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25
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SAVAGE[®] 224

DRAAGON



SAVAGE[®] DRAGON

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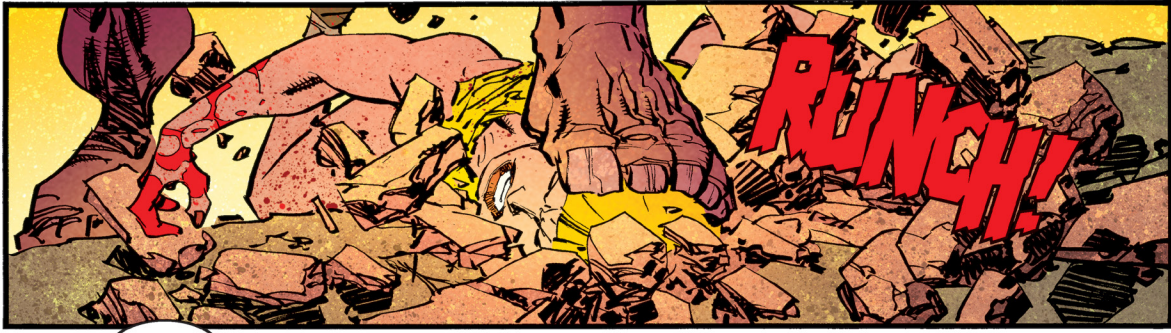
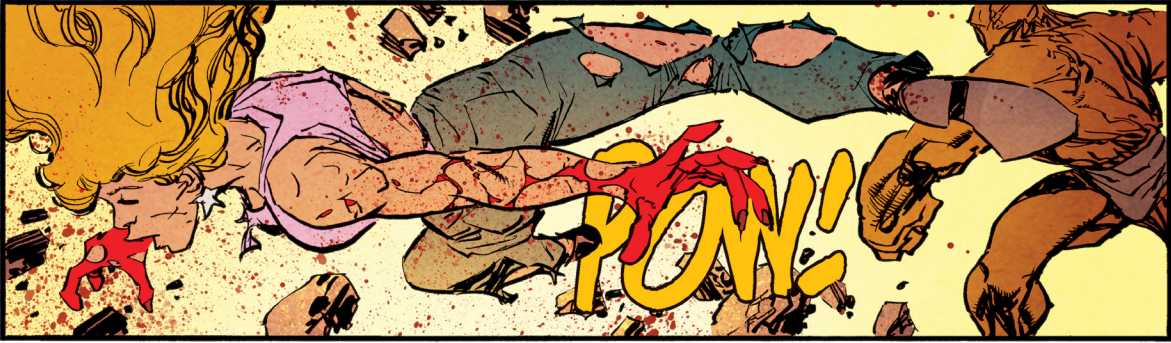
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HERE COMES THE MOTHERFUCKING CAVALRY, BOYS AND GIRLS!

HOO-BOY.

LET'S SHOW THESE SONS OF BITCHES WHAT WE'RE MADE OF!

NO PRISONERS!

BRANNA! BRANNA!
BRANNA! BRANNA!
BRANNA! BRANNA!
BRANNA! BRANNA!



HERE WE GO!

NOW THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

YAY! YOU MADE IT!



LOOK OUT!

AAAAIEEE!



THRA-KOOM!



MAXINE!



MAXINE? ARE YOU OKAY?

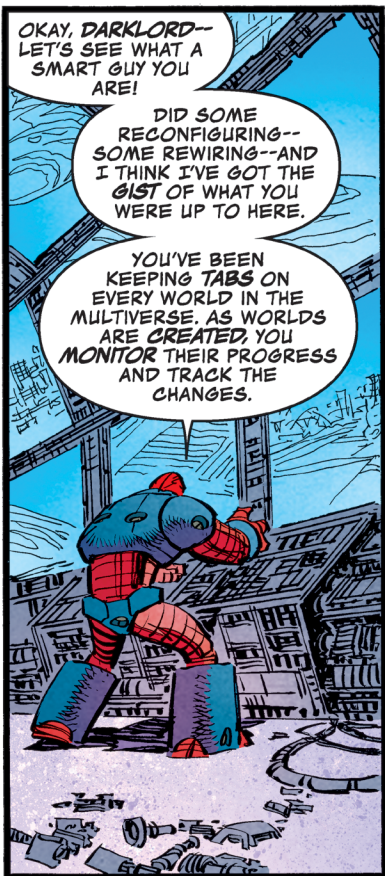
SPEAK TO ME!



DON'T DO THIS.

MAMA OKAY?





OKAY, DARKLORD--
LET'S SEE WHAT A
SMART GUY YOU
ARE!

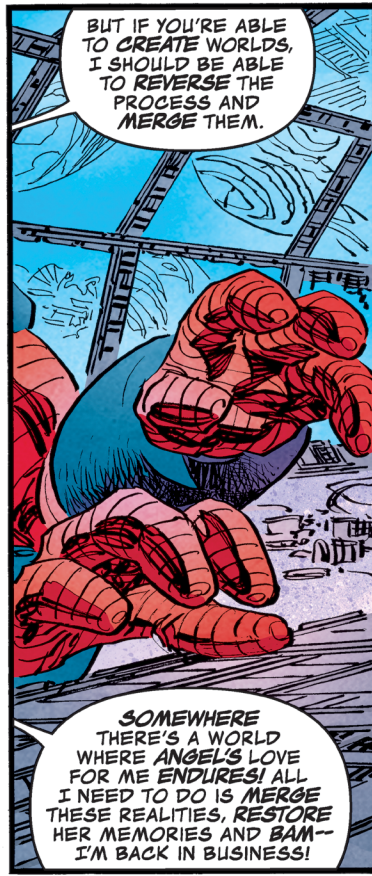
DID SOME
RECONFIGURING--
SOME REWIRING--AND
I THINK I'VE GOT THE
GIST OF WHAT YOU
WERE UP TO HERE.

YOU'VE BEEN
KEEPING TABS ON
EVERY WORLD IN THE
MULTIVERSE. AS WORLDS
ARE CREATED, YOU
MONITOR THEIR PROGRESS
AND TRACK THE
CHANGES.



THAT'S ALL HUNKY-DORY,
BUT YOUR LABELING SYSTEM
LEAVES A LOT TO BE
DESIRED.

THERE'S NO
WAY TO KNOW
WHICH WORLD IS
WHICH WORLD,
AND WHAT
CHANGES
WERE
WROUGHT.



BUT IF YOU'RE ABLE TO
CREATE WORLDS,
I SHOULD BE ABLE
TO REVERSE THE
PROCESS AND
MERGE THEM.

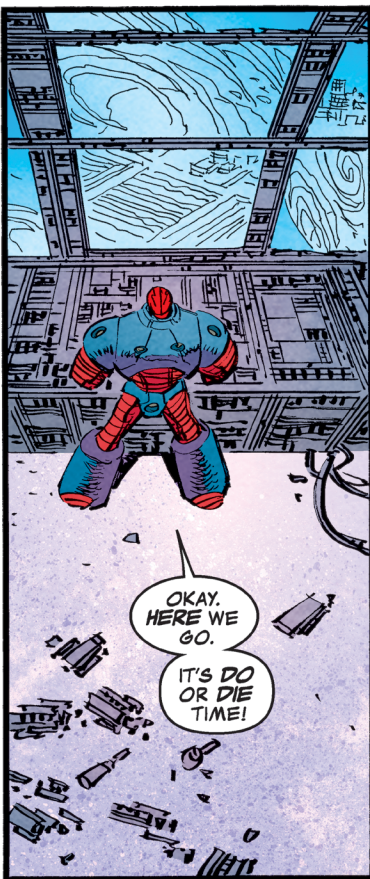
SOMEWHERE
THERE'S A WORLD
WHERE ANGEL'S LOVE
FOR ME ENDURES! ALL
I NEED TO DO IS MERGE
THESE REALITIES. RESTORE
HER MEMORIES AND BAM--
I'M BACK IN BUSINESS!



I'VE DETERMINED THAT SD75-30.1
IS ANGEL'S EARTH.

DARKLORD
HAD THIS ONE
SET ASIDE AS A
VIRGIN PLANET.
ONE THAT
EXISTED
WITHOUT HIS
TAMPERING.

SO I NEED TO KEEP
THAT WORLD INTACT
AND MERGE REALITIES
INTO THAT WORLD.

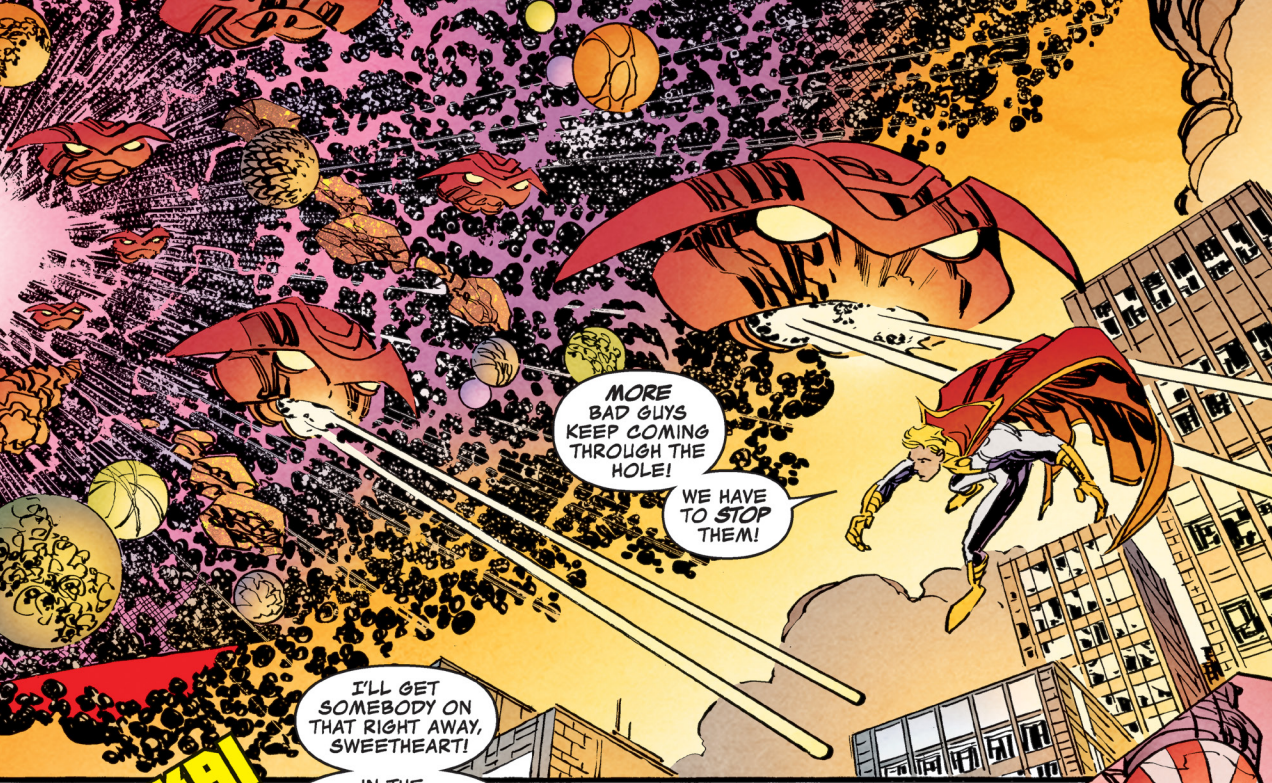


OKAY,
HERE WE
GO.

IT'S DO
OR DIE
TIME!



TIME TO WIN
SOME HEARTS
AND MINDS!



MORE
BAD GUYS
KEEP COMING
THROUGH THE
HOLE!

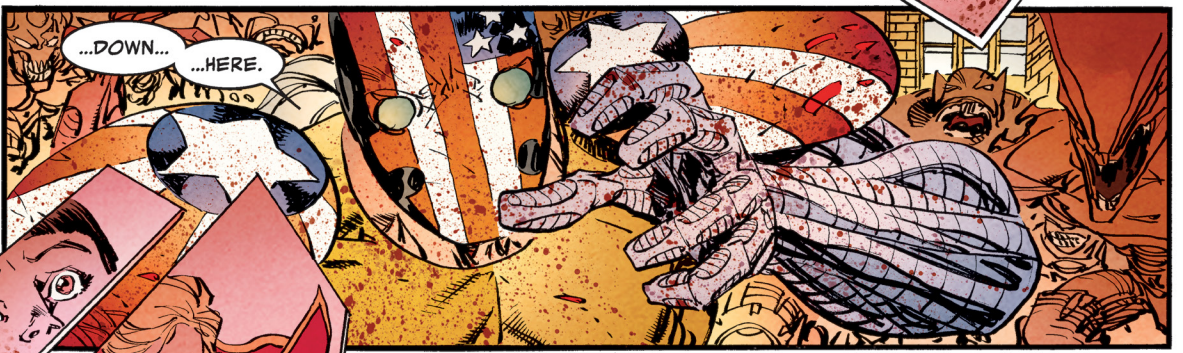
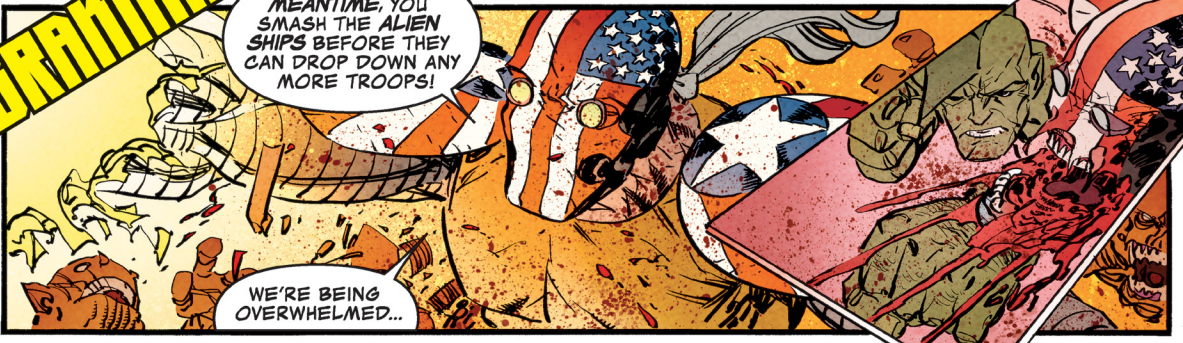
WE HAVE
TO STOP
THEM!

I'LL GET
SOMEBODY ON
THAT RIGHT AWAY,
SWEETHEART!

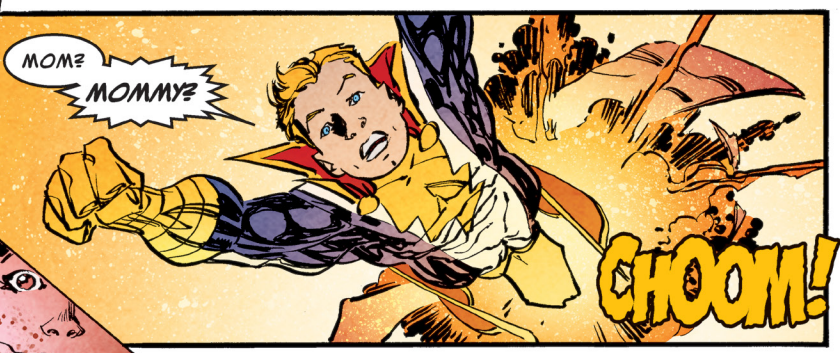
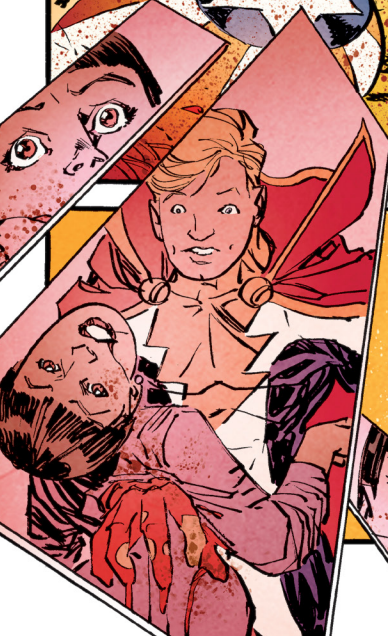
BRANNA!

IN THE
MEANTIME, YOU
SMASH THE ALIEN
SHIPS BEFORE THEY
CAN DROP DOWN ANY
MORE TROOPS!

WE'RE BEING
OVERWHELMED...



...DOWN...
...HERE.



MOM?
MOMMY?

CHOOM!

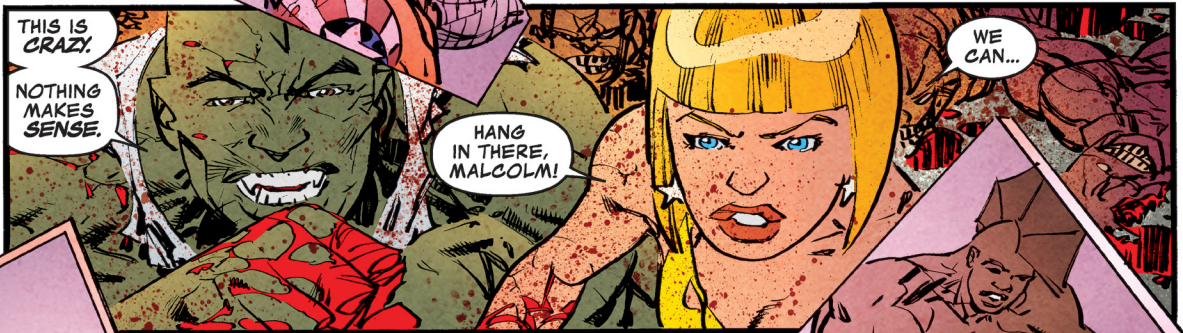


DRAGON...WHAT'S HAPPENING?

SOMETHING-- IS MESSING WITH OUR HEADS.

JESUS!

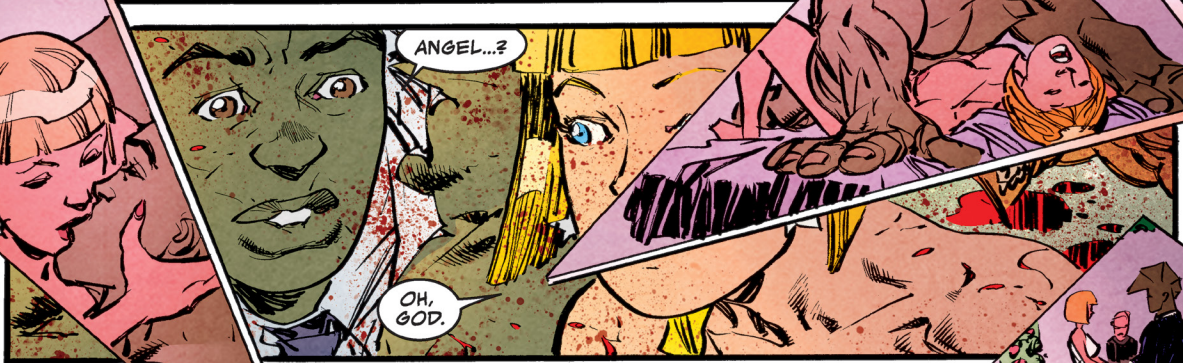
ALEX, I'M--
I'M SORRY.



THIS IS CRAZY.
NOTHING MAKES SENSE.

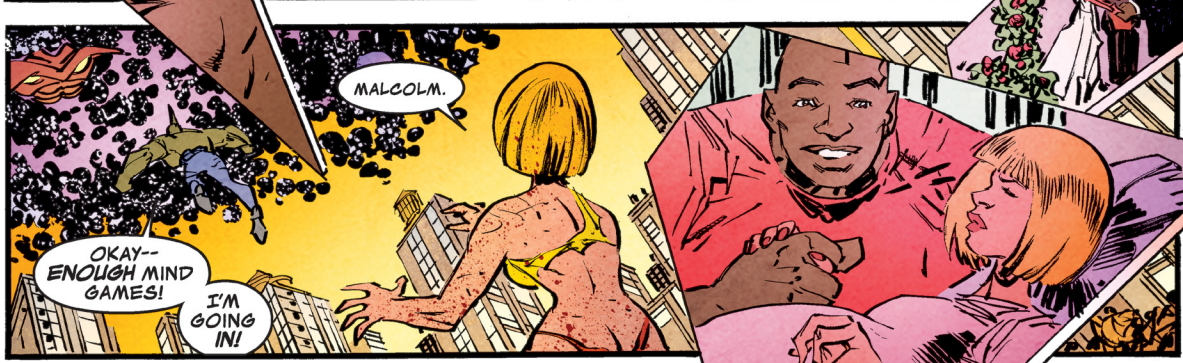
HANG IN THERE, MALCOLM!

WE CAN...



ANGEL...??

OH, GOD.

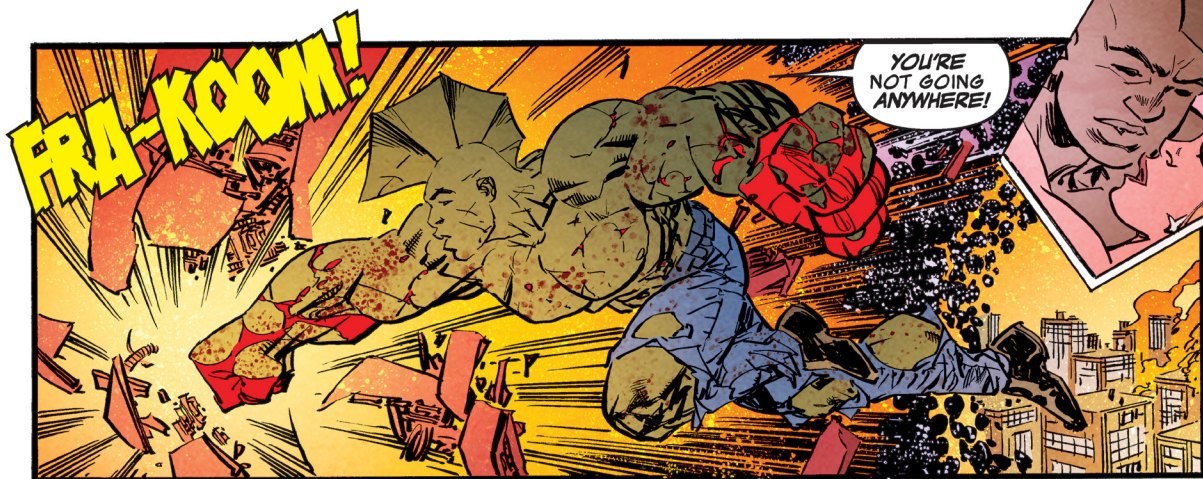


MALCOLM.

OKAY-- ENOUGH MIND GAMES!

I'M GOING IN!





FRA-KOOM!

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!



THIS IS MR. GLUM'S DOING, I'LL BET!



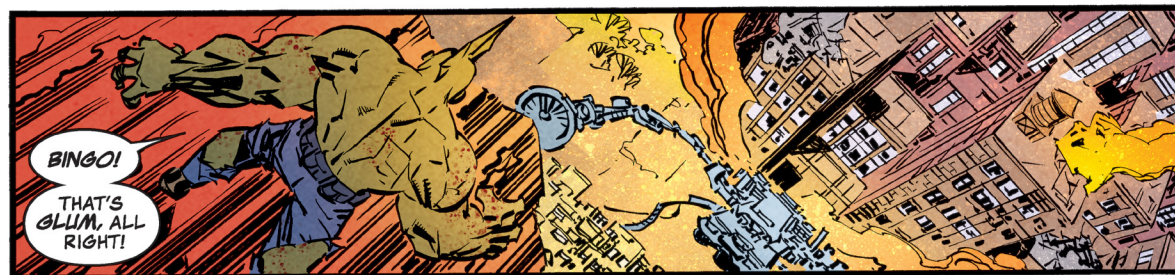
THAT LITTLE SHIT!

LEAVE IT TO MR. GLUM TO FIND A WAY TO ATTACK TWO ENEMIES AT ONCE--



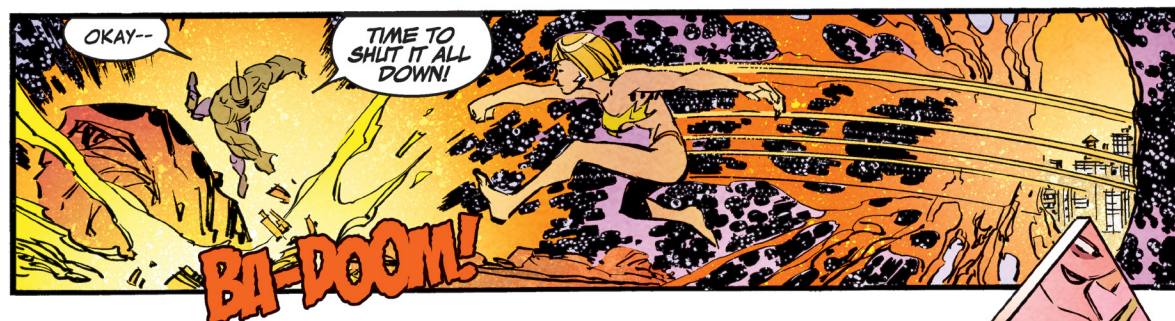
--BY FUNNELING THE BLOODTHIRSTY ALIENS ATTACKING HIM TO EARTH!

CHOOOM!



BINGO!

THAT'S GLUM, ALL RIGHT!



OKAY--

TIME TO SHUT IT ALL DOWN!

BA-DOOM!



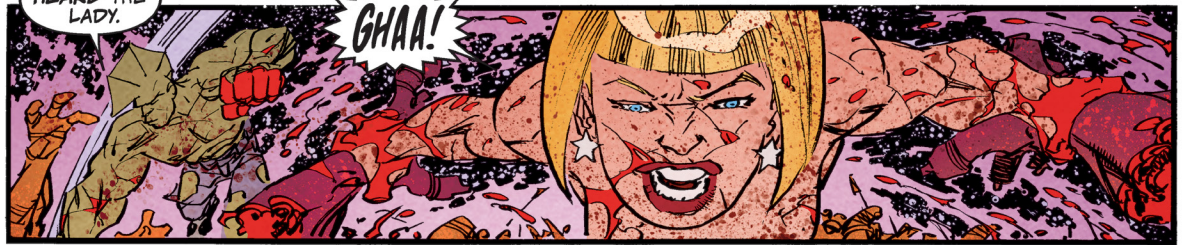
THRAKK!

YEAH--
WHATEVER!
YOU ATTACKED
US FIRST!

DIE!
DIE!
DIE!

YOU
HEARD THE
LADY.

GHAA!



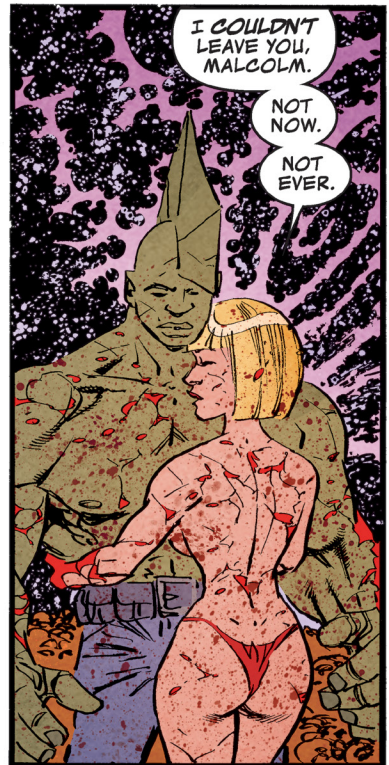
I THINK
THAT'S ALL
OF THEM.



WHY DID
YOU DO IT,
ANGEL?

WHY
DID YOU
FOLLOW
ME IN
HERE?

THERE'S NO
POINT IN BOTH
OF US BEING
TRAPPED
IN DIMENSION-X.



I COULDN'T
LEAVE YOU,
MALCOLM.

NOT
NOW.

NOT
EVER.



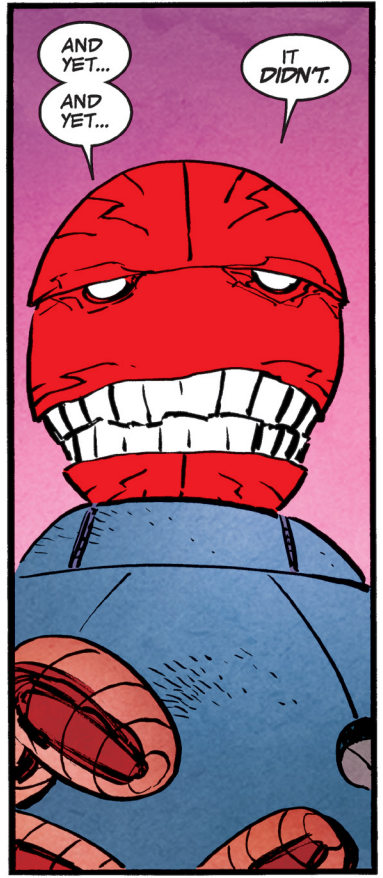
IT WORKED.



IT WORKED. EARTH 8FO4-16.5 NO LONGER EXISTS!

IT'S MERGED WITH SD75-30.1! ITS SCREEN HAS GONE BLANK! IT'S OFFLINE!

IT WORKED.



AND YET... AND YET...

IT DIDN'T.

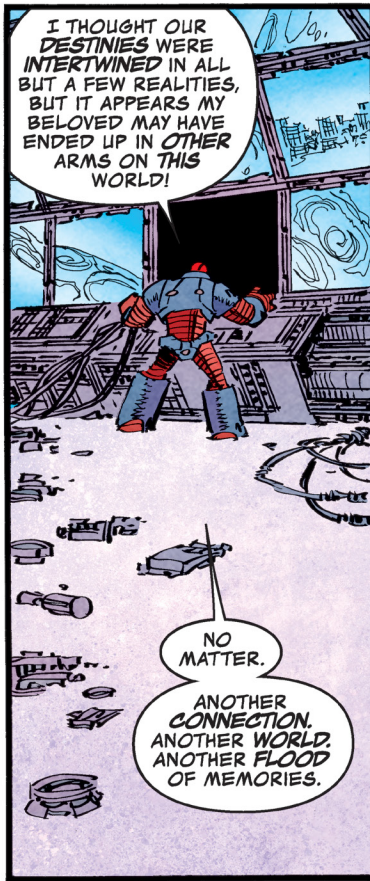


SOMETHING'S WRONG.

I WOULD HAVE FELT IT. I SHOULD HAVE FELT IT.

MEMORIES SHOULD HAVE BEEN FLOODING INTO MY HEAD ABOUT THE TWO OF US IN ENTHRALLED BLISS!

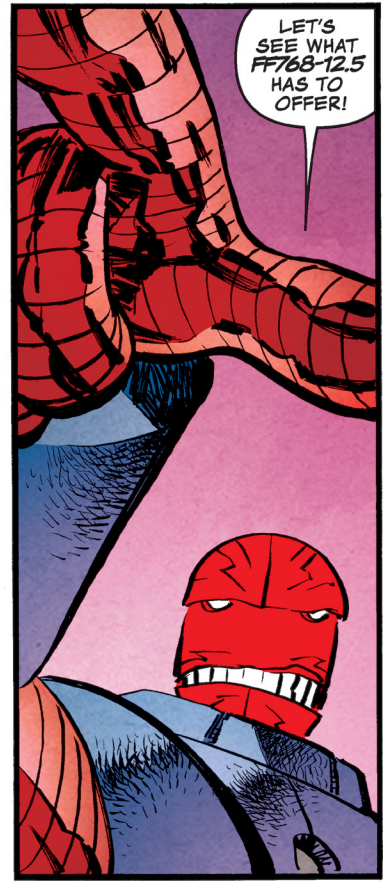
BUT INSTEAD OF FEELING ANGEL'S GENTLE CARESS, I FELT MORE WORLD-CONQUERING, PLANET-RESHAPING AND FURIOUS MASTURBATING!



I THOUGHT OUR DESTINIES WERE INTERTWINED IN ALL BUT A FEW REALITIES, BUT IT APPEARS MY BELOVED MAY HAVE ENDED UP IN OTHER ARMS ON THIS WORLD!

NO MATTER.

ANOTHER CONNECTION. ANOTHER WORLD. ANOTHER FLOOD OF MEMORIES.



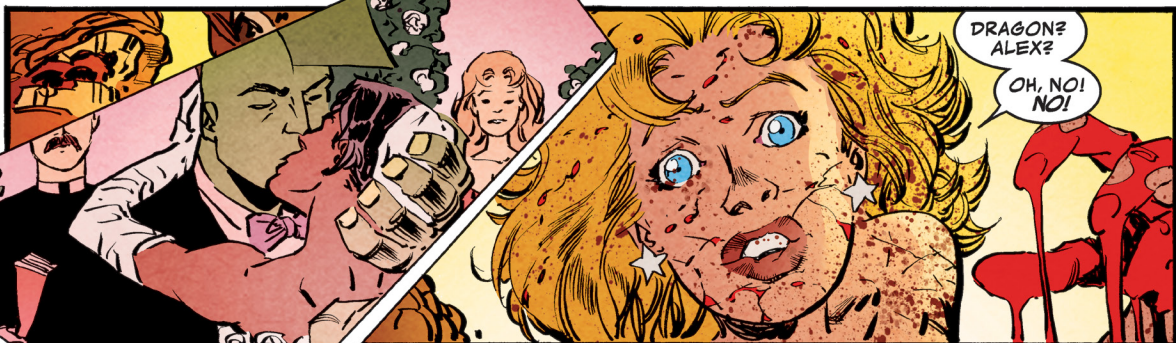
LET'S SEE WHAT FF768-12.5 HAS TO OFFER!

SPLORTCH!



LOOKING GOOD, JENNIFER!

BAP!



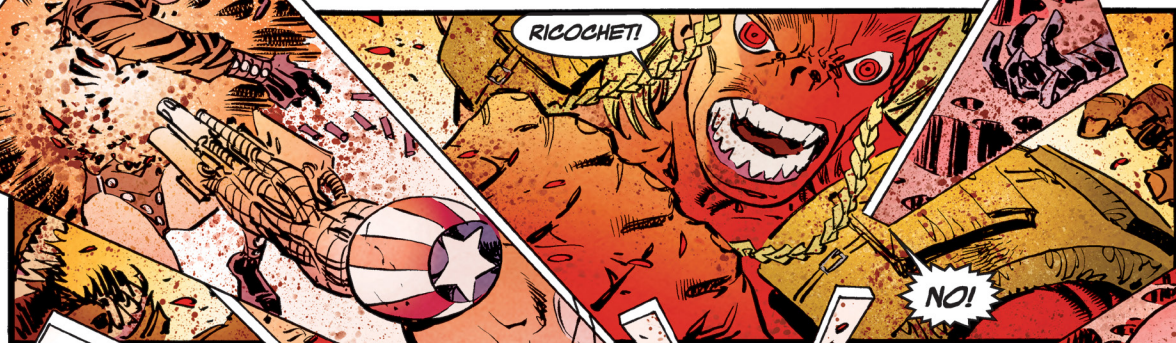
DRAGON? ALEX?

OH, NO! NO!



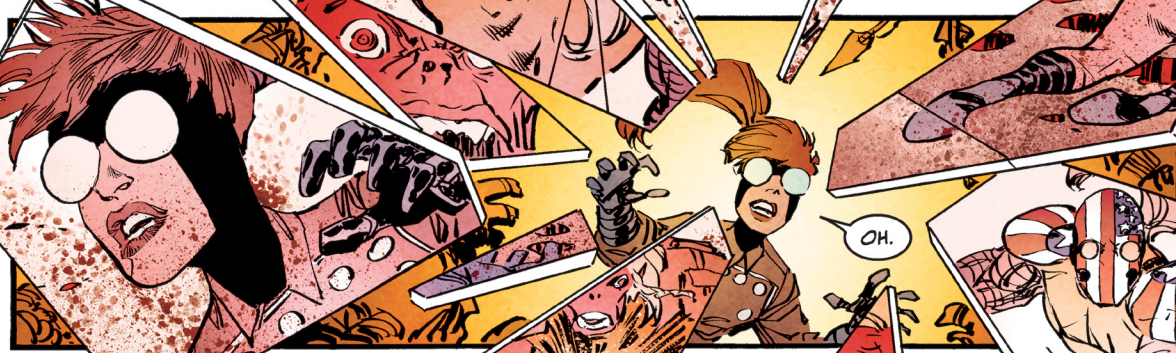
KEEP ON PUSHING!

WE'VE GOT THIS!

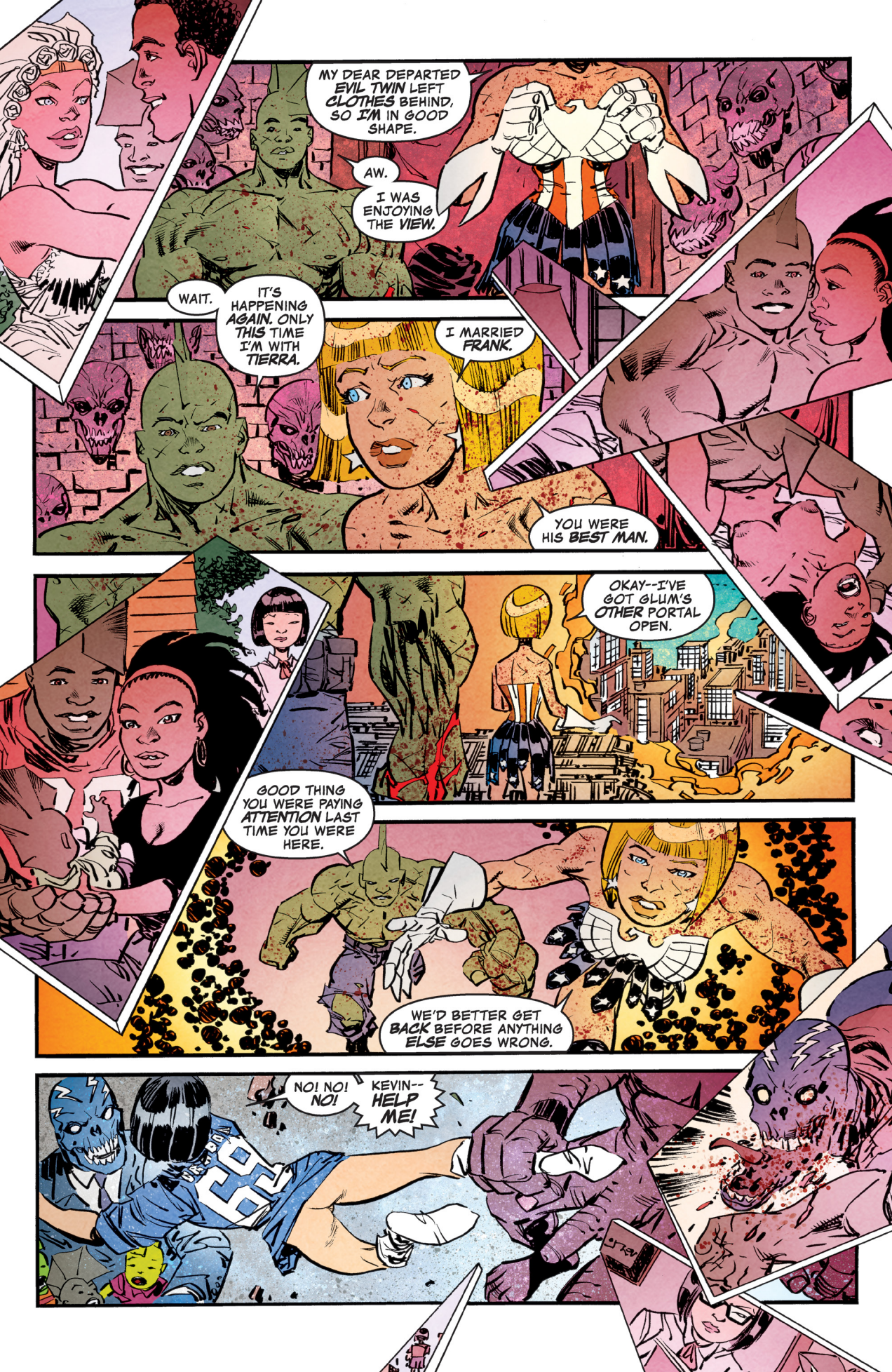


RICOCOCHET!

NO!



OH.



MY DEAR DEPARTED EVIL TWIN LEFT CLOTHES BEHIND, SO I'M IN GOOD SHAPE.

AW. I WAS ENJOYING THE VIEW.

WAIT. IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN. ONLY THIS TIME I'M WITH TIERRA.

I MARRIED FRANK.

YOU WERE HIS BEST MAN.

OKAY--I'VE GOT GLUM'S OTHER PORTAL OPEN.

GOOD THING YOU WERE PAYING ATTENTION LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE.

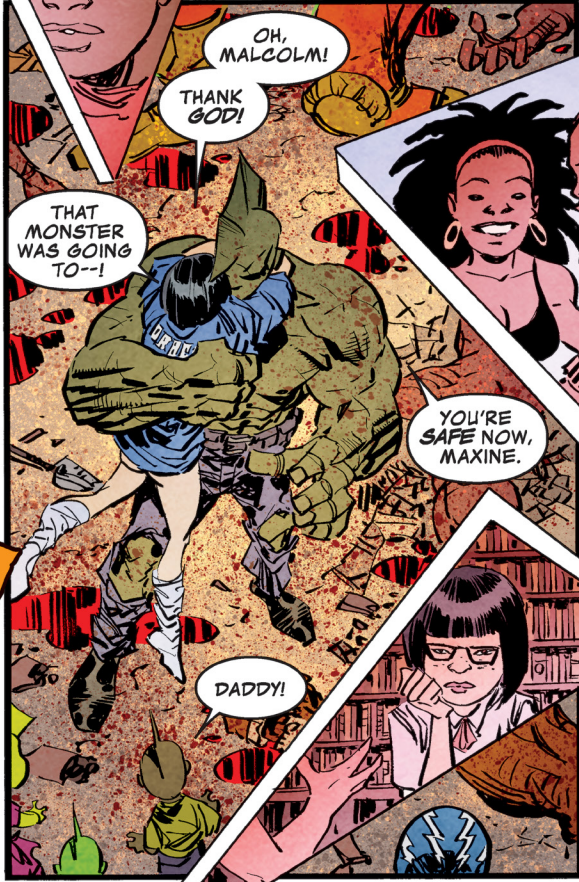
WE'D BETTER GET BACK BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE GOES WRONG.

NO! NO! KEVIN-- HELP ME!



LEAVE MY WIFE ALONE!

THRA-KOOM!



OH, MALCOLM!

THANK GOD!

THAT MONSTER WAS GOING TO--!

YOU'RE SAFE NOW, MAXINE.

DADDY!



FRAKKA-ZAKK!

SUCK IT, FUCK-FACE!



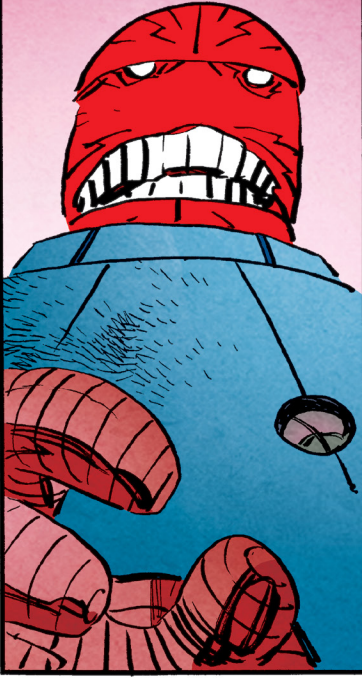
OKAY--THAT SEEMS TO BE THE WORST OF IT.

LIKELY A FEW OF THESE MONSTERS SQUIRRELED THEIR WAY INTO AN APARTMENT OR ALLEY SOMEWHERE AND SOMEBODY WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THAT, BUT IT'S MOSTLY OVER.

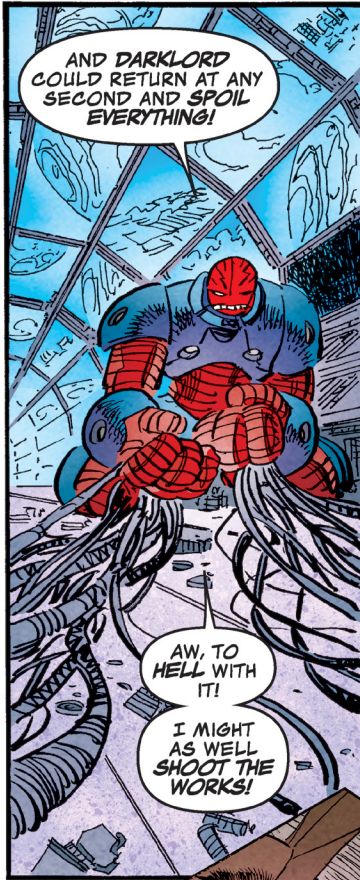
ANYBODY HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?

AGAIN! FAILURE!
NOTHING!

THIS IS BEYOND
MADDENING! GOING
AT IT ONE BY ONE
COULD TAKE A
LIFETIME!



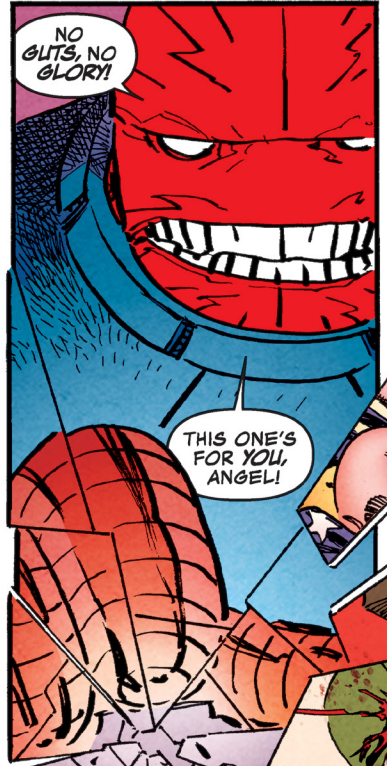
AND DARKLORD
COULD RETURN AT ANY
SECOND AND SPOIL
EVERYTHING!



AW, TO
HELL WITH
IT!

I MIGHT
AS WELL
SHOOT THE
WORKS!

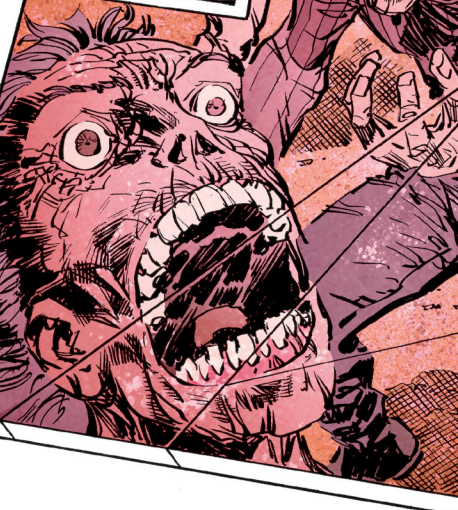
NO
GUTS, NO
GLORY!



THIS ONE'S
FOR YOU,
ANGEL!







DRAGON...?



WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED?

DID I JUST DIE?

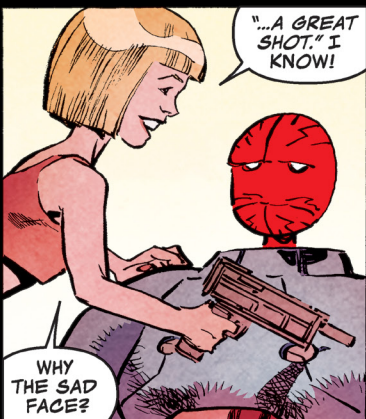
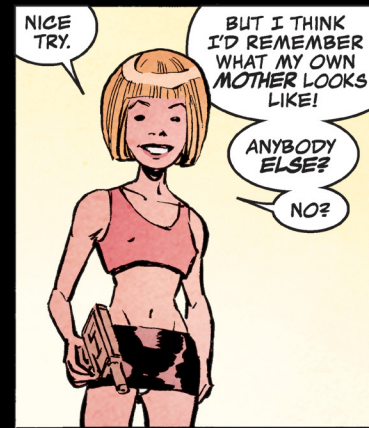
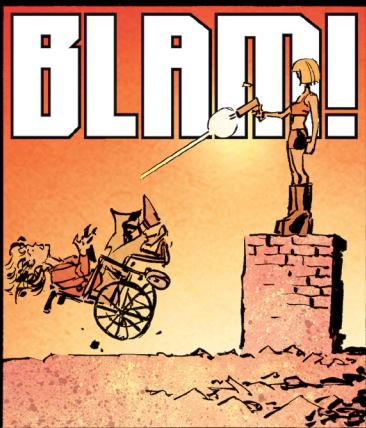
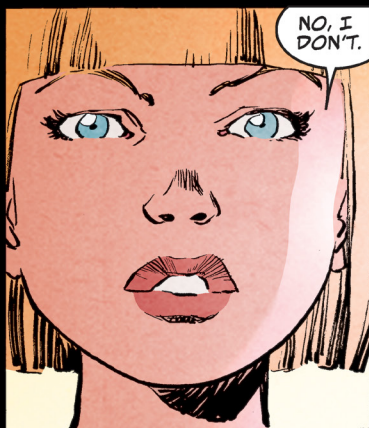
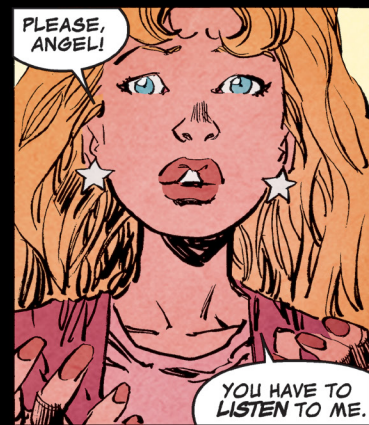
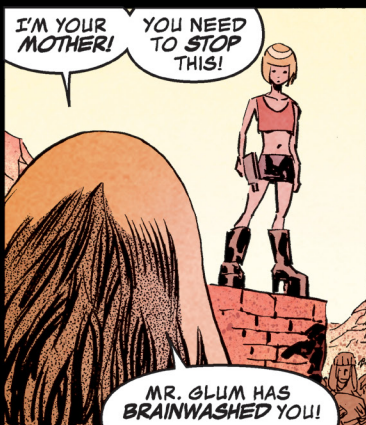
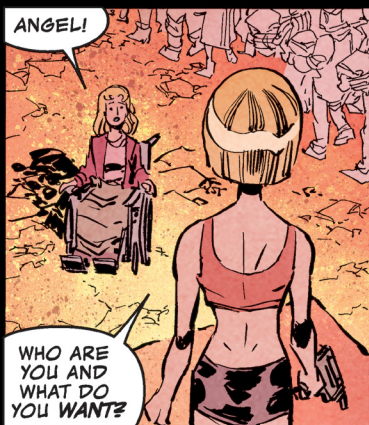
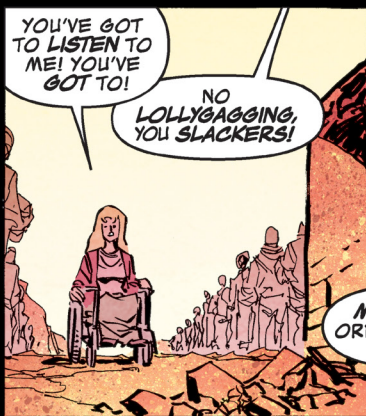
DID DAD JUST KILL EVERYBODY?

OKAY... THAT WAS WEIRD.



AM I DREAMING ALL THIS?

IF SO-- MY DREAMS SUCK!





GLUM...!

FIN ADDICTS

Send letters to:

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visit our website at www.savagedragon.com

Closing in even faster on Savage Dragon #225! This issue continues the senses-shattering three-part epic: The Merging of Multiple Earths! It began last issue, continues into this issue and concludes in our awe-inspiring 100-page super-spectacular 25th anniversary extravaganza, next month!

Every so often I need to do some catching up on mail. #221 and 222 received a mountain of mail so it's time for an extended dip in the ol' mail bag.

Hey Erik,

I can't remember the last time I decide to fire two consecutive letters in a row. It's been a while one way or another, but when an issue like 221 comes along, it makes every ounce of my body that loves Savage Dragon want to start talking about it. Since I can only talk about SD online, the next best thing is to write about it in a letter, so that's exactly what I'll do!

This issue has an air of nostalgia that serenaded the SD lover in me. Alex returns, Jennifer Murphy returns, Torment returns, and Chester returns. Wait a minute! Chester! Holy crap! Not that is an appearance that's long overdue. The guy is now a bartender to boot. Very interesting seeing the guy again after all these years as he was one of the characters that Dragon seemed to have a pretty fun relationship with. Even though it's Malcolm's book, it's still nice to see Dragon take center stage, even if its only for a short while.

Well, it looks like I was wrong with Torment's fate. I was pretty sure the electricity fried that sucker back in issue #194, but I'm kinda glad I was wrong. That dude is one crazy mule of a beast, and finding out what I thought were chin-spikes, turn out to be worm tales, was pretty disgusting. Those things go through his head? Ouch. Either way, Torment is still alive minus his evil side, so I'm not sure what can be done with him at his point, but I hope he someone comes back for at least one more showdown with Malcolm. Would hate to imagine his fate as a docile vegetable in prison. Speaking of villains, Glum. The guy everyone loves to hate. He's like the energizer bunny, he just keeps going and going. He's the one guy who has alluded death for so long, that I'm hoping his time is nearing its end. However it's pretty obvious he's a favorite of yours, so I wouldn't be surprised if he finds a way of cheating the Grim Reaper once again in this upcoming major story arc.

I can't imagine what Dragon is going to do with Alex and now Jennifer returning. A lot of people didn't like Jennifer, but I was always a fan of her relationship with Dragon. However, I've always felt like Alex would be the perfect match for Dragon. I really don't know what to think in this scenario! What is Dragon to do? I don't know, but you do, and I can't wait to see what in the same hill is going to happen between those three. Onwards and upwards to the questions!

- OK, so is Torment done with or will we see more of him? I always thought those things out of his head look similar to the things coming out of Snake Eyes's eyes. Those two need to form a team-up at some point.

- This might be the most important question I've ever asked. You have given us plenty of homages to Jack Kirby, but will we ever see a character with a bowler hat? Savage Dragon needs a classic bowler hat here and there.

- So following the back-up stories Gavin wrote, did Lightening Bug and the new Brute Force join the SOS? Lightening Bug is a personal favorite, so I hope she returns at some point.

- Is there any character you get cravings to write, but can't for whatever reason? Be it a deceased character or a character from another book?

Well Erik, another issue has come and gone, and it was fantastic which seems to be the case almost every month now. It's a comic book, yet these characters feel real and the more I read, the more I want. I love the real world aspects and the inclusion of Donald Trump has been hilarious. Maybe someday he could be the new BrainiApe, and instead of a gorilla it's an orangutang. Keep on

throwing the hits his way, because he deserves it. Now, can't wait for 222 as we build up to the big 225! Yes sir, I'm excited.

Sincerely,
Benny Hasa
San Jose, CA

Torment is not "done." We will see more of him at some point. There was some follow-up in #222 which clarified things a bit. The hard part in dealing with a guy like Torment is that you don't want to throw out the good with the bad. The tragedy is that the innocent needs to be confined in order to contain the guilty.

I suspect that I will introduce a character with a bowler hat at some point.

The SOS is somewhat sprawling and all over the place. They send in any number of members depending on the magnitude of the situation. Lightning Bug is in there somewhere.

The only characters I get a craving to write but can't touch are those owned by somebody else. There's nothing I can do about that. And, from experience, I can tell you that trying to scratch that itch with editors and owners involved seldom does the trick. I had all kinds of plans for Spawn (for example) and had intended to introduce a slew of new villains and repopulate the book and get things going but Todd was so overbearing and heavy-handed that I had to get the hell out of there. He was even rewriting dialogue from my own characters: Ant, Malcolm Dragon and even Maxine, for crying out loud.

No thanks.

Whenever I'm tempted to stick my toe back in that pool, I have to remind myself that it's not my playground and they're not my toys and there's no way I'm going to be happy working under those conditions. Almost nobody hands over their characters and then gets the hell out of the way. You pitch ideas and have to get shit approved. It's a process—and that process sucks all the fun out of it.

Erik,

In the war between good and evil, one thing's for certain: Evil, thy name is Glum. (Or is it Ba-Goom?) In the world of Savage Dragon, having a death wish needn't involve a God Gun; it's waking up in Chicago, or even worse, Dimension-X, only to discover Mr. Glum has done some unsavory things to you as you slept... like a new hairdo and perhaps other unseemly stuff. ALL THAT AND DECIDING TO STAY! (Not your average Beauty and the Beast scenario.) Well, Angel Murphy's decision to stick around paid off big dividends, allowing her to reunite with her long-lost mom, Jennifer. Who will Dragon go for now, Alex Wilde or Jennifer? Only time will tell if there's a three way in the offspring. (Provided you don't off them all.)

Observing Grandpa Dragon putting his babysitting skills into overdrive was very amusing. Not only are the triplets a handful (as Torment quickly learned), you might end up with a missing hand or arm. Just ask Craig. Seeing Dragon on the cover of SD #221 had me cheering, by the way. Yay! I can't believe you brought back Torment, who I'd assumed was one of the many fatalities necessary to sate your thirst for blood. The visual display of Dragon showing off his kickboxing know-how was quite gratifying; something I wanna see more of with Malcolm. Believe it or not, what shocked me most this issue was having Malcolm fire his weapon, not discharge lightning (great marksmanship). It's like seeing Batman use a gun for the very first time.

You know, I feel bad for all the toadies/Toadys of this world. When a keen intellect isn't your strong suit, donning battle armor that's programmed to burn you to a crisp just reinforces that fact. I gotta say, this issue was packed with detailed pencils on panels drawn from all types of awesome angles that were very pleasing to the eye. Also, Maxine is probably the best written character of any comic. Just sayin'. If I could just get a little serious for a moment... Of the film "The Birth of a Nation," promulgating KKK propaganda, an enthusiastic, if not racist President Woodrow Wilson was quoted assaying, "It is like writing history with lightning." Officer Malcolm Dragon's harnessed lightning is a repudiation of such hate,

while Angel Murphy allows the better angels of our nature to help guide her path. Just two of the many reasons why SD is my favorite "funnybook." Black History Month may be over, but Malcolm X is still fresh in my mind. Dimension-X, indeed. I'm glad this issue gave Malcolm and Maxine somewhat of a breather. The can't go around saving the world or their kids every day. That's what next issue's for!

Sincerely,
Sotiris Gravas
P.S. More nudity!

Finally a request I can fulfill!

As far as Malcolm discharging his gun goes—that kind of comes with the territory. He's a police officer and sometimes that's necessary. He can't actually fire lightning the way his mother could—he needs to touch somebody in order to unleash that power so his long range options are limited and that gun is right there.

To be fair, it's not likely that Toady was aware that Glum's armor would fry him to a crisp. He probably assumed it was like any other weapon.

Top of the morning to you, Erik!

I just finished reading Savage Dragon #221, and at the risk of sounding like a broken record, it did not disappoint. First, let's talk about that cover. Wow! I can see why you kept it under wraps for so long, and I really appreciate the fact that you did. I hate spoilers, so it was a nice surprise when I saw Dragon staring straight out at me from that front cover. Not only is it a fantastic illustration of Dragon, but the color choices really make it pop that much more. I didn't see it on the shelf since I get all my books delivered now, but it must have really stood out amongst all the other titles on the shelf.

This issue was pretty much a direct continuation of last issue, and by the looks of solicitations for upcoming issues this trend will carry on right up until at least issue #225. It looks like you'll have a bit of real time catch-up to do. But that doesn't bother me. In fact, I kind of like it. Not only do I really enjoy your catch-up issues, but it seems to me that it just makes sense that you should have them. It would be weird if Malcolm and the gang had a crazy adventure exactly once a month, every month like clockwork. I think it's much more plausible that these grand events only happen a few times sporadically throughout the year and the rest of the time they just experience everyday life like the rest of us. Well, what everyday life is like for them at any rate.

I like how you carried over the panel arrangements from the previous issue. It's a very effective way to separate the two storylines and makes for a nice visual contrast. On the Dimension-X side of things, I was happy to see Angel step up and take charge of the situation despite what looked like her capitulation to Mr. Glum at the end of last issue. I was impressed with how she was able to talk her way out of the situation. I didn't think she had it in her! She's always been a very strong and confident person, but she always seemed like more of a reactionary person who thinks with her fists rather than her head. Could it be she is actually maturing a little? Shocking! And seeing Jennifer so uncertain and deferring to her daughter was wild. Wasn't Angel just a little girl the last time she saw her? It must be seriously disorienting for her.

Dragon's adventures in babysitting was a fun romp and probably went as well as could be expected. The kids were only doing a little damage up until Torment showed up, at which point their violent tendencies came in pretty handy. Jack ripping the evil head out was a cool move and instantly made Torment a much more interesting villain to me. I always just assumed those were horns coming out of his chin, but the fact that they are literally the tail ends of talking heads is super fuckin' cool! Did you design him that way from the start, or is it something you thought of after the fact? In any event, I really hope you bring Torment back now because I really want to know more about him. Well done!

The last few pages of the book just gave me the warm fuzzies. Seeing Dragon trying to settle into his new life and reintroducing Alex was awesome. But poor Dragon. And poor Alex for that matter. Just when things are starting to look up for them and it looks like they're going to be able to get a fresh start, life throws another curveball at them. Those last five panels were so well done. The expression on Dragon's face says it all. When it rains, it pours.

On a final note, I must say I'm really digging the family aspect the book has going on right now. Having Dragon out of jail and able to be a grandfather to Malcolm's kids is a great move. It's the perfect way to keep him in the book without completely taking it over. I hope you keep this arrangement for a while. I don't think you've

explored this particular family dynamic before and it opens up some fun story possibilities, especially with Jennifer and Alex back in the mix.

And with that, I shall bid you adieu. I'm really looking forward to all the issue ramping up to the big 100-page extravaganza that will be issue 225!

Take care.
Andrew d'Entremont
Ottawa, ON

P.S. I loved your answer to my daughter's question about Mr. Glum's eating habits. It's sure to give her a good laugh. Don't be surprised if I have more questions from her for you in the future!

I'll answer whatever questions she has whenever she has them. Keep 'em coming!

And I've got a confession to make—I didn't draw the cover to Savage Dragon #221 and hold it back. I knew it was going to have Dragon on it and I knew that it would have been a spoiler for #220 so I waited a while before committing it to paper. I figured if it wasn't being shown to anybody beforehand—what's the rush?

In any case, I hope you enjoy what I have in store for you as much as I like delivering it to you! It has been my sincerest pleasure to have been able to bring you this book for all these years and I thank you for welcoming my humble efforts into your home!

Erik,

You brilliant mofu you.

Sigh...where to begin? First off thanks for clearing up Jennifer's age for me because it's been a while since I seen her D.O.B... So Jennifer and Angel are roughly 5 years apart now...crazy.

I know this is all a trip for Angel...given the fact that she was 5 going on 6 last time she saw her mom in Issue 75, wow. Seeing Grandpa Dragon with the Triplets was great...watching him get accustomed to free life again is awesome along with the Torment battle...and damn...it has been 5 years because he returned during the 20th anniversary issue...wow...time does fly...he came back to Earth...took out the new Overlord (aka Mercury) for good...then got arrested...and spent the rest of that time wondering if it would all work out...well it did.

Obama pardoned him and that in itself was the biggest win, definitively intertwining this fictional character and historic president forever...given the fact that Dragon was the first comic character to endorse Obama before he took office, and saved his life after he was elected.

I don't know how many of the FIN-Addicts ships Dragon and Alex but lord knows I do...even though I understand Jennifer is like his forever girl (hell my childhood crush name is Jennifer, so I get it, lol) but dang it, Erik...after all this time fine ass Alex is back...full grown (44 going on 45, and still hot) and single...and look who pops back up...the ORIGINAL Jennifer and still 27, lol.

The 220s is definitely going to be the game-changing decade of issues for the series I see and looking so forward to it all...I think of the series from when I was growing up when they were at this point, like the Marvel books in the late '80s when those kids born during the beginning of the Marvel Age were young adults and entering the comic field (your generation), those issues really shaped the future of those series and how it escalated the medium to a new level, for better or worse depending on your viewpoint.

My childhood friend and I was talking about how moviegoers see the movies as the definitive origins of these comic characters now, sad because they are unwilling to go to the root of it all and take what info they get and stick with it. We live in a great age to create comics but a bad age to sustain them. That's why I will try my damndest to make sure people see that great works such as yours exist, Erik. I have a series myself that I have tied into the fabric of real time situations...but due to the fact I'm not producing it on a monthly or even frequent enough level...I'm figuring out different ways to go about it...since my plan is to keep her a character born in the 1980s.

Forgive me if I rambled a bit too much but I had to. Kudos to Stephen Menendian for his series review letter...even the letter by the one guy obsessed with Maxine...lol that was entertaining. As a kid, this was always the cool thing about reading comics...seeing the letter's page...reading other people's responses to a book that you read and seeing other fans that like the book you like...these are the granddaddies of the reaction videos, lol. I encourage everyone that reads Savage Dragon, do a #SAVAGEDRAGONCHALLENGE Let everyone you know KNOW about this great book...we will most

likely never see the likes of this again so push it far and wide so we let everyone see how brilliant our “Kirby” is... Pure Larsen.

Until next time, chum.

NorViance Henry
Decatur, GA

I would encourage anybody who likes, well, anything to go out there and tell the world about it. If that means shouting about *Savage Dragon* from the rooftops—all the better!

Erik,

I wrote a letter that you were kind enough to run in *Savage Dragon* #90. In it, I described how I missed the flavor of the earlier *Dragon* stories - “the dialogue (and the adult language), the sexual situations, the violence, the unpredictability, the humor - all of which contributed to a more mature theme overall than I could find in most titles.” I wrote how I missed the supporting cast from the earlier days, the complex and crazy relationships between the characters, and the adult edge the title brought with it, all of which had given way to more of an action/adventure/fantasy vibe that was geared towards readers of all ages. I thanked you for years of solid entertainment, and said I’d check back in from time to time.

I picked up issue #200 for several reasons, nostalgia and curiosity among them, and really liked what I read. So I went back a bit to find out what I’d missed. The stories were fresh and exciting, and far more in line with the *Dragon* stories I remembered so fondly from earlier days.

I’m writing today to tell you that, as of issue #222, I’m all in again. Complex, adult themes? Check. Nudity? Check. Familiar faces and insanely complicated relationships? Check. Some over-the-top superhero hijinks interspersed throughout? Check.

If this is where “wandering into some previously unexplored territory” is taking you, I can’t wait to see what you find out there. And I’m happily along for the ride once again. More, please.

Sincerely,

Bobby Bazylak
Conneaut Lake, PA

Welcome back, Bobby. Truth be told, we missed you, too!

Erik,

Welp, I guess “vag” HAS been in the title from day one. Oy.

Seriously, though, I am fully aware of *Savage Dragon*’s tendency to push the envelope in terms of content, but 222 just whips out the letter opener and cuts that sucker right open.

The risqué elements over the years have never bothered me. At their best, they *ahem* serviced the story (such as the Horridus couch incident in 71); at their worst, they took a cheeky jab at the censors (like Rapture blowdrying her hair in 17). Even in 221, with Angel flashing beave left and right, I could still justify it. “Glum kidnapped her and dressed her in HISAngel’s costume,” I thought, “WITHOUT panties? Man, whatta creep.” The evolving dynamic between Glum and Angel has made him an especially vile villain, and it’s just another notch in the plus column for setting the book in real time.

222? I can’t really justify this. First of all, I understand that Angel is a tough cookie, but being kidnapped and more or less threatened with rape would probably make a girl wanna shuck her clothes and grab a shower as soon as she made it home. Ditto for Jennifer. But here they are, in their same filthy regalia, having a relaxed, casual conversation. I understand the need for exposition in such dense continuity, but damn...that’s some dehumanizing characterization.

Maxine’s the same way. Her high sex drive is well established. Her dialogue in this issue is redundant, and her behavior is completely unbelievable (that’s a stupid thing to say about a book where people can fly and knockdown entire buildings and such, but, more on that in a moment). Page 12 especially reads like the beginning of a piece of particularly...er...juicy slash fiction. In a book with real estate so precious, what does this add to Maxine’s character that we haven’t seen before? And if it’s the seed of some kind of subplot, color me worried. Even these fire guys with their garden hose dongs...I mean, what’s the real point? Why would energy beings even HAVE dicks? It’s a bit too much, too soon.

You mentioned the M/Mature advisory, and you said, “... apparently that is the strongest possible rating for an Image comic book”. I don’t think you’re flip about anything you put in your comic. Taking your editorial into account, though, issue 222 seems like the 21 year-old getting drunk at the bar for the first time, overindulging in the privilege, ordering dumb shit, raising some hell. And that’s fine, that’s what freedom’s all about. But the creepy ambiguity on

page 5, the squirt, the “happy ending”...I actively tell people this is my favorite comic and heartily recommend it. This is the first time I’ve been legitimately embarrassed by an issue. Especially on the verge of such an exciting and possibly accessible arc like “Merging of Multiple Earths”, 222 is indeed troublesome.

If the goal with this kind of material is to make the characters more lifelike, I just don’t think it worked. It feels dirty and fake. I’m not naive enough to pretend I know every kind of person living in the world today, but Angel WOULD have cleaned up and changed her clothes after that ordeal. And Maxine’s horniness is positively superhuman. So unless that’s where you’re going with this, it doesn’t make these ladies seem three-dimensional or down to Earth. Quite the opposite. They present like hollow, plastic fantasies.

I’ll still read the book. God knows what you’d have to do to get me to stop (I hope I never find out). I have the reassurance of your track record, and your statement that it won’t be “every page, every issue”. Hell, in smaller doses, it’s just business as usual, I know. But I take umbrage with how much of a cum sock this one turned out to be. I don’t want to be ashamed of any issue of *Savage Dragon*. It’s not a nice feeling.

Justin Crouse

When Angel and Jennifer returned to earth their first order of business was to call Malcolm and let him know they were okay. Not to take a bath—but to assure friends that they were alive and well. Following that, and the revelation that Dragon was out of jail—Angel excitedly gave him a call to let him know that not only was she safe but that Jennifer was alive and well. Both, perfectly reasonable actions, I thought: let folks know you’re okay. That’s the reasonable move. They’re not getting any dirtier. They can wait half a second to let possibly worried and frantic friends know that they’re okay. That’s what I’d do under those circumstances. And we pick up the conversation a second later in #222. Angel literally just hung up the phone and her mom asked her a few questions before the two popped into the shower to get cleaned up.

And, yeah, you don’t know everybody on Earth but I can assure you that not every person acts and reacts in the same way. Just because you wouldn’t say or do something it doesn’t mean that nobody on Earth would say or do something. In the overall scheme of things, you know a handful of people and I know a handful of people. Neither of us have experienced the broad ranges of human emotions all over the globe and nobody on Earth has experienced what these characters have experienced so it’s hard to say with any absolute certainty what they would or would not do. But I can say this: when it comes to the characters in this book—I’m the authority.

I don’t expect to please every reader every time. That’s never happened before and I don’t expect it to happen now.

Erik,

This issue was great as always. I am glad you are just doing what you want, because that seems to usually be in line with what I want to read even if I didn’t realize it.

I have a couple quick questions because even though Angel did some summarizing in her dialogue, I might still be confused about a few parts—

1) If Rapture is the mother of this new character that Malcolm saved, my first reaction was that it made them half-siblings? But then I started second guessing myself because I can’t recall for sure what the situation is regarding alternate earths/universes\dimensions\timelines and even duplicate Raptures?

2) When Malcolm is interviewing her at the police station, where exactly are those spark creatures in the room? I couldn’t figure it out. Maybe at this point no one can see them anymore?

3) Without spoiling anything for issue 225, does it feel super weird to be drawing scrawny Dragon out in the wild after decades of him being so huge and buff? Cause it’s still so strange to see!

Thanks and keep up the great work,

Dan Gibson

1: Malcolm considers Kevin a half-brother even though, technically, Kevin’s mother did not give birth to him. Same deal with Marsha Bradley. Thunder-Head and Marsha are half-brother and sister no matter how you slice it. Same universe, same mom.

2: They’re not in the same room. The three captive Fire-Lords were in an adjacent holding cell.

3: It does. I’m still struggling with it a bit. Same with him simply looking older. It throws me off.

Erik, dude,

So we are at the point where we are going to get some cock, balls, titties and ass, huh? I'm trying to figure out how I feel about it, but it ultimately comes down to the same thing as always, it's your book, I'm just here for the ride.

That being said, in my opinion, it's time to have the triplets(ish) climb up Angel and explode out from inside, leaving her lifeless, dead body for the elements to eat away at...right before they all three drown in a horrible(-y funny) bath-tub "accident", but that's just me. Maybe she'll get blinded by radioactive vag-squirt sometime in the future, which would be somewhat fulfilling. My point is, we all like different aspects of the book and wherever you want to go, count me in. (I vote for naked grandmas'!) So a variant cover is what catches my attention right away. Was there a reason or was it just a cool whim? I always dig it when you do that and am looking forward to the various covers for #225. Fuck people, I'll own up to it, I'll buy every variant from Dragon, so call me what they will. (Don't overdo it though). It kind of reminded me of the issue #17 variant but I couldn't find a difference of the interiors and that's a good thing, it took forever to find that one.

I love the fact that Dragon is back in the book more and from what I can see #225 might have him and Malcolm fighting together again and that would rock! Looking tremendously forward to it.

This issue (#222, damn man, #222) has a lot going on but still felt like a lot was resolved, and even more kickstarted. We have old bad guys, new bad guy, more on the resurrection of Jennifer (another reason to kill Angel) and now Malcolm has a cooler sister. Except for the baby shit, it was a better than average issue.

Your art seems to be on a streak of consistently kicking ass right now as well. Are you going to try some type of experimental art on us again anytime soon? I like the consistency a lot but it's always fun to see what you come up with.

I feel like I've wasted enough of your time and will let you getting back to the drawing table. Keep up the good work and good luck with the feedback on this issue, it's going to be fun to read.

Regards,

Chris Atkins

The variant was a bit of a whim. I'd posted the cover on Facebook in black and white and folks were so enthusiastic about it before the color was applied that I decided to print half of the issues sans-color. Color me impulsive.

As for Angel—I dunno what to say. There always seems to be characters that readers take a liking or disliking to. Some folks love Angel, some (okay, you) don't. Some want Dragon back in the book full time, some never want to see him again. Some have accepted and embraced Malcolm, some want him to hit the bricks. You're the first to request Malcolm's kids die horribly but it wouldn't surprise me to find that others share your view. There's no pleasing everybody.

Hey Erik,

Well, well, well, "off the rails", indeed! Holy Moley! I must say, every time I write in to this mag, I reiterate how I've grown up with this book. I can now honestly say, it has grown up too. And while I am okay with the mature leanings of the book, I certainly hope Maxine can get it together. Either help with a sex addiction problem, or if there is something else at play (no pun intended), 'cause I felt like I should have excused myself from the room on page 12. Yikes!

Sex and Violence Jennifer is alive and well!!! Excellent! And just in time for Dragon to be shacking up with Alex again! Oh, well, that could spell for a little more screen time for Grampa. Oh, those romantic entanglements! The pages they eat.

From the Too-Lazy-To-Look-It-Up Department: Correct me if I'm wrong, is Marsha the heretofore unknown daughter of this dimension's junkie Sharon? I am re-reading my run in its entirety for the first time, but I'm only up to issue 39, so I haven't gotten that far. Malcolm's got another weird, time-displaced half-step-sibling or something, looks like.

So, "The Merging of Multiple Earths", huh? OOO, that reminds me how much I've been enjoying Glum's return to the book! Culminating in a 100 Page 225th Anniversary issue? Oh, man. I gotta tell you, this book has been hitting on all cylinders for the last year, each issue better than the last. You have gotten really adept at speeding up the pace leading up to these anniversary issues, and they NEVER disappoint. The readers can tell that your excitement level for Dragon is as high as it has ever been, and it is reciprocated. Here's to doing whatever the hell you want for however the hell long you want to, I'll be along for the ride.

David Bewsey

Rockin' the suburbs, just like Joshey Eichhörn did.

P.S. Oh, yeah, Malcolm's cool, too. Sorry, lots going on this issue!

Technically it's the 25th anniversary issue. True, it is the 225th issue but the book hasn't been around 225 years! Give it time.

Hi Erik!

Long time no write! (sorry about that)

I haven't been financially able to buy any comics for the past few months (they're five bucks a pop minimum up here in Canada) but I was just able to pick up the past three issues, and great googily moogily were they outstanding! Dragon's back? DRAGON'S BACK!!! Jennifer's back? JENNIFER'S BACK!!! Maxine's a nympho? Well...that's always seemed to be the case. I must say, issue 222 caught me a bit off guard with the showing of... well... just about everything, but thanks a lot for the explanation box at the end! You've been such a tease over the past 25 years that it'll be exciting to see what comes out of that brilliant brain of yours now that the shackles are off! All in all, I'm as excited to pick up this crazy book now as I was when I first bought #50! Thanks for an amazing ride so far!

I hope you and yours are, and continue to be, well!

See ya in the funny pages!

Adam Viklund

Penticton, BC, Canada

I'll be here!

Erik,

I dare say, this high-octane issue was firing on all cylinders. Thankfully, I didn't sustain any third-degree burns from SD #222's dynamite 3-D cover. Wow! You don't typically see a bird's-eye view angle like that (though you did try something similar with SD #71). I loved the yellow, but that b&w variant was more than welcome..

Right off the bat, let me just say that I, for one, am glad that you take creative risks with SD. Your artistic sensibilities should be allowed to flourish, lest you feel stifled and mediocrity sets in. Nobody wants that.

Let's address the obvious elephant in the room, which was actually the tastefully-rendered nude female form of a very fit Alex Wilde. Not to mention those crotch-shots and nip-peekaboos of Angel, Marsha Bradley in her birthday suit, and anatomically correct Fire-Lords. Did I forget anyone?

Casual nudity and depictions of sex in this book gives it more of a European flair that's way more adult, and I'm fine with that. As long as there's no gender bias and guys are also shown "full monty," I have no problem. It should be a two-way street (three ways notwithstanding). Many artists hone their craft by sketching nude models, and, as such, the human body should be viewed as a work of art, not just an implement of pornography, as some would have us believe. Nudity and sexuality are not aspects of life that should elicit shame and have always been part and parcel of this book. Let's not forget how Dragon's introduction to this world was being found naked in a burning field.

Seeing you tackle the uglier side of humanity via attempted rape/incest/patricide might be hard to watch, but it adds to the breadth and depth of your ongoing narrative. On a lighter side note: I found it interesting that you went for such an obviously "white girl" name like Marsha. I guess it's not as bad as Becky, or heaven forbid... KAREN.

I'm glad that you're beefing up the supporting cast with more family members, no less. First Jennifer returns and now it turns out Malcolm's got a sister named Marsha. Question: is Malcolm limited to his tactile lightning, or could he project it from a distance like Marsha if he were to go all solar flared on somebody?

Gotta say, I'm a little surprised that Fire-Lords would be susceptible to lightning.

It would be cool to see Torment become a good guy that helps out Malcolm. I always liked seeing Marvel Comics villains like Sandman become rehabilitated, lending a helping hand to Spidey, and even joining the Avengers as a reserve member, thanks to getting a presidential pardon. (No, not from Obama.)

I've always enjoyed spit-take gags, so, seeing the triplets go all water fountain/target practice on Angel was a riot. (I didn't realize that their lung capacity was almost on par with that of Superman.)

As for this issue "going off the rails"... of all the scary villains we've seen thus far, I've never been more terrified of a super-horny Maxine. Good thing she doesn't have real superpowers. With all that outpouring of emotion and actual gushing, I half expected Fountainhead to rear his ugly head at one point. I don't know what's

more shocking, Fountainhead, Ayn Rand's philosophy, or that Thunder-Head has a lightning-streaked schlong. (That last "happy-ending" panel made me flash back to SD #71, which opens with Dragon NOT being down with Horridus going down on him.)

It's good to see a modern-day Sleeping Beauty like Jennifer Murphy settle into her new surroundings, but truth be told, I'd much rather see Dragon settle down with Alex. I'm glad Old Man Dragon still has a place in SD, unlike the Golden Age Daredevil who was booted out of his own funnybook. Damn those Little Wise Guys!

Two issues in one month, huh? A guy could get used to this.

Sincerely,

Sotiris Gravas

P.S. Don't be stingy with shading and shadows. More!

P.P.S. You no longer use those "Meanwhile" transition captions, but panels that show a change in setting are always welcome. (I love the way you draw buildings. Kirby would be criticized for unrealistic cityscapes.)

P.P.P.S. No one draws facial expressions as well as you do.

P.P.P.P.S. Tell Maxine to let her freak flag fly!

Man, that's a long list of stuff to remember.

And as far as we have seen, Malcolm cannot project lightning. He can only zap people if he is touching them directly.

Dear Penthouse.

You won't believe what happened to me...

Oh, wait. Wrong publication. Let me try that again.

Hey Erik.

Sorry about the false start there. After seeing all that gratuitous nudity in SD#222 I felt like maybe the letters page would be taking a different tack.

Ha! Just kidding! I'm sure there'll be a few negative Nellies who'll complain about seeing a little bit of nudity, but I thought it fit in just fine. These are adult characters doing adult things in adult situations, so you're bound to see a nipple once in a while. It's a lot more realistic than placing random objects in front of them or hiding them under sheets. It always bothers me in movies or TV shows when you see a couple in bed together and the woman is holding a sheet around herself while they're carrying on a conversation, or worse yet, they get out of bed immediately after having sex and they're both still wearing their underwear! I mean really, who does that in real life?

Alex and Dragon lounging around in the nude while carrying on their post-coital conversation is pretty much how it would go down in real life. I think my only minor quibble in the nudity department, and it really is minor, was Angel sitting holding her knees up so that she was on full display to her mother. She had to know she wasn't wearing any underwear by this point, so why would she sit like that? I suppose it's entirely possible that she was still so shocked and focused on the fact that her Mother was essentially back from the dead that she forgot about all about her lack of underwear. But like I said, it's only a minor complaint.

Overall I thought the nudity worked just fine and if this is how you'll keep approaching it in future issues, I say keep it coming!

Well, now that the most obvious point of conversation is out of the way, lets move on to the more substantive content of the issue. There were some interesting developments in this issue, not the least of which was the introduction of another quasi-family member in the form of Marsha Bradley. It was pretty obvious from the start who her mother was, but I thought you might stretch out the acknowledgement of it over a few more issues. I really like how you're slowly building up the supporting cast again, and I like it even more that you're doing it with family. I can see why Malcolm hesitated to tell Marsha that they might related though, and I can't wait to see what happens when he finally does tell her. Presumably Kevin is also her half-brother, which begs the question, did Kevin know about her? If so, why has he never mentioned her to Malcolm? I'm looking forward to the answers to these questions being revealed.

The other big developments concern Dragon's love life. The poor bastard. He goes through years in jail without any kind of companionship (does Lorella count?), and then BAM! The two most important women in his life turn up again at the same time. He just can't catch a break!

Jennifer has never been my first pick for the leading lady in Dragon's life, that'll always be Alex, but you can't help but feel for her. From her perspective it's probably only been a few weeks since she last saw Dragon and she was fully expecting to spend the rest of her life with him. Now everything seems to be falling apart.

Will Dragon accept her marriage proposal.? I hope not.

I'd really like to see Alex and Dragon finally get a shot at real happiness together. Alex is another person who always seems to get the short end of the stick in life so it would be nice to see her finally come out on top for once. And I actually think Dragon turning Jennifer down could turn out to be a real boon for Jennifer in terms of character development. She's always been defined by her relationship with Dragon and I think it would be very interesting to find out who she is without Dragon around. I know most fans are generally lukewarm at best when it comes to Jennifer so this could be your chance to turn that opinion around. Think of it as a challenge! Another interesting angle for you to work is the fact that Jennifer is now only a few years older than her daughter. How will they relate to each other now? I hope this is something you plan on exploring because I think there's a lot of great material to be mined from this situation.

Maxine, Maxine, Maxine. What's going on with you girl? I always knew Maxine had a high sex drive, but wow, she's completely insatiable! So much so that I have to wonder if there's more to it than her just being super-horny all the time. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with a woman being horny, but this almost seems to be bordering on some kind of medical condition what with her lusting after Torment's "giant, misshapen, two-toned devil cock" and all. Where are you going with this, Erik? What do you have up your sleeve?

Finally, I'd like to circle all the way back to the beginning to bring this letter to an end. The first page with Torment only served to increase my appreciation of him. This guy is really shaping up to be a great villain. And Malcolm's discussion with Captain Stewart about a war brewing with the underground monsters has me very excited for future developments. Any time we get to see you draw hordes of monsters is a win in my book. Can't wait to see it! But first we have to get through your epic 3-parter that starts next issue.

Looks like we are in for quite a ride. As always, Erik Larsen brings it!

Andrew d'Entremont
Ottawa, ON

Presumably Kevin did not know about Marsha. Kevin grew up in a broken home and his mom was nowhere to be found. Marsha is much younger and since they don't share a father there wasn't a lot of contact there.

Dear Erik,

I guess the big change with issue Savage Dragon #222 I that you've fully-embraced the Mature rating. And why not? Image publishes books like Sex Criminals, and that book (deservedly) gets great reviews and sales. It's not exactly a super-hero book, but it's in the ballpark. Savage Dragon is definitely a super-hero book, and many people are probably not used to seeing nudity and sexuality in their super-hero books. But again, why not? Super-hero books are generally for kids, but they don't all have to be kid friendly. It reminds me a bit of cartoons in the '90s. North American audiences had trouble with shows like Beavis and Butthead and South Park, because of the assumption that cartoons had to be for kids. But they don't. And obviously neither do comic books, not even super-hero books. Long story short: if you want to draw naked people in your comics, I say go for it.

Other things happened, too, though! The Dragon-Jennifer reunion finally happened. It was a little subdued, but as Dragon said, he's changed a lot since they last met. The wrinkle here is that she hasn't, so I'm sure there's more to this story. It will be interesting having her around, even more so if Alex is back as well.

And we meet Marsha Bradley, another member of Malcolm's growing extended family. This book already has so, so many characters, and there's always new ones being introduced. I guess real life is like that, too.

Dumb question: is Angel going to keep the bangs? Mr. Glum kidnapped her and made her wear the costume and hairstyle of her counterpart. Wouldn't she switch back? I think I read you prefer the evil Angel's costume, but even the hair?

Taylor Porter
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Bangs are not so easily gotten rid of. You need to grow them out and that's a long process which can look pretty crappy for a long time while it's happening. It's not like Angel can just ditch them and be back to her old look immediately.

Dear Mr. Larsen,

I really like your work and I think Savage Dragon is a great comic book. But your depictions of nudity and sexuality are getting

increasingly gross and bizarre. And they're distracting from your story, not enhancing it. Yeah, I get it; it's your book and you can write and draw whatever you want. But why would you want to draw a woman masturbating on a bed in front of her husband's (not) half-sister after trying to seduce her? I used to like Maxine when she was a character with recognizable human traits, before you turned her into a walking vagina with eyes. Please put the focus back on the superhero action and adventure.

Sincerely,
Eric Aaron

I like to think that the book has a little something for everybody. As far as it being bizarre or gross goes—let me tell you about this little thing called the Internet. Give yourself a few minutes therein and get back to me. You'll find that things are pretty tame around here in comparison.

Hi Erik,

Whoa! Who cranked up the nudity quotient in this issue? This is more than I've seen in any previous issue of Savage Dragon. On top of that we have nip slips, masturbation, oral sex and casual talk about lightning emblazoned male members! I almost feel guilty enjoying it as much as I did (thanks Catholic upbringing!) But enjoy it I did. I get it, you're giving us a glimpse into the characters lives and sex is a big part of those lives. Maxine's sexual frustration is understandable, the way she is handling it is kind of crazy, but that's how real people handle stress, unpredictably. What I find amazing is how Angel puts up with this stuff, she is truly a good friend to Malcolm and Maxine. I think this is going to have repercussions with Malcolm and Maxine down the line. And Dragon?!?! What a dilemma! I've always thought of Dragon as an ethical guy, but with a tendency to sometimes think with his dick...Staying with Alex Wilde, making a life with her, sounds like a happy ending they both deserve...But how do you turn down a marriage proposal from Jennifer? I mean, she's half his age, gorgeous and totally in love with him! I'm dying to see where this goes!

Once again you balance the drama and action in this issue perfectly. It's one of the things I've always like about your writing on Savage Dragon, the way you pace each issue. You cut from all out action, to character development, to horror, to comedy so seamlessly, you always keep me turning the page to see what comes next. The same goes for how you plot the book, major plot points spring organically in your stories. Nothing seems forced, it flows so cohesively. It looks like we're going to have some major action with the underground. I look forward to it, you've made it an interesting, mysterious place. And you love to sneak stuff in on us...Marsha Brady, Malcolm has a sister?!

Last but not least, the artwork looks better than ever! From that cool cover (I got the black and white one) to that final "nom nom nom", this issue looked great. Tell me one thing, in the last couple of issues, it seems Malcolm is looking a little more mature, a little older. Is this on purpose or am I just imagining things...

Anyway, take care, see ya next issue!

Don Massi
Mt. Ephraim, NJ 08059

Malcolm is getting older. Hell, everybody in the book is and I try to have the art reflect that.

Good Day Erik,

Right outta the chute, holy shit was page four an unexpected right hook to the chin! Not that I object in the slightest! I mean, I'm old enough to read all the mature books I want and I've never understood why wall to wall blood and guts is just fine but the human body is horribly offensive. We all have nipples. I must admit though, to...a small amount of eye rolling in regards to the Maxine subplot. I mean, I understand a young person wanting to be hungry for fun/sex with a strapping young man like Malcolm (especially when he can blow off steam by punching bad guys while she's stuck being a mom and mostly in the house), but to be so overcome that she can't help but start masturbating in front of Angel like that? I have a hard time buying that sorry, unless Maxine is going to turn out to be a nymphomaniac or was just trying to entice Angel into sex. I dunno, just kinda bugged me.

I really, really hope Dragon doesn't drop Alex just because Jennifer is back. I get that he married Jennifer and you once wanted them together, but I love Alex and want her and Dragon to have a shot at happiness. Heh, only Dragon could get off death row and have two amazing women fighting over him a week or two later. What a man. Can't wait to see where this whole thing goes.

Malcolm must be kinda slow on the uptake, cause as soon as I saw that new girl's powers, I actually said out loud, damn, Malcolm's got a sister! To be fair, I guess he did kinda have his hands full at the moment, so I'll give the kid a break. The bad guys were nothing special, but they served their purpose I suppose. Do they even have names? Also, your art during the fight scenes was great, it really seemed to jump out at me even more than usual.

Overall, I had some problems with the issue, but I liked it a lot more than it probably sounds. I read each issue twice before I write you and not only did I enjoy it just as much the second time, but it was my favorite issue in quite a while. Looking forward to how things blow up in 225, which I wish wasn't so ruined by the bloody solicits. But I know you'll still have great surprises up your sleeve... like The Deadly Duo. I can wish, right?

Until next month, Erik, make mine Savage!

Don Smith
Vancouver, BC, Canada

Well, don't forget that Maxine did a LOT more than that in front of Angel—twice—not that long ago and Angel was an active participant at those times. It's not as though the two have never been intimate and they had been drinking—there was an empty wine bottle in full view.

Lightning powers may be less common than super strength but they're not unheard of. So it's not impossible that Marsha could have been unrelated. Best to check things out first.

The bad guys were referred to in the story as Fire-Lords. They likely have individual names like Bobby and Henry and Mitch as well but since they're virtually indistinguishable from each other, I won't go running down a list of them.

As for the Deadly Duo—yeah, they're overdue. I need to get on that.

Erik,

In my humble opinion, Savage Dragon 222 should be rated L... for LIFE. Why? Because that is what this book is...simply LIFE. As every living and breathing human being should be aware of, there is NO RATING on the human experience...hell you can't make babies living life G-rated, lol.

With that being stated, thank you...for creating a series that has been on all levels of the comic book spectrum. From the fans of the series who are probably your age or even older, to those fans in my age range who were preteens at the beginning of Image to those who are teens and in their early 20s-early 30s now...enjoying this series.

222 saw a multitude of firsts...especially with Alex's first full on breast shot. First off, the woman still looks great, and I can understand her complete frustration with Dragon and anything regarding Jennifer. Last time Alex and Dragon saw each other...he was a newly widowed father, just learning the fate of the Savage World Jennifer that he married. Now here they are...faced with the revelation that his original Jennifer is back...a woman who Alex somewhat pushed into Dragon's arms.

For those that don't know in the pre Savage World, Dragon was presumed dead, during that time Alex told Jennifer that Dragon had feelings for her, so when he came back after his separation from William Jonson they began their life together as a couple, which was short lived after her presumed death at the altar followed by a brief period of Dragon and Angel living together as dad and daughter then Jennifer's reveal to be alive only to be "killed" presumably by Darklord, which is when she was frozen. This Jennifer, the original Jennifer is my favorite.

I look forward to her meeting Malcolm again, that is if she remembers her time brainwashed with The Covenant. Speaking of... man, how many kids did Savage World Rapture have? It's a trip I'm sure for Malcolm, I mean what does he say to Marsha? "My mom was Sharona Jackson too, but not your mom...I was her only child and the one of this Earth had you and Kevin and who knows who else", lol. It was an awesome introduction to a future hero who I'm sure will do the legacy of Rapture proud. I wish Malcolm could've known his mom...she was definitely the more emotionally stable Rapture out of the lot, excluding the ones Darklord had raising Malcolm in his early years.

This was such a powerful issue that hinted of the war to come with all those different underground species that may pop up soon. It goes to show that this world is still savage. Angel with her mom then Angel with Maxine showcases the levels that this book goes in. Maxine...MAN...she is a sex kitten times a million!!! And I don't think anyone would complain on getting that type of greeting after a hard day of work... I am looking forward to the 3 part story arc in

the next issues...great job as always, dear sir and thank you again for the advice on characters the other day.

Who knows, maybe Malcolm and Jelly can team up!!

NorViance Henry
Decatur, GA
@goat1408

Stranger things have happened.

Hi, Erik,

I just saw #222 today, and I have to say, I fully support this idea. In fact, I'd like to think I'm partly responsible for this decision (see my letter in #203 incase you don't remember me). I'm kidding, of course. But as far as I'm concerned, you CAN do this every issue, all the time.

Keep up the great work.

Kevin Kamps
Zanesville, OH

Sweet! On it!

Hi Erik-

I picked up issue 222 from my local shop yesterday and really enjoyed it. I was also pleasantly surprised to find two copies in my bag. Somewhere along the lines I must have missed there was a variant for the issue. I usually think variants are a treat, and this was no different. As long as there are not 8 versions of every issue it still feels special. At this point I think I'm only missing the She-Dragon variant of issue 40, the 1st edition variant to 137 (praise Obama), Obama/Osama 145, and the Oscar's version of 206. I can't say I liked the digest version of 190; it reminded me of the Archie comics and is a little hard to store, but I appreciated the dabbling in something different.

222 was... really good. Seriously. I'm happy with the "M" on the barcode, and I hope it doesn't limit your circulation. After 25 years, I think it's reasonable to make a book that you like, and the audience hopefully follows. Like many readers I think, I was originally skeptical of SD becoming Malcolm's book. Your work since the "bold new direction" has been thoughtful, and opened the SD world up a little more. I think thinking about how the series now feels more ensemble-esque than ever before. The family ties in the series have grown and grown, and 222 was color evidence in front of our faces. Maxine is becoming more entertaining, and I honestly was looking forward to her panels (sexual addiction or not) than Malcolm. It made me think of the Simpsons when Homer usurped Bart as the primary attraction. I think that's a ways off still, but Angel, Dragon, Maxine, can all carry the series (at least from a story perspective. Not sure about a sales point of view). Now, with Kevin around, Jennifer reappearing, and Malcolm discovering a half sister, it's opened up even more. Your roster is deep. Challenges moving forward about who the series focuses on should be entertaining to watch develop.

Something I've always wondered about is the inclusion of the "funny-books" in the back. When they were your characters I understood it more easily (Vanguard, as an example). The extras in the back seem to be at six pages usually. I'm not asking for your financial breakdown or anything, but do you at least come out even on the inclusion of these extra stories in SD? All things equal I get it, but if you're being altruistic to get other artists and writers exposure please toot your own horn for that, too. Do people approach you directly about getting their work into the issues directly or is it handled via somehow at Image?

In a random note, I really enjoy jigsaw puzzles and found a company that will do custom versions of various sizes. I'd love to work a 1000 piece SD puzzle, and I'd like to possibly secure your blessing to do it. I'm not sure what you consider your fair market value for consent using your intellectual property for something like that. You see Marvel and DC with puzzles on the market, but nothing is creator-owned. You may also feel like you'd have a quick price, but also just don't want people doing what I'm asking (or asking to do what I'm asking). That's fair too and your answer could be a simple "no". But I wanted to ask at least. I have not gotten ahead of myself and selected an image yet, but whatever would look awesome on a wall next to the collection and the action figure, Glum doll, Moore bust, etc. I'm more than willing to PayPal you some bucks for effort you've already done (unless you're feeling froggy and do a custom work;) So yeah, let me know if you're able.

Savage Dragon is my favorite book, and I will be here with you until you decide the ride is over. I'm looking forward to 225 and beyond!

David Taylor
Brimfield, Ohio

The Funnies in the back have come from numerous sources over the years. Sometimes I'm wrangling guys and sometimes others are chasing them down. And that can vary from issue to issue and month to month. Generally, somebody contacts me and it goes from there. I do prefer Dragon-related material, as you might expect, but, barring that, I'll take anything that strikes my fancy over tossing a pile of ads in the back of the book.

If you're making yourself a one-off puzzle and you have no intention of selling it—go ahead. People make themselves one-off bootleg shirts or print out one-off posters and that's fine. If you want to go into the puzzle manufacturing business that's another thing entirely. That, I'd prefer you not do.

Erik,

I recently started reading comics again after basically a ten year break. I had a couple of kids. Once I started reading again I hunted down Savage Dragon which I've read on and off over the years. My local shop only seems to stock it sporadically so I decided to subscribe through Image Direct. I want to make an impact with my \$\$ and the continued existence of Savage Dragon is important to me. Please never stop making this comic. It's a true gem and one of a kind. I decided to write because I know how nice it is to hear that people enjoy your work. Now I just need to catch up on about 60 issues. Also Mighty Man was great!

Cody Shelton
Culver City, CA

Oh, yeah—Mighty Man! I forgot to make a big stink about the recent Mighty Man one shot! Nikos Koutsis did the art—I wrote the story. In any case—it's pretty sweet and you should seek it out.

Erik,

Issue 222 is one of the best issues of this recent run. I feel like you really went for broke! This is the Savage Dragon I love to read. It's gritty, funny, violent, sexy and downright nuts.

I'm really looking forward to seeing what direction you're going to take Marsha Bradley. Her powers are intense and it was cool that Malcolm immediately began to mentor her during their fight with the Fire Lords.

What the hell was going on with Maxine? What a horny little devil! Malcolm better keep an eye on her or she is going to stray. Angel didn't quite know what to do with her. Haha! It's good that you are showing the frustration that is ever present when raising children. It's true that parents get very little time to themselves because it's a 24 hour, 7 day a week occupation. My wife Katy and I are currently raising our daughter Janey and she is a little handful. She acts like a typical toddler however, I'm just glad she doesn't have superpowers to go with her tantrums.

I'm a very happy to see the full on return of Jennifer. Although I have had mixed feelings regarding her over the years, her renewed presence, somehow, is a grounding experience for this long time reader.

One last thing, thank you for reassuring me concerning Powerhouse coming back to the book. I want to see him kick ass once again.

Thanks for issue 222. It's one of my favorites. Until next time...

Sincerely,
Rick Snyder
Greenwood, IN

Yeah, raising kids is no picnic. Twins and triplets are an even bigger ordeal, and kids with superpowers? Forget it! You might drive yourself over the brink doing something like that!

-Erik Larsen

NEXT: The Merging of Multiple Earths (Part 3 of 3) and lots, lots more. Our 100-page super-spectacular finale to this yarn!

Hey, don't stop reading now--there's plenty of additional funny-book fun to be had in the pages that follow--!

F U N N I E S

TRUTH SERUM

by Jon Adams

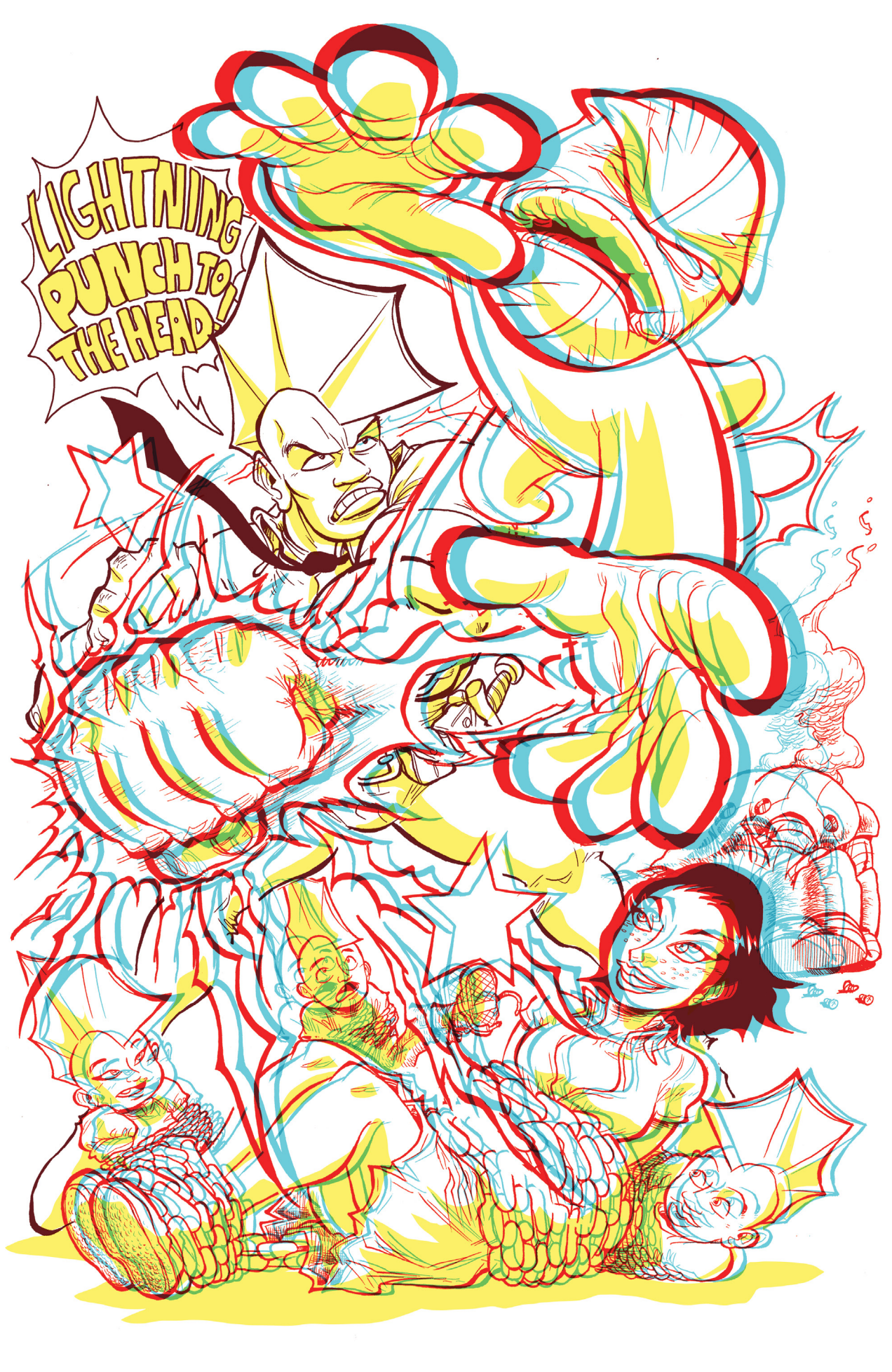


DRAW BRANDON DRAW

by Brandon B.



LIGHTNING
PUNCH TO
THE HEAD!



ANTTM

IS COMING!



2017