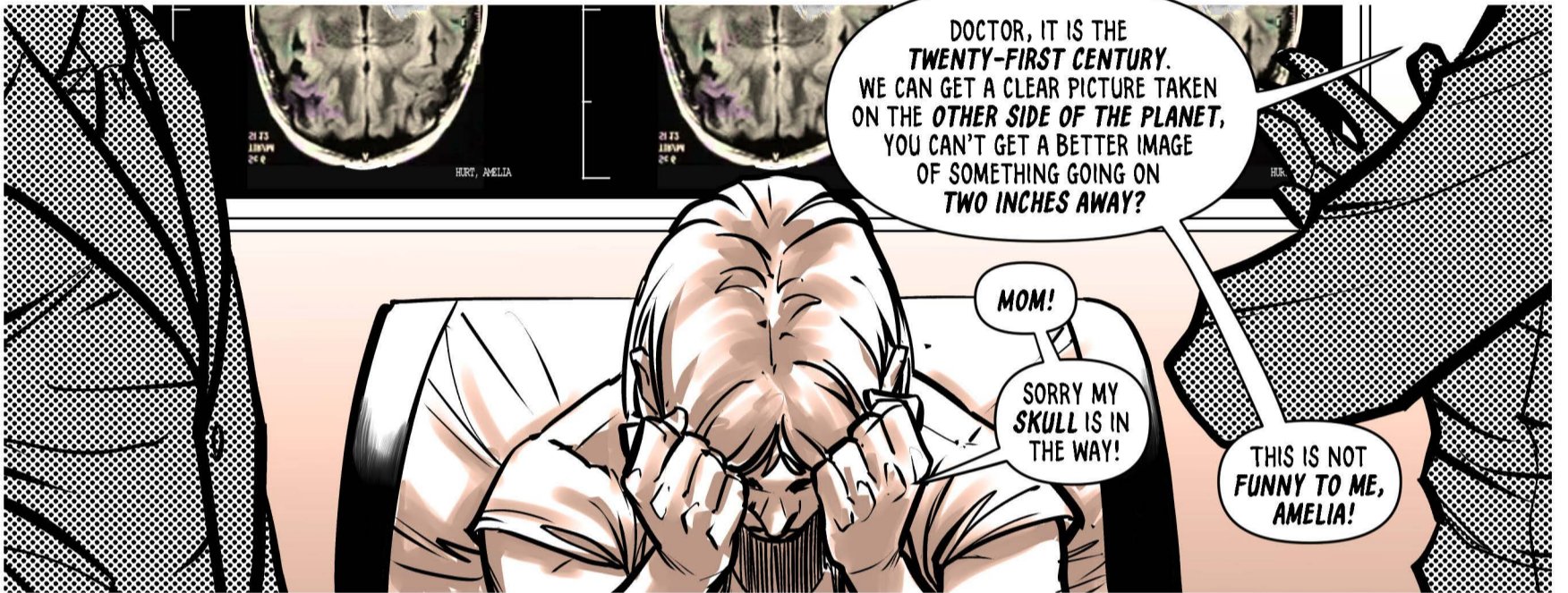


THEN

OBVIOUSLY... THIS ISN'T WHAT WE WANTED TO SEE.

RAPID GROWTH LIKE THIS MAKES IT CLEAR-- WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S NOT RESPONDING TO THIS TREATMENT... WHICH MEANS WE'RE BACK TO SQUARE ONE.

ARE YOU... KIDDING ME?!

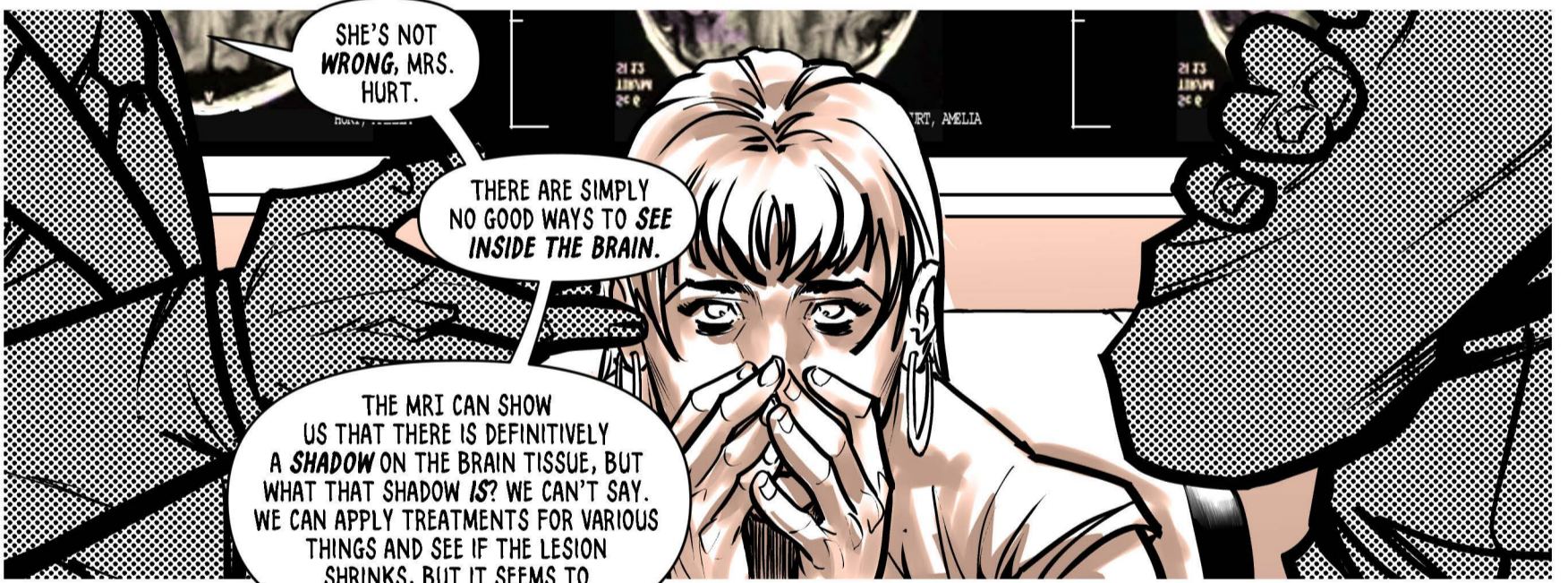


DOCTOR, IT IS THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY. WE CAN GET A CLEAR PICTURE TAKEN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLANET, YOU CAN'T GET A BETTER IMAGE OF SOMETHING GOING ON TWO INCHES AWAY?

MOM!

SORRY MY SKULL IS IN THE WAY!

THIS IS NOT FUNNY TO ME, AMELIA!



SHE'S NOT WRONG, MRS. HURT.

THERE ARE SIMPLY NO GOOD WAYS TO SEE INSIDE THE BRAIN.

THE MRI CAN SHOW US THAT THERE IS DEFINITELY A *SHADOW* ON THE BRAIN TISSUE, BUT WHAT THAT SHADOW *IS*? WE CAN'T SAY. WE CAN APPLY TREATMENTS FOR VARIOUS THINGS AND SEE IF THE LESION SHRINKS, BUT IT SEEMS TO HAVE *GROWN*.



THAT SPEAKS TO IT BEING SOMETHING... AGGRESSIVE. WHICH SPEAKS TO MALIGNANCY--

NO!



NOW

IT'S A STUPID PAPERWORK THING, MOM. I JUST NEED THE HOMEOWNER TO APPROVE THE METATOUR BEING LAUNCHED FROM *THIS* LOCATION. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING AND IT ISN'T DANGEROUS. PLEASE.

AND DON'T YELL, NAOMI'S HERE AND YOU'RE ON SPEAKER.

HIII MAMA HURT. HOW'S THE SYDNEY PLACE?

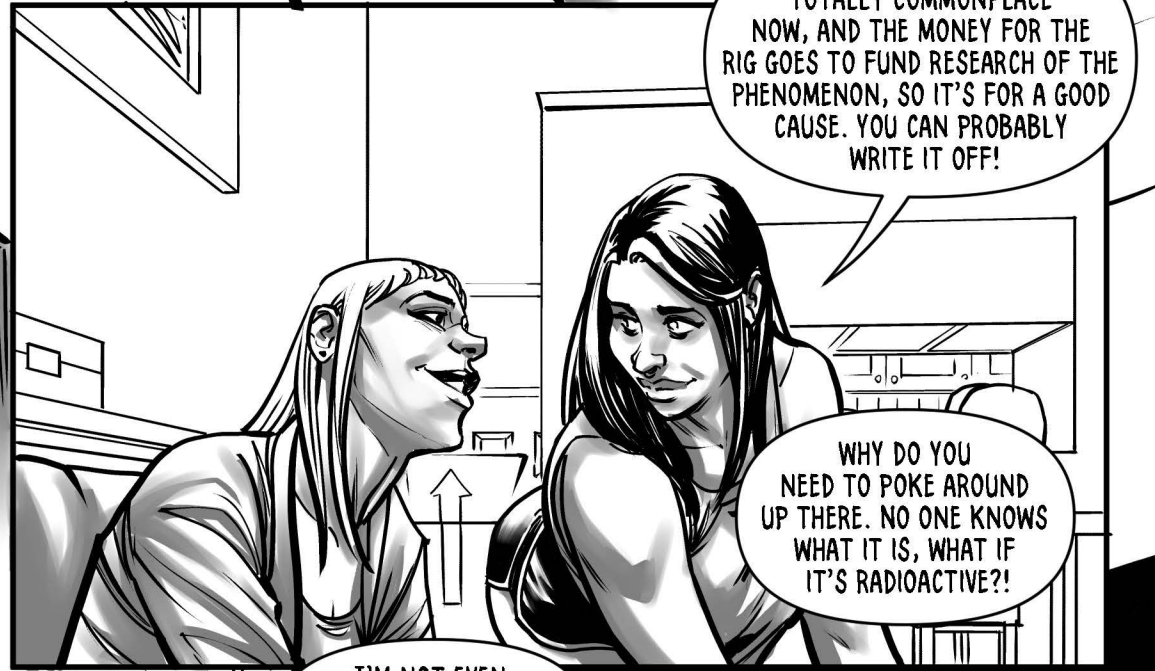
HI HONEY, IT'S FINE. GLAD YOU'RE THERE.

AMELIA, I THINK THIS CAN WAIT UNTIL I GET HOME. NAOMI, DON'T YOU THINK THIS CAN WAIT UNTIL I GET HOME?

MOTHER, DON'T INVITE HER TO ARGUE--

I'M ON AMELIA'S SIDE!

META-TOURS ARE TOTALLY COMMONPLACE NOW, AND THE MONEY FOR THE RIG GOES TO FUND RESEARCH OF THE PHENOMENON, SO IT'S FOR A GOOD CAUSE. YOU CAN PROBABLY WRITE IT OFF!



WHY DO YOU NEED TO POKE AROUND UP THERE. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT IT IS, WHAT IF IT'S RADIOACTIVE?!

I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO PHYSICALLY BE THERE, MOM, IT'S A VIRTUAL TOUR.

MAYBE...AMELIA CAN WRITE A BOOK ABOUT WHAT SHE SEES THERE? THAT WOULD BE CREATIVE AND COOL, RIGHT?



YES, I DID.

IS THIS YOU BEING RECKLESS? I DON'T LIKE IT, AMELIA. EVER SINCE YOU HAD THAT LITTLE BRAIN THING--

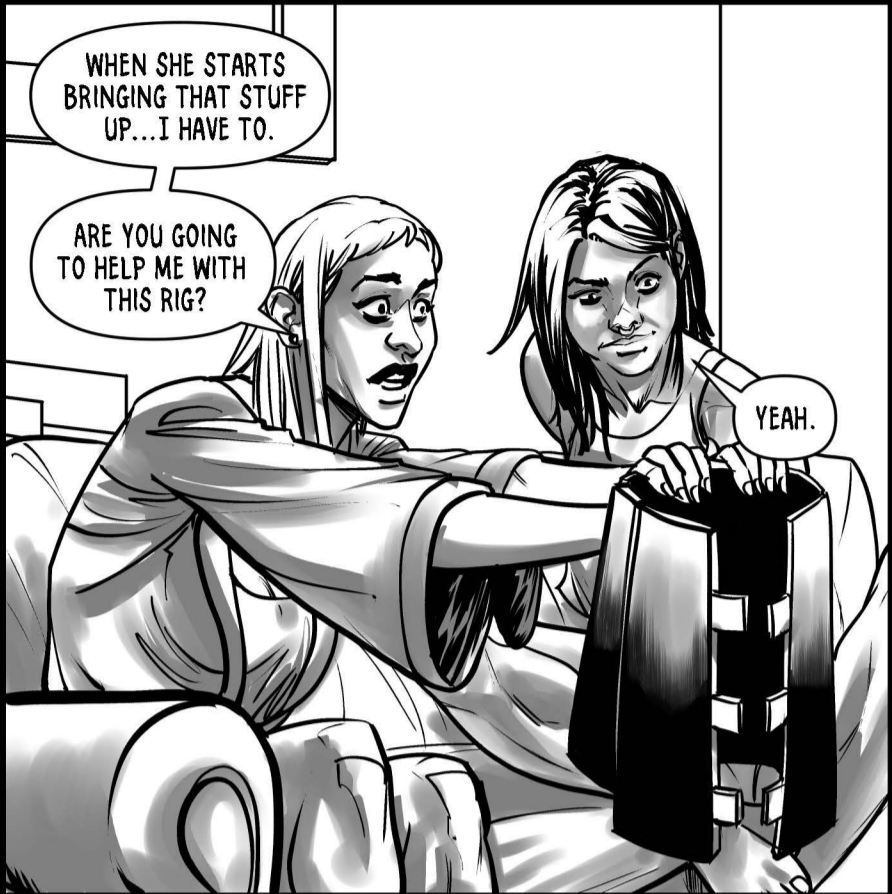
THAT WOULD BE! HONEY, DID YOU HEAR WHAT NAOMI JUST SAID?



I GOTTA GO, MOM. I'M GONNA SEND YOU THE EMAIL, YOU JUST NEED TO LOGIN AND APPROVE IT SO I CAN DO THE TOUR FROM HERE.

BEEP

DID YOU JUST HANG UP ON HER?



WHEN SHE STARTS BRINGING THAT STUFF UP... I HAVE TO.

ARE YOU GOING TO HELP ME WITH THIS RIG?

YEAH.



WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST GO TO ONE OF THE FIRST UNIVERSITY CENTERS WHERE ANYONE CAN META-TOUR THE CITY? MY CLASS DID IT WHEN I WAS A FRESHMAN IN COLLEGE, AND YOU WOULDN'T NEED YOUR MOM'S PERMISSION.

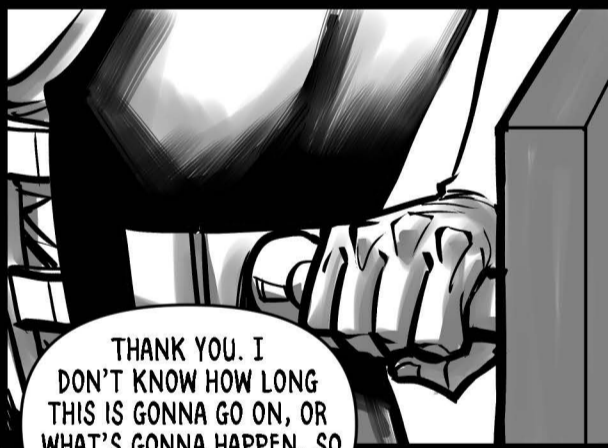
BECAUSE I WANT TO DO IT ALONE.

RIGHT. SUPER SECRET PERSONAL STUFF. AMELIA STUFF.

NAOMI...



I'M KIDDINGGGG. I MADE YOU SNACKS. EAT UP BEFORE YOU GO?



THANK YOU. I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THIS IS GONNA GO ON, OR WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN, SO I AM GLAD TO HAVE YOU HERE.



TOTALLY. I'M USUALLY THE BABYSITTER WHEN MY FRIENDS TRIP, AND THIS IS JUST LIKE...A DIFFERENT KIND OF TRIP.



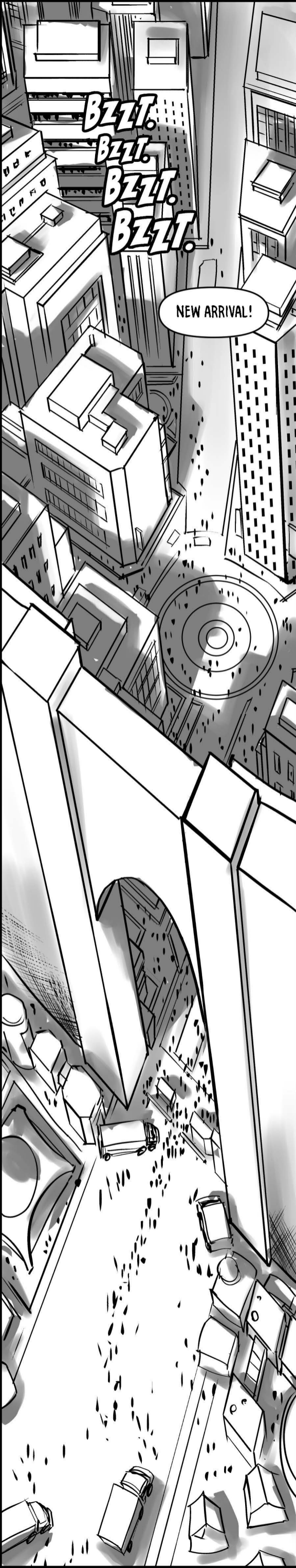
BEEP

OH MY GOD. SHE APPROVED IT.

HEY, IF I START SEIZING OR SOMETHING, DON'T UNPLUG IT, OKAY? JUST CALL THE CUSTOMER SERVICE LINE ON THE RIG.



GOTTA GO.

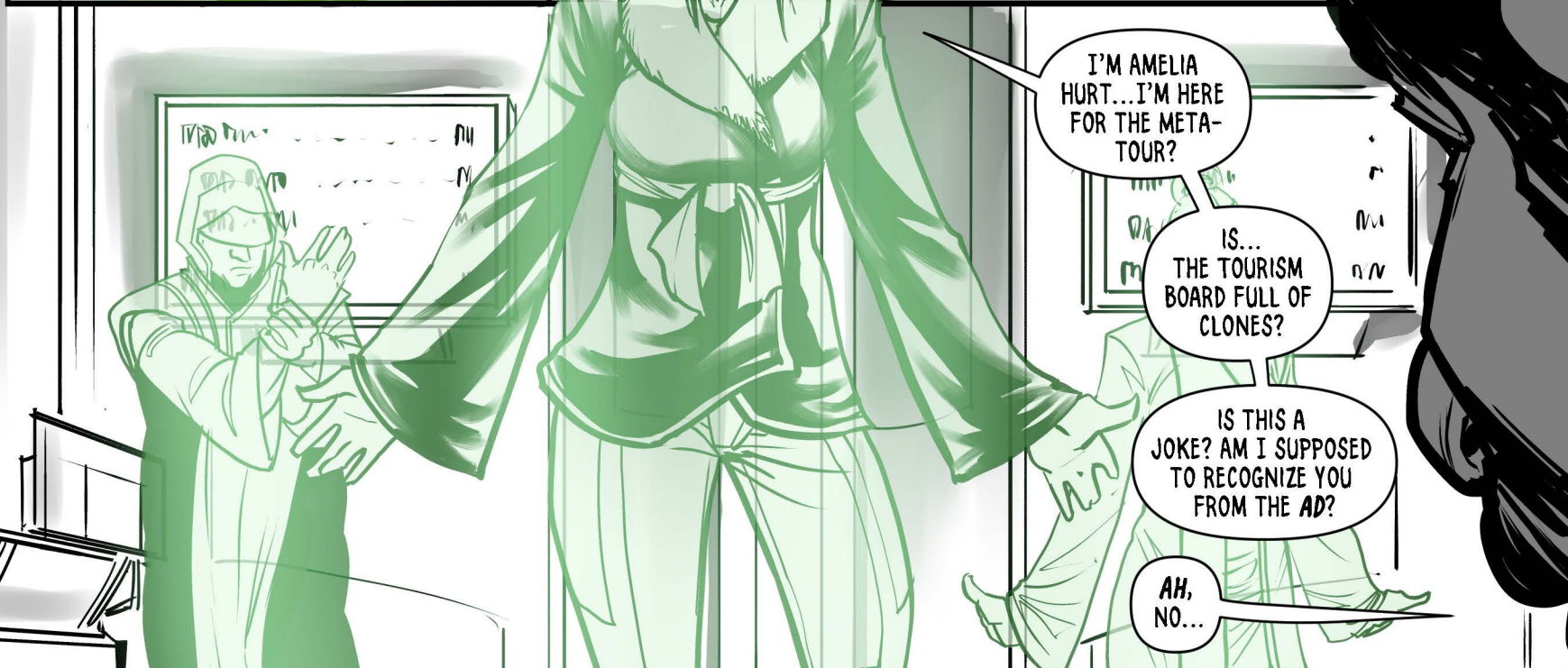




AMBROSE SOMERSET.

TOURISM BOARD.

HEY.

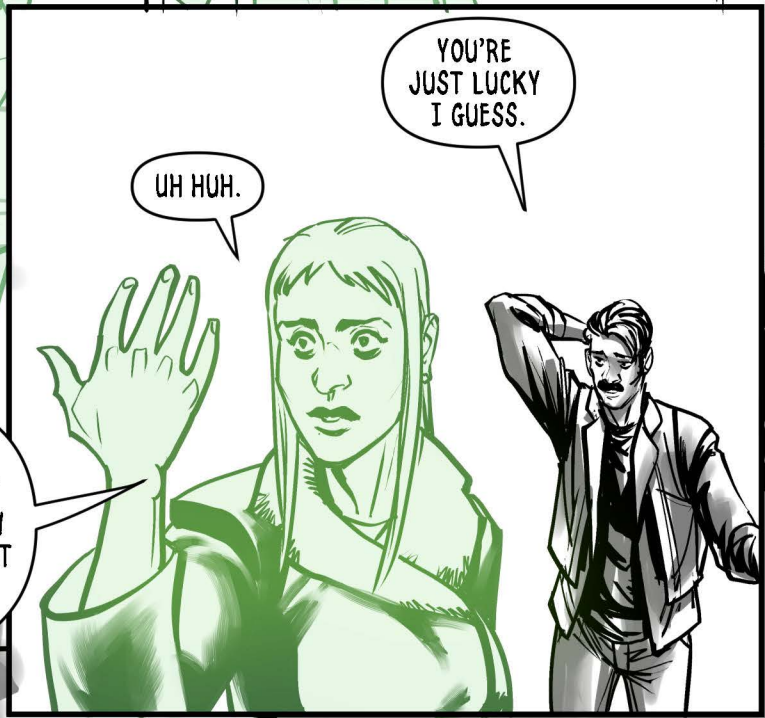


I'M AMELIA HURT... I'M HERE FOR THE META-TOUR?

IS... THE TOURISM BOARD FULL OF CLONES?

IS THIS A JOKE? AM I SUPPOSED TO RECOGNIZE YOU FROM THE AD?

AH, NO...



YOU'RE JUST LUCKY I GUESS.

UH HUH.

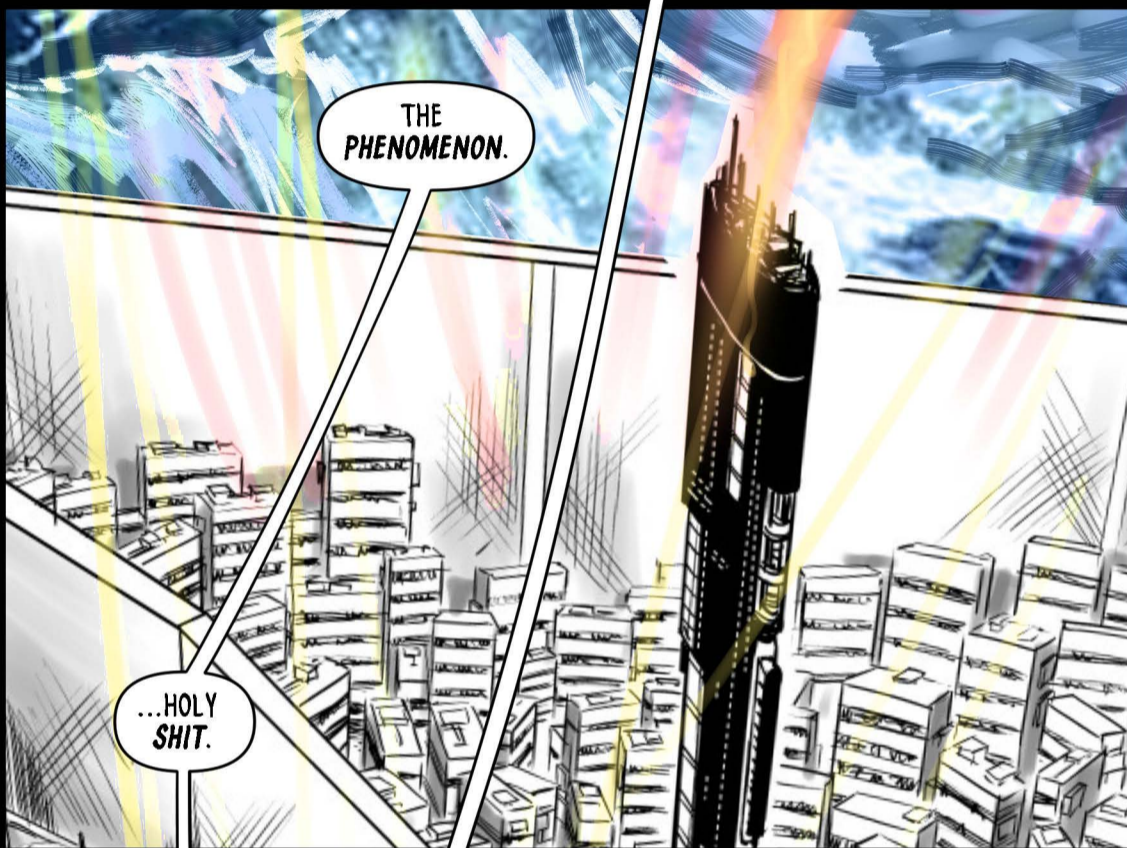


YOU'RE HERE ON A PERSONAL RIG, SO THAT MEANS YOU'RE PROBABLY HERE TO SEE SOMETHING SPECIFIC, YES? NO ONE SPENDS THAT KIND OF MONEY IF THEY'RE MERELY CURIOUS. I CAN ASSIST YOU WITH WHAT YOU NEED.

BUT IF YOU'RE ASKING ME, FIRST THINGS FIRST?



...I SUGGEST YOU LOOK UP.



THE PHENOMENON.

...HOLY SHIT.



LIKE "ALIENS" IS A FINE ANSWER.

I'M ACTUALLY NOT HERE TO SIGHT-SEE. I'M LOOKING FOR INFORMATION. A FRIEND OF MINE DIED HERE.

DRE WOODROW.



HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT? DID YOU KNOW HER?

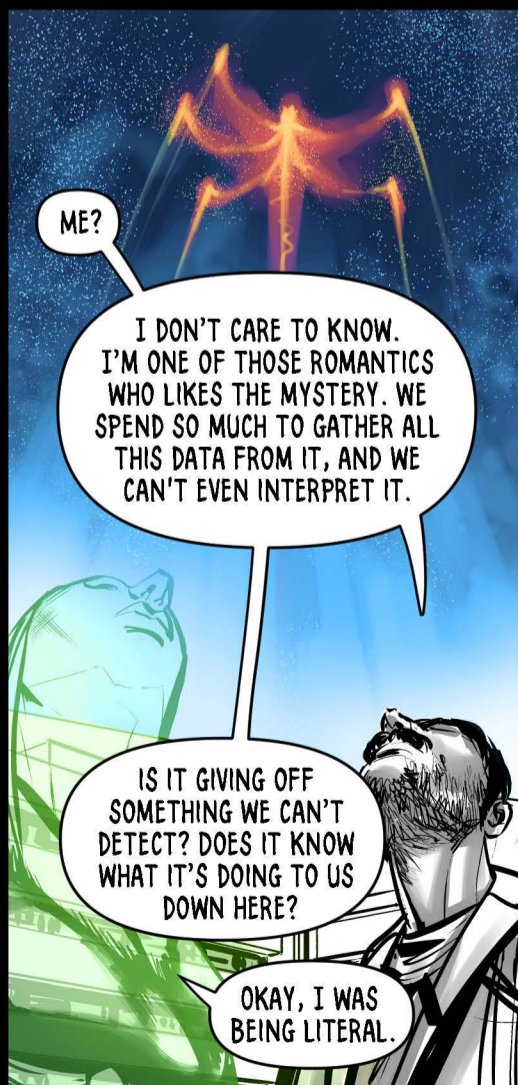
I KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE CITY. IT'S MY JOB.

IT'S RARE FOR SOMEONE TO DIE HERE. RARER STILL... FOR PEOPLE TO KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT.



IT'S DIFFERENT TO BE DIRECTLY UNDER IT LIKE THIS. EVEN IF YOU'RE JUST A HOLOGRAM.

IT IS PRETTY WILD...WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS?

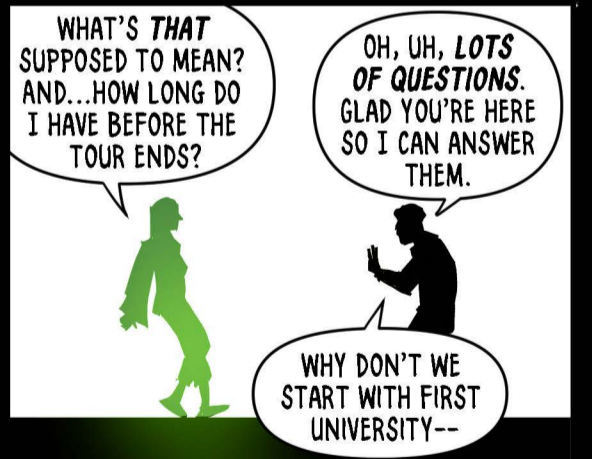


ME?

I DON'T CARE TO KNOW. I'M ONE OF THOSE ROMANTICS WHO LIKES THE MYSTERY. WE SPEND SO MUCH TO GATHER ALL THIS DATA FROM IT, AND WE CAN'T EVEN INTERPRET IT.

IS IT GIVING OFF SOMETHING WE CAN'T DETECT? DOES IT KNOW WHAT IT'S DOING TO US DOWN HERE?

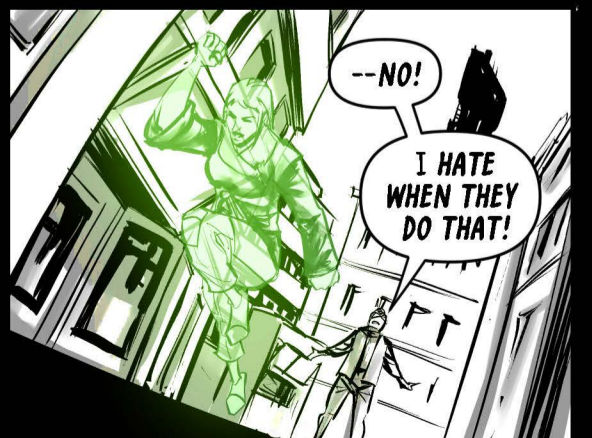
OKAY, I WAS BEING LITERAL.



WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? AND...HOW LONG DO I HAVE BEFORE THE TOUR ENDS?

OH, UH, LOTS OF QUESTIONS. GLAD YOU'RE HERE SO I CAN ANSWER THEM.

WHY DON'T WE START WITH FIRST UNIVERSITY--



--NO!

I HATE WHEN THEY DO THAT!



TOURISM BOARD! ON YOUR FEET!

WE'VE GOT A RUNNER.

IT'S JUST A META-TOUR, SHE CAN'T EVEN BREAK ANYTHING.

JUST LET THE TOUR PATROLS SHUT HER DOWN! THEY'LL BE SO EXCITED TO USE THEIR LITTLE BLASTERS.



WE WANT TO ENCOURAGE META-TOURISTS, NOT SHOOT AT THEM!

FIRST OF ALL, THAT IS ABSOLUTELY NOT IN THE SPIRIT OF THE BOARD.



BUT THERE ARE A LOT OF SENSITIVE INSTRUMENTS GATHERING DATA OUT HERE, AND THE UNIVERSITIES SPEND A LOT OF MONEY TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE PROTECTED.

IF THEY HAVE TO SHOOT HER WITH THE EMPS, SHE'S BANNED FROM THE CITY FOR LIFE.

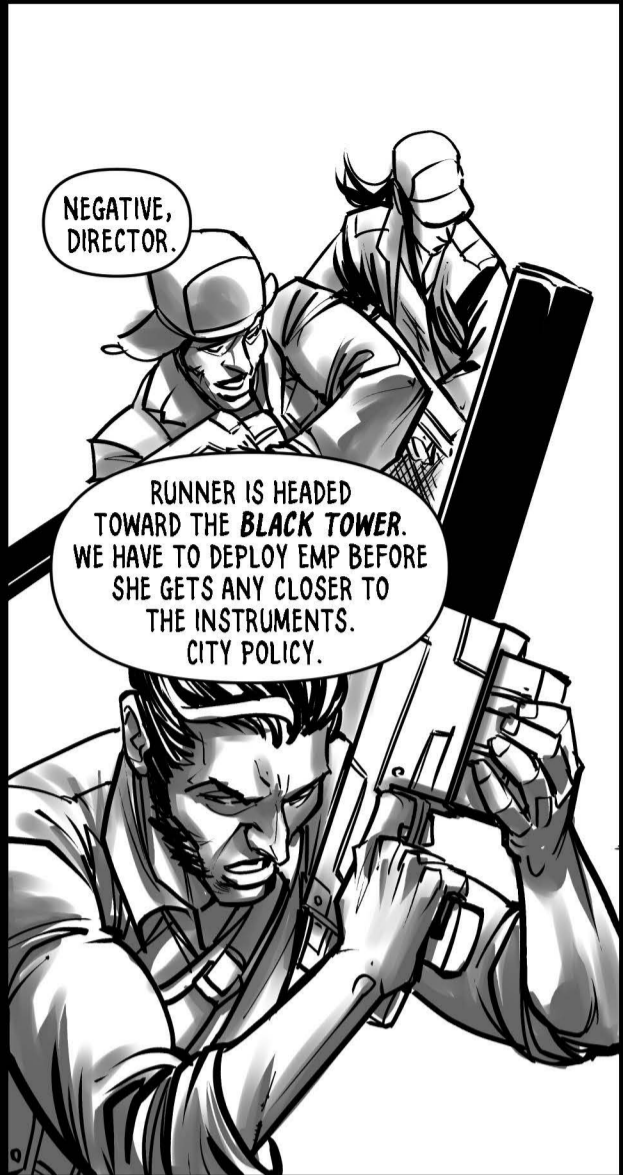


WHY AM I OUT OF BREATH?

NAOMI, I HOPE YOU'RE NOT TAKING PICTURES OF ME RUNNING IN PLACE LIKE A DOG IN HER SLEEP...



TOURISM BOARD, THIS IS DIRECTOR AMBROSE SOMERSET. WE HAVE A META-TOUR RUNNER, DO NOT BRING HER DOWN, I REPEAT, DO NOT--



NEGATIVE, DIRECTOR.

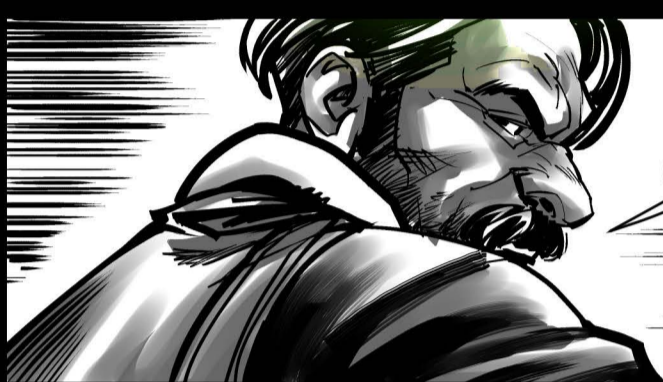
RUNNER IS HEADED TOWARD THE **BLACK TOWER**. WE HAVE TO DEPLOY EMP BEFORE SHE GETS ANY CLOSER TO THE INSTRUMENTS. CITY POLICY.



WHAT THE FUCK?!

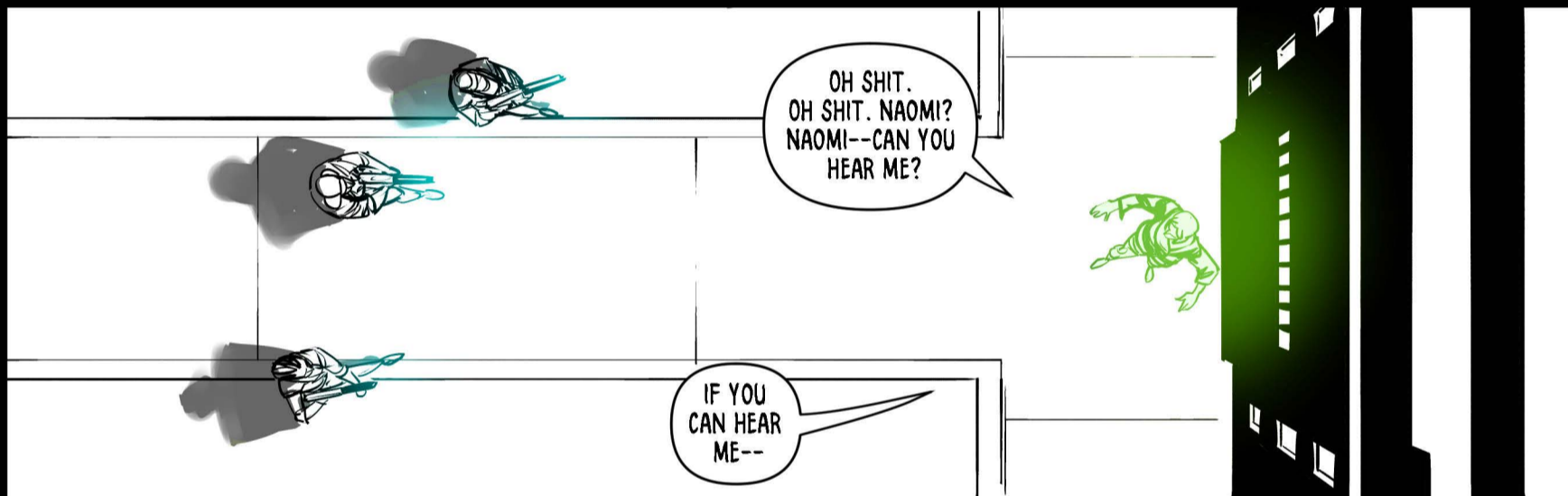
ZOMB
ZOMB

WHY ARE YOU SHOOTING AT ME, I'M A FUCKING HOLOGRAM!



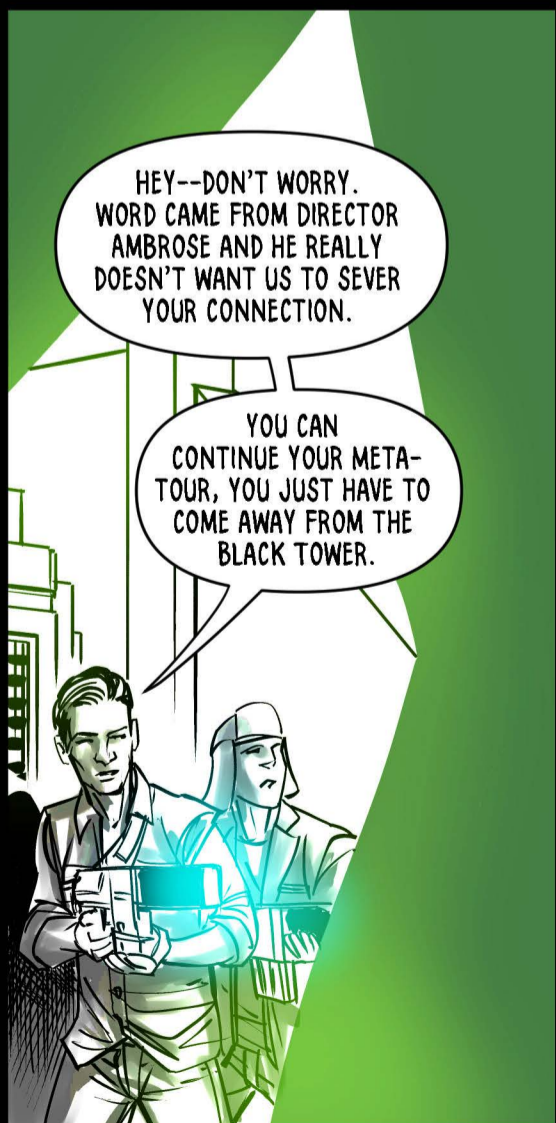
STOP! SHE'S LOOKING FOR SOMEONE, DON'T SHOOT HER!

TRY AND SURROUND HER, MAYBE!



OH SHIT. OH SHIT. NAOMI? NAOMI--CAN YOU HEAR ME?

IF YOU CAN HEAR ME--

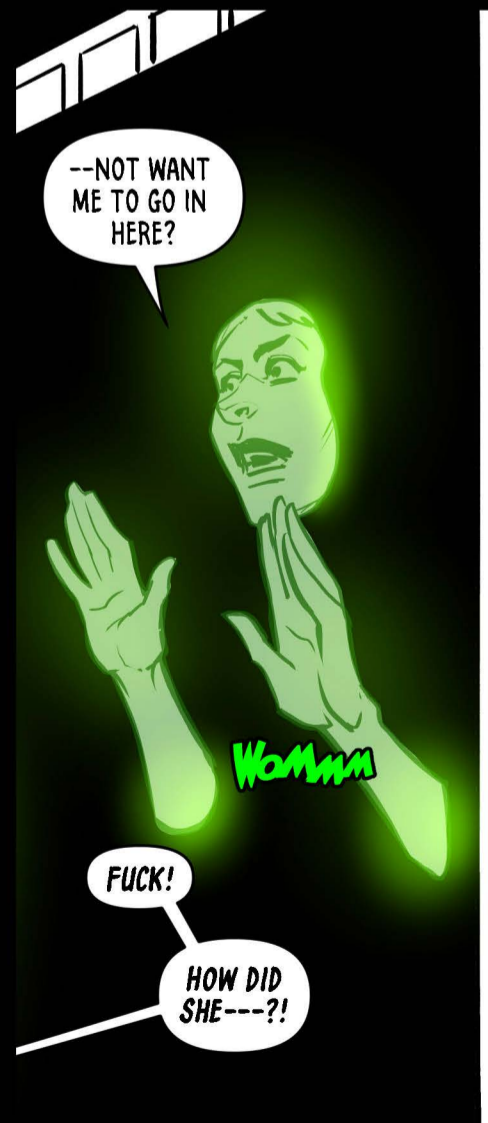


HEY--DON'T WORRY. WORD CAME FROM DIRECTOR AMBROSE AND HE REALLY DOESN'T WANT US TO SEVER YOUR CONNECTION.

YOU CAN CONTINUE YOUR META-TOUR, YOU JUST HAVE TO COME AWAY FROM THE BLACK TOWER.



WHY?
DO YOU...



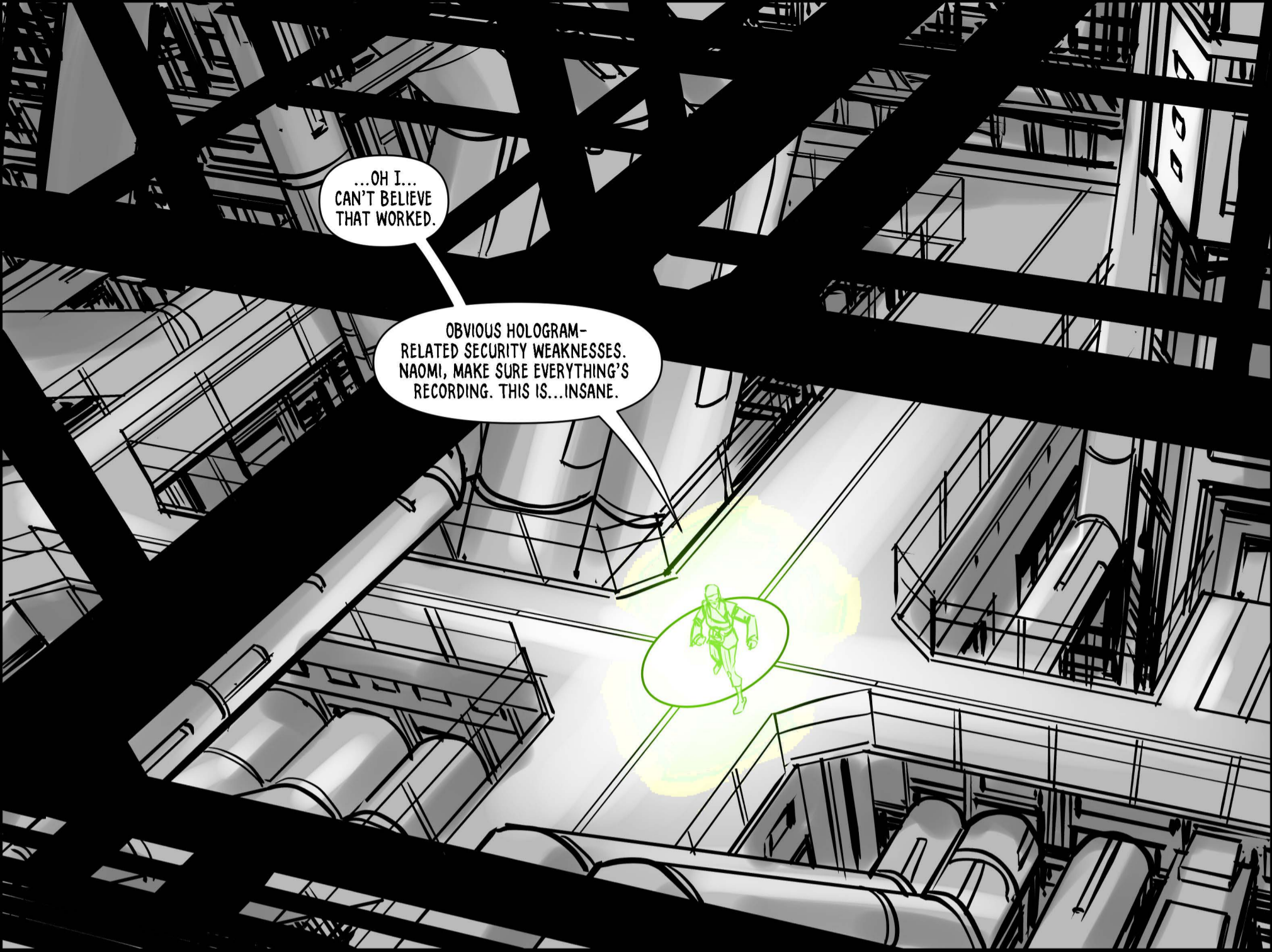
--NOT WANT ME TO GO IN HERE?

Waaaa

FUCK!
HOW DID SHE---?!

...OH I...
CAN'T BELIEVE
THAT WORKED.

OBVIOUS HOLOGRAM-
RELATED SECURITY WEAKNESSES.
NAOMI, MAKE SURE EVERYTHING'S
RECORDING. THIS IS...INSANE.



MAYBE I'LL
COME STAY WITH
MY NEW FRIENDS AT
THE TOURISM BOARD. WORK
AS A SECURITY
CONSULTANT.

I GUESS I
CAN SEE HOW
PEOPLE GET STUCK
LOOKING INTO
THINGS HERE--



-HUH?



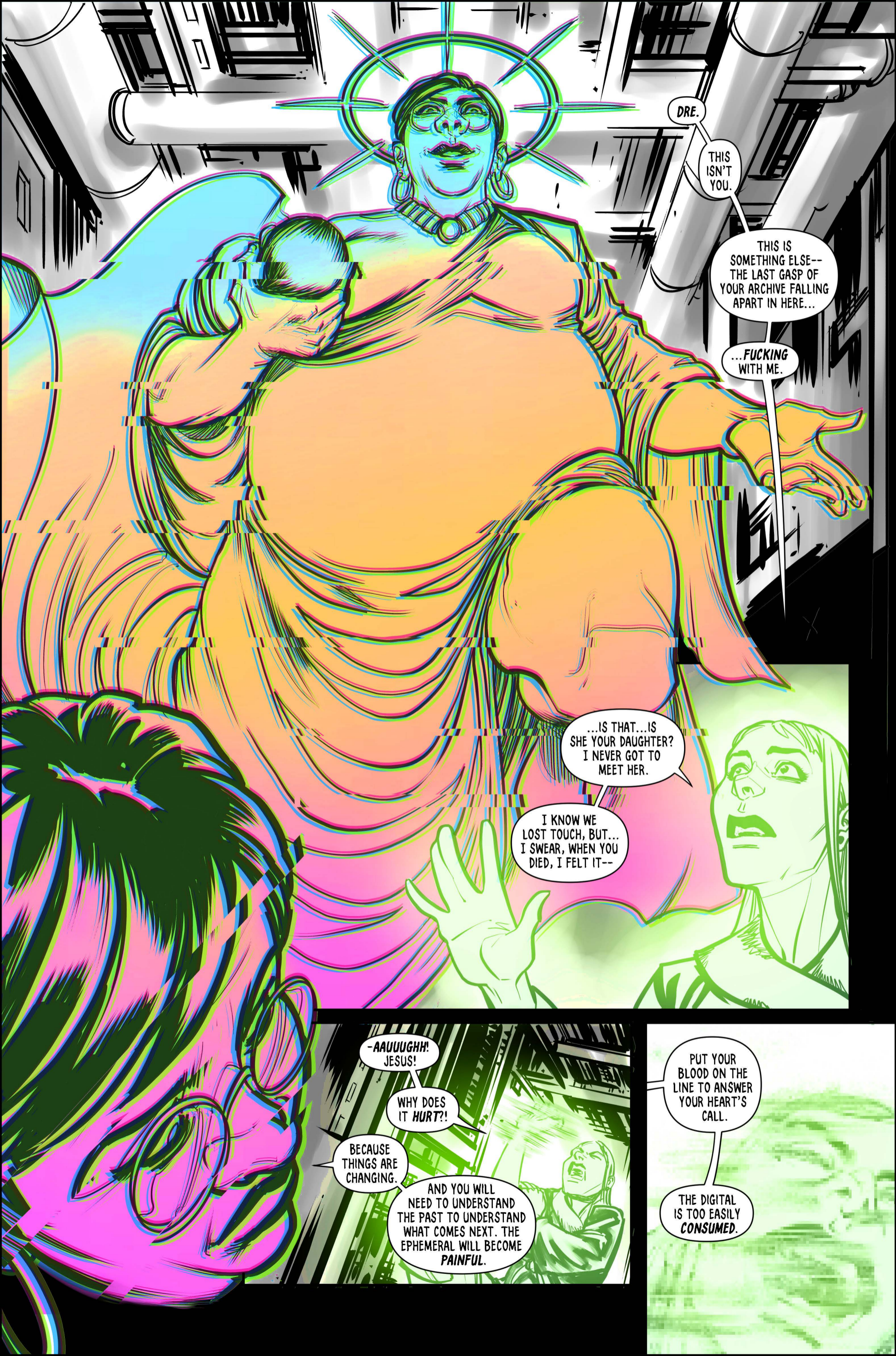
-AAAH!

THINK



A--MEE--
LLI--A?
IS TH--AT
--YOU?

NO
WAY.



DRE.

THIS ISN'T YOU.

THIS IS SOMETHING ELSE-- THE LAST GASP OF YOUR ARCHIVE FALLING APART IN HERE...

...**FUCKING** WITH ME.

...IS THAT... IS SHE YOUR DAUGHTER? I NEVER GOT TO MEET HER.

I KNOW WE LOST TOUCH, BUT... I SWEAR, WHEN YOU DIED, I FELT IT--



-**AAUUUGHH!** JESUS!

WHY DOES IT **HURT?**!

BECAUSE THINGS ARE CHANGING.

AND YOU WILL NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE PAST TO UNDERSTAND WHAT COMES NEXT. THE EPHEMERAL WILL BECOME **PAINFUL.**

PUT YOUR BLOOD ON THE LINE TO ANSWER YOUR HEART'S CALL.

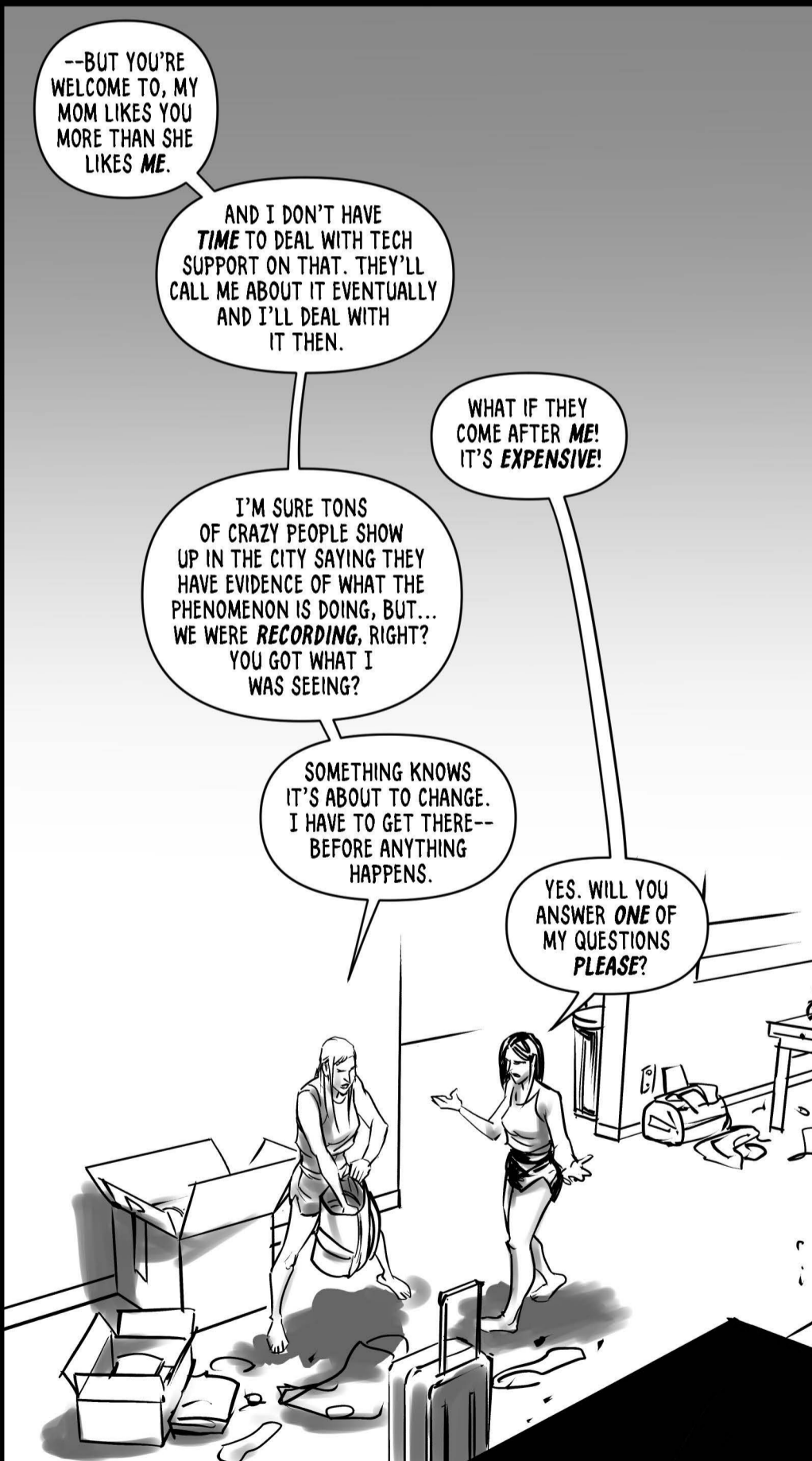
THE DIGITAL IS TOO EASILY **CONSUMED.**



YOU'RE JUST GOING TO LEAVE ME IN YOUR MOTHER'S APARTMENT WHILE YOU RUN OFF TO SOME CANADIAN RESEARCH SITE?

WHAT ABOUT THE RIG? YOU HAVE TO CALL TECH SUPPORT ON THAT THING, IT'S **TOTALLY FRIED**. WHAT DID YOU DO TO IT?!

FIRST OF ALL, YOU DON'T **HAVE** TO STAY HERE--



--BUT YOU'RE WELCOME TO, MY MOM LIKES YOU MORE THAN SHE LIKES **ME**.

AND I DON'T HAVE **TIME** TO DEAL WITH TECH SUPPORT ON THAT. THEY'LL CALL ME ABOUT IT EVENTUALLY AND I'LL DEAL WITH IT THEN.

WHAT IF THEY COME AFTER **ME!** IT'S **EXPENSIVE!**

I'M SURE TONS OF CRAZY PEOPLE SHOW UP IN THE CITY SAYING THEY HAVE EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE PHENOMENON IS DOING, BUT... WE WERE **RECORDING**, RIGHT? YOU GOT WHAT I WAS SEEING?

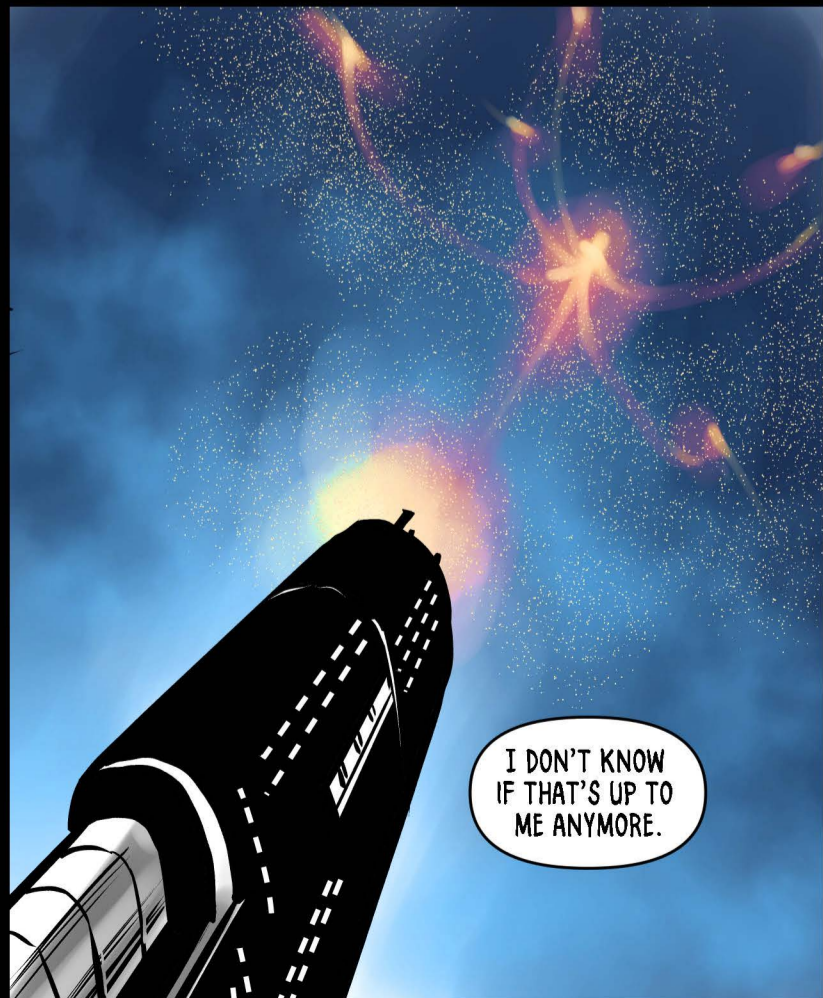
SOMETHING KNOWS IT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE. I HAVE TO GET THERE-- BEFORE ANYTHING HAPPENS.

YES. WILL YOU ANSWER **ONE** OF MY QUESTIONS PLEASE?



--WHEN WILL YOU BE **BACK?**

I DON'T KNOW, **BABE**.



I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S UP TO **ME** ANYMORE.

PHENOMENOCITY



answers are in the city....

.....**TINI HOWARD**
.....**PHILLIP SEVY**

.....
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