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# the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN





Eugene "Flash" Thompson was Peter Parker's childhood/high school tormenter. Flash was the jock with the beautiful girlfriend who everybody loved. He coined the nickname "Puny Parker."

But in college, life changed for Flash. He and his old nemesis Pete became friends, putting aside their differences from the past. And when Flash joined the Army, their bond became closer. After his stint in the Army, Flash had some troubles, but his friends like Peter Parker never gave up on him and Flash turned it around, becoming a P.E. teacher at his old high school, Midtown High.

But in a world gripped by war, Flash Thompson stood up to do his duty once more.

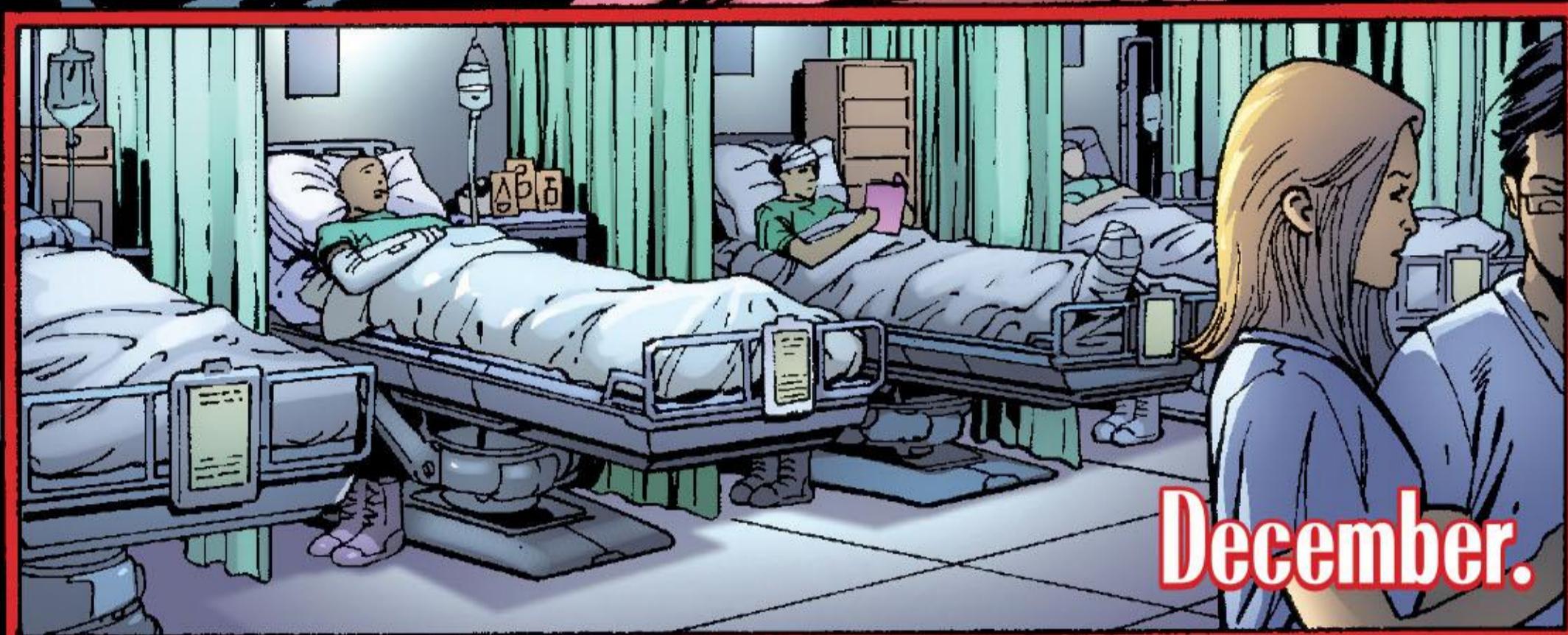
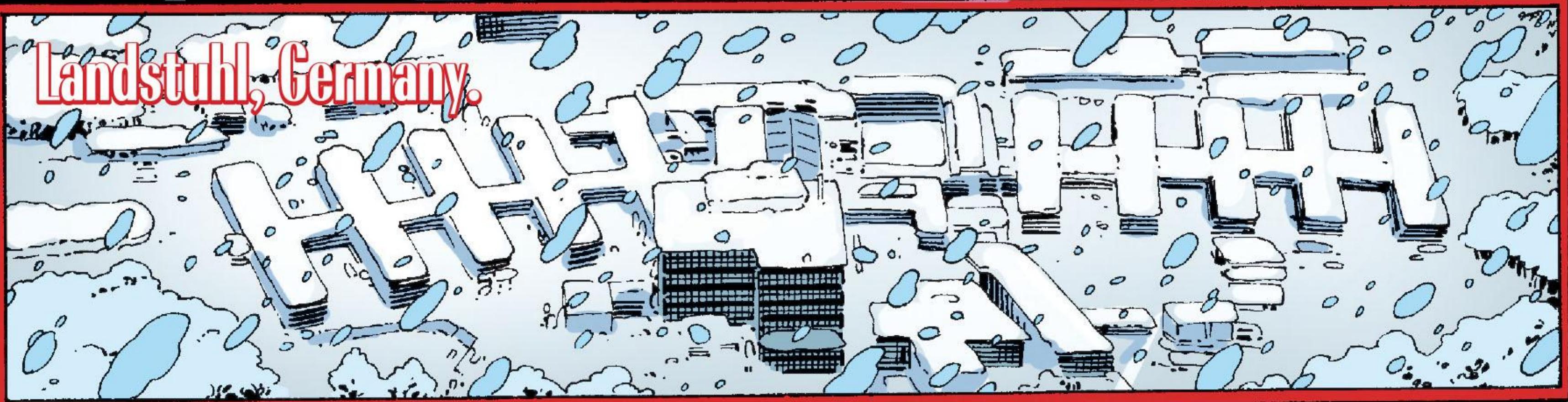
## FLASHBACKS

**Writer****MARC GUGGENHEIM****Penciler****BARRY KITSON****Inker****MARK FARMER****Colorist****STUDIO F'S ANTONIO FABELA**

**Spidey's Braintrust**  
**GALE, GUGGENHEIM & SLOTT**

**Letterer****VC'S CORY PETIT****Production****JOE SABINO****Assistant Editor****THOMAS BRENNAN****Editor****STEPHEN WACKER****Executive Editor****TOM BREVOORT****Editor In Chief****JOE QUESADA****Publisher****DAN BUCKLEY**

Landstuhl, Germany.



Iraq War.

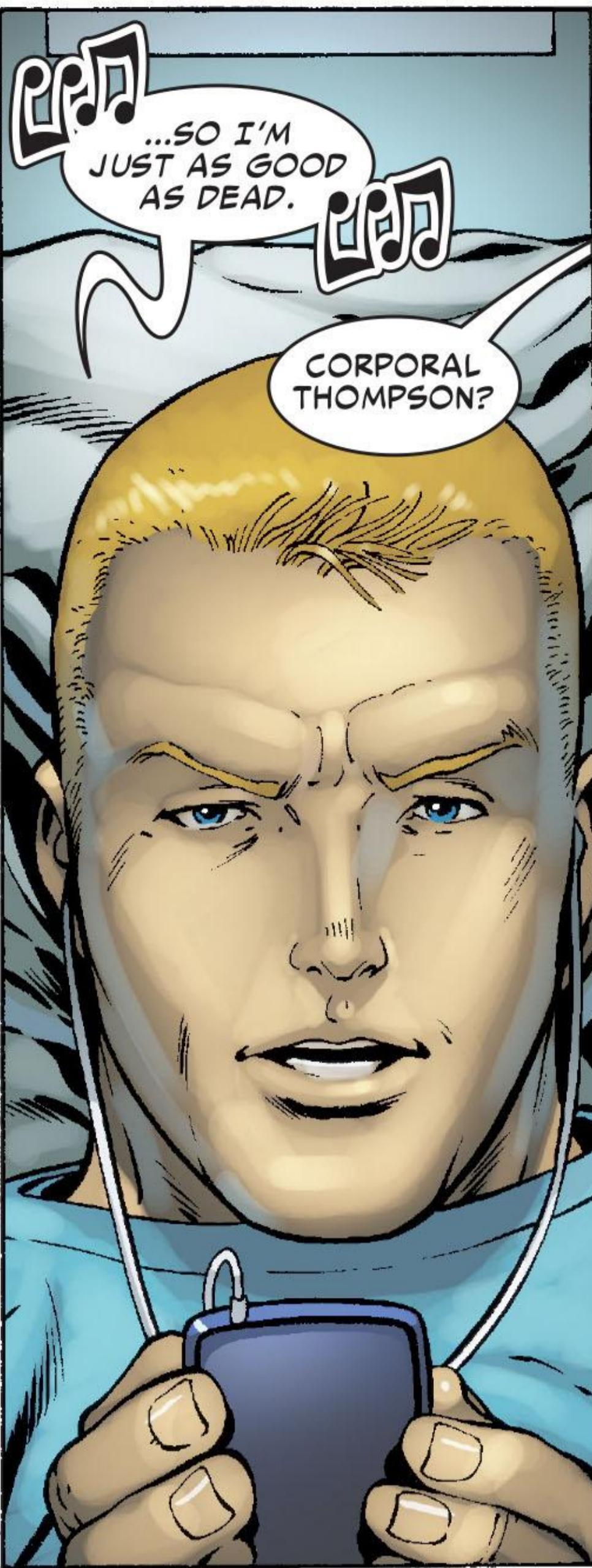


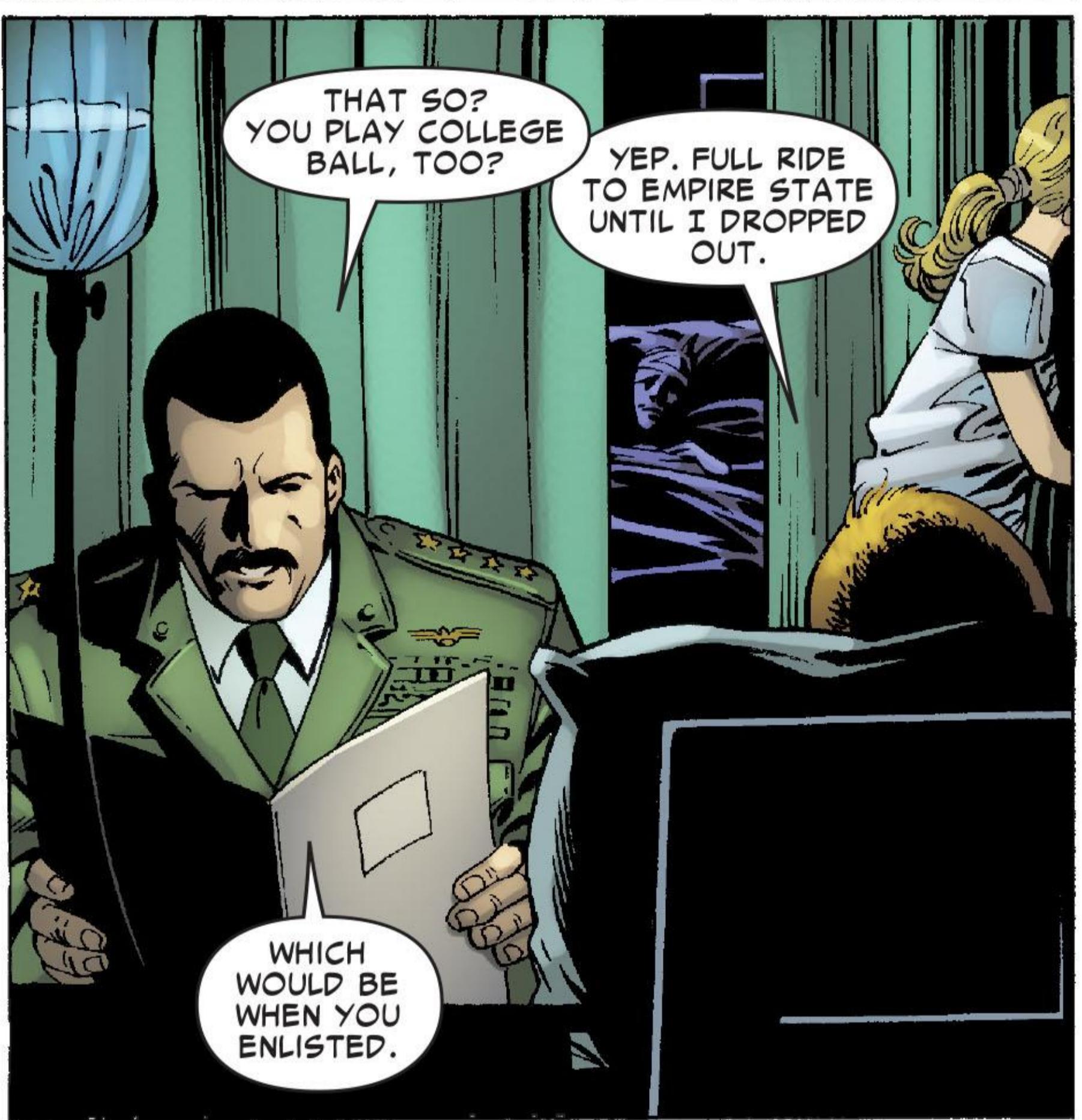
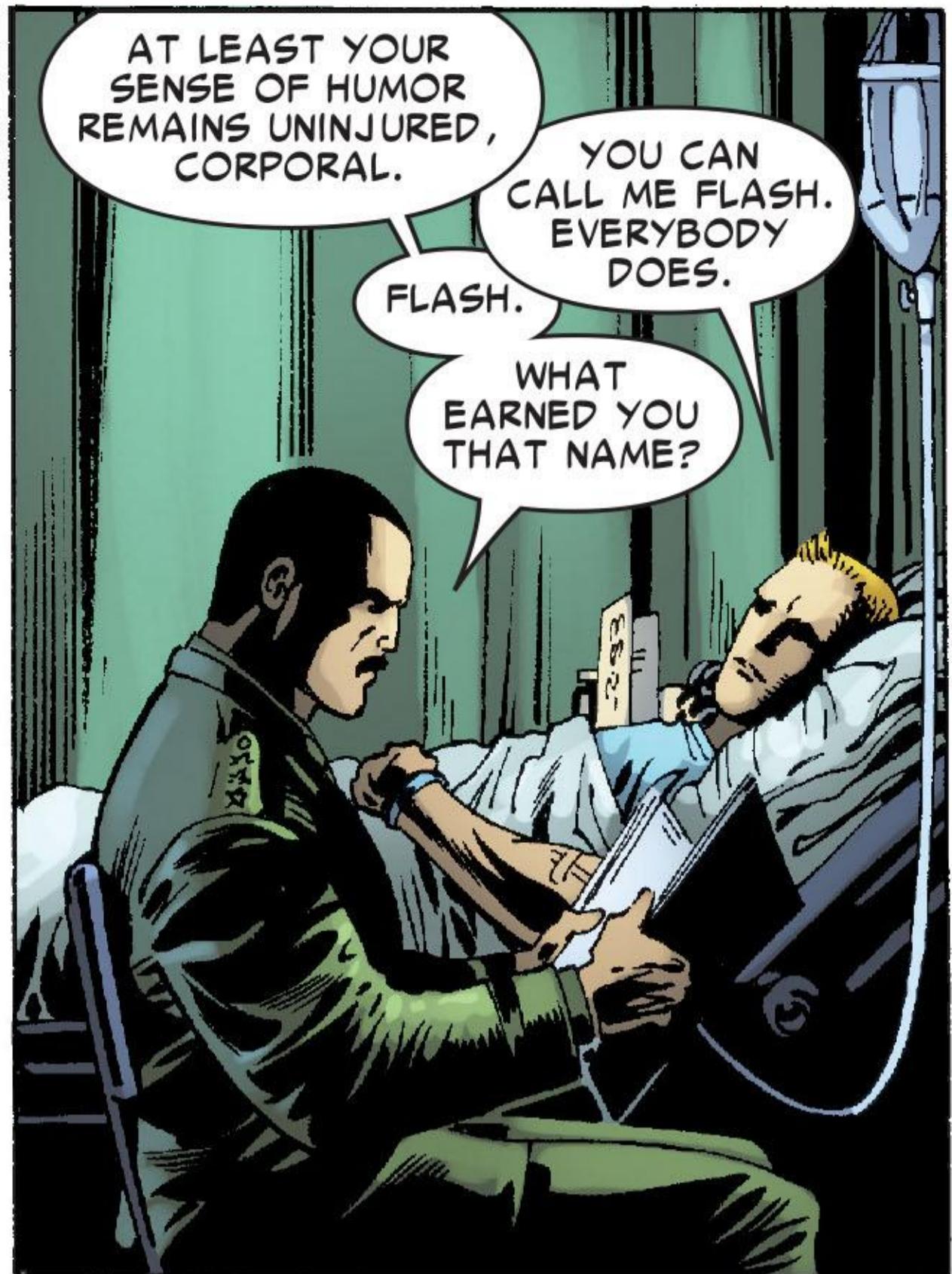
Merry Christmas!

Hope you don't already have an iPod. I put a song on it for you. Seemed appropriate. You're missed here. Come back home soon. And come back safe, alright?

Your pal, Peter







YOU GOT YOUR  
DISCHARGE, yadda  
yadda yadda...THEN  
THEY CALLED UP  
INACTIVE RESERVES...  
yadda yadda yadda...  
YOU WERE IN IRAQ,  
AM I RIGHT?

IF THE  
FILE  
SAYS  
SO...

THE FILE  
SAYS SO. AND  
I'LL TELL YOU  
WHAT ELSE THE  
FILE SAYS.

IT SAYS  
I'M SUPPOSED TO  
INTERVIEW YOU IN  
CONNECTION WITH  
A RECOMMENDATION  
YOU RECEIVE THE  
**MEDAL OF  
HONOR.**

MIND IF I  
ASK YOU A FEW  
QUESTIONS?

SIR, I AIN'T  
GOING ANYWHERE.  
YOU CAN ASK MORE'N  
A FEW.



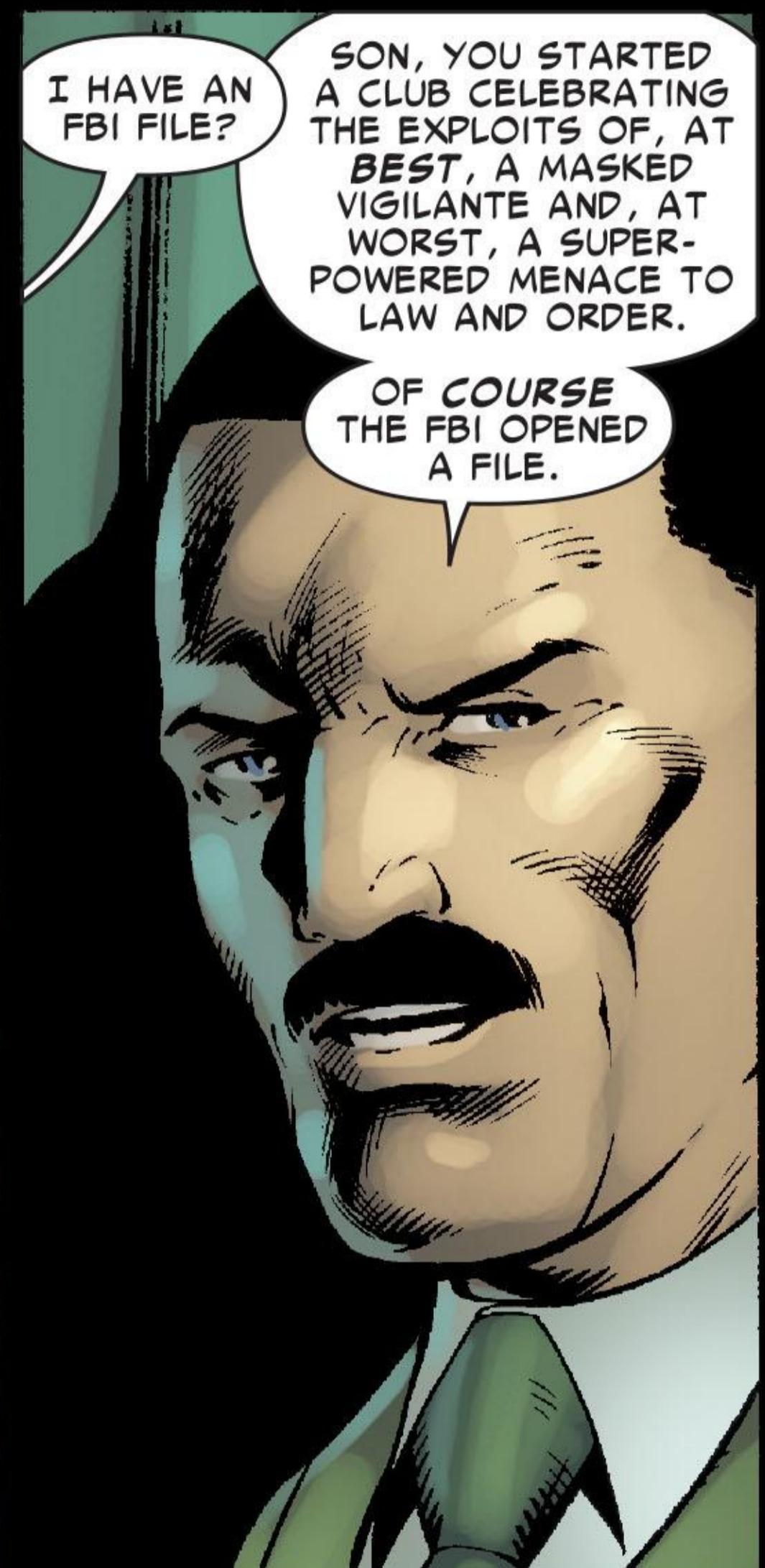
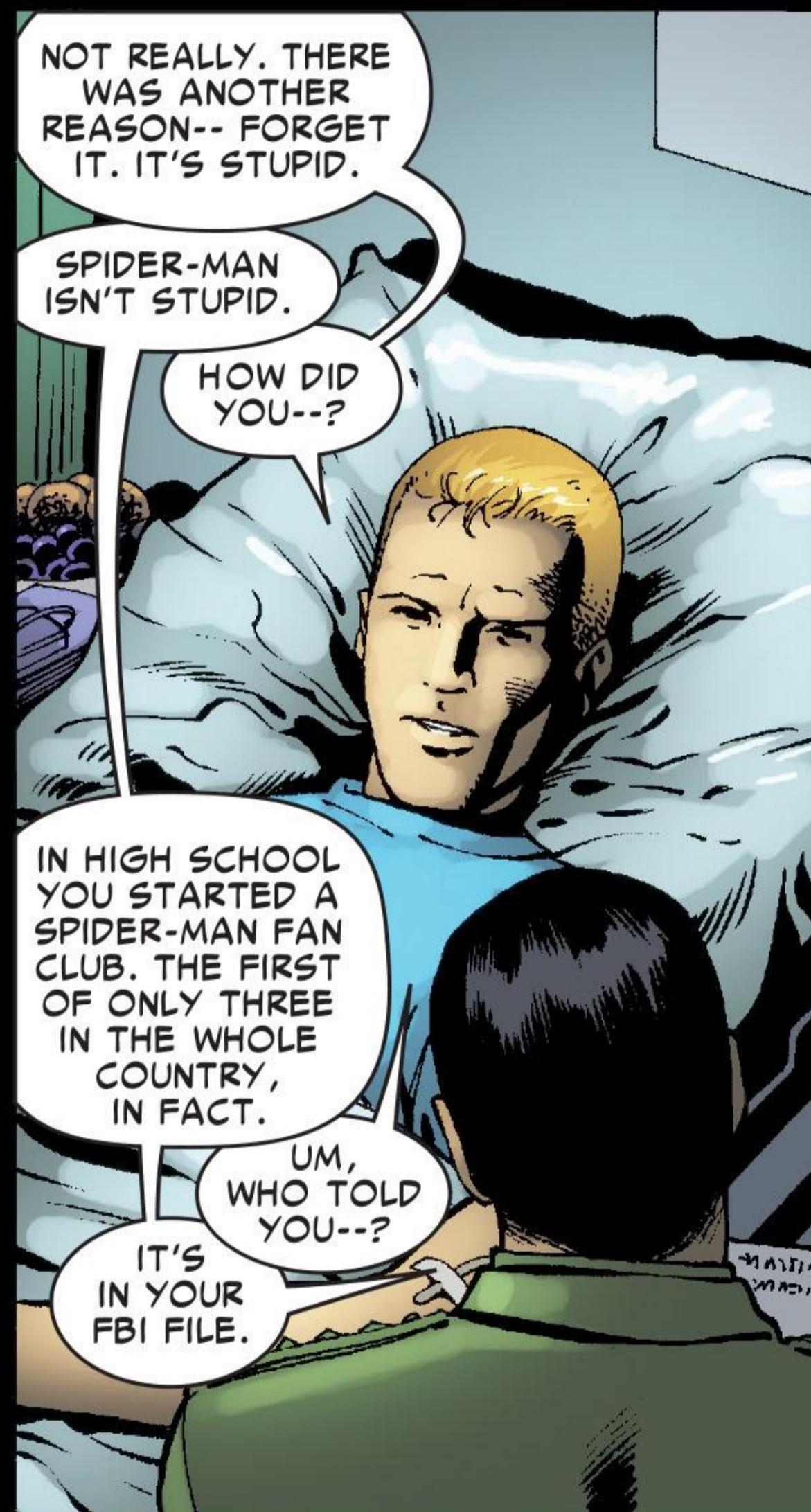
YEAH, I  
FIGURED THAT'D  
BE YOUR  
REACTION.

Y'KNOW, WE'VE  
ONLY AWARDED FOUR  
MEDALS OF HONOR FOR  
SERVICE IN IRAQ SO FAR,  
SO THIS IS KIND OF A  
SPECIAL THING. AND THE  
M.O.H. IS PRETTY  
SPECIAL TO BEGIN  
WITH.

GENERALLY...  
that's a little pun...  
I LIKE TO GET SOME  
BACKGROUND ON THE  
CANDIDATE FIRST...

NOW,  
YOU GREW  
UP IN QUEENS,  
NEW YORK...





YOU MIND IF I ASK WHERE THE FASCINATION WITH SPIDER-MAN CAME FROM?

DOES IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE MEDAL?

SPIDEY--ER, SPIDER-MAN, HE'S MISUNDERSTOOD.

NOBODY APPRECIATES HIM FOR WHAT HE IS, BUT HE JUST KEEPS GOING.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM, NO MATTER WHO'S DOING IT TO HIM...

"...HE JUST KEEPS GOING."

I GUESS I COULD JUST SAY IT'S THE MEDAL OF HONOR AND I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHERE YOUR SENSE OF HONOR COMES FROM.

BUT THE REAL TRUTH IS, I'M JUST CURIOUS.



WELL, LOOK AT THAT, TURNS OUT IT DOES HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE MEDAL, AFTER ALL.

NOT SURE I FOLLOW YOU.

WELL, I'M TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHY YOU DID THAT THING YOU DID.

THAT THING...?

YOU DIDN'T THINK WE WERE CONSIDERING GIVING YOU THE MEDAL OF HONOR FOR YOUR GOOD LOOKS, DID YOU?



SIR, I DON'T NEED ANY MEDAL--

TELL YOU WHAT: WHY DON'T YOU JUST WALK ME THROUGH WHAT HAPPENED.

WHERE SHOULD I START?





"WE MUST'VE HIT AN I.E.D. IT TURNED US ASS OVER TEAKETTLE."

"I GOT A FACE FULL OF KEVLAR FROM SERGEANT BASKI."

"SIXTY-FIVE POUNDS OF BATTLE RATTLE STRAIGHT IN THE TEETH."

DAMMIT!

GO! GO! GO!

LET'S GO! OUT THE TOP HATCH! WE CAN'T STAY HERE!

SENU, YOU SLEEP THROUGH THAT OR SOMETHING?!

MOVE!

IT'S STUCK!

"SO YOU'RE TRAPPED INSIDE A 17-TON COFFIN, SITTING DUCKS... HOW DO YOU KEEP YOUR COOL IN A SITUATION LIKE THAT?"

"I DON'T KNOW, TO BE HONEST. I GUESS I COULD SAY YOU--"

"YOU 'JUST KEEP GOING'?"

"YEAH, I GUESS. YOU JUST TRY TO REMEMBER YOU CAN GET THROUGH STUFF IF YOU JUST STAY FOCUSED."

"SO THAT'S  
WHAT I DID."

"I PRETENDED THE  
DOOR WAS A  
LINEBACKER FOR  
ASTORIA CENTRAL."

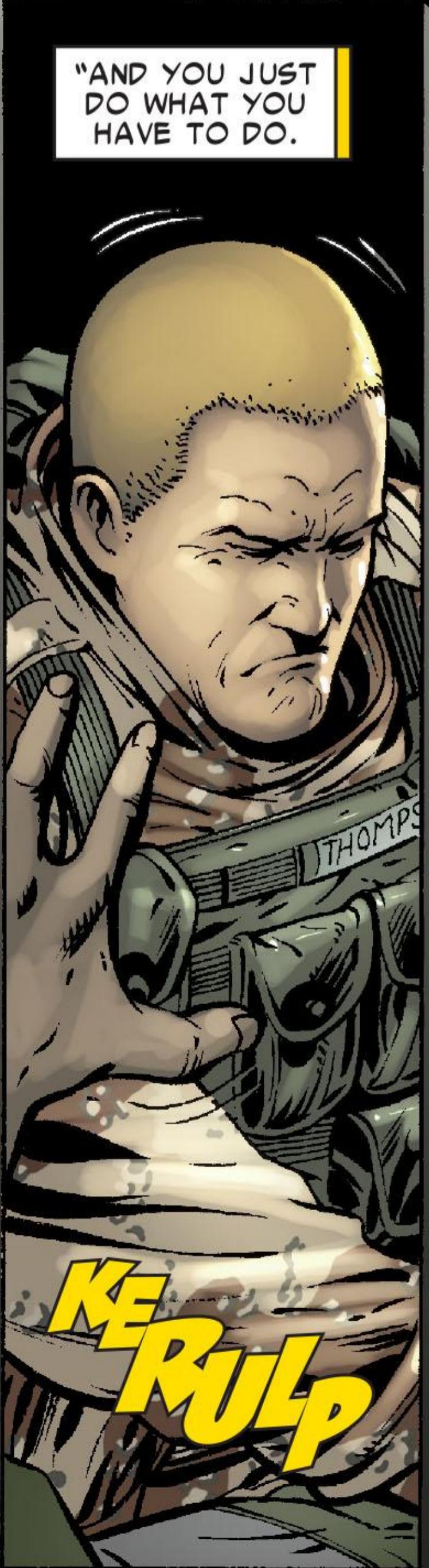






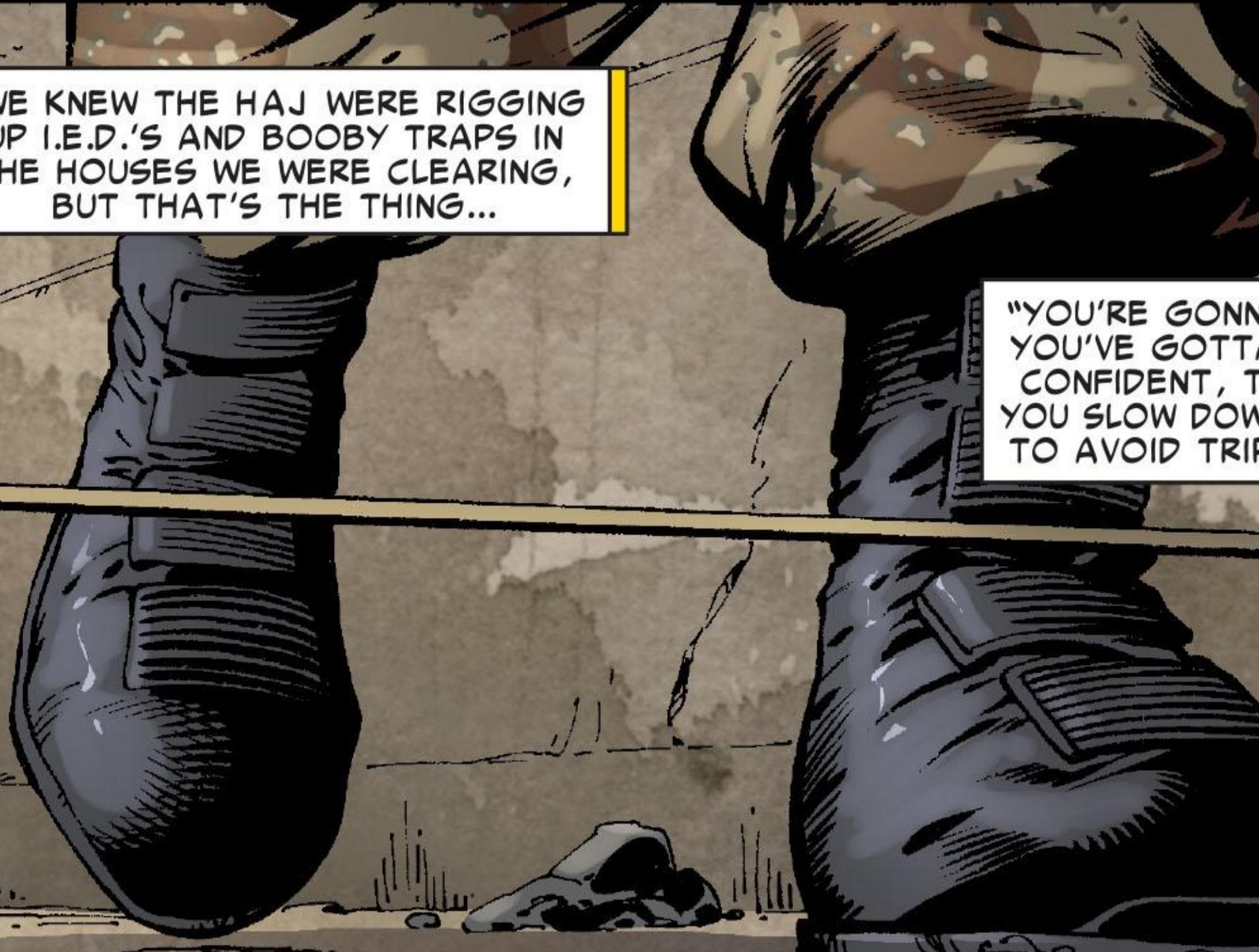




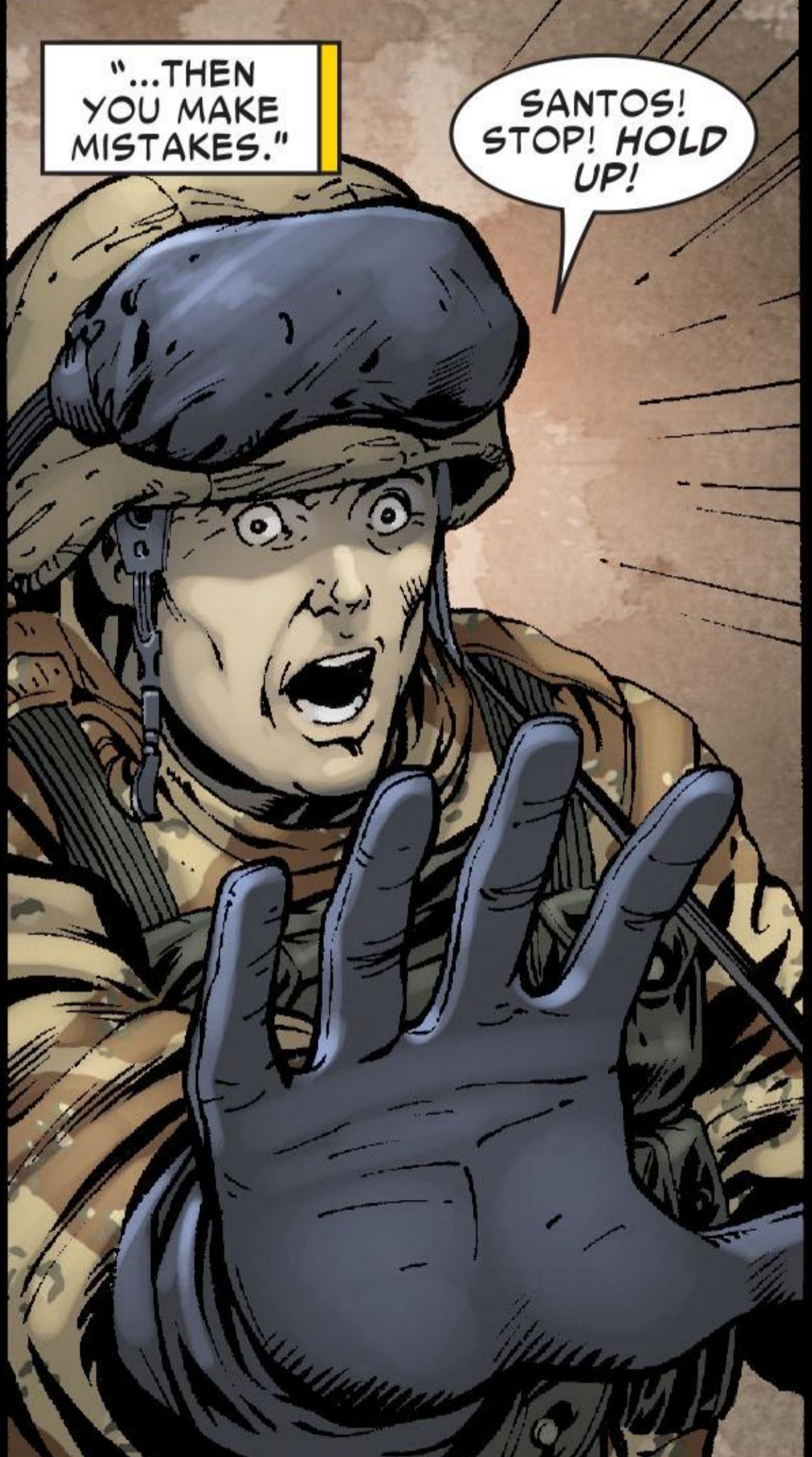




"WE KNEW THE HAJ WERE RIGGING UP I.E.D.'S AND BOOBY TRAPS IN THE HOUSES WE WERE CLEARING, BUT THAT'S THE THING..."



"YOU'RE GONNA CLEAR A HOUSE, YOU'VE GOTTA MOVE QUICK AND CONFIDENT, THAT'S THE KEY. IF YOU SLOW DOWN, MOVE CAREFULLY TO AVOID TRIPWIRES AND SUCH..."



"...THEN YOU MAKE MISTAKES."

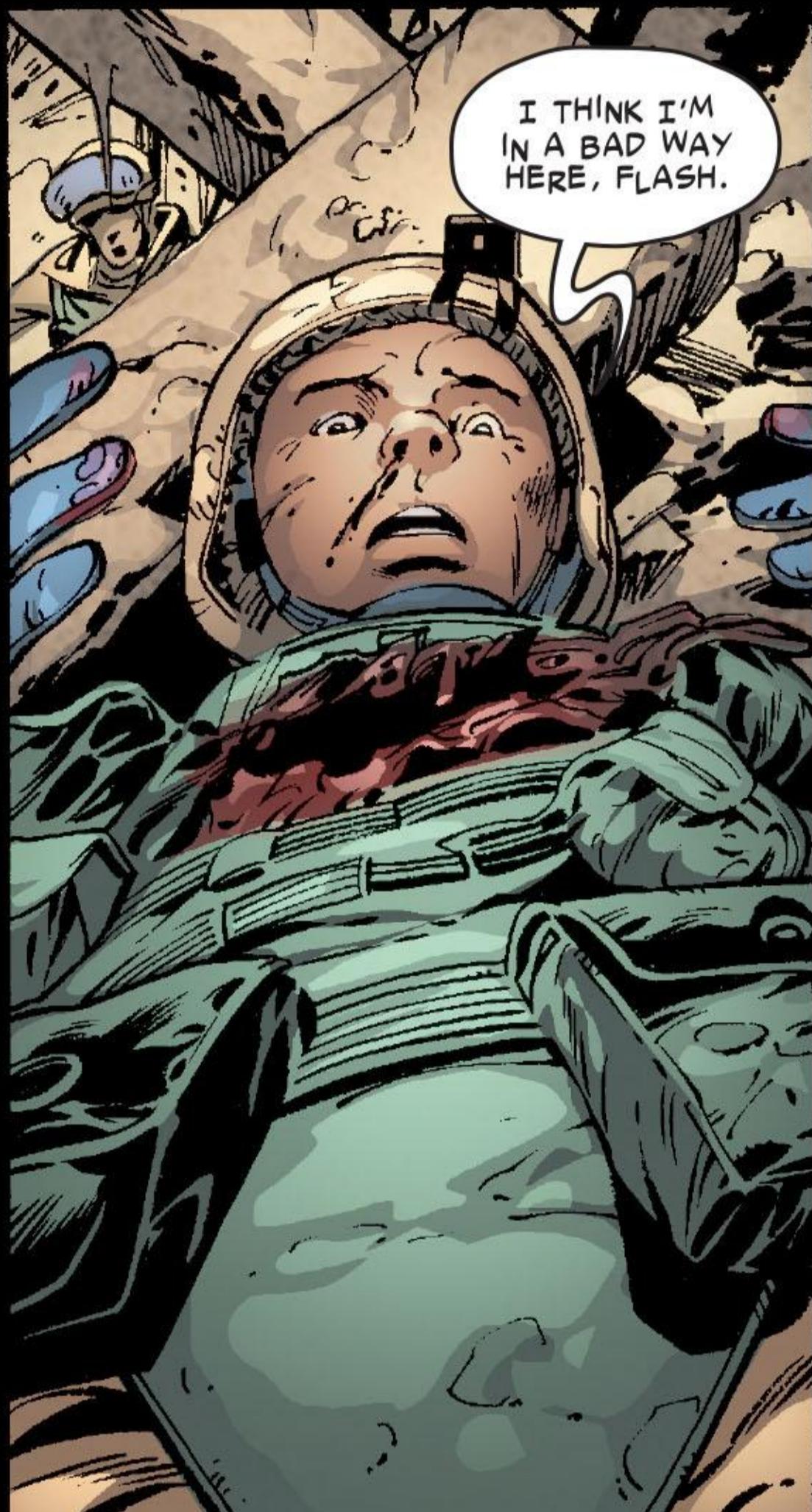
SANTOS! STOP! HOLD UP!

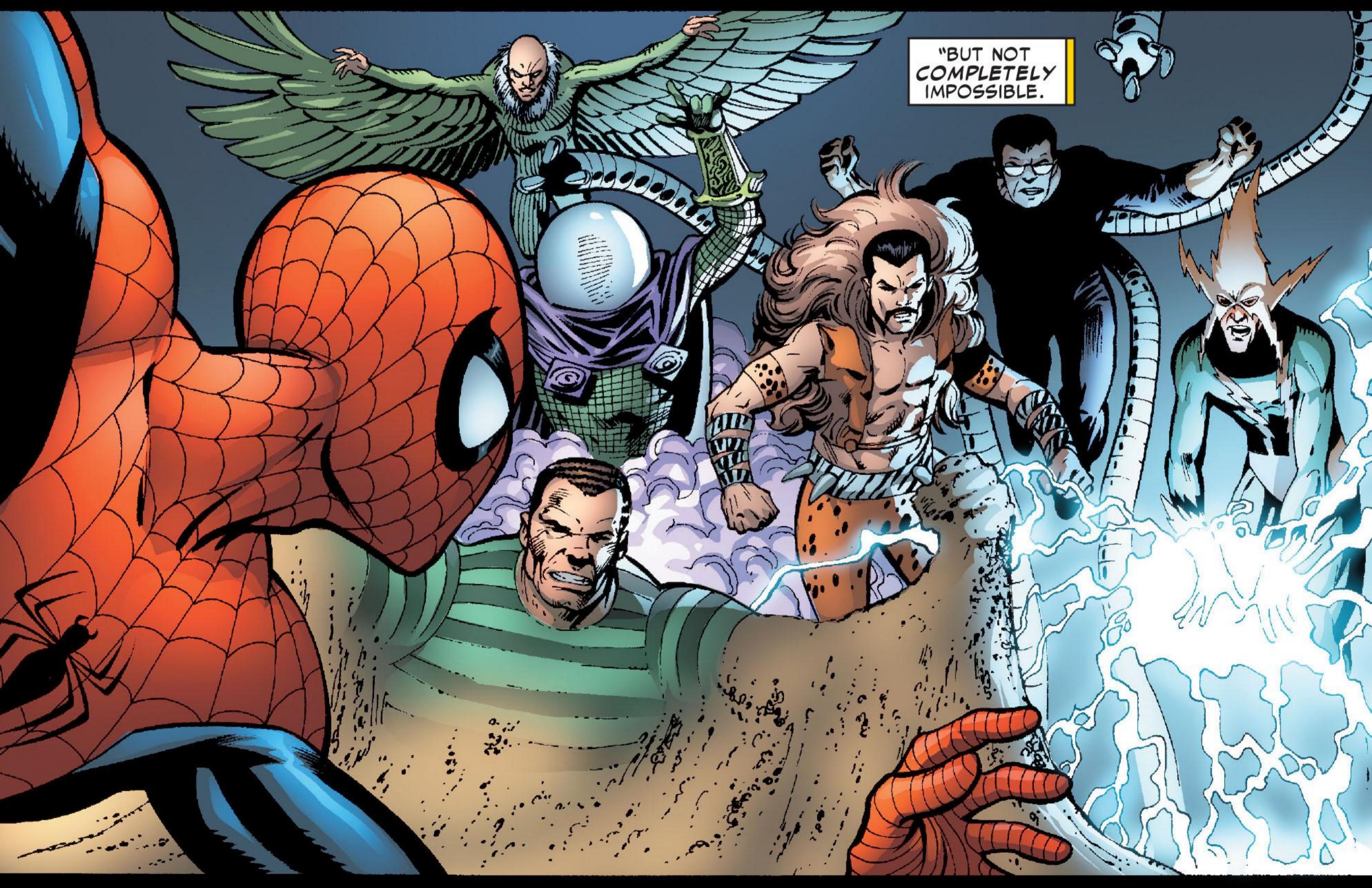


WHAT'S THAT, SIR?

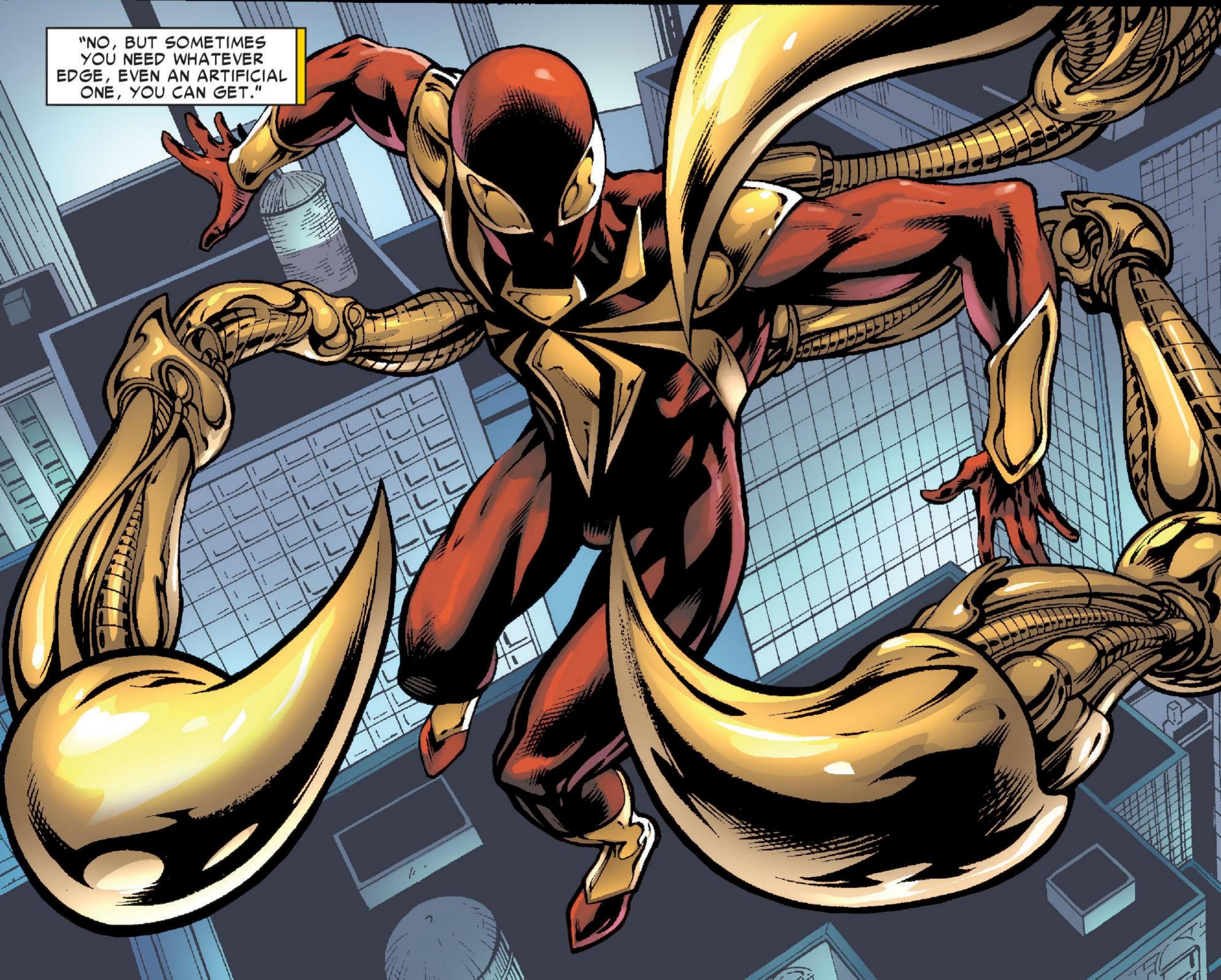
TIK











"SO YOU  
DON'T HAVE  
ANY REGRETS?"

"NO SIR.  
NOT A ONE."

"IF I HADN'T  
COME BACK  
FOR HIM, HE'D  
BE DEAD."

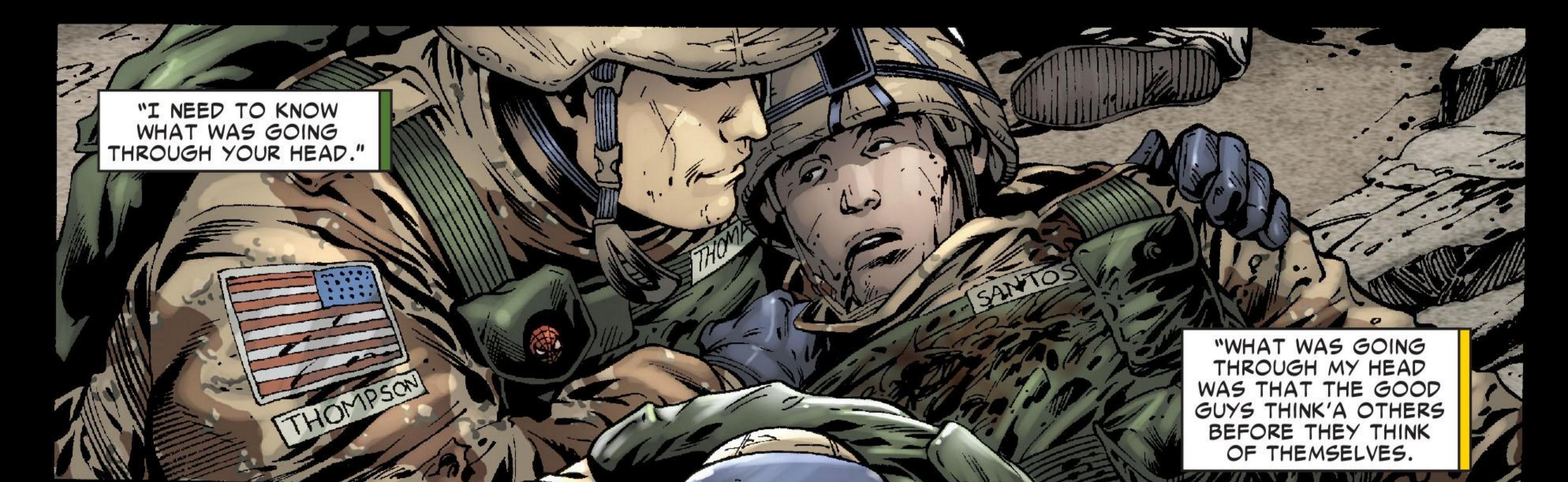
"TWO OF THE INSURGENTS  
HAD HEARD SANTOS MOANING  
BEHIND THE DEBRIS AND  
WERE GETTING READY  
TO FINISH OFF THE JOB."

"BUT THE DOCTORS  
TOLD YOU...DID THEY  
EXPLAIN THE CONSEQUENCES  
OF THAT DECISION?"

"YOU MEAN THAT I  
DIDN'T GET A MEDEVAC  
FOR ME IN TIME?"

"YOU'D LOST A LOT OF  
BLOOD...WERE STILL  
LOSING A LOT OF BLOOD."

"SANTOS IS ALIVE. YOU  
REALY GOT TO ASK  
THESE QUESTIONS?"



"I NEED TO KNOW  
WHAT WAS GOING  
THROUGH YOUR HEAD."

"WHAT WAS GOING  
THROUGH MY HEAD  
WAS THAT THE GOOD  
GUYS THINK'A OTHERS  
BEFORE THEY THINK  
OF THEMSELVES."



"ANYWAY, WE  
GOT OUTTA THERE,  
DIDN'T WE?"

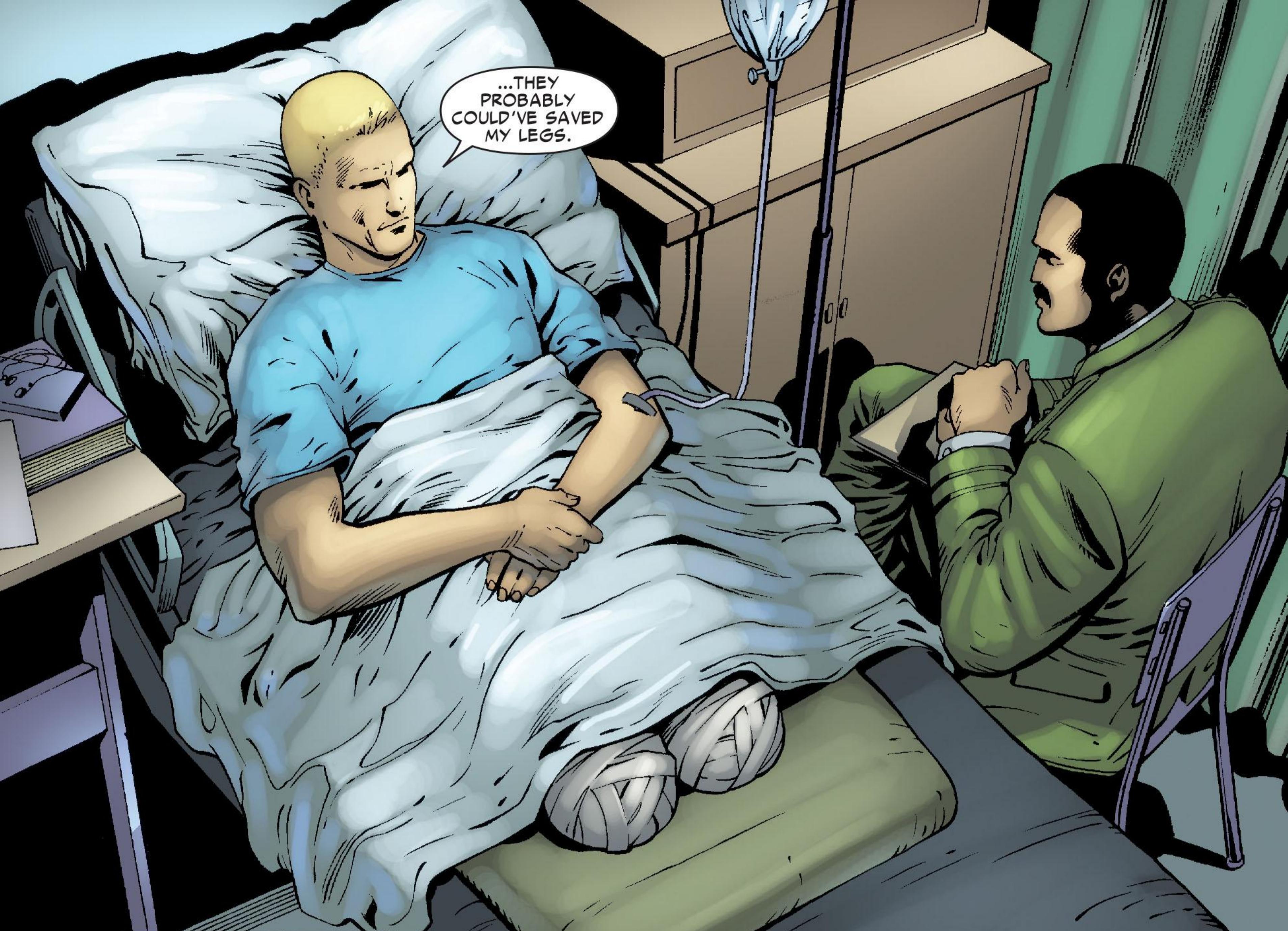
"YES,  
YOU DID."



"AND I ASSUMED  
THE DOCTORS  
EXPLAINED..."

"YEAH, THEY TOLD ME.  
THEY SAID I'D LOST TOO  
MUCH BLOOD. THAT THERE  
WAS TISSUE DAMAGE."

"THAT IF I'D  
GOTTEN MEDICAL  
ATTENTION SOONER..."



**DEDICATED TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVE, HAVE SERVED AND WILL SERVE IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WITH BRAVERY AND HONOR.**  
(With special thanks to Sergeant Jeffrey Guerin, U.S. Army 25th Infantry Division.)

# the AMAZING SPIDER-MAIL



Send e-mail to

[SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM](mailto:SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM)

(please mark as OKAY TO PRINT)



No letters this issue, folks. Instead, let me tell you about a great guy...

Several months ago, I was sitting at my desk putting the finishing touches on whatever Spidey issue had to go out that week when Marvel's publicity maven, Jim McCann poked his head through the door asking if we had time to meet a soldier injured in Afghanistan, an army medic named Jeff Guerin.

Now while Marvel doesn't do official office tours we do have visits a few times a week from family members of staffers', visiting talent, or perhaps folks from a company we happen to be doing business with. So occasionally it can get to feeling like rush hour on the Grand Central Parkway as we try to get work done while people are being shown around. To be honest, those days can be frustrating because it's hard enough getting these books together during the peaceful, quiet times. When you're also trying to meet people and carry on a couple conversations at the same you're getting work into the Bullpen, it can be downright mind crushing.

But meeting a soldier? That had potential. This was a chance to meet someone whose job I was more interested in than he was in mine.

Jeff was travelling with his fiancée, Jennifer, and several family members, so already he had a movie-star-sized entourage. Jeff's injuries have him in a wheelchair currently, but on top of him was piled about ten thousand gifts from the various editorial offices. Everyone he was with was carrying something too. And even with the injuries he bravely carried like a thousand-pound stone on his back, his smile entered the room about a full minute before he did. (Jeff's smile is like last year's flu...incredibly contagious).

We spoke for awhile and Jeff gave everyone in the office the incredible and unfortunately all-too-familiar story of what had happened:

An IED on the side of a road hit his vehicle, and his squad (the 25th Division's 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed the "Bobcats") was ambushed by Taliban attackers. Though several other of his brothers were injured or killed, the Bobcats fought off the attack. However, both of Jeff's legs were shattered in the explosion and he was blinded in both eyes by shrapnel. This was two days short of his 22nd birthday.

I could barely type that last paragraph... but this guy came into my office grinning ear-to-ear.

Like everyone else at Marvel, our office loaded Jeff up with gifts and spent some time talking comics (spilling some upcoming storylines in the process). All of this to try to show enough appreciation for someone who sacrificed so much and, speaking completely for myself, to vainly assuage the guilt of those far-too-numerous moments when I've taken for granted the men and women who do the bone-wearying work protecting me, my children, my country and each other.

Jeff and I kept in contact over the next few months as he travelled frequently to New York for experimental surgery. He sent us gifts in return and it made a ton of sense to include him when Guggenheim started really focusing on this story about Flash Thompson.

Jeff got on the phone with Marc and me for about an hour giving us a ton of specifics and reference to litter our story, enough material that we could have done an entirely separate Flash Thompson series. And even though our story took place in Iraq while Jeff's tour was in Afghanistan, there was enough shared experience that with his help we were (hopefully) able to make it feel truer than it would have felt otherwise. He helped us gather reference for our artist, Barry Kitson, who painstakingly worked to make you feel the claustrophobia of a Stryker while giving the soldier's uniforms weight and form on the page.

Jeff's at his parents' home now and thanks to a great charity called Homes for Our Troops ([homesforourtroops.org](http://homesforourtroops.org)) he's getting his own house built that will serve some of his needs caused by his injuries. By the time the issue comes out, the new house will be done and all of us here are thrilled for him and Jennifer.

Admittedly, we sometimes make a cliché out of "from great power must come great responsibility," but people like Jeff and his fellow soldiers remind us all that clichés are ultimately true.

To put it plainly...we couldn't have done this issue without Jeff's help and we dedicate it to him, the two men who lost their lives in the same explosion: Cpl. Kyle Fernandez and SSG. Brian Hobbs and the thousands of other soldiers like them who make us proud everyday by serving in the military. Thanks is too small a word.

Stephen Wacker  
10/2/08



Jeff gettin' the goods



Jeff & Jennifer



Ol' Green Face!



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