

**CALL ME CHUCKLES
BY MICHAEL COWGILL**

PAGE 1

PANEL 1

Establishing shot of Washington, D.C., a standard kind of view of the Washington Monument and Capitol (Let me know if you need reference).

NO TEXT

PANEL 2

Our main character Charley sits in a cubicle. He's in his mid-thirties, shaggy-haired, could use a shave. He wears a dress shirt open at the collar, a tie hanging loose, sleeves rolled up. He's proofreading a document. A digital clock on the desk reads 3:30.

NO TEXT

PANEL 3

Charley heads down an aisle between two long rows of cubicles, a laptop bag slung over his shoulder.

NO TEXT

PANEL 4

Sam, a tall, amiable-looking guy has stopped Charley for some chitchat. Charley looks impatient. He's got places to go, things to do.

SAM

Off tomorrow, huh? Big plans?

CHARLEY

Just going to see my mom in Atlanta.

PANEL 5

Sam leans against a cubicle, settling in for a good, long talk. Charley's smiling, but his body language says, "Get me the hell out of here now."

SAM 1
Driving?

CHARLEY 1
Yep.

SAM 2/LINKED
Long drive.

CHARLEY 2/LINKED
Why I got hit the road...now.

PANEL 6

Charley's heading out a doorway (no doors), gritting his teeth, loosening his tie even more. In the background, we can see Sam calling to him.

SAM
Bring back some peaches!

CHARLEY
Will do!

CHARLEY/THOUGHT BALLOON
Prick.

PAGE 2

PANEL 1

Charley drives a compact car down an interstate. He sings along to the stereo, beats the steering wheel with one hand.

CHARLEY/MUSIC NOTES

I know you're out there somewhere
By the riversiii-iide!

PANEL 2

Dusk. Charley talks on a payphone outside a McDonald's. He still wears the same clothes, minus the tie. He holds a Supersized soda in his free hand, and a bag of food sits on top of the metal payphone stand.

CHARLEY 1

Got everything I need, Buzz?

BUZZ/JAGGED

Like always.

CHARLEY 2/LINKED

Be rolling in 5:30, 6:00

PANEL 3

Night. Charley drives on a winding interstate, the shapes of mountains in the background.

CHARLEY/MUSIC NOTES

Rumblin' down the tracks
Just like that old Elvis song
Bearin' down on our backs
Sixteen coaches loooong

PANEL 4

Night with the first hints of dawn. Charley walks away from a rest area, a bottle of Coke in one hand, his old clothes rolled up and tucked under his arm. Now he wears a black leather jacket, black T-shirt, jeans with the cuffs rolled up, and beat-up sneakers. A sign on the wall behind him says, "Welcome to Missouri!"

NO TEXT

PANEL 5

An establishing shot of St. Louis, the Arch prominent.

NO TEXT

PANEL 6

In a mostly empty parking lot, Charley and Buzz shake hands. Buzz looks a lot tougher than Charley. He's got a blond buzz cut, wears a wife beater, has muscles, tattoos, a scar on his left forearm. A cigarette dangles from his lips.

BUZZ

Let's get you hooked up and meet Eddie.

PAGE 3

PANEL 1

Charley and Buzz stand behind a sedan, Buzz opening the trunk.

NO TEXT

PANEL 2

Inside the trunk, laid out neatly: a folded set of coveralls, a pair of gloves, a sawed-off shotgun, a small stack of \$20 bills, a lucha libre mask, a canvas bag with a strap – the bag's big enough to hold the gun.

CHARLEY
Lucha libre?

BUZZ
Man's got to have style.

PANEL 3

Charley and Buzz walk down the sidewalk. Charley has the bag slung over his shoulder and wears the coveralls and gloves. Buzz wears a trench coat now, concealing automatic pistols in shoulder holsters.

BUZZ
Sure 500's enough?

CHARLEY
Plenty.

PANEL 4

From behind Charley and Buzz as they walk toward an alley. Eddie stands at the edge of the alley, leaning on the wall, lighting a cigarette. Eddie is middle-aged, wears sort of '70s style criminal clothes – mirrored sunglasses, a leather jacket, wide-collared shirt, jeans, and cowboy boots.

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BUZZ

I don't get you.

CHARLEY 1

Simple.

CHARLEY 2

It's not about the score.

CHARLEY 3

It's about the ride.

PANEL 5

Charley and Buzz are in the alley with Eddie. He points at Charley but looks at Buzz.

EDDIE

Who the \$@&*'s this guy?

PANEL 6

Closer in on Charley from the chest up, a good-natured smile on his face.

CHARLEY

Call me Chuckles.

PAGE 4

PANEL 1

A hot-rodded pickup truck has pulled in front of a jewelry store. Charley in coveralls, gloves, and mask is leaping out of the bed, Eddie in his same clothes but also with a mask (with the shades on over it) is climbing out of the passenger side. Buzz is already on the side walk, also masked. A fourth masked man sits in the driver's seat. Each mask should look different.

NO TEXT

PANEL 2

Through glass doors, we see Charley, Buzz, and Eddie. Charley's pumping his shot gun, Buzz reaching in his trench coat with crossed arms for his pistols. Eddie is smashing the doors with a sledge hammer.

BUZZ

Fortune favors the bold!

PANEL 3

View inside the store. The usual glass counters. A balding man in his '50s is walking out of a doorway in the back center of the store, his hands raised. A young woman behind one of the counters holds her hands to her face. A middle-aged woman crouches on the floor in front of her counter. A portly security guard near the back counter is drawing his pistol.

NO TEXT

PANEL 4

Charley and Buzz pointing their guns. Charley holds his low near his hip, cradling the pump with his left hand. He's got a huge grin on his face. He is high on the thrill of this. All good times, right? Smash and grab.

BUZZ

Y'all stay calm and nobody gets –

SFX (gunshot)

BLAM!

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PANEL 5

Same as previous, but Charley's crashed. He's horrified but what's just happened. He holds the shotgun at his side. This is not fun at all. Buzz is looking to his left, pissed.

SFX (gunshot)
BLAM!

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN/OFF PANEL
AAAAHHHH!

PAGE 5

PANEL 1

Eddie holds a smoking Dirty Harry type .357 Magnum. He's smirking.

NO TEXT

PANEL 2

The security guard slumps against a counter, the glass smashed, bleeding from his lower abdomen, hand clutching the spot. He's just holding on.

NO TEXT

PANEL 3

Tight close-up on Charley, the horror and fear even more pronounced.

NO TEXT

PANEL 4

Charley's running out of the store. Buzz is running forward.

BUZZ

Grab the &%^#!

PANEL 5

Charley crouches and shoves the shotgun into a storm drain.

NO TEXT

PANEL 6

Charley's in an alley. He's in his street clothes, stuffing the coveralls and mask into a dumpster.

SFX (siren)

BAA-WOOOOOO!

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PANEL 7

Charley, casual, hands in pockets, climbs on a city bus.

SFX (siren)
WOOOOOO!

PAGE 6

PANEL 1

Charley's rental car heads down an interstate in the right lane, slow and steady, the St. Louis skyline in the background.

NO TEXT

PANEL 2

Charley's speedometer at 55 MPH.

NO TEXT

PANEL 3

Charley grips the steering wheel tightly with both hands, his jaw clenched, his eyes watering.

NO TEXT

PANEL 4

Charley stands at a sink (with a mirror and a rectangular metal soap dispenser above it) in a rest stop bathroom, splashing water on his face.

NO TEXT

PANEL 5

Still at the sink, Charley holds the \$500 in front of him, looking down at it.

NO TEXT

PANEL 6

Still at the sink, Charley holds the money and looks at his reflection in the mirror above the sink.

NO TEXT

PAGE 7

PANEL 1

Same shot but just the sink, the \$500 sitting on the soap dispenser.

NO TEXT

PANEL 2

Charley's car drives past a sign that reads WELCOME TO TENNESSEE, THE VOLUNTEER STATE!

NO TEXT

PANEL 3

Charley stands in a truck stop parking lot, talking on a cell phone. A sign behind him reads: ELVIS MEMORABILIA 50% OFF!

CHARLEY 1

G-got an early start, Mom.

CHARLEY 2

Might be there for supper.

PANEL 4

Dusk. Charley's car drives down a divided 4-lane highway. A tall wooden sign on a low hill on the side of the road reads: WELCOME TO DOGWOOD VALLEY, THE FRIENDLIEST TOWN AROUND with an iconic dogwood leaf above the words.

NO TEXT

PANEL 5

In the driveway of a two-story suburban house at the top of a cul de sac, Charley hugs his mother, a short woman in her fifties with short, permed hair.

NO TEXT

PAGE 8

PANEL 1

Charley stands alone in his childhood bedroom. It has a double bed with a wooden headboard, a window, its curtains open, a framed picture above the bed, a dresser, some simple shelves with paperback books on them. A stuffed animal frog (kind of like Kermit) sits on the bed.

NO TEXT

PANEL 2

Closeup of the picture on the wall, with Charley's hand holding the edge of the frame as he begins to lift it off the wall. The picture shows Charley as a 9-year-old boy with an 18-year-old girl. He's scrawny, has a crew cut, and smiling. The girl has her hair pulled back in a ponytail and wears a baggy T-shirt. She's pretty but hiding it.

NO TEXT

PANEL 3

A repeat of PAGE 5, PANEL 2: The security guard slumps against a counter, the glass smashed, bleeding from his lower abdomen, hand clutching the spot. He's just holding on.

NO TEXT

PANEL 4

From behind Charley's mother, who stands at the door, gripping the frame. Charley's at the window, holding the picture in one hand, the stuffed frog in the other. He leans his head against the glass.

MOM

What's wrong, honey?

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PANEL 5

Close on Charley, sad, afraid (maybe from the other side of the window). All he wants to do is tell his mother what's happened, but he can't, he can't tell anyone.

NO TEXT

PAGE 9

PANEL 1

Splash. Over his mom's shoulder, the distance between them slightly exaggerated. Charley has turned around and has a winsome smile, but the sadness is still visible in his eyes as much as he's trying to hide it.

CHARLEY

Got any peaches?