

**The following content is
intended to be enjoyed by
mature readers.**

By proceeding from this point,
you are certifying that you are
18 years of age or older.

DMZ

BRIAN WOOD RICCARDO BURCHIELLI

INTRODUCTION BY **BRIAN AZZARELLO**

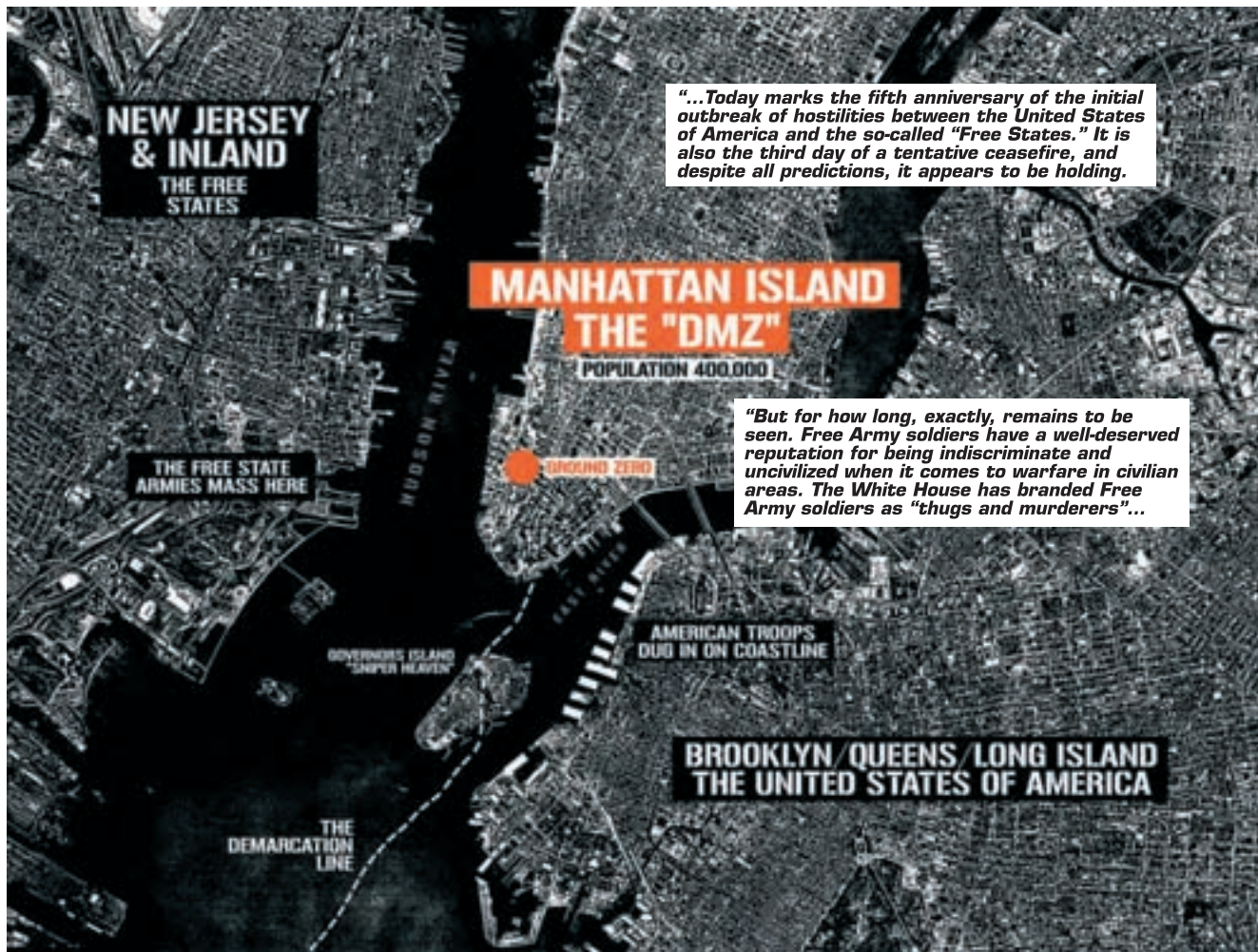
"Gut-wrenchingly portrays the chaotic reality of life in a war zone." — WASHINGTON POST



ON THE GROUND



© 2006 Brian Wood and Riccardo Burchielli.
All Rights Reserved.



"...Today marks the fifth anniversary of the initial outbreak of hostilities between the United States of America and the so-called "Free States." It is also the third day of a tentative ceasefire, and despite all predictions, it appears to be holding.

"But for how long, exactly, remains to be seen. Free Army soldiers have a well-deserved reputation for being indiscriminate and uncivilized when it comes to warfare in civilian areas. The White House has branded Free Army soldiers as "thugs and murderers"..."

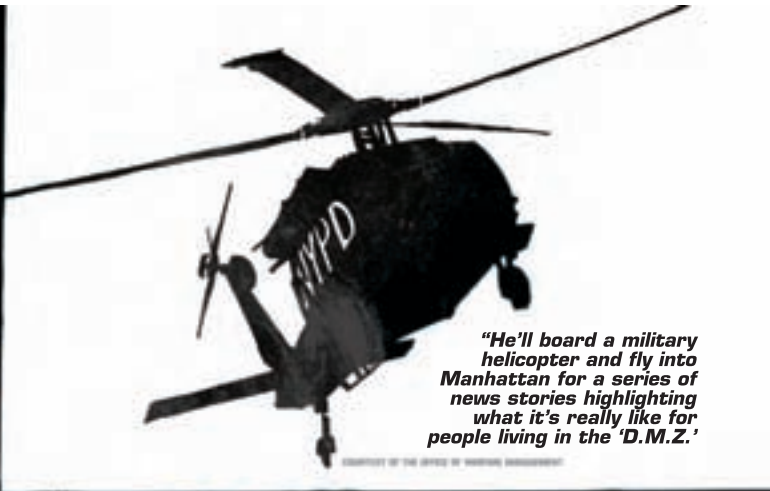


"Military commanders have expressed faith in this most recent ceasefire. It has all the characteristics of a lasting deal," General Mueller said, "but only on paper. The "Free State" forces need to prove to the world they're finally serious this time.

"For the few remaining residents of the beleaguered island of Manhattan, a formal ceasefire is of little consolation when faced with the realities of the war zone they live in: looters, roving gangs of neighborhood militia, insurgents, car bombers, contract killers... this is daily life in the city."



"Nobel Prize-winning news journalist Viktor Ferguson is en route."



"He'll board a military helicopter and fly into Manhattan for a series of news stories highlighting what it's really like for people living in the 'D.M.Z.'"



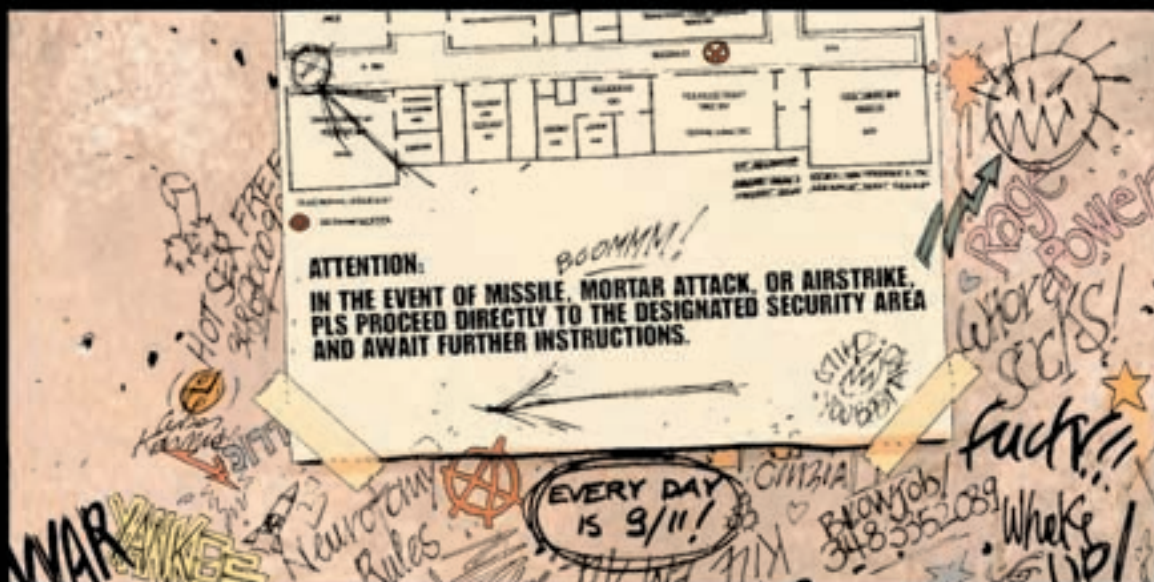
"Liberty News spokeswoman Marybeth Spaulding had this to say: 'This is history in the making. Never before has any news organization had such access to Manhattan. Civilian life over there remains largely a mystery, a mystery that Viktor Ferguson intends to unravel for you, the viewers at home, in a five-part news special.'

"In regard to safety concerns, that remains to be seen. If the ceasefire holds, as all parties pledge it will, they should be perfectly safe with the military bodyguards attached. Mr. Ferguson will broadcast, live, twice daily on this station, starting tomorrow evening."

"Tune in then for what will be, we're sure, unforgettable television."

"This is the Liberty News service, broadcasting from the United States of America, Long Island, New York."

LIBERTY
NEWS FOR AMERICA
and Americans! **5**





**LONG ISLAND CITY, QUEENS.
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.**



UH, YOU SURE I'M IN THE RIGHT PLACE?

I SORTA ASSUMED I'D BE IN A LAB OR A CUBICLE OR SOMETHING...



YEP. MATTHEW ROTH. YOU'RE ON BOARD WITH MR. FERGUSON.



ON BOARD THAT?

I'M GOING TO MANHATTAN? YOU SERIOUS?



THIS IS YOUR PRESS PASS. HAVE THIS WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES. WITH A LITTLE LUCK, IT'LL KEEP YOU ALIVE.

AND SIGN AT THE BOTTOM. YOU'LL BE BONDED FOR THE DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT, AND WILL BE LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY AND ALL EQUIPMENT ENTRUSTED TO YOUR CARE.



HOLY SHIT.

KID, SHIT LIKE THIS COMES ALONG ONCE IN A LIFETIME.

BRING ME BACK A SOUVENIR, WOULD YA?





PUT THE HEADPHONES ON!



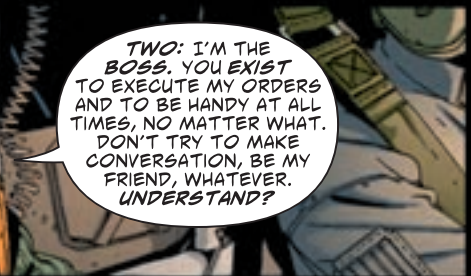
MATT ROTH?

YES SIR. MATTY ALSO WORKS.



COUPLE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW.

ONE: YOU WEREN'T MY FIRST CHOICE. I HAVE REAL PHOTO TECHS ON STAFF I'VE WORKED WITH BEFORE. YOU'RE ONLY HERE BECAUSE YOUR DADDY PULLED SOME STRINGS.



TWO: I'M THE BOSS. YOU EXIST TO EXECUTE MY ORDERS AND TO BE HANDY AT ALL TIMES, NO MATTER WHAT. DON'T TRY TO MAKE CONVERSATION. BE MY FRIEND, WHATEVER. UNDERSTAND?



UH, YES SIR!

PRICK.

DUDE, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT-- IT'S HIS PULITZERS TALKING. FUCK 'IM.

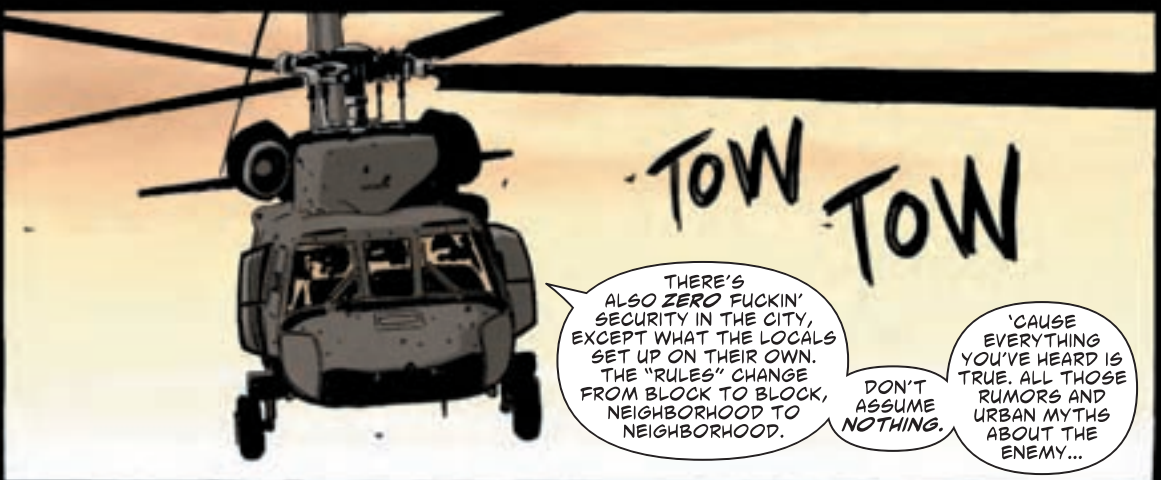
NAME'S COLBERT, BY THE WAY.

DID THEY PREP YOU BEFORE WE LEFT?



NOT REALLY, WHY?

LISTEN-- STICK CLOSE TO ME. MANHATTAN'S A FUCKED UP PLACE-- IT'S A NO MAN'S LAND. KIND OF PLACE YOU NEED TO KEEP ONE EYE LOOKING UP ALWAYS, YA KNOW?



TOW TOW

THERE'S ALSO ZERO FUCKIN' SECURITY IN THE CITY, EXCEPT WHAT THE LOCALS SET UP ON THEIR OWN. THE "RULES" CHANGE FROM BLOCK TO BLOCK, NEIGHBORHOOD TO NEIGHBORHOOD.

DON'T ASSUME NOTHING.

'CAUSE EVERYTHING YOU'VE HEARD IS TRUE. ALL THOSE RUMORS AND URBAN MYTHS ABOUT THE ENEMY...



IT'S ALL FUCKING TRUE.



COMING UP ON THE DROP ZONE, PEOPLE. THIRTY SECONDS.



WHATEVER YOU WANNA CALL 'EM: TRAITORS, RED-NECKERS, OSAMAS, JINGOES, TIMMIE-MACS, FLYOVERS, OR EVEN JUST "THOSE JERSEY MOTHER-FUCKERS"... IT DON'T MATTER...

THEY'RE JUST THE PIECES OF SHIT RESPONSIBLE FOR TURNING THIS COUNTRY INTO A REAMED-OUT ASSHOLE IN THE DIRT. KEEP THAT IN MIND, MAN. SERIOUSLY.



"SICK THING IS, I GREW UP AROUND HERE. THE ARMY RECRUITMENT OFFICE IS JUST A FEW BLOCKS DOWN THAT WAY. OR WAS. I USED TO PASS IT EVERY DAY COMING HOME FROM CLASS, THE FUCKERS."



FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN MY BLOCK IN FIVE YEARS. SHIT, THAT'S DEPRESSING.

THE LOWER EAST SIDE, MANHATTAN.





HERE YOU GO, MR. FERGUSON.
WATCH YOUR STEP.



GET SET UP RIGHT FUCKING NOW, YOU HEAR? THE SOONER I START, THE SOONER I CAN GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
YOU GOT IT, SIR.



F-TUMP!



WHAT--



F-TUMP!



MISTER FERGUSON! HEY! HEY!
YO, COLBERT! COLBERT!



NO!



SHIT!

PTINE!

PTINE!



HEY! NO! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



WAIT!

PTINE!
PTINE!



PTINE!

PTINE!



NO, YOU FUCKING ASSHOLES! COME BACK!

DON'T LEAVE ME HERE!









WHOA.



SHIT!



YO! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?



THIS IS MY PLACE!
GET OUT!

NO,
PLEASE!



...



HUH. WASN'T EXPECTING THAT TO HAPPEN.

WHERE'D YOU COME FROM, KID?

THE NEXT DAY...



!



WHAT THE HELL?



OH GOOD, YOU'RE AWAKE.

THAT WAS THE LONGEST FAINT IN HISTORY, I THINK.

AND SORRY ABOUT THE GUN, BUT IT'S JUST FOR SHOW. THE SLIDE'S BROKEN-- DOESN'T FIRE.



FOUND THIS IN YOUR BAG. FUCKING THING KEEPS RINGING, KEPT ME UP HALF THE NIGHT UNTIL I FOUND THE "MUTE" BUTTON.



FIGURED I'D LET YOU KEEP THAT. STILL GOING THROUGH YOUR EQUIPMENT CASES. YOU GOT SOME COOOOL SHIT, MAN.

VERTIGOBOOKS.COM

MATURE READERS



HEY!

YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE MY STUFF! I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR IT.

WHATEVER. LOOK, IF I DIDN'T TAKE IT, THE FREAKS OUTSIDE WOULD'VE. CONSIDER IT PAYMENT FOR SERVICES RENDERED: ROOM AND BOARD.

EAT YOUR BREAKFAST, TOURIST.



PEEP!
BEEP!

PEEP!
BEEP!



HELLO?

WHO IS THIS?

THIS IS MATT ROTH... WHO'S THIS?



HOW DID YOU GET THIS PHONE?

IT WAS IN THE BAG, IT JUST STARTED RINGING! LISTEN, ARE YOU WITH THE NETWORK?



ARE YOU ON STAFF?

... I'M THE INTERN! YOU HIRED ME!



PUT SOME-ONE ELSE ON. WHERE'S VIKTOR FERGUSON?

HE'S DEAD! THE HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN AND I THINK THEY KILLED HIM! THEY KILLED EVERYONE!

HE DIED? MR. FERGUSON'S DEAD?



WHO SHOT YOU DOWN? DID YOU SEE THEM?

NO-- I MEAN, YES, BUT THEY WERE WEARING MASKS--

THINK. WHAT DIRECTION DID THE FIRE COME FROM? NORTH, WEST? WAS IT SMALL ARMS FIRE? RPG? IS THE CRASH SITE SECURED?



SECURED? WHAT-- NO, I DON'T THINK SO. WHAT--

NO ONE'S PROTECTING THE CRASH SITE? WHAT ABOUT THE EQUIPMENT? WHAT ABOUT THE BODIES?

LISTEN TO ME! I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR EQUIPMENT! I'M NOT EVEN GETTING PAID FOR THIS!



I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. THIS FUCKING PHONE RANG AND I ANSWERED IT. THAT'S ALL!

MATTHEW--

JUST TELL ME WHAT TO DO! TELL ME HOW TO GET OUT OF HERE, OK?



MATTHEW, LISTEN TO ME, WE'RE GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF THERE, WE'LL GET YOU HOME.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO GET TO THE EXTRACTION POINT FROM WHERE YOU ARE?

EXTRACTION POINT? WHAT-- NO, I DON'T.



DELANCEY AND BOWERY, OK? GET TO DELANCEY AND BOWERY. IT'S ONLY A FEW BLOCKS, YOU CAN MAKE IT.

WE HAVE A RESCUE TEAM HEADING NOW TO SECURE THE CRASH SITE. THEY'LL PICK YOU UP. KEEP YOUR I.D. BADGE ON YOU. THAT'S YOUR TICKET OUT.

WE'LL GET YOU HOME SAFE, NO PROBLEMS. BUT YOU NEED TO GET TO THE EXTRACTION POINT ON YOUR OWN.

BE CAREFUL. THE CEASEFIRE IS PROBABLY BLOWN TO SHIT, SO YOU'RE NOW IN AN ACTIVE WAR ZONE.



ANYONE YOU SEE IS A POTENTIAL HOSTILE.

SERIOUSLY? ANYONE?

JUST GET TO THE EXTRACTION POINT NOW.



FUCK.
OKAY.



CEASEFIRE
BLOWN TO SHIT,
ACTIVE WAR ZONE,
EVERYONE'S A
HOSTILE. FUCKIN'
PERFECT.



WHY
AREN'T I
GETTING PAID
FOR THIS,
ANYWAY?

HEY,
WHERE YOU
GOING SO
FAST?



LOOK, I GOTTA
GO. CAN I HAVE MY
STUFF BACK?

WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?

I'M BEING
PICKED UP. MY
EMPLOYERS NEED
ME TO BRING
THOSE CASES
BACK, OK?



TELL ME
WHERE
YOU'RE
GOING.

WHAT? CORNER
OF BOWERY AND
DELANCEY, WHEREVER
THAT IS. WHAT DO
YOU CARE?



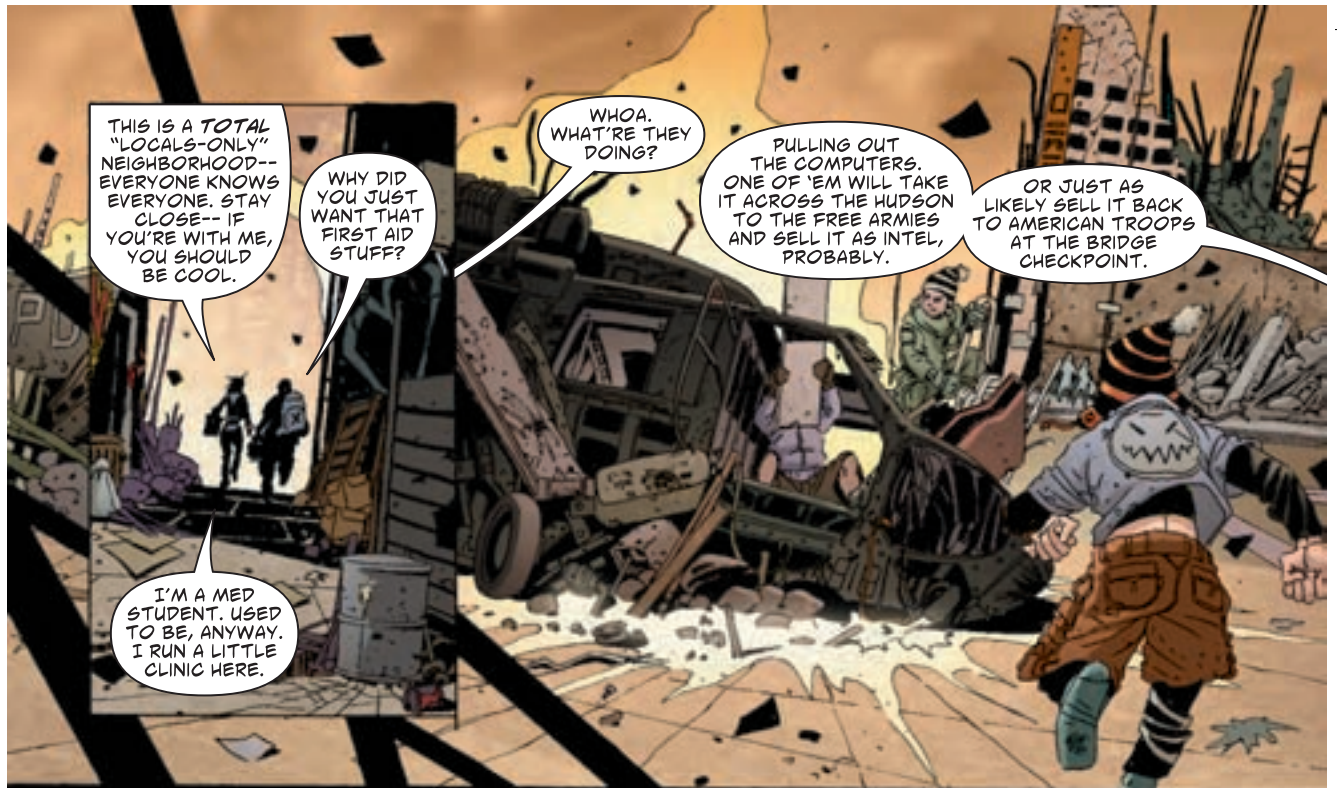
IT DOESN'T
MATTER TO ME,
BUT YOU'RE NOT
LOCAL, AND IF YOU
PLAN ON STEPPING
OUTSIDE EVEN A
LITTLE BIT, YOU'RE
GONNA NEED MY
HELP TO NOT
GET SHOT.

YOU HAVE
FIRST AID
KITS IN ONE
OF THOSE
CASES AND A
PARAMEDICS
JACKET, I
NOTICED.



THEY'RE
YOURS. KEEP
'EM.

SO CAN YOU
HELP ME GET
TO BOWERY AND
DELANCEY?



THIS IS A TOTAL "LOCALS-ONLY" NEIGHBORHOOD-- EVERYONE KNOWS EVERYONE. STAY CLOSE-- IF YOU'RE WITH ME, YOU SHOULD BE COOL.

WHY DID YOU JUST WANT THAT FIRST AID STUFF?

WHOA. WHAT'RE THEY DOING?

PULLING OUT THE COMPUTERS. ONE OF 'EM WILL TAKE IT ACROSS THE HUDSON TO THE FREE ARMIES AND SELL IT AS INTEL, PROBABLY.

OR JUST AS LIKELY SELL IT BACK TO AMERICAN TROOPS AT THE BRIDGE CHECKPOINT.

I'M A MED STUDENT. USED TO BE, ANYWAY. I RUN A LITTLE CLINIC HERE.



THEY'D JUST HELP THE ENEMY LIKE THAT?

YOUR SIDES DON'T MEAN MUCH AROUND HERE. EVERYONE FEELS LIKE THE ENEMY TO US.

WHAT'D THEY DO WITH THE BODIES?

WHAT DO YOU THINK'S HANGING THERE? LAUNDRY?



THE ONE PROBLEM WITH A LOCALS-ONLY 'HOOD. YOU CAN'T PICK YOUR NEIGHBORS. WE GOT A PRETTY INTENSE MILITIA.

THEY DISPLAY THEM LIKE THAT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CRAZIES. "STAY OUT OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD," YA KNOW?

I DON'T CONDONE SHIT LIKE THAT. BUT I'M SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

JESUS CHRIST...



YO, ZEE...

WHO'S THAT GUY SNAPPIN' PICS?



KKAKAK

WHAT--? HEY! STOP!



ARE YOU FUCKING CRAZY?

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?



RESPECT. YOU CAN'T JUST WALTZ IN AND START TAKING PICTURES OF WHAT-EVER YOU SEE! NOBODY KNOWS YOU HERE!

HOLD ON-- "WALTZ IN"? THESE FUCKERS SHOT ME DOWN YESTERDAY! YOUR NEIGHBORS!



YEAH, WELL, TROOPS LANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET DON'T EXACTLY FEEL FRIENDLY TO THOSE OF US WHO LIVE HERE, YA KNOW?

WE'RE NOT YOUR ENEMY, WE JUST LIVE HERE. IF WE HAVE GUNS, IT'S TO KEEP OUR HOMES SAFE FROM LOOTERS AND PSYCHOPATHS AND FUCKING ATTACK HELICOPTERS!



I DIDN'T-- LOOK, I'M NOT WITH THE MILITARY! WE WERE COMING IN TO DO NEWS STORIES, NOT ATTACK ANYONE!

A FUCKING NEWS CREW? WELL, WE DIDN'T ASK FOR A NEWS CREW.

WE DON'T WANT TO GET ALL CAUGHT UP IN YOUR SHIT. LIKE I SAID, WE JUST LIVE HERE.

I KNOW, BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--



WHAT? I DON'T UNDERSTAND?

OKAY SMART GUY, YOU TELL ME WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND!



YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'RE... TOLD OVER THERE. I DIDN'T KNOW SO MANY CIVILIANS STILL LIVED HERE... ALL WE HEAR ABOUT IS INSURGENTS AND STUFF.

THAT FIGURES. IGNORANCE WINS EVERY TIME. THAT'S WHY YOUR STUPID FUCKING WAR WILL NEVER END.



LOOK, LET'S JUST GET YOU TO YOUR FRIENDS AND GET THIS OVER WITH.

FINE BY ME. THEY SAID THEY WERE COMING TO SECURE THE CRASH SITE FIRST AND THEN PICK ME UP.



WHAT? THEY SAID THAT? "SECURE THE CRASH SITE"?

YEAH. SO? I GUESS THEY WANNA RECOVER WHAT THEY CAN, EQUIPMENT AND SHIT.









**BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP**

YOU PEOPLE
DON'T KNOW SHIT
ABOUT US. YOU PUNISH
US FOR YOUR OWN
FUCK-UPS.

WE JUST
LIVE HERE!
WHY CAN'T YOU
UNDERSTAND
THAT?



MATTHEW
ROTH? WHERE ARE
YOU? WE'VE SECURED
THE CRASH SITE AND ARE
AT THE EXTRACTION
POINT.

TIME TO GO
HOME, MATTHEW!
REPEAT: WE'RE
HERE TO TAKE
YOU HOME!



WHERE ARE
YOU? GIVE US YOUR
LOCATION!

MATTHEW?

MATTHEW
ROTH? ARE YOU
THERE?

ON THE GROUND **PART 1**

BRIAN WOOD: writer RICCARDO BURCHIELLI & BRIAN WOOD: artists
JEREMY COX: colors JARED K. FLETCHER: letters CASEY SEIJAS: asst. editor WILL DENNIS: editor
DMZ created by WOOD & BURCHIELLI

**"Looking for the next
FABLES or Y: THE LAST MAN?
Look no further than...DMZ."**

— WIZARD

The first collection
of the critically
acclaimed series
featuring an embedded
journalist trapped
in the most unlikely
war zone...
NEW YORK CITY.

Written by
Indie Comics Icon
**BRIAN
WOOD**

Illustrated by
**RICCARDO
BURCHIELLI**

