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204

SAVAGE DRAGON



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just smiled and gave me a vegemite sandwich.



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SERIOUSLY?

BUT...
I USED A
CONDOM.



THOSE
AREN'T
100%.

OBVIOUSLY.



LISTEN,
TIERRA--

I DON'T
MEAN TO BE
A DICK--

--BUT
YOU SHOULD
PROBABLY
GET AN
ABORTION.



I'M NOT
GOING TO KILL
MY BABY.



THAT BABY
COULD KILL
YOU.

MY MOM
NEARLY DIED
WHEN SHE HAD
ME AND SHE HAD
SUPERPOWERS!

IF YOU'RE
ACTUALLY PREGNANT
WITH MY CHILD--YOUR
LIFE IS IN DANGER.



DON'T ASK
ME TO KILL
MY BABY.

I WON'T
DO IT.



WELL, WHAT
THE HELL AM I
SUPPOSED
TO DO?

I'M NOT GOING
TO MARRY YOU, IF THAT'S
WHAT YOU'RE
THINKING.

I'M
ENGAGED
TO MAXINE.



IT'S YOUR BABY,
MALCOLM!

IT'S OUR
BABY!

IT WOULD BE
NICE IF YOU'D
DO THE RIGHT
THING!



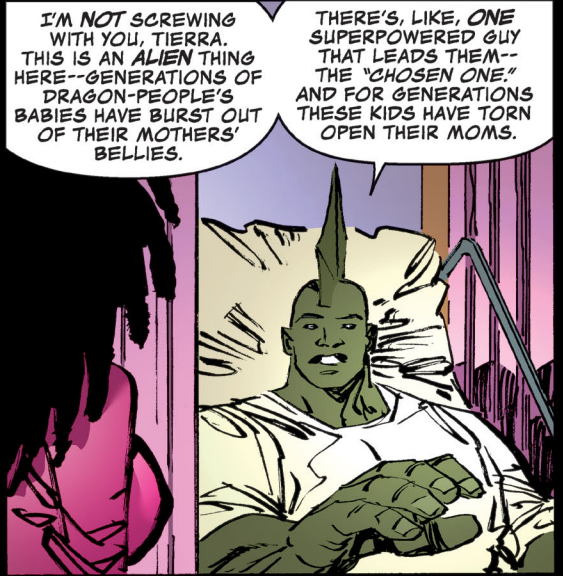
I AM DOING
THE RIGHT
THING!

TELLING YOU
TO GET AN
ABORTION IS THE
"RIGHT THING!"

A KID OF MINE
WILL TEAR OUT OF
YOU LIKE YOU WERE
MADE OF TISSUE
PAPER! I'M NOT
KIDDING!



YOU'RE SUCH AN ASSHOLE.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I WENT OUT WITH YOU.



I'M NOT SCREWING WITH YOU, TIERRA. THIS IS AN ALIEN THING HERE--GENERATIONS OF DRAGON-PEOPLE'S BABIES HAVE BURST OUT OF THEIR MOTHERS' BELLIES.

THERE'S, LIKE, ONE SUPERPOWERED GUY THAT LEADS THEM-- THE "CHOSEN ONE." AND FOR GENERATIONS THESE KIDS HAVE TORN OPEN THEIR MOMS.



YOU'RE JUST TRYIN' TO SCARE ME.



I'M TRYING TO TALK SENSE INTO YOU.

IF YOU'RE REALLY PREGNANT AND IT'S REALLY MINE--YOU'RE IN SERIOUS DANGER.



MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT THAT BEFORE YOU HAD SEX WITH ME AND ANGEL AND MAXINE!

HEY, YOU INVITED YOURSELF INTO OUR BED!

I SURE WASN'T TWISTING YOUR ARM!



AND YOU BROKE UP WITH ME, REMEMBER?

THEN YOU SLEPT WITH ANGEL'S BOYFRIEND AND FORCED HIM TO MARRY YOU WHEN YOU GOT PREGNANT.

NOW THAT YOU AND FRANK HAVE SPLIT, YOU WANT ME TO FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS?

THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.



TIERRA!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

WHAT? LIKE I NEED YOUR PERMISSION TO TALK TO MALCOLM?

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?



HIS ROOMMATE?

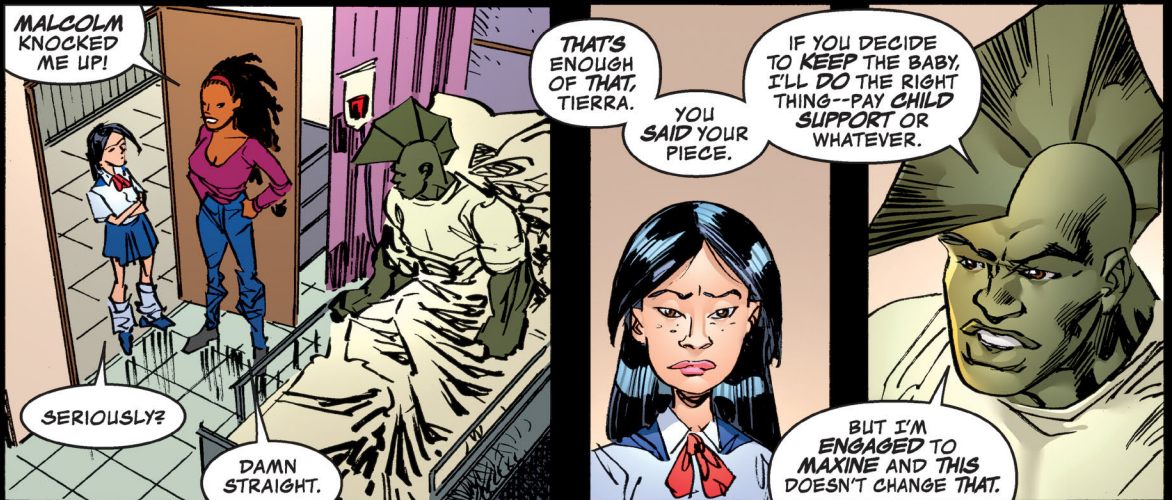
HIS GIRLFRIEND?

HIS FIANCEE?

TAKE YOUR PICK!

OKAY, OKAY.

IF YOU MUST KNOW-- I'M GONNA BE THE MOTHER OF HIS CHILD!



MALCOLM KNOCKED ME UP!

THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT, TIERRA.

IF YOU DECIDE TO KEEP THE BABY, I'LL DO THE RIGHT THING--PAY CHILD SUPPORT OR WHATEVER.

YOU SAID YOUR PIECE.

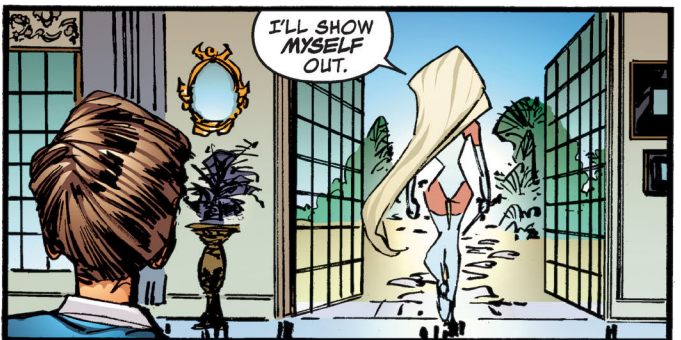
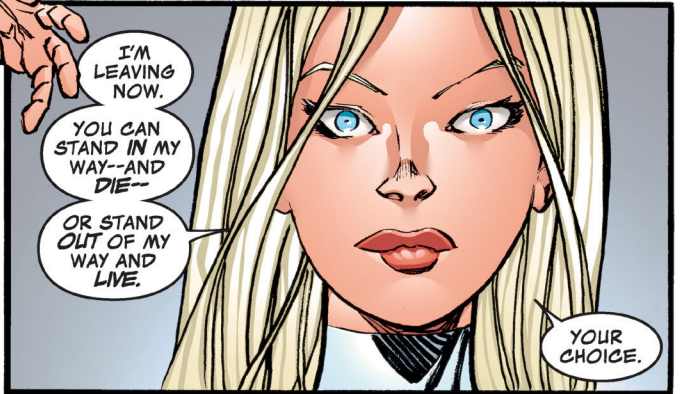
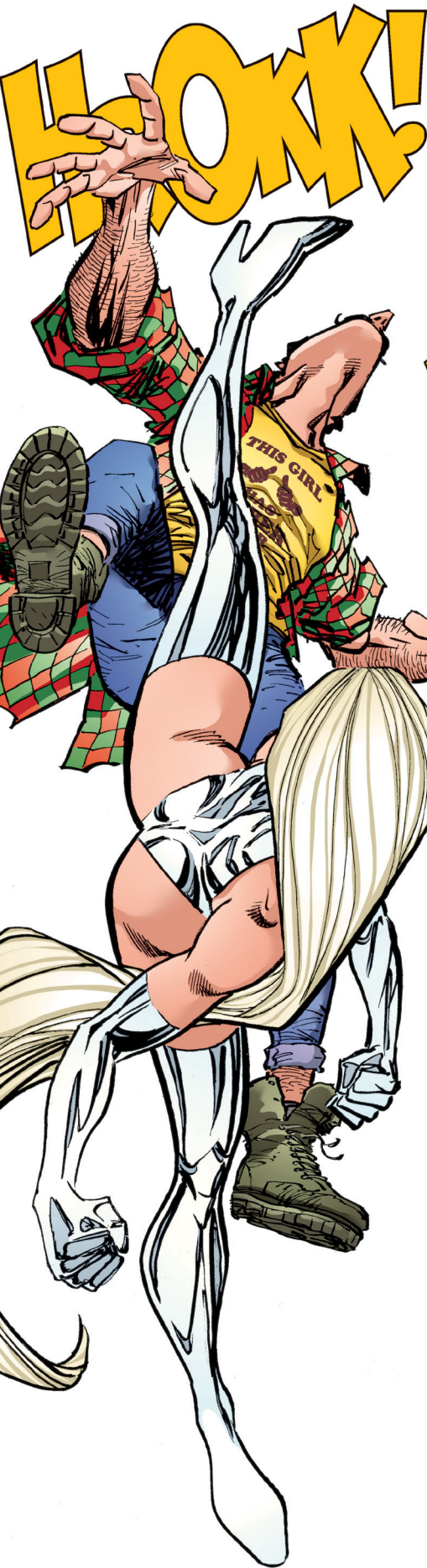
SERIOUSLY?

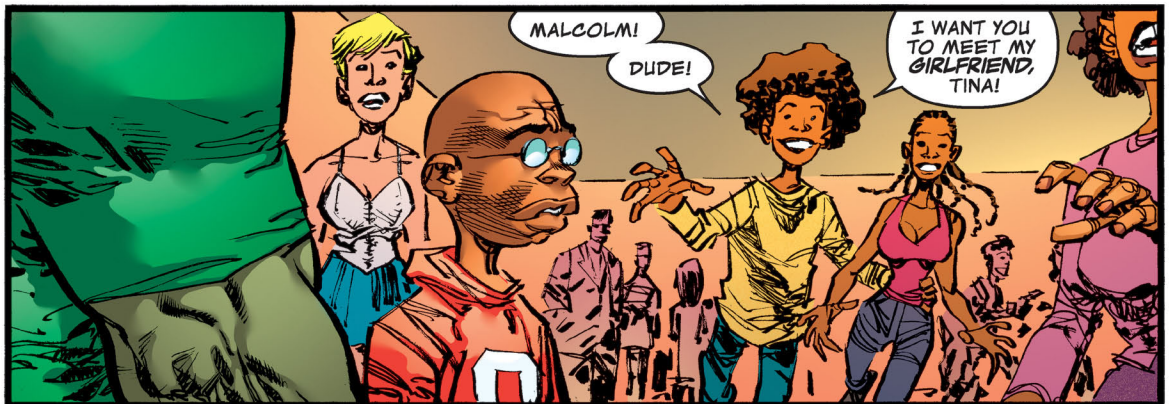
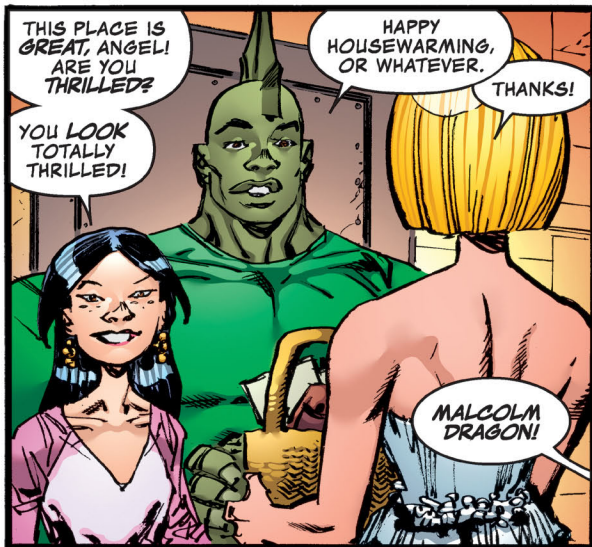
DAMN STRAIGHT.

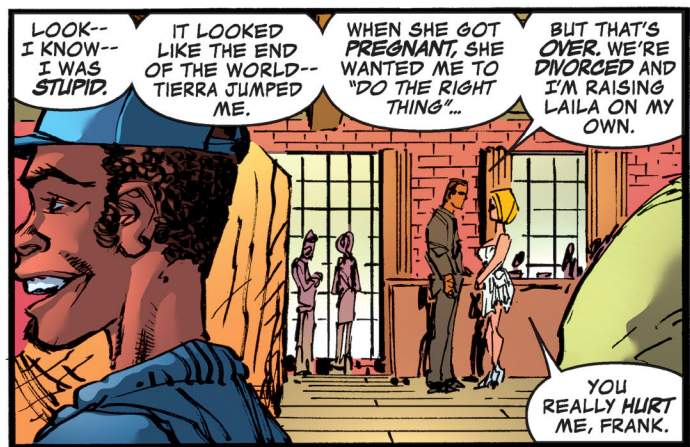
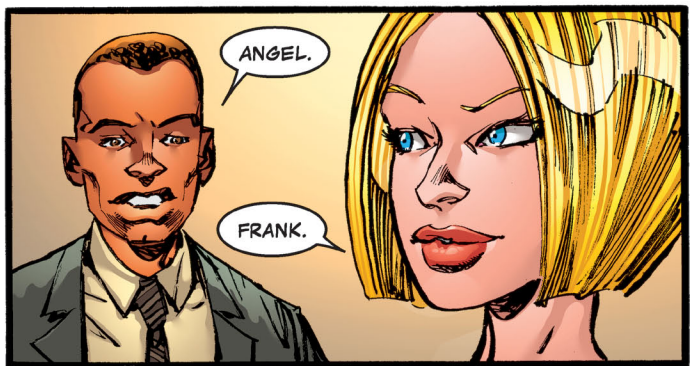
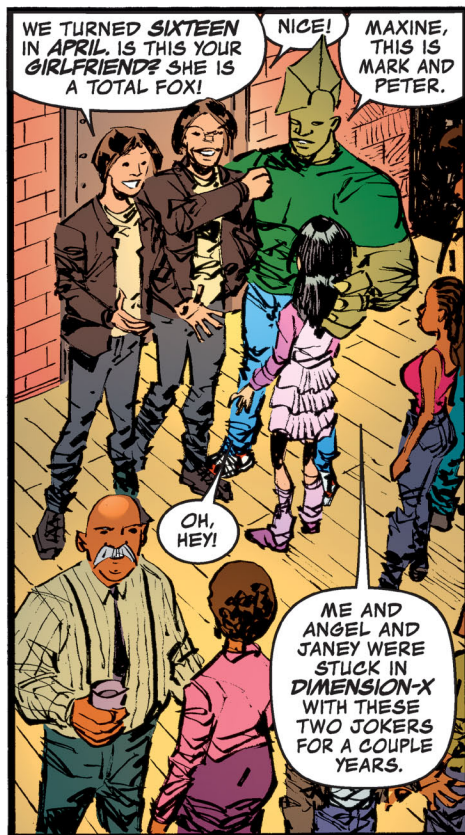
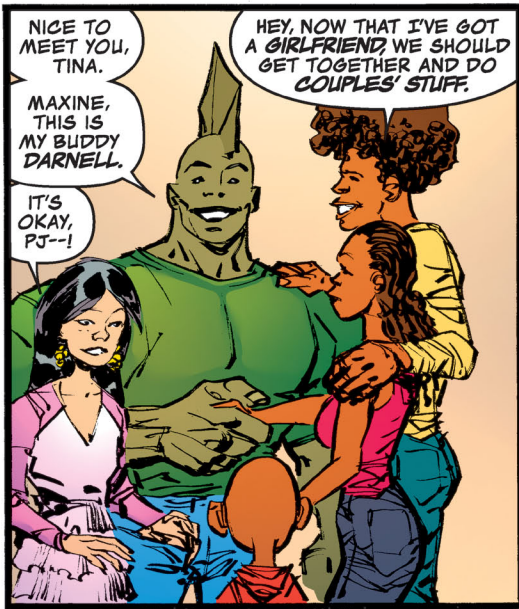
BUT I'M ENGAGED TO MAXINE AND THIS DOESN'T CHANGE THAT.

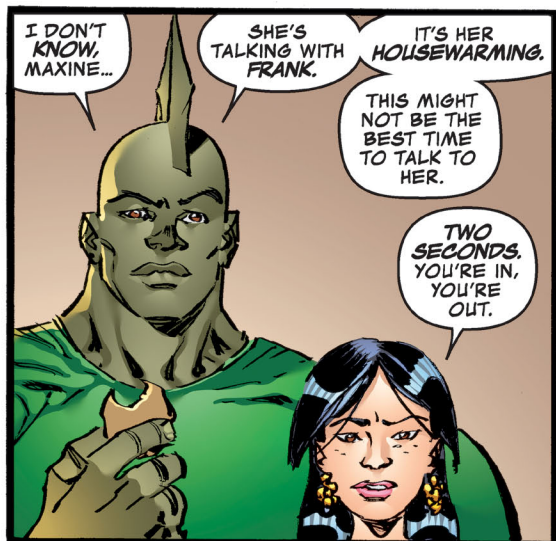


THIS AIN'T OVER.









I DON'T KNOW, MAXINE...

SHE'S TALKING WITH FRANK.

IT'S HER HOUSEWARMING.

THIS MIGHT NOT BE THE BEST TIME TO TALK TO HER.

TWO SECONDS. YOU'RE IN, YOU'RE OUT.



I SUPPOSE. BUT IT'S GOING TO PUT A DAMPER ON THE WHOLE EVENING.

THE SOONER SHE KNOWS, THE BETTER.

IF TIERRA'S GOING TO MAKE A STINK--SHE MAY GET PULLED INTO IT.

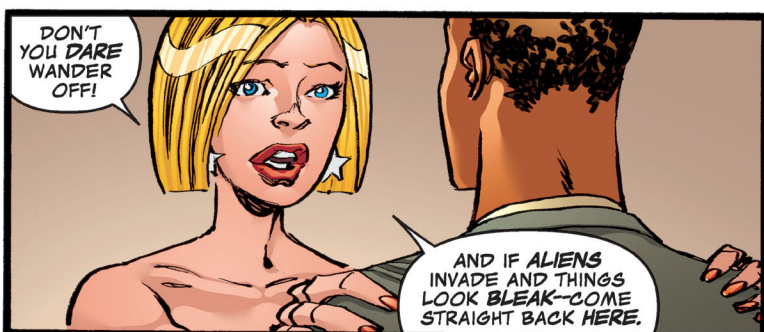
AND IF TIERRA'S ACTUALLY PREGNANT? SHE COULD BE TOO.

THERE WAS A LOT OF FLUID BEING EXCHANGED IN THAT LITTLE SESSION.



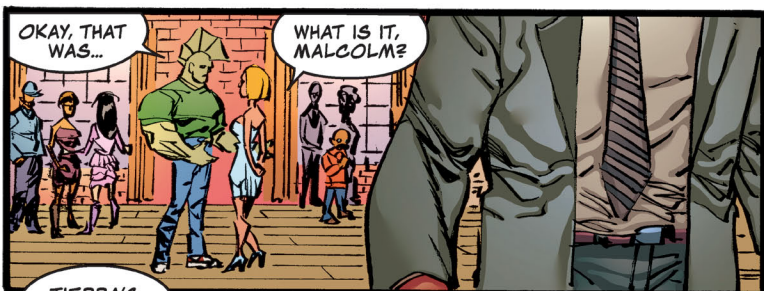
ANGEL--CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A SEC?

OH, MALCOLM--UH--YEAH...



DON'T YOU DARE WANDER OFF!

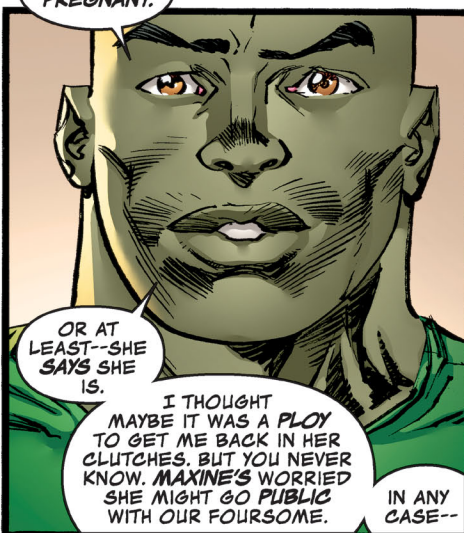
AND IF ALIENS INVADE AND THINGS LOOK BLEAK--COME STRAIGHT BACK HERE.



OKAY, THAT WAS...

WHAT IS IT, MALCOLM?

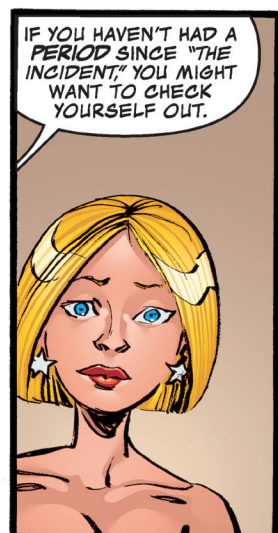
TIERRA'S PREGNANT.



OR AT LEAST--SHE SAYS SHE IS.

I THOUGHT MAYBE IT WAS A PLOY TO GET ME BACK IN HER CLUTCHES. BUT YOU NEVER KNOW. MAXINE'S WORRIED SHE MIGHT GO PUBLIC WITH OUR FOURSOME.

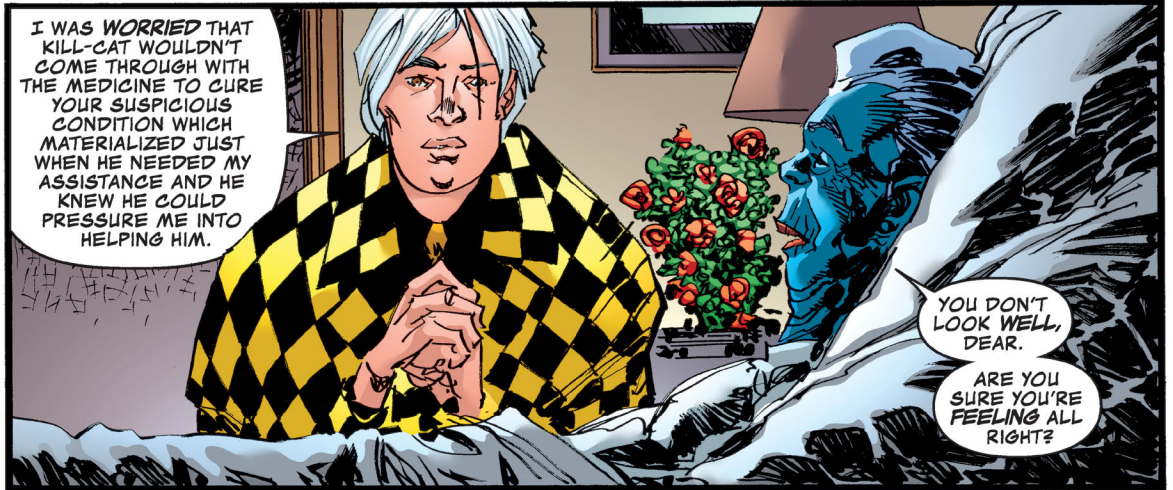
IN ANY CASE--



IF YOU HAVEN'T HAD A PERIOD SINCE "THE INCIDENT," YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK YOURSELF OUT.



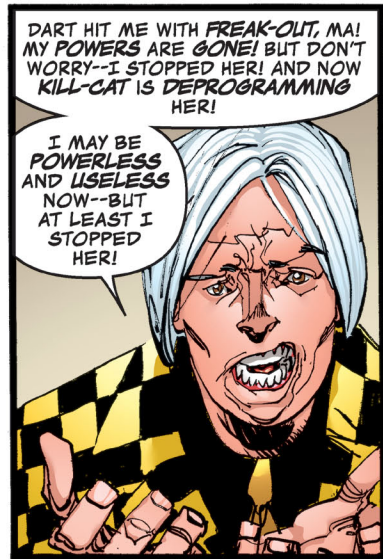
I'M GLAD YOU'RE FEELING BETTER, MA.



I WAS WORRIED THAT KILL-CAT WOULDN'T COME THROUGH WITH THE MEDICINE TO CURE YOUR SUSPICIOUS CONDITION WHICH MATERIALIZED JUST WHEN HE NEEDED MY ASSISTANCE AND HE KNEW HE COULD PRESSURE ME INTO HELPING HIM.

YOU DON'T LOOK WELL, DEAR.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE FEELING ALL RIGHT?



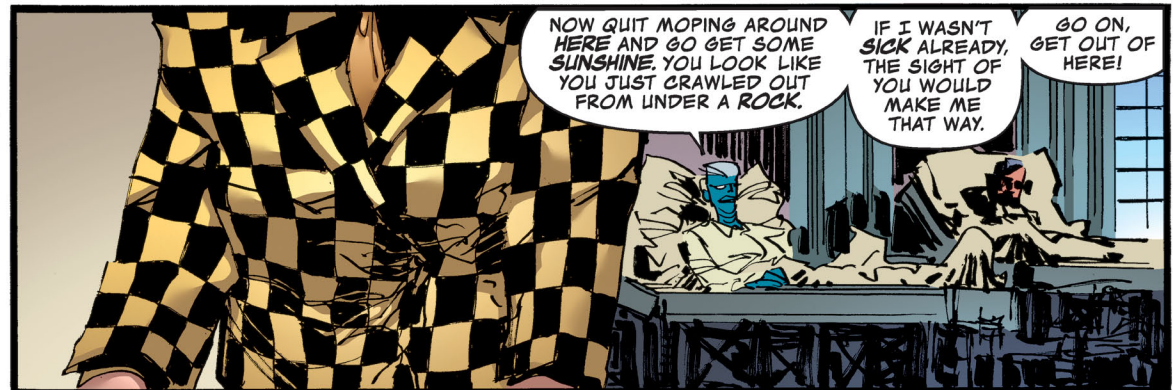
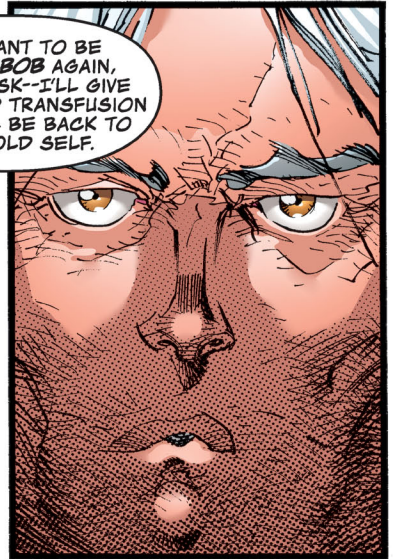
DART HIT ME WITH FREAK-OUT, MA! MY POWERS ARE GONE! BUT DON'T WORRY--I STOPPED HER! AND NOW KILL-CAT IS DEPROGRAMMING HER!

I MAY BE POWERLESS AND USELESS NOW--BUT AT LEAST I STOPPED HER!



I'LL HAVE NONE OF THAT TALK, ROBERT! THE NEUTROTSKI FAMILY IS NEVER "USELESS!"

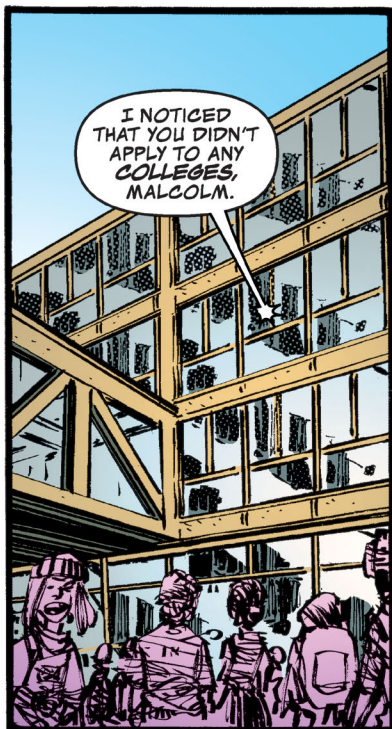
IF YOU WANT TO BE NEUTRON BOB AGAIN, JUST YOU ASK--I'LL GIVE YOU A BLOOD TRANSFUSION AND YOU'LL BE BACK TO YOUR OLD SELF.



NOW QUIT MOPING AROUND HERE AND GO GET SOME SUNSHINE. YOU LOOK LIKE YOU JUST CRAWLED OUT FROM UNDER A ROCK.

IF I WASN'T SICK ALREADY, THE SIGHT OF YOU WOULD MAKE ME THAT WAY.

GO ON, GET OUT OF HERE!



I NOTICED THAT YOU DIDN'T APPLY TO ANY COLLEGES, MALCOLM.



I REALLY THINK YOU'RE LIMITING YOUR POTENTIAL BY STOPPING YOUR SCHOOLING AT HIGH SCHOOL. YOU SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER COLLEGE.

YOUR GRADES ARE DECENT ENOUGH THAT YOU COULD GET INTO SEVERAL GOOD SCHOOLS AND YOUR CREATIVE WRITING IS EXCELLENT. I'M SURE YOUR ENGLISH TEACHER WOULD GIVE YOU HIGH RECOMMENDATIONS.

YOU HAVE A REAL TALENT AND IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO SEE IT SQUANDERED.

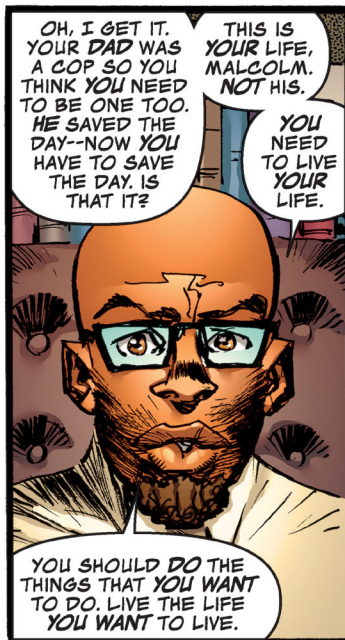
YEAH. IT'S JUST...



WELL, I HAVE POWERS AND I KIND OF FEEL LIKE I SHOULD USE THOSE POWERS TO HELP PEOPLE, LIKE MY DAD DID.

A LOT OF PEOPLE CAN WRITE BUT NOT A LOT CAN SAVE THE WORLD IF IT NEEDS SAVING.

I WAS THINKING THE POLICE ACADEMY WAS MY BEST BET.



OH, I GET IT. YOUR DAD WAS A COP SO YOU THINK YOU NEED TO BE ONE TOO. HE SAVED THE DAY--NOW YOU HAVE TO SAVE THE DAY. IS THAT IT?

THIS IS YOUR LIFE, MALCOLM. NOT HIS.

YOU NEED TO LIVE YOUR LIFE.

YOU SHOULD DO THE THINGS THAT YOU WANT TO DO. LIVE THE LIFE YOU WANT TO LIVE.



YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO LIVE YOUR LIFE IN YOUR FATHER'S SHADOW.

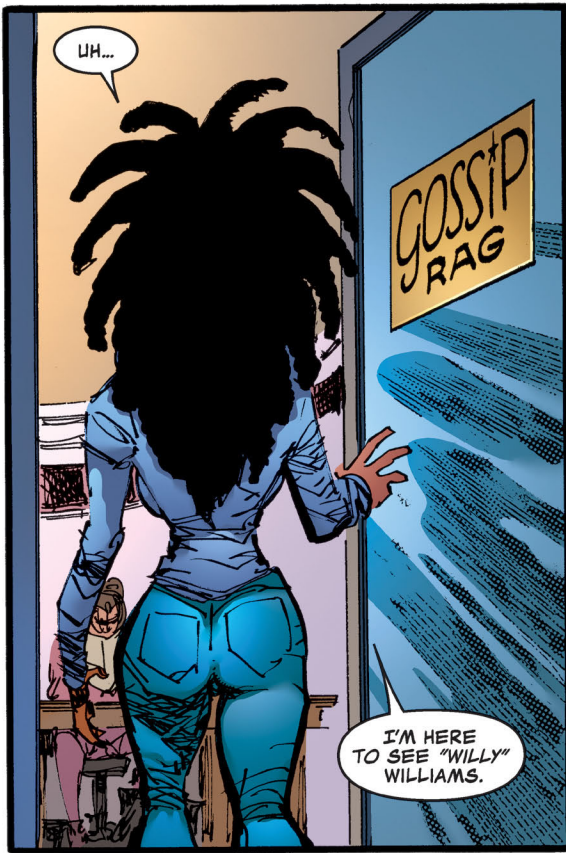


JUST...

THINK ABOUT IT.

YOU'VE ONLY GOT ONE LIFE TO LIVE, MALCOLM.

I WISH IT WAS THAT SIMPLE, MR. RUSHMORE.



UH...

GOSSIP RAG

I'M HERE TO SEE "WILLY" WILLIAMS.



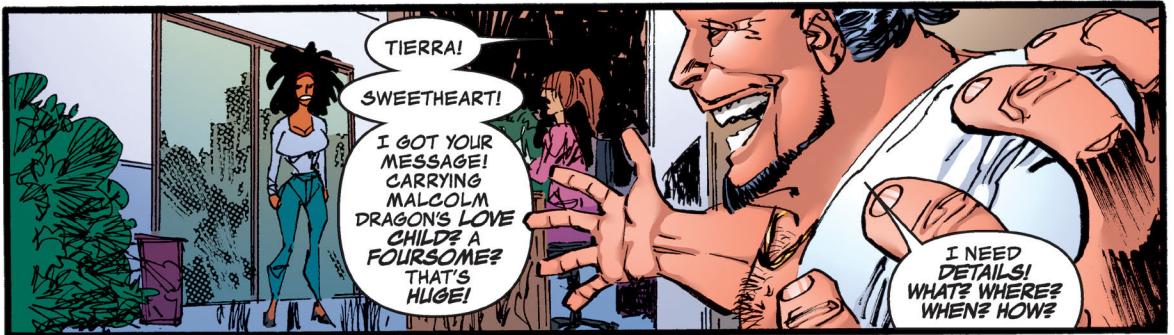
HE'S EXPECTING ME.

AND YOU ARE...?



TIERRA JONES.

I'M HERE ABOUT A STORY...

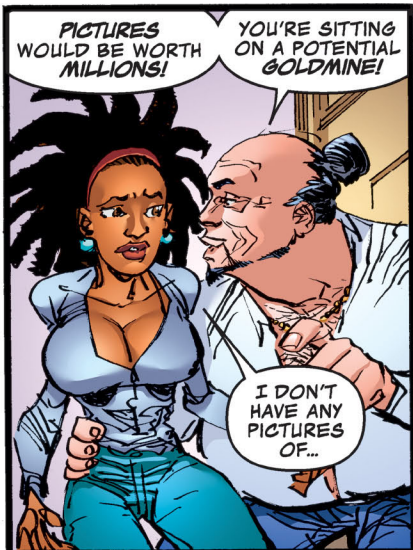


TIERRA!

SWEETHEART!

I GOT YOUR MESSAGE! CARRYING MALCOLM DRAGON'S LOVE CHILD? A FOURSOME? THAT'S HUGE!

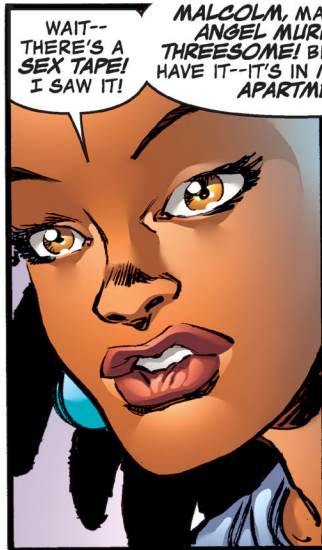
I NEED DETAILS! WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? HOW?



PICTURES WOULD BE WORTH MILLIONS!

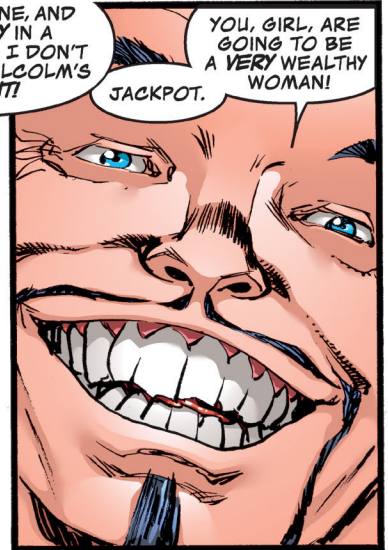
YOU'RE SITTING ON A POTENTIAL GOLDMINE!

I DON'T HAVE ANY PICTURES OF...



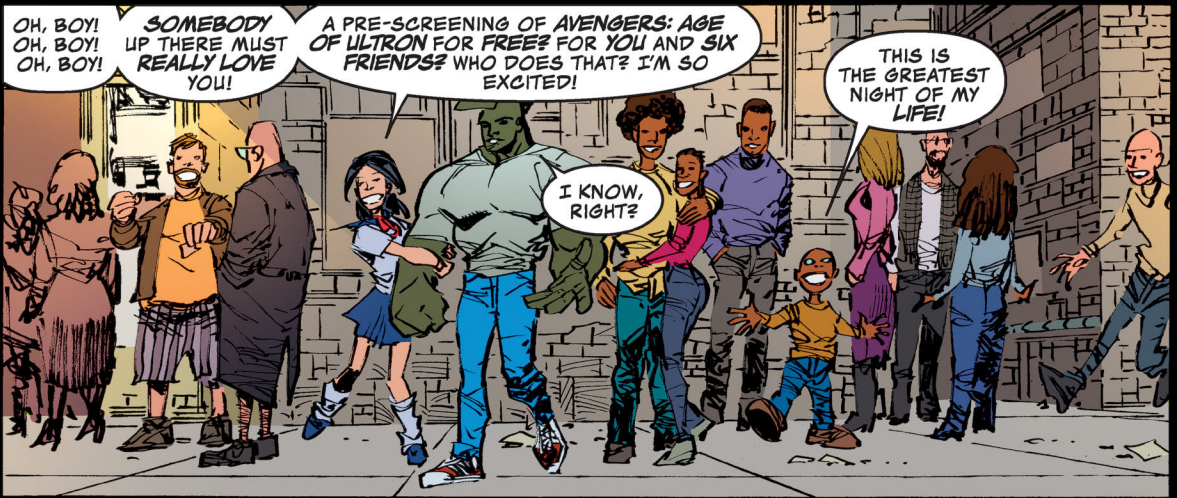
WAIT-- THERE'S A SEX TAPE! I SAW IT!

MALCOLM, MAXINE, AND ANGEL MURPHY IN A THREESOME! BUT I DON'T HAVE IT--IT'S IN MALCOLM'S APARTMENT!



JACKPOT.

YOU, GIRL, ARE GOING TO BE A VERY WEALTHY WOMAN!



OH, BOY!
OH, BOY!
OH, BOY!

SOMEBODY
UP THERE MUST
REALLY LOVE
YOU!

A PRE-SCREENING OF AVENGERS: AGE
OF ULTRON FOR FREE? FOR YOU AND SIX
FRIENDS? WHO DOES THAT? I'M SO
EXCITED!

THIS IS
THE GREATEST
NIGHT OF MY
LIFE!

I KNOW,
RIGHT?



BUT HELL--I'VE SAVED
A LOT OF LIVES--I CAN
SEE SOME GRATEFUL
CITIZEN TOSSING ME
A FREEBIE EVERY
SO OFTEN.

I EARNED THIS--
AND I AM NOT
COMPLAINING!

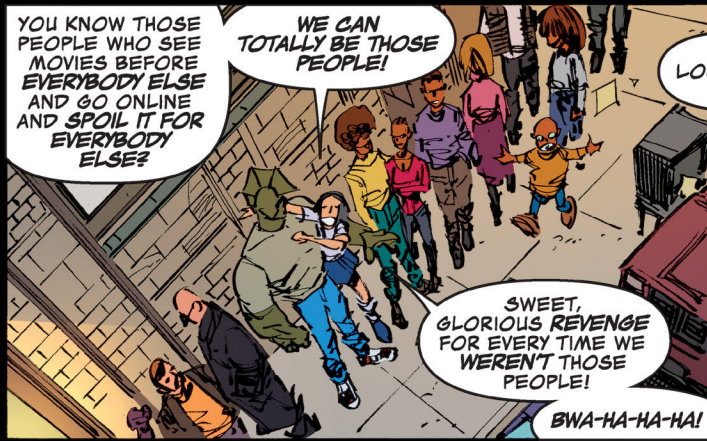
IF THIS IS
WHAT HAPPENS
WHEN YOU SAVE
THE WORLD? I'M
GOOD WITH THAT.



LIVING THE
DREAM!

MALCOLM
DRAGON--YOU ARE
THE MAN!

THANKS FOR
THINKING ABOUT
ME, BRO! YOU
ARE ALL
RIGHT!



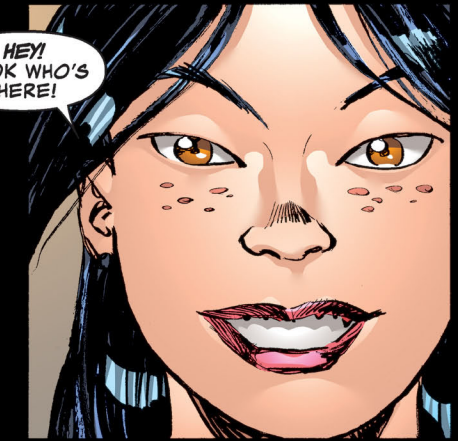
YOU KNOW THOSE
PEOPLE WHO SEE
MOVIES BEFORE
EVERYBODY ELSE
AND GO ONLINE
AND SPOIL IT FOR
EVERYBODY
ELSE?

WE CAN
TOTALLY BE THOSE
PEOPLE!

HEY!
LOOK WHO'S
HERE!

SWEET,
GLORIOUS REVENGE
FOR EVERY TIME WE
WEREN'T THOSE
PEOPLE!

BWA-HA-HA-HA!



ANGEL!

YOU
MADE
IT!

I
WORRIED.

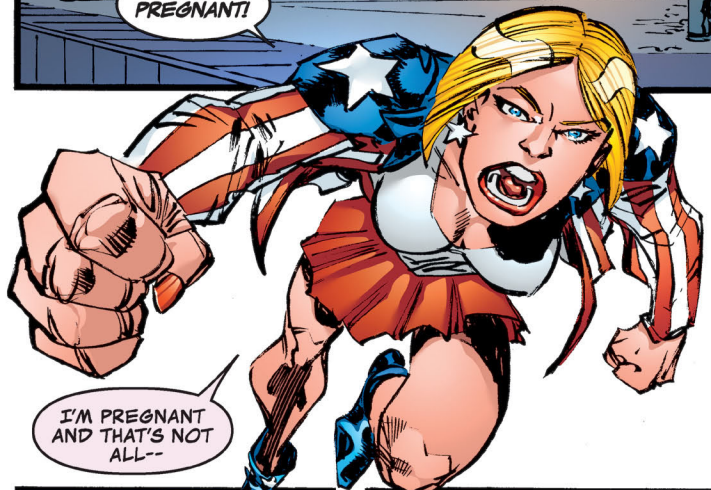
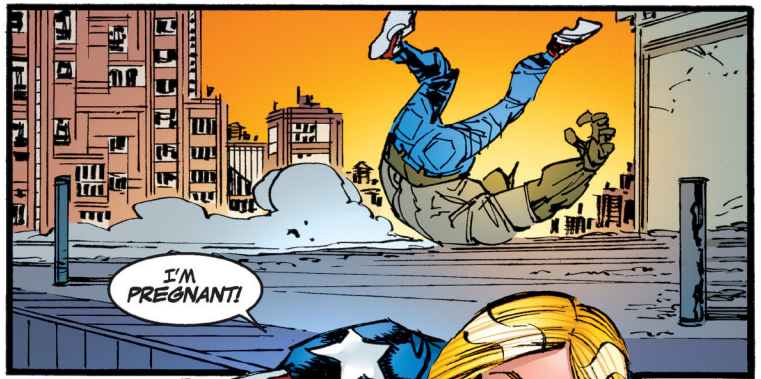
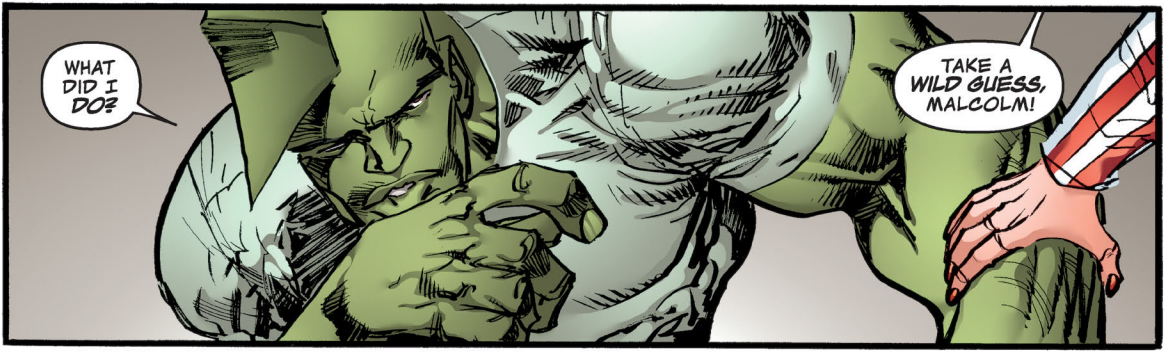
I DO
THAT.

WRAAAA!

YOU
DICK!

WHOA!





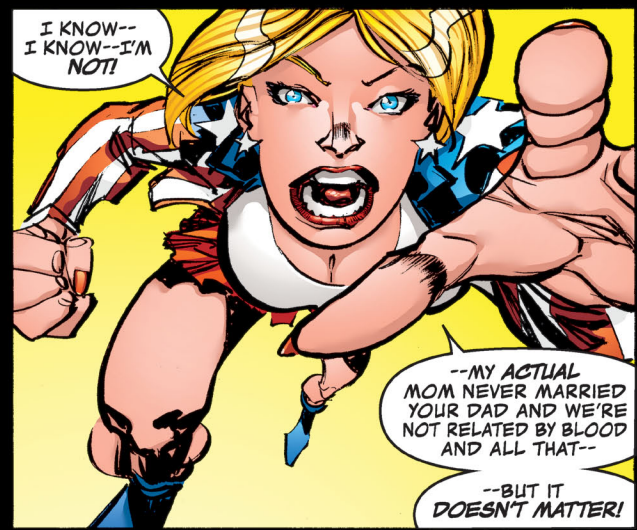


NO, WE CAN'T!

DON'T YOU GET IT?



I'M YOUR SISTER!



I KNOW-- I KNOW--I'M NOT!

--MY ACTUAL MOM NEVER MARRIED YOUR DAD AND WE'RE NOT RELATED BY BLOOD AND ALL THAT--

--BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER!



BECAUSE AS FAR AS EVERYBODY ELSE IS CONCERNED--I'M "YOUR SISTER" AND I WILL NEVER--EVER--LIVE THIS DOWN!

NOBODY HAS TO KNOW!

I'M NOT GOING TO TELL ANYBODY!



THEY'LL KNOW!

THEY'LL FIGURE IT OUT!

THERE'S NO HIDING IT!



GET ONE OF YOUR SECRET GOVERNMENT CONTACTS TO GIVE YOU AN ABORTION ON THE SLY.

TAKE ONE OF THOSE KILL-BABY PILLS!

YOU HAVE OPTIONS!

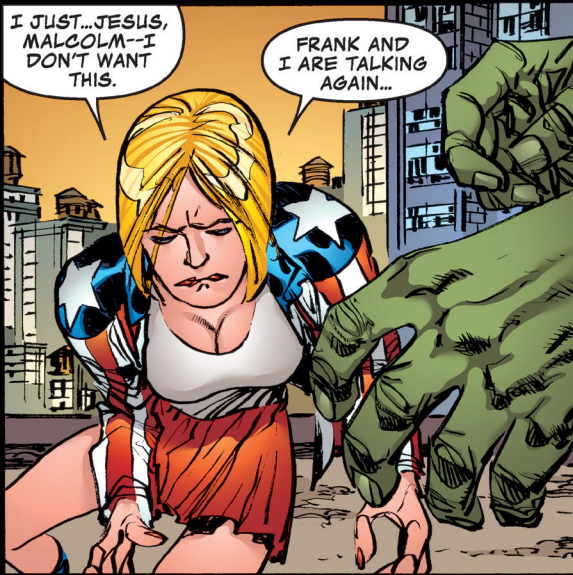


I AM SO PISSED AT YOU RIGHT NOW!

AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON!

DON'T BE PISSED!

BESIDES-- MAXINE TALKED YOU INTO IT.



I JUST...JESUS, MALCOLM--I DON'T WANT THIS.

FRANK AND I ARE TALKING AGAIN...



IT MIGHT NOT EVEN BE MINE!

IT COULD BE DAREDEVIL'S BABY.



SHIT.

YOU'RE RIGHT.



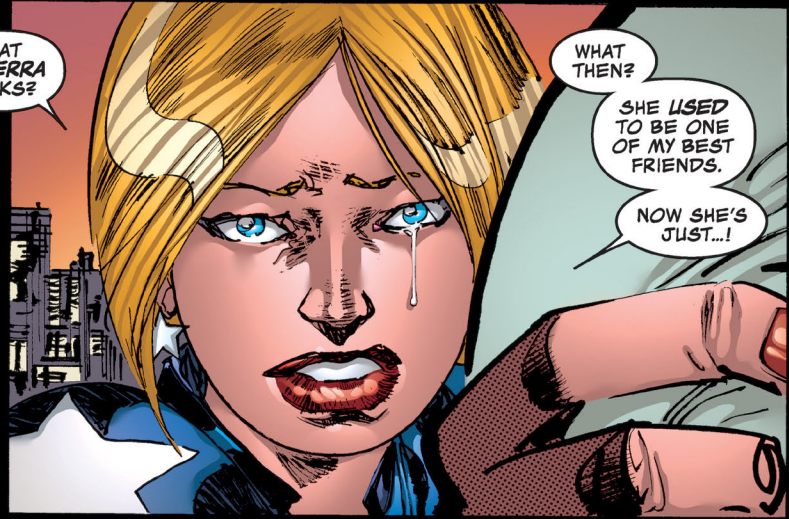
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY GET AN ABORTION.

I MEAN... SOON.

AND EVEN IF IT IS MINE--SAY IT'S DAREDEVIL'S. YOU TWO BROKE UP--YOU WERE ALL HURT AND VULNERABLE...



WHAT IF TIERRA TALKS?



WHAT THEN?

SHE USED TO BE ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS.

NOW SHE'S JUST...!



WE'LL GET THROUGH THIS.

WE ALWAYS DO.



AND IF ALL ELSE FAILS--

--WE'LL BLOW UP THE PLANET, JUMP INTO DIMENSION-X, FIND ANOTHER EARTH, AND START OUR LIVES OVER.



IF ONLY IT WAS THAT SIMPLE.



SO...
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO TELL THE OTHERS?

I'D GO WITH "MIND-CONTROL."



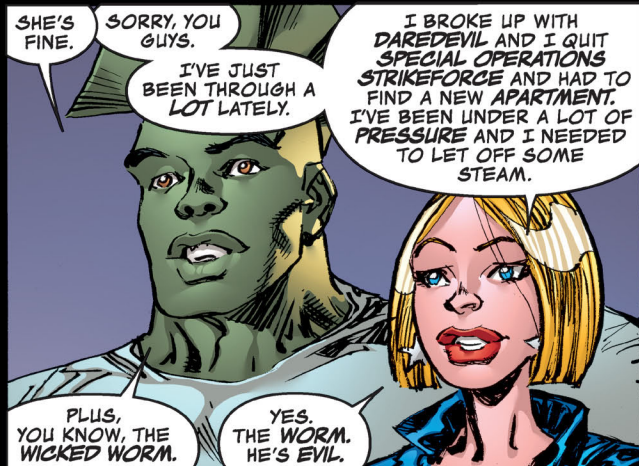
ARE YOU GUYS OKAY?

WHAT HAPPENED?

MIND-CONTROL.

WICKED WORM ATTACHED TO HER NECK.

IT'S OFF NOW. I SQUISHED IT.



SHE'S FINE.

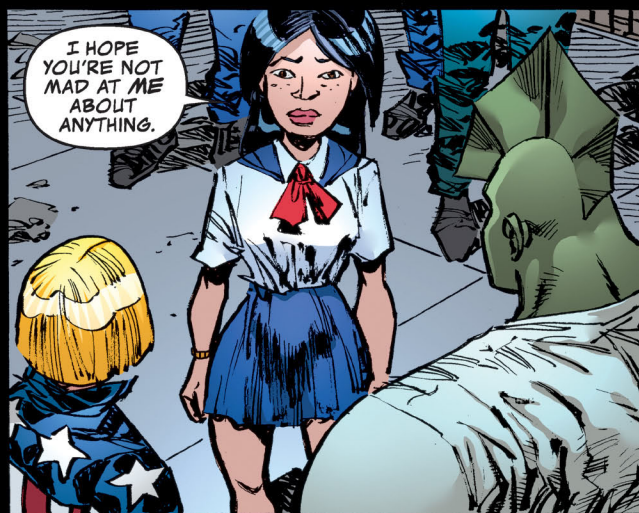
SORRY, YOU GUYS.

I'VE JUST BEEN THROUGH A LOT LATELY.

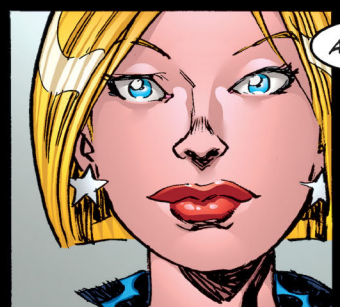
I BROKE UP WITH DAREDEVIL AND I QUIT SPECIAL OPERATIONS STRIKEFORCE AND HAD TO FIND A NEW APARTMENT. I'VE BEEN UNDER A LOT OF PRESSURE AND I NEEDED TO LET OFF SOME STEAM.

PLUS, YOU KNOW, THE WICKED WORM.

YES, THE WORM. HE'S EVIL.



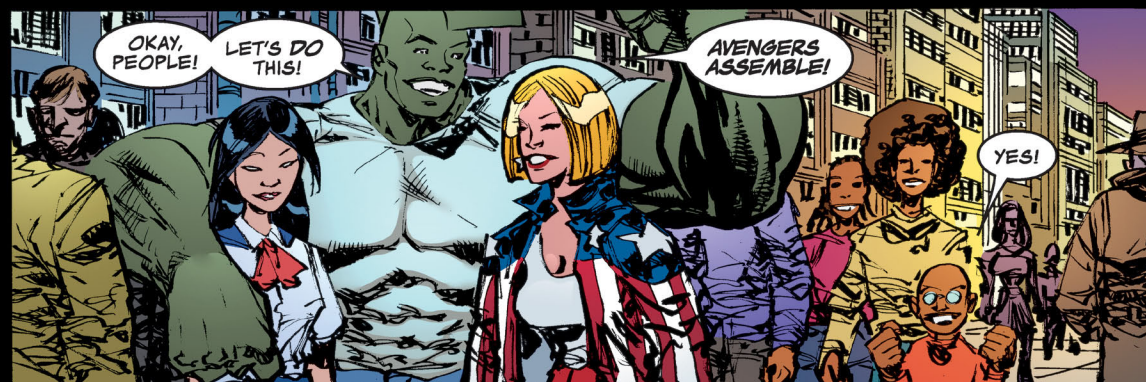
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT MAD AT ME ABOUT ANYTHING.



AWWWWW.



HOW COULD I STAY MAD AT YOU?



OKAY, PEOPLE! LET'S DO THIS!

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

YES!



HOW COME IT'S ALWAYS THE END OF THE WORLD WITH THESE GUYS?

IN EVERY SUPERHERO MOVIE IT'S THE SAME THING--

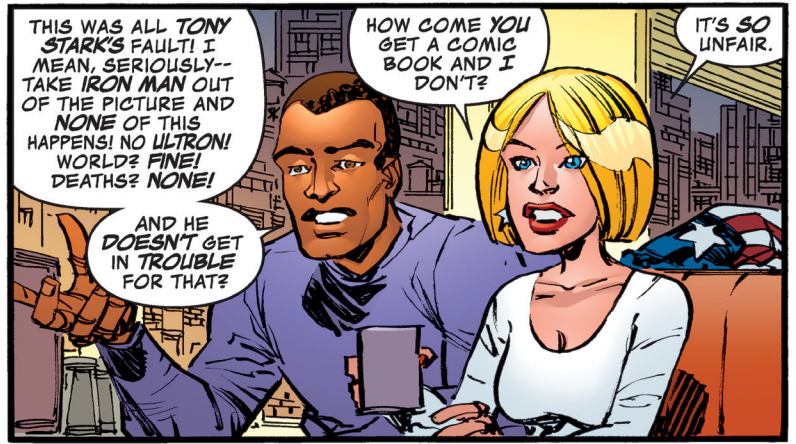
IT'S ALWAYS THE END OF THE WORLD IF THEY DON'T SAVE THE DAY.



IF IT WASN'T GOING TO BE THE END OF THE WORLD-- THEY WOULDN'T MAKE A MOVIE ABOUT IT, FRANK!

NOT EVERY ADVENTURE IS MOVIE-WORTHY!

HELL, I'VE FOUGHT BAD GUYS THAT DIDN'T EVEN MAKE IT INTO MY COMIC BOOK!

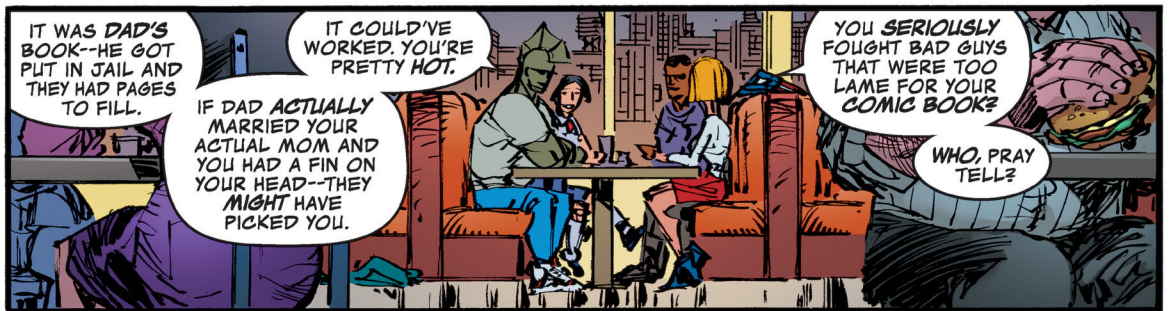


THIS WAS ALL TONY STARK'S FAULT! I MEAN, SERIOUSLY-- TAKE IRON MAN OUT OF THE PICTURE AND NONE OF THIS HAPPENS! NO ULTRON! WORLD? FINE! DEATHS? NONE!

HOW COME YOU GET A COMIC BOOK AND I DON'T?

IT'S SO UNFAIR.

AND HE DOESN'T GET IN TROUBLE FOR THAT?



IT WAS DAD'S BOOK--HE GOT PUT IN JAIL AND THEY HAD PAGES TO FILL.

IT COULD'VE WORKED. YOU'RE PRETTY HOT.

IF DAD ACTUALLY MARRIED YOUR ACTUAL MOM AND YOU HAD A FIN ON YOUR HEAD--THEY MIGHT HAVE PICKED YOU.

YOU SERIOUSLY FOUGHT BAD GUYS THAT WERE TOO LAME FOR YOUR COMIC BOOK?

WHO, PRAY TELL?

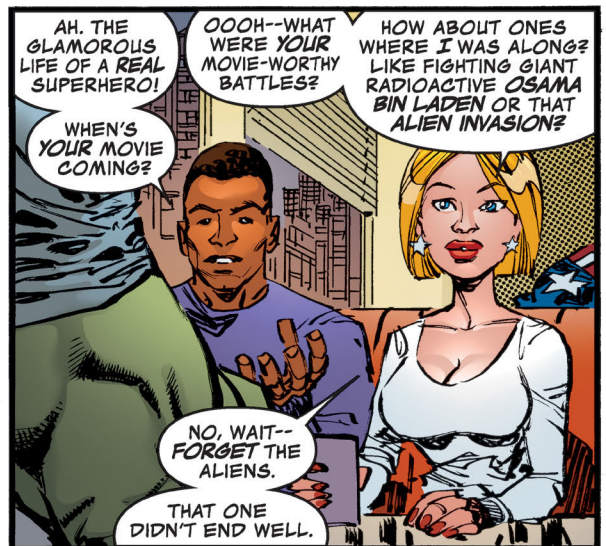


FEEBLE HENRY, PANCAKE BATTLER, THE CHISELER...

ROCKET JOHNSON, THE PURPLE PINWHEEL, DETOX...

BUZZARD BOY.

THE FLAMING EYE.



AH. THE GLAMOROUS LIFE OF A REAL SUPERHERO!

OOH--WHAT WERE YOUR MOVIE-WORTHY BATTLES?

HOW ABOUT ONES WHERE I WAS ALONG? LIKE FIGHTING GIANT RADIOACTIVE OSAMA BIN LADEN OR THAT ALIEN INVASION?

WHEN'S YOUR MOVIE COMING?

NO, WAIT-- FORGET THE ALIENS.

THAT ONE DIDN'T END WELL.



WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?

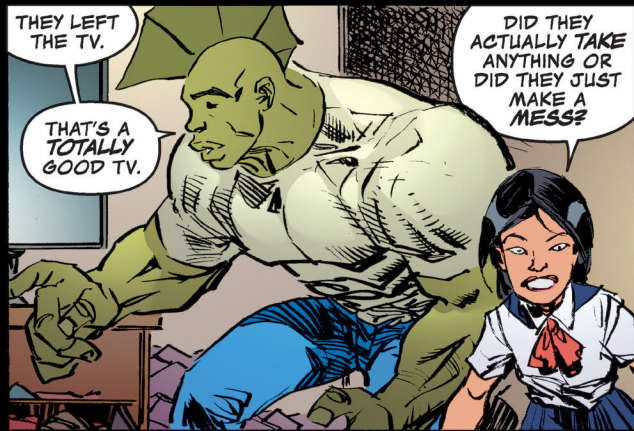
SOMEBODY BROKE INTO OUR APARTMENT!



WHAT A MESS!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE NEIGHBORS DIDN'T HEAR THIS!

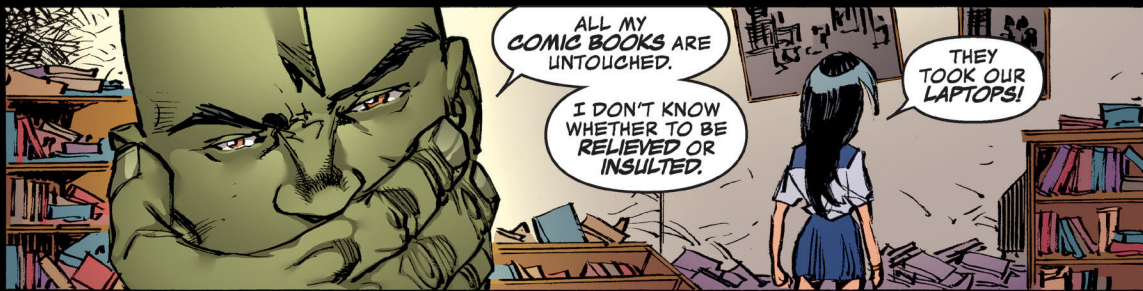
WHERE WAS CRAIG WHEN WE NEEDED HIM?



THEY LEFT THE TV.

THAT'S A TOTALLY GOOD TV.

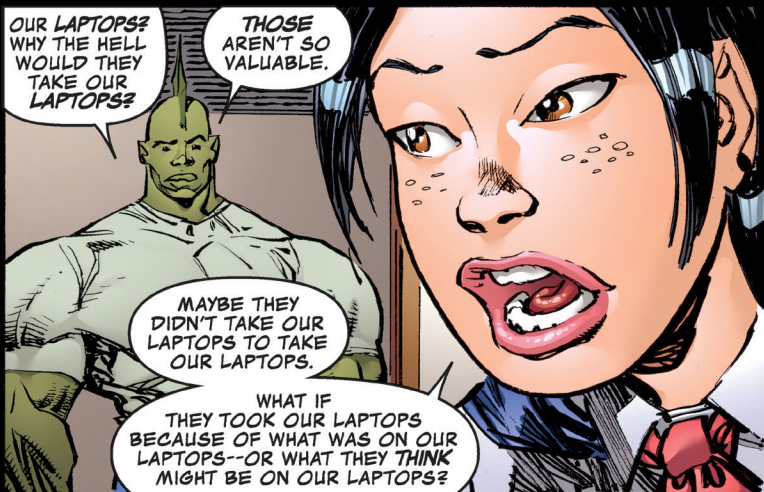
DID THEY ACTUALLY TAKE ANYTHING OR DID THEY JUST MAKE A MESS?



ALL MY COMIC BOOKS ARE UNTOUCHED.

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO BE RELIEVED OR INSULTED.

THEY TOOK OUR LAPTOPS!



OUR LAPTOPS? WHY THE HELL WOULD THEY TAKE OUR LAPTOPS?

THOSE AREN'T SO VALUABLE.

MAYBE THEY DIDN'T TAKE OUR LAPTOPS TO TAKE OUR LAPTOPS.

WHAT IF THEY TOOK OUR LAPTOPS BECAUSE OF WHAT WAS ON OUR LAPTOPS--OR WHAT THEY THINK MIGHT BE ON OUR LAPTOPS?



YOU DIDN'T BACK UP OUR SEX TAPE, DID YOU?

YOU ERASED IT, RIGHT?

THEY CAN'T RECOVER THAT, CAN THEY?

CAN THEY?

e-mail: Erik@savagedragon.com

visit our website at www.savagedragon.com

Savage Dragon #200 received a lot of mail. So much so that we're still running letters about it in this issue!

Hi Erik,

So, "Savage Dragon" is a teenage sex comedy now?

Cool.

I mean, I never thought the most interesting thing about this book would be who's sleeping with who (and who else at the same time), but it really works. Part of that, obviously, is just in having a younger cast filled with throbbing hormones. But, really, comics have always been soap operas. There's little difference between Peter Parker's love triangles and Malcolm's, save that you can be a little more, er, "graphic." Progressive? Modern? Last issue's situations had me cracking up, and this issue followed up nicely with Malcolm's conversations with Maxine. This being a serialized story, though, my first thought was about how long it would take before the three way sex tape leaked out somehow.

And then Tierra shows up on the final page. Hmm... Can't wait to see the sparks fly, particularly when Angel shows up, too.

It's not all romantic drama, though. Dart provides for some great explosive fights. Her Mako transformation was surprising and a nice turn of events to keep Malcolm off-guard. He can be a little cocky sometimes.

Those fight scenes are still some of the best choreographed and clearest-told action scenes in comics today. Nobody else in comics can blow up or knock down buildings with such clarity and energy.

Belated congratulations on the 200th issue, too. In the 25 years I've been reading comics, "Dragon" is the only series I've ever kept up with for over 100. Now that you've doubled that, I doubt very many books could overtake that title. Unless Kirkman starts double-shipping "Walking Dead" more often. THEN you might have trouble...

Best,

Augie De Blicek Jr.

Wayne, NJ

Well, yeah--to some extent Savage Dragon is a teenage sex comedy now--or at least while Malcolm's still a teen. The ladies in his life are all over 20.

Glad to see that I'm still keeping you interested after all these years.

Hey Erik.

I was so eager to get my hands on Savage Dragon #201 this morning that I left home early just so I could pickup my copy before going to work. I read through it very quickly once I got to work and my first impression was that it was a really fun issue. I took time over my lunch break to read it again in a more leisurely manner and my first impression was correct. Savage Dragon #201 does not disappoint!

On the very first page we see a very disheveled Dart attack and kill Jon Day by punching a hole right through his throat with her bare hand and my immediate reaction was "When did Dart get so strong? Did I miss something?" And then later we see her effortlessly lift up Melvin Belco with one arm at Belco Chemicals. I was really starting to wonder what the hell was going on with her until you revealed her transformation and then it all made sense. Nice twist! I can't wait to see where this goes. Will she have the ability to control her transformation into this Shark-Thing or will she slowly morph into a She-Mako? Only time will tell! And speaking of Belco Chemicals, I really liked the interiors you drew for the plant. I always liked Rex Dexter's lab underneath Dragon's house and kind of miss these more overt depictions of

sci-fi. I would welcome more stuff like this.

I really enjoyed the personal interactions in this issue. The talk between Malcolm and Frank Jr. was handled really well and felt very natural, like two buddies just catching up with each other. Their candid discussion about their sex lives was pretty typical stuff for guys of that age. It's also nice to see that they're both mature enough not to hold any grudges over past indiscretions. Angel's interaction with Daredevil was a little more subdued but it looks like it will have a pretty big impact on events in upcoming issues. It seems that once she actually got the object of her obsession there was really nothing left in it for her. Could it be that her feelings for Malcolm are deeper than she's willing to admit? Would she even do something about it if this is indeed the case? Could she do that to her friend Maxine?

And how about that Maxine? She just keeps on taking it up a notch. Not only did she instigate a three-way between herself, Malcolm, and Angel last issue, but she recorded it too! Malcolm's reaction to that was pretty priceless. He's both worried and turned on at the same time. And he's right to be worried too if the cover of #204 is any indication. And of course watching his past exploits in glorious HD inevitably leads to some more of that animal sex he and Frank were talking about earlier. I know there are probably going to be a few people who will complain about all the sex, but for me it is a welcome addition. It reminds me of the early issues of Savage Dragon when Dragon had plenty of his own sexual escapades. It seems that Malcolm is following in his famous father's footsteps in that department! Throw Angel and Tierra into the mix and things are about to get extremely complicated for our boy Malcolm.

Now for a few more random observations, comments, and questions about this issue:

1. I know I have given you some flak in the past for the bright yellow backgrounds (I'm still not a huge fan) but I thought the panel of Dart holding up Melvin Belco against the bright yellow background really popped and I quite liked it. I guess my main beef with yellow backgrounds is that when a scene takes place outside one would normally expect to see blue skies. Whatever. I'll try to stop harping on it!

2. A little while back you posed a question on Facebook regarding swearing. You really seemed to be having a hard time deciding whether or not to include it in the book but this issue has answered that question. For what it's worth I didn't even really notice the two instances on my first read through. It was only on my second pass that I noticed the swearing and both times it seemed natural and appropriate to the circumstances. Are you planning on its continued use?

3. Judging by his fight with Dart, Malcolm seems to be gaining confidence in himself and his abilities. He was spouting a lot of witty banter which was very reminiscent of his Father's, but with all the attitude and cockiness only and 18 your dude like Malcolm can bring to it. I liked it. It's something I felt has been a little lacking up to this point in Malcolm's tenure as the lead of this book. I guess gettin' some really has given him something of a swagger!

4. Was Mr. Eliopoulos in a rush this month? It seems like he missed a few words in a couple of panels. On page 6, panel 3 Maxine seems to be missing a "much" in her third speech bubble, and on page 7, last panel there seems to be a missing "the" in Kazuki's speech bubble. Do I get a No-Prize?

5. The Vanguard backup was great this month. The opening narration really hooked me and the rest of the story really flowed well. Mr. Fosco did a great job on the art and the coloring really popped too. I look forward to the story's conclusion next month.

6. And finally, I've been meaning to tell you this for a while, but I think your panel layouts are some of the best in the business. Not

once have I ever read one of your panels out of sequence, which is more than I can say for a lot of other artists out there.

Anyway, I guess that about wraps it up. I look forward to seeing what kind of (girl) trouble Malcolm can get up to next month!

Andrew d'Entremont
New York, NY

1: I'm a fan of the bright yellow. I know it's not found in nature but it pops characters like crazy. It's not supposed to be taken literally. Sometimes things are colored emotionally or symbolically.

2: When natural and appropriate to the circumstances. I don't want to stick in swearing just to have there be swearing in the book but sometimes it seems more awkward to avoid it.

3: Well, sure.

4: Any screw ups can be attributed to me. Chris is placing the scripts as I wrote them directly into balloons. The buck stops here. You got me on page 7 but page 6 reads fine to me. Give it another look. I'll generally try to fix things for the trade (and I do try to get it right the first time, believe me) so if you stumble on any others--let me know.

5: And how did that work out for you?

6: Thanks for that!

Erik-

SD #201 was an excellent issue, much better than #200's main story IMHO. I'm very curious about the mysterious white-haired woman at the start of this issue, is she a character we've already in the series, by any chance. Also, the scene with Malcolm and Maxine watching porn of themselves and Angel was kinda weird, to be frank. But it's interesting to see where things are going with Angel, and Tierra, for that matter. And the scene at Bellco Labs was quite funny.

Now, onto the questions:

1) Who owns the supporting characters Philip T. Lurker, Ma Becker, and Mrs. Eando from the Mighty Man stories? I know Gary Carlson, John Thompson, and the late Bill Fugate created these characters, right?

2) Who is the copyright holder(s) of the Mars Attacks Image miniseries? Are you the sole owner, or do Gary Carlson, Keith Giffen, Andy Smith, and/or Bill Sienkiewicz co-own a part of it?
John Pannozi

The mysterious while-haired woman at the start of the issue was Dart, having just escaped from jail in her Mako-form and turned back in a state of shock. Mystery solved.

1: Not that much of anybody cares one way or another but I assume they were created as Mighty Man supporting characters and would be mine to use and abuse if I so chose to do so. As it is, I don't imagine they'll be used very much in the future. Since they are, essentially variations on previously existing characters I don't see anybody really caring much one way or the other.

2: I own it. That was work-for-hire.

That wild ass Maxine..... :)

Erik,

Malcolm #9 AKA Savage Dragon #201 was definitely a ride...and kudos to the Vanguard crew as always for their story delivering goods on the far side of the galaxy.

Back to Malcolm...as I stated via Facebook, awesome way to keep the Mako Legacy alive...with that deadly side plus her already superb skills and Wise Guy blood...Dart will definitely be THE force to be reckoned with for DECADES to come...I'm sure her aunt wouldn't be proud but at this point Alison doesn't give two hoots...

Whoa, three days Malcolm was missing, eh? (Heh, I said "eh") That was some blast...looking forward to what else Bellco has in store, whether Melvin survived Dart's assault or not.

Ah, the trinity of ladies currently in Malcolm's life. In one corner Angel Murphy, who was raised with him pretty much...hell grew up on brother-sister relations but now could she finally be seeing him as more than her new pogo stick? Then you have Maxine, the complete wild card and girlfriend who now footage that could wind up being either stolen, sold or just seen by people that would trip out...in three days, I'm sure she's shown Tierra by now. Speaking of...Tierra...Malcolm's first girlfriend...

understandable she broke up with him due to danger, but knowing who he was, it was bound to happen...she was young and once she realized this was the life, she was done. Right now she's caught up with what she thought would be the last thing she would ever do affecting her life as well as Frank jr....they didn't marry for love, it was to try and be responsible for the innocent girl they made. Hopefully Tierra grows from this and becomes not only a great woman but great mother as well...now...being in the midst of the guy she wish she was with...decisions will be hard...as for the supporting cast of ladies at Malcolm's high school...I believe they'll have room to be fleshed out after high school...one of them could end up being his lady love, or someone we haven't even met yet. Can't wait to see this showdown of girl trouble in 202.

I can tell in your writing and in your art that you are having balls of fun...thanks for sharing with us.

Happy 2015 and many more.

Norv Henry

AKA Slim Jim Longfoot

The Angel Murphy thing isn't that weird, really. While she was raised by Dragon at an early age Malcolm was long presumed dead. By the time the two actually lived together in the same house she was 14-years old so they really didn't "grow up as siblings" the way some folks seem to think they did and very early on they were acting very unlike siblings. Hell, Malcolm came to earth from Dimension-X in Savage Dragon #143 and Angel was kissing him on the mouth in #144.

Erik,

Well, here we are, Savage Dragon #201, the issue after the greatest 200th issue I have ever read, seriously, 200 was terrific. And I expected to at least be a little disappointed but I'm happy to say that was not the case.

I really like how Malcolm is developing. He's definitely not a warmed over rerun of his father. Malcolm has his own personality, his own style, his own problems. I always imagined it would be hard to reboot a series using the hero's son but still make it unique, but so far your pulling it off in an extremely entertaining way. I do think Malcolm should have kept his lightning punch, just to further differentiate him from his father, but that's a minor quibble. And I love the way you've created Malcolm's supporting cast, blending older characters with new. Maxine is a great character and so not what I expected for Malcolm's girlfriend, such a breath of fresh air.

As for the whole sex angle, I don't know if it's in the overall best interest of the book, but I'm loving it! It's fun, it's slightly shocking and it's every high school guy's fantasy. I can't wait to see where it leads. Right now Maxine is digging it, threesome with Angel, inviting Tierra to stay with them (!) but I have a feeling it's going to bite her (and Malcolm) in the ass! Next issue, Malcolm in bed with 3 girls at once or cat fight central? Either way, I can't wait to see what comes next!

I admit I really liked Dart as a superbly trained normal with great weapons that allow her to go toe-to-toe with superhumans but seeing her turn into a superpowered shark woman was pretty cool and totally unexpected. She now has the power to be a real threat to Malcolm. And since Malcolm survived that massive explosion, I'm sure she did too. One of my favorite aspects of Savage Dragon is the great fight scenes you illustrate, now Dart is even more capable of city smashing brawls with Malcolm. I'm just wondering if we'll see the God Sword again.... All in all, Savage Dragon #201 was a great issue, a great follow up to #200. But tell the truth, do you think you have another 200 issues of Savage Dragon waiting to be done?

Thanks,

Don Massi

25 Thompson Ave.

Mt. Ephraim, NJ 08059

I would dearly love to go at least another 200 but time will tell on that front.

Hi Erik,

I just read through #201 and I'm starting to enjoy the notion of "Malcolm's book" more and more. Violence and action are hallmarks of SD, but the soap opera dynamic (almost WWE-esque) is adding a lot to the teenage/young adult years of the main

cast. The trials and tribulations of being that age are fun to read when the main character has super powers and is taking advantage of what he's been given. It's reminiscent of the early Amazing Spider-Man where Peter has his powers but keeps getting into messes and it screws up his personal life. The difference here (for the better), is that Malcolm isn't afraid and is enjoying life.

I recently saw that #202 will have a special layout, where every panel is in a different configuration. That got me thinking about how many times you've intentionally experimented with a layout. I can recall #7 with the all splash layout, issues #30 & #31 connect, #113 decreasing in panels for each page, #144 is a panel a day (and my single favorite issue of SD), #190 was the digest, and #199 was the all double splash page issues. What am I missing? I own and have read every issue, but I'm sure I've overlooked some of the intentionality you've introduced into the book. Any chance you can give the readers a comprehensive breakdown of things you've tried?

For a suggestion since you seem to be into challenging yourself like this - how about an issue of nothing but words? I know this is Malcolm's book now, but I'm thinking almost like cluster of a diary or found journal. Some of the pages could be letters that Dragon wrote to Alex or Frank from 18-20 years ago. There could be private pages from a diary Angel kept, or a to-do list for Mr. Glum (things he needed to get down to take over the world). A page of goofy things, such as Dragon's grocery list (does he buy 12 dozen eggs at a time) would be comical. I think it would be a fun trip down memory lane for old readers, filling in some pieces of the past and you could set some stuff up with the current form the series has now too. Give it some thought. It would be challenging but I think rewarding (at least for the reader).

To another 200 issues -
David Taylor
Brimfield, Ohio

Quite often my experiments are pretty simple and not worth noting especially. If I listed them all off it'd be quite a few issues--likely 50 or more. While #7 was all splashes #8 had a repeating panel grid. The Possessed issues had one as well. Issue 187 was all six-panel grids and that was a bit different but many issues have something subtle that I'm trying out. I'll often pick an artist and decide to use panel configurations from them in an issue or do one where the first panel on every page is a tall panel or something equally inane.

An issue with nothing but words would be a book and I'm not likely to have a book in place of a regular issue of this title. I think many readers would be put off by an issue with no art.

Erik,

Count me as a big fan of Malcolm and his crew starring in the book. Just finished issue 201. It was stellar. The writing is getting that almost madcap unpredictable feeling that used to be in some of the '90s issues when the cast was huge (not that your writing has ever been predictable, but it seems like this new direction has you amped up). After pages 5-6, I had the Knack's "Good Girls Don't" stuck in my head. The page layouts and art were a treat (I love when issues are set in the winter because I love seeing you draw snow all over the place). And kudos to Koutsis and Toris on the colors. Those guys have really brought their A-game the past several issues.

I want to thank you, too. I recently purchased the "Endgame" hardcover edition from a comic shop through their online store. They billed it as being a signed edition, but when they actually examined it, it wasn't. So they were awesome enough to send the book to you for signing, and you were awesome enough to sign it! Thanks! They even sent me the Sharpie you used, which I think I used to write a grocery list and then lost in my car somewhere.

One question for you: Any chance you'll do another full issue as an "all-in-one cartoonist" (including hand lettering and coloring)? I know it would mess with your schedule, but issues 128-131 are some of my favorites.

Keep up the good work.
Aaron Eppy
Devens, MA

I never say never but I'm more likely to do a backup or cover than a full issue any time soon. It all takes time and time is a premium these days.

Hello Fin Heads!

Seriously!?! I mean the sex stuff, THAT'S what a few people have been complaining about!?! All that hoopla for that!?! I guess these people have never been 18 years old with hormones on overdrive, geeze people, lighten up!

Stuff like this is VERY relevant when you are a teen, and about to head into adulthood, you are basically defined by your sex drive!

201 was a very good read throughout. When Dart transformed into Half -Mako, it was definitely a WTF moment, something you never fail to do even after 20 years. Another fact is that now we have a real BAD ASS villain here, you know Dart will use these powers to her full advantage and cause serious damage, you believe her to be a real threat to Malcolm.

What I like is the teen drama sprinkled in there, it makes me grin because it takes me back to my teenage years, and with couples breaking up, experimenting and all that really hits home. You can tell you have a son close to the age of Malcolm, or at the very least you remember your youth very well, dudes talking with dudes, about girls and life, it's great!

The minor Stan Lee reference was funny, I kind of saw this over optimistic gentleman not thinking about the consequences of his actions, and now there's this lab ready for the taking, which can only mean a million new super villains and heroes (?)

Anyways, you really have a momentum going, is it safe to say that you are having a lot of fun doing this, like a renewed energy?

I am just glad to be on this wild ride,
Eric Mallette

When I had Melvin Bellco say, "Excelsior" I was thinking of it in the classic sense as a Latin adjective meaning "higher" or "loftier." I was using it to punctuate the scene--with a hearty "ever upward!" as he bid goodbye to his comrades. There's a bit of Lee with the blind eye toward the possible consequences of his actions but I certainly wasn't out to lampoon Stan especially.

And, yes, I very much am having a lot of fun doing this book. In many ways it's like a new book to me at this point. One of the many advantages of setting a book in real time and having the cast grow and change over the years.

Howdy Erik,

I just finished issue 201, good stuff! I particularly enjoyed the banter between Malcolm and Frank Jr., yet another reminder how far this book has come. It was interesting to see many of my own sentiments echoed in the letters page as well, it is cool to know that there are other long term Fin heads out there like me who can likely remember where they were when they first read issue 50. For the record I was lounging on my buddy's couch, the very same buddy who convinced me to check out this book barely a year before. I started with issue 42 I think, the big SOS issue.

You mentioned growing up with these characters and that really struck a chord with me. That whole phrase in essence sums up while I still love comics at 33 years old, whenever I sit back and read something like Savage Dragon or even one of the Marvel Mainstays (I'll admit it, I dig what they are doing right now but am unsure about the reboot) it feels like coming home. THIS book carries more weight in that regard, however, for as a fellow reader said this book is consistent DESPITE how much it changes. Savage Dragon is very unique and I'm glad you are still enjoying yourself. It is obvious this isn't really WORK for you.

I'm excited to see issue 202 now that I have seen the template for it. I need to go back and check out more of your other "experimental" issues again, my latest favorite being the mini-issue you did (I snagged a few of those). I came across one of the Kirby covers for issue 200 the other day (my LCS only got me the standard version, which is fine) and left it on the stands... I'm going to rectify that on Saturday, the whole FORMAT of 200 was so dope I actually want an extra copy. I have a problem... I LOVE comics.

I'm a bit confused on this whole Dart thing but I'll stick with it... seeing her Shark-Out was a surprise, I had forgot about that whole Mako deal... That was in that very same mini-issue, wasn't it?

Anyhow, here is to 2015, the second year of Malcolm Dragon storming the stands (and making film apparently)! Is Dragon really in his 50s? Wow...

Thanks as always,
Cam Stylez

The Mako thing took place in Savage Dragon #191, the issue after the mini issue.

And, yeah, Dragon is in his 50's. When the book started Dragon was Superman's age, 29, but 23 years have ticked by since that time.

Erik,

Malcolm Dragon may no longer harness the powers of lightning with which to wield against those who would see evil prevail... but leave it to your fecund imagination -- like a bolt out of the blue -- to stun your readership with this monumental Dart/Mako revelation in SD #201. Damn! I guess Dart no longer needs a sword to slice through someone's neck.

Might I also mention, the Kirbyesque 3-D cover action almost kicked ME in the face!

Count me among the multitude of fans who rank Mako as one of their favorite villains, so it's great to see his essence return to the pages of SD, albeit the paradoxically grotesque guise of one good-looking female sociopath. It kinda reminds me of when that bastich, Lobo, was transmogrified into a hot chick. That musta been one hard -- that is to say, confusing time, for hormonal fanboys. Thor is also a young lady now, but it's not the same thing.

Scientists claim that when a man of vast intellect leaves behind his "essence" during coitus, it's like seeding smart DNA, whereby an increase in I.Q. can be quantitatively observed in the female recipient. Junk science, you say? More like junk DNA in a girl's junk, left behind from some spunk. Perchance Malcolm's frequent sexcapades will lead to a superpowered Maxine -- running around on supernumerary nympho overdrive.

Even though this new Dart's a homicidal maniac, I kinda feel bad for her. It must sting to see someone you so despised in your own reflection. Do maniacs hell-bent on world domination even bother to stop and examine themselves? I guess megalomaniacal narcissists do.

I'm glad you're not drunk on your power to create or destroy, Erik. You're not, right? Hmm.

It's cool how you're playing around with the concept of blood's viability to grant superpowers. It gives me hope that we may yet again see our senescent Savage Dragon boast some big, bulging biceps in the foreseeable future, as the super-jacked Dragon we've come to appreciate.

Just for the record, I too can effortlessly cradle an average-sized girl in one palm as easily as I do a copy of SD, or with the relative ease with which Malcolm "supports" Maxine. It always raises a few eyebrows at the gym, but well worth it.

While the intervening time frame between SD issues may hang heavily on my hands, seeing the singular manner in which you grip your illustration implements, by way of YouTube, definitely gives me newfound respect for your past attempts at lettering SD. Then again, perhaps your hand acts like a mini maulstick which bestows even more precision control... so what do I know?

Regardless of my physical prowess, or that of the Dragon dudes, I've always clamored for a paradigm that fosters a stronger foothold in comics, relative to "strong" female characters -- like the sword-happy Uma Thurman in the KILL BILL movies... irrespective of Quentin Tarantino's foot fetish predilections. It is my earnest hope that Evil Dart will not be summarily dispatched by her creator (I'm talkin' 'bout you there, Erik, not Mako). A new Vicious Circle made up entirely of women? If it's good enough for the new GHOSTBUSTERS movie, well then...

When it comes to heaping on praise in regards to your work, I love to lay it on thick -- deservedly so -- but not as much as how you seemingly love laying down some serious line weight with those thick/heavy panel borders as of late. Are you pickin' up what you layin' down? Is this the now norm? Is orange the new black? I'm sure Malcolm would argue that it's green as he stares wistfully towards the green light at the end of Daisy's dock... sorry, wrong book (sorry, Maxine). I seem to recall how you conveyed the image of Dragon having been electrocuted in SD #192 with a very thick panel border -- a sign of things to come. Books like DEADLY CLASS and THE FADE OUT provide a nice aesthetic by foregoing panel borders altogether.

Before I go, let me just say that the Tierra/Malcolm shower scene was too funny for words. I too could have benefited from a

shower 'cause I pissed myself laughing (guys often tinkle within the confines of their beloved shower, much to the chagrin of their significant other). Malcolm's "Green Machine" must have been quite shocking to Tierra, See, Malcolm doesn't need those pesky lightning powers after all.

Even though it's almost Valentine's Day as I write this, it was great seeing Christmas in all of its wintry wonderland glory being represented in SD -- something I always loved seeing as a kid (good thing Spidey had thermal underwear to protect his sugar plums). I'll refrain from asking if Maxine trims more than her tree to look pretty for Malcolm.

Later, Larsen!

Sotiris Gravas

I generally try to have the dates in the comics reflect those on the calendar but that's not always possible. I ended up touching on Christmas in three issues and they all couldn't come out at once.

Erik,

Issue 202 made me uncomfortable. Keep up the stellar work!

Chris Atkins

That, I can do.

Greetings Erik,

I'm fresh from reading issue 202. I got to say that it's one of the best issues I've read yet. I am loving the fact that Dart is becoming a truly formidable villainess. With her new powers and the God Sword, she will be hard to defeat indeed. She has a good mind for leadership, she just needs better and more seasoned soldiers. It was great to see Malcolm and Maxine grow closer in this issue as well. I have been enjoying their budding relationship and I look forward to watching it develop. Maxine has become a favorite of mine and will continue to be I believe. Also, thanks for spilling the blood and gore in this issue! It makes me happy to see it, Erik, I can't wait until the next issue. Thanks again for your work!

Sincerely,

Rick Snyder

Greenwood, IN

Okay. Well, sure. Thank you for reading it. That was awfully nice of you. I appreciate that.

Hello Mr. Larsen,

I just finished #202. Another great issue, by the way. I remember you talking on Facebook and twitter about the nine panel challenge, but it completely slipped my mind while I was reading the issue. So, I would definitely say it was successful because it flowed well enough without me even noticing until after the fact. However, I did feel like I got a lot more story due to the extra panels, once it was all said and done. All in all, an interesting and successful experiment.

It was nice to see the development in Malcolm and Maxine's relationship since I was starting to get a little worried that the sexual experimentation was going to become a regular thing in the book. Not that there is anything wrong with that, but it's not exactly what I am looking for in my monthly Savage Dragon fix. Also, it would probably become kinda ridiculous if it kept going too long for some of the same reasons that Malcolm and Maxine stated in the issue. So, it really did come to a natural and logical conclusion.

On another note, I have finally cleared enough of a space in my reading pile to delve into a rereading of the entire Savage Dragon run. I was sorta holding out for some kind of Ultimate Collection which was solicited, at one time, but after speaking to you at conventions, it seems like that is not really a priority for you since it will require quite a bit of effort and time to make that happen. So, I decided to delve into material, the old fashioned way: digging them out of the long boxes. The one advantage to that is I get to read all the old letter columns and commentary, which is like delving into a time machine, in a lot of ways. Hey, Erik got married! Hey, Erik had a son! Hey, there's going to be a Savage Dragon cartoon on USA! Good stuff. Also, I am enjoying the discourse between yourself and Peter David. While, the whole thing seems kinda silly almost 20 years later, I think history lands squarely on your side of the argument. I mean, especially

So, onto the actual comic book content! Still reads great, overall. I remember reading the initial mini series back in the day and thinking just how much FUN it was. I still get that feeling from comics today, but they are few and far between. Marineman and Mudman are two fairly recent series that come to mind. There is a definite shift in tone once the regular series starts and I remember that being kind of jarring, back in the day. I think a lot of that comes from the death of Debbie, but I didn't actually read that material since it was only available in the trade paperback which I didn't buy. Which does bring up an interesting question. Do you regret only including that material in the trade paperback, at the time or would you do it same way if given the opportunity? I mean, really, the situation is explained well enough in the issue, and I broke out my Image Zero to read it, anyway. However, if memory serves, Image Zero was not released prior to Savage Dragon regular series #1. Another question I had was about all the various spin off series. I do not own most of them and have not been reading them during this rereading exercise, but it sounds like most of the series had a pretty legitimate reason for existing since they fleshed out various character's origins and side adventures. If you had to do it all over again, would you still have them exist as separate entities, or would you have preferred to try to incorporate them into the core Savage Dragon book? It would probably slow the book down quite a bit with a lot more subplots and non-Dragon centric stories. Also, I'm just getting to the point where Freak Force was getting canceled due to poor sales. I'm just curious what those sales would have been since comics were selling so many more copies back in the day. Was that book losing money or was it just not making enough money to be worth your time that was pulling you away from all your other obligations? Hopefully, that is not too nosy of a question, and if it is just ignore it. I do not mean to offend.

Back to the actual comic again. Sorry about these constant digressions. I'm paying a lot more attention to the various side characters since I know some of them spin into some pretty serious things, later in the book. Rapture is a character which didn't really grab me the first time around, but I am really enjoying her characterization on this reread, for whatever reason. Also, it probably makes a difference since she is Malcolm's mom and he is the current focus of the book. Also, as scantily clad as most of them are, you really have some great strong female characters that have unique voices and are racially diverse. I really think you don't get enough credit for that. It was little bit ahead of its time.

The art itself holds up really well, and I am enjoying some of the great poses and action sequences. I love the pose and many variations of it where Dragon is sort of leaping and reaching with that oversized hand. Awesome every time! You really are a master of composition and motion (there's probably a more technical term, dynamism, maybe), but hopefully you get my meaning.

The art in the main series does seem a little different from the mini series. It is darker and seems "messier", but I don't use that term in a derogatory way. Paul Pope and Doug Tennapel have a messy style and Alan Davis has a very clean style, but both are stylistically viable options.

The art on current Savage Dragon seems to have shifted to a cleaner style, but that is just my opinion. There really is so much story in each issue and it really feels action packed, at the same time. While I have always LOVED your art, your writing is amazingly good, as well, and I don't know if I fully appreciated it, at the time. Maybe all that crap about Image Comics not being well written seeped into my subconscious back in the day and tainted my perceptions. All in all, this has been a very pleasurable reading experience for me and I can't wait to keep going and read the rest. Hopefully, I can update you as I go and let you know my thoughts.

Drew Woodworth
Savage Dragon Fan Forever

I do like the whole time capsule aspect of a letters page. Talking on Facebook or on the message board is nice and it's immediate but six months or a year later and things are no longer in front of people's faces and they're essentially gone. With a letters page it's here forever. So, yay that. Thanks for making it into print and it'll be in this issue always. So, there's that.

I do regret having Debbie's death take place elsewhere but at the same time there was this whole mail away thing

for a special Image #0 book and I wanted to do something significant in there rather than dash off a couple half-assed pinups or something. I put that material in the trade because it was important but, yeah, the whole thing could probably have been handled more gracefully. If I was to do it all over again I'd have preferred to have had that been in an issue #4 and rolled right into an ongoing book as opposed to leaving the initial Savage Dragon miniseries as a miniseries and then starting a separate ongoing book a few months later. Live and learn

As far as Freak Force--it was created to be its own thing and if it wasn't that I might not have formed the group at all.

The Freak Force book ended primarily because Vic Bridges wanted to stop doing comics entirely and I wasn't all that thrilled about finding a new guy given the available options at that time. Plenty of Image books flopped after successive creative teams failed to keep the momentum going and it just seemed better to end it on my own terms than have it limp along and eventually die of natural causes. Shoving all of that stuff into the Savage Dragon title was never a consideration but you can get a sense of what it might have been like by looking at the Savage Dragon book after Freak Force ended. The characters appear somewhat but they don't dominate it by any means. Their adventures were touched on but not dwelled on.

Artistically, things have changed a bit of late because I'm using Japanese markers more, which gives me a smoother brush-type line without it being an actual brush, which can get pretty messy in my hands and because I'm working larger now. When you work bigger the art gets reduced more and it looks tighter and more detailed in print. The only downside is that the pages are literally twice the size that they were and therefore take quite a bit longer to draw.

Please do keep in touch.

Dear Erik,

202 issues and no end in sight huh? Who would have thunk it. Malcolm is definitely coming into his own, and nice to see his maturity showing through as he deals with the females in his life on all sides of the aisle.

A huge highlight of this issue was seeing so many villains, female or not, in full costume taking on our heroes. It seems like this trend has been on the decline of late with more and more bad guys being those "funky head dudes" that started showing up in the 130's issue run and continue today.

While I know there has been an "in story" rationale that these generic thugs were the product of Belco Chemicals experimenting on the poor, you mentioned recently in a pod cast for issue 200 that these generic bad guys are actually a deliberate move on your part to avoid "fan requests" for origins and background for anyone in a cape and spandex. On that point; "I get it". I really do. Fans can be a little over the top. But to address this issue, I gotta say, I REALLY miss the colorful non generic characters that used to populate the book back in the day. And I don't think I am alone.

I-and-done background characters like Cyberface, Powerhouse and Roughneck have gone on to become major players in the book and have big fan followings of their own. Honestly, the current trend of using generic "funky heads dudes" in place of original "Larsen" designs has really left me wanting.

One of the things that really made Savage Dragon stand out on the rack "back in the day" was the colorful, leap-off-the-page designs you gave the background villains. No one else did this. Honestly, I never expected origins for all your colorful background villains. Heck, I was shocked that you went to the trouble of designing and naming them all (back when you listed all the names in the legal fine print; which I still miss too BTW!).

I suppose the rambling point I am trying to make is that your recent pod cast comments that you are deliberately using generic (funky head) villains in place of original colorful characters has really made the book feel watered down (IMHO). Having colorful "Larsen creations" in the background and in every fight scene was one of those elements that made Savage Dragon stand out and different from ever other book out there.

So... as a duly appointed representative of the fan base, having read Savage Dragon month to month since issue 1 of the mini series, I hereby ask you to reconsider your current "funky head dude" policy. If your reasoning for this is truly that you are

trying to avoid all of the fan boys online asking for “origins and background” on these guys, well you know what, I say you are officially off the hook. If the trade off means having colorful characters (sans origins) in the book vs. the current overabundance of generic thugs with funky heads, than do it!

Now that the Bellco subplot has more or less played out, let the Funky Head dudes retire too. Bring back the original Larsen creations that made this book great. If the trade off is a few fan boys need to accept the fact that not EVERY character will get an origin, so be it. You are too talented to censor your artistic creations this way. Bring em back! We miss your original Larsen esque crazy character designs. The Funky head dudes just don't cut it.

Keep em coming no matter what,
Scotty Neitlich
Southern California

I think you're under a preconception which doesn't really exist, Scotty. My point was not to make every character bland but to simply have there be levels of sorts. Much like in Spider-Man comics of old--when a group of businessmen would hold up a bank a reader wouldn't wonder all about a random thug in a brown suit because there was nothing particularly to mark him for distinction whereas when I'd have six guys in distinctive clothes do the same thing readers would wonder about all of them!

I half-remember some story about a cinema star's early role as a guy bagging groceries and a person commenting that “even though he was just bagging groceries you knew he was going to be a star” when, really, he shouldn't have stood out in that scene--he was supposed to be a guy bagging groceries and the fact that you noticed him was a distraction.

In any case--the point is that not everybody should be a star. Which is not to say I haven't been steadily introducing tons of new characters. It's hardly been a parade of guys with funky heads around these parts. Every issue has had guys in colorful costumes battling it out!

Greetings Erik,

So, I read the new issue of Dragon...and then end up in the hospital for three days. Talk about time to reflect!

But what a great issue to reflect upon! Sometimes it amazes me that you manage to pack so much action and development into single issues and don't feel the need to stretch everything out into six issues for no earthly reason except to make collecting trades easier. Supposedly.

Case in point, we start right off the bat with an explanation of Dart's new powers and by the end of the story? Yeah, they're gone. Talk about breakneck speed. But I think I can live without them, especially since she has the god sword back, which is definitely nothing to sneeze at. God only knows what you have in store and I refuse to read solicitos and try to avoid future covers, but I think this would be a great time for Dart to step into the background for a bit, use the time to retrain herself so she's more of a match for Malcolm.

Speaking of people who are evil bitches, damn does Tierra have some major brass balls. Maxine had no idea just how big a can of worms she was opening with that one. The three way leading into the four way wasn't totally unexpected, but Tierra being so forward about wanting Malcolm definitely was. I hope to god that she's not knocked up (Malcolm's smarter than....right?). Malcolm is definitely still into her as we've seen in the past, just have to hope the four way got it out of his system. But you'd never make things that easy on him, would ya?

I loved the scene at the end, of Malcolm just pouring his heart out to Maxine. He may be a smart ass like his old man, but he's also a lot more in touch with his emotions. It was a just a really beautiful moment, sir, and you really tugged at my heart strings.

Can I get a hug?

Overall, really liked this one a lot, even though it was lacking in Deadly Duo awesomeness. But its okay because that's what the next issue is for!! Finally, my cries have been answered! I praise your wise choice, sir! I hope that you're printing more copies than usual, because I have no doubt that the return of the Deadly Duo will have fans racing to comic shops to buy them up!

'Nuff said!
Don Smith
Surrey, BC, Vancouver

That would be awesome.

-Erik Larsen

NEXT: Prom fight!



And hey--don't forget to read The Funnies!

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F U N N I E S

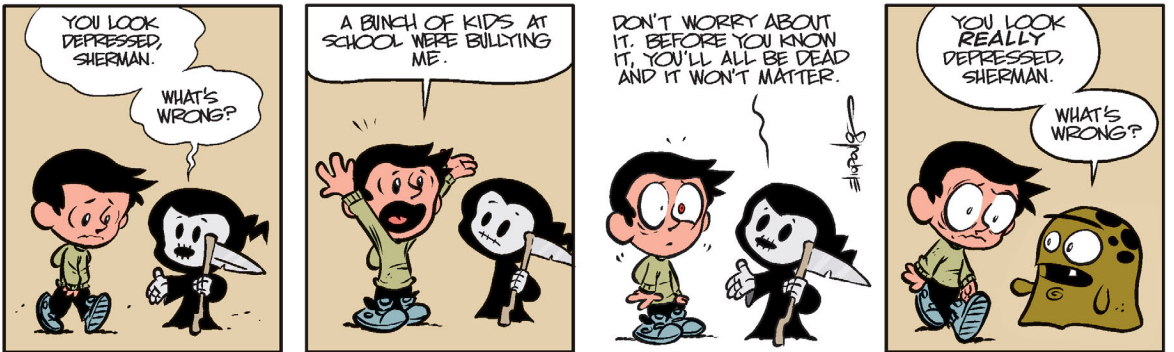
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MISERY LOVES SHERMAN

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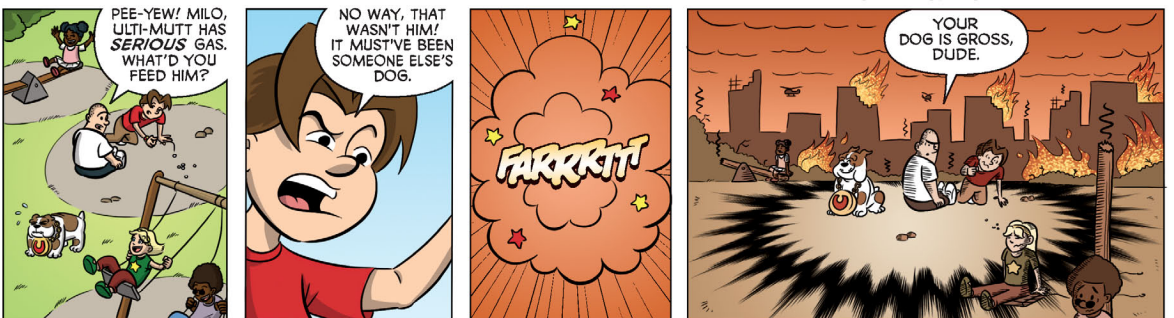
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MILO & ULTI-MUTT

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GOSH IS DEAD

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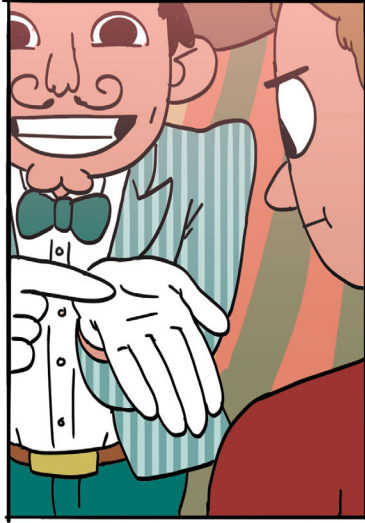
KNIGHT WATCHMAN

by Tom King



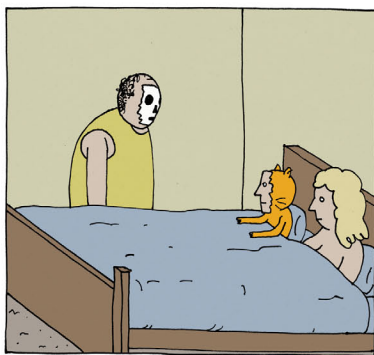
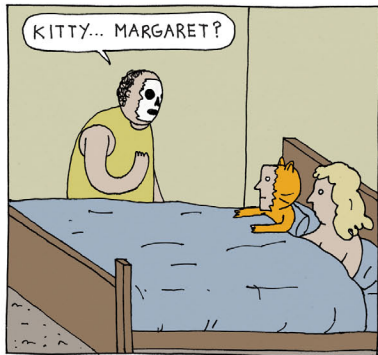
AT THE CARNIVAL!

by Brandon B.



MOONBEARD

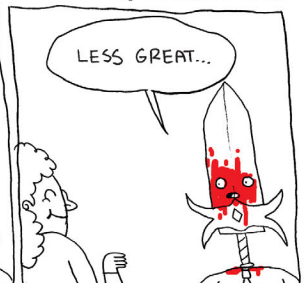
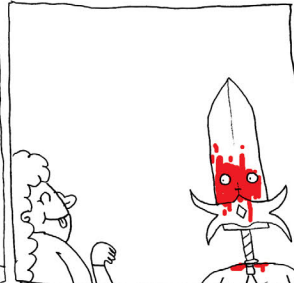
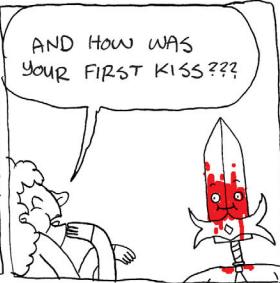
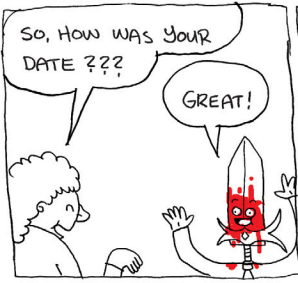
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SQUIRES

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