

VERTIGO
DC COMICS

WARREN ELLIS • DARICK ROBERTSON • RODNEY RAMOS

NO. 50
DEC 01

★ ★ ★ LATE EDITION ★ ★ ★

TRANSMETROPOLITAN

Having... its kind of... at the notion of a new venue... we are... the... 50 DAYS

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HAPPY TALK



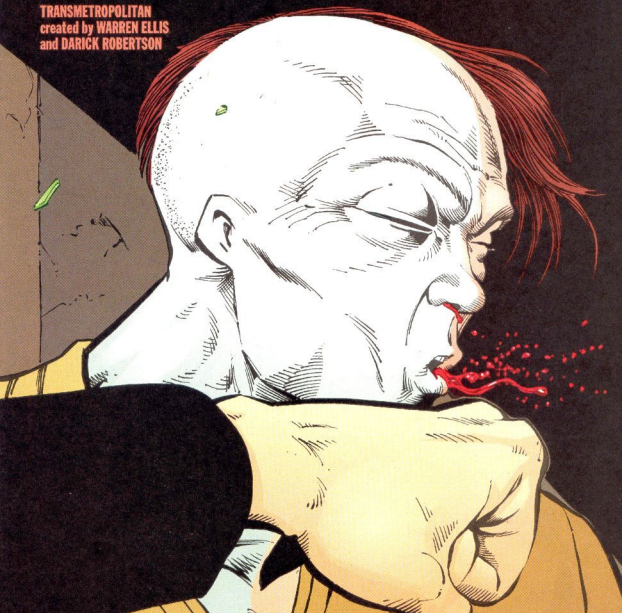
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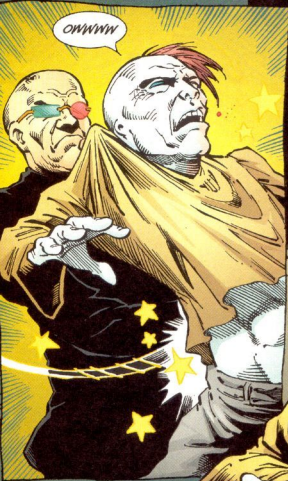
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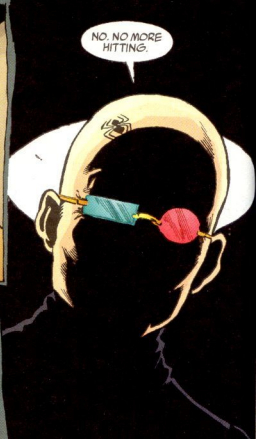
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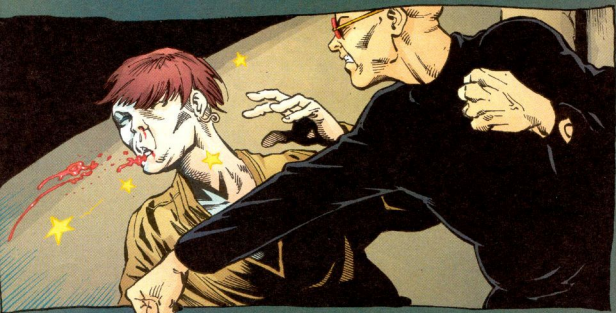


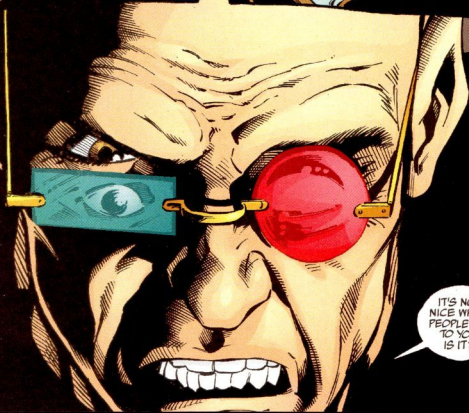
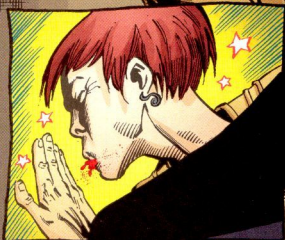
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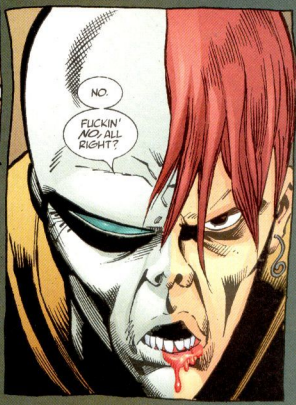




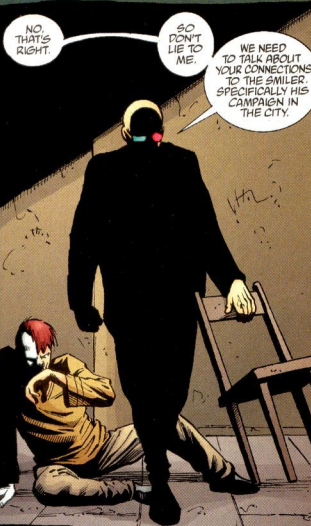
IT'S NOT NICE WHEN PEOPLE LIE TO YOU, IS IT?



IS IT?



NO.
FUCKIN' NO, ALL
RIGHT?



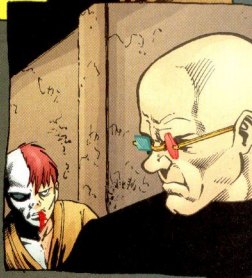
NO, THAT'S
RIGHT.

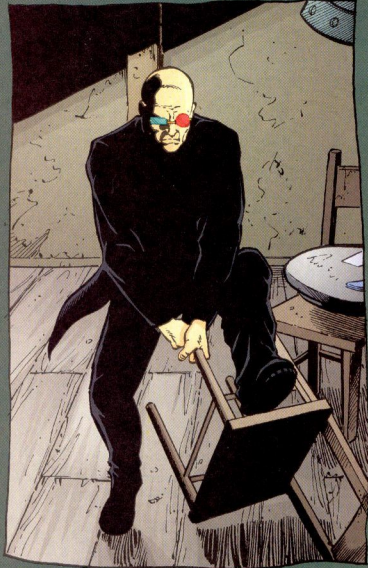
SO DON'T
LIE TO
ME.

WE NEED
TO TALK ABOUT
YOUR CONNECTIONS
TO THE SMILER.
SPECIFICALLY HIS
CAMPAIGN IN
THE CITY.




FUCK
YOU.







THERE IS NO TALKING BACK HERE.



THERE IS NO UNSPOKEN AGREEMENT TO LEAVE YOU WITH A SCRAP OF DIGNITY.



THERE IS, IN FACT, NO GUARANTEE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO WALK OUT OF HERE.



LISTEN TO THE CHAIR LEG OF TRUTH! IT DOES NOT LIE!

WHAT DOES IT SAY?



IT SAYS "SHUT LIP FRED"!

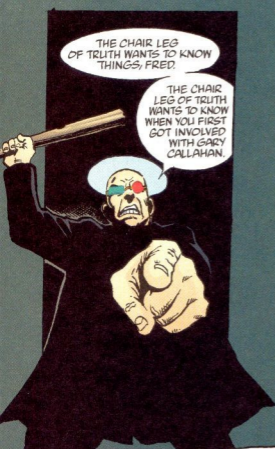
CAN YOU HEAR IT?



YOU'VE GONE MAD--

CAN YOU HEAR IT?

YES!

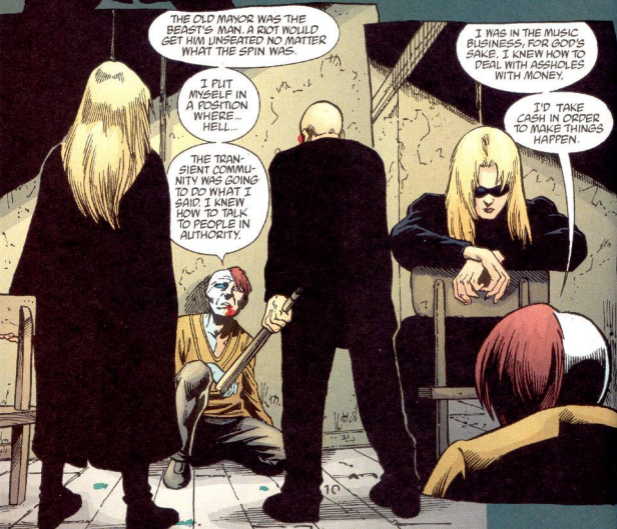


THE CHAIR LEG OF TRUTH WANTS TO KNOW THINGS, FRED.

THE CHAIR LEG OF TRUTH WANTS TO KNOW WHEN YOU FIRST GOT INVOLVED WITH GARY CALLAHAN.



THE ANGELS & RIOT.



THE OLD MAYOR WAS THE BEAST'S MAN. A RIOT WOULD GET HIM UNSEATED NO MATTER WHAT THE SPIN WAS.

I PUT MYSELF IN A POSITION WHERE... HELL...

THE TRANSIENT COMMUNITY WAS GOING TO DO WHAT I SAID. I KNEW HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY.

I WAS IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS, FOR GOD'S SAKE. I KNEW HOW TO DEAL WITH ASSHOLES WITH MONEY.

I'D TAKE CASH IN ORDER TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN.



OF COURSE,
I NEVER FIGURED
ON YOU SEEING
THE HANDOVER,
YOU FUCK...




I WANT
TO SHIT IN YOUR
HEART.



DO NOT
OFFEND THE
CHAIR LEG OF
TRUTH. IT
IS WISE AND
TERRIBLE.

CONTINUE.



THE MONEY ALLOWED ME TO
BUY FULL LEGAL STATUS FOR
THE RELIGION. JUST SAYING
YOU'RE A RELIGION DOESN'T
GET YOU THE TAX BREAKS,
THE CHARITABLE STATUS,
THE CONSTITUTIONAL
PROTECTION...

...ALL
THAT COSTS
MONEY.



AND
EVEN THEN,
IT WAS GOING
TO BE SMALL
FRY.

I WAS
GOING TO
BE SMALL
FRY.



ALL THROUGH THE TIME I WAS IN MUSIC MANAGEMENT, AND EVERY OTHER DAMN THING I TRIED, I WAS ALWAYS THE SMALL FRY.

I WAS ALWAYS THE GUY WHO GOT THE LEAST MONEY.



I WAS ALWAYS THE GUY WHO DIDN'T GET THE GIRL, OR ENDED UP WITH THE UGLY HOOKER, OR HAD TO SIT IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT WHILE SOMEONE ELSE GOT BLOWN IN THE BACK.

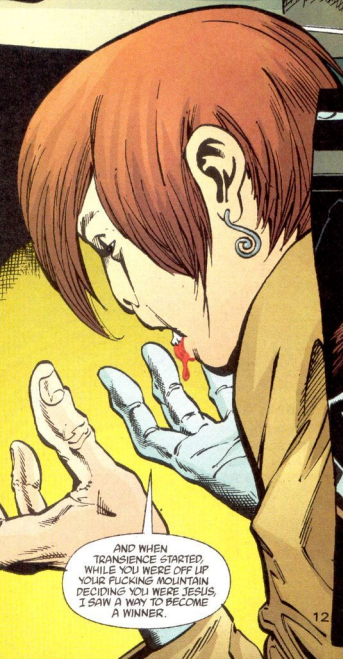
I WAS ALWAYS THE LOSER.



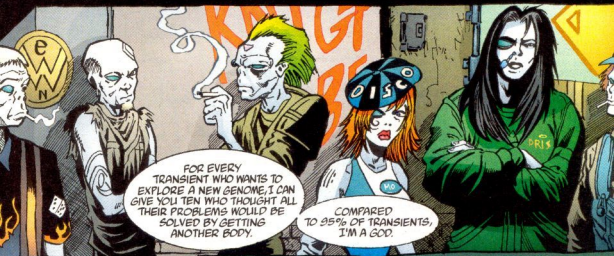
YOU KNOW WHERE MOST TRANSIENTS START? IN THE PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE.

HIGH INCIDENCE OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER. HIGH INCIDENCE OF SELF-MUTILATION. SUICIDE ATTEMPTS. ALIENATION.

I MEAN, FUCK, LOOK AT US. WE'RE WALKING FUCKING ALIENATION.



AND WHEN TRANSCIENCE STARTED, WHILE YOU WERE OFF UP YOUR FUCKING MOUNTAIN DECIDING YOU WERE JESUS, I SAW A WAY TO BECOME A WINNER.



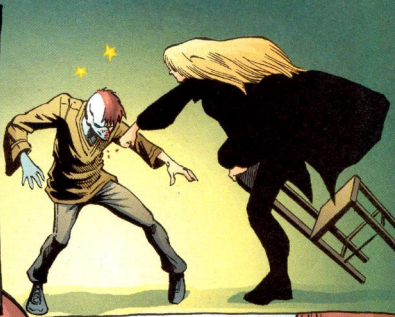
FOR EVERY TRANSIENT WHO WANTS TO EXPLORE A NEW GENOME, I CAN GIVE YOU TEN WHO THOUGHT ALL THEIR PROBLEMS WOULD BE SOLVED BY GETTING ANOTHER BODY.

COMPARED TO 95% OF TRANSIENTS, I'M A GOD.



AND YOU KNOW, WHEN THE CHANGE GETS HOLD, IT GETS INTO YOUR VISUAL CORTEX, AND YOUR SEX CENTER.

YOU MIGHT SEE SKINNY GREY THINGS, BUT IN MY PERCEPTION, I'M FUCKING MARILYN MONROE NINE TIMES A DAY.

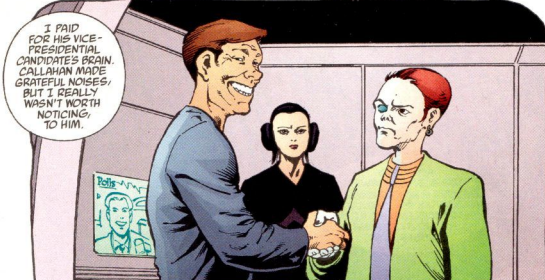


ANYWAY. WHERE THE CITY GOES, THE COUNTRY GOES, RIGHT? CALLAHAN WAS WORKING UP HIS CANDIDACY, AND HE WANTED THE CITY. IT'S AMERICA'S PIVOT.

HE WAS OFFERING MONEY AND LEGITIMACY.



TO HIM, I'M DAMN SURE I WAS BOUGHT CHEAPLY.



I PAID FOR HIS VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE'S BRAIN. CALLAHAN MADE GRATEFUL NOISES, BUT I REALLY WASN'T WORTH NOTICING, TO HIM.



BUT VITA SEVERN DID.



SHE HATED ME.



THE CONVENTION MADE IT CLEAR THAT I WAS IN THE COLD.

YOU SAW ME THERE, THE NIGHT CALLAHAN WAS SELECTED TO RUN, EVEN THE FUCKING USHERS WERE GIVING ME SHIT.

AND THEN YOU BLEW THE BASTARD FARM STORY.



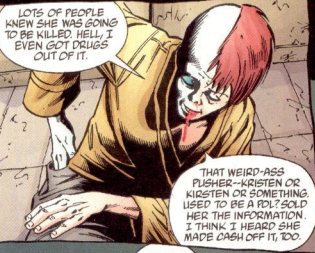
THAT WAS VITA SEVERN'S CUE TO HAVE ME CUT OUT OF CALLAHAN'S CIRCLE.

BUT I KNEW THE BITCH'S NUMBER WAS UP.

YOU KNEW SHE WAS GOING TO BE KILLED?



LOTS OF PEOPLE KNEW SHE WAS GOING TO BE KILLED. HELL, I EVEN GOT DRUGS OUT OF IT.



THAT WEIRD-ASS PUSHER--KRISTEN OR KIRSTEN OR SOMETHING. USED TO BE A FOL? SOLD HER THE INFORMATION. I THINK I HEARD SHE MADE CASH OFF IT, TOO.

THE VERY LEAST OF THOSE GIFTS WAS A KITTEN FOR ONE OF HIS KIDS.

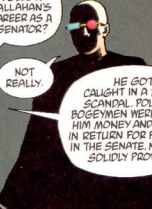
THE NIGHT BEFORE HE GAVE A SPEECH IN DEFENSE OF HIS ETHICS AND ALL THAT SHIT, HE KILLED THE CAT.




DID YOU FOLLOW CALLAHAN'S CAREER AS A SENATOR?

NOT REALLY.

HE GOT CAUGHT IN A LOANS SCANDAL. POLITICAL BOGEYMEN WERE GIVING HIM MONEY AND GIFTS IN RETURN FOR FAVORS IN THE SENATE. NEVER SOLIDLY PROVED.





VOICE CRACKED AS HE EXPLAINED THAT THE ONLY GIFT HE'D RECEIVED WAS A KITTEN FOR HIS CHILD, WHICH HAD BEEN RUN OVER BY SOME BASTARD THE PREVIOUS DAY...

WORKED LIKE A DREAM.

THAT'S HIS SYSTEM. WHEN HE'S IN SERIOUS TROUBLE, HE KILLS SOMEONE WHOSE DEATH IS TO HIS DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE ADVANTAGE.

AND IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO. SO LONG AS THEIR DEATH WILL DO THE JOB.

WHY THE HELL DO YOU THINK I'M SKULKING IN THE BACK OF SHITTY BARS?



I HAD TO DO SOMETHING TO GET BACK IN HIS GOOD GRACES.

AND I TELL YOU SOMETHING, AND THIS BETTER BUY ME SOME FUCKING GOOD GRACES HERE--

--THE PRESIDENT LIKES A STRANGE PIECE OF ASS.



I SUPPLIED HIM WITH TRANSIENT HOOKERS WHENEVER HE WAS IN THE CITY.

BUT I STILL
WASN'T GETTING
ANYWHERE.

NO ACCESS,
NO AID, NO CALLS,
NO NOTHING

SO WHEN
CALLAHAN STARTED
CLEANING UP HIS TRACES
IN THE CITY--

--AND THAT'S
YOUR FAULT,
FOR SHOWING
HIM THAT THERE
WAS AN EVIDENCE
TRAIL WHEN YOU
OUTED SCHAT
AS A KIDDIE-
HUMPER--

--HE WHACKED
THE GUY WHO HE
THOUGHT SUPPLIED
HIM WITH ALL THE
HOOKERS

PROOF.

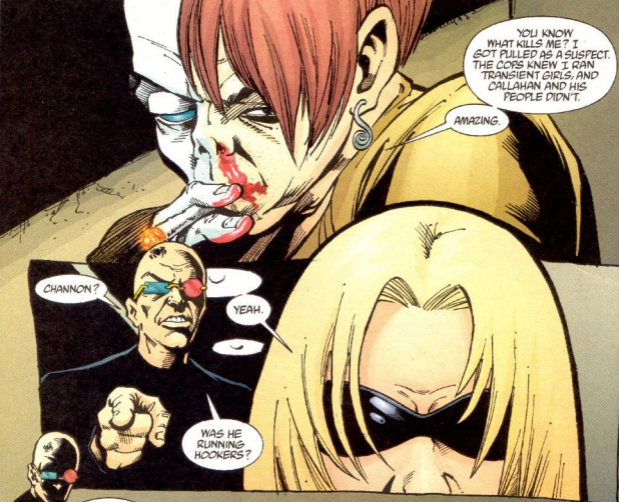
DON'T
NEED
ANY.

HELL, YOU HAD
HIM ON THE RECORD.
YOU COULDN'T
USE IT FOR ANYTHING,
BECAUSE WHO'S GOING
TO BELIEVE A PIMP?

I WORKED
IT OUT AFTERWARDS.
I WAS ROUTING THEM
THROUGH THAT GUY, THE
CONCIERGE AT THE
HOTEL FAT, USED
TO BE A PIMP.

EXCEPT
THE PRICK WAS
STILL A PIMP, WASN'T
HE? BASTARD WAS
TAKING THE
CREDIT FOR
THE GIRLS.

ALL YOU
REALLY DID
WAS MAKE HIM
A TARGET.



YOU KNOW WHAT KILLS ME? I GOT PULLED AS A SUSPECT. THE COPS KNEW I RAN TRANSIENT GIRLS, AND CALLAHAN AND HIS PEOPLE DIDN'T.

AMAZING.

CHANNON?

YEAH.

WAS HE RUNNING HOOKERS?



WASN'T WHAT HE CALLED THEM. AT LEAST, NOT WHEN I WAS THERE.



BUT WE ALL KNEW, YOU PIECE OF SHIT.

WE ALL KNEW.





HOW WE DOING?

THE RECORDER'S WORKING FINE--AND THE COPY'S BEAMED BACK TO HOME STATION WITH HARDLY ANY DROPOUTS.



YOU'RE RECORDING ME?

SURE. DO I LOOK STUPID TO YOU?

DOES THE CHAIR LEG OF TRUTH LOOK STUPID TO YOU?



STAND UP, FRED.

YOU'RE RECORDING THIS? YOU CAN'T FUCKING USE THIS. NOT EVEN ON DEEP BACKGROUND.

YOU ASSAULTED ME, YOU RETARD. YOU BEAT BACKGROUND OUT OF ME.

NO EDITOR ON EARTH WOULD TOUCH THAT. YOU GOT RULES--



YOU FORGET, FRED--

I'M NOT EMPLOYED ON A PAPER ANYMORE.

JOURNALISTIC ETHICS NO LONGER APPLY TO ME.



THE RULES DON'T APPLY TO ME.

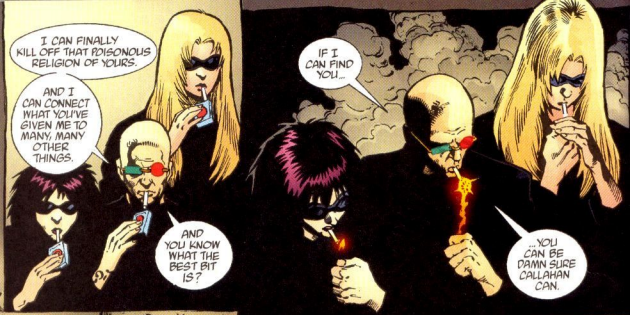




THIS WAS OUR FINAL CONVERSATION, FRED.

LIKE I SAID: I DON'T NEED TO FOLLOW RULES.

I'M AN OUTLAW JOURNALIST NOW. I CAN USE YOUR WORDS ANY WAY I LIKE.



I CAN FINALLY
KILL OFF THAT POISONOUS
RELIGION OF YOURS.

AND I
CAN CONNECT
WHAT YOU'VE
GIVEN ME TO
MANY, MANY
OTHER
THINGS.

IF I
CAN FIND
YOU...

AND
YOU KNOW
WHAT THE
BEST BIT
IS?

...YOU
CAN BE
DAMN SURE
CALLAHAN
CAN.



I WON'T
BE SEEING
YOU AGAIN,
FRED.

BECAUSE
YOU'RE GOING
TO DIE. YOU'VE MADE
AN AWFUL LOT OF
PEOPLE SUFFER OVER
THE YEARS,
BUT NOW, SOON,
YOU'RE GOING
TO DIE.

BECAUSE
OF SOMETHING
I'M GOING TO
WRITE.

AND THAT
MAKES ME
SMILE.



I lived in Italy for five years. During that period I visited Venice many times. It is on the way to Zagreb, my hometown, so I would always spend a few hours there waiting for the connecting train that would take me to Croatia. It was fascinating to stroll around a city built on water and shifting sands, with its smelly canals, blind windows, carved stone bricks, ancient bridges and moldy facades. During the rainy winter season, the ancient squares and streets are flooded, covered over with a few feet of water. The citizens of Venice are used to it and walk around in fishermen's boots. Morning mists are so thick that one needs a flashlight and walking stick to find the way. Venice is a beautiful, sinking labyrinth — a marble icon of decadence — an ideal stage for SANDMAN PRESENTS: "The Corinthian — Death in Venice," written by my fellow countryman Darko Macan, where the location mirrors the social turmoil and growing evil of the times.

Our tale is set in the year 1920 — a time when Europe was on the edge of a precipice and about to slide back into "the Dark Ages."

The start of the last dance of an Art Deco ballerina. Mussolini took power in '22, Stalin in '24, Hitler in '33, World War II started in '39, and so on...

ON THE ledge

Our star of the title, The Corinthian, is a cynical punk in a shiny white suit. His fellow characters are playing their roles in a puppet theater of the era, and Time, the real master of the Carnival, is moving the pieces on the chessboard. The Corinthian, a perennial witness and cold-blooded dream-killer, sneers, laughs, and enjoys himself. He will learn the tricks of his deadly trade and

become the vanguard of a new, ghoulishly celebrated breed — the serial killer. In this story, The Corinthian comes of age, hand in hand with the rest of "civilization." Together they lose their virginity and innocence is gone, once and for all. And while the ordinary humans suffer, struggle, cry, and fight, sand is slowly flowing through Time's fingers. In the background over Venice, an orange sun is rising from the Adriatic Sea, turning night into hope.

I live in Seattle now — a 21st-century city not unlike Venice. Both places are photogenic, surreal, exotic and shiny wet. In Seattle, water comes from above; in Venice it lies beneath. In Seattle, mornings are misty but there are no ancient buildings. The setting is catching up with me. Or is it only Time?

Danijel Zezeli

Danijel Zezeli

IN STORES THIS OCTOBER

THE SANDMAN PRESENTS: THE CORINTHIAN #1 (of 3)

An all-new SANDMAN PRESENTS miniseries details what happened before the Corinthian was primed to take on the mantle of the Dark Mirror. Set in the decadent, elite social circles of the Jazz Age, DEATH IN VENICE is the adventure of a serial-killer-in-training. *Written by Darko Macan; art by Danijel Zezeli; painted cover by Dave McKean.*

WAR STORY: D-DAY DODGERS

Garth Ennis' second 56-page special tells the story of the thousands of largely forgotten Allied soldiers fighting in the Italian countryside, while the world's attention was riveted by the war in France. *Written by Ennis. Art by John Higgins.*

ADVENTURES IN THE RIFLE BRIGADE: OPERATION BOLLOCK #3 (of 3)

The quest for Hitler's missing "family jewel" concludes as the battlin' boys from Blighty fight it out for the hairy little prize! *By Ennis & Ezquerra.*

ANGEL AND THE APE #3 (of 3)

After a violent confrontation at New York City's hottest dance club, Angel and Sam finally track down Bombi's killer...or do they? German shepherds, midgets and dermatology—this issue has it all! *By Chaykin, Tishman & Bond.*

GODDESS (TRADE PAPERBACK)

The hit miniseries from Garth Ennis and Phil Winslade is finally collected, featuring a foreword by Winslade and a collection of never-before-seen sketches and character designs. *Written by Garth Ennis. Painted art by Phil Winslade.*

THE BOOKS OF MAGIC: DEATH AFTER DEATH (TRADE PAPERBACK)

Reprinting issues #42-50 of the series, this volume features a frustrated Tim Hunter on a quest to rid himself of his troublesome magic. *Written by John Ney Rieber. Art by Peter Gross, Temujin and more.*

100 BULLETS #29

Under the sweltering Texas sun, things heat up between ne'er-do-well Wylie Times and a certain smoldering femme fatale, whose champagne tastes are way outta line with Wylie's beer budget. *By Azzarello & Risso.*

AMERICAN CENTURY #8

Harry Kraft shoots it out with Teresa's kidnappers at the Farmer's Market as Harry's adventure in Hollywood ends with a bang! *By Chaykin, Tishman, Laning & Stokes.*

CODENAME: KNOCKOUT #6

When Angela and Go-Go are trapped inside an African dictator's palace, their cover is blown, their mission is aborted, and the presidential guard is hot on their heels. *By Rodi, Connor & Palmiotti.*

THE CRUSADES #8

Intrepid fact-checker Venus cracks the biggest mystery in San Francisco when she falls into a subterranean cavern that looks like the murdering Knight's lair. *By Seagle, Jones & Randall. Painted cover by Richard Corben.*

HELLBLAZER #167

In "Highwater," Part 4, John Constantine's most controversial adventure comes to a shocking conclusion, as John's own past rears its ugly head. *By Azzarello & Frusin.*

HUNTER: THE AGE OF MAGIC #4

When Tim and Kalesh leave the White School in an attempt to save her people from the Sardonox warriors, they travel across Gemworld to confront the mysterious Red Man. *By Horrocks, Case & Wiacek.*

LUCIFER #19

Lucifer's arrival in Efrul coincides with a grand ball and a bloody revolution, but the Morningstar isn't interested in either. He has his own agenda, and he isn't here to dance... *By Carey, Gross, Ormston & Kelly.*

OUTLAW NATION #14

Martin, "The Devil Kid," learns that there are worse things than garbage to scrape up and bag as he meets sexy, death-obsessed artist Lola Todd. *By Delano, Parlov & Sudzuka.*

SWAMP THING #20

Final issue. This chapter in the legend of the Swamp Thing concludes in the search for the Tree of Life, as Tefé learns the true story of the creation of the world. *By Vaughan, Camuncoli & Stewart.*

TRANSMETROPOLITAN #50

Spider's struggle to bring down the President culminates in a final conversation with Fred, who hates the police enough to talk to Spider again. And the things he knows might just turn the tide... *By Ellis, Robertson & Ramos. Cover by Moebius.*

EVENTS NEXT MONTH...

GRIP #1 (of 5)

Gilbert Hernandez writes and illustrates this mind-bending crime series that follows the adventures of Mike Chang, a man who wakes up one day with no memory of who — or what — he is.

WAR STORY: SCREAMING EAGLES

The third of four 56-page specials written by Garth Ennis — this issue illustrated by Dave Gibbons — tells the darkly humorous tale of a group of war-weary G.I.s in the waning days of World War II who stumble on a castle filled with Nazi treasure.