

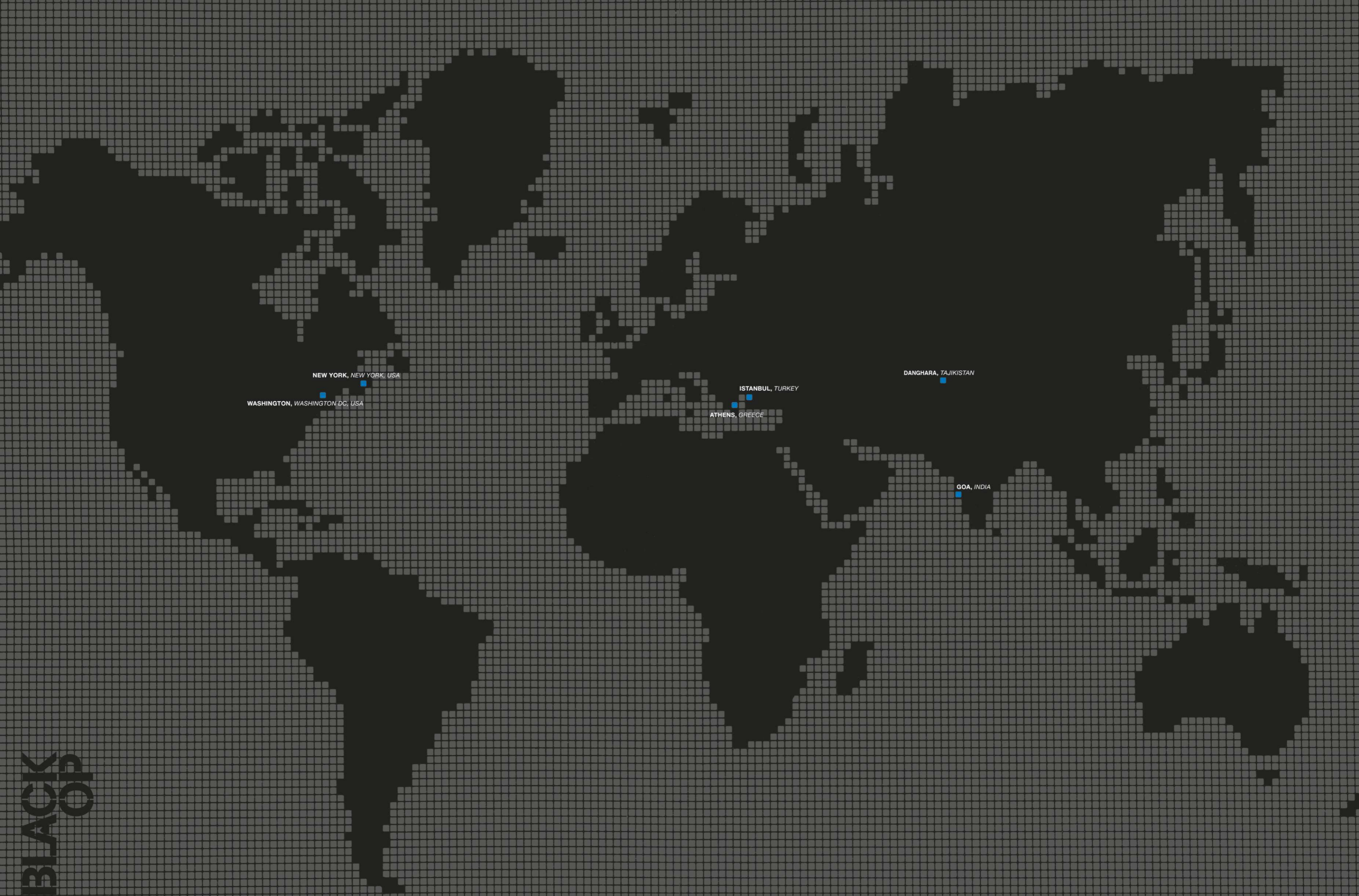
DESBERG & LABIANO

BLACK OP 2



The CIA's most secret operation...
Its alliance with the Russian mafia.





NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA

WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON DC, USA

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

ATHENS, GREECE

DANGHARA, TAJIKISTAN

GOA, INDIA

BLACK
Op

DESBERG & LABIANO

BLACK OP 2



COLORIST:

JEAN-JACQUES CHAGNAUD



For Nadine, for her
selflessness...

HUGUES

VOLUME 1 In 1945, Floyd Whitman's father becomes one of the first official victims of the conflict growing between the Western powers and their Soviet rival.
As soon as he's old enough, Floyd joins the CIA in order to take part in the crusade against the Communist enemy. While his childhood friend Trent Jackell takes advantage of family connections to climb the bureaucratic ladder, Floyd finds himself in the field in India, and for the first time comes face to face with the realities of the Cold War.
As the CIA desperately tries to find informants within the enemy's ranks, Floyd encounters a strange Soviet agent. Vladen Nechkov seems to be serving a master other than the KGB. And it doesn't take Floyd long to catch a glimpse of the Russian mafia's shadow behind him...

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DARGAUD



NEW YORK.



M...
MORDASOV?

GOD DAMN IT.
PICK UP!

MORDASOV!



I... I THINK
SOMEONE'S
FOLLOWING
ME. I'M SURE
SOMEONE'S
ON MY TAIL!



IS THAT YOU,
SERGEI?

WHAT'S
GOING
ON?

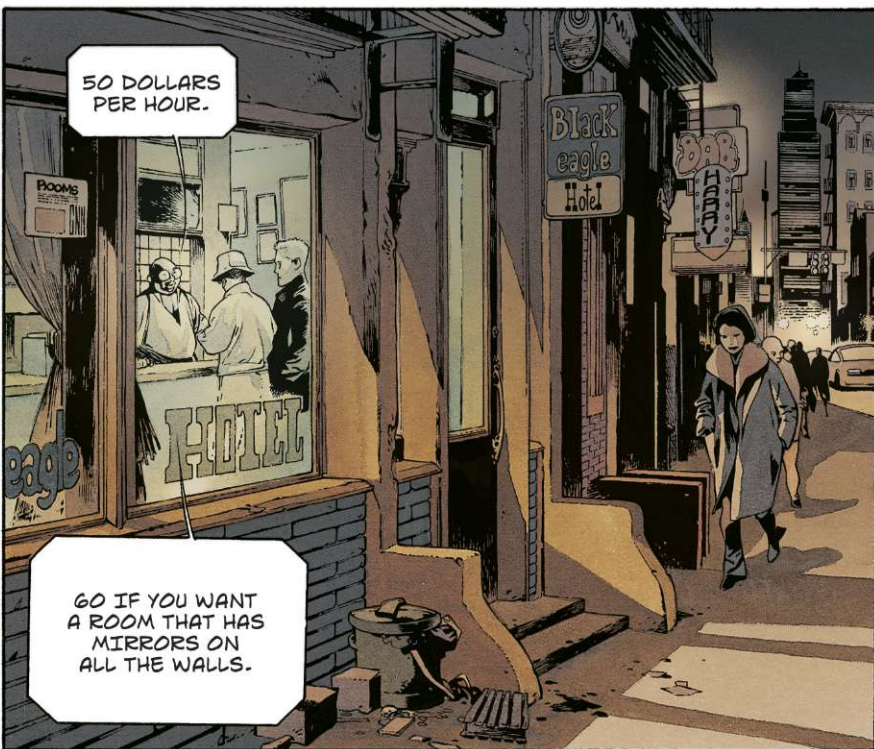


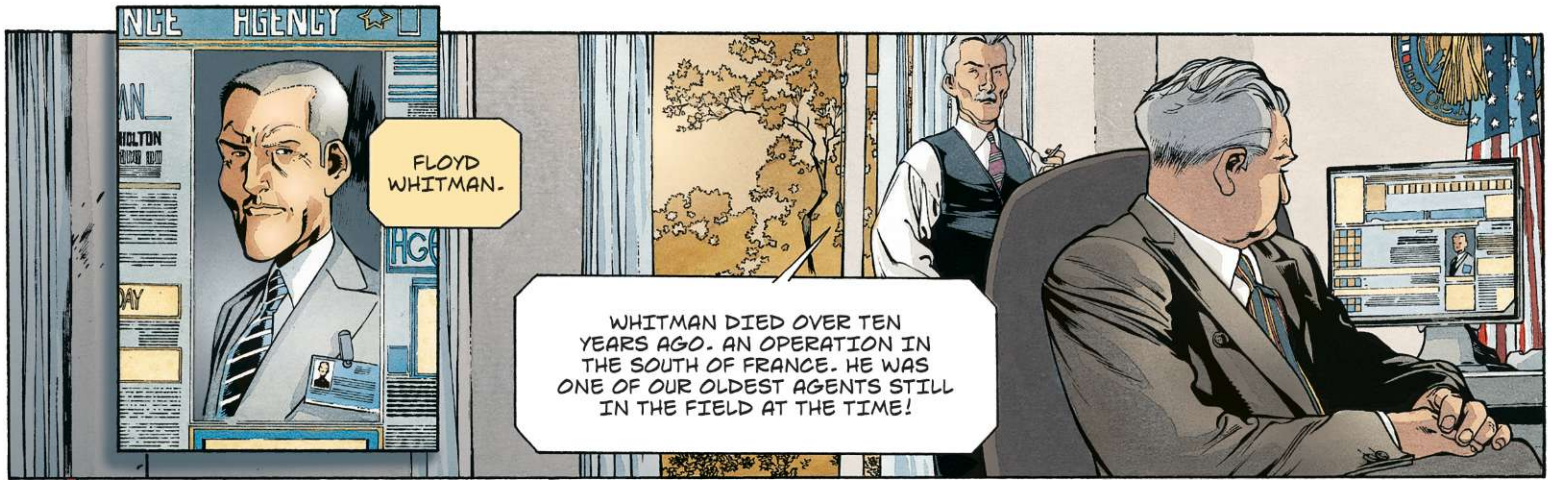
STAY
CALM.

WHERE
ARE
YOU?



I'M IN
LITTLE
NIGERIA.
I'M... I'M
SICK OF
HIDING OUT
ALL ALONE.
PLEASE,
COME AND
GET ME,
MORDASOV.
NOW!





FLOYD WHITMAN.

WHITMAN DIED OVER TEN YEARS AGO. AN OPERATION IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE. HE WAS ONE OF OUR OLDEST AGENTS STILL IN THE FIELD AT THE TIME!



HNGH!

I SPENT NEARLY TWO WEEKS IN FLORIDA, SISKY. JUST LONG ENOUGH TO STUDY HOW CERTAIN COMPANIES WERE OPERATING DURING THE LAST PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN.



I'M R... RUSSIAN. VOTERS... ELECTORS... WHAT COULD I POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND ABOUT YOUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM?

THAT'S JUST IT, THESE COMPANIES ARE CONTROLLED BY YOUR DIRTY MAFIA. WHY DO YOU GUYS CARE SO MUCH ABOUT GETTING ONE CANDIDATE ELECTED INSTEAD OF ANOTHER?

OR RATHER, HOW THEY WEREN'T OPERATING, SEEING AS HOW THEY WERE TRYING TO STOP AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE FROM VOTING AGAINST THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE.



THE MIRRORS ARE NICE, HUH? YOU CAN LOOK AT YOURSELF FROM EVERY ANGLE, STILL IN ONE PIECE.



WE'RE SORRY THAT WE HAD TO DISTURB YOU, SIR.

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE A PROBLEM...



SISKY, I'M WELL AWARE OF YOUR METHODS. IF YOU'RE PLAYING THIS GAME, IT'S BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING TO GAIN FROM IT!

WHAT DID THEY PROMISE YOU?

LISTEN, I... I JUST HANDLE THE FINANCES. THE BOSS IS MISTER NECHKOV... ALL I DO IS INVEST THE GROUP'S MONEY. THAT'S ALL!



ACCORDING TO OUR AGENT JOHN JAKOBSEN, IT LOOKS LIKE THE RESEARCH IS RELATED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN FLORIDA.

THE PROBLEM'S THE INVESTIGATOR. FLOYD WHITMAN HAS A LONG HISTORY WITH US. AND HIS SUDDEN RESURRECTION IS MOST DEFINITELY NOT A COINCIDENCE!



UH WELL... WE THOUGHT THAT... MAYBE YOU SHOULD BE AWARE...

THERE ARE SOME EMBARRASSING ELEMENTS IN FLOYD WHITMAN'S FILE. HE... UH... APPARENTLY, HE WAS A CLOSE FRIEND OF YOUR FATHER'S.



AND HOW DOES THIS CONCERN ME DIRECTLY, LAURSSON?



THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I CHOSE YOU, SISKY. FOR THE GROUP'S MONEY. HOW HAVE YOU MANAGED TO MAKE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS SINCE YOU STARTED HELPING THE NEW U.S. PRESIDENT?



THE CONTRACTS WERE IN THE PLANNING FOR A LONG TIME. WE... WE SIMPLY SOLD THE CONTACTS WE HAD IN CHECHNYA, FOR THE ENTIRE CASPIAN SEA.



SO, THAT'S IT... OIL, PLAIN AND SIMPLE!



BETWEEN MAFIAS... WE TAKE A PERCENTAGE AT EVERY LEVEL. NOTHING CAN HAPPEN WITHOUT US!





TOO SIMPLE.
AND WAY TOO
OBVIOUS.

WHAT COULD
BE HIDING BEHIND
ALL THAT OIL?



MOST PEOPLE THINK THAT MONEY
IS WHAT MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND.
AND YET THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S
MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONEY.



BEING IN A POSITION
TO MAKE IT!

YOU DON'T SET OUT TO WIN A
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION JUST SO
THAT YOU CAN GET INTO THE OIL
BUSINESS WITH THE RUSSIAN MOB.
WHEN YOU HAVE ALL THE POWER IN
THE WORLD, YOU INEVITABLY
HAVE OTHER OPTIONS...



HOW MUCH
LONGER DO
WE HAVE
TO WAIT?



EVERYTHING'S
GOING AS PLANNED,
SIR. THE FIRST TWO
GROUPS SHOULD ARRIVE
AT JFK AIRPORT
AND CHICAGO IN
A FEW HOURS.



WE'VE TAKEN EVERY
POSSIBLE PRECAUTION.
THERE IS ABSOLUTELY
NO WAY ANYONE CAN
DISCOVER OUR
INTENTIONS!





WE'VE GOT SOMEONE SNIFFING AROUND, BOSS.



I'M POSITIVE IT'S THE GUY WHO WAS INVESTIGATING OUR ACTIVITIES IN FLORIDA.

A JOURNALIST, OR MAYBE AN IRS AGENT, EXCEPT THAT THEY DON'T REALLY USE THOSE METHODS.
I DIDN'T TELL HIM ANYTHING, MR. NECHKOV. I PROMISE YOU, HE WASTED HIS TIME.



WHAT COULD YOU TELL HIM? YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING. THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM.

YOU HANDLE MY MONEY EVERY SINGLE DAY, SERGEI.



I'M THE ONE YOU SHOULD BE AFRAID OF.



BUT NOW YOU ARE VERY AFRAID OF SOMEONE ELSE, I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO TRUST YOU ANYMORE.



I ALWAYS COME BACK TO THE SAME QUESTION.

THE FLORIDA ELECTION WAS FIXED BECAUSE THEY NEEDED A REPUBLICAN PRESIDENT.



BUT WHY INSIST ON THIS PRESIDENT AND NOBODY ELSE?

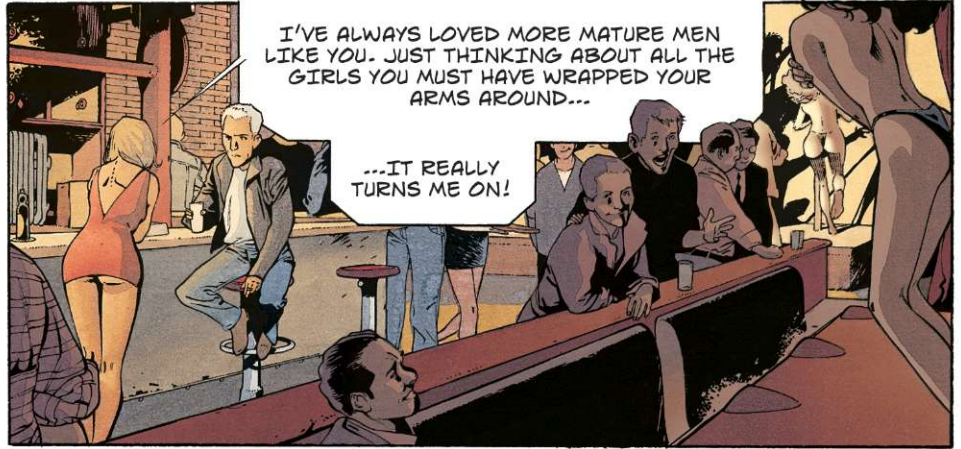


...IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE BEST TO INFORM YOUR FATHER.



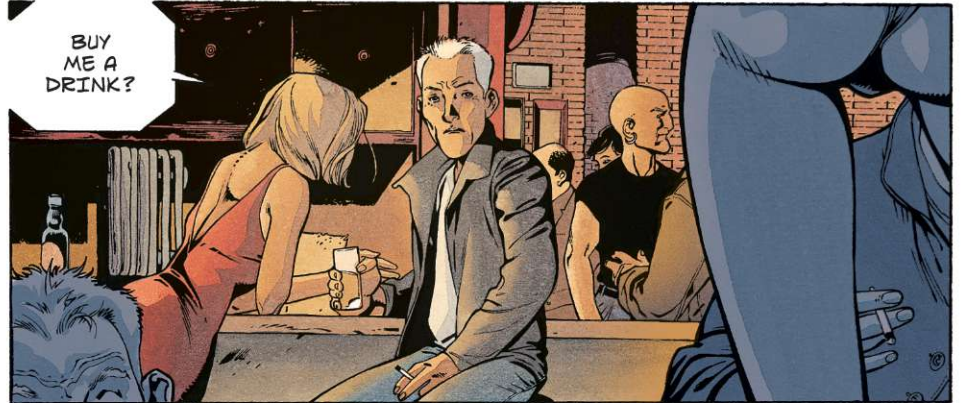
OUR OPERATION WILL COME TO AN END IN LESS THAN THIRTY-SIX HOURS. BUT... IF YOU HAVE THE SLIGHTEST HESITATION...

MY FATHER IS ONLY KEPT INFORMED OF WHAT HE ABSOLUTELY HAS TO KNOW. AS IT HAPPENS, WE'RE GOING TO SEE THIS THROUGH!



I'VE ALWAYS LOVED MORE MATURE MEN LIKE YOU. JUST THINKING ABOUT ALL THE GIRLS YOU MUST HAVE WRAPPED YOUR ARMS AROUND...

...IT REALLY TURNS ME ON!



BUY ME A DRINK?



GOA, INDIA. 1968.



AH, THE PAST. SOMETIMES IT SEEMS INCREDIBLY DISTANT. THE GIRLS ON THE BEACH IN INDIA. LIGHT-YEARS AWAY. THERE ARE OTHER VOICES, HOWEVER, THAT ARE STILL SO PAINFULLY PRESENT.



IF HE'S JUST ASKED YOU TO MARRY HIM, DON'T LISTEN TO HIM. I KNOW HE HAS AT LEAST FIVE FIANCEES IN THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS ALONE!



TRENT?!
TRENT
JACKELL!

WHAT THE
HELL ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?



YOU COULD AT LEAST
GUESS. YOU'RE THE REASON
WHY I'M HERE IN THIS HOT,
MOSQUITO-RIDDEN
HELLHOLE!

THAT'S NOT
POSSIBLE. ONLY
MY SECTION CHIEF
IS SUPPOSED
TO BE ABLE TO
CONTACT ME.



THEN ALLOW
ME TO CITE THE
CONCLUSION FROM
YOUR LAST REPORT.
IT'S ALMOST AS IF
YOU DIDN'T KNOW
WHAT A COMPLETE
BOMBSHELL YOU
DROPPED ON
LANGLEY!



NECHKOV.
VLADEN
NECHKOV.



I'M QUOTING YOU: "THERE MAY BE A WAY
THAT WE CAN FINALLY DEFEAT COMMUNISM!
MAKE THEM RICH, GET THEM INTO BUSINESS
AND MAKING MONEY.."

"WE'LL GIVE THEM BACK THE
DESIRE AND TASTE FOR BUILDING
FORTUNES FROM THE INSIDE!"



MAKE THE RUSSIANS RICH,
DO BUSINESS WITH THEM.
YOUR NECHKOV HAS CONTACTS
IN THE MAFIA. THAT'S
PRECISELY WHERE WE'LL
GET STARTED.



THANKS TO MY FATHER'S HELP, I WAS
ABLE TO GET A JOB WORKING AS THE
JUNIOR MANAGER OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF INTELLIGENCE & ANALYSIS. WHEN
I SAW YOUR REPORT ARRIVE AT
THE OFFICE...



THAT REPORT REPRESENTS
A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR
BOTH OF US, FLOYD. I MANAGED
TO CONVINCE MY BOSS THAT
YOUR IDEA WAS A GOOD ONE.

MY
IDEA?!

WE'LL GIVE THE MAFIA
BACK THEIR MEANS.
WE'RE GOING TO HELP
THEM REORGANIZE!

THERE IT WAS. THE WHOLE IDEA. HELP THE RUSSIAN MAFIA WIN BACK THEIR POWER. SO THAT THEY WOULD THEN ATTACK THE COMMUNIST REGIME THEMSELVES. AND NATURALLY BECOME ITS WORST ENEMY.

I'M NOT AT ALL CERTAIN ABOUT NECHKOV'S CONNECTIONS, TRENT. AT THIS STAGE, I CAN'T KNOW IF THEY REALLY STRETCH ALL THE WAY TO THE MAFIA.

GOOD GOD, FLOYD, WHAT'S IT GONNA TAKE? THE BOSS AT LANGLEY IS READY TO GIVE IT A SHOT. IF THE OPERATION PANS OUT, WE'RE GONNA FIND OURSELVES RUNNING A REAL DEPARTMENT.

IMAGINE THAT: YOU AND ME. LIFELONG FRIENDS RUNNING A TOP SECRET, INDEPENDENT OPERATION AGAINST THE BIG, BAD COMMIE ENEMY!

WE'LL GET 'EM FLOYD.

THE NEXT TIME YOU MAKE CONTACT WITH NECHKOV, MAKE SURE HE UNDERSTANDS THAT A CIA AGENT'S SALARY LEAVES A LOT TO BE DESIRED.

IF YOU SENSE THAT HE'S RISING TO THE BAIT, CASUALLY MENTION THAT THE CIA IS LOOKING TO ARM REBEL GROUPS THAT ARE FIGHTING COMMUNISM.

SO THAT'S WHERE WE'RE AT, NECHKOV... BOTH OF US MIGHT BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SITUATION.



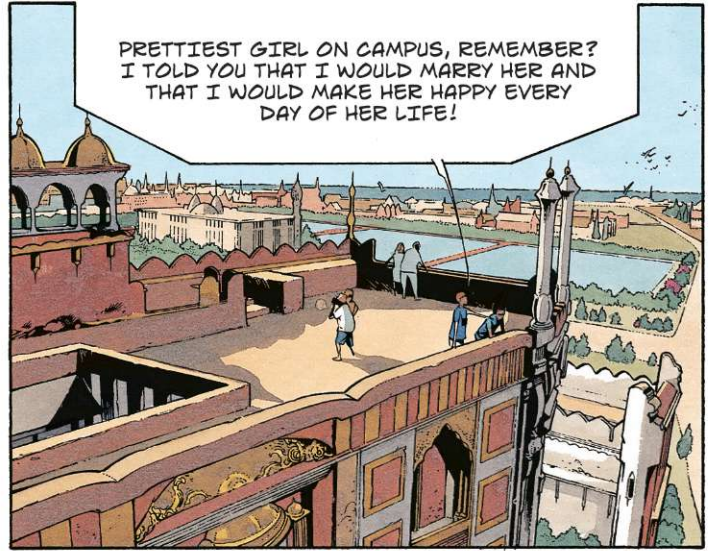


AND NOW WHAT?



WE WAIT. IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE WE KNOW IF NECHKOV DOES INDEED HAVE ACCESS TO A NETWORK OF INFORMANTS.

GO BACK TO D.C., YOU LUCKY DOG. JO-ANN MUST BE DYING OF BOREDOM WITHOUT HER DEAR HUBBY. SHE STILL AS PRETTY AS EVER?



PRETTIEST GIRL ON CAMPUS, REMEMBER? I TOLD YOU THAT I WOULD MARRY HER AND THAT I WOULD MAKE HER HAPPY EVERY DAY OF HER LIFE!



I'VE FOUND OUT SOMETHING NEW. IF IT INTERESTS YOU, WE'LL NEED TO ACT QUICKLY.



IT DEPENDS ON WHAT WE HAVE TO ACT ON.

WEAPONS TO BE DELIVERED TO THE TAJIK REBELLION. COMMANDER BABIYAR IS READY TO STRIKE BACK AGAINST TAJIKISTAN'S RED ARMY.



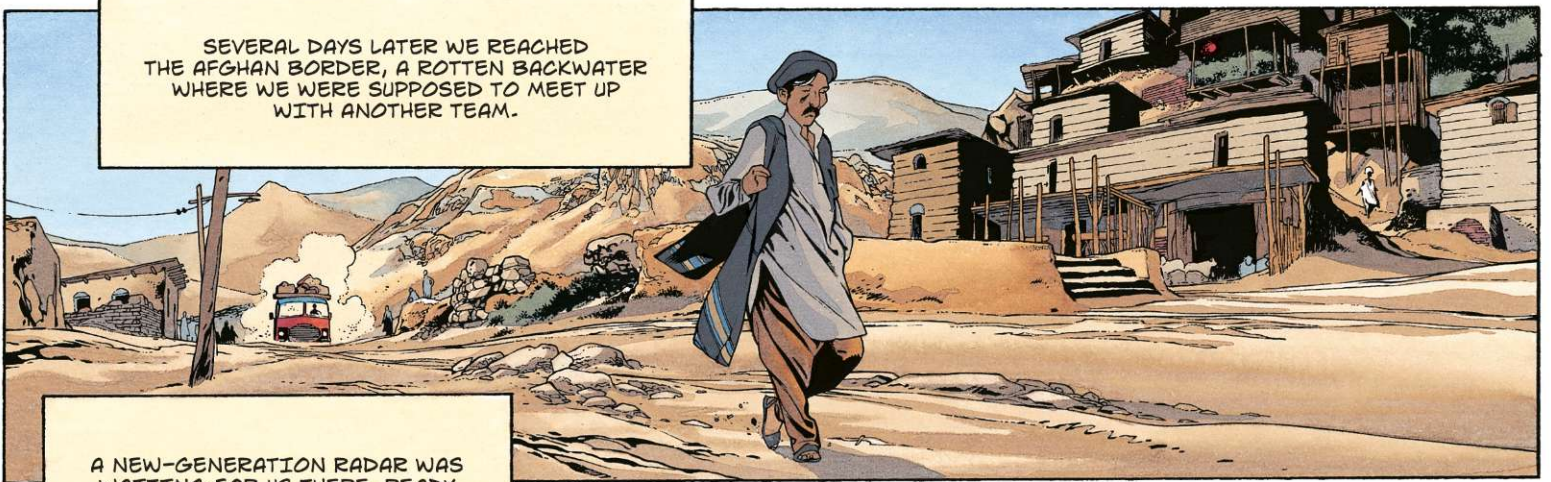
BABIYAR HAS MONEY FOR THE GUNS, AND HE'S READY TO PAY TOP DOLLAR. ONE MILLION DOLLARS FOR US TO SHARE!



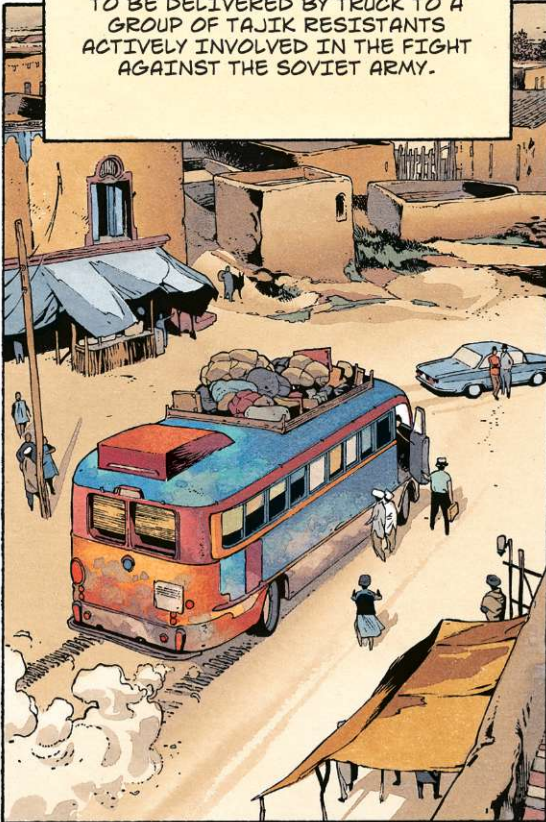
WE'RE ON. CARRY OUT THE OP WITH HIM. COLLECT THE MILLION DOLLARS.

WE'LL SEE WHAT HE DOES WITH THE MONEY!

SEVERAL DAYS LATER WE REACHED THE AFGHAN BORDER, A ROTTEN BACKWATER WHERE WE WERE SUPPOSED TO MEET UP WITH ANOTHER TEAM.



A NEW-GENERATION RADAR WAS WAITING FOR US THERE, READY TO BE DELIVERED BY TRUCK TO A GROUP OF TAJIK RESISTANTS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SOVIET ARMY.



WE WEREN'T SURE YOU WERE GONNA MAKE IT!

STILL PINCHING PENNIES ON YOUR MISSION EXPENSES, RAY?



ECONOMY CLASS WITH MULTIPLE LAYOVERS, RIGHT?

LET ME GUESS: DELHI TO AMMAN, THEN LIMASSOL TO ATHENS, THEN ANKARA?

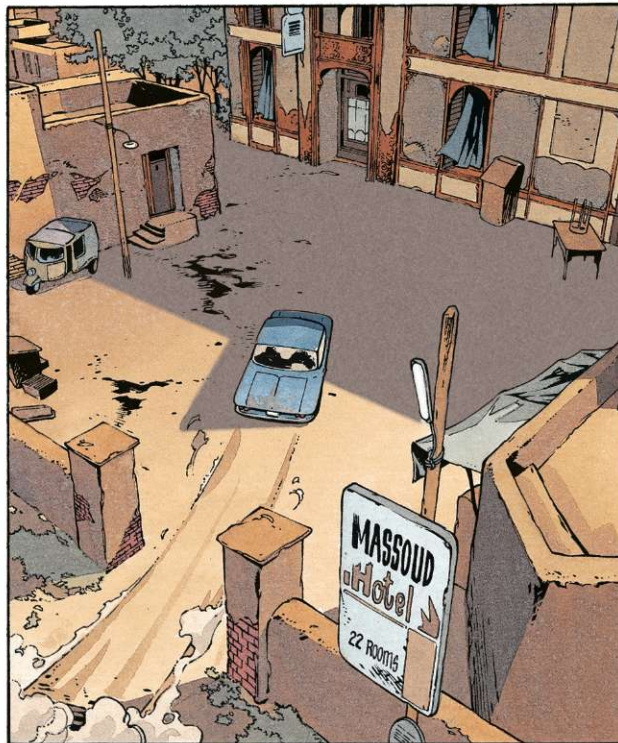
HA HA!

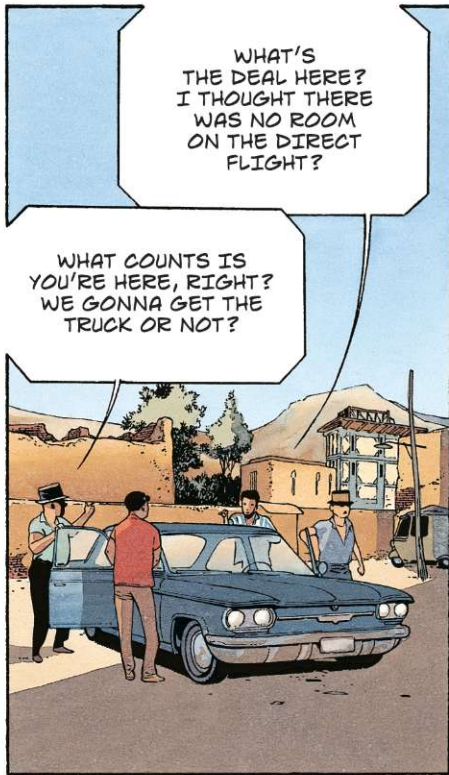


WITH ALL THE CASH YOU SAVED, YOUR WIFE'LL HAVE HER DISHWASHER SOON ENOUGH.



LET'S CHECK WITH COMMANDER BABIYAR. MAYBE SUGGEST A WEAPONS DEAL IN EXCHANGE FOR HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES.





WHAT'S THE DEAL HERE? I THOUGHT THERE WAS NO ROOM ON THE DIRECT FLIGHT?

WHAT COUNTS IS YOU'RE HERE, RIGHT? WE GONNA GET THE TRUCK OR NOT?

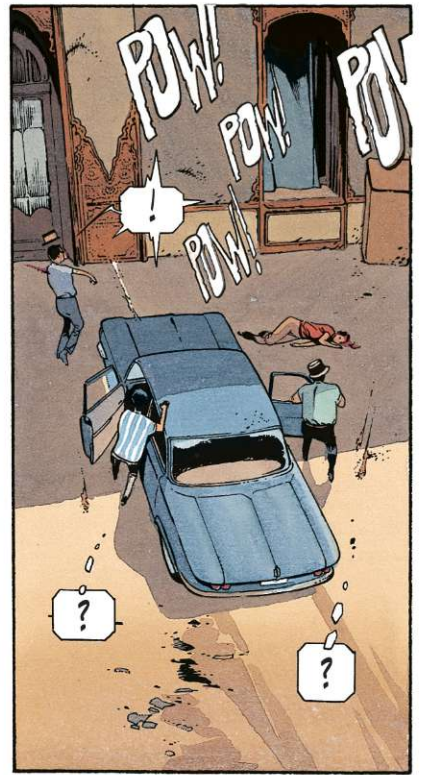


IT'S IN A GARAGE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN. YOU CAN TAKE A BUS, IF YOU WANT. GOOD OL' BOB R--



POW!

UHHH!



?

?

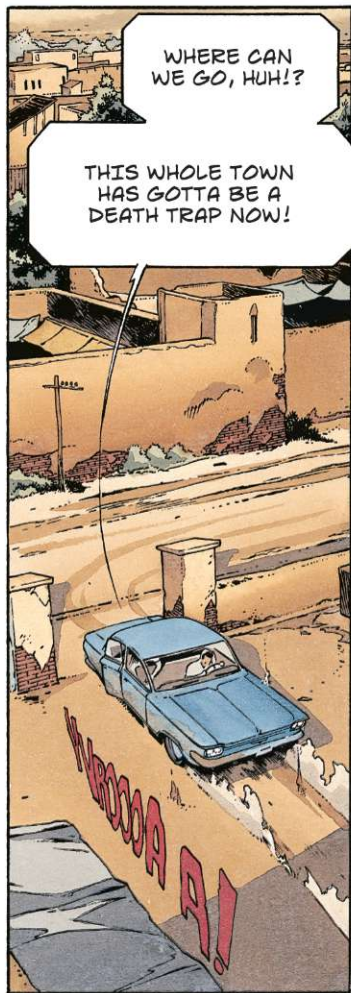


OH MY GOD!



THEY WERE EXPECTING US!

GOOD LUCK GETTING THE TRUCK AND THE RADAR!



WHERE CAN WE GO, HUH!?

THIS WHOLE TOWN HAS GOTTA BE A DEATH TRAP NOW!



SCREEEE



?

ROMAN LASSENKO!

THE WHITE WOLF!



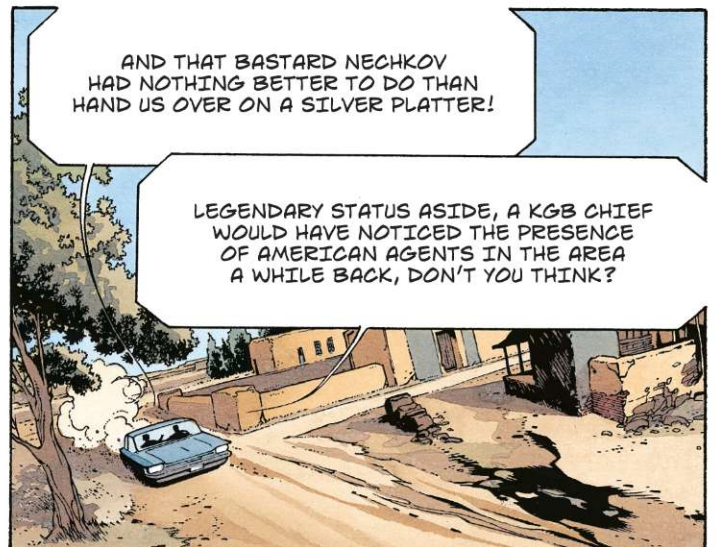
LASSENKO?



CAPTAIN LASSENKO.
HEAD OF THE LOCAL
KGB CELL.

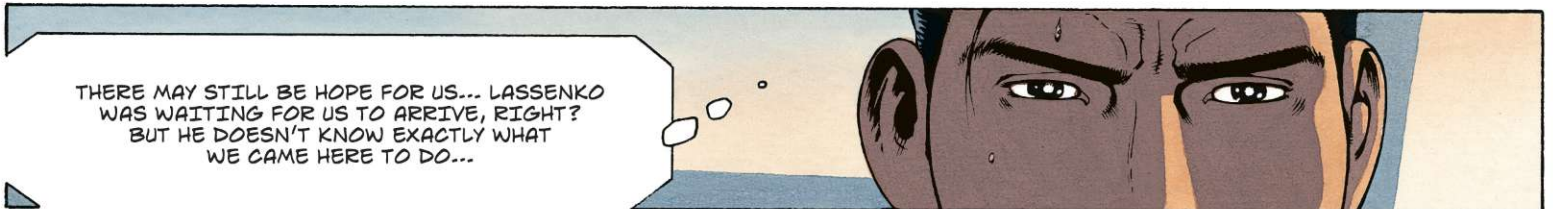


HE CAME
THROUGH DELHI
A FEW YEARS AGO.
LONG ENOUGH TO
BECOME A LEGEND.



AND THAT BASTARD NECHKOV
HAD NOTHING BETTER TO DO THAN
HAND US OVER ON A SILVER PLATTER!

LEGENDARY STATUS ASIDE, A KGB CHIEF
WOULD HAVE NOTICED THE PRESENCE
OF AMERICAN AGENTS IN THE AREA
A WHILE BACK, DON'T YOU THINK?

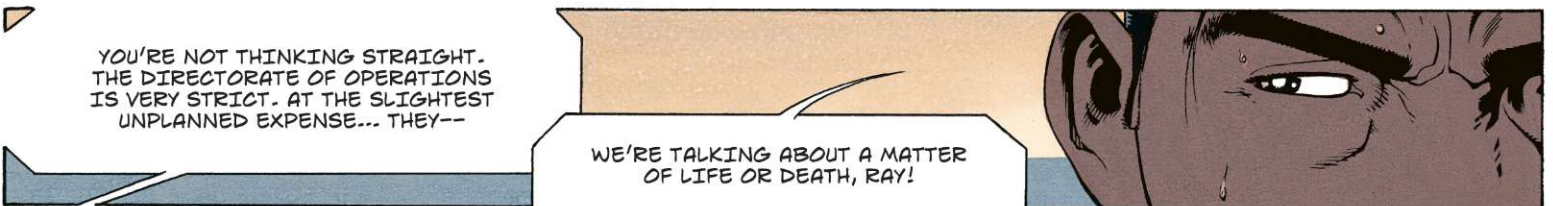


THERE MAY STILL BE HOPE FOR US... LASSENKO
WAS WAITING FOR US TO ARRIVE, RIGHT?
BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT
WE CAME HERE TO DO...



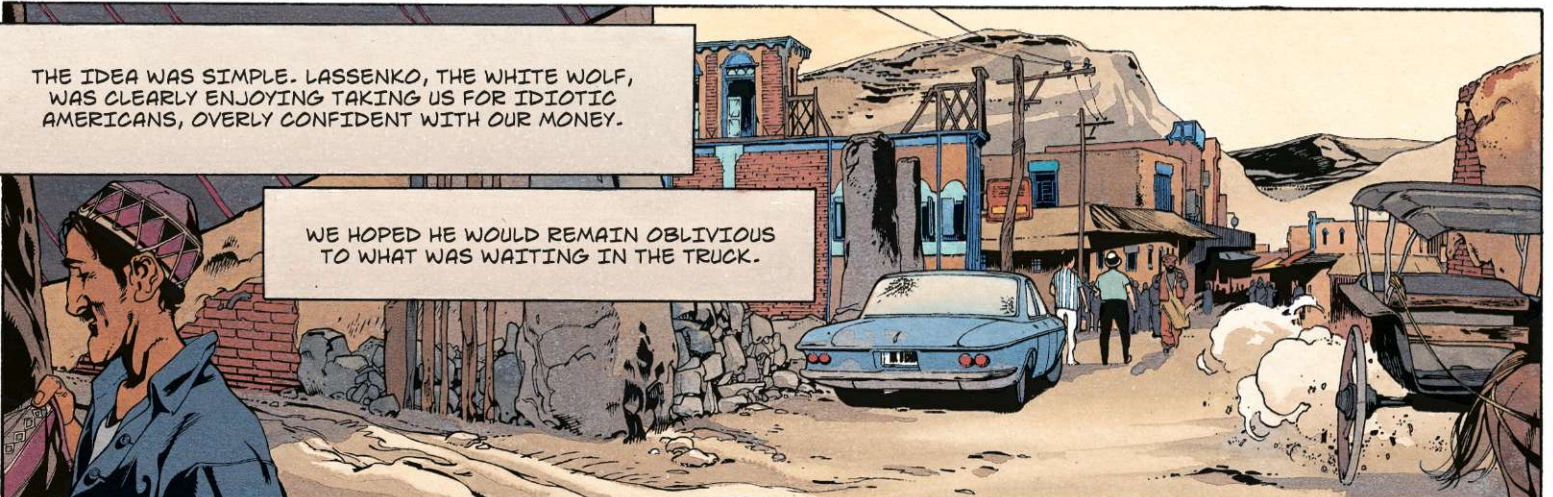
RAY, HOW MUCH CASH DO WE HAVE?
GIVE ME EVERYTHING THAT'S LEFT
FROM OUR MISSION ALLOWANCE.

WHAT?



YOU'RE NOT THINKING STRAIGHT.
THE DIRECTORATE OF OPERATIONS
IS VERY STRICT. AT THE SLIGHTEST
UNPLANNED EXPENSE... THEY--

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A MATTER
OF LIFE OR DEATH, RAY!



THE IDEA WAS SIMPLE. LASSENKO, THE WHITE WOLF,
WAS CLEARLY ENJOYING TAKING US FOR IDIOTIC
AMERICANS, OVERLY CONFIDENT WITH OUR MONEY.

WE HOPED HE WOULD REMAIN OBLIVIOUS
TO WHAT WAS WAITING IN THE TRUCK.



WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU, FLOYD?! YOU'RE CRAZY. WE'RE NEVER GOING TO FIND ARMS DEALERS BY INTERROGATING SHOPKEEPERS!



I NEED TO FIND THE MOST CORRUPT ONE. UNFORTUNATELY THERE'S A LOT OF COMPETITION IN THIS TOWN!



I EVENTUALLY FOUND A STOCK OF OLD AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, DECOMMISSIONED FROM THE RED ARMY'S ARSENAL.



GOOD GOD, FLOYD! THESE LOUSY GUNS WILL BE A LOT MORE DANGEROUS TO THE FOOL TRYING TO USE THEM THAN TO ANY ENEMY OUT THERE.



EXCELLENT. I ASSUME THEY'RE ALL IN WORKING ORDER?

UNFORTUNATELY, I ONLY HAVE U.S. DOLLARS. DO YOU THINK THERE'S SOMEWHERE I CAN EXCHANGE THEM?



MAYBE. A SMALL COMMISSION FOR ME...

...AND I ACCEPT DOLLARS. IN EXCEPTIONAL CASES.



HOLY SHIT, FLOYD! YOU DO REALIZE THAT THE MONEY YOU'RE PLAYING WITH COMES FROM AMERICAN TAXPAYERS, RIGHT?!



YOU'RE A GOOD BUSINESSMAN. SO, WHAT SHALL WE SAY? 5,000 DOLLARS AND IT'S A DEAL?



FOR GOOD CLIENT LIKE YOU, I EVEN OFFER DELIVERY FOR FREE!

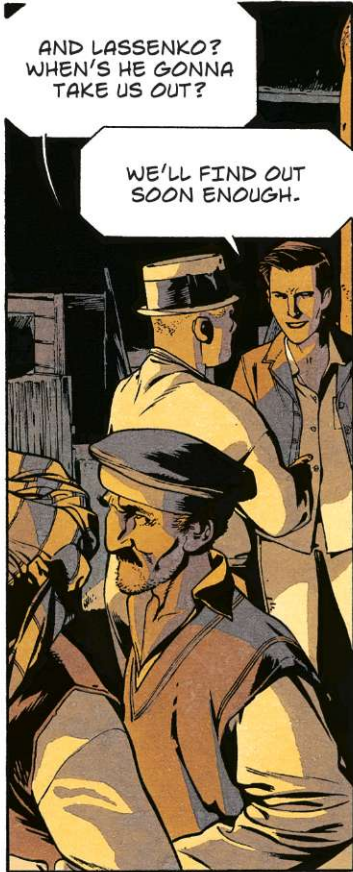


BY THE TIME NEWS OF OUR STUPIDITY HAD SPREAD AROUND TOWN, WE WERE READY TO TAKE DELIVERY OF THE SHITTY WEAPONS.





THE ONLY THING LEFT TO DO WAS LOAD THE GUNS, THE RADAR PERFECTLY HIDDEN INSIDE THE TRUCK.

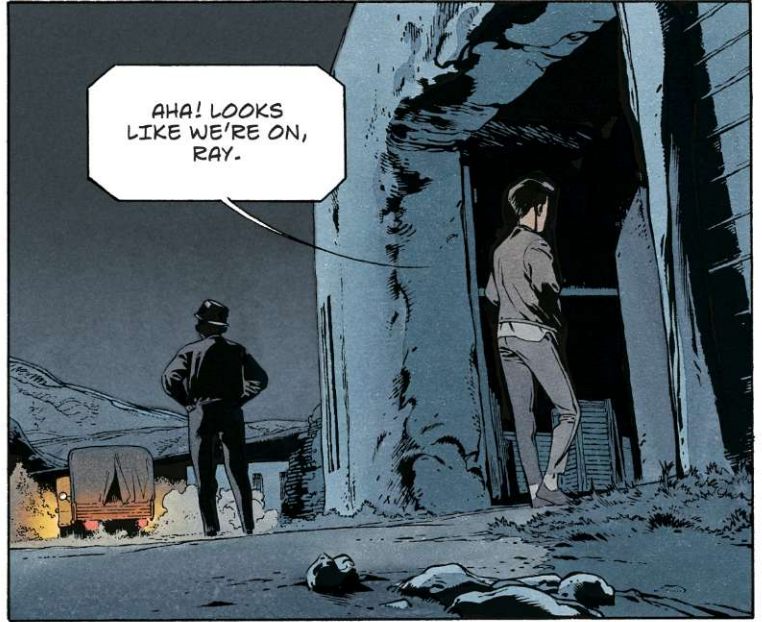


AND LASSENKO? WHEN'S HE GONNA TAKE US OUT?

WE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.



BOSS?



AHA! LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ON, RAY.



AMERICAN IMBECILES! I WOULD LOVE TO SEE THE EXPRESSION ON OUR TAJIK FRIENDS' FACES WHEN THEY SEE THE QUALITY OF GUNS THE CIA HAS GIVEN THEM!



WANNA MAKE A BET? SUB-MACHINE GUN FIRE OR A FEW ROUNDS OF ROCKETS?



LET THEM GO.



ON THE ONE HAND,
I'M OVERJOYED
THEY DIDN'T SHOOT
AT US. ON THE
OTHER...



...IT WOULD APPEAR
THAT WE TRULY LOOK LIKE
A SORRY BAND OF IDIOTS!



PFFT! GIVEN THE
CIRCUMSTANCES...

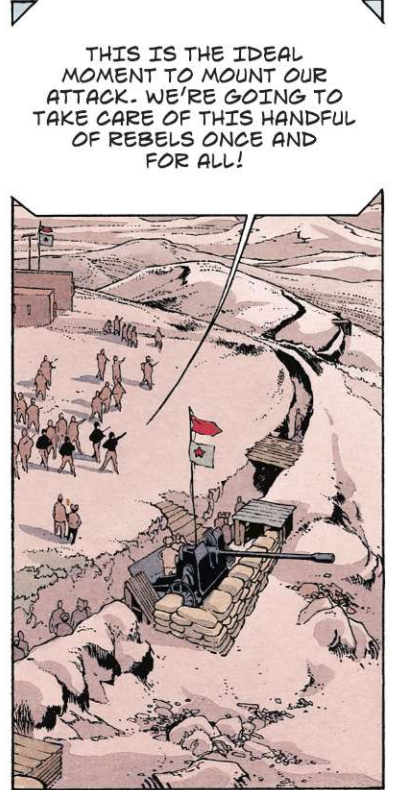
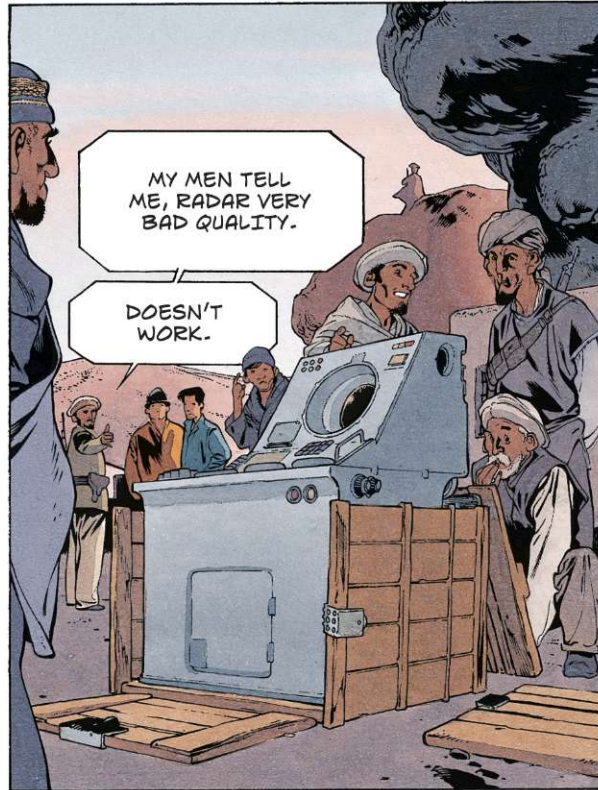
...I ASSURE YOU,
THAT'S JUST
FINE BY ME!



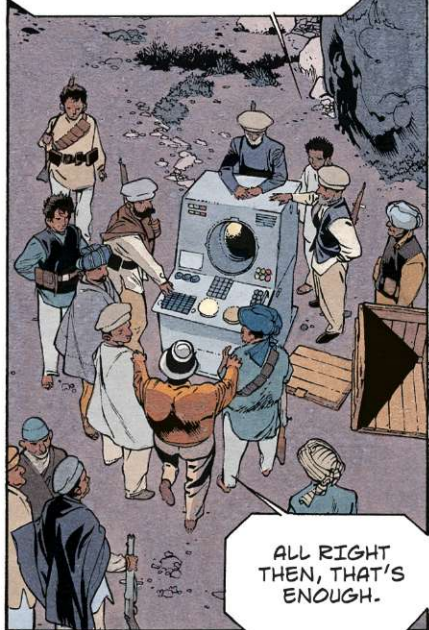
AFTER THAT, THE ROAD
WAS WIDE OPEN
AHEAD OF US...

...MORE OR LESS CLEAR UNTIL
THE FIRST TAJIK RESISTANTS'
OUTPOST.





MAYBE IT COULD BE GOOD DISHWASHER FOR AMERICAN WIFE, BUT CIA UNDERSTAND NOTHING ABOUT TRUE MAN'S WAR!



ALL RIGHT THEN, THAT'S ENOUGH.

ALL THIS WAS DESIGNED IN MINNEAPOLIS, ASSEMBLED IN BALTIMORE. IT WAS TESTED BY STUDYING THE MIGRATION OF CARIBOU IN ALASKA.



YOU JUST HAVE TO PUSH HERE... AND THEN THIS BUTTON, AND THIS ONE. WHEN IT'S USED WITH A MINIMUM OF INTELLIGENCE... THIS RADAR CAN BE USED TO DETECT...



...HANG ON...

...HERE WE ARE... TO DETECT SOVIET RATS. THREE GROUPS OF A DOZEN MEN, SPREAD OUT IN A SEMICIRCLE... THE FIRST ONE IS 1,600 METERS AWAY...



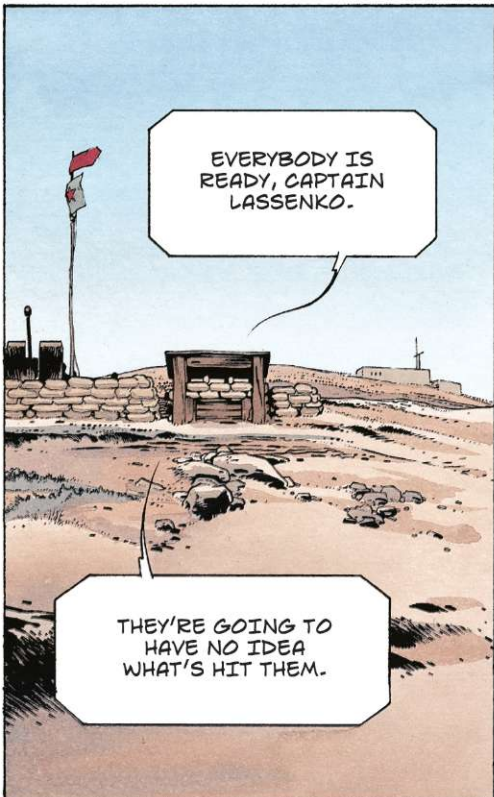
...33° NORTH-NORTHEAST...

...THE SECOND IS 1,800 METERS AWAY, HALFWAY UP THAT ROCKY BLUFF...



TO YOUR FIRING POSITIONS!

EVERYBODY IS READY, CAPTAIN LASSENKO.

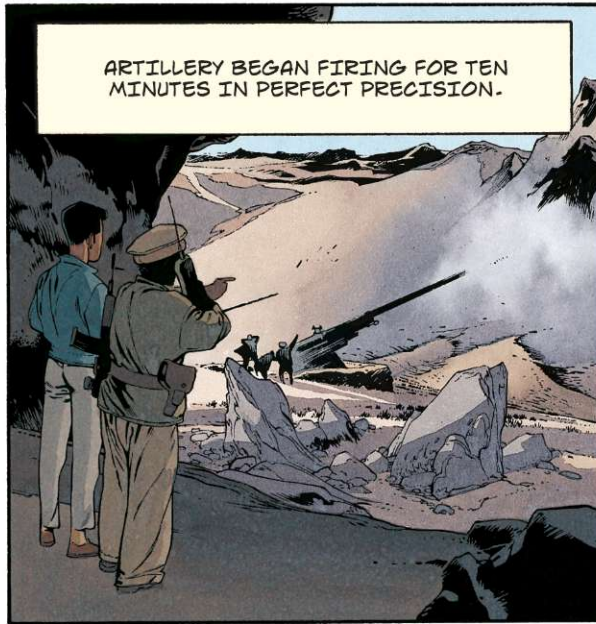


THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S HIT THEM.





A FOURTH GROUP... ON TOP OF THE CLIFF, DUE NORTH... 2,350 METERS...



ARTILLERY BEGAN FIRING FOR TEN MINUTES IN PERFECT PRECISION.



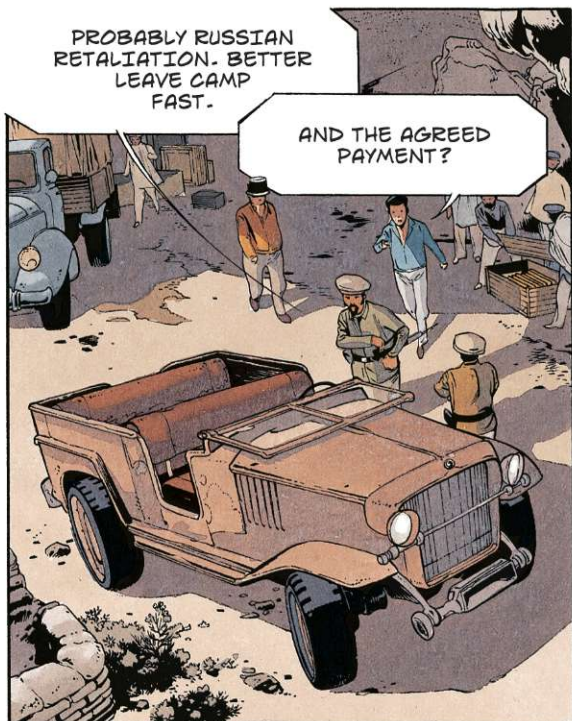
ACCORDING TO MY CRAPPY U.S. RADAR, THE SOVIET POSITIONS SHOULD ALL BE MORE OR LESS BLOWN TO BITS.



I... I'M GONNA GET THOSE TWO AMERICAN AGENTS... NOW, IT'S PERSONAL!



EXCELLENT! CIA AND US, FRIENDS FOR FOREVER! COME, NO STAY HERE!



PROBABLY RUSSIAN RETALIATION. BETTER LEAVE CAMP FAST.

AND THE AGREED PAYMENT?



ONE MILLION DOLLARS, COMMANDER BABIYAR.

NOW.



YES, YES. OF COURSE. I NO HAVE DOLLARS.

BUT I PAY WITH HEROIN.



OUR VERY BEST QUALITY. YOU'LL FIND VERY GOOD PRICE FAST.

ALPAY... GET THEIR TRUCK LOADED!



COMMANDER BABIYAR, THIS WAS NEVER PART OF THE DEAL.

WHERE DO YOU EXPECT US TO GO AND SELL ALL THIS SHIT? WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THE MARKET PRICE IS!



WE'VE ALREADY TAKEN UNEXPECTED RISKS WITH OUR MISSION ALLOWANCE. I'M NOT ASKING FOR OUR MILLION DOLLARS, I'M DEMANDING IT.

LISTEN, WE ARE FRIENDS. I WANT EVERYBODY HAPPY. I GIVE TWO PACKETS EXTRA. THAT WAY EVERYONE OKAY!



ALPAY WILL DRIVE YOU UNTIL THE TURKISH BORDER, BY SAFEST ROAD.

THANKS, CIA!



ISTANBUL.

ISTANBUL, BEST PLACE IN THE REGION FOR MAKE GOOD HEROIN DEAL.



WHAT A TERRIBLE MASSACRE! A RAID BY THE SOVIET ARMY?

NO.



IT WAS COMMANDER BABIYAR.

VILLAGERS SOMETIMES FRIENDS, BUT SOMETIMES NOT. NOW WITH CIA RADAR, WE DO MUCH BETTER JOB.



HERE'S TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR MY COUSIN OKAN, IN ISTANBUL.

HE KNOWS LOTS, MANY DEALERS. SAFE TRAVELS!

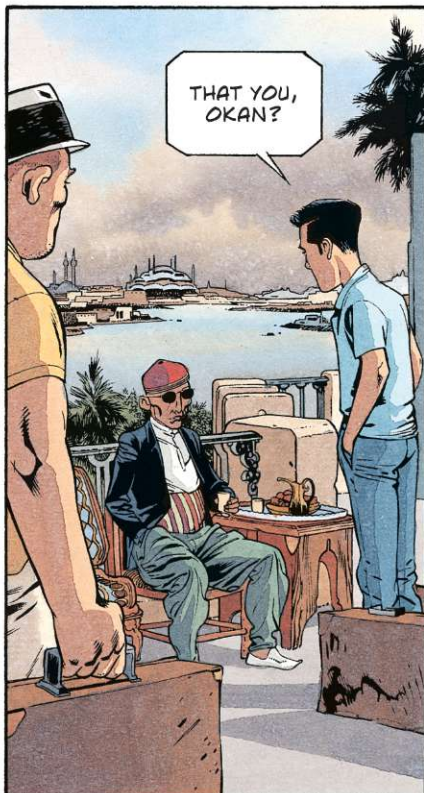


WE WEREN'T VERY REASSURED BY THE IDEA OF CROSSING TURKEY WITH PACKETS OF HEROIN WRAPPED UP LIKE SOUVENIRS.



IF THE IRS OR, GOD FORBID, A SENATE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE WERE TO LEARN WHAT WE'RE ABOUT TO DO WITH TAXPAYERS' MONEY...

AND THE HARDEST PART WAS YET TO COME IN ISTANBUL. AS AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN WITH GOODS TO SELL, THE WORLD SEEMED UPSIDE DOWN.



THAT YOU, OKAN?



I HAVE INTERESTED BUYERS ALREADY.





IF WE DON'T COME BACK WITH THE MILLION DOLLARS, I SWEAR WE'RE GOING TO BE WORKING OVERTIME FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS!



PURE. REMARKABLE.



I OFFER YOU TWO MILLION DOLLARS.



THIS MERCHANDISE IS WORTH FOUR MILLION AT LEAST.



NECHKOV!

FOUR MILLION!? ABSOLUTELY NOT!

I CAN GO AS HIGH AS TWO AND A HALF!



THREE AND A HALF. PLUS EXPENSES.

A HUNDRED THOUSAND FOR THE EXPENSES!

THIS IS MY FINAL OFFER: I'LL GO AS HIGH AS THREE MILLION, BUT PAYABLE IN FIRST-GRADE DIAMONDS. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO EXCHANGE THEM IN ANY LEBANESE SHOP.

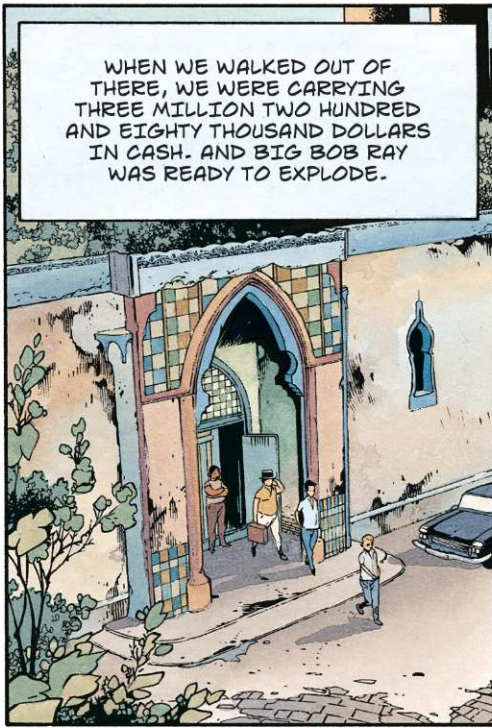


HA! NO THANK YOU! I'VE HAD IT WITH BARTERING.



I WANT DOLLARS, GOOD OL' DOLLARS. AND NOTHING BUT DOLLARS!

WHEN WE WALKED OUT OF THERE, WE WERE CARRYING THREE MILLION TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IN CASH. AND BIG BOB RAY WAS READY TO EXPLODE.



SON OF A---! FLOYD, GOD KNOWS I'M NOT AGAINST A LITTLE CON FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT COME ON!



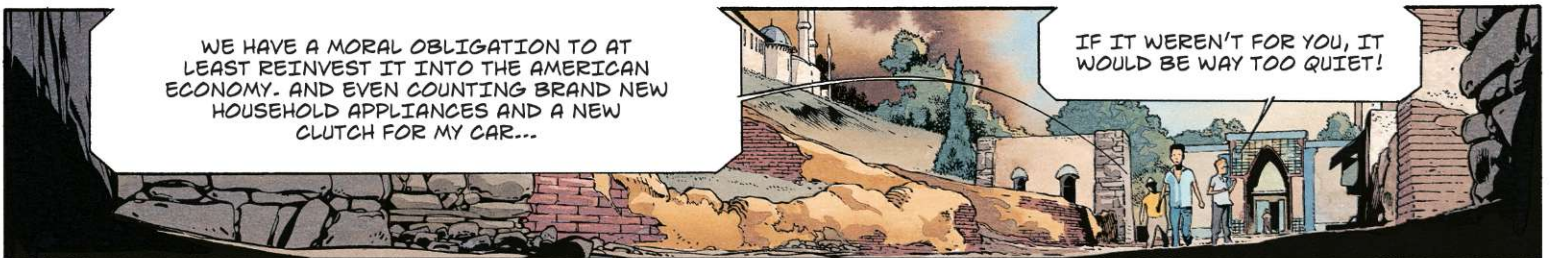
THEY TELL US TO BRING BACK ONE MILLION DOLLARS. SO OKAY, WE MAKE A LITTLE MONEY ON THE SIDE. FINE. BUT THEN YOU GO AND RISK OUR LIVES FOR THREE TIMES AS MUCH!



YOU GONNA TELL ME WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO WITH ALL THAT MONEY?

WE HAVE A MORAL OBLIGATION TO AT LEAST REINVEST IT INTO THE AMERICAN ECONOMY. AND EVEN COUNTING BRAND NEW HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES AND A NEW CLUTCH FOR MY CAR...

IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU, IT WOULD BE WAY TOO QUIET!



HEY, SOVIET, NOBODY ASKED FOR YOUR OPINION. IF I FEEL LIKE YELLING---



THIS TIME, GENTLEMEN...

...I'M AFRAID YOU'VE REACHED THE END OF THE ROAD!





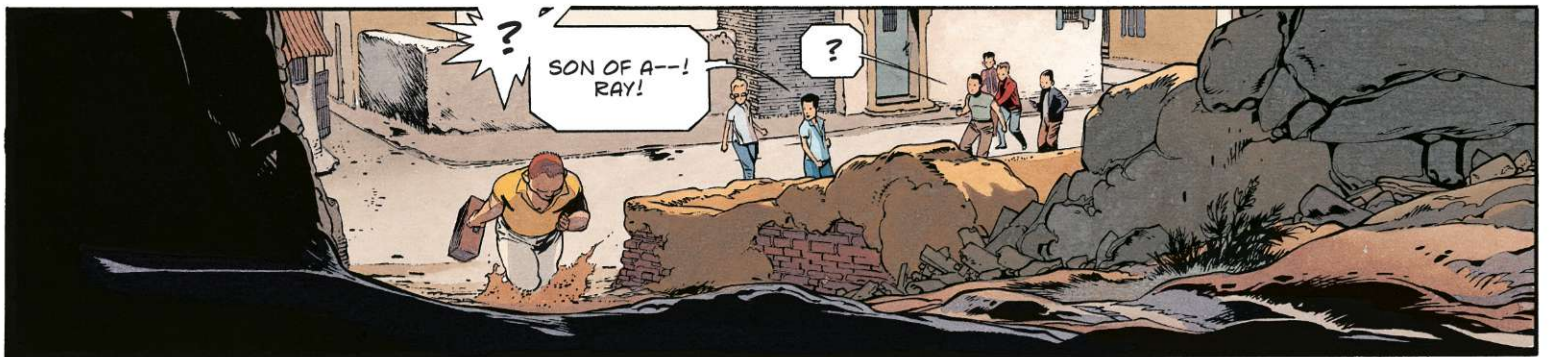
DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT YOU CAN TEMPT ME WITH YOUR DIRTY CAPITALIST TRICKS?

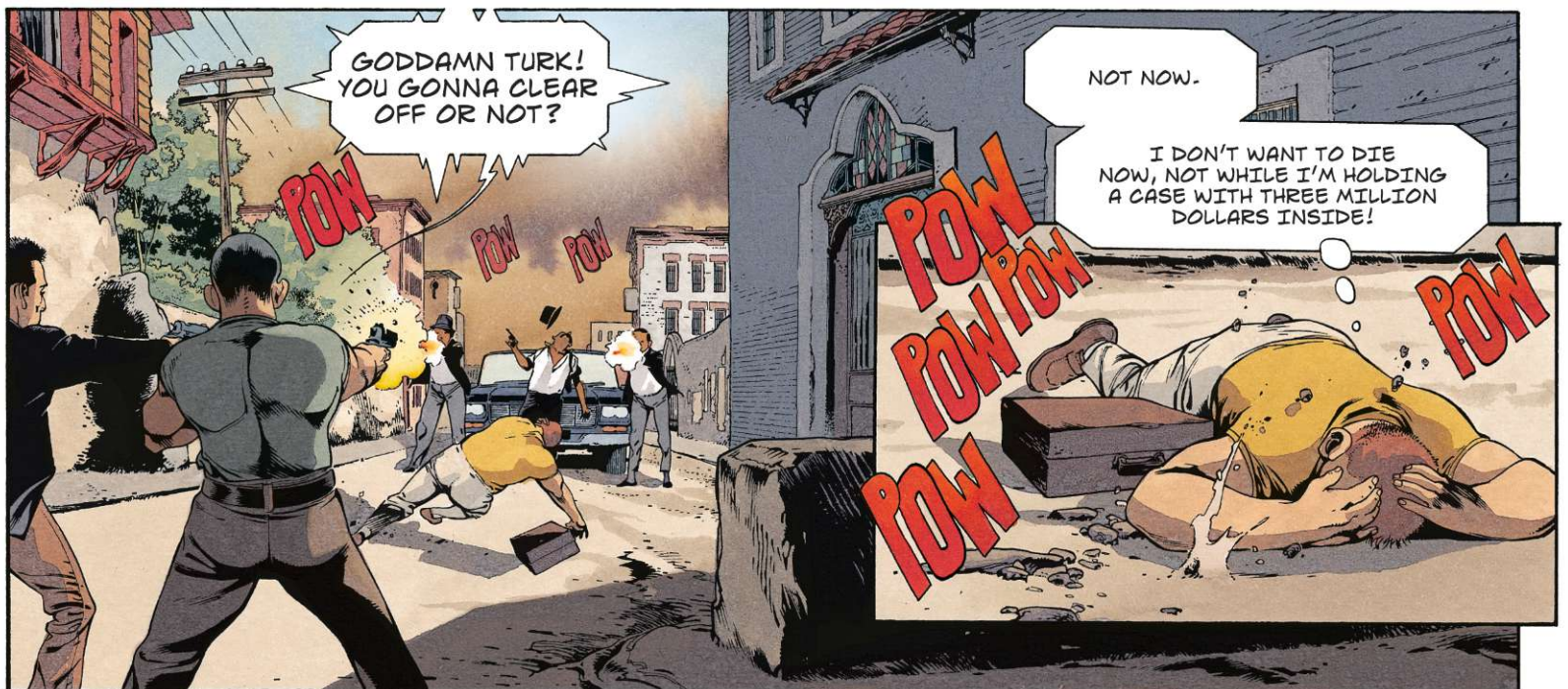
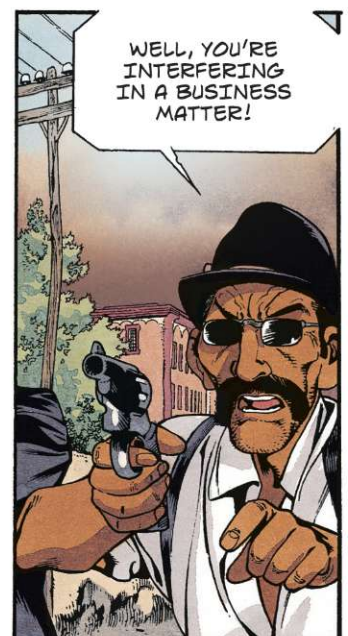
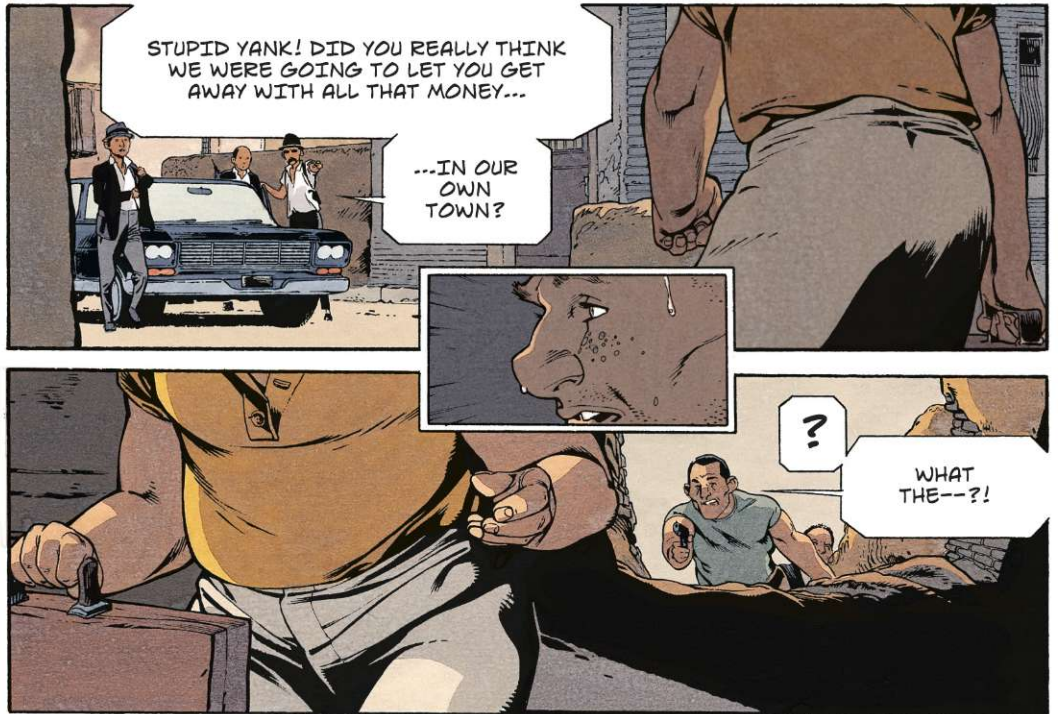
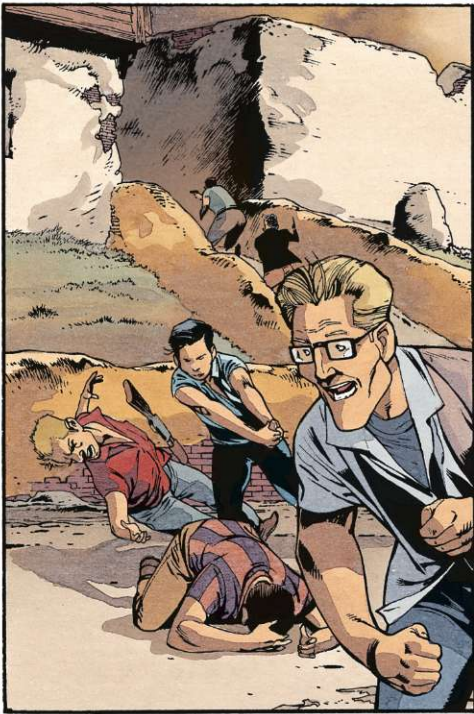


AT NEARLY THREE MILLION DOLLARS, CAPITALISM BECOMES A FORM OF INTELLIGENCE.



YOU'VE FOOLED ME ONCE, YANKEE. IF THERE REALLY IS THAT MUCH MONEY IN THE CASE, SHOW ME.





STUPID YANK! DID YOU REALLY THINK WE WERE GOING TO LET YOU GET AWAY WITH ALL THAT MONEY...

...IN OUR OWN TOWN?

?

WHAT THE--?!

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WE COULD ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION. THIS IS OUR TURF.

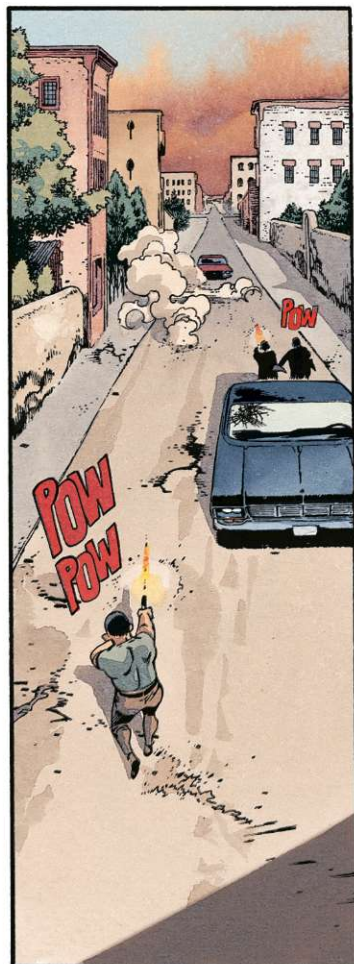
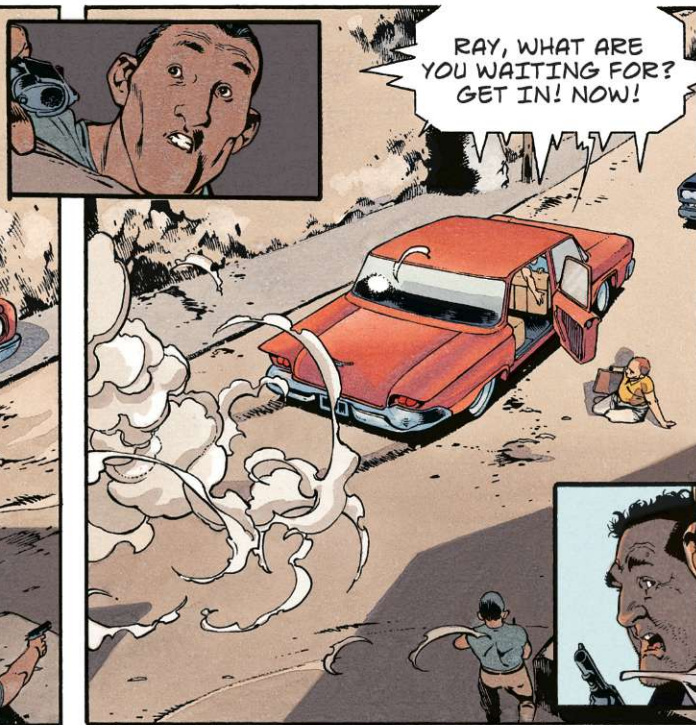
I SUGGEST YOU BACK DOWN. YOU'RE INTERFERING IN A STATE MATTER.

WELL, YOU'RE INTERFERING IN A BUSINESS MATTER!

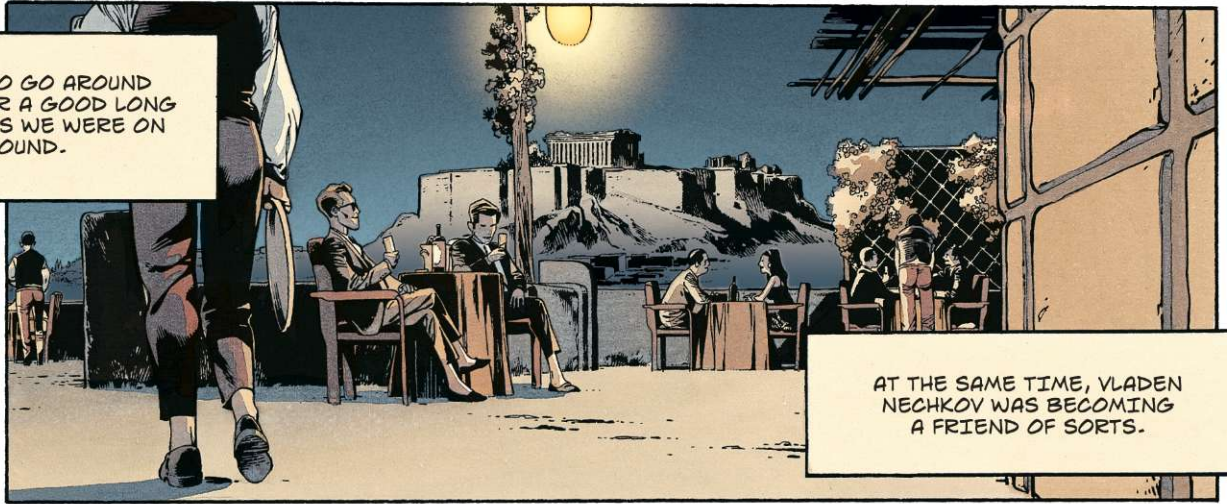
GODDAMN TURK! YOU GONNA CLEAR OFF OR NOT?

NOT NOW.

I DON'T WANT TO DIE NOW, NOT WHILE I'M HOLDING A CASE WITH THREE MILLION DOLLARS INSIDE!



ENOUGH MONEY TO GO AROUND AND CELEBRATE FOR A GOOD LONG WHILE, AS SOON AS WE WERE ON SAFER GROUND.



AT THE SAME TIME, VLADEN NECHKOV WAS BECOMING A FRIEND OF SORTS.

SO RAY REALLY DIDN'T FEEL LIKE JOINING US?

HARD TO BELIEVE WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE SET ASIDE, BUT RAY IS A STICKLER WHEN IT COMES TO MISSION EXPENSES.



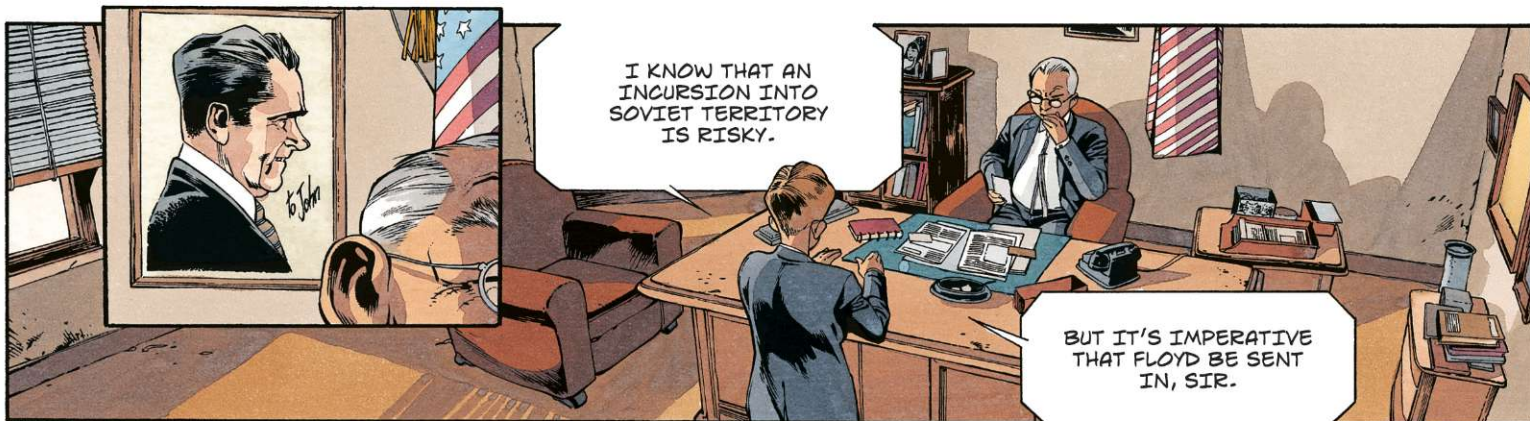
WILL YOU TRUST ME FROM HERE ON OUT?

THE PEOPLE I WORK FOR ARE VERY SATISFIED. THEY ASKED ME TO DELIVER AN INVITATION TO YOU.

IN ONE MONTH. IN ODESSA, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BLACK SEA. SOVIET TERRITORY.



THE MOMENT OF TRUTH HAD ARRIVED. WE WOULD FINALLY KNOW WHO NECHKOV WAS WORKING FOR.

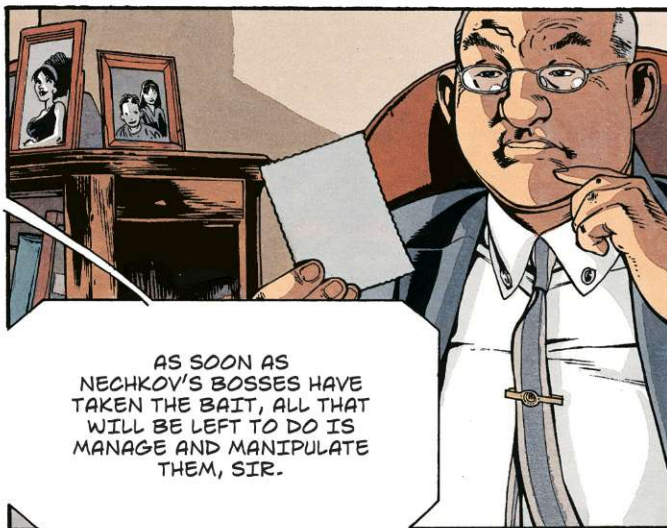


I KNOW THAT AN INCURSION INTO SOVIET TERRITORY IS RISKY.

BUT IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT FLOYD BE SENT IN, SIR.



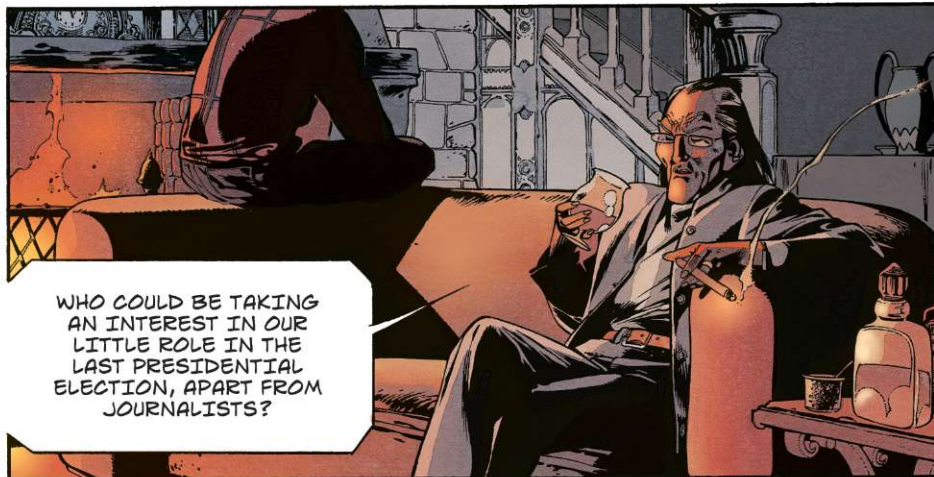
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT VLADEN NECHKOV WORKS FOR THE RUSSIAN MAFIA. IF WE CAN JUST GET TO THEM, WE WOULD BE RIGHT AT THE HEART OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE.



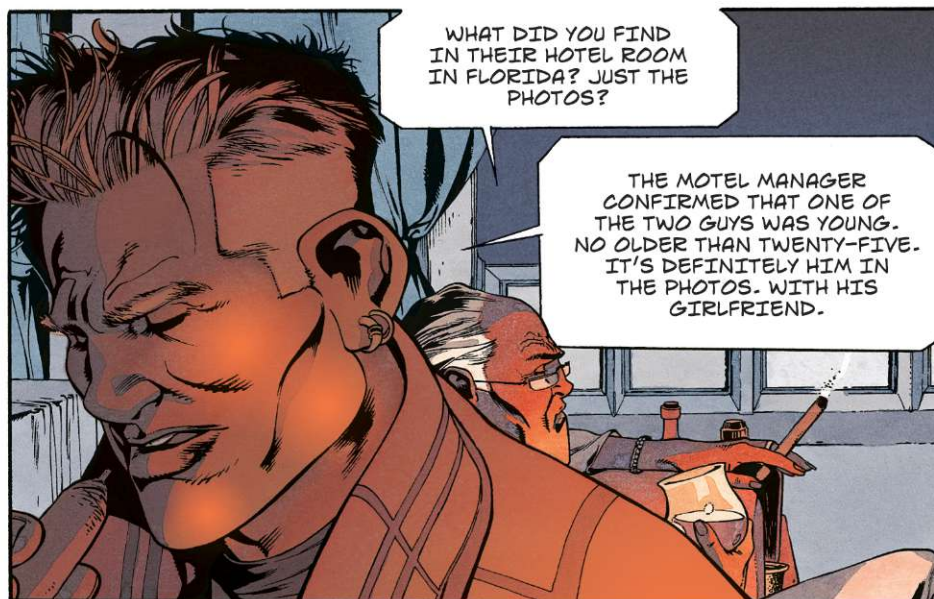
AS SOON AS NECHKOV'S BOSSES HAVE TAKEN THE BAIT, ALL THAT WILL BE LEFT TO DO IS MANAGE AND MANIPULATE THEM, SIR.



TODAY, THE RUSSIAN MAFIA REPRESENTS THE LARGEST ACTIVE CRIMINAL GROUP ON AMERICAN SOIL.



WHO COULD BE TAKING AN INTEREST IN OUR LITTLE ROLE IN THE LAST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, APART FROM JOURNALISTS?



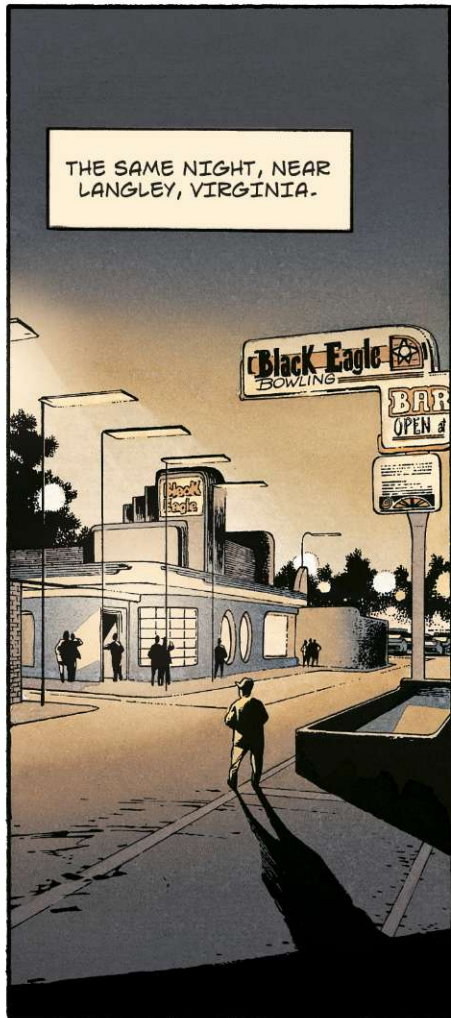
WHAT DID YOU FIND IN THEIR HOTEL ROOM IN FLORIDA? JUST THE PHOTOS?

THE MOTEL MANAGER CONFIRMED THAT ONE OF THE TWO GUYS WAS YOUNG. NO OLDER THAN TWENTY-FIVE. IT'S DEFINITELY HIM IN THE PHOTOS. WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND.



THEY WERE TAKEN ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS. OUR EXPERTS ARE LEANING TOWARDS CAMBRIDGE, LAST SPRING.

IF THE GIRL IS STILL THERE, MORDASOV WILL FIND HER.



THE SAME NIGHT, NEAR LANGLEY, VIRGINIA.

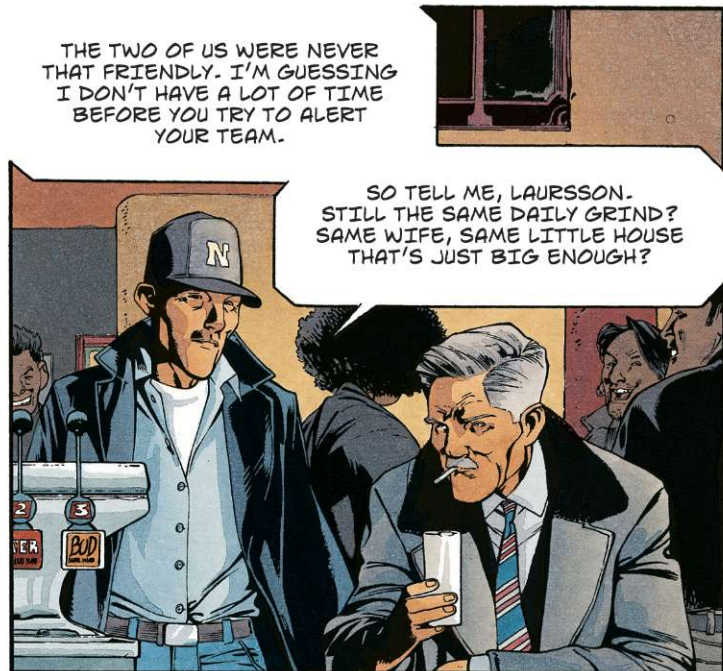


HI LAURSSON. STILL A CREATURE OF HABIT, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS?



FLOYD WHITMAN!!

YOU'VE REALLY OUTDONE YOURSELF. THE CIA JUST FIGURED OUT THAT YOU'RE ACTUALLY NOT DEAD, AND HERE YOU ARE JUST A FEW MILES AWAY FROM THE AGENCY!



THE TWO OF US WERE NEVER THAT FRIENDLY. I'M GUESSING I DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME BEFORE YOU TRY TO ALERT YOUR TEAM.

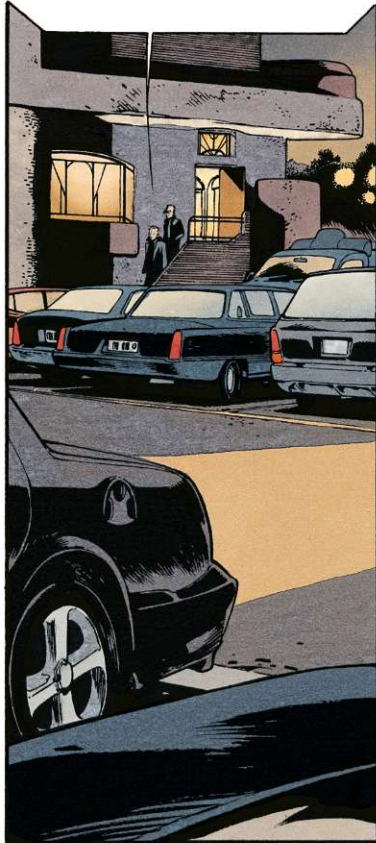
SO TELL ME, LAURSSON. STILL THE SAME DAILY GRIND? SAME WIFE, SAME LITTLE HOUSE THAT'S JUST BIG ENOUGH?



I KEPT CLIMBING THE LADDER, PROMOTED EVERY FIVE YEARS. WHAT WERE YOU EXPECTING, FLOYD? THINK I'D RATHER HAVE YOUR GODFORSAKEN LIFE?

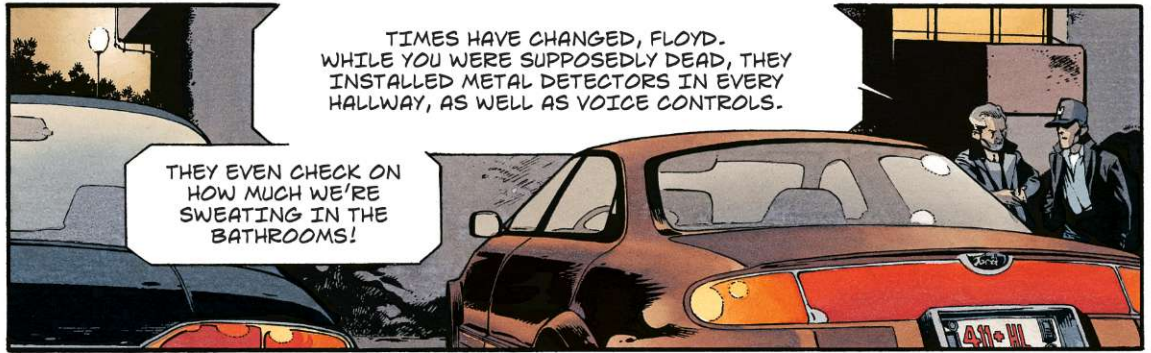
NO, WHAT YOU'D RATHER DO IS QUIETLY FOLLOW ME. PAST THE BATHROOM. THE DOOR TO THE PARKING LOT.

LET ME GUESS. YOU'RE GOING TO POINT A GUN AT ME AND ASK ME VERY SERIOUSLY TO GET YOU INTO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CIA?



TIMES HAVE CHANGED, FLOYD. WHILE YOU WERE SUPPOSEDLY DEAD, THEY INSTALLED METAL DETECTORS IN EVERY HALLWAY, AS WELL AS VOICE CONTROLS.

THEY EVEN CHECK ON HOW MUCH WE'RE SWEATING IN THE BATHROOMS!



THESE MACHINES ARE ALL INFALLIBLE, FLOYD! YOU--



HERE. HIS CAR KEYS.

THE ACCESS CODES FOR THE COMPUTERS CHANGE EVERY NIGHT. LAURSSON JOTS DOWN A REMINDER AND SLIPS IT UNDER THE SUN VISOR. THIS TOO IS THE WORLD OF INTELLIGENCE.

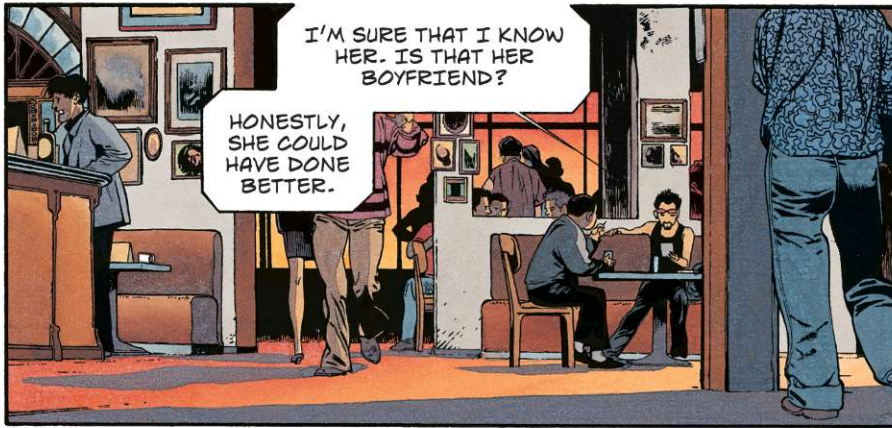


I'VE BEEN DOING THIS FOR QUITE A WHILE. THE MATERIALS ALWAYS EVOLVE; PEOPLE, LESS SO.



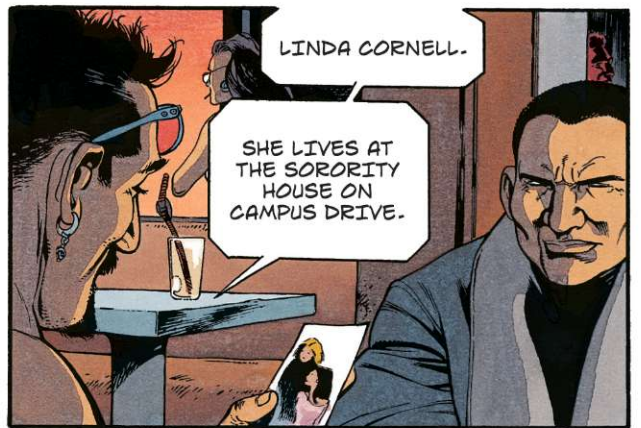
AND TO PENETRATE THE CIA, YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH A PERSON.





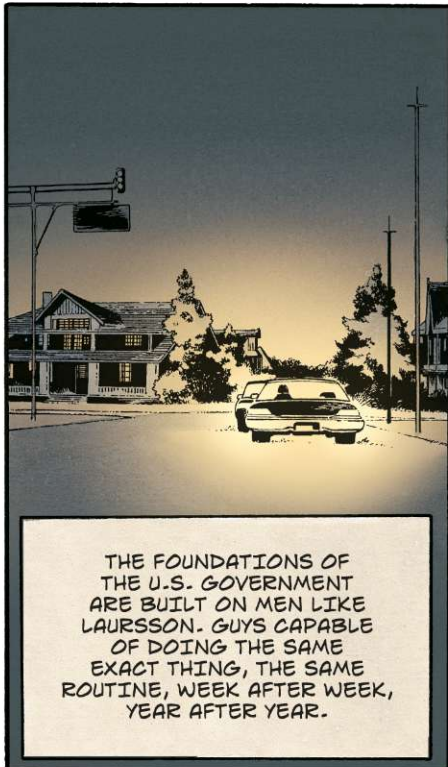
I'M SURE THAT I KNOW HER. IS THAT HER BOYFRIEND?

HONESTLY, SHE COULD HAVE DONE BETTER.



LINDA CORNELL.

SHE LIVES AT THE SORORITY HOUSE ON CAMPUS DRIVE.



THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ARE BUILT ON MEN LIKE LAURSSON. GUYS CAPABLE OF DOING THE SAME EXACT THING, THE SAME ROUTINE, WEEK AFTER WEEK, YEAR AFTER YEAR.



MUST BE THE SECOND TO LAST HOUSE.



STAY IN THE CAR, WAITS.

BE READY TO TAKE OFF AS SOON AS I COME OUT.





GIA CODES ARE AS CONVOLUTED AS EVER. WITHOUT LAURSSON'S ACCESS AND SEVERAL YEARS EXPERIENCE, I WOULDN'T HAVE STOOD A CHANCE...



ALMOST THERE, LAURSSON.

IS THE ANSWER TO MY QUESTION SOMEWHERE HERE?



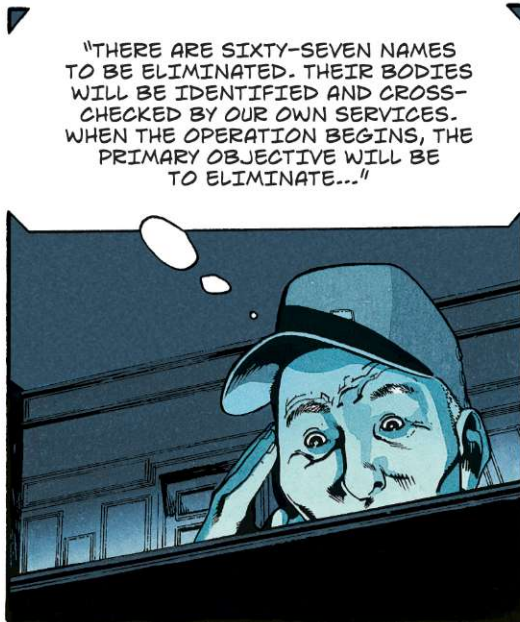
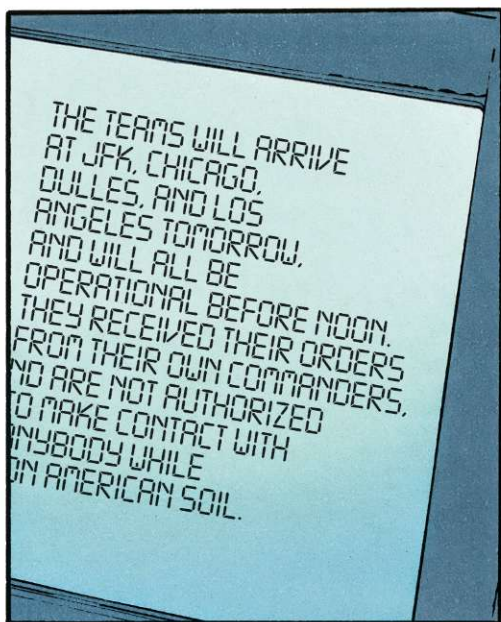
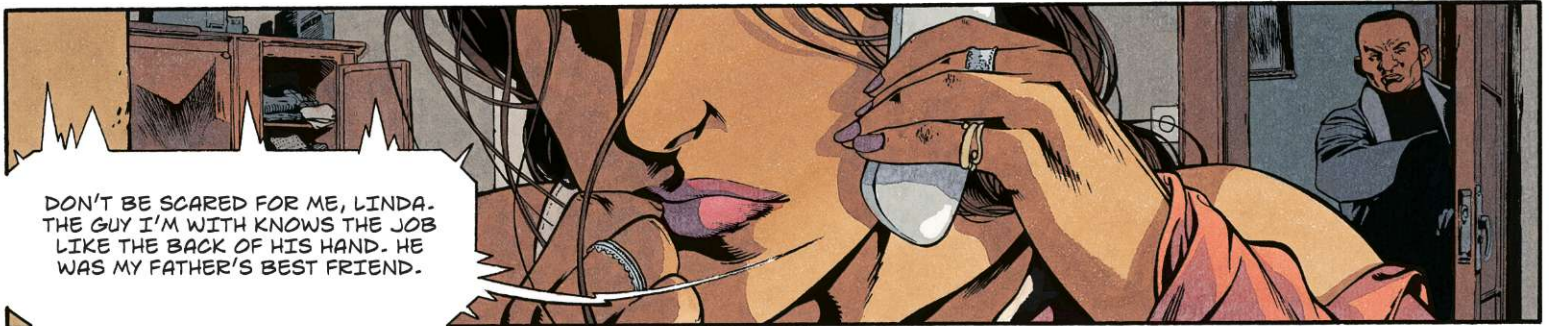
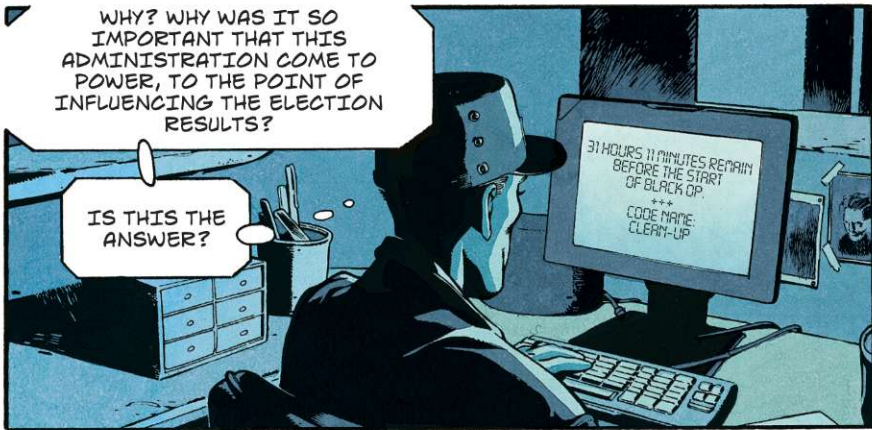
I MISS YOU A LOT TOO, BABY.

BUT YOU KNOW THAT THIS IS SOMETHING THAT I HAVE TO DO.



I OWE IT TO MY DAD. TO HIS MEMORY. WHEN IT'S OVER, I PROMISE YOU, IT WILL BE JUST YOU AND ME.





VASSILY
AFFANASIEV
HEAD
OF FRAUD
FOR THE
EAST COAST

NALBA
SITHA
HEAD
OF NARCOTICS
AND EXTERNAL
LIAISONS

DIMITRI
BLOCKHOV
HEAD
OF
MUNITIONS
AND SECURITY

LOVNA
SEANA
RECRUITMENT
AND LOGISTICS

LOVNA SEANA
RECRUITMENT AND LOGISTICS

LOVNA...



I GOT SOMETHING,
BOSS. THE GIRL'S
BOYFRIEND IS CALLED
WAITS.

WE FOUND
A COUPLE OF
LETTERS...

...WHERE HE
MENTIONS A
JOB HE HAS TO
DO FOR HIS
FATHER...

...A CERTAIN
BIG BOB RAY.

NECHKOV, BLOCKHOV, LOVNA.
THE MASTERS AND THE SURVIVORS.
CONDEMNED TO DEATH BY THE
NEW ADMINISTRATION.

A THANK YOU FOR THE ROLES
WE PLAYED IN THE PAST!



I HAVE TROUBLE BELIEVING WASHINGTON REALLY AUTHORIZED US TO DO THIS!



YEAH? WELL, RAY, I HAVE TROUBLE BELIEVING THAT YOU'RE STILL OPENLY SPEAKING IN ENGLISH WHEN WE'RE ABOUT TO CLANDESTINELY ENTER SOVIET UNION TERRITORY!



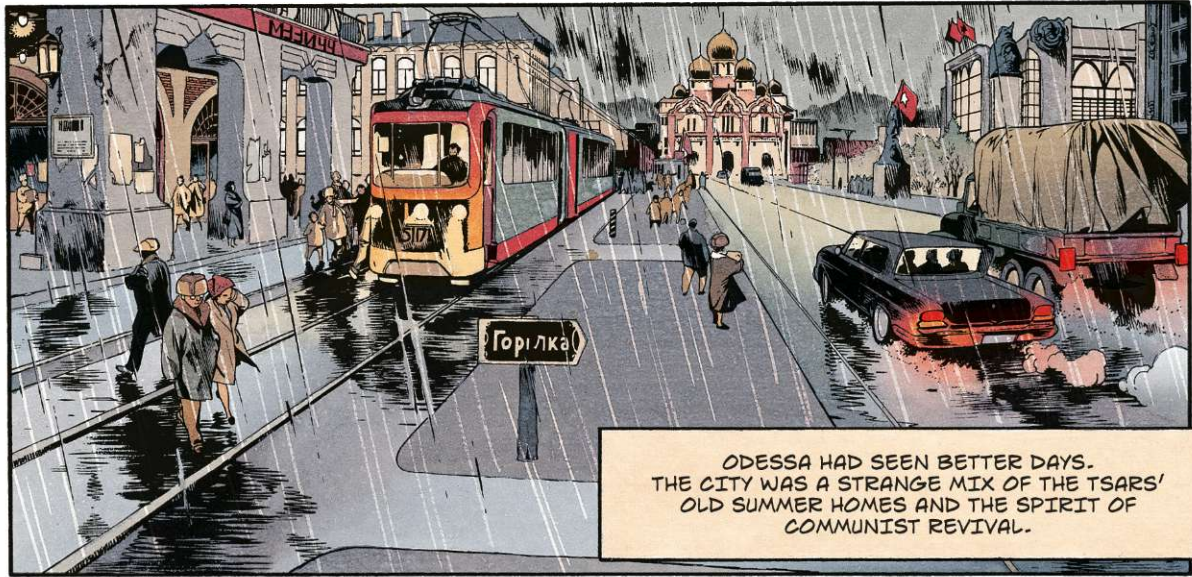
THIS IS WHEN WE'LL FIND OUT--

WHETHER VLADEN IS REALLY ON OUR SIDE. YEAH, YOU SAY THAT EVERY TIME WE'RE IN A TIGHT SPOT.





CONTINUE UNTIL THE EXIT, AND THEN TAKE THE FIRST CAR THAT STOPS FOR YOU.



ODESSA HAD SEEN BETTER DAYS. THE CITY WAS A STRANGE MIX OF THE TSARS' OLD SUMMER HOMES AND THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNIST REVIVAL.



THE PEOPLE YOU'RE GOING TO MEET ARE FOR THE MOST PART THE HISTORICAL LEADERS OF OUR ORGANIZATION.

THE OLDEST ONES SURVIVED STALIN'S RAIDS... AND DEPORTATIONS TO THE SIBERIAN GULAGS.



I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT THEY WEREN'T ALL PLEASED THAT YOU'RE COMING.



INDEED, AN ALLIANCE WITH AMERICAN CIA AGENTS DID NOT HAVE EVERYBODY'S SUPPORT.



THE OLDEST LEADERS HATED WESTERNERS FOR REASONS THAT LARGELY WENT BEYOND THE QUESTION OF COMMUNISM.

AMERICANS!?
WHAT THE HELL GOOD ARE AMERICANS? WHEN WE REALLY NEEDED THEM, DURING THE WAR, THEY DIDN'T RESPECT ANY OF THE DEALS WE MADE!



ALL OF A SUDDEN, THEIR ARCHENEMY STALIN WAS INDISPENSABLE FOR ATTACKING HITLER FROM THE REAR, AND THEIR PLANS TO OVERTURN COMMUNISM WENT DOWN THE DRAIN!



EXACTLY LIKE US! DOWN THE DRAIN. IN THE GULAGS! DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG I STAYED THERE, PROMISING MYSELF I WOULD BE BACK!



I'M NOT HERE TO DISCUSS AMERICA OR COMMUNISM. I CAME TO TALK DOLLARS.



AND NOW YOU'RE BACK, BEGGING US TO HELP YOU TO SABOTAGE THE SOVIET UNION?





DOLLARS.
OF COURSE.

POLITICS DON'T
EXIST AFTER ALL.

IT'S JUST A WAY TO
MAKE DOLLARS, RIGHT?



ARVO TRETCHOUK.
BE CAREFUL WITH
HIM. HE'S THE MOST
FORMIDABLE OF OUR
YOUNG WOLVES.

I DIDN'T COME
HERE TO SELL YOU
AN ALLIANCE WITH
THE CIA. I SIMPLY
REPRESENT PEOPLE
WITHIN THE CIA WHO
WANT TO MAKE SOME
MONEY. LOTS OF
MONEY ACTUALLY.

FOR THE FIRST TIME,
FACE TO FACE WITH THE
DANGEROUS LEADERS
OF A RUINED AND
DISORGANIZED GANG,
I HAD A GLIMPSE OF
THE DEADLY RISK WE
WERE TAKING.

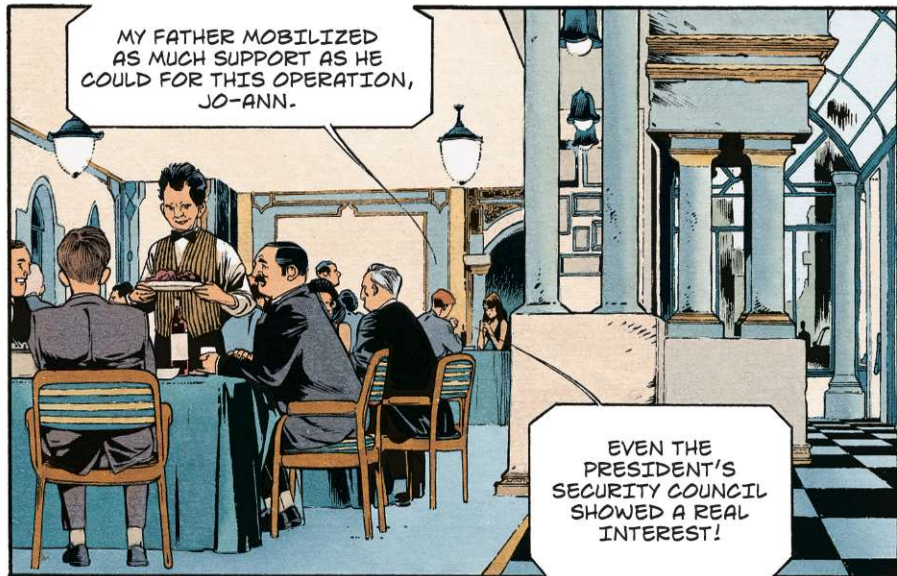


THE FUTURE DOESN'T LIE IN
POLITICS. THE ONLY IDEOLOGY THAT
WILL TRIUMPH IS MONEY. BECAUSE
I'LL NEVER HAVE ENOUGH. YOU'LL
NEVER HAVE ENOUGH.

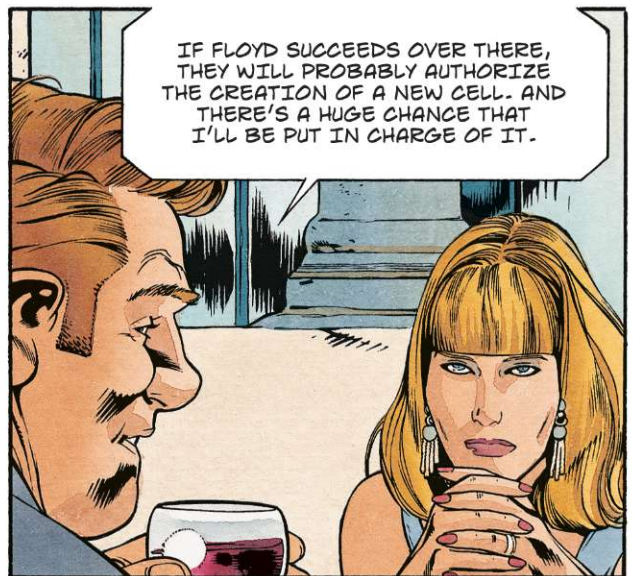
NO ONE EVER
HAS ENOUGH!

MY FATHER MOBILIZED
AS MUCH SUPPORT AS HE
COULD FOR THIS OPERATION,
JO-ANN.

EVEN THE
PRESIDENT'S
SECURITY COUNCIL
SHOWED A REAL
INTEREST!



IF FLOYD SUCCEEDS OVER THERE,
THEY WILL PROBABLY AUTHORIZE
THE CREATION OF A NEW CELL. AND
THERE'S A HUGE CHANCE THAT
I'LL BE PUT IN CHARGE OF IT.





I DON'T THINK WE CAN AFFORD TO PASS UP THIS KIND OF OPPORTUNITY. I DEMAND WE BE JUDGED ON OUR RESULTS. ON THE AMERICAN DOLLARS WE BRING IN!



THERE'LL BE MONEY FOR SURE. TO CIRCULATE DRUGS AND WEAPONS. TO CORRUPT BUREAUCRATS AND THE GOVERNMENT.



AND AS SOON AS THEY'VE NEGOTIATED A BETTER DEAL WITH THE KREMLIN, THEY'LL SELL US OUT!



WHAT GOOD ARE U.S. DOLLARS IN A GULAG, TRETCHOUK? DON'T YOU SEE THE AMERICANS' GAME?



MONEY IS NOT THE FUTURE, IT'S THE WAR OVER MONEY! AND TO THEM, THERE ARE NO ALLIES OR ENEMIES. JUST THE WEAK AND THE STRONG!



SO FLOYD IS RISKING HIS LIFE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW. IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO TELL ME?

FLOYD? OH, YOU KNOW, FLOYD'S ALWAYS BEEN THE BEST.



IT'S THE LIFE HE CHOSE, RIGHT? CAN YOU REALLY IMAGINE FLOYD IN AN OFFICE, COMING HOME ON TIME EVERY NIGHT TO HIS WIFE, TO A LITTLE HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS?



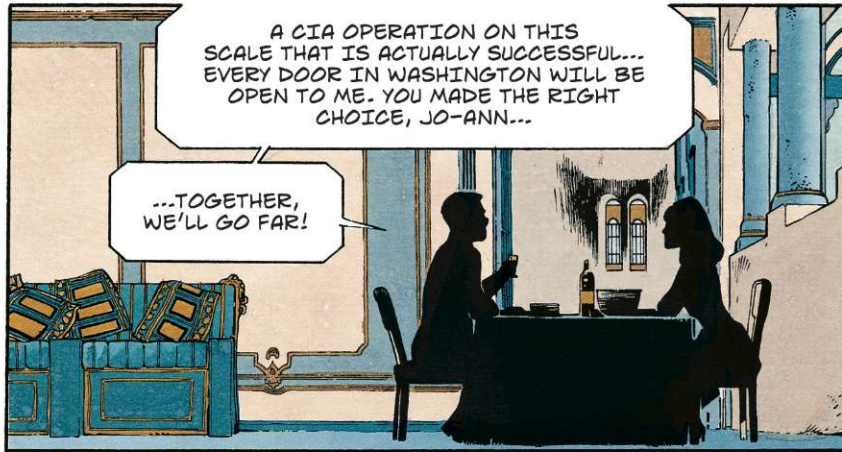
ALL I CAN DO IS REPEAT MYSELF: I CAME HERE TO MAKE SOME MONEY...

IF YOU'RE SO SMART, TRY TO SELL YOUR EVIL YANKEE SOUL TO THE DEVIL.

REBROV!

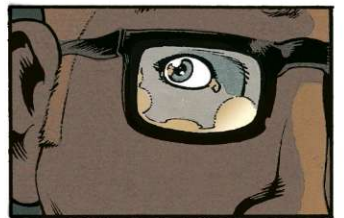


FLOYD! SON OF A...



A CIA OPERATION ON THIS SCALE THAT IS ACTUALLY SUCCESSFUL... EVERY DOOR IN WASHINGTON WILL BE OPEN TO ME. YOU MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE, JO-ANN...

...TOGETHER, WE'LL GO FAR!



L... LISTEN TO ME... I JUST THINK THAT WE SHOULD GRAB THIS OPPORTUNITY.



ALL OF US.



IT LOOKS LIKE WE REALLY ACHIEVED SOMETHING, FLOYD. THE RUSSIAN MAFIA AND THE CIA HAND IN HAND... TO A GOOD PLAN!

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED IN ODESSA.





DMITRI
BLOCKHOV.

HEAD
OF
MUNITIONS
AND SECURITY



THE OPERATION WAS SET TO BEGIN.
THROUGH TRENT, BIG BOB RAY
AND ME, THE CIA WAS GOING
TO REVIVE THE RUSSIAN MAFIA.



UNTIL IT WAS STRONG
ENOUGH TO ATTACK THE
COMMUNIST REGIME
ITSELF. AND BECOME
ITS WORST NIGHTMARE.



FIND
ANYTHING?

YOU COULD SAY THAT.
IF I STILL UNDERSTAND
THIS INTERNAL LANGUAGE,
THE WHITE HOUSE HAS JUST
ORDERED FOR ALL OF THE
RUSSIAN MAFIA'S TOP PEOPLE
IN THE U.S. TO BE ELIMINATED.

SAY
WHAT?



SIXTY-SEVEN DOSSIERS TO BE
CLOSED ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY.
THE OPERATION IS SET TO START
IN THIRTY HOURS, AS SOON AS
THE ASSASSINS ARRIVE ON U.S.
SOIL!



BY ORDER
OF...

YES. OF THE NEW
ADMINISTRATION
IN THE WHITE
HOUSE.

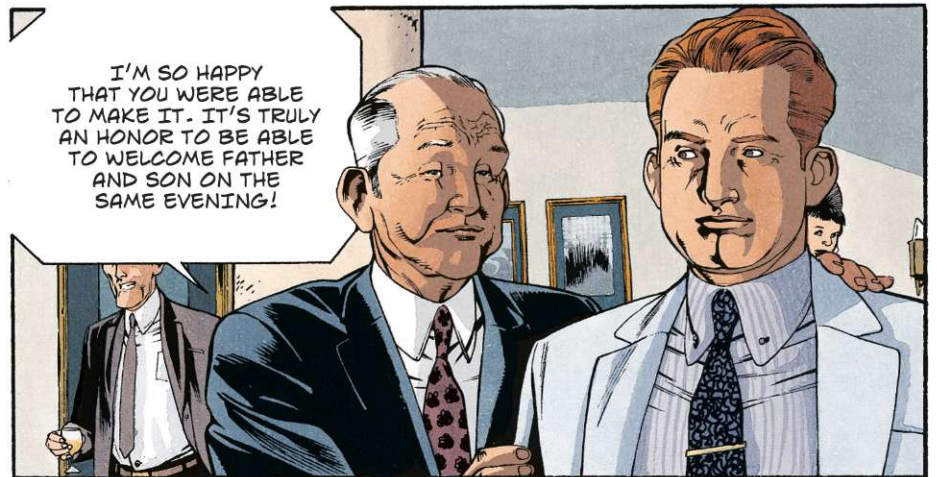
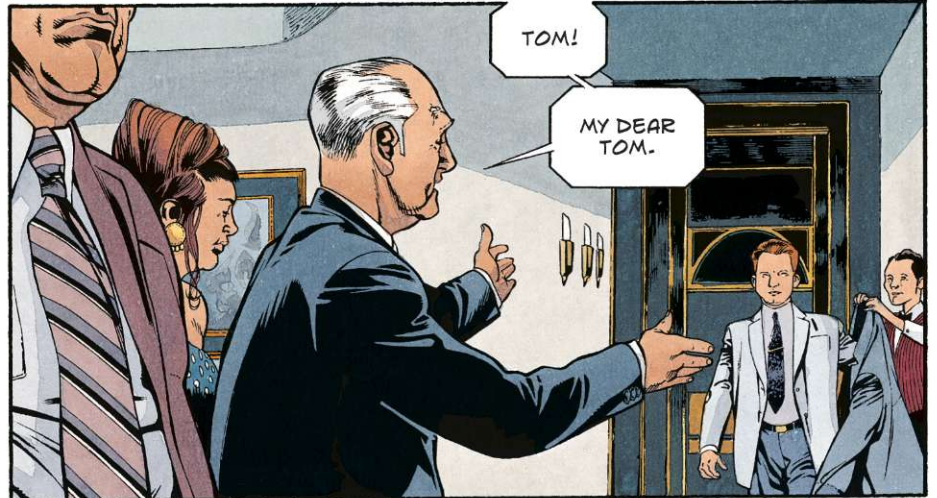


IT'S NOT GONNA TAKE
LONG TO CATCH UP TO THESE
TWO. MORDASOV FOUND A CELL
NUMBER AT THE GIRL'S PLACE.
IF WE THROW SOME MONEY
AROUND, WE'LL FIND OUT WHERE
THE PHONE AND THE BOYFRIEND
ARE HIDING SOON ENOUGH.



THAT'S WHY YOU
BROUGHT ME HERE?

THE BOY-
FRIEND'S NAME
IS WAITS CARVER.
SON OF BIG BOB
RAY CARVER.





NOW WHAT? WE KNOW WHAT THEY WANT TO DO, BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY MORE LEADS.

MAYBE WE DO.



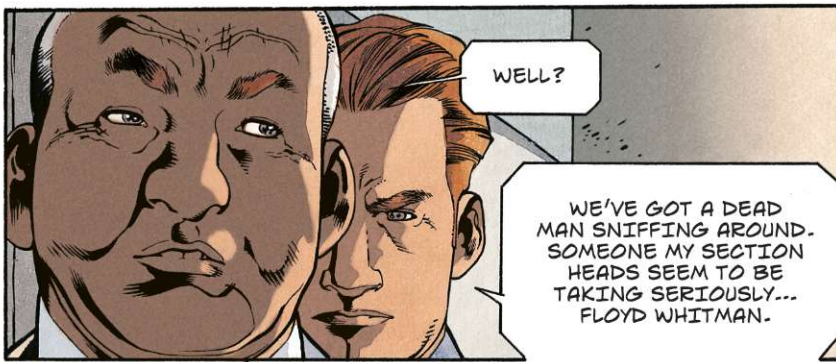
WHAT'S GOING ON? A PROBLEM WITH... OUR LITTLE PROJECT?

NO. EVERYTHING'S FINE ON THAT FRONT.



NECHKOV?

NO. HE'S OBLIVIOUS. IT'S SOMETHING ELSE.



WELL?

WE'VE GOT A DEAD MAN SNIFFING AROUND. SOMEONE MY SECTION HEADS SEEM TO BE TAKING SERIOUSLY... FLOYD WHITMAN.



YOU CAN'T IMAGINE JUST HOW OVERJOYED WE ARE TO HAVE YOU, MADAME. THE FORMER ADMINISTRATION WAS TRULY A BORE.



FLOYD.



THE ASSASSINS WILL ARRIVE AT JFK TOMORROW, BEFORE NOON.



BUT THOUSANDS OF TRAVELERS ARRIVE THERE EVERY MORNING!?



I MIGHT HAVE AN IDEA.



THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO TAKE EVEN THE SLIGHTEST RISK. FIND HIM, TOM. RIGHT AWAY. AND SHUT HIM UP... FOR GOOD!

SHOULD I PREPARE AN OFFICIAL REPORT?



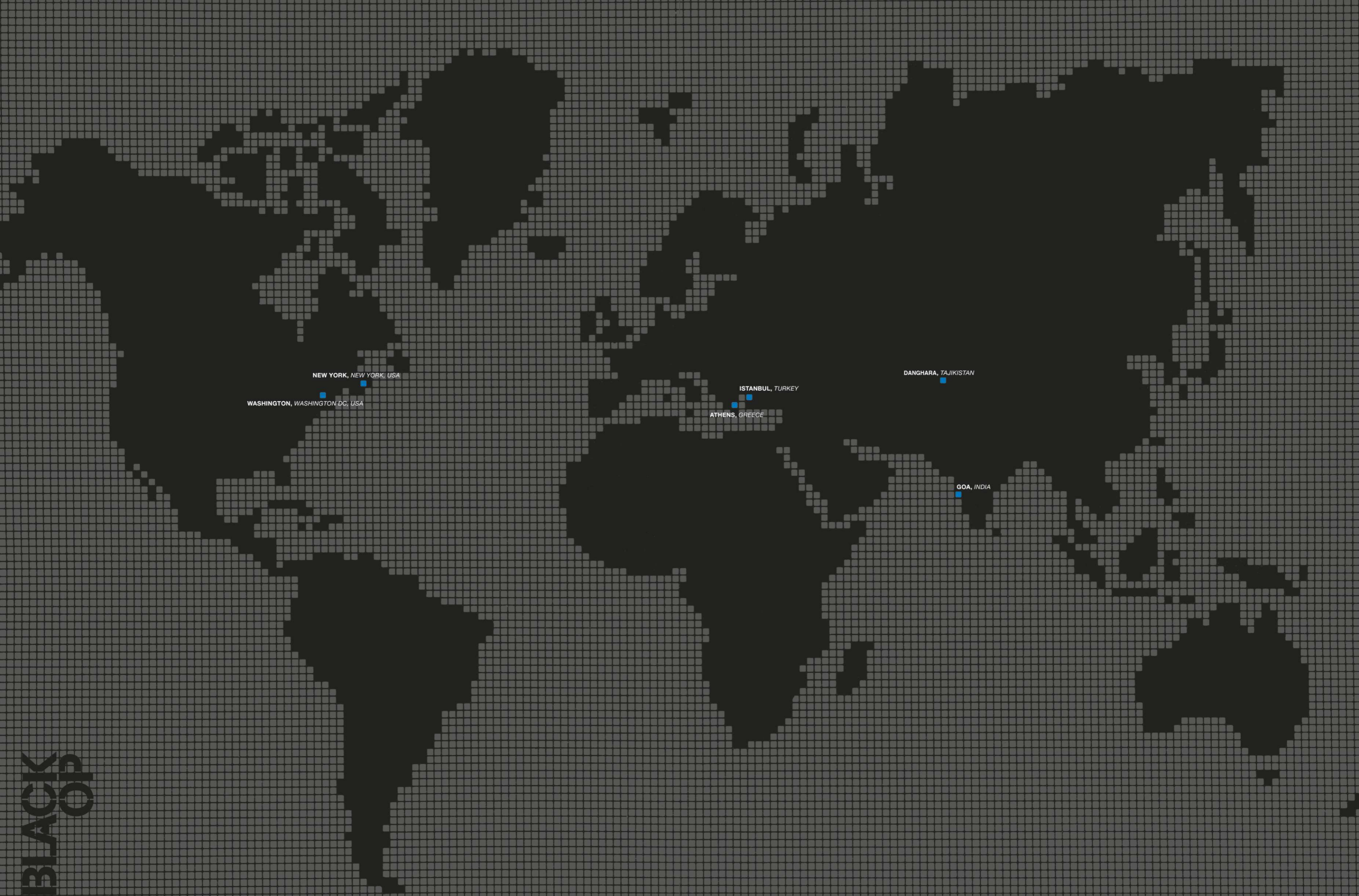
YES SIR, MISTER VICE PRESIDENT.



LABIANO_DESBERG

colorist : J.J. CHAGNAUD

october 2005



NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA

WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON DC, USA

ISTANBUL, TURKEY

ATHENS, GREECE

DANGHARA, TAJIKISTAN

GOA, INDIA

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BLACK OP In the heart of the American empire, two childhood friends are reunited at the CIA, engaged in one of the most audacious operations of the Cold War: encouraging the Russian mafia to eat away at Communism from the inside. One after another, we see the emergence of the major players behind a threat that risks, now more than ever, exploding into the open.

