

# THE DARKNESS



Issue #03



THREE MINUTES.

YOU KNOW HOW LONG  
THREE MINUTES IS?



ANY BOXER WILL TELL  
YOU IT'S A MATTER OF  
PERSPECTIVE.

A muscular man in a blue singlet lunges forward, while a man in a blue jacket cowers in the foreground. A woman in the background watches.

IT ALL DEPENDS ON  
WHETHER YOU'RE  
WINNING OR LOSING.





I REMEMBER JOEY LUCHESI CAME UP WITH A NAME FOR THESE LUNATICS-- HE CALLED THEM **THE TRIPLETS** ON ACCOUNT OF HOW YOU NEVER SEE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER TWO. THAT JOKE PRETTY MUCH STUCK AFTER THEY CUT HIS SONADS OFF THE FOLLOWING WEEK.

THE BIG ONE BEATING ME SENSELESS WITH THE SEVERED HEAD OF NICKY BARRUCCI IS CALLED **TANK**. TANK WOULD HARDLY BE WHAT YOU'D CALL THE BRAINS OF THE OPERATION.



MINDY IS A BLACK WIDOW SPIDER WITH PNEUMATIC BOOBS AND A HEART OF POISON. ONLY WOMAN I EVER MET WHO COULD LOOK THIS GOOD AND THIS BAD AT THE SAME TIME.

A FEW YEARS AGO SHE USED TO HAVE A THING FOR ME-- I NEVER HAD THE STONES TO FIND OUT WHAT THAT THING WAS.




O'MALLEY IS A DIFFERENT STORY ALTOGETHER. HE'S THE ONE YOU REALLY WATCH OUT FOR-- THE GUY WHO MAKES HIS RULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY MOMENT AND FOR ANY REASON.


I NEVER COULD FIGURE OUT WHY HE DOESN'T LIKE ME, MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'M THE ONE WHO MADE HIS SKULL LOOK LIKE A FLATHEAD SCREWDRIVER.



UWFF!



I WANT YOU TO TAKE A LONG LOOK, ESTACADO. I'M THE GUY THAT DID YOU A FAVOR. I'M THE GUY WHO PUT YOU OUT OF EVERYONE'S MISERY.



YOU DON'T EVER RESPOND TO THESE KILLERS — NOT UNLESS YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE THINGS WORSE FOR YOURSELF.

THE BREAK IN THE ACTION IS AN EXCUSE FOR O'MALLEY TO SAY HIS PIECE. IT'S A WAY FOR TANK TO TAKE A BREATH SO HE DOESN'T HURT HIS FIST ON MY NOSE.



I CAN'T ESCAPE, BUT I CAN HIDE.

AND SO I WELCOME THE DARKNESS.












I HEAR A SOUND  
COMING FROM  
ABOVE.

I WANT SO  
DESPERATELY TO  
STAY HERE WHERE  
IT'S SAFE.

BUT I CAN'T-- I'M  
PULLED INTO THE LIGHT  
BY DARKNESS, THROUGH  
TEN THOUSAND YEARS  
OF ACCUMULATED FILTH.



I'M JUST ANOTHER  
NUMBER ON ITS  
AGENDA... A  
HUNDRED  
THOUSAND TOTTEC  
HUMAN SACRIFICES...  
A THIRD OF A NATION  
IMPALED ON SPIKES...  
SEVEN AND A HALF  
MILLION JEWS.

WE'RE ALL  
NUMBERS.



AAH!



HELL.






WELCOME  
BACK, HERO. I WAS  
BEGINNING TO THINK  
YOU WERE GONNA  
WIMP OUT ON US.

→AH-EHHS.. THIS  
IS ABOUT THE HEAD  
THING IS IT, O'MALLEY?  
→HHHS.. ONLY YOU OUGHTTA  
KNOW BETTER THAN TO  
SNEAK UP ON A MAN WHEN  
HE'S IN THE COMPANY  
OF A LADY.

'SPECIALLY WHEN  
YOU GOT YOUR  
CRANIUM LINED UP  
UNDER THE AXLE OF A  
TWO-TON CHEVY JUST  
SO'S YOU CAN GET A  
BETTER VIEW.



YEAH... THAT  
WAS PROBABLY  
FUNNY THE FIRST  
FIFTY TIMES I  
HEARD IT, YOU  
LITTLE CRAP-  
STAIN.

I OUGHTTA  
GRIND YOUR  
OYSTERS IN A VICE  
FOR WHAT YOU DID.  
COUPLA MINUTES,  
WE'LL SEE IF  
YOU'RE STILL  
LAUGHIN'!



TAKE IT EASY,  
O'MALLEY. HE'S  
TRYING TO GET  
YOU RILED.



HEY, WHAT CAN  
I SAY? I DIDN'T  
KNOW SHE WAS  
YOUR WIFE.

IF IT MAKES  
ANY DIFFERENCE,  
SHE WAS LIKE A DEAD  
RACCOON IN THE  
SACK.



I WANNA SEE  
THIS LITTLE DAGO  
CRACK A FEW JOES  
AFTER WE CRACK  
ALL OF HIS RIBS.

MAKE IT  
LAST A  
WEEK.











PAULIE, IT'S  
MICKEY. I JUST  
CAME FROM OUTSIDE  
NICKY BARRUCCI'S  
HOUSE. THE BOYS DIDN'T  
CHECK IN. I FOUND 'EM  
OUTSIDE INNA CAR,  
DEAD AS FRICKIN'  
DODOS.

IT GETS  
WORSE:  
ESTACADO  
GOT AWAY.



WHAT  
D'YOU MEAN,  
'ESTACADO  
GOT AWAY?!"



HE GOT  
AWAY.







THIS  
SITUATION IN  
NEW YORK-- IT'S  
GETTIN' TO BE A  
PROBLEM.

JUST BE  
PATIENT; THE  
CREAM WILL RISE  
TO THE TOP

HOW ABOUT ESTACADO STAYIN' WITH  
JIMMY FRANCHETTI'S WIFE? WHAT  
ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO AFTER  
WHAT HE DID TO FRANKIE? WE DON'T  
JUST TAKE PEOPLE BACK IN LIKE  
WE'RE SOME KINDA GODDAMN  
**SOCIAL CLUB--**



ESTACADO KNEW  
FRANKIE WAS ON THE  
TAKE FROM US. HE TOLD  
NINO PIRELLI HE SPILLED  
THE BEANS TO  
PROTECT THE  
FAMILY.

BESIDES, HE WAS  
NEVER A BAD KID. WE  
HAD EYES ON HIM  
FROM ALL AROUND.



MAYBE IT'S THAT  
LITTLE SCHMUCK  
PAULIE WE OUGHTTA BE  
CONCERNED ABOUT.





I SEE DEAD  
PEOPLE.

EVERYWHERE.



SIR--?

HUH?



FROM THE  
GENTLEMAN, SIR... AT  
THE FAR TABLE. HE  
ASKED IF YOU WOULD  
LIKE TO JOIN HIM.







I HEARD YOU FOUND YOUR WAY BACK FROM THE DEAD, JACKIE.

MUST'VE BEEN A BUMPY ROAD-- YOU LOOK LIKE HELL.



YEAH, WELL... ALL ROADS LEAD TO STARBUCKS.

HOW YOU *DOIN'* BUTCHER?



ME AND BUTCHER, WE WENT AROUND THE BLOCK MORE THAN A FEW TIMES TOGETHER.

THAT BUSINESS WITH UNCLE FRANKIE... AND BACK WHEN I WAS STRICTLY A TRIGGER MAN, HE WORKED CLEANUP A FEW TIMES.




TWENTY YEARS OR MORE, BUTCHER'S BEEN THE BEST CLEANER IN THE BUSINESS. I MEAN, HE'S A CERTIFIED MIRACLE WORKER KNOWN TO EVERY PIG FARMER AND LANDFILL OWNER FROM HERE TO CHICAGO.

BUTCHER'S THE GUY YOU CALL IN AFTER A HIT. HE'S DISPOSED OF MORE BODIES THAN A BOSNIAN PRISON GUARD.




AN' I SWEAR, HE'S THE NICEST GUY YOU'D EVER WANT TO MEET.




I KNOW THINGS  
WENT REAL BAD IN THE  
END WITH UNCLE FRANKIE.  
YOU SAW WHAT HE DID TO  
JENNY. YOU SHOULD HAVE  
BEEN WATCHING MY  
BACK.

I'VE NEVER TAKEN  
SIDES, JACKIE-- YOU  
KNOW THAT. IT WAS  
NOTHING PERSONAL.



BOTTOM LINE:  
YOU TURNED YOUR  
BACK ON ME WHEN WE  
HAD A CHANCE TO SET  
THINGS RIGHT,  
BUTCHER--




BOTTOM LINE,  
YOU RATTED TO THE  
FEDS. WHAT YOU THINK  
THE FBI'S SOME KINDA  
CLINIC WORKER WHO  
COMES IN TO FIGURE  
OUT FAMILY  
PROBLEMS?  
WE DON'T  
DEAL WITH THEIR  
KIND, JACKIE, YOU  
SHOULD'VE  
EXERCISED BETTER  
JUDGMENT.



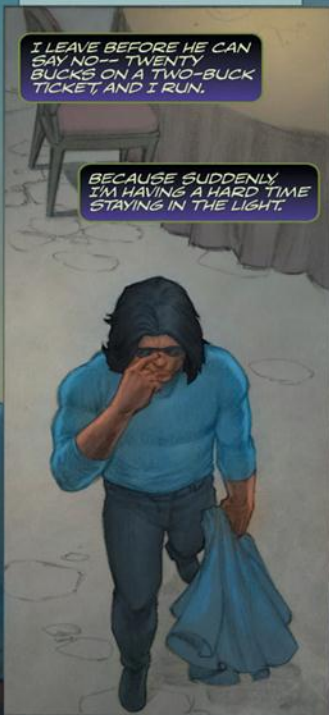
OKAY, OKAY... I'LL  
ADMIT I COULDA  
HANDLED IT BETTER, BUT  
FRANKIE WAS TEARING THIS  
PLACE APART. SOMETHING  
HAD TO BE DONE.

BESIDES, NOW IT'S  
**WORSE**-- WE GOT FRANKIE'S  
COUSIN, PAULIE, COME INTO TOWN  
ACTING LIKE A HORNED-UP RHINO,  
AN' WE'RE THE FALLEN STUMP  
THAT LOOKS LIKE A **LADY**  
RHINO.



IN CASE YOU  
HAVEN'T HEARD,  
THERE'S A **WAR** COMING,  
BUTCHER. AN' THIS TIME,  
YOU DON'T GET TO BE  
SWITZERLAND.












I SEE THEM  
EVERYWHERE... IN  
THE DARKNESS.  
ALL AROUND ME.

VISIONS.



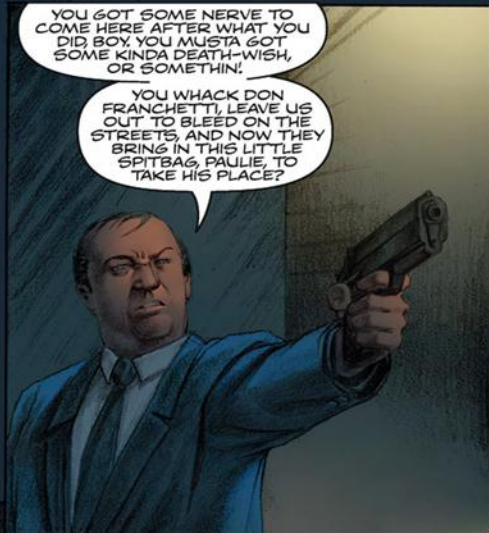
IT'S SUPPOSED TO  
MEAN SOMETHING.  
IT'S SUPPOSED TO  
BE A MESSAGE.



K-CHIK

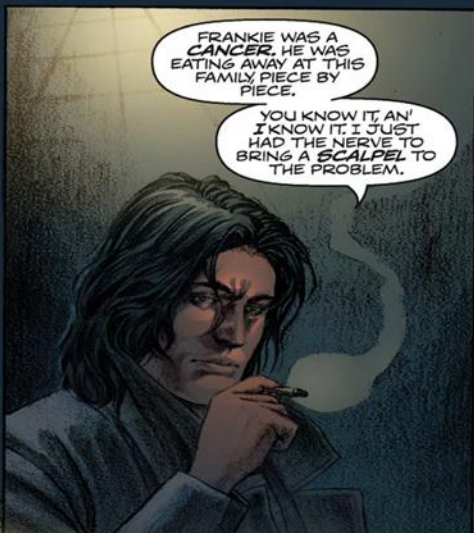


EVERYONE'S  
A DEAD MAN.



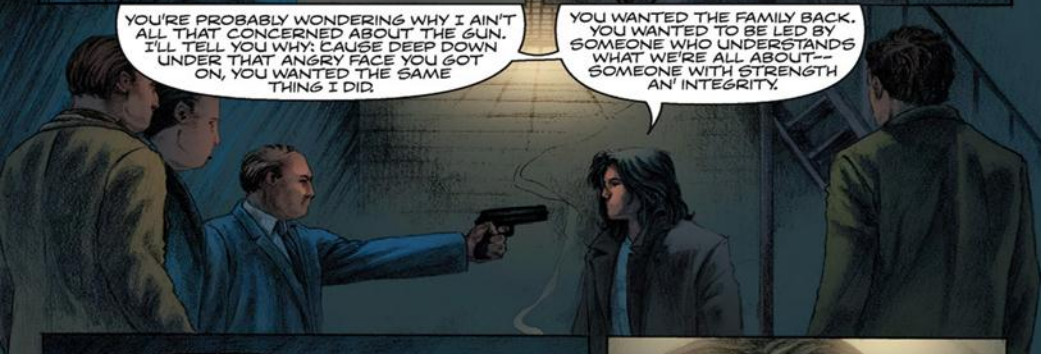
YOU GOT SOME NERVE TO COME HERE AFTER WHAT YOU DID, BOY. YOU MUSTA GOT SOME KINDA DEATH-WISH, OR SOMETHIN'.

YOU WHACK DON FRANCHETTI, LEAVE US OUT TO BLEED ON THE STREETS, AND NOW THEY BRING IN THIS LITTLE SPITBAG, PAULIE, TO TAKE HIS PLACE?



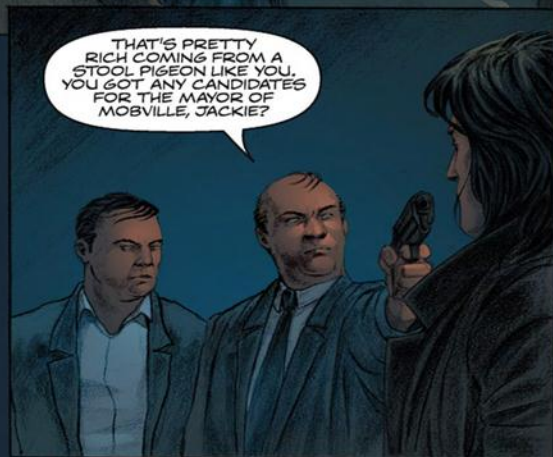
FRANKIE WAS A **CANCER**. HE WAS EATING AWAY AT THIS FAMILY PIECE BY PIECE.

YOU KNOW IT AN' I KNOW IT I JUST HAD THE NERVE TO BRING A **SCALPEL** TO THE PROBLEM.



YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHY I AIN'T ALL THAT CONCERNED ABOUT THE GUN. I'LL TELL YOU WHY: CAUSE DEEP DOWN UNDER THAT ANGRY FACE YOU GOT ON, YOU WANTED THE SAME THING I DID.

YOU WANTED THE FAMILY BACK. YOU WANTED TO BE LED BY SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT-- SOMEONE WITH STRENGTH AN' INTEGRITY.

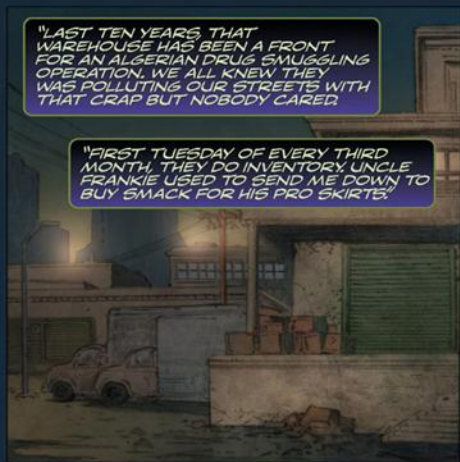


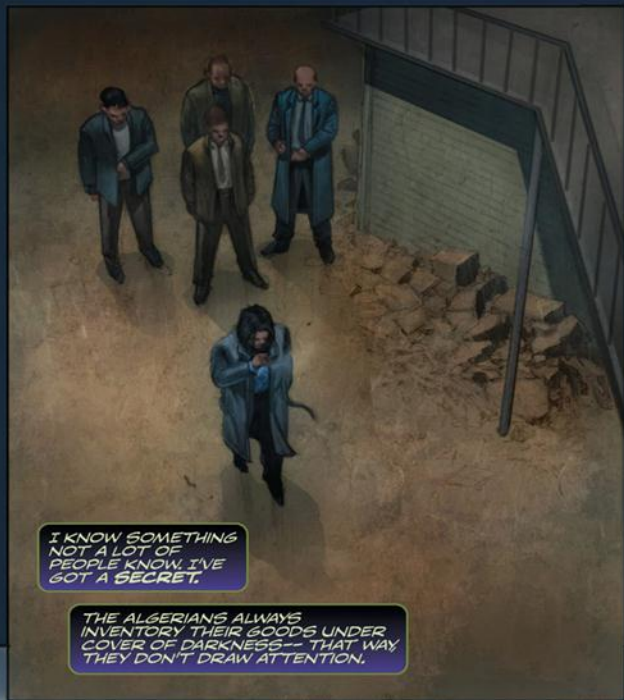
THAT'S PRETTY RICH COMING FROM A STOOL PIGEON LIKE YOU. YOU GOT ANY CANDIDATES FOR THE MAYOR OF MOBBVILLE, JACKIE?



ME.







I KNOW SOMETHING  
NOT A LOT OF  
PEOPLE KNOW. I'VE  
GOT A SECRET.

THE ALGERIANS ALWAYS  
INVENTORY THEIR GOODS UNDER  
COVER OF DARKNESS-- THAT WAY  
THEY DON'T DRAW ATTENTION.

BUT I GOT A GUN IN  
EVERY SHADOW, JUST  
WAITING TO GO OFF.

SOMEONE TOLD  
ME ONCE, I WAS  
A GENERAL OF  
SOULS. WELL, I  
GOT A WAR  
COMING, AND I  
NEED AN ARMY.



THEY MIGHT BE AN ARMY  
OF DEAD MEN IN MY EYES...

BUT  
THEY'RE  
FAMILY.



TO BE CONTINUED