

ERIC ERDEK © 1999

TRUE NOIR TALES

SUBWAY VIGILANTE



BONUS
SIDEWAYS STORY!

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TRUE NOIR TALES

THE AIR PRESSURE SHIFTS -- I FEEL THE FAR-AWAY PROMISE OF WARMTH AND LIGHT.

THE RUMBLING BECOMES A ROAR. THE TRAIN BURSTS INTO VIEW.

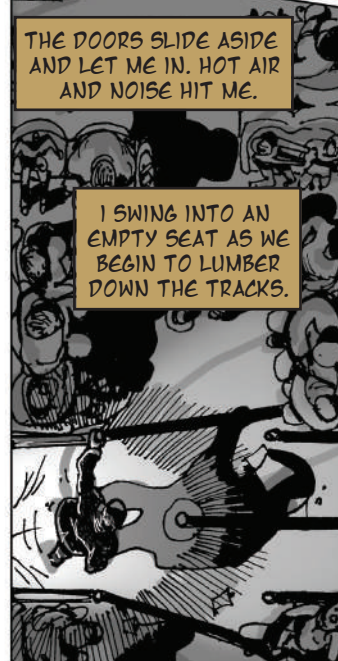
TIME TO TEST MYSELF. PLAY THE OLD GAME.

I BURY MY HANDS DEEP IN MY COAT POCKETS. MY FISTS CLENCH. DO I STILL HAVE IT?

BOOT TIPS AT THE PLATFORM EDGE. THE OLD GAME...



I DON'T FLINCH.



THE DOORS SLIDE ASIDE AND LET ME IN. HOT AIR AND NOISE HIT ME.

I SWING INTO AN EMPTY SEAT AS WE BEGIN TO LUMBER DOWN THE TRACKS.



DAMN, WHAT NOW?

THREE GUYS MAKING TOUGH AT THE OTHER END OF THE CAR.



THIS IS GETTING UGLY. THAT SCHMUCK IS HUMPING THAT POOR GIRL'S FACE.

WHY YOU BOTHERING ME? I AIN'T DOIN' NOTHING TO YOU!



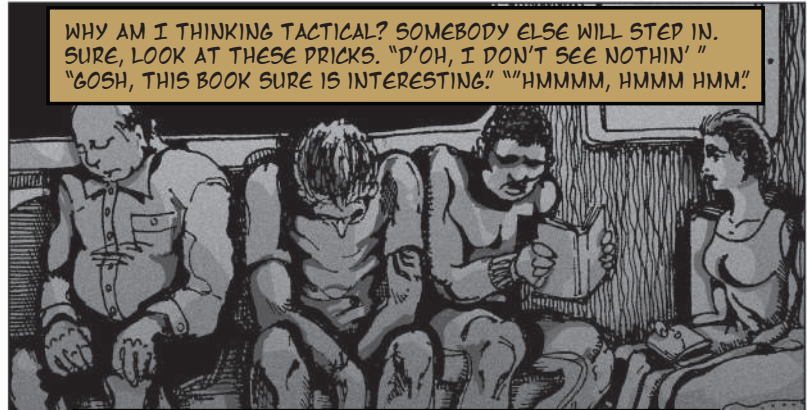
THERE'S THREE OF THEM.

MR. HUMPY IS THE LEADER.

BIG FAT ONE WITH THE RADIO IS RUNNING INTERFERENCE.

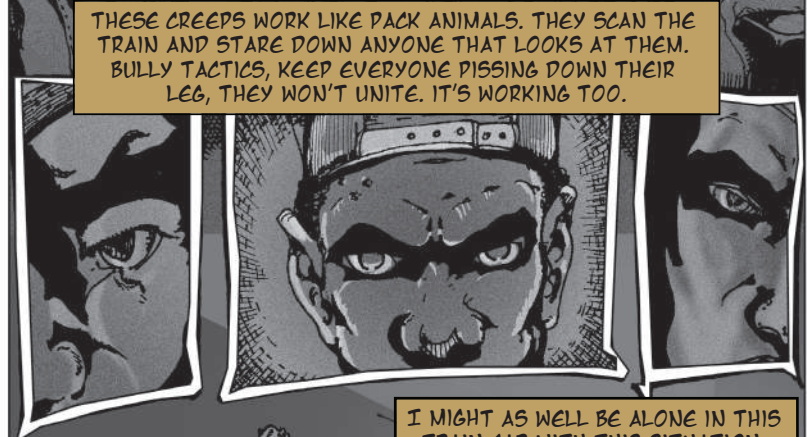


A DUMB LOOKING ONE WITH BOTTLE IN HAND.



WHY AM I THINKING TACTICAL? SOMEBODY ELSE WILL STEP IN. SURE, LOOK AT THESE PRICKS. "D'OH, I DON'T SEE NOTHIN' " "GOSH, THIS BOOK SURE IS INTERESTING." "HMMMM, HMMM HMM!"

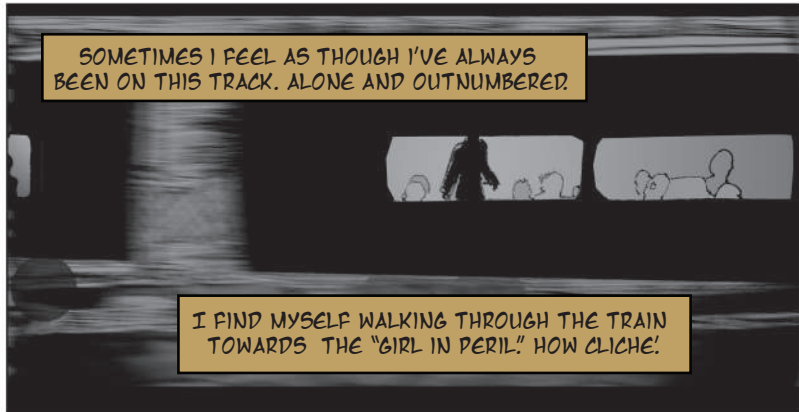
THESE CREEPS WORK LIKE PACK ANIMALS. THEY SCAN THE TRAIN AND STARE DOWN ANYONE THAT LOOKS AT THEM. BULLY TACTICS, KEEP EVERYONE PISSING DOWN THEIR LEG, THEY WON'T UNITE. IT'S WORKING TOO.



I MIGHT AS WELL BE ALONE IN THIS TRAIN CAR WITH THIS SITUATION.



EVERYONE ELSE IS A NON-ENTITY.



SOMETIMES I FEEL AS THOUGH I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ON THIS TRACK. ALONE AND OUTNUMBERED.

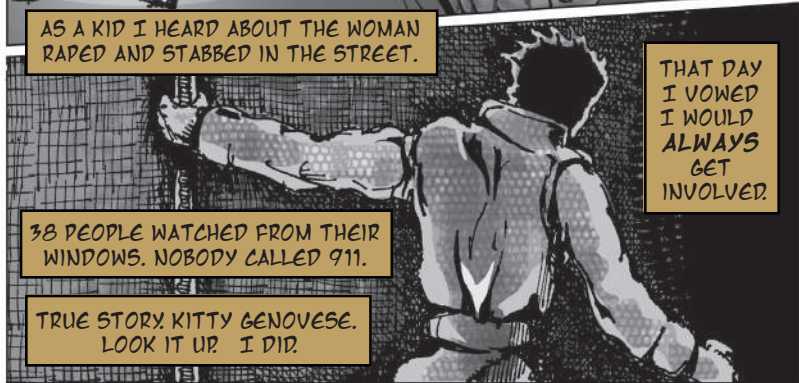
I FIND MYSELF WALKING THROUGH THE TRAIN TOWARDS THE "GIRL IN PERIL." HOW CLICHE!



I'M NOT A TRAINED FIGHTER. NO WEAPON. WHAT INEVITABLE INERTIA KEEPS ME WALKING TOWARDS THAT END OF THE TRAIN?

DON'T GET INVOLVED. THE CITY'S MANTRA.

WHAT AM I DOING!?

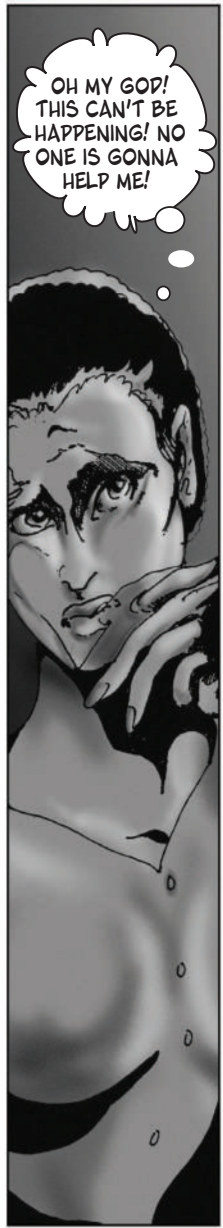


AS A KID I HEARD ABOUT THE WOMAN RAPED AND STABBED IN THE STREET.

THAT DAY I VOWED I WOULD ALWAYS GET INVOLVED.

38 PEOPLE WATCHED FROM THEIR WINDOWS. NOBODY CALLED 911.

TRUE STORY. KITTY GENOVESE. LOOK IT UP. I DID.



OH MY GOD! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! NO ONE IS GONNA HELP ME!

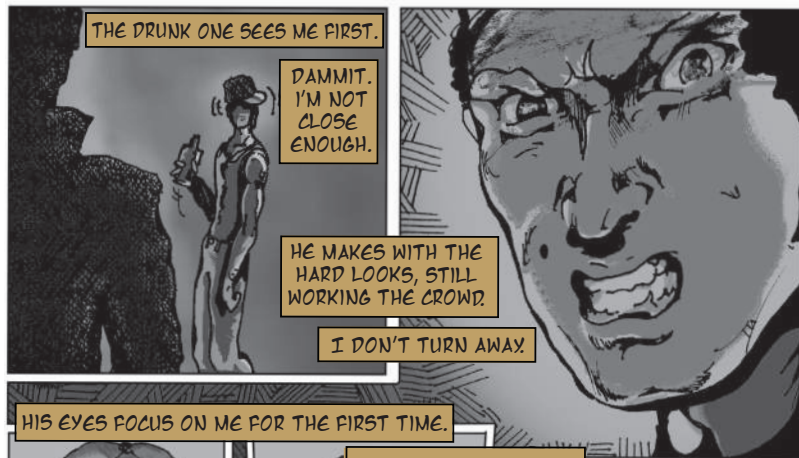


OKAY THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING. THEY ARE GONNA HURT THAT GIRL AND NO ONE IS GOING TO HELP ME STOP THEM.



SURPRISE AND FEROCITY ARE MY ONLY EDGE. SWING OFF THE POLE AND KICK THE LEADER'S HEAD.

YOU KNOW YOU LIKE IT, BITCH!



THE DRUNK ONE SEES ME FIRST.

DAMMIT. I'M NOT CLOSE ENOUGH.

HE MAKES WITH THE HARD LOOKS, STILL WORKING THE CROWD.

I DON'T TURN AWAY.

HIS EYES FOCUS ON ME FOR THE FIRST TIME.



I TAKE ANOTHER STEP.



HE TURNS AWAY.



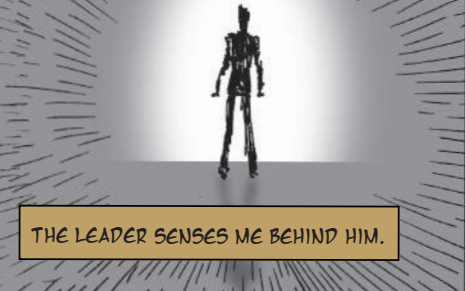
I BACKED HIM DOWN!



I LOOKED HIM RIGHT IN THE EYE WITHOUT FEAR AND HE BACKED DOWN!

I CAN DO THIS.. SHUT THEM DOWN ONE AT A TIME!

THE LEADER SENSES ME BEHIND HIM.



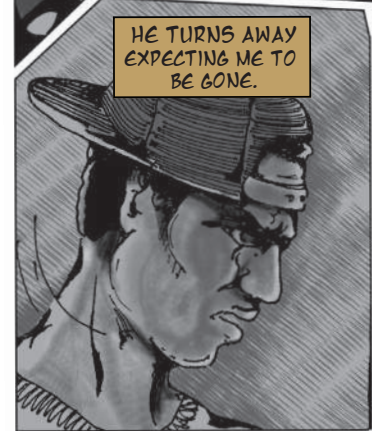
HE SPINS AND LOOKS AT ME WITH SUCH FEROCITY THAT I FEEL IT LIKE A PHYSICAL BLOW!

SUDDENLY I'M EIGHT YEARS OLD AGAIN, WAY OUT OF MY LEAGUE ABOUT TO TAKE A BEATING.

...

I DONT FLINCH.

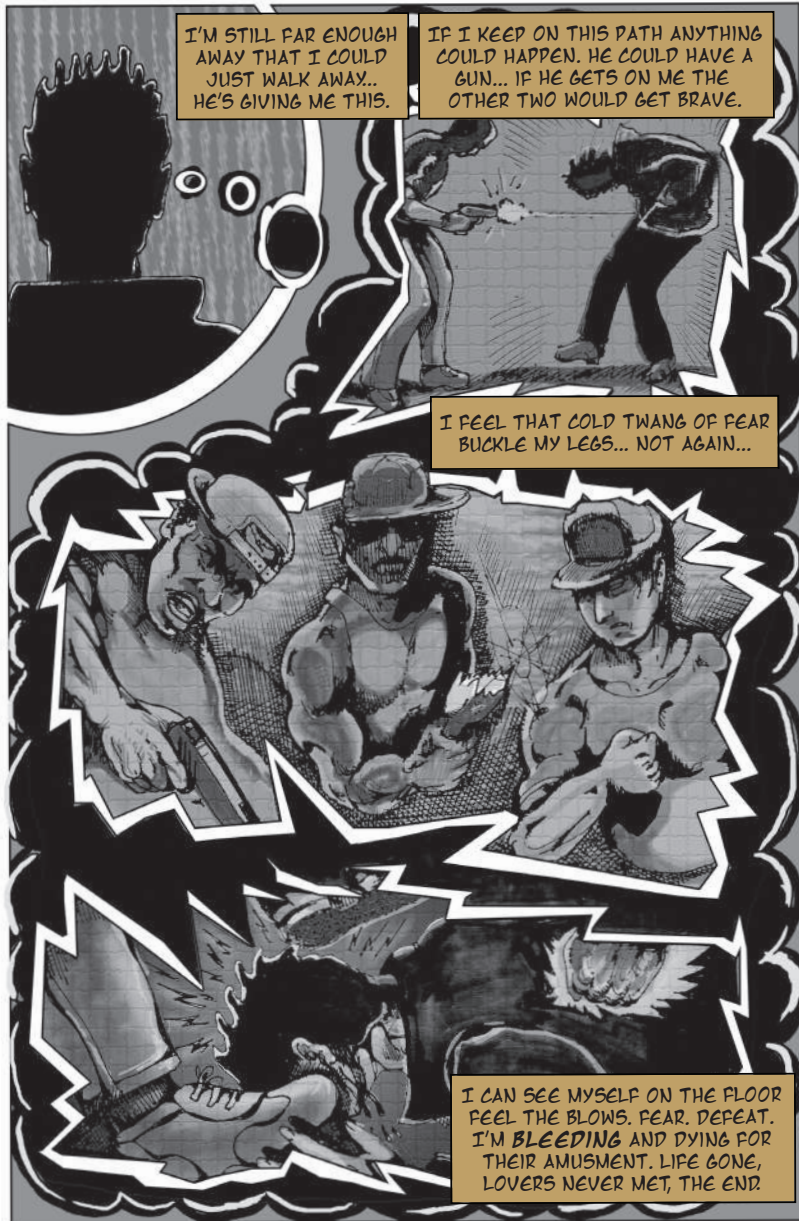
I'D RATHER LOSE A FIGHT THAN BE A VICTIM.



HE TURNS AWAY EXPECTING ME TO BE GONE.



WE LOCK EYES. HE LOOKS PUZZLED.

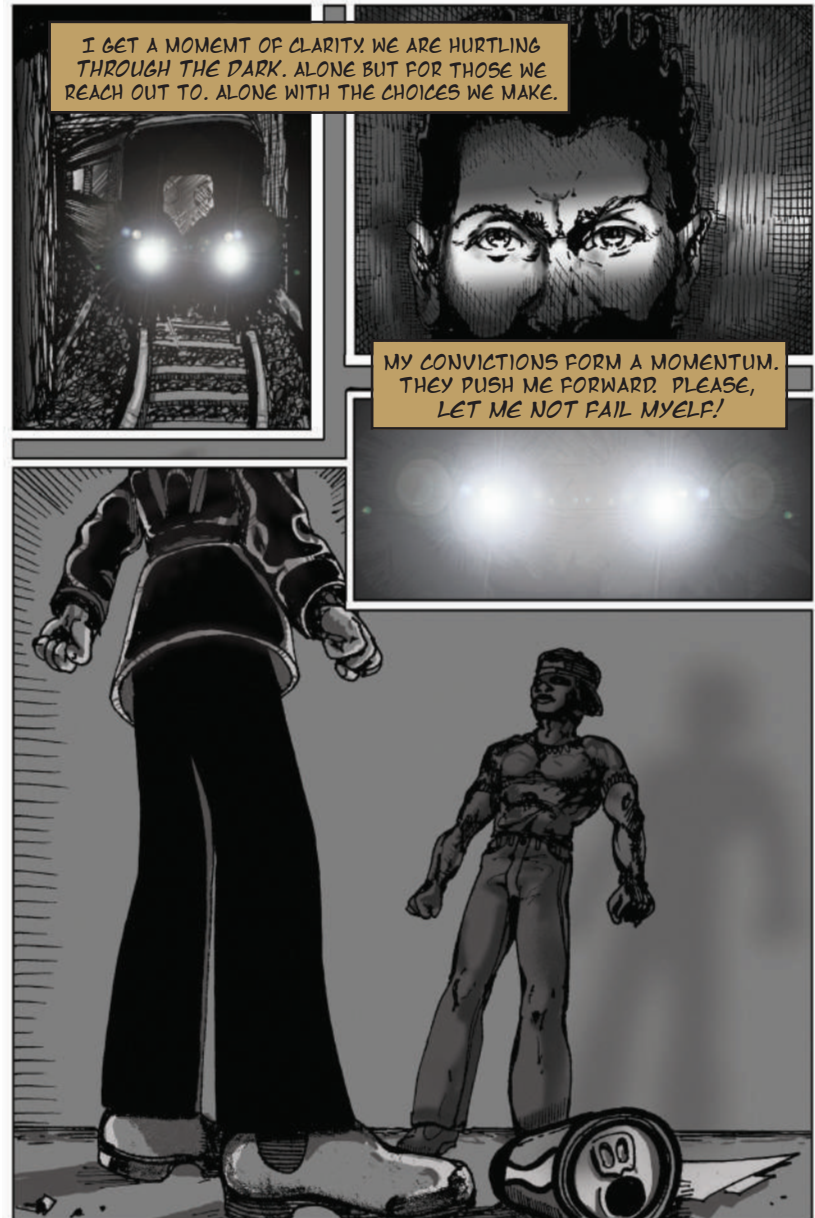


I'M STILL FAR ENOUGH AWAY THAT I COULD JUST WALK AWAY... HE'S GIVING ME THIS.

IF I KEEP ON THIS PATH ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN. HE COULD HAVE A GUN... IF HE GETS ON ME THE OTHER TWO WOULD GET BRAVE.

I FEEL THAT COLD TWANG OF FEAR BUCKLE MY LEGS... NOT AGAIN...

I CAN SEE MYSELF ON THE FLOOR PEEL THE BLOWS. FEAR. DEFEAT. I'M BLEEDING AND DYING FOR THEIR AMUSMENT. LIFE GONE, LOVERS NEVER MET, THE END.

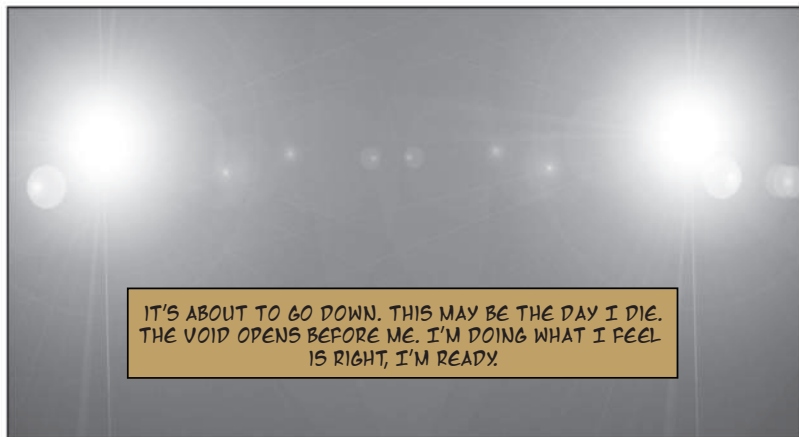
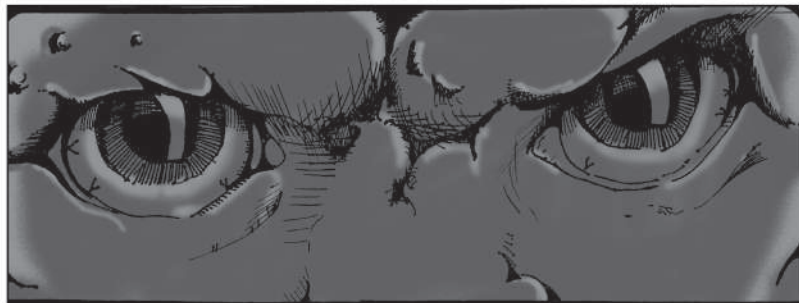
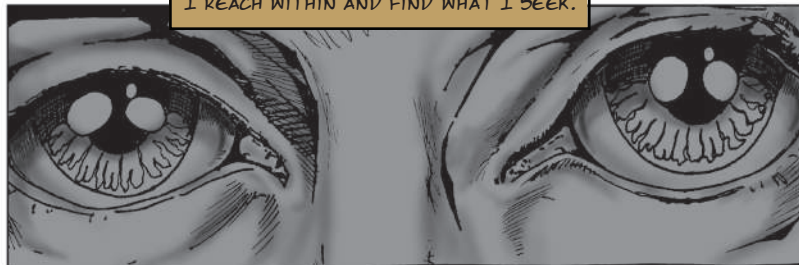


I GET A MOMENT OF CLARITY. WE ARE HURLING THROUGH THE DARK. ALONE BUT FOR THOSE WE REACH OUT TO. ALONE WITH THE CHOICES WE MAKE.

MY CONVICTIONS FORM A MOMENTUM. THEY PUSH ME FORWARD. PLEASE, LET ME NOT FAIL MYSELF!

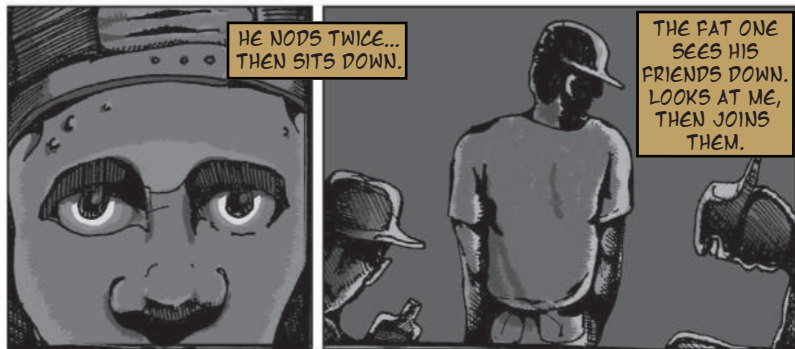


I REACH WITHIN AND FIND WHAT I SEEK.



IT'S ABOUT TO GO DOWN. THIS MAY BE THE DAY I DIE.
THE VOID OPENS BEFORE ME. I'M DOING WHAT I FEEL
IS RIGHT, I'M READY.





HE NODS TWICE...
THEN SITS DOWN.

THE FAT ONE
SEES HIS
FRIENDS DOWN.
LOOKS AT ME,
THEN JOINS
THEM.



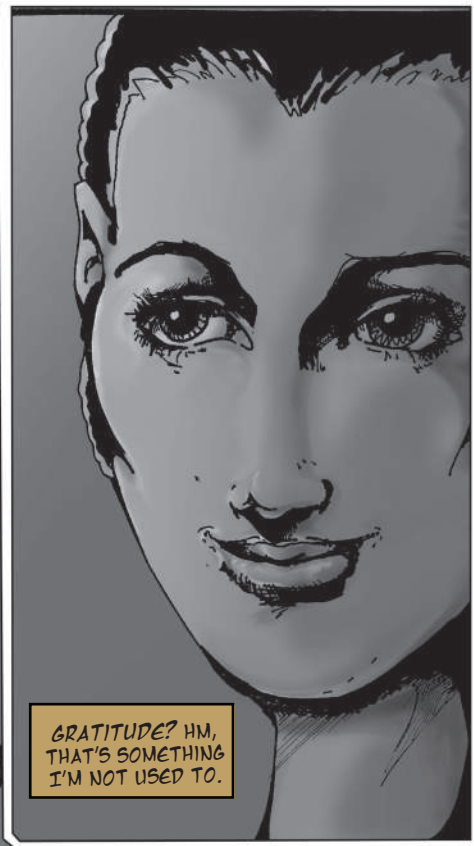
THE REST OF THE RIDE THEY DON'T
LOOK AT ME OR EACH OTHER.



MY STOP TIME TO GET OFF.



AS I GET OFF THE TRAIN
I NOTICE THE GIRL.



GRATITUDE? HM,
THAT'S SOMETHING
I'M NOT USED TO.





I BRUSH AGAINST SOMEONE,
NO MATTER. I'M THE MAN!

PRIDE SWELLS MY CHEST!
I MUST LOOK DAMN TOUGH,
OH YEAH, FEELS GOOD!

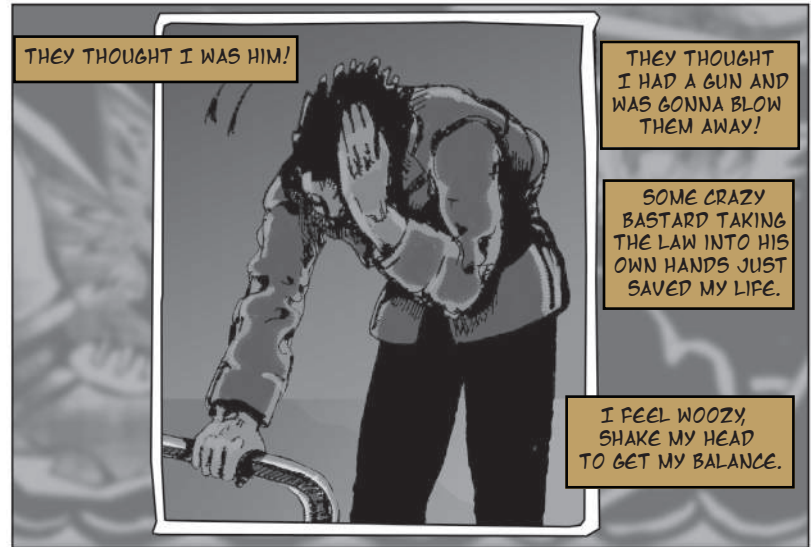
THEN I SEE THE
HEADLINES...

THE NEW YORK J
**SUBWAY VIGILANTE
KILLS AGAIN**

Clinton
SUCKS AGAIN

STARS

THE
MOUNT

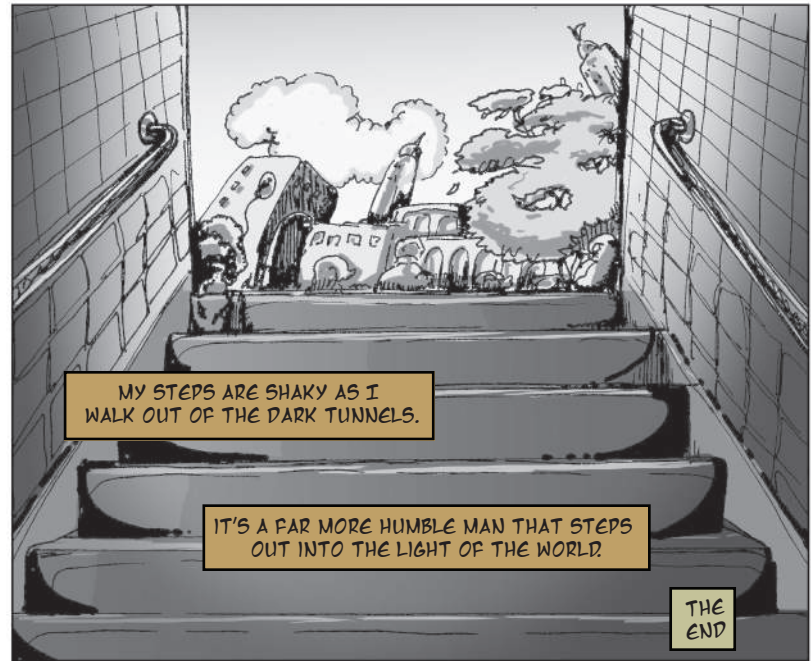


THEY THOUGHT I WAS HIM!

THEY THOUGHT
I HAD A GUN AND
WAS GONNA BLOW
THEM AWAY!

SOME CRAZY
BASTARD TAKING
THE LAW INTO HIS
OWN HANDS JUST
SAVED MY LIFE.

I FEEL WOOLZY,
SHAKE MY HEAD
TO GET MY BALANCE.



MY STEPS ARE SHAKY AS I
WALK OUT OF THE DARK TUNNELS.

IT'S A FAR MORE HUMBLE MAN THAT STEPS
OUT INTO THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

THE
END