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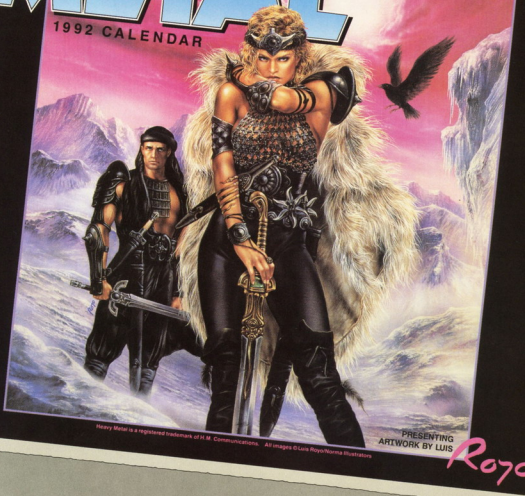
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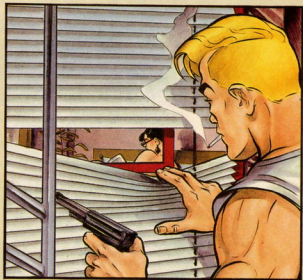
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20 NUDE DANCERS 20!

by Mark Martin

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by Julie Bell



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Ecstasy

JULIE BELL

As a bodybuilder my body is my medium. I sculpt and shape each muscle with a combination of power, control, and sensitivity. I have to recognize the need for balance—one body part can not overwhelm the others with strength or size. If this happens, the whole body is thrown off balance. Injury could occur and the aesthetics of the body diminish. Bodybuilding has taught me not only discipline, but that I am capable of pushing way beyond what I had ever dreamed possible.

I approach my painting the same way. I need a balanced composition, precise control in rendering, love and attention to each detail, sensitivity to color, warmth, and movement—and it all has to relate to itself. The fantasy art I am attracted to is centered around the figure and my love for the human body pushes me in that direction. I let myself be led by my paintings as I am working on them. Rigidity can kill a painting—spontaneity allows it to take on a life of its own.

As a woman, fantasy art is very appealing to me. I love the romance of it—the lusty, sexual side of it as well as the fairy tale side. I love the sensuality that comes from strength and power in men and women. My two children have always been a great source of inspiration and life's lessons for me. Watching them discover their own strengths is an emotional experience for me. I have always been an intensely romantic person and now I have my opportunity to share it with the world. That's extremely fulfilling for a romantic exhibitionist like myself.

—Julie Bell



Serpent Sage

I am a bodybuilder. I am an artist.
I am a woman.

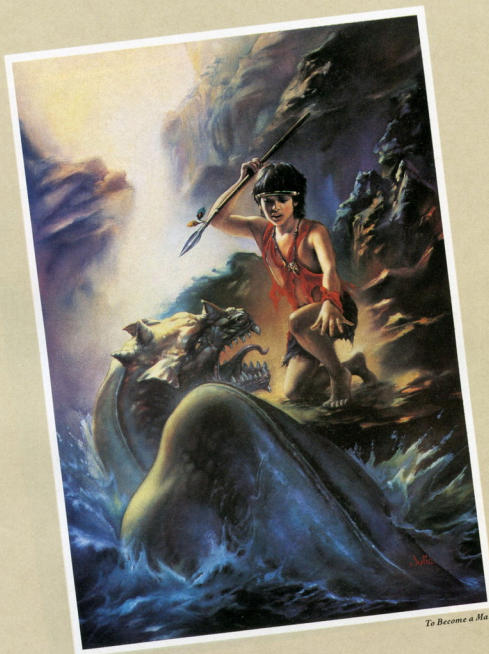
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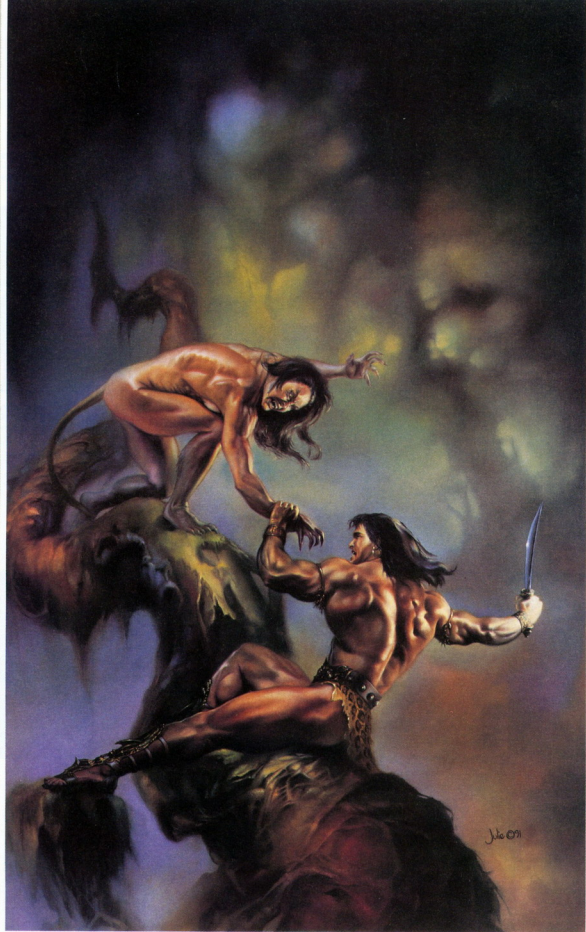
Battle of the Mer



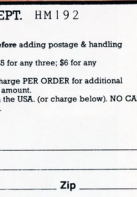
Young Wizard



To Become a Man



Untitled



* Adults Only; Please sign «over 21»



THE BAGSET WAS ON A SURVEY MISSION IN INNER ALPHA CANIS MINORIS WHEN WE NOTICED A PLANETARY TRIO APPARENTLY RICH IN SIMORIAN CRYSTALS. NATURALLY WE CAME IN FOR A CLOSER LOOK.



THERE WERE A FEW ODD THINGS ABOUT THIS ONE.

THE LIFE SCANNER CAME UP WITH AN ERROR CODE ON ALL CHANNELS.



BUT THERE WAS A GOOD AIR ATMOSPHERE. CAPTAIN KUBOTA TOOK ME AND TWO MINERAL TECHS TO LOOK AROUND. MY SUB-SPECIALITY IS ALIEN LIFE.



WE WERE GLAD TO GET OUT AND STRETCH OUR LEGS.

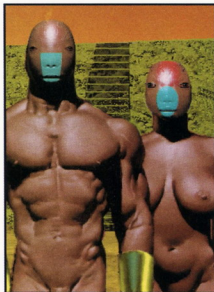
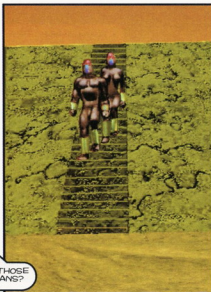
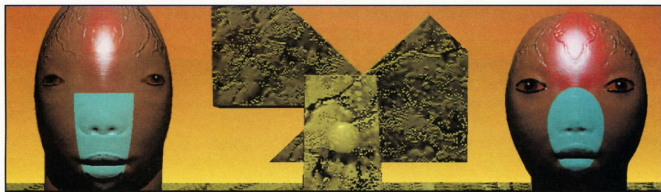
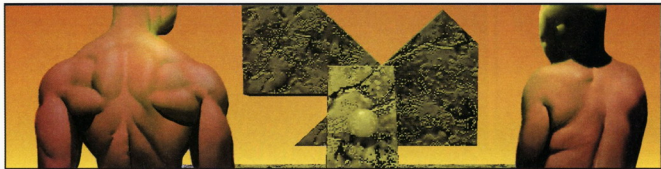
PLANETOID

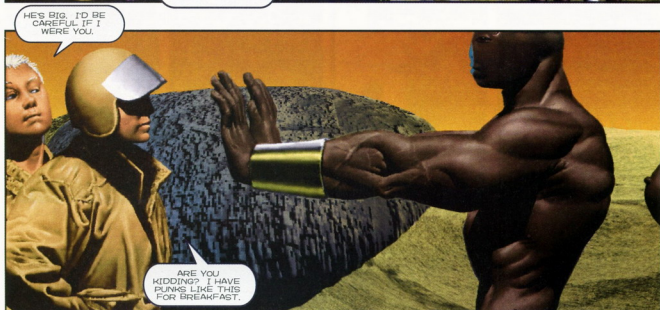


AAAHH!

WE WERE TOTALLY UNPREPARED FOR THE THING THAT BURST OUT OF THE SAND.

WHAT THE...







BUTCH, HELP ME.
THAT SUCKER
DISLOCATED MY BACK!



THE INCREDIBLY
VALUABLE CRYSTAL
DREW ME LIKE A
MAGNET. THE
ATTRACTION WAS ALMOST
HYPNOTIC.



BUTCH, HURRY
UP. YOU'VE GOT
TO HELP ME
BACK TO THE
SHIP. I'VE GOT A
BAD FEELING
ABOUT THIS
PLACE. WE'VE
GOT TO GET OUT
OF HERE.

SSS-KRAKLE - BEAGLE TO EV
PARTY. STRANGE SITUATION
HERE. THE SENSORS HAVE
LOCKED UP BUT THE GROUND
SEEMS TO BE MOVING. COME
IN PLEASE - SSS KRAK.



NOW I AM ALONE AND STRANDED. A TREASURE WORTH MILLIONS IS MINE. SO WHAT? THE NEAREST HELP IS LIGHT YEARS AWAY. I CAN'T EVEN LEAVE THIS STRUCTURE. I'M DOOMED.



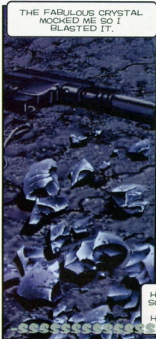
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN SITTING HERE? A DAY?



TWO DAYS?



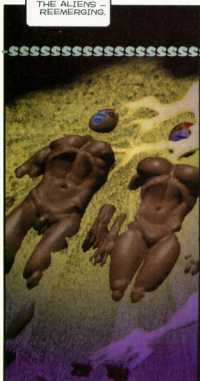
THE FABULOUS CRYSTAL MOCKED ME SO I BLASTED IT.



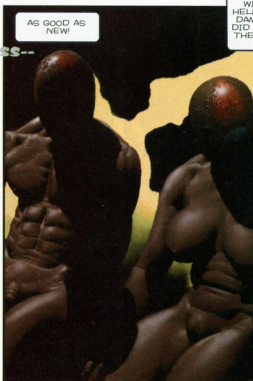
HUH? THAT SOUND. NOW WHAT'S HAPPENING?



THE ALIENS - REEMERGING.

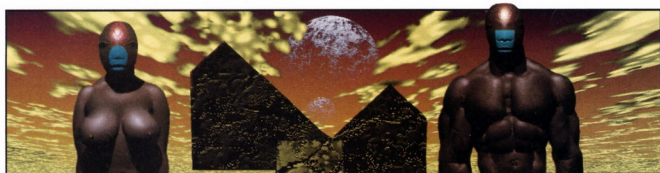
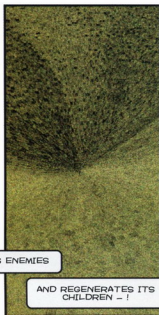
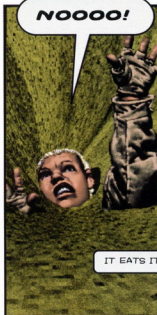


AS GOOD AS NEW!



WILL THEY HELP ME NOW? DAMNIT! WHY DID I SHATTER THE CRYSTAL?





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DREAMS OF REASON

AT MIDNIGHT ON JANUARY 15TH 1991 SADDAM HUSSEIN PASSED THE DEADLINE TO PULL OUT OF KUWAIT. OUTSIDE MY WINDOW MINGLING WITH THE STREET NOISE I HEARD SOMEONE PLAYING 'TAPS' ON A HORN. THAT NIGHT I HAD A DREAM...



© PETER KUPER 1991

SUSPENDED ACROSS THE ALLEY WAS A BOMBED-OUT CAR...



IT WASN'T CLEAR WHAT KEPT IT FROM DROPPING THE NINE STORIES...



THROUGH THE HAZE OF SMOKE AND FLAMES I THOUGHT I SAW PEOPLE.



I YELLED TO THEM TO HOLD ON AND I WENT FOR AN EXTINGUISHER.

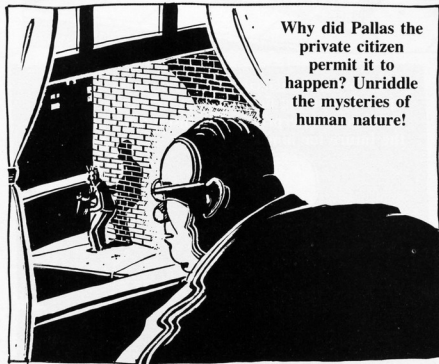
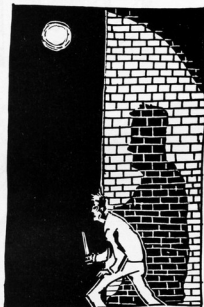
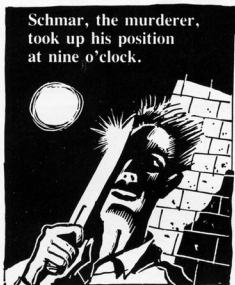




THE END

FRANZ KAFKA'S A FRATRICIDE

The evidence shows that this is how the murder was committed:



And five houses further along Mrs. Wese peered out to look for her husband who was lingering unusually late tonight.

At last there rang out the sound of the doorbell, too loud for a doorbell. Pallas bent far forward; Mrs. Wese was reassured; Schmar was glowing hot...



A sudden whim, the night sky invited him, with its dark blue and its gold...



Unknowing, he gazed up at it; nothing drew together to interpret the future for him.



Everything stayed in its senseless inscrutable place.





"Wese, you are
oozing away
into the dark
earth below
the street.
Why aren't you
simply a bladder
of blood
so that I could
stamp on you
and make you
vanish into
nothingness?"

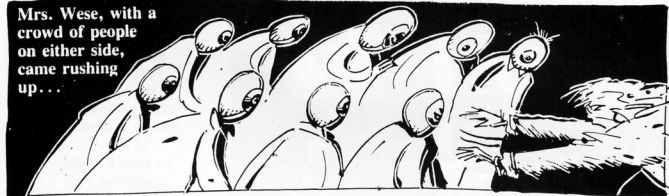




Pallas and Schmar scrutinized each other. The result of the scrutiny satisfied Pallas; Schmar came to no conclusion.



Mrs. Wese, with a crowd of people on either side, came rushing up...



Schmar pressed his mouth against the shoulder of the policeman who, stepping lightly, led him away.



END

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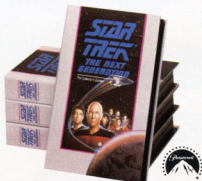
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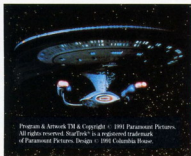
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WANT A LOUSY SCRIPT!

RAUL FLEETFOOT



THINGS HAD BEEN GOING WELL UNTIL THEN. SHE HAD MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THE BLOOD-THIRSTY WANGS-HO...



SHE HAD A ROOM IN THE DINGY, RAT-INFESTED HOTEL IN THE EAST END...HER LIFESTYLE HAD CHANGED...



BALMINE FUSO WAS GOING TO BE TERMINATED...JUST LIKE THAT, IN COLD BLOOD...THE SCRIPT SAID SO!

ON GOD! I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT...BALMINE, SUCH A SENSUAL, FELINE SPACEMAN OF ROMANCEHOOD...



SHE HAD BECOME REBORN...THE STORY WAS TO GO ON WITHOUT HER.



I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE TO APPRECIATE HER CURVES...

WHAT A LOUSH SCRIPT!...



WHO WAS I? WELL, I WAS THERE TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE FOLLOWED THE SCRIPT. I WAS AN INSPECTOR.



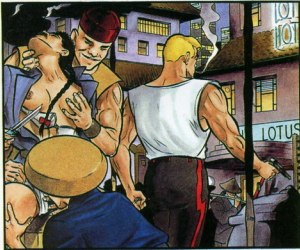
I'D BEEN WORKING FOR THIS SECOND RATE SERIES FOR A LONG TIME. ALWAYS BACKSTAGE... CHECKING CONTINUITY... REASSURING MY BOSSIES... JUST A ROUTINE JOB!



ONE ENDS UP BY BECOMING ATTACHED TO THE CHARACTERS.



WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MURDER? WHAT OLD FART IN HIS CLERK OFFICE HAD COME UP WITH THE IDEA?



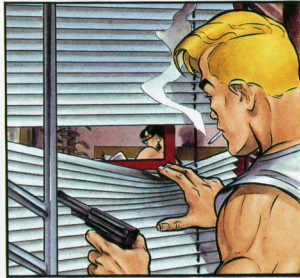
FOR THOSE OFFICE GUYS, THE CHARACTERS WERE JUST PIECES OF MEAT...



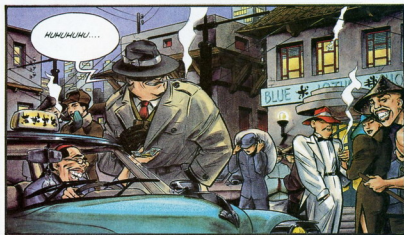
AND I WAS POWERLESS!



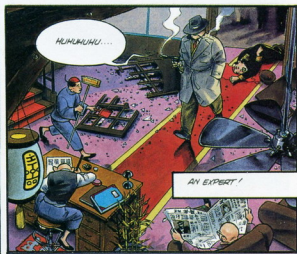
I COULD ONLY OBSERVE AND WRITE MY REPORT. AND UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES INTERFERE.



THE SCENE WAS GOING TO TAKE PLACE, IT WAS UNAVOIDABLE. YOU HAD TO ADMIRE THOSE DUSTY BUREAUCRATS ON THE FIFTH FLOOR: THEY HAD WORKED EVERYTHING OUT TO THE LAST DETAIL....



BEEF-NOSE HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO PLAY THE PART OF THE KILLER. HE HAD PLAYED THE SAME ROLE IN PREVIOUS EPISODES....



I KNEW JUST HOW SMART HE WAS AND HOW ELEGANTLY HE WENT ABOUT HIS BUSINESS....



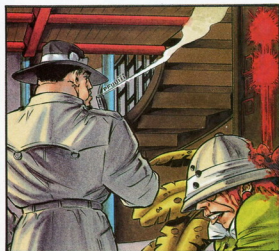
THEY HAD GIVEN HIM A COUPLE OF WITTY LINES....



NOOO! YOU HAVE THE WRONG PERSON. I THINK THE PARTY YOU ARE LOOKING FOR LIVES UPSTAIRS.

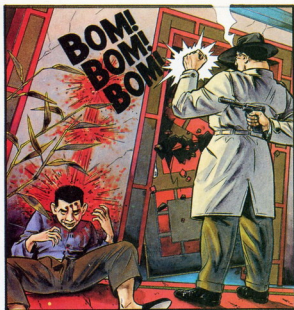


HER DESTINY WAS SEALED! BALMAINE FUSO'S ADVENTURES HAD COME TO AN END!

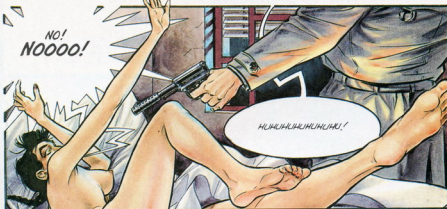


THE BLOODTHIRSTY WANG-HO WOULD END UP WINNING... AFTER 295 EPISODES... THANKS TO BEEF-NOSE, HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN....



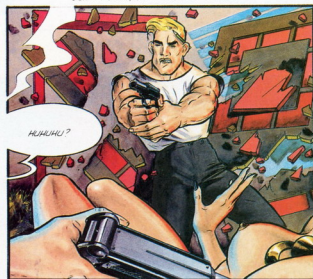


OH GOD! I COULDN'T BEAR TO SEE THIS!

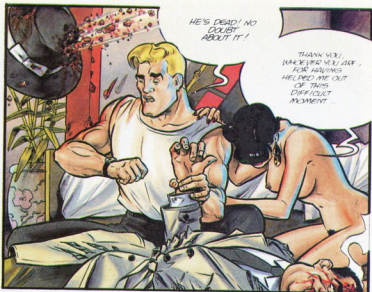


I COULDN'T STAND IT! A LUMP WAS RISING IN MY THROAT! THEY! DID THE STUPIDEST THING I'VE EVER DONE IN MY LIFE...

DON'T WORRY, BALMYNE, HERE I COME!



THE PLOT BEGAN TO UNRAVEL AND EVERYTHING STARTED HAPPENING AT ONCE!



PUT THIS ON! WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!



WE RAN DOWN THE FIRE ESCAPE. I FELT A KNOT IN MY STOMACH. HOW COULD I JUSTIFY SUCH AN INFRACTION OF THE RULES?



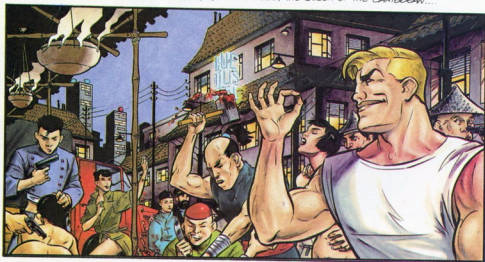
NO, GO AWAY, QUICK! I'M GOING TO HAVE ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT WITHOUT YOU AROUND!

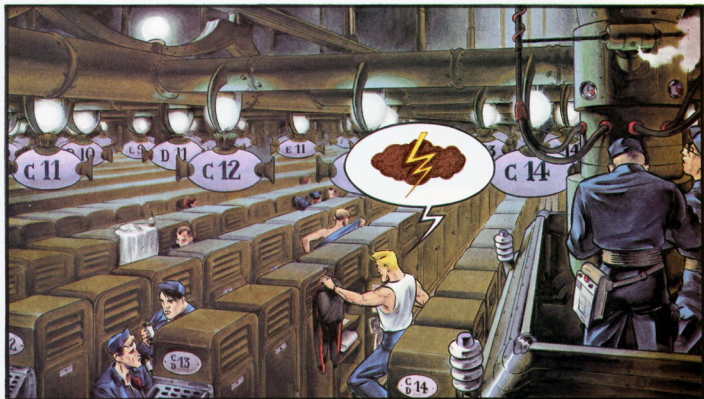


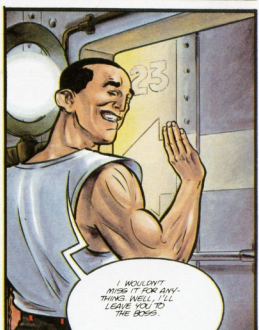
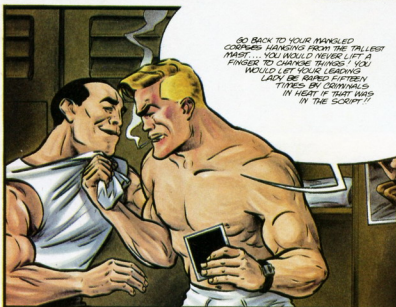
I WILL NEVER FORGET ALL YOU'VE DONE FOR ME!



I WAS IN A HELL OF A MESS. THE BLOODTHIRSTY WANGS NO AND THE GUNGS ON THE FIFTH FLOOR WOULD NEVER FORGIVE ME. BUT I WAS READY TO TAKE THE LOT OF THEM... JUST FOR ONE KISS FROM THE LOVELY BALMINE FUSO, THE QUEEN OF THE CARIBBEAN...

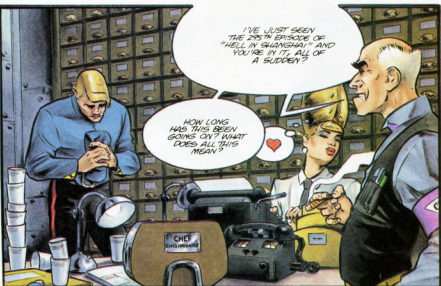








HA! BAIL FLEETFOOT.
WHAT'S THIS MESS
ALL ABOUT?



I'VE JUST SEEN
THE 29TH EPISODE OF
"HELL IN SHANGHAI" AND
YOU'RE IN IT. ALL OF
A SUDDEN?

HOW LONG
HAS THIS BEEN
GOING ON? WHAT
DOES ALL THIS
MEAN?



.... YOU CHOSE TO DISREGARD
THE EXECUTIVE MEMO... AND
GAVE YOURSELF THE STARRING
ROLE! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING
LIKE IT!!

ALL OF THE
FIFTH FLOOR IS
UP IN JOYS!
YOU'VE CREATED A
HELL OF A
STIR!



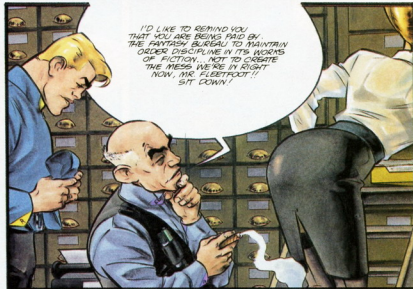
WANG-MO'S RIGHT-HAND MAN
IS DEAD. BALMAIN KIMBO WAS
DISAPPEARED... THE SERIES IS
SHOT! OUR EMERGENCY TEAM
IS WORKING ON IT BUT...

SIT
DOWN!

THEY'LL NEED
SEVERAL DAYS TO
GET THE SICKY
BACK IN SHAPE!

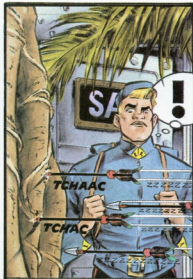
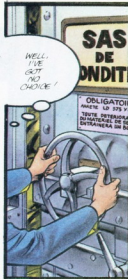


GOOD WORK, FLEETFOOT.
REAL GOOD! WHY DO YOU THINK
WE'RE PAYING YOU TO
WORK HERE?!



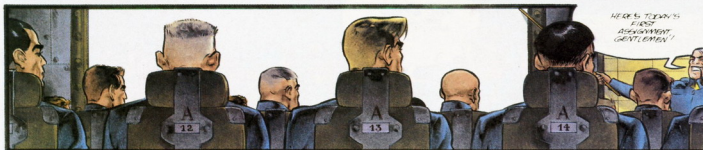
I'D LIKE TO REMIND YOU
THAT YOU ARE BEING PAID BY
THE FANTASY BUREAU TO MAINTAIN
ORDER DISCIPLINE IN ITS WORKS
OF FICTION... NOT TO CREATE
THE MESS WE'RE IN RIGHT
NOW, MR. FLEETFOOT!!
SIT DOWN!



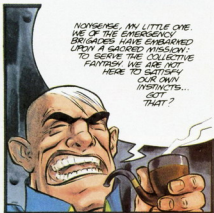
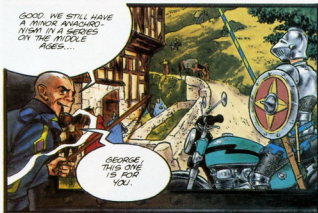
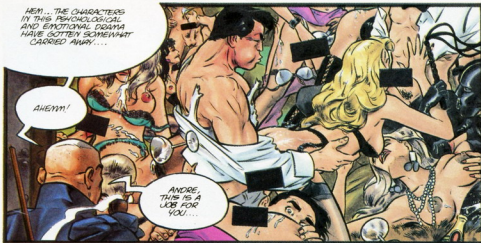


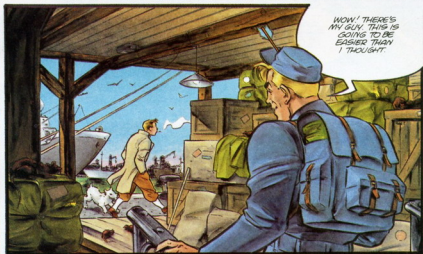
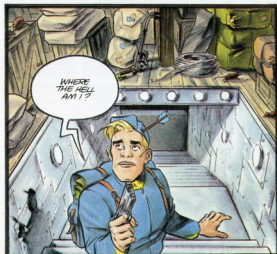












LOOK HERE, KID! I KNOW MY JOB. OKAY?!! I'VE STARRIED IN A LOT OF EPISODES... SO I KNOW WHAT'S IN THE SCRIPT!

BUT SIR, YOU'RE IN DANGER, I SWEAR!

YES, YES, I KNOW. DANGER IS MY MIDDLE NAME. BUT I'VE ALWAYS MANAGED TO SAVE MY SKIN. SO I'M NOT GOING TO WASTE MY TIME LISTENING TO YOU!

GOOD. NOW LEAVE ME ALONE MAN. I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO. SOME IDIOTS ARE GOING TO PLANT DRUGS IN TINS OF CANS MEAT...

I WILL BRING THEM TO JUSTICE!

BUT, MISTER...

LEAVE HIM ALONE! HE'S AS OBSTINATE AS A DONKEY!

...I KNOW HIM WELL. HE WANTS TO DO AS HE PLEDGES... HE WANTS TO BE A STAR ALL THE TIME!!

NAAA! BELIEVE ME! LET DESTINY TAKE CARE OF IT SELF!!

A COBTE OF SHARDINE TINS IS GOING TO LAND BARRON ON HIS HEAD! SO WHAT? HE'S NOT MORE REACEABLE, RIGHT?

A COBTE OF...

HEY, LISTEN TO ME! IF SOMEONE ON THE FIFTH FLOOR IS LOOKING FOR AN ACTOR TO REPLACE HIM IN THE SERIES, SAVE THEM MY NAME! HA...

I'M NOT KIDDING...

I CAN DO IT...

THERE'S NOT A MINUTE TO LOSE

LOOK, I'M STILL VERY FLEXIBLE AND ALL THAT..

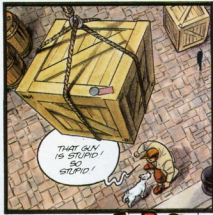
THERE'S ONLY ONE LITTLE PROBLEM...

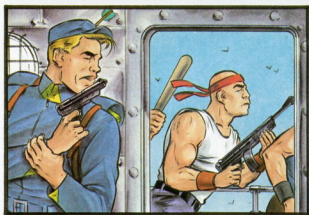
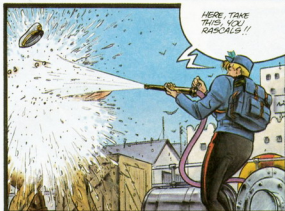
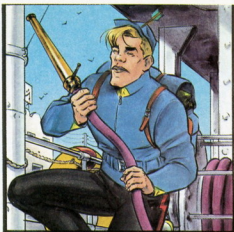
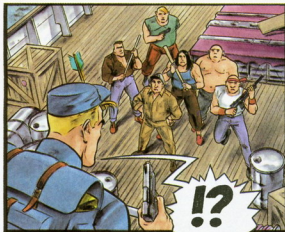
I LIKE TO DRINK...

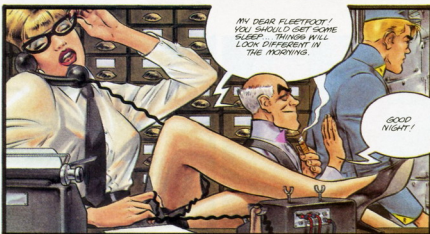
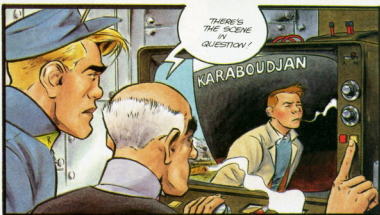
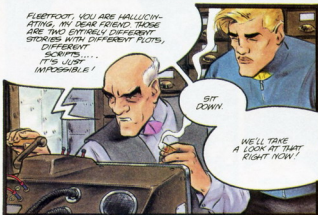
THERE HE IS!

JUST TO FORGET...

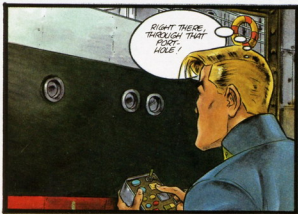
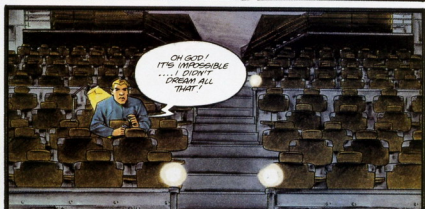
HORRORS!!!

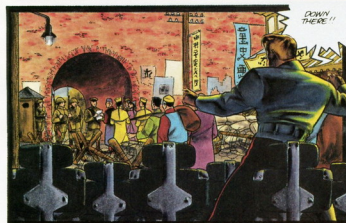
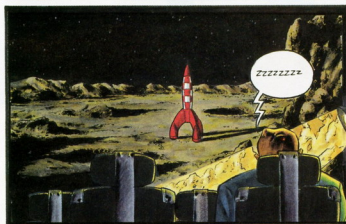
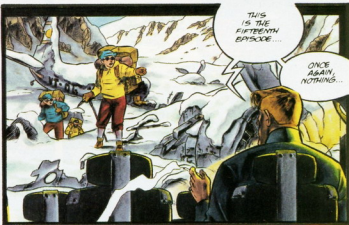
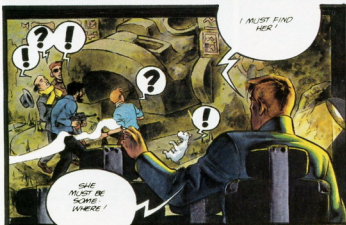
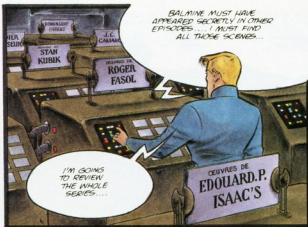


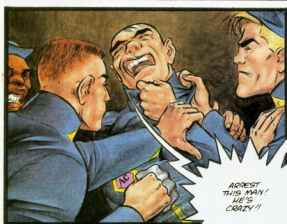


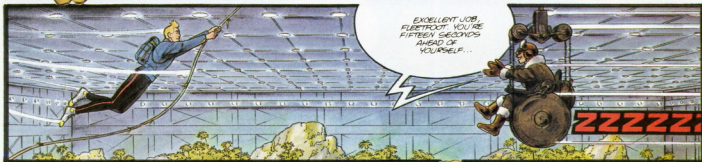


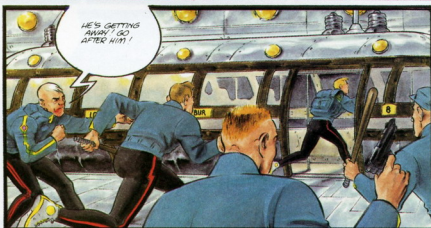
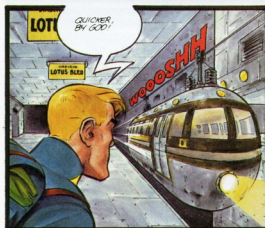
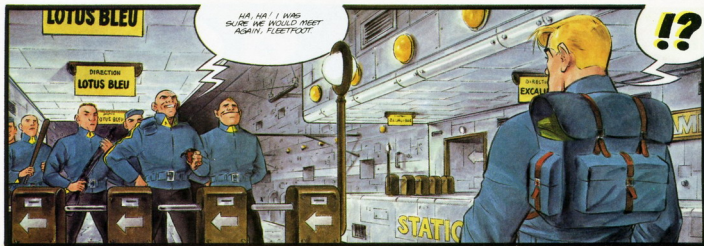


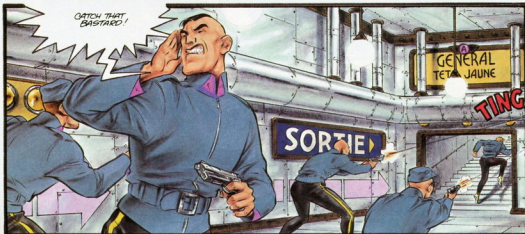
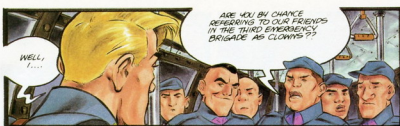


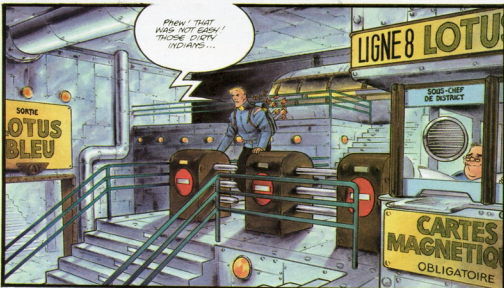












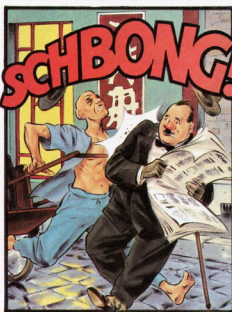
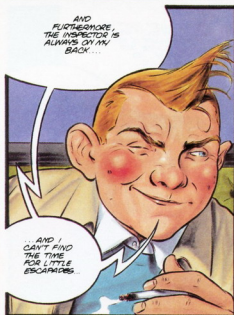
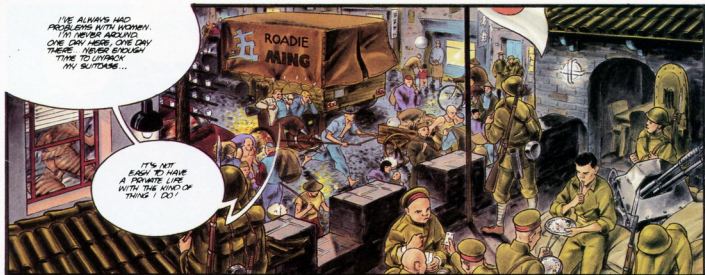


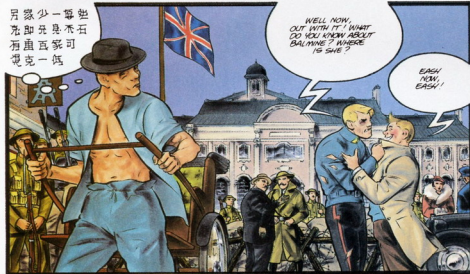
WELL, WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAVE ME FROM NOW? A CASE OF POISON? A PIT FULL OF POISONOUS GIARMS, AN INVASION OF GIANT ROADIES? NA, NA, NA! SOMETHING EVEN WORSE THAN THAT?

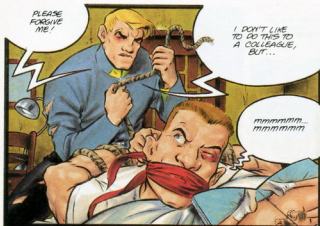


LISTEN TO ME! BALMINE FORD, THE WOMAN I LOVE, HAS BEEN ABDUCTED FROM HER ORIGINAL SERIES AND TAKEN AWAY ON SOME UTRONJULGLOU, PEOPLE. I DON'T YET KNOW WHY...

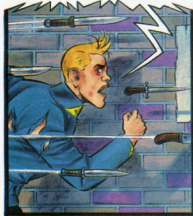






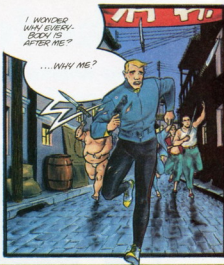


Whoa



I WONDER WHY EVERYBODY IS AFTER ME?

...WHY ME?



THERE'S THE OPILUM DEN...

THE "BLUE LOTUS"...



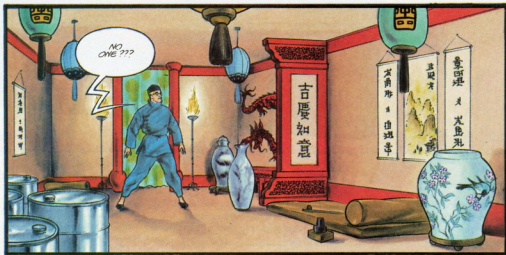
BALMINE... WE'VE NEVER BEEN THIS CLOSE BEFORE!



YOU JUST GAVE ME A GREAT IDEA, OLD PAL!



IN THESE CLOTHES I'LL FIT RIGHT IN!



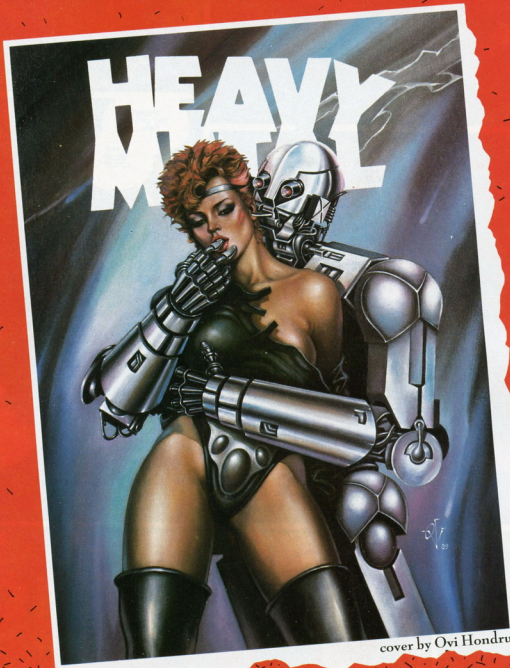
NO ONE ???

CONTINUED ON PAGE 92

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AMARILLO, TEXAS.
POPULATION: 43,132.
APRIL OF 1930.



PAYNE'S INFERNO

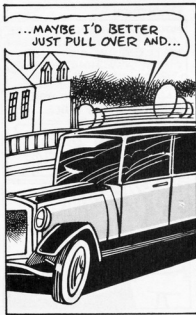
Story: GEORGE E. TURNER, MIKE H. PRICE Art: LAMBERTO ALVAREZ





AMARILLO'S COUNTRY CLUB ADDITION. FRIDAY, JUNE 27TH, 1930. 10:30 A.M.





DOWNTOWN...

MOTHER AND JUNIOR CAN'T BE MUCH LONGER, BOBBIE JEAN. WE'LL GET HIM OUTFITTED. MAYBE SOMETHING NEW FOR YOU — AND THEN HOME.

LADELL WON'T MIND WAITING LUNCH A LITTLE WHILE.

DADDY! LISTEN!

SIREN'S?

WELL, WE CAN READ ALL ABOUT IT IN THE NEWS TOMORROW. DARLIN!

WHAT CAN BE KEEPING THEM?

DADDY, THE 'PHONE!

PAYNE, I THINK YOU'D BETTER GET HOME — EXA AND JUNIOR —

WHAT? LISTEN — CAN YOU COME PICK US UP? BOBBIE AND I WALKED TO TOWN THIS MORNING...

...BUT QUICKLY: WHAT'S THE TROUBLE —?

THE LATE-MODEL DURANT THAT EXA PAYNE, 34, HAD STILL BEEN LEARNING TO DRIVE HAD EXPLODED WITH SUCH FORCE AS TO SCATTER FRAGMENTS OF STEEL, GLASS, FLESH AND BONE, AND FLAMING CLOTHING OVER A WIDE AREA OF THE FASHIONABLE NEIGHBORHOOD. THE COUPE HAD SPED ON A HUNDRED FEET, RAMMING A GARAGE AND KNOCKING THE AUTOMOBILE WITHIN THROUGH THE OPPOSITE WALL. THE WOMAN'S 11-YEAR-OLD SON, A.D. PAYNE, JNR., HAD BEEN FLUNG CLEAR, THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS BODY LARGELY STRIPPED OF FLESH, LANDING 40 FEET AWAY.

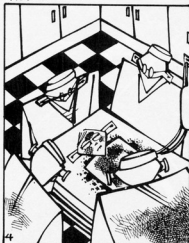


mother...

THE SIREN HAD WAILED FOR A.D., JNR., WHOM DOCTORS HASTENED TO SAVE AT THE NEARBY MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL...

...WHILE LAWYER A.D. PAYNE, DRIVEN TO THE SCENE BY A CLIENT, VIEWED THE MANGLED THING THAT HAD BEEN HIS WIFE.

ODD. THE GASOLINE TANK SEEMS NOT TO HAVE EXPLODED.



hmm... THE CAR. SHOW ME THE CAR.



NO, A.D. — BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU LOST YOUR FUEL CAP SOMEWHERE.

YES, WELL...
EXA WAS PRETTY
LAX ABOUT REMINDING
THE FILLING-STATION
ATTENDANT...

—OR ELSE SOMEONE
WAS COUNTING ON
A BLAST BIGGER
THAN THEY GOT...



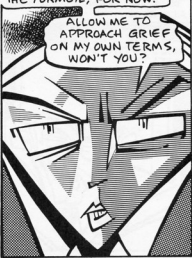
...A.D., GODSAKES, MAN!
THAT'S YOUR WIFE, STREWN
ALONG LINE AVENUE!

AND YOUR BOY, HE COULD
GO AT ANY MOMENT!
MAN, YOU'VE GOT TO
COMPREHEND WHAT HAS
HAPPENED HERE!



I COMPREHEND WELL ENOUGH,
DETECTIVE SCOTT: I COMPRE-
HEND MY WIFE'S PEACE AMIDST
THE TURMOIL, FOR NOW.

ALLOW ME TO
APPROACH GRIEF
ON MY OWN TERMS,
WON'T YOU?



AT 38, ALFRED DAY PAYNE WAS
A POOR FARM BOY, LONG SINCE
MADE GOOD. A FORMER SUPER-
INTENDENT OF SCHOOLS IN A
NEIGHBORING TOWN AND OF
LATE A CANDIDATE FOR POTTER
COUNTY JUDGE, PAYNE HAD WON
MANY POWERFUL FRIENDS AND
ADMIRERS WITH HIS COMMAND-
ING PERSONALITY AND HIS
PIERCING INTELLECT. HE ALSO
HAD COMPLAINED OF HAVING
RECEIVED ANONYMOUS THREATS.
● CHIEF DETECTIVE M.M. SCOTT
LEARNED QUICKLY THAT PAYNE
HAD CARRIED ON A FLIRTATION
WITH A STENOGRAPHER ONCE
IN HIS EMPLOY, AND ALSO THAT
PAYNE HAD RECENTLY PURCH-
ASED A TOTAL OF \$18,000 IN
INSURANCE ON HIS WIFE AND SON
... \$17,000 OF THAT CARRYING
DOUBLE INDEMNITY IN CASE
OF ACCIDENTAL DEATH.
...●●●

THIS EVIDENCE SEEMED FAR
FROM DAMNING.

I HEARD SOME NEIGHBOR KIDS TALKING
TO JUNIOR ABOUT GETTING 'EM SOME
DYNAMITE TO BLOW UP, COME THE
FOURTH OF JULY... CAUTIONED 'EM
ABOUT IT, Y'KNOW...

...MAYBE THE LITTLE
BASTARDS HID SOME IN
OUR CAR...



"UNDOUBTEDLY TNT," DECLARED
THE FAMED EXPLOSIVES EXPERT
TEX THORNTON, "SET OFF BY A
PHOSPHOROUS DEVICE."
PAYNE AVERRED HE HAD MADE
ENEMIES IN COURT...

...BUT NO ONE BITTER
ENOUGH TO PLOT SUCH
A FIENDISH CRIME.



I COULD NOT ASSOCIATE EVEN AN
ENEMY WITH SO TERRIBLE AN
AFFAIR, BUT SOME CONCLUSIONS
ARE FORCED UPON US:

THE EXPLOSION WAS
MEANT FOR ME.



GENE HOWE, GENIAL AND POPULAR
PUBLISHER OF THE LOCAL DAILIES,
LEAPT TO PAYNE'S DEFENSE AS THE
RUMORS MOUNTED OUTSIDE PAYNE'S
CIRCLE OF INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS. TO
HOWE'S POSTED REWARD OF \$500
FOR THE NABBIN' OF THE KILLER,
PAYNE QUICKLY ADDED \$5,000.

"GOSSIP-MONGERING WILL SOLVE
NOTHING," OLD TACK SAYS
HERE, MISSUS.

TAINT GOSSIP
IF IT'S TRUE...
THAT PAYNE'S
TOO COLD T'BE
GRIEVIN'.



HOWE BILLED HIMSELF AS "OLD
TACK, THE TACTLESS TEXAN," AND
HEADED HIS NEWSPAPER COLUMN
WITH THE DECEPTIVELY GOOFY
USAGE OF THE HOLLYWOOD COM-
EDIAN BEN TURPIN. MEETING
WITH PAYNE OVER A MONTH AFTER
THE TRAGEDY, HOWE SENSED
A SUBCURRENT OF MENACE IN
THE LAWYER'S FACILE URGENCY.

IF YOU PLUNGE
IN, GENE, AND
PRINT EVERYTHING,
I WILL BE
VINDICATED.



HOWE, THOUGH UNNERVED BY THE INSTINCTIVE FLASH OF INSIGHT, PROMISED PAYNE HE WOULD DELIVER THE JOURNALISTIC "WORKS." THEN, ONCE AGAIN ALONE...



GET ME THE K.C. STAR, ALTA MAE.

WHILE HOWE AWAITED THE RESULT OF HIS PHONE CALL THE NEXT DAY, THE POLICE REPRIMANDED PAYNE FOR HAVING SOLD THE WRECKAGE OF THE CAR TO A JUNK DEALER WHO HAD TOWED IT OUT OF STATE. HOWE CALLED UPON PAYNE'S ELDER DAUGHTER, 13-YEAR-OLD LADELL.



YOU'RE A THOUSAND PER CENT FOR YOUR FATHER, AREN'T YOU?

THE GIRL BURST INTO TEARS — THEN ICILY REGAINED CONTROL.



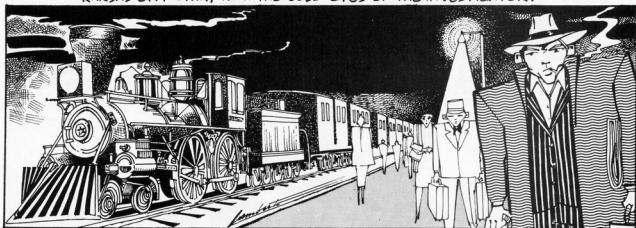
YOU MEAN, AM I SHIELDING MY FATHER?

IF I THOUGHT HE HAD DONE ANYTHING TO MY MOTHER — I'D TURN ON HIM IN AN INSTANT...

...NO, I CAN'T BELIEVE MY FATHER COULD FOOL ME.

ADAMANT IN SUPPORT OF HER FATHER, LADELL PAYNE FOUND RE-INFORCEMENT IN GLOWING APPRAISALS OF THE FAMILY'S STABILITY AND WARM CLOSENESS FROM HER TWO UNCLES FROM OUT-OF-TOWN, BROTHERS OF THE SUSPECTED LAWYER.

● THAT NIGHT, A.B. MACDONALD ARRIVED IN AMARILLO IN RESPONSE TO GENE HOWE'S SUMMONS. MACDONALD WAS A HARD-FACED MAN, A CRIME REPORTER FOR THE KANSAS CITY STAR, WITH THE COLD EYES OF THE INVESTIGATOR.



MACDONALD WASTED NO TIME IN TALKING WITH PAYNE.



I MUST KNOW ABOUT ALL THE WOMEN YOU KNOW — OR HAVE KNOWN.

WHEN PAYNE MENTIONED VERONA THOMPSON, HIS STENO OF A YEAR PREVIOUS, HIS TEMPO HASTENED. MACDONALD PRESSED TO HEAR A DESCRIPTION.



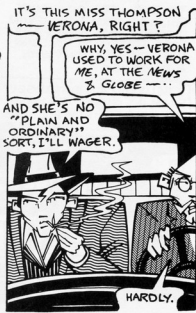
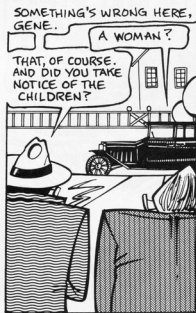
VERY PLAIN — ORDINARY. NO ONE WOULD LOOK TWICE AT HER.

SHE ISN'T ATTRACTIVE...

AS PAYNE LAUNCHED INTO KIND WORDS FOR HIS LATEST SECRETARY, MABEL BUSH, LADELL AND BOBBIE JEAN ENTERED WITH THEIR RECOVERING BROTHER. MACDONALD SIZED UP THE CHILDREN, THEN ABRUPTLY:



LET'S GO.



A VISIT WITH MABEL BUSH YIELDED A SAINTLIER CANDID DESCRIPTION OF PAYNE THAN MACDONALD CARED TO HEAR. THEIR NEXT STOP, VERONA THOMPSON'S APARTMENT.

HOWE'S PLEASANT MANNER PUT AT EASE IN MISS THOMPSON WHAT THE REPORTER'S BRUSQUE INTENSITY WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE AGITATED. MACDONALD, FEIGNING AN OFFICIAL CAPACITY, OPENED WITH A BLUFF:

AT FIRST HESITANT, THE WOMAN ACKNOWLEDGED HER TRAVELS WITH PAYNE — THEN FREELY. SHE UNBURDENED HER MIND OF FEARS THAT THE LAWYER HAD DONE MURDER OUT OF LOVE FOR HER.



TWO DAYS LATER, ON AUGUST 5TH, 1930, VERONA THOMPSON DICTATED AND SIGNED A 12-PAGE STATEMENT CONCERNING HER RELATIONS WITH A. D. PAYNE:

SHE HAD MADE SEVERAL TRIES TO ESCAPE HIS AMOROUS DOMINATION, AT A TIME WHEN THE DEPRESSION HAD MADE IT DIFFICULT TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT.

FAT CHANCE. SO I QUIT—AGAIN, LAST APRIL. THEN, IN JUNE, HE TOLD ME HE WAS CANNING WHAT'S-HER-NAME? —MABEL—AND WOULD I HIRE BACK ON. I AGREED TO GO OUT ON A PICNIC WITH HIM, THAT WAS A SUNDAY.

I BELIEVED HIM ESTRANGED FROM HIS WIFE ... HE WAS THE WILDEST LOVER I HAVE EVER KNOWN...

HE GOT ME BACK ---TO WORK FOR HIM, Y'KNOW ---WITH A HIKE IN PAY. THAT, AND A PROMISE HE'D NIX IT WITH THE ...
...WITH THE SEX, Y'KNOW?

LESS THAN A WEEK LATER, HIS WIFE GOT BLOWN UP.



AUTHORITIES WHO ATTENDED THE GIVING OF THE STATEMENT AGREED IT NECESSARY THAT THE SUSPECT BE CAUGHT UNAWARES. AN ARREST WAS ORDERED WITHOUT WARRANT.



JUST A MOMENT --THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEONE AT THE DOOR.



ALFRED D. PAYNE?

YES... what--?

OFFICER JOHN SNIDER, SIR. YOU'RE UNDER ARREST.

and your warrant--?



I AM THE WARRANT, SIR.

PAYNE WAS LOCKED IN WHAT THE POLICE CALLED THEIR "STRONGBOK"—AN UNFURNISHED CLOSET OF IRON WITH NO LIGHT AND SCARCELY A BREATH OF AIR. A SEARCH OF HIS CLOTHING, IN THE MEANTIME, REVEALED DAMNING EVIDENCE. SCRAPS OF FALSIFIED "CLUES," AN OUTLINE OF A PROSPECTIVE DEFENSE, DOCUMENTS OF INDEBTEDNESS —THESE POINTED TOWARD A COMMUNITY'S PLUNGE INTO THE MADNESS OF A CREATURE THAT HAD THRIVED AMONGST ORDINARY FOLK.



ALSO IN PAYNE'S POSSESSION THERE WAS A LEGAL FORM THAT THE AUTHORITIES FOUND PARTICULARLY INFURIATING:

...and, as a result, we consider it only fair to make the following statement:

Every piece of evidence, clue, report or rumor that ... would tend in any way to implicate Mr. A.D. Payne has been thoroughly investigated and traced to the end, and we have found no evidence whatever against Mr. Payne. On the contrary we find overwhelming evidence of the most congenial and devoted relationship existing between Mr. Payne and his family and of his clean, upright reputation throughout his history.

However, the fatal blast is still a mystery and we are working on every possible clue and will continue to do everything within our power to bring to justice the guilty party in this most horrible crime.

BENEATH THESE WORDS — PAYNE'S WORDS — HAD BEEN LEFT BLANK SPACES FOR THE SIGNATURES OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE, THE MAYOR, THE SHERIFF, AND A CONSTABLE.

A CONFRONTATION WAS FORCED UPON PAYNE.

MISS THOMPSON HAS TOLD ALL. HAVE YOU A STATEMENT?



THE LAWYER'S FACE TOOK ON A JAUNDICED HUE THAT WOULD REMAIN THROUGHOUT THE ORDEAL.

I have no statement.

DID YOU PROMISE MISS THOMPSON YOU'D TAKE HER TO SOUTH AMERICA?

no.

WHAT??

WHY, A.D., YOU DID? YOU.....

I HAVE NO STATEMENT.

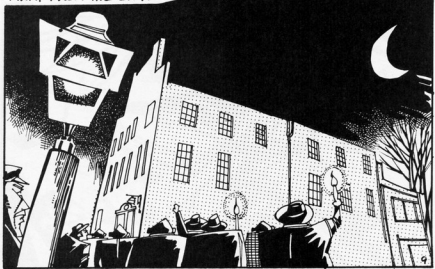


AS TEMPER FLARED, SEVERAL AGITATED POLICEMEN BURST IN.

GET THIS MAN OUT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!



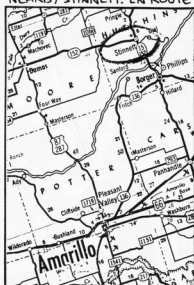
"IT'S ALL UP AND DOWN POLK STREET THAT WE'VE GOT PAYNE!" SHOUTED A PATROLMAN. "THERE'LL BE A MOB HERE BEFORE LONG! GET HIM AWAY FROM THE CITY!"



THE BEST-FORTIFIED JAIL IN TEXAS' PANHANDLE TERRITORY WAS SITUATED ATOP THE COURTHOUSE IN NEARBY STINNETT. EN ROUTE THERE — AS A COVER STORY WAS PASSED TO DISTRACT PROSPECTIVE

PARTICIPANTS IN A LYNCHING — PAYNE MADE BUT ONE UTTERANCE:

I AM INNOCENT, BUT I HAD MADE ALL ARRANGEMENTS TO COMMIT SUICIDE.



CORNELL WOOLRICH, THE PULP-MAGAZINE FICTIONEER OF THE 'THIRTIES WHOSE PORTRAYALS OF INTIMIDATING POLICE TACTICS OFTEN WERE DISMISSED AS EXAGGERATIONS, MIGHT HAVE FOUND HIS VIEW ACCURATELY REFLECTED IN THE INQUISITION VISITED ON PAYNE DURING THE NEXT 24 HOURS. AT

LAST:



I REALIZE IT IS THE HOT CHAIR FOR ME...

...AND THE SOONER, THE BETTER.



I WOULD BE SHOWN NO MERCY EVEN IF I WERE INSANE, BUT I AM NOT. I KNOW WHAT I WAS DOING.

I'M JUST MEAN, AND NOT CRAZY.



MY CONFESSION WILL STARTLE THE WORLD. IT WILL BE SO TERRIBLE THAT THE MAN WHO TAKES IT DOWN WILL NEED A STIMULANT.



"HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE LOOK IN THE EYES OF A TRAPPED RAT?" WROTE THE JOURNALIST CALVIN N. MELTON FOLLOWING A JAILHOUSE INTERVIEW WITH PAYNE. "IT WAS ALL OF THAT — ONLY MUCH MORE MALIGN."



MELTON'S ACCOUNT CONTINUED: "THERE COULD BE SEEN THAT DEADLY CONCENTRATION OF THE MENTAL FACULTIES WHICH NORMAL PEOPLE DO NOT POSSESS ~~~ THAT SOMETHING WHICH LEADS US TO DESIGNATE OTHER PEOPLE AS 'QUEER' EVEN THOUGH THEIR INTELLIGENCE MAY BE ABOVE NORMAL. FOR A MOMENT THE EYES WERE SEA-GREEN, SHINING LIKE SOME ANIMAL'S ...



"AS REALIZATION CAME TO PAYNE THAT MY GLANCE HAD MET AND WAS HOLDING HIS, THE EYELIDS DROOPED. WHEN THEY LIFTED, THE EYES WERE AGAIN LIMPID BLUE, WEARY AND DISILLUSIONED."



THE EYES WERE AGAIN LIMPID BLUE, WEARY AND DISILLUSIONED."



APART FROM A SILENT, TEARFUL REUNION WITH ONE OF HIS BROTHERS, PAYNE SPENT THE PERIOD OF FORMAL CONFESSION TALKING INCESSANTLY, SOMETIMES LAUGHING HEARTILY. HE INTERRUPTED TO READ AND SIGN EACH OF THE 55 PAGES ~~~ ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE DOCUMENTS IN THE ANNALS OF CRIME.

I AM THE MOST FIENDISH INDIVIDUAL THAT EVER PLAYED A PART IN THE REALMS OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE.



BEYOND THE MELODRAMATIC INDULGENCE OF THAT PREFACE, THERE LAY A LITANY OF UNRELENTING DESTRUCTIVE MADNESS.



FINANCIAL STRESS, HE SAID, LED HIM AT FIRST TO COMMIT EMBEZZLEMENT AND FORGERY ~~~ THEN TO PLAN SUICIDE.

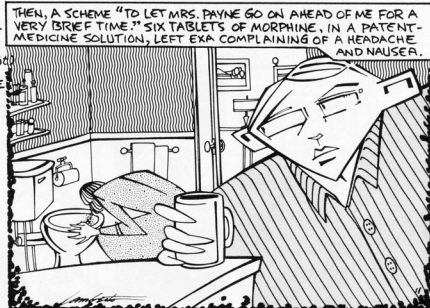


THIS, HE AMENDED WITH A PLOT TO HAVE EXA JOIN HIM IN DEATH.

AFTER FIVE HOURS AND 15 MINUTES OF UNRELIEVED (HE THOUGHT) GASSING, PAYNE REMAINED WIDE-AWAKE WHILE THE WIFE SLUMBERED ON, PEACEFULLY.



THEN, A SCHEME "TO LET MRS. PAYNE GO ON AHEAD OF ME FOR A VERY BRIEF TIME." SIX TABLETS OF MORPHINE, IN A PATENT-MEDICINE SOLUTION, LEFT EXA COMPLAINING OF A HEADACHE AND NAUSEA.



HIS SHOTGUN-IN-THE-CLOSET TRAP LEFT EXA WITH A FLESH WOUND IN ONE HAND. PAYNE MANAGED HURRIEDLY TO DISPOSE OF THE TRIGGERING DEVICE ~~~~ ALTHOUGH HE FEARED THAT HIS SON HAD NOTICED IT.



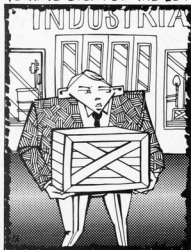
I HAVE PARTICULARLY A SORT OF DUAL PERSONALITY...

NOBODY HAS ANY MORE HEARTLESS, REMORSELESS, DETERMINED DISPOSITION THAN I WHEN THE WORSE SELF IS PREDOMINATING.

THEN I DETERMINED TO INCLUDE THE BOY IN MY PLANS. MY OWN TRAITS ARE EVIDENT IN HIM... I FEARED HE WOULD GROW INTO A DANGEROUS CHARACTER.



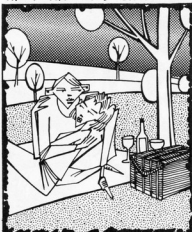
HE SPOKE OF INSANITY AMONG HIS MALE ANCESTORS. HE VOICED REGRET THAT A.D., JNR., HAD SUFFERED WITHOUT DYING. HE TOLD OF HIS TRIP TO A TOWN 50 MILES NORTHWARD TO PURCHASE DYNAMITE, BLASTING CAPS, AND A LENGTH OF FUSE. HE QUIZZED EACH PERSON ATTENDING HIS CONFESSION AS TO HOW THE BOMB MIGHT HAVE BEEN DEvised ~~~~ AND HE SEEMED PLEASED TO HAVE STUMPED THE LOT OF THEM.



NO, SIR ~~~ YOU'LL NEVER MAKE THE GRADE AS A MAD BOMBER!



PAYNE INSISTED HIS PURSUIT OF VERONICA THOMPSON HAD NO BEARING HERE AND RAILED AGAINST THE KANSAS CITY REPORTER, MACDONALD, FOR HAVING BROUGHT HIM DOWN WITH SO CHEAP A SHOT.



HIS FORMER PARTNER, LAWYER JAMES CADE, VISITED TO CHART AN INSANITY PLEA. SWORN TO SECRECY BY PAYNE, CADE LEFT WITHOUT PAYNE FOR A CLIENT, AND VISIBLY SHAKEN.



HIS CHATTERS, HE SAID, HE HAD TAKEN PAINS TO SPARE.



SURELY THEY WILL BECOME IDEAL WOMEN...
...LIKE THEIR MOTHER.

I PRAY MY SON'S FORGIVENESS THAT HE WAS NOT RELIEVED...



... FROM WHAT IS INEVITABLY IN STORE FOR HIM.

"THEY WILL NEVER SEND ME TO THE CHAIR, OR TO AN ASYLUM," DECLARED PAYNE. HE ASKED FOR CERTAIN OF HIS BOOKS, INCLUDING A BIBLE AND A SLENDER VOLUME OF POEMS CONTAINING *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* BY OSCAR WILDE.



IN THE AMARILLO GLOBE, GENE HOWE DENOUNCED PAYNE AS "THE BLACKEST OF LIARS," AND REMARKED THE CONFESSION AS BOGUS EVIDENCE OF INSANITY: "A PIECE OF RIDICULOSITY... AN INFAMOUS DOCUMENT STRAIGHT FROM THE DEPTHS OF HELL. THERE IS NO HEAVEN FOR ANYONE... IF THERE IS NO HELL FOR A.D. PAYNE." THIS, IN A LESS COMPLICATED AGE FOR BOTH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JOURNALISM, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY SUSPECTED A TRICK WHEN PAYNE DEMANDED:



I WANT DEATH AS QUICKLY AS THE LAW ALLOWS.



●PAYNE DEMANDED THAT GENE HOWE AND A.B. MACDONALD MUST ATTEND HIS EXECUTION...
YOU'LL BE MORE SCARED THAN I WILL!



●MACDONALD ADVISED PAYNE TO SHOULDER THE BLAME FOR...
... FOR BESTOWING PEACE AMIDST THE TURMOIL?
JUUVUUL
7 NO SIR!
3 A N F C

RETURNED TO AMARILLO, AT THE POTTER COUNTY JAIL, PAYNE TOLD OF HIS "VISITS" FROM HIS WIFE -- SINCE HER DEATH. EXA HAD MATERIALIZED IN A MANGLED CONDITION, HE SAID -- THEN SHE HAD VANISHED AND RETURNED, UNBLEMISHED, TO HOLD HIM ALL THE NIGHT LONG.



● THEN PAYNE SUGGESTED TO A FELLOW INMATE THAT HE HAD "SOMETHING" HIDDEN IN HIS TROUSERS.



IN A LETTER, PAYNE PROPOSED THAT "EXA AND I EACH NOW PREFER A SINGLE PLAIN TOMBSTONE... WITH THIS PLAIN INSCRIPTION..."



"GOODBYE, EVERYBODY," PAYNE WROTE ON THE FINAL PAGE OF A DIARY. "I HOPE TO SEE YOU BEYOND THE RIVER."



YOU NOTICE I FINISH MY DIARY IN /N/K...
...PAYNE CALLED TO A CELLMATE.



SOON AFTER MIDNIGHT, AUGUST 30TH, 1930, PAYNE ORDERED:



YOU BOYS CLEAR OUT. I WANT TO TAKE CHARGE OF THIS CELL.

GIVE ME A CIGARETTE, WON'T YOU?

NO SOONER HAD HIS CELLMATES COMMENCED TO LEAVE, THAN...



PAYNE'S HEIDIOUS SMUGGLING, ONCE DOCUMENTED, PROVED A FITTING EMBARRASSMENT TO THE AUTHORITIES.

FUNERAL GOERS FOUND THEMSELVES MOVED TO TEARS AT SIGHT OF THE PLACID VISAGE AS PAYNE'S BODY LAY IN STATE. THE CHILDREN WERE SEPARATED AND TAKEN BY VARIOUS RELATIVES.



PAYNE WAS BURIED ELSEWHERE THAN BY EXA'S SIDE—AFTER HER KIN OBJECTED TO HIS INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERMENT. LAWYER CADE NOW BROKE HIS OATH OF SECRECY AS TO WHAT PAYNE HAD TOLD:



I DON'T CARE TO LIVE, KNOWING DURING MY BETTER MOMENTS WHAT I AM LIKE, MOST OF THE TIME.

*No need to
waste
the foolish tear,
Or heave
the weary sigh:*

*The man had
killed
the thing he
loved,*

*And so
he had to die.*

—Oscar Wilde:
*The Ballad of
Reading Gaol*

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- ☐ **APRIL 1983** / Guido Crepax, Kaluta, and Moebius

- ☐ **JUNE 1983** / Corben, and Crepax
- ☐ **JULY 1983** / Gaetano Liberatore's "Ranxerox" premieres!
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- ☐ **NOVEMBER 1983** / Interview with Will Eisner, and Crepax's "Valentina"
- ☐ **DECEMBER 1983** / "Ranxerox" 's Liberatore interviewed
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- ☐ **APRIL 1985** / Eighth anniversary issue! Moreno, Corben, and Swarte
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- ☐ **JULY 1985** / George Miller interviewed, Olivia, and Sesar
- ☐ **AUGUST 1985** / Frank Frazetta interviewed, Juan Gimenez, and Torres
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HM0192

AN
UNPLEASANT
TALE...

EAT AT ED'S

by BOB
FINGERMAN
©1991

WELL, I, FOR ONE, AM
AS HUNGRY AS MOTHERFUCK,
AND I WANT SOMETHING
TO EAT!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT,
GODDAMNIT... WE'LL
GO TO ED'S AND GRAB
A MEAL THERE!

YEAH, MAN...
ALL THIS VIOLENCE
WE GET UP TO IS
HUNGRY WORK...
I'M FAMISHED!



HEY, NO
COMPLAINING! THIS
GUY WAS A WAY COOL
CONQUEST... HE DID
IT ALL... BEGGED FOR
HIS LIFE, GAVE UP HIS
CASH AND BLED LIKE
A PIG! HA HA HA

I
HEAR
YA,
AMIGO!

HAW!

SO, TROOPS
WHAT ARE WE IN
THE MOOD
FOR?

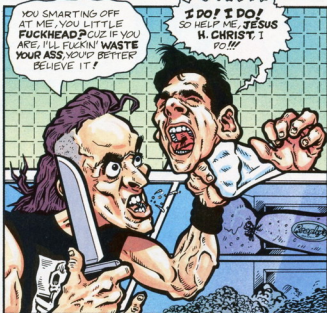
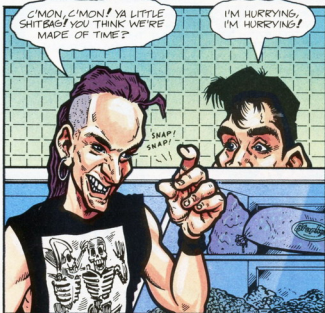
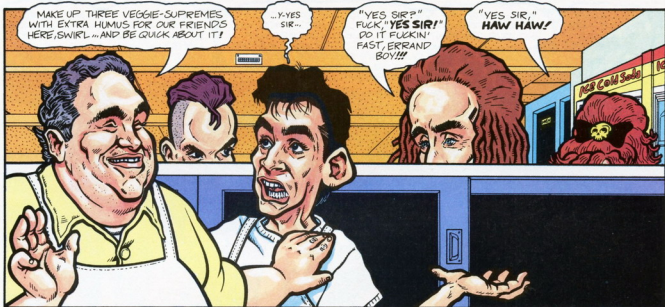
VEGGIE-
BURGERS
WITH
HUMUS!

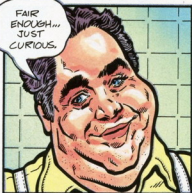
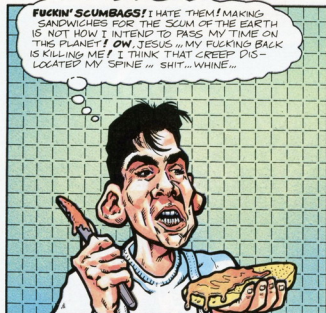
YEAH...
WHO WANTS MEAT
AFTER KILLING SOME
USELESS SCUMBAG...
IT'S KINDA
REDUNDANT
ISN'T IT?

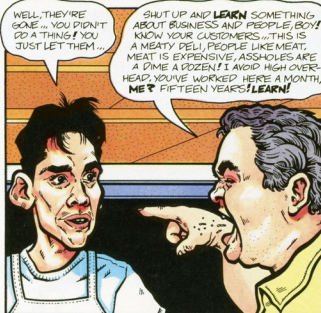
AMEN,
BROTHER!

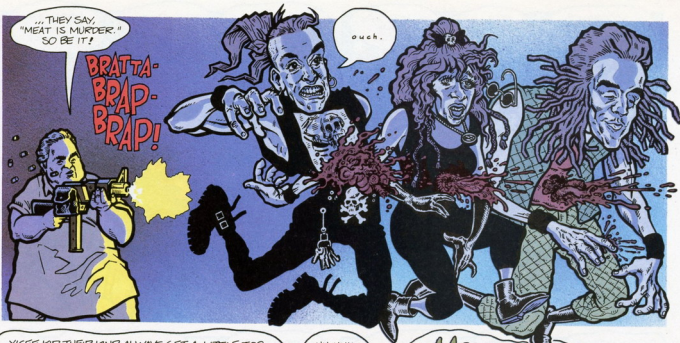








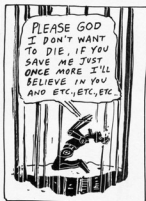




Y'SEE, KID, THEIR KIND ALWAYS GET A LITTLE TOO BIG FOR THEIR BRITCHES AND GET OVERLY FRISKY! BAD MANNERS AND LANGUAGE ARE ONE THING... ARMED ROBBERY IS ANOTHER! NOW, HELP ME CARRY THEIR CARCASSES BACK TO THE DELI ... AND DON'T YOU LOSE ANY! THIS SHOULD BE GOOD STUFF! VEGETARIANS COOK CLEANER THAN CARNIVORES. THIS IS QUALITY MEAT. Y'SEE, LOW OVERHEAD! WASTE NOT, etc., etc., etc., OH, AND HOSE DOWN THE SIDEWALK WHEN YOU'RE DONE. IT'S A REFLECTION ON MY BUSINESS IF IT'S MESSY.



IT'S NOT THEM, IT'S THE



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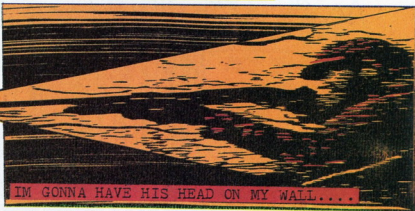
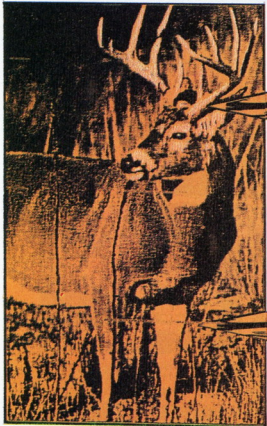
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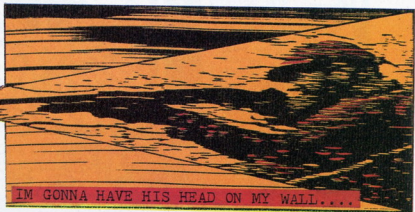
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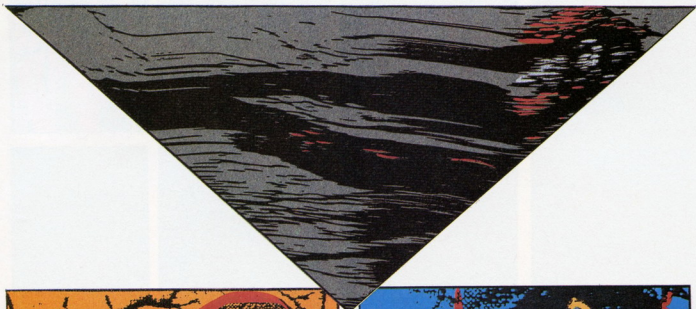


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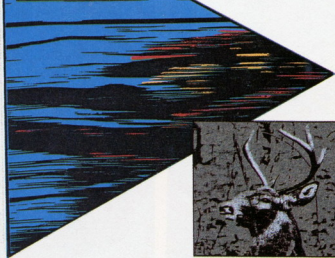


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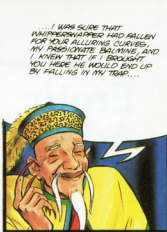
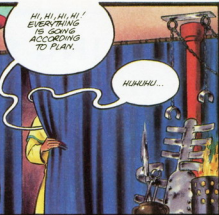
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BOSS! I JUST FOUND OUR LEADING MAN!...

BUT SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT...

!



OKAY, DON'T PANIC! THE SITUATION IS MERELY OUT OF CONTROL...

HEY GUYS, GET A LOAD OF THIS!

...AND WHAT IF IT WAS BECAUSE...



DAUL! YOU'VE FOUND ME AT LAST!

YES, BALMINE! FROM NOW ON, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!



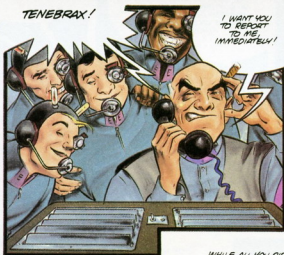
HI, HI, HI... YOU'RE STILL AS CONFIDENT AND AS ARROGANT AS BEFORE, NO FLEETFOOT! A LITTLE WHILE AGO YOU WERE ALSO SURE YOU HAD KILLED DEEF-NOSE WITH A BULLET THROUGH HIS HEAD...



LOOK AT THIS, BOSS!

WHAT?

...TELL ME I'M DREAMING!



TENEBRAX!

I WANT YOU TO REPORT TO ME IMMEDIATELY!



RIGHT AWAY, BOSS!

OUCH, OUCH!



WHILE ALL YOU DID WAS BLOW A FEW CIRCUITS IN THIS DELICATE MECHANICAL TOY...

BONG!

SEE FOR YOURSELF!

SCROUNCH!

TUER
DECHQUETER
TRONCHNER
VIOLE
CHOCOLOT



...BUT I AM NOT A MACHINE. I AM A MAN, MR. FLEETFOOT.

JUST LOOK AT WHAT YOU AND YOUR BOSSES HAVE REDUCED ME TO: A GROTESQUE PUNY-DRESSED UP AS A TORTURER...



DO YOU REMEMBER HOW MANY TIMES I ASKED YOU TO GIVE ME ANOTHER ROLE WHEN YOU WERE AN INSPECTOR ON THE SERIES??

TO LEAVE, FOR ONCE, MY FADGICAL ROLE AS A BLOODTHIRSTY CHINESE AND TO LET MY TRUE, ROMANTIC SELF COME OUT!!! ...TO PLAY ON THE AUDIENCE'S HEARTSTRINGS IN MY MOST DELICATE YET PASSIONATE MUSIC...



"IMPOSSIBLE" YOU SAID WE HAD TO FOLLOW THE SCRIPT.

I WAS TO BE WANG HO, THE BLOOD-THIRSTY CHINESE GANGSTER FORGIVER...

HA, HA HA...

SOMEONE WHO FOLLOWED A STEREOTYPE, SUPERFICIAL AND OBSCURIOUS IN ORDER TO FEED THE MINDS OF PURITANICAL WESTERNERS...



... RULES WHICH DISGUISED THE REAL HUMAN BEING, WITH HIS FAULTS AND HIS HIDDEN WOUNDS...



WHOSE TENDER EMOTIONS OVERFLOWED ON THE DAWN OF A BEAUTIFUL DAY, OR WHEN BEING A BUTTERFLY... I'VE WRITTEN SOME LOVELY POEMS ON BUTTERFLIES...



... IF YOU REALLY INSIST I COULD READ SOME OF THEM TO YOU...

ZZZZZZ



FLEETFOOT!

WHAT'S UP?



DURING 215 EPISODES I HAD TO PUT UP WITH YOUR CIVILISM! I'VE ACCUMULATED AN UNENDING RESERVEMENT AGAINST YOU!...

CHANGING THE SCRIPT WAS "IMPOSSIBLE?" BUT YOU DID IT, DIDN'T YOU?



FOR THIS GIRL, YOU BROKE ALL THE RULES TO SAVE HER! YOU WERE SATISFIED TO LEAVE ME AND MY EXCEPTIONAL SENSITIVITY MARQUET-ADINS AS A THIRD RATE GANGSTER, SURROUNDED BY BRUTES....

BUT YOU WERE EAGER TO SAVE THIS VULGAR LITTLE GUTTER-SNAPE!



I WILL NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR THIS HUMILIATION, FLEETFOOT... SO HERE IS THE TREATMENT I'VE RESERVED FOR THE FIFTH-FLOOR LACKEYS....

NIHINI!



THIS IS THE WAY YOU SEE THE CHINESE PEOPLE, DON'T YOU?

YOU AND YOUR ADMINISTRATION ARE REPRESENTING THE WORLD AS A HANDFUL OF LEADENY MEN. YOUR HEADS, SURROUNDED BY CONQUERING INDIANS, STUNNED BLANKS WHO CANNOT PRODUCE THEIR 'R'S AND DRY, EVIL CHINESE.





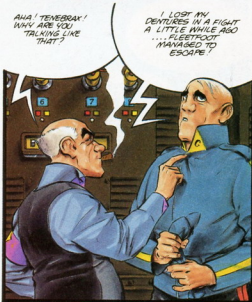
HEY, LOOK AT THAT!

BOSS! I JUST SAW A SCENE FROM "LOTUS" ... THE "SONS OF THE DRAGON" HAVE COME IN OUT OF CUE... THE PLOT IS COMPLETELY SORROWED UP!



IN THE NAME OF...

COMMANDER IN CHIEF TENEBRAY REPORTING, BOSS.



ANA! TENEBRAY! WHY ARE YOU TALKING LIKE THAT?

I LOST MY DENTURES IN A FIGHT A LITTLE WHILE AGO ... FLEETFOOT MANAGED TO ESCAPE!

FLEETFOOT? SO THAT'S WHAT'S GOING ON...

TRY TO DO SOMETHINGS YOU BLUNDERING IDIOT! TAKE YOUR MEN, GO TO THE LOTUS' AND BRING HIM BACK HEARD, DEAD OR ALIVE!

HEM... I WILL TAKE FRANCINE MY ADJUTANT WITH ME SHE IS AN EXPERT IN MATTERS OF TACT AND PSYCHOLOGY...

AND DO ME A FAVOR FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER SET OF TEETH!



OKAY, BOSS!



THANK YOU AGAIN!

HERE, YOU CAN FIND HIM AT THIS ADDRESS!

YES, YES, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WE SHOULD BE RECEIVING A LEADING PARTY FROM YOU...



ALL RIGHT BUT YOU MUST SIGN A RELEASE. I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE LATER ON...



SORRY, WANG...

HIHUKU?

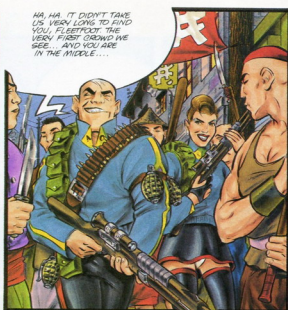
...WE'LL LISTEN TO YOUR POINTS ABOUT BUTTERFLIES SOME OTHER TIME...

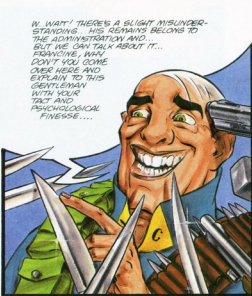
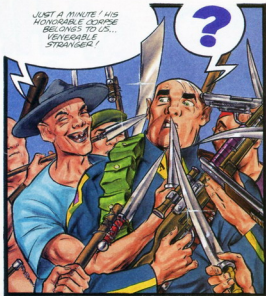
WE CLIMBED DOWN THE FIRE ESCAPE. IT SEEMED TO ME WE HAD BEEN THROUGH THIS SCENE TOGETHER BEFORE.....

BUT THIS TIME I WASN'T GOING TO LET HER GO!

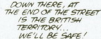
SHE WAS AS LOVELY AS THE MORNING DEW... SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN AS LOVELY AS A SLICED SALAMI, HAD OUR FRIEND WANG HAD HIS WAY!







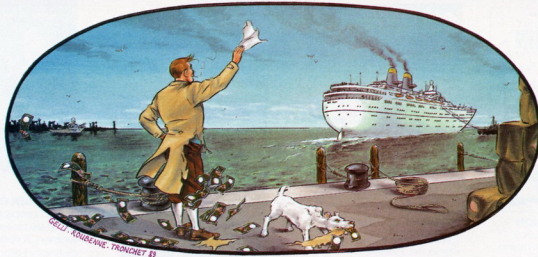
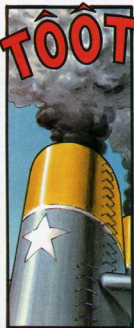






BAUMINE! NOW WE'LL NEVER HAVE TO LEAVE EACH OTHER AGAIN! WE HAVE SO MUCH TO SEE IN THIS UNIVERSE! INHA! THE TEMPLES OF TIBET, THE TEMPLES OF THE INCAS....





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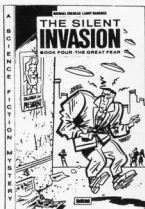
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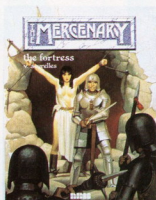
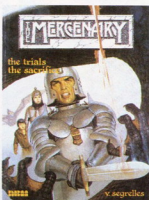
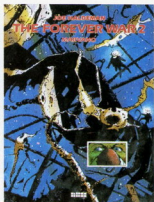
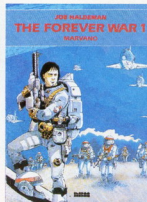
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DICK DIRT

by **MARK MARTIN**

<p>GOOD MORNING, MISS HOTPANTZ! I HAVE A LIST OF PROJECTS FOR YOU TO COMPLETE TODAY, PLEASE!</p>	<p>I PRIORITIZED THE LIST, WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT THING BEING NUMBER ONE, K & PETERA.</p> <p>DICK, YOU FORGOT ONE THING!</p>	<p>I DIDN'T GET MY CHRISTMAS BONUS THIS YEAR, WE HEE!</p>	<p>OF COURSE YOU DID, MISS HOTPANTZ! I'M SORRY IT WASN'T BIGGER, BUT YOU KNOW HOW OUR CASH FLOW HAS BEEN.</p>	<p>I WISH IT COULD'VE BEEN BIGGER - I APPRECIATE YOUR FINE WORK, BUT I ALSO HAD TO BE REALISTIC!</p> <p>OH DICK, YOU BIG SILLY!</p>	<p>I'M SURE THE BONUS I'M TALKING ABOUT WILL BE SUFFICIENTLY - BIG!</p>
<p>I'M SORRY I DON'T GET ABOUT THE BONUS YOUR DIRT, MISS HOTPANTZ!</p>	<p>I'M TALKING ABOUT THE ONE THAT'S STILL IN YOUR DRAWERS!</p> <p>MISS HOTPANTZ!</p>	<p>PLEASE REFRAIN FROM TOUCHING ME, MISS HOTPANTZ! THAT KIND OF FAMILIARITY IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO AN EFFICIENT WORK ENVIRONMENT.</p>	<p>BUT-- BUT--</p>	<p>BESIDES, I'M A HAPPILY MARRIED MAN, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME NOW, I'M GOING TO RETURN THIS PHONE CALL FROM MY WIFE!</p>	<p>HELLO, DEAR... YES, OF COURSE I REMEMBERED TO MAIL THE CAR PAYMENT! I WISH YOU WOULDN'T CALL HERE JUST TO NAG ME ABOUT--</p>
<p>1-2-3-4 -5-6-7 -8-9-10!</p>	<p>I'M SORRY HONEY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO BLOW UP AT YOU. IT'S JUST THAT I'VE HAD AN INCIDENT WITH MISS HOTPANTZ THIS MORNING.</p>	<p>HOW'S THAT?</p> <p>--NO, REALLY, I'D RATHER NOT ELABORATE. LET'S NOT GOSSIP.</p>	<p>DICK! GET YOUR ROD OUT! AND MAKE SURE IT'S LOADED!</p> <p>I'LL CALL YOU BACK.</p>	<p>MISS HOTPANTZ! YOUR GUN! IF YOU INSIST ON THIS WAY, I MUST--</p> <p>DICK! GET YOUR GUN!</p>	<p>YOUR GUN! YOUR PISTOL, ON THIS WAY, I MUST--</p>
<p>MY GUN?</p> <p>YES! YOUR GUN! THERE'S A MAN OUT FRONT AND HE'S HOSTILE!</p>	<p>DON'T BE DRAMATIC! WHATEVER THIS MAN'S PROBLEM IS, I'M SURE WE CAN DISCUSS IT LIKE MATURE ADULTS!</p>	<p>YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?</p> <p>I MIGHT ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION!</p>	<p>I HIRED YOU TO ACT OUT A MATURE FANTASY! YOU'RE ACTING LIKE A TEENAGER! I COUNTED TO TEN BEFORE I LOST MY TEMPER!</p>	<p>NO OFFENSE TO MISS HOTPANTZ, BUT SHE'S THE ONE ACTING LIKE A TEENAGER IN HEAT!</p> <p>THANK YOU! GIGGLE!</p>	<p>THANK YOU! GIGGLE!</p>
<p>EXACTLY! MAYBE YOU DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND THE "MATURE READERS" GENRE-- IT'S A BIT OF A MISNOMER, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO WHIS WHISPR WHISPR WHIS WHISPR WHIS</p>	<p>MY WHAT?</p>	<p>RIGHT HERE? RIGHT HERE IN FRONT OF EVERYBODY?</p> <p>WHS WHS</p>	<p>OF COURSE! ROBERT CRUMB DOES IT ALL THE TIME! THEY SAY WE GET LOTS OF HOT BABES THAT WAY!</p> <p>WELL, GOOD FOR HIM! IF I DID THAT, ALL I'D GET IS A NASTY LETTER FROM MY MOTHER!</p> <p>WHY WERE YOU DOING IT AND NOT ROBERT CRUMB?</p>	<p>PERHAPS A SUGGESTION OF EROTIC ACTIVITY--</p> <p>ABSOLUTELY NOT!</p>	<p>ABSOLUTELY NOT!</p>
<p>ABSOLUTELY? NOT!</p>	<p>OKAY OKAY! WE COULD GO FOR EXTREME VIOLENCE! YOU GET YOUR GUN AND--</p> <p>NO!</p>	<p>I'M A CONSCIENTIOUS DIRECTOR! BESIDES, MY CONTRACT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT HAZARDOUS DUTY! YOU'LL HAVE TO COUGH UP SOME BIG BUCKS, IF--</p> <p>NOW WHAT?</p>	<p>NEVER MIND! UN-- SCRATCH THAT! HEY! WE'RE OVER BUDGET AS IT IS!</p> <p>THIS ISN'T WORKING OUT IS IT?</p>	<p>NONSENSE! WE STILL HAVE SCARTOLOGICAL HUMOR TO WORK WITH!</p> <p>SCAT-- WHO?</p>	<p>SCAT-- WHO?</p>
<p>SCATOLOGY! YOU KNOW, WHS WHS WHS WHISPR WHS WHS</p>	<p>NO, REALLY! IT'S A VERY ESTABLISHED, GUT-REACTION KIND OF HUMOR. SOME PEOPLE EVEN FIND IT SEXUALLY STIMULATING!</p>	<p>IT'S TRUE! I THINK I HAVE SOME PHOTOS IN MY FOLDER!</p>	<p>SEE!</p>	<p>BEAUTIFUL! GO, MAN, GO! NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEWHERE!</p> <p>BLEACH! RETCH! HWOP!!</p>	<p>BLEACH! RETCH! HWOP!!</p>

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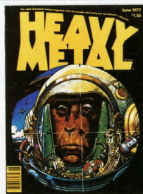
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