
MONITOR
AXON



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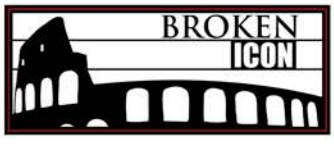

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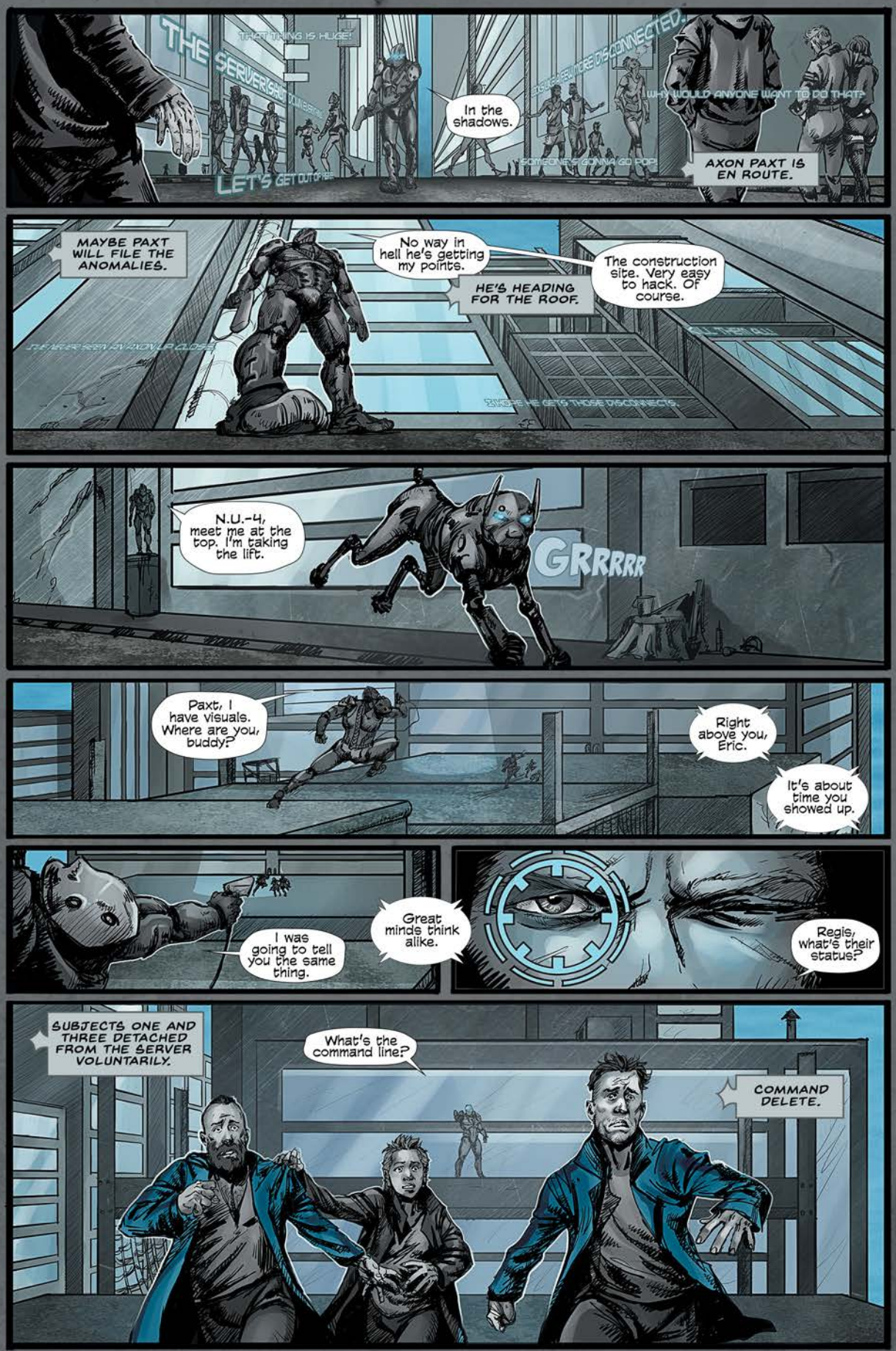
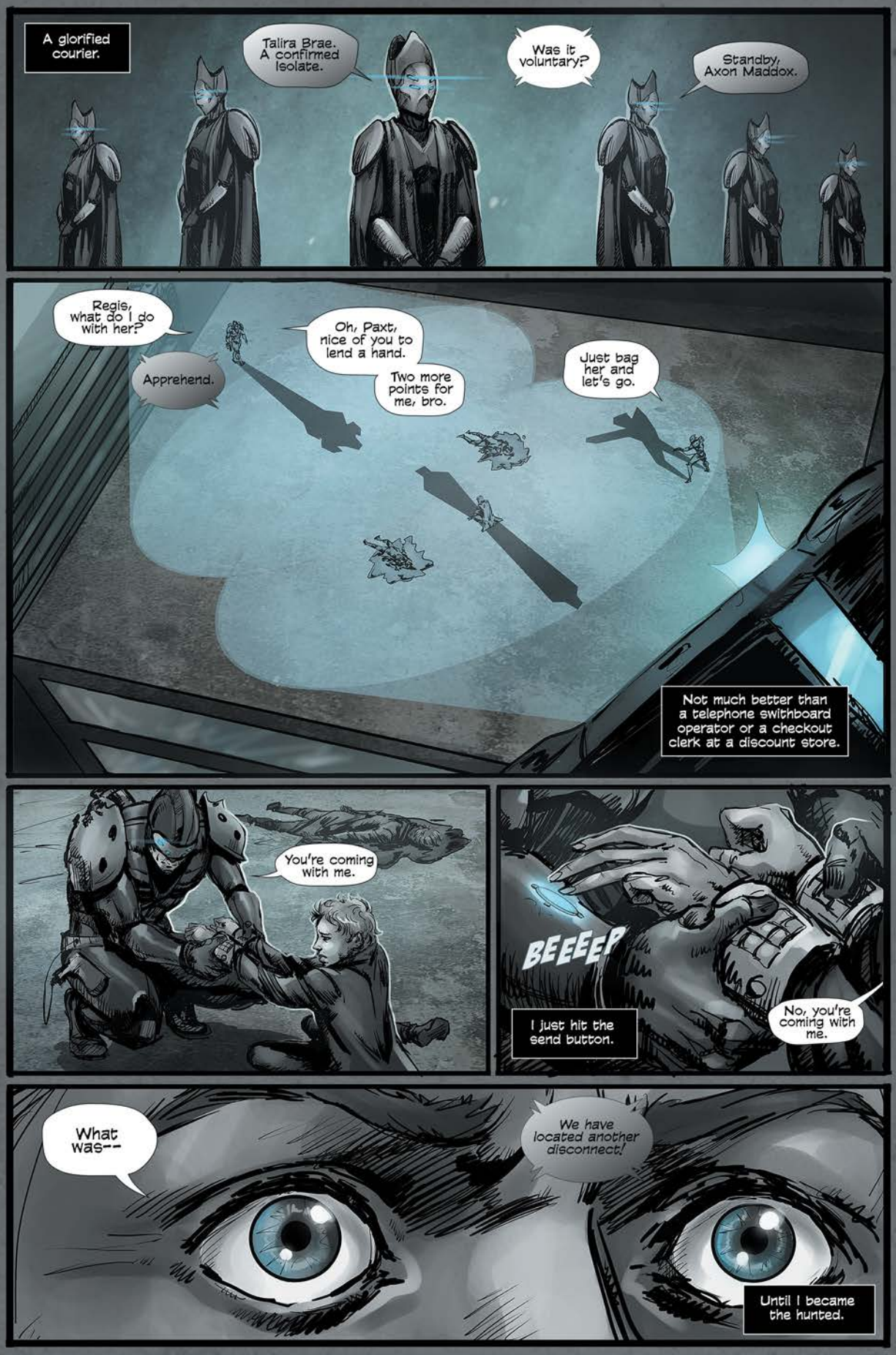
PART ONE STARTUP DISK
PART TWO SYSTEM CRASH
PART THREE REVEAL ALL
PART FOUR SYSTEM REBOOT
PART FIVE COMMAND ESCAPE


ARE YOU READY TO BE A HERO, ERIC?
THERE ARE VULNERABILITIES IN THE SYSTEM. TIME TO MOVE.
DOWNLOAD HISTORY
STIMULANTS HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED BY THE SERVER.
Approval is on the way.
AUTHORIZATION CODE HAS NOT--
C'mon, it's Monday morning.
PENALTY FOR NON-COMPLI--
These are just breath mints.
DOWNLOAD IN PROGRESS...
Wait--
Ahhhh
PUNITIVE MEASURES INSTALLED.
That. Was. Sarcasm.
HOW CAN YOU FIGHT IF YOU'RE NOT FIT, ERIC?
Enable gah humor patch.
LIKE YOU'RE THE BOSS OF ME.
WE HAVE DISCOVERED THREE ANOMALIES IN THE SYSTEM. ARE YOU READY, ERIC?
Who has the high score this week?
LANCE PAXT. BUT IF YOU FILE THESE THREE, YOU'LL--
IGNITION SEQUENCE ACTIVATED... FIVE... FOUR...
Be on top, finally.
LEAVING SO SOON? I WAS GOING TO RUN YOU A BATH!
THREE... TWO... ONE. -ENGAGE-
I don't even have a tub.
PERHAPS IF YOU WIN THE GOLDEN EAGLE, YOU'LL GET AN UPGRADE.


Don't tease me, please.
IT'S NOT OUT OF THE QUESTION.
REGIS AWARDED A GOLDEN EAGLE LAST MONTH.
I wouldn't even know how to turn it on.
I WILL TEACH YOU.
I saw a bathtub once. When I was a kid.
YOU WERE A KID?
Ha. Ha. Ha. Very funny. I know you have records of my monitors from back then.
I DO. AND THEY AREN'T PLEASANT.
Exactly.
I WON'T TELL ANYONE.
Not like there's anyone to tell.
I CAN RUN A SEARCH FOR SINGLE FEMALES--
You remember what happened last time you tried that?
NO. I DELETED THOSE FILES.
BEGIN ACTIVATION
Very funny. I think you posted those files to the network.
POSSIBLY.
Possibly?
EVEN I NEED TO EARN SOME CREDITS, ERIC.
VRRMMMM
Did you find the anomalies?
NEGATIVE.
Any digital footprints?
NEGATIVE.
BZZZZ
If you want to find a ghost, you have to look...


THE SERVER
THAT THING IS HUGE!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE
In the shadows.
SOMEONE'S GONNA GO POP.
WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO DO THAT?
AXON PAXT IS EN ROUTE.
MAYBE PAXT WILL FILE THE ANOMALIES.
No way in hell he's getting my points.
HE'S HEADING FOR THE ROOF.
The construction site. Very easy to hack. Of course.
N.U.-4, meet me at the top. I'm taking the lift.
GRRRRR
Paxt, I have visuals. Where are you, buddy?
Right above you, Eric.
It's about time you showed up.
I was going to tell you the same thing.
Great minds think alike.
Regis, what's their status?
SUBJECTS ONE AND THREE DETACHED FROM THE SERVER VOLUNTARILY.
What's the command line?
COMMAND DELETE.


Transmitting file.
INSTALLING AUTO EXECUTION BATCH FILE
SENDING AUTOEXEC.BAT
AAAAhhhh--
In this world, data is the only currency.
MONITORS OVERLOADING
NEURAL IMPLANTS: DETONATED
HEART RATE: 10,000 BPM
SPINAL INLAY: RUPTURED
FILE DELIVERED
Your every move is tracked, every vital sign is monitored.
Privacy is the only crime.
My job? I'm just the deliveryman.
Regis, what about the woman?


A glorified courier.
Talira Brae. A confirmed Isolate.
Was it voluntary?
Standby, Axon Maddox.
Regis, what do I do with her?
Apprehend.
Oh, Paxt, nice of you to lend a hand.
Two more points for me, bro.
Just bag her and let's go.
Not much better than a telephone swithboard operator or a checkout clerk at a discount store.
You're coming with me.
BEEEEP
I just hit the send button.
No, you're coming with me.
What was--
We have located another disconnect!
Until I became the hunted.


I don't see--
RIGHT ON TOP OF YOU. SCAN YOUR IMMEDIATE AREA.
You disconnected. It's you, Eric.
Must be a glitch.
Regis, instructions.
DETAIN HIM AND AWAIT ORDERS.
Wait--
Wow, Eric Maddox, I didn't figure you to go dark.
He's going to delete me.
Some friends you have there.
Your dog?
GRRRRR
Easy, boy.
Subject apprehended.
Lance, I would never dis--
You know, Eric, when your monitors get zapped...
And you start to burst from the inside...
They said it doesn't hurt.
Do you buy that?
I bet it hurts like hell.
MADDOX IS GUILTY. COMMAND DELETE.
INSTALLING AUTO EXECUTION BATCH FILE
Paxt, no, don't do--
Transmitting--
Ugghh
CRREEEEK
Erii-aaghh


SKREEEEEEEEEEECH
RAAAARRR
BOOM
KRAA-ASH
I've had these monitors inside me since before I was born.
I want to go back online.
To connect again.
To connect...
We don't have much time, Eric.
They can track your armor.
The cuffs. You need to have a--
Code.
BEEEP
Wait, I don't even have the--
Who are you? How--
I'm Talira Brae.
No, who ARE you? What's going on--
This is going to sting.
TSSSST
They call us Isolates.
Ow.
And Disconnects.
But we're just people.
The hidden people.
AHHH


It burns!
That will fool the facial recognition. For now.
You! You did this. All of this.
Eric, we have to run.
We can't run from them.
Come with me.
CLACK
Stripped of my armor, surrounded by Axons, hunted by Hell Hounds.
Disconnected from the server. Sentenced to death.
Wearing the face of a man I don't know.
But for the first time in as long as I can remember, I'm not alone.
For the first time...
I feel whole.

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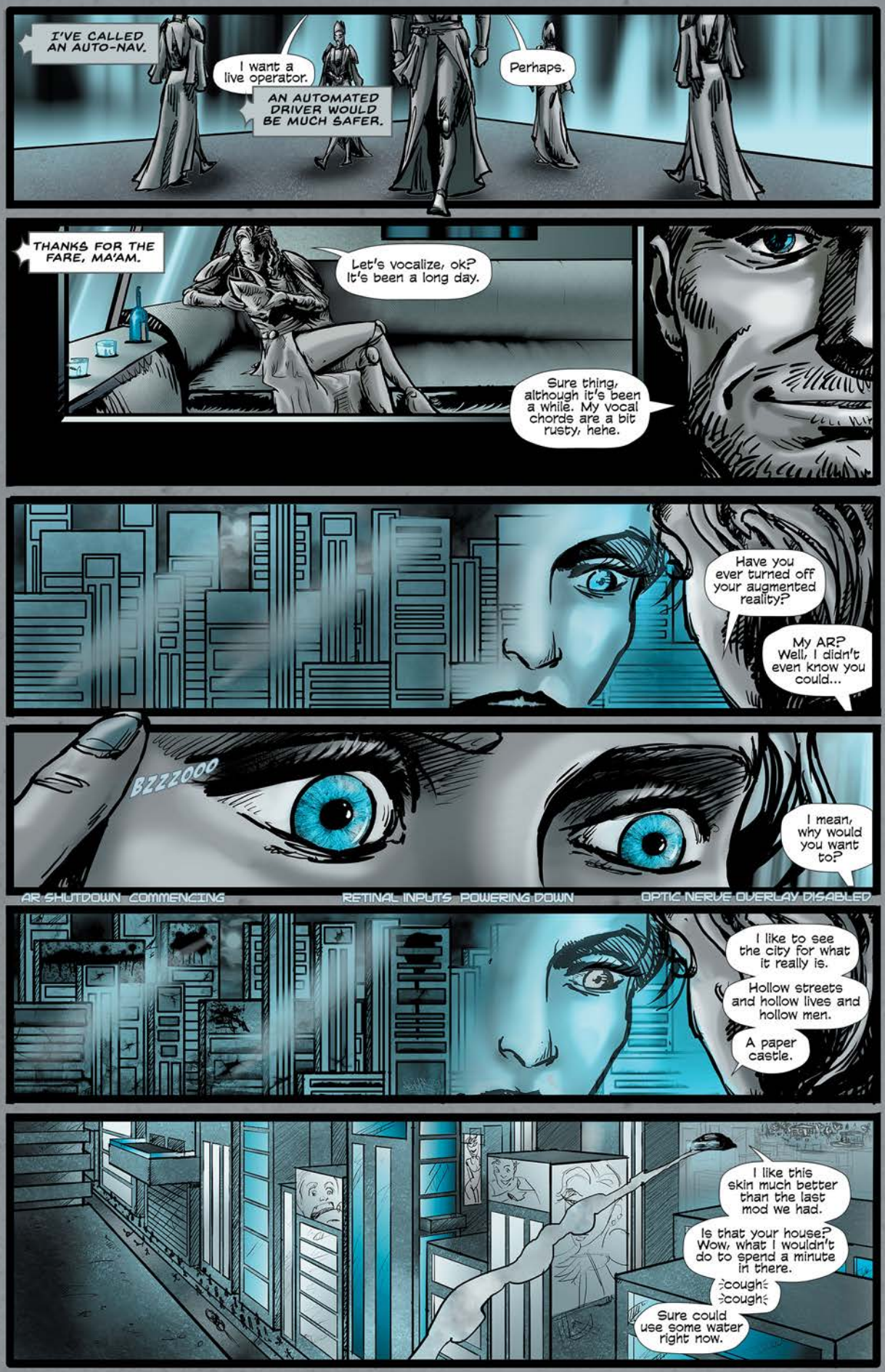
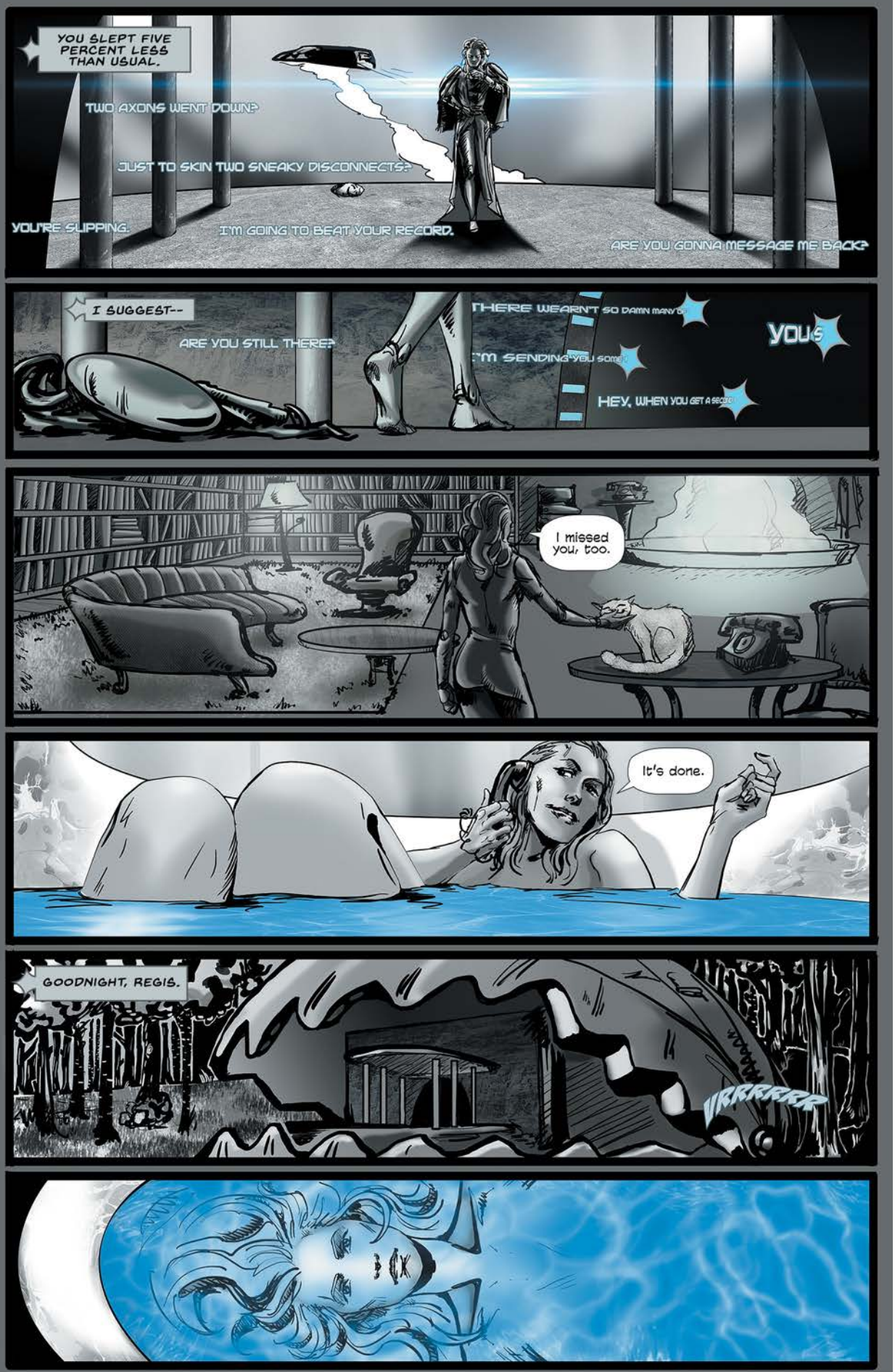
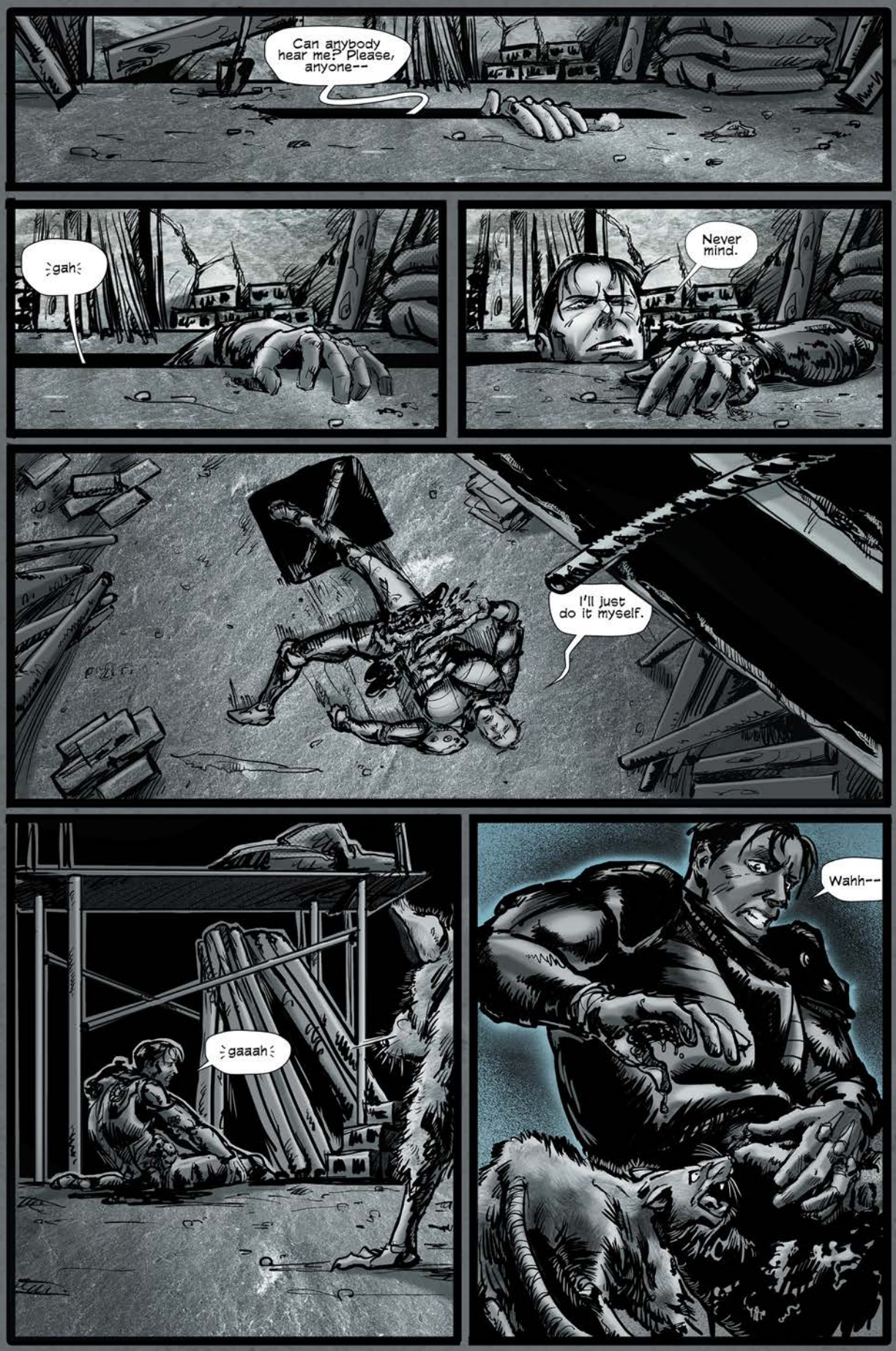
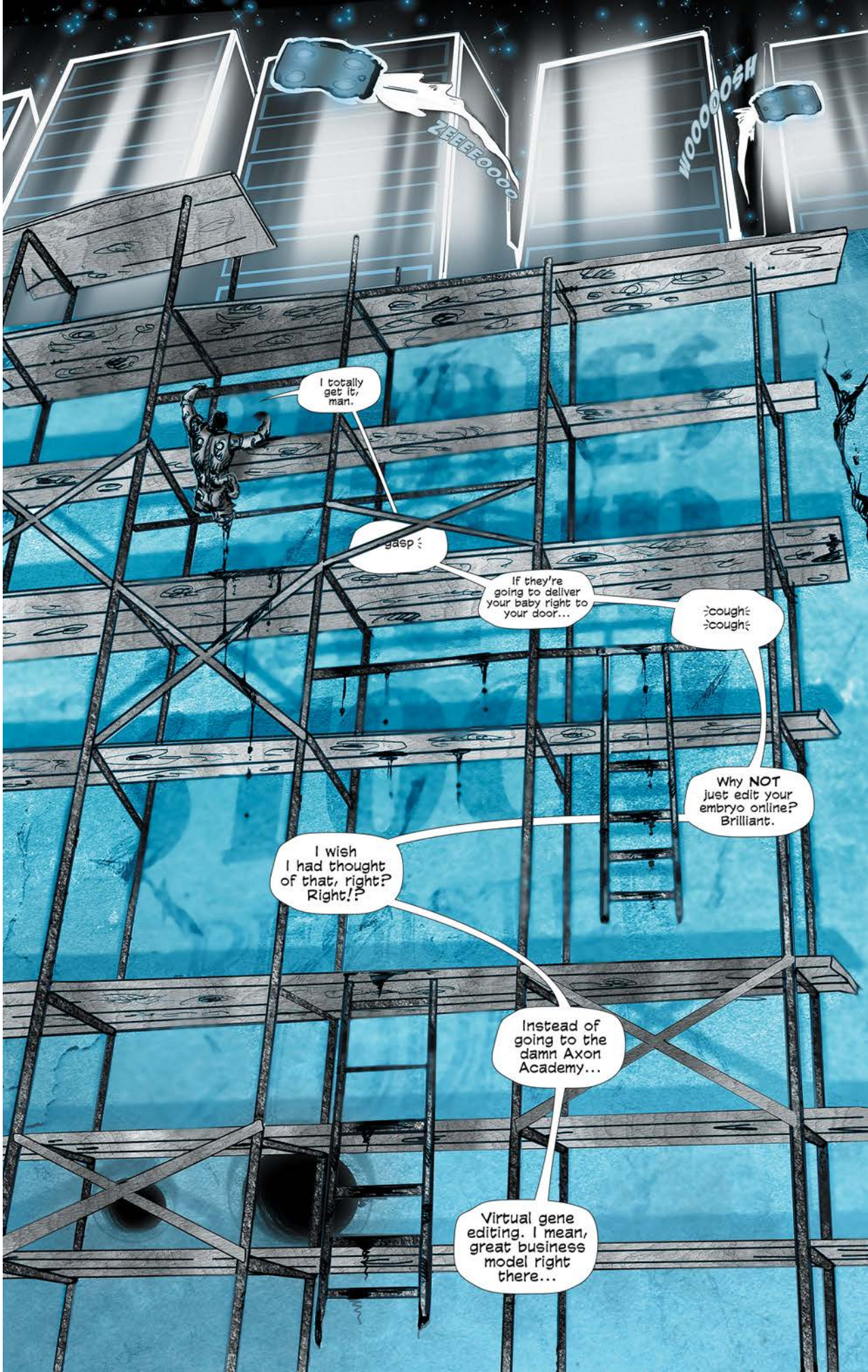
Paxt is down, Axon Paxt is down!
Regency? Server? Can you read me?
I can't see a damn thing.
Can't get GPS or a visual.
I'm right below you--
Calling for medivac.
Help! Heeeeelp--
Ahhh
Regis? Send kill command. Send kill command.


I'VE CALLED AN AUTO-NAV.
I want a live operator.
AN AUTOMATED DRIVER WOULD BE MUCH SAFER.
Perhaps.
THANKS FOR THE FARE, MA'AM.
Let's vocalize, ok? It's been a long day.
Sure thing, although it's been a while. My vocal chords are a bit rusty, hehe.
Have you ever turned off your augmented reality?
My AR? Well, I didn't even know you could...
BZZZOOO
I mean, why would you want to?
AR SHUTDOWN COMMENCING
RETINAL INPUTS POWERING DOWN
OPTIC NERVE OVERLAY DISABLED
I like to see the city for what it really is.
Hollow streets and hollow lives and hollow men.
A paper castle.
I like this skin much better than the last mod we had.
Is that your house? Wow, what I wouldn't do to spend a minute in there.
:cough:
:cough:
Sure could use some water right now.

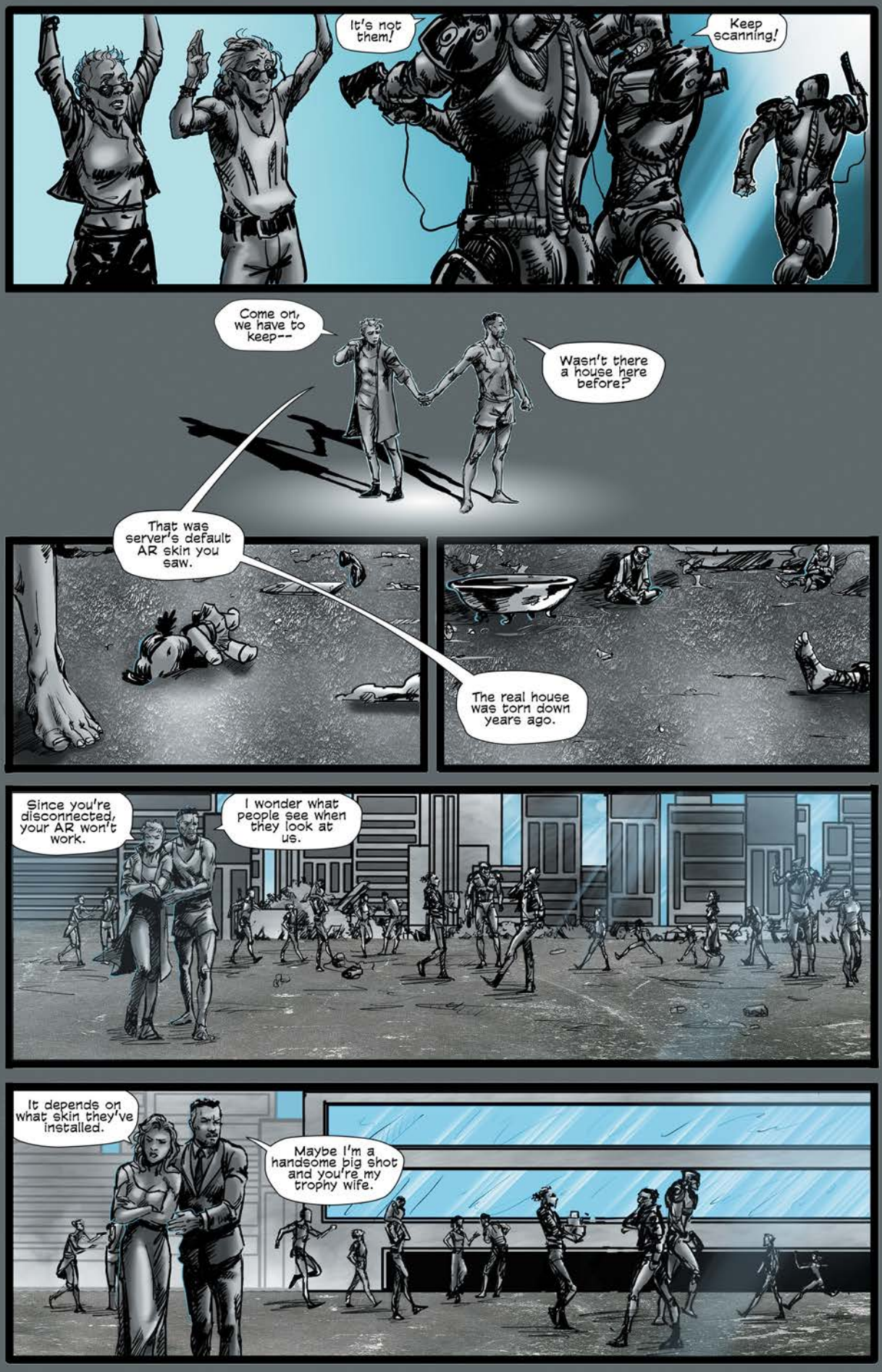

YOU SLEPT FIVE PERCENT LESS THAN USUAL.
TWO AXONS WENT DOWN?
JUST TO SKIN TWO SNEAKY DISCONNECTS?
YOU'RE SLIPPING.
I'M GOING TO BEAT YOUR RECORD.
ARE YOU GONNA MESSAGE ME BACK?
I SUGGEST--
ARE YOU STILL THERE?
THERE WEARN'T SO DAMN MANY
YOU
I'M SENDING YOU SOME
HEY, WHEN YOU GET A SEC
I missed you, too.
It's done.
GOODNIGHT, REGIS.
VRRRRRRR


Can anybody hear me? Please, anyone--
:gah:
Never mind.
I'll just do it myself.
:gaaah:
Wahh--

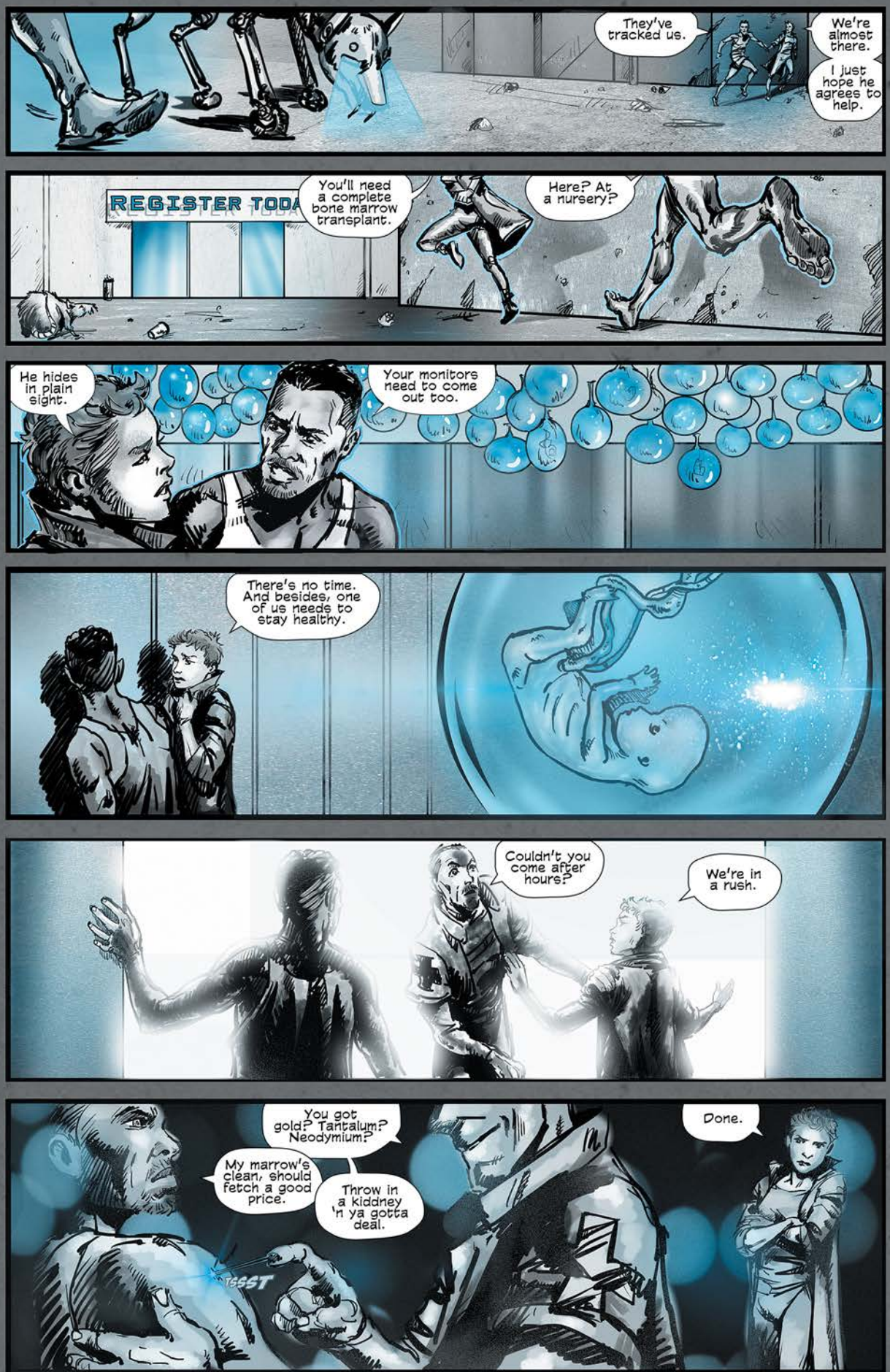

I didn't like this leg anyway.
I could use some stims right now...
That's it...
All the way off.
Ha-ha, take this!
I am an Axon agent in need of assistance!
I guess I have to do this the old fashioned way...
This is the leg I DO like... Well, off you go.


ZEEEEOOOO
WOOOOOSH
I totally get it, man.
gasp
If they're going to deliver your baby right to your door...
cough cough
Why NOT just edit your embryo online? Brilliant.
I wish I had thought of that, right? Right!?
Instead of going to the damn Axon Academy...
Virtual gene editing. I mean, great business model right there...

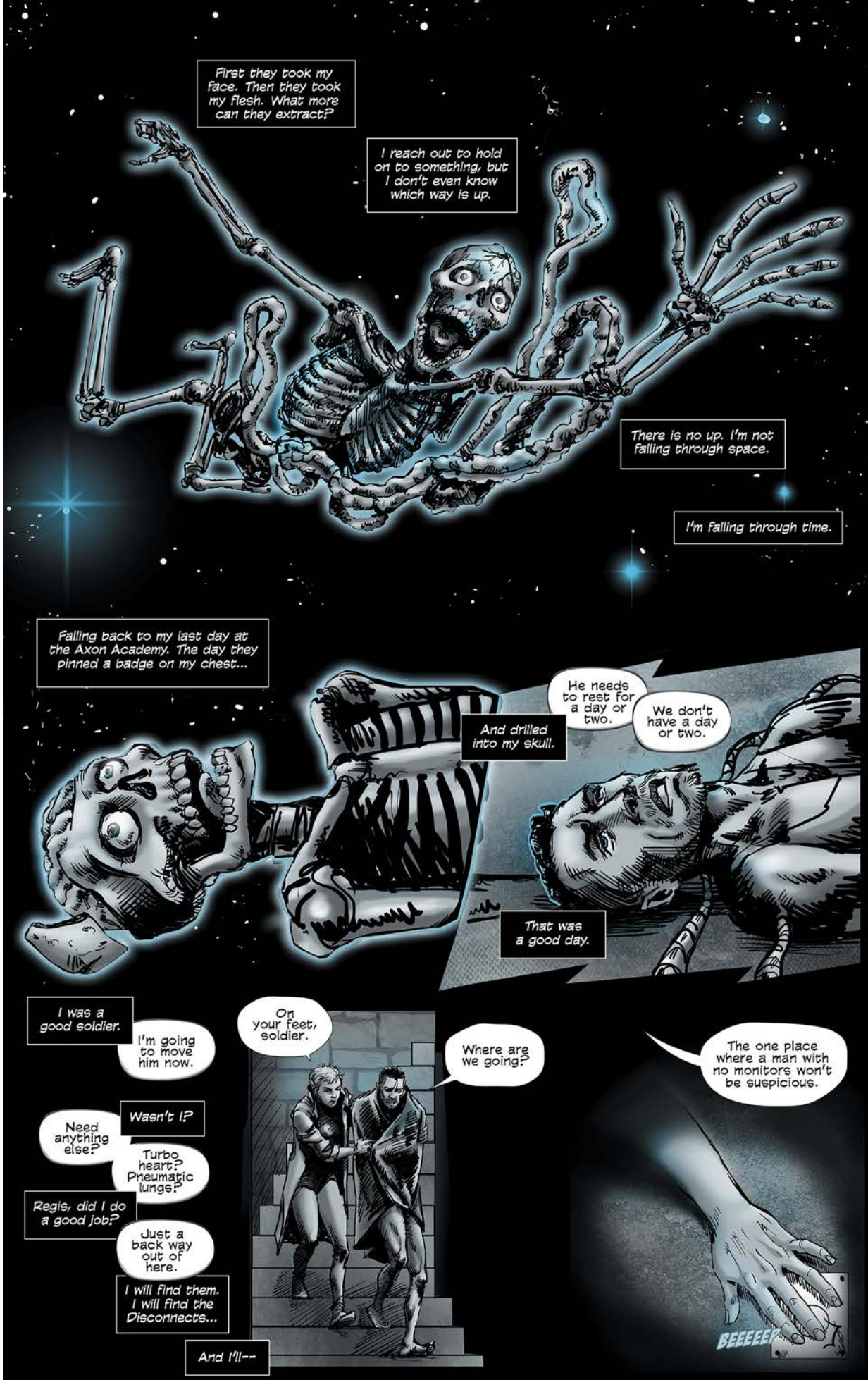

This way. Stay with me, my people wil keep you safe.
I won't be safe until I get these monitors out.
And that's impossible.
It's NOT impossible.
Just very painful.
Are you sure, Eric?
They MUST come out!
Let's GO!
This way.
You two, freeze!
DOWNLOADING AUTOEXEC.BAT
Don't run. We move and they'll track us.
I'll take your word for it.
Raise your hands.
Slowly.
ESTABLISHING LOCAL NETWORK
WRRRROW
Command delete authorized. Let's get this over with.
GRRRRRR


It's not them!
Keep scanning!
Come on, we have to keep--
Wasn't there a house here before?
That was server's default AR skin you saw.
The real house was torn down years ago.
Since you're disconnected, your AR won't work.
I wonder what people see when they look at us.
It depends on what skin they've installed.
Maybe I'm a handsome big shot and you're my trophy wife.

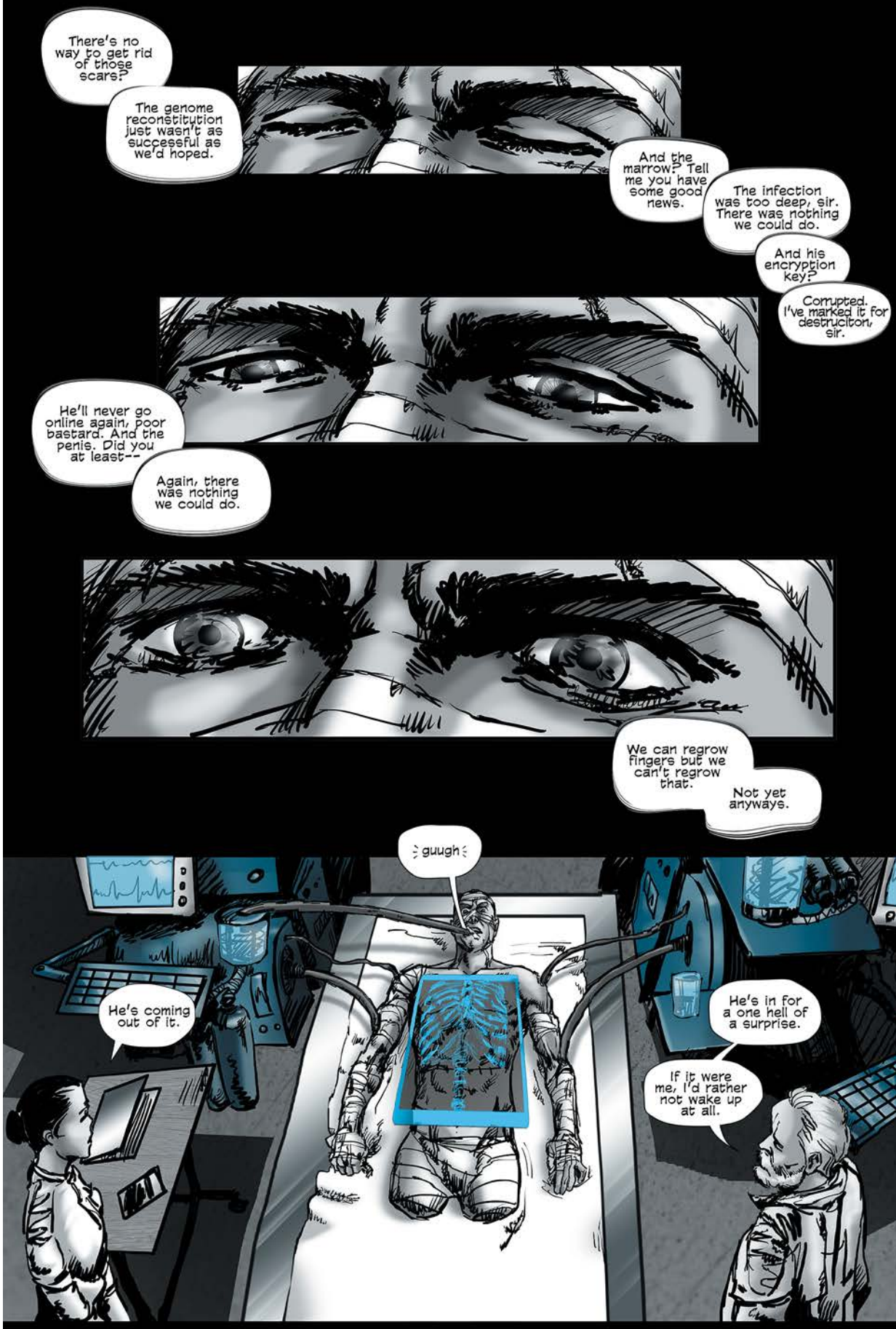

People see what they want.
Dragons, monsters.
Damsels in distress.
For others, horror and dispair.
My targeting sight cuts through the AR.
You saw the real me.
Yes.
I always see people for who they really are...
Just before you kill them.
Delete. I delete them.

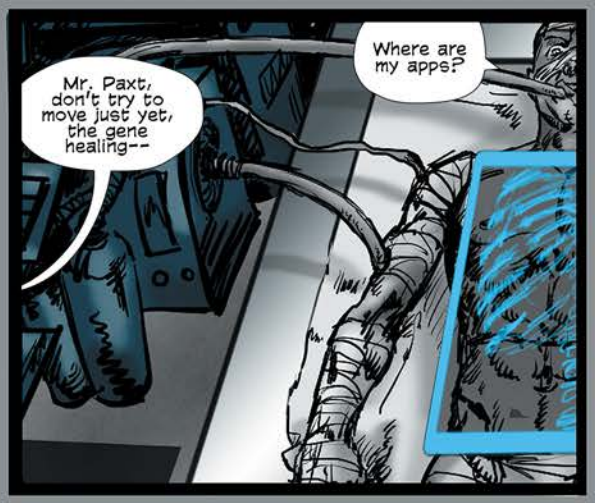

They've tracked us.
We're almost there.
I just hope he agrees to help.
REGISTER TODA
You'll need a complete bone marrow transplant.
Here? At a nursery?
He hides in plain sight.
Your monitors need to come out too.
There's no time. And besides, one of us needs to stay healthy.
Couldn't you come after hours?
We're in a rush.
You got gold? Tantalum? Neodymium?
My marrow's clean, should fetch a good price.
Throw in a kiddney 'n ya gotta deal.
SSST
Done.

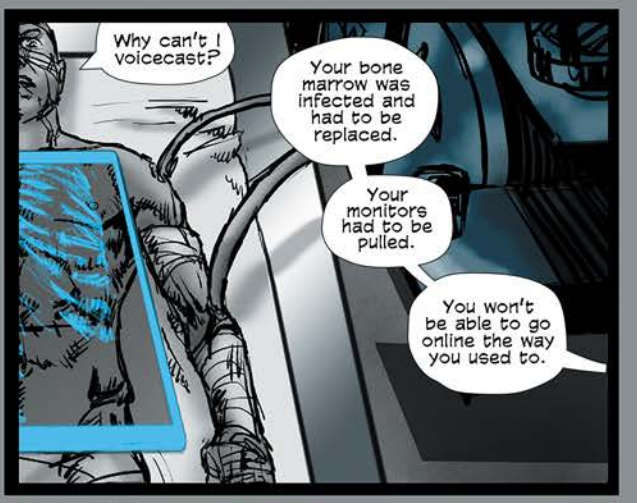

Your friend should already be feeling the effects...
I don't feel anything. Are you sure you know what--
These aren't my hands. These belong to someone else.
My hands just do what they're told. Just follow orders...
The surgeon, Eric, he's ready.
Whose face is this? What happened to my face!
Down, nice and easy, good.
...can't take them out, it's impossible...
...all a lie, don't let him...
I haven't got all day.
Ahhh-- I can't hold him.
Talira! Don't--
You can let go now. He's just about ready.
I am an Officer of the Axon Academy's 147th class.
A member of the Seaboard's most elite unit.
You can't do this. I command you to release me--

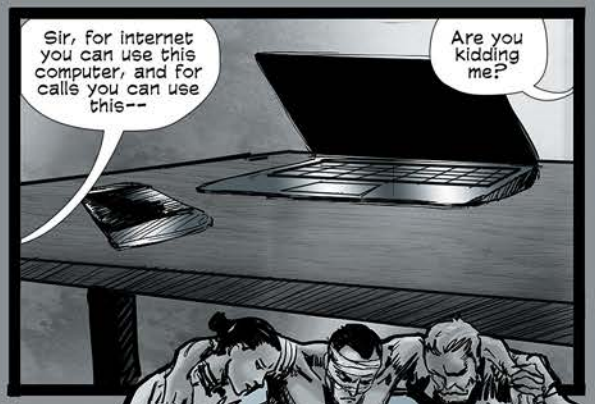

First they took my face. Then they took my flesh. What more can they extract?
I reach out to hold on to something, but I don't even know which way is up.
There is no up. I'm not falling through space.
I'm falling through time.
Falling back to my last day at the Axon Academy. The day they pinned a badge on my chest...
And drilled into my skull.
He needs to rest for a day or two.
We don't have a day or two.
That was a good day.
I was a good soldier.
I'm going to move him now.
Wasn't I?
Need anything else?
Turbo heart? Pneumatic lungs?
Regis, did I do a good job?
Just a back way out of here.
I will find them. I will find the Disconnects...
And I'll--
On your feet, soldier.
Where are we going?
The one place where a man with no monitors won't be suspicious.
BEEEEEP


You want me to climb down?
I'll be right behind you.
VRVRRRR
We have a few days before they activate--
ugh
We don't want to be here when--
Ahh--
Eric?
gah
ERIC!
Tali
snrkx
Sleep.


There's no way to get rid of those scars?
The genome reconstitution just wasn't as successful as we'd hoped.
And the marrow? Tell me you have some good news.
The infection was too deep, sir. There was nothing we could do.
And his encryption key?
Corrupted. I've marked it for destruciton, sir.
He'll never go online again, poor bastard. And the penis. Did you at least--
Again, there was nothing we could do.
We can regrow fingers but we can't regrow that.
Not yet anyways.
guugh
He's coming out of it.
He's in for a one hell of a surprise.
If it were me, I'd rather not wake up at all.


Where are my apps?
Mr. Paxt, don't try to move just yet, the gene healing--

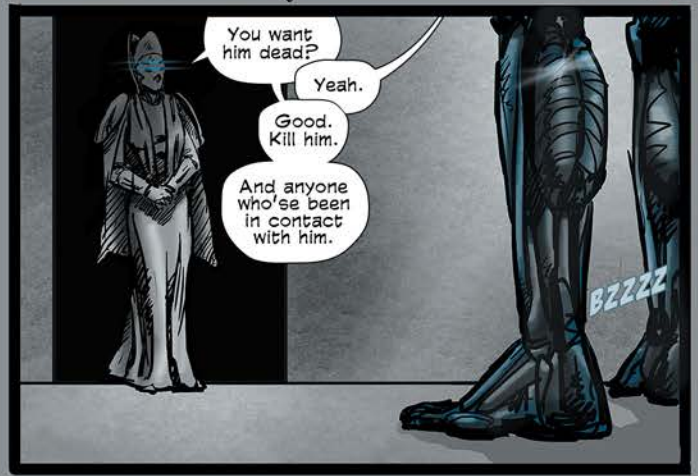

Why can't I voicecast?
Your bone marrow was infected and had to be replaced.
Your monitors had to be pulled.
You won't be able to go online the way you used to.


Are you kidding me?
Sir, for internet you can use this computer, and for calls you can use this--

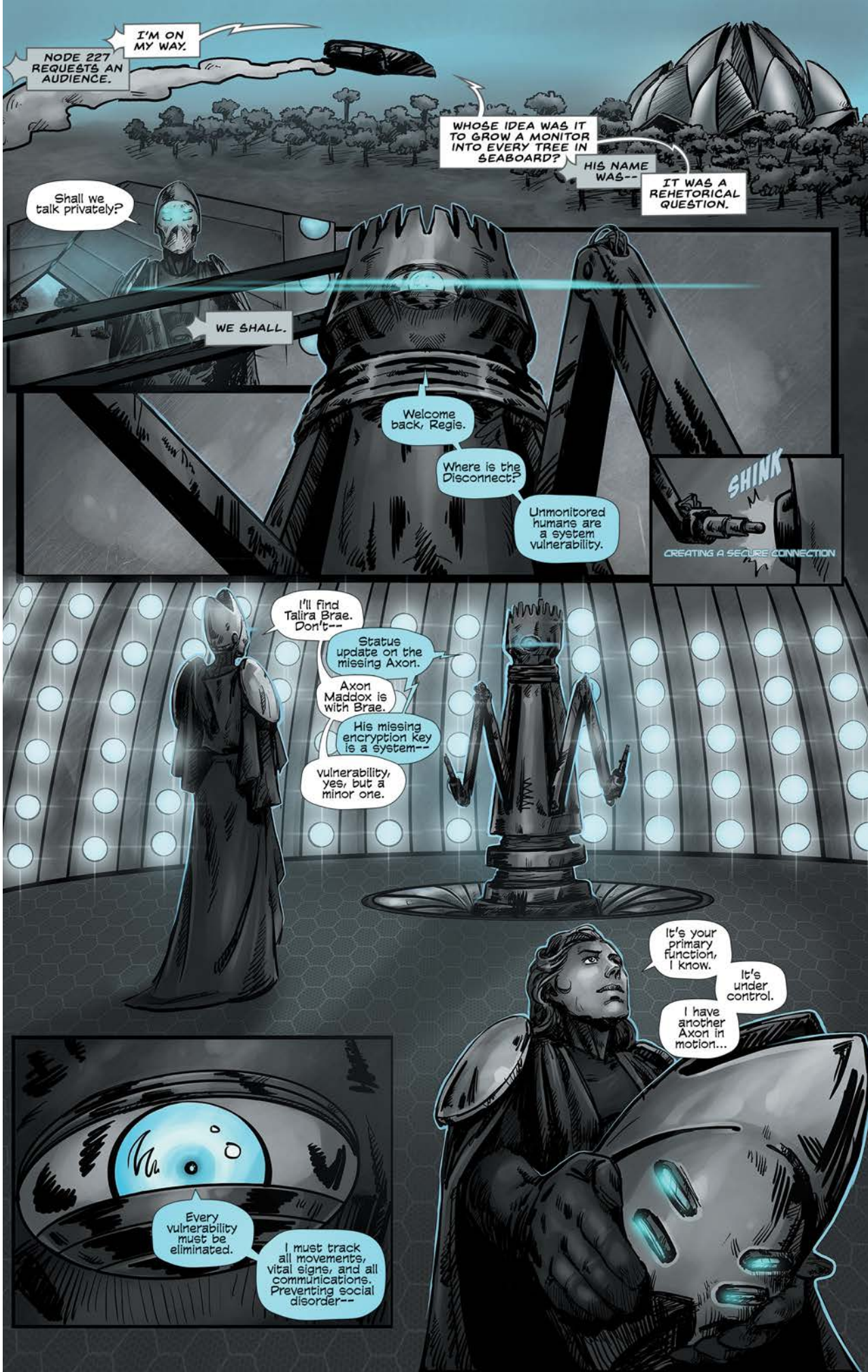

Without monitors, it's the only way you'll--
Hey, wait, you can't--
You're getting up? OK, let's see--
glagh

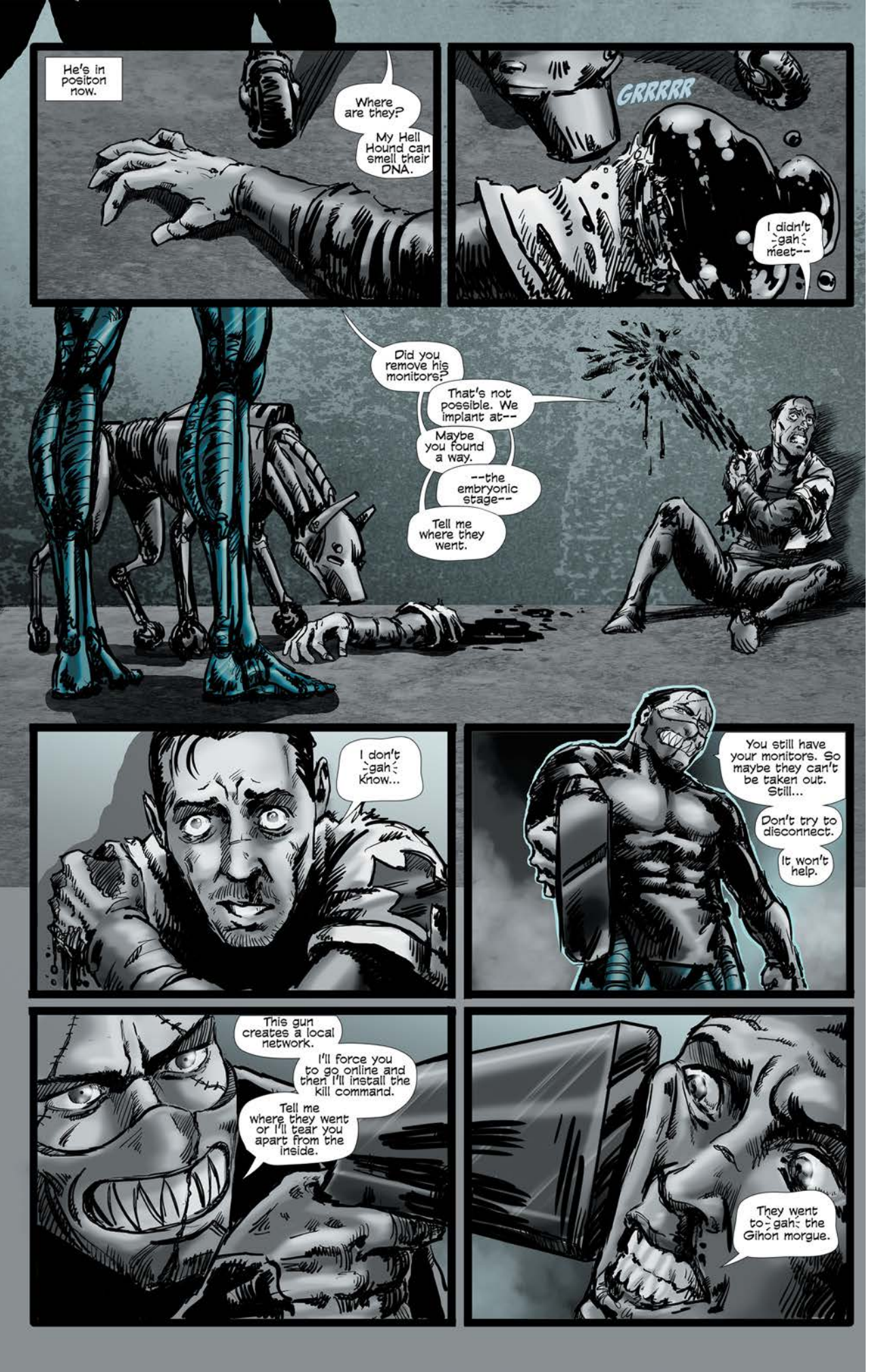

Eric.

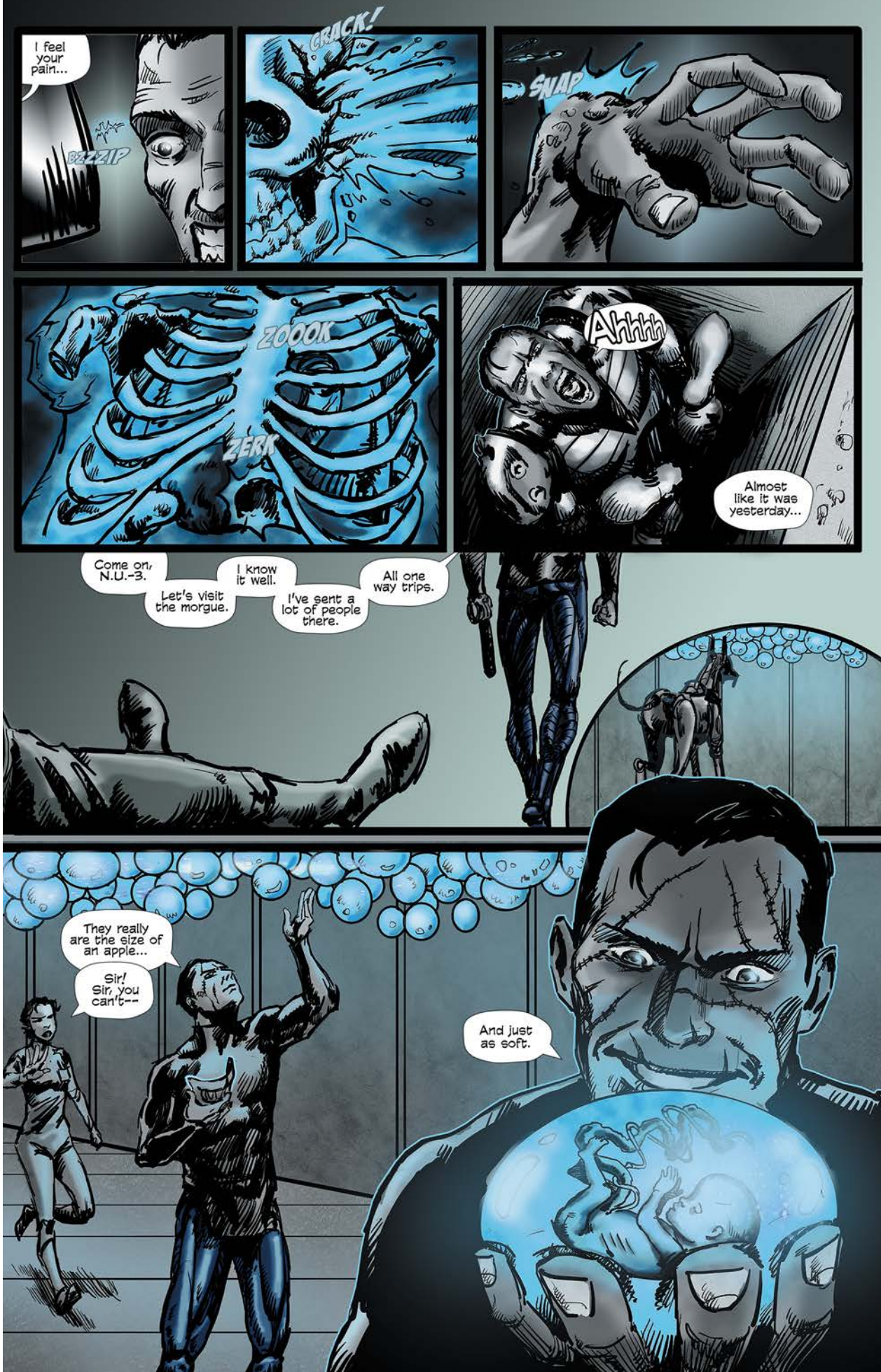

Where is he?
Who?
Eric Maddox.
No idea.
BZZZZ


You want him dead?
Yeah.
Good. Kill him.
And anyone who's been in contact with him.
BZZZZ


Tell me where I can find him.

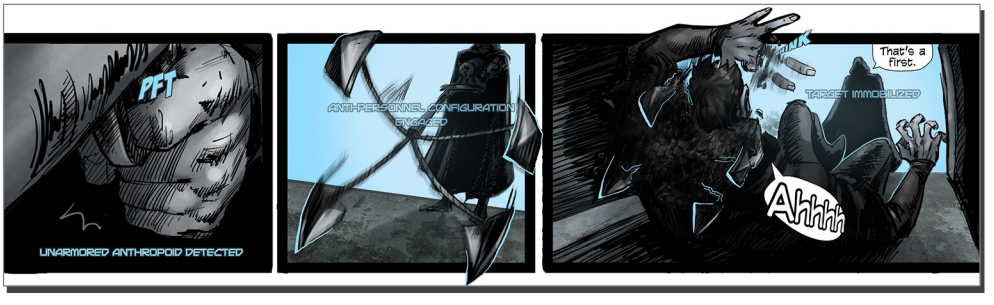

I'M ON MY WAY.
NODE 227 REQUESTS AN AUDIENCE.
WHOSE IDEA WAS IT TO GROW A MONITOR INTO EVERY TREE IN SEABOARD?
HIS NAME WAS--
IT WAS A REHETORICAL QUESTION.
Shall we talk privately?
WE SHALL.
Welcome back, Regis.
Where is the Disconnect?
Unmonitored humans are a system vulnerability.
SHINK
CREATING A SECURE CONNECTION
I'll find Talira Brae. Don't--
Status update on the missing Axon.
Axon Maddox is with Brae.
His missing encryption key is a system--
vulnerability, yes, but a minor one.
It's your primary function, I know.
It's under control.
I have another Axon in motion...
Every vulnerability must be eliminated.
I must track all movements, vital signs, and all communications. Preventing social disorder--


He's in positon now.
Where are they?
My Hell Hound can smell their DNA.
GRRRRR
I didn't -gah- meet--
Did you remove his monitors?
That's not possible. We implant at--
Maybe you found a way.
--the embryonic stage--
Tell me where they went.
I don't -gah- Know...
You still have your monitors. So maybe they can't be taken out. Still...
Don't try to disconnect.
It won't help.
This gun creates a local network.
I'll force you to go online and then I'll install the kill command.
Tell me where they went or I'll tear you apart from the inside.
They went to -gah- the Gihon morgue.


I feel your pain...
BZZZIP
CRACK!
SNAP
ZOOOK
ZERK
Ahhhh
Almost like it was yesterday...
Come on, N.U.-3.
Let's visit the morgue.
I know it well.
I've sent a lot of people there.
All one way trips.
They really are the size of an apple...
Sir! Sir, you can't--
And just as soft.

the adventure continues!





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