

SCOTT SNYDER

RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

AMERICAN VAMPIRE



VERTIGO

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suggested for
mature readers
vertigocomics.com

Cruces, New Mexico. 1954.

THE GRAY TRADER

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AMERICAN VAMPIRE created by SCOTT SNYDER & RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE

"THE STRIKE OCCURRED
IN BROAD DAYLIGHT,
AROUND TWO FORTY IN
THE AFTERNOON."



ANN HODGES WAS
RESTING IN HER HOME,
IN OAK GROVE ALABAMA,
WHEN OUT OF THE SKY, A
SUPER-HEATED METEOR
SLAMMED INTO HER
HOUSE...

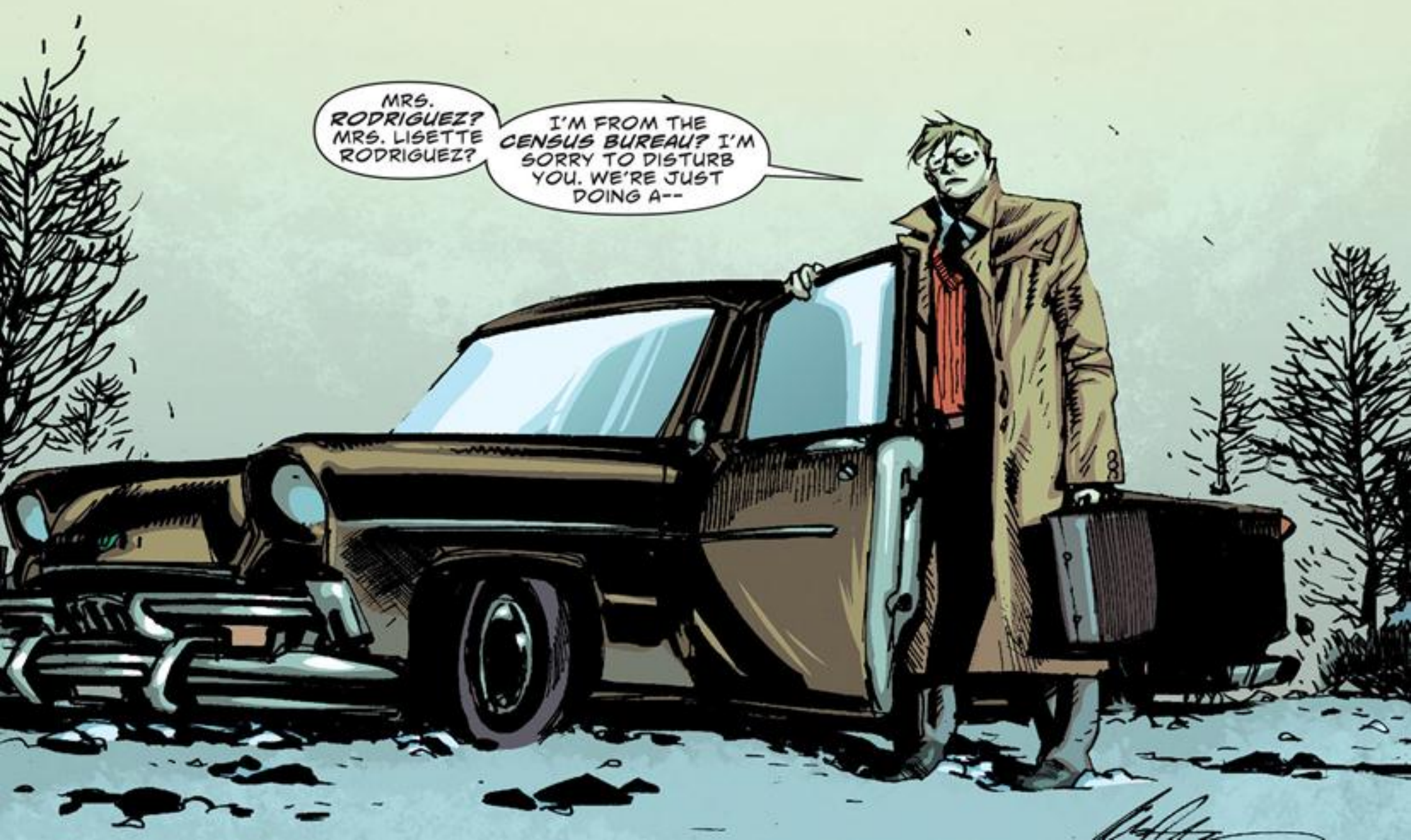
BADLY INJURING
HER, AND SETTING FIRE
TO HER RESIDENCE. THE
31-YEAR-OLD WIFE IS THE
FIRST PERSON IN RECORDED
HISTORY TO HAVE BEEN
INJURED BY AN
EXTRATERRESTRIAL
OBJECT...

...WE NOW
RETURN TO OUR
PROGRAM, "THE
LONE RANGER!"



KLIK













DON'T, DON'T
KILL ME, PLEASE. I
JUST WANTED SOME
ANSWERS. I'M
DESPERATE,
I--



YOU WANT
SOME SWEET
TOAST?



YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO--



I GET TOO FEW VISITORS
THESE DAYS TO KILL A
CHANCE AT DECENT
CONVERSATION.

WELL
THANK YOU,
I R--

AND I HAVE FAITH
IN YOUR CONVERSATIONAL
ABILITIES, AS I KNOW WHO
YOU ARE. I'M SORRY, MY
EYES AREN'T GOOD ANYMORE.
I COULDN'T SEE YOU WHEN I
SHOT YOU. BUT WHEN I GOT
UP CLOSE--I KNEW
YOUR BLOOD.

YES, YOU
KNEW MY
UNCLE.



WILL
BUNTING.
YOU LOOK
LIKE HIM.

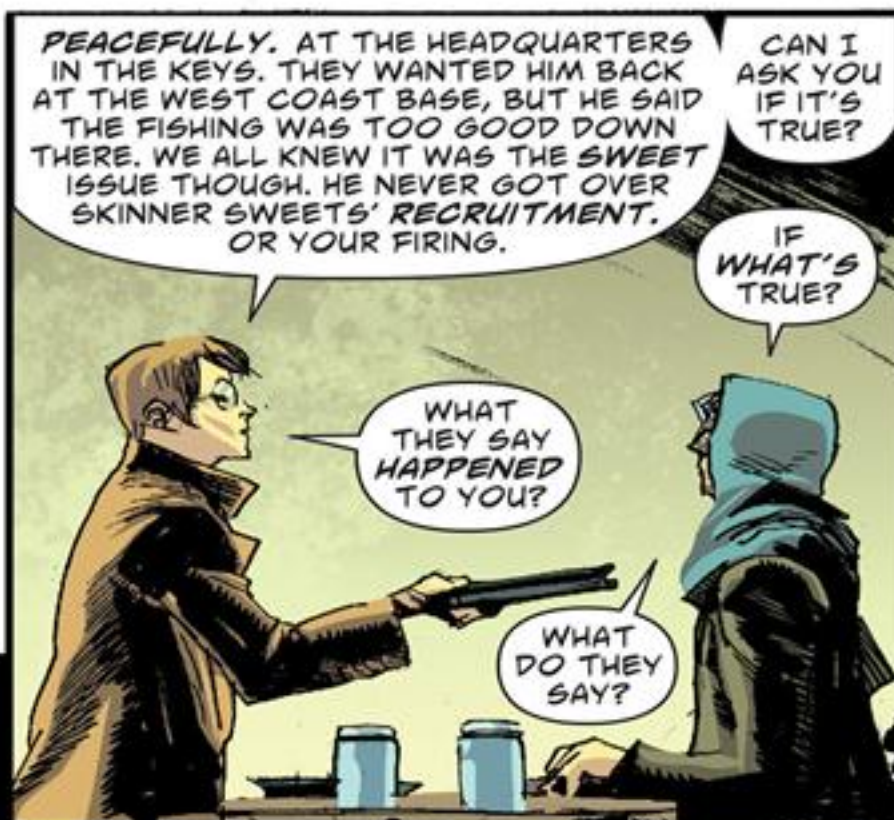
MY NAME'S
GENE. WILL WAS MY
UNCLE. I ONLY KNEW HIM
THESE LAST FEW YEARS.
HE WAS SICK WHEN HE
BROUGHT ME INTO THE
FOLD TO BE HIS
REPLACEMENT.

TO US, TO HIS
FAMILY, HE DIED BACK
IN 1925. I ONLY LEARNED
ABOUT THE VASSALS,
ABOUT HOW THEY'D TAKEN
HIM IN TO BE BOOK-
KEEPER, ABOUT FIVE
YEARS AGO. I WAS
A JOURNALIST.

A WAR CORRESPONDENT,
BUT WITH NO WAR. I WAS IN
A BAD WAY, AND THEN, ONE
MORNING, I'M STANDING IN MY
KITCHEN, OPENING A BEER
FOR BREAKFAST, AND WHO'S
STANDING THERE BUT
UNCLE WILL.

SAYS HE
HAS A WAR
FOR ME TO
COVER.





"...THAT YOU WERE TRYING TO PROVE SOME POINT, GOING BACK OUT INTO THE FIELD AFTER SO LONG, WITH HIM AT YOUR SIDE."





"SWEET RESCUED
YOU AND TOOK YOU
BACK FOR HELP."



2012



SWEET HAD TO RESCUE ME. THEY'D HAVE ACTIVATED THAT DEVICE IN HIS CHEST OTHERWISE.

BUT TO BE FAIR, HE COULD HAVE--



WHY ARE YOU HERE?



I'M HERE OUT OF DESPERATION. RECENTLY, I DISCOVERED SOMETHING. I DIDN'T KNOW WILL LONG, BUT HE TAUGHT ME A LOT, MOST IMPORTANT WAS THAT BEING BOOKKEEPER GIVES YOU A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THINGS.



HE LIKED TO SAY, THE VMS AGENTS WRITE SENTENCES, PARAGRAPHS. THE DIFFERENT BRANCHES COMPILE CHAPTERS. BUT ONLY THE BOOKKEEPER SEES THE WHOLE DAMN NOVEL.

HE'S THE ONLY PERSON SUITED TO GLEAN MEANING FROM THE PAST, BUT ALSO TO GUESS AT WHAT MIGHT COME NEXT.



AND LOOKING OVER THE "CHAPTERS" THESE PAST FEW YEARS, THE INCIDENT IN ENGLAND, TO THE VANISHINGS IN ICELAND AND EGYPT, TO THINGS I'VE SEEN HAPPENING HERE, IN THIS COUNTRY...WELL, IT SOUNDS RIDICULOUS, BUT I'VE BECOME WORRIED...AFRAID THAT...

WHAT? SAY IT.



I THINK HE'S IN AMERICA.



THE GRAY
TRADER.




YES. HOW
DID YOU
KN--

WHAT DO YOUR
SUPERIORS THINK
ABOUT YOUR
THEORY?

I HAVEN'T TOLD
THEM. IT'S MY OWN HUNCH.
BUT I HAVE EVIDENCE. FROM
SEISMIC DATA TO MORE OMINOUS
RECORDINGS LIKE COMMUNITIES
VANISHED OVERNIGHT. I CAN
TELL YOU ABOUT A SETTLEMENT
ON INDIAN LANDS NEAR
KAYENTA, ARIZ--


WHAT
DOES THIS
HAVE TO
DO WITH
ME?



THE BITE YOU
SUSTAINED IN THAT
INCIDENT WITH SWEET.
THE SPECIES YOU
ENCOUNTERED,
EVIDENCE SUGGESTS
THAT VICTIMS WHO
SURVIVE THE VENOM,
THEY SOMETIMES
HAVE VISIONS...

...VISIONS
OF THE FUTURE.
UNSETTLINGLY
ACCURATE PRE-
MONITIONS.

IS THAT
SO?

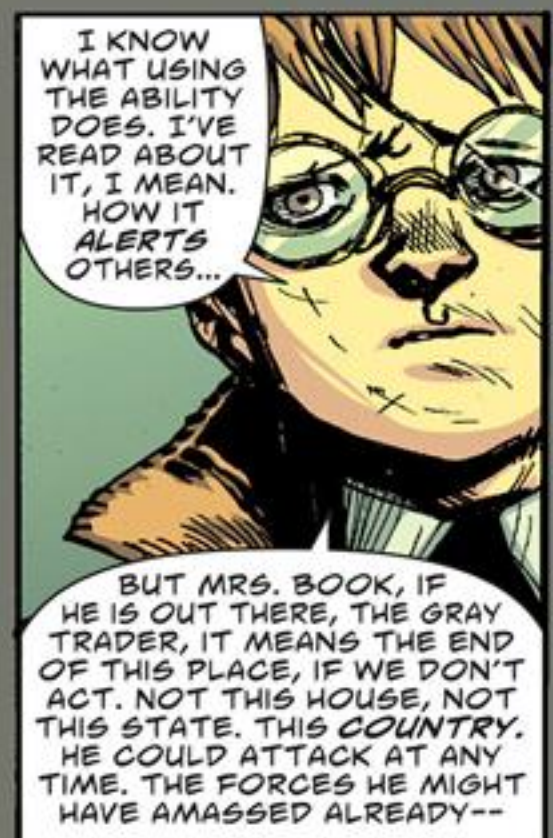


WELL, YOU'RE
THE ONLY PERSON
BITTEN BY ONE IN
ABOUT A THOUSAND
YEARS, SO IT'S HARD
TO KNOW. BUT THE
CASSANDRA
FOLKLORE...



YOU'RE HERE TO ASK ME
ABOUT THE FUTURE?
YOU MUST BE
DESPERATE.

I'M
SORRY. I
CAN'T HELP
YOU.



I KNOW
WHAT USING
THE ABILITY
DOES. I'VE
READ ABOUT
IT, I MEAN.
HOW IT
ALERTS
OTHERS...

BUT MRS. BOOK, IF
HE IS OUT THERE, THE GRAY
TRADER, IT MEANS THE END
OF THIS PLACE, IF WE DON'T
ACT. NOT THIS HOUSE, NOT
THIS STATE. THIS COUNTRY.
HE COULD ATTACK AT ANY
TIME. THE FORCES HE MIGHT
HAVE AMASSED ALREADY--



YOU DIDN'T
EAT YOUR
TOAST. BUT
I'M AFRAID IT'S
TIME FOR YOU
TO LEAVE.

MRS.
BOOK
I--

OF COURSE.
I'M SORRY I
BOthered
YOU.



I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR UNCLE. HE WAS A DEAR FRIEND.



THANK YOU.

AND SO YOU KNOW... YOUR DAUGHTER, FELICIA, IS A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE.

AND SHE'S WELL. SHE'S ACTUALLY ABOUT TO TAKE OVER FOR AGENT HOBBS, AS DIRECTOR OF--



I DIDN'T ASK.



BUT THANK YOU.

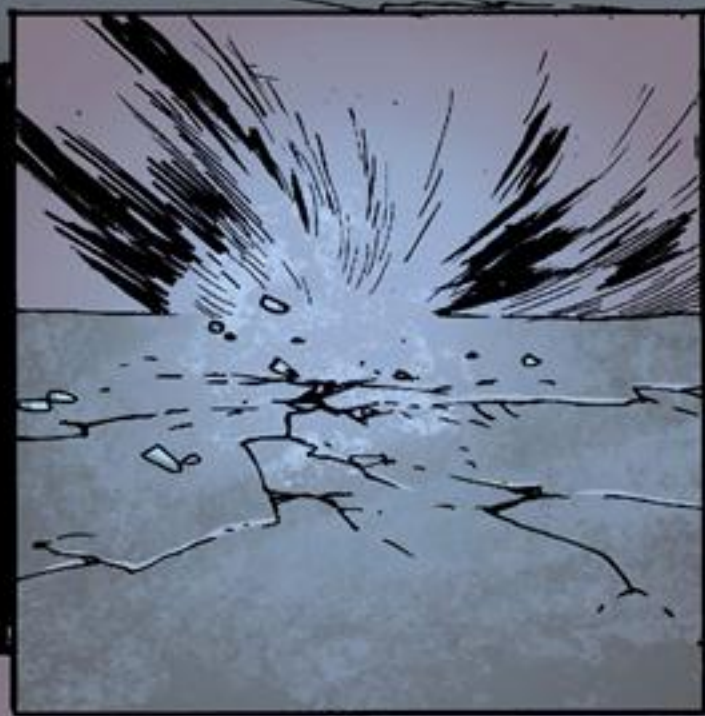












GENE...

YES?

NOTHING.
JUST...DON'T
STOP ANYWHERE
TONIGHT. DRIVE
STRAIGHT BACK
TO BASE.

Krroooooom

HE
GONE?

HE'S
GONE.

YOU USED YOUR
POWERS. DID YOU SEE
MORE THAN WHAT HE
ASKED TO KNOW?

YES.



