StormWatch: Team Achilles

#16 "Television"
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First Draft
July 15, 2003

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PANEL ONE

World War 2: The Fall of Berlin. The buildings are bombed-out piles of broken stone, dead bodies, rubble everywhere, haze fills the skies.

In the foreground, runs Citizen Soldier, leaping towards camera. Big Action Shot.

BORDERLESS LOCATION CAPTION

Berlin, 1945.

Behind Citizen Soldier runs Busy Bracken, a young lad dressed in a patriotic costume.

BUSY BRACKEN

Looks like we got company, Citizen Soldier!

CITIZEN SOLDIER

I see 'em, Busy Bracken!

PANEL ONE

Nazis shoot at Citizen Soldier.

GERMAN SOLDIER

Töten Sie ihn! Töten Sie den Amerikanischen Teufel!

PANEL TWO

The Soldier bowls them over the edge of a roof, leaping out into space.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

One side, Nazis, I've got an appointment with your boss!

GERMAN SOLDIER

Sheisse!

GERMAN SOLDIER

Schweinehund!

GERMAN SOLDIER

Aaagggh!

PANEL THREE

Soldier & Busy crash through a glass roof.

BUSY BRACKEN

Rise and shine, Ratzis!

PANEL ONE

CitSold & Busy run through a room.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Keep an eye out, Busy! We're in Indian Country
here!

BUSY BRACKEN

I gotcher back, Soldier!

PANEL TWO

Citizen Soldier runs down the stairs with Busy.

BUSY BRACKEN

How far down did this gink hide himself?

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Rats burrow deep, Busy!

BUSY BRACKEN

Thick door ahead, Soldier!

PANEL THREE

Citizen Soldier knocks down a door.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Knock Knock, Nazis!

PANEL ONE

CS and BB are impressed by what they see.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Wow.

BUSY BRACKEN

Yeah, no kiddin'.

PANEL TWO

Fabulous wealth.

BUSY BRACKEN

So this is what that crumb, Hitler did with all the swag he stole from Europe... He built himself a gaudy little hideyhole!

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Stay behind me, Busy... plush or no, these bunkers of Hitler's are bound to be filled with Danger!

PANEL THREE

They're a little further down the hall.

BUSY BRACKEN

Yeah, I'm right behind you, Citizen.

BUSY BRACKEN

(small font, to himself)

I wonder if I can fit any of dis stuff in my pockets?

PANEL FOUR

Empty case which held Hellboy's Big Gun.

NO DIALOG

PANEL FIVE

Citizen Soldier turns around at a sudden sound.

SOUND F/X

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Busy?

PANEL ONE

Citizen Soldier cradles the corpse of his young ward.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Don't move, son, I'll get you bandaged up-

BUSY BRACKEN

-Ah, fergit that, Soldier. I seen enough dead GI's tah know I'm done fer. I can't feel nothin' below my chest and everything's gettin' all cold.

PANEL TWO

C/Up on Busy, dying.

BUSY BRACKEN

S'okay, I guess... they wouldn't have understood about you and me back home anyway.

PANEL THREE

C/U on Citizen Soldier.

NO DIALOG

PANEL FOUR

Citizen Soldier cradles the dead Busy.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Busy Bracken! Noooooo!

PANEL ONE

Citizen Soldier smashes through a wall.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Come on out of there, you Nazi scum!

PANEL TWO

It's ADOLPH HITLER!

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Hitler!

ADOLPH HITLER

Curse You, Citizen Soldier! My pistol jammed! If only I had shot you first!

PANEL THREE

Citizen Soldier takes his shield in his hands and rears back with it above his head.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Busy's life will be the last you take, Butcher!

ADOLPH HITLER (O.S.)

Nein! You wouldn't dare-

PANEL FOUR

Citizen Soldier Cuts off Hitler's head with the edge of his shield (off-panel)! Hitler's blood squirts everywhere, covering Citizen Soldier. This should be REALLY FUCKING GRUESOME.

HITLER

Aaagkk!

PANEL ONE

Tefibi sleeping on a reclined bench surrounded by computer monitors scant inches from his face.

TEFIBI

(talking in sleep)

You... Butcher!

PANEL TWO

Tefibi wakes from his nightmare, hands flying to his throat, sitting upright-

TEFIBI

Aaahhh!

PANEL THREE

-hitting himself in the face on a computer monitor.

TEFIBI

Ack!

PANEL FOUR

Falling back to the reclined bench, rubbing his face.

SANTINI (O.S.)

Pleasant dreams, Tefibi?

PANEL FIVE

Widescreen. Santini in the foreground, shirt open, looking into a small table mirror, shaving with a straight razor and washing the blade in a metal bowl of water. In the BG, we see the complex arrangement of computers and monitors Tefibi's sleeping inside of.

SANTINI

Was it the one where he kills Hitler, the one where he kills Martin Bormann, or the one where he kills Joseph Goebbels?

TEFIBI

Hitler. I had Bormann earlier. Hey, Colonel Santini, I thought Goebbels committed suicide?

SANTINI

Apparently not. Unless you call having someone kick your skull in with steel toed boots to be committing suicide.

PANEL ONE

Tefibi sits up on an elbow and looks at Santini.

TEFIBI

Guy was Hell on Nazis. So what drives him over the edge? Why's he attacking the USA now? And where's he been since he was killed in '54?

PANEL TWO

Santini rinses his blade in the bowl.

SANTINI

I don't think we're going to like the answers to either of those questions.

TEFTBT

Why not?

SANTINI

We're dealing with a man who has been continuously reborn since at least the 1700's. A soul which doesn't seem to manifest in his host body until the country is at War or unless personally attacked.

PANEL THREE

Santini stretches his chin and shaves inside his Robert Mitchum chin cleft.

TEFIBI

And?

SANTINI

The last known death we have for him on record is in 1954. The guy we fought at the New York Stock Exchange is not 50 years old.

PANEL FOUR

C/U on Tefibi. He snaps his fingers: he gets it!

TEFIBI

He died once more between the kid in Louisiana and the guy we fought yesterday!

SANTINI (O.S.)

Good. Now do the math.

PANEL FIVE

Same angle, Tefibi counting in his head.

TEFIBI

1954... guy yesterday was maybe 30-35 at the most. Means he was killed between 1969 and 1974 between 15 and 19 years old... Oh shit... Vietnam!

SANTINI (O.S.)

Exactly. Now... was he regular Army?

PANEL SIX

Tefibi reacts. Hell no!

TEFIBI

No way. Citizen Soldier returns to kill Victor Charlie? The media would have made a BIG deal of that!

PANEL ONE

Santini smiles. He's proud of Tefibi's reasoning.

SANTINI

I'm proud of you, Khalid. You're beginning to get the basic skills down.

TEFIBI (O.S.)

Basic skills of what?

SANTINI

Thinking. It's an ability most people never develop. You're going to need it someday when I die.

PANEL TWO

Khalid is weirded out.

TEFIBI

Die? You planning on dying soon?

PANEL THREE

Santini, flat-faced. No emotion.

SANTINI

No. But Blake Coleman didn't plan on dying, either, and look what happened to him.

SANTINI

That's why I'm prepping you now, Tefibi... I need someone capable of taking over if I get greased.

PANEL FOUR

It all falls into place for poor Khalid. He covers his face with his hand, head slumped.

TEFIBI

(small font)

Oh my fucking Christ. I knew I was gonna hate this job.

PANEL ONE

Santini points to the computer bank.

SANTINI

But that probably won't happen for a long time to come. For now, just get back to watching for Citizen Soldier's teleport signature.

TEFTBT

Damn, I knew I was supposed to be doing something! Why can't I concentrate?

PANEL TWO

Tefibi presses buttons and dials switches. Santini looks at the monitors next to Tefibi.

SANTINI

Sleep deprivation. That's the point of these broadcasted nightmares. No one in America's gotten any deep sleep for the last six nights... and soon everyone's going to start seeing and hearing things that aren't there, if they're not already.

TEFIBI

You're depressing me. Mind if I turn on the TV?

SANTINI

If you think TV's going to relax you, knock yourself out.

PANEL THREE

FAUX NEWS CHANNEL logo. Onscreen, a rioting mob throws newspaper dispensers through the doors of a suburban bank.

FAUX NEWS REPORTER

-riot here at this bank in Sinclair, Iowa, Greg. Anxious Americans terrified over their savings are taking to the streets in a scene repeated all over America.

PANEL FOUR

A beautiful Soccer Mom grips her purse tightly and glares towards camera.

SOCCER MOM

Of course I helped break into the bank! That's MY money in there and I'll be goddammed if I let the government steal it from me!

PANEL FIVE

Two shot of Jerry White, our FAUX NEWS Reporter and a sweet little old grandma. The reporter looks uncomfortable talking to her.

OLD WOMAN

Well I think it's obvious that this is all definitely a plot by the Jews and their Zionist Banking Conspiracy to Destroy America.

FAUX NEWS REPORTER

Err... uh, and uh, that's the mood here on the street, Greg. This is Jerry White reporting live for FAUX NEWS!

PANEL ONE

FAUX NEWSROOM. On the Anchor, a youngish white guy also. Base him on Shepard Smith. Because every news event needs a title these days, the bottom of the screen reads: CRISIS: ROGUE AMERICAN and has an upside-down red-white-and-blue logo behind it.

FAUX NEWS ANCHOR

Wow, that's uh... that's a lot of emotion! Things are definitely looking bad on the streets. We turn our coverage of CRISIS: ROGUE AMERICAN now to the White House where the President is giving an impromptu Press Conference, about this unprecedented attack on America!

PANEL TWO

The White House press room. The President from issue #14 stands behind a podium, gripping the sides of it very tightly.

PRESIDENT

-A crisis of unimaginable proportions. We face an unknown enemy, determined to destroy the goodness that is America. These terrorists have slandered my name, destroying the sanctity of our American dreams with their lies and false dream-projections about me being a member of a racist group

PANEL THREE

He pounds the podum with one hand straight out like a karate chop (like Bush always does).

PRESIDENT

They have attacked the financial structure of this great nation... they have wounded us, but we're not dead yet. I have given orders to the head of the Civil Defense Administration to activate our superpowered CIVIL DEFENSE SQUADRON to apprehend these terrorists, to bring them in, dead or alive. Now, any questions?

PANEL FOUR

The reporters all stand up, shouting questions.

REPORTERS

(in separate speech balloons, repeat as
 necessary to fill the page)
Mr. president! Mr. President! Over here, Mr.
President. Mr. President!

PRESIDENT Uh... you in the front row.

PANEL ONE

A pretty female reporter.

FEMALE REPORTER

Sir, does this mean that you deny the events that every American has been dreaming and reliving every night?

PANEL TWO

The President, nervous, pulls at his necktie.

PRESIDENT

Well, some of them are well-known uh, rumors, in the halls of government, such as Citizen Soldier killing Hitler. We always suspected that he'd done it, but we never knew for sure. These dreams could all be just a trick... put some things which are true in there and then mix in events which are completely ficticious. Uh, Bob, in the second row.

PANEL THREE

On Bob, African-American male reporter.

BOB

Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, does your statement mean that you deny ever having been a member of the Ku Klux Klan?

PANEL FOUR

The Pres looks stern and pounds the podium for emphasis.

PRESIDENT

Those are lies, damned black lies! I have never, in all my adult life, been involved with any racist organization!

PANEL FIVE

On Sam Donaldson amongst the reporters. He holds up his arm and looks curious

SAM

Mr. President, why do you describe these particular lies as "Black" Lies?

PANEL ONE

Flint comes into the room. Big panel.

PRESIDENT (O.S.)

(over television)

Er, uh, that's just, uh, a figure of speech, it doesn't mean anything, just evil.

REPORTER (O.S.)

(over television)

So in your mind, black equals Evil?

FLINT

What are you two watching?

SANTINI (O.S.)

A train wreck of the highest order.

TEFIBI (O.S.)

Yeah, no doubt. At least the last guy made you feel all warm and fuzzy when he lied to us.

PANEL TWO

A red light blinks on Tefibi's panel.

SOUND F/X

Веер Веер Веер

TEFIBI

Sir! The facial recognition software database search has pulled up a high possible for Citizen Soldier!

PANEL THREE

One screen shows a milk carton box. The side reads "HAVE YOU SEEN ME?" above a grainy black-and-white pic of some smiling kid with a missing front tooth. Below the kid's face is the name "FRANKLIN R. DAVIS" A smaller screen (or picture-in-picture) has small biographical data.

TEFIBI

Ah, shit, it's just some kid who went missing in 1981.

SANTINI

Was he ever recovered?

TEFIBI

Nope. Presumed dead by the FBI. Sorry, Dead End.

PANEL FOUR

Santini smiles.

SANTINI

No, it's not. Now that we've got a photo of him young, we can work a search through the facial recognition software from both pictures.

TEFIBI

That'll remove like five levels of computer age interpolation! Man, why didn't I think of that?

SANTINI

Sleep deprivation.

PANEL ONE

A huge newspaper photo fills Tefibi's screen. It's of a 15-year-old kid getting a college diploma. It's Citizen Soldier as a kid. He's got a 1940s fade haircut, but otherwise, he looks like any other kid. He's NOT smiling.

SOUND F/X

Beep Beep Beep

HEADLINE

Child prodigy orphan earns Phd from MIT.

TEFTBT

Oh fuck. He's Steve Gatesniak. Oh, this is bad news, man. He's a big-time reclusive computer genius.

PANEL TWO

Santini smirks.

SANTINI

Some geek hero of yours?

PANEL THREE

On Tefibi, worried looking.

TEFIBI

He's only one of the most brilliant people to ever step foot on Earth... he designed the first laptop, the wireless modem and a lot of the theory behind the Internet.

SANTINI

So he's Super-You. Big Deal.

TEFIBI

He's also a multi-billionaire with some twenty Billion dollars to throw around on this little war of his. Kinda dwarfs our budget, eh?

PANEL FOUR

NOW Santini looks worried.

SANTINI

\$20 Billion? Jeezus, Tefibi you gotta be kidding me. Where's this guy live?

TEFIBI

That's just it... he went totally off-net about seven years ago. He just disappeared.
(MORE)

TEFIBI (cont'd)

His software company Computouch still exists, though... it's in Dull, Ohio.

FLINT

Sounds exciting.

TEFIBI

Laugh all you want. He owns the entire town. Literally.

PANEL ONE

Santini points at Tefibi and Flint.

SANTINI

Khalid, get Buzz Dixon on the phone. I want him inside Boring, Ohio within the next hour. I want a total once-over of that town. I'm not blundering in there without any intel.

TEFIBI

Yessir!

SANTINI

Flint, go get the field team ready for insertion.

FLINT

Yes, sir.

PANEL TWO

Santini looks into the vidphone. There's creepy Buzz Dixon from Issue #5.

TEFIBI

I've got Buzz on the vidphone.

SANTINI

Hey, Buzz! I need a volunteer. You busy?

BUZZ DIXON

Sounds deadly already. What's in it fer me?

SANTINI

Not much: low pay, unconscionable danger, a shallow unmarked grave, the indifference of the American People, or, if you live, I might be able to swing you lunch with the Secretary General of the United Nations, your treat.

PANEL THREE

Buzz smiles broadly.

BUZZ DIXON

Oooh la la, I am SO there. Where'm I goin'?

SANTINI

Boring, Ohio.

BUZZ DIXON

Okay. What city in Ohio?

SANTINI

Boring. That's the name of the town.

BUZZ DIXON

Oh. I thought you were talking about the whole state. Hey, this is a domestic mission... did you clear this op with Ivana Baiul and her American Civil Defense Administration?

SANTINI

Hell no.

BUZZ DIXON

I am SO there.

SANTINI

Good. Tefibi'll patch you through and download you an update on the situation so far.

PANEL FOUR

Tefibi flips some switches on his computer bank.

TEFIBI

Okay, Buzz has everything we've got on Citizen Soldier. I'm giving him a 30-minute window for insertion. He's got satphone gear with him, so we can just relax until he phones in the lay of the land. You sure he'll be okay?

SANTINI

Buzz is an adaptomorph, a natural chameleon. I can't imagine what it would take to break his native camouflage. Besides, Citizen Soldier's secret base probably isn't even in Ohio... he's gotta be operating out of a dormant volcano or some such shit.

SANTINI

I tell you what, though... I'd give anything to know what he's up to right now.

PANEL ONE

A huge fist fills a star-shaped background.

CROWD

(no balloons)
Steve! Steve! Steve!

PANEL TWO

Citizen Soldier addresses a crowd of unruly Computer Geeks.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Okay, Look, you know why you're here--you are the brightest that America has to offer. You were accepted to work at Computouch because you were both brilliant AND dedicated to the ideals that made America great.

PANEL ONE

Citizen Soldier holds up his arms... enough.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Okay, Look, you know why you're here—you are the brightest that America has to offer. You were accepted to work at Computouch because you were both brilliant AND dedicated to the ideals that made America great.

PANEL TWO

Citizen Soldier pounds his chest with one hand and points to the crowd with the other. Look at some pictures of Hitler talking... he's REALLY into this speech, weird extreme posing, etc.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

I'd like to read you something that a friend of mine named Thomas Jefferson wrote over two hundred years ago: "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government."

PANEL THREE

More crazy pose as he shouts to his followers/employees.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

America needs YOU, Computouch! America is being RAPED and MURDERED by the sickly disease known as the United States Government! Look at them: A Supreme Court, bought and paid for by rich men. They distribute laws... but NO JUSTICE for America or her citizens!

PANEL FOUR

Close up on the incensed Citizen Soldier.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

The Congress--They're supposed to REPRESENT us... but all these devils care about is helping their Rich campaign contributors eat this country alive! And finally, a Murderering Ku Klux Klan President in the White House!

PANEL FIVE

Citizen Soldier calm now. Arms spread, fingers wide, facing the crowd.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Government derives its power from the Consent of the Governed. THE CONSENT OF THE GOVERNED. Well that Consent ends now! I need three volunteers. Let's see... Christine, Sam... and Patil.

PANEL ONE

Two women and a man, the three volunteers are onstage next to Citizen Soldier. He clasps his hands in theirs.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Do you understand what I'm asking you to do?

SUICIDERS

Yes.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Then Godspeed, Patriots.

SUICIDERS

God Bless America.

PANEL TWO

They are shocked by a bolt of lightening which streams from the sky and strikes Citizen Soldier and flows outwards from his arms into the three holding his hands.

SOUND F/X

Krraaaa-Kraaackk!

PANEL THREE

On Tefibi's screen. It's a videodump from Buzz Dixon. Smoke obscures the three volunteers. Citizen Soldiers stands proud. The crowd goes wild. It's like those people on The Price Is Right jumping up and down, ecstatically, they wave their arms and pump their fists, tears running down the faces of the women.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Arise, Reborn Americans, Arise.

CROWD

America! America! America!

BUZZ DIXON

(over television)

I hope you guys are seein' dese fruitcakes loud and clear.

SANTINI (O.S.)

Yeah, we're seeing it, Buzz.

PANEL FOUR

On Tefibi's video screen. The same shot as panel three. Three superhero-types stand there. One of the women is on fire, like the Human Torch.

A second woman is made of congealed sand, and the third guy looks like a negative-universe evil Michelin Man. Citizen Soldier salutes the Suiciders.

TEFIBI

Holy fucking shit, he's a superhuman activator.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

(over television)

You have twenty minutes to live. You know your targets. Spend your time well. Your country is proud of you!

SANTINI

No... he's not an activator... he's something different. Like a hyper-exciter or something. He can give them powers but it's burning a candle from both ends! They die after twenty minutes!

TEFIBI

Yeah, well, that's not going to help whoever his targets are.

PANEL ONE

The woman takes off into the air, flying, arms outstretched, happy look on her face. She looks a bit like The Human Torch (little black lines inside of flames). The campus streams away below her.

NO DIALOG

PANEL

Outskirts of Boring, Ohio. Her flame-trail streaks upwards towards the sky.

NO DIALOG

PANEL THREE

The woman flies high above the Earth, past the International Space Station "Freedom." America is a tiny little blip on the earth below.

NO DIALOG

PANEL FOUR

A satellite buzzes near her. Her flames are much smaller, licking off her body into the vacuum of space. She hovers, tightens her body...

NO DIALOG

PANEL FIVE

...and EXPLODES.

NO DIALOG

PANEL SIX

A gaseous white explosion sweeps through space like a wave, destroying all kinds of satellites in its path. Including one marked "TELSTAR".

NO DIALOG

PANEL ONE

UN Building. All of Tefibi's television monitors (not the computer monitors) go fuzzy.

SANTINI (O.S.)

What the hell? Fix it!

TEFIBI

I can't! I'm not getting any signal!

PANEL TWO

Tefibi looks up, panicked.

TEFIBI

According to these readings, every satellite in orbit has just been destroyed. Television, Telephone, Spy, Global Positioning System, The President's hotline to Russia... it's all gone. Including Buzz.

PANEL THREE

The field team troops in.

JUKKO

What's the situation, sir?

SANTINI

The situation is that everything on the planet's about to get FUBAR.

PINCKNEY

FUBAR, Sir?

PANEL FOUR

On Santini, pissed.

SANTINI

Fucked Up Beyond All Recognition. We've got at least two superhuman assassins heading for Washington D.C. with three probable targets: The President, Congress and the Supreme Court.

SANTINI

Much as I despise doing this, we're once again running into a situation with no intel and no preparation. Keep on your toes and remember what happened to Blake Coleman. Do NOT assume that your kills are dead.

PANEL ONE

Over the shoulder shot as Santini points out three different groups standing slightly apart from one another.

SANTINI

Flint, Tefibi and I will go to the Supreme Court.

SANTINI

Pinckney and Jager, I want you to hook up with the Secret Service and the CDA at the White House. They're probably ready for this kind of shit, but who knows for sure.

SANTINI

Jukko and Galena, you're on The Capitol Dome. Doctor Grunier and Barak will stay here to be prepared to tap in on any location and help with the wounded. Okay, let's move.

PANEL TWO

The teams haul ass into the teleport circles. Flint, Tefibi and Santini are walking towards theirs.

TEFIBI

Sir, we gotta get more guys into this unit.

SANTINI

Yeah, well, no shit. Tell you what, you get to screen me two new ones if we get back. How do you like them apples?

TEFIBI

Remind me to keep my stupid mouth shut next time.

SANTINI

I'm proud of you, Tefibi. You're really learning quick.

PANEL THREE

On their faces. Shocked.

TEFIBI

Oh, this is bad.

SANTINI

These guys work fast.

PANEL ONE

Full page. The Supreme Court Building is on fire. The flames illuminate the scene.

TEFIBI

I guess we should hope we can find some survivors, huh, Colonel Santini?

SANTINI

Tefibi, I think it's safe to say that anyone in there is already as good as dead.

SANTINI

The only thing we're looking for now is some payback!

CAPTION

To be Continued!

REFERENCE FOR THIS ISSUE:

RUSSIAN TRANSLATION

http://translation2.paralink.com/

This page will give you the exact Cyrillic spellings for all of my dialog on the first few pages, if you have a Cyrillic font.

WALL STREET

Here's a AMAZINGLY GREAT webpage with java-enabled panoramic shots from all kinds of different areas in the NY Stock Exchange: http://www.nyse.com/floor/1022221392907.html Click "fascade" for the front door, then click "virtual tour" to load the quicktime circular.

THE UNITED NATIONS:

ONLINE VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE UN:

http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/untour/index.html

HERE'S A 360-DEGREE QUICKTIME OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL CHAMBER: http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/untour/subsec.htm

ONLINE PHOTOS OF THE UN BUILDING:

http://www.un.org/Overview/Tours/UNHQ/#HQS-SITE

CITIZEN SOLDIER TIMELINE

1948 - HUAC kills Citizen Soldier

1955 - 7 yrs old, lynched

1972 - 17 yrs old, Hell no, I won't go.

1973 - International Operations kills him.

2003 - 30 years old, Back with a Vengence.