

**TUMOR**

**CHAPTER 2**

**By Joshua Hale Fialkov for Noel Tuazon**

**PAGE 1**

PANEL 1 - INK WASH

PAGE TITLE: CHAPTER 2

Double Wide Panel - Blackness

PANEL 2 - INK WASH

Double Wide Panel - XCU Frank's Closed eyes.

CAPTION (DR. LEVINE)

Where are you now, Frank?

PANEL 3 - INK WASH

Double Wide Panel - Blackness again.

CAPTION (DR. LEVINE)

Frank, this is Dr. Levine, I need you  
to wake up.

(beat)

Now.

**PAGE 2**

PANEL 1 - HARD LINE

From the side, Frank's hand rubs his temple. He's on the floor  
of his office now.

FRANK

wherethefuckamiwhatsgoingon...

PANEL 2 - HARD LINE

Frank sits up, banging his head on the underside of his desk.

SFX

smack

FRANK

dammit.

PANEL 3 - HARD LINE

Frank, now leaning hard on his desk, pulls a small stand up clock out of his drawer.

PANEL 4 - HARD LINE

Close on the clock. It's 2:23.

FRANK

Fuckit.

PANEL 5 - HARD LINE

Frank swallows hard against the pounding in his head, his eyes pulled tight as he bites hard on his lip.

CAPTION (FRANK)

I was out for a few hours, and I felt weak and dizzy.

(beat)

Never stopped me before.

(beat)

What's that smell?

**PAGE 3**

PANEL 1 - HL

The sunset strip sprawls out in front of us. Of course, it's nearly 3am, and a week night, so it's not quite the bustling metropolis you'd expect it to be.

CAPTION (FRANK)

I used to spend my fair share of nights out here. Back before...

CAPTION (FRANK)

Well, before I stopped.

PANEL 2 - HL

Wide shot, Frank walks down the barren street. There's a noticeable piece of graffiti that we need for the next panel.

CAPTION (FRANK)

Places are filled with memories. You can forget about 'em, but, then, you stand there, and you can see it all over again.

PANEL 3 - HL (PRESENT) IW (FLASHBACK)

Against that Graffiti, where there clearly was nobody, we see 1978 era Frank and Rosa making out against the wall. 2009 Frank just keeps walking.

CAPTION (FRANK)

Some good, some not so good.  
(beat)  
Like that song.

CAPTION (FRANK)

Things have been more vivid lately,  
though.  
(beat)  
Since the headaches. Since the  
blackouts.

PANEL 4 - HL/IW

Rosa pulls her skirt down, as she heads towards the metal door that current day Frank stands at.

ROSA

Papi, I have to get back to work...

YOUNG FRANK

I know, I know.  
(beat)  
I'll be back at 2, yeah?

ROSA

Si, mi amor.

CAPTION (FRANK)

How'd you fuck that up, Frankie-boy?

CAPTION (DR. LEVINE)

The brain... it's an amazing thing, Mr. Armstrong. None of us really understand it.

PANEL 5 - HL/IW

Close on Rosa, frozen in time as she slips through the door, inches from current day Frank, who's profile is in the foreground.

ROSA

I love you, Frankie.

FRANK

I love you, too, baby.

ROSA

What the fuck you say?

PAGE 4

PANEL 1 - HL

In the doorway is a guy, younger, latino, hairnet, cigarette in his mouth, and a trash bag in his hand. Frank's disoriented and confused.

FRANK

I... sorry. I'm lookin' for, um...  
shit...

(beat)

(small font)

What the hell was his name.

PANEL 2 - HL

Close on Frank's pocket as he pulls out the photo of Evelyn, her name's written on the back.

FRANK

You know this girl?

GUY

Yeah, that's Roland's girl.

PANEL 3 - HL

The clean up guy pushes past Frank, and tosses the trash in a dumpster.

FRANK

She been around?

GUY

I dunno, man. I stay outta others  
business, y'know?

FRANK

Yeah. I know.

CAPTION (DR. LEVINE)

When did this happen, Frank? Can you  
remember? Was this recently?

PANEL 4 - IW

Frank's in a hospital bed, the Doctor staring at him, trying to coax him back into his own timeline. Frank's no longer strapped down, and he has an IV in his arm. His head is shaven. It's shaven from here out unless noted otherwise.

DOCTOR LEVINE

There you are.

(beat)

You okay?

FRANK

I was just... what...

DR. LEVINE

Frank, the tumor is malignant... it's been in there and growing for a while now. The fact that you're still functioning is a minor miracle-

PANEL 5 - IW

Frank rubs his eyes with his hand.

FRANK

So, what? You're gonna cut it out, and I'll be okay, right?

PANEL 6 - IW

Frank looks over his hand at the Doctor.

FRANK

I'm gonna be okay, right Doc?

PAGE 5

PANEL 1 - HL

The kid outside the club stares at Frank.

GUY

Hey. Dude? You okay?

PANEL 2 - HL

Frank snaps out of it.

FRANK

Yeah, sorry. Look, I don't want you to

get in trouble-  
(beat)  
You got a dead dog in that dumpster or  
what, man?

PANEL 3 - HL

The world goes into negative, suddenly Frank is in a void as a cacophany of noise fills his head. The panel is filled with gibberish that looks like it could be words or just scratching, as Frank clasps his ears with his hands, trying to keep the sound out.

FRANK  
FUCK!

PANEL 4 - HL

The kid is at Frank's side, holding him.

GUY  
I'm gonna call an ambulance, man.

FRANK (SMALL, BROKEN)  
No... I'm fine... just tell me where  
this asshole is, and I'm outta here.  
(beat)  
I won't name names. You're clear.

PANEL 5 - HL

The kid lowers Frank down to the curb.

GUY  
Look, man, you need-

FRANK (STRONGER)  
**Look, what I need is this fucking guy  
so I can find his girlfriend and keep  
her from getting her ass shot off.**

CAPTION (DR. LEVINE)  
"Mood swings. Yes?"

PAGE 6

PANEL 1 - IW

Frank's in his hospital bed.

FRANK  
What?

PANEL 2 -IW

The doctor leans forward in his chair, putting his hand on Frank's arm.

DR. LEVINE

Often times the episodes will be proceeded by a foul odor.

(beat)

An unnameable smell.

FRANK

I'm here, I'm there... I don't...

PANEL 3 - IW

Frank bites back some tears.

FRANK

You gotta just help me, doc, do something...

PANEL 4 - IW

The doc stands up, his hand still playing at being reassuring.

DR. LEVINE

I'm putting you on some steroids for the edema, and we can do some simple pain medicine, but the narcotics-

CAPTION (GUY)

Roland's got a place on Gardner, just south of Sunset.

PANEL 5 - HL

Frank, back on the curb.

FRANK

You got an address?

PANEL 6 - HL

The kid looks at Frank with pitiful eyes.

GUY

You're not well, dude. You need help.

FRANK

I need an address, and I got a fifty for the guy who gets it for me. Y'dig?

PAGE 7

PANEL 1 - HL

Frank walks down Sunset (is that Meltdown comics in the distance? - We'll get you reference).

CAPTION

Money'll make anybody do anything.  
(beat)  
My dad told me that.  
(beat)  
Right before he stole the petty cash  
from his desk drawer and ran off with  
some senorita from accounting.

PANEL 2 - HL

A signpost - GARDNER ST.

CAPTION

My head's ringing, and I keep losing my  
place.  
(beat)  
Like I'm reading a book while the tv's  
on and there's someone knockin' at the  
door.

PANEL 3 - HL

The building has a glass front door with a couple of palm frondes on either side of it. It's a decent building... for Hollywood.

CAPTION

Place ain't too shabby for some kid who  
manages some piece of shit club on the  
strip.

PANEL 4 - HL

Frank looks at the apartment list, it's blurry hard to read.

CAPTION

Heads pounding so hard, the words look  
like sheet music for a Frank Zappa  
record.

PANEL 5 - HL

He tears open another of the mini packages of asprin.

CAPTION

I never touched the hard stuff. A

drink here and there, maybe a drag on  
the wrong cigarette...

PANEL 6 - HL

Silhouette as he tosses the pills down his throat.

CAPTION

I figured drinkin' and druggin' myself  
to death was cheating.

(beat)

Nature goes through enough trouble  
trying to kill you without you helping  
it along, right?

**PAGE 8**

PANEL 1 - HL

Frank leans back and stares at the apartment listing.

CAPTION

What the fuck am I talking about?

PANEL 2 - 14 - IW

Tiny panels of Frank drinking beer, bourbon, shots, doubles,  
pretty much any damn thing you can put down and get drunk off  
of. Maybe a few of him wretching, falling down, bar-fighting...  
have fun.

CAPTION

I drink. Of course I drink.

PANEL 15 - HL

Frank's confused face.

CAPTION

What the fuck is wrong with me?

PANEL 16 - HL

Frank's got his finger on a line of the apartment listing. It  
reads R. FABRE - 306

FRANK

Got you.

PANEL 17 - HL

Frank crouches down and stares at the locking system on the glass doors.

CAPTION

In the good old days, I probably could've just picked it.

PANEL 18 - HL

Behind Frank is a man with a dog. Frank's eyes perk up.

DOGWALKER

Excuse me, pard.

CAPTION

What's that line from Streetcar Named Desire?

(beat)

I've always depended on the kindness of strangers.

**PAGE 9**

PANEL 1 - IW

Frank, in the hospital bed HOWWWLLLLLLLLL in pain, as a seizure engulfs him-

FRANK (SEIZURE TEXT BLEEDING ALL OVER THE PANE)

i'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonetake  
i'mdonetakei'mdone-FUUUUCK

PANEL 2 - IW

The Doctor leaps up, calling to the nurse across the room. Frank continues to seize in the background.

DR. LEVINE

WE NEED THE \_\_\_\_\_ OVER HERE! NOW!

FRANK (SMALL, FRACTURED)

i'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonetake  
i'mdonetakei'mdonei'mdonei'mdone-

PANEL 3 - IW

Close on a hypodermic needle, Frank's seizing face seen through the liquid inside.

CAPTION

My father was a doctor.

(beat)

Came over from Russia when he was a kid, and his folks pushed him to be something.

(beat)

I suppose he resented it, 'cause the guy barely took a lick of interest in me.

(beat)

Not that I blame him.

PANEL 4 - IW

Frank's face slackens, the sedative kicking in.

CAPTION

Anyway, I used to play football. And I was okay.

(beat)

Not Lynn Swan, but not Alex Hawkins, either.

**PAGE 10**

PANEL 1 - IW

A scrimmage line on a suburban California football field, circa the late 1960's. It's a practice, so both sets of kids are wearing sweat suits etc, with their pads over top. The field, their helmets, and, wherever else makes sense reads GLENDORA HIGH TARTANS. One of the kids isn't wearing a helmet. That kid, we'll soon see, is Frank. (The helmets back then were rounder and with only a single bar in front of the face. I'll get ref if you need it.)

CAPTION

I didn't like wearing a helmet. Most of the other guys did. Even back then. They weren't dumbasses.

PANEL 2 - IW

In close, we see Frank, without a helmet, going head to head with another kid... also without helmet, and just as much of a chunky meat head as our boy.

CAPTION

But y'see, Doug Franklin didn't wear a

helmet, so I'd be fucked if Frankie Strong-Arm Armstrong did the same.

PANEL 3 - IW

Frank laid out on the ground, after having been CRUSHED by the scrimmage line.

CAPTION

What was I-  
(beat)  
Right, one day it didn't work out so good for me.  
(beat)  
Had a concussion, and a broken collarbone.  
(beat)  
But, to be fair, had Doug been wearing a helmet he probably woulda hurt me a helluva lot more.

PANEL 4 - IW

Frank sits in the emergency room, his arm and shoulder wrapped up, and a support wedge holding it up and in place. His father stands there staring at him. His in silhouette as he looks down at his son.

CAPTION

My dad came to check on me, laying there, helpless. They took me to the hospital he worked at, so he knew the whole story.  
(beat)  
Knew about the helmet.

PANEL 5 - IW

Frank's dad, reverse shot, as he tells his story.

CAPTION

My dad, he didn't show emotion too great. Or at all.  
(beat)  
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.

**PAGE 11**

PANEL 1 - VICTORIAN STYLE?

The drawings should feel slightly more Victorian here. Yes. That's right. It's a flashback inside a flashback. We see Frank's dad's head floating next to the victorian image of a man working on the railroads. He's heaving a hammer on to a railroad spike, laying track.

FRANK'S DAD

Gage worked on a the railroad, laying track and what not. He was by all accounts a kind-hearted, decent man. Worked hard, took care of his own, all of that.

(beat)

Until the accident.

PANEL 2 - VICTORIAN STYLE?

Victorian-y drawing of an explosion.

FRANK'S DAD

They were dynamiting some rocks and didn't see a metal rod laying there... the explosion blew this three foot shard of metal through Gage's fool head.

PANEL 3 - VICTORIAN STYLE

Victorian drawing as a doctor examines Gage and his injury. It's a three foot long rod of metal that goes from his left cheek, through his brain, and out the top of his skull. Frank's dad's head, as needed for lettering...

FRANK'S DAD

Now, crazy as it sounds, the man lived. At first, not a scratch.

PANEL 4 - VICTORIAN

Victorian drawing Gage, drunk and angry looking.

FRANK'S DAD

But something changed. He became abusive, lazy, and swore like your Uncle Tony.

(beat)

You know why son?

PANEL 5 - IW

Frank as a Teen, in bed.

FRANK

Cause of what happened to his brain.

FRANK'S DAD

Poor bastard lived like that the rest of his life. Miserable, and a shell of himself.

(beat)

You understand?

FRANK

Yeah, dad.

**PAGE 12**

PANEL 1 - HL

Frank's in a hallway of the apartment building. It's a courtyard apartment, with stucco walls, and a floral garden and fountain on the bottom floor. Frank's up on 3, walking slowly toward 306.

CAPTION

What was I talking about?

(beat)

309. Apartment 309.

PANEL 2 - HL

Frank stands outside the door, and listens intently, his head pressed to the door.

CAPTION

There was a tv on inside, but that doesn't mean anything.

PANEL 3 - HL

He knocks loudly on the door.

SFX

BANG BANG

PANEL 4 - HL

Frank steps back and waits.

PANEL 5 - HL

Same. Nothing happens.

PANEL 6

Same. Nothing happens.

FRANK  
Did I forget to knock?  
(beat)  
Dammit.

**PAGE 13**

PANEL 1 - HL

Frank's hand reaches to check the door knob.

CAPTION  
Unlocked.

PANEL 2 - HL

From inside the apartment, the door creaks open, the moonlight spilling in.

SFX  
creeeeeeak.

FRANK  
Roland?

FRANK  
Janelle?

PANEL 3 - HL

BIG PANEL - In the moonlight and the glow from the television we see that there's blood EVERYWHERE. Sitting on the couch, facing the tv is Roland. Frank thinks maybe he's not sleeping.

FRANK  
Oh god.

PANEL 4 - HL

Frank walks up to Roland and touches him.

FRANK  
Hey. Man. Are you...

PANEL 5 - HL

Frank looks at his hand, it's got blood on it.

FRANK

Shit.

**PAGE 14**

REST OF PAGES OF THIS CHAPTER ARE HARD LINE

PANEL 1 -

Frank grabs the cell phone sitting next to Roland.

PANEL 2

On the screen, it reads 911, and Frank's thumb is hitting send.

PANEL 3

Frank checks Roland's pulse-

FRANK

Operator? I'm in an apartment on  
Gardner, somebody's hurt-

SFX

CLICK.

PANEL 4

Standing behind Frank, gun to his head, is Adrian.

ADRIAN

Ain't hurt, Frankie.

(beat)

Dead.

(beat)

Hang up the phone.

PANEL 5

Frank turns pale.

FRANK

Never mind operator.

**PAGE 15**

**PANEL 1**

Wide shot. Frank hits end, and puts his arms up.

FRANK

Why'd you do it, Adrian, what'd he do?

ADRIAN

What?

(beat)

Man, put your hands down.

**PANEL 2**

Adrian pockets the gun.

ADRIAN

Oh, sho nuff, the black man in the room  
got to be the one who killed the  
motherfucker?

(beat)

I followed up on a lead, and here he is.

**PANEL 3**

Frank relaxes a bit.

FRANK

You call the cops?

ADRIAN

Yeah. And then I gave notice to his  
landlord and called his next of kin.

(beat)

What the fuck you think, man?

**PANEL 4**

Frank crosses to the small kitchenette.

FRANK

The girl?

ADRIAN

Gone daddy gone.

SFX

BANG!

PANEL 5

A small bullet hole drips blood on Adrian's forehead.

ADRIAN

Fucker.

**PAGE 16**

PANEL 1

Standing next to Frank, is Evelyn. She's got the gun cocked and pointed at him.

EVELYN

Who the fuck are you?

PANEL 2

On Frank, frozen, his mouth hangs open, confusion all over his face.

CAPTION

Phineas Gage. Right.

(beat)

Now I remember.

(beat)

See, I don't know if it's the thing in my head, or what, but, if this was me, normally...

PANEL 3

Push in on Frank even closer, now we just see his eyes and nose.

CAPTION

I'd jump out of the way, run out the door, disappear, and pray that Gibson let's me live.

PANEL 4

We push in even further, super tight on one of Frank's eyes.

CAPTION

But maybe this thing was pushing on the part of my brain that gives me my balls back.

(beat)

Or maybe it's just making me even stupider.

PANEL 5

We push in to the pupil of Frank's eye.

FRANK (OFF)

Evelyn, I'm here to help you. Your father hired me, but I don't work for him. I work for you.

**PAGE 17**

PANEL 1

Wide, Frank turns to her.

FRANK

You're mixed up in some heavy shit, I get that. I don't know what Adrian wanted, or why he was here, all I want to do is protect you.

(beat)

From whoever's trying to hurt you.

(beat)

From your father.

(beat)

From your boyfriend.

(beat)

Anybody.

PANEL 2

Frank's got his hand on her gun.

FRANK

I just want to help.

PANEL 3

Evelyn's arms relax, she lowers the gun.

PANEL 4

SILOUHETTE - SPASMS FLASH THROUGH FRANK'S BODY. HE'S HAVING A HUGGGGGGGEEEEEEEEEE SEIZURE.

FRANK

i'mdonei'mdonei'mdonei'mdonetakehertake  
hertakehertakeher.

**PAGE 18**

PANEL 1

Frank's in the hospital bed. We're echoing where he was in issue 1 here. He has hair.

DR. LEVINE

Mr. Armstrong?

(beat)

Can you here me?

PANEL 2

Frank's eyes wearily open.

FRANK

Where...

DR. LEVINE

My name is Dr. Levine. You're in the hospital.

FRANK

Hospital?

DR. LEVINE

You've had a seizure. When you were brought in-

PANEL 3

Frank starts pushing himself up and out of bed.

FRANK

No, I'm fine, I just get this  
headaches...

DR. LEVINE

Please lay down, Mr. Armstrong-

FRANK

I need to find the girl, I gotta find  
her-

PANEL 4

The doctor looks straight at him.

DR. LEVINE

Mr. Armstrong, we believe there's a  
malignant growth on your temporal lobe.

(beat)

You may find yourself disoriented and  
confused right now.

PANEL 5

Frank furrows his brow.

FRANK

I remember this. It already happened.

DR. LEVINE

That's the tumor, Frank.

(beat)

It's called Jamais Vu...

**PAGE 19**

PANEL 1

The doctor leans in and takes his pulse.

DR. LEVINE

We're going to perform a biopsy, Mr. Armstrong.

(beat)

We'll know more-

PANEL 2

Frank starts to panic.

FRANK

Biopsy? What does-

PANEL 3

The doctor calms him again.

DR. LEVINE

We take a small sample of the tumorous tissue, and then-

FRANK

You're not cutting open my head.

DR. LEVINE

It's a tiny incision, and perfectly safe. It may even help release some of the pressure building up in there.

PANEL 4

Frank lays back.

FRANK

When's this-

PANEL 5

Frank seems frozen in time.

**PAGE 20**

THIS IS PAGE 7 OF CHAPTER 1. YOU CAN REPEAT THE ART, OR MAYBE WE SHOULD DO IT ALL FROM SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT ANGLES...?

PANEL 1

Dr. Levine smiles gently. Frank has his hair at this point.

DR. LEVINE

Did we lose you for a second there?

FRANK

Whatsgoingonon...

PANEL 2

The doctor listens to Frank's heart through a stethoscope.

DR. LEVINE

You're going to be a bit disoriented  
from the medication, and the swelling.

FRANK

Wherethefucking-

PANEL 3

He sits bolt upright in bed, disoriented and confused. He pushes  
the doctor out of the way.

FRANK

Somethingswron-

DR. LEVINE

MR. ARMSTRONG! CALM DOWN!

PANEL 4

He pulls on the tube up his nose.

DR. LEVINE

I NEED HELP OVER HERE!

PANEL 5

Another hand is on Frank's.

**PAGE 21**

PANEL 1

Blackness.

CAPTION (DR. LEVINE)

You have cancer, Frank. A brain tumor.

PANEL 2

Frank sits arms crossed staring at the Doctor. (His head is shaved again.)

FRANK

So what are you going to do?

DOCTOR LEVINE

Nothing. I'm sorry. The tumors taken hold, and has burrowed into the occipital lobe.

(beat)

You don't have long.

PANEL 3

Frank thinks quietly.

PANEL 4

He looks earnestly to the doctor.

FRANK

Give me something for the pain and let me go home, Doc.

DR. LEVINE

I can't release you without someone to provide you care.

PANEL 5

Frank looks sideways at the doctor.

FRANK

I don't have-

EVELYN (OFF)

I can take care of him, Doctor.

**PAGE 22**

PANEL 1

Big reveal, standing at the door is Evelyn.

DR. LEVINE

Is this your daughter, Frank?

PANEL 2

On a confused Frank.

FRANK

No, I...

PANEL 3

Evelyn crosses and sits on the bed, taking Frank's hand in hers.

EVELYN

C'mon dad. Let me take care of you for  
a change.

END CHAPTER 2