



**BOOK ONE**









JASPER  
JENKINS.

WHAT EXACTLY  
ARE YOU TRYING  
TO DO HERE...?





I MEAN, THIS IS SOME WAY TO SPEND A WEDNESDAY...

WELL, I'LL TELL YA, TERRY... LIFE AIN'T ROCKET SCIENCE.

~ PFFFFFFFFHHHH ~

WAIT. IS IT REALLY WEDNESDAY...?



Y'SEE? THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I MEAN.

YOU MIGHT NOT BE OVERFLOWING WITH POTENTIAL, BUT THIS IS JUST FUCKING SAD...

YOU CAN LAY OFF THE SPEECHES...



... I'M NOT STONED ENOUGH TO NOT BE OFFENDED.

IN FACT... YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD REALLY JUMP ON THE BANDWAGON.

~ SIGH ~

WELL... WHEN IN ROME, I GUESS...

BUT, Y'KNOW, I WORRY THAT THIS IS A WASTE OF YOUR LIFE...

SUCH AS IT IS.



TRUST ME, TER... I'VE GOT A WHOLE **INTERIOR LIFE** THING GOING ON INSIDE HERE. TONS OF DEPTH.

HOLD UP. I LOVE THIS COMMERCIAL WITH THE CHICK SINGER AND THE ENDLESS PARADE OF SAD DOG FACES... CHECK IT OUT...



... OH, YOU'LL NEED **THIS** TO COMPLETE THE TRANSACTION, ROOMIE...

THANKS.



HEY, WHAT THE FUCK--?

-- WITH THE LATEST ON THE HIGH-PROFILE HOME INVASION CRIME TAKING PLACE AS WE SPEAK...!



... THE MIDTOWN HOME OF CITY POLICE CHIEF DAN KANTOR IS CURRENTLY UNDER SIEGE.

AN UNKNOWN ASSAILANT HAS TAKEN CHIEF KANTOR, HIS WIFE AND TWIN DAUGHTERS HOSTAGE.

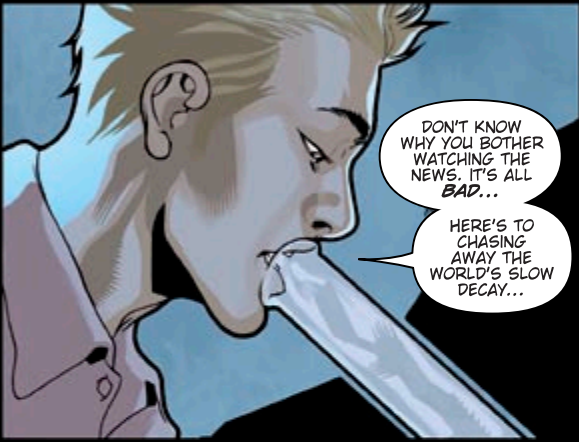
HOME INVASSAILANT

POLICE ARE WAITING FOR POSSIBLE RANSOM DEMANDS, BUT AS OF NOW, NONE HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING.

CHIEF



EVEN POLICE NEGOTIATORS ON THE SCENE WERE QUOTED AS SAYING, "AT THIS POINT, WE FEAR FOR THE LIVES OF CHIEF KANTOR AND HIS FAMILY..."



DON'T KNOW WHY YOU BOTHER WATCHING THE NEWS. IT'S ALL BAD...

HERE'S TO CHASING AWAY THE WORLD'S SLOW DECAY...



Ahhhhh... I GOTTA' HAND IT TO YOU, JASPER. YOU DO GET THE BEST SHIT.

THIS IS LIKE... DISCONNECTING WITH REALITY OR SOMETHING...

I'M... ALREADY GONE...



SO HOW THE HELL DID YOU MANAGE TO --

Huh?

JASPER...?

... AT THIS POINT, WE CAN ONLY PRAY FOR A POSITIVE OUTCOME TO THIS NIGHTMARE SCENARIO...



NOW WHERE'D THAT LITTLE SONOFABITCH GO...?





AIN'T NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS...



... I ALWAYS PERFORM BETTER IN FRONT OF A CROWD.

YOUR KIDS ARE REALLY GONNA REMEMBER THIS, CHIEF...



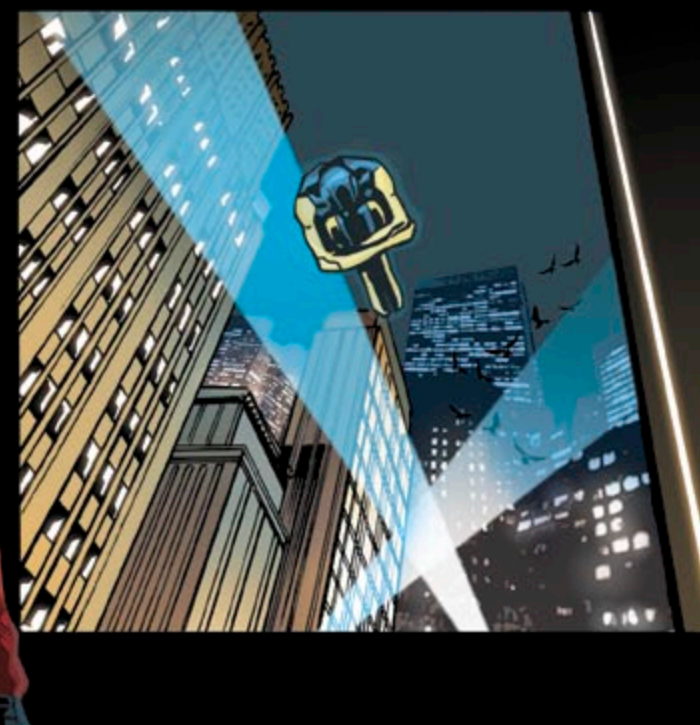
... mmmmk! hrrrk!

... THE DAY THEIR WHOLE WORLD CHANGED.



'COURSE, THIS KIND OF UNBALANCES THINGS IN MY WORLD.

A VILLAIN WITHOUT A HERO...















SO, Y'KNOW,  
I'VE BEEN  
THINKING...

... IT'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD  
WITH GUYS LIKE US IN IT. THINGS  
ARE JUST... DIFFERENT NOW.

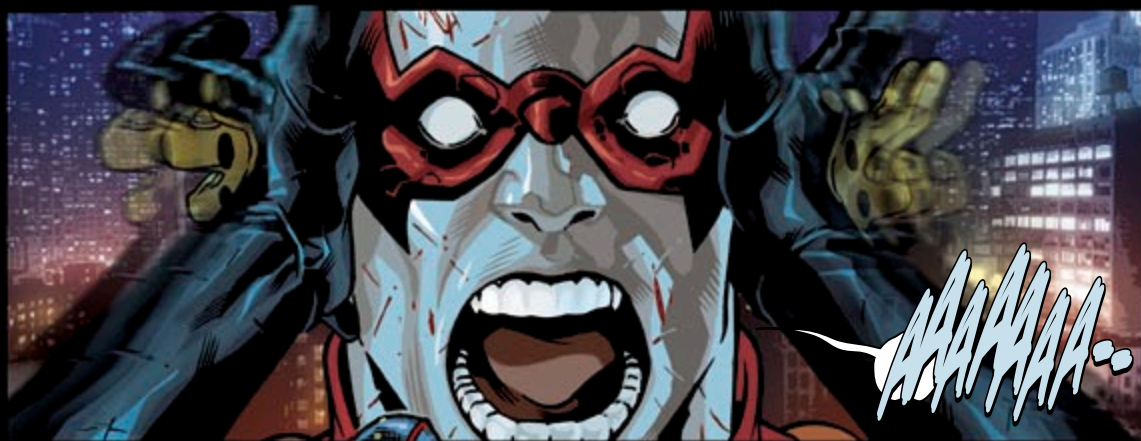
YOU GOTTA BE  
FEELING IT, TOO.  
THE WAY YOU'RE  
DRESSED.

SPEAKING  
OF WHICH...

... THEY CALL  
ME **THE CRUNCH** --



-- NOT THAT  
IT MATTERS  
TO YOU,  
SHITHEAD --



AAAAAAA--



H-HOW YA'  
LIKE ME NOW...  
"CRUNCH"?

FUUUUUCK...

... THAAAAAT  
HURT...

YOU AIN'T...  
GETTIN' THE  
DROP... ON ME  
AGAIN...

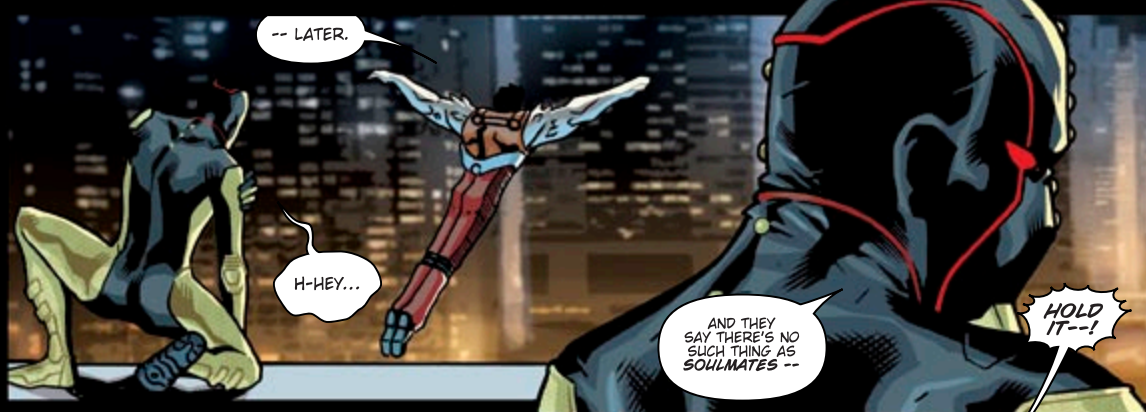




SHIT... THESE PIGS ARE TENACIOUS. I'M SURE THEY'LL BE PISSED WHEN THEY FIND OUT I JUST OFFED THEIR GREAT AND POWERFUL CHIEF.

THEY'LL CALL *US* FREAKS, BUT *THEY'RE* THE ONES BEHIND THE CURVE...!

ANYWAY --



-- LATER.

H-HEY...

AND THEY SAY THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS SOULMATES --

HOLD IT--!



FREEZE, YOU --

HOLY SHIT--!

Uh-huh.



HE'S GOIN' FOR IT--!

DON'T LET HIM --



BEE-OING!



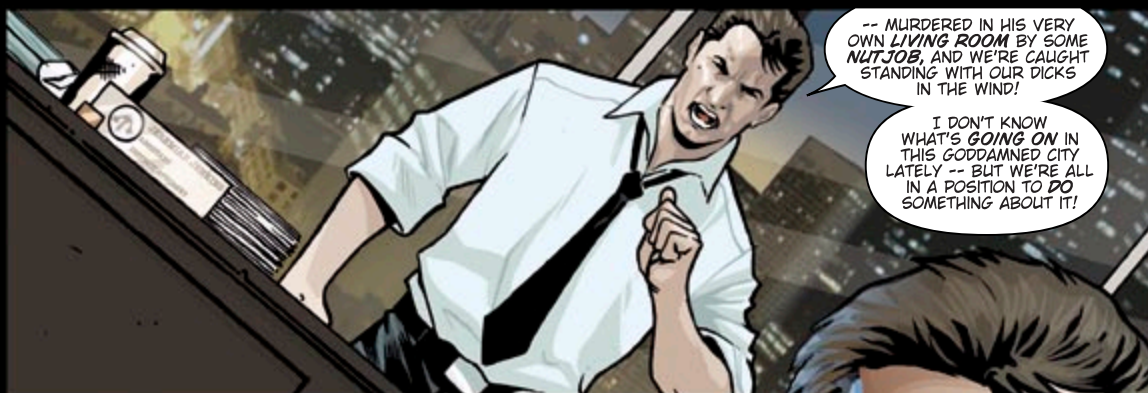


-> Sigh ->

SO BY NOW  
YOU'VE ALL  
HEARD WHAT  
HAPPENED --

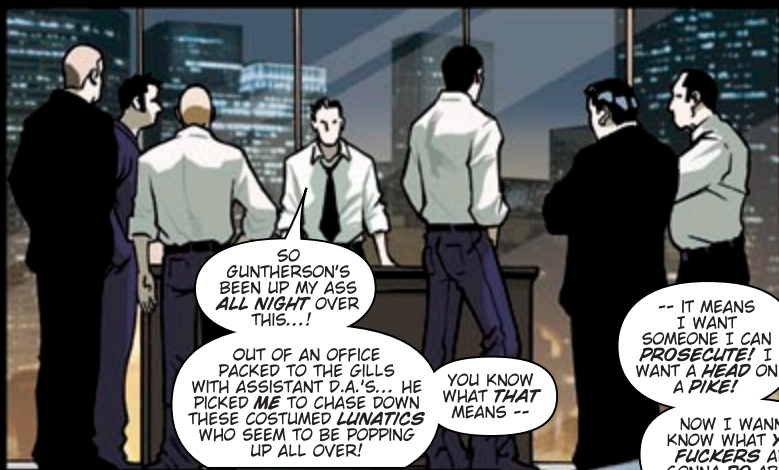


-- CHIEF  
KANTOR IS  
DEAD --



-- MURDERED IN HIS VERY  
OWN LIVING ROOM BY SOME  
NUTJOB, AND WE'RE CAUGHT  
STANDING WITH OUR DICKS  
IN THE WIND!

I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT'S GOING ON IN  
THIS GODDAMNED CITY  
LATELY -- BUT WE'RE ALL  
IN A POSITION TO DO  
SOMETHING ABOUT IT!



SO  
GUNTHERSON'S  
BEEN UP MY ASS  
ALL NIGHT OVER  
THIS...!

OUT OF AN OFFICE  
PACKED TO THE GILLS  
WITH ASSISTANT D.A.'S... HE  
PICKED ME TO CHASE DOWN  
THESE COSTUMED LUNATICS  
WHO SEEM TO BE POPPING  
UP ALL OVER!

YOU KNOW  
WHAT THAT  
MEANS --

-- IT MEANS  
I WANT  
SOMEONE I CAN  
PROSECUTE! I  
WANT A HEAD ON  
A PIKE!

NOW I WANNA  
KNOW WHAT YOU  
FUCKERS ARE  
GONNA DO ABOUT  
IT!







THIS... IS  
A COMPLEX  
PROBLEM,  
JENKINS.

MAYBE FORM  
SOME KINDA  
EXPLORATORY  
TASK FORCE  
TO --

OH, *THAT* OL'  
CHESTNUT?!  
NOT *THIS* TIME,  
LEONARD --



-- *THIS* TIME ALL  
OF OUR ASSES  
ARE ON THE LINE!  
CONSIDER  
THESE FREAKS  
*PRIORITY*  
*ONE!*

NOW GET  
THE FUCK  
OUTTA  
HERE--!



JEEZUS  
CHRIST....!

IS GUNTHERSON  
SO OLD HE'S  
GOTTA PASS THE  
BUCK TO *THIS*  
LITTLE BITCH?!

SHIT...  
WHADDYA BET  
THAT "LITTLE  
BITCH" ENDS UP  
OUR NEXT  
MAYOR...?

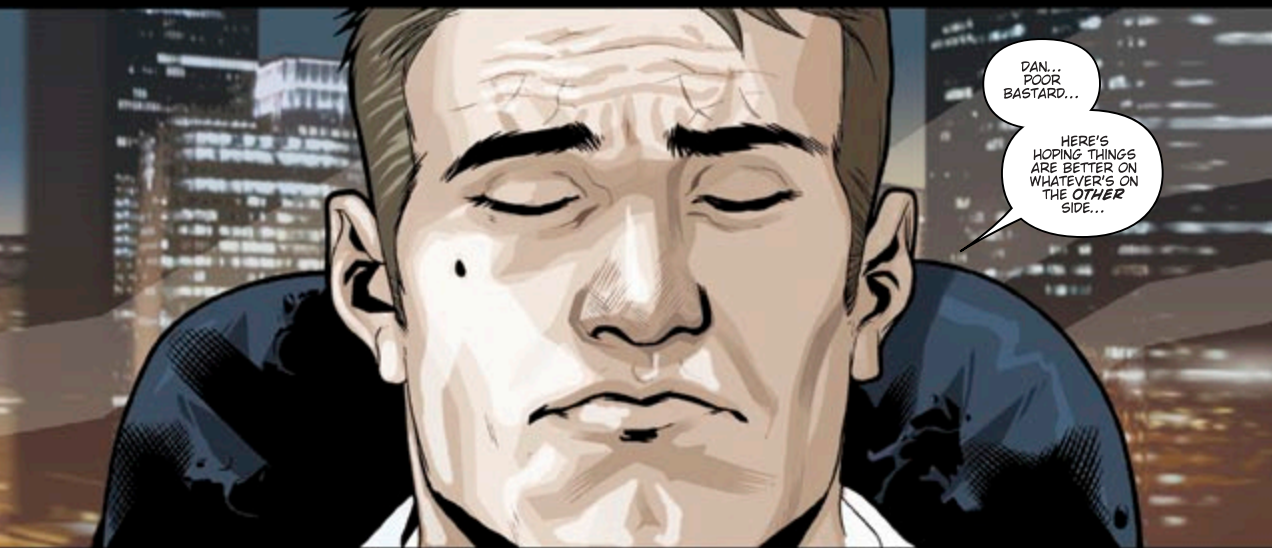


USELESS...



... THIS IS *NOT*  
WHAT I NEEDED  
RIGHT NOW.

NOT WHAT  
*ANY* OF US  
NEED...



DAN...  
POOR  
BASTARD...

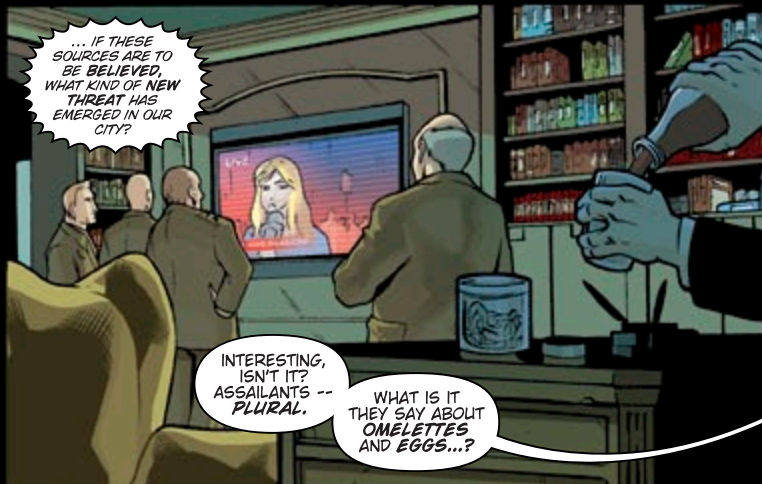
HERE'S  
HOPING THINGS  
ARE BETTER ON  
WHATEVER'S ON  
THE *OTHER*  
SIDE...



... NO ONE WILL CONFIRM, BUT POLICE SOURCES ARE CLAIMING TO HAVE SEEN WHAT THEY ARE DESCRIBING AS "COSTUMED ASSAILANTS".

THEIR ROLE IN THE MURDER OF POLICE CHIEF KANTOR IS UNKNOWN...

HOME INVASION!



... IF THESE SOURCES ARE TO BE BELIEVED, WHAT KIND OF NEW THREAT HAS EMERGED IN OUR CITY?

INTERESTING, ISN'T IT? ASSAILANTS -- PLURAL.

WHAT IS IT THEY SAY ABOUT OMELETTES AND EGGS...?

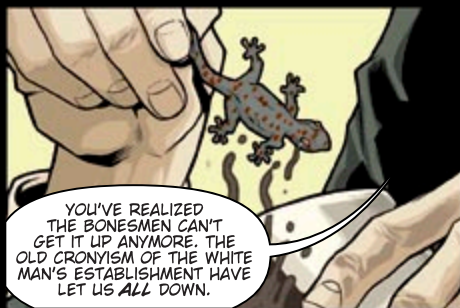


NEVER MIND THAT. YOU KNOW WE'RE HERE ON BEHALF OF GENERAL BAVA.

YOU SOLD HIM A BILL OF GOODS, AND WE'RE HERE TO ENSURE THAT YOU MAKE GOOD.

AGAIN?

YOU'RE NEW TO THIS DETAIL, AREN'T YOU? BAVA'S BEEN RECRUITING.



YOU'VE REALIZED THE BONESMEN CAN'T GET IT UP ANYMORE. THE OLD CRONYISM OF THE WHITE MAN'S ESTABLISHMENT HAVE LET US ALL DOWN.



YOUR DOSSIER READS LIKE A THESIS ON COVERT OPERATIONS OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES. EXTENSIVE AND IMPRESSIVE.

THE ONLY THING IT *DIDN'T* CONTAIN... WAS A NAME.



YEAH, I'M FUNNY LIKE THAT.

I'M NOT SURPRISED BAVA DIDN'T TELL YOU. A LITTLE MILITARY HAZING, MAYBE...?

I KNOW IT'S DISCONCERTING. MEN LIKE YOU COME FROM A PROUD TRADITION OF SERVING A GOD-FEARING NATION. AND UP UNTIL NOW, IT WORKED.

BUT WE'RE HERE -- ALL OF US -- BECAUSE SOMEONE FINALLY REALIZED THIS JUST ISN'T THE WORLD WE WANT TO LIVE IN, IS IT?

BUT THERE IS A GREATER ALTERNATIVE.

FOLKS CALL ME... THE DARLING.

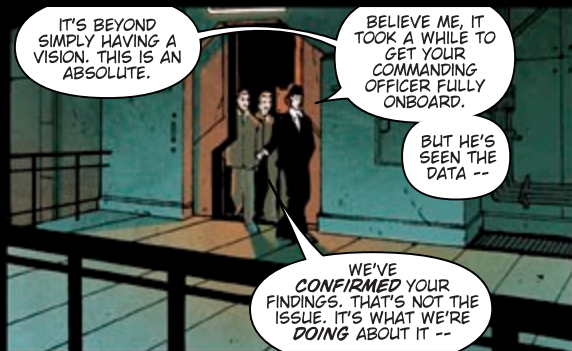
CHOCOLATE MILK, ANYONE...?

NO...? NOBODY?









IT'S BEYOND  
SIMPLY HAVING A  
VISION. THIS IS AN  
ABSOLUTE.

BELIEVE ME, IT  
TOOK A WHILE TO  
GET YOUR  
COMMANDING  
OFFICER FULLY  
ONBOARD.

BUT HE'S  
SEEN THE  
DATA --

WE'VE  
CONFIRMED YOUR  
FINDINGS. THAT'S NOT THE  
ISSUE. IT'S WHAT WE'RE  
DOING ABOUT IT --



WE'RE GOING  
TO CATCH US  
A FISH,  
GENTLEMEN.

A BIG  
ONE.

AND, FOR  
THAT... WE  
NEED ALL OF  
THIS?



THEY REALLY  
HAVE KEPT  
YOU IN THE  
DARK, HAVEN'T  
THEY?

I GUESS  
BABA PREFERS  
IT WHEN I TELL  
THE NEWBIES.

MEANWHILE,  
ALL I'VE EVER  
ASKED IS A  
SMALL DEGREE  
OF TRUST...



... BECAUSE  
THERE IS NO  
ONE BETTER  
EQUIPPED TO  
ACCOMPLISH  
THIS GOAL  
THAN ME.

I HAVE TECHNICIANS  
WORKING 'ROUND THE  
CLOCK. THEY'VE ALREADY  
ZEROED IN ON THE  
VIBRATIONAL FREQUENCIES  
INVOLVED IN THIS KIND OF  
OPERATION. EACH DAY...  
EVERY HOUR... WE GET  
ONE STEP CLOSER.

CLOSER  
TO WHAT,  
EXACTLY?

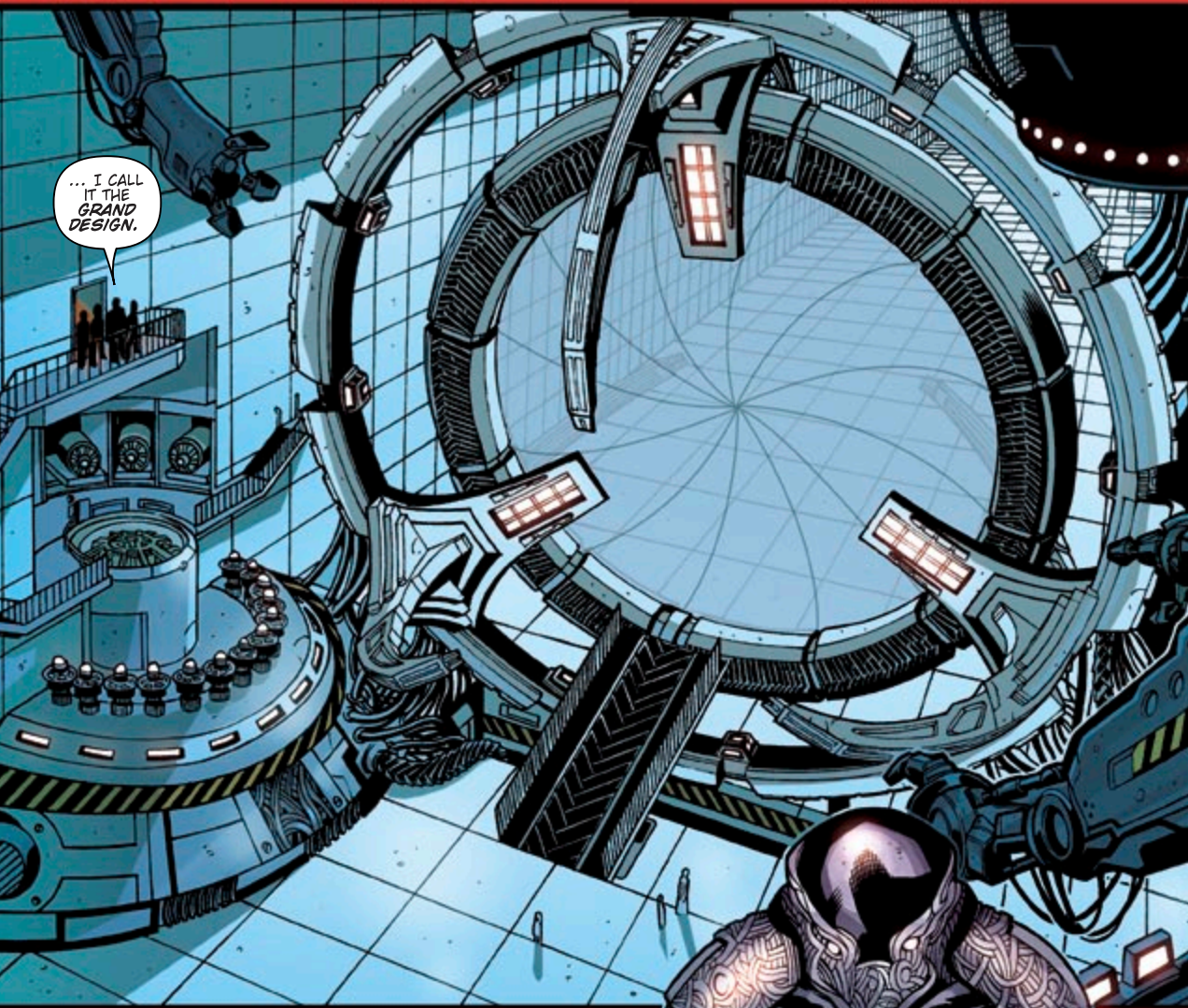


A NEW  
MEASURE OF  
PERCEPTION. THANK  
YOU, ALDOUS HUXLEY.  
IT'S OUT THERE...  
SOMEWHERE. WE'VE  
ALL SEEN IT IN OUR  
DREAMS.

OR MAYBE OUR  
NIGHTMARES.

BUT THIS  
IS OUR WAY  
OF MAKING  
IT REAL...





... I CALL  
IT THE  
GRAND  
DESIGN.



IT'S PURPOSE...  
WELL, THAT  
SHOULD BE  
OBVIOUS JUST  
FROM LOOKING  
AT IT.

THAT IS, IF  
YOU CAN EVEN  
IMAGINE WHAT IT  
TAKES TO PIERCE  
THE VEIL OF  
REALITY.

AND AS YOU  
CAN SEE, TO  
EMBARK ON AN  
ENDEAVOR OF  
THIS NATURE...

... WELL, IT  
REQUIRES NO  
SMALL AMOUNT  
OF BETA  
TESTING.

BUT THIS  
IS HOW  
WE MUST  
PROCEED.

THIS IS HOW  
WE'RE GOING TO  
SAVE EVERYTHING.  
MODERN WARFARE  
ISN'T ABOUT WHO  
HAS THE BIGGEST  
ARMY...

... IT'S  
ABOUT  
WHO HAS  
THE BIGGEST  
BOMB.

AND THESE  
DAYS, YOU  
ONLY NEED  
ONE.

ALL HAIL  
GOLG%CHK.





LOOK, I'VE  
HEARD THE  
**RUMORS**. IF THIS  
IS **REALLY** THE  
SHIT PEOPLE ARE  
SAYING IT IS --

HEY, I AIN'T  
GONNA  
**WASTE YOUR**  
TIME, YO. DAT  
AIN'T HOW WE  
ROLL UP IN  
HERE.

WE HEARD  
YOU WUZ  
**ASKING**  
**AROUND**, SO  
HERE WE  
ARE --



-- READY TO  
MAKE SOMETHING  
HAPPEN. THE  
QUESTION IS...  
ARE YOU?

WHOO,  
COWBOY. ARE YOU  
SUGGESTING I'M  
SOME SORT OF  
**LIGHTWEIGHT**!

MY MIND  
IS **WIDE**  
**OPEN**  
HERE!

WELL, YER  
**WALLET** BETTER  
BE OPEN, TOO. **DIS**  
QUALITY HIGH DON'T  
COME **CHEAP**.



BUT, Y'KNOW,  
FOR THE MAN  
WHO HAS  
**EVERYTHING...**

IS THAT IN THE  
BROCHURE?



TERRY.  
WHADDYA  
THINK...?

HEY, **THIS** ONE  
IS ALL **YOU**. IF  
YOU STILL HAVEN'T  
LEARNED YOUR  
**LESSON** --

**LISTEN**,  
YO --



-- NO ONE'S  
TWISTING YER  
ARM. YOU GOT  
THE **MEANS**. WE  
GOTS THE  
**METHOD**.

AND YOU AIN'T  
**NEVER** BEEN  
ANYWHERE LIKE  
WHERE YOU GO  
ON **DIS** SHIT.



LET'S  
GO.

CHRIST--!

HAVE  
FUN.

**DON'T**  
**FALL**  
**IN...**!