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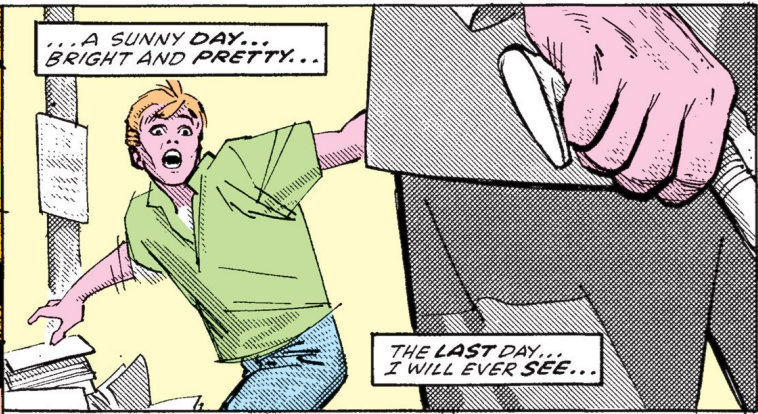




I NEVER BELIEVED... THAT BUSINESS OF YOUR LIFE FLASHING IN FRONT OF YOU BEFORE YOU DIE...

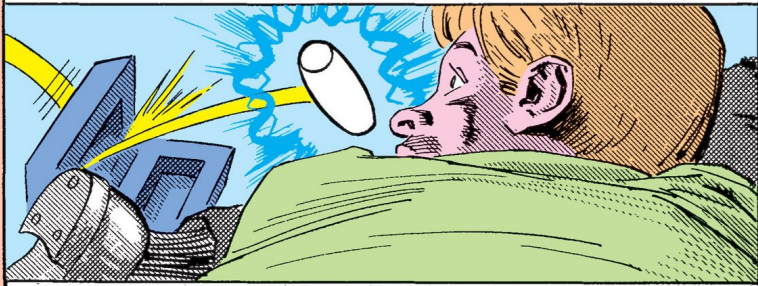
...NEVER THOUGHT... THERE COULD BE ENOUGH TIME... THERE'S TOO MUCH TO LIFE...

...BUT THERE'S REALLY... HORRIBLY LITTLE... THAT COUNTS...



...A SUNNY DAY... BRIGHT AND PRETTY...

THE LAST DAY... I WILL EVER SEE...



-- BRAVEST THING I EVER SAW! BUT HIS FACE-- HIS EYES...

THAT THING THAT FELL FROM THE TRUCK-- IS IT--

LOOK AT HIS FACE--

-- THAT THING-- IS IT--

-- IS IT RADIOACTIVE?

YES...



...YES, IT COURSES
THROUGH MY BLOOD.
IT CHANGES ME.

MY BLOOD...
IT BURNS...

...IT SPURTS FROM A HEART
THAT'S POUNDING SO LOUDLY
IT'S TRYING TO BURST FROM
MY CHEST--

-- MY BLOOD-- IT GUSHES
THROUGH HIGH POWER HOSES
AND SLAMS AGAINST THE
BASE OF MY SKULL.

EVERYTHING HURTS.

I DON'T KNOW
WHERE I AM.

SANDPAPER SCRAPES MY SKIN EVERY
TIME I MOVE-- NO-- NOT SANDPAPER--
SHEETS-- STARCHED SHEETS--

-- I'M IN A BED--
SOMEWHERE--

-- AND THE SMELLS...

... CHEMICAL SMELLS.
DISINFECTANTS.

HOSPITAL, I'M IN
A HOSPITAL.

THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN ON SCREAM-
ING HINGES, PEOPLE COME AND GO,
SMELLING LIKE BATHTUBS FULL OF
SWEAT-- SMELLING LIKE EATEN FOOD
-- LIKE ITALIAN SAUCES AND HALF-
DIGESTED EGGS--

-- THEY STAB ME WITH LONG SHARP
NEEDLES, THEY FILL ME WITH DRUGS.
BUT THE DRUGS DON'T FOOL ME.
I KNOW THEY CUT MY FACE.

I CAN FEEL IT YOU IDIOTS--
CAN'T YOU SEE THERE'S NOTHING
YOU CAN DO TO STOP ME FROM
FEELING IT?

EVERYTHING HURTS.

YOU CAN ONLY STAND SO MUCH.

I WRITHE AND SCREAM--

--BUT EVEN MY OWN SCREAM IS TOO LOUD SO I HAVE TO STOP--

--AND ALL I WANT IS TO DIE...

... BUT I DON'T DIE, SO I HAVE TO MAKE DO.

AFTER A TIME I SOMEHOW SHUT OUT JUST ENOUGH... AFTER A TIME IT'S ONLY AGONY.

THEN, PAST THE FUMES OF WHATEVER IT IS THEY USE TO CLEAN THE FLOOR, THERE COMES A WAVE OF WHISKEY --A MEGAPHONE VOICE...

SON?

CAN YOU HEAR ME, SON?

HEAR YOU-- WHAT DO YOU EXPECT-- YOU'RE SHOUTING--

THE DOCTORS.. THEY SAY YOU'LL BE FINE, SON.

--LIKE ALL THE REST-- BREATHES LIKE HE'S A HUNDRED FEET TALL...

YOU'RE A HERO, BOY.

... SO BIG... IT'S LIKE I'M IN HIM... IT'S...

YOU JUST REST NOW.

... IS THAT MY FATHER?

DAD'S ANXIETY PAINTS THE WORLD RED. HE FINALLY LEAVES AND IT'S ANOTHER NIGHT OF TERROR AND THE ENDLESS COUGHING OF SOMEONE DOWN THE HALL.

THEN... SOFT STEPS ... A SOFT WOMAN'S SCENT...

... A SOFT VOICE...

WHY DOES IT HURT?

SO LOUD... SO SMELLY... EVERYTHING...

I SEE...

SHE BREATHES. DOWN THE HALL THE COUGHING SUBSIDES.

WHEN SHE SPEAKS AGAIN IT'S A GENTLE WHISPER.

THIS... MAY NOT BE A BAD THING. WHAT YOU COULD DO WITH IT...

DO... WITH IT?

JUST THINK OF IT. IT'S A BLESSING, MATT.

IT'S YOURS. YOURS.

AND IT'S OUR SECRET. DON'T TELL ANYONE.

PROMISE ME NOW...

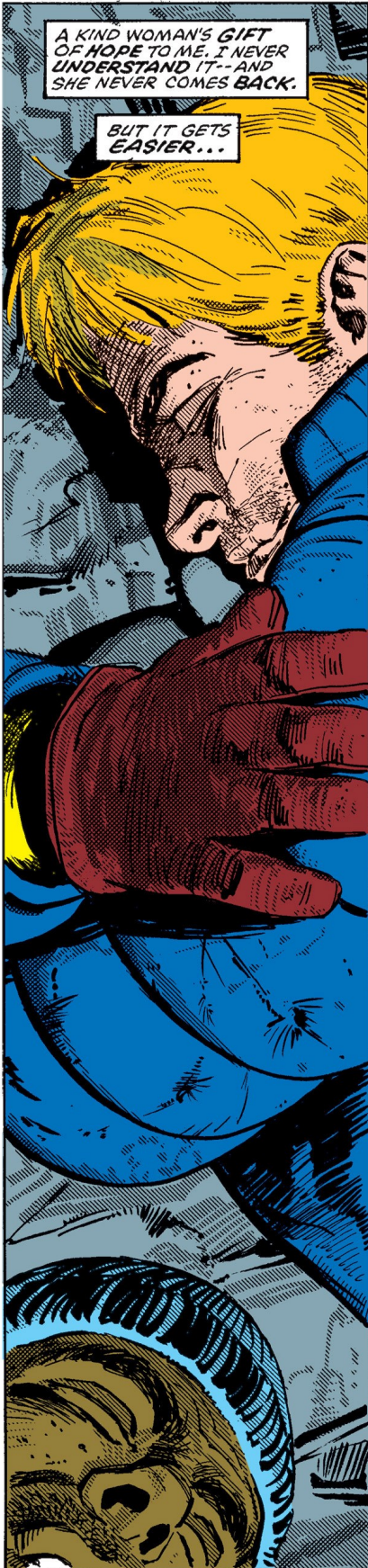
WHO ARE YOU?

LIPS, WARM... KISSING MY FOREHEAD... LOVING...

... AND SOMETHING HARD, DANGLING FROM HER NECK...

IT'S A CROSS... MADE OF GOLD...

PROMISE ME...



A KIND WOMAN'S GIFT OF HOPE TO ME. I NEVER UNDERSTAND IT-- AND SHE NEVER COMES BACK.

BUT IT GETS EASIER...

IT'S OKAY, DAD. I'M AWAKE.

SON... HOW'D YOU KNOW I WAS HERE?

COULD HEAR YOU A MILE OFF. SIT DOWN, DAD.

WE HAVE TO TALK, MATT. MAN TO MAN.

I'M ALL EARS, DAD.

IT'S ABOUT THE ACCIDENT, SON. YOU WERE HIT BY SOMETHING SOME CORPORATION WAS DRIVING THROUGH TOWN. RIGHT THROUGH TOWN.

THEY WON'T SAY IF IT WAS RADIOACTIVE. THEY WON'T EVEN TALK TO ME.
IT MESSED YOU UP PRETTY BADLY, MATT. YOUR FACE... WELL, I'M AMAZED WHAT THEY WERE ABLE TO DO WITH IT. YOU'RE GOING TO LOOK GOOD AS NEW. BUT...

...IT'S YOUR EYES, SON. THEY...

I KNOW I'M BLIND, DAD. THERE AREN'T ANY BANDAGES ON MY EYES-- AND I'VE NEVER HEARD OF A HOSPITAL WITHOUT LIGHTS.

YOU... YOU'RE TAKING IT WELL, SON...

YES...

...I PROMISED...

...I KEEP MY HEIGHTENED SENSES SECRET...EVEN FROM DAD...

...I FIND A TEACHER WHO HELPS ME MASTER THEM...

...AND DAD IS MURDERED AND I BECOME DAREDEVIL AND FIGHT CRIME...

...AND OTHER THINGS HAPPEN. A HOME. A CAREER...

...BUT THE OTHER THINGS ARE GONE NOW SO THEY DON'T MATTER...

...GONE...THE KINGPIN TOOK THEM AWAY. FOUND OUT MY SECRET IDENTITY AND TOOK EVERYTHING AWAY...

...AND I ATTACKED HIM...

...AND HE KILLED ME.

Stan Lee presents



PARIAH!

by FRANK MILLER and DAVID MAZZUCHELLI

CHRISTIE SCHEELE
COLORS

JOE ROSEN
LETTERS

RALPH MACCHIO
EDITOR

JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR IN CHIEF



UPTOWN, WHERE PEOPLE WITH MONEY SPEND IT...

REMEMBER CHRIST WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY

I WAS SURE I'D GET ALL THE SHOPPING DONE EARLY THIS YEAR...

YOU'VE BEEN BUSY, FOGGY. WHAT WITH ALL THOSE JOB OFFERS TO SORT THROUGH.



TO SAVE US ALL FROM SATAN'S POWER

NO KIDDING. LIKE SOMEBODY DROPPED THEM DOWN MY CHIMNEY.

THAT'S A JOKE, GLORI. HERE IN AMERICA WE TELL THE KIDS THAT CHRISTMAS GIFTS COME FROM SANTA CLAUS. HE'S THIS BIG FAT GUY WHO RIDES A SLEIGH--

EVEN IN IRELAND WE HEARD OF SANTA CLAUS, FOGGY.



SPOSE YOU HAVE.

LET'S SEE. TOOK CARE OF MOM AND DAD AND CINDY AND BECKY...

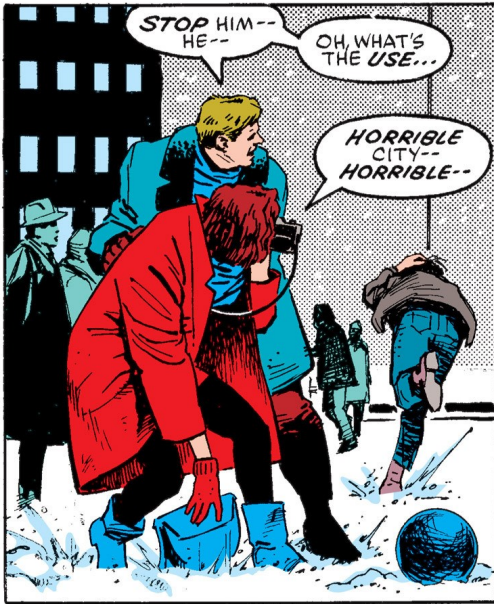
NO--



NO-- YE WON'T--

GLORI!





NO, I'M NOT DEAD.

NOT YET.

NOT AS LONG ... AS I KEEP MOVING...

My EDITOR wants something SWEET for the CHRISTMAS EVE edition-- something about LITTLE GIRLS and PUPPIES.

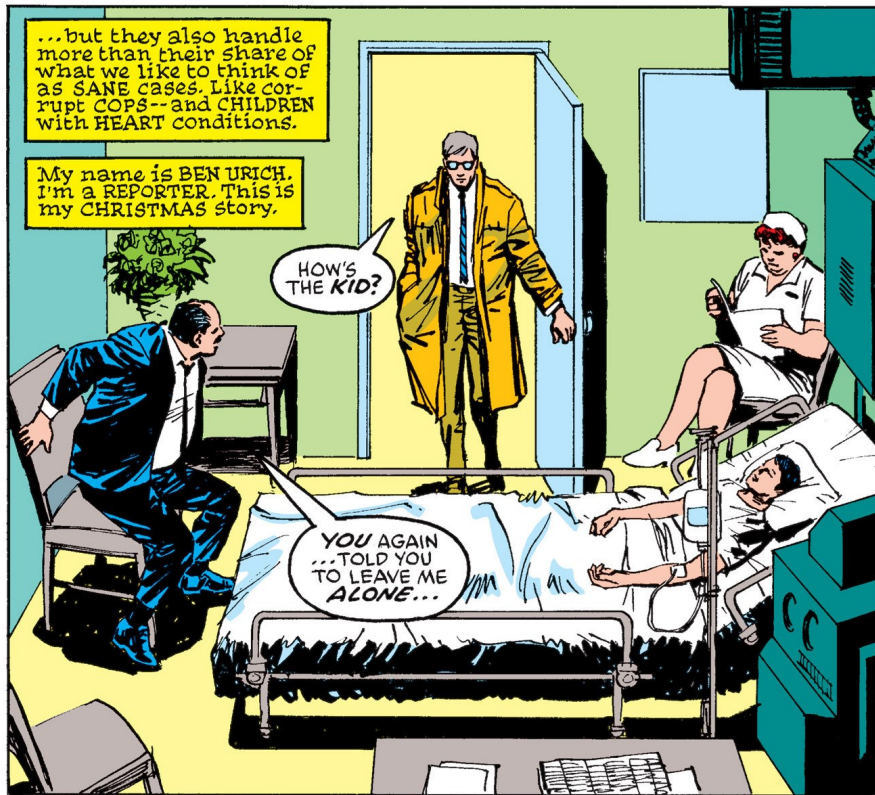
And here I am at BELLEVUE.

FORGET what you've heard about BELLEVUE. It's NOT a MENTAL institution. It's a HOSPITAL. Sure, they treat lots of emotionally DISTURBED patients...



...but they also handle more than their share of what we like to think of as SANE cases. Like corrupt COPS-- and CHILDREN with HEART conditions.

My name is BEN URICH. I'm a REPORTER. This is my CHRISTMAS story.







CHRISTMAS EVE--HOW CAN IT BE CHRISTMAS EVE WHEN IT'S SO HOT--

--CHRISTMAS IS SNOW AND FIRE-PLACES AND LOVED ONES AND PRESENTS--

--IT ISN'T THE MEXICAN SUN AND QUAKING FROM HEAD TO TOE FROM HEROIN WITHDRAWAL--



--IT ISN'T ROBBING A BLIND MAN--THE SECOND I'VE ROBBED,THINKS KAREN PAGE--

--MATT--I ROBBED MATT TOO--SOLD HIS SECRET IDENTITY FOR A FIX--

--AND NOW I NEED ANOTHER FIX AND I NEED TO GET TO NEW YORK AND I NEED MATT TO SAVE ME FROM MEN WHO ARE TRYING TO KILL ME-- I NEED MONEY--

--THE SECOND BLIND MAN I'VE ROBBED--BUT THIS ONE CATCHES ME--



--SCREAMS AND WON'T STOP SCREAMING--



--KEEP MOVING--

--DON'T THINK--

--THE KILLERS CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND--





KEEP MOVING...

I MISS YOU **TOO**, MOM. IT'S... WELL, IT'S **MATT**-- YOU KNOW, MY **PARTNER**-- OR AT LEAST HE **USED** TO BE MY **PARTNER**-- HE'S IN A LOT OF **TROUBLE**. IT'S KIND OF HARD TO **EXPLAIN**...



... BUT AS LONG AS THERE'S A **CHANCE** I MIGHT **HEAR** FROM HIM... I'M GLAD YOU **UNDERSTAND**, MOM...

... OH, THINGS ARE GOING **REAL WELL**. I'VE GOTTEN SEVERAL **JOB OFFERS**... YES, I KNOW YOU SAID I WOULD. ONE IN PARTICULAR LOOKS QUITE **GOOD**. ALMOST **TOO GOOD**... NO, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I MEANT BY THAT...

... AND, WELL, IT'S NOT JUST **THAT**, MOM. YOU SEE, I'VE MET A **GIRL**... SHE'S REAL **NICE**...



JEEZ, TURK. I MEAN WE COULD'VE **BOUGHT** THE SUITS.

WITH **WHAT**? WE BEEN **TAPPED** SINCE THE **KINGPIN** FROZE US OUT OF WORK.

HURRY UP AND GET **DRESSED**, GROTTO.

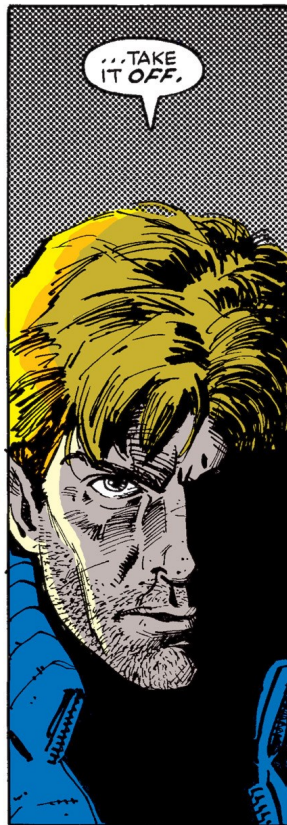


I DON'T KNOW, I MEAN, **SANTA CLAUS**...

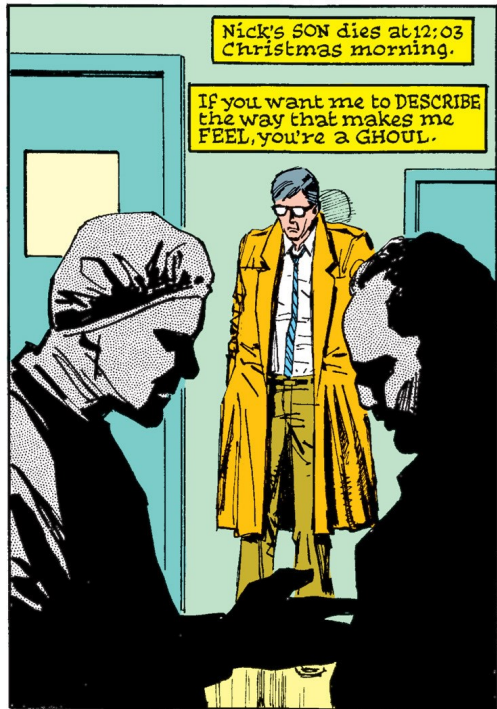
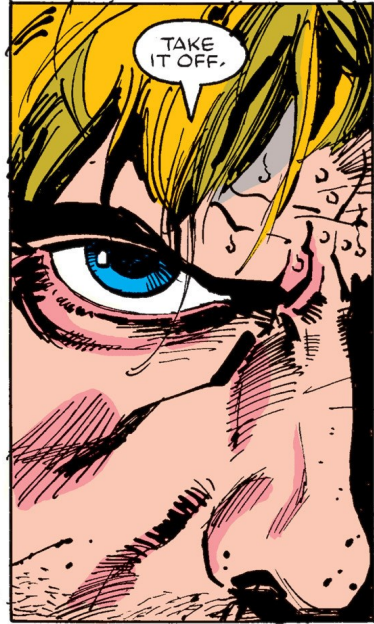
SHUT UP, NOW WE SHLEP TO THE **UPPER EAST SIDE**. THE **RICH** ONES GIVE US **MONEY**-- AND THEY FEEL BETTER ABOUT BEING **RICH**-- AND WE FEEL BETTER ALL **AROUND**.

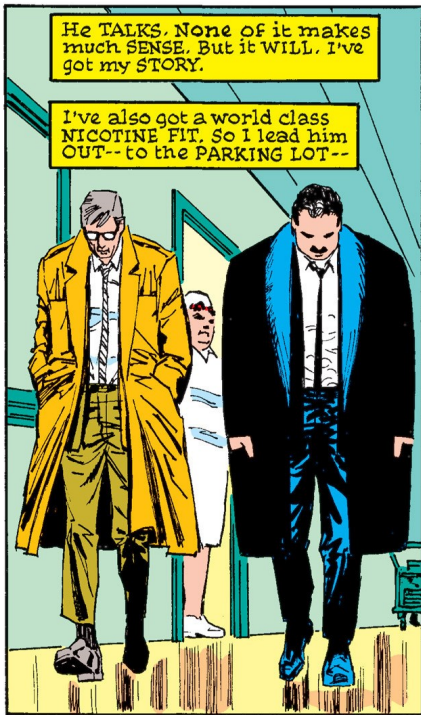
IT'S THE **CHRISTMAS SPIRIT**.

TAKE...



... TAKE IT OFF,





He TALKS. None of it makes much SENSE. But it WILL. I've got my STORY.

I've also got a world class NICOTINE FIT. So I lead him OUT--to the PARKING LOT--



-- where I don't EXPECT to have to Face any grouchy NURSES.



IT'S NOT JUST THE KNIFE WOUND--IT'S THAT RIB OF MINE THAT POPPED LIKE A WISHBONE WHEN THE KING-PIN SLUGGED ME-- IT HAD THE DECENCY TO STAY WHERE IT BELONGS--

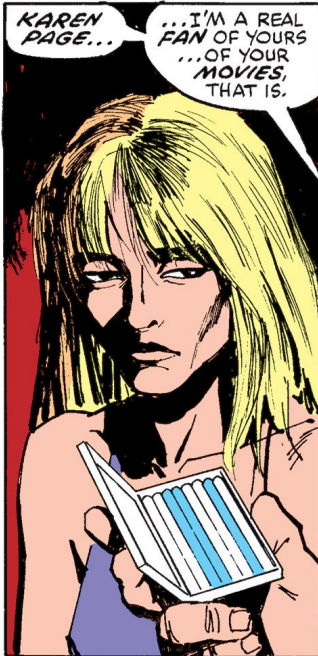
-- UNTIL THAT CAR HIT ME...

...NOW IT'S ALL LOOSE AND JAGGED AND EVERY TIME I MOVE IT CUTS AND GOUGES...



... I KEEP WALKING...

... JUST BECAUSE IT'S HARD TO...



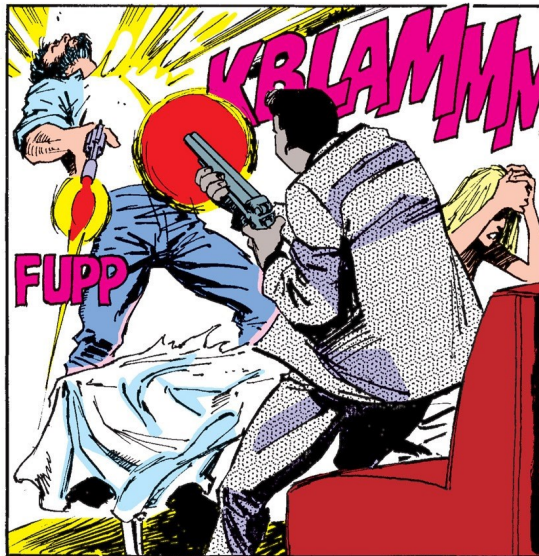
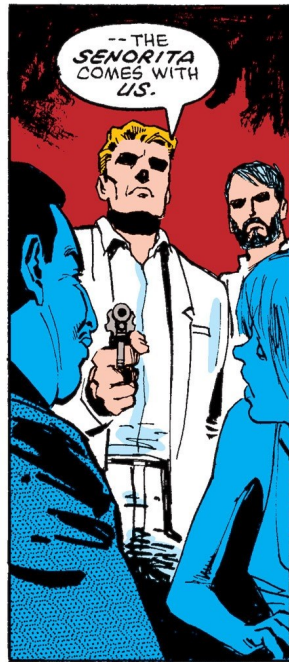
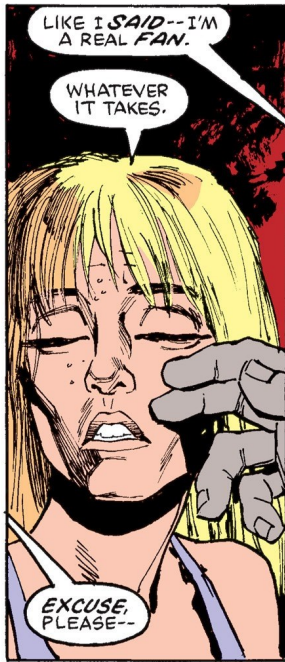
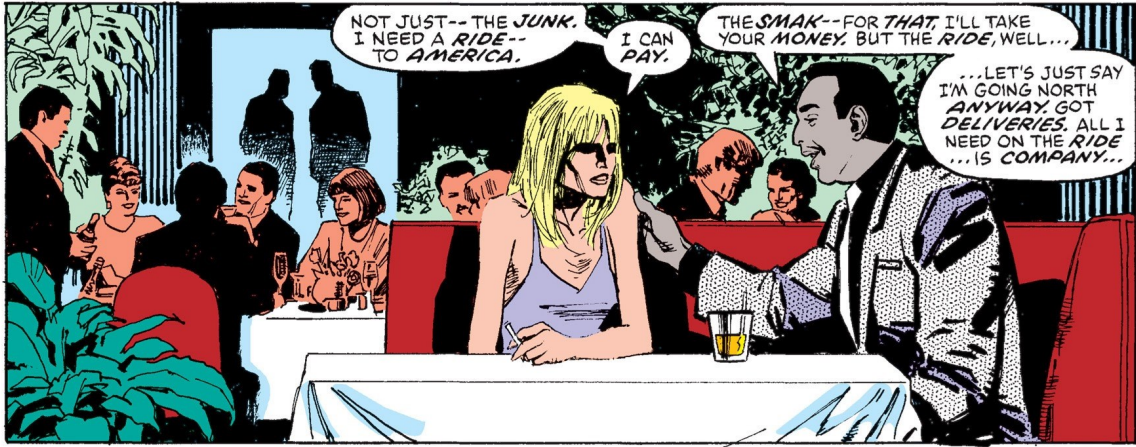
KAREN PAGE...

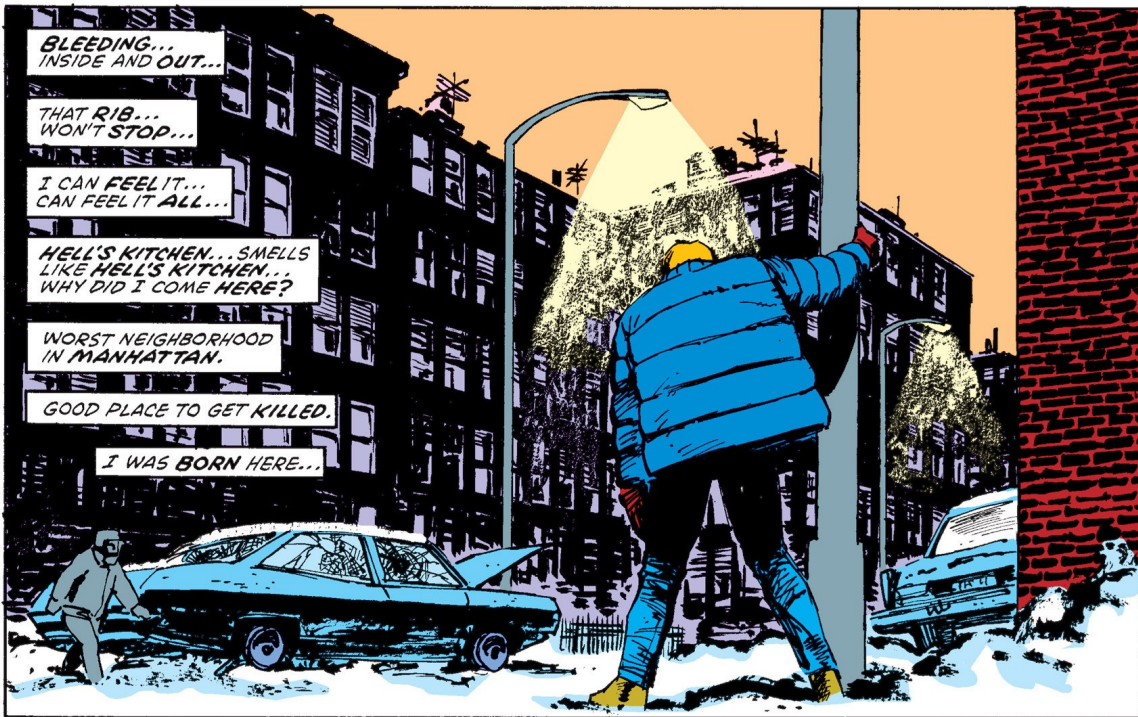
... I'M A REAL FAN OF YOURS ... OF YOUR MOVIES, THAT IS.



I NEED--

I CAN SEE WHAT YOU NEED.





*BLEEDING...
INSIDE AND OUT...*

*THAT RIB...
WON'T STOP...*

*I CAN FEEL IT...
CAN FEEL IT ALL...*

*HELL'S KITCHEN... SMELLS
LIKE HELL'S KITCHEN...
WHY DID I COME HERE?*

*WORST NEIGHBORHOOD
IN MANHATTAN.*

GOOD PLACE TO GET KILLED.

I WAS BORN HERE...



*... RIGHT DOWN THIS
STREET. MY FATHER'S
HOME...*

*MY HOME. THE
ONLY HOME...
I HAVE LEFT...*



*OH, FOGGY--
YE SHOULDN'T--*

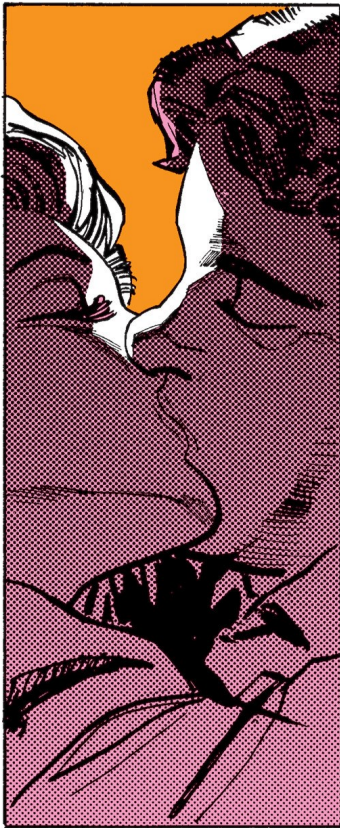
*--YE REALLY
SHOULDN'T
HAVE...*



*OH, FOGGY... IT'S
SO BEAUTIFUL--*



*--SURE AND IT COST
YOU A FORTUNE...*



THE WIND IS COLD. BLOWS FAST ACROSS THE EMPTY LOT.

WHEN... DID THEY TEAR MY HOME DOWN?

FATHER, THEY TORE IT DOWN. THEY TORE IT DOWN.

FATHER. THE GYM.

THE GYM.

IT WILL STILL BE WHERE IT WAS.

IT HAS TO BE...



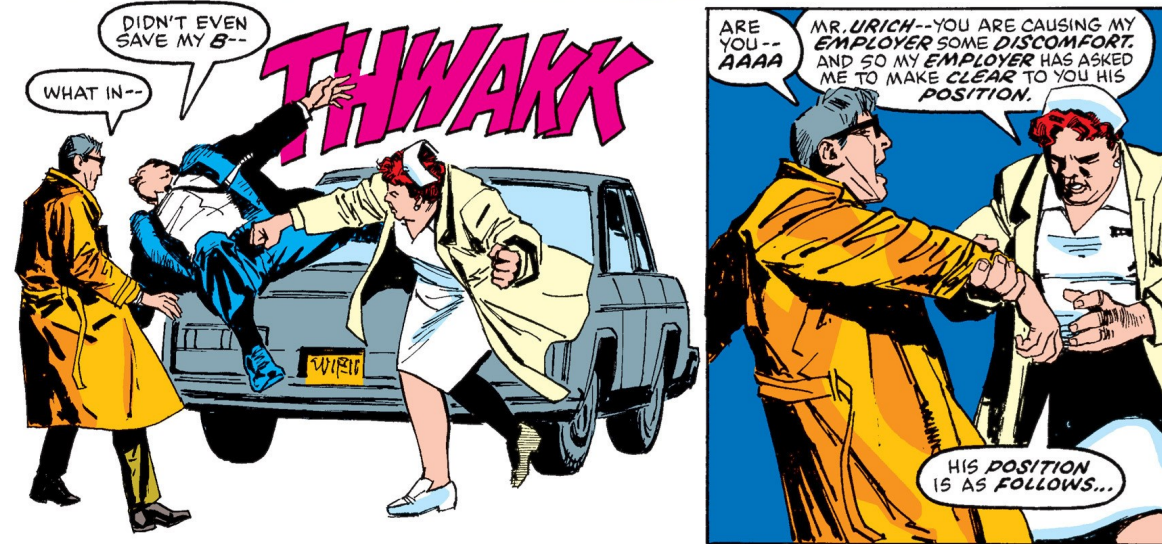
The CIGARETTE tastes AWFUL.

It's LIKE that sometimes.

GUESS IT WAS THE KINGPIN THAT MADE THE FRAME. DIDN'T KNOW THE GUY I SPOKE TO.

SOLD OUT. TWENTY YEARS WITHOUT FIXING A TICKET AND I SELL OUT AND IT DOESN'T EVEN SAVE MY BOY.

HEY-- IT'S GOT TO BE OKAY TO SMOKE OUT HERE...



DIDN'T EVEN SAVE MY B--

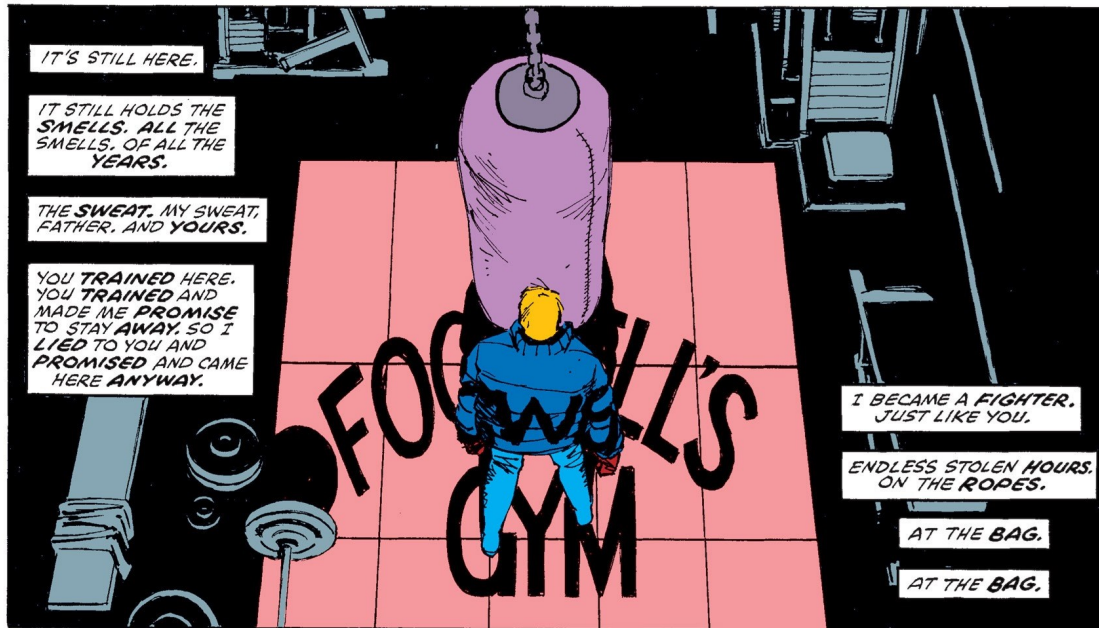
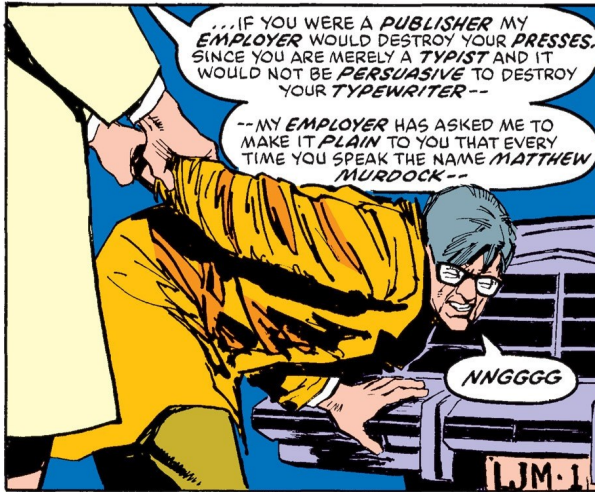
WHAT IN--

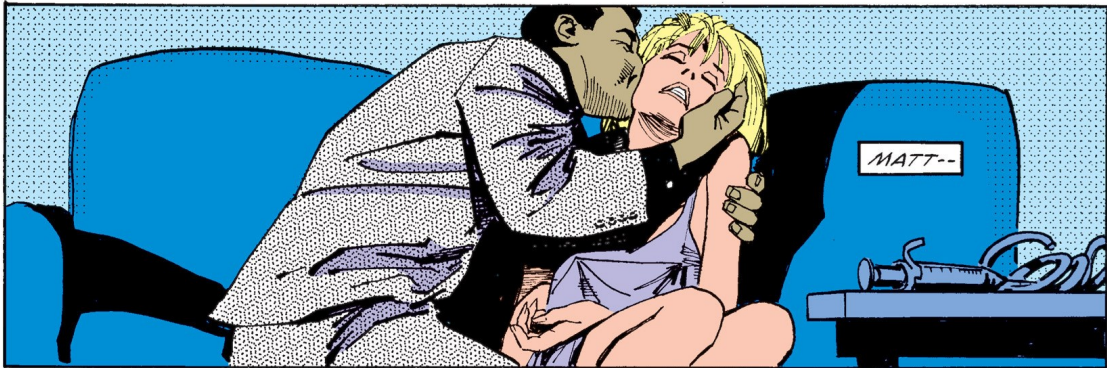
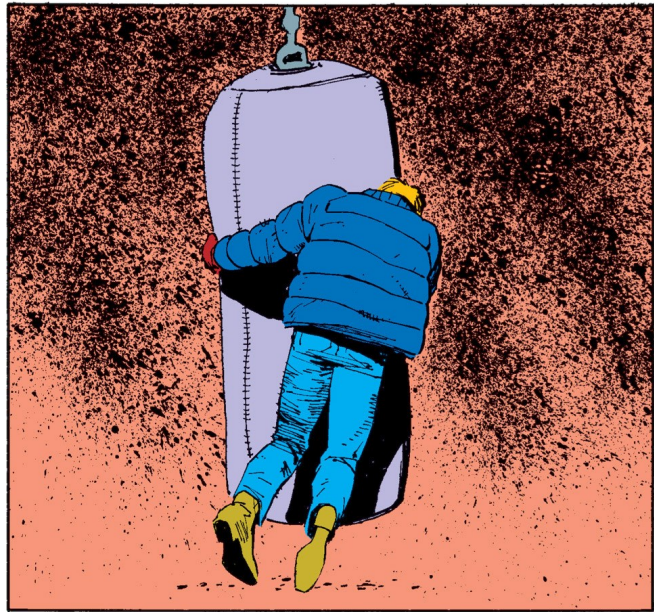
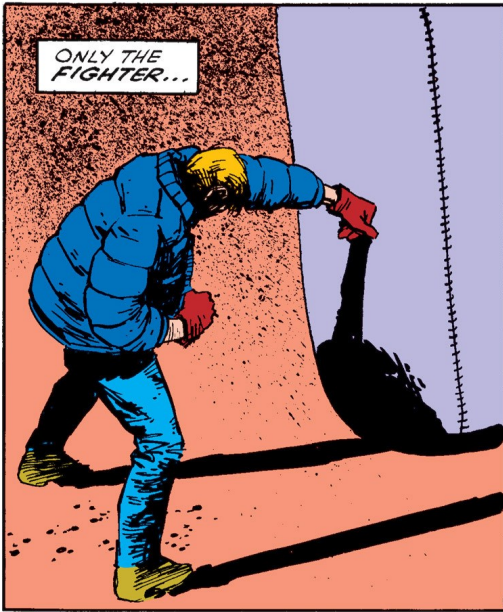
THWAKK

ARE YOU-- AAAA

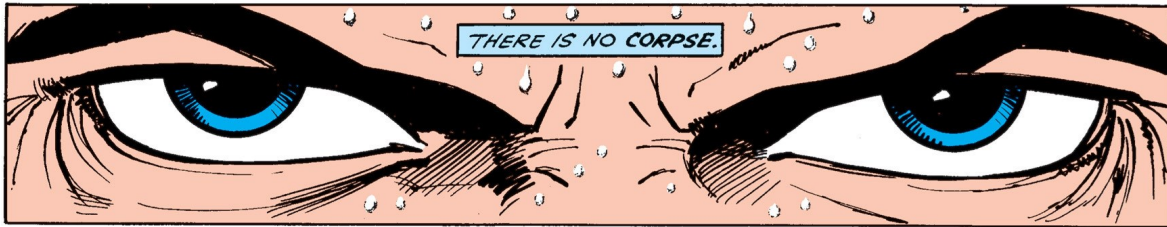
MR. URICH-- YOU ARE CAUSING MY EMPLOYER SOME DISCOMFORT. AND SO MY EMPLOYER HAS ASKED ME TO MAKE CLEAR TO YOU HIS POSITION.

HIS POSITION IS AS FOLLOWS...

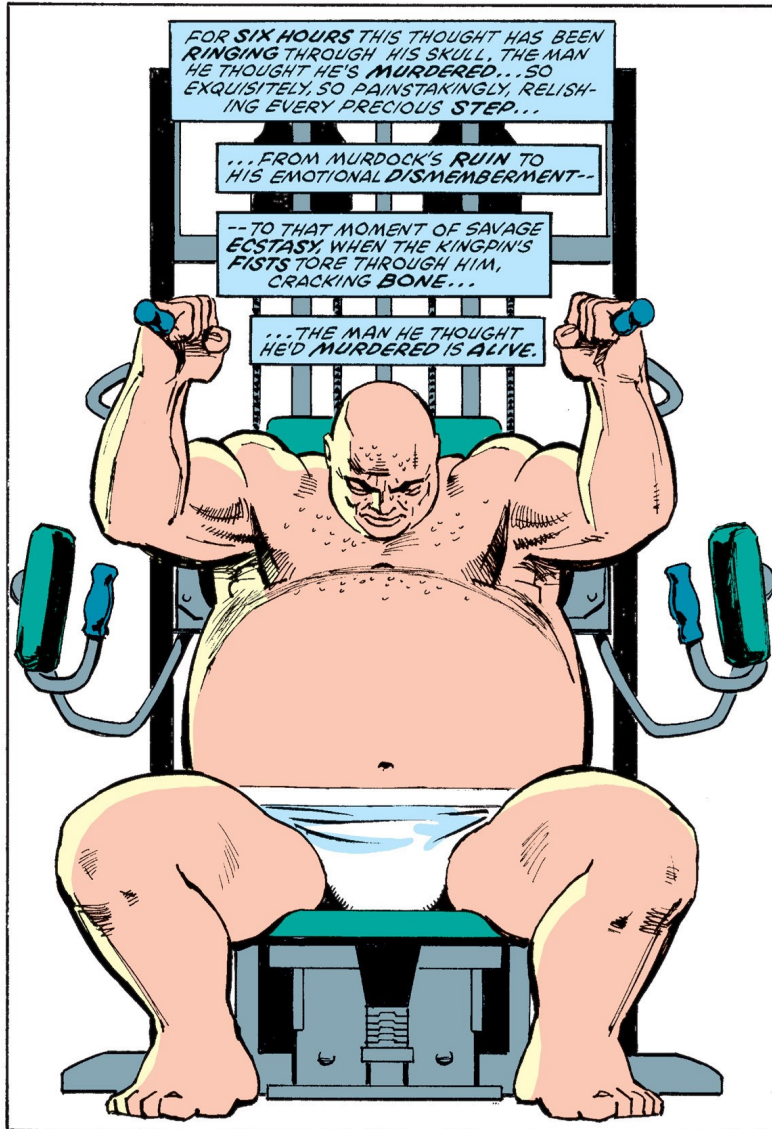








THERE IS NO CORPSE.

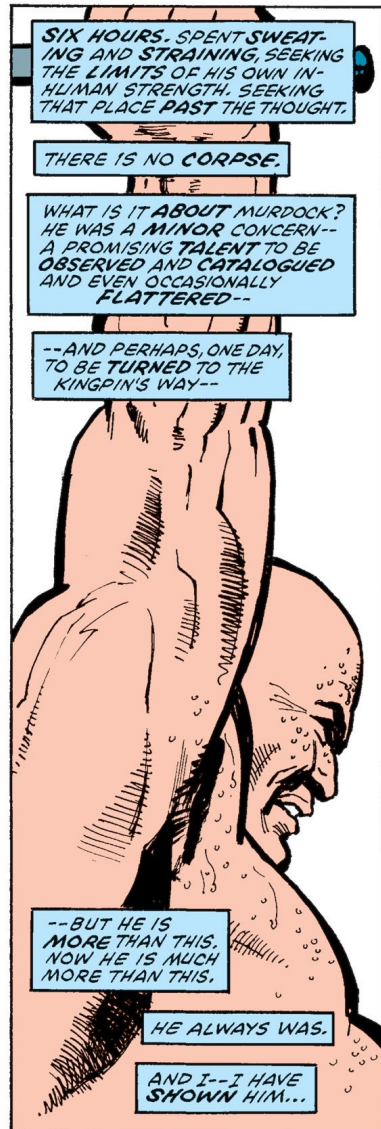


FOR SIX HOURS THIS THOUGHT HAS BEEN RINGING THROUGH HIS SKULL. THE MAN HE THOUGHT HE'S MURDERED... SO EXQUISITELY, SO PAINSTAKINGLY, RELISHING EVERY PRECIOUS STEP...

... FROM MURDOCK'S RUIN TO HIS EMOTIONAL DISMEMBERMENT--

-- TO THAT MOMENT OF SAVAGE ECSTASY, WHEN THE KINGPIN'S FISTS TORE THROUGH HIM, CRACKING BONE...

... THE MAN HE THOUGHT HE'D MURDERED IS ALIVE.



SIX HOURS. SPENT SWEATING AND STRAINING, SEEKING THE LIMITS OF HIS OWN IN-HUMAN STRENGTH, SEEKING THAT PLACE PAST THE THOUGHT.

THERE IS NO CORPSE.

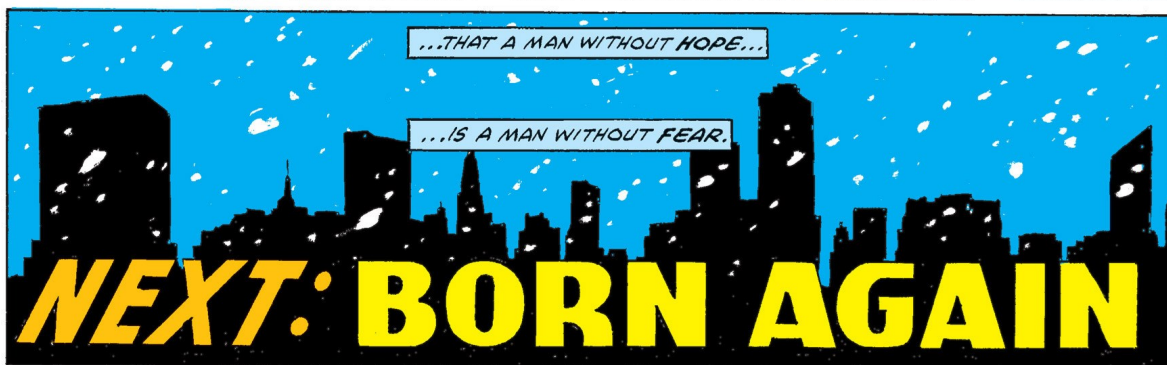
WHAT IS IT ABOUT MURDOCK? HE WAS A MINOR CONCERN-- A PROMISING TALENT TO BE OBSERVED AND CATALOGUED AND EVEN OCCASIONALLY FLATTERED--

-- AND PERHAPS, ONE DAY, TO BE TURNED TO THE KINGPIN'S WAY--

-- BUT HE IS MORE THAN THIS. NOW HE IS MUCH MORE THAN THIS.

HE ALWAYS WAS.

AND I-- I HAVE SHOWN HIM...



... THAT A MAN WITHOUT HOPE...

... IS A MAN WITHOUT FEAR.

NEXT: BORN AGAIN