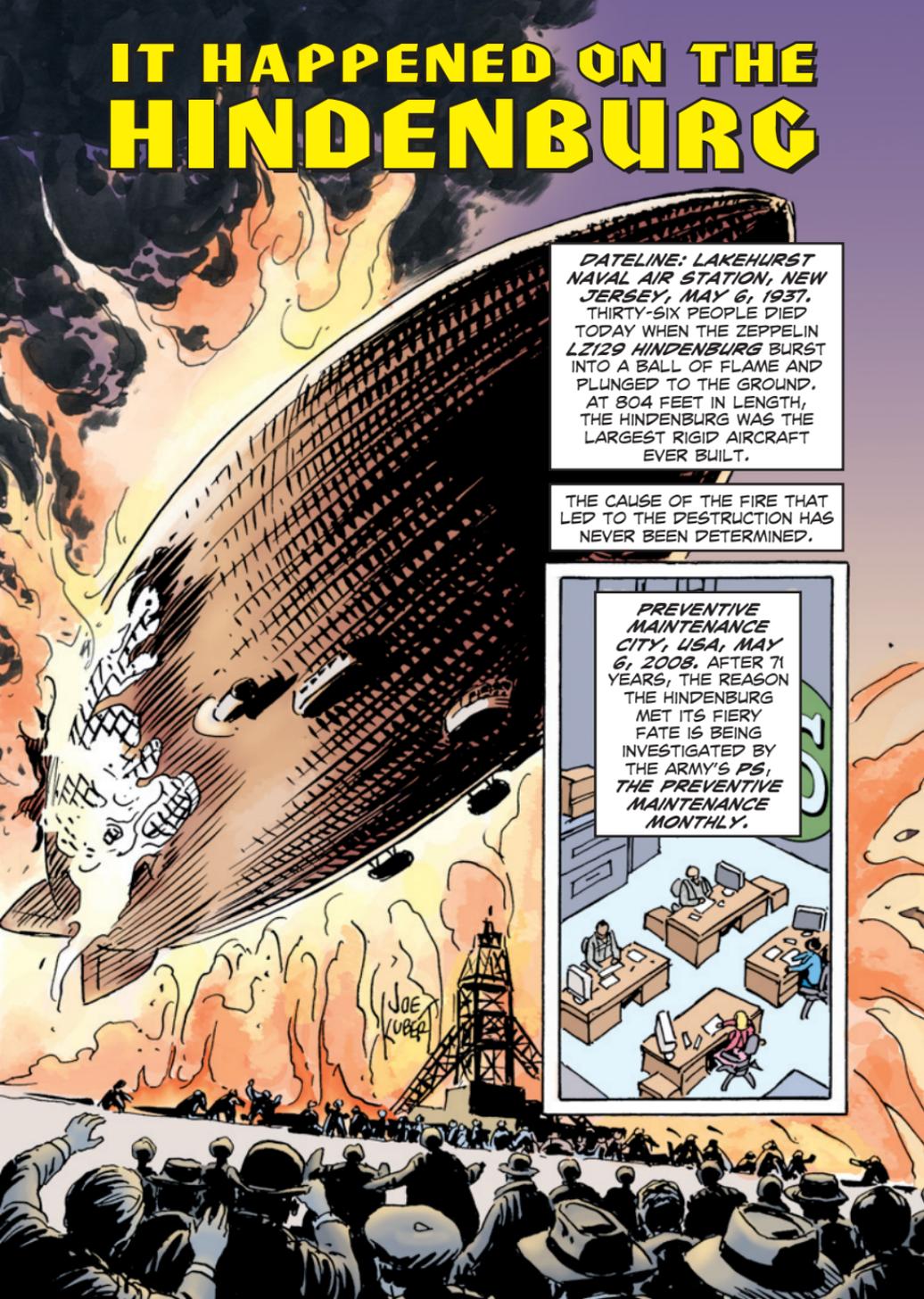


IT HAPPENED ON THE HINDENBURG



DATELINE: LAKEHURST NAVAL AIR STATION, NEW JERSEY, MAY 6, 1937.

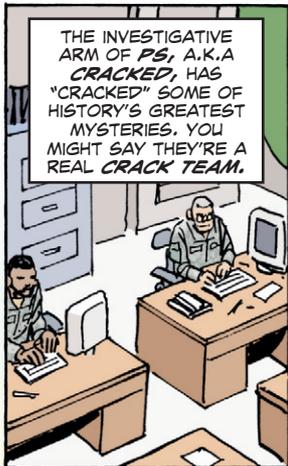
THIRTY-SIX PEOPLE DIED TODAY WHEN THE ZEPPELIN LZ129 HINDENBURG BURST INTO A BALL OF FLAME AND PLUNGED TO THE GROUND.

AT 804 FEET IN LENGTH, THE HINDENBURG WAS THE LARGEST RIGID AIRCRAFT EVER BUILT.

THE CAUSE OF THE FIRE THAT LED TO THE DESTRUCTION HAS NEVER BEEN DETERMINED.

PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE CITY, USA, MAY 6, 2008. AFTER 71 YEARS, THE REASON THE HINDENBURG MET ITS FIERY FATE IS BEING INVESTIGATED BY THE ARMY'S PS, THE PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE MONTHLY.

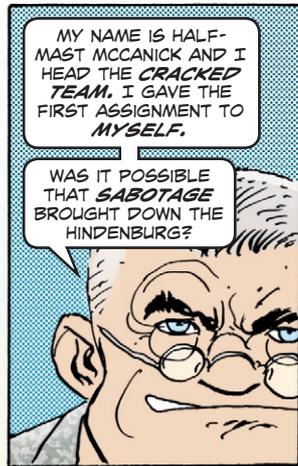




THE INVESTIGATIVE ARM OF **PS**, A.K.A. **CRACKED**, HAS "CRACKED" SOME OF HISTORY'S GREATEST MYSTERIES. YOU MIGHT SAY THEY'RE A REAL **CRACK TEAM**.



THEN AGAIN, YOU MIGHT **NOT**. THEIR EFFORTS TO SOLVE THIS HINDENBURG CASE STARTED BY VERIFYING OR DEBUNKING THE OTHER THEORIES ABOUT THE TRAGEDY.

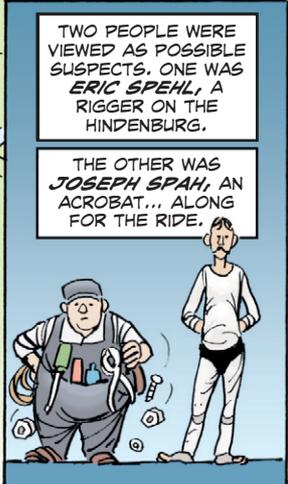


MY NAME IS HALF-MAST MCCANICK AND I HEAD THE **CRACKED TEAM**. I GAVE THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT TO **MYSELF**.

WAS IT POSSIBLE THAT **SABOTAGE** BROUGHT DOWN THE HINDENBURG?

THE HINDENBURG WAS THE PRIDE OF NAZI GERMANY. THOSE NAZIS LIKED THEIR AIRSHIPS.

COULD SOMEONE WHO DID **NOT** LIKE THE NAZIS PLANT A **BOMB**?



TWO PEOPLE WERE VIEWED AS POSSIBLE SUSPECTS. ONE WAS **ERIC SPEHL**, A RIGGER ON THE HINDENBURG.

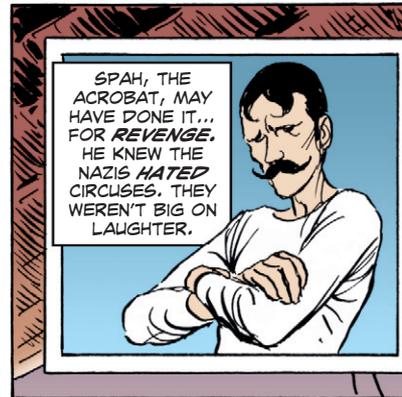
THE OTHER WAS **JOSEPH SPAH**, AN ACROBAT... ALONG FOR THE RIDE.



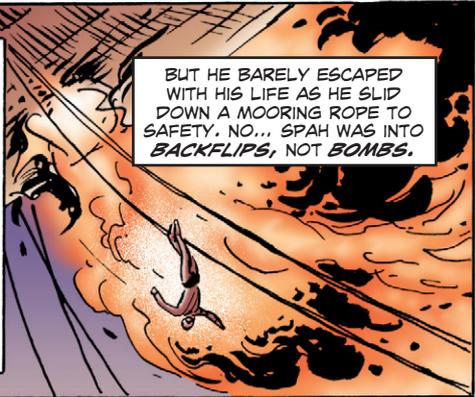
SPEHL MAY HAVE DONE IT OUT OF **LOVE**. SPEHL'S GIRLFRIEND WAS A COMMUNIST AND SHE **HATED** HITLER AND HIS THIRD REICH.



INSTEAD OF A **DIAMOND**, DID SPEHL GIVE HER AN **AIRSHIP**? NOT LIKELY. SPEHL DIED IN THE FIRE. LOVE'S HOT, BUT YOU DON'T IMMOLATE YOURSELF FOR IT.



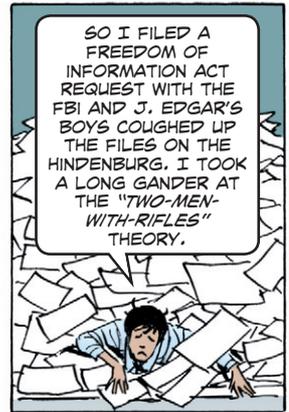
SPAH, THE ACROBAT, MAY HAVE DONE IT... FOR **REVENGE**. HE KNEW THE NAZIS **HATED** CIRCUSES. THEY WEREN'T BIG ON LAUGHTER.



BUT HE BARELY ESCAPED WITH HIS LIFE AS HE SLID DOWN A MOORING ROPE TO SAFETY. NO... SPAH WAS INTO **BACKFLIPS**, NOT **BOMBS**.



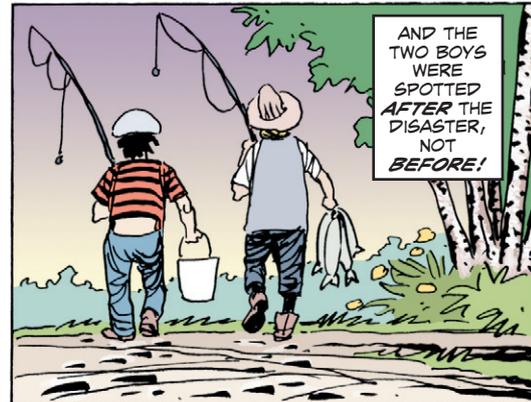
MY NAME IS BONNIE. I'M PART OF THE **CRACKED TEAM**. MY ASSIGNMENT WAS TO INVESTIGATE THE RUMOR THAT TWO MEN ARMED WITH HIGH-POWERED RIFLES **SHOT DOWN** THE HINDENBURG.



SO I FILED A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST WITH THE FBI AND J. EDGAR'S BOYS COUGHED UP THE FILES ON THE HINDENBURG. I TOOK A LONG GANDER AT THE "TWO-MEN-WITH-RIFLES" THEORY.



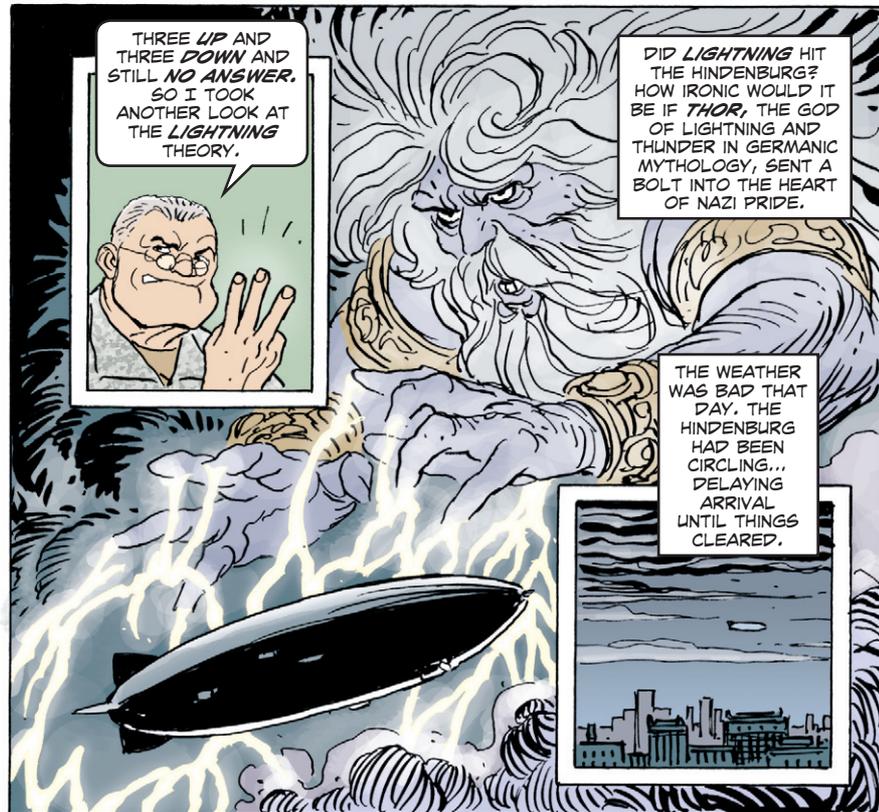
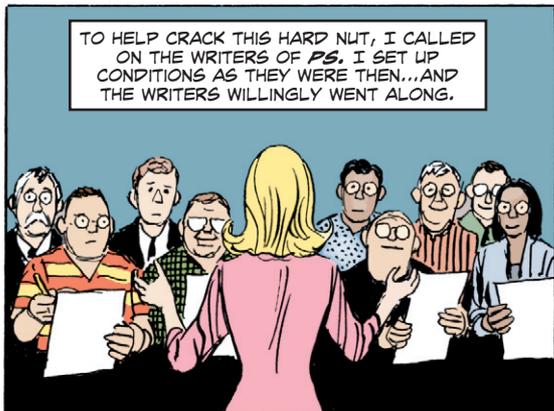
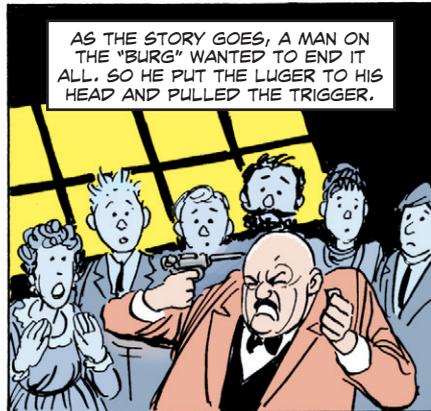
IT TURNS OUT, THE MEN **WEREN'T** MEN, BUT **BOYS**. THE RIFLES WEREN'T RIFLES, BUT **FISHING POLES**.

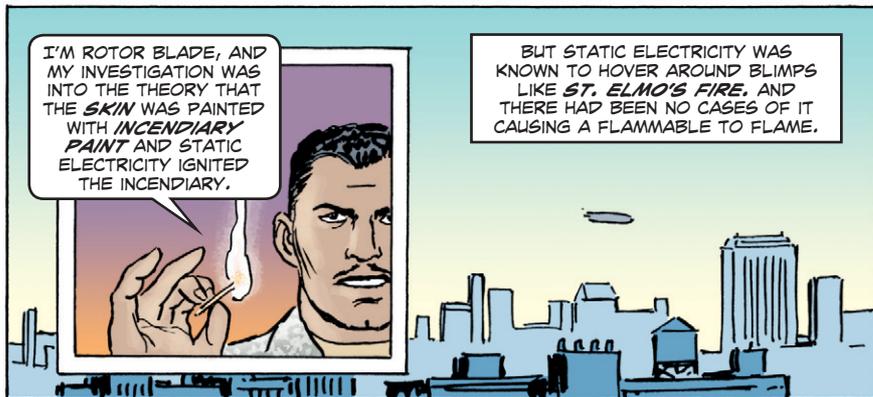


AND THE TWO BOYS WERE SPOTTED **AFTER** THE DISASTER, NOT **BEFORE!**



ANOTHER **RED HERRING** FILED AND FRIED.





I'M ROTOR BLADE, AND MY INVESTIGATION WAS INTO THE THEORY THAT THE SKIN WAS PAINTED WITH INCENDIARY PAINT AND STATIC ELECTRICITY IGNITED THE INCENDIARY.

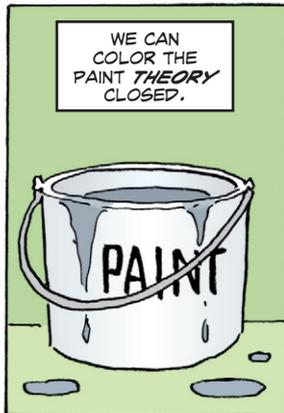
BUT STATIC ELECTRICITY WAS KNOWN TO HOVER AROUND BLIMPS LIKE ST. ELMO'S FIRE, AND THERE HAD BEEN NO CASES OF IT CAUSING A FLAMMABLE TO FLAME.



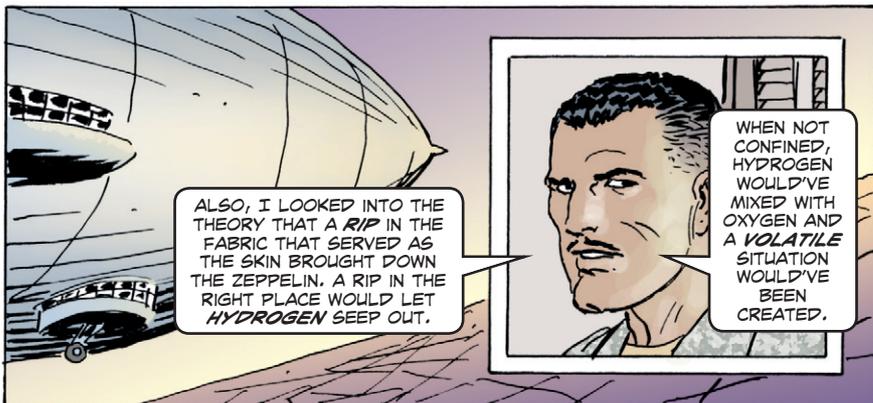
THE AIRSHIPS ARE WELL-GROUNDED EVEN WHEN THEY'RE IN THE AIR.



ALSO, THE PAINT WAS STANDARD ISSUE. THE SKIN WOULD BURN, BUT IT WOULD NOT BURN AS FAST AS IT DID.

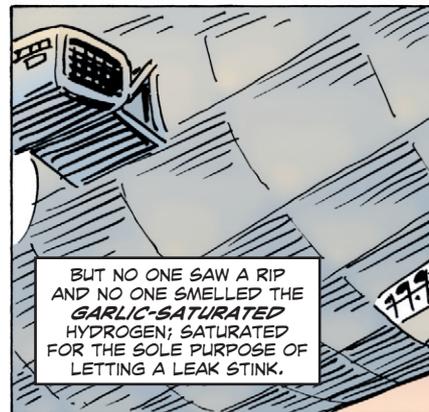


WE CAN COLOR THE PAINT THEORY CLOSED.



ALSO, I LOOKED INTO THE THEORY THAT A RIP IN THE FABRIC THAT SERVED AS THE SKIN BROUGHT DOWN THE ZEPPELIN. A RIP IN THE RIGHT PLACE WOULD LET HYDROGEN SEEP OUT.

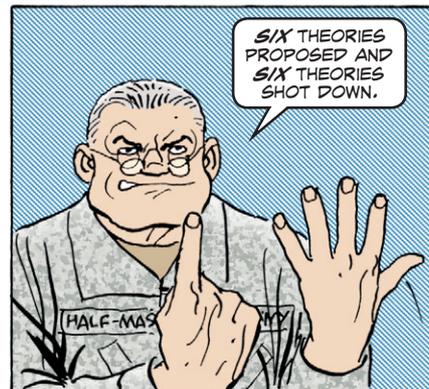
WHEN NOT CONFINED, HYDROGEN WOULD'VE MIXED WITH OXYGEN AND A VOLATILE SITUATION WOULD'VE BEEN CREATED.



BUT NO ONE SAW A RIP AND NO ONE SMELLED THE GARLIC-SATURATED HYDROGEN; SATURATED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF LETTING A LEAK STINK.



NO, NOTHING SMELLED ROTTEN ON THE HINDENBURG THAT DAY.



SIX THEORIES PROPOSED AND SIX THEORIES SHOT DOWN.



SO THE TEAM DID WHAT THEY DO BEST—WE PUT CRACKED HEADS TOGETHER.



WE READ THE REPORTS AND EXAMINED ALL THE DATA AND SUDDENLY THE FOG CLEARED.

"WE'VE CRACKED IT!"
CONNIE SHOUTED AND BONNIE ECHOED HER, AND WE ALL KNEW WHAT BROUGHT DOWN THE MIGHTY HINDENBURG. IT WAS...NOW, WAIT FOR IT...YOU'LL NEVER GUESS! HERE-IT-COMES...
A LACK OF PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE!

WE WERE JUST AS SURPRISED AS YOU ARE.

