

# BURNING FIELDS™ ISSUE 005: WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS

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"THEY'VE PULLED OUT FIVE BODIES SO FAR, THREE IDENTIFIED."

"THAT LEAVES FIVE PERSONS UNACCOUNTED FOR, THOUGH WE CAN PRESUME...WE CAN PRESUME."

I'M ASSUMING NO ONE CALLED IN A BOMB THREAT, NO WITNESSES?

THE AMERICANS DON'T EXACTLY SHARE INFORMATION FREELY, MS. ATKINSON. BUT FROM WHAT I HEAR, NO.

I GET THE IMPRESSION CARAPACE IS ITCHING FOR ANY GROUP TO CLAIM RESPONSIBILITY.

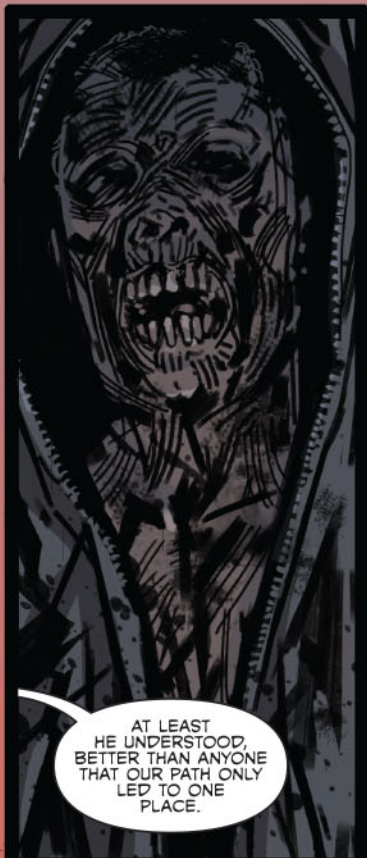
THIS WAS A SUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON A CORPORATE MILITARY ON THE VERY OILFIELD THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE PROTECTING. THERE WILL BE NO SHORTAGE OF PARTIES EAGER TO ANNOUNCE THEY WERE BEHIND IT.

OF THE IDENTIFIED-- WAS ONE A MAN, NELSON KENDRICK?

YOUR COLLEAGUE, THE SERGEANT...I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO INFORM YOU BUT, YES, HE WAS.

I'M SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS, MS. ATKINSON. I UNDERSTAND HE WAS A KIND AND--

TAKE ME TO THE BODY.



THERE ARE NO OLD MEN HOLDING COURT ON THEIR FRONT PORCHES, TELLING THE KIDS ABOUT ANY GREAT DAMN WAR.

THERE'S *NOTHING* IN ALL THIS TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU. BUT SOMEHOW, THAT NOTHING IS ALL YOU ARE.



WE HAVE TO MOVE *FAST*, ABAN. THIS CHESSBOARD IS CROWDED WITH PLAYERS WHOSE NEXT MOVE COULD BE *ANYTHING*. THAT'S ONE DANGEROUS SITUATION THAT--

WHO THE *HELL* LET THESE TWO IN?!

AT LEAST HE UNDERSTOOD, BETTER THAN ANYONE THAT OUR PATH ONLY LED TO ONE PLACE.



OUT. YOU AND THE COP, GET THE *HELL* OUT.



YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO SLOW DOWN A SECOND. WE'RE AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL, MISS...

DAVIS. *CAREY DAVIS*, VP OF OPERATIONS FOR CARAPACE. I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR AGREEMENT WITH SERGEANT KENDRICK, AND I *DON'T CARE*.

SINCE YOU'VE BEEN HERE, ATKINSON, THINGS HAVE GONE FROM BAD...



ABAN, YOU WOULD BE WISE TO TAKE LEAVE.

AS YOUR FRIEND, I SUGGEST YOU DISENTANGLE YOURSELF FROM THE AMERICAN. PEOPLE ARE *TALKING*.



...WHEN THE BODIES KEEP PILING UP? HUH, DAVIS?

THIS IS AN *INVESTIGATION*. YOU NEED *EVIDENCE*, NOT A BUNCH OF GRUNTS WAITING FOR AN EXCUSE TO TAKE THEIR SAFETIES OFF.

DANA, COME ON, THERE'S NO USE.



DO ME A FAVOR, DAVIS. A YEAR FROM NOW, WHEN YOU'RE BACK HOME, CAN'T SLEEP, GULPING XANAX BY THE BOTTLE... CALL ME.

I WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT YOU *CHOSE* THIS.



HARPER, MAKE SURE THEY LEAVE. WHEN THEY'RE GONE, HAVE MERRICK SCRUB THEIR CREDENTIALS. NEITHER OF THEM WERE *EVER* HERE.



MU'IB WILL LEAK THIS.

WHAT'S THAT?

HE'S A GOOD MAN BUT... OUR POSITION DOESN'T PAY US WELL. HE'LL SELL THIS STORY TO THE MEDIA.



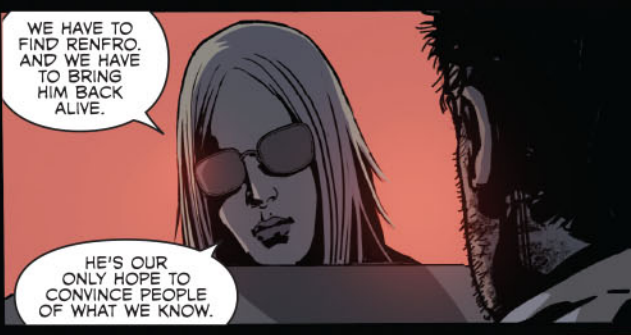
HONESTLY, ABAN? LET HIM. THE STORY WILL RUN AND BE FORGOTTEN WITHIN TEN MINUTES ANYWAY.



IF THE BOMBING IS MADE PUBLIC, THEN EVERYONE WILL KNOW, AND IF EVERYONE KNOWS--



THEN SOMEONE WILL PUBLICLY CLAIM THE ATTACK.  
...



WE HAVE TO FIND RENFRO, AND WE HAVE TO BRING HIM BACK ALIVE.

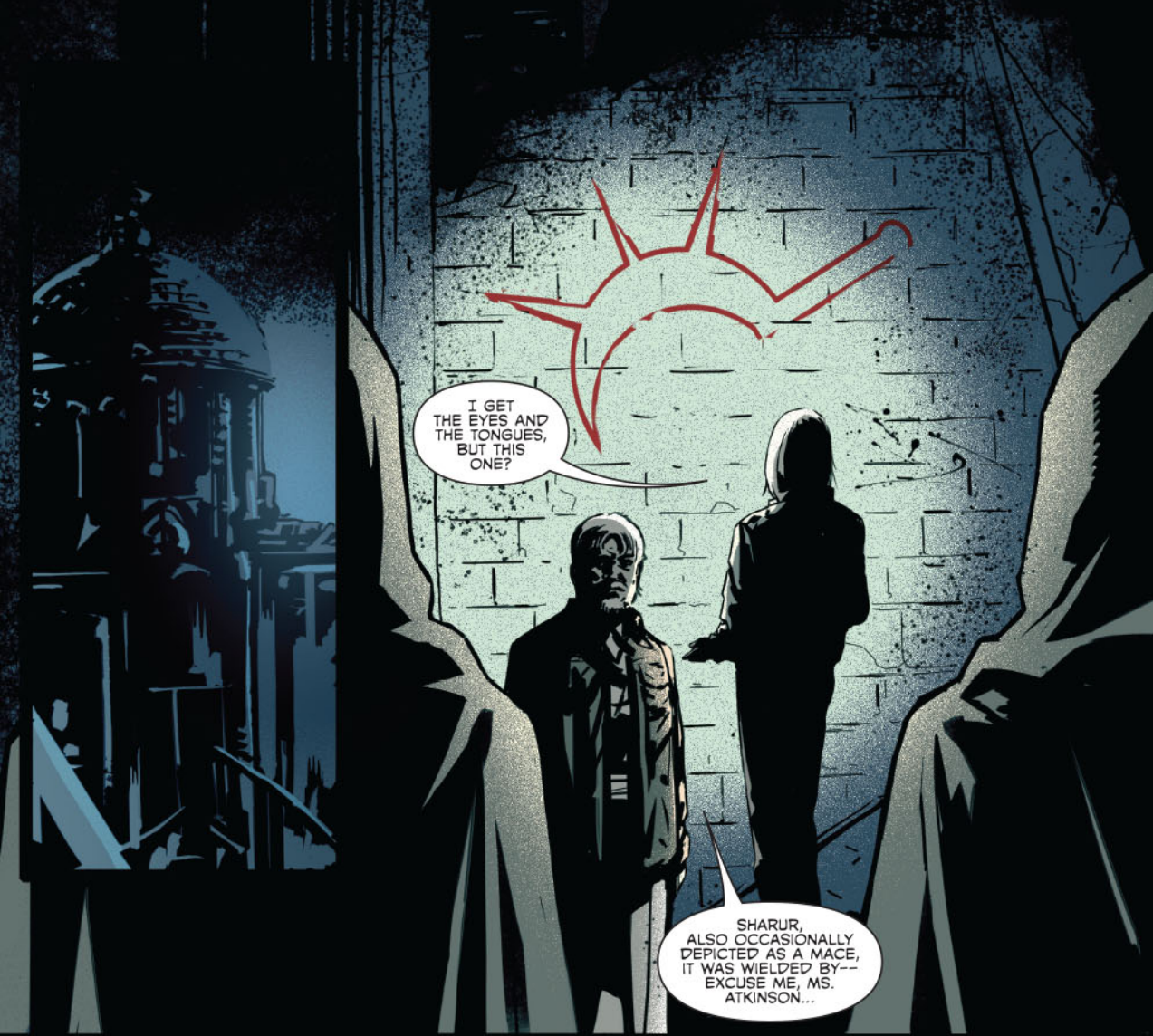
HE'S OUR ONLY HOPE TO CONVINCE PEOPLE OF WHAT WE KNOW.



AND HOW DO WE DO THAT?



"I HAVE NO CLUE, BUT WE HAVE TO DO IT WITHOUT DRAWING ANY ATTENTION."



I GET THE EYES AND THE TONGUES, BUT THIS ONE?

SHARUR, ALSO OCCASIONALLY DEPICTED AS A MACE, IT WAS WIELDED BY-- EXCUSE ME, MS. ATKINSON...



I SEE, AND THE TUNNEL? GONE IN THE COLLAPSE, I SUSPECT? HOW NEAT.

DID I HEAR THAT CORRECTLY? THE TUNNEL HAS JUST *DISAPPEARED*? THAT'S IT, I'M GOING. I'LL DIG MY WAY IN IF I HAVE TO.

PATIENCE, MS. ATKINSON. YOU HAVE *MANY* ENEMIES, BUT NONE LIKE THE ONE WE NOW FACE. IT IS BEST NOT TO TRAVEL ALONE AND CERTAINLY ONLY WITH TRUE PURPOSE.

IF YOU HAVE RETURNED, THEN IT IS CLEAR THE EMISSARY HAS ABANDONED THE SCRAPYARD.