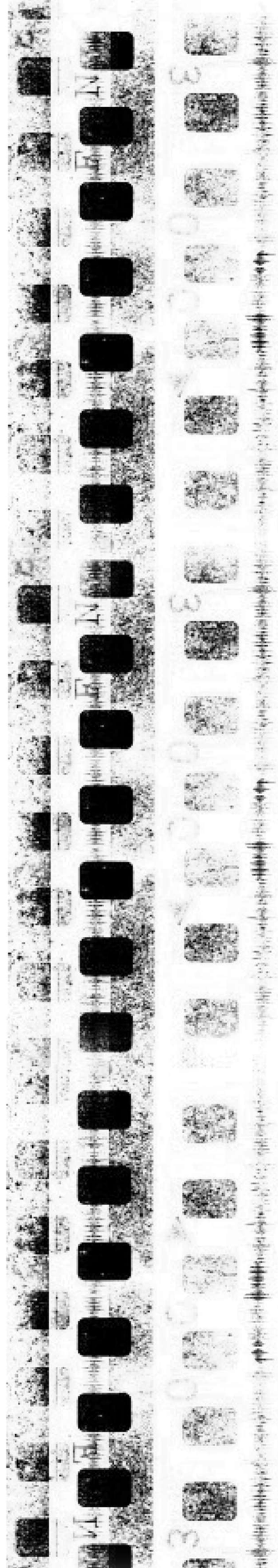


Captain Nitrate
SHORT(?) CUTS

Stanojević • Sotirovski

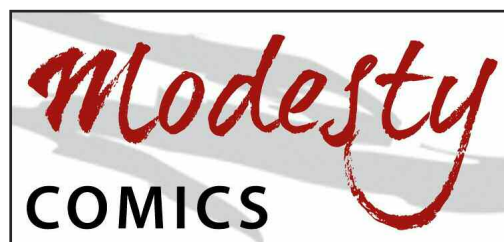


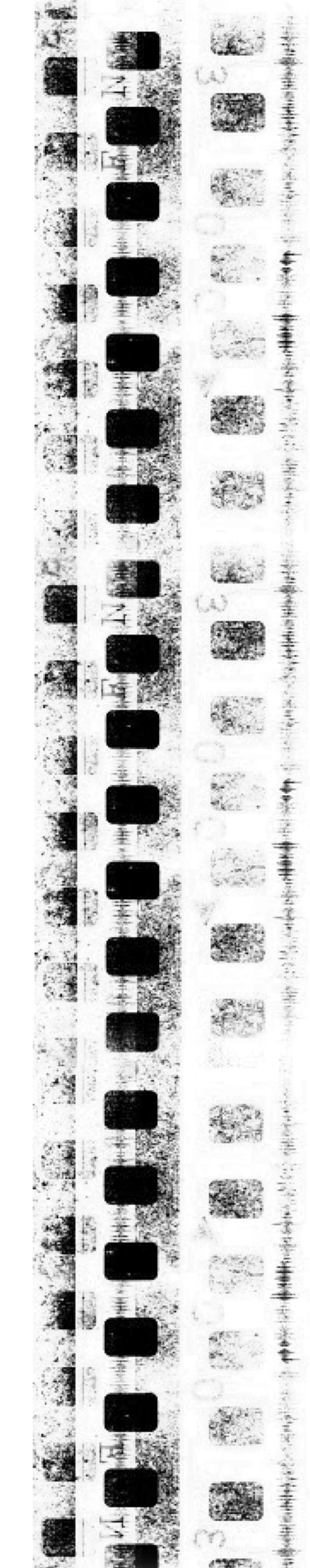




Stanojević - Sotirovski

CAPTAIN NITRATE SHORT(?) CUTS





Stanojević / Sotirovski

CAPTAIN NITRATE SHORT(?) CUTS

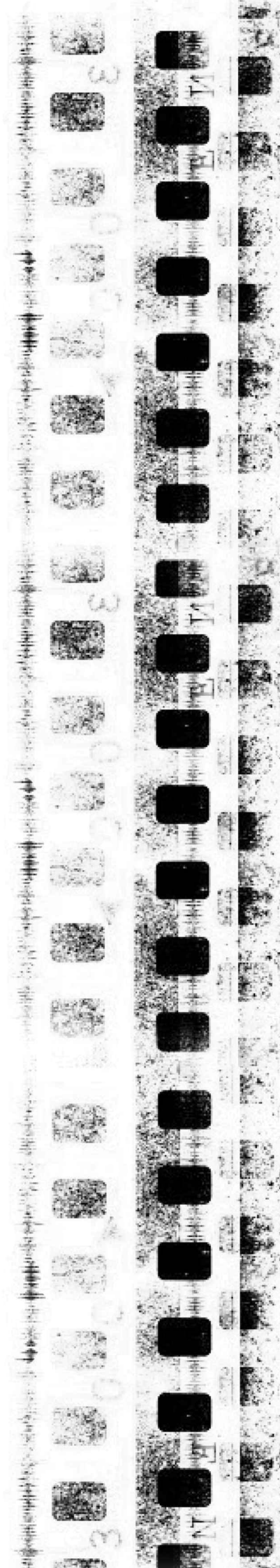
This edition published in 2014 by
Modesty Comics, London, UK
www.modestycomics.com
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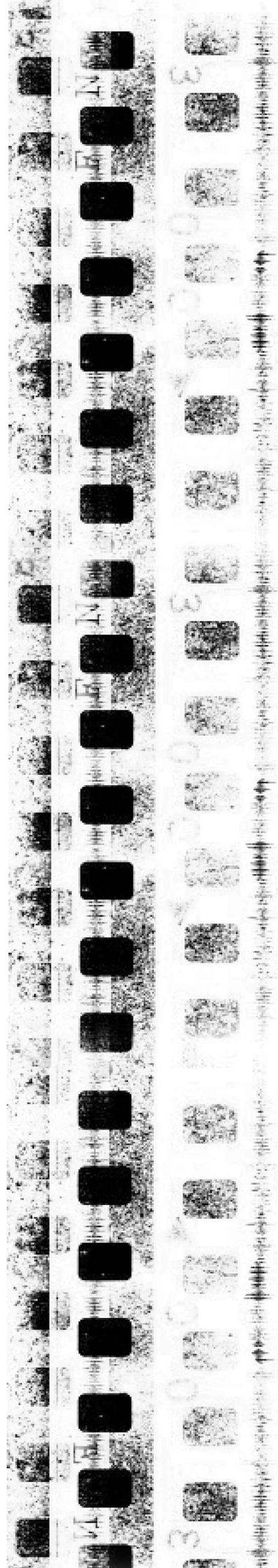
Editor: Živojin Tamburić
Original title: Kapetan Nitrat: Kratki(?) rezovi, Stanojević / Sotirovski
Script and art: © Borislav Stanojević and Aleksandar Sotirovski
Copyright for this edition: © Modesty Comics
English translation: Borislav Stanojević
Foreword: © Todor Jovčevski
Graphic design: Aleksandar Sotirovski

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Saving Nitrate Films

"Captain Nitrate: Short (?) Cuts" is an excellent and standalone graphic novel, that deserves the attention of both general readers and critics. In all of its elements, it overshadows previous issues of this saga. The artist, Aleksandar Sotirovski, apparently did not have much space to maneuver in. Characters, like in any serial, are already fixed: the main character's alter ego, Vatroslav Vostok, as any superhero double identity, is visually predetermined. Vostok's secret double, the supernaturally endowed Captain Nitrate, a fiery nitrate film messiah, from the first issue is defined as a white "mummy" wrapped in black nitrate film pellicles. Still, one of the graphic and intellectual depths of this comic is that Vostok/Captain's image is - black and white. He is a character who does not physiologically belong to his full color world, even if he exists in it.

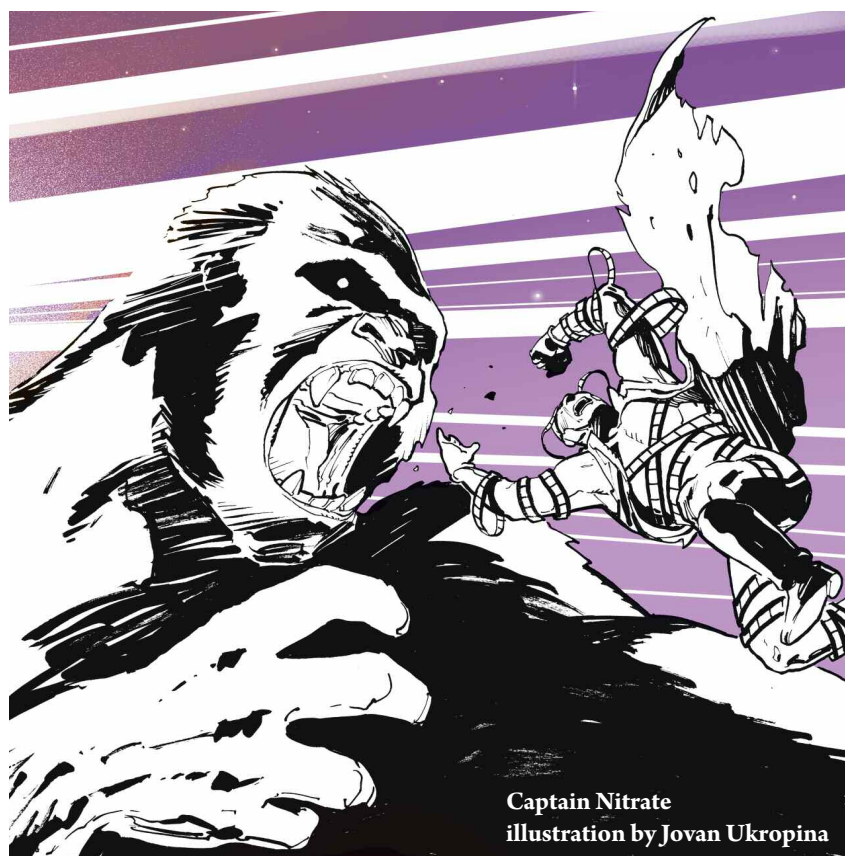
Script writer, Borislav Stanojević, wrote a comic that, in its consistency with sophisticated graphic manner of Sotirovski, is contained within three "L" word checkpoints: Lucid, Lavish, and Lunatic. Authors made every effort count in making an enviable, philosophical, esthetically artistic comics book. Led by Stanojevic's crafty hand, the main character finds out that he's almost unaware of his own strength and powers, and consequently, of the role he is to take in changing the world. So, Captain Nitrate speeds up in a classic and generally successful matrix: the quest of one's own individuality - the quest of identity. The depth of Captain Nitrate is in reaching for his own limits and potential, not in trashing the bad guys. What values does Captain Nitrate stands for... or fights against, we may ask? At first, he fights the destruction of nitrate films. But, that fights is far from simple, for there is a hidden plot that drives this annihilation. Captain Nitrate actually defends global (and national) heritage, cultural and historical, human memory embedded in these pellicles. While the energy released from the destruction of these old films generates cosmic levels of power

to a select few, a class of rulers of the World, led by a mysterious character hidden under the golden theatrical mask of Comedy. Obliteration of old inflammable films would destroy their exclusive and original memories of Chaplin, Keaton, or Mae West, but also of Hitler and other similar "playboys", or little "mushrooms" over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and "mannequins" of Auschwitz.



Captain Nitrate and Troll Remote
- illustration by Siniša Radović

That's the point where the author leaves us with a dilemma: is it that nitrate pellicle is physically potent cosmic energy fuel, or the real danger rests in its contents? The question imposes itself: is it possible to control the contents of film and who is capable of such control? And all this in a moment when the History of the World is in danger of a revision of unparalleled proportions! As such warning alarms in "Short (?) Cuts" should be understood the appearances of famous film monsters, King Kong, Godzilla and Fafner, but even more of celluloid criminal masterminds, Fantomas, Fu Manchu and Dr Mabuse - characters that have escaped from the movie screen reality to a comic-book one. The reader is invited to best solve these riddles himself, for, as Gide used to say: "Works of art always mean more than was the author's intention".



But on a personal level, I must take this opportunity to point out the things I like best in "Short Cuts": it is, above all, its coloring. Every drawing, every picture has its own depth, its own hue. This is no easy graphic novel to tint. It's no Dylan Dog, with his eternal red shirt, black jacket and blue jeans. The wealth of this comic book is introduction of color dimension brought to perfection: form of every shot, but also of every panel, is treated as film color photography through its historical progression, from its hand painted beginnings of Melies, to its most recent digital exhibitions. This treatment was driven by strict script requests: the artist's main task was to mimic a movie theater projection within comic book means. Sotirovski went to such pains to recreate the tiny vertical physical scratches, "flashes", visible by a vigilant eye, looking like film pellicle damage made by film projection apparatus. In 2007, in "Grind House" the movie duology by Tarantino and Rodriguez, such formal picture mastery was last seen. But in the world of comics, this is a groundbreaking effort.

Todor Jovčevski,
writer, editor and critic

Stanojević - Sotirovski

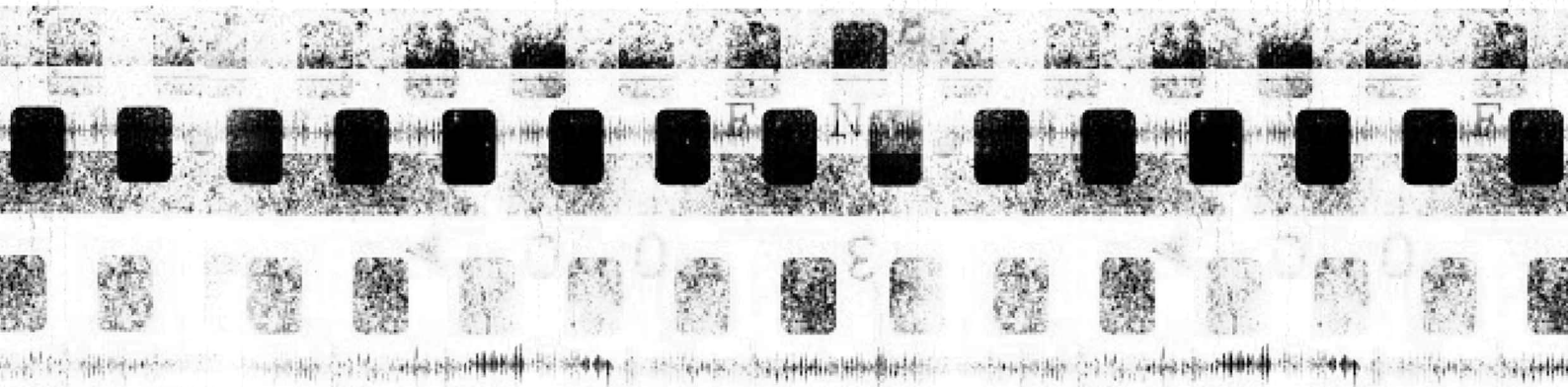
CAPTAIN NITRATE SHORT(?) CUTS

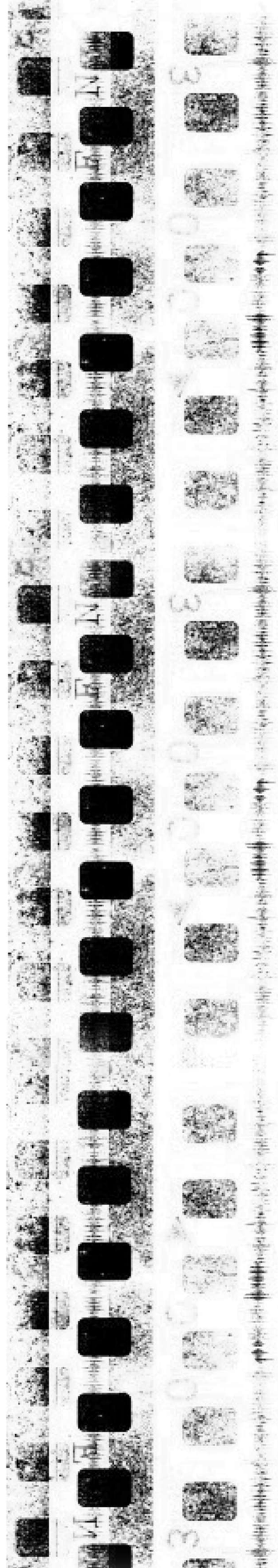
**"Fairy Tales are more than true; not because they tell us that dragons exist,
but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten."**

(G. K. Chesterton)

**"Just gonna stand there/ And watch me burn/
But that's alright/
Because I like/ The way it hurts"**

(Eminem ft. Rhianna)





ORGANIZATION "BENEATH". SUB-BASEMENT OF THE UN,
OR OTAN, OR EX-NKVD, OR N(O)S(UCH)A(GENCY),
OR SOMETHING ENTIRELY DIFFERENT. WHO CAN TELL?
OR CARE?

ESTEEMED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
RULERS OF THE WORLD, TODAY. BUT SOON,
OF THE UNIVERSE... I CAN UNDERSTAND, BUT NOT SHARE
YOUR CONCERN FOR OPERATION ATTILA'S FATE.

PLANS FOR COLLECTING AND TRANSFORMING NITRATE FILM
INTO APOCALYPTIC WEAPONS AND FUEL FOR SPACE FLIGHTS,
AND, FINALLY, CONQUEST OF COSMOS, ARE BEING FULFILLED
AS EXPECTED. A RAPIDLY GROWING MAJORITY OF WORLD FILM
ARCHIVES, UNDER THEIR GLOBAL ORGANIZATION IFAF,
VOLUNTARILY SUBMITS THEIR NITRATE STOCKS TO US.

ALMOST THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD BLINDLY
BELIEVES OUR "SCIENTIFIC" TALES OF NITRATE FILM'S
DEADLY RADIATION POISONING - IT BEING THE CAUSE
OF ALL KINDS OF PANDEMICS AND CRISES! STILL,
YOU WORRY ABOUT THE NITRATE-CONVOY HIJACKING
AND THE APPEARANCE OF A NITRATE MESSIAH, IN THAT
FORGOTTEN EUROPEAN FAVELA - SOUTH BEOVIA.


YOU QUESTION THE ATTENTION AND FINANCING
THE INVESTIGATION OF MARGINAL, BUT NONE
THE LESS, ASSASSINATED BEOVIAN
FILM ARCHIVIST WOSTOK?

IT'S QUITE SIMPLE AND NEEDS TO BE HEATED
UP EVEN IF IT GETS COLDER. SOME CIRCLES
IN BEOVIAN POLICE AND MILITARY, AND SOME
GLOBALLY IMPORTANT ESPIONAGE CIRCLES,
SUSPECT THAT SO-CALLED "CAPTAIN NITRATE"
HAS A ROLE IN MURDERING OF WOSTOK,
HIMSELF SUSPECT OF BEING IFAF TERRORIST.

AND IT WAS PROVEN THAT "THE VICTIM"
SUCCESSFULLY DABBLED IN ALCHEMICAL
EXPERIMENTS WITH INFLAMMABLE FILM.


WOSTOK, FIRST "DEAD", THAN "RESURRECTED", MUST BE
IMPORTANT, AT LEAST AS A PUBLICITY STUNT, TO IFAF,
AS ORGANIZATION OF REBELLIOUS FILM ARCHIVISTS, IFAF APOSTATES,
AND MUTINEERS AGAINST OUR NITRATE ACQUISITIONS.

NOT TO MENTION CAPTAIN NITRATE.



IF I'M RIGHT, AND HE IS A BEING
THAT USES THE POWER OF NITRATE,
HE IS VITAL FOR OUR PLANS. HOWEVER,
THERE SEEMS TO BE NO LOGICAL
CONNECTION BETWEEN WOSTOK
AND THAT UNCONTROLLABLE
SUPER-AGENT.

BUT CONSIDER THE FACT
THAT THESE TWO PERSONS
ARE FOUND AT THE SAME MOMENT,
IN THE SAME COUNTRY...
SAME CITY EVEN!
COINCIDENCE?



MY EXPERTS IN SUB-CULTURAL PHENOMENA
(SUPER-HERO COMICS, FILM + TV SERIALS)
MAINTAIN THAT IT IS CUSTOMARY
WITH SUCH CHARACTERS.

THESE DREAMERS GO SO FAR
AS TO SERIOUSLY SUGGEST WOSTOK
AS ALTER EGO FOR CAPTAIN NITRATE.
AND ME - YOU ASK? WELL, I SIMPLY DO NOT
ALLOW POSSIBILITIES. WE HAVE TO CUT THEM
ALL DOWN, AND FACE ONLY CERTAINITIES.

ALMOST INEXHAUSTIBLE FINANCIAL MEANS
YOU'VE ENTRUSTED ME, AS AN AUTHOR
OF "ATTILA", ALONG WITH MY OWN VAST
FORTUNE (AS SOME OF YOU ARE AWARE
THAT TOOK GENERATIONS TO BE AMASSED)
INVESTED IN THIS INVESTIGATION - I FIND
WELL PLACED.

ME, ALL OF US, INSIST ON CERTAINTIES
IN MASTERING OF THE WORLD.

EXPLORE THEM. MANIPULATE
THEM FOR THE GOOD OF OUR
CAUSE - OR DESTROY THEM.
WITH MAXIMUM BENEFICIAL PUBLICITY.
THAT IS WHY WE HAVEN'T STILL
DESTROYED THAT ANNOYING IFAF.
IT CAN STILL SUPPLY US WITH
SOME INTERESTING SUPERNATURAL
AGENTS, LIKE NITRATE, AND SOME
OF THE OTHERS, WHOSE EXISTENCE
IS SUSPECTED.

AH, YES. YOUR FINAL QUESTION.
CERTAINLY, THE HIJACKED
NITRATE FILM CONVOY WAS INDEED
LAUNCHED TO SPACE IN A MANNER
OF A CRUDE SPACECRAFT, OR MORE
ACCURATELY, A PROJECTILE.

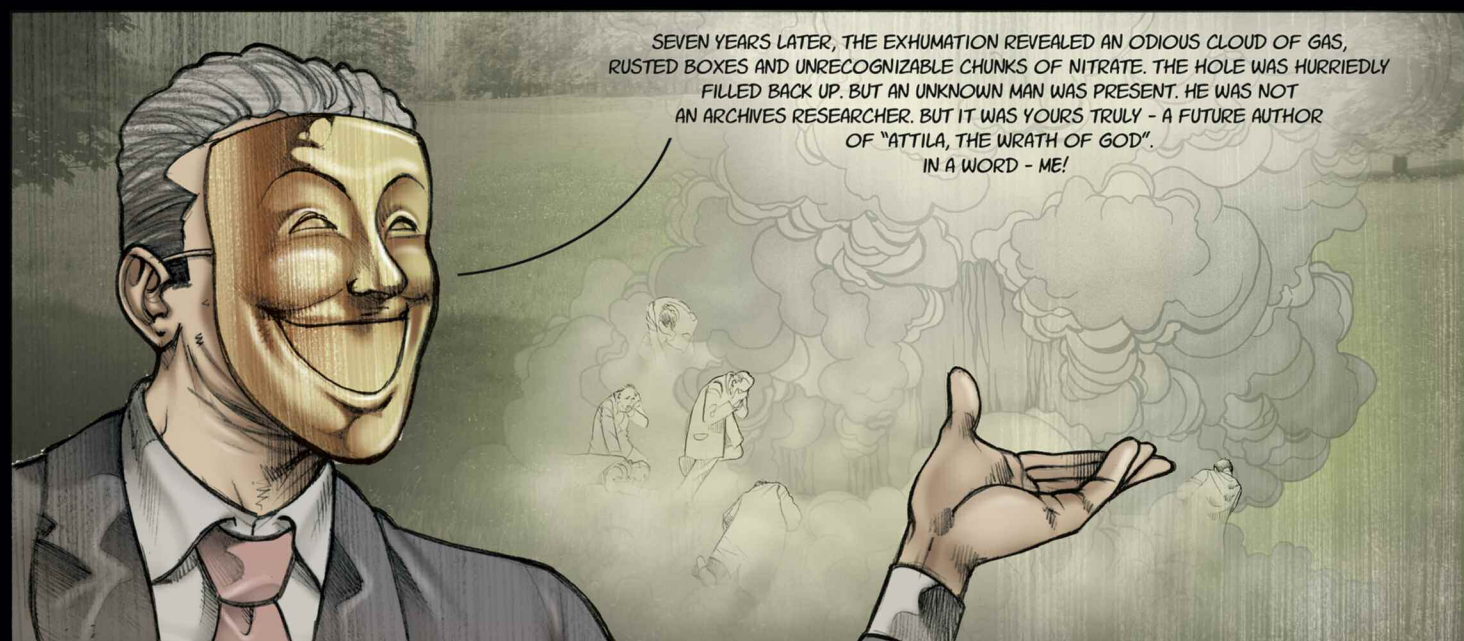
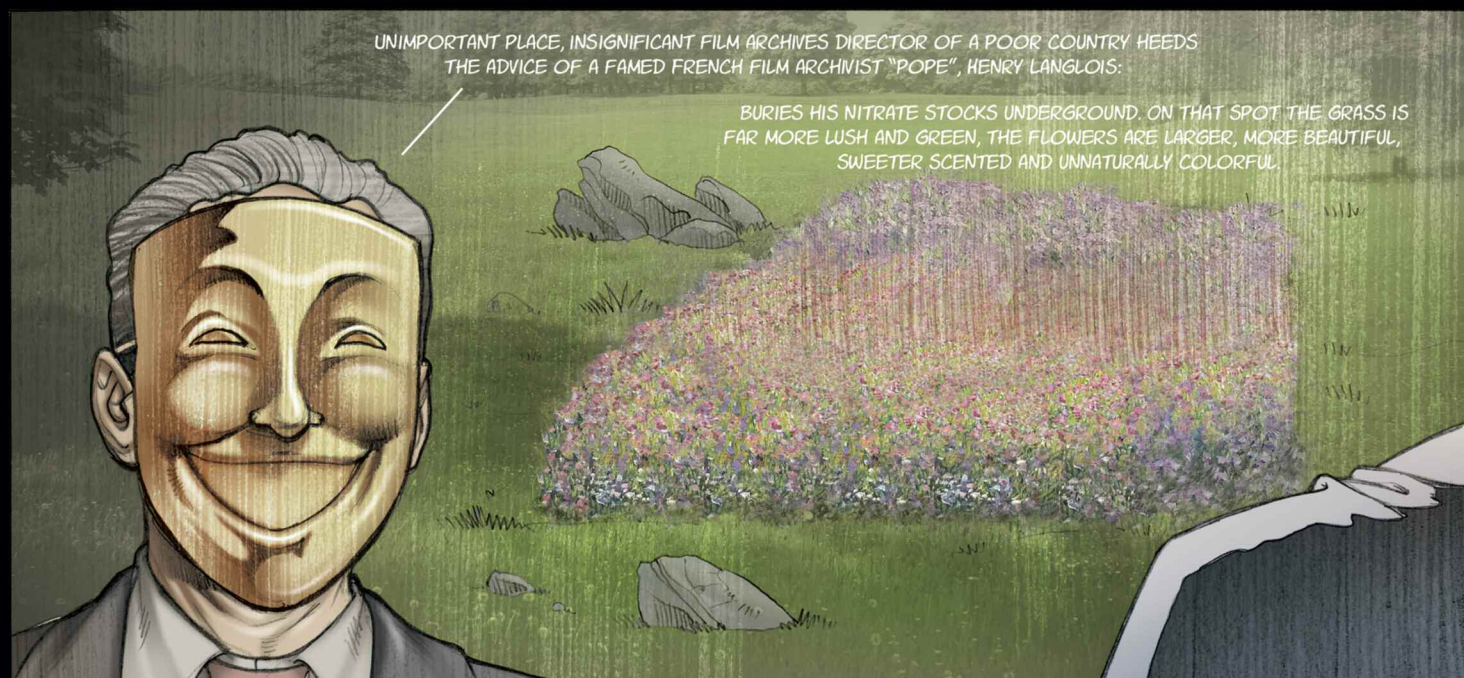
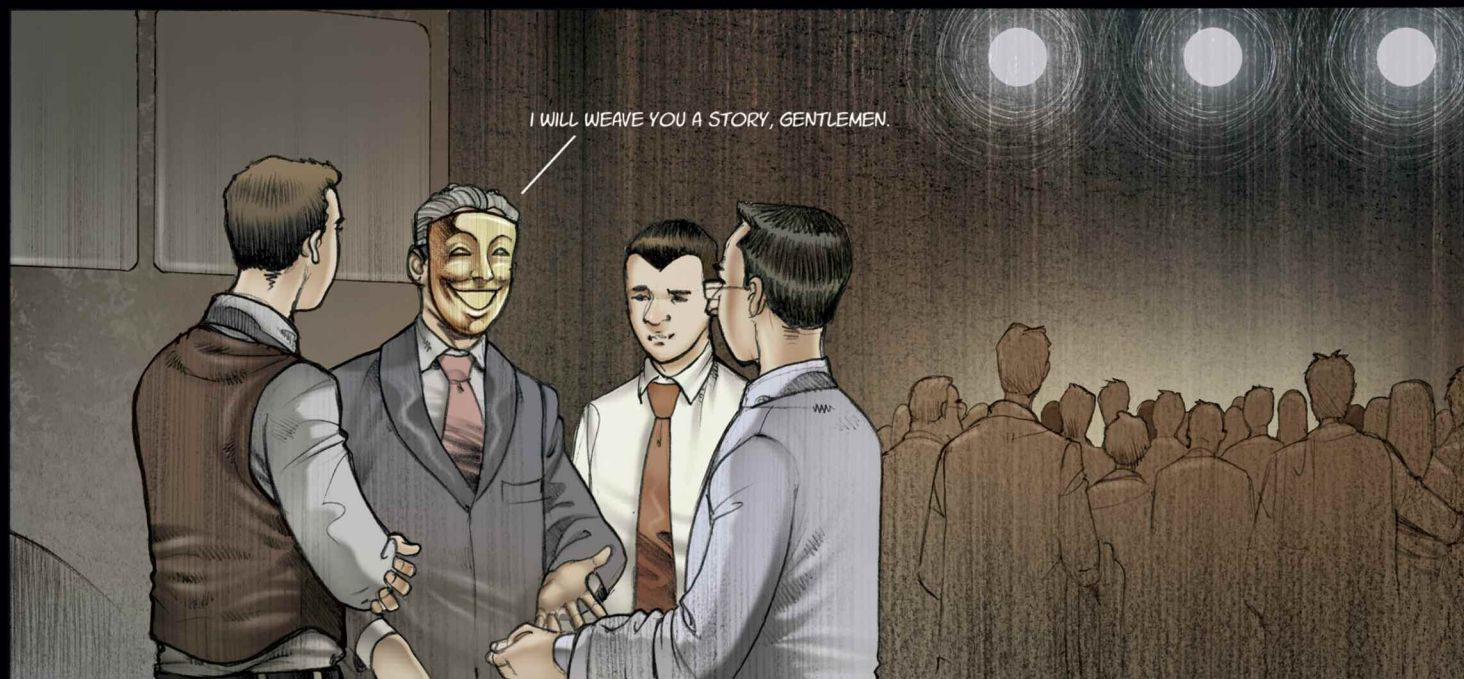
STILL, AS THE QUANTITY OF NITRATE
THERE IS NEITHER INSIGNIFICANT
NOR VITAL FOR THE PROJECT:
THE SATELLITE CAN WAIT.

IT WON'T... DRIFT ANYWHERE, NO?

AND WHEN OUR SPACE PROGRAM
IS WELL UNDER WAY, IT'LL BE MUCH
CHEAPER TO LAND IT, THEN TO SEND
A SPECIAL SHUTTLE NOW.

BY THE WAY, THAT CAPTAIN FELLOW
HAS FOUND AN IDEAL PLACE FOR KEEPING
FLAMMABLE FILMS: LOWEST AND MOST
CONSTANT POSSIBLE TEMPERATURE
PREVENTS IT FROM SELF IGNITING;
THE ABSENCE OF MOISTURE AND
THEREFORE PARASITES, ETC.
SO, IT'S ALL BRILLIANT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

AND THAT CONCLUDES THIS MEETING,
DEAR SHARE HOLDERS. YOU WILL BE
CONSTANTLY INFORMED.



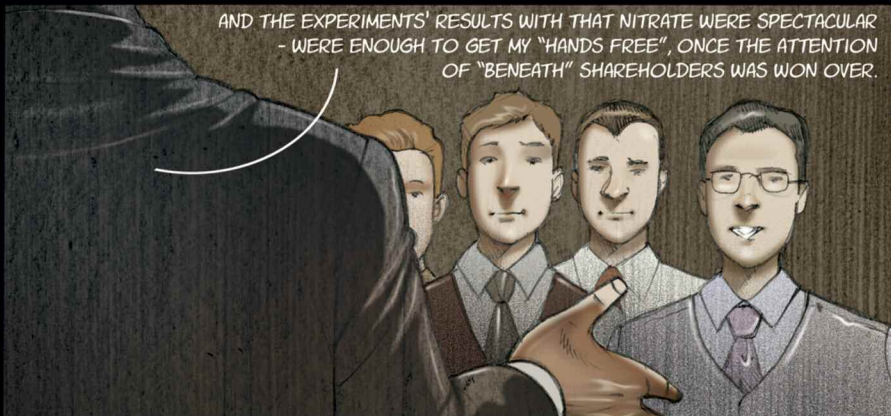
FLOWERS AND GRASS...
I KNOW - IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE - BUT THEY WERE
THE EPIPHANY. SOMETHING THAT BEAUTIFUL,
OVER SUCH A STINK-HOLE, I HAVE NEVER SEEN.
HEARD OF SUCH PHENOMENA, OVER MASS GRAVES,
THOUGH. VERY RARE.



BUT, THIS WAS A VISION. PURE INSPIRATION. EVERYTHING ELSE WAS A MATTER OF TIME.
AND THE NITRATE FROM THE STINK HOLE, OF COURSE, (I SAW TO THAT)
BECAME A FOUNDATION STONE OF MY RESEARCH. TO CONVINCE THOSE POOR WRETCHES
TO DELIVER IT TO ME, AS SECRETLY AS THEY'VE BURIED IT, WAS CHILD'S PLAY.



AND THE EXPERIMENTS' RESULTS WITH THAT NITRATE WERE SPECTACULAR
- WERE ENOUGH TO GET MY "HANDS FREE", ONCE THE ATTENTION
OF "BENEATH" SHAREHOLDERS WAS WON OVER.

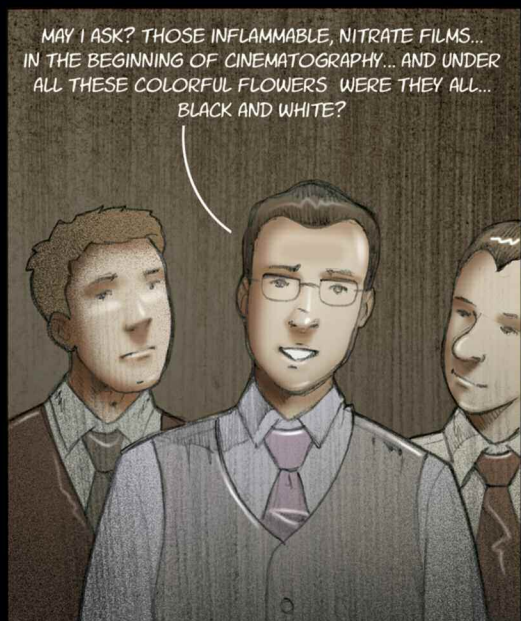


SORRY!
SIR!

ADDRESSING ME?

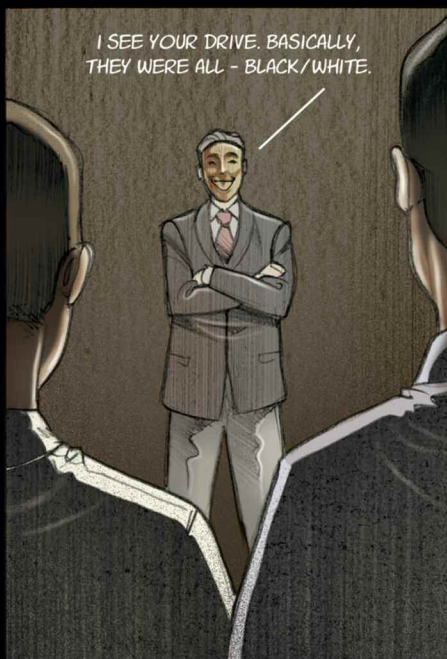


MAY I ASK? THOSE INFLAMMABLE, NITRATE FILMS...
IN THE BEGINNING OF CINEMATOGRAPHY... AND UNDER
ALL THESE COLORFUL FLOWERS WERE THEY ALL...
BLACK AND WHITE?



WELL, SOME WERE HAND PAINTED... BUT, YES...

I SEE YOUR DRIVE. BASICALLY,
THEY WERE ALL - BLACK/WHITE.



HMM. THAT SHOULD BE EXAMINED!
CAPTAIN NITRATE, THAN THAT WOSTOK GUY,
AND - B/W NITRATES!

BUT THE CONNECTION
ELUDES ME, FOR NOW.









WOSTOK. I KNOW THAT.
BUT, WHO ARE YOU?



BUT, I AM WOSTOK.

SURE. AND HE IS NOT...



SHUT UP, KID.

I'VE ONLY JUST RETURNED HOME.
OR WHAT'S LEFT OF IT. WHAT THE HELL
HAPPENED HERE? JUST A MOMENT:
YOU SAID - KILLED?

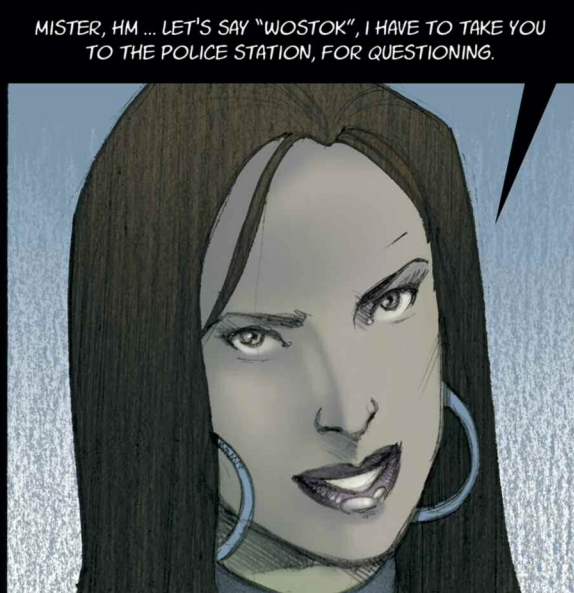


AND YOU CLAIM TO BE WOSTOK?
ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU ARE TERRIBLY
PALE. LIKE A VAMPIRE. WHY?

JUST A MOMENT, GIRL! WHO APPOINTED YOU...?



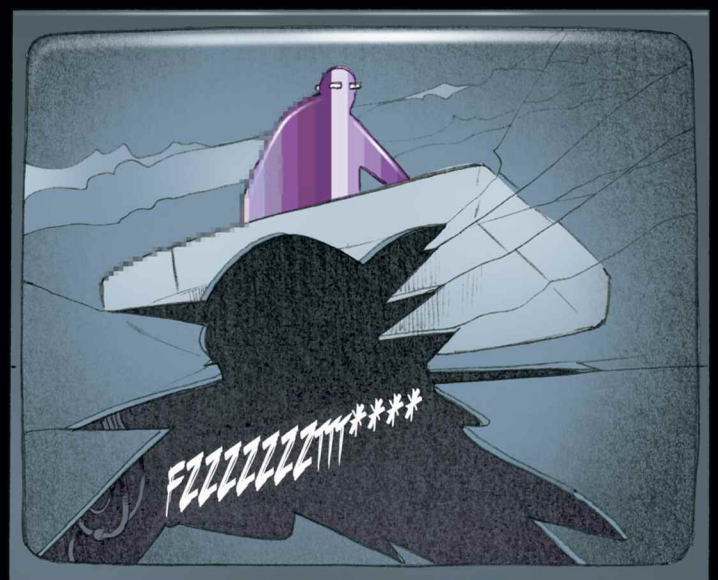
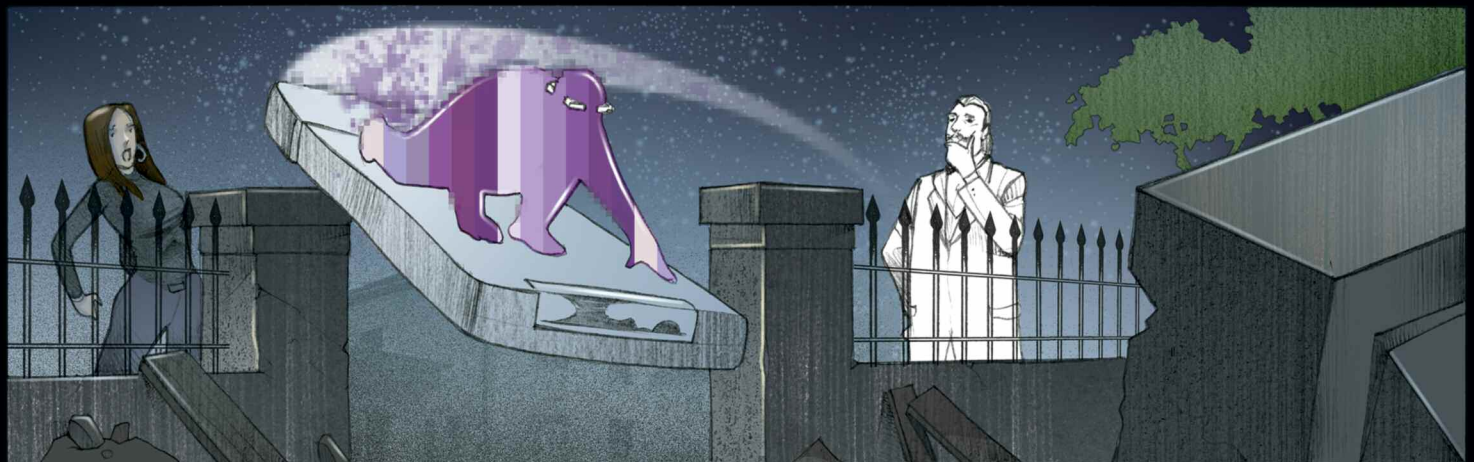
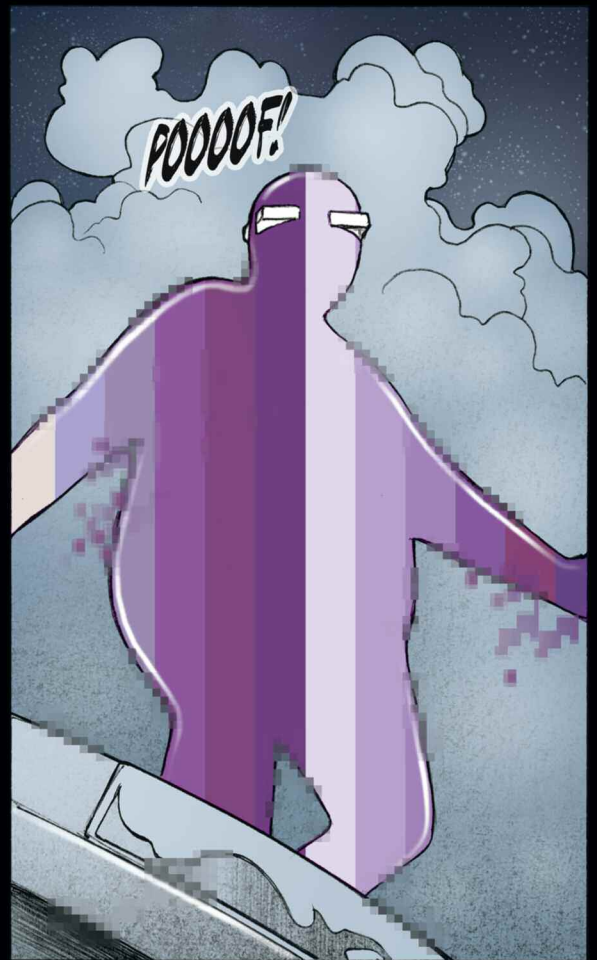
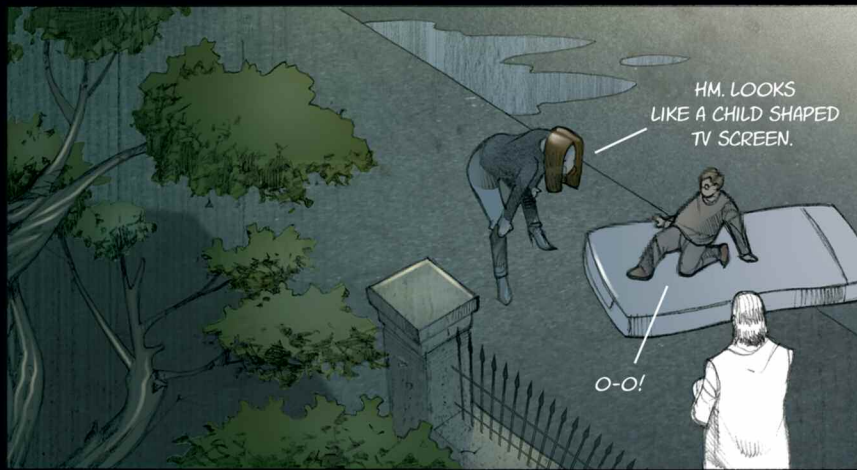
AH, SO,
INSPECTOR-ESS MARYNELA
VLADYK. POLICE, HMMM...
WELL, ISN'T IT A LITTLE LATE
TO GUARD MY HOUSE... OR ME?

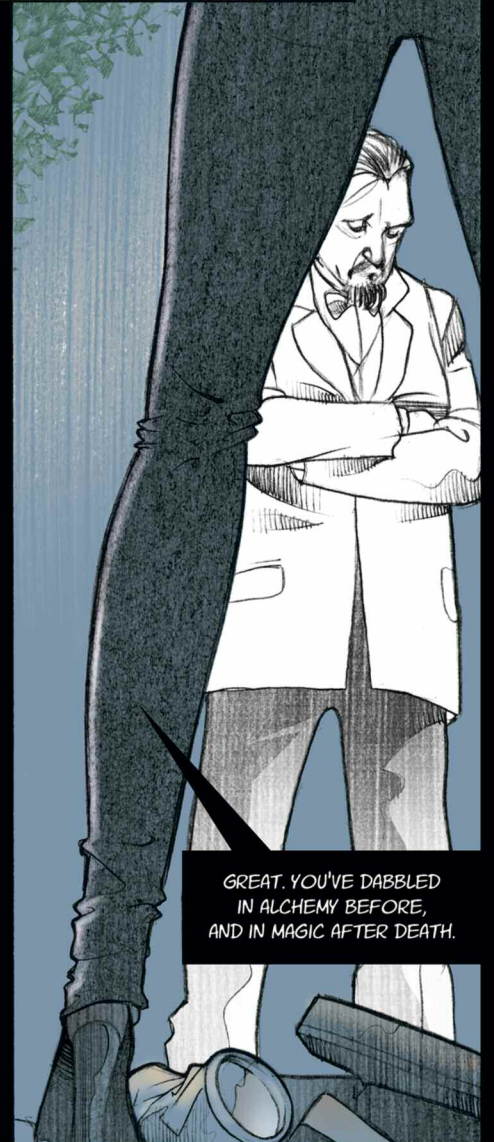
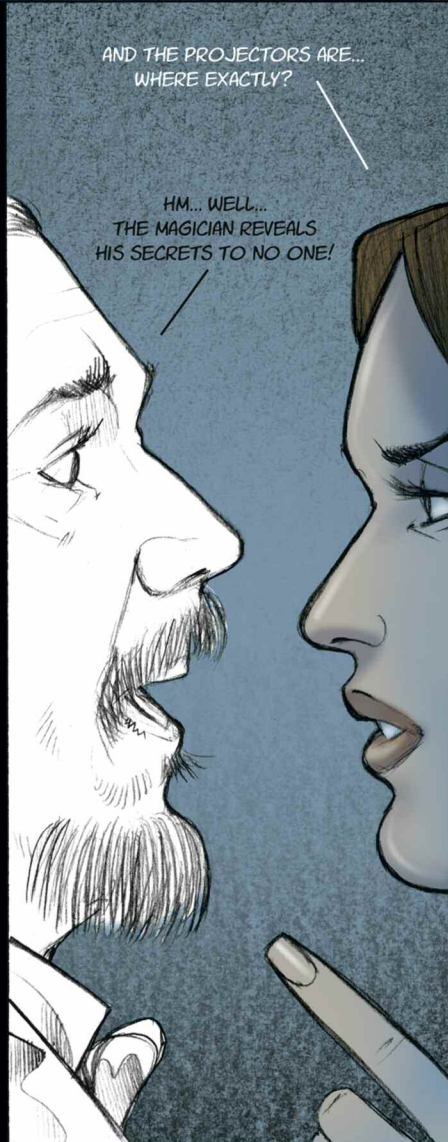
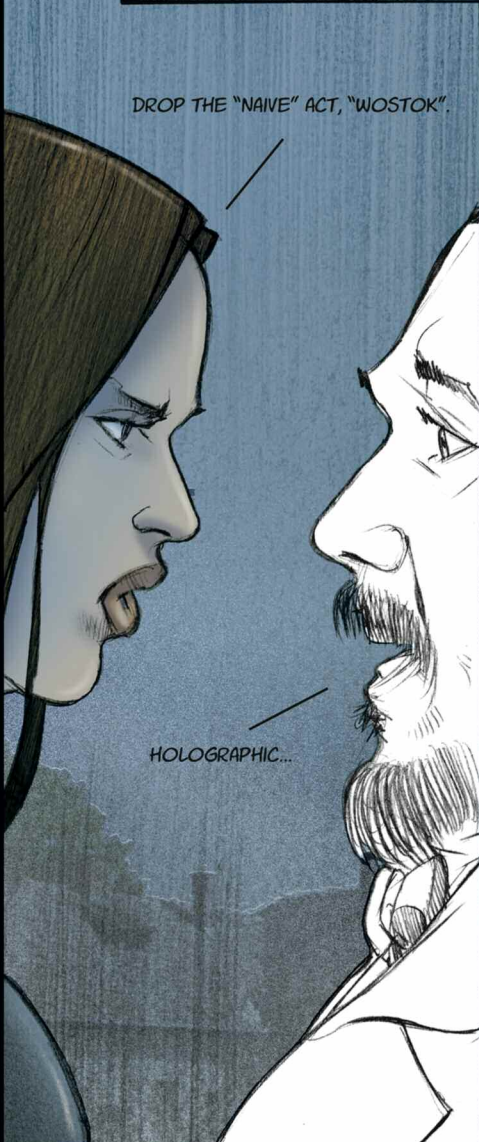


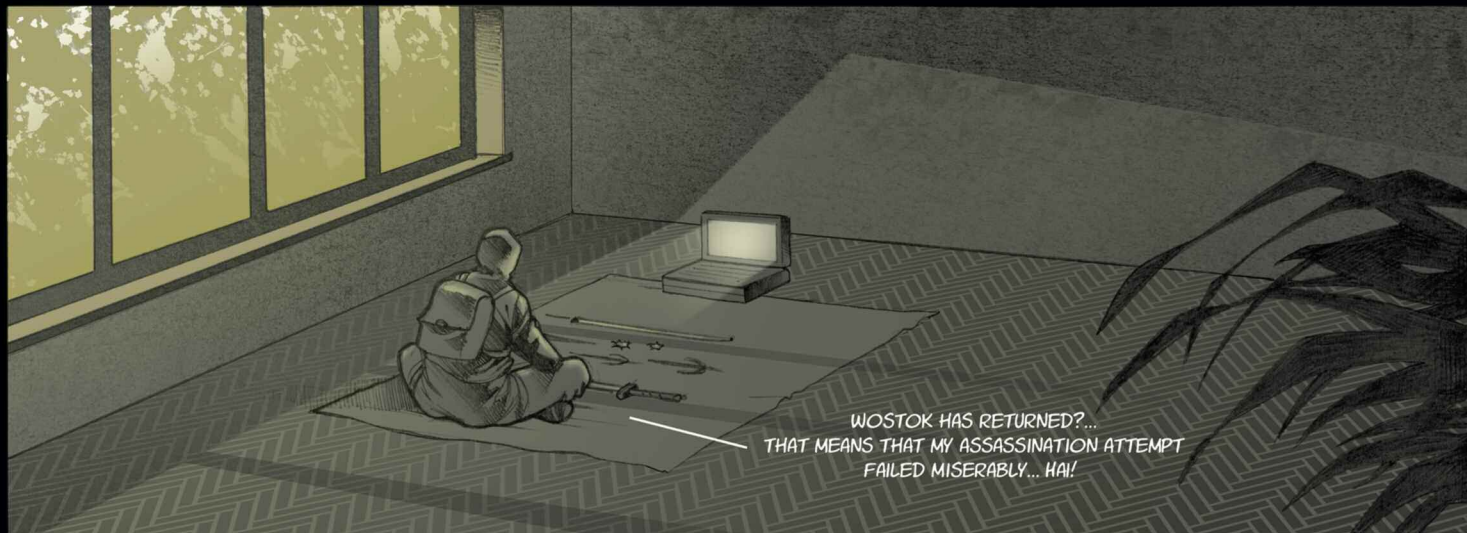
MISTER, HM ... LET'S SAY "WOSTOK", I HAVE TO TAKE YOU
TO THE POLICE STATION, FOR QUESTIONING.



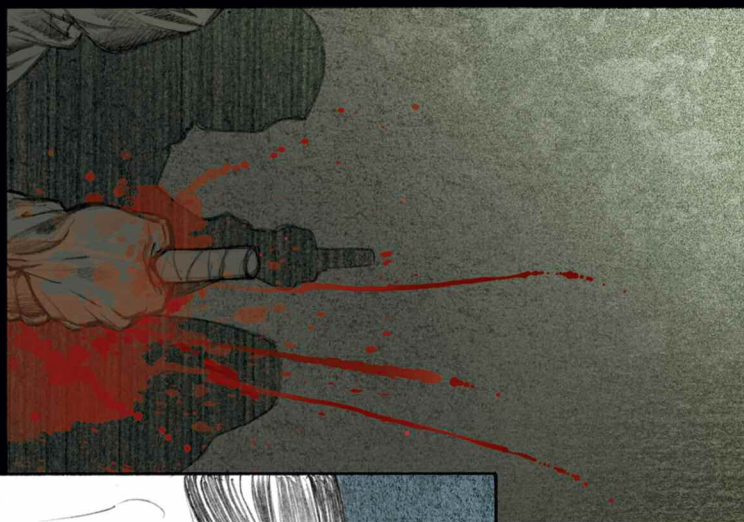
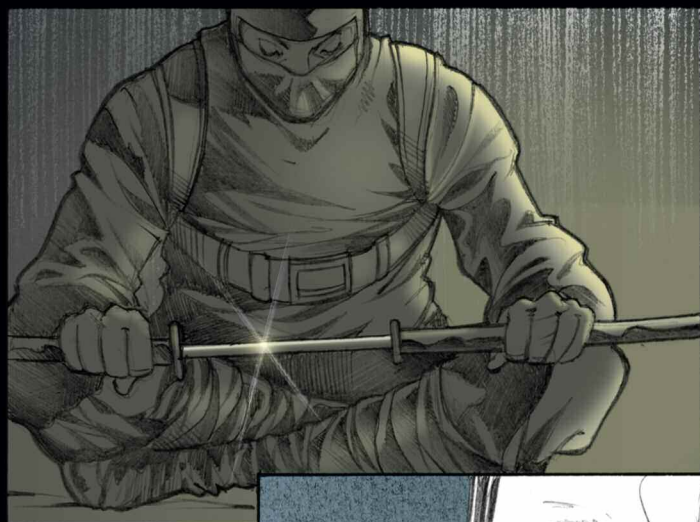
THE SAME APPLIES TO THIS... CHILD???







WOSTOK HAS RETURNED?...
THAT MEANS THAT MY ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT
FAILED MISERABLY... HAI!

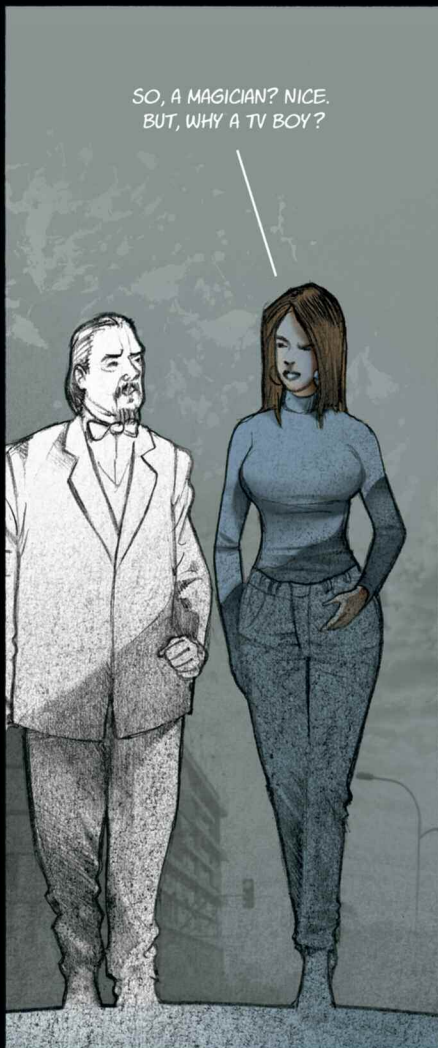


BUT I AM ALIVE,
FOR GOD'S SAKE.

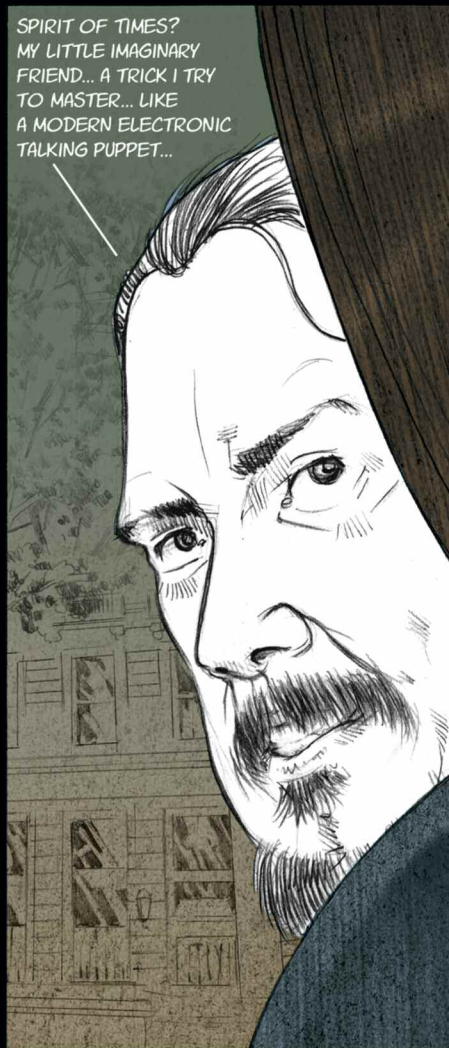
HANDCUFF? ME?
AND WHY WOULD YOU?



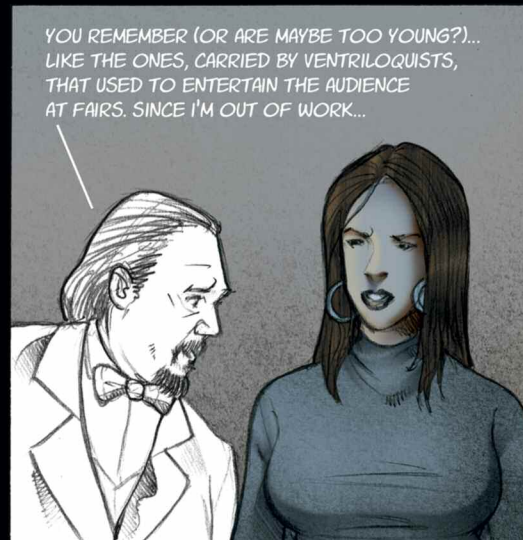
NO MATTER.
NO ONE RUNS FROM ME.



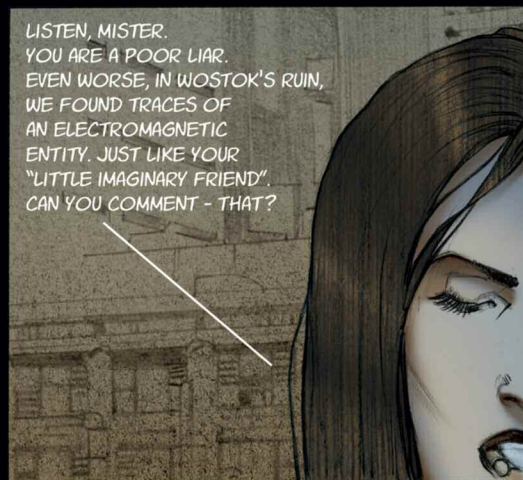
SO, A MAGICIAN? NICE.
BUT, WHY A TV BOY?



SPIRIT OF TIMES?
MY LITTLE IMAGINARY
FRIEND... A TRICK I TRY
TO MASTER... LIKE
A MODERN ELECTRONIC
TALKING PUPPET...



YOU REMEMBER (OR ARE MAYBE TOO YOUNG?)...
LIKE THE ONES, CARRIED BY VENTRILOQUISTS,
THAT USED TO ENTERTAIN THE AUDIENCE
AT FAIRS. SINCE I'M OUT OF WORK...



LISTEN, MISTER.
YOU ARE A POOR LIAR.
EVEN WORSE, IN WOSTOK'S RUIN,
WE FOUND TRACES OF
AN ELECTROMAGNETIC
ENTITY. JUST LIKE YOUR
"LITTLE IMAGINARY FRIEND".
CAN YOU COMMENT - THAT?



WELL, OFTEN PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT.
MAYBE IT'S SOMETHING FROM BEFORE...

THAT'S BETTER.
LYING, OF COURSE.

BUT, TO VERIFY
YOUR IDENTITY
WON'T BE HARD.



AGREED?

RETURNED? WHO? WHAT'Z WITH WOOD-STOCK?
OOO, YEAH. WOSTOK. THAT... ALCO-CHEMIST...
THAT WE BLEW IN HIS HOME...

AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT AWREADY.
YOU KNOW THE SAYING... SHIT
ALSO... RISES. WE'LL BLAST 'IM
AGAIN SO HIGH...

O. I SEE.
I AYE, SIR.

I HAVE A RIGHT
NOT TO LET YOU
WASH MY ASS!

I AM A WELL FORMED PERSONALITY!
AND, I WARN YOU, I'VE HAD A BATH...
9 MONTHS AGO!

BUT, THAT
RESULTED IN A
NEVER-ENDING
NIGHTMARE:

IN MY DREAMS,
I'M BEING CHASED
BY A MAD SOAP!