

WRITTEN BY  
JAMES **TYNION IV**

ILLUSTRATED BY  
ERYK **DONOVAN**

COLORS BY  
DEE **CUNNIFFE**

LETTERS BY  
JIM **CAMPBELL**

COVER BY  
ERYK **DONOVAN**

DESIGNER  
JILLIAN **CRAB**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
CHRIS **ROSA**

EDITOR  
ERIC **HARBURN**

SPECIAL THANKS  
JASMINE **AMIRI**

CREATED BY  
JAMES **TYNION IV** & ERYK **DONOVAN**

## ON DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2022 A.D.

A YOUNG WOMAN CHECKED INTO A HOSPITAL IN HOLMES COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI WITH A SHARP, PAINFUL COUGH. ONE YEAR LATER, THERE WERE FIVE MILLION DEAD IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH ALONE, WITH ANOTHER TWO MILLION DEAD ABROAD.

THE **MISSISSIPPI DELTA VIRUS**, ALSO KNOWN AS THE RED COUGH, OR THE POX, WOULD TAKE THE LIVES OF MORE THAN SEVEN-HUNDRED MILLION PEOPLE OVER THE NEXT DECADE. AT PEAK, THE UNITED STATES CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL WOULD ESTIMATE THAT SIXTY PERCENT OF THE WORLD POPULATION WAS INFECTED, EITHER AS A CARRIER OR VICTIM. IN EVERY RECORDED CASE, PREGNANCIES OCCURRING IN MDV CARRIERS WOULD RESULT IN STILLBIRTH, AS A RESULT OF GENETIC DEGRADATION WHICH IS A BYPRODUCT OF THE VIRUS.

IN 2035 A.D., PHARMACEUTICAL GIANT **GONRING-COLE** ANNOUNCED THE MASS PRODUCTION OF A VACCINE WITH A ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT SUCCESS RATE. THE UNITED NATIONS WOULD FACILITATE THE FREE DISTRIBUTION OF THIS VACCINE IN EVERY COUNTRY ON THE PLANET.

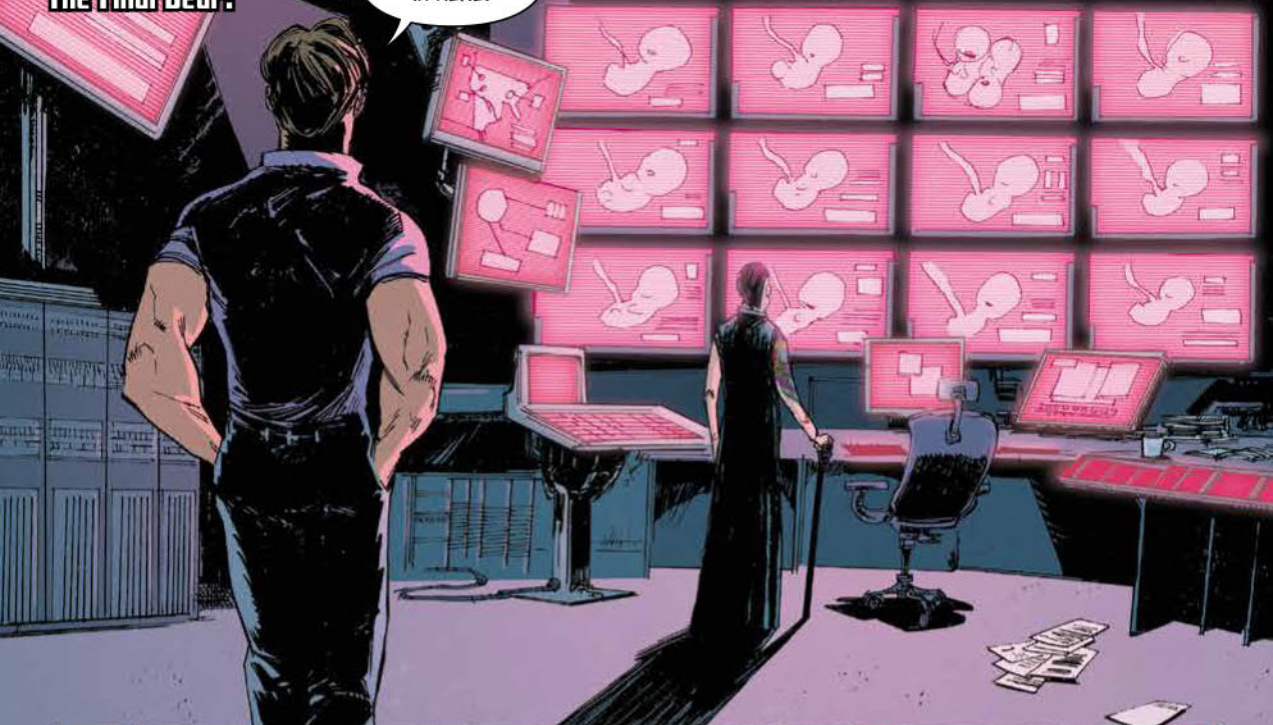
THE VACCINE WAS DEVELOPED BY **DOCTOR CYRUS CRANE**, A THIRTY-THREE YEAR OLD GENETICIST FROM MADISON, WI.

HE IS OUR FATHER. TO HIM WE ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL.



2032 Anno Domini.  
The Final Year.

I SHOULD  
HAVE KNOWN I  
WOULD FIND YOU  
IN HERE.



SHHH.  
THEY'RE  
SLEEPING.

THEY'LL BE  
SLEEPING A FEW  
MORE WEEKS,  
YET.

THE CREW'S  
HERE, FOR THE  
INTERVIEW. THEY'RE  
SETTING UP IN YOUR  
STUDY.

WHICH  
ROOM IS  
THAT?

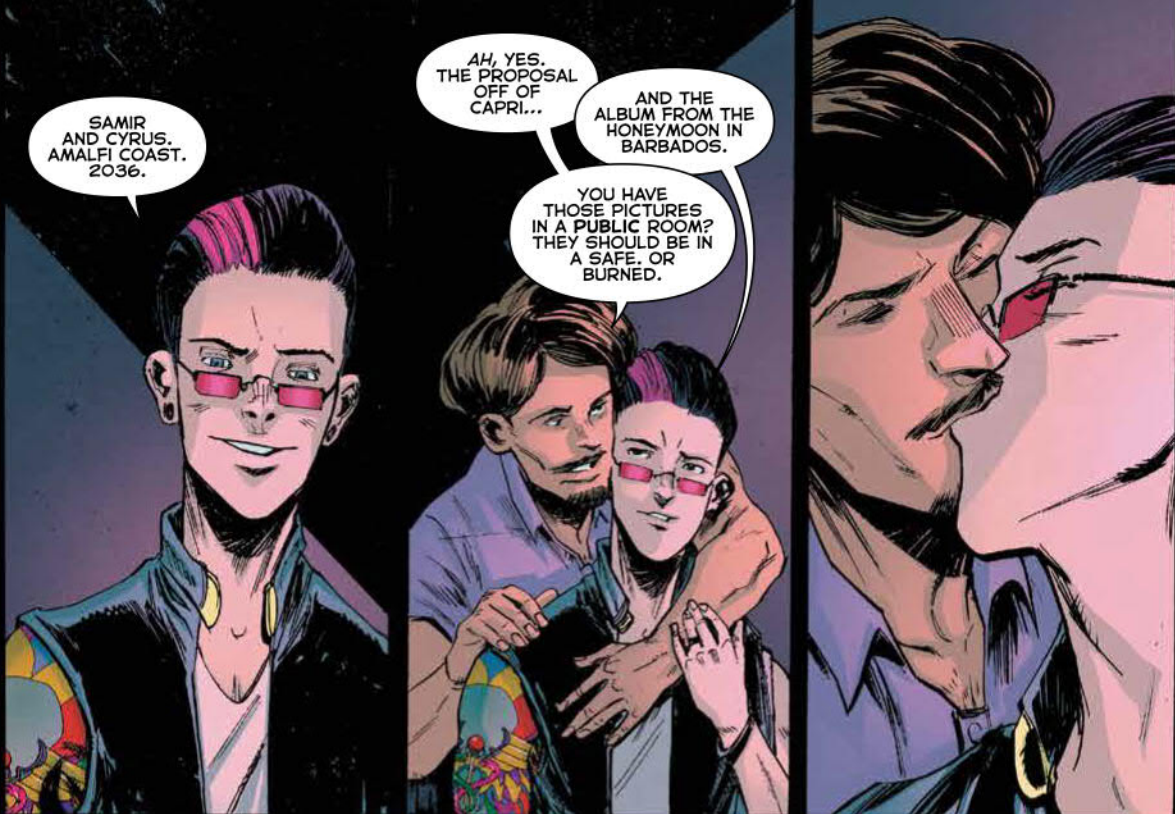
THE ONE WITH THE  
DESK YOU NEVER  
USE, AND ALL THE  
BOOKS YOU'VE  
NEVER READ.

I'VE  
READ A  
FEW OF  
THEM.

NAME  
ME A SINGLE  
BOOK ON THOSE  
SHELVES.







SAMIR  
AND CYRUS.  
AMALFI COAST.  
2036.

AH, YES.  
THE PROPOSAL  
OFF OF CAPRI...

AND THE  
ALBUM FROM THE  
HONEYMOON IN  
BARBADOS.

YOU HAVE  
THOSE PICTURES  
IN A PUBLIC ROOM?  
THEY SHOULD BE IN  
A SAFE. OR  
BURNED.



YOU CAN SEE  
THEM ALL,  
HERE?

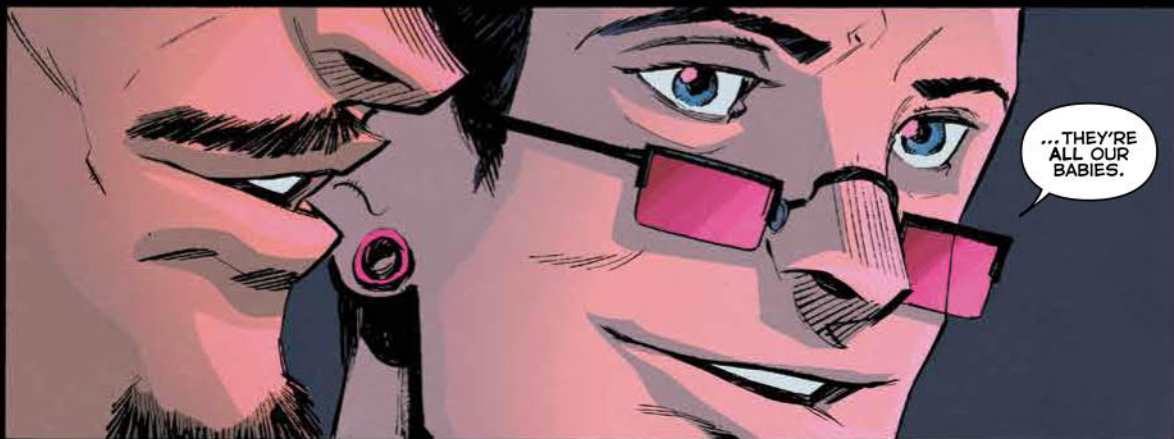
WE'VE GOT A SMALL  
IMPLANT IN EACH REGISTERED  
PREGNANCY, NOW. IT ALLOWS  
THE PARENTS TO TRACK THE  
ULTRASOUND IMAGES THAT I  
BROADCAST FROM HERE.  
GONRING-COLE HAS  
EVERYTHING ROUTED  
THROUGH ME.

I'M NOT  
GOING TO LET  
ANYONE ELSE  
MESS UP THIS  
CHANCE.



MAYBE SOON,  
WE CAN TALK ABOUT  
SURROGACY...HAVE  
OUR OWN  
BABY.

SAMIR...

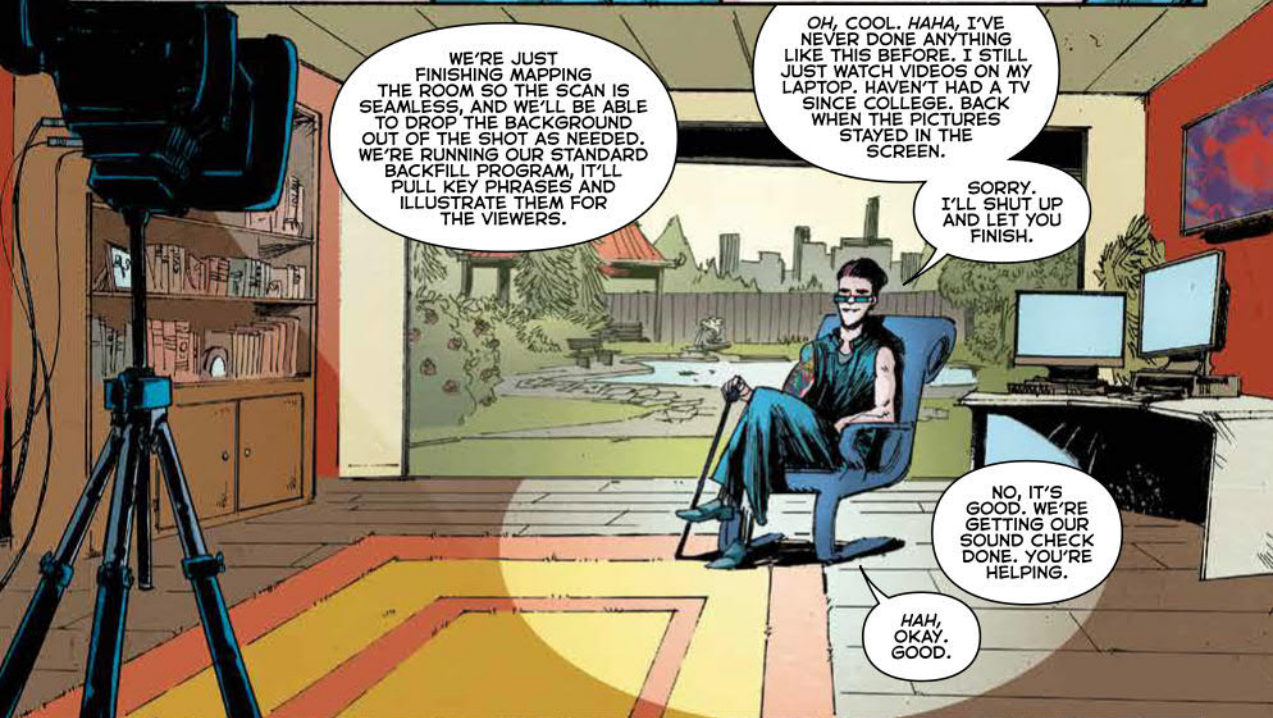


...THEY'RE  
ALL OUR  
BABIES.





IS  
THIS  
THING  
ON?



WE'RE JUST  
FINISHING MAPPING  
THE ROOM SO THE SCAN IS  
SEAMLESS, AND WE'LL BE ABLE  
TO DROP THE BACKGROUND  
OUT OF THE SHOT AS NEEDED.  
WE'RE RUNNING OUR STANDARD  
BACKFILL PROGRAM, IT'LL  
PULL KEY PHRASES AND  
ILLUSTRATE THEM FOR  
THE VIEWERS.

OH, COOL. HAHA, I'VE  
NEVER DONE ANYTHING  
LIKE THIS BEFORE. I STILL  
JUST WATCH VIDEOS ON MY  
LAPTOP. HAVEN'T HAD A TV  
SINCE COLLEGE. BACK  
WHEN THE PICTURES  
STAYED IN THE  
SCREEN.

SORRY.  
I'LL SHUT UP  
AND LET YOU  
FINISH.

NO, IT'S  
GOOD. WE'RE  
GETTING OUR  
SOUND CHECK  
DONE. YOU'RE  
HELPING.

HAH,  
OKAY.  
GOOD.



CAN YOU STATE  
YOUR NAME AND  
OCCUPATION?

I AM DOCTOR  
CYRUS CRANE, CHIEF  
EPIDEMIOLOGIST  
AT GONRING-  
COLE.



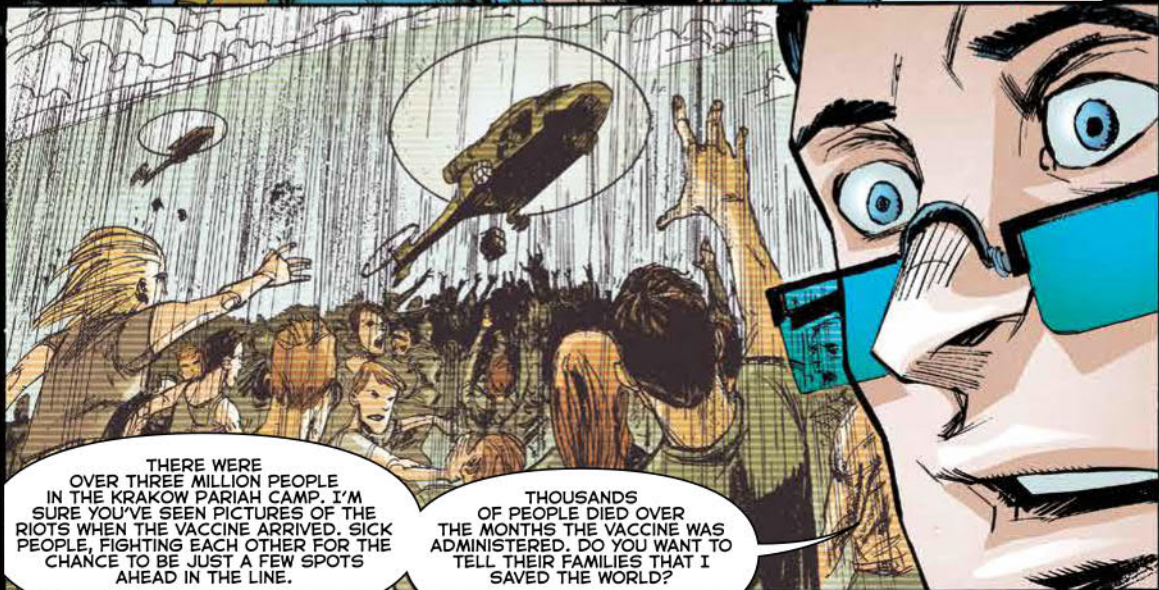
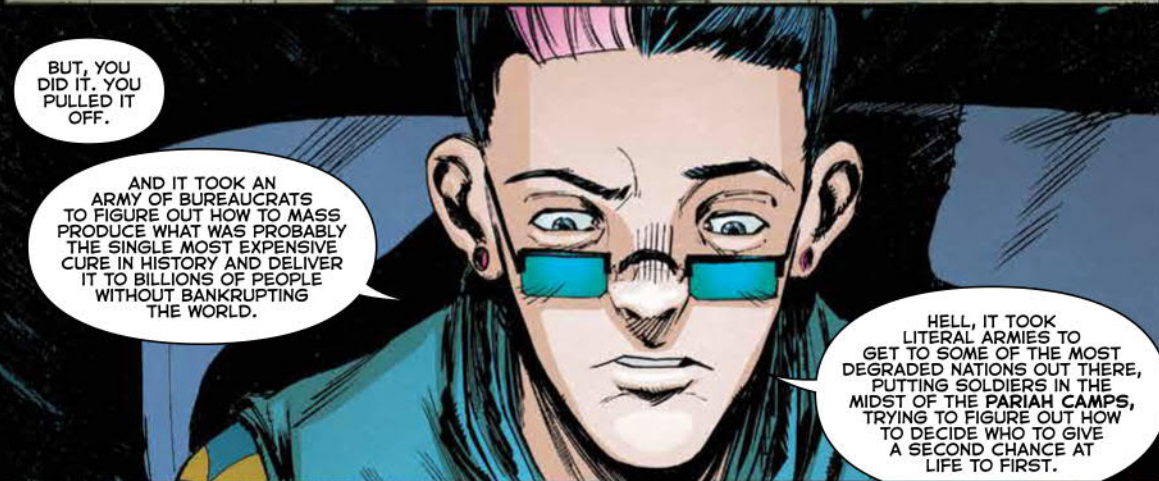
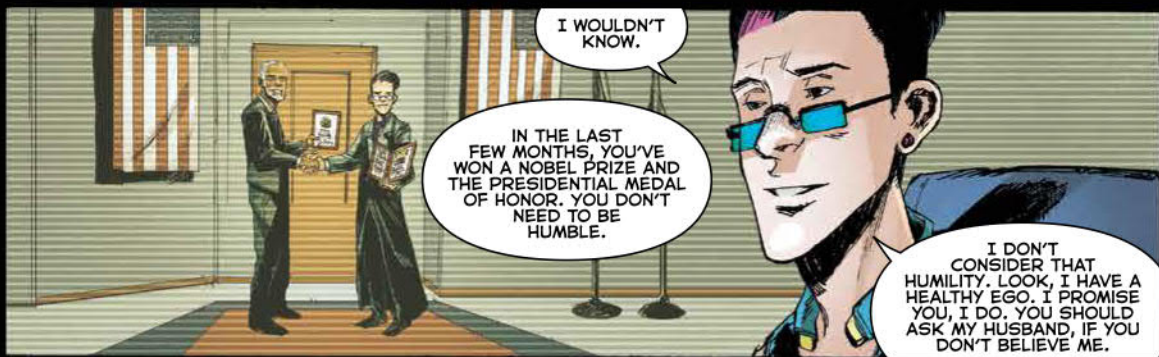
IT LOOKS  
LIKE WE'VE GOT  
EVERYTHING IN ORDER,  
AND JUST LET US KNOW  
IF WE NEED TO STOP A  
QUESTION AND RESTART.  
THIS WON'T BE LIVE, SO  
WE CAN EDIT IT AS  
NEEDED.

OH, DON'T TELL ME  
THAT. I'LL WANT TO  
ERASE EVERYTHING  
AND START  
OVER.

DOCTOR  
CRANE, LET'S START  
WITH THE BIGGEST  
QUESTION. THE ONE I'M  
SURE EVERYONE HAS  
BEEN ASKING YOU FOR  
THE BETTER PART  
OF A YEAR.

WHAT  
DOES IT FEEL  
LIKE TO SAVE  
THE WORLD?







BUT THAT'S JUST A FEW THOUSAND AGAINST THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE. YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT THE BIGGER PICTURE, HERE.

TRUST ME, I DO.

LOOK...

I WAS AN UNDERGRADUATE IN COLLEGE WHEN THE VIRUS STARTED TO SPREAD. AND THERE WAS THIS MYTH MY MOM USED TO TELL ME, IN THOSE FIRST DAYS.

SHE'D TALK ABOUT SEPTEMBER 11, 2001. A BIT BEFORE I WAS BORN. SHE LIVED IN NEW YORK CITY, THEN. AN ASPIRING ACTRESS WORKING IN A WEST VILLAGE DINER. SHE SAW THE PLANE HIT THE FIRST TOWER.

SHE SAID THAT IN THOSE WEEKS AFTER THE ATTACK, ALL OF THE DIFFERENCES, ALL THE HATE PEOPLE HAD FELT TOWARDS EACH OTHER JUST FELL AWAY. NEIGHBOR HELPED NEIGHBOR. THE BLOOD BANKS WERE FULL BEYOND CAPACITY. SHE SAID IT WAS A MOMENT THAT SHOWED US WHAT HUMANITY WAS *REALLY* LIKE.

WHEN THE VIRUS HIT, SHE SAID THAT THIS WAS GOING TO BE A MOMENT LIKE THAT FOR THE WORLD. THAT WE WOULD SHED ALL OF OUR HATE, ALL OF OUR FEAR.

SHE DIED BEFORE SHE COULD HEAR MY HUSBAND'S STORY. HIS UNCLE, MALIK, WAS BEATEN TO DEATH OUTSIDE OF A BODEGA IN THE SOUTH BRONX JUST FOUR DAYS AFTER THE ATTACK ON THE WORLD TRADE CENTER.

AND I THINK THAT STORY HAD MORE RELEVANCE TO WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT, I'M AFRAID.

THE WAY IN WHICH PEOPLE JUMPED TO BELIEVE THAT THE VIRUS ONLY SPREAD IN IMMIGRANT AND OUTSIDER COMMUNITIES.

THE FACT THAT THE UNITED NATIONS SET UP THESE PARIAH CAMPS FOR THE DESTITUTE, WHEN THE SICK AND WEALTHY TURNED PUBLIC HOSPITALS INTO LUXURY HOSPICES.

THE CALLS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS FOR GENOCIDE AROUND THE WORLD AND IN OUR OWN COUNTRY.

I HAVE A PRINT OF THE PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING PHOTO OF THE SICK LYNCHINGS ON THE FRONT STEPS OF MONTGOMERY CITY HALL SITTING OVER THE DESK IN MY OFFICE, SO I'LL NEVER FORGET.

WE WERE ALL DYING TOGETHER, BUT WE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE APART.



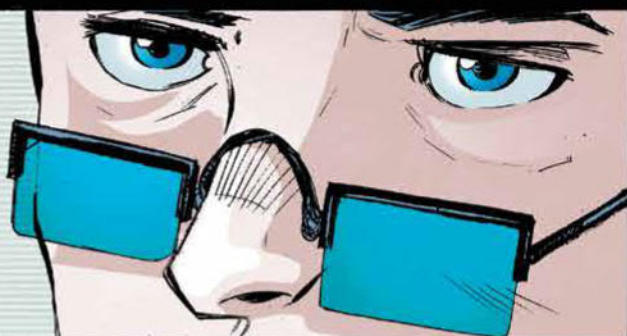


THAT DOESN'T JUST GO AWAY WITH THE VIRUS. THAT HATE. THAT FEAR. THAT'S STILL A PART OF US. AND AS MUCH AS WE WANT TO FORGET IT, AS MUCH AS IT WOULD COMFORT US TO BUILD A FRIENDLY MYTH TO LIFT OUR SPIRITS...

...I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

IS THERE ANYTHING THAT GIVES YOU HOPE?

IT'S BEEN ALMOST NINE MONTHS SINCE THE FIRST LARGE-SCALE VACCINES WERE DISTRIBUTED. IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, THERE WILL BE THE BIGGEST INFUX OF NEW BIRTHS IN FIFTEEN YEARS.

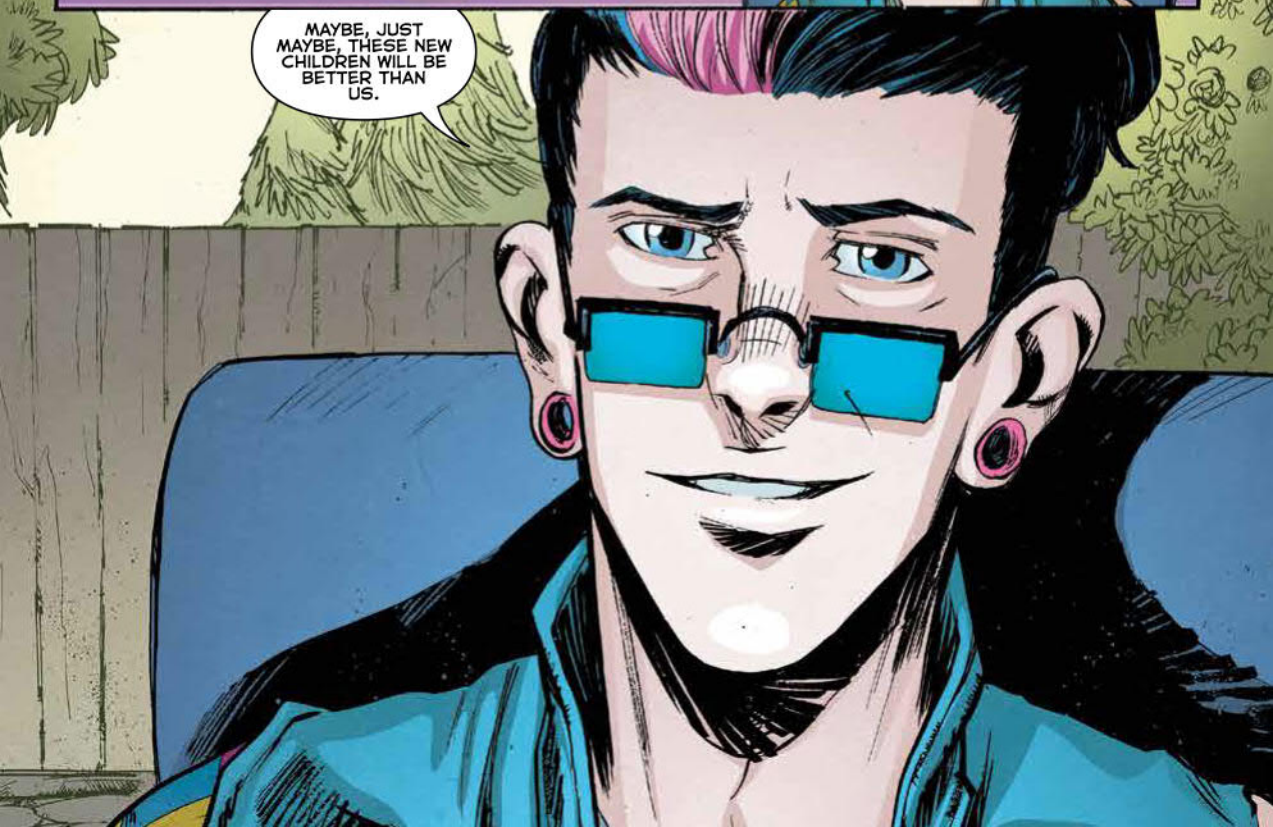


# GONRING COLE

NEW BIRTHS MEAN NEW POSSIBILITIES. NEW HOPE.

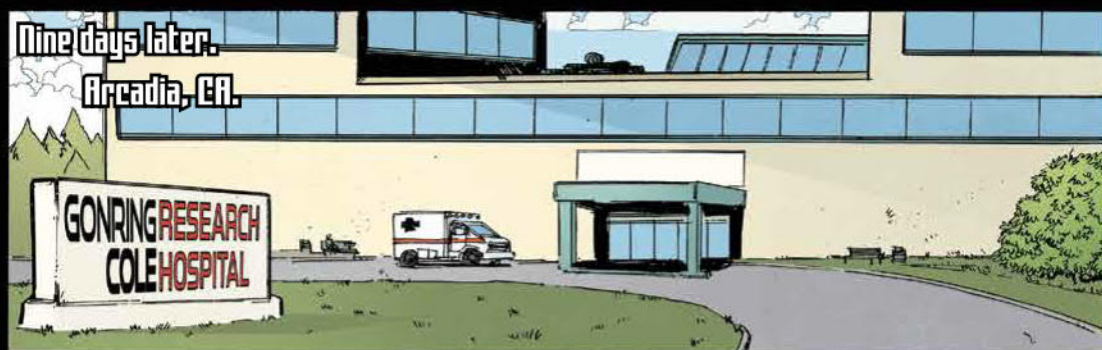


MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, THESE NEW CHILDREN WILL BE BETTER THAN US.





Nine days later.  
Arcadia, CA.



YOU CAN DO IT...JUST KEEP PUSHING.



HEY, BABY. YOU'RE ALMOST THERE. AND SHE'S STILL ALIVE...THIS IS GOING TO WORK, THIS TIME. I CAN FEEL IT.

JUST SHUT UP!

I LOVE YOU. I'M SORRY.

I LOVE YOU.



AHHHHHHH!



HERE SHE IS...





MRRNNNN!

OH, GOD...



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT IS THIS? WHAT'S GOING ON?

I...I DON'T KNOW...

IS SHE-- IS SHE OKAY?

WHAT'S THAT NOISE SHE'S MAKING...? IT'S LIKE...I'VE NEVER HEARD A NOISE LIKE THAT.

MRRRN!  
MRRRRRRRRNNNN!



W-WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT HER LIKE THAT? WHY ARE YOU SO PALE?

JEREMY, WHAT'S WRONG?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

SHE'S... SHE'S ALL WRONG.

WHAT IS SHE?

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT SHE IS.



DOCTOR... DOCTOR CRANE?

I'M SORRY TO INTRUDE. I REALLY AM, BUT YOU HAVE TO SEE THAT SHE IS A PHENOMENALLY SPECIAL YOUNG WOMAN.

SHE IS THE FIRST DOCUMENTED LIVING, BREATHING HUMAN BABY BORN IN THE UNITED STATES IN OVER TWO YEARS.

AND IF I MAY BE SO BOLD...



...I THINK  
SHE'S THE MOST  
BEAUTIFUL CHILD  
I HAVE EVER  
SEEN IN MY  
LIFE.

