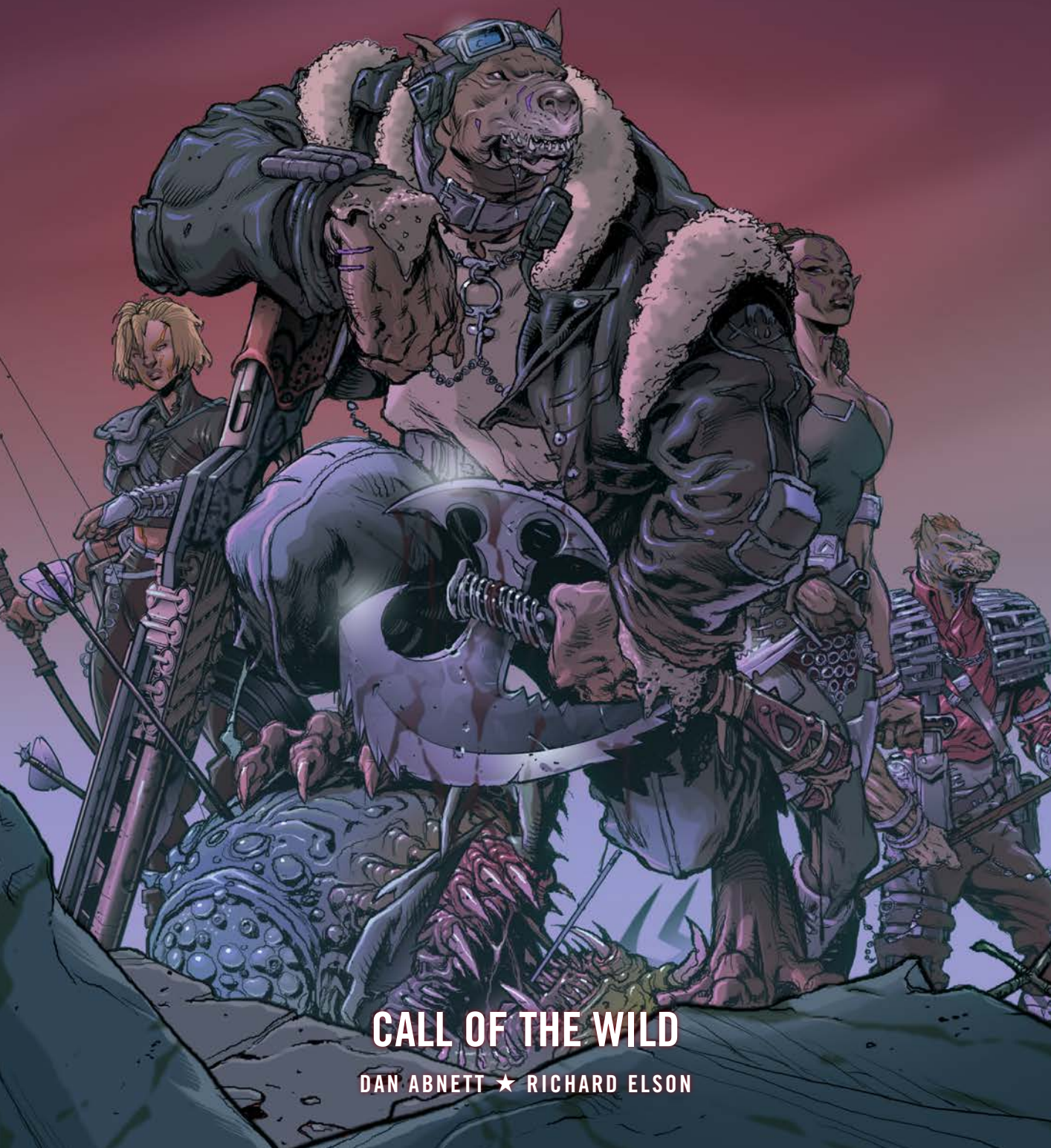


KINGDOM



CALL OF THE WILD

DAN ABNETT ★ RICHARD ELSON



KINGDOM

CALL OF THE WILD

KINGDOM CREATED BY DAN ABNETT & RICHARD ELSON

KINGDOM

CALL OF THE WILD

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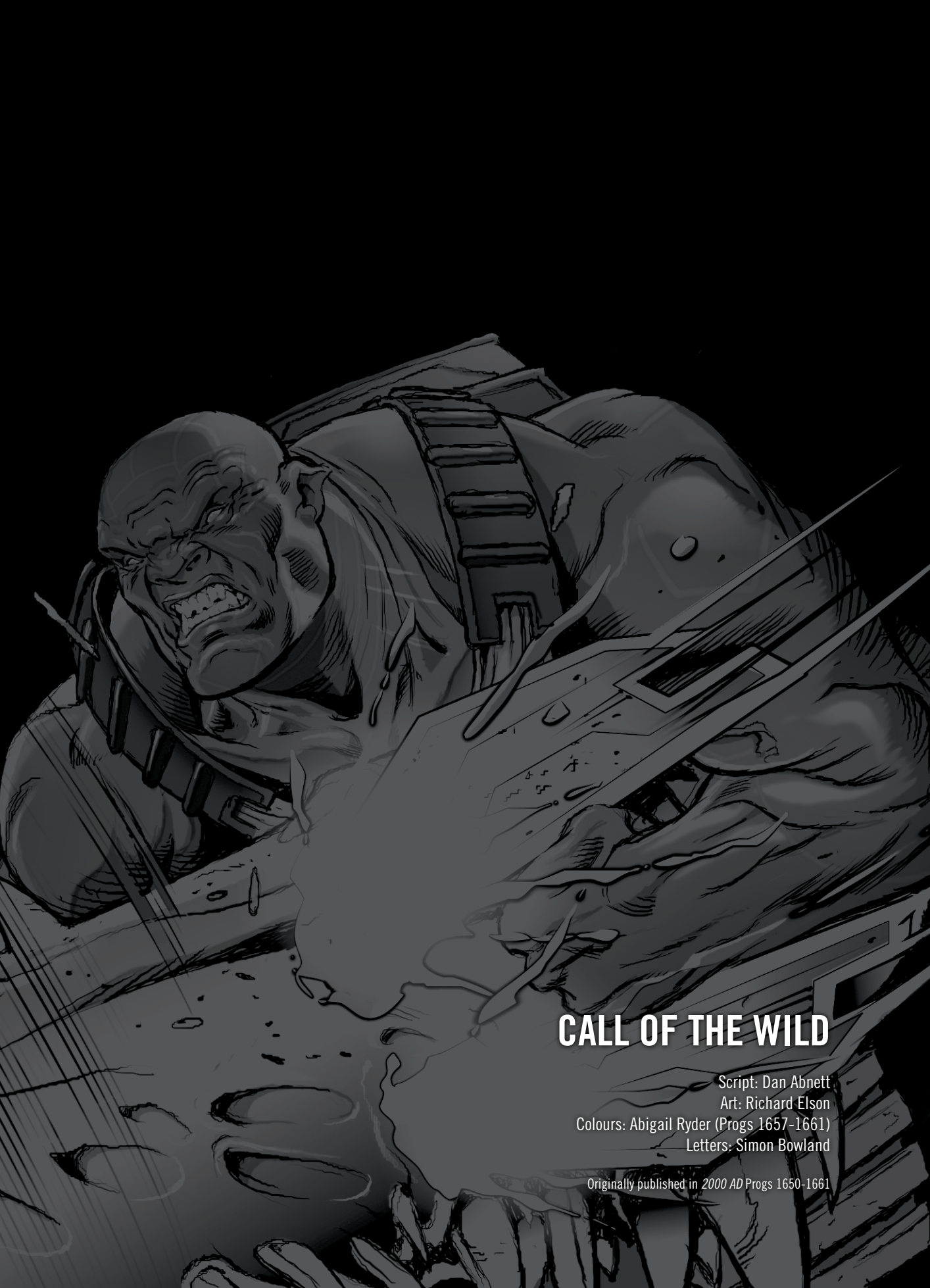
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DEDICATION

For Barrie Tomlinson. For giving me work when nobody else would and for all of your help and encouragement over the years. Thank you so much. – Richard Elson



CALL OF THE WILD

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Art: Richard Elson

Colours: Abigail Ryder (Progs 1657-1661)

Letters: Simon Bowland

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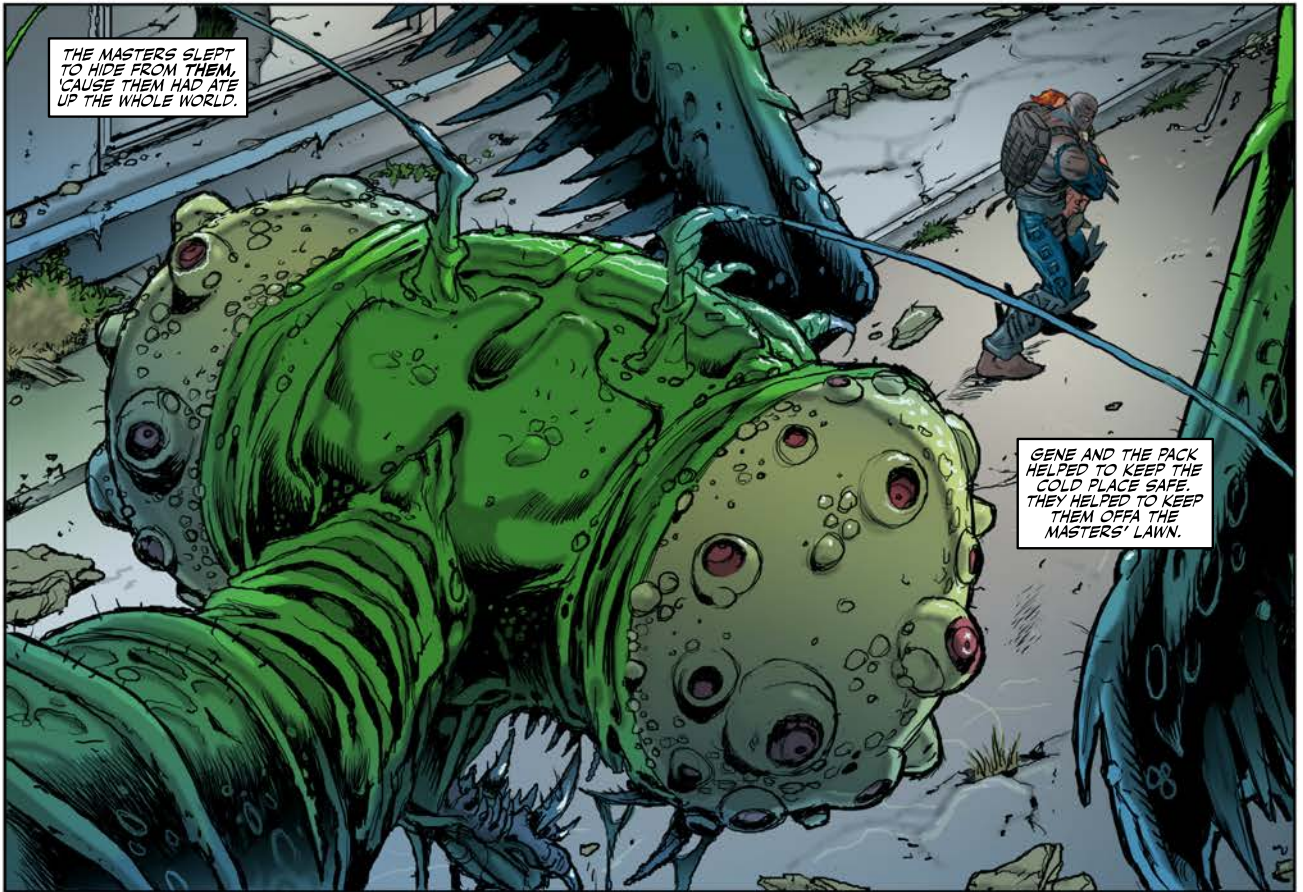
THIS IS THE TALE OF
HOW GENE THE HACKMAN
CAME TO THE WILD
KINGDOM OF AUSTRALIA.





GENE HAD ONCE BEEN ALPHA MALE, TOUGHER AND TOUGH, LEADING HIS PACK ON THE WALK-AROUND TO KEEP THE COLD PLACE CLEAN.

THE COLD PLACE WAS CALLED ANARCHTICY, AND IT WAS WHERE THE MASTERS SLEPT, LONG TIME.



THE MASTERS SLEPT TO HIDE FROM THEM, CAUSE THEM HAD ATE UP THE WHOLE WORLD.

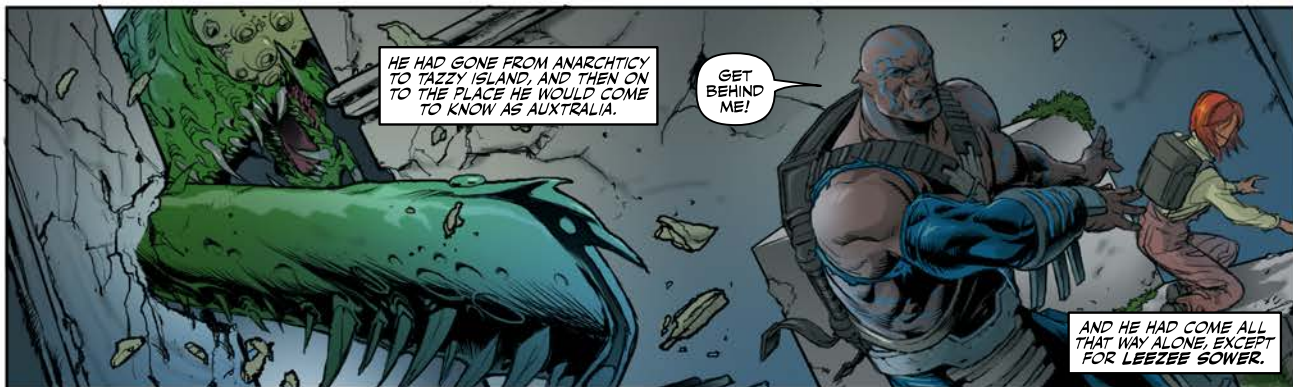
GENE AND THE PACK HELPED TO KEEP THE COLD PLACE SAFE. THEY HELPED TO KEEP THEM OFFA THE MASTERS' LAWN.



THIS WAY! DOWN HERE!

BUT THE PACK WAS LONG GONE, AND GENE WAS OMEGA NOW. ROGUE DOG, HIM.

HE HAD FOLLOWED THE LAND BRIDGE THEM HAD BUILT AND WALKED A-WAYS OUT INTO THE WORLD.



HE HAD GONE FROM ANARCHY TO TAZZY ISLAND, AND THEN ON TO THE PLACE HE WOULD COME TO KNOW AS AUXTRALIA.

GET BEHIND ME!

AND HE HAD COME ALL THAT WAY ALONE, EXCEPT FOR LEEZEE SOWER.



LEEZEE HAD LIVED ON A FARM IN THE COUNTRY, IN THE PROMISED LAND. BUT THEM HAD ATE THAT ALL UP TOO, SO SHE DID THE WALK-AROUND WITH GENE.

SHE WAS ALL HE HAD, AND HE DID HIS BEST TO KEEP HER SAFE.



GET AWAY!
GET BACK!

BUT IT WAS NOT EASY, NOT EVEN FOR A HACKMAN, WHO WAS TOUGHER AND TOUGH.

AUXTRALIA WAS FULL OF THE GIANT CRUMBLING PLACES WHERE THE MASTERS HAD LIVED, AND IN THOSE PLACES WERE ALL KINDS OF THEM GENE HAD NOT SEEN BEFORE.



MANY TIMES,
GENE HAD TO
SCRAP TO KEEP
LEEZEE SAFE.

IT WAS LIKE THEM
HAD THE SCENT OF
GENE AND THE GIRL,
AND WOULD NOT
LEAVE THEM ALONE.



GENE WONDERED IF
THIS WAS BECAUSE
OF THE TICK-THING
LEEZEE CARRIED.



GENE HACKMAN
WILL GET US KILLED.
WE SHOULD **NEVER**
HAVE FOLLOWED
HIM.

SHUT UP!
DON'T SAY
THAT ABOUT
GENE-DOG!

HE WOULD
NEVER LET
US GET
HURT!

GENE KNEW THE TICK-THING
WAS FULL OF WRONG, BUT HE
COULD NOT GET IT OUT OF
LEEZEE SOWER'S SKIN WITHOUT
IT KILLING HER DEAD.



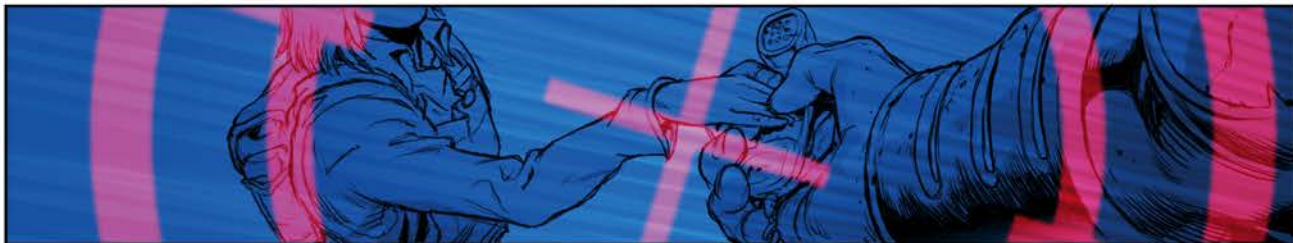
SO HE HAD TO
SCRAP INSTEAD.



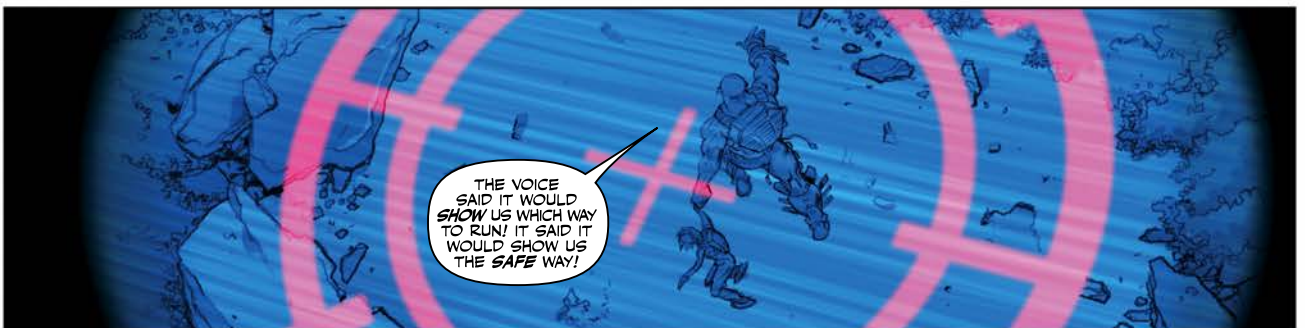


















AND THEN
THE WILD
SHOWED
THEMSELVES.

THEY CAME OUT OF
HIDING IN THE HIGH
PLACES AROUND THE
DEAD-END TRAP.

AND THAT WAS THE
SCRAPPING OF THAT DAY.

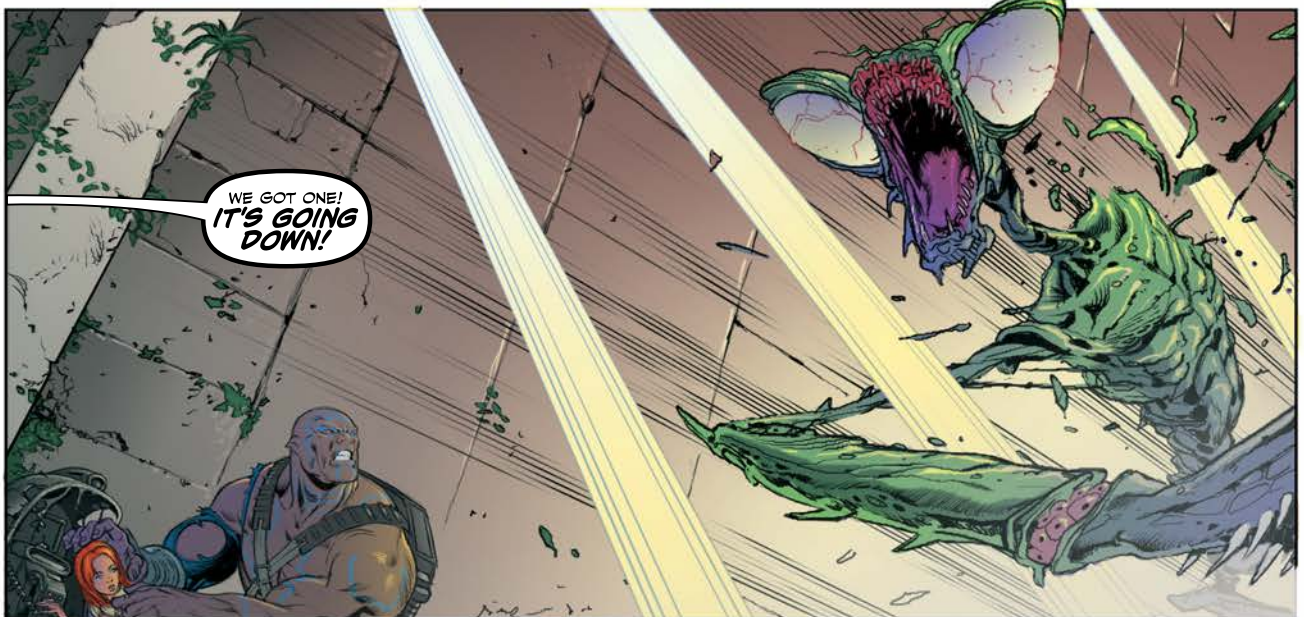


STAY
DOWN,
LEEZEE
SOWER!

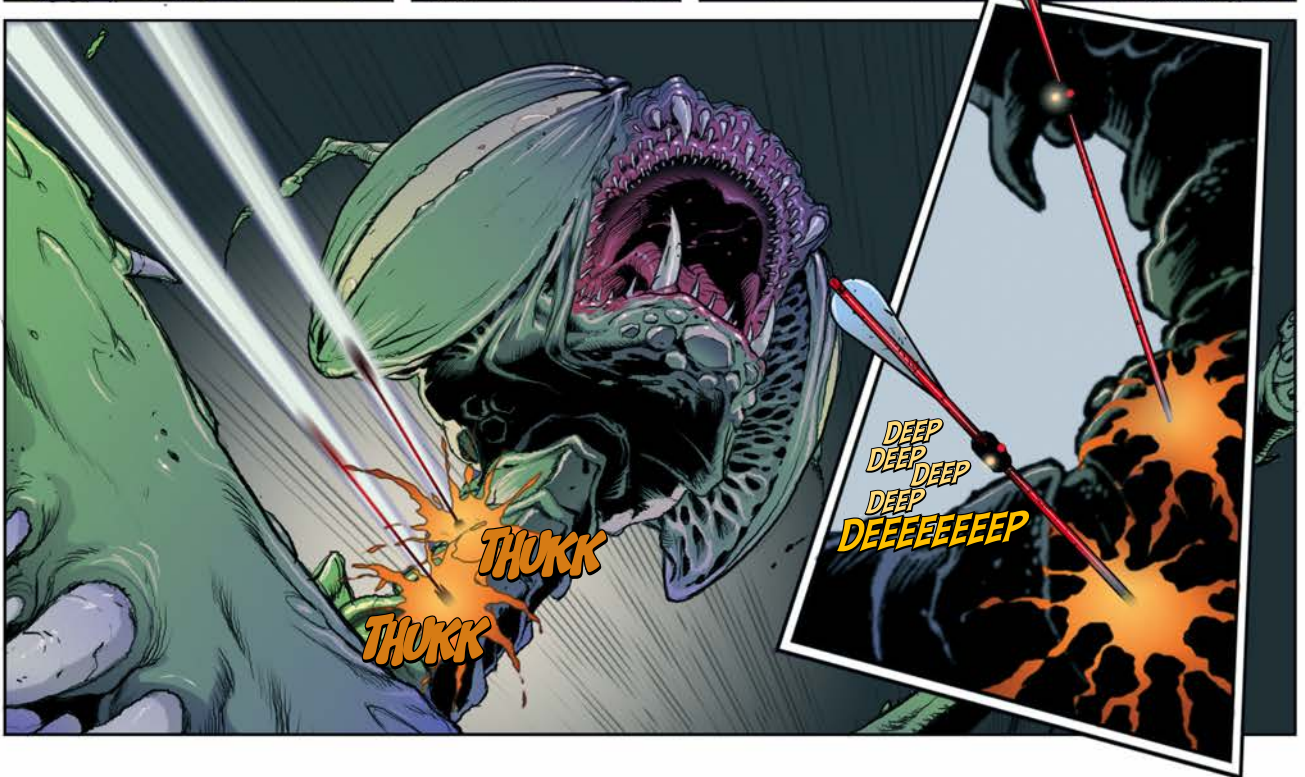


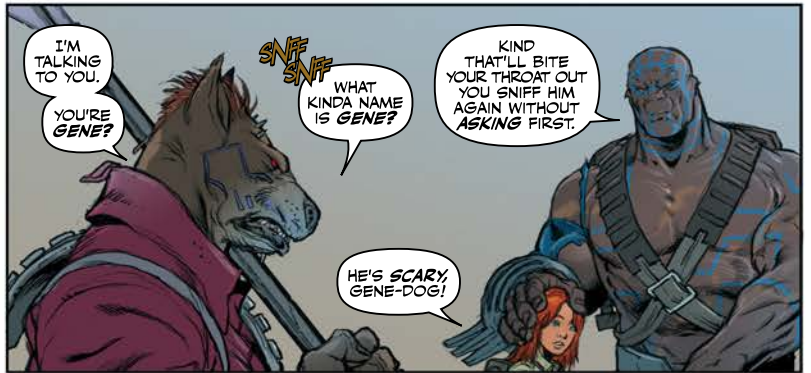
THAT'S RIGHT,
PRIEST BUGS!

GET
SKRAGGED
AND STAY
SKRAGGED!



WE GOT ONE!
IT'S GOING
DOWN!







YOU USED
US AS BAIT.

FAIR DO'S,
GENE. IT WAS A HUNT,
AND YOU *DON'T* MESS
WITH PRIEST BUGS.

YOU USE
WHATEVER YOU
GOT TO PUT
THEM DOWN.

THIS YOUR
FIRST TIME IN
AUXTRALIA,
MATE?



WHERE
IS THAT?

THAT'S *HERE*,
ALL AROUND.
THE WILD
KINGDOM OF
AUXTRALIA.

IT'S WHERE
WE LIVE AND
WHERE
WE HUNT.



WHERE
ARE YOUR
MASTERS?

MASTERS?
WHAT ARE
MASTERS?

THEY
GIVE YOUR
PACK ITS
URGINGS.

DUNNO WHAT
YOU'RE ON ABOUT,
GENE. WE AIN'T
GOT NO MASTERS.
WE AIN'T GOT NO
URGINGS.

I DON'T TAKE NO
ORDERS FROM *NO ONE*,
EXCEPT *REX HORIZON*, AND
SOMETIMES ME MISSUS
HOLLY HERE.

WILL FERAL
LISTENS TO HOLLY
THE HUNTER IF HE
KNOWS WHAT'S
GOOD FOR HIM.



WHERE
YOU FROM,
MATE?

WHO
WANTS TO
KNOW?

I'M *CLARA*
BOW. I WANT
TO KNOW.



I'M FROM
ANARCHTICY. I HAD A
PACK THERE AND DID
THE WALK-AROUND TO
KEEP THE COLD
PLACE SAFE.

BUT THEM ATE
UP MY PACK, UNTIL
THERE WAS ONLY *GENE*
THE HACKMAN LEFT, SO
I WALKED A-WAYS OUT
INTO THE WORLD.



COME ON,
MATE. LET'S FIND
YOU SOME FOOD
AND A PLACE TO
CRASH, EH?

WILD?
WERE
RIDING!



...I STILL
RECKON GENE IS
A *GIRL'S* NAME.
HE EVEN *SMELLS*
LIKE A GIRL.

DINGO STAR,
WILL YOU GIVE
IT A BLOODY
REST?

SO, YOU BEEN
TRAVELLIN', GENE?
WHAT'S IT LIKE
OUT THERE?



IT IS LIKE
WHAT IT'S LIKE. THEM
IS EVERYWHERE,
EATING THE
WORLD UP.

THAT'S *BAD*.
SEE, IT'S BEEN
REAL QUIET HERE
FOR MONTHS NOW.
WE'VE PRETTY MUCH
HAD THE *RUN* OF
THE PLACE.

BUT JUST THIS
LAST WEEK OR SO,
THEM'S BEEN *ABOUT*
AGAIN, MOVING IN
THE CITY.



IF IT'S A
NEW WAR WE'RE
FACING, THE WILD
COULD USE A
GOOD HACKMAN,
GENE.

MAYBE.

WHAT YOU
LOOKING AT,
CLARA?

I DUNNO,
BUT IT'S *YUM*.



I DON'T
LIKE IT. I DON'T
LIKE THIS ONE
BIT.

YEAH. ME
NEITHER.



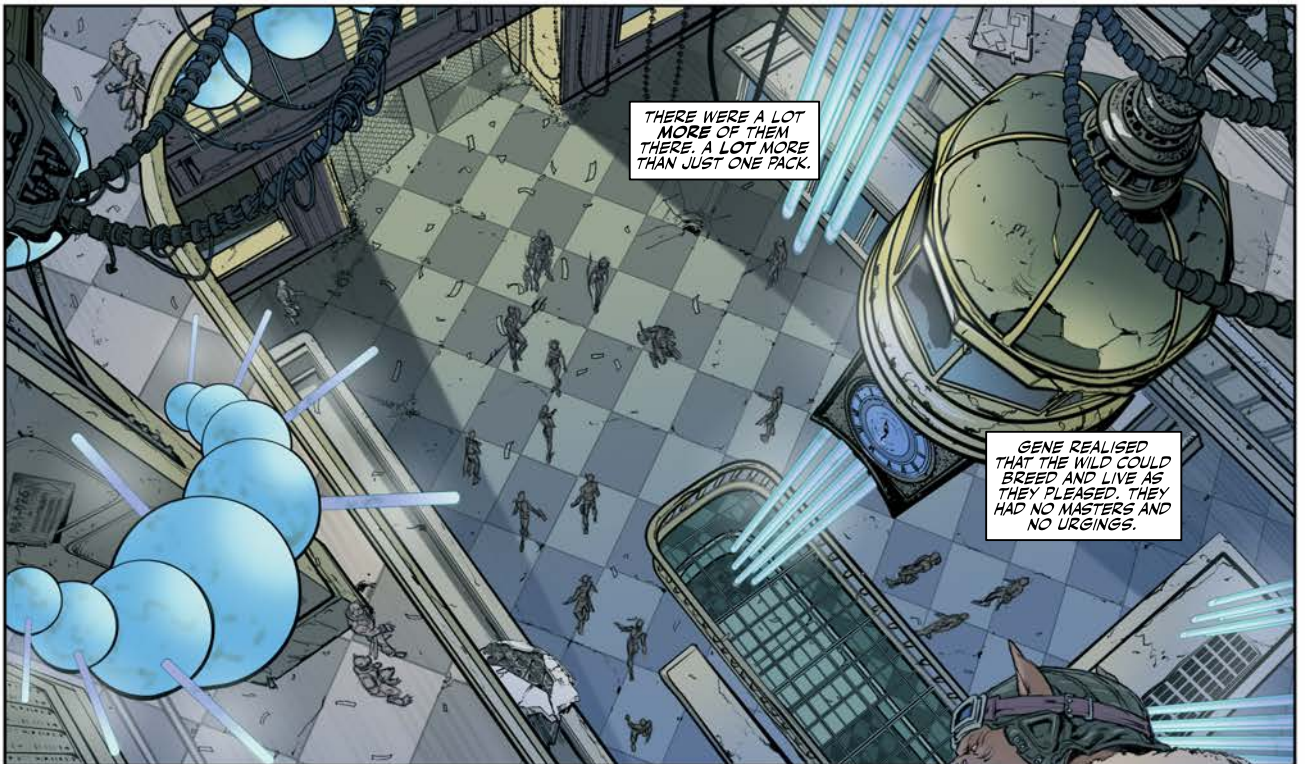
LET'S HALT HERE A
SEC. I'M GONNA USE
A DIAL MACHINE, LET
REX HORIZON KNOW
WE'RE COMIN' BACK
IN WITH A GUEST...

HEY,
GENE-OMEGA?

WHO'S
YOUR *PET*
TALKING
TO?



AND THE WILD TOOK GENE THE HACKMAN AND LEEZEE SOWER TO THE PLACE WHERE THEY LIVED.



THERE WERE A LOT MORE OF THEM THERE, A LOT MORE THAN JUST ONE PACK.

GENE REALISED THAT THE WILD COULD BREED AND LIVE AS THEY PLEASED. THEY HAD NO MASTERS AND NO URGINGS.



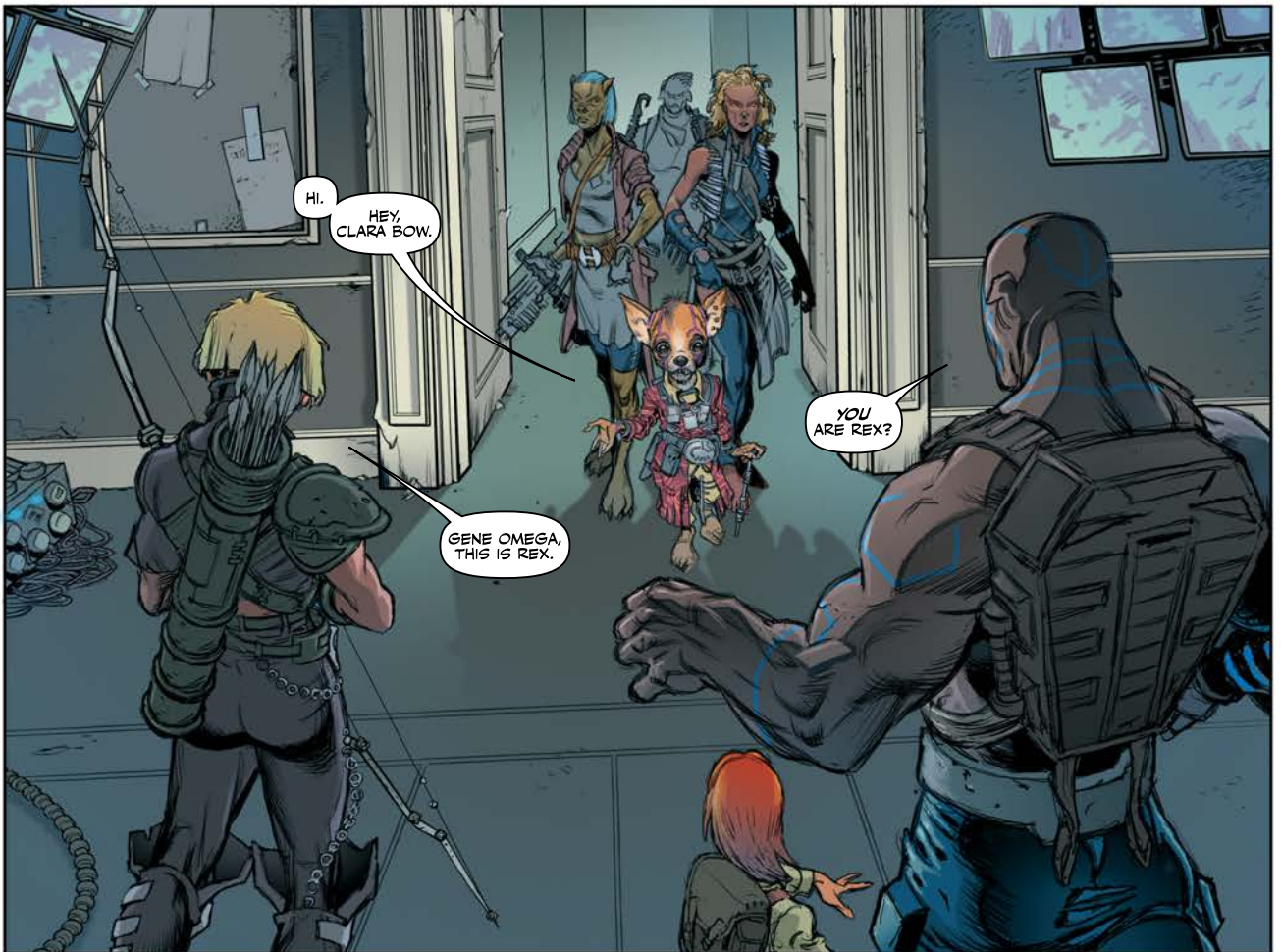
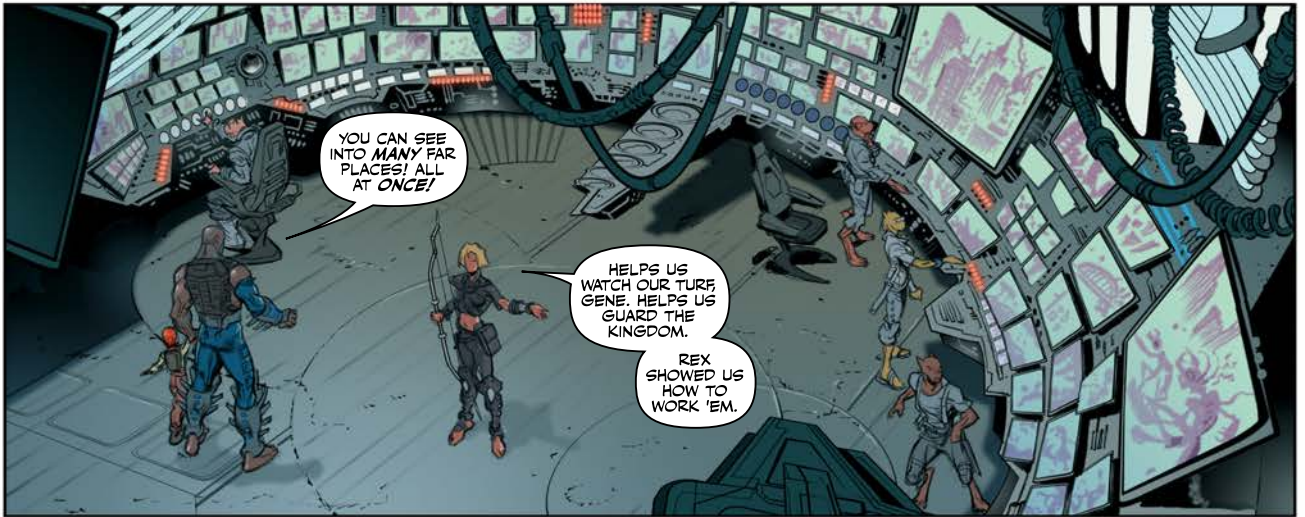
WHERE DID YOU GET HEAT AND LIGHT STUFF?

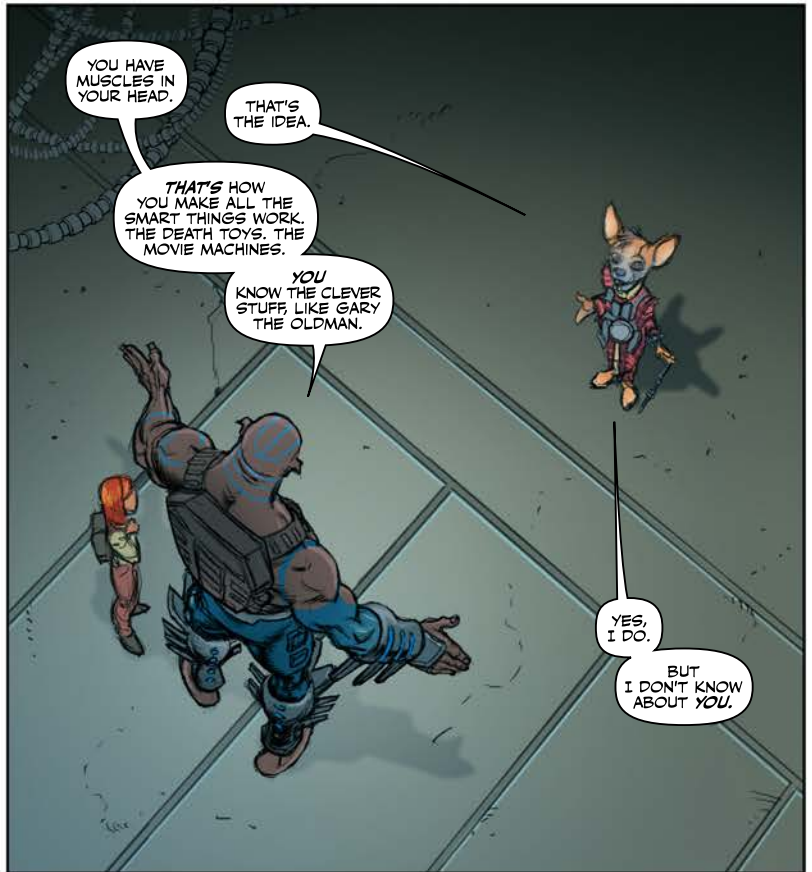
WE GOT PLENTY OF STUFF THAT RUNS, MATE.

WE GOT SYSTEMS.

REX FIXES THEM UP FOR US. HE MAKES THE OLD STUFF WORK AGAIN.









PET?

YEAH.
YOU'RE NOT
THE *ONLY* ONE
WITH A *PET*,
GENE.

"COME AND
MEET *MINE*."





NO ONE
SENT
GENE.

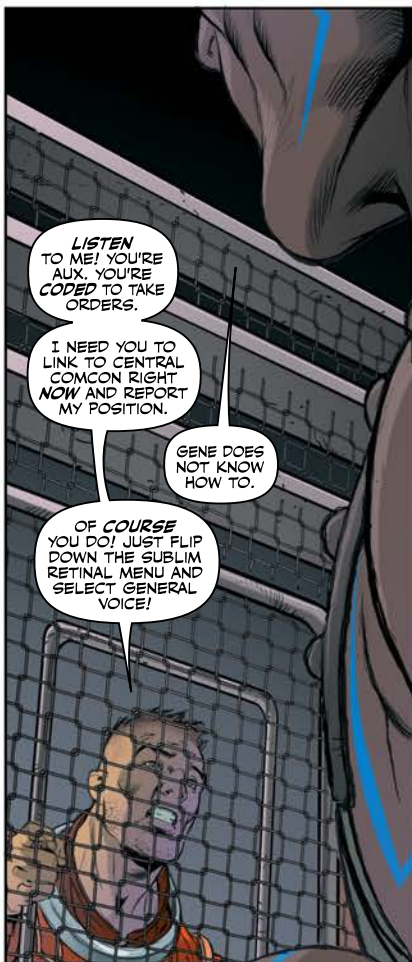


BUT YOU'RE
FACTORY STOCK,
NOT *WILD-BRED*
LIKE THESE
ANIMALS.

WHAT'S
YOUR BATCH
NUMBER? YOUR UNIT
CALL-SIGN? WHICH
BASE STATION ARE
YOU FROM?

WHICH COMCON
AUTHORISES YOUR
DEPLOYMENT?

YOUR
MOUTH IS
FULL OF
STRANGE.



LISTEN
TO ME! YOU'RE
AUX. YOU'RE
CODED TO TAKE
ORDERS.

I NEED YOU TO
LINK TO CENTRAL
COMCON RIGHT
NOW AND REPORT
MY POSITION.

GENE DOES
NOT KNOW
HOW TO.

OF COURSE
YOU DO! JUST FLIP
DOWN THE SUBLIM
RETINAL MENU AND
SELECT GENERAL
VOICE!



GENE
DOES NOT
KNOW WHAT
THAT IS.

FOR CHRIST'S
SAKE! THEY'VE GOT
ME TRAPPED HERE
LIKE A BLOODY
ZOO ANIMAL!

LINK TO
THE CENTRAL
COMCON DATANET
AND CALL IN AN
EXTRACTION!



GENE HACKMAN
CANNOT HELP YOU,
PAUL NUMAN.





"...PRIEST BUGS, PLUS CHOMPERS,
SOME RAKS AND CRANE FLIERS."



SOUNDS LIKE
OUR BUSY DAY
IS GONNA GET
BUSIER.

YOU UP FOR
THAT, GENE
HACKMAN?

TOUGHER
AND TOUGH.
GET
WHET.

YEAH,
I HEARD
THAT.

EVERYONE?
LIKE MY NEW
FRIEND GENE
SAID...

**GET
WHET!**

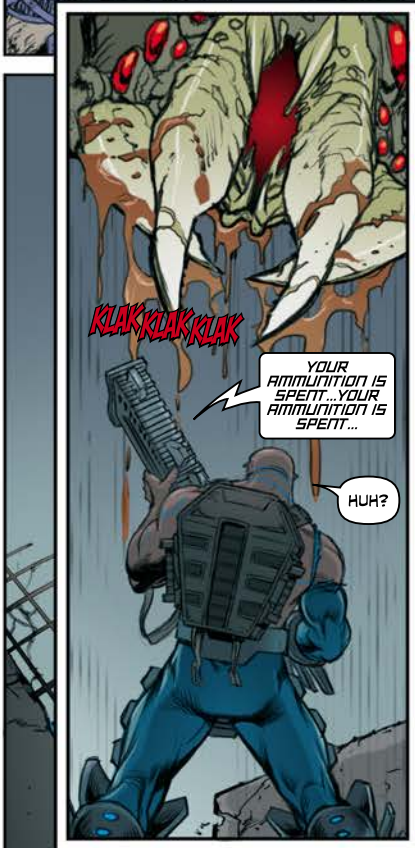








GENE
HAS YOUR BACK,
CLARA BOW!



KLAK KLAK KLAK

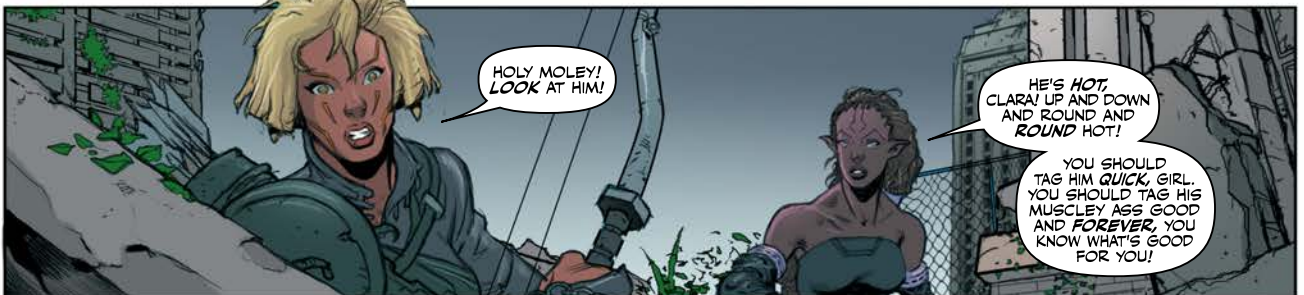
YOUR
AMMUNITION IS
SPENT...YOUR
AMMUNITION IS
SPENT...

HUH?



WELL, THEN!
GET WHET!

GRAAAAAH!



HOLY MOLEY!
LOOK AT HIM!

HE'S HOT,
CLARA! UP AND DOWN
AND ROUND AND
ROUND HOT!

YOU SHOULD
TAG HIM QUICK, GIRL.
YOU SHOULD TAG HIS
MUSCLEY ASS GOOD
AND FOREVER, YOU
KNOW WHAT'S GOOD
FOR YOU!



THE BUNCH, THEY'RE HOLDING THEM OFF *GOOD*.

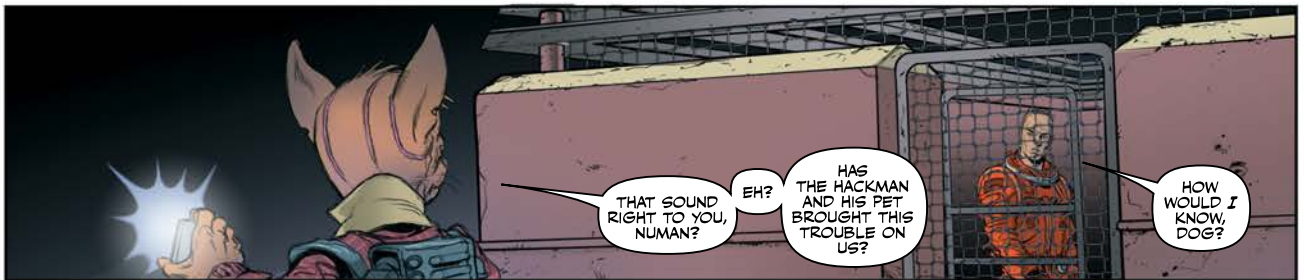
THAT GENE, ALSO. HE'S A PIECE OF WORK.



IT JUST MAKES ME WONDER...

YE KNOW, WE HAVEN'T HAD *ANY* TROUBLE *THIS* BIG FOR FREAKIN' AGES.

IT ALMOST FEELS LIKE...LIKE GENE THE FREAKIN' FANCY HACKMAN AND HIS LITTLE PET HAVE BROUGHT THIS SHIT *WITH* THEM.

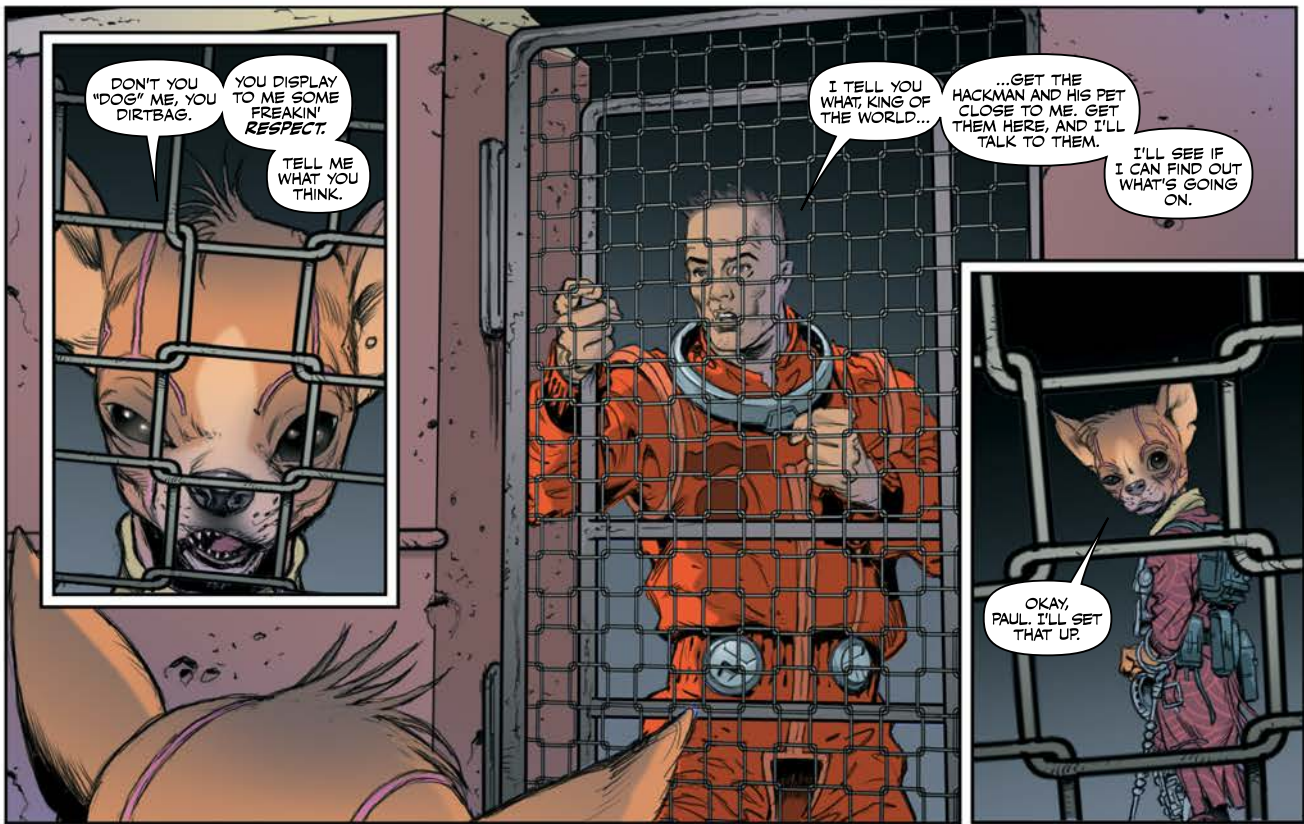


THAT SOUND RIGHT TO YOU, NUMAN?

EH?

HAS THE HACKMAN AND HIS PET BROUGHT THIS TROUBLE ON US?

HOW WOULD I KNOW, DOG?



DON'T YOU "DOG" ME, YOU DIRTBAG.

YOU DISPLAY TO ME SOME FREAKIN' *RESPECT*.

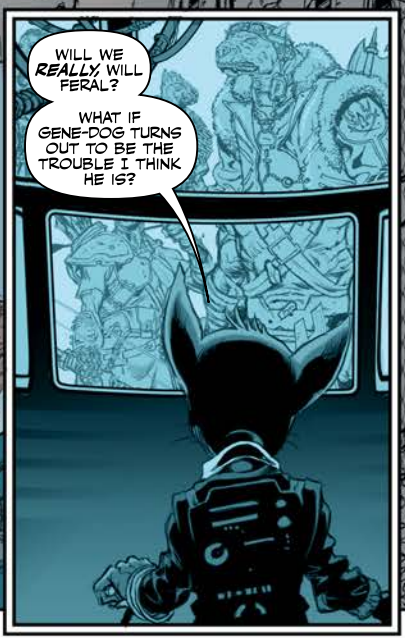
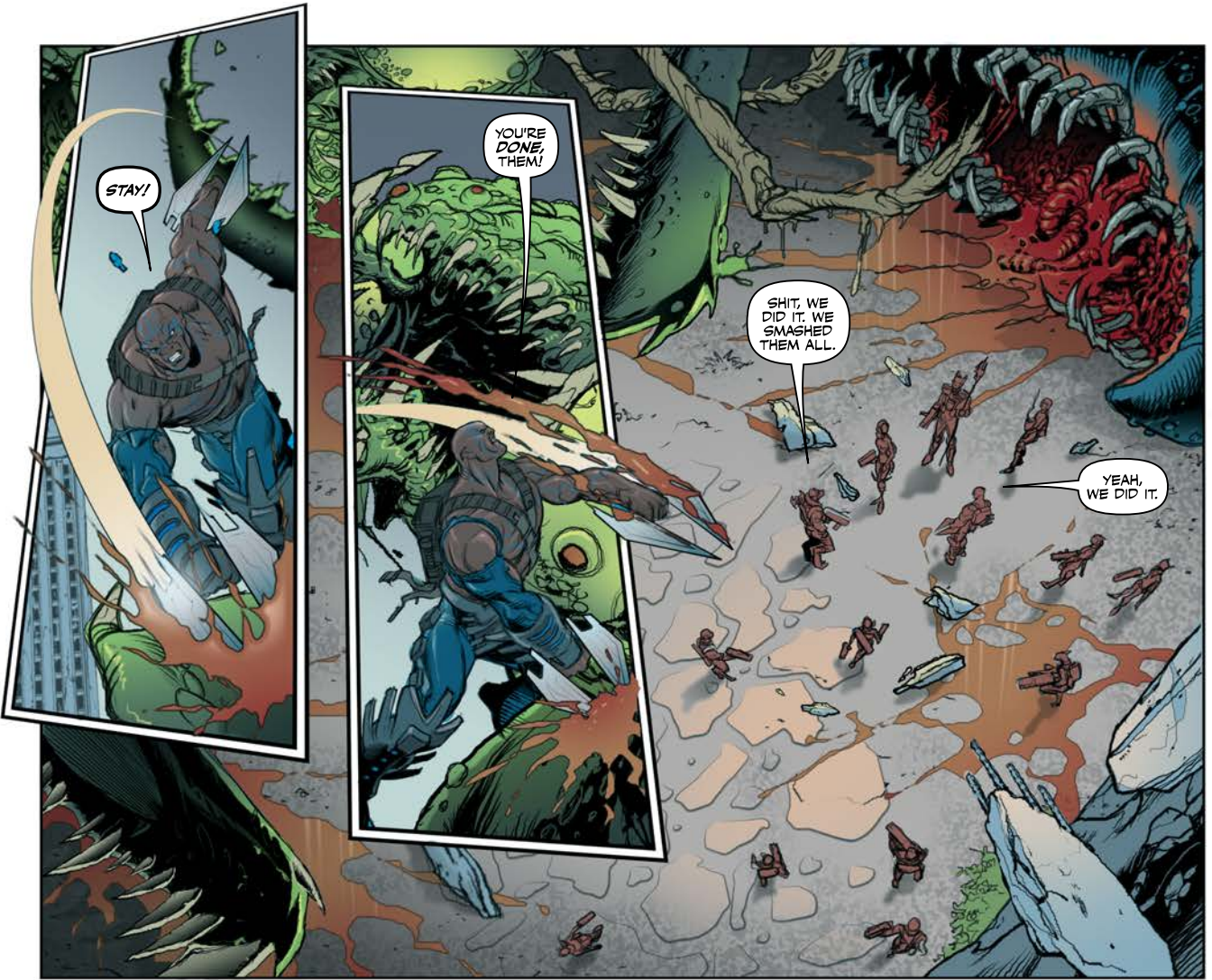
TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK.

I TELL YOU WHAT KING OF THE WORLD...

...GET THE HACKMAN AND HIS PET CLOSE TO ME. GET THEM HERE, AND I'LL TALK TO THEM.

I'LL SEE IF I CAN FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.

OKAY, PAUL. I'LL SET THAT UP.







WHY DO YOU CALL FOR ME, NUMAN?

WHAT IS LEEZEE SOWER DOING IN HERE?

IT'S OKAY, GENE-DOG. PAUL NUMAN JUST WANTS TO TALK TO YOU.

THAT'S RIGHT, GENE. I'VE TALKED TO LEEZEE AND NOW I WANT TO TALK TO YOU.



SO TALK.

I KNOW YOU'RE A PURE-BRED AUX, EVEN IF YOU'VE FORGOTTEN IT.

YOU'RE FROM A BASE STATION SOMEWHERE.

AND I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN ON YOUR OWN, AND THAT REX'S TRIBE OFFERS WELCOME SAFETY AND COMPANIONSHIP.

BUT I NEED YOUR HELP.



TELL HIM THE TALE, PAUL NUMAN.

OK, LEEZEE.

GENE, WHEN THE INSECTS...WHEN THEM...FIRST AROSE, THE HUMAN RACE, WHICH IS WHAT YOU CALL THE MASTERS, WAS ALMOST WIPED OUT.

WE HID AWAY FROM THEM, GENE, OUT IN ANTARCTICA. THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE HID IN CRYO-SUSPENSION UNDER THE ICE.



WE LEFT VAT-GROWN SOLDIERS BEHIND TO FIGHT THE WAR FOR US. TO KEEP US SAFE WHILE WE SLEPT IN THE ICE. TO PROTECT US UNTIL THE THREAT OF THEM HAD GONE.

BUT THEM...THEM HAS PROSPERED, AND LASTED LONGER THAN WE EVER THOUGHT THEY WOULD.



I WASN'T UNDER THE ICE, GENE. I WAS PUT INTO CRYO-SUSPENSION ON AN ORBITAL STATION CALLED COMCON CENTRAL.

I WAS PART OF THE OVERWATCH, GENE. WE WERE WOKEN PERIODICALLY TO ASSESS HOW THINGS WERE PROGRESSING DOWN ON THE SURFACE.

WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE FIRST LINE OF RE-ACTIVATION...THE PIONEERS WHEN THE BIG WAKE-UP CAME.



ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO, I WAS WOKEN BECAUSE COMCOM SYSTEMS HAD DETECTED ELECTRONIC ACTIVITY HERE IN SYDNEY.

WE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE THE START OF THE WAKE-UP, SO I WAS SENT DOWN ON A LANDER TO SCOPE OUT THE SITUATION.

BUT MY LANDER **CRASHED**, AND I WAS CAPTURED BY THE WILD.

TURNED OUT **THEY** WERE THE SOURCE OF THE ELECTRONICS.



SO WHAT DOES THIS ALL MATTER TO GENE THE HACKMAN?



GENE, IT WAS COMING HERE THAT MADE ME REALISE HOW **WRONG** THINGS HAD GONE. HOW **SUCCESSFUL** THEM HAD BECOME. HOW **LONG** WE'D ALL BEEN SLEEPING.

MANKIND'S BEEN IN CRYO-SLEEP FOR **CENTURIES** MORE THAN WAS INTENDED.

THE BIG WAKE-UP **NEVER CAME**, GENE, AND NOW THE HUMAN RACE IS BEING KEPT ALIVE BY MACHINES **WAY** PAST THEIR OPERATIONAL TOLERANCES.



THE MASTERS HAVE **GOT** TO WAKE UP SOON, OR THEY WILL **DIE** IN THEIR SLEEP, AND THAT WILL BE **IT**.



YOUR MOUTH IS FULL OF WRONG!

BESIDES, THE MASTERS **CANNOT** WAKE UP YET. **THEM** IS **STILL** HERE.

GENE, I **KNOW** ABOUT THE TICK LEEZEE CARRIES IN HER FLESH. IT REPRESENTS A **BIOLOGICAL THREAT** TO THEM.

IF WE COULD **ANALYSE** IT, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SYNTHESISE **BIOLOGICAL AGENTS** THAT COULD BE USED TO **WIPE THEM OUT**.

LEEZEE SOWER COULD **SAVE** MANKIND, GENE.



HOW?

I NEED TO GET HER BACK TO COMCON CENTRAL. I NEED TO GET *OUT* OF THIS CAGE AND CALL DOWN AN EXTRACTION.

I CAN'T DO THAT WITHOUT *YOUR* HELP, GENE.



GENE IS *PART* OF THE WILD! GENE IS *PART* OF THE PACK! GENE *WON'T* TURN ON THE PACK!

YOUR LOYALTY DOES YOU CREDIT, GENE. LOYALTY TO THE PACK IS *GOOD*.

BUT WHAT ABOUT LOYALTY TO THE *MASTERS*?

WHAT ABOUT LOYALTY TO *LEEZEE SOWER*?



THEM CAN *SMELL* THE TICK, GENE. THEM CAN *SMELL HER*.

THAT'S WHY ALL THIS *TROUBLE* IS COMING INTO THE WILD KINGDOM. THEY KNOW HOW MUCH OF A *THREAT* SHE IS.



THEM WILL *KEEP* COMING AND *KEEP* COMING UNTIL SHE IS *REMOVED*.

ANOTHER WEEK, *TWO* MAYBE, AND THE WILD KINGDOM'S GOING TO BE OVERRUN AND *DEAD*.



GENE DOESN'T KNOW THE *CLEVER* STUFF LIKE YOU DO, PAUL NUMAN.

GENE NEEDS TIME TO *THINK*.



"NO",
REX HORIZON?

YEAH, IT'S A
"NO" TO THAT, GENE.
I AIN'T GOING TO
LET NUMAN OUT.

HE'S SPUN YOU
SOME *FIBS*, MATE.
SOME *FIBS-POOR*
YARNS.



PETS DO THAT
ALL THE TIME. YOURS
MUST *TOO*. THEY MAKE
SHIT UP TO GET STUFF
OUT OF YOU.

I'VE HEARD THIS
TALE BEFORE. IT'S ALL
LIES. I DON'T EVEN
BELIEVE IN THE MASTERS,
MATE, AND EVEN IF I *DID*,
WHAT DO I CARE IF
THEY *DIE*?

WHAT
DID *THEY*
EVER DO
FOR ME?



DON'T TAKE
IT TOO *HARD*,
GENE-DOG.
NUMAN'S FOOLED
YOU WITH HIS
CLEVER YAP.

I HEAR WILL
CALLING FOR YOU,
MATE. A PATROL'S
GOING OUT. GET
SOME EXERCISE,
AND YOU'LL FEEL
TONS BETTER
ABOUT IT.



I *KNEW* THAT
BASTARD'S PET WAS
TROUBLE. GENE SAID
IT WITH HIS *OWN*
MOUTH.

THAT
LEEZEE THING
IS BRINGING THEM
HERE TO *HURT*
US.

SO WHAT
DO WE DO,
REX?

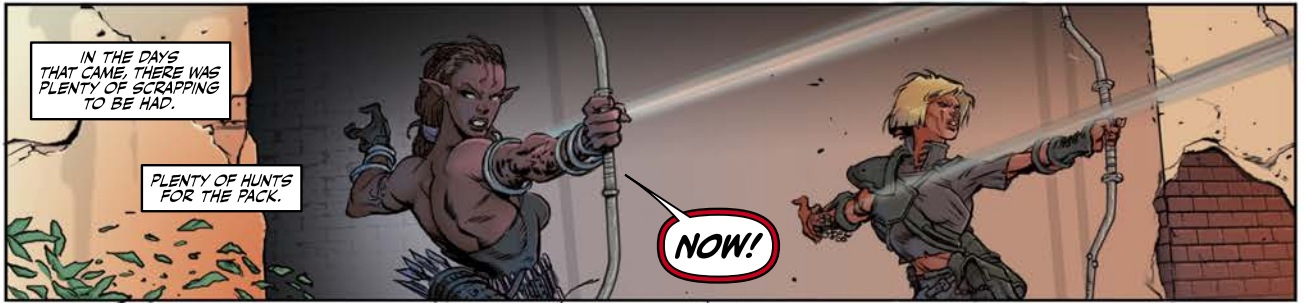


I'LL *TELL*
YOU WHAT WE
DO, DINGO.

WE MAKE
PEACE WITH
THEM.

WE *GIVE* THEM
LEEZEE SOWER.





IN THE DAYS
THAT CAME, THERE WAS
PLENTY OF SCRAPPING
TO BE HAD.

PLENTY OF HUNTS
FOR THE PACK.

NOW!



SCRAP
'EM!

SCRAP
'EM GOOD
AND DROP
'EM DEAD!

AND THEM WAS COMING
IN NEW WAR FORMS,
UGLY-BUG SHAPES
BRED FOR A KILLING
PURPOSE.

THEM WAS COMING
MORE OFTEN THAN THEM
HAD DONE IN YEARS.

KTOOOM
KTOOOM



GET
WHET.

EVERYONE KNEW THAT
THEM WAS FIXING TO
INVADE AND FINISH OFF
THE WILD KINGDOM.

EVERYONE KNEW
IT, BUT NO ONE
SAID IT OUT LOUD.



THERE WAS GONNA BE A LOT OF SCRAPPING BEFORE THE KINGDOM WAS SAFE AGAIN.



THERE WAS GONNA BE A LOT OF SCRAPPING BEFORE THEM WAS TAUGHT A LESSON AND DRIVEN OUT OF THE PACK'S TERRITORY FOR GOOD.



GET OFFA THE LAWN!



YEAH, WE'RE DONE HERE. THE WEST END'S CLEAR FOR NOW.

WE'RE COMING BACK IN.



LET YOUR BEST FRIEND KNOW HE'S THE BEST FRIEND IN THE WORLD!
BONZA PET FOOD

WHERE'S LEEZEE? WHERE IS LEEZEE SOWER?









GENE, WHAT'S GOING ON?

YOU'RE GOING TO BE QUIET.

GOD, I THOUGHT I'D NEVER GET OUT OF THAT CAGE--

BE QUIET, OR YOU GO BACK IN IT.



REX HORIZON'S DONE SOMETHING WITH LEEZEE SOWER. WE'VE GOT TO FIND HER, PAUL NUMAN.

WE'VE GOT TO MAKE SURE SHE'S SAFE.

H-HOW?



YOU SAID YOU COULD DO THAT! YOU SAID YOU KNEW HOW!

YOU SAID YOU COULD CALL IN AN EXTRA SHUN AND TAKE HER SOMEWHERE!

COMCON CENTRAL! I CAN GET HER TO COMCON CENTRAL!

JUST GET ME TO A NETWORK HUB!



YOU SAID LEEZEE SOWER COULD SAVE MANKIND. YOU SAID SHE COULD WIPE THEM OUT.

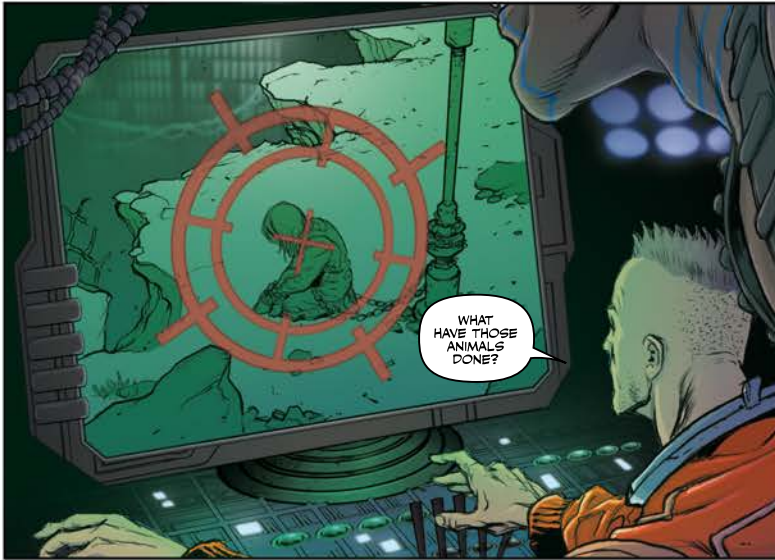
WAS THAT JUST TALK TO GET GENE TO HELP YOU?

I SWEAR IT WASN'T! JUST GET ME TO A NETWORK HUB AND I'LL PROVE IT!





OH JESUS
CHRIST...



WHAT
HAVE THOSE
ANIMALS
DONE?



WE GO GET
LEEZEE SOWER
NOW.

WE GO GET
LEEZEE SOWER
AND TAKE HER
TO THE EXTRA
SHUN.

WE'VE GOT
THREE HOURS,
GENE--



YOU GOT
NOTHING
LIKE THAT
LONG.

GRRAAAAAHHH!!



NGHHHH!

STOP IT!
STOP!

UHK!



YAAAAHHH!!





HKKK...

SHOULDA
DONE GUTTED YOU
WHEN YOU FIRST
SHOWED UP,
GENE-SMEAR!



YEAH...



...YOU
SHOULDA.



COZ IT WAS
THE ONLY CHANCE
YOU WAS *EVER*
GONNA GET.

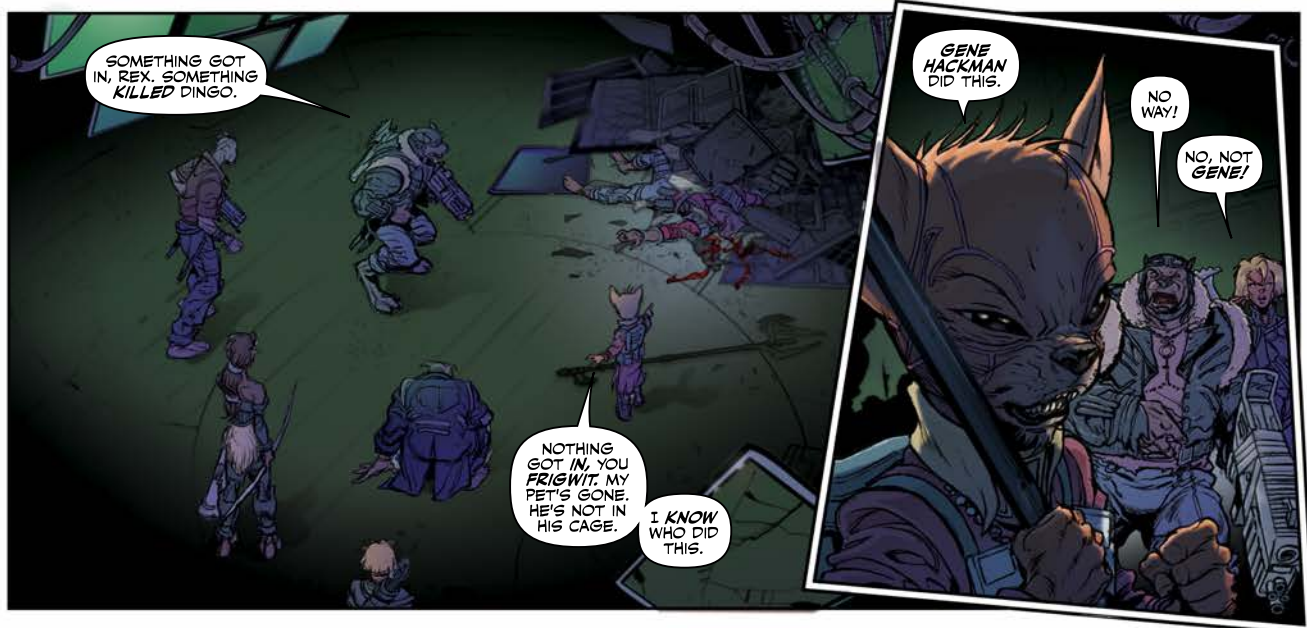


KRAAKK

J-JESUS...

TIME TO GO,
PAUL NUMAN.

AND THAT WAS HOW GENE OMEGA
BROKE HIS BONDS WITH THE WILD
BUNCH, AND HOW HE AND THE HUMAN
FLED INTO THE RUINS.



SOMETHING GOT
IN, REX. SOMETHING
KILLED DINGO.

NOTHING
GOT IN, YOU
FRIGWIT. MY
PET'S GONE.
HE'S NOT IN
HIS CAGE.

I **KNOW**
WHO DID
THIS.

**GENE
HACKMAN**
DID THIS.

NO
WAY!

NO, NOT
GENE!





"...AND THEY WILL
SCENT THE TICK IN
LEEZEE'S HIDE, AND
THAT WILL BRING THEM
RIGHT TO HER."



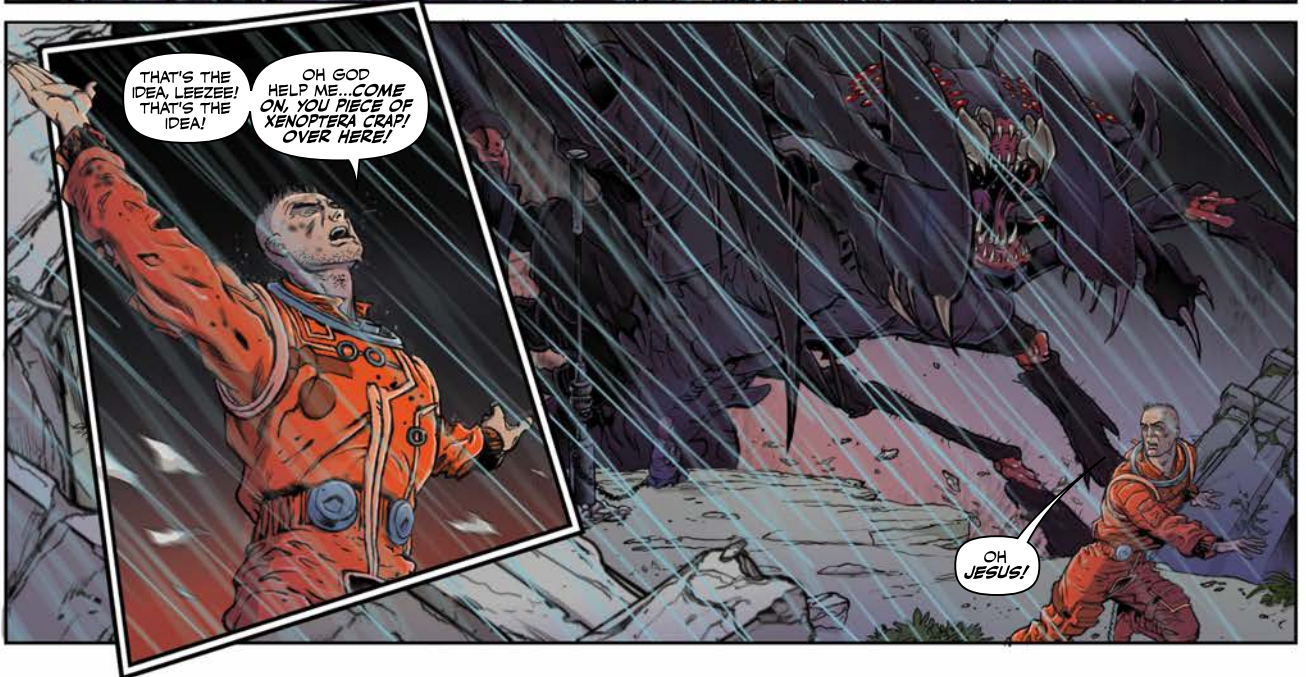
HELLO?

WHO
IS THAT
THERE?



OH.







NHHFF!



LAST
MOMENT,
MUCH?

DISTRACT
IT, YOU SAID!
I THOUGHT IT
WAS GOING TO
GET ME!

WELL, IT
DIDN'T.



OH, GENE!
GENE-DOG! YOU'RE
A GOOD DOG, YOU
ARE!

I *KNEW*
YOU WOULDN'T
LEAVE ME OUT
HERE!

HURRY,
LEEZEE SOWER,
WE'VE GOT TO
MOVE NOW.

NUMAN
HAS GOT AN
EXTRA SHUN
FOR YOU.

A WHAT?

AN
EXTRACTION.
IT MEANS I'M
GETTING YOU
OUT OF HERE.



GROUND SOUNDS.
THEY'RE COMING.

WHO?
THEM?

NO...



"...THE WILD
BUNCH. THE
WILD BUNCH IS
HUNTING US."



GENE!
GENE
OMEGA!

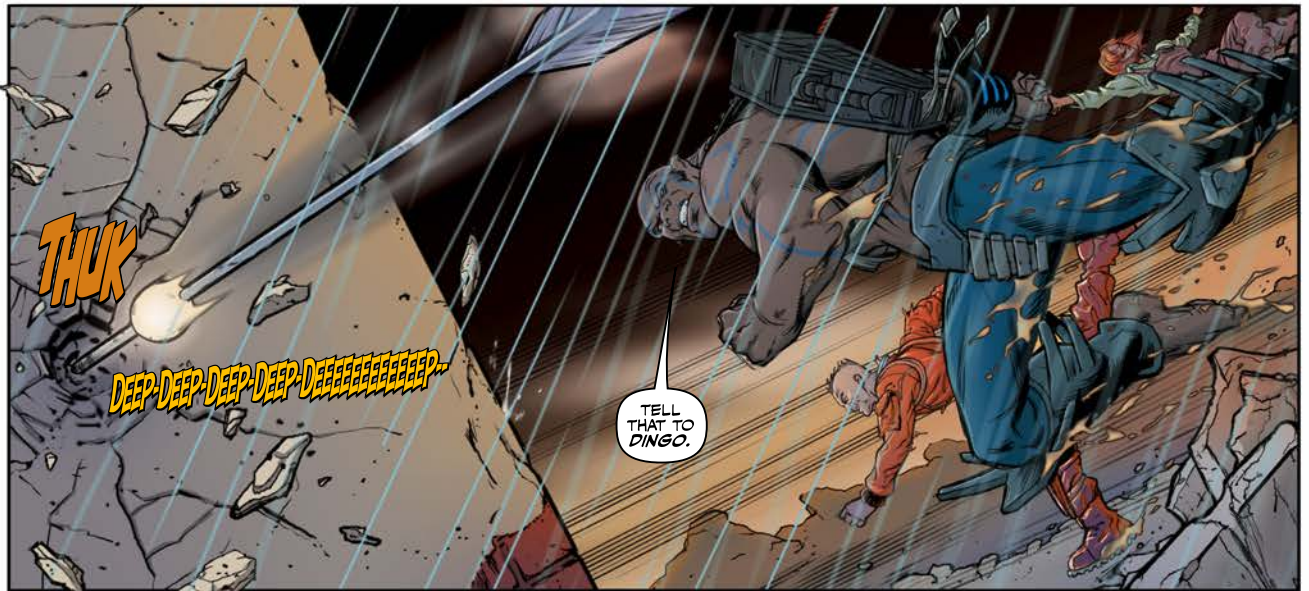
DON'T RUN
NO MORE, MATE!
GIVE YOURSELF
UP!

YOU DONE
CRIMES TO OUR
PEOPLE, MATE! YOU
GOTTA FACE THE
PAYBACK!



YOU KILLED
DINGO, GENE!
YOU BROKE
HIS NECK!

YOU GOTTA
PAY FOR THAT!
IT'S THE LAW OF
THE KINGDOM!
WE DON'T KILL
OUR OWN!



THUK

DEEP-DEEP-DEEP-DEEP-DEEEEEEEEEEP...

TELL
THAT TO
DINGO.





KEEP GOING!



UGHNN!



GNHHH!
NO--!

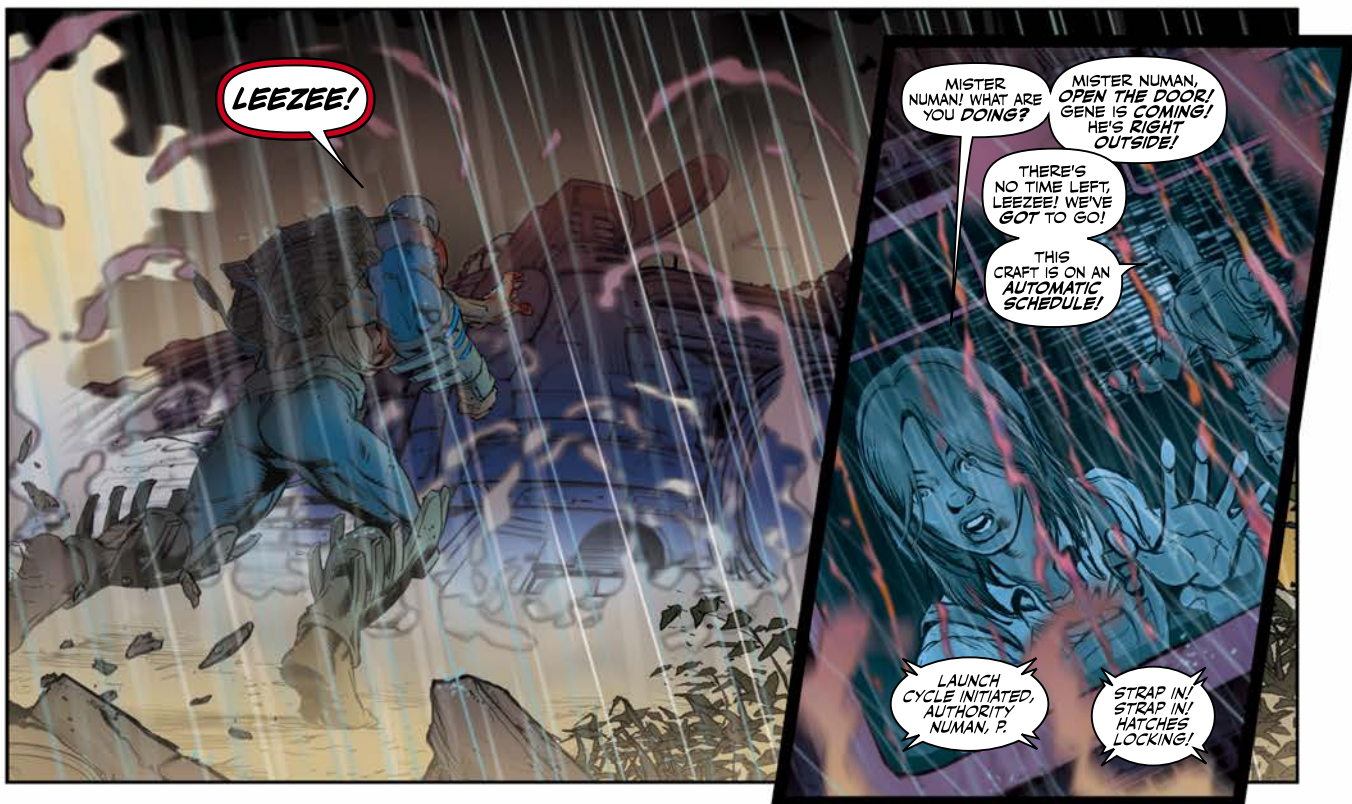


GENE!
GENE-DOG!

IT'S TOO LATE,
LEEZEE!

THERE'S
NOTHING WE
CAN DO!









LEAVE
ME ALONE.

WE CAN'T DO
THAT, GENE. WE
GOTTA BRING
YOU IN.



DON'T YOU *GET*
IT? NOW LEEZEE SOWER
IS GONE, SO IS THE *TICK*.
THEM WON'T BOTHER YOU
SO MUCH ANYMORE.

THE WILD
KINGDOM'S
SAFE AGAIN.

THAT'S
CRAP--

WHAT IF IT
AIN'T, WILL
FERAL?

WHAT IF
GENE'S RIGHT AND
HE *SAVED* US FROM
THEM BY DOING
THIS?



"WHAT *IF*"?
YOU SAYING WE
OWE HIM?

IF IT'S
TRUE, WE OWE HIM
SOMETHING, AT
LEAST.

A HEAD
START.



AN *HOUR'S*
HEAD START. *TWO*,
IF YOU GOT THE
BONE. THAT'S ALL
I WANT.

YOU CAN TELL
REX HORIZON THAT
THEM GOT ME.

OR THAT
I FLEW AWAY TO
THE STARS.



WHERE
WILL YOU GO,
GENE?



I'LL DO THE WALK-AROUND, LIKE I DONE BEFORE. LONGEST WALK-AROUND.

THERE'S A FARM IN THE COUNTRY THAT I HEARD OF. MAYBE I'LL FIND THAT.



AND THAT WAS THE TALE OF HOW GENE THE HACKMAN CAME TO THE WILD KINGDOM.



AND HOW HE SAVED IT, TOUGHER AND TOUGH.



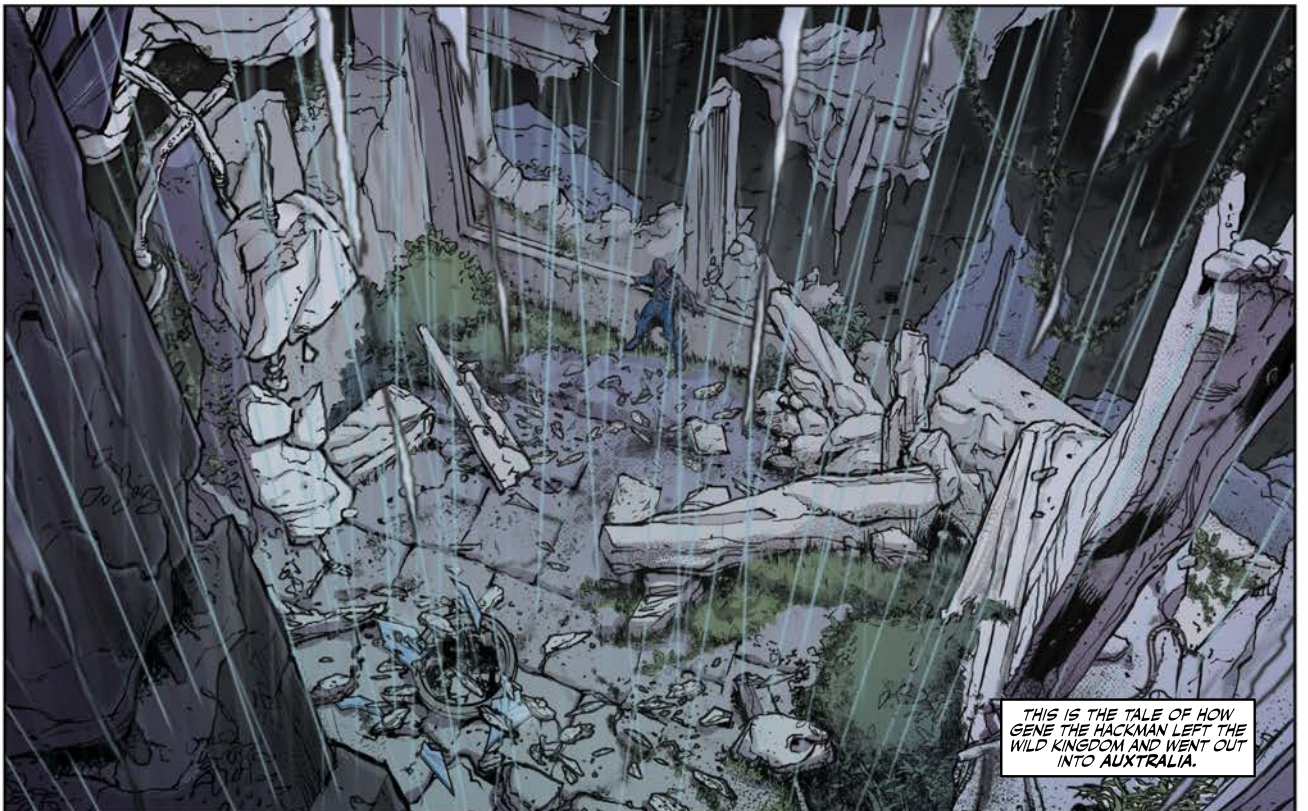
AND HOW HE WALKED A-WAYS AGAIN, AFTER, AND WENT OUT INTO AUSTRALIA ALL ALONE.



HIS MASTER'S VOICE

Script: Dan Abnett
Art: Richard Elson
Colours: Abigail Ryder
Letters: Simon Bowland

Originally published in *2000 AD Progs* 2011, 1715-1725





GENE HAD ONCE BEEN
ALPHA MALE, LEADING HIS PACK
ON THE WALK-AROUND TO KEEP
THE COLD PLACE CLEAN. BUT
THEM DAYS WAS LONG GONE.

GENE HAD NOT BEEN
ALPHA LONG TIME.
GENE WAS OMEGA
NOW. ROGUE DOG, HIM.

GENE HAD COME A LONG
WAY, FROM ANARCHTICY AND
TAZZY ISLAND TO AUXTRALIA.

CHKT

HE'D COME ALONE, AND
SURVIVED BY THE BLADES
IN HIS HANDS AND THE
MUSCLES IN HIS HEAD.



FOR A WHILE, HED HAD A FRIEND CALLED LEEZEE SOWER, BUT SHE HAD GONE NOW, AND LEFT GENE.

GENE DID NOT KNOW WHERE LEEZEE SOWER HAD GONE. HE HOPED IT WAS TO A GOOD PLACE. MAYBE TO A FARM IN THE COUNTRY.

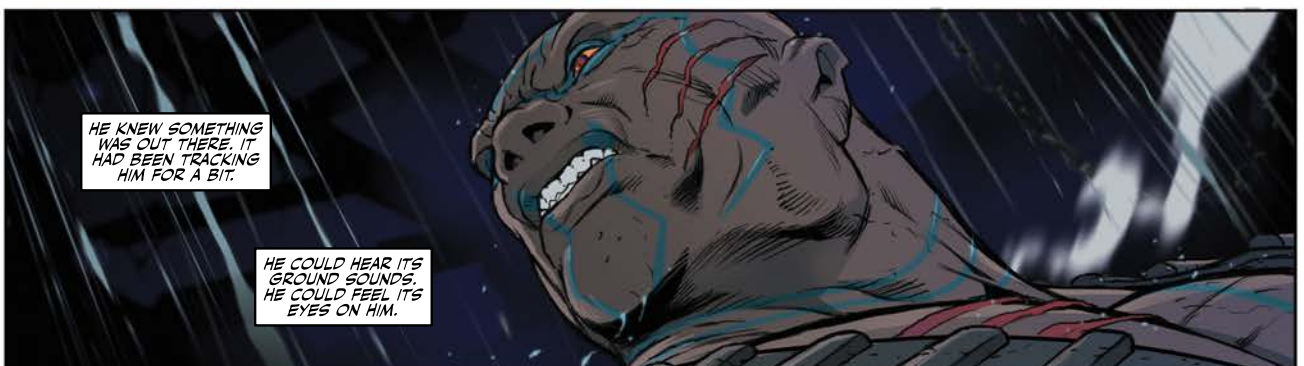


GENE PREFERRED NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT--AND THERE WAS PLENTY OF SCRAPPING TO DO, SO THAT KEPT HIM BUSY.

PLENTY OF SCRAPPING.



GENE WAS TOUGHER AND TOUGH, AND HED BEEN FIGHTING THEM LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT WAS WHAT.



HE KNEW SOMETHING WAS OUT THERE. IT HAD BEEN TRACKING HIM FOR A BIT.

HE COULD HEAR ITS GROUND SOUNDS. HE COULD FEEL ITS EYES ON HIM.



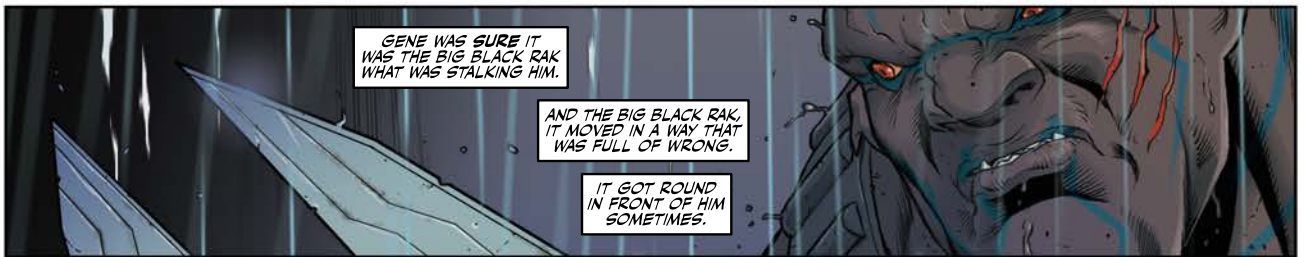
ALL OF 'EM.



GENE HAD COME WHISKER-CLOSE TO A BIG BLACK RAK TWO DAYS BEFORE.

BIG MEAN THING. A NEW WAR FORM GENE HADN'T SCRAPPED WITH BEFORE.

IT HAD ALMOST LEFT GENE ALL BIT-UP AND KILLED DEAD.



GENE WAS SURE IT WAS THE BIG BLACK RAK WHAT WAS STALKING HIM.

AND THE BIG BLACK RAK, IT MOVED IN A WAY THAT WAS FULL OF WRONG.

IT GOT ROUND IN FRONT OF HIM SOMETIMES.



SOMETIMES HE GLIMPSED IT SHADOWING HIM, AND NOT WHERE HE EXPECTED IT TO BE.

AND IT GOT NO SCENT.



GENE OMEGA, HE KNEW THAT WHEN THE RAK FINALLY DECIDED TO MAKE ITS PLAY...



...IT WAS GONNA HURT.

GAAHH!



NHH!



GET WHET!



THE BIG BLACK RAK WAS USING TUNNELS TO OUTFLANK GENE. TUNNELS AND BURROWS AND TRAPDOORS.



IT WAS CLEVER. GENE KNEW IT WAS A TRICK HE'D NEED TO REMEMBER AND WATCH FOR ANOTHER TIME.



IF HE GOT ANOTHER TIME.

UHHN!

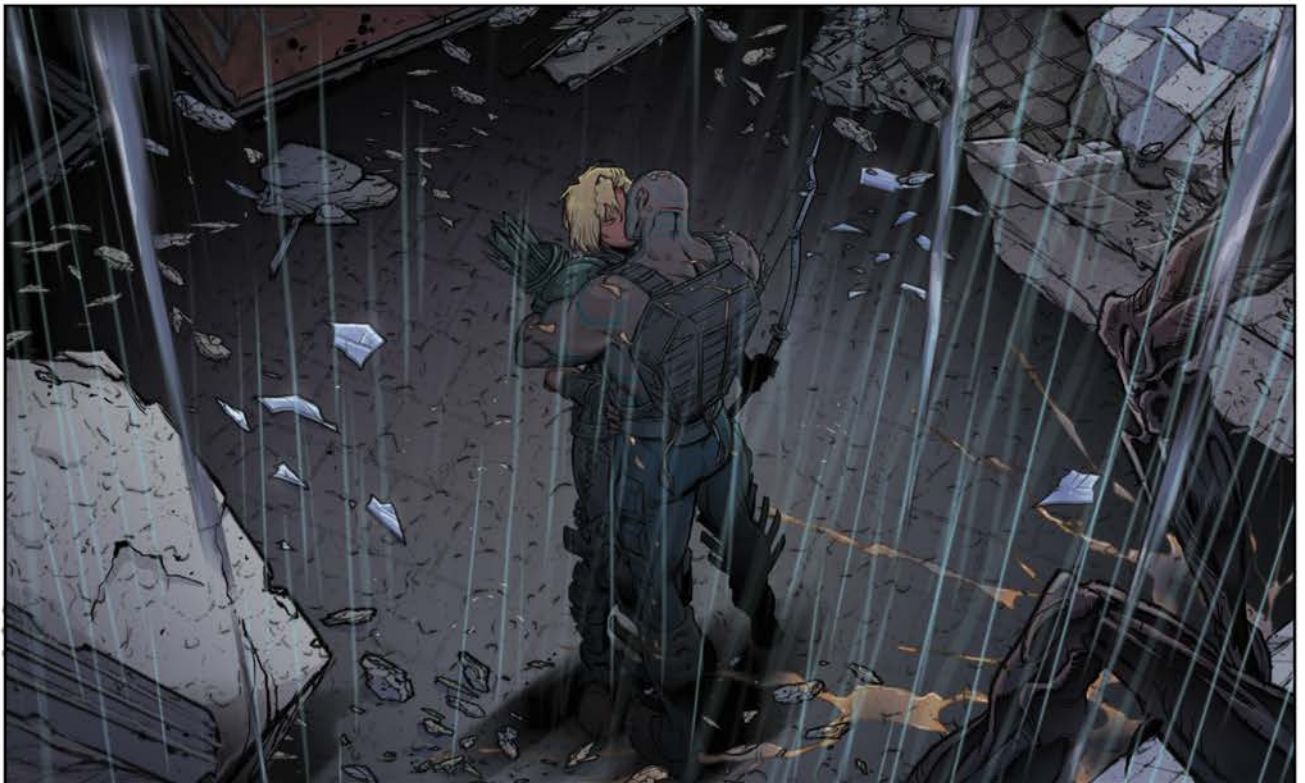
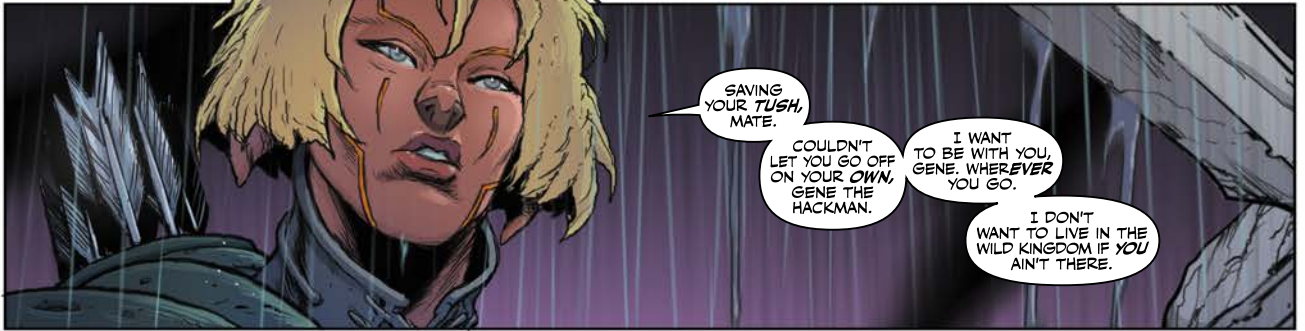




VADDDDDOM

THUKKTCH
THUKKTCH

HUH?
CLARA?
CLARA
BOW?





WHERE
WILL WE GO,
GENE-DOG?

MAYBE WE
SHOULD GO BACK
TO THE WILD
KINGDOM.

NO.

BUT WE COULD
GET WILL AND HOLLY
ON-SIDE, AND THEY
COULD EXPLAIN TO REX
WHAT YOU HAD TO
DO, MATE.



NO.

WE
GONNA GO ON
OUT, CLARA. OUT ON A
WALK-AROUND INTO
AUSTRALIA.

WHY?
THERE'S NOTHING
OUT THERE.

WHY
DO YOU WANT
TO GO OUT
THERE?



BECAUSE
THESE LAST FEW
DAY'S, GENE'S
HEARD THEM
AGAIN, CLARA.

GENE'S HEARD
THE MASTERS AND
THEY'RE CALLING
OUT TO HIM.

THEN WE'D
BETTER NOT KEEP
THE BASTARDS
WAITING, EH?



SO, GENE HACKMAN, YOU GONNA TELL ME ABOUT THESE VOICES SOME?



NOT MUCH TO TELL.

YEAH, BUT YOU'RE GONNA TELL CLARA BOW ANYWAY, RIGHT?



WE CALL THEM THE **URGINGS**. THEY ARE THE VOICES OF THE MASTERS.



RIGHT-HO.

AND THESE "MASTERS", MATE--SINCE WHEN DO DOGS HAVE MASTERS?



I DON'T KNOW THE WAY IT WORKS, CLARA. I JUST KNOW THAT THE MASTERS ARE WHO **MADE** US, AND THE MASTERS ARE THE ONES THAT SEND THE PACKS OUT.

THEY SEND THE PACKS OUT TO KEEP THE COLD PLACE CLEAN WHILE THE MASTERS SLEEP UNDER THE ICE, LONG TIME.



WHEN THE
PACKS DO THE WALK-AROUND,
THEY CAN HEAR THE MASTERS'
VOICES, GUIDING THEM, TELLING
THEM WHAT TO DO.

TELLING US
WHERE *THEM* ARE.
TELLING US WHEN TO
SCRAP, AND WHEN
TO BACK OFF.

YOU KNOW
WHAT THAT SOUNDS
LIKE TO ME, GENE
THE HACKMAN?

A MYTH? A
DOG-TALE?

NAH. IT
SOUNDS LIKE
BOLLOCKS.

YOU
DON'T
BELIEVE
GENE?

YEAH. THING IS,
I'VE NEVER HEARD
NO MASTERS IN
MY HEAD.

I'VE NEVER
HEARD NO
URGINGS.

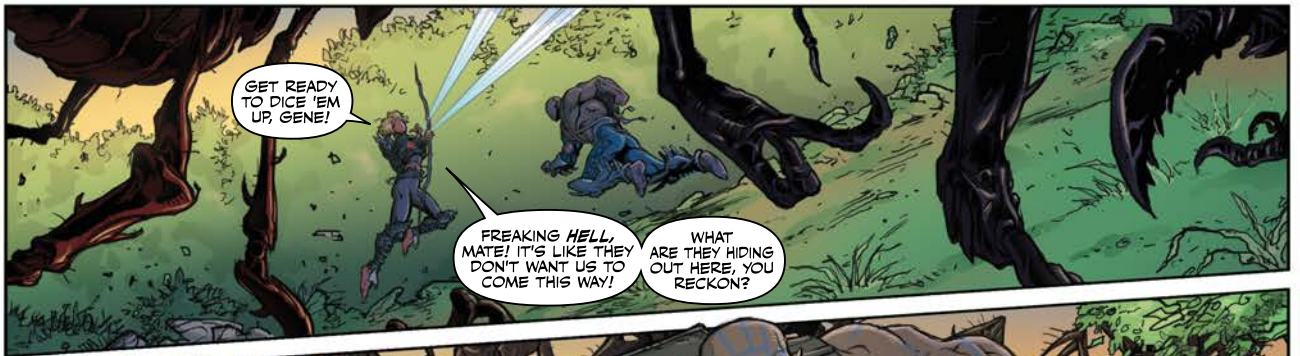


I THINK
THAT'S BECAUSE
WE COME FROM
DIFFERENT
PLACES.

I COME FROM
THE COLD PLACE, FROM
ANARCHTICY, AND I WAS
BRED BY THE MASTERS,
LIKE ALL MY PACK.

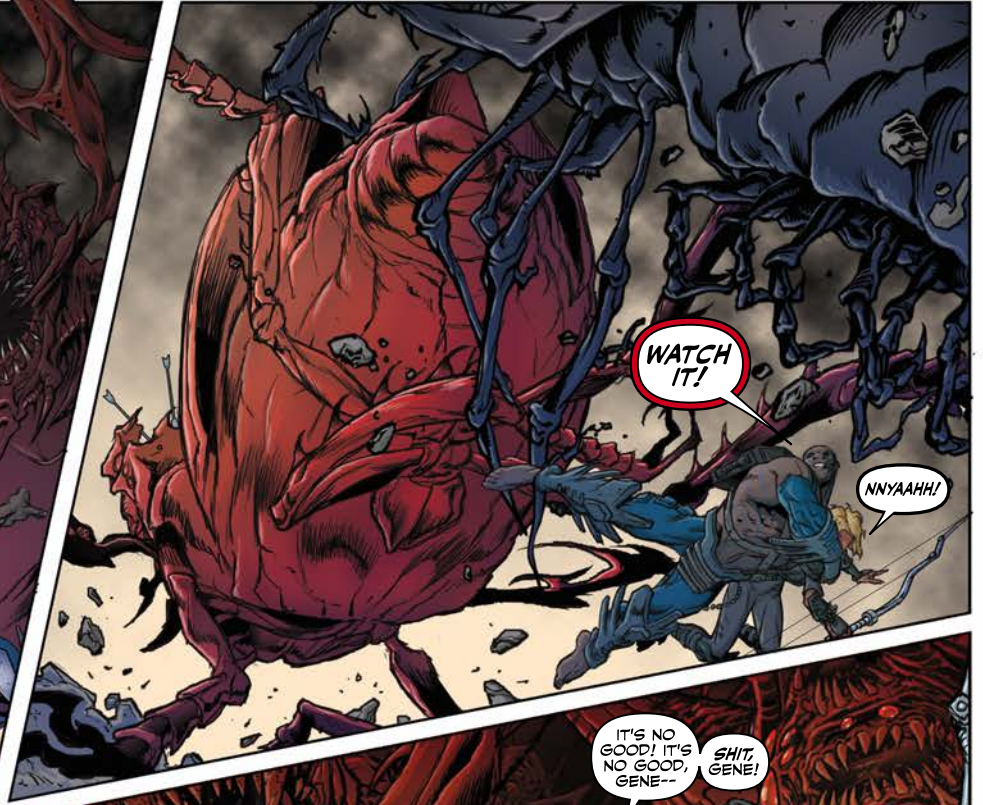
WE WAS
BRED TO HEAR
THE MASTERS'
VOICE.







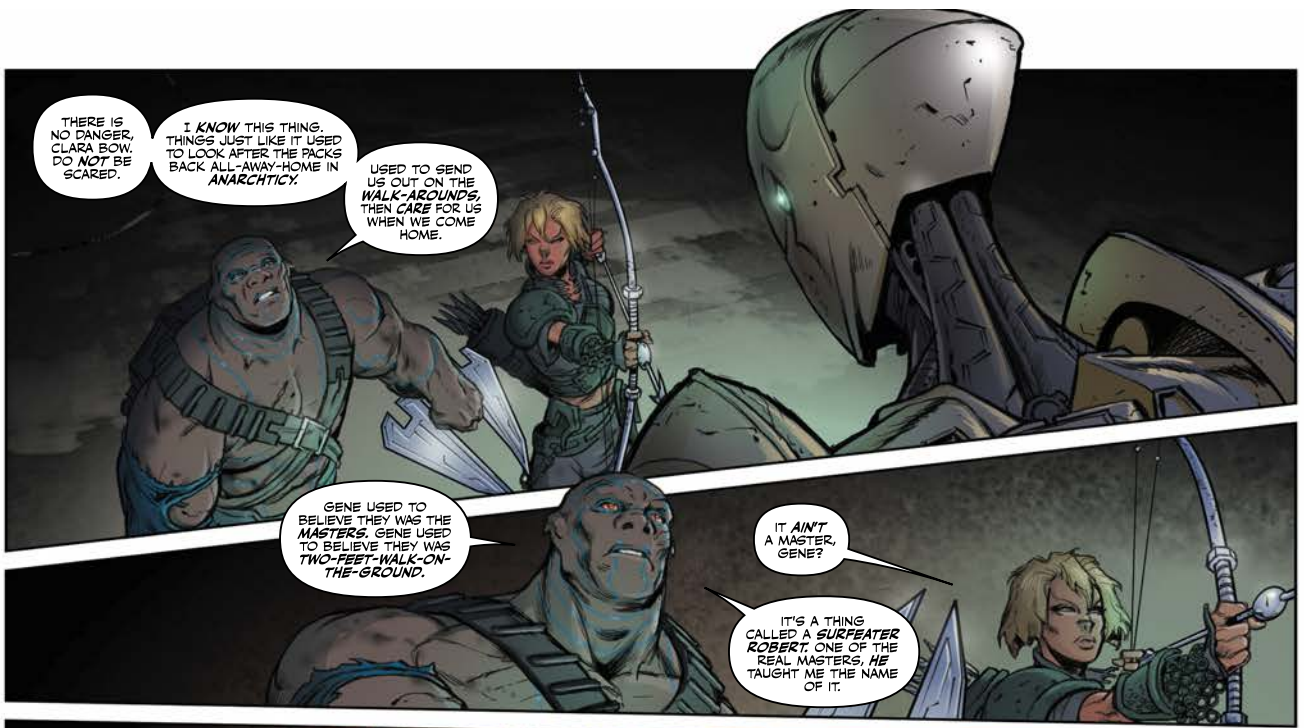
















UGHNN!
GET OFF!

**GENE
WILL
BREAK
YOU!**

GENE-DOG!
I CAN'T MOVE MY
LEGS! THEY'VE
GONE ALL DEAD!



**GET OFF ME,
METAL-FACE!**

**DISABLE
SPECIMEN
ONE.**



GAAAAHH!

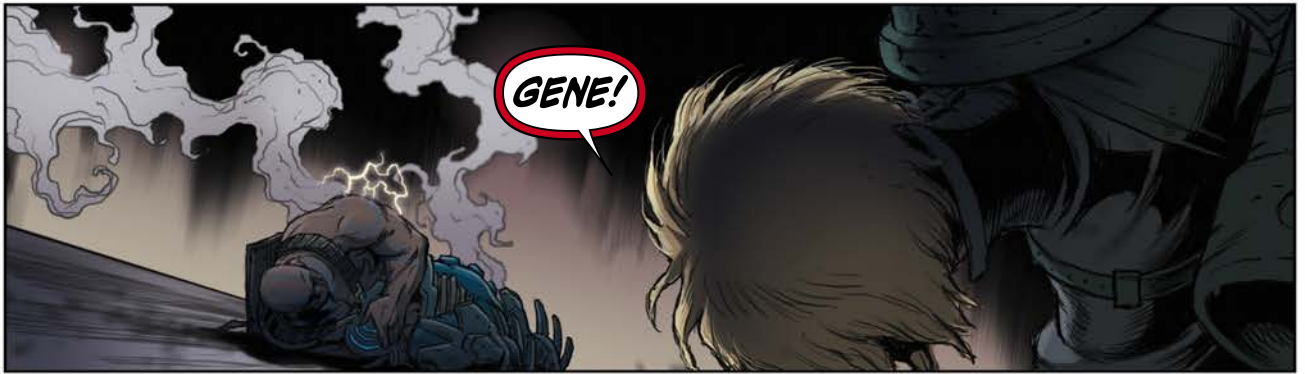
GENE!



**TRANSPORT
SPECIMEN TWO
TO HOLDING
POUND.**

**PUT ME
DOWN! LET
ME GO!**

**GENE! IT'S
BLOODY GOT
ME! GENE-DOG!
DON'T BE
DEAD!**





C-CLARA?

CLARA
BOW?



**CLARA
BOW!**

THE
MONGREL
ISN'T HERE,
ALIX.

IS
SHE YOUR
LIFE-MATE,
ALIX?



YOU KEEP
YOUR NOSE CLEAN,
STAY IN LINE, AND
MAYBE I'LL LET YOU
SEE HER AGAIN.
MAYBE WE'LL GET
YOU A *LICENCE*
TO BREED.

WHO ARE YOU,
FUNNY VOICE?
YOU ARE NOT THE
MASTERS. YOU
ARE NOT THE
URGINGS.



OH,
BUT I AM,
ALIX.

I'M
**GENERAL
JOHN BINGHAM
HERLOCKER.**

AND I'M
GOING TO
BRING YOU
TO *HEEL*.

NEW MEXICO, SIX YEARS
BEFORE THE BIG SLEEP.





CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING, SIR?

YOU LOOK *TIRED*, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING.

I DON'T THINK *ANYBODY'S* CATCHING MUCH SLEEP AT THE MOMENT, JOHN.

I SPEND TIME WITH THE FAMILY, AND ALL I DO IS *BARK* AT THEM.

THEN I CAN'T SLEEP. I END UP WATCHING *OLD MOVIES* ON CABLE.



DO YOU *LIKE* OLD MOVIES, LIEUTENANT? SEEMS TO ME THEY DON'T MAKE *STARS* LIKE THAT ANY MORE.

REAL HEROES, YOU KNOW?

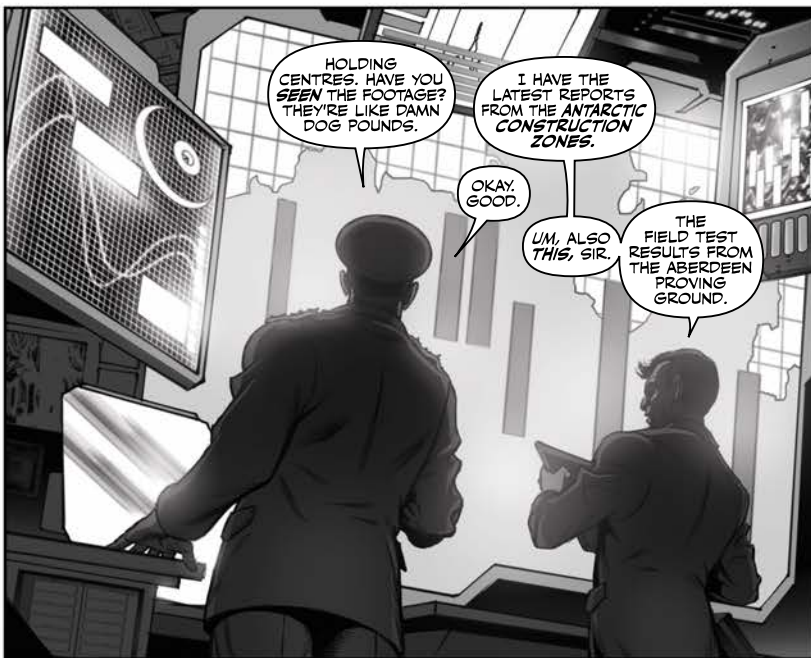


JOHN WAYNE, AUDIE MURPHY. THOSE GUYS.

THEY'D HAVE KICKED THEM'S ASS *YEARS* AGO. THEY WOULDN'T STILL BE SCRABBLING AROUND IN THE *DIRT*, TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO BEAT A BUNCH OF *DAMN INSECTS*...

OH, *IGNORE* MY GROUCHING, JOHN. TALK ME THROUGH TODAY'S SLATE.

THE EVACUATION OF FLORIDA CONTINUES, SIR. THE HOLDING CENTRES OUTSIDE ATLANTA ARE GETTING PRETTY FULL.



HOLDING CENTRES. HAVE YOU *SEEN* THE FOOTAGE? THEY'RE LIKE DAMN DOG POUNDS.

I HAVE THE LATEST REPORTS FROM THE ANTARCTIC CONSTRUCTION ZONES.

OKAY, GOOD.

UM, ALSO *THIS*, SIR.

THE FIELD TEST RESULTS FROM THE ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND.



THE NEONICOTINOID SPRAYS *AREN'T* WORKING.

WHAT? BUT THE LAB TESTS WERE *SOLID*!

COMCON THINKS THEY ARE DEVELOPING *RAPID IMMUNITY* AFTER EXPOSURE. WE CAN'T DEVELOP PESTICIDES *FAST* ENOUGH.



GOD HELP US, JOHN. THE NEONICOTINOIDS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE **MAGIC BULLET**.

I WAS GOING TO PRESENT TO THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF THIS MORNING.



WHAT THE HELL ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO **NOW**, JOHN?

WE NEED A BREAKTHROUGH. A **MIRACLE**.

SIR, I'VE BEEN SITTING ON THIS PROPOSAL FROM THE GENETICS DIVISION BECAUSE IT'S PRETTY **OUT THERE**, BUT--

SHOW ME, JOHN.

RIGHT NOW...



"...I'LL LOOK AT **ANYTHING**."

AUXTRALIA, PRESENT DAY.

WHAT'S YOUR NAME, AUX?



GENE. IT'S GENE.

GENE?

I'LL BE...

REALLY?

LISTEN TO ME, GENE. THIS IS ONE OF COMCON'S **PRIMARY** SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE BASE STATIONS.

IT'S A VAT-PLANT. AN **AUX FACTORY**.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?





PLEASED
TO MEETCHA,
CLARA.

I'M **J.S.
BARK.**

THIS IS **DEBORAH CUR,**
AND **CLAWED
RAINES,** AND ALL
THE OTHERS.

YOU'LL
GET TO KNOW
ALL OF US.



NOT IF I
BUST **OUT**
OF THIS
DUMP.



YEAH, BUT
YOU **WON'T**, BITCH.
NO ONE GETS
OUT OF THE
POUND.

NO ONE **EVER**
DOES. YOU'RE ONE
OF US, SEE? YOU'RE
MONGREL BREED.
WILD STOCK.

US
STRAYS, WE'RE NO
BLOODY USE TO
THE GENERAL. HE'S
LOOKING FOR
PEDIGREE.



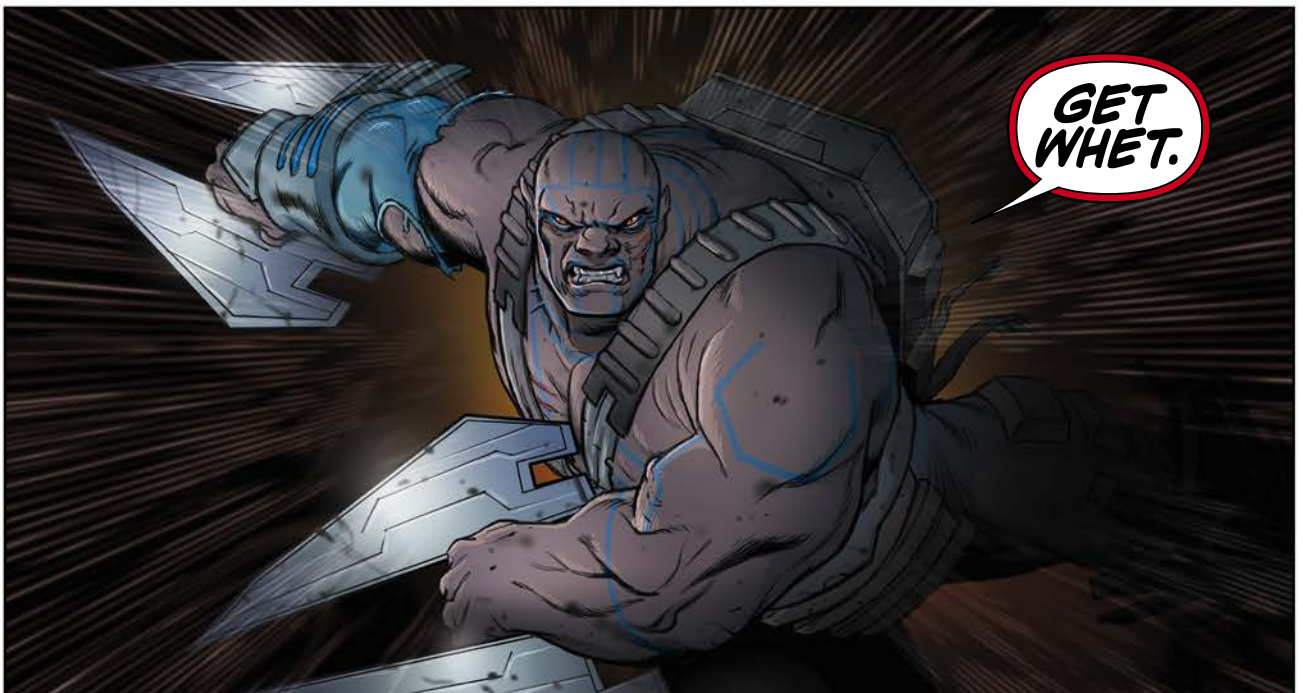
YOU
UNDERSTAND WHAT
I'M **SAYING**, BRIGHT
EYES?



YOU WIND
UP IN THE POUND,
YOU BETTER HOPE
SOMEONE **WANTS**
YOU...

...OTHERWISE
YOU STAY HERE TILL
YOU'RE **DEAD.**













NO! NO MORE!

SHUT UP, DEBORAH CUR! SHUT UP AND RUN!

TEST SUBJECT IS NOW TACKLING PHASE TWO. WOLF-CLASS ARACHNID-FORM.



GOOD CHRIST, LOOK AT HIM.

SUBJECT IS CLEARLY AN ALPHA-CLASS AIX.

IT'S NOT JUST THE BUILD AND THE MUSCLE DENSITY...



"...IT'S THE *GENENGINEERED* COMBAT SKILLS AND SENSORY ENHANCILES. YOU CAN'T TRAIN THAT. WE *BRED* IT INTO THEM.

"BRED IT INTO THE *BONE*.



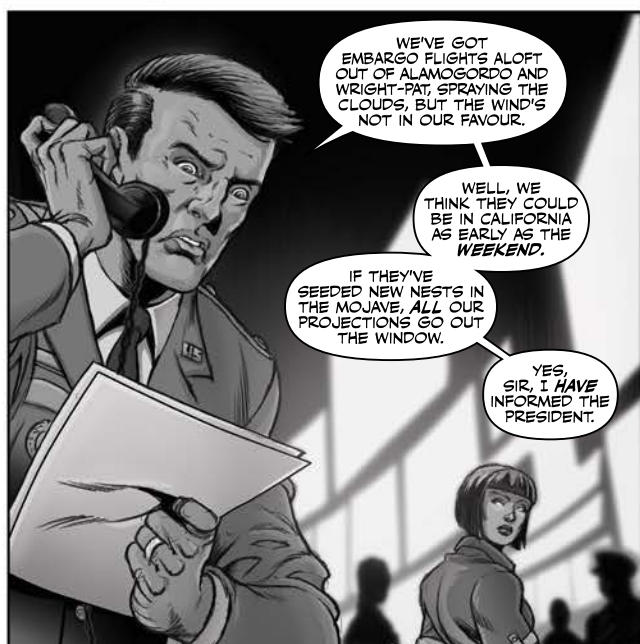
"IT'S A *FIGHTING* ANIMAL. NO MERCY, NO REMORSE, NO FEELINGS.

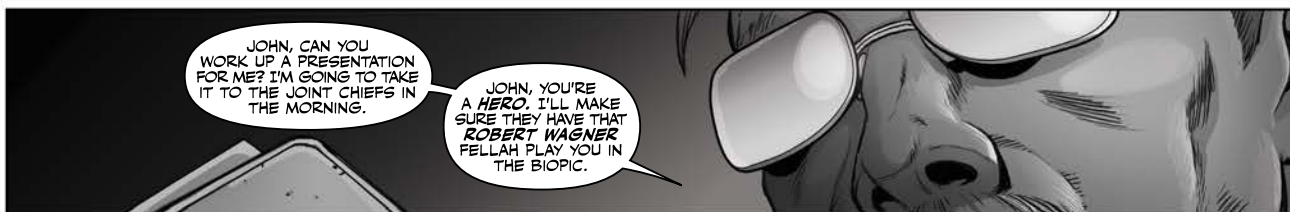
"NOT WEAK AND DILUTED LIKE THE *MONGREL CRAP* IN THE POUND."



BUILT FOR ONE PURPOSE.

OUR SALVATION.









GENTLEMEN,
COLLEAGUES.

SORRY
TO CALL YOU
IN SO LATE,
BUT I HAVE
NEWS.



GOOD
NEWS.

THE AUX SPECIMEN
WE GATHERED TWO DAYS
AGO HAS COME THROUGH
EXAMINATION AND
EVALUATION WITH *VERY*
HIGH PERCENTILES.



AS WE HOPED, HE'S
GENUINE FIRST GENERATION.
PEDIGREE GENE STOCK.
FACTORY QUALITY.

WE CAN *RESTART*
THE BREEDING
PROGRAMME. WE
CAN *RESTART*
PRODUCTION.



OF COURSE,
THE SPECIMEN WILL HAVE
TO BE *ENTIRELY* RENDERED
DOWN TO MAXIMISE *GENETIC*
YIELD, BUT THAT'S A
SMALL PRICE.



GENTLEMEN,
WE CAN START
FIGHTING THIS
WAR AGAIN!



NEW MEXICO, SIX YEARS BEFORE THE BIG SLEEP

GENTLEMEN, COLLEAGUES,

I'M GOING TO KEEP THIS SIMPLE.

WE'RE LOSING THE WAR AGAINST THEM AND WE'RE LOSING IT BAD.



MANKIND NEEDS AN EDGE, OR MANKIND IS GOING TO BE **EXTINCT** SOMETIME IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

WE HAVE OUR SURVIVAL CONTINGENCIES. COMCON IS MAKING **GREAT STRIDES** WITH THE ANTARCTIC CONSTRUCTION ZONES.

BUT WE NEED A **WEAPON**.

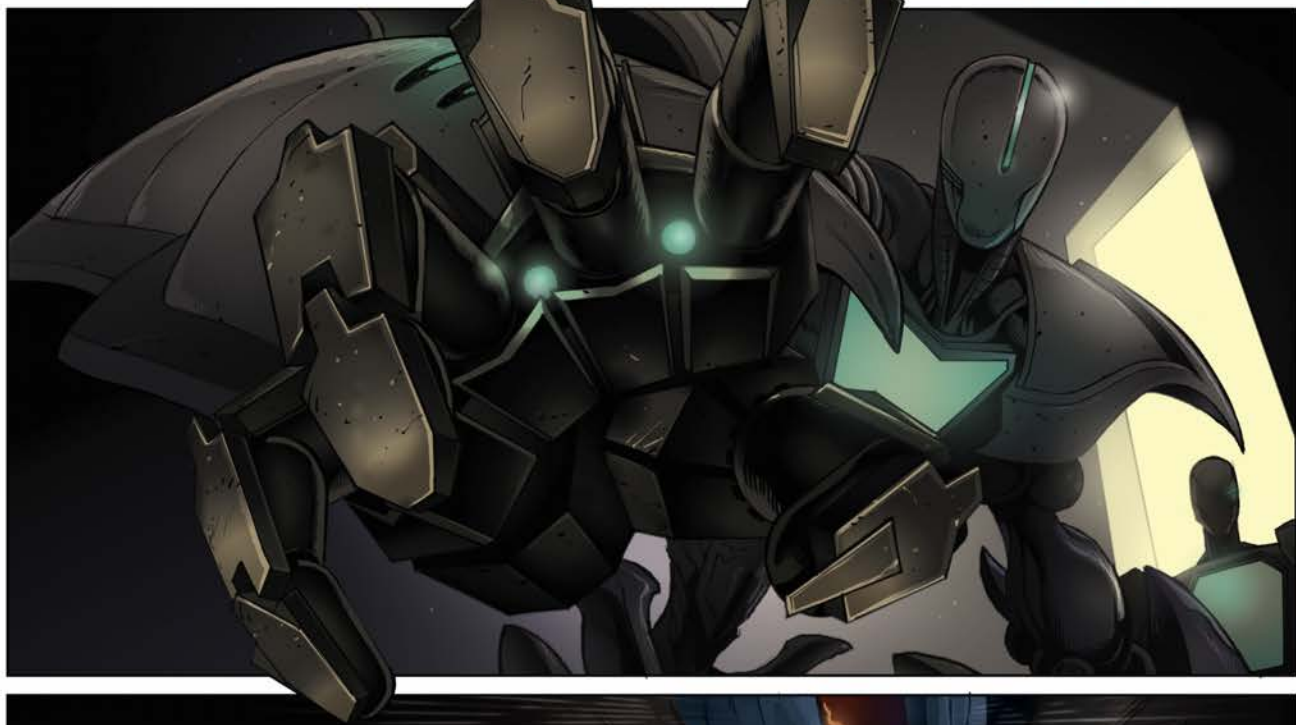
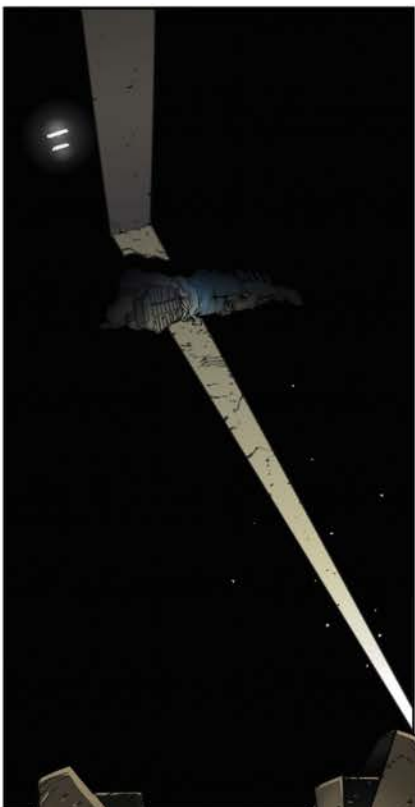


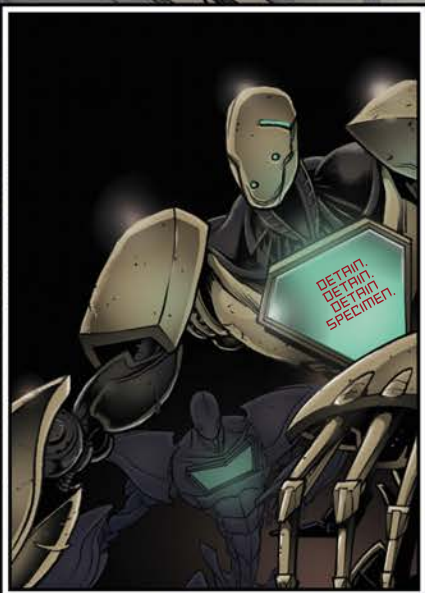
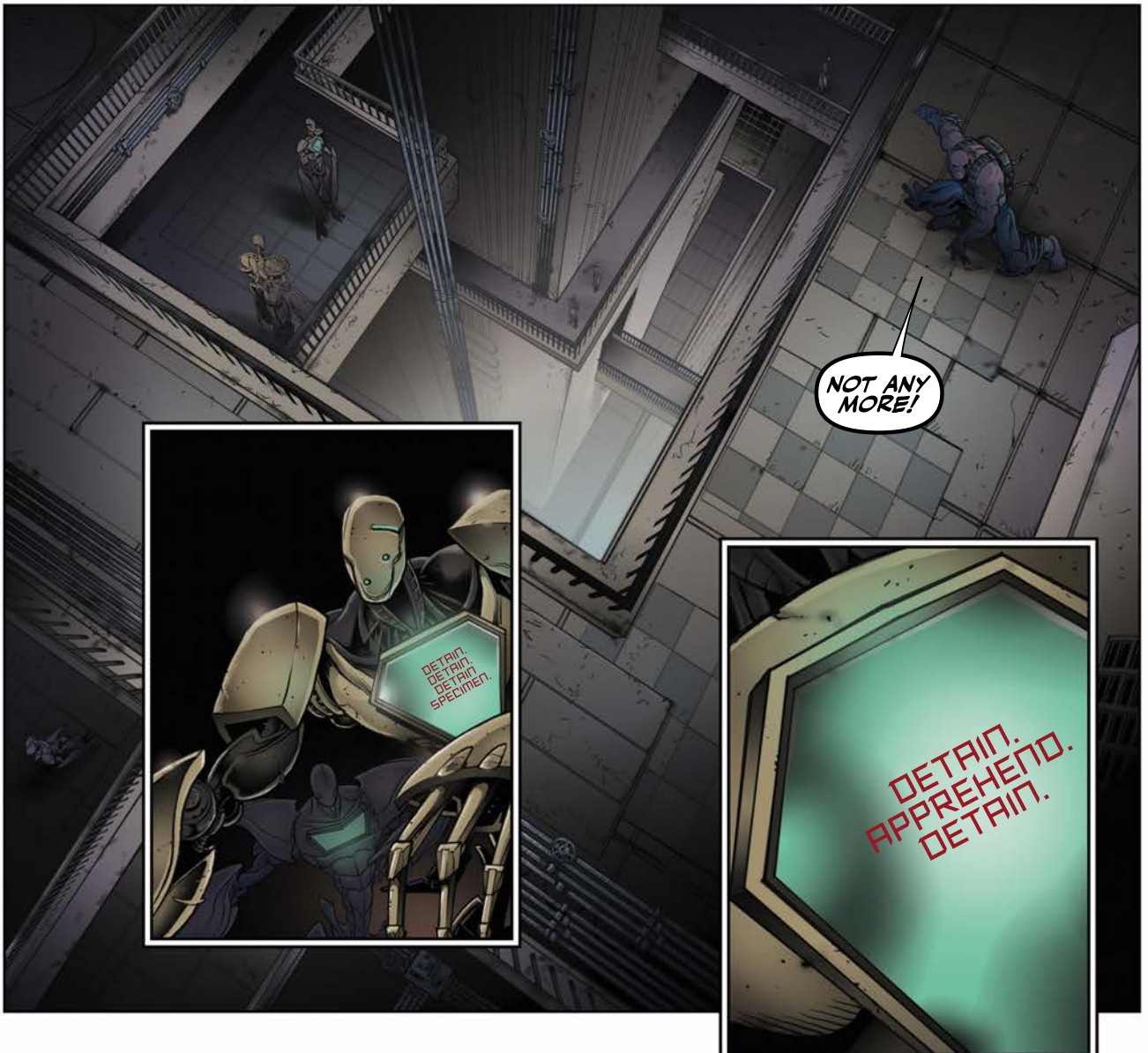
FIRST SLIDE, PLEASE.

GENTLEMEN, I WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO THE **AUXILIARY COMBATANT RESOURCE**.



I WANT TO INTRODUCE YOU TO SOMEONE WHO'S GOING TO FIGHT THIS WAR FOR US.







I DON'T WANT TO DETAIN YOU LONG.

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT **GENETICALLY MANUFACTURING** FRONTLINE SOLDIERS.

THIS ISN'T MORE OF THAT "**SUPER SOLDIER**" CRAPOLA, IS IT, GENERAL?

THE DROP-OUT RATE WAS **ATROCIOUS**, NOT TO MENTION THE **INVALIDITY SETTLEMENTS**.



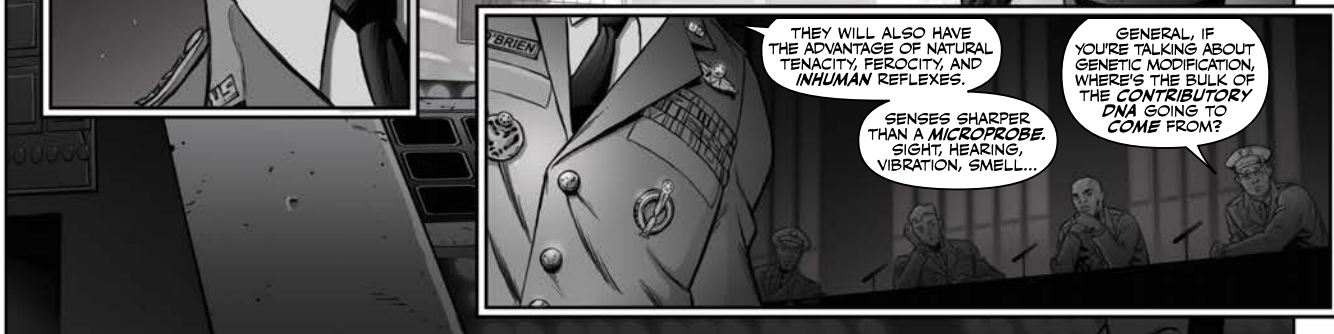
NO, SIR. WE'RE NOT GOING TO ENHANCE OR ADAPT ANY **HUMAN** PERSONNEL AT ALL.

I'M TALKING ABOUT **CONSTRUCTING TROOPS**. TROOPS THAT ARE **BIOLOGICALLY FABRICATED** TO BE FAR **TOUGHER** AND FAR **STRONGER** THAN ANY HUMAN COULD EVER BE.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL PLATFORM WILL INCLUDE **SOME** HUMAN DNA, BUT ONTO THAT WE WILL GRAFT **SYNTHETICS** AND ALLOYS TO BOOST MUSCLE STRENGTH, BONE DENSITY AND ORGAN REDUNDANCY.

WE'LL MAKE THEM RESISTANT TO TOXINS, MAKE THEM ABLE TO SOAK UP PAIN AND DAMAGE WITHOUT **BLINKING**.

AND THEY WILL BE **UNFAILINGLY** LOYAL AND OBEDIENT.



THEY WILL ALSO HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF NATURAL TENACITY, FEROCITY, AND **INHUMAN** REFLEXES.

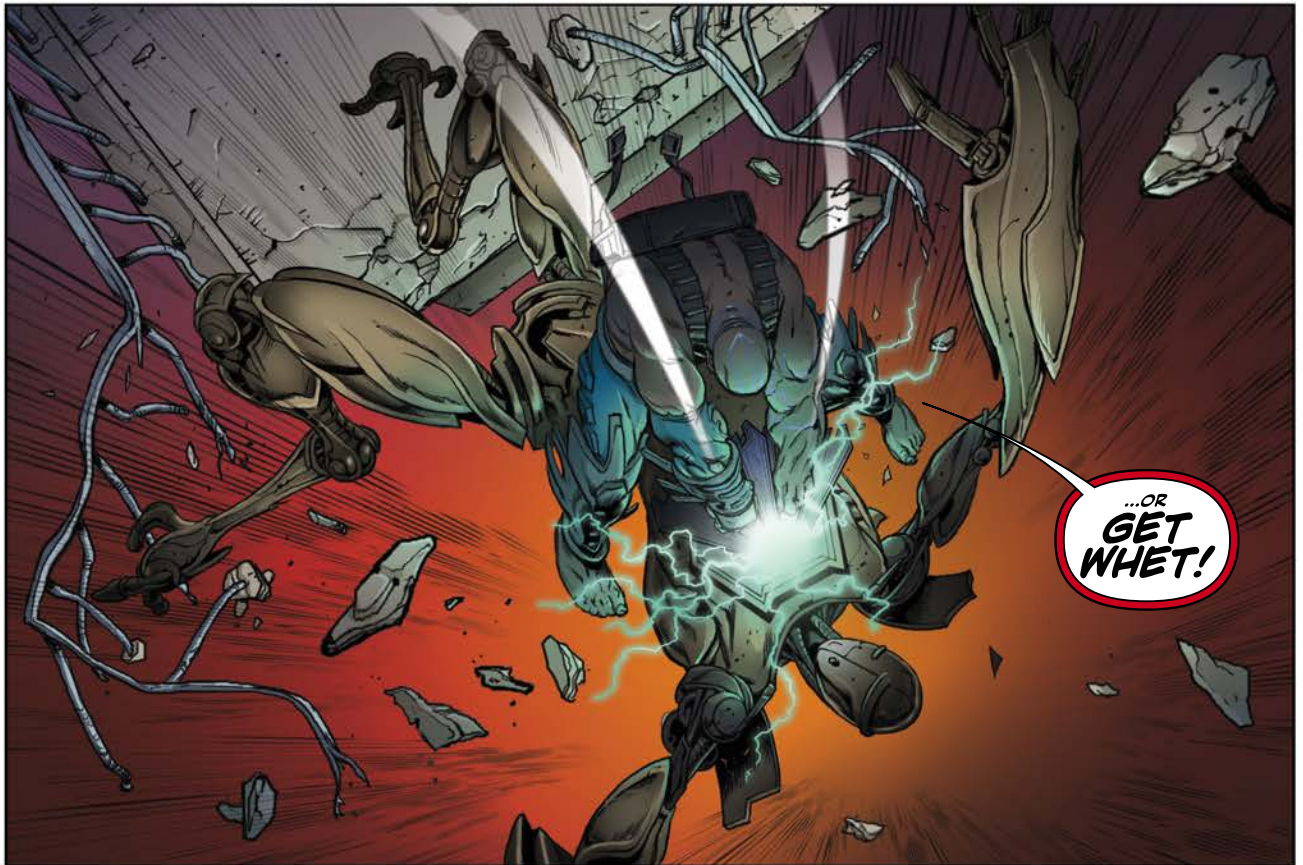
SENSES SHARPER THAN A **MICROPROBE**. SIGHT, HEARING, VIBRATION, SMELL....

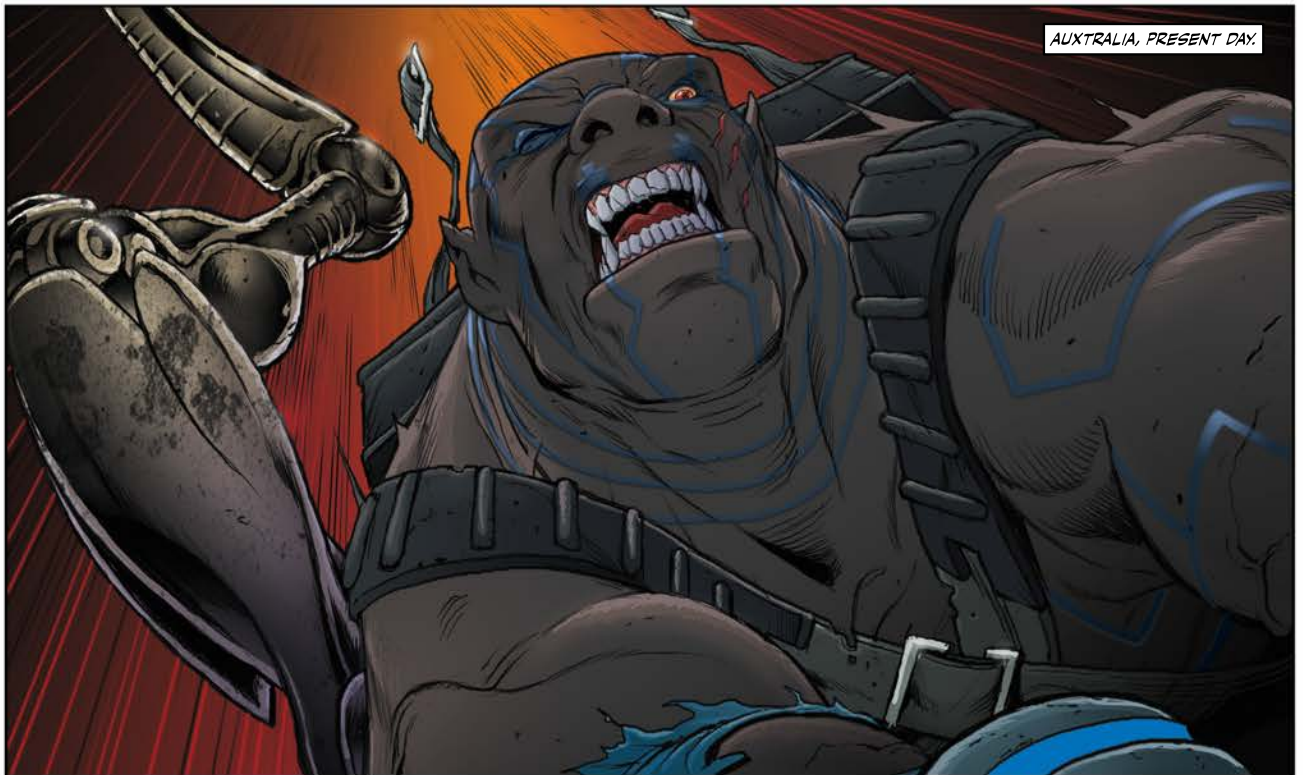
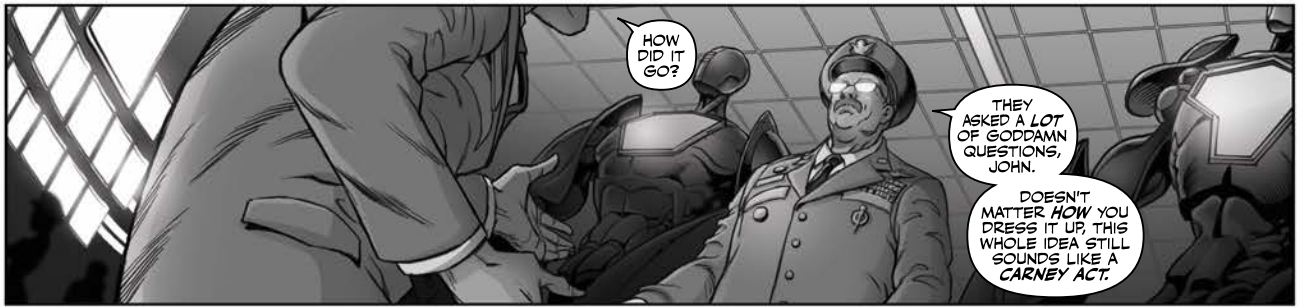
GENERAL, IF YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT GENETIC MODIFICATION, WHERE'S THE BULK OF THE **CONTRIBUTORY DNA** GOING TO COME FROM?



FOR THAT, SIR, WE'LL NEED A FRIEND.

A **BEST** FRIEND.









WHAT'S HAPPENING?

GIVE ME DATA!



THE ALIX IS FREE? DAMMIT!

GET IT DETAINED AND INTO A GENETIC SPLICER!

NOW!



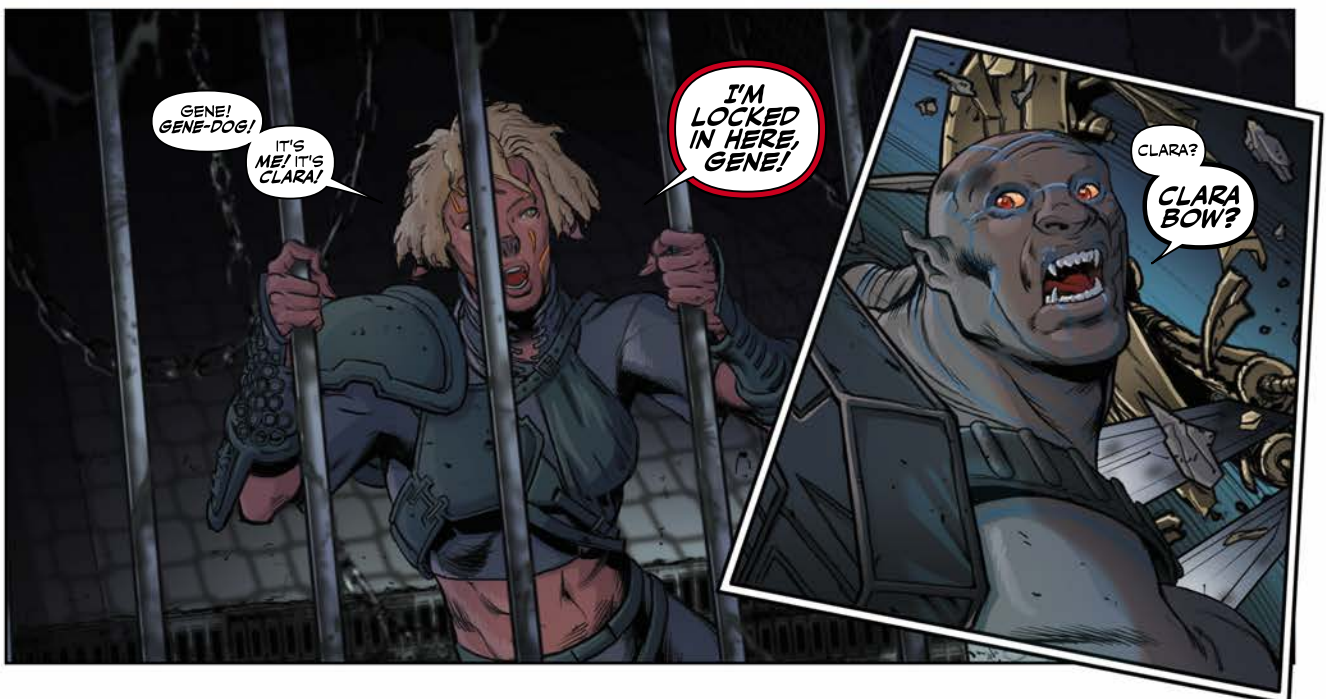
NO, YOU DAMN WELL ARE *NOT* AUTHORISED TO USE LETHAL FORCE!

I NEED ITS BODY ALIVE SO I CAN DISASSEMBLE IT!



AAAAHH!

GET YOUR STING THING OUT OF GENE'S FACE, SURFEATER ROBERT!





I HEAR YOU,
CLARA BOW!

I HEAR
YOU!



SEE?



LOOK AT HIM.
MAGNIFICENT.

IF HE WASN'T
DESTROYING GOVERNMENT
PROPERTY WHOLESALE, IT
WOULD BE A THING OF
BEAUTY.

YES,
I NOTICED. HE'S
HEADING FOR
THE POUND
NOW.



HIS
LIFEMATES IN
THERE, ISN'T
SHE'S OF
COURSE.

LOYALTY.
THEY'RE ALWAYS
SO GODDAMN
LOYAL.

GIVE ME
TANNOY.



GENE? YOU
HEAR ME? THIS IS
YOUR MASTER'S
VOICE.

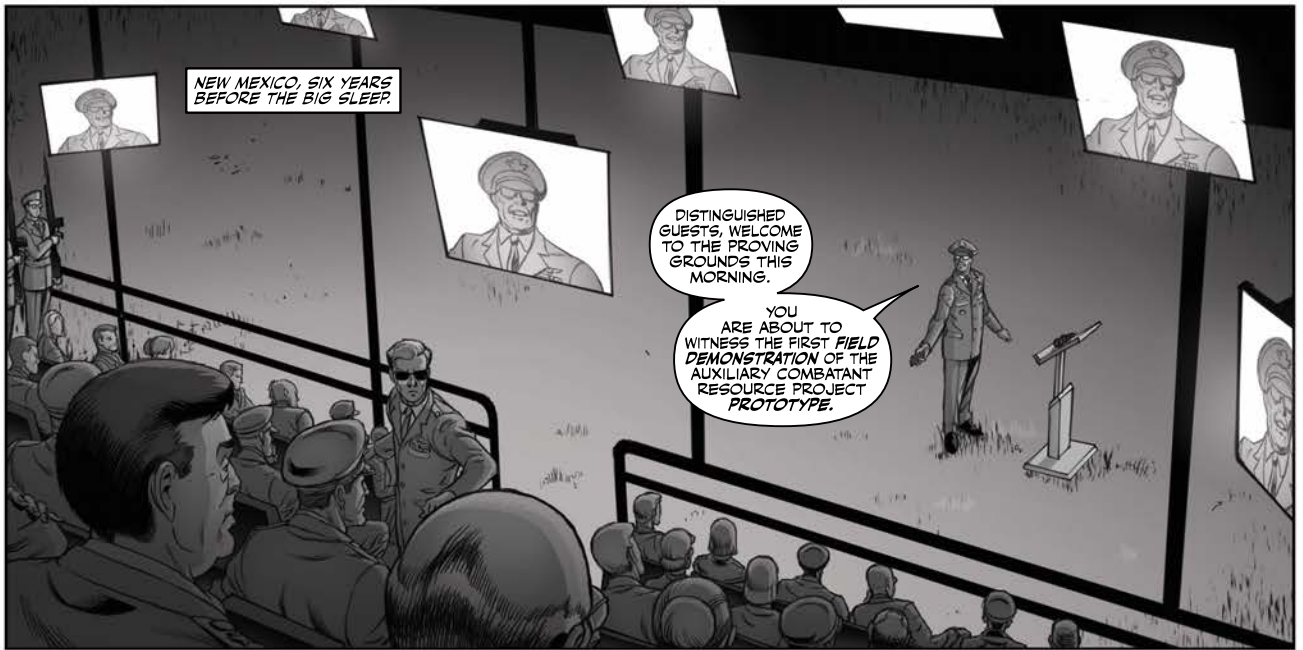
THIS
IS GENERAL
HERLOCKER.

I URGE YOU
TO SURRENDER AT
ONCE, GENE.



IF YOU DON'T, GENE,
I'M AFRAID I'M GOING TO START
KILLING THE MONGERS IN
THE POUND.

STARTING
WITH THAT BITCH
OF YOURS...





WHAT IN
SAM HILL--!

THAT,
GENTLEMEN,
IS THE AUK
PROTOTYPE.



HAS
HE GOT A
NAME?

DOES
HE ANSWER
TO IT?

DOES
HE DO
TRICKS?

OH YEAH,
HE DOES
TRICKS.





AUXTRALIA, PRESENT DAY.

OKAY, HERLOCKER. YOU WIN.

GENE WILL NOT FIGHT YOU AND YOUR SURFEATER ROBERTS ANY MORE.

NOT IF YOU ARE GOING TO *HURT* CLARA BOW.

SMART, GENE. *REAL* SMART.

YOU ALPHAS ALWAYS *WERE* QUICK ON THE UPTAKE.

G-GENE DOG?

EVERYTHING WILL BE *ALL RIGHT*, CLARA BOW.

EXACTLY. EVERYTHING WILL BE *SWELL*.

WE'RE WORKING *TOGETHER* NOW, YOU AND ME.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT WE'RE GOING TO *DO* TOGETHER, GENE?

NO.

WE'RE GOING TO *SAVE* THE WORLD.

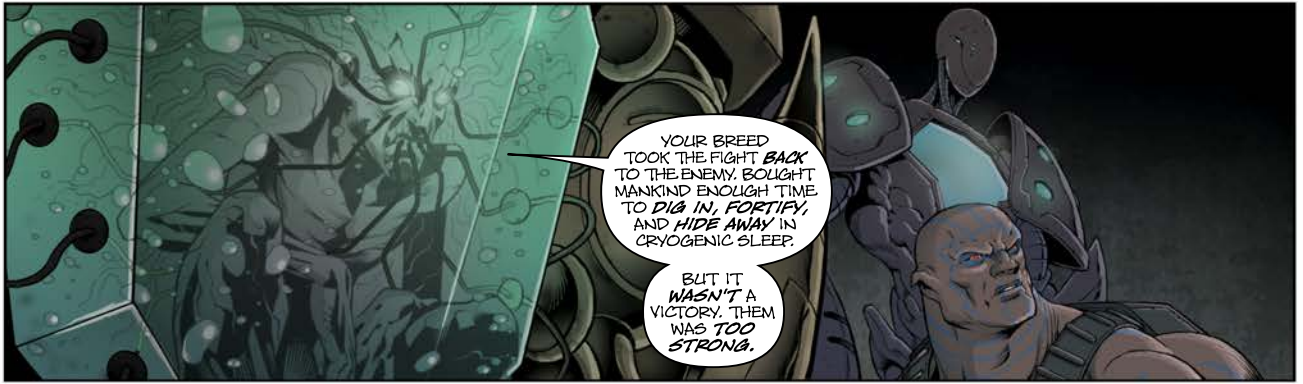
COME AND MEET THE TOP BRASS.

THERE'S A *WAR* ON, YOU KNOW. MANKIND VERSUS *THEM*. AND WE WERE *LOSING*. LOSING *BAD*.

MANKIND WAS ON THE *ROPES*, GENE. *ANY* OF MY COLLEAGUES HERE WILL TELL YOU THAT.

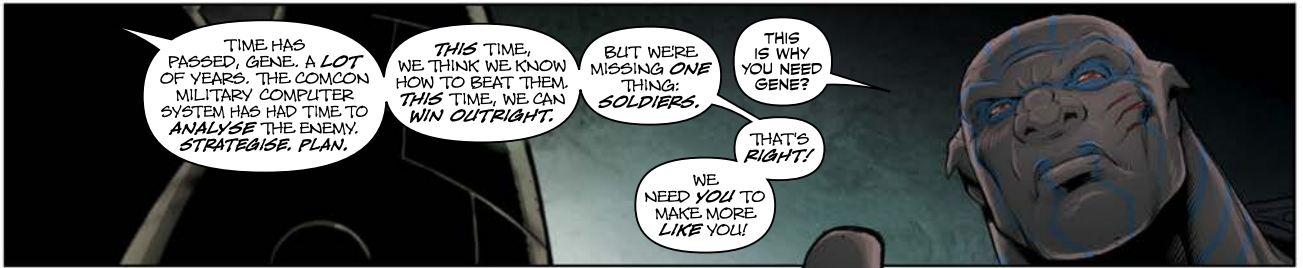
SO WE BUILT THE *AUX*. WARRIORS LIKE *YOU*.

I WAS RIGHT THERE AT THE START OF THE PROGRAMME.



YOUR BREED TOOK THE FIGHT **BACK** TO THE ENEMY. BOUGHT MANKIND ENOUGH TIME TO **DIG IN, FORTIFY,** AND **HIDE AWAY** IN CRYOGENIC SLEEP.

BUT IT **WASN'T** A VICTORY. THEM WAS **TOO STRONG.**



TIME HAS PASSED, GENE. A **LOT** OF YEARS. THE COMCON MILITARY COMPUTER SYSTEM HAS HAD TIME TO **ANALYSE** THE ENEMY. **STRATEGISE. PLAN.**

THIS TIME, WE THINK WE KNOW HOW TO BEAT THEM. **THIS** TIME, WE CAN **WIN OUTRIGHT.**

BUT WE'RE MISSING **ONE** THING: **SOLDIERS.**

THIS IS WHY YOU NEED GENE?

THAT'S **RIGHT!**

WE NEED **YOU** TO MAKE MORE **LIKE YOU!**



GENE SEES THE **SENSE.** HERLOCKER. GENE UNDERSTANDS YOUR **WORDS.**

BUT GENE DOESN'T NEED MUSCLES IN HIS HEAD TO FIGURE OUT...



...THAT THE WORLD IS **NOT** HOW YOU SEE IT, AND THAT **YOUR** HEAD IS FULL OF **WRONG!**



AUSTRALIA, PRESENT DAY.

SO YOU
THINK I'M
CRAZY,
HUH?



THAT'S RICH.
AN AUX--AN AUX
LIKE YOU--TELLING
ME I'M CRAZY?

YOU'RE JUST AN
INSTRUMENT, GENE.
JUST A TOOL.

WE
MADE YOU TO
FIGHT, NOT
TO THINK.

YOU
SHUT UP,
TIN-BOY!



NO,
CLARA
BOW.

HERLOCKER,
HE IS RIGHT.



IT IS THE
RIGHT THING TO
FIGHT THEM. THE
RIGHT THING.

THAT'S
WHY WE
ARE.

FIGHTING
THEM, BEATING
THEM, THAT'S ALL
THAT MATTERS.



I'M GLAD
YOU SEE THE
TRUTH OF IT,
GENE.



TROUBLE
IS, GENE IS
WORRIED ABOUT
HERLOCKER'S
JUDGEMENT.

YOU BEEN IN
THE CRYO A LONG
TIME, BEEN IN THAT
MACHINE TOO.

TOLD
GENE THAT
YOURSELF.



GENE
THINKS MAYBE
IT'S ROTTED
YOUR BRAIN.

THE
WORLD *ISN'T*
LIKE YOU
SEE IT.



THEM BLOKES?
THEY'RE DEAD.
HERLOCKER, BEEN
DEAD AGES.



WE'RE...

...WE'RE
UNDERSTAFFED.



RIGHT.

THAT'S WHY WE NEED **MORE SOLDIERS**, GENE! THAT'S WHY WE NEED **YOU!**



WE NEED TO BUILD UP OUR ARMY! A THOUSAND! **TEN THOUSAND!**

WE NEED TO BUILD UP A FIGHTING FORCE THAT WILL DRIVE **THEM** OFF THE PLANET FOREVER!



YOU DON'T NEED **MORE** SOLDIERS.

YOU BUILD MORE, THEY'LL **BREED** MORE.



YOU BRED ME TO **FIGHT**, HERLOCKER. I KNOW HOW TO DO IT. **REAL GOOD.**

I KNOW HOW TO **FIGHT** A FIGHT AND HOW TO **WIN** IT.

YOU GAVE GENE THE **MUSCLES**, AND THE **BLADES** TO DO IT.

AND HOW WOULD **YOU** WIN, THEN, GENE-DOG?



YOU NEED TO USE **TRICKS**. YOU GO UP AGAINST AN ENEMY SO **STRONG** HE CAN'T BE BEAT BY **NUMBERS**, THEN YOU HAVE TO USE THE MUSCLES IN YOUR **HEAD**.

FIGHT **SMART**.

OLD MAN GARY TOLD GENE THAT.



YOU HAVE TO USE **SMART TRICKS**.

IF AN ENEMY'S **THAT BIG** AND **STRONG**, YOU CAN'T BEAT HIM IN A **STRAIGHT MATCH**.

SO YOU HAVE TO GET IN RIGHT **CLOSE**, RIGHT IN **UNDER** HIS **GUARD**...

...AND **STICK** HIM IN THE **HEART**.



IS THAT **SOP**?



OH YEAH. **KILL-STICK**.

A GOOD **KILL-STICK** TO THE **HEART**'LL TAKE DOWN **ANYTHING**, EVEN THE **BIGGEST** **BASTARD**.



YOU THINK **THAT**'LL **WORK**?

YUP.



I
KNOW IT
WORKS.

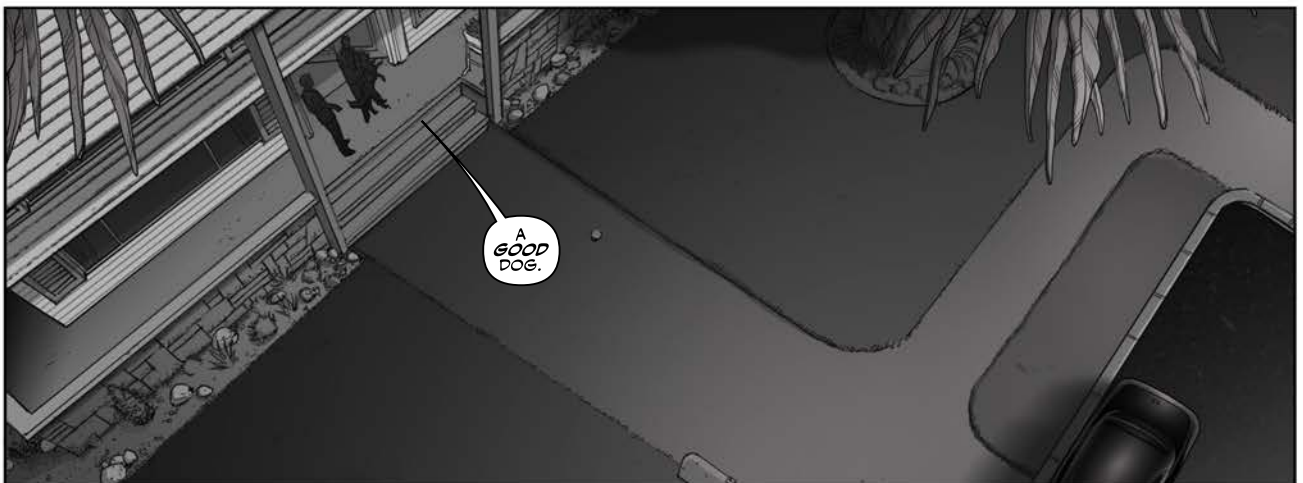
SKKKSSSSHH

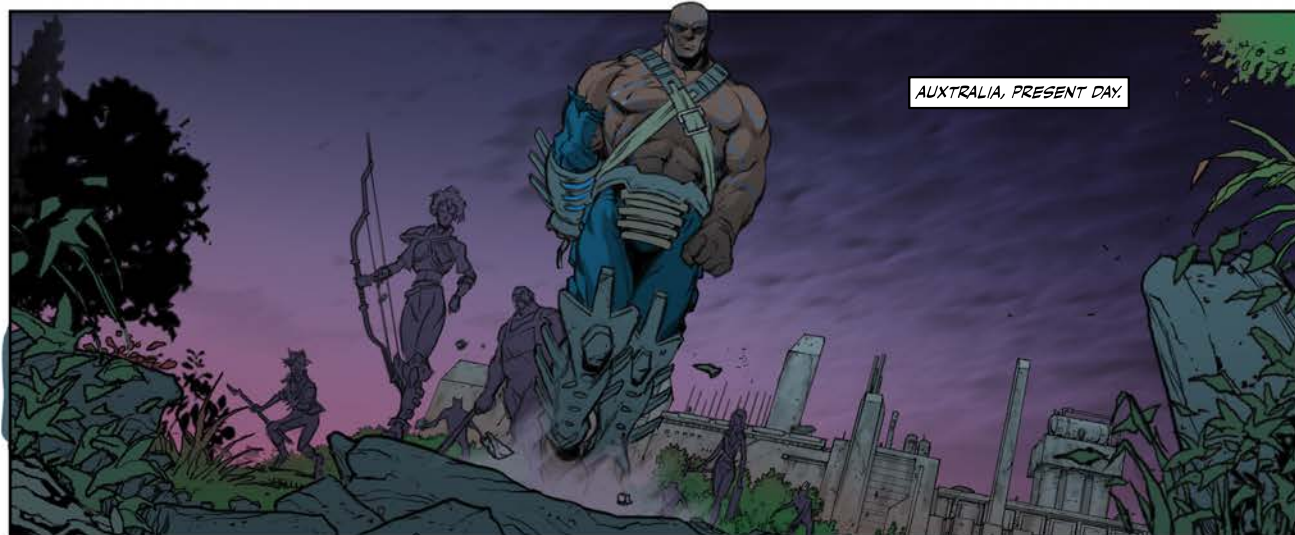
SEE?

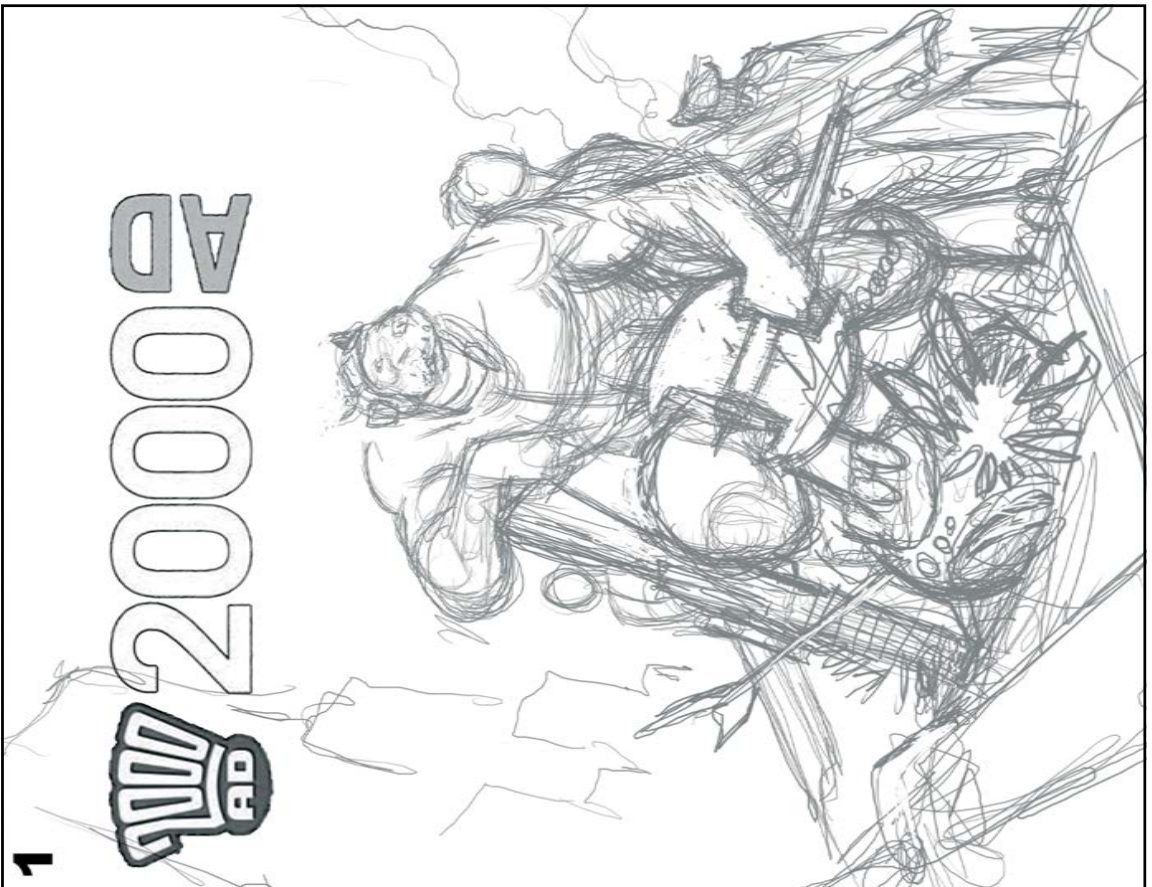
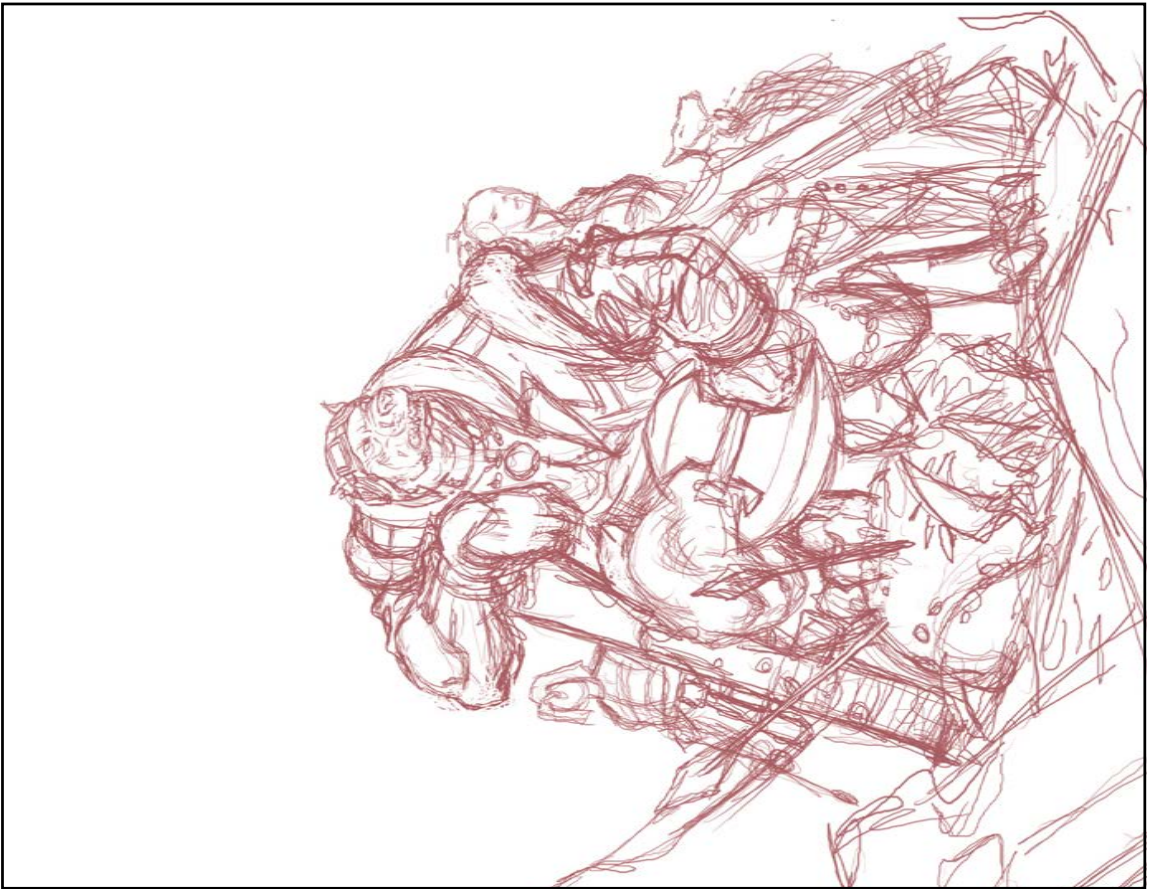






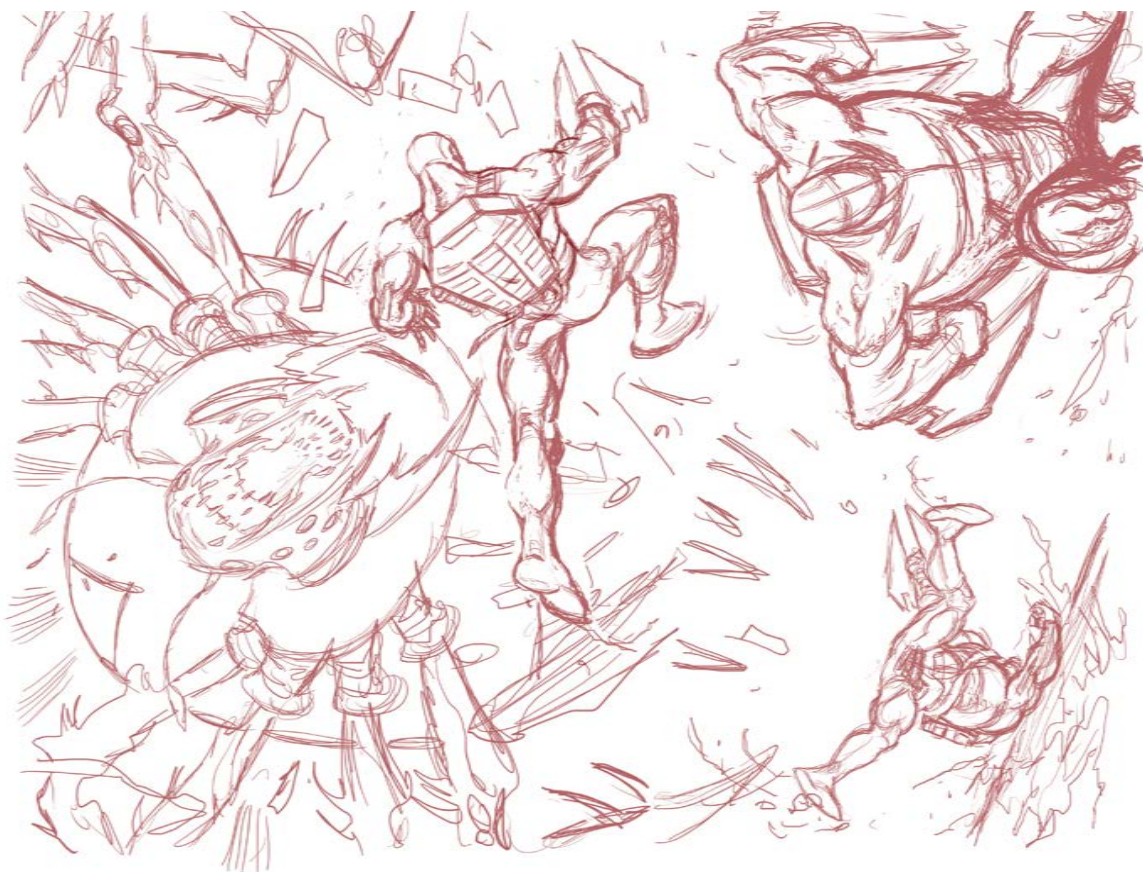






The creative process: 2000 AD Prog 1652 cover from rough layout to pencils, inks and colour





The creative process: Episode 1 page 6, from rough layout to inks and colour



Half chewed ear.

WILL

Rex to scale.

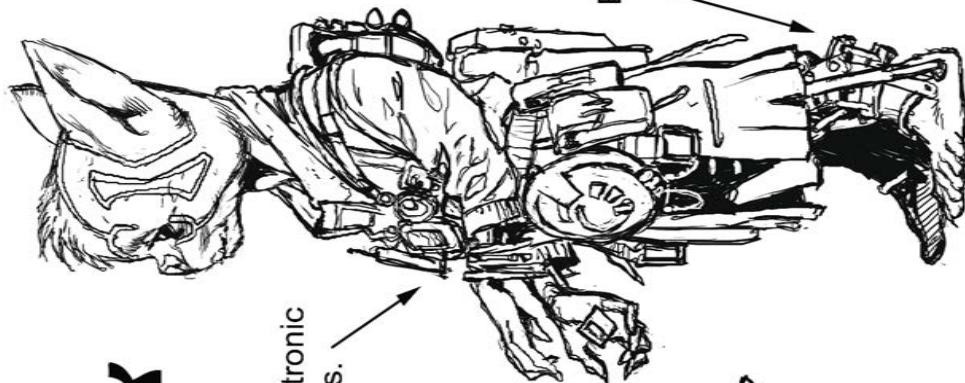


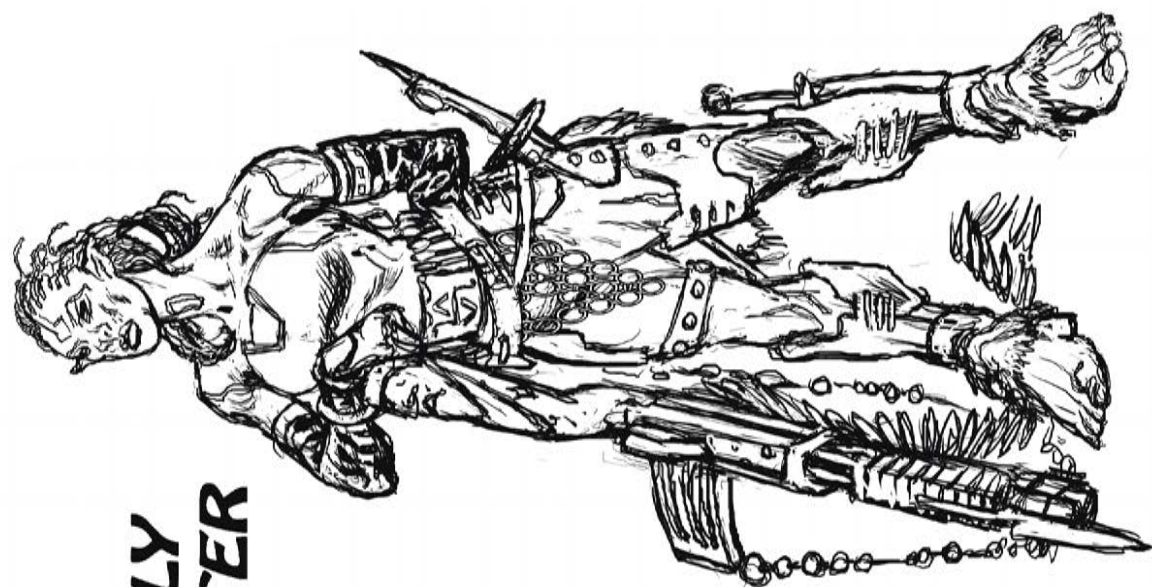
REX

Small, electronic devices.

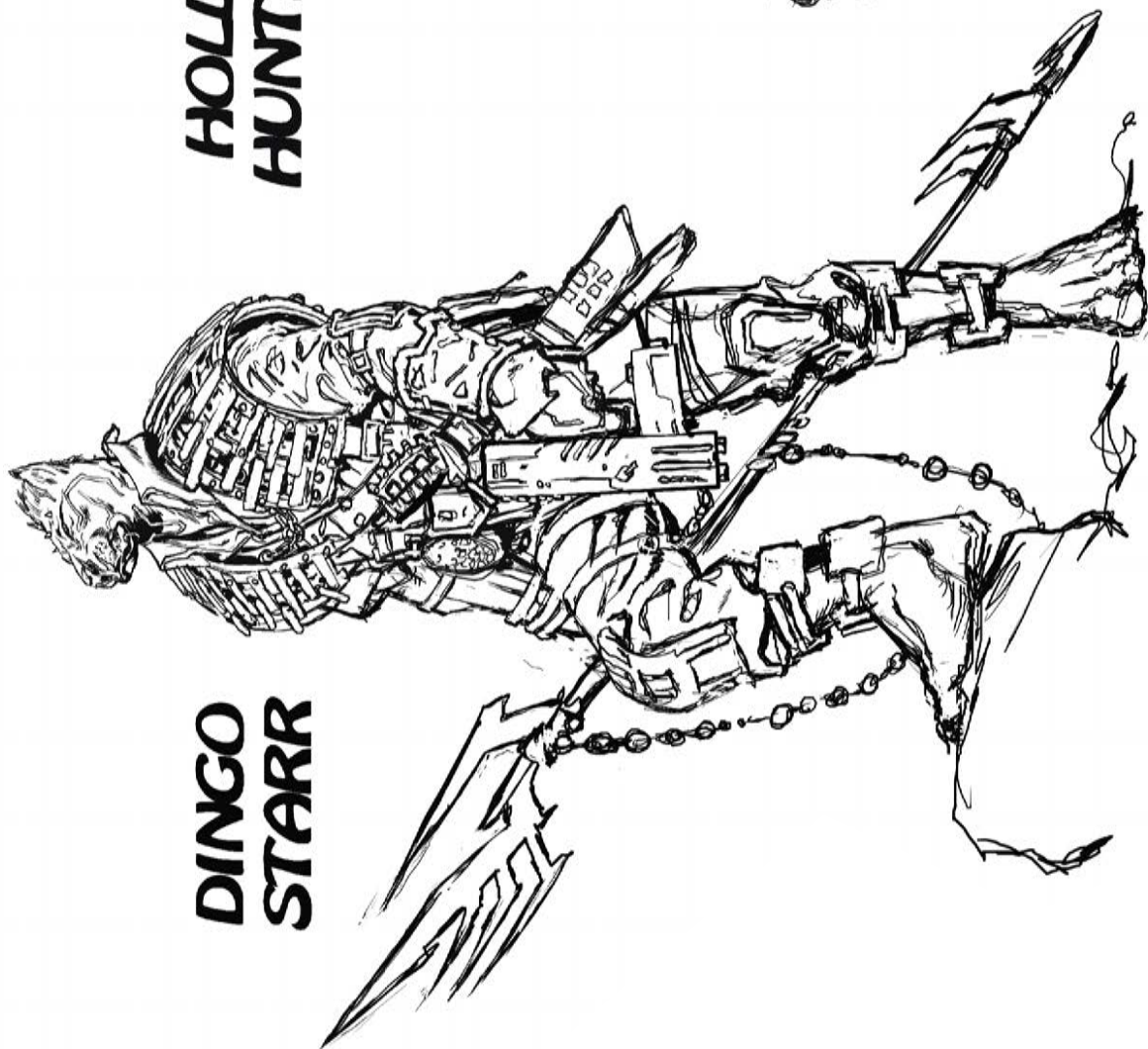
Brace on leg.

These small dogs
always seem to have
leg problems.





**HOLLY
HUNTER**



**DINGO
STARR**

CLARA BOW



DAN ABNETT

Dan Abnett is the co-creator of *2000 AD* series *Atavar*, *Badlands*, *Sancho Panzer* and *Sinister Dexter*. He has also written *Black Light*, *Downlope Tales*, *Durham Red*, *Flesh*, *Future Shocks*, *Judge Dredd*, *Pulp Sci-Fi*, *Roadkill*, *Rogue Trooper*, *The VCs*, *Vector 13* and *Venus Bluegenes*, as well as *The Scarlet Apocrypha* and *Wardog* for the *Megazine*. A prolific creator, Abnett has also written for Marvel, Dark Horse and DC Comics. He is the author of twenty novels for the Black Library, including the bestselling *Gaunt's Ghosts* series. His most recent work outside the Galaxy's Greatest Comic is DC's *Legion* and *Superman*, and Wildstorm's *Mr Majestic*. Dan Abnett was voted Best Writer Now at the 2003 National Comic Awards.

RICHARD ELSON

Richard Elson's first *2000 AD* work was on a *Future Shock* way back in 1988, and since then he has pencilled *Judge Dredd*, *Time Twisters*, *Terror Tales* and *Tyranny Rex*, as well as the co-created strips *Atavar*, *Roadkill*, *Shadows*, *The Scrap*, *A.H.A.B.*, *Go-Machine* and *Kingdom*.



IT'S A DOG EAT DOG WORLD!

EARTH, THE FAR FUTURE. Mankind has been all but destroyed, those still surviving forced into hiding by Them – insectile creatures that have taken over the world. Charged with protecting humanity are genetically engineered dog-soldiers like Gene the Hackman – savage warriors that patrol the wilderness, directed by Urgings from their Masters.

Now without a pack and having the responsibility of protecting young Leezee Sower, Gene has to survive in the kingdom of Auxtralia, where if Them don't kill him, the 'Wild Bunch' just might!

Written by best-selling author Dan Abnett (*Sinister Dexter*) and featuring the stunning art of Richard Elson (*Thor*) the continuing adventures of Gene the Hackman are a must have for any sci-fi/action fan.



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