

**VERTIGO**  
DC COMICS

WARREN ELLIS • DARICK ROBERTSON • RODNEY RAMOS

NO. 53  
APR 02

\*\*\*\*\* LATE EDITION \*\*\*\*\*

# TRANSMETROPOLITAN™

SUGGESTED FOR  
MATURE READERS



**DIRECT SALES**  
05311  
61941210421  
\$2.50 US \$4.25 CAN



dc.com/m53.com



PLAN B.



PLAN B IS ABANDON MY DAD'S CAR?

IT'S PROBABLY BEEN SPOTTED. THAT'S WHY I HAD CHANNON PUT THIS ONE HERE.

MY DAD'S CAR IS BEAUTIFUL. THIS CAR APPEARS TO DOUBLE AS A TOILET.



I DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TIME TO FIND A PUBLIC RESTROOM.

OH MY GOD, LEAVE ME FOR THE HIRED KILLERS, PLEASE...



**WARREN ELLIS** writes  
and **DARICK ROBERTSON &  
RODNEY RAMOS** draw



**THE CURE**  
PART TWO OF THREE

**CJEM  
ROBINS**  
letterer

**NATHAN  
EYRING**  
color & seps

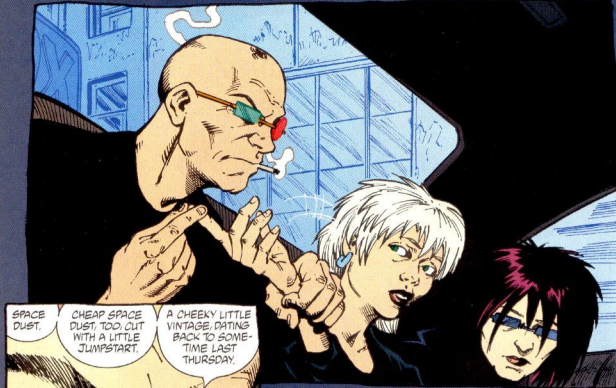
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SPACE DUST.

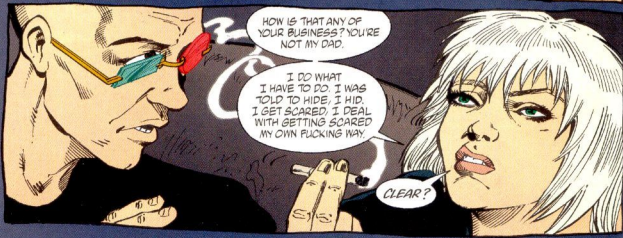
CHEAP SPACE DUST, TOO, CUT WITH A LITTLE JUMPSTART.

A CHEEKY LITTLE VINTAGE, DATING BACK TO SOME-TIME LAST THURSDAY.

JUST WHEN I THINK YOU COULDN'T GET MORE DISGUSTING.

SILENCE, FILTHY ASSISTANT.

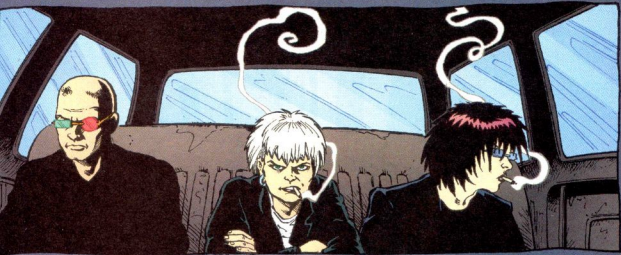
IS THIS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING THIS WHOLE TIME, LIESL? HIDING IN HOTELS, GETTING FUCKED-UP ON SPACE DUST?



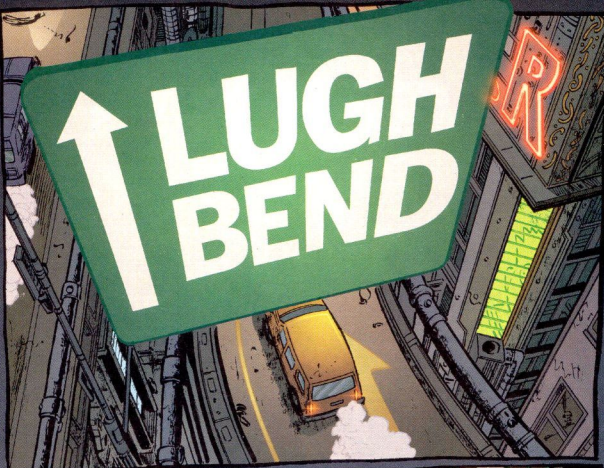
HOW IS THAT ANY OF YOUR BUSINESS? YOU'RE NOT MY DAD.

I DO WHAT I HAVE TO DO. I WAS TOLD TO HIDE, I HID. I GET SCARED, I DEAL WITH GETTING SCARED MY OWN FUCKING WAY.

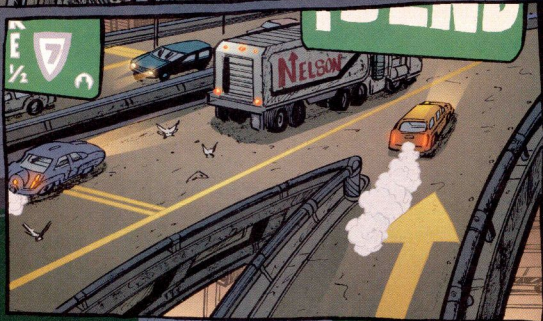
CLEAR?

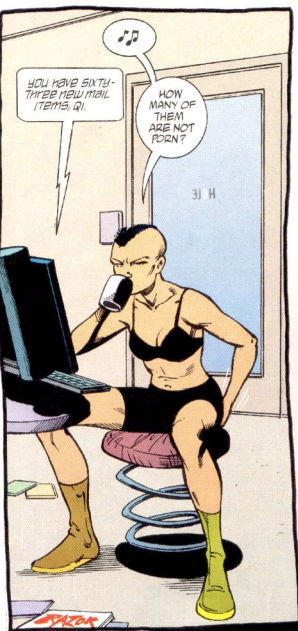


**LUGH  
BEND**



**LUGH  
BEND**





YOU HAVE SIXTY-THREE NEW MAIL ITEMS, Q1.

♪

HOW MANY OF THEM ARE NOT PORN?

31 H



I CANNOT TELL A LIE. I'M ACTUALLY BEING PAID TO SHOW YOU THE PORN'D E-MAIL.

I'LL DELETE IT MANUALLY.

I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO DO THAT, Q1.

310H



I'M GIVING YOU AN ORDER DON'T MAKE ME CUT OFF YOUR DRUG SIMULATOR.

DON'T TOUCH THAT, YOU LITTLE SHIT. JUST LOOK AT THE PORN.

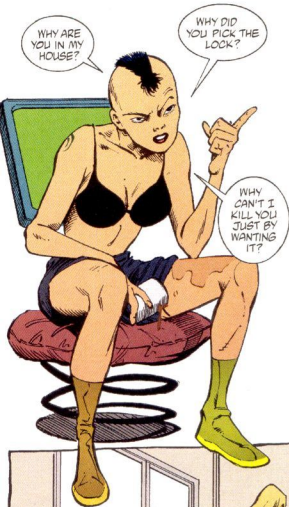
YOU LOOK AT THE PORN. I'LL CUT YOU OFF. NO MORE HAPPY FLUCKED-UP COMPUTER.



BEHOLD!

BRING YOUR FINEST MEATS AND CHEESES! YOUR GREATEST BENEFAC-TOR IS MADE MANIFEST IN YOUR TINY PEASANT'S HOVEL!

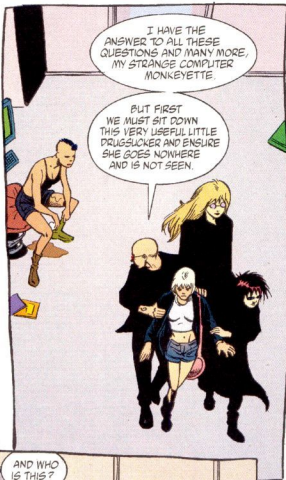
310H



WHY ARE YOU IN MY HOUSE?

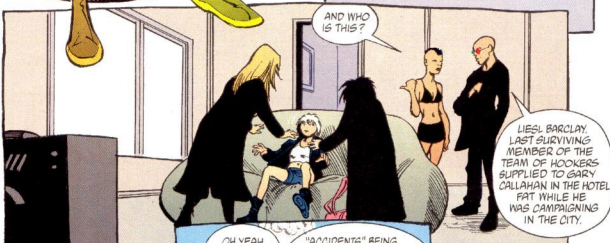
WHY DID YOU PICK THE LOCK?

WHY CAN'T I KILL YOU JUST BY WANTING IT?



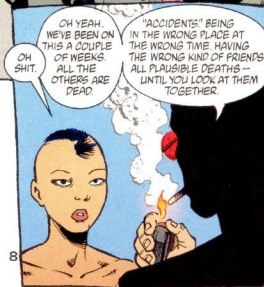
I HAVE THE ANSWER TO ALL THESE QUESTIONS AND MANY MORE, MY STRANGE COMPUTER MONKEYETTE.

BUT FIRST WE MUST SIT DOWN THIS VERY USEFUL LITTLE DRUGSLUCKER AND ENSURE SHE GOES NOWHERE AND IS NOT SEEN.



AND WHO IS THIS?

LIESL BARCLAY, LAST SURVIVING MEMBER OF THE TEAM OF HOOKERS SUPPLIED TO GARY CALLAHAN IN THE HOTEL FAT WHILE HE WAS CAMPAIGNING IN THE CITY.



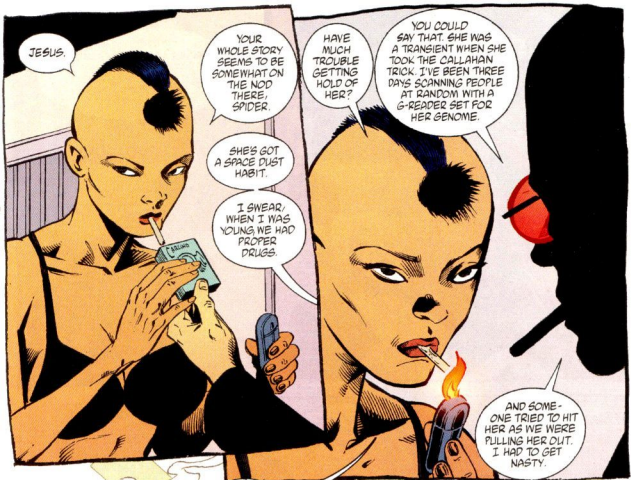
OH SHIT.

OH YEAH, WE'VE BEEN ON THIS A COUPLE OF WEEKS. ALL THE OTHERS ARE DEAD.

"ACCIDENTS" BEING IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME, HAVING THE WRONG KIND OF FRIENDS. ALL PLAUSIBLE DEATHS -- UNTIL YOU LOOK AT THEM TOGETHER.



SHE'S THE WHOLE STORY NOW.



JESUS.

YOUR WHOLE STORY SEEMS TO BE SOMEWHAT ON THE NOD THERE, SPIDER.

HAVE MUCH TROUBLE GETTING HOLD OF HER?

YOU COULD SAY THAT. SHE WAS A TRANSIENT WHEN SHE TOOK THE CALLAHAN TRICK. I'VE BEEN THREE DAYS SCANNING PEOPLE AT RANDOM WITH A G-READER SET FOR HER GENOME.

SHE'S GOT A SPACE DUST HABIT.

I SWEAR, WHEN I WAS YOUNG WE HAD PROPER DRUGS.

AND SOMEONE TRIED TO HIT HER AS WE WERE PULLING HER OUT. I HAD TO GET NASTY.

YOU'RE KIDDING.

I WISH. PHOTOS OF THE PAIR WHO TRIED THE HIT ARE IN THE SHADES. DOWNLOAD THEM. SEE IF YOU CAN MATCH FACES TO NAMES.

I'M ON IT. ANYTHING TO GET YOU OUT OF MY HOUSE QUICKLY.

QUICK AS WE CAN. BUT I WANT TO TALK TO HER HERE, AND WRITE THE STORY. I'M NOT TAKING THE CHANCE OF ANYTHING GETTING BETWEEN ME AND YOU PUTTING THE STORY OUT OVER THE HOLE.

I'M PRETTY SURE WE WEREN'T TRAILED HERE, BUT I'M GOING TO ACT LIKE WE WERE. I WANT TO MOVE FAST HERE, OKAY?



YOU'RE UP. I NEED THINGS, FILTHY ASSISTANTS.

SHOOT.

FRUIT JUICE. SPRING WATER. JUMPSTART. POST CRASH MEDS. IF SHE'S BEEN DOING NOTHING BUT SPACE DUST FOR WEEKS, SHE'S GOING TO COME DOWN HARD.

RECORDER.

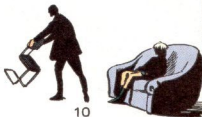
HERE. DO YOU NEED ANYTHING?

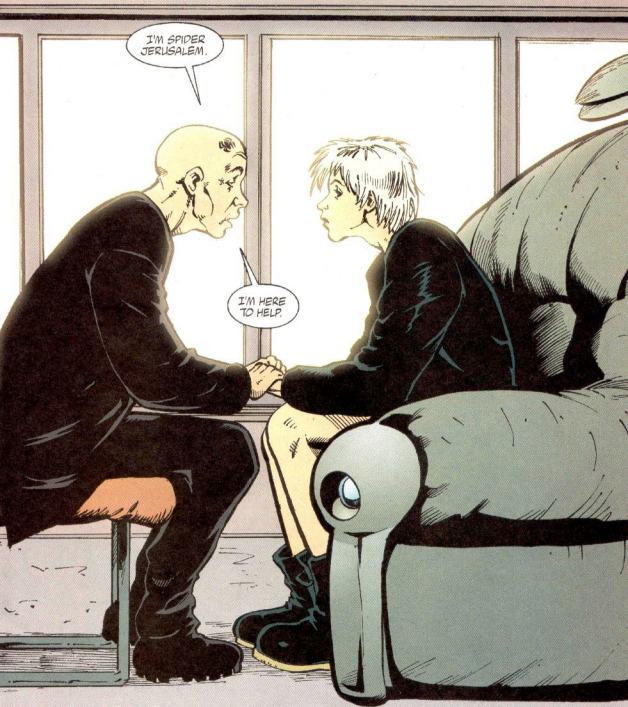
A NEW BRAIN AND BODY.

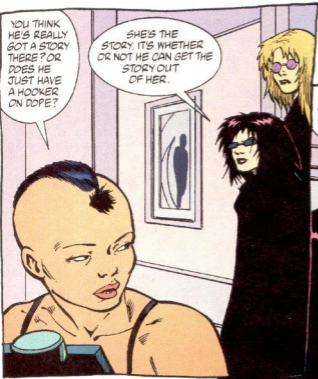
I'LL SEE WHAT THEY HAVE ON SPECIAL OFFER.

CHEAP.

NOT AS CHEAP AS YOU.

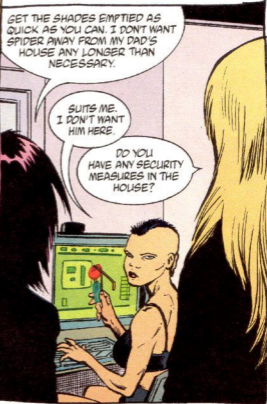






YOU THINK HE'S REALLY GOT A STORY THERE? OR DOES HE JUST HAVE A HOOKER ON DOPE?

SHE'S THE STORY. IT'S WHETHER OR NOT HE CAN GET THE STORY OUT OF HER.

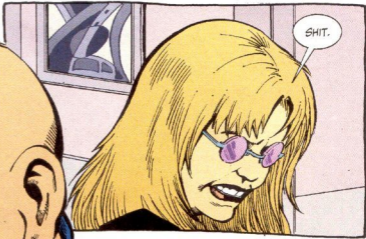
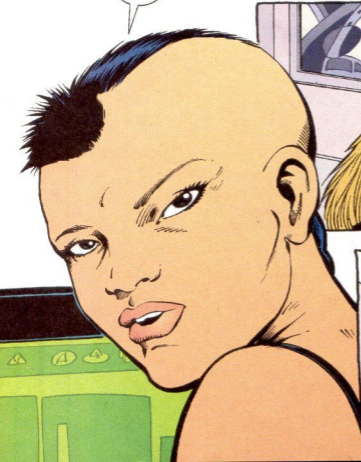


GET THE SHADES EMPTIED AS QUICK AS YOU CAN. I DON'T WANT SPIDER AWAY FROM MY DAD'S HOUSE ANY LONGER THAN NECESSARY.

SUITS ME. I DON'T WANT HIM HERE.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SECURITY MEASURES IN THE HOUSE?

I GOT A GUN.  
THAT'S IT.



SHIT.



GET IT.

I'VE GOT A FEELING.

MY JOURNALISTIC OVARIES ARE TWITCHING.



WHY'D YOU TAKE THE CURE, LIESL?



FEW REASONS.

FIRST OFF, SETH-- HE'S ONE OF MY, YOU KNOW, MANAGERS-- HE SAID I SHOULD DO SOMETHING REAL QUICK TO CHANGE MY APPEARANCE.

I GOT A LOT OF MONEY SAVED, SO I JUST BOUGHT THE CURE GOING FROM GREY TO WHITE, THAT'S A CHANGE OF APPEARANCE, RIGHT?



AND.

YOU KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE TRANSIENT COMMUNITY?

SOME.



WELL, YOU KNOW, TRANSIENTS-- THEY DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO.

ALL THAT MATTERS TO TRANSIENTS IS THAT YOU'RE A TRANSIENT TOO.



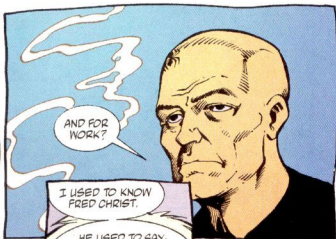
I DUNNO. I COME FROM A BIG FAMILY, I'M NOT GOOD AT BEING LONELY.

TRANSIENTS ARE NEVER LONELY. IT'S PART OF THE REASON THEY BECOME TRANSIENTS.

THAT AND, YOU KNOW, THEY'RE NOT COMFORTABLE IN THEIR OWN SKIN.



ME NEITHER.



AND FOR WORK?

I USED TO KNOW FRED CHRIST.

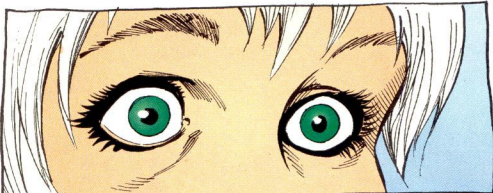
HE USED TO SAY, IF THEY THINK THEY'RE BUYING A STRANGE PIECE OF ASS, THEN IT'S YOU WHO HAVE THE POWER OVER THEM.

I MADE A LOT OF MONEY AS A TRANSIENT GIRL.



WAS FRED ONE OF YOUR... MANAGERS?





HE FED GIGS TO MY MANAGERS. HE NEVER DIRECTLY DID ANYTHING, YOU KNOW?

I THINK HE GOT A PERCENTAGE.

I KNOW HE GOT ME SOME IMPORTANT GIGS. I KNOW WHAT KIND OF GAMES HE WAS PLAYING. I'M NOT STUPID.



GAMES?

SURE. HE WAS PLAYING REPUTATION GAMES, POLITICAL GAMES, ALL THAT.

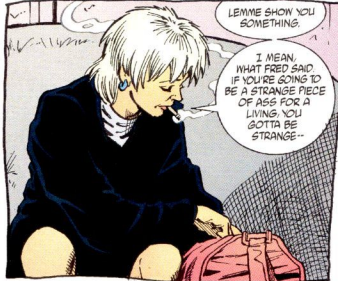
HE GOT US THE GIGS WITH THE SMILER.



GIGS?

SURE, SOUNDS MORE ROCKSTAR THAN "TRICKS," RIGHT?

I'M A CALL-GIRL. APPEARANCE IS EVERYTHING.



LEMME SHOW YOU SOMETHING.

I MEAN, WHAT FRED SAID. IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE A STRANGE PIECE OF ASS FOR A LIVING, YOU GOTTA BE STRANGE--



--AND YOU GOTTA BE A PIECE OF ASS.

THIS IS MY FAVORITE. I WORE THIS ON THE SMILER GIG.

APPEARANCE IS EVERYTHING. IF THEY'RE PAYING A ROCKSTAR CALLGIRL RATE, THEN I'M THE ROCKSTAR CALLGIRL, YOU KNOW?



YOU WORE THAT WHEN...

WHEN I DID THE SMILER.



YOU YOURSELF HAD SEX WITH CALLAHAN?

THAT WAS KIND OF THE POINT. I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE SMART.

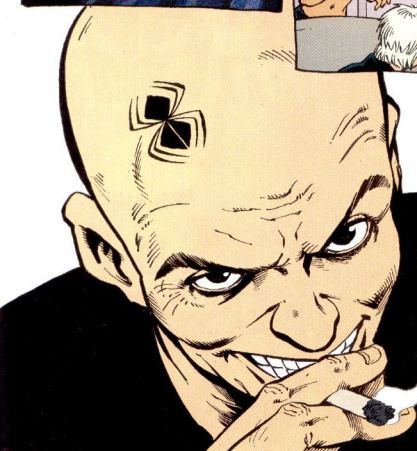
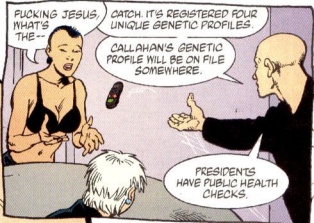
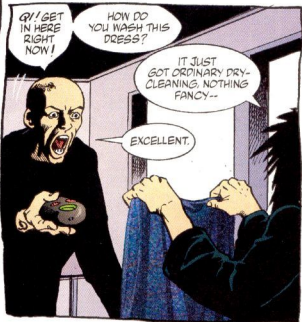


I HAVE BRAIN DAMAGE. COULD YOU HOLD ON TO THAT A MINUTE?

SURE YOU LIKE IT?

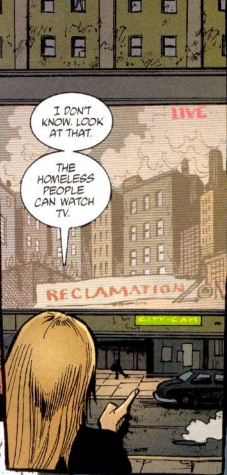
MORE THAN YOU KNOW. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU WORN IT SINCE?







SPIDER ALWAYS TAKES ME TO THE NICEST PLACES.



I DON'T KNOW. LOOK AT THAT.

THE HOMELESS PEOPLE CAN WATCH TV.



AND LOOK AT WHAT THE CAMERA'S ON. THE GODDAMN RECLAMATION ZONE.

MUST BE WHERE ALL THE RECLAMATION MONEY'S GOING.

YOU KNOW, TECHNICALLY, THE WHOLE CITY IS A RECLAMATION ZONE.



TECHNICALLY, MY ENTIRE LIFE IS A RECLAMATION ZONE.

LET'S GET BRAIN-DAMAGE BOY HIS SHOPPING.



IT WAS...WELL,  
IT WAS KINDA  
ORDINARY.



YEAH?



YEAH.

WHICH, YOU KNOW,  
COMPLETELY  
SUITED  
ME.

NO ONE  
LIKES BEING  
A SEX  
TOILET.

HE SEEMED  
TO THINK THAT  
GETTING A BLOW-  
JOB AND BEING  
UNDERNEATH WAS  
THE HEIGHT OF  
DEPRAVITY OR  
SOMETHING.

SOME OF  
THE OTHER GIRLS  
DIDN'T GET OFF SO  
LIGHTLY. THERE WAS  
A COUPLE OF GUYS  
WHO WANTED TO  
SHOW THEY HAD  
BIG NUTS. YOU  
KNOW.


ONE GUY  
JUST WASN'T  
INTO TRANSIENTS.  
AND THE GUY  
WHO PAID, I DON'T  
THINK HE WAS  
INTO GIRLS.



DIDN'T  
LAST  
LONG.

I MEAN,  
HE WAS INTO  
IT. REALLY  
INTO IT.

FOR SOME  
PEOPLE, YOU'RE  
JUST A HOLE. BUT  
FOR OTHERS,  
YOU'RE ACTUALLY  
A FANTASY.



ONE OF THE OTHER  
GIRLS, REBEKAH, ASKED  
ME WHAT IT WAS  
LIKE, AFTER.

NOT LIKE, WAS  
IT GOOD, OR DID HE  
HURT YOU, OR  
ANYTHING.

BUT WHAT WAS  
IT LIKE FUCKING THE  
PRESIDENT?



AND I  
GOTTA TELL  
YOU.

JUST  
ANOTHER  
GIG.



DID YOU SAY  
SOMETHING ABOUT  
THE OTHER GIRLS  
BEING DEAD?



OH,  
GOD...



OH, SHIT.  
YOU'RE STARTING TO  
CRASH.

LIES! LISTEN  
TO ME. YOUR  
PIMP--YOUR SURVIVING  
PIMP--REALIZED  
WHAT WAS HAPPENING  
AND PUT YOU SOME-  
WHERE SAFE.

YOU'RE OKAY,  
AND YOU'RE GOING  
TO STAY OKAY,  
YOU HEAR ME?



REBEKAH...?

SOMEONE HAS KILLED  
EVERY OTHER GIRL THAT  
WAS ON THAT GIG WITH  
YOU. AND ONE OF  
YOUR PIMPS.

THAT'S WHY THIS  
IS IMPORTANT. WITH  
YOUR STORY OUT THERE,  
NO ONE HAS ANY  
REASON TO  
HURT YOU.



REBEKAH...?

SHIT.

Q? WHERE  
ARE MY FILTHY  
ASSISTANTS?



LIP YOUR ASS,  
FOR ALL I  
KNOW, THOSE  
GIRLS CREEP  
ME OUT.

HERE'S YOUR  
G-READER.

WE GOT  
ANYTHING?



Two years ago, Doug Moench and his son Derek dropped in on my wife and me as houseguests out here in Portland, Oregon. Doug and I were both guests at a convention in Seattle, which is a stone's throw away. Drivable. One night we were outside gazing at the tapestry of stars and I mentioned to him that I had this great idea for a comic series. I told him that it had hit me one day like a white-hot bolt of lightning in the middle of my forehead. I told him that it came to me while I was working on a *STAR WARS* series called "Crimson Empire" for Dark Horse.

I said that it was my belief that nobody has a monopoly on outer-space drama and what makes for good fantasy science fiction, whether it be *STAR WARS*, *STAR TREK*, the *ALIEN* series, whatever. What I essentially did was take a genre that Doug, myself and our fans associate us with the most through the

years, and that is the super-spy genre. We all know who the greatest secret agent on Earth is, but our guy, Sebastian Starchild, is the greatest secret agent in the galaxy!

# ON THE ledge

Like a big stew, we mixed in some groovy villains, gorgeous, exotic space chicks, bizarre alien creatures, white-knuckle chase scenes, seat-of-your-pants ray gun battles and futuristic gadgets, stirred around a solid

storyline, and then sprinkled in some tongue-in-cheek humor for good measure. The result: *S.C.I. SPY* (Special Covert Investigations). If you enjoyed our work together from back in the day like *MASTER OF KUNG FU* or our recent collaborations on such titles as *BATMAN: OUTLAWS*, *LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT: TERROR* or *GREEN LANTERN: DRAGON LORD*, you'll be sure to get a kick out of *S.C.I. SPY*. It's a barrel of monkeys and loads of fun galore. Check it out, y'all.

*Galacy*

Paul Gulacy

## IN STORES THIS FEBRUARY

### S.C.I.-SPY #1 (OF 6)

Sebastian Starchild, like all great secret agents, is a stubborn lone wolf with a penchant for the ladies and a knack for saving the world — or in his case, the universe. In the genre-bending first issue, Starchild trails an intergalactic terrorist to a casino and discovers that nothing heats up deep space like a high-tech fire-fight. And just who is this mysterious femme fatale, Isis Nile? *Written by Doug Moench; art by Paul Gulacy and Jimmy Palmiotti; cover by Gulacy.*

### 100 BULLETS #33

When a tough-talking gal with a chip on her shoulder and the money to prop it up hires private eye Milo Garret for a special job, the payday's too good to refuse. That, and Milo figures there may be a bonus in it... *By Azzarello & Rissa. Painted cover by Dave Johnson.*

### AMERICAN CENTURY #12

Harry Kraft rides shotgun with uptight ATF Agent Gilmore after Sheriff Falk is mortally wounded in a gun-blazing car chase with local moonshiners. Harry and Gilmore are dead set on nailing the bad guys, if they don't kill each other first. *Written by Chaykin and Tischman. Art by Luke Ross and John Stokes. Painted cover by Glen Orbik.*

### CODENAME: KNOCKOUT #10

Angela Devlin heads to Paris on the trail of a fiendish Russian slavemaster. But who apprehends whom? Plus, Go-Go is confronted with the truth about his origins! *By Rodi & Paquette. Painted cover by Tomas Giorello.*

### THE CRUSADES #12

The second Crusade ends in a heartstopping showdown! Venus fights for her life in the Knight's hidden enclave, Detective Petronas fights to crack the mystery of the Knight before his rank is pulled, and the Knight himself fights a force that could stop his crusades once and for all! *By Seagle, Jones & Randall. Painted cover by Duncan Fegredo.*

### GRIP: THE STRANGE WORLD OF MEN #4 (OF 5)

Tension mounts in Forey's strip club as Detective Garcia searches for his missing partner. Meanwhile, precocious little Echo reveals what's underneath her eyepatch, which will blow everyone's mind — especially Mike Chang's — if anyone can find him. *Written and illustrated by Gilbert Hernandez.*

### HELLBLAZER #171

As the investigation into John Constantine's murder continues, one thing becomes exceedingly clear. Nobody's certain exactly what happened, which leaves investigators scratching their heads and sifting through clues. *By Azzarello & Frusin. Painted cover by Tim Bradstreet.*

### OUTLAW NATION #18

It's going to take hard thinking, fast footwork and considerable luck to save the Johnson spirit from extinction as Story has to confront the vicious truth of Old Asia's spiteful genocide. *By Delano, Parlov & Sudzuka. Painted cover by Glenn Fabry.*

### HUNTER: THE AGE OF MAGIC #8

New storyline. Tim Hunter has finished his school days, but he's soon going to learn that there's a world of mystery and mysticism that his schooling hasn't prepared him for. Even more alarming, he meets Dr. Fabien — a scientist who claims to have isolated the gene that causes evil behavior. If Tim decides to be tested, will he want to know the answer? *By Horrocks, Case & Bird. Painted cover by Jon Foster.*

### LUCIFER #23

In Part 3 of the 3-part "Paradiso," the Basano's bloody assault on Lucifer's cosmos culminates in a direct confrontation and a battle to the death. But for once the Morningstar finds that the trump cards have been dealt to someone else. *By Carey, Gross & Kelly. Painted cover by Christopher Moeller.*

### THE SANDMAN PRESENTS: THE THESSALIA #2 (OF 4)

The dark fantasy quest continues as Thessaly and Fetch ride the ever-changing Allegorical Subway. Each stop reveals a dangerous challenge between gatekeeper and traveler and also boasts cameos from some surprising characters from THE SANDMAN. *By Williamson, McManus & Pepoy. Cover by Dave McKean.*

### TRANSMETROPOLITAN #53

She's the last surviving witness to presidential sexual misconduct, and the only thing between her and a bullet in the brain is a crazed journalist with a degenerative brain disease, a drug habit that could kill a pack of rhinos, and the physical strength of a small, drunken rat. *By Ellis, Robertson & Ramos. Painted cover by Glenn Fabry.*

## EVENTS NEXT MONTH...

### KING DAVID (TRADE PAPERBACK)

Award-winning cartoonist Kyle Baker delivers his latest VERTIGO instant classic! The familiar tale of young David's rise to unprecedented power and popularity while under the paranoid scrutiny of King Saul gets the irreverent — yet biblically accurate — treatment that has made Kyle Baker's work acclaimed by both fans and critics alike. *Written and illustrated by Kyle Baker.*

### SWAMP THING: EARTH TO EARTH (TRADE PAPERBACK)

Reprinting SWAMP THING #51-56. After she is arrested for "a sexual crime against the laws of nature," Abby flees Louisiana and seeks refuge on the streets of Gotham City. When her circumstances draw the attention of Batman, Swamp Thing is drawn into a war for her freedom against the Dark Knight and all the forces of Gotham City. The battle breaks Swamp Thing's bond to the Earth and leaves him on a mysterious planet of blue, in the timeless tale "My Blue Heaven." *Written by Alan Moore. Art by Rick Veitch, John Totleben, and Alfredo Alcala. Painted cover by Totleben.*