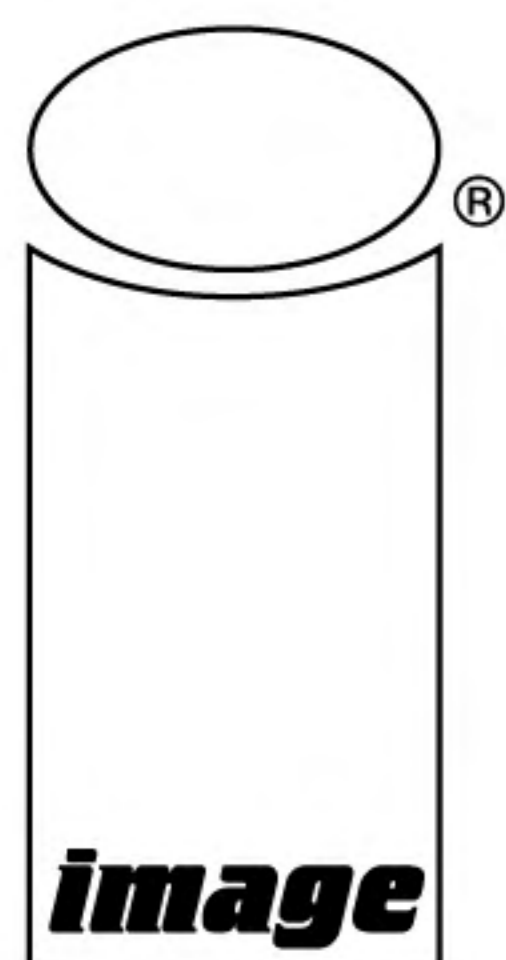
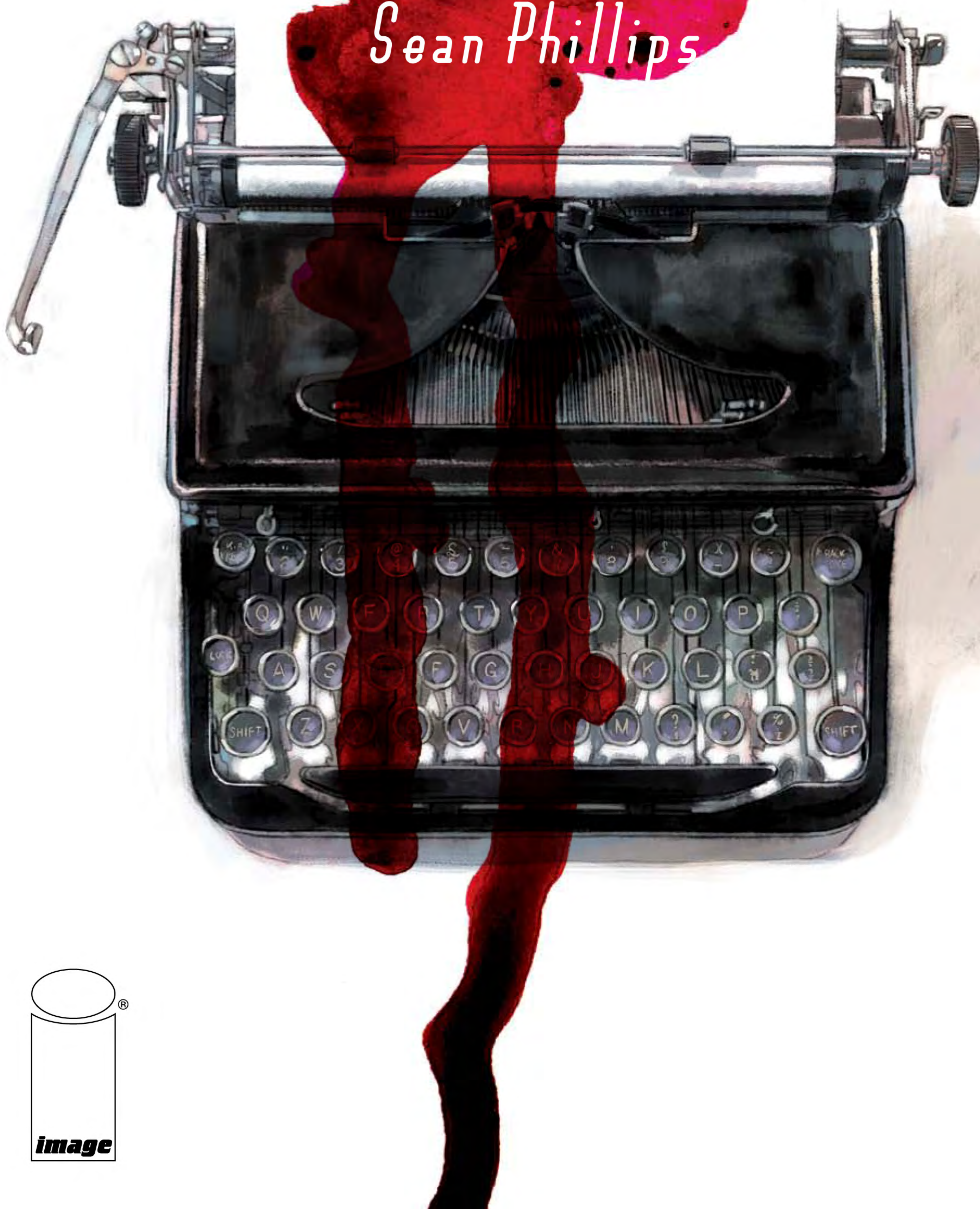


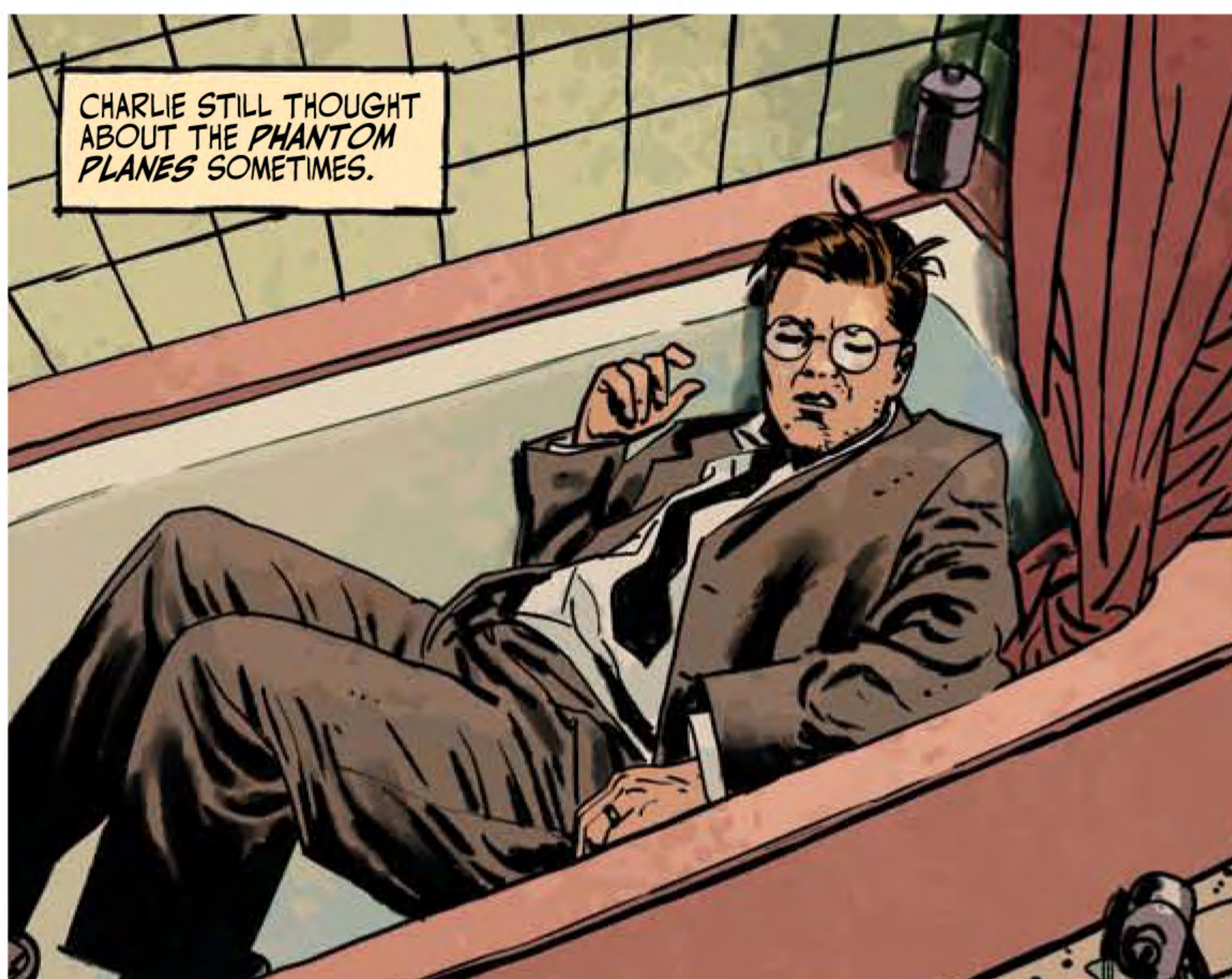
Number One

The
FADE OUT

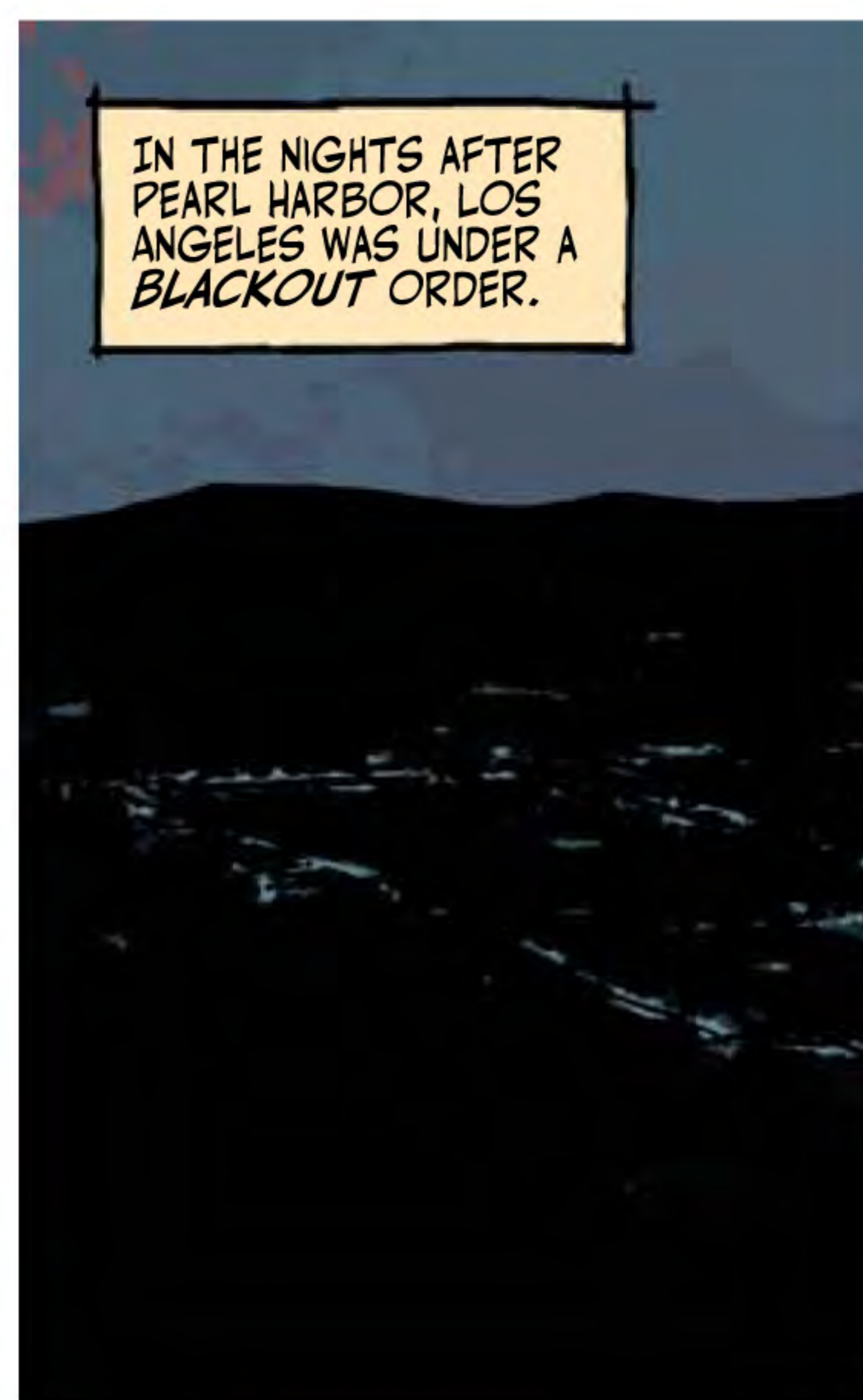
*Ed Brubaker
Sean Phillips*



The Wild Party



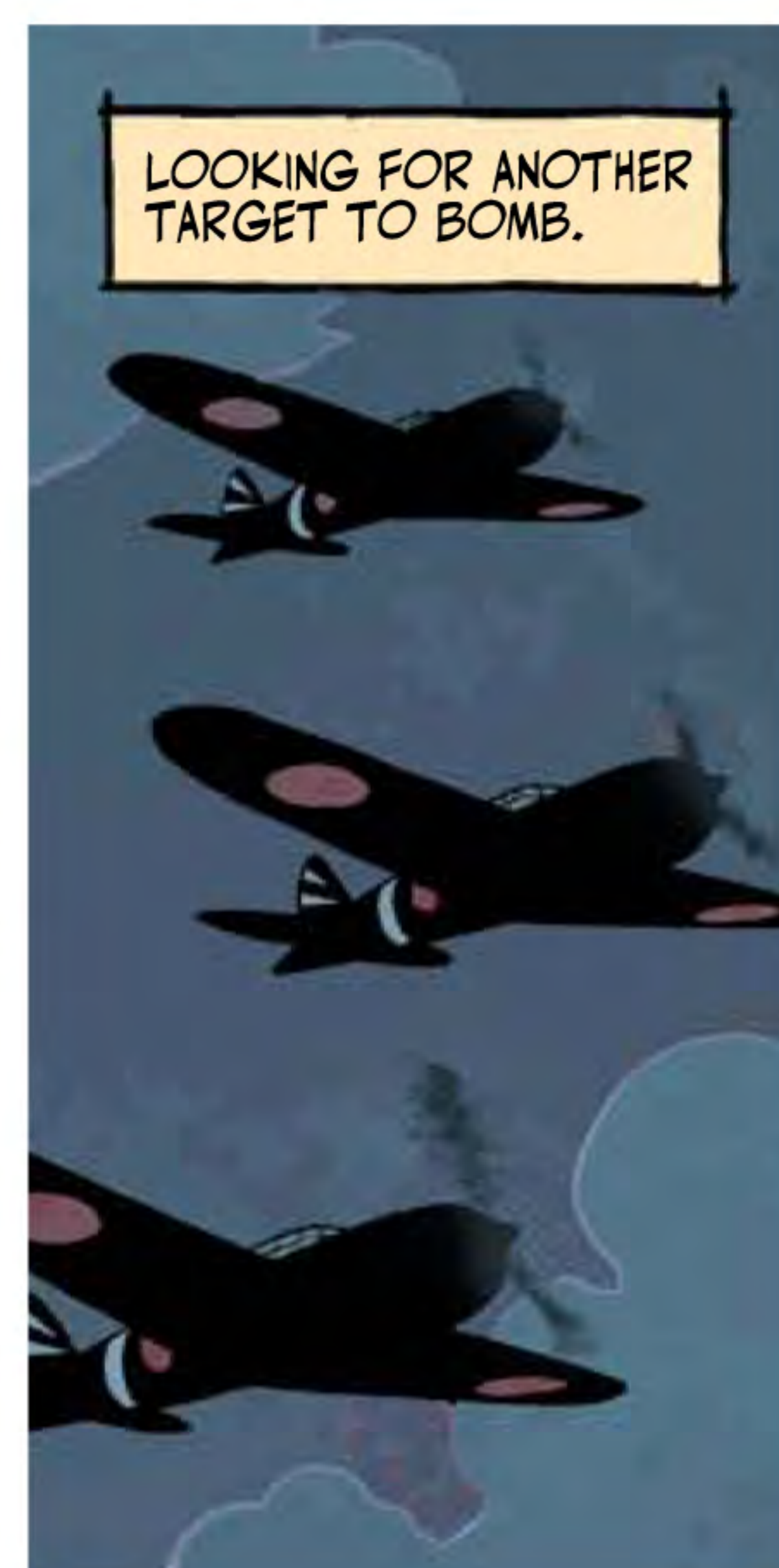
CHARLIE STILL THOUGHT ABOUT THE *PHANTOM PLANES* SOMETIMES.



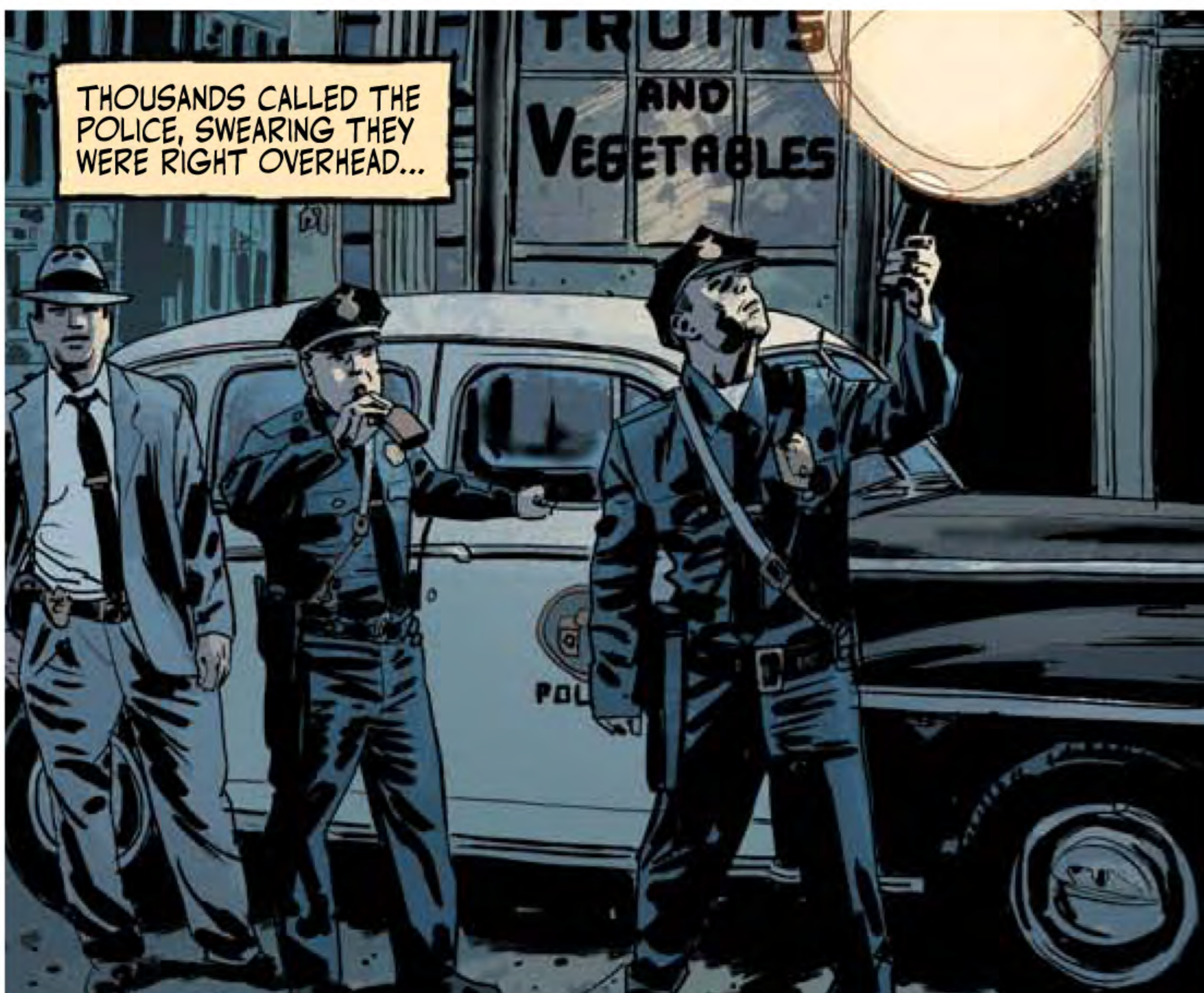
IN THE NIGHTS AFTER PEARL HARBOR, LOS ANGELES WAS UNDER A *BLACKOUT ORDER*.



BUT AFTER MIDNIGHT, SQUADRONS OF JAPANESE FIGHTER PLANES WERE HEARD BUZZING BACK AND FORTH OVER THE CITY...



LOOKING FOR ANOTHER TARGET TO BOMB.



THOUSANDS CALLED THE POLICE, SWEARING THEY WERE RIGHT OVERHEAD...



CHARLIE'S SOON-TO-BE EX-WIFE HID IN THE CLOSET, TOO TERRIFIED TO SLEEP.



HE DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING, THOUGH.



THERE WERE NO *PLANES* UP IN THOSE SKIES, JUST STARS YOU NORMALLY COULDN'T SEE.



THIS WAS JUST HOW IT WAS HERE...



...SOMETHING IN THE AIR MADE IT EASIER TO BELIEVE LIES.

...UHH... FUHH...

Los Angeles
Fall - 1948

...HELLO...?

CHARLIE KNEW THIS PLACE. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE LITTLE BUNGALOWS IN STUDIO CITY.

WHERE THEY STASHED CONTRACT PLAYERS, TO KEEP THEM CLOSE TO SET.

BUT HOW DID HE GET THERE?

WHAT DID HE REMEMBER FROM LAST NIGHT?

OH YEAH... THE PARTY.

WATCH IT, JACK.

OH, THE GREAT WHITE HUNTER... RIGHT.

EVEN BOB HOPE COULD KICK YOUR ASS.



CAN YOU GET UP, GIL?

NOT JUST THIS SECOND, NO...



I THREW MY *BACK* OUT TRYING TO DECK BOB HOPE.



GIL, EVEN *BEFORE* HIS LIFE FELL APART HE WAS THE BIGGEST TROUBLE MAGNET CHARLIE HAD EVER MET.



BACK WHEN THEY WERE FRIENDS, THAT WAS CHARLIE'S FAVORITE THING ABOUT HIM.



NOW IT WAS JUST THE REASON HE WAS LATE TO EARL RATH'S PARTY.



THE PARTY HE CAN'T REMEMBER.

NO WAIT...

