

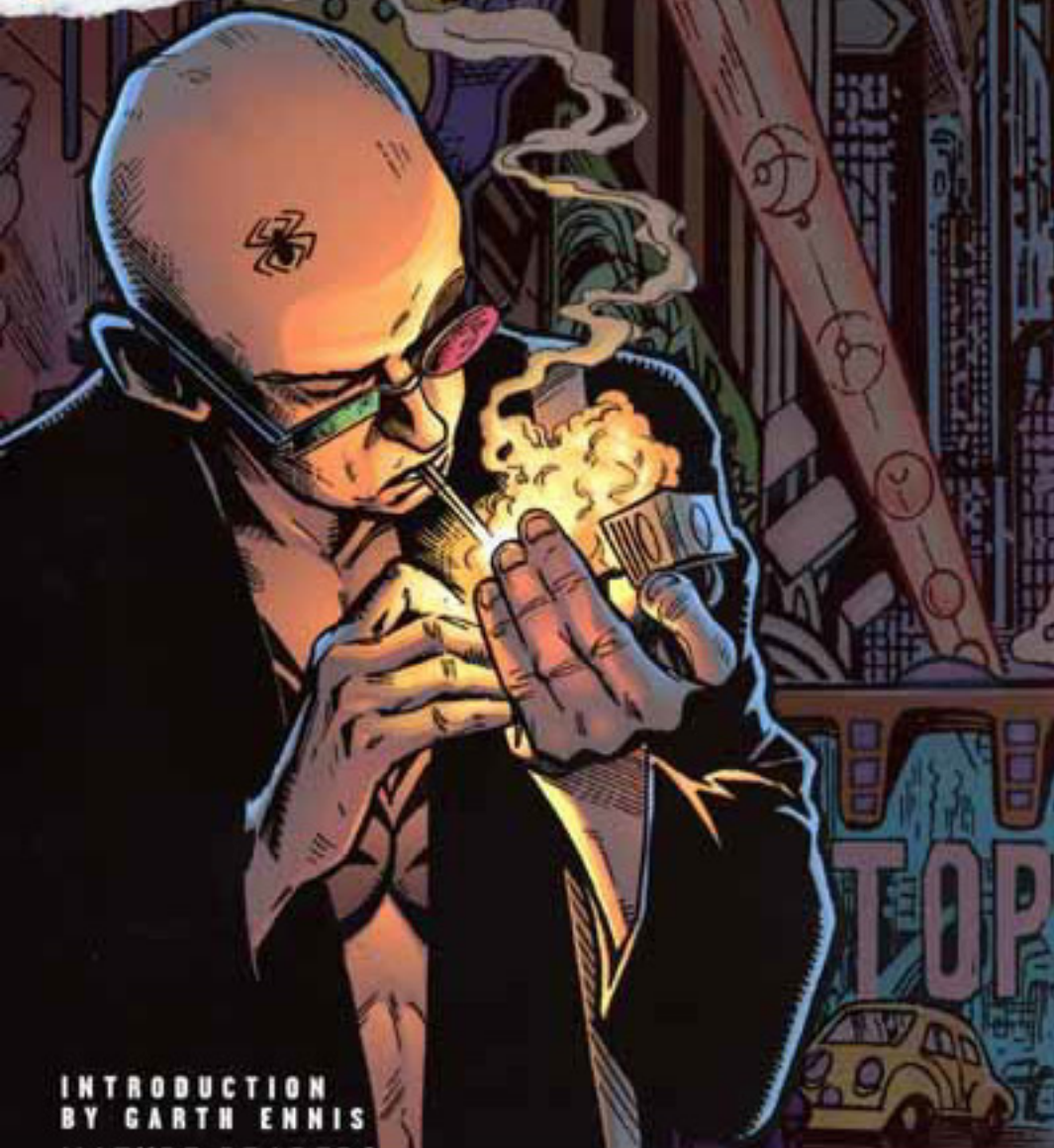
**The following content is
intended to be enjoyed by
mature readers.**

By proceeding from this point,
you are certifying that you are
18 years of age or older.

VERTIGO

WARREN ELLIS • DARICK ROBERTSON

LATE EDITION *****
TRANSMETROPOLITAN
back on the street



INTRODUCTION
BY GARTH ENNIS
MATURE READERS

© Warren Ellis and Darick Robertson. All Rights Reserved.

Up a goddamn mountain:

SO THAT IGNORANT, THICK-LIPPED, EVIL WHOREHOPPING EDITOR PHONES ME UP AND SAYS,

DOES THE WORD CONTRACT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU, JERUSALEM?

I WAS HAVING A MILDLY PARANOID DAY, MOSTLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE MAD PRIEST LADY FROM OVER THE RIVER HAD TAKEN TO NAILING WEASELS TO MY FRONT DOOR AGAIN.

CONTRACT? YOU'LL NEVER GET A CITY HITMAN UP THE MOUNTAIN TO ME--YOU BASTARDS DIE IF THERE'S ACTUAL OXYGEN IN THE AIR.

NO, THE BOOK CONTRACT, YOU STILL OWE US TWO BOOKS.

SPIDER. WE CUT YOU THE ADVANCE FIVE YEARS AGO, FOR GOD'S SAKE.

TEN TIMES
TENTIMES
REED

AH.

BOOK CONTRACT?
I KNOW NO CONTRACT.

I LIED, BUT IT WAS POINTLESS. THE WHOREHOPPER HAD ME.

THE MONEY WAS LONG GONE, AND MOST OF THE GOODS AND WEAPONRY IT BOUGHT HAD SINCE BEEN BARTERED AWAY FOR DRUGS, FOOD, AND CABLE TV.

FRANKLY, THINGS LOOKED BLEAK.

BUY MORE BULLETS

EVER SINCE

OKAY, DO YOU KNOW LAWSUIT?
DO YOU KNOW SUE YOUR ASS OFF IF WE DON'T GET OUR BOOKS?

WE FIGURE THAT YOU COULD GET THEM BOTH DONE WITHIN A YEAR, ONE ON POLITICS, ONE OF YOUR CHOICE, AS PER THE CONTRACT AGREEMENT.





AND WE BOTH KNOW YOU COULD NEVER WRITE ABOUT POLITICS FROM A DISTANCE, SO I GUESS WE'LL BE SEEING YOU IN THE OFFICE SOON, eh?

KEEP TALKING SHIT--



I DECIDED TO BE DEPRESSED FOR A WHILE.



I HAD TO GO BACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.

INTO THE CITY.





WARREN ELLIS writes &



DARICK ROBERTSON pencils

the summer of the year

JEROME K. MOORE, inker

NATHAN EYRING, color and separations CLEM ROBINS, letterer

JULIE ROTTENBERG, associate editor STUART MOORE, whoreopper

special thanks to ANDRÉ RICCIARDI

TRANSMETROPOLITAN created by WARREN ELLIS and DARICK ROBERTSON

I'VE SHUT OFF THE MINE-FIELDS AND THE INTELLIGENT GUNS. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FIVE YEARS, THERE IS NOTHING MENACING IN MY GARDEN.

FIVE YEARS OF SHOOTING AT FANS AND NEIGHBORS, EATING WHAT I KILL AND BOMBING THE UNWARY.

FIVE YEARS OF BEING ALONE.

I CAN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE THE WAYS I'LL MISS THE MOUNTAIN.

ONCE I'M GONE, THE SECURITY SYSTEMS WILL REBOOT, AND THE EBOLA BOMB UNDER THE TOILET WILL ARM.

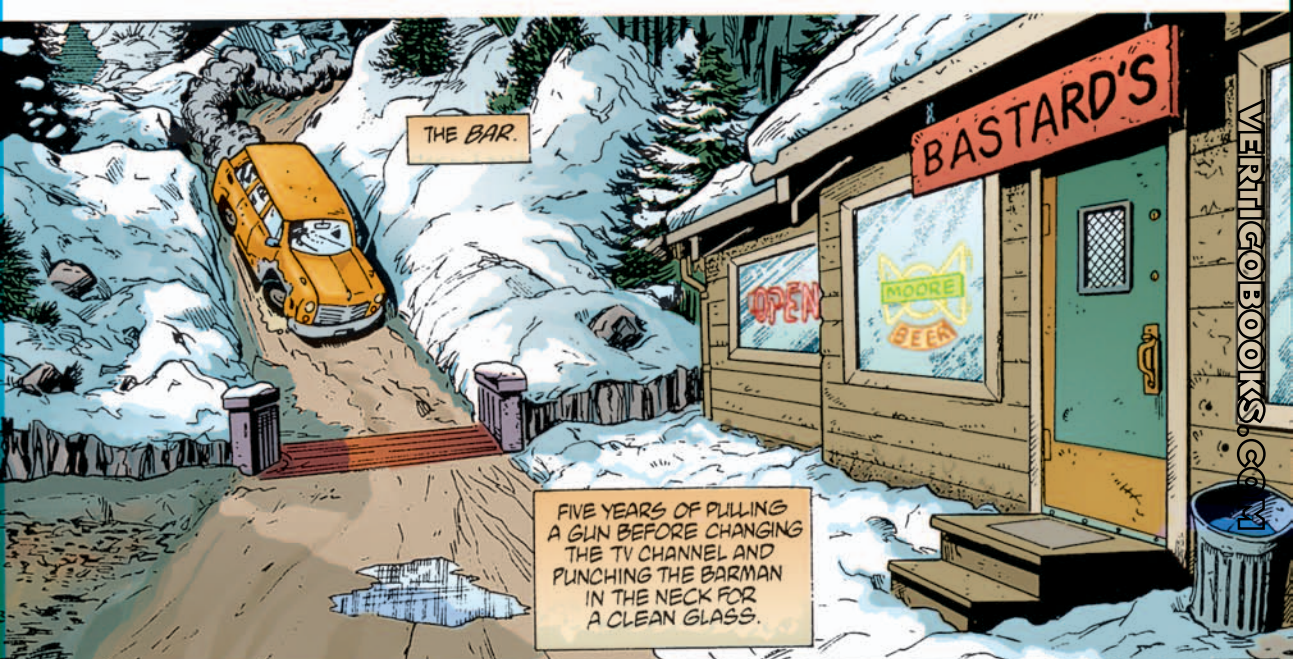
I'LL BE BACK; I WORKED FOR TOO LONG TO BUY FIVE YEARS OF PEACE, AND I'M NOT GIVING IT UP.

I COULD CRY.

I REALLY COULD.

JOURNALISTS DO NOT CRY.

AND I AM A FUCKING JOURNALIST. AGAIN.



THE BAR.

FIVE YEARS OF PULLING A GUN BEFORE CHANGING THE TV CHANNEL AND PUNCHING THE BARMAN IN THE NECK FOR A CLEAN GLASS.



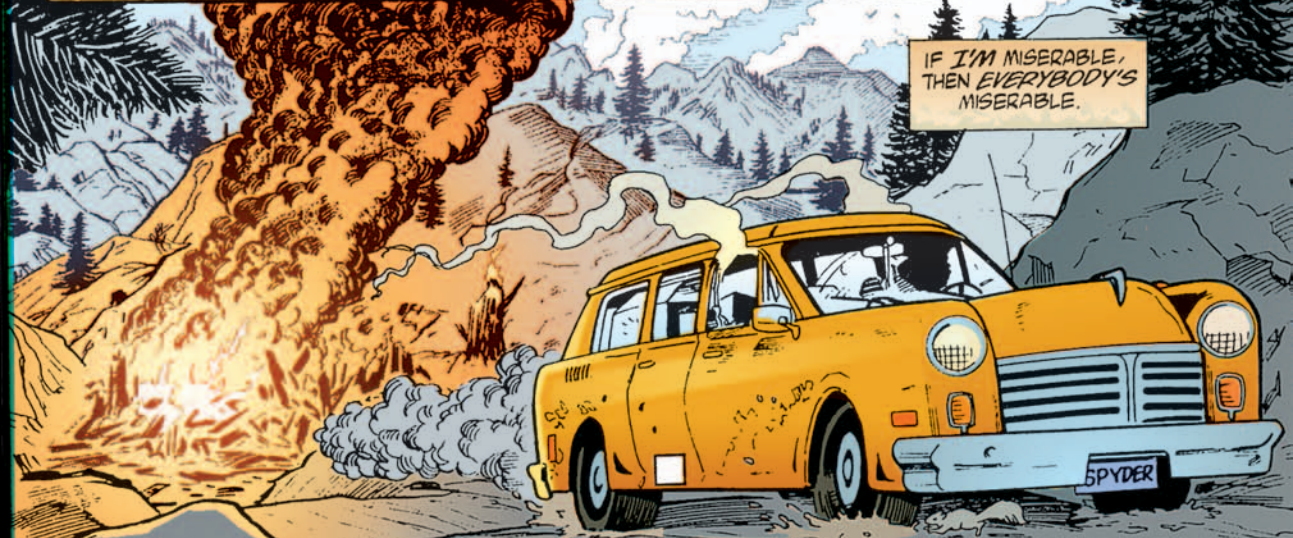
THE ONLY HUMAN CONTACT I HAD FOR FIVE YEARS.

OUTSIDE OF THE ODD LOCAL PARAMILITARY VENDETTA.

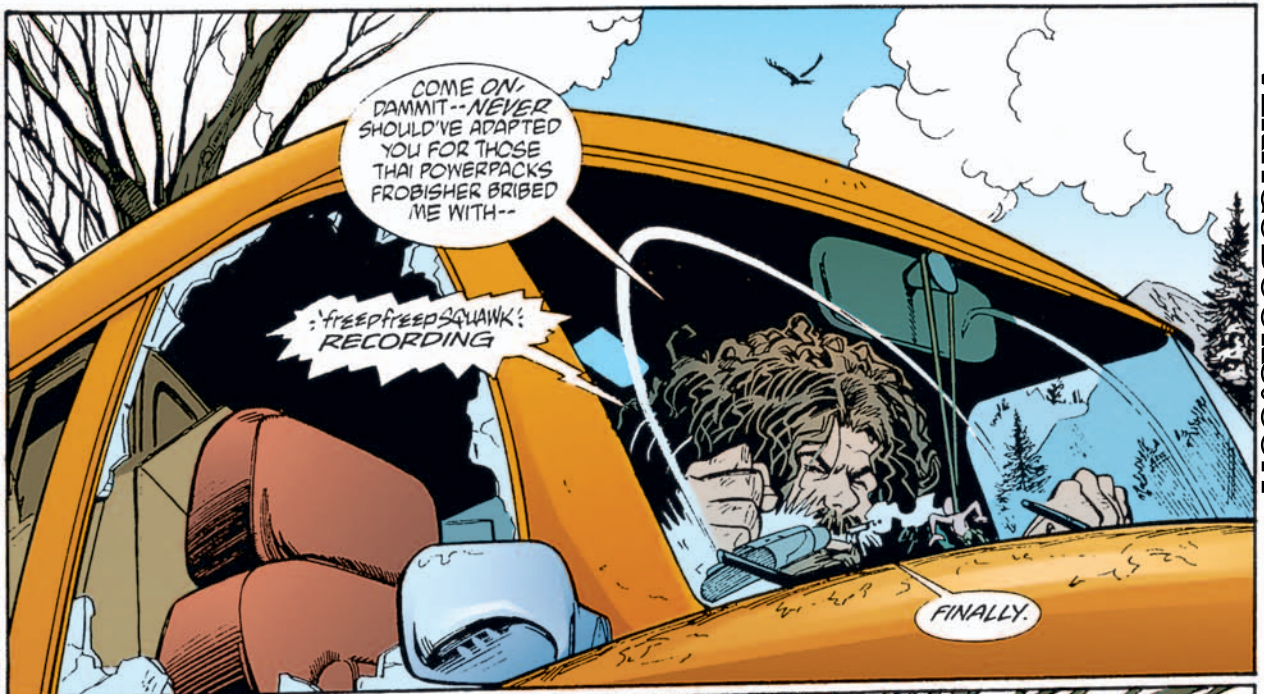
WHAT A GREAT BAR.



I HATE IT AND EVERYBODY IN IT.



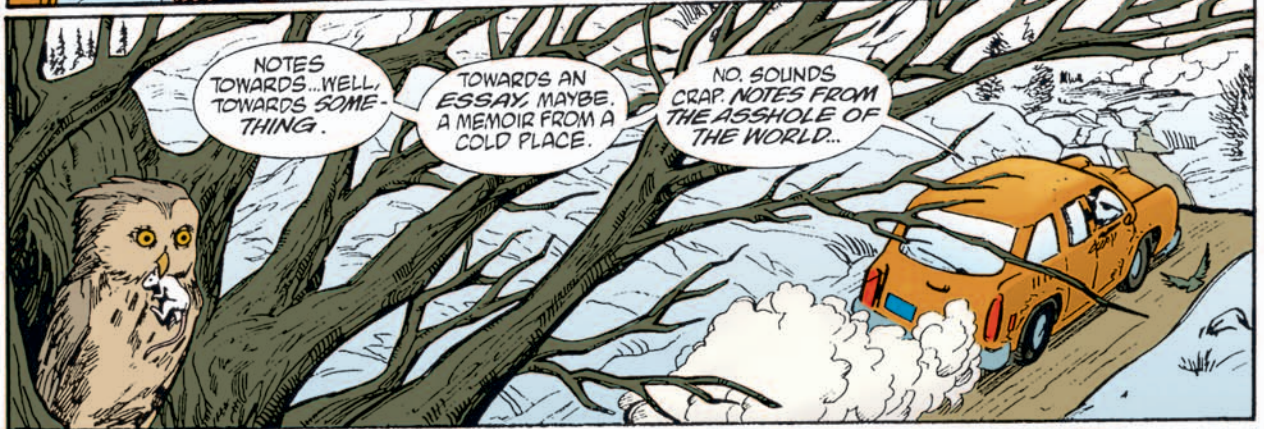
IF I'M MISERABLE, THEN EVERYBODY'S MISERABLE.



COME ON, DAMMIT--NEVER SHOULD'VE ADAPTED YOU FOR THOSE THAI POWERPACKS FROBISHER BRIBED ME WITH--

:FIEEFIEESQUAWK! RECORDING

FINALLY.



NOTES TOWARDS...WELL, TOWARDS SOME-THING.

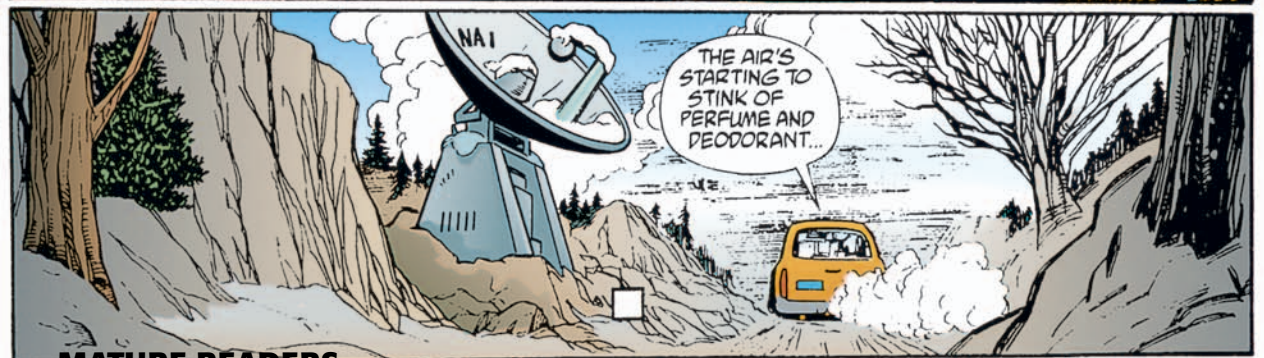
TOWARDS AN ESSAY, MAYBE. A MEMOIR FROM A COLD PLACE.

NO. SOUNDS CRAP. NOTES FROM THE ASSHOLE OF THE WORLD...

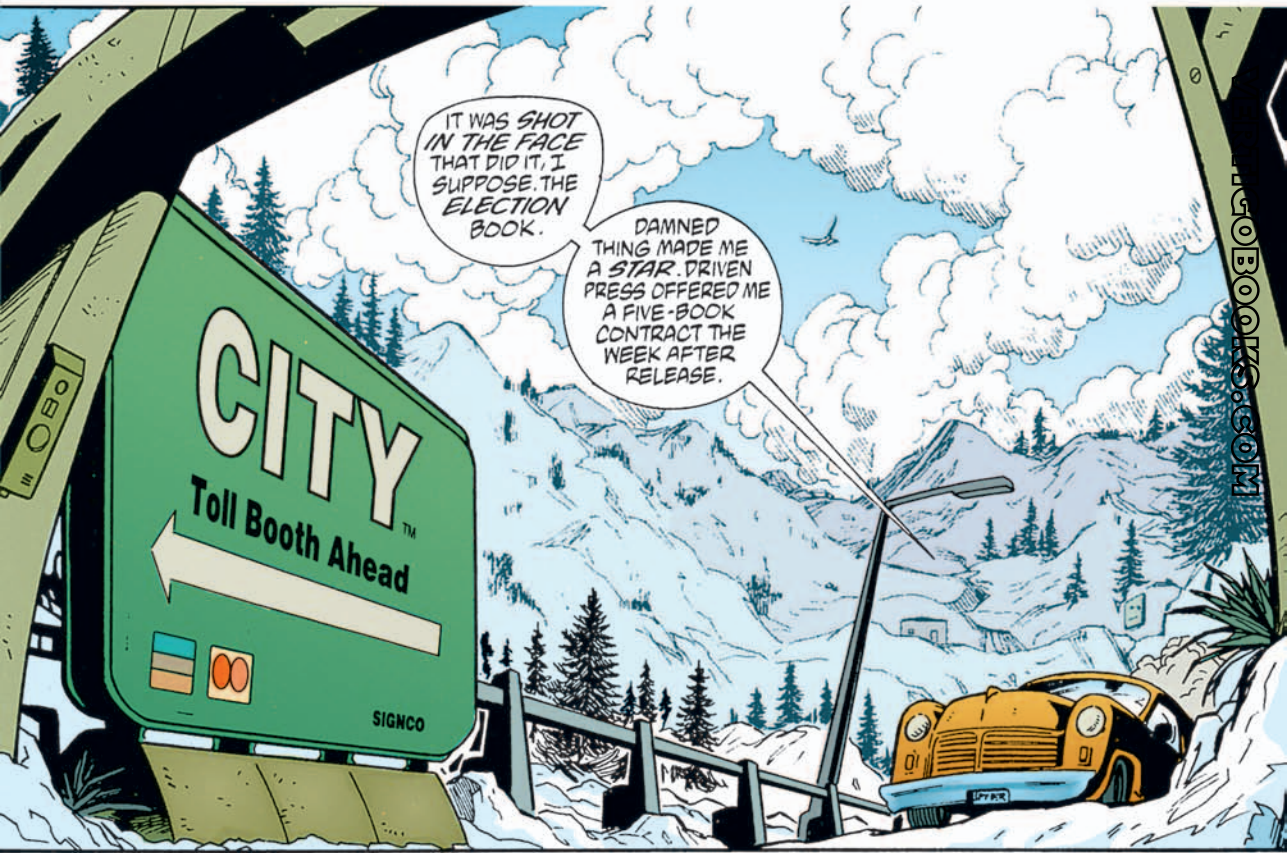


COLD AS HELL IN HERE, SINCE CRUDE ROCKETRY TOOK OUT THE PASSENGER SIDE WINDOW, AND TOOLING DOWN A TREACHEROUS SLOPE.

I'M BROKE, FRIENDLESS, AND HEADING DOWN TO THE ONE PLACE I HATE MORE THAN THIS PLACE.



THE AIR'S STARTING TO STINK OF PERFUME AND DEODORANT...



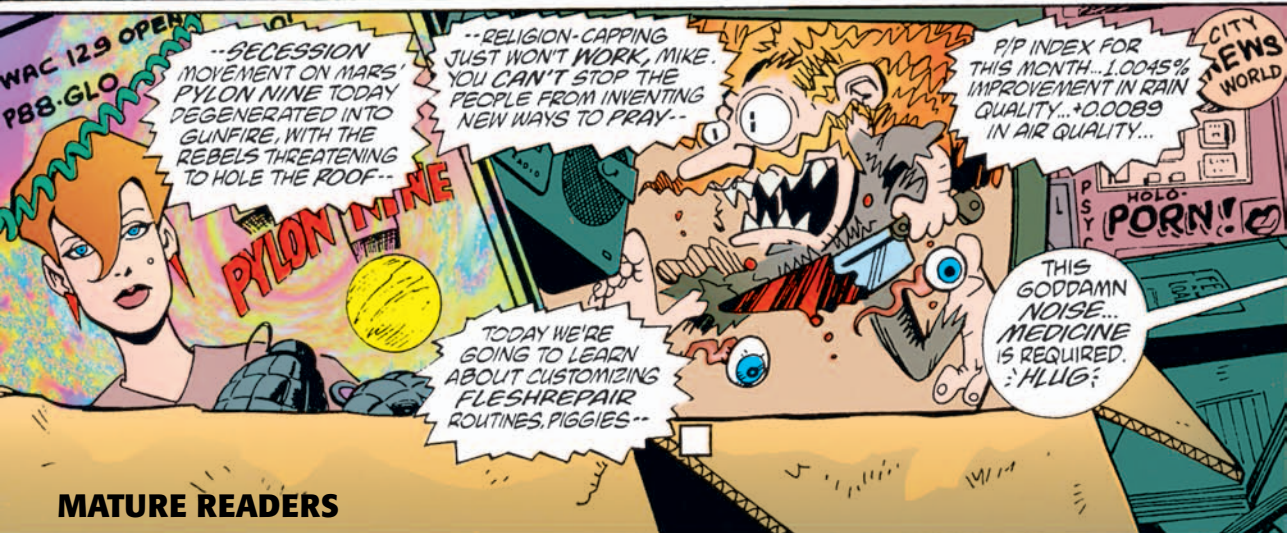
IT WAS SHOT IN THE FACE THAT DID IT, I SUPPOSE. THE ELECTION BOOK.

DAMNED THING MADE ME A STAR. DRIVEN PRESS OFFERED ME A FIVE-BOOK CONTRACT THE WEEK AFTER RELEASE.



SO I QUIT NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM, STARTED WRITING REPORTAGE BOOKS--HEY!

WE'RE INSIDE THE CITY'S COMMUNICATION SPHERE. THAT NOISE BEHIND MY VOICE IS THE SOUND OF MY PROFESSIONAL APPARATUS FIRING UP...



WAC 129 OPEN
PBB-GLO

--SECESSION MOVEMENT ON MARS' PYLON NINE TODAY DEGENERATED INTO GUNFIRE, WITH THE REBELS THREATENING TO HOLE THE ROOF--

PYLON NINE

--RELIGION-CAPPING JUST WON'T WORK, MIKE. YOU CAN'T STOP THE PEOPLE FROM INVENTING NEW WAYS TO PRAY--

TODAY WE'RE GOING TO LEARN ABOUT CUSTOMIZING FLESHREPAIR ROUTINES. PIGGIES--

PIP INDEX FOR THIS MONTH...1.0045% IMPROVEMENT IN RAIN QUALITY...+0.0089 IN AIR QUALITY...

CITY NEWS WORLD

HOLD-PORN!

THIS GODDAMN NOISE... MEDICINE IS REQUIRED. :HLUG:

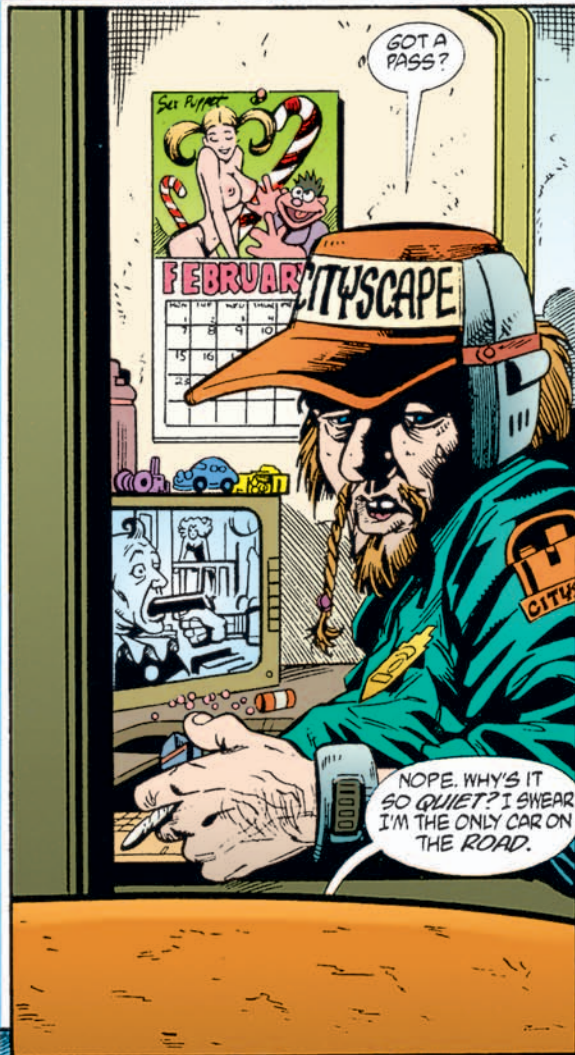
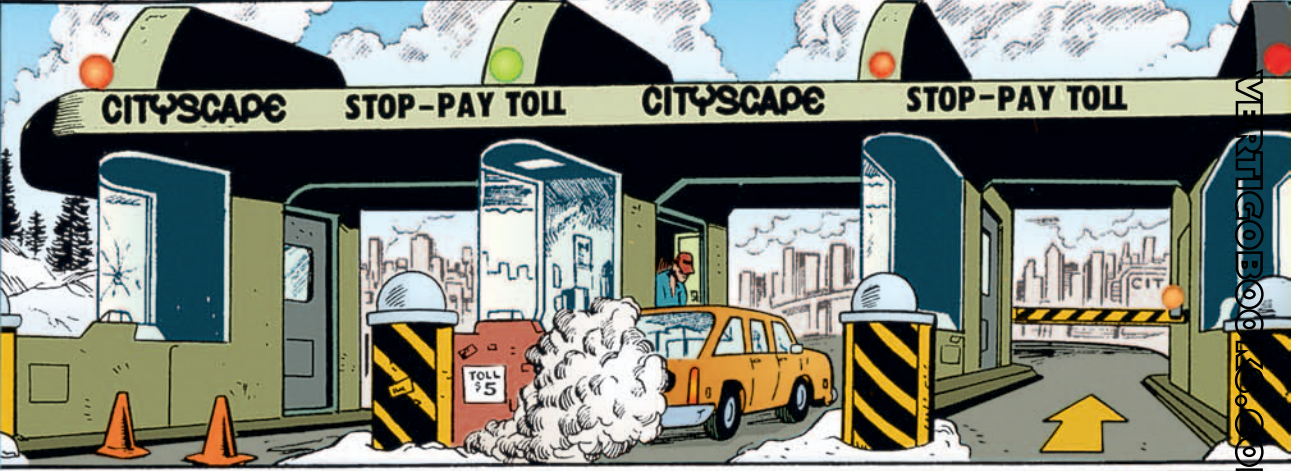
CITYSCAPE

STOP-PAY TOLL

CITYSCAPE

STOP-PAY TOLL

VERTIGO.COM



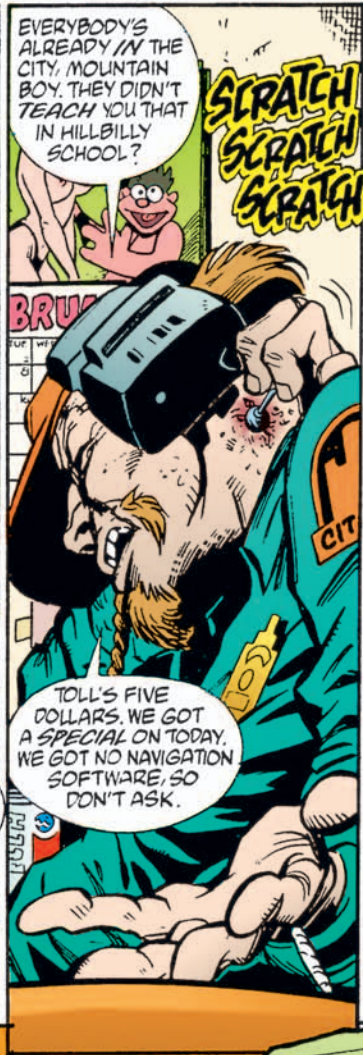
GOT A PASS?



FEBRUAR

CITYSCAPE

NOPE. WHY'S IT SO QUIET? I SWEAR I'M THE ONLY CAR ON THE ROAD.



EVERYBODY'S ALREADY IN THE CITY, MOUNTAIN BOY. THEY DIDN'T TEACH YOU THAT IN HILLBILLY SCHOOL?

SCRATCH
SCRATCH
SCRATCH

TOLL'S FIVE DOLLARS. WE GOT A SPECIAL ON TODAY. WE GOT NO NAVIGATION SOFTWARE, SO DON'T ASK.



WORKING THIS TOLLBOOTH ALL WEEK, PISSING IN A WHISKEY BOTTLE AND WEAKLY JERKING OFF OVER THE RADIO PORN THAT AERIAL PICKS UP... MUST BE A TOUGH LIFE.

BUT YOU REALLY ARE EVERYTHING I MOVED TO THE MOUNTAIN TO ESCAPE FROM. A WORTHLESS SCRAP OF FROGSHIT WITH A PULSE AND A BIT OF AUTHORITY.

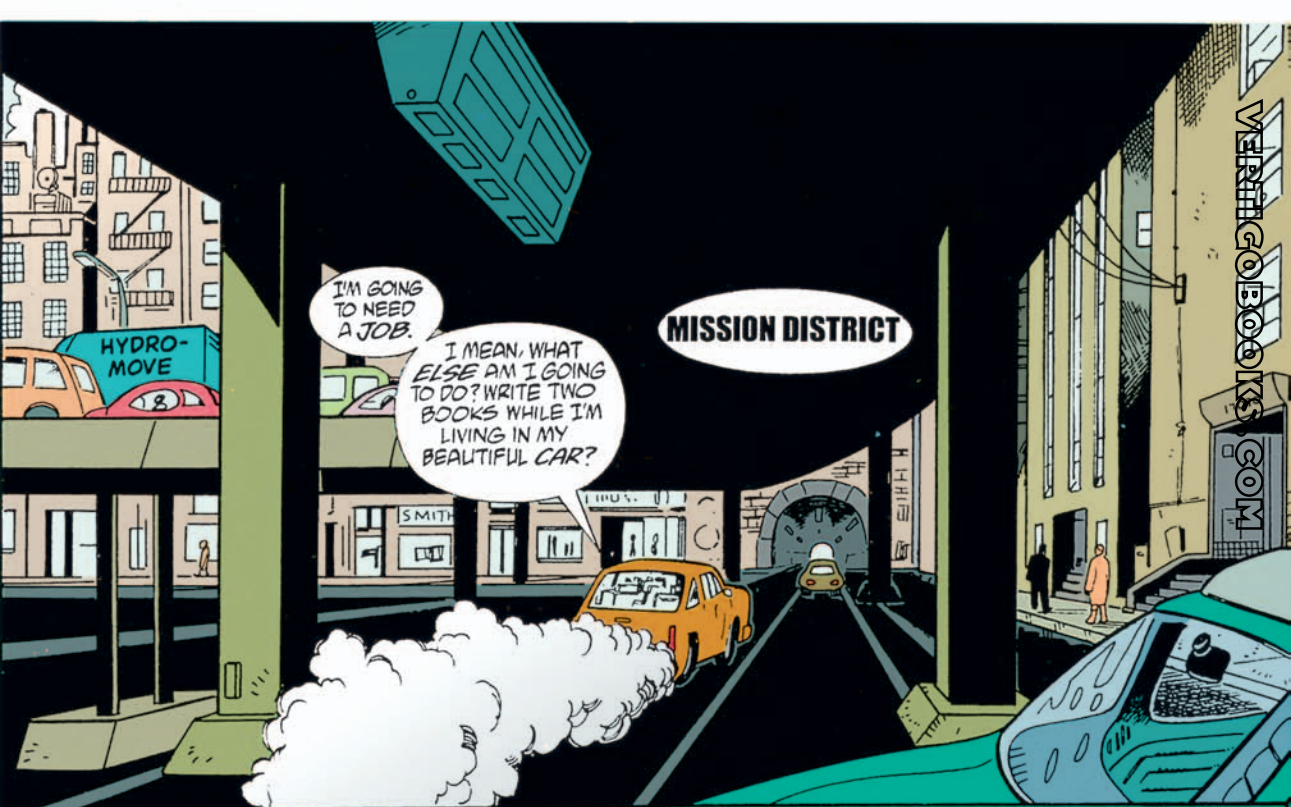


HERE YOU GO

I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU, SHITEYES.

BUY MORE BULLETS

LC EWU



I'M GOING TO NEED A JOB.

MISSION DISTRICT

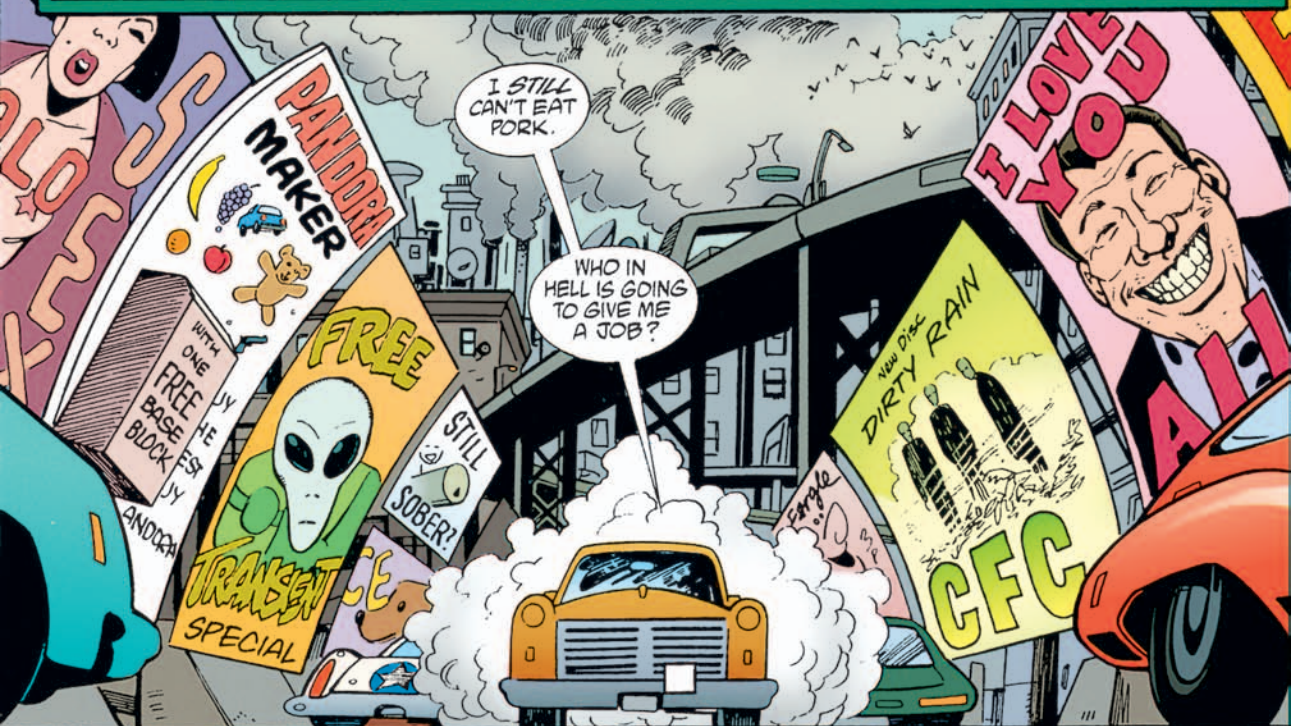
I MEAN, WHAT ELSE AM I GOING TO DO? WRITE TWO BOOKS WHILE I'M LIVING IN MY BEAUTIFUL CAR?



AND A JOB MEANS JOURNALISM. NO. MORE THAN THAT--STAFF JOURNALISM, OR A CONTRACTED GIG.

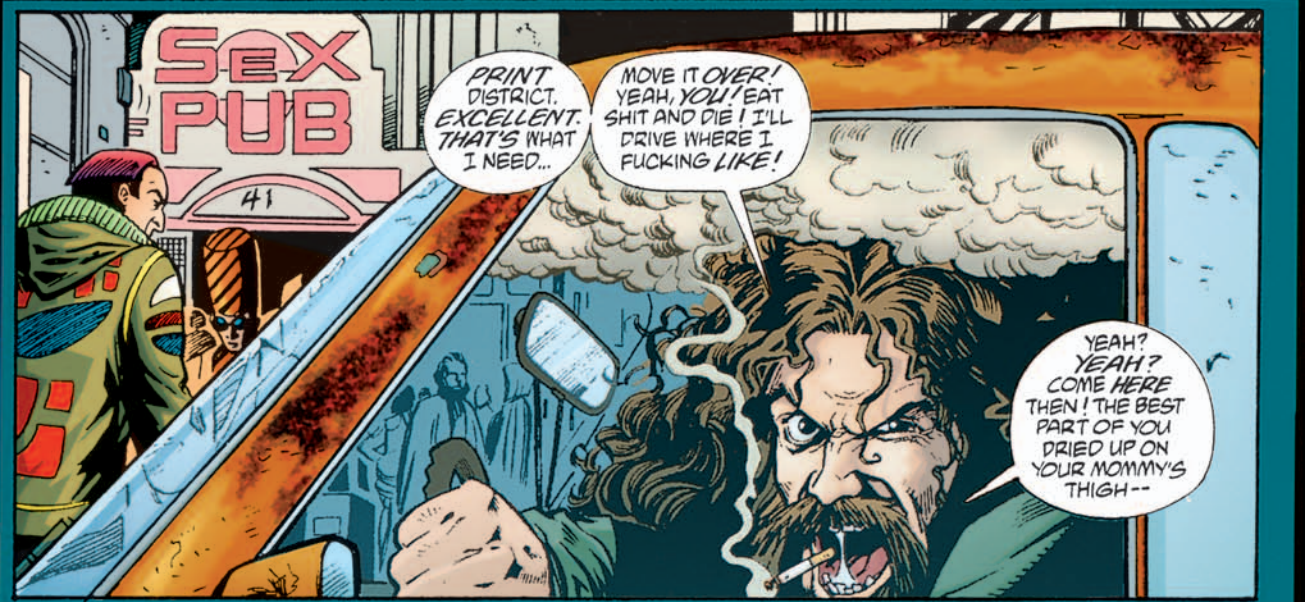
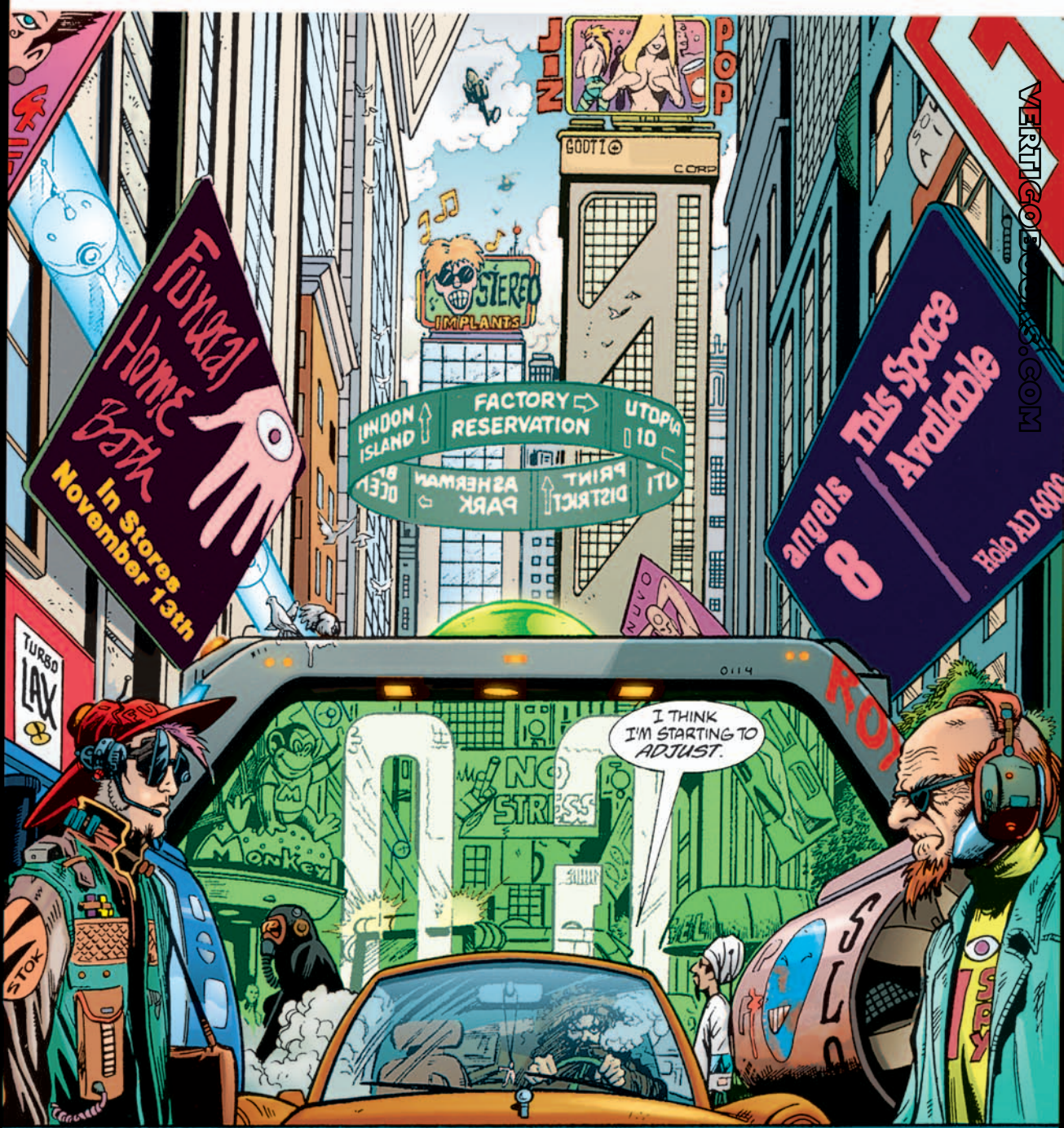
CHRIST, I DON'T EVEN HAVE JOURNALIST'S INSURANCE.

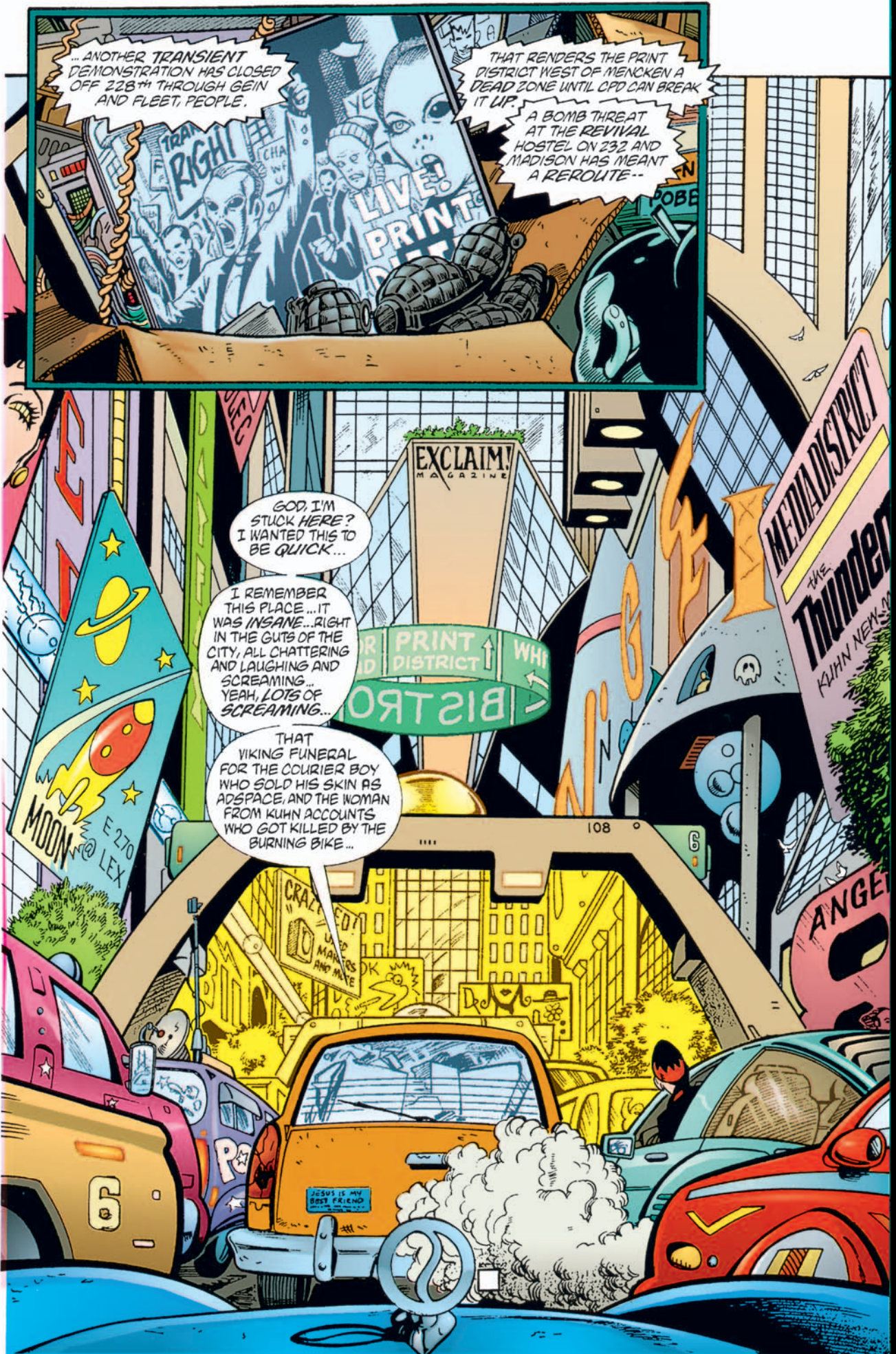
I HAVEN'T WORKED WITHOUT INSURANCE SINCE THAT TIME THE RED CATHOLICS DROPPED THE AUTO-CANNIBALISM MEME ON KAREL SQUARE ...



I STILL CAN'T EAT PORK.

WHO IN HELL IS GOING TO GIVE ME A JOB?





... ANOTHER TRANSIENT DEMONSTRATION HAS CLOSED OFF 228TH THROUGH GEIN AND FLEET, PEOPLE.

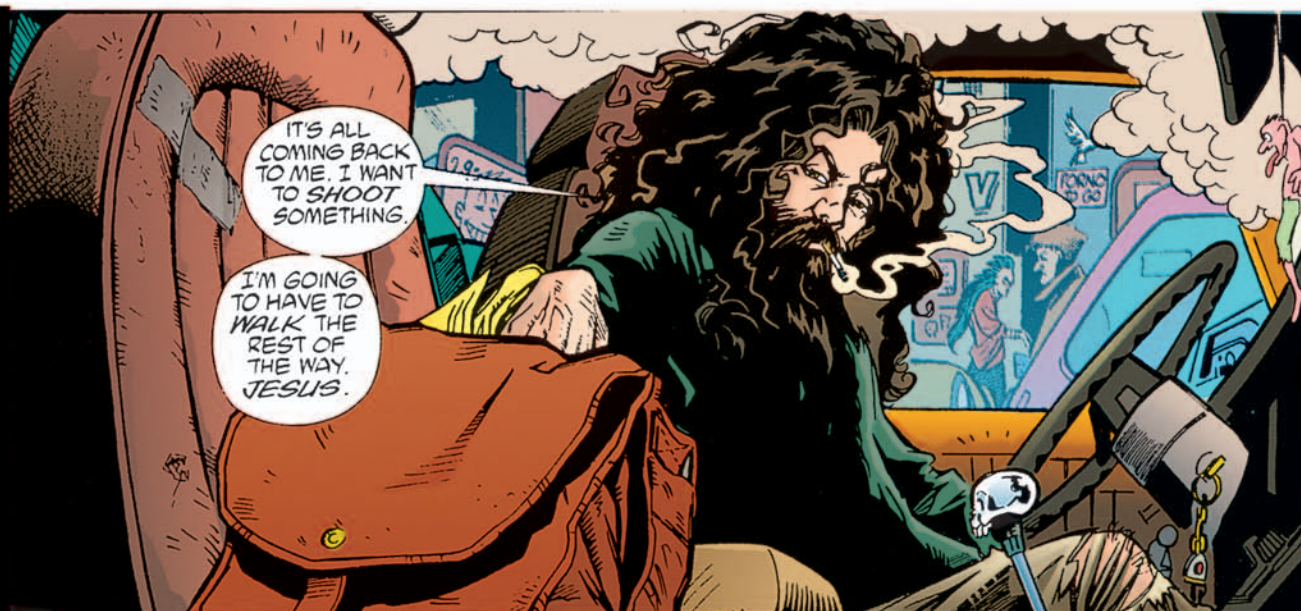
THAT RENDERS THE PRINT DISTRICT WEST OF MENCKEN A DEAD ZONE UNTIL CPD CAN BREAK IT UP.

A BOMB THREAT AT THE REVIVAL HOSTEL ON 232 AND MADISON HAS MEANT A REROUTE--

GOD, I'M STUCK HERE? I WANTED THIS TO BE QUICK...

I REMEMBER THIS PLACE...IT WAS INSANE...RIGHT IN THE GUTS OF THE CITY, ALL CHATTERING AND LAUGHING AND SCREAMING... YEAH, LOTS OF SCREAMING...

THAT VIKING FUNERAL FOR THE COURIER BOY WHO SOLD HIS SKIN AS ADSPACE, AND THE WOMAN FROM KUHN ACCOUNTS WHO GOT KILLED BY THE BURNING BIKE...



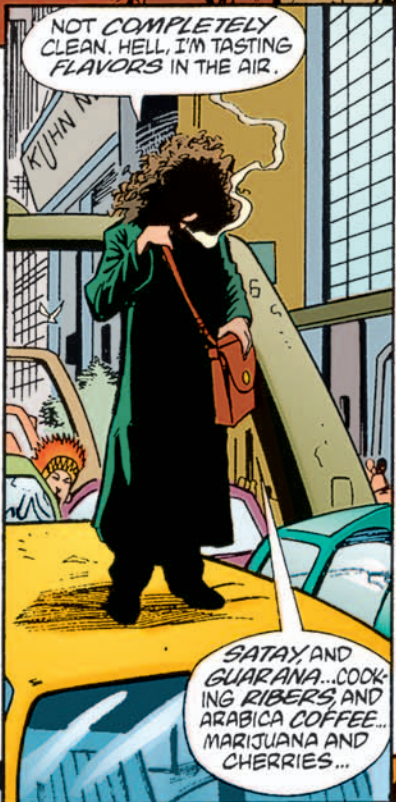
IT'S ALL COMING BACK TO ME. I WANT TO SHOOT SOMETHING

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO WALK THE REST OF THE WAY. JESUS.



GET THE CITY UNDER MY FEET...

IT SMELLS CLEANER. NOT AS CLEAN AS THE MOUNTAIN, OF COURSE. BUT...DEFINITELY CLEANER.



NOT COMPLETELY CLEAN. HELL, I'M TASTING FLAVORS IN THE AIR.

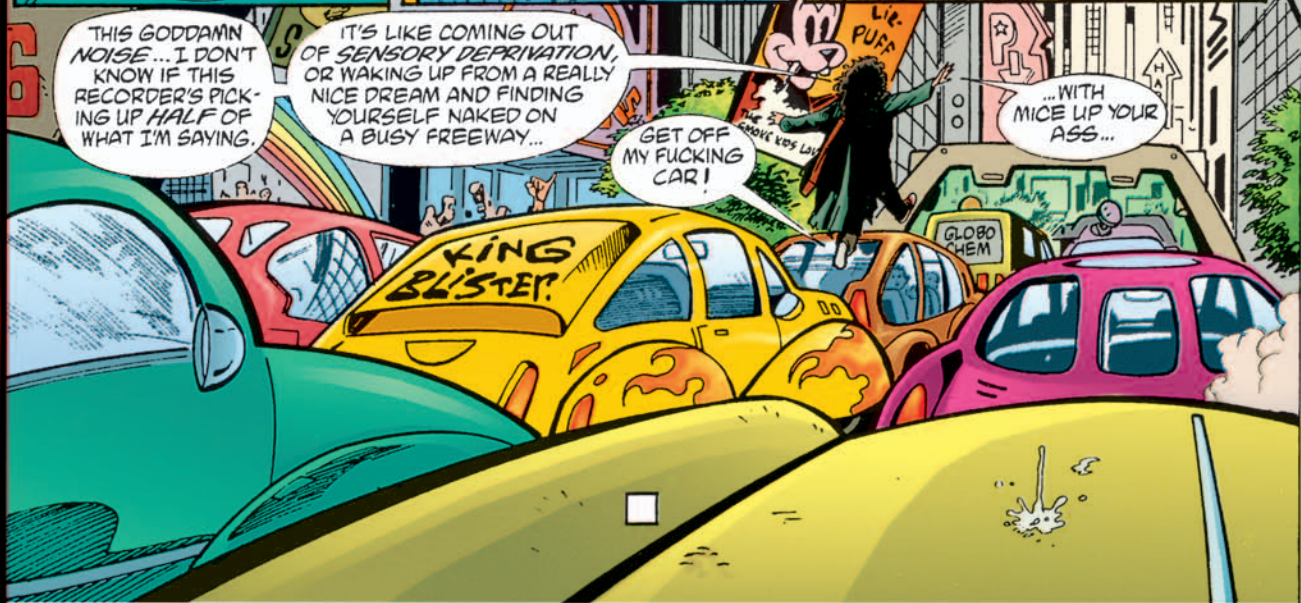
SATAY AND GUARANA...COOKING RIBERS, AND ARABICA COFFEE... MARIJUANA AND CHERRIES...



MAYBE I'LL GET USED TO IT AGAIN.

HOPE NOT. A KENYAN MAN ONCE SAID TO ME, "YOU CAN GET USED TO ANYTHING WHEN MONEYS INVOLVED."

HE USED TO STICK MICE UP HIS ASS FOR TWENTY BUCKS A TIME.



THIS GODDAMN NOISE... I DON'T KNOW IF THIS RECORDER'S PICKING UP HALF OF WHAT I'M SAYING.

IT'S LIKE COMING OUT OF SENSORY DEPRIVATION, OR WAKING UP FROM A REALLY NICE DREAM AND FINDING YOURSELF NAKED ON A BUSY FREEWAY...

GET OFF MY FUCKING CAR!

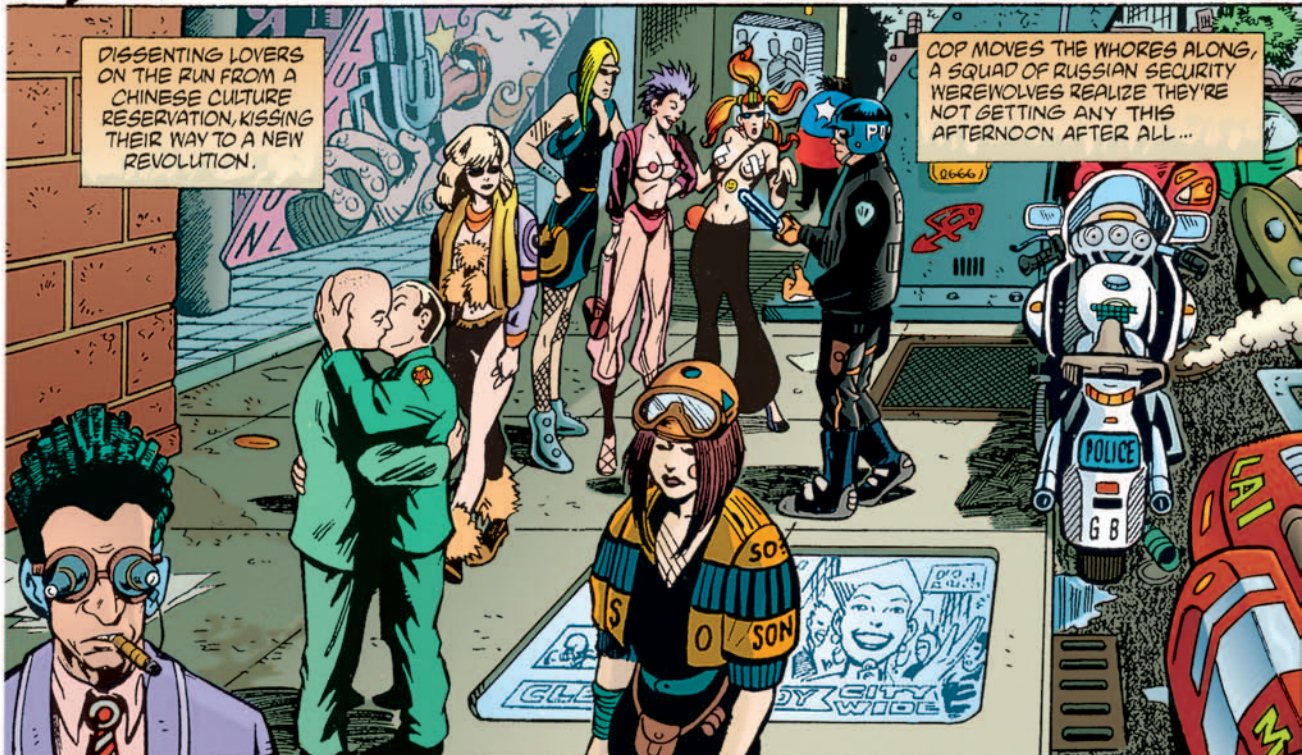
...WITH MICE UP YOUR ASS...



A TROUPE OF TUVAN THROAT-SINGERS STOPPING TO MAKE STEPPES MUSIC, JUST BECAUSE THEY FEEL LIKE IT.

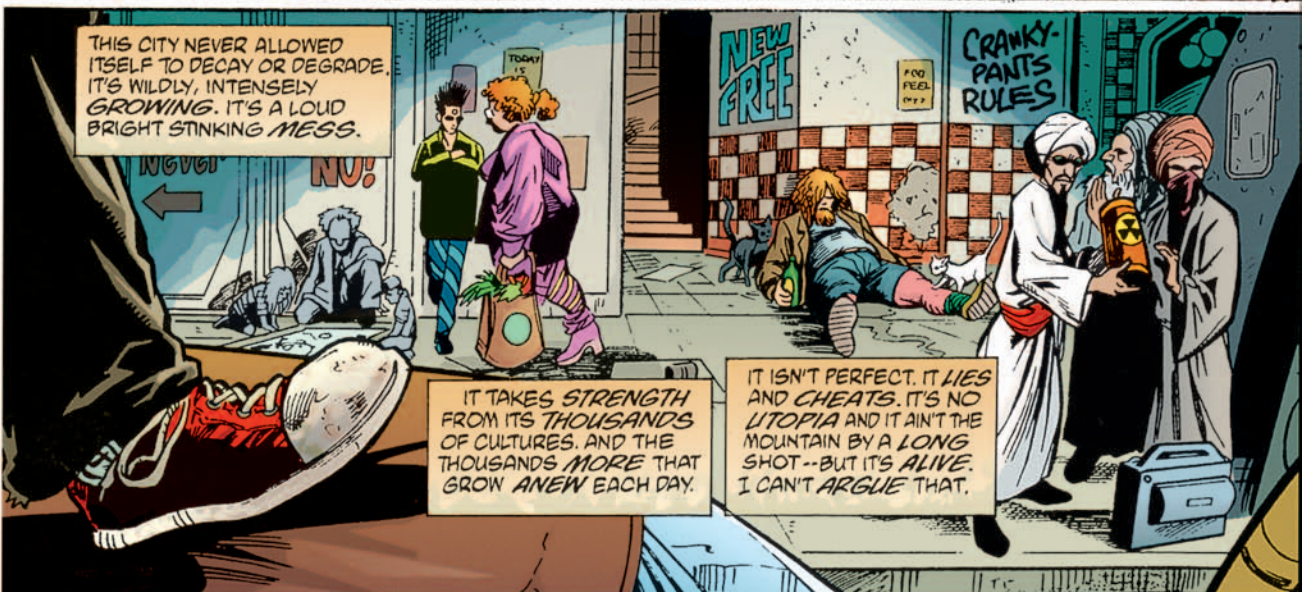
FEEDSITE LISTENERS MILLING AROUND, RECORDING THEM, SAVING A FEW LINGUISTIC MINUTES FOR EVERYBODY...

EXTRA EBOOKS.COM



DISSIDENTING LOVERS ON THE RUN FROM A CHINESE CULTURE RESERVATION, KISSING THEIR WAY TO A NEW REVOLUTION.

COP MOVES THE WHORES ALONG, A SQUAD OF RUSSIAN SECURITY WEREWOLVES REALIZE THEY'RE NOT GETTING ANY THIS AFTERNOON AFTER ALL...



THIS CITY NEVER ALLOWED ITSELF TO DECAY OR DEGRADE. IT'S WILDLY, INTENSELY GROWING. IT'S A LOUD BRIGHT STINKING MESS.

IT TAKES STRENGTH FROM ITS THOUSANDS OF CULTURES. AND THE THOUSANDS MORE THAT GROW ANEW EACH DAY.

IT ISN'T PERFECT. IT LIES AND CHEATS. IT'S NO LUTOPIA AND IT AIN'T THE MOUNTAIN BY A LONG SHOT -- BUT IT'S ALIVE. I CAN'T ARGUE THAT.

MATURE READERS



I'M HERE TO SEE ROYCE. HE WORKS ON THE CITY DESK. OLD FRIEND OF MINE.

I DON'T THINK SO.

DON'T LET THE DOOR HIT YOU IN THE BEARD ON THE WAY OUT.



SECURITY! :COUGH:

A LARGE :COUGH: HEAVILY ARMED :COUGH: THING JUST BROKE INTO EDITORIAL!

reception



THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.

I'M LOOKING FOR ROYCE. SPEAK UP, DAMMIT. I'M A PROFESSIONAL MAN. I DON'T HAVE ALL DAY--

editorial



MY GOD. THEY'VE CAGED HIM...

mitchell royce city editor



ROYCE. FINALLY.

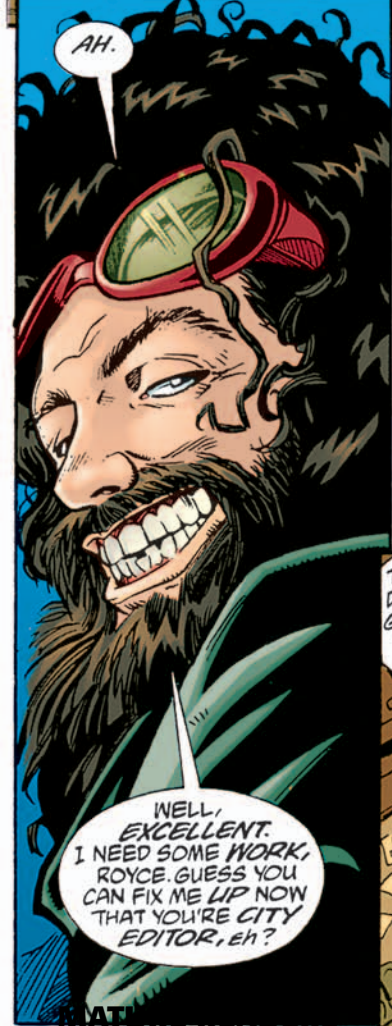
CHRIST ALIVE, MAN, THIS PLACE IS A SNAKEPIT. WE'VE GOT TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE.



SPIDER? SPIDER JERUSALEM? IS THAT YOU?

YEP AND JUST IN TIME, BY THE LOOKS OF IT. HOW LONG HAVE THEY HELD YOU PRISONER?

I STILL WORK HERE, SPIDER. I'M THE PAPER'S CITY EDITOR NOW.



AH.

WELL, EXCELLENT. I NEED SOME WORK, ROYCE. GUESS YOU CAN FIX ME UP NOW THAT YOU'RE CITY EDITOR, eh?



CITY EDITOR TO ALL POINTS. STAND DOWN. I REPEAT, STAND DOWN. PLEASE CANCEL ANY REQUESTS MADE TO THE POLICE. ALL IS WELL.

YOU LOOK LIKE A GODDAMN MONKEY, SPIDER.

FIVE YEARS UP THE MOUNTAIN WILL DO THAT TO YOU. I GOT HAIR IN PLACES YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU OWN.

PROBABLY A SEX THING. I'VE HEARD STORIES ABOUT YOU MOUNTAIN TYPES. WHAT BROUGHT YOU BACK?



TURNS OUT I STILL OWN MY OLD EDITOR AT DRIVEN PRESS TWO BOOKS. CONTRACTED I WRITE 'EM OR HE SUES MY ASS INTO DEBTOR'S PRISON.

...AND YOU CAN'T WRITE UNLESS YOU'RE HERE, CAN YOU? I REMEMBER YOU DRIED UP DURING THAT YEAR ON ST. LUCIA.

SO YOU LAUNCHED A FRONTAL ASSAULT ON MY PAPER FOR A JOB?



NO MONEY, NO INSURANCE, NO PLACE, NO NEWSFEEDS... I NEED ALL THESE THINGS TO WRITE BOOKS.

THE AUTHOR OF "WAVING AND DROWNING" AND "SHOT IN THE FACE" NEEDS MONEY?

ALL GONE.



WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A STAFF JOB, AREN'T WE?

OR A CONTRACTED GIG. WITH INSURANCE AND STAFF APARTMENT...

LIKE A COLUMN. A WEEKLY COLUMN. OP-ED PAGE OF THE CITY SECTION. BY THE AUTHOR OF...

THAT'D BE A BIT OF A COUP.



PAID STAFF APARTMENT. ROYCE WITH MAKER AND BASE BLOCK. I WILL NOT GO DOWN TO THE STREET WITH A GARBAGE BAG TO FUEL IT UP.

MM. THAT CAN BE DONE.

JOURNALIST'S INSURANCE. STARTING IMMEDIATELY. AND I WANT TO GET UNDER YOUR CREDIT COVERAGE. FIRST FEE UP FRONT. AND ALL THE NEWSFEEDS.

LURRR...



WELL, OKAY. IF THAT'S TOO TOUGH, MAYBE I'LL GO FIND SOMEONE ELSE WHO WANTS A COUP...

OKAY! OKAY! YOU WIN. I'LL GO GET YOU SOME PLASTIC AND A CONTRACT.

AND AN APARTMENT. A NICE ONE.

OH, SURE.



YOUR FIRST DEADLINE'S TOMORROW. I WANT TO SEE EIGHT THOUSAND WORDS. PRINTABLE WORDS.

I STILL REMEMBER THAT ESSAY YOU WROTE WHEN THE BEAST GOT ELECTED. I DO NOT WANT TO SEE THE WORD "FLUCK" TYPED EIGHT THOUSAND TIMES AGAIN.

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY YOU MOVED UP THERE.



THE FANS, ROYCE. THEY HELD ME DOWN IN BANK STREET ONCE AND TRIED TO STEAL MY GIZZARD.

THE FANS AND THE NOISE AND THE TV AND THE BULLSHIT AND...

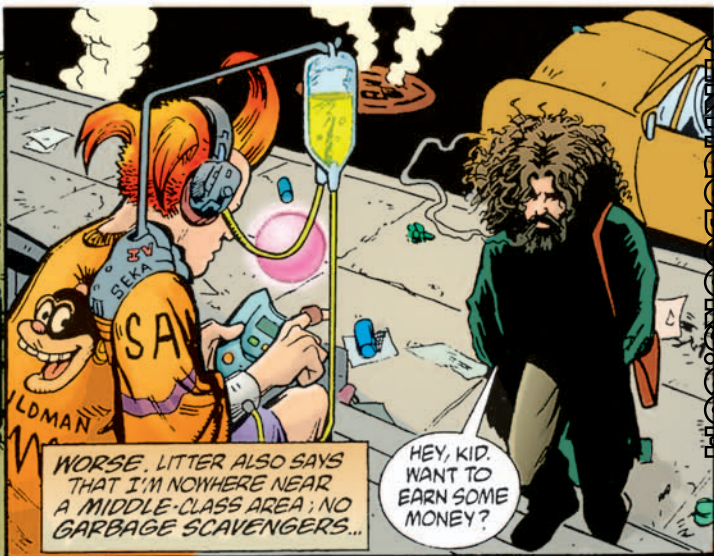


I COULDN'T GET AT THE TRUTH ANYMORE.

POOR AREAS ARE ALWAYS MARKED BY LITTER.

RICH AREAS HAVE DENIZENS WITH MAKERS AND BASE BLOCKS. THEY DON'T NEED TO BUY GOODS, SO THEY DON'T MAKE LITTER.

MY NEW HOME IS POORER THAN A STACK OF DEAD BEGGARS.



WORSE. LITTER ALSO SAYS THAT I'M NOWHERE NEAR A MIDDLE-CLASS AREA; NO GARBAGE SCAVENGERS...

HEY, KID. WANT TO EARN SOME MONEY?



CONVINCE ME. I EARN MORE MONEY THAN YOU'RE WORTH, JUST SITTING HERE.

YOU RUDE LITTLE SCAB. LISTEN, I NEED SOMEONE TO RUN TO THE LOCAL DRUGSTORE FOR ME.

I COULD SCORE YOU SOME MEDICINE RIGHT HERE, MAN...

I DO NOT WANT YOUR CHEAP BRAINBURNING DRUGS. THEY ARE USELESS FOR WORK. AND I AM A WORKING MAN TODAY.



I WANT VASOPRESSIN, WASHED CAFFEINE, JUMPSTART, GINGKO BILOBA, GUARANA, AND ANY INTELLIGENCE ENHANCER INTRODUCED IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS.



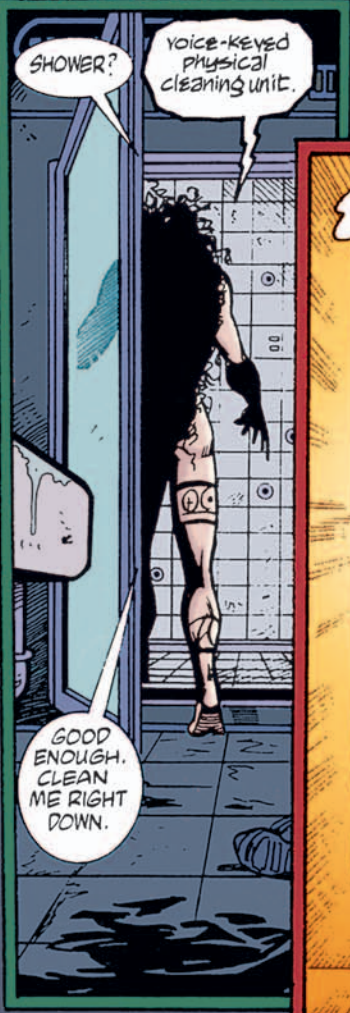
YOU SOME KIND OF HEALTH FREAK?

I'M A JOURNALIST, DAMNIT. NOW JUMP TO IT, PUSHER SPERM. I'M IN APARTMENT 100 K.



THE APARTMENT WAS A HOVEL, OF COURSE.

I WOULD'VE CALLED MY "FRIEND" ROYCE AND EXCHANGED WORDS OVER IT, BUT THE PHONE WAS OUT.



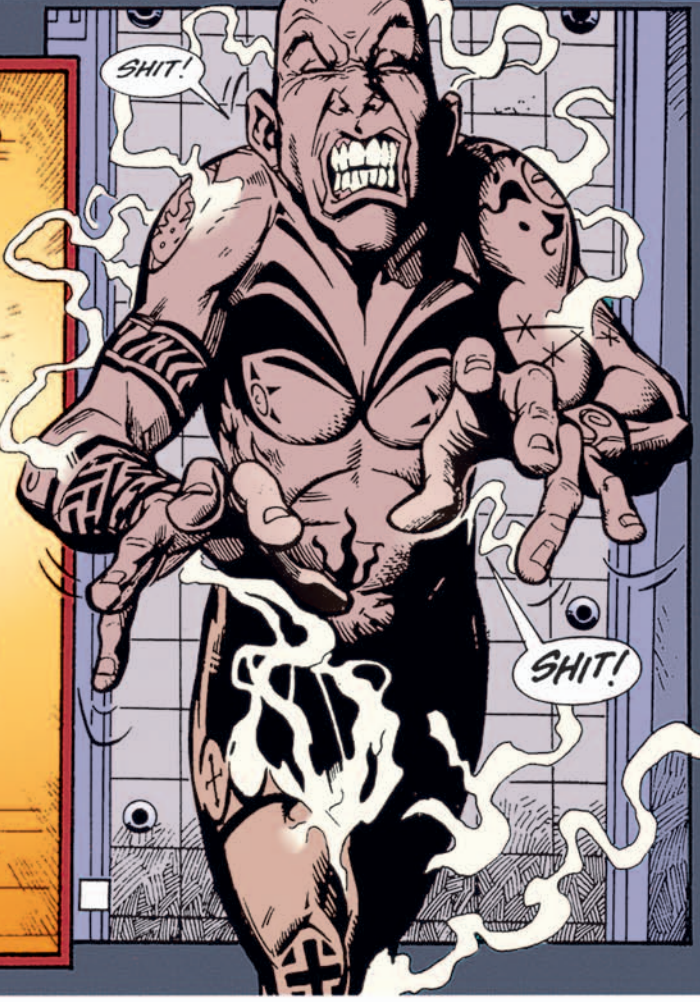
SHOWER?

VOICE-KEYED PHYSICAL CLEANING UNIT.

GOOD ENOUGH. CLEAN ME RIGHT DOWN.

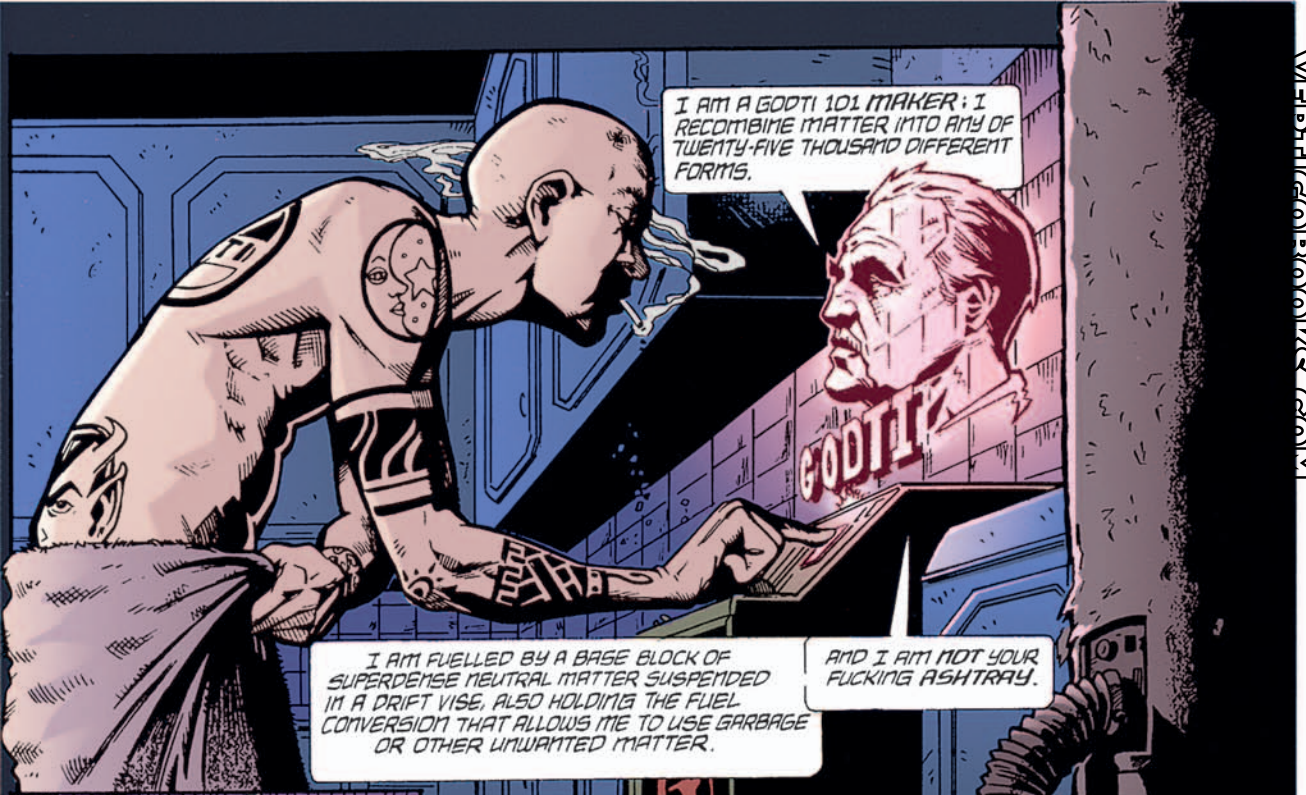


AAAAAAA!



SHIT!

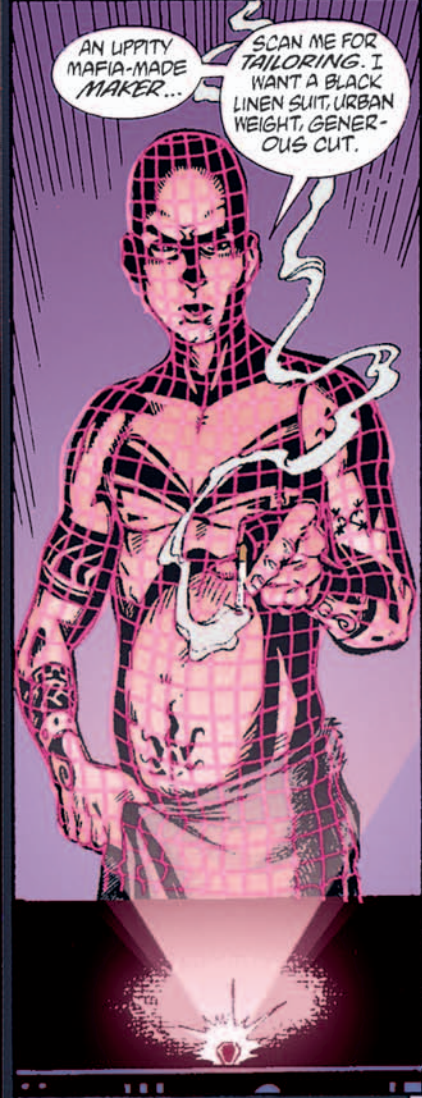
SHIT!



I AM A GOD! 101 MAKER: I RECOMBINE MATTER INTO ANY OF TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND DIFFERENT FORMS.

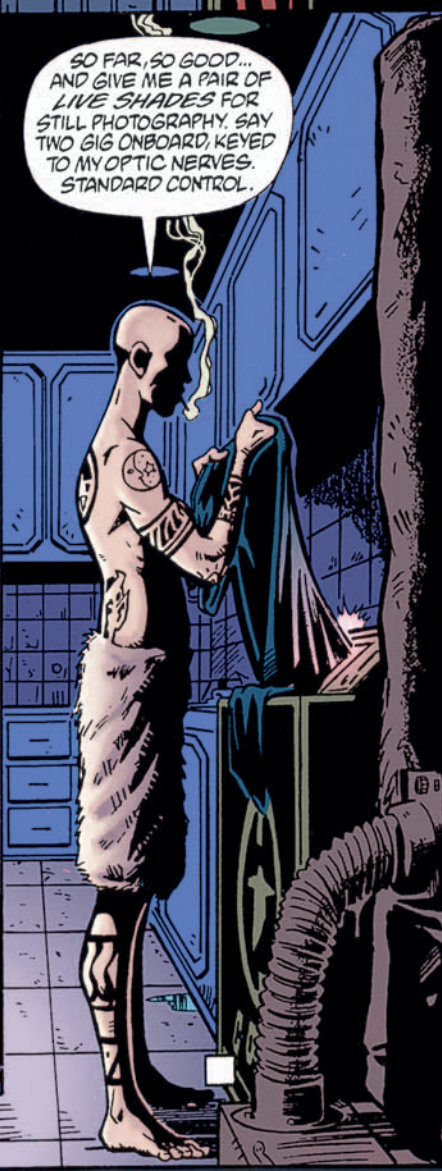
I AM FUELLED BY A BASE BLOCK OF SUPERDENSE NEUTRAL MATTER SUSPENDED IN A DRIFT VISE, ALSO HOLDING THE FUEL CONVERSION THAT ALLOWS ME TO USE GARBAGE OR OTHER UNWANTED MATTER.

AND I AM NOT YOUR FUCKING ASHTRAY.

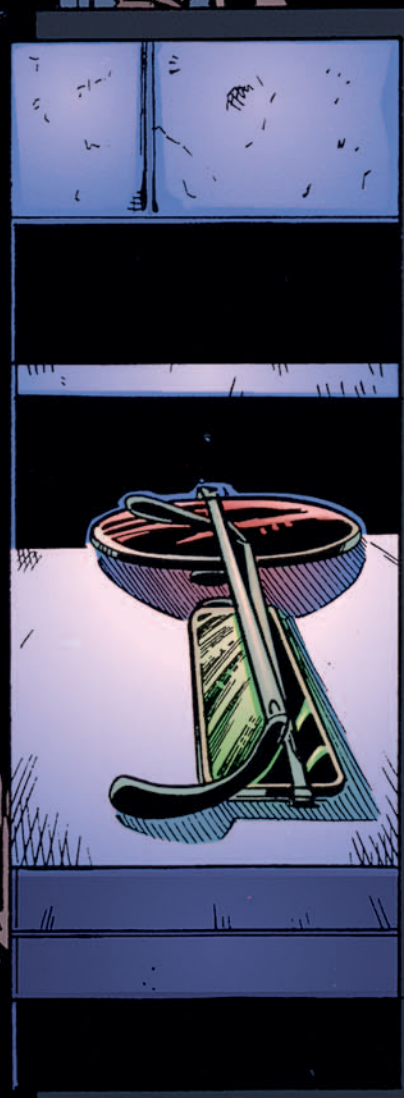


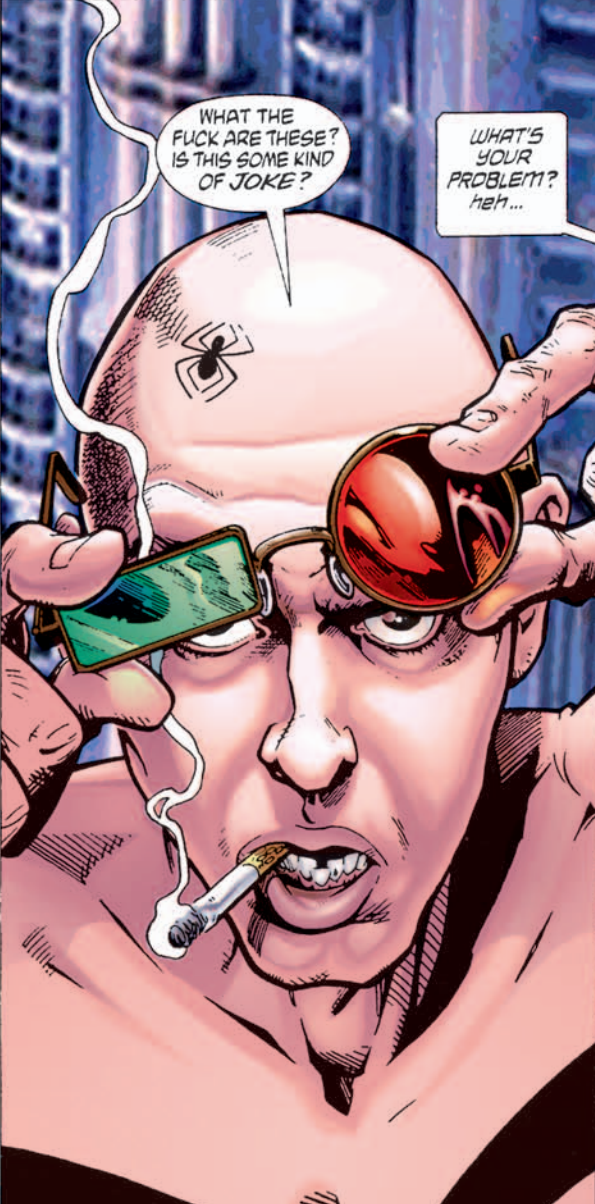
AN UPPITY MAFIA-MADE MAKER...

SCAN ME FOR TAILORING. I WANT A BLACK LINEN SUIT, URBAN WEIGHT, GENEROUS CUT.



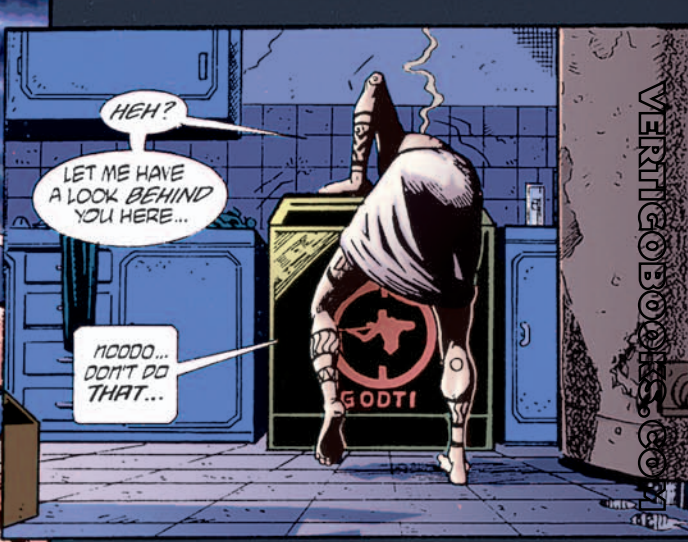
SO FAR, SO GOOD... AND GIVE ME A PAIR OF LIVE SHADES FOR STILL PHOTOGRAPHY. SAY TWO GIG ONBOARD, KEYED TO MY OPTIC NERVES. STANDARD CONTROL.





WHAT THE FUCK ARE THESE?
IS THIS SOME KIND
OF JOKE?

WHAT'S
YOUR
PROBLEM?
heh...



HEH?

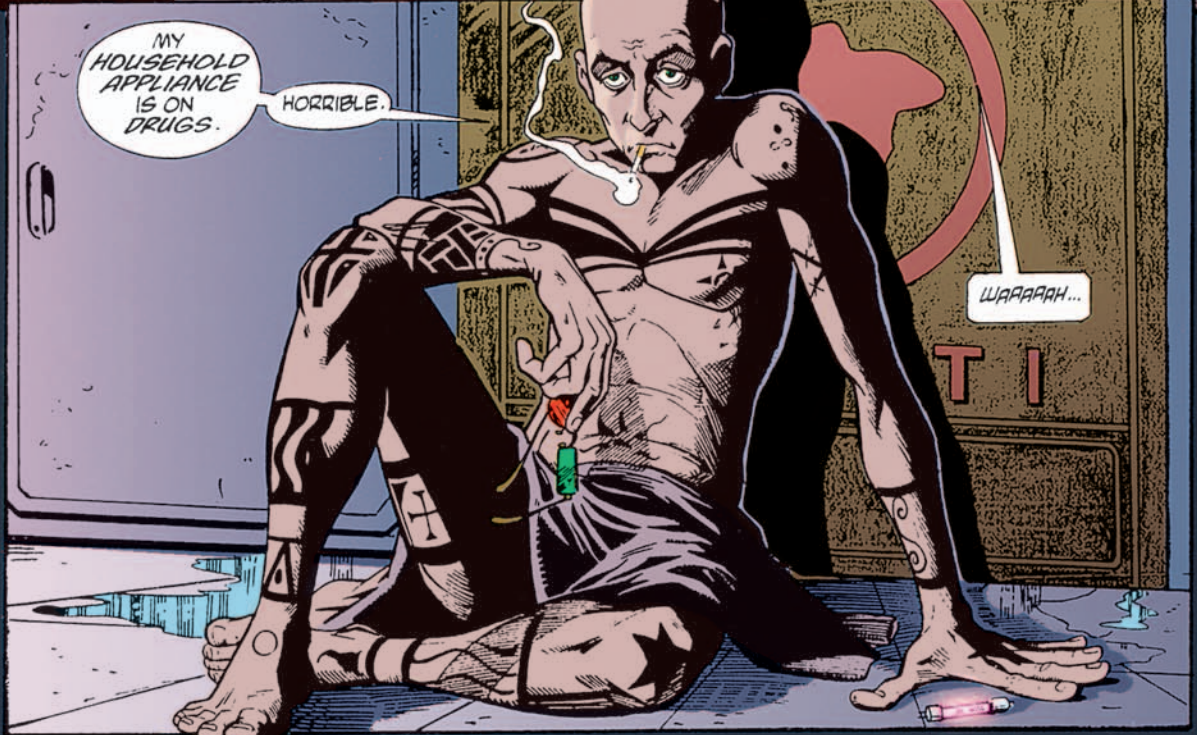
LET ME HAVE
A LOOK BEHIND
YOU HERE...

NOOOO...
DON'T DO
THAT...



WHAT'S THIS?
"TRIPWIRE 70."

I KNOW
WHAT THIS IS.
THIS IS A
HALLUCINOGEN
SIMULATOR
FOR LIVE
MACHINERY,
ISN'T IT?



MY
HOUSEHOLD
APPLIANCE
IS ON
DRUGS.

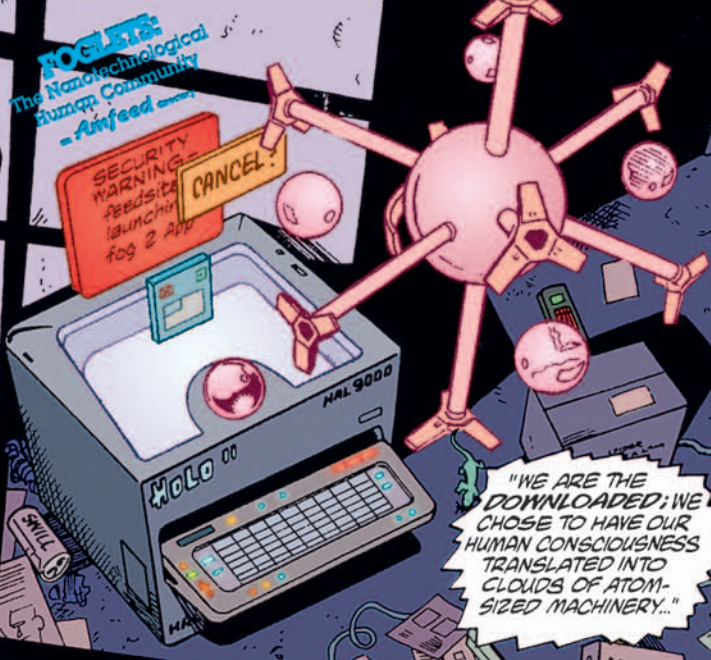
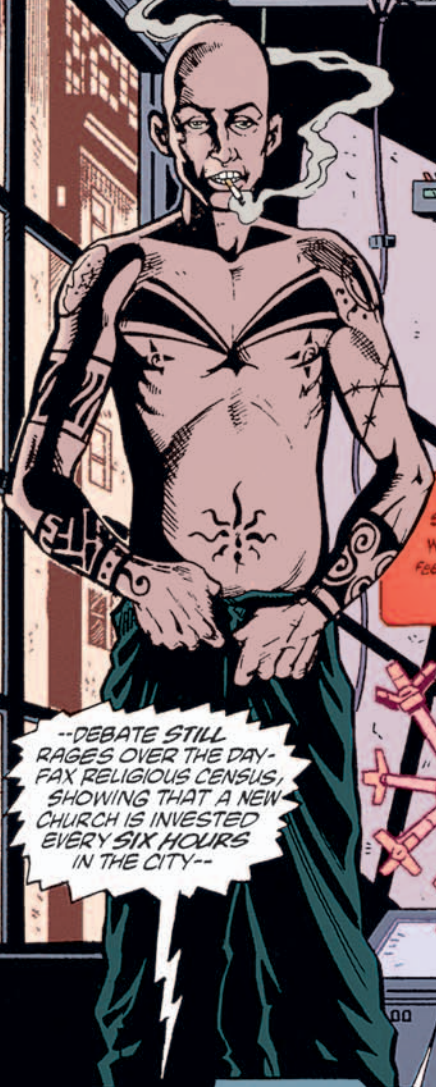
HORRIBLE.

WAAAAAH...

TV: RANDOM CHANNEL CHANGE EVERY TWENTY SECONDS. COMPUTER: RANDOM FEED SWITCH EVERY TWENTY-FIVE.

TONIGHT ON LONELY CITY: THE CONTINUING PLIGHT OF THE REVIVALS, BROUGHT BY CRYONICS TO A FUTURE THEY CANNOT UNDERSTAND.

HOW CAN WE HELP THEM, WHEN THEIR FIRST MERE GLANCE THROUGH A WINDOW LEADS INEXORABLY TO MENTAL ILLNESS? SHOULD WE HELP THEM?



--DEBATE STILL RAGES OVER THE DAY-FAX RELIGIOUS CENSUS, SHOWING THAT A NEW CHURCH IS INVESTED EVERY SIX HOURS IN THE CITY--

"WE ARE THE DOWNLOADED; WE CHOSE TO HAVE OUR HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS TRANSLATED INTO CLOUDS OF ATOM-SIZED MACHINERY.."

... AFTER THE UGLY CONCLUSION TO THE TRANSIENT RIGHTS DEMONSTRATION ON GEIN STREET THIS AFTERNOON--

IT SEEMS THAT MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THE CITY'S TRANSIENTS HAVE RETURNED TO THE ANGELS B DISTRICT, WHERE THE UNREST BEGAN.

MOVEMENT LEADER FRED CHRIST MADE HIMSELF AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW, JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO.

OH, YEAH?

FRED... TV! HOLD CHANNEL!

EVENT: CYCLE HOTMENU--JUST RELEASED, THE DATES FOR THE OPENING STAGE OF THE PRESIDENT'S REELECTION CAMPAIGN--

--CPD HAD ONLY THIS TO SAY: "WANTING A NEW BODY DOESN'T GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO BE A PUBLIC NUISANCE."



TRANSCIENCE IS ALL ABOUT THE RIGHT TO CHANGE YOUR SPECIES.

WITH A CHANGE IN SPECIES COMES A CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE, AND A CHANGE IN NEEDS.

THE SIMPLE FACT IS THAT CIVIC CENTER COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT US OR OUR NEEDS.

globe news **Free Christ**



FRED.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO YOURSELF MAN?



...SO, FOLLOWING THE POLICE'S ACTIONS DURING THE DEMO, WE HAVE COME TO A DECISION.



AS MOST PEOPLE KNOW, OUR TEMPLATE COMES FROM THE ALIEN COLONY IN OLD VILNIUS. THE COLONY WAS RECENTLY GRANTED SOVEREIGN RIGHTS BY THE WORLD COURT.



THEREFORE, WE HAVE GATHERED HERE TO EFFECT THE SECESSION OF THE ENTIRE ANGELS'S DISTRICT TO THE VILNIUS COLONY.

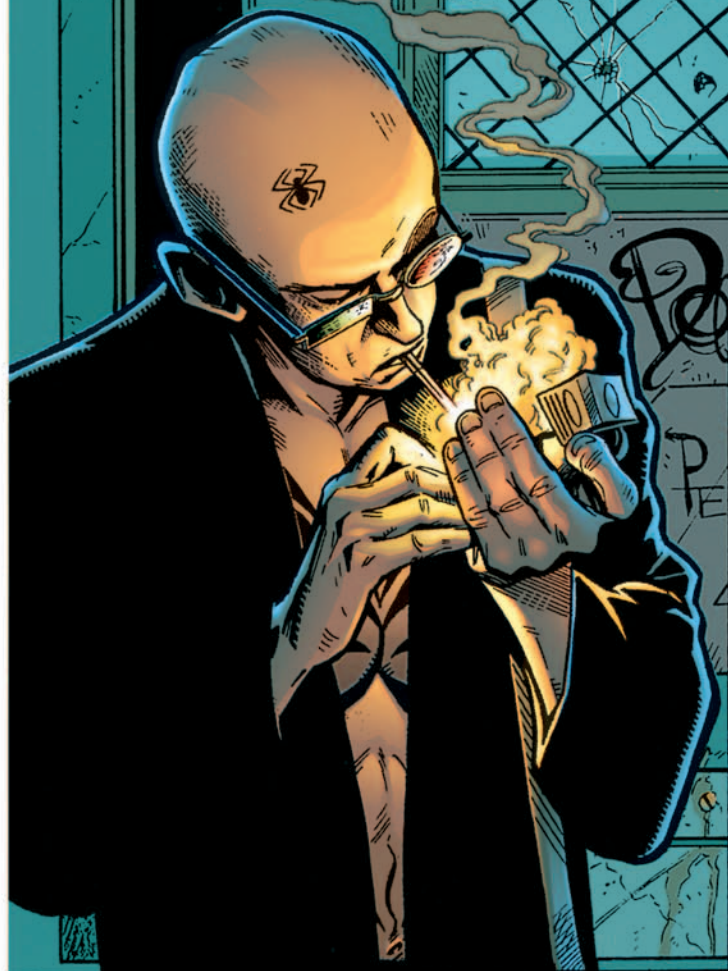
AS I SPEAK, BARRICADES ARE BEING ERECTED ACROSS OUR BORDERS--

FRED, YOU WEIRD LITTLE BASTARD.

YOU'RE MY FIRST COLUMN.

I HEAR KODŌ DRUMMING FROM THE JAPANESE ISLAND A FEW BLOCKS SOUTH; THE SOUND OF A VILLAGE GATHERING ITS PEOPLE HOME FOR THE NIGHT.

LAUGHTER UP THE STREET, AS NIGHTCLUB GATES MELT OPEN.



THE TASTE OF A CITY CIGARETTE, SMOOTH AND FAT. ANGELS B ISN'T FAR.



A BRIEF CLATTER OF GUNFIRE, THE SOUND OF A COUPLE HAVING SEX THAT THEY'VE WAITED THE WHOLE DAY FOR.

THE JUMP OF CAFFEINE IN MY FINGERS, THE CRACKLE OF INTELLIGENCE ENHANCERS IN MY HEAD.

THERE'LL BE A TAXI FOR ME AT THE END OF THE STREET, BECAUSE THAT'S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE.



CITY UNDER MY FEET.

HOME AGAIN.



TO BE CONTINUED

