



A NEW GRAPHIC NOVEL

Tumor

Joshua Hale Fialkov & Noel Tuazon

Chapter Two



NT-09

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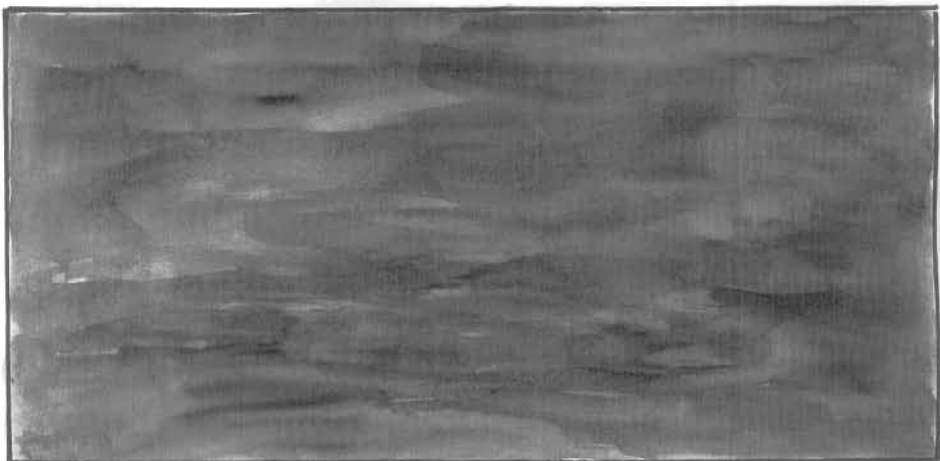
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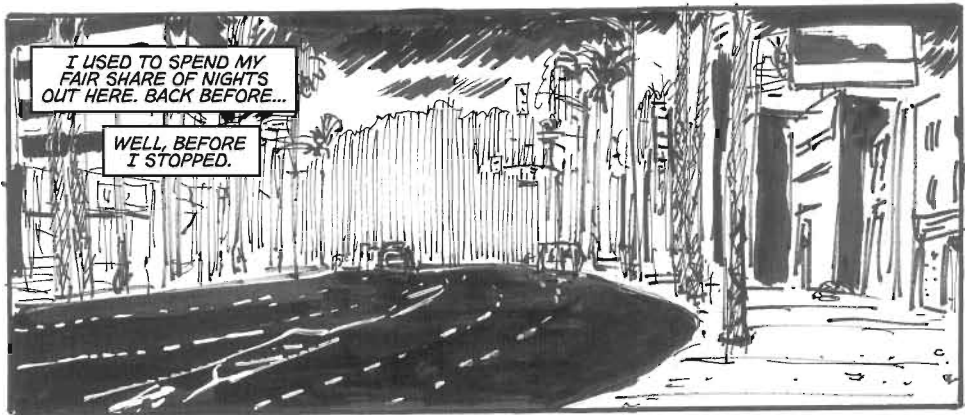
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I USED TO SPEND MY FAIR SHARE OF NIGHTS OUT HERE. BACK BEFORE...

WELL, BEFORE I STOPPED.



PLACES ARE FILLED WITH MEMORIES. YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT 'EM, BUT THEN, YOU STAND THERE, AND YOU CAN SEE IT ALL OVER AGAIN.

SOME GOOD, SOME NOT SO GOOD.

LIKE THAT SONG.



THINGS HAVE BEEN MORE VIVID LATELY, THOUGH.

SINCE THE HEADACHES. SINCE THE BLACKOUTS.

THAT'S IT, BABY...

PAPI, I HAVE TO GET BACK TO WORK...

I KNOW, I KNOW.



I'LL BE BACK AT 2, YEAH?

SÌ, MI AMOR.

HOW'D YOU FUCK THAT UP, FRANKIE-BOY?



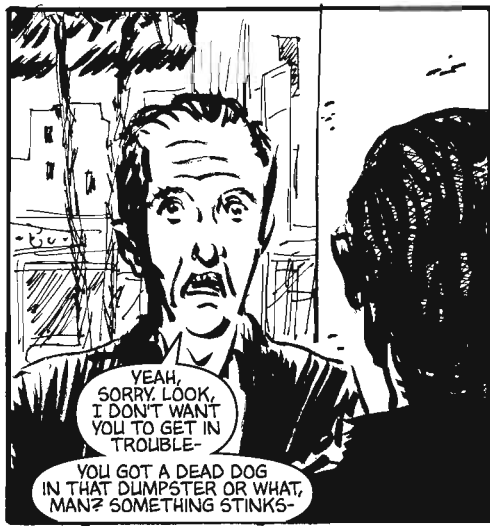
I LOVE YOU, FRANKIE.

I LOVE YOU, TOO, BABY.

WHAT THE FUCK YOU SAY?

I... SORRY,
I'M LOOKIN' FOR,
LIM... SHIT...
WHAT THE
HELL WAS HIS
NAME.









MONEY'LL MAKE ANYBODY DO ANYTHING.

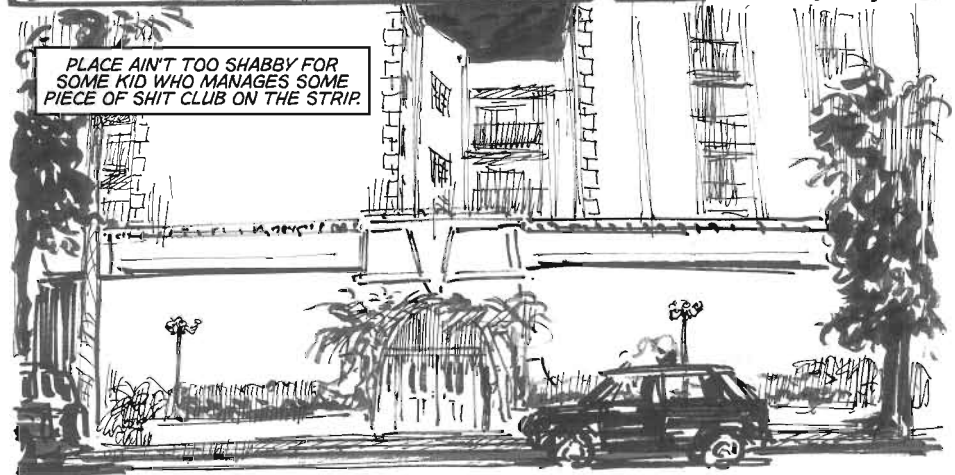
MY DAD TOLD ME THAT.

RIGHT BEFORE HE CLEANED OUT OUR BANK ACCOUNT AND RAN OFF WITH SOME SENORITA FROM BILLING.



MY HEAD'S RINGING, AND I KEEP LOSING MY PLACE.

LIKE I'M READING A BOOK WHILE THE TV'S ON AND THERE'S SOMEONE KNOCKIN' AT THE DOOR.



PLACE AIN'T TOO SHABBY FOR SOME KID WHO MANAGES SOME PIECE OF SHIT CLUB ON THE STRIP.



HEAD'S POUNDING SO HARD, IT'S LIKE I'VE BEEN POUNDING WHISKEY LACED WITH SECONOL.



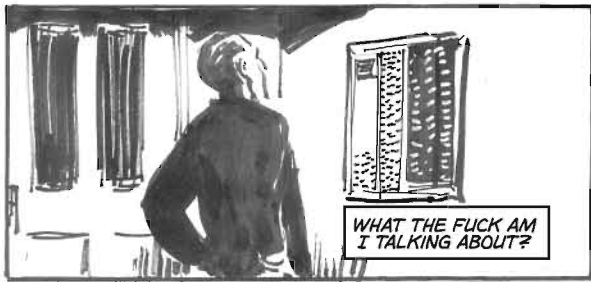
I NEVER TOUCHED THE HARD STUFF. A DRINK HERE AND THERE, MAYBE A DRAG ON THE WRONG CIGARETTE...



I FIGURED DRINKIN' AND DRUGGIN' MYSELF TO DEATH WAS CHEATING.



NATURE GOES THROUGH ENOUGH TROUBLE TRYING TO KILL YOU WITHOUT YOU HELPING IT ALONG, RIGHT?



WHAT THE FUCK AM I TALKING ABOUT?

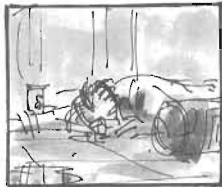


I DRINK. OF COURSE I DRINK.

FOR A GOOD TWENTY YEARS NOW I HAVEN'T DONE MUCH ELSE.



HOW COULD I THINK...



WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH ME?

GOT YOU.

R. FABRE 306
R. FABRE 307
R. FABRE 308
R. FABRE 309
R. FABRE 310



IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS, I PROBABLY COULD'VE JUST PICKED THE LOCK.



GOING IN?

I... UH... MY KEYS ARE INSIDE.

WHAT'S THAT LINE FROM 'A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE?'

I'VE ALWAYS DEPENDED ON THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS.

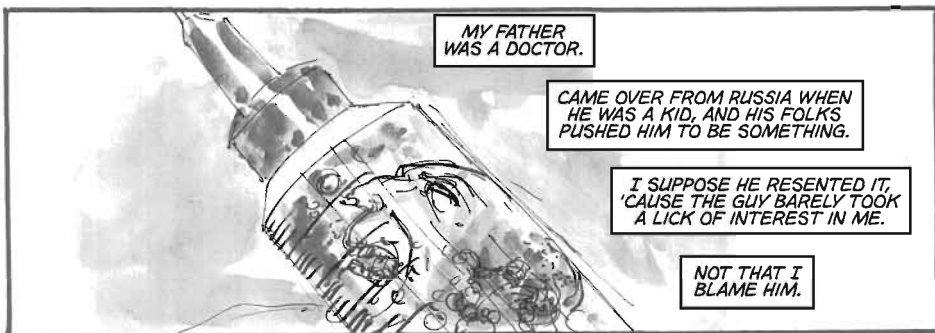


I'M DONE! M'DONE! M'DONE!
I'M DONE! M'DONETAKE! M'
DONETAKE! M'DONE-
FUUUUCK



HE'S SEIZING AGAIN!
WE NEED MORE
TEGRETOL!

I'M DONE
I'M DONE! M'DONE
I'M DONE! M'DONETAKE
I'M DONETAKE I'M DONE
I'M DONE! M'DONE-

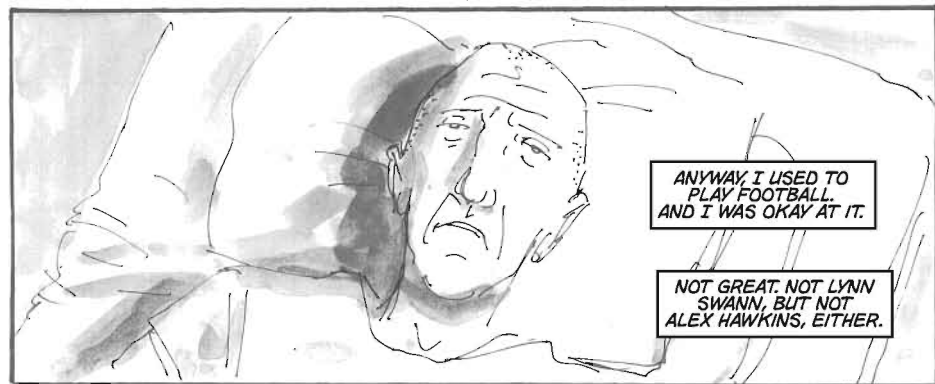


MY FATHER
WAS A DOCTOR.

CAME OVER FROM RUSSIA WHEN
HE WAS A KID, AND HIS FOLKS
PUSHED HIM TO BE SOMETHING.

I SUPPOSE HE RESENTED IT,
'CAUSE THE GUY BARELY TOOK
A LICK OF INTEREST IN ME.

NOT THAT I
BLAME HIM.



ANYWAY, I USED TO
PLAY FOOTBALL.
AND I WAS OKAY AT IT.

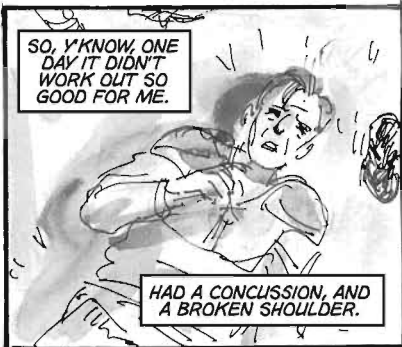
NOT GREAT. NOT LYNN
SWANN, BUT NOT
ALEX HAWKINS, EITHER.

I DIDN'T LIKE WEARING A HELMET.
MOST OF THE OTHER GUYS DID, EVEN
BACK THEN. THEY WEREN'T DUMBASSES.



BUT Y'SEE, DOUG FRANKLIN DIDN'T
WEAR A HELMET, SO I'D BE FUCKED
IF FRANKIE "STRONG-ARM"
ARMSTRONG DIDN'T DO THE SAME.

SO, Y'KNOW, ONE
DAY IT DIDN'T
WORK OUT SO
GOOD FOR ME.



HAD A CONCUSSION, AND
A BROKEN SHOULDER.

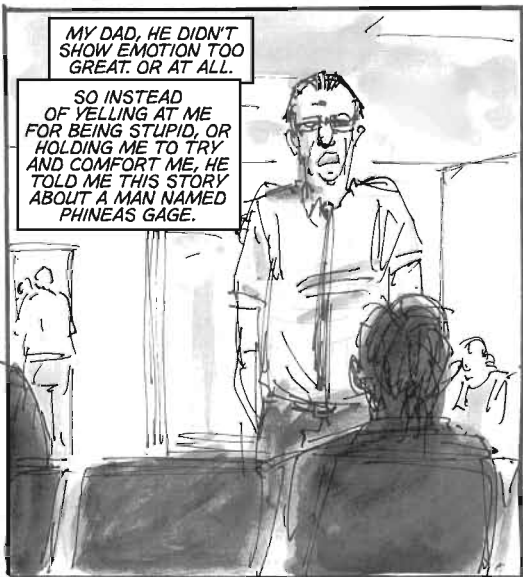
MY DAD, HE DIDN'T
SHOW EMOTION TOO
GREAT. OR AT ALL.

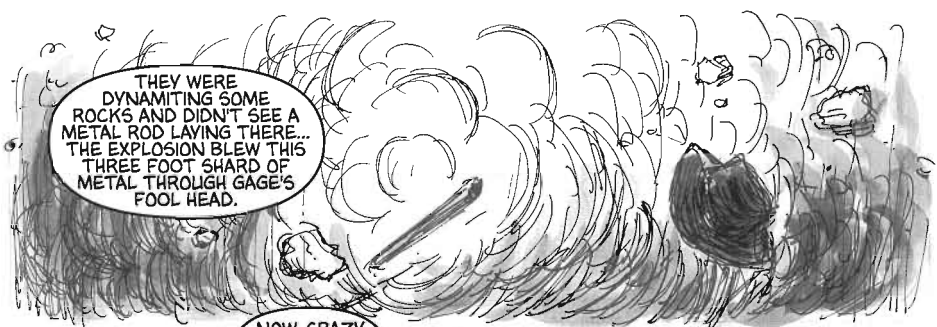
SO INSTEAD
OF YELLING AT ME
FOR BEING STUPID, OR
HOLDING ME TO TRY
AND COMFORT ME, HE
TOLD ME THIS STORY
ABOUT A MAN NAMED
PHINEAS GAGE.

MY DAD CAME TO CHECK
ON ME, SITTING THERE
LIKE AN ASSHOLE.

THEY TOOK ME TO THE
HOSPITAL HE WORKED AT, SO
HE KNEW THE WHOLE STORY.

KNEW ABOUT THE HELMET.







WHAT WAS I TALKING ABOUT?

306. APARTMENT 306.



THERE WAS A TV ON INSIDE, BUT THAT DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING.









BANG!

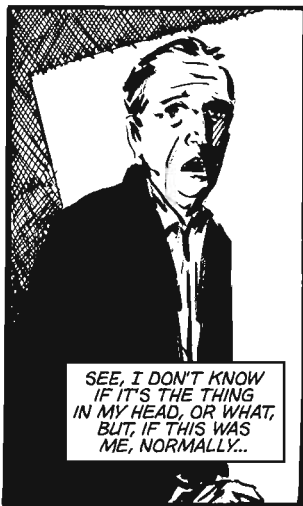




WHO THE
FLUCK ARE
YOU?!

PHINEAS
GAGE. RIGHT.

NOW I
REMEMBER.



SEE, I DON'T KNOW
IF IT'S THE THING
IN MY HEAD, OR WHAT,
BUT, IF THIS WAS
ME, NORMALLY...

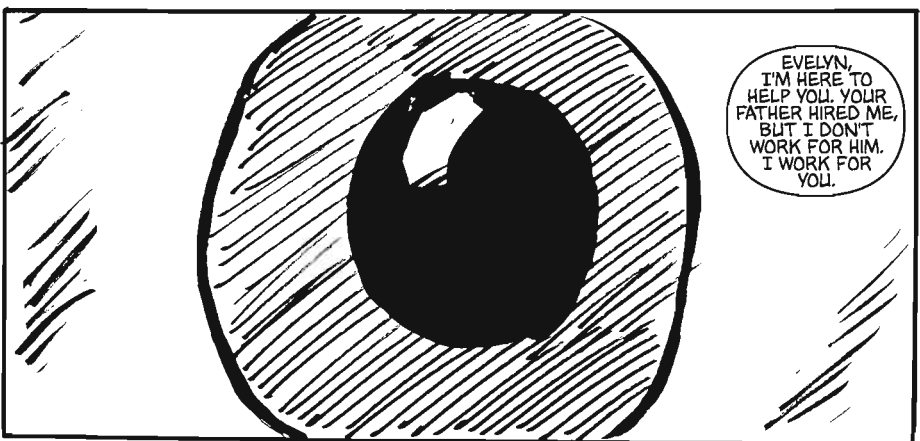


I'D JUMP OUT OF THE WAY, RUN
OUT THE DOOR, DISAPPEAR, AND
PRAY THAT GIBSON LETS ME LIVE.



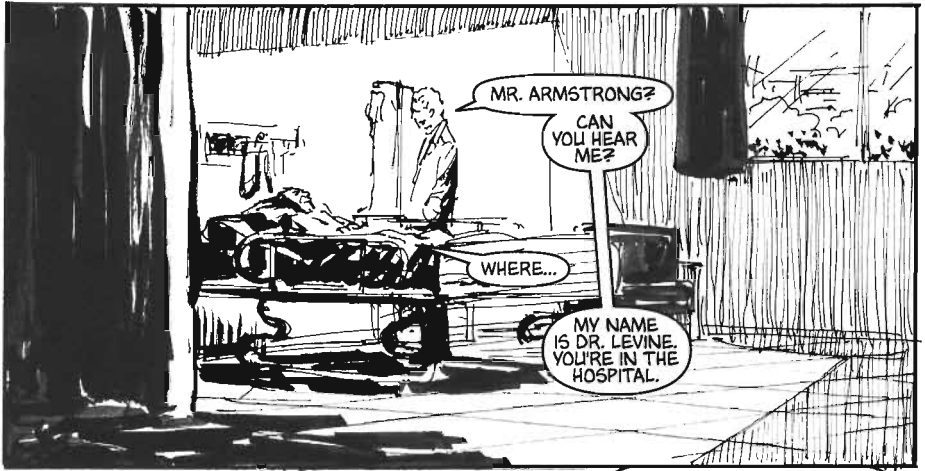
BUT MAYBE THIS THING WAS
PUSHING ON THE PART OF MY BRAIN
THAT GIVES ME MY BALLS BACK.

OR MAYBE IT'S
JUST MAKING ME
EVEN STUPIDER.



EVELYN,
I'M HERE TO
HELP YOU. YOUR
FATHER HIRED ME,
BUT I DON'T
WORK FOR HIM.
I WORK FOR
YOU.





MR. ARMSTRONG?
CAN YOU HEAR ME?

WHERE...

MY NAME IS DR. LEVINE
YOU'RE IN THE HOSPITAL.



HOSPITAL?

YOU'VE HAD A SEIZURE.



MR. ARMSTRONG, WE BELIEVE THERE'S A MALIGNANT GROWTH ON YOUR TEMPORAL LOBE.

YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF DISORIENTED AND CONFUSED RIGHT NOW.



NO, I'M FINE, I JUST GET THESE HEADACHES...

PLEASE LAY DOWN, MR. ARMSTRONG-



I NEED TO FIND THE GIRL, I GOTTA FIND HER-



I REMEMBER THIS. IT ALREADY HAPPENED.

THAT'S THE TUMOR, FRANK.

IT'S CALLED JAMAIS VII...



WE'RE GOING TO PERFORM A BIOPSY, MR. ARMSTRONG.

WE'LL KNOW MORE-



BIOPSY? WHAT DOES-



WE TAKE A SMALL SAMPLE OF THE CANCEROUS TISSUE, AND THEN-

YOU'RE NOT CUTTING OPEN MY HEAD.



IT'S A TINY INCISION, AND PERFECTLY SAFE. IT MAY EVEN HELP RELEASE SOME OF THE PRESSURE BUILDING UP IN THERE.

WHEN'S THIS GONNA HAPPEN?



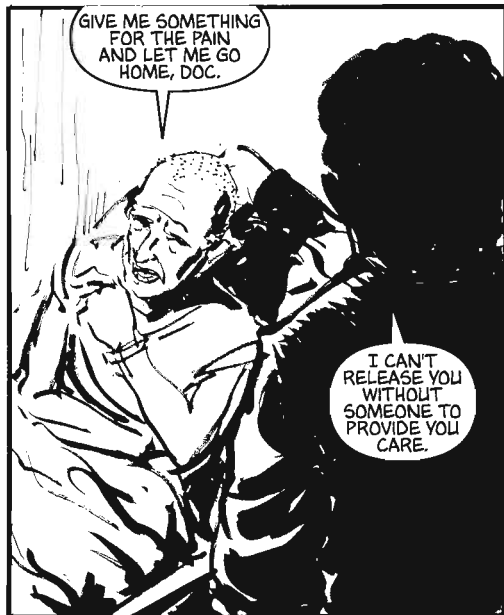
RIGHT NOW.



"FRANK, THE TUMOR HAS METASTASIZED."

SO, WHAT? YOU'RE GONNA CUT IT OUT, AND I'LL BE OKAY, RIGHT?

I'M GONNA BE OKAY, RIGHT DOC?





IS THIS YOUR DAUGHTER, FRANK?



NO. ROSA? I...



COME ON, DAD. LET YOUR LITTLE EVELYN TAKE CARE OF YOU FOR A CHANGE.



OH GOD. I THOUGHT THAT SHE WAS...

NO. THIS IS ALL WRONG.

END CHAPTER 2