

**August 24, 1814**





My NAME IS SIMON.

SIMON PURE.

THOUGH I'M ANYTHING BUT,  
AS YOU'LL COME TO KNOW.

ON THIS BLISTERING SUMMER  
NIGHT, YOU'D WAGER ME THE  
LUNATIC WHO SET THE  
PRESIDENT'S HOUSE ABLAZE.

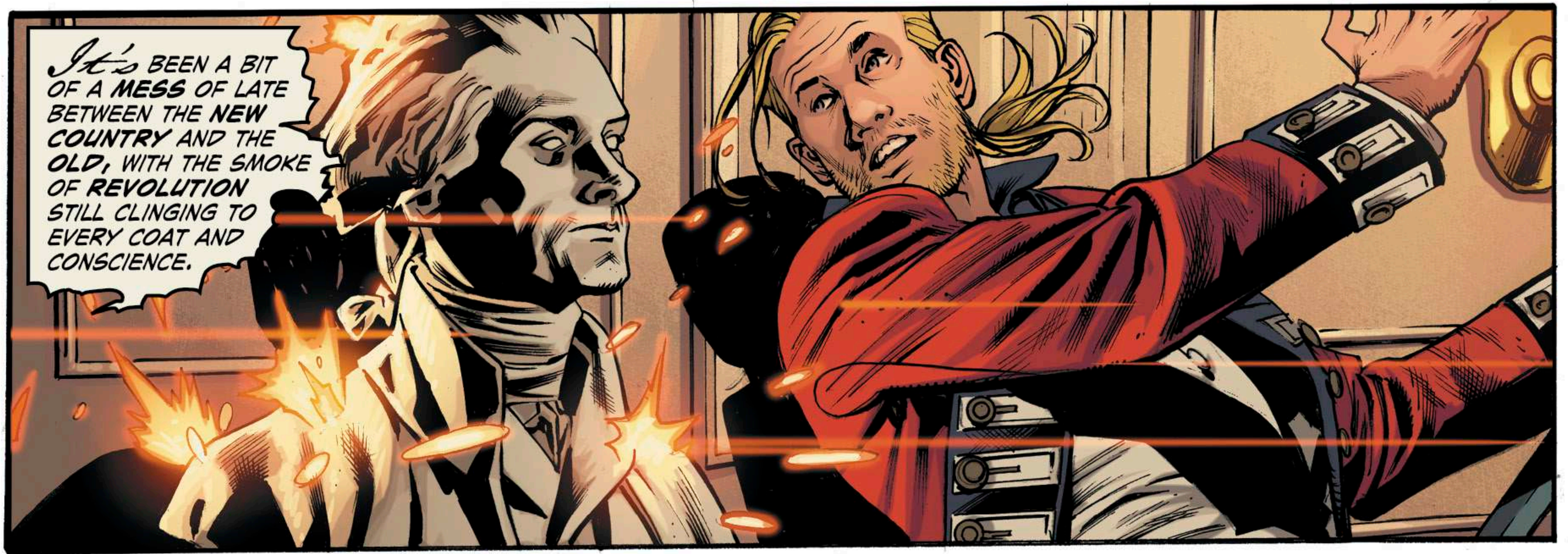
THERE'S  
THE CUR!

THE FLAMING  
DEVIL'S MAKING  
FOR THE  
TREASURY!

BUT I ASSURE  
YOU, I DID NOT  
LIGHT THE MATCH.

MY PART IN THIS  
INFERNO WAS PURELY  
ACCIDENTAL...ISH.





It's BEEN A BIT OF A MESS OF LATE BETWEEN THE NEW COUNTRY AND THE OLD, WITH THE SMOKE OF REVOLUTION STILL CLINGING TO EVERY COAT AND CONSCIENCE.



THEY WOULD SAY THE BURNING OF WASHINGTON WAS RETALIATION FOR THE RAZING OF YORK, BUT FOR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, IT WENT FAR DEEPER.

OF ALL BRITANNIA'S SONS, NONE LOATHED THE AMERICANS MORE THAN COCKBURN, AND NONE WERE BETTER SUITED TO TORCH THEIR CRADLE.



COCKBURN LIVED UP TO HIS NAME, BOTH IN ATTITUDE AND MEANS OF DESTRUCTION.

THEY LAID WASTE TO OUR CAPITAL. NOW WE'LL LAY WASTE TO THEIRS, TENFOLD.

WHO'S WITH ME?

COCKBURN CAME TO WASHINGTON NOT JUST TO BURN IT, BUT TO SHATTER MORALE AND UNMASK THE YOUNG REPUBLIC AS WEAK AND EXPOSED.

HIS AIM? FORCE PRESIDENT MADISON'S RESIGNATION AND COLLAPSE THE CENTRALIZED RESISTANCE TO BRITISH FORCES.

ALL TO SET THE STAGE FOR THE COLONIES TO COME CRAWLING BACK TO THE KING.





TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT, I WAS NOT HIRED TO STOP COCKBURN...



...NOR HAD I CROSSED PATHS WITH THE BLOKE BEFORE. THERE WAS NOTHING PERSONAL BETWEEN US.

NO VENDETTA. NO GRUDGE. NOT THAT I'VE EVER FOUND MUCH USE FOR SUCH THINGS.

JUST WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME, AS IT SO OFTEN WAS.



YOU SEE, WITH MADISON OFF PLAYING SOLDIER, ONE OF HIS COOKS--GOOD CHAP, LOOSE LIPS--INVITED ME TO THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE FOR A GAME OF LOO, WHICH IS POKER WITH LESS BLUFFING AND MORE BETRAYAL.

THE COOK SAID THERE WAS A ROAST ON THE TABLE AND AN UNCORKED WINE FROM A PRESIDENTIAL DINNER CALLED OFF THE NIGHT BEFORE...

CATCH, MATE!

...SOMETHING ABOUT BRITISH SHIPS IN THE BAY...



NOT ONE TO EVER TURN DOWN A FREE MEAL, ESPECIALLY FREE DRINK, I SHOWED UP RIGHT ON TIME AT THE BACK DOOR TO THE KITCHEN.

YET I ONLY HAD A SPOONFUL OF SWEET CORN AND A SIP OF CIDER BEFORE SMOKE ROLLED INTO THE ROOM, AND THE WHOLE TABLE FOLDED FAST.

AND WE ALL WENT SEPARATE WAYS, SEARCHING FOR THE NEAREST EXIT.



WHAT IN THE WORLD?