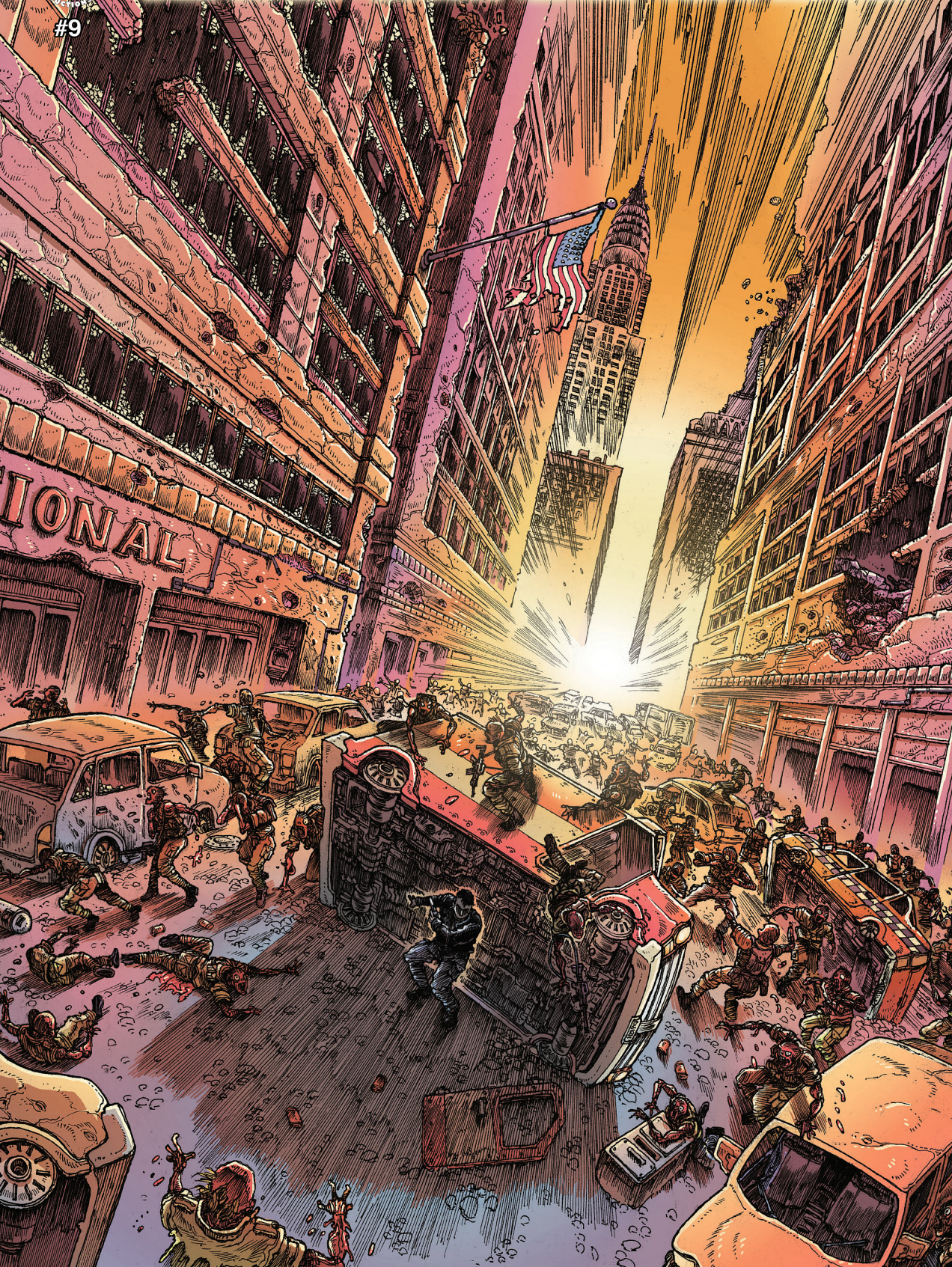




#9

ECLIPSE

ZACK KAPLAN • GIOVANNI TIMPANO • FLAVIO DISPENZA



Image

TOP GUN
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#9

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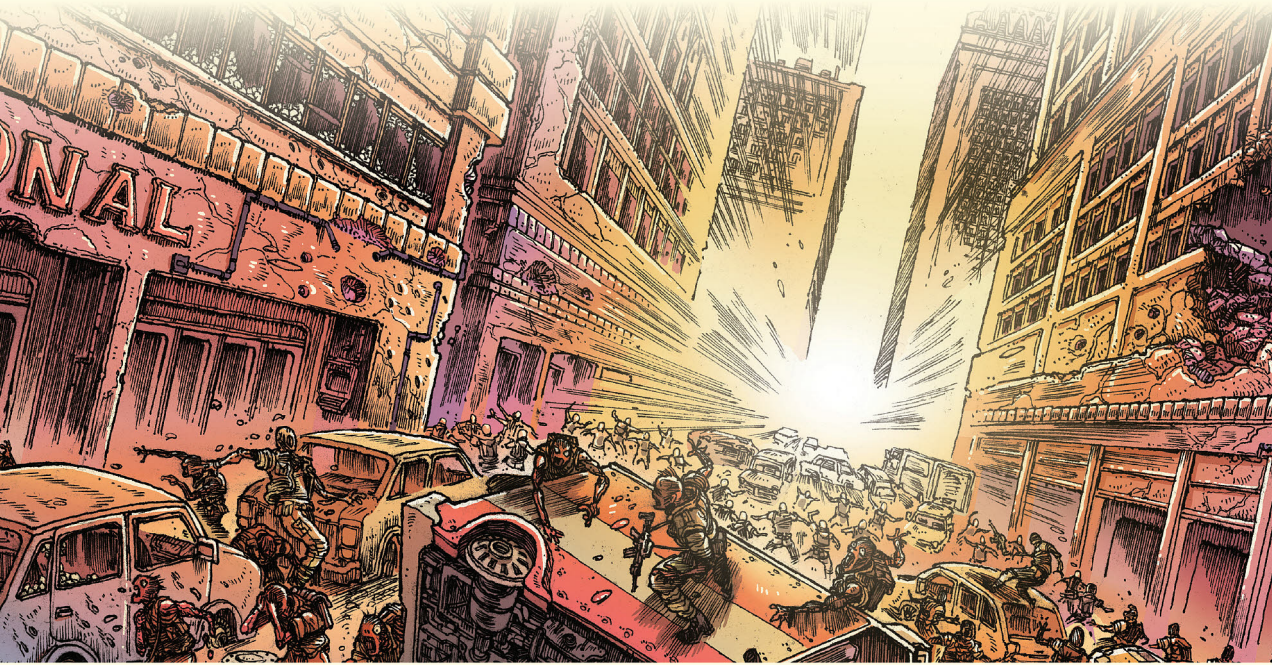
Timpano 2008



Chris 2008

ECLIPSE™

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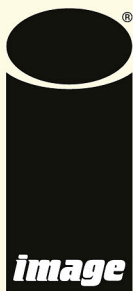


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**NINE YEARS
AFTER THE FLARE.**

1 YEAR AGO.





HEY,
STOP!



STOP
OR WE'LL
SHOOT.



HE'S NOT
BURNING.

WHERE DID
YOU COME
FROM?



WHO ARE
YOU?
SPEAK,
DAMN
IT!



I CAME
FROM FAR
AWAY.

I AM THE
CURE TO THE
SUNLIGHT.

NOW
TAKE ME
INSIDE.

PRESENT DAY.

THEY'VE HUNTED FOR A YEAR NOW.

IN THIS WORLD, SUNLIGHT ISN'T THE ONLY THING THAT KILLS.



BUT SUNLIGHT DOESN'T HAVE TO KILL.



UNFORTUNATELY, THIS CITY IS TOO...



WHERE DID HE GO?

...AFRAID.

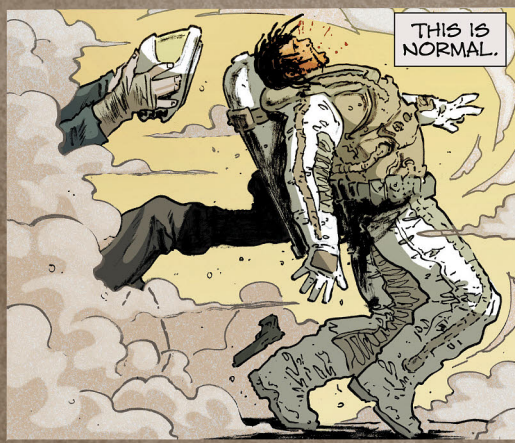
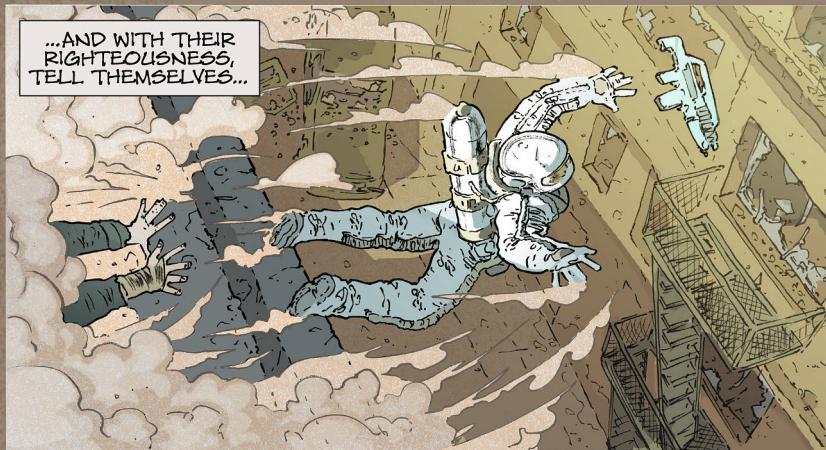
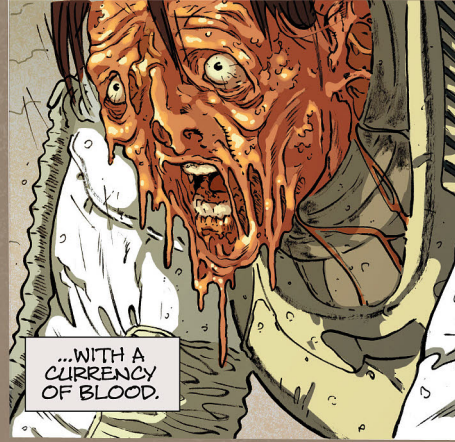
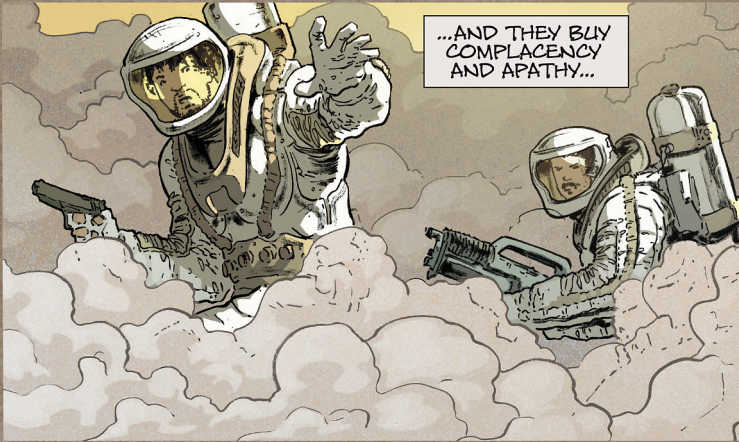


THIS WAY, OVER HERE.

HE'S CORNERED. WE GOT HIM.



AFRAID OF HOPE.



BUT I KNOW IT'S NOT NORMAL.

AN OLD FRIEND ONCE TOLD ME...

...WHEN YOU SEE DARKNESS...

...YOU MUST EMBRACE IT.

SO I EMBRACE IT.

I STILL HAVE HOPE FOR THIS CURE INSIDE ME.

YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD
MATT NEWMAN
5-14

BUT I'VE LOST ALL HOPE FOR THIS DARK CITY.

SO KIND OF YOU TO JOIN US, NICHOLAS.

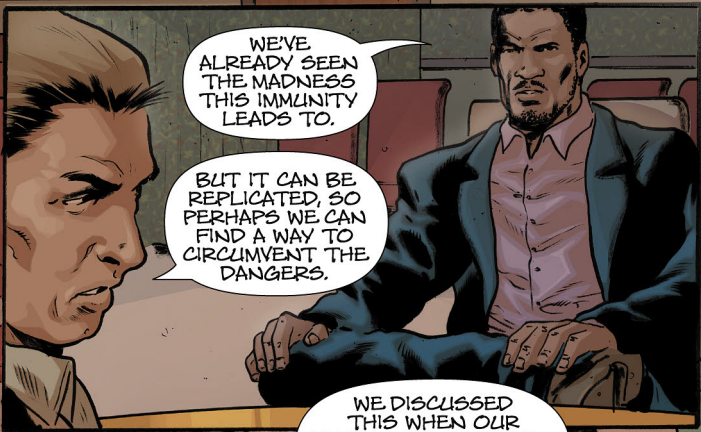
APOLOGIES, MR. VAN GORN, AND GENTLEMEN...

...BUT I JUST CAME FROM THE POLICE. THERE WAS ANOTHER ATTACK.

FOUR DEAD ICEMEN, AND OUR FRIEND STILL ELUDES US.

IT'S NO CONCERN, AS LONG AS UNDERGROUND INFORMANTS CONTINUE TO FEED US TIPS--

HE'S USING YOUR INFORMANTS AGAINST YOU. EVERY TIME YOU SEND MEN, HE'S WAITING. I SAY IT'S TIME WE MAKE A DEAL.



WE'VE ALREADY SEEN THE MADNESS THIS IMMUNITY LEADS TO.

BUT IT CAN BE REPLICATED, SO PERHAPS WE CAN FIND A WAY TO CIRCUMVENT THE DANGERS.

WE DISCUSSED THIS WHEN OUR VISITOR ARRIVED. EVEN STABLE, THIS IMMUNITY WILL DISRUPT EVERYTHING WE'VE BUILT.



YOUR DAUGHTER REMAINS WITH THE UNDERGROUND.

IF BRIBES AND BOUNTIES AREN'T CONVINCING THESE LOWLIFES TO HELP US FIND THE LAST ALBINO...

...THEN MAYBE YOUR DAUGHTER CAN CONVINCE THEM.

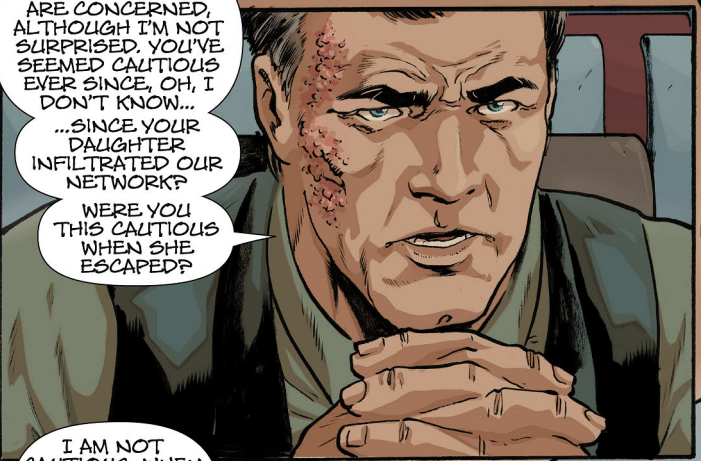
THAT IS, IF YOU'RE CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH HER...WITHOUT HESITATION.



NICHOLAS, I UNDERSTAND YOU ARE CONCERNED, ALTHOUGH I'M NOT SURPRISED. YOU'VE SEEMED CAUTIOUS EVER SINCE, OH, I DON'T KNOW...

...SINCE YOUR DAUGHTER INFILTRATED OUR NETWORK?

WERE YOU THIS CAUTIOUS WHEN SHE ESCAPED?

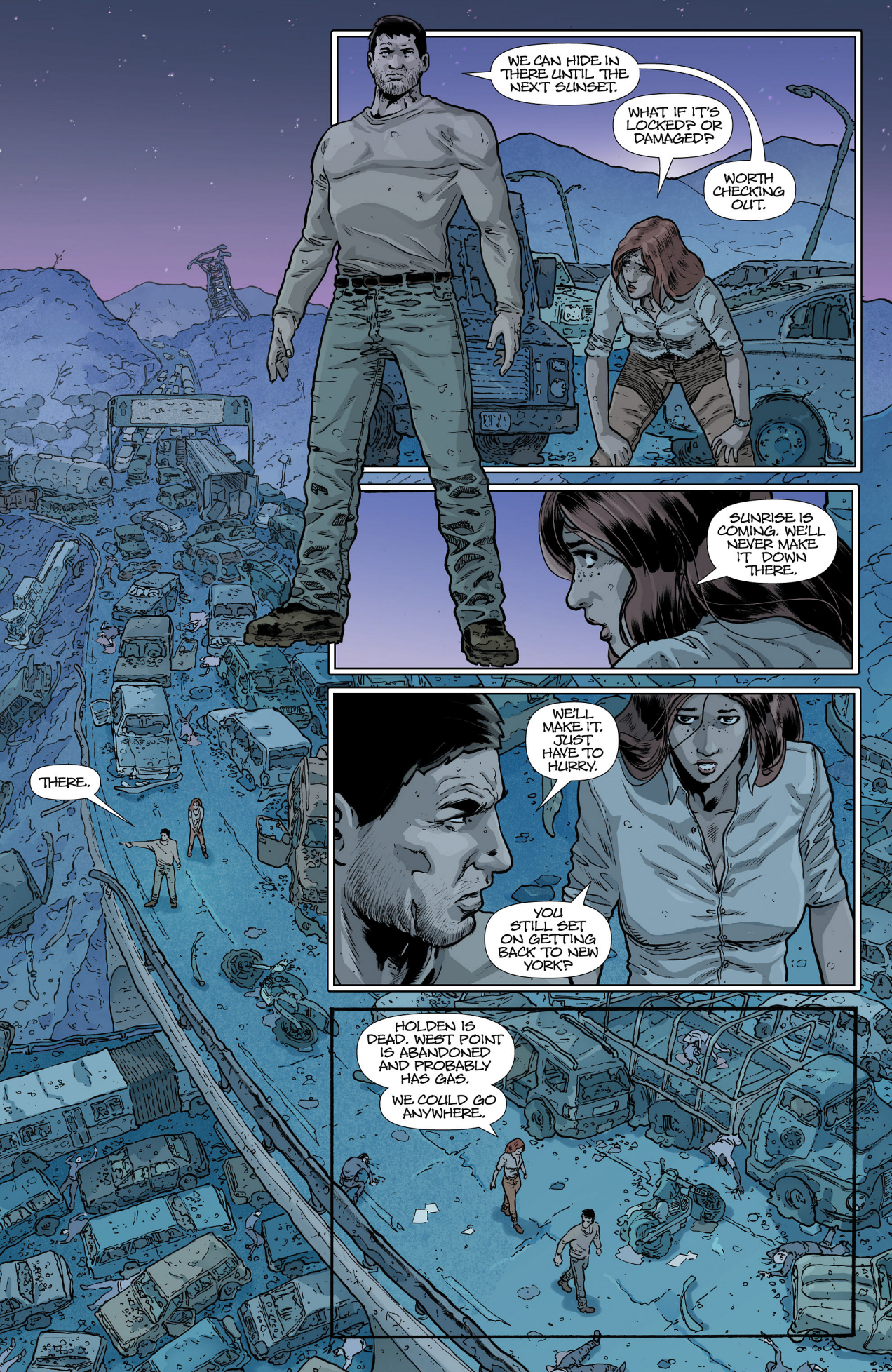


I AM NOT CAUTIOUS. WHEN IT WAS TIME TO ELIMINATE THE OTHER ALBINOS, I DID SO WITHOUT HESITATION.



AND THIS MAN MUST BE ELIMINATED, TOO. WE CAN ALL AGREE TO THAT.





WE CAN HIDE IN THERE UNTIL THE NEXT SUNSET.

WHAT IF IT'S LOCKED OR DAMAGED?

WORTH CHECKING OUT.

SUNRISE IS COMING. WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT DOWN THERE.

THERE.

WE'LL MAKE IT. JUST HAVE TO HURRY.

YOU STILL SET ON GETTING BACK TO NEW YORK?

HOLDEN IS DEAD. WEST POINT IS ABANDONED AND PROBABLY HAS GAS.

WE COULD GO ANYWHERE.



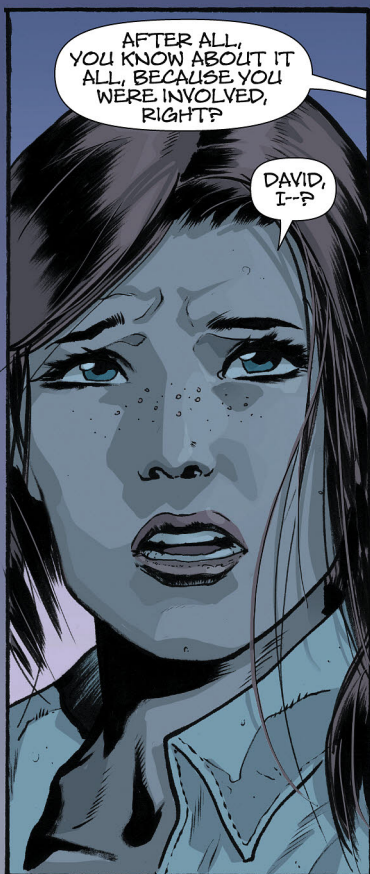
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT IN THAT AWFUL CITY.

NO MORE CURE.

SOLARITY KILLED BOTH ALBINOS.

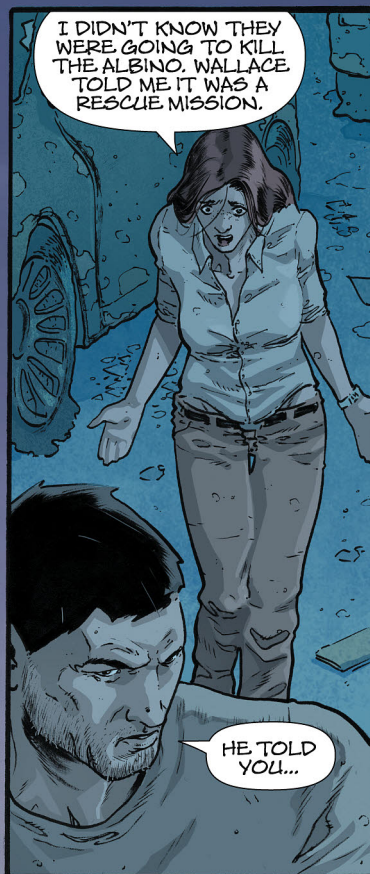
PROBABLY KILLED THE SCIENTIST BY NOW.

AND MIGHT TRY TO KILL YOU TOO, HUH?



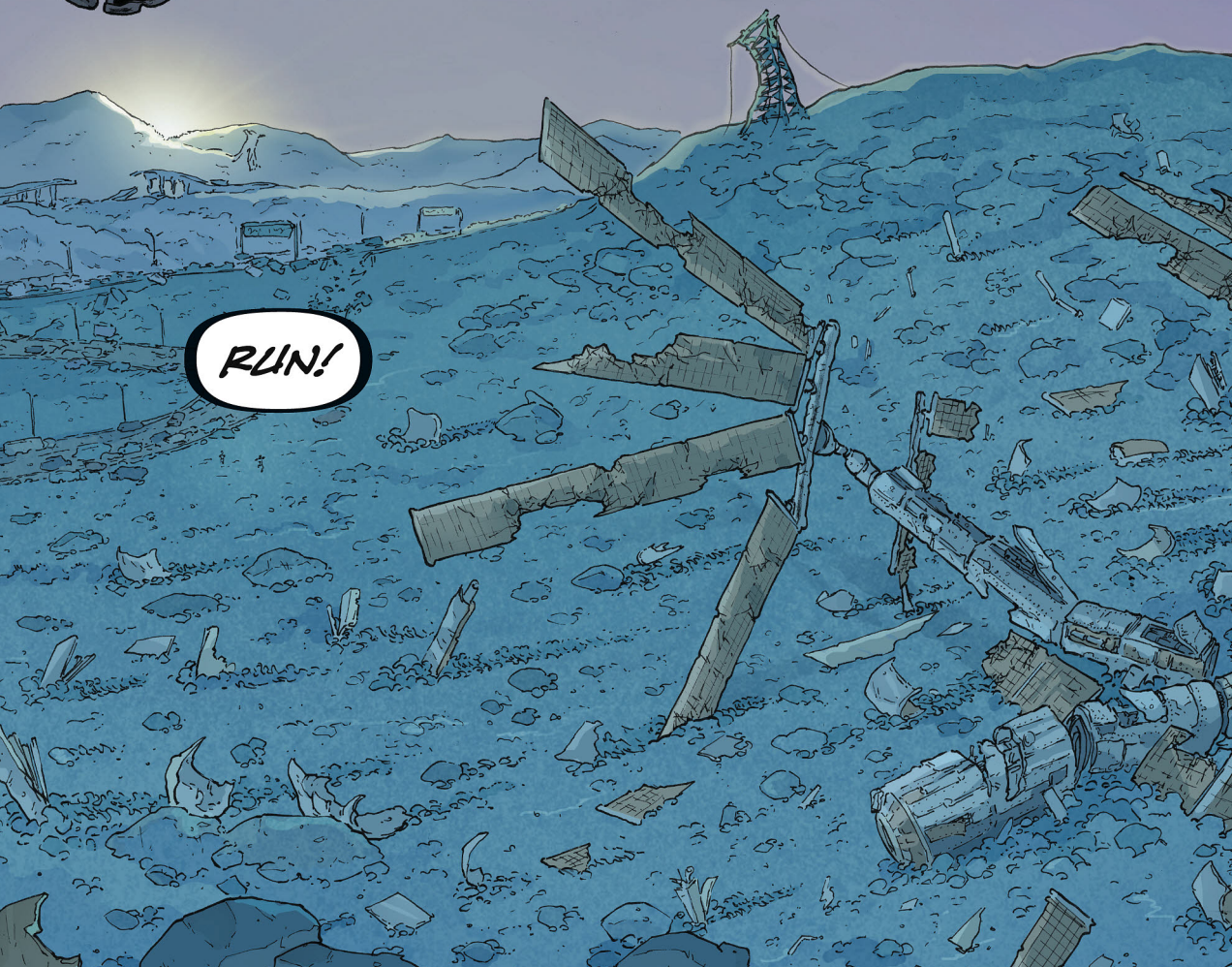
AFTER ALL, YOU KNOW ABOUT IT ALL, BECAUSE YOU WERE INVOLVED, RIGHT?

DAVID, I--?

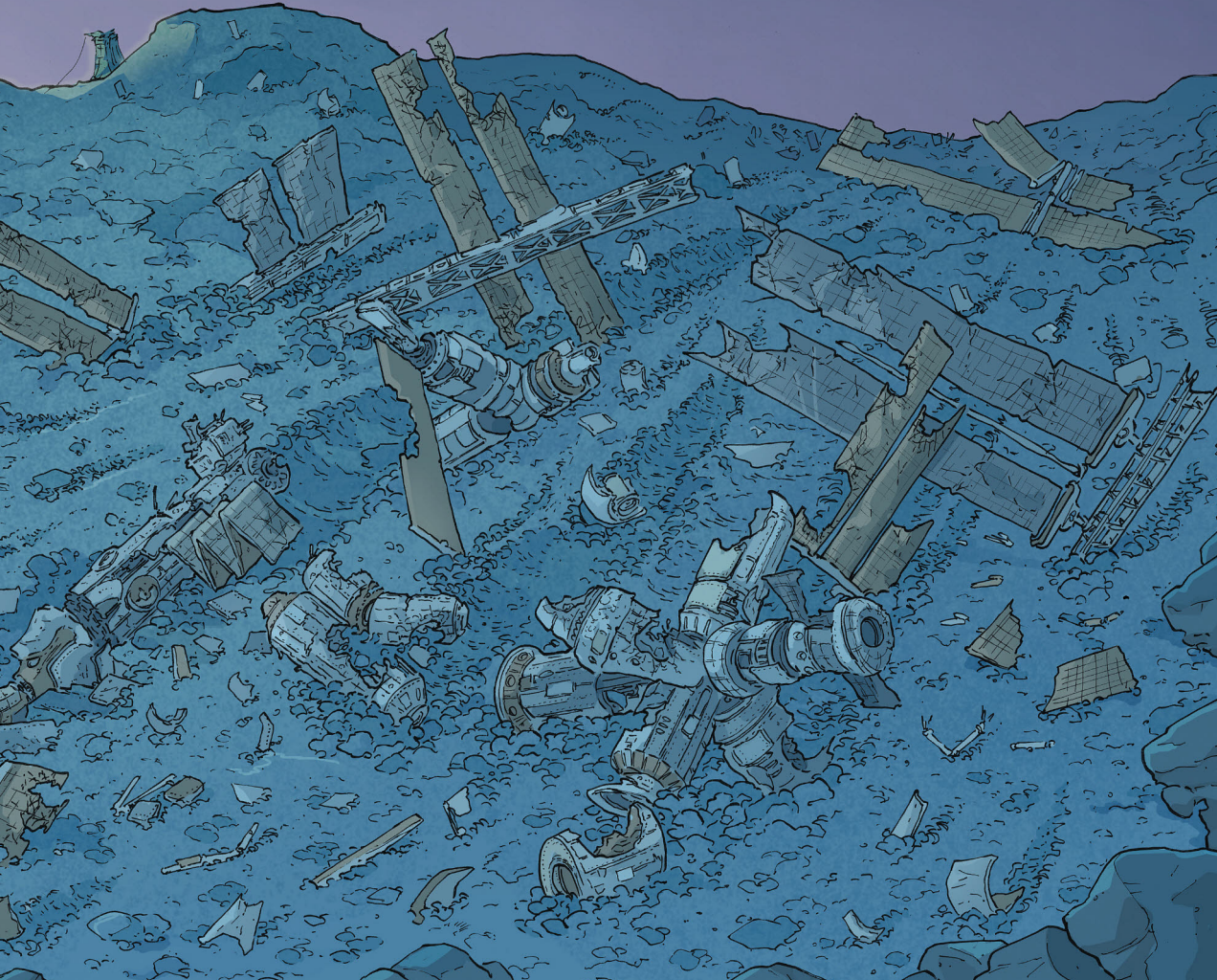
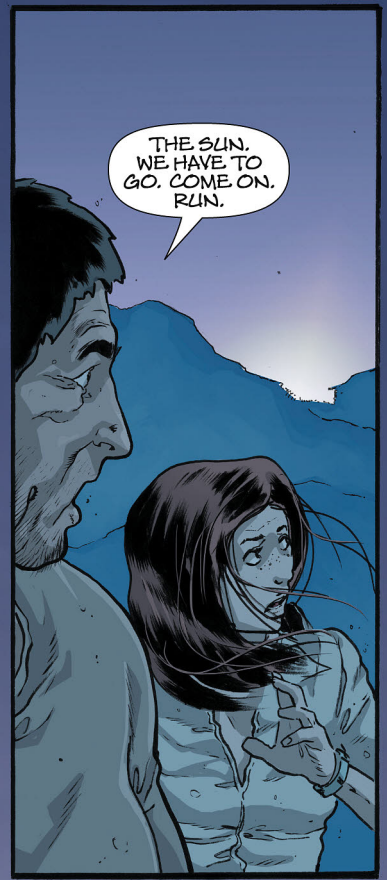
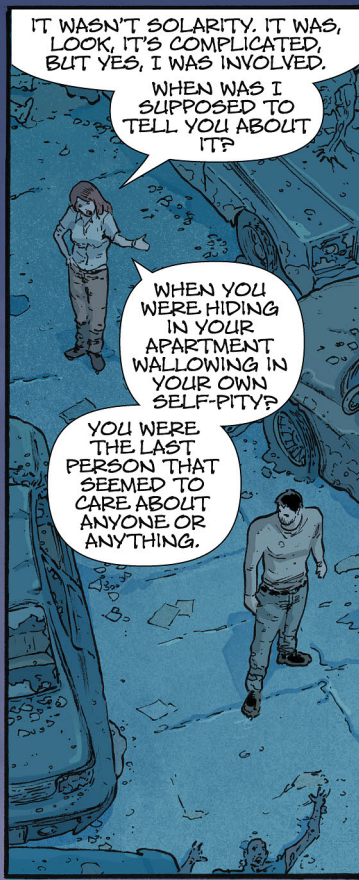


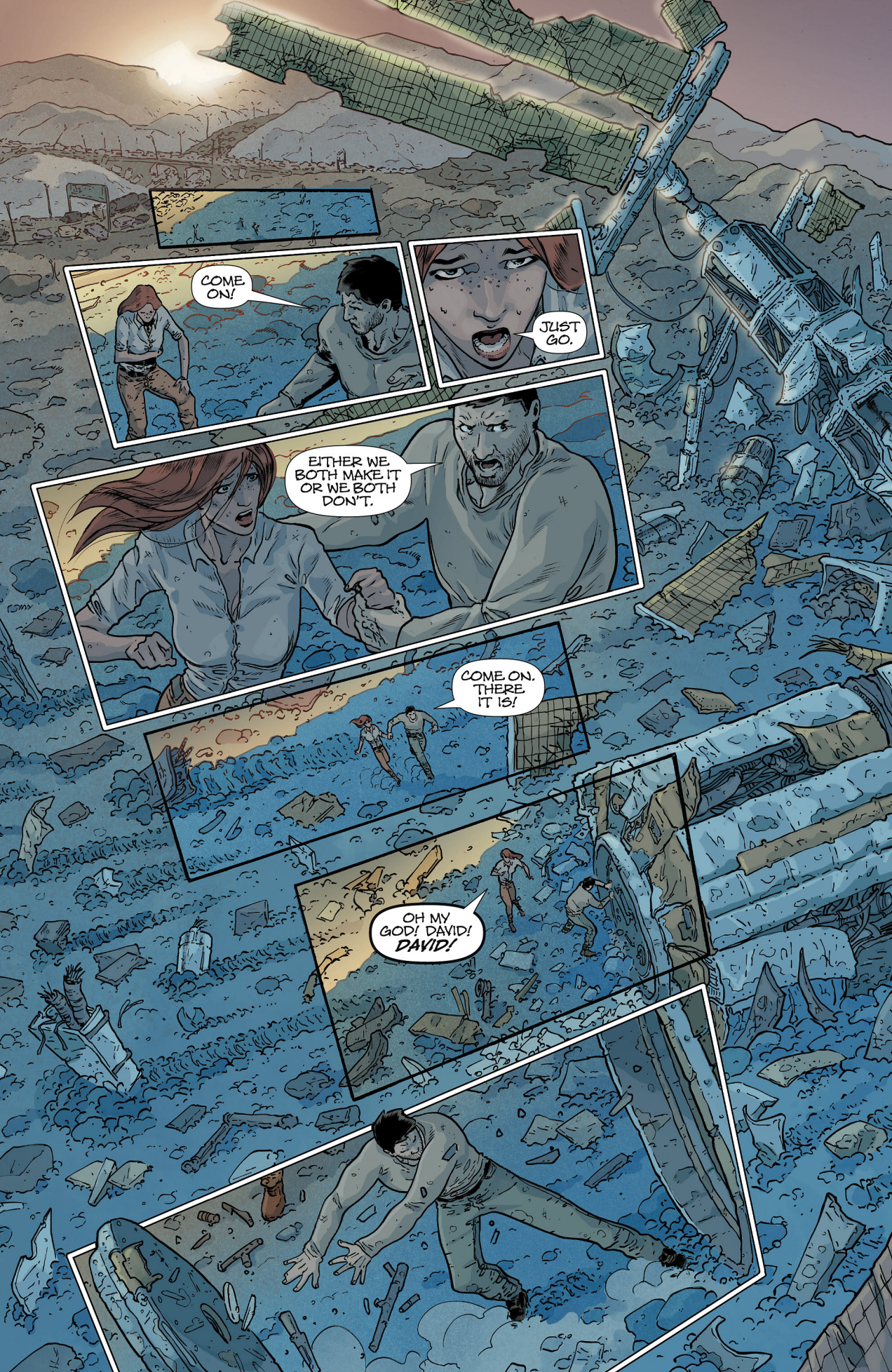
I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE GOING TO KILL THE ALBINO. WALLACE TOLD ME IT WAS A RESCUE MISSION.

HE TOLD YOU...



RUN!





COME ON!

JUST GO.

EITHER WE BOTH MAKE IT OR WE BOTH DON'T.

COME ON, THERE IT IS!

OH MY GOD! DAVID! DAVID!



I GOT YOU.
WE'RE SAFE
IN--

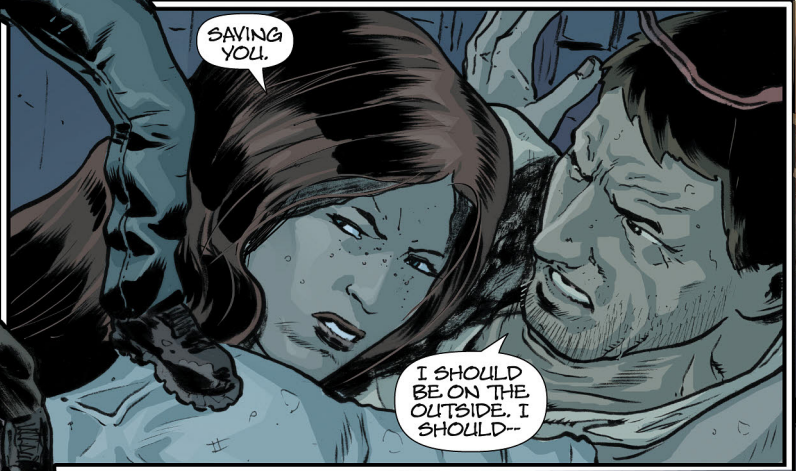
--HERE.

IT'S
COMING
IN HERE,
TOO.



GET BACK.

WHAT THE HELL YOU DOING?



SAVING YOU.

I SHOULD BE ON THE OUTSIDE. I SHOULD--

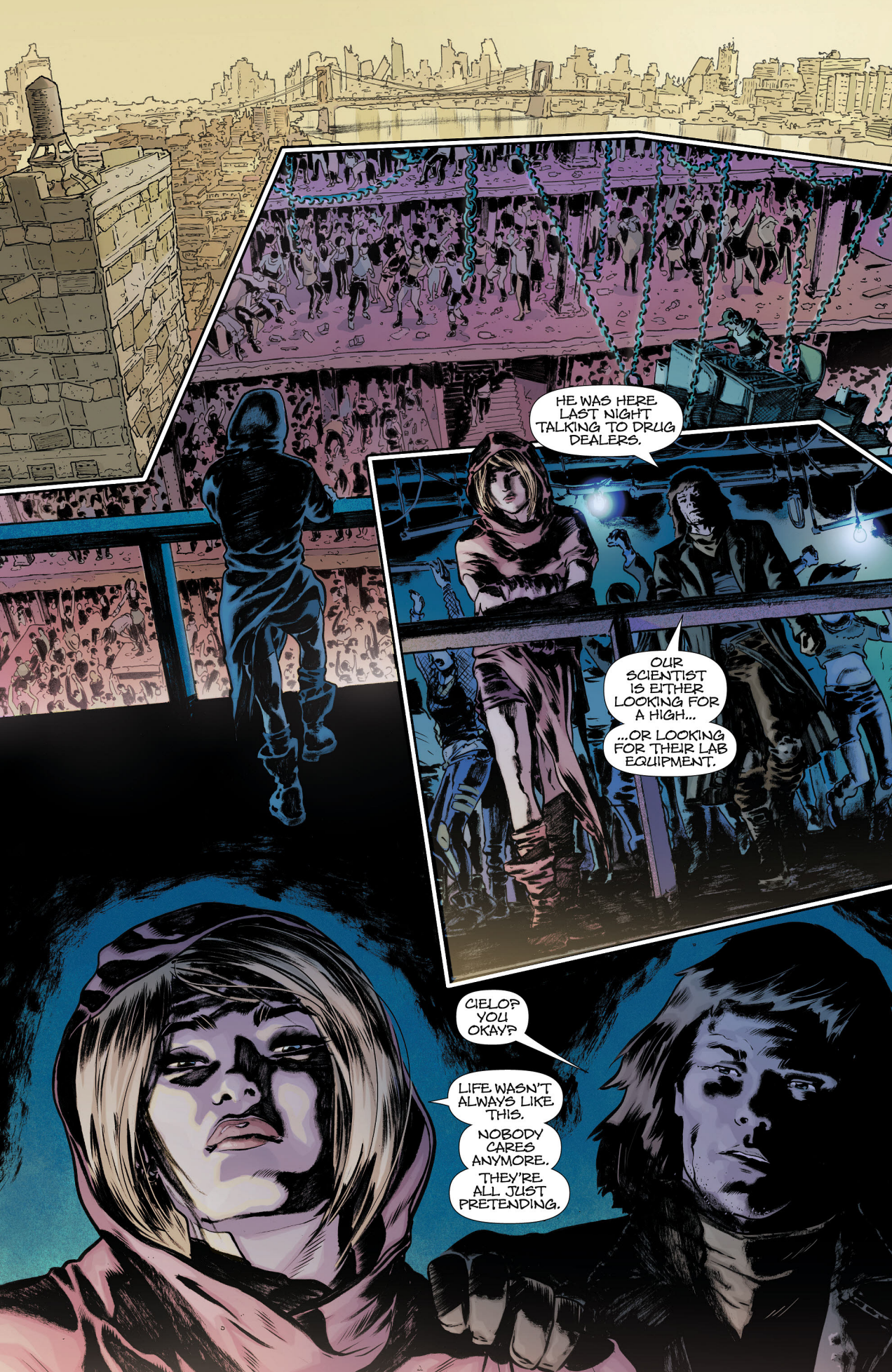


YOU'RE TOO BIG. YOU SAVED ME, I SAVED YOU.

WE'RE EVEN.



GREAT. THANKS FOR SAVING US.



HE WAS HERE
LAST NIGHT
TALKING TO DRUG
DEALERS.

OUR
SCIENTIST
IS EITHER
LOOKING FOR
A HIGH...
...OR LOOKING
FOR THEIR LAB
EQUIPMENT.

CIELOP
YOU
OKAY?

LIFE WASN'T
ALWAYS LIKE
THIS.
NOBODY
CARES
ANYMORE.
THEY'RE
ALL JUST
PRETENDING.



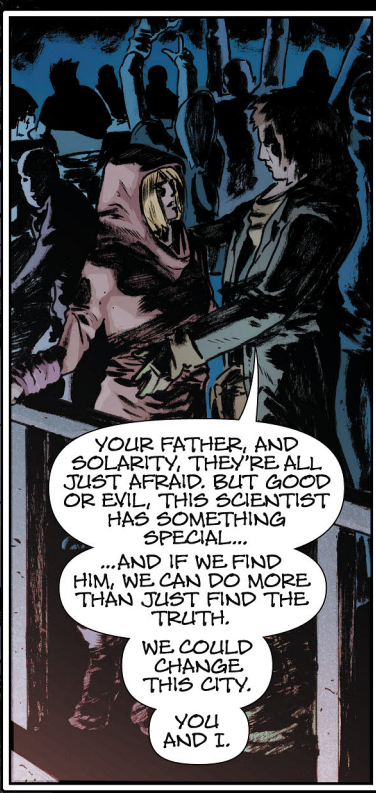
JUST LIKE I USED TO.



YOU'RE NOT PRETENDING ANYMORE.

I JUST WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH.

IS THAT ALL?



YOUR FATHER, AND SOLARITY, THEY'RE ALL JUST AFRAID. BUT GOOD OR EVIL, THIS SCIENTIST HAS SOMETHING SPECIAL...

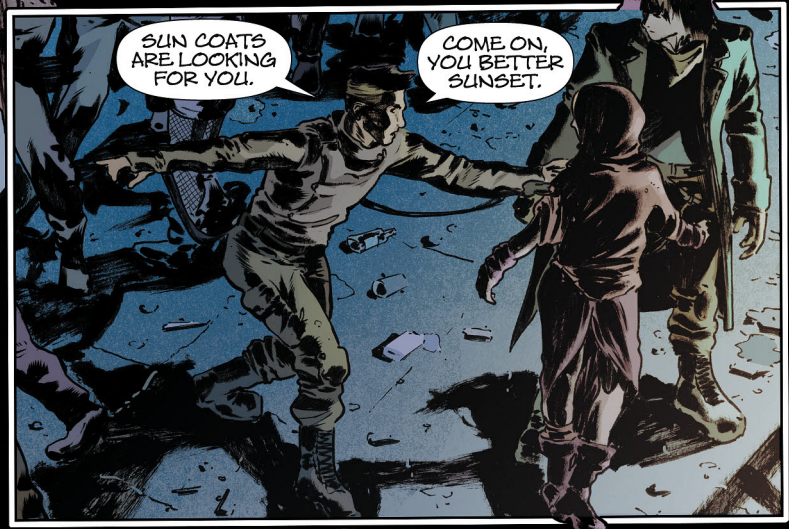
...AND IF WE FIND HIM, WE CAN DO MORE THAN JUST FIND THE TRUTH.

WE COULD CHANGE THIS CITY.

YOU AND I.



YOU PROMISE?



SUN COATS ARE LOOKING FOR YOU.

COME ON, YOU BETTER SUNSET.



SORRY, KIDS, THEY THREATENED TO SHUT US DOWN.

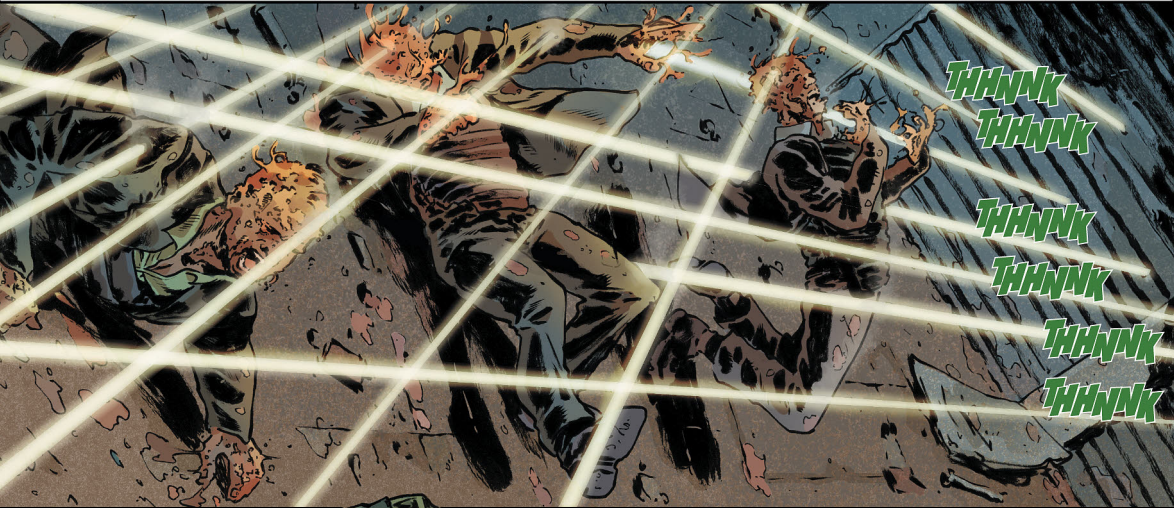
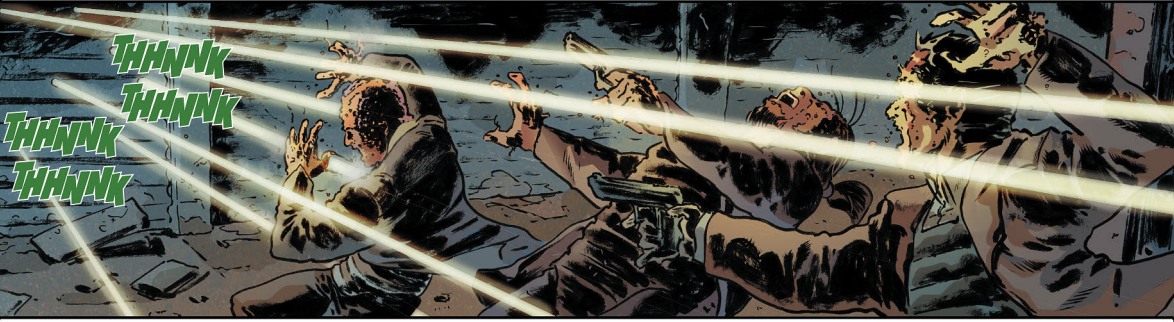
GOOD DAY, CAPTAIN EVERLY.

ACTUALLY, IT'S MAJOR EVERLY, NOW.
MAJOR OF THE ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORISM DIVISION.



DON'T WORRY, WE JUST WANT TO TALK.

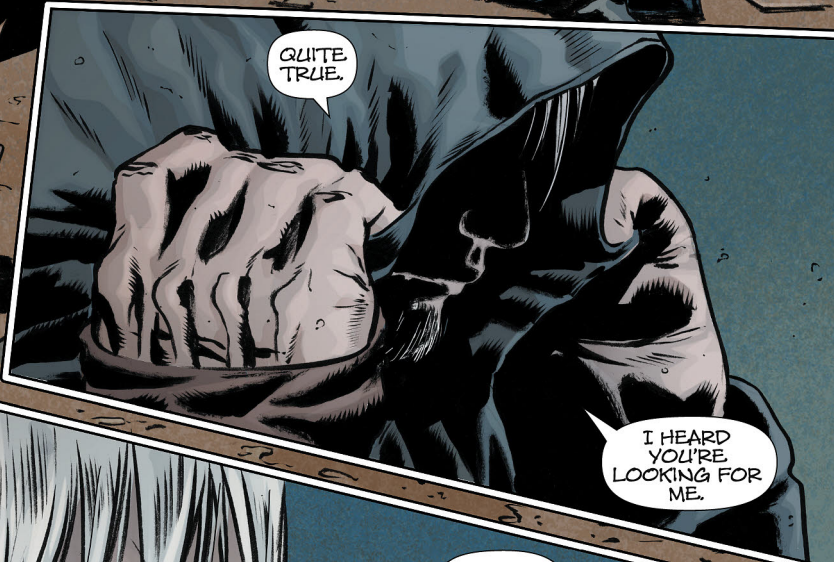






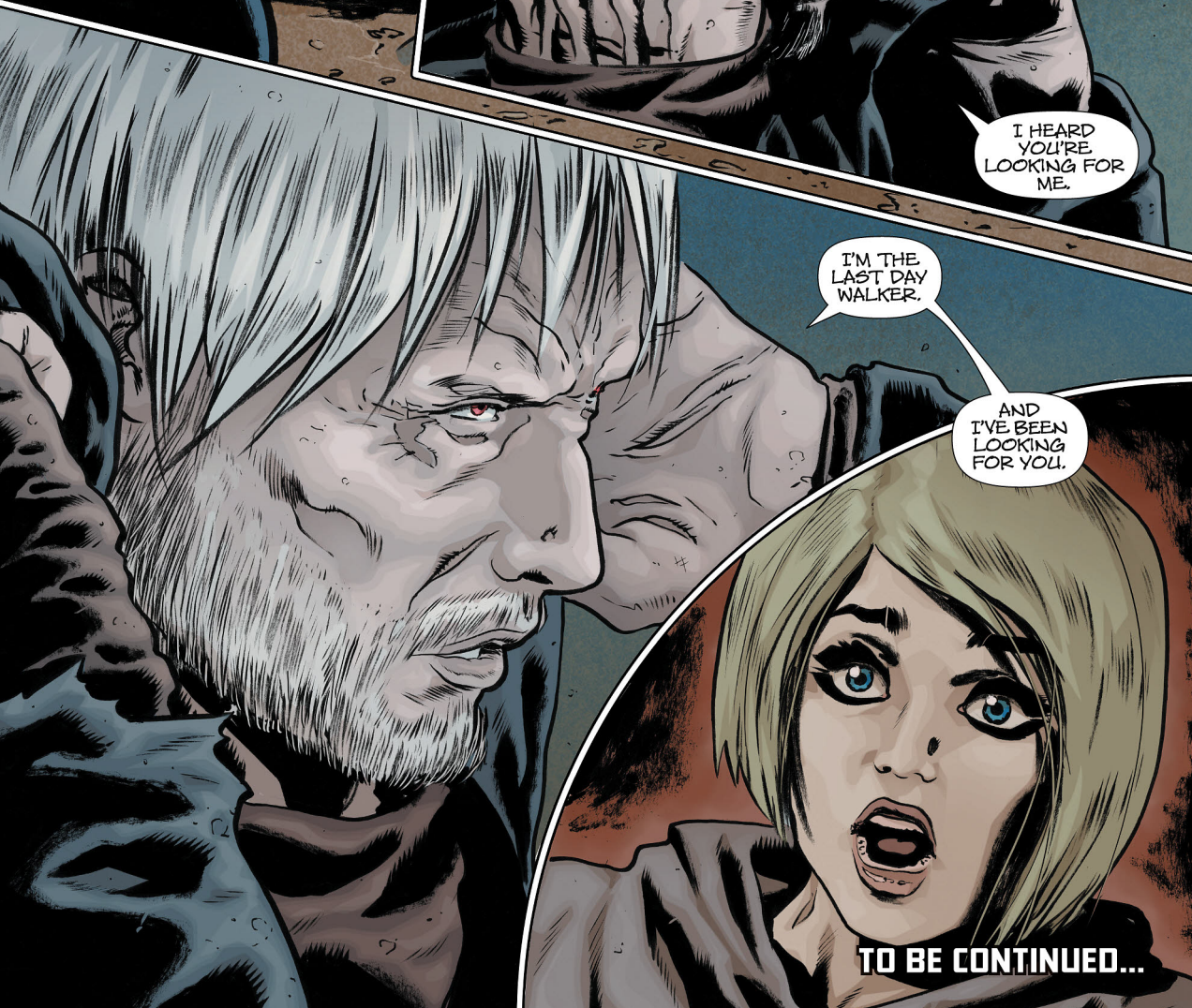
WHAT ABOUT THE MAJOR?

LET HIM LIVE.
LEAVE HIM.
I DON'T THINK OUR NEW FRIEND IS HERE FOR THE MAJOR.



QUITE TRUE.

I HEARD YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ME.



I'M THE LAST DAY WALKER.

AND I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.

TO BE CONTINUED...



#10

ECLIPSE™

ZACK KAPLAN • GIOVANNI TIMPANO • FLAVIO DISPENZA
NEXT ISSUE



Throughout our series, we've opened up our process and tried to share a look into the making of this comic. Whether it was a discussion of the art process or the story crafting, we've had a great time sharing a bit more into what goes into ECLIPSE.

As our series returned, I found myself really delving into these characters more than ever. These characters had been tested through the first two arcs, and their spirits were deepening, as anyone does when truly tested. While my stories often center around a large world and a creative hook, I spend a tremendous amount of time analyzing my characters, exploring their pasts and their points of view. The best thing I could do is find the hardest, most painful ways to challenge these characters, to test them to either become their best or reveal their worst, or perhaps both.

ECLIPSE plays with themes of hope in the face of tragedy, of whether to connect or survive, and the principle battles of human nature. But for me, what's been most exciting in the series, has been the opportunity to maintain a complex cast of characters, who face dilemmas no person would want to make, characters who are capable of being right and wrong at the same time. They are very real to me. So I thought I would share some of my thoughts on our key characters and where we currently find them at the beginning of this next chapter in ECLIPSE.

A GLIMPSE INTO THE PROCESS BEHIND

ECLIPSE

DAVID "BAX" BAXTER

Heroes have a sense of responsibility to help others in times of challenge and danger. As conflict emerges, they are empowered to rise to the occasion. So when tragedy strikes beyond their control, it shakes up everything they are.

David Baxter was a hero. As a former firefighter, he was the type that ran into burning buildings to help others. But ten years ago, when the Solar Flare cataclysmically changed the world, he rose to the occasion and tried to help those in need, specifically the Mayor, and fate took his family away from him, burning them alive. He was unable to help them, and he couldn't process or understand how his desire to help others and do good could be repaid with tragedy.

So he retreated and became a recluse. He used reasonable judgment against the city's new status quo of corruption and apathy, and determined strangers were no longer worth saving, and as long as he didn't get close to anyone, he'd never have to face the possibility of tragedy beyond his control.

The emergence of the sunlight killer forced Bax to interact with Cielo, a girl that would be the same age as his daughter, and he couldn't help but want to save her again. After the experience, he toys with the idea of helping the city in some way, but when faced with similar dilemmas of civic duty vs personal relationship, he finds it easier to help those he cares about. It's easy to dismiss the city's needs or the big picture and to hide from any real responsibility with judgments and righteous rationalizations. The last thing he wants is to try to serve the greater good again.

Bax finds himself at war between his true nature as a hero and his deepest fear: that he might try to help others and fail, and that his actions may lead to their pain or death once again, and that perhaps, all of his good intentions are simply wrong, and he's nothing more than a failed hero.



ROSE "CIELO" BRANDT

The princess in the castle knows not of the pain of peasants. She dances and enjoys the frivolity of her whims, ignorant of the world and its pain. The worst thing that could happen to her is to learn that the world is hard and cruel and complicated.

Solar tycoon Nick Brandt purposely sheltered Cielo to protect her, and as long as he maintained control over the city, her adolescent rebellion of day clubs seemed manageable. But when the sunlight killer threatened Cielo, she learned that the world is full of power struggles, that innocent people are often caught in the middle, and that she had been more than ignorant to it; she had been complicit.

The rebel thinks not of what will come next, only of destroying the thing today. Cielo has become a rebel of sorts, and the easiest choice for her now is to challenge everything her father represents and attack everything he wants. The very idea that he might try to destroy a cure of deadly sunlight must mean it is a worthy effort. The very fact that her father and his cohorts are in power while those suffer must mean they are solely responsible and must be overthrown.

Cielo pretends she wants the truth because she wants to understand as much as possible, for fear she might be ignorant to more of the world's pain. But she hides from complicated choices in favor of a world point of view of merely good and evil, in short, the black and white simplicity of childhood.

Her deepest fear is that she might have to cause others pain again, that she might lose her ideals altogether, that she might become her father. So she gravitates towards the rebellious and impulsive Underground lieutenant, Parker, and she becomes the rebel princess, ready to tear down her father's system in the hopes it will absolve her of her guilt and restore her faith in ideals of equity, justice and decency. Unfortunately, this is a complicated world and ideals alone will not protect one from challenges.



NICK BRANDT

A clever mind is a terrible curse. Intelligence forces you to evaluate every option, consider every repercussion and in a purely objective cost-benefit analysis, make the best choice for the most people, regardless of the sacrifice. When combined with the desire to protect others, the smartest man will justify immoral actions for the greater good, and sometimes, that is exactly who we want making our decisions.

Nick never intended to rule a city. He was a firefighter and an electrical engineer, an odd combination of masculine camaraderie and problem-solving. But he had a penchant for charming others while seeing the smartest path forward. When the Flare hit, he rose to the opportunities not out of greed, but a genuine desire to help. But for Nick Brandt, his true duty was to the city, and anyone who prevented him from protecting resources, power or security, was someone to be dealt with.

A strategist at heart, Nick's only desire is to eliminate all threats to New York City, and threats are dealt with in order of severity, meaning deadly sunlight actually becomes rather manageable when compared with rival governments, murderous gangs or any power-hungry foes. And so, when a resource like sunlight immunity appears, a true strategist doesn't see a solution to a minor problem, but rather the inability to control such a risky and mysterious new element. It's a threat to the status quo and threats are dealt with.

The worst thing that could happen to Nick Brandt is that he cannot trust his own strategic brilliance and he inadvertently puts the city in danger. All of his deals and compromises have only placated threats in the short term, but he sees only more threats, and now that his own daughter has lined up against him, he will have to face the greatest question: will he be willing to sacrifice his own daughter in order to regain control? And moreso, can one ever really eliminate all of the threats and have true control in a world where sunlight is deadly and there is always a new threat on the horizon?



DR. VALERIE MCHOME

Some knights fight dragons with swords. Some fight with armies. Some fight with science. Dr. Valerie McHome was that kind of knight. She was the little girl who heard about cancer and said I'll find a cure. A scientist quickly learns just how much control we have over our physiology and chemistry, and when you have no apprehension about messing with those factors, anything seems possible.

From the moment the Flare hit, Valerie's dragon was always the sun, and she intended to rectify this new horrible reality. She was actually involved early on with scientific cooperatives across the planet that studied this new deadly sunlight and hoped for a cure. But when you face the solar apocalypse, short-term necessities such as food and water and security present more important challenges. Those idealist efforts of a cure faded away, leaving Valerie embittered and disillusioned.

The hardest thing for this kind of hero is to be told you can't join the fight, and that you have Iceman tanks to fix and food to engineer. However, there were all sorts of demands for a Biochemist in this new world, and so Valerie quickly found herself at Solarity working in many areas that seemed mundane to her: food, energy and Icemen technology. She felt that she had a special gift as a biochemist, and her talents were being wasted, while this true enemy of deadly sunlight went ignored."

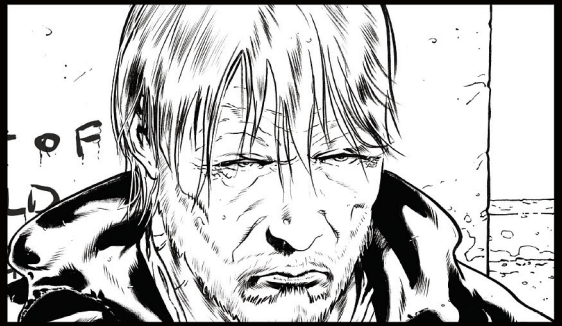
When the Scientist with sunlight immunity arrived, a secret effort began to replicate his ability, and Valerie soon found a chance to work on a cure again, and so, she got involved. But that effort has been abandoned, and she's tormented by the knowledge that there is a possibility to slay that dragon.

If she won't be given a sword and allowed to fight, she could still find fulfillment with another romantic concept: love. But the dragon still lives, and a cure has already presented itself, and so this knight will have to decide just what role she'll play, whether she'll escape seeking contentment or challenge everyone who dares stop her from her personal fight to cure the deadly sun.



THE SCIENTIST aka THE LAST ALBINO

Every villain is the hero of his or her own story. And sometimes a villain is only a villain because they stand opposite our heroes. Not much is known about our mysterious Scientist's past, but we learn in this issue that he came to New York City with a cure to deadly sunlight in his body, and somehow a year later, he has found himself hunted by the solar tycoons. And he's learned his lesson.



Without giving too much away, our Scientist actually sees himself as a savior. After all, through some events unbeknownst to us, he has received or developed a cure to deadly sunlight. The deadly sun seems to be the primary foe against our once civilized way of life, so why wouldn't we want to be saved from it? That's his goal.

Saviors begin with an offer of salvation. And some saviors see your salvation as their duty whether you want to be saved or not. Some see those who might prevent that rescue as the antagonists. But what happens when a savior seeks to save the world, but sees an entire city as complicit in the problem? The easiest way to prevail in a complex world is by choosing to only see things in the simplest of ways. This city stands against me and must be destroyed to be saved.

And so, despite our Scientist's cleverness and resourcefulness, despite his desire to save the world and combat deadly sunlight, and despite his patience and willingness to manipulate and strategize, his ultimate defining characteristic is his righteousness. He lies unwavering in his desire to spread his cure and anyone who would stand against him must simply be wrong and evil.

In a complex world such as ECLIPSE, the worst trait is righteous simplicity. Of course, it is the exact same trait Bax and Cielo lean on when they face the difficult realities of their conflicts. It's easier to see a father as wrong or a people as flawed or a city as evil. But it is this flawed and safe crutch that will force these characters into a collision course to either accept complexity or destroy each other.





ZACK KAPLAN is a new comic book writer whose debut sci-fi series, *ECLIPSE*, exploded onto the scene in fall of 2016 to an amazing response. Zack's sophomore comic effort, *PORT OF EARTH*, also published by Image Comics and Top Cow Productions, released November 2017. Both *ECLIPSE* and *PORT OF EARTH* are currently in development to be TV series, and currently ongoing. Zack also writes *The Lost City Explorers* for Aftershock Comics. Zack taught screenwriting at the International Academy of Film and TV, located in the Philippines, and he also writes film and television.



GIOVANNI TIMPANO is an Italian comic book artist who works for several U.S.A. publishers. For Dynamite Entertainment he has drawn a long run on *The Shadow* ongoing series, but also the *Doc Savage/Shadow/Avenger* crossover: *Justice Inc.* and the *Lone/Ranger* team-up miniseries. He has also worked on the *G.I. Joe* series for IDW, *Hellraiser* for BOOM Studios, *Grimm Fairy Tales* for Zenescope and *CYBERFORCE* for Top Cow. Currently he is working on *ECLIPSE*, a monthly series published by Top Cow/Image Comics and the DC/Dynamite Crossover *The Shadow/Batman*.



FLAVIO DISPENZA is an Italian colorist. He attended the Fine Art Academy in Frosinone and the Scuola Internazionale di Comics in Rome. On the Italian market he worked for Manfont on *Quantum Academy-Cassandra* and *Quantum Academy-Ethan*. He also colored *Dago* for Editoriale Aurea. In 2017 he made his debut in the American market with *ECLIPSE* published by Top Cow/Image Comics on which he is currently working. He also colored the DC/Dynamite crossover *Shadow/Batman*.



TROY PETERI, Dave Lanphear and Joshua Cozine are collectively known as A Larger World Studios. They've lettered everything from *The Avengers*, *Iron Man*, *Wolverine*, *Amazing Spider-Man* and *X-Men* to more recent titles such as *WITCHBLADE*, *CYBERFORCE*, and *Batman/Wonder Woman: The Brave & The Bold*. They can be reached at studio@alargerworld.com for your lettering and design needs. (Hooray, commerce!)

VOLUME 1

PORT OF EARTH™

ZACK KAPLAN | ANDREA MUTTI | VLADIMIR POPOV

179° 56' 39.4" X 0° 2' 46.2"

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INFINITE DARK

THE INFINITE DARK
HIDES AN INFINITE HORROR...



COVER A

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