

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS

# FATALITY



Number  
Fifteen



*Colors by Elizabeth Breitweiser*



**MEDIA INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO UTA - Agents Julien Thuan and Geoff Morley**

## **IMAGE COMICS, INC.**

Robert Kirkman - chief operating officer  
Erik Larson - chief financial officer  
Todd McFarlane - president  
Marc Silvestri - chief executive officer  
Jim Valentino - vice-president  
Eric Stephenson - publisher  
Rox Richards - director of business development  
Jennifer de Gooch - jr & marketing director  
Brenna Higginbotham - accounts manager  
Emily Miller - accounting assistant  
Janie Paterno - marketing assistant  
Emilia Bartista - sales assistant  
Suzie Gleason - administrative assistant  
Kevin Yuen - digital rights coordinator  
Tyler Shallice - events coordinator  
David Brothers - content manager  
Jonathan Oliva - production manager  
Drew Gill - art director  
Jana Cook - print manager  
Monica Garcia - senior production artist  
Vincent Kaban - production artist  
Jenna Savage - production artist  
[www.imagecomics.com](http://www.imagecomics.com)

**FATALE #15.** June 2013. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: 2001 Center Street, Sixth Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704. Copyright © 2013 Basement Gang Inc. All rights reserved. FATALE, the Fatale logo, and all Fatale characters featured herein and the likenesses thereof are trademarks of Basement Gang Inc. "Image" and the Image Comics logo are registered trademarks of Image Comics Inc. The events and characters presented are intended as fiction. Any similarity to real events or to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. This work may not be reproduced, except in small amounts for journalistic or review purposes, without permission of Basement Gang Inc. or Image Comics Inc. Printed in the U.S.A. For information regarding the CPSIA on this printed material call: 203-595-3636 and provide reference # EAST-499420.

# Prologue

When they finally bring me to court, it's like I've forgotten what the outside world even looks like.

Everything feels foreign... or fake.

Like the houses and fields will disappear after we pass by.

I wonder if this is *normal*, after being locked up for almost a year...

But so much of my life has felt unreal since I met *her*, maybe I'm just more aware now?

The guards all think I'm crazy, of course, and with good reason.

Ever since that *book* had arrived in my cell, I'd been obsessed.

Dominic's missing manuscript turning up on the bestseller list had felt like the Final twist of a knife that wouldn't stop stabbing me...

But after a few days, after my hysteria subsided, I discovered something...

...This *wasn't* the same book. Not exactly.

WHAT THE FUCK...?

It had the same title and the same story... but there were parts *missing*.

Sometimes a whole page, sometimes just a sentence or two.

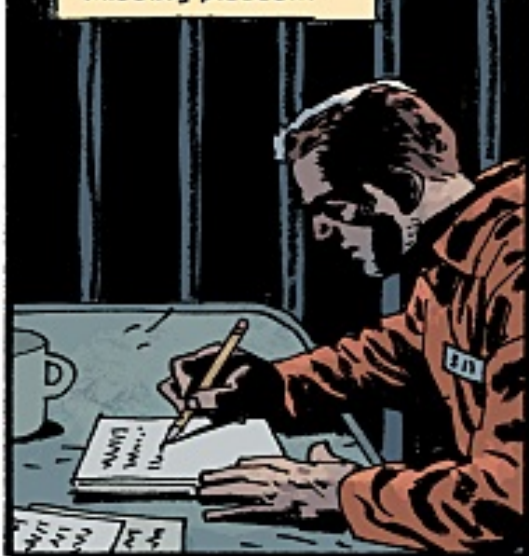
No one else would even notice...

...But I'd read those typed pages so many times I couldn't miss it.

So why had someone omitted these scenes?

Was it the same reason Uncle Dominic had never *published* this novel in the first place?

I spent days trying to recreate those missing pieces...



Losing track of eating and sleeping...



Always Feeling on the verge of finding an answer...



Always Feeling it just out of reach... But never giving up.



Because somewhere in those empty spaces was the *reason* for everything that had happened to me...

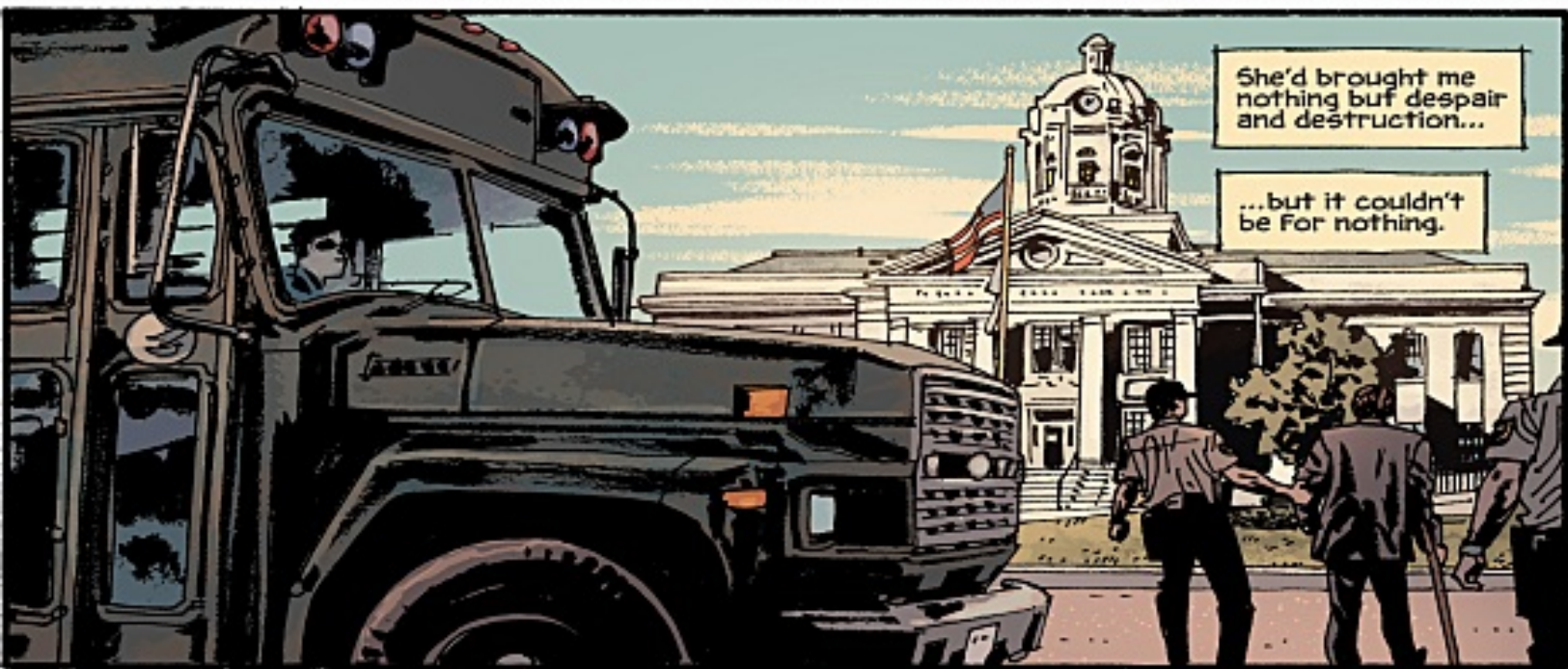


...And the secret to her... to *Josephine*.



She'd brought me nothing but despair and destruction...

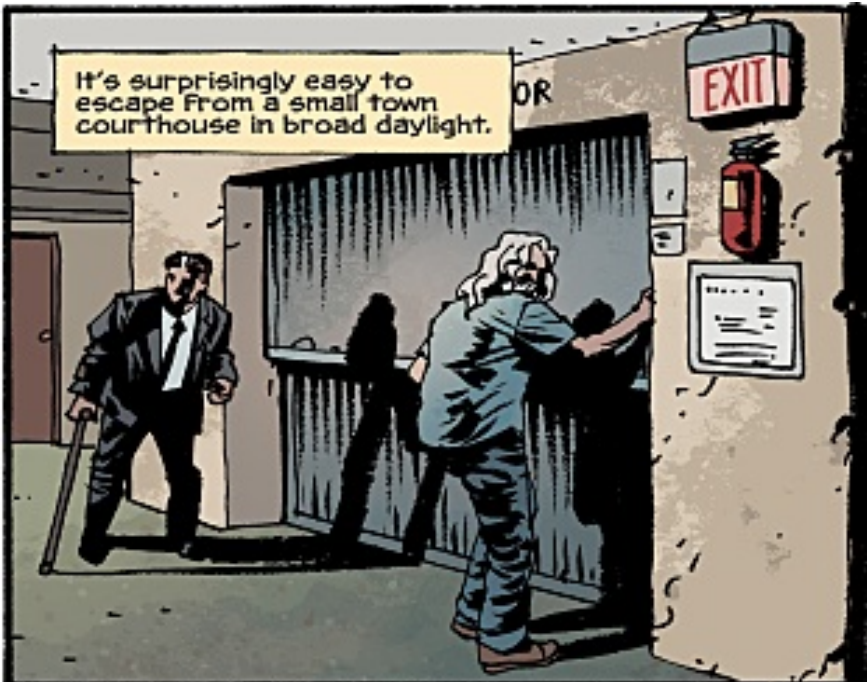
...but it couldn't be for nothing.







It's surprisingly easy to escape from a small town courthouse in broad daylight.



We take a service elevator to the basement...



Then we climb out a window into the alley behind the building...



THIS WAY, DUDE, OVER HERE...



Thirty seconds later, we're making a slow getaway up Main Street.

KEEP OUTTA SIGHT BACK THERE...



I feel a momentary jolt of Freedom, before it hits me that I now have *two* murders hanging over me, instead of *one*.



Which is how I know Jo really *did* send this guy.





Because no matter how bad my life already is, she can *still* make it worse...

YOU KNOW, NELSON...

...ANY CHANCE I HAD OF *EVER* CLEARING MY NAME JUST GOT FLUSHED DOWN THE FUCKING TOILET.

CLEARING YOUR NAME?

YEAH, RIGHT...

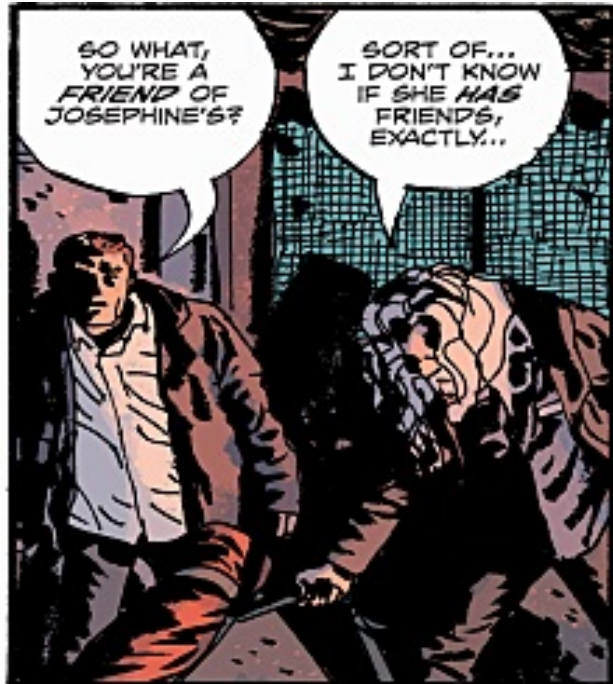
SPOKEN LIKE SOMEONE WHO'S NEVER DEALT WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM BEFORE.

TRUST ME, YOU WERE FULLY *FUCKED BACK* THERE...

OR DIDN'T YOU EVEN *LISTEN* TO YOUR LAWYER?

YOU MEAN THE GUY YOU *KILLED* RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME?

YEAH, I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT... SEEMED LIKE AN OKAY GUY.



SO WHAT, YOU'RE A FRIEND OF JOSEPHINE'S?

SORT OF... I DON'T KNOW IF SHE HAS FRIENDS, EXACTLY...



BUT I'VE KNOWN HER TWENTY YEARS...

JUST NOT BY THAT NAME... NOT AT FIRST...



NOW C'MON... WE GOT A BIT OF A HIKE DOWN TO THE BOAT...



SO, DO WE HAVE A PLAN HERE?

YEAH, WE GOT A PLAN...

GET THE FUCK OUT OF DODGE BEFORE THE FBI SHOWS UP...



And this is how I begin life on the run...



...Hobbling down a rocky trail to the river, following a madman.

# Chapter One

Seattle -  
1995

THINGS ALWAYS WENT  
SIDWAYS SOMEHOW.

LANCE HAD LEARNED  
THAT *THE HARD WAY*  
A LONG TIME AGO...

...WHEN THE BAND  
WAS ON THEIR FIRST  
WEST COAST TOUR.

YOU JUST HAD TO *ROLL*  
WITH THE FUCKUPS AND  
MINOR DISASTERS, OR  
YOU WOULDN'T SURVIVE.

WHICH TURNED OUT TO  
BE *GOOD TRAINING*  
FOR ROBBING A BANK.

...THAT'S IT, JUST  
STAY CALM,  
TERRY...

IT'S  
ALMOST  
OVER...

HELL, SO DID ALL THOSE YEARS GETTING UP ON STAGE.



NOW JUST LIE **FACEDOWN** BACK THERE, HON...

...AND DON'T HIT THAT ALARM JUST **YET**, PLEASE.



HE DIDN'T GET NERVOUS ANYMORE, NO MATTER WHAT HE WAS DOING.

SORRY FOR THE **INCONVENIENCE**, FOLKS.



AND WHEN THE GETAWAY CAR HE'D STOLEN DIED RIGHT OUTSIDE THE BANK...

...OH **C'MON**...



...LANCE JUST ROLLED WITH IT.



IT WAS PROBABLY  
JUST AS WELL, HE  
THOUGHT.



THE COPS WEREN'T GOING TO BE  
LOOKING FOR SOME IDIOT RUNNING  
THE HALF-MILE TO WHERE HE'D  
LEFT HIS SWITCH CAR.



STILL, NEXT TIME,  
HE'D NEED A DRIVER.



HE WAS TOO OUT  
OF SHAPE FOR  
THIS BULLSHIT.



NEXT TIME...  
CHRIST...

WAS HE ALREADY  
ADMITTING THERE'D  
BE A NEXT TIME?



THIS WAS JUST  
SUPPOSED TO BE  
A *STOPGAP*...



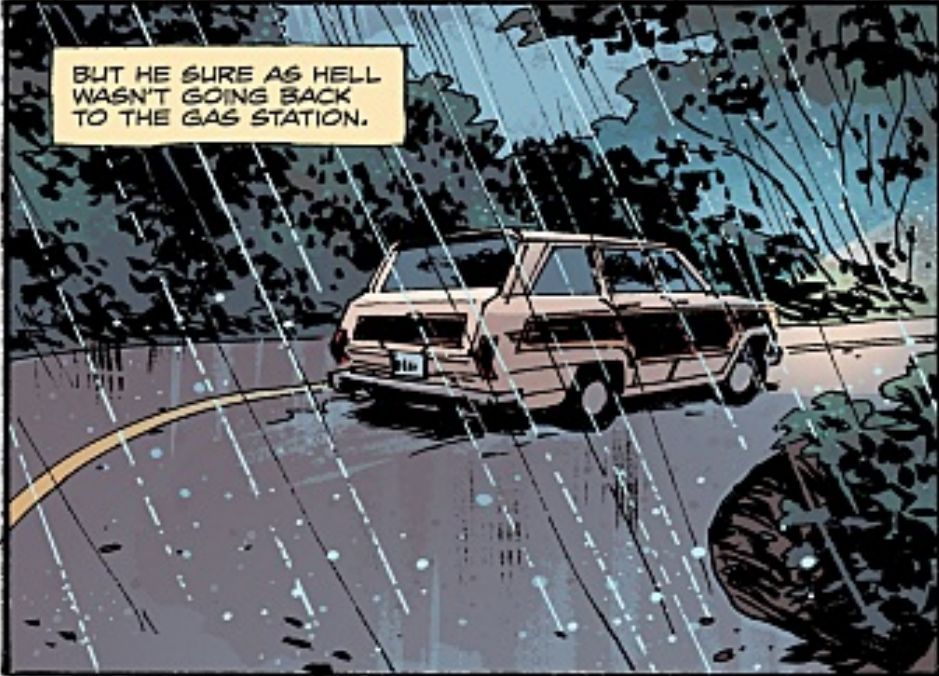
...TO GET THEM  
THROUGH UNTIL THE  
NEW VIDEO CAME OUT.



NOT A NEW  
CAREER.



BUT HE SURE AS HELL  
WASN'T GOING BACK  
TO THE GAS STATION.



HE'D LEFT THAT  
WORLD BEHIND.



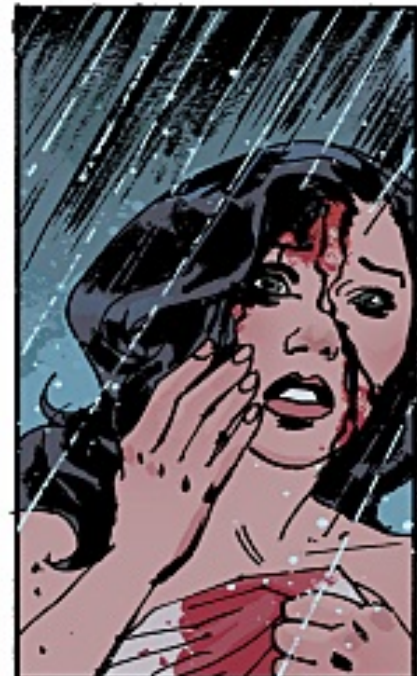
HE WAS A FAMOUS  
ROCK STAR.



AS LONG AS YOU PUT  
*FAME* IN QUOTES.



...THE  
HELL...?









ARE YOU FUCKING INSANE, LANCE?



WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO? JUST LEAVE HER ON THE ROAD?

YOU SHOULD'VE TAKEN HER TO THE E.R.

...NOT KIDNAPPED HER.



THIS IS NOT KIDNAPPING.

JUST SHUT UP AND FIX HER, SKIP.



SHE NEEDS A REAL DOCTOR, MAN.

YOU'RE A DOCTOR.



NO, I'M LIKE FIVE YEARS AWAY FROM BEING A DOCTOR.

FOR ALL I KNOW THIS CHICK'S GOT A MASSIVE BRAIN BLEED, OR...



HUNH...


WHAT?




THERE'S NO WOUND...

I THOUGHT IT WAS UNDER HER HAIR, BUT...







CHRIST, WHAT A  
PUSSY, LANCE  
THOUGHT.




IT WAS A GOOD THING HE  
DIDN'T TELL HIM ABOUT  
THE BANK ROBBERY.




HARD TO BELIEVE THIS WAS  
THE SAME SKIP RAFFERTY  
WHO'D STARTED A RIOT AT  
THE ODDFELLOWS HALL.



OF COURSE, THAT  
WAS BEFORE THEY  
HAD THEIR HIT WITH  
FLOW MY TEARS...



BEFORE THE MAJOR  
LABEL DEAL...



BEFORE THEY BOUGHT  
THIS MANSION...

...WHICH THEY COULD  
BARELY PAY THE  
TAXES ON NOW.

THEY WERE SO OVEREXTENDED THEIR FAMOUS PARTY PAD HAD BECOME A CAGE.

NONE OF THEM COULD AFFORD TO LEAVE EVEN IF THEY WANTED TO.

SOMETIMES LANCE THOUGHT THAT WAS THE ONLY REASON THE BAND HADN'T *BROKEN UP* YET.

BECAUSE IT'D BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE *AMSTERDAM* HAD THAT HIT SINGLE.

HEY, TOM... ARE YOU -

SHHH!

HE'S *TRANSCRIBING* A TAPE.

I THOUGHT MAYBE HE WAS WORKING ON A SONG.

DAMN IT... *REWIND!* DARCY.

SORRY.

OF COURSE HE WASN'T WRITING A NEW SONG. ALL TOM CARED ABOUT ANYMORE WERE HIS *ZINES*.

HE'D TAKE ACID AND WANDER RAVENNA PARK RECORDING HIS THOUGHTS, OR THE CONVERSATIONS OF *PASSERSBY*...

THEN HE TRANSCRIBED THEM BY HAND, LIKE THEY WERE THE *SECRET VOICE* OF THE UNIVERSE COMMUNICATING THROUGH HIM.

NO  
EXIT

LANCE SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SURPRISED. HE KNEW *ROCK HISTORY* WELL ENOUGH.



THE GENIUS IN THE BAND *ALWAYS* CRACKED FIRST.



THE RECORD'LL BE DONE WHEN IT'S *DONE* -- ART DOESN'T CARE ABOUT YOUR *DEADLINE!*

BUT MUSICIANS ARE TERRIBLE AT LEARNING FROM HISTORY, AND ALL THEIR HEROES ARE TRAGIC...



HEY JON...

...YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND START PREPPING THAT VIDEO SHOOT.



*REALLY?* I THOUGHT BRUCE SAID THERE WAS NO MONEY IN THE *BUDGET?*

I FIGURED OUT A WAY TO PAY FOR IT OURSELVES.



JESUS. HOW MUCH IS THAT?

I DON'T KNOW, I DIDN'T COUNT IT YET.



DIDN'T - WAIT - WHERE DID YOU GET THIS?







HEY -- HEY!

HOLD ON!



HEY, I'M LANCE...

TAKE THIS... YOU'RE GONNA FREEZE LIKE THAT.

...WHAT...?



IT'S THAT MOMENT, WHEN SHE SEES THAT SHE'S NAKED... LIKE SHE'S SLOWLY WAKING FROM A DREAM...



...THAT LANCE REALIZES EXACTLY HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS.



AND IT'S NOT HER NUDITY THAT DOES IT... IT'S THE LOST LOOK IN HER EYES.

STAY BACK...



IT'S OKAY... I FOUND YOU, REMEMBER?


I STOPPED MY CAR?



HERE.








AND AGAIN, IT'S HER EYES THAT DO IT.

SURE...  
OKAY...  
WHATEVER  
YOU SAY...



SURE, LANCE  
DIDN'T WANT TO  
CALL THE POLICE...

JUST... YOU'RE  
TOTALLY SAFE  
HERE... I'LL  
TAKE CARE OF  
YOU.



BUT IT'S HER EYES  
THAT MAKE HIM NOT  
EVEN *WONDER* ABOUT  
WHY *SHE* DOESN'T.

WHATEVER  
YOU NEED...




WHAT THE  
*HELL* IS  
GOING  
ON?


WHERE'D THAT  
*GIRL* COME  
FROM?




I HAVE NO  
IDEA...



HE KNEW IT WAS A  
MISTAKE... AGAINST  
HIS OWN PROTOCOL...



...BUT *WULF* COULDN'T  
STOP HIMSELF FROM  
GOING BACK THAT NIGHT.



SO HE *DIDN'T* WAIT THE TWO  
DAYS. SO WHAT? HE COULD  
*PUNISH* HIMSELF FOR IT LATER.

IT'D BEEN NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO WORK, KNOWING SHE WAS UP THERE... *WAITING*.



HE'D ALMOST CRASHED HIS *SQUAD CAR*, THINKING ABOUT HER... AND THE THINGS HE WAS GOING TO DO...



HE WAS BREAKING THE PATTERN, AND PART OF HIM SCREAMED INSIDE BECAUSE OF IT.



BUT THIS ONE... SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT ABOUT HER.



WULF'S PROBLEM, IT TURNED OUT...



...WAS THAT HE SIMPLY DIDN'T KNOW HOW *TRUE* THAT WAS.

NO...



NO NO... WHERE DID SHE GO...?



**To Be Continued**



***First Two  
Volumes Now  
Available!***

ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS

**FATALE**



ED BRUBAKER SEAN PHILLIPS

**FATALE**





**FATALE Number Fifteen Ed Brubaker Sean Phillips**

**Rated M / Mature**