

BRINK

BOOK ONE

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BRINK

BOOK ONE

BRINK CREATED BY DAN ABNETT & I.N.J. CULBARD



Sometimes, it's not entirely clear where an idea comes from.

I first worked with Ian Culbard on *The New Deadwardians*, a series for DC Vertigo that I had devised. I knew and admired his work, and suggested him as artist. Even though the story was mapped out before he arrived, it developed as we got chatting. We began long, regular conversations and, if nothing else, they established a degree of understanding, so I quickly knew how much (or little) to give him in a script, and he knew what I was looking for in his art.

We've since collaborated on a number of different projects, most notably *Wild's End* for Boom! The one thing they've all had in common is that the ideas have been ours. They've grown from conversations. They've all been original to us, even if we can't precisely say how they formed.

As we were both long-time contributors to *2000 AD*, it seemed appropriate for us to produce a series for the Mighty Tharg together. That series was *Brink*, the first volume of which is contained in this book. It's full on space-set SF, which was a change of pace for us, but it's also a horror story, a police procedural, and a mystery. That particular cocktail was again the product of our conversations. One moment, we were rambling, and the next we exclaimed, 'That's it! That's the idea!'

Brink was very well received by the readers. Apart from the obvious pleasures of Ian's distinctive art work and brilliant storytelling, readers seemed to enjoy the story method itself. It's character-driven and carried by



dialogue. There is no narration. Information is delivered via 'tags' that work like footnotes to fill in raw exposition. This meant the dialogue could be extremely conversational and naturalistic. It's (deceptively) slow-burn, and paced unlike other *2000 AD* stories. It's also nothing like anything else I've written.

You're about to read it, so no spoilers, but I will say that there's a twisting of comprehension as the characters gradually, creepily, realise that ideas have permeated their world that make no sense on the surface yet seem to be true and real. Life for these humans living on the 'Brink' - artificial stations and habitats to which they have been exiled following the death of Earth - is slowly

becoming unzipped. It is a genuine otherness, or simply a psychological breakdown triggered by this remote, unforgiving, castaway life?

The mystery underpinning the drama is... where are these ideas coming from?

And, as I mentioned at the start, that's not always easy to figure out.

Dan Abnett

Somewhere on the brink,
March 2017



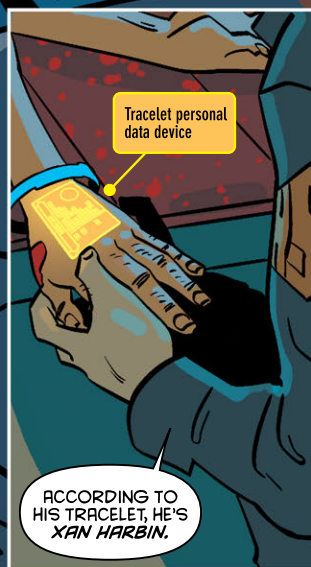
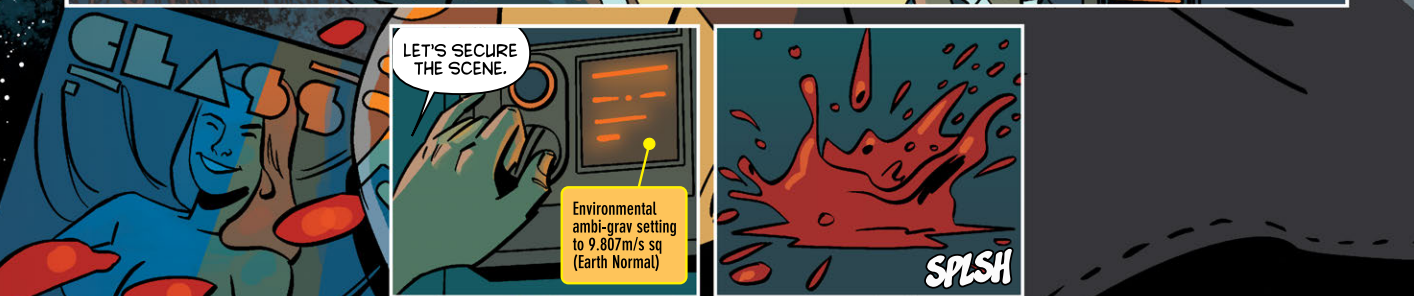
BOOK ONE

Script: DAN ABNETT

Art: I.N.J. CULBARD

Letters: SIMON BOWLAND

Originally published in 2000 AD Progs 1978-1992



"NOT THESE DAYS."

Odette Habitat
Owned: Sugarsurf Pharma
Completed: 2076 AD

Population: 209,000
First occupied 2077,
five years after the final
evacuation of Earth

Habitation
compartment 412
Loop 343
Odette

CHECK THE
LOCKERS.

Carl Brinkmann
Investigator, Habitat
Security Division
born: Xiang Habitat
2061

Bridget Kurtis
Investigator, Habitat
Security Division
born: Salma Habitat
2067

HARBIN WAS
ON DOUBLE-
SCRIP NUDGE.

High-dose selective serotonin
reuptake inhibitor antidepressants

...THAT
CRACKWIDE
CRUZ DONE
NOW?

I TOLD
HIM TO BE
CHILL.

OH, FOR
CRAP'S
SAKE.

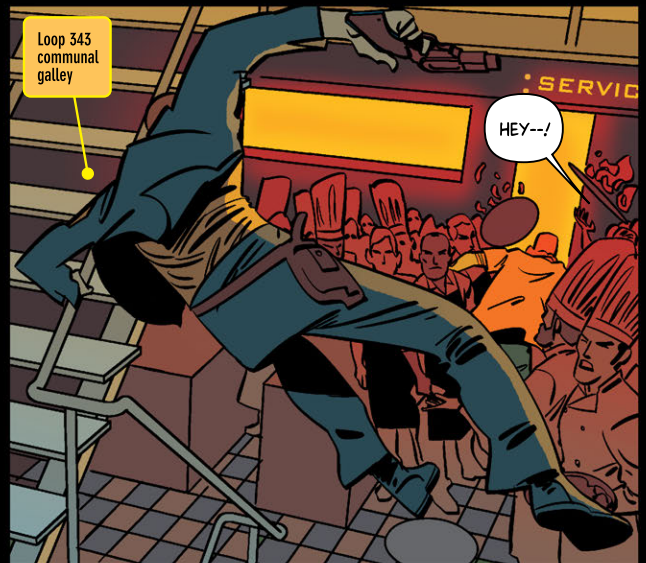
WE'RE GONNA
NEED SHEET
WRAP AND
ACCESS TO THE
WASTE PLANT--

FREEZE.

SECURITY.

SHIT!

.40 SIGlock automatic,
H.S.D. field issue
flatnose rounds







AAAAH!



UHNN!



SON OF A--



BDAM



JESUS.

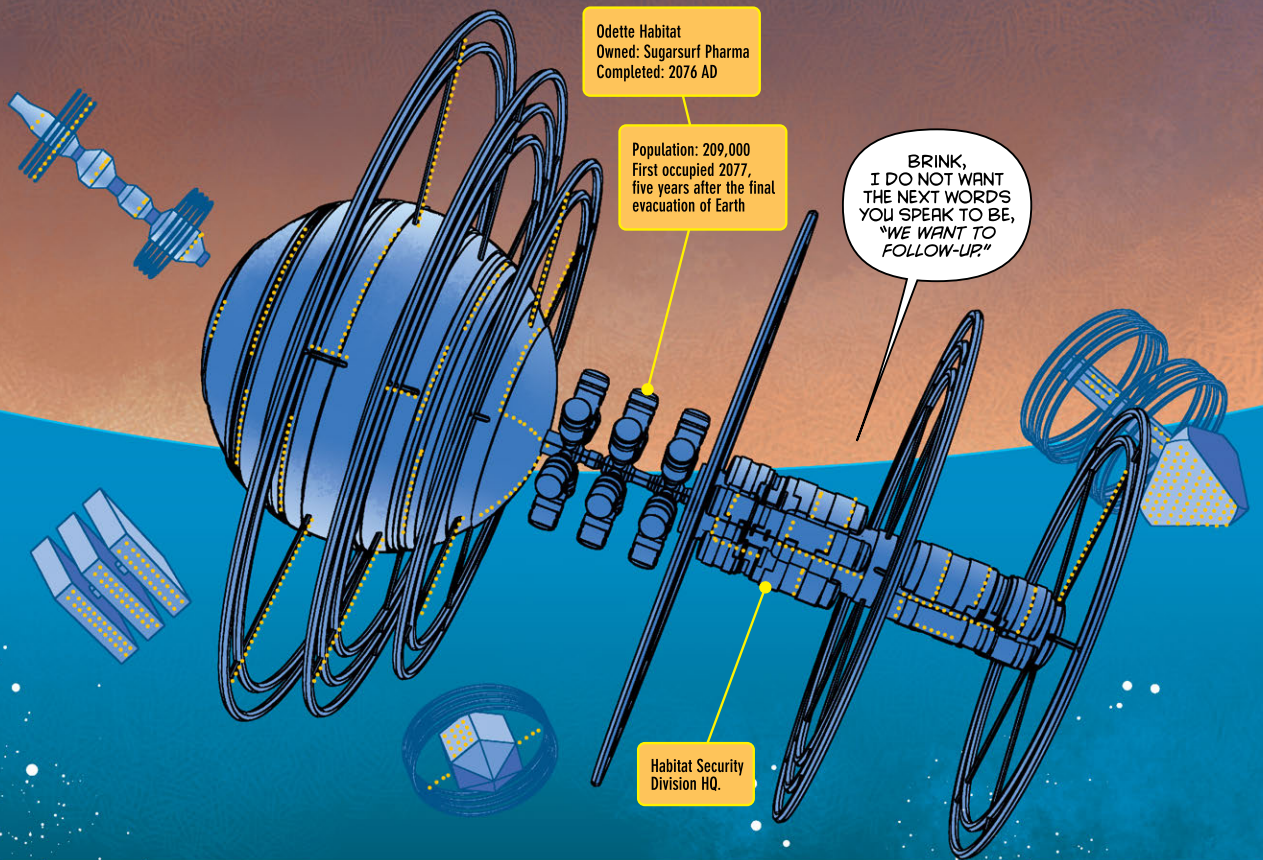
THANKS.

YOU GOING TO BE SICK NOW?



NO.

NOTHING LEFT TO COME UP.





SCREW THAT. HARBIN GOT OFFED BY A PHARM-HEAD CALLED **YAKOB CRUZ**.

YOU TOOK CRUZ OUT.

THAT SHOOTING'S BEEN RULED AS **JUSTIFIED**, BY THE WAY.



I SHOULD THINK SO.

YOU ARRESTED TWO CO-CONSPIRATORS.



JAN BREMER. SAMSON NOLD.

SECTS RUN THE BIG PHARM RINGS.

RIGHT, **THEM**. CASE CLOSED.

NOT HERE. IT'S JUST **GANGS** HERE.

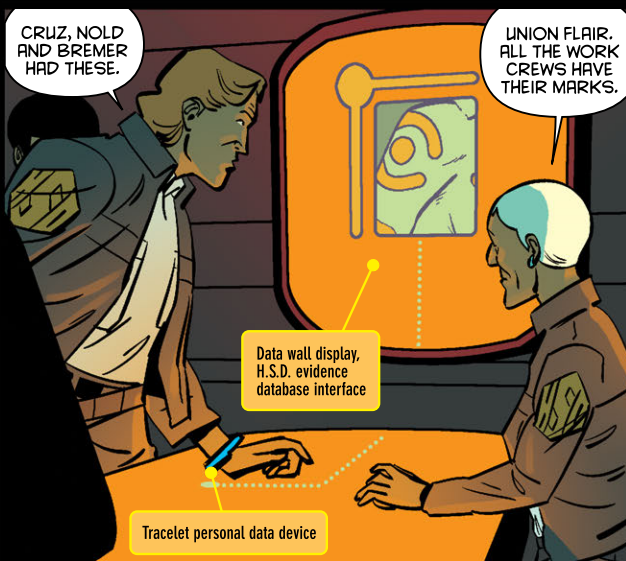


WHEN DOES A GANG BECOME A SECT?



WHEN IT FALLS IN THE FOREST AND THERE'S NO ONE AROUND TO HEAR EXCEPT BEARS SHITTING NEARBY.

WHAT KIND OF QUESTION'S **THAT**?

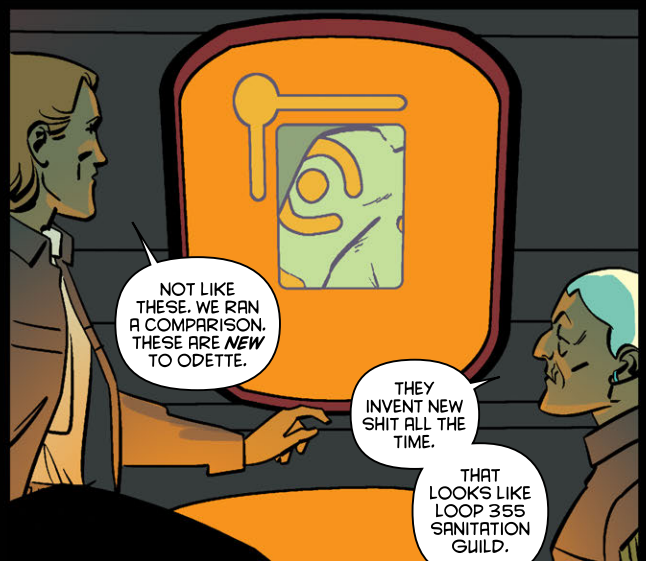


CRUZ, NOLD AND BREMER HAD THESE.

UNION FLAIR. ALL THE WORK CREWS HAVE THEIR MARKS.

Data wall display, H.S.D. evidence database interface

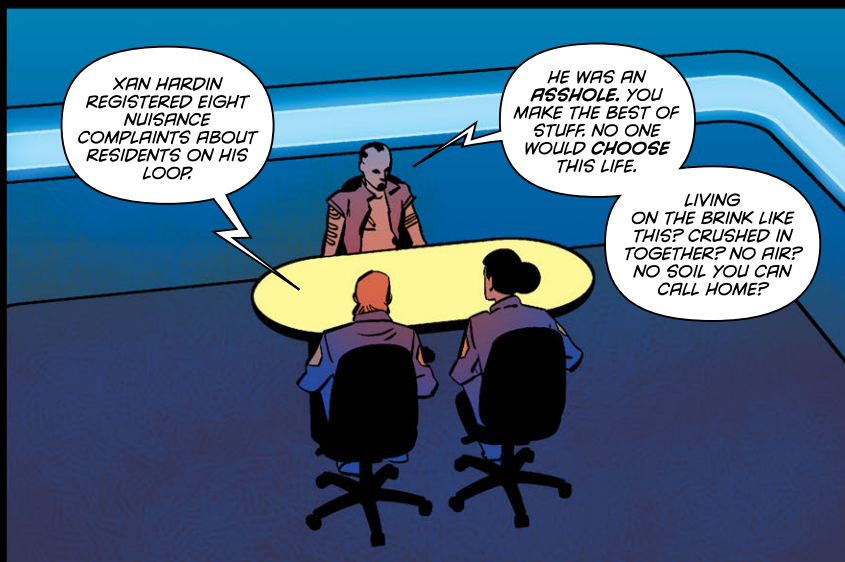
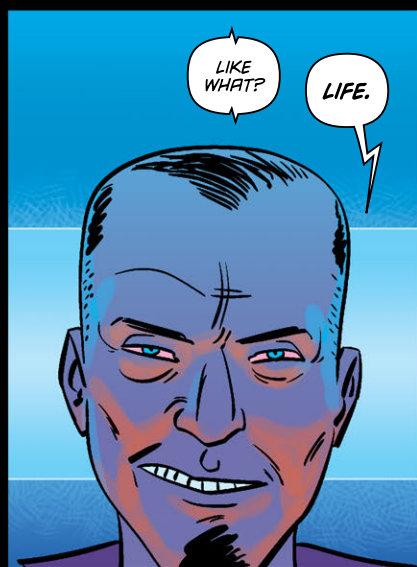
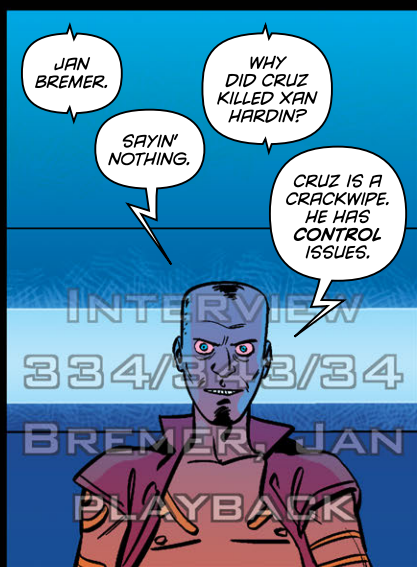
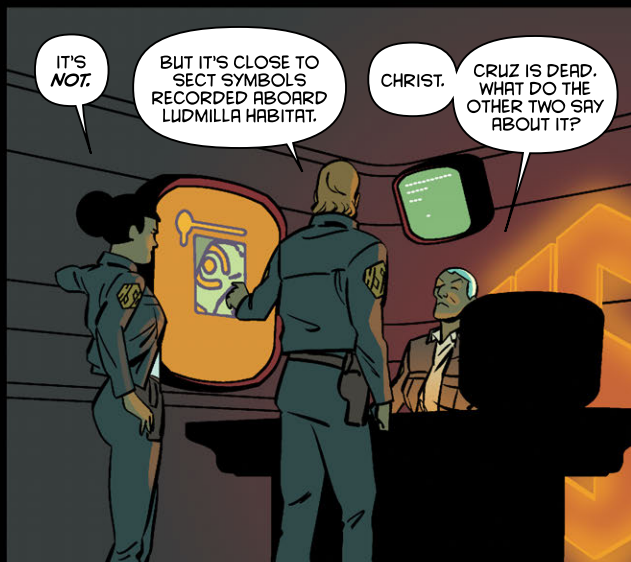
Tracelet personal data device



NOT LIKE THESE. WE RAN A COMPARISON. THESE ARE **NEW** TO ODETTE.

THEY INVENT NEW SHIT ALL THE TIME.

THAT LOOKS LIKE LOOP 355 SANITATION GUILD.





HE COMPLAINED ABOUT THE NOISE.

HE DIDN'T EMBRACE THE FUTURE WITH YOU?

WE ASKED HIM. HE DIDN'T WANNA.



SO YOU KILLED HIM BECAUSE HE DIDN'T PARTY WITH YOU?

I DIDN'T KILL NO ONE. CRUZ DID.



WHAT DOES THE FUTURE MEAN TO YOU?

OH, SEE, NOW YOU'RE DISRESPECTING ME. THAT AIN'T THE WAY.

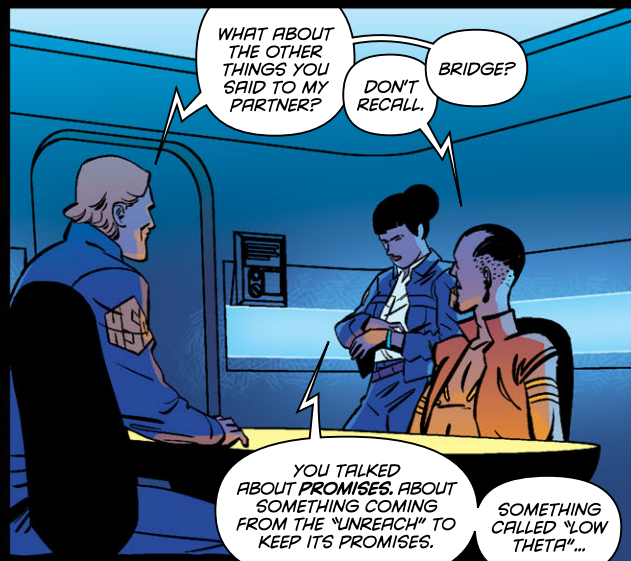


WILL THE LEPER HEART SEE US FOR WHAT WE ARE?

YEAH, YEAH.

WHAT IS THE LEPER HEART?

YOU DON'T KNOW IT, IT DON'T KNOW YOU. SO I CAN'T TELL YOU.



WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER THINGS YOU SAID TO MY PARTNER?

BRIDGE?

DON'T RECALL.

YOU TALKED ABOUT PROMISES. ABOUT SOMETHING COMING FROM THE "UNREACH" TO KEEP ITS PROMISES.

SOMETHING CALLED "LOW THETA"...



LOW THETA HANGS IN THE SUN.

EVERYONE KNOWS.

"MELAN-CHOLEMA."



DROWSY. ITS BRAIN BURNED BLACK.

SAY THE OTHER NAME. THE OTHER ONE. THE ONE YOU MADE ME SPELL FOR YOU.

NO.

SHE DON'T DARE. IT MADE HER SICK TO HER BELLY WHEN SHE HEARD IT.

SHE PUKE ON ME. COULDN'T KEEP IT DOWN. COULDN'T KEEP THE TRUTH DOWN.

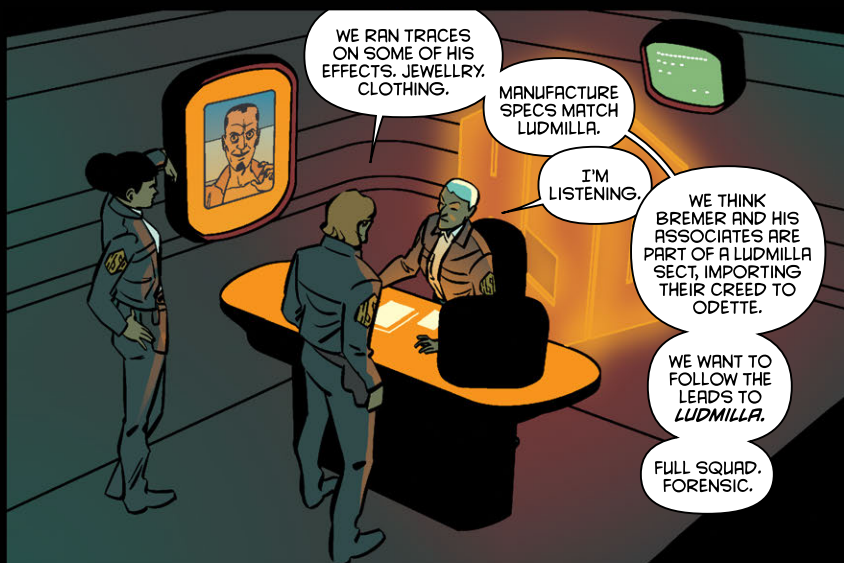


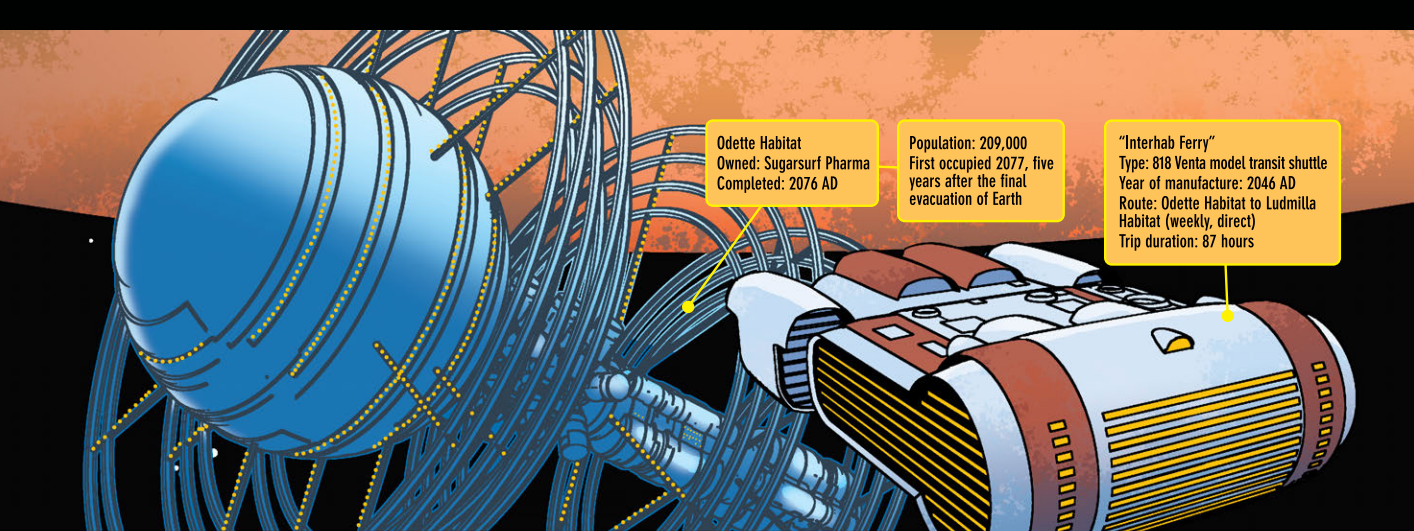
DO YOU BELONG TO A SECT, MR BREMER?

DISRESPECT.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ON ODETTE STATION?

EIGHT YEAR.





Odette Habitat
Owned: Sugarsurf Pharma
Completed: 2076 AD

Population: 209,000
First occupied 2077, five
years after the final
evacuation of Earth

"Interhab Ferry"
Type: 818 Venta model transit shuttle
Year of manufacture: 2046 AD
Route: Odette Habitat to Ludmilla
Habitat (weekly, direct)
Trip duration: 87 hours



WANNA
GET UP TO
SPEED?

SURE. NOTHING
BETTER TO DO
THAN SIT HERE
AND WAIT FOR DEEP-
VEIN THROMBOSIS
TO STRIKE.

Carl Brinkmann
Investigator, Habitat Security Division
Born: Xiang Habitat 2061

Bridget Kurtis
Investigator, Habitat Security Division
Born: Salma Habitat 2067



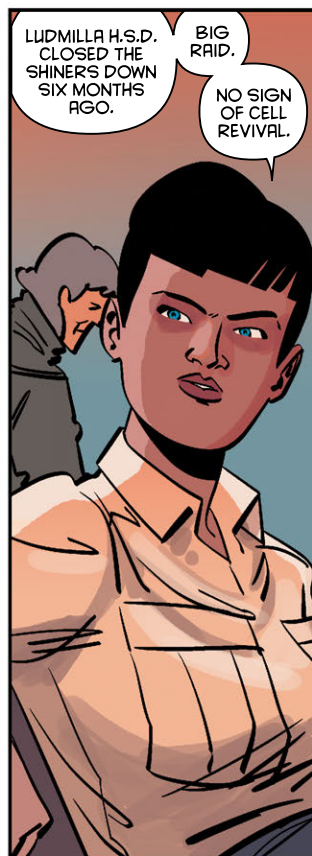
SO...
BASICS.
THREE CULTS
KNOWN TO
LUDMILLA
H.S.D.

THE
EXHALATION.
THE PRIVATE
SANCTUARY
AND...

...SOMEWHERE
HERE...

...THE RED
VISOR AKA THE
SUNGAZERS
AKA THE
"SHINERS".

Tracelet
personal data device



LUDMILLA H.S.D.
CLOSED THE
SHINERS DOWN
SIX MONTHS
AGO.

BIG
RAID.

NO SIGN
OF CELL
REVIVAL.



SO
BREMER--

HEY HEY,
VOYAGERS.
REJOICE,
REJOICE!

HOW DOES THE
SUN FIND YOU
TODAY? HELP A
BROTHER MAN
BUY A--



PISS
OFF.

HEY HEY,
ONE LIFE,
BUDDY.

OUR CRADLE
DIED, BUT WE
LIVE ON. YOU
GOTTA GIVE
THANKS FOR--

I'VE CLEARLY
GOT TO REPEAT
MY INSTRUCTION
TO PISS OFF.

Rejoicer
Informal movement that
celebrates humankind's
survival after the death
of Earth



NEVER FIGURED OUT WHY YOU HATE REJOICERS, BRINK.

OUR SPECIES IS CHOKING ON NUDGE JUST TO GET THROUGH THE DAY, AND *THEY'VE* FOUND A POSITIVE SPIN.

"PLANET EARTH DIED, BUT LOOK! WE'RE ALIVE!"

THEY SMELL.



THERE'S THAT.

AND THEY'RE A CULT.

OKAY, BUT NOT THE SORT OF CULT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

DON'T THINK THEY GET ON ANYONE'S WATCH LIST UNLESS THEY SLEEP IN DOORWAYS OR WHIZZ IN THE HALLS.

WHATEVER.



SO... BREMER--

TRIN TACKER.

RIGHT, REAL NAME TRIN TACKER...NO OBVIOUS CONNECT WITH EITHER OF THE OTHER CULTS.

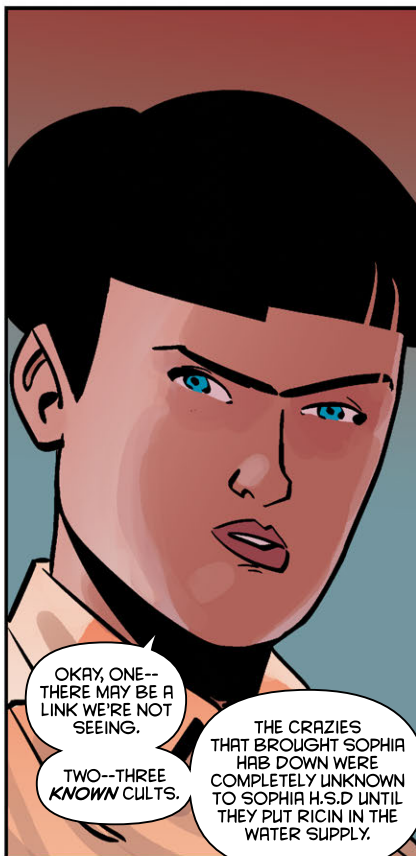
THE PRIVATE SANCTUARY SEEMS TO CENTRE AROUND LUDMILLA'S REACTOR LEVELS.

THE EXHALATION IS AN OUTGROWTH OF THE ATMOSPHERIC WORKERS UNION, AN OLD TRADE CLUB TURNED BAD.



TACKER'S NEVER BEEN A MEMBER OF THE A.W.U.

HE SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE WORKING ELECTRICALS IN A LOOP CALLED HANG STREET, ON THE SUNSIDE.



OKAY, ONE-- THERE MAY BE A LINK WE'RE NOT SEEING.

TWO--THREE *KNOWN* CULTS.

THE CRAZIES THAT BROUGHT SOPHIA HAB DOWN WERE COMPLETELY UNKNOWN TO SOPHIA H.S.D UNTIL THEY PUT RICIN IN THE WATER SUPPLY.



SO WE'RE PROBABLY LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT'S STILL DARK?

LUDMILLA H.S.D. MIGHT HAVE SOME SOFT LEADS THEY'RE NOT WILLING TO PUT IN THE FORMAL REPORTS.





I'M A BEHAVIOURAL BIOLOGIST. I RUN **MACROBIO** ON LUDMILLA.

YOU'RE HABITAT SECURITY DIVISION?

YEAH.



YOUR STOMACH PROBLEMS...NAUSEA, RIGHT? IT'S DIET. I KNOW, I KNOW, I GET A BIT PREACHY.

IT'S ALL THE SYNTH. AND NUDGE DRUGS. I MEAN, A WHOLE COCKTAIL.

I EAT **CLEAN**, YOU SEE. ALL MACRO OR HYDROPONIC. NOTHING SYNTH. NADA.

I'VE MANAGED TO EAT OFF THE GRID FOR THREE YEARS NOW. I USED TO HAVE CHRONIC I.B.S.



ACTUALLY, YOUR SKIN IS **AMAZING**.

I **KNOW!** I FEEL SO GOOD FOR IT. YOU **REALLY** OUGHT TO TRY IT.

SYNTH AND NUDGE, IT'S SO HORRIBLE. **TOXIC**.

NOT A LOT OF CHOICE NOW WE'RE ON THE BRINK.

UNLESS YOU'RE HIGH END, OF COURSE.



WELL, **NO**. YOU CAN CULTIVATE. THERE ARE SIMPLE KITS TO PURIFY THE MATERIALS.

IF YOU COME BY MACROBIO, I'D LOVE TO GIVE YOU SOME VAC-PACS TO TRY. SALAD. RADISH. QUINOA.

I HAVE NEVER KNOWINGLY EATEN A RADISH.



COME BY. YOU'RE VISITING LUDMILLA FOR A WHILE?

SHORT TOUR. OFFICIAL.

COME BY. I'LL HAVE RADISHES READY.

IF I GET A CHANCE. THANKS.



FRANNIE.

BRIDGET. BRIDGE.

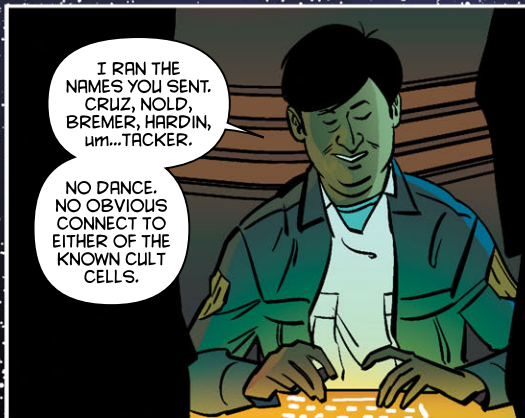
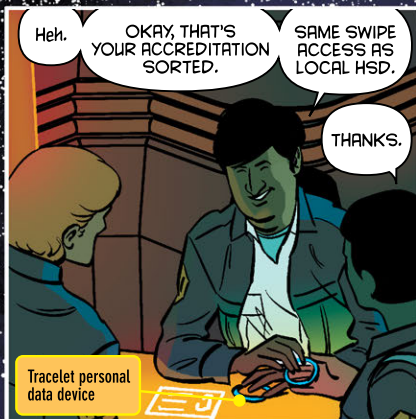
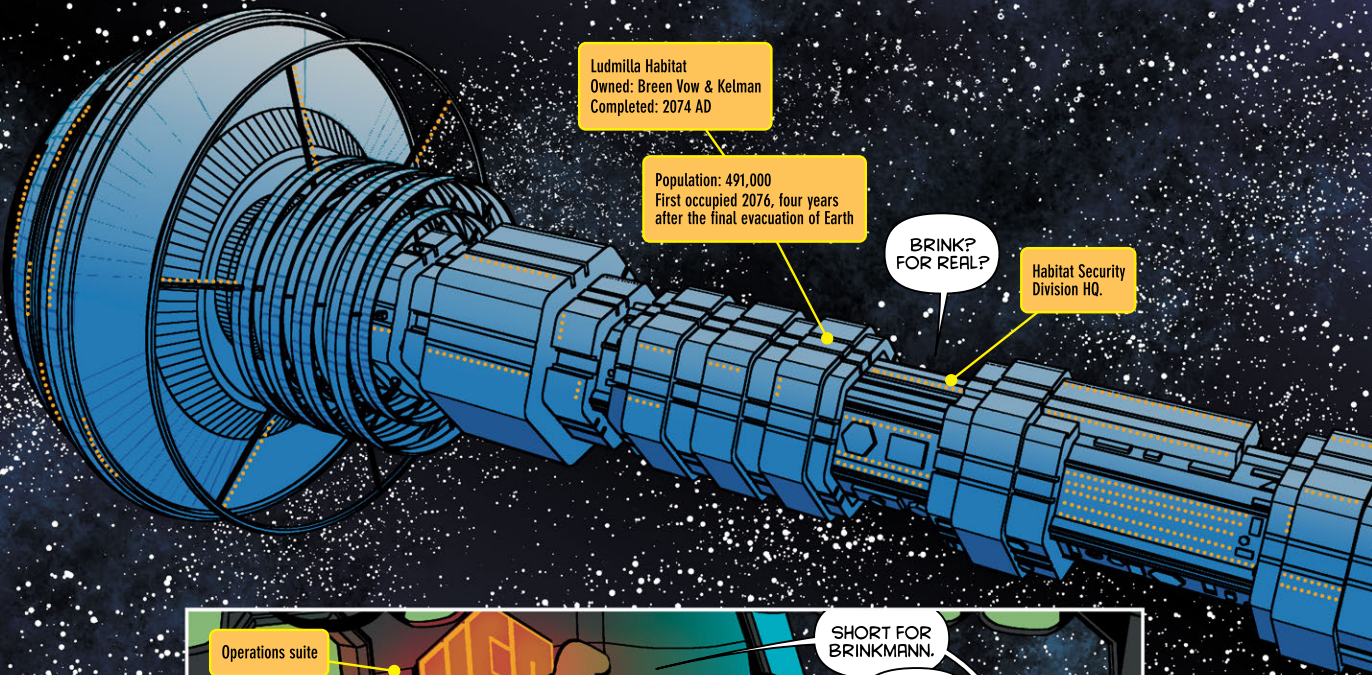
THIS IS MY PARTNER, BRINK.

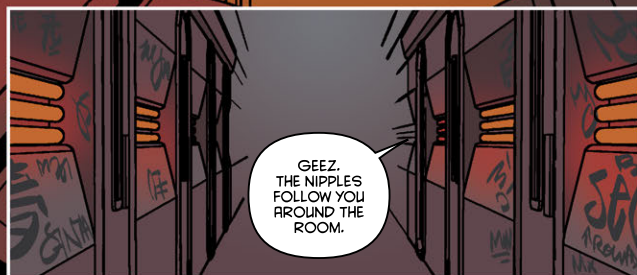
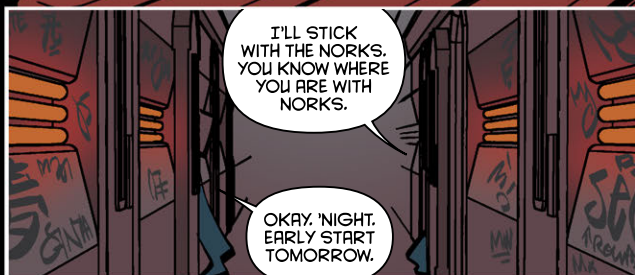
THAT'S **FUNNY!**

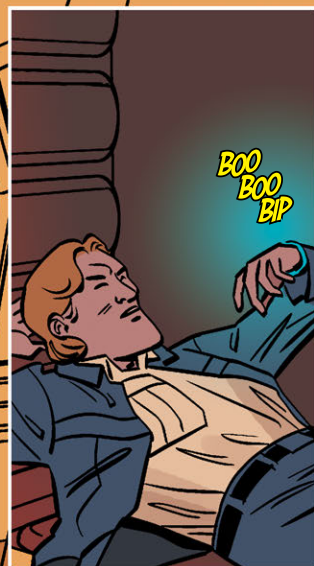
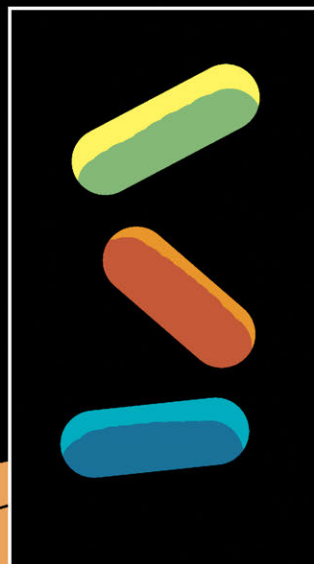
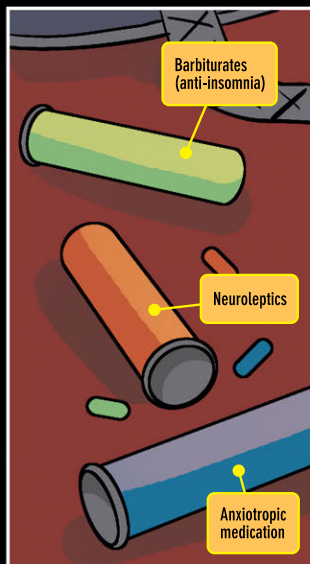
SHORT FOR BRINKMANN.

AND YES, IT **IS**. BRINK ON THE BRINK.











THIS IS THE GUY. HASSAN IN OPS SAID YOU WANTED TO SPEAK TO ME.

OH, RIGHT. YOU GOT A NAME?



BILDER.

THAT'S YOUR NAME?

NO, THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL ME.

232 OVERWALK IN TEN. COME ALONE.

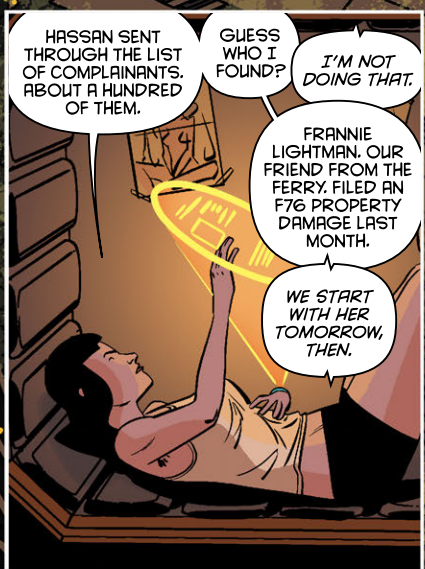


BOOBOOBIP

BRINKMANN.

WHERE ARE YOU?

GONE FOR A WALK. WHAT'S UP, BRIDGE?



HASSAN SENT THROUGH THE LIST OF COMPLAINANTS. ABOUT A HUNDRED OF THEM.

GUESS WHO I FOUND?

I'M NOT DOING THAT.

FRANNIE LIGHTMAN. OUR FRIEND FROM THE FERRY. FILED AN F76 PROPERTY DAMAGE LAST MONTH.

WE START WITH HER TOMORROW, THEN.



GOTTA GO.



BILDER?

S'GONNA WAKE UP ANY DAY NOW.

Uh, WHAT IS?



VOVEK.
ILLUSTRIOUS
TRULL. MR
MIBBER.

YOU GONNA
MAKE SOME
SENSE SOON?

NAMES. THEY'RE
ALL NAMES. DIFFERENT
CULTS, DIFFERENT
NAMES. THE EXHALATION
CALL IT VOVEK. THE
SHINERS CALLED IT
MR MIBBER.

CALLED
WHAT?



YOUR
BASIC GIANT
PRIMORDIAL
DAEMON
SPACE-GOD.

FUNNY, THEY'RE
ALL RAT-SHIT
INSANE, BUT
THEY GOT THAT
ONE BELIEF IN
COMMON.

THE SUN'S
AN EGG, AND INSIDE
IT THERE'S A GIANT
SLEEPING SPACE-GOD,
AND ANY TIME NOW IT'S
GOING WAKE UP AFTER
A BILLION YEARS
AND HATCH.

I HAVE NO
IDEA WHAT TO
SAY TO THAT.



Uh-huh.
CULTISTS
BE CRAZY.

BUT
CONSISTENT.
MR MIBBER, UP-
ARISING FROM
THE SUN-SHELL.

MELANCHOLEMA,
BORN OUT OF THE
UNREACH. VOVEK
AWAKENING AT--

WAITAMINUTE.

WHAT DID
YOU JUST
SAY?



VOVEK
AWAKENING--

BEFORE
THAT.



MELANCHOLEMA.



THAT
WORD MEAN
SOMETHING
TO YOU,
HUH?

IT CAME UP
RELATING TO
A PROBLEM
ON ODETTE.



MELANCHOLEMA
IS ONE OF THEIR
GODS.

GIANT
PRIMORDIAL
DAEMON
SPACE-
GODS?

RIGHT.

IT'S PART OF
THE LANGUAGE
USED BY
SEVERAL
SECTS.

AND IT
MEANS?



YOUR BASIC
BELIEVER IS OUT OF
HIS SKULL ON SUPER-
ACTIVE NUDGE, PLUS
A LOT OF BANNED
SUBSTANCES.

IT MEANS
WHATEVER THEY
FEEL LIKE IT
MEANS THAT
MORNING.



BUT IT'S CULT
LANGUAGE. DOESN'T
MATTER WHAT IT
MEANS, IT INDICATES
A COMMONALITY
OF DELUSION.

SHARED
PSYCHOSIS.



RIGHT. I'VE
BEEN TRACKING
LANGUAGE
INSTANCES.

"MELANCHOLEMA"
IS A KEY TAG.

IT'S GETTING
WHISPERED A
LOT DOWN HERE
IN BOLO, AND IN
BOILERHOUSE
TOO.

A NEW
CULT?

PROBABLY.
IT DOESN'T HAVE A NAME
YET. MY GUESS IS IT'S
GROWING, ESTABLISHING
ITS DELUSION.

ANOTHER MONTH,
MAYBE TWO, IT'LL START
ANNOUNCING ITSELF
AND WEARING ITS
IDENTITY, SAME AS THE
OTHER GROUPS.



YOU SOUND
DOUBTFUL.

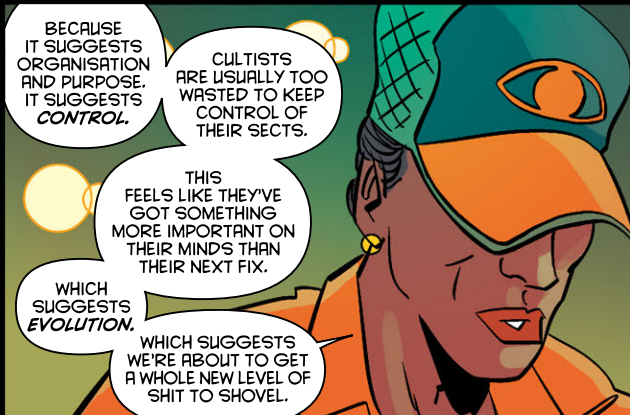


MAYBE I'VE
BEEN UNDER TOO
LONG. THIS ONE
FEELS HINKY.

LIKE IT'S NOT
FOLLOWING THE SAME
PATTERN. LIKE IT WANTS TO
STAY COVERT. *ESOTERIC*.
KNOWN ONLY TO THOSE
WITHIN.

THAT WOULD BE
NEW.

WHY?



BECAUSE
IT SUGGESTS
ORGANISATION
AND PURPOSE.
IT SUGGESTS
CONTROL.

CULTISTS
ARE USUALLY TOO
WASTED TO KEEP
CONTROL OF
THEIR SECTS.

THIS
FEELS LIKE THEY'VE
GOT SOMETHING
MORE IMPORTANT ON
THEIR MINDS THAN
THEIR NEXT FIX.

WHICH
SUGGESTS
EVOLUTION.

WHICH SUGGESTS
WE'RE ABOUT TO GET
A WHOLE NEW LEVEL OF
SHIT TO SHOVEL.



Ludmilla Habitat

Boilerhouse district

THIS BILDER GUY, HE'S GOING TO KEEP US ADVISED?



IF HE HEARS ANYTHING.

YOU COULD'VE TAKEN ME ALONG TO THE MEET.

YOU WERE RESTING.



YOU SHOULD HAVE RESTED TOO. YOU LOOK LIKE A CRAP SANDWICH, BRINK.



IT'S YOU!

I KNEW YOU'D COME AND VISIT! I KNEW IT!

I PUT ASIDE SOME MACRO VEG FOR YOU!



ACTUALLY, THIS IS BUSINESS, FRANNIE.

OOOH! EXCITING!

YOU FILED A F76 PROPERTY DAMAGE LAST MONTH. SAYS YOU SUSPECTED SECT ACTIVITY?



THAT'S RIGHT.

BOB! COME OVER AND MEET THESE GUYS!



HI. BOB ADLER.

BOB'S ONE OF MY *REGULAR* CUSTOMERS. BOB'S A *GURU*; SELF-HELP STUFF. BOB'S INTO *CLEAN LIVING*.

BOB FILED A REPORT TOO.

"BOB" IS STARTING EVERY SENTENCE.



YOU'RE *SO* FUNNY!

MY PLACE IS DOWN THE LOOP.

I GOT MY WINDOWS SMASHED SAME NIGHT AS FRANNIE'S.

SLOGANS TOO.

YOU'RE A WHAT, A "*GURU*"?



NO, A LIFE-COACH. THIS LIFE WE'VE BEEN GIVEN IS PRETTY BAD, RIGHT? I JUST HELP PEOPLE.

HE'S A *WIZARD*!



IT'S JUST SIMPLE STUFF. CLEAN LIVING... NO SYNTH FOOD, NO DRUGS, NO NUDDGE.

AND, LONG-TERM, I BELIEVE IN *MIGRATION*.



TO... WHERE?

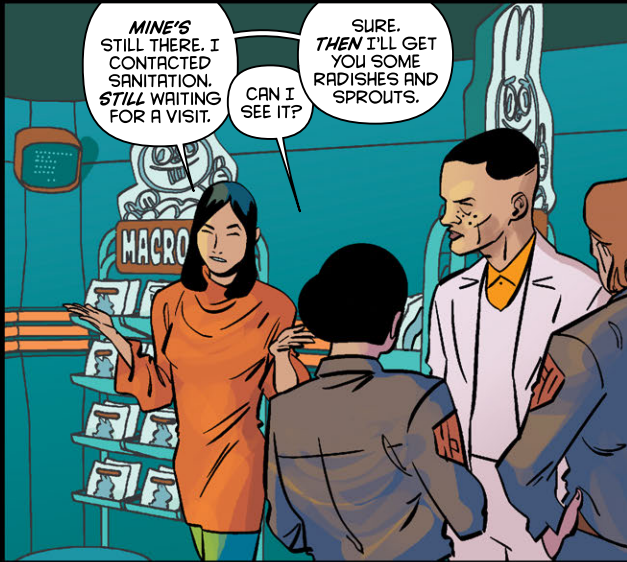


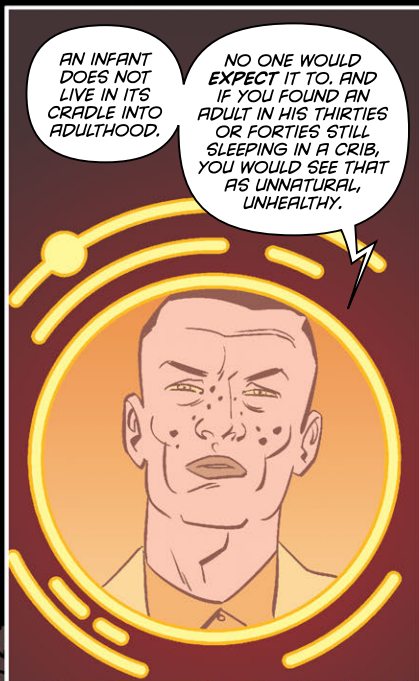
MANKIND KILLED THE EARTH. WE CAN'T LIVE ON THE BRINK FOREVER. IT'S JUST NOT SUSTAINABLE.

I SUPPORT THE MOVEMENT TO DEVELOP A VIABLE PROPULSION SYSTEM SO THAT WE CAN MOVE, AS A SPECIES, TO A NEW SOLAR SYSTEM AND MAKE A FRESH BEGINNING.

THAT IDEA'S BEEN SHOT DOWN A THOUSAND TIMES. THE SHEER LOGISTICS ARE UNFEASIBLE.







AN INFANT DOES NOT LIVE IN ITS CRADLE INTO ADULTHOOD.

NO ONE WOULD EXPECT IT TO. AND IF YOU FOUND AN ADULT IN HIS THIRTIES OR FORTIES STILL SLEEPING IN A CRIB, YOU WOULD SEE THAT AS UNNATURAL, UNHEALTHY.



WE HAVE OUTGROWN OUR CRADLE. WE'RE NOT INFANTS ANY MORE.

MIGRATION IS OUR NATURAL NEXT STEP.

SCIENCE HAS SO FAR IDENTIFIED SIXTEEN HUNDRED EXTRASOLAR PLANETS THAT MEET THE GAINES SCALE CRITERIA FOR HABITATION.



NOW THE CORPS ARE GOING TO TELL YOU--LOOK AT THE LITERATURE--THEY'RE GOING TO TELL YOU THAT INVESTMENT IN EXOPLANET MIGRATION IS UNFEASIBLE.

THAT THE PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS ARE ENTIRELY BEYOND THE SCOPE OF BRINK SOCIETY.

THE TWO KEY ISSUES--AND THERE ARE LOTS OF ISSUES--BUT THE TWO KEY ISSUES ARE JOURNEY TIME AND FUEL LOADS.



LET'S TALK A BIT ABOUT THOSE.

WHAT WE NEED IS INVESTMENT IN RADICAL NEW PROPULSION SYSTEMS THAT--

BUSY?

I WAS SPEED WATCHING SOME OF BOB ADLER'S GURU-TUBE SEMINARS.



WHY?

WE'VE BEEN HERE THREE DAYS. LOOKING AT HOOTERS FOR AMUSEMENT PALLS AFTER A WHILE.



WELL, I'VE BEEN DOING SOMETHING USEFUL.

NICE. THAT'S A SOUR MOOD YOU'RE IN TODAY.

EXCEPT IT'S THE SAME SOUR MOOD AS EVERY DAY.

DO YOU WANT TO HEAR OR NOT?

SHOOT.



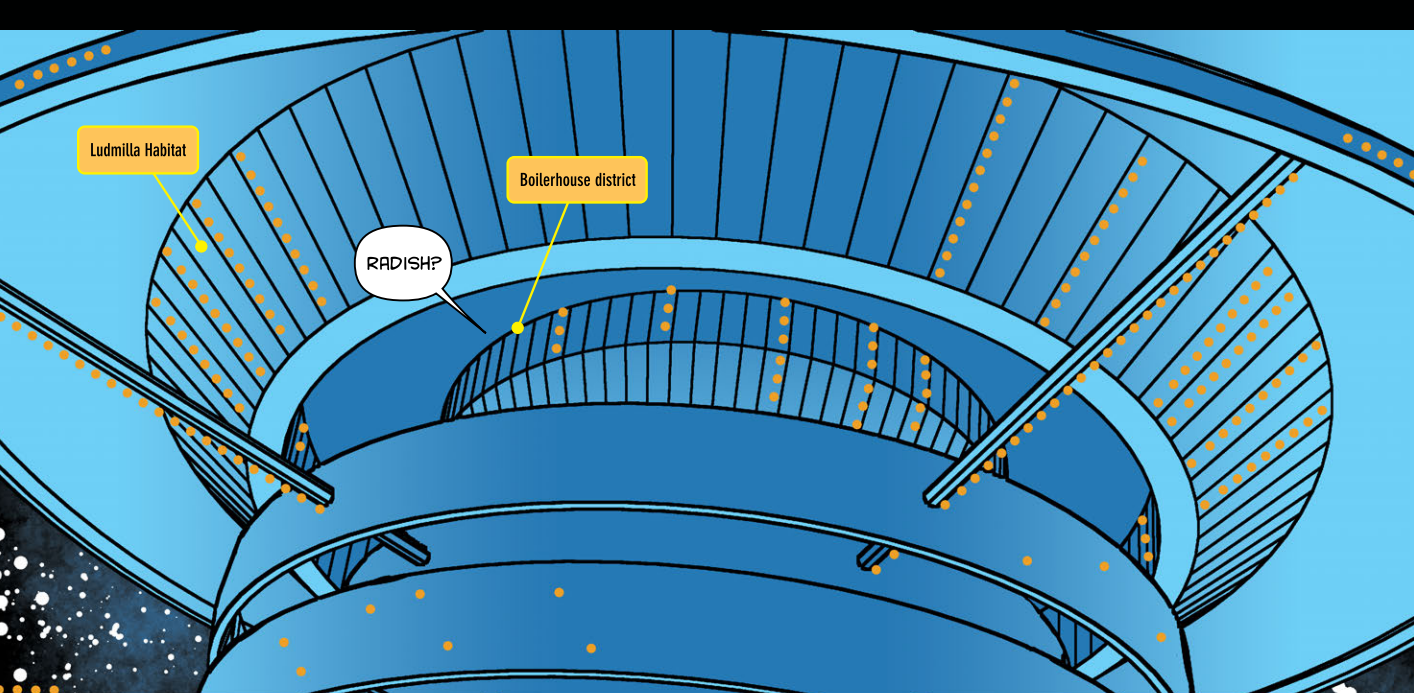
HASSAN RUSH-JOBBED THE PAINT SCRAPINGS WE TOOK FROM THE MACRO WOMAN'S WALL.

ONLY TOOK TWENTY- EIGHT HOURS. GOOD JOB, HSD FORENSICS.

IT'S NOT PAINT.

IT'S POLYPLASTIC UNDERSEAL FOR USE ON THERMAL DUCTING.

THE DUCT AND VENT MAINTENANCE UNION IS BASED IN BOILERHOUSE.



Ludmilla Habitat

Boilerhouse district

RADISH?



Affiliated Ducting and Ventilation Maintenance Union (Ludmilla Habitat)

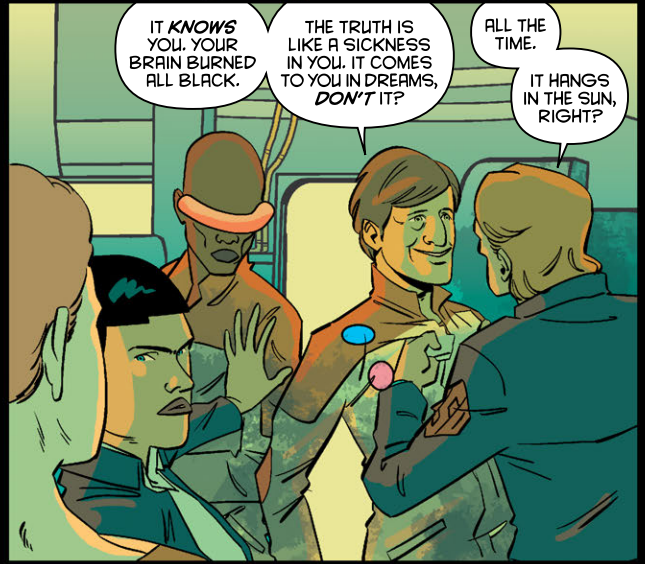
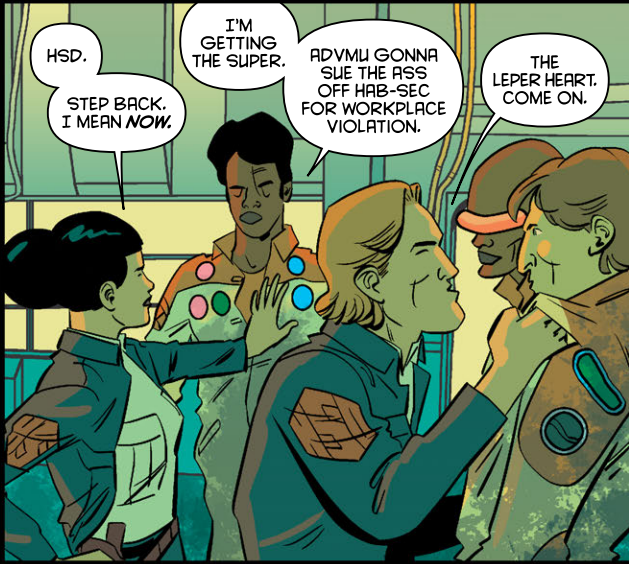
WE CAN'T WALK IN AND RUN AN UN-AUTH INSPECT.

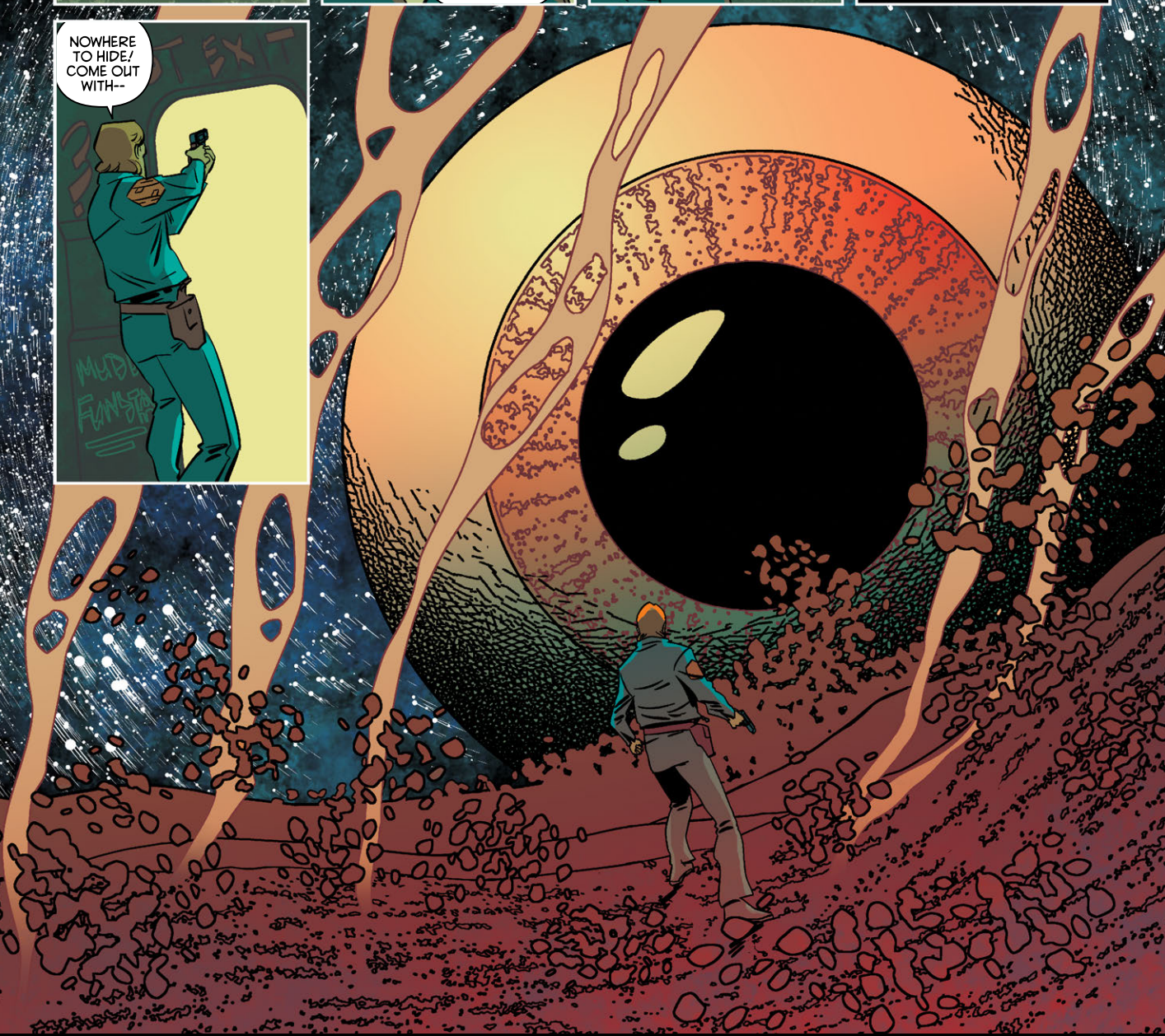
LET ME TAG HASSAN FOR A WARRANT.

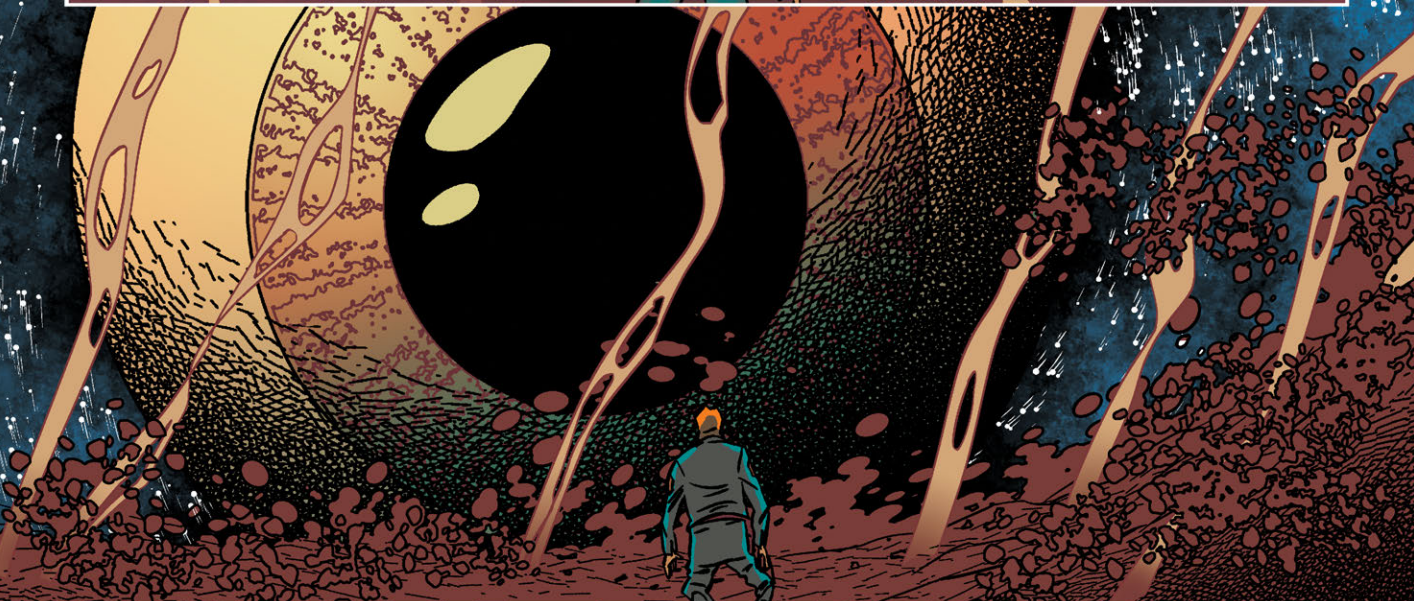
WE WON'T GET IT. THE UNIONS HAVE CLOUT.

WE'VE GOT TEN GOOD MINUTES TO PURSUE REASONABLE SUSPICION BEFORE WE GET BOOTED.









BRINK?
BRINK!
WHERE DID
HE **GOP**

BRINK,
WHAT DID
HE **DO** TO
YOU?



RIGHT
BEHIND YOU.
WHERE DID
HE **GOP**

IT'S BEEN
HOURS... I'VE
BEEN IN HERE
FOR **HOURS**...



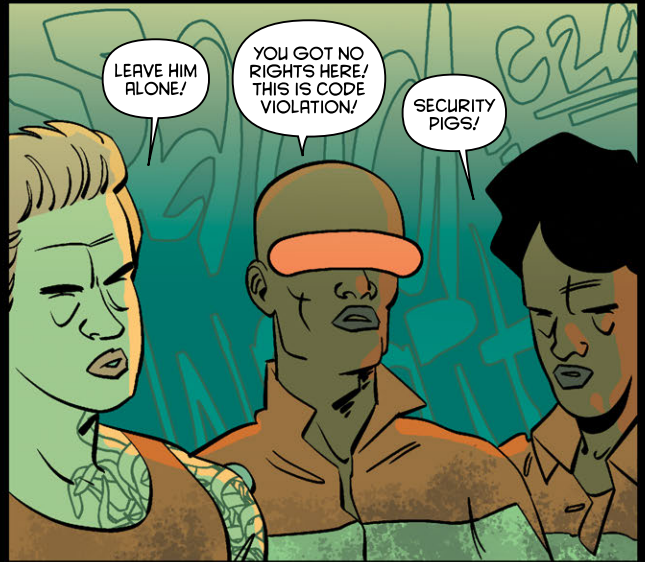




WHAT?
NO...

GOD'S
SAKE,
BRINK!

YOU LOT!
DISPERSE! LET
US THROUGH!



LEAVE HIM
ALONE!

YOU GOT NO
RIGHTS HERE!
THIS IS CODE
VIOLATION!

SECURITY
PIGS!



THIS IS
A *SECURITY
MATTER!* WE
HAVE REASON
TO DETAIN!

WE'RE TAKING
THIS MAN BACK
FOR INTERVIEW!

GET THE HELL
OUT OF OUR WAY OR
I'LL GET RIOT IN HERE
TO BOOK THE LOT OF
YOU AND SHUT THIS
SHOP DOWN FOR
INSPECTION!

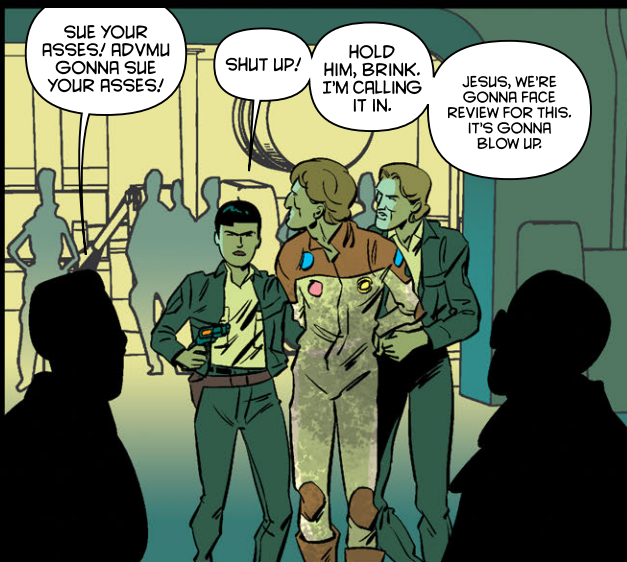
BITCH!



ASSHOLES!

HSD
SUCKS!

UNION'S
GONNA
SUE YOUR
ASSES!



SUE YOUR
ASSES! ADVMU
GONNA SUE
YOUR ASSES!

SHUT UP!

HOLD
HIM, BRINK.
I'M CALLING
IT IN.

JESUS, WE'RE
GONNA FACE
REVIEW FOR THIS.
IT'S GONNA
BLOW UP.



HSD URGENT ASSIST NEEDED.
OUTSIDE ADVMU SHOP, BOILERHOUSE.
REQUESTING RAPID PICK-UP AND
CODE TWELVE RESPONSE.

COPY THAT.
STAND BY.





NNN...

O-O-OFFICER DOWN.

H-H-HELP ME.



SAY AGAIN?

GET UP. GET UP. BRINK, GET UP.



GET UP! GET UP! BRINK, GET UP!

GET UP, BRINK! GET UP!

Ludmilla Habitat
Owned: Breen, Vow & Kelman
Completed: 2074 AD

Population: 491,000
First occupied 2076,
four years after the final
evacuation of Earth

SO, YEAH,
THEY--

KURTIS?

Habitat Security
Division HQ.



YEP.

THEY'RE
GOING TO
PASS THE
CASE TO
REVIEW.

YEAH,
YEAH.



NOT
JUST THE
SHOOTING.

WITH A LINE
DEATH, THE
WHOLE CASE
GETS PASSED
ACROSS.

I GET
IT.

HSD evidence
collection pouch

Service side arm,
warrant card,
badge, gene-swabs;
Bridget Kurtis,
Investigator HSD



YOU'LL HAVE
TO STAY HERE
UNTIL REVIEW
IS FINISHED.

I WANT TO
STAY ANYWAY,
TO SEE THE
CASE OUT.

WELL....

I'M SAYING
YOU WON'T BE
ABLE TO DO THAT
BECAUSE THE
CASE IS GETTING
PASSED.

YOU
UNDERSTAND
YOU'RE
SUSPENDED,
RIGHT?



OKAY, BUT THEY'LL
NEED ME TO RUN
THROUGH THE
MATERIALS WITH
THEM AT LEAST.

I GUESS.

REVIEW NEEDS
YOU TO BAG
UP EVERYTHING
YOU HAVE THAT'S
CASE-RELATED
AND SIGN IT
OVER TO ME.

WE'VE ALREADY
GATHERED
BRINKMANN'S
EFFECTS.



I--

HASSAN, I
DON'T KNOW
IF WE HAD
CAUSE.

I DON'T KNOW
WHAT BRINK WAS
THINKING, BUT IT
SEEMED TO ME
LIKE IT WAS OFF. I
DON'T THINK IT'LL
STAND UP AND--

NO,
NO, NO.

NOT
LISTENING.



YOU NEED TO GET IT
CLEAR BEFORE YOU SAY
ANYTHING TO ANYBODY,
INCLUDING **ME**, OR
ANYBODY FROM
REVIEW.

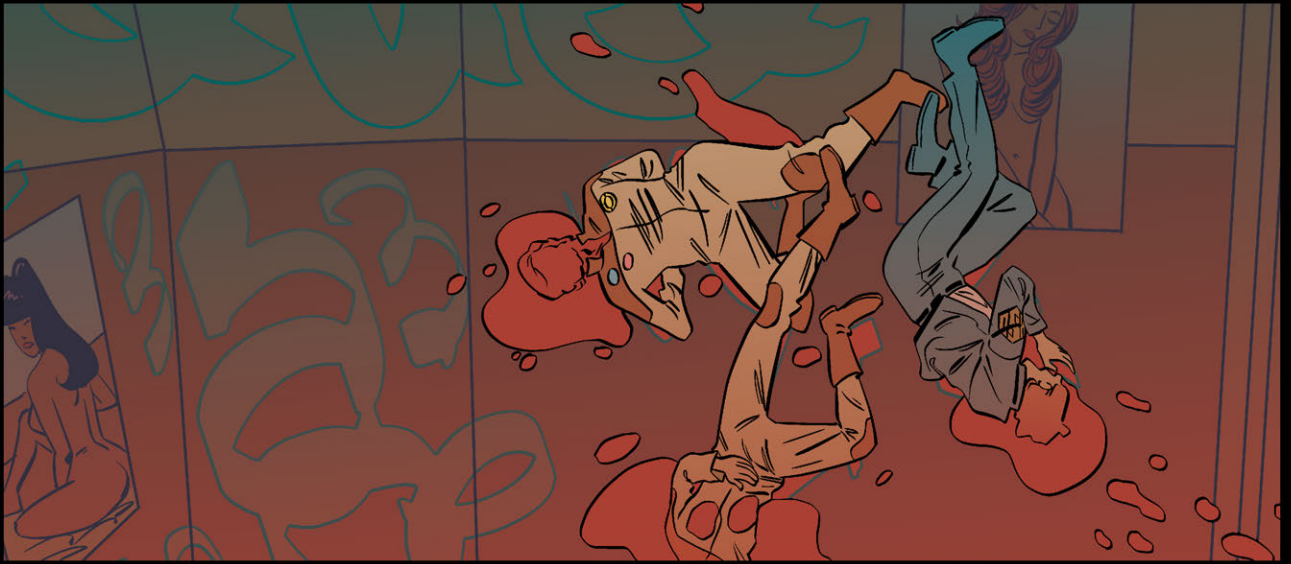
YOU NEED
TO TALK TO
LEGAL. I CAN
GIVE YOU A
CONTACT.

YOU NEED TO
HAVE THE
CONVERSATION
SOON.

KURTIS, DO YOU
UNDERSTAND WHAT
I'M SAYING?

YEP.









WHEN YOU WENT IN THERE, DID YOU HAVE CAUSE?

IT WAS BRINK'S CALL.

DID HE HAVE CAUSE?



YOU KNOW THE ADVMU IS SUING HAB-SEC?

NO. FOR WHAT?

NOT CLEAR YET. CODE VIOLATION AT LEAST. HARASSMENT. TRESPASS. UN-AUTH.

SCREW THEM.



YOU REALISE THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE SHIT HERE, KURTIS? THE UNIONS HAVE HUGE PULL. WE'VE GOT AN OFFICER KILLED IN THE LINE, A POSSIBLE SUSPECT KILLED WHILE UNDER ARREST. A POSSIBLE UNJUSTIFIED SHOOTING. THAT'S TWO DEAD ADVMU WORKERS.



THE PERP WAS KILLING BRINK AND THE SUSPECT. IT WAS JUSTIFIED.

YEAH, BUT IF HE WAS PROVOKED BY AN UN-AUTH INSPECT AND YOU CAN'T SHOW CAUSE--

DID YOU FIND ME JUST TO PISS ME OFF?



NO. I FOUND YOU TO TELL YOU THAT YOU POKED SOMETHING AND WOKE IT UP.

THERE ARE RIOTS BREWING ALL THROUGH BOILERHOUSE. SOME OF THAT IS THE USUAL ANTI-HSD CRAP, BUT THE REST IS LIKE PRESSURE VENTING.

LIKE THE COMMUNITY HERE IS PROTECTING ITSELF.

FROM WHAT?



FROM THE LIGHT THAT SHINES IN WHEN THE ROCK GETS TURNED OVER. I'VE BEEN WORKING SECT-CRIME FOR SIX YEARS. EVERY SINGLE CASE, THE SECT HAS BEEN SMALL. THIRTY MEMBERS MAX.

THEY GET SHUT DOWN BY US OR THEY COLLAPSE UNDER THEIR OWN INSANITY. I THINK THEY'RE ALL JUST SYMPTOMS. OUTGROWTHS AND BY-BLOWS OF SOMETHING BIG THAT'S BEEN THERE ALL ALONG.



THIS ISN'T A NEW SECT, KURTIS. THIS IS THE **GRANDDADDY**. THIS IS THE **SOURCE**.

AND IT'S THOUSANDS STRONG.

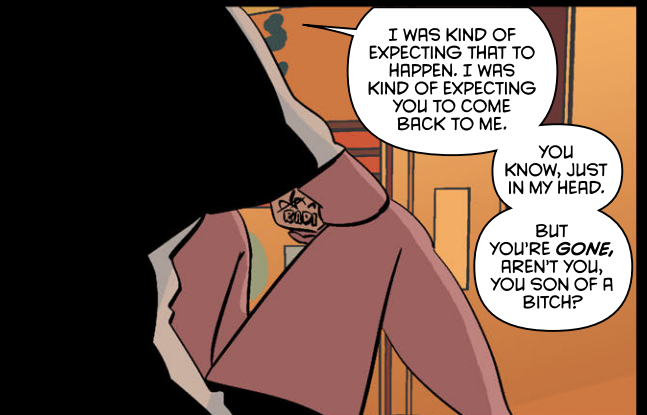
AND IT'S RIGHT **HERE**.

BILDER--



WHAT?

I NEED A **GUN**.





I'M GLAD ABOUT THAT, ACTUALLY. YOU'D BE A PAIN IN THE ASS IF YOU WERE HERE. YOU'D BE NAGGING ME.

YOU'D BE TELLING ME I SHOULD STOP DODGING THE APPOINTMENTS WITH REVIEW AND LEGAL.



YOU'D BE TELLING ME I HAD TO GET MY STATEMENT STRAIGHT WITH A DIVISION REP. ESTABLISH A GOOD CASE FOR CAUSE SO I COULD CLEAR MY NAME.

YOU'D PROBABLY BE TELLING ME TO BLAME IT ON YOU. YOU HAD A SERIOUS NUDGE PROBLEM. ANXIETY ISSUES.



YOU'D BE TELLING ME TO LET MY DEAD PARTNER TAKE THE FALL FOR A BOTCHED INSPECT.

YOU'D BE TELLING ME TO GET THE WHOLE THING CLEARED AWAY SO I COULD GO HOME TO ODETTE.



BECAUSE OTHERWISE I'M GOING TO BE SITTING HERE FOR MONTHS IN THIS BOX OF TITS WHILE LUDMILLA REVIEW RUNS ITS INVESTIGATION.

YOU'D BE TELLING ME TO AVOID BILDER BECAUSE HE'S CRAZY AS A SHIT-TANK RAT.



YOU'D BE YELLING AT ME ABOUT THE GUN I HAD HIM PROCURE FOR ME.



MOST OF ALL, IF I COULD SEE YOU, YOU'D BE TELLING ME THE FACT THAT I COULD SEE YOU WAS **PROOF**.

PROOF OF THE GODDAMN SPACE-GOD DEMONS.

PROOF OF THE MADNESS.



BECAUSE YOU KNOW I'VE BEEN EATING CLEAN AND OFF NUDGE FOR THREE WEEKS.

THERE ARE NO PHARMS SWIMMING IN MY SYSTEM, MESSING WITH MY HEAD.

IF I WAS SEEING YOU, IT'D BE PROOF IT WAS ALL REAL.

BECAUSE YOU HAD THE EXCUSE OF BEING MESSED UP IN THE HEAD. I **DON'T**.



BUT I **DON'T** SEE YOU, DO I?

IT'S BEEN THREE WEEKS SINCE YOU DIED, AND I DON'T SEE YOU AT ALL, BRINK.



SO I GUESS YOU DON'T GET TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO.

AND APART FROM BEING ABSOLUTELY ALONE WITH NO ONE TO TALK TO, I'M OKAY WITH THAT.



BOO
BOO
BOOP

Tracelet personal data device

PLAYBACK.

One missed call.



THIS IS BONNER FROM REVIEW. MS KURTIS, YOU'VE MISSED THE LAST FOUR DEPOSITIONS.

I APPRECIATE THIS IS A DIFFICULT TIME FOR YOU, BUT WE HAVE TO GET THIS DONE.



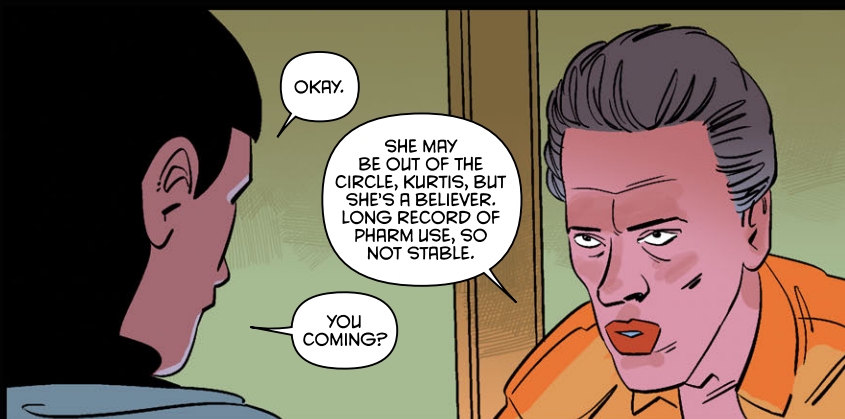
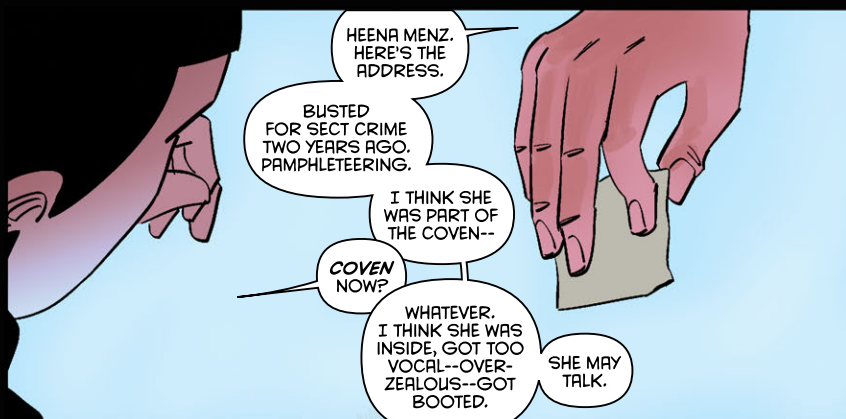
WE HAVE A SLOT TOMORROW AT--um--FIVE. I HAVE TO ADVISE YOU THAT IF YOU MISS THAT, WE WILL HAVE TO ISSUE A SUMMONS.

PLEASE DON'T MAKE US DO THAT. IT'LL MAKE THE WHOLE CASE A LOT MORE DIFFICULT. I BELIEVE THERE IS A GOOD OUTCOME POSSIBLE HERE, BUT WE NEED THAT INTERVIEW.

LET'S GET THIS SQUARED AWAY. CALL ME, PLEASE.



DELETE.







CRAP.
CRAP.



I HAVE
TO CALL
H.S.D. NOW,
RIGHT?



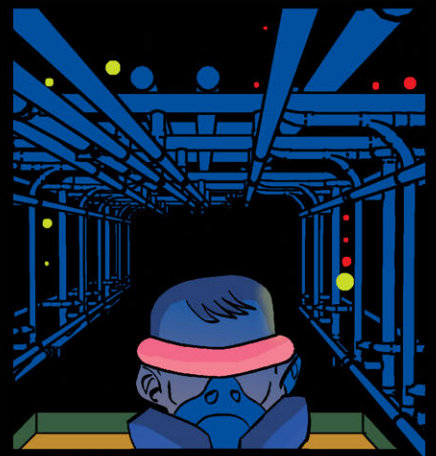
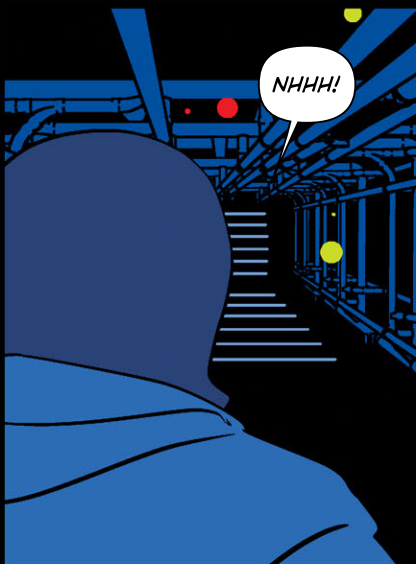
RIGHT?

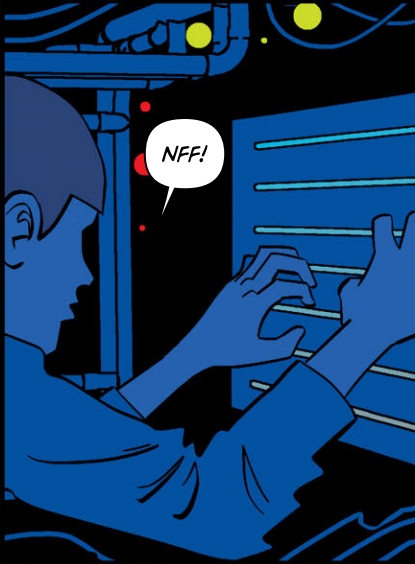
Oh, BYE,
THEN.



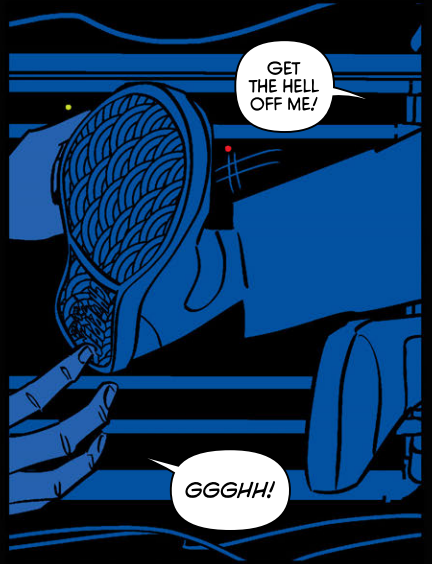
WELL...
SHIT.







NFF!



GET
THE HELL
OFF ME!

GGGHH!



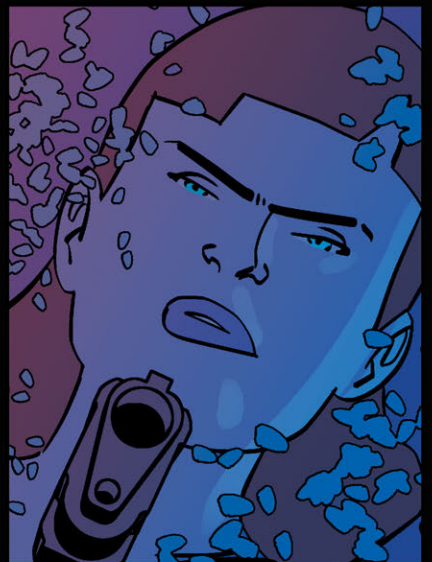
AAAAHH!



OOOOFF!



->HNH-<
->HNH-<
->HNH-<







THE
LEPER HEART
KNOWS YOU,
LADY!



IT KNOWS
WHAT YOU
DID!



AAAAHH--!



SHIT!

IT NEEDS
YOU TO PAY
NOW!

THE UNREACH WANTS
TO TAKE YOU DOWN
INTO ITSELF, FOR
LOOKING TOO DEEP
AND TRYING TO TAKE
AWAY ITS TRUTH!



LOW THETA
WAITS FOR
YOU IN THE
HEART OF
THE SUN.



STAY
THE HELL
BACK!

I WILL
SHOOT
EVERY ONE
OF YOU!



YOU AIN'T
GOT THE
ROUNDS,
LADY.

CLIP OF
EIGHT? NINE,
MAX.

THERE ARE
THOUSANDS
OF US.



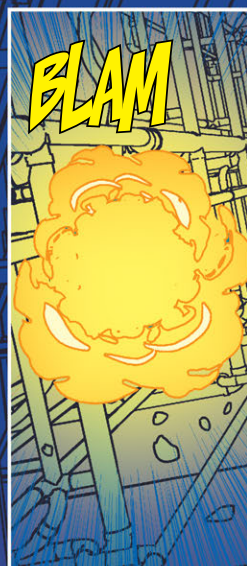
THAT'S STILL
NINE OF YOU
MOTHERS
DEAD.

AND ME
WITH A HEAD
START.



TO
WHERE?

EARTH'S
GONE. HOME'S
GONE. THERE'S
NOWHERE LEFT
TO RUN TO.





Grav-normal zone.

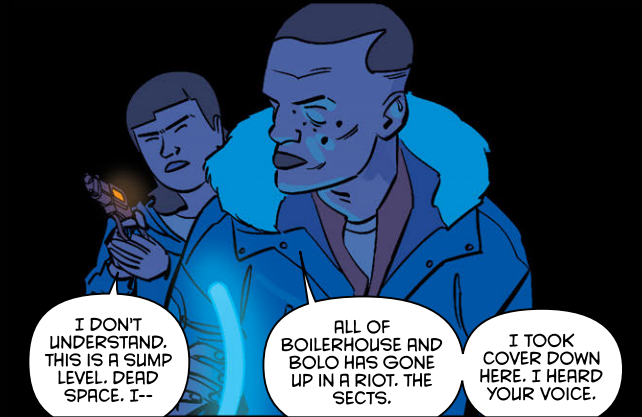


ADLER?

THE HELL ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE?

SAVING YOUR LIFE, LOOKS LIKE.

COME ON.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THIS IS A SUMP LEVEL. DEAD SPACE. I--

ALL OF BOILERHOUSE AND BOLO HAS GONE UP IN A RIOT. THE SECTS.

I TOOK COVER DOWN HERE. I HEARD YOUR VOICE.



NO YOU DIDN'T. THAT'S CRAP.

OKAY! OKAY.

I WAS WATCHING YOU. WE'VE RIGGED CAM-SURV RIGHT THROUGH THIS SECTION.

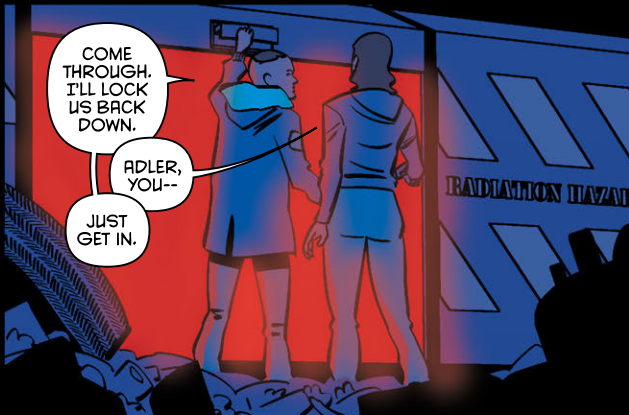
WE SHELTER DOWN HERE WHEN THINGS GET ROUGH.



WHO'S WE?

NORMAL PEOPLE.

PEOPLE WHO AREN'T OUT OF THEIR FRIGGING MINDS ON NUDGE OR TWISTED BY CULT BULLSHIT.



COME THROUGH. I'LL LOCK US BACK DOWN.

ADLER, YOU--

JUST GET IN.



YOU FOUND HER THEN, BOB?



WHO ARE YOU?

THAT'S ANISH. ANISH ANOOR.

NAME'S FAMILIAR...

IF YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT DEEP-RANGE PROPULSION SYSTEMS, ANISH IS A *DRIVE DESIGNER*. AN INNOVATOR. THE BEST.



WAS, BOB. WAS.



YOU TALKED ABOUT HIM IN YOUR SEMINARS.

YOU WATCHED THOSE?

ON GURU-TUBE. ALL OF THEM.

AND?

YOU MAKE A STRONG CASE FOR EXTRA-SOLAR MIGRATION, AND THE INVESTMENT NEEDED TO DO IT.



I TOLD YOU SHE'S SYMPATHETIC.

I COULDN'T JUST LET HER DIE OUT THERE. THE CULT'S ALREADY OFFERED HER PARTNER.

OKAY.

I SAID *STRONG*. I DIDN'T SAY I WAS CONVINCED. IF IT WAS SUCH A BRILLIANT IDEA, THE CORPS WOULD BE INVESTING, DEVELOPING...



AND LOSE THE ABSOLUTE CONTROL THEY HAVE HERE ON THE BRINK? BIG FISH, SMALL POND SYNDROME.

WHATEVER.

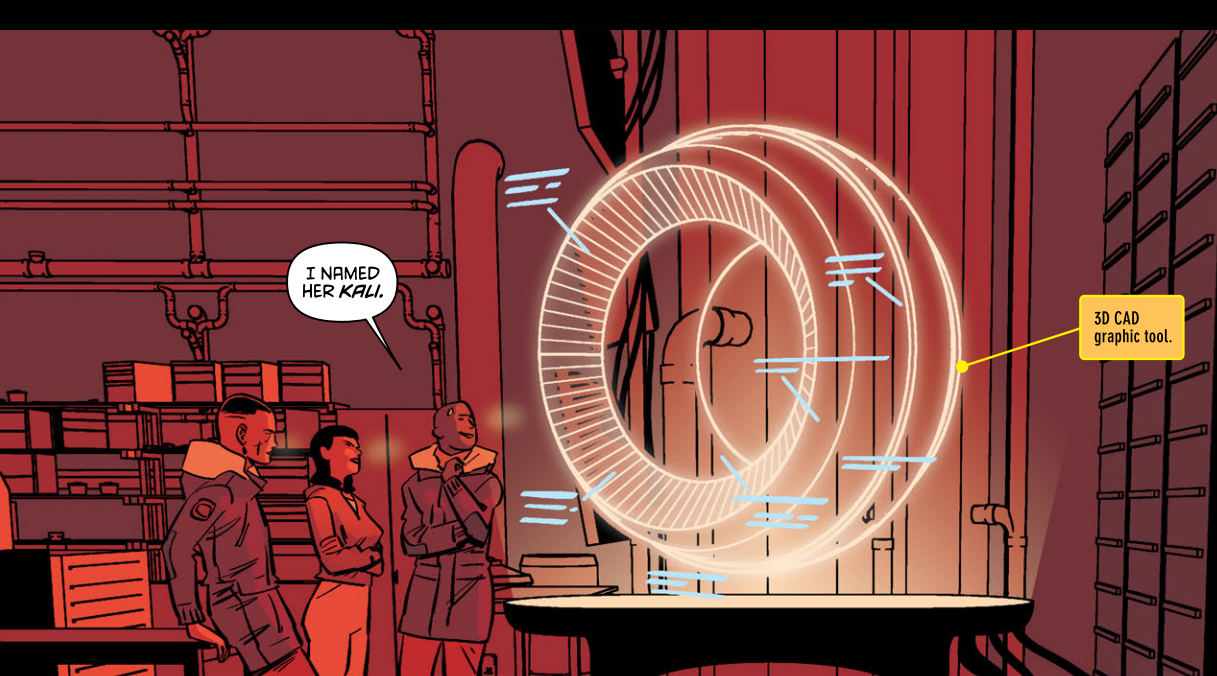


WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

IT'S A RUSTING SHITHOLE IN THE SUMP OF A ROTTING HABITAT WHERE WE HIDE IN THE DARK FROM THE WORST ASPECTS OF OUR OWN KIND.



AND IT'S WHERE THE *FUTURE* OF THE HUMAN RACE IS GOING TO *START*.



I NAMED
HER **KALI**.

3D CAD
graphic tool.



"CALLIE"?

NO, **KA-LI**. THE
GODDESS OF
EMPOWERMENT.

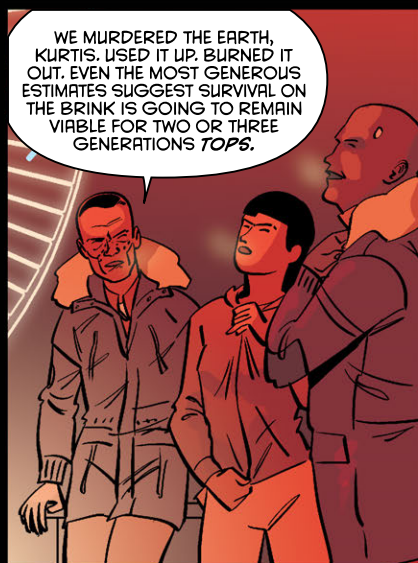
I THOUGHT
IT WAS
DESTRUCTION.



OH, IN PART. YOU
CANNOT CREATE
WITHOUT
DESTROYING.

THE AGE OF **KALI**
IS THE LAST CYCLE OF
MAN, BRIDGET. HERE,
EVERYTHING WE
HAVE BEEN WILL BE
DESTROYED.

NICE. A
REAL UPBEAT
NAME FOR
YOUR
PROJECT.



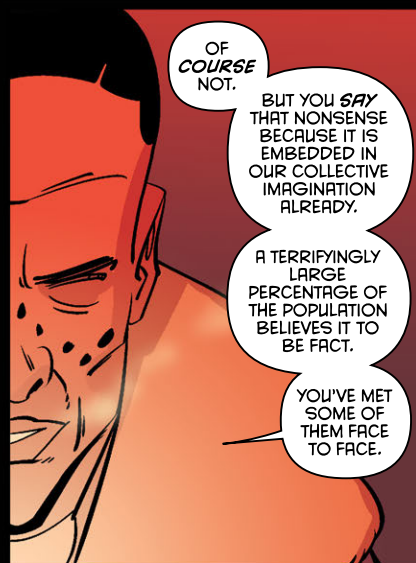
WE MURDERED THE EARTH,
KURTIS. USED IT UP. BURNED IT
OUT. EVEN THE MOST GENEROUS
ESTIMATES SUGGEST SURVIVAL ON
THE BRINK IS GOING TO REMAIN
VIALE FOR TWO OR THREE
GENERATIONS **TOPS**.



I'D SHAVE
ABOUT FOUR
DECADES OFF
THAT. **MORE**,
MAYBE.

THE HUMAN
RACE IS
LIVING OUT
ITS LAST
YEARS.

BECAUSE
GIANT COSMIC
SPACE-GODS
ARE GOING
TO HATCH OUT
AND KILL US
ALL?



OF
COURSE
NOT.

BUT YOU **SAY**
THAT NONSENSE
BECAUSE IT IS
EMBEDDED IN
OUR COLLECTIVE
IMAGINATION
ALREADY.

A TERRIFYINGLY
LARGE
PERCENTAGE OF
THE POPULATION
BELIEVES IT TO
BE FACT.

YOU'VE MET
SOME OF
THEM FACE
TO FACE.



THAT'S SECT CRAP, MASS PSYCHOSIS.

ABSOLUTELY, BECAUSE THE HUMAN RACE IS GOING MAD.

HAVE YOU HEARD OF *WEIRD LIFE*, BRIDGET?



NO, WHAT'S THAT?

IT'S NOT RELEVANT RIGHT NOW, ANISH.

KURTIS, HUMANITY IS SPIRALLING INTO A COLLECTIVE INSANITY.



LONG BEFORE THE SCANT RESOURCES OF THE BRINK DRY UP, WE WILL BE DEAD.

WE WILL SINK INTO THE DELUSIONS OF OUR OWN ADDICTED MINDS AND PERISH.

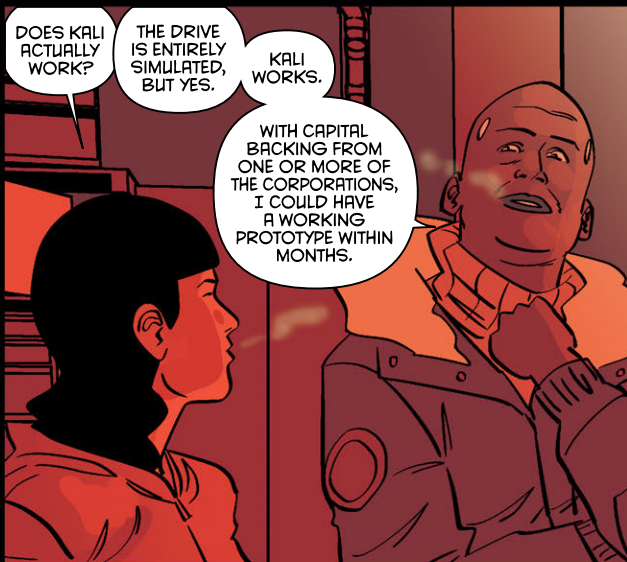
THE CULTS ARE JUST EARLY ADOPTERS OF THE HYSTERICAL INSTABILITY THAT WILL LEAD TO OUR EXTINCTION.



KALI IS THE WAY OUT. THE WAY FORWARD.

A ZERO-POINT DRIVE SYSTEM THAT WILL CUT OUT-SYSTEM JOURNEY TIMES TO A MATTER OF MONTHS.

KALI PUTS *FIVE* HABITABLE EXO-PLANETS WITHIN A THREE-YEAR RANGE.



DOES KALI ACTUALLY WORK?

THE DRIVE IS ENTIRELY SIMULATED, BUT YES.

KALI WORKS.

WITH CAPITAL BACKING FROM ONE OR MORE OF THE CORPORATIONS, I COULD HAVE A WORKING PROTOTYPE WITHIN MONTHS.

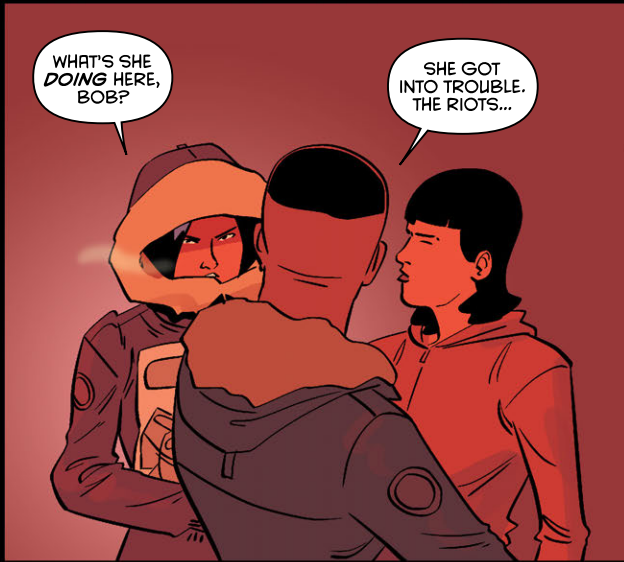


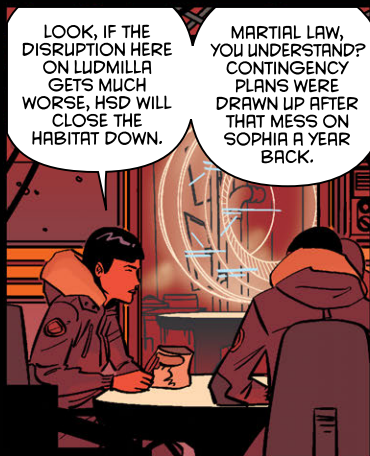
AND THEN WHAT? A MASS EXODUS?

COLONISATION?

A NEW START ON AN EXO-PLANET OUTSIDE THE SOLAR SYSTEM?







LOOK, IF THE DISRUPTION HERE ON LUDMILLA GETS MUCH WORSE, HSD WILL CLOSE THE HABITAT DOWN.

MARTIAL LAW, YOU UNDERSTAND? CONTINGENCY PLANS WERE DRAWN UP AFTER THAT MESS ON SOPHIA A YEAR BACK.



THAT WAS JUST THE START OF IT. THE FIRST REAL *REVELATION* OF SECT MADNESS.

I HAD HOPED THE AUTHORITIES MIGHT START TAKING ACTION *THEN*.



AND GREENLIGHT A MIGRATION PROGRAMME? IT WAS *CIVIL UNREST*, FRANNIE.

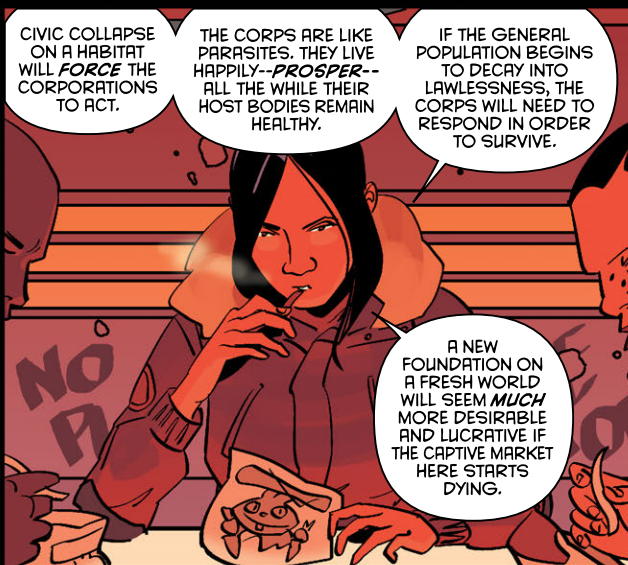
JUST LIKE THE CRAP GOING ON HERE.

I'M SAYING THINGS COULD GET TOUGH. LUDMILLA COULD BE SHUT DOWN. QUARANTINED.



GOOD.

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU MEAN, "GOOD"?



CIVIC COLLAPSE ON A HABITAT WILL *FORCE* THE CORPORATIONS TO ACT.

THE CORPS ARE LIKE PARASITES. THEY LIVE HAPPILY--*PROSPER*--ALL THE WHILE THEIR HOST BODIES REMAIN HEALTHY.

IF THE GENERAL POPULATION BEGINS TO DECAY INTO LAWLESSNESS, THE CORPS WILL NEED TO RESPOND IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.

A NEW FOUNDATION ON A FRESH WORLD WILL SEEM *MUCH* MORE DESIRABLE AND LUCRATIVE IF THE CAPTIVE MARKET HERE STARTS DYING.



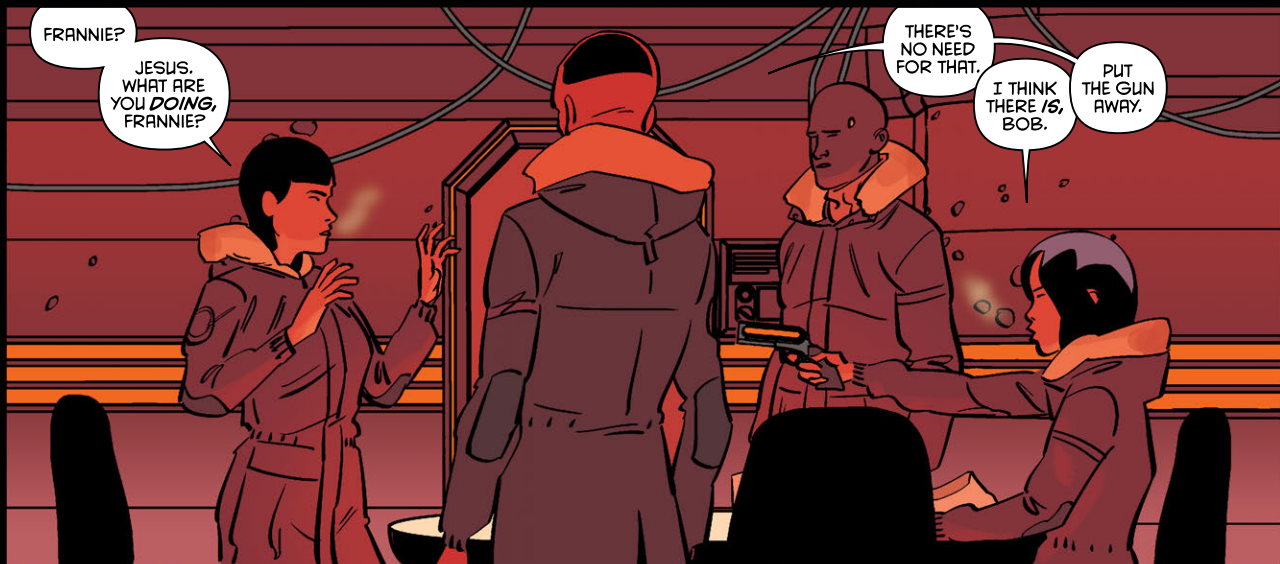
GOD'S *SAKE!* YOU'RE TALKING LIKE YOU *WANT* IT!



WE DO.

YOU'VE TOLD HER A LOT. DIDN'T YOU TELL HER THAT?

WE DO.



FRANNIE?

JESUS.
WHAT ARE
YOU *DOING*,
FRANNIE?

THERE'S
NO NEED
FOR THAT.

I THINK
THERE *IS*,
BOB.

PUT
THE GUN
AWAY.



I THINK
WE *NEED* ME
TO HAVE A
GUN, BOB.

YOU
REALLY
DON'T.



SHE'S
HSD.

SHE'S AN
INVESTIGATOR. SHE
INVESTIGATES.

YOU THINK
SHE WOULD
LIE DOWN HERE IN
THE BILGE BY
ACCIDENT?



SHE'S
INVESTIGATING
US.

I'M
REALLY
NOT.

PUT
THE GUN
DOWN.



WELL, IF
SHE WASN'T,
FRANNIE, SHE
IS *NOW*.



YEAH,
WELL.

WE CAN'T
BE TOO
CAREFUL.

I THINK SHE'S
GOOD. A GOOD
INVESTIGATOR.

REALLY,
REALLY
GOOD.



I THINK SHE'S ALL SMILES AND FRIENDLY, BUT DEEP DOWN, SHE'S THINKING *ALL* THE TIME.

I *AM* REALLY GOOD.

BUT I NEVER THOUGHT *THIS* CRAZY UP.



SHE'S GOT A GUN. BACK OF HER WAISTBAND.

TAKE IT OUT, BRIDGE. REALLY, REALLY SLOWLY.

OKAY.

PUT IT ON THE TABLE.

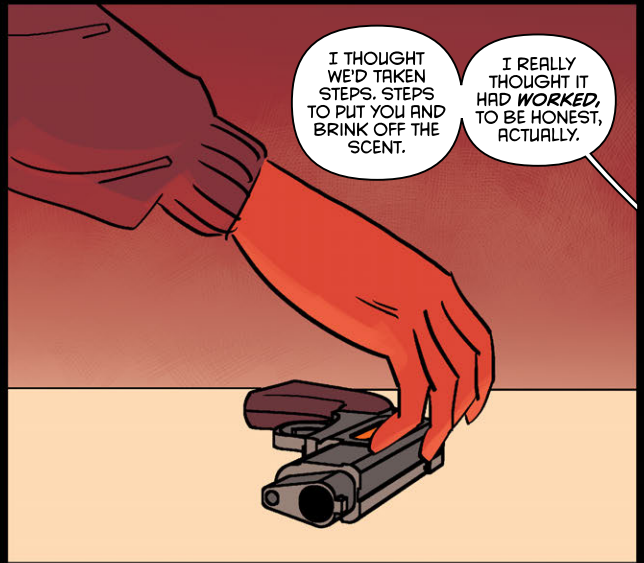


ON THE TABLE.

I LIKE YOU, BRIDGET.

BUT YOU WERE GETTING *EVER* SO CLOSE.

EVER SO.

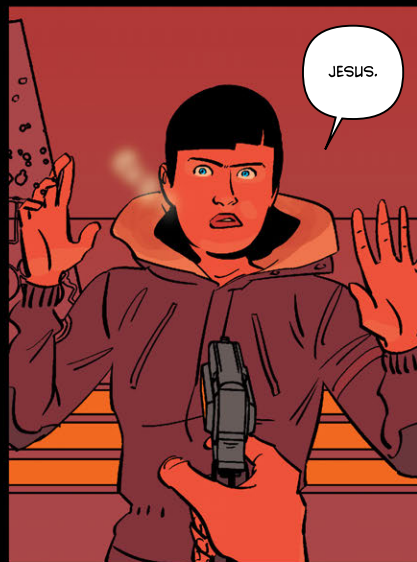


I THOUGHT WE'D TAKEN STEPS. STEPS TO PUT YOU AND BRINK OFF THE SCENT.

I REALLY THOUGHT IT HAD *WORKED*, TO BE HONEST, ACTUALLY.



WITH HIM ALL DEAD AND EVERYTHING.

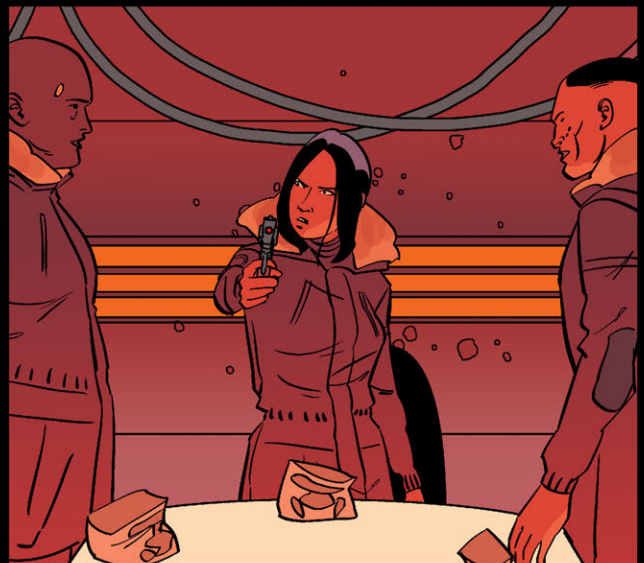


JESUS.



YOU WERE STOOD DOWN. CASE GOES NOWHERE.

NO MORE INVESTIGATING.







LIKE ACTUALLY
SEEING
SOMETHING
THROUGH.

OH
JESUS
CHRIST,
BOB--



SORRY. THOUGHT WE
COULD BRING YOU IN, BUT
THAT SHIP'S SAILED.

SHUT UP,
FRANNIE.

ANISH, GET SOME
PLASTIC SHEETING AND
SPREAD IT OUT IN THE
LOADING DOCK.

BOB? ARE
YOU GOING
TO SHOOT
HER, BOB?

CAN I
WATCH?



TAKE
OFF THE
COAT.

WHY?

THEY
COST MONEY.
I DON'T WANT
TO GET HOLES
IN IT.



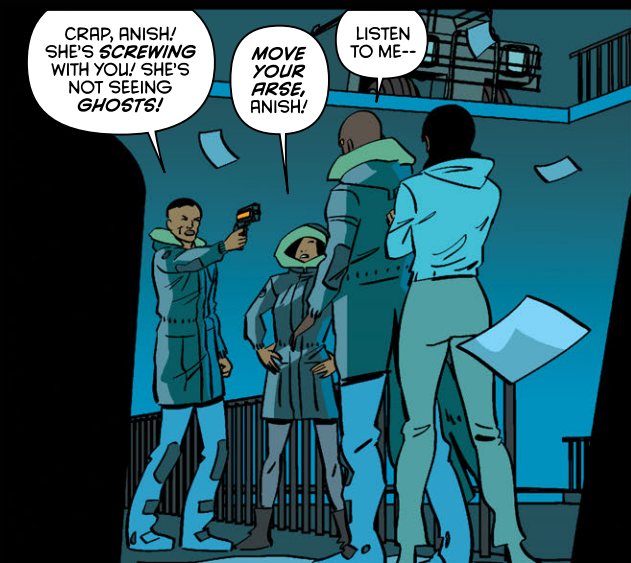
YOU KNOW
WHAT, BOB? I'VE BEEN
OFF NUDGE AND EATING
CLEAN SINCE I MET
PSYCHO FRANNIE.

WHY
AM I STILL
SEEING
THINGS?

WHAT
THINGS?

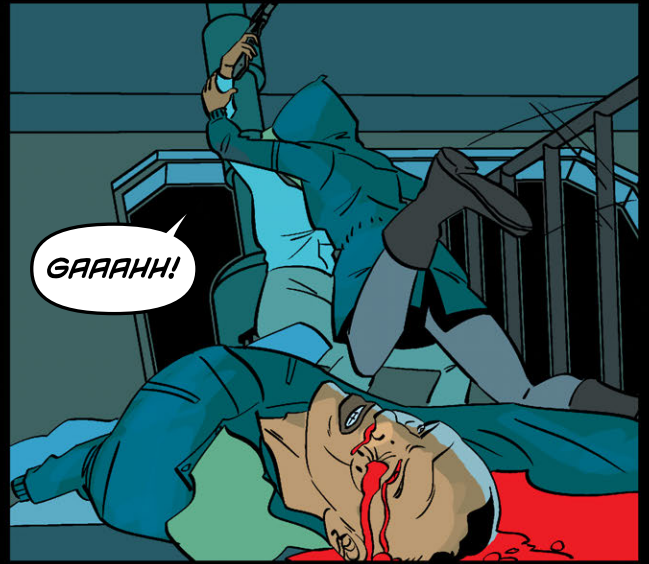


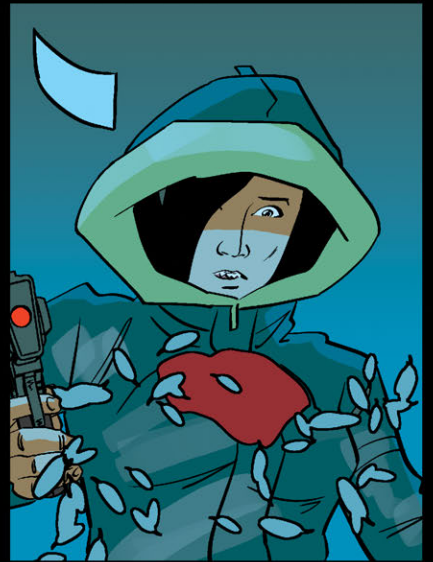
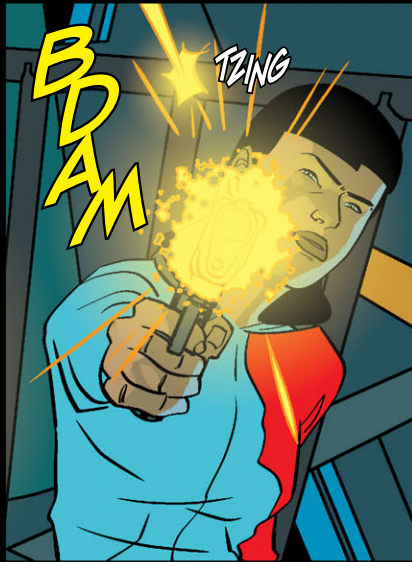
BRINK.

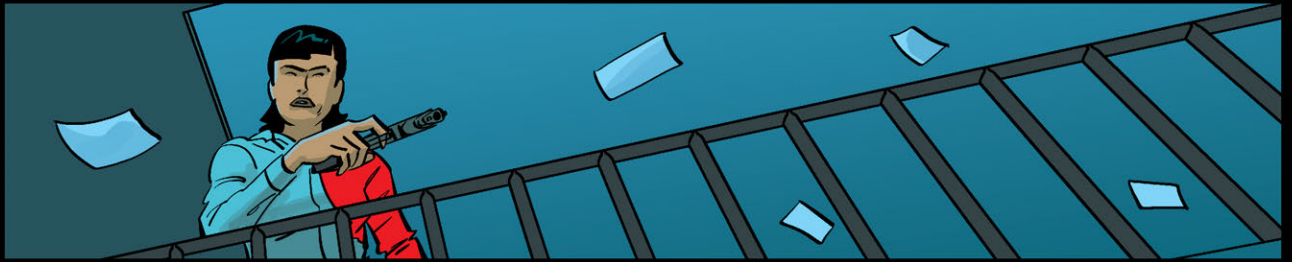












THIS IS KURTIS, HSD.

CALLING IN A NINE-SIX-OH. LOCK ON MY TRACELET FOR LOCATION.

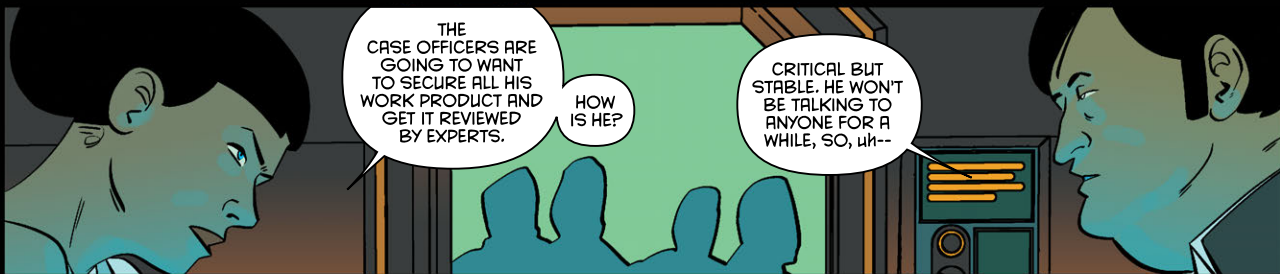
EMT AND SOC TEAMS **PRIORITY.**



ANISH ANOOR. PROPULSION ENGINEER?

Uh-huh.

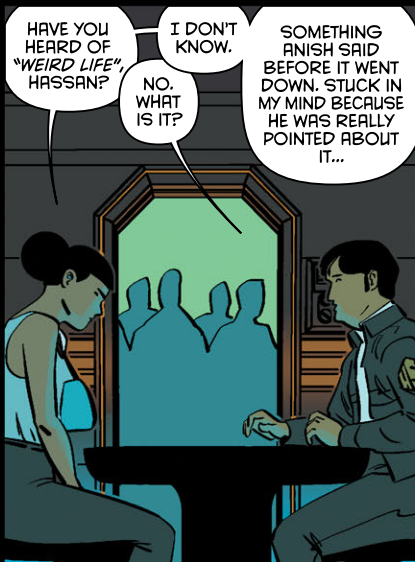
DRIVE DESIGNER.



THE CASE OFFICERS ARE GOING TO WANT TO SECURE ALL HIS WORK PRODUCT AND GET IT REVIEWED BY EXPERTS.

HOW IS HE?

CRITICAL BUT STABLE. HE WON'T BE TALKING TO ANYONE FOR A WHILE, SO, uh--



HAVE YOU HEARD OF "WEIRD LIFE", HASSAN?

I DON'T KNOW.

NO. WHAT IS IT?

SOMETHING ANISH SAID BEFORE IT WENT DOWN. STUCK IN MY MIND BECAUSE HE WAS REALLY POINTED ABOUT IT...



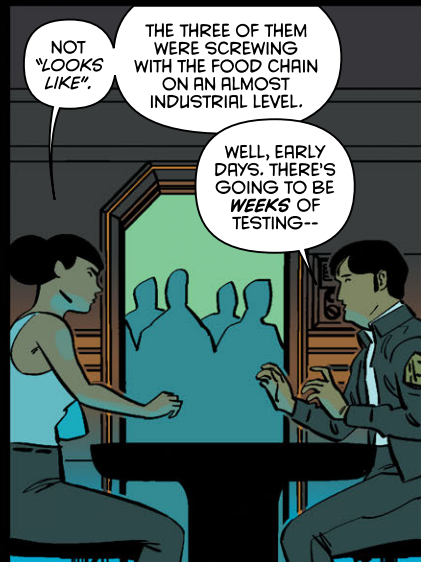
WELL, I DON'T KNOW.

LABWORK HAS ALREADY LOCATED A SYNTHETIC PSYCHOACTIVE CONTAMINANT IN *TWO* FOOD PROCESSING PLANTS IN BOILERHOUSE.

ANOTHER POSSIBLE IN BOLO.

MATCHES SAMPLES TAKEN FROM THE CRIME SCENE.

SO IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE RIGHT--



NOT "LOOKS LIKE".

THE THREE OF THEM WERE SCREWING WITH THE FOOD CHAIN ON AN ALMOST INDUSTRIAL LEVEL.

WELL, EARLY DAYS. THERE'S GOING TO BE *WEEKS* OF TESTING--



IT'S THE CASE *RIGHT THERE*. CONNECTS TO THE INCIDENTS IN BOILERHOUSE, AND TRACKS ALL THE WAY TO ODETTE.

YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO SEE WHICH HABITATS LUDMILLA IS EXPORTING FOOD TO, AND ALSO CHECK THE TRAVEL RECORDS OF ADLER, LIGHTMAN AND ANY ASSOCIATES--



WE KNOW HOW TO RUN AN OP, KURTIS.

I'LL LEAVE YOU GUYS TO TALK.



YOU'RE--?

BONNER. REVIEW.

OH YEAH.



WE'RE GOING TO BE TEASING THIS ONE APART FOR A LONG TIME.

CLEARLY ADLER AND LIGHTMAN WERE KEY ACTORS. WE'RE LOOKING INTO THEIR SECT LINKS.



COULD OPEN UP THAT LINE IN A BIG WAY. CERTAINLY GIVES US MASSIVE CAUSE TO SHAKE DOWN THE ADVMU BECAUSE OF THE OVERLAP.



DROP THE OTHER SHOE, BONNER. YOU'RE HERE FOR ME, NOT THE CASE.

OKAY. YOU WERE ON SUSPENSION. YOU WERE NOT CO-OPERATING WITH THE INQUIRY.

WE BELIEVE YOU OBTAINED AN UNREGISTERED FIREARM.

WE HAVE THREE DEAD-- ROBERT ADLER, FRANCINE LIGHTMAN, HEENA MENZ.



I'M COPPING TO THE FIRST TWO. NOT MENZ.

JUSTIFIED SELF DEFENCE.

SOC IS GOING THROUGH THE SUMPS. YOU TALKED ABOUT SECT MEMBERS. KILL ANY OF *THOSE*?



YOU *UNDERSTAND* WHAT THEY WERE DOING, RIGHT?

LIGHTMAN AND ADLER? AND ANOOR?

YOU UNDERSTAND THEY WERE INVOLVED IN A CONSPIRACY TO UNDERMINE STABILITY ON THIS HABITAT, AND THAT'S LED TO *FOUR* DEATHS I KNOW OF?



POISONING THE FOOD?

YOU'VE GOT LABWORK.

AND YOU THINK THAT UNDERPINS THE WILDFIRE DISTURBANCE HERE?



DON'T *YOU*?

I THINK IT'S A NEAT AND TIDY HAPPY-EVER-AFTER ANSWER. I THINK THE SECT ACTIVITY IS BIGGER, STRANGER AND MORE *COMPLEX* THAN--

SO WHAT?



THIS IS THIS, AND THE REST IS *WHAT*?

THE MALEVOLENT INFLUENCE OF GIANT PRIMORDIAL *SPACE-GOD DEMONS* THAT ARE GOING TO HATCH OUT OF THE SUN?

WHICH IS AN *EGG*?

THAT THE EXPLANATION YOU'RE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH?

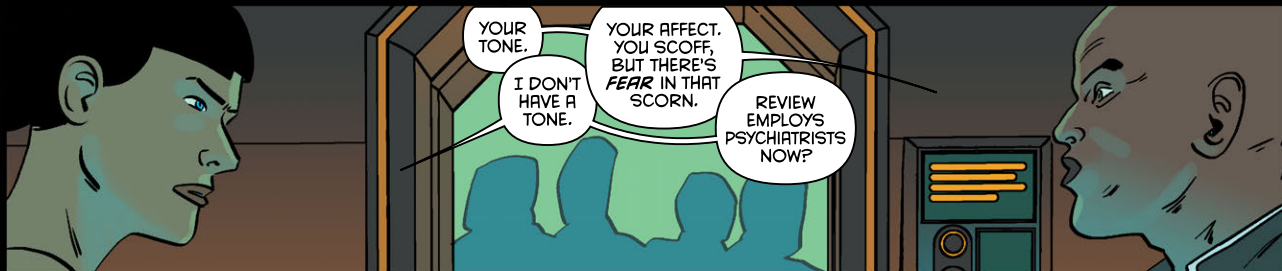


YOU SAY THAT LIKE IT'S A JOKE.

WHICH, NATURALLY, IT IS. JUST NOT A FUNNY ONE.

SO WHY IS THERE SOMETHING IN YOUR TONE THAT SUGGESTS YOU DON'T THINK IT'S A JOKE?

MY TONE?



YOUR TONE.

I DON'T HAVE A TONE.

YOUR AFFECT. YOU SCOFF, BUT THERE'S *FEAR* IN THAT SCORN.

REVIEW EMPLOYS PSYCHIATRISTS NOW?



YES,
ACTUALLY.

WELL...
BRINK.



WE'RE LIVING
IN RUSTING AIR-TIGHT
TIN CANS ADRIPT
AROUND THE LANDFILL
THAT USED TO BE
OUR HOME.

DIDN'T
SEE *THAT*
COMING,
DID WE?

NOTHING IS
RIDICULOUS ANY
MORE, BONNER.
NOTHING HAS
THE POWER TO
SHOCK.

NOT ANY
MORE.



AH. *THE*
BRINK.

YOU
MEANT OUR
CONDITION
OF LIFE.

I THOUGHT
YOU WERE
REFERRING TO
BRINKMANN.



BDIP
BDIP
BDIP



WE'LL
PICK THIS
UP AGAIN
SOON.

I'VE GOT
TO DEAL
WITH THIS.

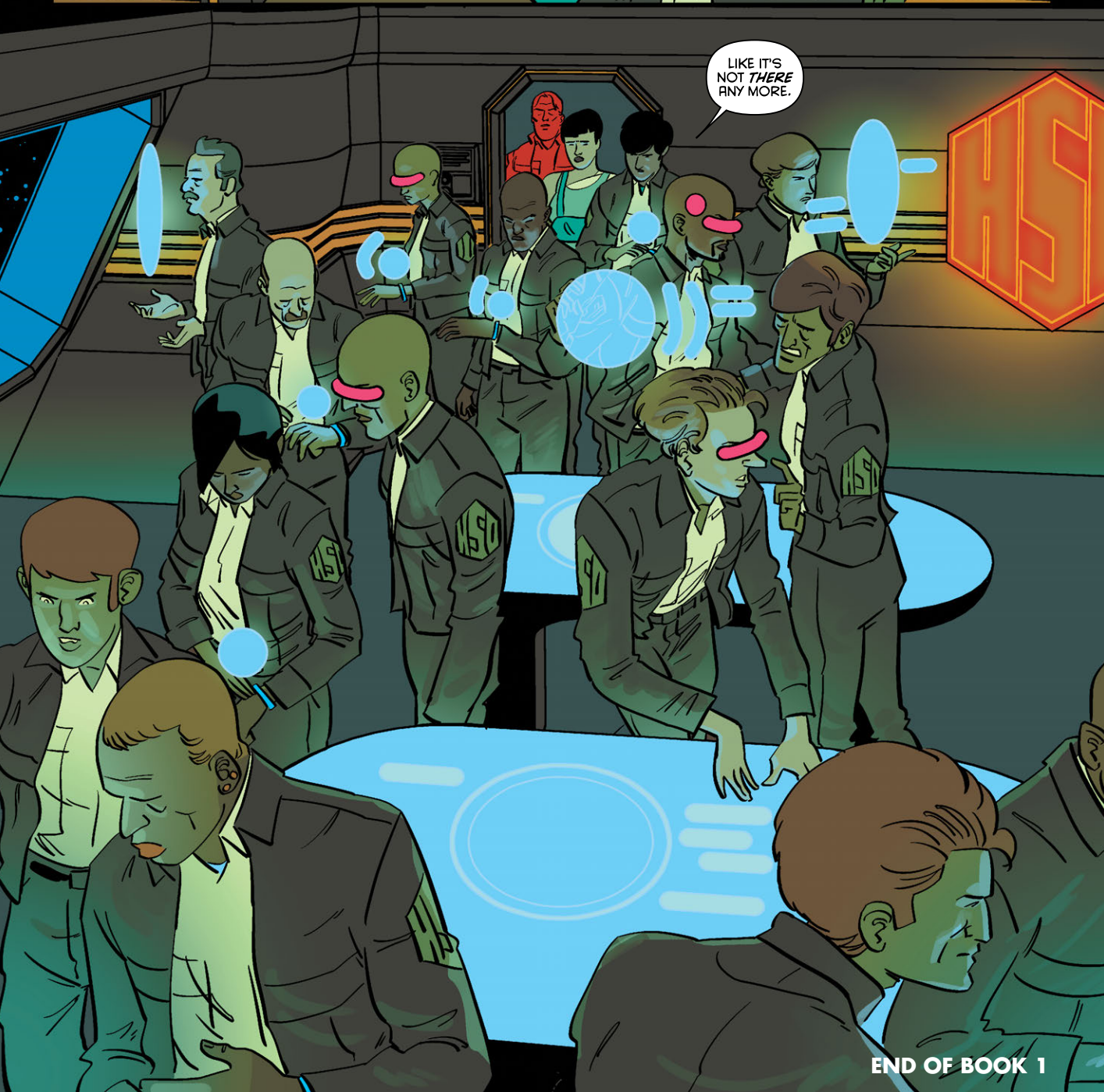


HASSAN?

WHAT'S
GOING
ON?

PROBABLY JUST A
COMMUNICATIONS
PROBLEM...

WHAT
IS?



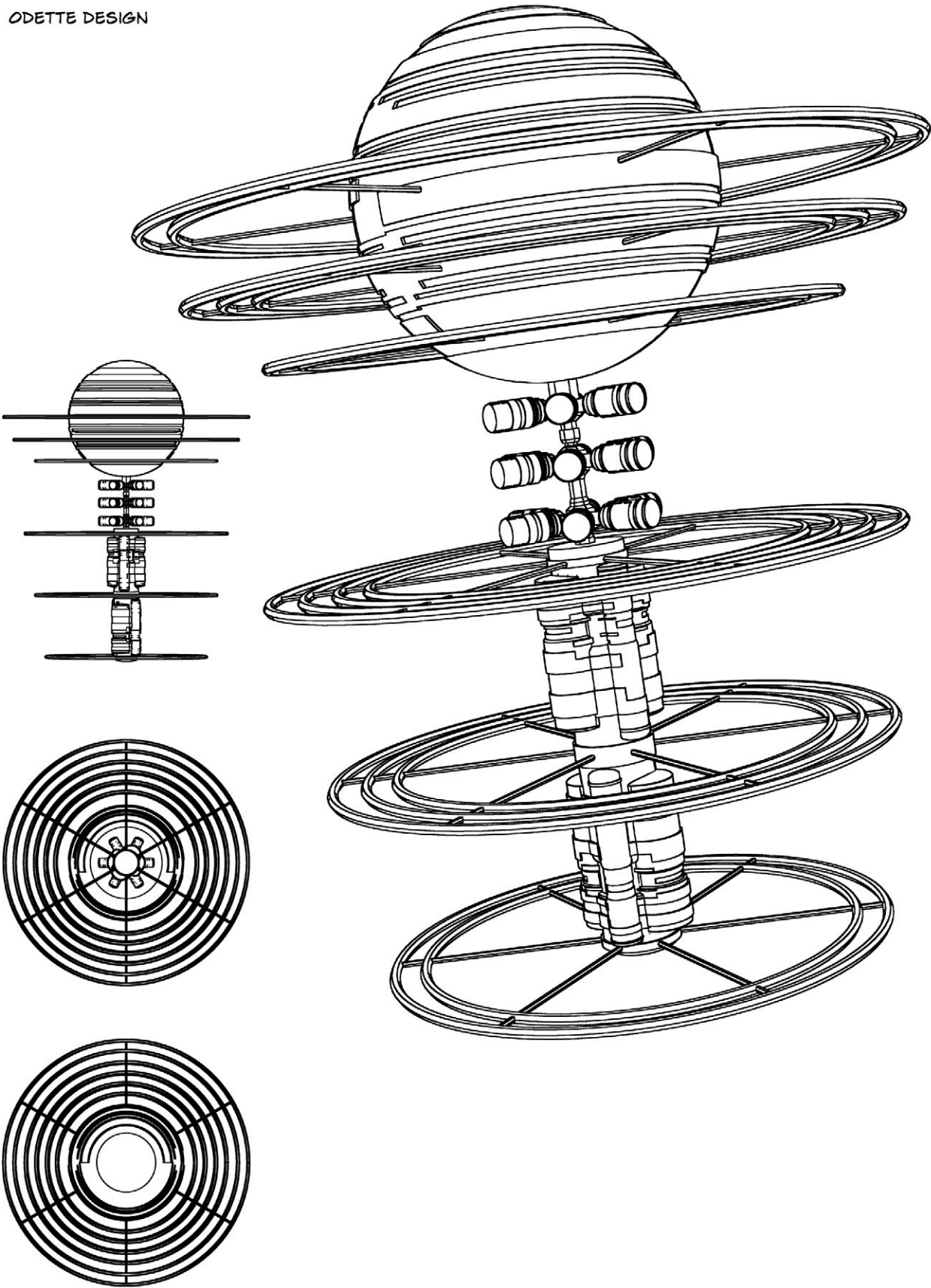
**COVER GALLERY,
SKETCHES &
DAN ABNETT SCRIPT**







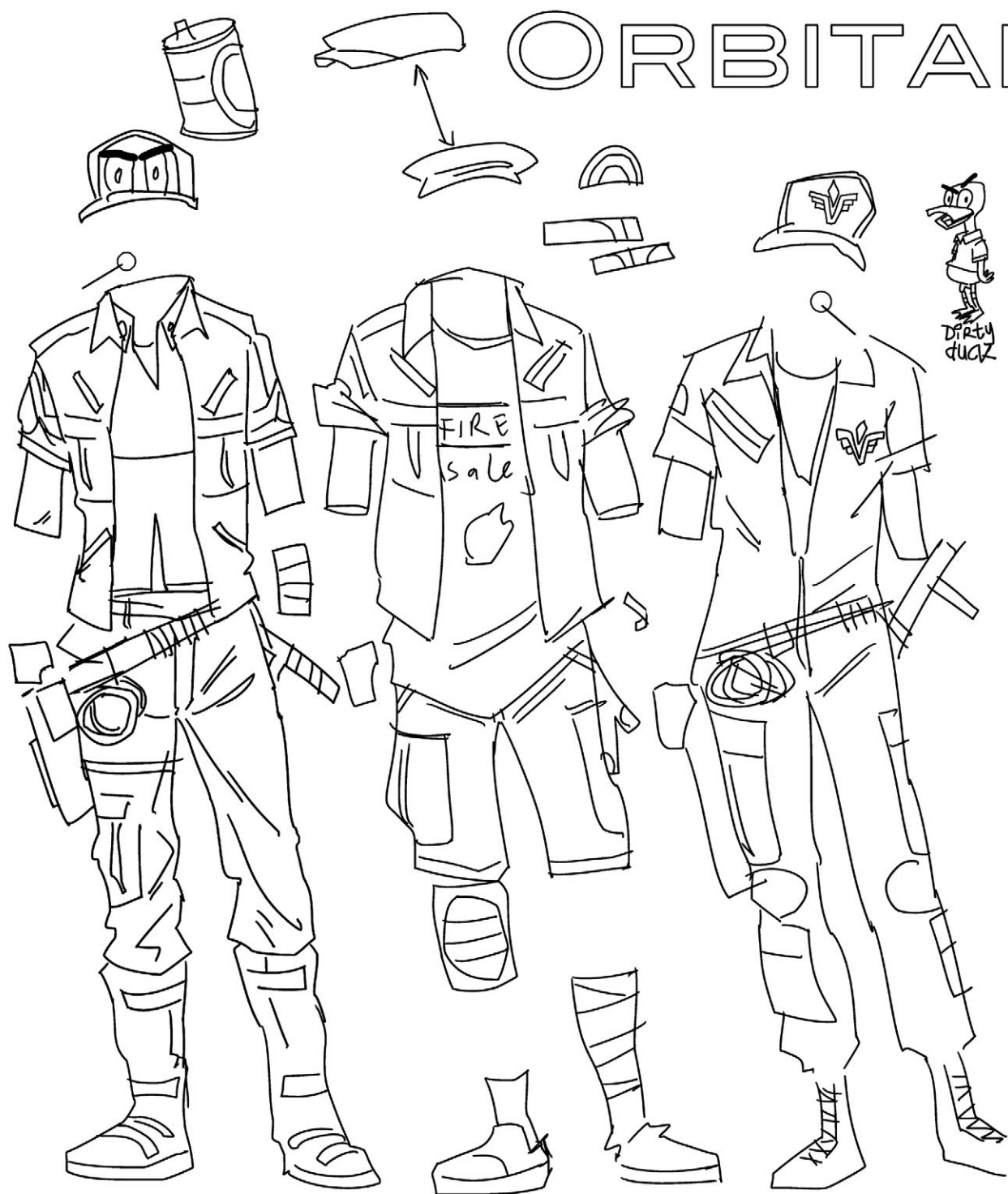




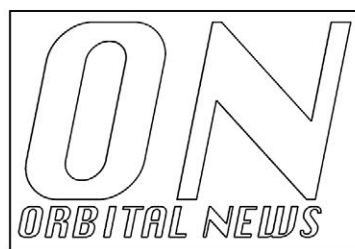
KINO

ZEMKE

ORBITAL



BAR



ON
NEWS

H
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T
E
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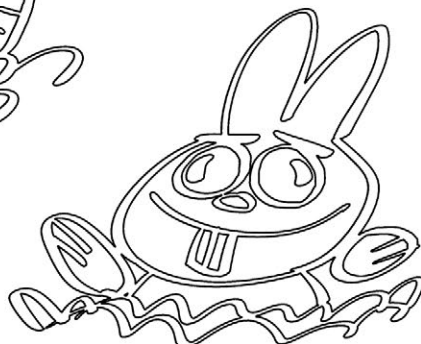
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FLESH
POT

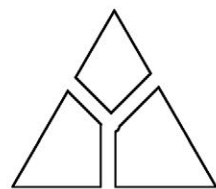
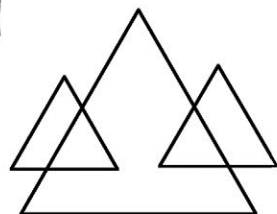
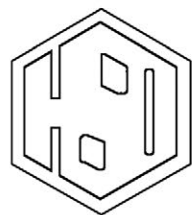


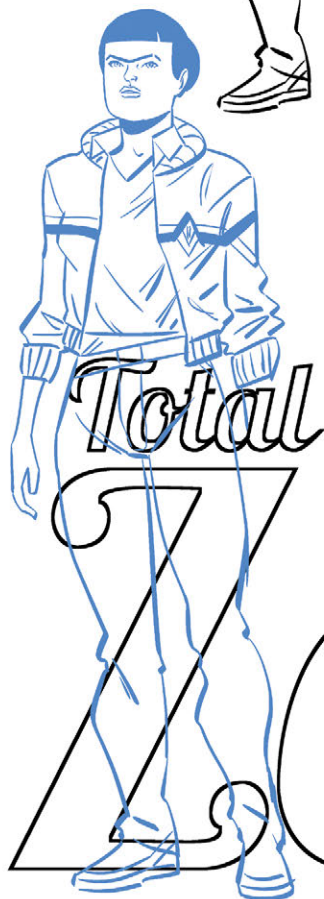
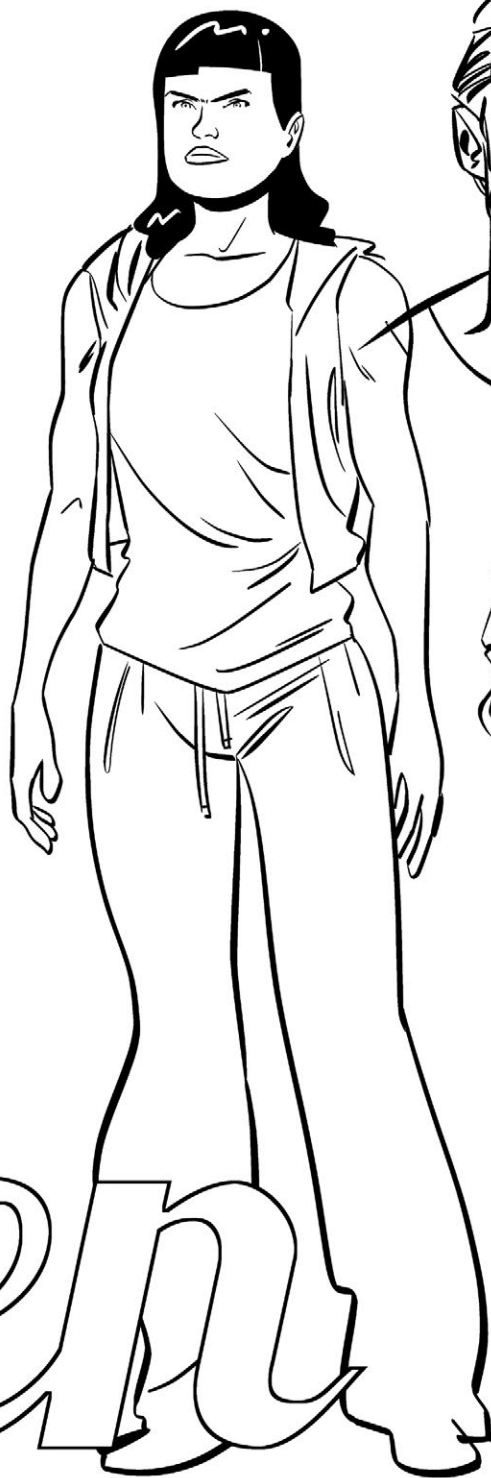
MACROBIO



EAT CLEAN

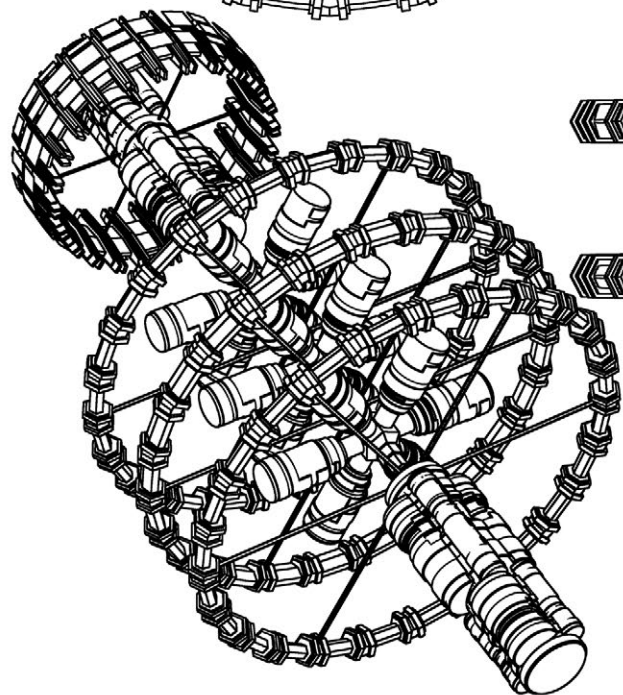
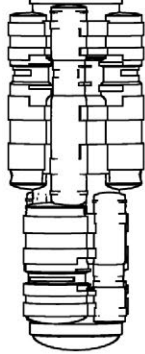
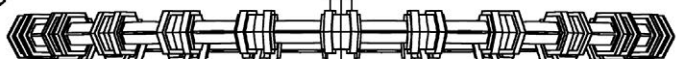
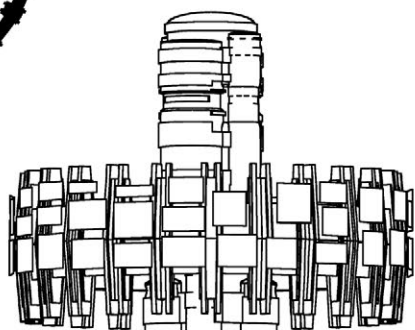
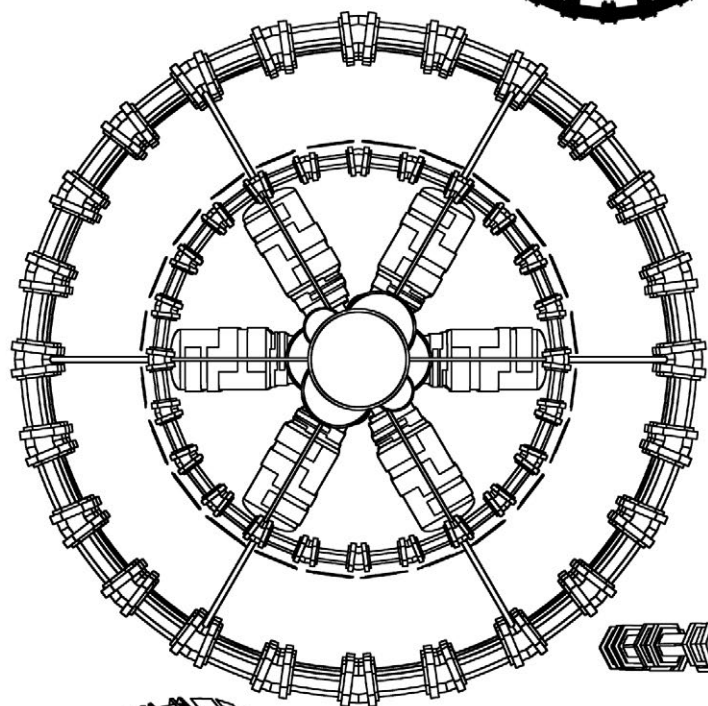
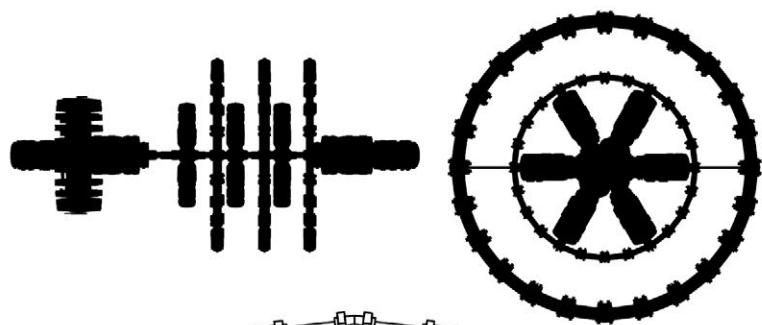


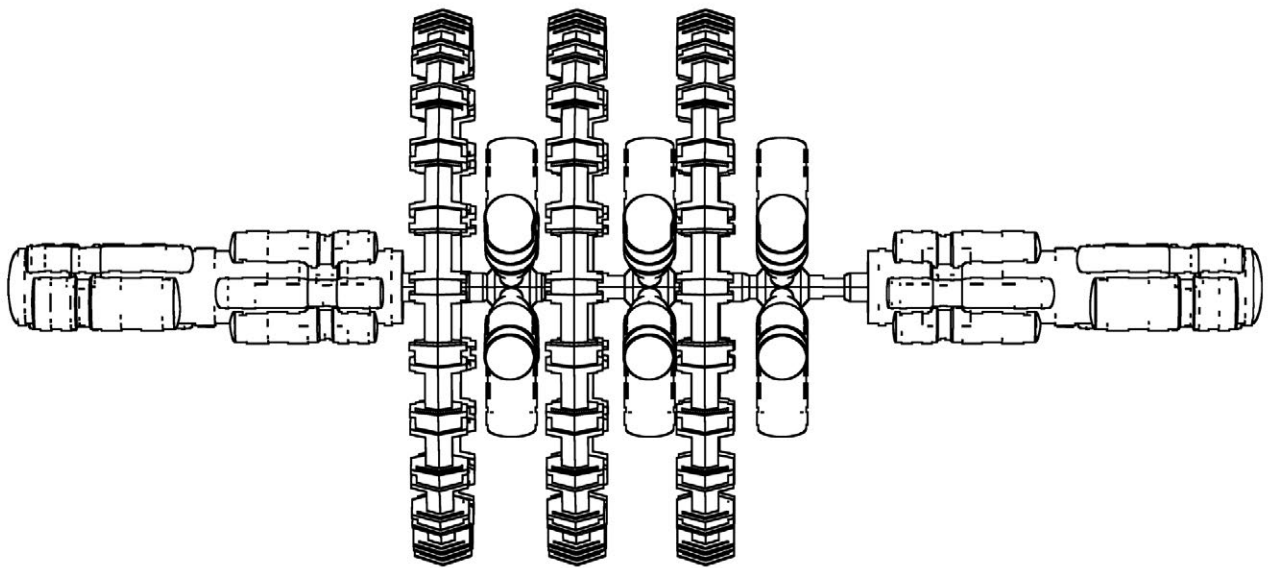
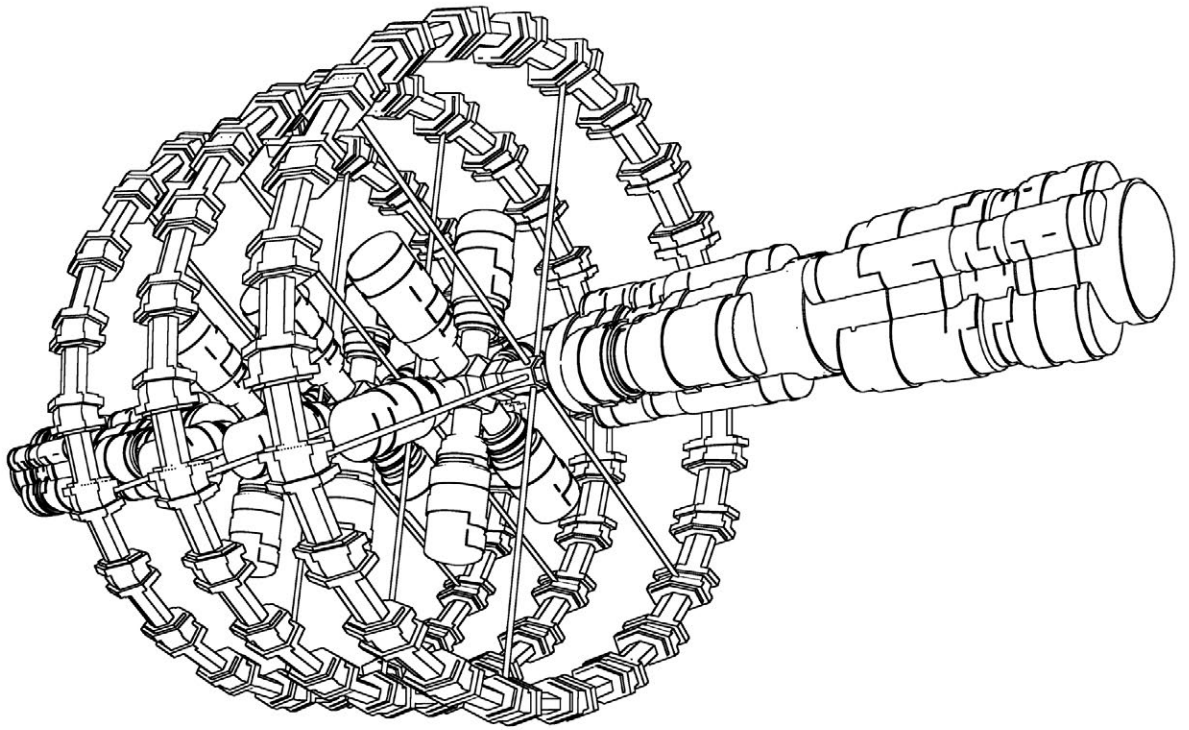




Total

Zen





BRINK: Part One Script

PAGE ONE

1. Page wide panel. To shock. In a gloomy, artificially lit 'cabin' on a habitat: a personal space, cluttered, mechanical, busy, dirty, worn, like the interior of Soyuz capsule. Junk. Porn pin-ups on the wall. We are looking directly at the head and shoulders of a dead man. What's left of him stares at us, slack-jawed, as if disappointed or bored. Something has bored clean through one side of his face, taking the cheek and the eye, digging a blood-black hole of chewed bone and tissue that goes right through his head. Deliberately, provocatively shocking, like the final shot of Gus in Breaking Bad, or the dead Indian scientist/astronaut in Gravity. He is sitting, propped up. Realistic, messy, human, shocking: not horror movie staged gore, but news-footage clumsy and un-glamorously real.

NO DIALOGUE

2. Page wide. Reverse angle. BRIDGET and BRINK face us in the doorway, sidearms drawn, but lowering them. Probably a waist up establishing shot. Both should look, at this point, pasty and sick, bad skin, lank hair, like they have flu (everyone looks like that), but they're also horrified by what they see.

Bridge looks like she is trying not to vomit. The dead guy could be in the foreground, facing them. Just for detail, there's a small window port looking out into space in the back wall of the room, opposite the hatch into the common hallway.

BRINK

Bridge?

BRIDGE

Mnm, yeah.

BRINK

Might you be sick?

BRIDGE

Nope. Mmn.

NEW PANEL 3

BRINK (FROM OFF)

Let's secure the scene.

FX

KLK

TAG (to unit)

Environmental ambi-grav setting to 9.807 m/s sq (Earth Normal)

NEW PANEL 4

FC

Splpsh

3. Brink peers at the dead guy, distastefully. Bridge glances around the grubby room.

BRINK

Someone opened his face with a machine drill.

4. Brink checks the dead guy's "tracelet", a wristband like a sleek rubber charity wristband. Everyone wears one. Maybe they're all orange. When you tap them, they project a display like an iPhone screen onto the skin of your forearm or the back of your hand. See this: <http://www.gizmag.com/cicret-bracelet/35109/> ...but fully functional. Brink is making it project on the man's hand, but we can't read the display, just the orangy glow of it.

BRINK

According to his tracelet, he's Xan Harbin.

5. Bridge is checking her own tracelet, adjusting the display like a touchscreen.

BRIDGE

Snap. The caller.

TAG (her display)

Harbin, Xan
inhab 412 loop 343 Odette
Call of complaint regarding neighbours logged 03:56

6. Brink glances at her. She shrugs.

BRINK

Are we getting to feel bad for getting here too late?

BRIDGE

Yes, Brink. Forever.

BRINK

Long time, forever.

PAGE TWO

1. Page wide, large shot, exterior, establishing the ODETTE HABITAT, a long chain of clumped together habitat drums and pods, 'weather-beaten' and dirty, hanging in a vast darkness of space, Big in the foreground, trailing away smaller as the chain grows distant. Maybe have some small shuttle docking for scale, or two guys in space suits working on the exterior with welding torches (nowhere near where the voices are coming from).

BRIDGE (from)

Not these days.

TITLE Brink

SUB Episode one

TAG (habitat)

Odette Habitat

Owned: Sugarsurf Pharma

Completed: 2076 AD

TAG (habitat)

Population: 209,000

First occupied 2077, five years after the final evacuation of Earth

2. Now maybe we're looking in through the grubby window port into the crime scene cabin, seeing them searching.

TAG (that cabin)

Habitation compartment 412

Loop 343 Odette

BRINK

Check the lockers.

3. Interior, they start to search, opening lockers, moving stained seat cushions etc. She's finding a packet of pills in one of the lockers.

TAG (Bridge)

Bridget Kurtis

Investigator, Habitat Security Division

born: Salma Habitat 2067

TAG (Brink)

Carl Brinkmann

Investigator, Habitat Security Division

born: Xiang Habitat 2061

BRIDGE

Harbin was on double-scrip nudge.

TAG (drugs)

High-dose selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor antidepressants

4. From the window side of the room as Bridge shoots a glance at Brink, finger to her lips. Both are moving to cover. Someone's approaching outside.

FROM OFF

...that crackwipe Cruz done now? (joined)

I told him to be chill.

5. Match shot, but Bridge and Brink are either side of the door, pressed to the wall, guns drawn

and ready, so neither can be seen by the two men stepping into the room. Both are workers, grubby, very shifty and sick looking. Both stare at the corpse without much reaction except tiredness. One (Bremer) is further into the room than the other (Nold) who is still half-out in the corridor. Both, as an incidental detail, are wearing creepy-weird, home-made necklaces, little 'symbols' of their dark cult. Maybe a star-shaped design, disturbing, which we'll use again. Both maybe wear several, variations of the same, and we don't have to see the detail here.

BREMER

Oh, for crap's sake.

(joined)

We're gonna need sheet wrap and access to the waste plant--

6. Match shot as Brink and Bridge both step out, guns aimed. Their guns are dark, blunt functional modern firearms - Sig Sauer pistols blended with Blade Runner's handgun. Retrofitted, solid slug, moulded grips. Bremer freezes in terror, but Nold starts to run.

BRINK

Freeze.

(joined)

Security.

BREMER

Shit!

TAG (gun, either)

.40 SIGlock automatic, H.S.S. field issue flatnose rounds

PAGE THREE

1. Continuous. Bridge is bundling the panicking Bremer down hard, arm lock. Brink is flying out the door after the otherone.

BRIDGE

Down! Down! Get down!

BREMER

Shit! No! Shit!

BRIDGE

Get the other one!

2. Exterior, the hallway. Nold sprinting desperately towards us, glancing back, Brink sprinting in pursuit. Other habitat dwellers get out of the way, shrink back, or watch with grim fascination.

BRINK

Halt!

(joined, small)

Damn it.

3. Back on Bridge, struggling with the arm-locked Bremer, getting cuffs on him.

BRIDGE

Quit it! You're under arrest!

BREMER

This ain't the way! This ain't the way!

(joined)

The Leper Heart will see you for what you are! See your disrespect! See your bruises upon my body!

BRIDGE

Shut up!

4. Back on Brink. He's vaulting down a metal staircase using the handrails into a filthy, steamy kitchen galley. Nold is already running and barging his way through the workers, knocking them aside, cookpots spilling, etc. Shots, angry complaints.

TAG (room)

Loop 343 communal galley

SHOVED COOK

Hey! Retard!

5. Continuous. Brink slams through the galley in pursuit, shouting, gun raised high so it isn't aimed at anyone. People are getting in his way (accidentally).

BRINK

Security!

(joined)

Move aside!

(joined)

Come on!

6. Back on Bridge, the cuffs now in place. Bremer's still struggling, on his knees, and she having to shove his shoulders down.

BREMER

Promises were made! You're spoiling it! The Leper Heart promised!

(joined)

Took the soil and the air, and left us in the dark with a promise it would come back for us too!

BRIDGE

Shut the hell up!

BREMER

Swelling up, swelling up out of the unreach, keeping its whispered promises!

(joined)

Low Theta, hanging inside the sun, Melancholema, and Phale Chronozon--

PAGE FOUR

1. Continuous. Bridge halts, for a second, shocked, suddenly looking very very pasty and unwell.

BRIDGE

(small)

Hell did you just say?

BREMER

Phale Chronozon!

2. Continuous. She keeps him pinned as before but, involuntarily, vomits violently, either aside onto the deck or (I prefer this) accidentally all over his shoulders and the back of his head.

BRIDGE

-WHHHULLPP-

BREMER

Gaaaah! Jesus, bitch!

3. Cut back to Brink. Kinetic impact shot as he flying tackles the fleeing Nold as they come out of the galley exit onto a metal gantry pavement above a huge engineering space. This impact is painful for both of them. This engineering space is a large chamber, perhaps where two habitat modules join. Below, we can see a curving wall of cabin or apartment windows, showing the density of the living space, a tower block wrapped into a drum. Maybe washing lines loop between the railings and walkways as people use the space for maximum efficiency.

BRINK

GRnaaaah!

NOLD

Nuuhhhk!

TAG (chamber)

Loop 343/Loop 344 junction ring

4. Continuous. They rolling, grappling. A painful frenzy. Brink is throwing a punch that is snapping Nold's head around and slamming it towards the pavement guardrail.

BRINK

Enough of your shit!

NOLD

Boohkk!

5. Continuous. Driven by the punch, Nold's head ricochets nastily off the railing.

FX

BLANG!

6. Panting, sick and out of shape, Brink kneels on (straddles) the very unconscious Nold, trying to cuff him. He's facing us through the guardrail. He doesn't see (but we do) the terrifying figure coming up behind him fast, appearing like LEATHERFACE in TCM.

This is a big guy, filthy, dirty work clothes, wearing a scary rebreather mask from a space suit and maybe some creepy-weird necklaces like Nold and Bremer. He has a massive dirty wrench raised to brain Brink.

BRINK

-nnh!- -nhh!- -nhh!-

(joined)

Asshole!

MASK (muffled)

Mmmlll Krrmmnnzznnn!

PAGE FIVE

1. Brink dives to one side as the wrench comes down and deeply dents, deforms the railing instead of his head.

FX

WHUNNGG!

BRINK

AAAH!

2. Brink is sprawling, trying to raise his sidearm, but the brute swings the wrench and smashes out of his hand, breaking fingers.

FX

KRKK!

BRINK

Nyaaaghh!

3. Brink falls back, the brute over him. We're looking up at it, from 'over Brink's shoulder' as it raises the wrench to pulp him (and us).

MASK (muffled)

Mmmlll Krrmmnnzznnn!

BRINK

Son of a--

4. Match shot, but the brute spasms, one of his mask's eye lenses suddenly cracked and full of blood (he's been shot from behind in the back of the head).

FX

KBAMMM!

5. Brink looks up, the brute slumped face down across him, heavy and dead, the back of his head a bloody pulp. Bridge is standing back away down the pavement, her sidearm still aimed in a braced, two-handed stance, muzzle smoking.

BRINK

Jesus.

(joined)

Thanks.

(joined)

You going to be sick now?

6. He clambers up, letting the body roll aside. In the foreground, she is turning aside, lowering her gun, sagging and fatigued as the tension release shivers through her, looking pale and sick.

BRIDGE

No.

(joined)

Nothing left to come up.

CAP

Next: case study

DAN ABNETT

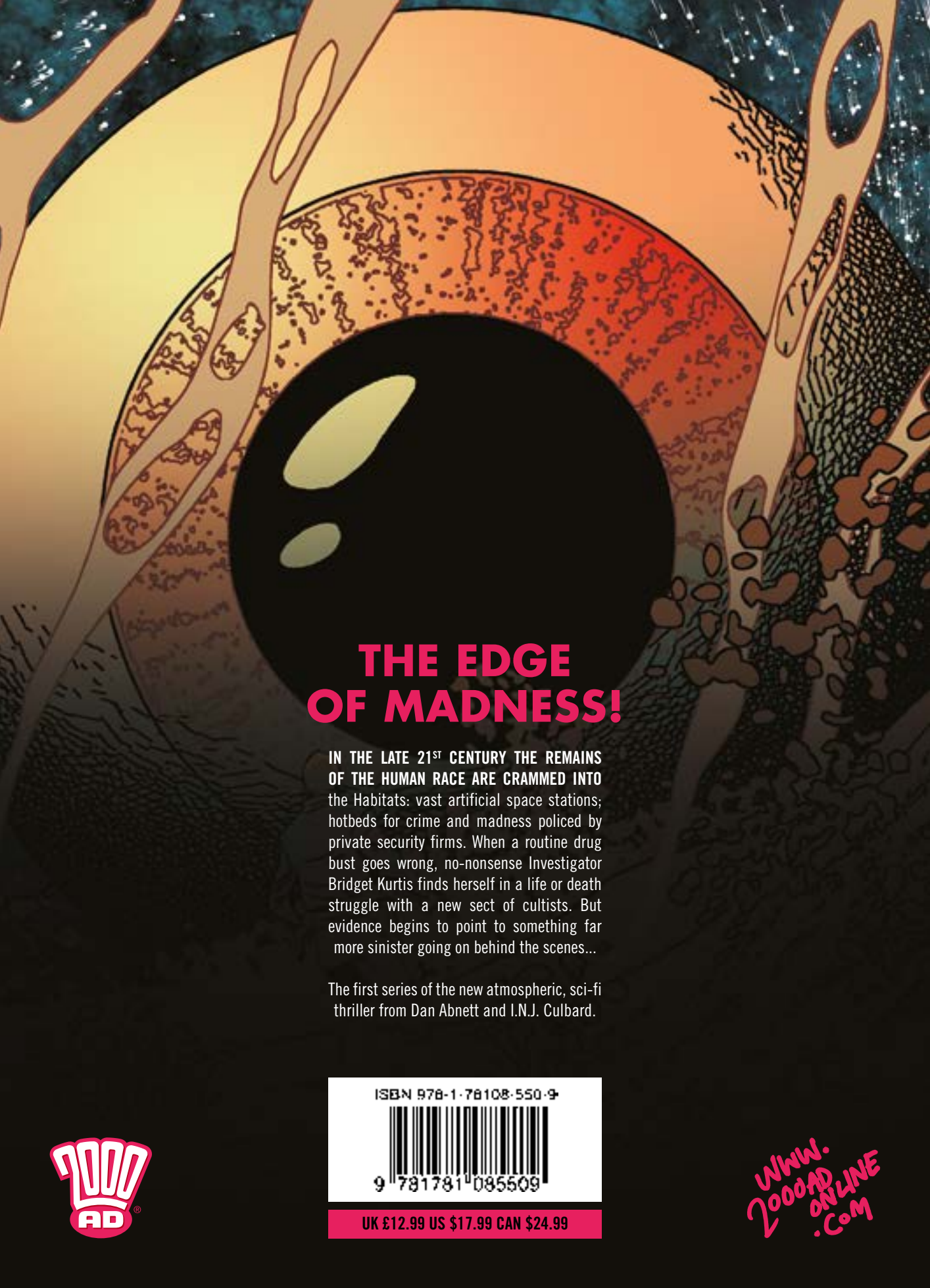
Dan Abnett is a seven-times New York Times bestselling author and an award-winning comic book writer. He has written over fifty novels, including the acclaimed Gaunt's Ghosts series, the Eisenhower and Ravenor trilogies, volumes of the million-selling Horus Heresy series, *The Silent Stars Go By* (*Doctor Who*), *Rocket Raccoon and Groot: Steal the Galaxy*, *The Avengers: Everybody Wants To Rule The World*, *The Wield*, *Triumph: Her Majesty's Hero*, and *Embedded*. In comics, he is known for his work on *The Legion of Super-Heroes*, *Aquaman*, *The Titans*, *Nova*, *Wild's End*, and *The New Deadwardians*. His 2008 run on *The Guardians of the Galaxy* for Marvel formed the inspiration for the blockbuster movie. A regular contributor to the UK's long-running *2000 AD*, he is the creator of series including *Grey Area*, *Lawless*, *Brink*, *Kingdom* and the classic *Sinister Dexter*. He has also written extensively for the games industry, including *Shadow of Mordor* and *Alien: Isolation*.

Dan lives and works in the UK. Follow him on Twitter @VincentAbnett

I.N.J. CULBARD

I.N.J. Culbard is an award-winning artist and writer. He has had work published by SelfMadeHero, Dark Horse comics, Vertigo and BOOM! Studios. He first started working with Ian Edginton on adaptations for SelfMadeHero of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Sign of the Four*, and *The Valley of Fear*. He has also worked with Dan Abnett on original series such as *The New Deadwardians* (Vertigo), *Dark Ages* (Dark Horse Comics), and *Wild's End* (BOOM! Studios). And lastly he has worked with Chris Lackey and Chad Fifer on the original graphic novel, *Deadbeats* (SelfMadeHero)

He has produced a number of his own adaptations for SelfMadeHero including *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, *The Shadow Out of Time*, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, *At the Mountains of Madness* and his first solo original graphic novel, *Celeste*.



THE EDGE OF MADNESS!

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