



SECOND FEATURE

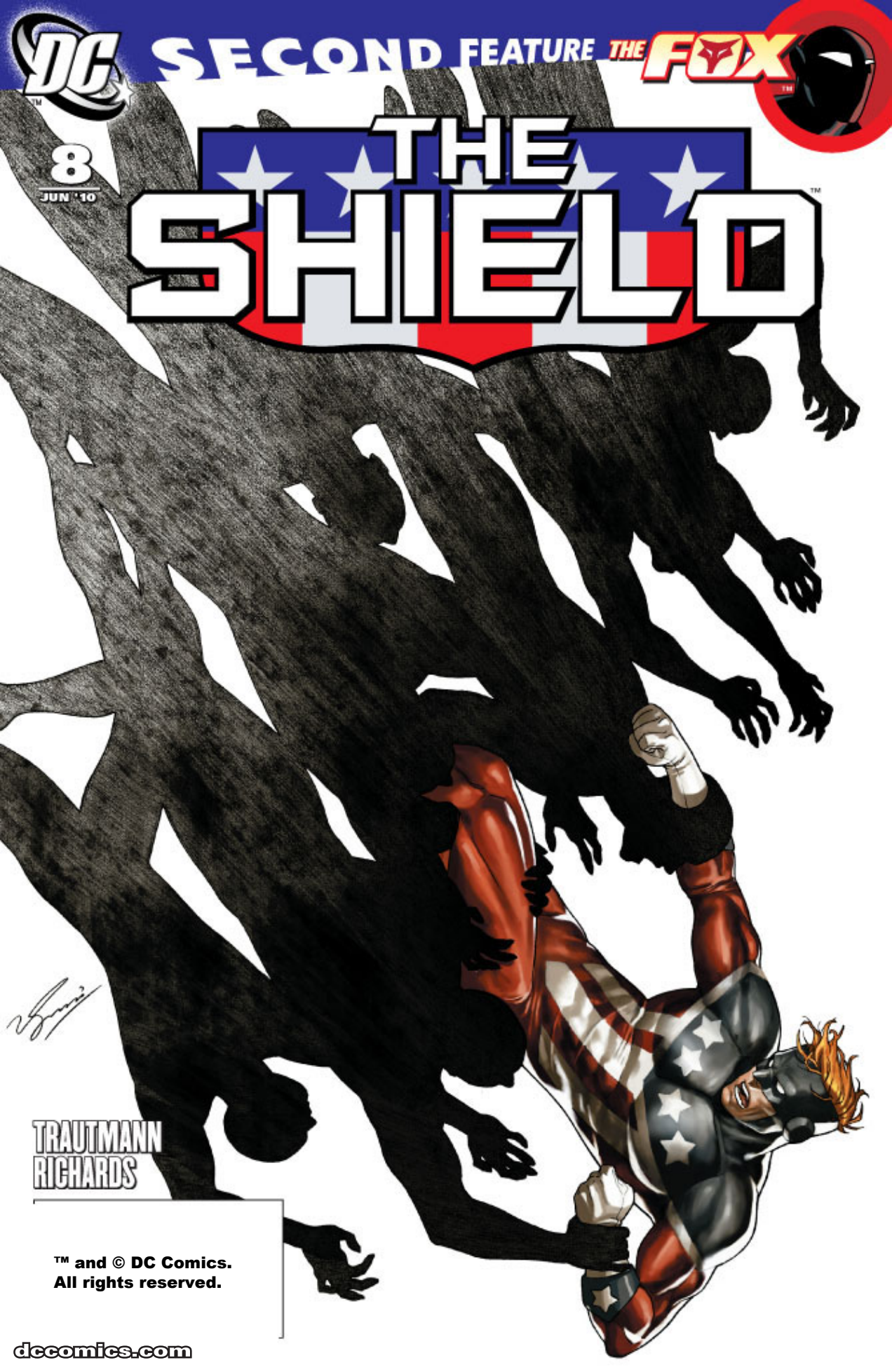
THE FOX



8

JUN '10

# THE SHIELD



*Richards*

TRAUTMANN  
RICHARDS

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THE LAST TIME HE DID HIS JOB, MOST OF THE MEN IN THIS ROOM ENDED UP UNDER HIS CONTROL.

THAT WAS DOWN TO GRODD, NOT MR. AL-THAKA.

WE NEED HIM. HE'S SEEN THE INSIDE OF BLACK SEVEN'S OPERATIONS, AND HIS ABILITIES MAKE HIM A USEFUL WEAPON IN THIS FIGHT.



A USEFUL WEAPON. JUST LIKE ME?

SO WE JUST TRUST HIM NOW, SIR?

IT'S CONDITIONAL TRUST, SOLDIER.

HEAR HIM OUT AND DECIDE FOR YOURSELF.



I UNDERSTAND YOUR DISCOMFORT, LIEUTENANT.

OUR LAST ENCOUNTER WAS A TIME OF... INSANITY FOR ME, AND SOMETHING I AM NOT PROUD OF.

BUT IF I WAS MAD, THEN IT WAS A MADNESS INFLICTED UPON ME.



KAHNDQAQ / BIALYA BORDER  
FOUR YEARS AGO

I WAS INSANE  
BECAUSE EVIL  
MEN STOLE  
AWAY MY VERY  
SELF.

I ONLY  
REMEMBER...  
FLASHES.

GUNS. SCREAMS.  
CHILDREN CRYING.  
MEN FROM OVER THE  
MOUNTAINS, FROM BIALYA,  
CALLING US ANIMALS  
AND HERDING US INTO  
THEIR CLUTCHES.

MAKING US  
DISAPPEAR.  
MAKING US  
GHOSTS.

USING  
US AS LAB  
RATS.

THE  
LAST THING  
I REMEMBER  
WAS NEEDLES,  
BLINDING PAIN, AND  
A WHISPERED  
PROMISE.

"WE WILL  
IMPROVE  
YOU."

THEN, ONLY  
DARKNESS.

OVER TIME,  
I BECAME MORE  
AWARE. I COULD  
SENSE STRAY  
THOUGHTS, ODD  
IMPRESSIONS.

FEELINGS OF  
DISAPPOINTMENT AND  
FRUSTRATION, AS IF I  
HAD SOMEHOW FAILED  
THE PEOPLE WHO HAD  
TAKEN ME.

THEN, I COULD  
ONLY FEEL GREAT  
PANIC, AS IF A  
DISASTER WAS  
COMING.

AND ONE  
DAY I WAS  
AWAKENED.  
ENSLAVED.

AND I LOST  
MYSELF. WHO  
WAS I? WHAT  
WAS MY  
NAME?

ALL  
GONE. ALL  
THAT WAS  
LEFT...





...WAS THIS. THE THING THEY MADE AND THEN ABANDONED. THEIR FAILED MONSTER.



WE FIGURE THAT H.I.V.E. LEFT HIM IN THE MOUNTAINS WHEN BLACK ADAM STRUCK. GRODD ADDED A CONTROL IMPLANT AND WOKE HIM UP.

THE GADGET I DESTROYED. AND YOU'VE REPAIRED THE DEVICE?



DAMN RIGHT.

THE IMPLANT DELIVERS MICROSHOCKS TO AL-THAKA'S BRAIN, PREVENTING USE OF HIS POWERS.

WE'VE SLAVED IT TO YOUR SUIT SYSTEMS.



HE'S THE TEAM'S BLOODHOUND, AND IN THE FIELD, YOU'LL BE THE ONE HOLDING HIS LEASH.

HOW'S THAT SITTING WITH YOU?

FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRACK DOWN AND HELP YOU DESTROY THE ONES RESPONSIBLE FOR MY... CONDITION?

I FIND IT EMINENTLY ACCEPTABLE, LIEUTENANT.



THEN LET'S GET TO WORK.

WE'VE GOT A TARGET.



A MID-LEVEL MEDICAL SPECIALIST, NAMED VIKTOR BURGOS, WORKED FOR KOBRA BACK IN THE '70S, THEN DEFECTED TO H.I.V.E. AROUND '84. HOOKED UP WITH BLACK SEVEN AROUND '01.

BURGOS IS AN EXPERT IN GENETIC MANIPULATION, CYBERNETICS AND COMBAT PHARMACOLOGY.

CAUGHT A LEAD ON HIS LOCATION FROM AN N.S.A. INTERCEPT. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A COMPLICATION...

SUSPECTED BLACK SEVEN OPERATIVE



"...THE N.S.A. INTERCEPTED AN ARREST ORDER FOR BURGOS. FRENCH INTELLIGENCE, INTERPOL AND POLICE AGENCIES ARE CLOSING IN.

"GET HIM BEFORE THE FRENCH DO."

PARIS, FRANCE

COPPERHEAD ONE TO ALL SHOOTERS. SATELLITE FEED SHOWS FRENCH AUTHORITIES THREE-ZERO MINUTES OUT. WE'RE ON THE CLOCK, BOYS.

COPPERHEAD THREE, IT'S YOUR SHOW.

AFFIRMATIVE, BOSS.

THE ARMY WAY: TRAVEL THREE THOUSAND MILES TO KILL A STREETLIGHT. HOO-RAH.

TIME TO GO DARK. KILL COMMS AND SATELLITE LINK. ONE STRAY BIT OF SIGNAL, AND BLACK SEVEN'LL SEE US COMING A MILE OFF.

THAT'S A ROG. HAND SIGNALS FROM HERE ON OUT, SIR.

COVER THE BACK DOOR, SARN'T. I'VE GOT POINT.

GOOD HUNTING, EL-TEE.