



THE SHIELD

3
JAN '10

TRAUTMANN
JERWA
RUDY
SCOTT
GRAY



SHOCK and MAGOG

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SECOND FEATURE

INFERNO



YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE TO START SCREAMING NOW.

THREAT DETECTED:
GORILLA GRODD
THREAT LEVEL:
SEVERE

THREAT DETECTED:
UNKNOWN
SUBJECT
(UNSUB:???)
THREAT LEVEL:
UNKNOWN

THINGS COULD BE GOING BETTER.

THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A RESCUE MISSION.

SEVERAL SPECIAL FORCES UNITS HAVE GONE MISSING IN THE MOUNTAINS SEPARATING BIALYA AND KAHNDAG.

I'M SUPPOSED TO FIND THEM AND BRING THEM HOME.

OBVIOUSLY, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME... COMPLICATIONS.

WAIT A SECOND. I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE. BIG APE. SCREAMING. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING.

SPOILER WARNING: IT ENDS PRETTY BAD FOR YOU, MONKEY.

MAGOG BLUNDERING INTO THE MIDDLE OF THE OP HAS NOT HAD A CALMING EFFECT.

THE TEAMS I'M HERE TO SAVE--AND THE INSURGENTS THEY WERE SENT IN TO FIGHT--ALL BEING UNDER GRODD'S CONTROL IS JUST THE ICING ON THE CAKE.

TO GET TO ME, HERO, YOU'LL NEED TO KILL YOUR OWN PEOPLE.

I DOUBT YOU'RE PREPARED TO DO TH--

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS...

YOU'VE GOT TO IMPROVISE.

ZAK

THE WARSUIT'S FILES ON GRODD AREN'T PARTICULARLY COMFORTING.

LT. JOE HIGGINS—WOUNDED AND LEFT FOR DEAD ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE—RECEIVED A CUTTING EDGE EXPERIMENTAL WARSUIT, AND IS NOW THE U.S. ARMY'S VERY OWN SUPERHERO. DISPATCHED ON HIGH-RISK MISSIONS AROUND THE GLOBE, HE IS...

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THE SHIELD

**IN HEARTS & MINDS
KICKING DOWN THE DOOR
PART 3**

ABANDONED H.I.V.E. FACILITY
AS-SINAN AL-HADI-DIYAH
MOUNTAINS, BIALYA

*SUPERINTELLIGENT,
COMPLETELY SAVAGE,
AND CAPABLE OF
CONTROLLING A
PERSON'S MIND.*

MUSTANG 3. AERIAL SUPPORT PLATFORM. ON STATION ABOVE AS-SINAN AL-HADI-DIYAH MOUNTAINS, BIALYA

...LOST CONTACT WITH THE SHIELD WHEN HE ENTERED THE STRUCTURES IN THE SUSPECTED INSURGENT CAMP.



WE'VE SPENT BILLIONS ON THIS TECHNOLOGY AND YOU'RE TELLING ME HE HAS A BUSTED RADIO?

NO, SIR. WE THINK IT'S SOME KIND OF EXTERNAL SIGNAL DISRUPTOR.



SUIT TELEMETRY IS STILL COMING THROUGH, BUT VIDEO'S OUT.

WE DID CATCH A COUPLE IMAGES BEFORE HIS UPLINK CUT. WE THINK IT'S AN OLD H.I.V.E. LAB--LORD ONLY KNOWS HOW MANY THEY SET UP HERE UNDER THE QUEEN BEE'S REGIME. PROBABLY ABANDONED WHEN BLACK ADAM STRUCK.

FIGURE THEY HAD ALL KINDS OF CLOAKS AND JAMMERS TO KEEP OUT THE RIFFRAFF.



MARVELOUS. STAY ON STATION UNTIL THE SHIELD MAKES CONTACT.

SIR, WE'RE RUNNING A LITTLE RAGGED UP HERE. WE COULD USE SOME RELIEF, AND SOME GUNSHIP SUPPORT.

NEGATIVE, SERGEANT. GUNSHIP SUPPORT IS A LAST RESORT.

THE ONLY THING WE NEED LESS THAN THE EXPOSURE OF AMERICAN COVERT OPS IN BIALYA IS FOR THE RESCUE OF OUR ELITE TROOPS TO SHOW UP ON GBS.

SO GET IT DONE, LATHAM OUT.

...THE GENERAL KNOWS PLANES EVENTUALLY HAVE TO LAND, RIGHT?

...SHUT UP, SPURLOCK. JUST...CALL FOR ANOTHER REFUEL.

WE'RE GOING TO BE UP HERE UNTIL THE MISSION IS DONE.

OR UNTIL WE FALL OUT OF THE SKY, APPARENTLY.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

...I'M FASTER.

WHA-?

WHOOOSH

(NO! GET AWAY!)

AND THEN THERE'S THIS GUY.

NO IDEA WHAT HIS STORY IS, BUT HE'S A MIND-CONTROLLER, TOO.

NEURAL INTERFACE DETECTED.

TRACKING SIGNAL PATHWAYS. UNABLE TO BLOCK SIGNAL.


SOME KIND OF SIGNAL BOOSTER OR RELAY, LINKED INTO UGLY'S OWN BRAIN.

I'M BETTING THIS IS IMPORTANT, UGLY.

HOPE IT'S STILL UNDER WARRANTY.

ZAK

--UH?



YOU'RE A CLEVER ONE, AREN'T YOU?

YOU'RE NOT KNOWN FOR CONTROLLING LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE. BUT MIND-CONTROLLING SOMEONE WHO CAN?

THAT'S MORE YOUR SPEED.

SORRY I BROKE YOUR TOY.

NO. YOU'RE NOT. BUT YOU WILL B--

CRASH!



--NNNGH!



SHOOTING A GIANT EVIL MONKEY IN THE HEAD? THAT'S MORE MY SPEED.

WHICH MAKES YOU ADORED BY THE REST OF THE PINK-SKINNED VERMIN, NO DOUBT.

AND I'M AN APE, YOU CRETIN.



MAGOG?

GRODD'S WORKING HIS MOJO.

THE WARSUIT STARTS SCREAMING THREAT WARNINGS. MAGOG'S BRAIN WAVES SHOW HE'S BEEN COMPROMISED.



AW, HELL.

LIEUTENANT JOE HIGGINS WELCOME TO THE SUCK.



ALL RIGHT, GRODD. LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO.

DILLON,
COLORADO

DAY FIVE

I'M STARTING TO
GET THAT BUZZING
FEELING UP THE
BACK OF MY NECK.
YOU KNOW WHAT I'M
TALKING ABOUT?

NEVER, EVER.
IT MEANS WE'RE
CLOSE. I JUST
CAN'T SEE HOW
YET.

WE KNOW FOR SURE
THAT FRANK VERRANO AND
THE FIRE-GUY WERE IN STAR
CITY ON THE SAME DAY. FLAMEY
FOUGHT GREEN ARROW AND
BLACK CANARY, AND FRANK
CAUGHT A TRAIN TO
COLORADO...

...WHERE
HE APPARENTLY
SPENT A NIGHT
IN A HOMELESS
CAMP AND THEN
GOT HIMSELF
A JOB.

NOPE. THAT
LEAD FROM THE
HOMELESS GUY
DIDN'T PAN OUT. NONE
OF THE DAY LABOR
EMPLOYERS HAVE SEEN
EITHER OF OUR
SUSPECTS.

WE BRIBED
HIM AND HE STILL
LIED TO US?
GOSH, I'M SO
SURPRISED...

MA'AM, I'VE GOT
AGENT CAULEY
ON LINE ONE. IT'S
URGENT.

YUP. "THE
BUZZ NEVER
LIES."

GIVE ME
SOMETHING
GOOD,
CAULEY.

FRANK VERRANO IS A MAN ON THE RUN. HIS MEMORIES ARE SCATTERED AND HIS ABILITY TO CHANGE INTO AN INCENDIARY SUPERHUMAN IS A MYSTERY. PURSUED BY SHADOWNY ENEMIES, FRANK MUST UNCOVER THE TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF AND HIS FIERY ALTER EGO--

INFERNO

BURNING INSIDE
PART 3 OF 4

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NOTHING
GOOD HERE,
AGENT
STANDER.

I BROUGHT
MY TEAM TO FOLLOW
UP WITH THE HOMELESS
MEN NEAR THE TRAIN
YARD, AS PER YOUR
ORDERS...



...BUT SOMEONE ELSE GOT HERE FIRST.

MEANING WHAT, EXACTLY?



THEY'RE ALL DEAD. WE'VE GOT A PRELIMINARY COUNT OF FOURTEEN RIGHT NOW, BUT WE CAN'T BE SURE JUST YET...

...BECAUSE IT LOOKS LIKE THEY WERE BURNED ALIVE.



SON OF A BITCH...!

WHAT? IS IT VERRANO?

IT'S EITHER HIM OR THE FIRE-GUY, ELIUD. MAYBE BOTH.

SOMEONE FOUND OUT THAT WE TALKED TO THOSE MEN--THAT THEY GAVE US INFORMATION, RIGHT OR WRONG--AND WENT BACK TO PUNISH THEM FOR IT.



THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. WHY RISK GOING BACK? WHY NOT KEEP MOVING?

MAYBE SOMEONE JUST WANTS US TO THINK THAT VERRANO DID IT. OR MAYBE FIRE-GUY IS CHASING VERRANO...

EXCUSE ME, AGENTS...

I'VE GOT A SIGNED STATEMENT FROM THIS NICE WOMAN HERE, AND I THINK YOU'LL WANT TO SEE IT.

APPARENTLY, THERE'S A COMPLETELY OFF-THE-TABLE CONSTRUCTION JOB GOING ON IN THE MOUNTAINS UP ABOVE BRECKENRIDGE, ABOUT 45 MINUTES FROM HERE.



THE COLD DOESN'T BOTHER ME. IT LEAVES MY JOINTS FEELING A LITTLE STIFF AT THE END OF THE DAY, BUT I THINK I'M STARTING TO ENJOY IT.

IT'S NICE TO FEEL SOMETHING BESIDES FEAR AND CONFUSION, EVEN FOR A FEW MINUTES.



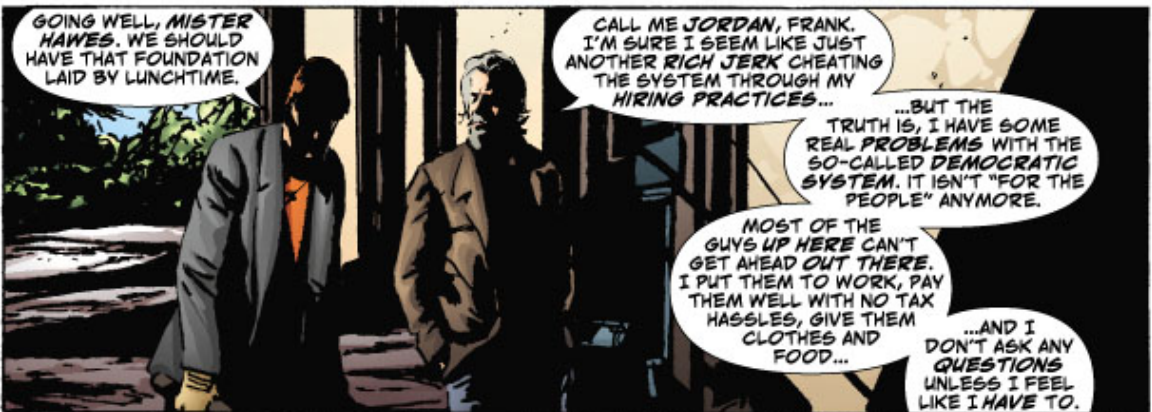
FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AND COUNTING. THIS IS THE LONGEST TIME I'VE SPENT IN ONE PLACE SINCE I WOKE UP IN THE HOSPITAL IN SAN FRANCISCO.

I'M SURE IT WON'T LAST.



IT'S FRANK, RIGHT? LET'S WALK AND TALK.

HOW'S THE DAY SO FAR?



GOING WELL, MISTER HAWES. WE SHOULD HAVE THAT FOUNDATION LAID BY LUNCHTIME.

CALL ME JORDAN, FRANK. I'M SURE I SEEM LIKE JUST ANOTHER RICH JERK CHEATING THE SYSTEM THROUGH MY HIRING PRACTICES...

...BUT THE TRUTH IS, I HAVE SOME REAL PROBLEMS WITH THE SO-CALLED DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. IT ISN'T "FOR THE PEOPLE" ANYMORE.

MOST OF THE GUYS UP HERE CAN'T GET AHEAD OUT THERE. I PUT THEM TO WORK, PAY THEM WELL WITH NO TAX HASSLES, GIVE THEM CLOTHES AND FOOD...

...AND I DON'T ASK ANY QUESTIONS UNLESS I FEEL LIKE I HAVE TO.