

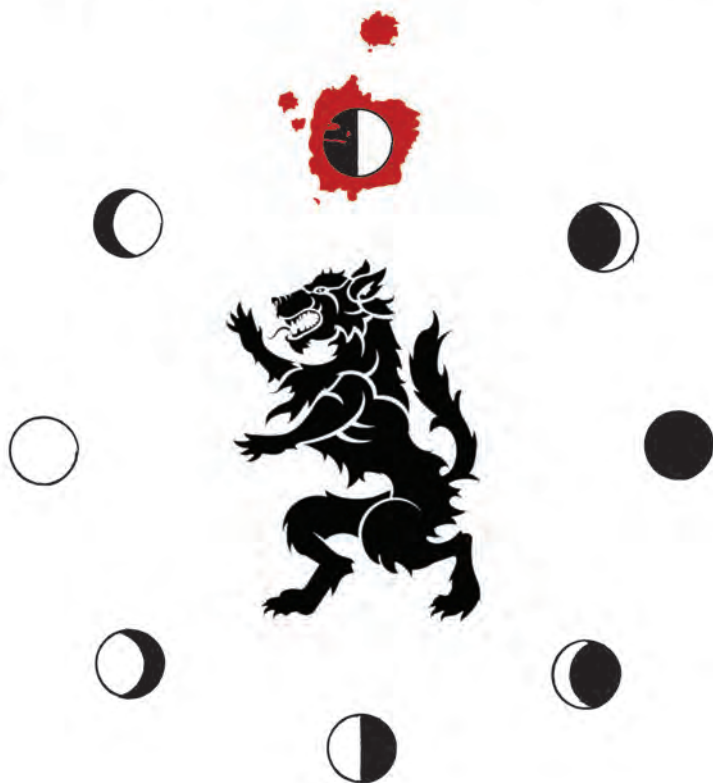
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CURSE



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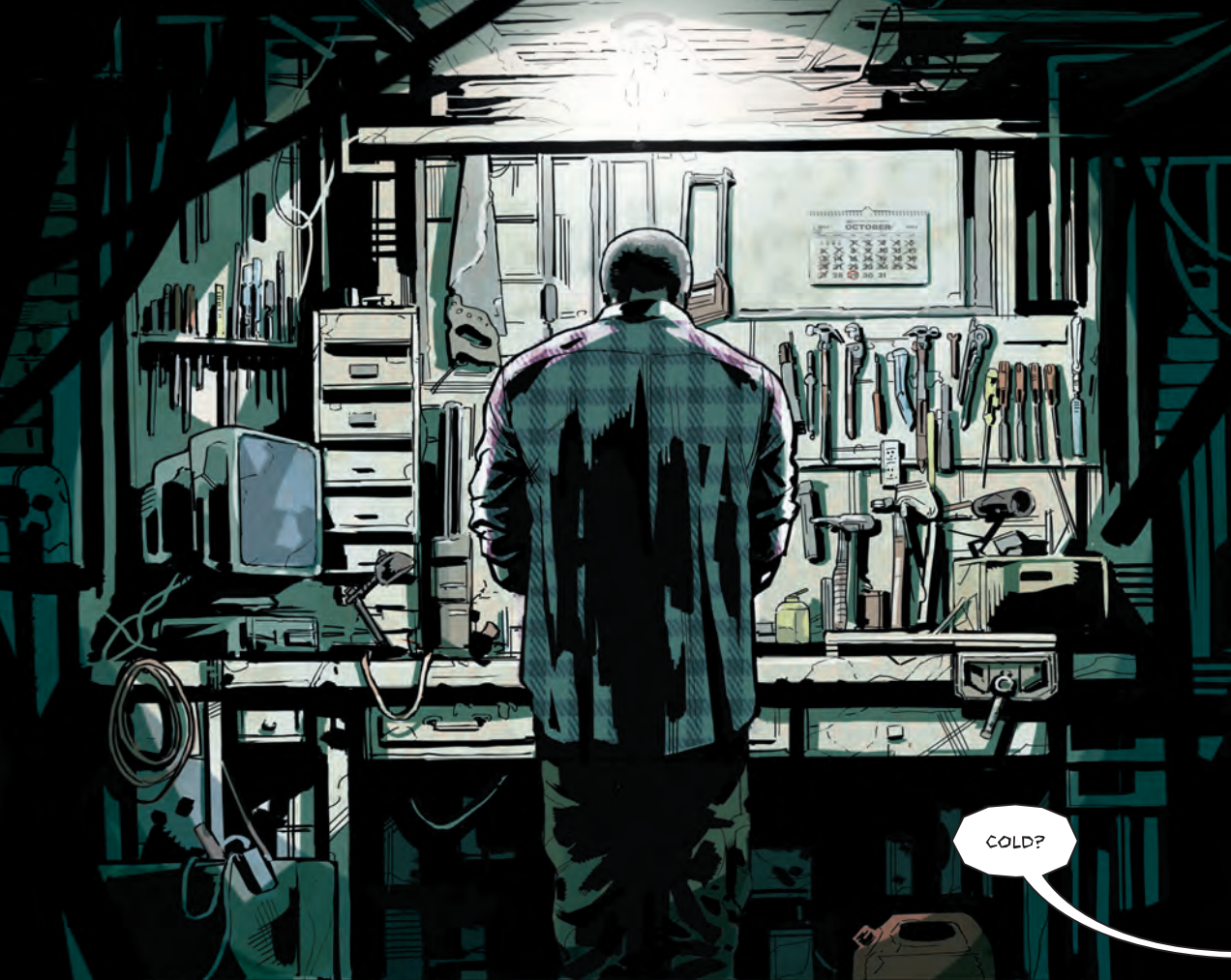
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COLD?



THAT'S
WHAT I SAID,
YOU COLD?

DAMP DOWN
HERE, STAYS COLD NO
MATTER THE TIME OF
YEAR, ESPECIALLY
ABOUT NOW.





I CAN
SMELL IT. *LIKE*
YOU, BUT NOT
QUITE...

SOMEONE...
YOUNGER.



YOUR
PROGENY.

I WOULDN'T.
IF I WERE
YOU...

I WOULDN'T.



FETID. THE
SMELL OF
DEATH.

YOU'VE NEVER
SMELLED *DEATH*--
THE SCENT YOU MAY KNOW,
THAT'S *DECAY*. BUT THE
SMELL OF SOMEONE *DYING*,
BY GOD, IT'S SO HUMAN,
SO RAW. SO...

INTOXICATING.



THE
UNMISTAKABLE
STENCH OF FEAR...
DESPERATION...MMM--
RESIGNATION.



THAT
WOULD
BE YOU,
THOUGH.



SEE, LANEY, MAN IS THE ONLY
BEAST THAT WILL DO ALMOST
ANYTHING TO PRESERVE
THE WEAK.

YOUR
MISPLACED
SYMPATHIES INSTINCTUALLY
COMPEL YOU TO SAVE THE
INFIRM, TO CURE THE ILLS
OF THE SICK, TO DEFEY
NATURE'S WILL.



IN TURN, YOU MERELY ENSURE
THE MEEK SHALL INDEED
INHERIT THE EARTH.

SO,
WHATEVER IT IS
YOU THINK YOU'RE
DOING HERE, FOR
ONE THING, IT'S
NOT GOING TO
WORK.



AS FOR
YOUR OFFSPRING,
HE'S INFECTED
WITH THE
SCENT.

THERE'S
NO GOING
BACK.

Before.

"WEBB TAKES THE
HANDOFF FROM
SMITH."



"WEBB CUTS TO THE
OUTSIDE, HE HAS A
BLOCKER!"



"WEBB HAS
DAYLIGHT!
HE--"



"WISKY CONTINUES ITS MARCH TO A NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AND GRIFFIN TO THE FIRST PICK IN THE PRO DRAFT."

"LANEY GRIFFIN BLOWS UP WEBB! THE ALL-AMERICAN ISSUING YET ANOTHER DEVASTATING HIT!"

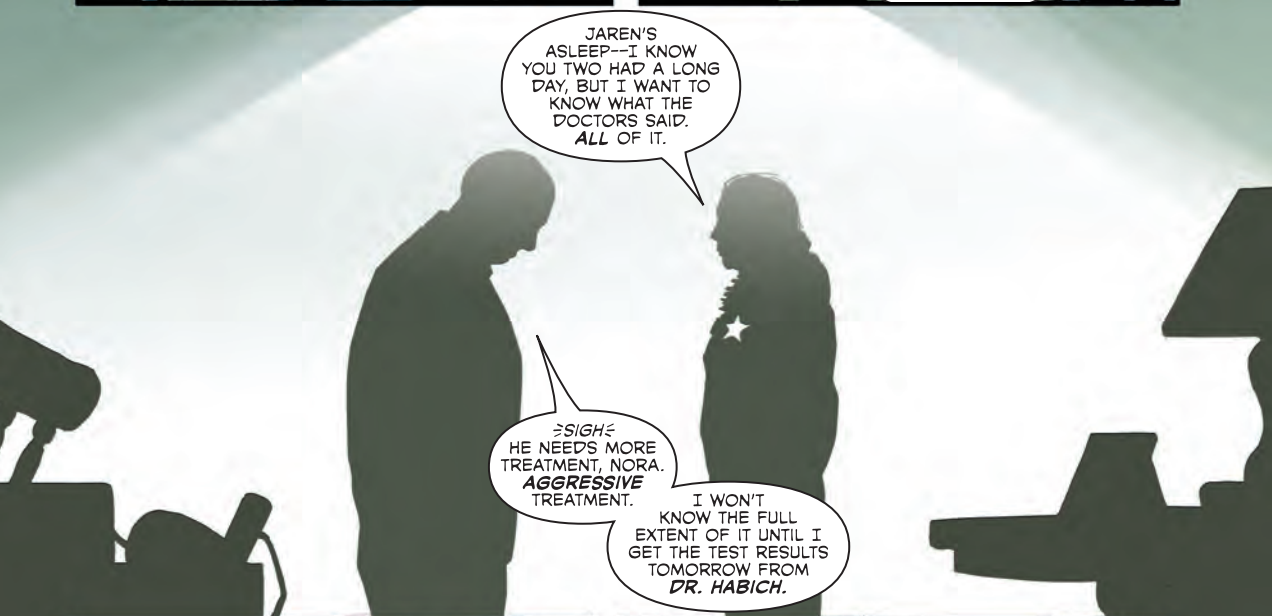


NEVER QUITE
GOT OVER THOSE
GLORY DAYS,
HUH?



I DID,
ACTUALLY. YOU
JUST NEVER
NOTICED,
NORA.

I'M **SELLING**
ALL THIS OLD STUFF,
NOT CELEBRATING
MY LEGACY.



JAREN'S
ASLEEP—I KNOW
YOU TWO HAD A LONG
DAY, BUT I WANT TO
KNOW WHAT THE
DOCTORS SAID.
ALL OF IT.

~SIGH~
HE NEEDS MORE
TREATMENT, NORA.
AGGRESSIVE
TREATMENT.

I WON'T
KNOW THE FULL
EXTENT OF IT UNTIL I
GET THE TEST RESULTS
TOMORROW FROM
DR. HABICH.



LOOK, LANEY, I HAVE
TO ASK: HOW **LONG** DO
YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP
DOING THIS? SELLING
OLD FOOTBALL JUNK,
REFINANCING THE
HOUSE...



GIVE **ME** CUSTODY OF JAREN.
I CAN'T DO **ANYTHING** FOR
HIM AS MY NEPHEW, BUT AS HIS
GUARDIAN... YOU **KNOW** MY
STATE BENEFITS
ARE--



LET ME BE
CRYSTAL CLEAR
ON THIS, ONE
FINAL TIME:

IF YOU ASK
ME TO GIVE UP MY
SON **AGAIN**, I'M GOING
TO THROW YOUR ASS
OUT OF THIS
HOUSE.



ARE YOU
THREATENING
AN OFFICER OF
THE LAW?

NO, I'M
THREATENING MY
SISTER-IN-LAW, WHO
COMES INTO MY HOUSE,
INSULTS ME, AND TRIES
TO LEVERAGE MY SICK
SON FROM MY CARE.



GEORGE-4,
WE HAVE A 10-91,
DERRY WOOD
TRAILHEAD.

GEORGE-4,
WE HAVE A 10-91,
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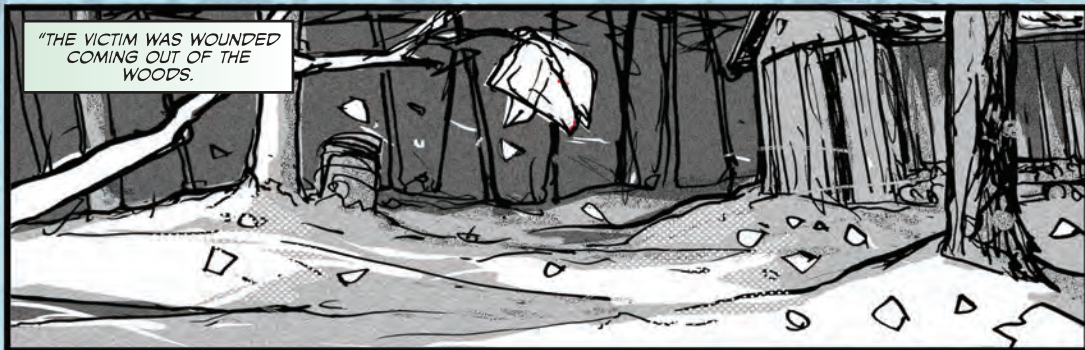
10-4 DISPATCH,
THIS IS GEORGE-4.
ONE MOMENT,
PLEASE.

UNDERSTAND
THIS, LANEY:

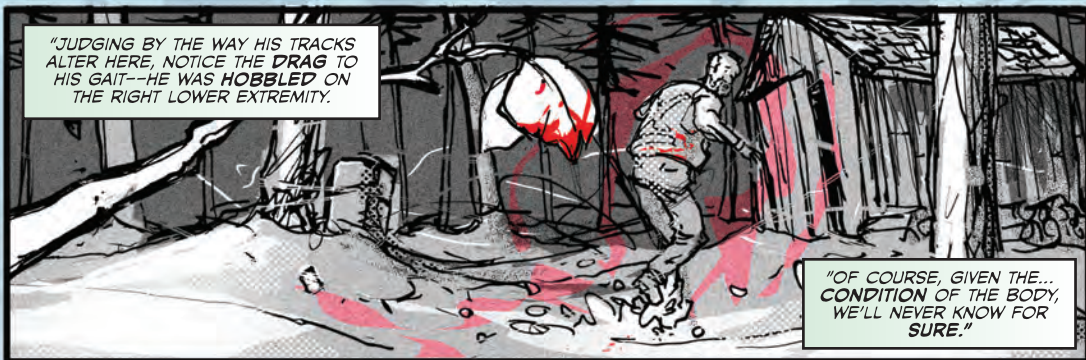
I WILL **NOT**
LOSE ANOTHER
MEMBER OF MY
FAMILY. I
REFUSE.

IT WON'T HAPPEN
AGAIN, I DON'T **CARE** WHAT
IT TAKES. YOU CAN BE AS **HARD-**
HEADED AS YOU **WANT**, BUT THE
MOMENT I THINK MY NEPHEW'S
HEALTH NEEDS ARE NOT BEING
MET, I'LL **FIND** A WAY.

I PROMISE
YOU, LANEY. I WILL
FIND A WAY.



"THE VICTIM WAS WOUNDED
COMING OUT OF THE
WOODS.



"JUDGING BY THE WAY HIS TRACKS
ALTER HERE, NOTICE THE **DRAG**
TO HIS GAIT--HE WAS **HOBBLED** ON
THE RIGHT LOWER EXTREMITY.

"OF COURSE, GIVEN THE...
CONDITION OF THE BODY,
WE'LL NEVER KNOW FOR
SURE."



LOOK
AT THE **SPACING**
BETWEEN THE STRIDES
OF WHATEVER THIS THING
IS. NOT ONLY IS IT
FAST...



"IT'S **BIG.**"

WHAT I *DON'T*
GET, SEE...MOST
ANIMALS, WHEN THEIR
PREY IS WOUNDED,
THEY EASE UP.

CONSERVE
THEIR ENERGY FOR
THE KILL.



"NOT THIS
ONE.



"ITS STRIDES
DON'T ALTER,
NOT ONE BIT.



"THIS THING..."

"IT'S RELENTLESS."



ANIMALISTIC--

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS POLICE LINE DO NOT

"--BUT THAT DOESN'T EVEN
BEGIN TO COVER IT.

"ANIMALS FEED; THIS THING
DEVOURS. ALL I CAN TELL
IS THAT IT ISN'T HUMAN, BUT
IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE AN
ANIMAL, EITHER."

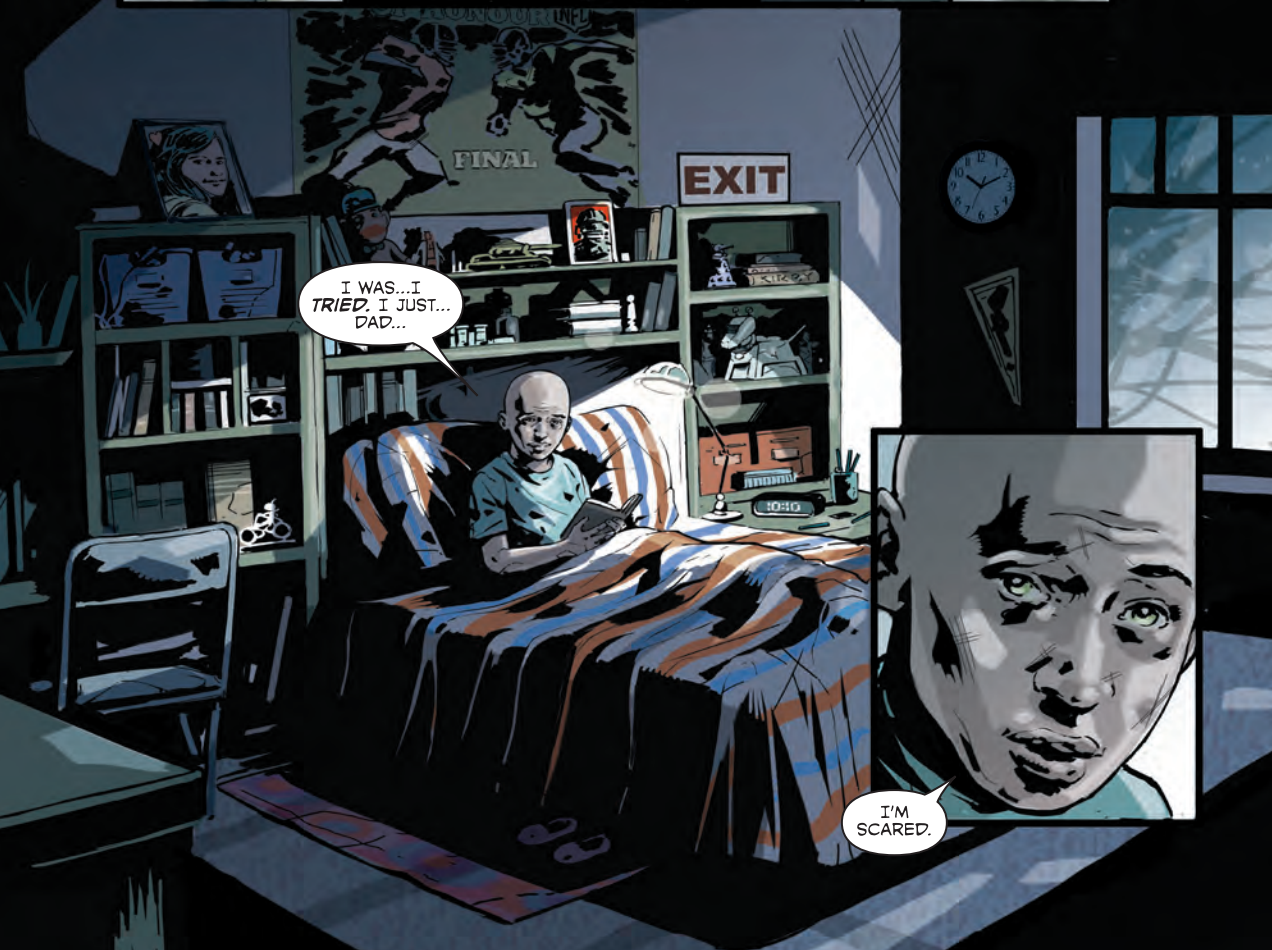
AND THE
BODY...SUFFICE IT TO
SAY, MATCHES THE CONDITIONS
OF THE OTHERS. THE SOON-TO-
COME MISSING PERSONS REPORT
WILL I.D. THIS ONE FASTER
THAN ANY MEDICAL
TESTING.

GOD...
WE NEED
SOMETHING
TO GO ON
HERE.

YOU NEED
SOMETHING TO GO
ON HERE. THE TOWN IS
FREAKING OUT, AND YOU'VE
GOT JACOBSEN IN THE PAPER
AGAIN, THREATENING TO
RUN FOR YOUR
SEAT.

THIS IS
THE FIFTH ATTACK IN
AS MANY MONTHS--IF WE
DON'T SOLVE IT, THERE'LL
BE A BOUNTY ON YOUR
HEAD, NORA, NOT THE
KILLER'S.

WHAT IN
THE HELL IS THIS
THING?





I KNOW,
BUDDY, I
KNOW.

BUT LET
ME TELL YOU
SOMETHING, JAREN.
SOMETHING I'VE NEVER
TOLD ANYONE BEFORE,
EVER.

YOU KNOW
THAT, WHEN I WAS IN
COLLEGE, I HURT MY *KNEE*--
I HURT IT REALLY *BAD*. ONE
OF MY TEAMMATES *FELL* ON
IT THE WRONG WAY AND...
AND THAT'S ALL IT
TOOK.

I *KNEW*, RIGHT THEN AND
THERE, THAT IT WAS *OVER*.
MY FOOTBALL PLAYING, THE
FUTURE I HAD IMAGINED...
EVERYTHING I WORKED
FOR, IT WAS ALL
GONE--AND I WAS
TERRIFIED.

AFTER MY SURGERY, WHEN
I WAS RECOVERING, I WAS
SO...*AFRAID*. THE FEAR OF
NOT KNOWING WHO I WAS,
OF HAVING TO START MY
LIFE OVER, IT ALMOST
MADE ME QUIT ON MYSELF.
THERE WERE MOMENTS--
WHEN I ALMOST
LET GO.

JAREN...*FEAR* WANTS
YOU TO *QUIT*. IT WANTS
YOU TO TAKE THE
EASY WAY.

BUT YOU
CAN'T QUIT, JAREN.
YOU *CAN'T* GIVE UP. IT'S
HARD, I KNOW THIS HAS
BEEN SO HARD FOR YOU,
BUT YOU *HAVE* TO KEEP
FIGHTING. YOU HAVE TO.
I HAVE TO.

CAN
YOU JUST STAY
HERE TONIGHT? I
DON'T WANT YOU
TO *LEAVE*.



JAREN...GOD,
I WISH I *COULD*.
BELIEVE ME, I DON'T
WANT TO GO. BUT I *HAVE*
TO. I HAVE TO GO TO
WORK, JUST FOR A
LITTLE WHILE.

IT'S LATE, AND
YOU NEED YOUR REST.
GET SOME SLEEP, AND
IF YOU NEED *ANYTHING*,
SHAY IS RIGHT
DOWNSTAIRS.

WE'LL HAVE
BREAKFAST TOGETHER IN
THE MORNING, YOU AND
ME. I *PROMISE*.



JAREN SHOULD BE **ASLEEP** BY NOW--HE WAS JUST A LITTLE...HE HAS A LOT GOING ON.

I ONLY NEED TO BE AT WORK FOR A FEW **HOURS**, SO--

ACTUALLY, SINCE YOU BROUGHT THAT UP...

I DROVE BY THE **NORTHERN LIGHTS** FACTORY ON MY WAY HERE. I DIDN'T, LIKE, DRIVE BY IT ON **PURPOSE**; I WAS COMING FROM A FRIEND'S PLACE AND... I'M NOT TRYING TO, I DON'T KNOW, **PRY** OR ANYTHING.

BUT THE PLACE WAS TOTALLY **DARK**. SHUT DOWN. LIKE, **NO ONE** WAS THERE. AND THAT **BAG**... YOU HAVEN'T BEEN GOING TO **WORK**, HAVE YOU?

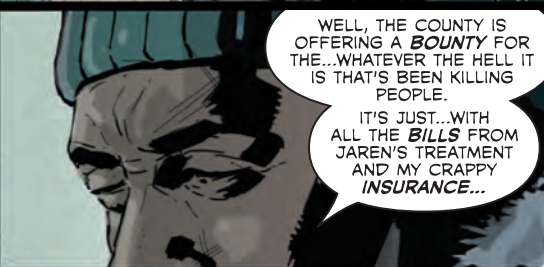


IF YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO **PRY**, SHAY, THEN **DON'T**.

I KNOW, I KNOW, YOU'RE **RIGHT**. I'M SORRY, REALLY. I JUST... I'M WORRIED ABOUT JAREN AND, I DON'T KNOW **WHAT** I WAS THINKING, BUT...



LOOK, SHAY, I'M SORRY. I **KNOW** YOU'RE CONCERNED. THE TRUTH IS THAT...YOU KNOW ABOUT ALL THE **KILLINGS**, RIGHT?



WELL, THE COUNTY IS OFFERING A **BOUNTY** FOR THE...WHATEVER THE HELL IT IS THAT'S BEEN KILLING PEOPLE.

IT'S JUST...WITH ALL THE **BILLS** FROM JAREN'S TREATMENT AND MY CRAPPY **INSURANCE**...



I **NEED** THE MONEY.

LANEY...I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR A LECTURE ON HOW **CRAZY** AND **DANGEROUS** WHAT YOU'RE DOING IS.

BUT, **ASIDE** FROM WHAT'S KILLING THESE PEOPLE, THE WOODS ARE GOING TO BE **CRAWLING** WITH **ARMED JACKASSES** LOOKING TO CASH IN.

SO, JUST... BE CAREFUL, PLEASE.

I WILL. YOU TAKE CARE OF JAREN.

I'LL BE BACK SOON.





crik





DAMN
IT.



WHERE
ARE
YOU?!

WHERE?!





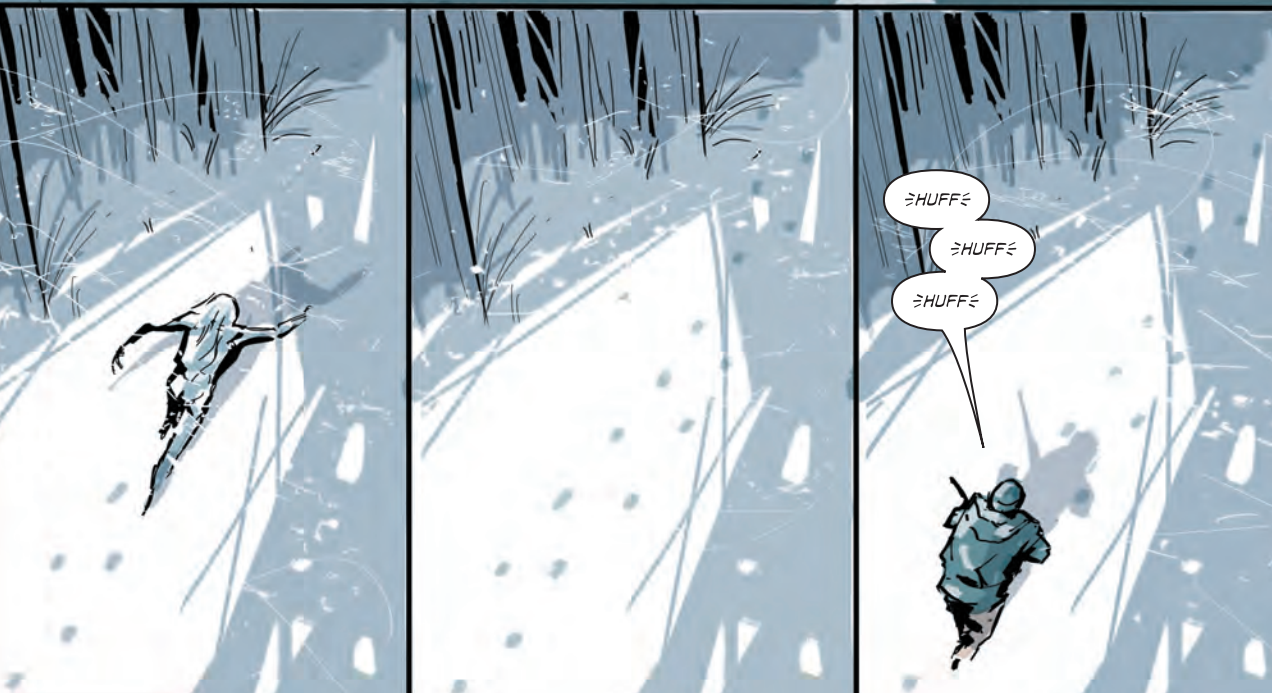
UGGHHHH...

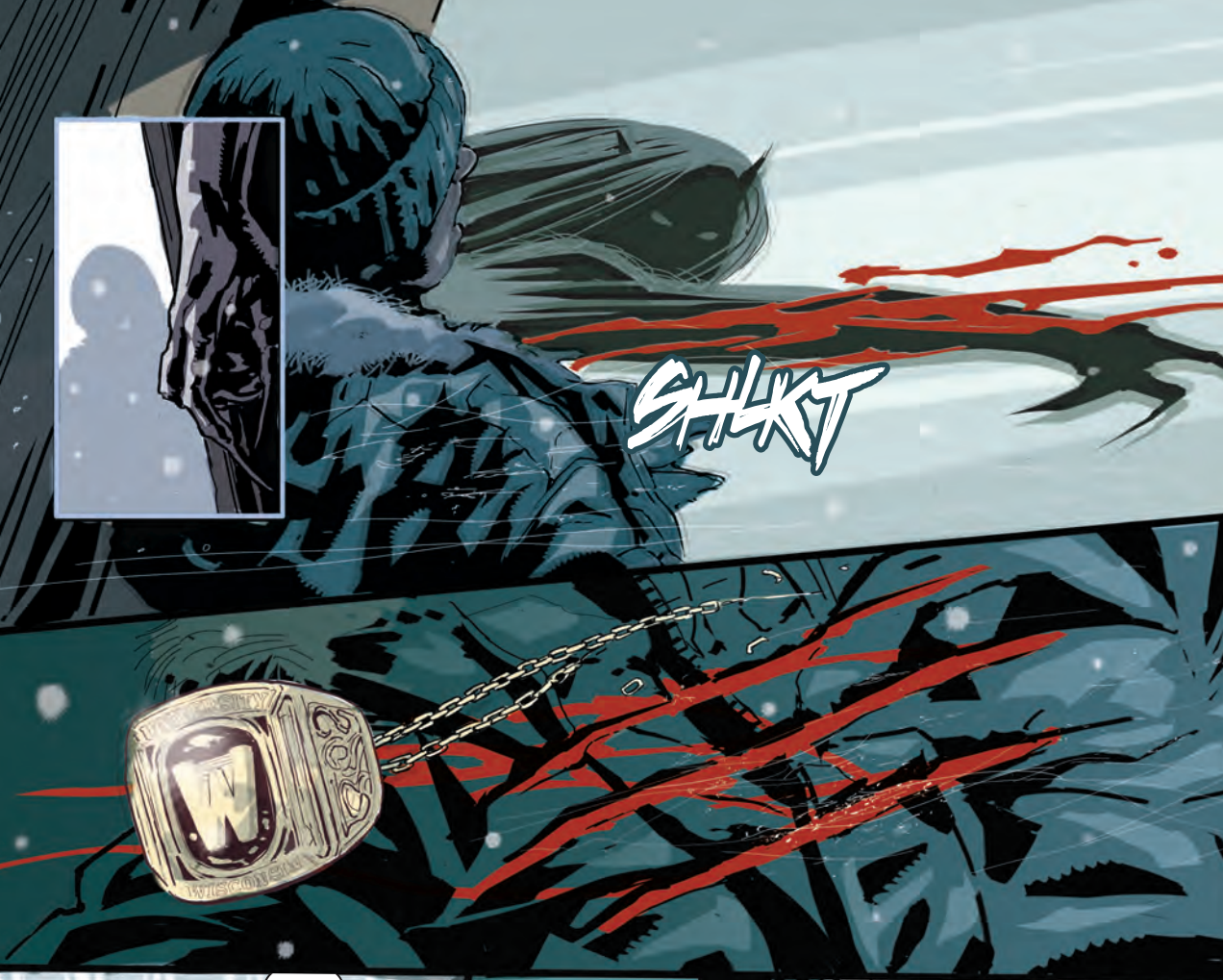
OH MY GOD.





NO,
NO!







30 DAYS until the next phase...