

# BURNING FIELDS™ ISSUE 002: IN TONGUES

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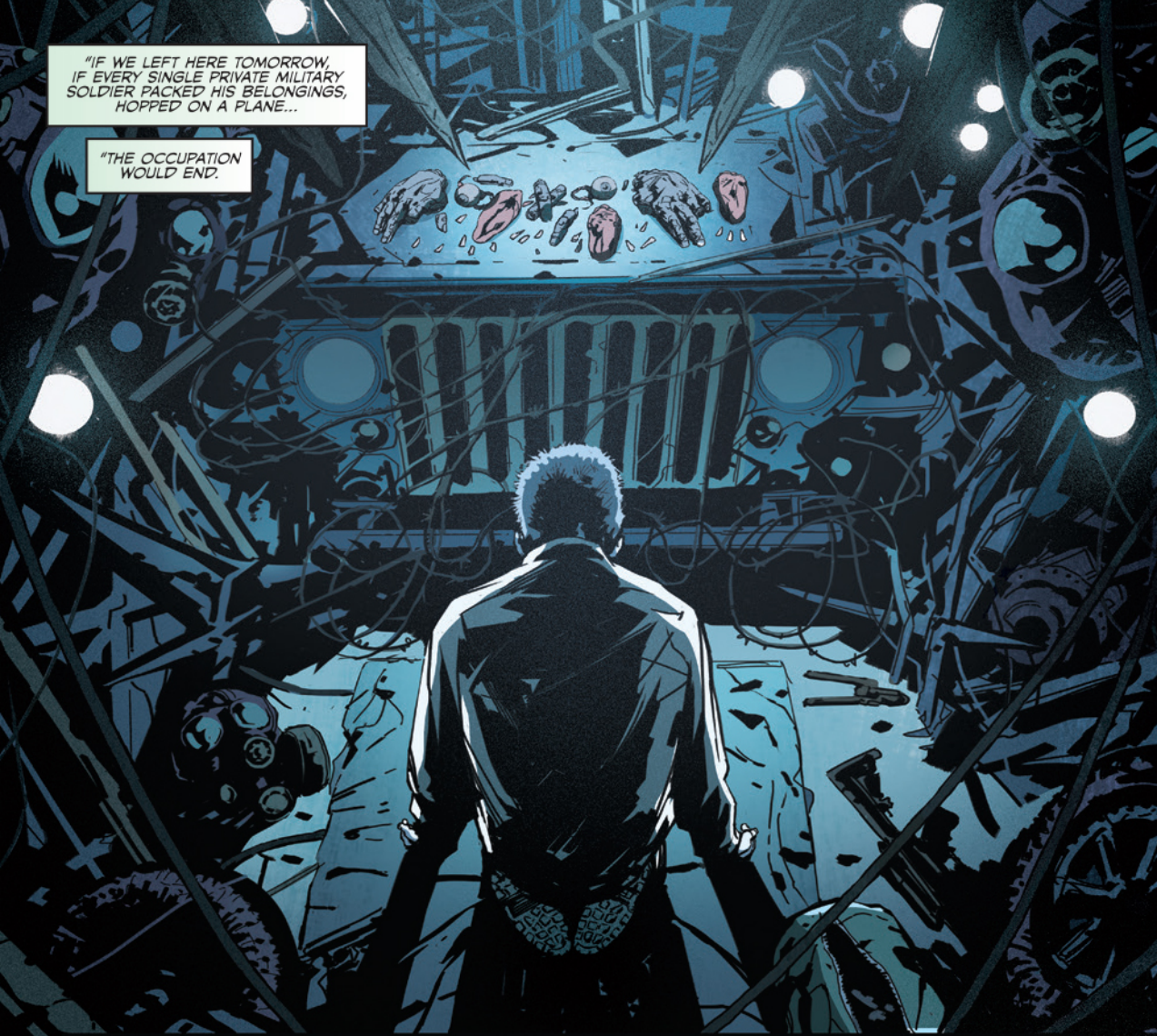


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"IF WE LEFT HERE TOMORROW,  
IF EVERY SINGLE PRIVATE MILITARY  
SOLDIER PACKED HIS BELONGINGS,  
HOPPED ON A PLANE...

"THE OCCUPATION  
WOULD END."



"THAT ISN'T AN OPINION, IT IS THE TRUTH. OUR COMPANIES  
PROVIDE A SECURITY FORCE OVER 20,000 STRONG TO  
THIS REGION--A STAGGERING NUMBER. THE U.S. MILITARY  
IS SPREAD TOO THIN. THEY LACK MANPOWER, RESOURCES,  
AND, FRANKLY, **WILLINGNESS.**"





"IF WE LEFT, THE DOMINOES WOULD FALL ONE BY ONE BY ONE."



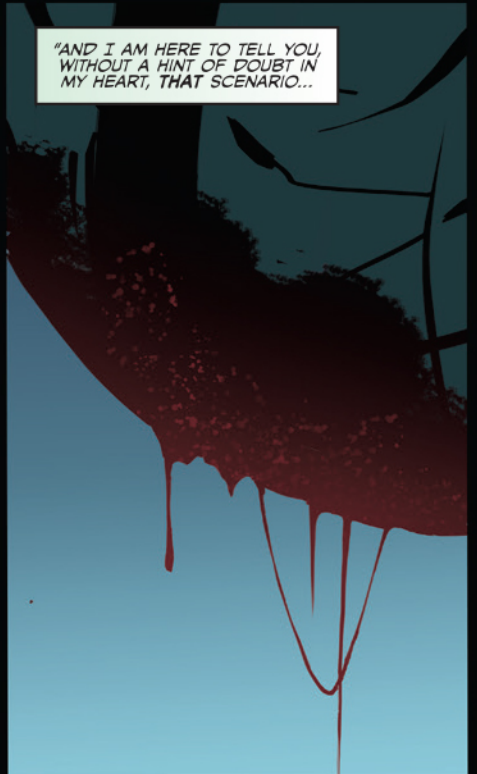
"YOU'D HAVE NO MORE ARMED PATROLS IN YOUR STREETS. NO MORE CHECKPOINTS. NO MORE RANDOM SEARCHES. YOUR COUNTRY WOULD GO RIGHT BACK TO HOW IT WAS BEFORE THIS ENTIRE THING STARTED."

"MIRRED IN CHAOS."

"WARRING FACTIONS WOULD DESCEND UPON YOUR LAND, YOUR HOMES, INCITING VIOLENCE INDISCRIMINATELY."



"AND ALL THE PROGRESS THAT'S BEEN MADE, THE TRAINING OF YOUR POLICE AND MILITARY, WHERE WE'RE STANDING, RIGHT NOW, WOULD BE DUST WITHIN A YEAR."

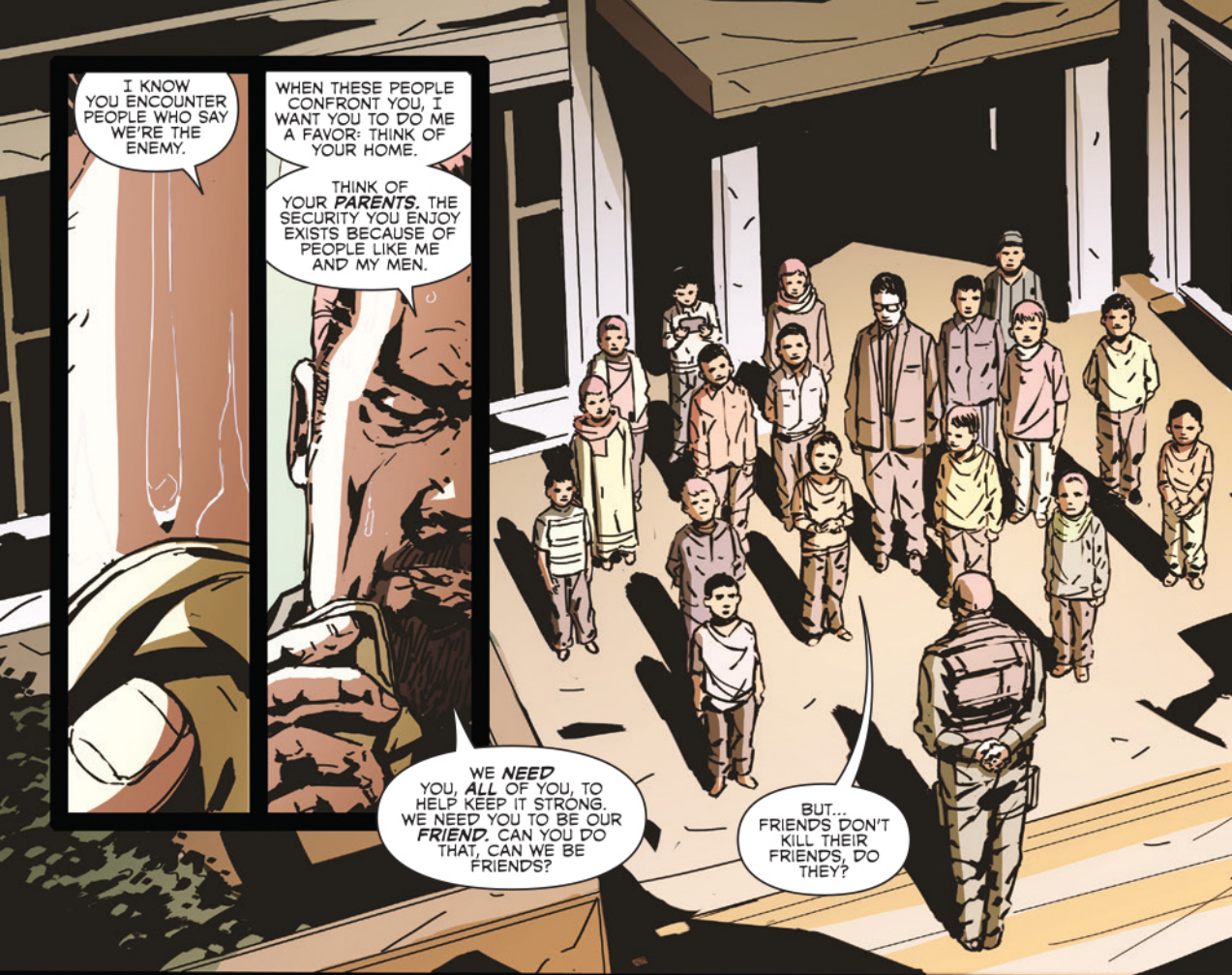


"AND I AM HERE TO TELL YOU, WITHOUT A HINT OF DOUBT IN MY HEART, THAT SCENARIO..."



"WILL NEVER HAPPEN, SO LONG AS WE'RE HERE."





I KNOW YOU ENCOUNTER PEOPLE WHO SAY WE'RE THE ENEMY.

WHEN THESE PEOPLE CONFRONT YOU, I WANT YOU TO DO ME A FAVOR: THINK OF YOUR HOME.

THINK OF YOUR **PARENTS**. THE SECURITY YOU ENJOY EXISTS BECAUSE OF PEOPLE LIKE ME AND MY MEN.

WE **NEED** YOU, **ALL** OF YOU, TO HELP KEEP IT STRONG. WE NEED YOU TO BE OUR **FRIEND**. CAN YOU DO THAT, CAN WE BE FRIENDS?

BUT... FRIENDS DON'T KILL THEIR FRIENDS, DO THEY?

هكيم  
HAKIM, YOU ARE EXCUSED.

BUT NO FRIENDS **EVER** MAKE YOU COMPROMISE YOUR BELIEFS, ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE DEDICATED TO FURTHERING THE GREATER GOOD.

THAT PERSON IS NO FRIEND AND **NEVER** WILL BE.

PLEASE, IT'S **OKAY**. HE MEANT NO DISRESPECT.

TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, **YOUNG MAN**, SOMETIMES EVEN FRIENDS KILL FRIENDS.



"I'M DEFINITELY NOT BUYING THAT."



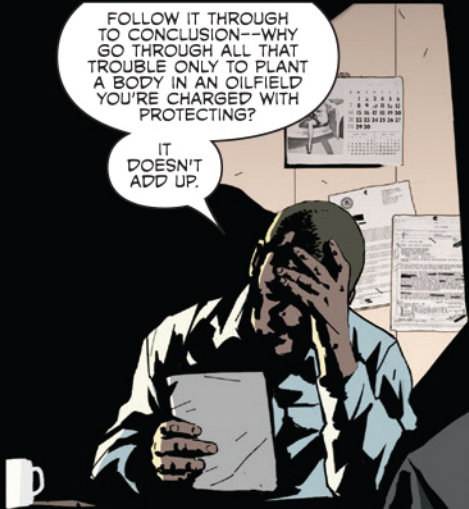
"INTERESTING ANGLE, AND I'D LOVE TO BELIEVE IT, DANA, BUT...IT'S TOO NEAT. VERGE MEN PICKING OFF CARAPACE PERSONNEL TO BETTER THEIR CONTRACT BARGAINING POWER..."

EVEN IF VERGE DOES DESTABILIZE THE AREA AND BRING IT BACK TO ORDER, THIS ALL STILL HAPPENED ON *THEIR* WATCH AND UNDER *DECKER'S* COMMAND.



FOLLOW IT THROUGH TO CONCLUSION--WHY GO THROUGH ALL THAT TROUBLE ONLY TO PLANT A BODY IN AN OILFIELD YOU'RE CHARGED WITH PROTECTING?

IT DOESN'T ADD UP.




WHAT DOESN'T ADD UP IS YOUR LACK OF SKEPTICISM WHERE DECKER IS CONCERNED.





YOU HEARD THAT IRAQI  
DETECTIVE, FASAD--EVEN HE  
CLAIMED THE PERP WAS  
AMERICAN.

MAYBE  
YOU SHOULD  
FOLLOW UP WITH HIM  
FIRST BEFORE--




SAVE  
THE EFFORT, MS.  
ATKINSON, YOU'D FIND  
LITTLE TO FOLLOW UP  
ON IN ANY OFFICIAL  
REPORT.




WHAT ARE YOU DOING  
HERE? LOOKING FOR A  
"THANK YOU" FOR LAST  
NIGHT?

THANK  
YOU, YOU  
MAY GO.



YOUR COUNTRY--NO  
DIFFERENT FROM ALL  
THE REST--COMES  
HERE SEEKING  
THE OIL.



AND YOU ALL QUICKLY FORGET THAT NO  
MATTER WHERE YOU ARE OR WHERE  
YOU'RE FROM, THE MOST PRECIOUS  
COMMODITY IS ALWAYS  
INFORMATION.