

**"Pistolwhip Presents: January" - A *Pistolwhip* Short Story for *Dark Horse Maverick***  
**Written by: Jason Hall Artwork by: Matt Kindt Plot and Layouts by: Hall & Kindt**

---

Setting: \*One month before\* the events of the upcoming *Pistolwhip: The Yellow Menace*

**PAGE ONE** (6 panels)

*Panel 1.* Early morning. We're deep underwater, and we see a shot of dead bodies tied down by the ankles with rope to large rocks that sit on the ocean floor (as seen on the first page of the first *Pistolwhip* GN). The title of our story, "Pistolwhip Presents: January" is written in "watery, flowing" lettering (to match the underwater atmosphere) in the upper left corner of the panel.

*Panel 2.* A close-up of one of the old tattered ropes as it snaps...

*Panel 3.* ...allowing the dead, decayed body it has holding down to float to the surface (the rope is still tied around the ankles of the body, and there's about 1 ½ feet of rope hanging down from where it's knotted around the ankles).

*Panel 4.* An overhead full shot of the body floating on the surface of the water, the remainder of the tattered rope hanging from the ankles - floating.

*Panel 5.* A close-up overhead shot of an old tea bag floating in a cup of hot water, both the tea bag and the string from the bag (also floating) are in the same exact position as the body and the rope tied to its ankles in the last panel (transitioning from body to teabag).

*Panel 6.* A medium-wide shot of Captain January (the pirate with the eye-patch who worked for the Human Pretzel in the first *Pistolwhip* GN) emptying a can of tuna into a bowl. We can see the cup of tea next to him on the table. He's hit hard times since the death of the Human Pretzel, and this cup of tea is a break from his usual diet of hard liquor, as demonstrated by the empty liquor bottles strewn around the pauper-like nautical shanty he lives in.

**PAGE TWO** (5 panels)

*Panel 1.* First of two panels in row one. A close-up of January's hand setting the bowl of tuna down on top of a 9 month old newspaper - the tuna is for Wally the cat. We can just see Wally's head/nose in the top left corner of the panel as he starts eating. The newspaper headline reads: "FAMILY TRAGEDY FOR NIGHTCLUB SINGER AND JACK PERIL STAR". The photo with the article shows Orson and Pidgeon Lang and their daughter Elsie. This is the \*same exact\* photo we will see later in this story in Pidgeon's dressing room.

January: (to Wally) There you go, buddy...

*Panel 2.* Second of two panels in row one. An overhead shot of January, having stood back up. He's looking down at Wally (which we can also see). We can see the bottom of the partially opened front door near the top of the panel. Wally is looking away from the bowl, back over his shoulder at the door. There's clutter about on the floor, as well as more empty liquor bottles.

January: ...sigh...

*Panel 3.* A wide panel, taking up the \*entire second row\*, showing a side shot of January on panel-left (facing panel-left) - the "camera" is parallel with his head, so it's high. He's in close-up and partially off-panel, so we only see most of the side of his face. He's looking towards the front door (off-panel). Center panel, behind him pasted on the wall, are a two month old newspaper article and a Wanted poster. The newspaper article is the same exact article about the Human Pretzel's demise as shown at the end of the *Pistolwhip* GN. The photo with the article shows HP with his pirates, and we recognize (if possible) that the pirate with the eyepatch behind HP is our very own Captain January. The Wanted poster next to it shows mugshots of Captain January and reads: "CAPTAIN JANUARY: WANTED FOR QUESTIONING IN AFFENHAUS FAMILY DEATHS". On far panel right there is a window, and outside the window we can see Wally the cat running on the shore away from the house.

*Panel 4.* A wide shot of Wally running by the dead body, which has now washed up on shore (still partially in very shallow water). There's a large sea shell next to the body. The tide/surf is just coming in. In the background we can see an old man, Estle, collecting shells on the beach.

*Panel 5.* A shot with the large sea shell and the rotted upturned shoes of the dead body both in the immediate foreground (the "camera" is down low, ground level). The tide/surf has now come in, and we can only see the very tops of both the sea shell and the dead body's feet (the "toes" of the shoes - one rotted shoe has a the big toe sticking out a hole). Estle is now standing right next to where the seashell (and body) is. He's old, wearing glasses, and is squinting (his eyesight isn't so good), as he's bent over, reaching for the large shell.

**PAGE THREE** (6 panels)

*Panel 1.* First panel in top row. An overhead shot from above Estle, his hand on the shell, as the tide/surf goes back out, revealing the body next to the shell.

*Panel 2.* Second panel in top row. A shot sort of from the POV of the dead body looking up at Estle. Estle is now standing, holding the large shell he picked up in his hand, but looking down at the dead body with a look of surprise on his face.

*Panel 3.* First panel in second row. Cut to inside at the police station. We see a shot of the Desk Sergeant (as seen in *The Yellow Menace*), who is on the phone (Estle being on the other end, having called in about the body he found).

Desk Sgt:           And there's a rope tied to the feet, you say? We'll take care of it.

*Panel 4.* Second panel in second row. A shot with the Desk Sergeant's face in the foreground, partially off-panel. In the background, out a window, we can see the Hotel Chase in the distance.

Desk Sgt:           Someone find Detective Copper...

                          ...it's one 'a his "special cases"...

*Panel 5.* A smaller panel in the third row. A wide shot of the Hotel Chase, as we see Wally the cat walk past the front entrance.

*Panel 6.* A wider panel taking up the rest of the third row. We cut to inside the Hotel Chase. In the foreground, we see a medium shot of a man, Detective Copper, in the hallway outside one of the rooms saying goodbye to a beautiful naked woman (Laura) in the doorway in front of him. She has a bed sheet wrapped around her and her hair looks "bed-tossed". Copper looks a bit disheveled and has a lipstick kiss mark on his cheek. In the background, we can see a maid, Isla Rose, standing at her maid cart (filled with towels and sheets), eavesdropping.

Copper:            I've gotta go clean up something down by the shore...

**PAGE FOUR** (5 panels)

*Panel 1.* An over-the-shoulder (Copper's) shot of Laura (who is in medium close-up), as she straightens his tie. We can see the lipstick kiss on his cheek.

Laura: Sure, Robert?you're probably just scurrying home.

*Panel 2.* Copper is on panel-left in the foreground (the camera eye-level with him), and we see from his chest up to the top of his head. He's walking away from the room towards the reader with a smile on his face, rubbing the lipstick mark from his cheek. We can clearly see a Secret Society pin on his lapel. On panel-right, in the background, we see Laura in the doorway watching him walk away, a little "tiffed" that he's leaving her.

Copper: Why the heck would I wanna do that...?

*Panel 3.* Cut to the lobby of the Hotel Chase, as Detective Copper (in the foreground) walks past Mitch Pistolwhip who is sitting on a sofa in the lobby (in the background). Mitch is deeply enthralled in a Jack Peril pulp magazine and is unaware that Copper is walking right past him.

Mitch: Wow...

*Panel 4.* An over-the-shoulder shot (Mitch's) of what he's reading. Paper-clipped to the Jack Peril pulp on the inside is a small snapshot of Detective Copper. The page of the pulp we can see is the type of page that has a ¾-page pic with two short columns of text under it (which, of course, we can't read). The picture shows Jack Peril on a raft in the middle of the ocean.

Mitch: ...what a yarn!

*Panel 5.* Afternoon. Now we cut to a shot of the ocean (transitioning from the pic in the pulp to real life). We see a distant shot of Mitch with his client (a woman - Madelyn Copper), sitting in his "office", outside on the deck of Estle's boat shop.

**PAGE FIVE** (6 panels)

*Panel 1.* A medium shot of Mitch and Madelyn sitting at a table. Mitch is pulling the picture of Detective Copper off of the Jack Peril pulp.

Mitch: Mrs. Copper, after an extensive tailing job and some keen observation --

*Panel 2.* An over-the-shoulder (Madelyn's) shot of Mitch handing her the picture of Detective Copper (which we can clearly see) as he begins to stand.

Mitch: -- I couldn't find any evidence your husband is having an affair.

*Panel 3.* A side shot of Madelyn, who is now also standing and is hugging Mitch over the table. Mitch is blushing and smiling.

Madelyn: Oh, thank you so much, Mr. Pistolwhip!

*Panel 4.* A shot from behind Madelyn as she continues to hug Mitch. But now we begin to move above and past them (so they're partially off-panel, on panel-left). On panel-right, in the distance, down on the beach, we can see Captain January and Detective Copper standing over the body. Copper is pointing down at the body. January has his hands/arms raised at his sides and is shrugging his shoulders in a "I don't know" manner.

Madelyn: It would have killed me if it were true...

*Panel 5.* Now we're a bit closer to January and Copper (but they're still in the distance). Copper is pointing out to sea with one hand.

Madelyn: (off-panel) ?oh, and how much do I owe you?

*Panel 6.* Small panel. Cut to a close-up of one hand placing a dollar bill on a tray (symbolic of what Mitch's services are really worth!).

**PAGE 6** (5 panels)

*Panel 1.* Pull-back to reveal Madelyn Copper sitting with her sister, Laura, at a table in a tavern (this is \*not\* "The Cave", seen in the first *Pistolwhip* GN) - revealing to the semi-careful reader that Laura is having an affair with Madelyn's husband...uh-oh! We see the waitress walking away with the tray the dollar is on. (If it's possible to see, have this be Trixie from "Mephisto", but now 8 years older, bags under her eyes - give her a small name tag that says "Trixie".) There are musical notes in the air coming from \*off-panel\* (we don't see the stage yet). Madelyn looks very happy. Laura...does not. (Madelyn should be in the same outfit she had on at Mitch's.)

Madelyn:            You know, sis...I think things are going to work out with me and Robert.

*Panel 2.* We move over and mostly past them to show Pidgeon Lang singing on stage, accompanied by the hot sounds of Slappy Johnson. She's just finishing her song. She looks very seductive and smooth. We can still partially see Laura in the bottom left corner of the panel as she responds to Madelyn's comment (Madelyn is off-panel at this point). And that'll make a nice juxtaposition with Laura's "Oh...great..." and the final line of Pidgeon's song.

Laura:                Oh...great...

Pidgeon:            (singing) ...and that's how you murdered my heart...

*Panel 3.* A full shot from the wing backstage of Pidgeon: as she walks off stage towards camera - her enticing stage presence falls away to despair. There is applause coming from the audience out on stage (from-off panel). So we can see back out on the stage (where Slappy still is) on panel-left (which is bright), Pidgeon is panel-right, backlit from the light coming from the stage behind her, somewhat in shadow (but we need to see her facial expression).

*Panel 4.* A shot over Pidgeon's shoulder as she enters her dressing room. Inside the room in front of her is her dressing table and mirror. To the right of that, on the adjoining wall we see Wally the cat on the window sill, looking over at her. She's surprised by the cat's presence.

Wally:                Mrwow?

Pidgeon:            Why, hello there, kitty...

*Panel 5.* A medium shot of Pidgeon picking up Wally in her arms. She has a sad smile on her face. She's thankful for the company.

Pidgeon:            What brings you here?

**PAGE 7** (5 panels)

*Panel 1.* A shot of Pidgeon sitting at her dressing table/mirror, holding Wally in her arms. The shot is over her shoulder, so we see her reflection in the mirror. There is a framed picture on the table in front of her (facing the reader), which she is looking at sadly and longingly. It is the SAME picture we saw in the newspaper on Page 1 - of her, Orson Lang, and Elsie. In the background, reflected in the mirror behind Pidgeon, we see Slappy Johnson coming into her dressing room. (So the door is directly behind her in the room)

Slappy: Hey, Pidge...

*Panel 2.* A shot from behind Slappy in the doorway from ground level (so the backs of his legs are in the foreground and framing Pidgeon sitting in the room - the shot is through his parted legs into the room). Wally jumps out of Pidgeon's lap, towards the door (and the reader). Pidgeon reaches for him.

Slappy: (from off-panel above) ...back on in five.

Pidgeon: (to the cat) No...

*Panel 3.* A close-up of the family photo in the foreground on the dresser on panel-left. On panel-right, we can see the moon outside the opened window (the window Wally came in). Pidgeon's words come from off-panel, and should be in the close proximity of the family picture (preferably near Elsie).

Pidgeon: (off-panel) ...don't go...

*Panel 4.* Midnight. On the shore. Captain January is loading a second large stone with a rope tied around it into a rowboat. We can see already stored in the boat the dead body from earlier, a rope from its ankles tied to another large stone. Wally the cat jumps onto the edge of the rowboat.

*Panel 5.* A close-up of January's hand petting Wally. We can see he's wearing a Secret Society ring.

January: There you are. I was getting worried...

**PAGE 8** (6 panels)

*Panel 1.* A medium-wide shot of January in the row boat, rowing out to sea. In the boat with him are Wally, the dead body tied to a large stone, and another large stone with a rope tied around it.

*Panel 2.* A medium close-up of January talking to Wally. January has a sad smile on his face.

January:           Well, buddy...it's time I got this weight of my conscience...

*Panel 3.* A shot of January standing in the boat, tossing both large rocks into the water. We can subtly see that the second large rock is tied off to his own ankles.

*Panel 4.* We see a medium close-up of Wally looking curiously off-panel as we hear a splash come from that direction (also off-panel).

*Panel 5.* A full shot of the now empty rowboat, except for Wally, on the water. The moon is high in the background, reflecting off the water. The water has ripples from the splash. Wally is looking over the side into the water.

*Panel 6.* Pull back to a wider shot, but now the water is deathly still. The moon has risen higher (to show some time has passed). Wally now looks towards the shore (towards the reader, but not at the reader).

[And with January relieving himself of the burden of guilt, we have our "happy ending" ...]

**THE END.**