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DRAT TICUS



ORIGINS: CHAPTER THREE



DRATTICUS

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OUR **TARGET** IS A THIRTY-FOUR YEAR OLD MALE, MEDIUM BUILD, DARK HAIR.

DR JAMES ATTICUS, RECENTLY A PARTICIPANT IN THE XETACEL GENE PROGRAM.

IN THE LAST 48 HOURS HE'S **ASSAULTED** THREE NU-GENX STAFFERS AND **STOLE** A DARK GREY SPORTS CAR FROM A PATIENT LIAISON.

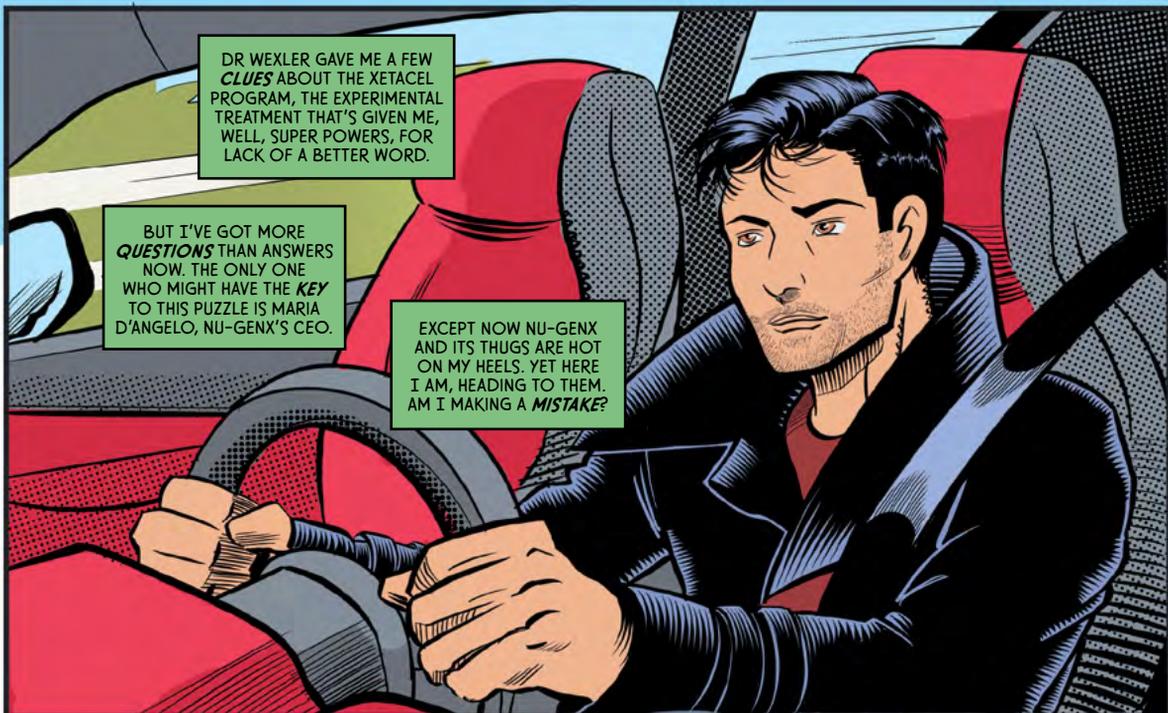
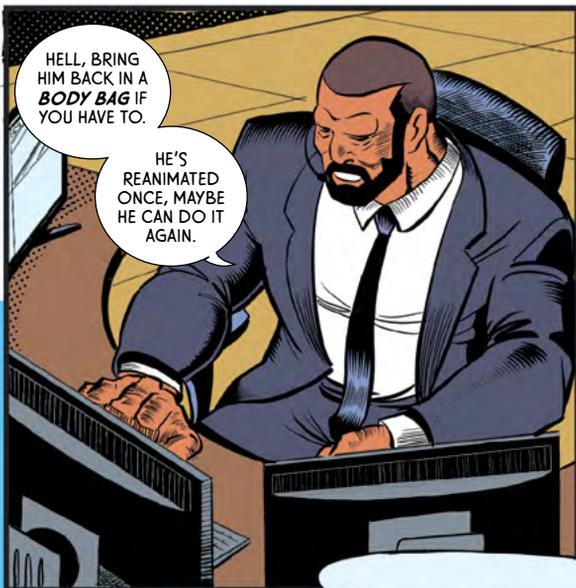
LICENCE PLATES QFK-866. TAGGED ON SPEED CAMERA TEN MINUTES AGO.

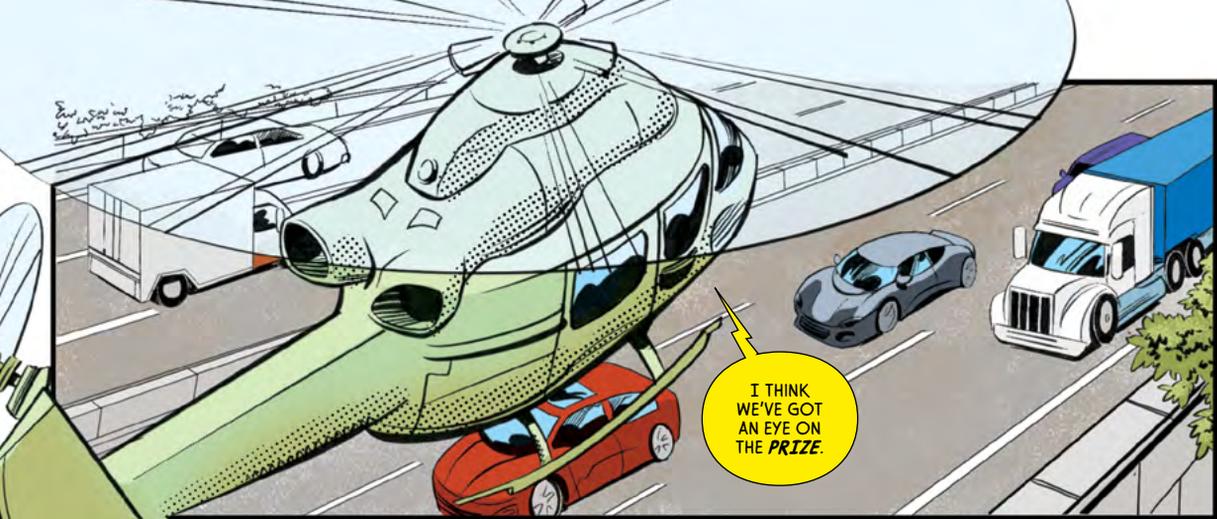
THE CAR IS CONFIRMED TO BE HEADING **EAST** ON M5 TOWARDS SYDNEY AIRPORT.

OUR TARGET IS IN POSSESSION OF **TOP-SECRET** NU-GENX I.P. AND IS **FLEEING** AUTHORITIES.

CONSIDERED **ARMED** AND EXTREMELY **DANGEROUS**.

DIRECTIVE: ACQUIRE TARGET AND SECURE THE I.P. BY **ANY** MEANS NECESSARY.





I THINK WE'VE GOT AN EYE ON THE PRIZE.



PLATES MATCH.



BULLFROG, CAN YOU CONFIRM THE TARGET?



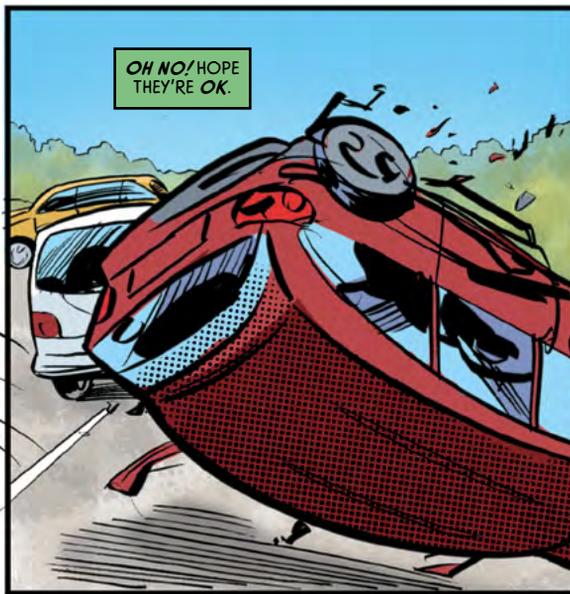
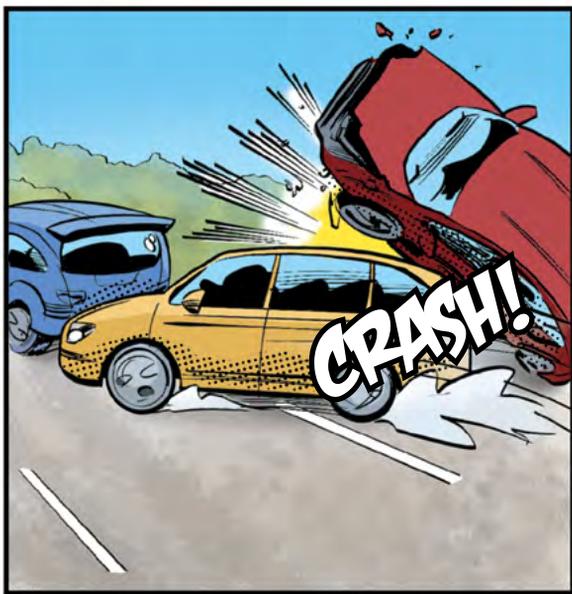
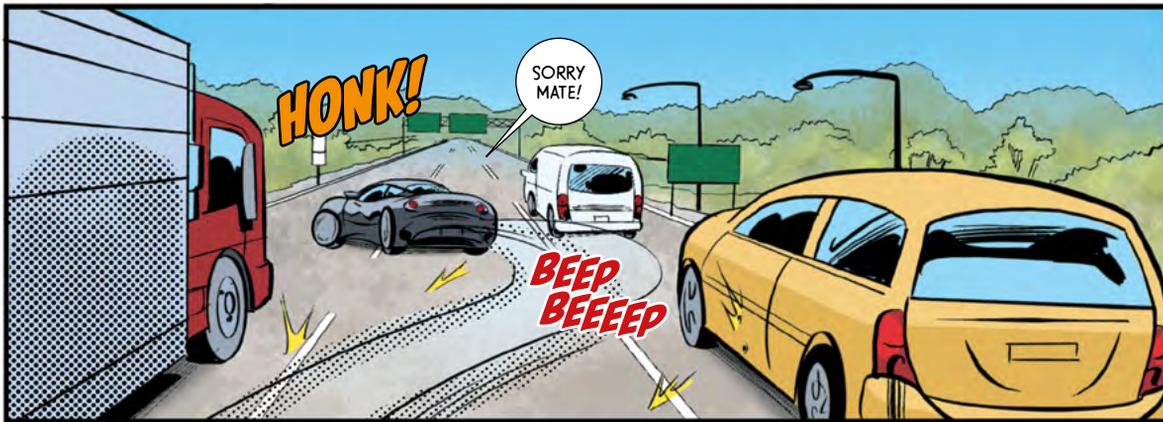
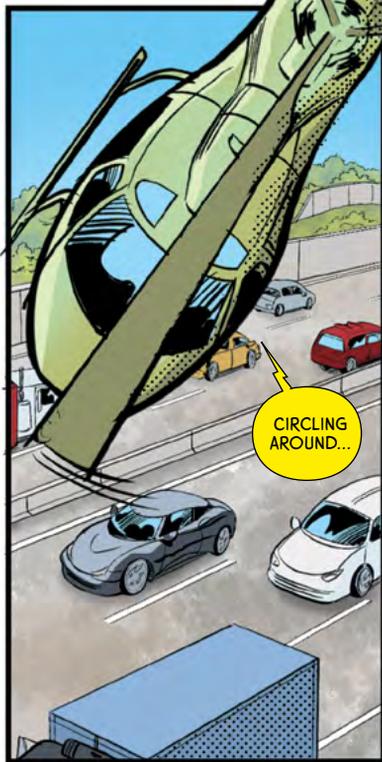
THAT'S HIM. BLACKBIRD YOU ARE CLEAR TO PROCEED.

COPY THAT.



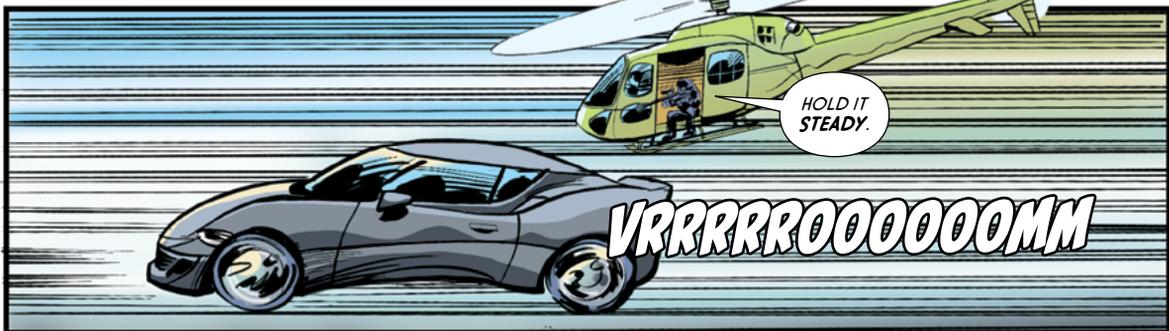
STRANGE... THAT HELICOPTER JUST HOVERING THERE...SO LOW.







I'M GOING TO MOVE UP **BESIDE** HIM -- GET YOU CLOSER.



HOLD IT **STEADY.**

VRRRRRROOOOOOMM

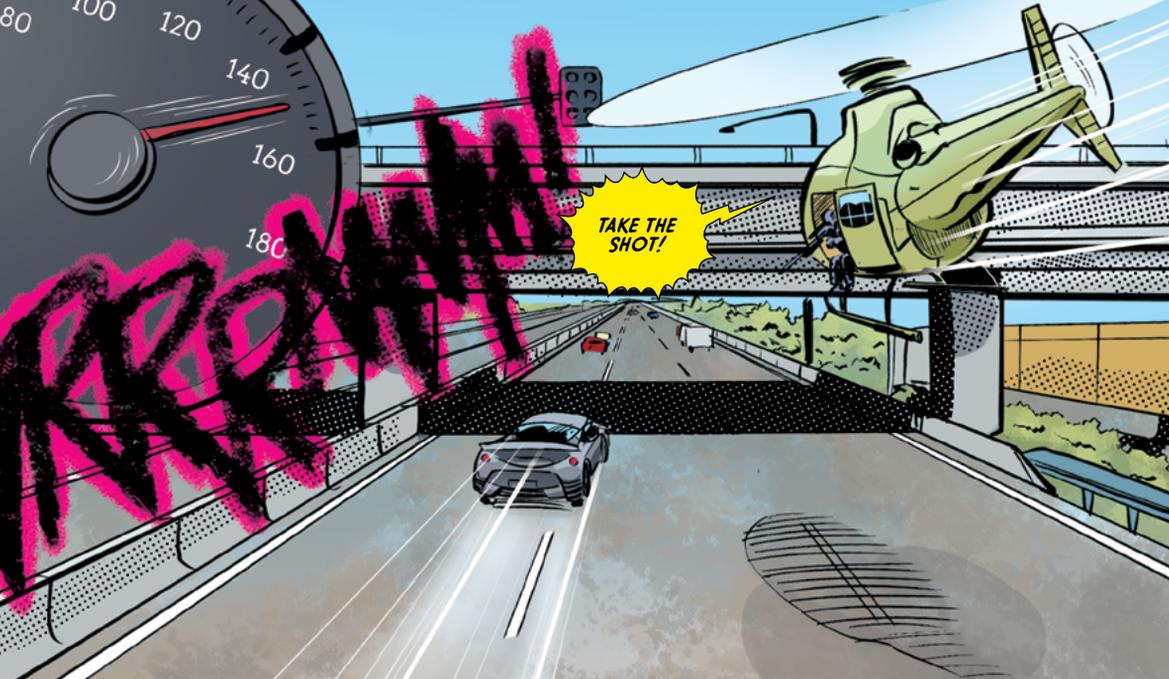


TAKE THE SHOT **NOW!**

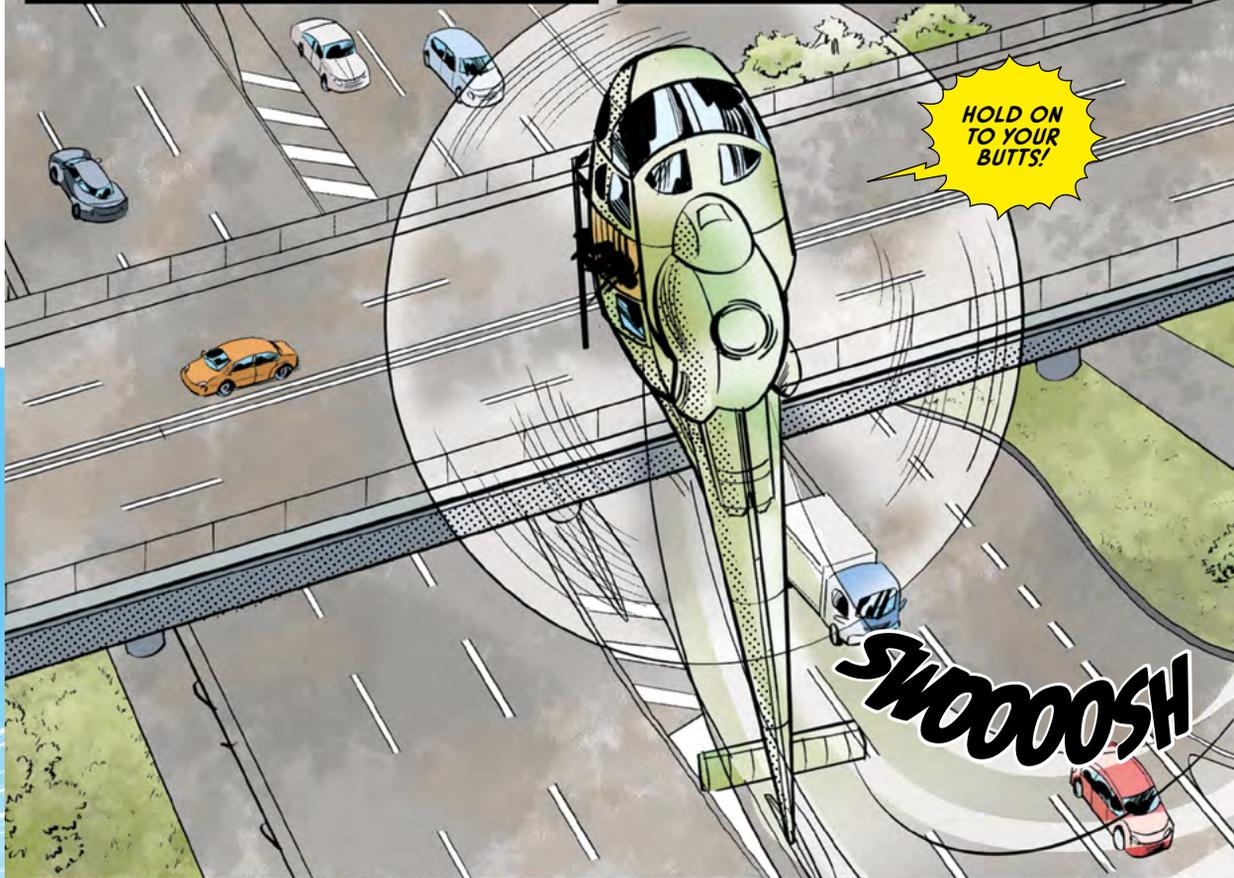
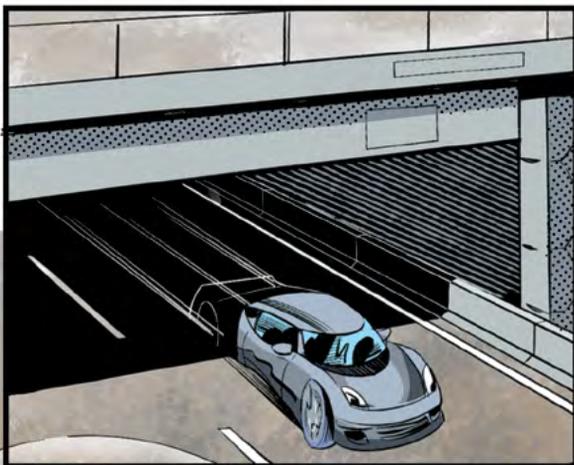
STEADY...

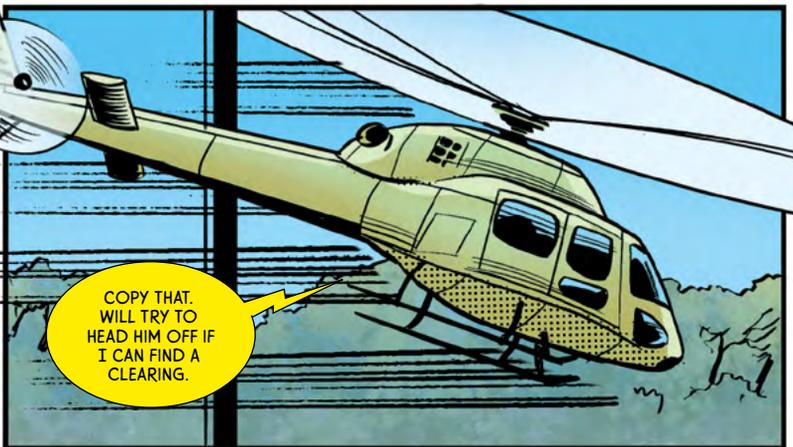
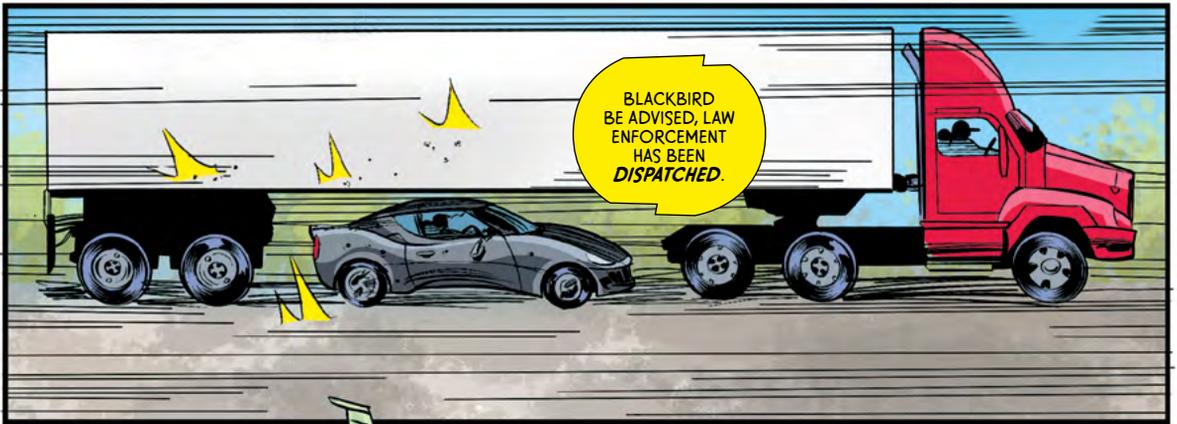
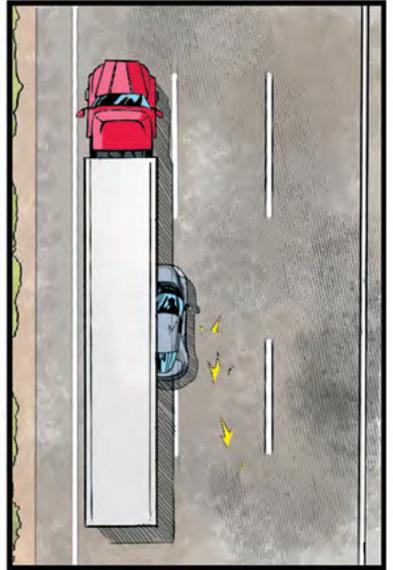
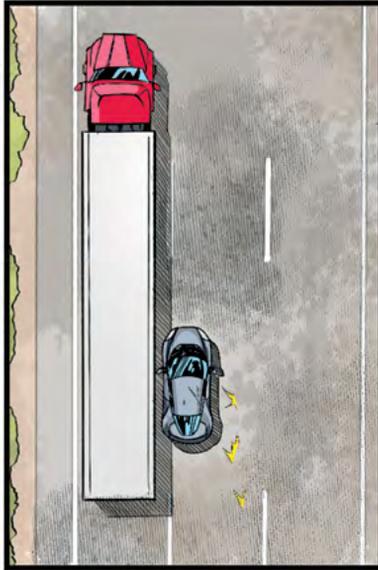
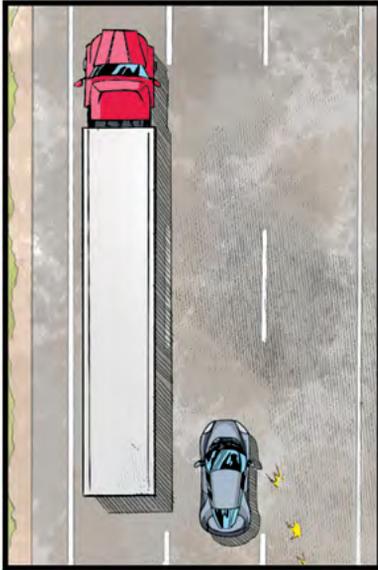


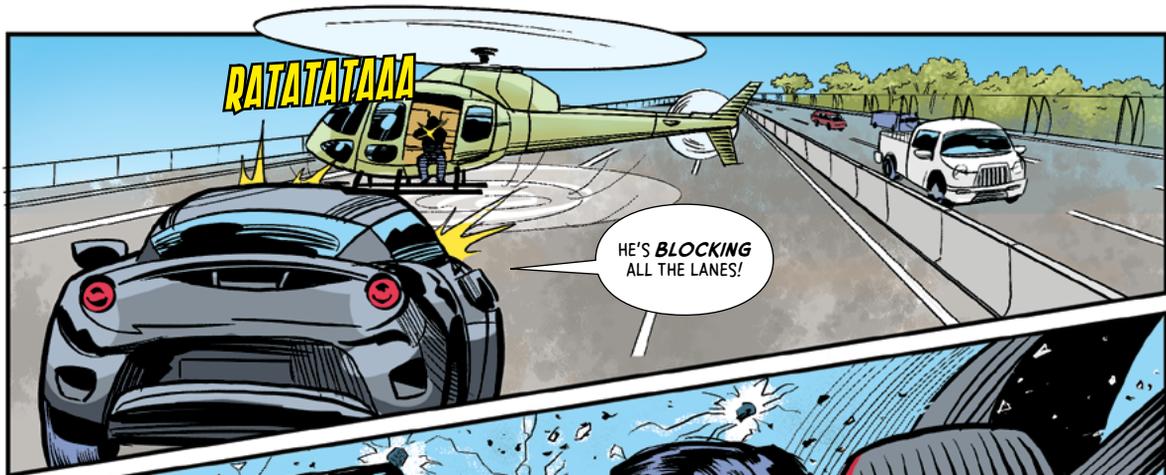
IF I **FLOOR** IT, I MIGHT JUST MAKE IT.



TAKE THE **SHOT!**

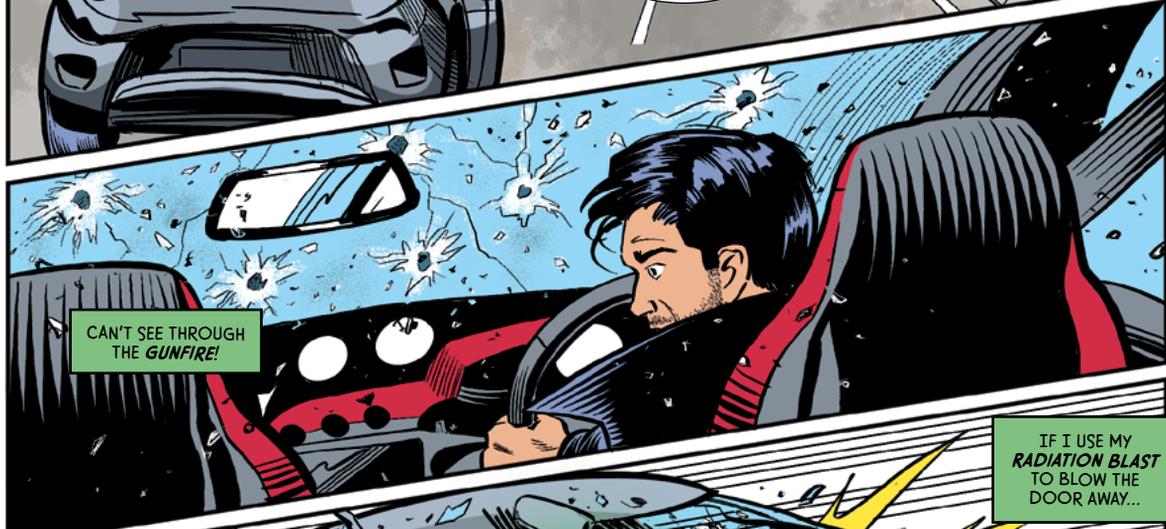






RATATATAAA

HE'S **BLOCKING** ALL THE LANES!



CAN'T SEE THROUGH THE **GUNFIRE!**

IF I USE MY **RADIATION BLAST** TO BLOW THE DOOR AWAY...

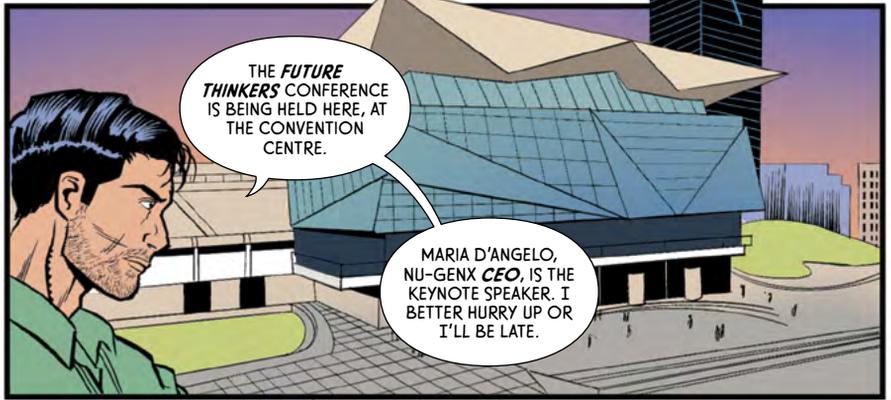


I CAN MAKE A **LEAP** FOR IT!

BOOM!



SOME TIME LATER...



THE **FUTURE THINKERS** CONFERENCE IS BEING HELD HERE, AT THE CONVENTION CENTRE.

MARIA D'ANGELO, NU-GENX **CEO**, IS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER. I BETTER HURRY UP OR I'LL BE LATE.



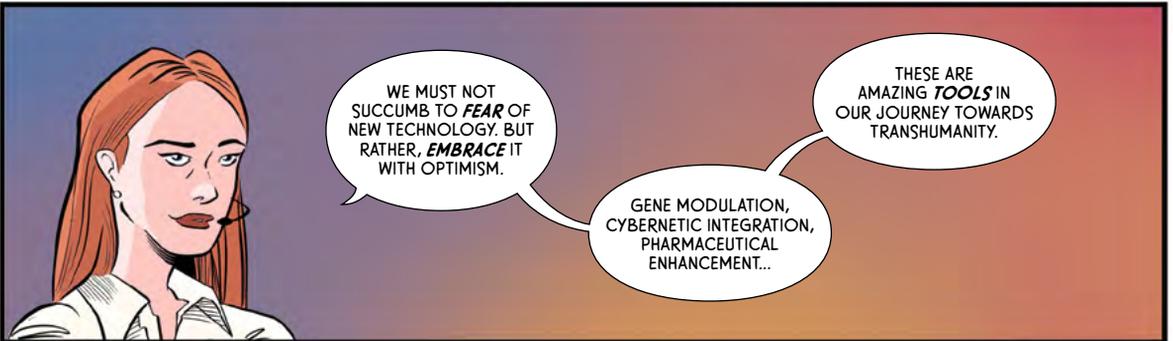
OW. **EVERYTHING** HURTS. IF I SIT DOWN, I MIGHT NEVER GET UP AGAIN.

...GIVING STUDENTS THE TOOLS THEY WILL NEED TO MAKE THE DISCOVERIES OF THE FUTURE.



AND INDEED, THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY IS TRANS-HUMAN, **BEYOND** HUMAN.

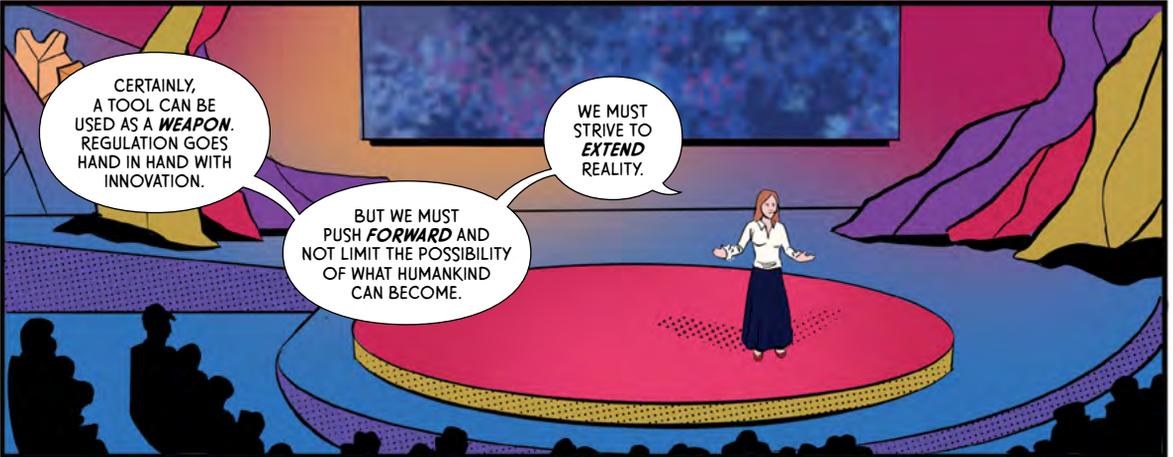
A SYMBIOSIS OF **BIOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY**.



WE MUST NOT SUCCUMB TO **FEAR** OF NEW TECHNOLOGY. BUT RATHER, **EMBRACE** IT WITH OPTIMISM.

THESE ARE AMAZING **TOOLS** IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS TRANSHUMANITY.

GENE MODULATION, CYBERNETIC INTEGRATION, PHARMACEUTICAL ENHANCEMENT...

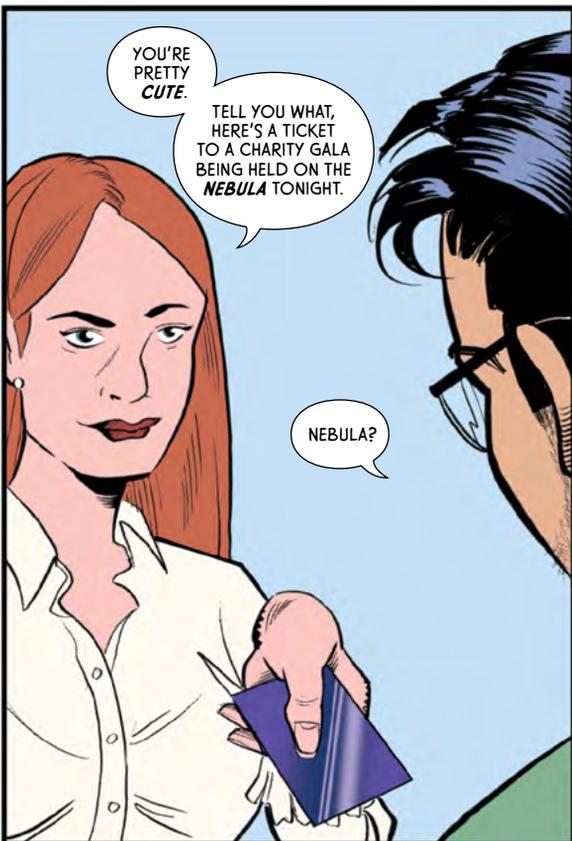


CERTAINLY, A TOOL CAN BE USED AS A **WEAPON**. REGULATION GOES HAND IN HAND WITH INNOVATION.

BUT WE MUST PUSH **FORWARD** AND NOT LIMIT THE POSSIBILITY OF WHAT HUMANKIND CAN BECOME.

WE MUST STRIVE TO **EXTEND** REALITY.

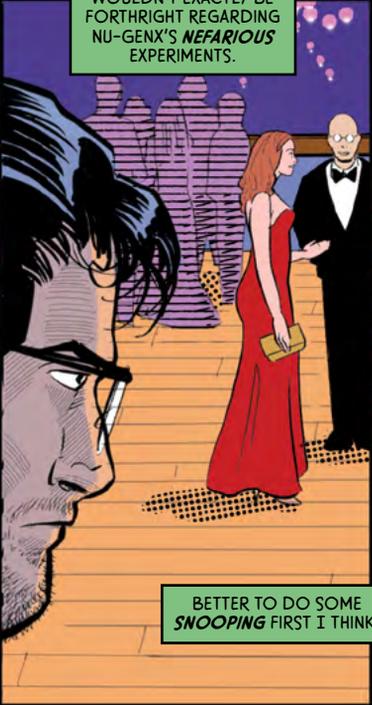




THE NEBULA.

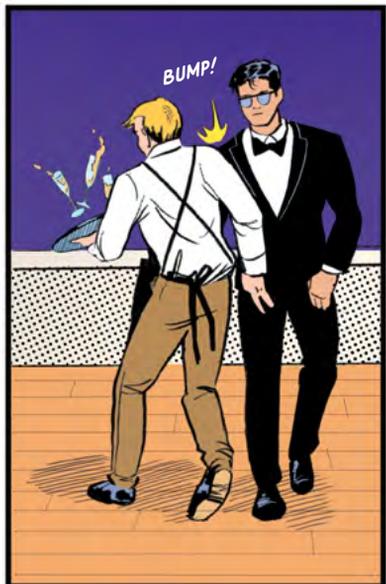


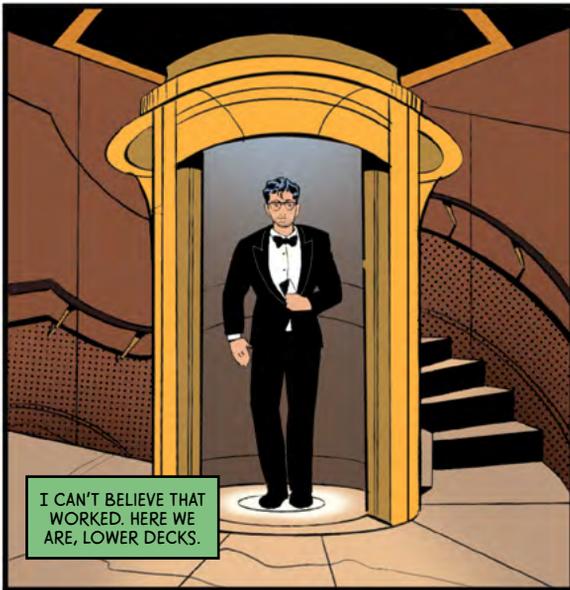
I'D LOVE TO PICK D'ANGELO'S BRAINS ABOUT *XETACEL*.

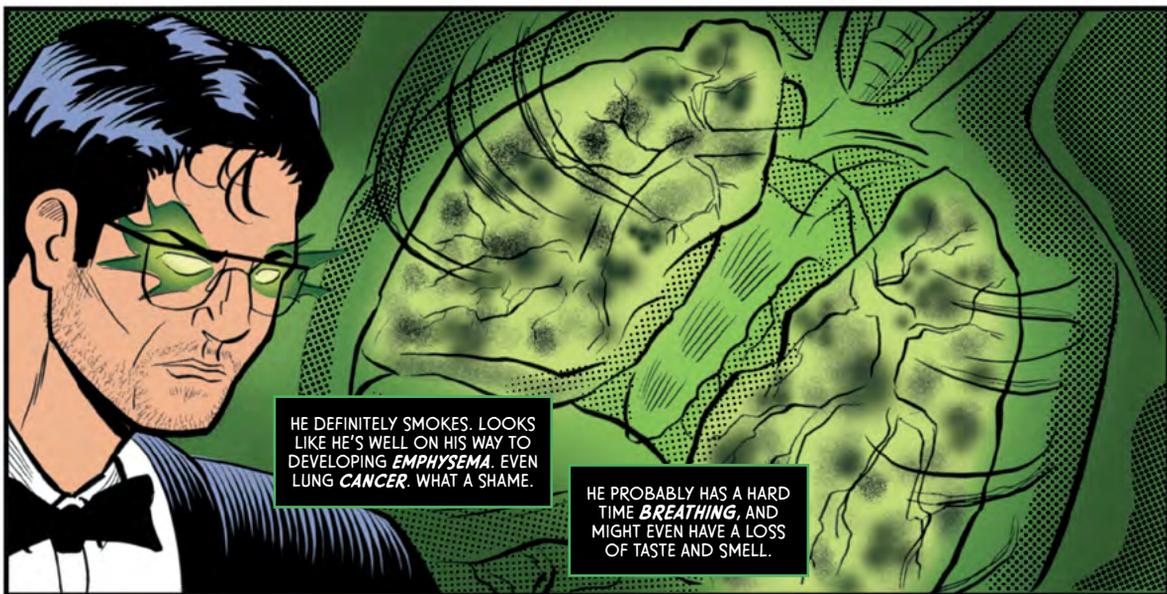


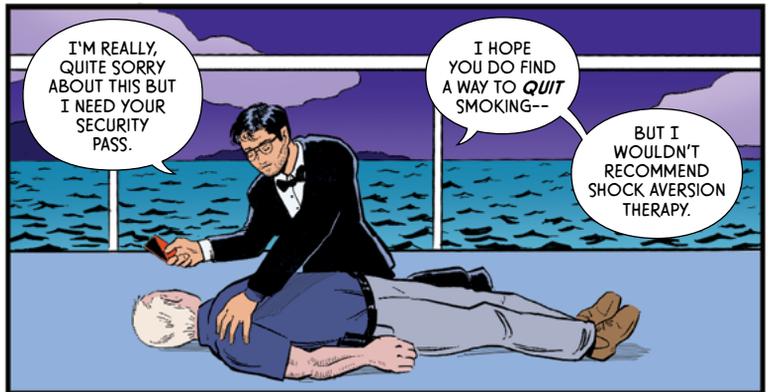
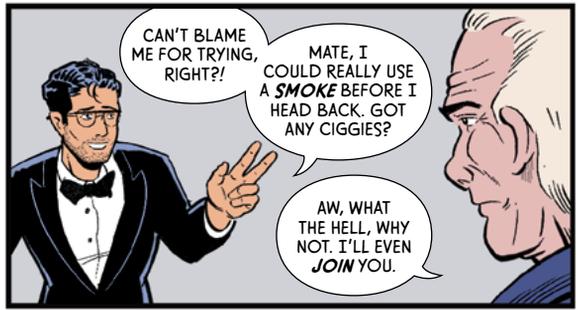
BUT I HAVE A FEELING SHE WOULDN'T EXACTLY BE FORTHRIGHT REGARDING NU-GENX'S *NEFARIOUS* EXPERIMENTS.

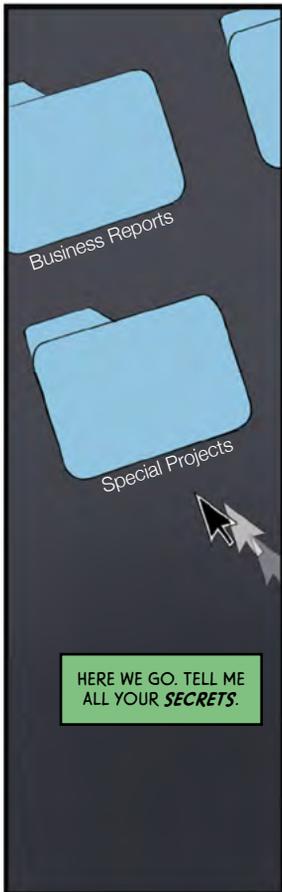
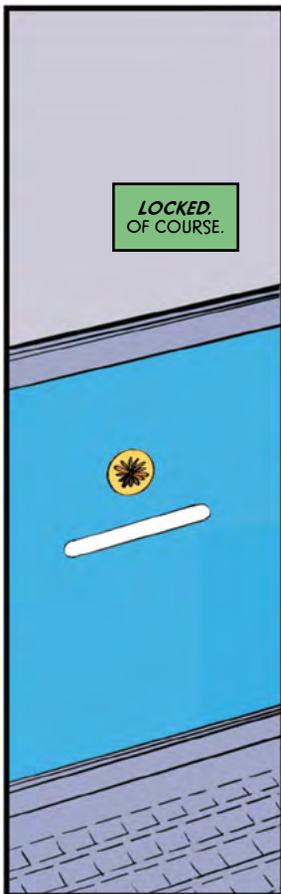
BETTER TO DO SOME *SNOOPING* FIRST I THINK.













GOOD EVENING.

WELL, THIS IS A *SURPRISE*. I WONDERED WHERE YOU HAD GONE OFF TO.



THE PARTY WASN'T REALLY MY SCENE.

I THOUGHT I'D PREPARE FOR OUR... *INTERVIEW*.



I LIKE A MAN WHO TAKES INITIATIVE.



DO YOU MIND?

TO BUSINESS ALREADY? HOW *TEDIOUS*.

YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY.



TELL ME MARIA, IN YOUR WORDS, WHAT IS *NU-GENX*?



WE ARE A BIOTECH *PIONEER* CREATING SOLUTIONS FOR THE HUMAN CONDITION.



I'M SORRY, THE HUMAN CONDITION?

YOU KNOW, BIRTH, DEATH, EMOTIONS, THOUGHTS.

OUR EXPERIENCE AS A *BIOLOGICAL* BEING CAPABLE OF SELF-AWARENESS.



AND THIS CREATES A PROBLEM?

OF COURSE! THE PROCESS OF GROWING AND LIVING IS *FRAUGHT* WITH DIFFICULTIES.



DISEASE, INJURY, OR SIMPLY THE LIMITATIONS OF ONE'S OWN GENES AND PHYSIOLOGY.

THESE ARE *SIGNIFICANT* PROBLEMS WE STRIVE TO OVERCOME.



YOU REFER TO THE TERM '*TRANSHUMAN*' IN YOUR SPEECH. WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

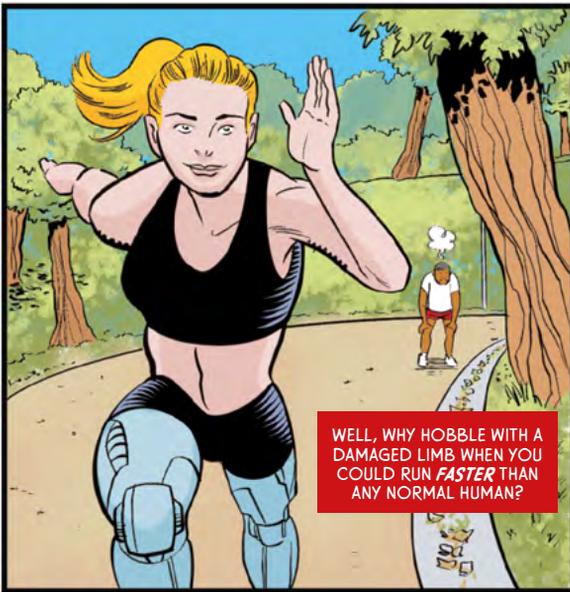
IS NU-GENX PURSUING A DIRECTION TOWARDS TRANSHUMANISM?



MERGING WITH *TECHNOLOGY* IS THE NEXT STEP IN OUR EVOLUTION.

WE WANT TO MOVE HUMANKIND *BEYOND* WHAT OUR BIOLOGY IS CURRENTLY CAPABLE OF, AND YES WE ARE EXPLORING THIS AVENUE.

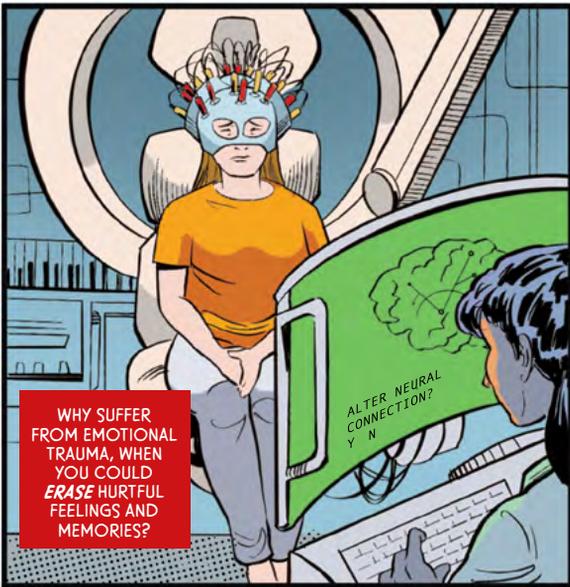
FOR EXAMPLE?



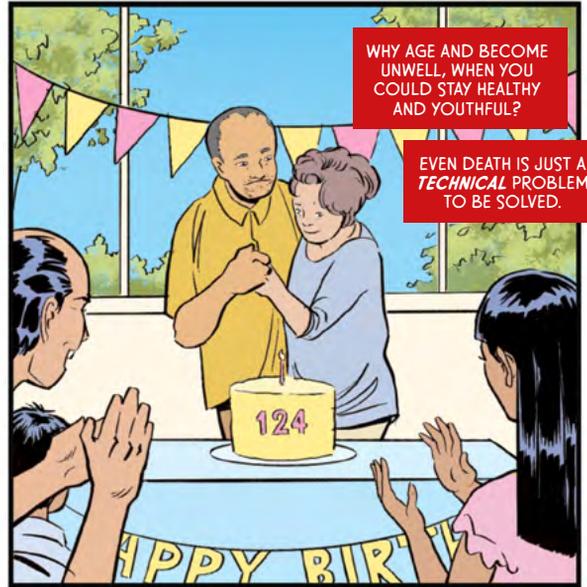
WELL, WHY HOBBLE WITH A DAMAGED LIMB WHEN YOU COULD RUN **FASTER** THAN ANY NORMAL HUMAN?



WHY BE HOSTAGE TO CRIPPLING ANXIETY WHEN YOU COULD THINK CLEARLY, LIVE CONFIDENTLY AND PLAN TEN STEPS AHEAD?

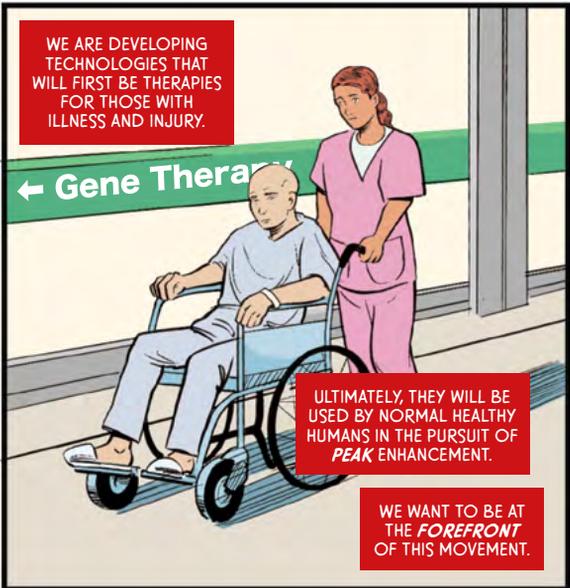


WHY SUFFER FROM EMOTIONAL TRAUMA, WHEN YOU COULD **ERASE** HURTFUL FEELINGS AND MEMORIES?



WHY AGE AND BECOME UNWELL, WHEN YOU COULD STAY HEALTHY AND YOUTHFUL?

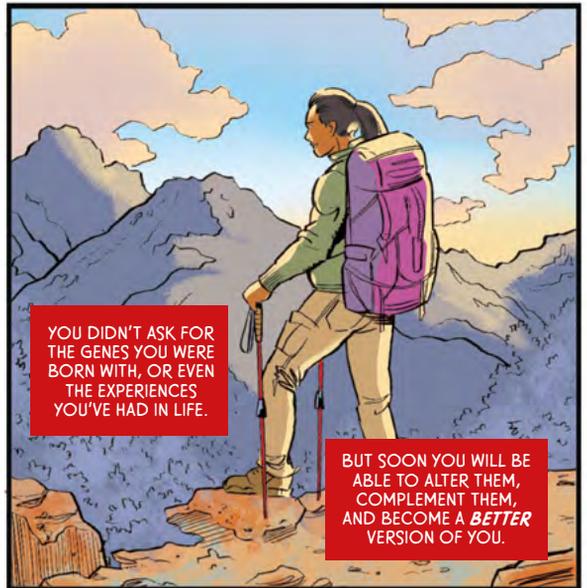
EVEN DEATH IS JUST A **TECHNICAL** PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED.



WE ARE DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGIES THAT WILL FIRST BE THERAPIES FOR THOSE WITH ILLNESS AND INJURY.

ULTIMATELY, THEY WILL BE USED BY NORMAL HEALTHY HUMANS IN THE PURSUIT OF **PEAK** ENHANCEMENT.

WE WANT TO BE AT THE **FOREFRONT** OF THIS MOVEMENT.



YOU DIDN'T ASK FOR THE GENES YOU WERE BORN WITH, OR EVEN THE EXPERIENCES YOU'VE HAD IN LIFE.

BUT SOON YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ALTER THEM, COMPLEMENT THEM, AND BECOME A **BETTER** VERSION OF YOU.

THAT'S A PRETTY BOLD VISION. IS ANY OF THIS POSSIBLE *NOW*? DOES NU-GENX HAVE THESE TECHNOLOGIES ALREADY?



WE HAVE *SEVERAL* PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT. UNFORTUNATELY I'M NOT AT LIBERTY TO DISCUSS THEM.

WE EXPECT TO TAKE *EUREKA*, OUR MEMORY ENHANCEMENT DRUG, TO MARKET IN QUARTER TWO OF NEXT YEAR.

IT'S BEEN SHOWN TO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE *MEMORY* RECALL IN ALZHEIMER'S PATIENTS.

IMAGINE WHAT IT COULD DO FOR YOU OR ME, AFTER SOME MODIFICATIONS.



WHAT ABOUT *XETACEL*? IS THAT A PROJECT DESIGNED TO ENHANCE HUMANS?



--I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* YOU'RE REFERRING TO.



I THINK WE BOTH KNOW THAT'S A *LIE*.

XETACEL IS YOUR COMPANY'S GENE THERAPY TREATMENT.

ISN'T IT TRUE THAT ALL THE TEST SUBJECTS *DIED*, LIKELY BECAUSE OF THE TREATMENT ITSELF?



THEY WERE TERMINALLY *ILL*. THEY DIED OF *DISEASES*.

HOW DO YOU KNOW--



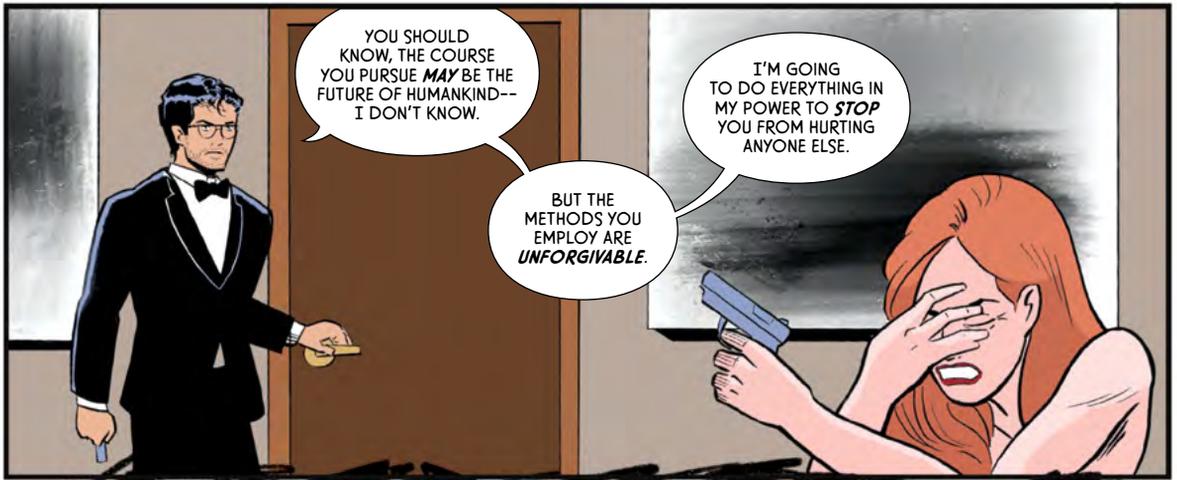
IT'S *YOU*, ISN'T IT.

YOU'RE *SUBJECT 13* -- DR ATTICUS, THE ONE WHO CAME BACK --



AND THEN SOME I'VE HEARD.





YOU SHOULD KNOW, THE COURSE YOU PURSUE *MAY* BE THE FUTURE OF HUMANKIND-- I DON'T KNOW.

I'M GOING TO DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO *STOP* YOU FROM HURTING ANYONE ELSE.

BUT THE METHODS YOU EMPLOY ARE *UNFORGIVABLE*.



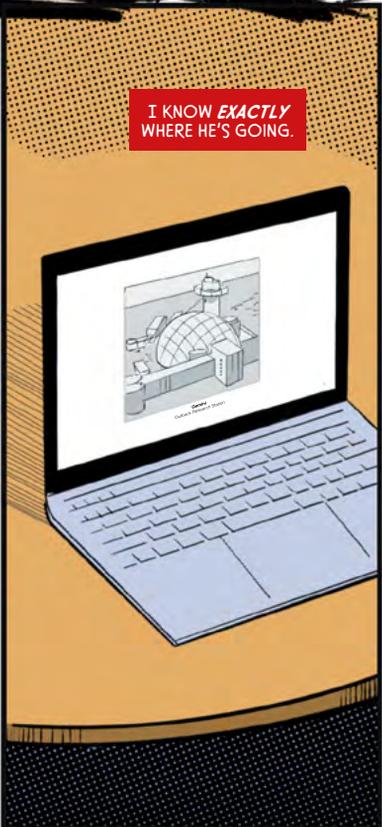
NOT IF YOU'RE IN A *BODY BAG!*



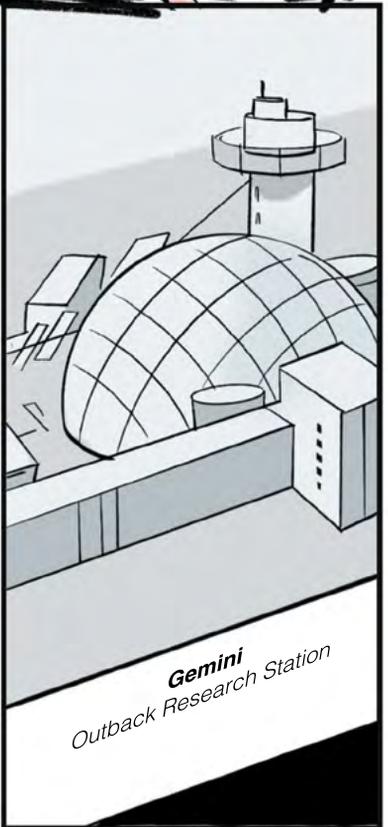
SOUND THE *ALARM!* LOCKDOWN THE SHIP!

HE'S NOT ON THIS DECK.

DON'T BOTHER.



I KNOW *EXACTLY* WHERE HE'S GOING.



Gemini
Outback Research Station



COMICS • DRINKS • EVENTS



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