



Sire Studios Presents:

FIRSTS

MAINSTREAM • DESCENDANT • THE SIRE



DOLCE • LEISTER • CALDWELL • MOY • SANCHEZ • PERRY • NAVARRO

THE MAINSTREAM



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WHAT IS IT YOU'D LIKE ME TO TELL YOU?

THAT ALTERNATE REALITIES *EXIST*?

THAT FOR EVERY VERSION OF *YOU*, THERE ARE AN *INFINITESIMAL* AMOUNT OF ALTERNATE *YOUS* SIMPLY FLOATING AROUND THE COSMOS?

WHAT IF YOU CHOSE TO SKIP WORK FOR A DAY? WHAT IF YOU SAID *NO...* INSTEAD OF *YES*?

WHAT IF YOU WERE NEVER BORN?

WHAT IF *ALL* OF THE CHOICES THAT LEAD TO THIS VERY MOMENT... WERE MADE *DIFFERENTLY*?

**DONKH
DONKH
DONKH!**

YOU'D LOVE TO *KNOW* WOULDN'T YOU? YOU'D LOVE TO *SEE*.

JESUS CHRI--
YEAH HOLD ON!

**DONKH
DONKH
DONKH
DONKH!**

INFINITE *SECURITY*, AM I RIGHT?

A WINDOW INTO ANOTHER *WORLD...*

THAT'S HOW THIS ALL STARTED. THE *ACCIDENT*. THE *MAINSTREAM*. THE *WAR*.

WE OPENED A *DOOR* WE COULD NOT CLOSE.



AND *DOOMED* OURSELVES TO REPAIRING THE *DAMAGE* WE UNLEASHED.

WHY DID REALITY *FRACTURE*? WHY WAS THIS FIGHT BROUGHT TO YOUR VERY DOORSTEP?

WHAT'S ALL THE--?



RRRGHHH...

IT DOESN'T MATTER NOW.



ALL THAT MATTERS NOW IS *SURVIVAL*.

AN INSTINCT NO GREATER ON *ONE* WORLD...

IMPOSSIBLE...



RARRGHHH!!

N-NO--
HHHHHH



...THAN ON THE NEXT!



THE VICTIM'S NAME WAS **FRANKLIN HODGE...** OR AT LEAST, THAT'S WHO WE **BELIEVE** IT TO BE.

YOU **"BELIEVE?"** THERE'S NO WAY TO CONFIRM FOR SURE?

NOPE. NO WALLET, NO CARDS, **NOTHING.** WE CAN'T EVEN MAKE A POSITIVE I.D. UNTIL WE GET SOME **PRINTS.**

HOW COME?

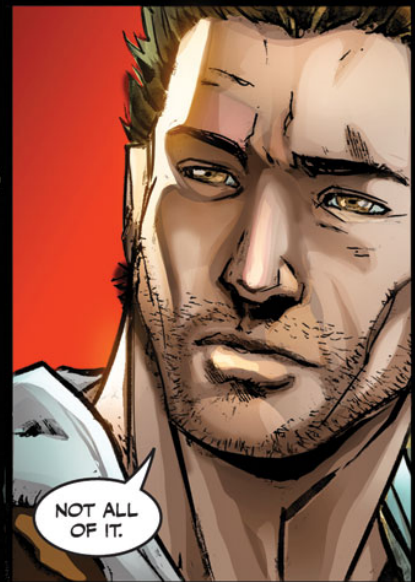
SEE FOR YOURSELF.



MY **GOD...** DID SOMEBODY **EAT** THAT GUY'S FACE?!

YES. BUT DESPITE ALL THE **WINDOW DRESSING,** IT WAS ACTUALLY THE SEVERING OF THE **CAROTID ARTERY** THAT KILLED HIM.

SOMEBODY **ATE** HIS FACE...



NOT ALL OF IT.



THERE'S SOME OVER **THERE** TOO.

AND SOME... **FRUIT LOOPS,** I THINK.



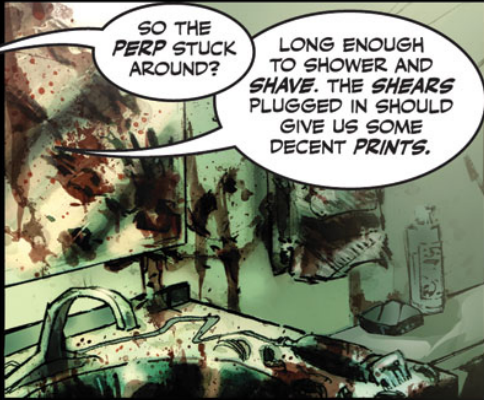
THANKS, **NATE.** ASIDE FROM RUINING MY FAVORITE **BREAKFAST CEREAL FOREVER,** I HOPE YOU'VE GOT MORE TO ADD TO THIS CASE THAN JUST **THAT.**



DON'T I ALWAYS, **DEX?**

OKAY...DESPITE APPEARANCES TO THE **CONTRARY,** THE ALTERCATION DID **NOT** EXTEND ANYWHERE **PAST** THIS MAIN AREA. WHICH MEANS EVERYTHING BACK **HERE** LIKELY OCCURRED **AFTER** THE VICTIM WAS ALREADY KILLED.

INCLUDING, YOU KNOW...THE **WHOLE FACE** THING.



SO THE PERP STUCK AROUND?

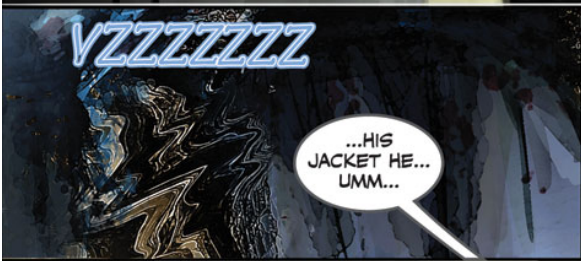
LONG ENOUGH TO SHOWER AND SHAVE. THE SHEARS PLUGGED IN SHOULD GIVE US SOME DECENT PRINTS.



CLOSET'S BEEN RANSACKED TOO. SAFE TO ASSUME OUR KILLER'S NOW WEARING SOME OF THE VICTIM'S... UM...



...THE VICTIM'S... UH...



...HIS JACKET HE... UMM...



...UHHH...



OFFICER COME WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOUR FACE HE SEEMS SO SPACED OUT

NOTHING, IT'S NOTHING. NATHAN BLEDDY, TALK TO ME.

CLOSET'S BEEN RANSACKED SO IT'S SAFE TO ASSUME THE PERP WHAT NATE? NATE? NATHAN??



A



NATHAN!

WH--?

IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?



YEAH, HE'S FINE. HE JUST... DAYDREAMS SOMETIMES.

SNAP OUT OF IT BUDDY, WHAT'D YOU SEE?

UM, IT'S, UHM... NOTHING.

IS IT NOTHING NOTHING, OR THE USUAL NOTHING?



OH. WELL THAT'S NOT GOOD.



SURVIVAL IS SOMETHING WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON.



DON'T LEAVE JUST YET.



PARADIGM ENERGY CORP
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY



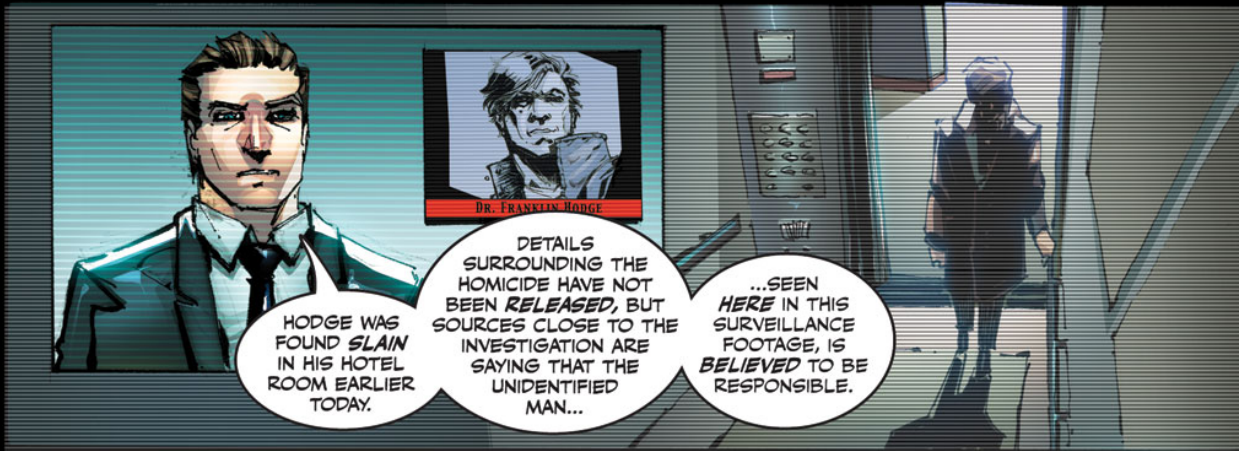
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
YOU STAYING OR GOING?



STAYING.
YOU TAKE CREDIT CARD?



POLICE ARE STILL SEARCHING FOR THE MAN SUSPECTED OF KILLING RENOWNED PHYSICIST AND CEO OF PARADIGM ENERGY CORP. FRANKLIN HODGE.



HODGE WAS FOUND *SLAIN* IN HIS HOTEL ROOM EARLIER TODAY.

DETAILS SURROUNDING THE HOMICIDE HAVE NOT BEEN RELEASED, BUT SOURCES CLOSE TO THE INVESTIGATION ARE SAYING THAT THE UNIDENTIFIED MAN...

...SEEN *HERE* IN THIS SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE, IS BELIEVED TO BE RESPONSIBLE.



FOR MORE ON THIS STORY AS IT UNFOLDS WE TURN TO TINA ROBERTS REPORTING LIVE FROM THE--



IT'S HIM. ALERT THE TEAM.

HE WON'T GET AWAY THIS TIME.





I SWEAR...



VZZZZZZZ



...I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE.
SOMEWHERE...

VZZZZZZZ

CLASSIFIED



DAMMIT!

VZZZZZZZ



YOU JUST GOING TO STAND THERE OR ARE YOU COMING IN?



I WILL. JUST GIVE ME A SEC.

ALWAYS AMAZES ME, WATCHING YOU DO...WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOU DO.

SEE WHATEVER IT IS NO ELSE SEEMS TO SEE.



PLUS, I BROUGHT BEER.

YOU KNOW I DON'T DRINK, DEX.

WHO SAID I BROUGHT ANY FOR YOU?

SO...WHAT'D YOU FIND, LOOKING THROUGH THOSE OLD CASE PHOTOS? THINK THEY'RE CONNECTED TO OUR MURDER SOMEHOW?



NO. *MAYBE*. I DON'T KNOW.

WHAT'D THE LAB COME BACK WITH?





INCONCLUSIVE?!

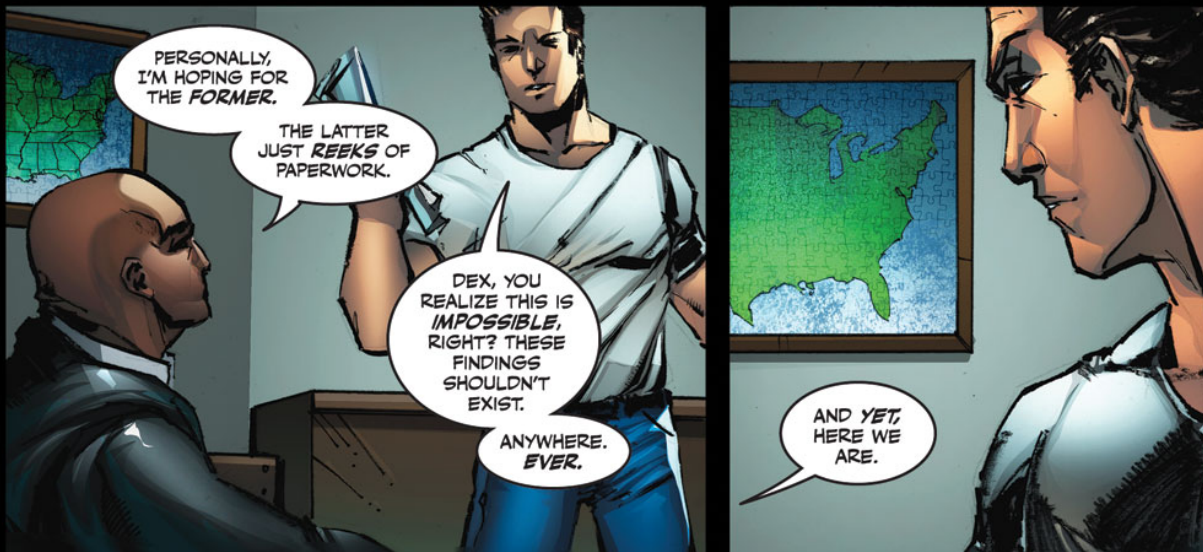
HOW? HOW COULD ALL THE FINGER-PRINTS COME BACK THE SAME?



MY THEORY? EITHER THE LAB GUYS REALLY SUCK AT THEIR JOBS...

...OR WE'RE LOOKING AT THE WORLD'S FIRST EVER SELF-INFLICTED MURDER-SUICIDE.

THIS DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.



PERSONALLY, I'M HOPING FOR THE FORMER.

THE LATTER JUST REEKS OF PAPERWORK.

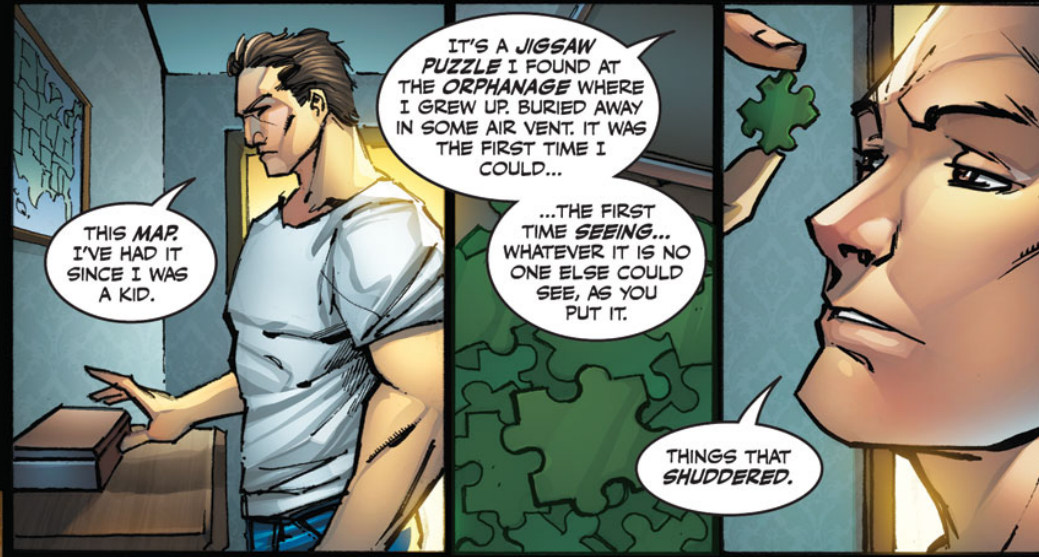
DEX, YOU REALIZE THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE, RIGHT? THESE FINDINGS SHOULDN'T EXIST.

ANYWHERE. EVER.

AND YET, HERE WE ARE.



CAN I SHARE SOMETHING WITH YOU?



THIS MAP I'VE HAD IT SINCE I WAS A KID.

IT'S A JIGSAW PUZZLE I FOUND AT THE ORPHANAGE WHERE I GREW UP. BURIED AWAY IN SOME AIR VENT. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I COULD...

...THE FIRST TIME SEEING... WHATEVER IT IS NO ONE ELSE COULD SEE, AS YOU PUT IT.

THINGS THAT SHUDDERED.

THAT'S WHAT I CALLED IT. THESE TWISTING, WARPING, HUMMING, DISTORTIONS FLICKERING IN AND OUT. IT'S WHAT THE PUZZLE BOX LOOKED LIKE WHEN I FOUND IT.

I MUST'VE PUT IT TOGETHER A HUNDRED TIMES. AND EVERY TIME, WITH EVERY NEW SET, THE SHUDDERING BECAME MORE CONCENTRATED AS I GOT CLOSER TO THE FINAL PIECE.

THE PIECE THAT KEPT CALLING ME FROM THE START. THE ONE PIECE...



...THAT JUST...



...DID NOT...



...BELONG.



JUST LIKE ME.

TO THIS DAY,
I WEAR THAT
PIECE AROUND
MY NECK...

...AS A
REMINDER THAT
MAYBE I DON'T
BELONG HERE
EITHER.

COME ON
NATE, YOU
KNOW THAT'S
NOT TRUE.

MAYBE NOT.
BUT THIS *CASE*...
EVERYTHING
ABOUT IT...

...KEEPS
BRINGING ME
BACK TO THAT
FEELING.

VZZZZZ!

CREDIT CARD
BELONGING TO
THE VICTIM JUST
HIT OUTSIDE MLK
AND IRVINE.

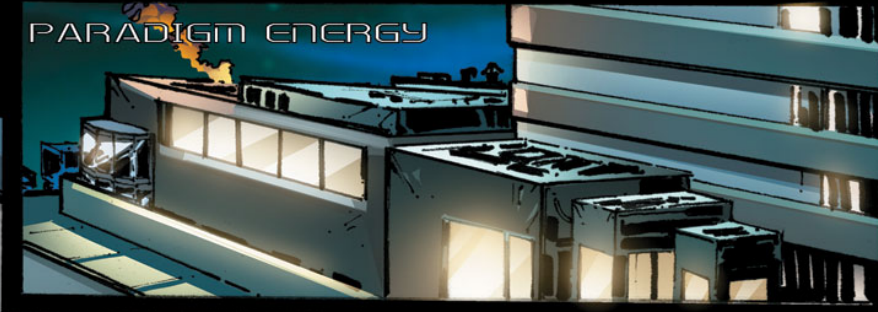
SERIOUSLY?

GUESS WE
DON'T NEED YOUR
SCRAMBLED PORN
SUPER-SIGHT
AFTER ALL!

SCRAMBLED
PORN?
REALLY?

YEAH... I'M
DRIVING!

PARADIGM ENERGY



FRANKLIN DONALD HODGE!



YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.

ARE YOU SURE?

THE FRONT DOOR CERTAINLY THOUGHT SO.

STOP IT. STOP USING HIS VOICE. STOP USING HIS FACE. YOU'RE NOT HIM!

YOU'RE AN ABOMINATION. AND YOU MAKE A MOCKERY OF EVERYTHING HE STOOD FOR.





REALLY? AN ABOMINATION? IS THAT WHAT WE ARE TO YOU?



WHAT'S THE PLAY HERE?

I'M NOT SURE. SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT.

YOU AND I TAKE POINT. NO SENSE RISKING EVERYONE...



"...BEFORE WE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH."

QUICK, CLOAK U--

SORRY! CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT!



NYGGHH!



FREEZE!

HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE THEM!



KLIK
KLIK

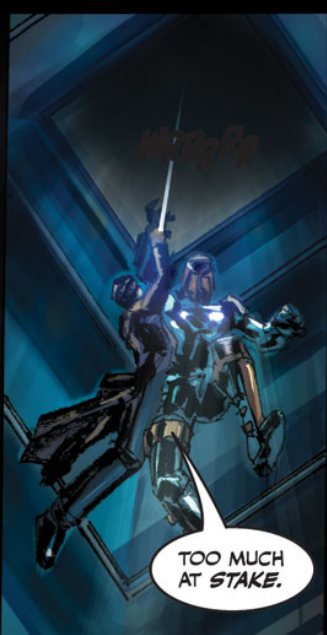
WILL THIS SUFFICE?

AND DROP YOUR, UH... WEAPONS!

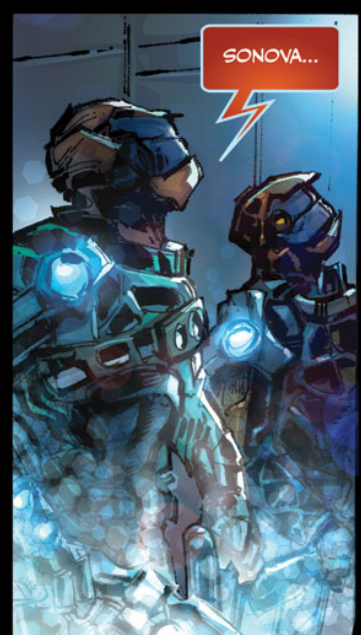


KLIK
KLAK

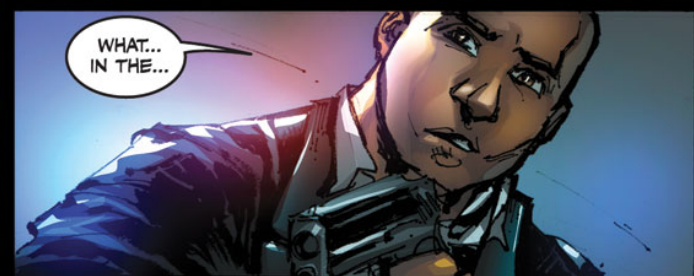
AFRAID I CAN'T DO THAT.



TOO MUCH AT STAKE.



SONOVA...



WHAT... IN THE...



...HELL JUST HAPPENED?!
WHERE'D EVERY-
ONE GO?



WAIT, YOU
DON'T SEE
THAT?

SEE
WHAT?



THEM!
THERE!
RIGHT IN
FRONT OF US!
THEY'RE STILL
HERE!



HERE...
WHERE?!

THE STAIRCASE!
FREEZE!
DAMMIT!



THEY MUST HAVE SOME SORT OF CLOAKING DEVICE!

WHOA! NOW THAT I SAW!



ARGH!



CALL FOR BACKUP ASAP!

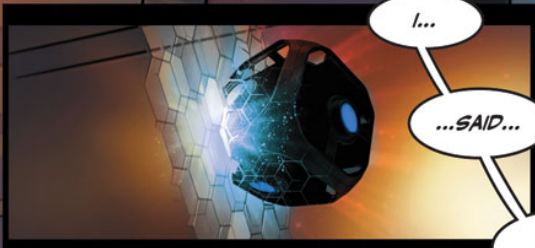
CHRIST, WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!

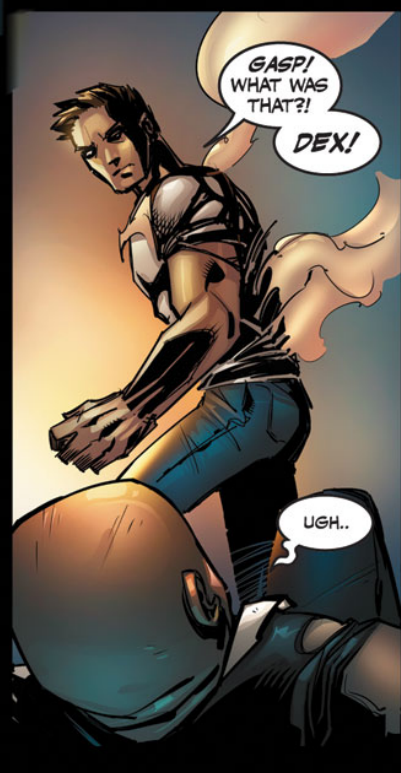
AGENT DOWN!

STOP! DAMMIT STOP RIGHT THERE!



WAIT... THAT COP... HE CAN SEE US? HOW?!





GASP!
WHAT WAS
THAT?!

DEX!

UGH..



OFFICER
DOWN!

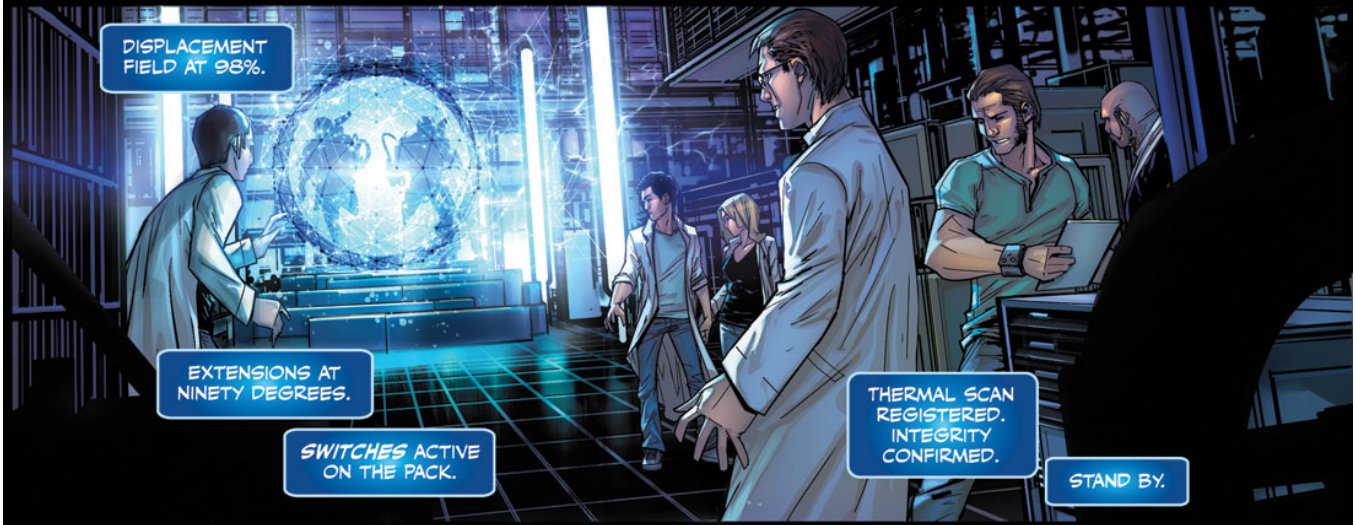
HANG IN
THERE BUDDY,
HELP'S ON THE
WAY!

...DID WE
GET 'EM?



NOT ALL
OF THEM.

YET.



DISPLACEMENT FIELD AT 98%.

EXTENSIONS AT NINETY DEGREES.

SWITCHES ACTIVE ON THE PACK.

THERMAL SCAN REGISTERED. INTEGRITY CONFIRMED.

STAND BY.



AGENT CLARK! AGENT WAKINO! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

AFFIRMATIVE.

WHERE'S FOSTER?

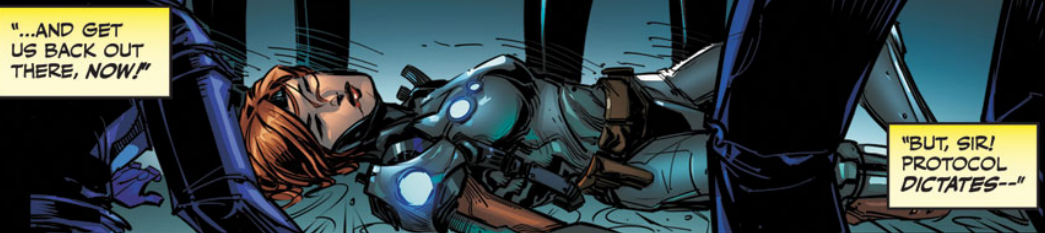


STILL IN THE FIELD AND HURT BAD.

HOLD STILL, LET'S GET YOU OUT OF THERE.



"NO TIME! GET A FRESH PACK ON US..."



"...AND GET US BACK OUT THERE, NOW!"

"BUT, SIR! PROTOCOL DICTATES--"



"TO HELL WITH PROTOCOL!"

"AFTER EVERYTHING WE'VE JUST LOST..."

"...WE'RE DAMN SURE NOT LOSING HER TOO!"

WE STARTED WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS.

A THEORY THAT TIME AND SPACE FLOWED LIKE A RAGING RIVER.

A SERIES OF CONSTANT AND CONCURRENT EVENTS...

...COURSING IN A SINGLE DIRECTION.

MOST EVENTS ARE LIKE *DEBRIS* TOSSED INTO THE *CURRENT*...

...*SWEPT* AWAY WITH *LITTLE* TO NO IMPACT ON THE WORLD.

BUT IF AN EVENT WERE *SIGNIFICANT* ENOUGH...

...A *RIPPLE* WOULD FORM.

THE *GREATER* THE *EVENT*...

...THE *GREATER* THE *RIPPLE!*

WELCOME TO "*THE MAINSTREAM*" MY FRIENDS.

LET'S MAKE OURSELVES A *HOME*.

TO BE CONTINUED...



DESCENDANT

image

Issue #1
\$3.50



KIRKHAM
Oracle

MICHAEL DOLCE • MARCUS PERRY • MARIANO NAVARRO

TERRORISM USED TO BE A PLAGUE.

NOW IT'S JUST ANOTHER BUSINESS PLAN.

YOU HAVE YOUR TARGETS. CONCENTRATE ON THE LOWER PECKS...

-- THE ENTREPRENEUR.

...THE BLAST WILL CAPSIZE THE REST.

AND ANOTHER CHARMIN-SOFT BANKER GETS FAT OFF THE INSURANCE WHILE WE SETTLE FOR PENNIES.

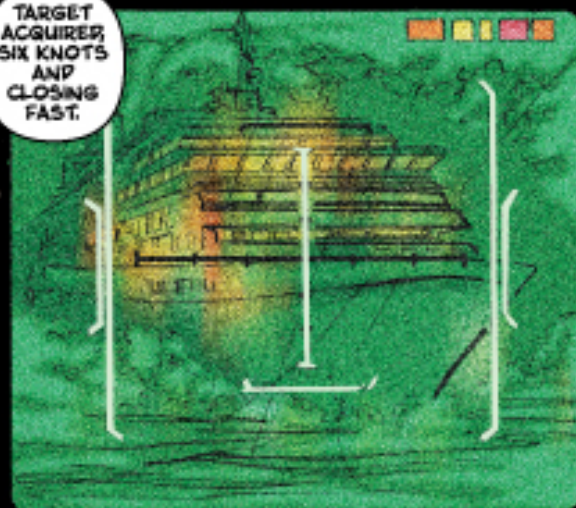
HEY, AS LONG AS THE CHECKS CLEAR, RIGHT?

THE PANAMA CANAL. TONIGHT.

THE PAYS OF NITJOBS STRAPPED WITH KITCHEN SINK EXPLOSIVES AND PRAYING FOR SEVENTY-TWO VIRGINS ON THE RIP SIDE HAVE KICKED OPEN THE POOR FOR A NEW BREED OF SCUM --


IT'S NOT ABOUT SOME WARPEP NOTION OF RELIGION OR FREEPOM ANY MORE...

TARGET ACQUIRED, SIX KNOTS AND CLOSING FAST.



BON VOYAGE.

...IT'S ALL ABOUT PROFIT.




BUT THAT'S
WHERE WE
COME IN.

I HAVE EYES.
ELEVEN ON THE
COUNT, ALL OF THEM
PACKING PRIMO
FIREPOWER.

M-240G SUB-MACHINE
GUNS, AT4 VIPER ROCKET
LAUNCHERS -- SOMEONE SHOULD
REALLY HAVE A CHAT WITH
THESE CREEPS ABOUT
ANGER ISSUES.


SHOW OF
HANDS?

RIGHT
THEN, ON MY
SIGNAL...



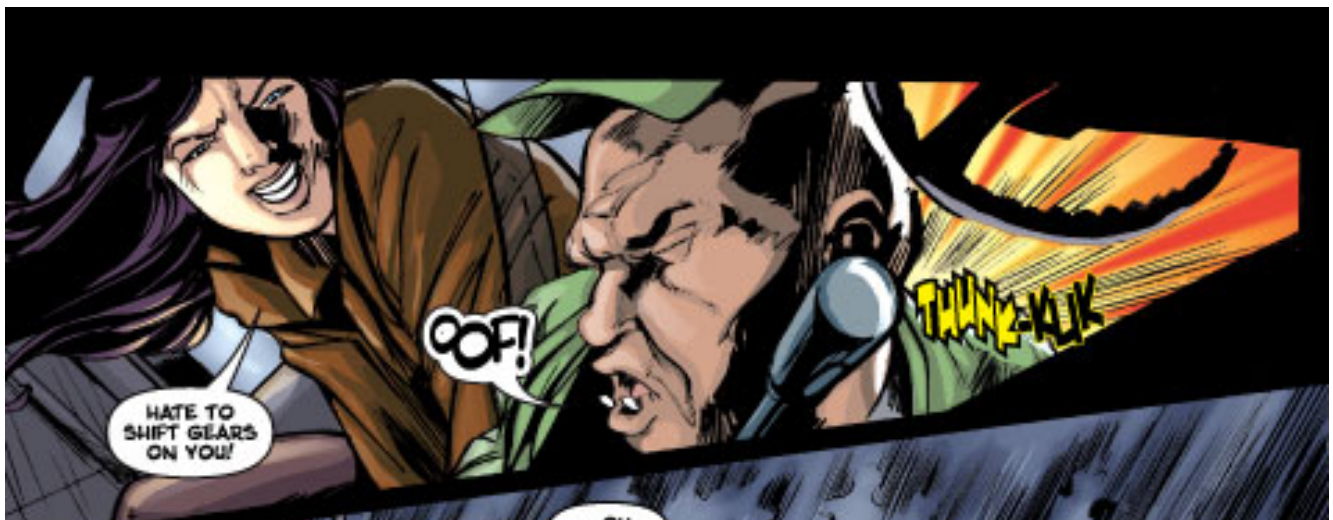
UNCLE SAM'S PERSONAL
CLEAN-UP CREW.

YOU MAY NOT
EVER SEE US...



...BUT YOU'LL KNOW
WHERE WE'VE BEEN.

MY NAME IS LIEUTENANT
RAYNE SANTIAGO. WELCOME
TO THE FRONT LINES.



KOOSH

NOT GOOD!

THUNDER

NYHHH

MY HAND, GRAB MY HAND!

KRACK

PRIEST!

LOOK AT YOU, LIEUTENANT. ONE LITTLE TERRORIST CELL AND YOU FALL TO PIECES ON ME.

SORRY, SIR. GUESS I MUST'VE GOTTEN RATTLED WHEN WE PARALLEL PARKED DOWN FIFTY FEET.

AT LEAST YOU FOUND A SPOT. I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE ALL RIGHT.

ME TOO.

LATER THAT NIGHT...

I MEAN YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN THE LOOK ON THIS IDIOT'S FACE, LYING STOMACH DOWN, MY RIFLE WEDGED IN HIS JAW.

HELL, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD CRAP YOUR PANTS UP

HA! HA! HA!
HA! HA! HA!
HA! HA! HA!

MAN, BILL... YOU'RE KILLIN' ME OVER HERE, I CAN'T BREATHE...

ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY RAISE A GLASS. TO ANOTHER VICTORY IN THE TRENCHES! THANK GOD WE'RE NOT ACCOUNTANTS!

THERE YOU ARE.

PARTY'S INSIDE, IN CASE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE.

YEAH, BUT THIS ONE'S WAY MORE EXCLUSIVE.

HEY, WE WON REMEMBER? EVERYTHING'S OKAY, RIGHT?

MAYBE. IT'S JUST... TONIGHT FELT WAY TOO FAMILIAR.

PRIEST, I'VE BEEN ON MY OWN SINCE I WAS A KID A WHOLE LIFETIME OF JUST ME...

AND DOWN THERE... TANGLED IN THAT WRECK... THAT'S HOW I FELT. LIKE I WAS ALONE AGAIN. LIKE I'D DIE ALONE.

PLAYING MAN IN THE BARREL AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PANAMA CANAL? I HOPE NOT.

IT'S NOT THAT...



IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU, I WOULD HAVE.

HEY, THAT'S WHAT WE DO, RIGHT? WE PICK EACH OTHER UP? IN THIS CASE, JUST A LITTLE MORE LITERALLY.



I'M SORRY THIS... THIS IS STILL SO NEW. IT'S STRANGE, IN THE BEST OF WAYS. TRUST ISN'T AN EASY THING FOR ME AND I GUESS I'M JUST STILL A LITTLE SCARED, YOU KNOW?

SCARED IT'S ALL GOING TO MELT AWAY...

WE'RE ALL SCARED BUT THAT'S WHY YOU'VE GOT ME.



DO I? YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW ME, PRIEST.

I KNOW THE COURAGE I SAW TONIGHT.

IT BELONGS TO THE WOMAN I FELL IN LOVE WITH AND NOTHING'S GONNA CHANGE THAT.



DON'T SAY THAT. DON'T EVER SAY THAT, THERE'S A WORLD ABOUT ME YOU DON'T KNOW.

THEN TELL ME, WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE RUNNING FROM --



I... I CAN'T. PLEASE. SOMETIMES THE PAST IS BEST LEFT WHERE IT IS. I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND

WHEN YOU'RE READY I'LL BE HERE.

THAT'S WHAT I UNDERSTAND



THEN WHY'S IT SO HARD FOR ME TO BELIEVE?



CAREFUL, CARBON! TOUGH TO CLAP WITH ONLY ONE HAND!

GYAAA, WAIT!

NO, IT CAN'T BE...



... FATHER VERGARRA?



IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME, RAYNE.

THE MONTHS ON THE ROAD, THEY SEEM LIKE A FEVER DREAM. I HAVE CHASED WHISPERS, TRACKED RUMORS JUST TO FIND YOU.

BUT HERE WE ARE, AS WE ONCE WERE...



(BLESSSED GIRL, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?)



(IT'S TOO LATE, FATHER!)

(STAY BACK OR YOU'LL BURN LIKE THE REST. I CAN'T CONTROL IT!)



ENOUGH OLD MAN! I AM NOT THE CHILD YOU REMEMBER!

NOW GO BEFORE I FINISH WHAT I STARTED A DECADE AGO!



RAYNE, WAIT! YOU MUST LISTEN!

OUR HISTORY MAY BE SOAKED IN BLOOD, BUT YOU CANNOT LET IT PROVN YOU! MARTAGAL IS UNDER SIEGE!

YOUR PEOPLE, THEY NEED YOU --



MY PEOPLE?

THE SAME ONES WHO EXILED ME IN THE FIRST PLACE? STRIPPED AWAY MY FAMILY, ROBBED ME OF MY LIFE, AND FOR WHAT?

TO LIFT THE CURSE YOU PROMISED THEM WAS A BLESSING?



THE PEOPLE ONLY FEAR WHAT THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND BUT I UNDERSTAND YOU, AS I ALWAYS HAVE...

YOUR PESTINY IS WRITTEN. CARVED IN THE STONE OF OUR ANCESTORS.



IT IS YOU WHO MUST DELIVER US FROM THIS PERSECUTION.

THAT FATE RUNS THROUGH YOUR VEINS.



IT IS PROVIDENCE.

KRRSH

THE DREAMS OF A FOOL!

AND I WOKE UP A LONG TIME AGO!

I'VE INFLICTED ENOUGH PAIN IN THE NAME OF YOUR GODS!
IT'S EATEN AT ME LIKE A CANCER -- WHY SHOULD I OPEN THE SCARS AGAIN?

BECAUSE IF YOU DO NOT, JAVIER AND MARCO WILL PAY THE PRICE.

WHAT DID YOU SAY...?

YOUR BROTHERS, RAYNE.

*THEY WILL SURELY DIE WITHOUT YOUR AIR ONLY YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE THEM...

FORGIVE ME, LOVE. I PRAY YOU'LL STILL BE WAITING.

... IT IS TIME TO COME HOME.

Priest

THE NATION OF MARTAGAL.

PEEP IN THE JUNGLE WOMB OF SOUTH AMERICA.

THE YEARS HAVE CHANGED THIS PLACE, PADRE. IT ALL SEEMS SO DIFFERENT SOMEHOW.

IT FEELS DIFFERENT.

MORE THAN YOU KNOW. BUT MARTAGAL'S PYE WAS CAST THE MOMENT WE TURNED YOU AWAY.

COWARDICE KEPT US FROM RECOGNIZING WHO OUR TRUE PROTECTOR REALLY WAS.

THERE!

"BANE PHARMACEUTICALS. THEY WERE A GIFT WHEN THEY FIRST CAME, WITH THEIR JOBS AND AMERICAN CASH.

"OUR WORKERS BEGAN TO VANISH IN THE NIGHT.

"STOLEN FROM THEIR HOMES, ONLY TO REAPPEAR AGAIN WEEKS LATER...

"BUT ALL THAT SOON CHANGER..

"... THEIR BODIES PERVERTED BY THE COMPANY'S SCIENCE.

"TWISTED SOMEHOW INTO BEASTS."



WHAT ABOUT MY BROTHERS?

WE PROTECTED THEM AS LONG AS WE COULD, BUT THE CREATURES' ATTACKS WERE FAR FROM RANDOM.

THEY STALKED MARCO AND JAVIER, HUNGRED FOR THEM LIKE NOTHING I HAVE EVER SEEN.

NOW THEY TOO ARE PRISONERS OF THAT HORRIBLE PLACE. HELP AT THE MERCY OF THE MONSTERS AND THEIR WITCH.



WITCH...?



THE COMPANY'S NAMESAKE. DR. ALEXIS BANE. A CRUEL MATRIARCH, SHE HAS SPANNED THIS MISERY IN OUR LAND

NOW SHE WATCHES FROM BEHIND HER IVORY WALLS WHILE OUR WORLD IS TORN APART.



AND WE WAIT FOR A CHAMPION TO SET US FREE.

הוסיף

הוסיף

הוסיף

HSSS...



(THIS IS NO CHAMPION!)

(WE'VE TRAPED ONE PLAGUE FOR ANOTHER!)

(SHE LIKES FIRE SO MUCH, I SAY WE GIVE HER A TASTE!)



(WE TRUSTED YOU TO FIND A SAVIOR, AND YOU BRING ANOTHER DEVIL INTO OUR PEN?!)

THIS IS GOING WELL.

(ALL OF YOU, PLEASE... SHE WAS A GIRL THEN, PUSHED TOO FAR BEYOND HER LIMITS. SHE WASN'T READY.)



(SHE KILLED MORE OF US THAN SHE PIP OF THEM!)

(MY POPPA BURNED THAT PAY! WHERE'S HIS JUSTICE?!)



I'M SORRY, FATHER. COMING HERE WAS A TERRIBLE MISTAKE...



RAYNE, WAIT!

THESE PEOPLE NEED YOU! WE WILL MAKE THEM UNDERSTAND!

IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT. THEY ALREADY UNDERSTAND.

VERGARRA CAN PLEAD ALL HE WANTS, BUT THE TRUTH BURNS COLD INSIDE MY SOUL.

THEIR BLOOD WILL ALWAYS STAIN MY HANDS.

(MOTHER OF GOD... RAYNE!)

(THE WHOLE TOWN IS BRISTLING WITH TALK THAT YOU HAD RETURNED, BUT I HAD TO SEE IT WITH MY OWN EYES.)

(EXCUSE ME?)

(HAS IT BEEN SO LONG THAT YOU DO NOT RECOGNIZE YOUR BROTHER'S KEEPER?)

(MOTHER ZETA? IS THAT YOU?)

(FORGIVE ME, PLEASE. TIME HAS CHEATED ME THE PLEASURE OF A FAMILIAR FACE.)

(I'D ASK IF ALL IS WELL WITH MY BROTHERS...)

(...BUT I ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER.)

AAAIEEEEE!!!





SKROOARR!

...HMPPF!

YOU BEASTIES LIKE TAKING SOUVENIRS SO MUCH--

FLINK!

-- HERE'S THE PERFECT MEMENTO!

KA-WHOOOM

DAMN THINGS ARE
AS STRONG AS
THEY ARE UGLY.

THEY WON'T BE
BROKEN, NOT BY
WEAPONS OF MAN.

WHICH IS
A LOT.

OR WOMAN.

BUT I AM
NEITHER.

THE ONLY WAY
TO STOP THESE
DEMONS...

HSSSS...



... IS TO BECOME ONE.

FATHER VERGARRA, I PRAY
TO THE GOPS THAT YOU
ARE RIGHT ABOUT ME.

SCREE!!!

IN A FLASH, IT IS UNDONE.

THE FORCES WARRING INSIDE ME ENGLUF THE STREETS.

AND THE HORROR OF MY SINS ALONG WITH THEM.

ONLY THIS TIME...

THE PAST PLAYS OUT LIKE A FLICKER SHOW BEHIND MY EYES...

... I FULFILL THE PROMISE I BROKE SO MANY YEARS AGO.

...AS PRESENT AS THE BATTLE I NOW WAGE.

THEY SAY MARTAGAL IS PESTINED FOR A SAVIOR.





FOR NOW, IT'LL HAVE TO MAKE DO WITH ME.



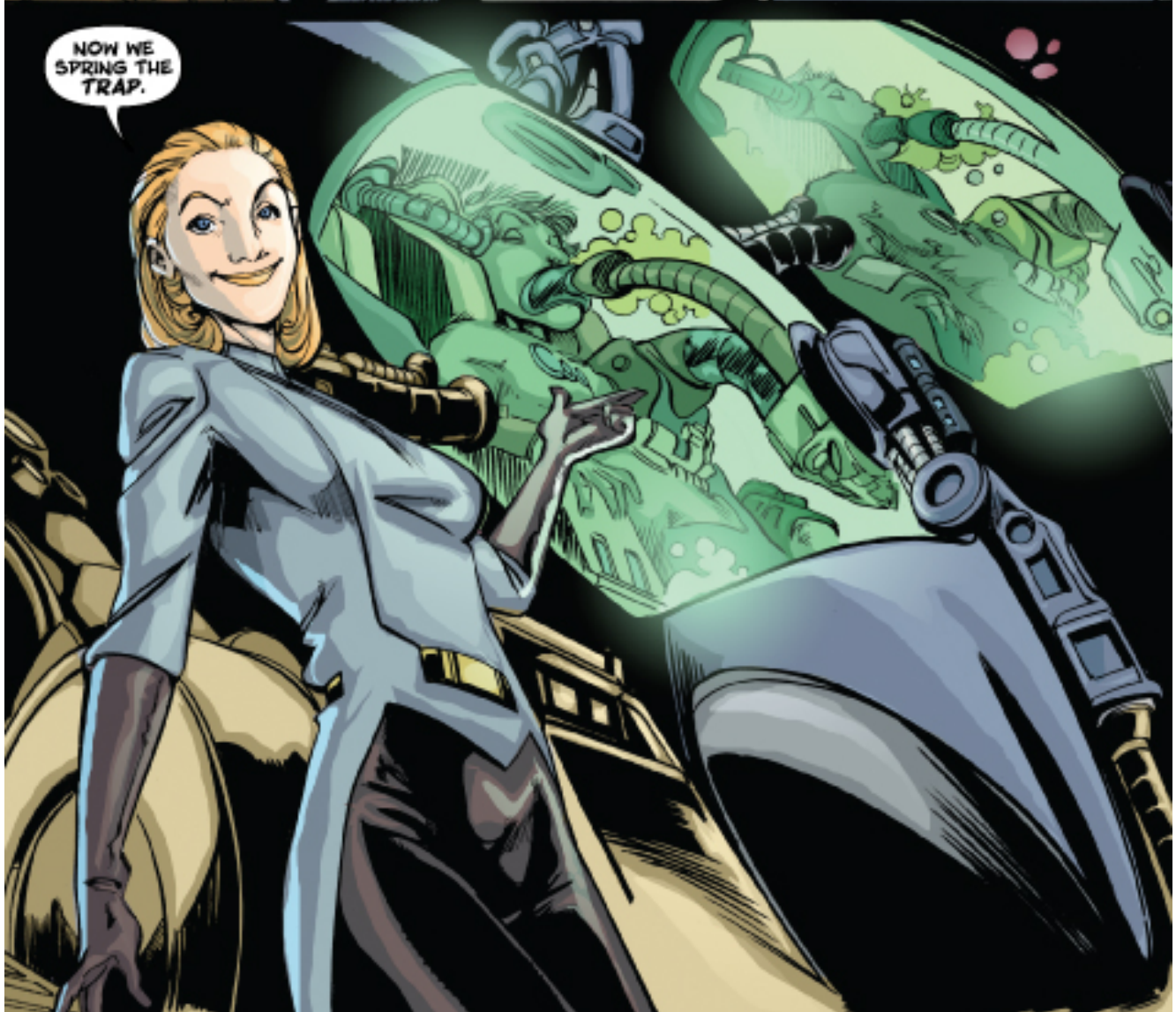
DR. BANE! SHUFFLE SMOKE, FROM THE VILLAGE!



THE DICERS' VITALS JUST FLAT-LINED, ALL THIRTY OF THEM AT ONCE! IT HAS TO BE HER! THE SISTER, SHE'S HERE!

NATURALLY.

SHE TOOK THE BAIT.



NOW WE SPRING THE TRAP.



I FEEL THE MIRRORS OF THEIR EYES AS I EXAMINE WHAT'S LEFT OF THE MONSTERS... AND THE TOWN.

I'M READY FOR THEIR ANGER...

(DID YOU SEE THAT?)



... THEIR HATE.

(I'LL BE DAMNER...)

(VERGARRA, HE... HE WAS RIGHT!)



IT SEEMS THE TIDE IS FINALLY TURNING IN OUR FAVOR, RAYNE.

FOR NOW...

(GODDESS!)



AND SO A NEW FLAME STOKES AWAY MY PEOPLES' FEAR IN OUR SMOLDERING STREETS.

CAN YOU FEEL IT, BROTHERS?



JUSTICE IS COMING.

TO BE CONTINUED...

I REMEMBER...



...I REMEMBER
THE SMELL.

OF BURNT CINDER
AND ASH...LIKE RAIN
EVAPORATING OFF A
HOT PAVEMENT...



AND I REMEMBER...

...THROUGH THE PAIN...AND
THE SMOKE... AND THE FIRE
BURNING ITSELF AWAY...



...I REMEMBER IT.

THE COSTUME.

CLINGING...

...SURROUNDING...

...CONSUMING!



YOU ASK ME HOW IT
FELT? WHAT I WENT
THROUGH...

...I WOULDN'T
KNOW WHERE TO
BEGIN...

UHHH...

MIKEBOOKS & AFTER SHOCK COMICS
PROUDLY PRESENTS:

The
SIRE

I WAS ON THE NEWS
THE OTHER DAY...

WELL,
FELLAS...



THIS IS A REAL
FINE MESS
YOU'VE GOTTEN
ME INTO.



HAAAAHA!

SHUT YER
TRAP! YOU GOT
SOME NERVE
JOKING AROUND
LIKE THIS AIN'T
YOUR FAULT,
FIREHEART!

AW, CHEER
UP FELLAS.
THINGS
ALWAYS HAVE
A WAY...



...OF
WORKING
THEMSELVES
OUT!





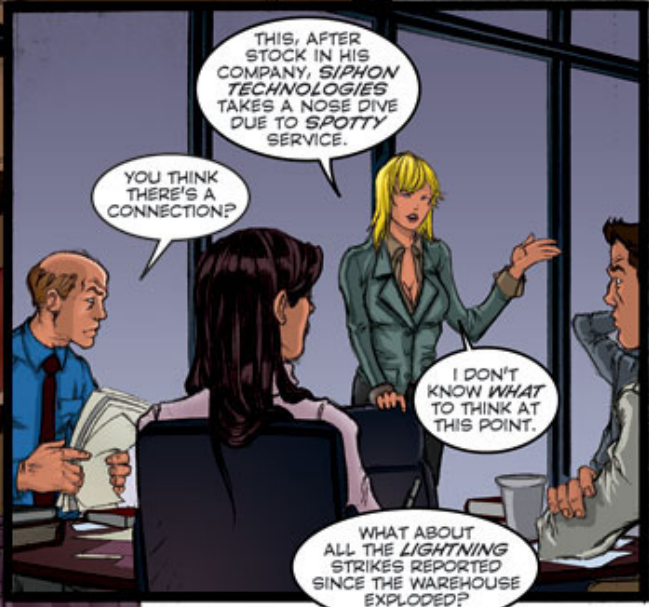
SOMETHING'S COMING...

JUST THINKING OUT LOUD, WALTER.

YOU SAY SOMETHING, J.J.?

SOMETHING'S COMING... SOMETHING WE'RE NOT SEEING.

A BILLIONAIRE TECHNOLOGY MOGUL GOES MISSING THE SAME DAY ONE OF HIS WAREHOUSES EXPLODES.



THIS, AFTER STOCK IN HIS COMPANY, *SIPHON TECHNOLOGIES* TAKES A NOSE DIVE DUE TO *SPOTTY* SERVICE.

YOU THINK THERE'S A CONNECTION?

I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* TO THINK AT THIS POINT.

WHAT ABOUT ALL THE *LIGHTNING* STRIKES REPORTED SINCE THE WAREHOUSE EXPLODED?



SAMUEL ANTONETTI'S RICH AND POWERFUL DOUG, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT--

FIFTY CASES WORLDWIDE IN JUST SIX HOURS!

--BUT HE'S NOT GOD!



NO, BUT HE IS AT THE CENTER OF THIS.

QUESTION NOW IS, JUST *WHAT* EXACTLY HE'S AT THE CENTER OF.

SOMETHING'S COMING WALTER...

VMMMMMMMM



SOMETIMES, YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE NOT KNOWING THE *IMPACT* YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ON THE WORLD...



FEEL

ALIVE!

YEAH, WHAT HE SAID.

CAN SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON?! HANDS AREN'T EXACTLY SUPPOSED TO...GLOW LIKE THIS.

HAHAHAHA!





THIS IS J.J. WATERSTON, REPORTING *LIVE* OUTSIDE OUR STUDIO OFFICES WHERE A HORRIFIC SCENE HAS UNFOLDED!

REPORTS ARE STILL UNCLEAR AT THE MOMENT...

...BUT IT APPEARS A POLICE CONVOY HAS BEEN SOMEHOW **STRUCK DOWN** JUST OUTSIDE THIS BUSY NEW YORK CITY STREET CORNER.

THE BLAST SIGNATURE WAS ENOUGH TO SHATTER WINDOWS AS HIGH AS TWELVE STORIES BUT WHAT'S EVEN MORE UNSETTLING...



POLICE! FREEZE!

...IS THE SKIRMISH THAT HAS DEVELOPED BETWEEN POLICE AND CRASH SURVIVORS.



>HUK--!

THEIR FEATURES APPEAR CHANGED SOMEHOW... DEFORMED.



THOUGH, TO BE HONEST, NO ONE'S EXACTLY SURE WHAT'S GOING ON.

HAHA...

>HURGH--!



HEY!

SOREN, PUT HIM DOWN...

HAHAHAHA!!

COMPANY'S HERE!

...AND SOMETIMES, YOU'RE FORCED TO MAKE ONE!

THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WHERE I FOUND MYSELF.

I DIDN'T WANT TO BE THERE. IN FACT, I WANTED TO BE AS FAR AWAY FROM THERE AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE.

YOU GUYS ARE GOING TO HAVE TO...UH, STOP, OR SOMETHING.

BUT THAT WASN'T AN OPTION.

ANOTHER MAN, DRESSED IN WHAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A HALLOWEEN COSTUME OF SORT--
--HAS INEXPLICABLY JUMPED BETWEEN THE COMBATANTS...

INSTEAD, I WAS THROWN INTO THE FRAY AGAINST MY WILL. FORCED TO FIGHT FOR REASONS I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND.

HELD HOSTAGE...

...BY MY COSTUME!



I WANT TO REMIND EVERYONE THAT YOU ARE WATCHING EXCLUSIVE COVERAGE OF THIS BREAKING EVENT ON WNBW, CHANNEL SIX.

THAT A GIRL! YOU SEE THAT? YOU TAKING NOTES? THAT'S HOW IT'S DONE!



BUT WALTER, COME ON!

THE DANGER... DOESN'T SHE REALIZE? DOESN'T SHE CARE?

THAT'S WHAT MAKES HER THE BEST, JIM...

...SHE'S FEARLESS!

I MIGHT NOT HAVE HAD MUCH OF A CHOICE.



UH, YEAH... SO, YOU'RE ALL UNDER ARREST.

WHAT'S HE DOING?

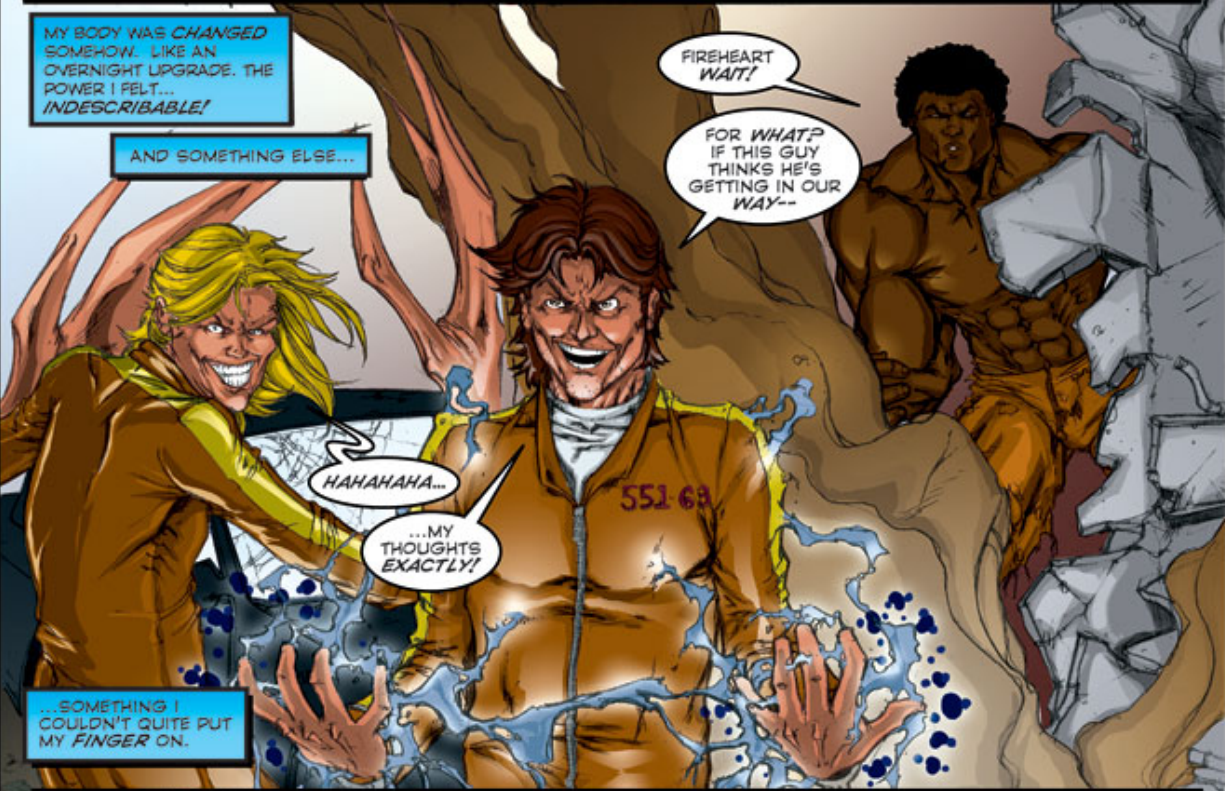
WHO IS THAT?

...FILMING A MOVIE?

BUT I ALSO KNEW I WASN'T HELPLESS.

MY BODY WAS CHANGED SOMEHOW. LIKE AN OVERNIGHT UPGRADE. THE POWER I FELT... INDESCRIBABLE!

AND SOMETHING ELSE...



FIREHEART WAIT!

FOR WHAT? IF THIS GUY THINKS HE'S GETTING IN OUR WAY--

HAHAHAHA...

...MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY!

... SOMETHING I COULDN'T QUITE PUT MY FINGER ON.



THE TENSION IS EXCRUTIATING AS THE HALLOWEEN MAN HAS WORKED HIS WAY THROUGH THE CONFUSION AND IS STARING DOWN THE OTHER THREE.

THE CROWD IS FIXATED, NOT SURE WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT!

WAIT--

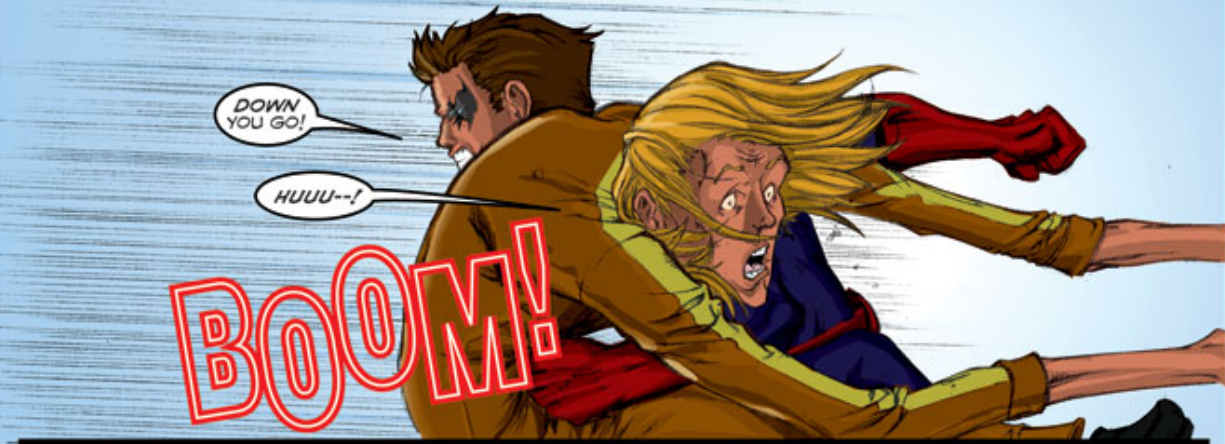
LIKE I WASN'T WORRIED IF I COULD TAKE THEM...



SOMEONE'S MAKING A MOVE!

...I WAS SURE OF IT!

HAHA-HAHA...



DOWN YOU GO!

HUUU--!

BOOM!



HA! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I ACTUALLY...I ACTUALLY HIT HIM!



NNN-YARGH!

AND I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D ACTUALLY LEAVE THE HOUSE LIKE THAT!



GET OFF ME!

--OOF!



FIREHEART!

JUST A LUCKY SHOT, BARD! GUARANTEED IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN...

YES, BECAUSE WE ARE LEAVING NOW!

AH, BUT THE FUN'S JUST GETTING STARTED!



WHAT FUN? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

OUR CAPTORS HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED. OUR BODIES DRAMATICALLY ALTERED AND THE ONLY IMPULSE WE HAVE IS A RIDICULOUS STREET FIGHT?

DOES THIS MAKE ANY SENSE TO YOU?

NO, BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. SOMETHING ABOUT THIS GUY...

...MAKES YOU WANT TO POUND HIS FACE IN. I KNOW, I FEEL IT TOO. ALL THE MORE REASON TO LEAVE, YES?



WHAT ABOUT SOREN?

HIS FATE IS ALREADY SEALED.

BUT MINE WASN'T. I'D FIGURED I'D HAD ENOUGH ALREADY AND THAT IT WAS TIME FOR ME TO LEAVE. MY COSTUME OF COURSE...



NNNAAA-AARGH!

...HAD OTHER IDEAS!



PICTURE A THOUSAND NEEDLES POUNDING AT YOUR CHEST WHILE A LOUDSPEAKER WAILS AT YOUR BRAIN.

IT HURTS...

OK...OK... YOU WIN...YOU WON...NOT GOING ANYWHERE...

...A LOT!

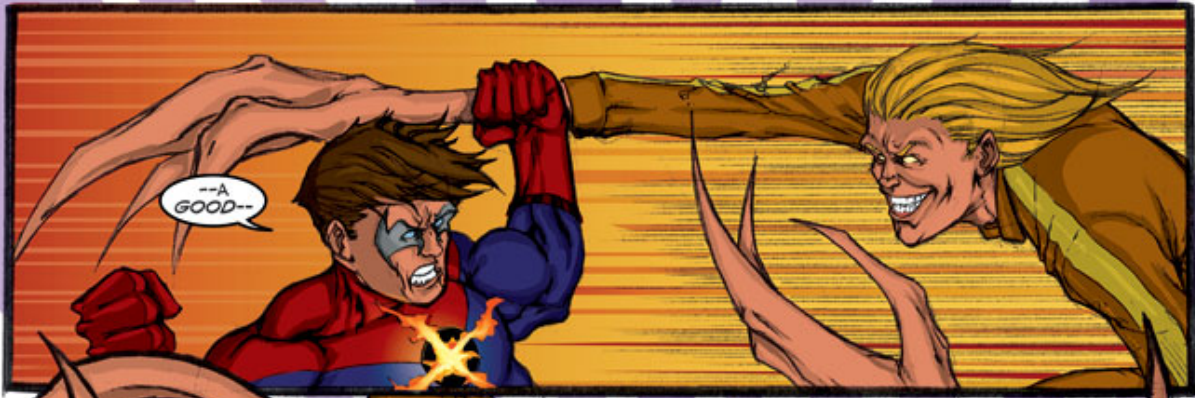
AND ALL IT MEANT WAS
THAT I WASN'T GETTING
OUT THE EASY WAY...

--HAHAHA...

OH,
GIMME A
BREAK!

NYHAHAHAHA!

THIS IS
NOT--





HA! THAT WAS... THAT WAS **INCREDIBLE!** **AMAZING!** I CAN'T BELIEVE I--!

EXCUSE ME! EXCUSE ME, SIR! HEY!



HUH?

J.J. WATERSTON, CHANNEL SIX! THAT WAS **SPECTACULAR!** WHO ARE YOU? WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED HERE TODAY?

J.J.?



J.J.--!

--DONP!

AND THAT *PRETTY* MUCH CATCHES YOU UP TO *SPEED*...



I *RAN* AS SOON AS SHE HESITATED. GOT AWAY BEFORE MORE *COPS* COULD SHOW.

YOU *RAN*?

WELL, SHE *IS* MY BOSS AND SHE **DEFINITELY** RECOGNIZED ME. SHE'S ALSO THE UH... *REASON* I WAS AT THE *WAREHOUSE* TO BEGIN WITH.

HER? WHY?

YOU EVER HEAR OF A THING CALLED *LOVE*? MAKES YOU DO *STUPID* THINGS SOMETIMES.

LIKE GET YOURSELF CAUGHT SOMEWHERE YOU *DON'T* BELONG.

BUT ENOUGH ABOUT ME. I'VE SPENT THE BETTER PART OF AN *HOUR* RECAPPING *MY* LIFE FOR *YOUR* BENEFIT.

TELL ME... WHAT'S YOUR DEAL?



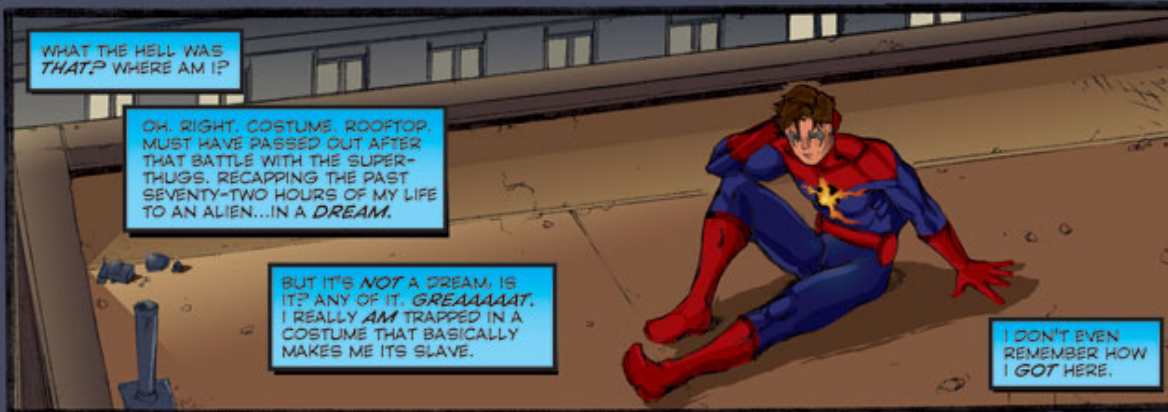
WHY *S/RE*, I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE OBVIOUS BY NOW...



I AM YOU!



AAAAAH!!!



WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT? WHERE AM I?

OH, RIGHT. COSTUME ROOFTOP. MUST HAVE PASSED OUT AFTER THAT BATTLE WITH THE SUPER-THUGS. RECAPPING THE PAST SEVENTY-TWO HOURS OF MY LIFE TO AN ALIEN...IN A DREAM.

BUT IT'S NOT A DREAM, IS IT? ANY OF IT. *GREAAAAAT*. I REALLY *AM* TRAPPED IN A COSTUME THAT BASICALLY MAKES ME ITS SLAVE.

I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER HOW I GOT HERE.



HELLOP

CREAK!

THINGS CAN'T GET ANY WORSE... CAN THEY?



GOOD EVENING MR. WRIGHT.

MY NAME IS **SAMUEL ANTONETTI**. I'M SURE YOU RECOGNIZE MY NAME THOUGH I DOUBT YOU'D RECOGNIZE MY FACE IN THIS...*CONDITION*.

YEAH, I'VE HEARD OF YOU. YOU'RE THAT BILLIONAIRE *MOGUL* THAT WENT MISSING.

ANY PARTICULAR REASON YOU HAPPEN TO BE ON THE SAME ROOFTOP AS ME? I MEAN IT'S--OH MY GOD! YOUR FACE! IT'S--



YES, WELL THAT WOULD BE *YOUR* FAULT. YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO ME.

DUDE, I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.



OF COURSE YOU DO. A PLAN WAS SET INTO MOTION THREE NIGHTS AGO THAT WOULD HAVE YIELDED ME GREAT AND UNIMAGINABLE *POWER*.

DURING THE EXCHANGE HOWEVER, THERE WAS SOMEONE *PRESENT* THAT DID NOT BELONG.

AN *INDIVIDUAL* WHOSE MERE PRESENCE DISRUPTED THE CAREFUL *BALANCE* NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

THAT PERSON WAS *YOU*. THE WAREHOUSE YOU STUMBLED UPON...





...WAS *MINE*. AS IT STANDS, YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO *ME*.

AND UNTIL I GET IT *BACK* I AM FORCED TO ENDURE THIS *UNFORTUNATE* APPEARANCE. NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND...



SERIOUSLY? LOOK, I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE BEEN WATCHING THE NEWS LATELY, BUT I'VE GOT *WAAAAAY* BIGGER PROBLEMS TO DEAL WITH THAN YOUR SKIN CONDITION.

SO IF YOU DON'T MIND...



DON'T BE *COY*! YOUR COSTUME IS THE SOURCE OF *UNIMAGINABLE* POWER! THE MISSING HALF YOU STOLE FROM ME!

WE ARE *CONNECTED* TO IT, YOU AND I. IT'S HOW I WAS ABLE TO *FIND* YOU HERE. IT'S HOW I KNOW YOU ARE *LYING* TO ME NOW.



LOOK, YOU'RE RIGHT. TRUTH IS, THESE POWERS, THIS COSTUME, THEY'RE *NOT* MINE AND I REALLY, *REALLY*, DON'T WANT ANY PART OF THEM.

BUT I GET THE FEELING THEY'RE A *ONE-WAY* TICKET.



OH, I WOULDN'T SAY *THAT*...



BEHOLD! I AM KNOWN AS... **THE SIPHON!**

DO YOU KNOW WHAT A **SIPHON** DOES?

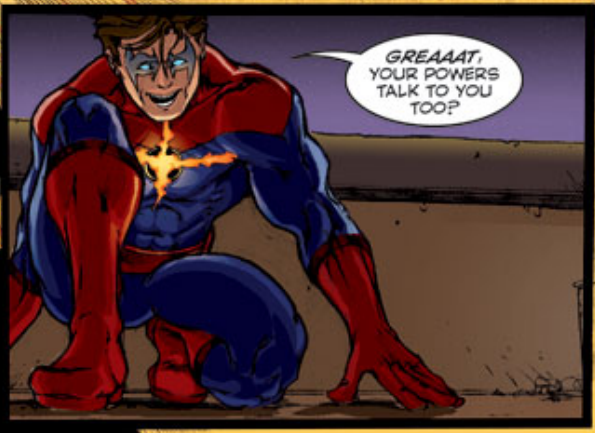


IT TAKES!

AGH! KIND OF...TICKLES!



WHAT? NOTHING'S HAPPENING! BUT I WAS TOLD...MY **POWERS** SAID...



GREAAAT, YOUR **POWERS** TALK TO YOU TOO?



NOW WE'RE BOTH CRAZY!



GET BACK
HERE NOW!



SORRY, PAL...



...NOT GONNA
HAPPEN!

HOLY CRAP! I'M NOT EVEN
THINKING ANYMORE!
JUST REACTING...

HA! MADE IT!
STILL IN ONE PIECE
TOO! IF IT WAS UP
TO THAT GUY...

...I WOULDN'T BE!



WHO WAS HE? IS HE
REALLY LIKE ME?

...OR IS THAT WHAT I'M
ABOUT TO *BECOME*?



YES...I
UNDERSTAND
NOW

HE CANNOT BE
SIPHONED. NOT
YET. I MUST GROW
STRONGER
FIRST.

THE
OTHERS...
THEY ARE THE
KEY.



HMM?



THOUGHT I
SAW...



...HMM. NOTHING.
NEVERMIND.



HEHEHEHE...



MEANWHILE...



...SHE'S TAKING CARE OF IT!

...AUTHORITIES ARE STILL ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THIS MASKED LUNATIC WHO, DESPITE AIDING IN THE CAPTURE OF AT LEAST ONE ESCAPED CONVICT, IS STILL WANTED FOR QUESTIONING.



GREAT...LIKE I HAVE ANY ANSWERS.

IT'S SAD NO ONE ELSE HAS EVEN RECOGNIZED ME FROM WORK BESIDES J.J.

THE DON WRIGHT CHARM IN EFFECT. FADE SO FAR INTO THE BACKGROUND NO ONE NOTICES WHEN YOU TURN INTO A SUPERHERO.



OF COURSE, THAT'S NOT EVEN CLOSE TO WHAT I AM. IS IT? WHAT I AM--

--IS I'M AN IDIOT TRAPPED INSIDE A COSTUME!



I'M WANTED BY THE POLICE...

...HUNTED BY SOME PSYCHO BURN VICTIM...

...AND I WANT IT ALL TO STOP!



KNOCK KNOCK

WHAAT?!

OH CRAP!



DON, IT'S J.J., OPEN UP!

CRAP! CRAP!

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TODAY.

CRAP! CRAP! CRAP! CRAP!

COME ON, I HEAR YOU MOVING AROUND IN THERE...



...HELLO?

DON?

OH SH--

THANK YOU FOR READING!

We hope you enjoyed **THE SIRE #1** and look forward to reading more. As a **BONUS** for checking it out, we're offering you digital copies issues the next two issues – **fo' FREE!**

That's right! Go to sirestudiosinc.com/fofree to download issues #2 and #3 fo free! **Welcome to the world of The Sire!**

– Michael Dolce (creator: The Sire, Mainstream, Descendant)

