



EARTH'S™ MIGHTIEST HERO

MARVEL
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**CASEY
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STAN LEE PRESENTS:



...NEAR THE TULAROSA BASIN IN NEW MEXICO, ANOTHER INTENSE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN U.S. MILITARY FORCES AND THE CREATURE KNOWN ONLY AS THE HULK.

SEVERAL REPORTED CASUALTIES RELATED TO THIS CONFLICT ONLY ADD TO THE LIST OF CHARGES LEVELED AGAINST THE CREATURE...

MY GOD...

...IT'S JUST GETTING WORSE, ISN'T IT...?



I MEAN, THEY'RE GOING TO END UP KILLING HIM, AREN'T THEY...?

I... UHHH... COULDN'T SAY, JAN.

PERSONALLY, I THINK HE'S TOO MUCH FOR THE ARMY TO HANDLE...

Y'KNOW, I THINK I'LL HEAD INTO THE LAB FOR AWHILE.

YOU'LL... UMMM... BE OKAY IN HERE, WATCHING THE NEWS CHANNELS, RIGHT...?

ALRIGHT, THEN...

C'MON, CORPORAL... THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE TO KNOW HOW FAR YOU GUYS'LL GO TO BRING THIS BEAST DOWN.

FOR EXAMPLE, ARE YOU PREPARED TO USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON AMERICAN SOIL...?



HEY THERE, HIGH-POCKETS.

YOU THINK IT'S THAT EASY? YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST SHUFFLE OUT OF A ROOM LIKE THAT...?



WHAT'S THE MATTER, HANK?

NOTHING.

I JUST... HAD A FEW THOUGHTS ON PERFECTING THE GROWTH FORMULA. I THINK I CAN REDUCE THE STRAIN ON OUR BODIES IF I JUST--



HANK. I'M NOT BUYING IT.

LOOK... WE'RE NOT MUTANTS. WE DON'T WEAR ARMOR. WE'RE NOT GODS. OUR ABILITIES ARE SCIENTIFIC. THAT MEANS THEIR LIMITATIONS... ARE MY LIMITATIONS.

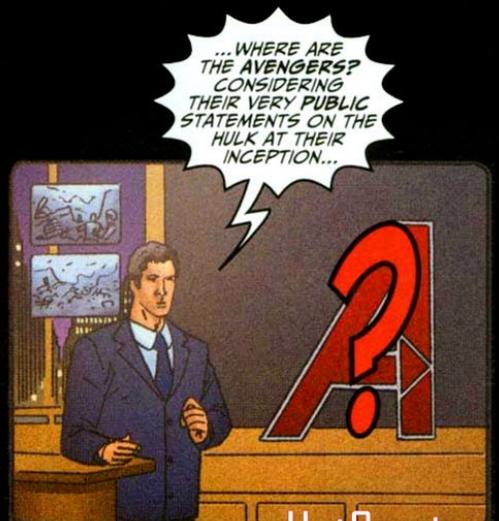
I KNOW I CAN DO BETTER. I JUST... NEED A LITTLE TIME. SOME PEACE AND QUIET...



OKAY. I HEAR YOU.



... WITH THE HULK STILL AT LARGE, THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION ON THE MINDS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE...



... WHERE ARE THE AVENGERS? CONSIDERING THEIR VERY PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THE HULK AT THEIR INCEPTION...

...AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THEIR EXPRESSED INTENT TO DEAL WITH THREATS OF THIS EXACT NATURE, I THINK WE ALL NEED TO FACE CERTAIN HARD TRUTHS ABOUT THEIR ORGANIZATION.



FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, THIS IS A MYSTERIOUS AND SCARY GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS.

THE FACT THAT THEY STOOD UP FOR THE HULK IN THE FIRST PLACE MAKES THEM SUSPECT!



I KNOW I WOULDN'T CALL THEM IF MY CAT WAS STUCK IN A TREE!



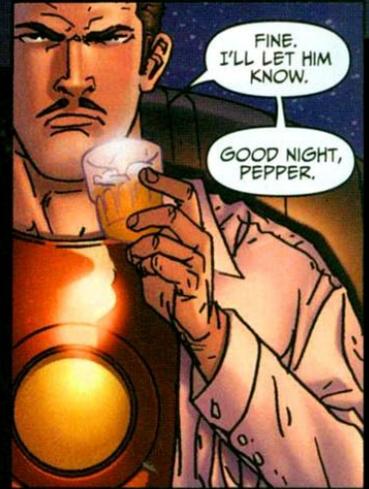
YES...?



JUST WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW BEFORE I LEFT FOR THE DAY... SPECIAL AGENT MURCH CALLED. HE'S REQUESTING A MEETING WITH IRON MAN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

FINE. I'LL LET HIM KNOW.

GOOD NIGHT, PEPPER.



...SHOULD WE STILL CONSIDER THE HULK TO BE THEIR ALLY? AND, IF HE'S NOT, WHY HAVEN'T THEY BROUGHT HIM TO JUSTICE?

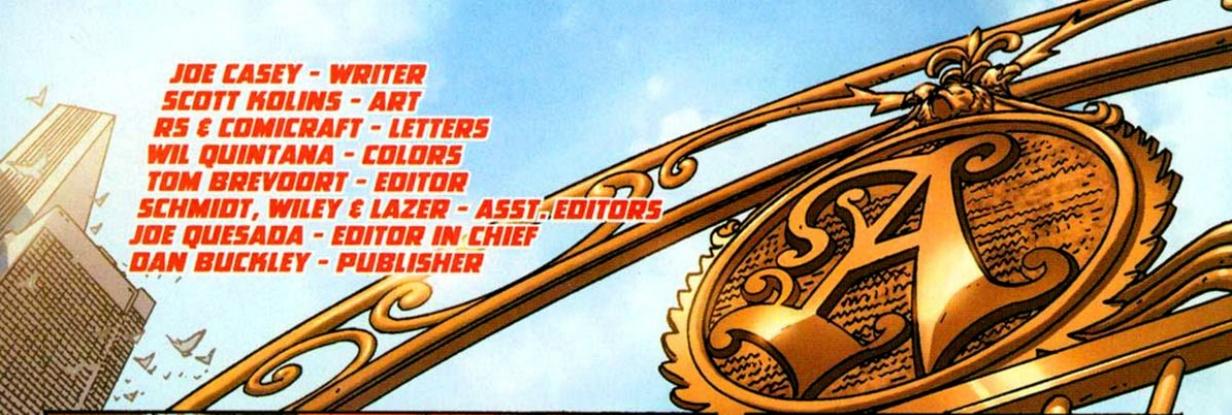


IS THE HULK'S BEHAVIOR MERELY INDICATIVE OF THE QUESTIONABLE NATURE OF THIS GROUP?

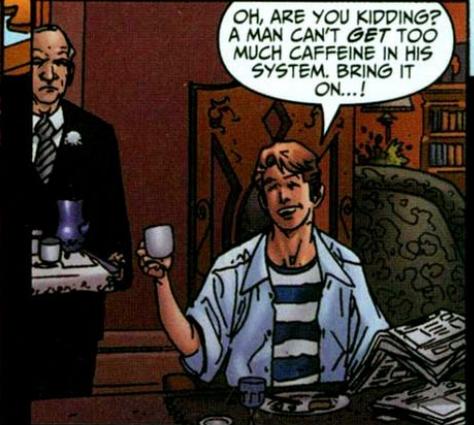
THEY SAY THEY'RE HEROES. SHOULD WE BELIEVE THEM...?



JOE CASEY - WRITER
SCOTT KOLINS - ART
RS & COMICRAFT - LETTERS
WIL QUINTANA - COLORS
TOM BREVDORT - EDITOR
SCHMIDT, WILEY & LAZER - ASST. EDITORS
JOE QUESADA - EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY - PUBLISHER



MORE COFFEE,
GENTLEMEN?



OH, ARE YOU KIDDING?
A MAN CAN'T GET TOO
MUCH CAFFEINE IN HIS
SYSTEM. BRING IT
ON...!



I THINK YOU'VE
HAD QUITE ENOUGH,
MISTER JONES.

WHATEVER.



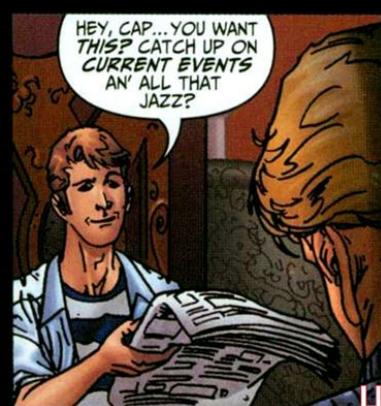
Y'KNOW, THESE
OP-ED PIECES...
THEY CAN'T STOP
TALKING ABOUT
YOU, CAP.

YOU'VE BECOME
A REGULAR URBAN
LEGEND. THERE'S
SIGHTINGS OF YOU
ALL OVER NOW.
HERE'S ONE FROM
A SHOPPING MALL
IN OHIO...



SIR...YOUR
BREAKFAST...

I'M... SORRY,
JARVIS. I GUESS
I'M JUST NOT
HUNGRY.



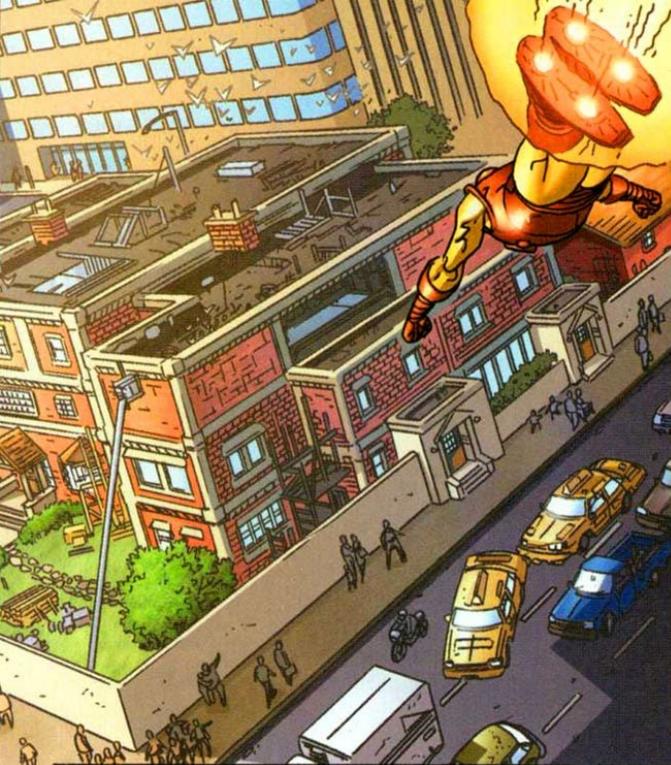
HEY, CAP... YOU WANT
THIS? CATCH UP ON
CURRENT EVENTS
AN' ALL THAT
JAZZ?

NOT
RIGHT NOW,
RICK...

...NOT RIGHT
NOW.







YOU'RE TWO MINUTES LATE, IRON MAN.

MAYBE YOU WERE TWO MINUTES EARLY, AGENT MURCH...



COULD BE. I DO LOVE MY JOB.

NICE HANGAR DOOR. I ASSUME YOU'VE CLEARED THE BUILDING CODES WITH OUR OFFICE IN WASHINGTON. IN ANY CASE...



...THIS MAN IS THE REASON I CALLED THIS MEETING. GENERAL PAUL WALLACE, VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.



WHAT IS THIS... A SETUP?

HARDLY.

YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY FORGETTING THAT I DON'T NEED TO BE SNEAKY TO MAKE YOU FOLKS LOOK BAD.



YOU'RE UP, GENERAL...

NO DOUBT YOU'RE AWARE THAT YOUR EMPLOYER HAS CUT SEVERAL DEALS WITH US ON WEAPONS CONTRACTS TO MASSAGE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEFENSE COMMUNITY, THE PRIVATE SECTOR... THAT'S ANOTHER STORY. HOWEVER...

... WE'RE HERE TO MAKE YOU A DEAL NOW.

HOW WOULD THE AVENGERS RESPOND TO BEING AN OFFICIAL BRANCH OF THE MILITARY...?

AN OFFICIAL...
WHAT...?!

TECHNICALLY,
YOU'D BE OPERATING
AS A SUPER-POWERED
SPECIAL FORCES
DIVISION...

...ORGANIZED
EMPLOYMENT OF A
PARAMILITARY UNIT IN
SUSTAINED COMBAT
AGAINST A DETERMINED
ENEMY.

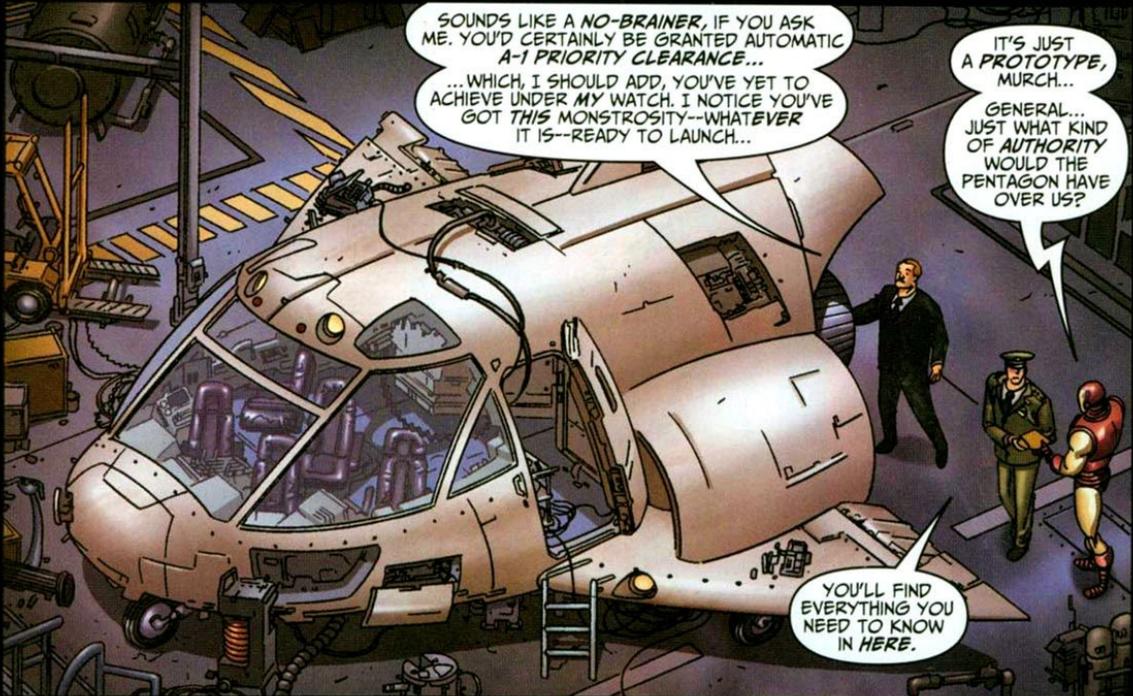


SOUNDS LIKE A **NO-BRAINER**, IF YOU ASK
ME. YOU'D CERTAINLY BE GRANTED AUTOMATIC
A-1 PRIORITY CLEARANCE...

...WHICH, I SHOULD ADD, YOU'VE YET TO
ACHIEVE UNDER MY WATCH. I NOTICE YOU'VE
GOT **THIS MONSTROSITY**--WHATEVER
IT IS--READY TO LAUNCH...

IT'S JUST
A **PROTOTYPE**,
MURCH...

GENERAL...
JUST WHAT KIND
OF **AUTHORITY**
WOULD THE
PENTAGON HAVE
OVER US?



YOU'LL FIND
EVERYTHING YOU
NEED TO KNOW
IN **HERE**.

I DON'T THINK YOU'VE GOT ANY RIGHT
TO BE **PARANOID** ABOUT THIS. THE
JOINT CHIEFS ARE WILLING TO OFFER
THIS ARRANGEMENT IN ALMOST
COMPLETE ACCORDANCE WITH
YOUR EXISTING **BY-LAWS**.

THAT MEANS YOUR SECRET
IDENTITIES WILL **REMAIN SECRET**.
AGAINST MY BETTER
JUDGMENT...



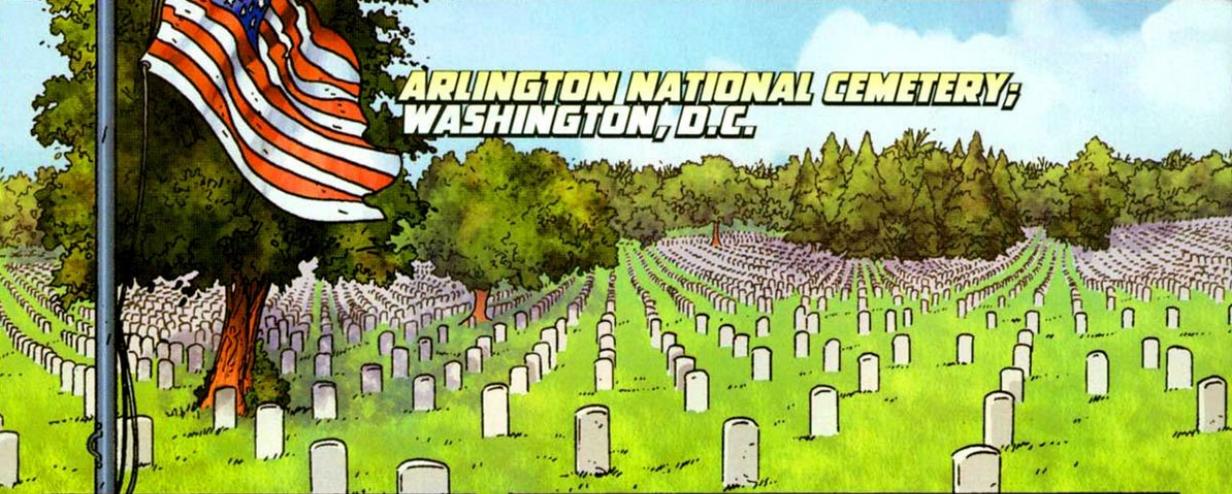
THIS IS **NEW**
TERRITORY FOR US,
AGENT MURCH.

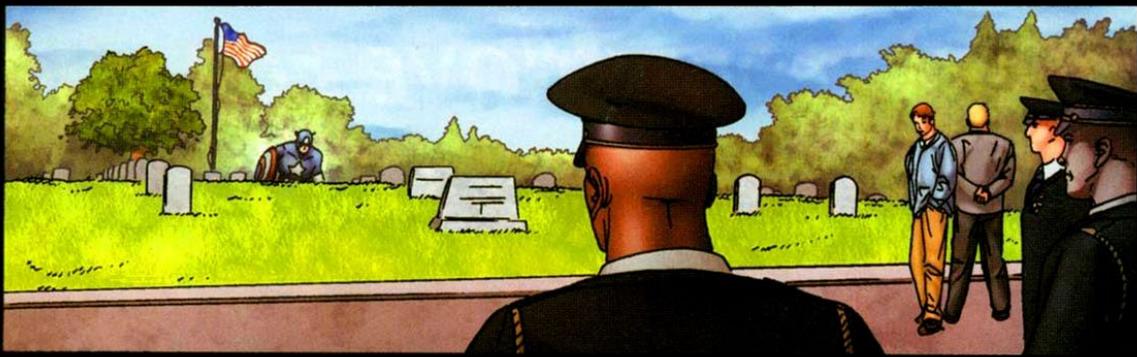
THE AVENGERS WERE
A **BIG HELP** TO US IN
ARIZONA. THE PRESIDENT
HIMSELF SUGGESTED
THIS MERGER...

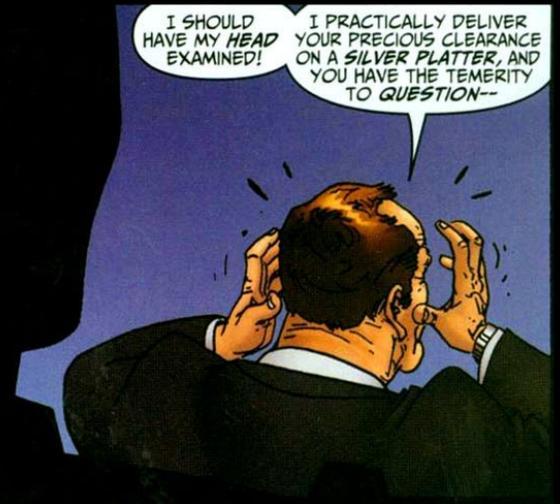
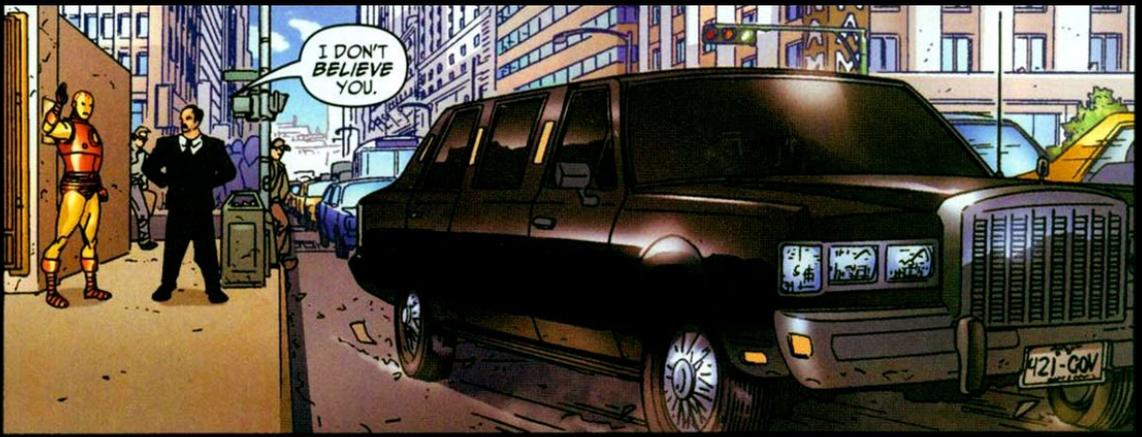


...WORKING
TOGETHER, THERE'S
A LOT WE COULD
ACCOMPLISH.

**ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY;
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AGENT MURCH... I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET THOR.

S-SOME LIGHT SHOW YOU... PUT ON THERE...



RIGHT. WELL...
...GUESS I NEED TO GET GOING.



YOU... UHHH... YOU THINK ABOUT THAT OFFER, IRON MAN...
YOU THINK ABOUT... R-RIGHT...



HAVE I EVER TOLD YOU HOW MUCH I APPRECIATE YOUR INNATE SENSE OF TIMING...?

AYE.

'TIS ALL ABOUT TIMING.



LET US ADJOURN TO THE GRAND HALL, AVENGER.
MINE INTUITION TELLS ME THERE IS MUCH TO DISCUSS.

YOU HAVE NO IDEA...



SO, THAT'S IT IN A NUTSHELL...

UNBELIEVABLE. THE U.S. ARMY WANTS TO PUT US ON THE PAYROLL!

SO WHAT'S THE UPSIDE?



WELL, FOR STARTERS, OUR AVENGERS PRIORITY STATUS WOULD BE GRANTED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. FROM THE BEGINNING, I TOLD YOU HOW ESSENTIAL THAT IS IF WE'RE TO DO OUR JOB WITH THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF INTERFERENCE...



BUT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE FREEDOM TO ACT. HOW MUCH FREEDOM ARE WE GOING TO HAVE UNDER THIS ARRANGEMENT?

I THINK WE NEED TO STOP AND CONSIDER WHAT THE PENTAGON GAINS FROM HAVING US AT THEIR BECK AND CALL...

...I DON'T THINK ANY OF US WANT TO END UP INVADING LIBYA OR SOME OTHER THIRD-WORLD NATION THE PRESIDENT DISAGREES WITH...



THERE IS WISDOM IN YOUR WORDS, GIANT-MAN.

THE SON OF ODIN IS NO MAN'S LACKEY, AND NO POLITICIAN HATH EVER PUT ANOTHER'S NEEDS ABOVE THEIR OWN.

WE MUST KEEP OUR OWN COUNSEL WHEN IT COMES TO SERVING THE GREATER GOOD.



SPEAKING OF KEEPING OUR OWN COUNSEL, THERE'S AN OPINION I'D REALLY LIKE TO HEAR...

...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE AN AVENGER SHORT.

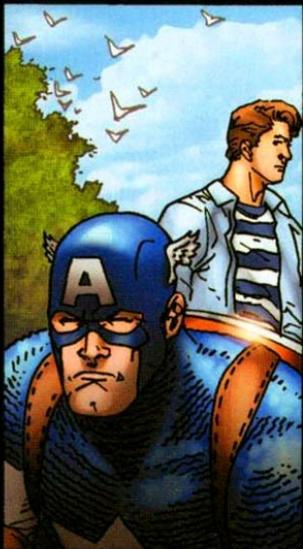
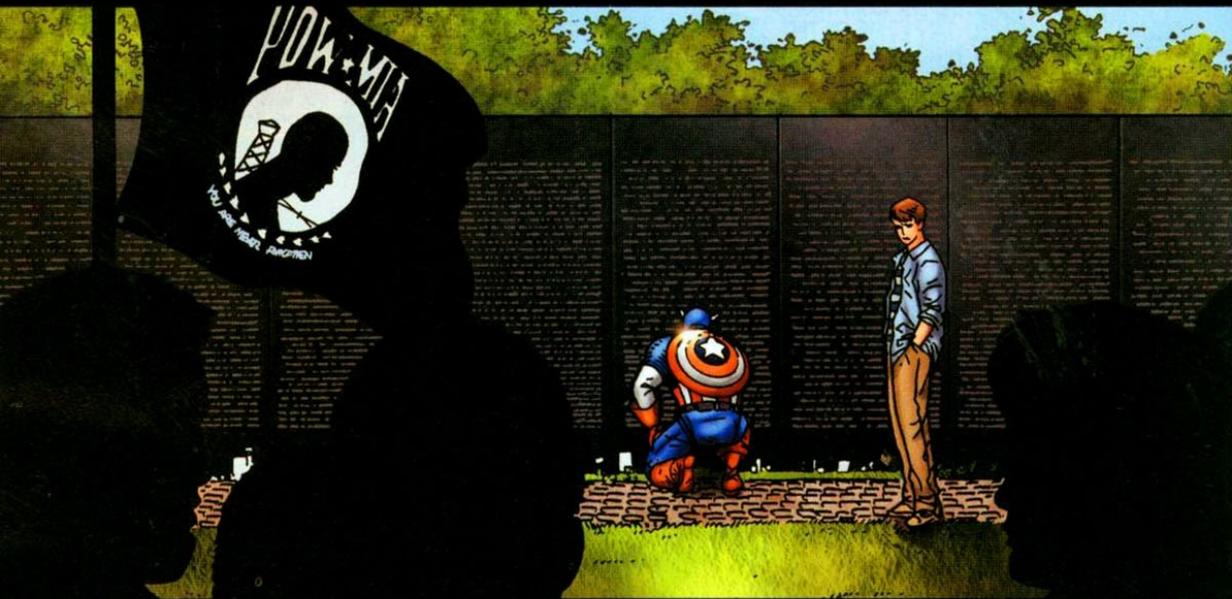


IF I MAY...

CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS TAKEN A FEW DAYS TO... RE-FAMILIARIZE HIMSELF WITH CERTAIN AREAS OF AMERICAN HISTORY.

AND, I SUPPOSE, TO EDUCATE HIMSELF ON WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED IN HIS ABSENCE...

VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL



UHHH, CAP...?
I WAS, UH, JUST WONDERING... HOW MUCH LONGER ARE WE GONNA BE HERE...?



FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES FOR ME TO READ EVERY NAME ON THIS WALL.

FOR AS LONG AS IT TAKES TO ACKNOWLEDGE EVERY SOLDIER THAT DIED...

...IN A WAR THAT I MISSED.

ONE WEEK LATER

DON'T HOLD BACK!
WE HAVE OUR ORDERS!
LET'S MOVE IT!





WHA--?!

OUR ENEMIES HAVE ARRIVED!



YA GOT THAT RIGHT, GLOW-WORM!

GVEARRROOH!



PRESS YOUR ATTACK, "COMRADE"! SHE IS FAR TOO SMALL TO POSE ANY REAL THREAT!

OBSERVE HOW I STRIKE AT THEIR ACHILLES' HEEL!



VILE BRAGGART! THOU WOULDST FIRE UPON INNOCENT MORTALS?!

THOU ART TRULY MASTERS OF EVIL!



LUCKILY, WE DIDN'T COME UNPREPARED, PARTNER!



SCHNELL!
WIR SIND AUF
EINEM FESTEN
ZEITPLAN!

OUR ENEMIES
ARE CLOSE BY AND
MY CONFIDENCE IN
MY HIRED MINIONS
IS WEAKENING BY
THE SECOND.

DESTINY HAS
BROUGHT ME TO THE
NEW CITY...BUT THIS IS
MEREY THE INITIAL SKIRMISH
IN A MUCH LARGER WAR.
AFTER THIS OPENING SALVO,
WHO WOULD DARE
OPPOSE ME...?!



THEY'VE
BAGGED THE
RADIOACTIVE
MAN!

THIS ENTIRE
OPERATION IS
SPIRALING OUT
OF...



...CONTROL.



UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YEAR, MELTER.



NO--!

STAY AWAY FROM ME! I'LL BRING THIS ENTIRE CITY DOWN ON YOUR HEAD--!



I'LL MAKE THIS OFFER UP FRONT...



...DROP YOUR WEAPONS AND SURRENDER NOW. OTHERWISE, I'LL HAVE TO GET ROUGH.



THAT VOICE...

AFTER ALL THESE DECADES... I COULD NEVER FORGET THAT UNMISTAKABLE HINT OF AMERICAN NAIVETE.

BUT THE TRUE QUESTION REMAINS...

...DO YOU REMEMBER ME?

--EXPERIMENTAL DRONE PLANE--

WE'RE TOO LATE--

--I CAN REACH IT, CAP--

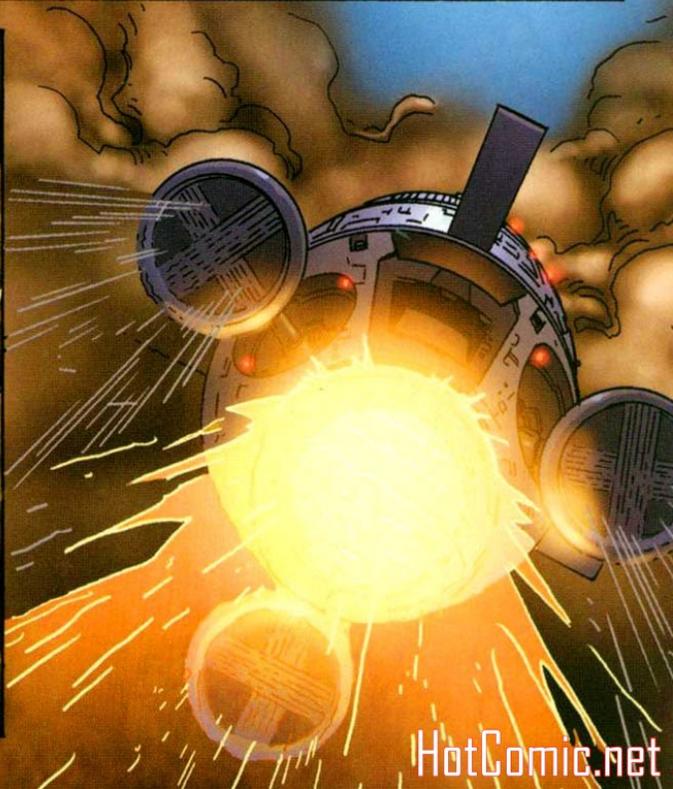
--BOOBY-TRAPPED--

--IT'S GONNA BLOW--!

NOOOO--!!



ZEEEMO!!





ODD'S BLOOD--!



HOW FARE THEE, AVENGERS?
I HAVE SUBDUED THE EVIL **BLACK KNIGHT**, BUT THE **RINGLEADER** OF THIS **CACOPHONY** HAS MADE HIS **ESCAPE**. SHALL I GIVE CHASE?

DON'T BOTHER, THOR.

I HAD **CAP** CHECKING THAT **LAUNCH SITE** AND **GIANT-MAN** HEADING IN FOR **BACKUP**. SPEAKING OF WHICH...

...**GIANT-MAN**, DO YOU **COPY?** OVER...



I'M RIGHT HERE, SHELLHEAD. THERE WASN'T MUCH TO **DO**... WHOEVER'S **BEHIND** ALL THIS WAS **RUTHLESS** ENOUGH TO **SACRIFICE** HIS OWN **MEN** DURING HIS **GETAWAY**... AND **CAP**...?

HE'S... **HERE**, BUT NOT QUITE FIT FOR **DUTY**. I DON'T KNOW WHAT **HAPPENED** TO HIM, BUT **WHATEVER** IT WAS...



...IT WASN'T PRETTY.

...Z-ZEMO...

CONTINUED...

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