

ARMORED
TROOPER

ギガン
ボトムズ

VOTOMS

MY NAME IS GOON
HETAW, GILGAMETH ARMY,
~~PRIVATE~~ IS CORPORAL,
201st DETACHMENT.

YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD
A LOT OF WAR
STORIES.

YOU AIN'T NEVER
HEARD ONE LIKE
MINE.



FACE
IN
SHADOW,
BUT NOTICEABLY
OLDER
THAN
IN STORY

MISSION OF
GOLD
SHOULDER

ART & STORY BY TIM EDDRED

ARMORED TROOPER // CREATED IN
VOTOMS // JAPAN BY

© NIPPON SUNRISE

"WELCOME TO THE
ASTRAGILUS GALAXY."

...A LOVELY LITTLE
PLACE WHERE EVERY
~~LITTLE~~ PERSON HAS ONE
A SINGLE, REAL
TALENT

WAR.

IT'S OUR WAY OF LIFE.
WE GILGAMETH HAVE BEEN
FIGHTING THE BALALANT
AS LONG AS WE CAN
REMEMBER... AND LONG
BEFORE THAT.

BUT WE DON'T
QUESTION.
WE JUST FIGHT.

NOT FOR ANY ONE PLANET.
NOT FOR ANY ONE IDEAL.
FIGHTING IS ALL WE KNOW.

WE THRIVE ON IT.
WE SAVOR IT.
THE WAR IS OUR
PEACE.

THE WAR BRINGS
PROGRESS. THE
WEAPONS GET
BETTER...

...THE ARMIES
GET STRONGER...

FIRST A.T.
MOVING UP TO LATER MODELS
- DARKLY, FIRE-LIT

...THE FIGHTING
GETS DEADLIER.

Continue space art from
war p. 3

LONG ABOUT THE YEAR 2313, SOMEONE ON OUR SIDE
DECIDED WE NEEDED A CHANGE--
SOMETHING NEW TO FIGHT WITH.



THEY CALLED IT
THE ARMORED
TROOPER.

THE VERTICAL, ONE-MAN
TANK FOR OFFENSE &
MANEUVER.



INTERPERSE
PROMINENT
AT'S W/INC.
IDENTICAL
FIGHTING
SCENES

WE CALL IT THE
DEATH MACHINE.

AND THE BALALANT WEREN'T
FAR BEHIND IN DEVELOPING
~~THEIR~~ THEIR OWN.

THE WEAPONS
WERE NEW.

BUT THE WAR
STAYED THE
SAME.

BUT AFTER
I JOINED THE
2021ST, NOTHING
WOULD EVER BE
THE SAME
FOR ME
AGAIN.

LIT FROM
BELOW
- STILL TOO
DARK TO
SEE FACE
CLEARLY

HUGE
BATTLEGROUND
OF AT'S

6

7

CHAPTER ONE

2336.

"IT WAS JUST AFTER MY PROMOTION. MY FOLKS WOULD'VE BEEN SO HAPPY FOR ME--IF THEY KNEW WHO I WAS.

ARTOFF, OUR DRILL SERGEANT (THAT'S HIM ON THE LEFT) BROUGHT IN SOME TOP BRASS TO LOOK OVER OUR PLATOON.

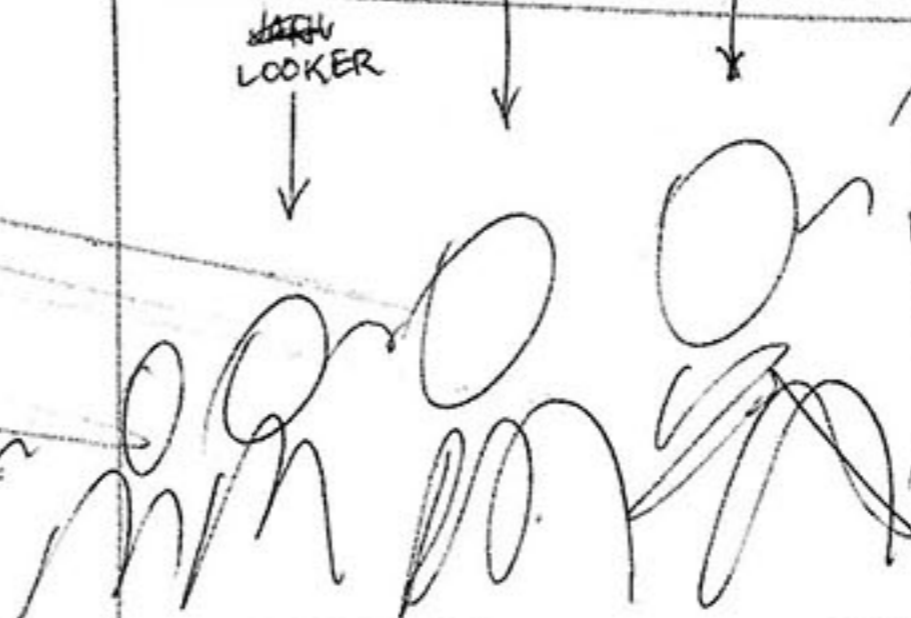


LOOKER

IRON IAN

SANDMAN

SINKER



THIS IS ME. GOOD LOOKIN' GRUNT, WASN'T I?

THE OFFICER DIDN'T DO MUCH. JUST LOOKED AT US, ~~GRANTED~~ MUMBLED A COUPLE THINGS TO ARTOFF, AND POINTED AT SOME OF US.



I DIDN'T WONDER WHY UNTIL HE POINTED AT ME.



BUT I FELT A LITTLE BETTER WHEN HE POINTED AT MY FRIEND JANUS KNOFF (PFC)...



...EVERYBODY'S ENEMY, "IRON IAN" (HARTWELL)... (PFC) I DON'T THINK THERE'S ONE SOLDIER HERE HE HASN'T PICKED A FIGHT WITH...



...AND MY BLOOD-BROTHER CHAN OMNIS. HE GAVE ME A WINK. BUT I KNEW HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOIN' ON, EITHER.

IT WAS A MILLION YEARS BEFORE THE SARGE YELLED--

DIS-MISSED!!

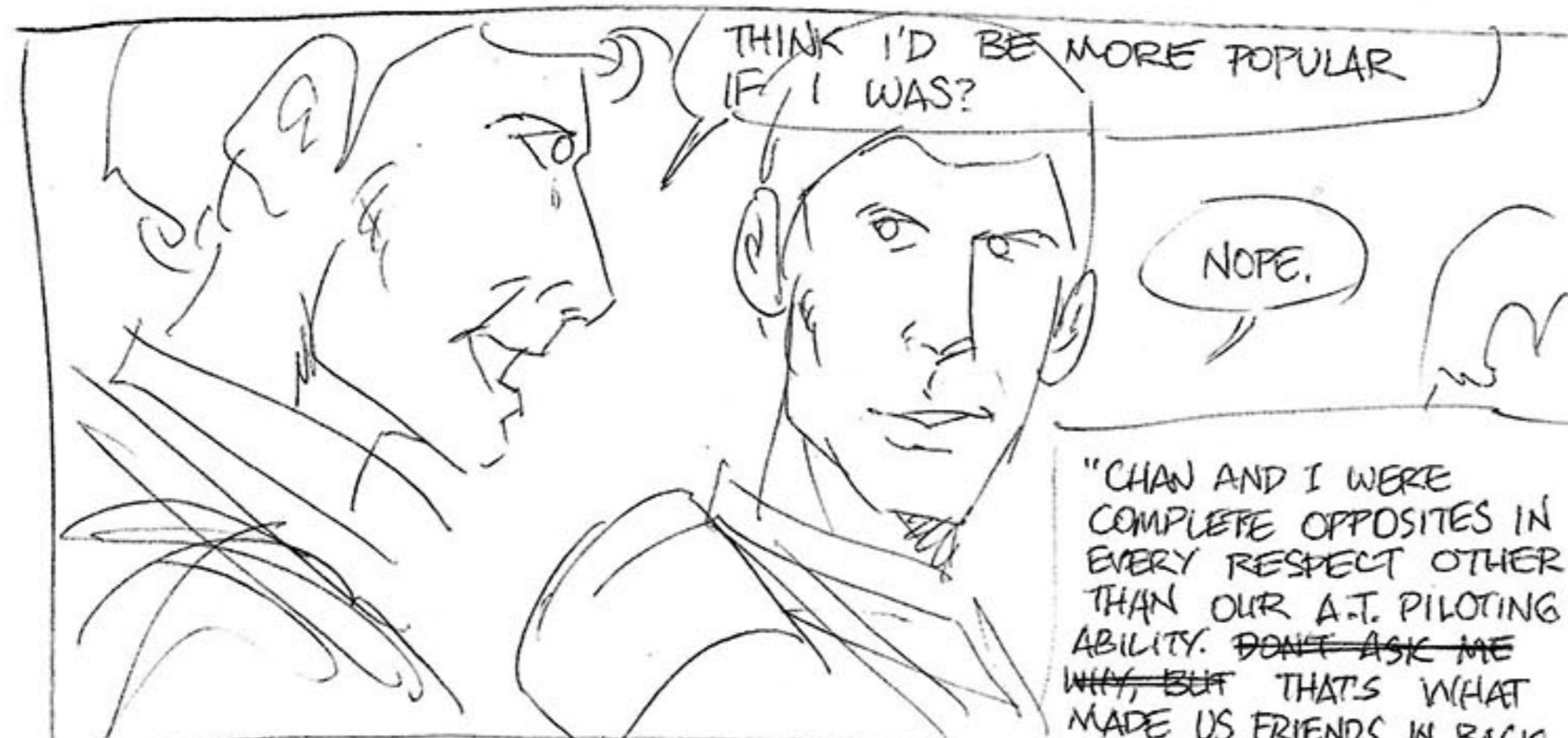


SO, UHH, WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT, ANYWAY?



DIDN'T YOU HEAR? THE TOP ECHELON'S LOOKIN' US OVER FOR INFINITE K.P.

CHAN, CAN'T YOU EVER BE SERIOUS?



THINK I'D BE MORE POPULAR IF I WAS?

NOPE.

"CHAN AND I WERE COMPLETE OPPOSITES IN EVERY RESPECT OTHER THAN OUR A.T. PILOTING ABILITY. ~~DON'T ASK ME WHY~~ BUT THAT'S WHAT MADE US FRIENDS IN BASIC.

JANUS I MET LATER. HE'S A LITTLE QUIET, BUT HE ALWAYS LETS YOU KNOW YOU'RE HIS FRIEND, SOMEHOW.

TODAY YOU CAN'T SPLIT US UP FOR ANYTHING.

HE'S BAILED ME AND CHAN OUT OF TROUBLE-- BOTH IN THE CAMP AND ON THE BATTLEFIELD-- MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT. IF I'VE GOT A MISSING BIG BROTHER SOMEWHERE, JANUS HAS TO BE HIM.

IRON IAN ON THE OTHER HAND, NOBODY CAN GET CLOSE TO. EVERY TIME I'VE TRIED TO GET FRIENDLY HE'S WOUND UP WITH MY KNECK IN HIS FIST.

HE'S THE MAIN REASON I WENT FOR ~~CORPORAL~~ THE PROMOTION. NOW THAT I OUT-RANK HIM, HE WON'T DO ANYTHING. I DUNNO WHAT THE GUY'S PROBLEM IS, BUT IT'S GONNA GET HIM KILLED ONE'A THESE DAYS.

AFTER THAT, THE WAR JUST WENT ON. I ASKED A COUPLE TIMES WHAT THE OFFICER WANTED, BUT NO ONE REALLY KNEW, 'CEPT SERGEANT ARTOFF.

AND HE WASN'T TELLING

THEN, THREE MONTHS LATER, HE CAME BACK.

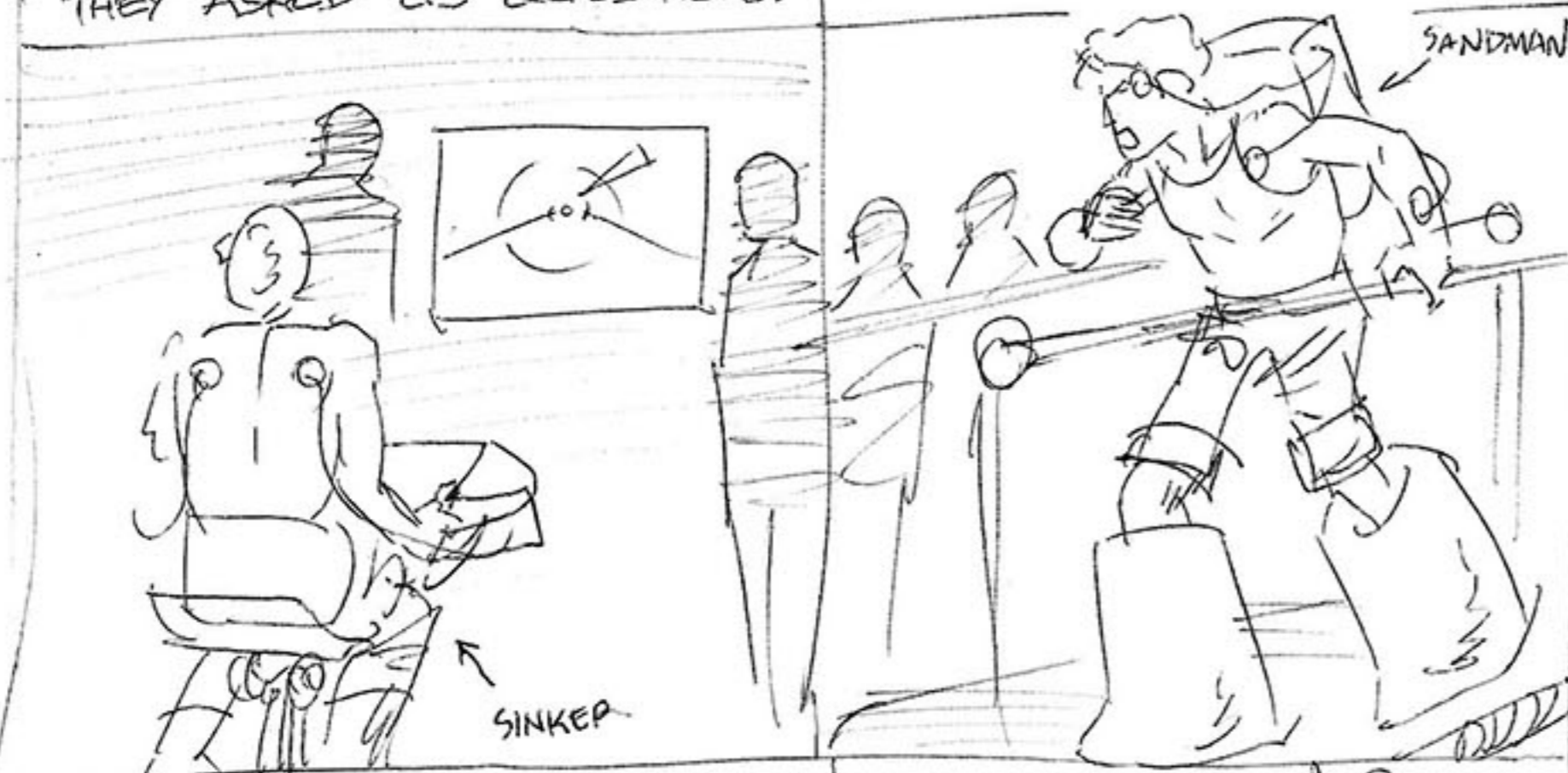
WITH SOME FRIENDS.

THAT'S WHEN THE BASE TURNED INTO AN ASSEMBLY LINE. EVERY DAY WE WERE SHUTTLED IN AND OUT OF A DIFFERENT ROOM...

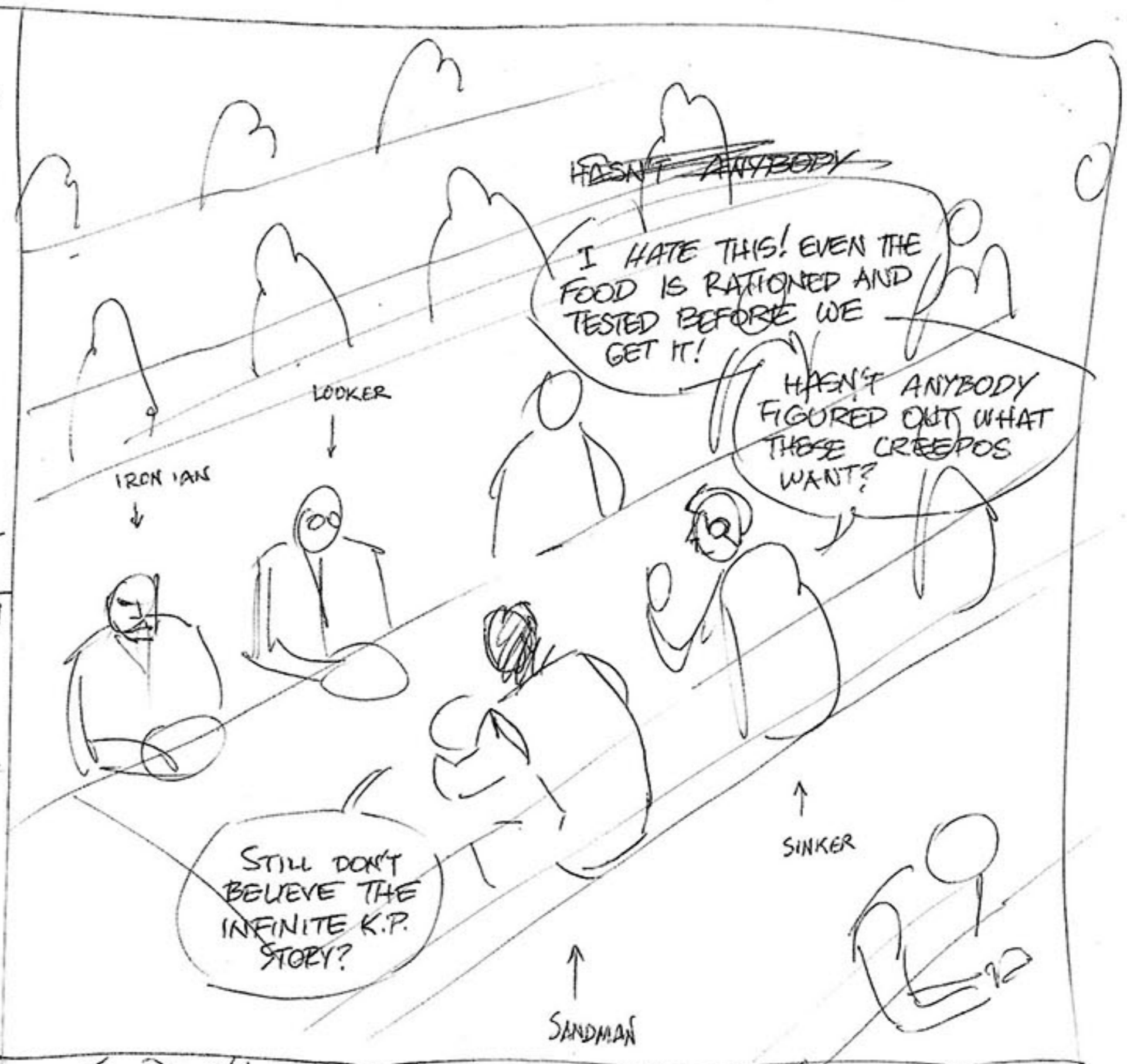


THEY ASKED US QUESTIONS.

WE ASKED THEM QUESTIONS.



12



13



CHARTWELL, LET HIM GO. YOU'LL BOTH ANSWER TO ME LATER.

I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT. AS OF 1500 HOURS TODAY, TESTING OF THE 2021ST DETACHMENT WAS CONCLUDED.

ALL TEST RESULTS ~~HAVE BEEN~~ ARE BEING COLLATED. YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO TURN OUT IN FULL DRESS UNIFORMS, 1900 HOURS THIS EVENING FOR ASSEMBLY.

AS YOU WERE.

WHAT'D I TELL YOU?

FINALLY!

I AIN'T GONNA FORGET ABOUT THIS, SHRIMP! ONE'A THESE DAYS YOU'DA BE EATIN' KNUCKLES!

BETTER EATIN' 'EM THAN WEARIN' 'EM!

NOTHING EVER FAZED CHAN. THAT SENSE OF HUMOR GOT US THROUGH MORE THAN ONE SCRAPE. IF HE EVER LOSES IT, WE'RE IN TROUBLE.

MEN, MANY OF YOU NEVER HEARD MY NAME. I AM COLONEL BONISAN, HEAD OF GILGAMETH SPECIAL SCIENCES DIVISION.

FOR THE LAST SIXTY DAYS, MY TECHNICIANS HAVE TAKEN INTENSE STUDY OF YOUR DETACHMENT. YOU HAVE BEEN TESTED FOR APTITUDE IN AREAS YOU ARE NOT YET FAMILIAR WITH.

BUT ALL WILL BECOME CLEAR TO YOU IN DUE TIME.

BEFORE THIS TESTING BEGAN, MANY OTHER UNITS WERE REVIEWED FOR THE ASSIGNMENT ~~YOU~~ WE'RE PREPARING.

YOU WILL BE PROUD TO KNOW THE 2021ST WAS CHOSEN ABOVE ALL OTHERS TO UNDERGO THIS IMPORTANT TASK.

← ARTOFF

SANDMAN

SINKER



IT IS A TASK UNPRECEDENTED.
A TASK THAT WILL AFFECT
THE FUTURE OF THE
ENTIRE ASTRAGIUS GALAXY.

STOP IT!



THE FOLLOWING MEN
WILL REPORT FOR AIR
DEPARTURE AT 0900
TOMORROW...

NO SPEECH
FIRST?

MY SECOND IN COMMAND,
CORPORAL GOLON HETOW...

SUNDRY
NAMES

OF ALL THOSE
TESTED, ~~TWELVE~~ SIXTEEN
OF YOU HAVE
BEEN CHOSEN
TO SPEARHEAD
THE PROJECT.

THESE SIXTEEN
WILL FORM THE
NUCLEUS OF A
~~NEW 2021~~
STRONGER, MORE
VITAL 2021ST THAT
YOU WILL ALL TAKE
A PART IN.

TO EFFECTIVELY BEGIN
ASSEMBLING THIS PROJECT, IT
WILL BE NECESSARY TO TEMPOR-
ARILY TRANSFER THE SIXTEEN
SOLDIERS TO A NEW POST.
~~ASSIGNMENT~~ THERE, THE
CHOSEN MEN WILL TRAIN TO
LEAD YOU INTO
NEW AND
DECISIVE
BATTLE-
GROUNDS
WITH THE
BALACANT
FORCES.

SERGEANT?



CORPORAL
GOLON HETOW,

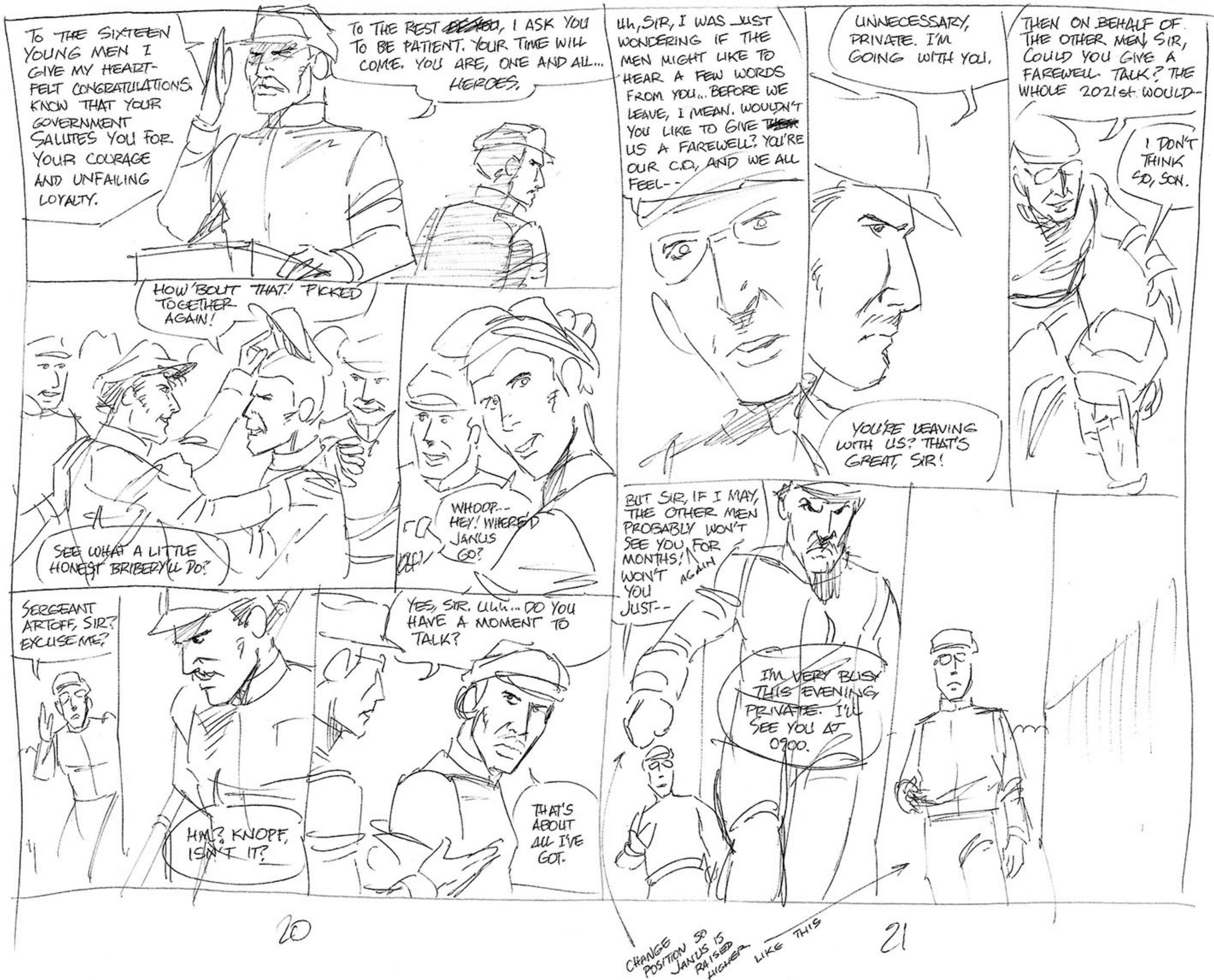
PRIVATE
JANUS
KNOFF.

WHAT'S WITH
HIM? HE'S SO
TIGHT-LIPPED
ALL OF A
SUDDEN!



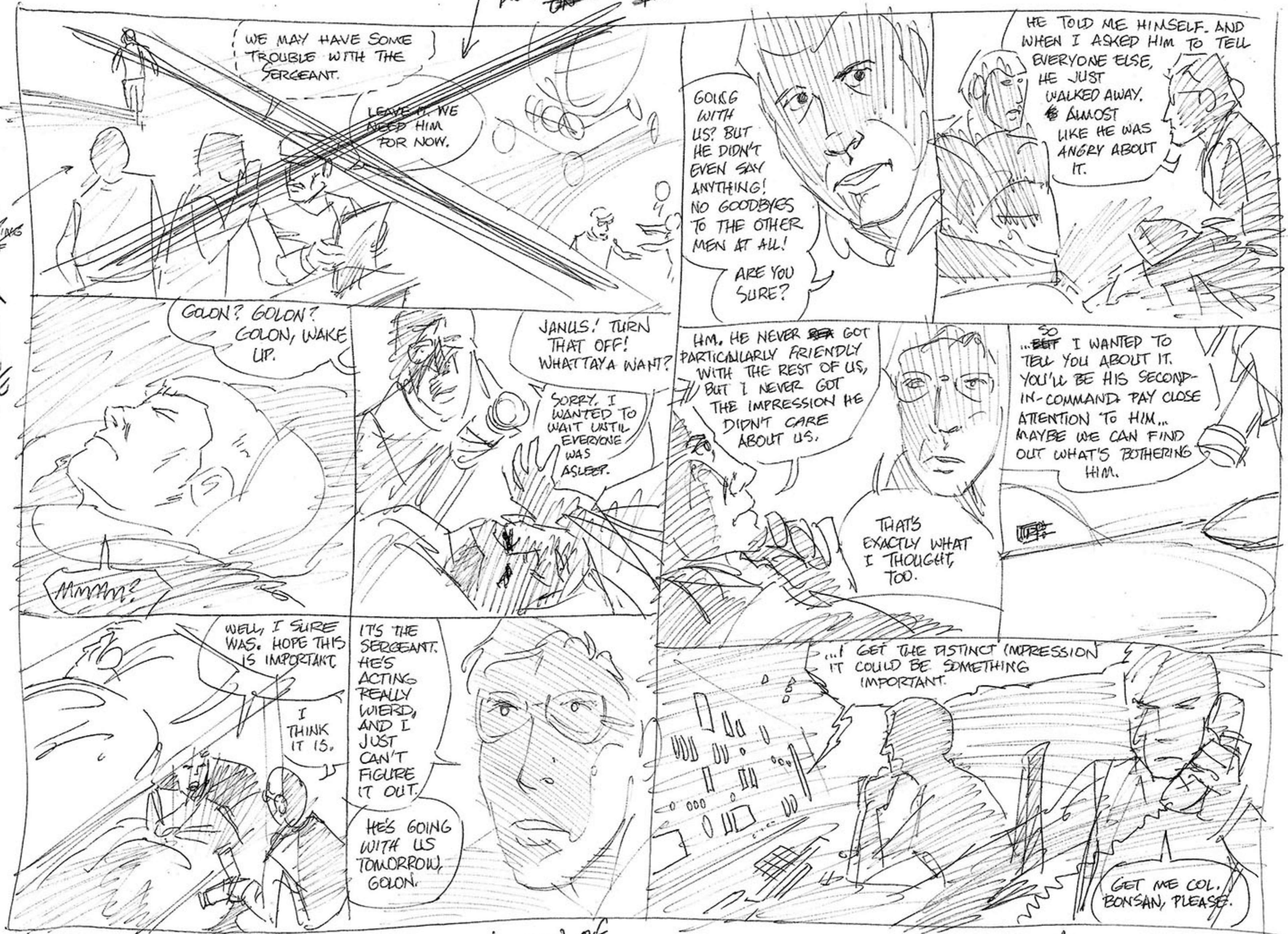
PRIVATE CHAN
OMNIB...

...AND PRIVATE
IAN CHARTWELL.



SEE ALTERATION ON NEXT PAGE

WATCHING
OFF
↑
MOVE
UP



WE MAY HAVE SOME TROUBLE WITH THE SERGEANT.

LEAVE IT. WE NEED HIM FOR NOW.

GOLON? GOLON?
GOLON, WAKE UP.

JANUS! TURN THAT OFF!
WHATTAYA WANT?

SORRY. I WANTED TO WAIT UNTIL EVERYONE WAS ASLEEP.

GOING WITH US? BUT HE DIDN'T EVEN SAY ANYTHING! NO GOODBYES TO THE OTHER MEN AT ALL!

ARE YOU SURE?

HE TOLD ME HIMSELF. AND WHEN I ASKED HIM TO TELL EVERYONE ELSE, HE JUST WALKED AWAY. ~~HE~~ ALMOST LIKE HE WAS ANGRY ABOUT IT.

HM. HE NEVER ~~BE~~ GOT PARTICULARLY FRIENDLY WITH THE REST OF US, BUT I NEVER GOT THE IMPRESSION HE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT US.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I THOUGHT, TOO.

SO ~~BE~~ I WANTED TO TELL YOU ABOUT IT. YOU'LL BE HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND. PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO HIM... MAYBE WE CAN FIND OUT WHAT'S BOTHERING HIM.

WELL, I SURE WAS. HOPE THIS IS IMPORTANT.

I THINK IT IS.

IT'S THE SERGEANT. HE'S ACTING REALLY WIERD, AND I JUST CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT.

HE'S GOING WITH US TOMORROW, GOLON.

...I GET THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION IT COULD BE SOMETHING IMPORTANT.

GET ME COL. BONSAN, PLEASE.

22 ↑ Next row of panels here

23 ↑ ONLY-LIT, BUT INDICATE THESE ARE THE SAME MEN W/ COL. BONSAN EARLIER

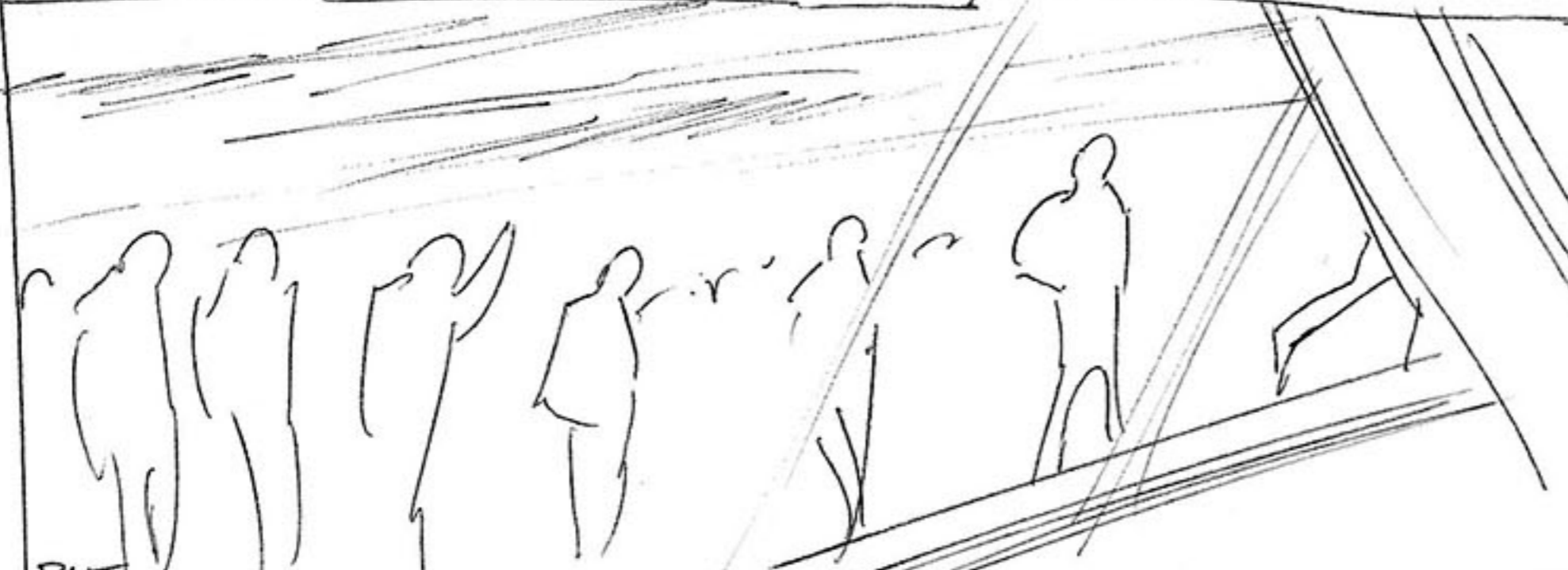
TOP OF PAGE

ALTERATION:



CHAPTER TWO/GOLD SHOULDER

THE NEXT MORNING WENT PRETTY MUCH AS EXPECTED. A QUICK BREAKFAST AND A HOP ABOARD THE TROOP SHIP AMIDST THE CONGRATULATIONS OF ALL OUR BUDDIES...



BUT THAT'S WHEN I NOTICED ARTOFF...

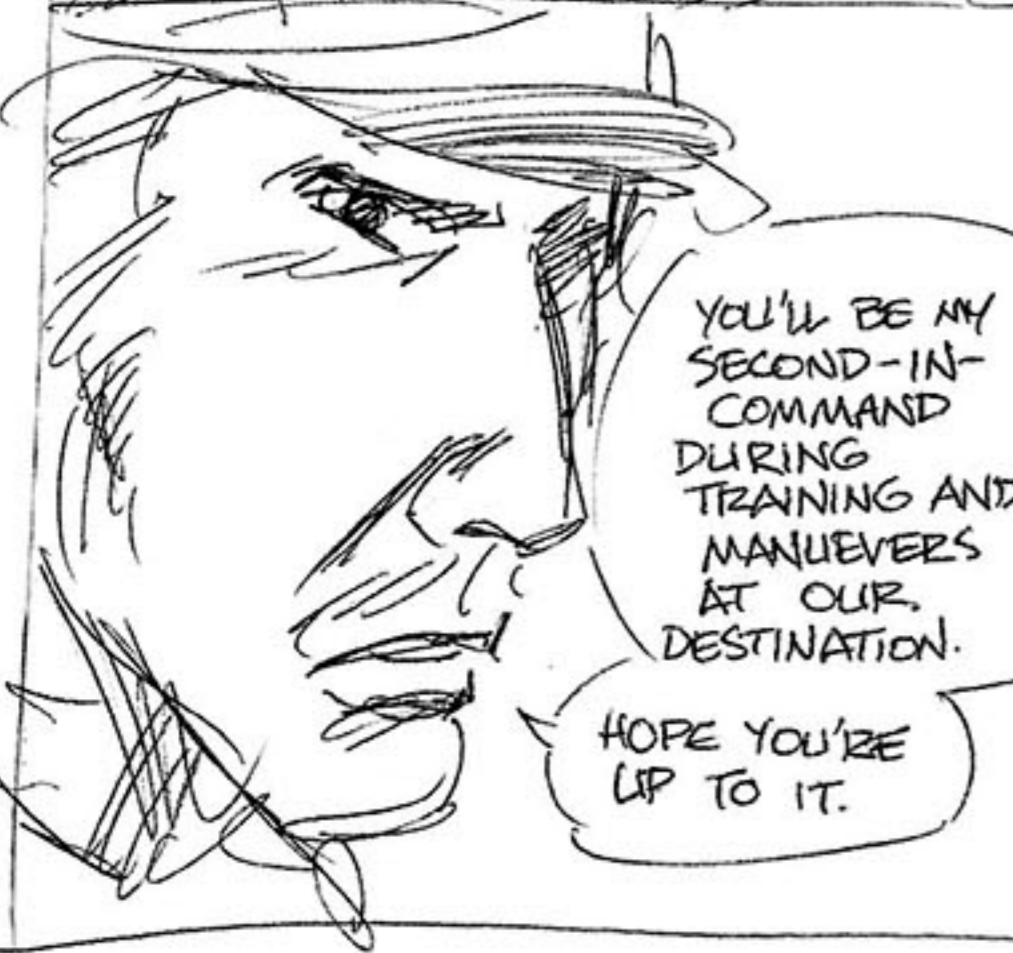


...AND DECIDED TO SEE WHAT JANUS WAS SO PUZZLED ABOUT.



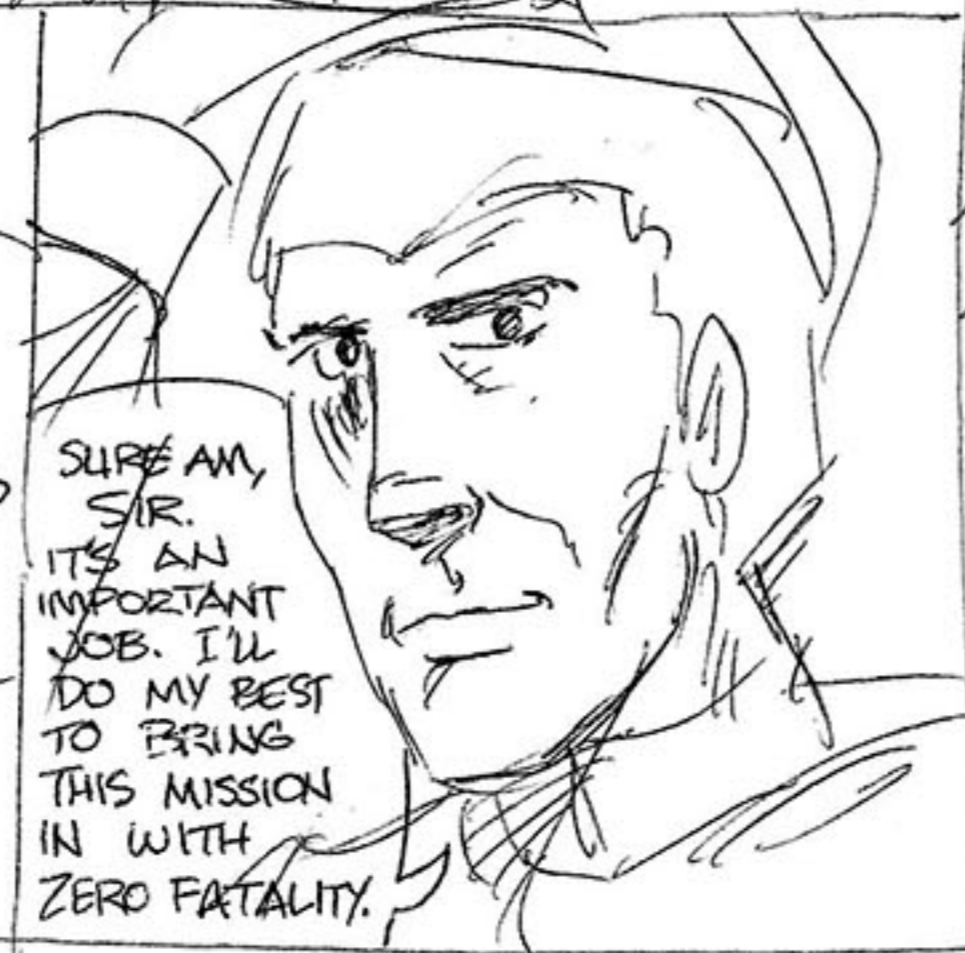
SERGEANT? GOOD TO HAVE YOU WITH US.

HM? OH, HELLO.



YOU'LL BE MY SECOND-IN-COMMAND DURING TRAINING AND MANUEVERS AT OUR DESTINATION.

HOPE YOU'RE UP TO IT.

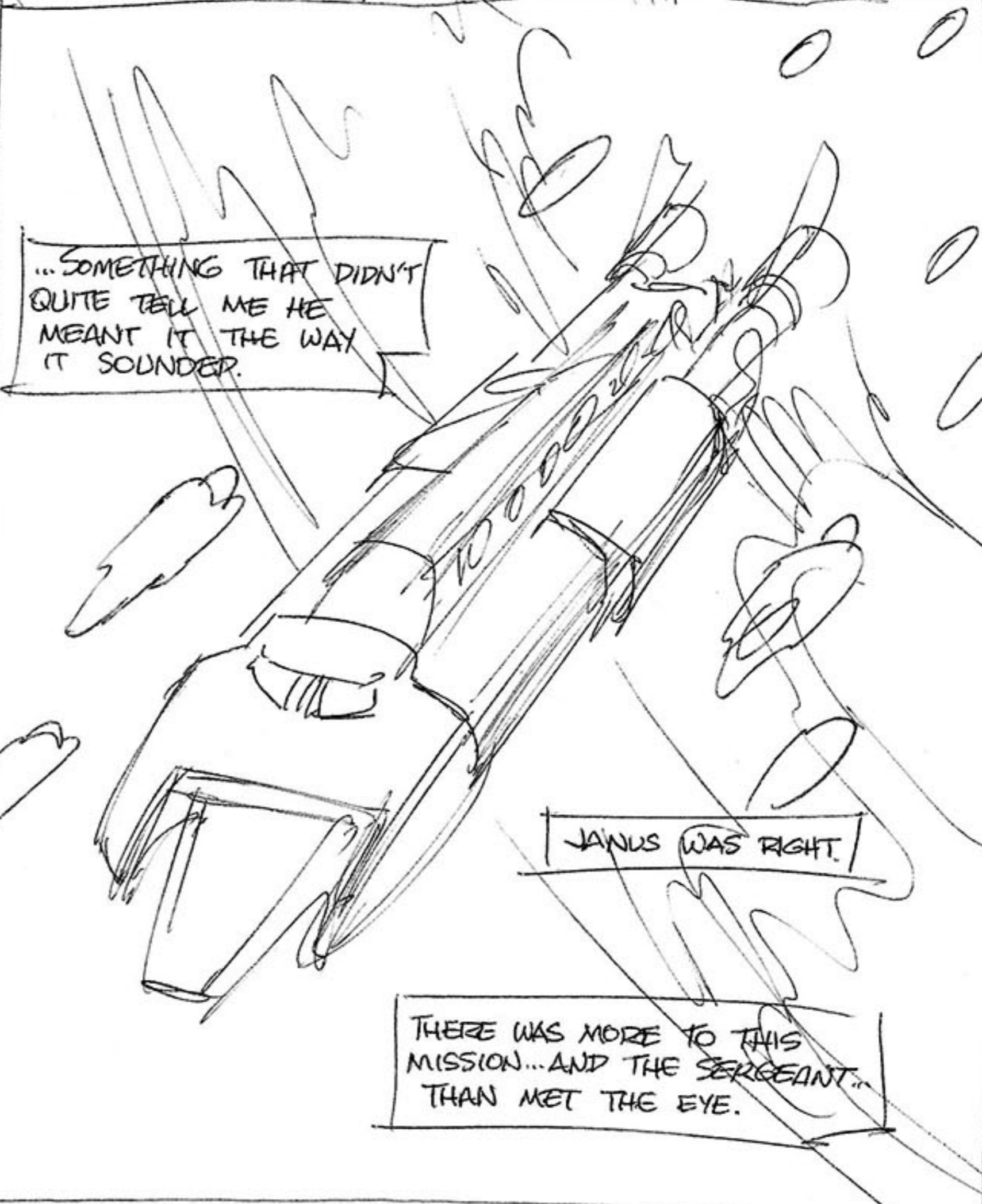


SURE AM, SIR. IT'S AN IMPORTANT JOB. I'LL DO MY BEST TO BRING THIS MISSION IN WITH ZERO FATALITY.

BONSAN'LL LOVE THAT.



"THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE WAY HE SAID THAT..."

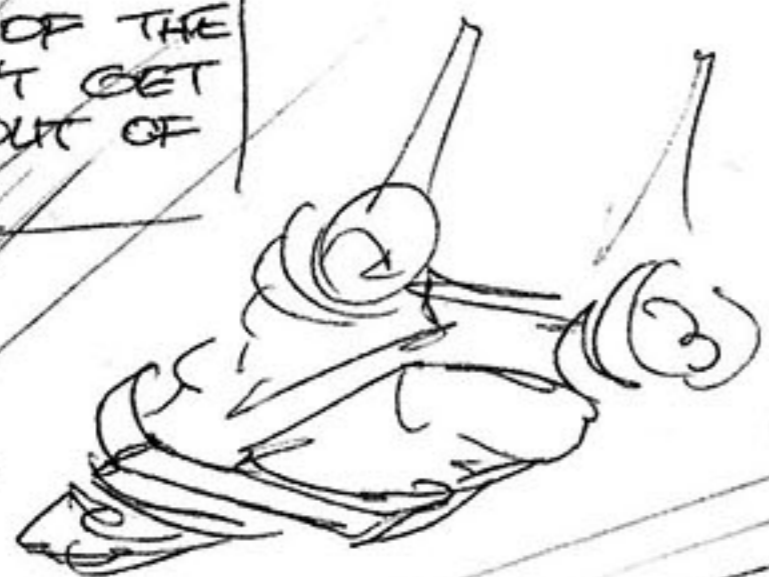


...SOMETHING THAT DIDN'T QUITE TELL ME HE MEANT IT THE WAY IT SOUNDED.

JANUS WAS RIGHT.

THERE WAS MORE TO THIS MISSION...AND THE SERGEANT... THAN MET THE EYE.

FOR THE REST OF THE TRIP, I COULDN'T GET TWO WORDS OUT OF ARTOFF.



AND ALL THE WAY THROUGH THE WARP TO OUR DESTINATION (WHERE NONE OF US KNEW ABOUT BY THE WAY) I TRIED TO SPECULATE WHAT WAS GOING ON...

"BUT WHEN WE EXITED THE WARP..."

...I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING.



ENEMY CONTACT!

MUCH BIGGER TO PUNCH UP EXPLOSION!

WOOP WOOP

HOLY--IT'S STARTED ALREADY!



"WE ALL KNEW WHAT IT WOULD BE RIGHT AWAY."

"BALALANT A.T. NO. 1 CATAPILLAR TYPE."

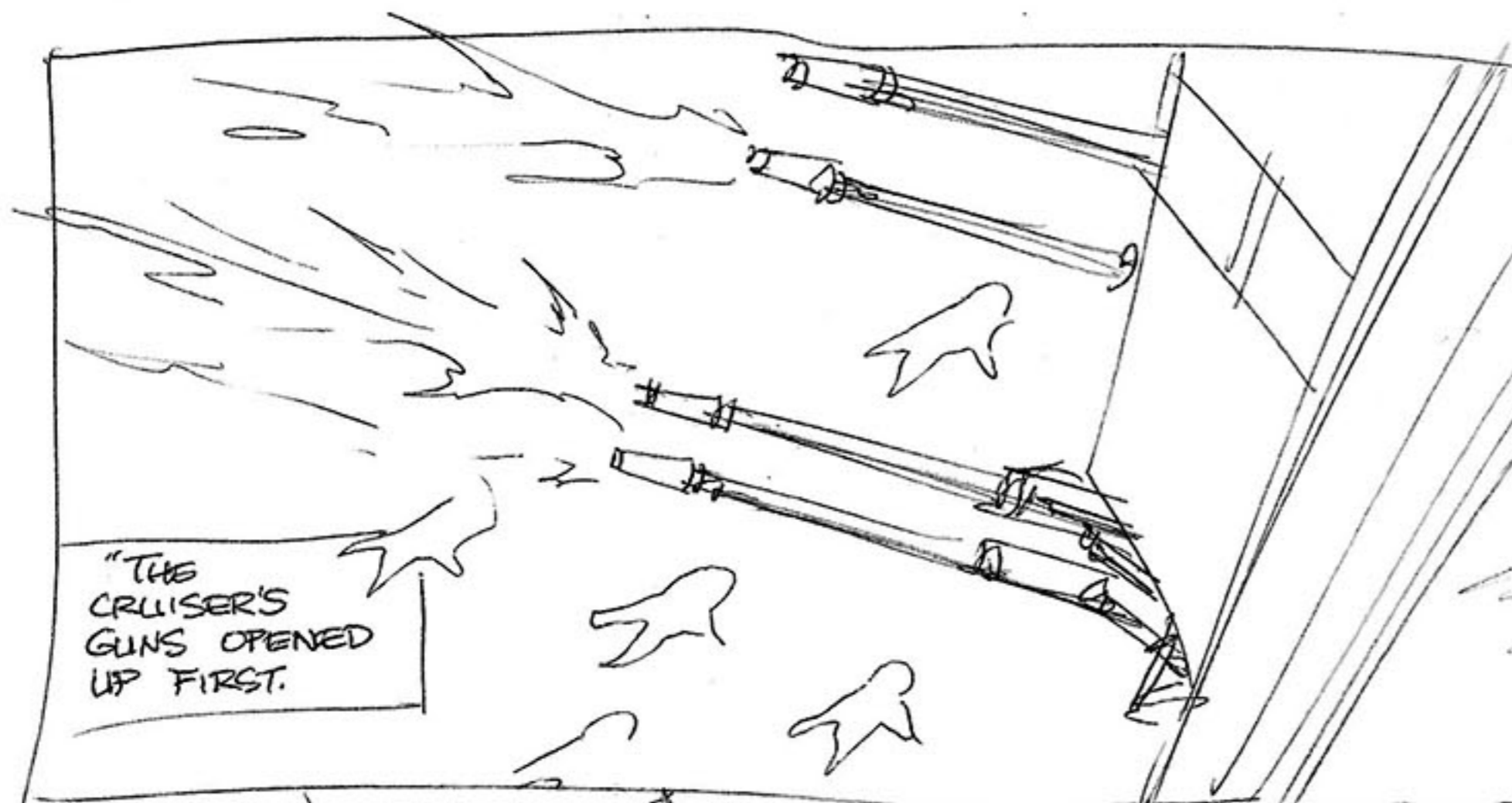


"NOT MUCH IN THE FIELD..."

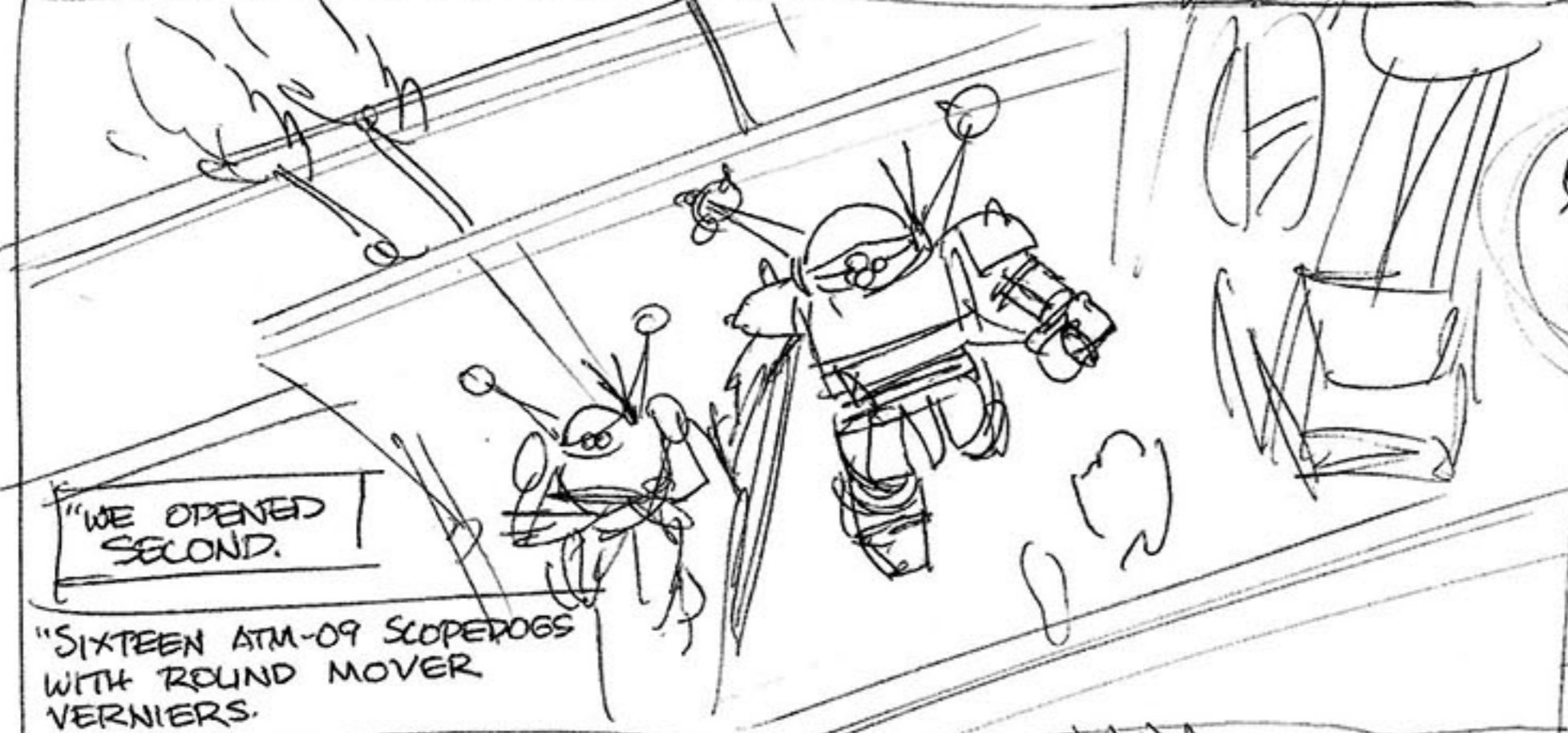
GET TO YOUR AT'S-- NOW!

...BUT MURDER IN ZERO-G.

CHASER PLATOON



"THE CRUISER'S GUNS OPENED UP FIRST."



"WE OPENED SECOND."

"SIXTEEN ATM-09 SCOPEROGS WITH ROUND MOVER VERNIERS."

"SIXTEEN OF THE BEST AT PILOTS IN THE WHOLE GILGAMETH ARMY."



CHAN... GOLDON. YOU READ ME?

RIGHT ON YOUR BACK-SIDE, BUDDY. SHALL WE TAKE THE FIRST DANCE?

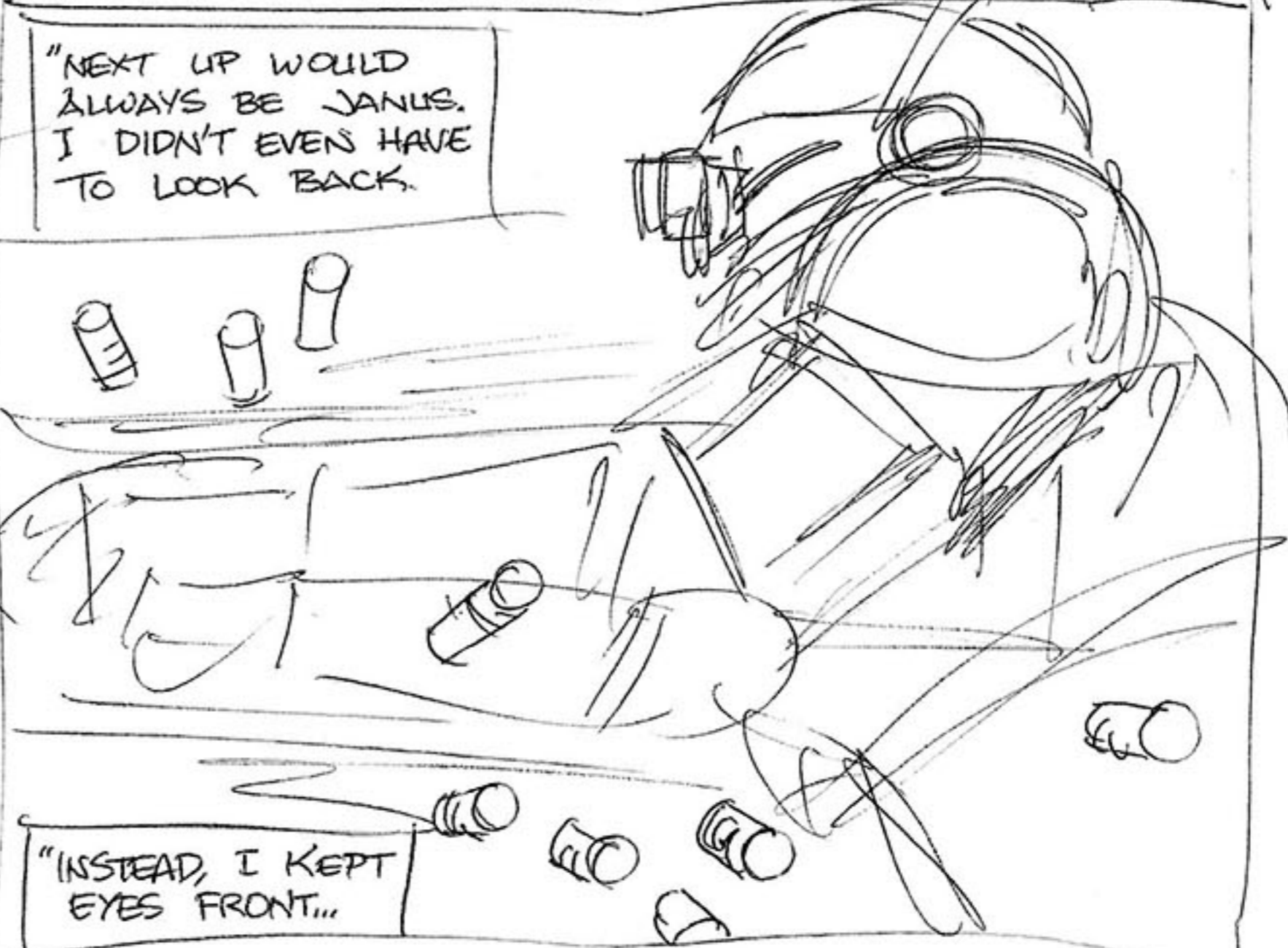


JUST WHAT I WAS GONNA ASK YOU.



"NONE OF THE OTHERS BOTHERED TO FORM UP WITH US. CHAN AND I HAVE ALWAYS RUN SPEARHEAD TOGETHER."

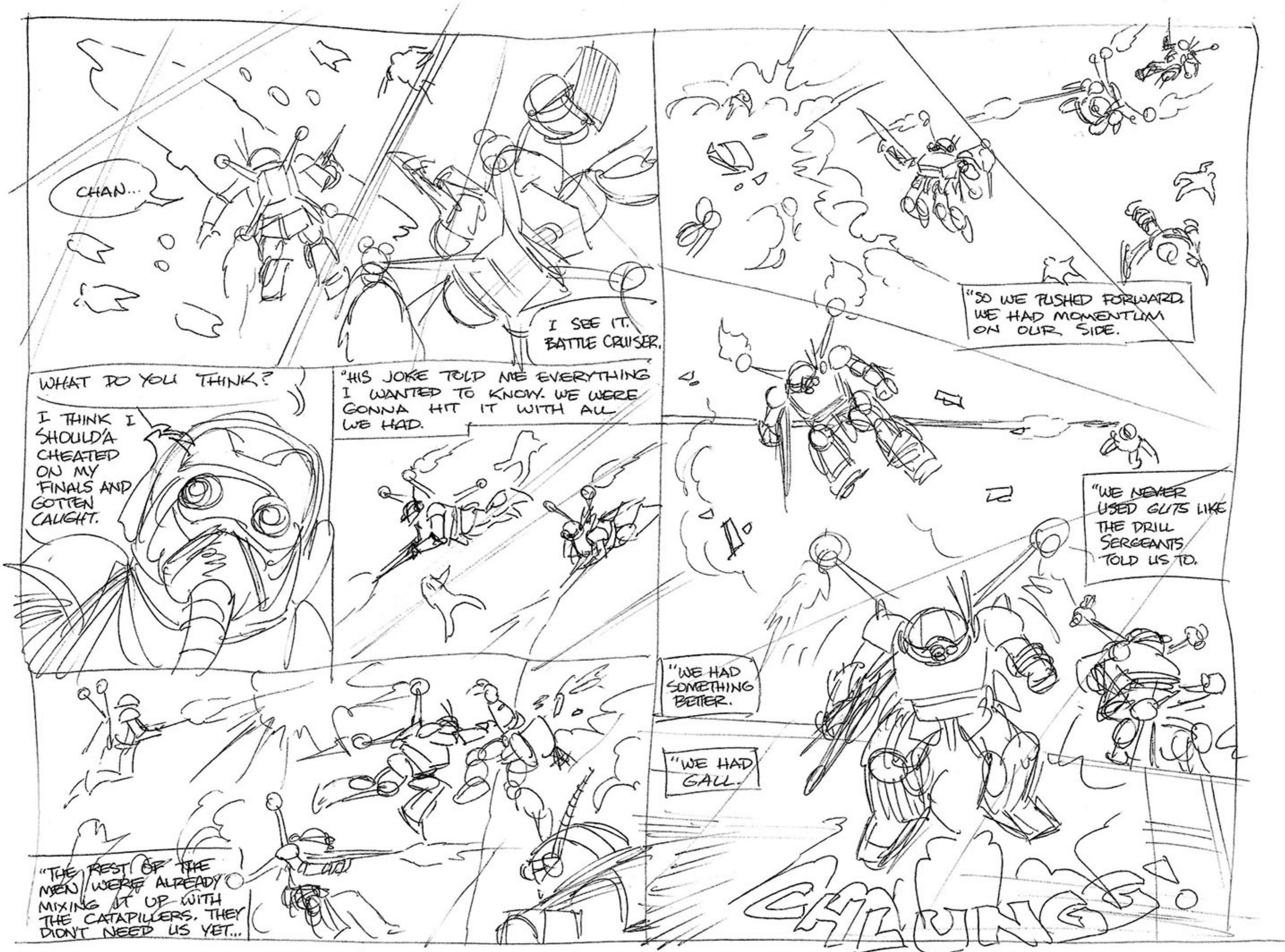
"IT'S A FACT OF LIFE. LIKE BRUSHING YOUR TEETH IN THE MORNING."



"NEXT UP WOULD ALWAYS BE JANUS. I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO LOOK BACK."

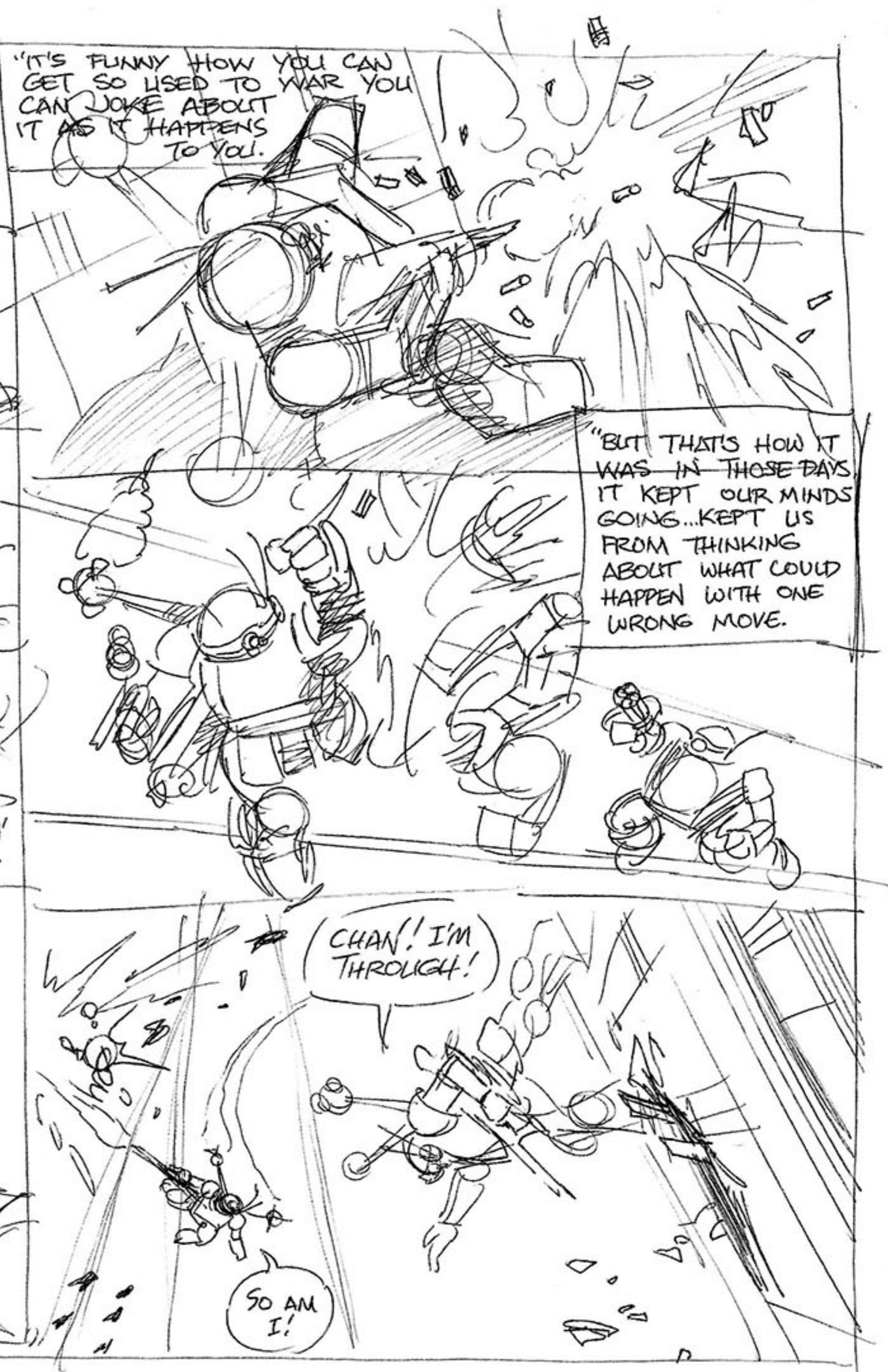


"INSTEAD, I KEPT EYES FRONT..."

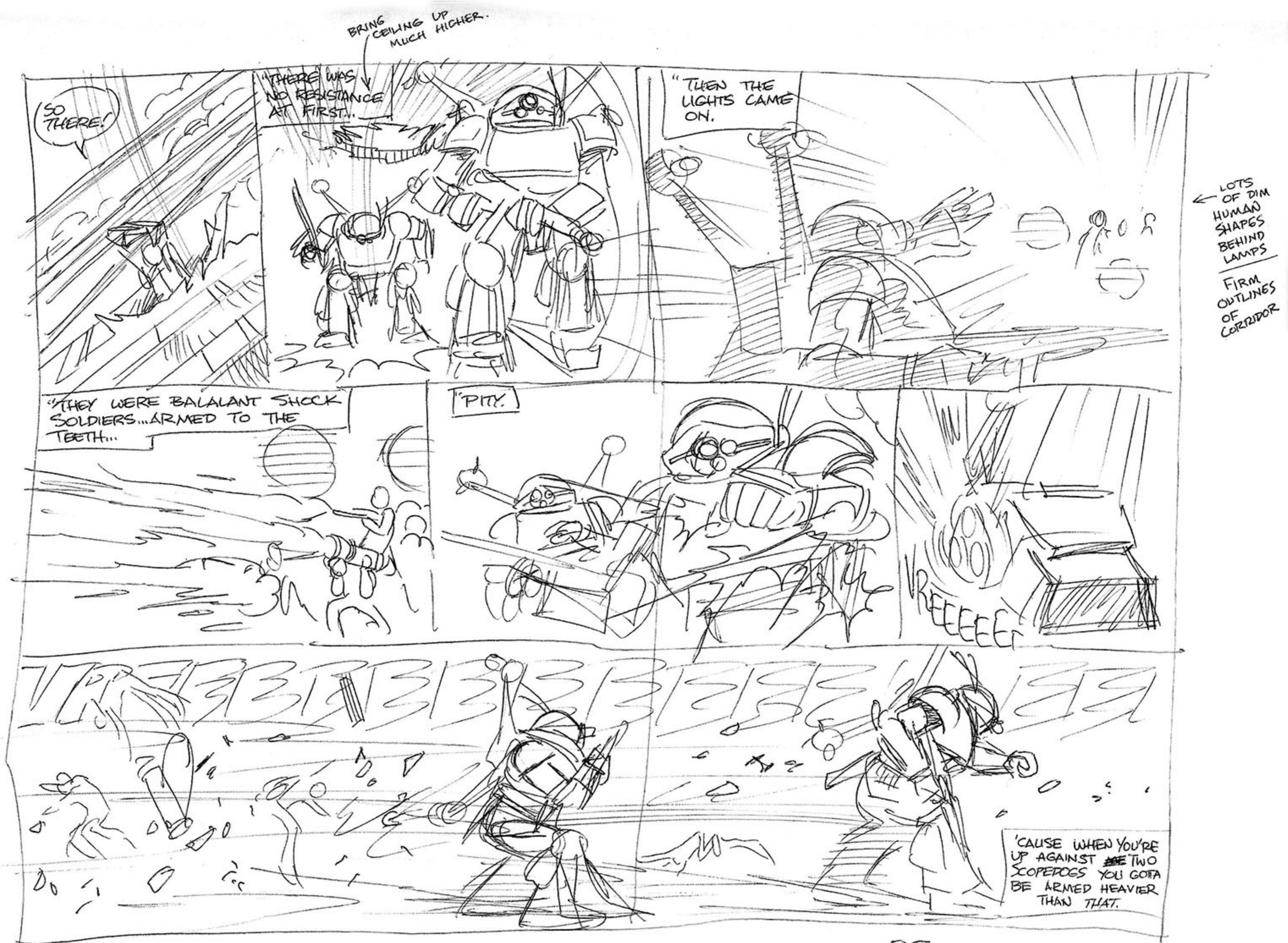




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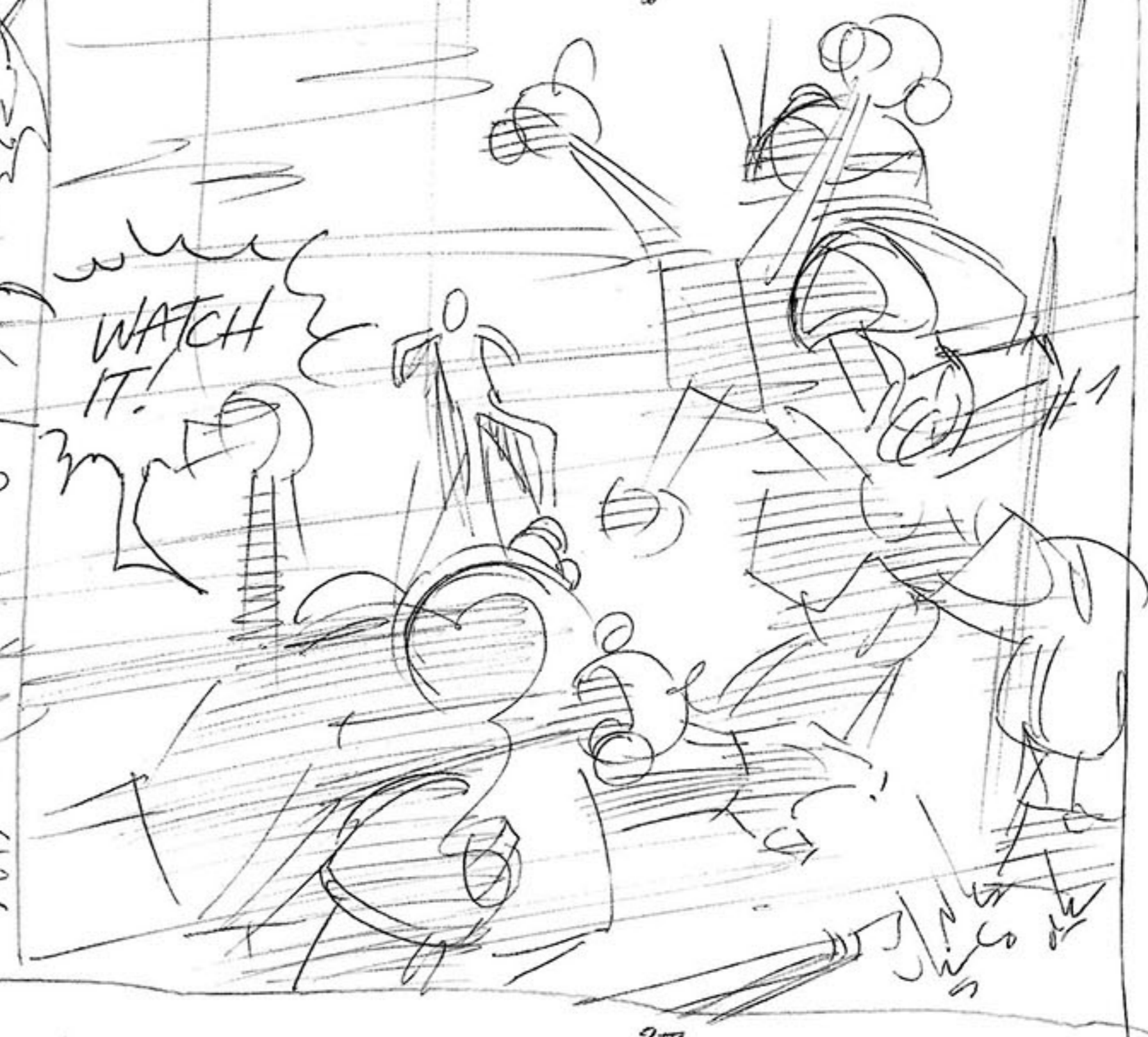
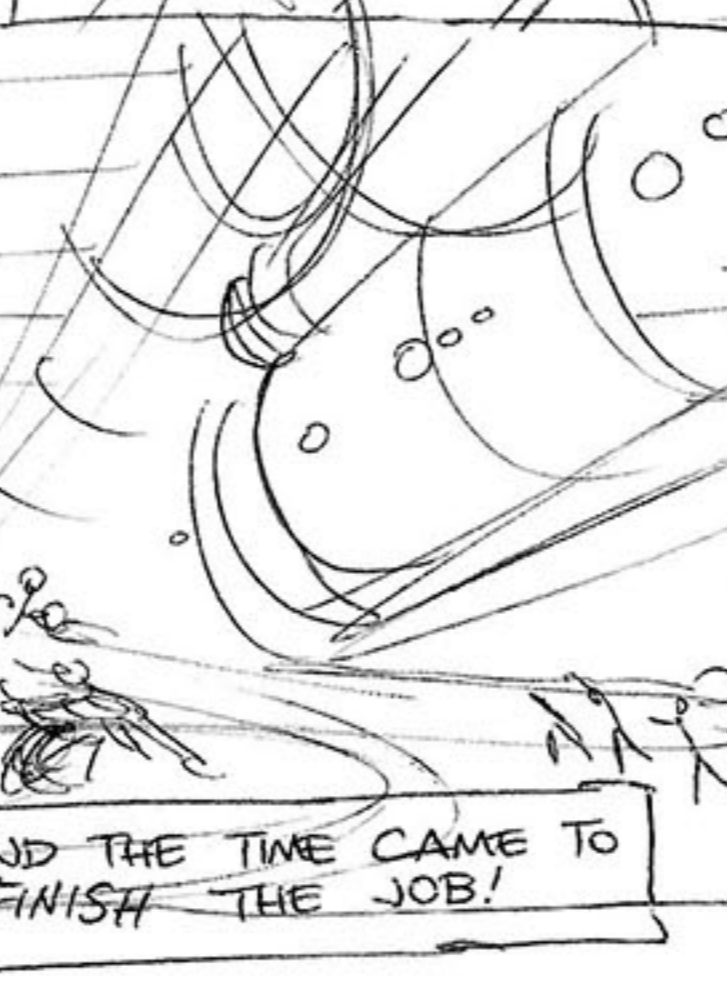
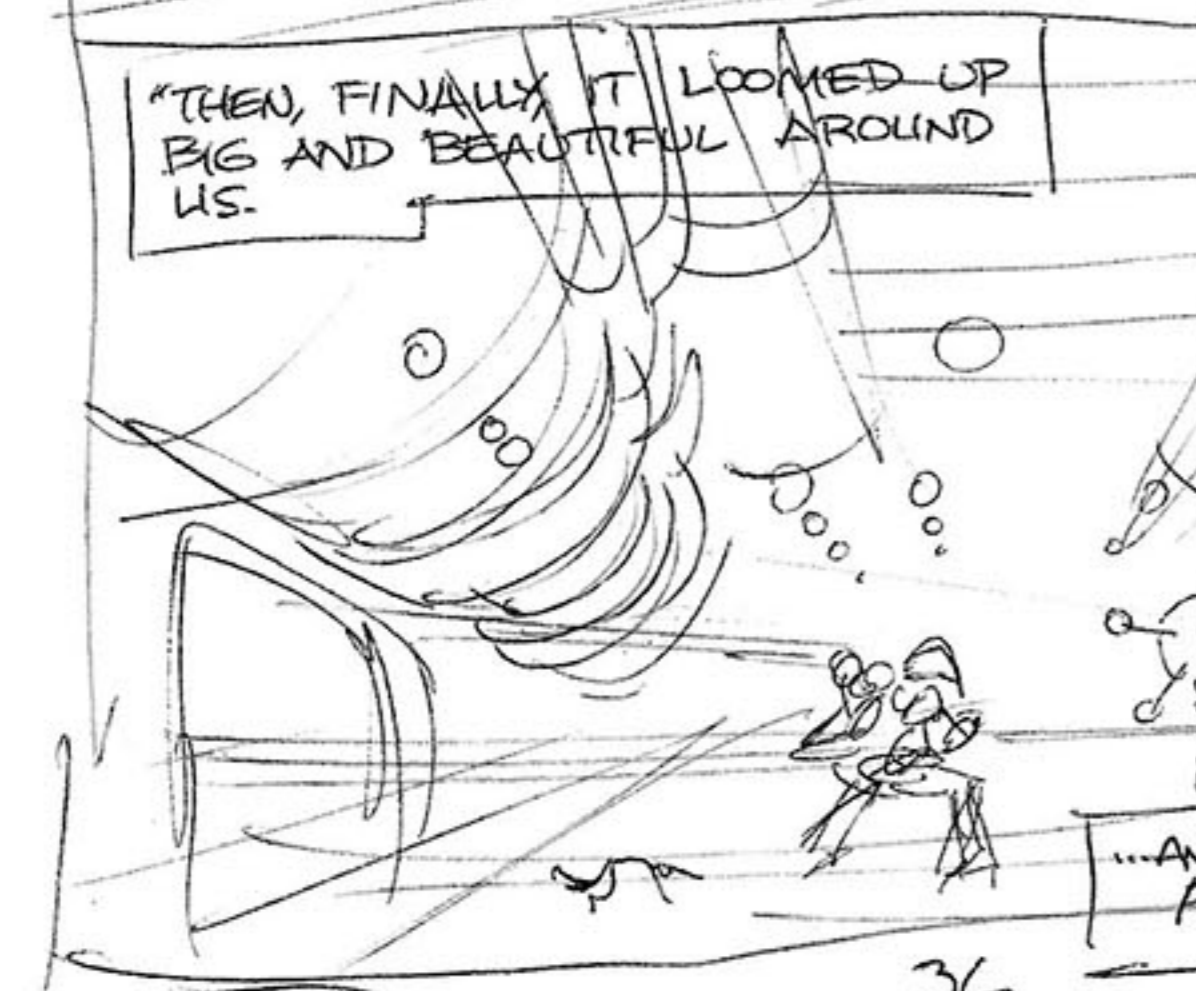
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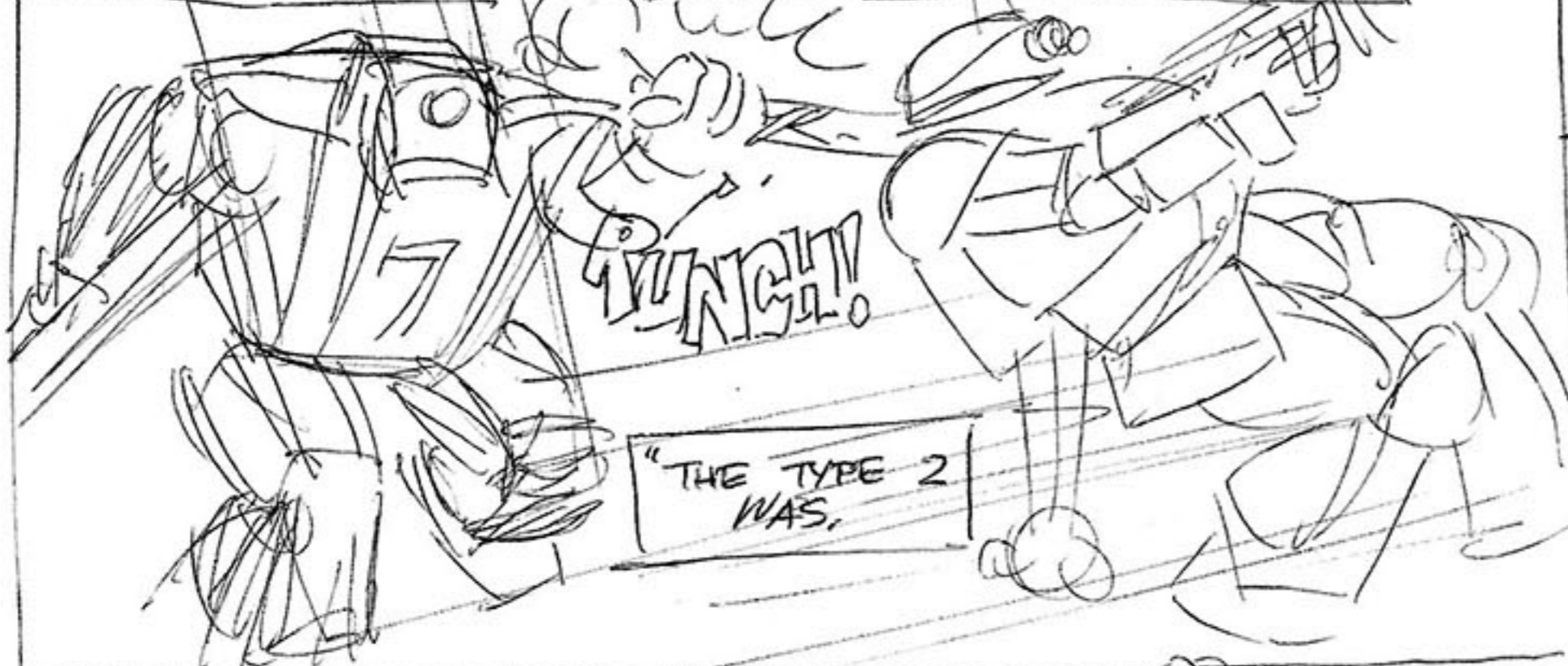
34

↑
HUNCH SCOPE DOG BODIES FORWARD
TO GIVE MORE SPEED

35



"AS I SAID, THE TYPE-1 CATAPILLER WASN'T SO HOT."



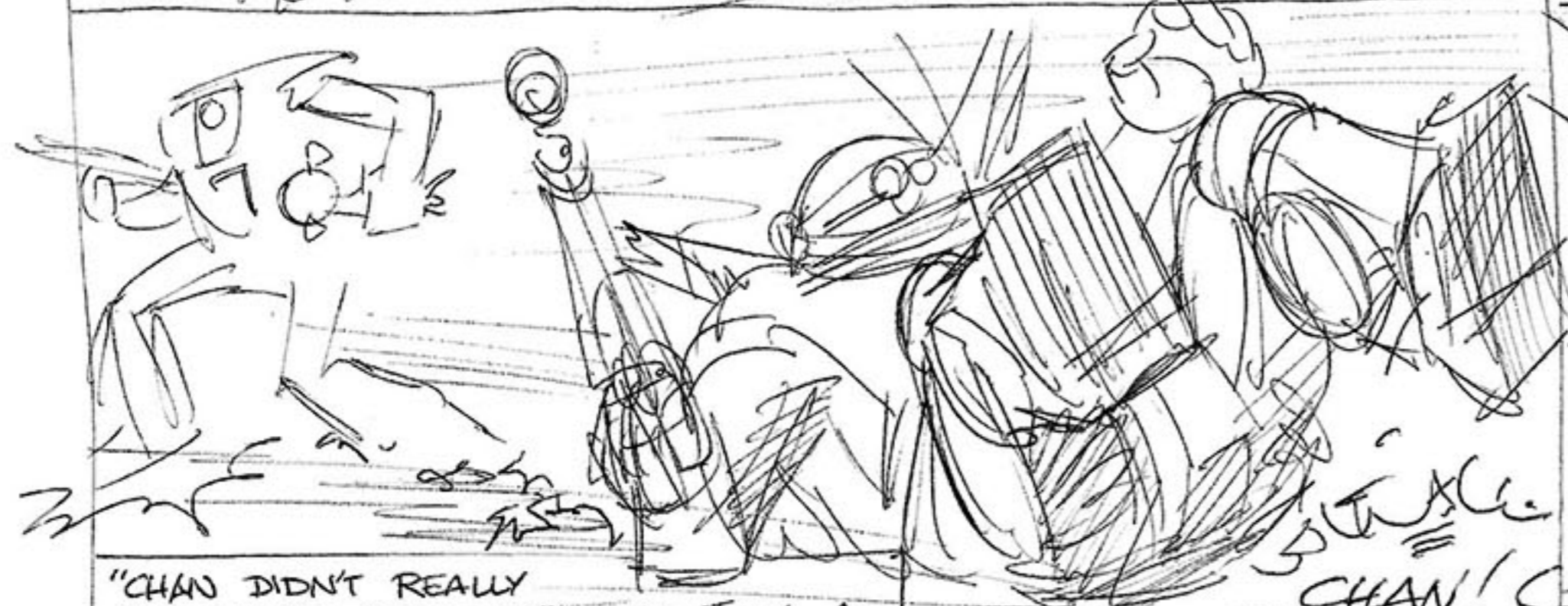
"THE TYPE 2 WAS."

"I LET FLY WITH AN ARMORED PUNCH AT THE TYPE 2."



"BUT BY THAT TIME, IT WASN'T THERE ANYMORE!"

HAND READY TO STRIKE

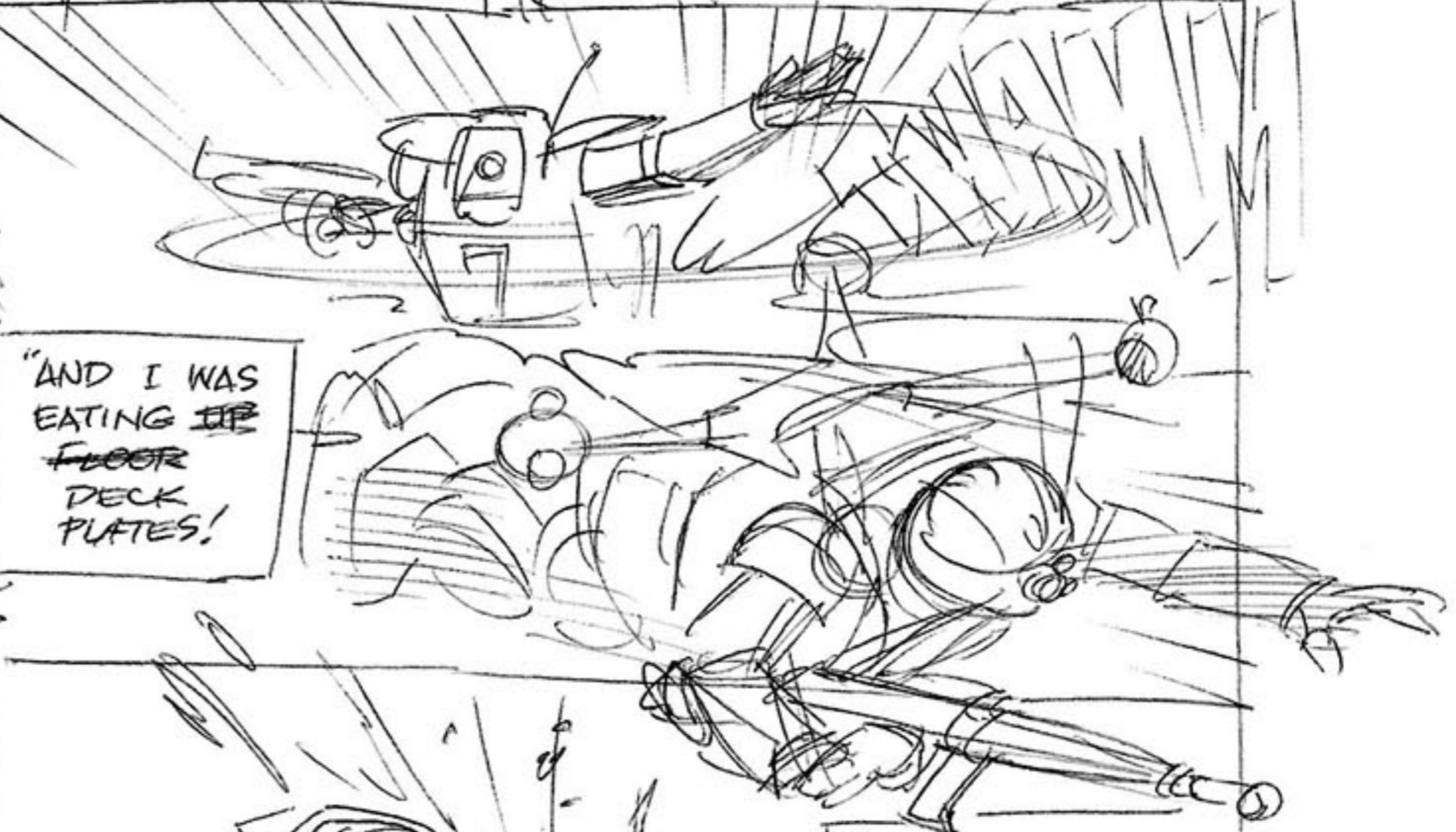


"CHAN DIDN'T REALLY REMEMBER THAT UNTIL HE TOOK A LITTLE SLIDE ON HIS SEAT."

CHAN!

THAT DID IT! NOW I'M EMBARRASSED!

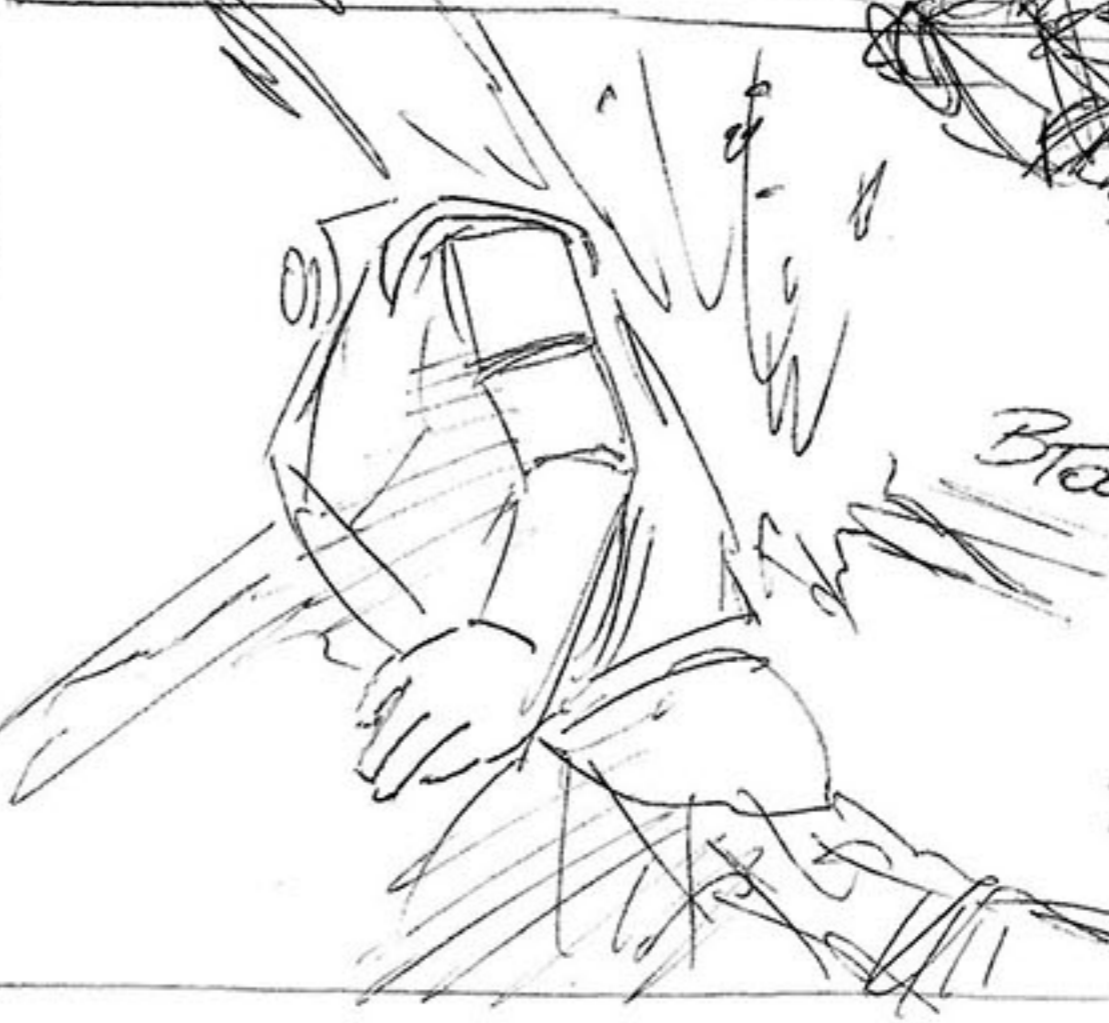
"AND I WAS EATING THE FLOOR DECK PLATES!"



"BUT THEN IT WAS CHAN'S TURN!"

Bloom! Bloom! Bloom!

NOW, WE CAN'T ALLOW THAT!



try to heighten impact of hit somehow

"HE KEPT THE TYPE 2 OFF BALANCE LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO GET TO MY FEET AND ADD TO HIS BARRAGE."

"THEN HELL BROKE LOOSE!"

TYPE 2
IN
BKG.

GAHH!
NOW
WHAT?

Oh, NOT MUCH, GUYS... JUST
JUST YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD
STRIKE FORCE!

JANUS?
THAT YOU?

IN THE
FLESH.

NOW QUIT
GAWKIN' AND
HELP US
FINISH WHAT
YOU STARTED!

"THAT DID IT FOR THE
TYPE 2. HE TURNED
TAIL AND RAN."

"I DON'T KNOW HOW WE COULD'A
FORGOT ABOUT HIM SO QUICKLY...
BUT I SURE WISH WE HADN'T!"

"BUT AT THAT POINT
IT DIDN'T MATTER TOO
MUCH... ALL SIXTEEN OF
US WERE TOGETHER
AGAIN AND UNLOADING
EVERYTHING ON THE
CRUISER'S ENGINE
SYSTEMS."

"AND THEN ALL SIXTEEN OF US WERE HAULIN' OUR BUTTS OUTTA THE THING..."

GUESS THE TOP BRASS KNEW WHAT THEY WERE DOIN' WHEN THEY PICKED US FOR THE JOB, HUH?

"THERE WAS ONLY ONE SURVIVOR ON THE BALANT SIDE. YOU CAN PROBABLY GUESS WHO."

SILHOUETTE OF TYPE 2

GUESS SO.

BACK TO THE SHIP, ~~THE~~ BOYS. WE'VE STILL GOT TO MAKE A PLANETFALL.

"THE SHIP ~~WAS~~ HAD TAKEN ONLY SUPERFICIAL DAMAGE. WE WERE STILL OPERABLE TO FULL CAPACITY."

"BUT SOMEHOW THAT DIDNT PLEASE THE SERGEANT AS MUCH AS IT PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE."

CONGRATULATIONS, CORPORAL. THE MISSION'S STILL GO THANKS TO YOUR LEADERSHIP.

THANK YOU, SIR.

"THE WORDS WERE ALL IN THE RIGHT PLACE... BUT THE TONE TOLD ME SOMETHING ELSE... SOMETHING I DIDN'T LIKE AT ALL."

"JUST IN TIME TO WATCH THE FIREWORKS!"

EVERYONE ACCOUNTED FOR? _ _ _ _ ?

ALL HERE, COLON. NOT A SINGLE CASUALTY.

"HE MUST HAVE NOTICED
SOMETHING IN MY
REACTION..."



"...BECAUSE SUDDENLY HE WAS
ALL BUSINESS AGAIN, BARKING
ORDERS LIKE HE'D NEVER GET
THE CHANCE TO AGAIN."

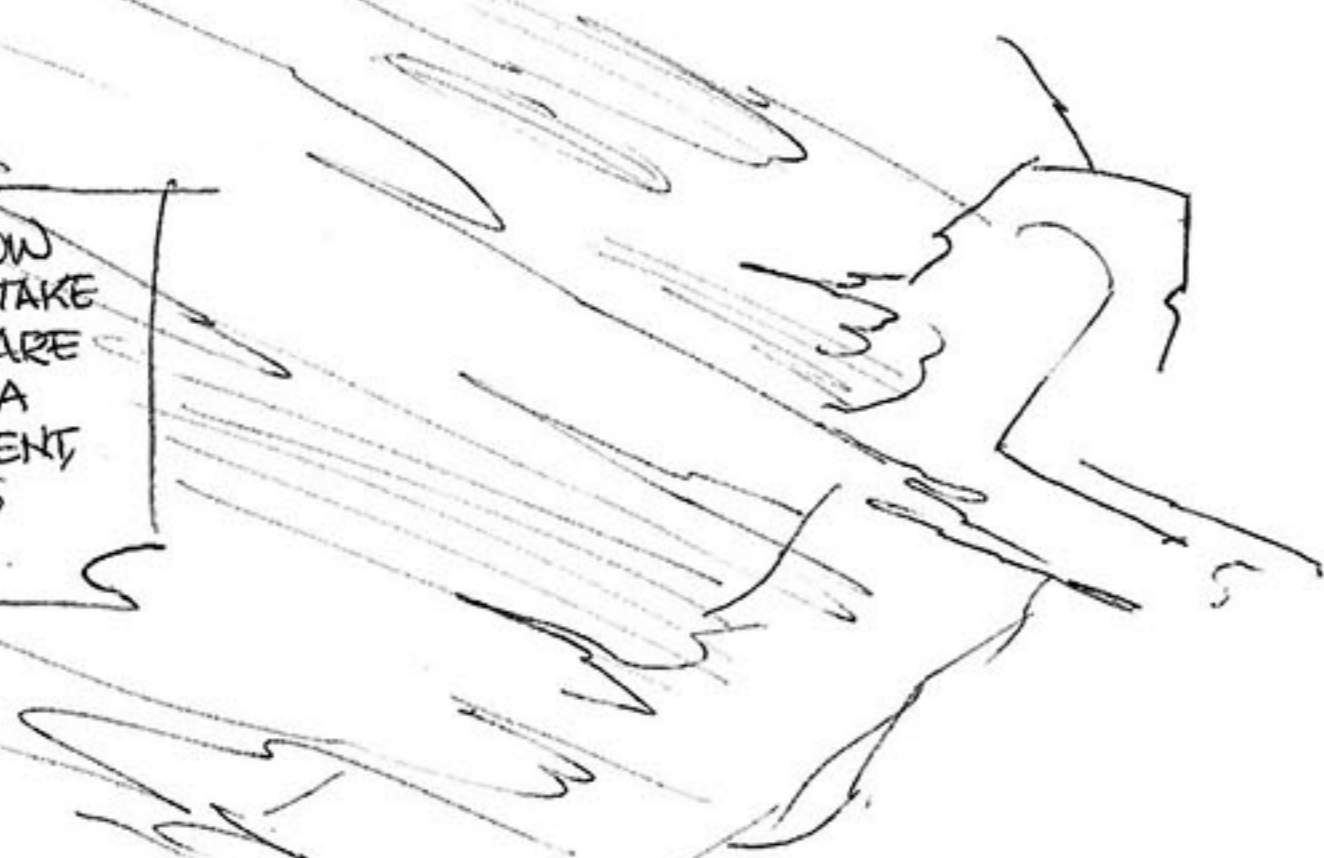
"AND WE WERE
GOING DOWN."

"MEANWHILE..."



"...SOMETHING ELSE WAS GOING DOWN JUST OUT OF OUR
SCANNER RANGE. YOU GUESSED IT. IT WAS THE TYPE 2."

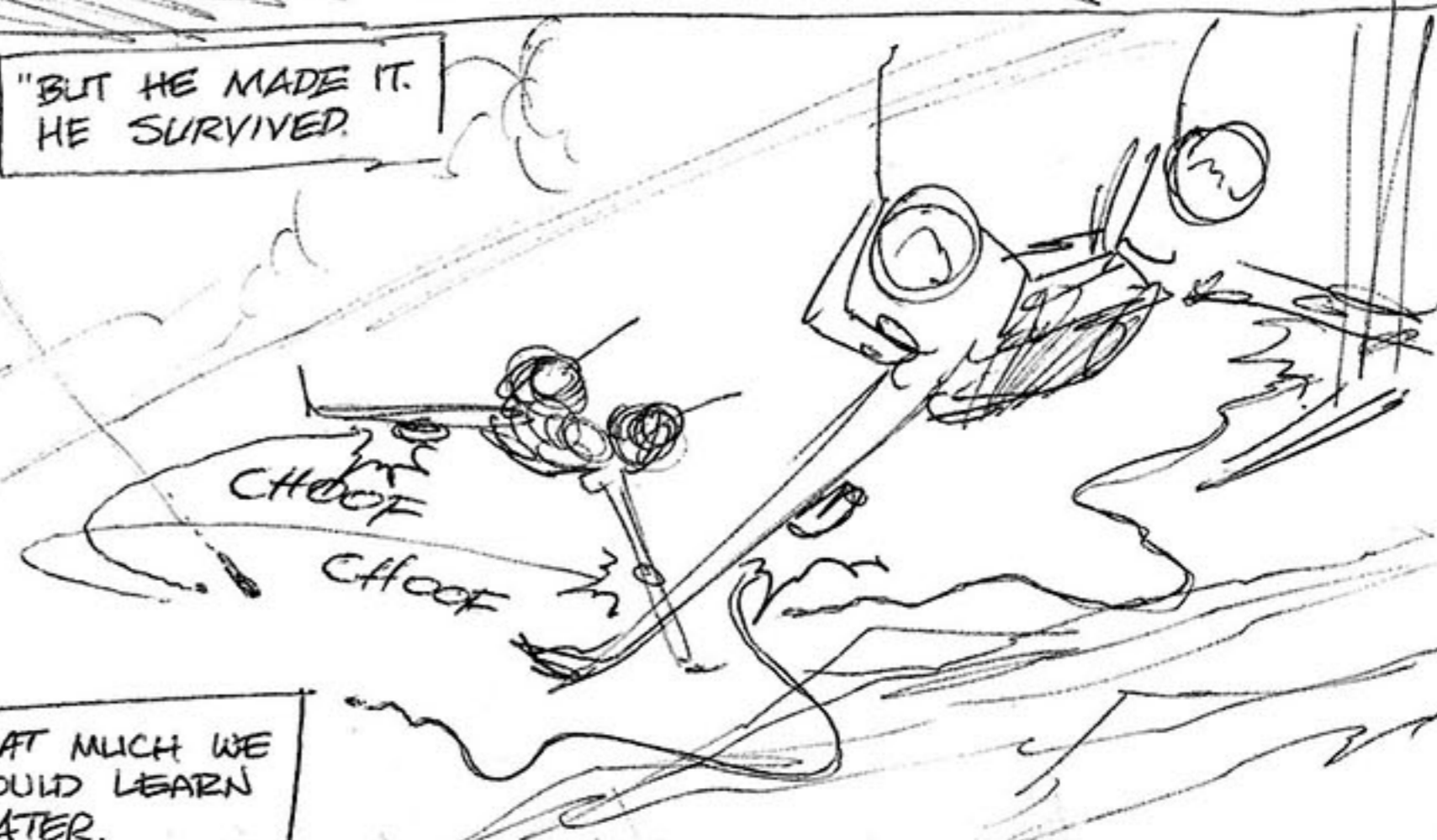
"I DON'T KNOW HOW
THE PILOT COULD TAKE
THE HEAT. A.T.'S ARE
BUILT TO TAKE A
LOT OF PUNISHMENT,
BUT RE-ENTRY IS
SOMETHING ELSE."



EXTREME
CLOSE-UP OF
A.T. SHOWING
PLATING MELT AWAY

"I IMAGINE RIDING THAT
THING DOWN WAS LIKE
A FEW MINUTES IN HELL
FOR HIM..."

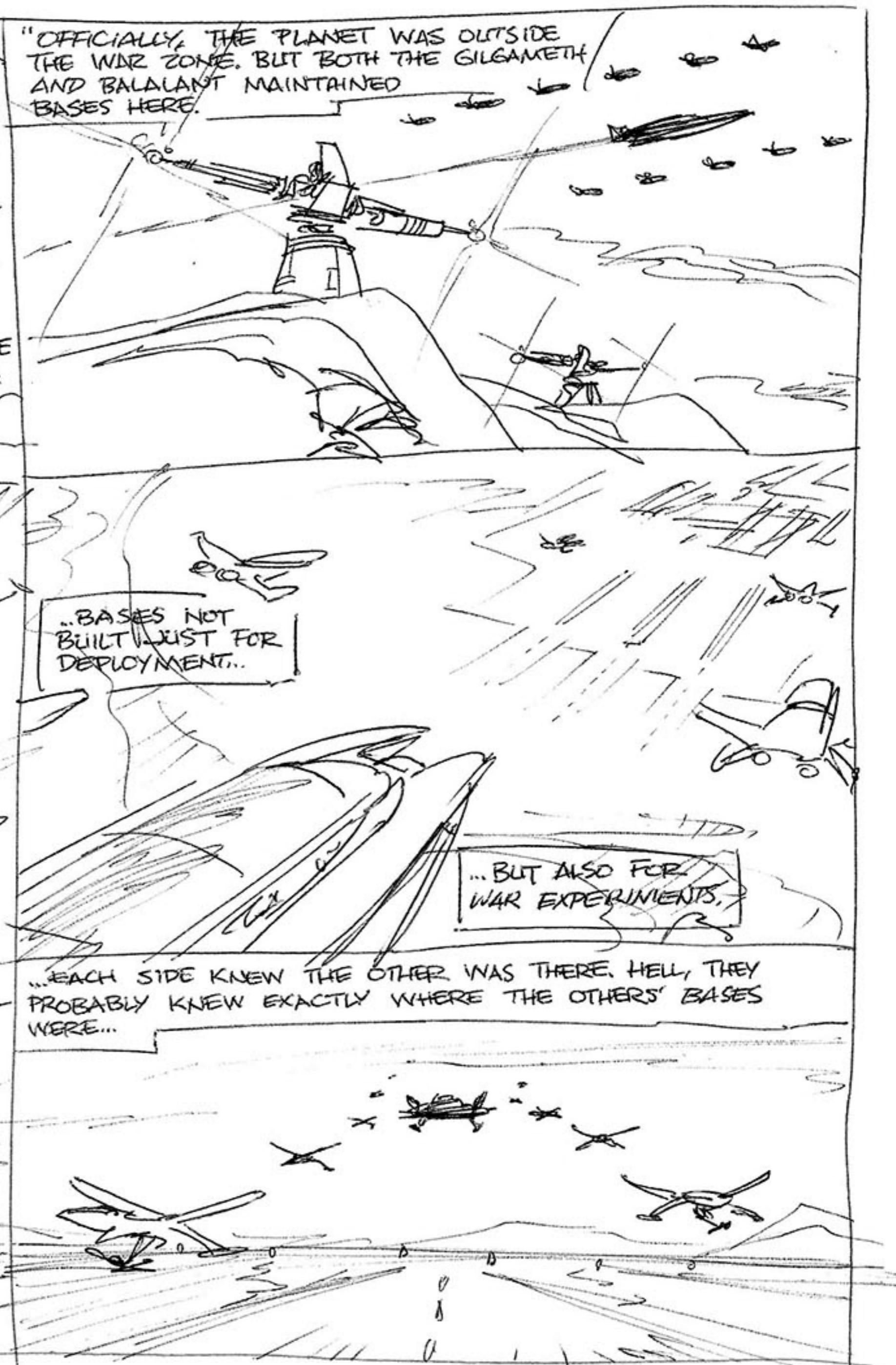
"BUT HE MADE IT.
HE SURVIVED."



"THAT MUCH WE
WOULD LEARN
LATER."

PLACE
HERE





CHAPTER THREE

"BUT THERE WERE NEVER ANY STRIKES. EACH SIDE KEPT TO ITSELF AND PLAYED ITS OWN LITTLE GAME."

"THAT GAME WAS SCIENCE."

GOOD. GOOD. THE LIFTER'S GOT HIM NOW. CLEAR OFF.

INCREDIBLE! HIS SIGNS HAVE ALL STABILIZED! NOT A SIGN OF SKIN ABRASION LEFT ON HIM!

"THERE WAS ALWAYS SOME SORT OF FIGHTING GOING ON SOMEWHERE ON LUNDEEN. BUT IT WAS ALWAYS FOR THE CAUSE OF EXPERIMENTATION, SO IT WAS ALWAYS TOLERATED."

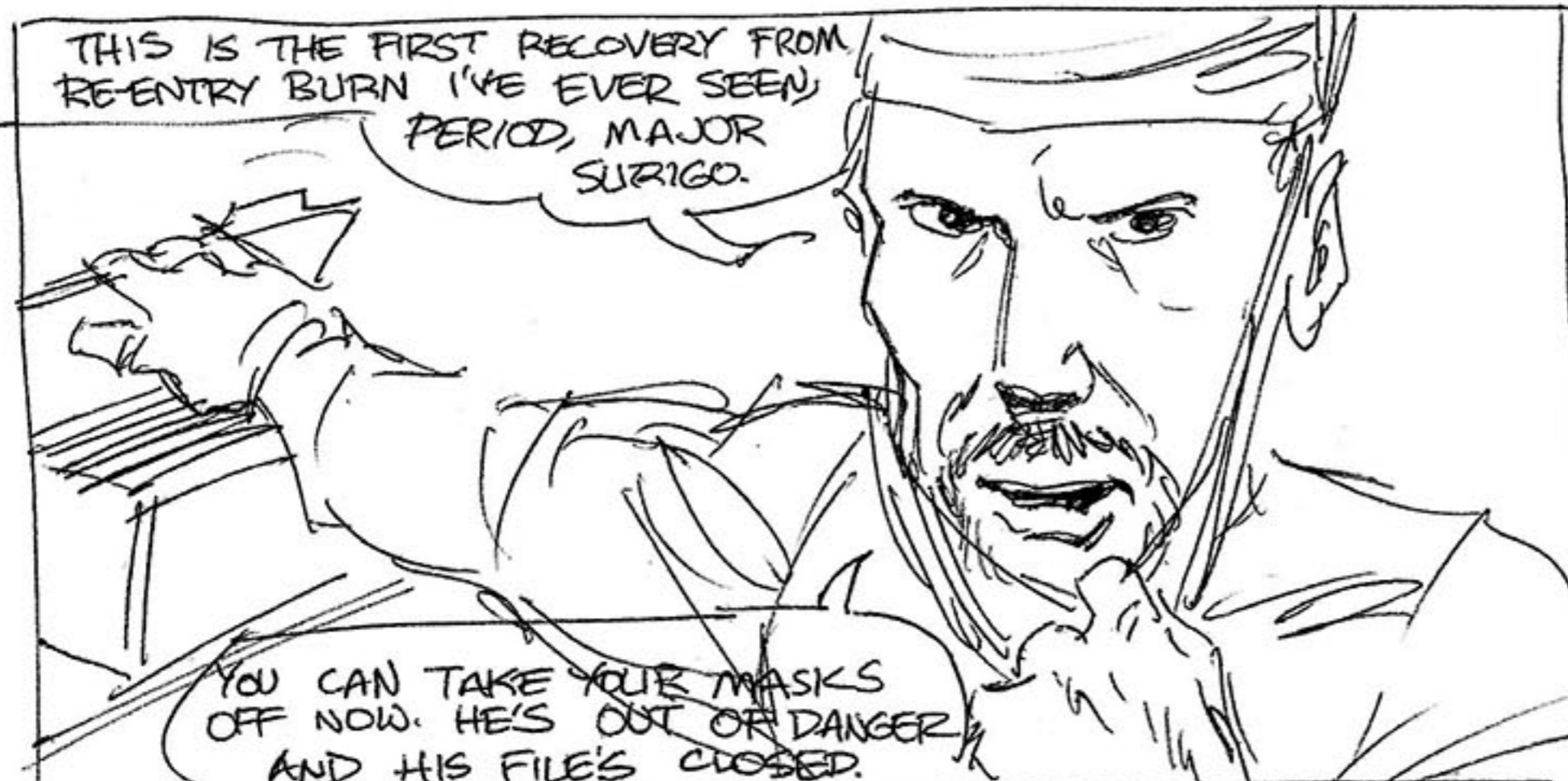
~~"THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED THE WHOLE MISSION HAD CHANGED"~~

"AT THAT MOMENT, THE WHOLE MISSION ~~HAD~~ CHANGED. WE WERE PUPPETS NOW. WE WERE PIECES ON A GAMEBOARD. AND SUDDENLY I KNEW WHAT SERGEANT ARTOFF WAS UNHAPPY ABOUT."

THIS THE FIRST TOTAL RECOVERY YOU'VE EVER FROM RE-ENTRY BURN YOU'VE EVER SEEN, DOCTOR YAKES?

Note: Medical Room-- Should be dimly lit

No goggles



DAMN HIM! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN HE'D MAKE IT! OF ALL THE A.T. PILOTS AT MY COMMAND...



...HE'D BE THE INDESTRUCTIBLE ONE!

I GET THE IMPRESSION YOU DON'T WANT ME AROUND.



MAJOR...MAJOR... IS THAT ANY WAY TO TALK ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE LITTLE SOLDIER?

I COULD ALWAYS STOP SAVING YOUR LIVES, YOU KNOW.



JANNER! IF YOU WEREN'T THE BEST FLAMIN' A.T. PILOT ON THIS PLANET YOU'D BE SCRAPIN' WASTE BINS! AND ON THE FIRST SLIP UP, YOU WILL!

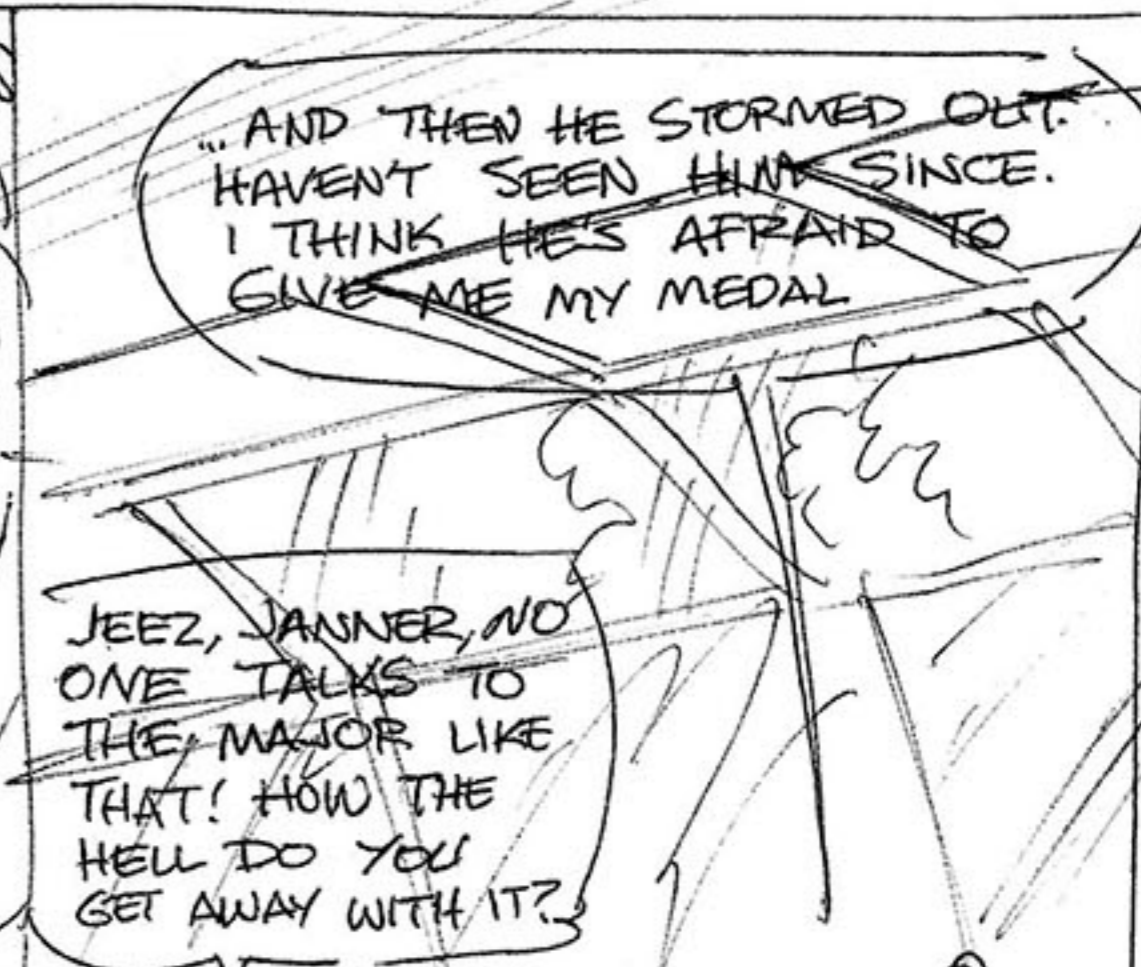


MESSAGE RECEIVED, FEARLESS LEADER.

NOW HOW 'BOUT FINDING SOMEONE TO GET ME DOWN?

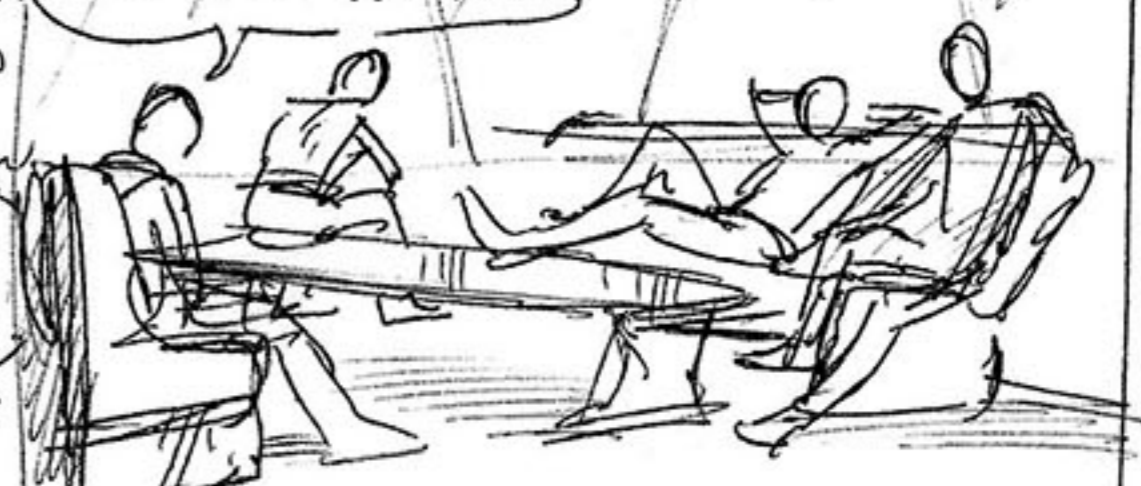
(PREFERABLY FEMALES.)

IT'S EASY, GUYS. YOU JUST HAVE TO BE THE BEST ARMORED TROOPER PILOT IN THE HISTORY OF WARFARE TENDS TO MAKE ONE POPULAR, THAT DOES.



...AND THEN HE STORMED OUT. HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE. I THINK HE'S AFRAID TO GIVE ME MY MEDAL.

JEEZ, JANNER, NO ONE TALKS TO THE MAJOR LIKE THAT! HOW THE HELL DO YOU GET AWAY WITH IT?



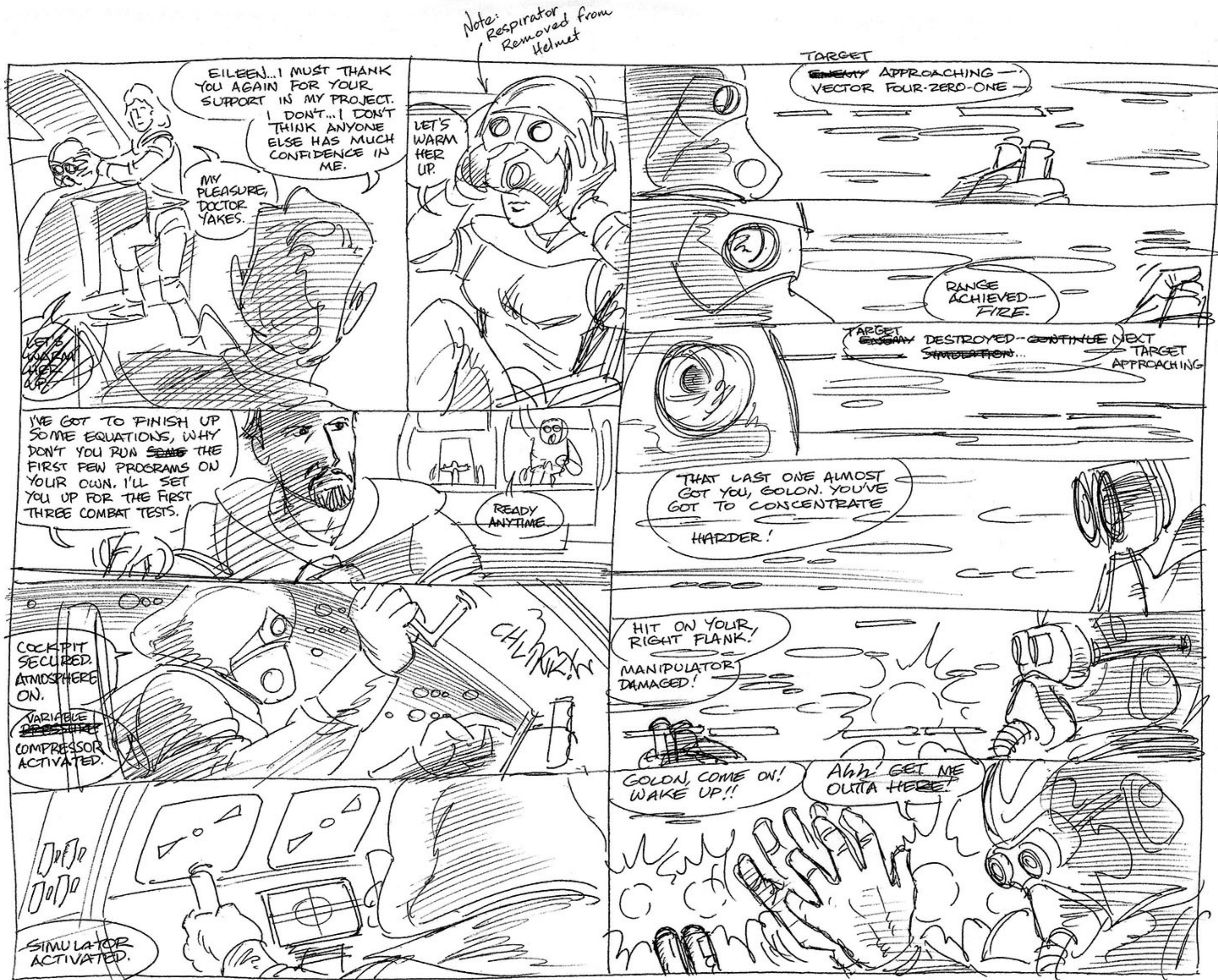
IT ALSO HELPS IF YOUR BRAIN'S BEEN SURGICALLY REPLACED WITH A BEDPAN, RIGHT, JANNER?



Ahhh... THOSE ANGELIC TONES I'VE BEEN SO WANTING TO HEAR SINCE MY FLIGHT THROUGH PERDITION'S FLAMES...







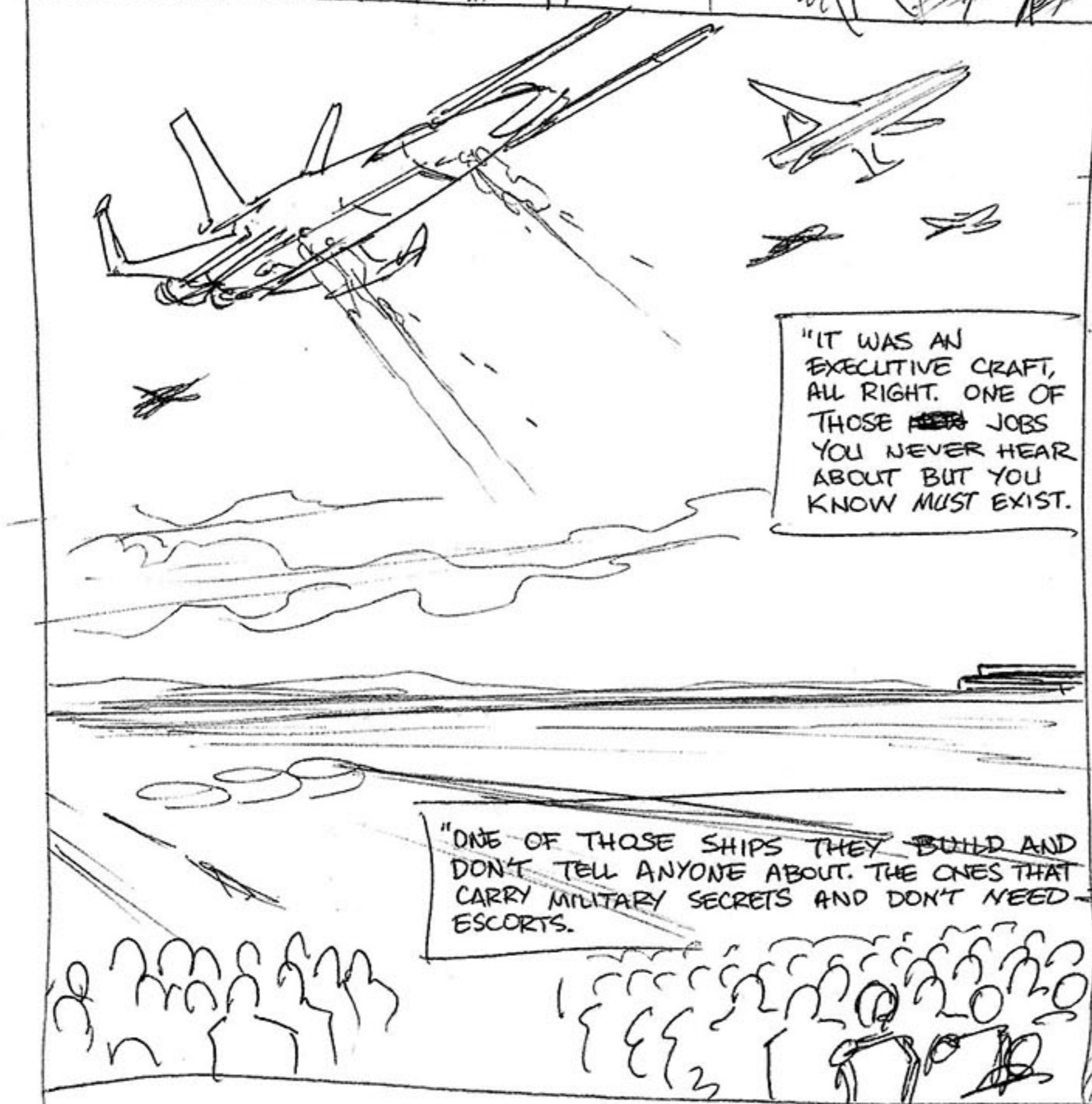


58

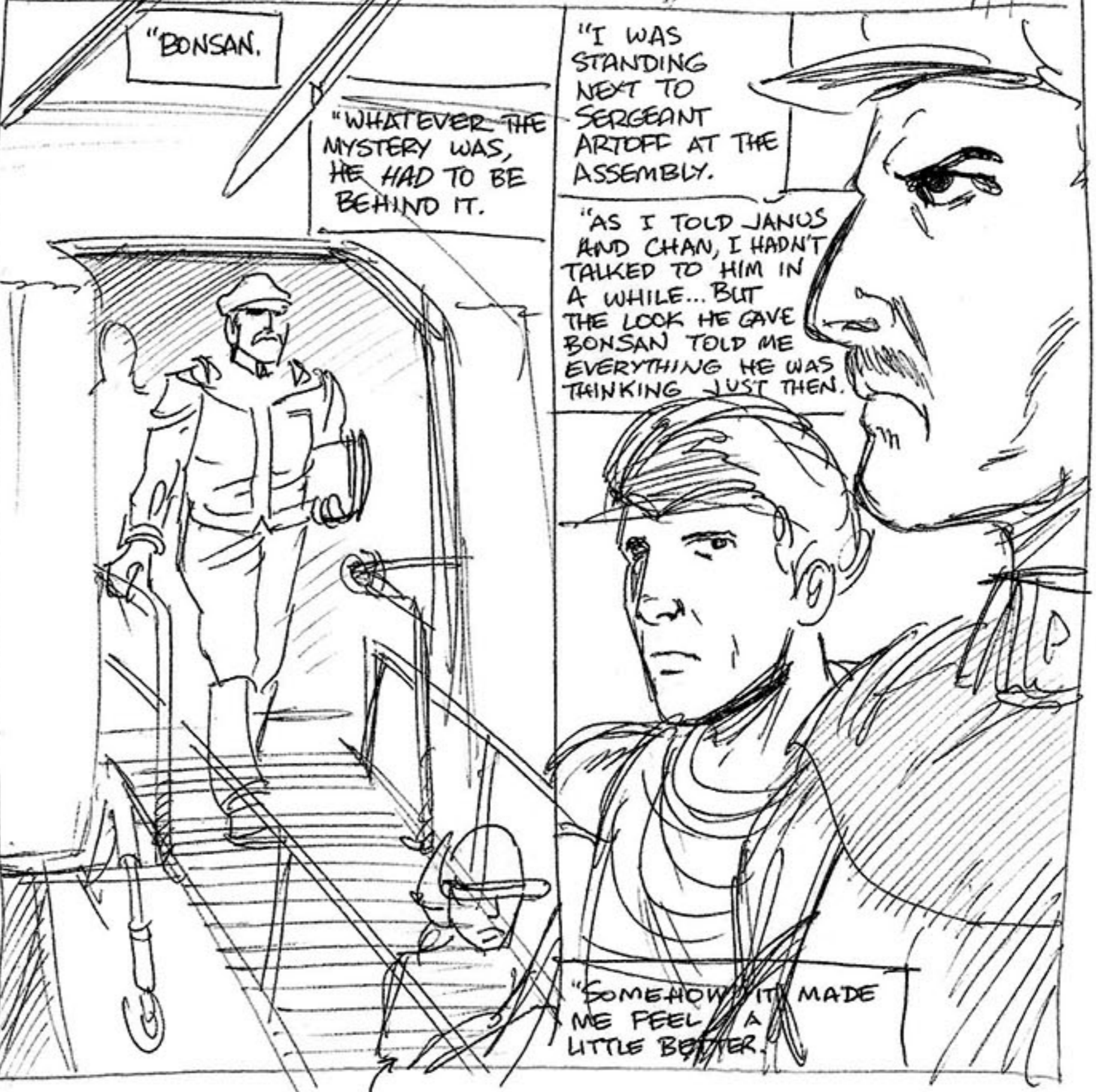
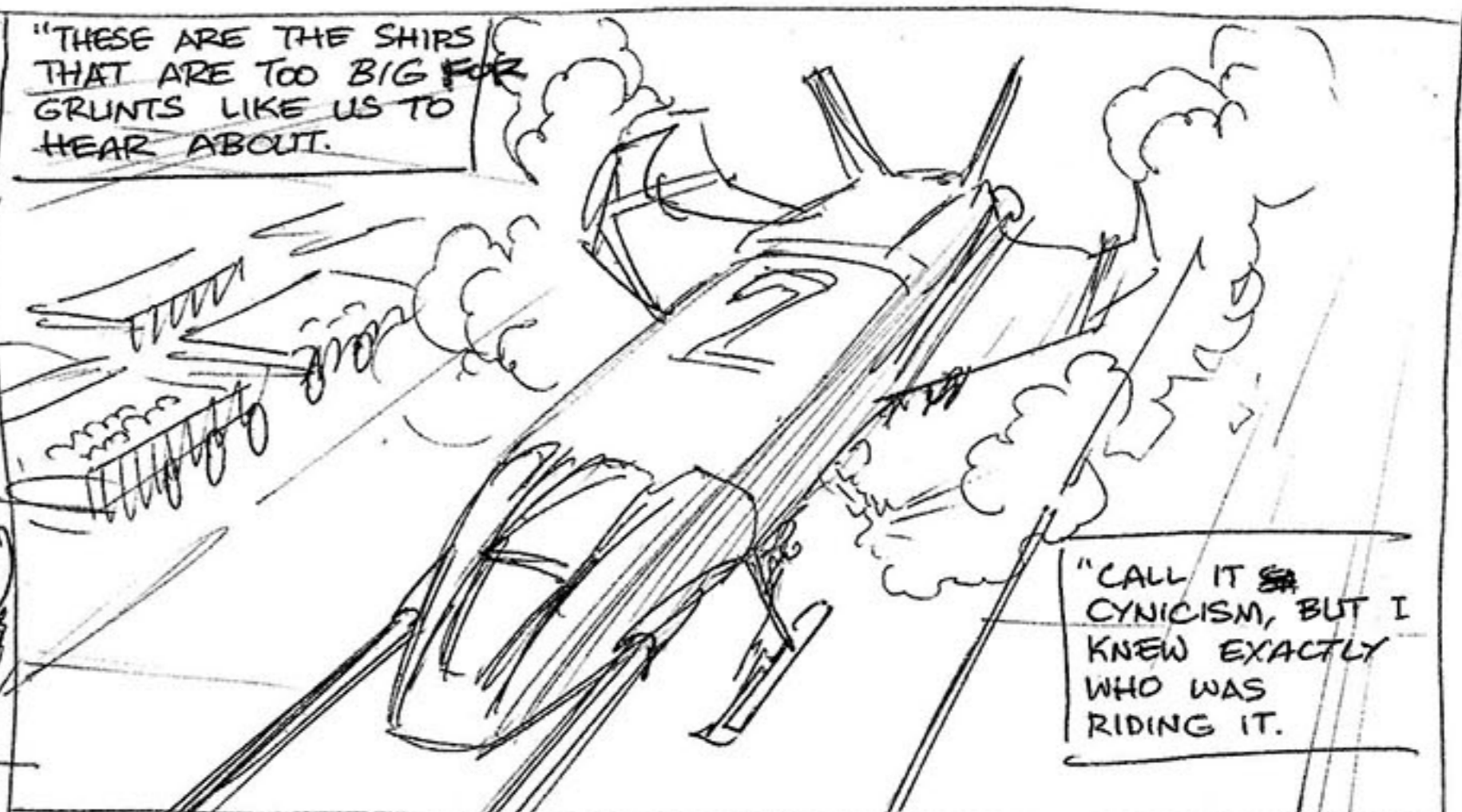
highlight this same kind of listening device as in room on page 23



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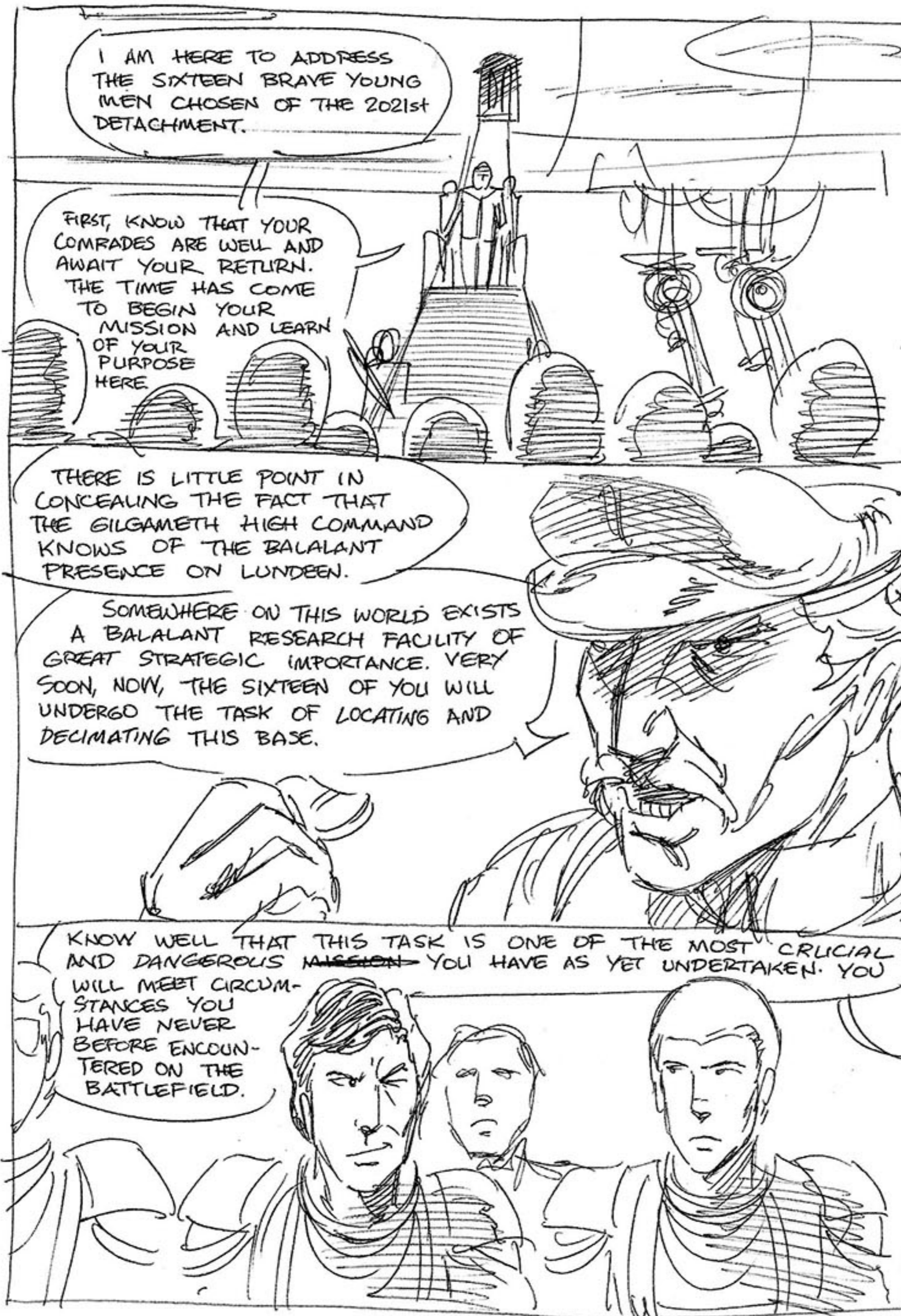


60



ARMED GUARD

61



"THAT WAS ENOUGH TO PUT EVERYONE'S MIND AT EASE. EVERYONE'S BUT MINE.

"BONSAN'S WORDS WERE ALL IN THE RIGHT PLACE... BUT ARTOFF'S REACTION TOLD ME ANOTHER STORY.

SIR, CAN WE GO SOMEWHERE? WE HAVE TO TALK. THERE ARE SOME THINGS I HAVE TO KNOW.



HETOW, I... I CAN'T.

BUT--

FORGET IT, CORPORAL. WE CAN'T TALK. IF WE'RE SPOTTED TALKING IT'S OVER. UNDERSTAND? OVER.

BUT--

DISMISSED, CORPORAL.

"A STORY I HAD TO GET STRAIGHTENED OUT!



SERG-EANT? WAIT, PLEASE?

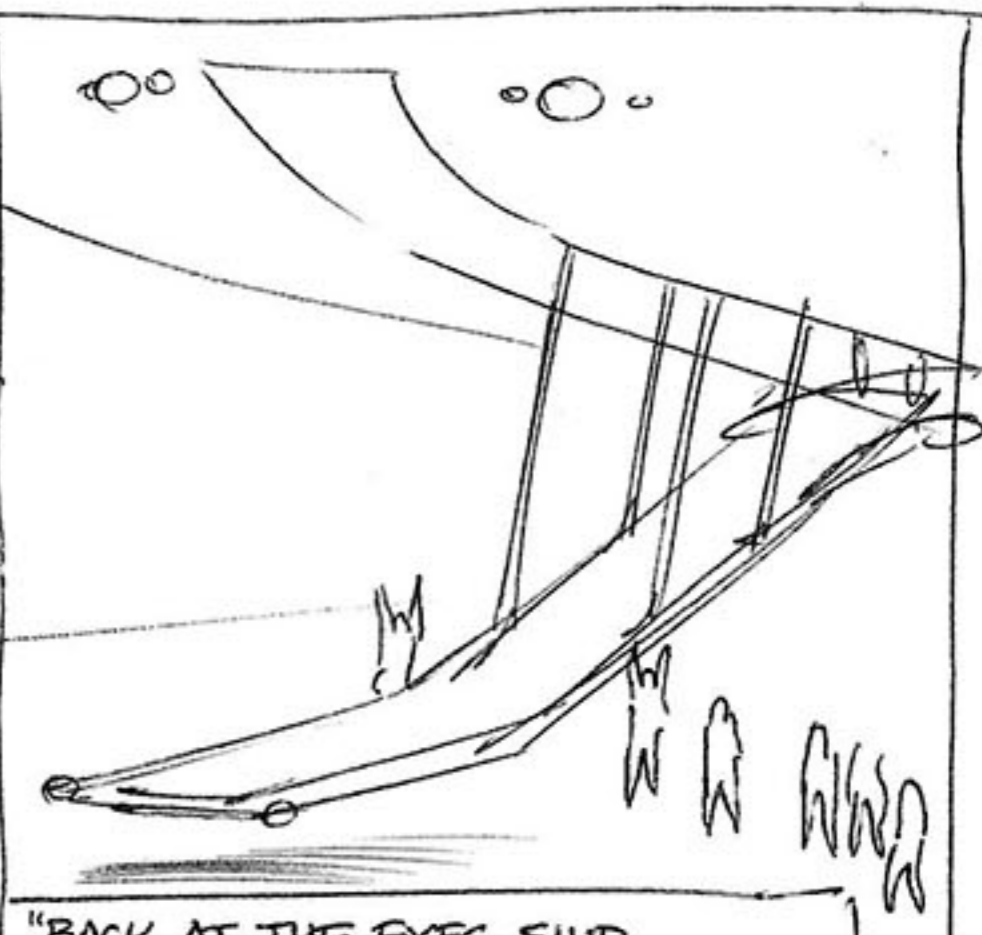
HMM?

STAND CLEAR.

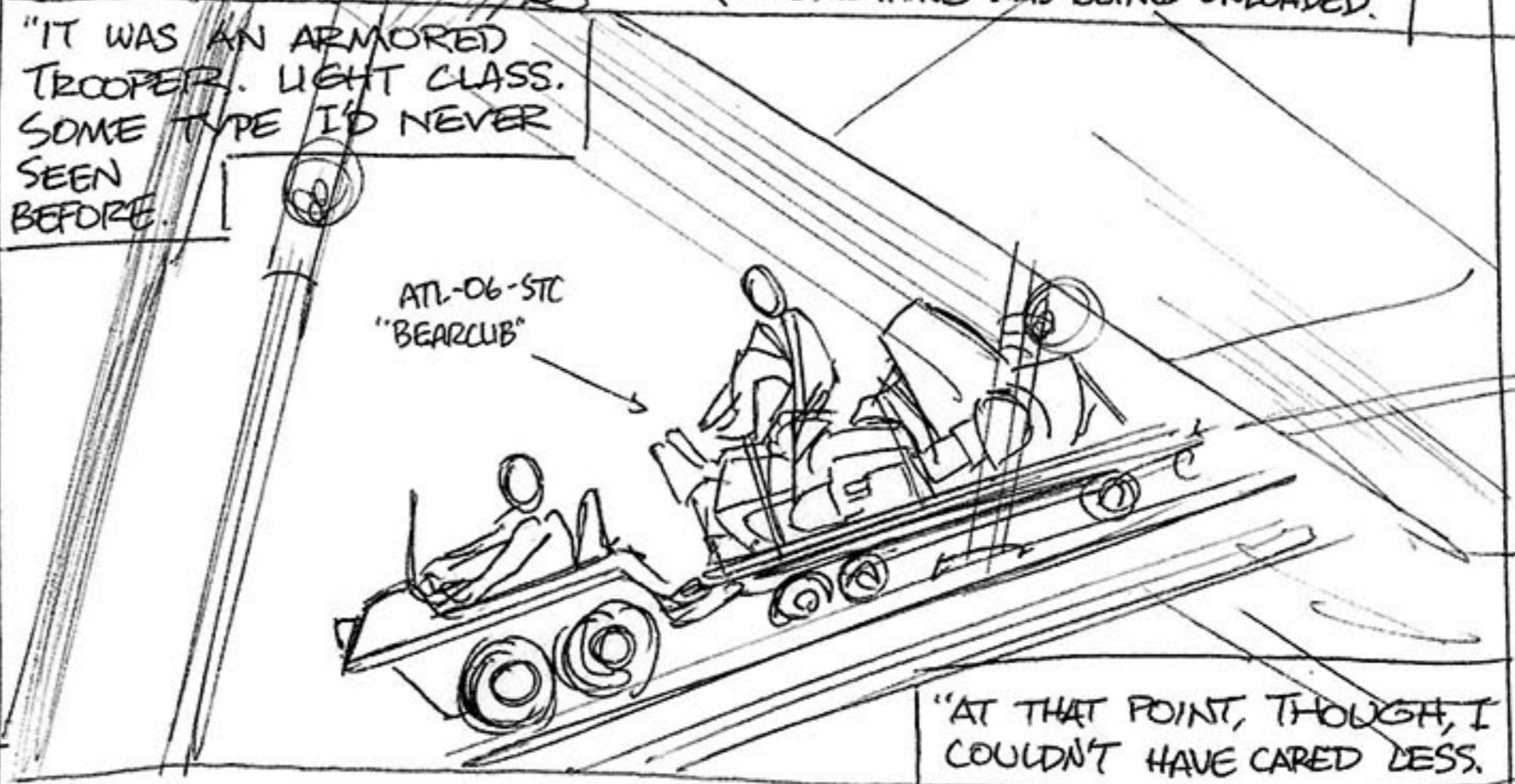


NOW WHAT?

"BACK AT THE EXEC SHIP, SOMETHING WAS BEING UNLOADED.



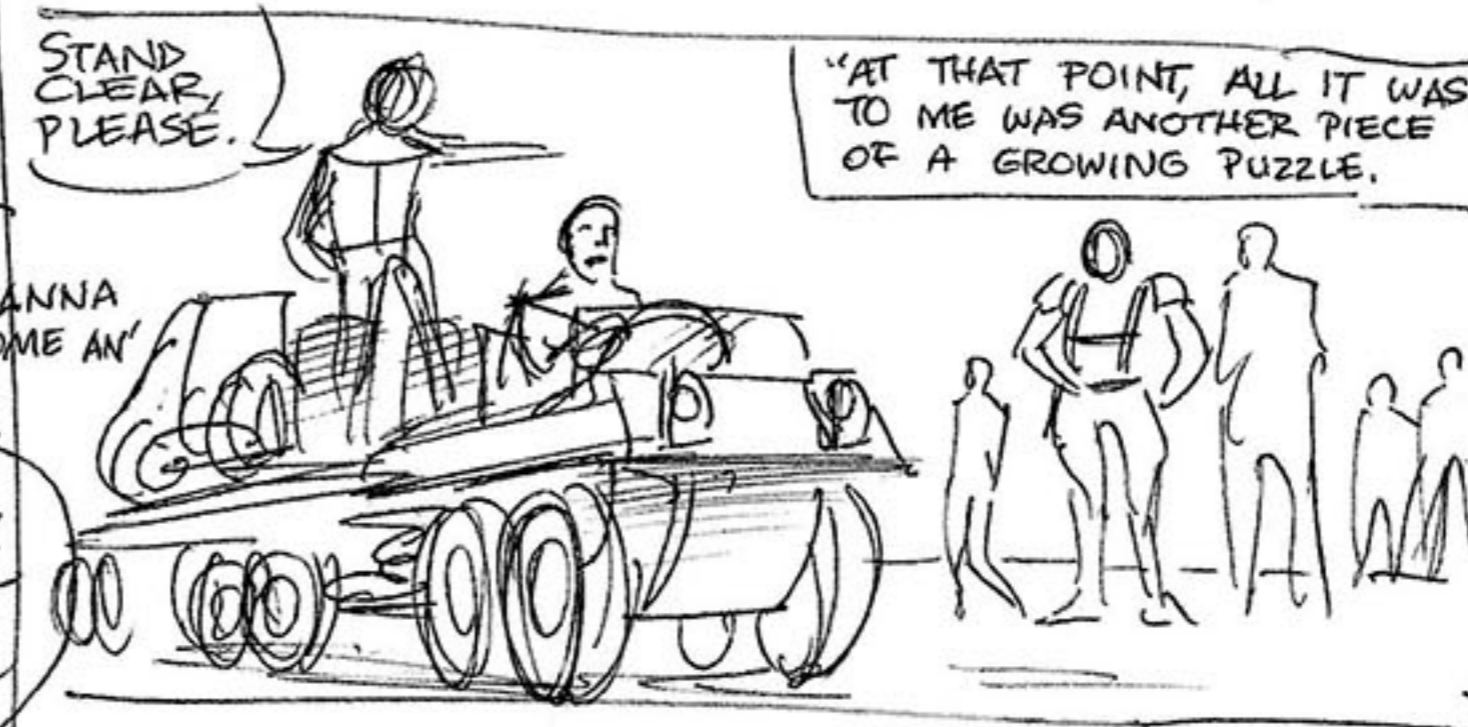
"IT WAS AN ARMORED TROOPER. LIGHT CLASS. SOME TYPE I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE.



ATL-06-STC "BEARCLUB"

"AT THAT POINT, THOUGH, I COULDN'T HAVE CARED LESS.

STAND CLEAR, PLEASE.



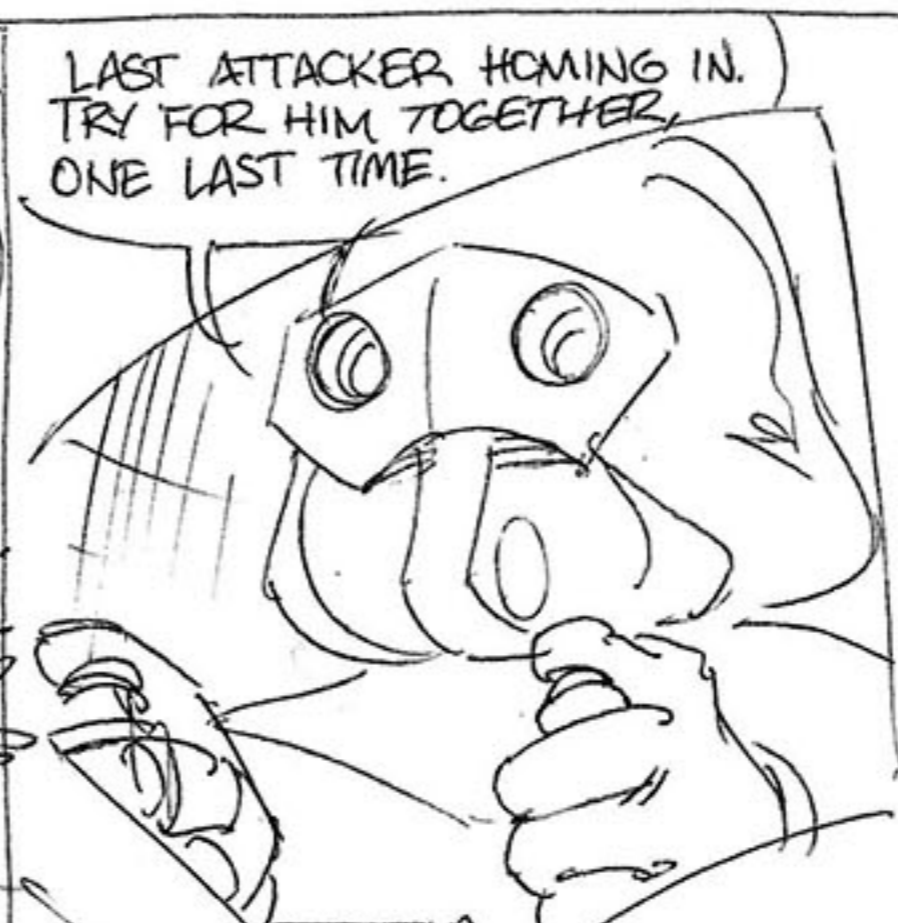
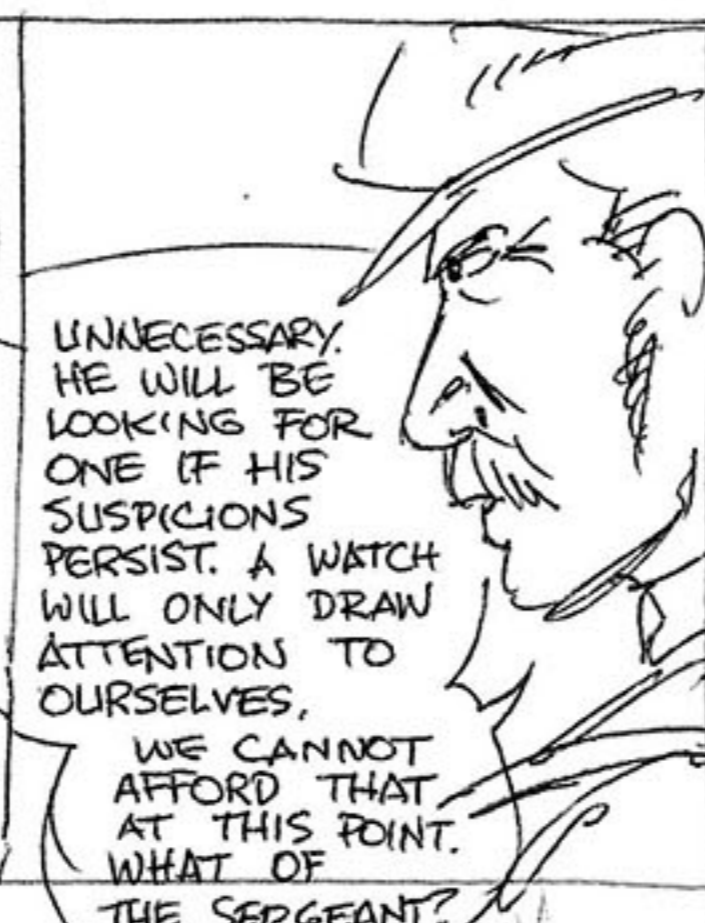
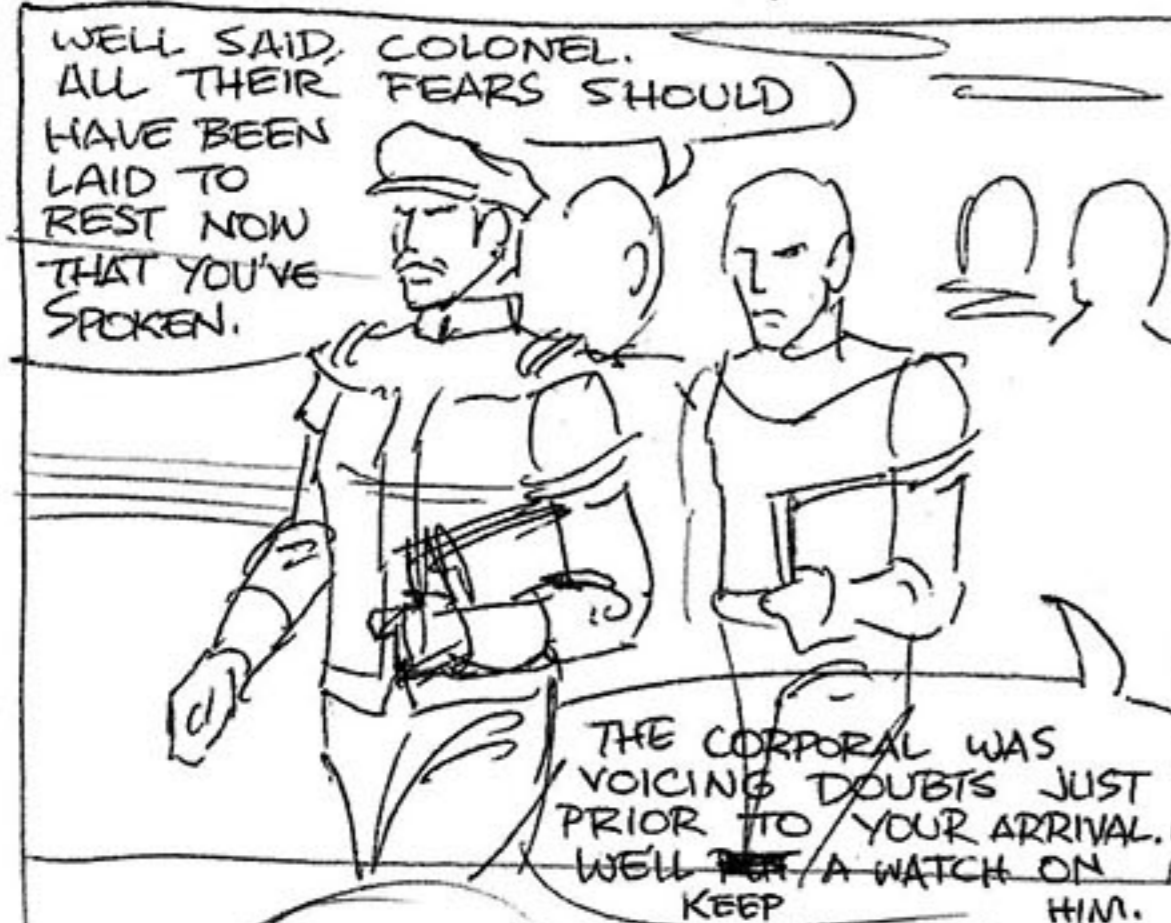
"AT THAT POINT, ALL IT WAS TO ME WAS ANOTHER PIECE OF A GROWING PUZZLE.

"THAT DID IT. NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE TOLD ME FROM HERE ON, ~~THEY WERE NOT~~ ~~GOING TO~~ ~~THROW~~ ~~ME~~ ~~OUT~~ ~~OF~~ ~~THE~~ ~~SHIP~~ ~~AND~~ ~~NOT~~ ~~BONSAN~~ ~~NOT~~ ~~ANYONE~~.

COULDN'T I ~~WANT~~ TAKE IT ~~AS~~ AT FACE VALUE.

GOL? WANNA ~~READY~~ COME AN' ~~TO~~ WATCH ME ~~BACK~~ UP THE SIMULATOR?

GOL?



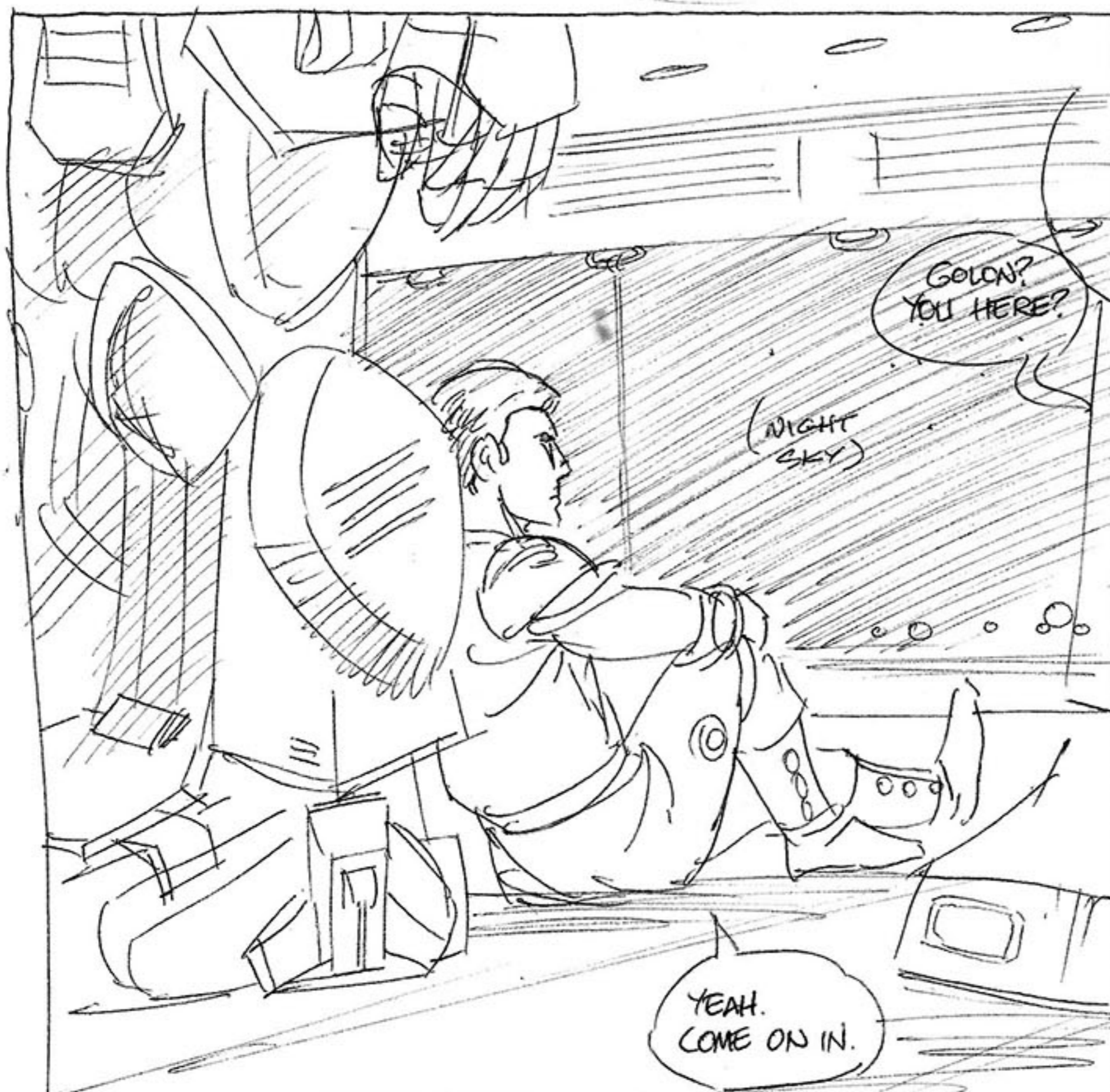




To

71 (2/6)

CP END ISSUE TWO 23



YOU AND I SPOKE ABOUT
ARTOFF ONLY ONCE... BACK
AT THE 2021st IN THE
BUNKROOM.
THEY WERE
LISTENING
THEN.

AFTER I LEFT
THE ASSEMBLY TODAY,
I WENT STRAIGHT
FOR MY BUNK.
UNDER IT, I FOUND
A LISTENING DEVICE.

TH--THEY BUGGED YOU?
WHAT DID YOU DO WITH
IT? DO
YOU
HAVE
IT?

I LEFT IT.
IF I'D TAKEN
IT, THEY'D KNOW.
AND I WOULDN'T
BE HERE NOW.

I CAN'T SAY
ANYTHING
ABOUT THIS
TO YOU GUYS
ANYMORE.
THERE'S NO
TELLING
WHAT THEY'RE
TAPPED INTO.
THEY PROBABLY
HAD THE
SIMULATOR
TAPPED TODAY,
TOO.

NO, NO, NO. THIS IS CRAZY.
THERE'S NO REASON TO
TAP A CORPORAL. WE'RE
DOGFACES TO THEM.
THERE'S NOTHING
WE COULD DO
AGAINST THEM.

SEE
THE
PROBLEM?

I DIDN'T WANNA LAY
THIS ON YOU. BUT I
WANTED SOMEONE ELSE TO
KNOW BEFORE I CLAMMED
UP TOMORROW.

IF I'M CAUGHT,
I WON'T BE
GOING INTO THE
FIELD WITH YOU...

IF I DIDN'T GO, YOU MIGHT
NOT COME BACK.

AND THAT I
COULDN'T
LIVE WITH.
SEE YOU IN
THE MORNING.

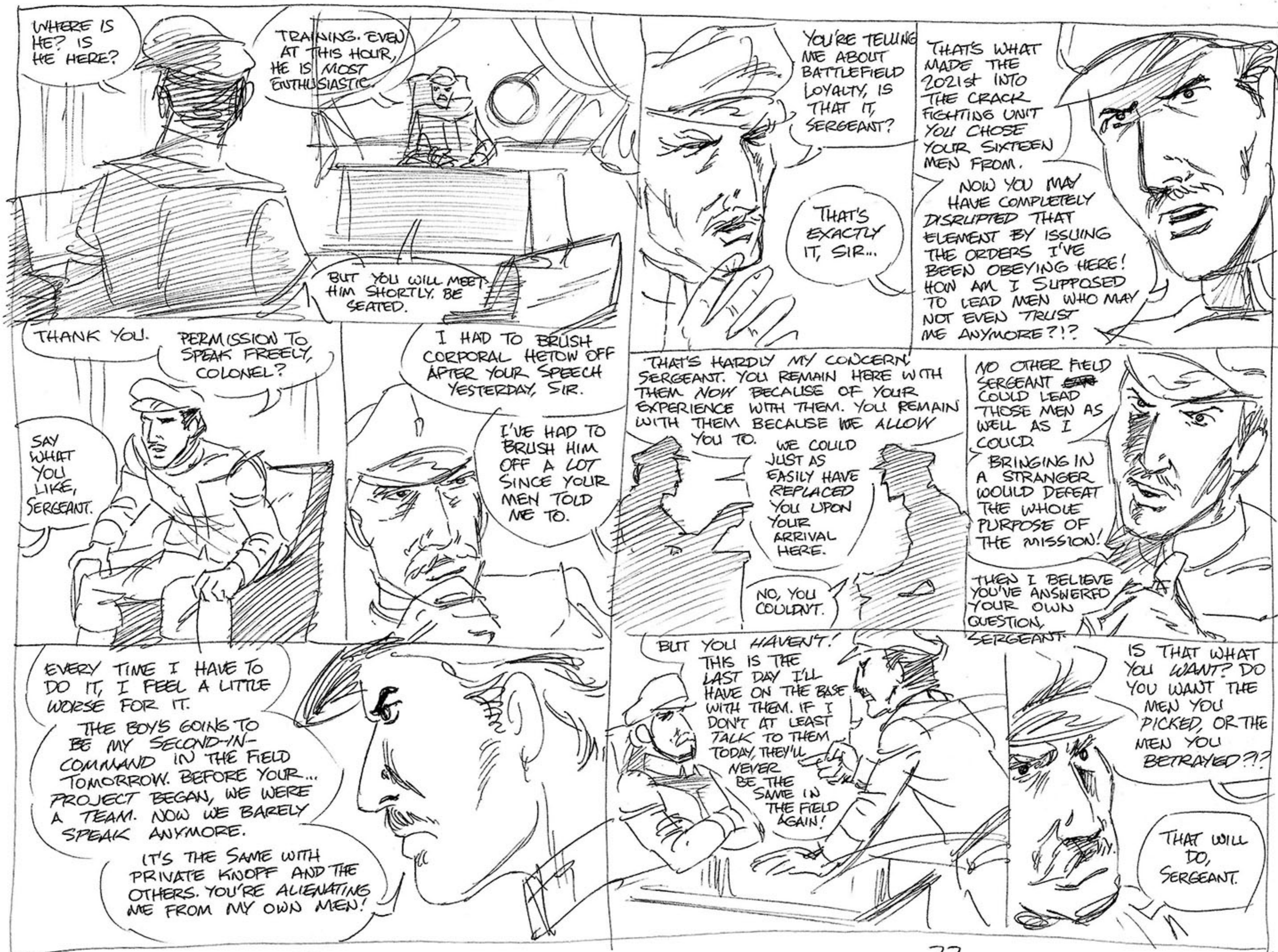
"I WAS AWAKE TO SEE THE SUN RISE THE
NEXT MORNING. SOMEHOW IT SPOKE
TO ME WITH ITS INNOCENT LIGHT.

"SOMEHOW I GOT THE
FEELING TODAY WAS
GOING TO BE
DIFFERENT.

"TODAY WAS GOING
TO BE IMPORTANT.

REPORTING AS
ORDERED,
GENERAL.

COME IN,
SERGEANT.





THIS IS WHERE EVERY PROJECT FALLS TO THE GROUND... WHEN SENTIMENTALITIES GET IN THE WAY.



SOLDIERS ARE TAUGHT FROM THE BEGINNING TO OBEY ORDERS UNQUESTIONINGLY.

FAILING THAT, THEY BECOME A LIABILITY. THAT IS WHAT YOU ARE BECOMING, SERGEANT.

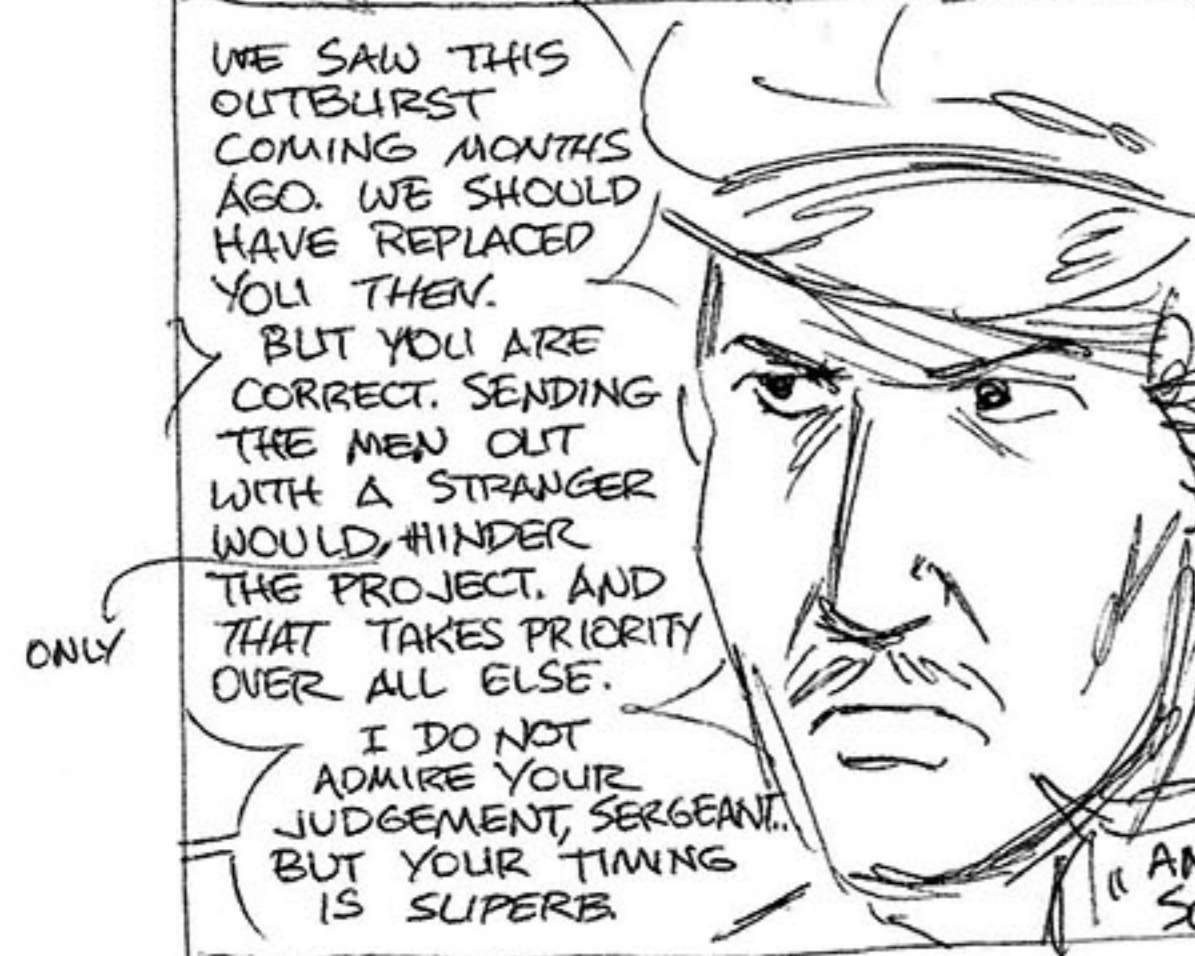


THEY'RE CLOSING IN.

TIME TO STRIKE---

NOW!

NOTE--This is the same light-class A.T. unloaded from the exec ship



WE SAW THIS OUTBURST COMING MONTHS AGO. WE SHOULD HAVE REPLACED YOU THEN.

BUT YOU ARE CORRECT. SENDING THE MEN OUT WITH A STRANGER WOULD HINDER THE PROJECT. AND THAT TAKES PRIORITY OVER ALL ELSE.

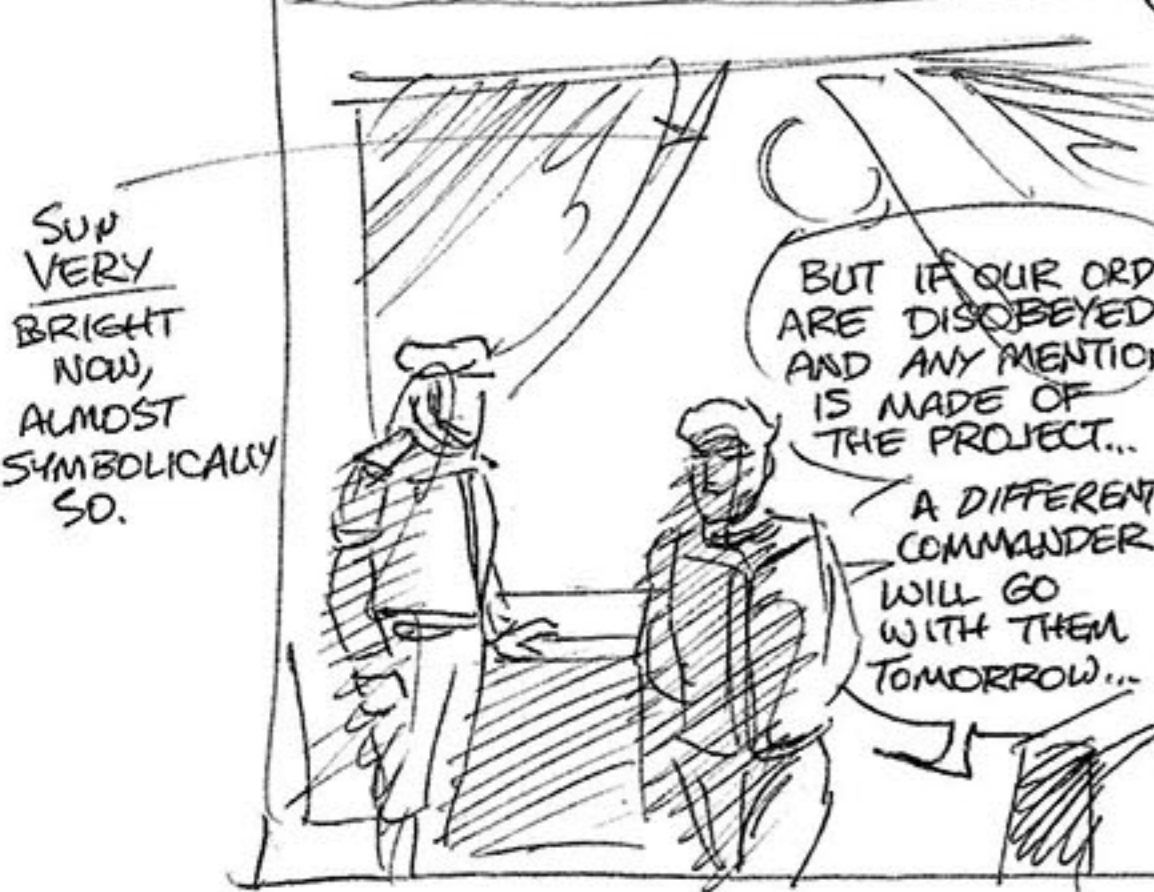
I DO NOT ADMIRE YOUR JUDGEMENT, SERGEANT. BUT YOUR TIMING IS SUPERB.



AND SO, YOU WILL ~~BE~~ LEAD THEM. TOMORROW.

AND SERGEANT, WILL YOU BE GRANTED THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND TIME WITH THEM TODAY?

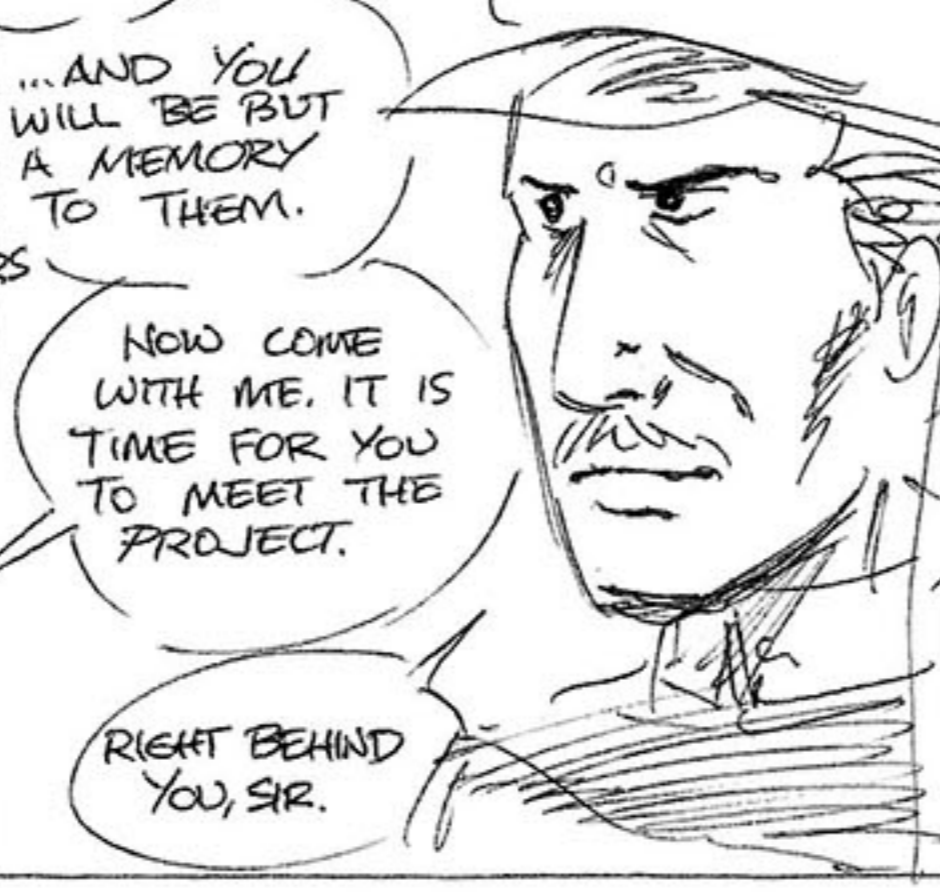
AND SO?



SUP VERY BRIGHT NOW, ALMOST SYMBOLICALLY SO.

BUT IF OUR ORDERS ARE DISOBEYED AND ANY MENTION IS MADE OF THE PROJECT...

A DIFFERENT COMMANDER WILL GO WITH THEM TOMORROW...



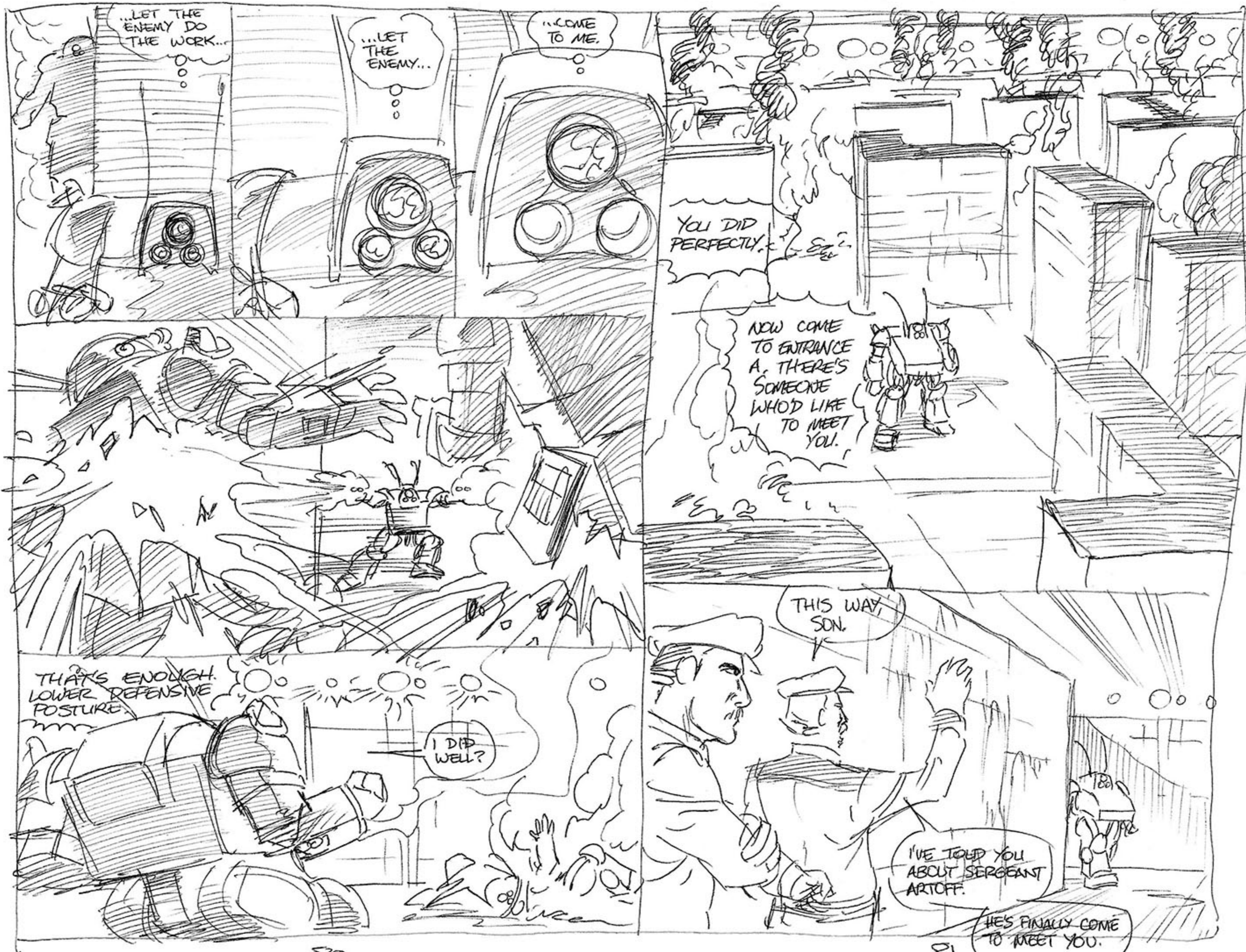
...AND YOU WILL BE BUT A MEMORY TO THEM.

NOW COME WITH ME. IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO MEET THE PROJECT.

RIGHT BEHIND YOU, SIR.

NOW, RUN... BEFORE THE REST GET HERE...

...TURN INTO A STONE...



YOU HANDLE THAT
A.T. VERY WELL, SOLDIER.
READY FOR SOME
COMBAT ACTION TOMORROW?



I'VE JUST
FINISHED
COMBAT
ACTION,
SIR.

THERE'S A BIG DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN ARENA AND FIELD
COMBAT.
WHAT
EXPERIENCE
HAVE
YOU HAD
OUTSIDE
THIS
BUILDING?



THE MEN WILL
NEVER
ACCEPT HIM!
YOU NEVER
TOLD
ME HE
WAS--

NOT MY
CONCERN,
SERGEANT.
YOUR MEN
WERE SELECTED
FOR THIS
ASSIGNMENT.
YOUR DUTY IS
TO LEAD THEM
THROUGH ANY
AND ALL
CIRCUMSTANCES.



BUT, NO REAL COMBAT
EXPERIENCE?!? YOU
MAY AS WELL--

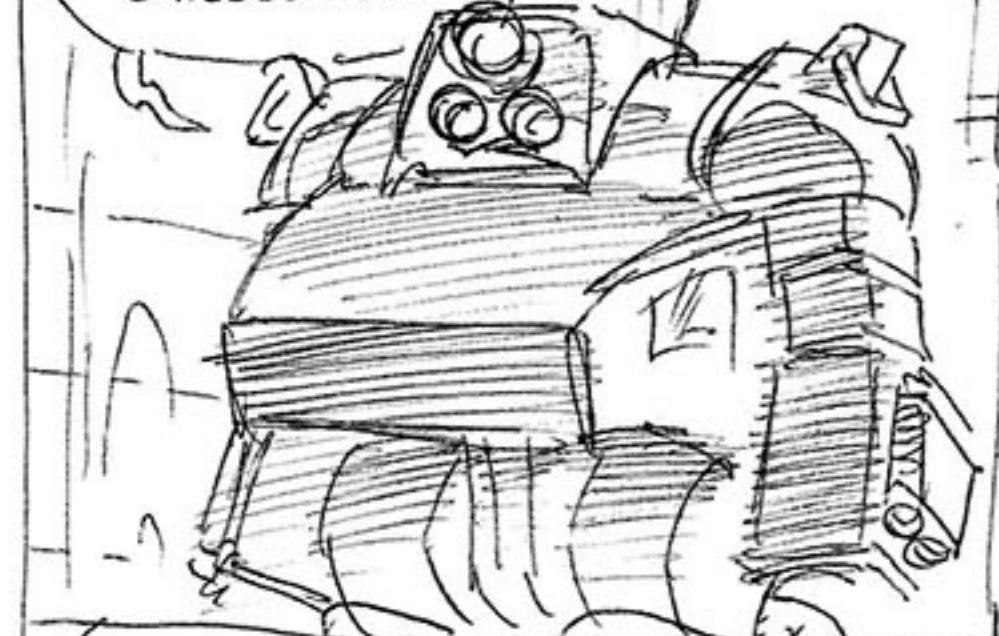
THE
SERGEANT
NEEDS
CONVINCING,
SON. RUN
THE NEXT
GAUNTLET
FOR
HIM.



MY PLEASURE,
SIR.

TOP MARKS ON ALL
COMBAT SIMULATORS,
SIR.

EQUIVALENT OF
NINETY FIELD
COMBAT HOURS.
CONSECUTIVE.



I SEE. BUT NO
ACTUAL FIELD
EXPERIENCE.

NINETY HOURS
EQUIVALENT,
SIR.

OPEN UP.
LET ME HAVE
A LOOK AT
YOU.



OPEN UP,
SON.

BUT...

COME WITH
ME TO
OBSERVATION,
SERGEANT.



HOLY--YOU
NEVER
SAID--

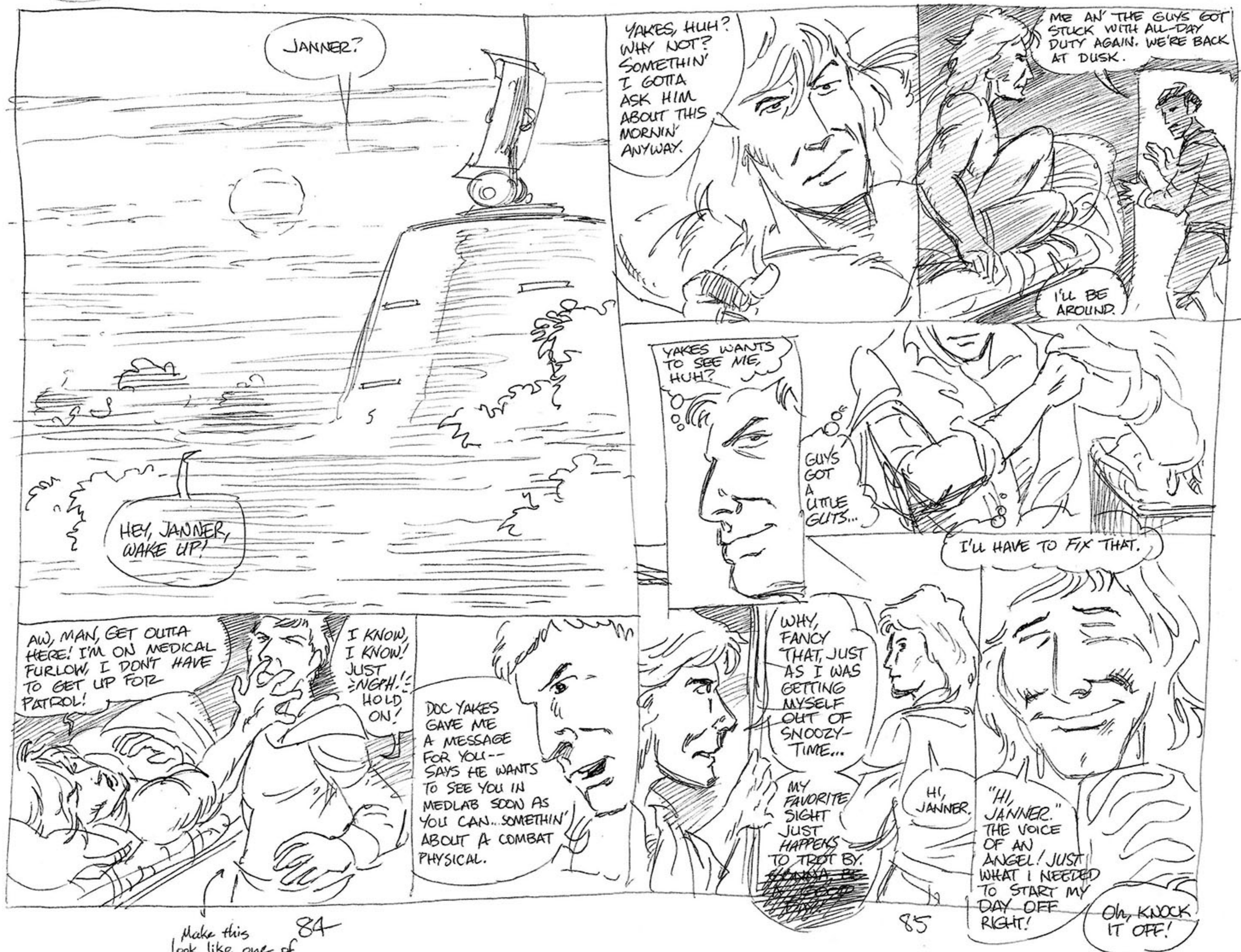
NOW YOU SEE WHAT
MAKES HIM SPECIAL,
SERGEANT. TRUE, HE
HAS ONLY TESTED ON
SIMULATORS THUS FAR,
BUT YOU'LL FIND HIM
MORE
THAN
ADEQUATE
OUT
THERE.



BUT
HE'S...

WATCH THE
NEXT GAUNTLET
CAREFULLY,
SERGEANT. SOME
OF YOUR MEN
HAVE TROUBLE
WITH THIS ONE.





Make this
look like one of
the guys that talked to
Janner on page 51-53





YOUR PLANS ARE IN ORDER, DOCTOR... BUT I'M STILL UNCLEAR ON THE... WHAT DID YOU CALL IT... LINKING PROCESS?

LIMB-LINK.

ALL ATTEMPTS AT DESIGNING A DUAL-PILOT ARMORED TROOPER HAVE MET WITH THE SAME PROBLEM... FINDING TWO PILOTS WITH EXACTLY THE SAME COMBAT REACTION.

UNLESS BOTH PILOTS ARE THINKING EXACTLY THE SAME TACTICS, THE MACHINE'S COORDINATION IS LOST.

NOT... JUST YET. MY ASSISTANT AND I HAVE PERFECTED THE THOUGHT PROCESS ON THE SIMULATOR. AT THIS POINT I WOULD LIKE US TO RUN THE FIELD TEST TOMORROW.

VERY WELL. YOU'VE EARNED IT. BEST OF LUCK, DOCTOR.

TH-THANK YOU, SIR. Y-YOU WON'T REGRET IT.

WHAT, THEN? YOU'VE FOUND THOSE TWO PILOTS?

NO--I'VE CREATED THEM! THROUGH THE LIMB-LINK PROCESS, THE TWO PILOTS SHARE THOUGHTS. NOT CYBERNETICALLY, BUT THROUGH A CHANNELING PROCESS IN THE HELMET CIRCUITRY, BOTH PILOTS' THOUGHTS ENTER THE CENTRAL COMPUTER SIMULTANEOUSLY.

I'M SURE. NOW GO GET JANNER CHECKED UP AND OUT OF HERE. I'M TIRED OF WATCHING HIM LOUNGE ON MY BASE.

YES... NOW FOR JANNER.

THE COMPUTER OVERLAPS THE THOUGHT COMMANDS AND TRANSMITS THE RESULTANT SIGNAL TO THE LIMB MOTORS, WHICH CARRY OUT THE FULL COMMAND.

I SEE, THUS BOTH PILOTS WORK THE LIMB FOR A SINGLE RESULT.

EXACTLY.

THEN ANYONE CAN RUN CERBERUS?

FINISHED?

YES. THE MAJOR IS MOST SUPPORTIVE OF THE CERBERUS PROJECT.

IT GOES INTO THE FIELD TOMORROW, IN FACT.

Getting Visibly Excited





A FEW DROPS
KNOCKS ANY
MAN OUT FOR
AT LEAST
HALF AN HOUR.

THAT MUCH
SHOULD KEEP
YOU OUT OF
ACTION FOR
~~AT LEAST~~ A
GOOD TWO
DAYS!

THE FIRST THING
TO GO IS THE CO-
ORDINATION, WHICH IS
WHY YOU CAN'T
CLOSE THE
CAP BACK
UP.

YOU B..BA...

NOW, YOU'RE
NOT THINKING
ABOUT
BREAKING
THROUGH THE
GLASS, ARE
YOU?

THE SECOND THING TO
GO IS BODY STRENGTH.

ENUGH!

DON'T WORRY
ABOUT YOUR
SUPERFLUOUS
GIRLFRIEND,
JANNER.
I'M NOT
INTERESTED.
I ONLY SAID
THAT TO
BAIT YOU.

BUT
I NEED
HER ~~NOW~~
FOR
CERBERUS.
THAT'S
ALL I
LOVE NOW.

AND NO
ONE WILL
TAKE IT
AWAY
FROM
ME.

ESPECIALLY
YOU.

I'VE WORKED
FOR IT, SACRIFICED
FOR IT ALL MY
LIFE.

I'll...
I'll KILL...

KILL...YOU...