

# SLIDERS SPECIAL



SCIENCE FICTION

MARCH

\$3.95/5.25 CAN

# DEADLY SECRETS

D.G.  
CHICHESTER

•  
DEAN  
ZACHARY

•  
SAM  
DE LA ROSA



DIRECT SALES

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**TO SHED LIGHT ON A HAUNTED PAST...  
THE SLIDERS MUST TAKE TO THE STARS**



THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME FOR HOBBIES WHEN YOUR 24-7-365 GIG IS ADVENTURING BETWEEN ALTERNATE REALITIES.

THE SLIDE -- THAT MINDBENDER TRIP FROM ONE PARALLEL DIMENSION TO THE NEXT -- IS PRETTY INSTANTANEOUS STUFF.

BUT WITH THE LAWS OF SPACE TURNED ON THEIR HEAD, TIME CAN AT LEAST SEEM TO STRETCH OUT.



IT'S THEN THE MOMENT LOOSENS ITS GRIP, EXTENDING BACK INTO MEMORY...



LIKE MANY TIMES BEFORE, WADE KATHLEEN WELLS LETS HERSELF BE CARRIED ALONG...

...AND IN THE SPACE OF A HEARTBEAT, THERE IS A LOST LIFETIME OF HEARTACHE.



GENTLE, WADE... THAT'S IT!

OH, SULLIVAN... SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL!

TAKES AFTER HER MOM, BONNIE!

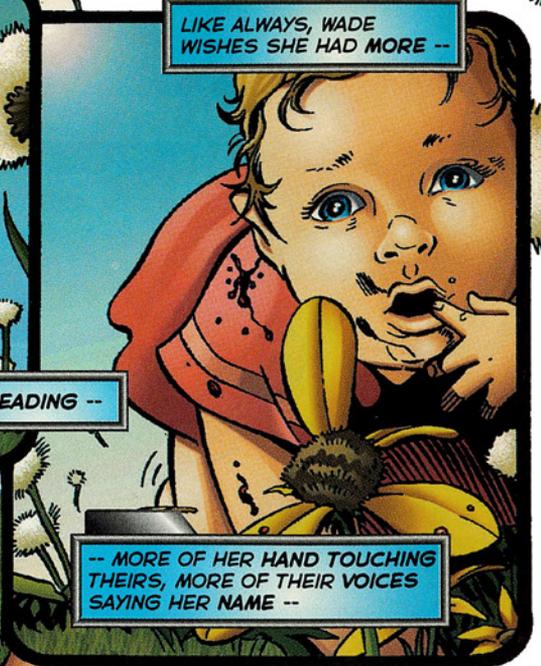
SO MANY BRIGHT COLORS DANCING AND SWIRLING --



-- AND SPLATTERING --

-- AND SPREADING --

LIKE ALWAYS, WADE WISHES SHE HAD MORE --



-- MORE OF HER HAND TOUCHING THEIRS, MORE OF THEIR VOICES SAYING HER NAME --



-- BUT SHE WAS SO YOUNG --



-- AND THE COLORS SO STRONG --

-- ALMOST GLOWING.



THIS ONE'S STILL KICKING!

WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE THINK? BRINGING THEIR KIDS LIKE SOME FAMILY PICNIC!



AT LEAST SHE'S TOO LITTLE TO REMEMBER...



SHE STILL FEELS IT, THOUGH. THAT WRENCHING COLD, SPITTING HER WITH WHAT SHE'S LOST TODAY...



...AND IN A FUTURE WORLD OF MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS.



AS EVER, MR. MALLORY, LET ME COMMEND YOU ON YOUR DISCOVERY OF SLIDING --

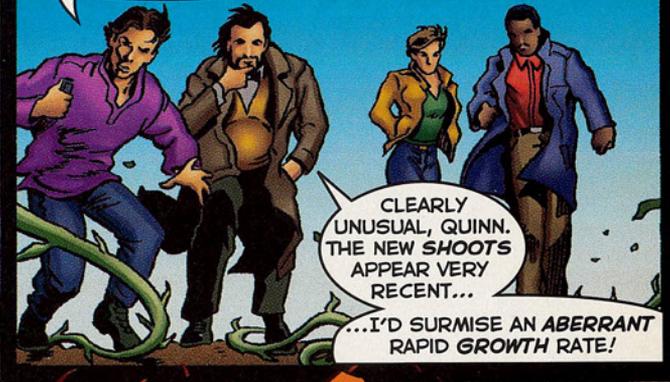
-- AND CONDEMN YOU FOR NOT DESIGNING IT AROUND CUSHIONED SEATS!

HEY, WADE... WHY THE TEARS? YOU OKAY?



F-FINE... FINE, REMBRANDT. JUST...ROUGH LANDING, THAT'S ALL. TOOK A TUMBLE.

WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THESE VINES, PROFESSOR?



CLEARLY UNUSUAL, QUINN. THE NEW SHOOTS APPEAR VERY RECENT...

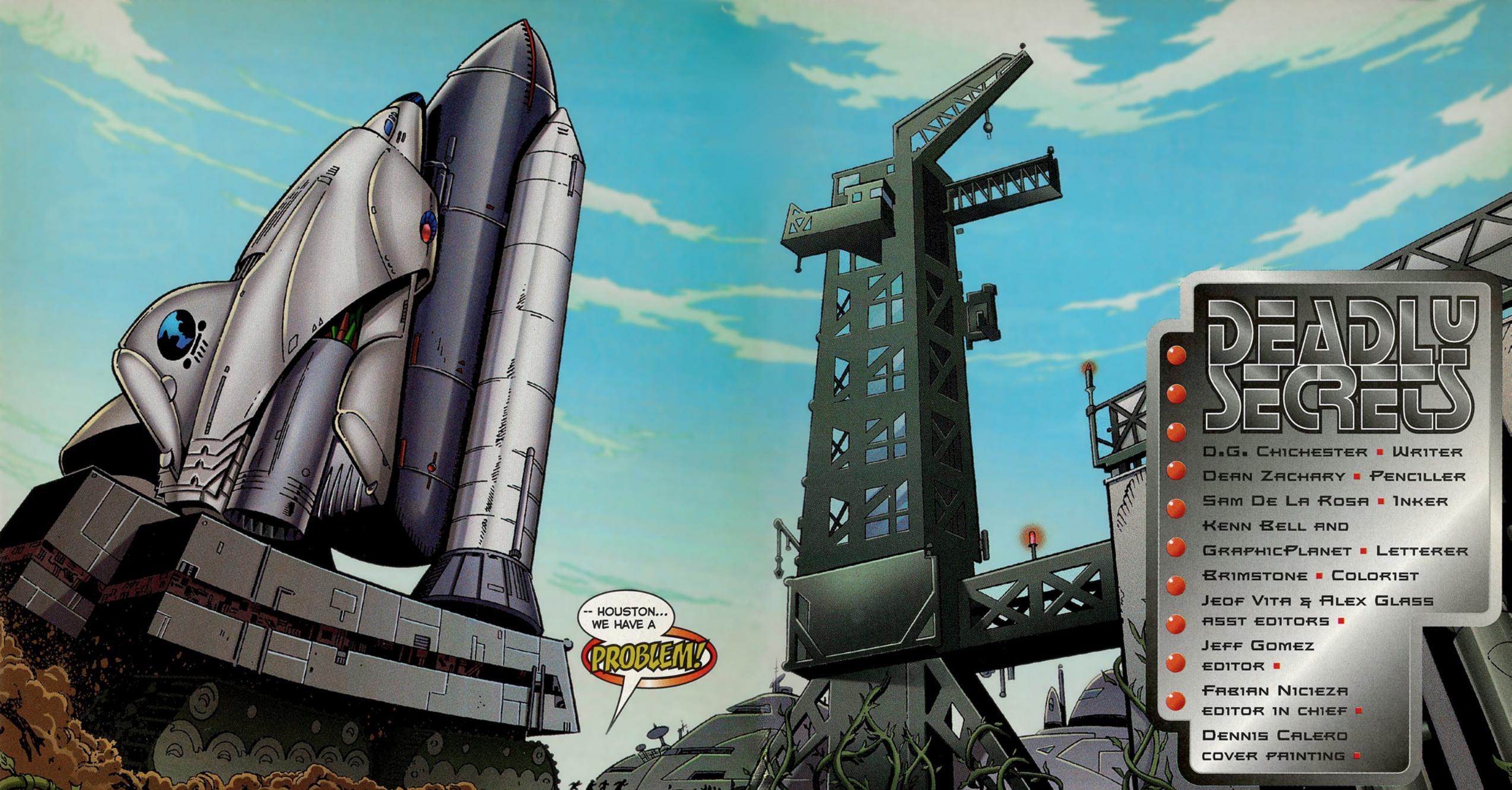
...I'D SURMISE AN ABERRANT RAPID GROWTH RATE!

# KARRMMMBLE



UM... MAYBE YOU GUYS SHOULD SAVE THE FLOWER ARRANGING FOR LATER!

I'LL SECOND THAT! RIGHT NOW, IT'S MORE LIKE --



-- HOUSTON...  
WE HAVE A  
**PROBLEM!**

# DEADLY SECRETS

- D.G. CHICHESTER ■ WRITER
- DEAN ZACHARY ■ PENCILLER
- SAM DE LA ROSA ■ INKER
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- GRAPHICPLANET ■ LETTERER
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- DENNIS CALERO
- COVER PRINTING ■

WE NEED TO GET CLEAR OF THIS CONVEYANCE AND ASCERTAIN --

ULLF!

WHICH OF YOUR DEGREES HELPED YOU FIGURE THAT ONE OUT, PROFESSOR?

I'M OKAY! JUST CLUMSY!

HEY! MY SHIRT --

-- GUYS --

I CAN'T GET IT LOOSE!

GUYS?

**GUYS!**

YOU'RE NOT GOING UNDER SO EASILY, QUINN MALLORY!

FRSSWIIP

THERE STILL MAY BE HOPE FOR YOU AND ME!

THAT WAS CLOSE!

WHAT CAPITALISTIC GALL!

HMM. I WONDER IF THEY CARRY MY "CRYING MAN" CDS?

WHO...?

YOU FOLKS SHOULD CONSIDER BUYING OUR PERSONAL SAFETY VIDEOS!

MULTIBIZ! "YOUR BUSINESS IS OUR BUSINESS!"

THERE'S NO WAITING AT DOOR TWO ...PLEASE BOARD THE SHUTTLE! NOW.

HEY! MULTIBIZ PUKES--

FWROOSH

FWROOSH

TWKRAYAMM

DAMN! IT'S THOSE EARTH CORPS CRAZIES!

--WE GOT SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS!

WOW. TALK ABOUT CUSTOMER SERVICE!

PROTECT THE CONSUMERS!



YEAH. IT'S A REGULAR -- HRRRAAK -- TEAR GAS SPECIAL -- IN AISLE THREE!



Q-QUINN... PROFESSOR ARTURO... REMBRANDT... EVERYBODY OKAY?

NO WAY AM I WORKIN' THIS INTO MY "CRYING MAN" ACT!



I THINK WE'RE ALL -- KKOOF -- ALL RIGHT CONSIDERING, WADE!

CONSIDERING --  
-- OMIGOD.



-- NOT READING YOU CLEARLY CAPTAIN WELLS --

I SAY AGAIN-- CLOSE OFF THAT ACCESS ROAD! WE'VE GOT TO PIN THIS GROUP DOWN.



DADDY? SULLIVAN WELLS? DAD?

WHAT THE HELL IS ALL THAT ABOUT...?



IF YOU FIND YOU'VE BEEN INJURED--





-- MULTIBIZ STOCKS AN EXCELLENT SELECTION OF MEDICAL PRODUCTS!



BACK THERE...

IT WAS...

THAT EARTH CORPS SOLDIER WAS MY FATHER!

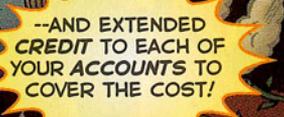
THERE NOW, MISS WELLS... AT THE VERY MOST, HE WAS YOUR FATHER'S DOUBLE ON THIS EARTH!



BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT, MULTIBIZ HAS ARRANGED FOR BARGAIN TRAVEL RATES--



WHAT THIS MADNESS IS A REFLECTION OF IS ANYBODY'S GUESS!



--AND EXTENDED CREDIT TO EACH OF YOUR ACCOUNTS TO COVER THE COST!



STRAP IN!

I KNOW... "NOW!"

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT?

REPEALED BY CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT IN '93!



THIS-- ISN'T-- HAPPENING!

ENJOY THE FLIGHT! AND WE HOPE YOU'VE PACKED YOUR MULTIBIZ CHARGE CARD...

...BECAUSE  
WE'LL TAKE YOU  
INTO ORBIT, BUT WE  
DON'T TAKE  
AMERICAN  
EXPRESS!

**SCA  
K  
A  
H  
O  
O  
M**

...AND THIS  
TIME WITH ONE  
STRANGE, MIXED-UP  
LITTLE GIRL ON  
BOARD!

"DADDY...?"

DAMN IT!  
THAT'S ANOTHER  
TRANSPORT WE'VE  
LET FLY...





FOR YOUR IN-FLIGHT ENJOYMENT TODAY, MULTIBIZ PRESENTS, **"OPERATION: SAVE OUR EARTH."**



OH, YEAH... THESE GUYS REALLY STRIKE ME AS THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY-MINDED TYPES!

AGREED, MISS WELLS! BUT EVEN PROPAGANDA CAN PROVE EDUCATIONAL!



WE CAN ALL STILL REMEMBER THAT INSPIRING DAY WHEN NASA JOINED FORCES WITH AMERICAN BIG BUSINESS!

AND WE ALL STILL GROW ANXIOUS WHEN RECALLING THE TRAGIC DAY --

-- WHEN THE PEACE CORPS THREW IN WITH THE "EARTH FIRST" RADICAL ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT.

INDUSTRIAL INGENUITY BREATHED NEW LIFE AND INVENTION INTO THE SPACE PROGRAM, COURTESY OF MULTIBIZ.

BUT DOWN BELOW,  
EARTH CORPS' MISPLACED  
AND ARROGANT ACTIVISM  
RELEASED THEIR  
BIOENGINEERED GROWTH  
ACCELERANT --

-- A VEGETATION  
"VIRUS" WE'VE ALL  
COME TO KNOW AS  
**"Green Thumb!"**

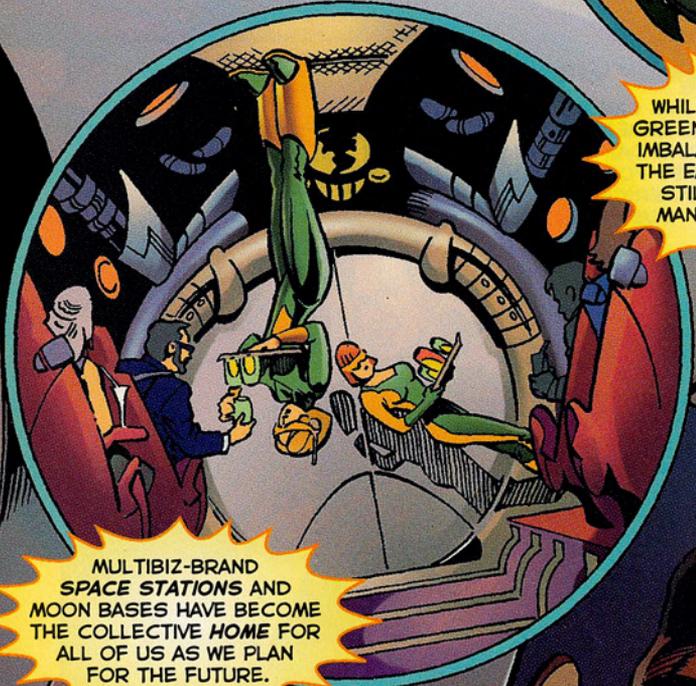
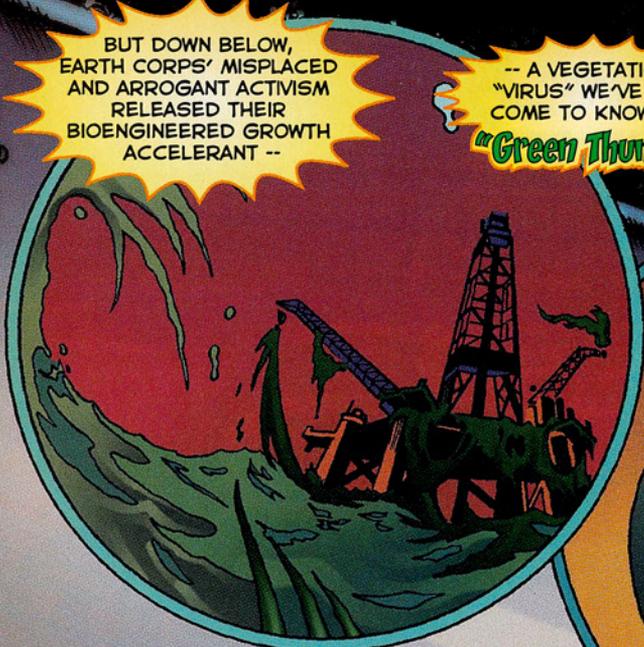
EARTH CORPS CLAIMS  
THEY DID IT FOR THE  
PLANET'S OWN GOOD.  
SCIENTISTS' PROJECTIONS,  
HOWEVER, ARE MORE  
OMINOUS.

WHILE THE CHOKING  
GREEN OF ECOLOGICAL  
IMBALANCE CONDEMNS  
THE EARTH, THERE ARE  
STILL HAVENS FOR  
MANKIND UP ABOVE.

MULTIBIZ-BRAND  
SPACE STATIONS AND  
MOON BASES HAVE BECOME  
THE COLLECTIVE HOME FOR  
ALL OF US AS WE PLAN  
FOR THE FUTURE.

NOW MORE  
THAN EVER, "YOUR  
BUSINESS IS OUR  
BUSINESS!"

YOU'LL ALL FORGIVE  
ME IF I DON'T LET LOOSE  
WITH THE TEARS AT THAT  
TOUCHING, TOUCHING  
SCENE!



IT'S TOO BAD THEIR "HAVENS" CAN'T BE AS BEAUTIFUL AS THEIR B.S.!

NO NEED TO LOOK FOR TRUTH IN ADVERTISING THIS HIGH IN THE SKY!

**HRRAAKGK**

PROFESSOR?!

**PROFESSOR ARTURO!**

IT'S -- N-N-NOTHING --

MY BOY --

I'LL BE --

YOU'LL BE QUIET AND LET US GET YOU SOME HELP, THAT'S WHAT YOU'LL BE!

STATION-TRANSPORT ROTATION EQUALIZED. ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY IN EFFECT.

WE'RE NEVER GOING TO GET HIM THROUGH THIS CROWD!

DON'T GIVE UP SO FAST, Q-BALL!

ALL RIGHT PEOPLE --

**MOVE IT OR LOSE IT!**

WHERE'D YOU LEARN THAT, REMBRANDT?

CHARMING, MY FRIENDS...

CROWD CONTROL AT CRYING MAN CONCERTS!

...THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE I FEEL!

I GUESS "INDUSTRIAL INGENUITY" IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING, "WE CAN ORBIT A TRAILER PARK!"



THIS LOOKS THE CLOSEST WE'RE GETTING TO SICK BAY ON THIS POOR MAN'S ENTERPRISE...

PREP HIM FOR SURGERY AND WHEEL IN THE NEXT --

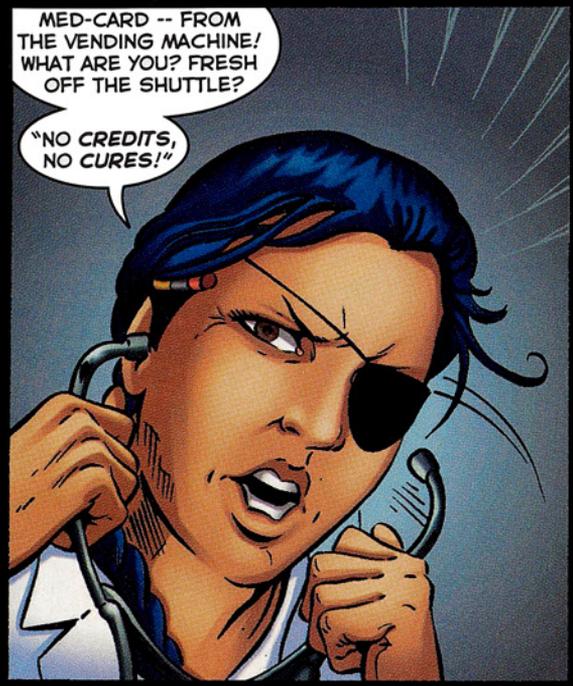


NURSE -- OUR FRIEND NEEDS --

WE ALL GOT NEEDS, THAT'S WHY MULTIBIZ IS IN BUSINESS!

HE GOT HIS MED-CARD?

HIS WHAT?



MED-CARD -- FROM THE VENDING MACHINE! WHAT ARE YOU? FRESH OFF THE SHUTTLE?

"NO CREDITS, NO CURES!"

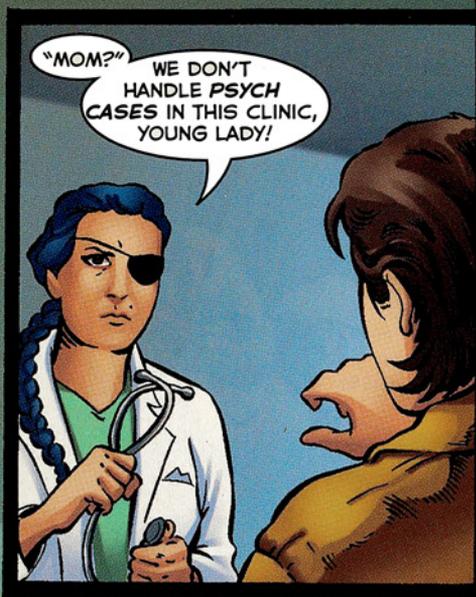
M-MOM?

YOU -- YOU CAN'T BE HERE...

YOU SHOULDN'T BE...

...YOU'RE LIKE DAD YOU'RE BOTH...





"MOM?"  
WE DON'T HANDLE PSYCH CASES IN THIS CLINIC, YOUNG LADY!



I CAN'T DEAL WITH TWO OF YOU IN ONE DAY --

WADE!

-- I DON'T WANT TO DEAL --



THIS MAN IS PROFESSOR MAXIMILLIAN ARTURO. HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR TEACHING ME HALF OF EVERYTHING I KNOW --

-- AND I AM NOT GOING ANYWHERE UNTIL HE GETS HELP! AM I MAKING MYSELF CLEAR, YOU BLITHERING IDIOT?



WE CAN'T RISK LOSING HER IN THIS CROWD, Q-BALL! I'LL CATCH UP -- YOU STRONG ARM THE PROFESSOR A BAND-AID!



THAT'S DR. BONNIE "BLITHERING IDIOT" WELLS TO YOU!

ALL RIGHT... WE'LL WORK SOMETHING OUT -- AND THEN WE'LL WORK ON YOUR MANNERS!

EXCELLENT APPROACH --

TO THE PROBLEM AT HAND -- MY BOY.

I COULDN'T HAVE BEEN -- MORE ARROGANT -- MYSELF!

EARTHSIDE.

175 KLICKS NORTH  
OF COSTA RICA.

EARTH CORPS HQ  
IS EXPECTING YOU AT  
1300 FOR DEBRIEFING,  
COMMANDER WELLS...

ROGER THAT,  
EARTH CORPS...  
I'M ENGAGING  
AUTOPILOT FOR  
SECURE APPROACH  
AND LANDING!

IT'S BEEN  
A LONG TIME SINCE  
I LOOKED BACK  
THROUGH THIS  
WINDOW...

...TO OPEN  
MYSELF TO THAT  
HURT ALL OVER  
AGAIN!

...AND FOR WHAT?  
SOME CONFUSED  
GIRL AT A MULTIBIZ  
SPACECENTER...

PHOTO-DIGITIZING  
IN PROGRESS...

ISOLATING AND ENLARGING LOWER  
ONE-THIRD OF BITMAP...

IMAGE ENHANCEMENT...INTERPRETIVE  
MORPHING IN PROGRESS...

PROJECTING AGE DIFFERENCE PLUS-20 YEARS...

OUR LITTLE GIRL'S  
LOOKING ALL GROWN  
UP, BONNIE.

JUST  
ONE PROBLEM,  
WADE KATHLEEN...  
AND THAT IS...  
YOU'RE DEAD...



MULTIBIZ HAVEN™ BRAND  
SPACE STATION 17-B.

YOU RUN  
A GOOD RACE,  
WADE!

OH,  
REMBRANDT...  
I'M SORRY!

I JUST  
NEEDED TO --  
CLEAR MY  
HEAD.

NOT IN THIS  
SORRY EXCUSE  
FOR GOLDEN  
GATE PARK!

COME ON --  
WE'LL WALK OFF  
THIS FUNK!

I'M SURPRISED  
THAT DOESN'T  
COST SOMETHING  
UP HERE...

MULTIBIZ  
APPRECIATES YOUR  
HELP IN SANITATION  
CONTROL!

IN APPRECIATION,  
WE'D LIKE TO CREDIT  
YOUR DEBIT CARDS  
\$5.15 FOR EACH  
WORK HOUR --

-- AND  
REMINDED YOU THAT  
ALL CONSUMABLES WILL  
BE ON A TEN PERCENT  
OFF SALE FOR THE NEXT  
THIRTY MINUTES!

LET'S FIND A  
PLACE OUT OF  
THIS NOISE WHERE  
WE CAN TALK...



WADE... I THOUGHT YOU HAD PARENTS... ALIVE AND WELL BACK HOME.

YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THEM AS IF THEY'RE DEAD!

I'M SORRY I NEVER MENTIONED THIS, REMY...

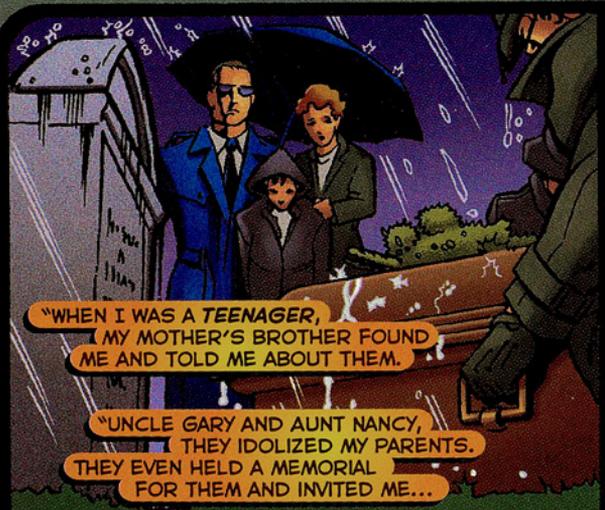
BUT THOSE ARE MY FOSTER PARENTS. I LOVE THEM, BUT...

...I CAN'T FORGET MY REAL MOM AND DAD.

THEY WERE KILLED WHEN I WAS JUST A BABY AT AN ANTI-NUCLEAR DEMONSTRATION.

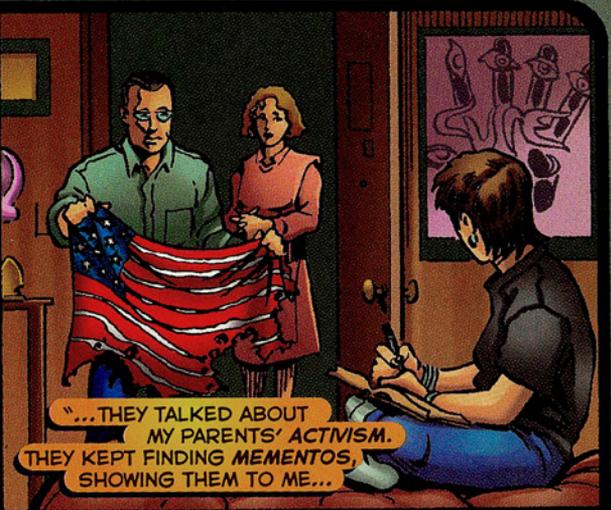
THERE WERE NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS, AND THINGS...

...GOT OUT OF HAND. MY PARENTS WERE SHOT DEAD.

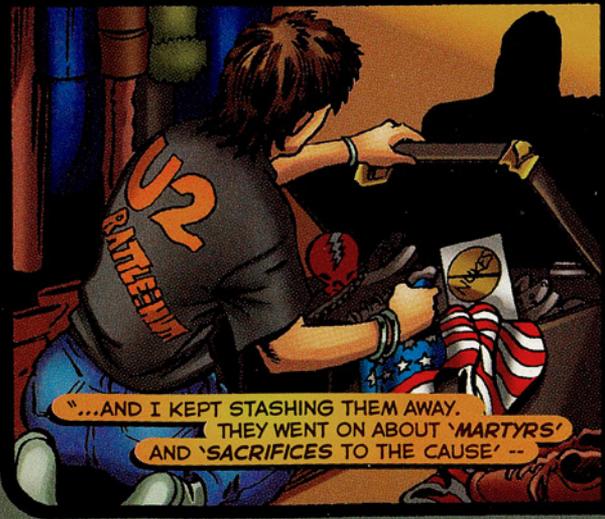


"WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, MY MOTHER'S BROTHER FOUND ME AND TOLD ME ABOUT THEM.

"UNCLE GARY AND AUNT NANCY, THEY IDOLIZED MY PARENTS. THEY EVEN HELD A MEMORIAL FOR THEM AND INVITED ME...



"...THEY TALKED ABOUT MY PARENTS' ACTIVISM. THEY KEPT FINDING MEMENTOS, SHOWING THEM TO ME...



"...AND I KEPT STASHING THEM AWAY. THEY WENT ON ABOUT 'MARTYRS' AND 'SACRIFICES TO THE CAUSE' --



"-- BUT I JUST WANTED MY MOM AND DAD."

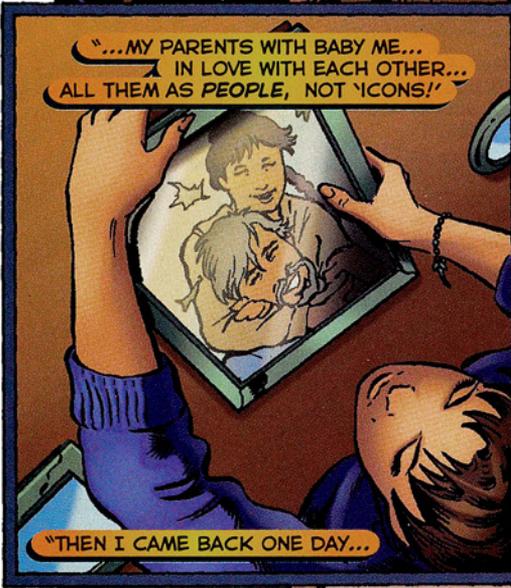


THAT'S A TOUGH TUG-OF-WAR TO GROW UP UNDER...

YEAH.

AND LIKE ANY TUG-OF-WAR, ONE SIDE ENDS UP PULLED INTO THE MUDHOLE!

I HUNG A BUNCH OF PICTURES I'D FOUND...



"...MY PARENTS WITH BABY ME... IN LOVE WITH EACH OTHER... ALL THEM AS PEOPLE, NOT 'ICONS!'"

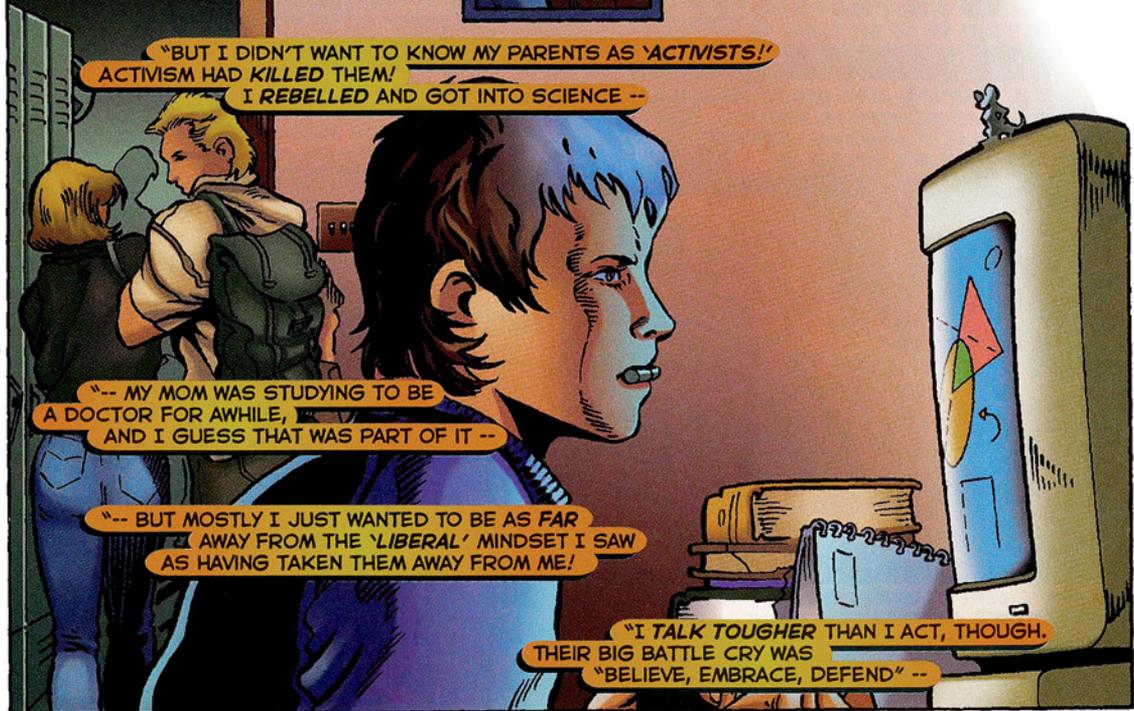
"THEN I CAME BACK ONE DAY..."



"...AND FOUND MY FOSTER PARENTS HAD DONE SOME REDECORATING."



"THEY MEANT WELL. THEY'D FIGURED SINCE I WANTED MORE MEMORIES OF MY PARENTS AROUND, THEY'D HELP HANG 'THE BIG PICTURE!'"



"BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW MY PARENTS AS 'ACTIVISTS!' ACTIVISM HAD KILLED THEM! I REBELLED AND GOT INTO SCIENCE --"

"-- MY MOM WAS STUDYING TO BE A DOCTOR FOR AWHILE, AND I GUESS THAT WAS PART OF IT --"

"-- BUT MOSTLY I JUST WANTED TO BE AS FAR AWAY FROM THE 'LIBERAL' MINDSET I SAW AS HAVING TAKEN THEM AWAY FROM ME!"

"I TALK TOUGHER THAN I ACT, THOUGH. THEIR BIG BATTLE CRY WAS 'BELIEVE, EMBRACE, DEFEND' --"

-- AND I KNOW MOST OF THE TIME I STILL END UP BACKING CAUSES IN SPIITE OF MYSELF.

DON'T SWEAT IT, WADE. THERE ARE WORSE THINGS THAN HAVING A HEART!

WEEOWEEOWEE



LIKE WHATEVER THIS CRAZINESS IS!

HEY -- ISN'T THAT THIS DIMENSION'S VERSION OF QUINN'S SPACEY CLASSMATE?

THE GROWTH RATE IS RADICALLY OUT OF CONTROL!

SINCERELY DISASTROUS... BUT KINDA COOL IN A THINGS-MAN-WAS-NOT-MEANT-TO-KNOW KINDA WAY, HUH?



CONRAD?



TASTY CURVES, MYSTERY GIRLY-GIRL...

...BUT FATE HAS DEPRIVED YOU OF THE CONRAD BENNISH, JR. MANLY-MAN CHARMS!



THE GREENS ARE GOING TO GOBBLE ALL THE OXYGEN IN THE STATION --

-- UNLESS WE BLOW THE SECTION!



FIRE THE EXPLOSIVE BOLTS...

...AND LET'S GO GRAB A BURRITO!

CONRAD --

NO!

BOOM



DR. WELLS!  
I NEED TO FIND OUT  
ABOUT MY FRIEND'S  
CONDITION --

IF HE'S STILL IN  
THE SYSTEM, HE'S NOT  
BETTER! IF HE DOESN'T  
GET OUT SOON, HE  
MAY NEVER BE!



HOW DO  
YOU LIKE THAT  
BEDSIDE  
MANNER?



WHAT'S  
GOING  
ON?

ATTENTION!  
WE ARE MAKING  
ADJUSTMENTS  
TO THE STATION  
GRAVITY  
FOR YOUR LIVING  
COMFORT!



NEWS FLASH, GUYS --  
IT'S GONNA TAKE MORE  
THAN THAT!



THERE  
IS NOTHING  
TO BE ALARMED  
ABOUT!

REMBRANDT!

**THE SPACE  
SUITS!**

WE'VE  
GOT TO --



IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING MOTION SICKNESS, MULTIBIZ IS RUNNING A TWO-FOR-ONE SPECIAL ON THE PHARMACY LEVEL!

WOW... JUST NO END OF BARGAINS IN THIS DIMENSION!

DR. WELLS!



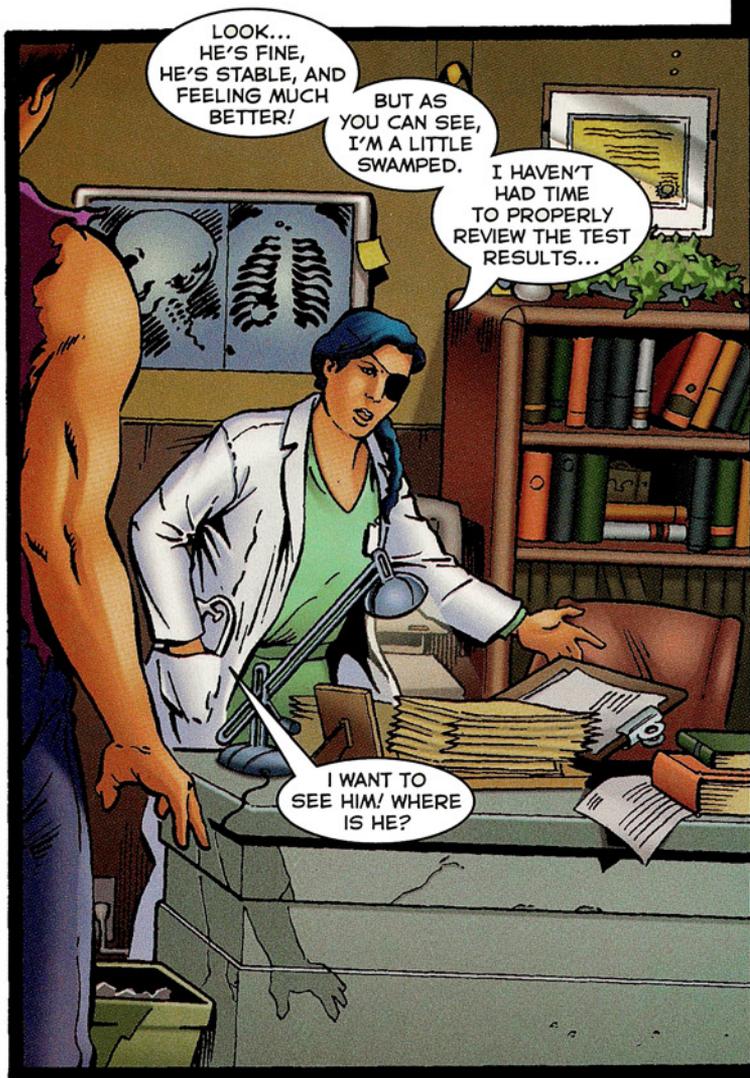
WATCH IT, BUDDY! YOU TRYIN' TO START SOMETHIN'?

NO THANKS... MULTIBIZ WOULD PROBABLY CHARGE ME FOR IT!



DR. WELLS! I'M NOT BACKING OFF UNTIL YOU LET ME KNOW ABOUT PROFESSOR ARTURO!

IF YOU DON'T WATCH IT, YOUNG MAN, I'LL SEE YOU GET A BED NEXT TO HIS!



LOOK... HE'S FINE, HE'S STABLE, AND FEELING MUCH BETTER!

BUT AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M A LITTLE SWAMPED.

I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO PROPERLY REVIEW THE TEST RESULTS...

I WANT TO SEE HIM! WHERE IS HE?



I'LL GET YOU THERE, BUT FIRST...

...YOUR FRIEND. THE ONE WHO CALLED ME "MOM."

WHAT'S HER NAME?



OH GOD. WADE... SHE HAD HER EYES.

I HADN'T SEEN THOSE EYES IN... HOW IS THIS HAPPENING?

HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?

WADE. WADE KATHLEEN WELLS.

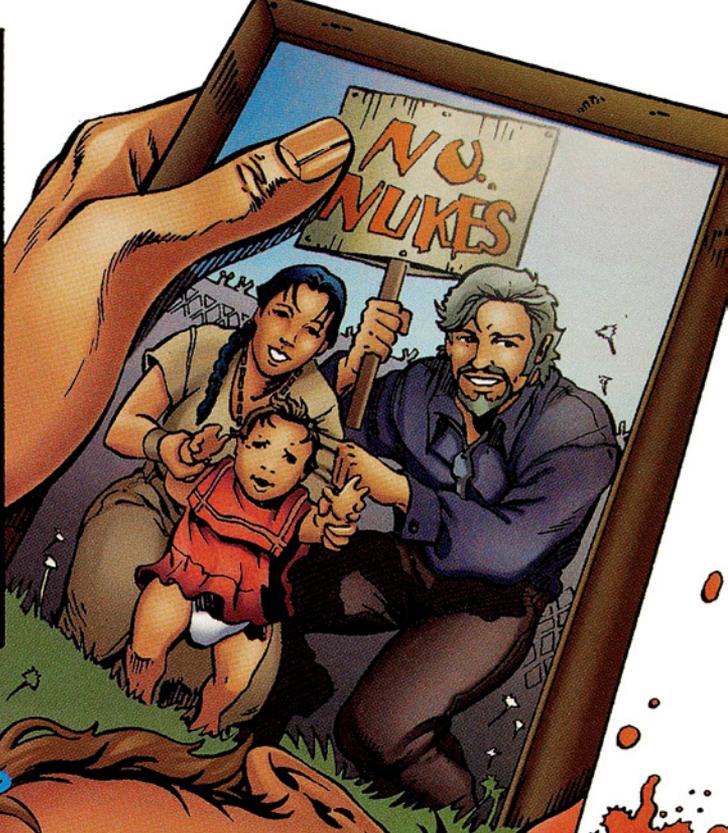
THERE ARE THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE EVEN MULTIBIZ DOESN'T HAVE A TRADEMARK ON!

WE COME -- THIS NEVER SOUNDS RATIONAL --



-- WE'RE FROM ANOTHER *DIMENSION*.  
AN EARTH WHERE *MY WADE* IS  
A *DOUBLE* FOR YOUR  
DAUGHTER!

MY DAUGHTER  
WAS ONE OF A  
KIND, QUINN!



"AND SHE DIED WHEN SHE WAS JUST A *BABY!*  
SHOT BY NATIONAL GUARDSMEN  
AT AN ANTI-NUKE PROTEST WE'D GONE TO --

"-- ME AND WADE AND... MY HUSBAND.

"SULLIVAN AND I...WE *THREW OURSELVES*  
INTO EVERYTHING THAT WOULD HELP US  
*DENY* WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

"HE GOT EVEN MORE INVOLVED IN 'THE CAUSE' --  
I *WHATEVER* IT WAS THAT WEEK.  
I *TURNT* MY BACK  
AND WENT BACK TO MEDICINE.

"WE LOST WADE...  
AND THEN WE LOST EACH OTHER."



YOUR PROFESSOR'S  
IN 2031. I'LL BE HERE  
CATCHING UP...

...AND THINKING  
ABOUT WHAT I LET  
SLIP AWAY.



WE'VE GOT ABOUT 28 HOURS ON THE TIMER, PROFESSOR! I'M A LITTLE CONCERNED ABOUT THE NEXT TIME SLIDE...

...I DON'T KNOW IF ZERO-G IS GOING TO AFFECT THE PORTAL MATERIALIZING!

YOU KNOW, I WAS WORKING ON AN ANTI-GRAVITY DEVICE WHEN -- WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT OF BED?

REGAINING MY DIGNITY! HOSPITAL GOWNS ARE A DRAFTY AFFAIR!



I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'RE WELL ENOUGH YET!

OH MY GOD. THESE CHARTS... THEY CAN'T BE...



IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I STUDIED *BIOLOGY*, BUT IF I'M READING THINGS RIGHT...

I KNOW FULL WELL WHAT MY *CONDITION* IS, MR. MALLORY. I'VE KNOWN FOR SEVERAL WORLDS!

BUT HOW...?

IF I KNEW THE SPECIFIC *ANSWER* TO THAT QUESTION, I COULD ADD ANOTHER *NOBEL PRIZE* TO MY COLLECTION!



L-LET ME...

THANK YOU, MY BOY.



I BLAMED MY *ILLNESS* ON THE SLIDE, AT FIRST. IT WAS A CONVIENT *SCAPEGOAT*!

BUT I'VE SINCE REVISED MY THEORY TO A MORE SCIENTIFIC "LUCK OF THE DRAW!"

DID YOU EVER HEAR THOSE *STORIES* OF THE *RAIN FORESTS* BEING HOME TO NATURAL *CURES*?

THEY'RE *NICE STORIES*, MR. MALLORY. WE CAN SEE HOW THEY END...

AFTER WE GET BACK TO EARTH FOR THE SAKE OF THE *SLIDE*!

MULTIBIZ MUST HAVE BEEN TRYING TO COME UP WITH SOME KIND OF "WEED KILLER" FOR GREEN THUMB...

THEY'RE NOT EXACTLY UNDER CONTROL HERE, WADE!

I CAN'T -- I CAN'T GET THIS HELMET ON RIGHT!

...AND THINGS GOT OUT OF CONTROL!

AH... SWEET OXYGEN!

DON'T WORRY!

NO PROBLEM. I NEVER STOPPED.

THEN AGAIN... THESE GAUGES -- THE AIR TANKS ARE LOW.

START WORRYING.

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO DRIFT!

HELLO? HELLO? CAN ANYONE --



-- HEAR ME ON THIS THING?

MR. BENNISH! WE'VE GOT EXTERNAL ACTIVITY!

AND I WAS SO HOPING THAT WAS ME TRIPPING...



WE'RE TRYING TO MAKE IT TO AN AIRLOCK --

-- BUT WE'LL NEED HELP GETTING IT OPEN!



THEY MAY HAVE SEEN TOO MUCH OF THE BIOHAZARD!

**SPACE GHOST**  
THEIR SORRY BACKSIDES!

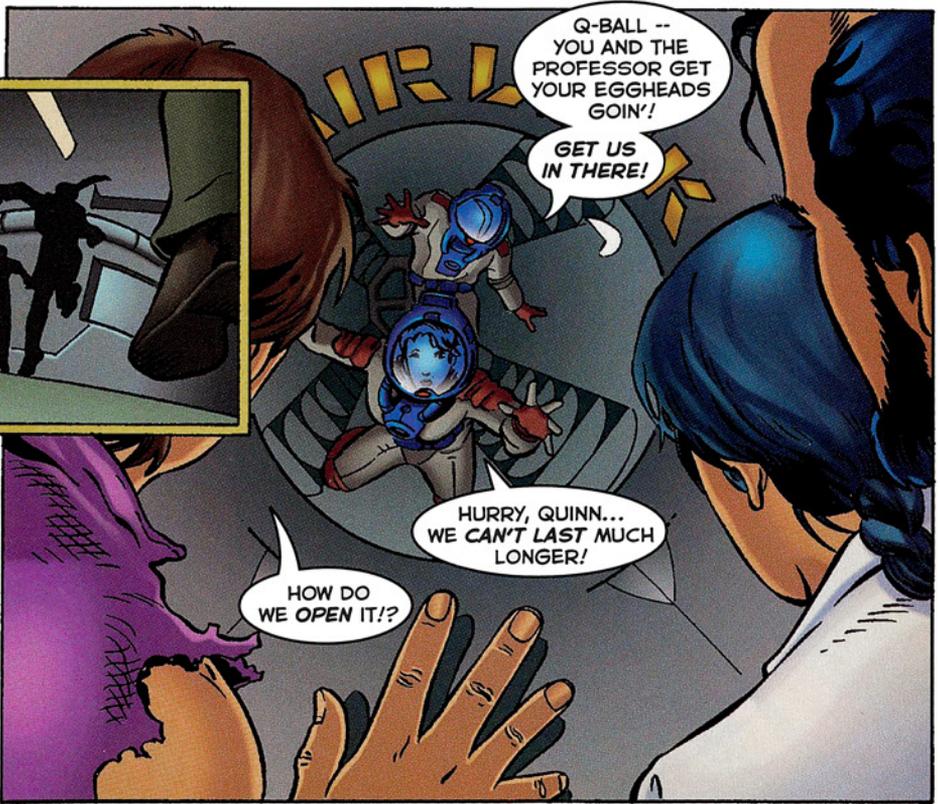


THERE YOU ARE!

WHAT IS IT, MADAM?



YOUR FRIENDS ARE IN TROUBLE!



Q-BALL -- YOU AND THE PROFESSOR GET YOUR EGGHEADS GOIN'!

GET US IN THERE!

HURRY, QUINN... WE CAN'T LAST MUCH LONGER!

HOW DO WE OPEN IT!?



THERE'S A MULTIBIZ  
EMPLOYEE PALMPRINT  
SECURITY PANEL --

NOW, NOW,  
DOCTOR...



...DON'T DO  
ANYTHING  
STUPID!

YOU  
DON'T WANT  
TO JEOPARDIZE  
YOUR EMPLOYEE  
DISCOUNT!



I KNOW  
YOU DON'T  
KNOW US...

...I KNOW I  
DON'T REALLY KNOW  
YOU EITHER -- I DON'T  
EVEN KNOW WHAT  
TO CALL YOU.



BUT I KNOW  
WHO YOU WERE...  
IN A WAY... AND SHE  
WOULD NEVER TURN HER  
BACK ON SOMEONE  
NEEDING HELP!

CALL ME  
"MOM."

FWKOOOSH



ALLEY-5



THANK YOU --  
OH, THANK  
YOU!

YOU'VE TAKEN  
A GREAT RISK  
FOR US, MADAM.

THAT MULTIBIZ  
DISCOUNT IS ONLY  
TEN PERCENT  
ANYWAY!



THE BETTER  
DEAL ON THE  
BENEFITS PACKAGE  
IS KNOWING WHERE  
THESE ESCAPE PODS  
ARE LOCATED!

COME ON --  
ALL ABOARD!



DO YOU  
KNOW HOW  
TO FLY THIS  
THING?

I DON'T  
HAVE TO... I'VE  
BROUGHT ALONG  
A PILOT!

KLANG

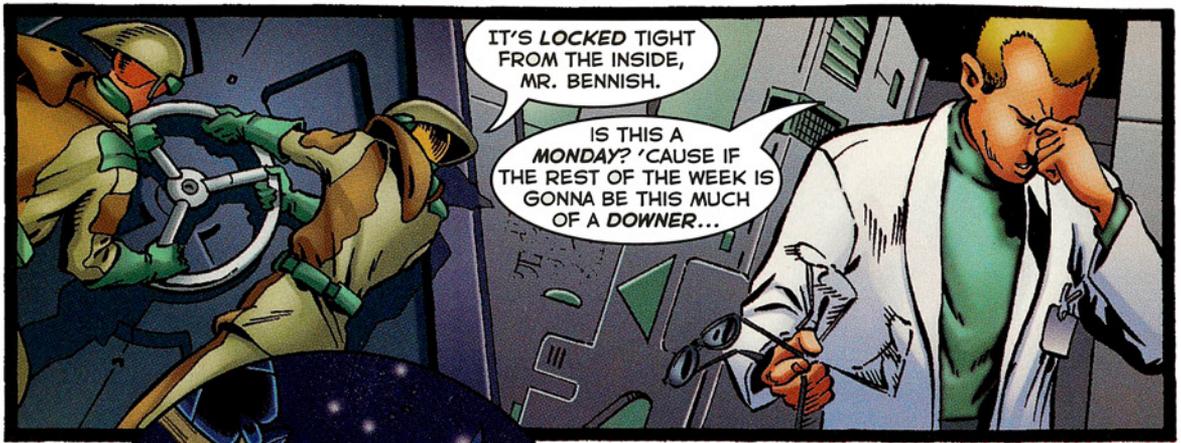
HELLO, BONNIE.  
I REALIZE THE CHANCES  
OF US EVER GETTING  
BACK TOGETHER ARE  
SOMEWHERE SOUTH  
OF ZERO!

...I'LL BE  
WAITING!

BUT I HAD THIS  
SMUGGLED UP TO  
YOU, SO IF YOU EVER GET  
YOUR EYES OPENED  
TO WHAT MULTIBIZ IS  
REALLY ABOUT...

AND THIS  
DISC WILL HELP  
STEER YOU BACK  
TO ME...





IT'S LOCKED TIGHT FROM THE INSIDE, MR. BENNISH.

IS THIS A MONDAY? 'CAUSE IF THE REST OF THE WEEK IS GONNA BE THIS MUCH OF A DOWNER...



D-DIDN'T W-WE J-JUST G-G-GO TH-THROUGH T-THIS ON-N-N TH-TH W-WAY UP-P-P??

ACCESSING DISC NAVIGATIONAL DATABASE... ENGAGING AUTO-PILOT.



WE'VE GOT AN UNIDENTIFIED, MULTIBIZ-BRAND CRAFT ON DESCENT, COMMANDER SULLIVAN... IT'S JUST GONE SUB-ORBITAL.

I SEE IT, MR. GALENO...



...IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ABOUT TO HAVE VISITORS!



I COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE, MADAM, THAT YOUR COMPANY SKIPPED ON LITTLE PEANUT PACKS DURING BOTH FLIGHTS!

YOU'VE MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE IN LEAVING THEIR EMPLOY!



AT LEAST YOU COULD SEE THEM COMING!

NO ONE MOVE -- HANDS HIGH!

EARTH CORPS!



LOWER YOUR WEAPONS! THESE ARE INVITED GUESTS!

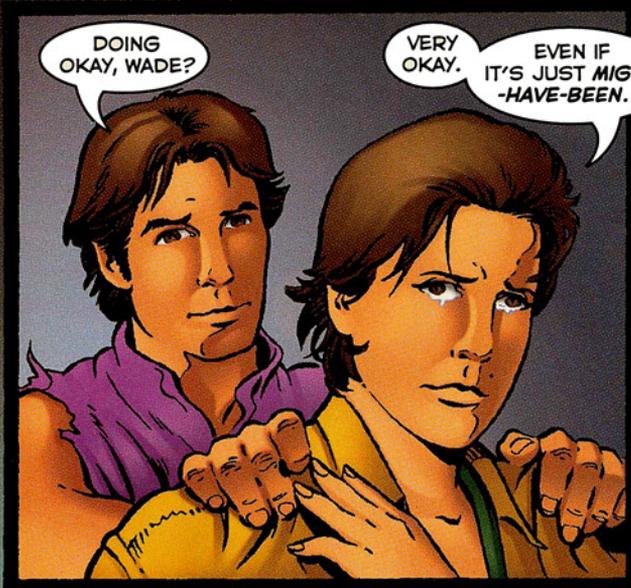


AND I'VE A FEELING I HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR THE RSVP, YOUNG LADY!



WE CAN BOTH THANK HER, SULLIVAN!  
AND HER NAME IS "WADE."

I KNOW, BONNIE... I KNOW!



DOING OKAY, WADE?

VERY OKAY.

EVEN IF IT'S JUST MIGHT -HAVE-BEEN...

I DON'T WANT TO CAST A DOWNER ON THIS TOUCHY-FEELY GOODNESS...

...BUT AIN'T YOU THE PEOPLE STICKING YOUR GREEN THUMB UP THIS PLANET'S --

THAT'S SUFFICIENTLY COLORFUL, MR. BROWN, THANK YOU! I SECOND HIS SENTIMENTS, THOUGH.

EARTH CORPS' ACTIONS ARE *SPITEFUL* AND DESTRUCTIVE!



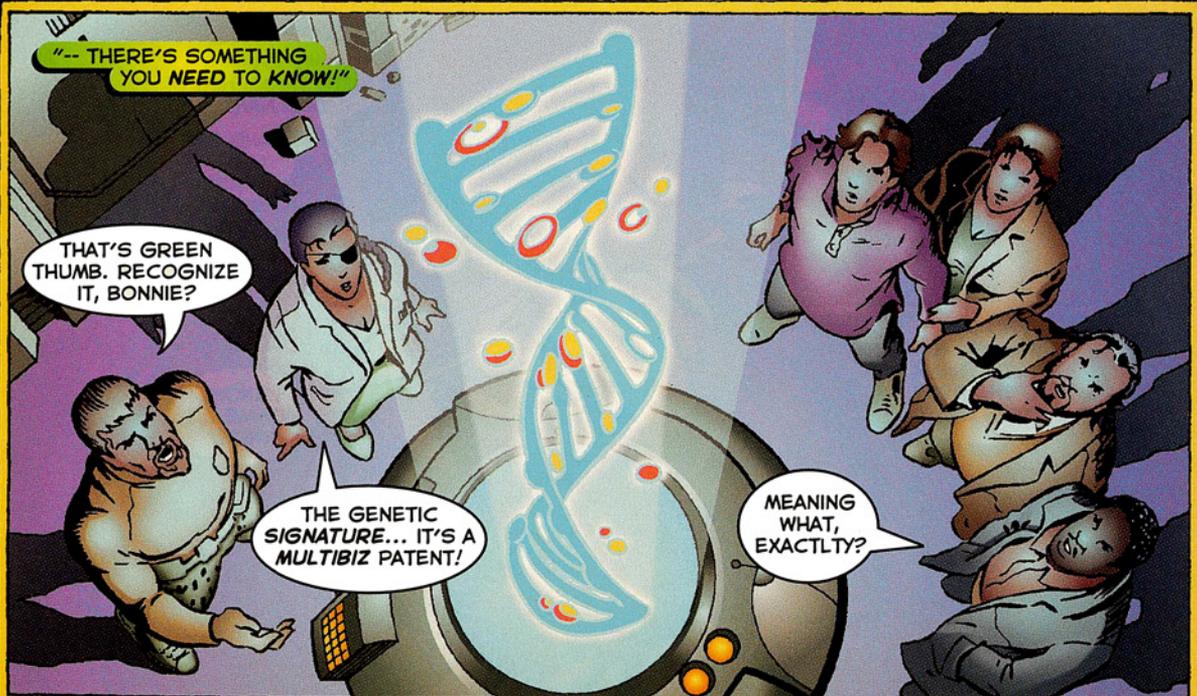
YOU *HAVE* GONE TOO FAR WITH THIS, SULLIVAN...



NOW LADIES... BEFORE YOU TAKE MY HEAD --



TELL HIM, MOM!

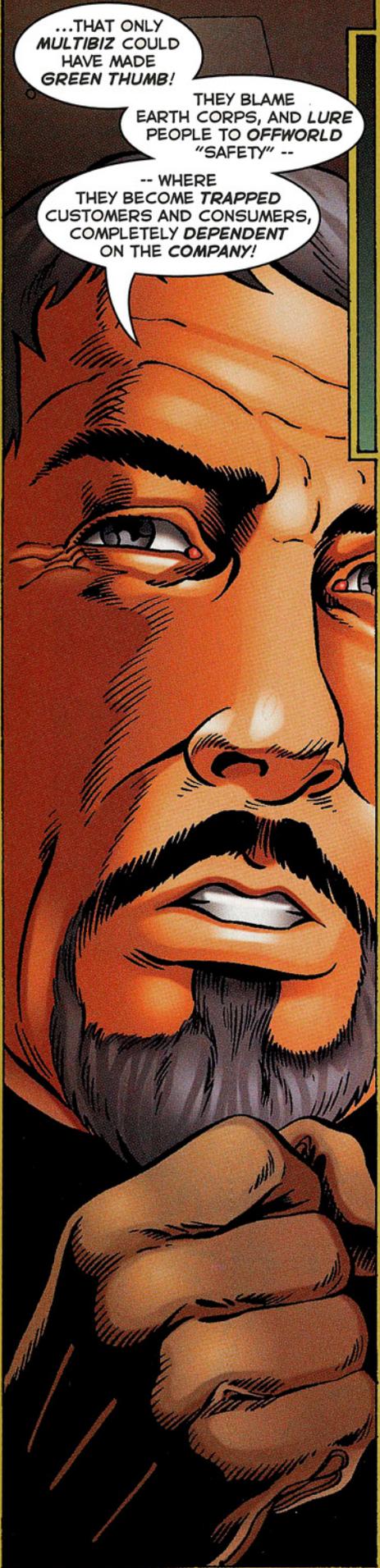


"-- THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO KNOW!"

THAT'S GREEN THUMB. RECOGNIZE IT, BONNIE?

THE GENETIC SIGNATURE... IT'S A MULTIBIZ PATENT!

MEANING WHAT, EXACTLY?



...THAT ONLY  
**MULTIBIZ** COULD  
HAVE MADE  
**GREEN THUMB!**

THEY BLAME  
EARTH CORPS, AND LURE  
PEOPLE TO OFFWORLD  
"SAFETY" --

-- WHERE  
THEY BECOME **TRAPPED**  
CUSTOMERS AND CONSUMERS,  
COMPLETELY **DEPENDENT**  
ON THE COMPANY!



LIKE THE MUSIC  
INDUSTRY PRICE  
GOUGING CDS!



MAKE WHAT  
COMPARISONS YOU LIKE  
MR. BROWN -- IT IS A WHOLLY  
**INSIDIOUS BUSINESS!**

YOU'VE GOT TO  
GET THE TRUTH UP  
THERE, SULLIVAN!

WE'VE BEEN  
**RAIDING THEIR LAUNCH**  
CENTERS, TRYING TO STOP  
MORE PEOPLE FROM  
BECOMING CATTLE!

BUT BEYOND  
THAT... THEY JAM ALL  
OUR **SPACEBOUND**  
**TRANSMISSIONS!**



WELL, IF WE  
CAN HELP YOU GET  
THE **WORD** OUT, LET  
US KNOW SOON.



WE SLIDE  
OUT OF HERE IN  
UNDER **TWELVE**  
**HOURS...**



AND SEVERAL OF THOSE HOURS LATER...

I FORGOT TO ASK HOW IT WENT WITH THE PROFESSOR'S CHECK-UP, Q-BALL...

...DID THEY THROW A BAND-AID ON HIM OKAY?

THE TRUTH OF IT IS, REMBRANDT...



THIS "GREEN THUMB" HAS RETURNED MANY PLANTS WE THOUGHT GONE FOREVER, SEÑOR ARTURO!

THIS ONE, MY GRANDMOTHER SPOKE OF AS HAVING GREAT HEALING POWER!



AS TO WHETHER IT CAN HEAL AWAY WHAT GROWS INSIDE YOU NOW...

I UNDERSTAND, MR. GALENO. NO GUARANTEES!

BUT YOU HAVE MY SINCERE GRATITUDE FOR YOUR EFFORTS!

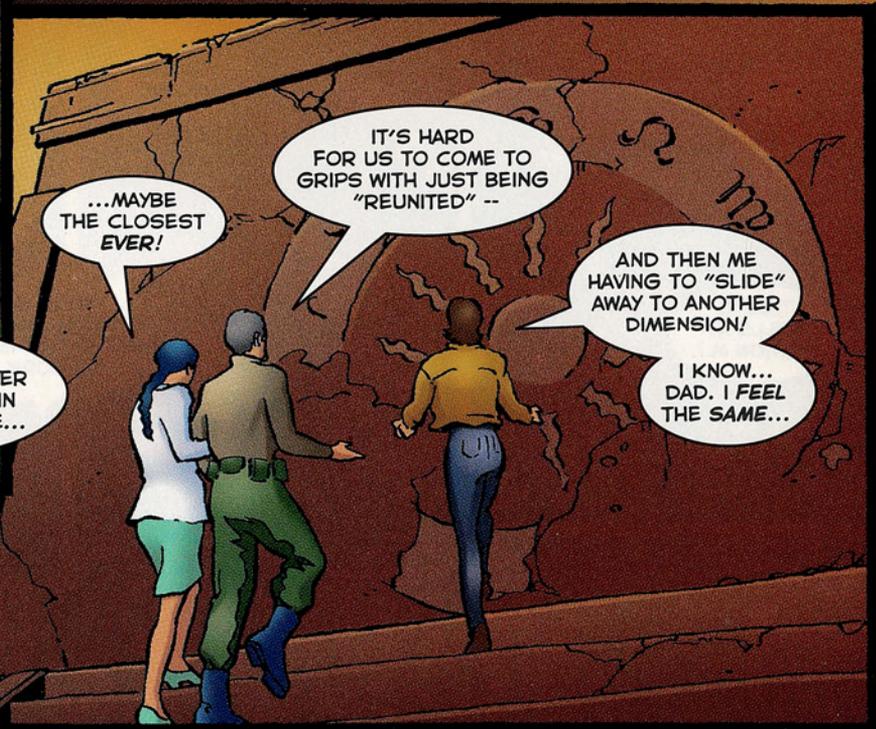


HE'S GOING TO BE FINE, REMBRANDT...

...JUST FINE...



THIS IS THE CLOSEST WE'VE EVER HAD TO A FAMILY IN A LONG TIME, WADE...



...MAYBE THE CLOSEST EVER!

IT'S HARD FOR US TO COME TO GRIPS WITH JUST BEING "REUNITED" --

AND THEN ME HAVING TO "SLIDE" AWAY TO ANOTHER DIMENSION!

I KNOW... DAD. I FEEL THE SAME...



...I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT A LOT. AND ABOUT WHAT YOU -- OR MY PARENTS -- USED TO STAND BY. "BELIEVE, EMBRACE, DEFEND."

I THINK THERE'S A WAY TO GET YOUR MESSAGE UP ABOVE THE ATMOSPHERE. IF YOU'RE WILLING TO TAKE A BIG CHANCE. IT'S LIKE THIS --

ARE YOU **CRAZY!!**



THEN AGAIN... IT JUST MIGHT WORK!



ONE HOUR TO SLIDE...

THIS IS WELLS AT STATION M...

...STAY SHARP, TROOPS!

WE'VE GOT TO HIT OUR MARKS JUST RIGHT IF THIS IS GOING TO WORK...

GET EVERYONE CLEAR OF THE FIRE ZONES -- I WANT NO ONE HURT!

...AND IF WE'RE GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS WITHOUT OUR BELIEF SYSTEM TOO BADLY BURNED!

ON MY SIGNAL -- LIGHT 'EM UP!

MR. BENNISH! WE'RE PICKING UP UNUSUAL THERMAL ACTMITY FROM PLANETSIDE!

I JUST KNOW THIS IS GONNA SUCK...



LOOK!

I don't believe it!

what does it mean?

**Attention!**

A LIMITED 75 PERCENT OFF SALE IS NOW IN EFFECT ON ALL MERCHANDISE!

UM... MAKE THAT 85 PERCENT!

SHOP EARLY SHOP OFTEN! STEP AWAY FROM THE WINDOWS AND SHOP NOW!

GREEN THUMB IS MULTIBIZ

WHAT YOU'RE SEEING BELOW IS, UM, CLEARLY, ANOTHER ACT OF EARTH CORPS TERRORISM AGAINST OUR BELOVED PLANET!

MULTIBIZ



IS IF THEY WERE TELLING THE TRUTH! DAMNED MULTIBIZ CONNED US ALL!



THINGS ARE REALLY GOING TO GET UGLY WHEN THEY START WANTING REFUNDS!

WE MAY BE HAVING TO CHANGE OUR PROFIT MODEL...





I THINK...  
IN A WAY...  
IT'S HARDER  
THIS TIME.

YES. KNOWING  
WHO YOU'VE BECOME --  
WHO OUR WADE MIGHT  
HAVE BEEN --

-- AND HOW  
PROUD WE ARE  
OF YOU!



THANK YOU  
BOTH. I CAN  
HONESTLY  
SAY...

...I'LL  
NEVER  
FORGET  
YOU!

*KWTOOSH*



THERE'S THE  
PORTAL -- TIME  
TO SLIDE!

THE LAWS OF SPACE TURN ON THEIR  
HEAD. AN INSTANTANEOUS MOMENT  
OF TRAVEL SEEMS TO STRETCH OUT.



QUINN MALLORY USES THE TIME  
TO WORRY OVER THE FATE OF  
HIS FRIEND AND MENTOR.

AND WADE WELLS GIVES THANKS  
FOR HER LONGTIME WISH... FINALLY  
BEING GRANTED.

