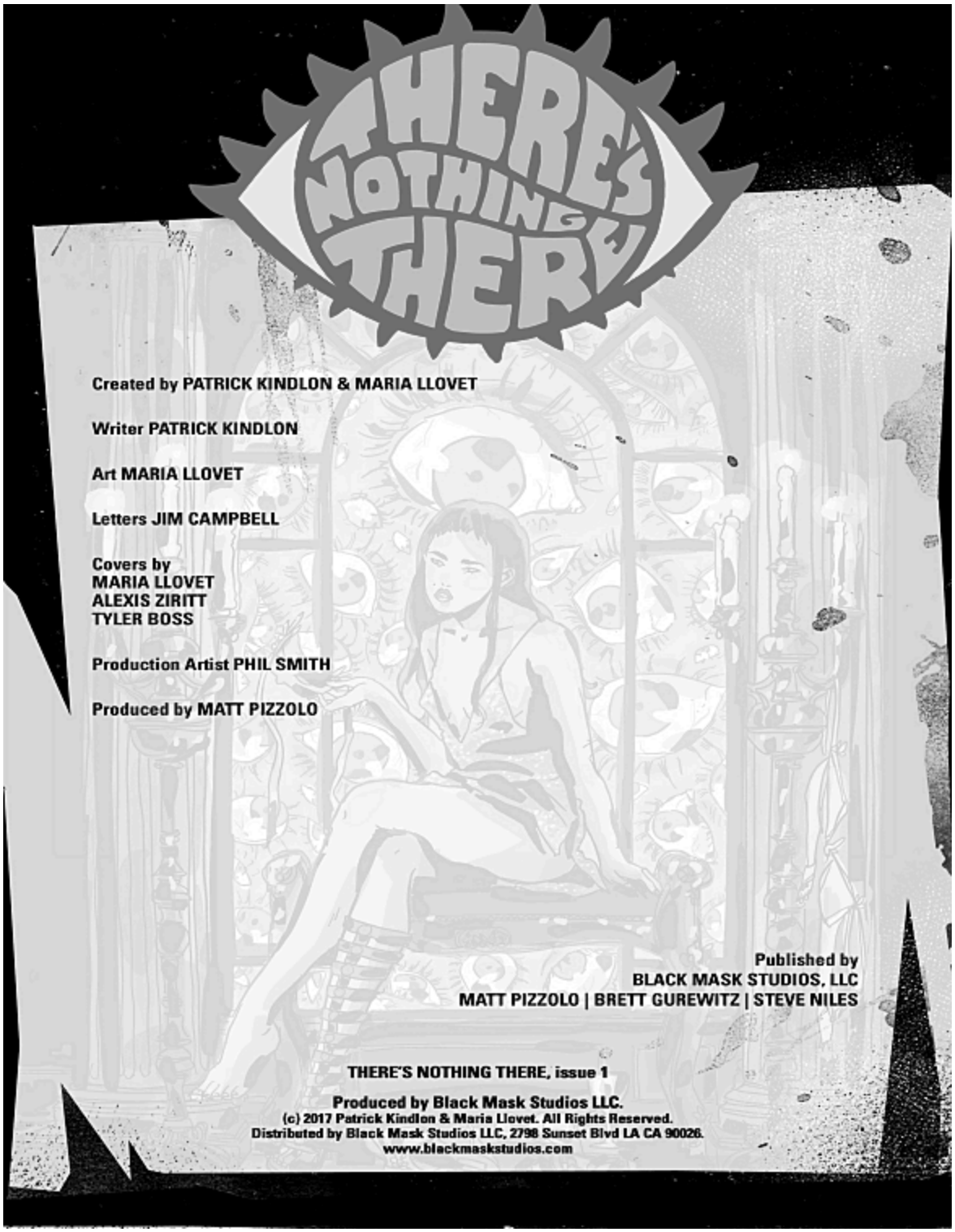

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THERE'S
THERE


THIS PLACE IS LIKE A BALLROOM SCENE FROM *LABYRINTH*, BUT WITH SOCIALITES INSTEAD OF MUPPETS.
DID YOU SEE AN EXIT? I NEED AIR!
RENO, IT'S A MASQUERADE BALL. THE MASK IS SUPPOSED TO STAY ON.
I DON'T SPEND TWO HOURS GETTING EYELASH EXTENSIONS JUST TO HIDE THEM.
ANONYMITY IS SORTA THE THEME HERE. SOMEONE'S GONNA RECOGNIZE YOU. AND...
AND I MIGHT GET CAUGHT AT A WEIRDO CULT ORGY?
W-WELL, ORGY MIGHT BE OVERSELLING IT, I MEAN--
"C'MON, KYLE. THE NAKED WAITSTAFF IS HANDING OUT CONDOMS. AND LUBE! THEY DON'T DO THAT AT MILITARY BALLS, GALLERY OPENINGS, OR CHARITY DINNERS.
"I'M NO EXPERT, BUT THIS IS AN ORGY."
ER, I--
OH, THANK GOD. AN EXIT.
AND FUCK IT, I'M GAME FOR THE ORGY, MAYBE. IT'S ALL A BIT VINTAGE FOR MY TASTES, BUT...


...LET'S SEE WHERE THE NIGHT GOES.
WHOA.
THIS MANY ACRES IN CENTRE ISLAND...WHAT DO YOU THINK IT'S WORTH?
YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED AT ALL IN THIS PLACE?
I'M SURE I DON'T CARE.
I'M SUPER INTERESTED, JUST NOT IN ITS MARKET VALUE.
YOU SHOULD BE. THOSE SERVANT QUARTERS ALONE WOULD LIST FOR A MILLION EASY!
SLAVE QUARTERS.
OH, SHIT. IS THIS SOME OF THE CHAMPAGNE SOCIALISM YOU'VE BEEN SIGNALING LATELY?
NO, YOU DICKHEAD. IT'S LITERALLY THE PLACE THE SLAVES SLEPT.
IT'S LONG ISLAND, RENO. NOT SAVANNAH.
NEW YORK WAS THE CENTER OF THE NORTHEAST SLAVE TRADE. THE DUTCH COULDN'T GET ENOUGH OF THEM.
THERE WAS A SLAVE CEMETERY FOUND IN THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT JUST LAST YEAR.
OK. SINCE YOU SEEM TO KNOW EVERYTHING, WHAT THE HELL IS THIS THING?


BINDING OF ISSAC.
I'M SORRY?
THE HEBREW GOD ASKED ABRAHAM TO SACRIFICE HIS SON, A TEST.
I'M OUT.
HI.
HI. DRINK?
BIBLE STUFF, *HUH?* MY FAMILY'S PENTECOSTAL I THINK. NO, SORRY, PRESBYTERIAN RATHER.
BIBLE. TORAH. KORAN, TOO.
MAYBE. WHAT DO YOU HAVE?
RED WINE, BUT IF YOU'D LIKE SOMETHING ELSE, I'M SURE I CAN ACCOMMODATE YOU.
YOU LOOK ACCOMMODATING. WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
QUEENS.
NEVER BEEN. SOUNDS NICE THOUGH.
WHEN MUSLIMS TELL THIS STORY, ISSAC DIDN'T NEED TO BE BOUND. HE WAS GAME FOR IT.
SAME EVENT. DIFFERENT LENS. DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS.
C'MON! YOU HAD TO DRIVE THROUGH IT TO GET HERE!
MY DRIVER'S FAST. I MUST'VE MISSED IT.


SHUURHHH
HELLO. HELLO.
DAMP
DAMP DAMP
HELLO AND WELCOME. IF EVERYONE WOULD JOIN ME IN THE YARD, WE'RE JUST ABOUT READY TO BEGIN.
WHY DON'T YOU SHOW ME THE LIQUOR CABINET? THAT WAY I CAN MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION.
NOW, I CAN GUESS WHAT MANY OF YOU ARE HERE FOR! AND YOU'LL HAVE YOUR CHANCE IN JUST A SECOND. BUT! BUT! BUT! YOU WERE INVITED TONIGHT FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE!
YOU'RE WITNESSES! AND, IN A WAY, ACCOMPLICES!
OH SHIT. IS THIS A PYRAMID SCHEME?
SHHHH. LISTEN TO A GREAT MAN SPEAK.
THE TEXTS ARE CLEAR. THERE IS A MAN FOR EVERY ERA. SOMEONE WHO EMBODIES THE MOMENT! PERSONIFIES THE PARADIGM!
TONIGHT IS HIS CONCEPTION!


TAKE A LONG LOOK. IS THIS RELIGION? POLITICS? MAYBE BDSM?
WHY NOT ALL THREE?
THESE USED TO BE SLAVE QUARTERS, RIGHT?
YEAH, THERE'S A PLAQUE ON THE WALL OUTSIDE.
I KNEW-- MMUHHM...
TONIGHT, WE ASK YOU TO BE BOTH ABRAHAM AND ISAAC. THEY WERE TESTED THAT DAY. THEY TRANSCENDED THEIR PROGRAMMING AND BECAME MORE THAN JUST MEN!
NATURE RENEWED BY FIRE MADE WHOLE. NOW, HAVE A NICE TIME.
BRUUM BRRUUM


OH. UH. I GUESS YOU WERE RIGHT, RENO. IT IS A BIT OF A, UH--
ORGY.
YES, THAT.
RENO?
BRRUUM
RUUM
RENO?
RENO!
FUCK THESE DRUMS.
RENO!
"JESUS, I HOPE SHE'S OK."






SEE WHAT?


DID YOU SEE THAT?


I DUNNO.
SOMETHING.
ORANGE JUICE WIT DE PULP. AVOCADO ON TOAST. BUNCHA VITAMINS.
UUURHHH. THANK YOU, JUDY. BUT I'M MEETING CELIA FOR BREAKFAST.
IT'S 3PM, SUGAR.
WHAT? THEN WHAT'S WITH THESE BREAKFAST FOODS?
PERCEPTION IS REALITY INSOFAR AS IT INFORMS BEHAVIOR. BREAKFAST IS A STATE OF MIND.
DAMN, JUDY GETTING DEEP.
PHONE, WHERE YOU AT?
URRRUHHH.
SOFT CEL Breakfast or no?
SOFT CEL Breakfast or nooooooo?
KYLE 2 B KURVED r u alrite??
SOFT CEL Break. Fast. Or. No.
KYLE 2 B KURVED Reno?
SOFT CEL Lunch or no?
SOFT CEL Nvm starved to death see you in hell
KYLE 2 B KURVED Reno?? Lemme kno ur alrite!


Tapas Began
Began Tapas
JUST CALM DOWN. NOT EVERYTHING IS ABOUT YOU.
I'M JUST SAYIN', SITTING OUT HERE IS PAPARAZZI BAIT.
I MAY SOUND SELF-OBSESSED NOW, BUT JUST WAIT UNTIL SOME GREASY SHITHEAD WITH A CAMERA RUNS UP AND YELLS, "HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT JOHN BOYEGA MOVING ON?"
WHEN DID YOU DATE JOHN BOYEGA?!
NEVER. BUT HE LEFT A COMMENT ON MY INSTAGRAM. YOU KNOW HOW THE PRESS IS.
NOW WHERE ARE THEY...
OH. MY. GOD. NOW YOU'RE FREAKING OUT BECAUSE THERE ISN'T PAPARAZZI HERE, AREN'T YOU?
MAYBE A LITTLE.
I TIPPED THE PAPS OFF THAT YOU'D BE AT THE DIM SUM PLACE TWO STREETS OVER SO WE COULD GET SOME PRIVACY HERE. DON'T PANIC. YOU'RE STILL POPULAR.
WHEW. THOUGHT THE RIDE WAS OVER.
NOW FOCUS AND TELL ME ABOUT LAST NIGHT.


AAH!
I KNOW.
YOU LOOK LIKE THE PARTY HAPPENED ON TOP OF YOU.
I KNOW!
OUT ALL NIGHT?
CHECK.
DRUGS.
YUP.
SEX.
SOME SEX.
WITH... KYLE?
HELL NO. HE'S GETTING CURVED INTO THE GROUND. I SEE IT AS MY CALLING TO UNDERMINE THE CONFIDENCE OF ENTITLED YACHT BOYS LIKE KYLE.
SO, WHO?
WHO IS THAT?
THAT'S WHAT I'M ASKING.


SAY AGAIN?
WHO. DID. YOU. SLEEP. WITH.
WHOA. CAR ALMOST HIT HIM.
IS THAT A METAPHOR? ALMOST HIT WHO?
LOOKS... LOST.
GIMME A NAME! OR... OH, MY GOD, NAMES? WAS IT A NAME OR WAS IT NAMES?
SPEAK!
ARE YOU REALLY NOT GONNA TELL ME?


BRO
OOOO
WHAT? DID ONE OF THE PAPS FIND US?
RENO?
RENO.
SNAP
SNAP
DID YOU SEE THAT?
WHAT DRUGS DID YOU SAY YOU DID LAST NIGHT?
NORMAL ONES.
YEAH? CAUSE YOU DON'T SEEM NORMAL.
JUST, UH, THOUGHT I, UM...
I'M CALLING US AN UBER.
YEAH, MAYBE THAT'S BEST.


WHAT DID YOU THINK YOU SAW?
A MAN.
KINDA VAGUE.
WEIRD MAN.
IT'S A SIDEWALK IN NEW YORK. ALL THE MEN ARE WEIRD.
HE... SEEMED OUT OF PLACE. LOST, MAYBE?
THEN, HE DISAPPEARED. I THOUGHT. I DUNNO ANYMORE.
WAIT. IS THIS A PRIUS?
YEAH.
YOU DIDN'T UBERBLACK?
I USED MY CARD. YOU'RE THE RICH ONE. YOU'RE LUCKY IT'S NOT AN UBERPOOL.
IT'S A NICE CHANGE OF PACE, ACTUALLY.
I'LL INFORM THE PEASANTRY YOU APPROVE, YOUR HIGHNESS. NOW CAN WE TALK ABOUT YOUR BREAKDOWN?
I DIDN'T HAVE A BREAKDO--
STOP! STOP THE CAR!


STOP THE GODDAMN CAR!
RENO! THIS IS DEFINITELY A BREAKDOWN YOU'RE HAVING!
HEY! YOU! WHO ARE YOU? ARE YOU WITH THAT MAN FROM EARLIER?
WAIT!
DID YOU SEE?
LET'S GET HOME, SWEETIE.
YEAH.


BRUUM BRRUMM
BRUUM
THIS ISN'T FUNNY.
HELLO?
ANYONE THERE?
OHJESUS.
HOLYFUCKING GODWHATS HAPPENING
THOUGHT THE RIDE...


...WAS OVER.
HUUUERRHHH...
CELIA?
JUDY?
ANYONE HERE?
I FEEL LIKE THAT TIME A POLICE HORSE KICKED ME AT GOVERNOR'S BALL.
HELP. TREAT ME LIKE A BABY. NAH.
HELLO.
HALLO, BABY GURL!
HI.
WHAT WAS THAT?
WHAT WAS WHAT?
MADE YOU THE COOKIES! DATE-SWEETENED. NO SUGAR!
WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING AT?


SHE GON' SEE IT SOON ENOUGH.
IT'LL BLOW OVER IN A DAY.
THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE HIDING? I'M ON GOSSIP SITES EVERY DAY. NBD.
GCA GAZE into the CELEBRITY ABYSS
EXCLUSIVE
RENO GOES CUCKOO!
HEY! YOU! WHO ARE YOU?
EXCLUSIVE
MUST READ!
OK, RIGHT. I LOOK PRETTY BAD.
DRUGS? SCHIZOPHRENIA? A TOXIC COMBINATION OF BOTH? NEXT UP WE TALK TO EXPERTS AND GET ANSWERS.
GOD. THEY'D LOVE IF I HAD A MAJOR MENTAL ILLNESS.
ALRIGHT. ALRIGHT. THIS IS NOT GOOD. BUT, I'VE DEFINITELY LOOKED WORSE. REMEMBER THAT TIME I LOST MY PANTIES BEFORE THE GLASS BRIDGE EVENT IN SHANGHAI?


NEXT UP, WE TALK TO EXPERTS AND GET ANSWERS.
LATE TEENS, EARLY TWENTIES, THAT'S WHERE SCHIZOPHRENIA IS LIKELY TO EMERGE.
OR MAYBE SHE'S JUST A DUMB SLUT.
ALL THE SYMPTOMS SEEM TO BE ON DISPLAY.
JUST A.
DUMB SLUT.
BRUM
BRUUM
BRUMB RUM


AND THERE WAS THAT TIME SOMEONE STOLE YOUR LAPTOP AND LEAKED A VIDEO OF YOU DEEP-THROATING A ZUCCHINI.
ZUCCGATE, THE PRESS CALLED IT. ROUGH WEEK IN THIS HOUSE.
BZZZUT
I WAS SIXTEEN! LEMME LIVE!
I'M NOT JUDGI--
BZZZZUT
DID YOU CALL THE WEED LADY?
NO.
NO.
BZZZZUT
PIZZA?
NOPE.
WEED LADY AND PIZZA. THE DOORMAN DOESN'T LET ANYONE ELSE UP.
DON'T ANSWER.
CORRECT. DO. NOT. ANSWER.


THERE'S NOTHIN' THERE.
MALFUNCTION, MAYBE?
BZZZZUT
LORDJESUS.
FUCKING CHRIST.
LET'S CALL SECURITY.
LET'S DISCONNECT THE BUZZER.
BZZZUT
WHY DID YOU OPT FOR SUCH A MISERABLE DOORBELL SOUND? WERE THEY ALL OUT OF DING-DONGS?
LET'S ORDER A PIZZA AND LET THE PIZZA GUY INVESTIGATE THIS FOR US.
RENO! DO NOT OPEN THAT DOOR.



—End Chapter One—

I'd like to use the backmatter in my books -creator-owned or corporate- as a place to dialog on the craft and business of comicbooks. If you're like me, you find yourself fascinated by the decisions creators make. Both in their work and in the way they 'further their personal brands.'

So, let's talk on it. Starting topic:

"Dress for the job you want."

Comic creators prefer not to leave their sweatpants, so they interpret this adage to mean "make your creator-owned comic for the employer you want."

For many, that's Marvel or DC. [For others, it's A&E or HBO.] Just as there's 'Oscar bait' in the film world, there's 'Big Two bait' in comics. I imagine most readers can recognize it when they see it. Certainly, comicbook professionals can.



Which isn't to say there aren't brilliant creators doing good books in that framework. Blahblahblah. That's obvious. Some great creators are doing their best work in sandboxes of the Marvel Try-Out Book variety. This isn't about shaming them. If that was my angle, I'd be a hypocrite, as We Can Never Go Home, a book I share creative credit on, could fall under a (sufficiently broad) 'superpowered teen' umbrella.

I like all y'all's books. So calm down.



This one is about me.

Maybe I should provide some context.

We Can Never Go Home was a breakout success in many respects. But I didn't share in that success.

My writing partner, Matthew Rosenberg, did the press and did the conventions. The requisite bullshit. He toughed it out, went to an obscene number of signings, and shook a million hands.



I didn't do any of that. I couldn't be bothered. And, as a result, when he got an ongoing gig at Marvel, and tried to angle me in as cowriter, he was met with, "we don't know that guy."

And like that, I was set back a year. Might not sound like much, "a year." But you probably only get 70 total. To be locked out of an opportunity because I didn't 'press the flesh' enough, had me feeling like comics are not an industry I care to be in. Like all self-assured idiots, I want life to be merit-based. Too much time playing D&D, perhaps.

After some soul-searching, I decided to stick it out. And to sellout. To do the handshaking and baby kissing. I don't get to decide how bunk the world is or isn't, and I have to make rent regardless.

So, going into the 2017 convention season, I need a book that fills all those work applications. A surefire conversation starter with editors large and small. Something relatable, in line with their mandates, etc. A handshake generator.

And this is not that book.

There's Nothing There is a horror book for literate adults. It's pop, no doubt. But it has nudity, and fucking, and sucking, and murder, and dead children, and... you get it. I love it. But, it's outside the purview of Big Two comics.

The book will be placed in every editor's hands this summer. But, it's not a tryout. It's an orgy of ideas that Maria and I can only pursue in the creator-owned world. A celebration of the independent space. Thank you to Black Mask for the latitude. Thank you to the retailers who see the value in different. And thank you for reading.

Help craft the conversation moving forward by emailing patrick.kindlon@gmail.com