



Droppin the Flay



The Healthy Aboriginal Network

Non-profit promotion of health, literacy & wellness

Droppin the Flag

Steven Keewatin Sanderson

Writer, page layouts and rough drawings

Nelson Garcia

Inks, colors and front cover

Brandon Mitchell

Lettering

Ron Dean Harris

Other covers

Sean Muir

Editor

Val Reimer

Copy editing

Healthy Aboriginal Network

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Anthony Wong

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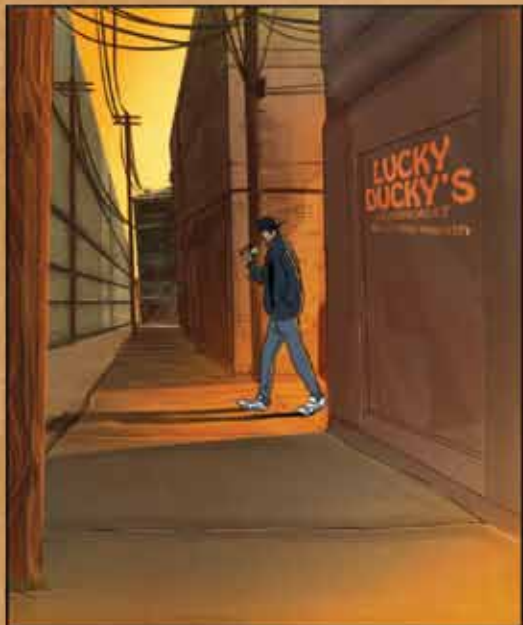
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Youth Outreach Program
204-426 east lakewood st
your appointment at
4:30 pm.









BUT, YOU CHOSE TO COME HERE. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT TELLS ME?

WHAT?



THAT YOU'RE EITHER HERE TO JERK ME AROUND AND TRY TO STAY OUT OF JAIL FOR A COUPLE MORE DAYS, OR YOU'RE HERE TO MAKE SOME SERIOUS CHANGES. SO, WHICH ONE IS IT?



ALL RIGHT. WELL, LET ME TELL YOU WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN THEN. YOU SIT THERE AND DON'T SAY ANYTHING. AND I SIGN THE PAPERS AND YOU GO BACK INSIDE.



HEY, MAN. WHY YOU GOTTA BE LIKE THAT?



HEY, IT'S NOT WHAT I WANT. BUT THAT'S WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN IF YOU KEEP STONEWALLING ME.



I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!



WELL, JUST TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF. I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU.

WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT YOU?



WELL, ALL RIGHT. I'M 36, GREW UP IN EDMONTON, FORMER GANG MEMBER.

REALLY?



YEAH. GOT SICK OF ALL THAT CRAP AND WANTED TO DO SOMETHING THAT MEANT SOMETHING TO ME. SO I FINISHED SCHOOL, WENT TO UNIVERSITY, AND NOW I'M HERE TALKING TO YOU.

AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT. I DIDN'T GO THROUGH ALL THOSE YEARS OF SCHOOL TO SEND KIDS LIKE YOU TO JAIL.



SO NOW YOU KNOW A LITTLE ABOUT ME, TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF. LIKE, WHERE DID YOU GROW UP? WHAT WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD LIKE? STUFF LIKE THAT.



OKAY.

WELL, UM, I GREW UP ON THE WEST SIDE. POOR AS HELL. NO DAD. MOM WAS A JUNKIE.



SO, WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

PFFTT. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WELL, I KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR ME WHEN I WAS A KID. BUT I NEED TO KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR YOU.



THE HOUSE WAS A DUMP. IT STUNK. LIQUOR BOTTLES EVERYWHERE. YOU KNOW. I REMEMBER THE FRONT DOOR WAS ALWAYS OPEN. NOBODY EVER BOTHERED TO CLOSE IT BECAUSE THERE WAS NOTHING TO STEAL ANYWAYS.



I MEAN, EVEN FOR THE HOOD OUR HOUSE WAS A DUMP.





I'D WAKE UP AND THERE WOULD BE NOTHING TO EAT AT ALL.



NO MEAT. NO VEG. NO MILK. NOTHING.



IF I WANTED CEREAL I'D HAVE TO USE TAP WATER FOR MILK. YOU KNOW HOW IT WAS.



YOU SAID YOUR DAD WASN'T IN THE PICTURE. WHAT HAPPENED WITH HIM?

HE TOOK OFF ON MY MOM BEFORE I WAS EVEN BORN.



I HEARD HE GOT KILLED IN A BAR FIGHT. GOT SHANKED. I GOT EIGHT BROTHERS AND SISTERS FROM HIM.

DID IT HURT YOU WHEN YOU FOUND OUT HE WAS DEAD?

NAW, I DIDN'T KNOW HIM FROM NOTHIN'. HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO CARE ABOUT A GUY I NEVER EVEN MET, YOU KNOW?



AND I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN.

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY HARD.

'COURSE IT WAS. I DIDN'T GET TO WATCH CARTOONS ANYMORE.



AFTER THAT, MY AUNTIE CAME BY AND GOT ME. BUT SHE WASN'T ANY BETTER THAN MY MOM.

SOCIAL SERVICES FOUND ME AND THEY PUT ME IN A HOME. BUT AS SOON AS I GOT THERE, I RAN AWAY.

I KEPT ON RUNNING. EVERY HOUSE THEY PUT ME IN. I'D BE OUTTA THERE.



DID YOU KNOW WHERE YOU WERE GOING WHEN YOU'D RUN AWAY?

NAW. I JUST KNEW I COULDN'T BE THERE. I WAS... I JUST WANTED TO BE SOMEWHERE. ANYWHERE ELSE, YOU KNOW.



THEY'D KEEP TRYING TO FIND ME. PUT ME IN ANOTHER HOME. I'D KEEP RUNNING AWAY. THEN ONE DAY I MET FRED. HE WAS A LITTLE OLDER THAN ME.



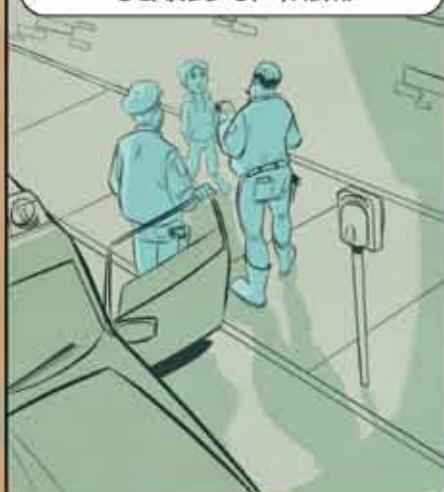
BUT HE JUST SEEMED TO KNOW SO MUCH. HIS BIG BROTHER WAS IN A GANG AND HE WANTED TO BE JUST LIKE HIM.



HE WAS SOLID. LET ME STAY AT HIS PLACE. WE'D GO TO THE GROCERY STORE AND BOOST WHATEVER WE NEEDED.



THAT'S WHEN I FIRST GOT CAUGHT BY THE 5-0. IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO STOP BEING SCARED OF THEM.



I'D GET CAUGHT STEALING OR FIGHTING AND I'D GET KICKED OUT OF SCHOOL. I NEVER CARED.



'CAUSE NONE OF THAT MATTERED TO ME. WHAT MATTERED WAS TRYING TO IMPRESS FRED'S BIG BROTHER AND GET INTO THE GANG.

I GOT SENT TO JUVIE FOR JOY RIDING. WHEN I GOT IN THERE, THEY ALL LOOKED OUT FOR ME, YOU KNOW. IT WAS STRANGE. I FELT... I DON'T KNOW...



LOVED?

YEAH. SAFE. STRONG, YOU KNOW?

YEAH, I REMEMBER WHAT THAT WAS LIKE. GO ON.

WHEN I GOT OUT, THEY GAVE ME A MISSION. I HAD TO ROB A CONVENIENCE STORE WITH A GUN. I WANTED TO IMPRESS THEM SO BAD, I DID IT. NO HESITATION.



MAN, WHEN I HELD THAT STRAP IN MY HAND, I FELT LIKE A BOSS. UNSTOPPABLE.



AFTER THAT, THEY GAVE ME MY MINUTES. IT WAS ROUGH. I MEAN, I KNEW IT WAS GONNA BE. BUT I THOUGHT THESE GUYS WERE MY BOYS.



THEY SHOWED NO MERCY. THEY ENJOYED IT - I COULD TELL.



AFTER THAT, I WAS IN. GOT PROPS. GOT MY COLORS. I FELT LIKE A G.



AH, MAN. THAT FEELING, YOU KNOW. THAT POWER. MAN, EVERYONE KNEW WHO I ROLLED WITH. EVERYONE RESPECTED ME.



IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I LEARNED THAT NOTHING WAS FOR FREE. I HAD TO START SLANGIN'.



THE LEADER OF THE GANG, BIG GEE, HE SAID HE'D GIVE ME SOME PRODUCT TO HELP GET ME STARTED. I FELT MADE.



I BUSTED MY ASS AND MADE LIKE \$1,300 IN A COUPLE OF DAYS. MAN, I FELT LIKE A MILLIONAIRE, YOU KNOW?



BUT THEN BIG GEE WANTED HIS CUT. I THOUGHT HE WAS JUST GIVING IT TO ME AS A FAVOR. HE NEVER SAID ANYTHING ABOUT PROFIT SHARING.



MAN, HE LOOKED AT ME LIKE I WAS AN IDIOT. HE TOLD ME TO PAY UP OR HE WAS GOING TO KICK MY ASS.

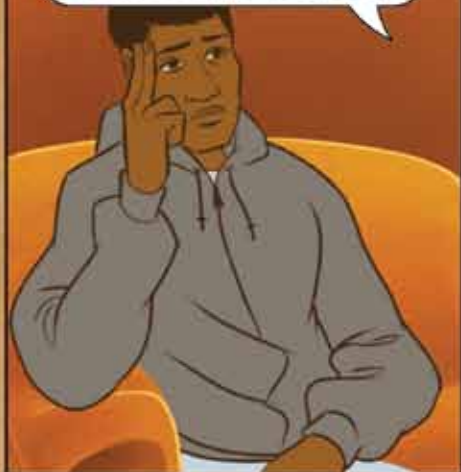


WHAT COULD I DO? NOT ONLY WAS HE WAY BIGGER THAN ME BUT HE HAD FULL RESPECT. I WAS JUST A RUNNER. A NOBODY.



SO AFTER ALL THAT HARD WORK, ALL THAT HUSLIN', THIS GUY TAKES 80% OF MY GRIP. I FELT LIKE A TOTAL PUNK.

BUT THAT DIDN'T MATTER.
'CAUSE IT DIDN'T TAKE ME
LONG TO START MAKING
SOME SERIOUS PAPER.
SLINGIN' KUSH, ROCK,
POWDER, WHATEVER I
COULD GET MY HANDS ON.



IT WAS MESSED UP, THOUGH. I KEPT
WONDERING WHEN I WAS GOING TO SELL
TO MY OWN MOM, YOU KNOW?
LIKE ANY DAY SHE'S GONNA COME UP AND
ASK ME TO FRONT HER SOME PRODUCT.



OTHER THAN THAT, IT WAS HARD
NOT TO HAVE FUN, YOU KNOW.
HANGIN' OUT, CHILLIN', GOIN' TO
THE MALL, STEALIN', SNEAKIN' INTO
MOVIES, HITTIN' UP THE LADIES.
THAT WAS SO MUCH FUN.



THEN WE'D RUN INTO SOME PUNKS.
ONE OF THEM WOULD THROW UP A
SIGN AND WE'D ROLL ON THEM.



STOMP 'EM. ROB 'EM.
YOU FEEL INVINCIBLE IN
A GROUP, YOU KNOW.





AND THAT WAS THE DRUG. YOU ROLL WITH YOUR BOYS, YOU GOT YOUR GRIP. GIRLS WANNA GET WITH YOU.



MAN, THERE WAS NOTHIN' BETTER...

BUT...?



BUT, YOU KNOW, MOST OF THE BRO'S WERE COOL AND STUFF. REAL FUN GUYS. BUT THE LIEUTENANTS... THE O-G'S...



THOSE GUYS TREATED US LIKE DIRT. GOT US TO DO ALL THEIR DIRTY WORK. STUPID LITTLE JOBS. EVEN THEIR LAUNDRY. THEY'D TREAT YOU LIKE YOU WERE A MORON. BUT MOST OF THESE JACK OFFS COULD BARELY SPELL, LET ALONE READ.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU WEREN'T VERY HAPPY.

MAN, I HATED THOSE GUYS. THEY WERE STRAIGHT UP CLOWNS.



AND THEY'D TALK A BIG GAME. ABOUT HOW MUCH PAPER THEY WERE MAKIN', HOW MUCH RESPECT THEY GOT.



THEY WERE TALKIN' LIKE THEY WERE A GODFATHER OR SOMETHIN'. BUT MOST OF THESE GUYS WERE ALWAYS BROKE.




I'D SEE THEM AT THE WELFARE OFFICE - TRYING TO KEEP THEIR BENEFITS, SO THEY COULD KEEP PAYING RENT ON THEIR CRAPPY ASS HOUSES.




AND THEY DIDN'T DRIVE A LEX OR CADDY OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. THEY DROVE A TOTAL PIECE OF CRAP REZ CAR. WITH RIMS! RIMS! MAN, THE RIMS WERE WORTH MORE THAN THE CAR WAS. IT WAS PRETTY PATHETIC.







BUT, I MEAN, SOME GUYS
KNEW HOW TO GET RIGHT
PAID, YOU KNOW?



THERE WAS THIS GUY - D-CREW. HE
ACTUALLY HATED BEING CALLED
THAT. HE JUST WANTED TO BE
CALLED DAVE. MAN, HE WAS A TRUE
ACE. HE WAS ROLLIN' HARD.




EVERYBODY KNEW HIM. EVERYBODY
RESPECTED HIM. I MEAN, HE
WASN'T LIKE THE OTHER O-G'S AT
ALL. HE WAS SMART, COOL.



HE KNEW HOW TO GET
THINGS DONE. YOU WANTED
TO HELP HIM. YOU WANTED
TO WORK WITH HIM.

THEN HE GOT CAUGHT. BUT HE
TOOK IT LIKE A MAN. HE EVEN
TOOK THE HEAT FOR BIG GEE.



BIG GEE TALKED ABOUT HOW HARD
DAVE WAS FOR NOT RATTING. DOING
HIS TIME LIKE A MAN.
HE TALKED ABOUT HOW LOYAL DAVE
WAS. HOW MUCH OF A REAL GANGSTER
THAT MADE HIM. AND THAT JUST MADE
US LOVE DAVE EVEN MORE.



BIG GEE USED DAVE AS AN EXAMPLE ALL THE TIME. HOW TO BE LOYAL. HOW TO SHOW RESPECT; HOW TO GET RESPECT. HOW WE GOT EACH OTHER'S BACK. 'DON'T RAT - BE TRUE TO YOUR COLORS.'



SO TELL ME, WHY DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO BE SO LOYAL TO THEM?

I FELT... I FEEL SO LOYAL TO THEM BECAUSE THEY WERE THE FIRST PEOPLE THAT WERE HONEST WITH ME, YOU KNOW? STRAIGHT UP. THEY WEREN'T LIKE MY MOM. THEY WOULDN'T MAKE PROMISES AND BREAK THEM.



MAN, IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I FELT FINE JUST BEING MYSELF.



AND THAT'S WHY YOU FEEL LIKE YOU OWE THEM EVERYTHING, HUH? BECAUSE THEY ACCEPTED YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE?

YEAH, THEY WERE ALWAYS LOYAL AND STUFF. BUT THERE WAS THIS TIME. WE WERE AT A PARTY ONE NIGHT; WE WERE HAVING A GOOD TIME. THEN THESE DUDES CAME IN FROM ANOTHER SET.



THEY WERE ACTING ALL HARD. THEN THEY THREW UP A SIGN.

YO, WE WEREN'T HAVING ANY OF THAT. SO WE CALLED THEM OUT.



MY BOYS AND THEIR BOYS WENT AT IT, RIGHT THEN AND THERE. ONE OF HIS PUNK-ASS FRIENDS HAD A MACHETE.



HE STARTED SWINGIN' AND GOIN' CRAZY. HE GOT ME REAL BAD. EVERYBODY SCATTERED.



AND I WAS THERE, ALONE, BLEEDING. THE COPS CAME; AMBULANCE TOOK ME AWAY.



I WAS IN THE HOSPITAL FOR OVER A WEEK. GUESS HOW MANY GUYS SHOWED UP TO VISIT?



HOW MANY?

ZERO.



AND HOW'D THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?





MAN, YOU KEEP ASKING ME THAT - 'HOW'D THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?' HOW DO YOU THINK I FELT?!



I NEED TO HEAR IT FROM YOU. 'CAUSE I DON'T WANT TO GUESS HOW YOU FELT. WHAT IF I GUESS WRONG?



I FELT... ALONE.



LIKE WHEN YOUR MOM LEFT?




YEAH.



SO THEN WHAT HAPPENED?


I GOT OUT AND EVERYONE WAS LIKE 'HEY MAN, SO GOOD TO SEE YOU. MISSED YOU, BRO.' WHEN I ASKED THEM WHY NO ONE SHOWED UP...




THEY'D BE ALL LIKE 'THERE WAS COPS THERE.' 'I GOT WARRANTS. I DIDN'T WANNA GET BUSTED'. CRAP LIKE THAT.




I THOUGHT I WAS COOL. I MEAN, I SAID IT WAS COOL. BUT...



BUT IT WASN'T, HUH?



NAW. THAT HURT.



ANYWAY, BEFORE ME AND MY BOYS FOUND THE CLOWN WHO GOT ME WITH THAT MACHETE HE GOT KILLED BY ANOTHER GANG.



SO I GOT RIGHT BACK TO WORK - SLINGIN' FOR BIG GEE. HE BROUGHT IN THIS NEW KID - HIS NEPHEW. WANTED ME TO SHOW HIM HOW TO ROLL. SO I DID.

YO, THAT'S WHEN I FOUND OUT WHAT REALLY MATTERED TO BIG GEE - MONEY. NOT FAMILY, NOT LOYALTY. MONEY.



HIS NEPHEW WASN'T TOO BRIGHT, BUT HE WAS A HARD WORKER. AND ALL HE WANTED TO DO WAS MAKE HIS UNCLE PROUD. SO HE'S HUSTLIN' ONE NIGHT, AND THE COPS ARE ABOUT TO BUST HIM. HE DOESN'T WANT TO GET BUSTED AND IT GET BACK TO BIG GEE...



SO HE DOES THE ONLY THING HE CAN DO - HE DUMPS THE PRODUCT. COPS SEARCH HIM AND DON'T FIND ANYTHING.




SO HE GOES HOME. THEN BIG GEE FINDS OUT...




AND BUSTS HIS JAW WITH A CROWBAR.







AAAHHH, MAN.
NOBODY COULD
DO ANYTHING.




WE JUST WATCHED HIM
BLEED AND TRY TO
CALL OUT FOR HELP
WITH A BUSTED JAW.




ALL BECAUSE THIS KID WAS
SMART ENOUGH NOT TO GET
CAUGHT WITH TWO G'S WORTH
OF STUFF. SMART ENOUGH NOT
TO GET BIG GEE INCRIMINATED.



BIG GEE ALMOST
KILLS HIS OWN
BROTHER'S KID
OVER MONEY...



AND THAT'S THE ONLY
THING THAT MATTERS
TO THEM. YOU PAY
THEM. THAT'S IT.



AND I WAS ABOUT TO
FIND OUT FIRST HAND
HOW MUCH LOYALTY BIG
GEE HAD FOR ME.

WE WERE CHOPPIN' UP
ROCKS WHEN THE
COPS CAME.



YO! YO! THE COPS
ARE COMIN'. THE
COPS ARE COMIN'!



GET RID OF
THE STUFF!

BUT THEY BUSTED DOWN
THE DOOR BEFORE WE
COULD FLUSH IT ALL.



BIG GEE SAID 'YOU TELL
THEM THIS IS ALL YOUR
STUFF. YOU GET ME?!



I AIN'T GOIN' AWAY!
YOU GET ME?!



YEAH, YEAH, I
GET YOU! JEEZ!





I'M UNARMED!
I'M UNARMED.
MAN, I GIVE UP!

GET ON THE
GROUND! GET
YOUR ASSES ON
THE GROUND!



SO I GET HAILED IN.
INTERVIEWED. STATEMENTS.



I TOOK THE
HEAT - CLAIMED
ALL THE ROCK
WAS MINE.



BUT THE COPS
WEREN'T HAVING
ANY OF IT.



AND NEITHER WAS THE
JUDGE. THEY'D KNOWN
ABOUT GEE FOR YEARS AND
THEY FINALLY HAD HIM.



BIG GEE GOT SENT UP FOR
POSSESSION WITH INTENT
TO DISTRIBUTE. I GOT
POSSESSION.

I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH OF A SERIOUS RECORD, SO I JUST GOT JUVIE.



BIG GEE GOT 15 YEARS IN THE PEN. HE BLAMES ME FOR HIM NOT GETTING LESS TIME.



LIKE IT'S MY FAULT.



YEAH, I KNEW HIM BACK IN THE DAY. SOUNDS JUST LIKE HIM - A BIG VICTIM. EVERYTHING WAS ALWAYS SOMEONE ELSE'S FAULT. NEVER HIS OWN. GO ON.



I GET TO JUVIE AND IT'S OUT THERE - I'M A SNITCH. EVERYONE WANTED TO DO ME.



SO HE GETS IT OUT THERE THAT I SNITCHED ON HIM. LIKE I'D BE IN JAIL AT ALL IF I RATTED!

EVERYONE.

I WAS ABOUT TO GET JUMPED IN THE REC YARD BY SOME HOMIES...

PUNK ASS RAT.

YOU'RE DEAD, BITCH.

I DIDN'T RAT. SCREW YOU IF YOU THINK I DID. BRING IT ON, PUNKS.

GET READY, KID.

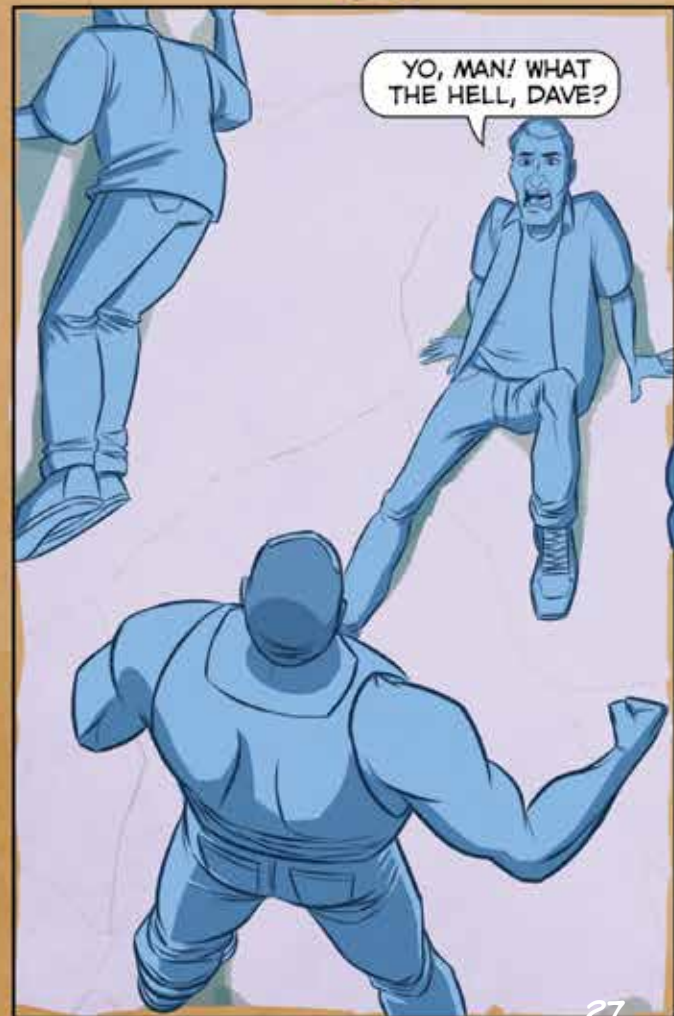
UGH!



NO, WAIT!
I WASN'T GONNA
DO ANYTHING.



CRACK!!!




YO, MAN! WHAT
THE HELL, DAVE?




YO, HE DIDN'T BIRD! HE
WOULDN'T GET SENT HERE
IF HE DID. USE YOUR HEAD.




YO, SORRY, DAVE.




DON'T SAY SORRY TO ME.



YO, I'M SORRY, BRO.




YEAH, WHATEVER.



YOU ALL RIGHT?


YEAH. THANKS DAVE.




DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.



DAVE WAS IN FOR A COUPLE MORE MONTHS. HE WAS FINISHING HIS TIME FOR WHAT HE DID FOR BIG GEE. WHICH APPARENTLY WAS A DIFFERENT STORY THAN WHAT BIG GEE HAD TOLD US.




IS THAT WHAT HE TOLD YOU GUYS? HMMMPH. WHAT A PUNK. WANNA KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?




SO WE'D JUST MADE A HUGE BUY, YOU KNOW? WE WERE BRINGIN' IT IN, AND WE GET PULLED OVER BY SOME UNITS.




AND THEN BIG GEE STARTS BITCHIN' OUT. 'YO MAN, I CAN'T GET BUSTED! I CAN'T GO TO JAIL! I WON'T MAKE IT IN THERE!'




I GOT TO LOOK AFTER MY BROTHER'S KID, YOU KNOW. I'M THE ONLY FAMILY HE'S GOT!



MAN, HE WAS SO PATHETIC.



YEAH, MAN. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. YOU'RE JUST THE PASSENGER, ALL RIGHT?



YEAH. THANKS, DAVE. YOU'RE A REAL BRO. I REALLY APPRECIATE THIS.

YEAH, MAN. WHATEVER.



SO BIG GEE WALKS AND I'M IN HERE FOR THREE YEARS. WHAT A PUNK ASS.



I WAS ALREADY HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT BIG GEE, BUT DAVE JUST LOCKED IT IN. I TOLD HIM WHAT BIG GEE DID TO ME. IT DIDN'T SURPRISE HIM.



WE STARTED HANGIN' OUT. THE MORE I GOT TO KNOW DAVE, THE MORE I LIKED HIM. HE TOLD ME ABOUT HIS SISTER. HIS FOSTER SISTER, I MEAN.



I HAVEN'T SEEN HER IN LIKE SEVEN YEARS. I WANNA SEE HER AGAIN, BUT... I CAN'T LET HER SEE ME LIKE THIS.



SHE'S A GOOD KID - AN ANGEL. I GOTTA GET MY LIFE TOGETHER BEFORE I SEE HER AGAIN.



YO, WHAT YOU GOT PLANNED, MAN?




I DUNNO. FINISH OFF HIGH SCHOOL. GO TO UNIVERSITY - GET MY DEGREE. GET A REAL JOB.




A REAL JOB? BUT YOU'RE SO GOOD AT HUSTLIN', MAN.

YEAH, SO GOOD I'M IN HERE.

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, MAN. I'D GIVE A MILLION DOLLARS TO BE OUT OF HERE AND GOIN' STRAIGHT RIGHT NOW.




GOIN' STRAIGHT? YOU MEAN DROPPIN' THE FLAG? YO, YOU CAN'T BETRAY YOUR COLORS.




AND WHY NOT, YO? 'CAUSE OF LOYALTY? THE LOYALTY THAT GOT ME IN HERE?


THE LOYALTY THE BRO'S WERE GOING TO SHOW YOU IN THE REC YARD BEFORE I STEPPED IN?




THE ONLY LOYALTY THAT MATTERS IS TO THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE YOU. WHO REALLY LOVE YOU.




YO, MAN. I AIN'T GOT NOBODY LIKE THAT IN MY LIFE. JUST MY BOYS.



YO, MAN. DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP, ALL RIGHT. MY PARENTS - DEAD. MY BLOOD SISTER - DEAD. NOBODY LOVED ME EITHER, MAN.



BUT I AIN'T GOING TO LET THAT STOP ME FROM HAVING A DECENT LIFE.



YOU DON'T HAVE ANYONE WHO CARES ENOUGH ABOUT YOU TO DO RIGHT FOR? THEN CARE ABOUT YOURSELF AND START DOING RIGHT FOR YOU.

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME ANYONE EVER MADE ME THINK ABOUT AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE GAME, YOU KNOW?



I MEAN, IF A GUY LIKE DAVE CAN HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART. A REAL HARD PLAYER LIKE HIM...



I STARTED GOING TO HEALING GROUPS AND COUNSELING SESSIONS. I COULD HEAR THE OTHER GUYS SAYING MY STORY.



'MY MOM WAS A CUSTY.' 'MY GRANDPARENTS WENT TO RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL.' I DIDN'T FEEL ALONE, ANYMORE. I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO WENT THROUGH THAT.



I TOOK SOME SCHOOL COURSES.



YEAH, I SAW THAT. YOU GOT REALLY GOOD GRADES.

YEAH, THEY HAD A LOT OF EXPERIENCE WITH GUYS LIKE ME. YOU KNOW, GUYS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES. THEY HELPED A LOT.



SO DAVE WAS ABOUT TO GET OUT. I WAS MORE NERVOUS FOR HIM THAN MYSELF.



HE PROMISED TO WRITE, AND HE DID - EVERY WEEK. THOSE LETTERS - MAN! THEY WERE LIKE A WINDOW TO THE OUTSIDE.



HE WAS DOIN' GOOD LIKE HE SAID HE WOULD. HE HAD A GREAT WORKER WHO WAS HELPING HIM GET HIS LIFE BACK.



HE TOLD ME THAT BIG GEE WAS STILL TALKING SMACK ABOUT ME, BUT HE SQUASHED IT. THE GANG WAS SCATTERED WITHOUT BIG GEE, AND DAVE WASN'T GOING BACK.



A COUPLE OF MONTHS LATER, DAVE FINISHED OFF SCHOOL AND STARTED LOOKING FOR HIS SISTER. THAT WAS THE LAST LETTER I EVER GOT FROM HIM.



SORRY. NOTHING TODAY, GARY.

A COUPLE OF MONTHS LATER, I GOT OUT. THAT'S WHEN I FOUND OUT DAVE WAS MURDERED.



ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS GET THAT GUY THAT SHOT HIM. ALL I WANTED TO DO WAS KILL HIM.



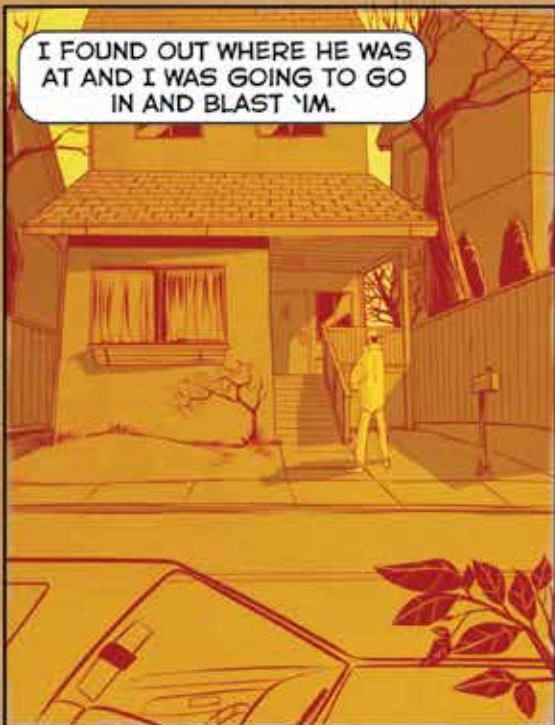
WHO WAS IT?!



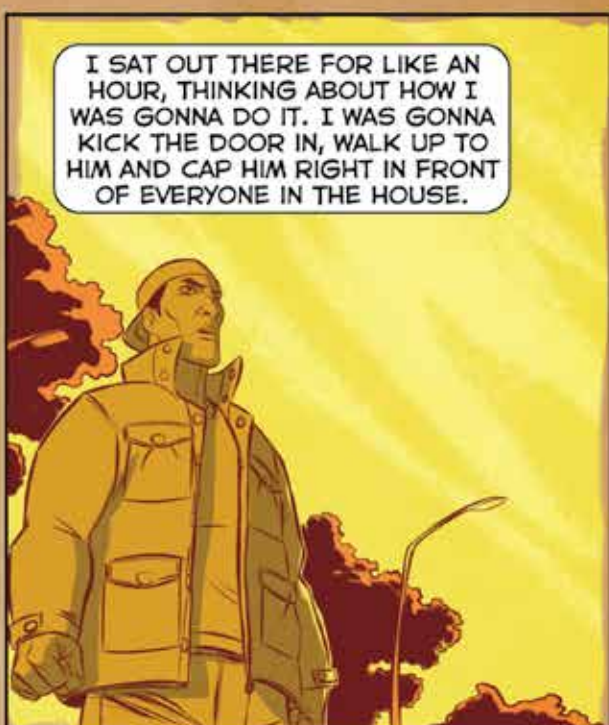
I FOUND OUT IT WAS SOME GUY NAMED HORIS, IN THE NORTH END.



I FOUND OUT WHERE HE WAS AT AND I WAS GOING TO GO IN AND BLAST 'IM.



I SAT OUT THERE FOR LIKE AN HOUR, THINKING ABOUT HOW I WAS GONNA DO IT. I WAS GONNA KICK THE DOOR IN, WALK UP TO HIM AND CAP HIM RIGHT IN FRONT OF EVERYONE IN THE HOUSE.



I WAS ABOUT TO GO IN...



THEN THE COPS SHOWED UP.



THEY WERE THERE TO ARREST HIM FOR DAVE'S MURDER.



MAN, I BOLTED. DUMPED THE GUN. WAS ALMOST OUT OF THERE.



BUT THE COPS CAUGHT ME IN THE ALLEY.



I WAS STILL JACKED FROM EARLIER AND WAS NOT IN THE MOOD TO PLAY NICE.



IT TOOK THREE COPS TO TAKE ME DOWN.



I GOT TAKEN IN FOR RESISTING ARREST.



AT THE COURT APPEARANCE THE JUDGE LOOKS AT ME...



HHHMMM. SAYS HERE YOU WERE IN THE YOUTH CORRECTIONAL FACILITY JUST TWO DAYS AGO. AND YOU WERE FOUND FLEEING THE SCENE OF A NOTORIOUS DRUG HOUSE.



RESISTING ARREST, MAKING THREATS AGAINST A POLICE OFFICER...



WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH YOU?



MAN, THAT MOMENT LASTED FOREVER...



HE TOLD ME I HAD A CHOICE - GO STRAIGHT BACK TO JUVIE FOR FOUR MONTHS, AND THEN DO A YEAR IN THE CORRECTIONAL. OR GO SEE YOU FOR AN EVALUATION. NOT MUCH OF A CHOICE.



SO, HERE I AM.

YES, HERE YOU ARE.



GARY, I'M GLAD YOU FOUND THE COURAGE TO OPEN UP. I KNOW IT'S NOT EASY TO DO THAT, GIVEN WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM.



AND I GET A SENSE THAT YOU'RE LOOKING TO MAKE SOME SERIOUS CHANGES. BUT...

BUT WHAT?




I HEAR YOU TALKING ABOUT THESE THINGS. BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THEM.




MAN, THERE IT IS AGAIN! WHY DO YOU KEEP ASKING ME HOW I FEEL?!




BECAUSE, GARY, I NEED TO KNOW WHY. WHY YOU DO WANT TO CHANGE?

A man with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket over a black shirt and a gold chain, is shouting into a black microphone. He has a frustrated expression. The background shows a bookshelf with colorful books.


BECAUSE I HATE THIS LIFE, MAN! I HATE LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER EVERY TWO SECONDS.

A close-up of the man's face as he shouts. His eyes are wide and intense, and his mouth is open in a scream. The background is a bright orange and red gradient.


I HATE HAVING TO HANG AROUND WITH A BUNCH OF GUYS THAT I DON'T TRUST JUST BECAUSE THEY WEAR THE SAME COLORS AS ME. I HATE THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT MYSELF.

A close-up of the man's face. He has a thoughtful and slightly sad expression. He is wearing a light blue hoodie.


THEN WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE?

The man is shown in a full-body shot, shouting with his arms raised in a 'V' shape. He is wearing a dark jacket, black shirt, and grey pants. He is holding a microphone in his right hand. The background features a green couch and a bookshelf.


BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ELSE, ALL RIGHT?! MY WHOLE LIFE I'VE JUST BEEN SURVIVING, JUST HOLDING ON FOR ONE MORE MINUTE, ONE MORE DAY, ONE MORE YEAR!




I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE, MAN. I WANNA LIVE, YO. NOT JUST SURVIVE. LIVE!




I WANNA DO SOMETHING WHERE I'M NOT ROBBING ANYONE OR SELLING POISON TO MY OWN PEOPLE.




BUT, I DON'T KNOW HOW, YOU KNOW? I WISH I DID. BUT I DON'T. I DON'T.



WELL, GARY. THAT'S WHERE I COME IN. I BELIEVE YOU WANT TO CHANGE. I HONESTLY DO. MOST GUYS COME IN HERE - THEY WALK OUT THE DOOR IN TWO MINUTES. YOU DIDN'T - YOU STAYED. THAT TELLS ME YOU WANT CHANGE - REAL CHANGE.



BUT WANTING CHANGE AND WALKING DOWN THE PATH OF CHANGE - THOSE ARE TWO DIFFERENT THINGS.



AND I NEED TO KNOW YOU'RE REALLY READY FOR THIS. 'CAUSE IT'S GONNA BE HARD.



NO, I MEAN IT. NOT JUST A LITTLE BIT HARD. THIS IS GONNA BE THE HARDEST THING YOU EVER DO.



BUT I GUARANTEE YOU, IT'S WORTH IT.



YOU'RE WORTH IT.



ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN?





YEAH.



GOOD. THEN LET'S GET STARTED.



AFTER SOME MORE SESSIONS WITH WALTER, HE GOT ME INTO A GROUP HOME FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS. IT WAS A NICE PLACE.



BUT WALTER WASN'T PLAYIN', MAN. THIS WAS THE HARDEST THING I'D EVER DONE. THE WORST PART WAS TO FIGHT THE TEMPTATION TO GO BACK. I'D SEE MY CREW HANGIN', HAVING FUN. I WOULD WANNA HANG WITH THEM, TOO. BUT THAT WOULD BE THE BEGINNING OF THE SLIDE BACK. AND I COULDN'T GO BACK.

AND THEN THE GUY WAS LIKE... THE COPS...

HA HA.



I GOT BORED SO EASILY AT FIRST. I COULDN'T SIT STILL. IT WAS LIKE BEING BACK ON THE INSIDE.



WATCHING TV, PLAYING GAMES HELPED A LITTLE...

SON OF A...



BUT I'D GET THAT OLD URGE TO RUN, LIKE WHEN I WAS A LITTLE KID.



I HAD TO FIGHT IT. BUT IF IT WASN'T THE URGE TO RUN, IT WAS THE URGE TO FIGHT.

YOU USED ALL THE MILK?



ANY SMALL THING COULD SET ME OFF.

BUT COUNSELING WITH WALTER REALLY HELPED. IT HELPED ME IDENTIFY WHAT THE PROBLEM REALLY WAS. I WAS... I WAS ANXIOUS. AND THIS NEW LIFE WAS MAKING ME MORE ANXIOUS.



HE HELPED ME ACKNOWLEDGE THE FEAR, AND ACCEPT THAT IT WAS OKAY TO BE SCARED. THAT FEAR DIDN'T MAKE ME WEAK.



I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS OKAY TO BE AFRAID. WHEN I WAS A KID - IT WAS ALWAYS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. A WAY TO SHOW PEOPLE THEY COULD HURT YOU.



IT FELT GOOD TO TRUST. BEING WALLED-UP ALL THE TIME HELPED WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. IT KEPT ME SAFE WHEN I NEEDED IT, BUT NOW... NOW I FEEL LIKE ITS OKAY TO TRUST.



IT'S TAKEN ME A WHILE TO TRUST THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO DON'T WANT TO HURT ME. GOOD PEOPLE.



I'M STILL LEARNING HOW. IT'S SLOW. IT'S HARD. BUT I WON'T GIVE UP. MY EDUCATION IS GOING GOOD. I MEAN, IT'S GOING WELL. WALTER HELPED ME GET INTO A TRADES TRAINING PROGRAM. I'M GOING TO BE AN ELECTRICIAN.



IT'S TOUGH, THOUGH. SO MUCH TO LEARN. BUT IT'S REALLY ACTUALLY KIND OF FUN. SOMETIMES I GET EMBARRASSED 'CAUSE I GET SO STOKED ABOUT GOING TO CLASS.



WALTER AND SOME PEOPLE FROM MY GROUP HOME SHOWED UP TO MY GRADUATION. I HONESTLY NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD MAKE IT THROUGH.



NOW I'M IN AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM AND MY MENTOR IS A REALLY COOL GUY.



HE MAKES LIKE \$75 AN HOUR! HE HAS A KICK-ASS TRUCK AND A SUPER NICE HOME.



AFTER I PUT IN MY TIME AS AN APPRENTICE, I'LL BE A JOURNEYMAN. THEN I CAN WORK PRETTY MUCH ANYWHERE, MAKIN' WAY MORE CASH THAN I DID WITH MY OLD CREW.



LIFE IS GETTING BETTER. BUT IT'S STILL HARD.



I'D RUN INTO SOME OF MY OLD BOYS AND GET ALL NOSTALGIC. BUT THEY'D SEE HOW WELL I'M DOIN' AND GET A BIT JEALOUS.



SOME GUYS STILL HATE MY ASS BECAUSE I GOT OUT OF THE GANG. CALL ME A PUNK AND THREATEN TO RUB ME OUT.



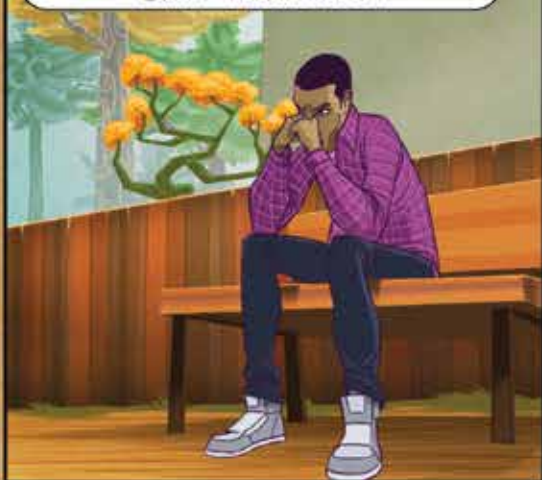
PART OF ME WANTS TO JUST BUST THEIR HEADS OPEN. BUT THEN I REMEMBER HOW FAR I'VE COME.



MAN, WALKING AWAY FROM THAT FIGHT WAS ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS I'D EVER DONE.



THINGS HAVE SETTLED DOWN NOW. I'VE BEEN THINKING MORE AND MORE ABOUT DAVE LATELY. HOW MUCH HE MEANT TO ME; HOW HE INSPIRED ME TO CHANGE. WALTER SUGGESTED THAT I GO TO A GRIEF WORKSHOP.



AT FIRST I WASN'T INTO IT AT ALL. THEN I THOUGHT; WHAT THE HELL. WALTER HAS DONE ALL RIGHT BY ME ALL THIS TIME. I TRUST HIM.



I'M GLAD TO SEE SO MANY NEW FACES HERE TONIGHT. WHY DON'T WE GO AROUND THE ROOM AND INTRODUCE OURSELVES? AND, IF YOU FEEL UP TO IT, MAYBE YOU CAN TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND WHY YOU'RE HERE.



OH, UM, HEY. I'M GARY. THE REASON I'M HERE IS, UM...



IT'S OKAY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEAK IF YOU'RE NOT READY.



NAW, IT'S ALL RIGHT. I WANT TO DO THIS. UM, THE REASON I'M HERE IS, I HAD A FRIEND. REALLY, HE WAS MORE LIKE A BIG BROTHER, YOU KNOW?




HE, UM, HELPED INSPIRE ME TO GET OUT OF A GANG AND, UH... TURN MY LIFE AROUND.




HE, UM... HE GOT SHOT ABOUT A YEAR AGO AND... I REALLY MISS HIM, YOU KNOW?








HEY, MY NAME IS JENNY. I WAS PART OF THE GROUP YOU WERE IN AND, UM, I HEARD YOU TALKING ABOUT DAVID VALLELY...



YOU'RE HIS SISTER.



YEAH.



WOW. YOU'RE JENNY...

