



ICU OF A HOSPITAL IN AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION.

AW, A FRUIT AND CHEESE BASKET! TWO FOOD ITEMS I'D BE HAPPY TO DO WITHOUT TO THE END OF MY DAYS...

THERE'S A BOTTLE OF SINGLE MALT UNDER THE MANDARIN ORANGES, CHUCKLES.



WELL, IN THAT CASE—MY HEARTFELT GRATITUDE IS FORTHCOMING.

I MUST BE WELL OUT OF THE WOODS IF YOU'RE HERE INSTEAD OF DUKE, LADY JAYE.



HE'S OVER AT WALTER REED IN BETHESDA SEEING COVER GIRL. SHE'S IN AN INDUCED COMA. THEY CALLED IN TWO SPECIALISTS...



ANYBODY ELSE GET—?

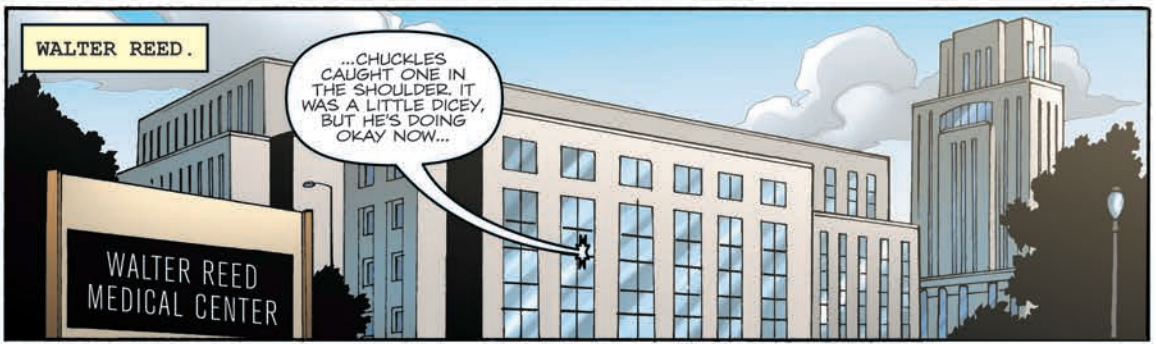


NO. JUST YOU AND COVER GIRL. NO COLLATERALS, EITHER, BUT THREE OF THE CRIMSON GUARD MOLES BOUGHT IT. ALL FRED SERIES.

SO, WE STOPPED COBRA DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS?



BUT, THERE'S A CATCH...





THEY'LL TAKE CARE OF HER HERE, DUKE.

THIS IS A PLACE WITH A MISSION.

I KNOW THAT, SIR.



IS THIS ALL THAT'S ON?

24/7 ON EVERY CHANNEL. WE'RE BIGGER THAN THE KARDASHIANS.

DID THEY OUT US? ARE WE BLOWN?

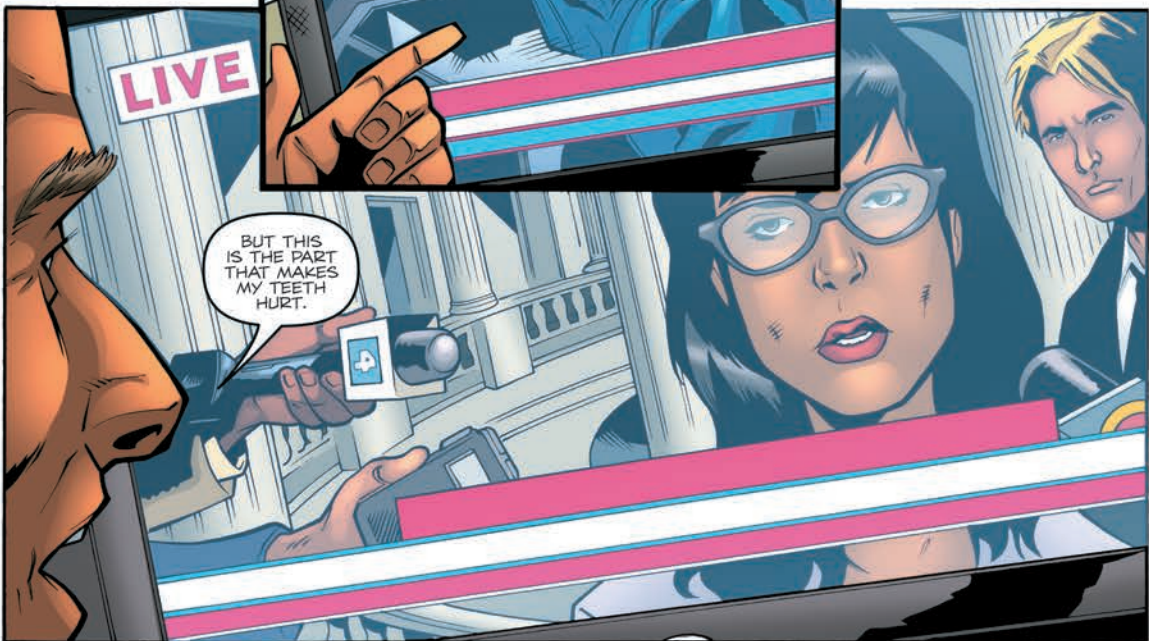


NO, WE ARE STILL UNDER THE COVER OF "VARIOUS SECRET INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES AND CLANDESTINE SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUPS."

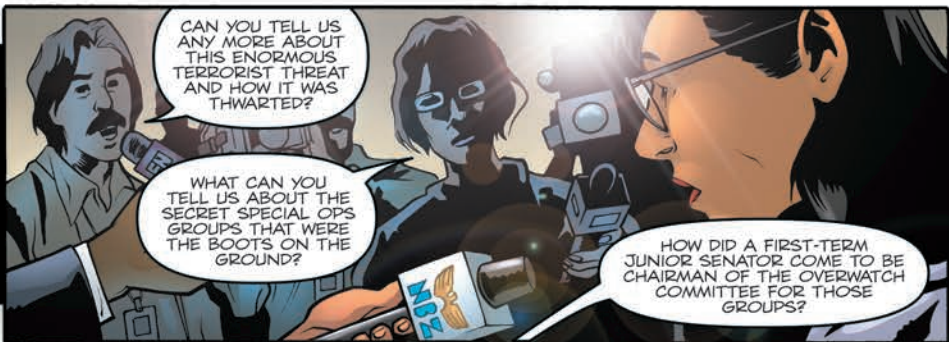
VAGUE ENOUGH.



THE CAT'S OUT OF THE BAG ON THESE GUYS, THOUGH.



BUT THIS IS THE PART THAT MAKES MY TEETH HURT.



CAN YOU TELL US ANY MORE ABOUT THIS ENORMOUS TERRORIST THREAT AND HOW IT WAS THWARTED?

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE SECRET SPECIAL OPS GROUPS THAT WERE THE BOOTS ON THE GROUND?

HOW DID A FIRST-TERM JUNIOR SENATOR COME TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERWATCH COMMITTEE FOR THOSE GROUPS?



MOST ASPECTS OF THE THREAT AND THE PERPETRATORS OF THAT THREAT ARE STILL CLASSIFIED, BUT THEY WILL BE MADE PUBLIC AS SOON AS THEY ARE CLEARED.

THE BRAVE OPERATIVES WHO STOPPED THIS ATTACK IN ITS TRACKS CAN ONLY CONTINUE IN THEIR STEADFAST VIGILANCE IF THEIR IDENTITIES AND MISSION STRUCTURES ARE KEPT SECRET.

THE CHAIRMANSHIP FELL TO ME BECAUSE IT'S A DIRTY AND THANKLESS JOB, AND NOBODY ELSE WANTED IT.



BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MORAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES—AND VIOLATIONS OF THE FOURTH AMENDMENT?

WHAT ABOUT TRANSPARENCY AND THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO KNOW?

WHAT ABOUT TRADING BASIC FREEDOMS FOR SECURITY?

THE SPECIAL OPS GROUPS AND INTEL AGENCIES CAN'T DO THEIR JOBS WITHOUT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SECRECY AND OPACITY, BUT THEY CAN'T EVER BE GIVEN COMPLETE CARTE BLANCHE.

THAT'S WHERE THE OVERWATCH COMMITTEE COMES INTO PLAY...



...PROVIDING THE NECESSARY CHECKS AND BALANCES THAT ARE THE LINCHPINS OF OUR TRIADIC FORM OF LEGISLATIVE, JUDICIARY, AND EXECUTIVE DEMOCRACY!



SOUNDS ALMOST PRESIDENTIAL, DOESN'T SHE?

I HAVE TO CATCH A FAST MOVER TO DC...

