
BLACK MASK
#4
THERE'S NOTHING THERE
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HEARD YOU GOT A ROOM AT THE MARRIOTT
I'M FUCKING MISERABLE.
SPEAK UP. I CAN'T HEAR YOU.
THEY'RE BLASTING LIL YACHTY. ACTUALLY, HE MAY BE PERFORMING BELOW DECK. I HAVE NO CLUE.
HEARD YOU'RE WET AND WAITING FOR A REAL ONE'S COCK
YEAH, FOUR DUDES HAVE TRIED HITTING ON ME BY POINTING OUT THE IRONY OF PLAYING LIL YACHTY ON A YACHT.
THEY'RE FOOTBALL PLAYERS, CELIA. LOTS OF HEAD INJURIES.
I KNOW IT'S NOT ACTUALLY IRONIC. I TRIED EXPLAINING THAT TO THEM.
HEARD YOU GOT A ROOM AT THE HYATT I KNOW ROOM
LOOK, YOU HEARD THE GHOST.
OK, RIGHT. OSCAR. I DIDN'T KNOW 'GHOST' WAS A DISMISSIVE TERM.
HE SAID I'VE GOTTA STAY VISIBLE.
SO, THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING.
SERVICE IS FULL SERVICE I'M ON MY WAY OVER


I'M MUCHO VISIBLE.
THERE'S


THERE


NY GIANTS CONTINUE OFF-SEASON ANTICS
NO DENYING THAT. IF THIS PAP ANGLES ANY LOWER, YOUR UTERUS WILL BE VISIBLE.
CAN YOU TELL THEM TO TURN THE YACHTY DOWN?
SAY AGAIN?
FUCK. LISTEN. CALL ME WHEN YOU GET TO SHORE, I'VE GOTTA DEDICATE A FEW HOURS TO MY NEW LINE. RIGHT NOW, IT LOOKS LIKE VOMIT.
NO, THAT WASN'T THE GOAL.
BE SAFE!
WHY DID YOU LET ME MAKE THAT?
YOU SAID IT WAS 'PROENZA SCHOULER DOES JUICY COUTURE.'
SLANDOR, PART OF YOUR JOB IS TO CHECK MY BEHAVIOR. IF I'M DESIGNING DOGSHIT, YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE THE GUTS TO PULL THE DOGSHIT-DESIGN-BRAKES AND STOP THAT TRAIN.
HONESTLY, I SORTA LIKE IT.
OK. I'M GONNA NEED YOU TO TAKE AN EYE TEST BEFORE YOU COME TO WORK TOMORROW. DMV; LENSCRAFTERS; WHATEVER. JUST HAVE IT SIGNED BY AN EYE DOCTOR. I WANNA KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU.
KNOK KNOK
AND ANSWER THAT DOOR.


THEY WATCH HER
THEY'LL WATCH ANYTHING
HERD THEM
WOOOOOO! TIME OF MY LIFE!
GIVE THEM THE SCENT OF BLOOD


I GOT SHOULDERS BIG ENOUGH FOR ALL MY MONEY
WOOOOO!
WOOOOO!
SO HAPPY!
DEFINITELY DON'T WANT TO KILL MYSELF!
KEEP FILMING OR GHOSTS EAT ME!
WOO!
AND ALL THE RAPPERS I CARRY I GOT SACKS
'SCUSE ME.
HEY!
WHOA! FELLOW YACHT GUEST HERE! NOT A MUGGER!
BIG ENOUGH FOR ENDLESS STACKS MY GIRLS
OH. HEY. IT'S...NOT MUGGERS I'M WORRIED ABOUT.
SCARED OF BLACK MEN?
IF THAT WAS THE CASE, I'VE BEEN A REAL THRILL SEEKER.
SCARED OF PRO ATHLETES?
SORTA, YEAH. BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I'M JUMPY. LOOK, I'M SORRY, I'M RENO. HI.
I KNOW. YOU'RE FAMOUS.
MY NAME'S SHAWN. I'M FAMOUS, BUT ONLY WITHIN A REALLY NARROW LANE OF MEN WHO DRESS THEIR INFANTS IN TEAM-BRANDED ONESIES.
WANNA GO SOMEPLACE WHERE WE DON'T HAVE TO YELL?
GOT ENDLESS RACKS WHICH WILL I MARRY


SHE'S NOTICED NOTHING UNUSUAL?
SIR, I... DON'T THINK SO.
SHE'S LESS THAN COOPERATIVE.
DON'T THINK? DID YOU ASK HER?
SHE'S A NINETEEN YEAR OLD GIRL, NOT A RIOTING CELLBLOCK. WE'LL JUST ASK HE--
HEY!
FUCKYOU FUCKINGRICHASSP IECESOFSHIT! I'M NOTGONNABETRA FFICKEDYOUSICKF UCKS!
OW!
WHAT'S SHE SAYING? AND WHY'S SHE TALKING SO FAST?
SHE'S AFRAID WE'RE HUMAN TRAFFICKERS, I THINK.
IT'S MILLENNIAL-SPEAK S--
DUFND
FUCK!
YOUNG LADY! WE'RE NOT TRAFFICKING YOU! I...DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT ENTAILS.
FUCKYOU!
YOU'RE HERE FOR YOUR SAFETY! I JUST NEED TO KNOW...
HAS ANYONE TRIED TO KILL YOU RECENTLY?

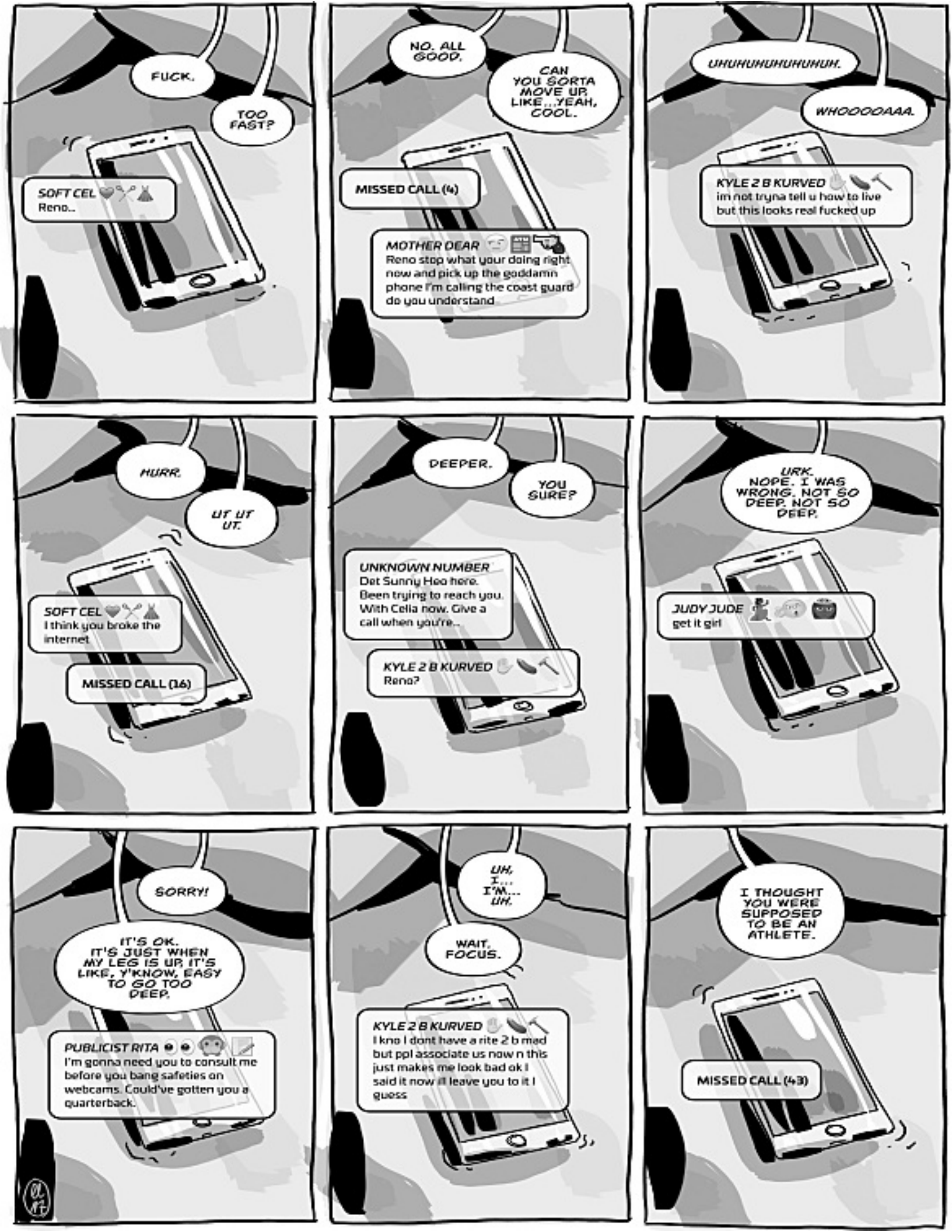

MR FOOTBALL?
SHAWN.
SHAWN, I'M NOT DRINKING ANYTHING I DON'T SEE YOU OPEN FOR THE FIRST TIME.
OK.
I RESPECT THAT. LEMME SEE WHAT WE'VE GOT AROUND HERE.
NOTHING PERSONAL.
NAH, NO OFFENSE TAKEN. LOTTA BAD DUDES OUT THERE.
WINE WORK?
YEAH. SOUNDS GOOD.
YOU'RE BIG ON SOCIAL MEDIA, HUH?
LIKE A LOT OF FOLLOWERS? OR BIG ON IT LIKE I PERSONALLY ENJOY IT?
BOTH, I GUESS.
I FUCKING HATE IT.


SO, JUST QUIT, RIGHT?
WISH I COULD, FOOTBALL SHAWN.
WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?
A GHOST TOLD ME I'LL BE MURDERED IF PEOPLE AREN'T CONSTANTLY WATCHING ME.
OH.
YEAH, I KNOW HOW THAT SOUNDS. I DON'T CARE ANYMORE. BELIEVE ME, DON'T BELIEVE ME, WHATEVER. JUST POUR.
POPD
SURE.
GHOSTS, HUH?
FUCKING GHOSTS, FOOTBALL SHAWN.
AND YOU'VE GOTTA...
STAY UNDER THE MICROSCOPE. ALL EYES ON ME ALL THE TIME.
OR...
OR I DIE. THAT PART I'M SHAKY ON, BUT I THINK A SKINNY NERD IS TRYING TO STAB ME.
SOUNDS SERIOUS.
"?"
ONLY IF I WANT TO LIVE. AND I'M ON THE FENCE ABOUT THAT.
SO, YOU'VE GOTTA, WHAT, KEEP IT SCANDALOUS?
"CLICK WORTHY CONTENT."
WANT HELP?
HOW'S THE WIFI DOWN HERE?


I'M NOT SURE I FOLLOW...
IT'S, UH, A POLYESTER BLEND.
I GUESS. SO, YOU WERE SAYING...
WHAT IS THIS FABRIC? IT'S SO SOFT.
WOW. THEY'RE DOING GREAT THINGS WITH POLYESTER THESE DAYS, HUH.
RIGHT. I'M LOOKING FOR A MISSING GIRL. THAT'S ALL.
BUT, I DON'T KNOW THIS PERSON.
AND SHE SEEMS TO KNOW YOUR FRIEND RENO, BECAUSE SHE SHOWED UP SCREAMING AT HER PLACE YESTERDAY.
THAT MAY BE TRUE. BUT YOUR FRIEND KYLE KNOWS HER.
GOT WITNESSES.
AND VIDEO.
AND... YOU THINK...
DON'T THINK ANYTHING. YET.
JUST PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER, Y'KNOW.
KAILEE MAD AT KYLE FOR PITCHING HER FOR RENO. KYLE STABBED. KAILEE ABDUCTED. RENO... NOT AVAILABLE FOR COMMENT.


I JUST SPOKE TO HER. IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S HIDING.
REALLY. REALLY NOT HIDING.
I DUNNO. STOPPED BY HER PLACE. CALLED HER PLENTY TIMES.
FROM A NUMBER SHE DOESN'T RECOGNIZE, NOBODY PICKS UP FOR 'UNKNOWN CALLER.'
HOLD UP. SHE'LL PICK UP FOR ME.
JUST A SEC.
IT'S RINGING.
BUZZZT BUVVZT
UUH. UH. UUUH. OOFH.
YEAH.
HUH. NO ANSWER.
YOU DON'T SAY.
OK, BUT SHE'S NOT HIDING. PAPARAZZI ARE UP HER ASS. SHE'S PROLLY ON THE GOSSIP SITES RIGHT NOW.
FIND HER?
HM.


HUH.
THE FUUUUUUUUCK?
WHORE.
NOT BAD.


FUCK.
TOO FAST?
SOFT CEL
Reno...
NO. ALL GOOD.
CAN YOU SORTA MOVE UP, LIKE...YEAH, COOL.
MISSED CALL (4)
MOTHER DEAR
Reno stop what your doing right now and pick up the goddamn phone I'm calling the coast guard do you understand
UHUHUHUHUHUHUH.
WHOOOOAAA.
KYLE 2 B KURVED
im not tryna tell u how to live but this looks real fucked up
HURR.
UT UT UT.
SOFT CEL
I think you broke the internet
MISSED CALL (16)
DEEPER.
YOU SURE?
UNKNOWN NUMBER
Det Sunny Hea here. Been trying to reach you. With Celia now. Give a call when you're...
KYLE 2 B KURVED
Reno?
URK. NOPE. I WAS WRONG. NOT SO DEEP. NOT SO DEEP.
JUDY JUDE
get it girl
SORRY!
IT'S OK. IT'S JUST WHEN MY LEG IS UP, IT'S LIKE, Y'KNOW, EASY TO GO TOO DEEP.
PUBLICIST RITA
I'm gonna need you to consult me before you bang safeties on webcams. Could've gotten you a quarterback.
UH, I... I'M... UH.
WAIT. FOCUS.
KYLE 2 B KURVED
I kno I dont have a rite 2 b mad but ppl associate us now n this just makes me look bad ok I said it now ill leave you to it I guess
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE AN ATHLETE.
MISSED CALL (43)


HOW DID YOU FUCK THINGS UP THIS BADLY?
SIR?
HANDS OFFSHITHEA DMOTHERFU CKER!
SHE'S NOT THE ONE WE'RE LOOKING FOR. AND, AS A RESULT, WE'RE BEHIND. MAY'VE LOST OUR WINDOW.
SHE FIT THE PROFILE! WE HAD HER BOYFRIEND FOLLOWED AN--
HE'S NOTMYBOYF RIENDYOUD UMBFUCK!
BUNF
BUMPD
AND WHY DIDN'T YOU GRAB HIM AS WELL?
YOU TOLD ME ASBEEL WANTS PRIZES!
SHE'S A PRIZE?
FUCKYOU!
SIR! SHE'S THE HIGHEST PROFILE GUEST! SHE'S GOT A MILLION FOLLOWERS ON HER SOCIALS!
ONEMILLIONTH REFHUNDREDT HOUSANDANDC HANGEYOU BITCH
SHE SAYS SHE WASN'T HERE.
SHE'S LYING!
I'MNOTLYIN GYOUFUCK HEAD!
SHE'S NOT LYING.


LAGGENSWORTH RSVP'D FOR BOTH OF THEM BY NAME, AND HE CHECKED IN WITH A WOMAN THAT NIGHT!
YEAH. THAT FUCKINGH OERENO!
WHAT'S SHE SAYING?
DUDM
RENO! RENO! RENO! AREYOUUGL YANDDEAFY OUTURDS?
RENO? LIKE THE PLACE?
RENO SELLETI, MAYBE? SHE'S FAMOUS.
FOR WHAT?
I...I'M NOT FULLY SURE.
KYLESAWABIGGERPLAYANOW ENTFORITALSOASURETHING BECAUSETHATSIRLEASYBUT I'MNOTLETTINGHIMSTEPON MYNAMEFI'LLSMACK'M BOTH
R...E... N...O... S...
IT'S COMING UP.
SHE'S ALL OVER THE NEWS TODAY, IT SEEMS.
SHE...

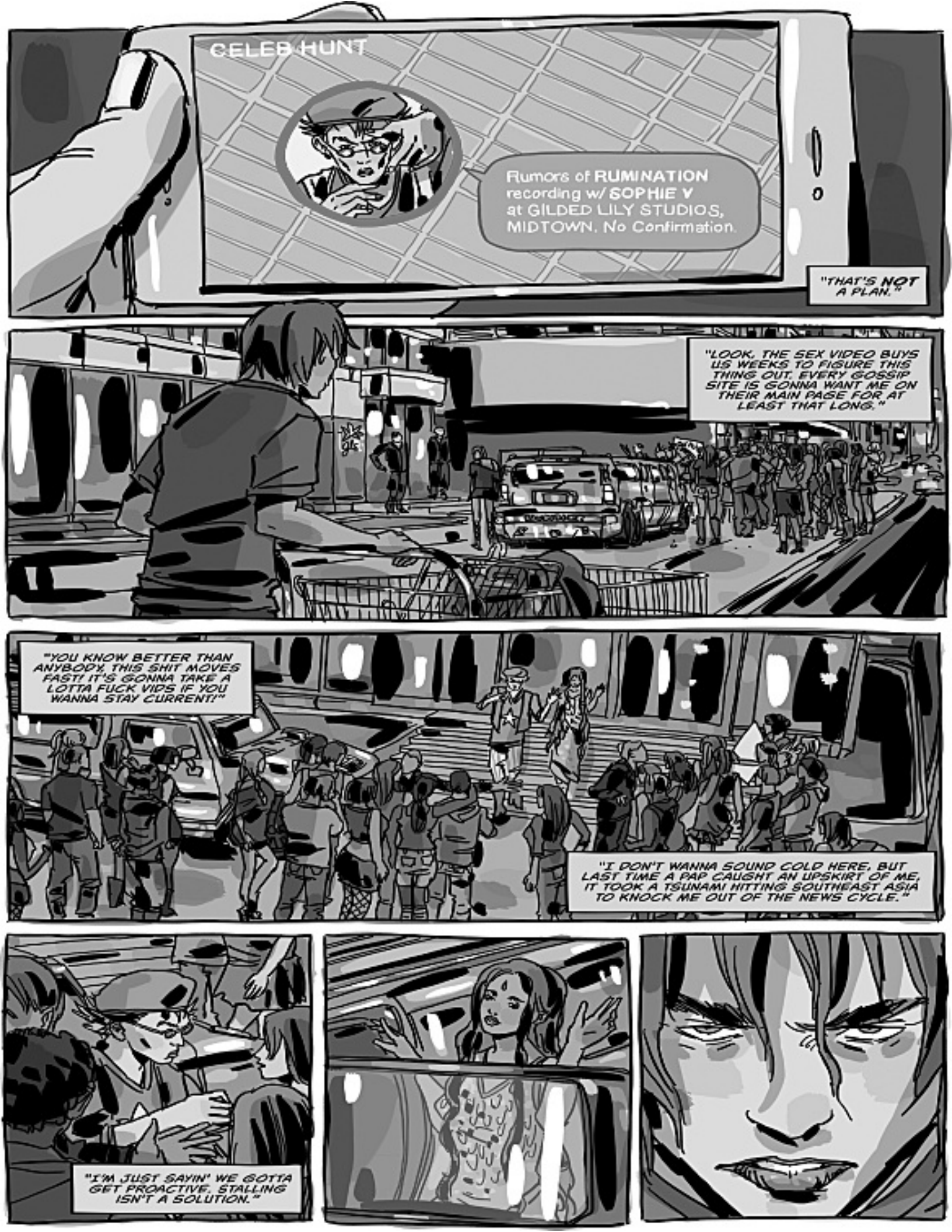

SHE'S NOT WORTH THEIR ATTENTION
SO...
SO.
SEEMS KINDA GOOFY TO ASK...
BUT, CAN I GET YOUR NUM--
DO YOU THINK YOU'LL GET RESPECT ON THE INTERNET FOR FUCKING ME, OR MADE FUN OF FOR CUMMING SO QUICK?
I HOPE THE FIRST. EXPECT THE SECOND.
HAVEN'T CHECKED MY PHONE, MOSTLY OUTTA FEAR.
THINK YOU CAN BEAT 233?
I'M NOT EVEN CLOSE.
LOOKS LIKE I GAINED 40,000 NEW FOLLOWERS THOUGH. MY AGENT'LL LIKE THAT.
THAT'S SOMETHING.
"U LIMPDICK FAG U CANT HIT IT RITE Y GOD EVEN GIVE U A DICK???"
MY AGENT MAY NOT LOVE THESE COMMENTS.
"BURN IN FIRES OF HELL HARLOT U DESERVE THE PAIN ETERNAL DESCRIBED IN LEVITICUS, REVELATION, AND THE LIVING WORD OF GOD JESUS CHRIST THE KING"
SEEMS LIKE I'M REALLY CONNECTING WITH MY FANS IN THE BIBLE BELT.


PROVE IT
YOU CAN WAIT INSIDE, IF YOU WANT. BUGS OUT HERE ARE CRAZY.
LISTEN TO THIS ONE.
"RACE MIXING IS A CRIME AGAINST YOUR FOREBEARS. MEN WHO BUILT THIS COUNTRY ARE ROLLING IN THEIR GRAVES. #WHITEGENOCIDE"
HOLD UP. I'M LOOKING. FUCK. I'M GETTING IT FROM THE OTHER SIDE.
"TYPICAL BLACK MAN BULLSHIT. WE'RE GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM WHEN HE'S STRUGGLING BUT AS SOON AS HIS MONEY'S RIGHT HE'S OFF WITH A WHITE GIRL. #2GOODATHESISTERS #FELL4THEBECKYBS #ANOTHERONEBITESTHEDUST"
SHE REALLY LOVES THOSE HASH-TAGS.
YOU HEAR ME ABOUT THE HOUSE? WE CAN CHILL INSIDE.
MY RIDE'S ON ITS WAY.
WE'VE BEEN OUT HERE AWHILE. AND IF THEY DIDN'T BEAT RUSH HOUR, IT'S GONNA BE A LONG MINUTE.
IN FACT, YOU WANNA RIDE? I CAN JUST GET ONE OF MY DUDES TO--
ARE YOU OUT HERE FOR ME? I THOUGHT YOU WERE WAITING ON A RIDE TOO.
OH MAN. IS THIS... GENTLEMAN STUFF?
NEVER MIND.


SHOW HOW DISPOSABLE SHE IS
NOW THE JESUS PEOPLE LEAVING COMMENTS ON MY PHOTOS ARE FIGHTING WITH THE RAPEY-SOUNDING DUDES LEAVING COMMENTS.
THAT'LL HAPPEN.
YOUR RIDE?
I THINK. BUT PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO KILL ME, SO BE READY TO BE MY BODY SHIELD.
HELLO, MS SELLETI.
I HAD JEFF THE DRIVER'S CONTACT INFO FROM THE PREMIERE. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND.
JUST SEEMED MORE COMFORTABLE THAN A ZIPCAR. WE WENT WITH THE WHITE LIMO. FEELS MORE HAMPTONS.
IT'S FINE. I WANT TO BE AROUND PEOPLE I KNOW. THANKS FOR COMING ALL THE WAY OUT HERE. CAN WE STO--
AREN'T YOU GONNA INTRODUCE US TO YOUR FRIEND?
I'M SHAWN. I--
GOTTA WORK ON YOUR STAMINA. BUT THAT BODY IS TOO FINE!
ER, THANKS.
OK. SHAWN, WAS REALLY GOOD MEETING YOU. I HOPE YOU MAKE THE TEAM OR WHATEVER THIS YEAR.
LOOK, ABOUT YOUR NUMBER...
SHAWN, YOU SLEPT WITH A WOMAN WHO WAS DISPLAYING ALL THE SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS.
I KNOW MY SHIT IS REAL. BUT YOU DIDN'T.
I THINK YOU SHOULD EXAMINE WHAT HAPPENED HERE TODAY. MAYBE TALK TO A THERAPIST ABOUT HOW YOU VIEW WOMEN.
THANK YOU FOR THE DICK. GOODNIGHT.


SHOW THEM HOW FLEETING IT ALL IS
TCN
Total Celebrity News
HELLO?
I SAID, HELLO.
YO.
KNOCK KNOCK.
THIS IS FROM YESTERDAY.
YES.
THAT'S A FULL CYCLE IN THE PAST. WHAT WE IN THE NEWS GAME CALL 'OLD NEWS.'
I'M LATE TO ALL THE FUN MEMES.
THAT GUY. REWIND. I WANT TO SEE THAT GUY.
HUH.
'HUH' WHAT? MOVE IT UP A FRAME. I NEED TO SEE THIS GUY'S FACE.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIS FACE?
HUH.


TAKE IT FROM HER
A WEED MODEL?!
YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE DETECTIVE LOOKING FOR YOU OR HOW KYLE BEING STABBED MIGHT BE PART OF A LARGER CONSPIRACY?
WE'LL GET BACK TO THAT SHIT. I WANNA KNOW HOW I WAS SECOND CHOICE BEHIND A FUCKIN' WEED MODEL!
I THINK YOU WERE TECHNICALLY FIRST CHOICE, AS I UNDERSTAND IT. THE WEED MODEL WAS HIS BACKUP.
WHATEVER. SHE SHOULDN'T BE IN THE SAME CONVERSATION.
OOH. GETTIN' A LITTLE SNOBBY IN HERE.
IT'S NOT LIKE THA--
WAIT. BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER, CAN WE DISCUSS THE GIANT FOOTBALL PLAYER AND HIS GIANT PENIS?
"WHAT ABOUT IT? YOU KNOW I'VE GOTTA STAY VISIBLE."
"I THOUGHT THAT MEANT SELFIES AND A LIVESTREAM FROM SPIN CLASS, NOT GETTING BENT OVER A MINI-BAR!"
"TOMATO, TAMATO.
"LOOK, THE PLAN IS SIMPLE: STAY IN THE PUBLIC EYE UNTIL WE HAVE A PLAN."


CELEB HUNT
Rumors of RUMINATION recording w/ SOPHIE V at GILDED LILY STUDIOS, MIDTOWN. No Confirmation.
"THAT'S NOT A PLAN."
"LOOK, THE SEX VIDEO BUYS US WEEKS TO FIGURE THIS THING OUT. EVERY GOSSIP SITE IS GONNA WANT ME ON THEIR MAIN PAGE FOR AT LEAST THAT LONG."
"YOU KNOW BETTER THAN ANYBODY, THIS SHIT MOVES FAST! IT'S GONNA TAKE A LOTTA FUCK VIDS IF YOU WANNA STAY CURRENT!"
"I DON'T WANNA SOUND COLD HERE, BUT LAST TIME A PAP CAUGHT AN UPSKIRT OF ME, IT TOOK A TSUNAMI HITTING SOUTHEAST ASIA TO KNOCK ME OUT OF THE NEWS CYCLE."
"I'M JUST SAYIN' WE GOTTA GET PROACTIVE. STALLING ISN'T A SOLUTION."



—End Chapter Four—

Whatup, world. It's your boy, Patrick.

We're rounding the final lap of this series, and I'd like to thank you all for going the distance. This book rules and it's made me happy to see it manifest.

Let's do what we did last month and dedicate this space to a current event that'll seem really goofy to a kid picking up this as a back issue in 10 years. Burning issue of the day: reducing publishing lines. It's something you hear celebrated by readers with option paralysis and retailers who watch their shelves bloat with titles they suspect are cannibalizing each other's sales.

And I get it. Shelves are overcrowded at the moment. Retailers can't effectively do their jobs and readers resent what they see as a cash-grab on the part of publishers. The Big Two feel scattered and Image's marquee names inadvertently murder the sales of the new guys. I get it. It's busy and chaotic and feels intractable.

But less of a good thing isn't necessarily the answer. And, even if it was, I gotta wonder why that's the first place your mind would go. Like, if you love something, you're supposed to want more of it. More options. More means to indulge your habit. It's the nature of a passion that you cannot effectively moderate it.

So, what's up? Why do I read comments sections full of people HAPPY to drop books? You've elected to be here. Presumably because you feel strongly about the medium. And even if your budget doesn't allow for infinite titles, why would you be excited to see someone else's favorite books go away? What's in it for you?

Constantly, I see "scale it back to just the core titles" posited as a solution. But, what's a 'core title'? Depends on when you came into comics. THE PUNISHER was a core title when I was a kid. Might not be now. And definitely wasn't always. A core title for a 14-year-old getting into comics (does that happen?) might include THE UNBEATABLE SQUIRREL GIRL (it's gone 30 issues)! Point is: You have to be careful when assigning importance. How much is objective fact, and how much is how you think it 'should be?"

But, ok, let's make it about 'what sells.' That, at least, begins to meet a scientific criteria. Let me address this in as polite a fashion as I can: You don't know anything. Maybe film blogs have given you the impression that playing Fantasy Mogul is a viable pastime, but you really don't have enough information to chime in on individual editorial decisions. For example, when you demand to know why a book selling 20k was cancelled before one that was selling 18k, you're being a dick. Doesn't matter if your motivation is lofty or selfish. You're being a dick. A) because you're demanding answers from someone who owes you none, and B) because you're insisting people share information that isn't theirs to share. It's possible there's a vast conspiracy to push the sorta books you hate. BUT MORE LIKELY THERE'S A TV/FILM DEAL IN PLACE THAT WARRANTS KEEPING A BOOK ON SHELVES. ALSO COULD BE THAT THE TITLE DOES WELL IN A SPECIFIC MARKETPLACE / VENUE IN WHICH THE PUBLISHER HOPES TO EXPAND. OR, MAYBE YOUR FIGURES ARE INACCURATE.

You just don't know enough to comment. I get gossiped to pretty often. Juicy stuff. Comic industry dirt. AND I STILL DON'T KNOW ENOUGH TO COMMENT. Because it's rare that what the public 'knows' is the full story. People who don't have public facing careers have a hard time grasping this.

I'm running out of space. Hm. Ok. While it's undeniable that comics are headed in a purely unsustainable direction, the go-to solution can't be "fewer voices; less choice." We're gonna have to go back to the drawing board and find a fresh scapegoat.

Help craft the conversation one final time by emailing patrick.kindlon@gmail.com

