



THE FUTURE OF COMICS
25
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EST. 1992

223

ERIK ZANG

SAVAGE DRAGON

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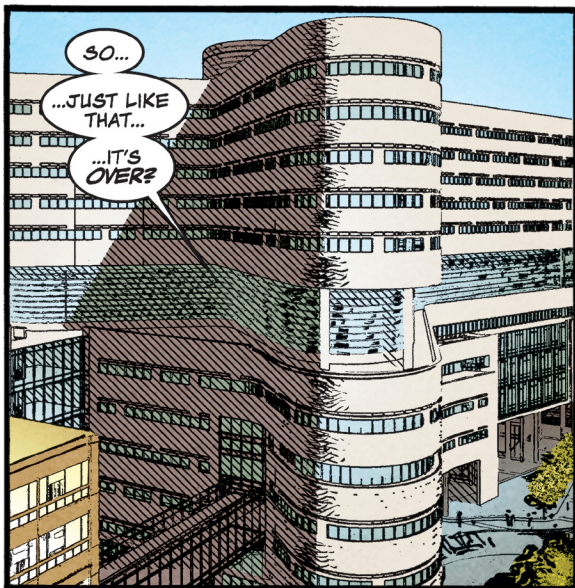
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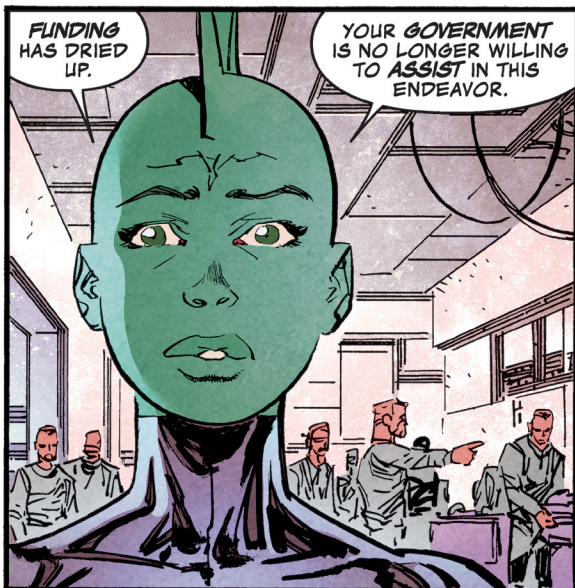
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SO...

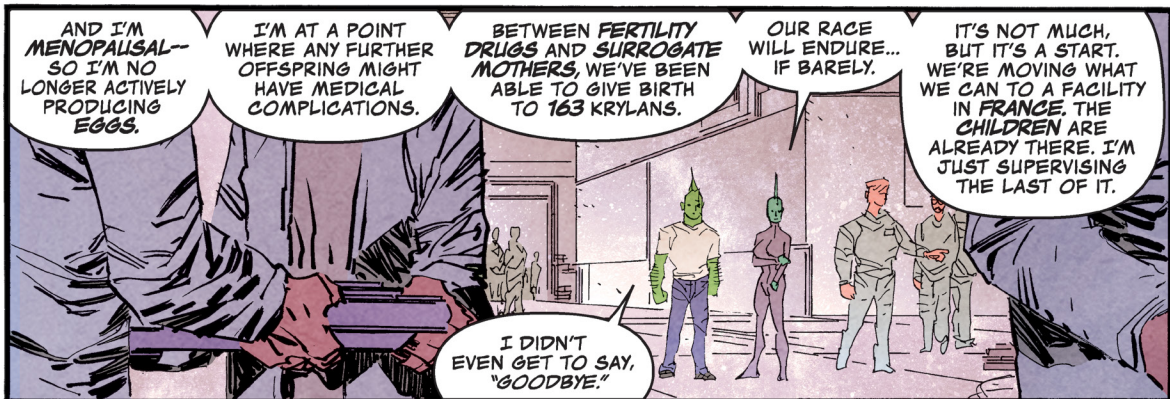
...JUST LIKE THAT...

...IT'S OVER?



FUNDING HAS DRIED UP.

YOUR GOVERNMENT IS NO LONGER WILLING TO ASSIST IN THIS ENDEAVOR.



AND I'M MENOPAUSAL-- SO I'M NO LONGER ACTIVELY PRODUCING EGGS.

I'M AT A POINT WHERE ANY FURTHER OFFSPRING MIGHT HAVE MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS.

BETWEEN FERTILITY DRUGS AND SURROGATE MOTHERS, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO GIVE BIRTH TO 163 KRYLANS.

OUR RACE WILL ENDURE... IF BARELY.

IT'S NOT MUCH, BUT IT'S A START. WE'RE MOVING WHAT WE CAN TO A FACILITY IN FRANCE. THE CHILDREN ARE ALREADY THERE. I'M JUST SUPERVISING THE LAST OF IT.

I DIDN'T EVEN GET TO SAY, "GOODBYE."



THEY'RE NOT YOUR CHILDREN, DRAGON. NOT REALLY.

THEIR DNA WAS TAMPERED WITH.

THEY ARE UNRELATED TO US AND EACH OTHER.

THEY ARE INDIVIDUALS, AND THEY WILL BE ABLE TO CONTINUE OUR RACE ONCE THEY REACH MATURITY.



SAY WHAT YOU WANT, LORELLA-- THEY WERE A PART OF ME.

NO NEED TO GET SOPPY OR SENTIMENTAL.

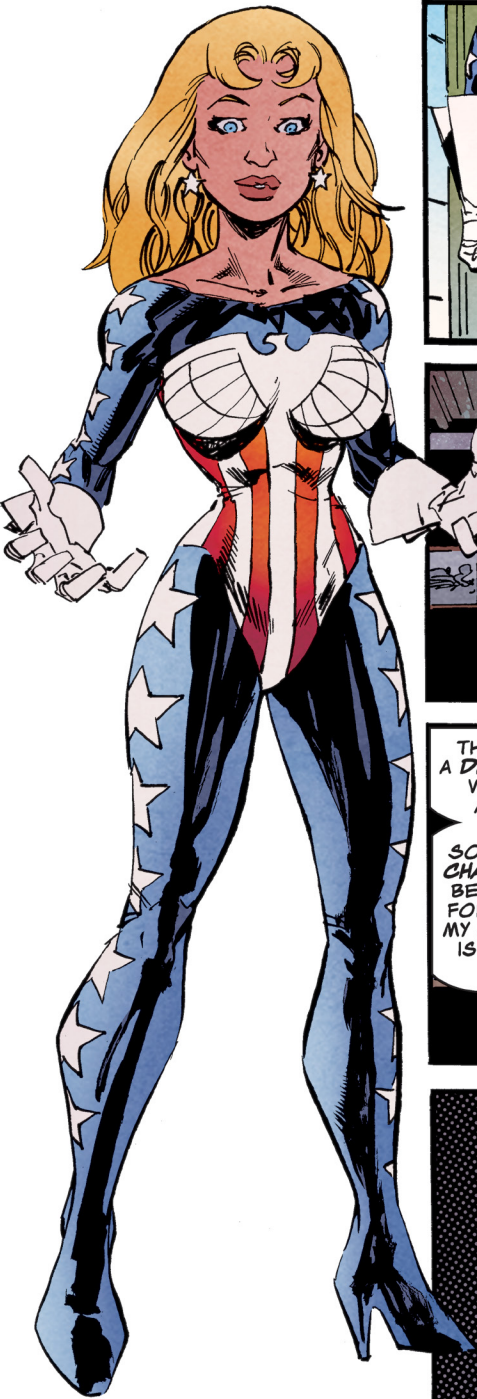
YOU PROVIDED RAW MATERIAL, NOTHING MORE.



YOU HAVE OTHER THINGS TO DO, AS DO I. YOU MAY RETURN TO YOUR WORLD.

YOUR OBLIGATION IS OVER.

IT FITS.
IT'S LIKE IT WAS MADE FOR ME.
ALTHOUGH, I SUPPOSE ON SOME LEVEL, IT WAS.



YOU LOOK GREAT, MOM!

AND WE DON'T NEED TO GO DOWN THAT "ALTERNATE EARTH" RABBIT HOLE AGAIN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.

SO...WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU AND DRAGON?

YOU MAKING PROGRESS THERE?

I KNOW YOU ASKED HIM TO MARRY YOU A WHILE BACK AND HE HASN'T GIVEN YOU A DEFINITIVE ANSWER YET...

IT'S... COMPLICATED.

I THINK IT'S GOING TO TAKE SOME TIME.

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.

IT SHOULD BE.

HE MARRIED YOU BEFORE-- OR ALMOST DID--TWICE.

THAT WAS A DIFFERENT WORLD, ANGEL.

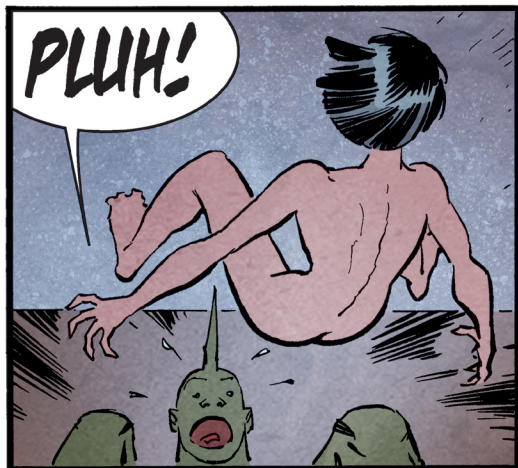
SO MUCH HAS CHANGED. I'VE BEEN ON ICE FOR 17 YEARS. MY LITTLE GIRL IS A GROWN WOMAN.

I'M ALMOST SURPRISED TO FIND THAT I'M NOT A GRANDMA! I HAD YOU WHEN I WAS ABOUT YOUR AGE.

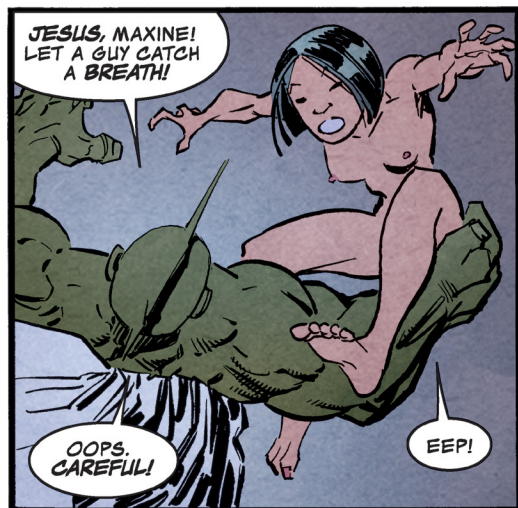
YEAH... ABOUT THAT...



GOOD MORNING, MARY SUNSHINE!



PLUH!



JESUS, MAXINE! LET A GUY CATCH A BREATH!

OOPS, CAREFUL!

EEP!



YAH!

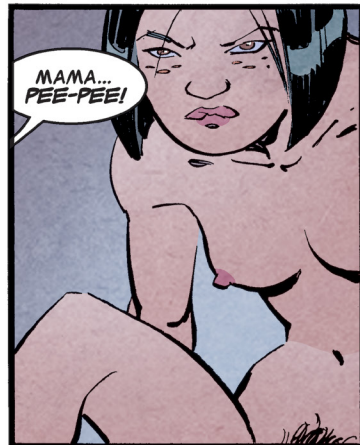


YOU ARE A WILD WOMAN, OUT OF CONTROL!

--AND I'M NOT COMPLAINING.

LINNGH!

OH! LINNGH! LINNGH!

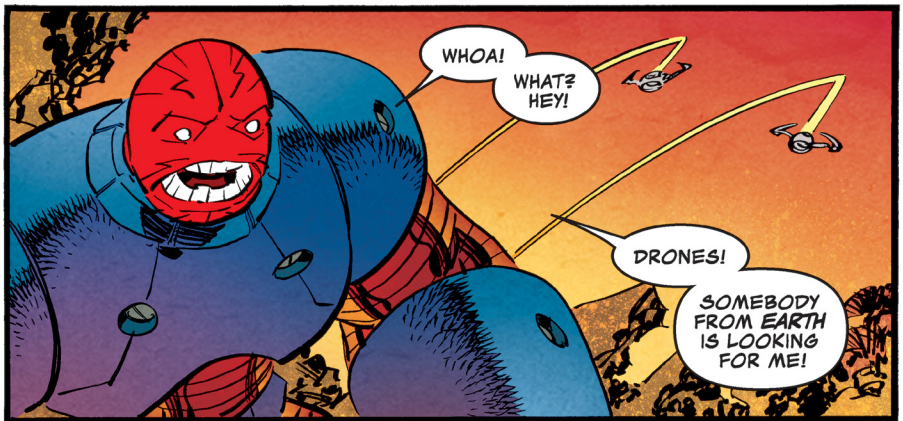


MAMA... PEE-PEE!



I HAVE TO WIN ANGEL BACK!

BUT HOW?



WHOA!

WHAT? HEY!

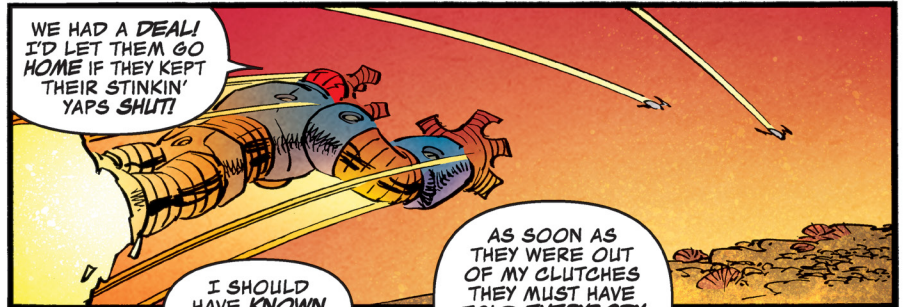
DRONES!

SOMEBODY FROM EARTH IS LOOKING FOR ME!



THOSE CONNING CUNTS!

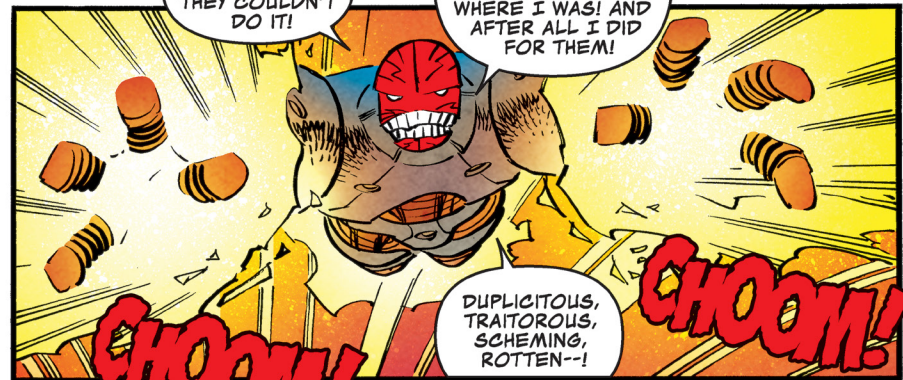
THEY BETRAYED ME!



WE HAD A DEAL! I'D LET THEM GO HOME IF THEY KEPT THEIR STINKIN' YAPS SHUT!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEY COULDN'T DO IT!

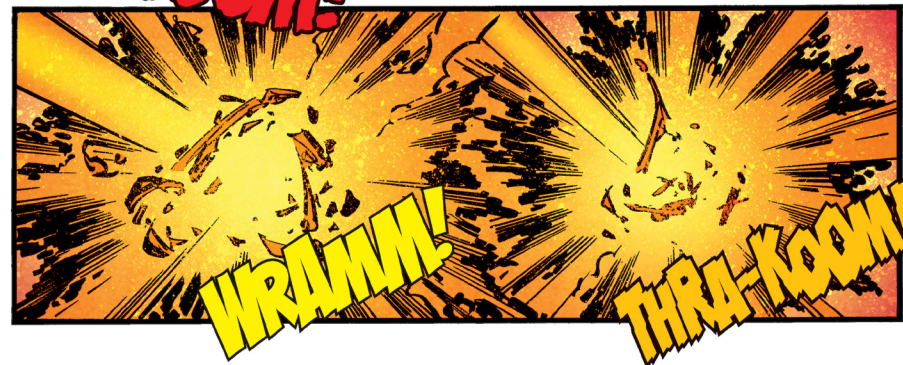
AS SOON AS THEY WERE OUT OF MY CLUTCHES THEY MUST HAVE TOLD EVERYBODY WHERE I WAS! AND AFTER ALL I DID FOR THEM!



CHOOOM!

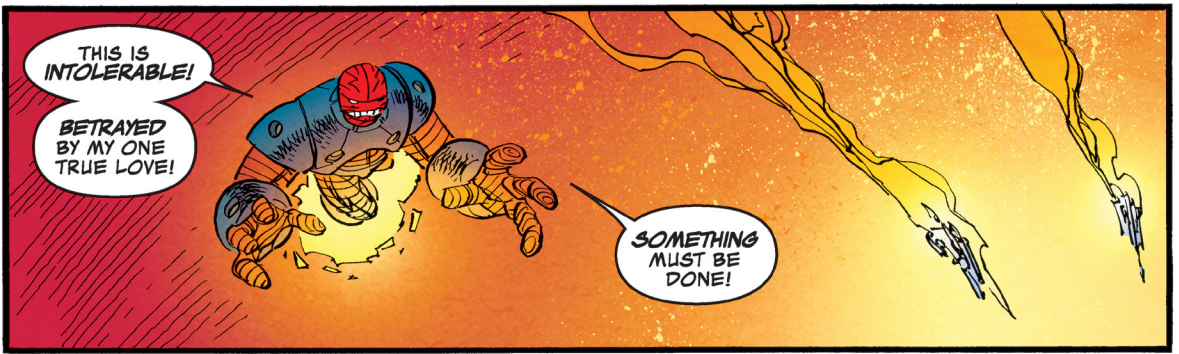
DUPlicitous, TRAITOROUS, SCHEMING, ROTTEN--!

CHOOOM!



WRANN!

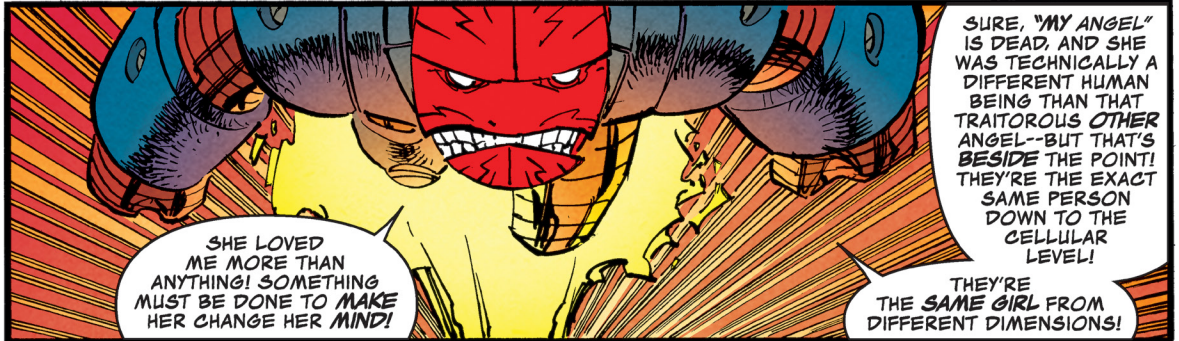
THRA-KOON!



THIS IS INTOLERABLE!

BETRAYED BY MY ONE TRUE LOVE!

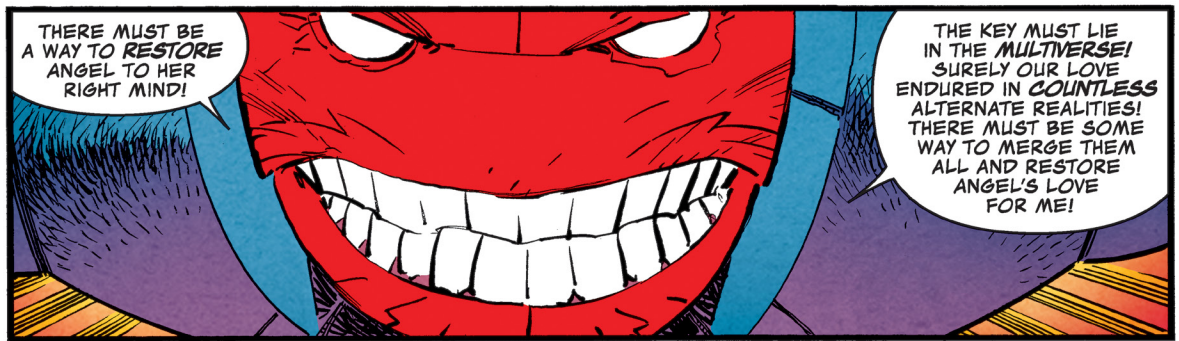
SOMETHING MUST BE DONE!



SHE LOVED ME MORE THAN ANYTHING! SOMETHING MUST BE DONE TO MAKE HER CHANGE HER MIND!

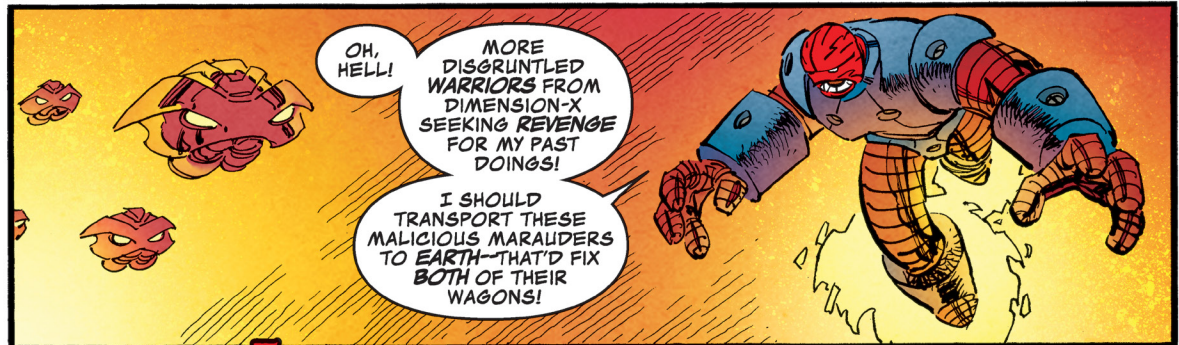
SURE, "MY ANGEL" IS DEAD, AND SHE WAS TECHNICALLY A DIFFERENT HUMAN BEING THAN THAT TRAITOROUS OTHER ANGEL--BUT THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT! THEY'RE THE EXACT SAME PERSON DOWN TO THE CELLULAR LEVEL!

THEY'RE THE SAME GIRL FROM DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS!



THERE MUST BE A WAY TO RESTORE ANGEL TO HER RIGHT MIND!

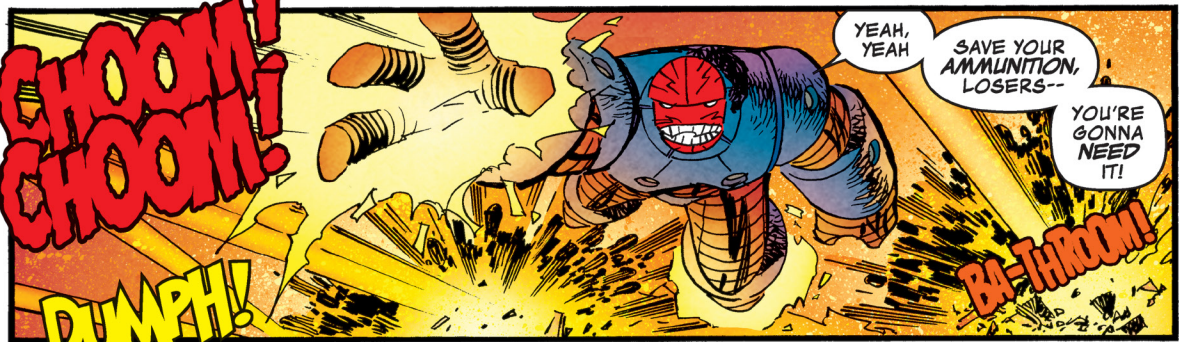
THE KEY MUST LIE IN THE MULTIVERSE! SURELY OUR LOVE ENDURED IN COUNTLESS ALTERNATE REALITIES! THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO MERGE THEM ALL AND RESTORE ANGEL'S LOVE FOR ME!



OH, HELL!

MORE DISGRUNTLED WARRIORS FROM DIMENSION-X SEEKING REVENGE FOR MY PAST DOINGS!

I SHOULD TRANSPORT THESE MALICIOUS MARAUDERS TO EARTH--THAT'D FIX BOTH OF THEIR WAGONS!



CHOOM!
CHOOM!

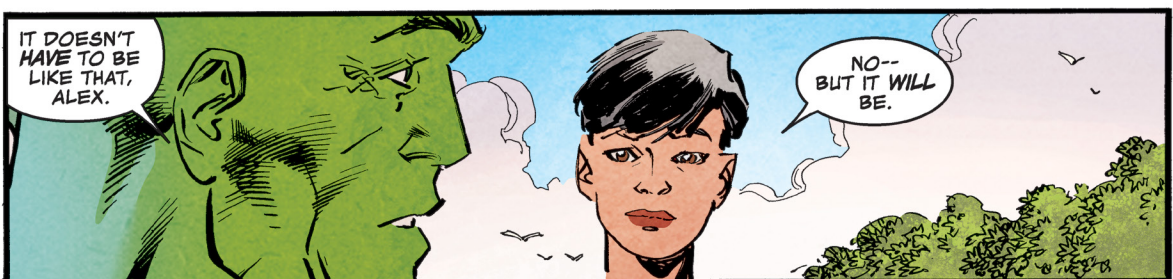
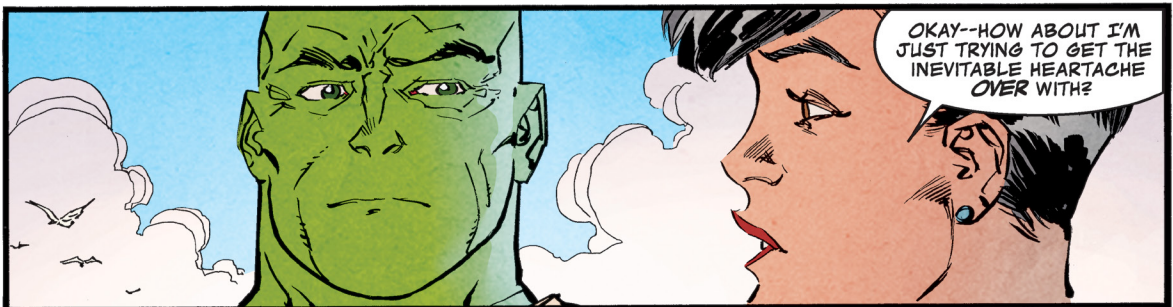
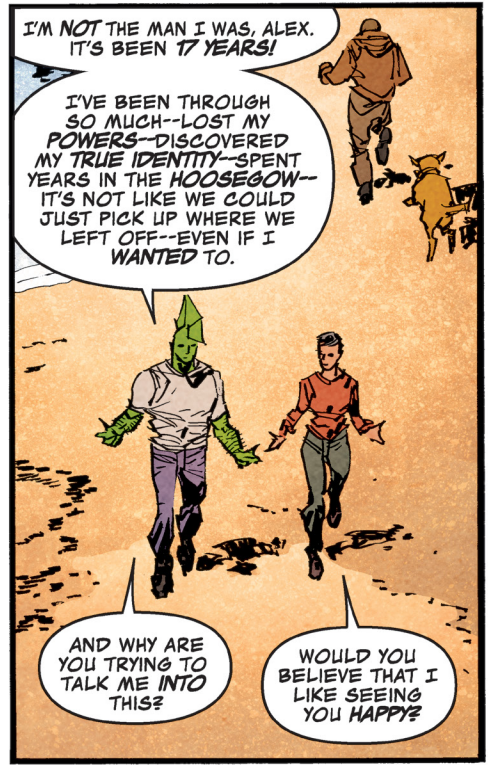
DUMPH!

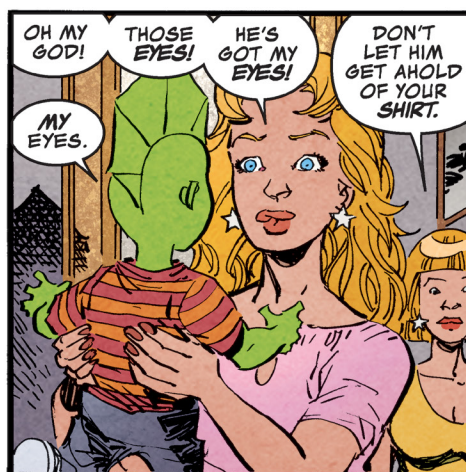
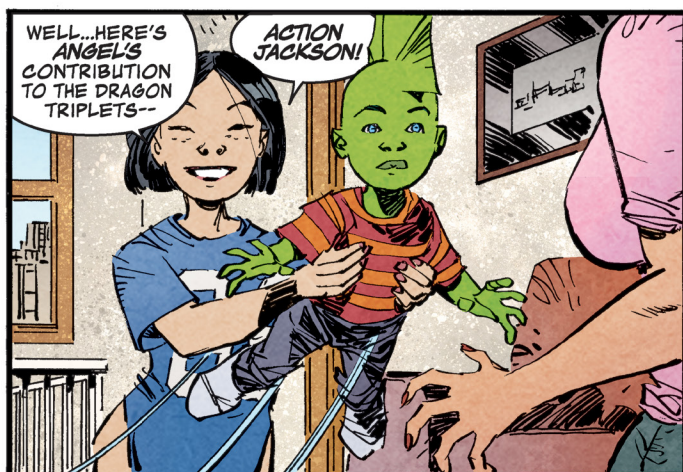
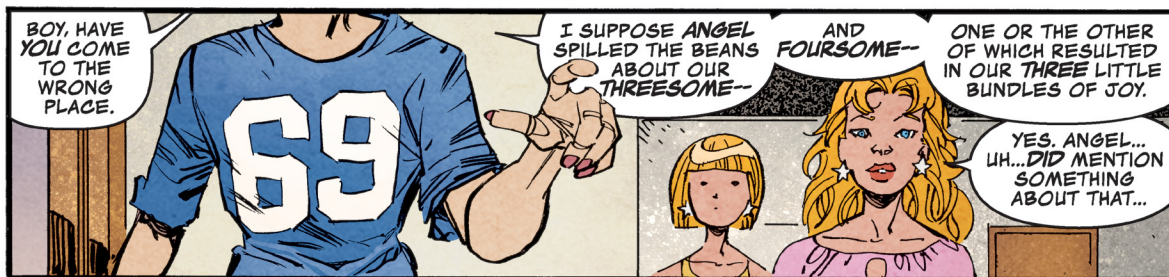
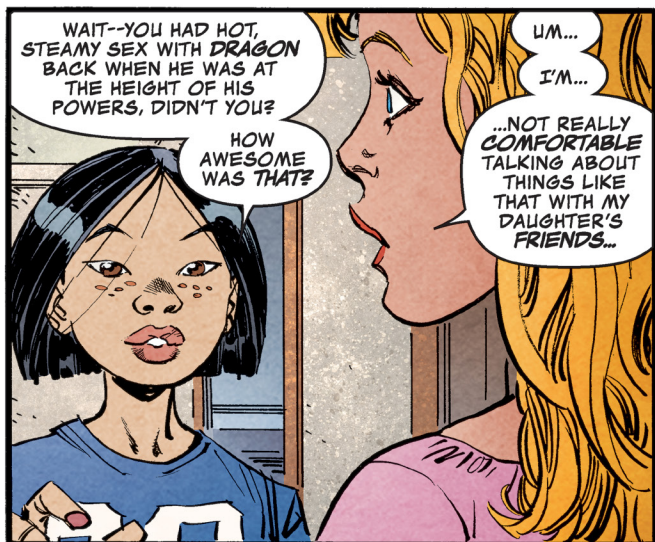
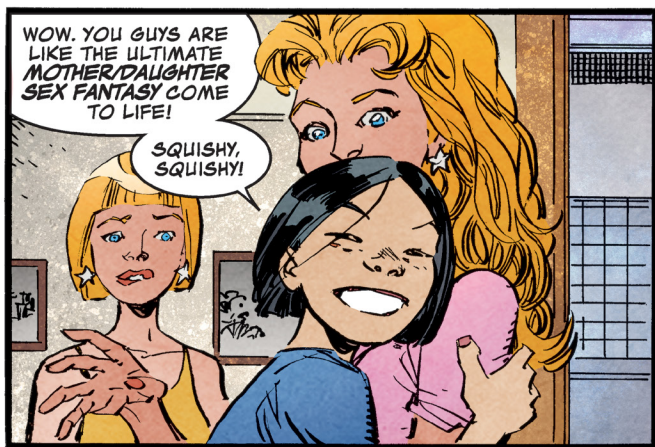
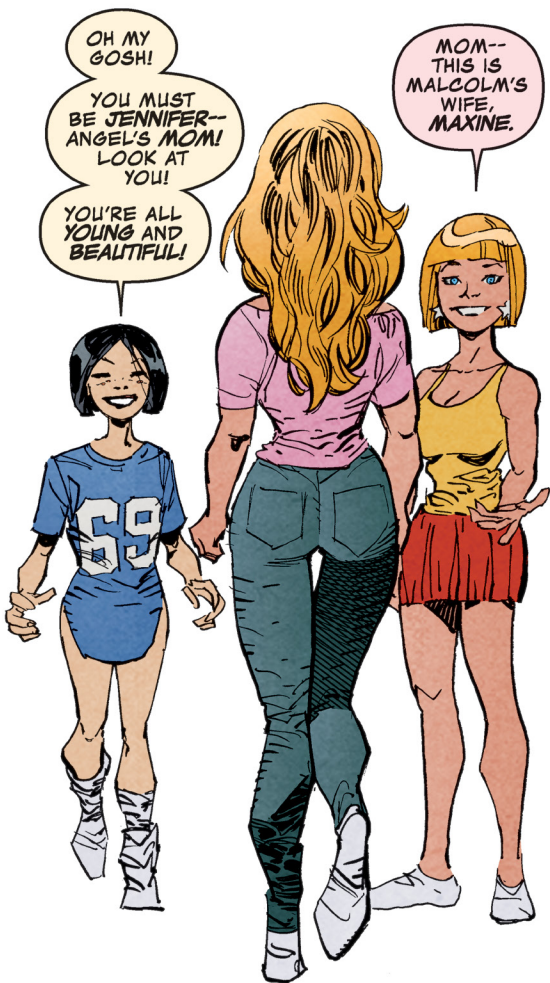
YEAH, YEAH

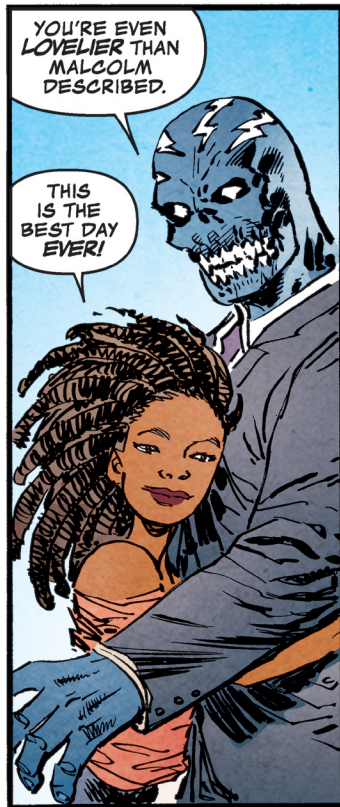
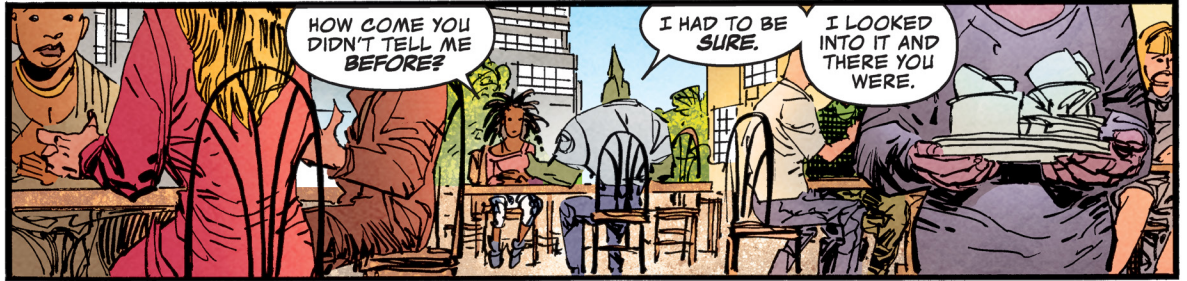
SAVE YOUR AMMUNITION, LOSERS--

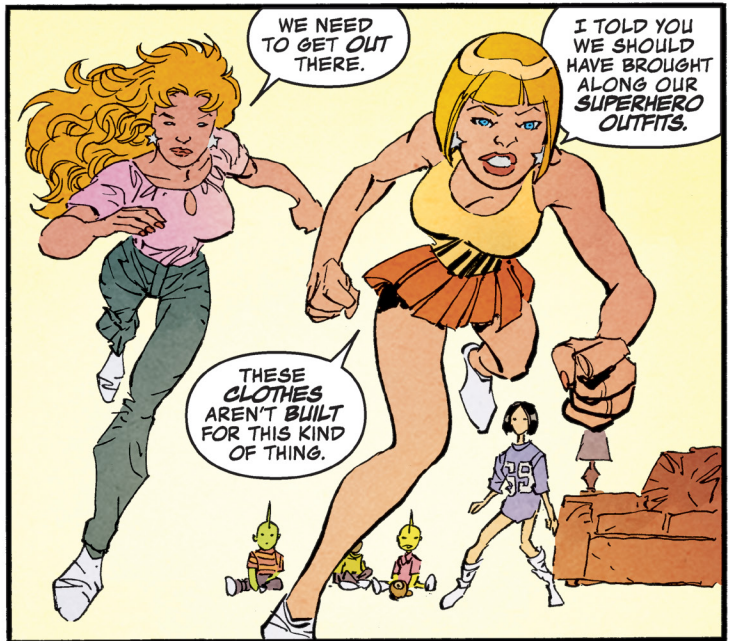
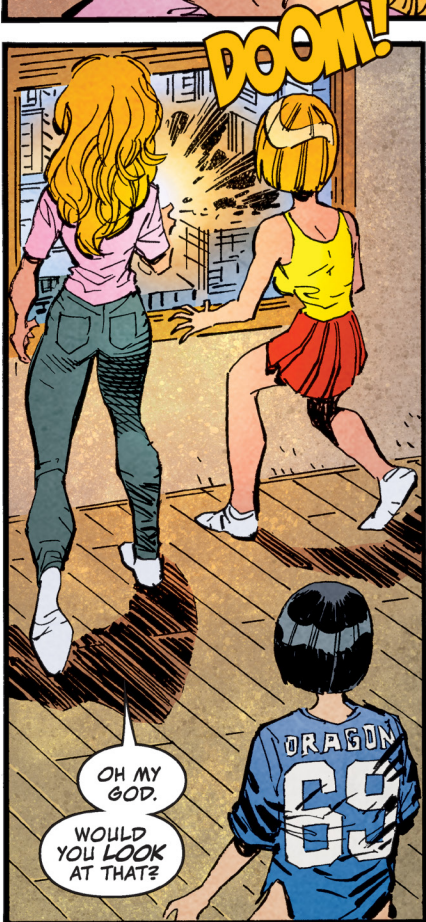
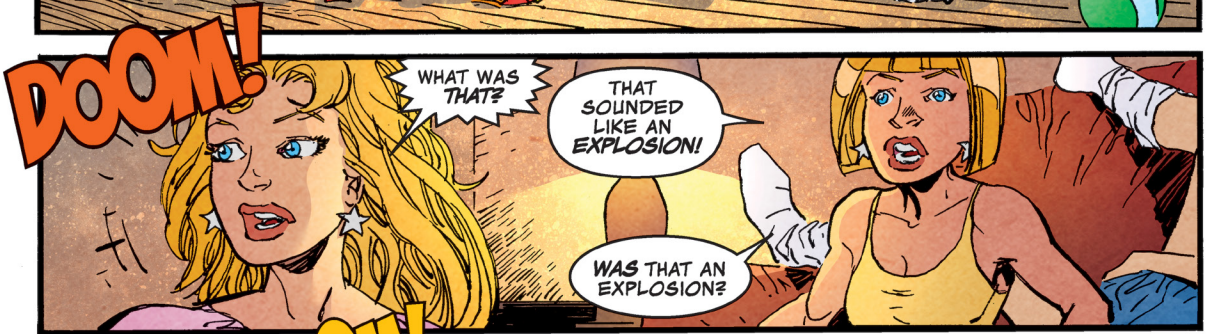
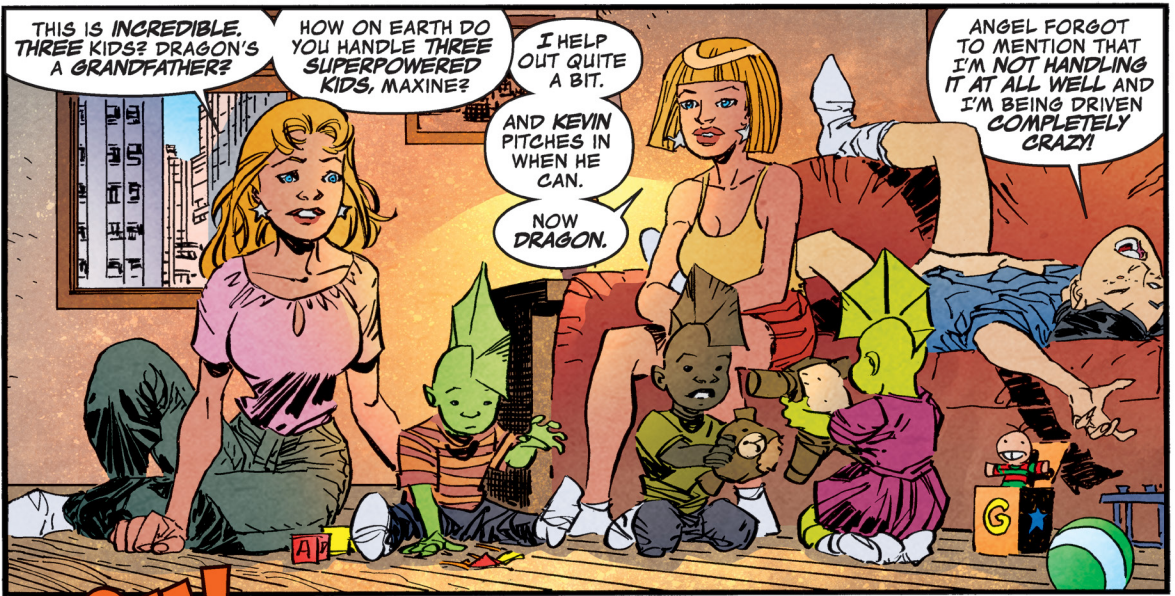
YOU'RE GONNA NEED IT!

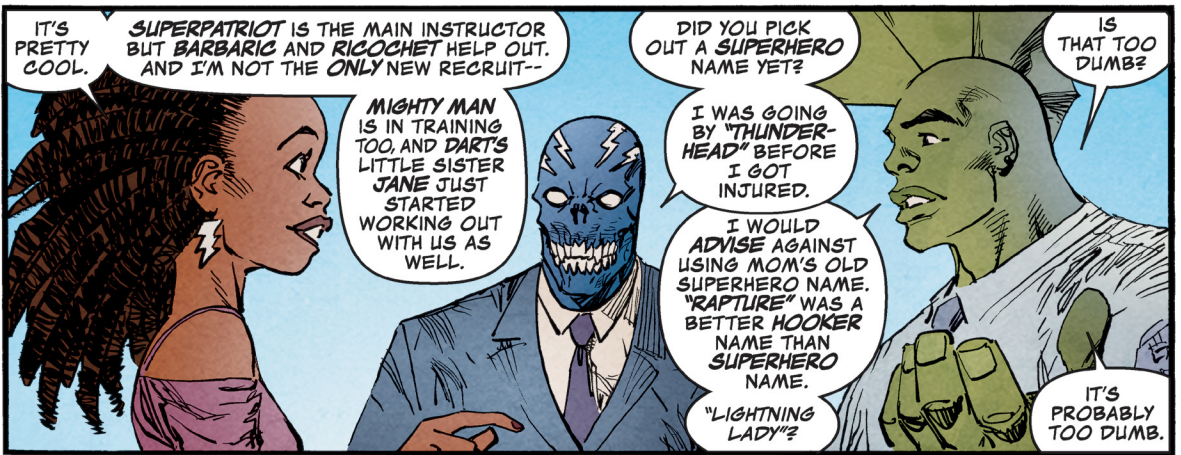
BA-THROOM!











IT'S PRETTY COOL.

SUPERPATRIOT IS THE MAIN INSTRUCTOR BUT **BARBARIC** AND **RICOCHET** HELP OUT. AND I'M NOT THE ONLY NEW RECRUIT--

MIGHTY MAN IS IN TRAINING TOO. AND **DART'S** LITTLE SISTER **JANE** JUST STARTED WORKING OUT WITH US AS WELL.

DID YOU PICK OUT A SUPERHERO NAME YET?

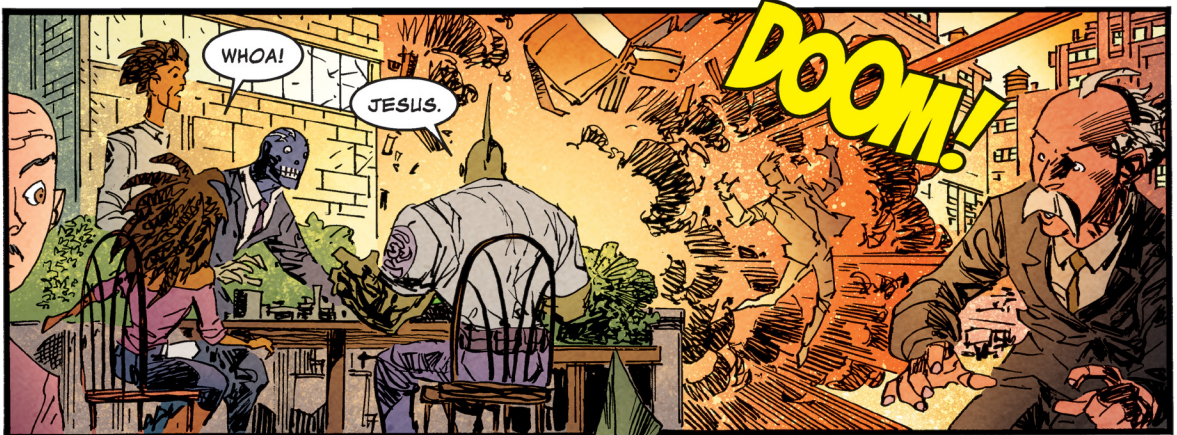
IS THAT TOO DUMB?

I WAS GOING BY "**THUNDER-HEAD**" BEFORE I GOT INJURED.

I WOULD ADVISE AGAINST USING MOM'S OLD SUPERHERO NAME. "**RAPTURE**" WAS A BETTER HOOKER NAME THAN SUPERHERO NAME.

"**LIGHTNING LADY**"?

IT'S PROBABLY TOO DUMB.



WHOA!

JESUS.

BOOM!



OKAY-- BACK TO WORK.

YOU COMING, MARSHAZ?

RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

YEAH. I JUST...

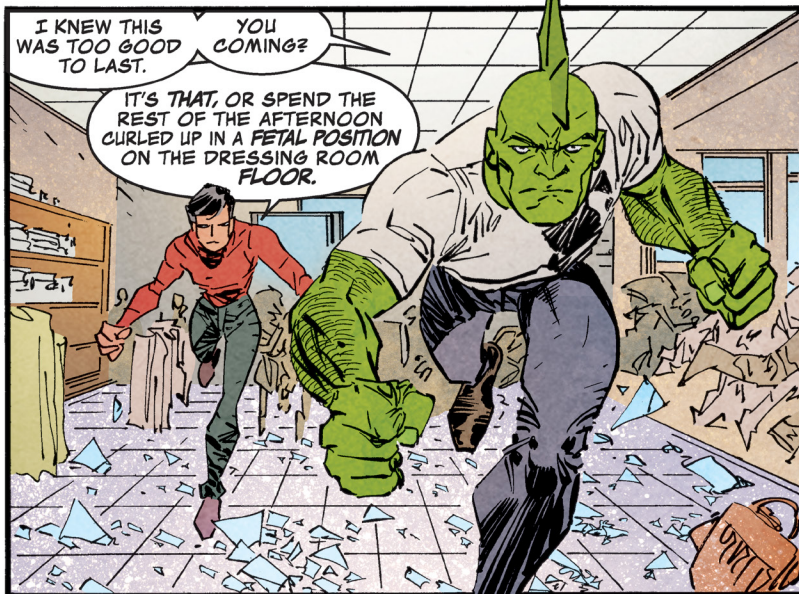
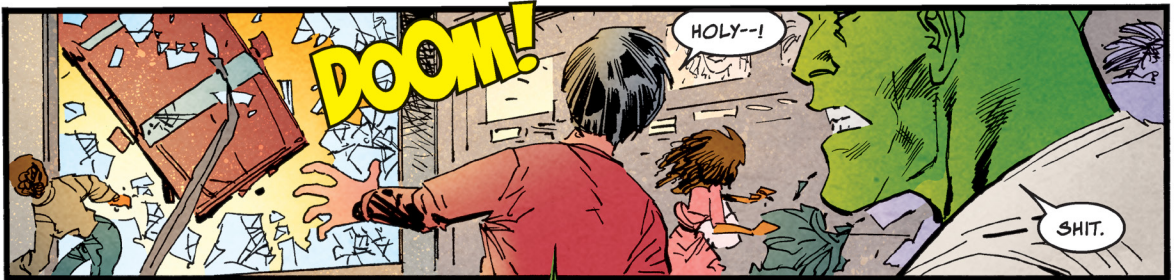
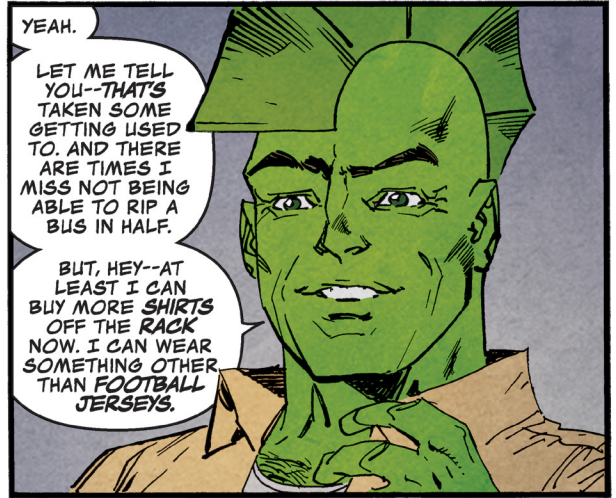
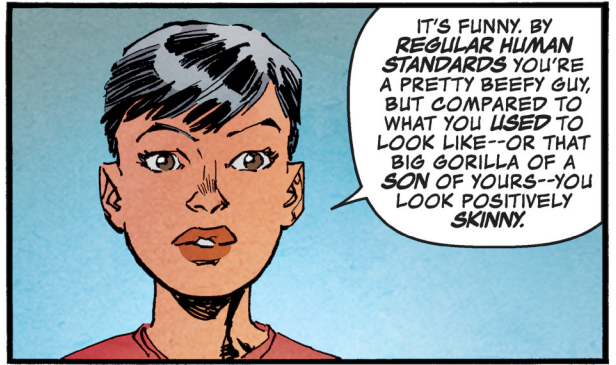
IT'S MY ONLY SUIT AND I JUST STARTED WORKING AT THE...

THAT'S OKAY, KEVIN.

I GET IT.

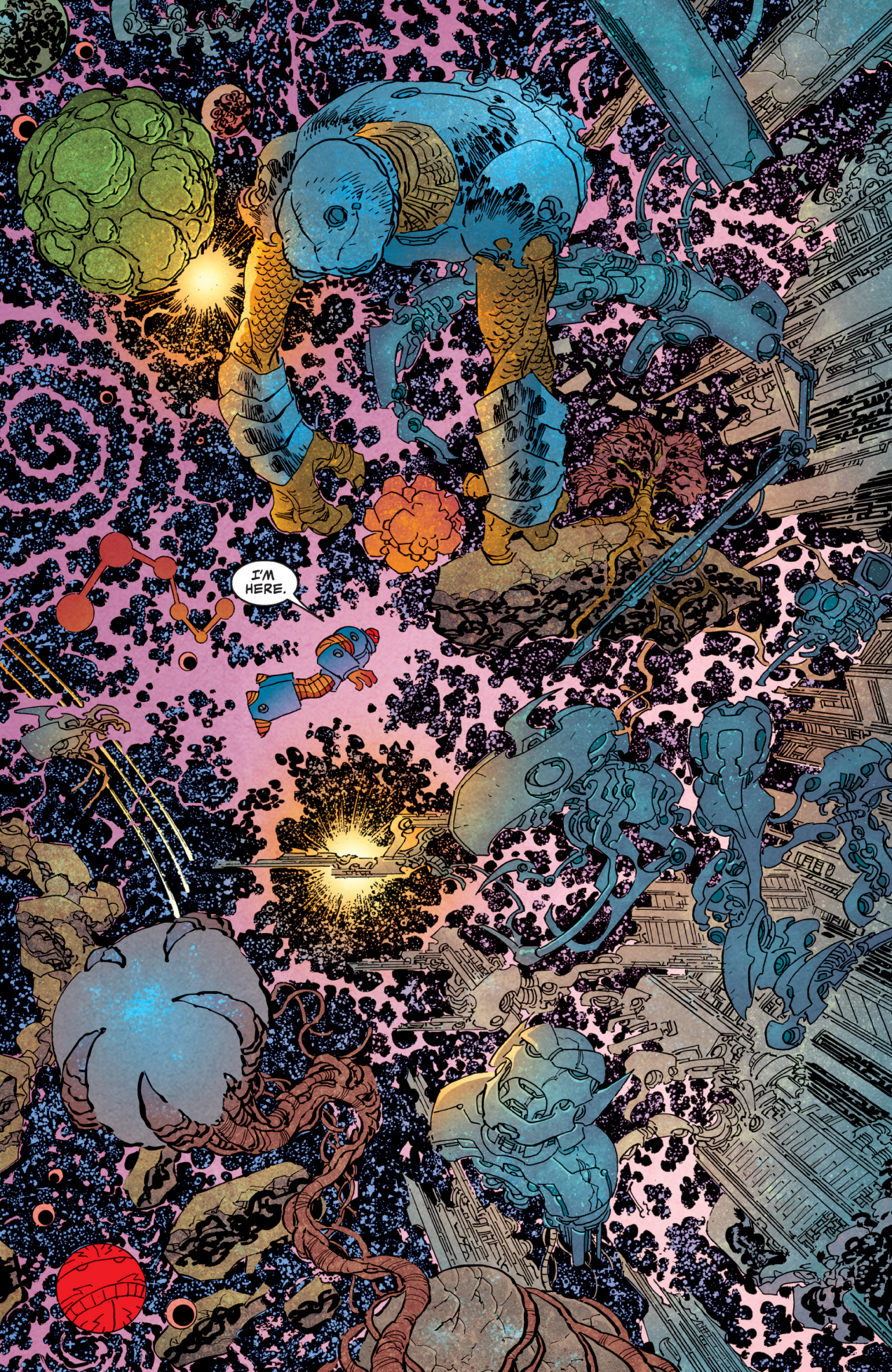


BUT PLEASE--CHECK IN ON **MAXINE**! SHE'S HOME ALONE WITH THE KIDS. SHE MAY NEED YOU.

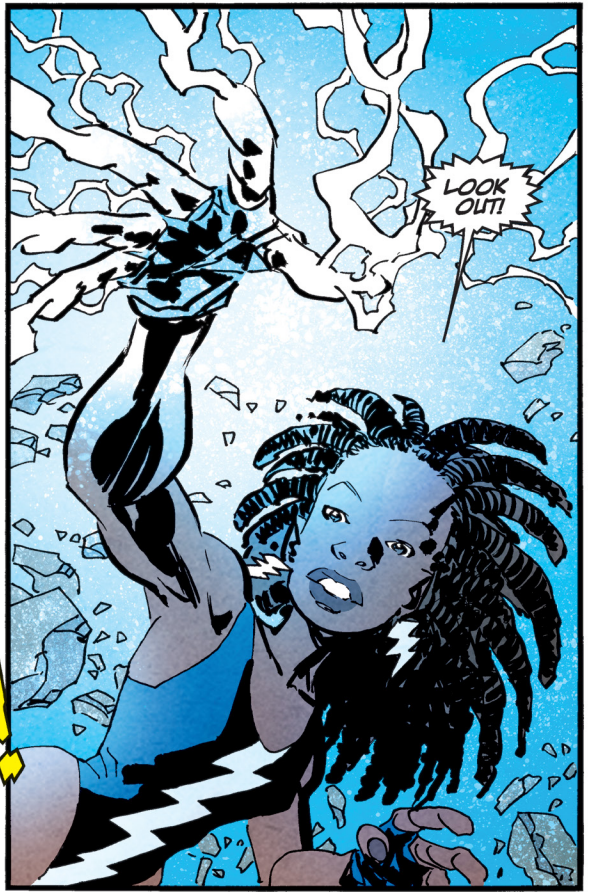


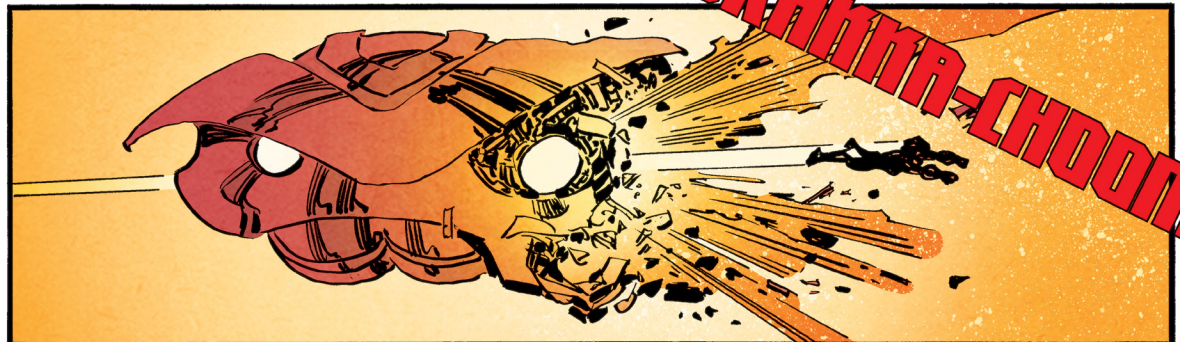
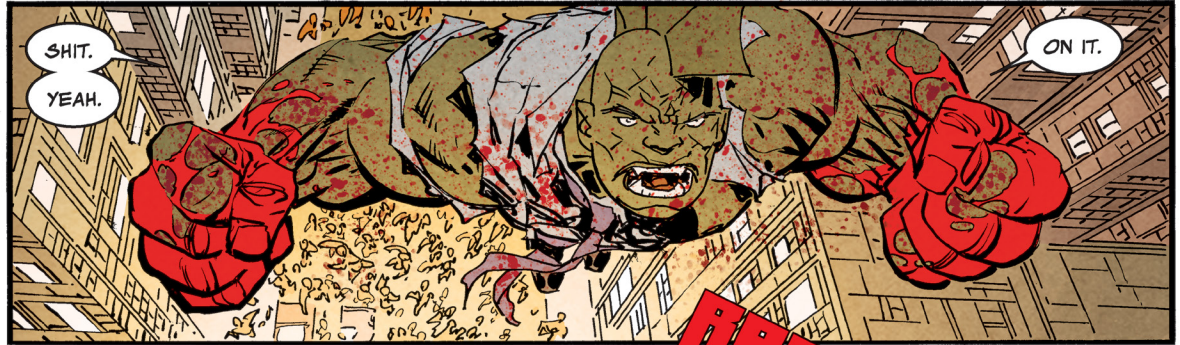
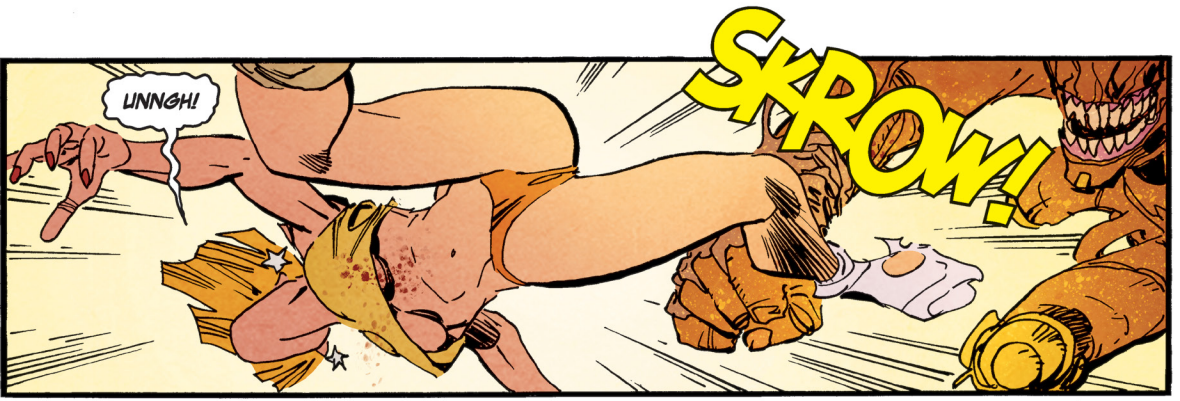


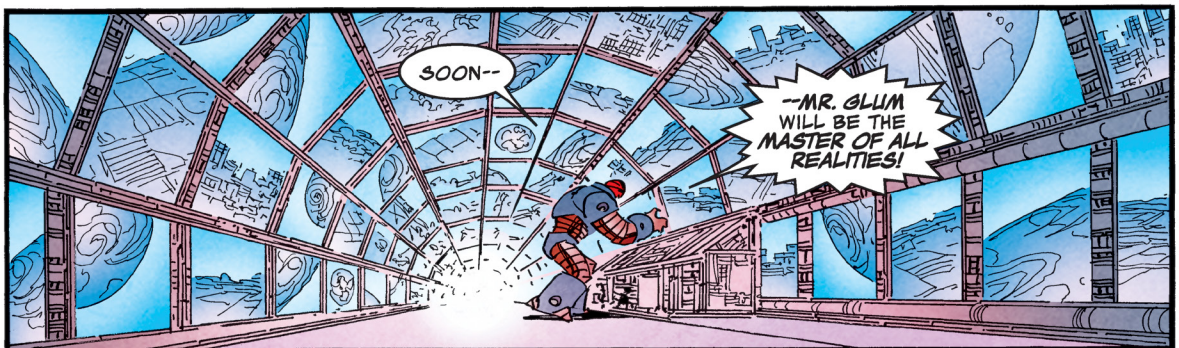
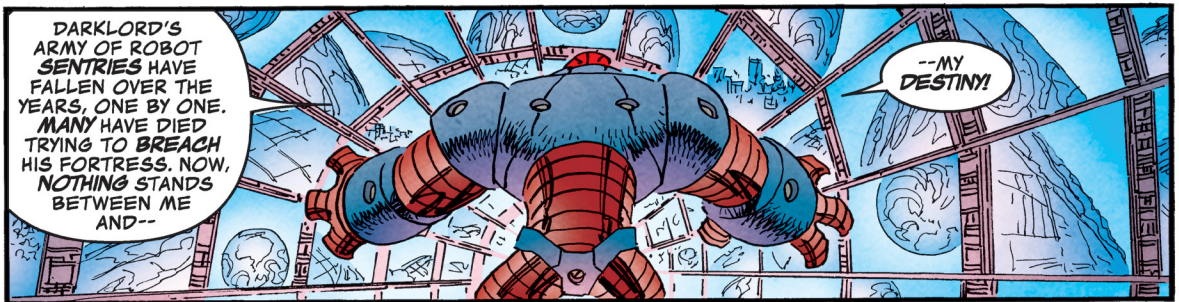
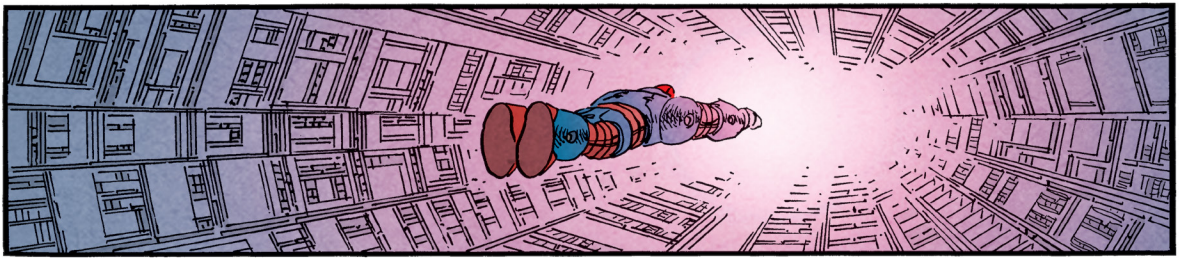
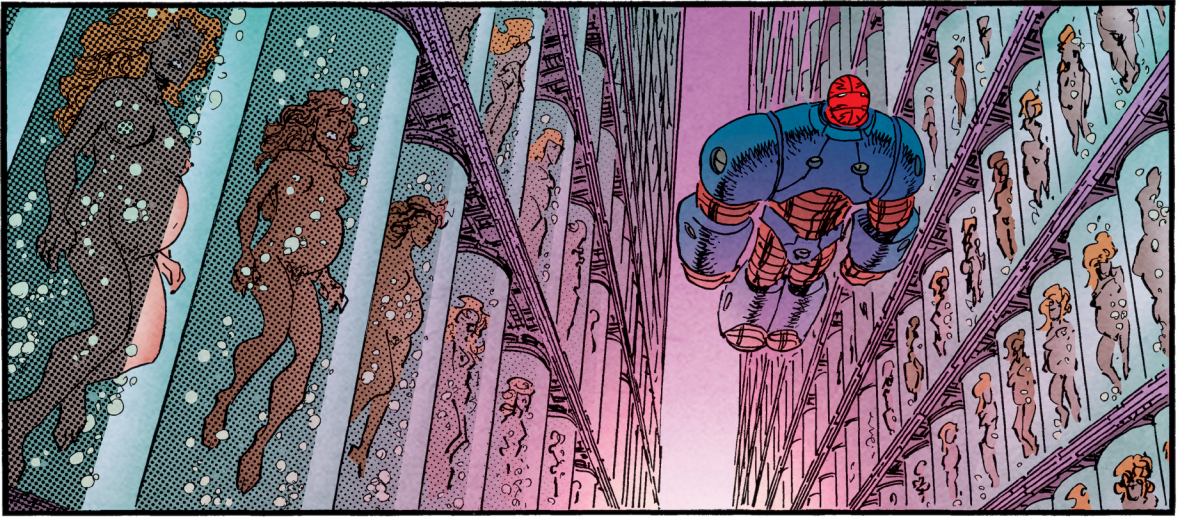


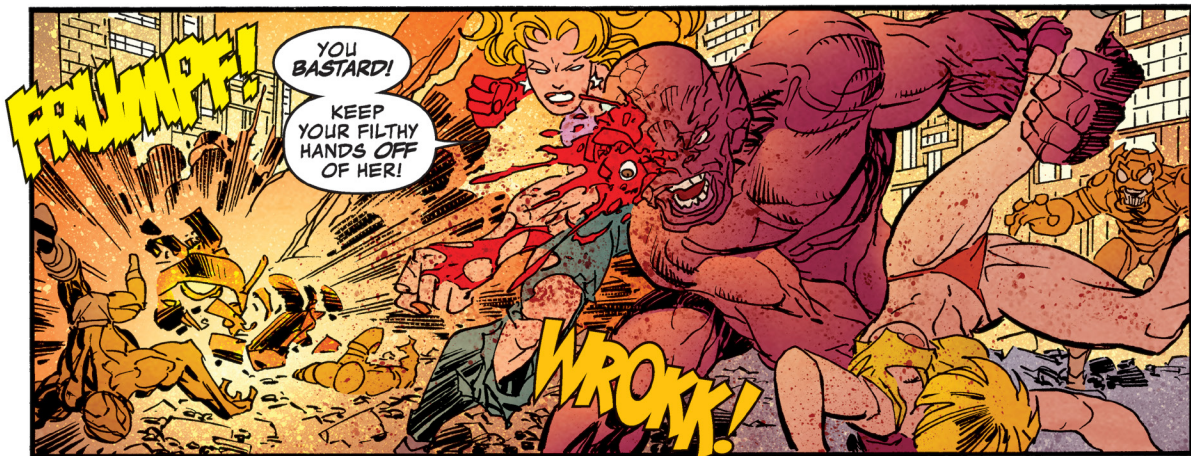
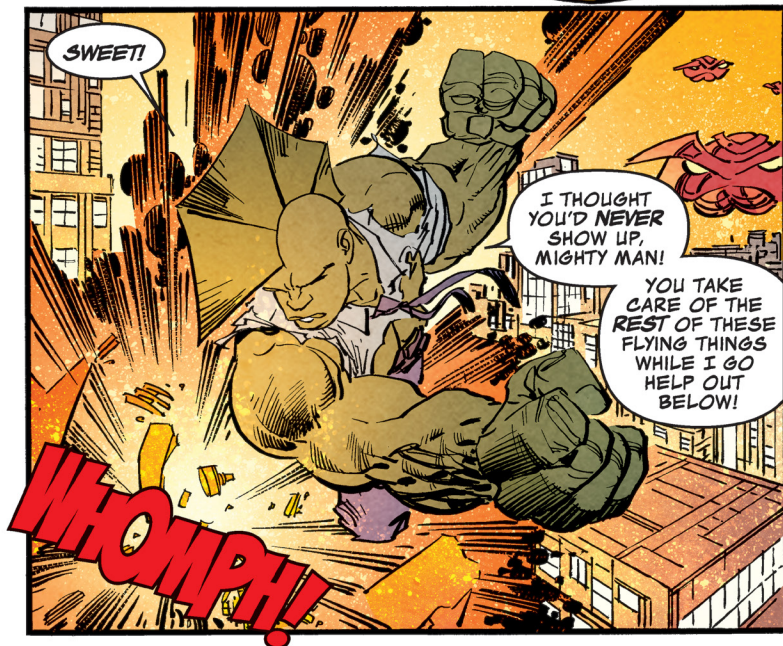
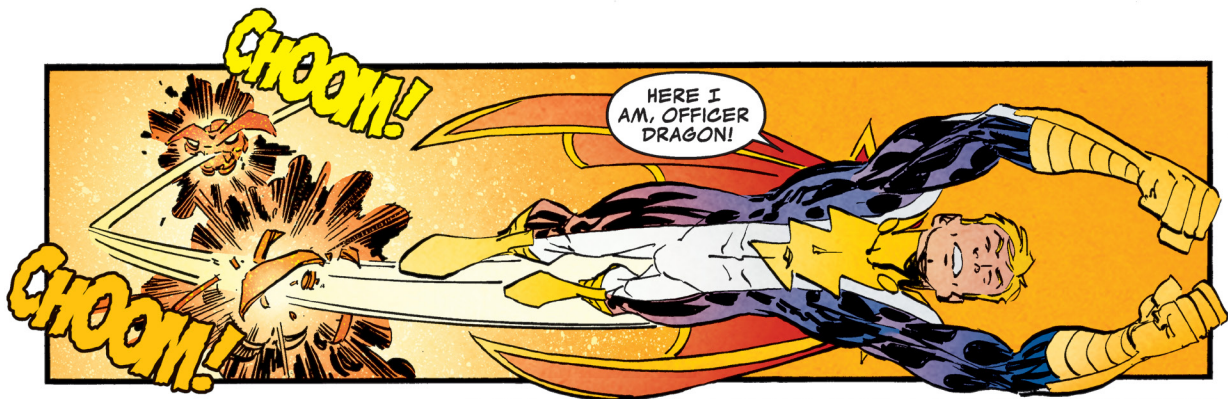


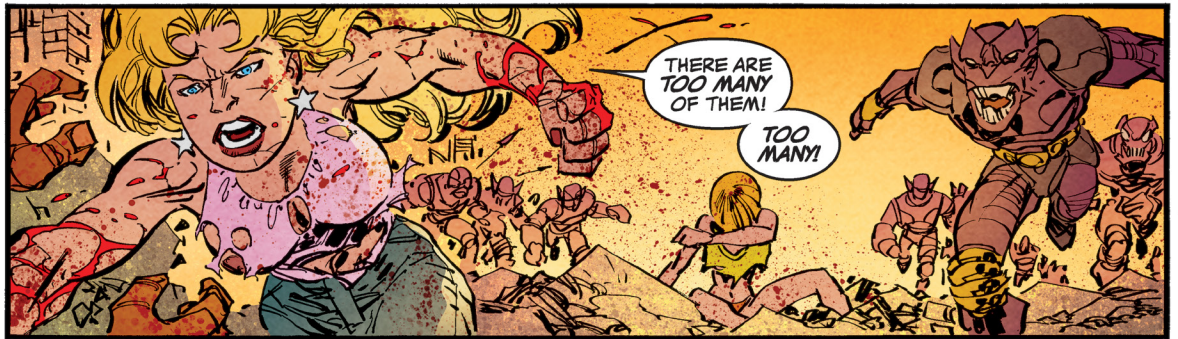
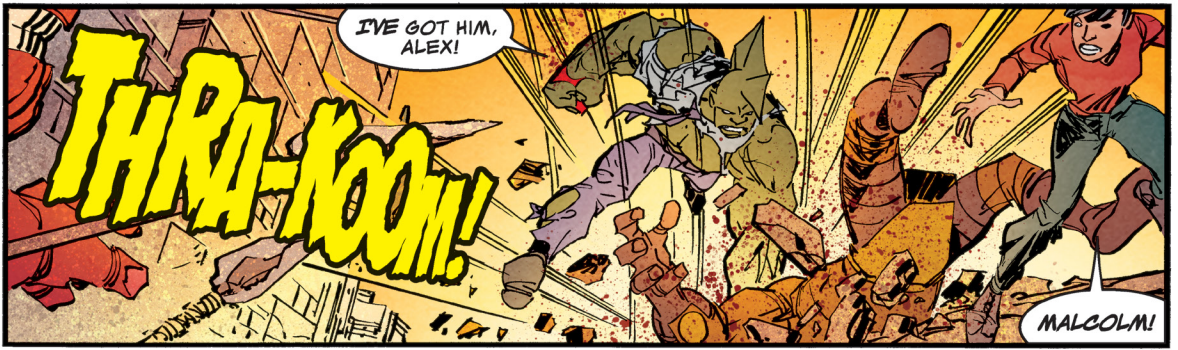
I'M
HERE.

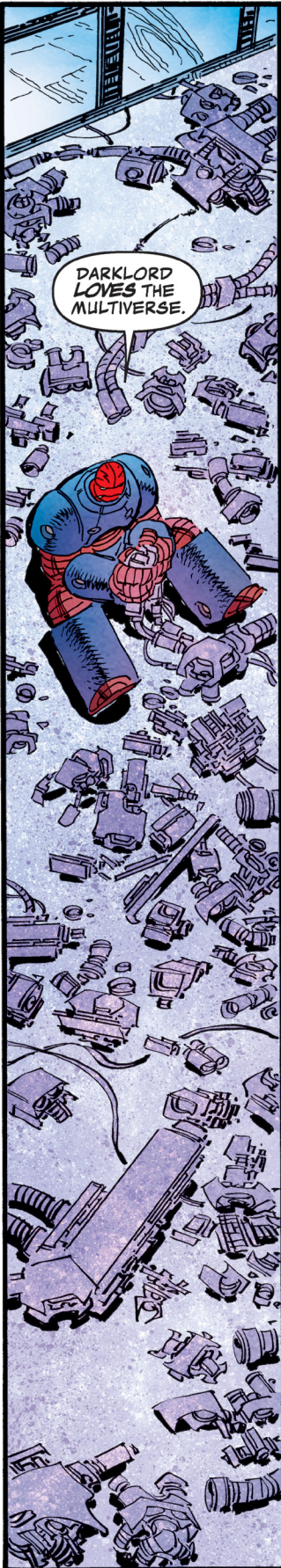




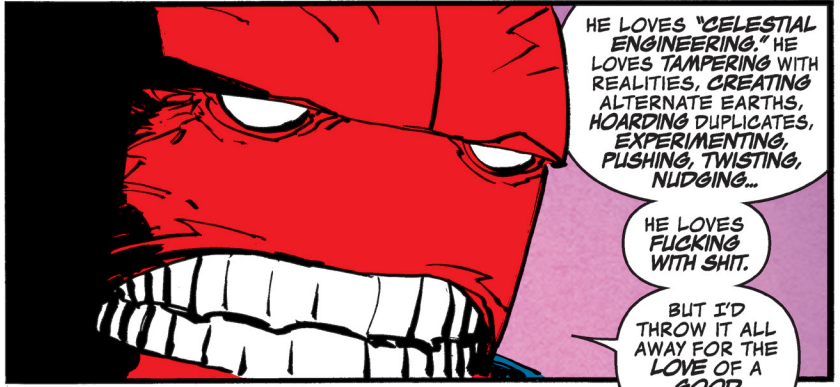








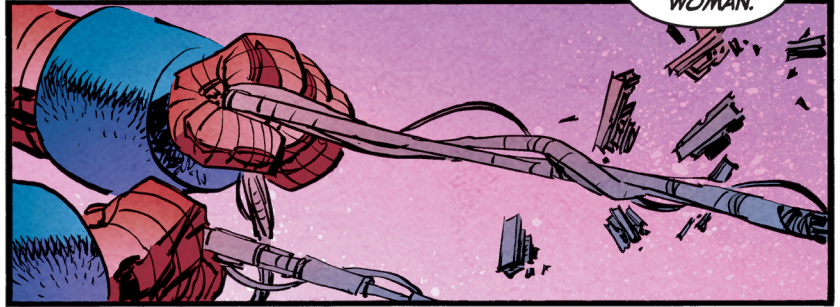
DARKLORD LOVES THE MULTIVERSE.



HE LOVES "CELESTIAL ENGINEERING." HE LOVES TAMPERING WITH REALITIES, CREATING ALTERNATE EARTHS, HOARDING DUPLICATES, EXPERIMENTING, PUSHING, TWISTING, NUDGING...

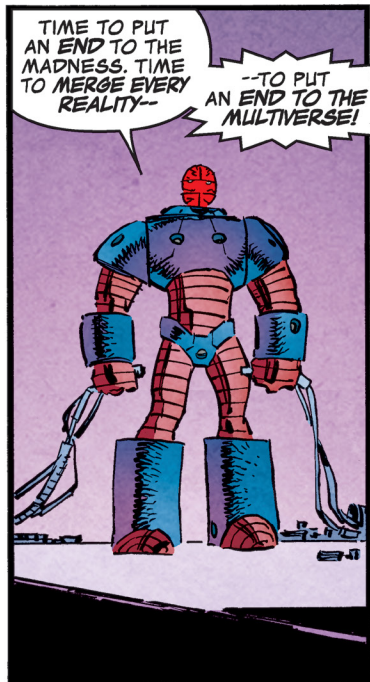
HE LOVES FUCKING WITH SHIT.

BUT I'D THROW IT ALL AWAY FOR THE LOVE OF A GOOD WOMAN.



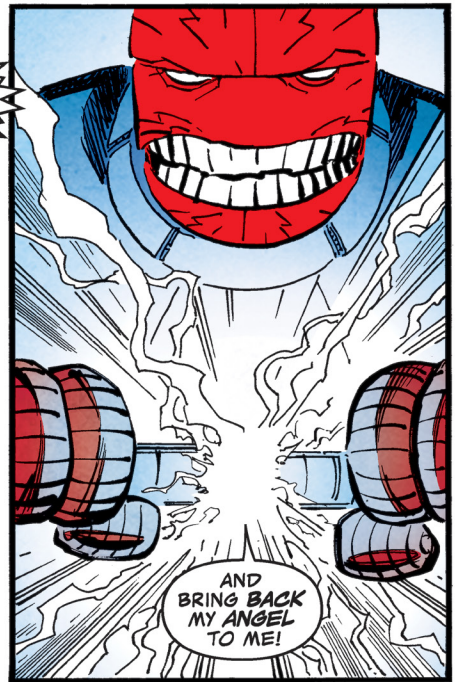
TO HELL WITH IT.

TO HELL WITH ALL OF IT.



TIME TO PUT AN END TO THE MADNESS. TIME TO MERGE EVERY REALITY--

--TO PUT AN END TO THE MULTIVERSE!



AND BRING BACK MY ANGEL TO ME!

FIN ADDICTS

Send letters to:
2001 CENTER STREET, 6TH FLOOR
BERKELEY, CA 94704

e-mail: Erik@savagedragon.com

visit our website at www.savagedragon.com

Closing in fast on Savage Dragon #225! This issue kicks off the senses-shattering three-part epic: The Merging of Multiple Earths and we're just getting started! It begins here, continues into our next smash issue and then concludes in our awe-inspiring 100-page spectacular 25th anniversary extravaganza. Hang onto your hats, kids--it's going to be a wild ride--!

Good Day Mister Larsen,

25 years of Image and 25 years of Dragon! So mind blowing! Its so great that we get issue 225 during the 25th anniversary! I still remember being amazed by that first cover 25 years ago and...damn, I don't know where the time has gone, but I know you've given us a lot of GREAT stories in that time, so thank you so much for that, good sir!

So, issue 220 is in the books and overall its a thumbs up for me, although it mostly felt like a set up issue in a lot of ways. Obviously Angel was the focal point, and cover star, of the issue and a lot of that was fights to establish her situation and being trapped in Dimension X with Mister Glum. I really liked the way you made her look smaller and weaker than normal in her last panel. It really drove home just how hopeless things are looking for her, as I think she also realized that she couldn't get home on her own. Could she? Interested to see where it goes.

I think the biggest event however was Dragon being set free, but holy shit, Erik, talk about outta left field! First off, and this is total nitpicking, I just can't see any political party agreeing to set someone like Dragon free. I get that Obama is leaving office so you could say he doesn't care anymore, but that doesn't ring true. I just don't understand the reasoning behind this pardon, nor why it was so sudden. But, that bitching/nitpicking aside, I'm happy to have Dragon back and interested to see where it goes.

Although I'm seriously scared that you only did it so you could kill him off. Otherwise, poor neighbor Craig...what a dumbass. Are you turning him into a lame ass version of Cable or just torturing him for our amusement? Malcolm was his usual cool self, although almost a non-factor in this issue, and Maxine was her usual blunt and hilarious self.

So overall, a strong issue that I enjoyed, but not in my top ten or anything. Can't wait to see what you have planned for 225. I know it will be great and I know you're trying to put together another 100 page giant...but if I might make a suggestion, as I mentioned earlier, since it's the 25th anniversary and the 225th issue, I see...150 pages!!! A flip book!!! 75 pages to the usual gang and 75 pages to the amazing...spectacular...wondrous...DEADLY DUO!!! Give it some thought and make mine Dragon and The Deadly Duo!

Don Smith
Vancouver, BC, Canada

Thoughts on the Obama pardon were as follows: Dragon did save his life directly in Savage Dragon #145, so there's a personal connection. Plus, don't forget, Dragon has saved the world a few times, and Dragon clearly had a different persona when he was in Emperor Kurrr mode. To a lot of people, Dragon was perceived of as being unjustly convicted. And Dragon has been freed a couple times and in both cases he went back to jail, willingly, and made no attempt to escape. And don't forget--his superpowers have been removed, so he's really not much of a threat at this point.

Pardoning prisoners is not a party decision. It's up to the president's own discretion.

As far as making #225 150 pages goes--I couldn't do that even if I wanted to. Page counts need to be divisible by four. So, it could be 148 pages or 152 but not 150.

Suggestion very much noted on the Deadly Duo front.

And, time will tell on neighbor Craig. I'll just say...we haven't seen the last of him.

Dear Erik,

Damn it. I can't believe how much you hoodwinked us with the sales copy on this issue. One goes back and re-reads it and that planet destroying menace that gets pardoned was right there in front of us. How did I not see this? It's your Larsen classic set up. The issue before you utterly destroy all hope (Dragon's appeal is over) to only throw a reverse at us the next issue. Yeah, you just did it with Barry's death, rebirth and death and you've done it countless times over the last 200 issues, but this one was delivered with nice class.

Dragon is free! Hallelujah praise Zeus. And the fact that you had this planned out since the beginning of his incarceration (that being the Obama end of term pardon) was a great resolution. Yeah, I'm still hoping we might get a little more insight into whether Judge Coffin was on the dole, maybe even a little more clarify on exactly what Urass' plot was. Between the Robot from Iraq, Bush's kidnapping, the freeing of Dark Dragon (and getting him Dragon's blood?), there just seem to be loose ends to this that didn't get resolved. I'm sincerely hoping that now that Dragon is free it doesn't mean the door is closed to resolving all the loose Dragon/Urass plot threads.

But even with Dragon returning to his own book, this time as a supporting cast member/babysitter/grampa, we're still running a little short

on superheroes. Yeah, I know and agree with you on the need to have well rounded non powered characters in the book, it feels lately like the Superheroness of the book is confined exclusively to Dragon and Angel.

The book used to be teaming with supporting heroes. SuperPatriot, Mighty Man, Star, Rock, Barbaric, Rapture, Battle Tank etc.... Sure some have been knocked off, others are off in space or 2nd grade. And that is good. It is cool to see that the supporting cast has grown and evolved. But with so many older heroes retired or away with the SOS, there seems to be a void where new heroes aren't coming along to replace them.

Sure, this makes Chicago more of Malcolm's town and focuses the book on him. But I miss the way Chris Robinson or the TMNT would stop by for a romp. We got Ant, Daredevil is with the SOS and Spawn is, well in his own book, really. Any chance some new creations could help save the day anytime soon? The colorful countless heroes and villains, the full world that Savage Dragon presents, has always been the draw for me.

Doesn't mean I won't keep reading. Thanks as always for another great issue and reading my ramblings.

Scotty Tielich
Southern California

Yeah, saying "a world-conquering menace inexplicably pardoned and set free" in the solicitation copy was meant to get people thinking I was talking about Mr. Glum, following, as it did, the trial of Mr. Glum.

As far as supporting heroes goes, it always seems like a bit of a dodge. If the idea of the book is Malcolm Dragon as the champion protecting the city that all goes out the window once you add a cast of thousands. And how dire can any situation be when there are a pile of guys ready and willing to jump into any fray?

There will inevitably be new cast members, superpowered and not, but I don't want Malcolm having it too easy or it takes away and sense of danger.

Hey Erik,

SD #221 is less than a week away and once again I find myself way behind in giving you some feedback on your latest issue. I promised myself I would start writing more regularly so even if this letter is almost a month late I am going to go ahead and write it anyways!

Where to start? The cover seems like as good a place as any. When I first saw the cover to Savage Dragon #220 I didn't really pick up on Angel's hair and costume change, but when I finally noticed the differences I was thinking WTF? Angel Dragon is dead! What the hell is she doing on the cover? It was only after some subtle comments from you on Facebook that I clued in that all wasn't as it might appear. And seeing the 25th anniversary trade dress on the cover was a bit mind blowing. I can't believe Image and Savage Dragon have been kicking around for 25 years! It seems just like yesterday we were hearing about those young upstart creators from Marvel breaking away to form their own company!

On to the interiors. I don't know what more can be said at this point. You have been on such a great run lately and it has been an absolute pleasure to have ringside seats to it all. I enjoyed how you broke up the two stories visually with the tall vertical panels for Angel and a the mostly horizontal panels for Malcolm and the gang. The colors by Nikos did a good job of separating the the two tales as well.

The Glum and Angel story has really taken a disturbing turn. We always knew Glum was a crazy dictator, but he really seems to have veered off into totally batshit crazy territory with kidnapping Angel and trying to remake her in the other Angel's image. It would seem his devastation over losing his Angel has finally completely unhinged him. Using Angel's Mother as a bargaining chip was another underhanded move and a clear act of desperation. As we approach the big 225th issue I look forward to seeing how his psychosis plays out.

As much as I enjoyed the Glum and Angel storyline, the best part of the issue for me was seeing Dragon finally become a free man. Woohoo! Thanks, Obama! I'm looking forward to some crazy adventures in babysitting from Grampa Dragon. It's just too bad he's no longer powered up. Those three kids are a handful and he's going to need every resource available to keep up with them. Just look at poor Craig. Even a patented Rob Liefeld Cable Arm wasn't enough to keep him safe. Poor Craig. Will he ever learn?

All-in-all another solid issue, and as always, I'm looking forward to the next one. I finally got a peek at the real cover for issue #221 and it is awesome! I am so jazzed (and a little nervous) to see what goes down next issue!

See you next month!

Andrew d'Entremont
Ottawa, ON, Canada

Sounds like a plan.

Dear Erik,

Working on getting caught up, and finally got to Savage Dragon #220. It was a bit subtle, but I liked the trick of vertical panels for the Glum world pages and horizontal for Earth. The colors and characters made it clear enough, but the panel layouts were an effective way to make the settings feel different.

Having Dragon be pardoned feels like a bit of a cop-out, but not a total rip-off. Presidents always pardon people, and you've established their relationship, so it makes sense. I hope we will see the ways that his time in prison has changed Dragon. Obviously he's a different man without his powers, but he spent years thinking he'd never be free, and I'm curious to see how he'll adjust.

The Rob Liefeld robot arm is a weird in-joke, but it sure made me chuckle. Poor Craig. I don't know if he'll become more than comic relief, but so far he's pretty amusing.

Keep on making fun comics, please.

Taylor Porter

Halifax, Nova Scotia

I'll do my best.

Hello Erik,

I sent you an email a while back but feel I want to send you another. I just came back from ECCC and drove over 1800 km to get there and home and spent too much and dragged my wife and baby along to be there for the 25th of Image and get stuff signed and meet all my childhood favorite artists. I've met you before and came back to your table a few times to have you sign more and just chat a bit. I enjoyed meeting all the Image guys and had met yourself, Marc and Jim (Valentino) in 2012 at ECCC but really came this time to meet Todd, Rob and Whilce and have a few things signed and sit in on panels. While I enjoyed the panels and meeting everyone the pitfalls I expected came in a few observations and were magnified recently in your recent twitter post about having your head examined and further touching on low sales of SD.

The saddest part for me watching the panel was wondering if the Image founders were still as relevant now? Attendance says yes, but how long does that last when most of you are no longer drawing books. I love Todd's stuff, but am sad he will likely never draw a book on his own again. Liefeld continues to pump stuff out and is still all over the map, but his art isn't as strong as it once was. The thing that hit home is comic movies are turning cons into a cash grab. This was most evident in Liefeld charging \$30 per signature (\$60 for DP first appearances) and getting bypassed by VIP holders who shelled out \$120 and his signing times not even being posted. This has always been the case with Liefeld, from variant covers to embossed, but you know what? I paid it. I stood in the line and paid \$60 for him to sign YB #1 and Image #0 which are both worth nothing and snapped a quick pic with him. I was talking to people about how it was cool you signed and didn't charge and were old school that way and thought it was something you'd never do.

With posts of SD #s being low I was trying to think, what changed, and how is it fixed? If not fixed how do you supplement income to make sure it survives? By the few times I've met you and follow your stuff I know you'll never ask for help, and that the book would end first. I'm not usually blunt, as I believe it comes off as rude but wanted to let you know how the book has changed for me and why #s may be affected and possible solutions.

1) Lack of exposure- By doing SD so long new comic readers are not exposed to Erik Larsen as shops don't carry it. Spawn was likely great exposure to your art again for younger audiences. Doing art or covers for other comics will bring attention to you bringing them to your book. Liefeld is still doing Deadpool stuff which is giving him ultimate exposure.

2) Change in Dynamic- While the book had to change, what I miss comparing it to early SD runs is the detail as its become much looser art wise. I felt the earlier book had countless very strong images of Dragon per issue where it is lesser art reliant now and more story focused. Maxine and Malcolm can never look as cool as Dragon with guns.

3) Cash In - While I hate to say this, cash in. Comics are business, you need to make money, SD needs to top #300. Charge for signatures, do variant covers, Do other covers for people. Hell, propose Spider-Man/Dragon crossover with Marvel as everyone misses your Spidey and could help bring readers. SD/Superman was cool. Bring back Dragon in all his glory to bring some readers back. Also, SUPERPATRIOT!!! Kickstart an exclusive issue, with bonuses of SD posters and shirts and anything with SD on it. Exposure!!! Ooh, Ooh, what about a one shot issue available only on Kickstarter that is "The End" of SD. Your current version of how it will all end someday, knowing it is likely to change as the series progresses.

4) SD event - Create an event around Dragon or Malcolm. Collaborate with Liefeld on a crossover where Dragon or Malcolm work with Youngblood and you do a jam issue ALA Image United. Maybe something that happens to Malcolm to make him less reserved.

Anyways, I'll keep reading. Thanks for reading this if you got this far, I just want the best for Savage Dragon, and Erik. Also, ECCC was great, I had a lot of fun and was happy to get a chance to be there, I even got one of the 300 signed posters in the lottery. With only two items allowed for Todd to sign I made sure he signed SD #193. That cover was super exciting for me as he is my favorite detail artist, but your action is the bomb. I also love the longevity you've put into SD.

I'll quit my pointless banter now.

Scott MacDonald

Tastes change. Styles come and go. Nobody stays on top forever, nor should they. I had my moment in the sun. I have a wife I adore, a nice house and two big, strapping boys. The industry has been good to me. Am I still relevant? That's not for me to decide. I just do the work as I see fit and hope somebody shows up.

As far as your points go:

1: I've done other books and found that if readers have a choice between my Spider-Man and my Savage Dragon they'll take my Spider-Man. At no point when I worked on other books did my numbers get a noticeable bump. I could stop doing Savage Dragon and do something else that sold better but I don't think for a minute that taking on more work elsewhere is any kind of magic bullet.

2: Change is inevitable and being even more stuck in the past is no solution. Styles change, people change. You loved that old stuff because you were 12 and that was your sweet spot. You may not want change but I crave it. Doing the same drawings the same way for decades is mind-numbingly monotonous. I love nothing more than finding new ways of tackling a similar problem. I look at the older issues and see all the mistakes. I see all the poor drawings and attempts to hide my deficiencies behind a wall of crosshatching and it doesn't do much for me. The lines aren't defining shapes and establishing light sources. They're lines for the sake of lines. Emulating that seems insane.

Strong iconic poses are great, sure, but ultimately, I'm trying to tell a story here, not compose pictures to be popped onto T-shirts and lunchboxes. And given the choice of repeating a familiar shot or finding something new--nine times out of ten I'll go with the new.

It's not an easy path. Some artists get stuck in a rut, forever repeating and emulating their old work. Readers get bored and move on. Others keep trying new and different approaches but that can alienate old readers who liked the way things had been. There's no simple solution, clearly, but in order to preserve my sanity, I need to keep moving. If I'm not kept engaged, I can't expect my audience to be. If I'm bored, it's reflected in the work. So I tend to try something new. Sometimes it's successful and sometimes it's not, but hopefully it's worth your attention.

And, honestly, it's impossible to unlearn what you've learned. A lot of what made earlier work vibrant and full of life was the learning process. I was figuring stuff out. And part of that involved screwing up. I can look back at old art and see where arms were clearly too long or faces were clearly constructed poorly, where compositions and anatomy and perspective are all skewed and line work makes no sense. It's hard to recreate that--and why would I want to? It would be like going back to high school.

3: No thanks. I'd rather go down with my integrity intact, thank you.

I'm not desperate or starving. I don't need to do anything I'm not comfortable with in order to survive. All of that seems like stuff that would keep me away from my drawing board. I'd rather be making comics.

4: You do realize we're all still waiting for Image United to be wrapped up, don't you? I can tell you this much--there is no way that I'm going to bank on any of those gentlemen to show up at the dance. I'm going to have to do this the old-fashioned way--though hard work and perseverance. At the end of the day I can count on one guy--and he's typing this response to you.

Dear Erik,

So Jennifer Murphy is back. I guess a return has been hinted at for a bit, going back to seeing her in her cryogenic tube in issues 207 & 208. But I'll admit that, even with the foreshadowing, the impact of the return was dilled a bit by some confusion. With the alternate realities and different versions of characters, sometimes it's hard for even long-time readers to remember who's who.

I know you're not a fan of re-capping the entire histories of characters, and I'm sure you will remind us of everything we need to know. But for my own sense of clarity, the Jennifer and Angel in issues 221 are the same two characters as when we first met them, correct? And this Jennifer and Dragon never married? This is the woman he almost married in issues 62? And so the Jennifer that Dragon married in 104 is dead? Killed by her own daughter, who is also dead? It's a little confusing.

This issue was a little light on Malcolm, too, and I know that's bound to happen from time to time, but try not to make it too much of a habit. Malcolm really is the best!

It was, however, very nice to see Alex Wilde, even if her timing was terrible. Chester, too! So much of the supporting cast has come and gone over the years. There's no way to catch up with all of them, but it's always great when we can see some old-timers, especially one's like Alex who have been a big part of the book.

Keep making 'em and I'll keep reading 'em.

Taylor Porter

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Sounds like a plan!

And, thankfully, the continuity is not so confusing that you couldn't figure it out on the first try! I've found that the continuity is more confusing to those who have several pieces of the puzzle scattered throughout the series than having a few issues in a row.

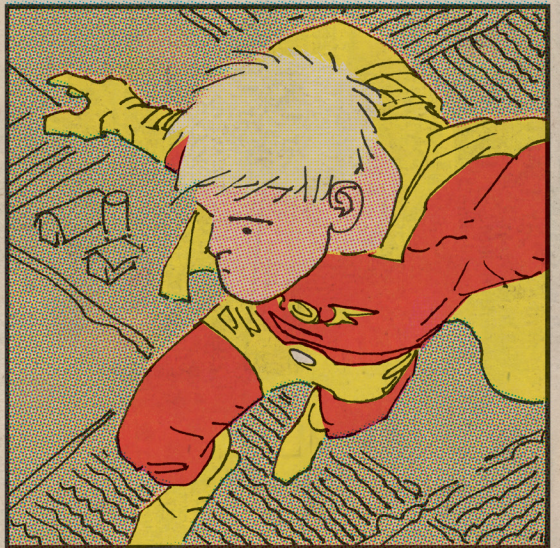
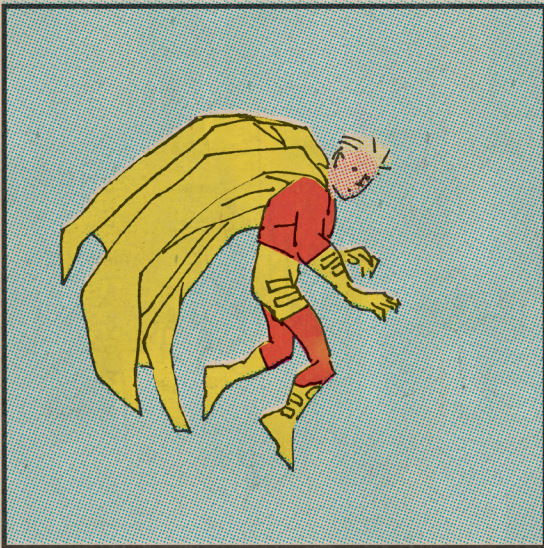
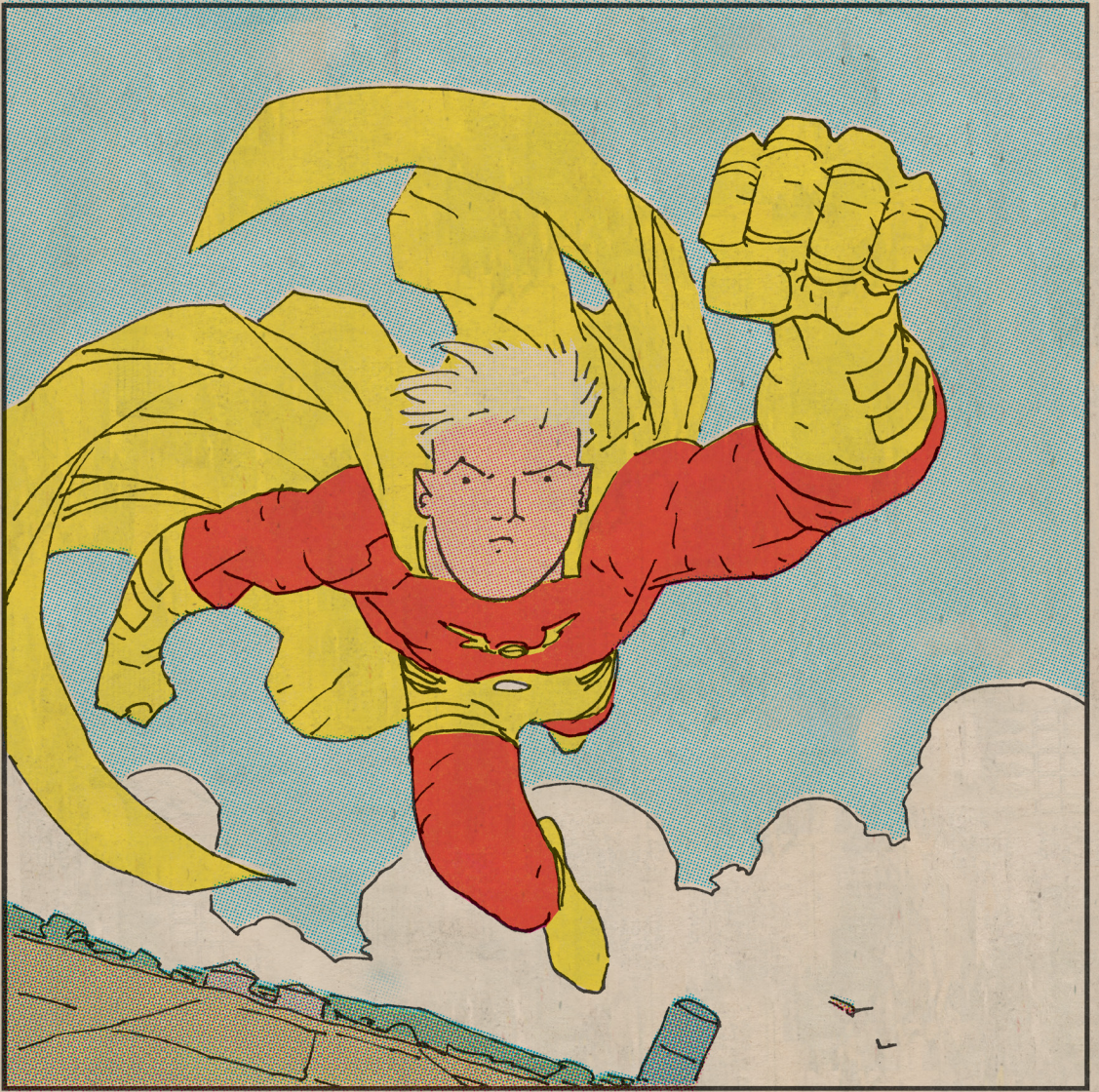
As an example, when the book just has Malcolm in it, there's no reason to mention that he's the son of the original Savage Dragon. All you need to know is that he's the good guy and he's fighting the good fight. If you have an old issue and a recent one, you might be confused as to why Dragon looks different and why he's being called Malcolm.

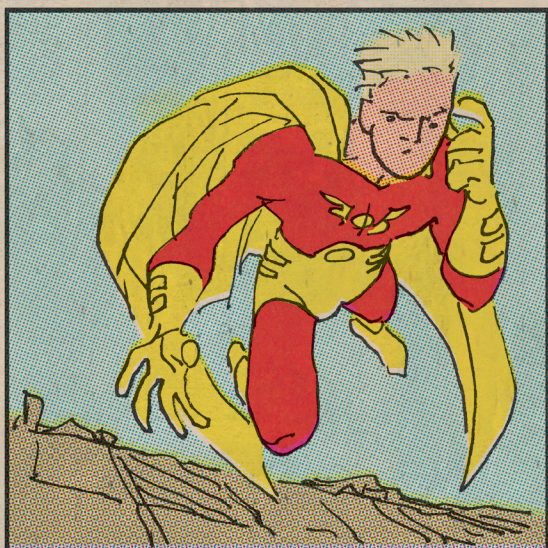
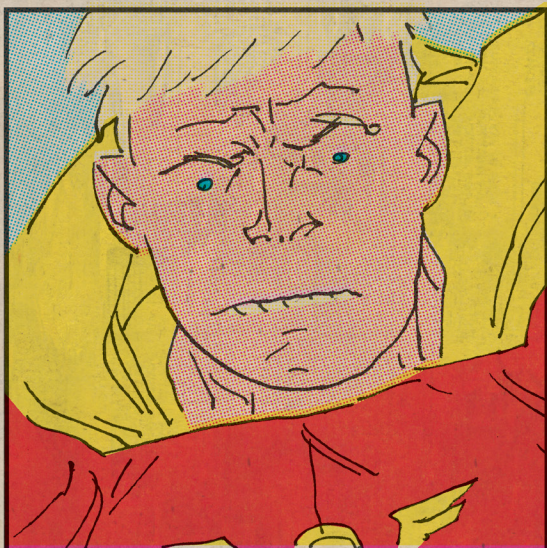
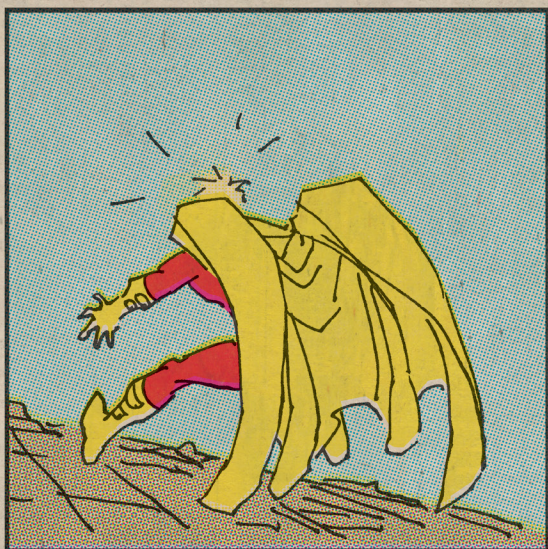
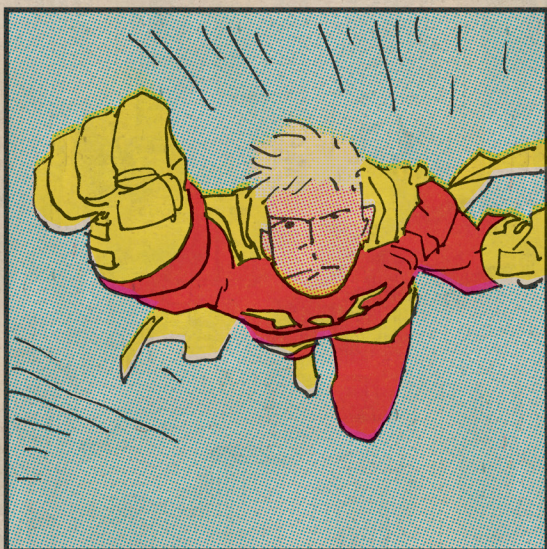
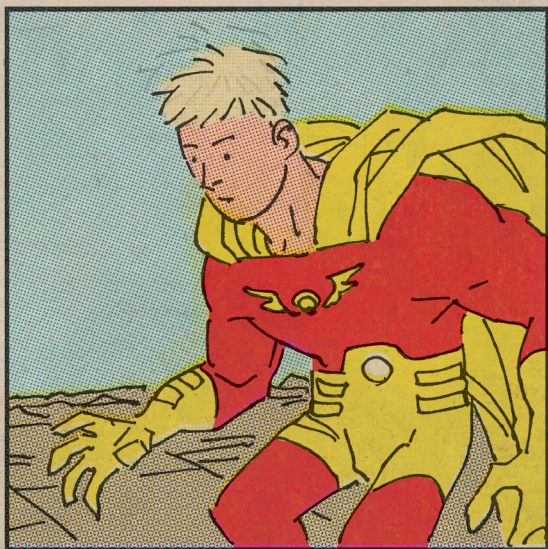
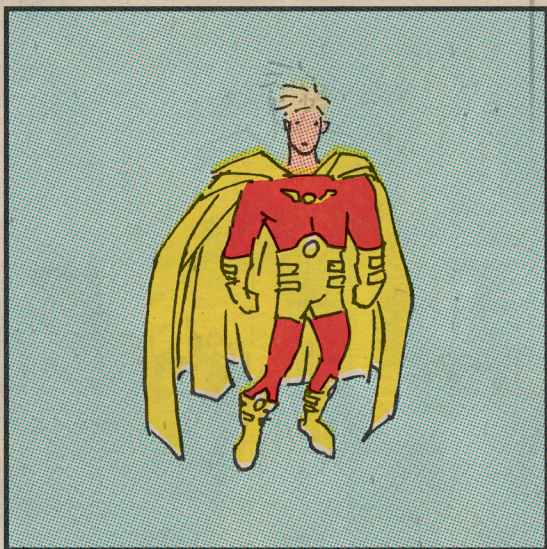
Readers are somewhat divided on the inclusion of Dragon in the book. Some want nothing more than for him to be restored to his former glory and take back the title, while others are firmly in Malcolm's corner. Thankfully, this book isn't a democracy and I don't have to take marching orders from the fans because I'd have no idea what to do!

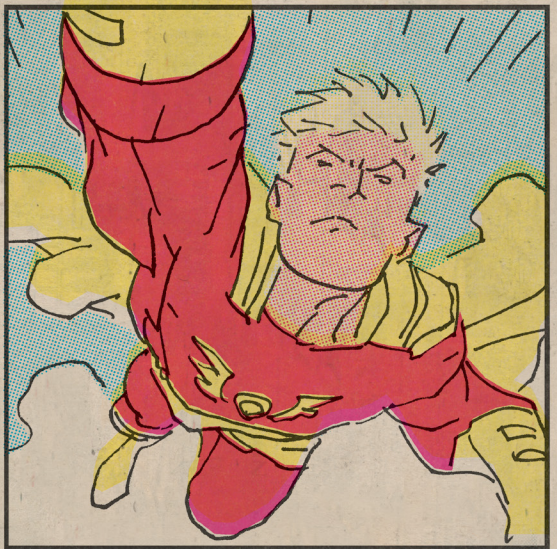
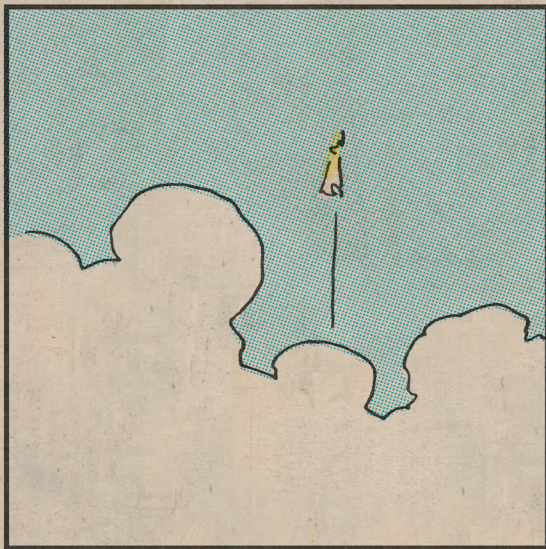
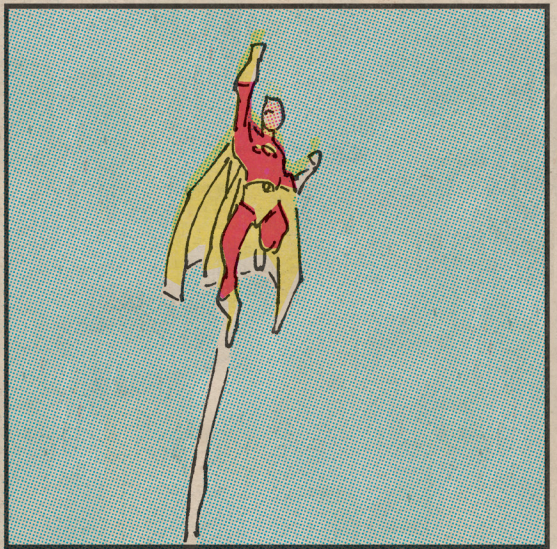
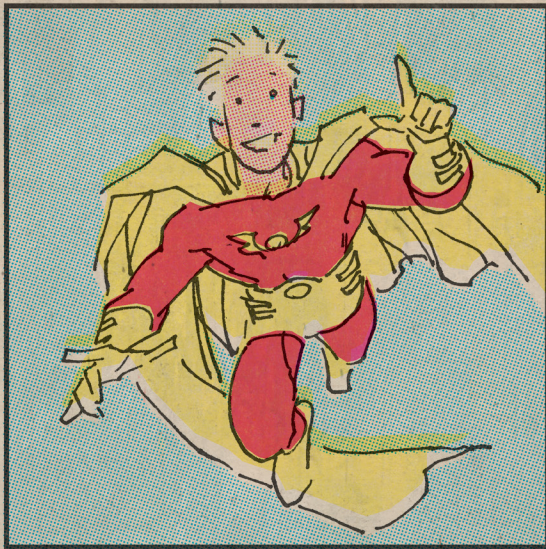
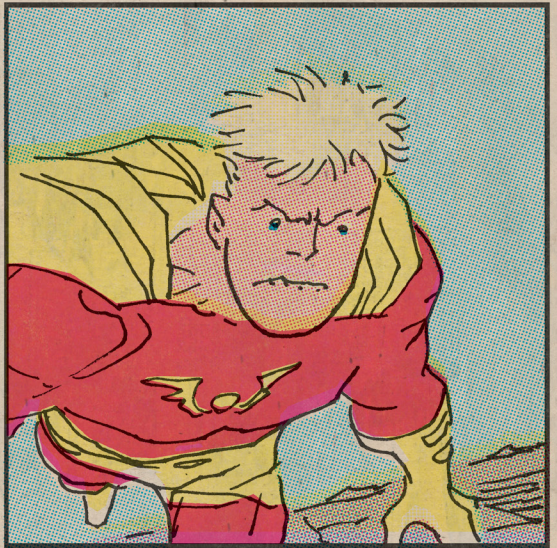
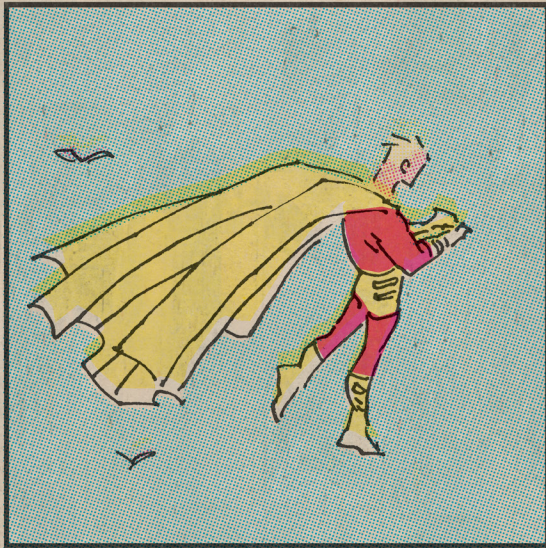
-Erik Larsen

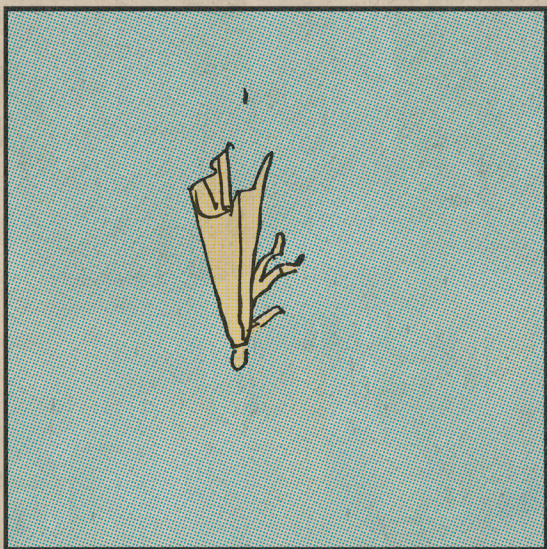
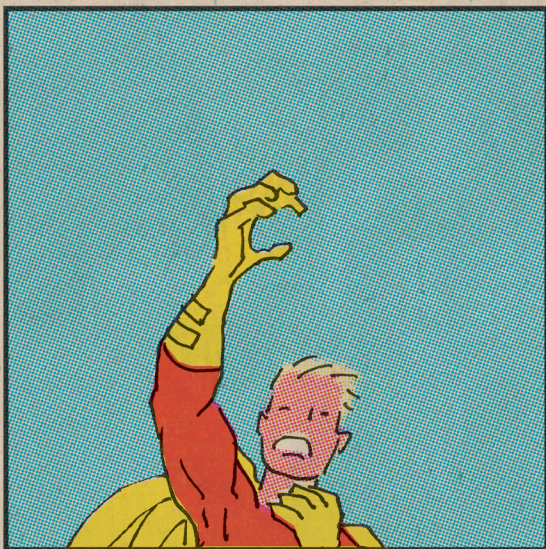
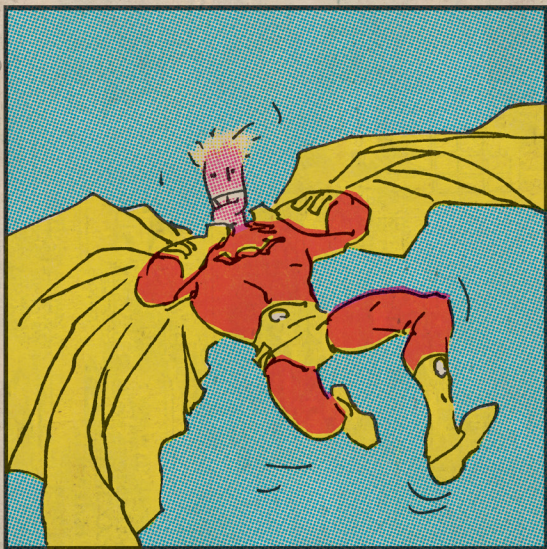
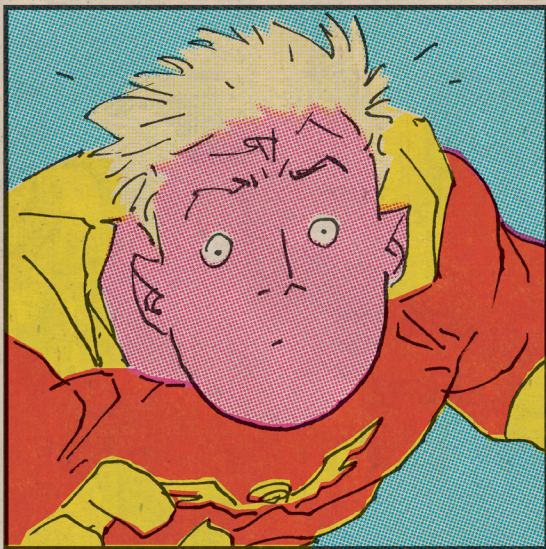
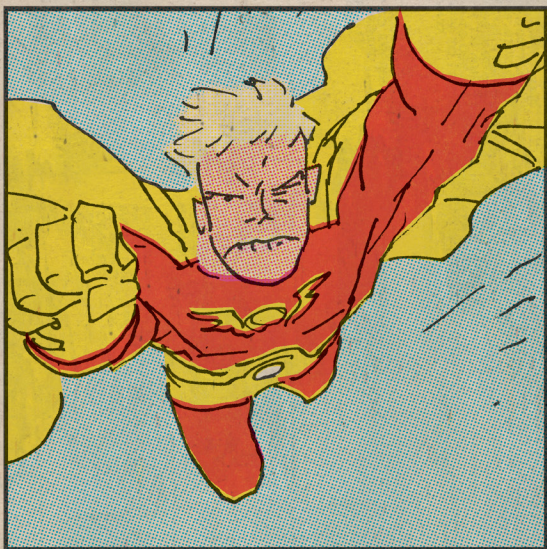
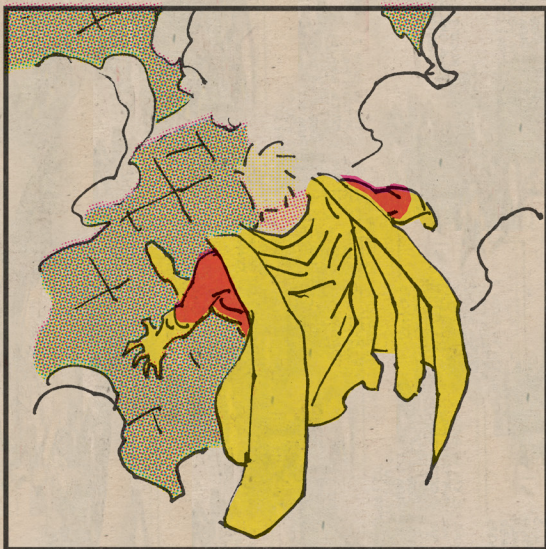
NEXT: The Merging of Multiple Earths (Part 2 of 3)

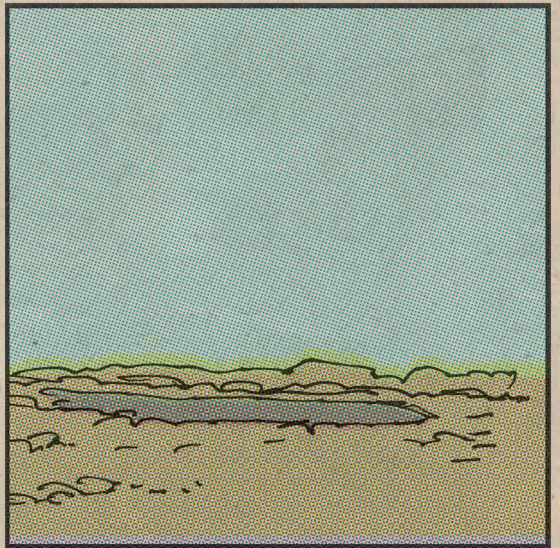
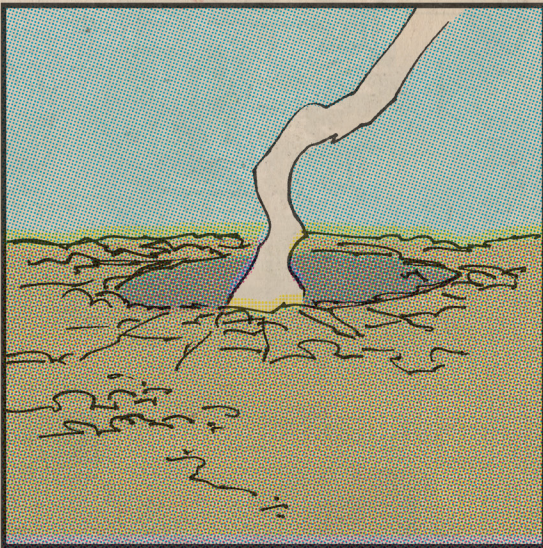
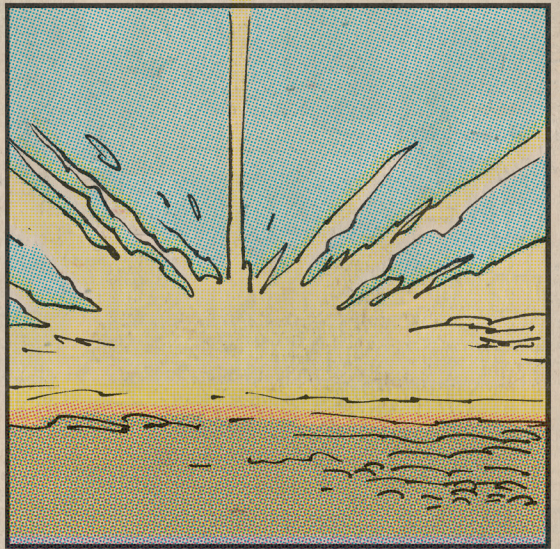
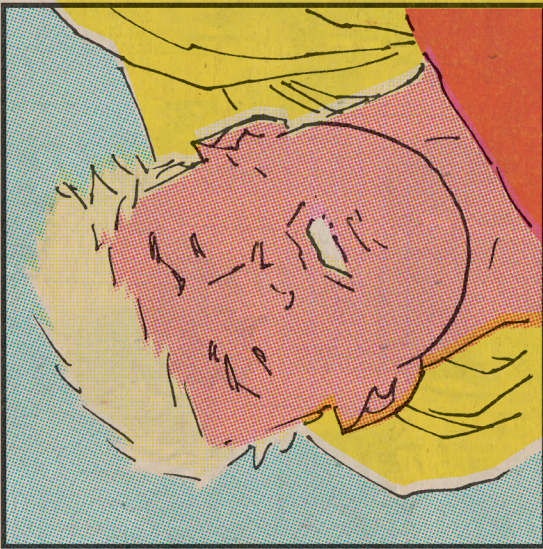
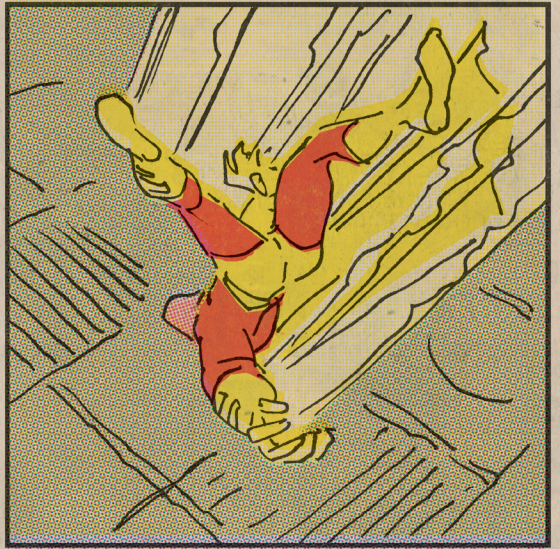
Hey, don't stop reading now--there's plenty of additional funny-book fun to be had in the pages that follow--!

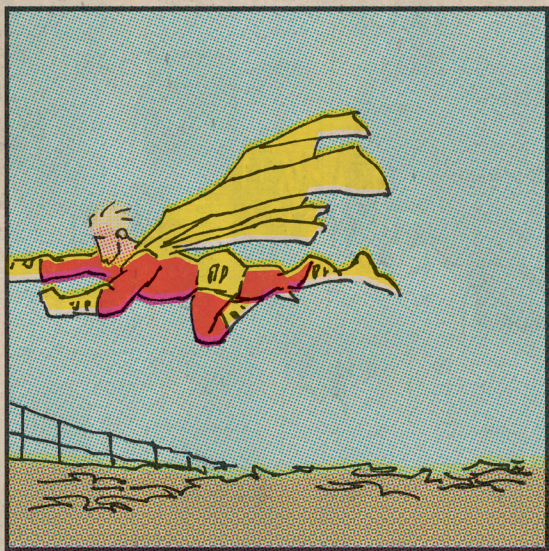
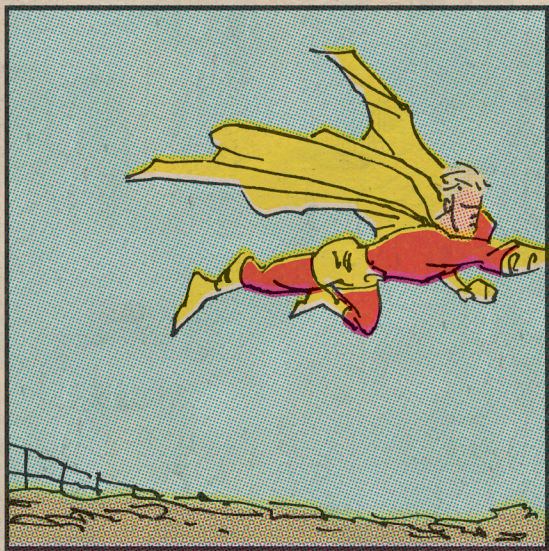
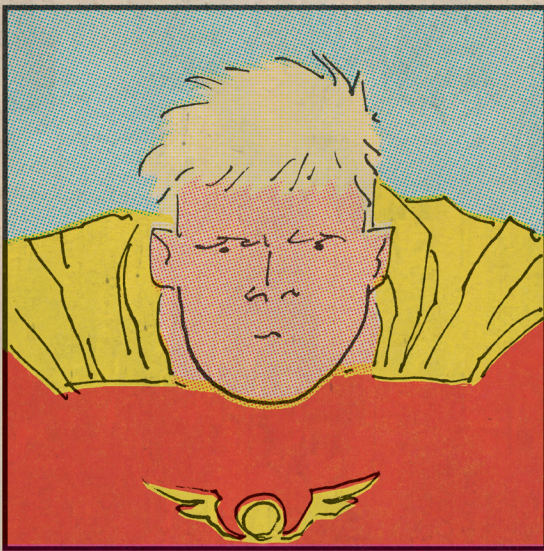
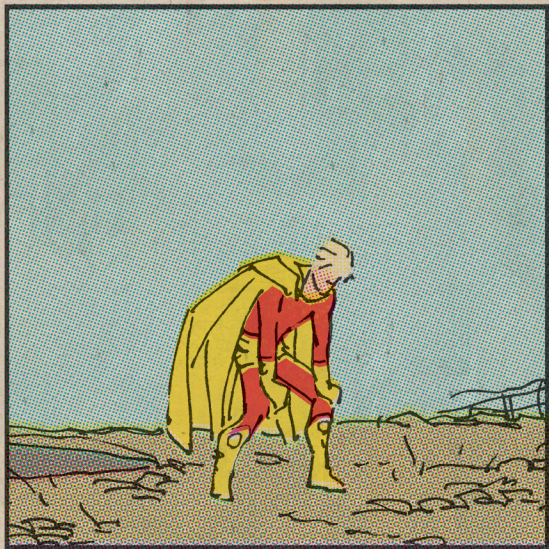
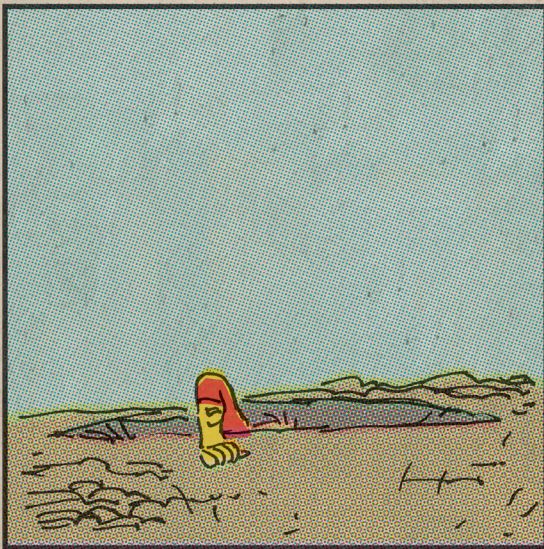












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