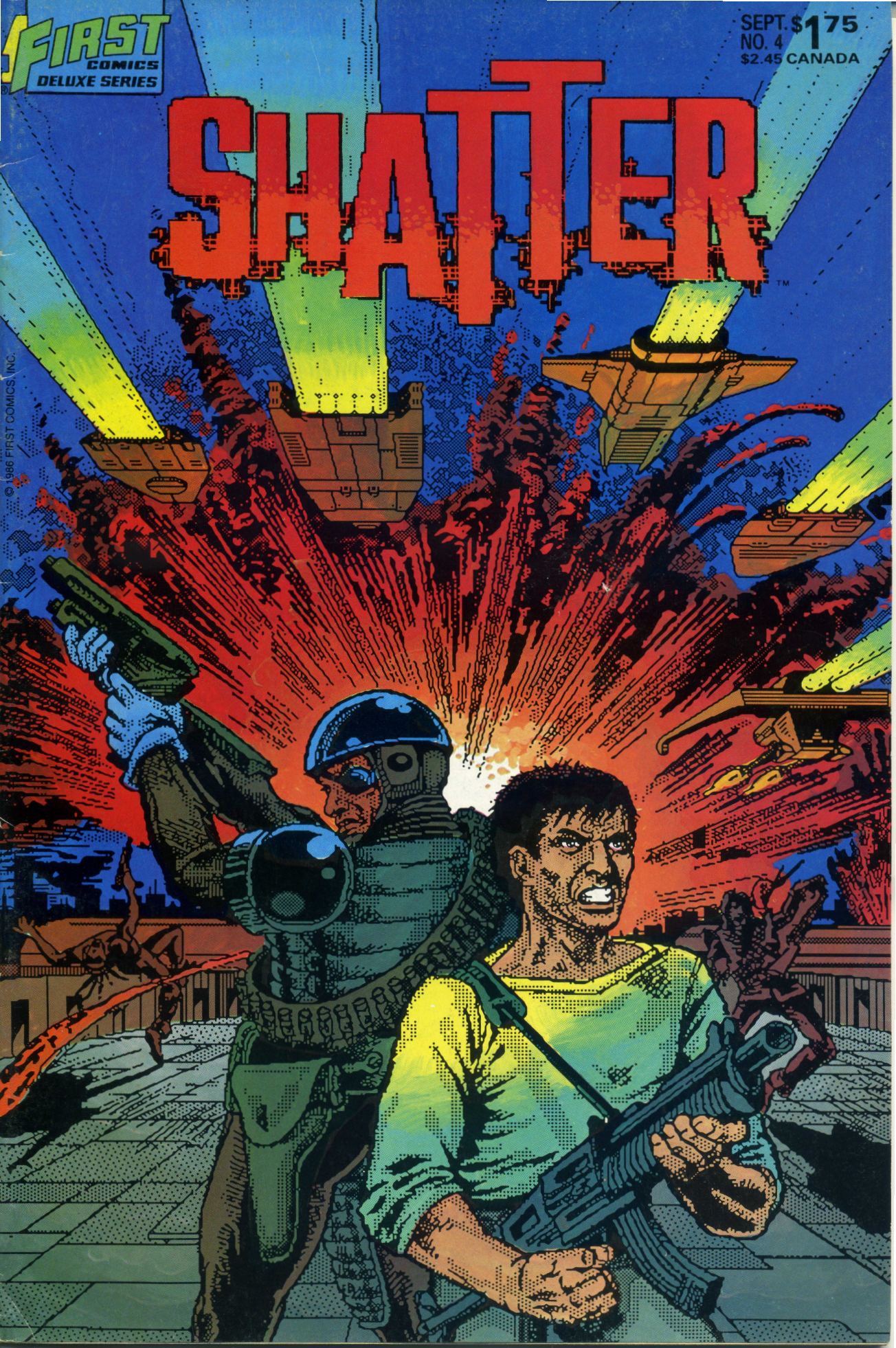


FIRST
COMICS
DELUXE SERIES

SEPT. \$1.75
NO. 4
\$2.45 CANADA

SHATTER

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SHATTER™

1/2 FIRST COMICS 435 N. LA SALLE ST., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

HOW THE HECK DO THEY DO THAT?

How do you draw a comic book -- or anything else for that matter -- on a computer? It's very simple. There are just three basic rules:

1) You should know how to draw already. If you don't, the computer won't help much -- unless your problem is straight lines, assorted geometric shapes, and copy (the stuff that goes in the word balloons), in which case the computer can save you oodles of time and aggravation.

2) You should be prepared to spend a lot of time losing material, particularly those especially good pictures that took you so long to create and that you're really quite proud of. Computers eat this kind of stuff for breakfast, and there's really nothing you can do about it until you learn about the "Save" and "Back-up" commands.

3) You should not feel intimidated by impossibly complex, sophisticated machinery that you can never hope to understand, even if you went to college and studied electronics and computer science for ten years or until you die of a cerebral hemorrhage, whichever comes first. But don't let that bother you. I drive to work every morning, and I have yet to grasp the meaning of "electronic ignition." All I know for sure is the electromagnetic pulse from a single nuclear device detonated in the upper reaches of the stratosphere will fry both my car's ignition system and my computer's memory, rendering them both utterly useless for the next 10 million years or until the next industrial revolution, whichever comes first.

What does all this have to do with drawing comics? Not much, but it's been on my mind lately.

Anyway, if you can draw, are very patient, and know absolutely nothing about computers, you're on the right track. The co-creator and original artist of this book, **Michael Saenz**, knew almost nothing about the *Apple Macintosh* when he first sat down and started using it to make pictures which evolved into comics.

I use the Mac everyday, and I've forgotten everything I thought I knew about computers since I bought the thing. And can I draw pictures with it? No, of course not. I couldn't draw before, either.

This is all very interesting; but what does it tell us about drawing comics on a computer? Not much. In fact, virtually nothing whatsoever. So what? Did you actually think I was going to divulge vital trade secrets right here on the letters page? Yes? Well, okay. But you have to promise not to tell.

The process behind **Shatter** has changed somewhat since its inception;

but the end product (with the exception of color) is still entirely contained in computer files on "micro-floppy" disks. You don't need a microscope to see them, and they don't flop. They just call them that because someone in marketing thought the name had a catchy ring to it.

First, we find someone who can draw. In this case, **Steve Erwin**. Steve does the pencilling the old-fashioned way -- on paper. The pencil art is then run through a digitizing scanner which translates the art into computer images. If certain images or backgrounds repeat in various panels, Steve just makes a notation for our "electronic inker," **Bob Dienethal** to use the computer to copy and repeat the images in the specified places. If he wants a certain pattern used for a shading effect, he just tells Bob which pattern to select from the computer memory.

Bob's job doesn't end there. He goes through every page, enhancing images, adding detail to backgrounds, putting in highlights and shadows. A lot like a regular comics inker, except his "pen" is a Macintosh computer.

After Bob enhances the computerized art, he gives it to me for lettering. Now I'm one of those guys with an illegible signature and handwriting that is easily mistaken for a secret code utilized by UFO aliens descended from hideous slime creatures without opposed thumbs. So if **Steven Grant** or **Peter Gillis** sneak in a tricky sound effect like "flick," we could land in serious trouble -- if not for the fact that the lettering is also computerized, and I can brazenly crank out one

FLICK!

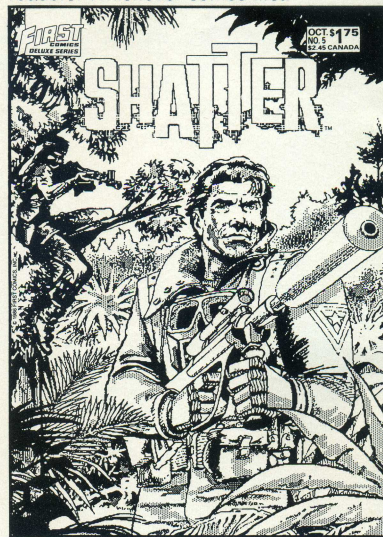
after another, all over the artwork, until they change their minds and promise never to do it again! Then I send it all back to Bob on those cute little 3 1/2" disks which are almost completely idiot-proof and were designed to withstand the most grueling punishment... which means I can send them in the U.S. mail.

Finally, Bob runs off the "final" black-and-white art on the *Apple LaserWriter*, sends it back to us, we shoot film and send the film to **Les Dorscheid** for coloring. Les sends the color work back to us, we pack it all up and zip it off to the color separator. The separator uses a laser scanner to separate out the three primary colors -- red, blue, and yellow -- and produce final film for the printer. The printer prints it; the distributor distributes it; the retailer sells it; and you buy it. Theoretically.

If you didn't actually buy this comic, you've just ruined the whole chain and upset an extremely delicate ecosystem! And if you don't go out right now and

buy numerous First Comics, don't blame me if hideous slime creatures descend on your house like termites in heat and exact a terrible revenge!

Well that was fun, wasn't it? Next issue we'll discuss the future of comics like **Shatter** in the post-nuclear, post-human era. Or print letters from you, the readers. Whichever comes first.



NEXT ISSUE: Co-creator **Peter Gillis** returns and takes **Shatter** to... Vietnam? "The Third World War," by **Peter B. Gillis, Steve Erwin**, and **Bob Dienethal**.

-- Rick Oliver

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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

The EXECUTARIAT
sends me to inves-
tigate improprieties
at SSJ --

-- Only to find you
ARTIST
UNDERGROUNDERS here.

What FOR?

The files on SSJ's RNA PROJECT, perhaps?

YELL?!

Go to --

ARRRGH!

Don't speak out of
TURN, Roger.

NO!
STOP it!



Give me an
INCENTIVE,
Ms. KILE.

Talk.



N-not... not
until you
stop
HURTING
him.



Done.
You may
continue.

It's CYAN you
want, not us.



She wants to be an
ARTIST. Somehow
she took over SSJ.

She wants RNA! SSJ
learned TALENT is
stored in RNA -- and
can be TRANSFERRED
through INJECTIONS.

Except you have to
REMOVE the BRAIN to
EXTRACT the RNA.
But the talent won't
STICK...

So you haven't
read the files.

Neither has
SHE, obviously.



Or she'd
KNOW --

Hello?

Found another one,
Mr. MACH. But this
one BELONGS here.

CAROLYN KUHL, SSJ
Public Relations.

You're
looking for
Cyan?



She's looking
for a man...

"...a man named..."

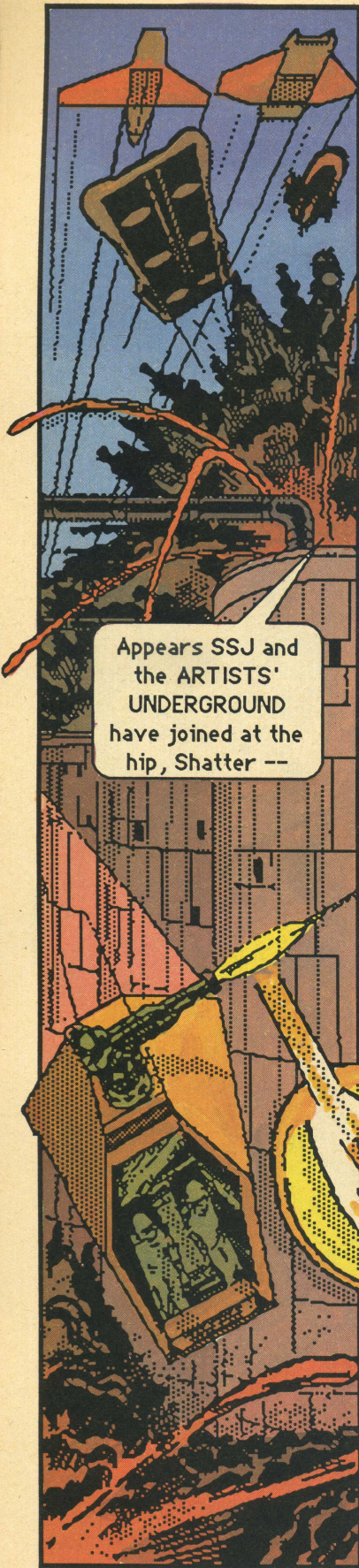
SHATTER™

"That's what they call me.
We're all FRIENDS here --
except for whoever's doing the
BOMBING and SHOOTING..."

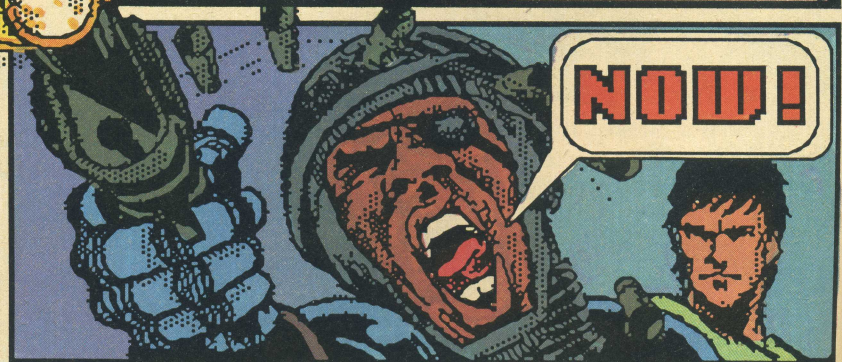
"Lately I've been pegged as the
perfect RNA RECIPIENT -- talent
stays with me FOREVER --

"-- which makes me the
perfect DONOR, as well."

Mind telling me
what's going on,
UNRATH?



Appears SSJ and the ARTISTS' UNDERGROUND have joined at the hip, Shatter --



That's the
SIGNAL!

Let the BUG
BOMBS fly!

THAK!

SPAK!

"Nothing more than a nuisance, really.
Unless they hit your flyers."

QUICK! Shake
them off,
before --

FOOM!

DAMN!

Emergency landing
procedure. STAT!

THOOM!

SKREERT

"Bug bombs. Robot roaches
that attach to machines and
shut them down."

"Or if you're around
when the bombs go OFF."



We're out of control!

Drop the PACKAGE to safety!

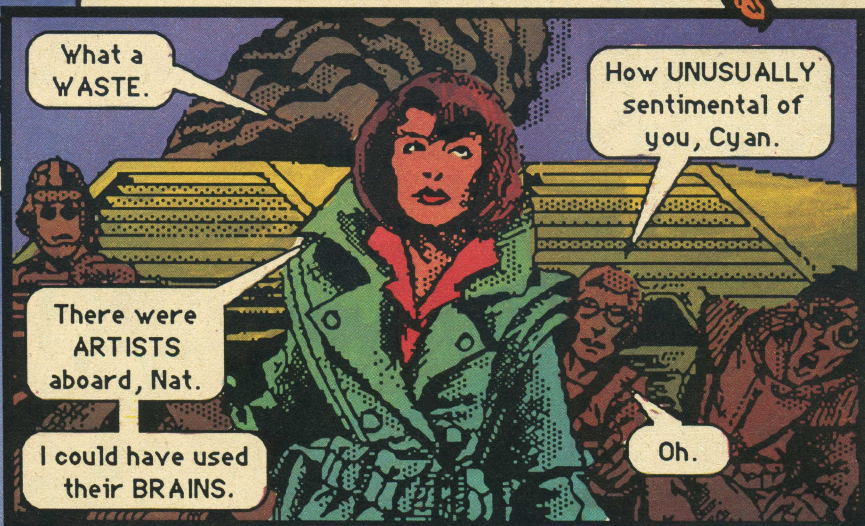
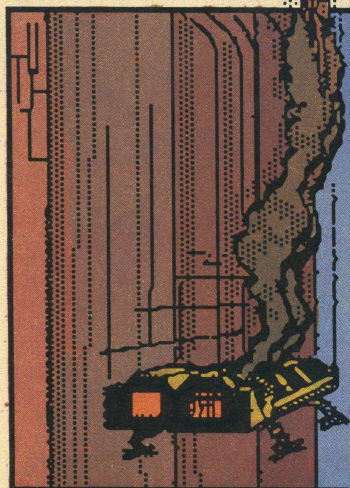


Try to MANEUVER!

Look out for the --



Woom!



What a WASTE.

How UNUSUALLY sentimental of you, Cyan.

There were ARTISTS aboard, Nat.

I could have used their BRAINS.

Oh.



Now we're STRANDED here -- with THEM!

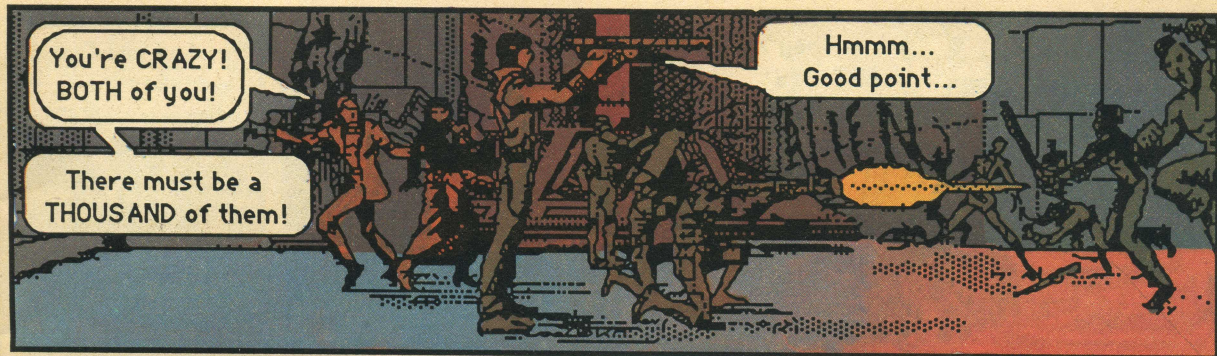
THOSE nobodies?



There's an ANTIDOTE for the Alien Nation...

Don't TALK, Danton!

SHOOT!



You're CRAZY!
BOTH of you!

There must be a
THOUSAND of them!

Hmmm...
Good point...



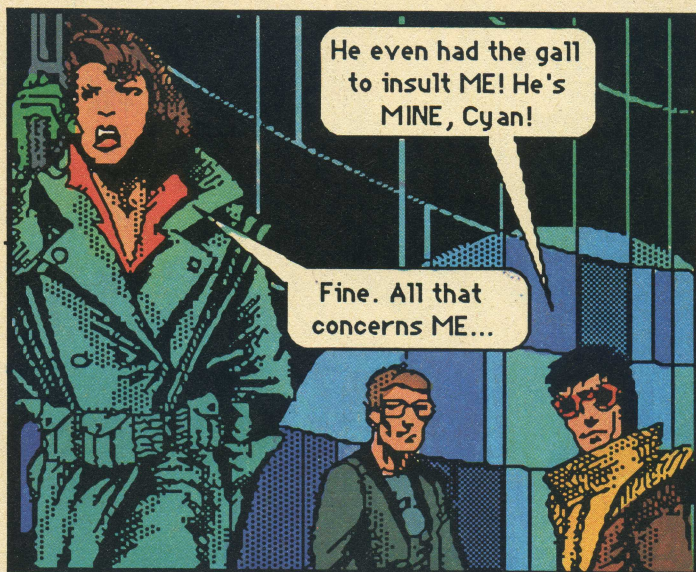
Look at them!

They even SLAY
artlessly!



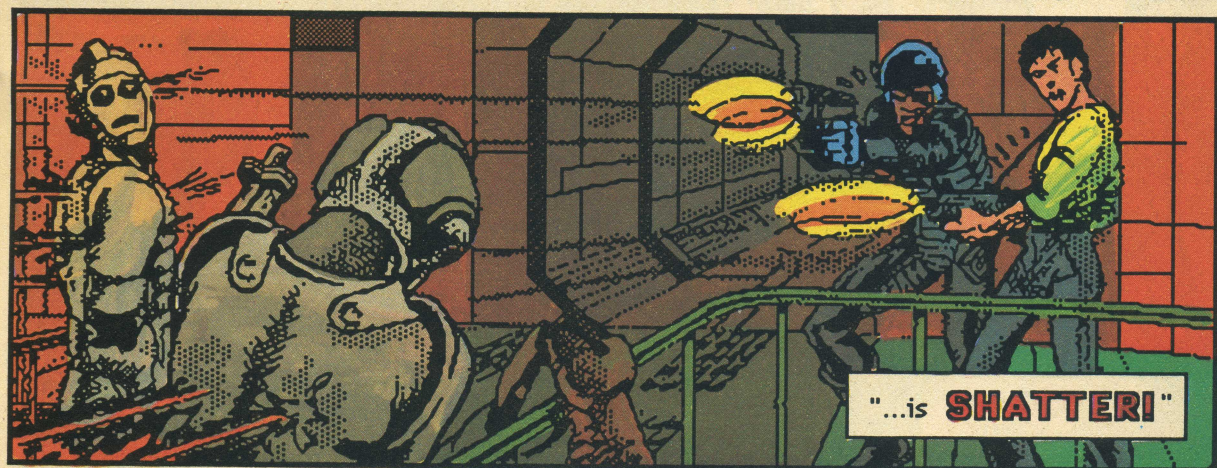
It's the fault of
their oafish
leader, UNRATH.

No talent.
No taste.

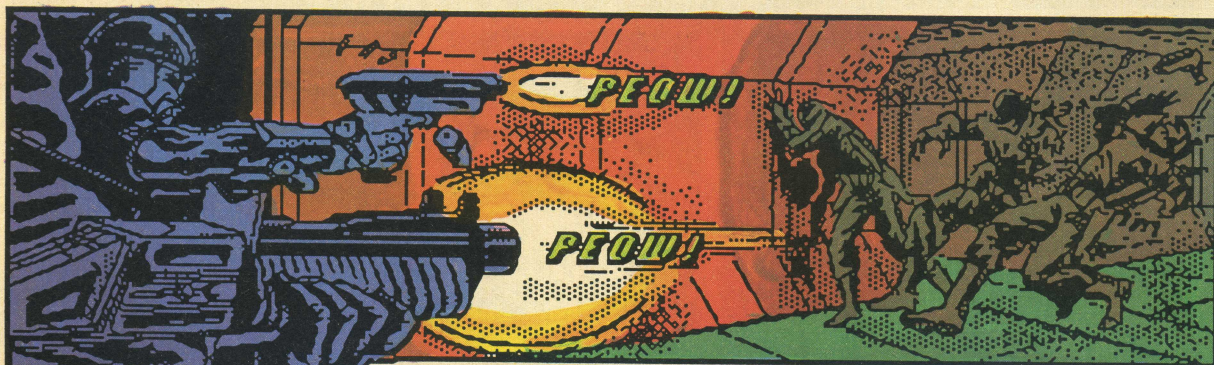


He even had the gall
to insult ME! He's
MINE, Cyan!

Fine. All that
concerns ME...



"...is **SHATTER!**"







IN-INFORMATION.

CYAN took over
SSJ somehow.

HUH?! I left
her in JAIL...



Old news. And some guy
named DANTON bumped
Nat as head of AU.

He and Cyan
BOTH want
your brain.

...Still,
taking on
the **WHOLE**
Alien
Nation...



It's
SUICIDE,
man.

Don't you
SEE?

They can't
smash YOU --



-- But they can
smash the
RAVENSWOOD
TANKS!

With their
HOMELAND gone,
the Alien Nation...

...would
cease...

...to
EXIST!

FIRST NOTES

THE REAL ALTERNATIVE

In the Executive Forum in *The Comics Journal* #105, **Dave Sim** -- whose work on *Cerebus* I greatly admire -- indicated that he felt First Comics has been cleverly masquerading as an "alternative" or "independent" comics publisher while, in reality, we have been running a real *business* behind the scenes! This startling revelation came shortly after another of the "alternative" publishers accused one of the major direct distributors of making a *profit* on comics!

Well, I don't mind telling you I was so stunned by these heinous allegations that I almost drove my Mercedes-Benz into a ditch after hearing the news on my cellular phone. It was enough to ruin my three martini, filet mignon lunch! God forbid we should ever run our company like a business! Heaven forbid that anybody outside New York should make a profit on comics!

But dropping the sarcastic tone for just a minute (I don't think I can hold out much longer than that), the truth is we have always disliked the terms "alter-

native" and "independent" because in the comics industry they seem to be synonyms for "sporadic," "erratic," "unpredictable," and "unreliable." Not terms associated with longevity in the business community. And we'd like to think we'll be around a long time.

We'd also like to think we'll do more than just survive. It's always been our goal to be the first comics publisher to really give the big guys a run for their money -- and to give people a *real* alternative. That's why we publish comics like **American Flagg!**, **Badger**, **Shatter**, and **Grimjack**. That's why we'll continue to publish comics like these as long as there are talented people to produce them and discerning readers to buy them.

Dave Sim's comments apparently stemmed from our continuation of **AF!** despite **Howard Chaykin's** departure from the book. Howard brought Reuben Flagg, Raul, Luther, and the Plex to life. It'll never be the same without him. But just because it's *different* doesn't mean it's not *good*. **Steven Grant** and **Mark Badger** bring their own creative energies to **AF!**, tempered by a respect for

Chaykin's original.

Bill Reinhold is the third artist to draw the **Badger**, and, in my opinion, the book's never looked better. **Timothy Truman** is a great admirer of **Tom Sutton's** work, and Tom was one of his personal choices to draw **Grimjack** when Tim left the feature.

Cancelling a book simply because a member of the creative team departs doesn't give the readers any choice at all. It doesn't give them any "alternative." If the readers ultimately decide they don't like the "new look" of a book, then we'll cancel it. In other words, we let the readers decide. We give them a choice.

We're in the entertainment business. As long as we entertain you, the reader, we're doing our job right.

But it's an uphill struggle all the way, and we need your help. A couple months ago, I asked you to write in and tell us what you don't like about our comics, as well as what you like. Well, don't stop now! Keep those cards and letters coming in! You may already be a winner! (Whoops! I told you I couldn't hold out for very long.)

—Rick Oliver



FIRST IN APRIL

Nexus #23: Keith Giffen and Rick Bryant join Nexus, Judah, the Badger, and Nexus co-creator **Mike Baron** for a special 28 page issue recounting the further exploits of the terrible trio in the mysterious bowl-shaped world. Really! Honest! This time for sure!

Shatter #4: Shatter confronts Cyan, as Unrath and the Alien Nation take on the combined forces of SSJ and the Artists' Underground. By **Steven Grant**, **Steve Erwin**, and **Bob Dienethal**.

The Enchanted Apples of Oz: The first in a new series of original graphic novels based on characters and concepts from **L. Frank Baum's** famous Oz books. Story and art by **Eric Shanower**.



Grimjack #25: Cover by **Tom Sutton**. The concluding chapter of "Demon Blood," by **John Ostrander**, **Tom Sutton**, and **Paul Guinan**. Plus: Munden's Bar by **John Ostrander**, **Del Close**, and **Howard Bender**.

American Flagg! #32: Everyone's after Reuben's underground TV station as "That's Entertainment!" continues, by **Steven Grant**, **Mark Badger**, and **Randy Emberlin**. Plus: Bob Violence by **Steven Grant**, **Joe Staton**, and **Hilary Barta**.

Badger #14: Norbert takes on a master of Kung Fu to avenge... a snake? "Snake Bile Cognac," by **Mike Baron**, **Bill Reinhold**, **Rick Bryant**, and **John Nyberg**. Plus: Zoomtown by **Mike Baron**, **Ron Wagner**, and **Gary Martin**.

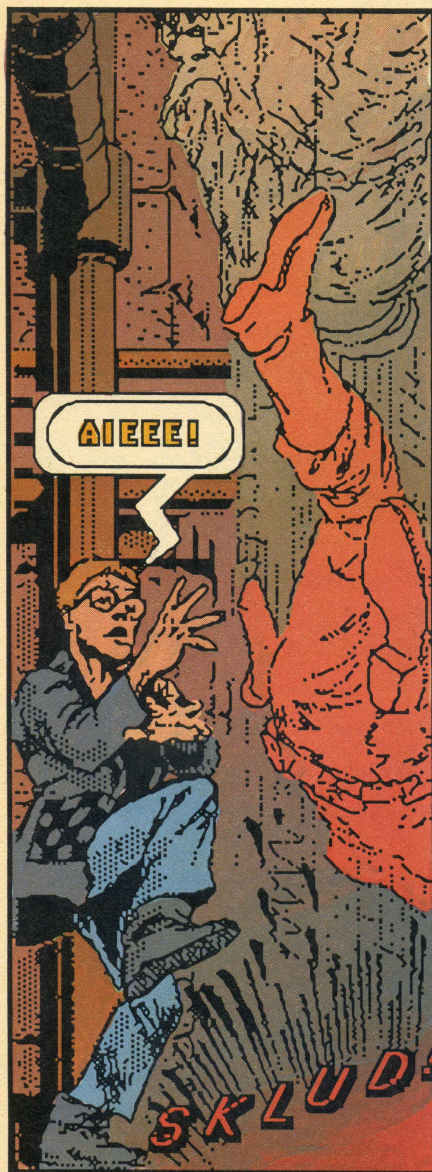


Jon Sable, Freelance #39: The concluding chapter to Sable's deadly return trip to Africa. Story and art by **Mike Grell**.

Whisper #2: Alexis uncovers the secret of Squadron 49; but the answer may prove fatal! "Datapanik in the Year Zero" continues, by **Steven Grant** and **Dell Barras**.

COMING NEXT MONTH

Elric of Melniboné: A 178-page First Graphic Novel re-printing in one volume the six-issue adaptation of *Elric of Melniboné*, the first novel in the Elric series, originally published by Pacific Comics. Adapted by **Roy Thomas, P. Craig Russell**, and **Michael T. Gilbert**. Full-color reproduction on high quality, coated paper, with the first two chapters completely recolored and a new cover by **Russell and Gilbert**.



AIEEE!

SKLUD!



What a
GUTLESS
wonder you
are!

Don't just
STAND there!
Take his GUN!

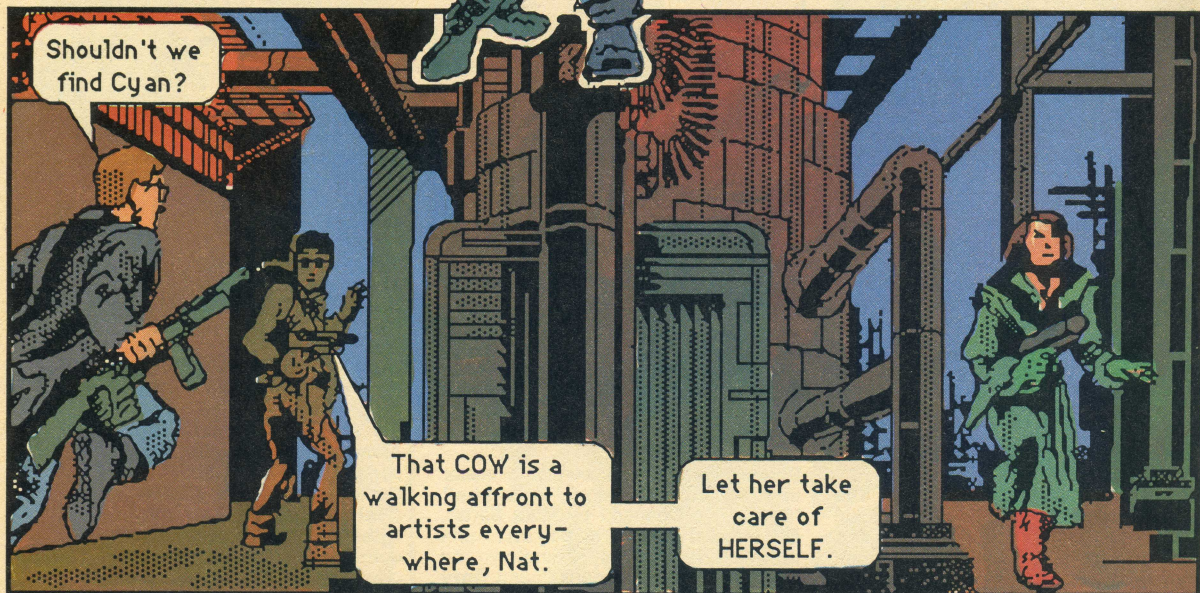
And keep UP!



WAIT!



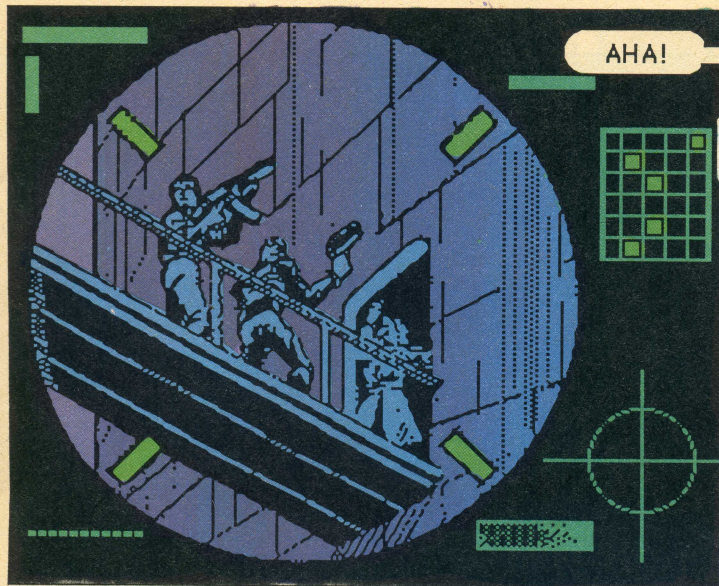
Don't LEAVE
me here!



Shouldn't we
find Cyan?

That COW is a
walking affront to
artists every-
where, Nat.

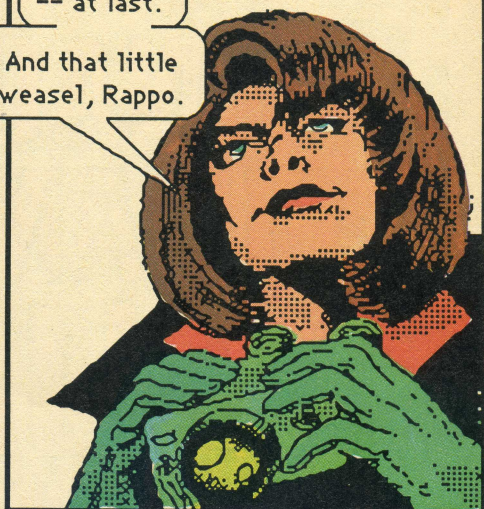
Let her take
care of
HERSELF.



AHA!

SHATTER
-- at last.

And that little
weasel, Rappo.



Good. I'd have to kill
Rappo eventually,
ANYWAY...



Mustn't have my
secrets LEAKING,
after all...

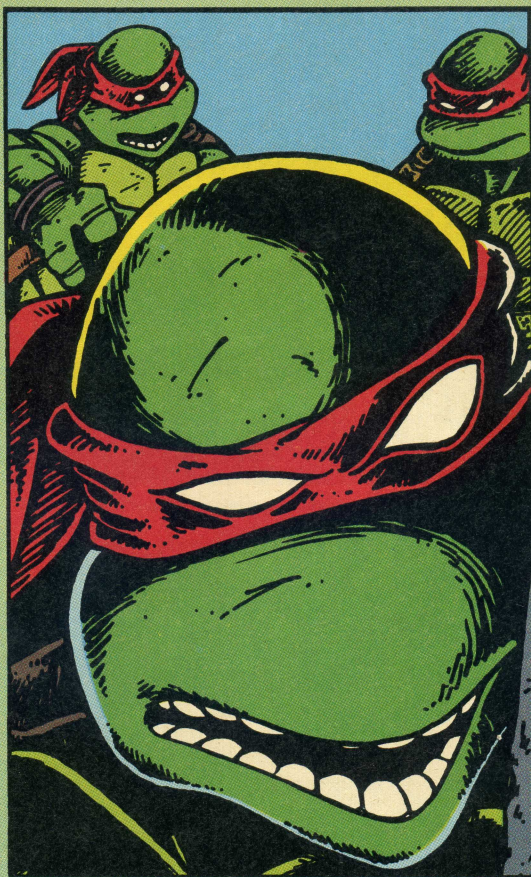


Looo-kin'
GOOD!



No...

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES™



IN COLOR!

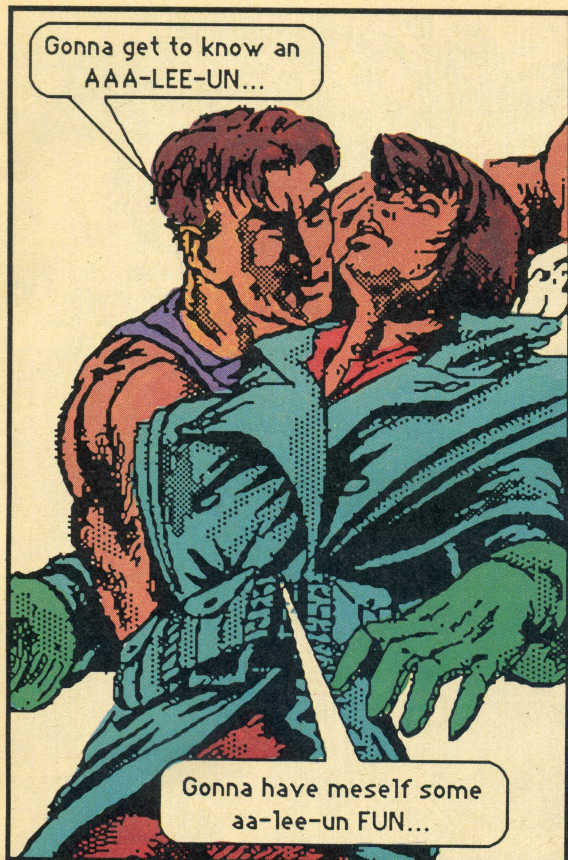
in
**grim
JACK** #26

**IN MUNDEN'S BAR!
BY EASTMAN & LAIRD!**



COMING IN MAY FROM **FIRST**
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Gonna get to know an
AAA-LEE-UN...

Gonna have meself some
aa-lee-un FUN...



Get...



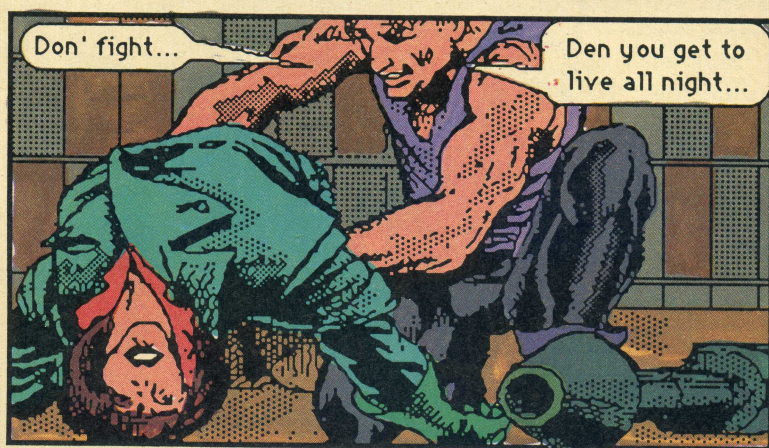
MMMMPH!

OW!



PASH!

Don' bite...

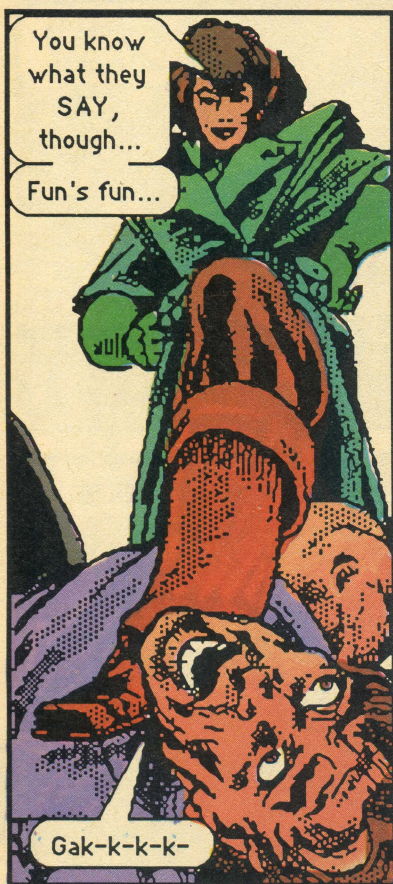
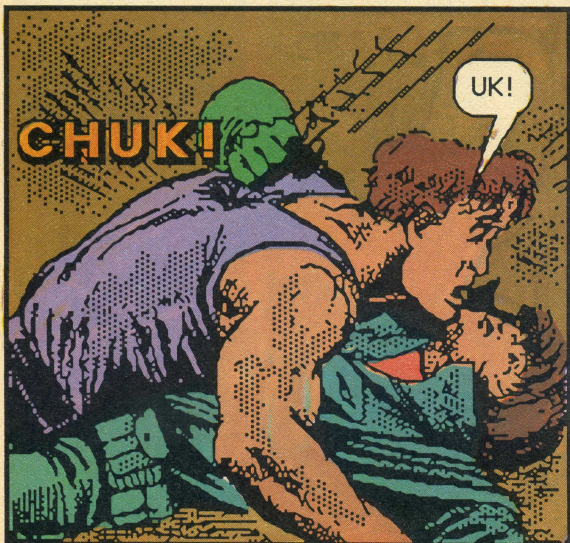
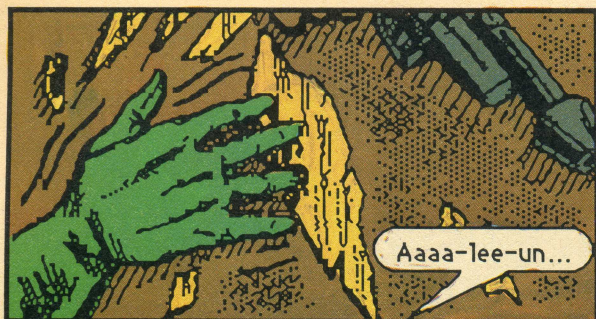


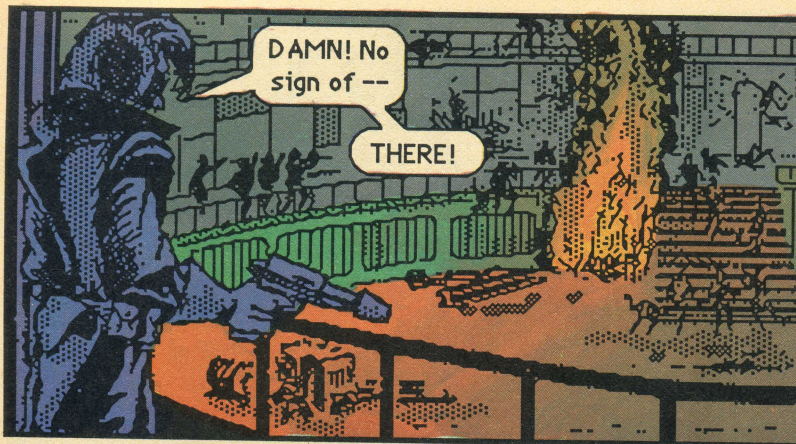
Don' fight...

Den you get to
live all night...



... 'til de alien's DONE.
Aaaa-lee-un.





DAMN! No sign of --

THERE!



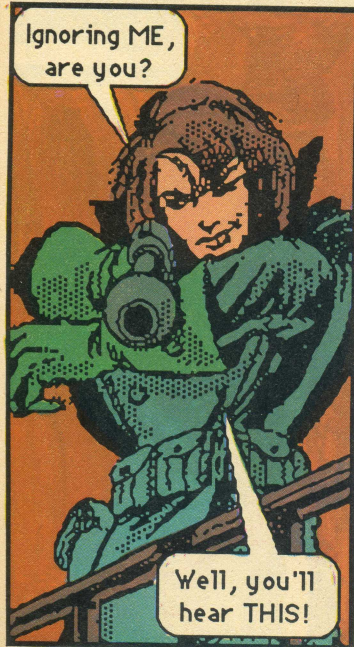
SHATTER!



PEOW!

PEOW!

BUDDA!
BUDDA!
BUDDA!



Ignoring ME,
are you?

Well, you'll
hear THIS!

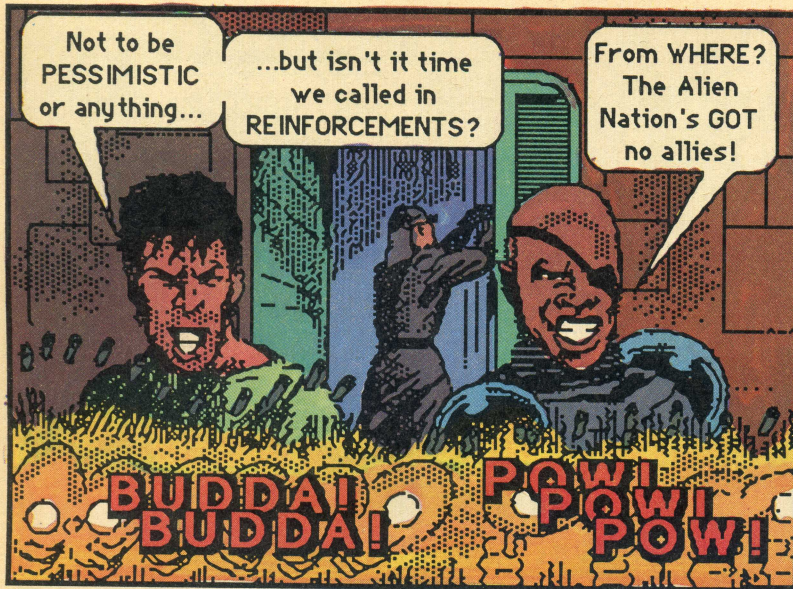


No.



I'll take you
ALIVE, Shatter.

And you'll
WISH I'd
killed you.



Did you MISS last month's issue?

Too bad! We're probably sold out by now. Maybe you can borrow a friend's copy and find out what happened.



If you had a **SUBSCRIPTION**, you'd never miss a single issue!

If you had a **SUBSCRIPTION**, every issue would come directly to your house! You wouldn't have to go out or anything!

If you had a **SUBSCRIPTION**, there'd be something in your mailbox besides depressing bills!

Now, if only you had a **SUBSCRIPTION COUPON** you could fill out and send in. Wait! What's that down there?

ONLY \$15 FOR 12 ISSUES

- ☐ AMERICAN FLAGG!
 - ☐ GRIMJACK
 - ☐ WHISPER
- (\$17 in Canada, \$32 foreign rate)

ONLY \$21 FOR 12 ISSUES

- ☐ BADGER
 - ☐ ELRIC
 - ☐ HAWKMOON
 - ☐ NEXUS
 - ☐ SABLE
 - ☐ SHATTER
- (\$23 in Canada, \$40 foreign rate)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

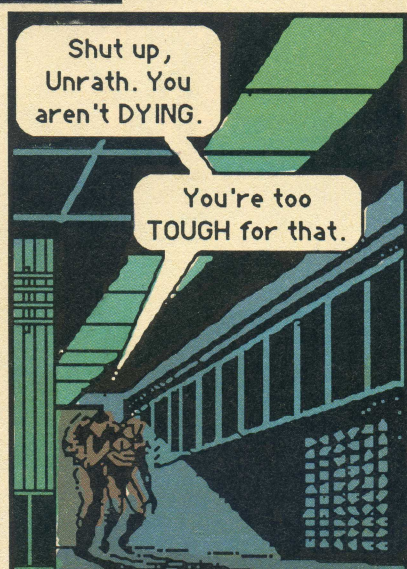
State _____ **Zip** _____

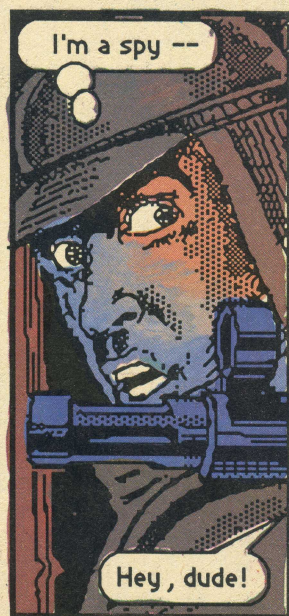
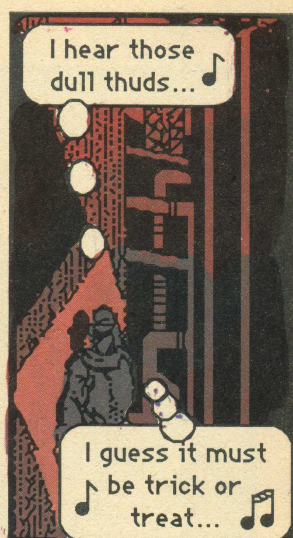
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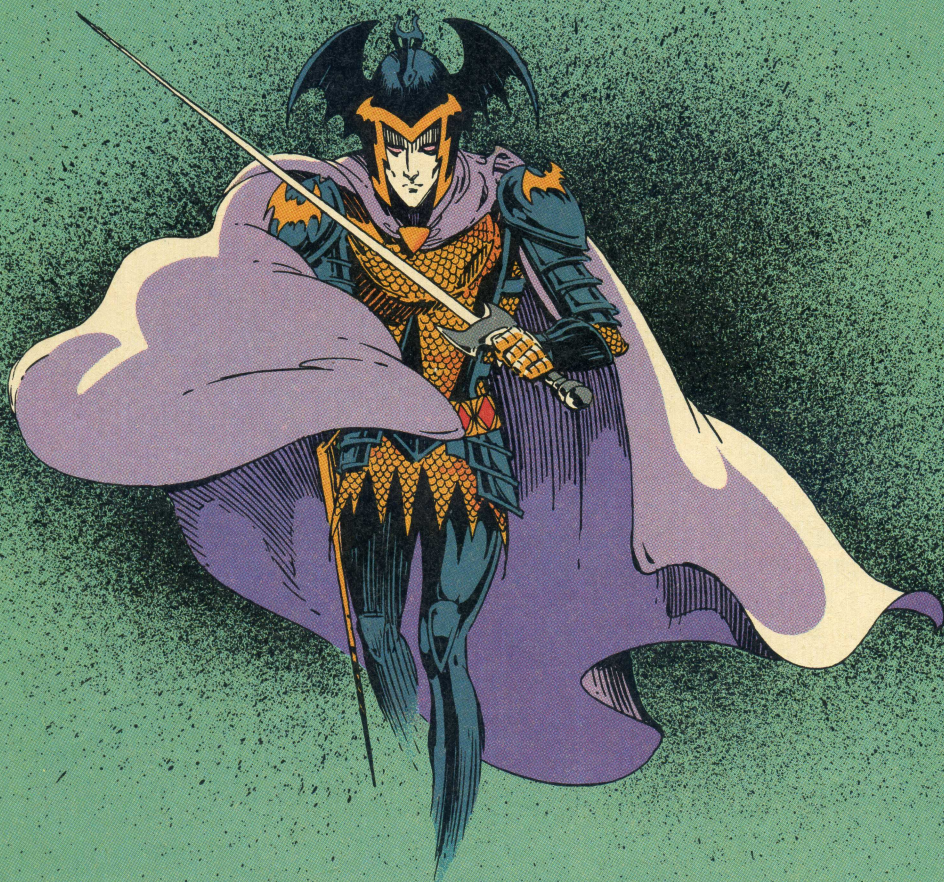


MICHAEL MOORCOCK'S

ELRIC

OF MELNIBONÉ

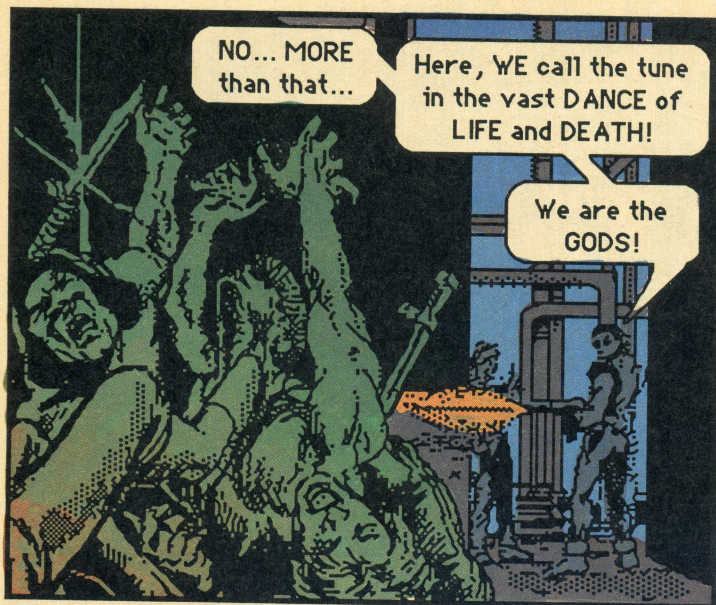
A FIRST GRAPHIC NOVEL



A 176 page full-color adaptation of the first book in Michael Moorcock's ELRIC saga
BY ROY THOMAS, P. CRAIG RUSSELL, AND MICHAEL T. GILBERT

COMING IN MAY FROM **FIRST**
COMICS

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NO... MORE
than that...

Here, WE call the tune
in the vast DANCE of
LIFE and DEATH!

We are the
GODS!



We ARE art!

Hmmm... this
guy looks
FAMILIAR...



GAAK!

It's RAPPO!



Must you spoil
EVERYTHING?!

Can't you just
APPRECIATE
the scene?!



Hell, you
always WERE
a half-assed
artist.



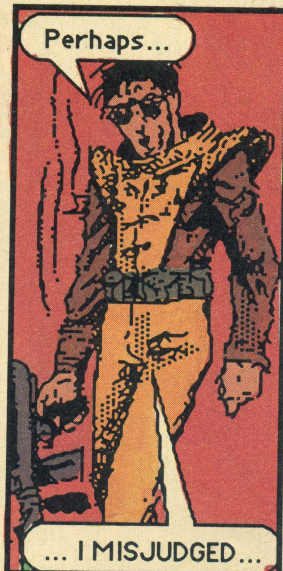
HALF-?!!

That's IT,
Danton!



BLAM!

I've been
wanting to do
THIS for years!



Perhaps...

... I MISJUDGED...

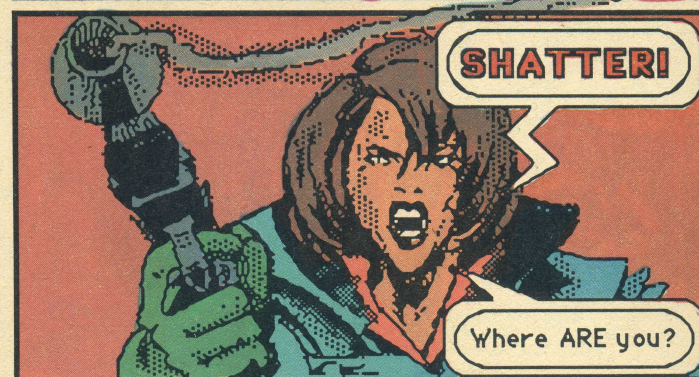
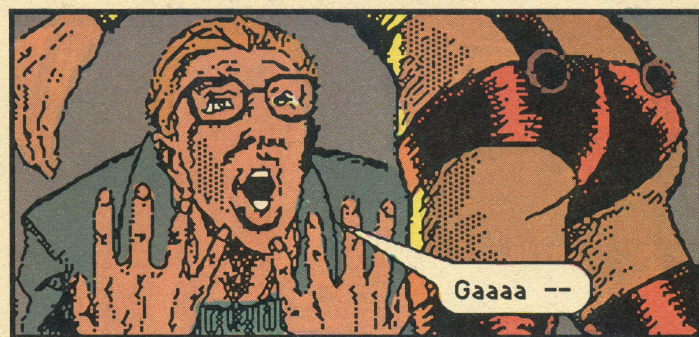
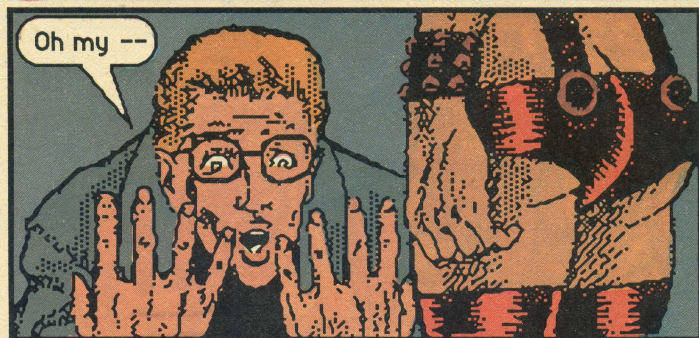
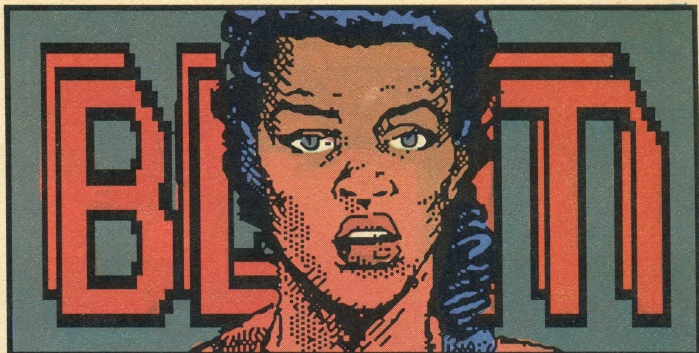
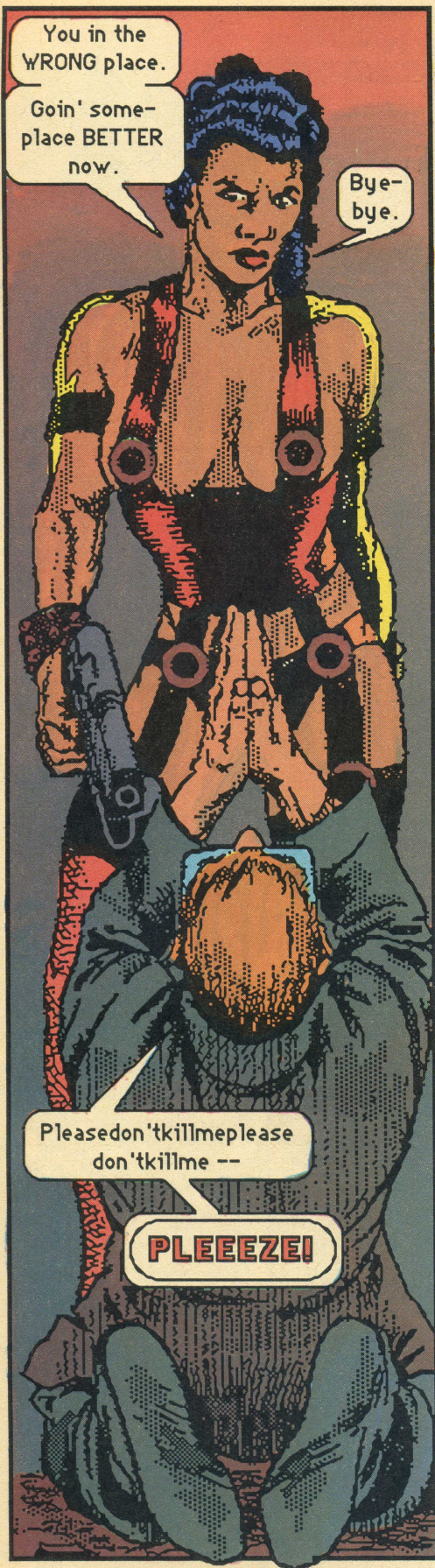


...youuuu



So much for --

-- art...





Unrath?

You HURT?



I'm DYING...
same as before...

Too SLOW, too...
leave me a gun
and a bullet and
get out of here...



FORGET it.
You're coming
with me.

No.

SHATTER!



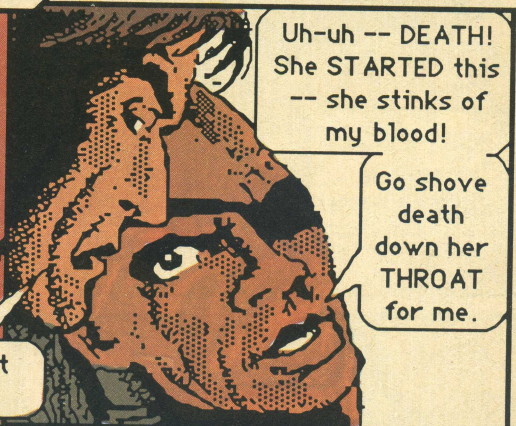
Death calls us
ALL, my man.

HEAR
it?

Death calls
YOU by your
NAME.



That's just
CYAN.



Uh-uh -- DEATH!
She STARTED this
-- she stinks of
my blood!

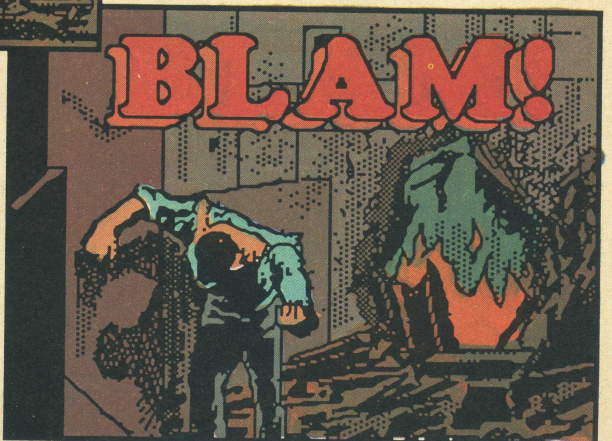
Go shove
death
down her
THROAT
for me.



All YOU can do
for me, I can do
for MYSELF.

Ciao, man.

KLIK!



BLAM!



CYAN.



Over HERE,
Cyan.



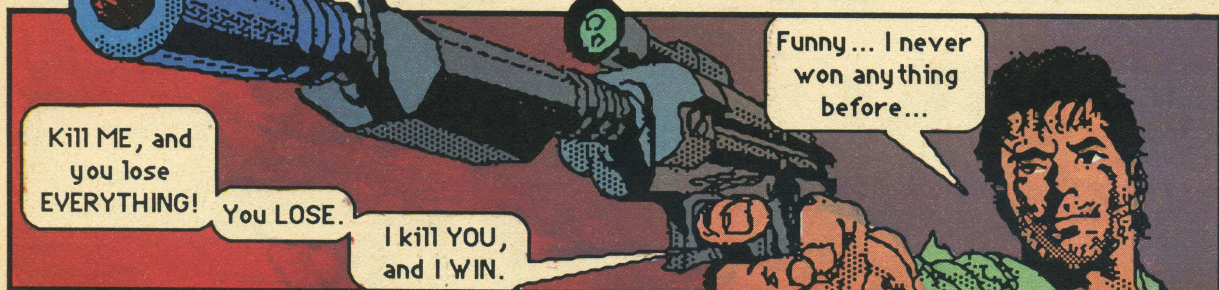
The way I
see it,
YOU'VE got
a problem.



Give it up,
Shatter. You
CAN'T escape.

You got that
BACKWARDS.

I'M walking
out of here.

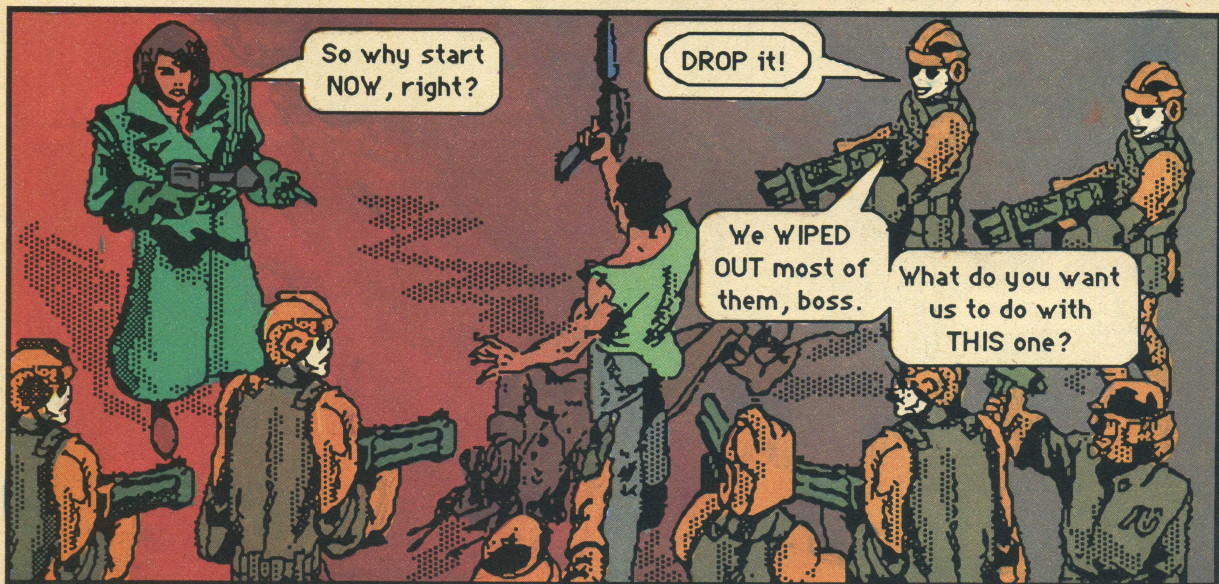


Kill ME, and
you lose
EVERYTHING!

You LOSE.

I kill YOU,
and I WIN.

Funny... I never
won anything
before...

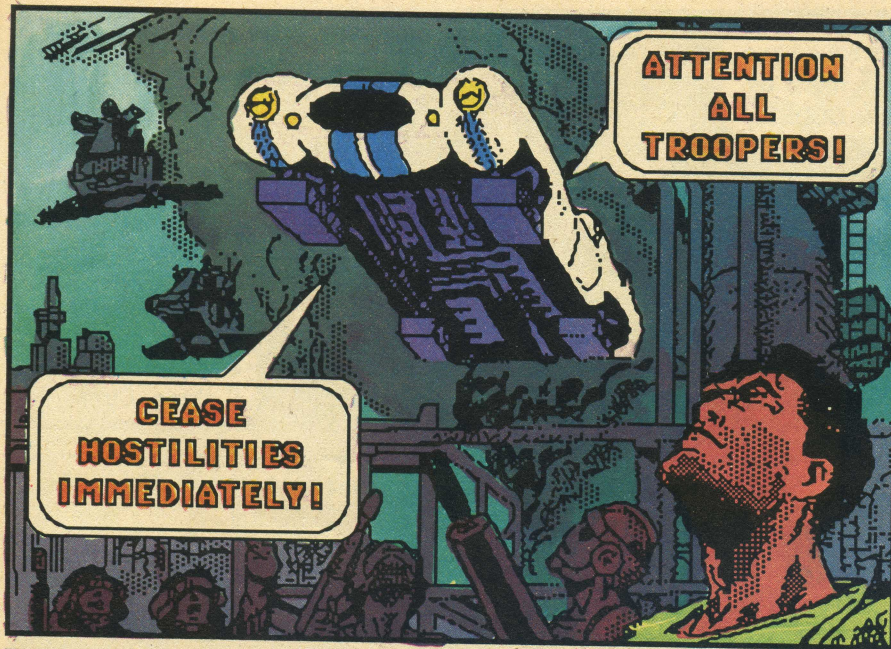


So why start
NOW, right?

DROP it!

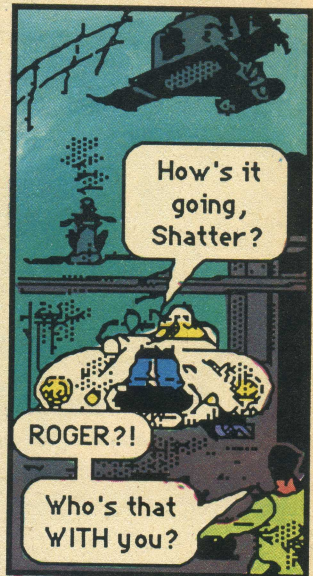
We WIPED
OUT most of
them, boss.

What do you want
us to do with
THIS one?



ATTENTION
ALL
TROOPERS!

CEASE
HOSTILITIES
IMMEDIATELY!



How's it
going,
Shatter?

ROGER?!

Who's that
WITH you?



CYAN?

WHOEVER you are,
you're interrupting an
SSJ OPERATION.

LEAVE!



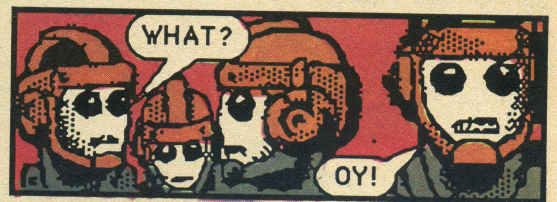
URBAN MACH,
Executariat
Special
INVESTIGATOR!

All assets of SIMON
SHUSTER JOVANOVICH
have been sold to
AVON-PURINA!



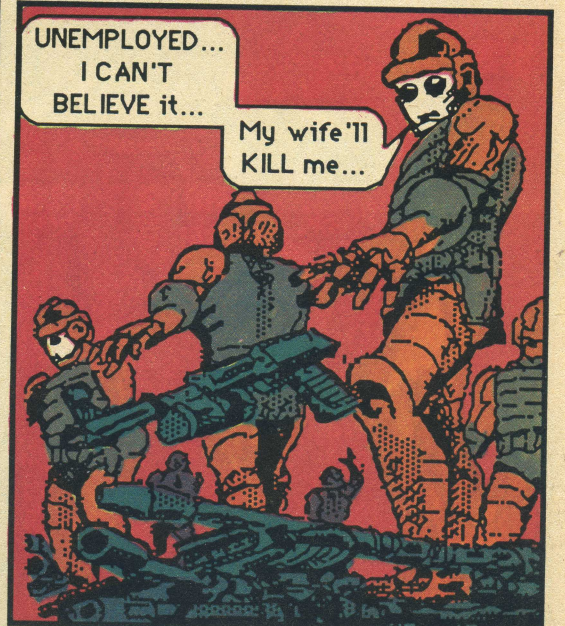
SSJ no longer
EXISTS --

-- and all of
you are out of
a JOB!



WHAT?

OY!



UNEMPLOYED...
I CAN'T
BELIEVE it...

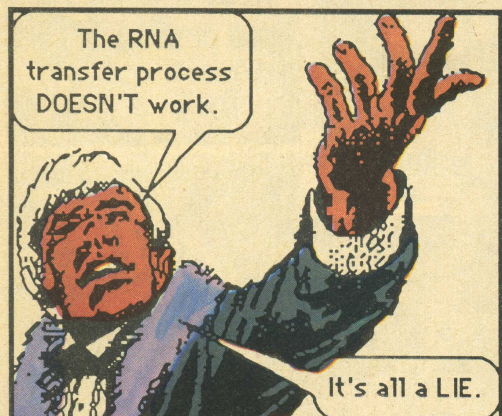
My wife'll
KILL me...



Come back! I can pay you!

There's RNA here that can make us all like GODS!

That's the OTHER thing, Cyan.



The RNA transfer process DOESN'T work.

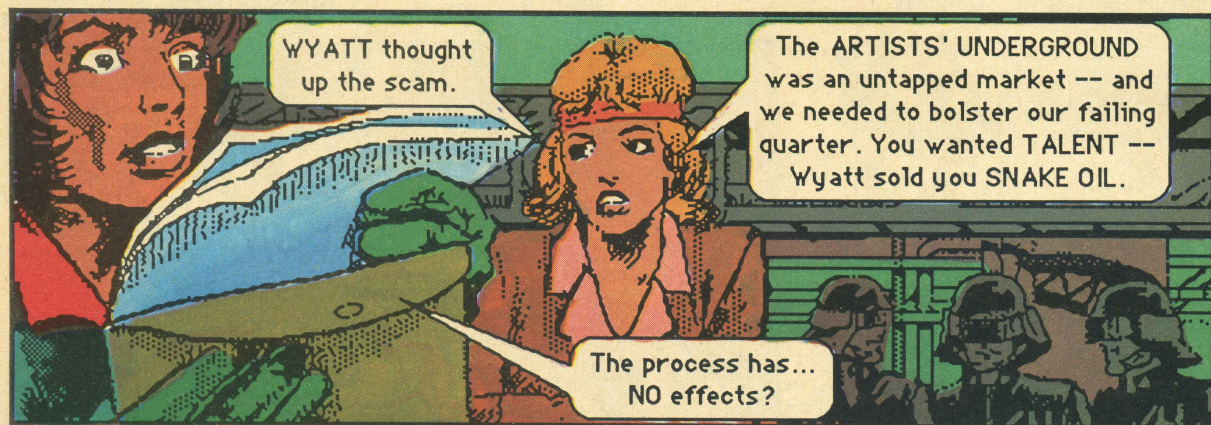
It's all a LIE.



YOU lie!

You want Shatter's genes for YOURSELF!

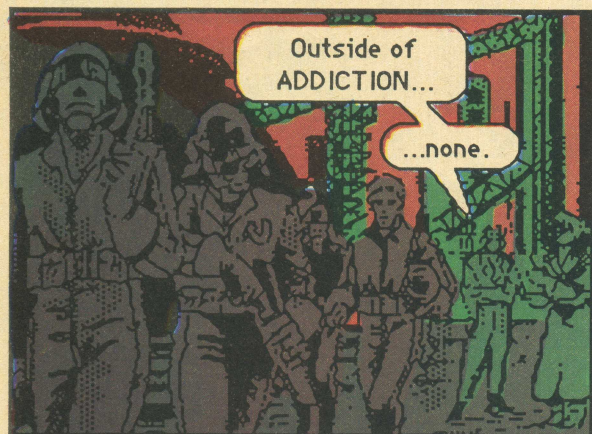
NO, Cyan. Look at SSJ's DATA.



WYATT thought up the scam.

The ARTISTS' UNDERGROUND was an untapped market -- and we needed to bolster our failing quarter. You wanted TALENT -- Wyatt sold you SNAKE OIL.

The process has... NO effects?



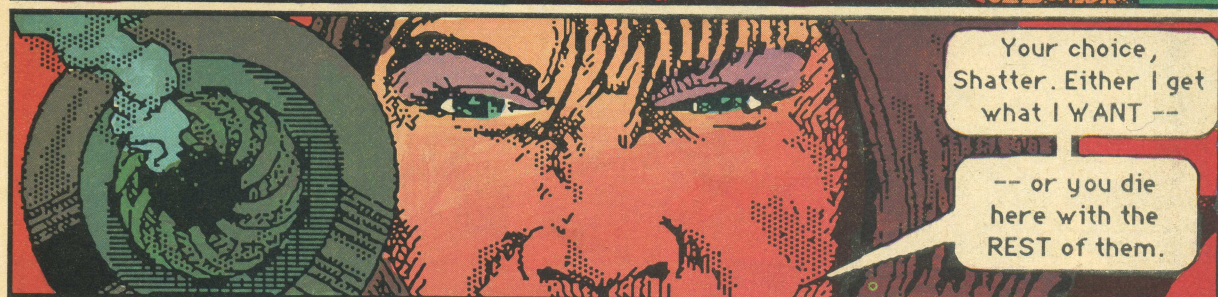
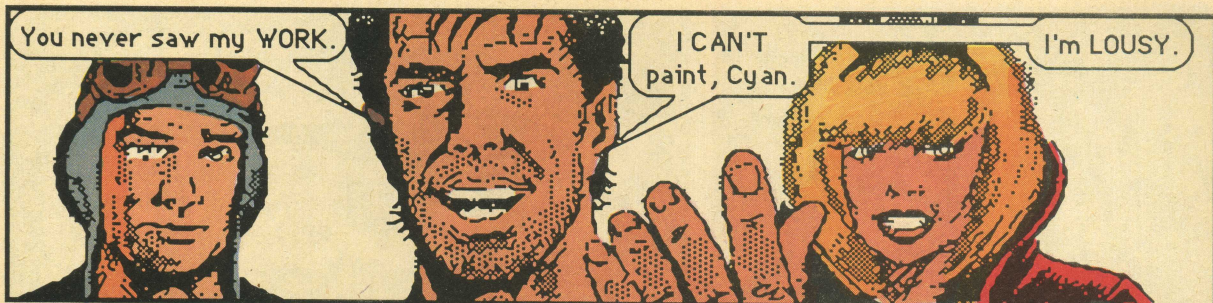
Outside of ADDICTION...

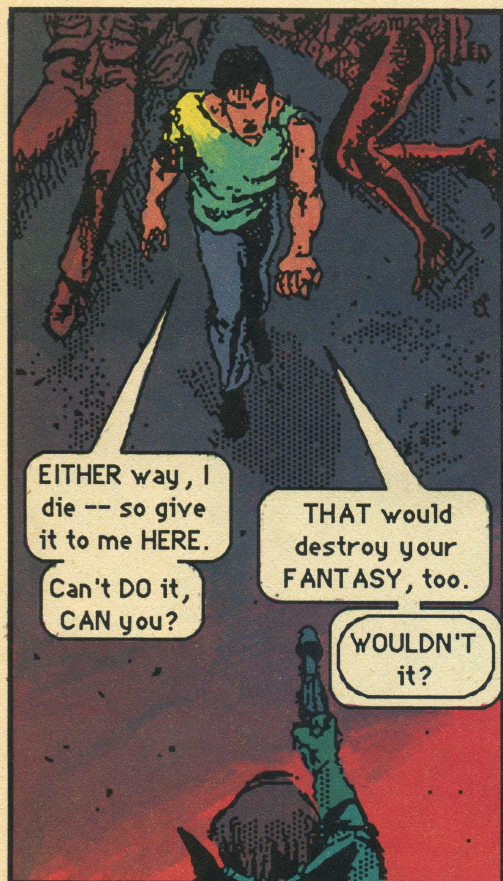
...none.



NO! HE's the PROOF!

SHATTER proves it works!



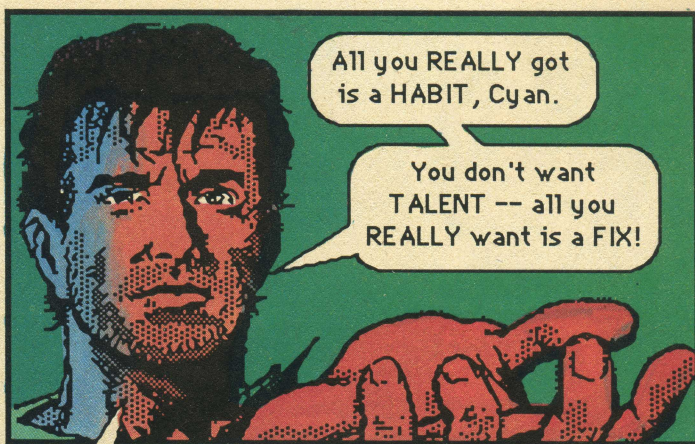


EITHER way, I die -- so give it to me HERE.

Can't DO it, CAN you?

THAT would destroy your FANTASY, too.

WOULDN'T it?



All you REALLY got is a HABIT, Cyan.

You don't want TALENT -- all you REALLY want is a FIX!



LOOK at you. You're shaking like a junkie.

A lousy JUNKIE!

No.

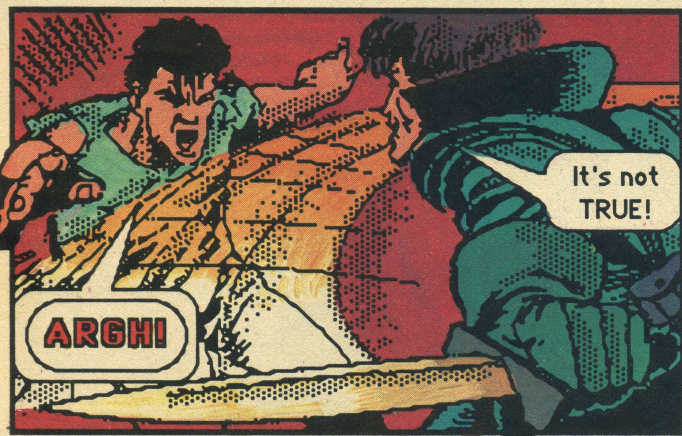


All these people DEAD...

...just so YOU can get a FIX.



No.

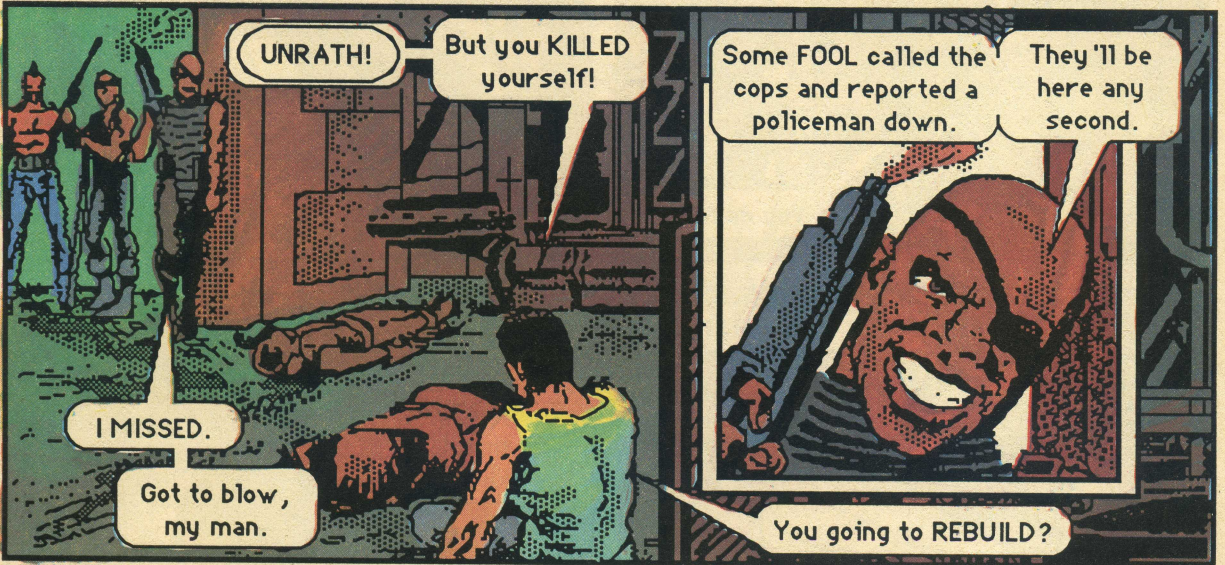
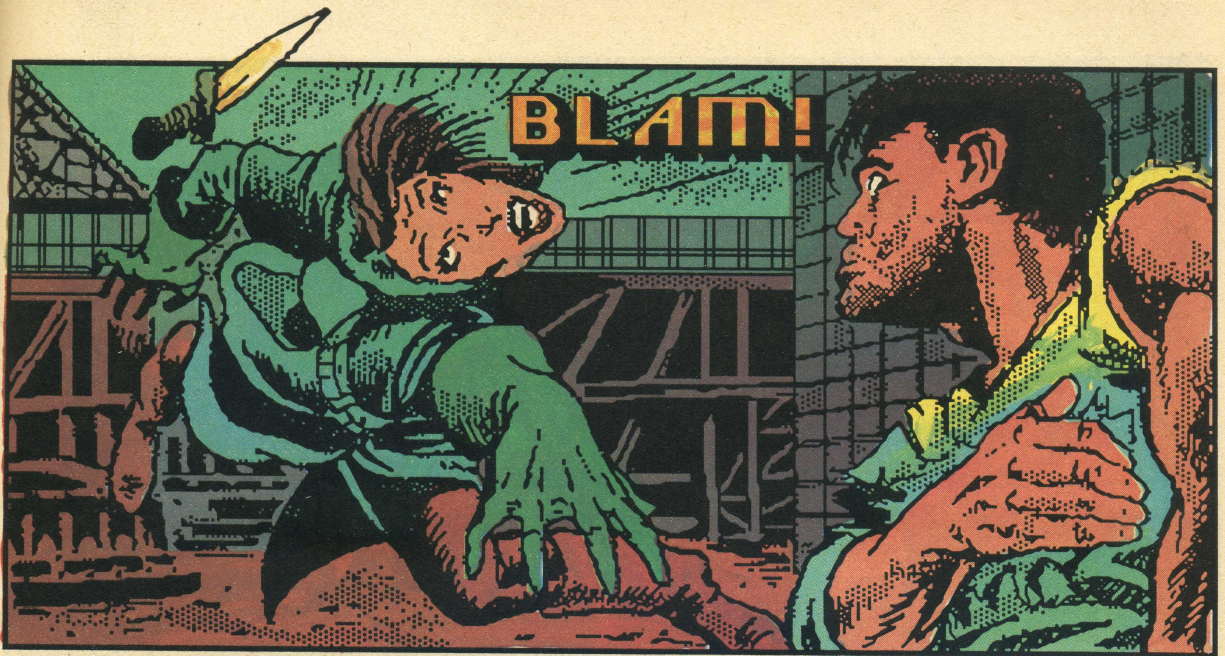


It's not TRUE!

ARGH!



It's NOT!



Epilogue:

You JACK
SCRATCH? The
COP that was
DOWN?

You called it. Something I can
DO for you?

Yeah. Move your CAR.

I haven't GOT
one anymore.

You do NOW.

Some guy named
ROGER left it to
you in his WILL.

It's BLOCKING a
public causeway.

Nice car. Wanna SELL it?

"So it ends.

"No wins. Lots of
losses.

"I'm ALIVE,
though.

"I guess that's the best
we can hope for, really.
That... and a COKE.

"I could USE a Coke...

"...but that's how I got into
this in the FIRST place."

GRANT, WRITER • ERWIN & DIENETHAL, ARTISTS
DOORSCHIED, COLORIST • OLIVER, MISCELLANEOUS

NEXT ISSUE: SHATTER CO-CREATOR PETER GILLIS RETURNS!

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