

# YOU HAVE KILLED ME



*by*  
**JAMIE S. RICH**  
&  
**JOËLLE JONES**

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*An Oni Press Production*





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PUBLISHED BY ONI PRESS, INC.

JOE NOZEMACK *publisher*

JAMES LUCAS JONES *editor in chief*

RANDAL C. JARRELL *managing editor*

CORY CASONI *marketing director*

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DOUGLAS E. SHERWOOD *production assistant*

*Special thanks to Terry and Satoka for their assistance with the tones, which were all applied by hand. Their aid was a big help in completing the process.*

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ONI PRESS, INC.

1305 SE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Suite A

Portland, OR 97214

USA

[www.onipress.com](http://www.onipress.com)

[www.confessions123.com](http://www.confessions123.com)

[www.joellejones.com](http://www.joellejones.com)

First edition: June 2009

ISBN: 978-1-932664-88-1

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

PRINTED IN CHINA

# CHAPTER 1





I REMEMBER THE SMELL OF ALMONDS.

IT WAS NATURAL OILS, SHE SAID.



I'VE BLOCKED THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT SMELL FROM MY MEMORY FOR YEARS.



OH, KITTY, DID YOU HURT YOURSELF?

YOU'D THINK I'D HAVE NOTICED IT.





THE SMELL, IT USED TO JUST STING.

YOU CUT YOURSELF GOOD. THERE'S BLOOD ON YOUR CHIN.

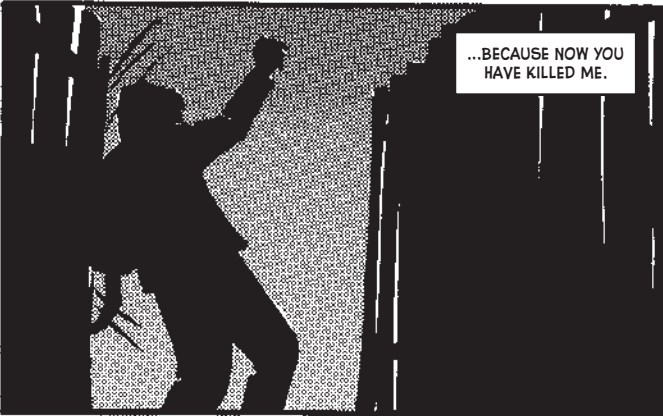
NOW IT'S GOING TO HURT MUCH WORSE...



WE'RE QUITE A PAIR, A COUPLE OF STRAYS...



...A COUPLE OF SUCKERS WHO CAN'T RESIST STICKING THEIR NOSES IN DANGEROUS PLACES.



...BECAUSE NOW YOU HAVE KILLED ME.



I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF.

THIS STORY STARTS JUST LIKE ANY OTHER...

...WITH A GIRL.





HELLO,  
MERCER. DO  
YOU REMEMBER  
ME?



NO.  
SHOULD  
I?

*TSK.*  
I'D HOPED  
I LEFT A BETTER  
IMPRESSION ON  
YOU THAN  
THAT.

IMPRESSION?  
YOU MEAN LIKE  
A BOOTHEEL  
IN THE  
MUD?

WHAT?  
OH, NOW I  
GET IT. YOU'RE  
HAVING FUN  
WITH ME.

I MAKE  
IT A HABIT NOT  
TO REMEMBER  
ANYTHING WHEN  
FIRST ASKED, *RED*.  
IT'S WHAT MAKES  
ME A GOOD  
DETECTIVE.



REALLY?  
I HAD HEARD  
YOU WERE A  
VERY BAD  
DETECTIVE.



I'M  
NOT GOING  
TO ASK WHICH  
WAY YOU  
MEAN  
THAT.



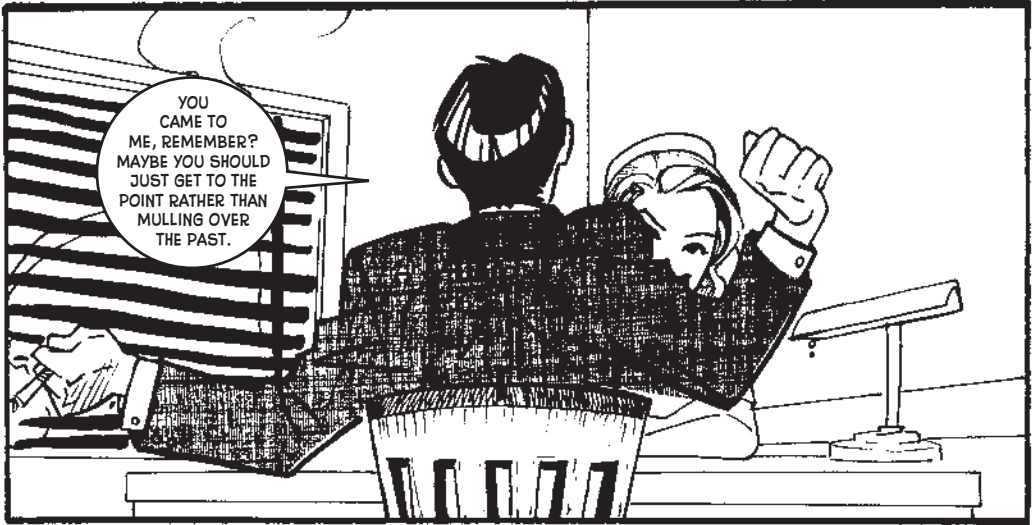
THE TALK  
AMONGST YOUR  
OLD FRIENDS IS THAT  
YOU'LL EVENTUALLY  
GIVE THIS UP AND  
COME HOME.

JUST  
PROMISE TO  
HAVE MY  
DINNER READY  
WHEN I DO.



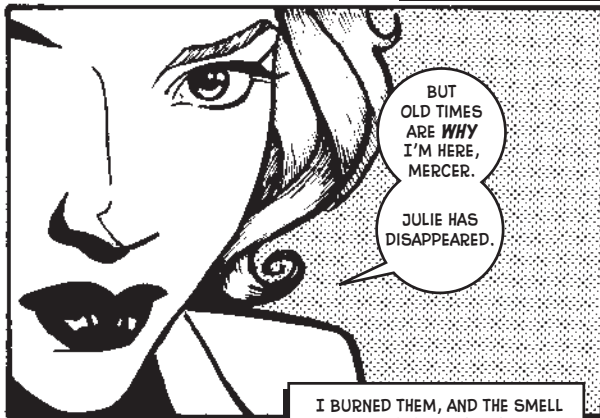
SHE SMELLED LIKE  
HER SISTER SMELLED.

COME ON,  
MERCER, BE  
SERIOUS FOR  
ME. I NEED YOU  
TO. CAN YOU BE  
SERIOUS?



YOU CAME TO ME, REMEMBER? MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST GET TO THE POINT RATHER THAN MULLING OVER THE PAST.

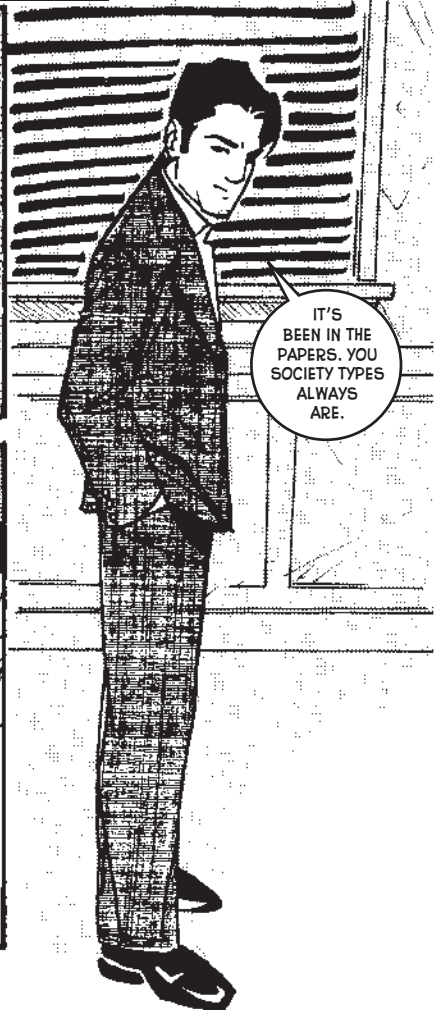
MY GRANDFATHER ONCE TRIED TO TEACH ME HOW TO ROAST ALMONDS.



BUT OLD TIMES ARE *WHY* I'M HERE, MERCER.

JULIE HAS DISAPPEARED.

I BURNED THEM, AND THE SMELL WAS AWFUL. LIKE SOMEONE WAS BURNING DOWN A SYRUP FACTORY.



IT'S BEEN IN THE PAPERS. YOU SOCIETY TYPES ALWAYS ARE.



DIS-APPEARED? I THOUGHT SHE WAS ABOUT TO GET MARRIED.

HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT? HAVE YOU BEEN KEEPING TABS ON HER, YOU OLD DOG?



YOU SAY THAT LIKE WE'RE SO DIFFERENT, YOU AND I.

BUT WE'RE NOT.



THAT'S WHY I CAME TO YOU DESPITE YOUR REPUTATION. YOU KNEW US. YOU KNEW HER.

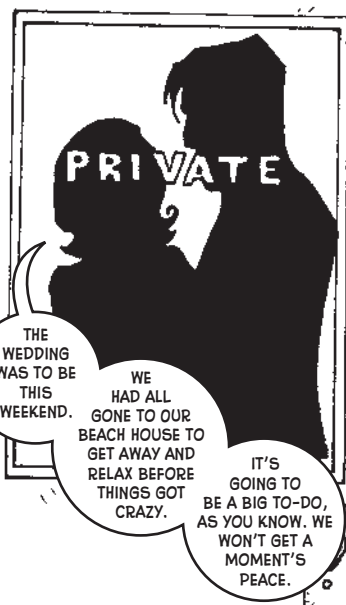
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT GIVE YOU SOME INSIGHT.



SHE PROBABLY GOT COLD FEET. SHE'LL BE BACK.



I DON'T KNOW. IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS THAT.



THE WEDDING WAS TO BE THIS WEEKEND.

WE HAD ALL GONE TO OUR BEACH HOUSE TO GET AWAY AND RELAX BEFORE THINGS GOT CRAZY.

IT'S GOING TO BE A BIG TO-DO, AS YOU KNOW. WE WON'T GET A MOMENT'S PEACE.



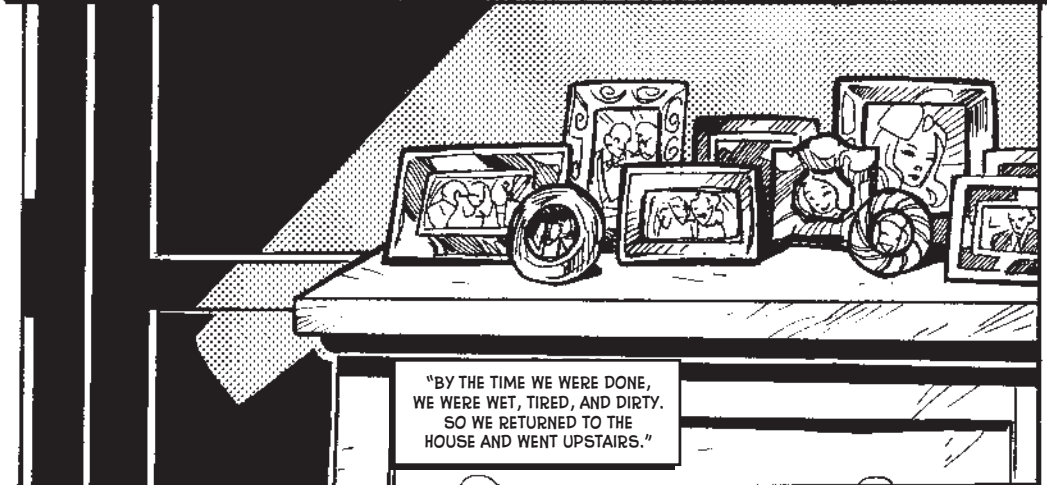
"SHE AND I WERE STAYING TOGETHER IN THE WEST BEDROOM. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THERE?"



"IT'S THE ONE THAT LOOKS OUT OVER THE WATER, THE CLIFF SIDE."



"WE HAD SPENT THE DAY DOWN BY THE ROCKS, GOING THROUGH THE TIDE POOLS AND COLLECTING SHELLS. JULIE WANTED TO GIVE THEM TO THE CHILDREN OF THE WEDDING GUESTS."



"BY THE TIME WE WERE DONE, WE WERE WET, TIRED, AND DIRTY. SO WE RETURNED TO THE HOUSE AND WENT UPSTAIRS."

"I TOLD HER SHE COULD USE THE BATH FIRST. I WAITED FOR HER ON THE BED AND READ MY MAGAZINE. TO LEAVE, SHE WOULD HAVE HAD TO GO PAST ME. BUT SHE NEVER DID."

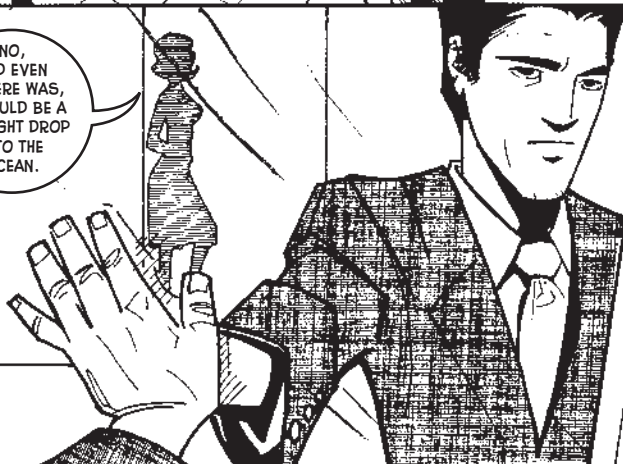
ARE YOU SAYING SHE DISAPPEARED FROM THE BATHROOM?



YES.

THAT'S RIDICULOUS. THERE'S NO WINDOW.

NO, AND EVEN IF THERE WAS, IT WOULD BE A STRAIGHT DROP INTO THE OCEAN.

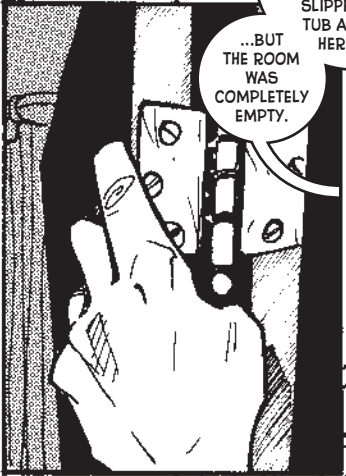
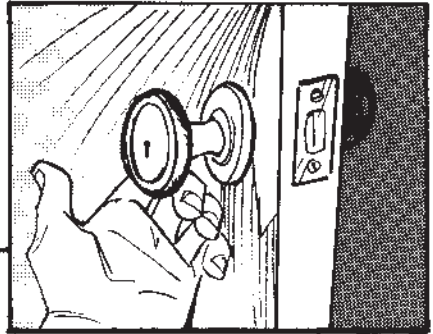




YOU SURE SHE DIDN'T SLIP BY YOU, RED?

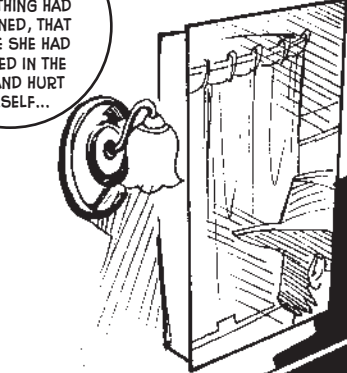
YOU SAID YOU WERE TIRED. MAYBE YOU FELL ASLEEP.

NO, AND THE DOOR TO THE BATHROOM WAS LOCKED FROM THE INSIDE.



...BUT THE ROOM WAS COMPLETELY EMPTY.

WE HAD TO BREAK IT DOWN. WE THOUGHT SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED, THAT MAYBE SHE HAD SLIPPED IN THE TUB AND HURT HERSELF...



WELL, SHE HAD TO GET OUT SOMEHOW. PEOPLE DON'T JUST VANISH FROM THEIR BATHROOM.



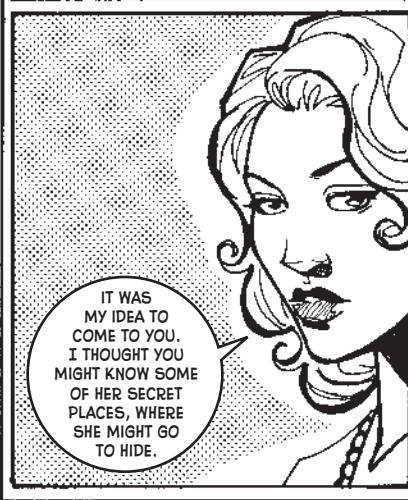
AT THIS POINT, WE DON'T CARE HOW SHE GOT OUT...



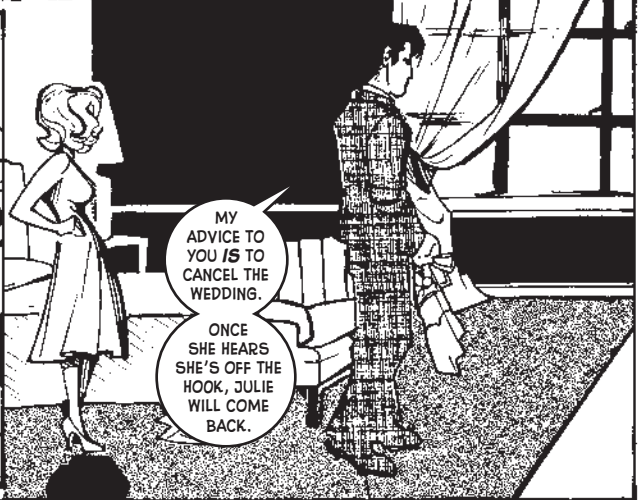
...WE JUST WANT TO KNOW WHERE SHE WENT.



IF WE HAVE TO CALL OFF THIS WEDDING, IT'S GOING TO BE A DISASTER.



IT WAS MY IDEA TO COME TO YOU. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT KNOW SOME OF HER SECRET PLACES, WHERE SHE MIGHT GO TO HIDE.



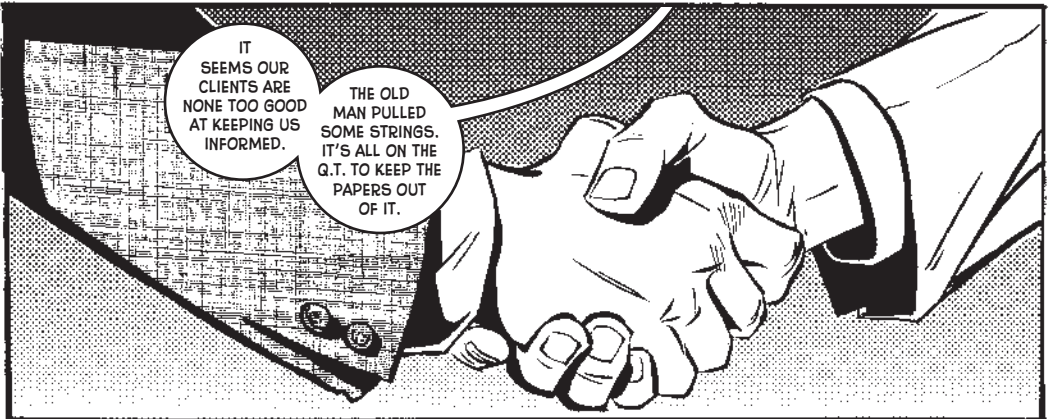
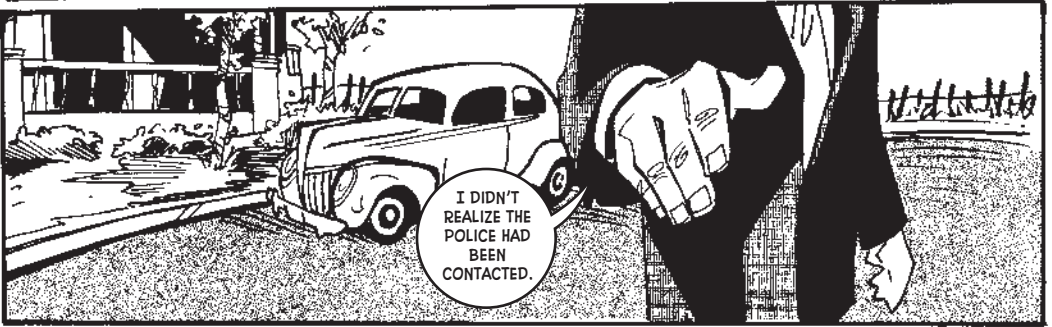
MY ADVICE TO YOU IS TO CANCEL THE WEDDING.

ONCE SHE HEARS SHE'S OFF THE HOOK, JULIE WILL COME BACK.



DO YOU WANT THE JOB OR NOT? WE'LL PAY DOUBLE YOUR FEE AND A CASH BONUS IF YOU GET HER TO THE ALTAR.





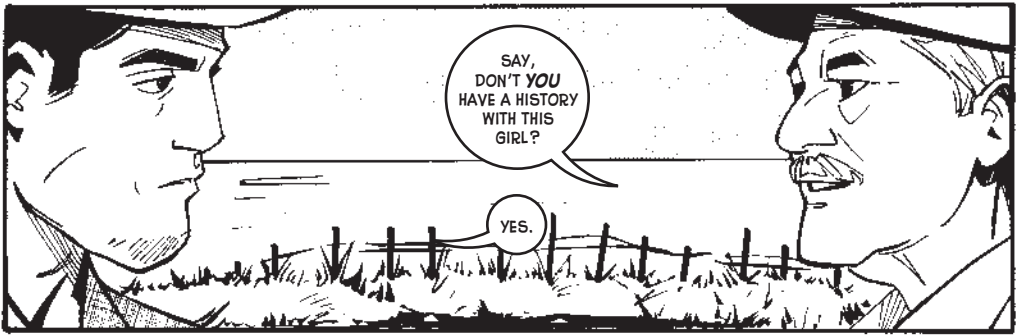


I GOT HIRED BY THE KID SISTER. SHE'S ALL WEEPY ABOUT IT.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUSPECTS?

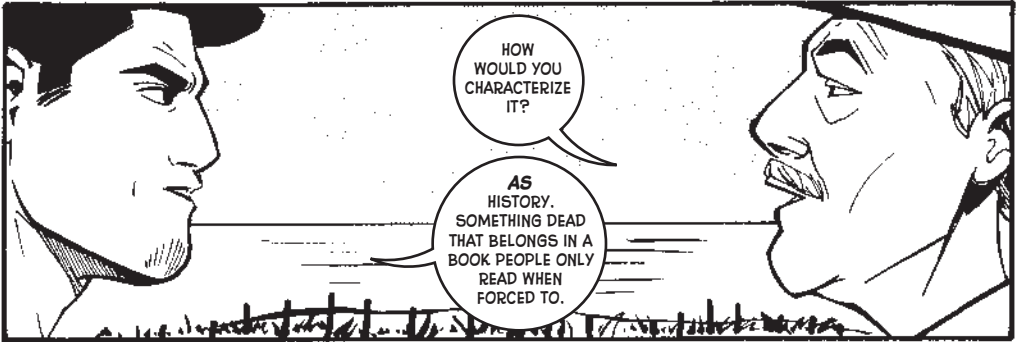


EVERYONE AND NO ONE. THEY'RE ALL SO CLEAN, THEY LOOK DIRTY.



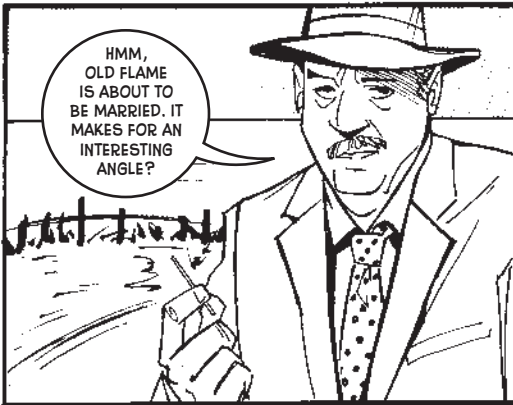
SAY, DON'T YOU HAVE A HISTORY WITH THIS GIRL?

YES.

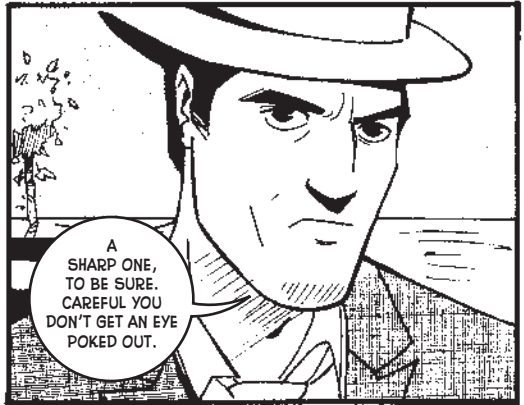


HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE IT?

AS HISTORY. SOMETHING DEAD THAT BELONGS IN A BOOK PEOPLE ONLY READ WHEN FORCED TO.



HMM, OLD FLAME IS ABOUT TO BE MARRIED. IT MAKES FOR AN INTERESTING ANGLE?



A SHARP ONE, TO BE SURE. CAREFUL YOU DON'T GET AN EYE POKED OUT.



HEY,  
NOW. LET'S  
NOT GET  
NASTY.

THIS  
IS OUR  
TERRITORY,  
MERCER. IF YOU  
INTERFERE, IT'S  
YOUR EYE, NOT  
MINE...



...AND  
YOU'D BETTER  
SHARE WHATEVER  
YOU SPY WITH IT.  
DON'T MAKE THIS  
LIKE THE GREEN  
CASE.

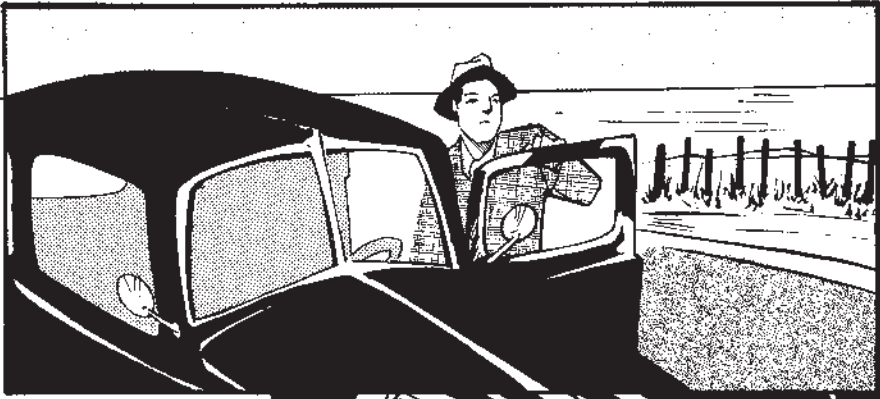
AS  
LONG AS  
YOU PROMISE  
TO DO THE  
SAME.



HEH.  
YOU KNOW  
YOU HAVE A BETTER  
CHANCE OF SPOTTING THE  
FLYING DUTCHMAN OVER  
THESE WATERS THAN  
YOU DO A RUNAWAY  
DEBUTANTE.



THEN  
I THINK  
WE'RE ON THE  
SAME PAGE.



# CHAPTER 2



WHERE  
IS THE  
FIANCÉ  
NOW?

I READ A STORY ABOUT A MAN  
WHO ONE DAY WALKED OUT INTO  
THE SNOW, LAY DOWN, AND DIED.

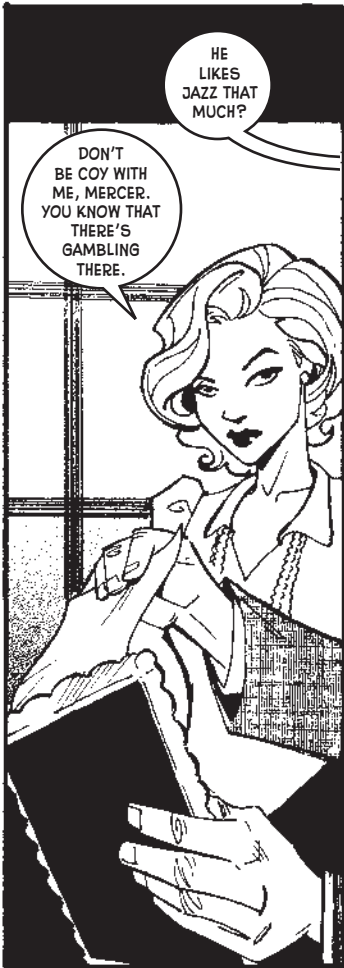
NO  
ONE IS  
SURE. TO BE  
HONEST, WE  
HAVEN'T SEEN  
RANCE IN  
DAYS.

SOME-  
THING TELLS  
ME YOU KNOW  
WHERE HE  
**PROBABLY** IS,  
THOUGH.

THE  
JAZZ CLUB.  
**TOURNEUR'S.**



HE WAS A PROFESSOR OR SOMETHING SOMEWHERE,  
AND HE KNEW THAT IT WAS HIS TIME TO GO.



HE LIKES JAZZ THAT MUCH?

DON'T BE COY WITH ME, MERCER. YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S GAMBLING THERE.



I GUESS HE'D HAD ENOUGH OF LIFE, AND LIFE HAD ENOUGH OF HIM.

YEAH, RED, I KNOW. BUT I NEEDED TO HEAR YOU SAY IT.



I EXPECT YOU TO TELL ME THINGS, YOU UNDERSTAND?

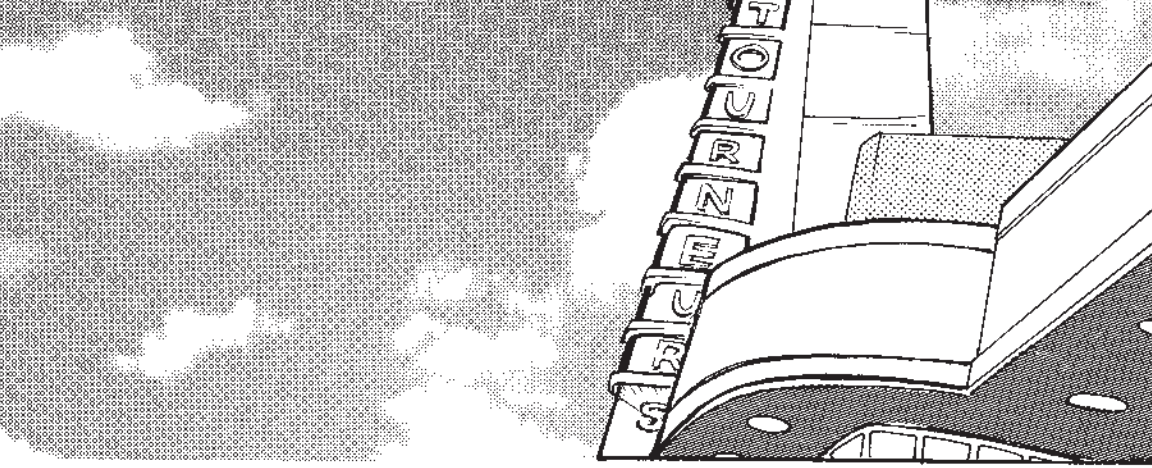
UNDERSTOOD.

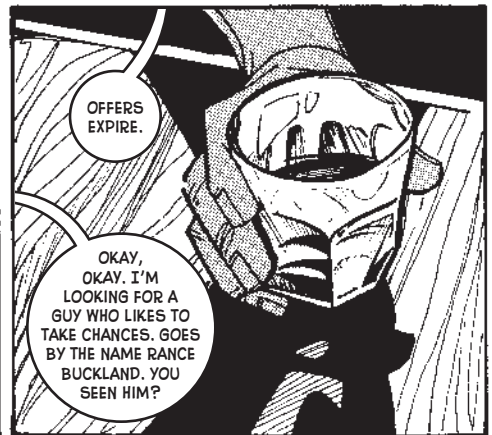
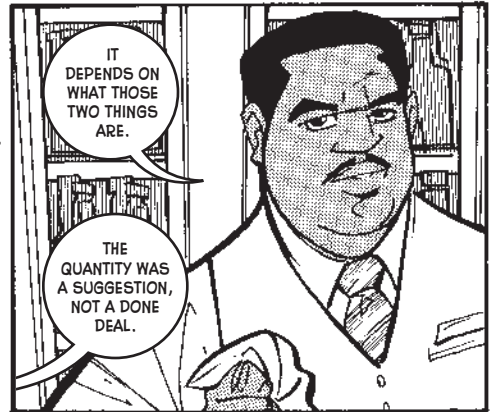


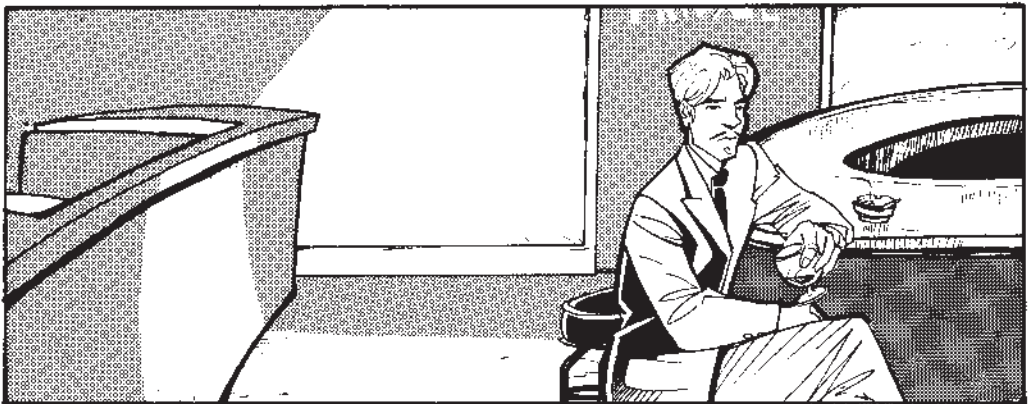
GOOD.

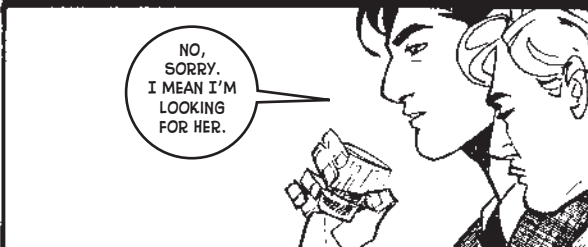
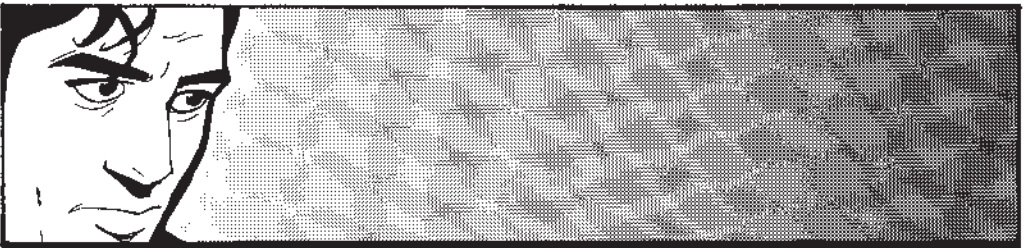
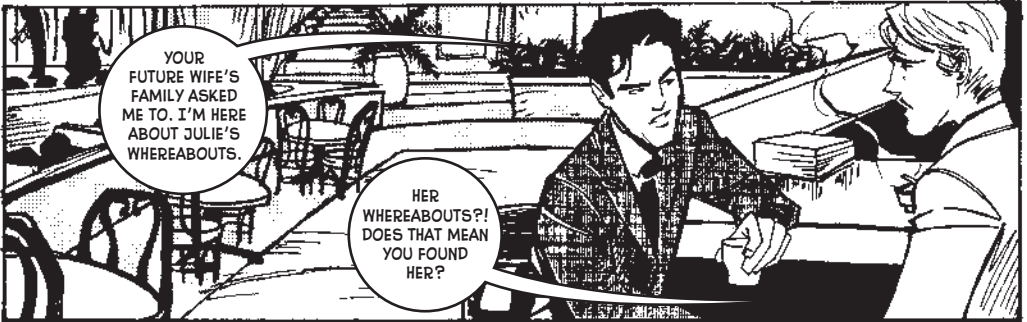


SO, HE WENT TO SLEEP, AND HE WAS GONE, JUST LIKE THAT.





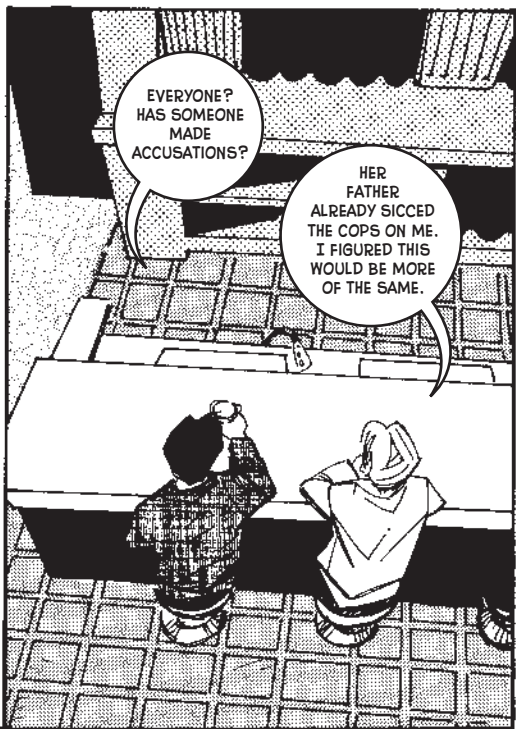






I DON'T IMAGINE YOU WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.

HOW COULD I? I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. I DON'T KNOW WHY EVERYONE THINKS I DO.



EVERYONE? HAS SOMEONE MADE ACCUSATIONS?

HER FATHER ALREADY SICKED THE COPS ON ME. I FIGURED THIS WOULD BE MORE OF THE SAME.

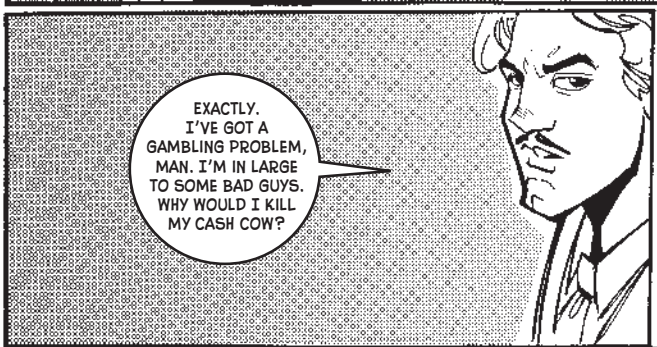


AND I SUPPOSE YOU THINK WE SHOULD JUST TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT? A GUY WITH A GAMBLING PROBLEM.



MAYBE SHE FOUND OUT.

LIKE IT'S A SECRET! YOU WANNA KNOW THE SECRET, MERCER?

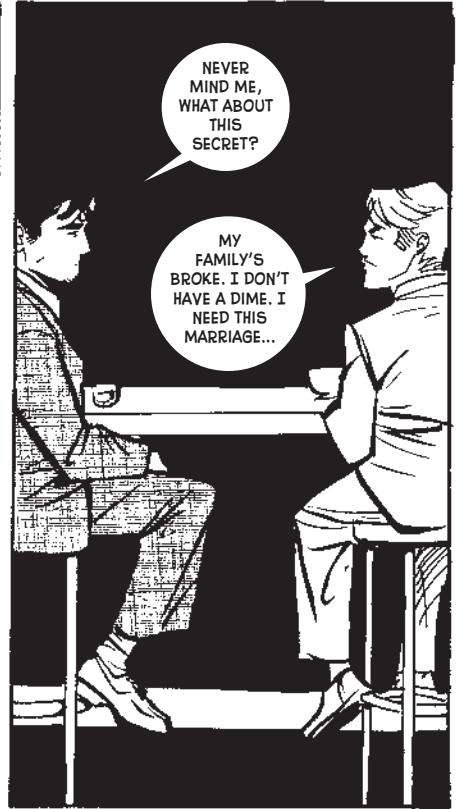


EXACTLY. I'VE GOT A GAMBLING PROBLEM, MAN. I'M IN LARGE TO SOME BAD GUYS. WHY WOULD I KILL MY CASH COW?



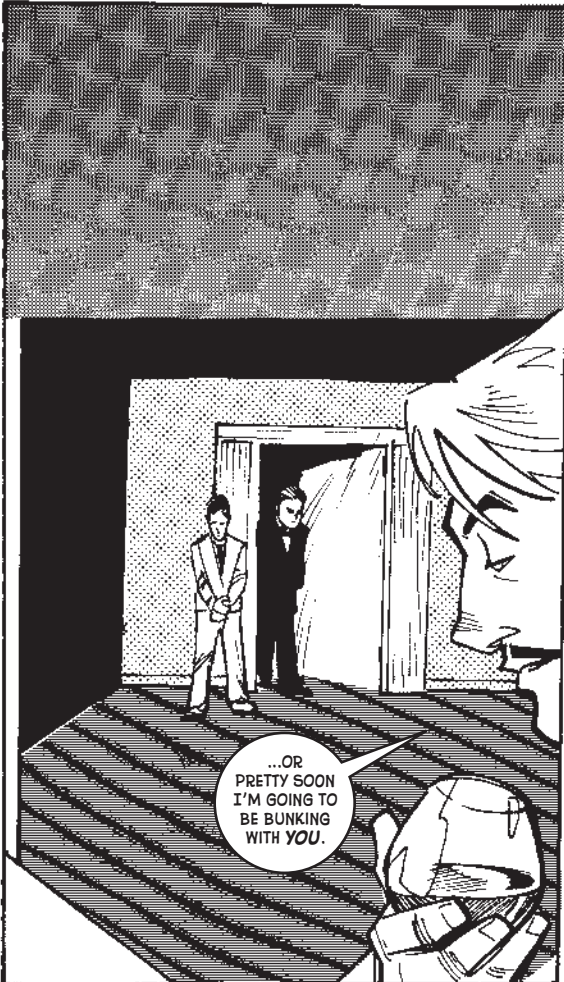


YEAH, I KNOW YOU. I REMEMBER YOU FROM THE SUMMERS OUT BY THE LAKE. I GUESS THEY WERE RIGHT WHEN THEY SAID YOU WERE SLUMMING.



NEVER MIND ME, WHAT ABOUT THIS SECRET?

MY FAMILY'S BROKE. I DON'T HAVE A DIME. I NEED THIS MARRIAGE...



...OR PRETTY SOON I'M GOING TO BE BUNKING WITH YOU.







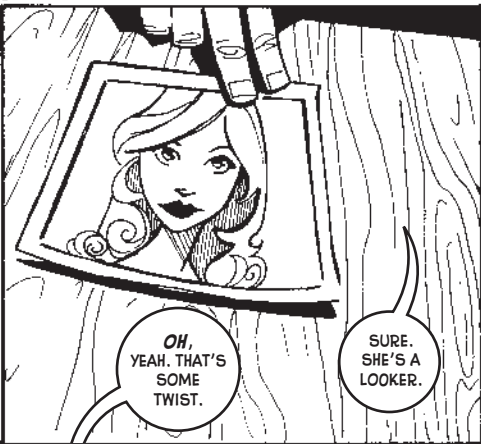
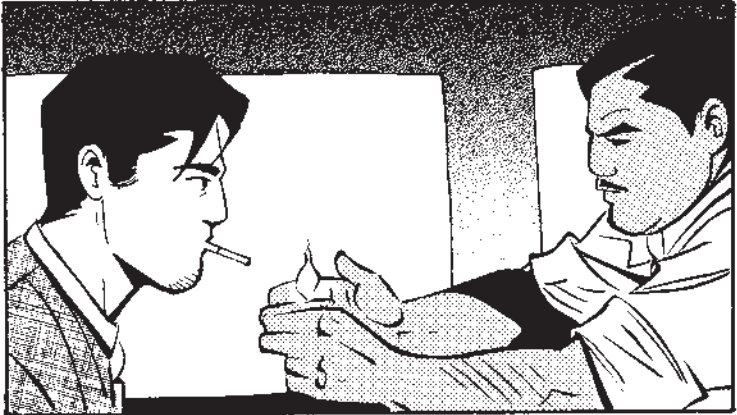
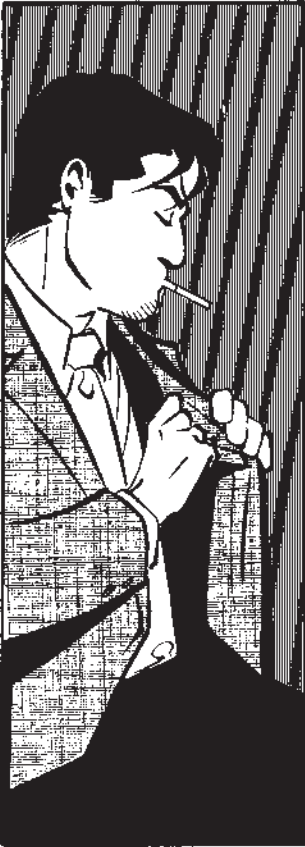
THE THING I LIKE ABOUT JAZZ IS...



...YOU NEVER KNOW WHERE IT'S GOING.



YOU JUST HAVE TO FOLLOW.



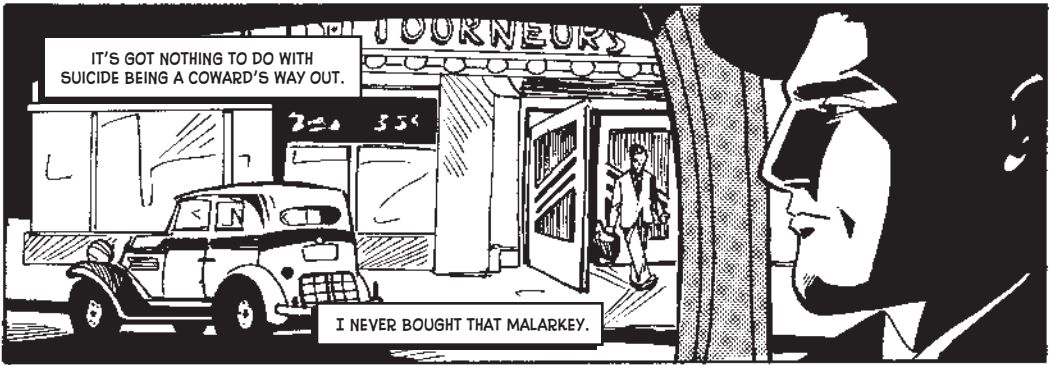


# CHAPTER 3



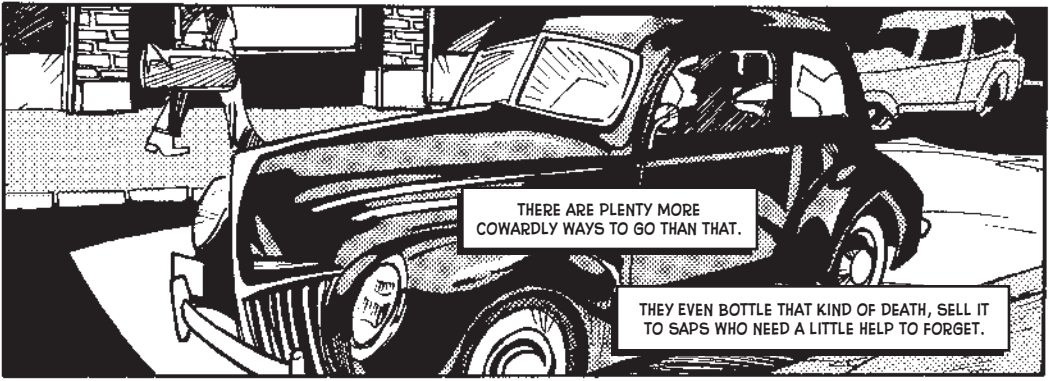


I DON'T THINK I'D EVER SEE GOING OUT LIKE THAT PROFESSOR DID.



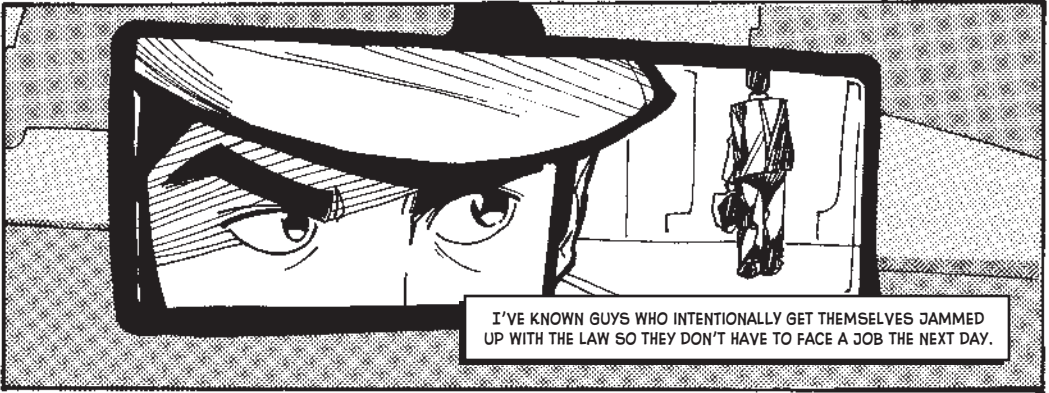
IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH SUICIDE BEING A COWARD'S WAY OUT.

I NEVER BOUGHT THAT MALARKEY.



THERE ARE PLENTY MORE COWARDLY WAYS TO GO THAN THAT.

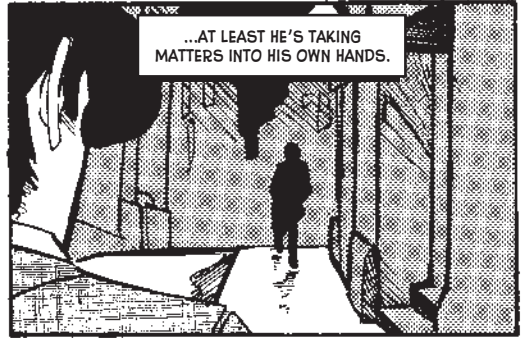
THEY EVEN BOTTLE THAT KIND OF DEATH, SELL IT TO SAPS WHO NEED A LITTLE HELP TO FORGET.



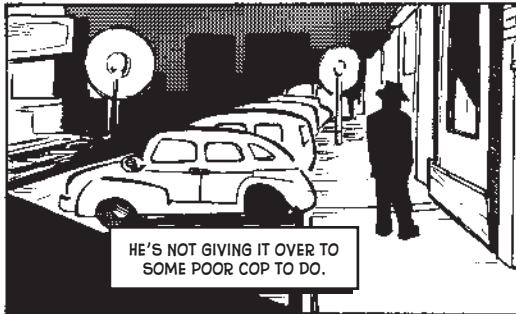
I'VE KNOWN GUYS WHO INTENTIONALLY GET THEMSELVES JAMMED UP WITH THE LAW SO THEY DON'T HAVE TO FACE A JOB THE NEXT DAY.



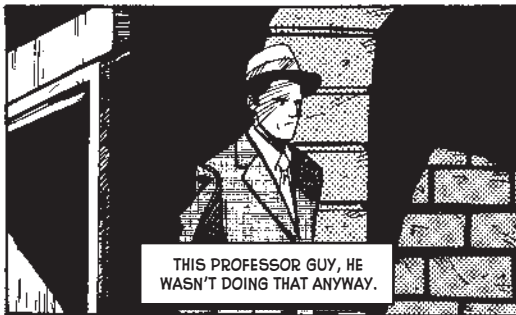
A GUY WHO KNOWS WHEN TO GET OUT AND DOES IT HIMSELF...



...AT LEAST HE'S TAKING MATTERS INTO HIS OWN HANDS.



HE'S NOT GIVING IT OVER TO SOME POOR COP TO DO.

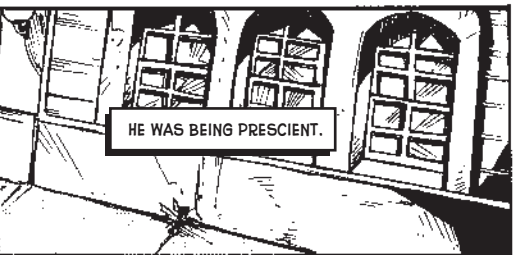
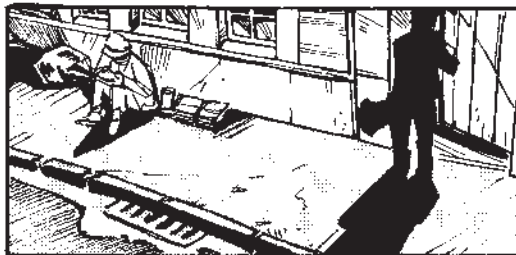


THIS PROFESSOR GUY, HE WASN'T DOING THAT ANYWAY.



HE WASN'T LOOKING TO ESCAPE.

HE WAS DOING SOMETHING ELSE.

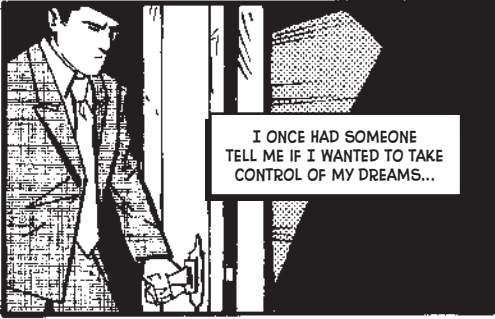


HE WAS BEING PRESCIENT.

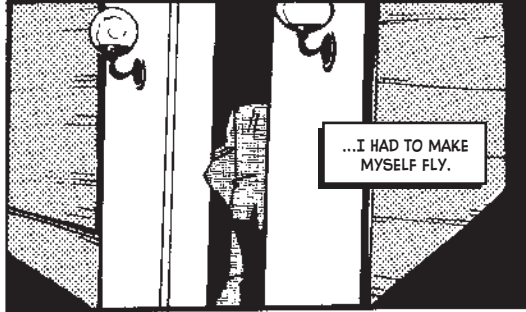


I DON'T THINK I'D EVER BE SO SELF-AWARE...

...AS TO KNOW IT'S TIME TO GO.



I ONCE HAD SOMEONE  
TELL ME IF I WANTED TO TAKE  
CONTROL OF MY DREAMS...



...I HAD TO MAKE  
MYSELF FLY.



NEXT TIME I DREAMT, IT WAS ONE  
OF THOSE DREAMS WHERE IT'S  
LIKE I WAS WATCHING MYSELF.

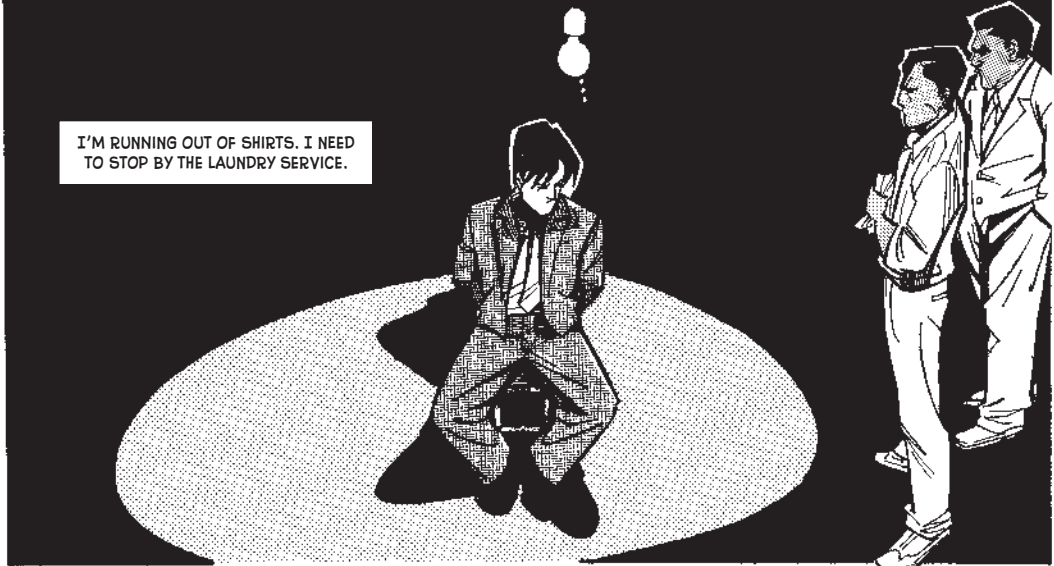
THE ME THAT WAS WATCHING  
FLOATED DOWN AND POSSESSED  
THE ME OF THE DREAM...



...AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW,  
MY FEET WERE OFF THE GROUND.



**WHACK!**



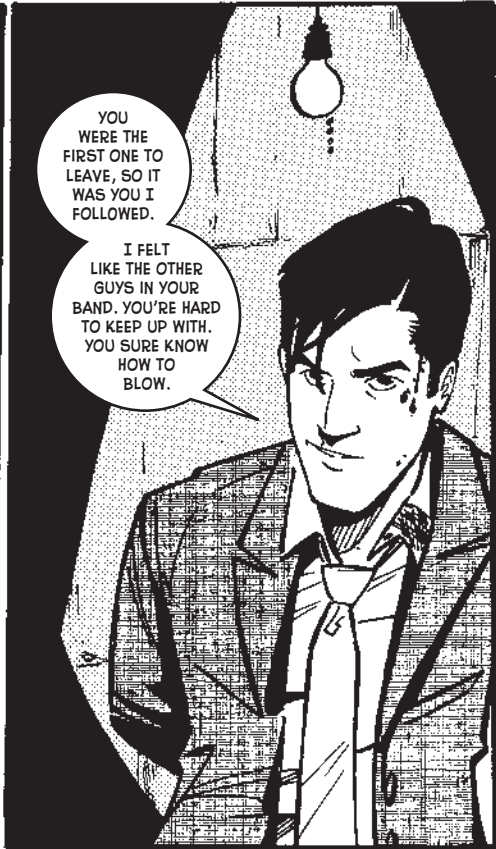






SORRY. I'M NOT TRYING TO CAUSE TROUBLE, I'M JUST DOING A JOB.

THEN WHY ARE YOU ON MY TAIL, NOT RANCE'S?



YOU WERE THE FIRST ONE TO LEAVE, SO IT WAS YOU I FOLLOWED.

I FELT LIKE THE OTHER GUYS IN YOUR BAND. YOU'RE HARD TO KEEP UP WITH. YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO BLOW.



THAT'S WHY THEY CALL ME "KILLER."

BUT, KANE, I THOUGHT THAT WAS COZ--



SHUT UP!

TAKE IT EASY, BUGLER. I HEARD THE GIRL AND YOU HAD A THING. DON'T YOU WANT TO FIND HER?



OF COURSE I DO! WHO SAID I DIDN'T?

NO ONE. DON'T GET EXCITED.



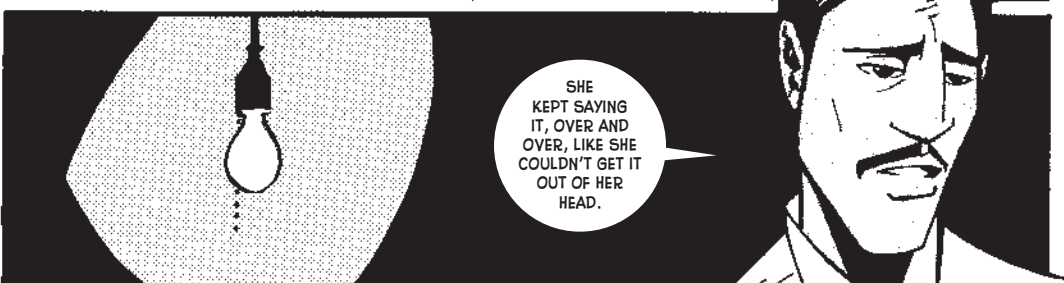
IF SHE HAD COME SEE ME LIKE SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO, NO ONE WOULD'VE GOTTEN THEIR HANDS ON HER.



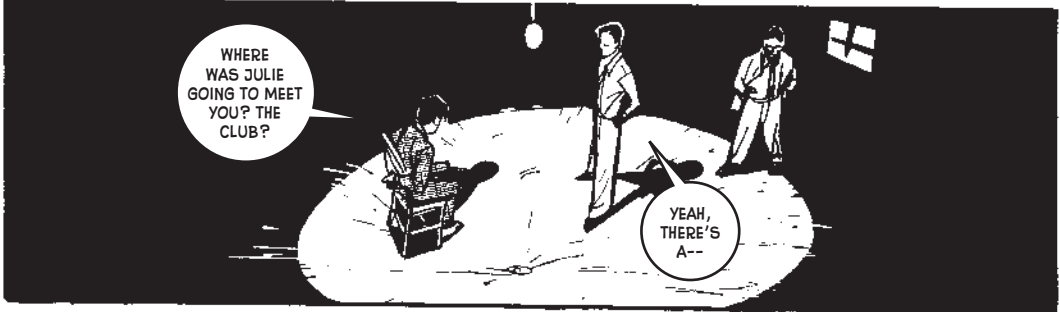
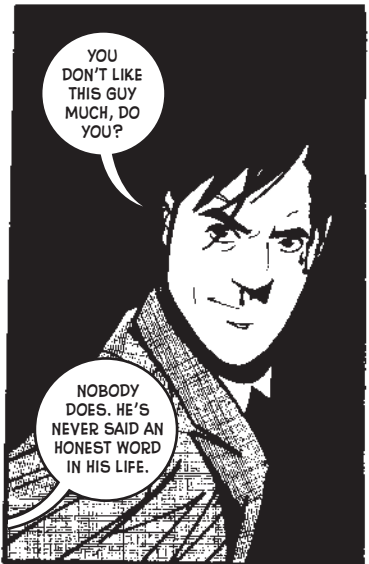
WHEN DID YOU TALK TO HER LAST?

THE AFTERNOON, BEFORE SHE VANISHED. SHE CALLED ME. SHE WAS BEING REALLY WEIRD.

SHE KEPT SAYING, "THE MARRIAGE, IT SHOULDN'T BE."

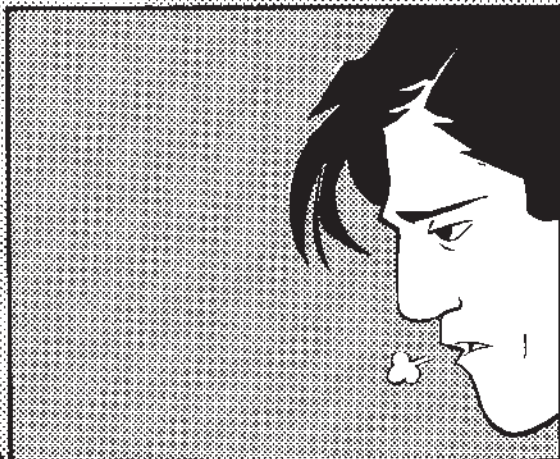


SHE KEPT SAYING IT, OVER AND OVER, LIKE SHE COULDN'T GET IT OUT OF HER HEAD.



ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WANT?

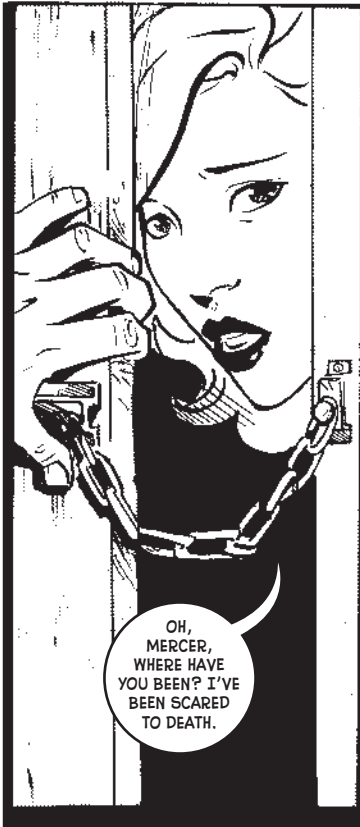
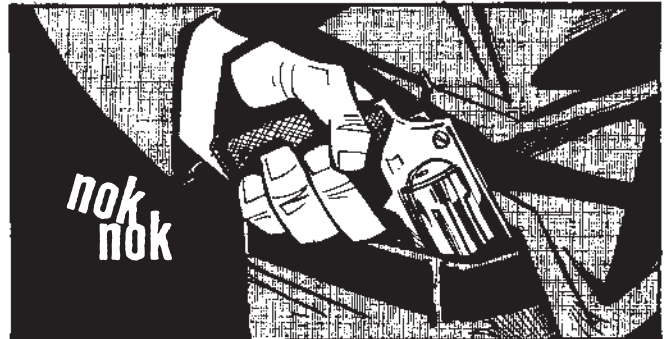
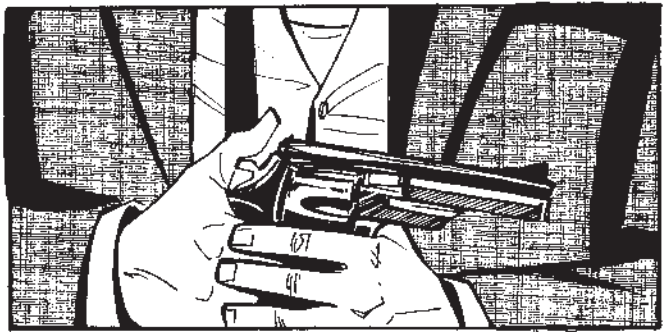
SURE.



# CHAPTER 4







OH, MERCER, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I'VE BEEN SCARED TO DEATH.



I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO COME BACK.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



YEAH. THEY CHECKED MY POCKETS FOR SILVER CANDLESTICKS WHEN I LEFT.

DID YOU KNOW THERE WERE POLICE LURKING AROUND MY HOUSE?



WHY MUST YOU BE SO GHASTLY?

IT JUST SAVES TIME. I JUMP STRAIGHT OVER THE HOPEFUL ILLUSIONS, GET RIGHT TO THE NAUGHTY BITS.



I'M SORRY. DID RANCE HURT YOU?

RANCE?



HE CAME BY THE HOUSE IN A RAGE. SAID HE SAW YOU AT THE CLUB. HE SCARES ME SOME-TIMES.



DOES HE GET VIOLENT?

YES. HE YELLS, THROWS THINGS.

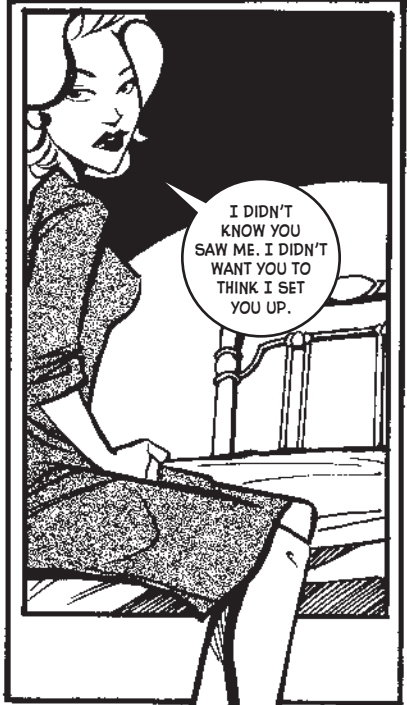


HE SCARED ME TONIGHT.

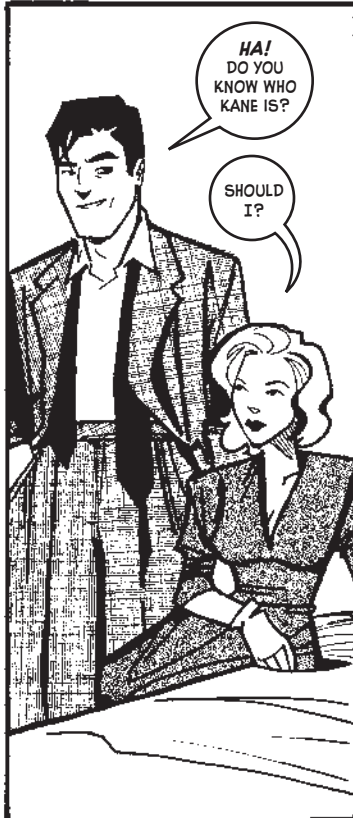




I SAW YOU AT THE WINDOW, JENNIE. WHY DID YOU PRETEND I WOULDN'T KNOW THERE WERE COPS?



I DIDN'T KNOW YOU SAW ME. I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO THINK I SET YOU UP.



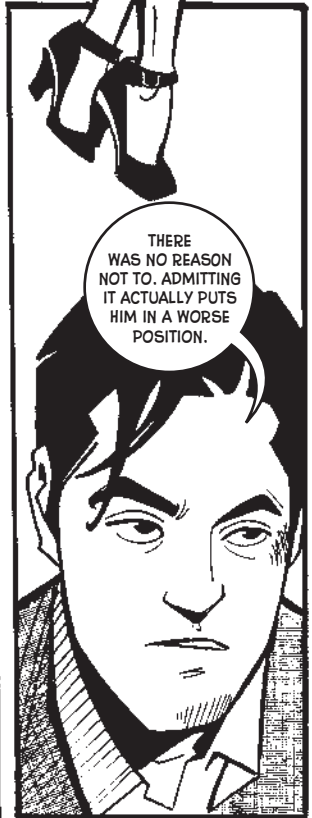
HA! DO YOU KNOW WHO KANE IS?

SHOULD I?

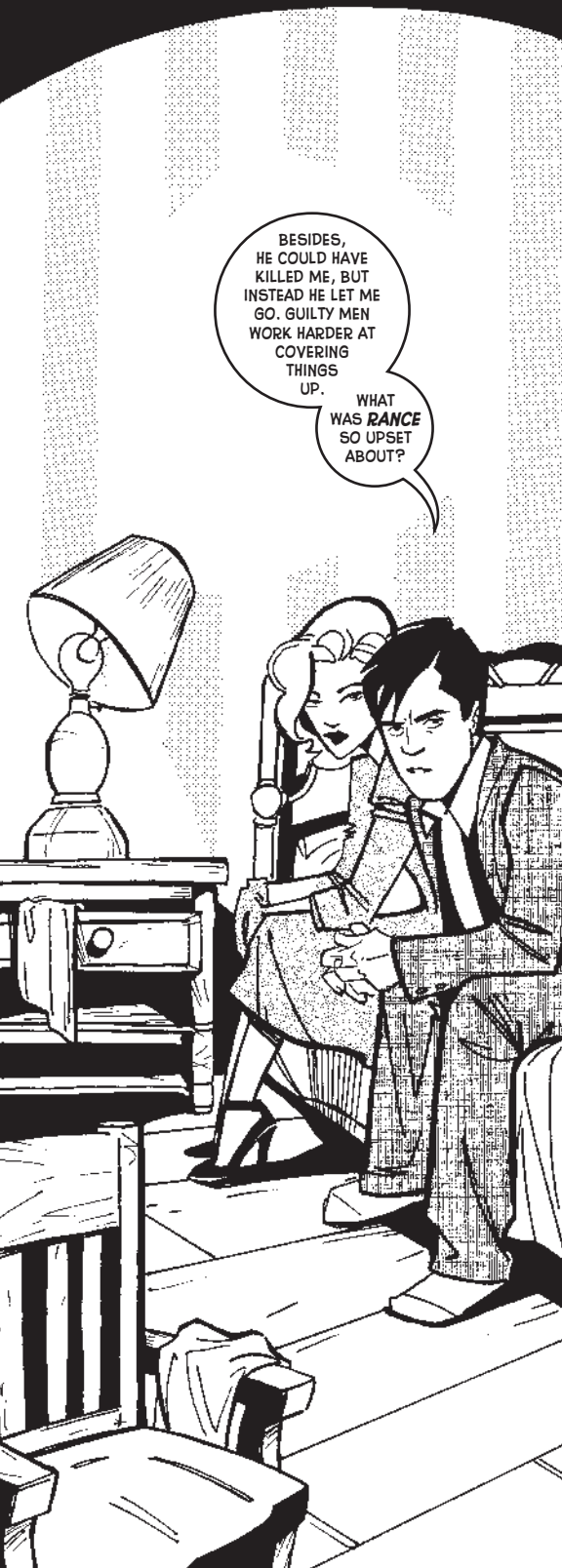


APPARENTLY HE HAD A THING WITH YOUR SISTER.

THE TRUMPET PLAYER? AND YOU BELIEVED HIM?



THERE WAS NO REASON NOT TO. ADMITTING IT ACTUALLY PUTS HIM IN A WORSE POSITION.

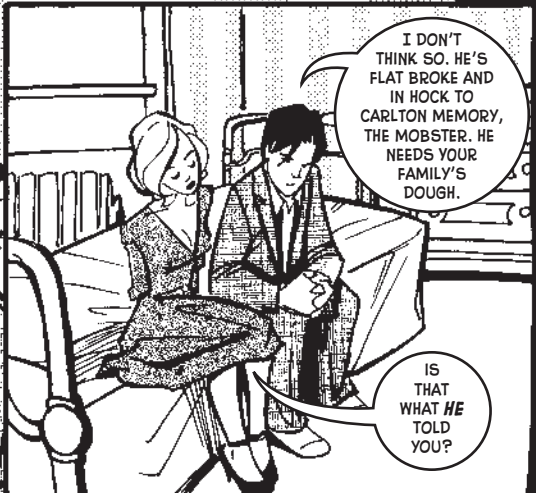


BESIDES, HE COULD HAVE KILLED ME, BUT INSTEAD HE LET ME GO. GUILTY MEN WORK HARDER AT COVERING THINGS UP.

WHAT WAS RANCE SO UPSET ABOUT?



HE THINKS EVERYONE IS GOING TO TRY TO PIN IT ON HIM.



I DON'T THINK SO. HE'S FLAT BROKE AND IN HOCK TO CARLTON MEMORY, THE MOBSTER. HE NEEDS YOUR FAMILY'S DOUGH.

IS THAT WHAT HE TOLD YOU?



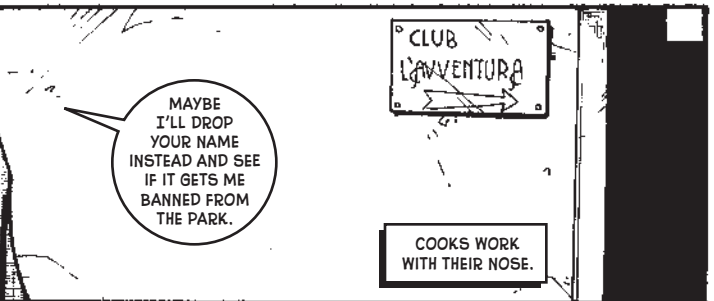
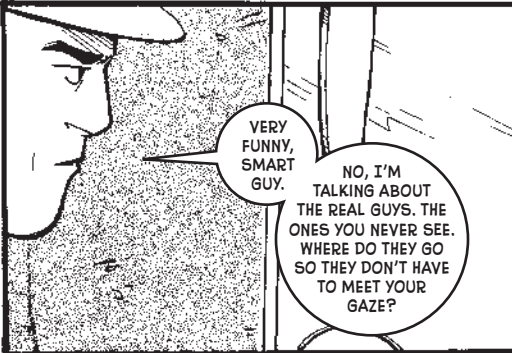
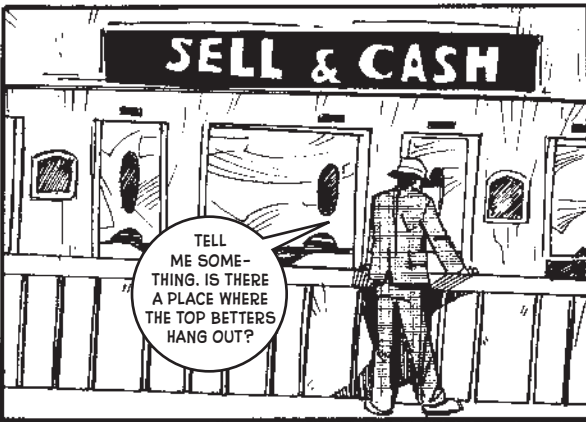
YEAH. WHY? WAS HE LYING?

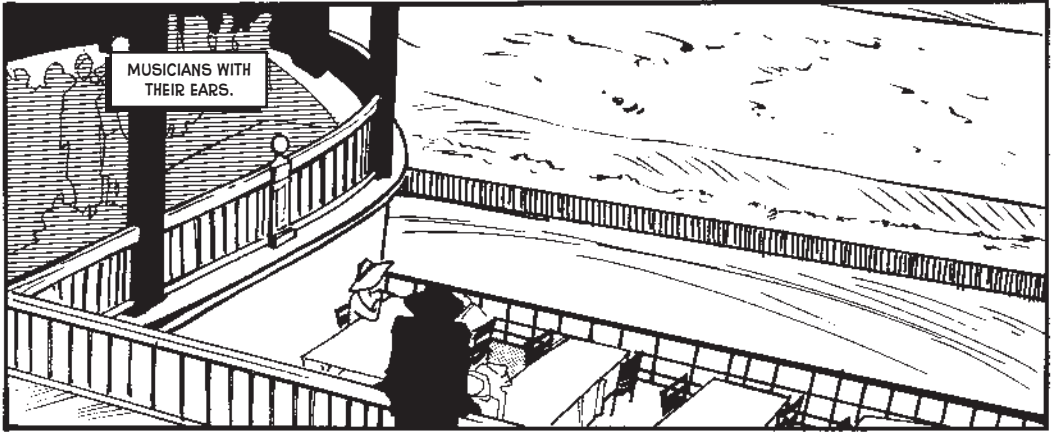
IF HE HAS NO MONEY, MERCER...

"...THEN MAYBE YOU SHOULD  
ASK HIM HOW HE MANAGES  
TO KEEP GAMBLING.

"TODAY IS HIS REGULAR  
DAY AT THE TRACK. GO SEE IF HE  
DOESN'T MAKE A BET OR TWO."







MUSICIANS WITH THEIR EARS.



I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO, THOUGH...

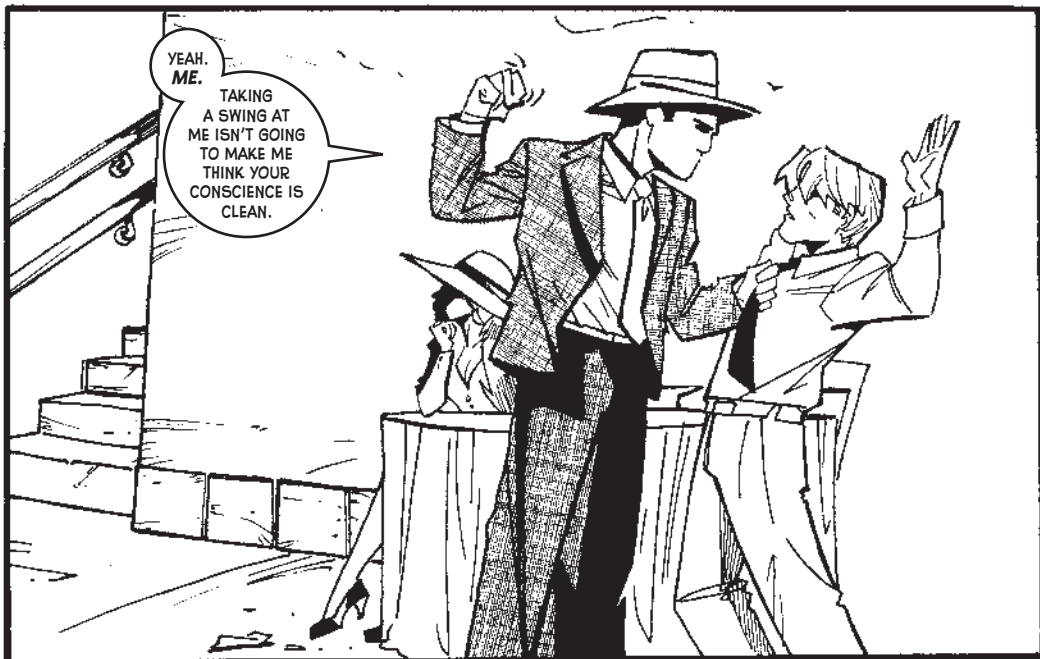


...EVERYONE USES THEIR EYES.



ANTONY!  
I WAS JUST TALKING TO RANCE ABOUT YOU.





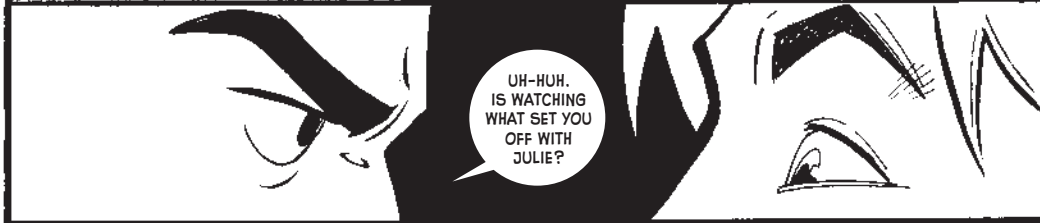
YEAH.  
ME.

TAKING  
A SWING AT  
ME ISN'T GOING  
TO MAKE ME  
THINK YOUR  
CONSCIENCE IS  
CLEAN.

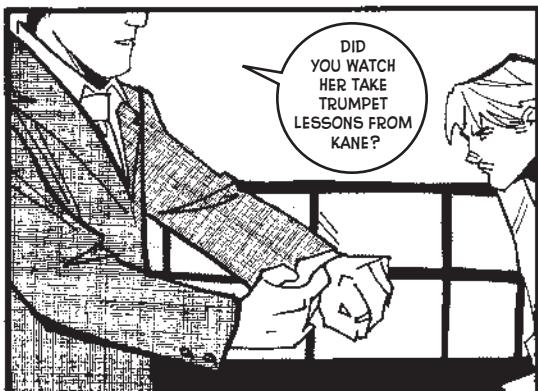


TELL  
ME, RANCE.  
YESTERDAY YOU  
FED ME SOME STORY  
ABOUT BEING BROKE.  
WHAT'S EACH  
PONY COSTING  
YOU TODAY?

NOTHING.  
I'M HERE TO  
WATCH.



UH-HUH.  
IS WATCHING  
WHAT SET YOU  
OFF WITH  
JULIE?



DID  
YOU WATCH  
HER TAKE  
TRUMPET  
LESSONS FROM  
KANE?



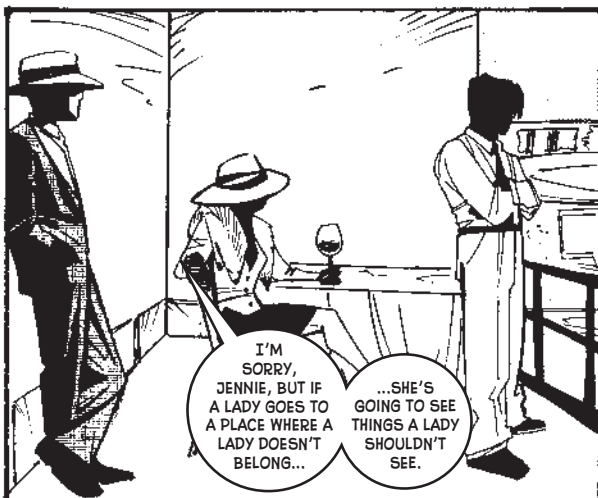
I WARN  
YOU, MERCER,  
I WILL PUNCH  
YOU AGAIN.



AND YOU'LL MISS AGAIN.



BOYS, YOU ARE BEING EMBARRASSING.



I'M SORRY, JENNIE, BUT IF A LADY GOES TO A PLACE WHERE A LADY DOESN'T BELONG...

...SHE'S GOING TO SEE THINGS A LADY SHOULDN'T SEE.



GIVEN HOW OFTEN JENNIE IS IN THESE KINDS OF PLACES, I GUESS YOU CAN SAY SHE'S NO LADY, JULIE, TOO.



DON'T TALK THAT WAY ABOUT MY SISTER!

OH, SHE'S GONE, AND YOU SUDDENLY CARE. IMAGINE HOW MUCH YOU'LL LOVE HER IF WE FIND OUT SHE'S DEAD!





I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

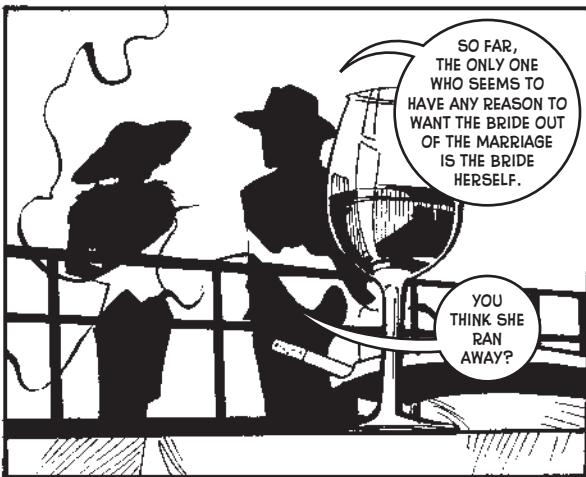
FORGET IT. HE'S BACKED INTO A CORNER, AND HE KNOWS IT.



DO YOU REALLY THINK HE'S THE ONE BEHIND JULIE'S DISAPPEARANCE?

PROBABLY NOT. IT STILL DOESN'T FIGURE THAT HE BENEFITED ANYTHING FROM **NOT** MARRYING HER.

THAT'S STILL THE BIG QUESTION MARK OVER EVERYTHING.

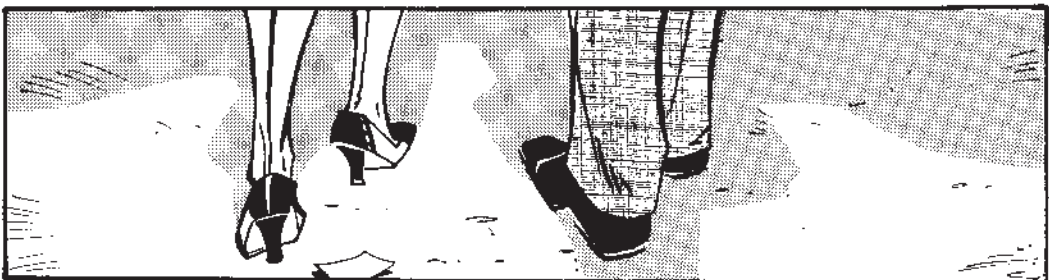


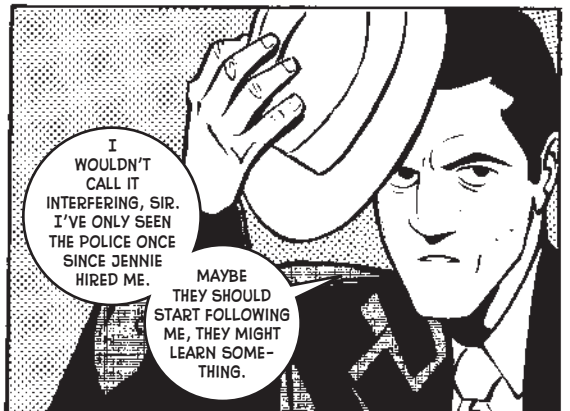
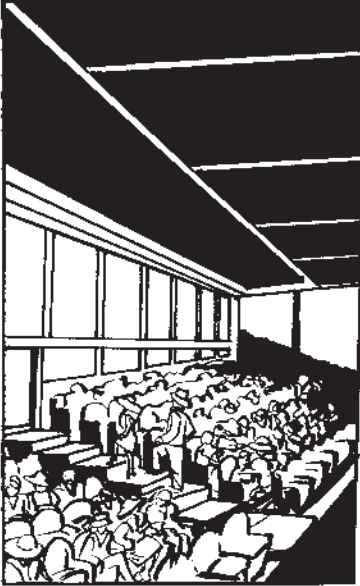
SO FAR, THE ONLY ONE WHO SEEMS TO HAVE ANY REASON TO WANT THE BRIDE OUT OF THE MARRIAGE IS THE BRIDE HERSELF.

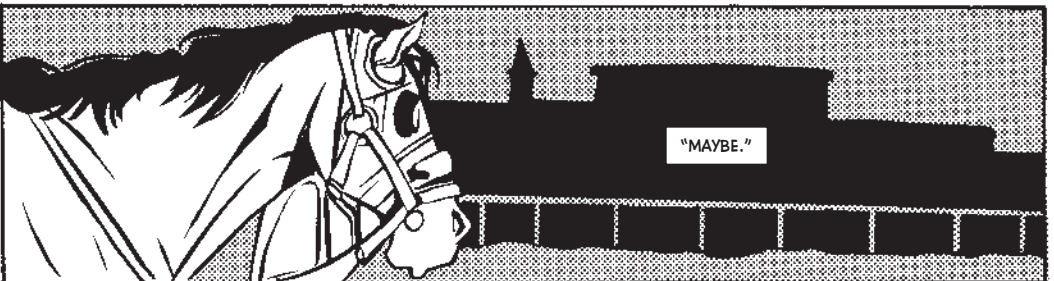
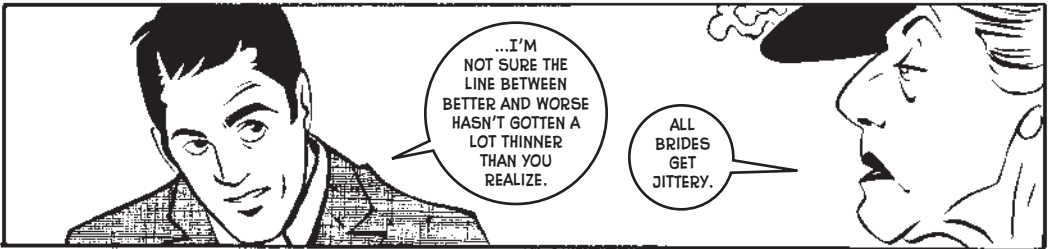
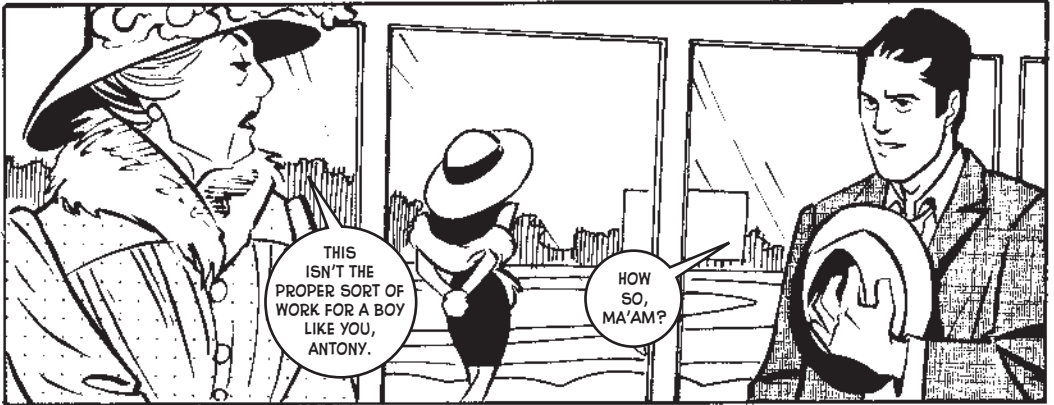
YOU THINK SHE RAN AWAY?

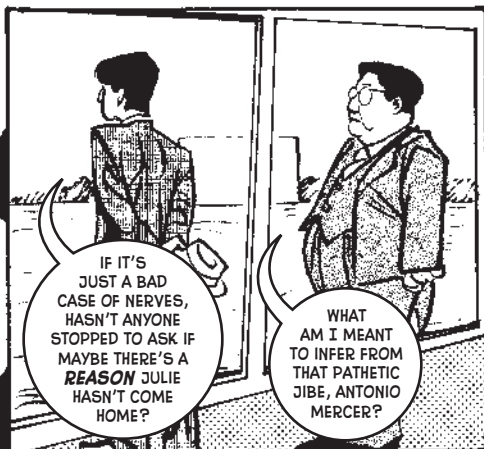


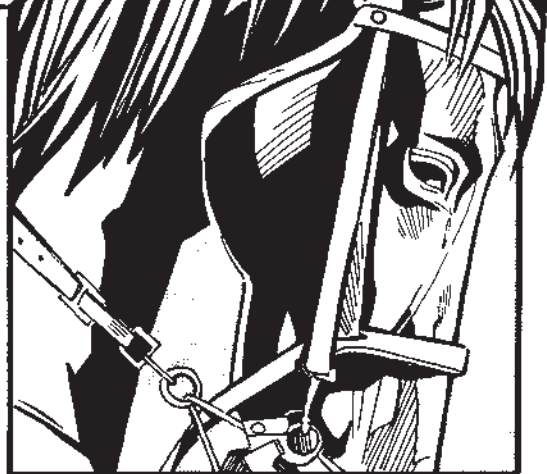
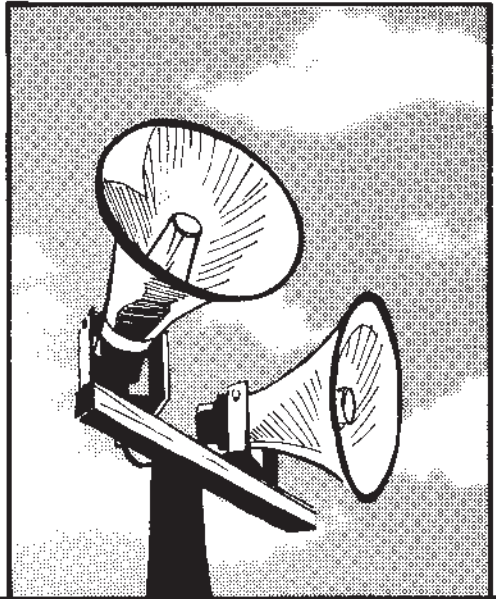
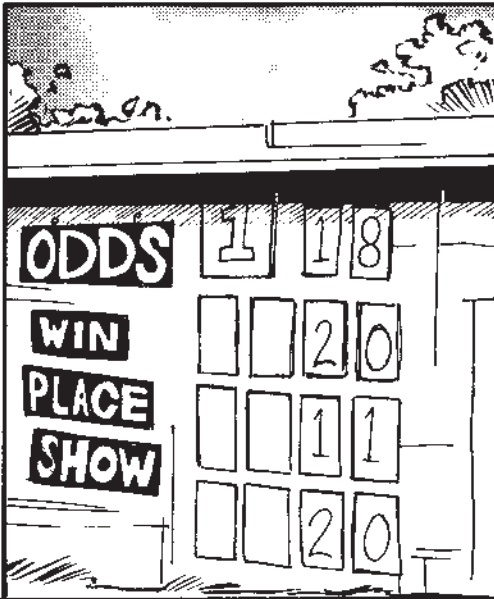
IF YOU HAD BEEN LATCHED TO THAT GUY, WOULDN'T YOU?

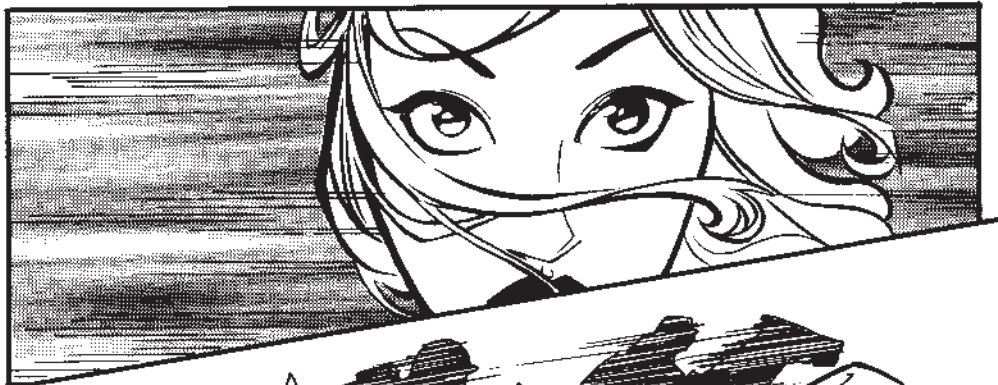
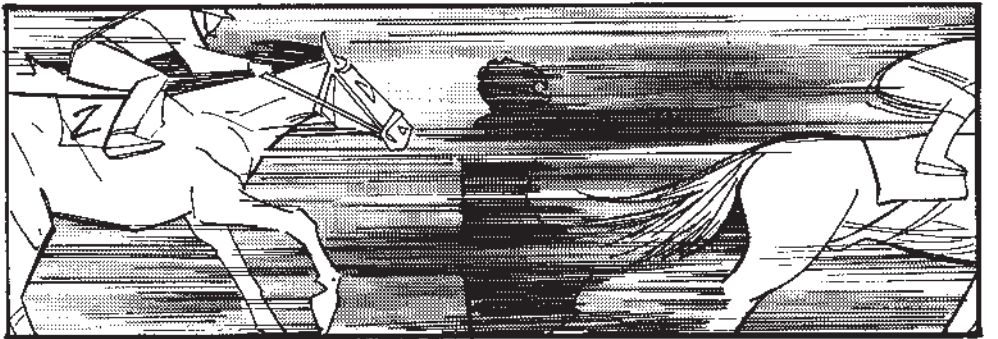
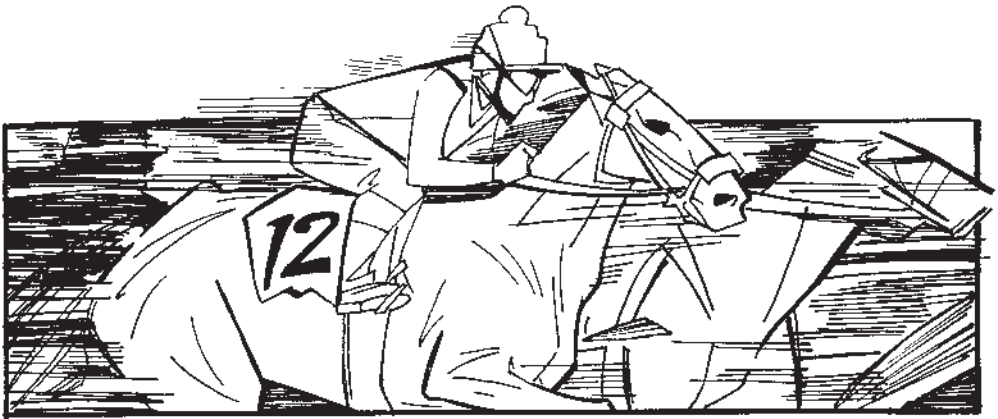










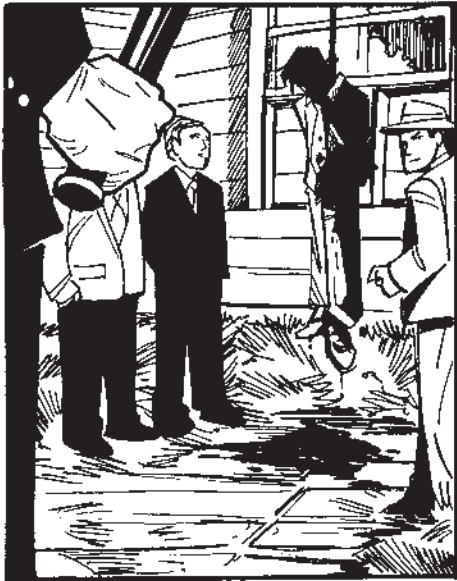






I  
KNOW  
HIM...







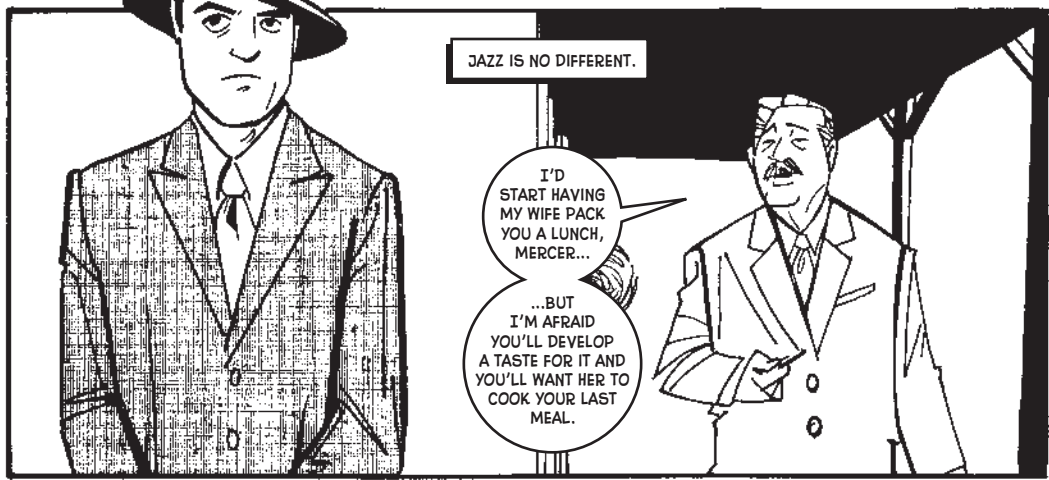
...BUT YOU ALSO WATCH THEIR COLOR.



IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU COOK.



YOU HAVE TO WATCH.



JAZZ IS NO DIFFERENT.

I'D START HAVING MY WIFE PACK YOU A LUNCH, MERCER...

...BUT I'M AFRAID YOU'LL DEVELOP A TASTE FOR IT AND YOU'LL WANT HER TO COOK YOUR LAST MEAL.



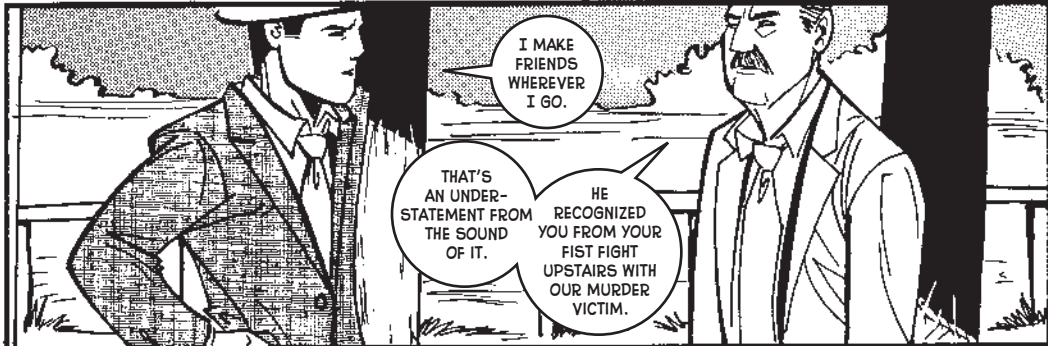
YOU LISTEN...

DON'T JUICE UP THE CHAIR YET, TYNAN. THERE'S NO BLOOD ON MY HANDS.



...BUT EACH PLAYER HAS TO WATCH THE OTHERS.

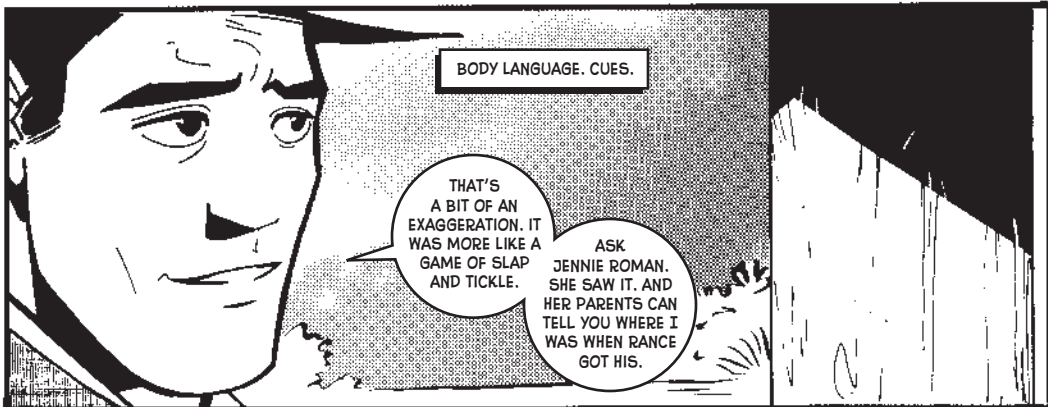
YOU'D BETTER HOPE NOT. I FOUND IT NONE TOO FUNNY THAT THE SECURITY GUARD THAT WALKED ME DOWN HERE RECOGNIZED YOU.



I MAKE FRIENDS WHEREVER I GO.

THAT'S AN UNDER-STATEMENT FROM THE SOUND OF IT.

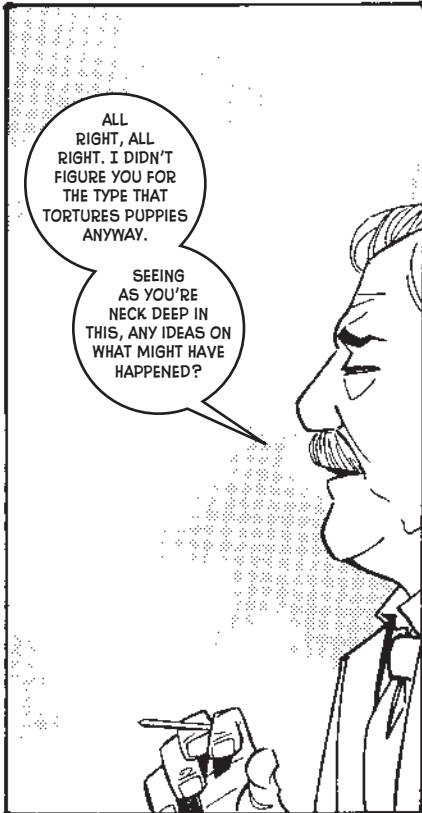
HE RECOGNIZED YOU FROM YOUR FIST FIGHT UPSTAIRS WITH OUR MURDER VICTIM.



BODY LANGUAGE. CUES.

THAT'S A BIT OF AN EXAGGERATION. IT WAS MORE LIKE A GAME OF SLAP AND TICKLE.

ASK JENNIE ROMAN. SHE SAW IT. AND HER PARENTS CAN TELL YOU WHERE I WAS WHEN RANCE GOT HIS.



ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. I DIDN'T FIGURE YOU FOR THE TYPE THAT TORTURES PUPPIES ANYWAY.

SEEING AS YOU'RE NECK DEEP IN THIS, ANY IDEAS ON WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED?



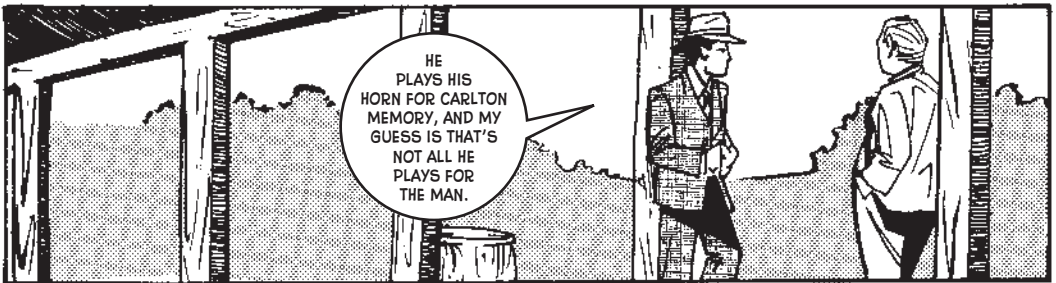
A BAND ALSO NEEDS A PLAYER THAT CAN LEAD.

I DON'T KNOW, TYNAN. I WOULDN'T WANT TO "INTERFERE."

GIMME A BREAK, MERCER. YOU KNOW THIS GOES ABOVE BOTH OF US, AND WHEN IT DOES, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.



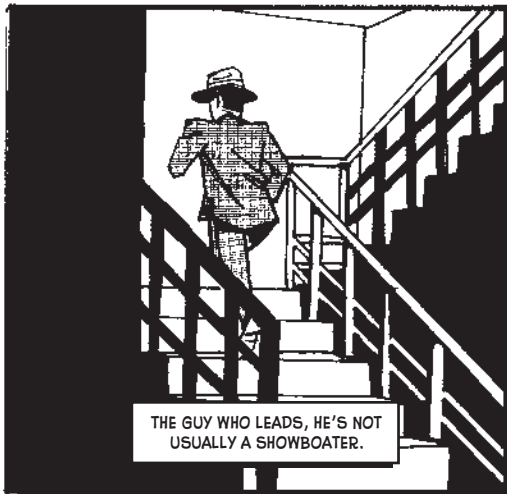
YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK A TRUMPET PLAYER NAMED KANE, GOES BY THE SUBTLE NICKNAME OF KILLER.



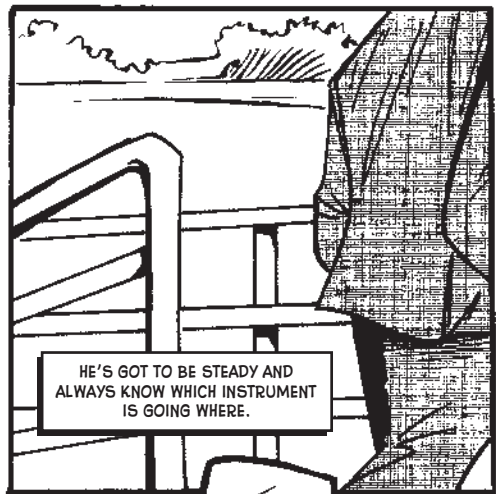
HE PLAYS HIS HORN FOR CARLTON MEMORY, AND MY GUESS IS THAT'S NOT ALL HE PLAYS FOR THE MAN.



NOW, YOU SEE HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO COOPERATE?



THE GUY WHO LEADS, HE'S NOT USUALLY A SHOWBOATER.



HE'S GOT TO BE STEADY AND ALWAYS KNOW WHICH INSTRUMENT IS GOING WHERE.



IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID A COLLISION.

IF HE LETS HIMSELF GET DISTRACTED, THE SONG GETS DIZZY...

...AND THE ALMONDS BURN.

# CHAPTER 5

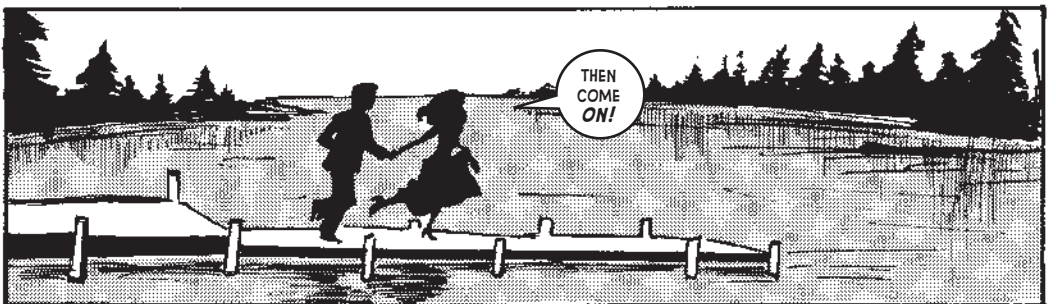


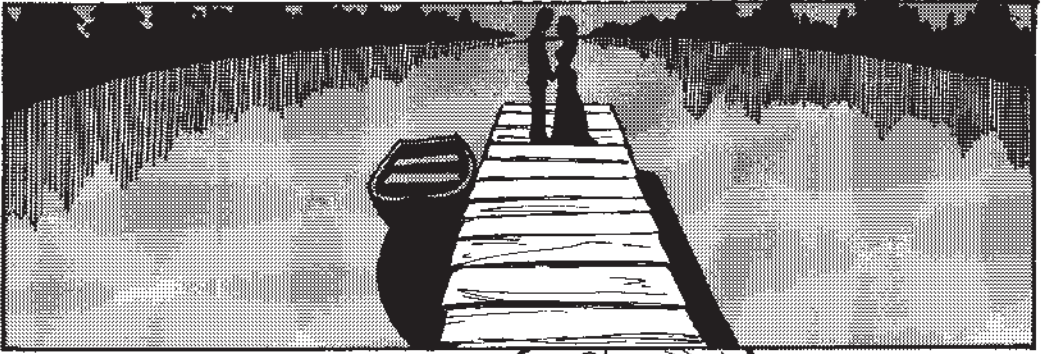


COME ON! LET'S GO!

WHERE--?!

ALL MEN HAVE SECRETS.





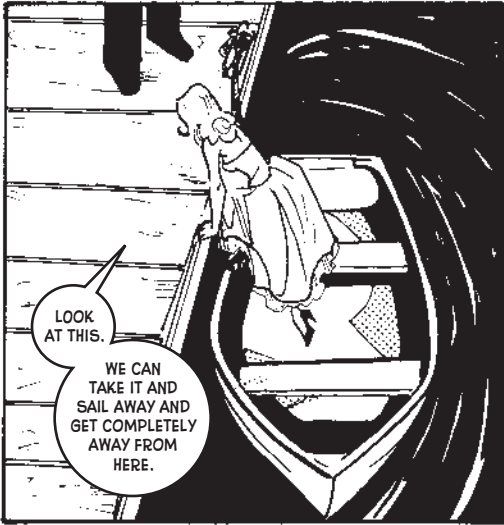
SEE?  
IT'S NOT  
SO BAD, IS  
IT?

I  
GUESS  
NOT.



WHAT  
CAN I DO  
TO ALLEVIATE  
YOUR  
DOUBTS?





LOOK AT THIS.

WE CAN TAKE IT AND SAIL AWAY AND GET COMPLETELY AWAY FROM HERE.



WHAT? NO!

IT'S NOT OUR BOAT, JULIE. AND IT'S DARK.



GEE WHIZ, TONY, WHICH ONE OF US IS THE GIRL HERE?

NOW, UNTIE ME AND LET'S GO.

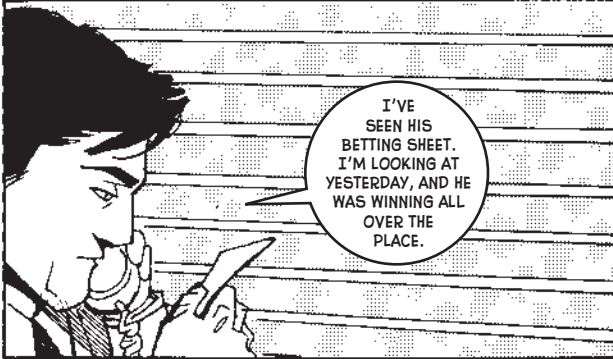
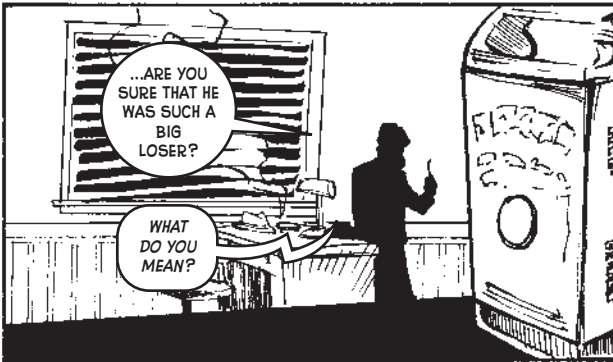


I DON'T KNOW.

IF YOU DON'T COME WITH ME, I'LL GO BY MYSELF.







"WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT, MERCER?"

"THAT MAYBE HE WASN'T IN DEBT TO MEMORY, MAYBE MEMORY WAS IN DEBT TO HIM."

"I NEED TO CHECK OUT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY. IS THERE SOMEPLACE HE LIKED TO GO BESIDES TOURNEUR'S?"

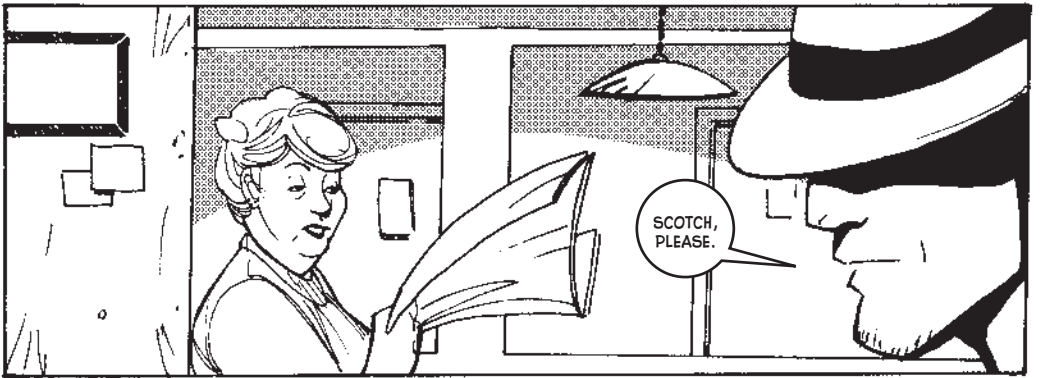
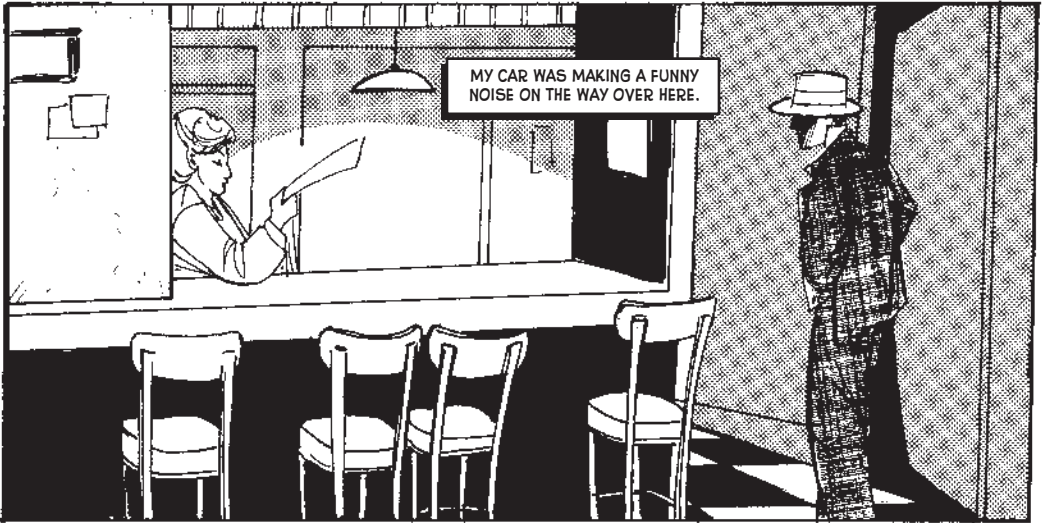
"SOMEPLACE I MIGHT NOT BE RECOGNIZED."

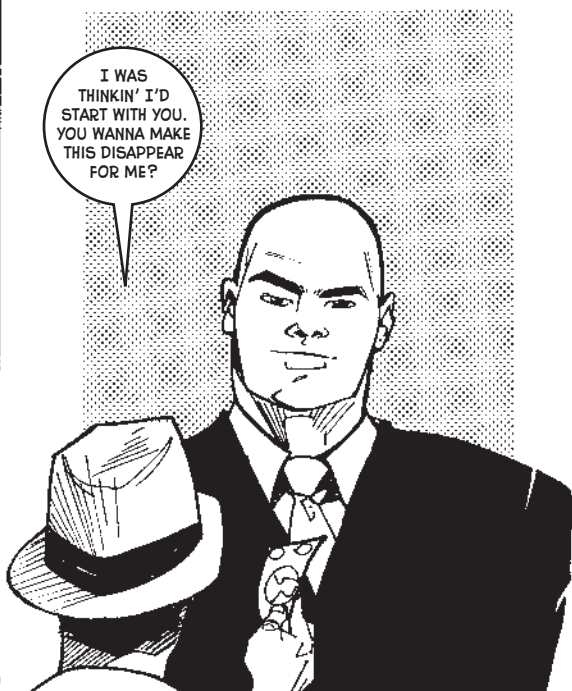
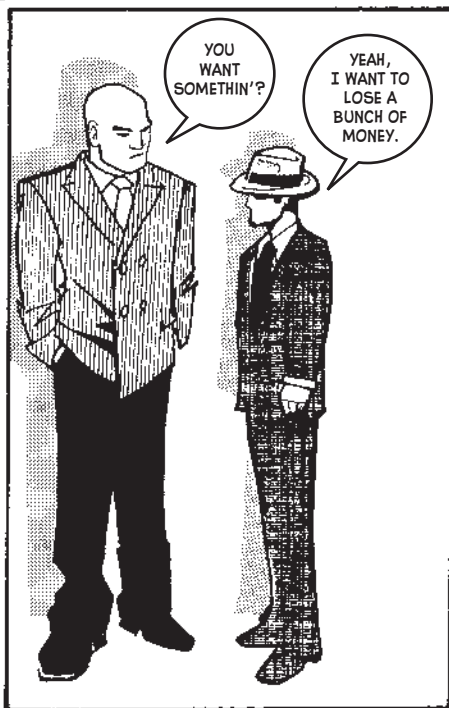
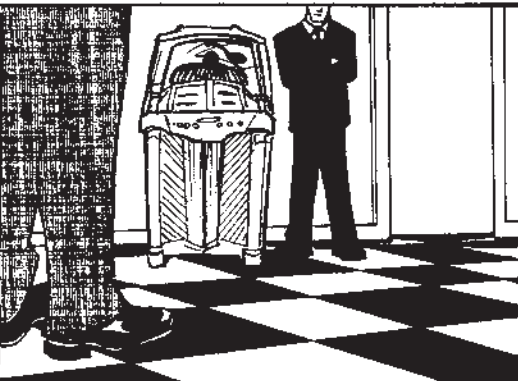
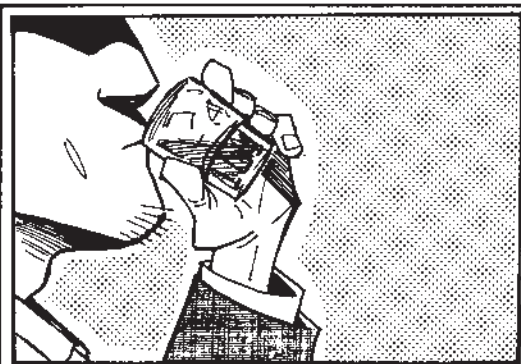
"THERE'S A ROAD HOUSE OUTSIDE OF TOWN, OFF THE OLD HIGHWAY."

"JULIE LIKED TO GO THERE WITH HIM, TOO."

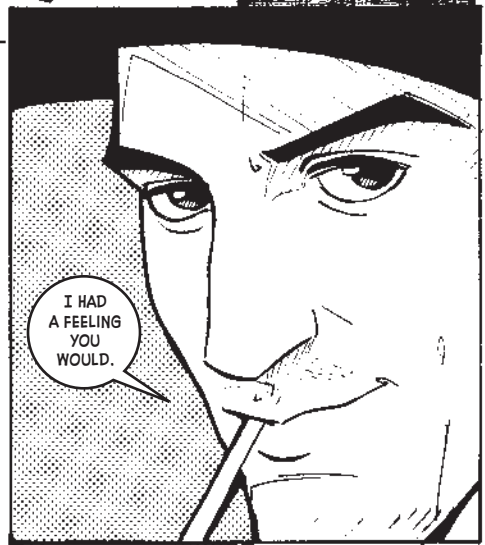
"ARE YOU TELLING ME YOUR SISTER LIKED TO GAMBLE, AS WELL?"

"SOMETIMES. I MEAN, DON'T WE ALL?"



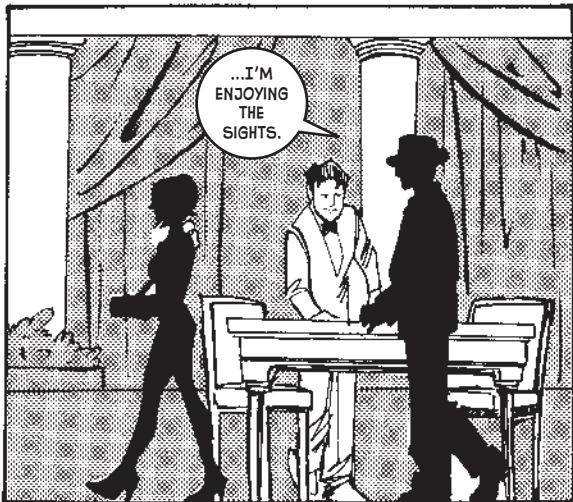








DON'T FEEL LIKE YOU NEED TO RUSH, THOUGH...



...I'M ENJOYING THE SIGHTS.



I THINK YOU'LL FIND THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.

NOT BAD.

BUT ARE YOU GOING TO BE AROUND LATER IF I'M LOOKING FOR SOMETHING ELSE?

OH, YEAH. YOU HAVE TO PLAY THEM RIGHT.



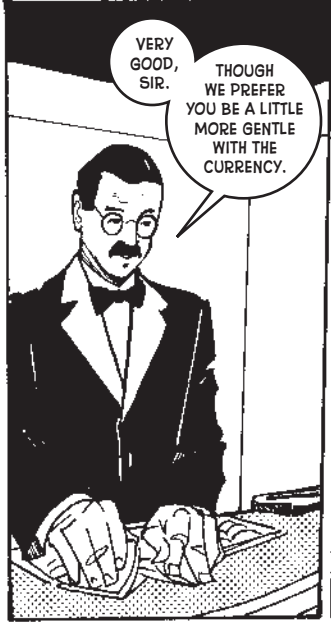
WHAT IS IT THEY SAY ABOUT PLAYING YOUR CARDS?



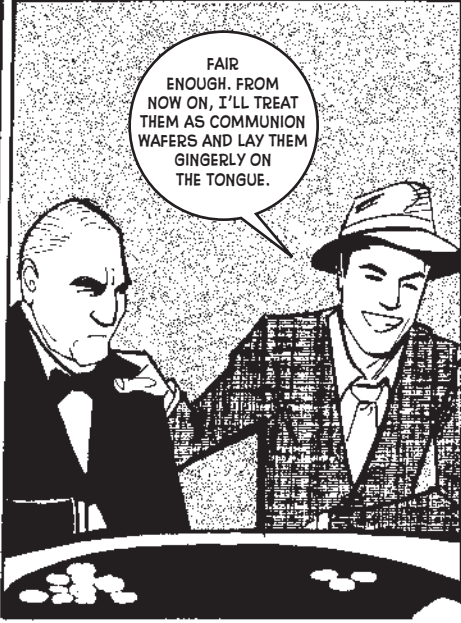
LUCKY FOR YOU, I LIKE WHAT YOU'VE GOT SHOWING SO FAR.



GIVE ME A COUPLE OF SWEET ONES.



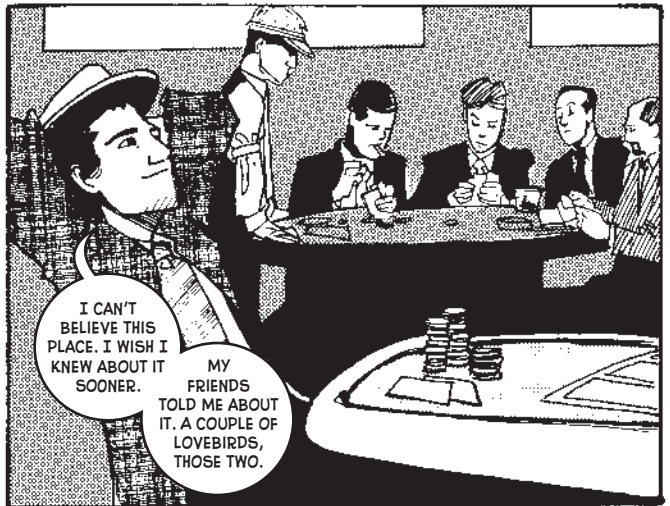
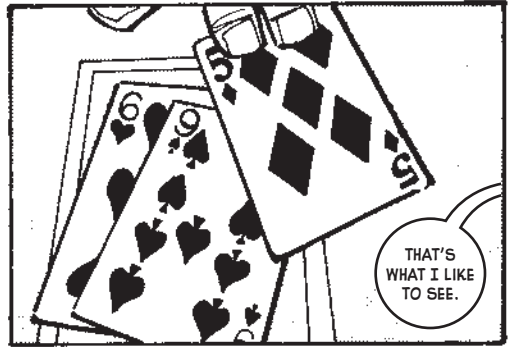
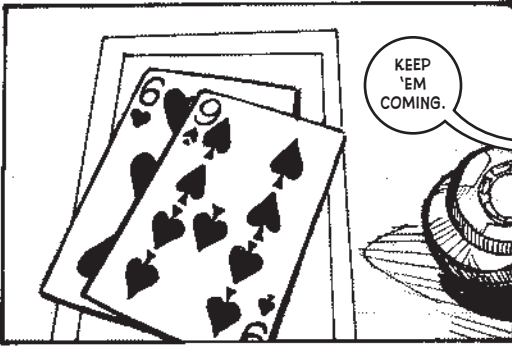
VERY GOOD, SIR. THOUGH WE PREFER YOU BE A LITTLE MORE GENTLE WITH THE CURRENCY.



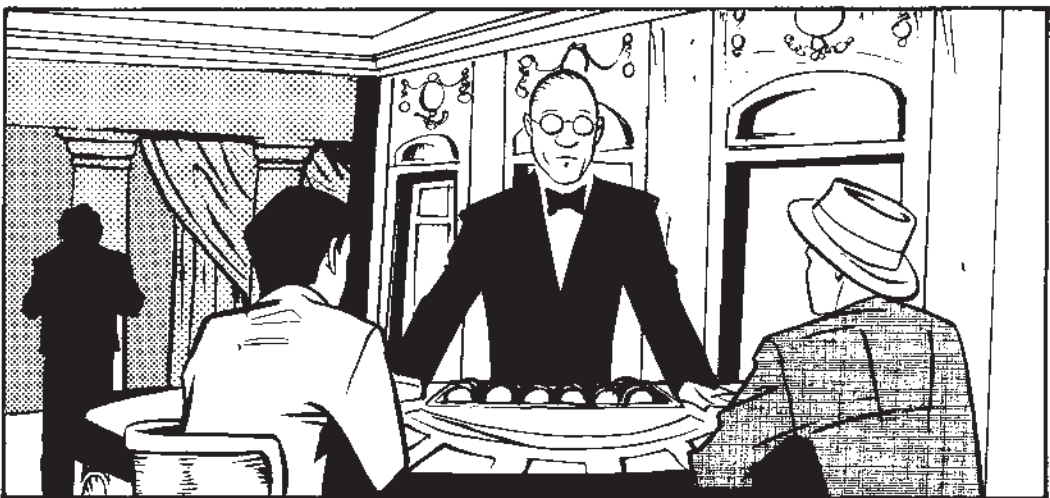
FAIR ENOUGH. FROM NOW ON, I'LL TREAT THEM AS COMMUNION WAFERS AND LAY THEM GINGERLY ON THE TONGUE.



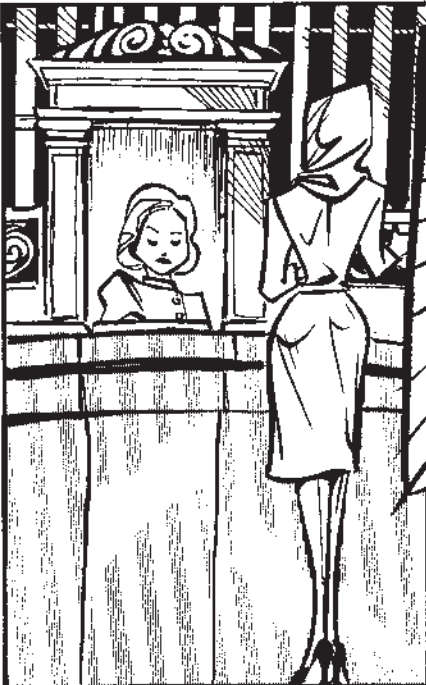
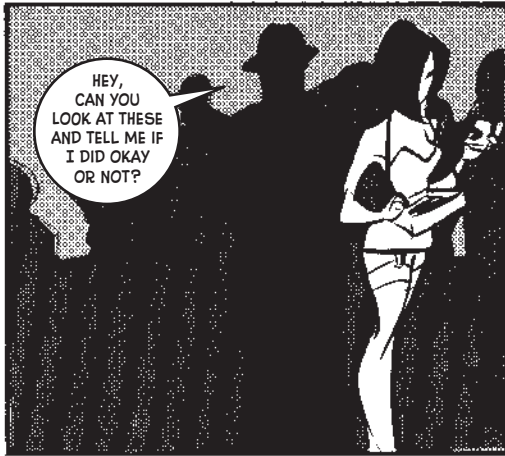
HAW-HAW-HAW!

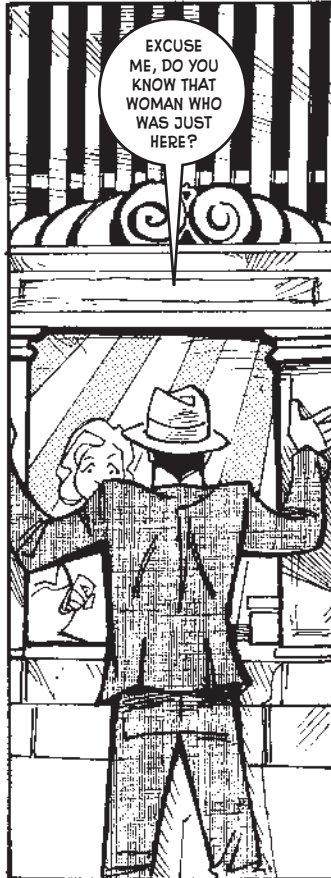
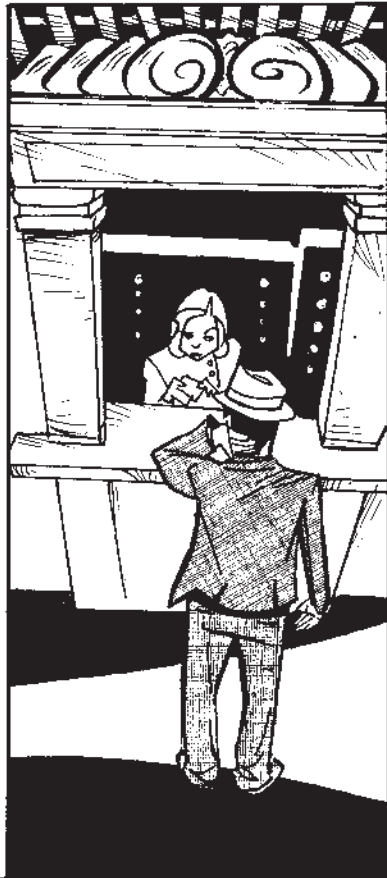


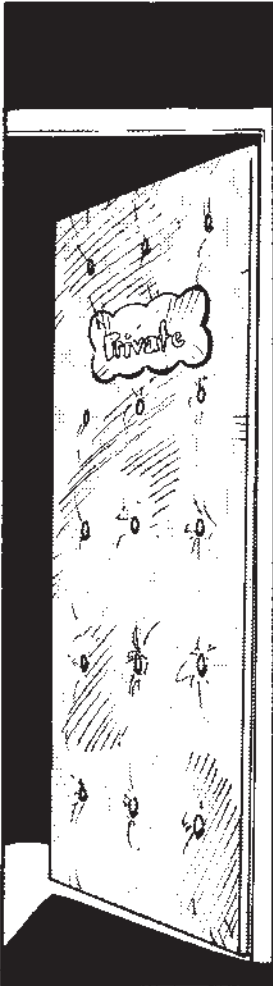
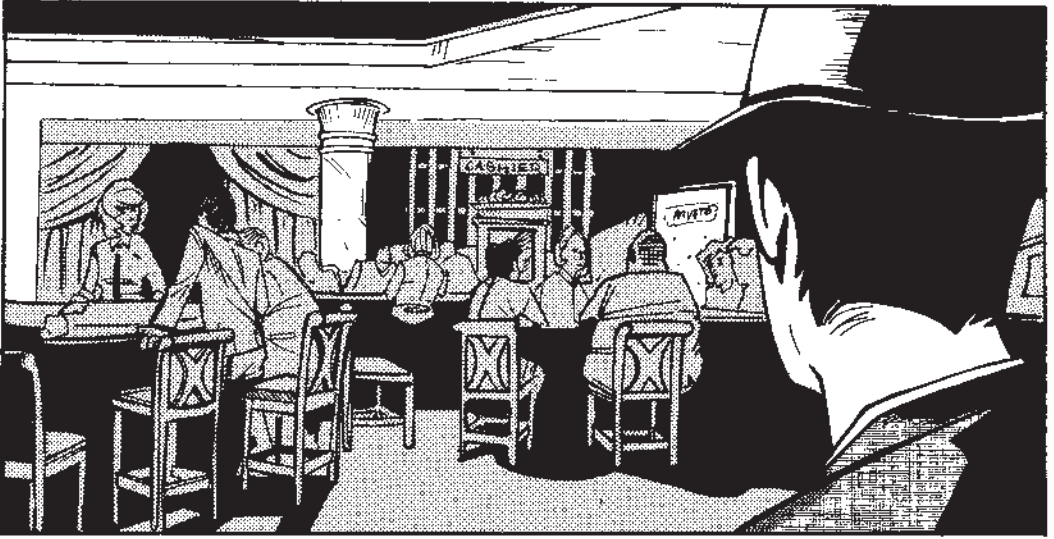


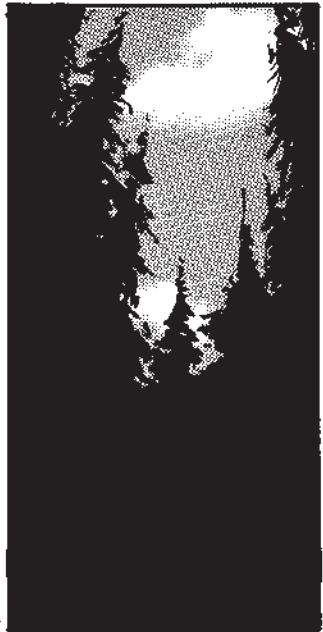














HELLO,  
DETECTIVE.



IT  
WORRIES ME  
WHEN SOMEONE  
SPOTS A RAT IN  
ONE OF MY  
ESTABLISH-  
MENTS.

IT  
FORCES ME  
TO CALL FOR PEST  
CONTROL BEFORE THEY  
SEND BOYS IN PRETTY  
BLUE UNIFORMS TO  
SHUT ME  
DOWN.

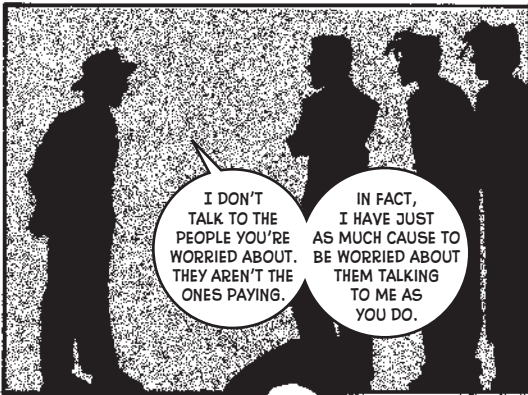


THE WAY YOU TALK, IT MAKES ME SOUND LIKE SOME KIND OF G-MAN.



I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE WAY YOU TALK.

AND TO WHOM.



I DON'T TALK TO THE PEOPLE YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT. THEY AREN'T THE ONES PAYING.

IN FACT, I HAVE JUST AS MUCH CAUSE TO BE WORRIED ABOUT THEM TALKING TO ME AS YOU DO.



NOT SURE IF YOU HEARD, BUT THEY WANT TO SEND ME DOWN FOR WHAT YOU DID.





WATCH YOUR MOUTH.

YOU'LL HAVE TO FORGIVE MY BOY HERE, MR. MERCER. HE DOESN'T LIKE WHEN PEOPLE SAY BAD THINGS ABOUT ME.



'S ALL RIGHT. I UNDERSTAND.

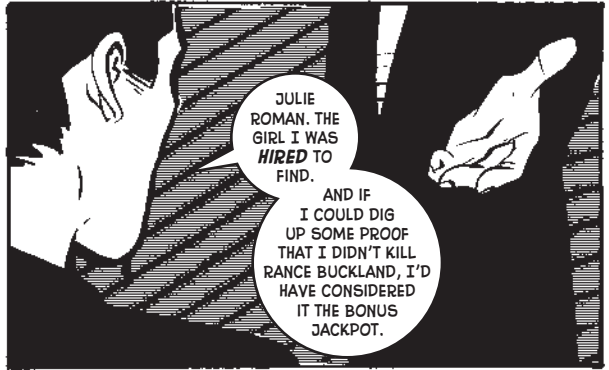
YOU DON'T MIND IF I SIT DOWN HERE FOR A WHILE, THOUGH, DO YOU?

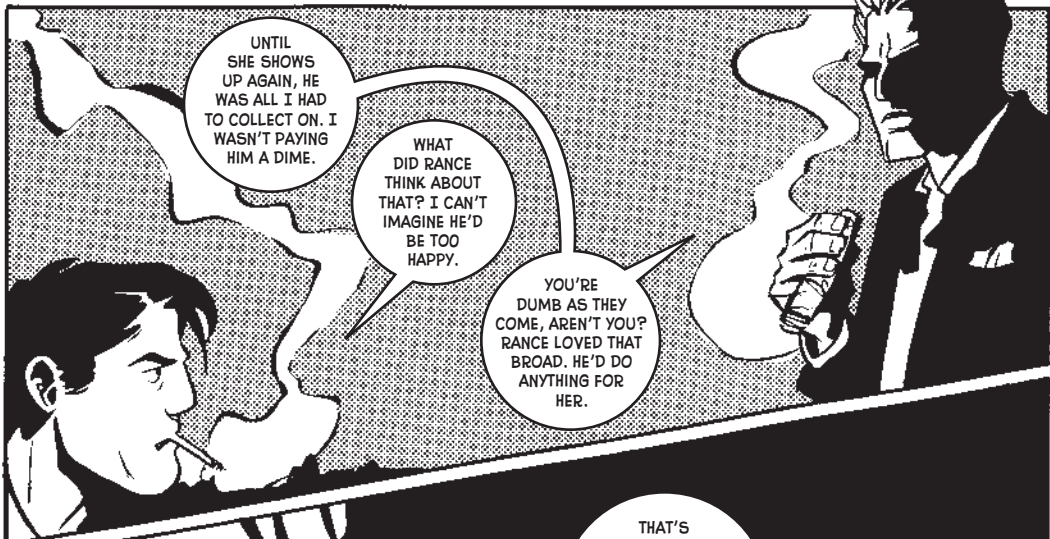


IT'S A SHORTER FALL IF YOU WANT TO SUCKER PUNCH ME AGAIN.



STEADY.





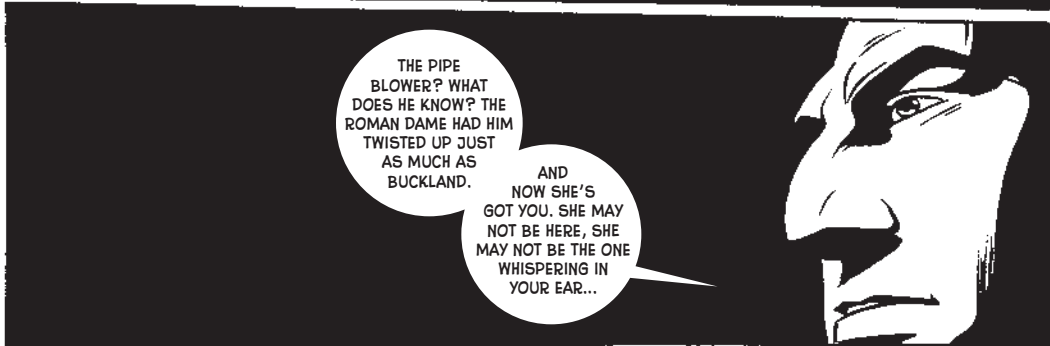
UNTIL SHE SHOWS UP AGAIN, HE WAS ALL I HAD TO COLLECT ON. I WASN'T PAYING HIM A DIME.

WHAT DID RANCE THINK ABOUT THAT? I CAN'T IMAGINE HE'D BE TOO HAPPY.

YOU'RE DUMB AS THEY COME, AREN'T YOU? RANCE LOVED THAT BROAD. HE'D DO ANYTHING FOR HER.



THAT'S NOT WHAT YOUR BOY KANE SAYS. HE SEEMS TO THINK THE MARRIAGE WAS HEADING FOR NOWHERE BEFORE IT EVEN LEFT THE CHAPEL.



THE PIPE BLOWER? WHAT DOES HE KNOW? THE ROMAN DAME HAD HIM TWISTED UP JUST AS MUCH AS BUCKLAND.

AND NOW SHE'S GOT YOU. SHE MAY NOT BE HERE, SHE MAY NOT BE THE ONE WHISPERING IN YOUR EAR...

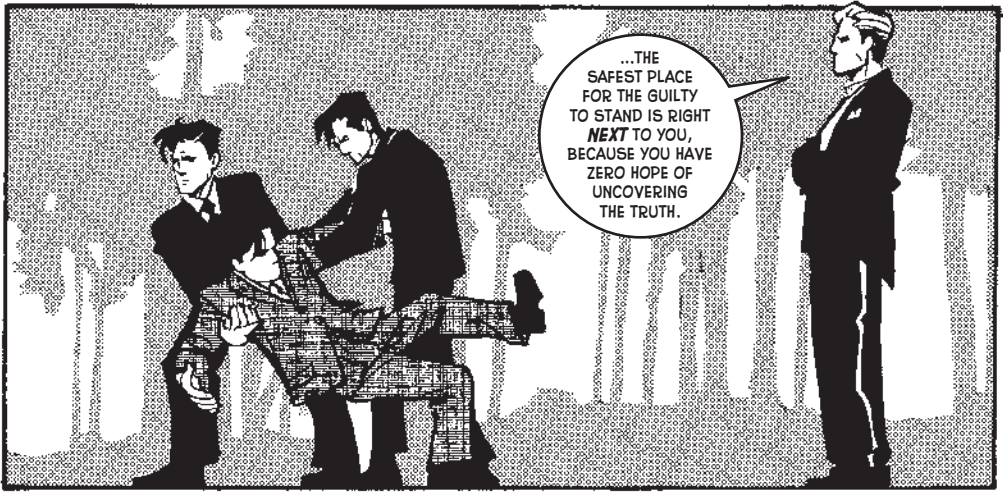


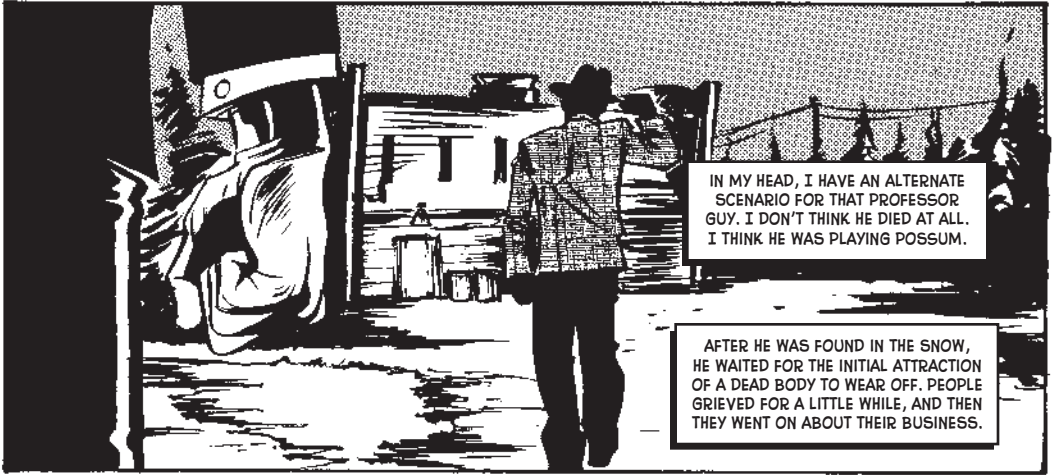
...BUT NOW YOU'RE ALL TANGLED IN HER HAIR AGAIN.

FAMILIAR FEELING?

A BIT. BUT I DON'T REMEMBER HER SHAMPOO STINKING LIKE YOU.

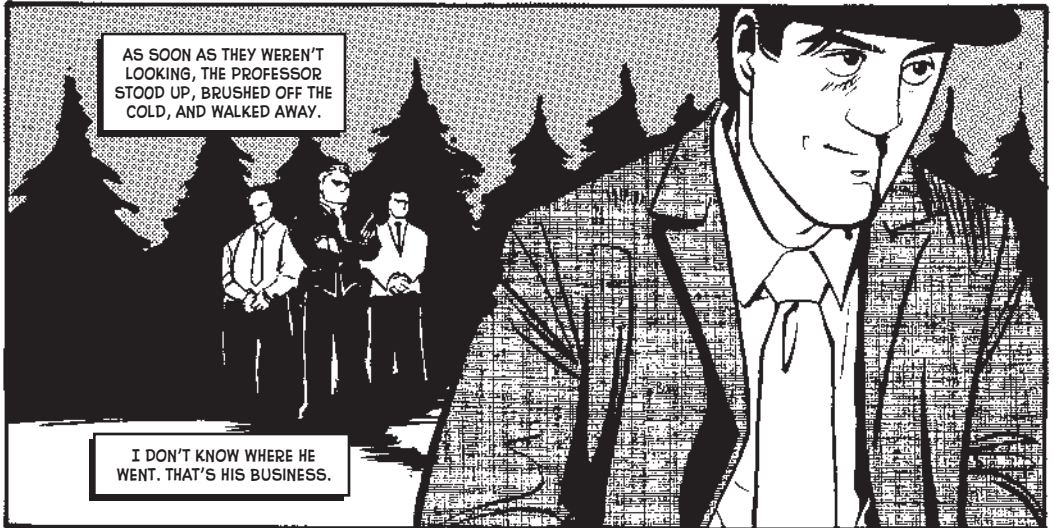






IN MY HEAD, I HAVE AN ALTERNATE SCENARIO FOR THAT PROFESSOR GUY. I DON'T THINK HE DIED AT ALL. I THINK HE WAS PLAYING POSSUM.

AFTER HE WAS FOUND IN THE SNOW, HE WAITED FOR THE INITIAL ATTRACTION OF A DEAD BODY TO WEAR OFF. PEOPLE GRIEVED FOR A LITTLE WHILE, AND THEN THEY WENT ON ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS.



AS SOON AS THEY WEREN'T LOOKING, THE PROFESSOR STOOD UP, BRUSHED OFF THE COLD, AND WALKED AWAY.

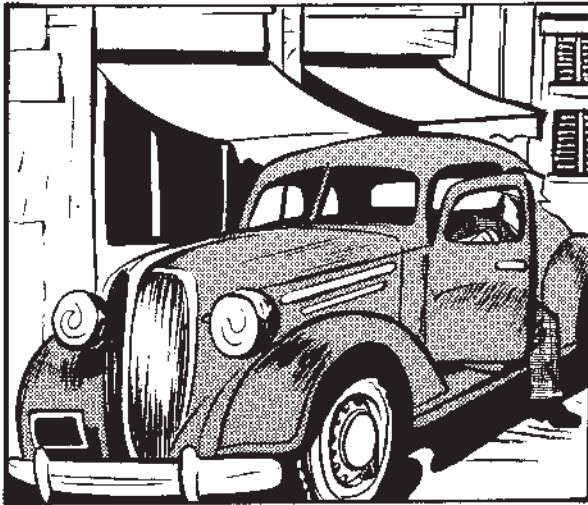
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE WENT. THAT'S HIS BUSINESS.



BUT HE WAS SMARTER THAN THEY ALL THOUGHT, HE GOT AWAY CLEAN.

# CHAPTER 6

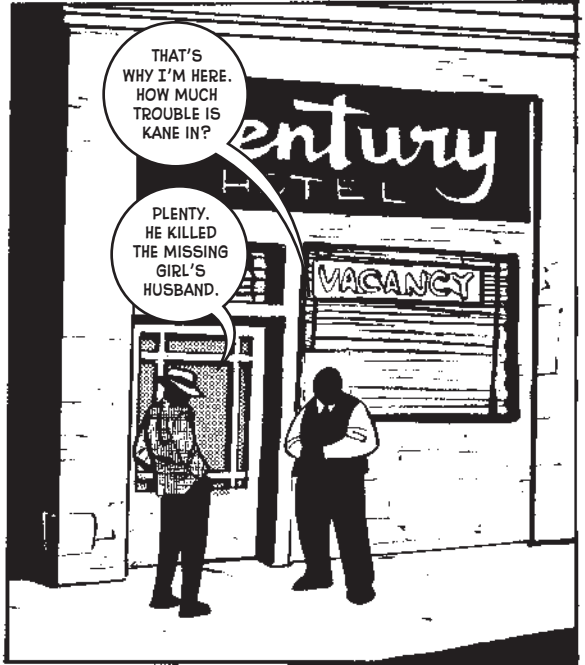






OF COURSE I DO.

FIRST YOUR FRIEND STARTS SHOWING UP IN FUNNY PLACES, NOW YOU.



THAT'S WHY I'M HERE. HOW MUCH TROUBLE IS KANE IN?

PLENTY. HE KILLED THE MISSING GIRL'S HUSBAND.



I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING.

YOU HAVE TO HELP HIM, DETECTIVE. HE'S NOT A BAD GUY, HE'S NOT.

MY JAW BEGS TO DIFFER.

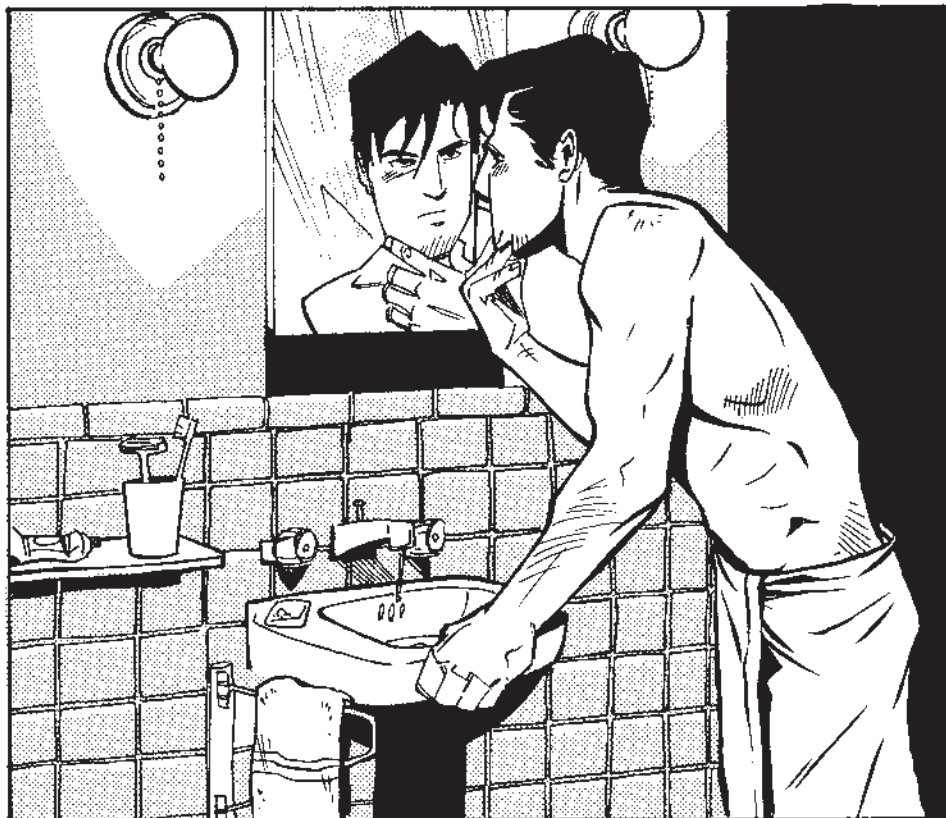


IT'S THAT GIRL. THAT JULIE. SHE'S GOT HIM ALL MESSED UP.

YOU DON'T KNOW THIS, BUT SHE CAME TO SEE HIM. AFTER HE WAS WITH YOU.











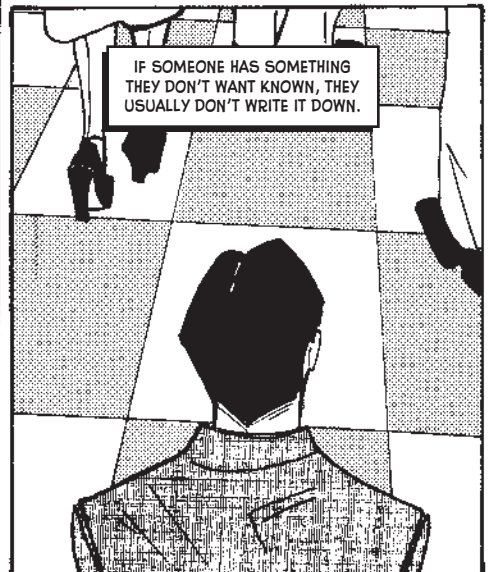
WHENEVER ANYTHING REACHES ITS DEAD  
END, IT USUALLY ENDS UP ON PAPER.

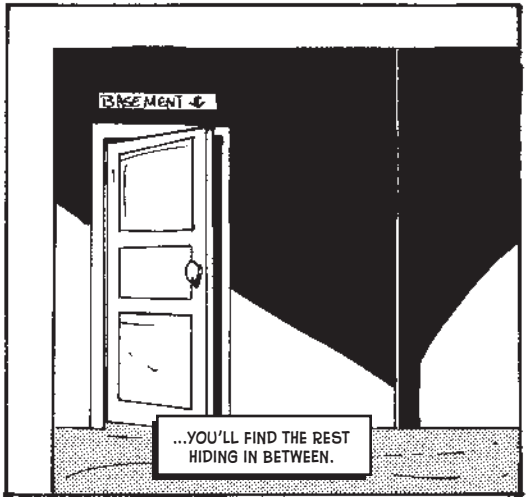
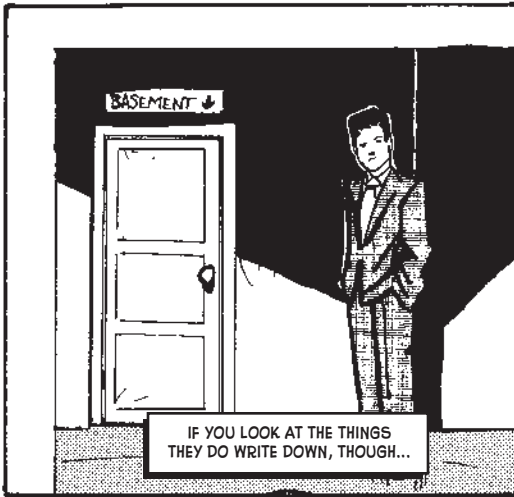


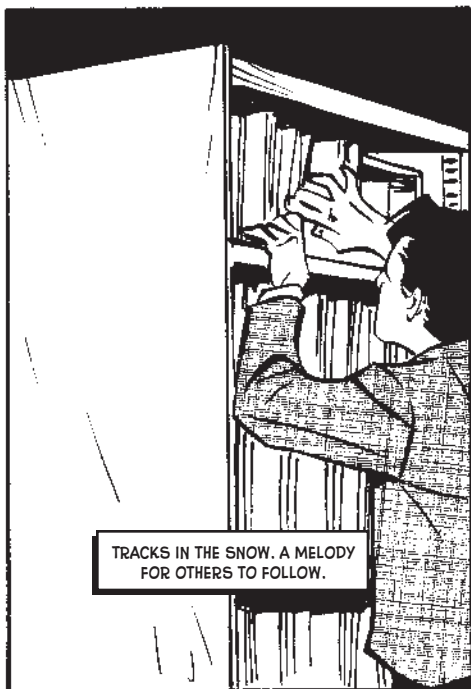
'LO,  
MERCER.

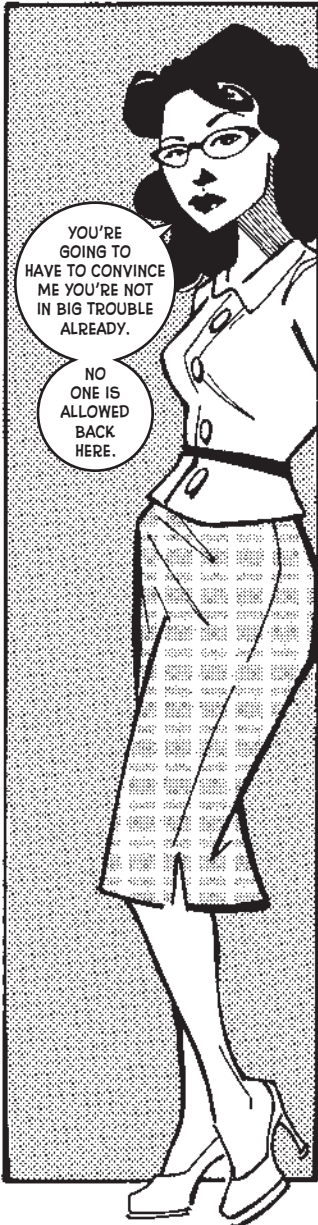
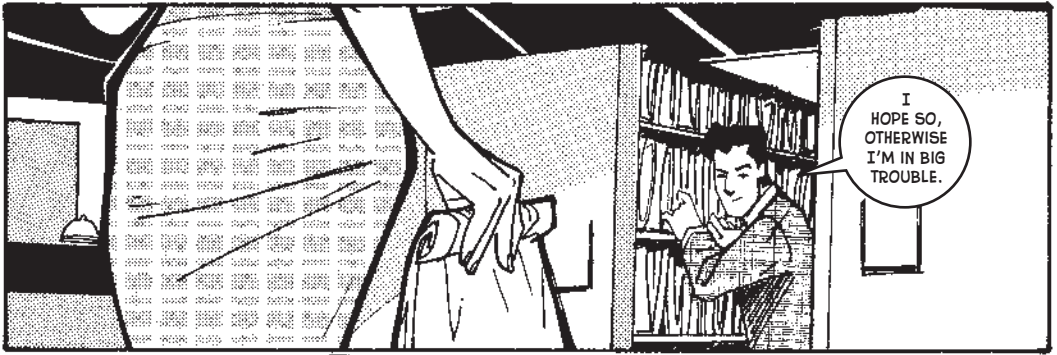
NORMAN.

IF SOMEONE HAS SOMETHING  
THEY DON'T WANT KNOWN, THEY  
USUALLY DON'T WRITE IT DOWN.











YEAH, BUT I'M SURE YOU CAN IMAGINE WHO I THOUGHT I WAS WAITING FOR.

YOU KNOW THE AVERAGE CITY HALL TYPE-- FAT GUY, BEEN HERE TOO LONG AND HE SMELLS LIKE IT.



CAN YOU BLAME ME FOR WANTING TO GET A HEAD START?

THANKFULLY YOU STOPPED ME WHEN YOU DID, OR I'D HAVE COMPLETELY MISSED OUT.



WHAT WERE YOU HOPING TO FIND BACK HERE?



I'M SORRY. IT CAN WAIT. I DON'T WANT TO INTERRUPT YOUR LUNCH. US WORKING STIFFS, WE DON'T GET TOO MANY BREAKS, IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.



I DON'T.

BUT MAYBE YOU CAN EXPLAIN IT TO SECURITY.



LISTEN, I'LL BE STRAIGHT WITH YOU.

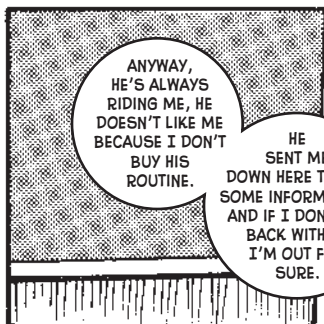


MY BOSS SENT ME DOWN HERE. HE'S BEEN RIDING MY HUMP TO GET SOME INFORMATION.

YOUR BOSS?

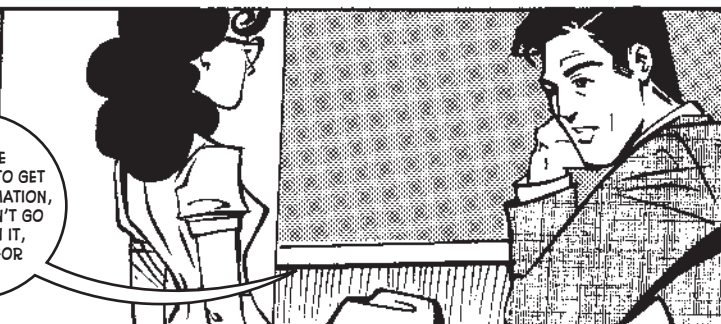
YEAH, I'M FROM THE EXAMINER. MY EDITOR'S A REAL PIG OF A MAN.

OR SHOULD I SAY PIGLET. HIS DADDY IS TOP BOAR.



ANYWAY, HE'S ALWAYS RIDING ME, HE DOESN'T LIKE ME BECAUSE I DON'T BUY HIS ROUTINE.

HE SENT ME DOWN HERE TO GET SOME INFORMATION, AND IF I DON'T GO BACK WITH IT, I'M OUT FOR SURE.



LET ME GUESS. HE'S NEVER PACKED A LUNCH IN HIS LIFE.

YOU'VE MET HIM?



WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU NEED?

YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS RICH CAT THAT GOT OFFED? THE ONE THAT WAS ENGAGED TO THE HEIRRESS?

UH-HUH.





NOT  
A LIVING  
SOUL.



WHAT  
DID YOU  
SAY THE FIRST  
NAME  
WAS?

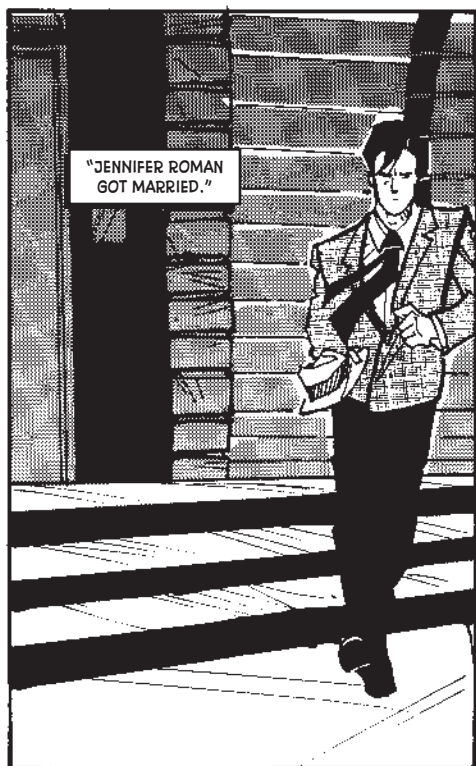


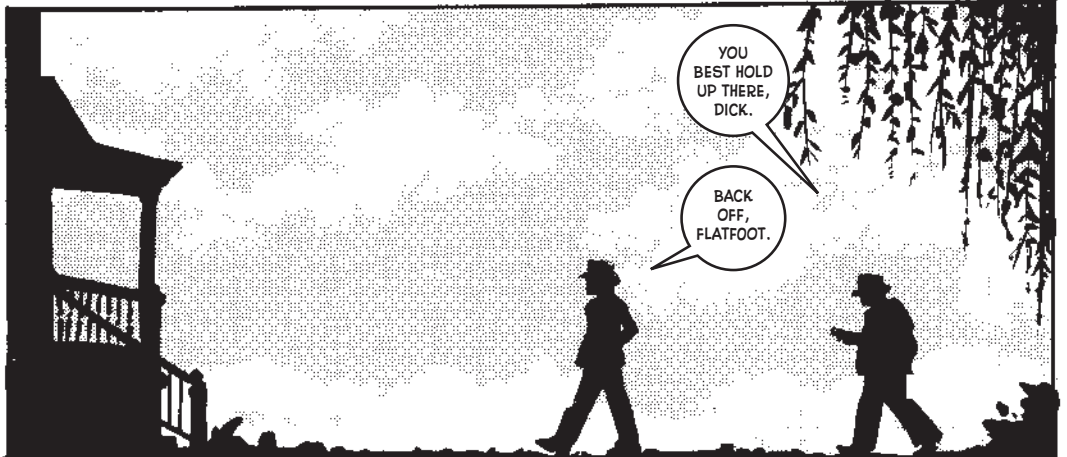
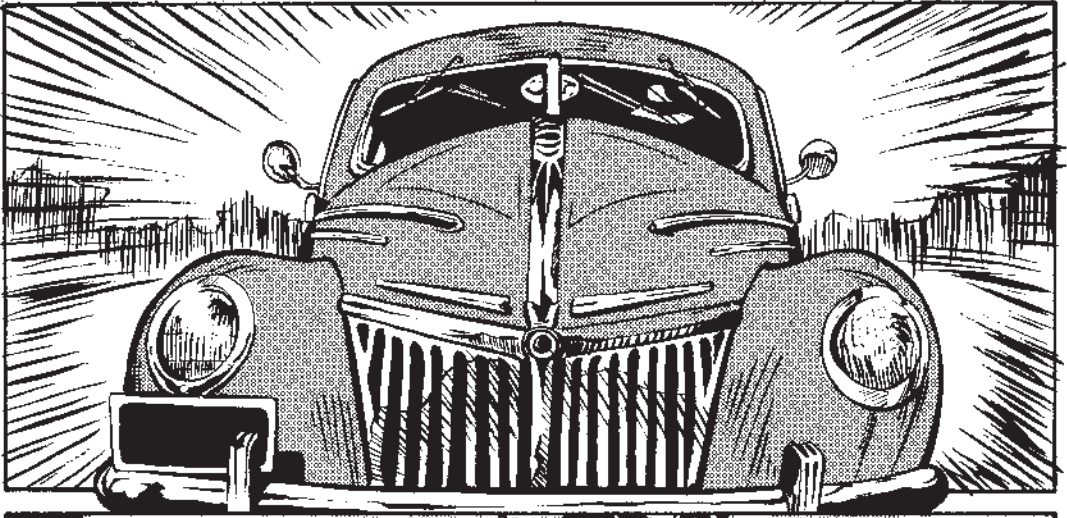
BECAUSE  
THERE ARE A  
COUPLE OF THINGS  
HERE UNDER THE  
NAME  
ROMAN.

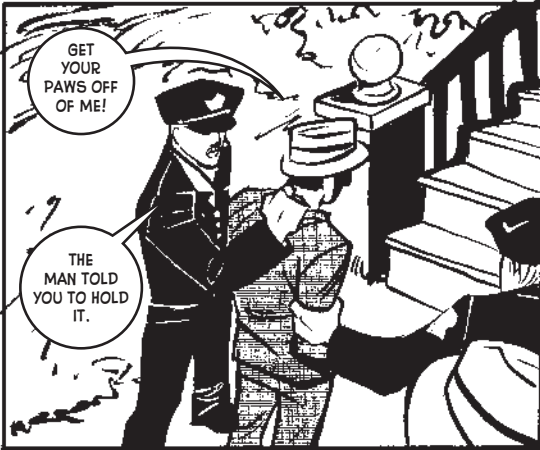
REALLY?



YEAH,  
A JULIET  
AND A  
JENNIFER.







GET YOUR PAWS OFF OF ME!

THE MAN TOLD YOU TO HOLD IT.



AND I TOLD YOU TO GLOVE THOSE MITTS.

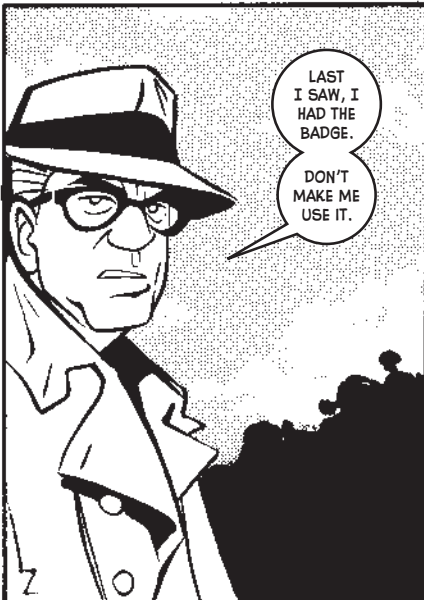
WHAT THE HELL IS THE PROBLEM HERE?



NO ONE GOES INSIDE.

SAYS WHO?

SAYS ME.



LAST I SAW, I HAD THE BADGE.

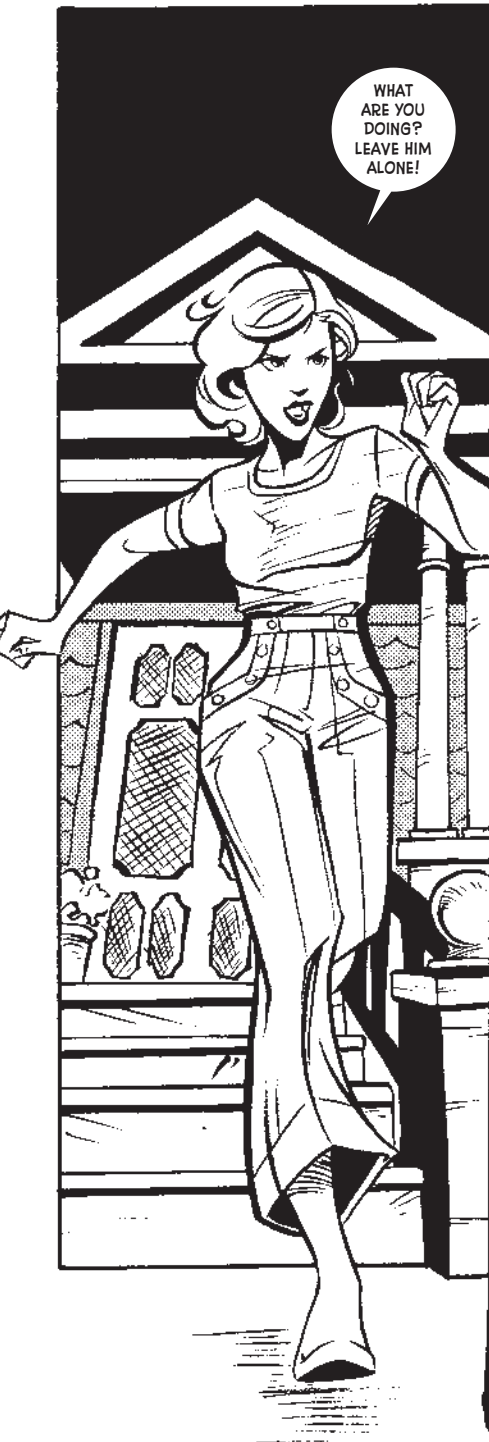
DON'T MAKE ME USE IT.



THIS IS RIDICULOUS. YOU KNOW WHO I AM. YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE.

DO I?



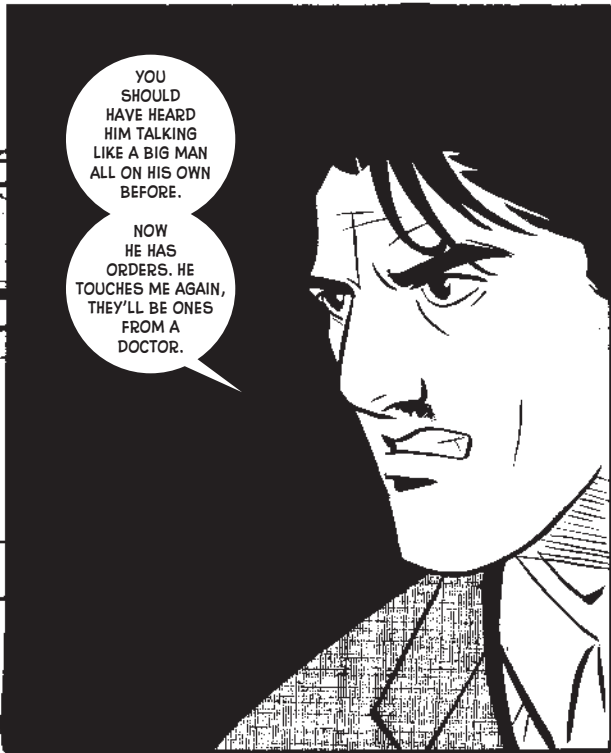


WHAT ARE YOU DOING? LEAVE HIM ALONE!



YOU KNOW I HAVE MY ORDERS, MA'AM.

I DON'T CARE. THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY.

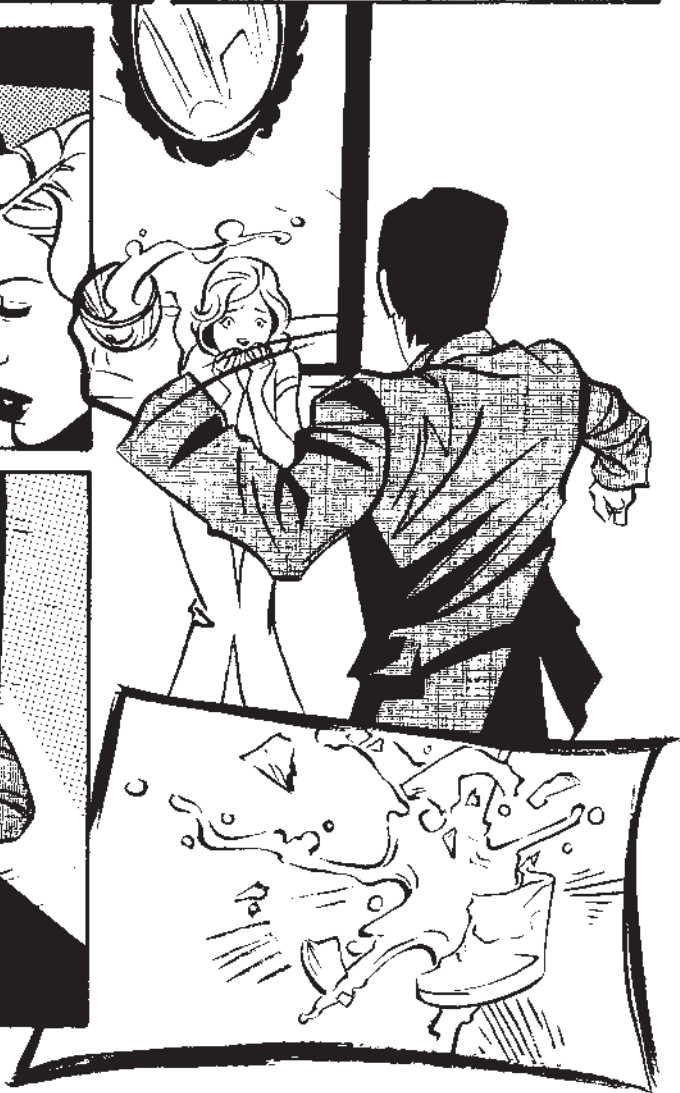


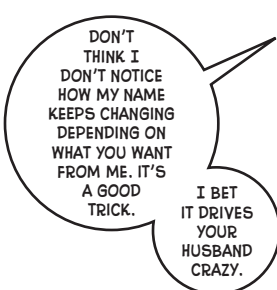
YOU SHOULD HAVE HEARD HIM TALKING LIKE A BIG MAN ALL ON HIS OWN BEFORE.

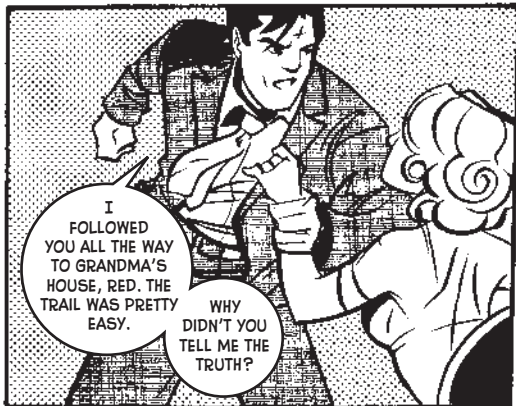
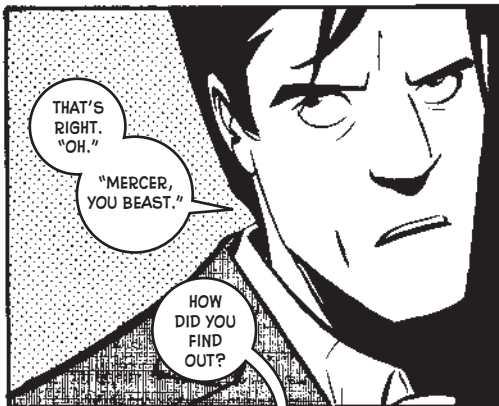
NOW HE HAS ORDERS. HE TOUCHES ME AGAIN, THEY'LL BE ONES FROM A DOCTOR.

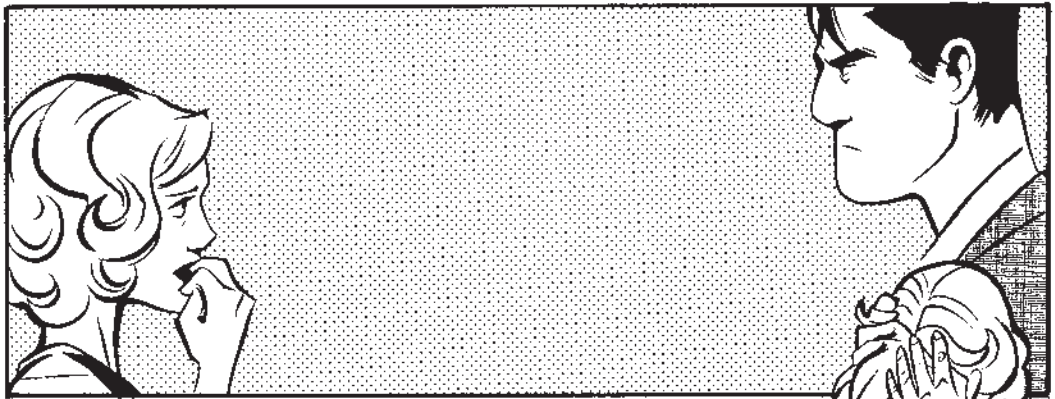
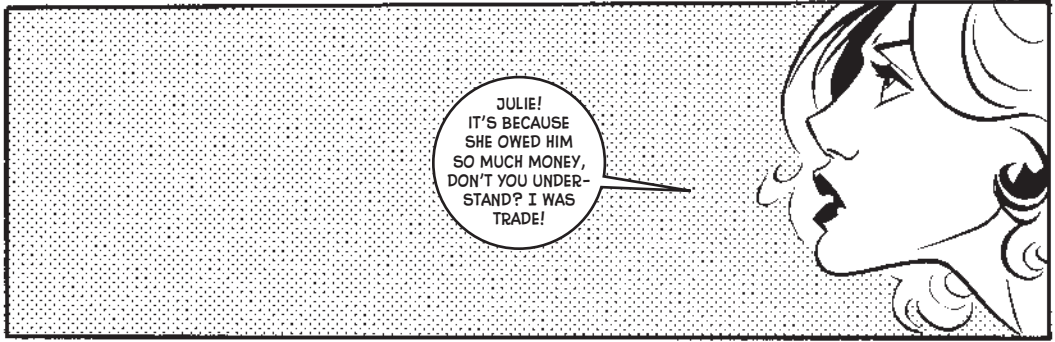
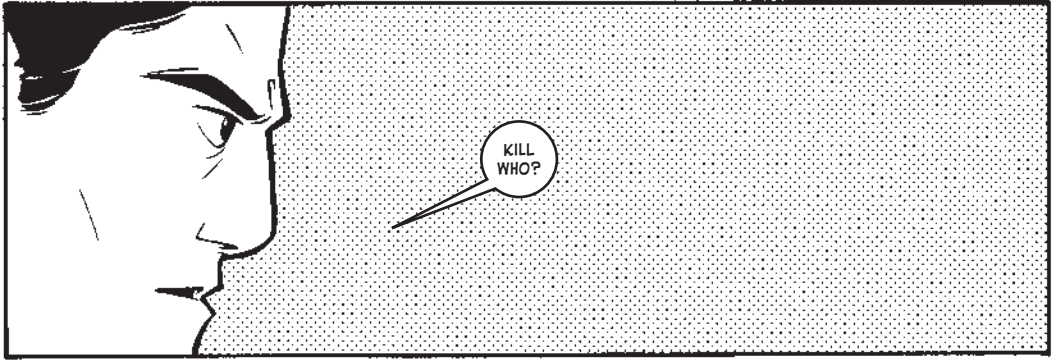






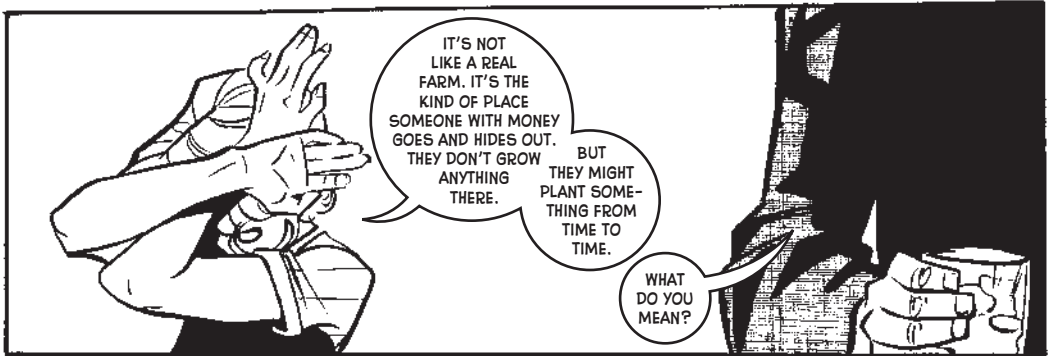








...AND THE NEXT THING I KNOW, WE'RE ON SOME ROAD OUT TO THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. OUT TO CARLTON'S FARMHOUSE.



IT'S NOT LIKE A REAL FARM. IT'S THE KIND OF PLACE SOMEONE WITH MONEY GOES AND HIDES OUT. THEY DON'T GROW ANYTHING THERE.

BUT THEY MIGHT PLANT SOMETHING FROM TIME TO TIME.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?



IT'S WHERE HE HIDES THE BODIES, MERCER. OF THE PEOPLE WHO GET IN HIS WAY.

IT'S WHERE HE BURIES THE EVIDENCE.



I'M SCARED, MERCER.

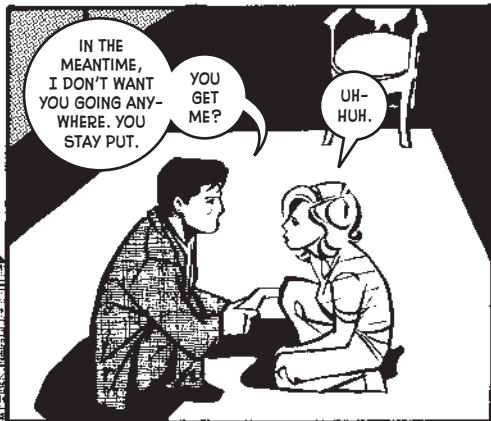


I'M SO SCARED. WHEN WILL IT BE ENOUGH? WHEN WILL HE EVER HAVE ENOUGH?

SHHH. WE'LL FIND HER.

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN, JENNIE.

WE'LL FIND HER.



IN THE MEANTIME, I DON'T WANT YOU GOING ANYWHERE. YOU STAY PUT.

YOU GET ME?

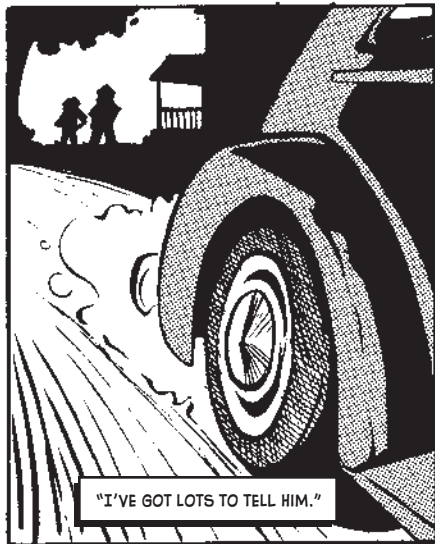
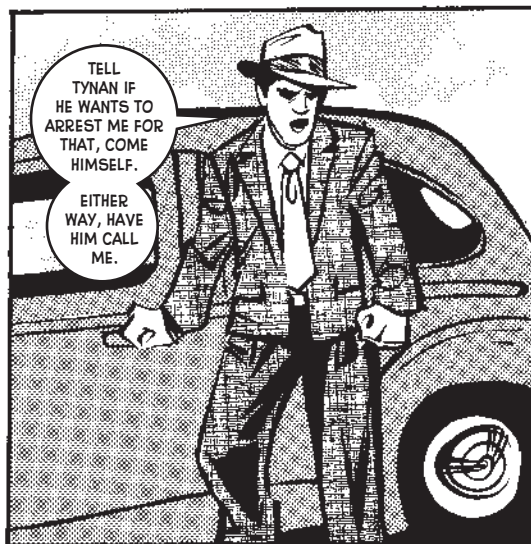
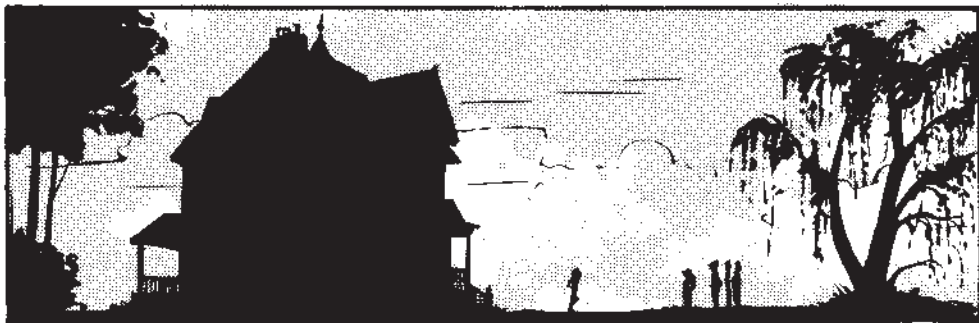
UH-HUH.



WE'VE ALREADY LOST ONE OF YOU DUMMIES...



"...I DON'T NEED YOU WANDERING OFF, TOO."



# CHAPTER 7





I DON'T MIND THE CUTS AND BRUISES.



ANYTHING YOU CAN PUT A BANDAGE OVER WILL EVENTUALLY CLOSE UP...



...WILL EVENTUALLY FADE AWAY.



EVEN IF IT LEAVES A MARK, YOU'VE GOT A NEW ANECDOTE.

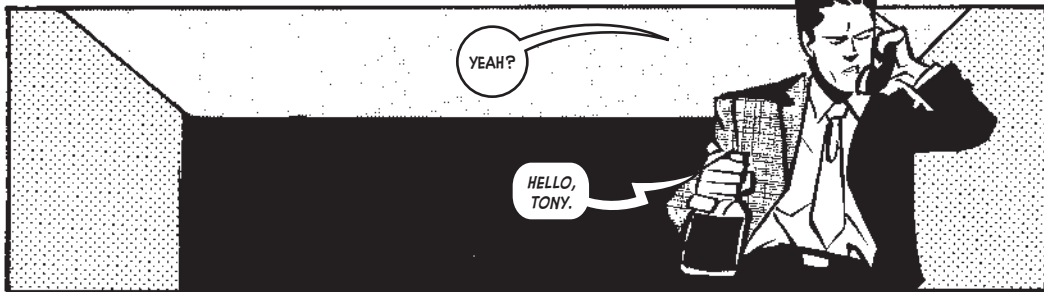


"SEE THIS HERE ON MY CHIN? THAT'S WHEN I WALKED INTO SOME GUY'S ELBOW.



"SEE THIS HERE ON MY ELBOW? THAT'S WHEN SOME GUY WALKED INTO MINE."





YEAH?

HELLO,  
TONY.



HELLO  
YOURSELF.  
WHO IS  
THIS?

MY, HOW  
QUICKLY THEY  
FORGET.



JULIE?

I HEAR  
YOU'VE BEEN  
MAKING ALL SORTS  
OF NOISE AROUND  
TOWN, BANGING ON  
POTS AND PANS  
AND SCREAMING  
YOUR HEAD  
OFF.



WHERE  
ARE  
YOU?

I NEED  
YOU TO CUT  
IT OUT, TONY.  
YOU'RE GOING  
TO GET ME IN  
TROUBLE.


I HATE  
TO BREAK IT  
TO YOU, BUT  
YOU'RE  
ALREADY IN  
TROUBLE.



LET ME  
SEE YOU,  
JULIE. ALL I NEED  
TO KNOW IS YOU'RE  
OKAY. JUST SO I CAN  
TELL YOUR FOLKS.  
THEN I'LL CALL  
IT OFF. I  
SWEAR.

...

FINE.  
MEET ME...




"...I'LL GIVE YOU THE ADDRESS."

IT'S THE ONES THAT COME AND DO THEIR DAMAGE  
AND DISAPPEAR WITHOUT LEAVING A VISIBLE TRACE...

...THOSE ARE THE ONES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE A MUG.



THERE'S NO BANDAGE BIG ENOUGH  
TO BLOT OUT JULIE'S NAME...



...NO WORLD OLD ENOUGH TO GIVE ME THE TIME  
TO LET THE WOUND SEAL OVER AND FADE.

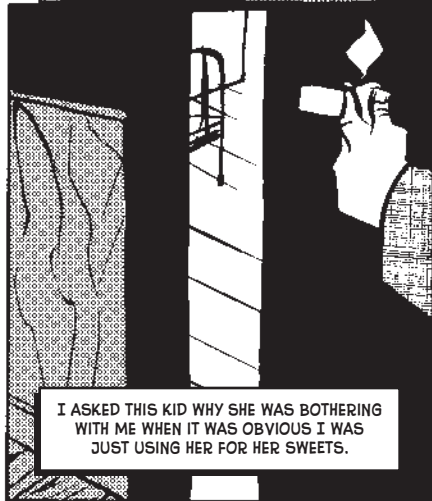
I KNEW THIS LITTLE GIRL BACK IN SCHOOL WHO  
GAVE ME COOKIES FROM HER LUNCHPAIL.

I'D EAT THEM AND SHE'D LOOK AT ME  
AND I'D BE LOOKING ACROSS THE WAY...



"I'M IN ROOM 20."

...AT WHATEVER JULIE WAS DOING.



I ASKED THIS KID WHY SHE WAS BOTHERING  
WITH ME WHEN IT WAS OBVIOUS I WAS  
JUST USING HER FOR HER SWEETS.



SHE SAID BECAUSE IF SHE WALKED AWAY,  
EVERYONE ELSE WOULD SEE HOW MUCH IT HURTS.



SOMEWHERE  
THAT KID IS NOW  
A WOMAN...

...AND SHE'S GOT A BIG SCAR  
IN THE SHAPE OF MY NAME.

LIKE A BRAND ON HER HEART.



I KNEW I WAS DOING  
IT TO HER, TOO, AND IT  
DIDN'T STOP ME.

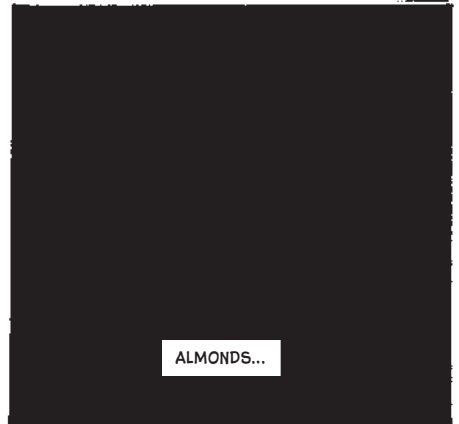
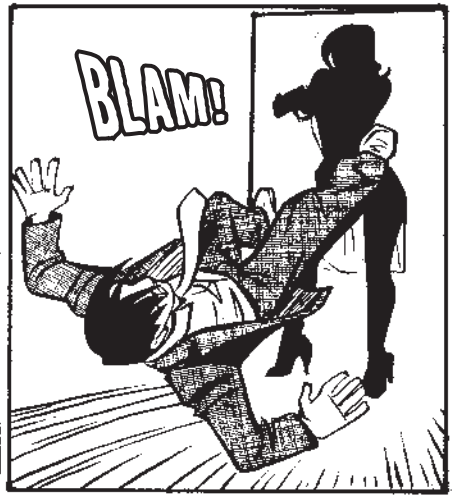
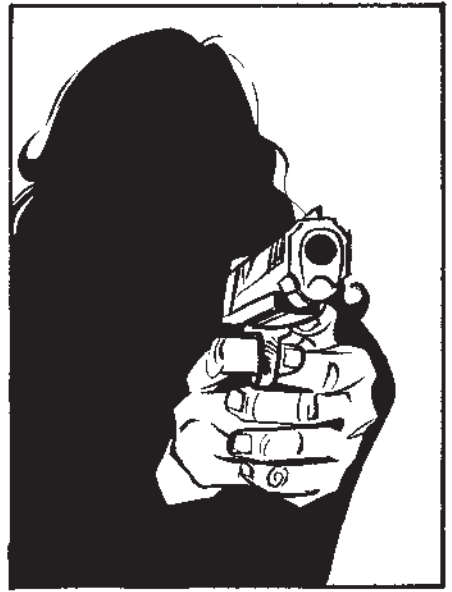


I GUESS I WAS JUST HUNGRY.





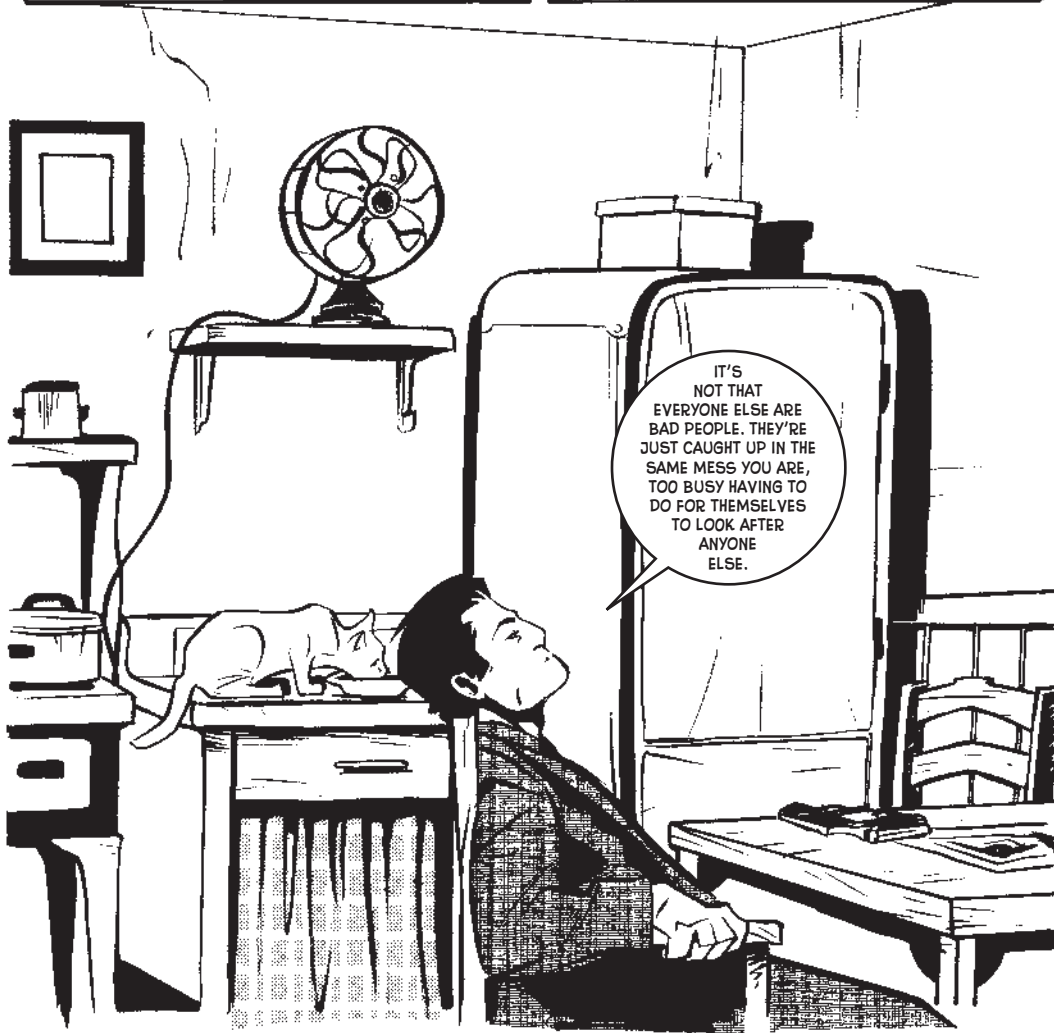
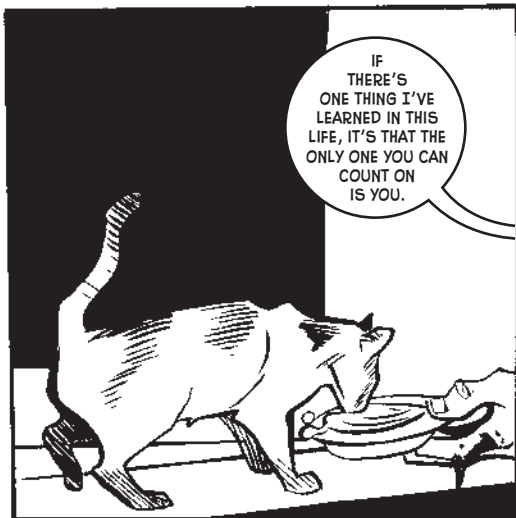
THAT SMELL... ALMONDS.



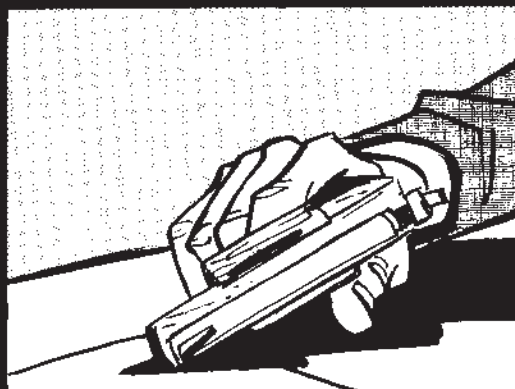
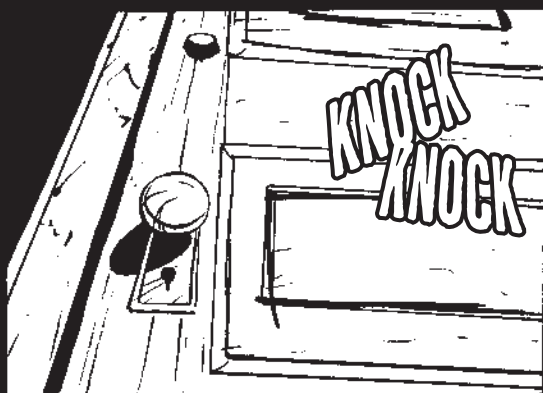
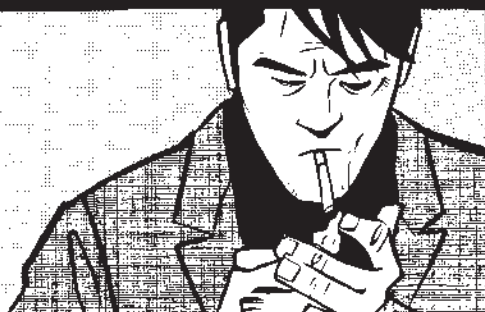


# CHAPTER 8





**KNOCK  
KNOCK**





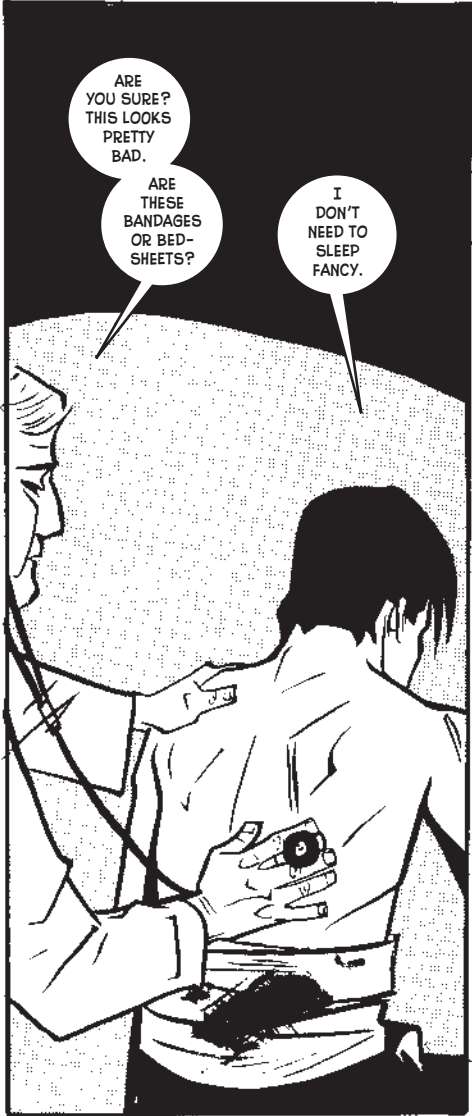
THANK YOU FOR COMING. DID YOU SEE ANYONE OUTSIDE?

NO, THE STREET WAS EMPTY.



I'M NOT SURPRISED. NO ONE EXPECTS ME TO BE HERE.

AND AS FAR AS YOU KNOW, I WASN'T.



ARE YOU SURE? THIS LOOKS PRETTY BAD.

ARE THESE BANDAGES OR BED-SHEETS?

I DON'T NEED TO SLEEP FANCY.



YOU SHOULD GO SOMEWHERE AND REST.

I CAN'T. PLEASE, JUST PATCH ME UP AS BEST YOU CAN.



YOU KNOW I WILL. REGARDLESS OF WHAT HAPPENED TO GREEN, YOU HELPED ME. A LOT. I OWE YOU.

HOW MUCH TROUBLE ARE YOU IN?



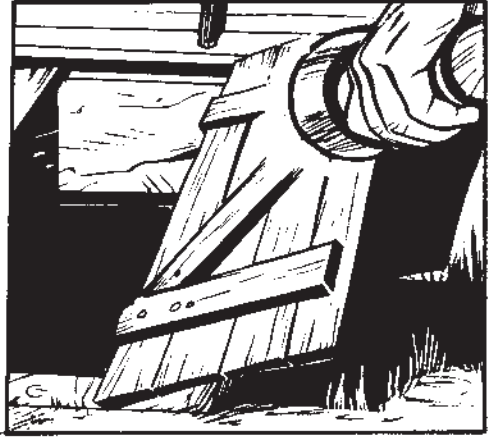
WELL,  
THEY ONLY  
SHOT ME  
ONCE.

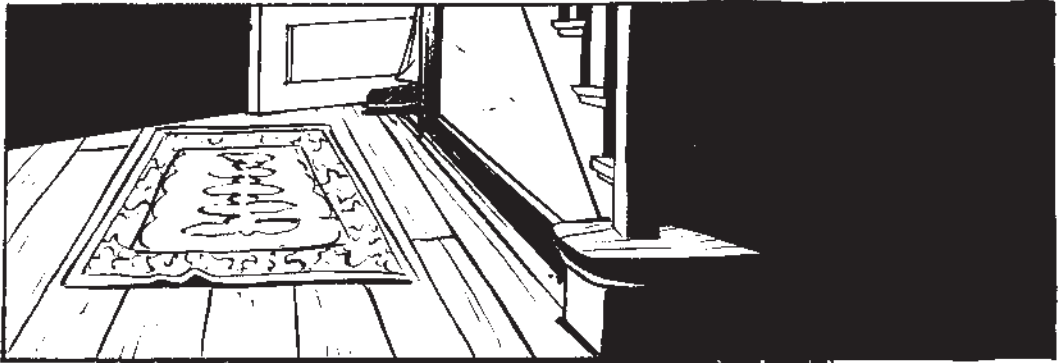
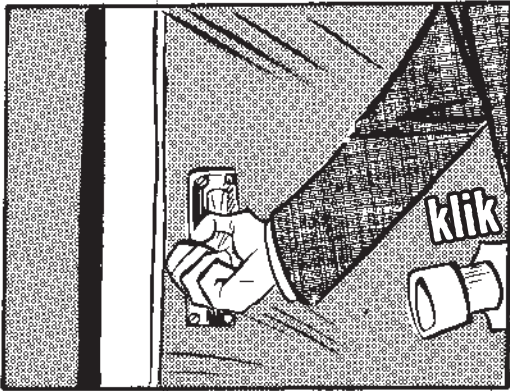


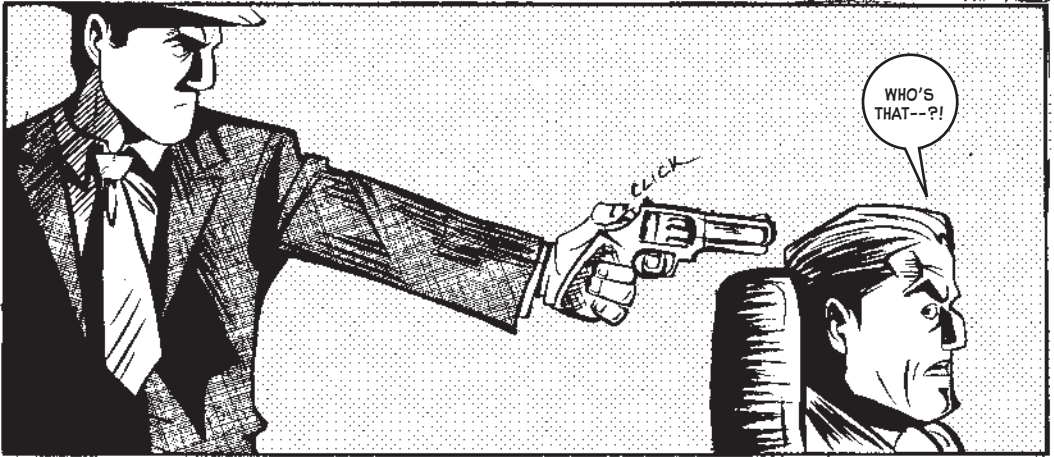
THAT'S  
SOMETHING,  
I SUPPOSE.



"IT'S WHERE HE HIDES  
THE BODIES, MERCER."









YOU SURPRISE ME, MERCER. WORD WAS THAT YOU HAD MET AN UNTIMELY END.

OH, YEAH? ONLY PERSON COULD HAVE TOLD YOU THAT WAS THE ONE WHO CLOSED THE BOOK ON ME.

WELL, THE DETAILS WERE SKETCHY. WHO OR HOW WASN'T MADE CLEAR.

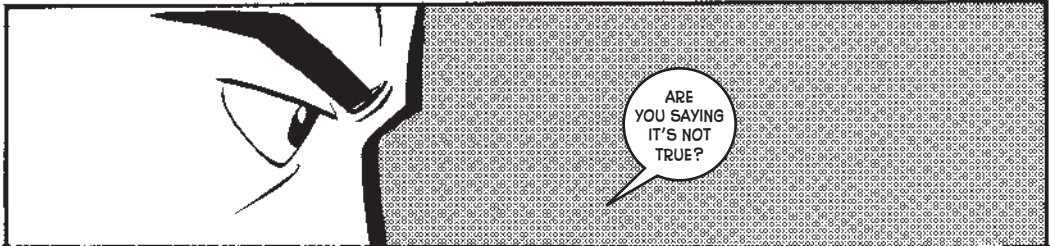
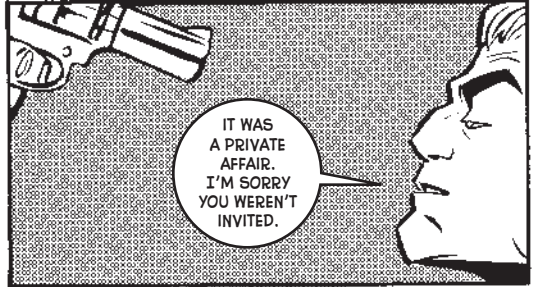
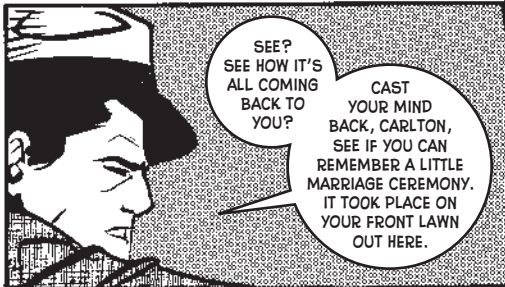
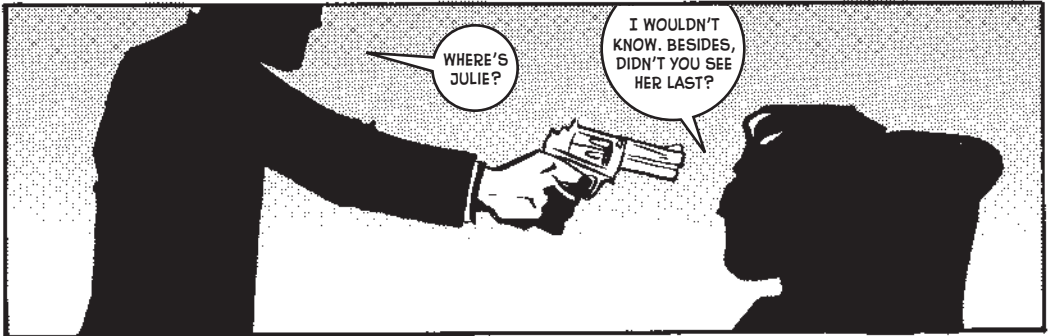


THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME. THERE ARE A LOT OF FUZZY MEMORIES IN THIS TOWN...

...AND THEY SEEM TO GET FUZZIER THE CLOSER THEY GET TO YOU.



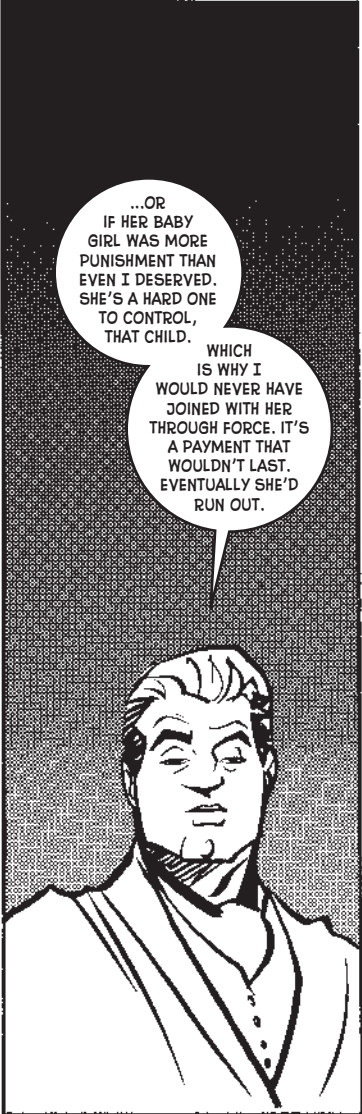
A COINCIDENCE OF THE NAME, I ASSURE YOU.





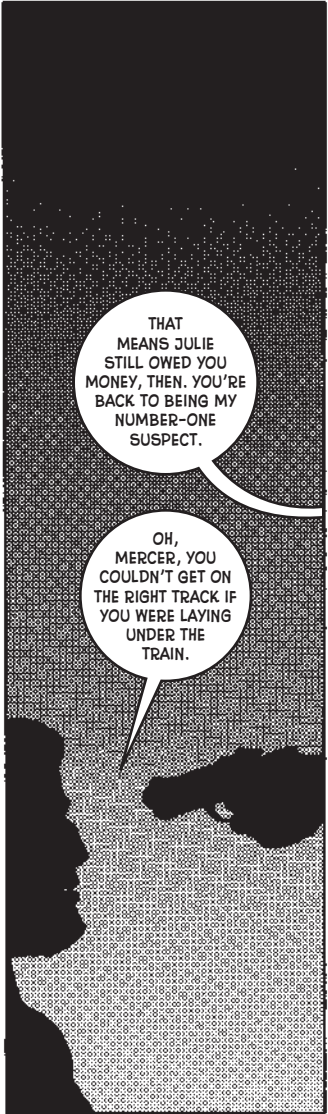
I'M SAYING THAT IF I'M GOING TO BARTER, I'M NOT GOING TO SETTLE FOR SOMETHING AS IMPERMANENT AS A WOMAN.

JENNIE AND I ARE MARRIED, YES, BUT I ASSURE YOU, IT'S WHAT THE GIRL WANTED. HER SISTER HATED THE IDEA. I'M NOT SURE IF SHE THOUGHT I WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH...



...OR IF HER BABY GIRL WAS MORE PUNISHMENT THAN EVEN I DESERVED. SHE'S A HARD ONE TO CONTROL, THAT CHILD.

WHICH IS WHY I WOULD NEVER HAVE JOINED WITH HER THROUGH FORCE. IT'S A PAYMENT THAT WOULDN'T LAST. EVENTUALLY SHE'D RUN OUT.

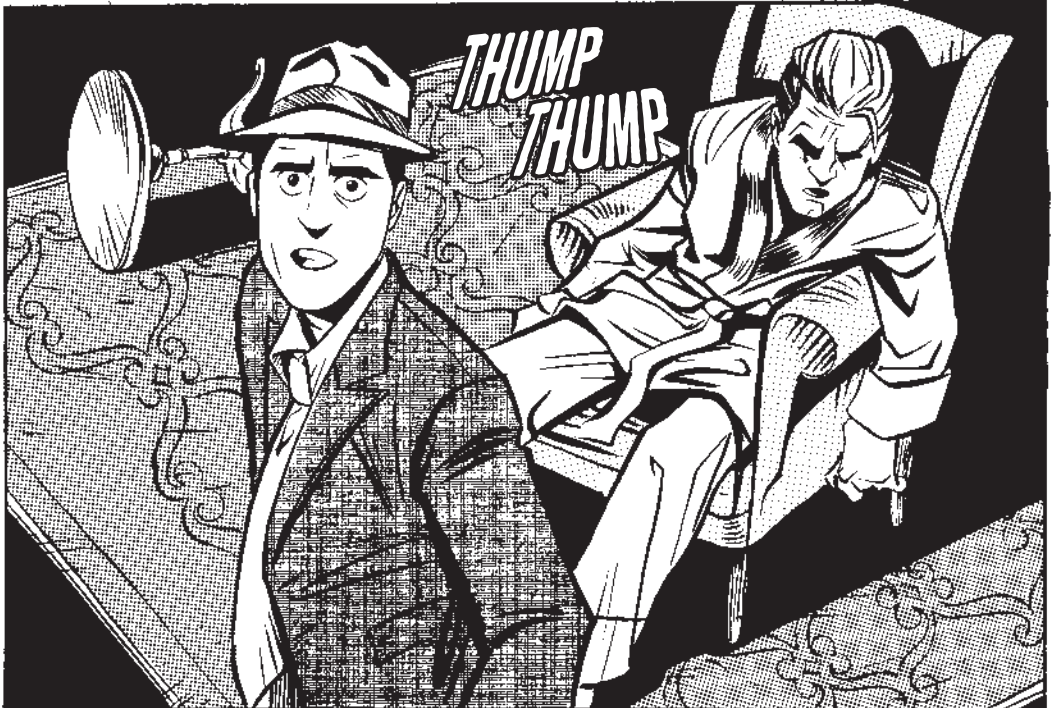
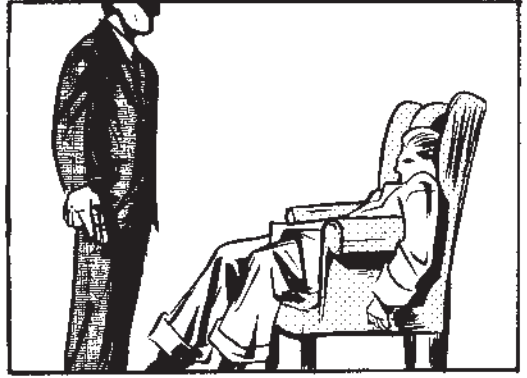
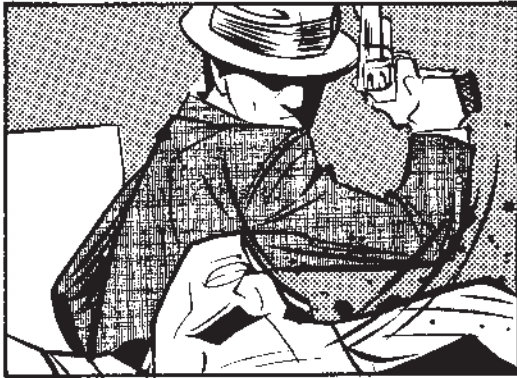


THAT MEANS JULIE STILL OWED YOU MONEY, THEN. YOU'RE BACK TO BEING MY NUMBER-ONE SUSPECT.

OH, MERCER, YOU COULDN'T GET ON THE RIGHT TRACK IF YOU WERE LAYING UNDER THE TRAIN.



QUIT LYING TO ME, DAMMIT! WHERE'S JULIE?!







YOU! I SHOULD'VE KNOWN...



OH, TONY! THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE HERE!



DON'T CALL ME THAT, ONLY SHE CAN CALL ME THAT!



I DIDN'T WANT TO COME HERE. DON'T YOU SEE? I HAD TO ACT LIKE NOTHING HAS CHANGED, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO.

SURE. YOU NEVER WANT ANYTHING.

HE TOLD ME YOU WERE DEAD.



AND DID YOU HOPE HE WAS RIGHT?

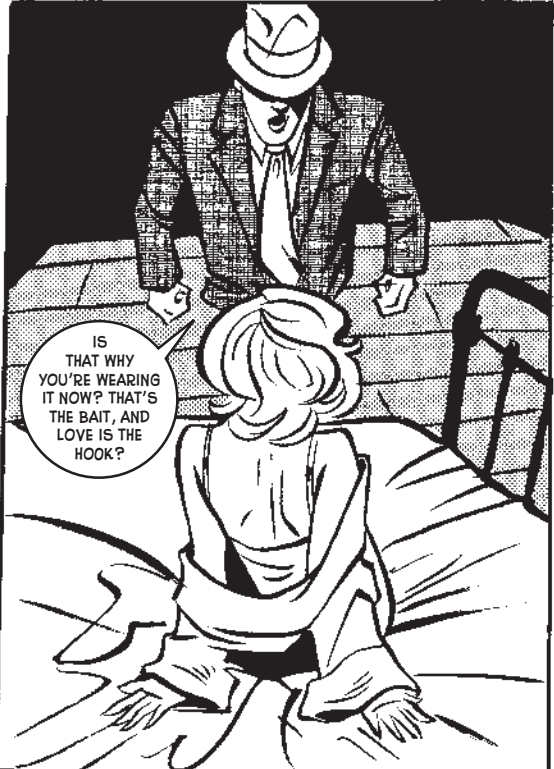


NO, MERCER, NO. I LOVE YOU. I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU.



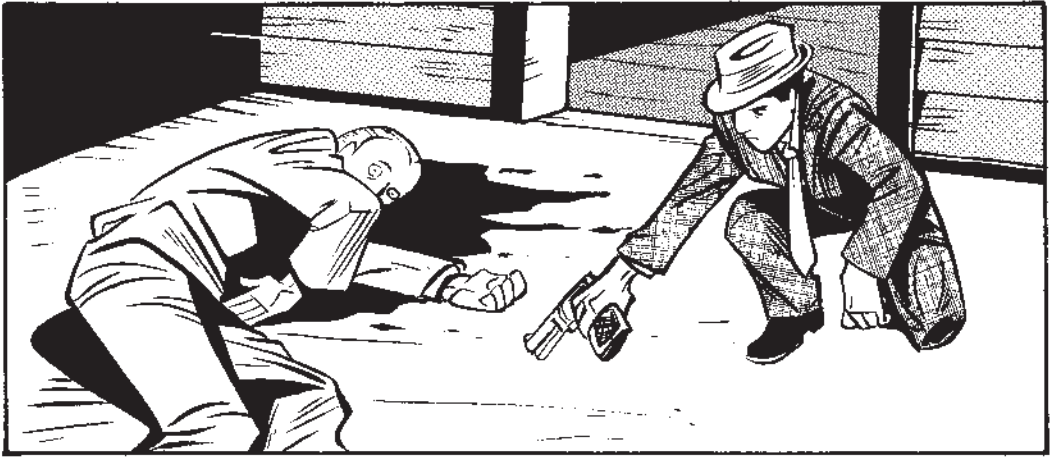
OH, YEAH?

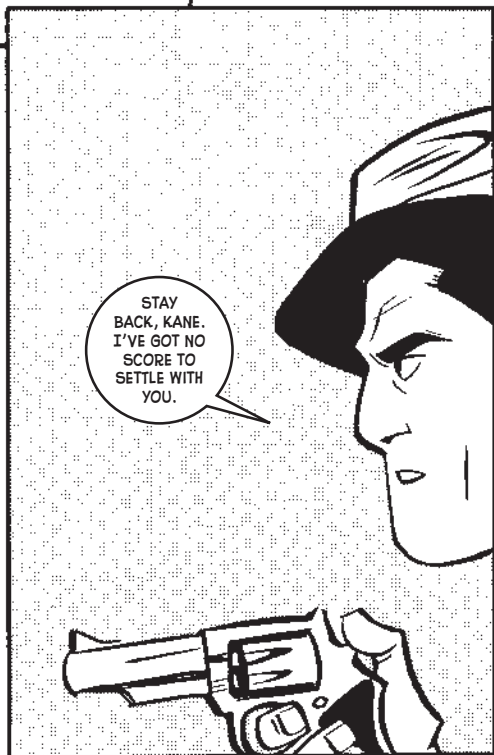
IS THAT WHY YOU SHOWED UP AT MY OFFICE IN YOUR SISTER'S PERFUME?



IS THAT WHY YOU'RE WEARING IT NOW? THAT'S THE BAIT, AND LOVE IS THE HOOK?





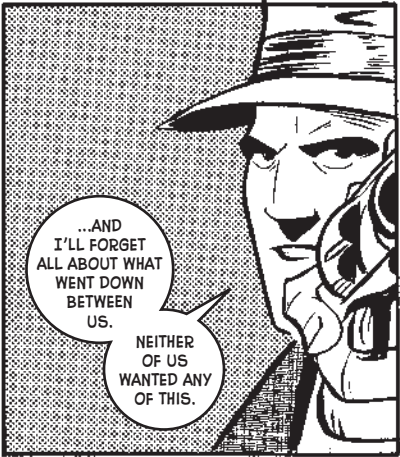


STAY  
BACK, KANE.  
I'VE GOT NO  
SCORE TO  
SETTLE WITH  
YOU.



SCORE?

YOU  
WALK OUT  
OF HERE, LEAVE  
ME AND THE  
GIRL BE...



...AND I'LL FORGET ALL ABOUT WHAT WENT DOWN BETWEEN US.

NEITHER OF US WANTED ANY OF THIS.



HE DID.

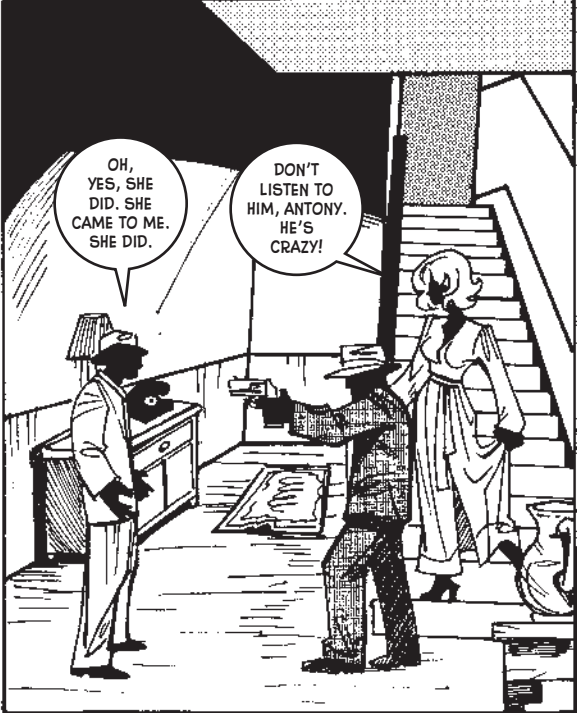


AND SHE DID! I KNOW SHE DID!



MERCER, NO!

THE GIRL DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU, KANE.



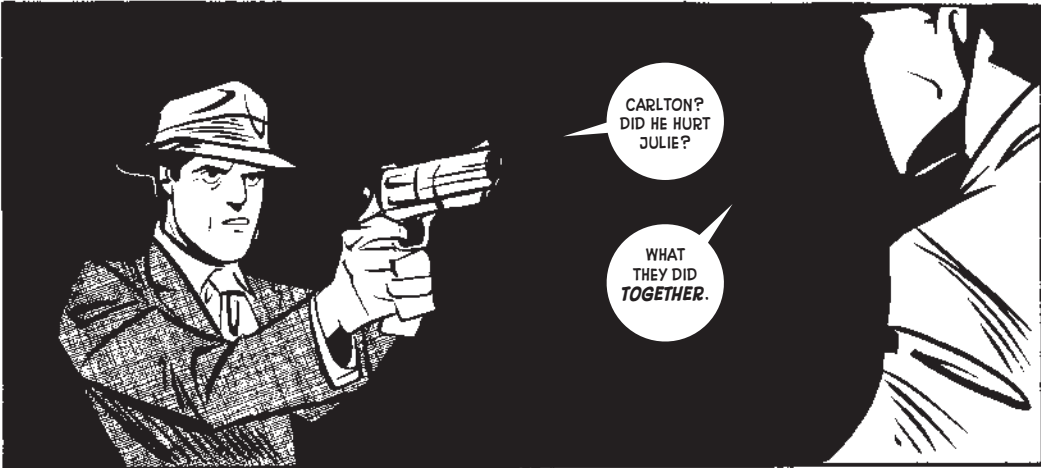
OH, YES, SHE DID. SHE CAME TO ME. SHE DID.

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, ANTONY. HE'S CRAZY!



BUT I  
DON'T CARE  
WHAT SHE DID  
TO ME. IT'S  
JULIE.

THAT'S  
WHAT I CARE  
ABOUT. WHAT  
HE DID.



CARLTON?  
DID HE HURT  
JULIE?

WHAT  
THEY DID  
TOGETHER.



WHAT  
THEY DID  
TO HER!

KANE!  
DON'T--!



**BLAM!**



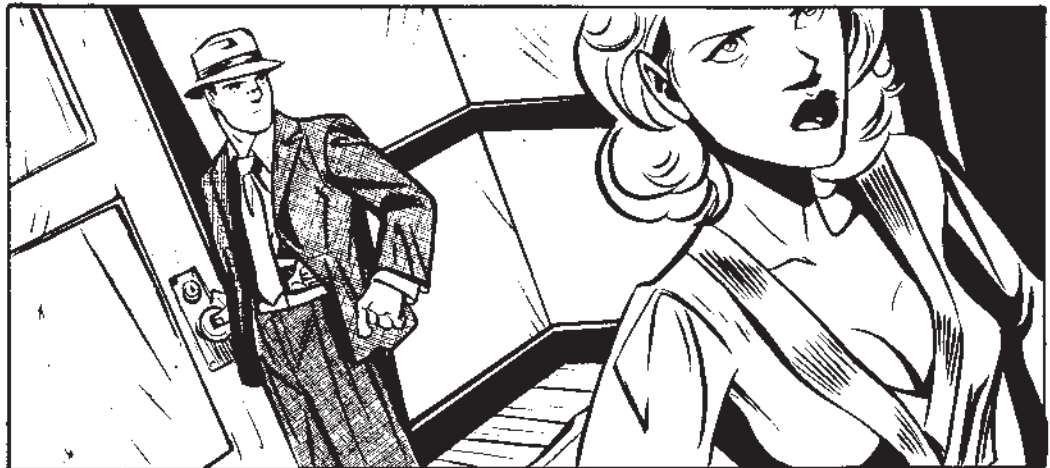
DON'T  
MAKE ME  
SHOOT YOU AGAIN,  
KANE. AS FAR AS I'M  
CONCERNED, CARLTON  
MEMORY GOT WHAT  
WAS COMING  
TO HIM...

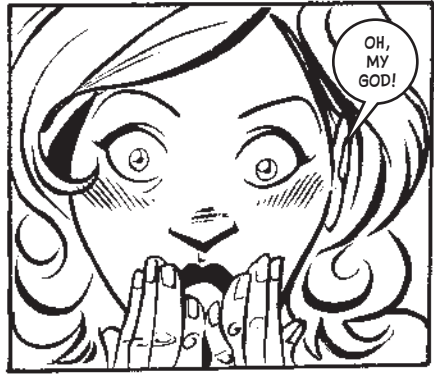
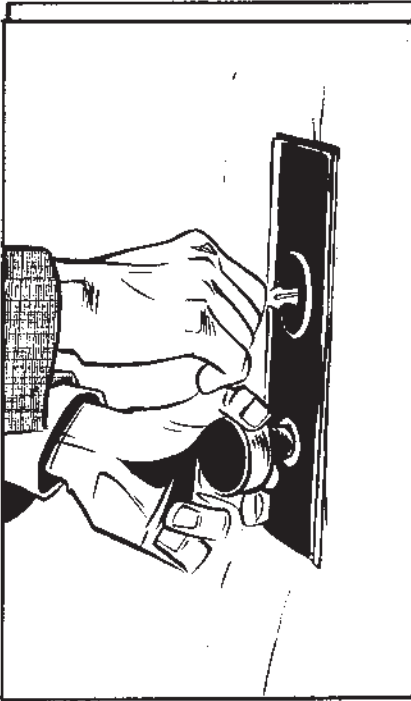


...BUT  
IF YOU MOVE  
ON US, I'LL  
KILL YOU.

BUT  
SHE--

I'LL  
KILL  
YOU.







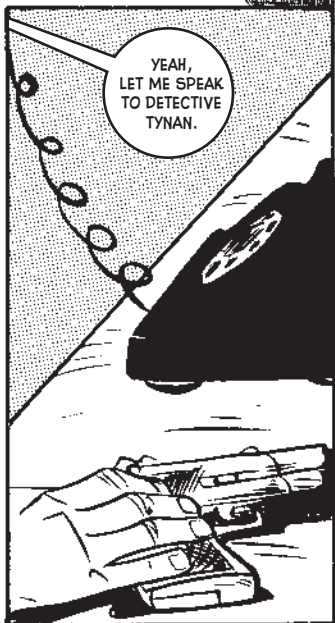
YOU DON'T NEED TO SEE THAT.



OPERATOR, KL5-929.

JUST STAY OVER HERE, STAY ON THIS SIDE OF THE ROOM, OKAY?

OKAY.



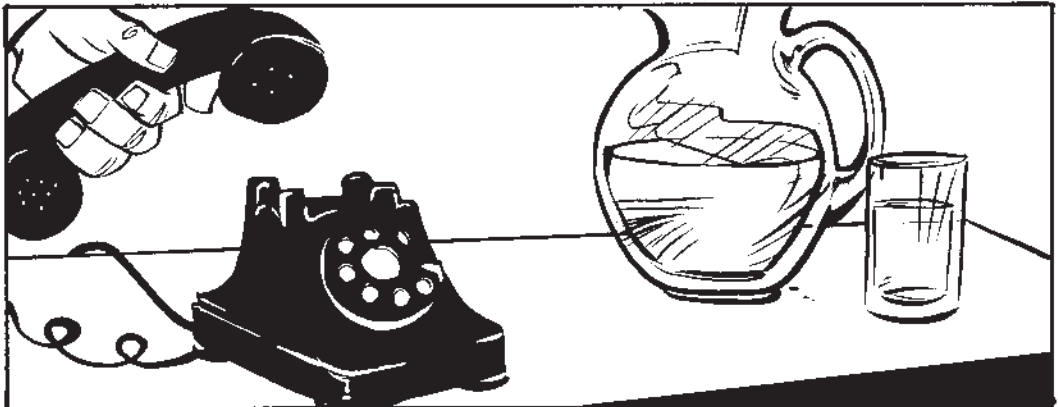
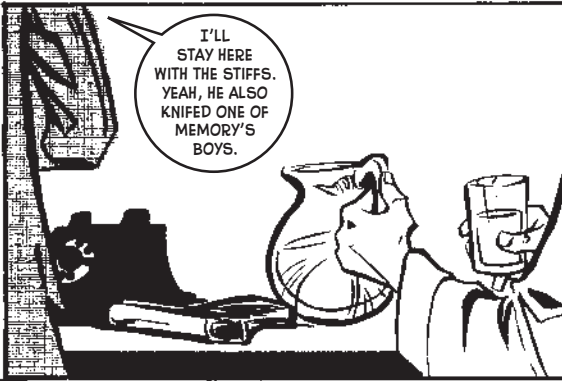
YEAH, LET ME SPEAK TO DETECTIVE TYNAN.




HE'LL WANT TO SPEAK TO ME. IT'S ANTONIO MERCER.



TYNAN, LISTEN... I JUST SAW KANE AGAIN.








ONCE YOU'D SOLD ME ON THAT, IT MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY FUN WATCHING ME RUN AROUND, MUDDYING UP THE WATERS WITH ALL THE DIRT I WAS FINDING.

THE GAMBLING, THAT WAS ALL SETTLED. MEMORY HAD IT SET UP JUST FINE FOR HIMSELF. AND RANCE WAS SO TWITCHY, HE JUST LOOKED GUILTY.

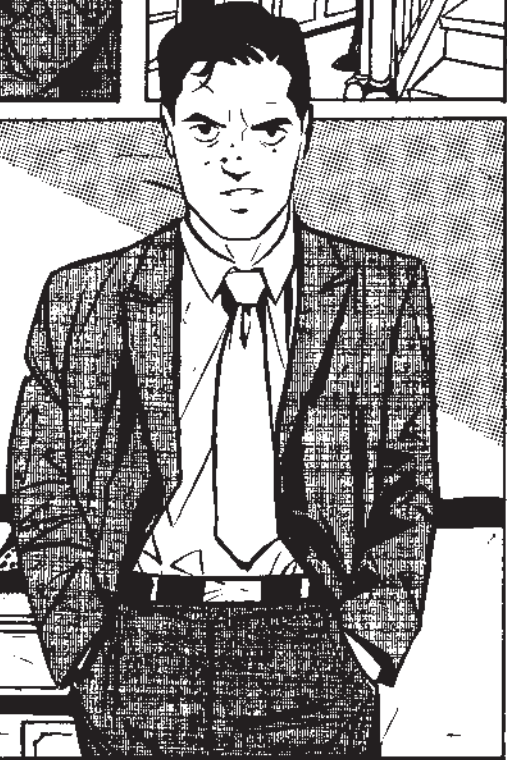


YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

IT'S MARRYING THE GANGSTER THAT SET EVERYTHING OFF. THAT'S WHAT JULIE MEANT WHEN SHE CALLED KANE AND SAID IT WAS THE MARRIAGE.



SHE DIDN'T MEAN HER OWN, SHE MEANT YOURS. ANOTHER HANDY OBFUSCATION FOR YOU.



THE ONLY PART I CAN'T FIGURE IS WHY YOU GOT HITCHED TO MEMORY. I KNOW WHY YOU KEPT IT A SECRET, BECAUSE DADDY AND MOMMY WOULDN'T APPROVE, AND JULIE COULDN'T STOP IT BECAUSE YOU'D TELL THEM WHAT SHE WAS UP TO.

WERE YOU JUST ANXIOUS TO TIE A KNOT BEFORE SHE COULD? OR IS THERE A PIECE I'M MISSING, THAT SHE WAS HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH HIM, TOO, AND YOU WANTED A SLICE?

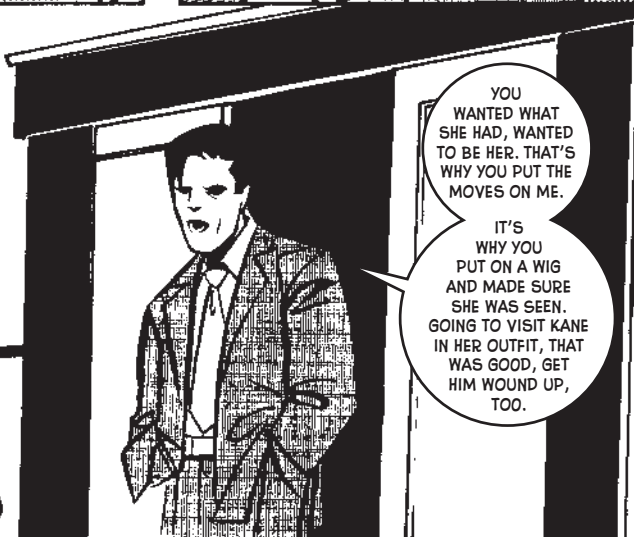


HOW  
COULD YOU  
THINK THAT,  
TONY?



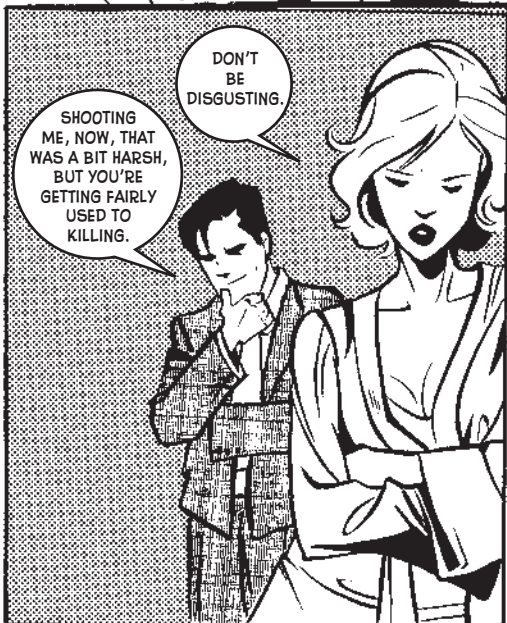
THERE  
YOU GO AGAIN,  
CALLING ME BY THE  
NAME SHE CALLED ME,  
WEARING HER PERFUME,  
DOING ALL THESE  
THINGS TO WIND  
ME UP.

THAT'S  
WHY I FIGURE  
MAYBE SHE  
WAS SLEEPING  
WITH  
CARLTON.



YOU  
WANTED WHAT  
SHE HAD, WANTED  
TO BE HER. THAT'S  
WHY YOU PUT THE  
MOVES ON ME.

IT'S  
WHY YOU  
PUT ON A WIG  
AND MADE SURE  
SHE WAS SEEN.  
GOING TO VISIT KANE  
IN HER OUTFIT, THAT  
WAS GOOD, GET  
HIM WOUND UP,  
TOO.



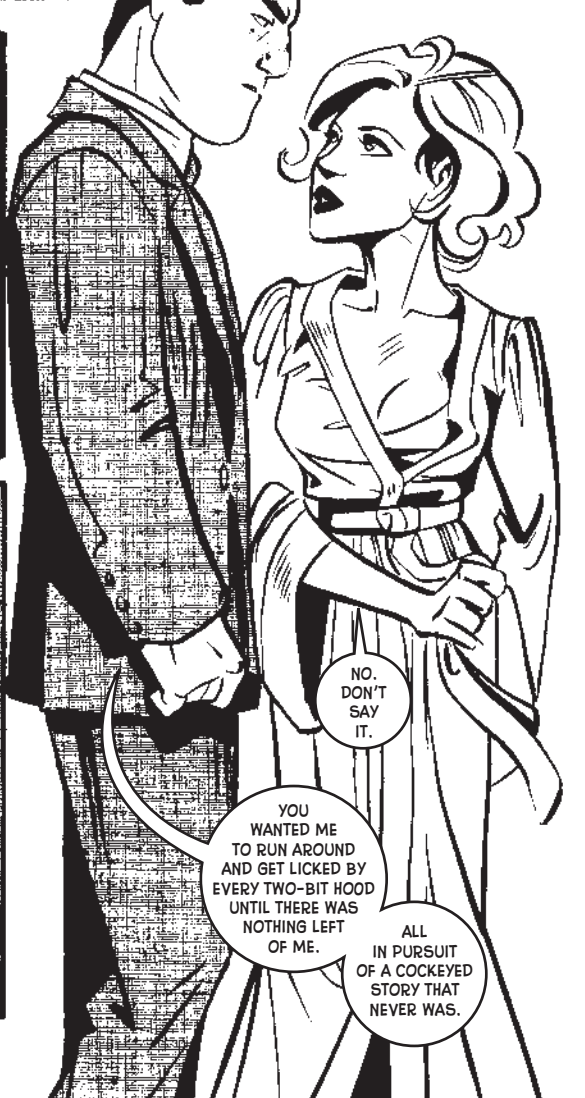
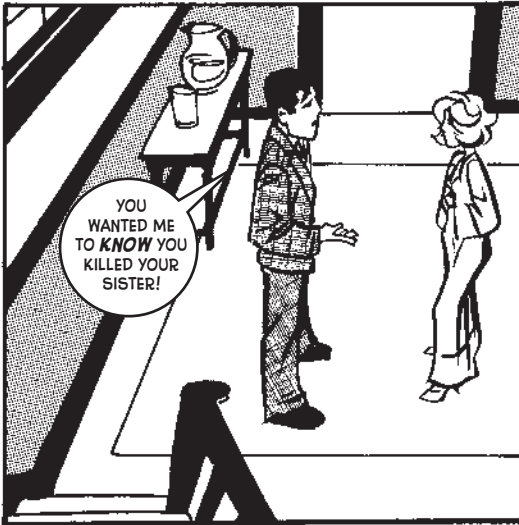
SHOOTING  
ME, NOW, THAT  
WAS A BIT HARSH,  
BUT YOU'RE  
GETTING FAIRLY  
USED TO  
KILLING.

DON'T  
BE  
DISGUSTING.



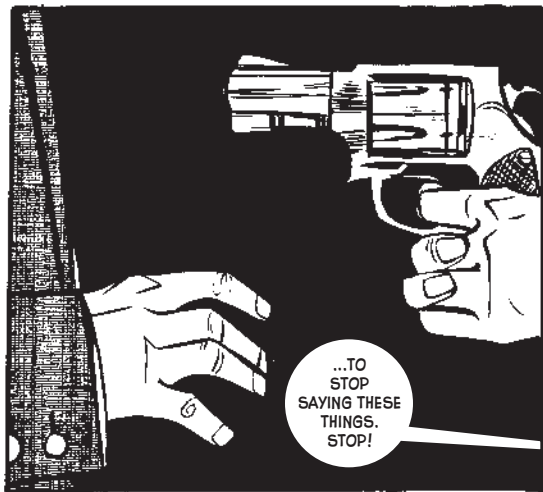
WHERE  
IS SHE,  
JENNIE? DID  
YOU BURY JULIE  
AROUND THE  
FARMHOUSE  
HERE?

IT'S  
ALMOST LIKE  
YOU WANTED ME  
TO FIGURE IT OUT,  
THE WAY YOU  
DESCRIBED THIS  
PLACE, LEAVING  
THE PHOTO OUT  
FOR ME.

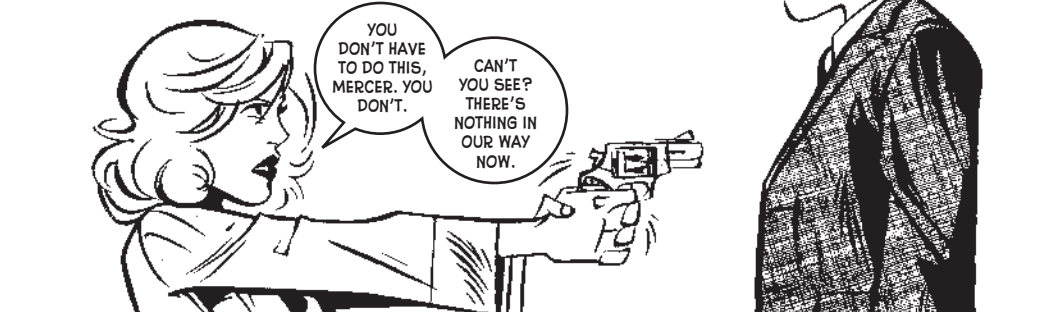




I KEEP ASKING YOU...



...TO STOP SAYING THESE THINGS. STOP!



YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS, MERCER. YOU DON'T.

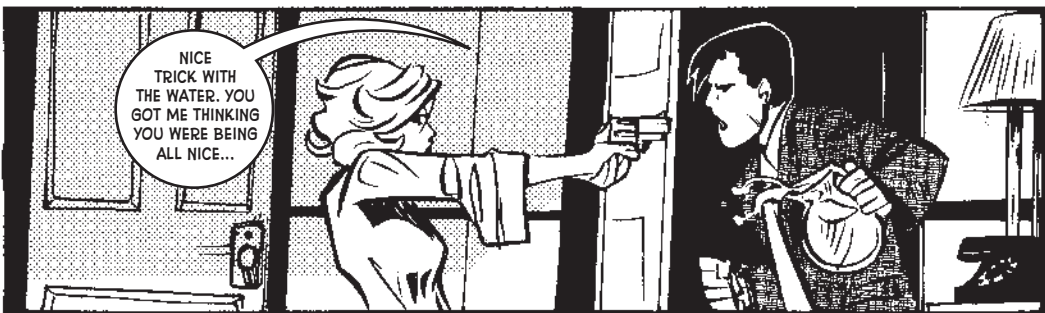
CAN'T YOU SEE? THERE'S NOTHING IN OUR WAY NOW.



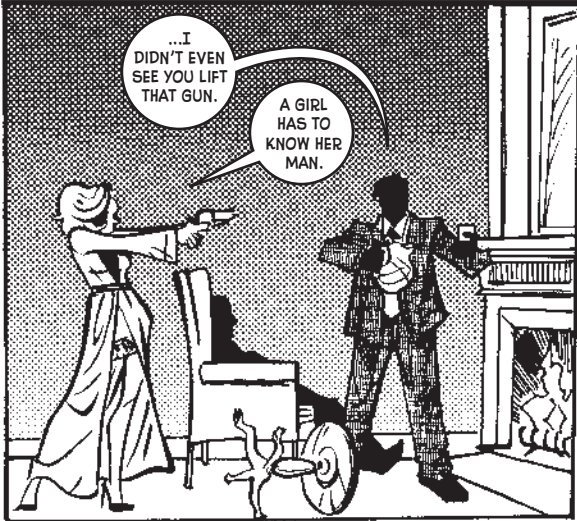
WE CAN BE TOGETHER. WHY NOT?



YOU DON'T WANT YOUR FATHER'S MONEY, BUT WHAT ABOUT MY FATHER'S? WHAT ABOUT MINE?



NICE TRICK WITH THE WATER. YOU GOT ME THINKING YOU WERE BEING ALL NICE...



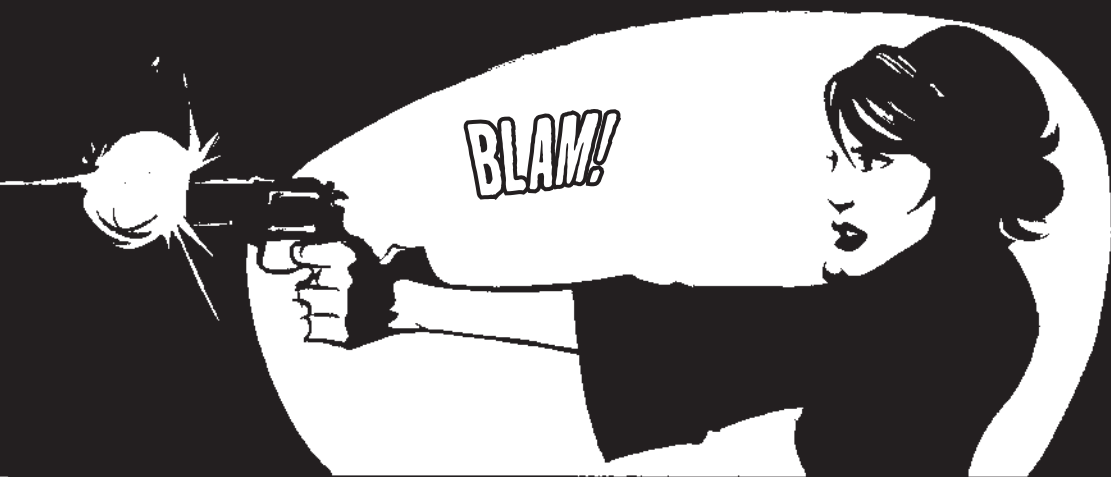
*thump*

MERCER?

STILL  
HERE, RED.  
YOU ALREADY  
SHOT ME ONCE, I  
WON'T LET YOU  
DO IT AGAIN.

*ggg  
ggg*





**BLAM!**

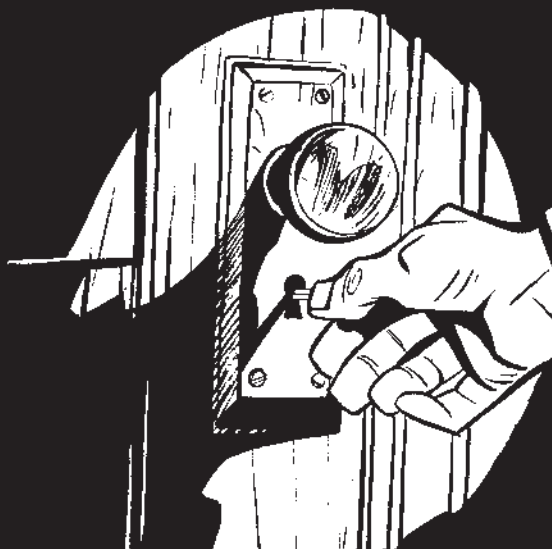


**BLAM!**

**BLAM!**

**thmp**











YOU'LL FIND JENNIFER ROMAN INSIDE. SHE'S DEAD.

AND THIS IS THE GUN THAT KILLED HER. IT'S REGISTERED TO ME.



YOU KILLED HER?

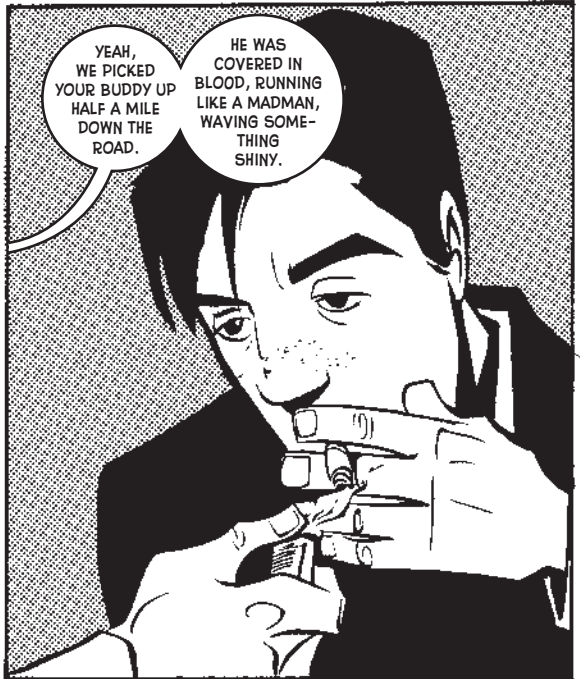
I'M AFRAID SO.

SHE HAD A GUN.



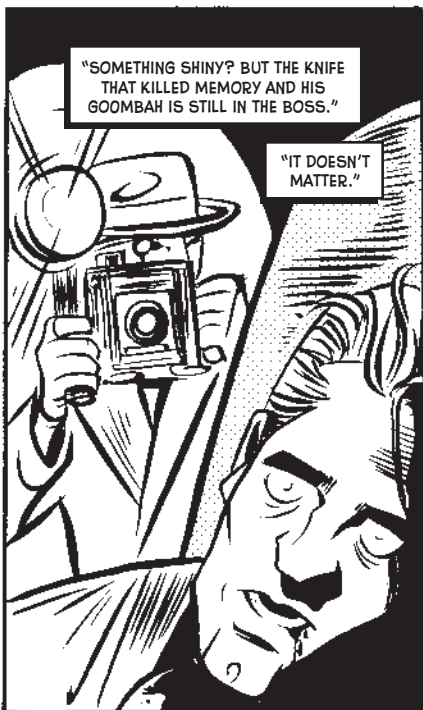
"YOU'LL FIND THAT NEAR HER BODY. IT BELONGED TO THE GUY IN THE DOORWAY, BUT SHE DIDN'T KILL HIM.

"I DID USE IT TO SHOOT KANE, THOUGH."



YEAH, WE PICKED YOUR BUDDY UP HALF A MILE DOWN THE ROAD.

HE WAS COVERED IN BLOOD, RUNNING LIKE A MADMAN, WAVING SOMETHING SHINY.



"SOMETHING SHINY? BUT THE KNIFE THAT KILLED MEMORY AND HIS GOOMBAH IS STILL IN THE BOSS."

"IT DOESN'T MATTER."



ONE OF MY BOYS TOOK HIM DOWN.

IT WAS JUST A MOUTHPIECE FROM HIS HORN, BUT IT LOOKED LIKE A BLADE IN THE DARK.



THAT'S EVERYONE THEN. ALL DEAD.



YOU MEAN... THE OTHER ROMAN DAME, TOO?

YUP. START DIGGING AROUND THE YARD, YOU'LL FIND HER.

AMONGST OTHERS.



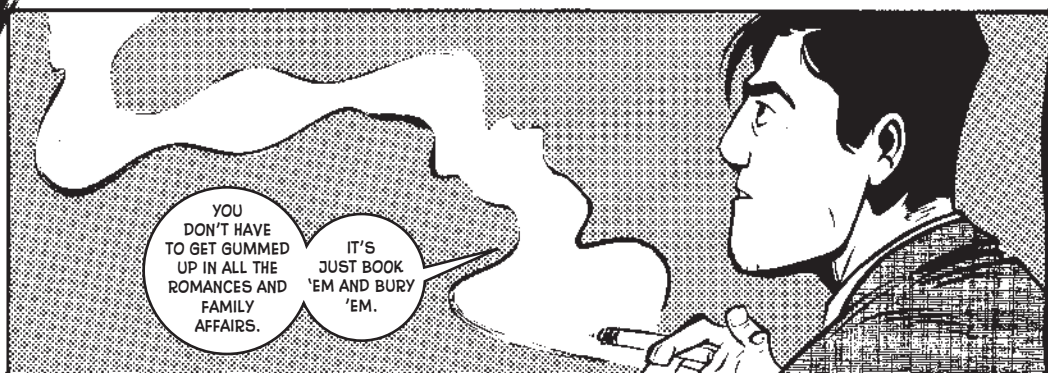
YOU KNOW, I ENVY YOU GUYS, TYNAN.

OH, YEAH? HOW'S THAT?



YOU  
HOMICIDE  
COPS, YOU  
HAVE IT  
LUCKY.

YOU  
JUST PICK  
UP THE STIFFS  
AND LOCK UP  
THE CROOKS.



YOU  
DON'T HAVE  
TO GET GUMMED  
UP IN ALL THE  
ROMANCES AND  
FAMILY  
AFFAIRS.

IT'S  
JUST BOOK  
'EM AND BURY  
'EM.



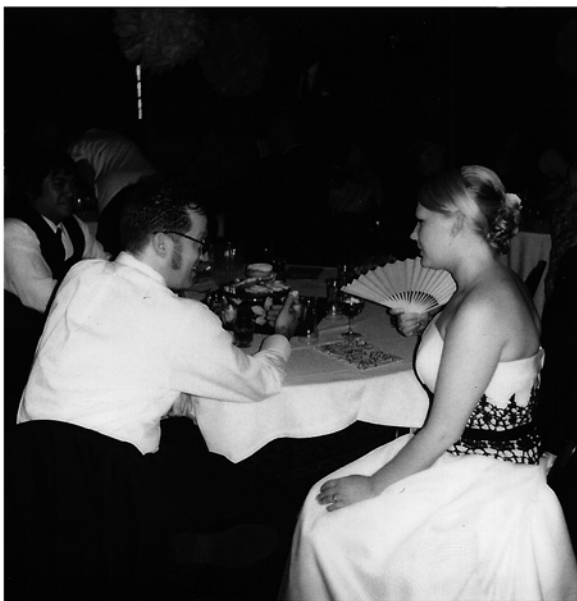
WHEREAS THE REST OF US HAVE TO  
CARRY OUR BODIES BACK HOME.

# THE END

*An Oni Press Production*







**JOËLLE JONES & JAMIE S. RICH** first collaborated on the acclaimed comic book *12 Reasons Why I Love Her*, and have since shown up as a team in the pages of *Popgun*, *Portland Noir*, and *Madman Atomic Comics*. Joëlle also did the cover and interior illustrations for Jamie's novel *Have You Seen the Horizon Lately?*

Separately, they have multiple creative works between them. Joëlle has contributed to the long-running comics series *Fables* at DC/Vertigo, and she drew the Minx young adult graphic novel *Token*, written by Alisa Kwitney. Her next long-form project is called *The Starving Artist*, also from Vertigo.

Jamie has published four prose novels, including *Cut My Hair, I Was Someone Dead*, and *The Everlasting*. He wrote the comics series *Love the Way You Love*, which was illustrated by Marc Ellerby. Additionally, he has had short stories in *Four-Letter Worlds*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Food Chain*, *Put the Book Back on the Shelf*, *The Dark Horse Book of the Dead*, and *This is a Souvenir*, teaming him with artists as diverse as Andi Watson, Chynna Clugston, Guy Davis, Natalie Nourigat, and Kelley Seda.

Both Rich and Jones currently reside in separate locations in Portland, OR, U.S.A. They will next be seen on the printed page as a team working with Nicolas Hitori de on the Oni Press series *Spell Checkers*.

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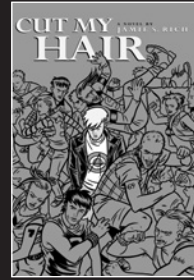


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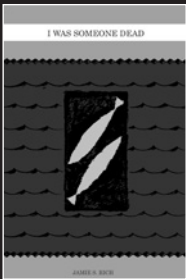
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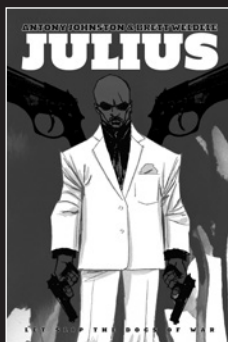
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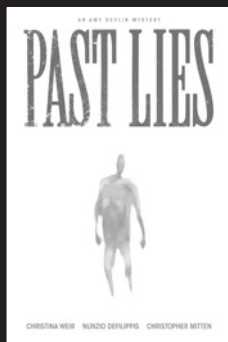
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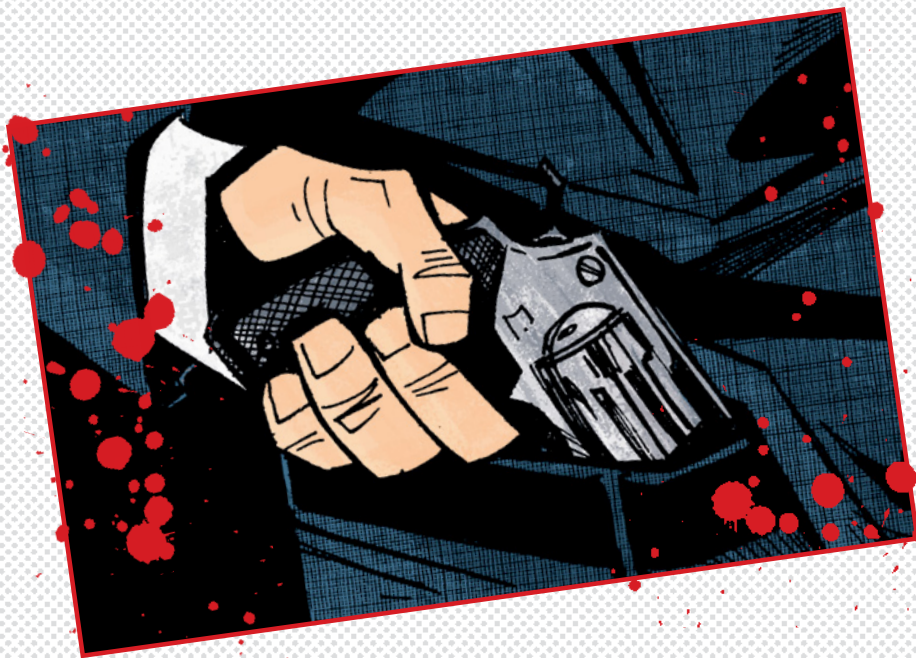
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— Ande Parks, writer of *Union Station* and *Capote in Kansas*



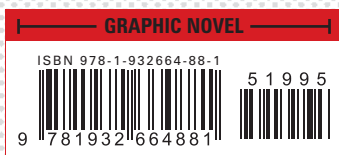
HE WANTED TO TELL HER HE LOVED HER,  
BUT ALL HE COULD SAY WAS...

# YOU HAVE KILLED ME

by  
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