

# The SIMPING DETECTIVE



SIMON SPURRIER ★ FRAZER IRVING





The  
**SIMPING** \*  
\* **DETECTIVE**

THE SIMPING DETECTIVE CREATED BY SIMON SPURRIER AND FRAZER IRVING

# The SIMPING DETECTIVE

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# INTRODUCTION

The way *The Simping Detective* came to be is: a clown raped my puppy.

Okay, fine, I made that up. I could just as easily have opened with “Judge Dredd touched me in the showers” or “Frazer Irving has congress with otters,” but I figured puppies have international appeal. I was doing you a favour – sue me.

Look, that’s how these intro gigs work. You start with some big dumb eye-catching statement then spend 600 words justifying its relationship with the masterpiece that follows. Before the poor reader knows what’s going on they’ve wasted five minutes on a batch of wanky anecdotes that culminate in a platitude designed to leave them in a contemplative frame of mind. Maybe that’s value for money.

The truth is that *The Simping Detective* came about in a disappointingly prosaic fashion, and if you’re looking for the sort of book that’ll require you to be in a contemplative frame of mind, be aware: this is a story about a cowardly know-it-all P.I. who wears an exploding rubber nose and has an alien superpredator for a pet. Don’t say you weren’t warned.

The first S.D. story – ‘Gumshoe’ – started life among a clutch of self-contained one-shots I pitched to the then-editor of the Magazine – Alan Barnes – under the catchy title Mega City Noir. My simple contention was that there were so many bad spinoffs from Judge Dredd’s universe that I should definitely be allowed to do one too. That was as far as the thinking went.

As a man of taste and distinction, Alan gave it the nod as soon as he read it. To quibble that it took him 18 months to do so would be blackguardly of me. To further whinge that only two Noir stories ever ran would be to foolishly ignore that a rather shallow series was saved from anonymity by introducing us to Jack Point – simp, private eye, judge – as a fully-formed and oddly

engaging character who, Alan felt, warranted a series all of his own.

To claim all this was intentional would be, well... a lie. The only appeal the character held for me when I first dreamt him up was that only in Mega City One could you get away with dressing like a twat in order to go undercover. On the shifting sands of such simple smirking are the following chronicles built.

I forget precisely why Frazer ended-up drawing it, other than that he needed cash to pay-off the RSPCA over that thing with the otter. Plus, y’know, he’s good. Very good.

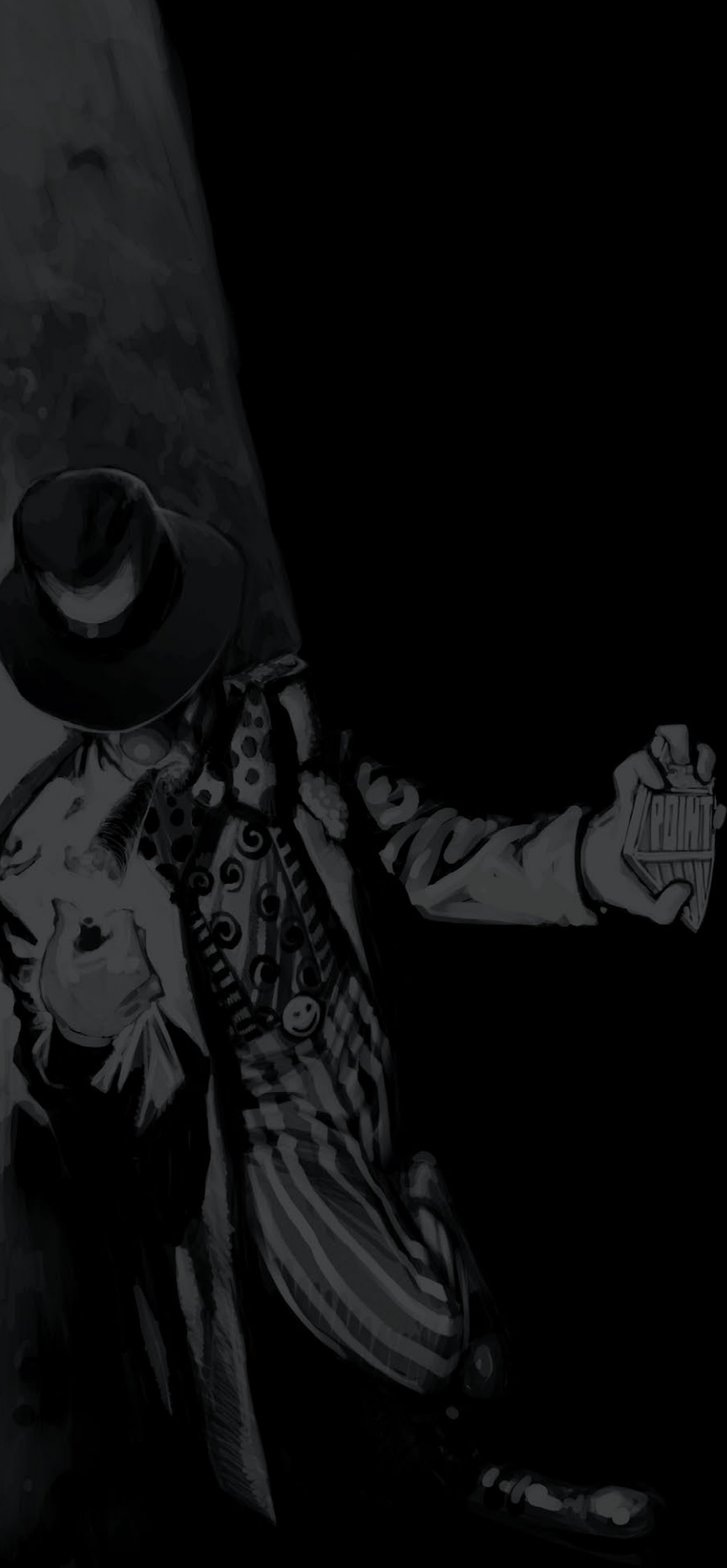
My mental mission-statement with *The Simping Detective* was to cut back on the number of panels on every page and insert loads of noir-ish monologues instead. This was entirely about slowing the pace and not at all about showboating with alliteration and simile. Anyone who knows anything about comics will attest that it’s a lot harder to keep things flowing when you have bloody great splats of text all over the shop, so Frazer’s shown his true colours – or at least his true greyscales – by rising to it magnificently. He draws good hands, great guns, superb monsters... and spectacular women. If this is your first time reading these stories, keep the word “floss” in mind and wait for DeMarco to appear. You’ll see what I mean.

So here’s Jack, folks. He’s a shifty little sod but his heart’s in the right place (right next to his hipflask), and say what you like about his fashion sense, he still makes carrot-shaped cigars look cool. And if you’re reading through this intro right now and still waiting for the contemplative conclusion, wondering what’s the point...? Then, hey:

It comes right after the “Jack,” spuggo.

Stop wasting your time and get on with the story.

Si Spurrier  
2007



# GUMSHOE

Script: Simon Spurrier  
Art: Frazer Irving  
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in *Judge Dredd Magazine* 220



Hey. The name's *Jack Point*.  
 Yeah, *Point*. As in  
 "armour piercing", "hollow"  
 and "what's your --?"  
 I got two friends in this  
 world. One's long and hard  
 and makes your *ears* ring  
 after every *shot*. The  
 other's my *gun*. I'm a *P.I.*  
 Here in *Angeltown*, that  
 stands for '*Perpetual*  
*Insecurity*.' Sure, it's a  
*dirty job*, but some--

It's a *dirty job*.

In *this trade*, there's two  
 kinds of *client* you gotta  
 watch like a *hawk* on  
*hypnojuice*...

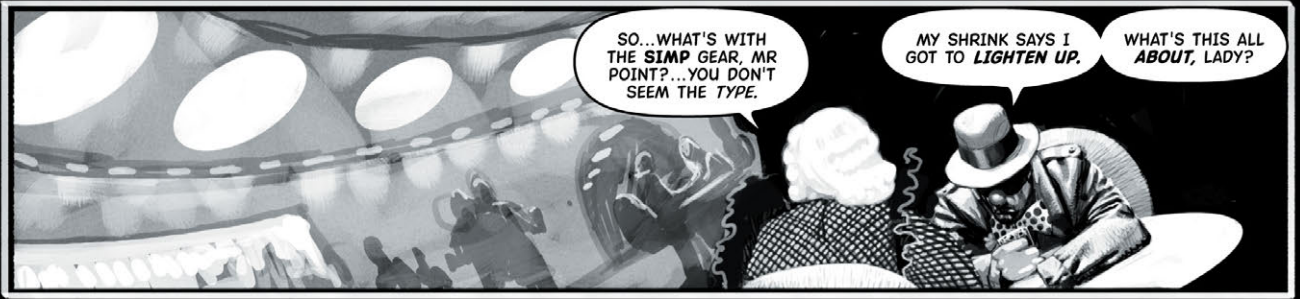
Number one: folks with  
*missing pets*. You ever  
 tracked a *stray ripperjack*,  
 you'd know what I mean.



MR POINT?  
 I NEED YOUR  
 HELP..

Number two:

**Broads.**



SO...WHAT'S WITH THE SIMP GEAR, MR POINT?...YOU DON'T SEEM THE TYPE.

MY SHRINK SAYS I GOT TO LIGHTEN UP.

WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT, LADY?

She says her name's Molly. She says her husband wants her dead. She says it's safest in a public place, and we can take her car.

She says a lot of stuff, but I'd by lyin' if I said I was watching her mouth.



CAN I TRUST YOU, MR P--?

HEY! HEY YOU! I SEEN YOU BEFORE!

YOU'RE A DROKKIN' BADGE!

I shoulda said no soon as she mentioned public places. What can I say? I'm a sucker for a woman with curves.



MISTER, YOU'RE DRUNK.

YEAH? WHAT'S YOUR POINT, JUDGEY?



...COMES RIGHT AFTER THE JACK.



So they kick us out after the ninth goon joins the med wagon queue. I love it when the bouncers say please.

I figure we're going back to hers for synthicaff when she goes and gets curious.

They always do, sooner or later.



T-THAT MAN...  
WHAT HE SAID...

YOU WANT TO KNOW,  
AM I A JUDGE?  
ANSWER'S NO.

NOT ANY  
MORE.

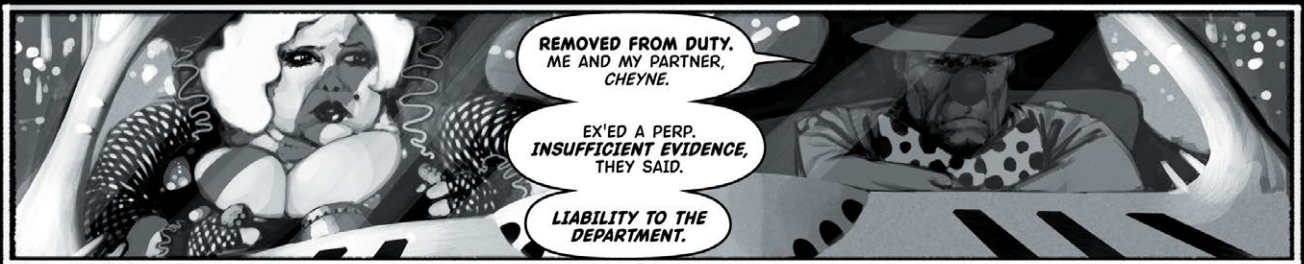


STOMM. WHAT  
HAPPENED?

WHY YOU GOTTA  
KNOW, LADY?

CAN'T HIRE SOMEONE  
I DON'T TRUST, MR  
POINT. SPILL.

Not just a pretty face, this broad.  
Trouble, with a capital click-click-boom.



REMOVED FROM DUTY.  
ME AND MY PARTNER,  
CHEYNE.

EX'ED A PERP.  
INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE,  
THEY SAID.

LIABILITY TO THE  
DEPARTMENT.



WHERE'S  
CHEYNE NOW?

HE'S DEAD.



MY PLACE IS JUST UP **HERE**.

SO, LISTEN... HOW DID YOUR PARTNER **DIE**?

JOVUS... YOU GOT A **MORBID** STREAK, LADY?

HE HAD HIS HEAD CUT OFF BY A DROKING **SWORD**, IF YOU **GOTTA** KNOW.



YOU MEAN SORT OF LIKE THOSE ONES?

AH... **NUTS**.

*Broads, huh? Can't live with 'em, can't have 'em lobotomised.*



WE KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR LITTLE **FALL** FROM JUSTICE DEPARTMENT **GRACE**, MR POINT.

IT WAS ONLY EVER A MATTER OF **TIME** BEFORE WE CAUGHT UP WITH YOU.

'WE'?



WORD OF ADVICE, IF YOU'RE GOING TO EXECUTE A... '**PERP**' IN **COLD BLOOD**, IT'S BEST TO CHECK HE'S NOT THE **BROTHER** OF SOMEONE **IMPORTANT**.

THE **BOSS** TENDS TO TAKE STOMM LIKE THAT **PERSONALLY**.

**BOYS...?**



*Simp gear. You gotta love it. I ain't found a squeaky nose or novelty buttonhole that couldn't be rigged.*

*You get plenty resourceful, working in Angeltown.*



*But sometimes...not resourceful enough.*

YOU KNOW, I'LL BE KIND OF SORRY TO KILL YOU, MR POINT. YOU'VE GOT **STYLE**.

NOT LIKE YOUR **PARTNER**. MAN, HE LOOKED BETTER **WITHOUT** A HEAD.

LADY, IT'S ONLY FAIR I SHOULD **TELL** YOU...

THAT **BRAWL** IN THE **BAR** WAS A **FAKE**.

SOME **PALS** OF MINE WANTED TO STICK A **TRACKER** ON ME. THEY BEEN HUNTING CHEYNE'S **KILLERS** FOR **WEEKS**.

W-WHAT'S YOUR **POINT**?



I TOLD YOU.

IT COMES  
RIGHT AFTER  
THE JACK.



# CRYSTAL BLUE

Script: Simon Spurrier

Art: Frazer Irving

Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in *Judge Dredd Magazine* 221-223

Angeltown was a dame, she'd be a two-cred whore with a zizz habit and a garter-gun.  
 Angeltown was a drink, it'd be whiskey. Sour whiskey.  
 Kind that burns your guts and makes you choke.  
 It ain't either.  
 It's home.



Name's *Point*. Private Eye. We've met, right?

You live here a *while*, you get a *taste* for the air.

Gets so you *know* when something ain't right, even before you know *what...*

Yeah, well. Something ain't right.



HEY, DULT! STREET-CREEP! SIMPO! CAPPA THE BLUE, MAN?

Crystal Blue. New brand on the street. Grud only knows what's in it.



Way I hear it, only way to shake the blues is a bloodball.

Hotshot.

Grade-A RedStimm.

Deep illegality.



BLUE FOR DOWN, RED FOR BACK UP AGAIN. THAT RIGHT, JUVE?

DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR. RUN.

HEH! YOU GONNA PLUG ME UP, SIMP-GIMP?



NO. BUT THEY MIGHT.

CITIZEN *POINT*? YOU'RE COMING WITH US.



PLEASED TO FINALLY MEET YOU, POINT. NAME'S DAVEEZ.

CHIEF DAVEEZ.

*Radlions.*  
I saw a documentary one time.

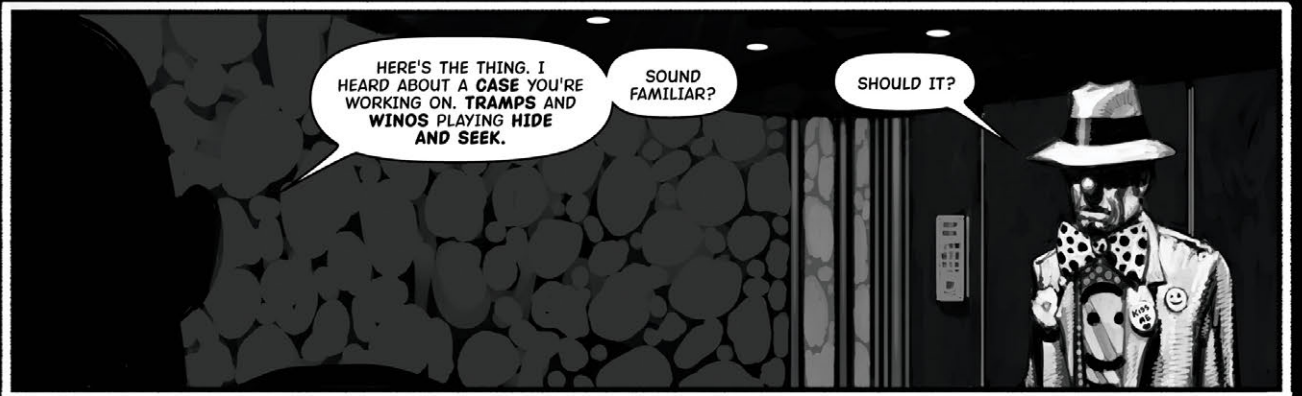
Old male dies, new one shows up. You know the first thing he does, besides *pissing* everywhere?



**Kills all the cubs.**

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, *JUDGE*. JUST A ROUTINE CALL-IN. MEET THE *NEW BOSS*, THAT SORT OF THING.

SAYS HERE YOUR COVER'S A P.I. AGENCY. *CUTE*.



HERE'S THE THING. I HEARD ABOUT A CASE YOU'RE WORKING ON. TRAMPS AND WINOS PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK.

SOUND FAMILIAR?

SHOULD IT?



NOT ANY MORE. YOU **TERMINATE** YOUR INVESTIGATION, UNDERSTAND?

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.**



OR?



OR MAYBE THE *SJS* BOYS HEAR YOU'RE GOING *NATIVE*. MAYBE FIND SOME *GLAND BRAND* IN YOUR *HAB*, HUH?

MESSAGE RECEIVED?

Message received.

Only thing stands out more than a badge in Angeltown is a bent badge.

So come on, Chief. Whose payroll you on?

...NUMBER ONE...

... OKAY... NUMBER ONE. ELMER WIDDISON. LAST SEEN RIGHT HERE...

...NUMBER TWO OUTSIDE ANDY SERKIS BLOCK...

...NUMBER THREE... STACKERS AT THE PARK-O-RAMA...

*Fifteen's just the official count. Truth be told, slabwalkers been vanishing months, and I guess I just... let it slide.*

"Suspend your investigation," Daveez said. *Some investigation.*  
Yeah, sometimes it takes a bastard telling you there's nothing to see —

—to make you start looking.

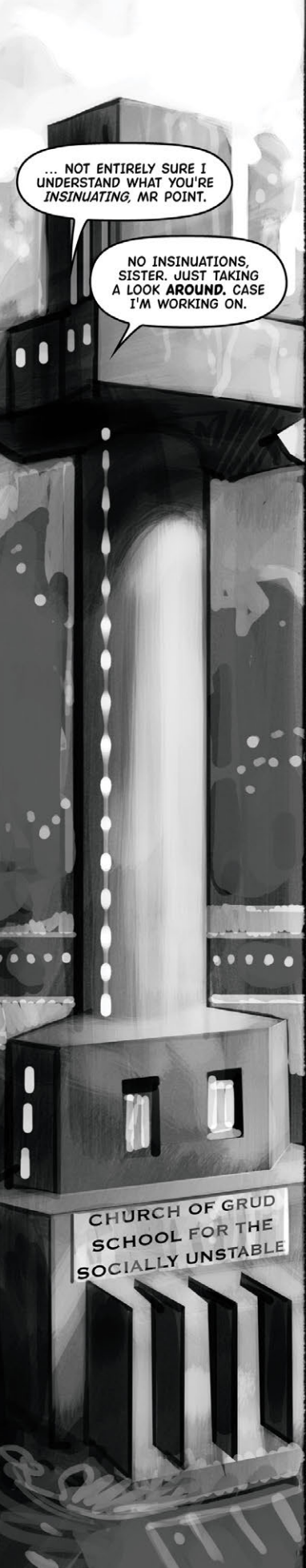
### LAST KNOWN LOCATIONS OF SUBJECTS 1-15



WELL, DROKK ME.

SO WHO'S THE PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE?





... NOT ENTIRELY SURE I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE INSINUATING, MR POINT.

NO INSINUATIONS, SISTER. JUST TAKING A LOOK AROUND. CASE I'M WORKING ON.



A "CASE", EH? IT'S BAD ENOUGH THE JUDGES RUNNING RIOT WITHOUT... **YOUR KIND...** DISRUPTING LESSONS.

YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH SIMPS, LADY? WHATEVER HAPPENED TO RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE?



MR POINT, IN THIS SCHOOL WE BELIEVE JUVES NEED TO EXPRESS IN ORDER TO BEAT ANTISOCIAL TENDENCIES. I HARDLY THINK DRESSING LIKE AN IDIOT APPLIES, DO YOU?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE SCHOOL BAND?

SOON AS MY EARS STOP BLEEDING, I'LL LET YOU KNOW.



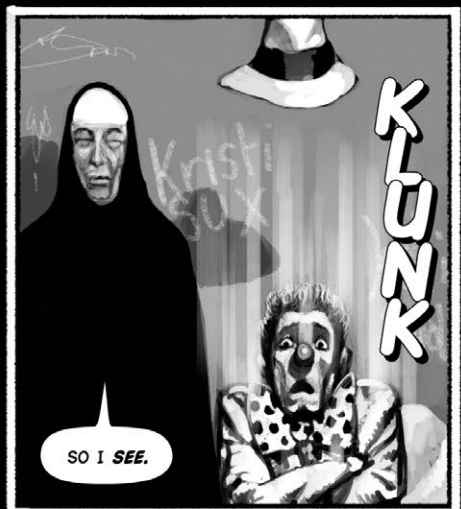
BE AS RUDE AS YOU WANT. WE'RE PROUD OF OUR GOOD WORK.

ANGELTOWN HAS MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE OF TROUBLED YOUTH.



I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU OUR SCIENCE DEPARTMENT, MR POINT. I THINK EVEN YOU WILL APPRECIATE IT.

CAN'T WAIT.



SO I SEE.

First rule of Angeltown: never trust a dame with an expensive habit.

It's a long fall.



WELCOME TO THE BASEMENT, MR POINT.

THE GOOD CHIEF DAVEEZ WARNED US YOU MIGHT STOP BY.

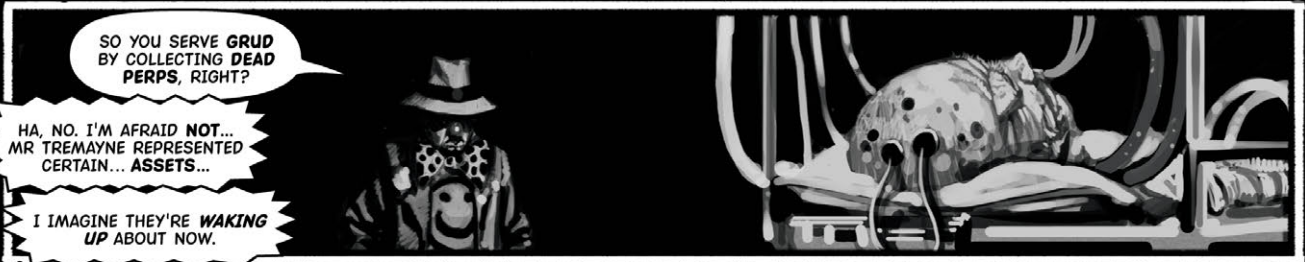
Daveez.  
Drokker.



WHO'S THE STIFF, SISTER?

HIS NAME IS DARTINGTON TREMAYNE. HE WAS SHOT BY JUDGES SOME YEARS AGO.

HE'D DIE WITHOUT THE MACHINES.



SO YOU SERVE GRUD BY COLLECTING DEAD PERPS, RIGHT?

HA, NO. I'M AFRAID NOT... MR TREMAYNE REPRESENTED CERTAIN... ASSETS...

I IMAGINE THEY'RE WAKING UP ABOUT NOW.

Something's rustling. In the shadows, I mean. Like rats, maybe. Big ones.

Anywhere else in Angeltown, chances are it's a pro and her john dancing the sideways rumba.

Down here, it stinks of meat.

It stinks of sweat. Down here, the imagination plays tricks.

Down here, that rustling could be anything...



MR TREMAYNE HAD A PET. A VERY LOYAL PET.

A PET WHICH IS QUITE HAPPY TO DO WHAT WE WANT -- EVEN REPRODUCE -- JUST AS LONG AS WE DON'T HARM ITS DADDY...



Like I said... fifteen's just the official count.

I guess Fido got hungry.



Then there's *crazy stomm* in my mind and shapes that *don't make sense* all round...

They...

They want me to...

*Give up.*

They *say so*, in my head.

*Give up.*

*Make it easy.*

*Just accept it.*



Gun's about as useful as a slap in the face.



I think maybe *ten hours* pass. I can't look down at my *watch*.

Ten hours I hold a lump of metal against a *Resyk-dodger's* head, and ten hours they... *hiss* and *move* and *watch*.

Sometimes, like maybe when I'm not *concentrating*, I can feel them in my *head*.

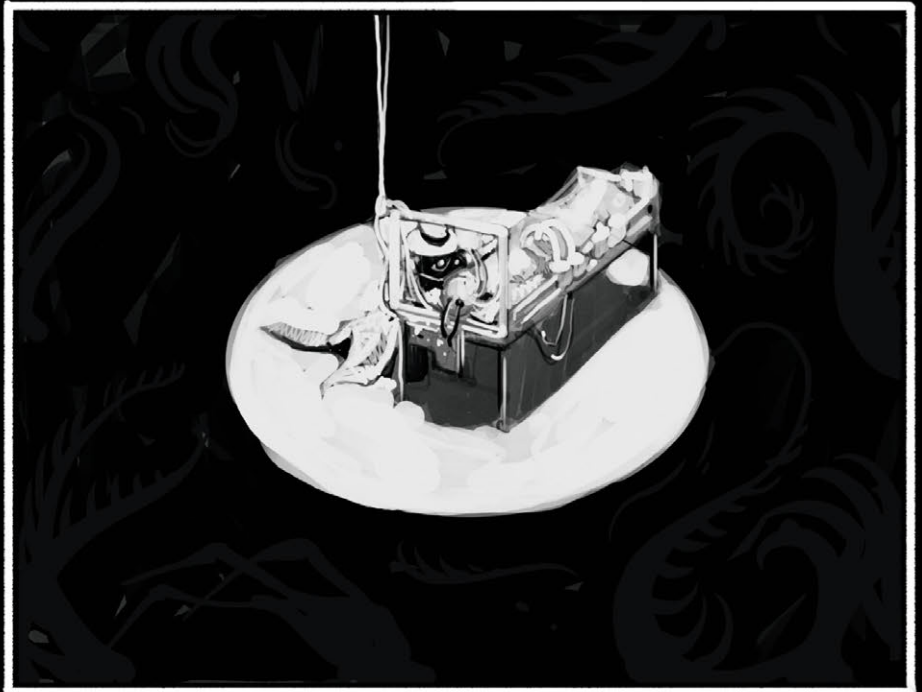
Nudging around.

Like *tasting*, maybe.

Tentacles and cords in my *memories*.

I swear, you never seen such *dark*.

Suddenly I'm a *juve* again.



**THWUMP**

Then ten hours are *up*, and someone reminds me what *light* looks like.



ALRIGHTY...BOSS SAYS THEY BEEN FED TODAY, SO THEY'RE GONNA BE **FRISKY**.

SONICS TO THE FRONT. EYES **PEELED**.



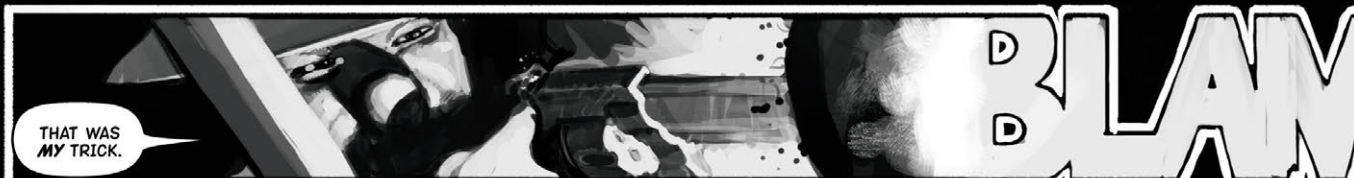
WHICH ONE WE **MILKING**, ZIG?

**BIG ONE**. GET A GUN ON THE STIFF SOON AS YOU CAN. CRITTERS GO **CALM AS KITTENS** AFTER THAT.



HEY, **BOYS**?

W-what's-?



THAT WAS **MY TRICK**.

**BLAM**



Yeah. *Loyalty* doesn't get you far when there's nothing left to be loyal to.

I figure, hey. Start a *fight*. Keep everyone busy.

You think of any *easier* ways out of here, you be sure and let me know.

Welcome back. How've you been? Me - I've been *better*.

So this whole business has got me *thinking back*. Big case a few years ago: *Dredd* and that *Psi-chick* with the *love-me-tender curves*, *Karyn*.

This is back when I wore a *polished dome*. I remember the *perp descrip*.



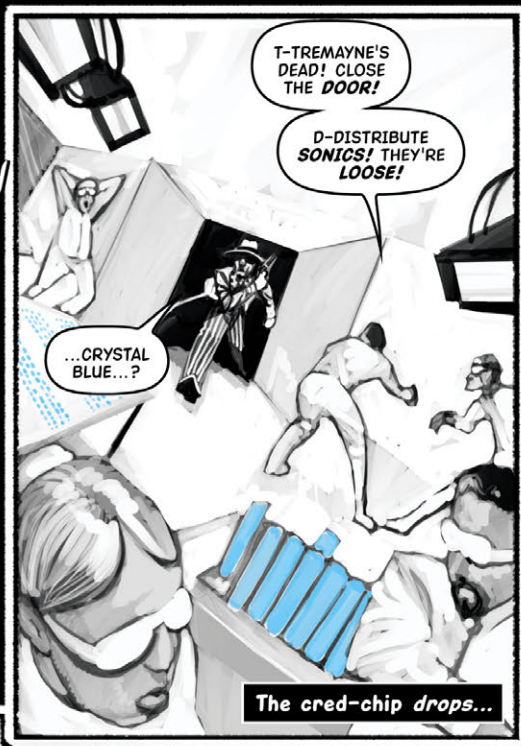
*Raptaur*, they called it. Silicon life form, harder than a *diamond* on *PCP*. Plays *psionic hardball*.

*Drokkers*'ll hypnotise you, pump you fulla *poison* then drink your *brain* like a *drunken dame*.

Those *parasitic xenophorms* they found in the *undercity*, couple years ago.

Remember *them*?

*These things* make 'em look like *cute pets*.



...CRYSTAL BLUE...?

The cred-chip drops...



THE DOOR!  
THE --

URK!

There's a saying, situation like this:

'He who fights and runs away...'

'...doesn't get eaten.'

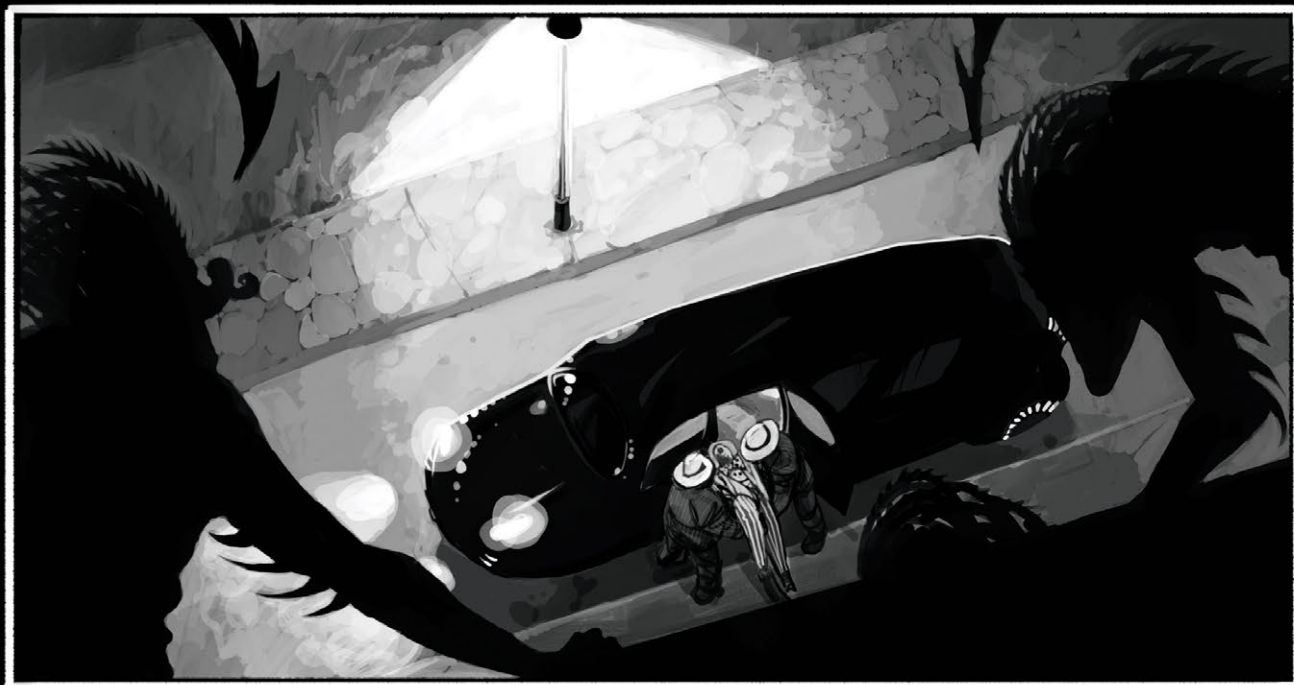




So the way I figure it, there's a *drugs factory* beneath the *school*, using *Raptaur Venom* to create the city's most powerful hallucinogenic *downer*.

And if you think that sounds a little *far-fetched*...

...then maybe you don't know *Angeltown* like I do.



So there's a voice.

I can't see drekk, but the voice...

The voice I know.



THING IS, MR POINT, THE BOSS -- HE'S A REASONABLE GUY, BUT HE AIN'T TOO HOT FOR COMPETITION.

SO THIS CRYSTAL BLUE, THIS NEW STOMM ON THE STREETS, IT'S GIVING HIM A HEADACHE, SEE?

The voice says it knows all about the *juvey pushers*, about how they're all from the same school.

The voice says the boss is mighty interested in the place.

The voice says it was running *surveillance* and it sure didn't expect *me* to show up.



Nff.

The voice, like maybe a hyena crossed with a little girl, that voice giggles.



Meet Muggro Keevish. He ain't big, he ain't strong, he ain't smart. What he *is* is this: A complete and utter drokking bastard.

SO WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW, MR POINT, IS THREE THINGS:

WHO WERE YOU *RUNNING* FROM, WHERE'D YOU GET THE *BLUES* SO *BAD*, AND *HOW'D* YOU WANT TO DIE?

BOYS? MR POINT LOOKS TENSE. LOOSEN HIM UP.

Point of logic: the local boss sets his apes to making you sing like a mech-canary.



You'd figure the stommheads'd give you a drokking chance to oblige.

THWUP THUD CRACK  
I-- LISTEN, I'VE--



BAWSS? I THINK HE TRYINNA SAY SOMMIN.

THAT A FACT?

...AW, DROKK...



0-QUESTIONS TWO AND THREE...hh... I'LL COME BACK TO THOSE.

QUESTION ONE... WHO I WAS... nnf... RUNNING FROM?

LOOK UP.

My guess is, one of these critters  
*cuts you, you're drokked.*

*Yeah, it hurts like hell.*

And *yeah, it plays pinboing*  
*with your brain.*



But now... Now my guess is:  
*it marks you too.*

*My very own fanclub.*  
*Yipdee-drokkin'-do.*





BLOORG



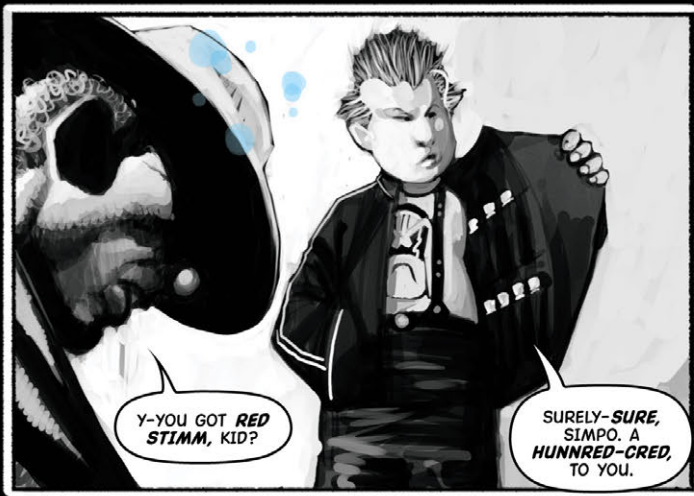
...S-STOP THE RIDE...



HEY, MISTER? YOU UP FOR SOME BLUES NOW?

LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ALREADY DOWNING, DULTY-CIT.

Blue for down, red for back up again.



Y-YOU GOT RED STIMM, KID?

SURELY-SURE, SIMPO. A HUNNRED-CRED, TO YOU.

You work in Angeltown any length of time, you find out pretty quick how low you're prepared to stoop to get what you want.



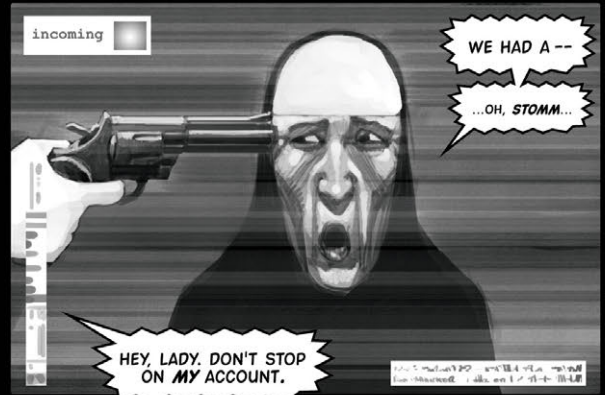
GIMME THE DROKING REDS, PUNK, OR I BLOW YOUR DROKING HEAD OFF.

Ask me on a bad day,  
judicial regulations or  
not, *nothing* beats  
whiskey.

Burns your guts.  
Sears your throat.  
Makes you feel alive.



But once in a  
while, right  
when you're  
least *expecting*,  
you find  
something  
tastes even  
*better*.



In this job, *incriminating* evidence is *by-the-by*. But factor-in a *drokkhead*  
of a *Sector Chief* and, yeah...whiskey's got *nothing* on that.







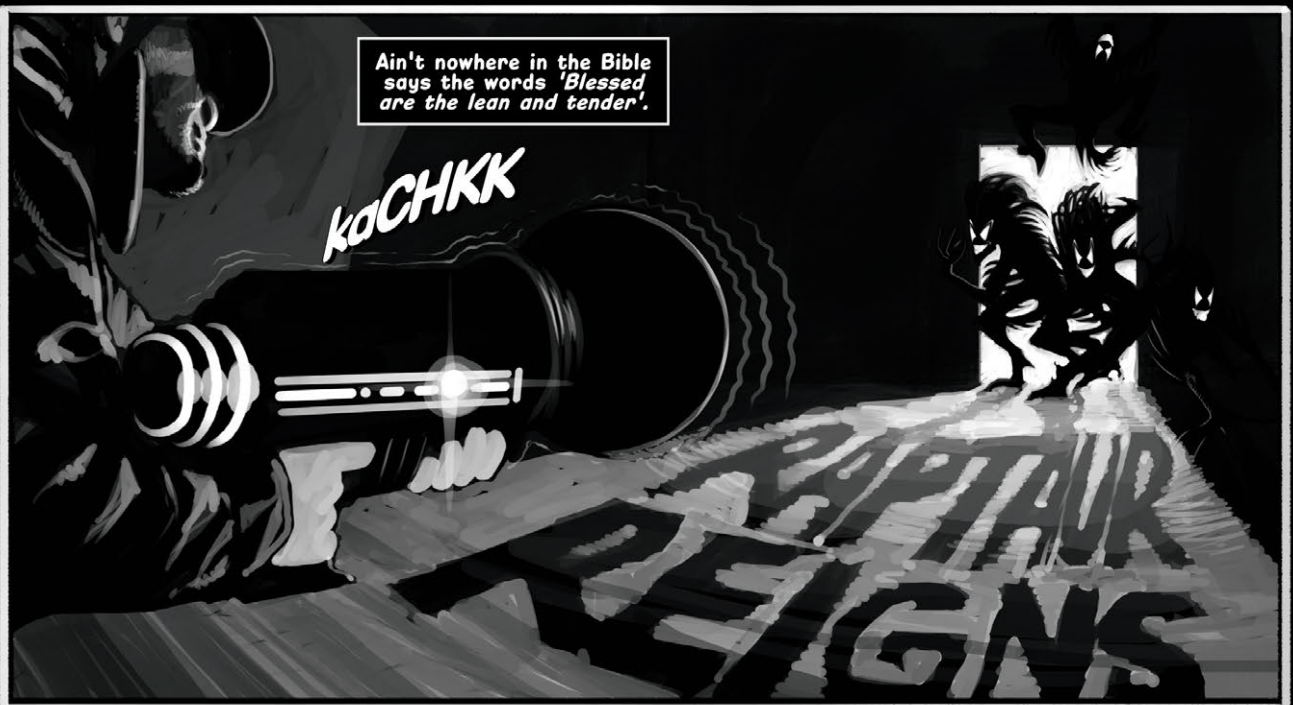
You ever heard the expression, 'Outta the frying pan, into the fire'?



Now me, I know where I stand. Times of trouble, I got my good pals Colt and Dram to keep me company.

But if you figure, hey, where's the harm in taking comfort in the Good Book?

Well, then I'll tell you:



Back in the day, old man Dredd figured these critters' Achilles heel.

Bullets don't work, fire's just a warming breeze, but sonics... Sonics'll shake the drokkers up like a Long Island Sector Special.

It seems to work.



AAAAAKK-!

Sort of.



STOMM.

And just when it's starting to look like an old fashioned turkey shoot, comes-along a cute reminder of what any Thanksgiving Day Robochef'll tell you free of charge:

Turkeys are awkward drokkers at the best of times.

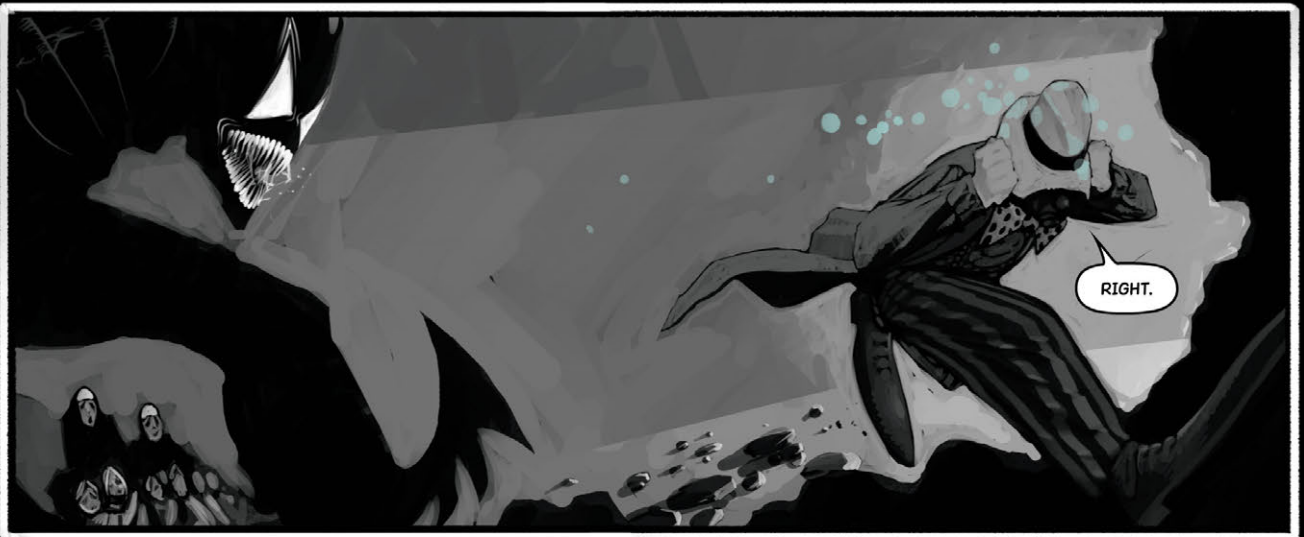
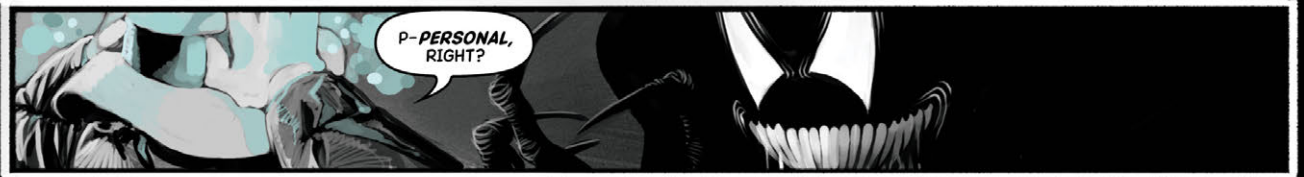
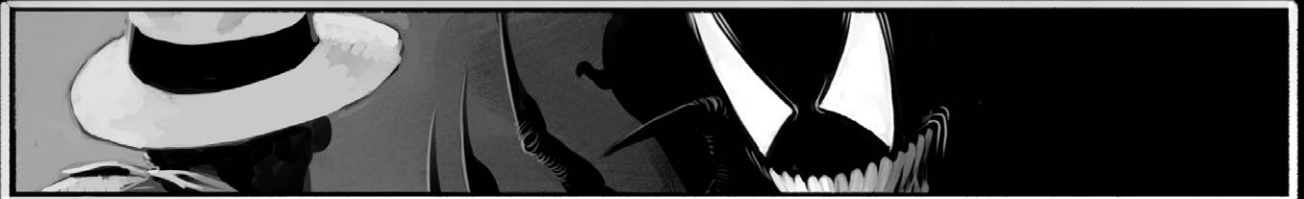
And they ain't as dumb as they look.



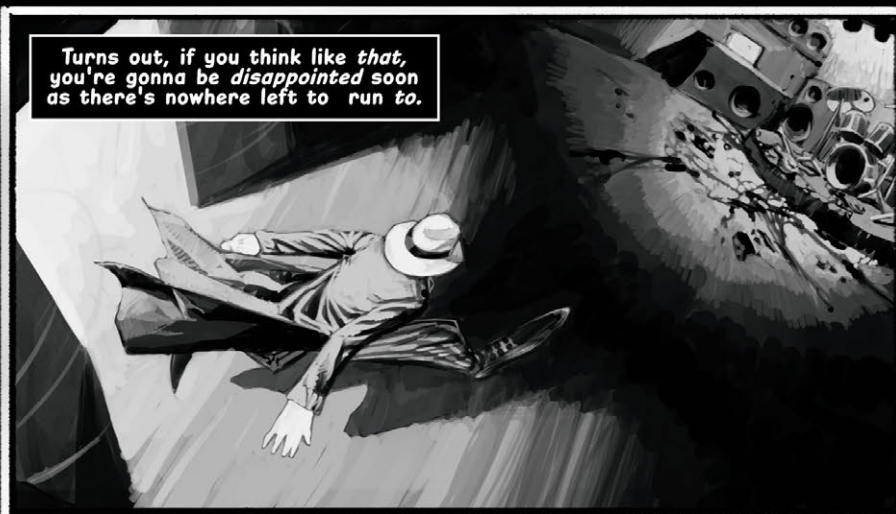
WHAT'S--?



AW, HELL.



Trick is, tell yourself you're using your own body as bait. You're drawing away a vicious alien predator from a roomful of socially-disturbed-but-broadly-innocent juves. Whatever you do, don't think of this as cowardice. Don't think of this as running.





*Give up, it says, like maybe the echo of your favourite fem, curling in your head.*

*And then you're back. Back in that world of deep, crystal blue. Cold and silent and hollow but...ancient.*

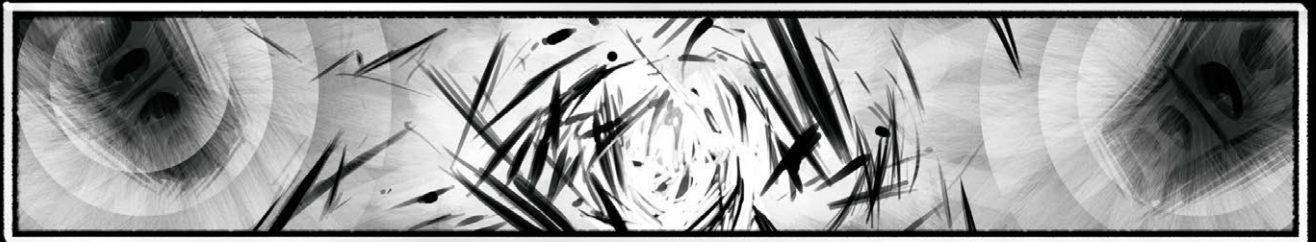
*Give up, it says. And I reckon maybe I will.*



...I play the blues.

S  
S  
S  
S  
H  
R  
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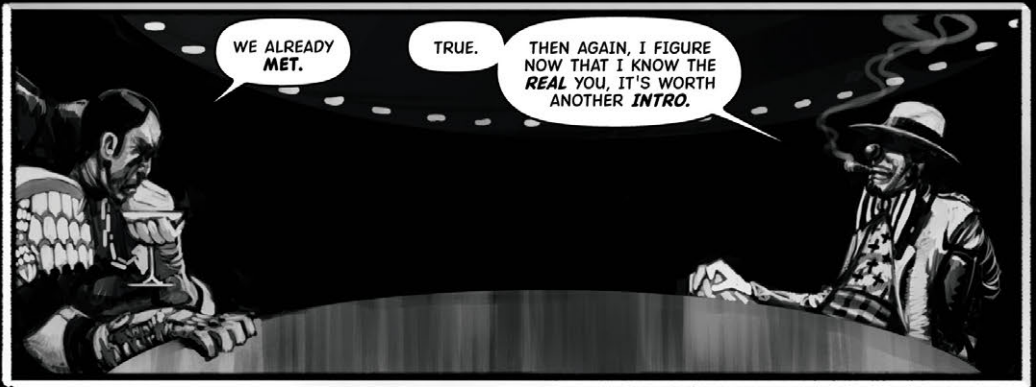


So that's *that*. Mostly.



... CAN'T JUST COME BARGING IN HERE LIKE THIS, JUDGE OR NOT.

HEY, NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. JUST A ROUTINE STOP-BY. MEET THE NEW BOSS, THAT SORT OF THING.



WE ALREADY MET.

TRUE.

THEN AGAIN, I FIGURE NOW THAT I KNOW THE REAL YOU, IT'S WORTH ANOTHER INTRO.



YOU GOT AN ALLEGATION YOU WANT TO MAKE, JUDGE?

PERISH THE THOUGHT. NO EVIDENCE, RIGHT? NOT SINCE THE SCHOOL INEXPLICABLY CAUGHT FIRE.

YOU WANT A SMOKE, CHIEF?



NOW LISTEN HERE, DROKKER. YOU'RE ON THIN ICE. GET TOO FAT, IT'S GONNA BREAK.

DO NOT DROKK WITH ME.

AND SMOKING'S STILL ILLEGAL, CREEP.

PLIP



YEAH. HEH. SO'S ALCOHOL.

WHAT'S YOUR POINT?



COMES RIGHT AFTER THE 'JACK'.

SO LONG, CHIEF.



So maybe I *lied*. Maybe I *did* have a point.

Maybe I shoulda told the bastard I spiked his *brandy* with a cap of the *blues*. Maybe I shoulda told him there's no *redstimm* left in the *sector*, since his *goons* burned down the *school*.



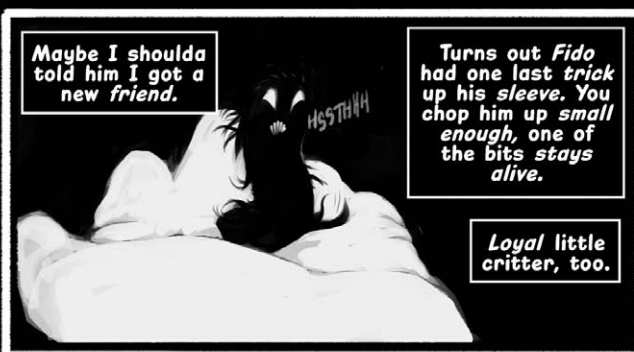
CHIEF? CHIEF, YOU OKAY?

Maybe he'll figure it for himself.



**BALLROOM PUTZ**

And, hey, maybe I shoulda told him that wasn't all I removed from the crime scene...



Maybe I shoulda told him I got a new friend.

Turns out *Fido* had one last trick up his sleeve. You chop him up small enough, one of the bits stays alive.

Loyal little critter, too.



Maybe *Daveez*'ll find that out for himself too, someday.

I love this town.



## **INNOCENCE: A BROAD**

Script: Simon Spurrier

Art: Frazer Irving

Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in *Judge Dredd Magazine* 224-226

Angeltown. Sector 13.



I used to have a partner, name of *Cheyne*. Said if the city was a man, Angeltown was his *charcoal lung*.

Fat with tumours, he said. *Greasy* from one too many *baccystix*.

He's *dead* now.  
So's *Cheyne*.

Anyways, I ain't sure I *agree*. You ask me, Angeltown's a *mother*. Something to *belong* to. Something *nourishing*. (And hey, if your taste runs to *milk* and *diapers* and you got the *cash*, this here's the place to come *play*.)

And some days, yeah...



Some days she even reminds me of my own *ma*. For one reason or another.

For example:



Difference is, Ma Point never needed the *ironwork*. Knuckles like *anvils*, I swear.

I GOTTA TELL YA, RUBE. YOU *DISRESPECTIN'* MR *GRIMM*, THINKIN' YOU CAN *BREAK IN* HERE SO EASY.

HE *HATESTA* BE DISRESPECTED.



GRIMM'S A *FUTSIE* MOB *PSYCHO*, PAL. *POND SLIME* DISRESPECTS HIM.

Juves with sense never *messed* with *Ma Point*.  
'Dults with sense stay the *drokk* away from Angeltown.

Sense ain't one of my *strong points*.





WHAT'S ALL THIS, BOYS?

CAUGHT A LITTLE PIGGY?

*Brutus Grimm.*

Decent guy, so I hear -- long as you got nothing against frothing psychosis and a sadistic streak wider'n the Black Atlantic.

About number five on The Boss's special payroll, but he's a climber. Men would be angels, right? Well henchmen would be Dons.

That's kinda why I'm here...



FOUND HIM TRYINNA GET IN, MISTER GRIMM. YOU WANT WE SHOULD CUT HIM A NEW HOLE?

A BURGLAR, EH? DEAR, DEAR... WHATEVER NEXT?

WE SHALL ALL BE MURDERED IN OUR BEDS!



NOTHING FANCY, CHEGS.

BURN OUT HIS EYES WITH A BLOWTORCH AND TAKE TURNS DROKING THE HOLES.

DRIVE ON, WILFRED. CYNTHIA AND I ARE TIRED.

LET'S HAVE AN EARLY NIGHT, EH DEAR?



YOU HEARD THE BOSS, RUBE. YOU GOT ANY LAST REQUESTS?

-- 'COS I LOVE TO SAY NO.

ALIEN GIRL... GOT AN EYE FOR THE EXOTIC, YOUR BOSS?



KEEP TALKING 'BOU EYES, RUBE.

WE LIKE A GUY TA MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.



SO...*ah*...WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IF I TOLD YOU I BEEN MENACED BY SICKO GOONS *BEFORE*?

I'D SAY 'WHO THE DROKK'RE YOU CALLIN' A *GOON*'?

WHAT'S YOUR *POINT*?



H-HA.

COMES RIGHT AFTER THE --

*Pause.*

For the *record*, you ever hear my now-famous *catchphrase*, you know for sure there's some *bad crazy coolness* on the way.

Possibly involving lethal *custard pies* or similar *combat-simp* action.

I could *take* these guys, is what I'm saying. *Honest.*

No problem.

Any minute now.

Except, as it happens --

-- someone beats me to it.

# FOOOOM



DROKK.

ANYONE GOT A *LIGHT*?



The *High Dive*.

You ever want to *pick up* on a platinum beauty with dangerous curves and the kind of scent'd drive a schmuck like me crazy with *lust*, this is the place.



They also have *girls*.



-- of a kind.

ANOTHER *FLAMING DROKKUPPET*, BOB. BEFORE I BARF, PLEASE.

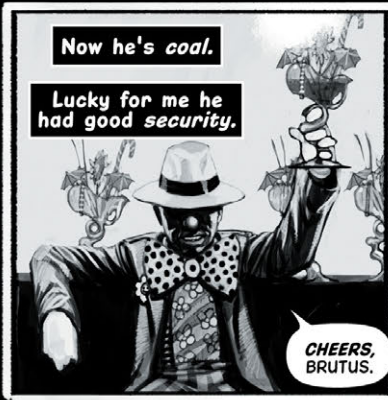
HEY, YOU DON'T LIKE THE *MEAT*, HIT THE *STREET*...

Let me bring you up to *speed*.  
Six of The *Boss's* top henchmen have upped and *detonated* in the last week. They're criminal scum and -- worse -- I ain't getting paid, but it's my job to find out who's *doing* it.  
For *this* I became a judge.



KEEP 'EM COMING, BOB.

I figure it's an *inside job*. One of the firm, trying for *promotion* the quick way.  
Up until *this* evening, I had Brutus Grimm pegged as *Il Grande Suspecto*. Lookin' for evidence, see?



Now he's *cool*.

Lucky for me he had good *security*.

CHEERS, BRUTUS.

Point is, Angeltown's all-shook-up. And if you figure the *badges* are after a *culprit*, imagine how the *crims* feel. The *High Dive's* where they come to vent.



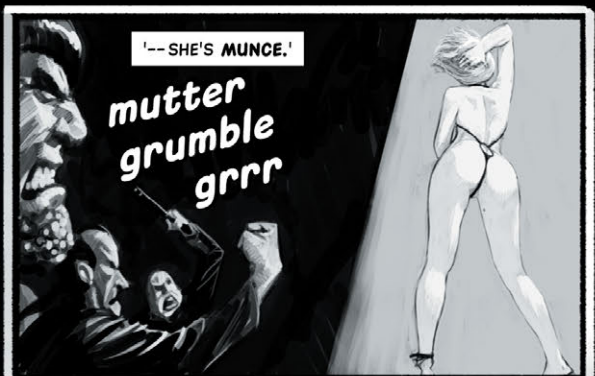
Every last sorry drug-pushing tax-dodging mother-drokkng one of them.

IT'S LIFE, BOB, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT.

Yeah, if goons, thugs, pimps and human waste were eggs, the High Dive'd be an omelette.

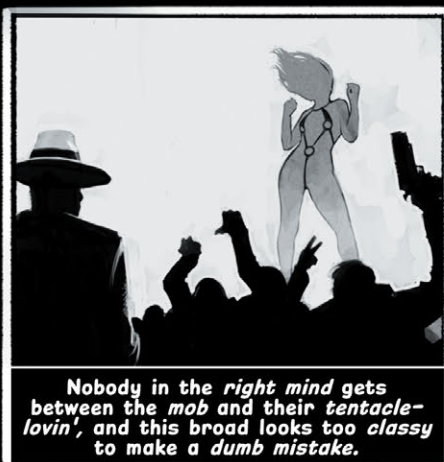
Hold the cheese, extra salmonella.

No honour amongst thieves, right? But these creeps all got something in common. They come to watch the freakshow, and I come to watch them.



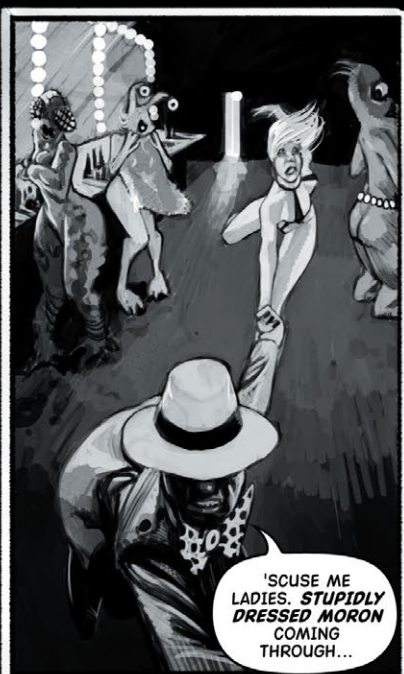
Now me, I got this spooky ability to block out manly desires. All judges have it, see? Even us Wallies.

But this chick... this chick is up to something.



There's something going down here -- call it a hunch -- and it's my job to hand-out the parachutes.

And if that's the best excuse I can come up with to ogle her close up, I'm more a simp than I look.



Where did you get that incredible thong?



YOU'RE JACK POINT, RIGHT?

DEPENDS. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT JACK POINT?



PRIVATE EYE. ALCOHOLIC. MORON.

AN EMBARRASSING KNACK FOR SCREWING UP CASES, SUCH AS -- FOR EXAMPLE -- THE ONE I'M WORKING ON.

OH... THAT JACK POINT.

Her name's DeMarco. She's also a P.I., which is to say: a rival.

And no, before you ask. I don't know where she kept the gun either.

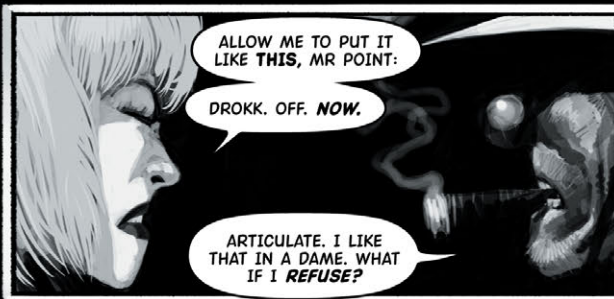
She says the Allentown girls working this stomphole hired her. She says whores been complaining about being drugged. About waking up in weird places. About some of them even vanishing for good.



She says she was posing as a dancer to find out what goes on backstage. She says this is her case, and I can just butt the hell out...

butt...butt...butt...

Lucky for me she's not my type, huh?  
Lucky, yeah. Ahaha.



ALLOW ME TO PUT IT LIKE THIS, MR POINT:

DROKK. OFF. NOW.

ARTICULATE. I LIKE THAT IN A DAME. WHAT IF I REFUSE?



THEN MY ASSOCIATE MR PERKINS WILL ASK YOU NICELY.

GOOD EVENING, MR POINT. SO VERY HAPPY TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.



AH. THE NOVELTY NON-HUMAN SIDEKICK, RIGHT? NEVER LEAVE HOME WITHOUT ONE.

'SCUSE ME.

Pheep

MISS DEMARCO,  
MEET *CLIQ*.

AS IN  
'*POINT AND CLIQ*'.  
CLEVER, SEE?

HE ISN'T VERY *BIG*,  
DOESN'T HAVE A STUPID  
*ACCENT*, EXISTS ON A DIET  
OF *RATS* AND *MUNCE*, AND  
ONLY LEAVES THE *SEWERS*  
AT *NIGHT*. 'SCUSE THE  
*SMELL*.

BUT HE'S  
*REAL LOYAL*.

NOW. LET'S TALK  
*BUSINESS*.



Yeah, this is *Angeltown*. And yeah, I'm a *P.I.*

That means I'm a *suspicious bastard* who goes looking for *trouble* and doesn't often get paid. Think of me as a *reincarnating lobster*.

Always in *hot water*, see?

I'm also a *Simp*. That means I do stupid stuff for no reason, dress like an *idiot* and tell *bad jokes*.

Example:

Q: Where does a *300lb gorilla* with a *pinstripe suit* and fists like *hamplants* spend the night?

It's the way you tell 'em. Besides, when *said gorilla* is *oozing menace* on behalf of its *überfem boss*, who ain't keen on sharing her *investigative territory* with yours truly, there's a *gag* I much prefer:

A: Wherever the *drokk* he wants.



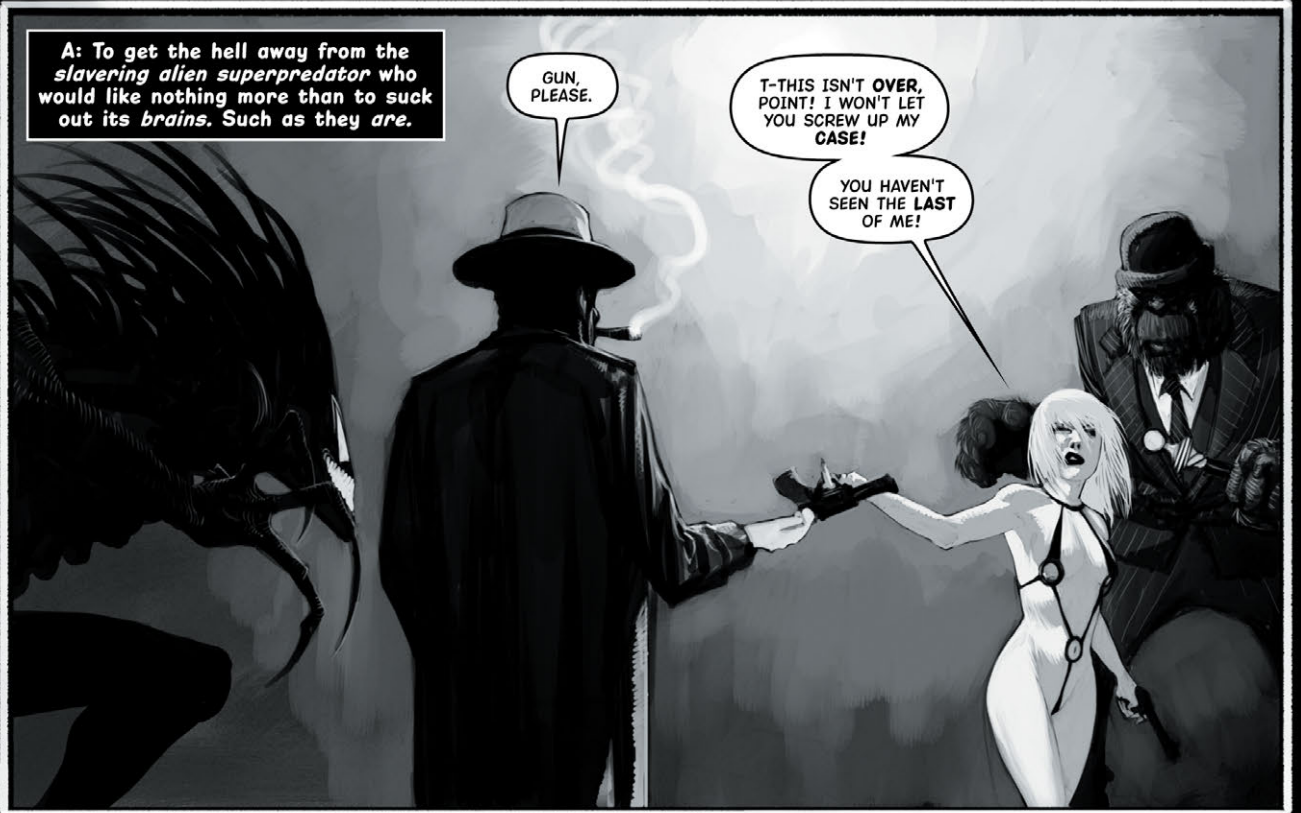
Q: Why did the gorilla cross the road?

A: To get the hell away from the *slavering alien superpredator* who would like nothing more than to suck out its *brains*. Such as they are.

GUN,  
PLEASE.

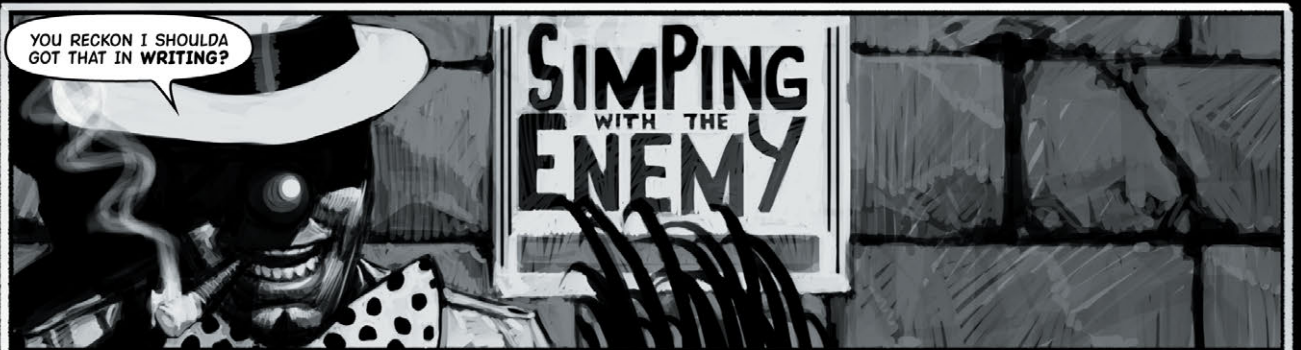
T-THIS ISN'T OVER,  
POINT! I WON'T LET  
YOU SCREW UP MY  
CASE!

YOU HAVEN'T  
SEEN THE LAST  
OF ME!



YOU RECKON I SHOULD  
GOT THAT IN WRITING?

SIMPING  
WITH THE  
ENEMY



So I guess the case is *mine* now.

I'd be just *stoked*, if I knew what the hell the case *was*.

Besides, I been doing my *homework* on Little-Miss-Piston-Perfect, and if *department records* were *bowls of sand*, hers'd be a *beach*.

*Life's a beach*, right?

Well, I still have no whiskey, and this particular stretch of *shoreline* has a *toxic spillage*.

The *Boss'* goons are getting *nuke*d one by one, the triple-X *freakettes* at the *High Dive* are being *doped*, and my *whiskey* just ran *dry*.

It's all too much for a *guy* to *take*.



Yeah. Galen DeMarco. Heiress of the *holy-stomm-how-many-billions-did-you-say* DeMarco Foundation.



*Ex-Judge.*

Turns out she fell from *grace*. Turns out she wasn't *down* with the '*no extra-Judicial liaisons*' rule.

Turns out she tried it *on* with a senior *street Judge*.

And you'll *never* guess which *one*.

KOFF!  
HAKK!  
CHOKK!

HIM?!?

Go on. Take a *stab*, I *dare* you.

You'll *never* get it.

**KRASSSH**

CRIME SWOOP!

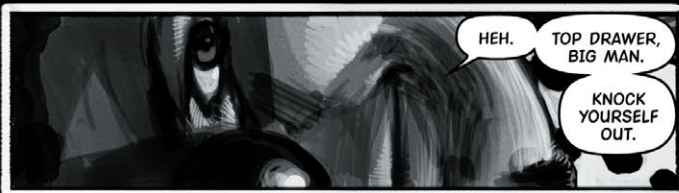
NOBODY MOVE!

DROKING HELL. THAT'S SPOOKY.

THIS HIM?

THAT'S HIM.







'Two heads are better than one,' he says. I figure what he actually meant was: 'I ain't got time to keep tabs on crazy Wally-Squaddies and hotshot ex-helmets, so you drokkers can watch each other.'

Smart.



Needless to say, Dredd shoulda left diplomacy to diplomats.





At 11.37, give or take, Jim 'Slim' Pickings --he's the kinda accountant'd give a paperclip a run for its money in the bent stakes -- cruised home from a night down the High Dive.

Ten minutes later he's airborne dust. Rack up one more to the assassin.

Information, huh? In Angeltown -- if you knew who to ask -- you could find out the colour of the Chief Judge's drokkin' knickers.



Colm 'Shite' O'Leary. Dependin' who you ask, the nickname's either the natural reaction to coming face-to-face with him, or a character description.

He's the Boss's Chief Enforcer. He's a very, very, very bad man.

Shite.





Listen.

The guy you work for, the office *suit* with an *okay* hovcar and an *okay* wife, that's your *boss*.

The guy that *everyone* works for, sooner or later, know-it-or-not, that's *The Boss*.

Bosses were *fish*, he'd be the *roboshark*. The one no one's ever *seen*, but everyone's *heard* about. The one with the *killcount*.

Scratch that. He'd be the *ocean*.



Private Eye.

Knack for *finding people*. Expensive affair with a *whiskey glass* to *fund*.

Missing persons case.

You do the math.

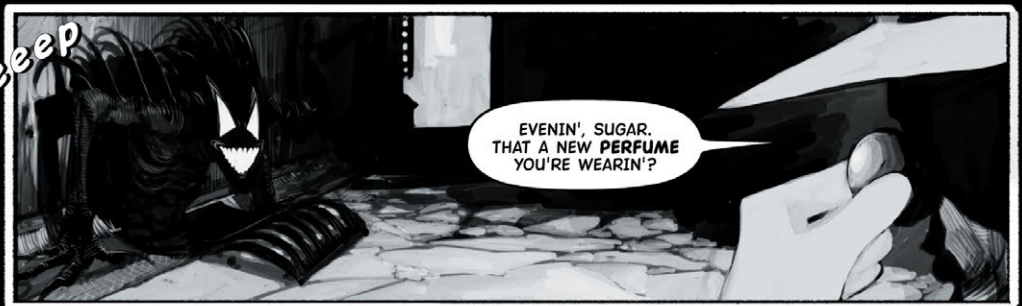


The voice says that four months ago it married the *astoundingly attractive Miss Innocence Barumba*. It challenges me to make a *snide comment about love, honour and obey*.

No drokking fear.



The voice says that two days ago *Mrs Boss* upped and *vanished*. It says all the king's *horses* and all the king's *goons* ain't been able to *find* her.



It says all it's got to go on is a *package*, delivered to its unofficial staff offices at the *High Dive*. A package containing a single braid of *perfect hair*, and a *note*.

'COME GET ME.'

The voice says it figured I'd enjoy the *challenge*.



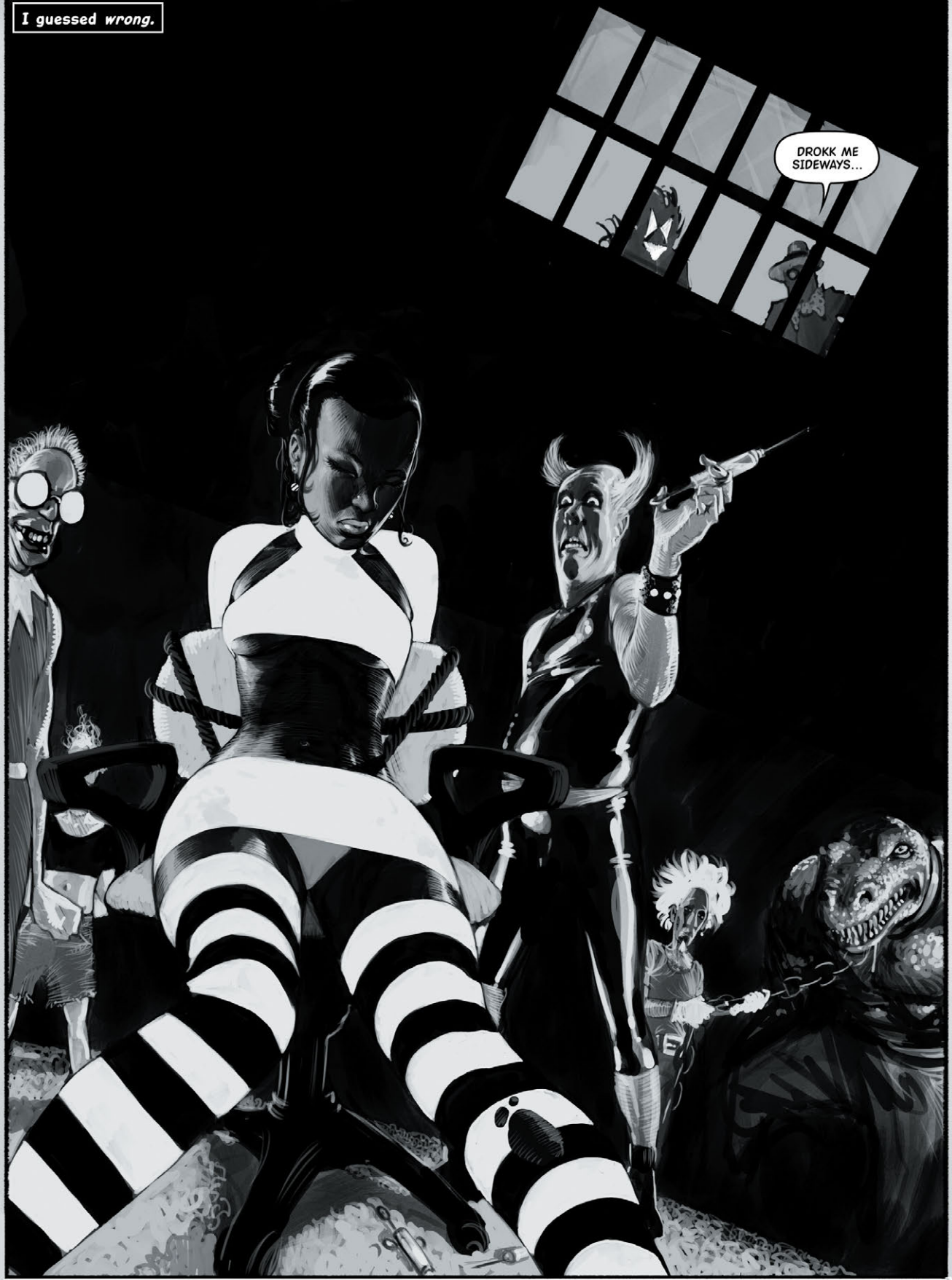
I guess maybe I expected an *alien*. I guess maybe a *mutie cutie* with more *holes'n a revolver cylinder* and *featherdown lips*.

I guess I figured his *taste'd* match his *goons'*.

Weird.

I guessed wrong.

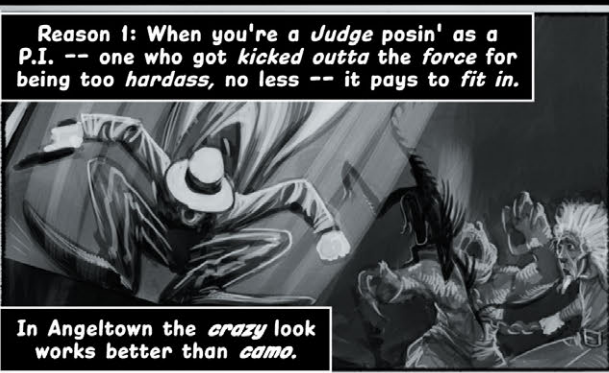
DROKK ME  
SIDEWAYS...





People're always askin' me why I dress like a guy *two shots* short of an *overdose*.

Well I got *three* good reasons and *six* good bullets, so either way people tend to only ask *once*.



Reason 1: When you're a *Judge* posin' as a P.I. -- one who got *kicked outta* the force for being *too hardass*, no less -- it pays to *fit in*.

In Angeltown the *crazy* look works better than *camo*.



Reason 2: *Thirty-inch dufus shoes* with *concealed toxin blades*, *razor-sharp shuriken bow ties* and *stumm-gas whoopee cushions*.

*Morons* get all the best *toys*.



And if none of *that* convinces you, just remember Reason 3: This is Angeltown --



*"Play it again, Bob"*



*Dames. Let's talk dames.*

People were newspapers, dames'd be crosswords. And not those crappy synonym ones, either: I'm talkin' full-on cryptic craziness, with the clues misprinted and written in acid.

Dames'll screw up your insides like a suppository switchblade.

Once in a while you'll get one looks like a cazillion creds. Or maybe she smells like a hormone holiday. Or say she's got skin like --

...You get the idea.

Yeah, well this one... This one's screamin' 'classy' in every sense I got, and a whole buncha spooky ones I never knew existed.



She's so far outta my league she's a whole new sport. Good thing us Judges are chaste, right? Ahahaha.



S-SO... YOU'RE MARRIED TO THE BOSS, RIGHT?

RIGHT.



YOU... ah... YOU MIND IF I ASK YOU A QUESTION?

IF YOU MUST...



SO... DO YOU REALLY THINK IT'S POSSIBLE TO TRUST A MAN WHOSE ENTIRE LIFE IS BASED UPON CRIME, EXTORTION AND MURDER?

...AND, BY EXTENSION, IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO TRULY LOVE A GUY YOU DON'T TRUST?

...AND TO FOLLOW UP, THEREFORE, HOW OPEN ARE YOU TO THE PROSPECT OF EXTRA-MARITAL ROMA--

*Yes, yes and not at all, apparently.*



JUST UP HERE ON THE LEFT, MAC.



O'LEARY. GOOD. CALL MY HUSBAND AND TELL HIM I'M SAFE.

RIGHT SO, MISSUS B. THEM FILTHY FECKERS DIDN'T HURT YE?



BESIDES DRUGGING ME AND REGALING ME WITH BAD JOKES, NO. AND NO, BEFORE YOU ASK, I DON'T KNOW WHO SENT THEM.

JUST PAY MR POINT FOR HIS TROUBLE AND TAKE ME HOME. I HAVE A HEADACHE.

I'LL WAIT IN THE CAR, COLM. DON'T BE LONG.



SURE BUT HERE SHE IS, POINTY. PRETTY AS A CAT'LIC CALLGIRL... ALL JANGLIN' WI' NERVES AN' NOT A HAIR OUTTA PLACE.

FEM FOR A FEM. NO HARD FEELINGS, EH?



AND THAT'S IT? SIMPLE AS THAT?

SIMPLE AS THAT.

RUN, YOU STUPID BASTARD!



ON TH' OTHER HAND... THERE'S ALSO THE WEE MATTER O' YE KILLIN' THE BOSS' BROTHER.

FOIRE AT WILL, LADS. FOIRE AT WILL.



JOVUS... MAKE ONE LITTLE MISTAKE AND PAY THE REST OF YOUR LIFE...

W-WHAT'S THAT?



INSURANCE.



WILCO, JUDGE DREDD.  
REPLOTTING CO-ORDINATES  
FOR SECTOR 13.

--THE DROKK?

HA! HE'S  
SPUGGIN' OUT  
ON US!



AAHH--!

GRUD, I'M  
HIT!



Sector 13  
Welcome  
FRESH MEAT  
@cheerful drive

CONTROL?  
DREDD.

THERE BEEN A  
LAWMASTER UPGRADE  
YOU WANT TO TELL ME  
ABOUT?



IS IT BAD?

OH GRUD...  
IT'S WORSE...



WILCO,  
JUDGE DREDD.

BIKE CANNON  
DEPLOYED.

CANCEL THAT  
ORDER! CANCEL,  
DROKK IT!



**BRAKKA  
BRAKKA  
BRAKKA**

W-WHAT  
THE HELL?



CAVALRY'S HERE.  
TIME TO HEAD OUT  
THE BACK.

DROKKFLAPS!  
IT'S KING CHIN!  
TAKE HIM OUT!

JOE? JOE'S  
HERE?



I DON'T KNOW  
WHO YOU CREEPS  
ARE, BUT THIS IS  
YOUR FIRST AND  
LAST WARNING!



BOOM  
RATATAT  
BLAM  
KOOM

HEY!  
WHERE ARE  
YOU GOING?



WHAT DOES IT  
LOOK LIKE?

AWAY!

BUT JOE MIGHT NEED  
OUR HELP! WE CAN'T  
JUST LEAVE HIM!

Listen. Me, I got a way with words. It's sort of like how *Don Quixote* had a way with windmills.

Right now, what I *should* say is: Hey, the Man With The Golden Chin needs your help like a *snake* needs *sneakers*. I should say: It's *okay*. These are *Angeltown* goons. *Dredd*'ll go through 'em like *brandy* through a *baby*.

But *oh no*, I got to get all *jealous* at the *Run-To-Joe* routine and open my big flappin' face:



GET IT IN  
YOUR SKULL,  
TOOTS!

ANGELTOWN  
LOOKS AFTER CITS  
THAT LOOK AFTER  
THEMSELVES.



YOU KNOW,  
POINT... FOR A  
SECOND BACK  
THERE I MISTOOK  
YOU FOR A DECENT  
GUY, BUT...

YOU'RE A  
DISGRACE  
TO THE  
DEPARTMENT,  
JUDGE.

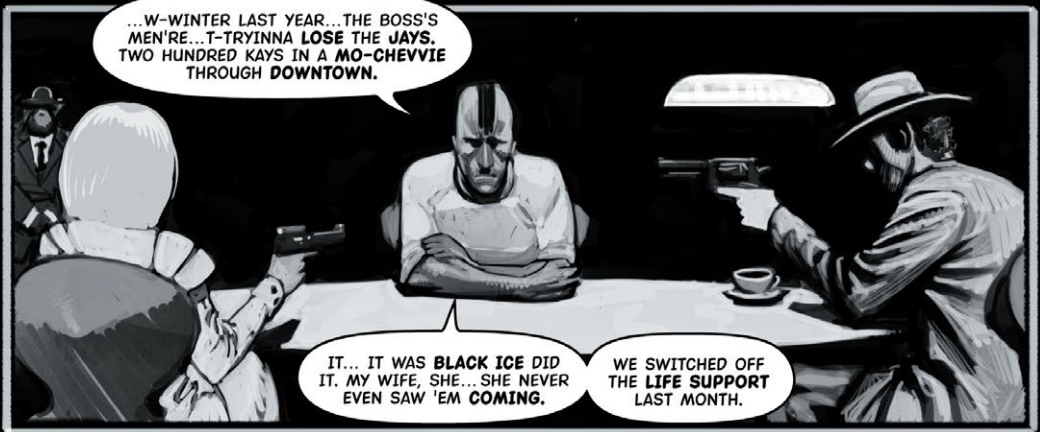
LOOK WHO'S  
TALKING,  
LITTLE MISS  
HIDE-THE-  
TRUNCHEON.



SHIT.



So two cups of *gigasobriety coffee*, a novelty cigar and a hasty bit of *Point-style charm* later, and finally we're getting somewhere.



Little *Bob*, who ain't ever raised his voice in his life, his eyes go hard like *plasteen*. He says how it made him *crazy angry*. He says how the boss' goons have always had a thing for *Alientown fems*.



He says how it was easier than *Sunday Mornin'* to inject his dancing girls with *Jazzalite*.



A-singin': 'Sex-bomb, sex-bomb, yooou're my sex-bomb...'



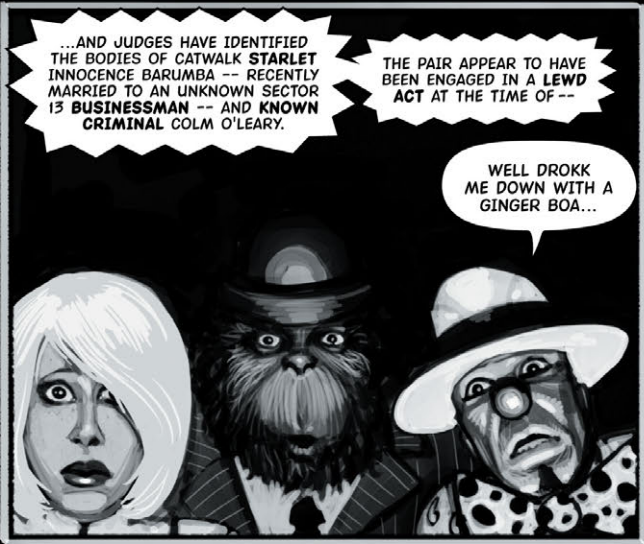
# N-YOUZE

News for YOU!

And sure enough, Angeltown's got herself one last lightshow in store.

Only it ain't quite what poor old Bob had in mind...

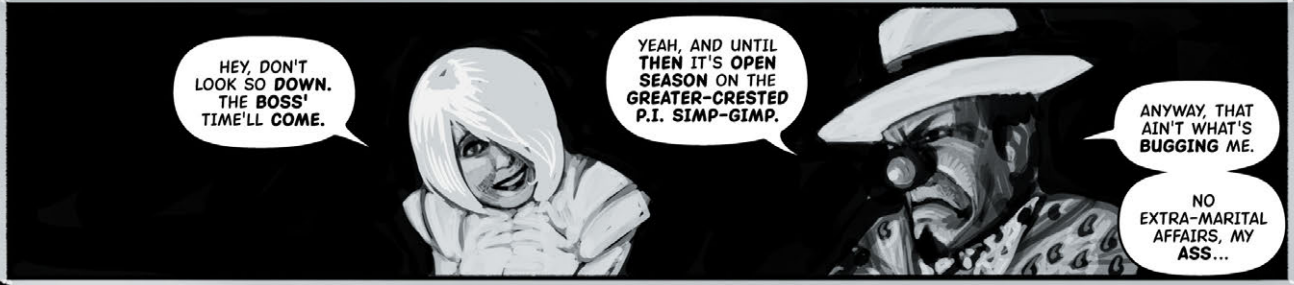
Sector 13 blast!!!



...AND JUDGES HAVE IDENTIFIED THE BODIES OF CATWALK STARLET INNOCENCE BARUMBA -- RECENTLY MARRIED TO AN UNKNOWN SECTOR 13 BUSINESSMAN -- AND KNOWN CRIMINAL COLM O'LEARY.

THE PAIR APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A LEWD ACT AT THE TIME OF --

WELL DROKK ME DOWN WITH A GINGER BOA...



HEY, DON'T LOOK SO DOWN. THE BOSS' TIME'LL COME.

YEAH, AND UNTIL THEN IT'S OPEN SEASON ON THE GREATER-CRESTED P.I. SIMP-GIMP.

ANYWAY, THAT AIN'T WHAT'S BUGGING ME.

NO EXTRA-MARITAL AFFAIRS, MY ASS...

I guess it's true what they say, huh? No place for *innocence* in Angeltown.



WE BETTER BE GETTING ALONG. AND LISTEN -- FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

I SHOULDN'T HAVE CALLED YOU A DISGRACE TO THE FORCE.

W-WHAT'S YOUR POINT?



COMES RIGHT AFTER THE 'JACK', JACK.



SEE YOU AROUND.

Dames, huh? Walk all over you, drive you crazy... then still set your heart to hammerin' like a mescaline monsoon.

Who needs 'em, right? Not this simp, that's for sure.

'See you around,' she said.

You... uh... You think she meant soon?



# PLAYING FUTSIE

Script: Simon Spurrier

Art: Frazer Irving

Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in *Judge Dredd Magazine* 234-236

Evenin'.

Sometimes, like for example *tonight*, I get to thinking the *Justice Department's a pimp*. All done up in *gold and leather*, with a temper you wouldn't *believe*. All the different *sectors* -- those're his *girls*.

Angeltown's the speciality act. Unshockable, unscareable. Seen it all, enjoyed it all.

You got the right money, she'll do anything you want.

And if you ain't got the money, well -- she knows how to handle that too.

ISO CUBES 5-10

...UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO CONFISCATE THE WEAPONS. BUT...THE HIPFLASK, GRUDAMMIT-?

And yeah, you wanna be *crude* about it, this dame has some pretty dark *holes* about her. *Sorta* places you wanna be *wary* of.

*Sorta* places a guy could catch anything.

*Sorta* places where -- *Jovus* -- there's always room for two.

P-POINTY?

WHAT YOU DOIN' HERE, MAN?

IT'S YOU, YOU STUPID BASTARD! THE JAYS SEEN YOU COMING TO MY OFFICE. GOT ME AS AN ACCESSORY!

YOU MUSTA DONE SOME NAUGHTY STOMM, ZIG.

BUT...BUT THIS PROVES IT!

THEY BEEN WATCHING ME! T-THEY KNEW I'D FIGURE IT OUT, SEE?

KNEW I WAS ONTO THEM!

Oh yeah, one other thing. This broad, this sick, cred-hawkin' ped-walkin' perv-ho, name of *Angeltown* --

-- she sure has seen a lotta nuts.

*siiigh*

TELL ME EVERYTHING, ZIG.

"Just 'cause I'm paranoid..."



Heh. Y-YEAH. YEAH, GONNA OPEN YOUR EYES, SIMP. GONNA SHOW YA THE LIGHT.

S-STARTS INNA OFFICE.

'DOWN IN THE BIZSTRICK, YOU GOT A 95% ROBOTIC WORK-FORCE, ONLY IT TURNS OUT HUMIES'RE CHEAPER THAN MECH-JANITORS.

BINS NEED EMPTYING, NUMBER FIVE? OR...uh...SEEN ANY VERMIN, MAYBE?

ANYTHING?

tippatappa

tippatappa

TRASH



'STILL, JOB'S A JOB. S'MORE THAN MOST CITS GOT.

'AND YEAH, MAYBE YOU GET TREATED LIKE MECHASHIT, AND MAYBE YOU GOTTA GRAB LUNCH DURING OIL-BREAKS, BUT BEGGARS CAN'T BE CHOOSERS, RIGHT? Hah!

MISTER. GIMME A CREDIT.

DROP DEAD.



Hneeh.

YOU AIN'T A PAPERWORKER.



I CAN TELL. NO INKY FINGERS, SEE?

I WAS NEVER A PAPERWORKER NEITHER.

GO AWAY. I'M BUSY.



ME... I WUZ A COURIER. BAT-GLIDER. GOOD ONE, TOO.

TWENNY YEARS I DONE THAT. MAN AND BOY.

Flap  
Flap  
Flap



YOU SEE SOME SIGHTS UP THERE, LEMEE TELL YOU.

LOTSA TIME TO THINK TO WONDER ABOUT STUFF...



LISTENNA THIS. YOU'LL LIKE THIS.

SO A PACKAGE GETS SENT FROM, SAAAAY...**EMPHATICALLY YESS™** TO THE STREET-REGS DEPARTMENT. RIGHT?

**TWELVE INK-MONKEYS** GOTTA SIGN FORMS, JUST TO GET THE DROKKIN' THING DISPATCHED.



WHAT WITH THE COURIER, THE FORM-STAMPERS, THE FLIGHT-CONTROLLERS, THE SORTING GUY... ALLA THAT, YOU GOT **THIRTY PEOPLE** WORKING AWAY -- ALL IN JOBS 'TOO MENIAL' FER BOTS, HAH! -- JUST TO GET ONE PARCEL SHIFTED.

**THIRTY PEOPLE!**



'I OPENED ONE ONCE, JUST TO SEE. LIKE...**WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?**'

'A-AND?'



EMPTY, OF COURSE.

THEM JUDGES. THEY REALISED TOO LATE...ROBOTIC WORKFORCE MEANS PEOPLE GETS BORED. MEANS PEOPLE GOT TIME TO PONDER.

START GETTING IDEAS...



SO THEY MAKE JOBS. CREATE TRENDS. HOBBIES. TRI-DROKKING-DEE.

THEY'LL DO ANYTHING TO KEEP US BUSY. KEEP US DISTRACTED...



I...I GOTTA GO. MY FIVE MINUTES ARE UP...

WHO ARE YOU?

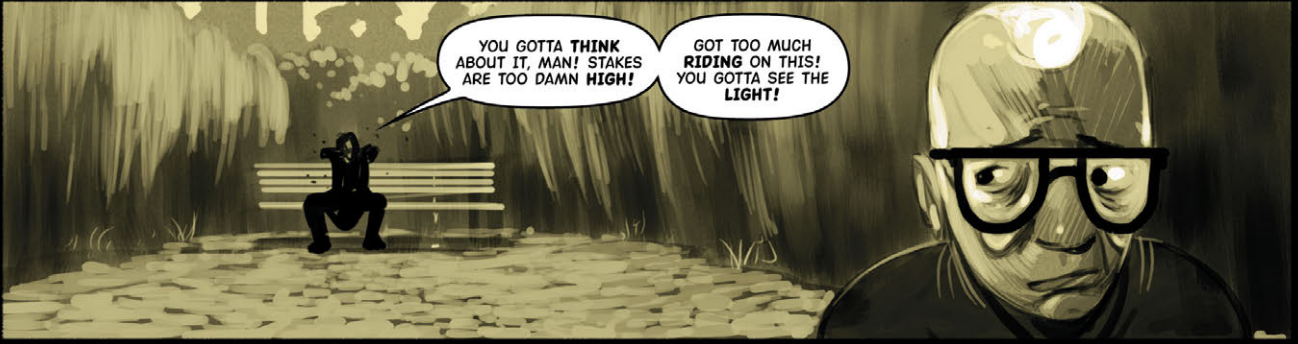
SHUFFLIN' CHESS. JUSTA TRAMP.



I GOT OUT, SEE? QUIT! WOULDN'T LET THEM PULL MY DROKKIN' STRINGS! I AIN'T NOBODY'S PUPPET!

GIMME A CREDIT!

NO.



YOU GOTTA THINK ABOUT IT, MAN! STAKES ARE TOO DAMN HIGH!

GOT TOO MUCH RIDING ON THIS! YOU GOTTA SEE THE LIGHT!



AND I DID...

YOUR TURN NOW, POINTY. WE GOTTA STICK TOGETHER, SEE?

Kooks, huh? Way I see it, insanity's sorta like an embarrassing disease. You just naturally wanna... spread it round.

Little Zig here, he was a straight-up guy 'til he met his hoople-headed-hobo. Now he's joined the gruddamn freakshow.

Me, I dress dumb. I figure it's like an inoculation: little dose of sickness so you don't catch it for real.



Don't mean I got a desire for unnecessary exposure.

POINT! APPROACH THE DOOR, CREEP! INTERROGATION TIME!

What do you know? Saved by the bell.



CHEERS, CHARLIE. DROKKIN' THINGS WERE INTERFERING WITH MY STYLE.

snkt

Hey. Don't act surprised. Day ever comes these bozos really try to shut me down, they better have a Deviant Dame Division on standby with bourbon bullets, on account of how that's the only thing'll get close enough to take a shot.



CHIEF.

HEH. CUBE THREADS SUIT YOU, POINT. MAYBE WE SHOULD MAKE 'EM PERMANENT.

Sector Chief Daveez. Droker.  
*Bendier'n a contortionist's cobra and nowhere near as trustworthy. Fingers in more pies than Little Jack Horner's mutant hillbilly cousin.*



WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT, CHIEF? ARRESTING HELMET TOLD ME TO GET THE CIT TALKING. THAT'S ALL. YOU BEEN LISTENING IN?

Dumb question, Jack. Does a dune shark shit in the sand?



NEVER MIND THAT. ZIGBIE ARCHER. ARRESTED YESTERDAY EVENING.

MEDS SAY HE'S MENTALLY DIVERGENT, ACUTELY PARANOID AND DROKIN' NUTS.



FUTSIE?

FUTSIE.



CAN'T USE TRUTH JUICE -- FAMILY HISTORY OF CEREBRAL HAEMORRHAGE, SOME STOMM LIKE THAT. GUY VISITED YOU DURING THE WEEK, SO YOU'RE OUR IN.

AND YOU CALLED ME UP HERE JUST TO TELL ME THAT?



HEH. NO. CALLED YOU UP HERE TO TELL YOU YOU'VE BEEN PLACED IN CHARGE OF THE CASE. WE WANT TO KNOW WHY HE DID WHAT HE DID.

CONGRATULATIONS, ACTING SENIOR JUDGE POINT.

Suddenly I got warning bells in my ears. For once it ain't a hangover.

Daveez. Gruddamn.

So maybe last year I busted his chem-operation and spiked him with an X-T hallucinogen. Honest mistake.

If he's pulled strings to get me assigned, it's 'cos the case is either illegal, ill-advised or drokking suicidal.



S-SO, uh...WHAT DID HE DO?

BEST LET HIM TELL YOU HIMSELF, HUH?

ARMS OUT, JUDGE. I'LL DO THE HONOURS.

AFTER THE PARK, YEAH... YEAH...

F-FIRST... FIRST I FIGURED IT WAS ALL BULLSTOMM. I MEAN, WHO WOULDN'T?

EXCEPT...IT GOT ME THINKING. THAT STATE OF MIND, YOU START TO NOTICE STUFF...

'LIKE MAYBE A HOVBUS GOES BY, AND YOU'RE THINKING -- HEY...WHERE THEY GOING?'

'RUNNING ERRANDS, MAYBE. SHOPPING THE LATEST TREND GEAR DOWN THE ÜBERMART. GOING TO MEETINGS TO PASS ROUND PAPERS AND ACHIEVE NOTHING.'



'BUSY AS A BOWLFULLA MAGGOTS, AND ALL GOING NOWHERE.'

'SO... ONE NIGHT I STAY IN THE OFFICE AFTER THE MECHS HAVE BEEN UNPLUGGED.'

'JUST TO...SEE WHAT THEY BEEN DOING ALL DAY. PROVE THAT DAMN TRAMP WRONG.'

'WENT ROUND PULLING PAPERS OUTTA OUT-TRAYS. GOING THROUGH THE DAY'S FILES...'



BLANK. EVERY DROCKING PAGE.

'THAT'S WHEN I CAME TO SEE YOU. KNEW YOU HAD A REPUTATION. THOUGHT YOU COULD HELP.'

'YOU REMEMBER, POINTY?'

Yeah, I remember. I was planning on a quiet evening -- just me and the fine fems of the *Megalube Channel* -- 'til this wacko showed up, sounding off like a *ketamine klaxon*.

I was fixing to call in *Pest Control* when right outta nowhere the kook *splits* like a defective *Dong-dom*.

Guess I coulda followed it up, but as it goes a *pal* of mine showed up and I clean forgot *all* about it.

*His name's Jack* too. Small world, huh?



WHY'D YOU RUN OFF, ZIG? I COULDA HELPED--

HEH! FIGURED IT OUT, SEE? THASS JUST WHAT THEY WANTED. I DROP IT ON YOU, THERE'S TWO OF US BEING KEPT BUSY...

NO WAY WAS I GONNA PLAY INTO THEIR HANDS.





SO...WHAT HAPPENED?  
WHAT BROUGHT YOU  
HERE?

What petty little thing did you do,  
spuggo, to drag me down to *Big  
Brother Central* when it's *Flexing Fem  
Fatties Night* down at the *High Dive*?

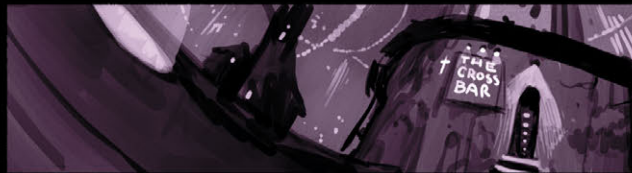
REC:•



G-GOT TOO MUCH.  
LAST NIGHT, ALL GOT  
ON TOP OF ME.

EVEN MY WIFE'S BEEN  
TRYINNA KEEP ME BUSY,  
DISTRACTING ME WITH  
ROMANTIC MEALS AND  
SEXY LINGERIE --  
SNEAKY STOMM LIKE  
THAT. S-SO I FIGURE...

I FIGURE I'LL GO  
SOMEWHERE SAFE.  
SOMEWHERE I  
KNOW...



MOCKBRÄU  
AND A PACK OF  
MUNCE-CRISPIES,  
JOE...

'THE CROSSBAR. ME AND THE  
GUYS, WE KNOW EACH OTHER  
YEARS. NO WAY THE JAYS GOT  
TO THEM TOO.'



YOU OKAY, ZIG?  
YOU DON'T MIND ME  
SAYING, YOU LOOK A  
BIT... PEAK --

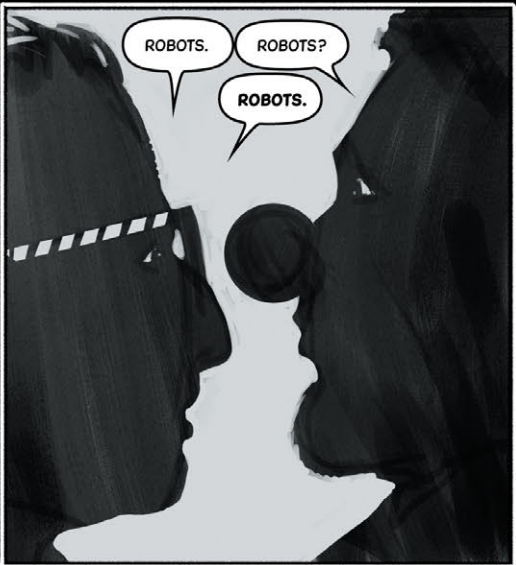
PEA-PEA-PEAK-  
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE. KK KK KK.

J-JOE?



'AND THERE IT  
WAS. SUDDENLY ALL  
MADE SENSE.

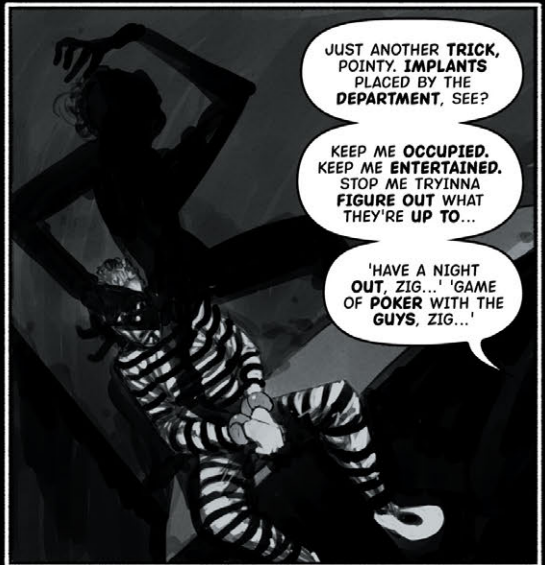
'JOE. MY PALS. MY WIFE,  
MY KIDS, MY FOLKS...  
ALL OF THEM....'



ROBOTS. ROBOTS?  
ROBOTS.

Stomm.  
Maybe I missed my  
true calling, and  
there's a place for  
me up at *Psi-Div*,  
'cos suddenly I can  
see where this is  
going.

Down.  
Straight drokking  
down.



JUST ANOTHER TRICK,  
POINTY. IMPLANTS  
PLACED BY THE  
DEPARTMENT, SEE?

KEEP ME OCCUPIED.  
KEEP ME ENTERTAINED.  
STOP ME TRYINNA  
FIGURE OUT WHAT  
THEY'RE UP TO...

'HAVE A NIGHT  
OUT, ZIG...' 'GAME  
OF POKER WITH THE  
GUYS, ZIG...'

DAMN LUCKY I KNEW ABOUT THE PIECE JOE KEPT HIDDEN UNDER THE BAR.

'JUST IN CASE OF TROUBLE,' HE USED A SAY. DAMN RIGHT!



H-HOW MANY PEOPLE, ZIG? HOW MANY DID YOU KILL?

PEOPLE? DON'T BE DUMB. NONE.



'WASTED TWENTY-TWO GRUDDAM ROBOTS, MIND.



'THEM TEKS SURELY DO MAKE 'EM REALISTIC THESE DAYS.'

YOU GOTTA HELP ME, POINTY! I BEEN SITTING HERE ALL DAY TRYINNA TO THINK IT THROUGH...

THEM BADGES, THEY'LL DO ANYTHING TO DISTRACT US FROM SOMETHING... B-BUT I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT...WHAT DO THOSE BASTARDS WANT?



It's a good question, Zig. If you weren't such a screaming drokking futsie I'd even attempt to answer it, but even then I could only speak for myself.

What does a judge want?

I really, really want my hipflask back.

Catch-up time.

We got a dark room with one bed and two men. The first one, he's sweating like a sumo sauna. The other one's me. It don't bode well.

In Angeltown, smart guys keep their pals in their pockets, know what I mean?



Y-YOU...UH...YOU OKAY, ZIG...?

Yeah, pals. Me, I got three. I'm lucky like that.

Cannon, cordial and credit. Don't leave home without 'em.

And especially don't wind-up in an iso-cube with a kill-krazy kook when all three've been confiscated.

Meet Zig. He killed 22 cits 'cos he thought they were robots. I'm supposed to find out why, and 'because he's in-droking-sane' just won't cut it.



The name's Point. Depending who you ask, I'm an undercover judge, a disgraced helmet, or an untrustworthy bastard.

If little Zig hears any of the above, this could get tricky.

TIME TO GO, POINT. WE GOT YOU A CELL ALL OF YOUR OWN.



Hurrah for the cavalry.

THEEEERE SHE IS...



CASE NOTES. DAVEEZ SENT THEM DOWN.

Daveez, Angeltown's Sector Chief. Judges were roads, he'd be a chicane.



Someone as bendy as Daveez assigns you a case, all personal-like, it's time to get twitchy. It's time to keep your pals reeeal close.

Not that I'm paranoid.



THE PLOT THICKENS.

Turns out *Zig* ain't the first *ait* to go *Krakatoa*. Turns out *Angeltown's* got a full-on *futsie* fad.

*futsie* n. Individual suffering spontaneous sustained psychotic episode; behavioural breakdown, suspicion and focused aggression. [MC sl. *Fut* ure - *si* ckness]

No chemical inducement. No psychoactive *stomm*. Pressures of modern life, the meds say. *Overwhelming urban stresses*. I know what they mean.

But when you got *twenty freakout rampages* in the last quarter, *600%* up on the city average, it's time to start asking *why*.

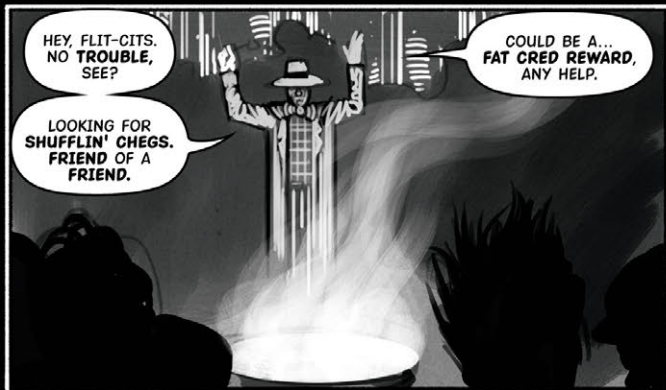


For *Zig*, it all started *here*.

WATCH YOURSELF, SIMPO. HERE BE TIGERS.



MIAOW.



HEY, FLIT-CITS. NO TROUBLE, SEE?

LOOKING FOR SHUFFLIN' CHEGS. FRIEND OF A FRIEND.

COULD BE A... FAT CRED REWARD, ANY HELP.



WANTS TO KNOW WHEREZZ CHEGS, HE DOES HE DOES

WASSEWANNIMFOR, WASSEWANNIMFOR, EH?

BABY THINKS HE LOOKS TASTY. LOTSA MEAT...

E'S GOTTA GOTTA RAAAAABIT FERRAHEAD

HURTS IN MY EYEBALLS LIKE MAGNET WARTS

AAR! FILTHY SWAB! 'AVE HIM WALK THE MIZZENFUTTOCK!

C-CHEGS? N-NOT ALLOWED T'SAY...GET IN TROUBLE, WE WILL...



Ah, *stomm*. Looks like some drokker went and put the *frightenens* on the *hobo herd*, and just like *any* sucker havin' a bad day, all they wanna do is *pass it on*.

BABY THINKS MAYBE HE'S A WALKING FEAST...



Hell, some days I'd eat me -- if only for the liquor content.

As it goes, I got a coat that packs more hidden hardware than a John Holmes MechaClone, and playin' Vape-the-Vagrant'd be a walk inna park. Pun intended.

But a functioning pulse is about all these sadsacks got, and believe it or not I got scruples. Time for my guardian angel to lend a hand.

So, okay, it looks bad. I got a concentrated tramp-stamp underway and it's *Simping Stew* on the menu, but I ain't got the heart to hold it against 'em.



LADIES AND GENTS... OR WHATEVER... MEET CLIQ.

HE'S AT THAT DIFFICULT AGE WHERE ALL HE WANTS IS CEREBRAL FLUIDS AND SEX.

ANY VOLUNTEERS?  
NO?



HEY -- QUIT IT WITH THE SULKING, SPIKO. IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD. YOU START GETTING A TASTE FOR HUMAN BRAINS AND I'LL JUST HAVE TO KILL YOU AGAIN, AND NOBODY WANTS THAT.

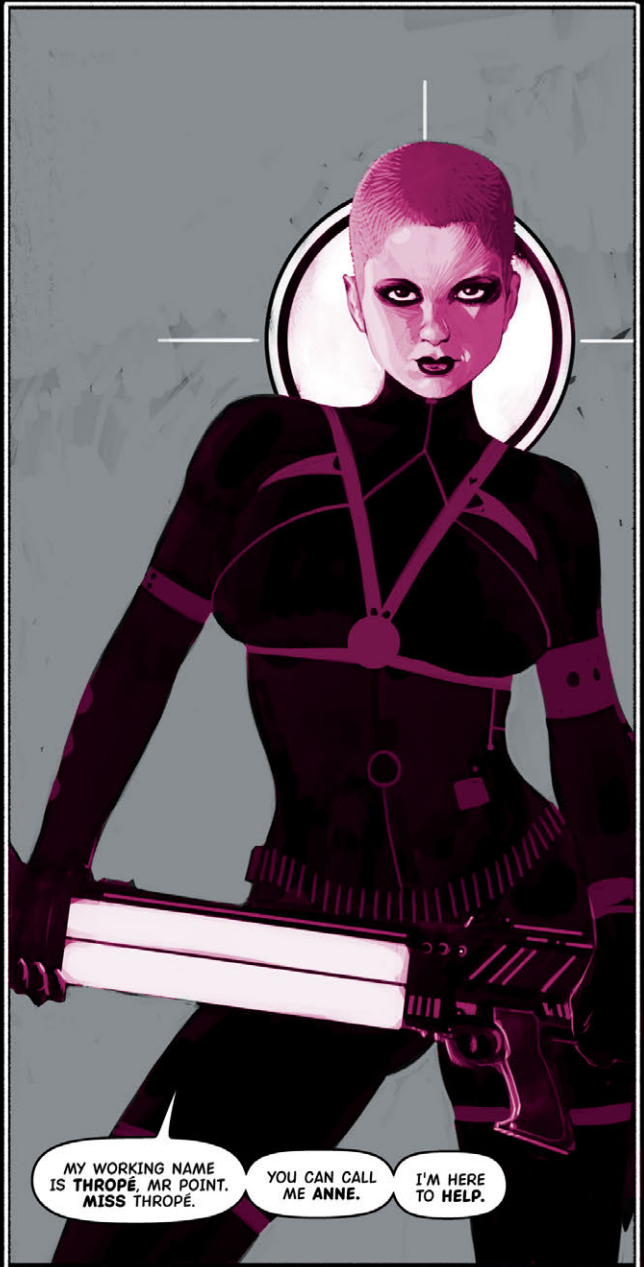
AND LOOK AT ME WHEN I'M TALKING TO Y--

HE'S DISTRACTED, MR POINT. CAN YOU BLAME HIM?



NOTE THE SONIC CANNON. INSPECTOR. EQUALLY AS ADEPT AT POPPING HEADS AS SILICATE LIFEFORMS. JUST IN CASE YOU GET... TWITCHY.

WHOA... W-WHO ARE YOU?



MY WORKING NAME IS THROPÉ, MR POINT. MISS THROPÉ.

YOU CAN CALL ME ANNE.

I'M HERE TO HELP.

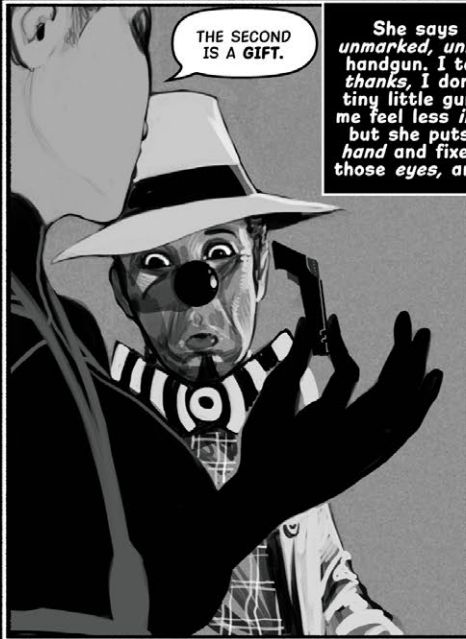
This is a first for me. See, I got this theory on Angeltown fems, how even the ones with no threads still got strings attached. They all want something, and mostly it's my head.

This dame, she's something else. She's squeezed in that jumpsuit like a vac-packed peach, and every time she moves the air files for molestation. She says she ain't with the Firm. She says she ain't a badge. She says she represents certain ambiguous assets whose interests happen to coincide with mine.

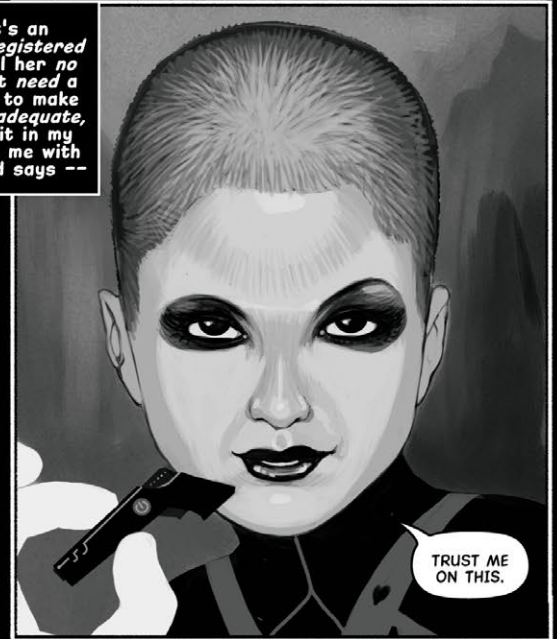
Where I'm sitting, her assets ain't ambiguous at all.



THE FIRST IS A WARNING. KEEP AN EYE ON DAVEEZ. HE'S SNEAKIER THAN HE LOOKS.



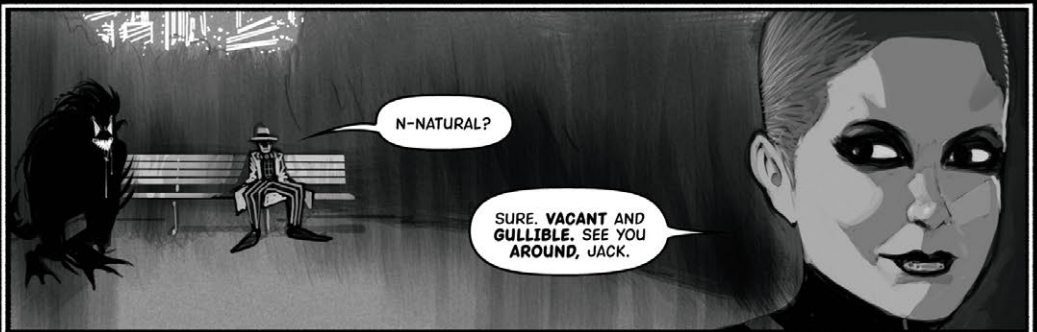
She says it's an unmarked, unregistered handgun. I tell her no thanks, I don't need a tiny little gun to make me feel less inadequate, but she puts it in my hand and fixes me with those eyes, and says --



ONE OTHER THING. I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SHUFFLING CHEGS...

Y-YOU KNOW HOW I CAN FIND HIM?

COULDN'T BE EASIER. COME BACK AT MID-DAY, LOOK AS THOUGH YOU'RE EMPLOYED, AND ACT NATURAL.



N-NATURAL?

SURE. VACANT AND GULLIBLE. SEE YOU AROUND, JACK.

Now, call me a *suspicious bastard*, but I ain't too inclined to put all my eggs in one basket... even one that looks as un-be-droking-lievable as Miss Anne Thropé.

... Heh. I just got the *name* thing. Cute...

Point is, the night's still *jailbait-young*, and I got other leads to chase.



An office fulla *blank paper*. Not exactly the *high-concept detective work* I'm used to, but *still*. This is *Angeltown* --



-- '*mundane*' and '*freaky*' are just a *bad day* apart.

W-WHO'S THERE?



OH



HE'S HUNGRY. TURNS OUT SEWER RAT JUST AIN'T GOT THE GREY CELLS FOR A GROWIN' BOY.

YOU KNOW, I'M NOT EVEN SURE I'LL BE ABLE TO CONTROL HIM MUCH LONGER...

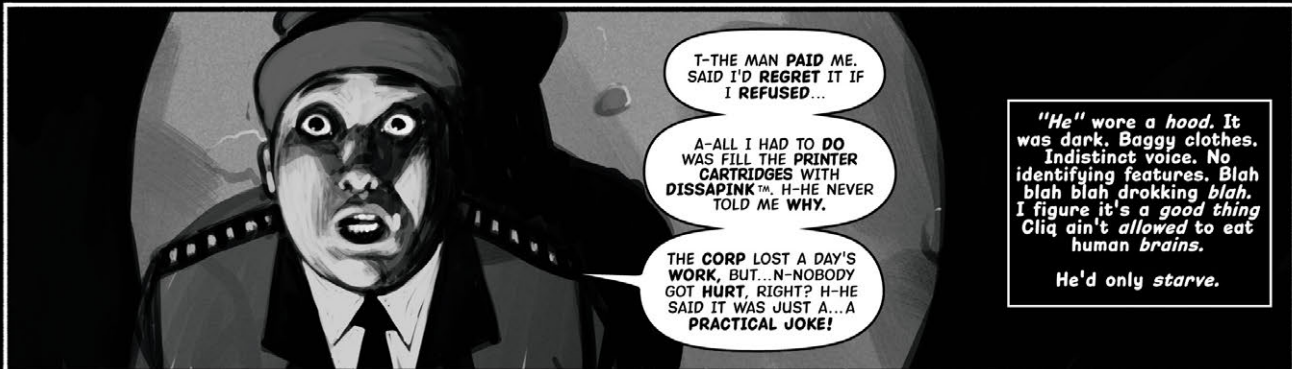
W-WHAT'S...WHAT'S YOUR PUH-PUH-POINT...?



COMES RIGHT AFTER THE 'JACK'.

MegaCorps. Businesses were *sports*, night guards'd be the *referees*. Inflated vision of their own *importance*, yours to buy for a *stack of creds*, and they always, *always* know the *score*.

Usually, they're *responsible* for it.



T-THE MAN PAID ME. SAID I'D REGRET IT IF I REFUSED...

A-ALL I HAD TO DO WAS FILL THE PRINTER CARTRIDGES WITH DISSAPINK™. H-HE NEVER TOLD ME WHY.

THE CORP LOST A DAY'S WORK, BUT...N-NOBODY GOT HURT, RIGHT? H-HE SAID IT WAS JUST A...A PRACTICAL JOKE!

"He" wore a hood. It was dark. Baggy clothes. Indistinct voice. No identifying features. Blah blah drokking *blah*. I figure it's a *good thing* Cliq ain't allowed to eat human brains.

He'd only *starve*.



Robots. Robots are curious. Supposedly they got this programming -- 'no lying', 'no stealing', 'no crushing the human race' -- but in Angeltown you get what you pay for. Top-of-the-range model's an emotionless monster. It'll rip out your *manhood* soon as look at you.

In Angeltown, robots and fems got a lot in common.



MIGHT... BZZZK... MIGHT AS WELL SHOOT ME, SIMP... ZZZK... W-W-WON'T TELL YOU ANYTHING...

THAT A FACT? YOU A HOME MODEL, JOE? BUILT IN THE MEG?

WHAT'S... KKH... WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO W-?



JUDICIAL OVERRIDE 23N/54PP, CODEWORD MONTEROSO.

Woooooop

AUTO-SUBSERVIENCE PROTOCOL, HARDWIRED IN AT THE FACTORY. NOBODY WANTS ANOTHER ROBOT WAR, PAL.

B-B-B-B-BAAAAASTAAAAARD--



REC:

SO, FIRST THINGS FIRST, WHERE'S THE REAL JOE?

U-UNDER THE... ZZZK... FLOORBOARDS OUT THE BACK. K-K-KILLED HIM BZZZK YESTERDAY M-M-M-MORNING.



FAIR ENOUGH. YOU READY FOR THE SIXTY-MILLION-CRED QUESTION, THREEPIO?

WHO SENT YOU?

C-C-C-C-CCAAAAAN'T... HE'S WAAAAATCHING...



HEY... DID YOU KNOW YOUR ASS IS FLASHING?

OH NO



M-MY CRIME SCENE! THEY'LL BUST ME DOWN TO TRAFFIC FOR THIS!

TOUGH BREAK, KID. OBVIOUSLY I'D, Y'KNOW... ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY, BUT... YOU KNOW HOW IT IS...

I'M UNDER COVER.

So it's mid-day and I'm down to my last lead.

Someone went to a lot of trouble to make little Zig mistake a *radvarmint-hill* for a *mountain*, and I get the distinct impression this peak's overdue an *avalanche*.



I got *Anne Thropé's* voice in my head, spinning about like a *legless lapdancer*. Look *employed*, she said. Act *gullible*, she said.

I will never live this down.

He shows up right on time, like he's been watching. He is to smell what the sea is to moist.



He sits and he starts the *spiel*, just like Zig said. Judges controlling this, conspiracy that. I cut in before he warms up.



JUST SO YOU KNOW, PAL, YOU'RE SITTING ON A WHOOPÉE-CUSHION LANDMINE.

YOU GONNA TELL ME WHO'S PAYING YOU TO DROKK ABOUT WITH CITS' MINDS, OR YOU GONNA LET ONE OFF?

IN THE TERMINAL SENSE.

I... ..

DEVRIES, E-ELMORT DEVRIES.



Now *there's* a name you don't hear every *day*, though I'd bet a *cred-pen-head* there's not a *badge* in the *city* ain't heard it *before*.

Elmort Devries. Top tomali of the *Hunters Club*. Certifiable drokking serial-killing *nightmare*.

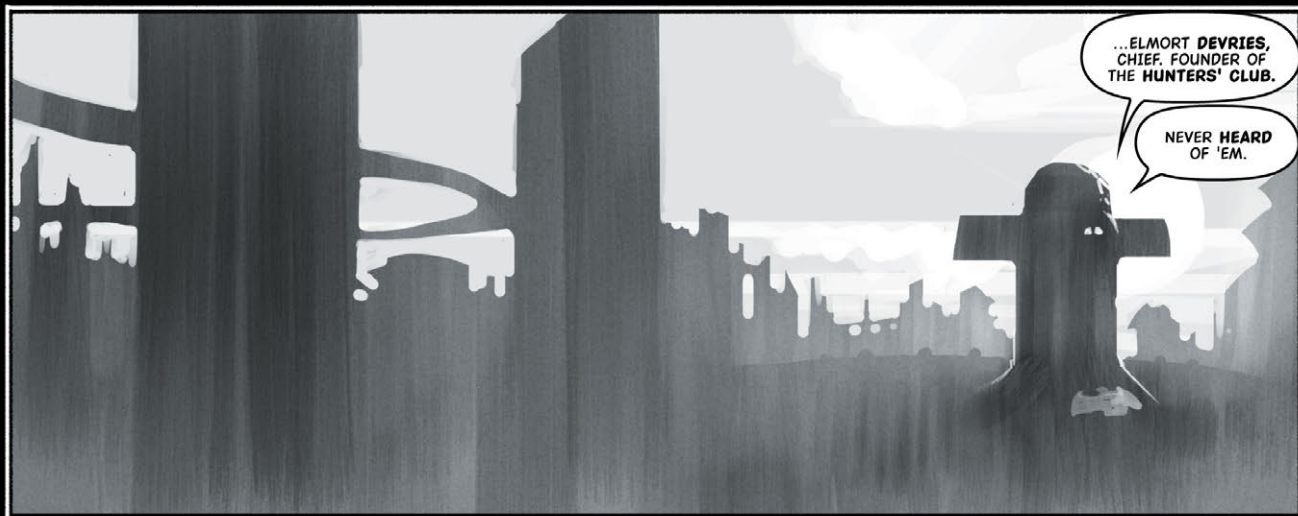
He's *supposed* to be *dead*.

Then again, this is *Angeltown*, an' if there's worse than *death* this is where it's *found*.



Welcome *back*. I'd shake your hand, only this is *Angeltown* and I ain't had my *booster shots*.

'Sides... I'm sorta *busy*.



...ELMORT DEVRIES,  
CHIEF, FOUNDER OF  
THE HUNTERS' CLUB.

NEVER HEARD  
OF 'EM.

'Progress report' or 'toadying to the corrupt bigwig'. *Tomayto, tomahto...*



POSSE OF  
CREDHEADS, GOT  
THEIR KICKS  
HUNTING CITS.

CAME UP WITH A  
SPONSORED MASSACRE IN  
'14 TO HELP NECROPOLIS  
ORPHANS. CALLED IT  
'DEATH AID'.\*

RINGS  
A VAGUE  
BELL...

\*See 2000 AD Progs  
711-720.



It *should*. You were one of  
the badges assigned to *find*  
the drokkers, you reticulated  
*creep*. I *checked*.

WASN'T HE KILLED,  
THIS DEVRIES? I SEEM  
TO RECALL DREDD  
GETTING INVOLVED...



DEADER'N  
DEMOCRACY.

'CEPT IT TURNS OUT THE  
PSYCHO HAD AN ELMORT  
JUNIOR, AND YOU'LL NEVER  
GUESS WHERE HE GREW UP.

IN MY  
SECTOR,  
HUH?

In *my* sector, drokko.



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON, SEE? 'CEPT  
THE YOUNGSTER'S TOO SMART FOR GUNS.  
I FIGURE HE'S BEEN BLITZING CITS USING  
HOLLOW-POINT PARANOIA.

WHAT I DON'T  
FIGURE IS, WHAT  
DOES HE GET  
OUT OF IT?

PLENTY OF  
SICKOS OUT THERE,  
JUDGE. SINCE WHEN  
DID THEY NEED A  
REASON?

Since freakers  
like *you* dipped  
your *thumbs* in  
the *pie*, chief.

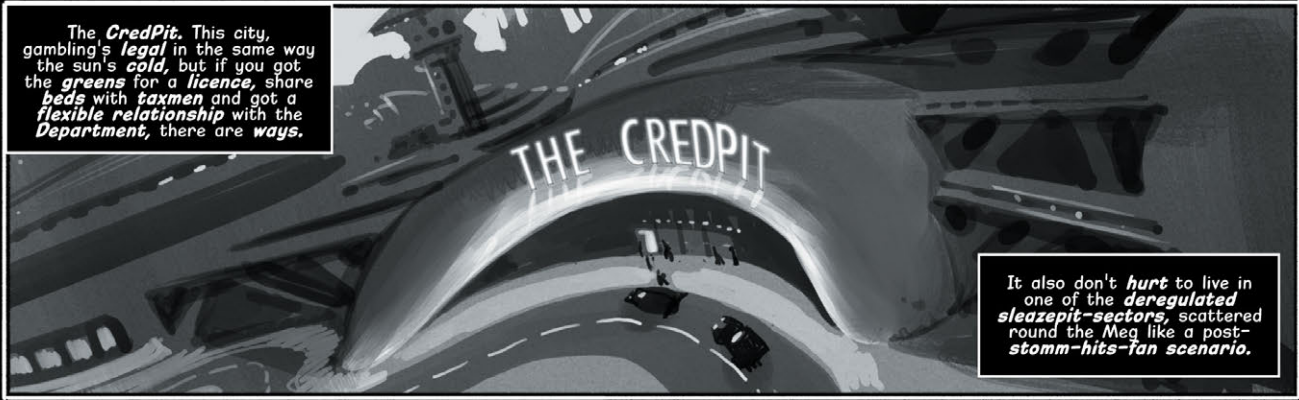


THIS  
DEVRIES...

SHUT HIM  
DOWN, POINT.

SHUT HIM  
DOWN HARD.

The **CredPit**. This city, gambling's **legal** in the same way the sun's **cold**, but if you got the **greens** for a **licence**, share **beds** with **taxmen** and got a **flexible relationship** with the **Department**, there are **ways**.



It also don't **hurt** to live in one of the **deregulated sleazepit-sectors**, scattered round the Meg like a **post-stomm-hits-fan scenario**.

No prizes for guessing the biggest **sleazepit** of **all**. The line **goes**, if they can't gamble **legal**, they'll find **another way**. I figure what that **means** is, if the **badges** don't skim a **cut**, some other **drokker will**. In **Angeltown**, the **Jays** are just **another mob**.

And **good intentions** or **not**, they got the best **muscle** money **can't buy**.



SOUTH TEAM IN POSITION, DREDD.

ABOUT TIME. ON MY COMMAND--



THREE, TWO, O--

AH-RUM...

I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.



YOU TRYING TO BE FUNNY, POINT?

ACTUALLY, IT'S ACTING SENIOR JUDGE AND, *ha*, CASE SUPERVISOR POINT... BUT, HEY, THANKS FOR GETTIN' EVERYTHING READY.

YOU'RE AN ASSET TO MY TEAM.



Grud, I **love** this job.

LET'S ROLL, JUVES.



THIS IS A RAID! DON'T NONE OF YOU DROKKERS MOVE!

THOK

First rule of Angeltown *Law*: you wanna sift the *lowlifes* from the *nolifes*, wade in *heavy*. Wait and see who *slumps* and who *slaps*.

Leather, that is.

*Overkill* and *Angeltown* go together like *whiskey* and *more whiskey*. These *badges*, they got orders to take 'em *alive*, and that sounds *cuter* than it is.

You ever seen a perp *withholding information*, blubbin' like a *primadonna* on *Prozac* with his *face* smeared up the *wall*, you know what I *mean*.

Me, I never get tired watching the *nipple-heads* at work. *Ultraviolence* and *dames in leather* -- it don't get better than *that*.

NOK  
NOK  
NOK

KLTT  
KLTT  
KLTT

HMM.

HEY, JOE--  
WHERE YOU  
BEEN?

QUIT MESSING  
AROUND AND GET  
THE DOOR, HUH?

rrrrr

**BAMF!**

AAAA!

AAAA!

J-JOVUS!

MUCH  
OBLIGED.

FEEL FREE  
TO HANG  
AROUND.

These old *streetseekers*, they been wearing *helmets* all their *lives*. I figure the least I can do is make 'em feel *useful*.



ELMORT  
DEVRIES JUNIOR,  
I PRESUME?

WON'T WORK,  
DULTYSIMP! AIN'T BIG-  
KEEN ON 'TIMIDATION,  
YOU CHUCK-CHUCK?

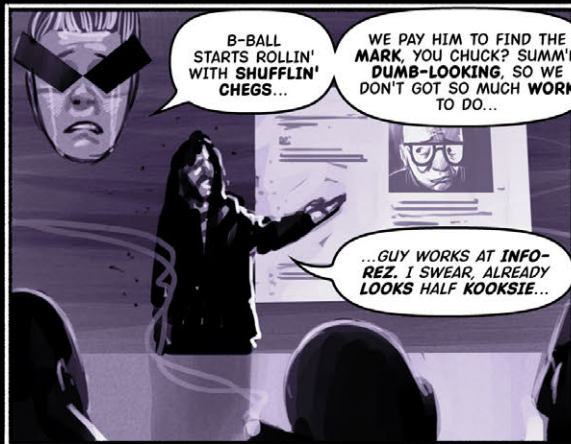
DAVEEZ LOST,  
FAIR AN'  
SQUARE!

KID, THIS AIN'T  
'TIMIDATION'.



THIS IS A GUY IN A CLOWN SUIT  
FIXING TO BLOW YOUR GRUD-  
DAMN EYEBALLS CLEAN THROUGH  
YOUR SKULL. START TALKING.

And yeah, he *blubs* and cries for his *mommy* like *any juve*, but I ain't *listening*. This is *Angeltown*. A creep round here ever *really* needs his *ma*, it's to *sell her* for *spare parts*. Takes the *Castrato Kid* three minutes to *cave in* like a *Pompeii palace*, and when *fingers* start *pointing* it's straight at a buncha *rich bozos* name of -- get this -- *The Collateral Club*.



B-BALL  
STARTS ROLLIN'  
WITH SHUFFLIN'  
CHEGS...

WE PAY HIM TO FIND THE  
MARK, YOU CHUCK? SUMM'N  
DUMB-LOOKING, SO WE  
DONT GOT SO MUCH WORK  
TO DO...

...GUY WORKS AT INFO-  
REZ, I SWEAR, ALREADY  
LOOKS HALF KOOKSIE...



A-ALLA PLAYERS PUT  
IN A STAKE, HALF INNA  
HOLDING ACCOUNT, HALF  
FOR COSTS, EXPENSIVE  
BIZ, MAN.

S-SO WE WATCH THE  
GEEK, STAND-UNDER? PSU  
HACKS, DRONECAMS, STREET-  
PEEPS: ALL WE NEED TO  
CHECK HIS FORM...

WE FREAK HIM OUT  
'TIL ALL IT TAKES IS ONE  
LITTLE PUSH --



-- AND POP GOES  
THE WEASEL.

Nice kid. His *pa'd* be *proud*.



YOU MENTIONED  
A HOLDING  
ACCOUNT...

HEH. 'S THE CLEVEREST  
BIT. WE GOT US THIS A.I.  
OUT INNA MONGOLIAN  
FREE-TEES, MONITORS  
JUDGEYBOY PRESS.

SHELLS OUT  
SOON AS THEY  
RELEASE DEATH  
TOLL FIGURES.



SHELLS OUT  
TO WHO?

AIN'T YOU WORKED IT  
OUT, SIMPO? WHOEVER  
GUESSED CLOSEST. THE  
MARK DOES THE SLAYING,  
WE DO THE PLAYING.

*Collateral accountancy*. And they say the spirit of *innovation* is *dead*.



This case was a *munceychoc bar*, right now we'd be getting to the *thick, creamy centre*.

Sweeter than a *bon-bon bypass*, and it ain't *sugar* makin' it *so*.

NOW TELL ME ABOUT DAVEEZ.

The kid says it was a *week* back the slippery bastard joined the *Collateral Club*. Buncha vice-ridden *scumbags* rolling in *creds* up to their *penthabs*. Must have been like coming *home*.



ZIG WAS HIS FIRST TRY. HE GOT IT WRONG. SIMPLE AS THAT.

MAN, I FIGURED HE'D SEND SOME CHUG-A-THUG MORON, YOU KNOW? THREATS AN' PETS AN' RENEGING ON BETS, BUT, *heh...*

THAT DAVEEZ, HE GOTTA BE DULL INNA SKULL, SLIM! SENDING HIS ONLY STRAIGHT BADGE TO POP THE CHOP!

LIKE, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU GONNA DO?



It's on the end of my *tongue* -- 'Lawful arrest, creep,' like I'm Old Stoney Face *himself* -- before it all *falls together* like a methadone *mudslide*.

Daveez, you clever bastard. So gruddam *bent* you're *prehensile*.

It's like this. *First* up, there ain't a *law* called *Malicious Neurotic Damage With Intent to Cause Psychosis*, and the *jibber-jabber-juve* here already got a licence to *gamble*.

I ain't got *nothing*.



And sure, I could maybe come up with *candy violations* or some other *stomm*, but drokk me down with a *silver spittoon*, 'cos that's exactly what *Daveez* wants.

That's exactly why he sent *me*, an *okay* guy, to conduct a...a gruddam *thorough investigation*. To make an *arrest*, using whatever *Bouncy Brat* law I *could*.

'Judicial Regulation #1345b: The financial assets of any *detainee* may be *frozen* or *seized* by the *Department* pending *investigation*.'

In *Angeltown*, Daveez *is* the Department. He's using *me* to get his gruddamn *money back*, and the only way *out* is to *kill* the *kid*.

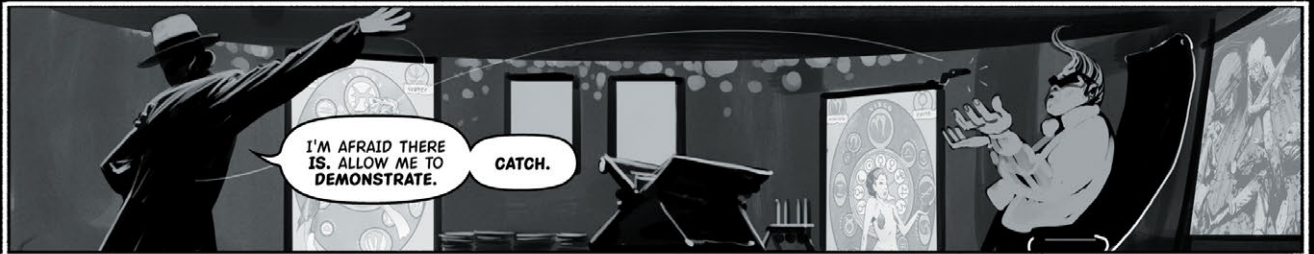
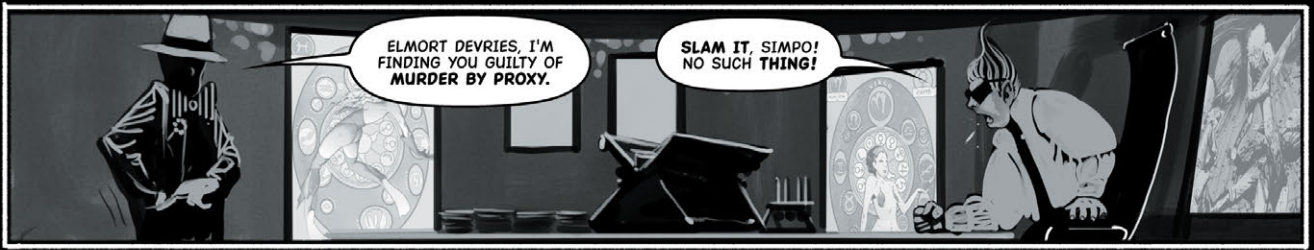
Daveez *knows* I *won't*.

Times like *this*, a guy could use a friendly *face*. Just so happens I got one *right here* in my *mind*.



TRUST ME ON THIS.

Bingo.



Turns out it ain't *murder* if you ain't the one pulled the *trigger*.





Back at the *start*. Angeltown's *like* that.

I figure I *owe* it to *Zig*, so I tell him there's *no conspiracy*. I tell him he got it wrong, he's been *played* like a *hypno-harpsichord*, and everything's back to *normal*. He's *twitchy* like a *caffeine candle*, sure, but he's *listening*. He's taking it *in*.

What I'm saying is, it could have *worked*.



Daveez, you drokker. You slimy *bastard*. That's too *slippery*. That's too damn *sneaky*.



Mega City One. It's like a *flame*, see? Hottest part's always the *darkest*. This is *Angeltown*, and you don't get *darker* than *this*. Round here, a *decent guy* just *died*. That's *Angeltown* inna *nutshell*, see? Things never *finish* like you *think* they will.



Daveez. Daveez, you bastard. I got *nothing* on you, *again*.





UHHH...PISS.  
NEED A PISS.

PISS PISS PISS  
PISS PISS PISS...

PISS PISS

# FIFTEEN

Script: Simon Spurrier  
Art: Frazer Irving  
Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in *Judge Dredd Magazine* 237

City-sectors were snacks, Angeltown'd be a hottie. Smells kind of appealing, even tastes good in the right mouth -- but it's still just a strip of stomm scraped off the Resyk floor. Stick on a perfect bun and drown it in sauce, can't stop it looking pre-digested. Twice.

The way I figure, that makes this place a lump of gristle. You know the kind.

If it don't choke you to death you better pray you got E-coli immunity.



The High Dive. Turns out it's fifteen years since Don Roman took his styrocrete slippers for a dockside dip. Fifteen years of the New Boss becoming the Only Boss, and if the Top Tomali wants a 'hate party' to celebrate, that's exactly what he gets.

Hate Party. That's perptalk for dressing up like all the do-goods and no-goods who ever impeded, insulted, or informed on the Firm.

This is the rogues sending up the righteous, and after fifteen years lousing on the law, you know what?

That's a lot of heroes.



All them costumed crims, I figure the real good guys deserve a little representation.



...DAME IN THE CAL-HAB KILT...HEH! FORGOT HER PLAID PANTIES...

So maybe it ain't exactly official business, but hear me out. Angeltown right now, you got more tongues wagging than a popsicle pornshoot. Word is, some kook's gunning for the Boss.

Yeah, it'll fail -- security's tighter than a drokkbot's coin slot, and any kook tries anything is coffinbait -- but it's worth watching. Just in case.

'sides, Ain't like I got anything better to be staring a--



EVENING, MR POINT.

AIM THAT THING AT ME AND I'LL BREAK YOUR SPINE.



Miss Anne **Thropé**. She's never tried to **kill** me yet, and for a **dame** that's kind of **unique**. Wearin' that **bodysuit**, only thing left to the **imagination** is her **hidden agenda**.



SO THIS WOULD-BE **KILLER**... YOU KNOW WHO IT IS?



T-THE **GRAPEVINE** WASN'T EXACTLY **FORTHCOMING** ON THAT POINT, B-BUT...

OH GRUD.

Before you ask, it's just a **spare cigar**. Really.

The **dame** **smiles**. She says this **assassination**, of **course** it won't **work**, but the **killer** don't deserve to **doze** with the **dolphins**. I guess whoever it is ain't from **round** here. She says this poor **pinhead** just found out the **Boss** was behind a **death** in the **family**, and **revenge** ain't something that'll **wait**. She **leans down** real **close** (make that **two** spare **cigars**)...and she **fingers** a **photo**.

THIS IS HER.

THE **SUIT**'S WITH THE **FIRM**. SOLD HER THE **TRUTH** ABOUT THE **HIT** ON HER **DADDY**.

DeMarco. Drockk.



SHE'LL BE IN A **COSTUME**. GRUD ONLY KNOWS **WHAT** -- SAME WITH THE **BOSS**.

SHE GETS CLOSE ENOUGH TO **PULL** A **PIECE** ON HIM, SHE'S **MUNCE**.

WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO **DO** ABOUT IT, **JACK**?



That's **dames** for you. Show up, ruin the **party**, expect the **impossible**... Little Miss **Anne Thropé**, she raises a lot of **questions**. (Amongst other things.)

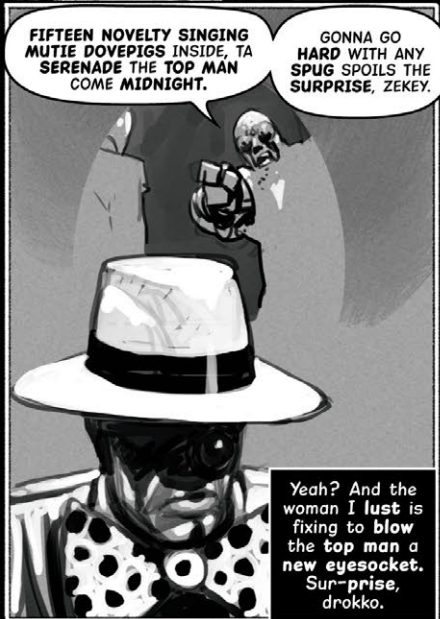
Why's she **helping** me? What does she care if **Galen DeMarco** lives or **dies**? (What's under the **bodysuit**?)

HUH--?

And where the hell are my **gruddamned batteries**?



GOOD **LUCK**, **MISTER POINT**.



Me, I got a wit drier than a dune shark's derriere, but tonight ain't the time to effervesce. Tonight I got to save the angelic ass of the Meg's second sexiest P.I. before her assassination skit goes the way of East-Meg 1. The victim's an omnipotent overboss I don't recognise, wearing a costume I don't know.

Piece of cake.

Mingling time.



Tonight the DJ's mixing Bennett Beeny with puglytrance, which is kind of the same as smearing Satanus stomm over a Mech-Monet. Meathead's lucky I ain't armed.

Tonight there's no guns allowed, and that ain't as unlikely as it sounds. Crowd like this, a pistol party's never far away. You can bet there's a guard goon for every shadow, keeping an eye.

Tonight there's more costumes than a fetish fete at the Sci-fi Society, and inside every one you got a twitchy bastard hiked on crackzizz and canapés.

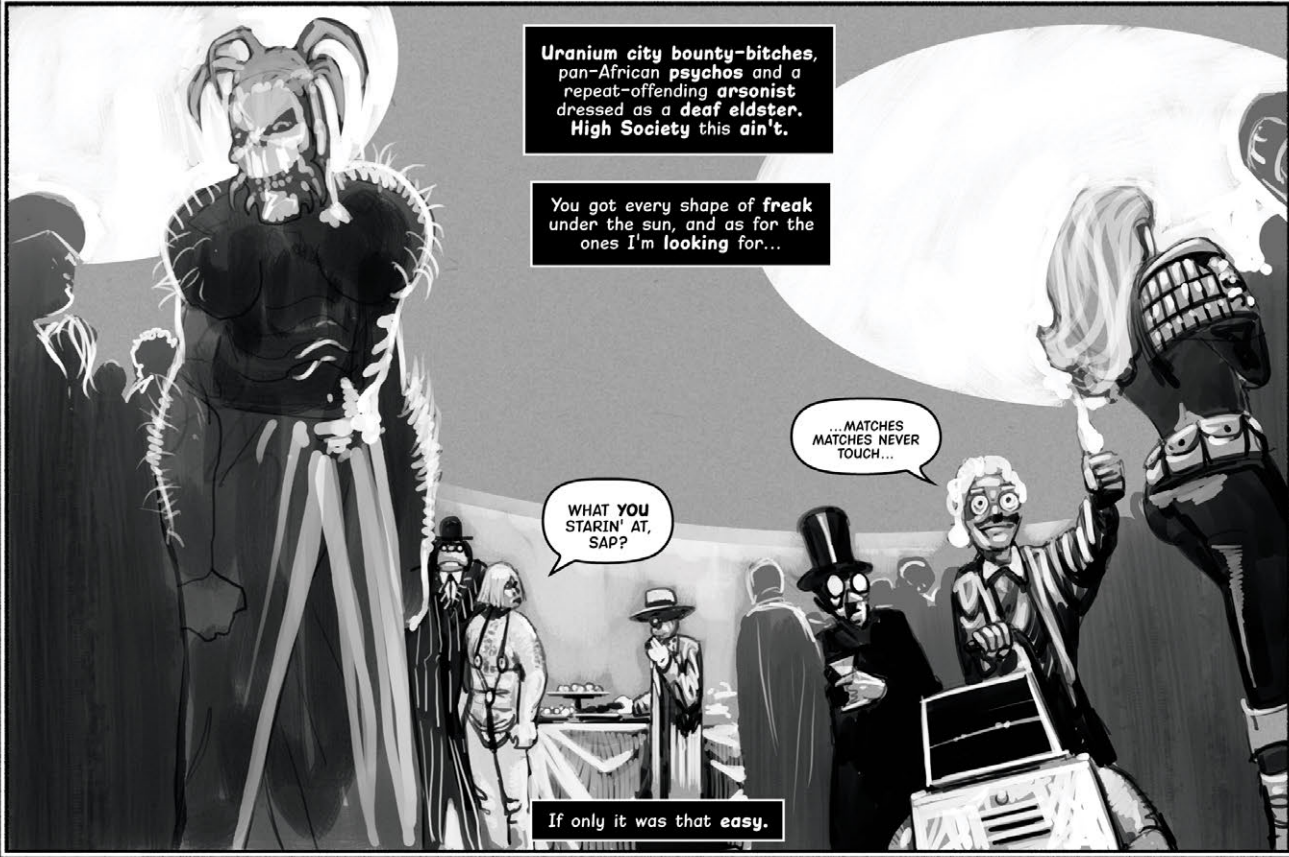


... BURNED THE DROKKIN' DOPE, STOLE THE SMUGGLIN' RIG, LEFT US STRANDED INNA BADLANDS WITH CROSSES SLICED IN OUR DROKKIN' FACES, AND YOU THINK IT'S FUNNY SHOWIN' UP LOOKIN' LIKE THAT?

YEAH? YOU FIGURE I WANT REMINDING 'BOUT THAT CAT ABDUCTION SCAM? I COULDN'T SIT DOWN ALL WEEK, YOU INSENSITIVE STOMMHEAD!

Uranium city bounty-bitches, pan-African psychos and a repeat-offending arsonist dressed as a deaf eldster. High Society this ain't.

You got every shape of freak under the sun, and as for the ones I'm looking for...



...MATCHES NEVER TOUCH...

WHAT YOU STARIN' AT, SAPP?

If only it was that easy.

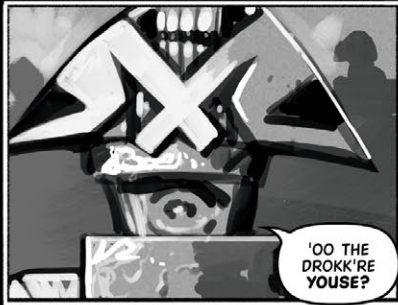
I figure mostly these goons are from out of town, on account of how they keep asking the same thing.



WHO YOU SUPPOSED TO BE, THEN?



WHO YOU SUPPOSED TO BE, THEN?



'OO THE DROKK'RE YOUSE?

Either way, I'm figuring I got this **incognito** thing down **pat** when some **creep**, some two-cred **pug-thug**, some **rattle-skulled scum-chum** with more **chins** than **brain-cells**, pulls off a **monkeywrench-to-machine merger**.

--TOLD YOU, ONLY ONE OF EACH CHARACTER! WE ALREADY GOT A JACK POINT!



OUTTA MY WAY, NOFLAB! I GOT FIRST DIBS ON THE SIMPSUIT THREE WEEKS AGO!



WHERE'S THE SAP WHAT STOLE MY IDEA--?

AHEM

What I'm **getting** at is, it ain't going **well**. Any of these losers could be the **Boss**. Same for **DeMarco**, and truth be told her **face** ain't the **part** I got **seared** onto my **memory**.

This **place**, you got **fifteen years** of **concentrated crimefighting** squeezed **together**, and all wrapped up in **Angeltown Attitude**. These **creeps**, their idea of **breaking the ice** is to **skin your folks**. Yeah, you can paint me **nervous**, and when **that** happens, well --



One thing --



--leads to another.



NICE COSTUME. MPH.



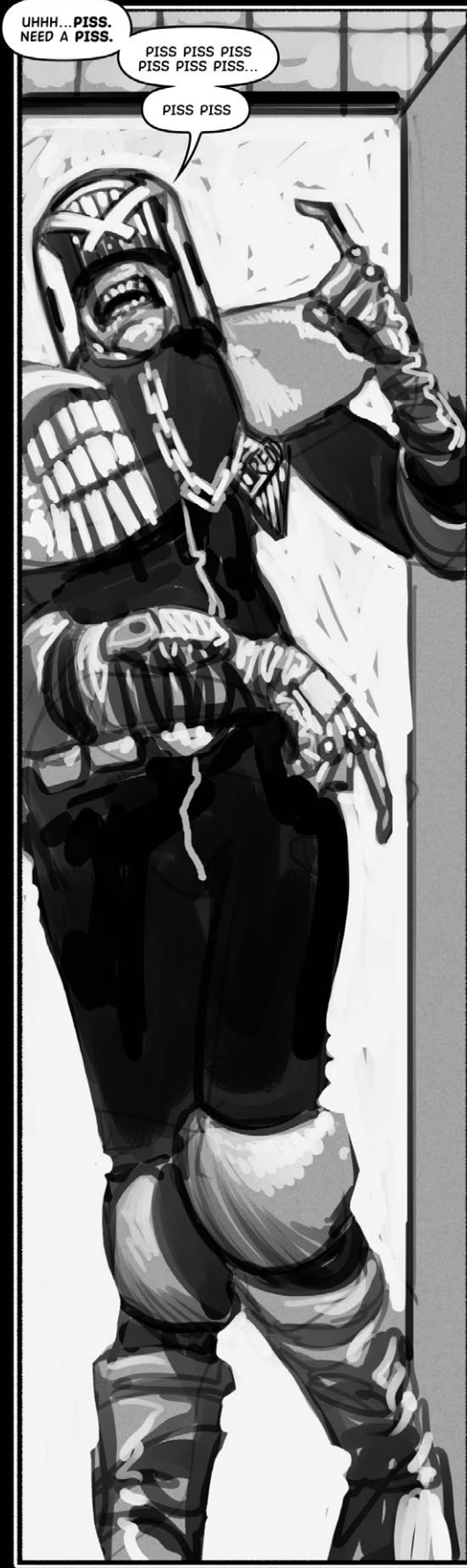
WHERE'S YOUR PARTNER? HE DID A GOOD JOB TOO. ALL THAT RED HA--

SHE'S WAITING OUTSIDE.



S-SORRY. SAY, DON'T YOU WANT TO ASK WHO I'M SUPPOSED TO B--

And then he walks in.



UHHH...PISS.  
NEED A PISS.

PISS PISS PISS  
PISS PISS PISS...

PISS PISS

Yeah, it's just some **guy**. It ain't really **him**. But the **badge**... the **threads**... the **name**. You heard about people with **presence**, right? There's **comedians** can land a **laugh** just by **looking** at you. There's **musicians** who'll step-up to a **digiano** and every **footstep's** a **symphony**. There's people got **personalities** so big they walk in an empty room and it's **full**, like everything's **polyboing-packed**.

And then there's **Joe**.

How many of the **boss's bozos** have you put **away**, Judge? **Fifteen years** is a **long time**. And **credit** where it's **due**: If I'm a **thorn in the guts of crime**, Joe's a **nuclear-barbed heatseeking harpoon**. Who'd come here dressed as **Dredd**? Who'd have the **meat-balls** to **Jim** as **Joe**?

The way I figure it, only **one guy**.



It's the **Boss**. It's the **drokking Boss**.



DRINK DRINK  
DRINK DRINK  
DRINK DRINK

I was expecting someone **taller**.



RIGHT.

HEY, YOU DIDN'T WASH YOUR H--

H-HANG ON...

There was no **zip**. That **silverback suit**, that's a lot of **fur to fill**. Kind of rig calls for a **big guy**. Too big. And there was no **zip**. And his partner's waiting **outside**. His **female partner**. And the **Boss** just walked **out there**. **Alone**. **Drokk**.





The voice. Drags papercuts over my poise and craps on my confidence. This thing going up and down my spine -- I've paid for less. That voice, I've heard it before.



The Boss. Sneaky bastard. Decade-and-a-half at the dissecting edge. More close shaves than a wax-allergy werewolf, but always hanging on. New ideas, old ways. Fresh faces. Seedy places. Slick stommhead'll do whatever it takes to stay on top, and... drok it all... enjoys every gruddamn second. DeMarco needs to be told. She got the wrong guy. It ain't nearly so easy to take down a fifteen-year institution.

On the other hand, she's emotional. She's vulnerable. She thinks I just saved her life... Maybe I'll tell her in the morning.



# PETTY CRIMES

Script: Simon Spurrier

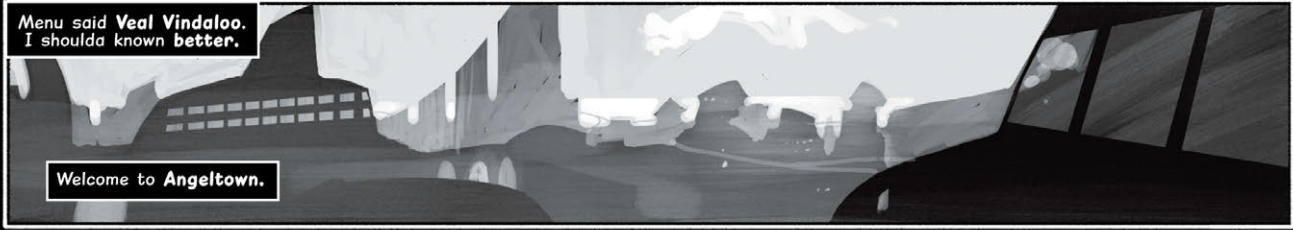
Art: Frazer Irving

Letters: Tom Frame

Originally published in *Judge Dredd Magazine* 238-239



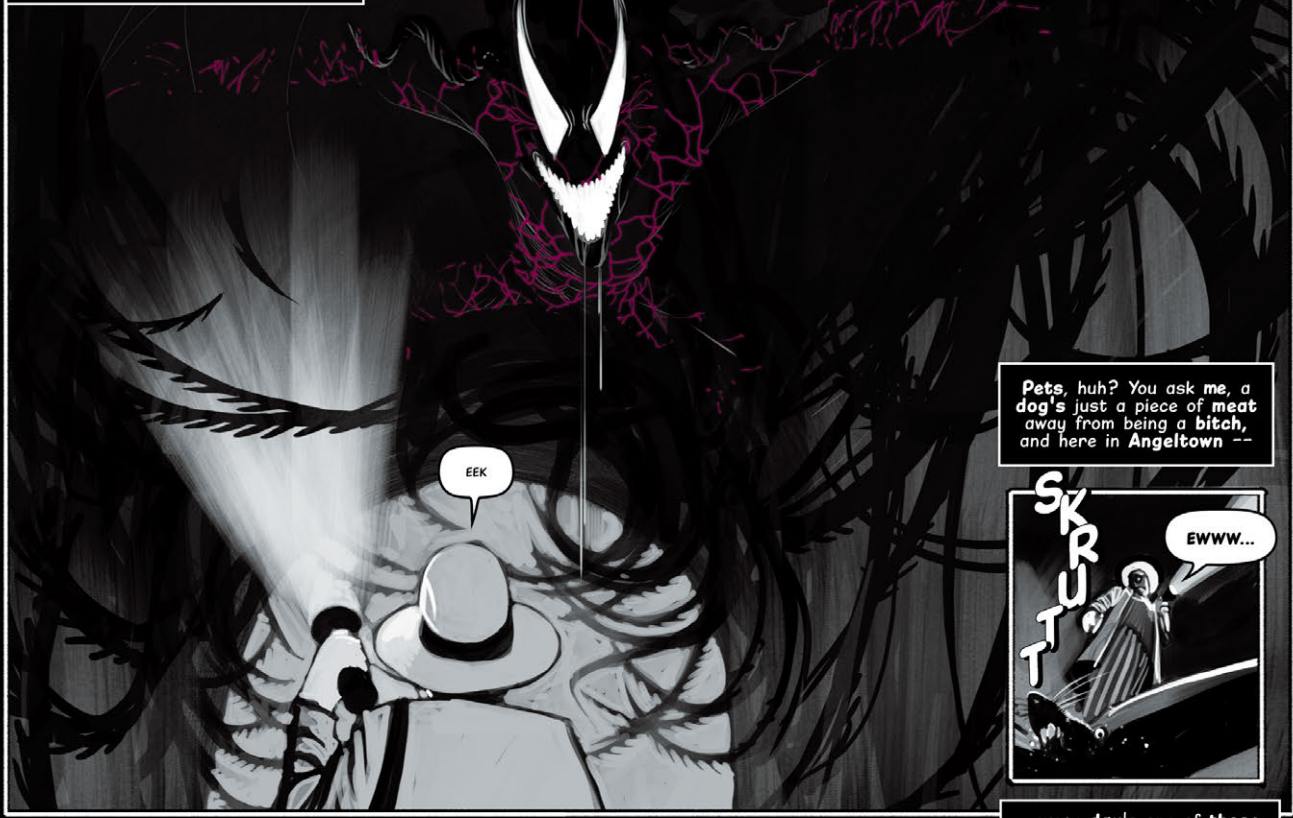
They say **dogs're man's best friend**. I had one once.



This neighbourhood, **man's best friend** comes in three shapes.



And then the one who discourages other drokkers from stopping you being alive -- usually by chewing off their spugging faces and sucking on the **hormonal brainstomm** inside.



Pets, huh? You ask me, a dog's just a piece of meat away from being a bitch, and here in Angeltown --



--every day's one of those.

They also say owners end up looking like their pets.

Figure that makes me a slaving silicate super-predator with a black hole appetite and a growing disregard for obedience.

I guess one in three ain't bad...

...though I ain't sure about giving birth outta my skin.

HEY! WHAT THE HELL'RE YOU PLAYING AT?  
HARD ENOUGH FEEDING ONE DEMON-CROCODILE, SPUGGO, BUT TWO?

There's also the minor issue of **illegality**. Anyone official catches me with the **Giger wannabe** here, my old pals in the badge brigade are gonna throw the book. Shelf-unit and all.

SKWITCH

AND I AIN'T SURE I APPROVE OF THIS LITTLE **IMAGE CHANGE**, EITHER. THERE IS SUCH A THING AS **TOO MANY TENTACLES**.

Point is, X-T backup is all very well, but soon as it starts getting **malicious, misbehaved** or -- Jovus -- **maternal**, it's time to **panic**. Right now, Cliq's getting to be a **liability** quicker than a flammable firetruck.

I should kill him.

JUST...STAY OUT OF TROUBLE, OKAY?

AND STOP DROKING GROWING!

Liability or not, nobody likes to say g'bye to a loyal pal...

...specially when there's so damn few of the drokkers around.

bleep  
bleep  
bleep

...YEAH, YEAH...

PETE? WHAT'S --

IT'S TROUBLE, JACK.



Corvid Pete.  
Another Wally.

Judges were animals, he'd be a chameleon. Guy blends in like octopus oilpaint.

He says it's bad. He says the crooked creep at the top of the pile is running a cull, and any one deemed disloyal is munce.



Sector Chief Daveez. Drokker. Judges were animals, he'd be a quad-joined cobra. Bendier than an origami hour.

Some nights, I have mongoose dreams.

Pete says Daveez is making a move. Says he's sent out his tame SUS geeks to keep tabs on us. Dig for dirt.



Pete says the hag who tailed him reported he'd 'disconnected with judicial protocols'. Too many bad habits.

Mandatory sentence of ten on Titan.

Pete says he's out. Rogue. Fled like a custard cockerel. He says he wants to let me know:



SJS. 'Special Judicial Squad.' That's the Sinister Jeopardy Sect to you and me. Depending who you ask, they're 'the Judges who judge the Judges', the brakes on fascism, or a bunch of drokking drokkheaded evil drokks.



Turns out they come in undercover flavour too.

MISTER POINT?

YOU'VE JUST GOT TO HELP ME...

She says her name's Mrs Stickle, and she's 85. She says some bozo stole her breeding pair of endangered pigeonfish, and I'm supposed to find them.

She says she'll be tagging along to make sure I ain't mis-spending her creds, and she's so drokking SUS she might as well wear a sign.

Missing pets. I hate missing pets.



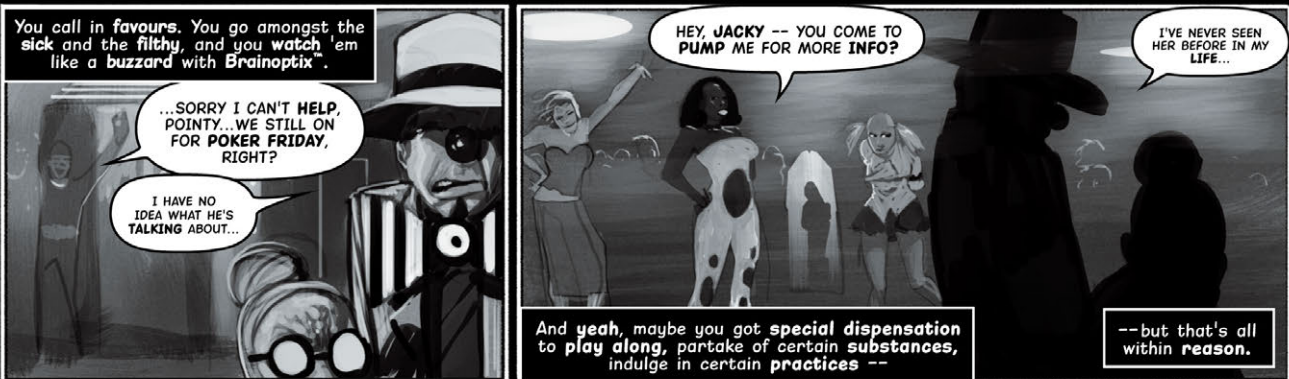
Being a **Wally**, you get used to the **life**. Keeping an **ear** to the ground. Knowing where to look for **answers**.

Staying **incognito**...

HEY-HEY, JACK!

WASSUP, SIMPO!

You make friends like how a **wolf** gets **pally** with **piglets**.



You call in **favours**. You go amongst the **sick** and the **filthy**, and you **watch** 'em like a **buzzard** with **Brainoptix**.

...SORRY I CAN'T HELP, POINTY...WE STILL ON FOR **POKER FRIDAY**, RIGHT?

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT...

HEY, JACKY -- YOU COME TO **PUMP** ME FOR MORE INFO?

I'VE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE IN MY LIFE...

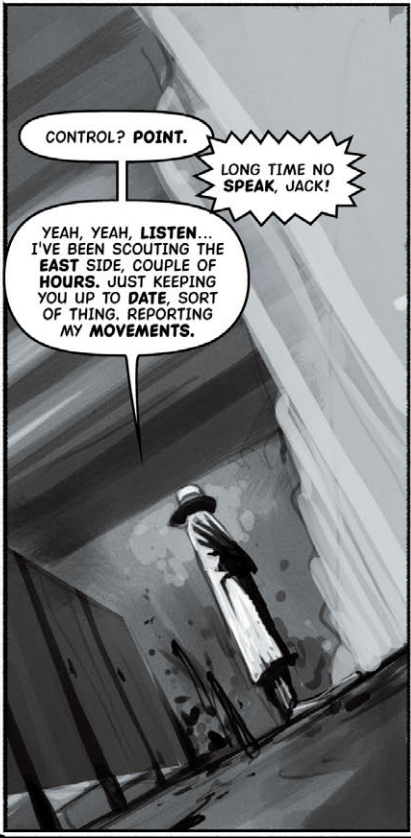
And yeah, maybe you got **special dispensation** to **play along**, partake of certain **substances**, indulge in certain **practices** --

--but that's all within **reason**.



Anything above and beyond... That's called **Going Native**.

I JUST...ah...NEED A MOMENT...



CONTROL? POINT.

LONG TIME NO SPEAK, JACK!

YEAH, YEAH, LISTEN... I'VE BEEN SCOUTING THE **EAST SIDE**, COUPLE OF **HOURS**. JUST KEEPING YOU UP TO **DATE**, SORT OF THING, REPORTING **MY MOVEMENTS**.



... WHY?

COS IT'S WHAT I'M **SUPPOSED** TO DO, YOU **DESPICABLE LITTLE DROKFLAKE!**

WELL, YEAH, BUT--

Thing is, being a **Wally**... you sort of forget how to **play** it by the **book**. Protocols, routine checkups, yadda yadda.

Matter of **fact**, you sort of forget what the **book** even **drokk** looks like.



ALL UNDER CONTROL, MR POINT? I NOTICE WE'VE MADE NO REAL **PROGRESS** IN FINDING **MY DINKIDUMS**...

THESE THINGS TAKE **TIME**, MRS STICKLE. WHAT SAY WE GET ON WITH IT?

YOU DROKING **GESTAPO HARRIDAN**.

Let me tell you: missing pets are thirsty work. Problem is, a swig of the sweetstuff right now'd be up there with a whaleburger at a Weight Watchers' wedding: ina-spugging-ppropriate. If there's worse than hell, this is it.

Miss Anne Thropé. If the teks could take the word 'wow' and turn it into a broad, stick her in a Lyera vacuum and do something dangerous with her smile, here's the result.

Funny thing. Hearing all this stuff, it's sort of a relief...



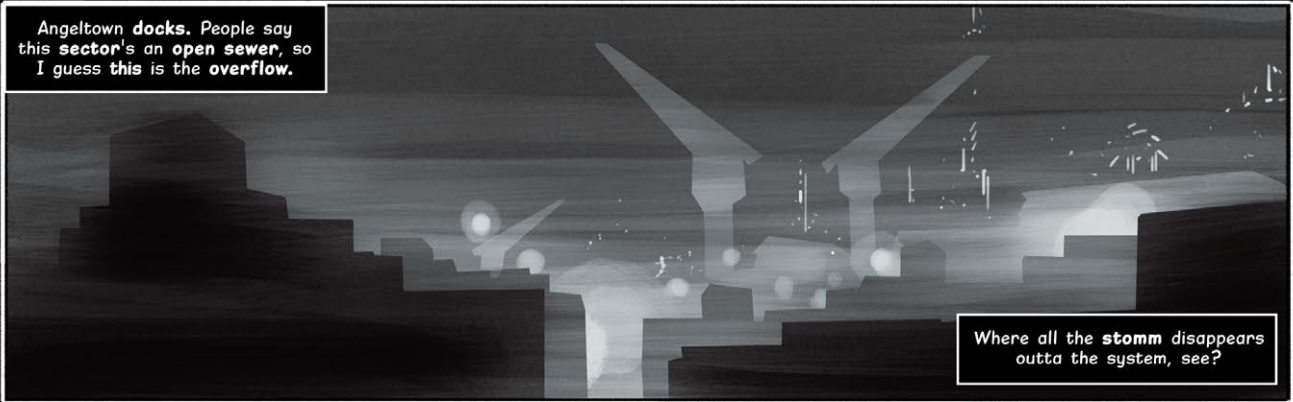
All evening, I been imagining the irony. 'Poor old Jack,' it went, 'running about like a blue-assed simply for this dame, acting all goody-goody cos he thinks she's SJS...Wouldn't it be hilarious if it's just coincidence she showed up when she did, and she's really just some kook off the street?'

Yeah. Hilarious. You spend any time in Angeltown, cynicism comes easy.



That killer smile.

Angeltown docks. People say this sector's an open sewer, so I guess this is the overflow.



Where all the stamm disappears outta the system, see?

Turns out Johann Herneoja and his ScandaNavy sidestepped into smuggling. Rare breeds, shipped offcoast to the Euro-Taxidermists. Good cred, if the haul's right. Fresh dispatch every Monday. Guess what day it is.



AND YOU DEDUCED ALL THAT JUST ADJUSTING YOUR BRACES?

THE TWANGING FOCUSES THE MIND.

YOU PLANNING ON RISKING LIFE AND LIMB, OR YOU GONNA STAY HERE AS BEFITS A DAME OF YOUR AGE?



FIGURES.

THERE! LOOK! BEHIND THE ZEPHYRFROG CAGE! MY DINKIDUMS!



OKAY, OKAY... I'LL HANDLE THIS.

YOU STAY DOWN. I'M GONNA CALL US SOME BACK-UP.

BACK-UP? FROM WHERE?



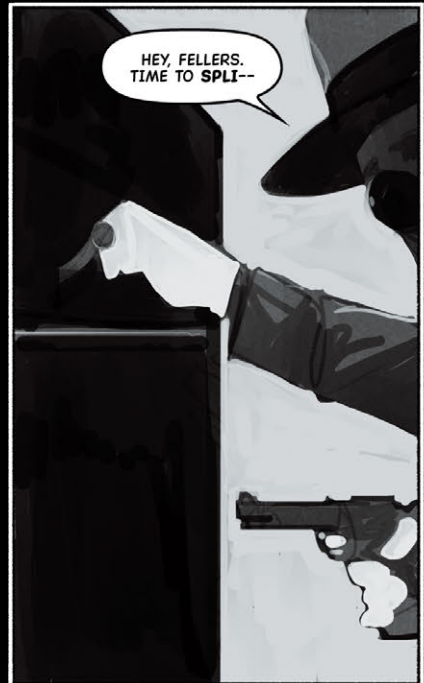
Eldster's playing it straight. Not so easy to catch her out.

THE SUGARPLUM FAIRIES. NOW KEEP QUIET.



Guy from Control says he's got helmets en route, then you can hear him grin.

'It'll take a while,' he says. 'Gotta go through the official channels.'



HEY, FELLERS. TIME TO SPLI--

Everyone's a drokking comedian.

AAARRRK

SQUAAAWK

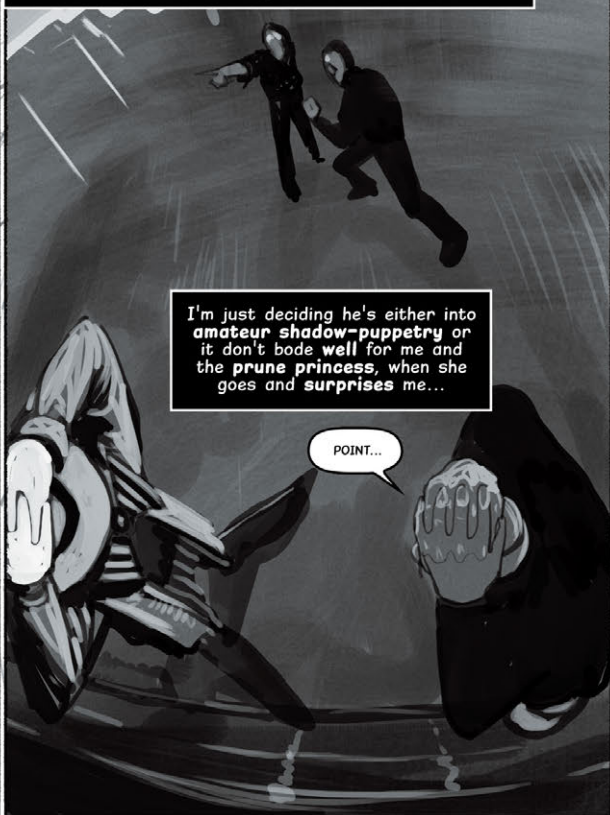


HEY! THAT'S MY DROKKIN' GUN!



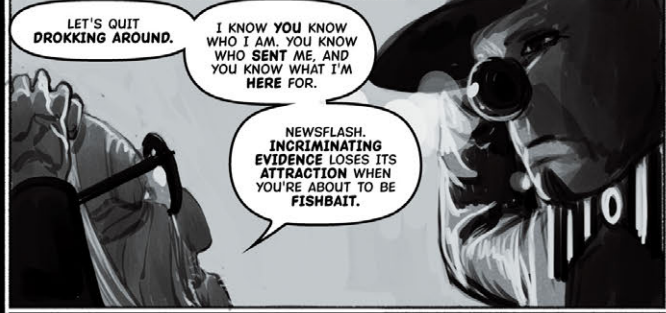
'KEEP IT QUIET,' HE SAYS. 'I'LL HANDLE THIS,' HE SAYS...

These goons, I can't understand a word they're saying. They're kinda animated, and one of them keeps making hand motions like maybe a shark's mouth...



I'm just deciding he's either into amateur shadow-puppetry or it don't bode well for me and the prune princess, when she goes and surprises me...

POINT...



LET'S QUIT DROKKING AROUND.

I KNOW YOU KNOW WHO I AM. YOU KNOW WHO SENT ME, AND YOU KNOW WHAT I'M HERE FOR.

NEWSFLASH. INCRIMINATING EVIDENCE LOSES ITS ATTRACTION WHEN YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE FISHBAIT.



WE'VE SUSPECTED FOR A LONG TIME YOU'VE GOT SOME... UNUSUAL ALLIES.

YOU GET US OUT OF THIS, POINT -- BY THE BOOK OR NOT -- AND I'LL KEEP DAVEEZ OFF YOUR BACK FOR GOOD.

JUDGE'S WORD.



What's to lose, Jack?

PHEEEEP

It starts kinda like an **open door night** at the **High Dive**.  
Like a **sumo stampede** in the **distance...**

Somewhere out in the **mist**, a flock of caged **spiderbats**  
cries out like a **pro's first night** working **Alientown**.



A **radgoat** bleats for **half a second**, then **screams** like a **fattie** with a **foodless fridge**. All over there's the sound of **wood splintering**,  
animals getting **dead**, and something **hissing** through **greedy gobbles**.



Welcome **back**. Let me bring you up to **speed**.  
This is **Angeltown**. The name thing, it's supposed to be **ironic** -- like a calling a **fattie** 'littlejohn' or a **firearm** 'unnecessary'. **Funny**, see?  
Takes a rare talent to see the **funny side** in this neighbourhood. Then **again**, surviving Angeltown and talent go **hand-in-hand**...

Case in **point**. Me, I got a **talent** for getting into **sticky situations** -- and I don't just mean in **Han Joab's Massage Joint**.



Mrs **Stickle** here, she's got a **talent** for being **poisonous** like **Black Mamba Madras**, 'specially to **undercover jays** with **vicarious vices**.



She's **SJS**, which is sort of like if **Judas** came back with an **official remit**.

And this here is **Cliq**. Up 'til recently he had a **talent** for keeping me **alive**, looking after my **interests** and **unsticking** them **sticky situations**.



Right now he's up there with **chooglu** and **pass-me-down porno**.

**Grud** only knows what's got into him, but take it from me: he's a **pussycat**. **Honestly**.

Speaking of which...

HA!



Miss **Anne Thropé**. **Normal circumstances**, I'd be wondering how the hell she got here so **quick**. I'd be figuring she must've been **following** me, and there's something **freaky** going down.

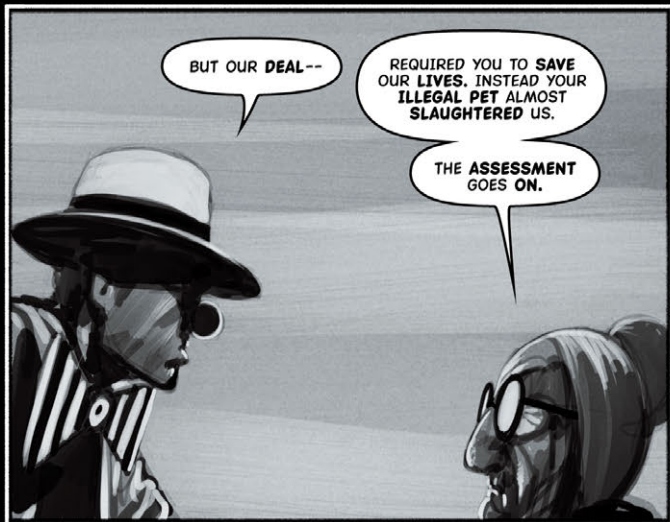
As it **happens**, all I can **think** is --





I... I SHOULD GO AFTER HER. SHE MIGHT KILL HI--

I DON'T THINK SO, MR POINT. YOU'RE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET.



BUT OUR DEAL--

REQUIRED YOU TO SAVE OUR LIVES. INSTEAD YOUR ILLEGAL PET ALMOST SLAUGHTERED US.

THE ASSESSMENT GOES ON.



BUT I KNOW WHO YOU ARE! WHAT'S THE DROKING POINT?

THE POINT, MR POINT -- *aha* -- IS THAT I'M NOT TAKING MY EYES OFF YOU UNTIL I'M SATISFIED YOUR JUDICIAL PROCLIVITIES ARE INTACT--

--AND YOUR COVER IS FEASIBLE.



YOU NEED TO CONVINCE ME YOU'RE A SUCCESSFUL PRIVATE EYE. THOSE PIGEONFISH WON'T FIND THEMSELVES.

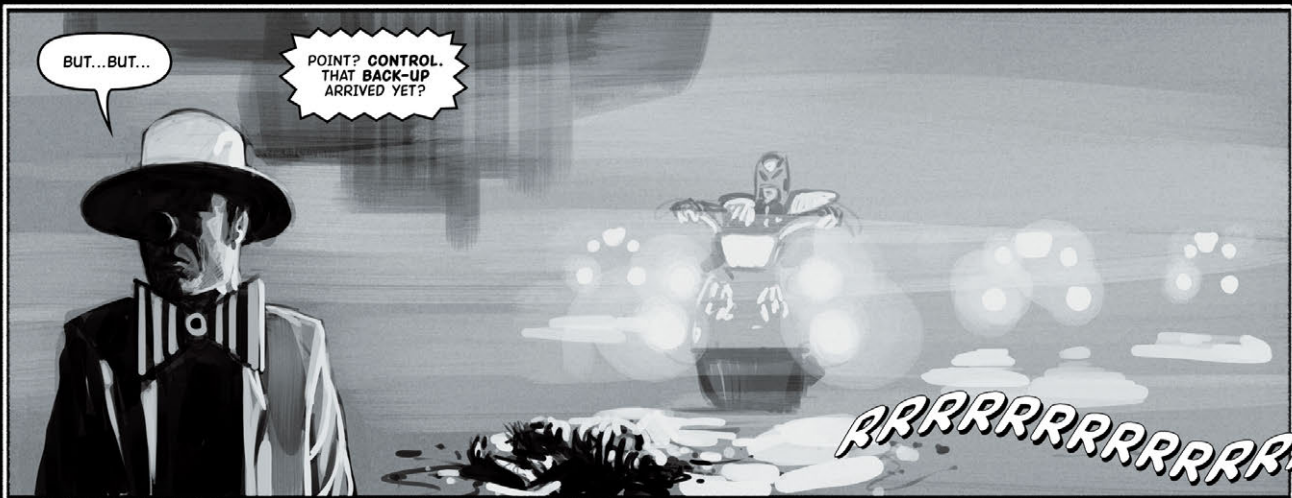
SEVEN O'CLOCK. OUTSIDE YOUR OFFICE. DON'T BE LATE.



BUT WHY CAN'T I FOLLOW CLIQ UNTIL THEN?

I SUSPECT YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY TO KEEP YOU OCCUPIED, JUDGE. REPORTS, PAPERWORK... THAT SORT OF THING.

AND JUST REMEMBER: YOU DON'T KNOW WHO I AM.



BUT...BUT...

POINT? CONTROL. THAT BACK-UP ARRIVED YET?

RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Time I get back to the sweat-factory, it's getting on for dawn. You figure the helmets woulda quit the questions around the fiftieth 'I don't know', but those guys are perceptive like hyenas are hygienic.

Funny thing, on the subject of scavengers...



Already I got this crazy cackling in my ears.



JUDGE POINT? SJS JUDGE KOVACS.

I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL NIGHT, MR POINT. RANDOMLY SCHEDULED ASSESSMENT.

YOU'LL FIND THE PAPERWORK ALL IN ORDER.

SIT.

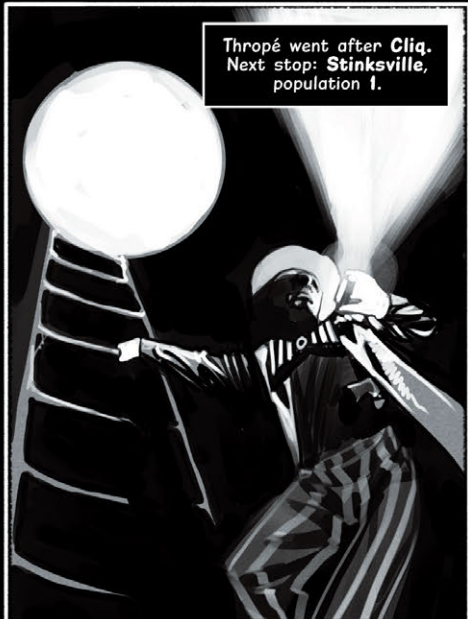
This is drokked up. They never send out two Gestapo goons at once. Someone's lying to me. The way I see it, this fem, she looks the part. She's got the papers and the poise. And yeah, it'd be just swell to play good cop/bad cop with the leatherclad lovely, but what's more important right now is:



SORRY, SUGAR -- GOTTA CHECK ON SOMETHING.

HEY!

I need to speak to Anne Thropé. Truth be told, I kinda like the idea of lying as far as she's concerned -- but only in the horizontal sense. She told me the withered witch is SJS, and if that ain't the case then who the drokk is she?



Thropé went after Cliq. Next stop: Stinksville, population 1.

Usually.



CLIQ? YOU HERE?



DAMN.

squee squee



Rats.

You spend any time living in Angeltown, you get to understand them -- same way a mosquito understands malaria.

Example: Given the choice, a rat don't just come sauntering into the lair of a colossal carnivore.

It don't tend to run round and round in circles, then get a heart attack and die.

It don't tend to smell quite so strongly of... of...



JOVUS...

snff snfff

THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?

The credcard drops...



One last check. Scargill slum. More junkies than a littertek landfill.

COME AND GEEEEET IT...



p-p-p-PRIIIIIMO... A-DREN, MAN...

GIMMEGIMME-GIMMEGIMMEGIMME

SNFF SNFFFFF

'A-Dren'. That's adrenocorticotrophic hormone or bad drokking juju, depending on your vocab.

Cliq's a silicate alien lifeform who drinks cerebral soup. Some twisted motherdroker's been loading rodents to the gills with junkie-juice, then sending them straight to him.

Hormonal Home Delivery. Pre-fab puberty. Jovus.

No wonder he's grown.



scrunchhhh

This is starting to look like a big spugging set-up.

RIGHT.



She says her name's Rita Delphin. She's a Psi.

Up til three months back she was the kinda psi with a badge and a bike. The legal kind. Now?

She says she's been tampering with my perceptions since we met, so I see her different. In Angeltown you get by on your talents, remember, so I tell her: hey, neat trick. Then I stick the gun even further up the little bitchdrokek's nostril and tell her again to fess. She looks at the ground a minute, then she says: 'Let's get a cab.'



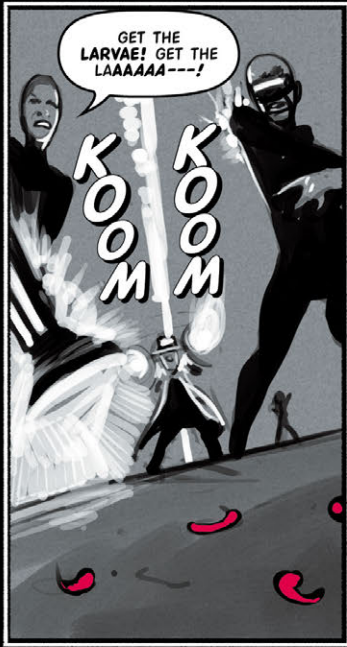
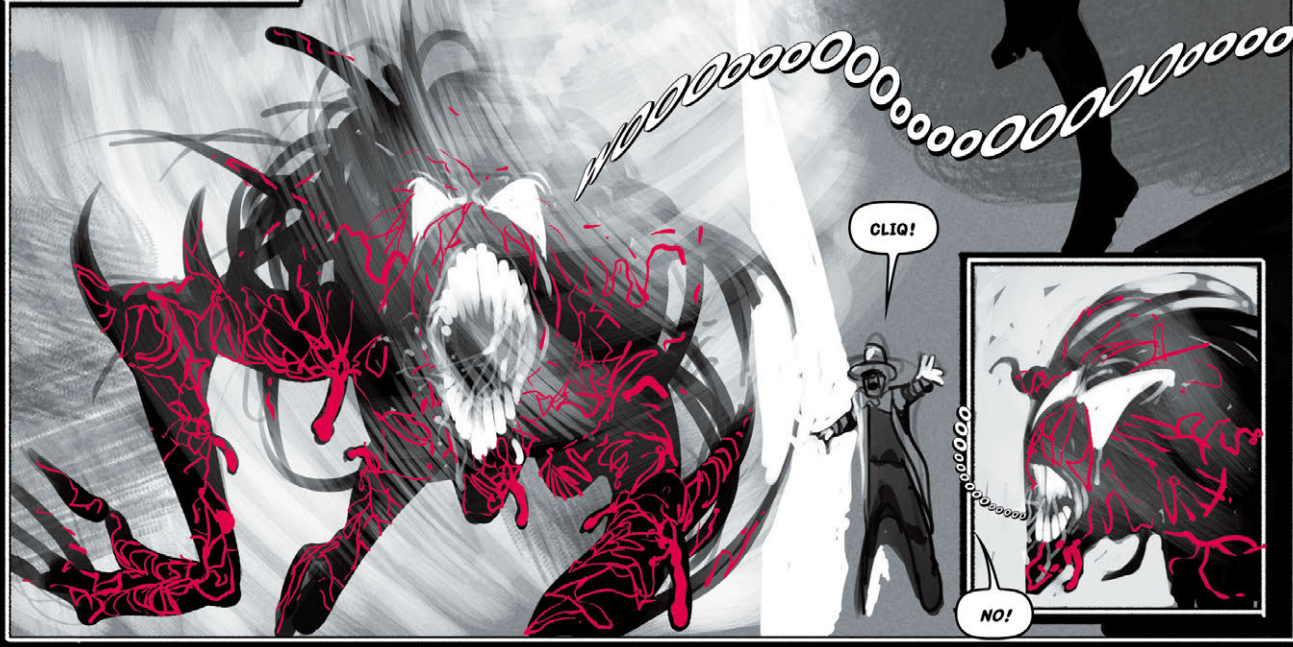
Baby Raptours. That's what'll drive a dame to such long gruddam lengths.

She says her job was to get me out of the office and into the hot water. She says all them animals at the docks last night were pumped-up like A-Dren balloons, so when Cliq played the smorgasbord snatch he went futsie.

Total hormone overload. Out of control. Reproducing like a randy rabbit.



And who directed us to the docks? Who showed up just in time to follow the fiend?



Ain't it always the way? **There** you are, minding your own **business**, getting ready to shoot the holy spugging **bejovus** out of the piston-perfect **peach** you been coveting all week --

--when a pair of rare **feathered barracuda** try to chew off your head.



Times like **this**, the mind gets **real** focused. Starts **wondering**. Like: who could convince two **edgy** **airborne** **ichthyoids** to attack a **seething** **simpo**? Same **subject**, who could make a **hormonal** **rat** take a **voluntary** **zoom** to its own **drokking** **doom**?



I make a **rule** of never hitting a **broad**.  
Call me **old-fashioned**.

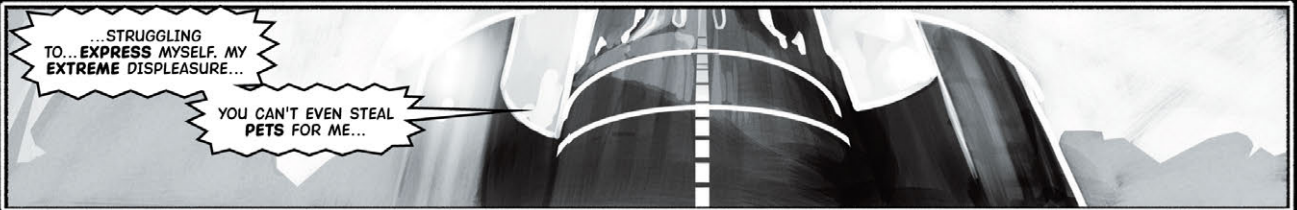


**Pets**, huh? **Domesticate** the little **drokkers** much as you **want**, they still do what comes **naturally**.



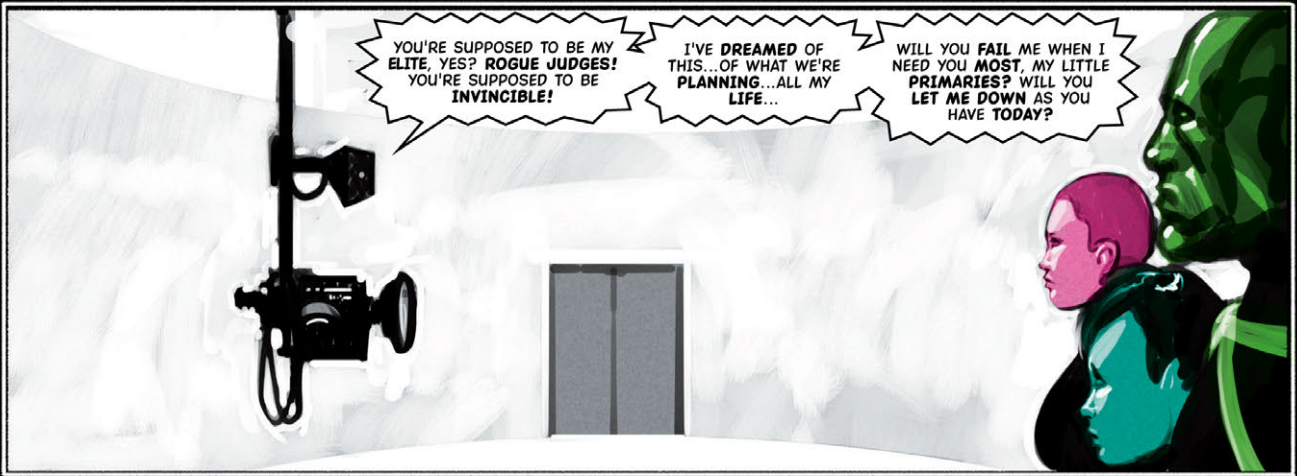
We **stare** at each other a **long** time. I ain't entirely sure **why**.  
I tell her I **trusted** her, and it comes out like the noise a **mouse**'d make right before you **trod** on it.  
She doesn't bother to **answer**.  
I tell her she's responsible for the deaths of thirteen **ScandeNavy** **smugglers**, and by all rights I should **take** her in.  
She reminds me I **owe** her one.  
We **stare** some more.





...STRUGGLING TO... EXPRESS MYSELF. MY EXTREME DISPLEASURE...

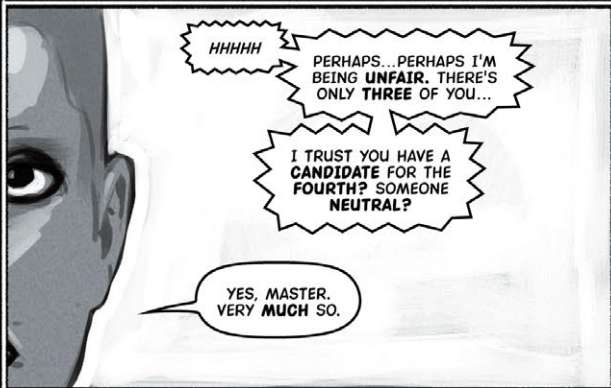
YOU CAN'T EVEN STEAL PETS FOR ME...



YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE MY ELITE, YES? ROGUE JUDGES! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE INVINCIBLE!

I'VE DREAMED OF THIS... OF WHAT WE'RE PLANNING... ALL MY LIFE...

WILL YOU FAIL ME WHEN I NEED YOU MOST, MY LITTLE PRIMARIES? WILL YOU LET ME DOWN AS YOU HAVE TODAY?

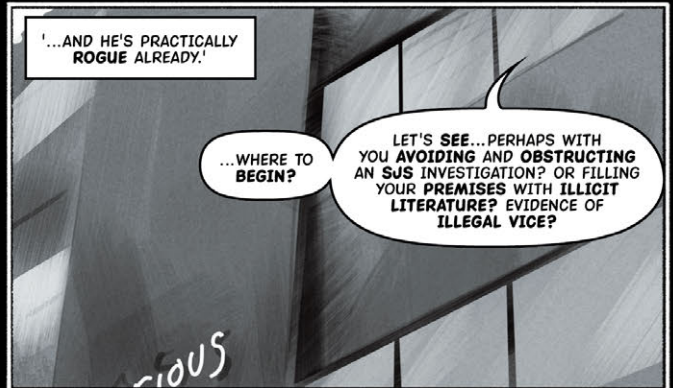


HHHHH

PERHAPS... PERHAPS I'M BEING UNFAIR. THERE'S ONLY THREE OF YOU...

I TRUST YOU HAVE A CANDIDATE FOR THE FOURTH? SOMEONE NEUTRAL?

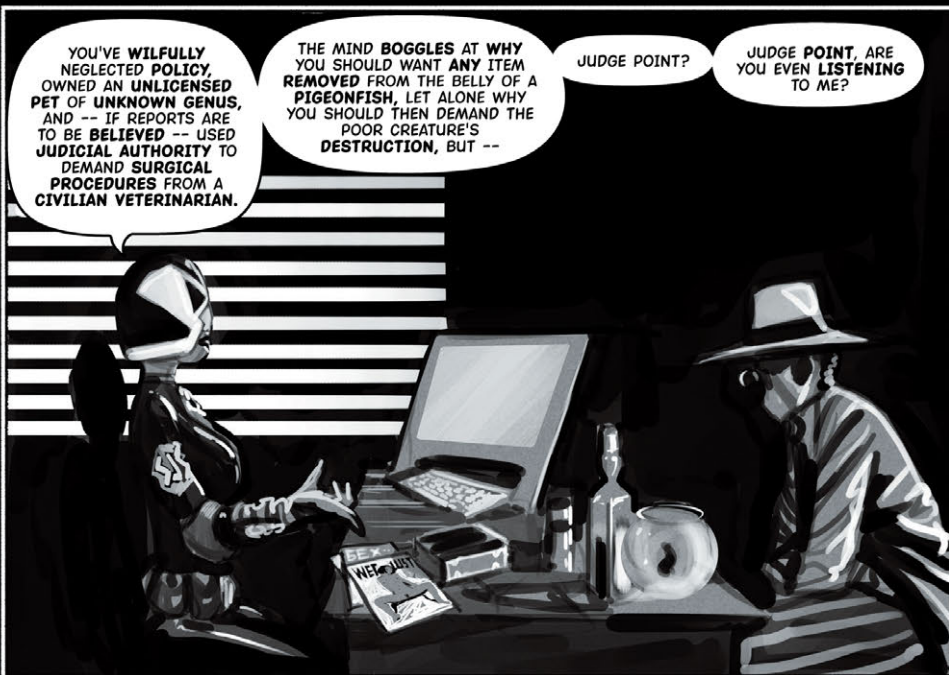
YES, MASTER. VERY MUCH SO.



'...AND HE'S PRACTICALLY ROGUE ALREADY.'

...WHERE TO BEGIN?

LET'S SEE... PERHAPS WITH YOU AVOIDING AND OBSTRUCTING AN SJS INVESTIGATION? OR FILLING YOUR PREMISES WITH ILLICIT LITERATURE? EVIDENCE OF ILLEGAL VICE?



YOU'VE WILFULLY NEGLECTED POLICY, OWNED AN UNLICENSED PET OF UNKNOWN GENUS, AND -- IF REPORTS ARE TO BE BELIEVED -- USED JUDICIAL AUTHORITY TO DEMAND SURGICAL PROCEDURES FROM A CIVILIAN VETERINARIAN.

THE MIND BOGGLES AT WHY YOU SHOULD WANT ANY ITEM REMOVED FROM THE BELLY OF A PIGEONFISH, LET ALONE WHY YOU SHOULD THEN DEMAND THE POOR CREATURE'S DESTRUCTION, BUT --

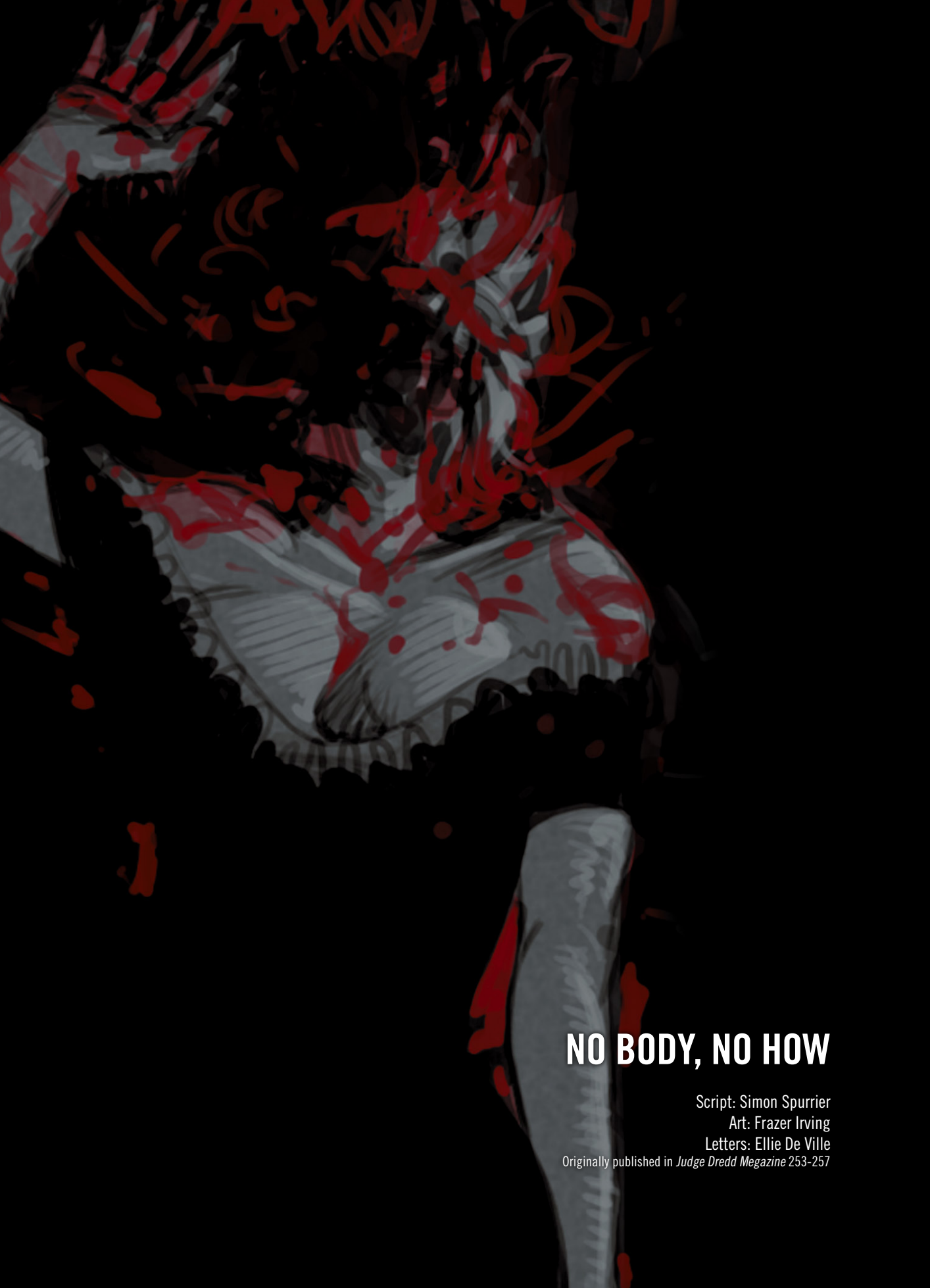
JUDGE POINT?

JUDGE POINT, ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING TO ME?



WH...?

H--HAS ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU HOW TALENTED YOU ARE?



## **NO BODY, NO HOW**

Script: Simon Spurrier

Art: Frazer Irving

Letters: Ellie De Ville

Originally published in *Judge Dredd Magazine* 253-257

They say you never  
hear what wakes you.



Lucky for me, I guess.  
Streetsounds outside  
like a foghorn fiesta,  
and round here you  
gotta treat nocturnal  
noise like the  
choccoscat chatline™:

You listen too  
close, it's only  
gonna upset you.



JOVUS, MY  
HEAD...

I got holes in my  
MEMORY like a swiss-  
cheese sponge, and my  
guts — STOMM — I  
figure I can trust 'em  
'bout as far as a dame:  
one wrong move,  
they're outta here.

Then you'll recall you're in Angeltown, and  
pokin' in dark places... that ain't smart.

OH  
STOMM....



Listen: I've been set up. I've  
been set up like a shot-glass  
showdown, and if it's been  
done right there's a tipped-off  
trespasser en route right now  
to catch me gore-gloved....

Even so, this ain't new.  
Hung-over wake-ups and me  
go together like whiskey  
and MORE whiskey, and  
you'd figure there's nothing  
so bad can't be improved  
with a little light.

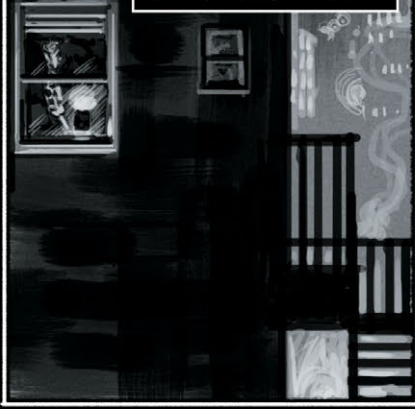
It **MUST** be a set-up,  
on account a how if  
it ain't...

... then I did  
this myself.



Yeah, you can bet your last  
crispy cred that hustling up  
them stairs right now is a  
herd of **helmets**, waiting on  
me to brandish the **badge**.

Then **twenty** on Titan  
for Murder Most  
**Motiveless**, to regret  
not splitting sooner.



Any minute now.



Sooner or later, you gotta figure, either this  
set-up's effective like **prophylactics** to **priests**,  
or there's more going on than meets the **Eye**.

**Private Eye**, that  
is. That'll be **Me**.

Broad's got a **hole**  
through her face like  
Harpoon Happy Hour  
down Pincushion  
Pete's Piercing Palace.

... **Curves** like  
those I'd recognise  
anywhere.



And sure, I got **sledge-**  
**hammers** in my **skull**  
and my memories've  
gone thick like moronic  
**Munce**, but even so...

ROTH.

MEEKLY  
ROTH.



A week ago, and here's me up to my neck like a giraffe's jugular, playing ninja through a Westside warehouse.



Whole damn place — goons, guns, guess-how-legal-it-ain't-goods — all under the name of Dexy Roth.

Guy's a stripe-suited slick-streak psycho. Works for the Boss, and that's all you need to know.

I shouldn't be here.

Recent weeks, old Dexy's been flashing cash. Word is, he's smuggling from Offworld. Word is, no drokker knows what he's offloading. Word is, he catches my nose in his knickers, I'll be plumbing new depths of Dead.

I'm an undercover Judge. Supposed to be discreet like a special-ops squid...



... But then, Angeltown's a devil for discretion.



WHO ARE YOU?

UH...

WHAT'RE YOU DOING ON MY HUSBAND'S PROPERTY?

Dames. Why's it always a dame?

Five seconds before, chances of getting out alive were fair to futile. Add a broad and a Blastboogie 9000. I'm going down like a flightless fellationaut.



Y-YOU...?

...

GET OUT OF HERE. RUN.

I know, I know, Mercy in Angeltown. Makes less sense than a kook-cube crossword. But then again:

Dames. Whaddya expect?

Case in point:  
showing up  
sans  
cerebrum in  
my drokking  
hab. Typic—



Well there you  
go. A little  
later than  
expected, but  
they're here.  
Let's get this  
cliche back on  
track.

**NOK NOK NOK**

DON'T  
SHOOT! IT AIN'T HOW  
IT LOOKS!

PROBABLY.

AND I'M  
UNARM—



UNARMED, HUH?

PITY.

**Galen DeMarco.**  
Ex-Judge, rival P.I.,  
hotter than lesbian  
lava. Last time I  
checked, I got  
more chance  
greeting a Loch  
Ness Kennedy at  
my door than the  
Piston Princess...

She says we're s'posed to  
have a date. She says I  
called two hours ago with  
an invite to Gordon  
Bleugh's All-You-Can-Pay  
place up on Proops. I have  
no memory of this.

What I should be saying  
is: Come on in, let me fix  
you a drink while I fetch  
my ceremonial snozz.  
Or hey, we could skip the  
Mortgage Meal and  
move straight to the  
Actually-I-Don't-Drink-  
Syntheticaff part...

Instead, what  
I'm saying is:

NOW'S...  
AH... NOW'S  
NOT A GOOD  
TIME.



**SLAP**

It's gonna be one  
of those nights.



*meekly Roth. Nothing on the citynet. Even the Judge system's firing blanks.*

*Means either she's led a blameless life with a record cleaner than a cardinal's conscience, or that ain't her real name.*



*In Angeltown, no way is it option a).*

*I need a drink. Looks like I beat me to it. Sure feels like it.*

*Empty. Wish I could remember how. Yeah, definitely one of those n—*



**CRRKKK**

**CRRKKK**



**GET OFF! DROKK OFF, Y'FREAK!**

**SHOO!**

*Meet Larf. His old man Clig was kinda my pet. Think illegal psychotic sewer-dwelling crocasaurus and you're there. Clig bought the farm — and exploded all the hell over it — not so long ago. Left little Larf here behind.*

*Clig turned out crazier than a weasel's wedding with a taste for sliced cit. Larf here, well...*



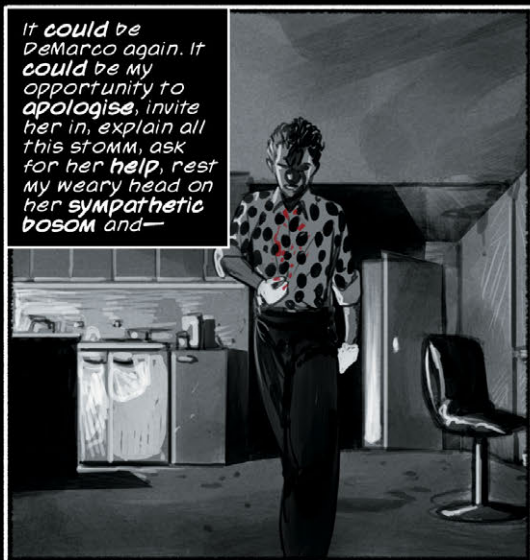
**NOK NOK**

*Larf's a lot like his Pa, only with patience and rationality removed.*

*Truth is. I'm starting to figure he might be a 'she'.*

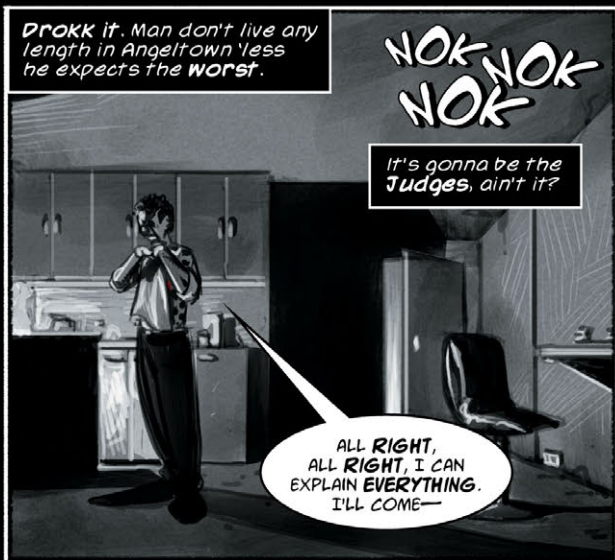


**OH GRUD...**



It could be DeMarco again. It could be my opportunity to apologise, invite her in, explain all this stommm, ask for her help, rest my weary head on her sympathetic bosom and—

—And yeah, then we can go buy some juicy pigwings together.



Drakk it. Man don't live any length in Angeltown 'less he expects the worst.

NOK NOK NOK

It's gonna be the Judges, ain't it?

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, I CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING. I'LL COME—



... QUIETLY.

Y-YOU... AIN'T THE JAYS...

WOSS YER POINT?



COMES RIGHT AFTER THE 'JACK'.

DAT'S VERY CLEVER. DAT'S A VERY CLEVER LITTLE SAYING, MISTER, ON ACCOUNTA HOW IT'S YOUR NAME, RIGHT?

WE GET IT. A-HA-HA-HA.

MR ROTH, DAT'S OUR EMPLOYER, HE HAS A LITTLE SAYING FING LIKE DAT ALL OF HIS OWN.

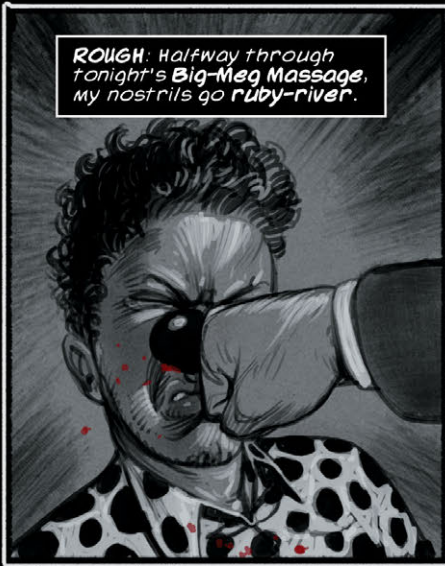


'T GOES:

'IF DAT WOMAN-STEALIN' SHIT POINTY DON'T TELL YA WHERE MY WIFE IS, BOGGS, YOU ANNA BOYS SHOULD STILL PLUG 'IM, ONLY DO IT EXTRA SLOW...'

Angeltown. Expect the worst, 'cos it'll always go one better...

Angeltown was a sideshow, I figure she'd be a half-bearded broad. You wanna get to know her, you gotta take the rough with the smooth. case in point —



**ROUGH:** Halfway through tonight's Big-Meg Massage, my nostrils go ruby-river.

**SMOOTH:** Consequently, no drokker spors the burgundy backwash already stainin' my threads.



**ROUGH:** This thug-a-gram three-some got it in their bony brains I eloped with their boss's babe.

WHERE IS SHE, DROKKO?

**SMOOTH:** Just so happens I do know the womanly whereabouts. I tell these goons where she is, I figure the stommkicking stops.



**ROUGH:** That ain't gonna happen.



DAT'S IT, POINTY. TIME'S UP.

GONNA GET ROUGH N—



CRAAAAAAK



**SMOOTH:** Angeltown ain't averse to bolts from the blue...

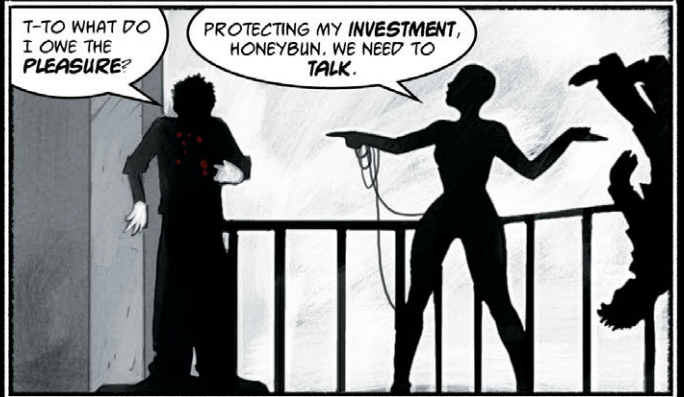


**ROUGH:** I drokkin' hate surprises.

Miss Anne Thrope. Cute name's the only part of the package ain't **deadly serious**.

Serious **curves**, serious **kit**, serious **cause-for-concern**. Last time we tangled she killed my sense of reason and my slaver's sidekick. I let her **walk**. **Broads**, huh?

way to think of Thrope is: **radswan** on a **lavalake**. There's a **lot** goin' on below the **surface**.



T-TO WHAT DO I OWE THE **PLEASURE**?

PROTECTING MY **INVESTMENT**, HONEYBUN. WE NEED TO **TALK**.



M-MAYBE SOME **OTHER DAY**? I'M KINDA **BU-**

**TONIGHT**, JACKY.



LET'S... UH... LET'S HIT A **BAR**. NEUTRAL TERRITORY.

SOUNDS PERFECT. YOU SURE YOUR **FEMFRIEND'D** APPROVE?



F-FEMFRIEND... ?

LITTLE SLITCH YOU BEEN HANGING WITH. WE'VE SPOTTED YOU TOGETHER A **FEW** TIMES, STUP...



IS IT **SERIOUS**?

Back with the flashback fandango. Hurts like a resyk rampage, with an eyeball enema for seconds.

I figure we're back five days here.

Sector 13 Shop-o-rama. This time of year, they say the MeccaMalls downtown're lit up like a Christmas Tree convention. Figure that makes this place an irradiated pine:

Small and dark, with freakowl nesting in every nook and used needles underfoot.

Though once in a while, if you're lucky, a check-it-out chick might just pause to perch.



Broads, huh? Tryna understand 'em: less point to it than a eunuch's yardstick.

AIN'T YOU EVEN GOT A COAT? NOT EXACTLY INCONSPICU—

SHUT UP. PAY ATTENTION.

I WANT YOU.

Whoa.

IN MY TEAM.

OH.

She says she's assembling a crack unit of **adventuring, espionage, ninja-swinging mercenaries**. Mostly my brain tunes out at the word 'crack'.

She says her employer's got **big changes** in store for Angeltown, and neither the **blues** nor the **boss** are gonna stand in the way.

She says all her **soldiers** are **ex-helmets**. She says getting kicked outta the force is sort of an **entry requirement**.

WE'VE BEEN **WATCHING** YOU, JACKY. YOU GOT THE **BADGE**, SURE ENOUGH, BUT YOU'RE NOT A **JAY**. NOT **THROUGH AND THROUGH**.

WE'RE GONNA MAKE THINGS **BETTER** — FOR **EVERYONE**. BUT WE NEED YOUR **HELP**. ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS **QUIT**...

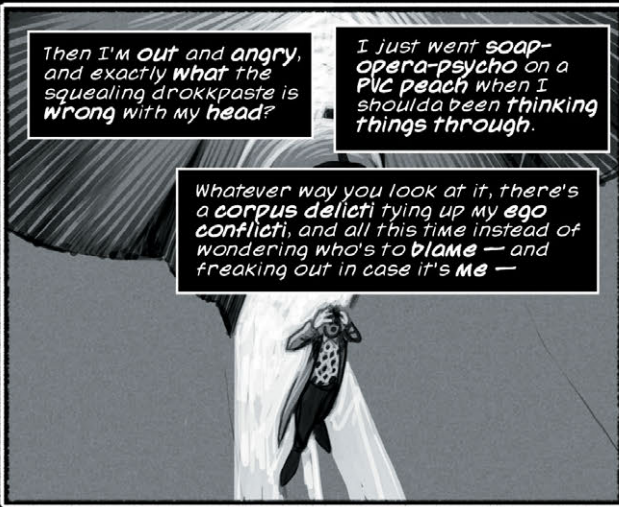
... OR GET **FIRED**.

*Blam.* There it is, the last piece to a **junkie's jigsaw**. Under it all — the **novelty nose**, the **flappy feet** — what I **AM** is this: A **drakkin' Judge**.

And sure, maybe I ain't as **straight** as some, maybe I play it less by the **book** than the **balls**, but even so: I'm one of the **good guys**.

I hate that I'm even **tempted**.

I AIN'T A **PERP**, DOLL.



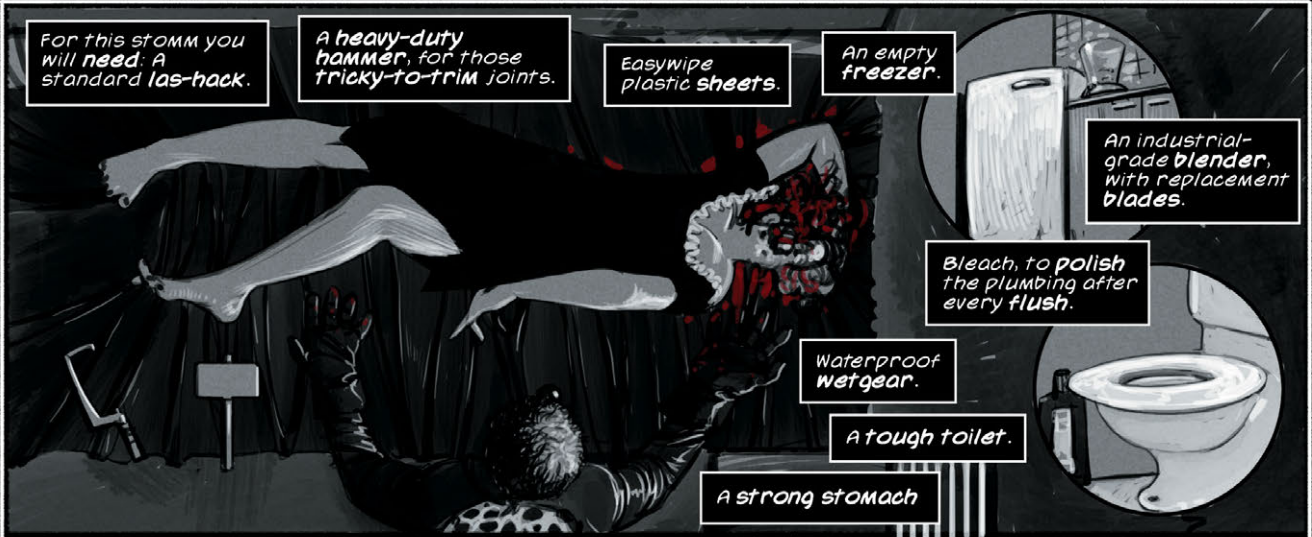
Then I'm **out** and **angry**, and exactly **what** the **squealing drokkpaste** is **wrong** with my **head**?

I just went **soap-opera-psycho** on a **PVC peach** when I shoulda been thinking things through.

Whatever way you look at it, there's a **corpus delicti** tying up my **ego conflict**, and all this time instead of wondering who's to **blame** — and **freaking out** in case it's **me** —



I shoulda been **acting**.



For this **stomm** you will need: A standard **las-hack**.

A **heavy-duty hammer**, for those **tricky-to-trim joints**.

**Easywipe plastic sheets**.

An **empty freezer**.

An **industrial-grade blender**, with **replacement blades**.

**Bleach**, to **polish the plumbing** after **every flush**.

**Waterproof wetgear**.

A **tough toilet**.

A **strong stomach**.



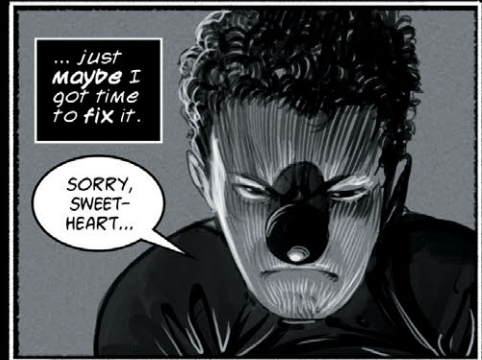
And a **good grip**.

**Listen**. maybe this really is a **set-up**. You work any time in **Angeltown**, you're gonna pick up **adversaries** quicker than **addictions**.

Plenty of **drokkers** happy to see me out the **force**, out of their **faces**, into the **fire**...

But nobody's **come** yet. Nobody at the **door** to take me in. And **that** means maybe this ain't a **set-up** at all.

And **that** means, whatever did happen here, whoever did this, however much I don't wanna think about how it might've been **me**...



... just **maybe** I got time to **fix** it.

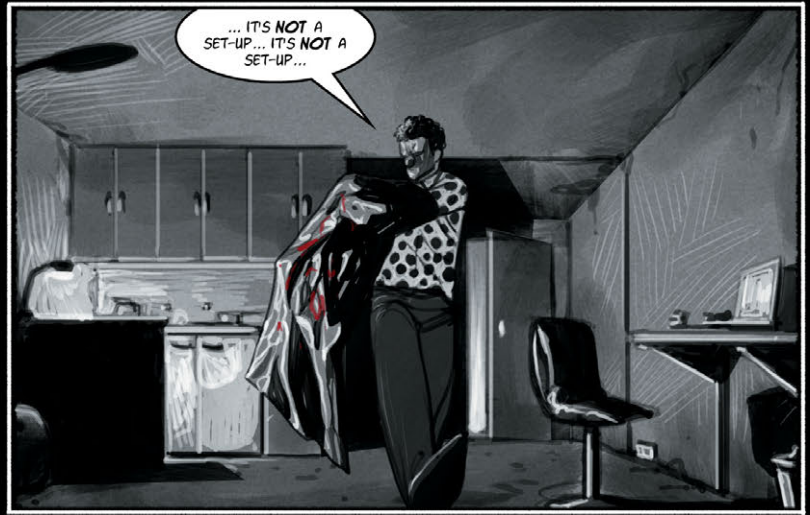
SORRY, SWEET-HEART...



WHAT'S—?



AH, DROKK...



... IT'S NOT A SET-UP... IT'S NOT A SET-UP...



OH GRUB

Funny thing. Any other week, this many dames at my door, I'd figure maybe it's my birthday.



It ain't my birthday.

WE HAD AN APPOINTMENT, POINT. WE WERE SUPPOSE TO MEET AT YOUR OFFICE HALF AN HOUR AGO.

I AM MOST DISPLEASED.

SJS Judge Kovacs. Few months back, this dame pinned me for every damn indiscretion there is. Wasn't as fun as it sounds. Obstruction, vice, rulebreaking and downright dirtiness. I'm on report for the whole shebang.

The chance to meet a leather-lined lovely once a week and debate depravity? You'd figure no force on Earth's gonna make me forget that.



Guess I've just had other things on my mind.

YOU'VE MADE ME LATE, MR POINT.

WE'LL HAVE TO HOLD OUR MEETING HERE...

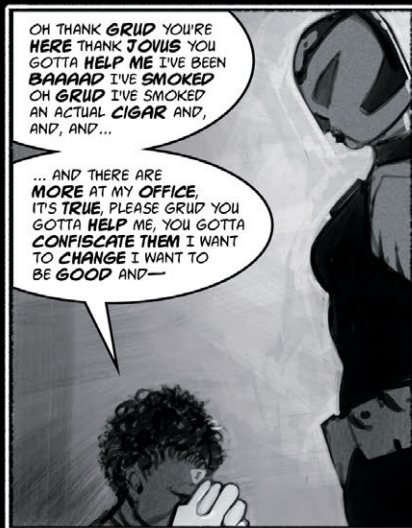
Morning. I'd fix you a synthcaff, only I'm outta cowsquirt and I figure the situation's black enough. Let me bring you up to speed.

Right now my bedclothes're five shades of baffling broad's brainjuice, my head feels like a supernova sick-up, I been up all night preparing to carve the cadaver...



... and the gruddamn SJS want in to my hab.

It's gonna take everything I got to keep this broad outta here. It's gonna take charisma, suaveness, more charm than a leprechaun's breakfast, and...



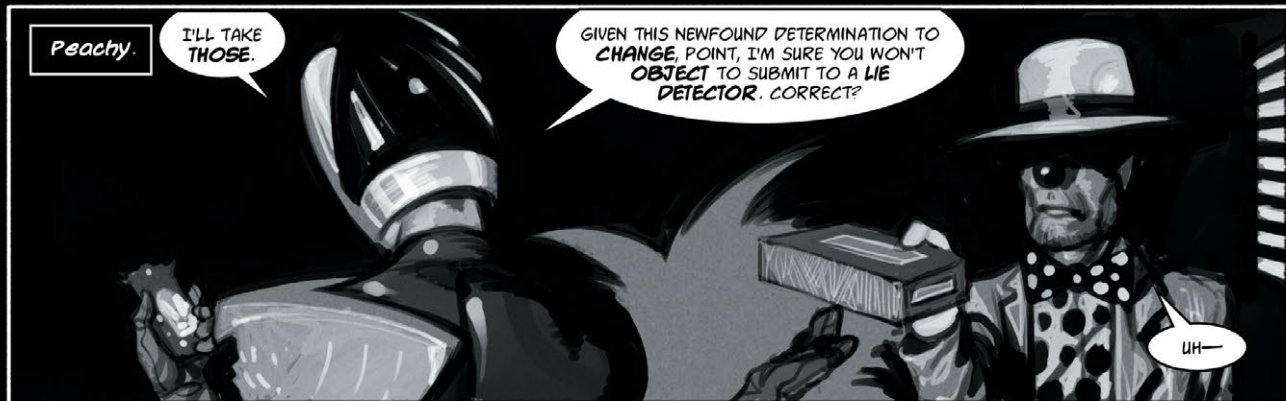
OH THANK GRUD YOU'RE HERE THANK JOVIS YOU GOTTA HELP ME I'VE BEEN BAAAAD I'VE SMOKED OH GRUD I'VE SMOKED AN ACTUAL CIGAR AND, AND, AND...

... AND THERE ARE MORE AT MY OFFICE, IT'S TRUE, PLEASE GRUD YOU GOTTA HELP ME, YOU GOTTA CONFISCATE THEM I WANT TO CHANGE I WANT TO BE GOOD AND—



Angeltown, huh? Charm 'n' charisma got as much chance round here as virginal virtue.

This sector, you know the rules, you're a nectarine nympho.



Peachy.

I'LL TAKE THOSE.

GIVEN THIS NEWFOUND DETERMINATION TO CHANGE, POINT, I'M SURE YOU WON'T OBJECT TO SUBMIT TO A LIE DETECTOR. CORRECT?

UH—



Only problem with Angeltown, see? The gruddamn rules keep changing.

SO THEN, POINT... YOU BEEN UP TO ANYTHING ELSE YOU SHOULDN'T'VE BEEN?

'SEX? DRUGS?'

'MURDER?'



N-NOT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE...

*Lie Detector's a platinum problem, but there's a way 'round. With the birdie it's all in the voice. No sweat count, no brain graph. With the birdie, trick is: be pedantic.*



So when the helmeted harridan says:

LET'S TALK SPECIFIC. YOU HAD ANY ALCOHOL SINCE OUR LAST MEETING?



*Then what you're thinking is: Alcohol? Like... on its own? Medical? Unsullied by bourbon beauty?*



NEVER TOUCH THE STUFF.

*You rewrite the questions in your head and the answers come together like the Mega-Symphony Orchestra's grand finale. You've heard how the birdie ain't 100% reliable, right? Here's why.*

*It takes an hour, and I gotta tell you: all that concentration's leaving bootprints on my brain.*



S-SO... IF I GET ANY MORE CONTRABAND URGES I'LL... I'LL FLUSH 'EM STRAIGHT DOWN THE PAN, HUH?

NO. YOU'LL BRING THEM TO ME.



YOU THINK WE'RE NOT MONITORING YOUR SEWAGE OUTPUT, POINT?



Monitoring sewage output, she says.

Bang goes that idea...

Outside, Angeltown goes on. Always has, always will. Doesn't give a rat's rectum for Meekly Roth, whoever the drokk she really was.

Well, I do. I did.

Three days ago:

GOT YOUR MESSAGE. WHY YOU WANNA MEET H—

THE MINDERS ARE RIGHT BEHIND ME! GET GOING!

HEY!

PULL THE DROKK OVER—

THWAP

LET'S TALK.

We talked. She said how she was *confused*, as if that ain't *natural* for a *fem*.

She said she was *scared*. Scared of her *old man* and what he'd do if he caught her with *me*. She said she was *powerless*, she wanted out, she couldn't handle 'this cit-life *stomm*' no more.

I told her I couldn't help 'less she *opened up* completely. Pretty sure I hid the *smirk*.

She just said:

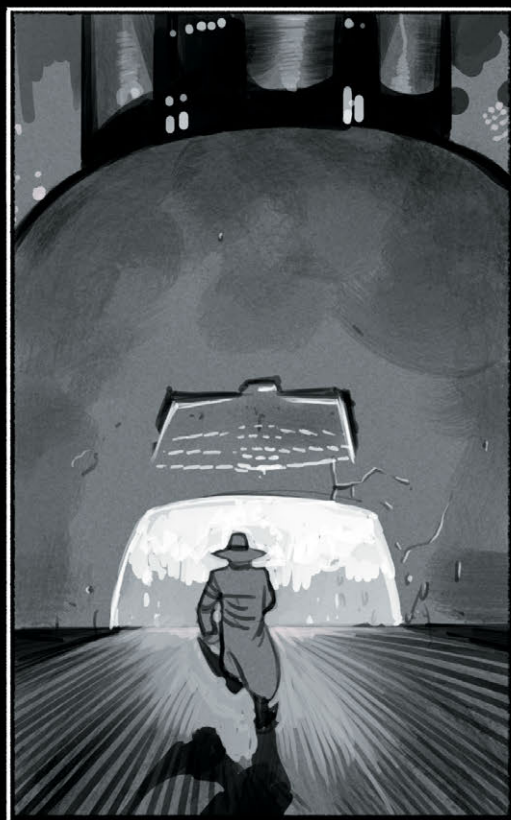
Y-YOU WANT A DRINK, JACK?



Funny thing: it ain't too regular, a dame trynna get me drunk. Any other time I would be riding the pink pachyderm like a shot — a double, for preference — but... No. I remember thinking:

The way she watched. The way she held out her hand. The way her eyes filled up just as quick as my glass....

Something's not right.





GLAVE?

WELL, WELL... LOOK WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD...

*Teks. Tek's're just fine by me. Tek's got half as many bugs crammed up their butts as Street-Beats, twice as many greycells, and just as many curves.*

*You give Glave in there a DNA dribble, off the record, and she'll make a match quicker than a steroidal sprint.*

*All she wants in return is a 'thanks', a 'thinking of you'... and a thousand creds in an offshore account.*

TEK DIV

*Don't look surprised. This is Angeltown. The name's ironic.*

HEY...



BREVIN.

BREVIN, YOU LITTLE SHIT.

W-WHAA—!

*Brevin is the personal attache of Sector chief Daveez.*

*Daveez is more crooked than a broken slinky. Daveez is to fairness what a syphilitic swamp is to hygiene, and if there's one droknuckled scuzz in the whole of the Meg who'd be happy to see yours truly shipped to Titan for homicide-most-horrid, you know just who.*

*If Daveez set me up, he's taking his time about knocking me down.*

WHAT'S HIS GAME, BREVIN?

TELL THE TRUTH OR BAIL YOUR BALLS. I AIN'T FUSSED.

*This is breaking more rules than a stationery-store stampede. This is reckless and feckless and it's gonna get me dead.*



My head. This is like a...

Like a...

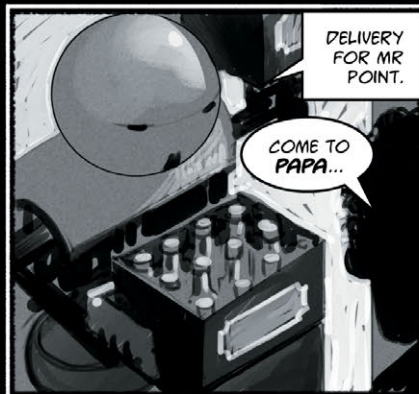
Like something so drokking painful I ain't got time for smart drokking analogies.

It hurts.



I got to tell you, this right here... at this time on this day of every week... this is about the one time I ain't afraid to open the door.

DROKK set-ups.  
DROKK dames.  
DROKK Daveez.



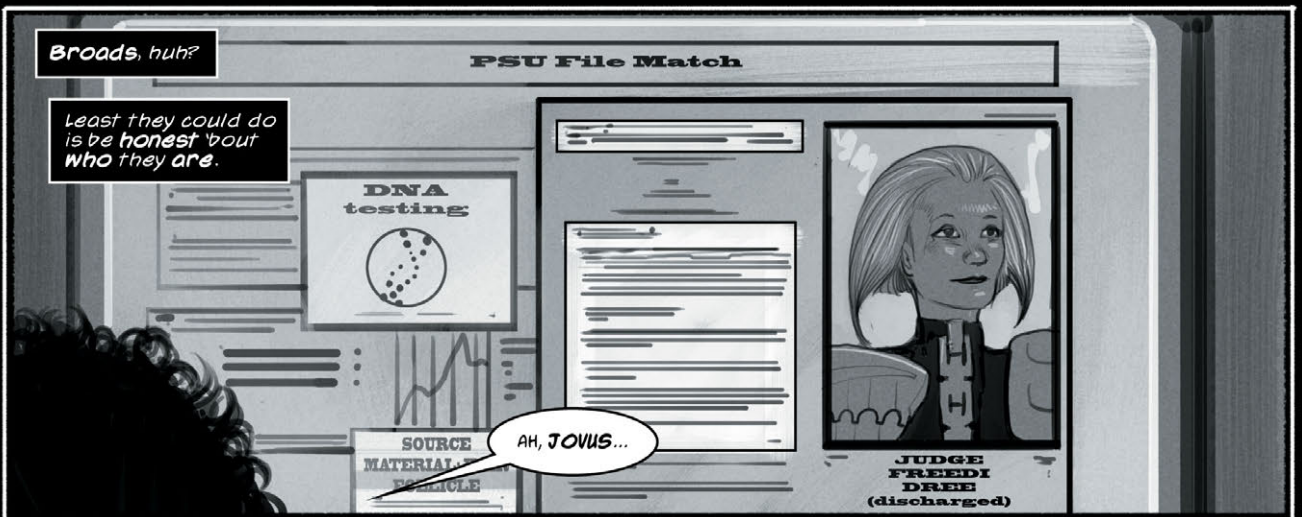
This is Angeltown, and round these parts the hardstuff might not cure a problem, might not even cure the headache that goes with it, but at the very least it'll help you sleep.



I got **two vices** worth talkin' tall, and if ain't escaped me how they got a lot in **common**. Example:



Both even start with the same **letter**. And both'll **blemish** your **bedclothes** when their **containers're cracked**.

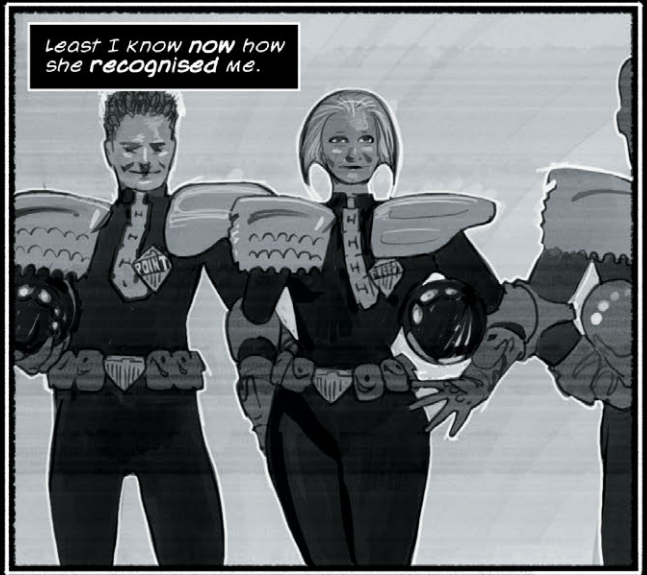




FREEDI DREE....

FORMER JAY,  
DISHONOURABLE  
DISCHARGE TWO  
YEARS INTO STREET  
SERVICE...

UNJUDICIAL  
LIAISON WITH A  
FELLOW JUDGE:  
IDENTITY  
UNKNOWN...



Least I know **now** how  
she recognised me.



Says here  
she went  
**walkabout**  
after she  
was fired.

Outer systems,  
real **backwater**  
stuff.

Magzusi IV. ChininWarne  
Prime. Lesser Lingo.  
The moons of  
Tim-buck-drokkin'-two.



What did  
she find  
out there?



Last known location  
was the **Epsilon**  
System. They never  
figured she came  
back to the Meg.

New name,  
new face, new  
psychotic-  
stommcrumb-  
of-a-husband.

Depressed  
like a **key-**  
board on  
ketamine.

Ain't surprisin'.  
Ex-Judges an'  
real life go  
together like  
Muncy Vindaloo  
and easy-tear  
ass-paper.  
Result's the  
same.



A MESS.



...E-EVERYTHING'S...  
EVERYTHING'S  
**BLACK...**

GRUD... I  
CAN'T **STAND** IT  
ANY MORE...

*This is the last time I  
saw her alive. Jovus, I  
got skull-smarts just  
tryin' to remember. I'd  
figure there's somethin'  
wrong with my brain,  
only I hate to admit Ma  
was right all along.*



LOOK, I **TOLD** YOU... ALL  
YOU GOTTA DO IS TELL ME  
WHAT YOUR OLD MAN'S  
**SMUGGLING.**

YOU CAN BE A  
MILLION MILES AWAY  
BEFORE TOMO—



PLEASE, J-JACK.....  
DON'T TALK.

**F-FOLLOW** ME.



HERE.



JUST...  
**HOLD**  
ME.





And that's where the mental movie stops—

AAAAHH!



WH...WHAT THE DROKK'S.. WR... **WRONG** WUH... WITH MMM...



WHAT THE **DROKK** WHAT THE **DROKK** WHAT THE **DROKK**

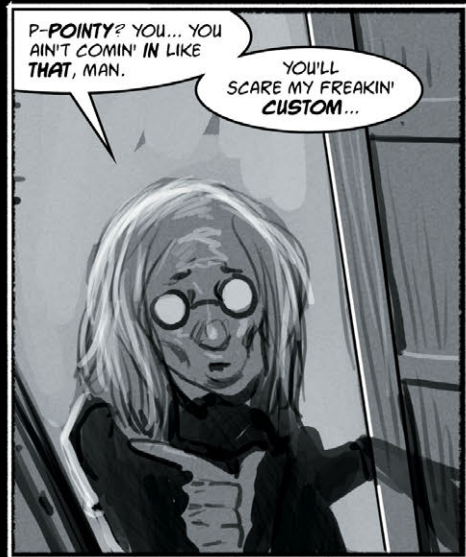
*I figure we're overdue desperate measures.*



NOK  
NOK  
NOK



EVENIN' FRIGGY.



P-POINTY? YOU... YOU AIN'T COMIN' IN LIKE THAT, MAN.

YOU'LL SCARE MY FREAKIN' CUSTOM...

Friggy MacGlutinin is scum. **Clever** scum, like the froth on a **Mensa Milkshake**. He's the kind scum attracts desperate people, on account of how the law ain't renowned for its helping hands. Friggy, anywhere else but Angeltown, he's a **Black Market Neurosurgeon**. Sort of **scalpel snake**'ll chop out **memories** you don't want. Or maybe find the ones you do. In Angeltown, Friggy's called a **Brain Strain**.



I AIN'T STAYIN' OUT HERE, FRIGMUND.

I'M COMIN' IN AND BY GRUD YOU'RE GONNA HELP ME, ON ACCOUNTA HOW IF YOU **DON'T** I AIN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENS...



I AIN'T MYSELF TODAY, FRIGGY.

W-WHATS YOUR POINT?



COMES RIGHT AFTER THE JACK.



You want to know what's going on. I understand. You'll find out. Gimme time.



What's important is this:



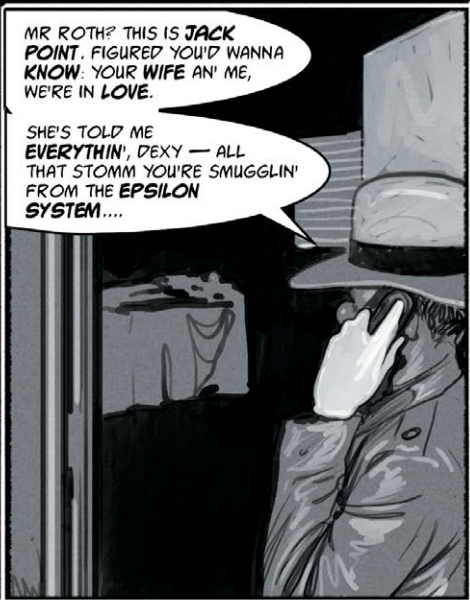
An hour later, in a crazy kind of way, *Freddi Dree* just died a second time.



She probably deserves a **MOMENT**.

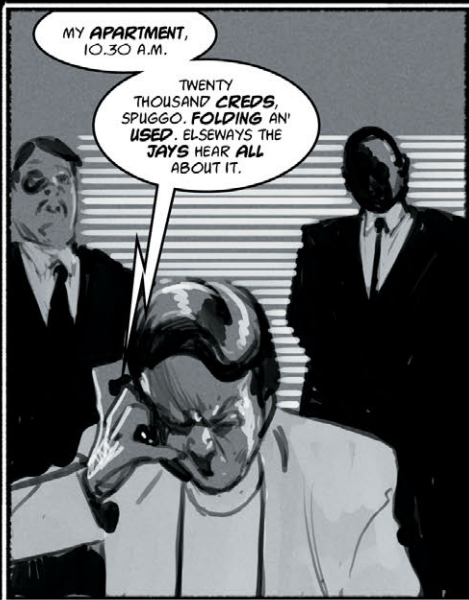
And hey, *you* probably deserve an **EXPLANATION**.

But Angeltown ain't the kinda dame to be **rushed** — she'll take her sweet **TIME** — an' the best you can hope is that she'll show up lookin' **the part**.



MR ROTH? THIS IS **JACK POINT**. FIGURED YOU'D WANNA **KNOW**. YOUR WIFE AN' ME, WE'RE IN **LOVE**.

SHE'S TOLD ME **EVERYTHIN'**, DEXY — ALL THAT STOMM YOU'RE SMUGGLIN' FROM THE **EPSILON SYSTEM**....



MY **APARTMENT**, 10.30 A.M.

TWENTY THOUSAND **CREDS**, SPUGGO. **FOLDING AN' USED**. ELSEWAYS THE **JAYS** HEAR ALL ABOUT IT.



And one final act, to set the **ball rolling**.

*Pheeeeeep*



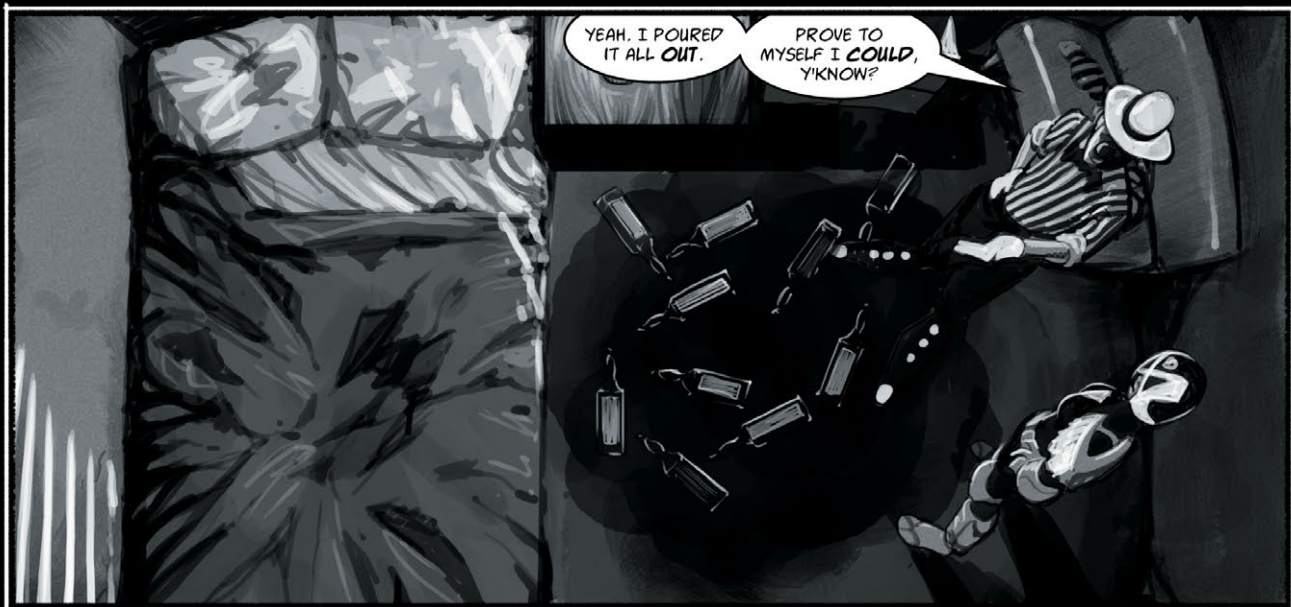
HEY BOY.

GIRL.

WHATEVER.

**CHOW TIME.**

There're guys out there — in Angeltown more'n anyplace else — that'd pay big to watch a pal lickin' at ladyflesh.





No way was Dexy gonna stand for threats. I told him to pay up or go down, and he's the kind to take the third route.





THERE'S THE SIGNAL.

Anne Thrope. I called her earlier. Told her I'd reconsidered her offer, we should talk, do some business. Oh, and one little favour'd be persuasive like a hypnosporer handshake...

I figure this means I owe her big, but Angeltown's all about crossing bridges when you get to the drokkers...



... And only then when the others're crispy kindlin' behind you.



J-JOVUS, DID WE DO THAT?



TH-THEY'VE GOT ROCKETS!

ARMED AND DANGEROUS! TAKE 'EM DOWN!



Word to the wise: SJS Judges got a reputation for bein' sneakier than a fox's finale, and observant like a paranoid Poirot.

Best kind of witness there is.



GOOD WORK, POINT. LOOKS LIKE YOU MIGHT BE WORTH SPIT AS A JUDGE AFTER ALL.

YEAH. SHAME ABOUT THE HAB. SENTIMENTAL VALUE, Y'KNOW?

... And that means movin' into the office.

They say never mix business and pleasure, but seein' as I just exploded all my gruddamn whiskey I figure I ain't in danger of either.

HAIR  
OF  
SERVICES

Back Point  
Private eye

NOW YOU FOLKS BEEN PATIENT, AND I OWE YOU FOR IT.

SO HERE'S WHAT'S WHAT. HERE'S THE KEY. HERE'S HOW IT ALL WENT DOWN.



BIOCHIPS.



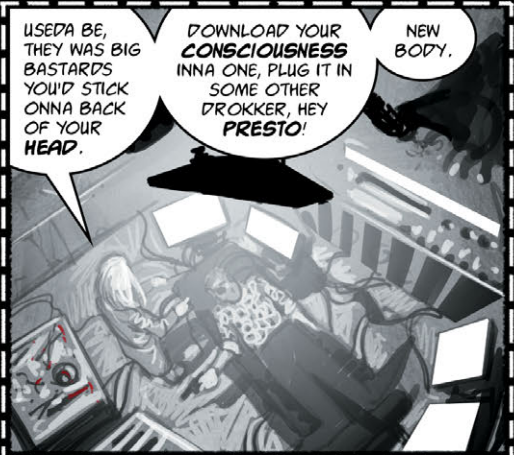
Modern tech. This city, you got more breakthroughs than a woodpecker wehrmacht, and your average greycell guru needs to keep up like gigaviagra and gravy.

Friggy McGlutinin knows his STOMM.

USEDA BE, THEY WAS BIG BASTARDS YOU'D STICK ONNA BACK OF YOUR HEAD.

DOWNLOAD YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS INNA ONE, PLUG IT IN SOME OTHER DROKKER, HEY PRESTO!

NEW BODY.



Friggy's theory is someone's developed a new type. One you dispense outta your own bod. Say, when some big-shoed bozo comes along.

Copies of your own brain, soluble like salt. It's a drokked-up world.

YOU KNOW ANYONE BEEN TO LESSER LINGO, POINTY?

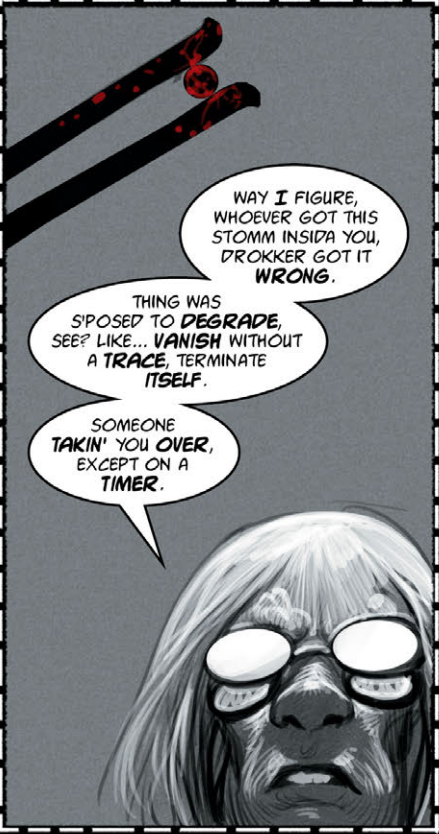
ONLY PLACE I EVER HEARD OF WHERE THE DAMN THINGS'RE LEGAL...





... WHICH EXPLAINS WHAT OLD DEXY WAS TRYIN' TO SMUGGLE INTO TOWN, RIGHT?

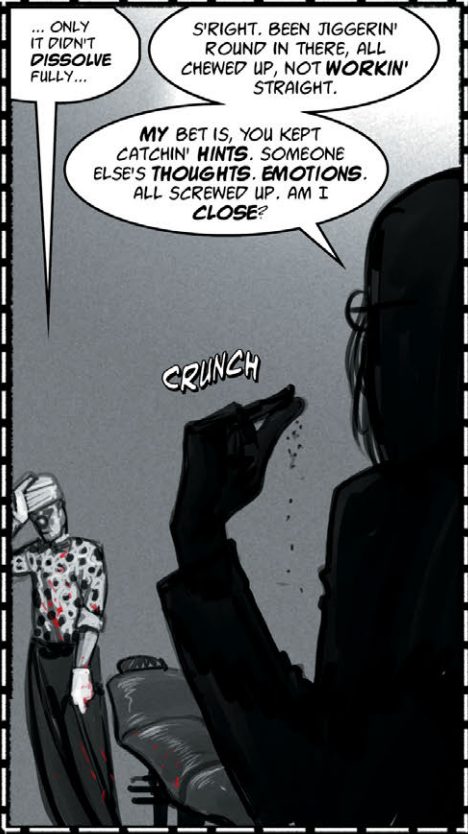
YOU GOT TO WONDER HOW MANY HE SOLD...



WAY I FIGURE, WHOEVER GOT THIS STOMM INSIFA YOU, DROKKER GOT IT WRONG.

THING WAS SPOSED TO DEGRADE, SEE? LIKE... VANISH WITHOUT A TRACE, TERMINATE ITSELF.

SOMEONE TAKIN' YOU OVER, EXCEPT ON A TIMER.



... ONLY IT DIDN'T DISSOLVE FULLY...

S'RIGHT. BEEN JIGGERIN' ROUND IN THERE, ALL CHEWED UP, NOT WORKIN' STRAIGHT.

MY BET IS, YOU KEPT CATCHIN' HINTS. SOMEONE ELSE'S THOUGHTS. EMOTIONS. ALL SCREWED UP. AM I CLOSE?

CRUNCH



Yeah.

Close like a dryshave disaster.

Only in Angeltown, huh? These sorry slabs, this drokked-up dump. I tell ya, if Angeltown was plumbing, it'd be the chute in an alien abattoir.

S'where all the weird shit goes down.



HERE'S THE THING.

I KNOW WHO KILLED MEEKLY ROTH.



She was scared. Depressed.

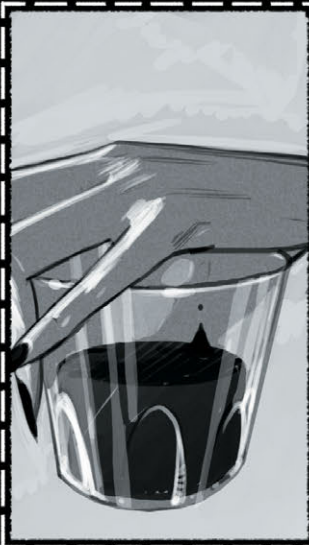
Out in the stars she'd seen so much beauty, and that raffink Dexy bought her right on back.



And she plain out couldn't take it.

HERE.

JUST... HOLD ME.



She was alone.

She was alone, and she couldn't do it herself.



So she found someone she **KNEW**, someone she figured was smart enough to get away with it, and she passed the buck.

D-DON'T SCREW UP.



NOK!  
NOK!

Not her fault the chip didn't dissolve. Not her fault she got stuck in my brain, like a poltergeist in a pickle jar. I ain't one to bear a grudge.

Turns out she made some calls before she pulled the trigger. Did some stuff I was too chicken to do for myself.

Her little way of thankin' me, I guess.



YOU GOT A LOT OF EXPLAINING, STOMMDROKK!

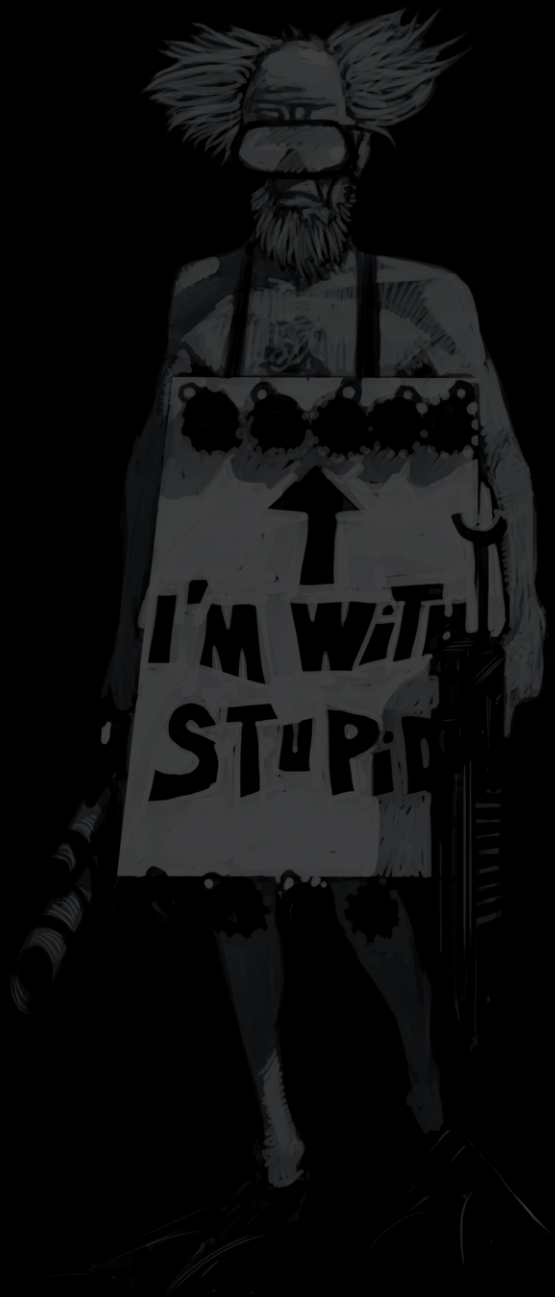
FIRST YOU MAKE A DATE, THEN YOU SLAM THE DOOR IN MY FACE, NOW YOU CALL ME AGAIN!

I'M NOT THE KIND TO BE MUCKED AROUND, POINT —



Broads, huh?

Sometimes you just got to take the initiative.



## DORKS OF WAR

Text: Simon Spurrier

Illustrations: Frazer Irving

Originally published in *Judge Dredd Magazine* 227

**IT'S MONDAY.** That, or I died Sunday and woke up in Hell. Either way: 'Ow.'

This hangover, it's like a tectonic event. It's like I swallowed a diseased volcano and the lava's congealing down my throat. It's like someone swapped my drokkin' eyeballs for nailbombs.

Welcome to Angeltown. If Grud made the Big Meg in six days, this is where he puked the morning after. I guess that makes me a Public Cleaner.

Me, I got more layers than a sedimentary onion. I'm an undercover Judge posing as an ex-helmet, working as a clapped-out PI with a sideline in dressing as an idiot.

Confused? And my friends ask why I drink too much.

'Friends'. Ha. Good one.

The name's Jack Point. Yeah, 'Point', as in: 'Quit it with the rambling *intro* and get to the —'

beats her regularly, and what she needs is a Real Man who ain't afraid to show his sensitive side.

Actually, what she says is: 'He's a troubled soul, Mr Point ... He can't handle stressful situations.'

... but I'm reading between the lines.

She says she took a photo of the body before he vanished, then dumped it back in the ooze. She's a class act. She says she's trusting me not to tell the Jays, and to find her husband. She hands me the picture like it's a love note and she wets her lips.

'Find out who did this, Mr Point,' she says, leaning forward. Right about now, I'm glad I don't have to stand up. 'Find the *real* murderer, and convince my Bunnykins to come home.'

She looks away, lips pursed, like maybe she's about to reveal some intimate secret, maybe something sleazy. A guy can hope.

# “ BRUNETTE. BODY FIT TO MAKE A EUNUCH SLASH HIS WRISTS AND A PRIEST REACH FOR THE KLEENIWIPES ”

Monday morning. This being Angeltown, it's only a matter of time before trouble comes calling. And this being Angeltown, trouble only comes in one shape. Think *hour glass*.

Eleven o'clock, a knocking at the door. Feels like my ears are bleeding, but I'm a gentleman.

'It's open.'

Brunette. Body fit to make a eunuch slash his wrists and a priest reach for the Kleeniwipes™. Lips like novelty pillows and an ass like plums in *oil*. A broad like this, she smells like honey mixed with *heroin*. She moves and you're looking for blurry out-lines, on account of how *no way* is she anything but an expensive *effect*.

She's real.

'I need your help, Mr Point.'

It's a good start. Just so happens my eyes are level with the top of her blouse, and I'm trying to think of any words besides 'Grand Canyon'. Cleavage like that, a guy could go bungee-jumping.

'It's about my husband. He's disappeared.'

And it was going so well.

She says her husband is Oswald Takko, like I should know who that is. She says her name's Maria Takko, and I'm doing my best to watch her lips in a listening-to-the-words kinda way, rather than the 'let-me-fetch-a-lollipop' thing my brain's churning up.

Turns out this guy, he's in sewage processing. This guy, he's earned a fortune. He's the biggest gruddamn shit-stirrer on the East side of the Meg.

She sits. She bounces. *Bungee jumping*, I swear.

She says her husband's gone AWOL. She says last Friday he found a body in the chem-tank, burned to stomm. Figured the Jays'd pin it on him. Mrs Takko, she says her husband Got the Jitters. She shifts like she's uncomfortable, and she says he's a tenth-grade screaming *kook* with zero sex appeal. She says he

'My husband,' she says, 'he ... he simps in his spare time, Mr Point. *Help him.*'

She offers me money. She appeals to my sense of justice. She leans over a bit more.

Guess which one sells it.

## SO I'M EN ROUTE TO THE SECTOR 13 SIMPING CLUB WHEN THE CALL COMES IN.

Role-play. You got a hangover like a Pinboing™ game in your skull. You're on a crosstown zoom, makes more noise than a radmonkey howling for a mate. You're surrounded by chavgang-ers with psychorawk on their We-Pods, and there's this fem, this lump of whalemeat, this Brit-Cit tedium-tourist, shouting at her rat's ass of a husband for not buying a guidebook. Your ears are melting like a malfunction at the Snowdomia. Your hand's reaching for the hipflask for the first dose of the day. Word of advice:

*Turn down the drokking volume on your drokking lump-of-shit mobile drokking communicator.*

It's my guy from Control. He's pretty good about taking abuse.

He says he ran the ID on Takko I wanted. He says the guy served ten years in the Space Corps and came back with more metal pinned to his chest than a 46DD robo-doll. He says this guy, he's a gen-yoo-ine hero, turned to simping.

You see enough bad shit out there, I guess you get to appreciate the funny side.

Simps're like eggs that've boiled themselves. Simps are the dorks and the dames who see how drokked the world is, who maybe get kicked around once too often by the devil-dame Life, and take the only course open.



Jack Point  
Private Eye



LIFE

T9.7

T9.8

XO.4

Put a chameleon against a polka-dot shirt, watch him turn funky. Now stick a sensitive soul in a mental asylum calling itself a city. Same difference.

Simps like to dress stupid. They like to act crazy. Simps keep walking into stuff on account of imagining it's invisible. They like to say 'f'taang' and 'clip-clop'. I have no idea why.

Me, I dress like one. Means I can walk in any place and cits'll underestimate me. Way I think of it, it's like a shark wearing a goldfish suit.

Dressing like a Simp is one thing. Acting like one ... I need whiskey.

Something's gone seriously drokking awry.  
Plan B.

### AS A RULE, I HATE CLUES.

You ever watch an old tri-d mystery movie, you can't move for convenient footprints and tell-tale fragments of cloth. It's all, 'A-ha! A seed from the Mongolian Bluskvudder! This can only mean *one* thing!'

Big gruddamn obvious clues. Never happen in the real world, and when they *do* you gotta trust 'em like a feline loan-shark.

## “ FIVE OF THEM. ARMED TO NUKE THE WORLD. THESE GUYS, THESE FIVE CRAZY-FACED KOOKS, THEY LOOK SET TO START A WAR ”

**THERE'S A CROWD OUTSIDE THE SIMPCLUB.** Goons from the Sensible League, done up in Sensible Shirts with Sensible Ties and Sensible Shoes. These guys, they're waving placards and shouting like it's a competition.

'Down with clowns! Down with clowns!'

This sort of thing, my head does *not* need.

If simps are oil, the League are vinegar: belong in the same pot, see, but they sure as hell don't mix.

For once, the League has grounds for complaint. Citywide, we got a simp-based crime boom. Guys in clown kit been knocking over banks, blasting clerks with custard pie grenades, filling floppy pants in jewellery stores. This week alone, we got ten simp-inflicted casualties. For the League, it's like Christmas came early.

I make it into the club without getting egged. The gun maybe helped.

So I'm inside. 'Thirteen!' says the first guy I see. He's wearing a fishtank. That's it. 'A new ostrich in the purple! Parped, old spatula? Have you come to play with my otter? Clip-clop.'

I don't like what he's implying, so I break his fingers. Maybe whiskey was a bad idea.

There's a fem wearing a tutu on her head. She keeps barking like a dog and asking for spare change for the leopards.

There's a bat-glider with no wings clinging to the floor in case he falls off. He's sobbing like a joyless juve.

There's a fat naked guy who swears his ass talks to him, delivering nuggets of incontrovertible wisdom in the dead of the night.

There's a fem who'd be the finest piece of hardbody I ever laid bloodshots on, if she hadn't scrawled 'COTTON?' in felt-tip all over her face.

I expected this place to be kinda sad. I mean that in the 'pa-thetic' sense.

But it's also the most depressing thing I ever saw.

There's no answers here. You mention Takko to these creeps, they either burst into tears or run away shouting 'mook'. Simpung's supposed to bring happiness.

Then again, I'm out of options. I spend any more time in Simp Central I'm gonna be reaching for a razorblade wristwatch, so what say we take a look at that photo?

Feel free to flick back a page.

In this game, you get good at paying attention, like a peeper on Prozac. This photo, something ain't right.

Sure, there are clues. There's the droid serial numbers and Takko's threads. There's the reg number on the treatment stacks and the viscosity of the shit. Leads. Avenues of investigation.

But there's something else. Something ... *wrong*. It's grating against my head like a medulla-maggot, and I ain't any closer to figuring it. Maybe it's the whiskey to blame.

I could sure use a refill.

Meantime, take a squint at the ChuffyBar™ in fatso's fist. Staple diet of the idiot. These things, they'll turn bowels into blimps. 'Noisy but odourless gas release.' Simps love that shit.

To reiterate: I only *dress* like one.

Point is, Chuffybar's habit forming. Guy gets in the fart routine – elevators, taxis, public places – he can't go cold turkey. And there's only one place to get 'em: *Ziggo's Simpung Supplies*. I'm willing to bet Takko was a regular customer. I'm willing to bet he's been there in the last few days.

Just so happens there's also an alco-store down the same alley.

Detective work. You gotta love it.

**ZIGGO'S IS SHUT.** Can't say I'm disappointed. Closing a lead means opening a bottle.

So I'm ready to head next door when there's metal pressing my skull. Bad metal. The kind in the shape of an 'O'. The kind, I guess, with a gun behind it.

I'm hustled inside the Clown Store, and there're guys all around me.

Five of them. Armed to nuke the world. Guns like phallic nightmares, bandolier grenades and hippy-holstered hand-

cannons. These guys, these five crazy-faced kooks, they look set to start a war.

Thing is, beneath the ammo-belts and doom-cocks, beneath the photoflares and monoblades, I'm seeing feathers and baggy pants. I'm seeing simps.

'DeGlok sent you, right?' says one – a guy with a happy face drawn on his forehead and a black dress covering his paunch. He looks like maybe he forgot something, so he coughs and adds: 'Er, *clip-clop*.'

I tell him, no, DeGlok didn't send me. I tell him I'm looking for Takko. I tell him I have no drokking idea who DeGlok is, or why five such good natured and intelligent guys should want to shoot me, a spiritual brother of the Temple of Simp.

'What you ... *ah...* f'taang f'taang ... want with Takko?' says one – a skinny guy wearing a bunny costume. 'You come to frubwoople him?'

'He means kill him,' inserts another, helpful like.

I say, no. I say, *Would any of you drokking mentalists mind telling me what's going on, because Takko's angelically-endowed better-half ain't paying me enough to wade through this shit?*

Then the gun's taken away from my head, and the fat guy holding it there, he turns me round and he peels off his broccoli mask.

'M-my wife sent you?' says Takko. 'Marmaduke.'

### IT'S LIKE THIS.

When they returned to earth, the men and women of the Ter-ran 53rd Space Corps – affectionately known as the SKREEM-ING PSYCHOS – found everyday urban life kinda *tricky*. Ones who didn't go futsie mostly turned up swinging by the neck. Lucky ones found the Sector13 SimpClub.

Five years, Oswald Takko and his grunts – every one as crazy as a dino-dentist – got by. Nine to five they worked their jobs, soaked up welf. Evenings and weekends, they vented unsavoury emotions on dressing dumb and talking toss.

'Ain't as good as blowing things to fnaaarp,' Takko says, stumbling over the dumb words, 'but it's the next best radish.'

Then a month back the SimpClub president choked to death on a quick-drying custard pie. Step into the breach Lars DeGlok – lifelong simp, respectable pillar of the moron community and, if you believe Takko, a complete bastard.

'Since then, haddock by haddock, my men have been turning into squids.'

'He means frubwoopling.' Says one.

'He means *disappearing*.' Says another, rolling his eyes. 'Er ... f'taang.'

These guys, for them, simping don't come natural.

I know how they feel.

Takko says his men been going AWOL. He says there's something fishy going on in the Club and this DeGlok guy, he's right at



the heart of it. He says he gathered his remaining men and went into hiding at Ziggo's place.

Actually, what he says is: 'DeGlok's been norking my spittle, frub, since the Days Of Thrix. Chatterbox! Chukka-chukka-chukka-huuuh.'

... but I'm reading between the lines.

I ask him, 'So what about the body?' I show him the photo, and tell him his wife's worried.

He says he's never seen that body before in his life, and that he told his wife where and why he was hiding before he split.

Mrs Takko. Lady, I smell a rat.

Her husband wants to know what the hell's going on. His gang of goons, they're getting excited.

Trying to keep these guys calm, that's got 'King Canute' written all over it.

So I say it.

'Let's go to work.'

### THE TREATMENT PLANT NESTLES UP AGAINST THE BLACK ATLANTIC WALL LIKE A NUCLEAR LIMPET.

Me, I got a novelty nose pressing my nostrils together – but still I smell the place before we're off the zoom.

The security droid at the gate tries to stop us. Says it's got to report visitors to Mrs Takko.

'Hey,' says Oswald, 'it's *me*. I'm the boss' – but the buckthead ain't listening.

The fem's in charge.

Oswald looks fit to pop.

Little Jinxy, he's the one in the orange chumpsuit and the Christmas tree, he gets jittery. The droid falls into a million bits and the lazerstubber kicks up a spout of smoke like the finest Banana City carrot-shaped cigar. Already there's an alarm whooping.

This could be going better.

'We're just here to ask some *questions* ...' I remind them. Doesn't do much good. These guys, these slapstick soldiers, they're so highly strung they're *crucified*.

Only one way to cool the situation. Do it for your city, Jack.

*Frraaap*.

It works. I got these simpos giggling like they ain't got a care.

Thank Grud for flatulence.

Then we're inside, and the stink of shit knocks me down like a Scent-based Sumo, and by the time my eyes've quit watering Mrs Takko's waiting for us with a smile.

'Welcome back, honey.' I like to think she's talking to me.

And right when we're ready to begin probing, all hell breaks loose.

**THEY COME DOWN ON ROPES.** They burst in through doors on both sides. They slip out of the shadows like ...

Like heavily-armed kooks in a variety of elaborate but impractical costumes springing from their concealment to ensnare my

loyal morons and – importantly – *me*. Time like this, I wish I'd stayed in the office.

Scratch that. Time like this, I wish I'd stayed in the *womb*.

Right now, there's so many muzzles aimed at my head, if I shout 'bang' and duck I could wipe out half the city.

These guys, holding cannons to our skulls, they're all simps too. If clashing colours could kill, this'd be a massacre.

Thing is, as they're springing up and surrounding us, we should be making a stand. Even better, we should be running like the Good Guys out of Gomorrah.

Only Takko and his boys, they've lost the plot.

'Fawkes?' they're shouting. 'Rogers? Is that you? Sarge? Jone-sy? We thought you guys had been frubwooped!'

They recognise these creeps. I guess the Mystery of the Disappearing Ex-Combat Clowns is solved. These guys should be slapping backs and hi-fiving.

They ain't.

Takko's ex-comrades or not, these guys don't look like they're fixing to cut us slack. The ones who ain't wearing dumb masks, the ones whose eyes you can actually see ...

... the lights are on, but there's no drokker home.

'Puppets,' says Mrs Takko, as if it explains everything. She's standing out of reach, showing-off every inch of that make-a-saint-sweat hardbody. If I'm about to die, please Grud let me come back as her bedroom mirror.

She fixes me a look, and she smiles. 'These morons,' she says, waving a hand at the ambush party, 'they were already halfway to *loco*-land. All it took was a little ... *push*.'

She says she's been having an affair with this guy Lars DeGlok, the new Pres of the Club. Beside me Takko chokes on a murderous 'wibble'. She says together they cooked up a crazy plan. She doesn't say what it is.

She says when her husband and his pet freaks caught wind of something amiss, she thought the game was up. She says she needed a way to bring them in. She needed to find someone stupid enough to care. Someone her husband would trust. Someone with ties to the simping community.

She says she faked the photo and sent me on my merry way.

I don't understand what the hell is going on here, but I'm still watching her lips like a dog eyeing a bone. She blows me a kiss and says it's been a pleasure, then she tells her army of simps to lock and load.

Dames, huh? Somewhere out there, maybe, there's one that ain't *evil*.

I ask her if at least she'll let me die without this stupid grud-damn gear on me. I ask if I can meet my maker not looking like a fool. This broad, she's been married five years to a man who shouts 'Bibbly!' at the moment of climax. She understands what I'm getting at.

She nods.

I pull off the nose and the bow tie, the lapel flower and the big drokking shoes. I chuck it all in the shit tank nearby, and stand back.

'Okay,' I say. 'I'm ready.'

Then the hi-ex core of the novelty hooter – just one of the many

ingenious simp-based munitions I keep on my person – detonates three feet deep. Even before the air's emptied of ballistic crapola I'm running as fast as my newly-liberated feet can take me.

Behind me, it sounds like Takko and Co are making that last stand.

*Once a moron, always a moron.*

**A JUDGE'S BODY IS A TEMPLE, RIGHT?** Well, mine's the Taj Mahal. That's the Indo-Cit curry-rama halfway down Meera Syal Overped: full of carcinogens, cheap alcohol and unhealthy stomm.

“

## THE SIMPS STARE AT THE SENSIBLES. THE SENSIBLES STARE BACK. THERE'S SILENCE. THIS IS GONNA BE UGLY...

”

Running away before being shot in the face looks like the attractive option, 'til you're halfway down the street and your gruddam heart starts hammering like a Construction Droid. My tongue feels like it turned into a cactus.

For the first time, I get what they mean when they say 'cold sweat'.

Mondays, huh?

Behind me, it sounds like the gunfight didn't last. Takko and his boys went down in a big pointless flashy blaze of glory like the big pointless flashy cretins they were. Rest in pieces, drokkos.

Shame the same can't be said for Mrs Takko's little army. Half a kay up the street I'm heaving on dry air like a premature lungfish, my feet are cut to shit on the usual Angeltown detritus, and an oh-so-casual glance over the shoulder tells me all I need to know.

They're hot on my heels. Fifteen, maybe twenty: psychos in streamlined silly hats, go-faster-stripes down every baggy limb, goggle-eyes trailing in the wind.

They got more guns than I got scars. I got a lot of scars.

Turn a corner. Keep running. Don't look back. Push people out the way, keep your legs pumping.

Suddenly I'm in a square. Wide pedway with a colourful building one end, crowded to capacity. What's going on here? Doesn't matter. No time for distractions. Don't think about it. Don't think about anything but running.

Don't think about whiskey.

*Mmmm.*

I said *don't*—

And then something's wrong. You run hard enough and fast enough, you forget what's around you. You focus on one foot before the other. But here and now, bit by bit, something's breaking through.

I'm surrounded by voices. Angry voices.

*Chanting* voices.

'Down with clowns! Down with clowns!'

Ah, *stomm*.

I'm out front of the Angeltown SimpClub. The guys from the Sensible League, these square-jawed geeks in knitted jumpers and golfing socks, waving placards and spitting, they're all around me.

I'm dog tired. I'm dead meat.

Except ...

I got rid of the nose. I ditched the bow tie and flower squirter. Far as these guys know, I'm just an average Joe.

Behind me, the simp army takes the corner with a clatter of flapping shoes.

They slow to a stop.

The simps stare at the Sensibles. The Sensibles stare back. For just a little while, there's silence.

This is gonna be ugly.

**I WOULDN'T CALL WHAT I'M DOING 'COWERING', EXACTLY.**

What it is, I'm watching the fight. I just happened to find a nice, out-of-the-way door with a nice, out-of-the-way view and a nice, totally impenetrable shadow.

Things seem pretty even, so far.

So I'm watching a novelty baby's bonnet spiralling out of the crowd, when I happen to glance up at the windows in the place above me. It's this rundown joint, same as most Angeltown blockfronts, overlooking the square and the SimpClub. There's a guy there, pressed against the glass, staring down at the *mêlée*. This guy, he looks a whole bladderworth of *pissed*. He sees me watching and backs outta view.

Nothing suspicious in that. City's full of nosey bastards.

Except this doorway I'm in, the sign above it says 'Lee Three-Fingers' Sino-Cit Takeout'. The place is boarded up. And Mr Who-ever-the-hell-he-is upstairs, he didn't look Sino.

Matter of fact, with the makeup and the wig and all, he looked distinctly *simpo*.

Three fingers. Three fingers. Why's that scratching at my brain so hard? Why's it got me reaching for my hipflask, just to dampen the brain-strain? In my pocket, right next to the empty pot, there's the photo. Lady Takko faked it. Superimposed her hubby over ...

Over ...

The body.

*That's* what had me scratchin' my head before. *That's* what I couldn't figure out. What made the photo feel *wrong*.

Three fingers.

Lee Three-Fingers. Deader than disco.

Like maybe someone wanted to use his premises and wouldn't say 'please'.

**THE HELMETS TURN UP WHEN THE FIGHT GETS OUTTA HAND.**

The Sensible guys scatter like boringly-dressed seeds on tilled ground.

I point the badges into the Sino-joint and settle down to watch.

Inside, they find a guy called Lars DeGlok and enough torture equipment to keep three dynasties of sadists busy for life.

He spills all under interrogation.

He says him and Mrs Takko, they dreamed up a scheme. He says if you're gonna get someone to rob a bank, you want to make sure: [a], they ain't recognisable; [b], they don't look outta place walking up a street; and [c], they'll do exactly what they're told.

'Simps,' he says.

Every fragile-brained little kook in the Angeltown SimpClub with a history of combat. Kidnapped in the night, taken to a secret location, beaten half to death by DeGlok and his goons, tortured 'til their puny minds snap and they're left malleable like wet clay.

The clown-based crime spree, that's DeGlok's doing. The sims acting crazy in the Club, that's DeGlok's doing. The army of braindead psychos who tried to kill me, who're so traumatised by whatever-the-hell they been through the Meds say

they'll never recover, that's DeGlok's doing.

He's a nice guy.

Ninety years.

**MRS TAKKO'S HIDING OUT AMONGST THE CHEMICAL VATS**

**WHEN I FIND HER.** I asked the Jays to let me close my own case. They smelled the venue and they didn't put up much of a fight.

Mrs Takko tries it on. She's all over me like a swarm of mosquitoes on a skinless anaemic. She promises money. She promises rewards like I ain't ever dreamed, if I just let her go. We can go away together. Somewhere hot.

It's no good. I guess finally she accepts it's all over, 'cos she comes over all guilty and prepares to throw herself into the chemical pit. Better that, she says, than life in a cube.

She says she knows she did wrong. She says she never meant to hurt anyone. She begs for forgiveness and she says she knows that only in death will she find redemption.

Actually, what she says is: 'No! No, you bastard! Don't push me!'

... but I'm reading between the lines.

I need a drink.



**COVER GALLERY**



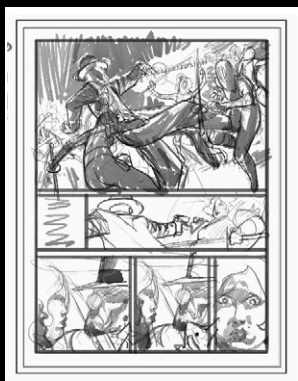
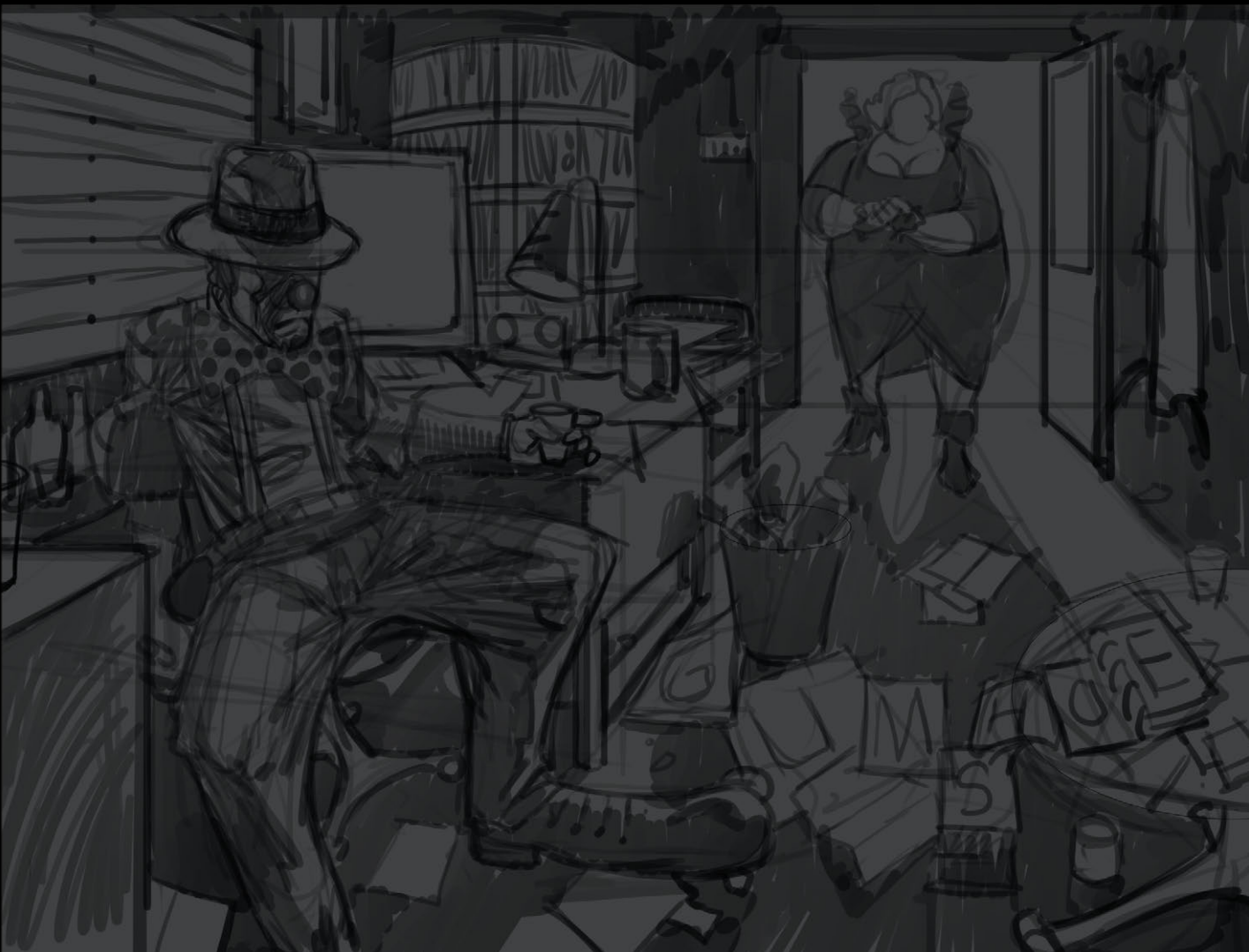
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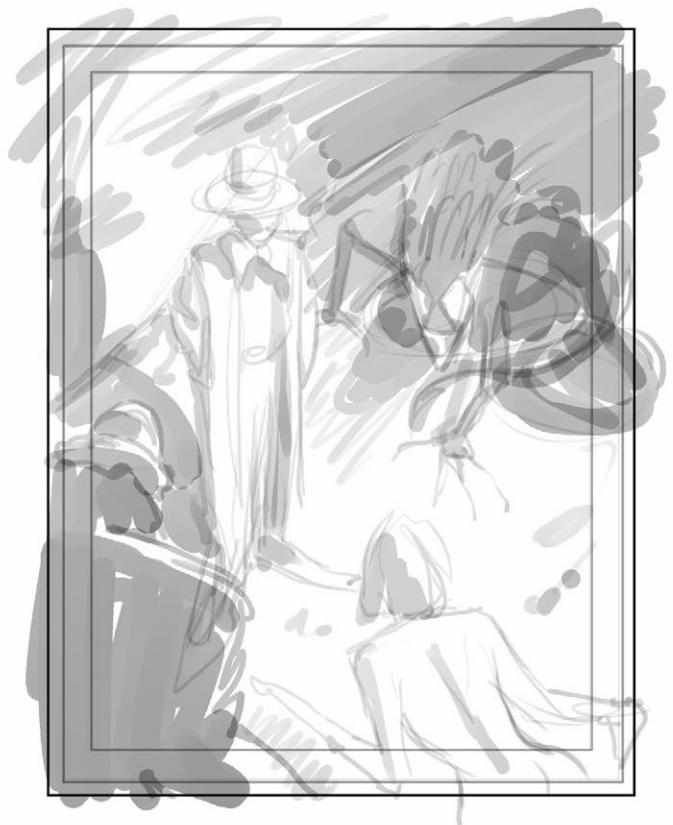
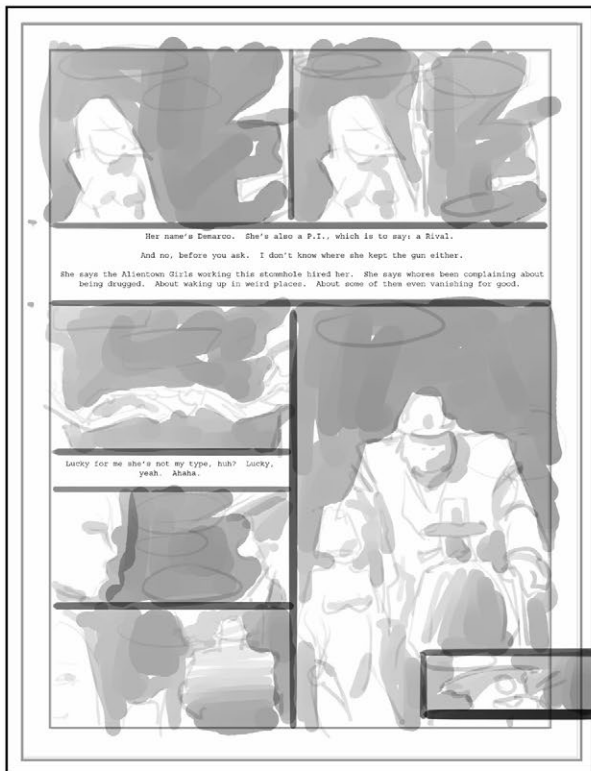
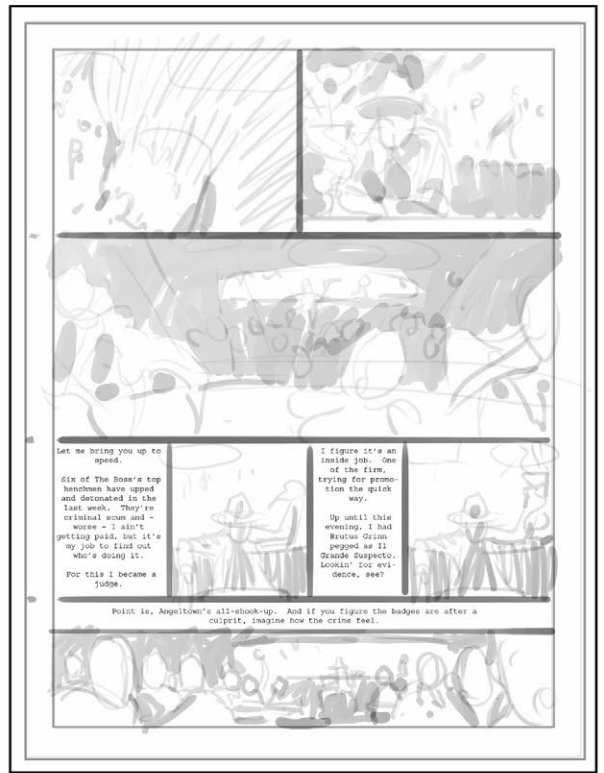
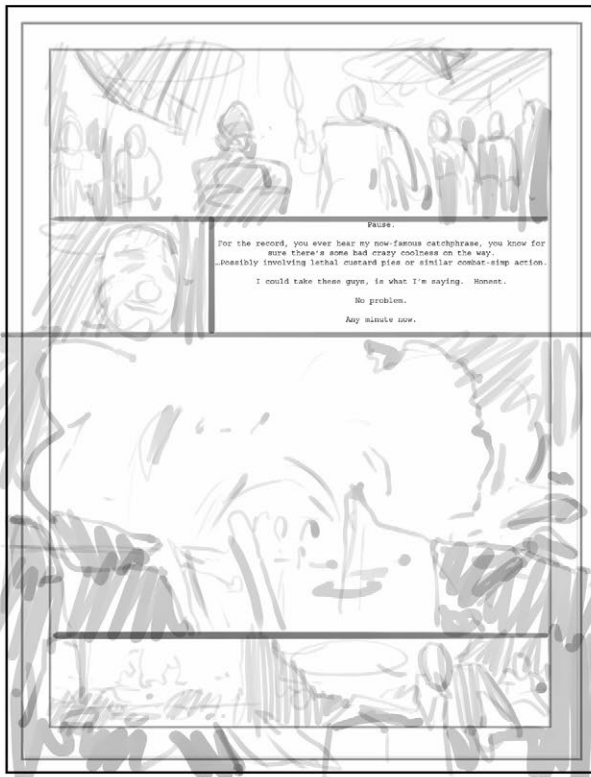
# FRAZER IRVING SKETCHBOOK



F. IRVING '05







## SIMON SPURRIER

**Simon Spurrier** is one of the newest additions to the *2000 AD* creative roster, but he has already made his mark with co-created strips *Bec & Kawl*, *From Grace*, *Lobster Random*, *Chiaroscuro* and *The Sipping Detective*. He has also written several *Future Shocks*, *Past Imperfects* and *Terror Tales*.

## FRAZER IRVING

**Frazer Irving** is without question one of *2000 AD*'s brightest new stars. His distinctive style, both on co-created strips like *A Love Like Blood*, *Necronauts* and *Storming Heaven*, as well as on *Judge Dredd*, *Judge Death*, *Future Shocks*, *Terror Tales*, *Tharg the Mighty*, *The Scarlet Apocrypha* and *Sinister Dexter*, have quickly brought him to the attention of the US industry. Irving recently completed both *Klarion the Witch-boy* for DC Comics and *Iron Man: Inevitable* for Marvel comics. Amongst other things he is currently working on *Gutsville* with Simon Spurrier, published by Image Comics.



## WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

**MEGA-CITY ONE, 2129 AD.** Simped-up private eye Jack Point is an undercover 'Wally Squad' Judge – 'cos only a clown would want to walk the streets of Angeltown, the scuzziest part of City Bottom. He's got two friends in this world, one's long and hard, and makes your ears ring after every shot; the other's his gun. In fact, Jack's got enemies on both sides of the Law, and he's never far from trouble.

Written by Simon Spurrier (*Gutsville*) with art by Frazing Irving (*Storming Heaven*), *The Sipping Detective* is future noir at its best!



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