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SAVAGE® 262

DRAGON



SCORCHED EARTH!

SAVAGE[®] DRAGON

BY

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JACK MORELLI

letters

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colors

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flats

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engaging in legitimate political discourse



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SAVAGE DRAGON™

SCORCHED EARTH!



ANGEL
MURPHY--

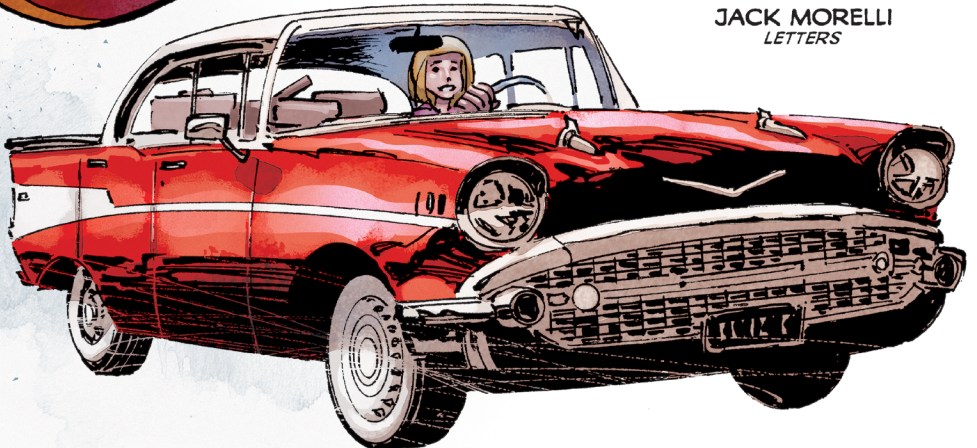
STOP
THE
CAR!

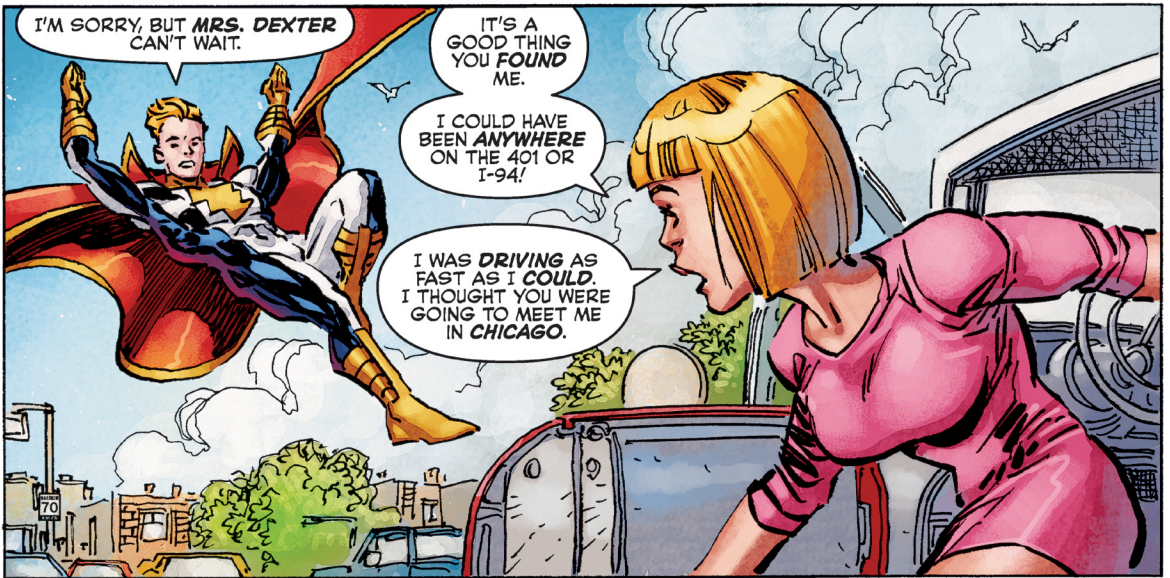
MIGHTY
MAN--?!

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?

By
**ERIK
LARSEN**
with
**NIKOS KOUTSIS
and MIKE TORIS**
COLORS

JACK MORELLI
LETTERS



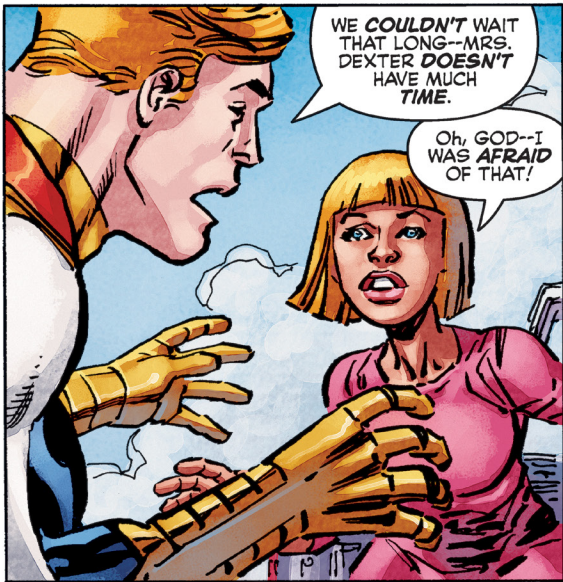


I'M SORRY, BUT **MRS. DEXTER** CAN'T WAIT.

IT'S A GOOD THING YOU FOUND ME.

I COULD HAVE BEEN ANYWHERE ON THE 401 OR I-94!

I WAS **DRIVING** AS FAST AS I **COULD**. I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO MEET ME IN **CHICAGO**.



WE **COULDN'T** WAIT THAT LONG--**MRS. DEXTER DOESN'T** HAVE MUCH TIME.

Oh, **GOD--I WAS AFRAID** OF THAT!



PLEASE, HURRY!

I HAVE **MALCOLM'S BLOOD** RIGHT HERE.

DO YOU NEED ANY **FREAK OUT?**

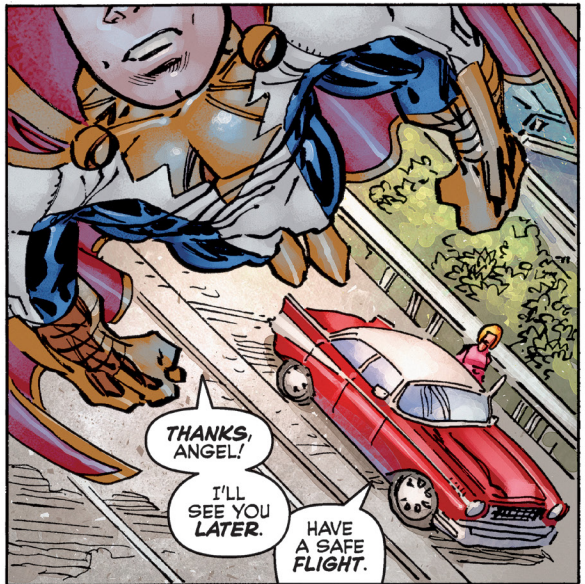


THEY'VE **GOT** THAT.

WE **JUST** NEED MALCOLM'S BLOOD.

HERE! TAKE IT!

WHEN THIS IS OVER, GIVE **SARA** A HUG FOR ME!



THANKS, ANGEL!

I'LL SEE YOU LATER.

HAVE A **SAFE FLIGHT.**

I DON'T
KNOW HALF
OF THESE
GUYS.

I THINK THAT
FURRY GUY
IS "MYOTIS."
I READ ABOUT
HIM IN THE
WIKI.

AND
I'M PRETTY
SURE THAT'S
"SPLIT-HEAD."

THERE ARE,
LIKE, SIX OR
MORE **PURPLE**
GUYS WITH
FUNKY
HEADS--

YOU'RE--

WAIT,
DON'T
TELL ME--

IS IT
"PUG FUGLY"?
AM I CLOSE?

THAT
TIP I GOT
WAS LEGIT,
MALCOLM--

THIS REALLY
IS THE DREGS
OF THE VICIOUS
CIRCLE!

THERE
AREN'T A
LOT OF GUYS
I RECOGNIZE
FROM MY
TIMELINE.

WE MAY
JUST MAKE IT
OUT OF HERE IN
ONE PIECE!



WHOA!
WHOA!

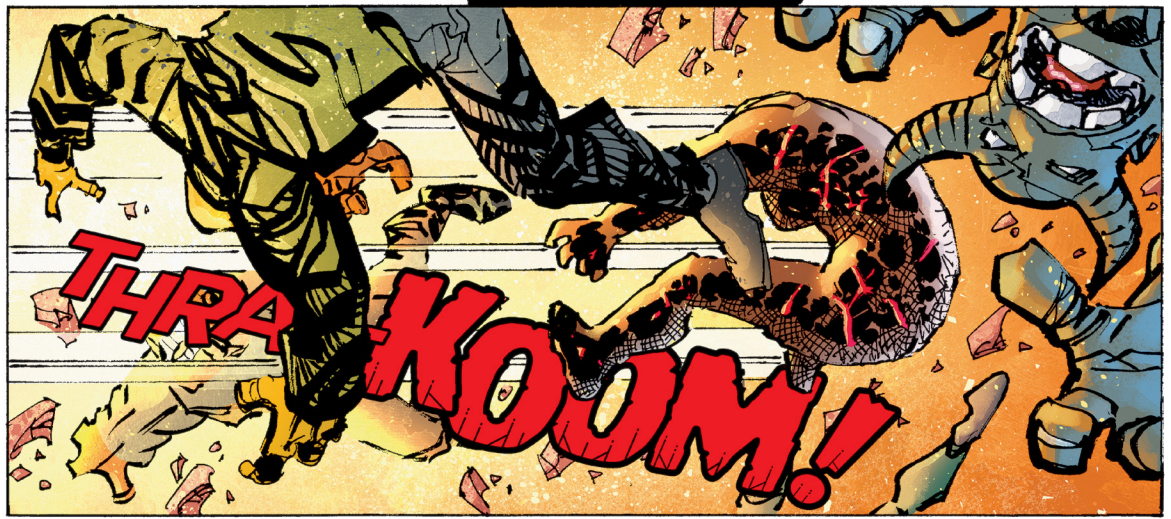
WATCH
WHAT YOU'RE
DOING!

BLARFF!



WHAM!

Oh,
HELL--!



**THRA
KOOOM!**



DAD!
I GOT
IT!

HURRY,
BETTY!

WE DON'T
HAVE A MOMENT
TO LOSE--!

TAKE IT!
GO SAVE MRS.
DEXTER!

HOLD ON,
SARA!
HOLD ON!

I'M
COMING--!

SARA...?

SHE'S GONE,
LARRY.

NO, NO,
NO--!

I HAVE THE
CURE RIGHT
HERE!

IT'S
RIGHT
HERE!

YOU
CAN'T BE
DEAD!

YOU
CAN'T!

THOOM!

PUNY DRAGONS!

YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR **BRAWN!**

WRANN!

"BRAWN,"
EH?

WELL, YOU MAY BE THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS--

BUT THIS LITTLE POWER GLOVE OF MINE MAY JUST EVEN THE ODDS A BIT--!

BAH!

RUNCH!

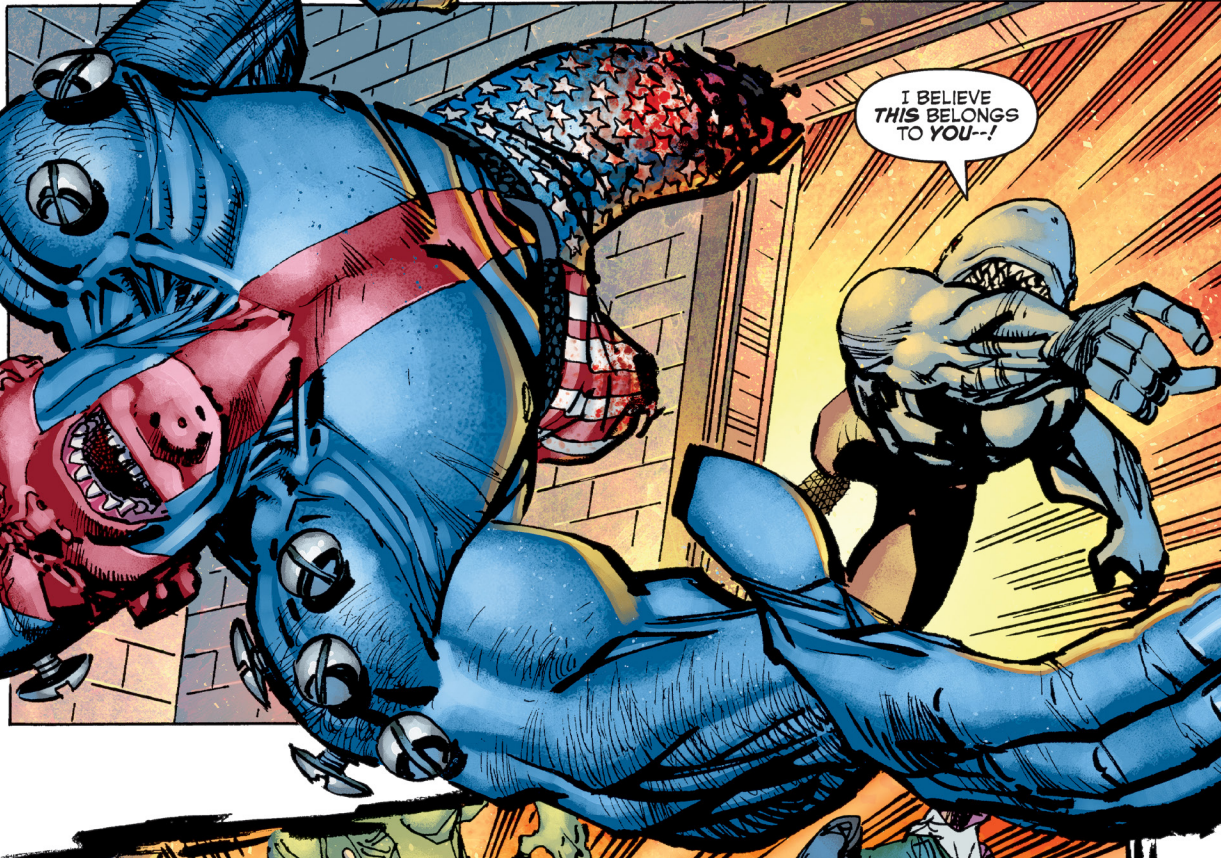
THAT OVERSIZED OVEN MITT IS WORTHLESS!

IT MAY KEEP YOU FROM BURNING YOUR FINGERS WHEN YOU TAKE THE TURKEY OUT OF THE OVEN--

BUT IT DOESN'T DO SQUAT AGAINST ME!



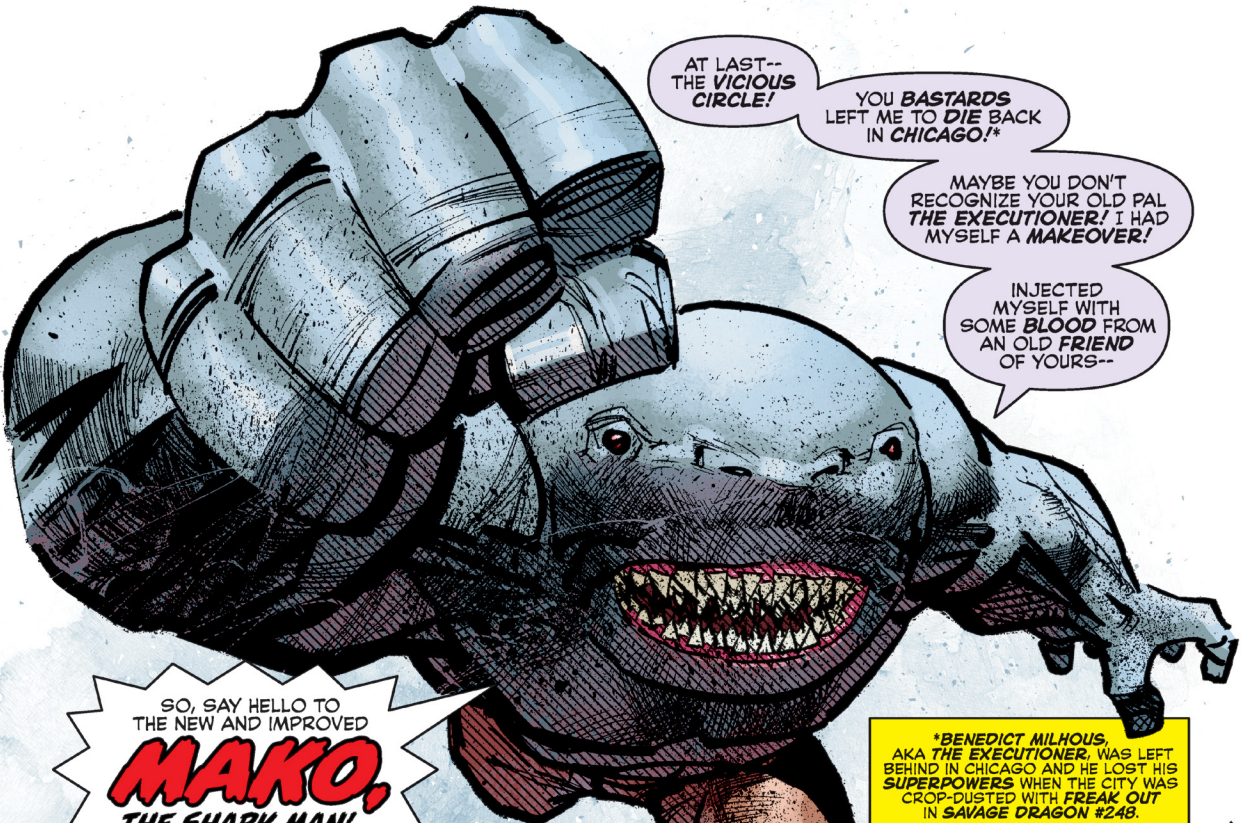
HEY, FUCK-TARDS!



I BELIEVE THIS BELONGS TO YOU--!



BRAKKA-THA-KOOM!!



AT LAST--
THE VICIOUS
CIRCLE!

YOU BASTARDS
LEFT ME TO DIE BACK
IN CHICAGO!*

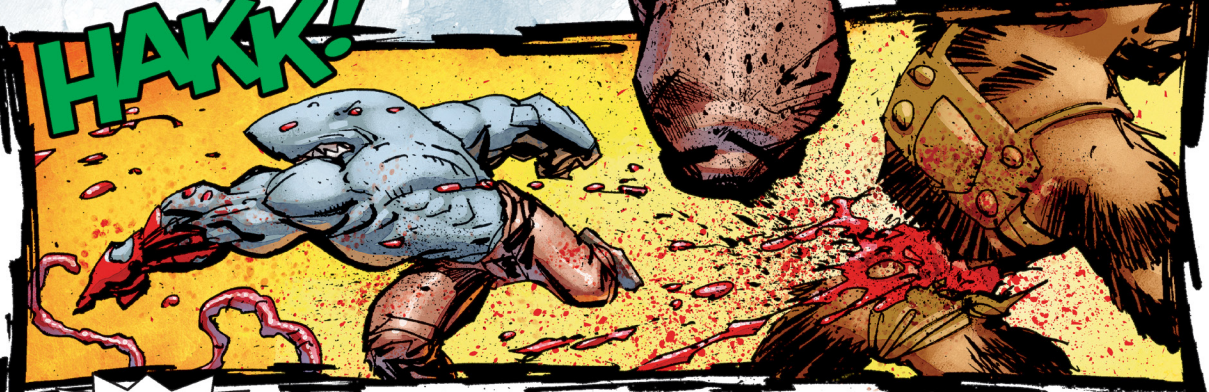
MAYBE YOU DON'T
RECOGNIZE YOUR OLD PAL
THE EXECUTIONER! I HAD
MYSELF A MAKEOVER!

INJECTED
MYSELF WITH
SOME BLOOD FROM
AN OLD FRIEND
OF YOURS--

SO, SAY HELLO TO
THE NEW AND IMPROVED
MAKO,
THE SHARK MAN!

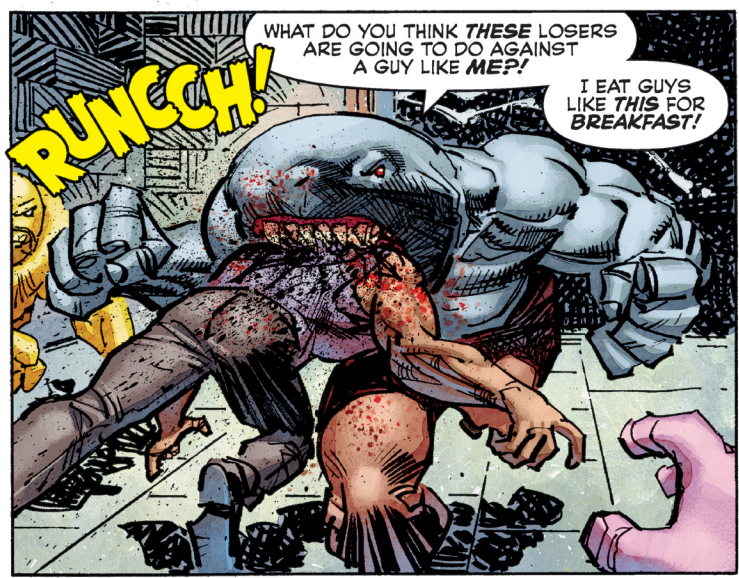
*BENEDICT MILHOUS,
AKA THE EXECUTIONER, WAS LEFT
BEHIND IN CHICAGO AND HE LOST HIS
SUPERPOWERS WHEN THE CITY WAS
CROP-DUSTED WITH FREAK OUT
IN SAVAGE DRAGON #248.

HAKK!



STOP HIM!
KILL HIM!

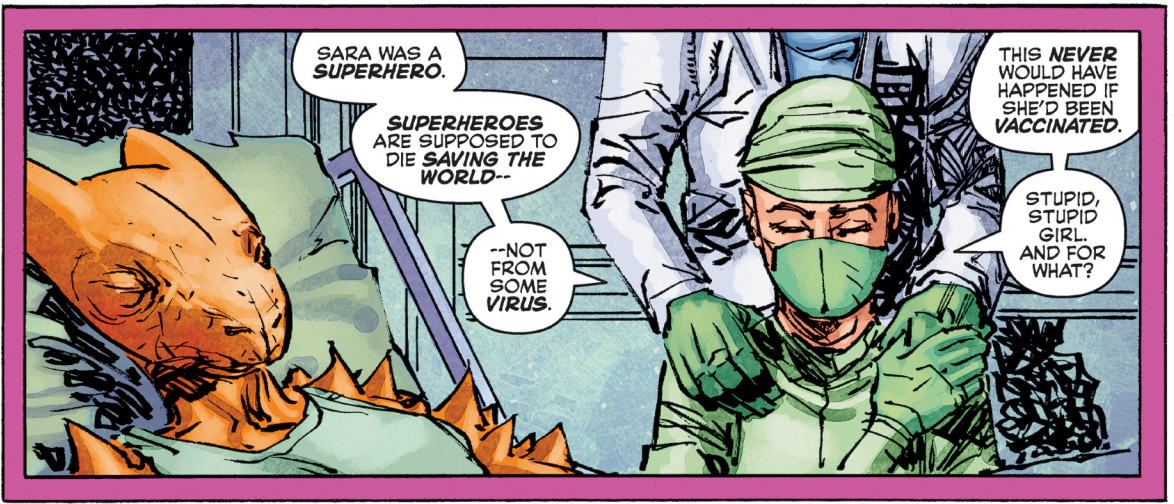
THIS FOOL
MAY RUIN
EVERYTHING!



RUNCCH!

WHAT DO YOU THINK THESE LOSERS
ARE GOING TO DO AGAINST
A GUY LIKE ME?!

I EAT GUYS
LIKE THIS FOR
BREAKFAST!



SARA WAS A SUPERHERO.

SUPERHEROES ARE SUPPOSED TO DIE SAVING THE WORLD--

--NOT FROM SOME VIRUS.

THIS NEVER WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF SHE'D BEEN VACCINATED.

STUPID, STUPID GIRL. AND FOR WHAT?



ANN...

MAYBE SARA'S DEATH DOESN'T NEED TO BE IN VAIN.

Oh, YEAH?



THERE ARE OTHER COVID PATIENTS ON VENTILATORS, YOU KNOW.

HORRIDUS WASN'T THE ONLY ONE.



WE COULD USE MALCOLM'S BLOOD ON ONE OF THEM--

OR MORE.



WE COULD TURN THEM INTO DRAGONS, HEAL THEM, AND THEN USE FREAK OUT TO TURN THEM BACK INTO HUMANS AGAIN.



SARA WOULD HAVE WANTED THIS, I THINK.

WE'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING, AREN'T WE?

I SURE HOPE SO.



Oh, GOD!
Oh, GOD--!

RUNCCH!

DON'T WORRY,
CONTROL--

I'VE GOT HIM!



YOU OKAY?

LOOKS LIKE WE GOT A
REPRIEVE FROM AN
UNEXPECTED SOURCE.

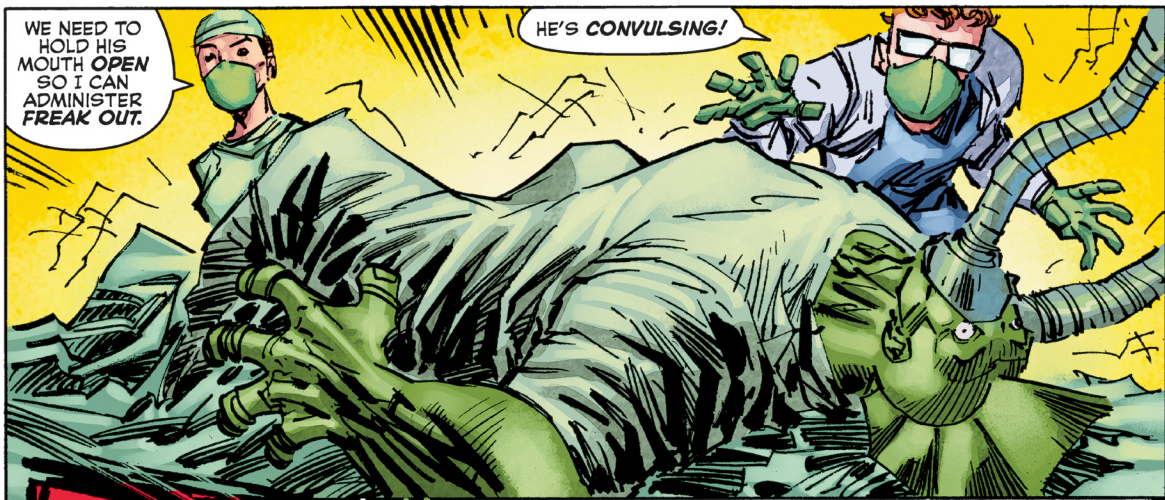
I'LL TAKE
WHAT I CAN GET.



SHUOK!

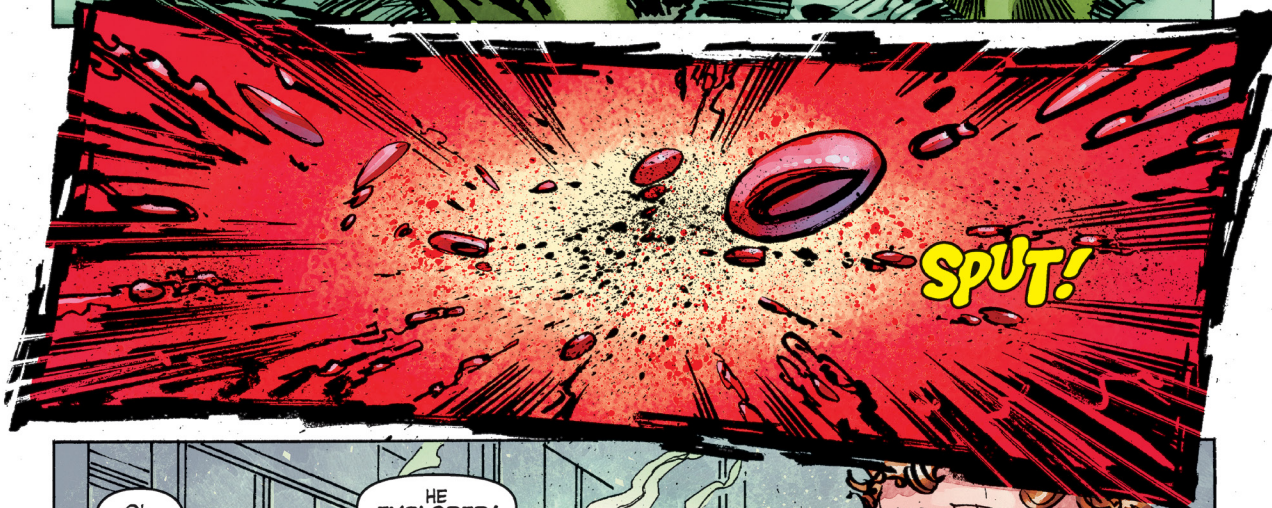
HKK!

CHOKE
ON THIS,
BRAWN!



WE NEED TO HOLD HIS MOUTH OPEN SO I CAN ADMINISTER FREAK OUT.

HE'S CONVULSING!



SPUT!



Oh, GOD.

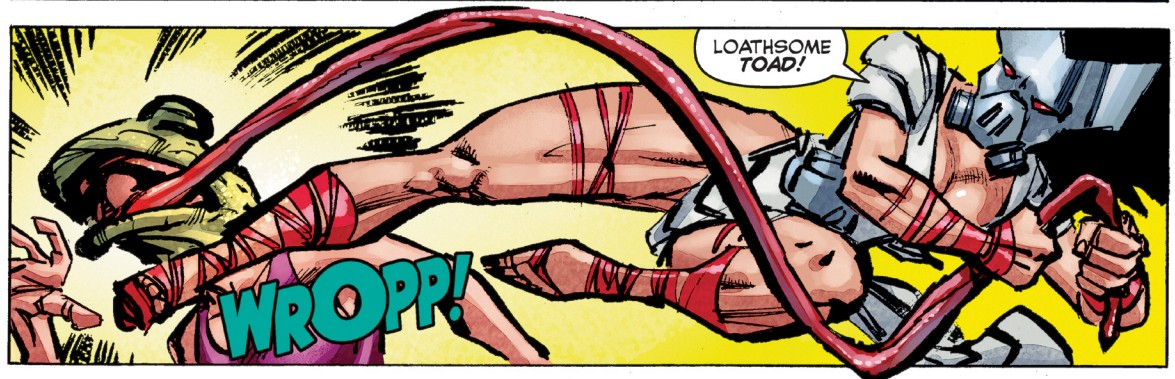
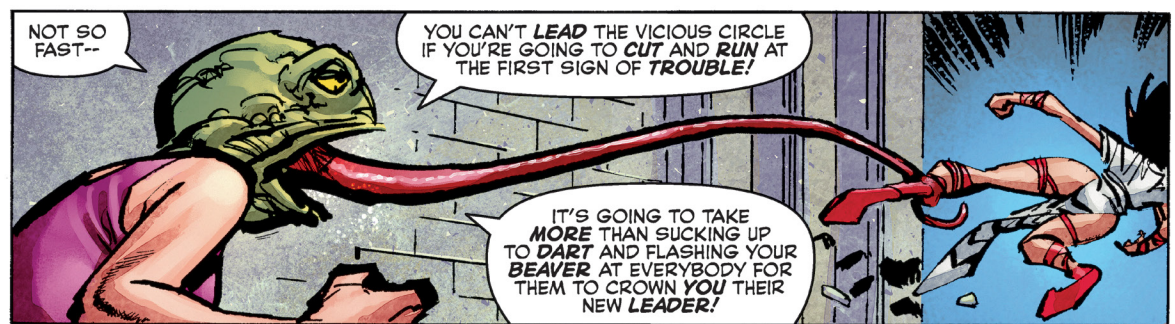
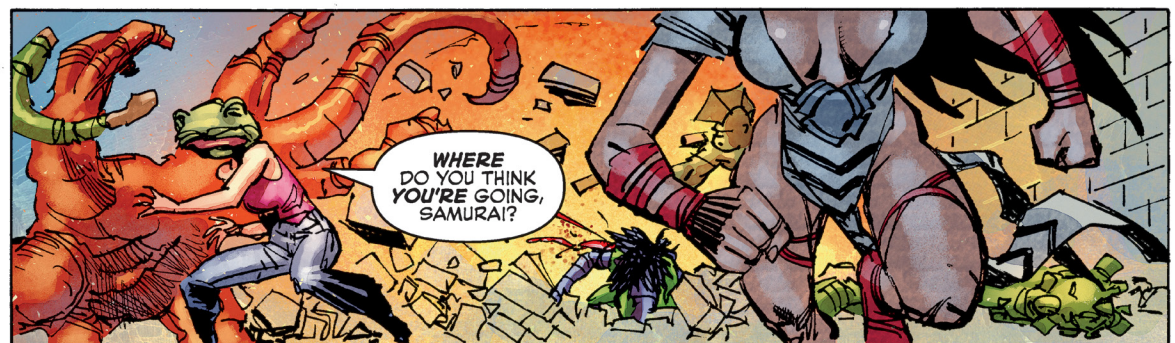
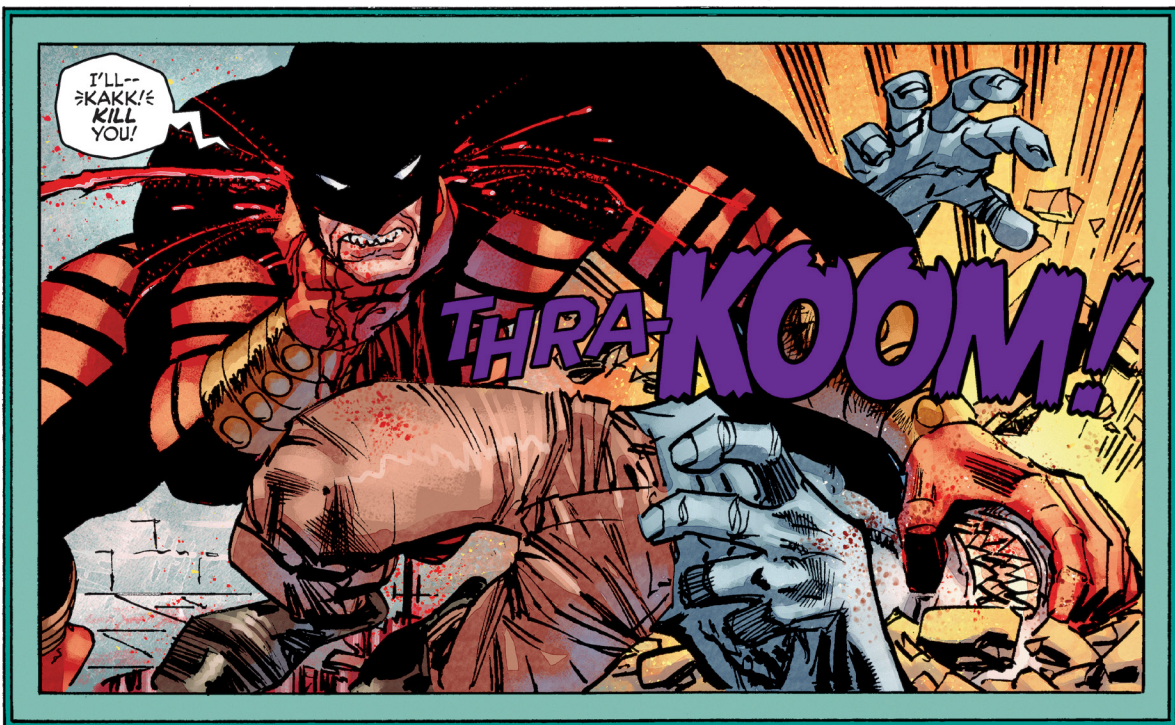
HE EXPLODED!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.



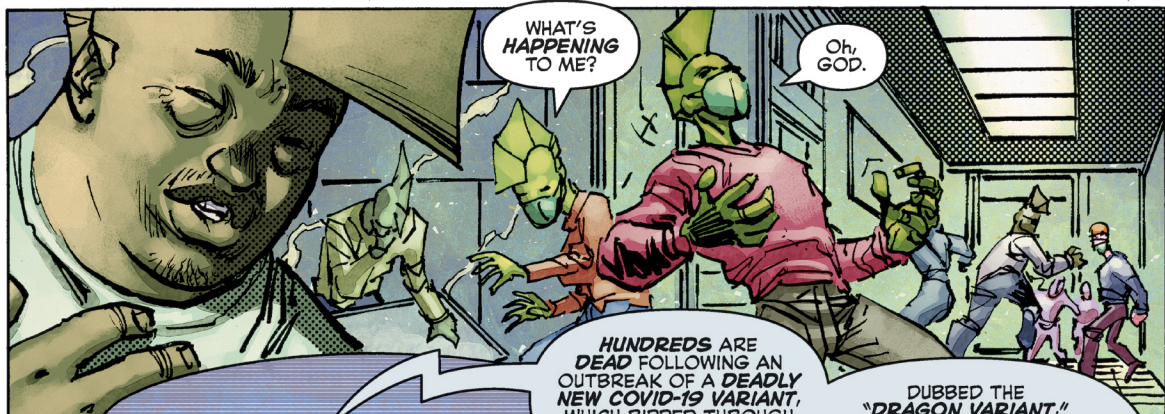
LARRY...?

Oh, GOD.



SPUT!

SPUT!



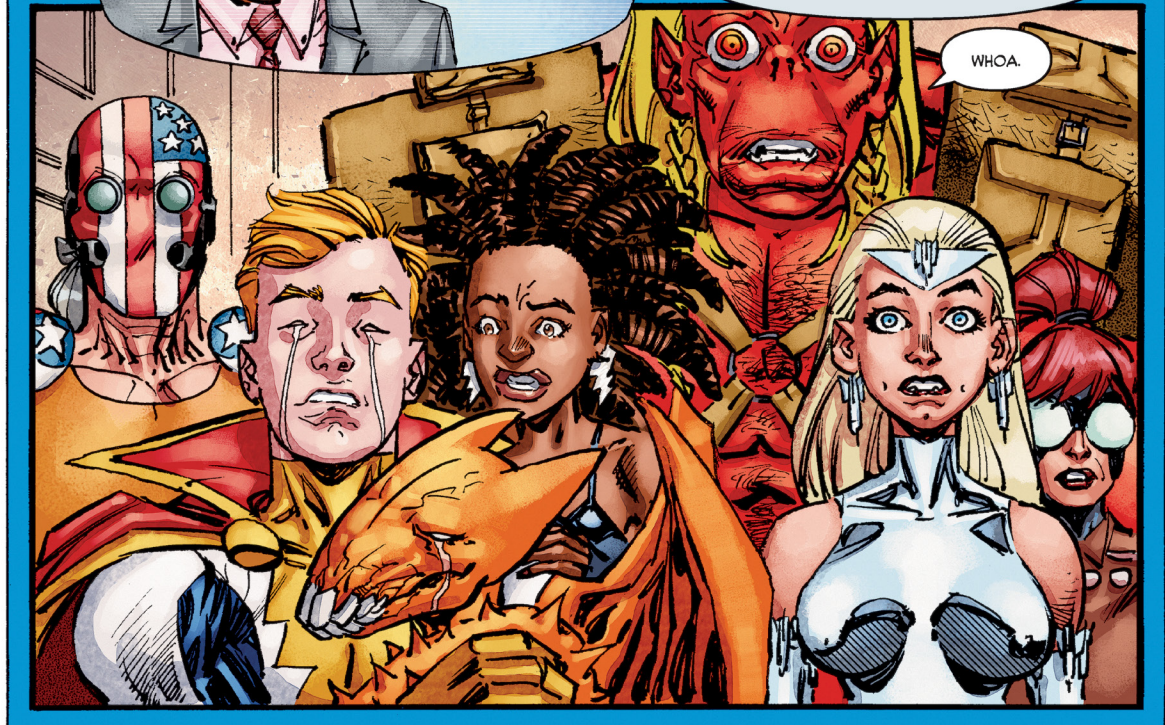
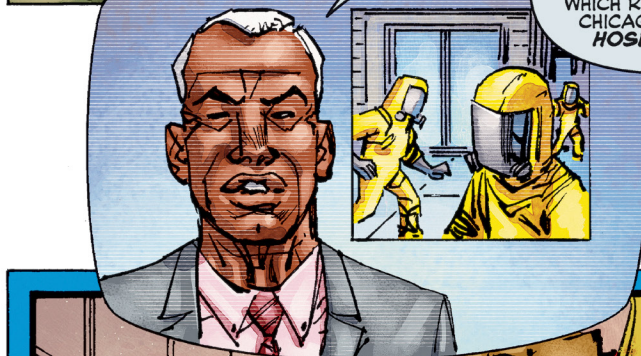
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?

Oh, GOD.

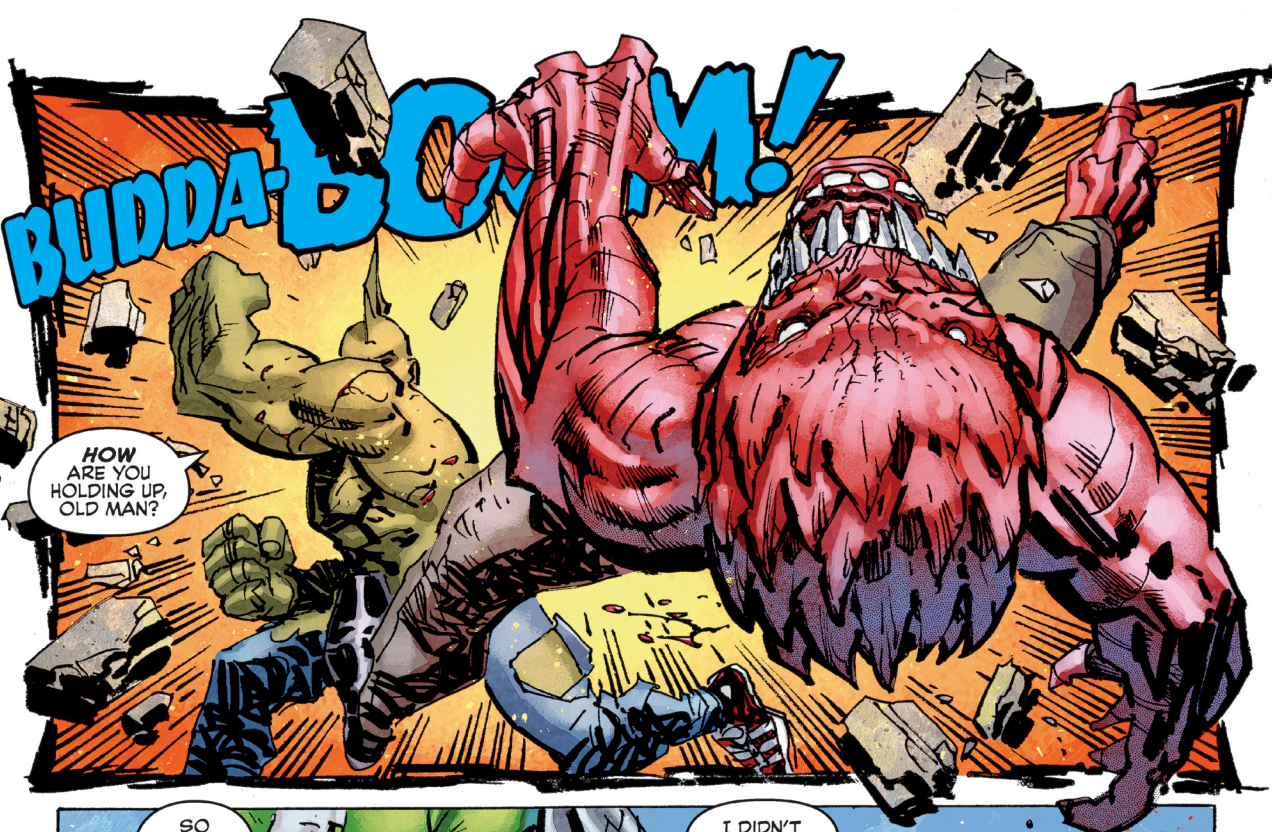
HUNDREDS ARE DEAD FOLLOWING AN OUTBREAK OF A DEADLY NEW COVID-19 VARIANT, WHICH RIPPED THROUGH CHICAGO'S HILLMAN HOSPITAL TODAY.

DUBBED THE "DRAGON VARIANT," BECAUSE VICTIMS BRIEFLY MUTATED TO RESEMBLE THE SAVAGE DRAGON BEFORE THEY BURST INTO BLOODY PULPS, THE SUPER-INFECTIOUS VARIANT SEEMED TO KILL EVERYBODY IT CAME INTO CONTACT WITH IN THE HOSPITAL.

INITIAL TESTS HAVE INDICATED THAT THE STRAIN MAY HAVE BURNED ITSELF OUT, HAVING RUN OUT OF VICTIMS, BUT HILLMAN HOSPITAL REMAINS CLOSED WHILE FURTHER TESTS AND BIOHAZARD CLEANUP ARE PERFORMED.

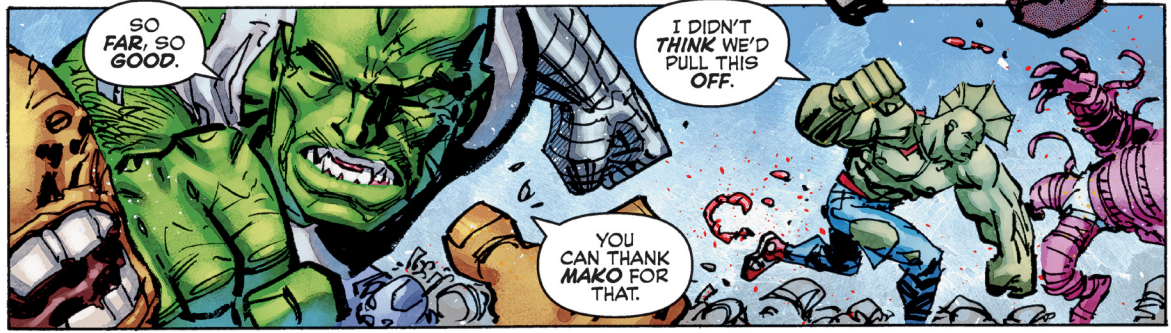


WHOA.



BUDDA-BOOM!

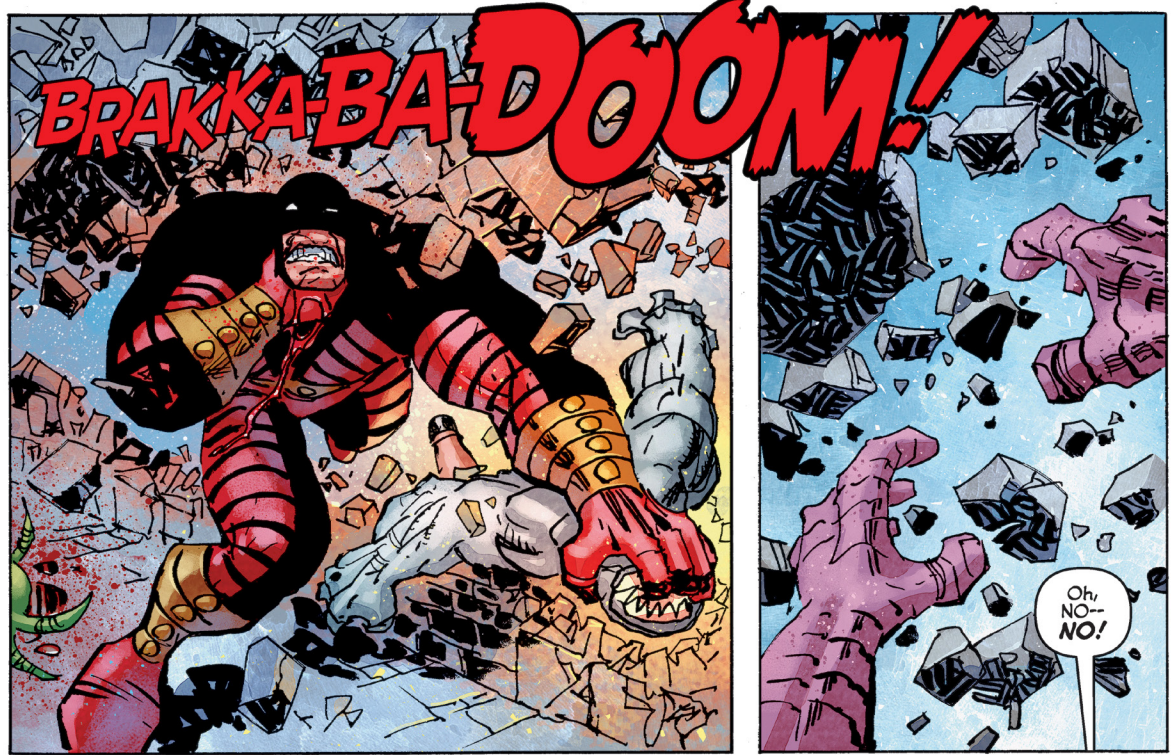
HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP, OLD MAN?



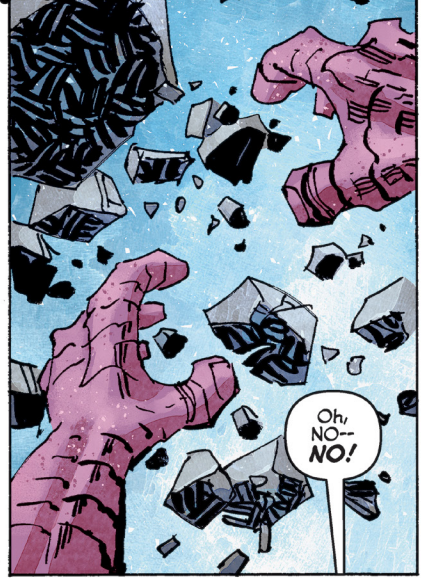
SO FAR, SO GOOD.

I DIDN'T THINK WE'D PULL THIS OFF.

YOU CAN THANK MAKO FOR THAT.



BRAKKA-BA-DOOM!



Oh, NO-- NO!

THRAKKA-BA-THROOM!

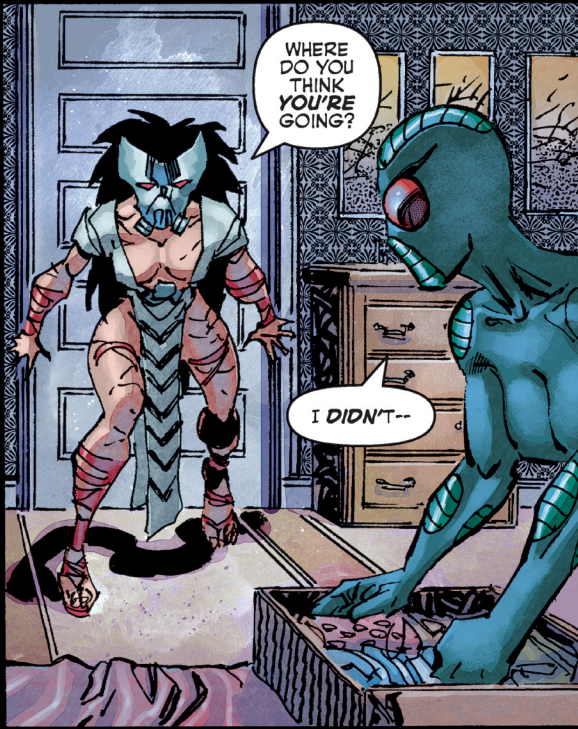


STOP HER!

KILL HER!

DON'T LET HER GET AWAY!





WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

I DIDN'T--



SURE, YOU DID. YOU TIPPED THEM OFF.

THE DRAGONS ARRIVED, AS EXPECTED--

YOU LEAVE US ALONE!



--AND MAKO.

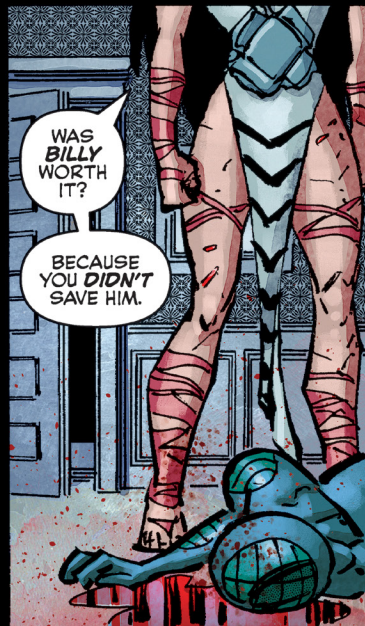
SHUKK!

HKK!



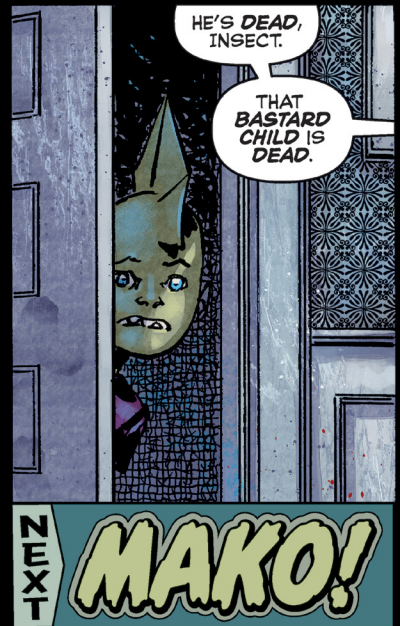
ARE YOU PROUD OF YOURSELF, INSECT?

ARE YOU?



WAS BILLY WORTH IT?

BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T SAVE HIM.



HE'S DEAD, INSECT.

THAT BASTARD CHILD IS DEAD.

NEXT MAKO!

Welcome to Savage Dragon #262.

Not a lot to report, other than the reality that I've been running late.

And I've been questioning whether or not to address this in the letters page because, months from now, years from now--all this will be long over and done with and nobody would ever remember that there was even so much as a hiccup along the way unless I said something...

But here we are.

I had a nasty, lingering case of artist's or writer's block (it's hard to tell where one starts and the other begins sometimes). But in any case, it's been a long, hard struggle trying to dig myself out from under it and it hit at the absolute worst possible time--right when I was launching a second title, ANT, which I was writing and drawing.

But...here I am. And I'm working. I never stopped working. I'd draw the same page again and again, revising and changing and rethinking what I'd done, but I never stopped working. It was incredibly frustrating but I do seem to be coming out of it. So, that's good.

I'm getting there, bit by bit.

My options were to continue or call it a day, and I'm opting to continue.

We'll see how it goes.

Dear Erik,

You've been talking about art homages a lot lately, and even slipping in a few with the Sienkiewicz bear and a couple of covers. Savage Dragon 260 had a few pages that looked familiar to me, and I had to do a bit of digging to place them. The conclusion of Malcolm's fight with Torment is homaging none other than yourself, from when Dragon first fought SuperPatriot in the original Dragon mini-series. That was a cool little Easter Egg.

I also read that this issue had a lettering experiment, with two different printings featuring two different letterers. I buy Savage Dragon digitally, and that version had Rus Wooton handling the letters, and I think he did a great job. He's been top in his field for a long time, and if you are able to keep him you should go for it. But I'll admit a bias, since I didn't see the other job at all.

Maxine seems to think Torment is dead, but I hope that's not the case. He's not my favourite villain, but he's got a unique, cool look and an intriguing back story. I love when bad guys like that pop up from time to time. Seeing villains like Torment, or Neutron Bob, or Power House are such good reminders that Erik Larsen books just aren't like any others. And that's a good thing!

Taylor Porter

Halifax, Nova Scotia

I was wondering if anybody would catch the self-homage from the Savage Dragon miniseries! Good eye!

I wasn't sure how they'd handle things for the digital version. It's a shame both weren't made available.

Torment has appeared dead before but I can't make any promises.

Hey Erik,

What a Wednesday to pick up Savage Dragon issue 260! Got my son on the bus, penciled a page, then decided to run to my LCS, Richmond Comix. Not the brightest decision in the down-pouring remnants of Hurricane Ida. Thankfully I made it there and back home with my two copies! My two F'd up copies that is! Sorry the printer screwed up with the entire lettering debacle. I'll of course pick up the corrected issue. I also support your decision in naming Jack Morelli as new Savage Dragon letterist! Rus Wooton's work is great, but I think I preferred Jack's just a little bit more.

Totally dig that Paul has the bionic arm. Can't wait to hopefully see him put it to good use. Wasn't expecting to see him and Alex tie the knot so soon, but who am I to judge? I've been "living in sin"

for years now. It really made me smile seeing William Jonson again! You totally nailed his aging with simply having his hair and beard colored gray. It looked so appropriate but made me feel so old. HA!

Torment was a great tragic villain for this issue. I have to admit, I never noticed from his previous appearances how his bulbs resemble Mr. Glum. Their good angel / bad devil on the shoulder routine was great and totally made him a more appealing character. His mother attempting to cover for him was a good angle, something I don't recall seeing in comics often. It totally made sense that Torment would seek swift revenge on Malcolm after barging into his home like that. I also recognized the sweet call backs to the miniseries on pages 18 and 19! Too cool!

Well, I better get back to the drawing board. Thanks for another great issue!

Best,

Nick Justus

Cumberland, VA

You're quite welcome!

As for Paul and Alex tying the knot unceremoniously--I like to keep readers guessing. And it's nice to have a pleasant surprise on occasion.

Mr. Larsen,

Issue 260 may be my favorite issue of Savage Dragon. I enjoyed it so much, I was compelled to write to the Fin Addicts letters page for the first time. I've got almost 200 issues of your book in my collection, and I'm looking to complete this series that I started reading when I was a very impressionable 12-year-old.

I had been out of town for work over the last week, and I always use those opportunities to dig through the back issue bins of whatever comic shops I can find. I found so many great comics, including some Savage Dragon issues. I was ecstatic.

I totally screwed up at the hotel later, and left a bag with about half the comics I purchased on the back of a car, and they vanished. Total bummer. Feeling like an idiot, I headed home, depressed. At least my local shop will have the latest issue of Savage Dragon I've been waiting a while for.

Well worth the wait. You stated this issue gave you grief, but that wasn't evident in these pages with clear storytelling that had moments of nice character development, like Maxine trying to get Malcolm to warm up to the new/old Dragon, or Alex buying a wedding dress. I appreciated these details more than ever before for some reason.

Then of course we get some intense ACTION. I audibly gasped at that 2 page spread of Torment yanking Maxine out the window. Powerful stuff. I love the look in Malcolm's eyes. Real panic.

Then the following two page turns. WOW. I thought, for sure, you were going to kill Maxine. Then that brutal intestinal strangling. I love the blood spatter and gore. Just a really intense finale. I loved it. Then we get a joke at the end and all is well. It just made me so happy and forget about my earlier screwup. So, thank you and keep up the great work.

T.J. Ripp

Tuscaloosa, Alabama

I'll do my best!

Erik,

I've been aware of Paul Dragon for quite a long time. I have memories of one of our regulars coming into the comic shop I worked at with some old comics he was incredibly proud of. He, like me, thought that Savage Dragon was clearly the best title from that new Image company. I honestly can't remember if he had copies of Megaton, or less likely, Graphic Fantasy. But he was eager to share with the staff the early version of Dragon that none of us realized existed.

I would not have guessed that, all these years later, I'd own my own copies of the Megaton issues featuring Dragon, as well as

those pretty cool reissues of Graphic Fantasy. Nor would I have predicted that Paul would return and become my favorite part of Savage Dragon.

I suspect I am not alone in my fascination with all those Dragon stories created and sadly lost so long ago. It's great to have Paul himself share parts of those stories with the reader as he explains his past to our version of his friends and allies. I would be perfectly happy with an entire issue of Paul talking with his new wife about all the differences between his old home and new.

Thanks for bringing Paul back.

Ken Albery

There's an issue in the pipeline which fills in a lot of the gaps in regard to Paul's world. I can't answer every question but I'll do the best I can to catch you up to speed.

Hello Erik,

I just finished my second read of issue 260. I really enjoyed it.

It was nice seeing Alex and Paul tie the knot and I look forward to seeing what's next for them. Paul's new bionic arm is great, but I think it may cause some problems later on if he goes up against the wrong person.

I always have liked William and it was good seeing him included in the story. Hope we see more of him soon.

That fight between Malcolm and Torment was intense and it didn't really go well for either of them. Is Torment truly dead, or is he coming back?

I appreciated the writing quite a bit this issue. It was straight to the point and balanced without being simplified. The art work was kinetic and looks great.

Until next time, thanks for another great issue of Savage Dragon.

Sincerely,

Ricky D. Snyder

Greenwood, Indiana

We'll have to wait and see about Torment.

Erik,

On social media, you mentioned that you were struggling through writer's block and had a really tough time with putting together issue 260. Damned if I could tell! This issue felt like it was shot out of a cannon!

The cover homage to Gil Kane's Daredevil #120 was top notch. What a brilliant and dynamic layout. I think Torment may be my favorite "Malcolm" villain, so I've been anticipating this issue since I first laid eyes on the cover solicitation. Safe to say, it did not disappoint!

I've said it once, and I'll say it again-- I really enjoy seeing Paul Dragon and following along on his adventures as he acclimates to this new reality. Seems like between Captain Tootsie and now, Joseph Strange, the super-genius scientist role is being filled once again. I'm a big fan of the Reed Richard/Rex Dexter types that are able to invent cool gizmos and vehicles. I'm hoping this realty's Joseph Strange eventually dips his toes in the superhero waters-- if not just to see his wacky old-school costume in action!

Malcolm's distrust/uneasiness of Paul is a great dynamic. I think many of us would feel the same if some deceased relative that looked slightly different just showed up at our doorstep one day telling us they were from an alternate earth.

Torment is quite the unstable menace with an appetite for human flesh at that! Learning a little more about his backstory was quite cool and unexpected. As we have seen in previous issues, his power levels are insane; however, even with that knowledge, seeing him man-handle and eviscerate Malcolm was still quite a shock. The self-homage to the pages in issue #2 of the Savage Dragon miniseries was immediately recognizable as those pages have been burned into my brain since I first laid eyes on them in 1992! It's such a great call back that really fits this gruesome moment.

I'm glad to see at least some version of Dragon finally tie the knot with Alex! It's been a long time coming. Let's hope it lasts quite a few issues before we see another funeral scene. I'm optimistic, but seeing how most Dragon marriages end up, I'm still a bit worried!

Before closing this, I have to mention how neat it was to see two different letterer's takes on this issue. Both Jack Morelli and Rus Wooten did superb jobs. It was fun comparing the issues and seeing how their approaches differed. I don't envy you for having to choose between them. I would be happy with either.

And now for a few quick questions to make it official:

1. Are those "worm" guys in Torment's head parasites, or was he just born like that?

2. Where did Torment get his fancy get-up from? Renaissance fair?

3. Does the Daredevil #120 cover have any special meaning to you or was it just a case of digging the layout?

Till next time (hopefully not quite as long)!

Craig Olsen

Philadelphia, PA

1: I'm assuming he was born that way.

2: Demonoid Gap.

3: It doesn't have any special meaning--I just always liked it as a cover and that's the image which sprang into my head when the art was due.

Choosing a new letterer was no easy task. Ferran Delgado was a tough act to follow and I had hoped to keep him on forever, honestly, but it was not to be. I certainly wish him the best. Hopefully Jack Morelli can stick around a while.

Dear Erik via Fan Addicts,

Rather entertaining issue 260! Let's do the numbered response thing:

1 - The cover: Well, it was a little busy with three figures in action and three different caption boxes. At least it depicted something close to what happened in the story.

2 - Nice opening splash page. Totally gave me some '60s to '70s Kirby vibes!

3 - This "can't say 'no' to being best man" thing. Totally disagree with Maxine. I had to say "no" to being best man twice in my life. Both cases involved me being too far away and not being able to get away from my job. Loved the two pet names used in this conversation (carpet bag and pickle jar). Are you running out yet?

4 - Speaking of Maxine: did I ever tell you she reminds me of my hot mathematics teacher back in high school? Right down to the short dresses and freckles. So much so that I find myself being jealous of Malcolm.

5 - Torment: what a weird, wild villain. The two smaller heads doing most if not all of the talking is interesting. Wait, did the middle head talk at all? I guess not. It's sort of a take-off on the old angel and demon whispering in someone's ear gag you often see in cartoons.

6 - After missing a wedding and having a titanic fight, Malcolm's in the hospital again! Well, at least we know he can take a lot of punishment. That was funny that both Maxine and Angel were concerned that his apparatus was still intact. LOL!

Thanks for an entertaining issue!

Alan Bowman

Sagamihara City, Japan

1: As noted above, the cover was based on the cover of Daredevil #120 by Gil Kane and Tom Palmer, which was somewhat crowded as well, but I always liked it.

2: That's high praise indeed.

3: I'm not even close to running out of pet names. I have an exhaustive list on my phone in case of emergencies.

4: You did not tell me that.

5: That is indeed where the idea sprang from. And, no, the middle head did not talk at all.

6: They've got their priorities straight.

Hi Erik,

This is my first time writing, despite the fact that I've been buying Savage Dragon since the early days. Unfortunately, buying is the key word in that sentence. I stopped reading Savage Dragon sometime around #112. Ever since then, I continued to buy the comic, but the unread issues just kept piling up.

I'm not exactly sure why I stopped reading, to be honest. I guess I was just strapped for time, so I stopped buying comics -- everything except Savage Dragon, that is. I trusted you, and I knew I'd eventually get back into funnybooks. And whenever that day arrived, I figured there was a good chance I'd still enjoy your peerless periodical.

As expected, I got back into comics a few years later. But I didn't start reading Savage Dragon again, because I'd forgotten what was going on with the story, and I wanted to start over at the beginning. That was a daunting prospect, though, so I kept putting it off and telling myself I'd get around to it eventually.

Well, a few months ago, I decided it was finally time, and I started with issue #1 of the miniseries. Today I made it to #260, and I'm pleased to report that my faith in you was completely justified. Man, I can't tell you what a pleasure it's been reading the full run. Just pure joy. I wish there were more people who made comics that are so much FUN. Sincerely, thank you for doing what you do.

Highlights included:

#31. This was my favorite issue as a teenager, and it definitely held up. The pinup for God Comics still kills me.

#73-75. The Darklord saga was the peak of my Dragon obsession. I probably read these issues a dozen times when I was in college, and I lurked on the Dragon forum pretty much every day. (I think Gavin was still going by the name Homer Simpson back then.)

#113. Man, I have no idea how you pulled this one off. It would be hard enough to lay out an issue with a decreasing number of panels on each page. But not only does the story make sense -- it's a ripping yarn!

#124-131. The political commentary was a bit too on-the-nose (and I agree with your views for crying out loud), but I absolutely love the fact that you did everything in these issues by yourself.

#0. Damn, I was WAY off! My money was on Dragon being the descendant of a god.

#146. Great writing in this issue. Watching Alex leave got me a little choked up.

#163-168. I'm glad I didn't have to wait a month between issues for this storyline. Really outstanding stuff here.

#216. This issue's story was entertaining enough, but the art was off the charts. I don't know what was different, exactly. Perhaps the muted colors drew more attention to your line work? Whatever the case, I was thoroughly impressed.

#220. Cripes, this issue might feature the best artwork of your career. And the colors have never looked better, in my humble opinion.

#225. Bravo, sir. You always threatened (promised?) to kill off your main character, and when the moment finally came, it couldn't have been more exciting. Last but not least -- if there's one thing I've learned after reading 29 years' worth of letter columns, it's that I have to make a list of questions.

1. On a few occasions, you've mentioned that you'd like to do 500 issues. Is that still the goal, or do you plan to retire at some point? I reckon you'd be in your 90s by the time you hit #500. That would be incredible, and I hope you go for it.

2. I know you tend to look forward rather than backward, but which issues are you most proud of?

3. Along the same lines, which issues are you most disappointed with?

4. What comics are you enjoying these days?

5. I'm curious about the long-term health of the comic. Many years ago, I think you said you'd make the book black and white if sales ever got too low. Have you ever been near that point? I know sales could always be better, but are things relatively okay at the moment?

6. Would you ever consider doing a black and white issue just for fun? The B&W cover for #222 stopped me in my tracks, and it made me wish the entire issue looked like that. If you ever did a B&W issue, perhaps you could even make the lack of color part of the story somehow. Maybe Malcolm goes to an alien world that doesn't have any color, or something like that. On the other hand, maybe I should just buy the Archive TPBs...

Well, that's all for now. If it's not obvious by this point, I'll keep buying 'em as long as you keep making 'em. And as an added bonus, I'll try not to wait another two decades before I read the next issue!

Nick Rebman
Saint Paul, MN

There is something super fun about reading a long run all at once like that. I'll often plow through books that I'm particularly fond of and revisit them in that manner. It's even more rewarding if it's something new. It must be particularly wild on a book like *Savage Dragon* where you can see characters be born, grow older, take center stage or even die.

As for *Savage Dragon* #113, I'd actually ruled out those panel borders and had intended to use them for *Savage Dragon* #58, but several pages in it became clear that it wouldn't work, so I scrapped that notion and put the pages aside and waited a few years until the perfect story came along. I'm not entirely happy with the results--I should have merged panels 1 and 4 (from page

11) for page 12 to give the robot a bigger entrance--but it worked out reasonably well.

1: At the very least I'd like to get past #300, which is how far Dave Sim went with *Cerebus* but I have no specific goal in mind. If I make it to #500, that would be excellent, but if that actually happened--I probably wouldn't want to stop there.

2: *Savage Dragon* #8 was the first issue where I thought things actually started to click. I liked *Savage Dragon* #31 pretty well at the time as well. To be honest, I haven't sat down and reread the entire series in years, so the ones which stick with me tend to be more recent. #252 was a recent challenge that I enjoyed the results of quite a bit, due in large part to Ferran Delgado's herculean efforts to emulate the lettering styles of various strips. But I liked others as well. #199 with ten double-page spreads was nothing but fun.

3: I can't pinpoint a specific issue where it all went wrong but around #180 or so I was drawing heads unusually long and, looking back, I'm not super happy with how things were going. I moved to drawing larger around #194 because I wasn't happy with how the art had been looking and that's when things really started to improve.

4: I read a lot of older comics these days because I lost the thread of the old Marvel and DC books during the pandemic. I didn't set foot in a comic book store in over a year and when I finally did--I just couldn't get back into the books I'd been lacklusterly pursuing. So, beyond that it's mostly Image Comics. I get everything we publish. I'm currently reading the TPB *The Fade Out* by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips.

5: Sales are actually up quite a bit from a few years ago and new or returning readers are scrambling to find back issues at an affordable price. Prices of those have skyrocketed, I'm sorry to say.

6: The Archive books have everything in B&W if you're so inclined. I might do a special B&W variant at some point but I'd rather not do the regular book in B&W.

Erik,

Would you ever consider, again, doing an issue that takes place over the course of a year or so? Back around #104 you did this and it's one of those fondly remembered things for a lot of fans: each panel telling its own miniature story and giving readers a panoramic sense of time moving forward.

Thank you for everything you've done, and looking forward to new *Savage Dragon* issues in 2022.

Best,
Raymond Cummings
Owings Mills, Maryland

The issue you're thinking about was *Savage Dragon* #144, I believe, and there was a reason for that. First, I was running far behind reality due to a bunch of continued stories and a spotty shipping schedule. And second, it was a fun experiment in storytelling.

The thing is--the book is set in real time. So, most issues take place roughly in the month in which they're released. The exceptions are continued stories where one issue feeds directly into the next one (like this very issue, which was continued from the previous one) and in cases like that, I'll occasionally need to do a bit of catching up in order to get the dates more closely aligned.

So, unless things are running unusually late or I've had a bunch of continued stories--most often there isn't a year to be found. It would be odd to set an issue in the future, after all. So, I can't really just do that.

But mostly--it just feels like I've done that already and if I did it again I'd just be repeating myself.

-Erik Larsen

NEXT: the Murderous Menace of Mako!

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

MIGHTY MAN and Captain Tootsie

in "ALIEN INVASION"

GROCER

HELLO, EVERYONE. THIS IS BOBBY BERMAN REPORTING FROM THE SMALL TOWN OF 50/50, NEVADA!

SEVERAL PEOPLE HERE HAVE REPORTED SEEING AN ALIEN SHIP AND EVEN ALIENS.

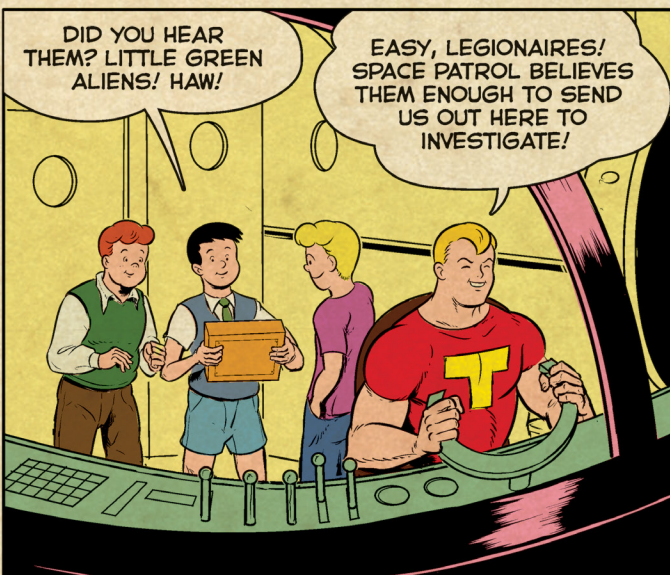
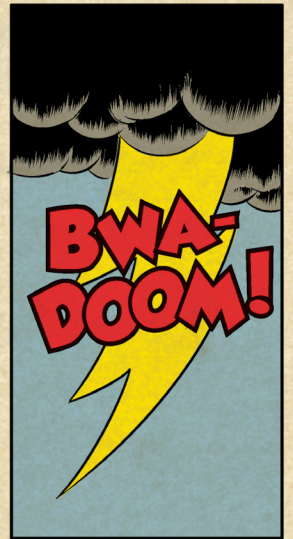
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GARY CARLSON
ART:
JONATHAN DHENRY

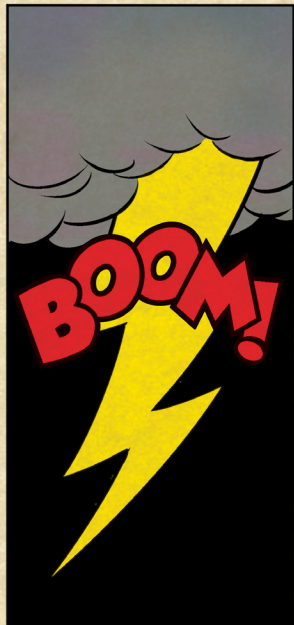
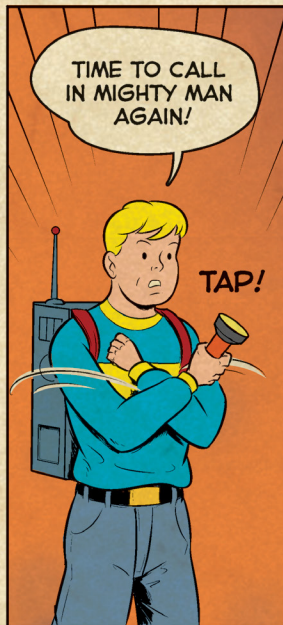
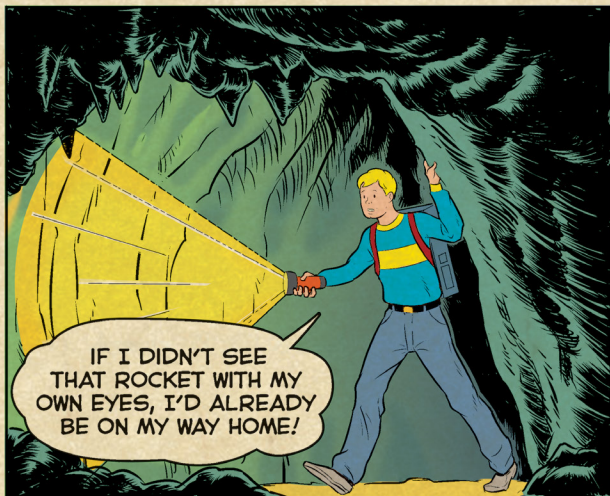
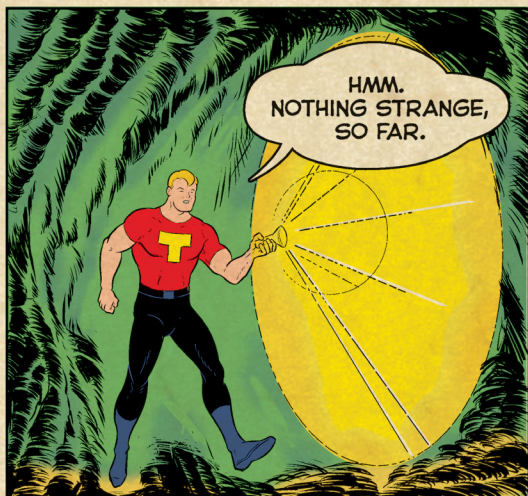
THEY WERE LITTLE GREEN PEOPLE. ABOUT THIS HIGH!

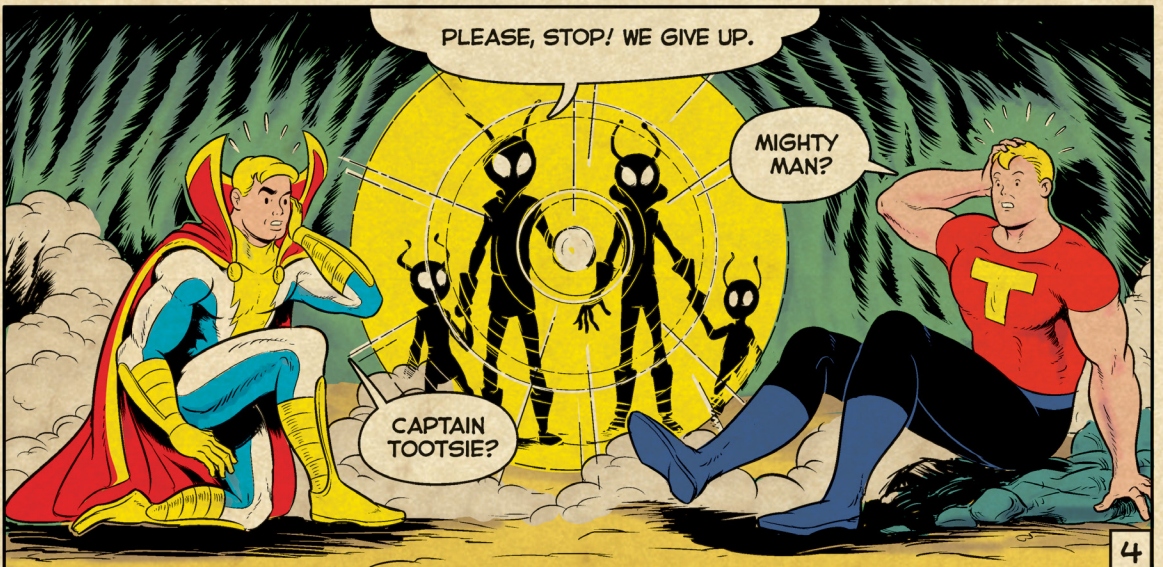
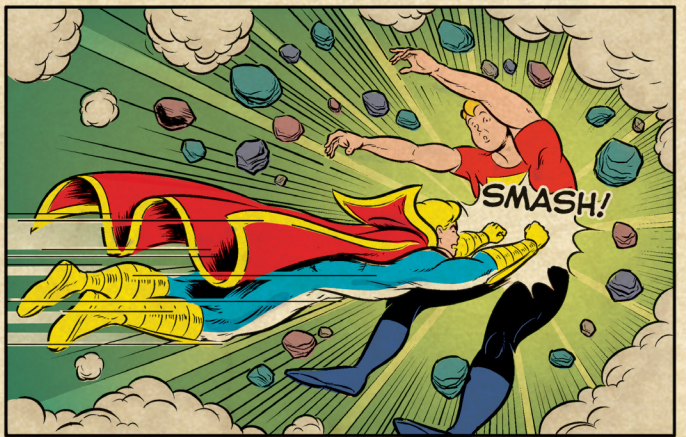
THREE OF THEM CAME INTO MY STORE AND STOLE SOME FOOD!

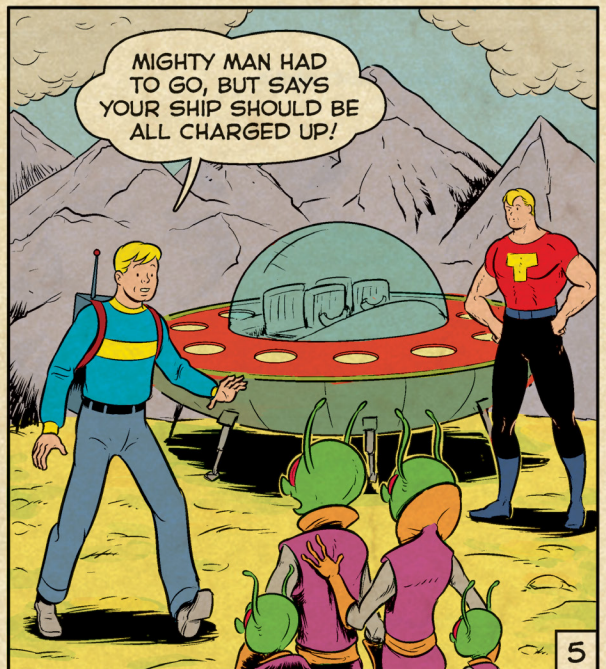
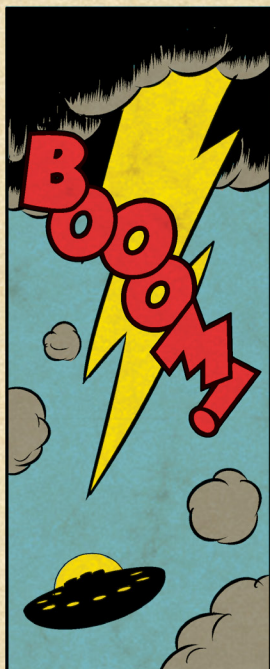
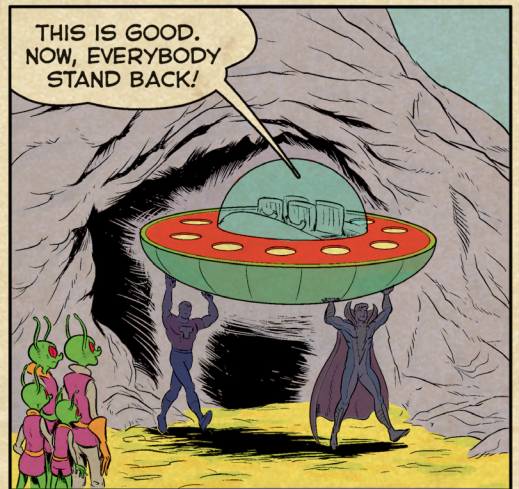
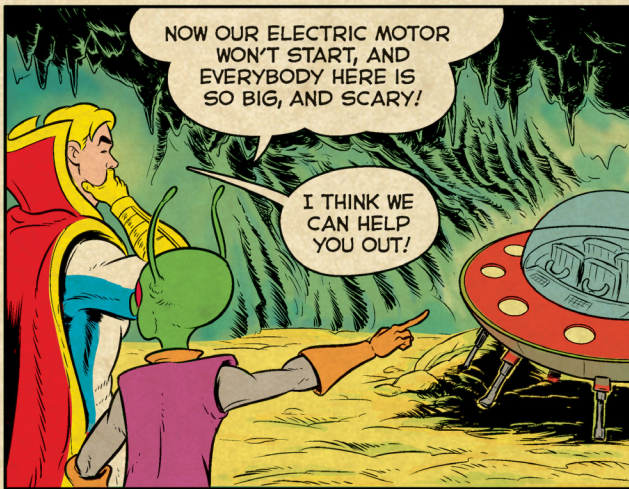
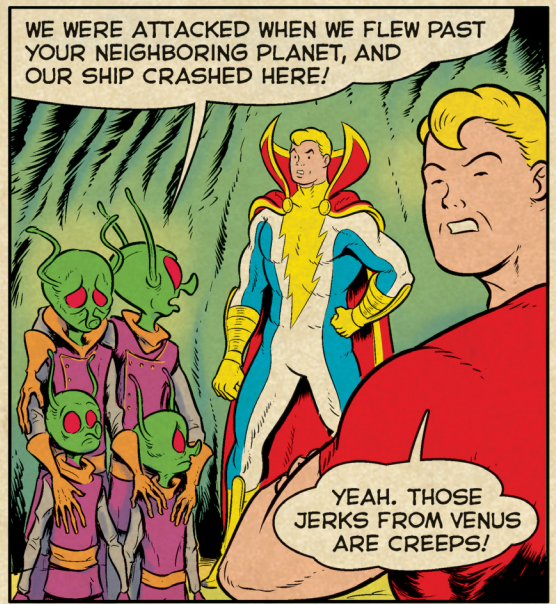
WHY, LOOK! THERE'S A SPACESHIP NOW!

HOLY BALONEY!



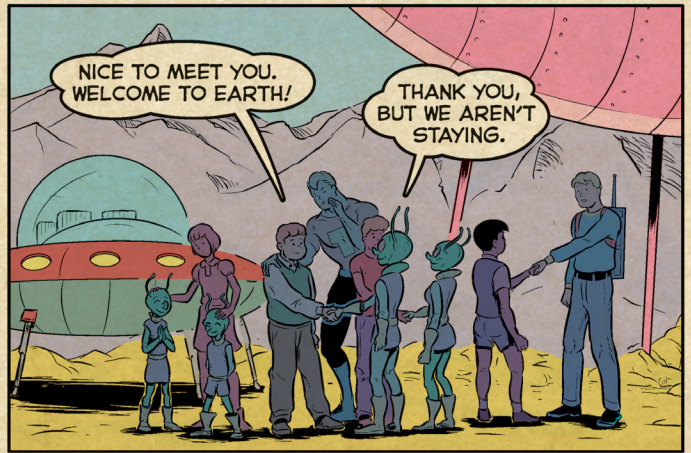








NO WORRIES!
THOSE ARE MY
FRIENDS!



NICE TO MEET YOU.
WELCOME TO EARTH!

THANK YOU,
BUT WE AREN'T
STAYING.



HOPEFULLY THIS
FOOD WILL HOLD
YOU UNTIL YOU
GET HOME!



IT'S GOOD
TO MEET NICE
ALIENS LIKE YOU,
MR. TOOTSIE!



BYE!



AND THAT'S THE STORY
OF THE ALIENS THAT
LANDED HERE IN
50/50, NEVADA!

THIS IS BOBBY BERMAN
SIGNING OFF! HAVE A
GREAT DAY AND BE
KIND TO STRANGERS!

THE END



Mighty ManTM ADVENTURES



ENTER:

Captain
Tootsie!

RATED M / MATURE