

MILESTONE FOREVER

Dwayne McDuffie
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Page

Black page. DHARMA'S VISION BUBBLES are visible at the edges of the pages. There will be *lots* of type down the center of the page, so put the globes mostly around the edges, almost like a border but not so obviously.

TYPESET CAPTION

"Sometimes I have a dream. I am in the cave in Plato's Republic sitting on the cold ground, my hands and feet bound in iron chains. Through an opening at the end of the cave, I see a turnstile and a neon sign. It flashes 'World's Oldest Operating Metaphor'. This does not, however, appear to be a very popular attraction anymore."

—Jeremy Levin

TYPESET CAPTION

"The secret to Funk is to pay attention."

—George Clinton

Page

&

Page

DOUBLE PAGE SPLASH.

The page is almost entirely BLACK, broken up by different-sized Dharma VISION GLOBES, floating in the mostly empty blackness. These globes each have a picture of a different Milestone Hero inside, usually head and shoulder shots. We see ICON, HARDWARE, STATIC, XOMBI, KOBALT, DMZ, KWAI, DONNER, BLITZEN, DEATHWISH, et cetera, all inside individual globes. This could be pick up art from old Milestone comics, if that eases the artist's load. DHARMA'S HAND holds one of the globes.

LOGO
MILESTONE® FOREVER

**Page
&
Page**

DOUBLE PAGE SPLASH

DHARMA dominates the composition, brooding in the darkness of Shadowspire, his hand still holding the globe from the Previous page. Around him floats various-sized VISION GLOBES. In the globes are images of HARDWARE, ROCKET, STATIC, DEATHWISH, CATHOLIC GIRL, IOTA, ORO, PAGE, BRICKHOUSE, et cetera. Leave room for too many captions.

DHARMA CAPTION

I am **Dharma**. It is about to begin...

DHARMA CAPTION

What's done is done, what **will** be done is done.

DHARMA CAPTION

The entirety of history, past, present and future, is an open book to me.

DHARMA CAPTION

All except for one maddening page.

DHARMA CAPTION

This is my power. And my curse:
A single moment in all of history that *I cannot see*.

DHARMA CAPTION

And beyond that moment, I see only doom.

TITLE

"Meta Fictions"

BOTTOM CAPTION

(typeset)

*"Time forks, perpetually into
countless futures. In one of
them, I am your enemy."*

—Jorge Luis Borges

Page

Panel 1

Close on Dharma's face. He's looking at a large Vision Globe, filled with FIRE. His face is lit by the light from the fire.

DHARMA CAPTION

My omniscience is marred by a
blind spot. But after that
lapse, the future is clear.

Panel 2

Closer on the Globe. We can see the Earth floating in space, over half-consumed in fire.

DHARMA CAPTION

*Dhosha. The great Evil.
Suffering. **Fire**. The death of a
Universe.*

Panel 3

Wider, Dharma thrusts the fiery globe away from himself.

DHARMA CAPTION

And I alone am responsible.

Page

Panel 1

Closer, Dharma's head hangs in frustration. We can see other globes, hovering about.

DHARMA CAPTION

But how? A decision I make? A
decision I **fail** to make?

DHARMA CAPTION

I do not know.

Panel 2

Vision Globes swarm around Dharma, who has regained his composure.

DHARMA CAPTION

Nevertheless, I have **prepared** for this day.

Panel 3

A thoughtful Dharma is surrounded by Vision Globes of STATIC, WISE SON BOOGIEMAN, IRON BUTTERFLY, AQUAMARIA, THIRD RAIL.

DHARMA CAPTION

I have gathered around myself beings of great power, in the hope that one of them might be able to **stop** me, should that be required.

Page

Panel 1

Big panel. Dharma looks at a Vision Globe with an image from THE BIG BANG (perhaps one of John Paul's panels from Static #1, with the gas everywhere and gangbangs running).

DHARMA CAPTION

For I have **already** done evil in the name of a **greater good**.

DHARMA CAPTION

At the "Big Bang" I killed hundreds of innocents, in order to create a mere handful of potential heroes.

Panel 2

Dharma is looking at globes with Static, Icon, Rocket, Hardware, Xombi and Kobalt.

DHARMA CAPTION

Perhaps it will be one of my own creations that saves me. Or ruins me.

Panel 3

Dharma's reaching for the Rocket Globe.

DHARMA CAPTION

I am blind to my ultimate
decision.

Panel 4

Big panel, Dharma holds and views a LARGE VISION
GLOBE containing an image of ROCKET'S FACE (this is a
detail from the image from the next page), looking
down at something off panel. The globe is panel right
and in the foreground.

DHARMA CAPTION

My hope, slim though it may be,
is that by observing the **final**
fates of those who could **oppose**
me, I might somehow deduce my
own **future**.

DHARMA CAPTION

Time fast-forwards, then plays
itself out.

DHARMA CAPTION

The future unfolds, as it must...

Page

SPLASH

ROCKET, back in her original costume, is standing
over her Grandmother's GRAVE MARKER (this is not a
headstone. It's a simple stone plaque, set into the
ground). The Marker reads AMELIA HYLAND. Flowers left
on the grave conveniently obscure birth and death
dates.

ROCKET CAPTION

Although the marker's been down
for a couple of weeks, this is
the first I've seen of it. I
haven't been out much, lately.

ROCKET CAPTION

But that's gotta **stop**. Time to
shake this thing and get over
myself.

ROCKET CAPTION

My name is **Raquel Ervin**. When I'm in my work clothes, they call me **Rocket**.

ROCKET CAPTION

And it's past time I got back to business.

OFF-PANEL SPEAKER

Rocket?—

LOGO

ICON

TITLE

"Blood Will Tell"

TYPESET TEXT

"To dream the fantastic is to dream the dream of the Other."
—Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Page

Panel 1

New angle reveals Rocket turning to see FLASHBACK.

FLASHBACK

—I'm really sorry to hear about your grandmother.

ROCKET

Flashback? What are you doing here?

Panel 2

Favoring Flashback, a wry smile on her face.

FLASHBACK

Looking for **you**. You haven't been around very much since your grandmother passed. You're about to blow your cover.

Panel 3

On Rocket, surprised.

ROCKET

Cover? I don't even know what you're talking about.

Panel 4

Flashback puts a hand on Rocket's shoulder. Rocket is confused.

FLASHBACK

Oh, **please**! I already figured out your so-called secret identity. You think I don't know what you're really up to?

ROCKET

Then **why**...?

Panel 5

Favoring a shrugging Flashback.

FLASHBACK

Cause I **like** you. It's not that big a deal. The Blood Syndicate's **full** of undercovers, these days.

Panel 6

Flashback has her arm around Rocket's shoulders.

FLASHBACK

What we **don't** have enough of are **friends**.

Page

Panel 1

BIG PANEL. Rocket and Flashback are flying through the sky.

FLASHBACK

Why come you're back to wearing your old costume? Don't you like the one I got you?

Panel 2

Close on Rocket.

ROCKET

I like it fine. It's just ... it seems **right** to wear this now.

FLASHBACK

I don't get it.

Panel 3

On Rocket, grim.

ROCKET

Me either, really. I just got this **feeling**. Like you only get so much time in the world. I want to go out the same way I came in.

Panel 4

Flashback and Rocket are flying away from the camera and towards the FACTORY.

FLASHBACK

Don't get all morbid on me, girl. We both got **plenty** of life left in us.

Page

Panel 1

Small panel. Exterior CITY HALL.

CAPTION

Dakota City Hall...

TALKING BUILDING

I **can't** say I'm **happy** to see you.—

Panel 2

Big panel. The MAYOR'S OFFICE. MAYOR JEFFERSON is seated calmly behind her desk. She doesn't even look up from her papers. HOLOCAUST is standing in her still-smoldering doorway.

CAPTION

Her Honor, Mayor Thomassina Jefferson, presiding...

MAYOR

—I can't even say I'm
surprised, Leonard.

HOLOCAUST

(signature balloon)

My name is **Holocaust**!

Panel 3

Close on the Mayor, finally looking up from her papers.

MAYOR

You're name is **Leonard**. I named you and if you don't straighten up, I'll **spank** you. **Again**.

Panel 4

On Holocaust's face. His eyes are literally burning.

HOLOCAUST

Listen to me, Bitch. Organized crime in this city is **mine**. You keep getting in my way, I'll **do** you, Mother or no.

Page

Panel 1

Big Flashback panel. Grey tone colors, except for the blood. A TWELVE YEAR OLD LREONARD looks insane, standing over the broken body of his FATHER. Leonard stares at his hands, and the blood that runs down them.

HOLOCAUST CAPTION

"On my twelfth birthday, I killed my no-account father with my own hands."

Panel 2

Back in the Present. Holocaust looms, leaning into the terrified face of the Mayor.

HOLOCAUST

I got no problem completing the set.

Panel 3

New angle, Holocaust reacts to an off-panel speaker.

OFF PANEL ICON

I think you're **projecting**,
Leonard.—

HOLOCAUST

Who...?

Page

Panel 1

Big Panel. New angle reveals cocky ICON.

ICON

—You're not really mad at your
mother. You're mad at me.

HOLOCAUST

Icon!

Panel 2

The two men face off.

HOLOCAUST

Guess I'm supposed to be so
pissed that I throw down with
you here and now? One on one?

Panel 3

Favoring smiling Holocaust.

HOLOCAUST

I got **nothing** to prove to you,
old man. Just a score to
settle. But that's **later**. Right
now, I'm leaving.

Page

Panel 1

Icon bars Holocaust's way.

ICON

I don't remember giving you
permission to leave, Lenoard.

Panel 2

Holocaust, his back to the picture window. The sky behind him is filling with fire.

HOLOCAUST

I don't remember **asking**.

Panel 3

Big Panel. The window behind Holocaust EXPLODES INWARD. An enormous fireball just flew in. Holly is a silhouette at the center of the fire. Icon is already moving towards the Mayor.

ICON

(burst)

Get down!

SFX

KA THOOOMM

Panel 4

The Mayor on her knees, covering her head with her hands. Icon crouches over her, protecting her from the fire and falling glass all around them. SILENT PANEL.

Page

Panel 1

Wide on the room. Suddenly the fire is gone. So is Holocaust. Don't let us get a good look at the floor. SILENT PANEL.

Panel 2

Closer on Icon and the Mayor, they are standing now, she is shaky, leaning on him for support.

MAYOR

We could have been **killed**!

Panel 3

Favoring a thoughtful Icon.

ICON

No. I doubt it.

Panel 4

Big Panel. Wide on the room from above. Still burning in the carpet is the message: NEXT TIME IS THE LAST TIME!

ICON

He was just leaving me a message.

Page

Panel 1

Exterior the Factory.

TALKING BUILDING

That's it, Rocket—

Panel 2

In Flashback's room (it's neat and clean, now). Flashback is holding up a small shoebox full of crack pipes and vials. Rocket looks at it askance.

FLASHBACK

—That's **all** of them.

ROCKET

All?

Panel 3

Rocket is dumping the shoebox in a trash can.

ROCKET

This is a big step, Sara. I'm proud of you.

Panel 4

Rocket BLASTS the garbage can with a bolt of her signature energy. It's vaporized as Flashback looks on.

SFX

ZRRRAKK

Panel 5

Close enough to see Flashback holding up one crack pipe.

FLASHBACK

I kept one, Rocket. To remind
me not to do it.

Page

Panel 1

Cocking her finger like a toy gun. Rocket fires a
thin beam of her signature energy at the pipe. It
shatters in a surprised Flashback's hand.

SFX

PLINNK

ROCKET

Tell you what, you **need**
reminding, you call **me**.
Anytime.

Panel 2

Flash hugs Rocket, both are smiling.

FLASHBACK

You know, if I want to start
again, breaking that **pipe** won't
make any difference.

ROCKET

This is true. How about I break
your neck?

Panel 3

New angle. Both react to an off-panel speaker.

HOLOCAUST

(off-panel)

It's **time**, Rocket.—

Panel 4

Wide to reveal Holocaust.

HOLOCAUST

—You gotta take a stand.

Panel 5

Holocaust towers over a nervous Rocket, his arm
around her shoulders.

HOLOCAUST

I'm about to take your
ex-partner out of the box. I
gotta know, you still part of
the Blood Syndicate?

Page

Panel 1

On Rocket's face. She looks like she's lying.

ROCKET

Yeah.

Panel 2

Holocaust is looking at Rocket. He doesn't buy her
story.

OFF-PANEL HOLOCAUST

I owe you a little sump'in
sump'in for how you helped
Flashback—

Panel 3

Big Panel. Holocaust is shooting a huge WALL OF FLAME
at Rocket.

HOLOCAUST

—But girl, you can't **lie** for
~~444~~ !

SFX

FOOOOOSH

Panel 4

Flashback reacts as Rocket is trapped in a huge
cylinder of flame.

FLASHBACK

(burst)

Holly, **no**!

Panel 5

Holocaust pulls Flashback away from the flame.

HOLOCAUST

She'll be fine, long as she
don't try to get out. What's
coming next, I don't want her
involved.

Page

Panel 1

Outside. High in the sky, we're looking down as Icon
flies through the canons between skyscrapers mid-air,
puzzled. He's looking for something.

Panel 2

Silent panel. Similar to previous, Icon is gone.

Panel 3

Outside. High in the sky, FADE floats in mid-air,
puzzled. He's looking for something.

FADE CAPTION

How did he **lose** me? I was right
behind him.

OFF-PANEL SPEAKER

I'm over here, **Fade**.

Panel 4

New angle reveals Icon, hovering nearby above Fade,
arms folded confidently.

ICON

If your intent was stealth, you
failed miserably. And if it was
to lure me into an ambush, I'm
doubly disappointed.

Panel 5

Favoring Fade.

ICON

You don't belong with
Holocaust. If you want out, I
promise I'll help you protect
your sister.

FADE

I hear you, Icon. But things
ain't always how we want them
to be. Sometimes they ain't
even how they **look**.

Page

Panel 1

Fade flies away from Icon, down towards the factory.
Icon follows behind.

FADE

We both know what has to be
done. So let's do it.

ICON CAPTION

I had always felt, in my heart
of hearts, that many of the
Blood Syndicate had the
potential to be **heroes**.

Panel 2

Tight as Fade passes through the wall of the Factory.

ICON CAPTION

None, I thought, had more
potential than this ... temporal
smear of a man.

Panel 3

Icon lands next to the wall Fade just passed
harmlessly through.

ICON CAPTION

This isn't the first time I've
misjudged someone.

Panel 4

Icon blasts a hole in the wall with a one-fisted
power blast, ala Space Ghost.

ICON CAPTION

Nor, I suppose, will it be the
last.

SFX
CHOOOMM

Panel 5

From inside, Icon steps through the hole he made.

OFF-PANEL HOLOCAUST
Come in, Icon.—

Page

Panel 1

SPLASH. ICON is surrounded by the blood syndicate;
FADE, FLASHBACK, BOOGIEMAN, TARMACK, BAD BETTY, HARM,
BUBBASAUR and Holocaust. Captions label the team.

HOLOCAUST
—We were **expecting** you.

HOLOCAUST
Have you met the new BLOOD
SYNDICATE?

CAPTION
Fade.

CAPTION
Flashback.

CAPTION
Boogieman.

CAPTION
Tarmack.

CAPTION
Bad Betty.

CAPTION
Harm.

CAPTION
Bubbasaur.

Page

Panel 1

Closer, a smug Holocaust in Icon's face.

HOLOCAUST

See! You thought **I** was the
fool. But who's here without
any back-up, **now**?

OFF-PANEL HARDWARE

I give up, Holocaust.—

Panel 2

Holocaust reacts to the towering figure in silhouette
behind Icon. It's HARDWARE 2.0 but his eyes are the
only visible detail.

HARDWARE

—Who?

**Page
&
Page**

Double page SPLASH

The money shot, this is the last bow of the Dakota
universe. Make it good. A powerful Icon is backed up
by an imposing Hardware, a cocky Rocket and a
crackling STATIC, who is hovering above on his disk.

OFF-PANEL HOLOCAUST

Hardware? Static?—

Page

Panel 1

Closer. Holocaust is puzzled by Rocket.

HOLOCAUST

—And **Rocket**? But I left you—

ROCKET

In a column of **fire**. I know. It
burned through the **floor**,
Genius.

Panel 2

On a raging Holocaust.

HOLOCAUST

It don't matter. The four of
you **still** can't beat us all.

OFF PANEL SPEAKER

Five, Holocaust—

Panel 3

Wide to reveal Harm, stepping up to Holocaust.

HARM

—There's **five** of us.

HOLOCAUST

Don't be stupid, **Harm**.

Panel 4

Panel left Holocaust is dressing panel right Harm
down.

HOLOCAUST

This ain't no time for a power
play. You're way out of your
league.

Panel 5

Harm is flashing a badge.

HARM

What I **am**, Dickweed, is a
federal agent. And your fiery
ass is **busted**.

Page

Panel 1

Wide. Powerful Holocaust bursts into flames. Harm
flinches back, but he's still tough.

HOLOCAUST

Don't matter, cop. **None** of you
got a weapon to stop **me**.

Panel 2

Foreground Icon points at his temple to demonstrate.
Static is zooming along in the background nearby.

ICON

We have the best weapon of **all**,
Holocaust. Our **minds**.

STATIC

I'll say! My mind's where I
keep all my **retorts**.

Panel 3

Static dive bombs down towards Bad Betty, firing
LIGHTNING BOLTS from his hands.

STATIC

Dibs on the Bionic Woman!

STATIC

Nuhnunuhnuhnuh...Didididididid*

SFX

shrzzzzk

BOTTOM CAPTION

* Static's extremely poor
imitation of a "bionic" sound
effect.

-Editor

Panel 4

Bad Betty tears the metal floor up in front of her,
making a shield that blocks Static's lightning.

SFX

KRRREEUNK

STATIC

That is so **cool** when you do
that! Seriously, how much can
you lift?

BAD BETTY

Raaagh!

STATIC

What's the matter? You pull something?

Page

Panel 1

Hardware is wary, as Tarmack flows towards him, a living wave, with a giant, hate-filled face embedded in it.

HARDWARE

I got **this** one. What's it all about, **Alva**?

ALVA CAPTION

A **moment**, if you **please**.
Downloading files from Heroes
database... Ah!

Panel 2

Close on Hardware's face, a semi-transparent, holographic image of ALVA'S FACE (The Alva AI), is superimposed, nearby.

ALVA

His *nom de guerre* is **Tarmack**.
He is a **bang baby**, composed of
a substance comparable to
molten tar.

Panel 3

Hardware (no visible Alva) has one Omnicannon ready to fire. Tarmack is congealing into human form, and has one arm molded into the form of a huge sledge hammer. He's going to brain Hardware.

HARDWARE

Then I'll refrain from throwing
him into the briar patch. Pop
open a cold one, Alva.

ALVA CAPTION

Cryonic shells loaded, Curtis.

Panel 4

Hardware fires a shell into Tarmak's chest.

ALVA CAPTION
Omnicanon blast, on target.

SFX
POOMF

Panel 5

New angle shows Hardware looking at a flash-frozen Tarmack. Icicles drip from him, he was stopped in mid-swing. Alva's head floats nearby.

ALVA
Target frozen solid.

HARDWARE
Thank God.

ALVA
If **God** could do the tricks **we**
can, he'd be a **happy** man.

Page

Panel 1

Harm is punching the crap out of Bubbasaur.

SFX
KRAK

BUBBASAUR
Raaagh!

Panel 2

Harm stands over the fallen Bubbasaur, nursing the fist he just punched him with.

HARM
Nailed ya, you big, ugly,
purple-ass Barney wannabe!

HARM
Now, just give me two rounds
with the Wiggles and everybody
gets their DVRs back from the
toddlers.

Panel 3

Static has Bad Betty trapped in an electrical field, she's a silhouette, writhing in a lightning bolt.

STATIC

(wavy balloon with musical notes inside)

We're going to turn it onnnn!

We're going to bring you the pow-errr!

Panel 4

Static stands over a fallen Bad Betty, small sparks of electrical energy still crackling over her.

STATIC

C'mon Tin-Lizzie! You're not **singing** with me.

BAD BETTY

("weak" balloon)

Uhhhh...

STATIC

Spoilsport.

Page

Panel 1

Rocket, fists charged up and ready to blast, faces off with Flashback, who has her palms up, to ward Rocket off.

ROCKET

I wish it didn't have to be like this, Sara.

FLASHBACK

It don't. Just hold up a second!

Panel 2

Holocaust pointing at Icon. He is standing between Fade and Boogieman.

HOLOCAUST

Fade, Boogie! Grab Icon! Hold him while I burn him.

Panel 3

Favoring Icon, trying to calm the situation.

ICON

Stay out if this and you won't be harmed. This is between Holocaust and myself.

OFF-PANEL SPEAKER

Beg to **differ** with you, Big Man.—

Panel 4

On WISE SON. He's bald and hatless but wearing his shades. He's casually leaning against a wall, holding a cap

WISE SON

— This is between Holocaust and **me**.

HOLOCAUST

Wise Son!?!

Panel 5

Wise son is between Icon and Holocaust, looking up into Holocaust's enraged face.

WISE SON

No other. And since Tech-9 passed, **I've** been the rightful leader of the Blood Syndicate.

Page

Panel 1

On Wise Son, he's putting on Tech 9's hat on his head.

WISE SON

This is **Tech-9's** cap. And **I'm** wearing it, not you.

Panel 2

Favoring Wise Son, in Holocaust's face.

WISE SON

You thought the Blood Syndicate
was a gang, and its members a
bunch of gangsters. That ain't
all there is to it, bro. That
ain't **never** been all of it.
We're **family**.

Panel 3

Icon and Rocket are visible behind Wise Son as Wise
continues. Holocaust doesn't like this one bit.

WISE SON

A while back, Icon told me
there would always be **justice**
in the world, long as there
were people willing to **fight**
for it.

Panel 4

Close on Wise, he's calm, almost cocky.

WISE SON

As of today, the Blood
Syndicate is ready to fight.
What about **you**, Holly?

Panel 5

Holocaust whirls to see Fade, Boogieman and
Flashback, standing defiantly against him.

HOLOCAUST

You're **all** in on this! You're
all with him!

FADE

Oh, that's the **least** of it,
pendeja.

Page

SPLASH

Wise Son flanked by DMZ, THIRD RAIL, AQUAMARIA,
BRICKHOUSE, ORO, twelve year old NINA (Kwai) LAM,

holding her cat in her arms, and DOGG (in the foreground and panel left). They bad.

DOGG

Bow wow wow, yippie-yo,
yippie-yay, **bitch!**

CAPTION

Dogg.

CAPTION

DMZ.

CAPTION

Third Rail.

CAPTION

Aquamaria.

CAPTION

Brickhouse.

CAPTION

Oro.

CAPTION

Kwai.

WISE SON

So here's what it be like,
Holocaust. Turn yourself over
to the supercop there.

WISE SON

Or face **BLOOD SYNDICATE**
justice.

Page

Panel 1

Holocaust smiles down chillingly on Wise Son.

HOLOCAUST

I don't have to fight **all** of
you. All I have to do is beat
your sorry ass. Make your move,
punk.

WISE SON
Ladies first.

Panel 2

Holocaust clocks Wise Son with a vicious, flaming fist.

HOLOCAUST
I **challenge** your claim to leadership.

SFX
THOK

Panel 3

On the crowd. Hardware stands impassively. Rocket is holding Icon's arm to keep him back.

ICON
This has gone far enough!

HARDWARE
Not quite. Let it play out.

ROCKET
Listen to him. Wise has to **earn** their respect again.

Page

Panel 1

Wise Son is holding his jaw and smiling.

WISE SON
Challenge accepted, Holly. You and me, here and now, for the leadership of the Syndicate.

Panel 2

Holocaust smiles malevolently.

HOLOCAUST
You just made your last mistake.

Panel 3

Wise Son is on his ass, almost grinning.

WISE SON

Nah. I'm going to make lots more mistakes. It's just that takin' your punk-ass on ain't one of em.

Page

Panel 1

Holocaust punches Wise with a FLAMING FIST, turning his head with the impact.

HOLOCAUST

You think you can talk ~~444~~ to me!

WISE SON

Uh!

Panel 2

Same thing, other fist. Wise's head is turned the opposite way.

WISE SON

Unnn! Good shots, Holly-

Panel 3

Close on Wise, smiling, unharmed.

WISE SON

-- But you can't beat me. You know what my power is. **Nothing** can hurt me.

HOLOCAUST

Nothing so **far**.

Page

Panel 1

Wise punches Holocaust, knocking him back.

WISE SON

I always had a thought about you, big man.

SFX

KRAK

Panel 2

Wise throws another right.

WISE SON

-- You're big as hell, and
strong as a mother ~~444~~, but you
got no **heart**.

Panel 3

And another.

WISE SON

Nobody ever **tries** you, people
fold when you just look at them
wrong.

SFX

KRAK

Page

Panel 1

Wise lands another head shot.

WISE SON

But, I ain't going away. I'm
standing up to your bull ~~444~~,
just like Tech-9 did.

SFX

KRAK

Panel 2

Holocaust is shrugging off the punch.

WISE SON

And I think you're going down.

Panel 3

Holocaust and Wise Son grapple hand-to hand,
Holocaust has the advantage and is pressing down.
Wise is on one knee, trying to get back up on his
feet. Holocaust is BURNING.

HOLOCAUST

Burn, Wise Son!

Page

Panel 1

Similar to previous, but the flames are hotter and spreading.

HOLOCAUST

Burn!

Panel 2

Similar to previous, but the flames are MUCH hotter. Both men are visible only as silhouettes.

HOLOCAUST

Burn!

Panel 3

Even hotter, it hurts to look at.

HOLOCAUST

Burrrr—

Page

Panel 1

From above. Wise Son stands at the center of a charred circle on the floor. Holocaust's bones are white.

Panel 2

Wise Son is surprised.

WISE SON

Damn. I think I was starting to **feel** that.

Panel 3

The Blood Syndicate is following Wise Son, walking away. Dogg's tail wags vigorously.

WISE SON

C'mon, Bloods. Let's go home.

DOGG

Did you **see** that? He burned his own ass up! You are **great**, Wise son! **Great!**

DOGG

(small lettering)

Are we gonna eat soon?

Page

Panel 1

Outside the Factory, Harm, Static, Hardware, Icon and Rocket are gathered.

CAPTION

Later...

STATIC

Well, the ending was kinda creepy but all in all not a bad day's work.

Panel 2

Favoring sorrowful Icon.

ICON

The cost of our victory was too high.

HARM

Not from where I'm standing.

Panel 3

Favoring Harm.

HARM

They say if you don't have anything good to say about the dead, you should keep quiet. I say, "He's dead, **good.**"

Panel 4

Hardware has one hand on Icon's shoulder as he ticks off accomplishments with his other hand. Rocket is sitting on the curb, looking at Hardware.

HARDWARE

Look, Ike. We've dealt organized crime in Dakota a

crippling blow. Even the Blood
Syndicate have come over to the
side of the righteous.

Panel 5

Snarky Rocket asides to Hardware.

ROCKET

At least as much as the **next**
guy.

HARDWARE

Touché.

Page

Panel 1

Favoring Rocket. Icon rubs his chin, considering.

ROCKET

He **is** right, though. We
accomplished a **lot** together.

ICON

I must admit, I am impressed at
how well we worked as a **team**.
Perhaps it's time we formed a
more **permanent** alliance.

Panel 2

On Harm, Hardware and an excited Static. Harm is
waving the idea off.

STATIC

Oh, how cool is **this**? Can we
have our Secret Headquarters on
the **Moon**?

HARDWARE

You're **yanking** me, right?

HARM

Uh, I'm not really what you'd
call a **team player**...

Panel 3

Icon has changed his mind.

ICON

No, you're right. Silly notion.
I don't know what came over me.

Panel 4

Static is crushed. Panel right Rocket dominates the panel, she pats Static on the shoulder.

STATIC

Awww!

ROCKET

Cheer up, Static. It's like they say in that crappy old slave movie, "Tomorrow is another day."

ROCKET

You **never** know what the future might bring.

Page

Panel 1

Shadowspire. Dharma is sitting, holding the Vision Globe of Rocket's Face, looking down at something off-globe.

DHARMA CAPTION

How succinct.

DHARMA CAPTION

Rocket's great destiny still lies ahead of her. I'd dared hope to be a small part of it. But she is not the one.

Panel 2

Closer on thoughtful Dharma.

DHARMA CAPTION

And so very few possibilities remain.

IRON BUTTERFLY

(Off-Panel)

Harry?

Panel 3

Dharma turns to see IRON BUTTERFLY. She is carrying a metal TRAY OF FOOD. There is a plate, a teapot and china cup on the tray. There are no Vision Globes here.

DHARMA

No, **Iron Butterfly**. I am
Dharma, now.

IRON BUTTERFLY

Whatever you choose to call
yourself, you still require
food.

Page

Panel 1

Dharma, still sitting, takes the teapot and cup. The tray is "melting" away, it's *part* of Iron Butterfly's armor. She is holding the plate and smiling wryly.

IRON BUTTERFLY

You cannot expect to brood
properly on an empty stomach.

Panel 2

Dharma scowls at Iron Butterfly.

DHARMA

Do not attempt to lighten my
mood. The dark day I've spoken
of is upon us.

DHARMA

My blind spot looms ever
closer, obscuring more and more
of my vision.

Panel 3

Favoring Iron Butterfly. She has placed a hand gently on Dharma's shoulder. Dharma rests the plate in his lap.

DHARMA

The future is no longer
predetermined. I have reached a

fork in the path. And I cannot
choose. I am paralyzed.

Page

Panel 1

Iron Butterfly tries to calm him down.

IRON BUTTERFLY

Everyone makes choices without
knowing how they will turn out
ahead of time.

Panel 2

Dharma leaps to his feet, propelling the tea pot, cup
and plate towards Iron Butterfly. She doesn't flinch.
Part of her armor warps into a SHIELD and the dishes
break harmlessly against it.

SFX

(dishes shattering)

KSSSSH

DHARMA

(burst)

Not **me**!

Panel 3

DHARMA

Not for stakes like **these**.

IRON BUTTERFLY

Make your choice, Harry. If
you're **wrong**, I **promise** I'll
stop you.

Page

SPLASH

Foreground panel right Dharma has turned his back on
background Iron Butterfly. He gazes down into a large
Vision Globe, with an image of a PARAKEET IN FLIGHT
against a sky-blue background inside of it. There is
a smaller Globe with STATIC in it floaating nearby,
and smaller still, globes with Xombi, Kobalt, Marissa
Rahm, and whoever else fits the composition.

DHARMA

No, Kahina. You **won't**.

DHARMA CAPTION

But, with the grace of whatever
god will listen, perhaps one of
the others will...

BOTTOM CAPTION

To be concluded...