

"ATBS"

BOOK I.

PAGE ONE:

Panel 1 of 3, stacked: wide, high view of a town that's just been slammed by a tornado, is dead-still now.

CAPTION
Nazareth, Texas. Population
yesterday: 782.

Panel 2 of 3: one low-30's, white FIREMAN is standing above a second, dead fireman. The first fireman is buttoning his jacket, looking at the still-green sky. The dead fireman is in his underclothes.

CAPTION
March, 1982.

Panel 3 of 3: the fireman, finished with his jacket, pulls his gloves on, steps away from the dead fireman so that we see the right side of his face, missing.

CAPTION
This was the first time.

PAGE TWO:

Panel 1 of 9: the fireman peering into an upturned car at two dead women, their ponytails touching the headliner.

Panel 2 of 9: close on the fireman's boot. It doesn't fit.

Panel 3 of 9: the head of the fireman's axe, almost dragging the ground. The axe-head is dirty, stained, but there's not enough focus to make out any more.

Panel 4 of 9: a cat explodes across the street, across the fireman's path.

Panel 5 of 9: the fireman's eyes. He's smiling at the cat.

CAPTION
Strange things can happen during a
tornado.

Panel 6 of 9: the fireman squats down.

FIREMAN
Here kitty kitty kitty...

Panel 7 of 9: the cat just stares at the fireman. Like it knows.

Panel 8 of 9: the fireman stands, his jacket billowing around him, the air still charged blue. And then an upturned couch beside him shivers.

Panel 9 of 9: close on the fireman's mouth, smiling.

CAPTION
The first time in a while, anyway.

PAGE THREE:

Panel 1 of 4: the fireman rolls the couch off an injured WOMAN then backs off, is just studying her.

CAPTION
Nazareth, Texas. Population now:
undetermined.

Panel 2 of 4: the woman reaches for the fireman.

FIREMAN
You injured, ma'am?

Panel 3 of 4: the woman opens her mouth, then looks at the inset/magnified head of the fireman's axe. What it's coated in is the gore of the dead fireman.

Panel 4 of 4: the fireman looks to the axe with her, smiles.

FIREMAN
It's not what you think, ma'am.

PAGE FOUR:

Panel 1 of 3, staggered: the woman, eyes wide, looking up to the fireman.

WOMAN
Are you - you going to save me?

Panel 2 of 3, mirroring Panel 1 so we know this is a response shot: the fireman, not looking at her but out at Nazareth.

FIREMAN
Not all of you, no.

Panel 3 of 3, a base for the other two: a wide, side shot of Nazareth. The idea is that we're looking away from what the fireman's doing to the woman.

CAPTION

Anything can happen during a tornado.

PAGE FIVE:

Panel 1 of 9: The fireman, throwing up beside a broken house.

Panel 2 of 9: Close on his hand, the woman's bloody hair tangled in the fingers.

CAPTION

Every time feels like the first time.

Panel 3 of 9: the cat, watching this fireman.

Panel 4 of 9: the fireman, shaking his head no, falling to his knees now.

CAPTION

He was here to help people.

Panel 5 of 9: close on the fireman's hand, fumbling two school photographs from his shirt pocket.

CAPTION

Them.

Panel 6 of 9: the school photographs, fanned like cards, so that there's a 10 or 11-year old girl on top, her slightly younger brother underneath. Both dark, Indian.

CAPTION

Sarina Doe. Jim Doe.

Panel 7 of 9: the fireman's mouth, set, determined.

Panel 8 of 9: Nazareth, a street sign inset in the fireman's POV.

Panel 9 of 9: close on the back of the photographs now. It's a hand-drawn map, half of it covered with the fireman's wide thumb.

PAGE SIX:

Panel 1 of 4: A broken house, like all the rest. SARINA and JIM DOE's house is the idea. The fireman standing before it, small, slight, unsure.

CAPTION

In the tornado that came through
North Texas and Oklahoma in 1947,
bodies were flung up to a mile
away.

Panel 2 of 4: the older sister, Sarina, stands from the rubble of a closet. She's covered in sheetrock dust, otherwise not very injured.

FIREMAN

Sa - Sarina . . . ?

Panel 3 of 4: In some kind of shock, she focuses on this fireman who knows her name.

CAPTION

And that was adults, being carried
through the air for a mile.

CAPTION

A child, though. Who knows how far
a child might have gone?

Panel 4 of 4: the fireman, crying, his glove in his teeth, holds his hand down to the girl. She's reaching up to him too, the perfect little girl, being saved. The perfect moment.

FIREMAN

Your brother in there too, Sarina?

Inset a bit - set off somehow - a boy's dark hand, starting to move.

CAPTION

All the way home, maybe.

PAGE SEVEN:

Panel 1 of 1, splash: black and white history book looking photo of Nazareth. Really it's the 'complete' image that was sliced up for Page 1. Its function here is a buffer, an indicator of time, passing.

PAGE EIGHT:

Panel 1 of 7 (3/1/3): a slender, dark, 17-yr old girl walks down the road, holding her bookbag to her chest. We see her from the back.

CAPTION

Nazareth, Texas. The girl's name is Terra.

Panel 2 of 7: same view on Terra, but now through the windshield of a Bronco.

CAPTION

Population of Terra's 2:00 Trig class: one less.

Panel 3 of 7: Terra, stopped, has her head turned halfway around, the wind lifting her hair.

CAPTION

He's been warned about her, of course. Multiple times.

Panel 4 of 7, the wide, middle one: tall shot, making the white Bronco and Terra and the baseball fields of Nazareth look small. Important are the clouds. They're heavy, dark.

CAPTION

This is nineteen years after the storm.

Panel 5 of 7: close on the driver's door of the Bronco. It has a Castro County Sheriff's seal on it. The driver's dark hand hanging down over it a bit.

Panel 6 of 7: the Bronco eases up by Terra.

TERRA

(as suggestively as possible)
. . . Deputy.

Panel 7 of 7: Terra, climbing into the passenger side of the Bronco.

CAPTION

He's been warned, of course. By his boss, Gentry. By the girl's parents. This one's jailbait, trouble.

CAPTION
But still.

PAGE NINE:

Panel 1 of 4: Close on the driver's dark hand having to work to grind the Bronco to shift up into second.

Panel 2 of 4: Terra in the passenger seat, drawing attention to her breasts with the seatbelt.

CAPTION
'Shit.'

Panel 3 of 4: The driver now, finally. It's a deputy, young, Indian. JIM DOE, as established quietly by his nameplate.

CAPTION
It's not that he thinks she might be his sister.

Panel 3 of 4: Terra, flirting just by sitting there.

CAPTION
He doesn't know what it is, really.

CAPTION
"Gonna rain."

TERRA
Guess I'll just have to get wet, then...

PAGE TEN:

Panel 1 of 9: Tall angle on the Bronco, scooting down a caliche road that runs alongside some high-tension wires.

CAPTION
Nineteen years since the storm.

Panel 2 of 9: Tight on Jim Doe's sunglassed face.

CAPTION
He's twenty-seven now.

Panel 3 of 9: Four broken-down houses rolling into view ahead of them.

CAPTION
Doesn't even remember the day
Nazareth was knocked down, really.

Panel 4 of 9: The Bronco stops on the rise by the four houses. Through the side window, small, Jim Doe, leaning over the steering wheel.

Panel 5 of 9: Through the windshield, a supercell, an anvil-shaped mound of cloud, dark blue.

Panel 6 of 9: Jim Doe as he looks to Terra – someone not paying attention to her, who should be.

CAPTION

But that's a lie.

CAPTION

He remembers.

Panel 7 of 9: Looking at Jim and Terra from the backseat, more or less.

TERRA

So have . . y'know. Prom?

CAPTION

It was the day Sarina died, got pulled up to Heaven, body and all. An act of God.

Panel 8 of 9: Jim Doe, closing his eyes to Terra's question.

CAPTION

That's what the man with the insurance check called it, anyway.

Panel 9 of 9: Jim Doe, hiding half his face with his hand.

JIM DOE

Prom?

PAGE ELEVEN:

Panel 1 of 3, 'column'-panels: Jim Doe, on his side of the truck.

JIM DOE

What class are you missing?

Panel 2 of 3, the centerpiece of the page: a mocked-up doppler radar/thermal enhanced/satellite-looking shot of the cloud they're watching.

CAPTION

"Trig."

CAPTION
"Wilkins?"

CAPTION
"I do believe you're avoiding the
question, Deputy."

CAPTION
"I'm just . . . the storm."

Panel 5 of 8: Terra, on her side of the truck, her hand
reaching out of the panel, for Jim Doe's leg.

TERRA
Doesn't that make it better - ?

What she's interrupted by is the radio CRACKLING awake
between them, kind of wedged under the satellite view of the
cloud.

PAGE TWELVE:

Panel 1 of 9: With one hand, Jim Doe's holding the mike.
With the other hand, he's shushing Terra.

CB
...size of golf-balls, hoss-

JIM DOE
Trucker.
(into mike now)
What's your twenty?

Panel 2 of 9: out the front windshield, at the cloud. It's
scary-big.

Panel 3 of 9: Terra, watching Jim Doe avoid her, put her
off. Like a hundred other times, evidently.

TERRA
(laughing)
Hail, good buddy? Come back?

Panel 4 of 9: the trucker, barreling down some interstate.
The idea is, this is what Jim Doe's picturing.

TRUCKER
Coming down out of Amarillo, man,
just looking for-

Panel 5 of 9: close on Jim Doe's thumb, working the CB button. Nothing.

Panel 6 of 9: Terra, smiling her mischievous smile, unhooking her seat belt just to get her hand close enough to the CB mike to snag it from Jim Doe.

TERRA
(into mike)
Breaker 1-9, breaker 1-9, this is
Rosco P. Col-

Panel 7 of 9: To avoid Jim Doe's efforts to get the mike back, Terra has to turn sideways, push back against her door.

TERRA
-hot pursuit.

But then the CB crackles back at them.

Panel 8 of 9: Jim Doe and Terra, from the back. They're watching the CB under the dash. Waiting.

CAPTION
"I on the wrong channel here,
chief?"

Panel 9 of 9: Jim Doe, lowering his head to the steering wheel, taking the mike Terra's pushing back into his hand. He talks into it without opening his eyes.

JIM DOE
Sheriff.

PAGE THIRTEEN:

Panel 1 of 4: Jim Doe, definitely not smiling at Terra.

SHERIFF
"This a bad time, chief?"

JIM DOE
No. Sir. Just . . .

SHERIFF
"Watching the pretty cloud?"

JIM DOE
Something like that, yeah.

SHERIFF
"All by yourself, right?"

JIM DOE
(glaring at Terra the
whole time)
You needing me for something,
Sheriff?

Panel 2 of 4: Sheriff GENTRY on *his* CB. The push again is that, maybe, this is the way Jim Doe's picturing it: Gentry behind the wheel.

SHERIFF
Little hot pursuit, you could say.
Nebraska plates on a late eighties
Impala. Mary says he might have
palmed a candy bar.

JIM DOE
"In Dimmit?"

SHERIFF
Castro County, deputy. Our
jurisdiction? Anyway, thought you
might want to, y'know, go back to
the blanket with him or
something... He's got one of them
feathers hanging from his rearview,
looks like. Coming your way, up
168.

JIM DOE
"Speeding?"

SHERIFF
I can stop him for the feather,
y'know?

Panel 3 of 4: Still a cross between what's really happening and what Jim Doe's picturing: Gentry's POV of the Impala, from the back. The feather hanging from the rearview mirror.

CAPTION
"He calls you chief?"

CAPTION
"It's complicated."

CAPTION
"Like us, you mean."

CAPTION
" . . . "

CAPTION
"Why's he stopping that guy?"

CAPTION
"DWI: Driving While Indian."

Panel 4 of 4: back to a through-the-windshield POV angle on Jim Doe and Terra, in the Bronco, Jim Doe still with the mike to his mouth. The first raindrop of the storm splashes onto the hood.

TERRA
Guess it's starting...

JIM DOE
(shushing her, then
into mike)
Need some back-up, sir?

SHERIFF
"He'll be gone the time you get her
back to school, don't you figure?"

JIM DOE
...sir?

SHERIFF
"Town & Country, say?"

JIM DOE
About five?

SHERIFF
"10-4 good buddy..."

CAPTION
Nazareth, Texas. Population 452.
For a few more minutes, anyway.

PAGE FOURTEEN

Panel 1 of 9, each framed, inset, except the last: tall angle on Gentry, lights flashing, pulling the Impala over.

CAPTION
tape recovered from dashboard unit
A34.

Panel 2 of 9: Gentry, his hand to his service-issue revolver. He's leaning down to the Impala's window, the INDIAN in the driver's seat out of it, it looks like. Long hair just settling, face dark, eyes straight ahead.

CAPTION
attached note: tape A34, DO NOT
COPY. NOT FOR RELEASE.

Panel 3 of 9: Inexplicably, Gentry now has the Indian out of the vehicle, on his knees, hands laced behind his head, face pressed into the fender.

CAPTION
Actually, just destroy it.

Panel 4 of 9: Gentry, his gun out now, the butt of his service revolver raised, coming down to the back of the Indian's head.

CAPTION
The Nebraska plates were out of
date by six years. From a junkyard.

Panel 5 of 9: Close-on the Indian, from the front. The duct-taped handle of another pistol stuffed behind his belt buckle, his shirt caught on it.

CAPTION
The offender was anybody.

Panel 6 of 9: Gentry, at the back of the Impala now, the Indian's keys in his hands, going into the trunk lock.

CAPTION
His back-up at this point was
Deputy James Doe. He was
approximately 3.2 miles away.

Panel 7 of 9: The trunk opens. In the enhanced recording, the grainy shot is of two dead children, their mouths and eyes sewn shut. One of their arms falls down over the chrome bumper.

CAPTION
Children: unidentified.

CAPTION
Recovered slug: .357.

Panel 8 of 9: The Indian, pointing his pistol like an index finger at Gentry, the shot splashing through Gentry's chest, spreading him everywhere.

Panel 9 of 9, the unframed panel: Gentry, bleeding out on the hood of his cruiser, and, far in the distance, small, the only harsh color in the scene, the lightbar of Jim Doe's Bronco. Too late.

PAGE FOURTEEN

Panel 1 of 1, splash: a grainy, obviously-magnified screen capture of the Indian's face from the recording. It's from when he was rising from the car, his eyes flicking back to Gentry's cruiser. The image is poor enough that he looks a lot like Jim Doe.

PAGE FIFTEEN

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3, though the top three are one pic, just 'cut' by panel borders, to isolate people): Gentry's funeral. It glitters with badges, bristles with ordnance. The widow is AGNES.

Panel 2 of 8: Framing Agnes are two Texas Rangers: BILL MCKIRKLE and WALTER MAINES. Truly massive, unsmiling men.

Panel 3 of 8: To the side, small and not fitting in here at all, Jim Doe.

Panel 4 of 8, the first wide, middle panel: this is what Jim Doe's thinking, what he's reading from the mourners: all of them unholstering their sidearms ...

Panel 5 of 8 the second wide, middle panel: ...shooting him with no compunction.

Panel 6 of 8: The mourners are all funneling away from the funeral, Agnes brushing by Jim Doe.

Panel 7 of 8: Full body shot of Jim Doe still, to show his awkwardness, his guilt.

JIM DOE

I'm - I'm so-

AGNES

Come by later, won't you?

Panel 8 of 8: In her absence, it's just McKirkle and Maines now, their cowboy hats clamped back down onto their heads. They're staring at Jim Doe, indicting him.

MCKIRKLE

(to Jim Doe)

Be seeing you, now.

MAINES

(falsetto, to
McKirkle)

What time she say?

PAGE FIFTEEN

Panel 1 of 9: Agnes, in her chair at the kitchen table.

AGNES
Is it serious, at least? The
girl...Terra Bollinger, right?

Panel 2: the food between them.

Panel 3: Jim Doe, fidgety, in uniform, hat in hand.

JIM DOE
It's not like that, ma'am. I'm
...I'm sorry.

Panel 4: Agnes, studying the food.

AGNES
Yes, you've said that. Listen,
James. Tom carried a gun. Because
he expected somebody to shoot at
him someday. I'm just glad it
didn't have to be anybody from
town. Somebody he knew.

Panel 5: the food, as if decomposing.

Panel 6: Jim Doe, looking out the window - away.

JIM DOE
I should have been there, though.
Everybody knows that. I'm not going
to - he's not going to get away
with it, that's what I'm saying.

Panel 7: Agnes, reaching for Jim Doe's hand.

AGNES
Let the state police handle this,
dear. I understand Walter Maines
and have been-

Panel 8: the food, a fly on the foil now.

Panel 9: Jim Doe, standing, nervous. Still watching out the
window.

JIM DOE
No offense, but Gentry never hired
Walter Maines when it was that or
the Air Force for him. He never
took Bill McKirkle in when his own
dad disappeared. When his mom-

PAGE SIXTEEN

Panel 1 of 6, as wide as the page: exterior view of the house, one which includes both Jim Doe, at the window, and, on the opposite side, a pickup truck pulled up by the Bronco, two cowboy-hatted men inside - McKirkle and Maines, as promised.

JIM DOE
This should be fun.

Panel 2 of 6: Jim Doe on the front porch, folded around the punch Maines just shot into his gut.

JIM DOE
... how'd I know this was coming?

MCKIRKLE
You're telepathic?

MAINES
More like guilty.

Panel 3 of 6: Jim Doe, slammed back against the house.

MAINES
Our hypothesis is that you were familiar with the one did this to Tom. If you're interested.

MCKIRKLE
Why you were slow to respond and all.

Panel 4 of 6: McKirkle, hauling Jim Doe up by the scruff of his shirt, to run his head into a post.

JIM DOE
...you're assaulting a-

MAINES
Indian who can't keep his hands off the young white women? Think we'll get a medal for that, Bill, or just another commendation?

Panel 5 of 6: Jim Doe, rising, leading with his pistol, blood streaming down from his mouth.

JIM DOE
I'll give you a piece of metal, sir. It's about half an inch long, weighs in at 180 grains.

Panel 6 of 6: The Rangers smile about this, their eyes impossibly bored.

MCKIRKLE

That what your cousin said to Tom, kid?

MAINES

Couldn't quite tell on the tape...

AGNES

(from behind, off-panel)

Then I suggest you study it some more, gentlemen.

PAGE SEVENTEEN

Panel 1 of 4: Small, old, widowed Agnes, standing behind a mean-ass goose gun, the butt resting on her hip, the barrel angled up to Maines, both Maines and McKirkle just turned halfway around.

AGNES

Or ask him yourself, if you'd rather.

MCKIRKLE

Ma'am—

AGNES

Don't 'ma'am' me, Bill McKirkle. And don't think Tom would be doing any different than I am right now. This one was like a son to him.

MAINES

Agnes—

AGNES

I'm saving your life too, here, Walter. So just shut the hell up. James?

Panel 2 of 4: Jim Doe, in the living room, following directions he just heard, holding a wad of squirreled-away cash in his hand:

CAPTION

"Behind those red encyclopedias. There's a brown cigar box — you'll see it. I want you take what's in it, now."

CAPTION
Seventeen hundred dollars.

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe on the porch again, bleeding, cash in one hand, his pistol in the other, Agnes still directing the goose gun to McKirkle and Maines.

AGNES
Take it. Go. Catch him. It's the only way to stop them...all of them, from being like this.

JIM DOE
I'll - I'll pay it back.

AGNES
No you won't...

Panel 4 of 4: Jim Doe, climbing into his truck, backing into the night.

CAPTION
"Just come back alive, James. For Tom. I'll hold these two here as long as I can."

PAGE EIGHTEEN

Panel 1 of 9: The Impala, booking it north, past a Welcome to Liberal, Kansas! billboard.

CAPTION
His name is Amos Pease.

Panel 2 of 9: close on the Impala's front tire, blowing out.

CAPTION
He's just killed a lawman.

Panel 3 of 9: AMOS PEASE, fighting the steering wheel for control.

CAPTION
He hadn't even realized he was doing it until it was done.

Panel 4 of 9: The Impala, half in the ditch, about to wreck.

CAPTION
The gun is anywhere now. He knows how to dispose of weapons.

Panel 5 of 9: A lonely ESSO gas station rolls into view.

CAPTION

He knows how to dispose of a lot of things, really.

Panel 6 of 9: An angle from under the hood of a car the MECHANIC at the gas station's working on: the Impala, limping in, about the same size as the plastic war bonnet hanging from the rearview mirror of the hood-up car. The mechanic stands, tips his cap back.

MECHANIC

First customer of the day...

Panel 7 of 9: Amos stands from the Impala, looks behind him, down the road both ways. Very silent panel.

Panel 8 of 9: The mechanic has stepped out of the garage a bit, is looking both ways too, for whatever Amos is looking for. There's nothing though; they're alone.

MECHANIC

(about the car, the flat)

Horse go lame on you there, chief?

Panel 9 of 9: Amos cocks his head to the side, as if to be sure he's hearing this right.

AMOS PEASE

'Chief?'

CAPTION

Last customer of the day, too.

PAGE NINETEEN

Panel 1 of 9: A lonely gas station a night - *not* the one Amos just hit. Snow dusting the asphalt. Idling, smoke ghosting up from the tailpipe, Jim Doe's white Bronco. Standing by the front door of the store, an old apparently-homeless INDIAN MAN. Through the glass, Jim Doe. He's standing at the counter, evidently talking to the clerk.

CAPTION

Gove, Kansas. Just west of Trego Center, which was west of some other gas station.

CAPTION

They're getting hard to tell apart.

Panel 2 of 9: The GIRL behind the counter, from Jim Doe's POV. She's on her stool, blowing a pink bubble. Holding a

flyer before her — the flyer that's got Amos Pease's face on it, though we can't quite see that — her beauty magazine in the other.

CAPTION

This is the sixth day out of Nazareth.

GIRL

This a trick question?

CAPTION

The ten thousandth useless clerk.

Panel 3 of 9: Jim Doe, in his brown deputy jacket. He's studying the front glass of the store, the Indian Man, maybe.

JIM DOE

Depends on what you consider a trick question, I'd guess.

Panel 4 of 9: Side angle on Jim Doe and the girl now, so that we too can see the Indian Man, leaning against the glass. The girl's shrugging, as if insulted.

GIRL

It's you, right?

Panel 5 of 9: The front of the convenience store again. As Jim Doe walks past the Indian Man, he passes him a steaming cup of coffee. The Indian Man tracks Jim Doe with just his eyes. Taped to the back of the glass door now is the blurry Amos Pease flyer.

CAPTION

\$1304.03 left, now.

CAPTION

He's keeping track.

Panel 6 of 9: A through-the-Bronco's-windshield POV on the Indian Man, Jim Doe half in the shot, like we're looking over his shoulder. The Indian Man's got the styrofoam cup to his lips, carefully. Is studying the face on the flyer.

CAPTION

"No. It's not me."

Panel 7 of 9: The front of the store again, a wide view. Jim Doe's Bronco is pulled alongside the curb now. It's an invitation. The Indian Man is climbing in, up, out of the cold.

CAPTION
They called him 'Chief,' but Jim
Doe's father was white.

CAPTION
This isn't him.

CAPTION
But still.

Panel 8 of 9: As if looking in through Jim Doe's window.
He's driving down some highway, snow scratching white lines
in the black.

INDIAN MAN
You're looking for that one, yeah?

JIM DOE
You know where he is?

Panel 9 of 9: Rear-view on the Bronco, it's red taillights
leaking out into the night, the road empty, long.

INDIAN MAN
Only one place to be tonight if
you're real Ind'n, senator.

CAPTION
Ennit?

PAGE TWENTY

Panel 1 of 9, like cards shuffling – like these three
stories are each pushing through, fighting for attention: A
ham radio set in a dark basement, a child's hand tuning it.

Panel 2 of 9: Jim Doe's Bronco, driving through the snow.

Panel 3 of 9: Amos Pease, in another ditch, throwing up
hard, his hair getting all in it.

Panel 4 of 9: Over-the-hood view of the Bronco's windshield,
the old man pointing down another road, Jim Doe's hand on
the wheel, already turning.

Panel 5 of 9: Amos Pease, looking up through his hair, at
the rear-end of the Impala

Panel 6 of 9: backed-off the ham radio now, it's a pale,
thin 12-year old boy, his head leaned down, the earphones
monstrous on him, so *important* to him – his *life*.

Panel 7 of 9: The Bronco pulling up to a high school gym, the parking lot stuffed with Indian cars, tents and teepees and lodges and RVs staggered everywhere, a banner over the front doors, saying something vague about 'championship.' Only clear thing on the banner's a basketball...

Panel 8 of 9: The ham radio boy, turning his head sideways, as if to look back at us. Like he knows we're watching...

Panel 9 of 9: the trunk of the Impala in Amos Pease's POV. It's half-open, one of the sewn-mouthed children pushing it up, rising...

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 4: the ham radio boy, JOHN13, at the breakfast table. A meek-postured white kid, his MOM and DAD talking above him as they balance food and juice and coffee etc.

CAPTION

Independence Day, 1965. Tinker AFB,
Oklahoma.

CAPTION

Tornado Alley.

MOM

...he was on it all night again,
though. That's what I'm saying.

DAD

Once he school starts he'll meet up
with the rest of the kids.

MOM

And what if he tries to ... you
know. Again? What then?

DAD

I don't think-

CAPTION

This is how you build a monster.

Panel 2 of 4: John13's radio, down in the basement, in the dark. Like it's waiting for him. Like it's what he's thinking of right this instant.

CAPTION

It's a Mosley CM-1. His father
bought it so he could tune in
drills on base.

CAPTION

"He won't do it again. I've talked to him about it."

CAPTION

His father is captain of the emergency response team. Their main duty is respond to natural disasters. And run drills.

CAPTION

"...and what if he doesn't meet any kids his age? What then?"

CAPTION

He's been awake 43 hours now. Not bad for a twelve-year old.

Panel 3 of 4: Overview of Tinker AFB. The lake, the Kennedy-era fighter planes, the stamped-out houses.

CAPTION

He lives and breathes above 30mhz, in the 2 meter band. His handle is 301JN - John13.

CAPTION

"Godddamnit! What the hell do you want me to do, then? Just tell me that? Am I responsible for-?"

CAPTION

Who he's been waiting to talk to now for fourteen hours in Morse is Jesse James.

CAPTION

"I just don't - he's right here, Dan! Don't, no, not--"

CAPTION

"What? You think I can't tell when my own son's-?"

CAPTION

Jesse James doesn't yell. In Morse, you can't yell, not really.

Panel 4 of 4: Back to the kitchen. The Dad is kneeling by John13, the mother on the ground, tucked into the corner between the refrigerator and the back door. Bleeding. John13 just spooning his cereal in...

DAD
Listen, I'm sorry - you don't...
I'll make it up to you tonight, how
'bout? Just you and me. We'll go
out on the water, watch the
fireworks. That work for you,
scout? Just the men folks.

JOHN13
..... -.-. .--.*

CAPTION
• this is one way to say help.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 7 (3/1/3): Distant shot of John13 and his Dad, on a boat on the water at night, fireworks exploding all around, the Dad with a beer in his hand.

Panel 2 of 7: Close on the Dad's hand, passing the beer to John13.

Panel 3 of 7: The Dad's self-satisfied face, at having accomplished this ritual.

Panel 4 of 7, the wide panel: water-level shot of their two silhouettes, sparks all around. John13 raising the beer to his mouth.

Panel 5 of 7: Closer to them again. The father holding up a cardboard box, a surprise.

DAD
You're a man now.

Panel 6 of 7: top-view of the contents of the box - John13's POV is the idea. It's his Mosley CM-1.

Panel 7 of 7: The father, smiling, nodding, dumping the radio over the side of the boat, into the water.

PAGE TWENTY-THREE

Panel 1 of 1, splash: A Mosely CM-1 view of John13, clawing down through the water, his fingers almost to the headphones, trailing down. The air is leaving John13's mouth in a torrent, his eyes jacked wide-open, his arm stretching out so far, fingers spread so wide.

CAPTION

The bible verse that corresponds to his name. It had to do with Judas, the betrayer.

CAPTION

It was part of a sequence of verses, though. The last one is 27.

CAPTION

"Do quickly what you have to do."

CAPTION

The lake in 1965 had just been filled, hadn't been stocked with Christmas trees and refrigerators yet.

CAPTION

It was eighty-five feet to the bottom, then.

CAPTION

The Yaqui pearl-divers of the 16th century routinely dived to a depth of 10 or 12 fathoms, and came up with bloody hands and feet.

CAPTION

One fathom is six feet.

CAPTION

They didn't live long.

CAPTION

In 1965, the lake at the point John13 went in was eighty-five feet.

CAPTION

It was very quiet down there.

CAPTION

Even with the headphones on.

PAGE TWENTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 9: John13 in a hospital bed, his eyes bloodshot, hands clasped over his stomach, the curtains beside his bed drawn back.

CAPTION

At eighty-five feet, the eardrums
implode.

Panel 2 of 9: the Dad, standing by the bed with another
cardboard box, the Mosley spilling out. John13 doesn't know
he's there.

DAD

I found it.

Panel 3 of 9: Same pic, same words pretty much, just more
volume.

DAD

I said I found it!

Panel 4 of 9: John13 looks over, his face beatific, almost.
The definition of serene.

CAPTION

He was down there for what his
father would swear was four
minutes.

Panel 5 of 9: same pic, pretty much.

DAD

Listen, the rest of the summer,
until school starts. It's yours,
whatever you want to do. We can get
you another ... another-

Panel 6 of 9: The window of the hospital room. A supercell
building on the horizon. A normal parking lot.

CAPTION

"I'm sorry, Jimmy."

Panel 7 of 9: Tight on John13.

JOHN13

That's not my name.

Panel 8 of 9: Big stare-off between the two of them, the
window in the background.

CAPTION

The way a barometer works is by
measuring pressure.

Panel 9 of 9: John13, angling his head towards the window,
the clouds he can't see.

JOHN13
It's gonna rain.

CAPTION
The way the human ear drum works is
by measuring pressure.

PAGE TWENTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 6: A long line of parked cars. Indian cars, shoe-polished and ribboned for the game. All black-and-white except for one just *electric* blue Impala. The idea is, this is how it's looking to Jim Doe.

CAPTION
"That's it."

Panel 2 of 6: Jim Doe, pushing the door of the Bronco shut. He's parked directly behind the Impala.

CAPTION
The Nebraska plates are from a 1952
GMC pickup.

Panel 3 of 6: Side-view of the car, Jim Doe standing beside it. At the trunk, a raggedy tall dog. It's trying to smell through the metal. The Indian Man is watching the dog from the other side of the car.

INDIAN MAN
I used to have one like that, yeah?

JIM DOE
Car?

INDIAN MAN
Dog.

Panel 4 of 6: Jim Doe, standing at the front railing of the gym stands, the basketball game going on, scoreboard ticking, people screaming, etc.

CAPTION
\$1186.49 left.

Panel 5 of 6: On the other side of the gym, even with Jim Doe — his POV is the push — one of a hundred long-haired Indians. Only this one's Amos Pease. No doubt at all.

CAPTION
It cost \$2 to get in.

CAPTION
Even with his badge.

Panel 6 of 6: Tighter now on the railing Amos Pease was just grasping, as if looking for somebody as well. It's empty now. No Amos Pease.

CAPTION
It was worth it.

PAGE TWENTY-SIX

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3): Jim Doe, running down a dark high school hallway, lockers flashing past, following the hint of FOOTSTEPS.

CAPTION
He doesn't yell ahead that he just wants to talk.

Panel 2 of 8, framed differently: Sarina Doe, crossing the living room 19 years ago, her lips crudely sewn shut. It's evident from the contrast of the sutures and the faded-photographic feel of the image that this is a memory of Jim Doe's, which current events are scratching over, ruining.

Panel 3 of 8: As if running away from that image he didn't even ask for, Jim Doe crashes through a just-closing door, already drawing his pistol.

CAPTION
Because he doesn't want to talk.

Panel 4 of 8, first of the twin/wide ones: The large, dark space he's fallen into is a practice gym. He points his gun every direction at once, finally settles on halfcourt or so.

Panel 5 of 8: Where we see maybe a quarter of the gym in panel 4, panel 5 goes all the way to half-court, so that the panel border doesn't so much mark a different space as a slightly later time: what Jim Doe is settling his pistol on. A long-haired figure, Amos Pease. But standing in an effeminate manner, almost. Smiling.

AMOS PEASE
(at a whisper)
Jim.

Panel 6 of 8: Straight on Jim Doe now, staring hard over the back of his pistol, head cocked, teeth set. He says it anyway:

JIM DOE
(whispering back)
Sarina?

Panel 7 of 8: Repeat of second panel, above, just, now, Sarina's eyes are tracking Jim Doe, in panel 6.

Panel 8 of 8: Looking along Jim Doe's barrel with him, now. Amos Pease is gone.

PAGE TWENTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 6, the 2nd and 4th unframed, loose: The dark practice gym, un-accounted-for light tracing some of the gym-stuff blue, just enough to make it out. Distinct are one set of the hanging lights, with screens on them. Inset lower right here is Jim Doe's pistol hand, scrabbling at a row of light switches on a brick wall, a warning printed above them. All we can read is *WARNING*, though. And ~~DON'T~~. And *THIS MEANS YOU*.

Panel 2 of 6: The lights, in exactly the same place in the panel, are on, bright, harsh, but, below them, it's the main gym, the crowd exploding comically (drinks flying, kid being thrown, husband choking his wife in celebration, etc) as the red team sinks some shot.

Panel 3 of 6: The lights, still in exactly the same place. Dark again though, meaning practice gym. Dark except for a worm of light (the filament) wriggling awake behind the screen.

Panel 4 of 6: The lights power up yellow, not harsh, guttering almost. Bright enough in comparison to what it's been, though, that Jim Doe has to shield his eyes with his pistol hand, uncovering the warning sign: *WARNING. DON'T EVER please TURN THIS ON DURING A GAME. FUSES, PEOPLE. THIS MEANS YOU*. The 'please' is graffiti, of course, as are the strike-throughs.

Panel 5 of 6: The same-placed lights in the main gym, dying down, the whole place going suddenly dark, a collective sigh rising from the crowd, the players. All that's left of the game is the afterglow of the scoreboard, the ball, *BOUNCING* down.

Panel 6 of 6: Jim Doe's POV, his pistol hand taking up half of it. The other half is a folded metal chair, coming fast for his face.

CAPTION
(as if an echo, a
repeat)
"Sarina."

PAGE TWENTY-EIGHT

Panel 1 of 9: Sarina Doe, real now, walking across that living room, a dark boy from the traipsing behind her. He's wearing a hat. The push is that this is where Amos Pease has just hit Jim Doe back to. That this is what Jim Doe's seeing while unconscious. Remembering; reliving.

CAPTION
The year is 1982. The day of the storm.

CAPTION
This is what happened.

Panel 2 of 9: 8-year old Jim Doe steps into the frame, behind the boy with the hat. They're practically the same kid.

CAPTION
What had to have happened.

Panel 3 of 9: When the kid, JERRY LECHAPEU, turns around, he has the 'scratched-on' sutures over his mouth too. Which means this is the boy Jim Doe's polluted POV.

CAPTION
Jerry LeChapeau was from the only other Indian family in Castro County. They lived in Dimmit.

CAPTION
He wasn't Blackfeet, like Sarina and Jim's mother, but he was close enough.

CAPTION
His great-grandfather named after a French trapper, supposedly.

Panel 4 of 9: All the windows in the house suddenly BLOW OUT. It freezes the kids in their tracks.

CAPTION
That about the windows is a myth.

CAPTION

Not that strange things don't
happen during a tornado.

Panel 5 of 9: Sarina at the door of the front closet,
herding Jim Doe into it first, then Jerry LeChapeau.

CAPTION

She was supposed to be taking care
of both of them for an hour.

CAPTION

Even though Jerry was just one
grade under her.

Panel 6 of 9: Tight on the three kids in the dark closet,
the house being ripped apart around them, Sarina hugging Jim
Doe hard to her side.

CAPTION

It was too loud for them to say
anything.

CAPTION

The words have been sucked from
their lungs.

CAPTION

And then maybe their lungs would
have fluttered out too.

Panel 7 of 9: Silence, darkness. In the caved-in closet's
the idea. Maybe a WHIMPER or a SNIFFLE, or a tiny AVALANCHE
of crumbled sheetrock.

Panel 8 of 9: Tight-tight on Jim Doe's curled up, covered-
with-debris form. Sarina's legs level with his face. She's
standing.

CAPTION

"Your brother in there too,
Sarina?"

Panel 9 of 9: Jim Doe's POV of the hand Sarina ISN'T
reaching up to the fireman. It's palm-back, fingers spread,
shushing him, telling him to *stay there*.

CAPTION

She was supposed to take care of
them. Of him.

CAPTION

Nazareth, Texas.

CAPTION

The next Sunday, everybody went to church. It was the only thing left standing. A miracle.

PAGE TWENTY-NINE

Panel 1 of 7 (3/3/1): SHERIFF DEBS is standing in the open bay door of the ESSO gas station we last saw Amos Pease at. Couple of DEPUTIES milling around by the cars. It's night.

CAPTION

The man across the street called it in. Said Taylor was working too late, probably in the beer again.

Panel 2 of 7: Looking over Debs' shoulder, into the dark garage.

CAPTION

This isn't Sheriff Deb's jurisdiction, but Tom Gentry was a friend of his.

CAPTION

The man across the street had reported an blue Impala parked out front.

Panel 3 of 7: The coke machine is trashed, flayed open. The register upturned on a rolling tool cart.

CAPTION

Indians are nothing new in Kansas, of course.

CAPTION

This one's coming up from Texas, though.

Panel 4 of 7: Debs, standing over the pit, raising his sunglasses, yellow tape marking the crime scene. Debs squints his eyes, as if to reduce how much of this he'll have to see, to remember.

Panel 5 of 7: What he's seeing: the Mechanic, Taylor stitched on his coveralls. A slag hammer is buried deep in his forehead. Beside him, a set of pliers, Taylor's teeth all around, bloody-stumped. At Debs feet, a crumpled piece of paper.

Panel 6 of 7: The paper - flyer - uncrumpled, in Debs' hands. It's the one Jim Doe's been pasting all over the place.

CAPTION
"Sheriff."

Panel 7 of 7, the wide one: Debs in the bay door, the Esso sign tall, the gas station on one side of the panel, the radio cars on the other. One of the deputies holding up a CB mike to Debs; this is the deputy that just said "Sheriff."

DEPUTY
You might want to hear this.

PAGE THIRTY

Panel 1 of 4: Still the same Kansas night, but a different bat-channel, now: another radio car, this one in an empty parking lot. Rising behind it, the basketball banner in tatters now, the gym where the big game was played. In the back of the car, his face smashed in a bit, Jim Doe. Leaning down to him, his expression all about doubt, Debs. He has the flyer unfolded for Jim Doe.

DEBS
So it's not you, then?

JIM DOE
I didn't do this to myself.

DEBS
You know your badge ran out at the Sherman County line there, right?

JIM DOE
This is personal.

DEBS
We in a movie poster here, kid?

CAPTION
Maybe.

Panel 2 of 4: A greasy, lonely diner, way at the edge of town. Jim Doe and Debs in a booth. They're the only customers. In the parking lot is Jim Doe's Bronco, a DEPUTY stepping down from it. Meaning Jim Doe was escorted here.

CAPTION
Except this is still Kansas.

CAPTION
Garden City. 6:56am.

JIM DOE
You were at the funeral.

DEBS
And you were at the scene of the
crime. Or – just after, I mean.

JIM DOE
Agnes sent me.

DEBS
That so? Thought the Rangers were
on this one. You know, the experts.

JIM DOE
They're still in Oklahoma. He's
here.

DEBS
According to you.

Panel 3 of 4: Tight on the wall above the booth Jim Doe and
Debs are sitting in. It's part of a series of black and
white photographs, of a town, ravaged by a tornado.

JIM DOE
So I'm free to go?

DEBS
Once you tell me what you were
really doing at Cleveland High
School.

DEBS
Looking for another girlfriend,
maybe?

JIM DOE
I don't–

Panel 4 of 4: Jim Doe standing from the booth, pulling his
hat on. But then he sees the photographs.

JIM DOE
...not Garden City?

DEBS
Everybody who comes up here thinks
they're in Oz. It's a place called
Lydia.

JIM DOE
North?

DEBS
An hour, give or take.

JIM DOE
That's where he's going.

PAGE THIRTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 9: Jim Doe's Bronco, heading to the top of the frame. Meaning 'north.' Daytime now.

CAPTION
The story he got from the clerk at the last gas station was that Lydia got knocked down 15 years ago. Bad.

Panel 2 of 9: Jim Doe, slurping some coffee to stay awake.

CAPTION
On the way into town, the tornado hit the slaughterhouse, the pig farm, something. Blood everywhere. A column of red.

Panel 3 of 9: Jim Doe, at a 3-way intersection. He's gassing the Bronco up, studying the bank of clouds surging up from the horizon.

CAPTION
The clerk inside says he remembers a long-haired Indian, yeah.

CAPTION
"Your brother?"

Panel 4 of 9: Jim Doe, hand-over-handing the wheel, away from the gas station.

CAPTION
He paid for the gas his "brother" stole.

CAPTION
He's below a thousand dollars, now.

Panel 5 of 9: A satellite/thermal view of the storm he's driving into.

Panel 6 of 9: Close on the left rear fender of his truck as he drives north. It's a red handprint. Left by Amos Peas is the idea.

CAPTION

In the old days, it was the highest honor to touch your enemy in battle. Just a soft, symbolic little slap.

CAPTION

'Coup.'

Panel 7 of 9: Jim Doe through his side window, leaning down to better see the clouds.

CAPTION

An insult to the enemy, of course

Panel 8 of 9: The small town rolling into view before Jim Doe. The rain just splattering the windshield.

CAPTION

Lydia, Kansas.

Panel 9 of 9: Side-view again of Jim Doe, only now it's dark, twilighty, and the Bronco's off, parked in a motel parking lot. He's got his collar pulled up to sleep, his head lowered.

CAPTION

He doesn't want to sleep all night or anything.

CAPTION

Not \$30 worth, anyway.

PAGE THIRTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 9, the only one not 'inset'/framed: Sky-high view of the Bronco in the motel parking lot, rain slanting down across everything. The no-caption maybe suggests some time has passed. Importantly, just pulling in, a truck we recognize: McKirkle and Maines.

Panel 2 of 9: This is a continuation of the 'what happened that day' [Page 28]. It's daytime, the sky a mealy yellow. The remains of the Doe-home, a company car just pulling up, 8-yr old Jim Doe diving behind a broken wall. No real push that this is a 'dream' or a 'remembering,' now. Just that it's what happened.

CAPTION

He was already calling her Dorothy,
his sister.

CAPTION

Because the wind had taken her.

Panel 3 of 9: We're at Jim Doe's level, just a bit behind him. The adults in the scene are his father, HORACE, and the insurance AGENT. Both Horace and the Agent are just legs.

CAPTION

Nobody believes him about the
fireman, of course.

CAPTION

They say his memory's just fixing
what happened. Editing it for TV.

Panel 4 of 9: Over Jim Doe's shoulder again, this time looking at another set of legs: his MOTHER. She's sweeping. Except everything's covered in caliche dust.

CAPTION

His mother told him that maybe the
storm took human form, for him, for
just a minute.

CAPTION

So he could understand.

Panel 5 of 9: Back to Horace and the Agent's legs.

CAPTION

She says she wishes she could have
seen.

CAPTION

Made a deal, maybe.

Panel 6 of 9: Still Horace and the Agent's legs.

CAPTION

Because the insurance agent is
white, he can make Indian jokes.

Panel 7 of 9: Same legs.

CAPTION

The one about the Sioux guy walking
into a bar with his three-legged
dog, the bartender asking what's up
with that dog, the man saying it's
special.

Panel 8 of 9: Same legs

CAPTION
"Why's it special?"

Panel 9 of 9: The insurance agent's car, driving off, dragging a plume of dust, Horace standing with a check in his hand, as if amazed.

CAPTION
Three thousand dollars.

CAPTION
Not signed by God.

PAGE THIRTY-THREE

Panel 1 of 4: McKirkle standing in the open doorway of one of the rooms of the motel Jim Doe's parked at, Maines with his boot heel hooked up on the air conditioner, his back to the wall. Still night, still raining. The Bronco's brake lights washing some of the asphalt before them red.

CAPTION
They're not in Oklahoma

CAPTION
Oklahoma was a bust

CAPTION
Too many Indians there.

CAPTION
Kansas, though.

CAPTION
Just the right amount of Indians,
so far.

CAPTION
One.

MAINES
He's moving.

MCKIRKLE
(holding his hat by
the brim as he
leans over to spit)
Well.

Panel 2 of 4: The Bronco at a convenience store, Jim Doe through the glass, obviously talking to another useless

clerk about the flyer. We're in the bed of McKirkle and Maines' pickup, looking along their line of sight.

MAINES

Think he knows?

MCKIRKLE

He was just a kid.

MAINES

Still.

Panel 3 of 4: Slightly skewed, like a photograph. Meaning this is an image from a memory: McKirkle and Maines, much younger, in their DPS days. They're in Nazareth the day after the storm or so, looking where 8-year old Jim Doe's pointing: to one of the fireman still helping emergency services. McKirkle's lip curled up in doubt.

CAPTION

He was the only witness.

CAPTION

Ever.

Panel 4 of 4: The Bronco parked in front of the courthouse, Jim Doe hunched under his hat, walking through the rain to a granite monument.

MAINES

Shit.

MCKIRKLE

Well.

PAGE THIRTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 9: Jim Doe in the rain, touching the names on the granite monument/pedestal.

CAPTION

The tornado of 1984 took 14 people.

Panel 2 of 9: Tight on Jim Doe's fingers, tracing the names, partially obscuring two with the same last name: *Blue Elk*.

CAPTION

Just twelve bodies, though.

Panel 3 of 9: The dates beside them are *b.1975* and *b.1977*. The date of death obvious, at the top, for all to share: *1984*.

JIM DOE
Eight. Nine.

JIM DOE
Brother. Sister.

Panel 4 of 9: Jim Doe from the other side of the monument, suddenly: McKirkle and Maine are standing behind him in their slickers and cowboy hats. One of them has a long gun, pointing down. They're Frank Frazetta scary looking.

Panel 5 of 9: Jim Doe senses, them, turns.

MAINES
So you think you know something,
then.

MCKIRKLE
Not that it matters.

Panel 6 of 9: Jim Doe again, face-on. Looking back and forth, Ranger to Ranger.

CAPTION
Brother. Sister.

Panel 7 of 9: All three of them, from the side.

CAPTION
This has been going on ... for -
for-

MCKIRKLE
For awhile, kid.

MAINES
It's unrelated to the case you
think you're on now.

MCKIRKLE
That you've put yourself on.

Panel 8 of 9: The three of them again, but now the monument's more important, the center of things.

MAINES
That was twenty years ago. Drop it
already.

JIM DOE
You've - you've known, all this
time? What happened to her?

MCKIRKLE

We're not here about that.

Panel 9 of 9: Jim Doe, reaching back for the monument, just to keep standing here. Eyes roving the ground, in disbelief, in wonder.

JIM DOE

Somebody's been — been taking
Indian kids for twenty years?

MAINES

We're just here for the truck. It's
Castro County property.

JIM DOE

The truck?! What about my sister?

MCKIRKLE

Like the man said, we're not here
about—

PAGE THIRTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 4 (3/1): Silent. Jim Doe, diving for the two
Rangers at once, it would. The three of them just in
silhouette, in the rain.

Panel 2 of 4: The butt of McKirkle's rifle rising to meet
Jim Doe's face, Jim Doe's head snapping back from it.

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe falling, collapsing.

Panel 4 of 4, the almost-splash: top view of Jim Doe lying
in the mud and grass, the monument behind him like a
headstone, his arms and legs every direction.

CAPTION

"Sarina."

CAPTION

He remembers Jerry LeChapeau
telling him it was a fireman, it
was okay.

CAPTION

His sister, saving his life.

Panel 1 of 9: a satellite/thermal/swirly storm, mostly in red.

CAPTION

In a better world, he could have
been the nation's leading
meteorologist.

Panel 2 of 9: pulling away from that satellite image: the red isn't stopping, isn't going blue like sea water, like it should be.

CAPTION

He can hear the barometer fall.

Panel 3 of 9: Backed all the way off, now, it wasn't a satellite image at all, but the fluidy-machinations of the inner ear, in a cut-away diagram of a generic boy's head.

Panel 4 of 9: John13 is sitting on the curb just past the guard gate of Tinker AFB. He's wearing a backpack, is ready to travel. The only car in the scene is distant, but not far enough we can't see it's long, a boat, has fins. A line drawn to it ends in a handwritten 1966.

CAPTION

But he can see things, too.

CAPTION

Remember things.

Panel 5 of 9: A dark blue El Camino is pulling up, the windows unaccountably dark. Evil for sure.

CAPTION

He never asked why his friend
called himself Jesse James.

Panel 6 of 9: The passenger door of the El Camino sweeping open.

CAPTION

It was just supposed to be a
handle, a call-sign.

Panel 7 of 9: John13's POV on JESSE JAMES, behind the steering wheel. He's got long, wavy blonde hair, looks shady, lounge-lizardy already, in 1966.

CAPTION

He was never supposed to be a real
person.

Panel 8 of 9: From the bed of the El Camino POV, the backs off John13 and Jesse James' heads as they pull away.

JESSE JAMES

The kid who can hear the storm
clouds building...

JOHN13

(very small, meek)

Yeah.

Panel 9 of 9, cut in half diagonally: the upper/first half is El Camino, receding from our stationary, AFB-bound POV. The second/lower half is close on Jesse James' lap as he wets a white cloth from a brown glass bottle of Chloroform.

CAPTION

But then the devil was never
supposed to be real either.

PAGE THIRTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 16, each mock-hilarious, each more [teen titan] than the last, like a comic distillation/exaggeration of what's actually going on; like John13 and Jesse James are just traipsing through all this... (specifically, as if this is the only way John13 can remember/deal with it): The El Camino at a school crossing, John13 with little bubbles around his head, as if just waking, one 13-year old girl the object of attention here, obviously.

CAPTION

Colorado.

CAPTION

Her name was Janelle.

Panel 2 of 16: Top-view of Janelle, bound and gagged in the bed of the El Camino, which is at a stoplight, pulled right up beside a police car.

CAPTION

She was the first.

Panel 3 of 16: Another school crosswalk, another girl. Only difference is, now, John13 is the bait, is *outside* the car, raising his hand to talk to this girl.

CAPTION

Claudette.

Panel 4 of 16: Close on the white Chloroform rag, over Claudette's face.

CAPTION
Five days, five girls.

Panel 5 of 16: Panoramic view of the Rockies at sunset. A postcard image.

CAPTION
A whole new world.

Panel 6 of 16: The El Camino parked at a roadhouse at night, John13 unconscious in the front seat.

CAPTION
An education.

Panel 7 of 16: *In* the roadhouse: Jesse James living it up, celebrating his vacation of young girls.

CAPTION
Giving the boy the fumes was supposed to be nicer than tying him up each time he had to piss.

Panel 8 of 16: Back to the cut-away diagram: we're pulled of it more, now. Not just the head, but the torso too. The *liver*, inflamed, hurting, dying.

CAPTION
There's a reason dentists stopped using chloroform, though.

Panel 9 of 16: John13 waking in the El Camino on some other night. Throw-up on his chest. He paws the glove compartment open for a napkin.

Panel 11 of 16: Close on what John13 finds instead of napkins: a stack of Polaroids. Him in various, mostly naked (thought, for us, not graphic) poses with all these different girls. Little hand-drawn lines, as if supplied from his memory: *Liz, Katrina, Janelle*.

CAPTION
Anna was still down the road.

Panel 12 of 16: Back to a crosswalk scene. To Anna, happy, carefree with her friends. Her hair and skin dark enough that she's Indian, maybe. *All* the kids there dark like that.

CAPTION
She never woke from the chloroform.

Panel 13 of 16: John13 in the woods, carry-dragging Anna. He's crying, desperate, in a bad state.

CAPTION
His initiation was to bury her.

CAPTION
Alive or dead, whichever.

Panel 14 of 16: Instead, John13 meets an old INDIAN MAN in the woods. They look at each other.

CAPTION
His name was George Sache.

Panel 15 of 16: Long, silhouette shot of John13 passing Anna up to George Sache.

Panel 16 of 16: Redo of that scene, except, now, George Sache isn't wearing flannel and jeans, but tribal regalia like a fancy dancer, like a god. Very romantic image.

CAPTION
That's not the name he would be remembered by, though.

PAGE THIRTY-EIGHT

Panel 1 of 4, back to non-[teen titan]/conventional style: John13 walking up the last bit of the road to Tinker AFB. Trailing behind him, like he's looking at them then dropping them, the snapshots of him and the girls.

CAPTION
What he learned from Jesse James was how to go undetected.

CAPTION
How, if you smile, the world smiles with you, doesn't look at what you're doing with your hands.

CAPTION
And about power.

CAPTION
He learned about power, about control.

Panel 2 of 4: a slightly older, hippied-out Jesse James, sitting in a ratty kitchen across from a woman who's obviously HIS MOTHER. She's balancing ash on the end of her cigarette. He's reading a paper, smiling.

CAPTION

Five years later, Jesse James would read in a paper about how a boy had weighed his pockets down with lead shot, walked out into the lake.

CAPTION

'It was like he was looking for something,' a witness would report.

CAPTION

The boy he used to be, before he died the first time, on Independence Day.

CAPTION

The boy who reached 85 feet down for something he loved.

JESSE JAMES

Little fucker finally did it.

HIS MOTHER

Hmph. [cough cough cough]

Panel 3 of 4: John13, approaching the guard gate in 1966, the guard stepped out like he knows him. In the window, against regulation, is a school photo of John13, most of his name smudged. It starts with J-, though.

CAPTION

Jesse Wiggs wouldn't read the paper the next day, though.

CAPTION

It would include a retraction: the boy did die, but came back.

CAPTION

For the second time.

CAPTION

It was like he couldn't die. Like he was magic.

GUARD

Shit, man. Wouldn't want to be you right about now, hoss.

JOHN13

-what?

GUARD

Your old man, man. Shee-it...

Panel 4 of 4: John13, walking by the guard booth, onto base. The guard still talking, smiling, shaking his head with wonder, a little frame-in-panel thing/trick, an arrow pointing out from the back of John13's head, so we can see his face, his wide, wide smile. As if this all a diagram, a second line points to the brown bottle of Chloroform peeking up from John13's rear pocket.

GUARD
(about John13's now-shaggy hair)
What, you going Choctaw on us?
Gonna do us a little rain dance?

JOHN13
...

GUARD
He's gonna to make you cut it, y'know that, right?

JOHN13
(the diagram line goes from the dialogue bubble to the chloroform)
Yeah, well. Think he's going to like it, really.

PAGE THIRTY-NINE

Panel 1 of a 1, a big splash page: Amos Pease's red handprint on the flank of Jim Doe's Bronco. We can see the whorls and vortices of the fingerprints; little digital green boxes identify a database match.

CAPTION
"Amos Pease."

CAPTION
From the registry of missing children. 1988.

CAPTION
Presumed dead.

CAPTION
In a tornado.

PAGE FORTY

Panel 1 of 7 (3/3/1): all black.

CAPTION

"You really like to lead with your face there, yeah?"

CAPTION

"That how they do it in Indiantown these days?"

Panel 2 of 7: It's Sheriff Debs talking. Jim Doe is in the front room of some Sheriff's offices, a wet compress held tight to the bridge of his nose.

CAPTION

Lydia, Kansas.

JIM DOE

Turning the other cheek. Isn't that what you taught us to do?

SHERIFF DEBS

...

Panel 3 of 7: Top-view of the legal notepad Debs is pushing back across the metal table, to Jim Doe. It's a long, handwritten statement. Jim Doe's, is the idea.

SHERIFF DEBS

So it's a conspiracy. Except, instead of the government, the Texas Rangers are involved.

JIM DOE

I think they're after him too.

SHERIFF DEBS

The one who shot Tom?

JIM DOE

He's older than that. Been at it longer.

CAPTION

Since Sarina.

Panel 4 of 7: The two of them from the side again, Debs leaned far back in his chair, his gut still hitting the table's edge. Jim Doe is holding his bloody compress out on the table, as if gesturing with it. His face smashed.

SHERIFF DEBS

His name is Amos Pease. The evil Rangers pulled his prints. Just

like them, right? He's out of
Pawnee City, Nebraska.

JIM DOE
...that's why he wanted those
plates...

SHERIFF DEBS
But he's too young...

JIM DOE
He's connected. In his trunk—

SHERIFF DEBS
Not anymore.

Panel 5 of 7: Exterior view of the Sheriff's offices, the
impound yard off to the side. Electric blue and dingy as
ever inside the fence is Amos Pease's Impala

CAPTION
"He was here."

CAPTION
"You got lucky, kid."

CAPTION
"We've got to — we can still—"

CAPTION
"Call the feds? Bill McKirkle,
Walter Maines?"

Panel 6 of 7: Back to Debs and Jim Doe. Side-view again. Jim
Doe's bloody rag in the middle of the table now, as if
thrown down. Sheriff Debs looking out the window now, both
as if drawing back from the idea of the Impala and now
looking into some past.

JIM DOE
You know about this. Their —
whatever they're working on.

SHERIFF DEBS
You're not old enough to remember,
kid. This is twice as old as you
are.

JIM DOE
What?

SHERIFF DEBS
If it's even the same thing, I
mean.

JIM DOE

What?

Panel 7 of 7, the wide one: a sepia-toned image of a generic nothing-town. In the distance but approaching hard is a tornado. A wide, ropy one. This is Oz.

CAPTION

"This was 1947."

PAGE FORTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 7 (3/2/2): Same sepia-tone quality, suggesting dust, everywhere. The panhandle. The tornado is tossing freight cars around like toys. A grain silo simply explodes. Cattle in the air.

CAPTION

"It started down in Whitedeer, Texas, tracked up to White Horse, Oklahoma."

CAPTION

"Not just one, either. Six of them, all bunched together."

Panel 2 of 7: a cutaway panel, no frame, as if it's 'above' this story. Jim Doe and Debs, still at the table.

JIM DOE

Woodward.

SHERIFF DEBS

You have heard.

Panel 3 of 7: Back to the sepia-toned disaster. An old Studebaker truck wrapping its nose around the top part of a utility pole in the center of town. Something like that.

CAPTION

"Another name you might know: Joan Gay Crawford."

CAPTION

"She was ten, twelve, something like that."

Panel 4 of 7, only as wide as the first 3: A girl, JOAN, in the emergency room spillover, holding her younger sister to her side. Her sister's leg bleeding, Joan uninjured, mostly.

CAPTION

"Her parents were both dead by then.."

CAPTION

"She didn't know that yet, though."

Panel 5 of 7, the wide one: This is more a continuation of panel 4, just outside, in the emergency lane, so that the panel-divider acts as the exterior wall. What we see is a tall, clean-cut MAN with dark hair and a lantern jaw (think Lone Ranger) crossing for the front door.

CAPTION

"He asked the nurse where she was, Joan."

Panel 6 of 7, wide: Joan and her sister on one side of the hall, huddled together, the man standing just on the other side of the hall with a bee-hive-haired NURSE. The nurse is pointing to Joan and her sister. Joan's looking back, her eyes narrowed.

JOAN

My - my dad?

MAN

He told me to bring you to see him.

CAPTION

"Her father by that time was dead, of course."

Panel 7 of 7, narrow like 1,2,3 and 4: Joan and the Man in the exact same posture as Sarina and the Fireman from Page 6, Panel 4: him reaching down for her, her reaching back up to take his hand.

CAPTION

"Nobody missed her until it was too late."

CAPTION

"And then it was the storm that got her."

PAGE FORTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 6: Jim Doe sitting in the Impala, at the edge of town. Evidently thinking. Another serious storm building to the north, water still standing from the last one.

CAPTION

The deal he made was to deliver the car back to Castro County.

CAPTION

To not think about why it had been there, in Lydia.

CAPTION

But he knows, too.

Panel 2 of 6: The Impala, parked at the low wall of an old cemetery.

CAPTION

He knows what Amos Pease is doing

CAPTION

He's fixing the world. Putting things back where they belong.

Panel 3 of 6: Jim Doe at the foot of two fresh, short graves. The single headstone for them reads *Blue Elk*. We can kind of make out the 1985, too. Like the monument in town.

CAPTION

Dot and Wallace Blue Elk, taken by the storm in 1985.

CAPTION

Finally returned last week.

Panel 4 of 6: Long shot of Jim Doe, just a silhouette mostly, falling to his knees, crying. This is through Debs' windshield, too, Debs at the very edge of the frame, so we know it's him, looking.

CAPTION

If Deputy Sheriff Jim Doe says his sister's name, Debs can't hear it.

Panel 5 of 6: Jim Doe, running to the Impala. Debs, still watching, reaching for his steaming coffee.

SHERIFF DEBS

You better be right, kid.

Panel 6 of 6: Jim Doe pushing the Impala away, hard, fast. A diagram-line pointing way, way ahead of him, over the horizon, into the storm, where it reads *Pawnee City, NE*.

SHERIFF DEBS

Goddamnit, you better be right.

Panel 1 of 8 (3/3/2): Amos Pease is sitting in the front seat of some stolen car. A town-setting, a park in the background, a hospital he's watching intently.

CAPTION

Wichita, Kansas in the daytime.

Panel 2 of 8: close on a long flashlight, tapping the glass by Amos's head, and Amos spinning around, his hair lifted, eyes wide and bloodshot.

CAPTION

He's been here before, but never like this before.

Panel 3 of 8: Amos's POV through the window, of an impossibly tall, dark man reaching down for him. The idea is, to him, it's a fireman. *The fireman.*

CAPTION

Never alone.

Panel 4 of 8: The stolen car from the rear, as Amos kicks across the front seat, falls half out the passenger window. Now we can see that the man tapping on the glass is a security GUARD. A surprised security guard.

CAPTION

A clean getaway.

Panel 5 of 8: Close on Amos's various spilled pills on the front seat.

CAPTION

Almost.

Panel 6 of 8: Amos is running hard across the park, through a frisbee game. He's the definition of not fitting in. So desperate, so sure the fireman's coming for him.

Panel 7 of 8, the wide one: The security guard has his shoulder CB pulled over to his mouth, is just watching Amos recede.

CAPTION

(into CB)

...just another Indian...

Panel 8 of 8: Amos, small, sprinting across an idyllic little bridge, a mounted COP taking a definite interest in him, his horse tasting the air with its nose, as if it too

remembers this chase, the cowboy and Indian thing. Amos scares some girl enough that her halogen pink scoop of ice cream topples, falls into the water.

PAGE FORTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 8 (2/3/3): Straight-on Amos, from the front, as he backpedals away, more desperate and afraid and dying inside than we've seen him before.

CAPTION

In a better world, he could have been a basketball hero.

Panel 2 of 8, the wide one: this is Amos from a ways off, from the side, so we can see what he's run up on: a fire station, all the FIREMEN out front in the bottom halves of their fireclothes. They're washing their red truck, and being watched by a group of girls.

FIREMAN #1

(sponge in hand, in greeting)

Hey!

Panel 3 of 8: All the fireman raise their hands, in greeting, in - to Amos - menace, aggression.

CAPTION

He needs his pills.

Panel 4 of 8: black, blank. Signifying Amos's mind.

CAPTION

Needs something.

Panel 5 of 8: Amos's heavy lidded POV as he wakes in a sterile white hospital room. The hospital he was casing is the idea.

CAPTION

It's like he's died and gone to white man heaven.

CAPTION

Indian hell.

CAPTION

But then there's antiseptic in the air, burning his nose.

Panel 6 of 8: Amos at the door, looking through. He's halfway back into his street clothes, already pulling on the rest.

CAPTION

This is where he was going anyway.

Panel 7 of 8: Amos, moving like an invisible weasel down the hall. A security camera lodged in the ceiling above him.

CAPTION

It can only mean one thing:

Panel 8 of 8: Amos pushing through a set of double doors labeled *MORGUE*. This panel is framed funny, though, has markings which indicate it's through the lens of a closed-circuit feed.

CAPTION

That this is what he's supposed to be doing.

PAGE FORTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 9, the first 8 of which are closed-circuit recordings, from different, ceiling-mounted angles: Amos smiling for the NURSE behind the plastic glass of the morgue window. He has his hands clasped behind his back; trailing from them is a wooden cane. Though the nurse's mouth is moving in response to Amos's polite question, there's no audio on the recording.

CAPTION

The first person he ever killed was at a Def Leppard concert.

Panel 2 of 9: Rear-view of the nurse. Amos has snaked the cane through the hole in the window, has her hooked around the back of the neck, her face splatted on the glass, her feet off the ground.

CAPTION

In the bathroom.

Panel 3 of 9: Close on a grainy image of Amos's cane, pushing the nurse's door-open buzzer.

CAPTION

It was an assignment, a test.

Panel 4 of 9: Amos in the hall, moving through it like a force of nature.

CAPTION
Supposed to look benign.

Panel 5 of 9: Using the cane like a nightstick, Amos has it rammed deep into the belly of a male NURSE, that comic kind of 'deep' so that it seems to be coming out his back, even.

CAPTION
Amos's solution was to sit on his target's chest, pry his mouth open, and throw up into it, clamp his hand over the guy's nose and mouth.

Panel 6 of 9: Amos, backhanding another male NURSE with the cane, the guy's teeth scattering.

CAPTION
He wanted it look like an OD, an accident.

Panel 7 of 9: Amos slamming a metal door open into a female NURSE, cracking her face down the middle.

CAPTION
It did.

Panel 8 of 9: Amos standing across a cold storage room from ANOTHER NURSE, this one mopping. They're just staring at each other, Amos breathing hard, smiling a hungry smile, his hair everywhere, cane bloody, the female nurse flat on her back beside him, bleeding, unconscious.

CAPTION
He'd been fifteen then. The Hysteria tour.

ANOTHER NURSE
I - I help you, man?

Panel 9 of 9: Tight on Amos's evil-ass, wicked smile.

CAPTION
He's twenty-five now.

PAGE FORTY-SIX

Panel 1 of 6: Still cc-tv, but not in a limiting way anymore. Only indication, maybe, is the frame. What's in it is Amos standing before the wall of silver drawers, his breath frosty, his hand full of gore from the now-dead nurse who just asked if he could help him. The running TIMESTAMP is suddenly here, too: 3:42.

Panel 2 of 6: Timestamp: 3:46. A good half of the drawers are opened, CORPSES spilling from them like Amos was looking for some specific ones.

CAPTION

Their names were Daniel and Trin.

Panel 3 of 6: Timestamp: 3:53. Amos lifting a blackened, mouth-sewn child corpse from a drawer. Cradling it.

CAPTION

Daniel lasted two months, Trin four.

Panel 4 of 6: Timestamp: 3:59. Amos standing with both corpses now. He has his head angled down to the girl's sewn mouth, as if she's speaking to him.

CAPTION

Amos used to sneak them food. Once, a transistor radio.

Panel 5 of 6: Timestamp: 4:04. Amos, moving up a remote stairway with the children.

CAPTION

It didn't matter.

Panel 6 of 6, no cc-tv frame, finally: Watching this recording are Bill McKirkle and Walter Maines and a THIRD COP. We're behind them, so we can still see the recording, a bit. Through the static it's Amos, walking into a parking garage full of cars.

THIRD COP

So that your boy?

MAINES

Heh.

MCKIRKLE

One of them, anyway.

PAGE FORTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 8 (3/3/2): A tv WEATHERMAN standing before a map of the country, with suns and raindrops etc. He's pointing to North Dakota right now.

WEATHERMAN

As you can see, we've got this mass of supercooled air coming down from—

Panel 2 of 8: High angle on the blue Impala Jim Doe's driving now. It's picking down a rutted road to a lonely tarpaper house. Every window is stained glass. A ragged sign reads *pease*.

CAPTION

"-which would be bad enough, this time of year. But then once we take into account-"

Panel 3 of 8: Back to the weatherman, now pointing to the Gulf of Mexico.

WEATHERMAN

What this is, now, is mass of warm air. Now, when the two of these meet later on in the week-"

Panel 4 of 8: Jim Doe standing from the parked Impala, LORNA PEASE bundled on the porch, as if waiting for him. As if already suspicious of him.

CAPTION

"Then get ready, Midwest. We could see a wall of tornadoes at that dry line like we haven't seen since-"

Panel 5 of 8: Jim Doe on Lorna Pease's sun-porch now, a glass of something cloudy set before him.

JIM DOE

So you knew it wasn't the storm?

LORNA PEASE

I didn't know anything, Mr. Doe. Not for a long time.

Panel 6 of 8: Same scene, different angle, Lorna Pease now tilting a framed photograph to Jim Doe. Cupping it with her hands. In it we see a generic Indian kid, maybe eight, and his carbon-copy sister.

LORNA PEASE

That was two weeks before.

JIM DOE

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have-

LORNA PEASE

No, Mr. Doe. It's okay now.

Panel 7 of 8: Jim Doe studying her, trying to figure out if she's serious, or just crazy.

JIM DOE
You - at first. You didn't think I
was him.

LORNA PEASE
Amos? You couldn't be, dear. He
came home two weeks ago.

Panel 8 of 8, the wide one: This is what Lorna Pease is talking about. One side of the frame is the sun porch Jim Doe and Lorna Pease are sitting at. Maybe two carlengths out into the pasture are two fresh, well-tended mounds of dirt. Jim Doe seeing them at last.

PAGE FORTY-EIGHT

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3): We're looking past Jim Doe's shoulder, through the Impala's windshield. It's night. We can tell Jim Doe's been sitting a while from the trash on the dashboard. What he's watching is Lorna Pease's shack of a house, the one light still on.

CAPTION
What he knows is this:

CAPTION
A Nebraska State Trooper was here
hours before. Amos Pease's mother
didn't tell him about her
children's graves.

Panel 2 of 8: Tighter on the two graves.

CAPTION
She didn't tell him because he was
driving a police car.

CAPTION
Because the burials are illegal.

Panel 3 of 8: Repeat of Panel 1, except, now, the one light is off.

CAPTION
The police man might have taken her
children away.

Panel 4 of 8, wider: Jim Doe crossing the scrub-pasture, a shovel hooked over his shoulder.

CAPTION

What Jim Doe didn't tell her was
that he was a police man too.

Panel 5 of 8, wider: Jim Doe, digging at the graves,
frantic.

CAPTION

That her children's bodies were
evidence.

CAPTION

That her son and daughter were part
of a string of abductions going
back at least to 1982.

Panel 6 of 8: Close on the two mounds of dirt Jim Doe's dug
up. They're significant, suggesting he's done.

CAPTION

To a town called Nazareth.

Panel 7 of 8: Jim Doe holding up the sewn-mouthed body of a
mid-teens girl, a girl older than the girl in Lorna Pease's
photograph.

CAPTION

A girl called Sarina.

Panel 8 of 8: The boy-corpse, now.

CAPTION

A thing Jim Doe doesn't tell
anybody is that he wishes he could
have gone with her.

CAPTION

That he was still with her.

PAGE FORTY-NINE

Panel 1 of 4: Jim Doe studying the boy-corpse. It's as tall
as the sister, and black, decomposed. Importantly, it's
right hand is missing, has been severed.

JIM DOE

Wha-?

Panel 2 of 4: Jim Doe, dropping the corpse, falling away
from the right edge of the frame, the dialogue bubble
creeping in.

LORNA PEASE
It was an act of God.

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe standing on the other side of the bodies from Lorna Pease, shaking his head no, both reluctant and insistent. Lorna Pease is wispy, in some muslin nightgown.

JIM DOE
No. It's - it's...

LORNA PEASE
An angel brought them back, dear. I watched from my window.

JIM DOE
You saw him?

LORNA PEASE
He was crying. That's how I knew.

Panel 4 of 4: Tighter on the two corpses, so that Jim Doe and Lorna Pease are just pieces of themselves, maybe a leg, a hand, a cup of coffee.

JIM DOE
Knew what?

LORNA PEASE
That He loved them. He loves the little children, y'know?

JIM DOE
But - he's not ... you're-

LORNA PEASE
Who else could have done it, dear?
After all this time? Who Else could give back what He had taken?

PAGE FIFTY

Panel 1 of 7 (3/1/3): A road crew in downtown. Above them, the sky's heavy, like the tv weatherman was saying. Each WORKER's a carbon copy of the last. Except one: this one is obviously Indian, has long hair spilling out from his yellow hardhat (we know it's Amos Pease). He's using a jackhammer on some piece of asphalt. Cars stacked around them everywhere.

CAPTION
Lincoln, Nebraska.

Panel 2 of 7: Same exact pic, except the Indian and jackhammer are no longer there. And one of the WORKERS has hit hat tilted back, as if he's noticed the missing sound too: no jackhammer.

CAPTION

He knows all the tricks.

WORKER

???

Panel 3 of 7: Amos Pease, no hardhat or safety vest anymore. He's moving fast down the dark side of some alley, the jackhammer (*heavy*) slung over his shoulder, his grin wide and satisfied.

CAPTION

Learned from the best.

Panel 4 of 7, the wide one: a storage facility, Amos melting down off the roof, the jackhammer already lowered down ahead of him. It sits beside an already-stolen (gas-driven) air compressor.

CAPTION

Drop him in any town, in any situation, and he'll find the tools to survive.

CAPTION

To get the job done.

Panel 5 of 7: Amos in the storage unit now, jackhammering down through the concrete floor. LOUD. He's wearing safety goggles.

CAPTION

One of the first things he was taught was the story of the fish.

CAPTION

Fish in transport, in long tanker trucks of water.

Panel 6 of 7: Down along the jackhammer, into the growing, chipped-out hole. There's blackened arms and hands and bones everywhere.

CAPTION

How the fish kept dying.

CAPTION

Until somebody figured out it was because they weren't scared, felt too safe.

CAPTION

Had none of their natural enemies in the tank with them.

Panel 7 of 7: Reverse-shot of Amos, so we can see the silhouette behind him. It's just a MAN in a windbreaker, some slacks, close-cut hair.

CAPTION

No predators.

PAGE FIFTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 6: Amos, realizing somehow that he's not alone. His head, swiveled part of the way around, eyes narrowed through the safety goggles. The jackhammer dying down.

MAN

I not teach you better than to never return to a place like this?

CAPTION

father.

Panel 2 of 6: The man, still indistinct — older, though, we can tell that now — is suddenly closer to Amos, has his hand on Amos's shoulder, as if massaging it. Very paternal. Not looking at Amos so much as the hole, either.

MAN

Don't get me wrong. I like what you're doing, the thinking behind it. The impulse. I just never ... but we never do, do we? Never expected you to use it back on me, everything I gave you...

Panel 3 of 6: The two of them from the back now. Everything would be hunky-dory normal, except that, from this new angle, we can see the fireman's axe slung, the underside of the blade hooked in the man's pocket somehow, so that the handle trails down along his leg, hidden from the front. The man's still looking down into the hole.

MAN

That sheriff down in Texas, though. That I wouldn't have recommended.

MAN

Not that it didn't have a certain elegance, of course.

MAN

But still. Those fish I told you about, the ones that keep the others healthy.

Panel 4 of 6: Tight on Amos's crumbling face. Safety goggles still on.

CAPTION

"Do you remember what happens to them at the end of the trip?"

Panel 5 of 6: The man bringing the axe around cleanly, quickly, Amos already twisting away, tipping over into the hole, pulling the jackhammer between him and the man. Still, the blunt butt of the axe head is going to clip him in the side. It's unavoidable.

Panel 6 of 6: The man, standing at the sunny door of the storage unit. In the foreground, crawling away, bloody all over, Amos Pease. The head of the axe is clean, the handle bloody. The man isn't looking at Amos, though, but the clouds.

MAN

(to Amos, about the storm)

Hear that?

MAN

It's gonna come a rain, I daresay...

PAGE FIFTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 9: A mid-20s John13, standing with his back to us. Before him, his father in a hospital bed. The green heartline on the monitor flat.

CAPTION

Cause of death: liver failure.

Panel 2 of 9: Reverse shot, close on John13's adult face. Not smiling. His eyes flat, just watching his father die. In his background, over his shoulder, his mother, sprawled in an ugly chair, the rag John13 just had over her mouth fallen down onto her chest now.

CAPTION
Cause of liver failure: chloroform.

Panel 3 of 9: Side view of the three of them, this family.

CAPTION
Perfect beasts built: one.

Panel 4 of 9: John13, pushing through the front doors of the hospital, lowering his face into a pair of aviator shades.

CAPTION
Onto better things, now.

Panel 5 of 9: Close on a postcard John13 is filling out. It's one of six; the other six are generic touristy "Indian" pics. The one he's writing on, we can't quite see, because of his hand.

CAPTION
Old debts.

Panel 6 of 9: Close on the back of the postcard, no hands around it now. Like it just exists, cocked at an angle. The address side reads *Jesse Wiggs*, with some made-up, half-there address; the message part says simply "Having fun in Pueblo. Working at Schlessinger's. Still think of you lots—Janelle Cross".

Panel 7 of 9: An older Jesse Wiggs, in serious decline. Still sitting across the kitchen table from his mom, who hasn't aged a day, is just smoking, staring.

JESSE WIGGS
Hmph.

Panel 8 of 9: old photographs fanned out like a hand of cards. They're the snapshots of all the girls Jesse Wiggs abducted years ago, with John13 in tow. The names: Liz, Janelle, Katressa.

CAPTION
"Whassat?"

Panel 9 of 9: back to the kitchen, same side view of Jesse and his mom, except backed off a bit, so the window's more important. As if Jesse's going somewhere...

JESSE WIGGS
Just an old girlfriend, Ma. Nothing for you to worry about...

PAGE FIFTY-THREE

Panel 1 of 16: Back to the overblown [teen titan] style of Jesse and John13's first trip. Here, Jesse's same El Camino is sitting outside a huge store, Shlessinger's. A tall, meek girl walking out. JANELLE.

CAPTION
Pueblo, Colorado.

Panel 2 of 16: Jesse and Janelle, sitting across from each other in a booth in some breakfast place, Jesse's hand over hers. Across the restaurant, watching them, John13. Very sullen, focused guy. A bandanna tied low across his forehead, like he's an Indian. Or thinks he is. Right now he's tipping some powder into a pot of coffee the WAITRESS is carrying to Jesse and Janelle's booth; his arm impossibly long to do it, of course. Everybody else impossibly blind, etc.

JANELLE
How do you - you-?

JESSE WIGGS
You changed your hair, didn't you?

Panel 3 of 16: Interior of a dark motel room. Passed out on the bed, Jesse and Janelle. Janelle's seriously dead, flayed open. The door CLICKING shut.

Panel 4 of 16: Jesse in the morning, throwing up over the railing of the second floor motel. The motel room door open behind him, Janelle's foot just there.

CAPTION
Her name was Janelle Rogers.

Panel 5 of 16: Another town, this one through Jesse Wiggs' windshield. Propped in front of his gauges, the postcard that led him here.

CAPTION
Denver.

CAPTION
Elizabeth Hawkins.

Panel 6 of 16: A girl, LIZ HAWKINS, shying away from Jesse Wiggs in some parking lot. John13 standing in the background, still with the bandanna. Trailing from his hand, half-hidden but comically apparent, a huge blowgun, with ACME tranq darts, pretty much.

Panel 7 of 16: Jesse Wiggs from the back, as he accosts LIZ through her closed door.

JESSE WIGGS
I just want to know who you told!

LIZ HAWKINS
Told what? Who are-?

CAPTION
Jesse James.

Panel 8 of 16: Liz Hawkins from streetlight-level, gutted in the bed of Jesse Wiggs' El Camino, curled as if trying to hold herself together. At the edge of the frame, Jessie Wiggs, covering his mouth with the back of his hand.

CAPTION
The outlaw.

Panel 9 of 16: Another motel room, the door opening, Jesse Wiggs pushing a bound and gagged KATRESSA ORTON through. Jesse Wiggs has a bandanna over his lower mouth, outlaw-style.

CAPTION
Somewhere in Utah.

Panel 10 of 16: Katressa hiding behind the bed, crying. Jesse Wiggs standing over her

CAPTION
You don't understand. This is for
your own good.

Panel 11 of 16: In Jesse Wiggs's background, John13, reflected in the mirror, his hands in his pockets, a brown bottle peeking out from one of those pockets...

CAPTION
"I'm saving your life."

Panel 12 of 16: Top view of Jesse Wiggs unconscious in bed, Katressa Orr simply spread all around him, on him. Coming out his mouth.

CAPTION
Somewhere in hell.

Panel 13 of 16: The same motel room door. It's CLICKING shut now.

CAPTION
"Ogden Police. The nature of your
emergency?"

Panel 14 of 16: Jesse Wiggs at the ice machine, his arms
plunged all the way in, all the ice red from the blood he's
trying to wash off. Pieces of Katressa in there he's trying
to hide, too. At the end of the hall, John13. SIRENS wailing
in.

CAPTION
The trick is to do it without
emotion.

CAPTION
Save that for later.

Panel 15 of 16: Same pic, except Jesse Wiggs is seeing
John13 now.

JESSE WIGGS
Who-?

CAPTION
It would be easy to say something
to him.

CAPTION
For example: "Hey, bad man."

CAPTION
But that would be a small, brief
victory.

Panel 16 of 16: Long shot of all the law that's descended on
this motel. Tanks, helicopters, all of it. They're all
lofting explosives at Jesse Wiggs, still at the ice machine
in his halogen white boxers. He's about to be dead, of
course.

CAPTION
The big ones are better.

CAPTION
More permanent.

PAGE FIFTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 9, maybe vertical, with film-strip edges, that
kind of cellular scratching: John13 with a different
haircut. He's standing in a nighttime electronics store, the
alarm WAILING.

CAPTION

Two years later, feeling bad about the girls, he would break into a place, wait for the police to collect him.

Panel 2 of 9: Exterior view of a sprawling prison, a dark blue bus pulling up, John13 maybe in the window, just staring ahead.

CAPTION

Spend eight months in jail.

CAPTION

To pay for his crimes.

Panel 3 of 9: a slightly crooked, aged snapshot of John13 with a woman, and two dark children. The kids and John13 are in color. The woman's face is snipped from the photo (by John13 is the idea), doesn't matter.

CAPTION

Upon parole - good behavior - he would move in with a woman who had just adopted two Indian children.

CAPTION

She was supposed to be saving them. The same way she was supposed to be saving him.

Panel 4 of 9: A burly EX-CON in the prison yard. In the distance, who he's watching: John13, talking to a guard. Laughing and laughing.

CAPTION

But not all the friends he made in prison were good men.

CAPTION

Not many of them were, really.

CAPTION

Friends.

Panel 5 of 9: The kids and wife alone in the living room, the doorbell CHIMING.

CAPTION

One even came to the house, for old time's sake.

CAPTION

An old insult on the tip of his tongue.

Panel 6 of 9: Close on a razor-blade, descended from a utility knife, fingers holding it tight by a pants leg.

CAPTION

On the tip of his boxcutter.

Panel 7 of 9: John13 pulling up to the house, the front window splattered red on the inside.

CAPTION

And the kids.

Panel 8 of 9: John13's wholly emotionless face. Behind him, the doorframe; we're looking at him from the living room, from right at what he's looking at.

CAPTION

He wasn't able to save them.

Panel 9 of 9: Just bright, scratched white, like the end of the movie, the projector glaring, burning (ie, the opposite of the 'black' which indicated Amos's psychological overload).

CAPTION

Not any little bit.

PAGE FIFTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 1, big splash: A non-[teen titan] 'portrait' of all-grown-up John13. Gambit in a trenchcoat heroic kind of stuff. Only John13's standing above Nazareth, the clouds hanging seriously low above it. And he's not a hero. Hanging by its hair from his fingers is the head of the ex-con who killed his family. His mouth is sewn shut.

CAPTION

But there would be more.

BOOK II.

PAGE FIFTY-SIX

Panel 1 of 6: An autopsy room. McKirkle and Maines and an M.E. On the two tables are the two corpses from Lorna Pease's land. The M.E. is working on the boy-corpse but looking up at McKirkle and Maines.

M.E.

Didn't know Texas Rangers, y'know,
counted in Nebraska.

MAINES

You could say we're on special
assignment.

MCKIRKLE

If you had to say anything, that
is.

MAINES

Which you don't.

Panel 2 of 6: Same scene, reverse angle, so we're looking
over the corpse.

M.E.

This is related to all those bodies
downtown, isn't it? The storage
facility?

MCKIRKLE

What makes you say that?

M.E.

That I'm not a stupid person,
Officer.

MCKIRKLE

Ranger.

M.E.

Sir. The bodies have been preserved
in similar fashion. And they're all
approximately the same size. Same
age...

Panel 3 of 6: Behind the doctor, Maines is leaning over a drain, spitting a long line of brown into it.

MCKIRKLE

That's your official, medical opinion?

M.E.

My medical opinion is that whoever's doing this has been doing it for a long time.

MCKIRKLE

And?

M.E.

And that he's been careful. Very careful.

MCKIRKLE

He was that careful, we wouldn't be here.

M.E.

He wasn't careful, you would have caught him a long time ago, right?

Panel 4 of 6: McKirkle and Maines catching each other's eyes, passing information.

M.E.

You two read the paper any, or you just talk to your horses for the daily news?

MAINES

Rather talk to a horse than some people...

M.E.

What I'm saying, gentleman, is that word's out. The media's named the renter of that storage unit.

MCKIRKLE

They got his name?

M.E.

They're calling him the Tin Man, I believe.

M.E.

...because he doesn't have any heart...? C'mon, even you have to

appreciate that. We're not that far from Kansas, here...

Panel 5 of 6: The M.E. is holding up x-ray films, presumably of the two Pease corpses. McKirkle and Maines' eyes are just slits, their lips grim, jaws set.

M.E.

So...without any dental records or DNA samples, you want me to wave my magic scalpel and tell you if this is Angela and Amos Pease?

MAINES

Something like that.

M.E.

...you came all the way up the yellow-brick road to ask the wizard if-

MCKIRKLE

Cut the shit, doc. Weather's turning. We're running out of time here.

MAINES

Among other things.

Panel 6 of 6: Top-view of the two corpses, finally, and of the M.E. and McKirkle and Maines.

M.E.

Well then, I apologize. These could be any two children, as far as this wizard can tell. Their teeth are gone, did you notice that? Yes. He's very careful, this one. But the films... You say Angela and Amos, they were twins, right?

MAINES

It was in the file.

M.E.

Yes, yes. Well. From these films, and I'm no radiologist, understand, but the sacral joint there, you see how it's not seating properly? How the socket is actually scarred? What that says to me is congenital defect. The kind we all have, never notice.

MCKIRKLE
The kind these both have.

MAINES
Shit.

M.E.
What?

PAGE FIFTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 4 (3/1): close on the side of John13's head. Just the side of *any* head, really, any *guy*, but we know it's John13 by the line of blood seeping out.

CAPTION
(carryover from last page)
"It means we don't know who the hell put them in the ground."

Panel 2 of 4: Pulling back on John13. He's in a pharmacy, at the vitamin-rack. The labels are all small enough that we can just see the *E's* and *C's* &etc. He's holding a 'milk thistle' little tub.

CAPTION
From the chloroform, he can only eat certain things: black radish, artichoke leaf, boldo. Milk thistle.

CAPTION
He pictures his liver as a bloated black bean in his gut. Made of glass.

Panel 3 of 4: John13 dropping the milk thistle, turning left sharply, his hand rising to his ear. Like he's hearing something.

CAPTION
Some things get better with age.

CAPTION
Some just get more intense.

Panel 4 of 4, the three-quarter splash: a ropy tornado, dancing through some Midwest town, plowing up everything.

CAPTION
He doesn't complain.

PAGE FIFTY-EIGHT

Panel 1 of 8 (3/3/2): Tight on a wallet, dark fingers riffling through the cash.

CAPTION

\$683.41.

Panel 2 of 8: It's Jim Doe at a truckstop, dropping change into a payphone.

CAPTION

\$683.16.

Panel 3 of 8: Jim Doe beating the phone with its own receiver.

Panel 4 of 8: Jim Doe putting more money in, the parking lot yawning behind him, wide and empty, just the Impala.

CAPTION

\$682.91.

Panel 5 of 8: Same pic, pretty much.

CAPTION

Terra, that you? Ben — Ben, I need to talk to your sister, man.
C'mon...

CAPTION

He's been warned.

CAPTION

But this is different.

Panel 6 of 8: Jim Doe, eyes closed, fingers pinching the bridge of his nose so he can get his words right.

JIM DOE

I just ... yeah, cemetery. Just if it's different in any way, y'know?
... I don't know. Yeah, dug up, like.

Panel 7 of 8, the wide one: Jim Doe looking behind him, to the olive drab convoy rolling past. A helicopter, even.

JIM DOE

... Sarina too ...

Panel 8 of 8: The national guard convoy over, the merry band following them: a ragtag group of stormchasers. Jim Doe's already looking ahead, though, to—

PAGE FIFTY-NINE

Panel 1 of 3, stacked, just like we first saw Nazareth, on Page 1: A storm-flattened town. This one at night. Emergency lighting and fires scattered around, a phonebook fluttering open in the immediate foreground.

CAPTION
McCook, Nebraska.

Panel 2 of 3: A man's shadow stretching out as if over McCook. John13.

CAPTION
Dead: 23.

Panel 3 of 3: The sun rolling over the horizon, inverting McCook, pretty much: now we can see the water tower, tipsy on three legs, as if it's leaning over to study something one street over; the emergency and Army vehicles, both crawling and parked. The temporary shelters and barricades and news crews. Importantly, too, the phonebook is gone from the foreground.

CAPTION
And counting.

PAGE SIXTY

Panel 1 of 7 (2/3/2), wide: tighter on this leaned-over water tower. It's sloshing water down onto a church. A big Army helicopter is hovering above it, lowering lines. Already attached to it are various tractors and trucks.

CAPTION
"...and the drama in the heartland may not be ever yet, America. The Episcopalian chapel directly below the damaged water tower is the church that, just yesterday, sheltered forty-two youths from the storm--"

Panel 2 of 7: the REPORTER saying all that. Not inset in a television screen, but standing in McCook, the water tower over her shoulder.

REPORTER
But now, if emergency personnel can't find a way to drain the four thousand gallons of water already threatening to spill, then the church, evacuated of course, will

be yet one more casualty of the F2
tornado that ripped through this
southern Nebraska town—"

Panel 3 of 7: the field report is inset now, on some
monitor. We're tight on the men hanging out of the
helicopter, guiding the lines down, all yelling at each
other, and into their headsets, etc. It's hopeless,
ridiculous.

CAPTION

"—no, I'm sorry. Again: this sleepy
little town in southern Nebraska.
It better like that?

Panel 4 of 7: The water tower again, from a distance. A
different angle than we've been getting, though.

CAPTION

"Are you even getting any of this?"

Panel 5 of 7: Tight on the phonebook from the last page.
It's open to a page with a map on it. Held in place across
from the map — gloved fingers holding it in place — a page
torn from residential. Just readable, the name *Yellow Calf*.

CAPTION

A woman at one of the shelters said
Gancy Yellow Calf had two kids,
yes.

CAPTION

A boy and a girl.

Panel 6 of 7: A fireman — John13, we know — standing amid
the rubble, looking again to the efforts to save the water
tower, the church.

CAPTION

People will tell a fireman
anything.

Panel 7 of 8, wide: Same angle on the hopeless water tower,
the copter straining to hold it up, pull it over or
whatever, only now, John13's not in the foreground anymore.

CAPTION

8 ball, corner pocket.

CAPTION

He couldn't have called it any
better.

PAGE SIXTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 8 (3/3/2): John13 moving among the rubble, holding his axe near the head, the plastic face shield folded down from the helmet.

CAPTION

This was supposed to just be a scouting mission.

CAPTION

Not acquisition.

Panel 2 of 8: A cat streaking across the street, its belly tight to the ground. Same exact cat as from Nazareth all those years ago.

CAPTION

But there's no accounting for the weather.

Panel 3 of 8: John13 small in the distance. In the foreground, his head split, clothes removed, a DEAD FIREMAN.

CAPTION

And of course he can adapt.

Panel 4 of 8: Tight on John13's face at last, through the mask. The mask is splattered with blood, his ear still crusted with it. He's staring hard at something.

CAPTION

It's like running drills for him, all this.

CAPTION

Acting out the maneuvers that, for years, tuning them in on his radio, he had to close his eyes to see.

Panel 5 of 8: What he's looking at: the cat, ferrying a kitten across the street behind him, the kitten's neck skin in her teeth.

CAPTION

In them, his father was always the hero.

Panel 6 of 8: tight on the bloody axe-head, so that we can read the TAFB-32-459 on it, somewhat (for 'Tinker AFB'). More important, possibly, is the blood still congealing on the blade of the axe.

CAPTION

Like, once he walked out their front door, he changed into another person altogether.

Panel 7 of 8, the wide one: Reverse, full body shot on John13, and the street past him. He's still just tracking that cat. Past it, the water tower, in jeopardy, the helicopter straining hard into the sky, trying to hold it up.

CAPTION

Their names are Ben and Steph.

CAPTION

The Yellow Calf children.

Panel 8 of 8: tight again on the fireman's face. He's smiling.

CAPTION

Every time's like the first time:

CAPTION

magic.

PAGE SIXTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 4: McKirkle and Maines are towering over a not-insignificant-himself National Guard CAPTAIN. McCook's still blasted all around them.

CAPTION

Noon.

CAPTION

A little after, maybe.

CAPTAIN

So you want me to believe that there's some storm-freak out there? Doing what?

MCKIRKLE

What he does. Sir.

CAPTAIN

If you think I'm going to be able to divert any-

Panel 2 of 4: Same three guys, slightly different angle. In their background, now, a large dollop of water splashing

from the water tower down onto the church. It's what the captain's watching, now.

CAPTIAN

Shit.

MAINES

We're not asking you to help us here.

MCKIRKLE

Just to stay out of the way.

Panel 3 of 4: This brings the captain back to them, now.

CAPTAIN

And you're not really asking either, I take it?

MCKIRKLE

Take it however you want. Sir.

CAPTAIN

Texas isn't as big as you think, you know.

MAINES

Big enough, I figure.

CAPTAIN

I do have an army here, you know?

MCKIRKLE

So did the Mexicans. Sir.

Panel 4 of 4: Closer on the tower-helicopter efforts. One of the lines on the helicopter snapping, more water threatening to spill.

CAPTION

"I can't - listen. You're certified law personnel. Look around. But I don't have time or resources to chaperone you. You find yourselves in a hole, too, don't expect my men to come rushing to pull you of it. Check? We've got real emergencies to attend to today..."

CAPTION

"Real?"

CAPTION

"You're chasing a ghost, Ranger.
This guy, he's just an old Lakota
story. I heard it too. When I was a
kid."

CAPTION

"What?"

CAPTION

"That the storms out here, they're
really people. Gods."

PAGE SIXTY-THREE

Panel 1 of 6: the reporter again, reporting, the water tower
over her shoulder, a large crane being erected beside it.
It's not dusk yet, but close.

REPORTER

...inside the church now, claiming
it was an act of god which saved it
the first time—

Panel 2 of 6: Interior of the candlelit chapel of the
church. Six junior-high and high-school students. They're
sitting in a ring, holding hands.

CAPTION

"—eight of the forty-two youth
group members who took shelter in
the church yesterday. They say that
even if the water falls, then God
will part it for them.

CAPTION

"That he's done it before."

Panel 3 of 6: Facing the barricade around the church,
National Guard and various emergency personnel working the
crowd, fighting the parents, keeping them from busting
through to their children, in the church.

CAPTION

"Others are less confident."

CAPTION

He couldn't have designed it any
better, really.

Panel 4 of 6: John13 in his fireman getup. He's standing on
the porch of a wind-tilted trailer, knocking on the door

with the head of his axe. The curtain on the window beside his door is a Hudson-looking blanket. Meaning 'Indian.'

CAPTION

Because nobody was home the first time he called, he was forced to spend the day with a nice man, and that man's wife.

Panel 5 of 6: Flash to a broken, crashed-in living room, a woman's foot extended past a couch, a man arranged on the couch, as if watching tv. But dead, of course. Balanced on his neck, his wife's head.

CAPTION

Anything can happen during a storm.

CAPTION

It was a worthwhile experience, too.

Panel 6 of 6: Back to the porch, close on the front, midsection of John13. Cradled in his gloved hands is an impossibly big-eyed kitten. He's feeding it a bit of bloody, not very mysterious meat with his other hand.

CAPTION

Not everyday you get to be part of the natural process of things.

CAPTION

In this case, weaning.

PAGE SIXTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 6: McKirkle is bent down to the dead, stripped fireman. Maines standing above, as if keeping watch, a lever-action rifle in the crook of his arm.

MAINES

So?

MCKIRKLE

Kicked the bucket, I'd say.

MAINES

With his head, yeah.

Panel 2 of 6: Both of them standing now. Studying what's left of McCook. The light fading over it. McKirkle is thumbing cartridges into his large revolver.

MAINES

He's out there, then. Wearing this one's Big Bird get-up.

MCKIRKLE

That'd be my wager, yeah.

MAINES

Glad to get your approval.

MCKIRKLE

Go to hell.

Panel 3 of 6, cut in half diagonally: the upper triangle is Maines, nodding down to the other triangle, which is a close-up of the backside of McKirkle's revolver, the cylinder still out, one of the chambers empty.

MAINES

You still doing that?

MCKIRKLE

Invisible bullets, sir.

Panel 4 of 6: Pretty dark now. All the lights there are focused on the leaning water tower. None of them on the darkened, Yellow Calf trailer in the foreground.

CAPTION

"Puts the fear of God in them."

Panel 5 of 6: Interior of that trailer. The living room. The kitten is doing something irresistibly cute under the coffee table, both kids entranced. On the couch, an Indian WOMAN, presumably the mother. Standing in the kitchen, a man with a long black braid and plenty of tats – the father. John13 is standing by the tv, leaning against the wall, just watching the kids, the axe angled against his leg, close. In his hands, now, the brown bottle of chloroform, and a folded over rag.

MOTHER

What's that?

JOHN13

This? Hydrogen peroxide.

FATHER

In case we've been cut or something?

JOHN13

Or something, yeah.

Panel 6 of 6: Exact repeat of Panel 4. Only difference, the SOUNDFX: *SWACK! SWACK!* Or whatever an axe sounds like, cutting into flesh.

CAPTION

Everybody loves kittens.

CAPTIONS

He should have thought of that years ago.

PAGE SIXTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 4: Pure dark now. The water tower teetering in the background. In the foreground, small, an awkward, top-heavy silhouette.

Panel 2 of 4: Closer on the awkward figure. Face-on, it's John13, the two unconscious kids slung over his shoulders. He's straining to carry them, using his axe as a cane.

Panel 3 of 4: John13, still heading towards us. A different part of the street now, suggesting he's come a ways. We can no longer see the whole water tower, just the bent legs, the lights. Right now he's stopped, though, has his head turned sideways, as if listening behind him.

Panel 4 of 4: Taking up the whole frame — John13's field of vision is the idea — is Jim Doe, in his Castro Country browns. He has his pistol loose by his leg, isn't smiling.

CAPTION

You can put them down now, I'd say.

PAGE SIXTY-SIX

Panel 1 of 8 (2/3/3): John13's turned all the way around now, to face Jim Doe.

JOHN13

I'm saving them, officer.

Panel 2 of 9: Tight on Jim Doe's face.

JIM DOE

From what?

Panel 3 of 9: Tight on John13's gloved fingers, gripping the bloody axe head.

JOHN13

You're from Texas.

JIM DOE
Nazareth, yeah.

Panel 4 of 9: Close-on John13's face, his eyes set in concentration.

JOHN13
You would have been...

CAPTION
"Eight."

Panel 5 of 9: The water tower, in bad shape.

CAPTION
"You're Indian."

CAPTION
"Blackfeet."

Panel 6 of 9: Face-on, John13. He's pulling one flap of his yellow jacket wide open, as if flashing Jim Doe. Only, what's inside, tied to his belt, are scalps.

JOHN13
Then you understand.

Panel 7 of 9: Jim Doe's face, not flinching. He's looking over his gun now.

JIM DOE
The kids, please. Now. This isn't about them.

Panel 8 of 9: John13, smiling wide, too relaxed.

JOHN13
You don't know anything, do you?
It's all about the kids...

Panel 9 of 9: Jim Doe, thumbing the hammer back on his pistol, his arm straight behind it, lips thin.

JIM DOE
I know about one of them. Her name was Sarina.

PAGE SIXTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 9: John13, looking harder at Jim Doe now.

JOHN13
What do you know about her?

JIM DOE
Just put the kids down. Now. I'm
not letting you do this again.

Panel 2 of 9: The water tower again, still in trouble.

CAPTION
"First tell me how you know about
her."

CAPTION
"She was my sister."

CAPTION
"Impossible."

Panel 3 of 9: Jim Doe and John13, still facing off.

JOHN13
Her brother, he's—

JIM DOE
You never took her brother, sir.

Panel 4 of 9: Close on John13, covering his smile with his
free hand, his eyes all about amusement.

JOHN13
All this time ... it does explain a
few things, though. Why they were
so different. Unsatisfactory and
... exceptional.

Panel 5 of 9: Tight on Jim Doe's trembling trigger finger.

JIM DOE
I'm not going to say it again.

Panel 6 of 9: In response, John13 lets the children slough
off, holds his arms out.

JOHN13
Well then. You've got me, I'd say.
Take me in. Unless of course you
want to see her...

Panel 7 of 9: Tight on Jim Doe's face, indecisive, hungry,
confused.

CAPTION
"Well?"

Panel 8 of 9: Jim Doe, lowering his pistol, thumbing the
hammer back into place.

JIM DOE
She's alive?

Panel 9 of 9: Instead of answering, John13 slings the bottle of chloroform over to him.

JOHN13
Price of admission, ennit?

PAGE SIXTY-EIGHT

Panel 1 of 1, big splash: John13 kneeling over an unconscious Jim Doe, the folded white rag still in one of Jim Doe's outstretched hands. John13 is administering to him. It's almost priestly, almost clinical, almost a lot of things, none of them right.

CAPTION
James Alan Doe. Born in May of
1974.

CAPTION
Tornado season.

PAGE SIXTY-NINE

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3): The water tower, in (somehow) even *more* serious trouble: lines to the helicopter snapping, a leg folding in, trucks scattering.

Panel 2 of 8: McKirkle and Maines standing in some nearly empty road, just shy of all the light. Maines with the rifle, McKirkle with his big pistol. McKirkle is holding the pistol out to stop Maines from walking anymore.

MCKIRKLE
Big Bird.

Panel 3 of 8: At the other end of the street (a few houses down), what they're seeing: a fireman, staggering into the street.

CAPTION
"You got the rifle, I guess."

Panel 4 of 8: The fireman, looking down to one side of his jacket, pulling away from a .30/.30 slug.

Panel 5 of 8: The other end of the street/other end of the line of flame: Maines, standing, looking down the barrel of the gun.

CAPTION

That got his attention.

Panel 6 of 8: From all around Jim Doe, National Guardsmen stand, rifles already raised, helmets on, etc.

Panel 7 of 8: The captain, striding into the street, no gun, a wet cigar clenched between his teeth like he's a bad-ass.

CAPTAIN

Gentlemen. Scare up your ghost, did you?

Panel 8 of 8: Close on the fireman. Through the plastic face-shield, it's Jim Doe, of course, still half-drugged.

CAPTION

"Don't think you want to be standing there."

CAPTION

"Sir."

PAGE SEVENTY

Panel 1 of 4: the captain looking around, behind him. His cigar falling from his mouth.

CAPTION

The last flood in southern Nebraska would have been biblical in nature.

Panel 2 of 4: The water tower, falling towards the church, the crane it's chained to now leaning over with it.

Panel 3 of 4: street-view of the water tower coming down over the church. As if looking up at it, from in front of the church. Through some fluke of metal-tearing, the water's spilling hard to either side of the church, leaving the church itself dry. Sweeping everything else away, however.

Panel 4 of 4: Inside the church, the circle of praying youths looking up to the ceiling.

CAPTION

On the 10:00 news, this one will
have been too.

CAPTION

A miracle.

PAGE SEVENTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 3 (2/1): The wall of water coming down the
street, sweeping up Jim Doe, the National Guardsmen. Right
about to hit the captain.

Panel 2 of 3: tight on McKirkle's mouth, his lip drawn up in
a sneer.

MCKIRKLE

Shit.

Panel 3 of 3, the wide one: The water, flattening out like a
lake, various things and people bobbing up. It's like a
long-awaited release, a big sigh of relief.

CAPTION

McCook, Nebraska.

CAPTION

Population: leaning toward the
Episcopal.

PAGE SEVENTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 6: The same female reporter from McCook,
reporting live, using the rubble as backdrop.

CAPTION

"-and in a twist that only serves
to add insult to injury for this
town, which the governor just
declared a disaster area-"

Panel 2 of 6: Pulling back a bit, off her. She's in a tv
set; this is the news.

CAPTION

"-late last night the water tower,
already damaged by high winds and
rescue efforts, finally gave up the
ghost and splashed down-"

Panel 3 of 6: Pulling back farther: The tv set is on the other side of a bed in what looks like a dingy, dark motel room. A motionless form there, the blankets maybe tented to let the news in.

CAPTION

"-luckily, however, emergency crews were already on the scene, so, while there were numerous water-related injuries, as of yet, there have been no drowning fatalities to add to the thirty four confirmed deaths--"

Panel 4 of 6: Pulling back farther - spiraling deeper into the sky - a high angle on the ratty motel.

CAPTION

"-and two still missing: Benjamin and Stephanie Yellow Calf, ages nine and twelve--"

Panel 5 of 6: An even higher view, this time of the Midwest, the state lines somehow intact, some star or something so we know the motel was in Lincoln, Nebraska.

CAPTION

"In a related story, two of McCook's residents have been discovered in their family living room, apparently decapitated by flying debris."

Panel 6 of 6: Satellite-level view: the storm, swirling over the Midwest. Moving south.

CAPTION

"According to a National Guard spokesman, the as-yet unnamed husband and wife didn't suffer."

CAPTION

"Probably never even knew what hit them."

PAGE SEVENTY-THREE

Panel 1 of 8 (2/3/3): Jim Doe sitting on the open tailgate of a National Guard truck. He's in a blanket, drinking coffee. Watching the reporter in the distance, saying all the stuff we just heard. McCook even more trashed live than through a camera.

CAPTION

"What you want us to do with that one, then?"

Panel 2 of 8: The person asking is the National Guard captain. He's lifting his coffee cup to Jim Doe, in the distance. Who he's asking is McKirkle.

MCKIRKLE

Impersonating a fireman something you can enforce?

Panel 3 of 8: The stumps of the water tower, rising up into the sky.

CAPTION

If I was sure you two weren't the ones dressed him up like that for a little duck shoot, then maybe, yeah.

Panel 4 of 8: Tight on Maines' face. He's disgusted with this.

MAINES

State police in Nebraska and Kansas are already putting up checkpoints.

CAPTAIN

For your ... your Tin Man?

Panel 5 of 8: Jim Doe again, still in the distance.

CAPTION

"Just because they're naming him like a cartoon, that don't mean he's not real. Sir."

Panel 6 of 8: The captain, smiling, looking over to Jim Doe, meaning it was *his* POV in Panel 5.

CAPTAIN

Like you two aren't characters from some western? Playing your own little version of cowboys and Indians...?

Panel 7 of 8: Tight on the captain, smiling at his own joke, his hand coming up for the cigar he's got clenched in his teeth/smile.

CAPTAIN

No offense intended, of course—

Panel 8 of 8: The captain flinching away from the empty space where McKirkle and Maines just were.

CAPTION
None taken.

PAGE SEVENTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 7 (3/2/2): Ben and Steph Yellow Calf, wide awake, seatbelted into the backseat of a moving car. Late afternoon-ish. Thick traffic.

CAPTION
Usually, right now they'd be locked in a well-stocked cellar just outside their hometown.

CAPTION
So he could collect them later.

Panel 2 of 7: Side/top angle on the normal sedan, gridlocked on what should be a fast-moving road.

CAPTION
That's what the scouting trips are for. To find those cellars.

CAPTION
Because driving on public roads like this.

Panel 3 of 7: The kids again, Steph looking out her window, at another KID, looking back to her. The kid's car is packed with stuff, like his parents are escaping McCook (like everybody else on the road).

CAPTION
With them.

CAPTION
It's not something he would advise.

Panel 4 of 7: John13's hand gripping the steering wheel hard. His eyes flashing in the rearview, impatient, nervous.

CAPTION
Not that he can't rise above this as well.

CAPTION
Just that he's only got two weeks vacation, here. And already used

nine days sitting on the storage unit.

Panel 5 of 7, wide: Wide, high angle on what's slowing things up here. It's a state police checkpoint. The only indication that John13's seen this is the amount of space now between his car and the car in front of him.

Panel 6 of 7, wide: Step in the backseat, eyeing the kid in the car next to theirs. As if trying to send code with her eyes.

CAPTION

And he has somewhere to be.

JOHN13

(calling over
backseat, to kids)

You guys hungry, yeah?

CAPTION

Or, more specifically, somewhere not to be...

Panel 7 of 7: Tall angle on the sedan again, as it loops into the ditch, turning around, avoiding the checkpoint.

CAPTION

"Think I saw a place back here somewhere."

PAGE SEVENTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 8 (2/3/3), the wide one: McCook at dusk. Sheriff Debs standing from his cruiser, National Guard trucks all around. He's peeling his sunglasses from his face, resettling his cowboy hat. The National Guard captain watching him, some LACKEY standing by him, taking orders.

CAPTAIN

(to himself)

What is this, a cowboy convention?

LACKEY

Think that'd be a rodeo, sir...

Panel 2 of 8: Jim Doe, still sitting on that same tailgate, with the same blanket. Debs and the captain in the background, gesticulating.

CAPTION

From all the accountants playing soldier, he knows about the Yellow Calves.

Panel 3 of 8: Exterior of the Yellow Calf trailer. It's marked off with police tape.

CAPTION

The unofficial word is that it predates the storm.

Panel 4 of 8: Tight on Jim Doe's face, all squinted up, studying McCook.

CAPTION

He knows better.

Panel 5 of 8: Debs walking over, the captain waving him away.

CAPTION

In his wallet, \$414 wet dollars.

CAPTION

And if he were to call Agnes right now, he's not sure what he'd report.

Panel 6 of 8: Long shot of Debs, almost to Jim Doe.

CAPTION

That he's not even chasing Amos Pease anymore, the one who shot her husband during a routine traffic stop?

CAPTION

That he's looking for his sister?

Panel 7 of 8: Tight on Jim Doe's eyes.

CAPTION

That last night he met a man who was supposed to have taken him to her?

Panel 8 of 8: Debs standing by Jim Doe, the two of them looking out over McCook.

DEBS

This is getting to be a habit, yeah? Picking your red ass up?

JIM DOE
He's got two more kids.

DEBS
Get in. I can take you home,
anyway. Maybe you can get your
pretty white truck back, even, quit
calling me...

PAGE SEVENTY-SIX

Panel 1 of 6: a man in a brown and tan police uniform is standing at a wall of toys in a truckstop. He's reaching out to touch one of the four masks lined up at chest-level: Dorothy, The Lion, The Scarecrow, and The Tin Man. It's deep night.

CAPTION
"Home."

CAPTION
That's once.

Panel 2 of 6: Reverse shot. It's John13, of course. In Jim Doe's Castro Country Deputy outfit, holster and all. He's holding the Tin Man mask in his hand now, so it's looking up at him.

CAPTION
The third diner in four hours.

CAPTION
He's not sure how much more
chloroform the children can take.

CAPTION
But they need a mother's the thing.

Panel 3 of 6: Some unlucky, middling-attractive WAITRESS balancing a stack of dishes and coffee pots past a table. A harried woman with black hair.

CAPTION
A mother with the right physical
characteristics.

CAPTION
Matching hair, matching skin.

CAPTION
A legal car.

CAPTIONS

No warrants, nothing to ring any bells at a roadblock or checkpoint.

Panel 4 of 6: The waitress standing over John13's booth, order pad in hand. John13 sitting where he can see his sedan in the parking lot, of course (sign: *Arapahoe Feed & Speed*). Spread on the table, all four Oz-masks from the rack. The dining area crowded with truckers and families.

WAITRESS

(about the masks)

Not in Kansas anymore, right?

JOHN13

I don't even remember the movie, I don't think. Something about blue monkeys...

WAITRESS

They carried the kids off, yeah. Messed me up for a while.

JOHN13

For a while?

WAITRESS

I haven't seen it for a few years, I mean.

Panel 5 of 6: Same diner, except now John13's had a plate and cleaned it. The diner around him empty, deserted. The waitress at the counter, counting tips or something. From the slightly lower angle we're looking at the booth, now, we can see under the table, to the chloroform in one of John13's hands, the folded rag in his other hand...

CAPTION

His first cheeseburger in fourteen years.

CAPTION

It was good. Definitely not milk-thistle, anyway.

CAPTION

Not that he'll be able to hold it down.

CAPTION

But nothing lasts.

CAPTION

He learned this a long time ago.

Panel 6 of 6: John13's booth empty, just his plate, his glass, and, the waitress reaching down to them, the four Oz-masks. She's not looking at them, though, but out to the parking lot. John13 almost to his car again. Only we can see the folded rag in his hand.

CAPTION

It won't be any problem at the checkpoint, using his own ID.

CAPTION

He's not flagged in any database.

CAPTION

Just another refugee out of Nebraska, taking his estranged family to safety.

CAPTION

Estranged, sleeping family.

CAPTION

He'll have to change clothes again, of course.

PAGE SEVENTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 7 (2/3/3), wide: Long, level angle on the Arapahoe Feed & Speed. Couple of random tractor-trailers idling around, their running lights giving a dull glow. Empty pump islands. One police cruiser up near the glass, two people in a booth inside.

CAPTION

4:52am.

Panel 2 of 7: It's Jim Doe and Debs, Debs working on a cigarette, the remains of their food all over the table. Debs hooking his chin over to the counter.

CAPTION

\$387.55.

DEBS

What's it take to get some coffee here, you think?

JIM DOE

She said somebody quit tonight. You were in the can.

Panel 3 of 7: Debs, smiling, blowing smoke.

DEBS

A little old for you, isn't she?
Out of high school and all, I
mean...

CAPTION

"It's not like that."

Panel 4 of 7: The two of them from the side again, the blonde, tired waitress there now, pouring coffee, making things awkward.

JIM DOE

And anyway, we're not talking about
me.

DEBS

Just be nice to talk about
something else for a change, I
thought. It's a long way to Texas.

JIM DOE

We can stop him, though.

Panel 5 of 7: Debs, holding his cup up in thanks to the waitress, already fading back to the counter. Behind him, turning in from the road, some bright-bright headlights.

DEBS

So he's been doing this since,
what? 1982? But suddenly you're in
his head?

JIM DOE

I've talked to him, yeah.

Panel 6 of 7, equal width: The headlights resolve into a news van, bristling with satellites.

DEBS

Well, hell, kid. I talk to my wife
every damn day and I still-

JIM DOE

The one thing that doesn't change:
he only takes Indian kids.

Panel 7 of 7, equal width: The news van through the glass, the female reporter from McCook stepping down, her clothes all rumpled, hair fried.

JIM DOE

I think I know what to do now.

Panel 1 of 4: In the waitress's car, as if looking forward from the back dash, at the sun coming up. It's the perfect little family: mom, dad, both kids in back. Dad the only one awake, his hand tuning the news in.

NEWS

...[static]... twenty-nine confirmed dead, thirty-one counting the two children of Native American descent still missing as of last hour's report...

Panel 2 of 4: a highway PATROLMAN leaning down to the driver's side window of the now-stopped car. He's got a flashlight, but it's dawn, so he's not pointing with it. In his other hand, a cup of steaming coffee. His hat tilted back like it's been a long night. John13 and Ben and Steph and the waitress are all hidden by him, pretty much.

PATROLMAN

-guess you know what we're looking for then.

JOHN13

...I'm listening to it right now, officer - are they supposed to have made it this far on their own, though? How old are they?

PATROLMAN

Close to yours, I'd say.

Panel 3 of 4: the patrolman's POV into the back seat of the car, the two sleeping children, Steph's hair obviously cropped now. They're in masks: Lion and Scarecrow. At the edge of the frame, John13, his Tin Man mask cocked up on his head. The waitress slumped forward, face still hidden.

JOHN13

Except ... a boy and a girl, right?

PATROLMAN

Yeah. They'll probably find them under a house or something. Still need to check your ID, though...

JOHN13

... so ends the whirlwind tour ...

Panel 4 of 4: From behind the patrolman, now. He's moving his flashlight from the driver's license to the kids in the backseat again.

PATROLMAN

Mind taking their masks off for moment there, Mr....

JOHN13

No, but, I mean ... they just fell asleep, officer. Have you ever driven across country with a seven year old and a nine year old?

PATROLMAN

Well-

JOHN13

I understand, of course. But, believe me, there's only Dorothy in this car, officer.

PAGE SEVENTY-NINE

Panel 1 of 4: The patrolman, shifting his almost useless-now flashlight to where John13's indicating: his 'wife,' the waitress. Instead of cranking her head around, he's threading the hair from her face. She's wearing the wide-eyed, disconcertingly-awake Dorothy mask.

JOHN13

If you still want-

PATROLMAN

No, thank you. Just move along...

Panel 2 of 4: Back-dash POV of the happy family again, John13 with his hand to the volume knob, his mask back down over his face, making him wholly emotionless.

JOHN13

(as if to the kids)

Hey, back there! Don't make me pull this car over...

NEWS

-initial estimates are putting the damage at between two and three million dollars...[static]...

Panel 3 of 4: The two kids in the backseat, leaned into each other. As reflected in the rearview mirror, pretty much. Which has a feather hanging

from it, we can see now. A feather tied with carefully-braided, long black hair (Steph's). The push is this is John13's POV as he listens to the radio.

NEWS

... while the biological father of the two missing children, a businessmen in Fargo, is offering a reward for the return or discovery of his two half-Indian children...

Panel 4 of 4: A three-quarters behind, high angle on the waitress's car, the brake lights flaring bright, bright red.

CAPTION

Three days of vacation left, now.

CAPTION

For him.

PAGE EIGHTY

Panel 1 of 5 (2/1/2): Wide-ish shot of a rest stop at night, police vehicles swarming over it, a few little headquarters-type tents set up, glowing from within. A just-visible sign points to *Trego Center*, just up the road.

CAPTION

Deep in the heart of Kansas.

CAPTION

Of America.

Panel 2 of 5: Swooping in through the milling COPS and cars and lights and tape &etc. To a specific tent.

CAPTION

A place to stop and have a picnic.

CAPTION

For a family to have a picnic.

Panel 3 of 5, wide: McKirkle and Maines *inside* that tent, standing over the dead, naked waitress, still in her Dorothy mask. McKirkle and Maines' legs effectively 'clothe' her. Other UNIFORMED MEN on the other side of the waitress. McKirkle looking to the side, as if out the flap, into the night.

MAINES

Them two Sioux kids?

UNIFORMED MAN

No.

MCKIRKLE

Not yet, more like.

Panel 4 of 5: The whole rest stop scene through the windshield of a cruiser, the two occupants just in silhouette, pretty much: Debs and Jim Doe.

DEBS

Guess this means he heard your little radio show then, yeah?

Panel 5 of 5: Tight on Jim Doe's eyes as he stands from the cruiser, surveys the scene. He's terrified of what he might have caused here. Debs isn't in the panel (still in the car, really), just his dialogue bubble.

DEBS

Thought Indians were supposed to be stoical, all that?

CAPTION

He sounds just like Thom Gentry.

CAPTION

Almost enough to indebt a person to Amos Pease.

CAPTION

Except he's promised himself not to think that.

CAPTION

Anymore.

PAGE EIGHTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3): Debs walking through all the uniforms, bee-lining the central tent. Behind him, mad, Jim Doe. In cast-off civilian clothes (scrounged from McCook, presumably). Hair ragged, fists balled, steps long, etc. Too many of the COPS taking note of him, their coffee cups stopped mid-drink.

CAPTION

But then it's Gentry's funeral all over again.

Panel 2 of 8: Tight on two of the cops, catching each other's eyes, about Jim Doe.

CAPTION

The badges. The accusations.

Panel 3 of 8: Tight on a flyer pulled up from some cop's clipboard. It's the Amos Pease one. Jim Doe in the background of the flyer, walking to the glowing tent with the transparent walls.

CAPTION

A body among them nobody'd paid for. Yet.

Panel 4 of 8, the wide one: Jim Doe stopped in a circle of drawn service revolvers, a sea of stiff cowboy hats. Gentry still walking forward, mostly unaware.

COP

Familiar with the term 'field ticket,' boy?

CAPTION

The last time a man in a cowboy hat used a six shooter to kill a real, live Indian in the Great Plains, and not pull any jail time:

Panel 5 of 8: Looking over a long pistol at Jim Doe, just staring back.

CAPTION

Two weeks ago.

CAPTION

In the parking lot of a bar.

Panel 6 of 8: McKirkle and Maines parting the circle of guns. They're in dusters, hats, boots, are unshaven, all that: grim and intolerant.

CAPTION

The Old West is alive and well.

Panel 7 of 8: Gentry holding his hand up, to stop this.

CAPTION

Of the murders attributed to Amos Pease, one particularly messy one was in Garden City, Kansas.

CAPTION

The owner of another garage.
'Honest Injuns.'

CAPTION
It was a pun.

CAPTION
To the owner.

Panel 8 of 8: The circle of guns lowering, reluctantly, Maines guiding them down, not Gentry, Jim Doe glaring at McKirkle.

MAINES
He's ours.

COP
What do you—?

MCKIRKLE
Need him to ID somebody.

PAGE EIGHTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 6: McKirkle and Maines and Debs and Jim Doe in the tent with the dead waitress. Jim Doe looking down at her. The toe of McKirkle's boot hooked up under her side.

JIM DOE
You can't just run her prints?

MAINES
More of a family affair.

MCKIRKLE
She's Indian.

JIM DOE
And you think I'm supposed to know her just because I'm Indian too? Do you know all the cowboys out there, Ranger?

Panel 2 of 6: Tight on the dead waitress McKirkle's just flipped over, onto her stomach. Written there in black marker or something: *s a r i n a*.

MCKIRKLE
(just a dialogue
bubble)
All the ones with my sister's name write on them, yeah.

Panel 3 of 6: Jim Doe on his knees by the woman, wanting to see her face, not wanting to touch her. Debs and McKirkle and Maines still standing, just watching.

JIM DOE
Sarina? God, no—

MAINES
Her prints come back to a Daney
King. Out of Nebraska.

MCKIRKLE
She's not your sister, kid. Your
sister's de—

Panel 4 of 6: Jim Doe rising, swinging wild at McKirkle,
catching him right in the face.

Panel 5 of 6: McKirkle, his head cocked over. He's smiling,
his teeth bloody.

MCKIRKLE
You done there, now?

CAPTION
The Great Indian Uprising of 1999.

Panel 6 of 6: Jim Doe absolutely flying through the tent
flaps, as if thrown.

CAPTION
Definition of a field ticket:

CAPTION
a citation that doesn't leave any
paper behind

CAPTION
one you pay in the ditch, not at
the courthouse

CAPTION
with skin.

PAGE EIGHTY-THREE

Panel 1 of 7 (3/2/2): McKirkle punching Jim Doe hard,
lifting him off the ground with it.

JIM DOE
...you're looking for the wrong
guy, Ranger...

Panel 2 of 7: McKirkle punching Jim Doe again, all the cops
watching, liking.

JIM DOE
...the one you should be — looking
for ... he's not even Indian ...
only thinks he is—

Panel 3 of 7: Jim Doe crashed back into picnic table, wiping his busted mouth with the back of his forearm.

JIM DOE
You're looking for Amos Pease. But
Amos Pease — all he's doing ... all
he's doing out here is burying the
dead ... and anybody who gets in
his way—

Panel 4 of 7: McKirkle, standing over Jim Doe. Jim Doe smiling now.

JIM DOE
—and he's dead anyway. Has been for
years.

Panel 5 of 7, wide: McKirkle, picking Jim Doe up like a bouncer might, hurling him across the picnic table, Jim Doe a ragdoll.

MCKIRKLE
Then who is it, kid?

Panel 6 of 7, wide: Jim Doe trying to sit up, the barrel trashcan he just hit turned over sideways behind him, the open end almost facing us, trash spilling out. McKirkle not looking at Jim Doe anymore, but that trash. Something in it. Jim Doe starting to crane his head around too, to see.

JIM DOE
...not me...

Panel 7 of 7: Tight on what they're seeing: a boy, Ben Yellow Calf, spilling arm-first and halogen pale from the bottom of the barrel, where's he been curled like a snail.

CAPTION
"Toto, I don't think we're in
Kansas anymore. Do you?"

PAGE EIGHTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 4: Backseat view on John13, driving. A city opening up before him, nameless. He's adjusting the rearview, so we can see a slice of the Tin Man mask he's still wearing.

CAPTION

The children are alive, of course.

CAPTION

Because live children are children
somebody saved.

CAPTION

Kickstart the hero machine.

CAPTION

Cue the cameras.

CAPTION

Everybody go north, away from the
dryline.

Panel 2 of 4: Top-view of a ratty old Impala jerking around
John13's car, to pass.

CAPTION

In a better-designed world, he
would get three weeks of vacation,
not two.

CAPTION

And the human liver would be
indestructible.

CAPTION

And the human heart.

Panel 3 of 4: The Impala, pulling even with John13 for a
moment. Looking out John13's side window. Hunched over the
wheel, a beer bottle loose in his fingers, is a coyote. A
man in a coyote-head, anyway. Driving very intently.

CAPTION

In Native American culture, the
coyote is the creator, the
destroyer, the trickster.

CAPTION

His whole existence is one of
excess, of indulgence.

CAPTION

The Christ-figure, out there
sacrificing himself to comic abuse
so the Indians won't have to.

CAPTION

A masochistic sociopath, some would
say.

Panel 4 of 4: High angle of John13's car, pulling in behind the Impala, accelerating to keep up.

CAPTION

To others, a genius.

CAPTION

A sign.

PAGE EIGHTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 9: Rear view of Deb's cruiser, nosed up to a neon convenience store. The flyer of Amos Pease already in the window, looking out. The cruiser's the only car there; Jim Doe's door is open, his arm guiding it. Debs is just sitting there.

CAPTION

Garden City, Kansas.

DEBS

Think you can keep from getting
your ass handed to you by that
little girl in there?

Panel 2 of 9: Jim Doe inside the store, lightly fingering various ointments and bandages on the rack. His lip split, his hand holding his ribs in place, etc. All this from the *male* CLERK's POV.

CLERK

Hey, this ain't no IHS, man.

Panel 3 of 9: Tight on Jim Doe's face, confused.

JIM DOE

(small, to himself)

IHS?

UNCLAIMED

(from behind)

Indian Health Services.

Panel 4 of 9: Jim Doe's POV, looking down the aisle behind him, towards the coolers. Standing there is the same Indian man from Page 19, holding a whole display box of Slim Jims.

JIM DOE

You.

INDIAN MAN

Surprised to see you here, Sheriff.

Panel 5 of 9: Side view of the two of them, standing a bit closer. The Indian man smiling a sly smile...

JIM DOE
Deputy. Why?

INDIAN MAN
Because you're Indian. And there's
only one place to be if you're
Indian tonight...

Panel 6 of 9: Clerk's POV of these two Indians, socializing in his store.

JIM DOE
What if you just think you're
Indian?

INDIAN MAN
Same difference.

Panel 7 of 9: Jim Doe and the Indian man standing at the counter, Jim Doe reaching back for his wallet.

CLERK
You two playing bingo back there,
or what?

INDIAN MAN
Just voting on where to bury the
hatchet...

CAPTION
\$130.10.

Panel 8 of 9: Jim Doe and the Indian man standing at Deb's window. We're watching from the back, pretty much.

CAPTION
2:03am.

JIM DOE
He says he saw him.

INDIAN MAN
He was wearing a mask, Sheriff. All
these blue monkeys behind the car,
like he had fishing line tied
through their noses or something...

DEBS
He had a sign too, I take it?

INDIAN MAN
'Will kidnap for food...'

Panel 9 of 9: Debs straight on, massaging his growing headache, Jim Doe and the Indian man just midsections beside him, the Indian man gesturing with his hands, flattening one of them out as if on top of something (to show 'floating').

INDIAN MAN
... you know it's gonna rain here,
right? Think it's the big one too,
this time. Wash all the white
people out to sea, like...

DEBS
Just us?

INDIAN MAN
You never look in the toilet,
kimosabe? Yeah, man, shit, it
floats...

PAGE EIGHTY-SIX

Panel 1 of 6: A trunk-type POV, looking forward through the interior of Debs' cruiser. A city rolling up before them; it has the same low, industrial skyline as the one John13 was driving up on. The Indian man's leaning up to the screen between him and the front seat; he's talking to Jim Doe, evidently hasn't stopped yet.

CAPTION
Dodge City in the morning.

INDIAN MAN
So what happened to your pony,
then?

JIM DOE
It was a Bronco.

INDIAN MAN
The Ford, yeah. Big white horse.

JIM DOE
Had an Impala after that.

INDIAN MAN
Sound like a confused Indian to me.
At the zoo.

JIM DOE
The circus, more like.

INDIAN MAN

America, ennit? Go left here,
chief.

Panel 2 of 6: The three of them standing and stretching in a parking lot very similar to the one Jim Doe was in before: Indian cars, RV's, tipis, lodges. Now there's campfires and beer bottles, too.

INDIAN MAN

...only one place to be if you're
Indian tonight...

CAPTION

Or if you think you are.

Panel 3 of 6: Long-ish, high angle on Debs following to where Jim Doe's looking now. They're all just silhouettes, maybe even black/white inverted, some. What Jim Doe is studying is a tall, rangy dog, nosing the trunk of a late-model Pontiac. Not at all unlike the waitress's car.

JIM DOE

What'd she have registered?

DEBS

The ... from the rest stop?

JIM DOE

It was a Pontiac.

Panel 4 of 6: Jim Doe turning to the Indian man, except the Indian man's already melted into the pow-wow somehow.

JIM DOE

So where do we--?

CAPTION

Sign up. Register. Pay. Whatever
happens at one of these things.

Panel 5 of 6: Tight on a screwdriver in Jim Doe's dark, long-fingered (ie, *Piegan*) hands. He's ramming it into the lock of the trunk the dog was interested in.

DEBS

Don't guess you guys stand on
warrants much down in Castro
Country, right?

JIM DOE

He came here to get more kids. Real
kids. Indian kids. They could
already be in here for all we--

Panel 6 of 6: The trunk, popped open. We're looking over Jim Doe and Debs' heads. It's a dead thing all right, but not human: a green-eyed doe, her throat slit, belly cut. The dog already flopping its forelegs up into the trunk. Big, pendulous drops of rain starting to splash down on everything.

DEBS

Well what'd you think?

CAPTION

Nothing.

CAPTION

sarina

PAGE EIGHTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 8 (3/3/2): a late-model, mid-size car, driving fast through the rain.

CAPTION

The car is from a lot, was easy to get started.

Panel 2 of 8: Front-seat level view of the dashboard. There's a stack of license plates there.

CAPTION

The plates are from a motel.

CAPTION

All different states.

Panel 3 of 8: Passenger-seat view of the driver, Amos Pease.

CAPTION

He doesn't remember taking them.

CAPTION

Just that they're there now. And what to do with them each time he stops.

Panel 4 of 8: Tight on the wide assortment of spilled pills, from Amos's POV. They're scattered over the passenger seat.

CAPTION

The pills are for his injuries.

Panel 5 of 8: Tight on Amos's side that he's holding. His face battered bad behind his hair, his hands crusted with blood.

CAPTION
He needs them all.

CAPTION
And more.

Panel 6 of 8: Backseat view, looking out the windshield with him.

CAPTION
It would have been easier to die.
To stay dead.

Panel 7 of 8: Tight on the rearview mirror, as if Amos's POV. It's another black, decayed child, mouth sewn shut.

CAPTION
Except he wasn't done yet.

Panel 8 of 8, wide: Amos's stolen car slipping through the rain at impossible speeds. From the side of the road, it looks like a normal guy driving, a kid in back, sitting perfectly, perfectly still. The bumper stick on his car—maybe we can read it: *My heroes have always killed cowboys.*

PAGE EIGHTY-EIGHT

Panel 1 of 1, splash: Debs and Jim Doe small and lost in this smeary, all-night pow-wow. We can see the layout of the exhibition building it's being held in, though: bleachers unfolded from all the walls; the next ring in, vendor booths; in the center, the dance area. Right now in the dance area it's a grass-stomp, it looks like. And not 'exotic' or touristy or any of that, though of course there's a lot of goose feathers and plastic tomahawks and long blond braids. And cameras, of course. The guy with the coyote head, looking down, as if stomping grass.

PAGE EIGHTY-NINE

Panel 1 of 1: Reverse-shot splash page. It's Jim Doe through the feather-shrouded eyes of one of the dancers. Jim Doe looking at the coyote-head dancer, maybe.

PAGE NINETY

Panel 1 of 9: Jim Doe and Debs from the side, buying fry bread off a long table of it, the seller guy handing both over to Jim Doe.

JIM DOE
-just anybody with two kids. Indian
kids.

CAPTION
\$122.15.

Panel 2 of 9: Debs, knowing what to do with the honey-dripping fry bread, a dotted line identifying it as *Indian donut*. He's standing back from Jim Doe now, Jim Doe at another vendor table, looking at some gaudy, fur-trailing, mass-produced pipe.

JIM DOE
-there like a place where all the
kids go, then?

CAPTION
\$90.43.

Panel 3 of 9: Another table, another vendor, reverse angle, looking past Jim Doe and Debs, to the center, the dancers. The vendor balling his fists at Debs, glaring.

JIM DOE
-no, no, he's with me-

Panel 4 of 9: Jim Doe, trying to stop the vendor from advancing on Debs, knocks a glass eagle to the ground. It shatters. The top of the panel is the bottom of the table, pretty much.

CAPTION
\$60.43.

Panel 5 of 9: Another VENDOR, another table. Debs touching the butt of his service revolver.

VENDOR
(laughing, touching
his FRIEND's
stomach with the
back of his hand)
You mean like an Indian day care,
man?

FRIEND
All makes and models, brother...

Panel 6 of 9: Jim Doe and Debs, from a high above, unclaimed POV. They're moving along the vendor ring, losing each other a bit, two ex-con looking INDIANS between them for the moment, everybody else giving Debs's uniform wide berth. Directly behind them, a feathered-up FANCYDANCER.

Panel 7 of 9: side angle on the unclaimed POV from Panel 6. It's a bunch of KIDS, smoking cigarettes up in the rafters. They have a small radio with them.

RADIO
...[static]... the
storm...Oklahoma...

KID 1
(about radio)
Nothing else on?

KID 2
...just nothing with drums, man...

Panel 8 of 9: The two ex-con Indians have Jim Doe pinned up against the cinderblock wall of the exhibition building. Holding him there for LORNA PEASE; she's got an eagle wing fan now, is wearing a traditional dress, has a number pinned to her back, fluttering up. The shiny things dangling all over her dress are cameos of Amos and Angela.

LORNA PEASE
That's him, yeah. He's the one.

INDIAN #1
Never heard of NAGPRA*?

CAPTION
'Native American Graves Protection
and Repatriation Act.'

Panel 9 of 9: The tall, face-painted fancydancer putting his hand on Lorna Pease's buckskin shoulder, looking the whole time at Jim Doe.

JIM DOE
Ever heard of the Indian Child
Welfare Act?

FANCYDANCER
Believe that was 1978.

FANCYDANCER
...I think I can take it from here,
Lorena.

Panel 1 of 9: Debs from high-above, at another fry-bread station, digging for his wallet, looking around for Jim Doe, who isn't there. A faded-red bullseye over his fry-bread plate; the whole *panel* as seen through a target.

CAPTION
"He won't be digging up anymore
bones."

DEBS
(oblivious)
Slippery-ass Indian...

Panel 2 of 9: Close on flakes of cigarette ash hissing into
the shiny skin of his fry-bread.

CAPTION
Bulls-eye.

Panel 3 of 9: Debs from a ways off, a young INDIAN KID
tugging at his sleeve, trying to hand Debs a ratty sheet of
paper. It's one of the kids from the rafters, we can tell.
And, by how far down Debs has eaten his latest fry bread,
it's been a while since Panel 2.

DEBS
What is it? Your pa stuck in a well
again?

Panel 4 of 9: Close on the Indian kid's hand, pulling at
Debs' sleeve.

CAPTION
Coup.

DEBS
Well drink, I mean...

Panel 5 of 9: The paper the kid was forcing on Debs. It's
one of the grainy Amos Pease flyers, scotch tape still at
all four corners.

DEBS
Him?

Panel 6 of 9: Looking over the top of a mounded-up trashcan,
at Debs, following the kid outside. On top of the pile of
trash is Deb's half-eaten frybread. The fancydancer watching
all this happen. As if orchestrating it.

Panel 7 of 9: Debs standing in the rain with the kid.
They're looking at all the drunk, passed-out Indian men on
the dark side of the building, the rain wetting their
extended legs but not their bodies. Brown-bagged bottles all
around.

DEBS
-now this is more what I'm used to
out of your kind, kid...

DEBS
The Retired Wagon Burners Club, get
it - ?

Panel 8 of 9: In Debs' POV, the kid's already melted away,
of course.

CAPTION
"Shit."

Panel 9 of 9: One of the passed-out Indian men looking up
from the hood of his blanket. It's Jim Doe. He's been beaten
again, then had his face painted over: red kola-stripe down
the middle, fingerthick black lines flaring up from his
cheekbones.

CAPTION
Back to the blanket, like Gentry
said.

CAPTION
A lifetime ago.

PAGE NINETY-ONE

Panel 1 of 5 (3/2): Close on Jim Doe, still looking up from
his blanket, not ever aware of the warpaint, it seems.

JIM DOE
Where all the kids are. They told
me already.

DEBS
They.

JIM DOE
Indian day care...

Panel 2 of 5: What Jim Doe's talking about: all the parked
cars. In every third one, there's kids. Fogged glass,
flashlights. One car down at the end has had its trunk
popped. Hanging half out is the doe, her neck at a bad
angle. The dog is still feeding on her.

CAPTION
"Make and model."

Panel 3 of 5: Jim Doe, trying to stand, ratchet himself up.

DEBS
Who did this to you?

JIM DOE
It wasn't him.

DEBS
How do you know?

JIM
Because I'm alive. But he's here.

DEBS
How—?

JIM DOE
Wouldn't you be? It' an Indian-kid
store.

Panel 4 of 5, a bit wide, split diagonally: in the first/upper triangle, it's Jim Doe and Debs small in comparison to the parking lot now. All the fogged windows, the kids with flashlights in the cars. The second/lower triangle is close on the bound hands of two Indian kids. They're tied to a seat belt in some anonymous backseat.

Panel 5 of 5: We're pulled way off now, to show the true immensity of this parking lot. All the cars to check. How hopeless that would be.

CAPTION
"What'd you say that dead waitress
drove again?"

PAGE NINETY-TWO

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3): Jim Doe from above, moving down a line of parked cars. Most of the one's he's passed have their headlights blazing now. Jim Doe has a screwdriver balled in his hand. Some of kids standing from opened windows like prairie dogs, passing the alarm back.

CAPTION
Her Nebraska plates should have
narrowed the field.

CAPTION
Except plates can be changed,
probably have.

Panel 2 of 8: Tight on Jim Doe, pressing the head of the screwdriver against the valve stem of a car, the air HISSING out.

CAPTION
This can't take all night, though.

Panel 3 of 8: Same image, almost, except now Jim Doe is pushing the screwdriver hard through the sidewall of the tire.

CAPTION

Dear Agnes: Kansas sucks.

Panel 4 of 8, wide: Jim Doe walking away from the tire he just flattened. We're staying with the car, though. Dangling from the rearview is the feather we know. On the dash, face-up, the Tin Man mask. And, the top of his coyote head just barely in the side window, John13.

CAPTION

The dancer sold it to him for the price of a case of beer.

CAPTION

It was less like buying it, more like saving it. Honoring it.

CAPTION

The tradition.

Panel 5 of 8: Backseat POV of John13, easing his door open, his eyes in the rearview, checking on the kids he has tied up. His eyes are halogen white against all the black of his face-paint, the coyote head more a cap, its nose a visor.

JOHN13

You two stay here, all right? I should just be a minute...

Panel 6 of 8: Long view of John13 standing, his regalia simply fucking stunning at night, with the headlights splashing all around.

CAPTION

He guesses he should have put the children in the trunk.

Panel 7 of 8: John13 standing over the deer-eating dog, the dog tucking its tail, slinking away. The deer looking at John13 in wonder, almost, her green eyes very distinct. The sky alive with the storm.

CAPTION

But the night was just so beautiful.

Panel 8 of 8: John13, still large and grand and tall, extending his hand to the dog, the dog almost nosing John13's fingertips.

CAPTION
He couldn't help himself.

PAGE NINETY-THREE

Panel 1 of 6: John13 cupping the top of the dog's head now, rain slicing down all around. Debs suddenly behind him, his elbow cocked, hand to the butt of his service revolver.

DEBS
Hey, chief! You there...

Panel 2 of 6: Tight on John13's make-up smeared, paint-black face. His eyes and his smile so bright, so malicious. So coyote.

JOHN13
Yes, officer?

Panel 3 of 6: This is old stuff: the boy John13 was, handing the unconscious Indian girl Anna Two Elk to George Seche in the woods. Because this is John13's memory, too, George Seche is lousy with feathers and regalia, is Indian royalty, pretty much, his face ridiculously grave.

GEORGE SECHE
The Great Spirit thanks you for this, his daughter.

Panel 4 of 6: Tight again on John13's adult eyes, as if this is hurting him, to be remembering this. A betrayal or something.

CAPTION
"Well, chief?"

Panel 5 of 6: Debs in John13's POV again. Only, now, he's not in Sheriff-khaki's, but George Seche's regalia. Extending a coup stick, curved at the top, trailing feathers.

CAPTION
Chief.

Panel 6 of 6: John13 and Debs just standing there, Debs with his revolver drawn, pointed (not the coup stick). Behind John13 now, in the trunk, Anne Two Elk, her neck at a bad angle, her eyes vibrant-green, matching up with where the doe's were.

CAPTION

There's exactly one car in the parking lot guaranteed not to have a flat tire.

CAPTION

One set of keys for that car.

PAGE NINETY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 6: Jim Doe, standing fast from the front tire of some car. A GUNSHOT, maybe.

JIM DOE

Not again.

Panel 2 of 6: Jim Doe running hard through the mud, screwdriver still in hand. All the kids in the cars HONKING their horns now, the sound everywhere.

JIM DOE

Goddammit, not again.

Panel 3 of 6: Looking over something at Jim Doe; he's just rounded a row of the cars. What we're looking over is the dog. It's eating, pulling strings of gore up from below the panel.

Panel 4 of 6: Jim Doe, standing over a supine Debs, the dog close enough to still snipe a bit or two of the absolute mess Debs' face is. The revolver still clenched in his hand.

CAPTION

He forgives him for 'wagon burner.'

CAPTION

Mostly.

Panel 5 of 6: High angle on Jim Doe, still standing over the body. Now there's an arc of pow-wow people standing silent and dark on the other side of the body. Lorna Pease among them, under a shawl. Indicting Jim Doe just with her eyes.

LORNA PEASE

Done yet, Texas?

Panel 6 of 6: Jim Doe, turning to a car, easing out of the parking lot. Behind him, Debs COUGHS, once, his knee jerking up.

CAPTION

No.

PAGE NINETY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 4: Jim Doe sitting on a trunk, his boots hooked up onto the bumper. The pow-wow people are pulling the deer's guts from Debs' face, Debs fingering it away himself, the deer close and obvious now.

CAPTION

Neither of them should be alive, he knows.

CAPTION

The only reason they are is that this was sacred, to him. An Indian place.

CAPTION

They won't find another.

Panel 2 of 4: Lorna Pease running across Jim Doe's field of vision, her eagle wing fan fluttering down behind her.

LORNA PEASE

Amos! Angela-baby!

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe standing now, looking where she's heading. We're behind him, can see too: one of the ex-con Indians is standing by the open door of a car, his eyes flat, emotionless. He's found something.

LORNA PEASE

-Mommy's coming...

Panel 4 of 4: A frontseat POV of the two tied-up Indian kids in the backseat of the car. The ex-con Indian just in the panel, as a thick midsection. But the kids. They're in the Scarecrow and Lion masks, their plastic eyes scarily open, white.

CAPTION

Dodge City, Kansas.

CAPTION

Oh my.

PAGE NINETY-SIX

Panel 1 of 1, splash: the emptied-out pow-wow grounds from high above, trash everywhere. We're up with the smoking kids; they're lounged back in the rafters, the radio still CRACKLING.

RADIO

...[static]...dryline's going to
settle down over Texas and the
Panhandle ... stall there ...
advisory upgraded to a watch until-

KID 1

Thought I told you to find some
music?

KID 2

It's the only thing on, man...

PAGE NINETY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3): Satellite image of the storm, swirling
down into north Texas.

CAPTION

Worst storm since 1981.

Panel 2 of 8: Moving in, closer. High view of a mostly-
deserted two-lane blacktop.

CAPTION

Oklahoma.

Panel 3 of 8: Tighter on a seriously washed-out part of that
road. There's a firetruck there; by the fact that it's a
ladder truck (ie, for a city), we can tell it was headed
north, to help one of the storm-ravaged cities. But now
this. A pick-up washed into the ditch, against a fence. A
woman standing in back, holding her wet dog. The six FIREMEN
trying to save her.

CAPTION

A place called Buffalo.

Panel 4 of 8: dramatic front shot of Amos Pease, standing at
the edge of the lapping water, his car behind him, the dead
girl there, quiet.

CAPTION

It's not a name he appreciates.

Panel 5 of 8, wide: Side-angle, upstream of this water
crossing the road. The fireman are trying to point their
ladder down to the woman in the truck. It's long, just not
quite long enough, maybe. Behind the firetruck, a white work
truck, the DRIVER leaned forward over the wheel, watching.
Amos still standing there, his hair blowing behind him.

Panel 6 of 8: We're behind Amos, the firemen all lined up on the other side of the water. His own personal hell.

FIREMAN 1

Hey, you! Give us hand, yeah?

Panel 7 of 8: Same image, just backed off a bit more: we're looking through the windshield. From the backseat, maybe. Amos still just standing there. One of the fireman underhanding a long rope high in the air, across the water.

Panel 8 of 8: Tight on Amos Pease's ragged shoe. A clean red axe is THUNKING into the ground right by him, evidently tossed over as well.

CAPTION

"—just tie it off on that, man."

PAGE NINETY-EIGHT

Panel 1 of 9: Tight on the rope on the firemen-side, being tied hard onto a silver valve.

Panel 2 of 9: Tight on Amos Pease's side, a loop of the rope going around the bumper of his car.

CAPTION

Because the axe would never hold.

Panel 3 of 9: Side-view again, the rope as tight as a guitar string between the two cars. Amos standing at the edge of the water again. Three of the firemen already going out along it, hand over hand.

Panel 4 of 9: Top view of the fireman, making a human chain anchored halfway down the rope. They're trying to reach the woman in the truck, almost can.

Panel 5 of 9: Two more firemen coming out to help.

Panel 6 of 9: Tight on Amos's quadrant, the red square around Park, his hand on the shifter.

Panel 7 of 9: Amos's POV. He's looking into the rearview mirror, at the sewn-mouthed, girl.

Panel 8 of 9: Same image, except, now, the girl's eyes are opening. So white.

Panel 9 of 9: Side-view again, of Amos's car, jerking forward a few feet, the five firemen getting swept away, the woman in the bed of the truck screaming.

CAPTION

They shouldn't have named the place
buffalo.

CAPTION

It's their fault.

PAGE NINETY-NINE

Panel 1 of 7 (3/2/2): One of the firemen struggling his way along the slack rope. Reaching for Amos, like this was all a mistake.

Panel 2 of 7: We're behind Amos as he reaches down for the fireman. What the fireman can't see, of course, is the axe Amos is holding behind his left leg.

Panel 3 of 7: Just as Amos takes the fireman's hand, he brings the axe around into the fireman's face.

Panel 4 of 7, wide: Side angle of Amos and the sixth fireman, watching each other across this river, Amos's axe dripping blood.

Panel 5 of 7: Surprise, Amos raises a pistol, shoots the fireman dead in the face.

Panel 6 of 7, wide: Amos with the dead girl across his shoulder. He has the head of the axe hooked over the now-tight rope, is moving slowly across the water, the woman in the bed of the truck just watching, her dog BARKING and BARKING.

Panel 7 of 7, normal width: As if the panel border is the only thing separating this continuous image, as it's really just an extension of Panel 6: The man in the white work truck, running into the pasture, leaving his door open, smoke trailing up from his tailpipe.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED

Panel 1 of 4: The fireman, caught in the fence, drowned. The woman balled up in the bed of her truck, shot now too, blood all over the cab of her truck.

Panel 2 of 4: Looking at the front of the white work truck. It has the girl in front now, the seat belt pulled across her chest, keeping her in place.

Panel 3 of 4: reverse-shot, through the work truck's windshield: Amos, axe in hand, down on one knee over the

dead fireman, his hair falling down across the fireman's face, the pistol deep in the fireman's mouth.

CAPTION

Until the magazine's empty.

CAPTION

The barrel hot.

CAPTION

The nightmare over.

Panel 4 of 4: Close on a full shot of Amos, shrugging into the fireman's yellow jacket, the boots and helmet already on.

CAPTION

Don't look now at me now, Sarina.

CAPTION

I'm not him.

BOOK III.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND ONE

Panel 1 of 6: Side, high-ish angle on all these people standing out at their mailboxes, watching the sky. It's low, grey-green: mammatus clouds. Foreboding.

CAPTION
Nazareth, Texas.

Panel 2 of 6: The cemetery in Nazareth, just north of the Catholic church. We can see the white water tower in the background. Picking among the graves, Terra. But she's looking at the sky too, not the headstones.

CAPTION
Population: mindful of the sky.

Panel 3 of 6: Over-the-shoulder shot of an old man in a dingy living room. He's tied to an oxygen tank, is focused on the weather report on the tv. The usual graphics, but, in the lower right corner, an animated white tornado.

CAPTION
1981 is yesterday for them.

Panel 4 of 6: Terra, running against the wind, through the cemetery.

CAPTION
For some, it's every day.

Panel 5 of 6: One of the mailbox/sky watchers, framed by her house, her robe whipping around her legs. Standing on the porch is her husband, his weather radio stretched as far as it will go, sharp, wavy lines of danger radiating out from it. Stuff blowing down the road. Heavy stuff.

Panel 6 of 6: Terra in some living room, at some desk, hammering numbers into the phone. She's crying, frantic.

CAPTION
This day, even.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWO

Panel 1 of 1, splash: A ropy, thick tornado, from far away, so we can see it all. It's just west of Nazareth, gouging up earth.

CAPTION

In 1947, the one that went from White Deer, Texas to Whitehorse, Oklahoma lasted for more than an hour.

CAPTION

Witnesses claim it was six tornadoes that came together as one.

CAPTION

Like punishment.

CAPTION

The finger of God.

CAPTION

"...[static]...initials reports are that an F4, possibly F5 tornado has touched down in Nazareth, Texas...[static]..."

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THREE

Panel 1 of 4: Looking through plate glass at Jim Doe and Debs, sitting in a booth in a gas station, nursing coffee, the clerk's radio CRACKLING with the news from Page 102, Jim Doe holding his hand up to Debs, so they can hear this news. His head turned to it. Debs reaching for his wallet.

DEBS

-but how can you only have seven dollars left? Didn't you say she gave you-?

Panel 2 of 4: Another convenience store, a ceiling-type POV on John13, curled into a ball by the counter, the milk he was buying for his liver spilling out on the ground. Now, he's holding the side of his head, his ear, blood seeping out between his fingers.

CAPTION

"...[static]... apparently the tornado is heading in a westerly direction, away from Nazareth. Residents of Castro County are urged to seek shelter. Safe places include bathtubs, doorways, interior closets--"

Panel 3 of 4: Looking over a steering wheel at this storm, the tornado hardly even there, hidden by the debris it's

drilling up from the pasture. The hands on the steering wheel are coming out of a fireman's yellow slicker. In the rearview, looking away now, her eyes open, the dead girl.

CAPTION

It's happening again.

CAPTION

Like it never stopped.

Panel 4 of 4: Back to the same angle on the plate glass of the convenience store Jim Doe and Debs were sitting in. Their coffee's still there, Jim Doe's spilled, dripping. But Jim Doe and Debs? Gone.

CAPTION

Like it can all turn out different this time.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND FOUR

Panel 1 of 3 (1/1/1): The thick, black tornado just standing on top of a mid-size little north Texas town. The tilted city limits sign reads *Dimmit City Limits / pop. 17,439*. another twisted farm-to-market sign the Texas-shape on it, so we know that too.

CAPTION

In the movie, the tornado that carried Dorothy to Oz was made from cardboard and muslin.

Panel 2 of 3: Same image, the tornado just in a different part of town now. Lofting freight cars through the air like nothing.

CAPTION

It only left one person dead.

Panel 3 of 3: The tornado cutting through the concrete grain silos, the silos just exploding, darkening the sky with seed. Most of the town trashed by now. The population part of the city limits sign blurry now, damaged, unreadable.

CAPTION

This is real life, though.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND FIVE

Panel 1 of 6: Bill McKirkle and Walter Maine's truck, parked as far it's possible to go into Dimmit. Parked by Amos's white work truck.

Panel 2 of 6: Driver-side angle on the two of them on the passenger side of the truck. The dead girl still there, seatbelted in. Maines is studying the body, the interior of the truck. McKirkle leaned over to spit a long line of brown.

Panel 3 of 6: Maines's POV on the dead girl, a lapdog erupting over her, snapping and snarling at him. It's the woman from Buffalo, Oklahoma's dog, of course.

Panel 4 of 6: Maines as seen from behind the truck, drawing and firing all in one motion. Into the truck.

Panel 5 of 6: Same rear-angle. Maines's gun lowered now. McKirkle looking into the truck, its glass coated on the inside with blood now.

MCKIRKLE

He's not going to like you shooting his dog like that.

Panel 6 of 6: Maines shooting both tires on that side of the truck. McKirkle not even watching anymore, but looking into their background, at the silhouettes of helicopters coming over the horizon.

MAINES

Guess he's just gonna hate this, then.

MCKIRKLE

Hey. The cavalry.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND SIX

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3): One of the National Guard helicopters touching down, GUARDSMEN already jumping out.

Panel 2 of 8: Long shot of one of the guardsmen talking to a Castro Country Sheriff's Deputy, the deputy nodding, pointing, the guardsmen looking in that direction.

Panel 3 of 8: Tighter shot on the deputy and the guardsman, so that the deputy's back is to us.

GUARDSMAN

Sir - is your ear bleeding?

Panel 4 of 8: Tight-tight on the deputy's mouth - *John13's* mouth, of course. He's wearing the uniform he lifted from Jim Doe in McCook. And smiling so big.

CAPTION
"Yes. Yes it is."

Panel 5 of 8, wide: Jim Doe and Debs standing from Debs' cruiser. The panel's wide to re-establish what a wasteland Dimmit is. Helicopters lifting off, banking away. By the amount of guardsmen down there, this is at least a couple of hours after Panel 4. The sky still ominous. Jim Doe holding a pistol, Debs a shotgun.

JIM DOE
Shit.

Panel 6 of 8: Passenger-seat angle on Debs, wedged back behind the steering wheel, the radio mike held hard to his mouth.

DEBS
-listen, just tell your C.O. that this is him, the one they were looking for in Nebraska ... Tin Man, yeah.

Panel 7 of 8: High angle on a fireman running hard down the center of a destroyed street. Amos, obviously.

CAPTION
"He thinks he's a fireman or something."

CAPTION
"...[static]...has anybody ever seen this guy? Over...

Panel 8 of 8: Debs, small in the driver's seat, looking over to where Jim Doe just was, where Jim Doe should still be.

DEBS
Just one.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN

Panel 1 of 4: McKirkle and Maines standing over the stripped body of another nondescript man. Just like they found in McCook. McKirkle loading his pistol. Maines spitting.

MAINES
He's nothing if not predictable, I guess.

MCKIRKLE
You saying we shouldn't complain?

MAINES

That gonna stop you?

Panel 2 of 4: Half the panel is a firetruck, just around a building. Standing behind that building, his back to it, fingers spread wide on the brick, the leg and yellow-slickered arm of Amos Pease. He's frantic. Spilling down as we watch, pills of every color.

CAPTION

They're not real.

CAPTION

He knows because he just killed them.

CAPTION

In Oklahoma.

CAPTION

Killed them and killed them.

Panel 3 of 4: Debs, moving awkwardly through the rubble, raising his arm to get the attention of a GUARDSMEN, reading something from a clipboard.

DEBS

Hey, private! You the one I was talking to? About that Tin Man shit?

Panel 4 of 4: Tight on the guardsman's clipboard. It's a torn-out page from a school annual, one face circled on it: a young-ish Indian kid in glasses: *LeChapeau, Trevor*. Below his name: see also, *LeChapeau, Tina*, sister.

CAPTION

No.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT

Panel 1 of 8 (3/3/2): Jim Doe, moving through the rubble like a cat. He's Amos Pease, pretty much, as Amos used to be.

CAPTION

In Dodge City, they found the Tin Man by going to where the Indian kids were.

Panel 2 of 8: Jim Doe, still moving, intent.

CAPTION

What's good enough for Kansas
should be good enough for Texas,
too.

CAPTION

Except, here, there's only two
Indian kids.

Panel 3 of 8: Jim Doe from the open bay of an Army
helicopter.

CAPTION

"...[static]...sir, yes, we have a
visual on an unidentified male,
possibly fitting the description--"

Panel 4 of 8: Jim Doe, adopting Amos's position, flat
against a wall. He's hiding from the helicopter.

CAPTION

The two Indian kids are the ones
Jerry LeChapeau's parents had
nearly ten years after the storm.

CAPTION

To replace Jerry.

Panel 5 of 8: High, high view -- possibly the helicopter's --
of Dimmit. As if looking for Jim Doe. One house circled for
us, blocks away, at the edge of town, all by itself.

CAPTION

He doesn't need a phonebook to know
where they live, either.

Panel 6 of 8: Jim Doe, running hard through a stretch of
open space.

CAPTION

This is his county, his town, his
boogey man.

CAPTION

The LeChapeau kids are way out on
Third, by the baseball field.

Panel 7 of 8: Jim Doe, looking around a corner at the
baseball field, wholly trashed.

CAPTION

He went there with Terra once.

CAPTION
To see her cousins.

Panel 8 of 8, wide: Looking out of that house on Third Street, at the open door. It's about the only thing left of that front wall. Standing in it, Amos Pease, shrouded in his yellow fireman coat, his hand chocked way up on the axe.

CAPTION
It was strange, wrong.

CAPTION
Jerry's room was like Jim Doe remembered it.

CAPTION
Seventeen years ago.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND NINE

Panel 1 of 6: Amos's hand, pulling a family portrait up from the debris of the house. Perfect family: Indian parents, Indian kids.

CAPTION
Mom.

CAPTION
Dad.

Panel 2 of 6: Amos's finger, touching the face of the boy in the portrait. Cleaning the dust off it.

Panel 3 of 6: Amos on his knees in the living room, smiling, his eyes full, nearly spilling over.

AMOS PEASE
I lived.

Panel 4 of 6: Sepiatone/flashback stuff. The nice fireman from the Nazareth storm leading Sarina Doe and Jerry LeChapeau away from the shattered house, Jerry LeChapeau looking back to the closet Jim Doe's still hidden in.

CAPTION
None of it really happened.

Panel 5 of 6: Through the chainlink cage in a basement cellar. Jerry LeChapeau and Sarina Doe, looking out. Diagram lines pointing to them say *brother, sister*. Beside them, a slightly younger Indian kid, badly beaten. His diagram line: *Amos Experiment #1 (failed)*.

Panel 6 of 6: Those kids' POV. It's John13, his back to us/them. He's wearing a yellow fireman jacket, has bare legs, black socks. Is leaning over an ancient HAM radio, the headphones bulky on his head, his hand up on a huge knob, tuning something in. Down the wall between him and the kids, all kinds of Indian artifacts. Even some scalps.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TEN

Panel 1 of 4: Jim Doe standing in the baseball field, two Army helicopters just above him, tilted so that MEN with rifles can keep Jim Doe in check. Jim Doe has his arms up, his teeth set. The sky past the helicopters green and black.

Panel 2 of 4: Jim Doe lowering his hands, the helicopters unaccountable banking away, hard, fast. Some of the tin from one of the dugouts peeling up, blowing over.

CAPTION

Orders.

CAPTION

They can't maintain altitude or attitude in this kind of weather.

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe, smiling one side his mouth, in disbelief.

CAPTION

This kind of storm.

Panel 4 of 4: Repeat of Panel 1, except no helicopters now, and no Jim Doe. Just the storm, swelling down, whipping the remains of Dimmit up into the air again.

CAPTION

It's not over yet.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN

Panel 1 of 4: Amos Pease, in his big yellow jacket, sitting on his old bed in his old room. His head down, resting on top of the axe head (axe-as-cane).

Panel 2 of 4: Close on a brown bottle of chloroform upturned against a folded up white cloth. Right before Debs' face. Debs helpless somehow, we can't see how.

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe, as seen from across Third Street. He's standing in the doorway of the broken LeChapeau home, his pistol by his leg, trash blowing up and down the street behind him.

Panel 4 of 4: Reverse-shot: standing on either side of the broken doorway, just hidden by the mostly gone wall, McKirkle and Maines, guns up.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE

Panel 1 of 6: McKirkle backhanding Jim Doe all the way across the room.

CAPTION
The eye of the storm.

Panel 2 of 6: Jim Doe, falling down the wall, trying to catch himself, hold onto his gun.

CAPTION
Heart of the country.

Panel 3 of 6: Debs stumbling into the room through the missing south wall. Tied to his hands with wire, his shotgun. To his face, the tin man mask. Maines leveling his rifle that way fast.

JIM DOE
NO!

Panel 4 of 6: McKirkle and Maines both have their guns leveled on Debs. Debs is stumbling, dopey, mute.

MAINES
(to Jim Doe)
You know this one?

JIM DOE
It's not him. We're just supposed to think it is.

Panel 5 of 6: McKirkle and Maines lowering their guns, frowning hard. Debs holding his gun above his head, trying to live. The harsh crack of a GUNSHOT.

CAPTION
Not that it makes any difference.

Panel 6 of 6: Tight on Debs, blood seeping through the front of his shirt.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN

Panel 1 of 4: Same frame, just, now, Debs is slumped forward. Standing behind him, gun smoking, the national

guardsman. John13, of course. Dimmit flying around behind him.

JOHN13
Gentleman.

Panel 2 of 4: John13 tossing his gun down beside Debs. In answer to all the guns suddenly on him. John13 talking to Jim Doe here. Smiling.

JOHN13
But – he's the one you were
describing on the radio, right,
officer?

Panel 3 of 4: Reverse shot, Maines and McKirkle waiting for Jim Doe to answer. Not lowering their guns, of course.

Panel 4 of 4: Tighter on Jim Doe now.

JIM DOE
How'd you know I was cop?

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN

Panel 1 of 4: Jim Doe standing, leading with his gun, John13 taking a long step back, his hands up.

JIM DOE
Thought all you guys left?

JOHN13
Just air support – what? Do you
think—?

Panel 2 of 4: Same image, just, now, McKirkle has his gun more on Jim Doe. Jim Doe advancing, the storm building, building.

JIM DOE
Where's my sister?

AMOS PEASE
(not in panel yet)
In my truck.

Panel 3 of 4: Amos Pease from Jim Doe's POV. He's standing in the doorway, unsteady, the axe trailing down.

Panel 4 of 4: From above, through the roofless LeChapeau house.

MCKIRKLE
Well whaddya know? We got ourselves
a little party here.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN

Panel 1 of 4: Amos, stepping out of the doorway, looking sharply over to the Rangers. He's an animal now. Again.

MCKIRKLE
Drop it, son!

Panel 2 of 4: Amos smiling his wolf smile.

AMOS PEASE
You're not my daddy.

Panel 3 of 4: Amos nodding ahead, to John13.

AMOS PEASE
He is. Right?

Panel 4 of 4: John13, still trying to back away, having to lean hard against the serious, serious wind.

JOHN13
Amos, please, this doesn't involve—

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEEN

Panel 1 of 4: Tight on Amos's wicked dark face.

AMOS PEASE
That's not my name

AMOS PEASE
And this does involve me.

AMOS PEASE
This is my house.

Panel 2 of 4: From the side, Amos and John13, Jim Doe in the middle, Amos bringing his axe up fast.

JOHN13
Don't you Indians know when you're
dead?

AMOS PEASE
Do you?

Panel 3 of 4: Maines blasts the axe away. It sticks in the wall by Jim Doe.

MAINES
I said drop it, now.

Panel 4 of 4: Amos, smiling, shrugging, smoothly brings his pistol up with his other hand, shoots Maines in the arm, Maines's rifle clattering to the ground.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN

Panel 1 of 1, splash: Looking over Jim Doe's shoulder, up through the missing roof. A freight car is tumbling beautifully through the sky.

CAPTION
In coffee table books about Native Americans, the push is always for balance.

CAPTION
Full circles.

CAPTION
Things ending where they started.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEEN

Panel 1 of 1, splash: the white work truck Amos Pease stole in Oklahoma. Standing from it now, Sarina Doe, as she used to be: alive. Stepping into the storm, the black tornado we see trashing Dimmit even more.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETEEN

Panel 1 of 6: Looking through the front wall of the LeChapeau house as McKirkle pulls the trigger on his revolver.

Panel 2 of 6: Tight on the hammer of McKirkle's pistol, falling.

Panel 3 of 6: Amos Pease looking at his chest, Jim Doe confused, not sure where to point his gun anymore. Finally at McKirkle.

Panel 4 of 6: McKirkle's smiling face. Evil, killer face.

MCKIRKLE

That first chamber's just for shits
and grins, y'know?

Panel 5 of 6: McKirkle, slamming five shots not into but *through* Amos Pease, Amos a ragdoll, his blood misting down onto Jim Doe.

Panel 6 of 6: Amos lying face down, his hand on the family portrait.

CAPTION

"I lived."

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY

Panel 1 of 4: Jim Doe's POV on John13. John13 isn't there. Just some heavy stuff, rolling around in the wind.

JIM DOE

...not this time.

Panel 2 of 4: Jim Doe running through the open south wall, McKirkle behind him, picking up Maines's rifle for him.

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe, running hard after the olive drab form of John13, firing a shot on each side of him.

Panel 4 of 4: John13 stopping but not turning around.

JOHN13

You do this, you'll find those two kids.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 4: Looking over Jim Doe's gun at him. He's indecisive, caught, hesitating.

CAPTION

"You want another little kid to grow up like you, or like Amos?"

Panel 2 of 4: The two of them from the side, John13 turned around now, hands up, Jim Doe thumbing his hammer back again.

JIM DOE

His name was Jerry.

Panel 3 of 4: Looking at John13 straight on now.

JOHN13

I can take you to her. Your sister.

Panel 4 of 4: Looking over Jim Doe's gun at Jim Doe again.

JIM DOE

No you can't.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 1, splash: Jim Doe shooting a line of flame at John13, except, now, part of a house has fallen from the sky between them. Maybe onto John13. Definitely all around Jim Doe.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE AND TWENTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 10 (1/8/1), all the way across both pages: Dimmit, flattened even more, the sun setting behind it.

CAPTION

Castro County, Texas.

Panel 2 of 10: Same scene, only now, from the foreground, Jim Doe is climbing out.

Panel 3 of 10: Amos's stolen white work truck, seen from the rear. Windows still splattered red on the inside. Otherwise empty.

Panel 4 of 10: A frazzled reporter, standing before her cameraman. Her backdrop is the freight car, standing up from the ground like a spear. Her mouth moving, no words.

Panel 5 of 10: A man in overalls on Main Street, holding a rifle in one hand, pointing it down to the forehead of a badly-injured horse. Neither of them looking away.

Panel 6 of 10: Debs, dead, the Tin Man mask half-pulled off by the wind, so that we can now see that the reason he wasn't talking is that his lips had been pinned shut with his Sheriff's badge.

Panel 7 of 10: A family standing from its backyard storm shelter, the father carrying the daughter. Very Norman Rockwell; very ideal.

Panel 8 of 10: Bill McKirkle and Walter Maines and a guardsman. McKirkle is pointing across town for the guardsman; Maines is holding his shot arm, is leaned over to spit, looking up under his hat something we can't see.

Panel 9 of 10: The LeChapeau house, absolutely destroyed, a bright yellow fireman slicker blowing out from it a little.

Panel 10 of 10, all the way across: Repeat of Panel 1, just Jim Doe standing all the way now, in silhouette, surveying the damage. What he's won, like. Daylight pushing through the clouds in random, dust-filled rays.

CAPTION

Forecast: partly sunny.

CAPTION

Occasional gusts.

electronic version

epilogue.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 6: Jim Doe's white Bronco again, from the rear. He's parked at a high point, over the ruins of Dimmit. One dialogue bubble leaking out the passenger window. Rain drizzling grey and dismal.

CAPTION

Ten days later.

UNCLAIMED

So ... I don't understand, I guess.
You wanted me to see if Uncle
Jerry's grave had been dug up or
something?

Panel 2 of 6: Interior of the Bronco, Jim Doe's POV of Terra. Looking the same as ever.

JIM DOE

It doesn't matter now.

CAPTION

'Uncle' Jerry.

CAPTION

She hadn't even been born in 1981.

Panel 2 of 6: Backseat POV, through the captain's seats and out the wiper-arcs of the front windshield, at Dimmit.

TERRA

You never answered, y'know? About
prom.

Panel 3 of 6: Jim Doe on his side of the truck, trying not to have any expression at all on his face now. He's in his deputy-browns again.

TERRA

I'm eighteen next week, deputy. If
that's what you're thinking.

CAPTION

It's not.

Panel 4 of 6: Jim Doe's POV. He's catching Terra's face in the rearview. There, she's not herself so much anymore, but what Sarina might have been, had she grown up.

CAPTION

He doesn't know what he's thinking,
really.

CAPTION

That it might be easier just to not
think, really.

CAPTION

About where her niece and nephew
were found three days ago.

Panel 5 of 6: Faded, differently-framed image of a farmer helping Jerry LeChapeau/Amos Pease's little brother and sister from a seeming hole in the ground, in the middle of a pasture, on a hot, dry day.

CAPTION

The same place he'd hidden Sarina,
maybe. And Jerry.

Panel 6 of 6: Jim Doe, looking out his side of the truck. We're seeing him from outside the truck, through the rain.

CAPTION

Three days ago he went there,
looked for her name in the wall.

CAPTION

It wasn't there.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIX

Panel 1 of 6: Jim Doe's Bronco from the back again, only now, smoke coming up from the tailpipe. His dialogue bubble bleeding out his window

JIM DOE

I should get you back.

Panel 2 of 6: Looking at Terra in her seat again.

TERRA

It's like that, then?

JIM DOE

It's ... I don't know how it is.
It's just—

Panel 3 of 6: The two of them from the back, the Bronco backing away (we can tell by the different view through windshield), and that the wipers are slapping fast now.

TERRA
It's okay. Don't worry about it.

JIM DOE
I'm sorry. I just—

Panel 4 of 6: Tight on Jim Doe's police radio, CRACKLING, interrupting them.

RADIO
Deputy? Don't know if you've heard, but those two Texas Rangers have been looking for you all day. I don't know why. If you want to meet them, they say they'll be—

Panel 5 of 6: Jim Doe's hand, CLICKING the radio off.

JIM DOE
Where to?

TERRA
I'm still helping Danny and Donna unpack, I guess. Unless there's somewhere else you want to go.

Panel 6 of 6: Both of them from the front, through the windshield maybe. Jim Doe's eyes closed to make it through saying this.

JIM DOE
Like ... prom?

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 8 (3/3/2)): Jim Doe's Bronco pulling up to an obviously-new trailer home, Terra's door already open. We can tell the trailer's new because the truck's still backed up to it. All the skirts around it dragging, half-on, mud-splattered, etc. The stairs not attached yet, even. Various cars out front, nosed all the way up to the trailer.

Panel 2 of 8: Jim Doe's POV of Terra, running through the rain, bounding through the cars, pulling herself through the front door.

Panel 3 of 8: Looking over Jim Doe's shoulder at what he's seeing in the passenger floorboard: Terra's purse.

Panel 4 of 8: Jim Doe, walking through the cars, carrying the purse like a dead animal. The cars are Indian cars, mostly: primed, cobbled together, feathers hanging from

the rearview mirrors. Except one; it's white, like a company car.

Panel 5 of 8: Looking over the white car at Jim Doe. What's on the back dash is a tumbling, big-eyed kitten.

Panel 6 of 8: Jim Doe reaching up to the front door, to knock, but not quite there yet. Looking behind him instead.

Panel 7 of 8: Jim Doe's POV of one of the Indian KIDS (boy: Jerry's little brother) suddenly on the *trunk* of the white car, a newspaper tented over his head. He's studying the kitten.

Panel 8 of 8, wide: Jim Doe crossing to the kid, a smile on his face, like he's just trying to keep the kid from getting in trouble here. The kid looking up, scared.

JIM DOE
Hey, listen—

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT

Panel 1 of 9: Jim Doe at the trunk, the kid ready to blast off into hyperspace, the rain letting up for the moment. We can tell because Jim Doe's having to squint, his eyes unaccustomed to the sun pushing through the clouds.

JIM DOE
You're Terra's nephew.

KID
So?

Panel 3 of 9: Same image, just rotated a bit, so we can see the kitten more. Jim Doe smiling, shrugging. Setting Terra's purse down on the roof of the car.

JIM DOE
So you want to see that cat, yeah?

Panel 3 of 9: Tight on the kitten, looking out at them.

JIM DOE
He probably needs a breather anyway.

Panel 4 of 9: Jim Doe holding his hand across the lips, shhh, and opening the rear driverside door, the cat absolutely *bolting* past his boots, slipping in the mud.

Panel 5 of 9: Jim Doe alone now, with the open door. No kitten.

JIM DOE

Shit.

Panel 6 of 9: Looking between two cars at Jim Doe, on his knees, looking for the kitten.

Panel 7 of 9: Side/low angle on Jim Doe, reaching far under a car for the kitten. He's trying to get as little mud on his uniform as possible. Failing.

JIM DOE

Here kitty kitty kitty...

Panel 8 of 9: Reverse-shot of Jim Doe, his face, cocked over all of the sudden for the SLAM of the trailer's front door.

VOICE

-yeah, before it comes back again, anyway.

CAPTION

Shit shit shit.

Panel 9 of 9: Top view of Jim Doe, pulling his arms to his chest, rolling under the car behind him.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINE

Panel 1 of 6 (3/3): Tight on Jim Doe, wedged under the car, eyes wide.

CAPTION

And so this is what it's come down to, these last few weeks.

Panel 2 of 6: Jim Doe's POV of legs from the knee down: one pair of jeans and boots (DANNY), one pair of slacks (GUY).

CAPTION

Hiding from Danny LeChapeau, because he doesn't know how to say it:

CAPTION

I couldn't save Jerry. Your son.

Panel 3 of 6: Still watching the legs, their dialogue bubbles bleeding down.

DANNY

-I mean, shit yeah, it's easier for y'all, it's easier for me...

GUY
Acts of God, Mr. ... what is it
again?

Panel 4 of 6: Tight on Jim Doe's face. He's worried now.

CAPTION
"LeChapeau."

CAPTION
"The 'hat,' right? That Indian or
something?"

Panel 5 of 6: Tight on the kitten, melting over Jim Doe's
pistol. Jim Doe's hand dropping to protect it (the pistol).

CAPTION
"Yeah. Some French joke, I don't
know."

CAPTION
"Yeah, well, I don't know. Jokes
are what keep us going, Mr. Hat.
Like, have you heard the one about
the special dog?"

Panel 6 of 6: The legs again, approaching, approaching.

GUY
I'm not sure I'm getting it right
here. Man up in South Dakota told
it to me like this once. But ...
won't offend you, will it?

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY

Panel 1 of 3: The legs again, approaching in Jim Doe's POV.

GUY
-Indian in a bar, y'know, and he's
got this three-legged dog, I guess.
Just carrying it around, on the bar
and everything. The bartender of
course knows his line here, asks
what about that dog there, in my
bar?

Panel 1 of 3: The legs again, almost to Jim Doe now. We're
looking from behind the cars now.

GUY
What the man says here is that
that's a *special* dog, barkeep. The

other night, it pulled my wife from a burning truck. Then the next day it caught a snake that was about to bite my boy. The bartender nods, whatever, then looks down to the dog, shrugs, says that's how he lost his leg then, yeah?

Panel 2 of 3, wide: Jim Doe lying under that car, only he's eight years old again, hiding from the insurance man who came to pay for Sarina. And now he has a huge pistol in his hand, close to his chest. The kitten tumbling off his leg.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY

Panel 1 of 6: Jim Doe standing, leading with his pistol, the guy and Danny both stopping, unsure here. Jim Doe half-caked in mud, here.

JIM DOE

No, the man says. That's not how the dog lost its leg. Because he's Indian, see? Sioux, really. Puppy eaters, right? But what the guy says is, Man, dog like that, you don't cook him up all at once...

Panel 2 of 6: Looking straight on at Danny and the guy, both trying hard not to laugh. The guy hardly recognizable as John13, but him nevertheless. He's in a short-sleeved business shirt, tie, etc: his insurance agent disguise.

GUY

Yeah, that's it. You got it.

Panel 3 of 6: Looking at Jim Doe over his pistol

JIM DOE

That's because I've heard it before.

JIM DOE

Nineteen years ago.

Panel 4 of 6: Close on the hammer of Jim Doe's gun, CLICKING back.

CAPTION

"When you stole my sister."

Panel 5 of 6: The three of them from the side now. Not laughing. Danny and John13's hands up.

JIM DOE

This is what you do to make it all right? You pay for the kids you take? Like you're buying them?

Panel 6 of 6: Tight on John13. Very serious now.

JOHN13

I don't know what you're talking about, deputy. As I understand it, it was some misunderstanding, right? This gentleman's children were recovered...?

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ONE

Panel 1 of 4: The three of them through a windshield. McKirkle and Maines' windshield; they're just pulling up.

JIM DOE

For now, yeah.

JOHN13

Listen, I don't know who-

JIM DOE

Don't talk.

Panel 2 of 4: Looking over Jim Doe's shoulder, at McKirkle and Maines, stepping down from their truck, Maines's arm in a sling.

JOHN13

Listen. Nobody needs to get hurt here. Why don't we just let these gentleman-?

JIM DOE

You were supposed to take me. You screwed up, Tin Man.

JOHN13

-Tin ... what?

Panel 2 of 4: Maines and McKirkle joining the three now.

MAINES

Deputy. I take it this is why you've been unavailable all day?

JIM DOE
This doesn't concern you, Walter.
Between him and me. I'd think you'd
understand that.

Panel 3 of 4: McKirkle working his big pistol up, settling
it casually on Jim Doe.

MCKIRKLE
Don't make me do anything I'm not
going to regret here, son.

JIM DOE
You were looking for me already.

MCKIRKLE
You owe Tom Gentry's widow some
money, I believe.

JOHN13
Really, this is between y'all, I
don't want to—

Panel 4 of 4: Jim Doe, stepping close enough to John13 now
that his pistol is in John13's mouth, John13 shaking his
head no.

JIM DOE
You killed my sister, you son of a
bitch.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO

Panel 1 of 4: John13 backing away, hands up, knees to the
ground, Jim Doe's pistol still in his mouth.

JOHN13
If killing me's going to make you
feel better about whatever — your
sister? Then—

Panel 2 of 4: Jim Doe cracks John13 on the side of the head
with the pistol. Hard. It slings him into the ground.

DANNY
Now c'mon, Jim. We don't want—

JIM DOE
He killed Sarina, Danny. He killed
Jerry.

Panel 3 of 4: McKirkle reholstering his pistol, Maines
leaning against their truck. Both of them smiling.

MAINES

So ... what? Now you go up for assault?

MCKIRKLE

...police brutality?

Panel 4 of 4: Jim Doe's pistol flashing back up, to John13's mouth, Danny LeChapeau falling away.

JIM DOE

No—

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE

Panel 1 of 1, splash: all black, just SOUNDEX, a gun, BOOMING. And maybe that's all we can see: the finger of flame, the outline of the barrel of the pistol. Like that's all that matters.

CAPTION

For this.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR

Panel 1 of 8 (3/2/3): Jim Doe, diving between the cars, McKirkle fanning his hammer, firing just above Jim Doe, the slugs tearing ragged holes in the side of the trailer.

Panel 2 of 8: Same image, just no Jim Doe anymore. And now we can see John13, falling over, dead, blood sprayed all behind him, half-on Danny LeChapeau.

Panel 3 of 8: Jim Doe hunkered down between the cars, his arms covering his ears, everything around him just EXPLODING with gunfire. He's smiling, though. Big. The rain starting again, soft, slow, heavy.

CAPTION

It was worth it.

Panel 4 of 8, wide: Backing off a bit, looking over the Rangers' truck at the now-wet line of cars Jim Doe is hiding among. Through the glass of one of the trailer's windows, a rifle is poking out, the dark shape of an Indian WOMAN behind it.

CAPTION

It's an Indian house, is the thing.

Panel 5 of 8, wide: Jim Doe's POV, looking up between the cars at the woman with the rifle. It's Jerry LeChapeau's

mom. Her eyes are on fire with this too, her lips drawn back from her teeth, a bandanna low across her forehead.

CAPTION
Janey LeChapeau.

Panel 6 of 8: Side view of this firefight, Janey shooting now too.

CAPTION
She grew up on Pine Ride.

CAPTION
Her family killed by Goon Squads with badges.

Panel 7 of 8: The firefight, but closer on John13 now, sprawling into his death pose, the rain washing the blood from his face.

CAPTION
Her son killed too, even though she ran away from South Dakota.

Panel 8 of 8: Looking down at Jim Doe, watching Janey work her lever-action rifle, her screams not as loud as all the shooting.

CAPTION
She's got all the bullets this is going to take.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE

Panel 1 of 4: the front door opening halfway, Terra ducking halfway out of it, arm cocked to throw something.

Panel 2 of 4: Close on what she's thrown: every set of car keys in the house.

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe, reaching up to catch them.

Panel 4 of 4: McKirkle stepping into the end of the little alley Jim Doe'd been hiding in. Jim Doe's not there.

CAPTION
In his whole life, he's never felt more Indian.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIX

Panel 1 of 4: One of the jalopies spinning out of its place in line, fishtailing into McKirkle, knocking him onto another car. Jim Doe driving, of course. Slinging mud everywhere.

Panel 2 of 4: Jim Doe through the front door — Terra silhouetted in the door so we know it's her watching, lifting one hand in farewell. Jim Doe's still fishtailing down the long, muddy driveway.

Panel 3 of 4: Jim Doe sliding onto the blacktop, stopping, looking back, his eyes hot, focused.

Panel 4 of 4: Through his window, he can see McKirkle and Maines, climbing into their truck to come after him. dangling from his rearview mirror of course, an eagle feather.

PAGE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVEN

Panel 1 of 1, splash: long, high angle on this chase, Jim Doe on a pale ribbon of dry blacktop in his Indian car, McKirkle and Maines following, one of them holding his cowboy hat out the window, whipping their truck on, faster, faster. Jim Doe's become Amos Pease, here, running north, hard, out of Texas.

CAPTION

From a phone booth in Nebraska
he'll call his father at last,
after fifteen years.

CAPTION

What he'll say is that he found
her, Sarina.

CAPTION

And that she's all right now.

CAPTION

And that he is too.

CAPTION

After that, he's anywhere.

CAPTION

Everywhere.

the end

electronic version