THOMAS OTT TAB MURPHY THOMAS JANE

DARK COUNTRY

AT THE END OF THE ROAD . . . THE NIGHTMARE BEGINS

DARK COUNTRY

ISBN: 978 0 9827165 2 6

Published by
RAW STUDIOS
Los Angeles

First edition: July 2012

Dark Country GN copyright © 2012 Raw Studios. All rights reserved.

Forword copyright © 2012 Eddie Muller. All rights reserved.
Detour Into Darkness copyright © 2012 Ray Zone. All rights reserved.
Text copyright © 2012 Raw Studios. All rights reserved.
Gallery photography by Van Redin © 2012 Sony Pictures. All rights reserved
Criterion logo copyright © 2012 The Criterion Collection. All rights reserved

Cover and Book Design by Tim Bradstreet

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Raw Studios would like to thank:
Eddie Muller for writing the forword and for his support,
Ray Zone for the detour into darkness and for his friendship and guidance,
Tab Murphy for sticking with us through the Dark Country,
Thomas Ott for taking the journey.

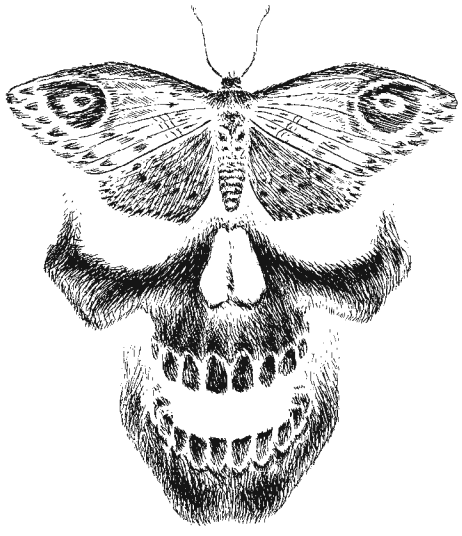
Thanks also to David Allcock, Bernie Wrightson, Frank Darabont.

visit our website:
www.rawstudios.com

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, not be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

Printed and bound in Korea

DARK COUNTRY



Illustrated by **THOMAS OTT**

Written by **TAB MURPHY**

RAW STUDIOS

A TWISTED ROAD

About ten minutes into *Dark Country* (2009) I thought to myself*, Thomas Jane must be a comic book geek*. It was the sense of lurking dread in the film's simple but striking compositions that reminded me of panels in my favorite EC stories, like "Murder May Boomerang," from *Crime SuspenStories #1*. As the movie unfolded, the *frisson* only increased. *Okay, obviously this guy is a film noir nut as well*, I realized. Cinematic shards from many a B noir starting popping up all along that lonely desert road. *Yeah, this guy has seen* Detour *more than a few times.*

By the end of its brisk 88-minute running time, I felt not only like I'd taken a trip on a nightmarish Möbius strip, but that I'd careened through a funhouse of references, both cinematic and comic-bookish. It was like discovering a lost Edgar G. Ulmer cheapie, made in the early 1970s, storyboarded by Johnny Craig. The movie is a delirious dream of the dark pulpy stuff we loved as kids—and always will.

And it was in 3D. Only nobody got to see it that way, because Sony, after bankrolling the film as a 3D project, pulled the plug and released it straight to DVD, flat as a pancake.

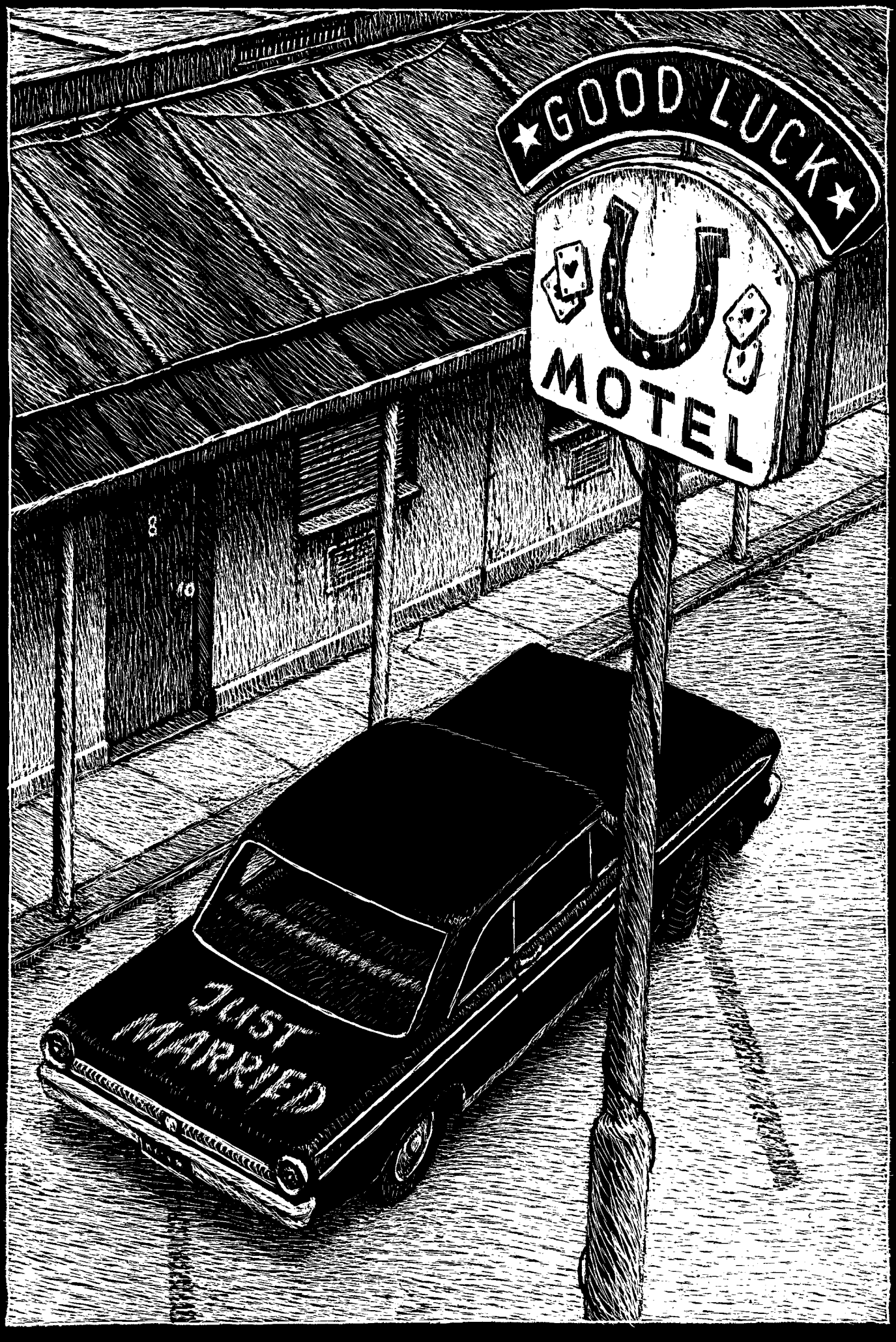
That's where Ray "3D" Zone comes in. Ray was a regular at the film noir festival I present each year at Hollywood's Egyptian Theatre, and I was familiar with his work because, like a million other comic book fans, I'd had my eyes popped out by his 3D adaptations of classic comics (Jack Cole's "Murder, Morphine and Me" is a favorite). Ray diligently worked at connecting me with Tom, in the hope I'd screen *Dark Country* at one my noir festivals, in its original 3D format. (Ray had worked on the film as a special 3D visual consultant.)

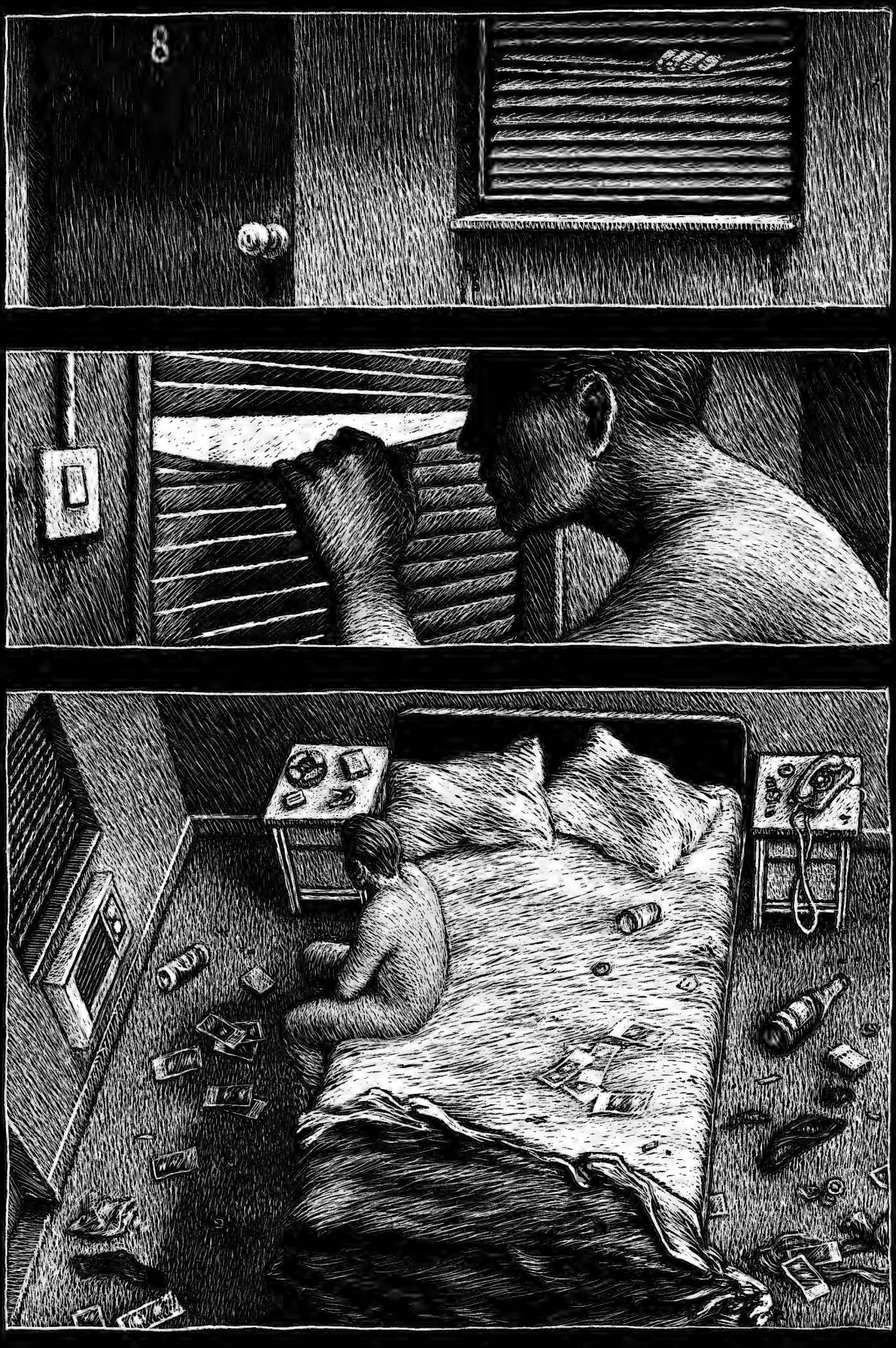
That finally happened, on November 18, 2011 at the majestic Castro Theatre in San Francisco, a night Tom declared "The best screening ever." I'd spent barely any time with him beforehand, so it was in our onstage discussion following the film that we first talked about *Dark Country* in detail. When I called it a "live action comic book," Tom's face lit up like I'd compared his directorial debut to *Citizen Kane*. "That's exactly what we were going for!" he declared, and then proved it by veering into a wide-ranging discourse on the various comic book artists that influenced him—a digression I eagerly spiraled into, although it probably left most of the audience baffled. They'd come expecting references to Welles, Hitchcock, and Martin Scorsese and we gave them an earful of Krigstein, Wrightson, and Thomas Ott.

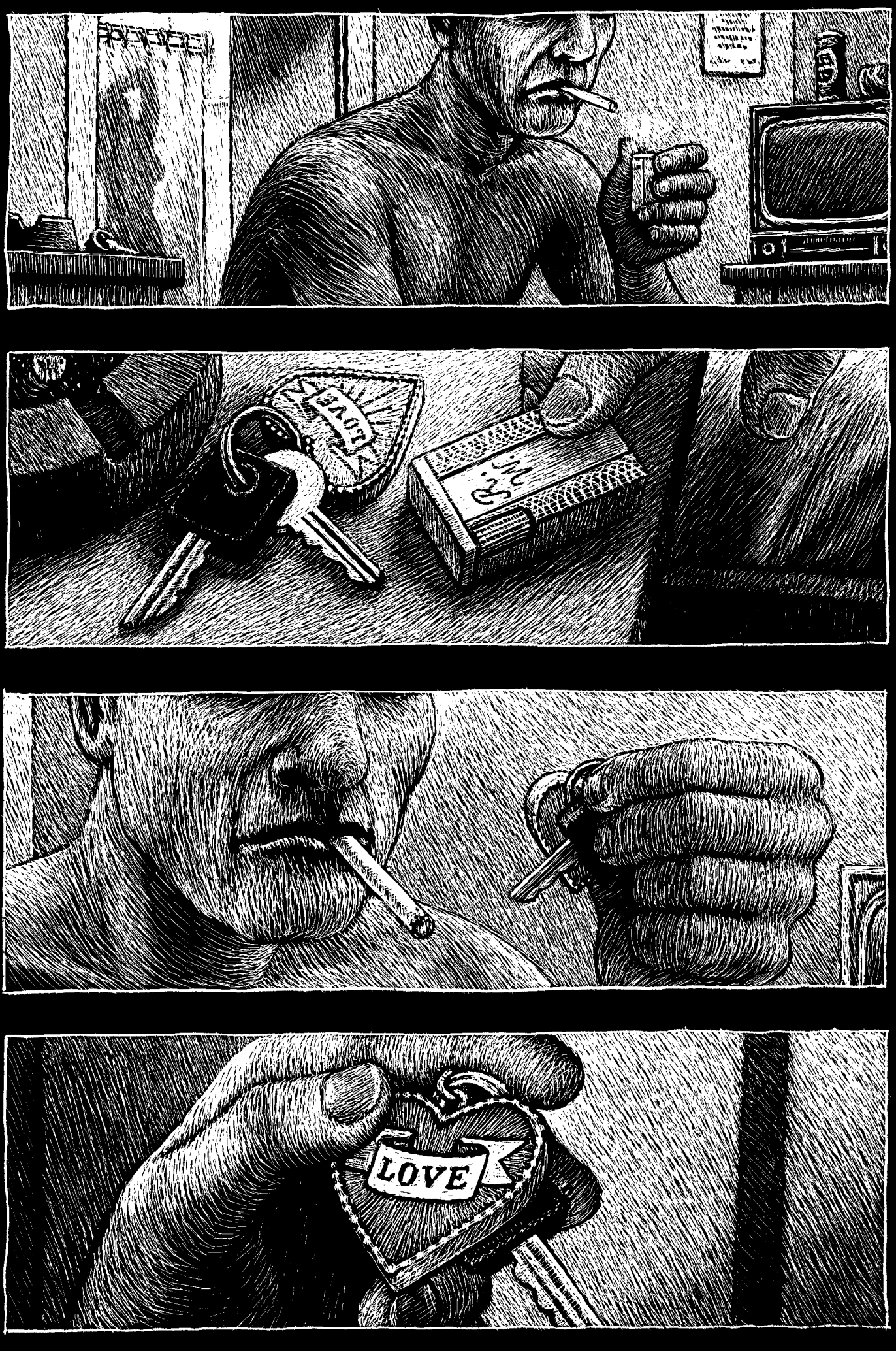
Tom was effusive in his praise for Ott's "pure" graphic storytelling and readily admitted that the artist's *Dead End* and *Greetings from Hellville* were huge inspirations when it came to directing *Dark Country*.

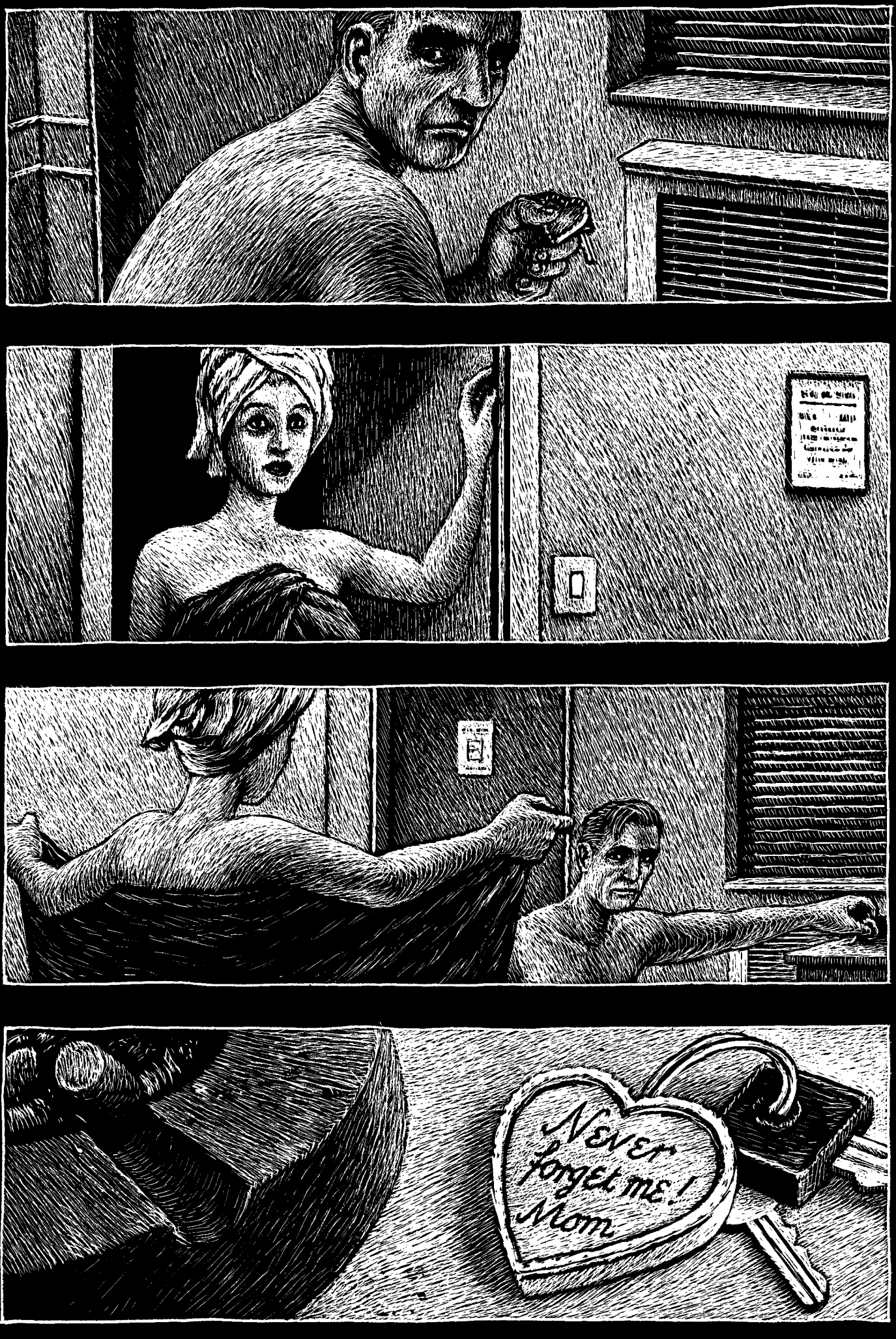
And now it's come full circle—just like in the Tab Murphy story that started it all—as Thomas Ott brings to the page his own inimitable interpretation of a film his art helped inspire. *Dark Country* is a masterpiece of sequential storytelling, worthy of all the illustrious ghosts lurking in its sinister scratchboard shadows.

—Eddie Muller
San Francisco, January 2012

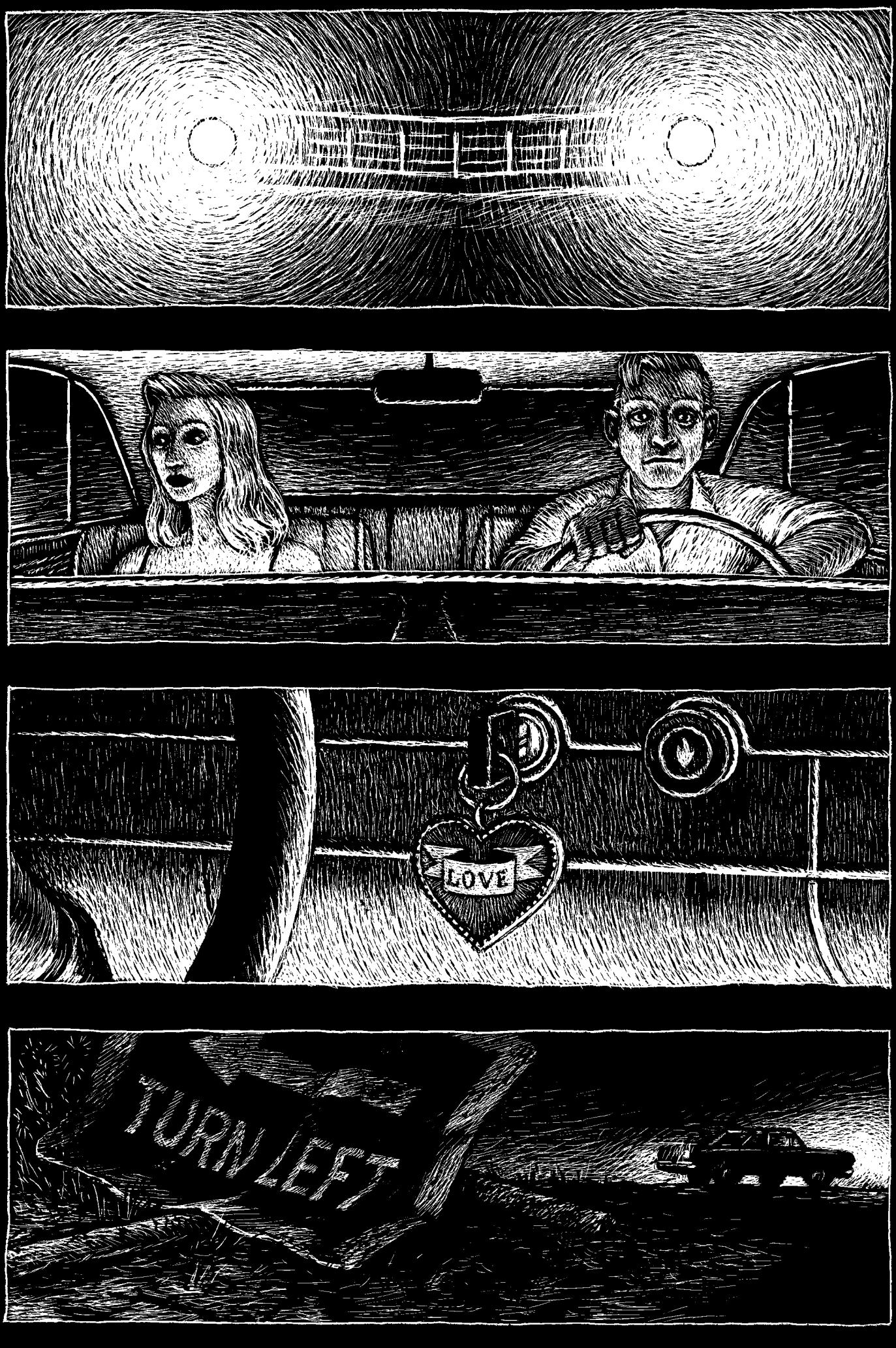

GOOD LUCK
MOTEL
8
10
JUST MARRIED

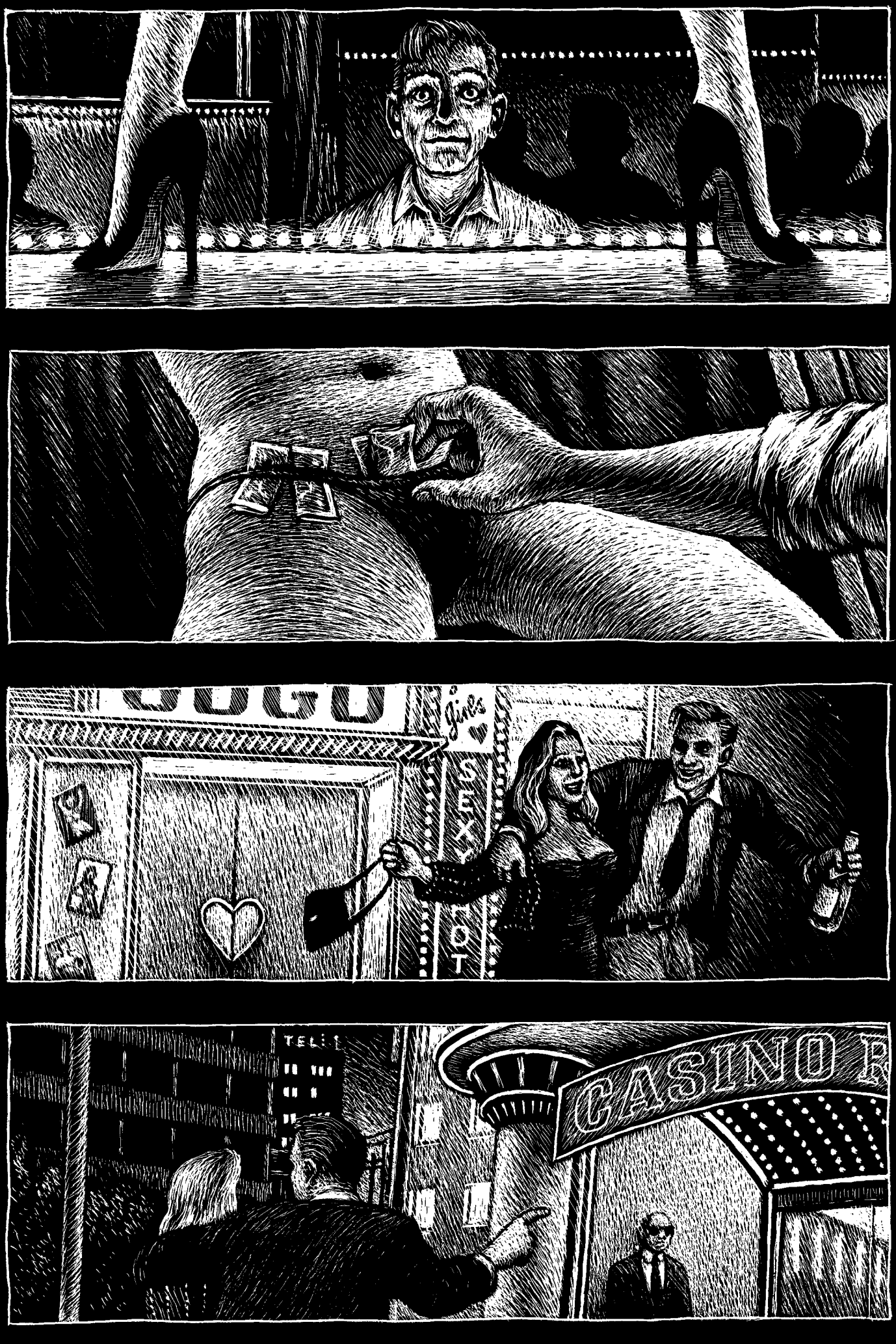

8


LOVE
LOVE

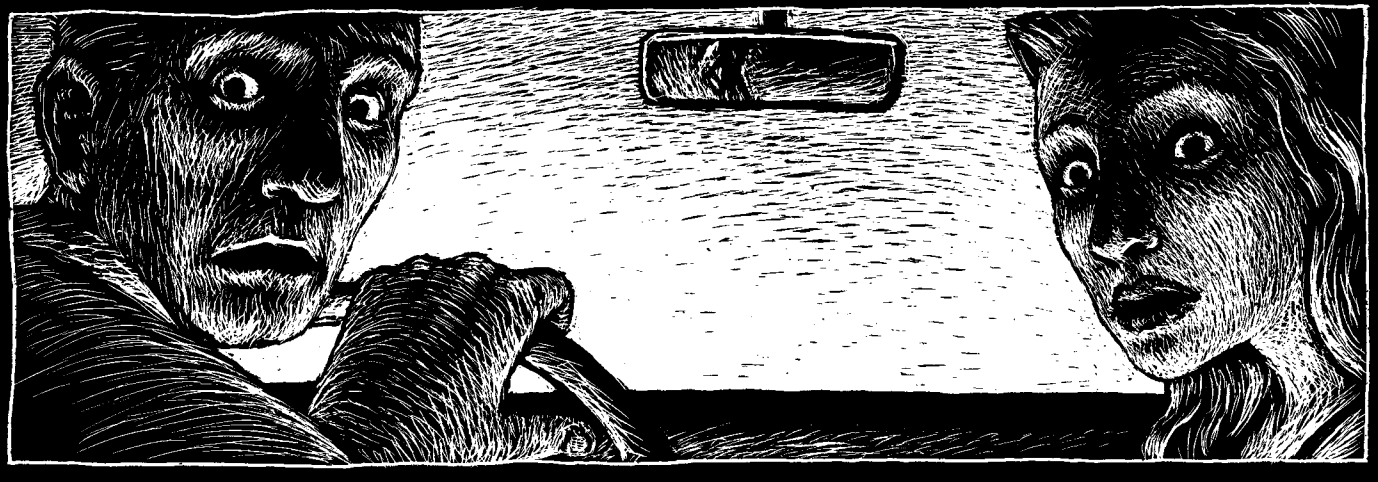

Never forget me!
Mom

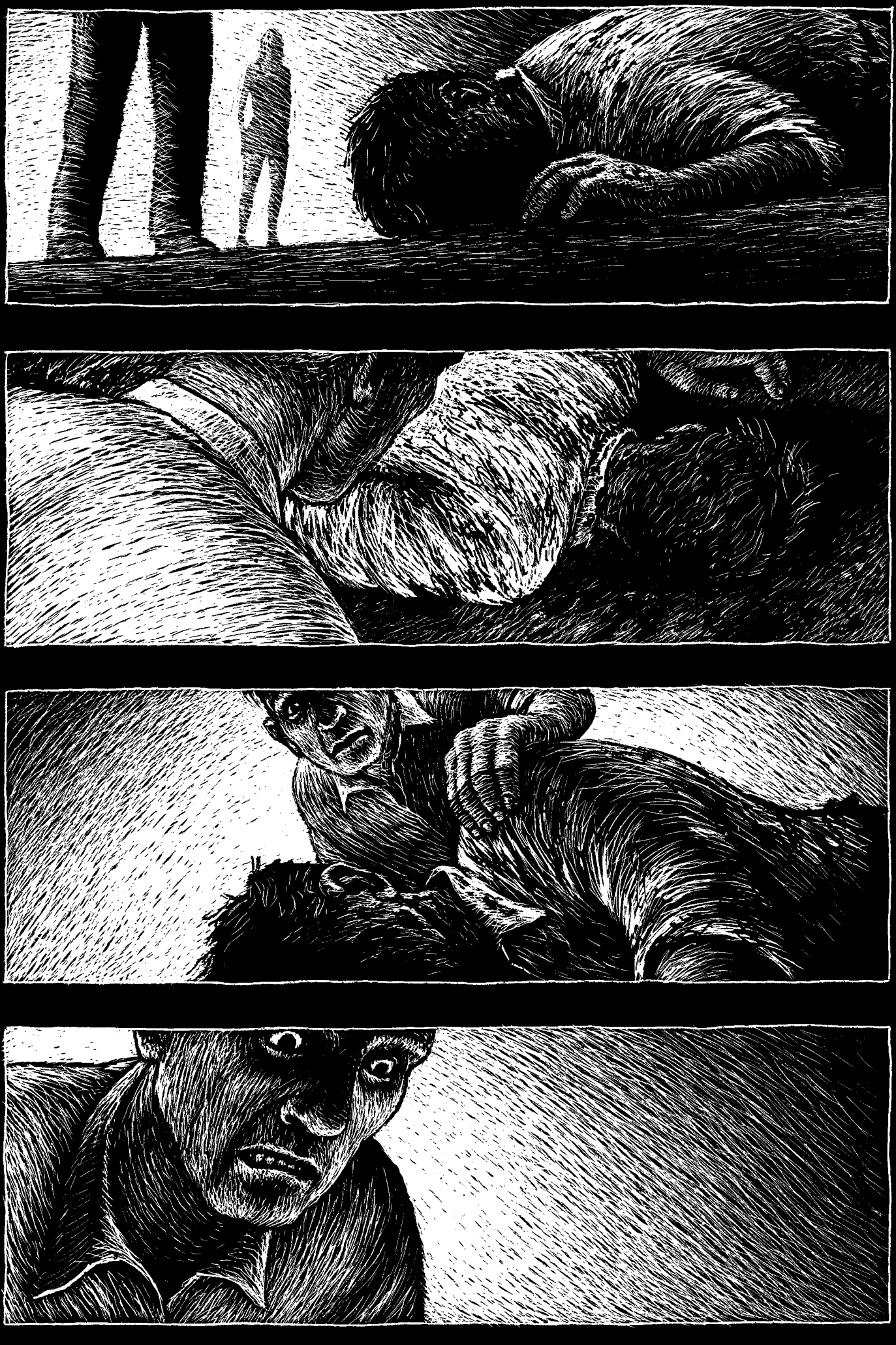
DARK COUNTRY

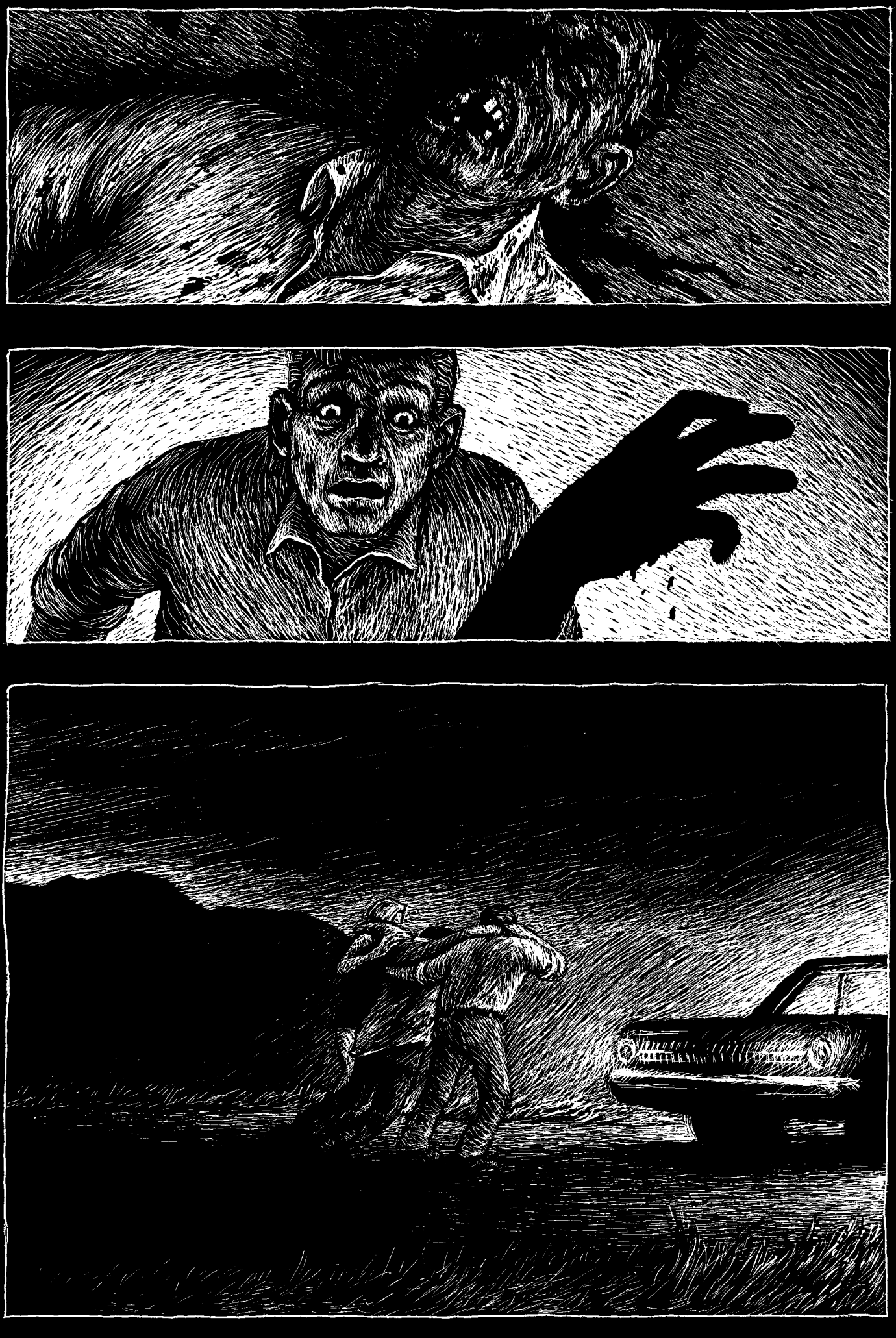

LOVE
TURN LEFT

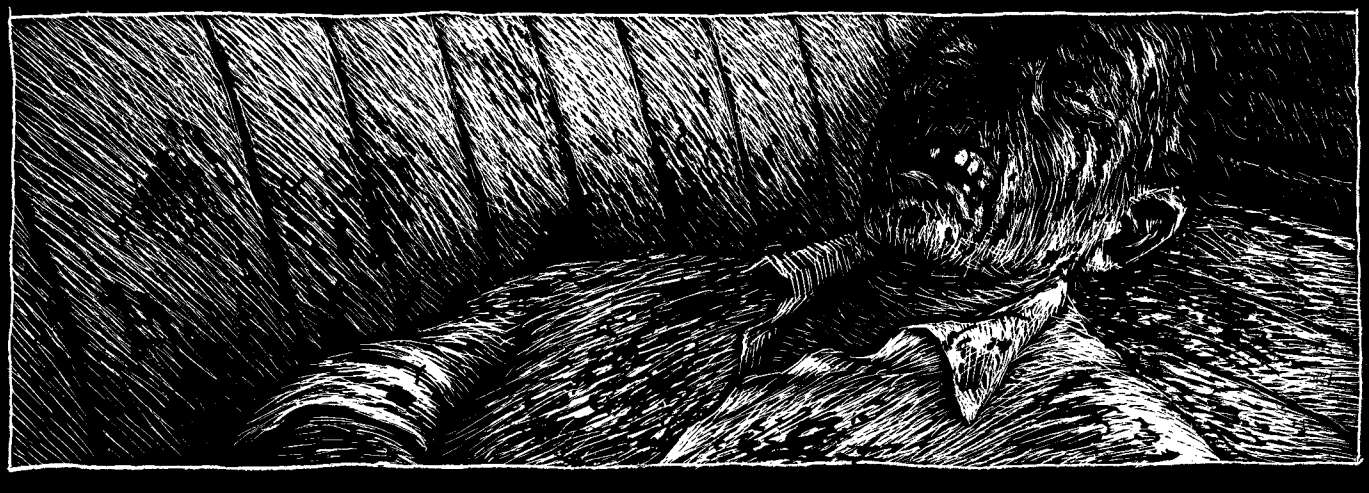

SEX
CASINO

WEDDING
CHAPEL









THE ART OF THE FILM
DARK COUNTRY
FILM PRODUCTION EXTRAS

In the summer of 2007, a group of artists and creators began work on a little film with high asperations. The ringleader was first-time director Thomas Jane, who sought to blend his life-long passion for comics and illustration together with his passion for Film Noir, and the burgeoning new technology of 3-D. As a member of the Stereo Club of Southern California, Jane was fully aware of the leaps 3-D had made since it's humble beginnings and was determined to bring that new digital technology to the 'Drive-In Saturday Night' - EC Comic book feel of his gothic, noir, horror, suspense film. Along the way he recruited artists of 'like minds' to assist in achieving his graphic vision for Dark Country, David Allcock, Bernie Wrightson, Ray (3D) Zone, and partner in crime, Tim Bradstreet, joined with Jane to help define the look of the film

Join us now for a look behind the scenes, from pre-production storyboard and concept art to production photography, marketing artwork and design - **The Art of Dark Country**

RAW STUDIOS PROUDLY PRESENTS

DARK COUNTRY

Illustrated by **THOMAS OTT**

Written by **TAB MURPHY**

Edited and directed by **THOMAS JANE** Designed by **TIM BRADSTREET**

Production by **MARSHALL DILLON**

Additional art by **David Allcock**, **Bernie Wrightson**, and **Tim Bradstreet**

for Heather

RAW STUDIOS

Thomas Jane · President and Managing Editor
Tim Bradstreet · Vice-President and Creative Editor

Special thanks to Sony Pictures - Hyde Park Entertainment, Kristyn Humphreys, Eric Kurland, the Castro Theater San Francisco
Ron Perlman, Lauren German, Geoff Boyle, Max Penner, Howard Smith, Karri O'Reilly, Dylan Hopkins, Chris Browning, Con Shell
Van Redin, Eric Vespe, AICN, Film School Rejects, Fangoria, William Stout, Todd Farmer, Steve Niles, and the Stereo Club of Southern California

visit the dark country website - http://www.rawstudios.com/darkcountry/

"DARK COUNTRY IS A MASTERPIECE OF SEQUENTIAL STORYTELLING"

Eddie Muller - Noir City

At the end of the road . . . the nightmare truly begins. In 2007 actor, filmmaker, Thomas Jane went off to New Mexico to make his Noir/Suspense film, Dark Country in 3D. The result was a mind-bending, idiosynchratic, E C Comic-style ride into the noirish landscape of damnation. To accomoplish his vision, Jane recruited the world class talents of conceptualist David Allcock, 3D pioneer Ray Zone, legendary illustrator Bernie Wrightson, and the iconic vision of Tim Bradstreet. Deep in the director's mind and a major visual influence on the film was the work of reknown illustrator Thomas Ott, whose 'silent' style of sequential story-telling and signature scratchboard illustration technique has brought him a world - wide legion of fans. It was Jane's dream to commission Ott to bring his style and craft to the project in a Graphic Novel format. In an effort to create a new experience, Jane had the artist adapt the original short story by Tab Murphy that inspired the film. This graphic presentation offers a unique perspective never before experienced by it's fans. Ott's adaptation is presented in his signature 'silent' format, with Tab Murphy's original short story immediately following the sequential art. Also included is a 40 page bonus section packed with previsualization art, production photography, and marketing art and design.

Together with the film, this volume represents the COMPLETE Dark Country experience.

RAW STUDIOS