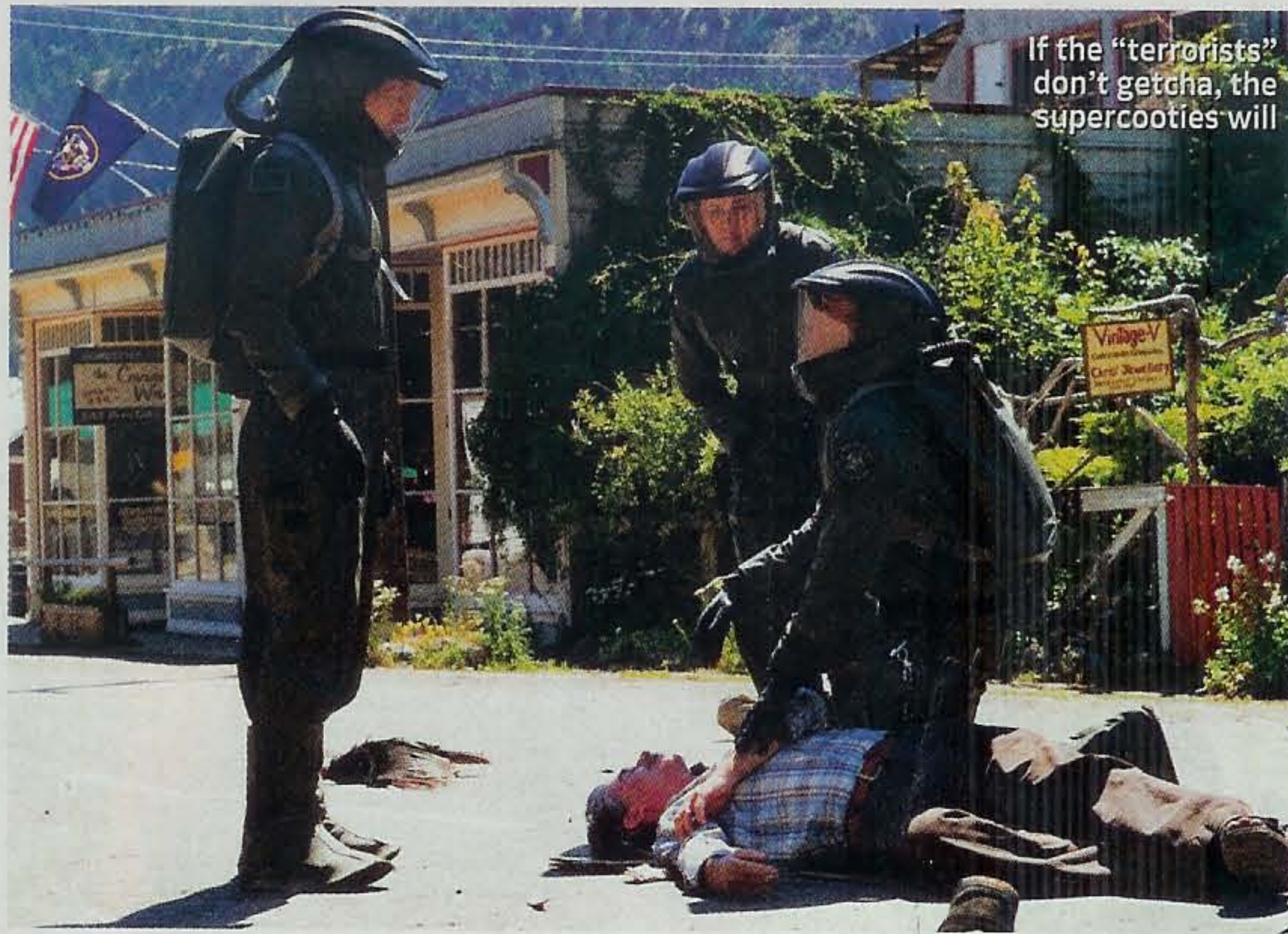




by Rochell D. Thomas

● **Do shows like *The Andromeda Strain* make you paranoid, too?**

It doesn't take much to set off my doomsday alarms. So couple the Benjamin Bratt A&E mini-series about a pathogen that takes you out in 10 seconds with Seasons 3 and 5 of *24*, and it's a small miracle that I even leave the house. After watching how the Andromeda strain slipped past quarantine, I just know that some super-cootie is going to come. And we won't be able to contain it and....[Sigh] Clearly I've got issues. But they're normal ones, according to Dr. Gabriela Cora, a psychiatrist who specializes in mood, anxiety and stress management. "To be a little anxious is not a bad thing," she says. "But to react to this movie as if the end of the world is about to happen may be too much." Basically, it's all fun and games until I start shopping for hazmat suits.



If the "terrorists" don't getcha, the supercooties will

● **Has *American Gladiators* missed the mark with *Vertigo*?**

The show's new event



And reach!

tests players' balance and core strength by having them race across small platforms mounted on swaying 30-foot-tall poles.

The problem: It's not as exciting to watch because it simply pits the Gladiator pros against inexperienced athletic joes rather than having the contenders race each other while being chased by Gladiators.

Opportunity wasted, *Am Glad*.

● **Did Katherine's speedy adoption ruin things for people looking to adopt in Romania?**

In the *Desperate Housewives* season finale, Wisteria

Lane's battered neighbor admitted not only to burying her daughter Dylan in the woods after the kid was accidentally crushed to death years ago, she copped to zipping off to Romania to get a child to replace her in what had to be one heck of a suspiciously quick adoption. "I found a girl in a Romanian orphanage who looked just like Dylan," she said—as if a woman could just fly in and pick up a child at the cash-and-carry shop, then drop said child in her dead daughter's place without a hitch. I was offended on behalf of Nadia Comaneci's people. So I did a quick search. And, shut my mouth, apparently such adoptions were once a problem. According to a 2005 Helsinki Commission report, the Romanian adoption system had gotten so corrupt in the '90s that the Romanian government banned intercountry adoption. Now it's next to impossible for law-abiding people who want a baby to adopt a Romanian child. Way to ruin it for other folks, Katherine.



Dylan was a steal

A READER'S IS IT JUST ME?

Does *ER*'s County General get shot up a little too often?

That emergency room has been blown up, machine-gunned and held hostage by countless crazies. Gangbangers walked up with weapons raised when Dr. Benton was performing surgery. Lack of security caused a face-off between Carter and Weaver. You'd think they'd learn! Yet in a recent May episode, a man was still able to hold the staff at gunpoint. Either this hospital should invest in better security, or the state should close it and burn the building to the ground to get rid of the bad karma. —Trey Farr, Spartanburg, S.C.



Should we be concerned?

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DIYAH PERA/ABC; RON TOM/ABC; JOEL WARREN/© NBC UNIVERSAL INC.; PETER HOPPER STONE/© NBC UNIVERSAL INC.