

LOMPOC, CALIFORNIA.
12:45 PM.

"TAKE YOUR TIME, SOLDIER. THINK IT THROUGH. WE NEED TO BE SURE YOU HAVEN'T LEFT OUT A SINGLE DETAIL ABOUT THIS... INVADER."

"I'VE TOLD YOU WHAT I SAW, SIR. THE METAL SUIT, THE... MUTATION. THE MURDERS."

VANDENBERG
AIR FORCE BASE

BUT YOU EARTH DEFENSE COMMAND FOLKS KEEP DODGING MY QUESTION.

WAS THAT THING ONE OF OURS?

THAT'S CLASSIFIED.

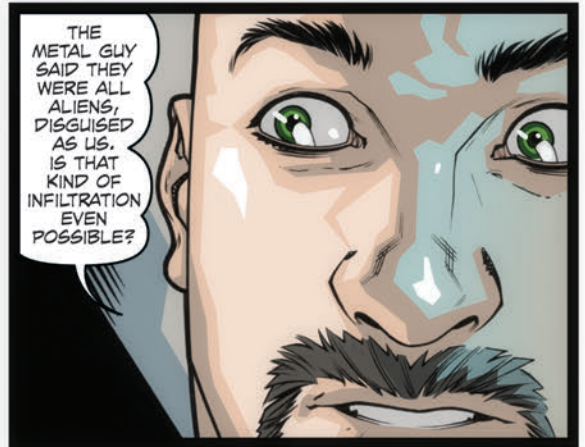
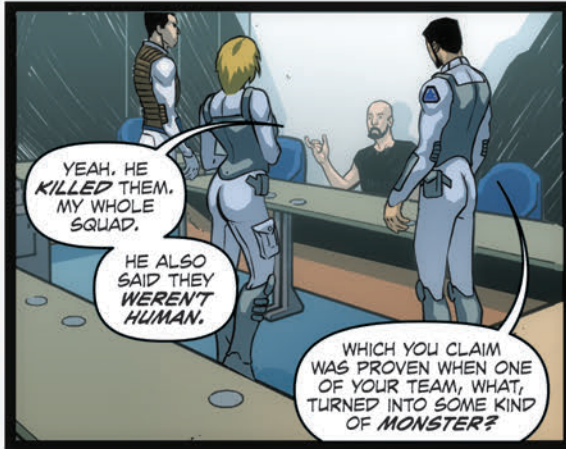
ALSO, WE DOUBT IT.

KEN FRANCIS, EDC

BRYCE KUKUK, EDC

AT THE MOMENT, WHO HE WAS MATTERS LESS THAN WHAT HE DID.

DAVE DUBOSKY, MILITARY ENGINEER



ROM IN EARTH FALL

PART ONE



THIS PLANET FEELS DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS. THE NATIVE POPULACE OCCUPIES TOO MUCH OF THE LAND MASSES.

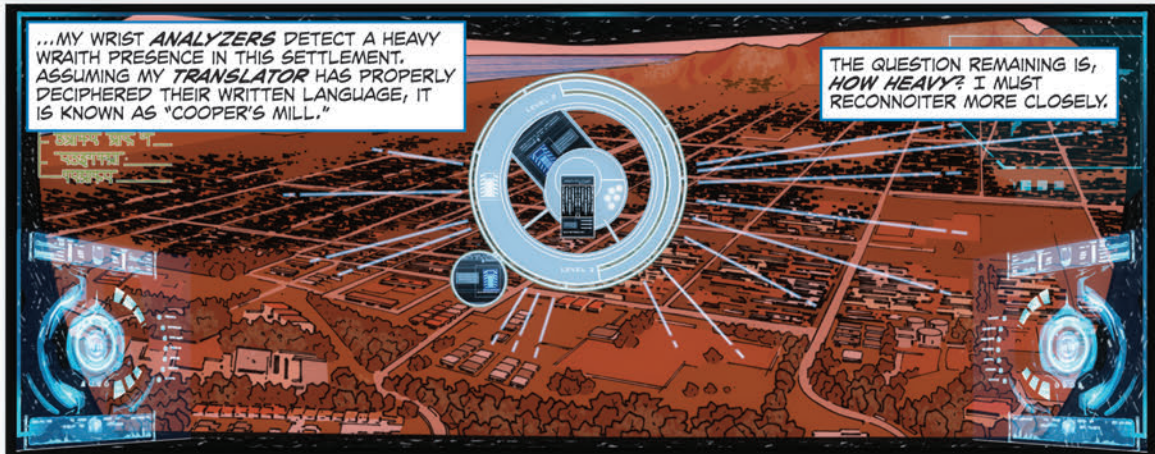
SO MANY PLACES FOR THE *DIRE WRAITHS* TO HIDE.

MY ARRIVAL WENT POORLY... NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME. ESTABLISHING INITIAL CONTACT WITH A WORLD'S MILITARY CAN LEAD TO HOSTILITIES UNDER THE BEST CIRCUMSTANCES ...AND THIS ONE'S BEEN *INFILTRATED*.

BETTER I ENGAGE A DIFFERENT CLASS OF HUMAN TO HELP GUIDE ME. AN ELDER... PERHAPS THE LOCAL EQUIVALENT OF A SPIRIT-GUIDE, IF THEY HAVE THEM. BUT FIRST...

...MY WRIST *ANALYZERS* DETECT A HEAVY WRAITH PRESENCE IN THIS SETTLEMENT. ASSUMING MY *TRANSLATOR* HAS PROPERLY DECIPHERED THEIR WRITTEN LANGUAGE, IT IS KNOWN AS "COOPER'S MILL."

THE QUESTION REMAINING IS, *HOW HEAVY?* I MUST RECONNOITER MORE CLOSELY.





BY THE SOLSTAR ORDER!

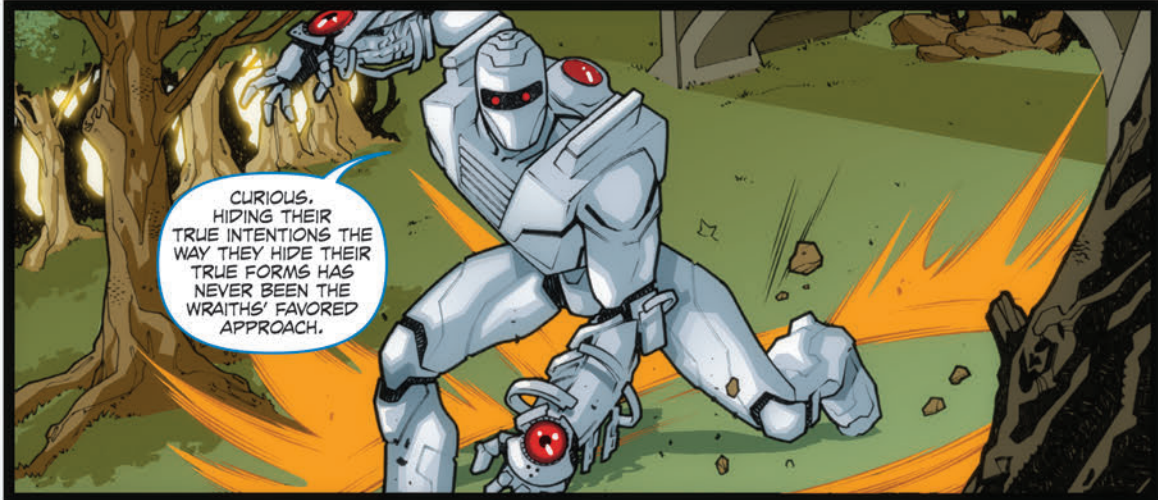
THIS SEEMINGLY IDYLIC TOWN...



"...APPEARS AT FIRST GLANCE TO BE **OVERRUN** BY DIRE WRAITHS,"



YET I SEE NO SIGNS OF PLANETARY SUBJUGATION; NO WRAITH HIVES BEING CONSTRUCTED.



CURIOUS. HIDING THEIR TRUE INTENTIONS THE WAY THEY HIDE THEIR TRUE FORMS HAS NEVER BEEN THE WRAITHS' FAVORED APPROACH.



"THIS CALLS FOR

"MORE EXTENSIVE

"ANALYSIS."

MANTLO PARK.
1:45 P.M.

IT'S SO GOOD TO HAVE YOU HOME, HONEY.

WE KNOW IT HASN'T BEEN EASY...

SO YOU BROUGHT ME HERE FOR, WHAT, AN INTERVENTION?

WE'RE JUST WORRIED ABOUT YOU, DARBY.

THE MILITARY DOES OFFER... HELP, DON'T THEY?

THEY OFFER A LOT OF THINGS. WHAT THEY *DON'T* OFFER IS A *PROMOTION* IF YOU GET A REP FOR BEING "FRAGILE."

I'M NOT CRAZY, ENRIQUE. I JUST NEED SOME DOWNTIME. A CHANCE TO BE *NORMAL* FOR A WHILE.

HE KNOWS THAT, SWEETIE. WE'RE JUST—WE'VE ALL BEEN SO WORRIED. WE CAN SEE THE CHANGE IN YOU.

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

SAYING NOTHING'S OKAY, TOO, MOM. QUIET IS... A NICE CHANGE.

I'M HAPPY TO JUST BE HOME AND HAVE A CHANCE TO REDISCOVER *WHO I AM*.

AND WHO YOU'VE ALL BECOME WHILE I WAS OVERSEAS, TOO.

OH, WE'RE THE SAME AS ALWAYS.