WATCHMEN: PART II by Lon Turner

Based on the graphic novel

WATCHMEN By Alan Moore and David Gibbons

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FADE IN

EXT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

Somewhere in Florida. Pretty, welcoming.

SALLY (O.S.) Laurie, honey? Are you okay?

INT. SALLY'S ROOM - DAY

A utility apartment: one big room, plus a connected bathroom. Great view of the outside. SALLY JUSPECZYK (66), still attractive if a bit battered, wheelchair bound, peeks into the bathroom.

> SALLY You don't sound so good.

IN THE BATHROOM

Laurie on her knees before the toilet, her head over the bowl.

LAURIE (spits) I'll live.

Laurie stands, unsteady, and enters the room proper.

LAURIE Happens every time Jon teleports me. One second I'm in New York, I blink and here I am in Florida. Adios, breakfast. And to think, I get to do it again when Jon's finished.

SALLY My poor little girl. Where is Jon, anyway?

LAURIE At a funeral.

Laurie checks out the room. Porcelain figurines on a shelf. Hollis Mason's book on a bedside table. Photos on a wall.

> SALLY Anyone I know?

LAURIE Uh...some government thing. They even made him put on clothes.

SALLY It's Eddie Blake's funeral, isn't it...

LAURIE Now, mom, you shouldn't upset yourself --

SALLY Please, Laurie. Don't treat me like a child. I still keep in contact with Hollis Mason, he told me all about it.

Sally looks at a photo on the wall. Same as the photo Rorschach found in Edward Blake's apartment -- The Minutemen group photo.

> SALLY Poor Eddie... LAURIE "Poor Eddie?" How can you say that after what he did? SALLY Because that was a long time ago, Laurie, and things change. LAURIE It doesn't matter how long ago it was, he --SALLY It does matter. What's done is done.

Laurie, bothered, lights a cigarette.

SALLY In the end, all you can do is wash your hands of it and put it away.

LAURIE Just like that, huh?

SALLY It was almost forty years ago. What was I supposed to do? (MORE) SALLY (cont'd) Curl up into a ball and spend the rest of my life crying in the corner? It happened. It's the past. As for Eddie...

THE PHOTO

fills the screen as Sally continues.

#### SALLY

He was the youngest of us, you know. He used to poke fun at me and Mason, we were the oldest. He'd joke about how he was going to outlive us. That was Eddie. He always thought he'd have the last laugh...

The FLASH of a camera bulb.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MINUTEMEN HEADQUARTERS - 1965

As the Minutemen pose for the photo. A PHOTOGRAPHER gives them the thumbs up.

# PHOTOGRAPHER That's a keeper!

The heroes relax and circle about a punch bowl. NIGHT OWL (Hollis Mason) steps to the photographer.

NIGHT OWL Thanks, Jimmy. Don't forget, six prints.

PHOTOGRAPHER You got it, Mr. Owl.

Silk Spectre (Sally Juspeczyk) passes out cups of punch. HOODED JUSTICE declines his.

SILK SPECTRE Wow. A real photo session. Did my hair look okay, Hooded Justice?

HOODED JUSTICE Honestly, Sally, I don't go for all this publicity hooplah. I'd rather be on the streets, doing what I do best.

#### COMEDIAN

Hell with the streets. Things are startin' to brew over there in Viet Nam. Why doesn't Uncle Sam give us a call, put us where the real action is?

HOODED JUSTICE

We're not at war yet, kid. Besides, we should avoid political situations --

Night Owl approaches.

NIGHT OWL Politics, shmolitics. This is our first anniversary as a team, we should be celebrating. What say we head over to the Owl's Nest and have a drink. Say, half an hour?

SILK SPECTRE You guys go ahead. I have to change.

COMEDIAN Can I watch?

SILK SPECTRE Eddie, stop...

Silk Spectre waits as the heroes clear out. Comedian gives her a last look over his shoulder as he walks out.

Silk Spectre goes to a locker and pulls out her civilian clothes. She strips down to her bra and panties, folds her skimply outfit and sets it in the locker.

> COMEDIAN Lookin' good, Sally.

Sally, startled, quickly covers herself with her arms.

SALLY Eddie! You knew I was changing.

COMEDIAN 'Course I did. You announced it loud enough.

SALLY Could you please wait outside? COMEDIAN I could. But the view's better in here.

Comedian approaches her. He takes his time. Allows her to feel intimidated.

COMEDIAN You really do take great care of yourself, Sally.

SALLY

Eddie --

COMEDIAN Don't be bashful. Nothin' I ain't seen before.

He steps behind her, leans in close.

COMEDIAN Course, what I seen before didn't look this good.

He places his hands on her hips.

SALLY What are you doing?

COMEDIAN Whaddaya think?

# SALLY

No, Eddie.

Comedian grabs her and spins her to face him. He pulls her to him.

COMEDIAN You sure? You might like it.

He kisses her hard. Sally struggles.

SALLY Eddie. Let me go.

COMEDIAN Come on, baby. You gotta have some reason for wearin' that outfit of yours.

SALLY I said no! Uh huh. No as in yes --

Sally KNEES Comedian in the groin and scampers out of his grip. Comedian doubles over, teeth clinched.

Sally takes a step back. Comedian glares at her, fire in his eyes. He straightens himself. Torques his jaw.

# SALLY

Eddie...

Comedian SLUGS her in the gut so hard her feet come off the floor. He BASHES her across the face with his fist. She hits the ground hard.

Comedian KICKS her in the ribs, BREAKS several of them. He rolls her over onto her stomach, presses her down with one hand, loosens the belt of his uniform with the other.

SALLY No...Eddie, don't...

Comedian RIPS her panties off.

SALLY Eddie, please, oh god!

Comedian puts his weight on her and thrusts. Sally SCREAMS. It's ugly. Repulsive. Sally's face blank with shock and smeared with blood.

HOODED JUSTICE (O.S.) Sally? I heard --

Hooded Justice enters and stops, shocked. Comedian looks up. The look on his face: uh oh.

Hooded Justice marches toward Comedian. Comedian grabs at his pants, tries to pull them up.

COMEDIAN Wait. Hey, man, she wanted me to --

HOODED JUSTICE You sadistic little bastard.

Hooded Justice snatches Comedian up like a child and beats the shit out of him. SLAMS him in the mouth. BREAKS his nose. KNEES him in the gut. Comedian falls to the floor, dribbles blood and teeth. Hooded Justice looms above him, ready to dish out some more. Comedian SPITS a wad of blood.

> COMEDIAN Heh heh. You like this, don't you, big guy? Turns you on. Yeah. This is what gets you hot.

Hooded Justice relaxes his fists. The only part of his face visible -- his eyes -- full of disgust.

HOODED JUSTICE The Minutemen punish criminals. We don't put them on our roster. Get out.

### COMEDIAN

You want me out? All right. I'm out. But mark my words, asshole. I got your number. Yeah, that's right. And one of these days the joke's gonna be on you.

#### HOODED JUSTICE

Get out!

Comedian pulls himself to his feet. Pulls his pants up. Stumbles toward the door. Sally pulls herself to her knees, armed wrapped around her busted ribs. She's a pathetic sight.

> HOODED JUSTICE Get up. And for god's sake, cover yourself.

> > FADE TO:

INT. SALLY'S ROOM - DAY

Sally stares at the photo on the wall.

LAURIE Mom. Mom, did you hear me?

Sally clears her throat.

SALLY I'm sorry. What?

LAURIE I said I still don't understand how you can just forgive something like that. SALLY Because, Laurie. Life goes on. As Laurie takes a final draw of her cigarette: LAURIE Yeah, well... She snuffs the cigarette out in an ash tray. LAURIE Not for everybody. EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CEMETERY - DAY The Street Preacher, "The End is Nigh" sign in hand, passes before the cemetery gates. PRIEST (O.S.) Man that is born of woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of miseries... EXT. CEMETERY - BURIAL SITE - DAY Adrian Veidt, Jon Osterman and Dan Dreiberg in attendance, amongst others. Blake's casket draped in an American Flag. ON ADRIAN, as the priest continues the service. PRIEST (0.S.) He cometh up and is cut down like a flower. He fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one

FADE TO:

INT. MEETING HALL - 1984

stay.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS (48), his suit tight around his gut, stands before a large map of New York City adorned with multicolored stick pins. Other heroes in attendance: Night Owl (Dreiberg), Rorschach, Ozymandias. Dr. Manhattan, still in costume at this point, stands beside his girlfriend, JANEY SLATER (43).

A much younger Laurie, as Silk Spectre, sneaks peeks with Dr. Manhattan. Janey notices, and is not pleased.

Comedian sits off to the side in a chair, cigar chomped between his teeth, legs kicked back as he reads a paper. At this point, he wears his full-headed mask to hide his scar.

> CAPTAIN METROPOLIS Well, firstly, let me say I'm pleased to see so many of you here. Secondly, for those who only know me as Captain Metropolis, my name is Nelson Gardner. Call me Nelson. Thirdly, uh...I guess I should welcome everyone to the first meeting of The Crime Busters.

Comedian BURPS.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS

Ahem. Why "The Crime Busters" you ask? Well, all the Minutemen save for myself have retired. But crime hasn't retired. No, sir.

He points out various stick pins on his display.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS Racism, campus subversion, drugs, promiscuity, all still exist in our fair city. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

He paces before the heroes.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS Now. Ever since The Minutemen officially disbanded four months ago, I've been searching for heroes to join me in battle against the atrocities which transpire around us every day. I think I've found those heroes in you. You're the best and the brightest.

He steps before them.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS

What I'd like is to offer you, the new generation of heroes, the opportunity to join me in a new, elite team. That's right. The Crime Busters.

COMEDIAN

Bullshit.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS

What?

Comedian lowers his paper.

### COMEDIAN

Cut the act, Nelly. I accepted your invitation 'cuz I thought maybe you was doin' the world a favor and retirin'. Look at you. You're pushin' fifty, you're over the hill and obsolete. But ya still wanna go on playin' cowboys and injuns.

Janey leers at Jon, his eyes locked on Laurie.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS Th-that's not true --

#### NIGHT OWL

Now, Comedian, he's got a point. Rorschach and I spend most of our time combatting violent gangs in Harlem and we could use all the help we can get.

### RORSCHACH

I agree. Need more heroes on the street. But Comedian is right. A group this size...too big. Too unwieldy.

# OZYMANDIAS

I would think that to be a simple matter of organization. With the proper person coordinating --

### COMEDIAN

And who would that be, I wonder? Any ideas, tinker bell?

Comedian lays his paper aside and stands.

I mean, you're the smartest man in the world, right?

# OZYMANDIAS

One needn't be a genius to realize this country has problems which need solving.

As Comedian drops his cigar to the floor and stomps it out:

## COMEDIAN

You got that straight, girlie. It also don't take a genius to know they're not so small that they can be solved by you bunch o' monkeys.

### OZYMANDIAS

No problem is insurmountable. All it takes is a little intelligence.

# COMEDIAN

And we all know you got intelligence comin' outta your ears, right? (scoffs) You people are a joke. Do you think it really matters, runnin' around tryin' to solve problems by beatin' the crap out of 'em?

## RORSCHACH

Of course it matters. Criminals must know that there are those who will not tolerate them.

#### COMEDIAN

They already know, squirt. And they don't care. Know why?

Comedian takes out a lighter and sets Captain Metropolis' display afire.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS My display!

COMEDIAN They don't care 'cuz there's still gonna be the Russians. The Gooks. The rag-heads. (MORE) COMEDIAN (cont'd) Nukes'll be flying all over hell and half o' Georgia within the next twenty years, then Ozzy here's gonna be the smartest man on the cinder. Bunch o' half wits. I got better things to do.

Comedian takes his leave. Captain Metropolis pats at the display, attempts to put out the flame. Janey nudges Dr. Manhattan.

JANEY Jon, I'd like to go home. Now.

NIGHT OWL I appreciate what you're trying to do, Cap -- Nelson. But this was a fiasco.

The room clears out save for Ozymandias, who sits deep in thought. Captain Metropolis continues to pat at the flaming display.

CAPTAIN METROPOLIS Wait! Please, don't leave. This is important. Somebody has to -damn it, somebody has to save the world!

PRIEST (O.S.) O lord most mighty, o holy and merciful savior...

FADE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - BURIAL SITE - DAY

Adrian stares at the casket, deep in thought.

PRIEST (O.S.) ...deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

ON JON as the priest continues.

PRIEST (0.S.) Thou most worthy judge eternal, suffer us not at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee...

FADE TO:

Fireworks in the sky above. Dr. Manhattan watches them from the front of an open-faced bar. No one else inside the bar save for Comedian. He pours himself a shot.

#### COMEDIAN

God damn fireworks. Ya'd think this country'd seen enough of 'em. Screw it. Least we got this place to ourselves.

## DR. MANHATTAN You sound bitter, Blake.

Comedian downs his drink in one big gulp. As he pours himself another:

### COMEDIAN

Nah. Just tired of this friggin' rice paddy. These little yellow bastards are great enemies, don't get me wrong. But when ya seen one gook, ya seen 'em all.

DR. MANHATTAN

You have strange attitudes on life and war, Blake.

## COMEDIAN

Strange to you, maybe. But once you see how big a joke all this is...bein' The Comedian's 'bout the only thing that makes sense.

### DR. MANHATTAN

Charred villages, boys with guns and necklaces made of human ears. These are part of the joke?

## COMEDIAN

Hey, I never said it was a funny joke. But if Uncle Sam says I gotta be here, may as well have a good time while I'm at it.

Dr. Manhattan steps inside the bar.

#### COMEDIAN

Try as I may, though, I hate this place. Hate the smell, hate the temperature, the cheap whiskey. (MORE)

COMEDIAN (cont'd) First chopper comes along, I'm outta here.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN (O.S.) Mr. Eddie?

Dr. Manhattan and Comedian turn to see a VIETNAMESE WOMAN, young, very pregnant, sheepishly step into the bar.

COMEDIAN Shit-hell and holy damn. Thank you, Lord. This is all I need.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN Must talk with you, Mr. Eddie.

Comedian downs his drink. As he pours another:

COMEDIAN Nothin' to talk about, mama-san. New York number one, Saigon number ten. I'm gettin' the hell outta

The Vietnamese Woman places her hands on her pregnant belly.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN

You...you walk away from this?

Comedian pours himself a drink.

this burg.

COMEDIAN Walk hell. I'm runnin' fast as I can!

Comedian LAUGHS. Dr. Manhattan watches on.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN But I cannot walk away from this. Our child grows in my belly. I cannot forget.

## COMEDIAN

That's a cryin' shame, 'cause I sure as hell can. And that's exactly what I'm gonna do. Forget about you, forget about this whole rotten country.

Comedian gulps his drink down. Tears roll down the Vietnamese Woman's face.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN But...you say you love me. COMEDIAN And you believed me? Heh. Joke's on you.

Comedian pours himself yet another drink. The Vietnamese Woman fumes.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN No. You not forget. I won't let you. I think you remember my rotten country, and you remember me!

She plucks a knife from Comedian's belt.

COMEDIAN The hell are you --

She swings the blade. It SLICES Comedian's left cheek. Comedian YELPS, pushes her away. Puts a hand to his cheek. Looks at all the blood.

> COMEDIAN My face. My face! You god damn...

Comedian reaches for the pistol holstered on his waist.

DR. MANHATTAN

Blake --

Comedian pulls the pistol.

COMEDIAN ...filthy, rotten little...

Comedian takes his aim.

COMEDIAN ...lousy, stinkin' piece of...

DR. MANHATTAN Blake, don't --

BLAM! The Vietnamese Woman takes a bullet in the forehead. She collapses to the ground. Comedian holsters his pistol, holds his cheek.

> COMEDIAN Medic. Gotta find a medic.

Comedian grabs a rag from the bar as he heads for the door. Dr. Manhattan regards the woman's body on the floor. Follows after Comedian. Comedian stomps along, rag to his cheek. Dr. Manhattan keeps pace behind him.

DR. MANHATTAN Blake, that woman was pregnant.

COMEDIAN Ya don't say?

DR. MANHATTAN And you killed her in cold blood.

## COMEDIAN

Yeah, that's right. She was pregnant, and I shot her down. And you stood there and watched me. You could've changed the gun to water, could've changed the bullets to snowflakes, could've transported either of us to god damn Timbuktu. But you didn't lift a finger. You don't give a shit about people anymore. Just like you didn't give a shit about Janey Slater 'fore you dumped her for Laurie Juspeczyk, and pretty soon you won't be interested in her, either.

Dr. Manhattan stops. Comedian continues off.

COMEDIAN Before long you ain't even gonna care about the planet or anybody on it. God help us all.

Dr. Manhattan stands alone in the middle of the road, fireworks in the sky above him.

PRIEST (0.S.) Earth to earth...

FADE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - BURIAL SITE - DAY

Dr. Manhattan looks to the sky.

PRIEST (O.S.) ...ashes to ashes...

ON DAN as the priest continues.

PRIEST (O.S.) ...dust to dust.

FADE TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY - 1992

The LA riots. Streets full of smoke. Comedian and Night Owl emerge from the smoke in filter masks, Comedian armed with a grenade launcher. Buildings on fire. Strewn litter as far as the eye can see.

> NIGHT OWL (FILTERED) This is a nightmare. The whole city is erupting.

COMEDIAN (FILTERED) Don't get your panties in a twist, junior. National Guard'll be here soon enough. But until then we're the only line of protection.

A car EXPLODES nearby. Night Owl jerks. Comedian doesn't even bat an eye.

NIGHT OWL (FILTERED) Protection. Not sure who we're protecting them from...

COMEDIAN (FILTERED) Whatsa matter, bird boy? Not used to fightin' somebody ain't dressed up in his underoos? Speakin' of which, where are the rest of your Watchmen buddies?

NIGHT OWL (FILTERED) Dr. Manhattan and Silk Spectre are handling the south side streets. I'm not sure where Ozymandias is, but Rorschach's across town trying to hold down the east side. He, uh...seems to prefer working alone these days.

Comedian throws a gas grenade at a group of looters.

COMEDIAN (FILTERED) (to looters) Heads up, my little chickies! (MORE) COMEDIAN (FILTERED) (cont'd) Heh heh. (to Night Owl) Rorschach's nuts. Used to have half a head on his shoulders but that kid snuff he worked a few years back put 'im over the edge. Rorschach, Moth Man, that freak Dr. Manhattan...all nuts.

NIGHT OWL (FILTERED) Some would say the same thing about you.

COMEDIAN (FILTERED) Not me, pal. I keep things in perspective and try to see the humor in it all. I -- drop that can you little maggot!

Comedian raises his grenade launcher and takes aim at a pair of black YOUTHS spraying graffiti. On the wall of the building before them: "WHO WATCHES THE WATC."

> NIGHT OWL (FILTERED) Wait, don't shoot!

COMEDIAN (FILTERED) Relax. It's just a smoke bomb.

Comedian pulls the trigger. A grenade rockets toward the youths. It EXPLODES in a ball of fire, takes the youths and half the building with it.

COMEDIAN (FILTERED)

Oops!

NIGHT OWL (FILTERED) You said it was just a smoke bomb!

COMEDIAN (FILTERED)

I lied.

Comedian LAUGHS.

NIGHT OWL (FILTERED) You just...you just --

COMEDIAN (FILTERED) Casualties of war, amigo. Seen that "Who watches the watchmen" garbage all over the place lately. Now come on. Let's really show 'em who's watchin' who. Comedian steps off into the smoke, leaves Night Owl beside himself.

FADE TO:

## EXT. CEMETERY - BURIAL SITE - DAY

The service over. Attendees clear out as a Cemetery worker lowers the casket into the ground. Dan stands at the end of the grave. He pulls Comedian's blood-stained smiley face button from his pocket.

He regards it and lays it atop the casket and walks off. In the near distance, a MAN in a dark coat, his dark hat pulled down low, one arm behind his back.

He approaches the tombstone. Pulls a bouquet of roses from behind his back and sets them beside the headstone.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The Man in the dark hat and suit exits the cemetery. Nearly bumps into the Street Preacher.

STREET PREACHER Have you repented yet, brother?

The man looks up. His face gaunt, sunken cheeked, aged. His eyes are a pale violet. His name is MOLOCH (60).

MOLOCH Yeah. Didn't do me any good.

The Street Preacher watches as Moloch climbs into a cab and disappears down the street.

EXT. QUEENS - NIGHT

Moloch climbs the stairs to his cheap apartment building, a bag of groceries in hand.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Moloch enters. Lights out. He sets the grocery bag aside. Removes his coat, hangs it on a rack nearby. Removes his hat and hangs it by his coat. Full view of his head now: his ears are pointed.

He grabs his grocery bag and walks to...

THE KITCHEN

and sets the bag atop the counter. An apple falls out. He picks it up, brushes it against his sleeve. Puts it back in the bag.

He steps to the refrigerator. Grabs the handle. Pulls the door open.

RORSCHACH

leaps from inside the refrigerator and tackles him. He forces Moloch onto his stomach. Twists Moloch's arm behind his back.

MOLOCH You! I didn't do anything to deserve you! You've got the wrong person!

RORSCHACH Edgar William Jacobi. Also known as Moloch. Criminal mastermind.

MOLOCH But I didn't do anything!

Rorschach twists Moloch's arm. Moloch SHRIEKS.

RORSCHACH Lie again, it breaks.

MOLOCH Please! I haven't committed a crime since I got locked up fifteen years ago!

Rorschach torques Moloch's arm.

MOLOCH I swear to God! Jesus Christ, I'm on parole!

RORSCHACH

How long?

MOLOCH They sprung me two weeks ago.

RORSCHACH Two weeks. Plenty of time to get in trouble. Plenty of time to kill Edward Blake. MOLOCH I didn't kill anyone! I swear!

Rorschach releases Moloch's arm and stands. Moloch, racked with pain, rolls over onto his back.

RORSCHACH Heard you attended funeral today. Why?

MOLOCH I-I don't know. I just felt that I should. After The Comedian visited me last week --

Rorschach snatches Moloch up, rough, holds him against the wall.

MOLOCH What did I say?!

RORSCHACH How did you know Blake was Comedian?

MOLOCH Last week, he broke in! He was drunk, had his mask off --

RORSCHACH Enemies for almost forty years. Why would he visit you?

MOLOCH I don't know! I woke up and there he was. He was babbling, not making any sense!

RORSCHACH Tell me. Better be convincing.

INT. MOLOCH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - ONE WEEK EARLIER

Moloch lays asleep in bed. A large, powerful hand grabs him by the collar of his night shirt and yanks him up. Moloch is shocked awake.

The Comedian leans in, drunk, unsteady. His temperament changes as the conversation continues...angry, sad, outraged...the gamut.

COMEDIAN Wake up! You're in on it, ain't ya?!

Moloch's too surprised to answer.

COMEDIAN I saw your name on the list. You, Doc Manhattan's old girlfriend Janey Slater. If you're in on it, I'll kill you. Understand? Kill you.

MOLOCH I-I don't know w-what you're --

Comedian drops to a seat at the foot of Moloch's bed. He takes a large gulp from a bottle of whiskey.

### COMEDIAN

When I was a kid cleanin' up the waterfronts, it was a gas. World was tough, sure, you just had to be tougher. I thought I had it all figured out. Thought I was in on the joke. But this...if it's a joke, I don't get the punchline.

He takes another swig.

COMEDIAN

Tell you what's funny. If I'd never seen that bus load of rag heads...never seen those compound plans, never seen the flight lists...

He shakes his head.

#### COMEDIAN

No. I don't like this joke. I thought I was the comedian? I can't believe anybody would do...

Comedian breaks into tears. Moloch can only stare at him.

# COMEDIAN

Look at me. Cryin' like a little girl with a skinned knee. But you don't know. You don't know what's happenin'. It's too big. What he's doing -- I mean I've done bad things. (MORE) COMEDIAN (cont'd) Killed women, killed children. Killed another hero once.

He sobs.

COMEDIAN Bad things. Bad things. But I never did anything like...

Comedian drops to his knees at the foot of the bed.

COMEDIAN Forgive me, mother. Please, forgive me.

He looks to Moloch, tears on his cheeks.

COMEDIAN I don't get the joke, see? Somebody explain it to me.

He grabs Moloch's collar, desperate, terrified, confused.

COMEDIAN Somebody explain it to me!

Comedian's tears flow freely as he wraps his arms around Moloch in a desperate hug. Moloch, at a loss, pats his back.

FADE TO:

INT. MOLOCH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rorschach still has Moloch pinned to the wall.

MOLOCH And then he left. I swear to God, I don't know what it was all about.

Rorschach leans toward Moloch. Noses half an inch away. Moloch's eyes full of fear.

RORSCHACH

Hurm...

Rorschach releases Moloch and steps away.

RORSCHACH Strange story. Could be true.

MOLOCH S-so that's it? I'm clean? RORSCHACH You? Clean? Heh.

Rorschach reaches into his pocket.

RORSCHACH Searched your house before you got back. Found illegal drugs.

MOLOCH B-but I don't use drugs...

Rorschach pulls out a sandwich bag full of pill bottles.

RORSCHACH Oxycotin. Codein. Demeral. No prescription. Illegal.

# MOLOCH

Oh, those. Look. I knew they wouldn't do me any good, but when you've got what I got you'll try anything on the off-chance it --

RORSCHACH

What do you got?

## MOLOCH

Cancer.

RORSCHACH Kind of cancer?

MOLOCH You know the kind of cancer you can get better from? (beat) It isn't that kind of cancer.

## RORSCHACH

Hurm...

He sets the sandwich bag atop the counter.

RORSCHACH Memorized name of doctor on label. Will report later. Keep out of trouble.

Rorschach walks off.

RORSCHACH (V.O.) Journal entry, 8/11/01...

EXT. 42ND STREET - NIGHT Rorschach, collar up, hat pulled down low, trudges down the sidewalk. Past the porn shops and peep shows. RORSCHACH (V.O.) 42nd street. Caterer of filth and depravity. Women's breasts on every billboard, every display. He passes by several prostitutes. Each one propositions him. RORSCHACH Whores offered filthy love. Private love. Oral love. But not normal love. Normal love like coke in a green bottle; they don't make it anymore. EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT Rorschach approaches the front gate. RORSCHACH (V.O.) Thought about Moloch's story on way to cemetery. Could be lies. Could be truth. Rorschach picks the lock on the cemetery gates. RORSCHACH (V.O.) If true, still many questions. Puzzled by references to Dr. Manhattan, Moloch's name on a list with Janey Slater. Hit list? List of accomplices? Rorschach approaches Edward Blake's grave. RORSCHACH (V.O.) Answers will come soon enough. Nothing is insoluble. Nothing is hopeless. Not while there's life. Rorschach stops before Blakes grave. On the headstone: "EDWARD MORGAN BLAKE, 1940-2001." A cheap set of plastic flowers lay atop the grave. RORSCHACH (V.O.) Edward Blake. Sixty one years old. Thirty nine years a comedian.

(MORE)

25.

RORSCHACH (V.O.) (cont'd) Violent life brings violent death. Heroes don't die in bed. Don't allow ourselves luxury. Rorschach kneels before the grave, reaches into his trenchcoat. Pulls out a bouquet of roses and lays them upon the grave. RORSCHACH (V.O.) Something in our psyches? Animal urge to fight? No. Do what we have to do. What no one else will. Rorschach arranges the roses, almost obsessive. RORSCHACH (V.O.) Blake understood. Saw world's true face, made himself a parody of it. Only way he could cope. Reminds me of a joke ... Rorschach plucks a rose from the bouquet and tucks it into his collar. As he walks off across the cemetery: RORSCHACH (V.O.) Man goes to doctor. Says he's depressed. Life seems harsh and cruel. Feels all alone in a threatening world. Doctor has perfect solution. Says great clown Pagliacci in town tonight. Go see him. You'll feel better. Man bursts into tears. Says, "But doctor ... " Rorschach disappears into the night. RORSCHACH (V.O.) "...I am Pagliacci." FADE TO: EXT. WATERFRONT - NIGHT - 1966 Along the Hudson Bay. GRUNTS and PUNCHES from the shadows. A pair of THUGS spill out of the darkness and to the ground, their faces bloody and swollen.

Hooded Justice steps out of the shadows. He snatches the thugs up -- one with each hand -- and SLAMS them both against a warehouse door.

He throws one back to the ground. Holds the other up by the collar. The thug's feet six inches above ground.

HOODED JUSTICE This is what happens when you try to sell drugs in my town, criminal. Understand?

The thug nods his head, terrified. Hooded Justice drops him to the ground by his friend. He towers above them.

HOODED JUSTICE There's a soup kitchen downtown. You're going to volunteer. Do something good for society for a change. If you don't show up I'll know, and I'll come after you again. If I have to come after you again, you're dead. Go.

The thugs scamper to their feet and scram. Hooded Justice watches them until they're out of sight. He CHUCKLES. Turns to walk off.

BANG! A bullet penetrates his heart. He looks down at the wound. His legs buckle. He drops to his knees.

Comedian steps out of the shadows, his gaudy yellow uniform now black, a smoking revolver in his grip. Hooded Justice looks up to him.

> COMEDIAN Not so tough now, are ya, H.J.?

Comedian cocks his pistol and puts it against Hooded Justice's forehead.

COMEDIAN Told you I got your number. Now the joke's on you.

BLAM!

# AGAINST BLACK, TITLE CARD:

"And I'm up while the dawn is breaking even though my heart is aching...I should be drinking a toast to absent friends, instead of these comedians." - Elvis Costello

TO BE CONTINUED...