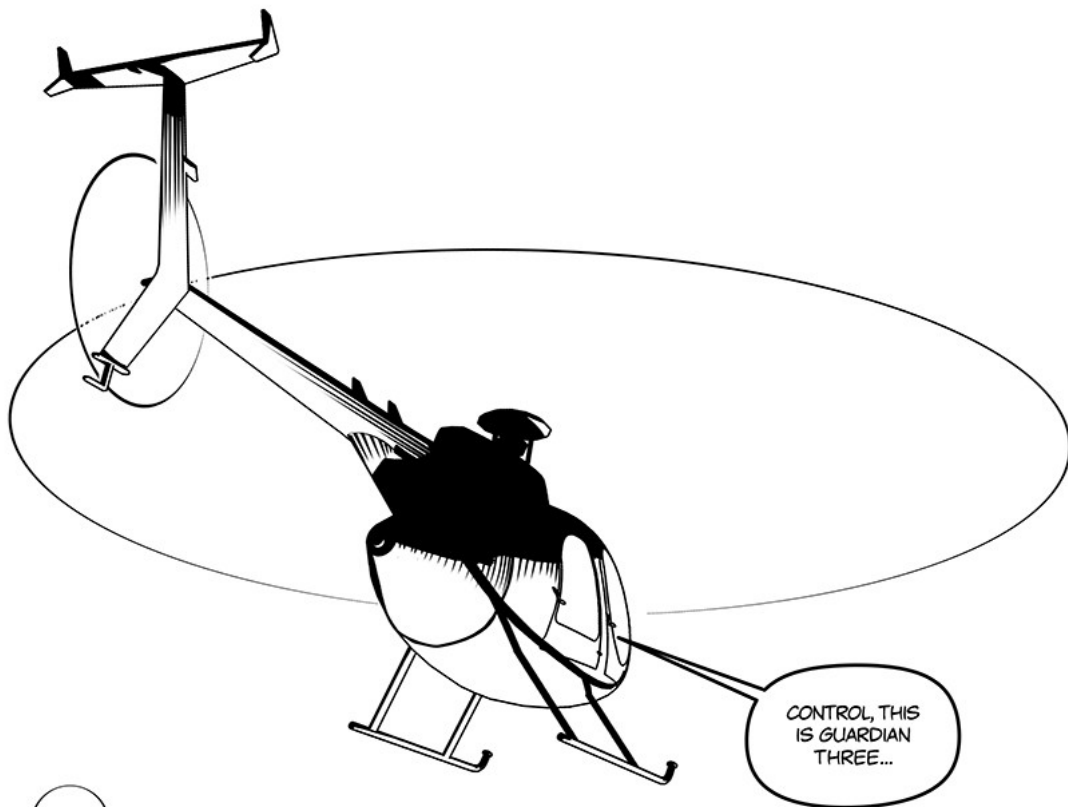




VINDICATED INC.



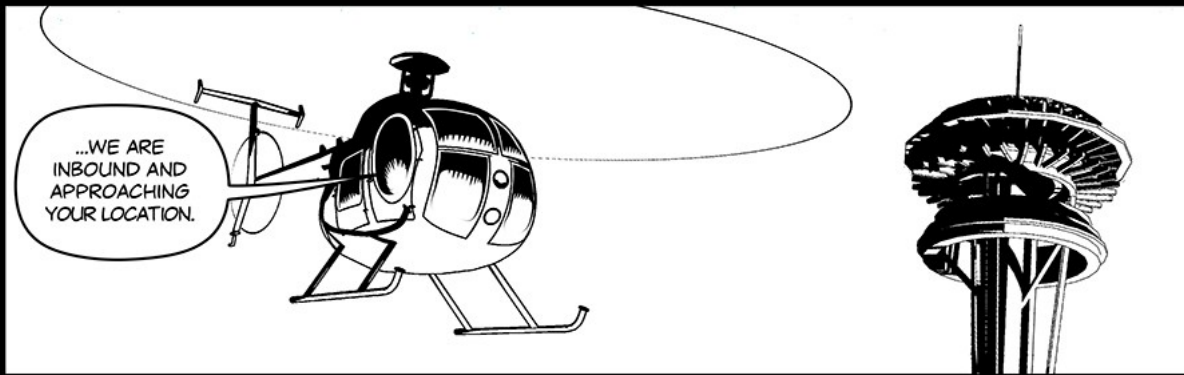
"Vindicated inc. is my personal love song to every veteran who has left a piece of themselves on the battlefield." —Gerry Kissell



CONTROL, THIS
IS GUARDIAN
THREE...



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.







TARGET IS DOWN!
REPEAT! TARGET IS
DOWN!

LISTEN UP,
WATKINS!



I DON'T GIVE TWO SHITS
WHAT YOU *THINK* YOU
ARE SEEING. KEEP EYES
ON TARGET UNTIL BRAVO
TEAM IS IN POSITION.



IF THIS JACKASS
ESCAPES, OUR
DEAL IS DEAD!
WE ARE DEAD!
ARE WE **CLEAR?**

ROGER, SIR.
YOU'RE FIVE BY
FIVE.

CHARLIE FOXTROT
ONE TO TWO-ONE
ACTUAL, DO YOU
COPY?

MY CHEST FEELS LIKE
SOMEONE JUST PLAYED
"WIPEOUT" ON IT WITH A
SLEDGEHAMMER.



7.62 NATO ROUND.

BODY ARMOR DID
IT'S JOB.

DAMMIT, JOHN, DO
YOU READ ME?!

I'M GONNA FEEL THIS
IN THE MORNING...



...IF I MAKE IT
THROUGH THE
NIGHT.



MAN...

...FULL MOON.

DAMMIT.

VINDICATED INC.

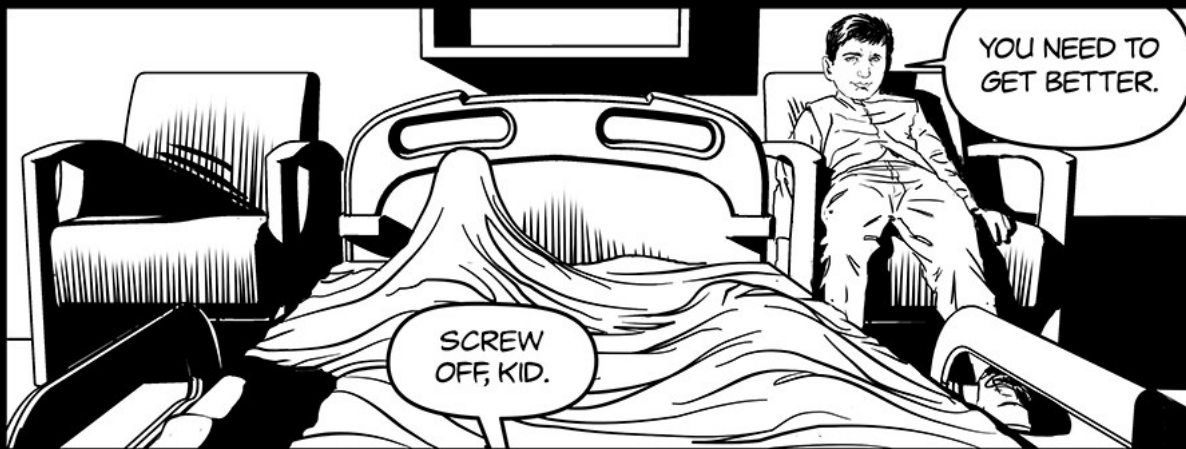
CHAPTER ONE:

GOD JUDGES HIS HEROES BY THEIR SCARS

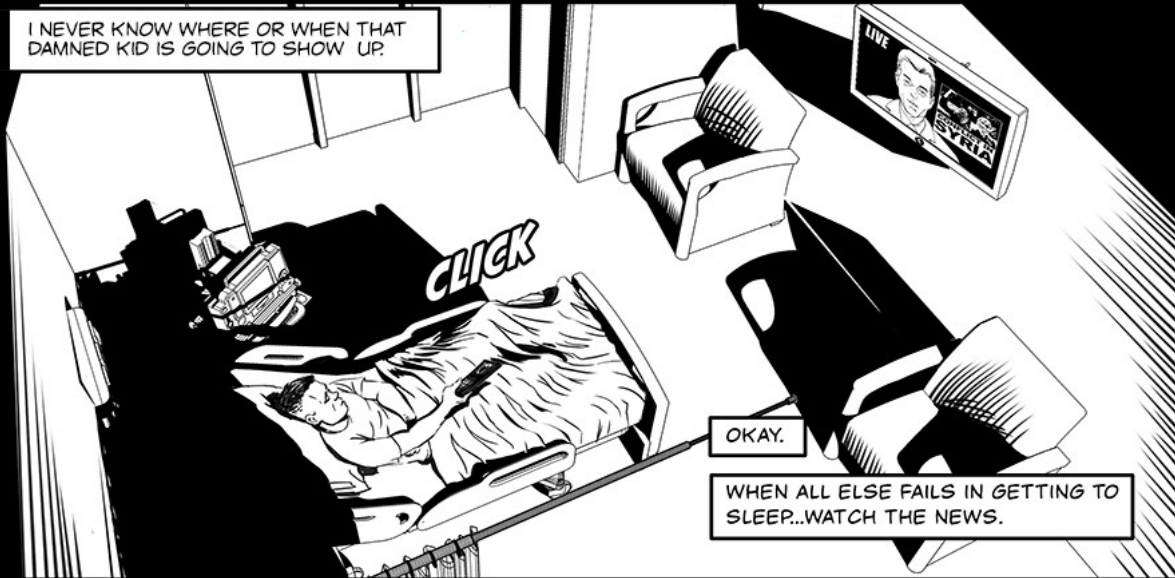
WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY
GERRY KISSELL

DAMN IT.
AWAKE, AGAIN.

R-R-R-EAK



I NEVER KNOW WHERE OR WHEN THAT DAMNED KID IS GOING TO SHOW UP.



OKAY.

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS IN GETTING TO SLEEP...WATCH THE NEWS.

IT'S FUNNY. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT IS GOING TO TRIGGER A FLASH BACK.

SOMETIMES IT'S A SMELL.

SOMETIMES A SOUND.



SOMETIMES, IT'S CAN BE THE WAY THE SUN HITS YOUR FACE.

OR, MAYBE, JUST A CREEPING FEELING...

...THAT COMES SEEMINGLY FROM NOWHERE...



...A FEELING THAT STARTS IN THE ABDOMEN...



...TIGHTENING, MAKING IT HARD TO BREATHE...



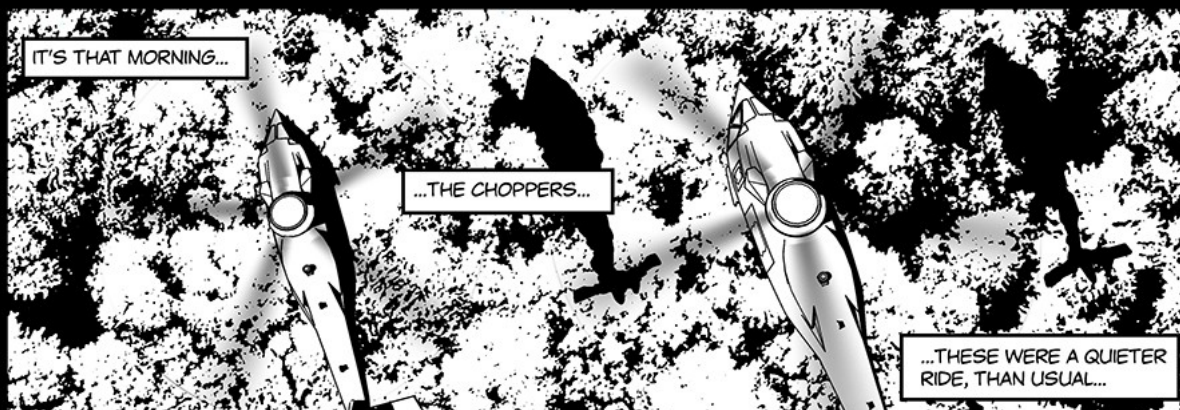
...AND THEN...



...LIKE THAT...



...I'M BACK IN THE SANDBOX.



IT'S THAT MORNING...

...THE CHOPPERS...

...THESE WERE A QUIETER
RIDE, THAN USUAL...



SO WE COULDN'T ENJOY THE
VIEW, WIND, OR THE SMELL OF
THE FRESH MOUNTAIN AIR.

IT WAS A SIMPLE SNATCH
AND GRAB MISSION.

THOUGH, THIS TIME IT WAS A CO-OP
MISSION BETWEEN OUR TEAM AND
AFGHAN SPECIAL FORCES.



ERIK WAS THERE...

...AS ALWAYS BY MY
SIDE.



MY OLD FRIEND, CAPTAIN
JABARI, WAS COMMANDING
THE AFGHANI TEAM.

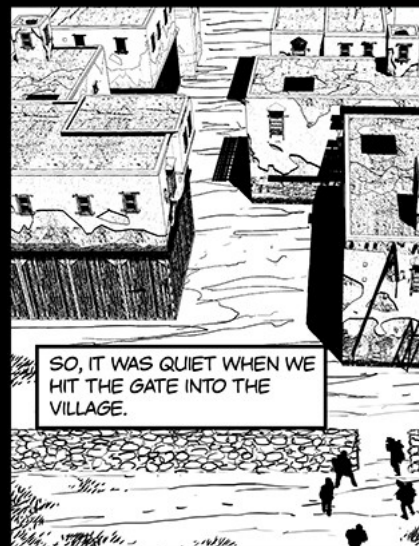
I'D TRAINED HIM
MYSELF

SO, I TRUSTED
THE MAN.



AFTER THE INSERT, WE MADE OUR WAY TO THE VILLAGE.

IT WAS EARLY. ONLY THE SHEEP HERDERS WERE UP.



SO, IT WAS QUIET WHEN WE HIT THE GATE INTO THE VILLAGE.



THE TEAM HELD BACK AT THE GATE...



...AS I MOVED UP ON THE FIRST BUILDING.



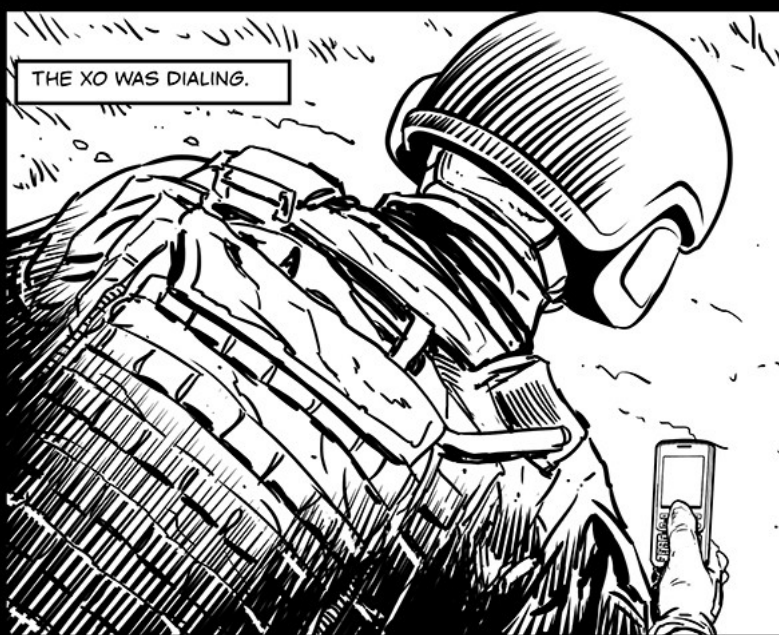
I'M NOT SURE WHAT MADE JABARI LOOK BACK AT HIS XO.



BUT THE TWO SECONDS THAT PASSED NEXT, CHANGED THAT MISSION.

JABARI SAW HIS XO DARTING HIS EYES AROUND.

IT WAS CHILLY THAT MORNING, YET THE MAN WAS COVERED IN SWEAT.







BUT HE DIDN'T STOP HIM.



JABARI TRIED TO WARN ME.



THERE WAS NO TIME.



OH...



...HELL.



TIME SLOWED, AS THE FLAMES CAME OUT...

...AND FOR A SPLIT SECOND, I WAS HOME...

...ON THE BEACH, THE TIDE WASHING OVER MY FEET.



I HAVE A VAGUE MEMORY OF IMMENSE HEAT...

...AND A BRIGHT LIGHT.

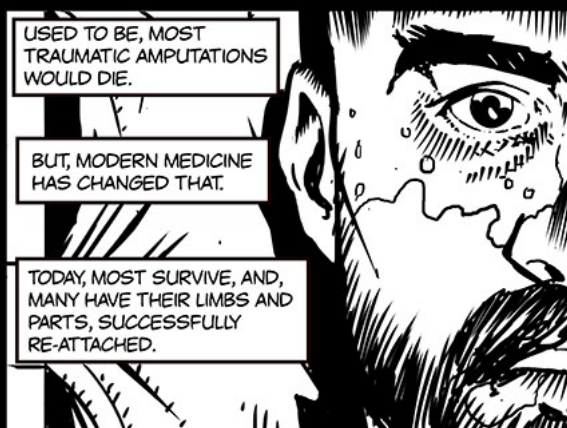




NOTHING IN THIS LIFE CAN PREPARE
YOUR MIND, FOR THE MOMENT...



...WHEN SOMEONE HANDS SOMEONE
ELSE, A PART OF YOUR BODY.



USED TO BE, MOST
TRAUMATIC AMPUTATIONS
WOULD DIE.

BUT, MODERN MEDICINE
HAS CHANGED THAT.

TODAY, MOST SURVIVE, AND,
MANY HAVE THEIR LIMBS AND
PARTS, SUCCESSFULLY
RE-ATTACHED.



NOT IN MY CASE.

TOO MUCH OF MY LEG,
THE PART THAT WAS
BLOWN OFF, WAS TOO
DAMAGED BEYOND USE.

REALITY IS A
MOTHER, MAN.



ON THE POSITIVE SIDE, I LOST
TEN POUNDS, IN UNDER AN HOUR.

THAT'S SOMETHING.





