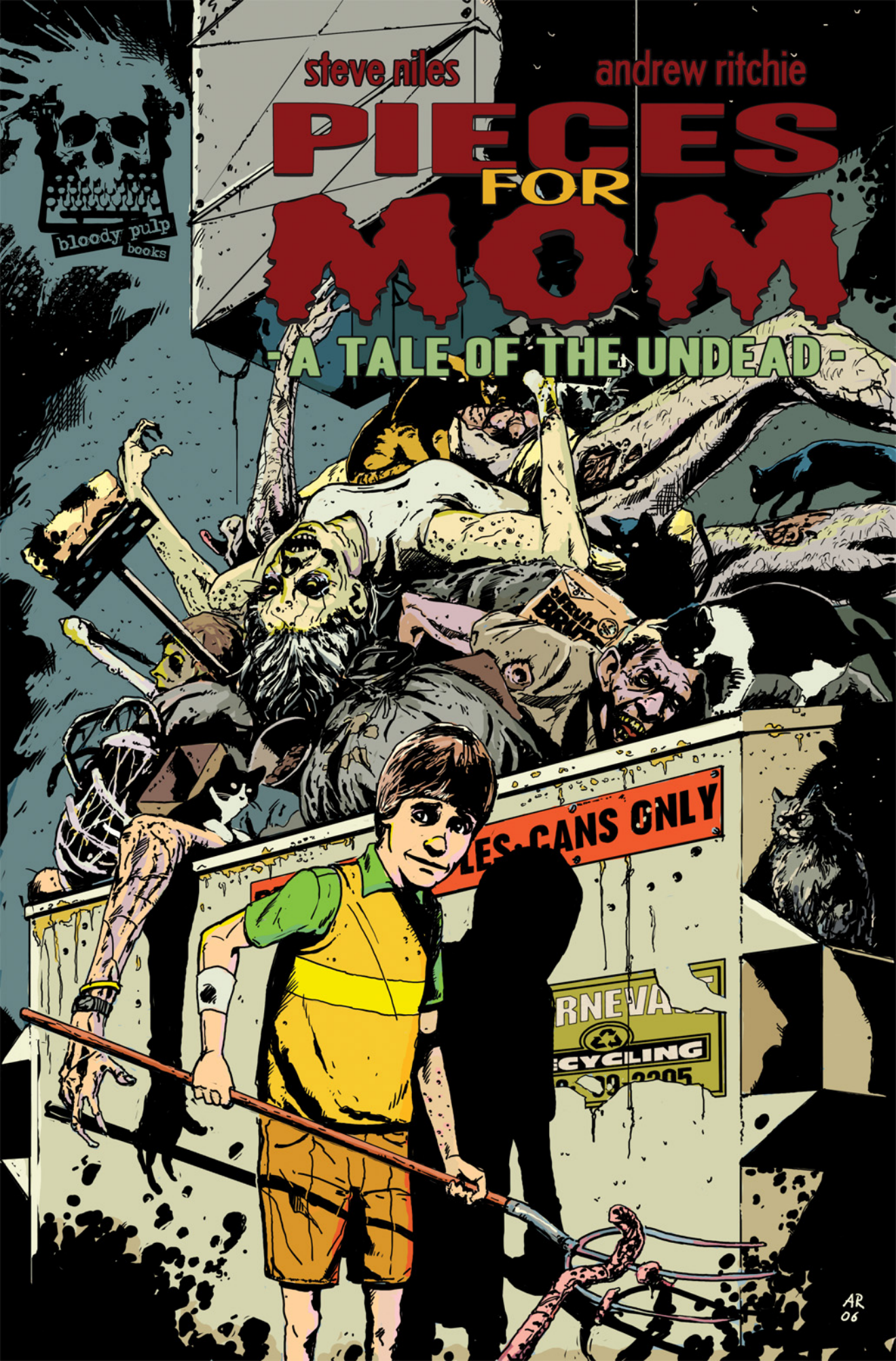


steve niles

andrew ritchie

PIECES FOR MOM

- A TALE OF THE UNDEAD -

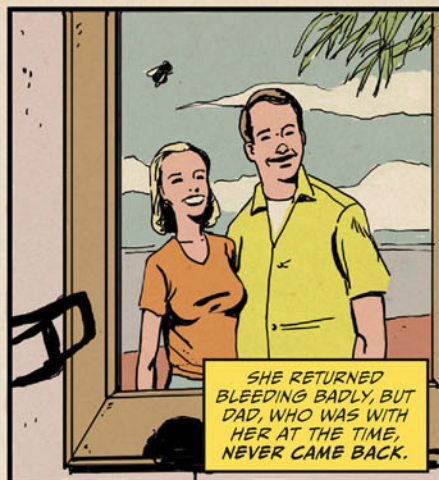
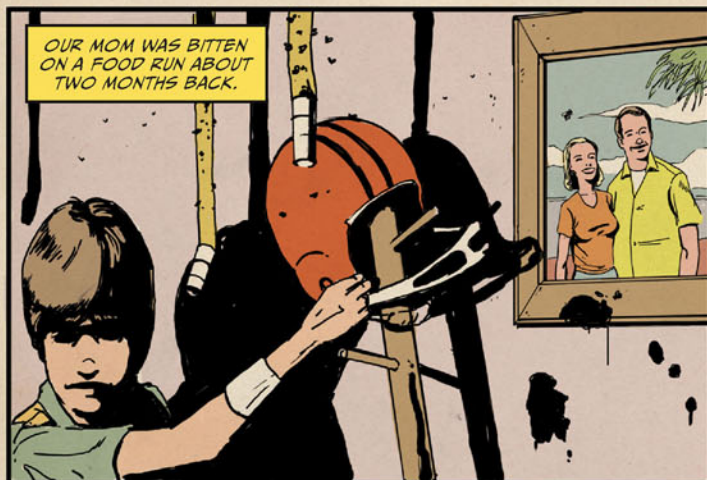














IN HER HASTE, SHE
RAN RIGHT INTO A
CROWD OF ZOMBIES.



AAAAAAAAAAAA



SHE HAD YET TO COMPLETELY
DIE, AND THE FACT THAT SHE COULD
TALK MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR US
TO PUT ONE IN HER BRAIN.

SHE WAS OUR
MOTHER, AFTER
ALL.

YOU DON'T KILL HER JUST
BECAUSE SHE SUDDENLY
PREFERRED THE TASTE
OF HUMAN FLESH TO AN
OLD CAN OF BEANS.



THE NATURE OF THE PLAGUE WAS SO UNPREDICTABLE.



I'VE SEEN MANY OF MY FRIENDS DIE AT THE MOUTHS OF ZOMBIES.



SOME OF THEM DIED AND STAYED DEAD. OTHERS TURNED IMMEDIATELY INTO RABID FLESH-EATERS.

SOME RAN LIKE SPRINTERS IN A RELAY RACE, WHILE OTHERS SHAMBLED SO SLOW YOU COULD WALK RIGHT AROUND THEM.



SOME TALKED, SOME DIDN'T.



I KNOW, MOM. I AM TOO.



IT WAS GETTING SO THAT A PERSON COULD HARDLY TELL THE SCAVENGERS FROM THE ZOMBIES.







IT HAD ONLY BEEN A
COUPLE MOMENTS SINCE I
CHECKED THE PEEPHOLE,
BUT SOMETIMES THAT'S
ALL IT TOOK.

MISTER BARRETT,
MAX'S DAD.

NUUUH!



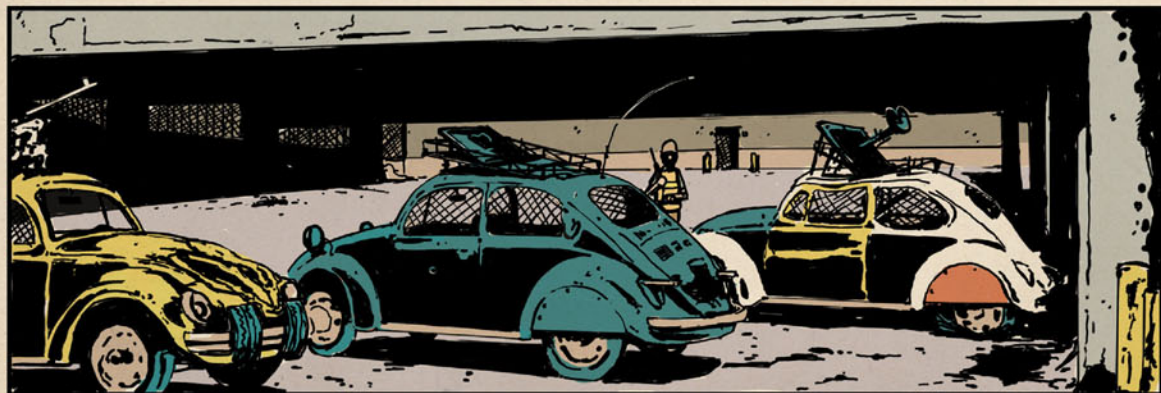




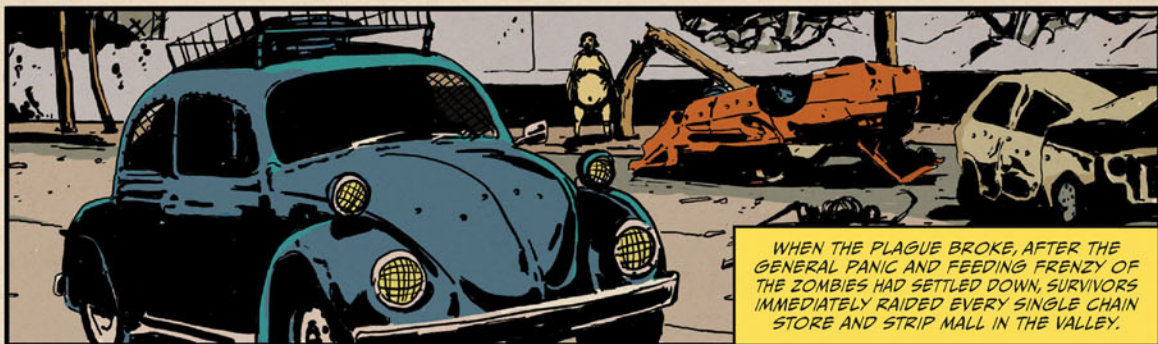
TOO BAD MR. BARRETT IS SO
ROTTEN OR I COULD FEED HIM TO
MOM, BUT THE ZOMBIES ONLY LIKE
FRESH MEAT.



I'LL HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER RECENTLY
TURNED ZOMBIE, OR WORSE, SHOOT
A SCAVENGER. I HATE DOING THAT,
BUT A WHOLE BODY COULD KEEP
MOM FED FOR A MONTH.







WHEN THE PLAGUE BROKE, AFTER THE GENERAL PANIC AND FEEDING FRENZY OF THE ZOMBIES HAD SETTLED DOWN, SURVIVORS IMMEDIATELY RAIDED EVERY SINGLE CHAIN STORE AND STRIP MALL IN THE VALLEY.



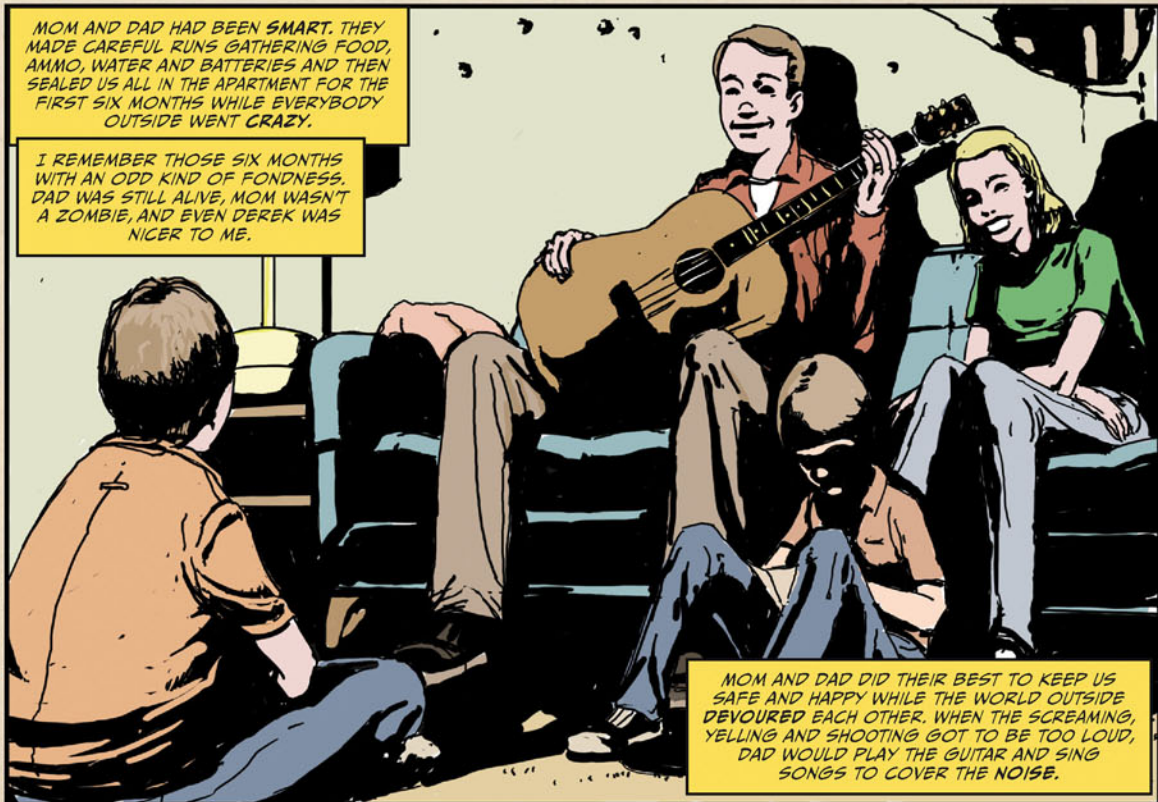
IN FACT, INSTEAD OF GUNS AND AMMO, MOST PEOPLE WENT AFTER THINGS LIKE CLOTHING AND TOILET PAPER.



FUNNY. THE END OF THE WORLD ROLLS AROUND, THE DEAD ARE WALKING THE EARTH, BUT ALL EVERYBODY WAS WORRIED ABOUT WAS CLEANING THEIR ASS.

MOM AND DAD HAD BEEN SMART. THEY MADE CAREFUL RUNS GATHERING FOOD, AMMO, WATER AND BATTERIES AND THEN SEALED US ALL IN THE APARTMENT FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS WHILE EVERYBODY OUTSIDE WENT CRAZY.

I REMEMBER THOSE SIX MONTHS WITH AN ODD KIND OF FONDNESS. DAD WAS STILL ALIVE, MOM WASN'T A ZOMBIE, AND EVEN DEREK WAS NICER TO ME.



MOM AND DAD DID THEIR BEST TO KEEP US SAFE AND HAPPY WHILE THE WORLD OUTSIDE DEVoured EACH OTHER. WHEN THE SCREAMING, YELLING AND SHOOTING GOT TO BE TOO LOUD, DAD WOULD PLAY THE GUITAR AND SING SONGS TO COVER THE NOISE.



DEREK AND I WERE JUST KIDS AT THE TIME, BUT MOM AND DAD TAUGHT US HOW TO SHOOT, AND EVEN HOW TO DRIVE. THEY TAUGHT US EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO HELP US SURVIVE AS A FAMILY, AND, IF WORSE CAME TO WORSE, ON OUR OWN.



BUT EVEN THOUGH THEY WOULD TRY TO BUFFER THE WORST OF IT FROM US, MOM AND DAD DIDN'T HIDE THE TRUTH. THEY COULDN'T REALLY.

DEREK AND I WOULD SIT IN THE WINDOW AND WATCH THE FIRES BURNING AND THE FIGHTING IN THE STREETS.



WE EVEN SAW THE MUSHROOM CLOUD FROM THE BOMB THEY DROPPED ON SAN DIEGO WHERE A LARGE CONCENTRATION OF ZOMBIES EMERGED.





ZOMBIES, EATING A SCAVENGER. I
COULD PROBABLY STOP AND SEE IF
THERE IS ANY MEAT, BUT FROM THE
LOOKS OF IT...



...THERE'S PROBABLY NOT
MUCH LEFT FOR MOM.







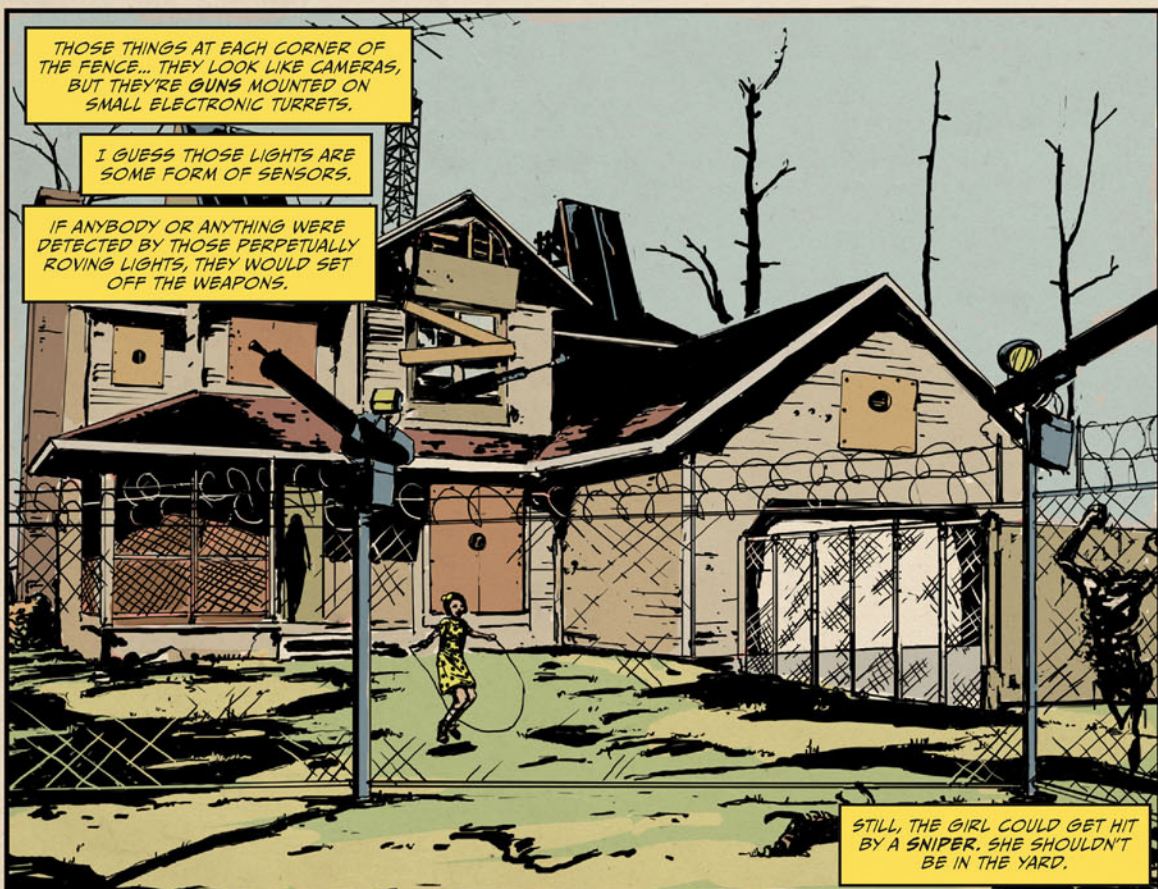
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO THIS PART OF THE VALLEY BEFORE. BY THE LOOKS OF IT, SOMEONE'S GOT A REALLY GOOD SET-UP GOING.

THE HOUSE HAS LIGHTS GOING INSIDE AND OUT SO THAT MEANS THEY HAVE A GENERATOR.



A GIRL... ABOUT MY AGE, MAYBE A BIT YOUNGER, PLAYING IN THE YARD.

HOW COULD SHE JUST BE OUT IN THE OPEN LIKE THAT? FENCE OR NOT, SHE COULD GET HURT ANY NUMBER OF WAYS.



THOSE THINGS AT EACH CORNER OF THE FENCE... THEY LOOK LIKE CAMERAS, BUT THEY'RE GUNS MOUNTED ON SMALL ELECTRONIC TURRETS.

I GUESS THOSE LIGHTS ARE SOME FORM OF SENSORS.

IF ANYBODY OR ANYTHING WERE DETECTED BY THOSE PERPETUALLY ROVING LIGHTS, THEY WOULD SET OFF THE WEAPONS.

STILL, THE GIRL COULD GET HIT BY A SNIPER. SHE SHOULDN'T BE IN THE YARD.



THEY'RE A FAMILY... LIKE I USED TO
BE A PART OF. NORMAL IN EVERY
RESPECT EXCEPT FOR THE PISTOL.
THE WOMAN WEARS AS A SIDEARM.



WAIT...



DAD?!



HE LEFT US... LEFT MOM
TO DIE IN THE STREETS
AND HIS KIDS TO SURVIVE
ON THEIR OWN.



HE ABANDONED HIS FAMILY
TO BE WITH THIS ONE!

KRRSH! HEY,
DICKHEAD, YOU FOUND
ANY FOOD YET?



HANG ON A
SECOND...



I TOLD HIM WHAT I'D FOUND,
WHO I'D FOUND. THERE WAS
A LONG SILENCE.



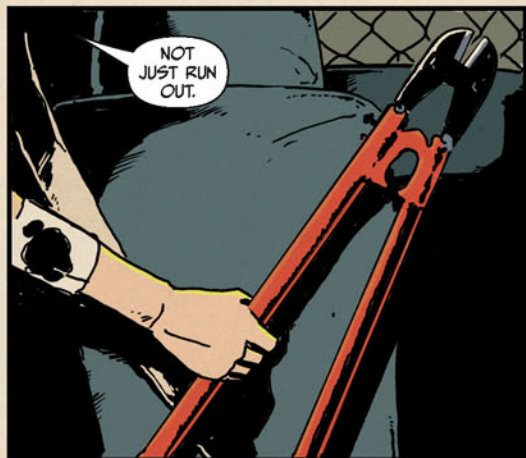
I TOLD HIM TO MAKE SURE
MOM WAS OKAY. TO CLEAN UP
THE APARTMENT.

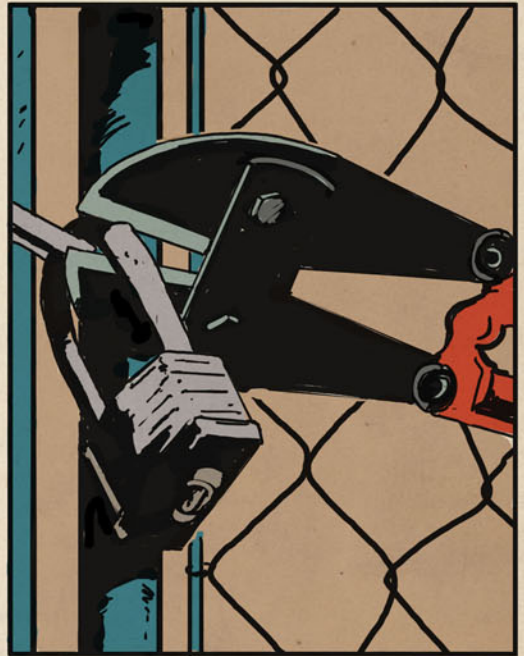
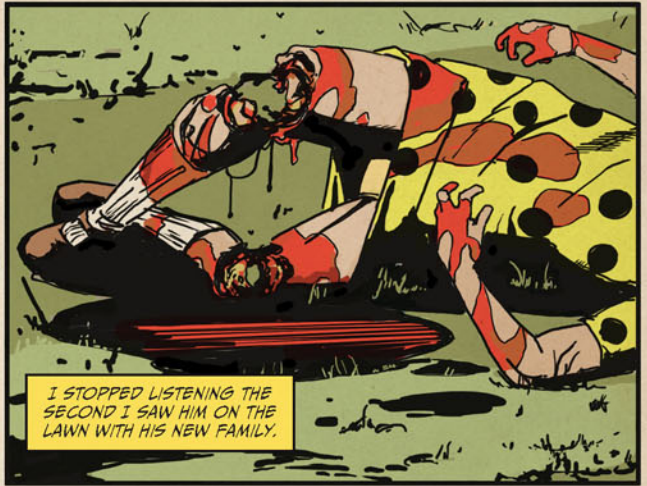
"I'LL BE BACK IN A FEW
HOURS WITH FOOD..."













TAKE CARE
OF MOM.



I RADIOED DEREK
AGAIN.

I TOLD HIM TO MAKE SURE
MOM WAS OKAY. TO CLEAN UP
THE APARTMENT.



"I'LL BE BACK IN A FEW
HOURS WITH FOOD..."

"...AND A THREE-MONTH SUPPLY
OF MEAT FOR MOM."





PIECES FOR MOM

- A TALE OF THE UNDEAD -



WRITTEN BY STEVE NILES

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LETTERED BY JASON HANLEY

SPECIAL THANKS TO ROB MATTISON!
AND ALEX LODERMEIER

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