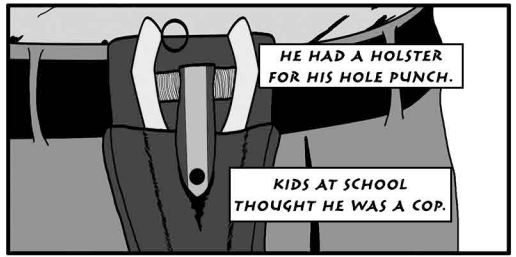




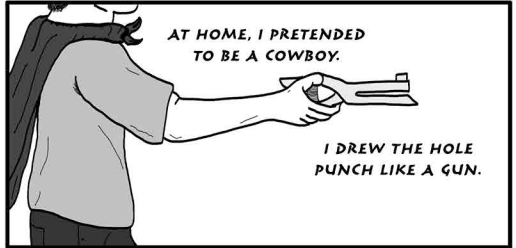
WHEN I WAS A KID, MY DAD DROVE A COUNTY BUS.

I LOVED IT.



HE HAD A HOLSTER FOR HIS HOLE PUNCH.

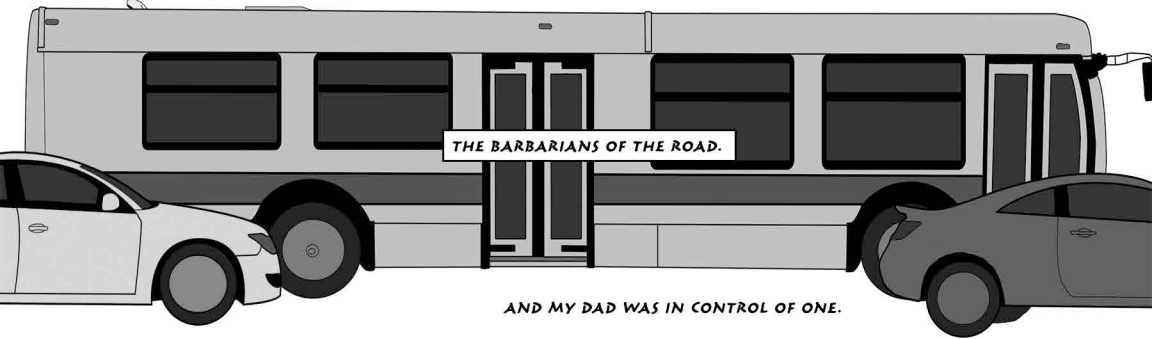
KIDS AT SCHOOL THOUGHT HE WAS A COP.



AT HOME, I PRETENDED TO BE A COWBOY.

I DREW THE HOLE PUNCH LIKE A GUN.

TO ME, BUSES WERE HUGE TANKS, TOWERING OVER TRAFFIC.



THE BARBARIANS OF THE ROAD.

AND MY DAD WAS IN CONTROL OF ONE.



MY BROTHER AND I OFTEN RODE OUR DAD'S ROUTE.

WE PLAYED CHICKEN IN THE AISLE, DIVING INTO AN EMPTY SEAT AT THE LAST POSSIBLE MOMENT.



A SWEET, ELDERLY WOMAN GAVE US CANDY.

BUT AS WE GOT OLDER WE WERE NO LONGER ALLOWED TO RIDE THE BUS.

THE BUS WAS FILLED WITH LOWLIFES PISSING AND SHITTING ON SEATS AND IN THE AISLE.



DRIVERS BOILED OVER WITH ANGER, READY TO SNAP VICIOUSLY ANY MOMENT.



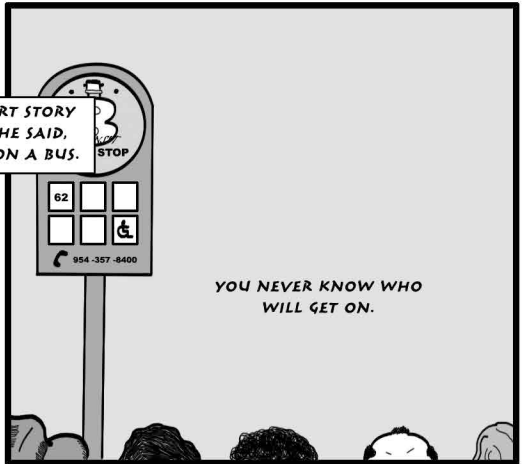
BUSES WERE POWDER KEGS. VIOLENCE COULD ERUPT OVER MINOR ACTS, LIKE LOOKING AT SOMEONE A SECOND TOO LONG.



FOR YEARS, MY FATHER HAS WANTED ME TO WRITE ABOUT PEOPLE ON THE BUS.



A WHOLE SHORT STORY COLLECTION, HE SAID, COULD BE SET ON A BUS.



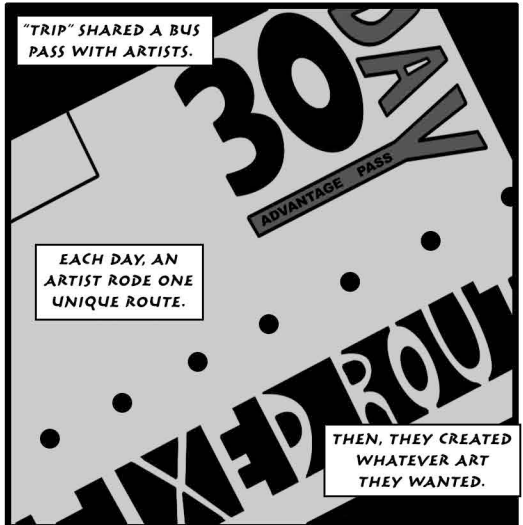
YOU NEVER KNOW WHO WILL GET ON.

I HAD ALL THIS ON MY MIND WHEN I WAS ASKED TO TAKE PART IN "TRIP."



"TRIP" SHARED A BUS PASS WITH ARTISTS.

EACH DAY, AN ARTIST RODE ONE UNIQUE ROUTE.



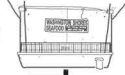
THEN, THEY CREATED WHATEVER ART THEY WANTED.

IN HALF AN HOUR, RIDERS WENT FROM



LINK 24

WASHINGTON SHORES SUPERSTOP



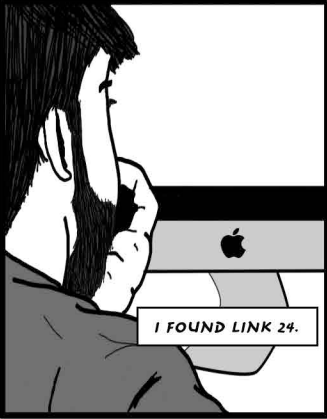
ONE OF THE POOREST, MOST CRIME-RIDDLED NEIGHBORHOODS IN ORLANDO

TO

THE MALL AT MILLENIA AND THE ORLANDO PREMIUM OUTLETS



FOR A WEEK, I RESEARCHED ALL THE ROUTES IN ORLANDO, LOOKING FOR THAT PERFECT, DRAMA-FILLED RIDE.



I FOUND LINK 24.

THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THESE AREAS, I HOPED, WOULD MEAN AN EVENTFUL RIDE.



I WOULD FINALLY SEE THE STORIES MY FATHER TALKED ABOUT.

I IMAGINED READERS CAPTIVATED BY MY COMIC.



I WOULD MAKE A NAME FOR MYSELF.

BUT FOR YEARS AFTERWARD, I COULDN'T MAKE ANYTHING.

I FELT SLEAZY.

IT FELT WRONG.

IT WASN'T THE STORY I WANTED TO EXPERIENCE.

IT WAS WORSE.

ON A SUNDAY MORNING
IN NOVEMBER, I DROVE
TO THE OUTLETS.

X I PARKED

THE STOP FOR LYNX 24
WAS OFF TO THE SIDE,
HIDDEN NEAR THE BACK.

MAIN
ENTRANCE

X

THE BUSES STOPPED
NEAR THE MAIN ENTRANCE.

THE STORES DIDN'T OPEN FOR
AN HOUR, BUT THE PARKING
LOT HAD BEGUN TO FILL.



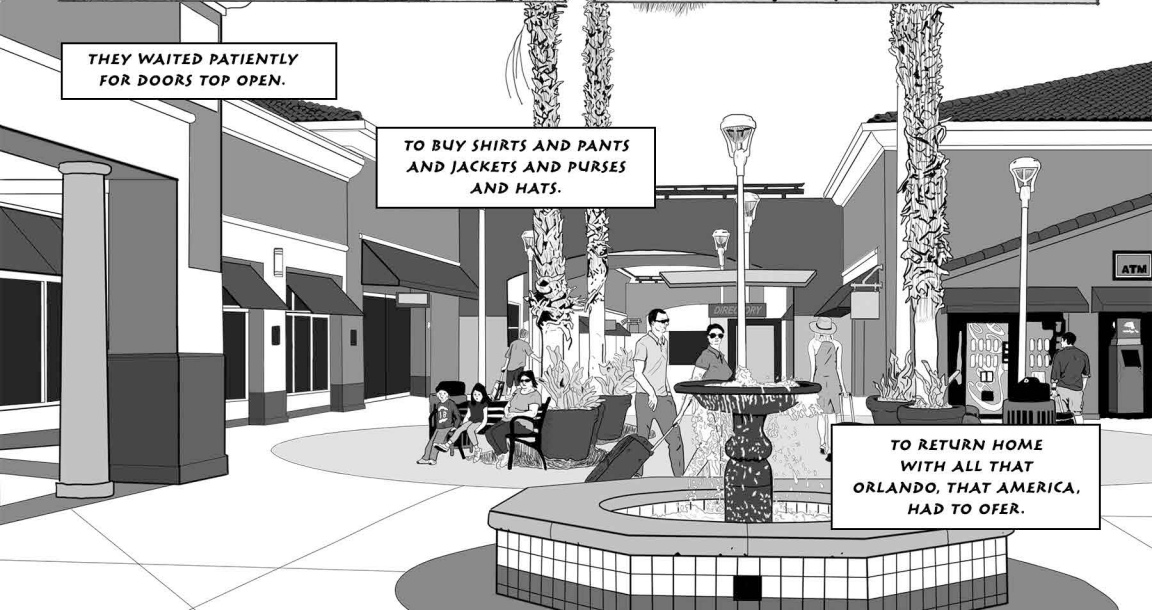
TOURISTS DRAGGED EMPTY LUGGAGE,
EXCITED TO FILL THEIR BAGS.

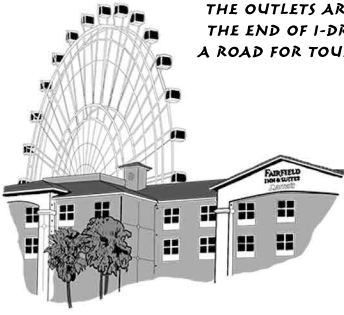


THEY WAITED PATIENTLY
FOR DOORS TO OPEN.

TO BUY SHIRTS AND PANTS
AND JACKETS AND PURSES
AND HATS.

TO RETURN HOME
WITH ALL THAT
ORLANDO, THAT AMERICA,
HAD TO OFFER.

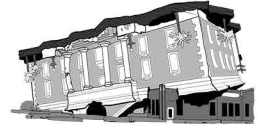




THE OUTLETS ARE AT THE END OF I-DRIVE, A ROAD FOR TOURISTS.

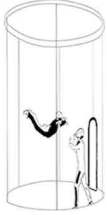


THERE ARE IMAGINATIVE ATTRACTIONS TO SHOW ODDITIES AND WONDERS,

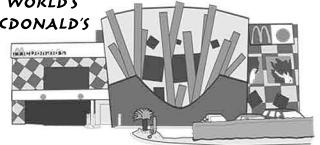


THE WORLD'S LARGEST GIFT SHOP















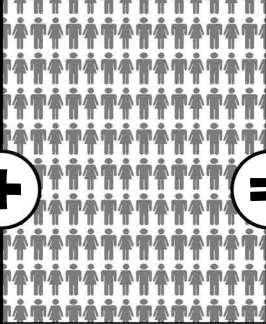

EVEN THE WORLD'S LARGEST MCDONALD'S

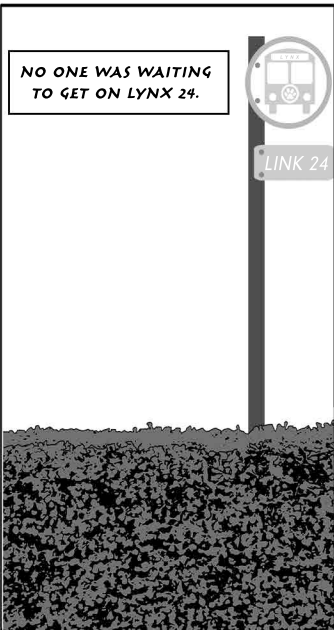


AMUSEMENTS FOR ANYONE AND EVERYONE.



THE AREA IS DESIGNED TO CONFINE YOU, TO DRAIN YOUR BANK ACCOUNT.

 <p>10 MILES FROM DISNEY</p>  <p>4 FROM SEAWORLD</p>  <p>3 FROM UNIVERSAL STUDIOS</p>	<p>Calvin Klein</p>           		
<p>774,000 SQ. FT OF PRIME REAL ESTATE</p>	<p>150+ STORES AND RESTAURANTS</p>	<p>CITY THAT WELCOMES 59 MILLION VISITORS A YEAR</p>	<p>\$1,385 IN SALES PER SQ. FT</p>

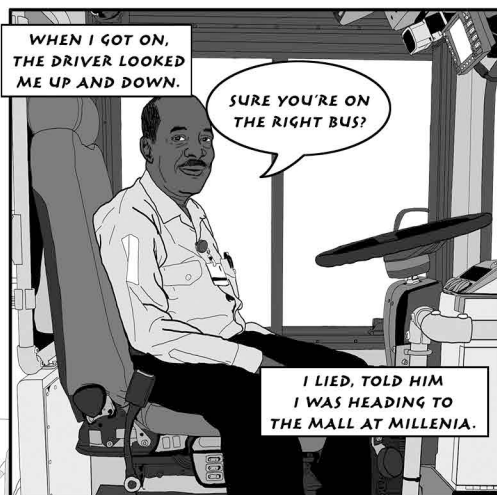




THE DOORS OPENED.

DOZENS
PILED OUT.

I NOTICED
THEY WERE ALL
MALL EMPLOYEES.



WHEN I GOT ON,
THE DRIVER LOOKED
ME UP AND DOWN.

SURE YOU'RE ON
THE RIGHT BUS?

I LIED, TOLD HIM
I WAS HEADING TO
THE MALL AT MILLENIA.



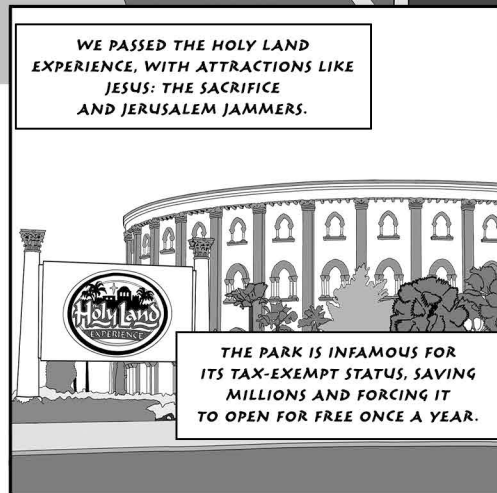
NO ONE ELSE GOT ON BOARD.

FOR THE ENTIRE RIDE,
IT WAS ONLY ME
AND THE DRIVER.



WE PASSED THE MALL AT MILLENIA.

THE DRIVER LOOKED AT ME,
BUT I STAYED ON.



WE PASSED THE HOLY LAND
EXPERIENCE, WITH ATTRACTIONS LIKE
JESUS: THE SACRIFICE
AND JERUSALEM JAMMERS.

THE PARK IS INFAMOUS FOR
ITS TAX-EXEMPT STATUS, SAVING
MILLIONS AND FORCING IT
TO OPEN FOR FREE ONCE A YEAR.

FIRST BAPTIST ORLANDO SERVED AS BORDER BETWEEN WASHINGTON SHORES AND THE TOURISTS.

A MEGACHURCH THAT UNDERWENT A \$14 MILLION RENOVATION FOR BETTER SOUND AND MORE VIBRANT VIDEO SCREENS.

IT HAS STADIUM SEATS AND A 25X14 SCREEN FOR A POWERFUL WORSHIP EXPERIENCE.

AS WE DROVE BY THE PARKING LOT WAS OPEN AND BEAUTIFUL.

AS WE NEARED WASHINGTON SHORES, A WALL BLOCKED OUR VIEW OF THE CHURCH.

A NEW PART OF TOWN EMERGED.

EVERYWHERE YOU LOOKED, CHURCHES.

AS THOUGH RESIDENTS NEEDED TO KEEP HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD BEYOND THIS ONE.

AS WE DROVE...

ROADS WORSENERD WITH CRACKS AND POTHOLES.

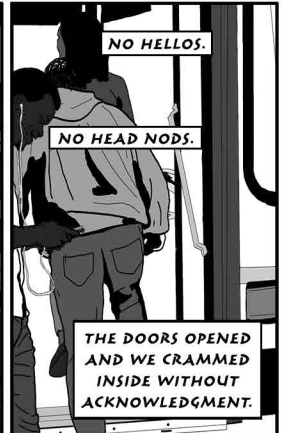
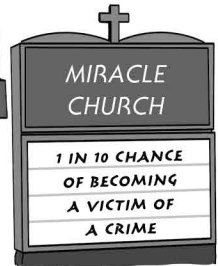
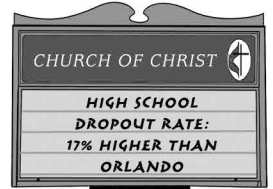
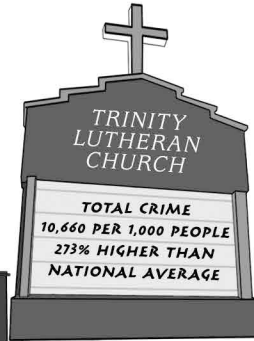
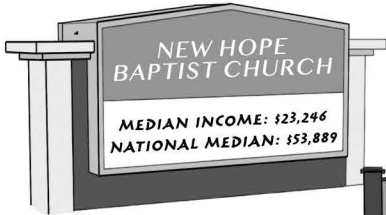
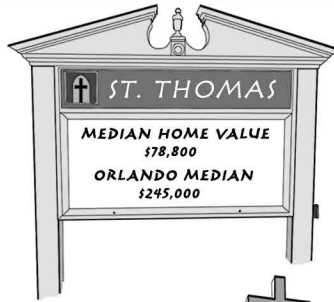
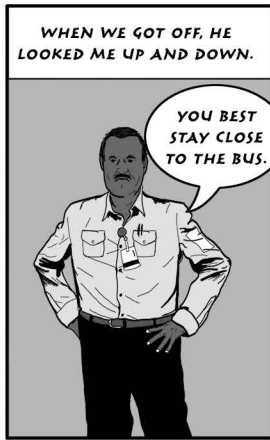
BAR, OR WOOD, COVERED WINDOWS.

RUSTED FENCES DID LITTLE MORE THAN LEAN.

THE SUPERSTOP WAS THE NICEST PART OF TOWN.

WE PULL UP TO THE EMPTY STATION.

THE END OF THE LINE.





THE RIDE WAS STANDING ROOM ONLY.

THE RIDE WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT.

NOTHING EXCITING HAPPENED.

NO ONE FOUGHT.

NO ONE EVEN SPOKE.

THE BUS WAS AS QUIET
AS A CHURCH.

MOST LISTENED TO MUSIC
OR WATCHED VIDEOS
ON THEIR PHONES.

NO ONE REQUESTED
A STOP.

THE DRIVER NEVER
HESITATED WHEN HE
APPROACHED A STOP.

EVERYONE HEADED
TO THE OUTLETS.

EVERYONE HEADED TO WORK.

THESE PEOPLE IN MEDITATION
WERE WHO MY FATHER
WARNED ME ABOUT.

WHEN WE ARRIVED, I WATCHED
THE OTHER RIDERS WANDER TO WORK.

LIKE ZOMBIES.

I WONDERED
WHAT CAME FIRST.

THE BUS ROUTE?
OR THE OUTLETS?

I WONDERED IF THE OUTLETS
HAD THE ROUTE BUILT
TO DRIVE IN CHEAP LABOR.



I CALLED MY DAD.

THERE WAS
THIS MAYOR'S MAID.

A BUS WENT
RIGHT TO
HER TRAILER.

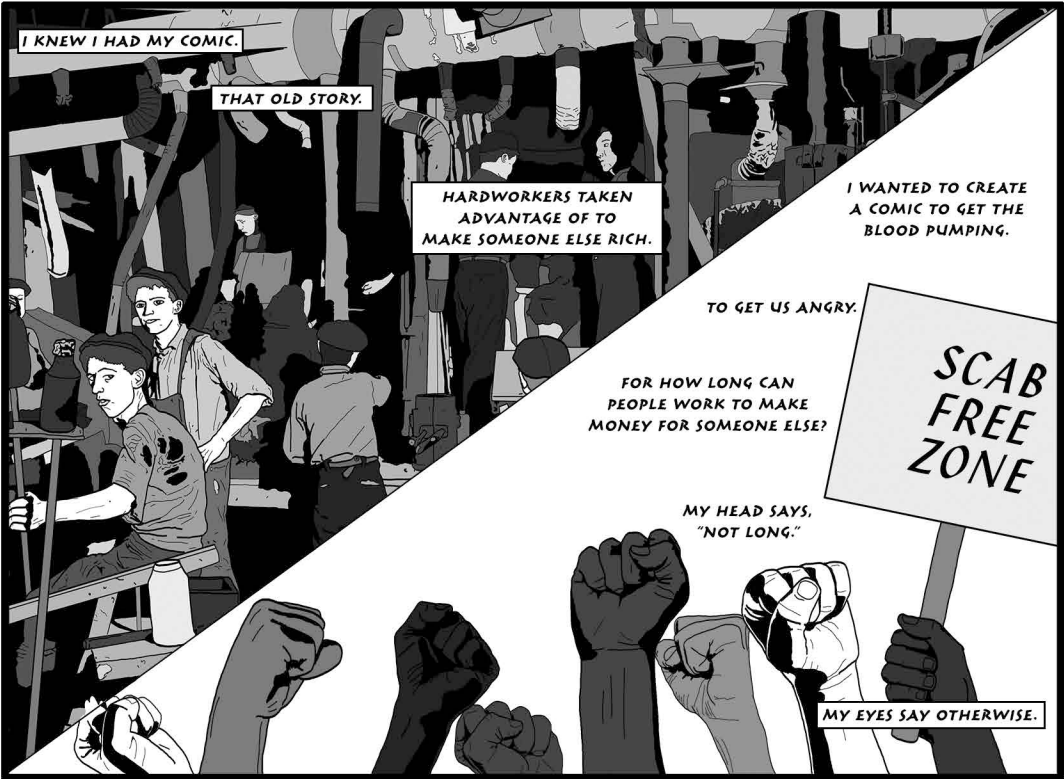
THE ONLY
STOP TO
DO SO.



I HAD 2 THOUGHTS:

1. THE MAYOR
WAS NICE
TO DO THAT.

2. THE RICH MAYOR
DIDN'T PAY HIS MAID
ENOUGH FOR A CAR
TO GET TO WORK.



I KNEW I HAD MY COMIC.

THAT OLD STORY.

HARDWORKERS TAKEN
ADVANTAGE OF TO
MAKE SOMEONE ELSE RICH.

I WANTED TO CREATE
A COMIC TO GET THE
BLOOD PUMPING.

TO GET US ANGRY.

FOR HOW LONG CAN
PEOPLE WORK TO MAKE
MONEY FOR SOMEONE ELSE?

MY HEAD SAYS,
"NOT LONG."



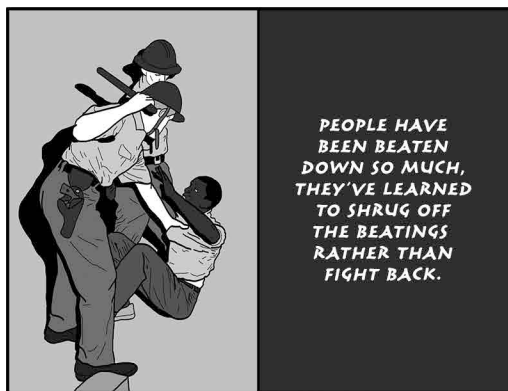
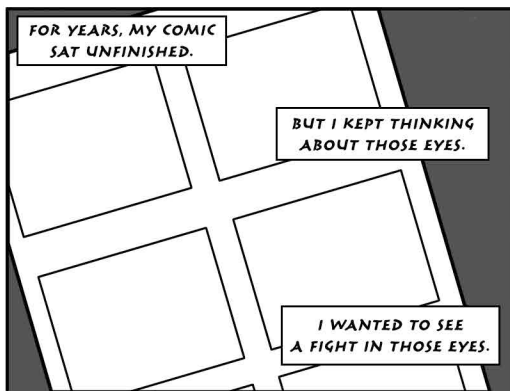
MY EYES SAY OTHERWISE.

THEIR EYES SAID
OTHERWISE.

EVERYONE ON THAT
BUS HAD THE SAME
LOOK IN THEIR EYES.



APATHY.



WE CAN'T BE
APATHETIC.

"APATHY IS ONE OF
THE CHARACTERISTIC
RESPONSES OF ANY
LIVING ORGANISM
WHEN IT IS SUBJECTED
TO STIMULI TOO INTENSE
OR TOO COMPLICATED
TO COPE WITH."



JOHN DOS PASSOS



PLATO

"THE PRICE OF APATHY
TOWARDS PUBLIC
AFFAIRS IS TO BE RULED
BY EVIL MEN."

WE NEED TO
SHOW EMOTION
ABOUT OUR LIVES.

MY PARENTS LOOKED DOWN
ON PEOPLE WHO RODE THE BUS.



THEY DID THIS SO THAT
THEY COULD FEEL BETTER
ABOUT THEIR OWN
MIDDLE-CLASS LIFE.

SO, IF NOT RICH, AT LEAST
THEY WERE BETTER THAN SOME.

WE ALL DO THIS
FOR ONE GROUP
OR ANOTHER.

IS INEQUALITY
MERELY OUR
NATURAL STATE?

HOW MANY TIMES
MUST WE EXPERIENCE
THIS STORY? OVER HOW
MANY GENERATIONS?

I HAD SOMETHING
DIFFERENT PLANNED
FOR THIS PAGE.

SOMETHING POSITIVE.

HOPEFUL.

TONIGHT AS I WRITE THIS,
CONGRESS PASSES A TAX BILL
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
THAT FAVORS THE RICH.

THIS COMIC WILL
DO NOTHING, LIKE
ALL THE ART BEFORE IT.

I DON'T WANT TO SEE
ANOTHER COMIC.

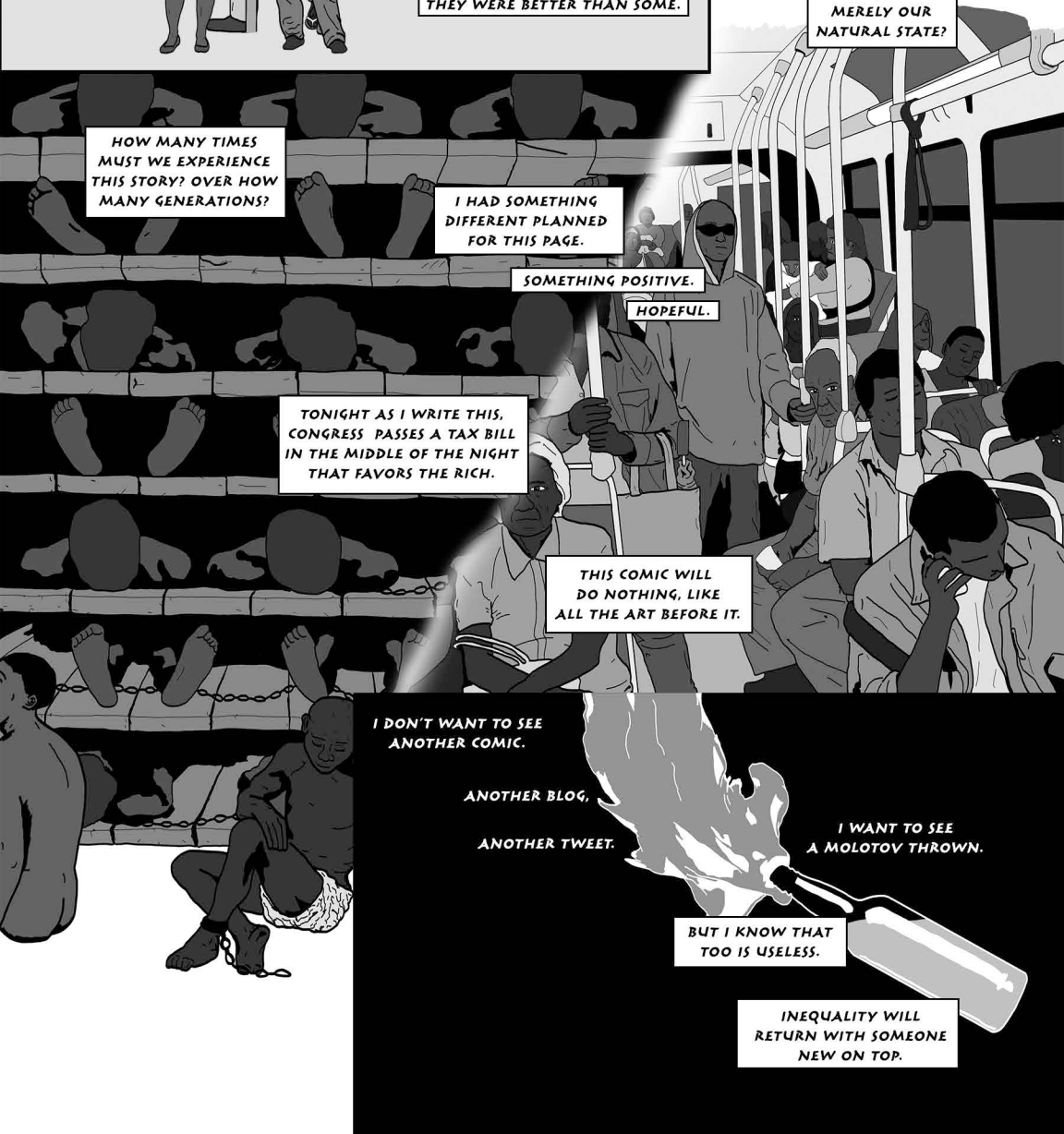
ANOTHER BLOG,

ANOTHER TWEET.

I WANT TO SEE
A MOLOTOV THROWN.

BUT I KNOW THAT
TOO IS USELESS.

INEQUALITY WILL
RETURN WITH SOMEONE
NEW ON TOP.



I SUPPOSE THERE IS NOTHING TO DO, BUT END LIKE ALL THE OTHER WORKS FROM TRIP.

MANY I READ SEEMED SURPRISED THE BUS WAS CLEAN AND USEFUL.

AND IT WAS.

THE BUS WAS CLEAN.

THE BUS WAS ON TIME.

THE DRIVER WAS POLITE.



WELCOME
TO
ORLANDO

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

WASHINGTON SHORES SHOPPING CENT

THE BUS GOT EVERYONE TO WHERE THEY WERE HEADED.

AND THEN IT BROUGHT THEM BACK.

