image
3
TOP COW
CYBER FORCE
RIPCLAW
WARBLADE
R.I.P.

CYBER FORCE

CREATED BY
Marc Silvestri

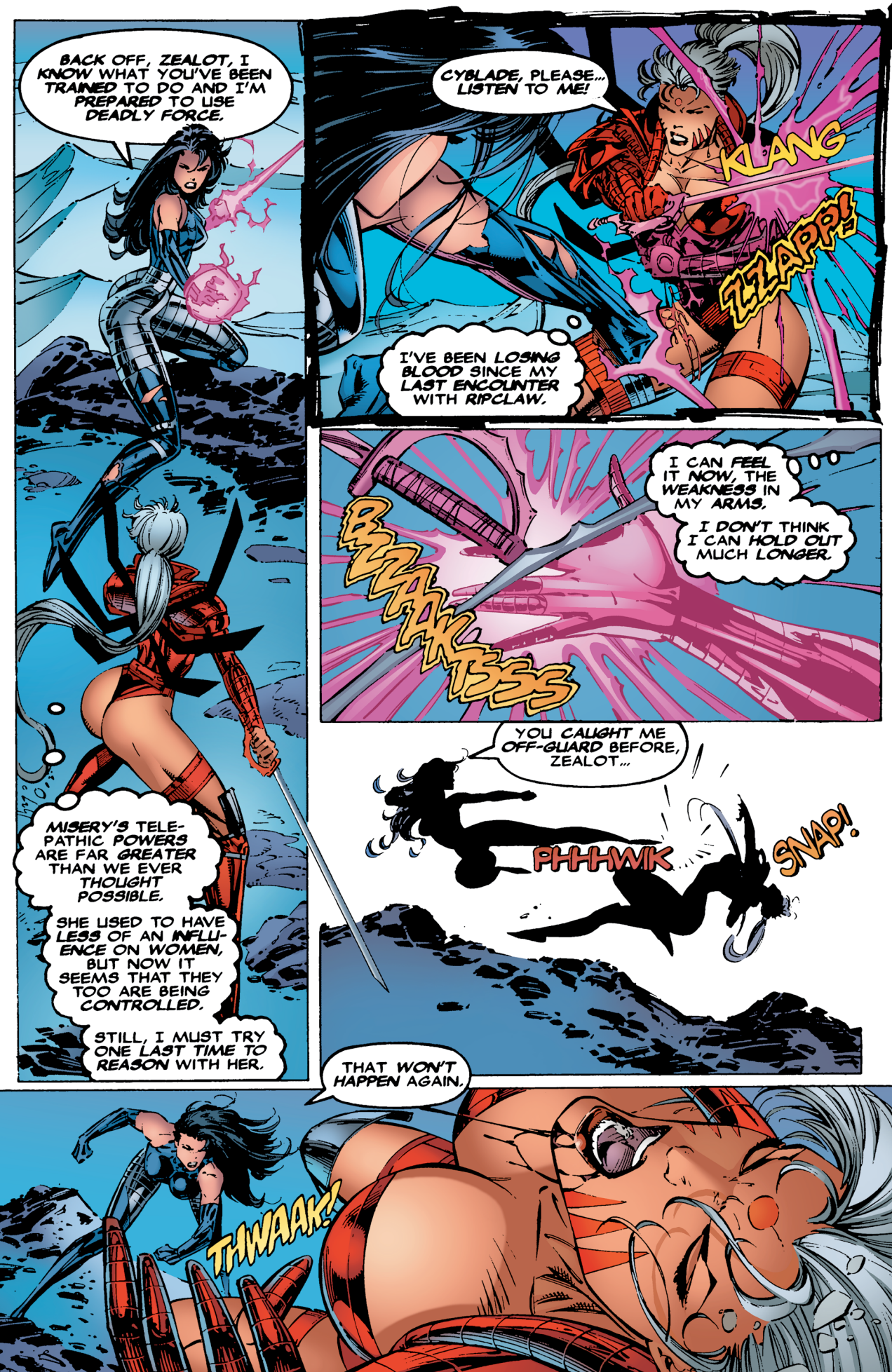
HIGH ATOP THE SNOW-CAPPED PEAKS OF GAMORRA, TWO SUPERBLY-TRAINED, UNIQUELY-TALENTED INDIVIDUALS ARE LOCKED IN MORTAL COMBAT.
THE ONE CALLED HEATWAVE IS A CYBERNETICALLY-ENHANCED MUTANT. THE OTHER, KNOWN AS SPARTAN, IS A BIOSYNTHETIC HUMANOID.
THEY ARE HIGH-TECH SOLDIERS IN A HIGH-TECH WAR...

...A WAR IN WHICH NOTHING IS CERTAIN, NOT EVEN WHO YOUR ENEMIES ARE.
I DON'T LIKE THE GAME PLAN, GRIFTER. THESE CYBERFORCE PUNKS ARE PLAYING FOR KEEPS.
BZZZAAKA-
BOOOM!
PCHOW
PCHOW
PCHOW
I THINK IT'S TIME TO TURN UP THE HEAT, CYBLADE!
YOU GOT IT, STRYKER. AS LONG AS I CAN GET MY HANDS ON ZEALOT--THAT CODA WITCH!
WELL, I SAY WE DO THE BIG GUY FIRST. MAYBE THAT'LL SCARE THE REST OF 'EM OFF.
ALL RIGHT, "STREET FIGHTERS", TIME FOR A LITTLE "RE-DIZZY COMBO".
PTING
PTANG
PCHOW
PCHOW
CH CLIK
HEY! WHERE'D SHE COME FROM?
TH
WHOOP

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN, MALL. I DON'T LIKE GETTING SHOT AT ANY MORE THAN YOU DO. BUT THEY CAN'T HELP THEMSELVES. MISERY'S BEEN MESSIN' WITH THEIR HEADS.
PHAM!
PHAM!
PHAM!
PCHUNK
PCHUNK
KARAAK!
BOOOM!
GOOD WORK, VELOCITY. KEEP HIM BUSY. GIVES ME TIME TO POWER-UP.
I BUILT UP QUITE A CHARGE. HOPE HE'S ALL RIGHT. DON'T WANT TO KILL THE BIG LUG... TOO MUCH!
MEANWHILE, HIGH ABOVE THE FRAY, HEATWAVE GETS AN URGENT CALL FROM A VERY DEVIOUS TELEPATH.
HEATWAVE, COME QUICKLY. SUB-BASEMENT. NEED HELP.
ON MY WAY!

LOWER LEVEL, RICHTOFFEN'S SECRET RESEARCH FACILITY.
BE CAREFUL, ROBERT. RENO'S ANGER FRIGHTENS ME.
THAT'S BECAUSE MY ANGER IS THE ONLY THING THAT KEEPS YOU OUT OF MY HEAD, MISERY. THIS WAY I DON'T TURN INTO ONE OF YOUR LITTLE STUD PUPPETS.
WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH THIS INSOLENT SCUM, LYDIA?
KILL HIM.
YOU TRIED THAT TWICE ALREADY, REMEMBER? ISLE OF THE DEAD, TWO YEARS AGO AND THEN AGAIN THIS MORNING.
I'VE HEARD ENOUGH!
KILL HIM, MY LOVE.

DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME TRYING TO KILL ME, IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK.
YOU AND I ARE A LOT ALIKE IN THAT RESPECT, LYDIA... WE JUST KEEP COMING BACK FOR MORE.
THIS IS YOUR FINAL WARNING, RIPCLAW. STAND ASIDE AND LET ME DO WHAT MUST BE DONE OR PLAY THE FOOL 'TIL YOUR DYING BREATH...
WHAT'S IT GONNA BE?


BACK OFF, ZEALOT, I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TRAINED TO DO AND I'M PREPARED TO USE DEADLY FORCE.
MISERY'S TELEPATHIC POWERS ARE FAR GREATER THAN WE EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.
SHE USED TO HAVE LESS OF AN INFLUENCE ON WOMEN, BUT NOW IT SEEMS THAT THEY TOO ARE BEING CONTROLLED.
STILL, I MUST TRY ONE LAST TIME TO REASON WITH HER.
CYBLADE, PLEASE... LISTEN TO ME!
KLANG
ZZAPP!
I'VE BEEN LOSING BLOOD SINCE MY LAST ENCOUNTER WITH RIPCLAW.
BZZAAKTSSS
I CAN FEEL IT NOW, THE WEAKNESS IN MY ARMS.
I DON'T THINK I CAN HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER.
YOU CAUGHT ME OFF-GUARD BEFORE, ZEALOT...
PHHHWIK
SNAP!
THAT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.
THWAAK!

YES, CYBLADE, TAKE PLEASURE FROM THE PAIN YOU INFLICT...
TH-WAAAK!
THRILL TO THE SIGHT OF BLOOD YOU HAVE DRAWN.
SHE IS ONE OF THEM...CYBERDATA'S DEATH SQUAD--THE S.H.O.C.S.
REMEMBER YOUR BROTHER'S LEGACY, THE SOLEMN VOW YOU MADE...
TO SEEK OUT AND DESTROY THOSE WHO WOULD HARM...
...THE INNOCENTS.
YES, MY CHILD, COME CLOSER, THIS IS YOUR TIME, THE MOMENT OF TRUTH.
YOU MUST TAKE THIS SWORD AND PROVE YOURSELF WORTHY TO THOSE YOU MOST ADMIRE.
ONCE THEY SEE THAT YOU HAVE TAKEN THAT FINAL STEP...
THEY WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE READY...
TO BE ONE OF THE CHOSEN...
...A BRAVE KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR...
...A MEMBER OF CYBERFORCE.

FAR BELOW THE SURFACE OF GAMORRA, TWO SUPERBLY-TRAINED, UNIQUELY-TALENTED INDIVIDUALS ARE LOCKED IN MORTAL COMBAT.
SKRRRIIIP
BUT, UNLIKE HEATWAVE AND SPARTAN, RIPCLAW AND WARBLADE ARE NOT HIGH-TECH SOLDIERS IN A HIGH-TECH WAR.
STRRRR
AAK!
THERE IS NO PLAN OF ATTACK, OR RULES OF ENGAGEMENT. THESE ARE WARRIORS, AND THIS IS PERSONAL.

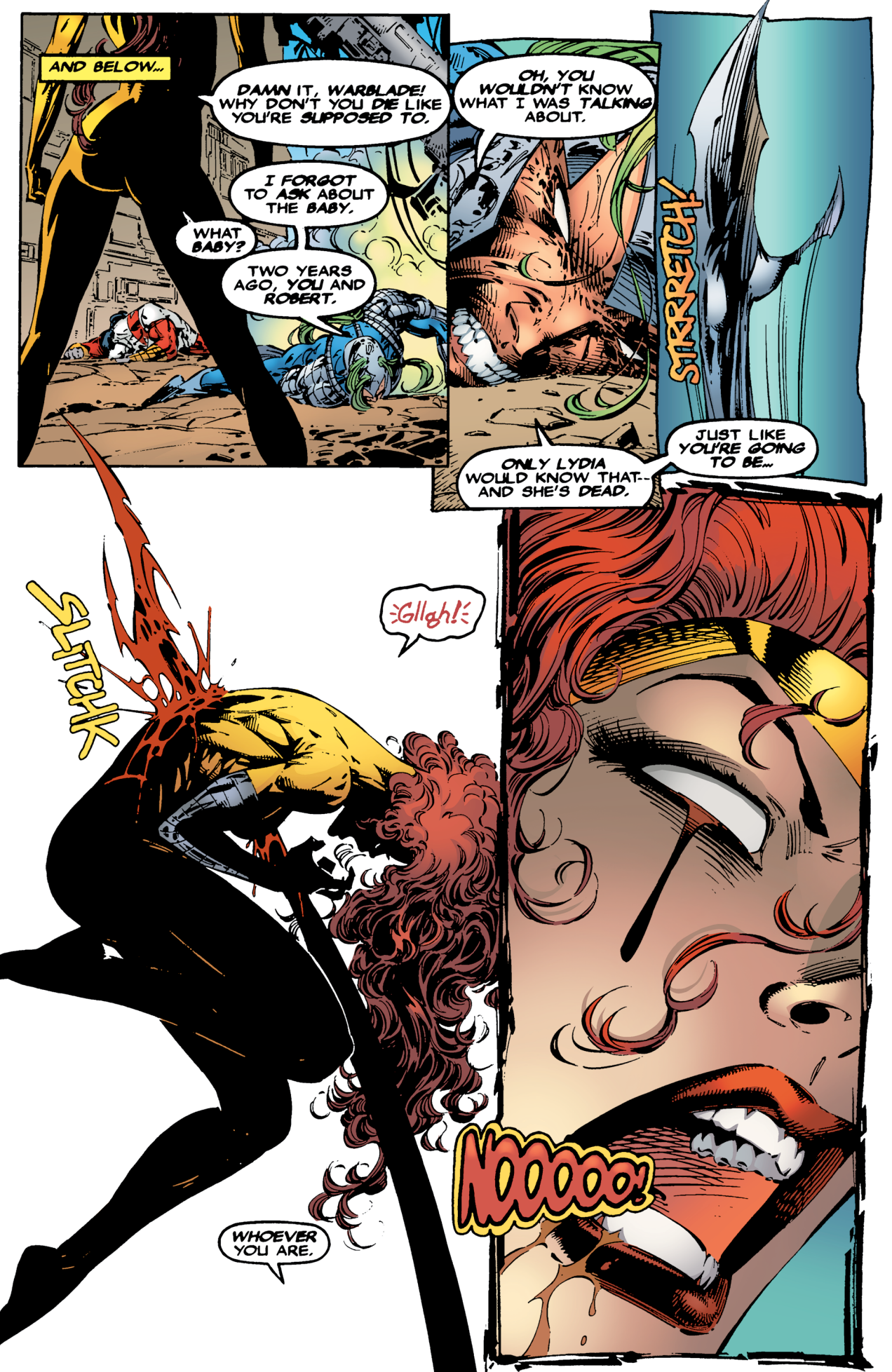
IT'S NOT ABOUT NATIONAL SECURITY OR WORLD DOMINATION.
STRRRETCH!
...GRABS YOU BY THE THROAT AND STARTS SQUEEZING TIGHTER AND TIGHTER 'TIL YOU CAN'T BREATHE ANYMORE.
TU-WHOOP!
ALL THAT DEEP, DARK PSYCHOLOGICAL STUFF...
AND IT HURTS SO BAD ALL YOU CAN THINK ABOUT IS THE PAIN. UNTIL THE FEAR SETS IN, THEN YOU'RE THINKING MAYBE THIS IS IT. MAYBE YOU'RE...
...DYING, I CAN FEEL HIM DYING. WHY SHOULD THAT BOTHER ME? WHAT DO I CARE?
IT'S ABOUT LOVE, HATE, BETRAYAL AND REVENGE.
AFTER ALL, IT'S ONLY RIPCLAW.
AND I'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO THINK ABOUT, LIKE THE CONTENTS OF THIS STASIS POD.
BUT HE REALLY CARES, EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, AND NOT BECAUSE I TOLD HIM TO, EITHER.
I SPENT ENOUGH TIME IN THAT CRAZY INDIAN'S HEAD TO KNOW I USED TO MEAN SOMETHING TO HIM.
MAYBE I SHOULD TRY TO HOLD ONTO THAT.

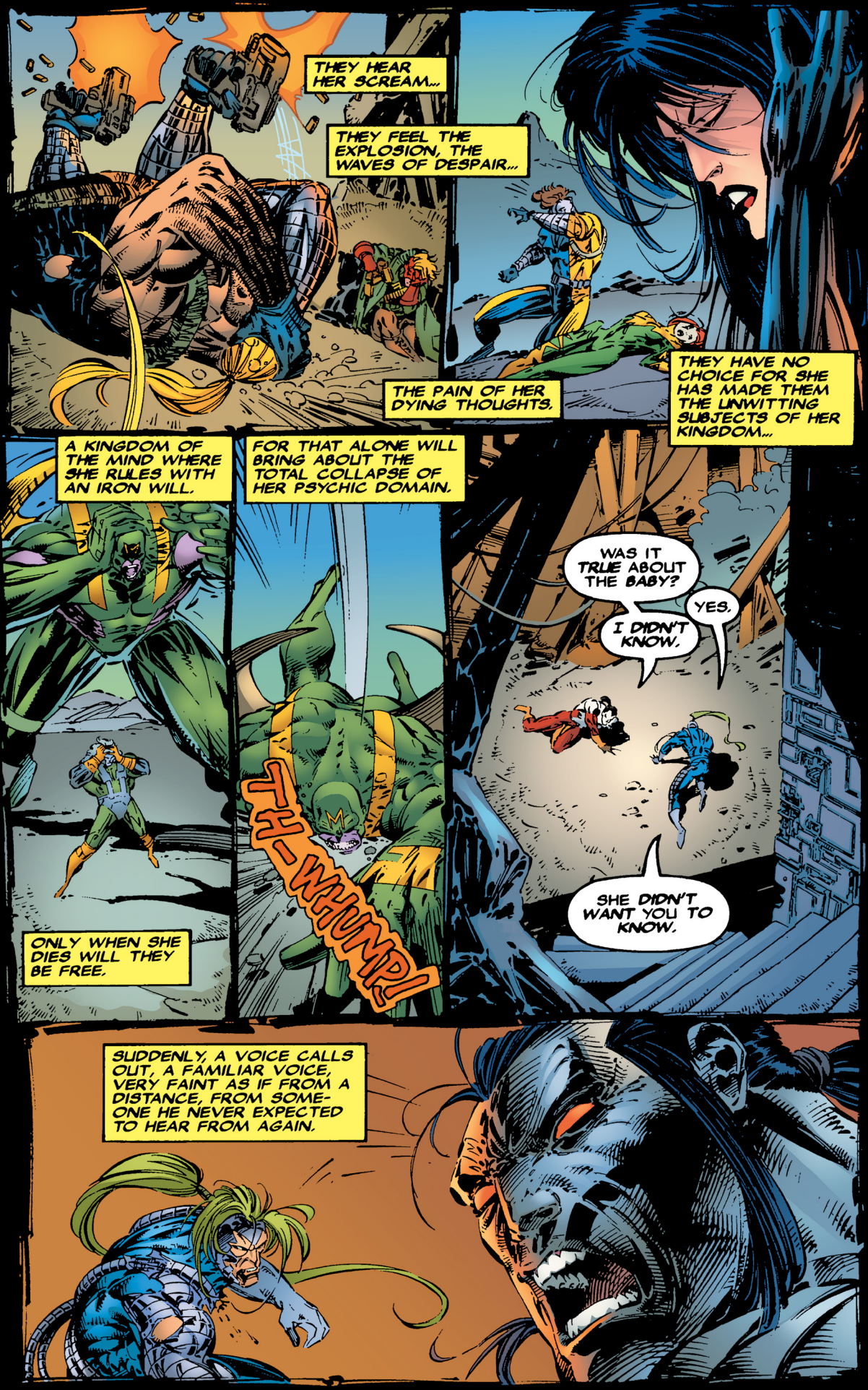
THEN SOMETHING SNAPS. IT WAS SO SUDDEN SHE COULD FEEL IT...
IT'S SO QUIET NOW. LIKE SOMEONE JUST SLAMMED THE DOOR SHUT.
THE ONLY THING OF ANY IMPORTANCE NOW IS DR. RICHTOFFEN...
...AND THE WONDERFUL FUTURE HE HAS PLANNED FOR US.
AND THE NOISE. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NOISE?
THE DOOR TO WHAT? I DON'T REMEMBER. OH WELL, COULDN'T BE VERY IMPORTANT THEN, COULD IT? OF COURSE NOT.
TOO BAD, YOU HAD TO GET IN THE WAY.
I HATE IT WHEN THAT HAPPENS.
IT MAKES ME CRY.
AND YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CRY.
BZZKT
THERE, THAT'S BETTER. GOOD TO LET IT OUT ONCE IN A WHILE.
OH, BY THE WAY, THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HELP. I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU.

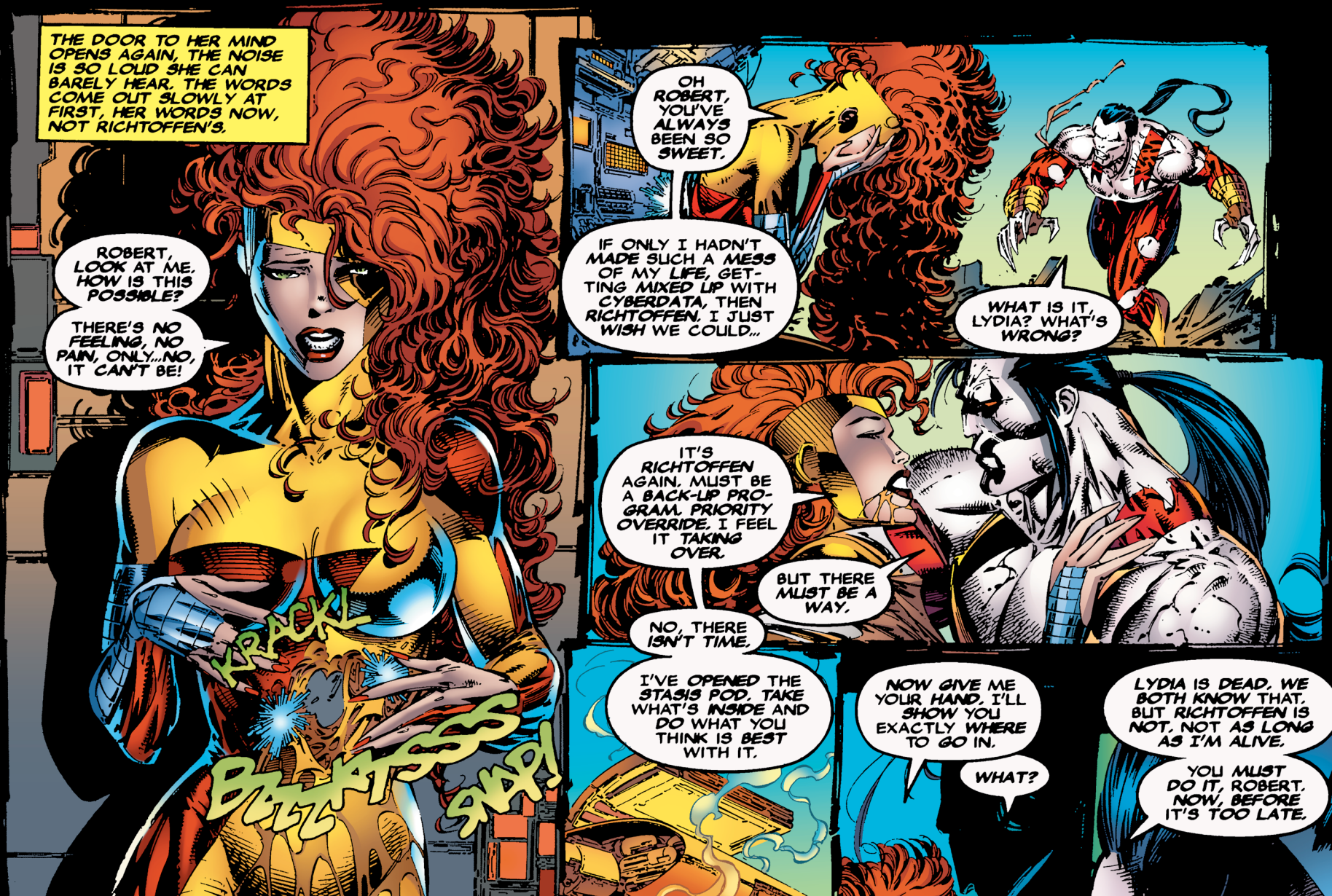
IN THE TERMS OF FIRE-POWER, HEATWAVE IS THE MOST POWERFUL MEMBER OF CYBERFORCE.
THE GENETIC ABNORMALITY WHICH ENABLES HIM TO ABSORB AND RETAIN AMBIENT SOLAR ENERGY...
COUPLED WITH CYBER-NETIC ENHANCEMENTS DESIGNED TO REGULATE THAT ENERGY...
BZZAKA
PROVIDE HIM WITH A WEAPON OF AWESOME DESTRUCTIVE CAPABIL-ITIES.
SO MUCH SO, IN FACT, THAT HE RARELY EVER USES IT IN CQB* SITUATIONS.
WAAK
AND IF SHE HADN'T JUST CALLED WITH AN URGENT PLEA FOR HELP...
BECAUSE SUPER-HEATED PLASMA AT POINT BLANK RANGE IS ALMOST ALWAYS LETHAL...
WHOOMP!
BZZAKA
SPLAK!
HE NEVER WOULD HAVE DONE WHAT HE'S ABOUT TO DO...
EVEN TO A BIOSYNTHETIC HUMANOID.
*CLOSE QUARTERS BATTLE.

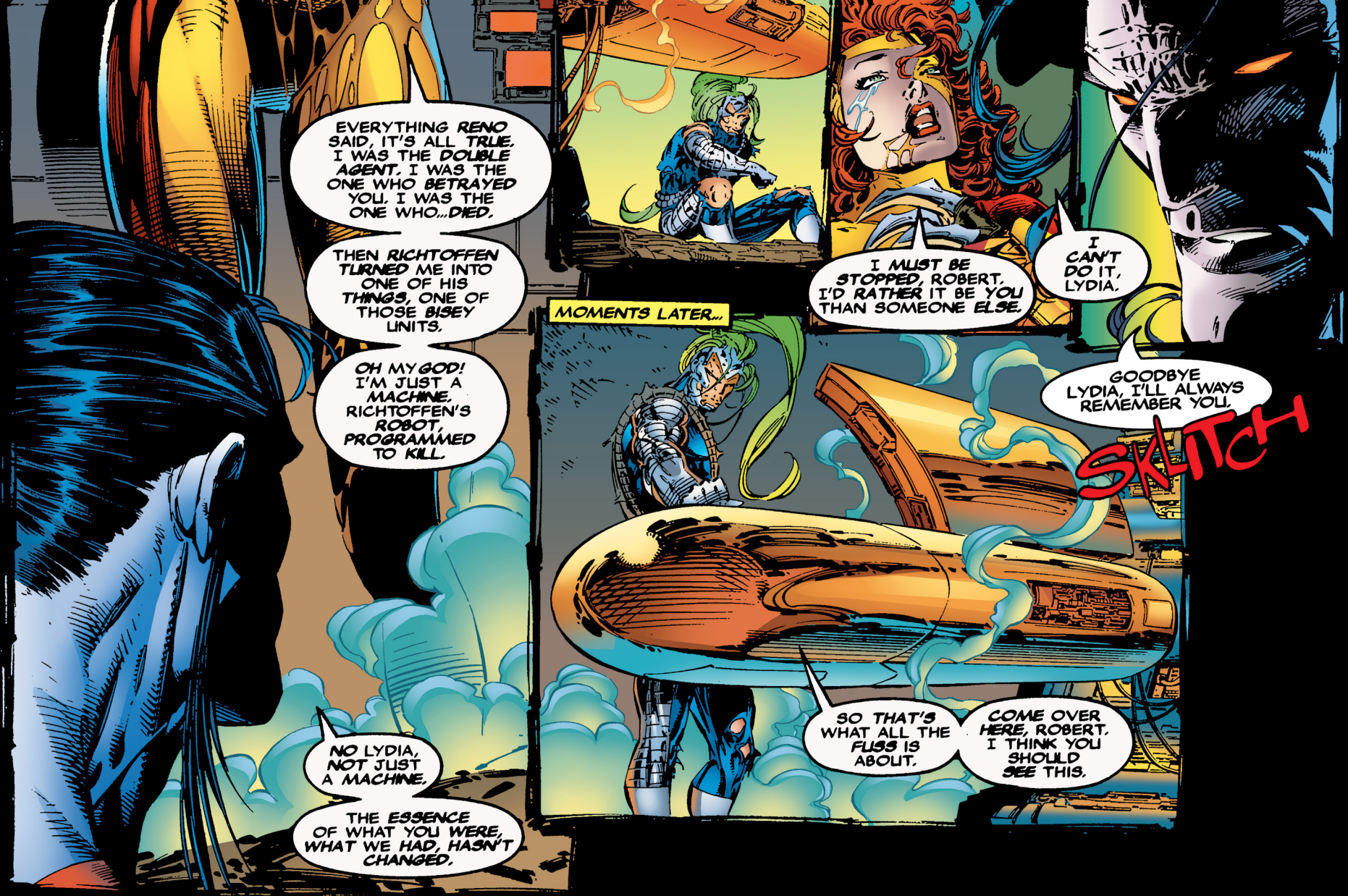
MEANWHILE, AS GROUND FIGHTING CONTINUES...
PCHOW
PCHUNK
ZEALOT'S IN TROUBLE. I'VE GOT TO GET OVER THERE.
JUST NEED TO MAKE SURE I DON'T GET BLOWN AWAY BY A CERTAIN FOUR-ARMED FIRING SQUAD.
IT STILL DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT, BUT IT'S SOMETHING I MUST DO. THEY'RE WAITING TO SEE IF I'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES.
I JUST WISH CASSIE WERE HERE. SHE'D BE SO PROUD OF ME.
ELSEWHERE...
...BUT YOU'RE STUPID. YOU DON'T KNOW WHEN TO STOP.
YOU'RE TOUGH, WARBLADE. I'LL GIVE YOU THAT MUCH...
YOU DON'T THINK THAT SILLY LITTLE SYNAPTIC OVERLOAD TRICK IS GONNA STOP ME, DO YOU? AFTER WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH!
YOU STILL DON'T GET IT, DO YOU? THE KIND OF POWER YOU'RE DEALING WITH.
YOU KNOW HOW HARD IT IS KEEPING ALL YOU ARROGANT IDIOTS UNDER CONTROL? NO, OF COURSE NOT.
BECAUSE YOU NEED TO BE TAUGHT FIRST.
SO HERE IT IS, RENO HONEY. ALL THE POWER I'VE GOT, JUST FOR YOU.

FOCUSING HER PSYCHIC POWER ON WARBLADE, MISERY RELEASES THE MEMBERS OF CYBERFORCE FROM THEIR TELEPATHIC PRISONS.
*BIOSYNTHETIC ENTITY.
STRANGE, I FEEL LIKE I JUST WOKE UP.
I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT MISERY WANTED ME TO DO. SOMETHING ABOUT KEEPING RICHTOFFEN'S BISEY* SYSTEM FROM...
WAIT A MINUTE. WHY WOULD THE WILDCATS BE WORKING FOR CYBERDATA?
AND WHY IS... GOOD GOD! IT CAN'T BE...
STOP!
VELOCITY! WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
BZZ-ZAK-A
ZZZKT KLANG!
WHA...?
THAT TELEPATHIC WITCH! I KNEW SHE COULDN'T BE TRUSTED.
W--WHAT HAVE I DONE?


AND BELOW...
DAMN IT, WARBLADE! WHY DON'T YOU DIE LIKE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO.
I FORGOT TO ASK ABOUT THE BABY.
WHAT BABY?
TWO YEARS AGO, YOU AND ROBERT.
OH, YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT.
STRRRETCH!
JUST LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO BE...
ONLY LYDIA WOULD KNOW THAT-- AND SHE'S DEAD.
SLTCHK
Gllgh!
NOOOOO!
WHOEVER YOU ARE.


THEY HEAR HER SCREAM...
THEY FEEL THE EXPLOSION, THE WAVES OF DESPAIR...
THE PAIN OF HER DYING THOUGHTS,
THEY HAVE NO CHOICE FOR SHE HAS MADE THEM THE UNWITTING SUBJECTS OF HER KINGDOM...
A KINGDOM OF THE MIND WHERE SHE RULES WITH AN IRON WILL.
FOR THAT ALONE WILL BRING ABOUT THE TOTAL COLLAPSE OF HER PSYCHIC DOMAIN.
WAS IT TRUE ABOUT THE BABY?
YES.
I DIDN'T KNOW.
SHE DIDN'T WANT YOU TO KNOW.
TH-WHUMP!
ONLY WHEN SHE DIES WILL THEY BE FREE.
SUDDENLY, A VOICE CALLS OUT, A FAMILIAR VOICE, VERY FAINT AS IF FROM A DISTANCE, FROM SOMEONE HE NEVER EXPECTED TO HEAR FROM AGAIN.

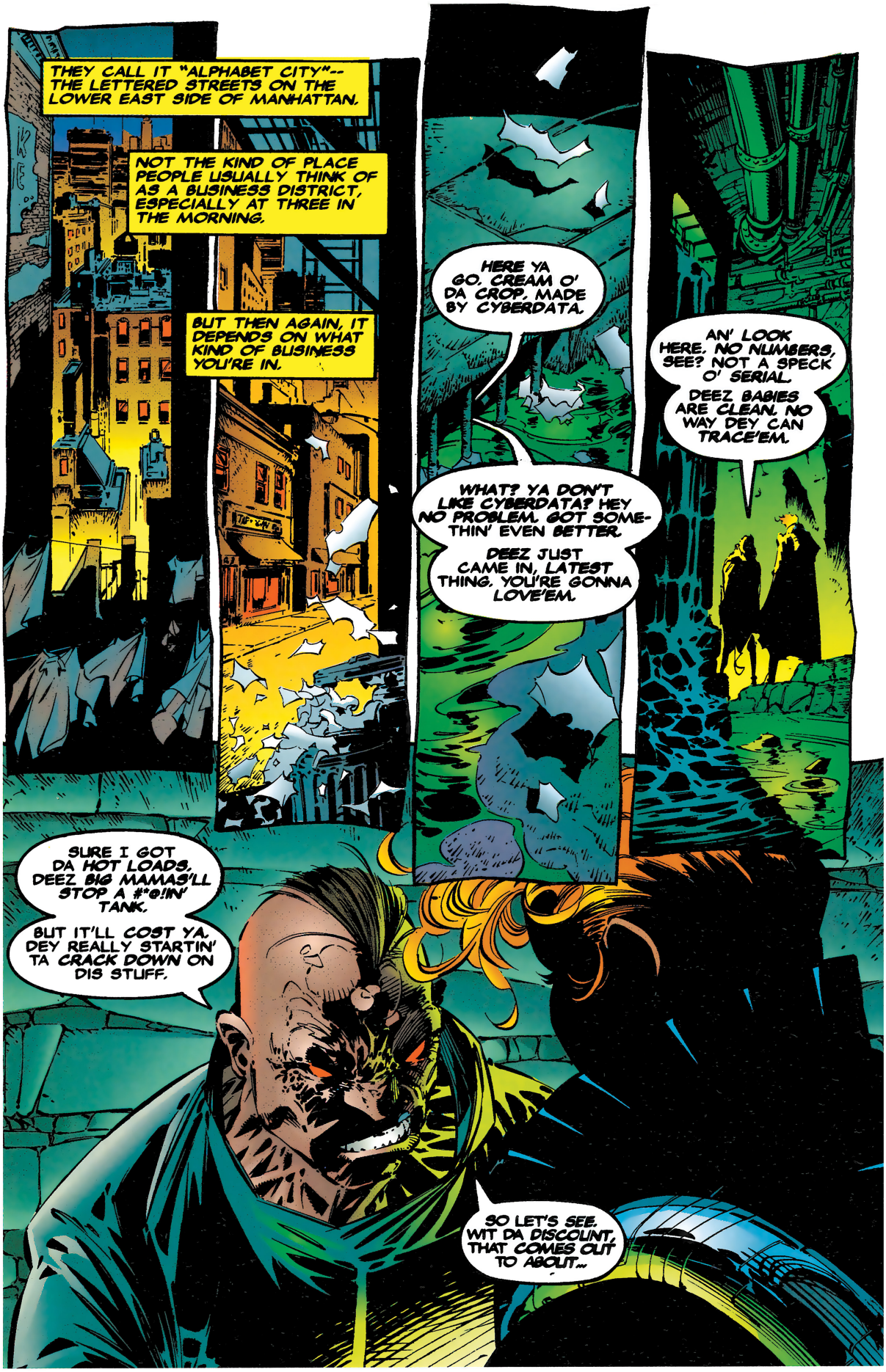

THE DOOR TO HER MIND OPENS AGAIN, THE NOISE IS SO LOUD SHE CAN BARELY HEAR. THE WORDS COME OUT SLOWLY AT FIRST, HER WORDS NOW, NOT RICHTOFFEN'S.
ROBERT, LOOK AT ME. HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE?
THERE'S NO FEELING, NO PAIN, ONLY...NO, IT CAN'T BE!
KRACK!
BLLLKTSSS
SNAP!
OH ROBERT, YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO SWEET.
IF ONLY I HADN'T MADE SUCH A MESS OF MY LIFE, GETTING MIXED UP WITH CYBERDATA, THEN RICHTOFFEN. I JUST WISH WE COULD...
WHAT IS IT, LYDIA? WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S RICHTOFFEN AGAIN. MUST BE A BACK-UP PROGRAM. PRIORITY OVERRIDE. I FEEL IT TAKING OVER.
BUT THERE MUST BE A WAY.
NO, THERE ISN'T TIME.
I'VE OPENED THE STASIS POD. TAKE WHAT'S INSIDE AND DO WHAT YOU THINK IS BEST WITH IT.
NOW GIVE ME YOUR HAND. I'LL SHOW YOU EXACTLY WHERE TO GO IN.
WHAT?
LYDIA IS DEAD. WE BOTH KNOW THAT. BUT RICHTOFFEN IS NOT. NOT AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE.
YOU MUST DO IT, ROBERT. NOW, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.


EVERYTHING RENO SAID, IT'S ALL TRUE. I WAS THE DOUBLE AGENT. I WAS THE ONE WHO BETRAYED YOU. I WAS THE ONE WHO...DIED.
THEN RICHTOFFEN TURNED ME INTO ONE OF HIS THINGS, ONE OF THOSE BISEY UNITS.
OH MY GOD! I'M JUST A MACHINE. RICHTOFFEN'S ROBOT, PROGRAMMED TO KILL.
NO LYDIA, NOT JUST A MACHINE.
THE ESSENCE OF WHAT YOU WERE, WHAT WE HAD, HASN'T CHANGED.
I MUST BE STOPPED, ROBERT. I'D RATHER IT BE YOU THAN SOMEONE ELSE.
I CAN'T DO IT, LYDIA.
MOMENTS LATER...
GOODBYE LYDIA, I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU.
SKLTCH
SO THAT'S WHAT ALL THE FUSS IS ABOUT.
COME OVER HERE, ROBERT. I THINK YOU SHOULD SEE THIS.

WHAT, OR SHOULD I SAY, WHO IS IT?
IT'S PART OF THE COS*7 BISEY** PROTOTYPE THAT WAS TORN OFF BY A CODA.
THE GUY IT BELONGED TO IS PROBABLY UPSTAIRS RIGHT NOW. GOES BY THE NAME OF SPARTAN.
SO MISERY WAS GOING TO USE THIS TO BRING RICHTOFFEN BACK TO LIFE,
YEAH, GOOD THING WE WERE HERE TO STOP HER, TOO.
THAT GUY WOULD HAVE HAD THESE THINGS TAKING OVER THE WORLD.
*CYBERNETIC OPERATIONS SYSTEM
**BIOSYNTHETIC ENTITY
MOMENTS LATER, RIPCLAW AND WARBLADE REJOIN THEIR COMRADES, ONE OF WHOM SEEMS TO HARBOR SOME RESIDUAL HOSTILITY.
DON'T GIVE ME THAT FORGIVE AND FORGET CRAP, GRIFTER.
THAT TWO-BIT CYBERPUNK TRIED TO KILL ME. AND WHAT ABOUT FOUR-ARMS OVER THERE? 'BOUT BLEW YOUR DAMN HEAD OFF.
LIKE I KEEP TRYING TO TELL YOU, MAUL, THEY DIDN'T MEAN IT, OK?
IT'S ALL MISERY'S FAULT. TELEPATHIC MANIPULATION, KIND OF LIKE THE REMOTE CONTROL FOR YOUR T.V.
NOW, IF YOU'LL JUST CONCENTRATE ON GETTING SMALL, THIS WILL ALL START MAKING A LOT MORE SENSE.

AFTER APOLOGIES ARE OFFERED AND ACCEPTED BY EVERYONE, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF MAUL, TWO OF THE MOST UNIQUE COMBAT UNITS IN THE WORLD, PREPARE TO PART COMPANY.
WELL MR. STRYKER, I HOPE IF WE EVER MEET AGAIN, IT WILL BE ON SLIGHTLY FRIENDLIER TERMS.
I'M VERY MUCH IMPRESSED BY YOUR SURGICAL TECHNIQUE, CYBLADE.
WELL THANK YOU, ZEALOT. I ACTUALLY SPENT TWO YEARS IN MEDICAL SCHOOL BEFORE THE A...ACCIDENT THAT CHANGED MY LIFE AND CAUSED ME TO PURSUE A COURSE THAT EVENTUALLY LED TO CYBERFORCE.

YOU CAN COUNT ON IT, SPARTAN.
AND, BY THE WAY, I WOULD DEFINITELY TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT REATTACHING THAT OTHER ARM OF YOURS.
TAKE IT FROM ME, IT NEVER HURTS TO HAVE A SPARE.
THEY WERE BROUGHT HERE TO DESTROY EACH OTHER. THEY LEAVE KNOWING THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN, FOR THEY SHARE A COMMON GOAL: TO RID THE WORLD OF TYRANTS.
PEOPLE LIKE RICHTOFFEN, HELSPONT AND ZADROK WHO WOULD USE OTHERS AS PLAY-THINGS IN A DEADLY GAME, THE WAY THEY WERE USED, THE WAY SHE WAS USED.
SO, WHADAYA SAY, VELOCITY, WANNA HANG OUT WITH LIS FOR A WHILE?
VOID'LL BE HERE PRETTY SOON. SHE CAN TAKE YOU ANYWHERE YOU WANNA GO.
YES, THEY WILL MOST LIKELY MEET AGAIN, THESE HIGH-TECH SOLDIERS IN A HIGH-TECH WAR, A WAR IN WHICH NOTHING IS CERTAIN, ESPECIALLY...THE OUTCOME.


THEY CALL IT "ALPHABET CITY"-- THE LETTERED STREETS ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE OF MANHATTAN.
NOT THE KIND OF PLACE PEOPLE USUALLY THINK OF AS A BUSINESS DISTRICT, ESPECIALLY AT THREE IN THE MORNING.
BUT THEN AGAIN, IT DEPENDS ON WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS YOU'RE IN.
HERE YA GO. CREAM O' DA CROP, MADE BY CYBERDATA.
AN' LOOK HERE. NO NUMBERS, SEE? NOT A SPECK O' SERIAL.
DEEZ BABIES ARE CLEAN. NO WAY DEY CAN TRACE'EM.
WHAT? YA DON'T LIKE CYBERDATA? HEY NO PROBLEM. GOT SOMETHIN' EVEN BETTER.
DEEZ JUST CAME IN, LATEST THING. YOU'RE GONNA LOVE'EM.
SURE I GOT DA HOT LOADS, DEEZ BIG MAMAS'LL STOP A #*@!N' TANK.
BUT IT'LL COST YA. DEY REALLY STARTIN' TA CRACK DOWN ON DIS STUFF.
SO LET'S SEE. WIT DA DISCOUNT, THAT COMES OUT TO ABOUT...

JUST PUT IT ON MY TAB.
SURE THING, BALLISTIC, WHATEVER YA SAY.
NEXT-- ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WOMAN.