

CHAPTER

V



FROM THE NOTES OF DR. MALCOLM LONG, OCTOBER 25TH, 1985.

OKAY NOW
I GUESS YOU
KNOW WHAT
THIS IS...



FIRST INTERVIEW WITH KOVACS...
HE'S EVEN MORE DISTURBED
THAN I'VE HEARD, BUT I'M
OPTIMISTIC. A SUCCESS HERE
COULD MAKE MY REPUTATION.

I WANT YOU
TO LOOK AT IT AND
TELL ME WHAT
YOU SEE.



HE'S VERY WITHDRAWN, WITH
NO EXPRESSION IN EITHER FACE
OR VOICE. GETTING A RESPONSE
IS OFTEN DIFFICULT.

WILL YOU
LOOK AT IT,
WALTER?

WILL YOU
DO THAT
FOR ME?

NEVERTHELESS, I'M CONVINCED
I CAN HELP HIM. NO PROBLEM
IS BEYOND THE GRASP OF A
GOOD PSYCHOANALYST, AND
THEY TELL ME I'M VERY GOOD.
GOOD WITH PEOPLE.



WHAT
CAN YOU
SEE?



A PRETTY
BUTTERFLY.

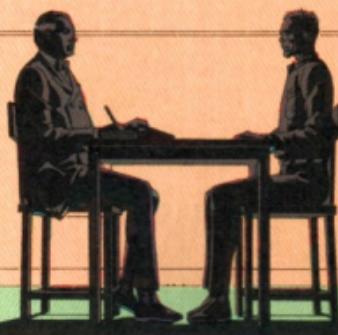


HIS RESPONSES TO THE RORSCHACH
BLOTT TESTS WERE SURPRISINGLY
BRIGHT AND POSITIVE AND
HEALTHY. I REALLY THINK HE
MIGHT BE GETTING BETTER.

I JUST WISH
HE WASN'T SO
INTENSE.



I JUST WISH HE
WOULDN'T STARE AT
ME LIKE THAT.



THE ABYSS GAZES ALSO

HIS FULL NAME IS WALTER JOSEPH KOVACS, BORN 1940. MOTHER'S NAME: SYLVIA JOANNA KOVACS, FORMERLY SYLVIA GLICK. HIS FATHER'S NAME IS UNKNOWN.

LET'S TRY ANOTHER, SHALL WE?

HE'S 5'6" TALL AND WEIGHS 140 LBS. FOR HIS AGE, HE'S IN EXCELLENT PHYSICAL SHAPE DESPITE A LOT OF BRUISES AND LACERATIONS MOSTLY SUSTAINED DURING HIS ARREST.

HOW ABOUT THIS ONE?

THE POLICE HAVE BEATEN ON HIM PRETTY BADLY. DURING THE POLICE STRIKE OF '77 HE MADE SEVERAL INFLAMMATORY ANTI-COP STATEMENTS, AND THEY'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN.

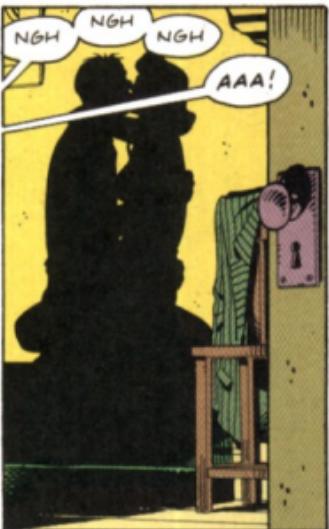
C'MON, WALTER...DO IT FOR ME, HUH?

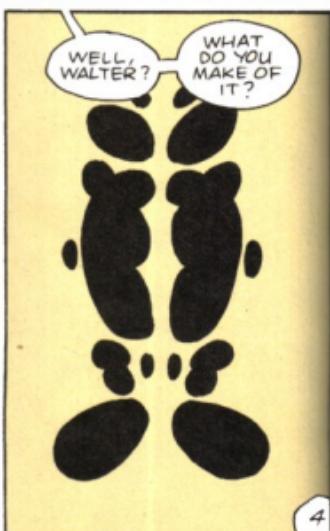
THE COPS DON'T LIKE HIM; THE UNDERWORLD DOESN'T LIKE HIM; NOBODY LIKES HIM. I'VE NEVER MET ANYONE QUITE SO ALIENATED. HOW ON EARTH DID HE GET LIKE THIS?

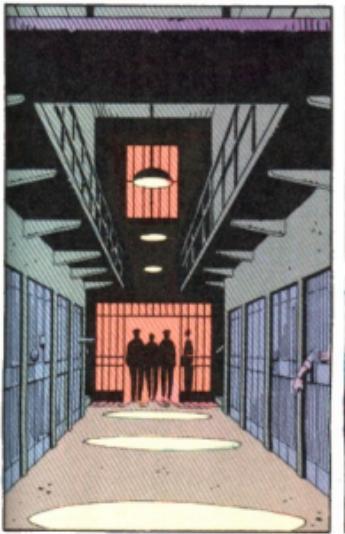
WALTER?

GOOD. THAT'S VERY GOOD.

OKAY, WALTER, NOW I WANT YOU TO TELL ME WHAT'S ON THE CARD...











ONCE HIS HOME LIFE HAD BEEN INVESTIGATED, HE WAS REMOVED FROM HIS MOTHER'S CUSTODY AND PUT INTO CARE. AWAY FROM HER, HE SEEMED TO IMPROVE.

EXCELLING AT SCHOOLWORK, KOVACS GREW INTO A BRIGHT BUT UNUSUALLY QUIET CHILD.

"GOOD."

MAL, IT'S LATE. ARE YOU DONE WITH THIS RORSCHACH CASE YET?

NOT RORSCHACK. WALTER KOVACS. RORSCHACK'S AN UNHEALTHY FANTASY PERSONALITY. Y'KNOW, HE WOULDN'T ANSWER TO ANYTHING ELSE DURING HIS BAIL HEARING?



ON THE NEWS HE SOUNDED FRIGHTENING. DON'T GET TOO WRAPPED UP IN THIS ONE, MAL. IT MIGHT RUIN YOUR CHEERFUL DISPOSITION.

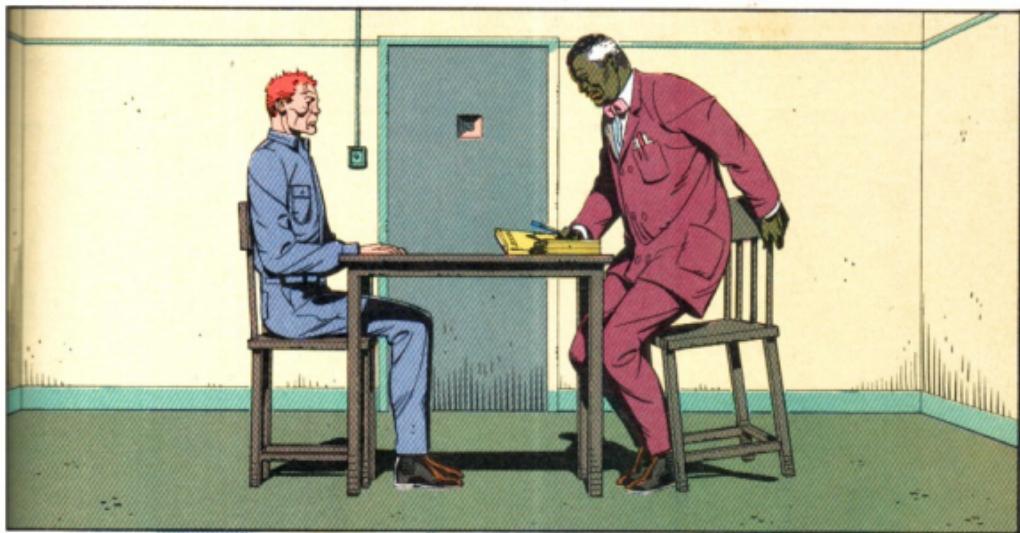
GLORIA, I'M TOO FAT AND CONTENTED FOR ANYTHING TO RUIN MY DISPOSITION...



...ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE STUFF ABOUT HIS EARLY LIFE, FANTASIES ABOUT A FATHER HE NEVER KNEW...

SHH! LEAVE IT AT THE OFFICE. YOU GOT A NICE LIFE, I GOT A NICE LIFE. NOBODY ELSE MATTERS.





"1956 AGED 16. LEFT CHILDREN'S HOME BECAME UNSKILLED MANUAL WORKER, GARMENT INDUSTRY.

"JOB REARABLE BUT UNPLEASANT. HAD TO HANDLE FEMALE CLOTHING.



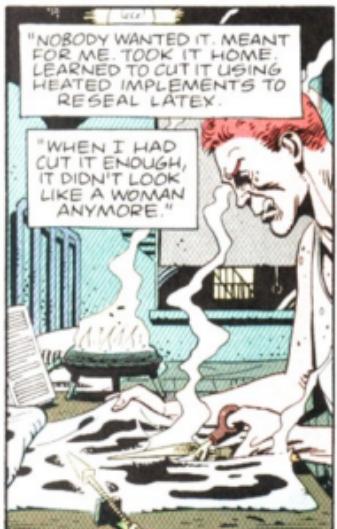
"1962 SPECIAL ORDER FOR DRESS IN NEW DR. MANHATTAN SPIN-OFF FABRIC. VISCOUS FLUIDS BETWEEN TWO LAYERS LATEX, HEAT AND PRESSURE SENSITIVE.

"CUSTOMER YOUNG GIRL, ITALIAN NAME. NEVER COLLECTED ORDER. SAID DRESS LOOKED UGLY.



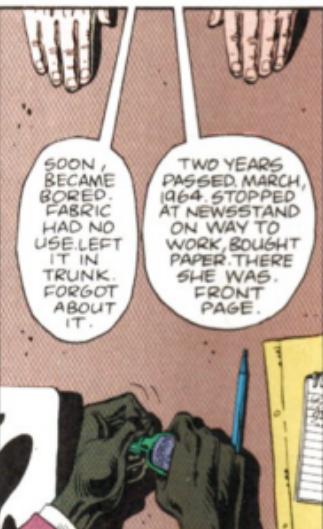
"NOBODY WANTED IT. MEANT FOR ME. TOOK IT HOME. LEARNED TO CUT IT USING HEATED IMPLEMENTS TO RESEAL LATEX

"WHEN I HAD CUT IT ENOUGH, IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE A WOMAN ANYMORE."



SOON, BECAME BORED. FABRIC HAD NO USE. LEFT IT IN TRUNK. FORGOT ABOUT IT.

TWO YEARS PASSED. MARCH, 1964 STOPPED AT NEWSSTAND ON WAY TO WORK. BOUGHT PAPER. THERE SHE WAS. FRONT PAGE.



"RAPED TORTURED KILLED HERE. IN NEW YORK. OUTSIDE HER OWN APARTMENT BUILDING.

"ALMOST FORTY NEIGHBORS HEARD SCREAMS. NOBODY DID ANYTHING. NOBODY CALLED COPS. SOME OF THEM EVEN WATCHED. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?



"SOME OF THEM EVEN WATCHED.

"I KNEW WHAT PEOPLE WERE THEN, BEHIND ALL THE EVASIONS, ALL THE SELF-DECEPTION. ASHAMED FOR HUMANITY, I WENT HOME. I TOOK THE REMAINS OF HER UNWANTED DRESS..."



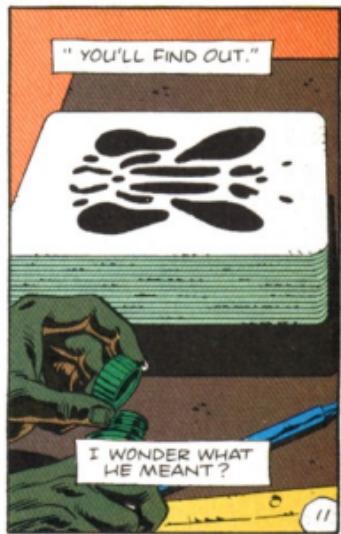
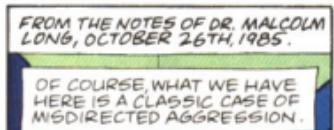
"WRONG. NOT UGLY AT ALL.

"BLACK AND WHITE MOVING CHANGING SHAPE ... BUT NOT MIXING. NO GRAY.



"VERY, VERY BEAUTIFUL.





LATER: THE DEPUTY WARDEN JUST CALLED. APPARENTLY, KOVACS WAS INVOLVED IN AN INCIDENT TODAY, JUST AFTER HE'D SEEN ME. IT HAPPENED DURING LUNCH, IN THE CANTEEN...



THE GUARDS INTERVENED,
DRAGGING KOVACS AWAY TO
SOLITARY AND THE OTHER
MAN TO THE PRISON HOSPITAL.

ACCORDING TO THE DEPUTY
WARDEN, HIS BURNS WERE
HORRIFIC HOT COOKING
FAT... I DON'T LIKE TO
THINK ABOUT IT.



AS THEY DRAGGED HIM
AWAY, RORSCHACH SPOKE
TO THE OTHER INMATES.

HE SAID "NONE OF YOU UNDER-
STAND. I'M NOT LOCKED UP IN
HERE WITH YOU. YOU'RE LOCKED
UP IN HERE WITH ME."



MY EARLIER OPTIMISM WAS
OBVIOUSLY UNFOUNDED.
HE'S GETTING WORSE.



SO AM I. JUST READ BACK WHAT
I'VE WRITTEN ABOVE THE SIXTH
LINE DOWN SHOULD READ "KOVACS
SPOKE TO THE OTHER INMATES."

KOVACS.

NOT
RORSCHACH.



MAL?
YOU'RE NEVER
GONNA SLEEP
WITH ALL THAT
COFFEE
INSIDE
YOU.

OH, HI, GLORIA.
ACTUALLY, I
WASN'T PLANNING
ON SLEEPING
JUST YET.



REMEMBER
LAST NIGHT,
MAL? WHEN
I REQUIRED
ATTENTION?



...AND
FRANKLY I
THINK IT'S
UNFAIR OF YOU
TO BRING UP SEX
WHEN YOU KNOW
I NEED TO
WORK.

OH WELL, MAYBE
I JUST SOMETIMES
NOTICE HOW OFTEN
YOU BRING UP
WORK WHEN
YOU KNOW I
NEED SEX.

GOOD NIGHT,
MAL.

WAIT!
GLORIA,
WHAT DO
YOU MEAN?
COME BACK
HERE. WE CAN
TALK...

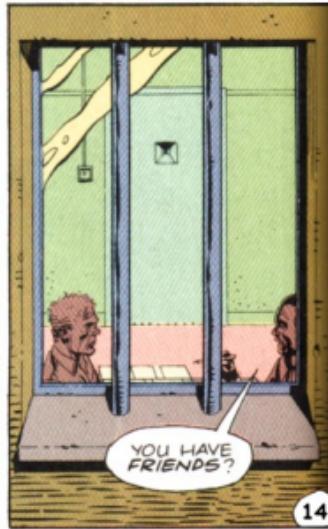
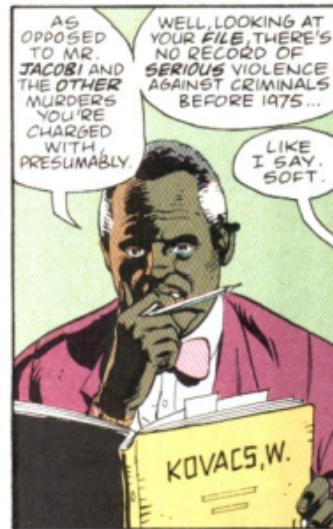


"YOU'RE LOCKED UP IN HERE
WITH ME," HE SAID.

HE'S RIGHT.

ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

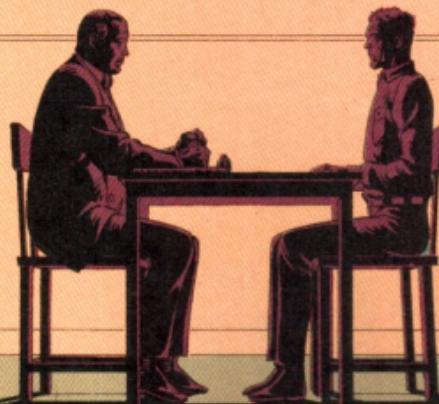






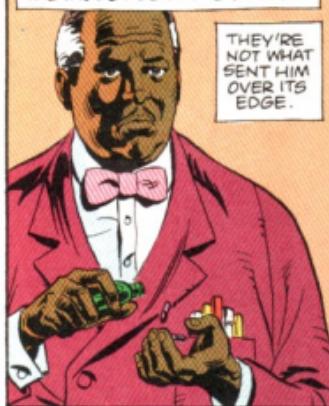
FROM THE NOTES OF DR. MALCOLM LONG. OCTOBER 17TH, 1985 =

HIS LAST WORDS TODAY WERE "WE DO IT BECAUSE WE ARE COMPELLED."



BUT HE NEVER SAYS WHAT IT IS THAT COMPELS HIM. IT'S NOT HIS CHILDHOOD, HIS MOTHER OR KITTY GENOVESE THOSE THINGS JUST MADE HIM OVER-REACT TO THE INJUSTICE IN THE WORLD.

THEY'RE NOT WHAT SENT HIM OVER ITS EDGE.

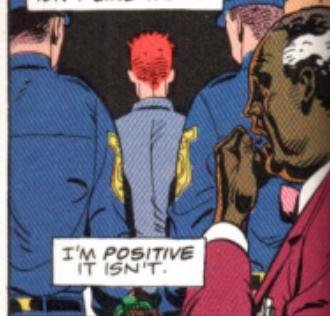


THEY'RE NOT WHAT TURNED HIM INTO RORSCHACH.



IT'S AS IF CONTINUAL CONTACT WITH SOCIETY'S GRIM ELEMENTS HAS SHAPED HIM INTO SOMETHING GRIMMER, SOMETHING EVEN WORSE.

IF ONLY I COULD CONVINCE HIM THAT LIFE ISN'T LIKE THAT. THE WORLD ISN'T LIKE THAT.



BOUGHT A GAZETTE ON WAY HOME, INCLUDING A SMALL PIECE ABOUT KOVACS WHICH THE NEWSVENDOR POINTED OUT EXCITEDLY. I GUESS HE DOES THAT TO EVERYBODY.

APPARENTLY, KOVACS VISITED HIS NEWSTAND REGULARLY.

THE COINCIDENCE IS TRIVIAL, BUT UNSETTLING.



SO WAS THE FRONT PAGE. RUSSIAN TANKS HAVE ENTERED PAKISTAN.

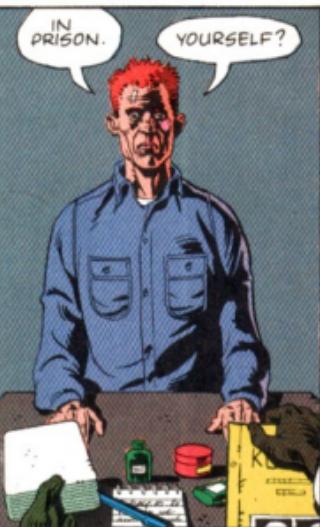
ON SEVENTH AVENUE, SOMEONE HAD SPRAYED SILHOUETTE FIGURES ONTO THE WALL. IT REMINDED ME OF THE PEOPLE DISINTEGRATED AT HIROSHIMA, LEAVING ONLY THEIR INDELIBLE SHADOWS.

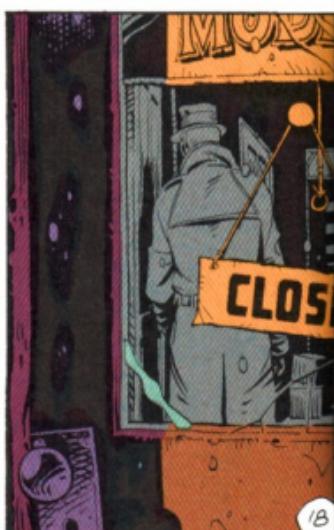
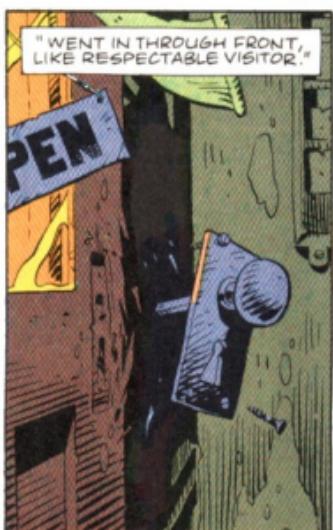
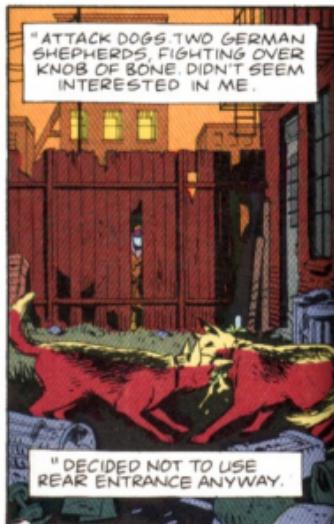


AT HOME, GLORIA SEEMED ANXIOUS TO SWEETEN THINGS AFTER YESTERDAY AND TOLD ME SHE'D INVITED RANDY AND DIANA TO DINNER TOMORROW.



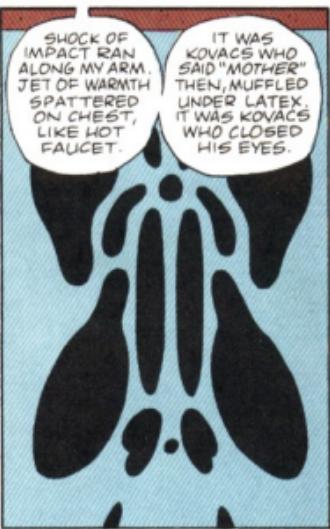
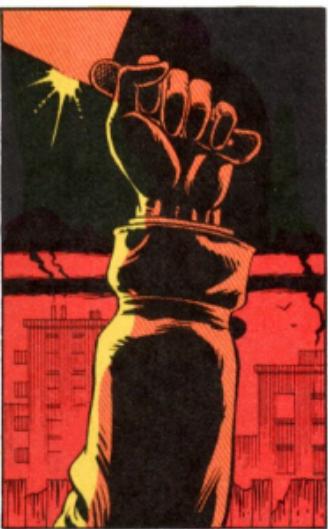
FROM THE NOTES OF DR. MALCOLM LONG. OCTOBER 28TH, 1985:





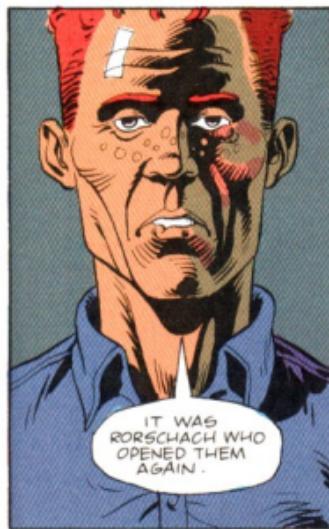






SHOCK OF IMPACT RAN ALONG MY ARM. JET OF WARMTH SPATTERED ON CHEST, LIKE HOT FAUCET.

IT WAS KOVACS WHO SAID "MOTHER" THEN, MUFFLED UNDER LATEX. IT WAS KOVACS WHO CLOSED HIS EYES.



IT WAS RORSCHACH WHO OPENED THEM AGAIN.

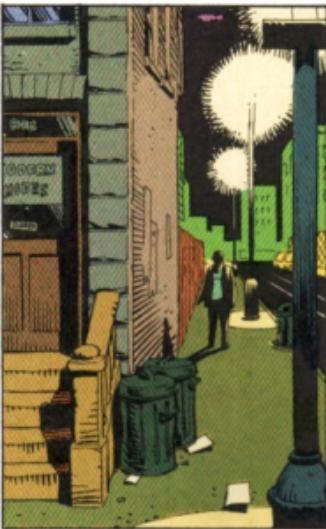


ACCORDING TO MY INFORMANT, MAN USING PREMISES NAMED GERALD GRICE.
OUT DRINKING WHEN I CALLED. RETURNED TO DRESSMAKERS AT TEN FORTY-FIVE.



DARK BY THEN.

DARK AS IT GETS.





AAAAAAA!



AAAAAA!
OH, GOD...

OH,
GOD!



UUUUUGH.
WHO
IS IT?

UUGH

WHO'S OUT
THERE?



I
HAVEN'T
DONE
ANYTHING,
I
SWEAR I...



EEEEEEHIGH!





"STOOD IN FIRELIGHT, SWELTERING BLOOD STAIN ON CHEST LIKE MAP OF VIOLENT NEW CONTINENT."

"FELT CLEANSED. FELT DARK PLANET TURN UNDER MY FEET AND KNEW WHAT CATS KNOW THAT MAKES THEM SCREAM LIKE BABIES IN NIGHT."

"LOOKED AT SKY THROUGH SMOKE HEAVY WITH HUMAN FAT AND GOD WAS NOT THERE. THE COLD, SUFFOCATING DARK GOES ON FOREVER, AND WE ARE ALONE..."

"LIVE OUR LIVES, LACKING ANYTHING BETTER TO DO. DEVISE REASON LATER."



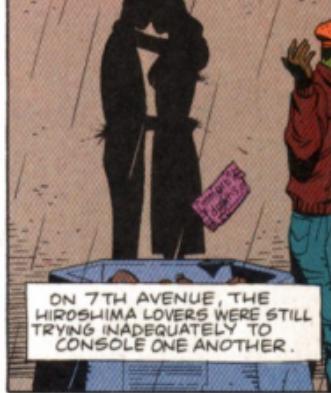
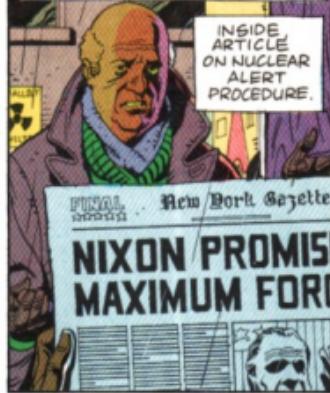
FROM THE NOTES OF DR. MALCOLM LONG, OCTOBER 28TH, 1985:

WALKED HOME ALONG 40TH STREET. A BLACK MAN TRIED TO SELL ME A ROLEX WATCH. WHEN I KEPT WALKING HE STARTED SHOUTING "NIGGER! HEY, NIGGER!"

IGNORED HIM. BOUGHT PAPER. RUSSIANS CLAIM THAT FIGHTING SPILLING INTO PAKISTAN WAS ACCIDENTAL. NIXON SAYS U.S. WILL MEET CONTINUED SOVIET AGGRESSION WITH "MAXIMUM FORCE."

INSIDE ARTICLE ON NUCLEAR ALERT PROCEDURE

IT SAYS THAT ANY DEAD FAMILY MEMBERS SHOULD BE WRAPPED IN PLASTIC GARBAGE SACKS AND PLACED OUTSIDE FOR COLLECTION.



HOME: GLORIA REMINDED ME THAT RANDY AND DIANA WERE COMING TONIGHT. LOOKED CROSS WHEN I CONFESSED I'D FORGOTTEN. WE DRESSED FOR DINNER IN SILENCE.



DINNER DIDN'T GO VERY WELL.



DIANA REMEMBERED THAT THEIR BABYSITTER HAD TO BE HOME EARLY AND THEY LEFT SOON AFTER DINNER.

GLORIA WENT INTO THE BEDROOM I FOLLOWED HER. SHE WALKED OUT AGAIN, INTO THE HALL.

I SAT ON THE BED.

SHE CAME IN, WEARING HER COAT, SUBJECTING ME TO A LOT OF CRUDE SEXUAL INSULTS, WENT OUT. THE FRONT DOOR SLAMMED.

WHY DO WE ARGUE? LIFE'S SO FRAGILE, A SUCCESSFUL VIRUS CLINGING TO A SPECK OF MUD, SUSPENDED IN ENDLESS NOTHING.

I SAT ON THE BED. I LOOKED AT THE RORSCHACH BLOT.

I TRIED TO PRETEND IT LOOKED LIKE A SPREADING TREE, SHADOWS POOLED BEHIND IT, BUT IT DIDN'T.

IT LOOKED MORE LIKE A DEAD CAT I ONCE FOUND, THE FAT, GLISTENING GRUBS WRITHING BLINDLY, SQUIRMING OVER EACH OTHER, FRANTICALLY TUNNELING AWAY FROM THE LIGHT.

BUT EVEN THAT IS AVOIDING THE REAL HORROR.

THE HORROR IS THIS: IN THE END, IT IS SIMPLY A PICTURE OF EMPTY MEANINGLESS BLACKNESS.

WE ARE ALONE.

THERE IS NOTHING ELSE.

Battle not with monsters, lest ye become a monster,

and if you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.

— Friedrich
Wilhelm
Nietzsche



New York
Police Department
MANHATTAN



Form 2-18

WALTER T.
KOVACS

FOR INTER-DEPARTMENTAL USE ONLY

(Please type or print clearly)

Name KOVACS, Walter Joseph

Address TRANSIENT

Born 3/21/40

Mother's name KOVACS, Sylvia Joanna (nee GLICK)

Father's name Unknown

DETAILS OF ARREST	COPIES:	LEFT THUMB PRINT	RIGHT THUMB PRINT
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Walter Joseph Kovacs, A.K.A. RORSCHACH, was arrested on the night of Monday, October 21st when a squadron of police officers led by Detectives FINE and BOURQUIN surrounded the house of EDGAR WILLIAM JACOBI, A.K.A. EDGAR WILLIAM VAUGHN, A.K.A. WILLIAM EDGAR BRIGIT, A.K.A. MOLOCH, following an anonymous tip: Kovacs, who was on the premises at the time, injured two police officers while resisting arrest. Officer SHAW was admitted to the hospital with minor burns, while Officer Greaves, who was shot at point blank range with a gas-powered grappling gun, has a shattered sternum and is still on the hospital's critical list as of this writing (10/22/85).

When the house was explored, the body of Edgar Jacobi was discovered in the kitchen, shot through the head. The murder weapon was found less than two feet away, and although there were no fingerprints on the gun it should be remembered that since Kovacs was wearing gloves when arrested, this lack of prints is hardly remarkable. Although Kovacs has denied the murder of Jacobi, given his previous history of violence against other criminals and his location in the murder house at the time, few other conclusions seem possible. Curiously, Kovacs has not denied the two other murders attributed to him, those of GERALD ANTHONY GRICE, unemployed, in the summer of 1975, and of wanted multiple rapist HARVEY CHARLES FURNISS two years later in the summer of 1977, immediately following the passage of the Keene Act into law.

At the time of his arrest, the contents of Kovacs' pockets were as follows: 1 battery powered flashlight; 5 individually wrapped cubes 'Sweet Chariot' chewing sugar; 1 map New York underground and subway system, dated 1968 with recent alterations drawn in with a red ballpoint pen; withered remains one red rose; one dollar fifty-nine cents in assorted loose change; one pencil; one notebook, pages filled with what is either an elaborate cypher or handwriting too cramped and eccentric to be legible; one broken bottle 'Nostalgia' cologne for men, possibly broken during leap from Jacobi's second story window during arrest; a residue of ground black pepper.

(If second sheet is needed refer to Form 6-2)





New York State Psychiatric Hospital West Branch

EARLY HISTORY: A SUMMARY:

Sylvia Kovacs came to New York from Ohio in the spring of 1935 with her husband, Peter Joseph Kovacs, whom she divorced in 1937 amidst mutual accusations of adultery and mental cruelty. After the divorce she had no further contact with her former husband, and for the next three years, she lived in a number of low-rent apartments, both alone and with a number of male acquaintances. Exactly when she drifted into prostitution as a means of meeting her mounting debts is uncertain, but it seems likely that her last semi-permanent relationship was with the true father of Walter Kovacs, who left her two months before the baby was born. Mrs. Kovacs was either unable or unwilling to provide any details concerning him other than that his name was 'Charlie'. Sicne shortly after the birth of her son we see Mrs. Kovacs' first arrest on charges of prostitution, we can perhaps assume that the additional cost of keeping an infant child may have been what necessitated this new occupation, and perhaps also speculate as to whether the above factors were the cause of the resentment and cruelty which Sylvia Kovacs showed to her son as he grew older.

In the July of 1951, the boy was admitted into care after viciously attacking two older boys in the street, partially blinding one of them. When questioned, Kovacs refused to talk about what had caused him to attack the boys, so it must be presumed that it was an unprovoked assault. Nevertheless, investigation of the circumstances the boy lived in revealed that he was regularly beaten and exposed to the worst excesses of a prostitute's lifestyle, and it was decided to place the child under care. He was admitted to the Lillian Charlton Home for Problem Children in New Jersey, where he remained until 1956, when it was decided that he was intelligent and stable enough to function in normal society. During his time at the home, removed from his mother's negative influence, Kovacs did very well at schoolwork, excelling particularly in the fields of literature and religious education as well as possessing an impressive skill in the areas of gymnastics and amateur boxing. While quiet and shy, especially with women, Kovacs was capable of long and well-reasoned conversations with his classmates and instructors, and struck most people as a serious but likeable child who was merely bit withdrawn.

This aside, it is clear that his loathing of his mother remained undiminished. Shortly before Kovacs left the Charlton home in 1956, news was received that his mother, who had never made any attempt to contact her child and who had continued to become further involved in the world of small-time vice, had been murdered. Her body had been found in a back alleyway in the South Bronx, the cause of death being the forced ingestion of Drano cleaning fluid. A man named George Paterson, Mrs. Kovacs' pimp, was later charged





New York State Psychiatric Hospital West Branch

with her murder. When the news was broken to Walter Kovacs, then aged sixteen, his only comment was 'Good.' Shortly after this, Kovacs left the home to take up residence in the first of a series of small apartments and also take up full employment in a menial capacity within the garment industry, an occupation he apparently remained in up until the mid-seventies, maintaining a dual life between his daytime employment and his nocturnal activities in the guise of 'Rorschach'.

Very little physical evidence exists that gives a clear insight into the psychology of this troubled man. Some police officers have tentatively identified him as a prophet-of-doom sandwich-board man seen locally over the last several years, but as Kovacs refuses to divulge his current address, if any, this is not provable at such an early stage in the investigation. Similarly, material relating to his early years is scarce, although I have been able to obtain photocopies of two pieces written by Kovacs during his stay at the Charlton Home, one being an essay written on the set topic of 'My Parents' when Kovacs was eleven, the other being a transcription of Kovacs' verbal recounting of a nightmare he suffered when he was thirteen.

CONFIDENTIAL

Charlton Home

by Walter Kovacs

My Parents

I have two parents, although actually, I don't have any. I never see my mom, but that's okay, although I would like to see my dad sometimes. I have never met my dad and I would sure like to. He had to leave our house when I wasn't even born, I guess because he couldn't get along with my mother. I would of done the same if I was him.

I used to ask my mom about my dad, but she doesn't talk much about him. His name was charlie, which is short for Charles although it has the same number of letters. She says she doesn't know his second name although how can you live with somebody if you don't know who they are? It is just stupid.

My mom told me she threw my dad out because he was always getting into political arguments with her because he liked President Truman and she didn't. I think perhaps my dad was some sort of aide to President Truman, because he liked him so much. Most probably he was out of the country during the war when I was growing up on some sort of mission. I think he was the kind of guy who would fight for his country and what was right. Maybe he got killed fighting the Nazis and he's with God now and that's how come he never managed to find me.

I like President Truman, the way Dad would of wanted me to. He dropped the atom bomb on Japan and saved millions of lives because if he hadn't of, then there would of been a lot more war than there was and more people would of been killed.

I think it was a good thing to drop the atomic bomb on Japan.

That is all I have to say about my parents.



DREAM, 5/27/63

CONFIDENTIAL

"A man was in my old house, with my mom. They were eating some stuff like raw dough, and my mom choked on a piece. The guy with her tried to fish it out of her throat. He got his whole hand in her mouth and then it was like he had his whole arm down her throat. He told me to get a doctor, so I ran out of the room but the house was all different and there wasn't any doctor there anyway, so I went back to find mom. I was walking down this sort of hallway, and it was dark and I saw what looked like my mom and this guy dancing, old fashioned dancing at the other end of the room, and they didn't have any clothes on. They were sort of clopping around like a horse in a pantomime with two guys in a suit. When they got nearer, I saw they weren't dancing at all, they were squashed together like siamese twins, joined at the face and chest and stomach. They didn't have any face, you could only see their ears, two on either side of the head facing towards each other. Their hands were growing into each other as well, but they had all four legs free and they were sort of dancing sideways towards me down the dark hall like a crab, and there was something tripping 'em up, wrapped around their feet, and I looked down and I saw it was trousers and underwear and stuff. They were coming towards me, and then I woke up. I had feelings when I woke up. Dirty feelings, thoughts and stuff. The dream it sort of upset me, physically. I couldn't help it. I ~~feel~~ had just talking about it."



MY
dream
by
W.J. KOVACS
APR 13

From the desk of: Dr. Malcolm J.

10/2.

Walter Joseph Kovacs promises to handle a complex case, especially in light of the extreme nature of his vigilante activities. It may be possible to identify a new syndrome that will help us to understand those other people who have in the past shared Kovacs masked vigilante activities. In any event, keep notes with an eye to possible future publication. First interview with Kovacs is Friday afternoon. Looking forward to it.

