

I HATE YOU.



I KNOW.



REALLY THOUGH. I SUDDENLY KNOW WHAT **BRYNN ORI** FELT LIKE.

ORI. I THOUGHT SHE WAS THE ATTACK NODE, BUT SHE WAS JUST THE METHOD.

SHUT UP. I HATE YOU.

WE DIDN'T NOTICE *HER* ANY MORE THAN WE NOTICED *YOU*.



WHICH IS TO SAY NOT AT ALL.

YOU ARE *SUCH* A [REDACTED]. CAN YOU EVEN HEAR YOURSELF? WE ALMOST EXPLODED LIKE AN HOUR AGO AND YOU'RE ALREADY TAKING SHOTS AT ME.

I'M COMPLIMENTING YOU. YOU'RE QUIET AND UNASSUMING. IT'S AN ASSET.



THERE'S A BATHROOM DOWN THE HALL.

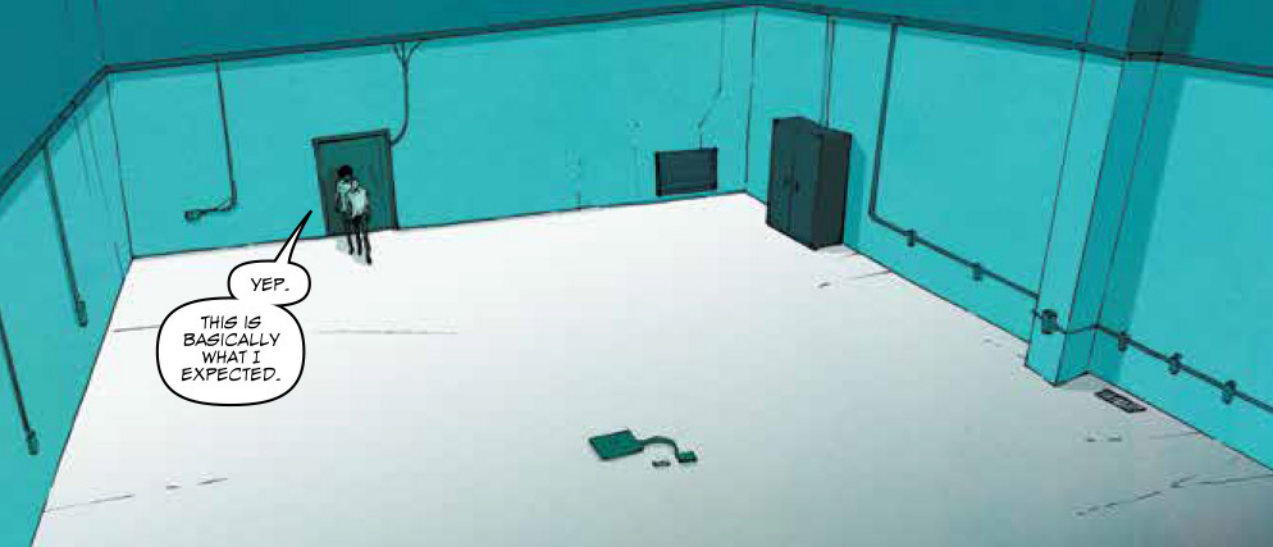
THANK THE LORD.

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

A CONTINGENCY. I HAVE SPOTS LIKE IT ACROSS THE COUNTRY, BUT THIS ONE WAS THE FIRST. HAD IT SINCE HIGH SCHOOL.

"I THINK OF IT AS HOME."





YEP.  
THIS IS BASICALLY WHAT I EXPECTED.

MY **ACTUAL** HOME IS UNDER CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE EVER SINCE TUNISIA. IT'S A LITTLE MORE COMFY.

AND YOU HAPPENED TO HAVE A SAFEHOUSE ON STANDBY?

I KNEW SOMEDAY THIS WOULD BE HOW THINGS WERE. I NEVER HAD NATE'S ILLUSION OF PERMANENCE.



THAT'S THE HARDEST PART. BEING RIGHT. ALL THE TIME.

BEING A PESSIMIST ABOUT YOUR CLOSEST FRIEND. KNOWING HE WON'T COMPLETE THE MISSION, THAT YOU'LL HAVE TO LEAVE HIM BEHIND.

AND BEING RIGHT.



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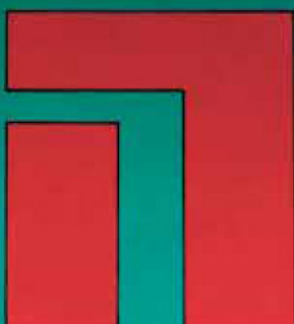
EXCEPT YOU WEREN'T **ENTIRELY** RIGHT, WERE YOU?

I HELPED BREAK YOUR LIFE WIDE OPEN. I KNOW WHAT NATE DID. TOOK HIM A WHILE, SURE, BUT HE WAS STILL WITH YOU.

HE **STOOD UP** TO ORI.

EXCEPT WHAT IF THAT WAS THE PLAN ALL ALONG? WHAT IF THE GOAL WASN'T TO TEAR US APART, BUT JUST SHOW THE WEAKNESS THAT WAS ALREADY THERE?

WHAT IF BRYNN ORI WAS JUST A WEAPON WIELDED BY SOMEONE ELSE.



"A WEAPON FOR THE TOWER."

"ACCORDING TO YOUR INVESTIGATIONS, BRYNN ORI WAS CHASING THE TOWER TWO YEARS BEFORE SHE APPROACHED NATE."

"YEP, THE TOWER'S NOT A NEW PHENOMENON IN THE LEAST. IN COMPUTER YEARS, IT'S ANCIENT."

"SO OVER THE LAST DECADE, SOMEONE HAS DESIGNED A **BLACK BOX SYSTEM** THAT CONNECTS SELECTED HACKERS TOGETHER TOWARDS COMMON GOALS OF VIOLENCE."

"AND DID SO WITHOUT **ME** HEARING ABOUT IT UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE."

"DON'T FORGET THE PART WHERE THE BOX EXPLODES WHEN INTERFERED WITH."

"BECAUSE IT DOESN'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT. SO WHEN ORI LOOKED THEIR WAY..."

"THEY FED YOU AND NATE TO THE CIA."

"THE TOWER USED THE ONLY PEOPLE WITH A CHANCE OF SHUTTING THEM DOWN TO **DISTRACT** THE ONLY PERSON LOOKING FOR THEM."

**TOP SECRET**

"THEY TOOK **SVE** OURSELF OFF THE BOARD. MADE ME A MARTYR. MOTIVATED THEIR NEXT WAVE."

IT CAN'T HAVE **ALL** BEEN THEIR PLAN?

YOU'VE SEEN HOW THEY WORK. HOW FAR AHEAD THEY ARE. THIS IS SOCIAL ENGINEERING ON A POTENTIALLY MASSIVE SCALE. THIS COULD **STILL** BE THEIR PLAN.

THEN WE HACK THEM. WE TAKE **THEIR** SECRETS. WE GET AHEAD.

CAN'T, THE LAST TOWER'S JUST EXPLODED.

FRIENDSHIP\_IS\_DEADLY.

NO. ONE GOT AWAY. THE **KID**...NAME'S A MY LITTLE PONY REFERENCE--

I CAN FIND HIM. HE'S OUR LAST SHOT.

IF I CAN GET INTO HIS SYSTEM, I CAN MAKE A MAP OF ENEMY TERRITORY.

THEN YOU AND NATE SHUT THIS THING DOWN FOR GOOD. TOGETHER.

...  
YEAH.

TOGETHER.

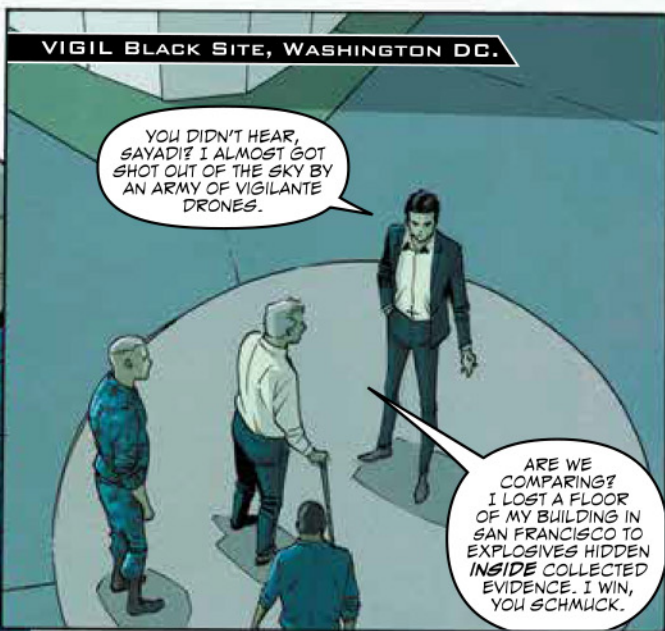
CLICK

BACK UP SITE

ACTIVATE



WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN, GRAFT?



YOU DIDN'T HEAR, SAYADI? I ALMOST GOT SHOT OUT OF THE SKY BY AN ARMY OF VIGILANTE DRONES.

ARE WE COMPARING? I LOST A FLOOR OF MY BUILDING IN SAN FRANCISCO TO EXPLOSIVES HIDDEN INSIDE COLLECTED EVIDENCE. I WIN, YOU SCHMUCK.



TWO DEAD. MARSH AND ALVAREZ.

YES. YOU SHOULD'VE.

I SHOULD'VE BEEN THERE.



BUT NOW YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT, AND JUST IN TIME.

WE'VE STILL GOT TWO HACKERS IN THE WIND AND WE'VE LOST THE TECHNOLOGY WE COULD'VE USED TO TRACK THEM. BUT AS YOU SAY, THEY STILL SEEM QUITE INTERESTED IN VERY LARGE EXPLOSIONS AND IMPOSSIBLE ULTIMATUMS.

WE'VE GOTTA FIND THEM.



SO WE'RE GOING TO RESORT TO OLD FASHIONED TECHNIQUES.

DIRECTOR GRAFT...



YOU MAY BEGIN YOUR INTERROGATION.

Name: Hal Koetchner  
Nym: ColdIronPatriot  
Marine. Discharged following injury.



Name: Keisha Morrison  
Nym: X3RX3S  
Community organizer.  
Victim of police violence.



I OWE YOU A BULLET, GRAFT.



HOW'S THAT GOVERNMENT CHECK TASTE, GRAFT?



YOU EVER INTERROGATE ANYONE BEFORE?

I KNOW THE FIELD MANUAL. AND I KNOW YOUR PEOPLE WILL BREAK IT IN A HEARTBEAT.

I ALSO KNOW HOW THIS ENDS. WE'VE ALREADY WON.



WHERE IS THE HACKER KNOWN AS SEAGUEEN?

YOU KNOW WHERE SHE IS, MAN!



SHE'S EVERYWHERE. SHE AND FRIENDSHIP BOTH. THEY'RE IN THE AIR AND YOU CAN'T EVEN TASTE THEM, YOU FASCIST SNITCH.

SO WHY DON'T YOU STOP WASTING OUR TIME AND GET TO THE TORTURE.