

BLACK CAP #3 script – “The Passage” (1 July 02)

By Robert Morales

Page 1:

1) INT. TENEMENT LOBBY--DAY:

CLOSE ON a young BLACK WOMAN’S HAND--perhaps slightly roughened, fingernails neat but unpainted--lifting up the METAL PANEL of a 1940s mail wall unit; we see the flat METAL KEY in the panel and LETTERS in the mail slot, one of them ominously official-looking.

From the **upper-right** of this comes an OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: LA, LA-LA. WE’RE HERE, HONEY!

CAPTION: THE BRONX, NEW YORK. JUNE, 1942.

2) PULL BACK:

We see Faith Bradley, gesticulating infant daughter Sarah Gail cradled in one arm, looking much like they did in the photo Isaiah cooed over last issue. Faith’s pocketbook is slung over her other arm’s shoulder, and she’s peering at the now-open official letter in her left hand with her keys; her other mail’s clamped inside her armpit. She’s wearing a blue-grey ‘40s car mechanic’s outfit, with “Lou’s Garage” stitched in script over a breast pocket. It’s a tiny lobby.

FAITH: MOMMY’S GOING TO MAKE YOU A NICE--

3) CLOSE ON Faith’s eyes, suddenly teared-up, twin reflections of the letter with an inverted UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES LETTERHEAD w/ AN AMERICAN EAGLE in her pupils.

4) BOTTOM HALF OF PAGE--INT. CANFIELD RESIDENCE:

It’s a panel that echoes our first look at Maurice Canfield and Leonard the butler in **Black Cap #1, page 7**:

But instead of Maurice standing in the doorway, the butler finds a stout BLACK REVEREND in his 60’s with greying temples and an elegant BLACK ARMY OFFICER in his late 30’s. Leonard wears a look of pure dread.

REVEREND: GOOD DAY, LEONARD. I’M AFRAID WE’RE HERE TO SEE MR AND MRS CANFIELD.

CAPTION: PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA.

Page 2:

1) INT. PRICE'S OFFICE:

CLOSE ON the angry face of Walker Price, who's yelling into a '40s HANDSET.

PRICE: I SAID I WANT **NEGRO BLOOD!**

2) PULL BACK:

Price's office is spacious enough, but has an eerie claustrophobic quality: It's either underground or cut into a mountain. The side walls are ROUGH-HEWED STONE, but the wall behind Price's desk is BLOND WOOD. Hanging on the last are the ubiquitous framed documents and George Washington portrait. Along the ceiling runs a STEEL AIR VENT. Price's desk has neatly stacked papers, a '40s manual typewriter, a cup of pencils and pens, and, of course, his telephone.

Off to one side, Lt Merritt is handing Price a sheaf of papers in the manner of someone waiting to have them signed and handed back. Seated in one of two chairs facing Price is Homer Tulle. These men are always dressed the same throughout the war.

PRICE: NO, SERGEANT, THAT'S NOT NEARLY ENOUGH.

PRICE: NO, WE CAN'T **WAIT** UNTIL IT'S SHIPPED FROM--

TULLY: YOU KNOW, REINSTEIN SAYS THERE'S REALLY NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CAUCASIAN AND COLORED BLOOD.

CAPTION: PROJECT SUPER SOLDIER, LOCATION CLASSIFIED.

3) Handset to his ear, Price seems mildly surprised by the news. Merritt, however, is thunderstruck, looking at Tully with his mouth open.

PRICE: IS THAT SO?

MERRITT: NO...

4) CLOSE ON Price again, talking more calmly into the phone.

PRICE: OKAY, SERGEANT, THEN SEND US A THOUSAND UNITS OF **CAUCASIAN** BLOOD.

PRICE: WHAT?

Page 3:

1) CLOSE ON Price angrily yelling into the phone again.

PRICE: WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT DO I WANT WITH IT? DO YOU WANT A TRANSFER INTO INFANTRY, SERGEANT? WOULD THAT SATISFY YOUR CURIOSITY?

2) WIDE SHOT:

Price is smirking now as he winds up his phone call. Merritt is visibly chortling, Tully's impassive.

PRICE: THAT'S WHAT I LIKE TO HEAR, SERGEANT.

PRICE: AND I WANT THAT BLOOD ASAP, YOU HEAR? DON'T PUT IT ON COLORED PEOPLE TIME!

MERRITT: THAT'S A GOOD ONE, COLONEL!

3) Now Price is looking down at the papers Merritt's handed him, signing away as he speaks.

PRICE: SO WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, LIEUTENANT? SOME DAY NEGRO BLOOD MIGHT SAVE YOUR LIFE ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

4) CLOSE ON a thoroughly appalled Merritt.

MERRITT: I'D RATHER DIE, SIR!

5) Handing the papers back to Merritt, Price merrily speaks to Tully.

PRICE: WELL, TULLY, I THINK WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP THE DOCTOR'S REVELATION TOP SECRET AS WELL.

Page 4:

1) CLOSE ON a holstered Army Service revolver, on an Army-uniformed hip.

2) CLOSE SHOT looking down on the shaved head of Jefferson Jamison, who's gazing nervously toward an OFF-PANEL BALLOON.

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: TRY TO RELAX.

3) WIDE SHOT--INT. OBSERVATION ROOM:

The massive Jamison is naked, strapped to a metal gurney in a medium-sized room with white walls. Against a heavily-reinforced STEEL DOOR on **panel left**,

stands an armed Army GUARD--it was Jamison's POV of him in **panel 1**. A WHITE NURSE is attaching a GLASS I-V to Jamison's arm.

In **panel right**, we see a LARGE OBSERVATION WINDOW, made of THICK, GREEN GLASS. There is a SMALL LOUDSPEAKER to the window's side.

CAPTION: OBSERVATION ROOM #2.

Page 5:

1) INT. REINSTEIN'S LAB:

In the b.g. we clearly see Jamison's scene from the other side of the observation window.

In the f.g., Dr Josef Reinstein wears a white doctor's coat with a dress shirt and tie. Similarly dressed personnel mill about a huge laboratory filled with GLASS TUBES and BEAKERS, CENTRIFUGES, BUNSEN BURNERS, and the obligatory OBSCURE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT. It could easily be a cheesy '50s sci-fi movie set, but here it all seems state of the art. The lab, too, has ROUGH-HEWED STONE WALLS.

Reinstein peers at his WRISTWATCH and speaks into a METAL BROADCAST MICROPHONE.

REINSTEIN: VERY WELL, IT IS 1700 HOURS. AGAIN WE ADMINISTER 5 CC'S OF THE SERUM, NOW TO SUBJECT A-23.

2) Back inside the observation room, the nurse injects Jamison with a monstrous GLASS HYPODERMIC. We can see the speaker.

SPEAKER: NURSE, PLEASE PROCEED WITH THE INJECTION.

NURSE (*whisper balloon*): GOOD LUCK.

3) Looking through the green observation window, we see the nurse and guard leave the room. Jamison looks miserable.

From **panel right** comes an OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: THE SERUM HAS BEEN ADMINISTERED. PLEASE EVACUATE THE OBSERVATION ROOM.

4) JAMISON'S POV--CLOSE ON the steel door.

DOOR SOUNDS: *CLANK! CLUNK!*

Page 6:

1) Jamison raises his head, looking at his REFLECTION in the observation window.

2) CLOSE ON Jamison's head, staring ahead at nothing.

3) CLOSE ON Jamison's head--now his face is drenched with sweat, eyes widening.

4) CLOSE ON Jamison's head--now he's grimacing, eyes clenched, still sweating profusely.

JAMISON: MOTHER MARY ...

5) CLOSE ON Jamison's head and torso, *bulging* as if filling with a rush of liquid, his eyes full of panic.

Page 7:

THREE HORIZONTAL PANELS:

1) Jamison's body seems like it's *roiling* underneath his now-taut skin, flailing about, about to explode. The gurney's in mid-hop with his exertions.

JAMISON: **OH ...!**

2) A rush of blood and viscera splatter against the observation window and speaker.

SOUND FX: **SKISSSSH**

3) Reinstein in the f.g., speaking into his microphone, the drenched and muddled observation window in the b.g. None of the others seemed perturbed.

REINSTEIN: SUBJECT A-23 EXPIRED AT 1718 HOURS. NOW IT IS CERTAIN THAT 5 CC'S OF THE SERUM IS **TOO MUCH.**

Page 8:

THREE HORIZONTAL PANELS:

1) INT. FAITH'S APT KITCHEN:

A *Honeymooners*-era kitchen--icebox, stove, dinette table, and a tub as well. Faith sits at the table, hunched over sobbing, still in her work clothes, being consoled by black housewives. Isaiah's death notice is on the table in front of her. Another housewife holds a cooing Sarah Gail. In the b.g., the apartment door is open and we see one sister speaking to another, both looking on sympathetically.

EXPLAINING WOMAN: THEY SAID IT WAS SOME KINDA EXPLOSION.

2) INT. CANFIELD STUDY:

The Canfields sit on their sofa, hands clenched, looking terribly small. The Reverend and Army officer are old hands at delivering bad news, seated with their hats in their hands. The officer is speaking.

OFFICER: APPARENTLY, IT WAS A TRAGIC ACCIDENT, INVOLVING EXPLOSIVES...

3) CLOSE ON Dallas, Sgt Evans' pool hall buddy from **Issue #1**. He looks stricken, and his eyes are filled with tears.

DALLAS: SGT. EVANS? DEAD?

Page 9:

1) CLOSE ON Maurice's head on a pillow, his eyes groggily open, mouth slack. (In the b.g. are ROUGH-HEWED STONE WALLS.)

He's being awakened by OFF-PANEL WHISPER BALLOONS:

OFF-PANEL WHISPER BALLOON: PSSST!

OFF-PANEL WHISPER BALLOON: HEY! FAUNTL'ROY!

2) MAURICE'S POV:

LOOKING UP at a TRANSFORMED Damon Larsen: He's musclebound now, but recognizable in his hospital gown. His shaved forehead is grossly misshapen, but it's him. He wears trademark sneer nervously.

LARSEN (*whisper balloon*): FAUNTL'ROY, HOW I LOOK ...?

3) Maurice is up on one shoulder now, looking up at Larsen with astonished dismay.

From panel right comes an OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: LARSEN, SINCE YOU'RE THE FIRST DOGFACE TO COME BACK ...

4) LARSEN'S POV:

Sgt Evans regards us coolly, upright on his cot. Around him, on their cots, we see Isaiah, Dave Plumb, Jack Harvey and a few of the other guys. They all wear hospital gowns, and--Sarge excepted--they are all *horrified*.

EVANS: YOU LOOK GREAT.

Page 10:

THREE HORIZONTAL PANELS:

1) EXT. CEMETERY--DAY:

It's Maurice's funeral, a sunny day. We see his parents and a number of well-dressed, well-to-do mourners (the black Army officer among them) seated to the side of a beautiful casket. Standing to its other side is the black reverend.

CAPTION: THREE DAYS LATER.

REVEREND: ... DUST TO DUST ...

2) INT. OBSERVATION ROOM #2:

Strapped onto a gurney like Jamison, Maurice regards his shaved head in the observation window's reflection.

3) INT. BAR--DAY:

Pure light streams in through the barfront window.

Dallas hoists a beer over his head, while barely supporting himself from kissing the bar. The black bartender and the few other patrons toast with him.

DALLAS: HERE'S TO THE SARGE ...

PATRON: LUCAS EVANS!

Page 11:

THREE HORIZONTAL PANELS:

1) INT. OBSERVATION ROOM #2:

The nurse injects Evans (his head's shaved) with the glass hypodermic, Army guard in the b.g.

NURSE (*whisper balloon*): GOOD LUCK.

2) INT. FUNERAL HOME OFFICE:

Seated to panel left, is a middle-aged BLACK UNDERTAKER. He's behind a heavy oak desk.

Dressed in black, Faith sits before him.

UNDERTAKER: IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THE CASKET IS CLOSED, MRS BRADLEY, I DON'T RECOMMEND--

FAITH: ISAIAH IS MY HUSBAND.

BOTTOM THIRD OF PAGE IS DIVIDED INTO 2 PANELS:

3) CLOSE SHOT looking down on Isaiah's shaved head.

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: PLEASE EVACUATE THE OBSERVATION ROOM.

4) CLOSE ON a determined Faith.

FAITH: I WANT TO SEE HIM.

Page 12:

TOP HALF OF PAGE:

1) GROUP PORTRAIT of Evans, Isaiah, Maurice, Plumb, Harvey, Larsen, and a couple of other black dogfaces. They are all TRANSFORMED, albeit none as grotesquely as Larsen. Their muscles fill their GI T-shirts.

They regard us like superheroes on the debut cover of any comic.

BOTTOM HALF OF PAGE:

2) INT. EMBALMING ROOM:

The undertaker leads Faith toward a closed steel casket.

3) LOOKING UP at a shocked and horrified Faith. The casket lid is open to panel left.

Page 13:

1) INT. REINSTEIN'S LAB:

The Super Soldier science staff is celebrating. Several champagne bottles are emptying into cups and MUSICAL NOTES waft through the air. An atypically ecstatic Tully is clasping the normally taciturn Reinstein's shoulders.

TULLY: THE PRESIDENT SENDS HIS CONGRATULATIONS, REINSTEIN! HE'S SAYS YOU MIGHT HAVE JUST WON THE WAR FOR US.

REINSTEIN: BUT THAT IS **PREMATURE** ...

2) Gracefully dancing the Nurse into Tully and Reinstein's conversation, Price addresses them.

PRICE: DOCTOR, YOU NEED TO LEARN TO TAKE YOUR REWARDS AS THEY COME.

3) Price twirls the Nurse, who's laughing in delight. Tully grins and Reinstein doesn't as they look on.

PRICE: THE WORD FROM OUR FRIENDS IN BRITISH INTELLIGENCE IS THAT YOUR FORMER COHORT **DOCTOR KOCH** HAS HIS SUPER SOLDIER OPERATION IN **FULL SWING**.

4) TULLY & REINSTEIN'S POV:

Price dips the Nurse toward us and looks up coolly.

PRICE: GET READY TO TAKE ON YOUR FATHERLAND, DOCTOR. WE'RE PACKING UP.

Page 14:

1) EXT. SHIPYARDS--NIGHT:

WIDE SHOT ON an eerily deserted commercial shipyard on a clear STARRY NIGHT. There are numerous small mountains of CARGO CRATES, CRANES, TRUCKS, etc.

From panel left a SMALL CONVOY of military transport trucks speed toward a LARGE FREIGHTER in panel right, with H.M.S. PYNCHON visible on its bow.

2) Evans and the seven surviving members of his unit get out the back of one of the trucks. Lt Merritt watches them with his machine gun-toting Army guards.

3) Led by Merritt, Evans and his unit walk double file toward the freighter's gangplank, flanked by guards.

4) The lot goes up the gangplank.

Page 15:

1) On the Pynchon's main deck, SAILORS mill about. A CIVILIAN CAPTAIN (yeah, right) approaches Merritt, Evans, and the others, his arm gesturing towards an OPEN HATCHWAY.

CAPTAIN: THAT'S YOUR WAY DOWN TO THE HOLD.

2) Isaiah, with a frowning Jack Harvey behind him, stops at the hatchway and squints upwards, as if unused to any natural light.

JACK: ISAIAH, I'M NOT FEELING SO GOOD ...

3) FROM BEHIND ISAIAH'S HEAD as he looks up at the ship's mast reaching toward the stars.

ISAIAH: THAT'S OKAY, JACK, I NEVER BEEN ON NO BOAT BEFORE EITHER.

Page 16:

1) INT. CANFIELD BEDROOM--NIGHT:

CLOSE ON Mr Canfield's face as he stands at his bedroom window, drenched in starlight and looking utterly desolate.

2) Mrs Canfield's in bed, facing us in the f.g. In the b.g., we see their bedroom is furnished much like the study we saw in **Issue #1**. Also in the b.g., we see Mr Canfield--in T-shirt and suspended trousers--approaching her with a heavy REVOLVER in his left hand.

MRS CANFIELD: HONEY, YOU SHOULD COME TO BED.

3) CLOSE ON the OUTSIDE of THE BEDROOM WINDOW, FILLED with a FLASH OF LIGHT. From inside is a SOUND FX:

SOUND FX: **BLAM!**

4) PULLING BACK away from the now-darkened window, so we now see the upper storeys of the Canfield townhouse.

5) PULLING BACK so we now see the entire townhouse. The bedroom window is again FLUSH WITH LIGHT. And again there's a SOUND FX by the window:

SOUND FX: **BLAM!**

Page 17:

1) INT. SHIP'S HOLD:

It's poorly-lit, filled with CRATES, RIGGING and assorted crap; the WALLS--when we see them--are DANK and any PIPES we see look 90% RUSTED THROUGH.

In the panel left f.g., Maurice is sitting wearing a shell-shocked look. Dave Plumb sits next to him, concerned.

In the rest of the panel, we see most of the guys (Larsen, most notably) sitting around playing cards, enjoying their smokes--except for Harvey, who's laying feverishly prone atop some bedding on the hold's deck, and Isaiah, who tends to him.

Evans isn't in sight.

PLUMB: HEY, MAURICE? YOU OKAY?

ISAIAH: DON'T **FRET**, JACK--SARGE'LL BRING THE DOC BACK...

2) CLOSE ON a haunted Maurice.

MAURICE: I DON'T KNOW, DAVE... I JUST GOT THIS **DREAD**...

3) Evans has joined Isaiah and Harvey. His gaze is on Harvey while he talks to Isaiah.

EVANS: IS HE DOING ANY BETTER?

ISAIAH: NAH, SARGE. THE DOC COMING?

4) HARVEY'S POV--CLOSE ON Evans, a comforting dad.

EVANS: DOC WILL COME DOWN IN THE MORNING, JACK--YOU STAY STRONG TILL THEN, OKAY, SOLDIER?

Page 18:

1) CLOSE SHOT--HARVEY'S POV:

Similar to **preceding panel**, but instead of Evans staring down at us, we see the BENIGN, SCARIFIED FACE of a BALD AFRICAN ADULT MALE. What the hell--?

2) WIDE SHOT:

Only Evans and Isaiah hover over Harvey.

Plumb and Maurice are deep in conversation.

Larsen's tossing his hand down in triumph.

LARSEN: JACKS OVER EIGHTS, YOU HUCKLEBERRIES!

LARSEN: GOTTA PUT UP A BETTER FIGHT WHEN WE GO KILLIN' KRAUTS!

3) In the f.g., Larsen's gleefully gathering the pot toward himself while the musclebound others look on irritably.

In the b.g., Evans is looking up at Larsen while Isaiah talks to Harvey.

LARSEN: HEY SARGE! WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST BATTLE YOU FOUGHT?

EVANS: THE BIGGEST? THAT WOULD BE AFTER THE GREAT WAR--

4) CLOSE ON Evans, accessing an awful memory.

EVANS: --IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Page 19:

1) EVANS' POV:

Larsen and his poker buddies, Maurice and Plumb--they all stare at us dumbstruck. Larsen's jaw hangs open.

LARSEN: WHA'...?

2) WIDE SHOT:

Evans addresses his men.

EVANS: THE RED SUMMER IS WHAT EVERYBODY CALLED IT, LATER--

EVANS: IT WAS THE WAR AT HOME.

3) Evans stuffs tobacco into his corncob.

EVANS: IT WAS A SATURDAY--JULY 19, 1919. THE WAR WAS DONE, AND COLORED AND CRACKER DOGFACES WERE TAKING WEEKEND LIBERTY IN THE CAPITOL, ME AMONG THEM.

4) Evans lights his pipe.

EVANS: WORD GOT AROUND THE METRO POLICE LET LOOSE A COLORED MAN THEY QUESTIONED IN THE RAPE OF A WHITE WOMAN.

5) CLOSE ON Evans, exhaling his drag around his corncob and looking straight at us with a jaundiced eye.

EVANS: NATURALLY, SINCE COPS LET GUILTY COLORED MEN GO EVERY DAY--

6) EXTREME CLOSE-UP ON Evans' eye.

EVANS: --HUNDREDS OF WHITE TOWNIES AND DOGFACES HITS THE STREETS LOOKING FOR JUSTICE.

Page 20:

1) CLOSE ON Jack Harvey's sweat-drenched face.

Evans continues his tale with an OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: THEY PARADED SOUTHWEST TO THE COLORED PART OF D.C., PICKING UP PIPES AND CLUBS AND BITS OF LUMBER AS THEY WENT...

2) Harvey sits up, hand to his sweaty brow, not cognizant of the SHIRTLESS, MUSCULAR AFRICAN MEN who flank him. The first African we saw isn't among them, but like his, their faces are scarified. Their torsos are unmarred.

There's another OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: THEY BEAT AND LYNCHED ANY COLORED MAN THEY CAME ACROSS--ONE FELLOW WAS YANKED RIGHT OFF A STREETCAR.

3) Harvey looks at the African on panel left, who's nodding in acknowledgement.

Another OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: THEY BEAT WOMEN AND CHILDREN--THEY BEAT A MAN IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE--

4) Harvey looks at the African on panel right, who's smiling reassuringly.

Another OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: --AND NOBODY--NOT THE COPS, NOT PRESIDENT WILSON, LIFTED A FINGER TO STOP THEM.

5) LOOKING DOWN ON Harvey, who gazes piercingly straight at us.

And another OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: THAT'S WHEN WE DECIDED--

Page 21:

TOP PANEL:

1) HARVEY'S POV:

We see the first African, benignly reaching out his hand to us.

From panel right comes an OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: --IT WAS UP TO US.

2) CLOSE ON Evans, smoking corn cob in the corner of his mouth.

EVANS: COLORED VETERANS AND UPSTANDING CHURCHGOERS AND BUSINESSMEN AND LOW-LIFE HOODLUMS BANDED TOGETHER.

3) Larsen and the poker players watch Evans.

EVANS: BY THAT MONDAY, D.C.'S COLORED BOUGHT 500 FIREARMS FROM PAWNHOPS. AUTOMOBILES WERE REINFORCED WITH STEEL PLATES TO PLOW INTO WHITE CROWDS. WE SET UP BARRICADES ON NEW JERSEY AND U AVENUES. WE HAD SHARPSHOOTERS ON THE HOWARD THEATRE--

4) Maurice and Plumb watch Evans.

EVANS: WE WERE READY FOR THEM. AND THEN WE WENT AFTER THEM. AND WE KILLED ENOUGH OF THEM--IN D.C. AND NINETEEN OTHER CITIES THAT SUMMER--THAT THE LYNCHING STOPPED. FOR A SPELL, ANYWAY.

5) EVANS' POV:

Among the flabbergasted Maurice, Plumb and the poker players, only Larsen adds his two cents.

Then from panel right, there's an OFF-PANEL BALLOON:

LARSEN: DAMN! THAT'S ONE HELL OF A STORY.

OFF-PANEL BALLOON: SARGE?

Page 22:**FULL PAGE SPLASH:**

It's like a Caravaggio:

Working our way up, Harvey lays with his head in the lower page f.g.

Slouched and gathered around him are Isaiah, Evans, Maurice, Plumb, Larsen and the rest--they all look toward his face, stricken.

And towering or floating--it's eerie, we can't be sure--in the upper page b.g., are the Africans and a shirtless, pre-serum Harvey, the first African at his side. And they are staring at us.

ISAIAH: JACK'S GONE.

CAPTION: TO BE CONTINUED.