



BY
GERRY CONWAY AND
JOSE LUIS GARCIA LOPEZ

75¢

2

FEB. 84



ATARI FORCE

DART
VS.
THE WARBEAST...



...NO WONDER WE CALL THIS ONE
"DIRECT ENCOUNTER"



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[™] Video Game



Volume 1, the CLOUDY MOUNTAIN[™]* cartridge was only the beginning of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[™]* video game series for Intellivision.[®] Now comes Volume 2, the TREASURE OF TARMIN[™]* cartridge. You want the treasure. And over 50 different creatures want you!

MATTEL ELECTRONICS[®]

Intellivision[®]

ADVANCED
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[™]
TREASURE OF TARMIN[™]

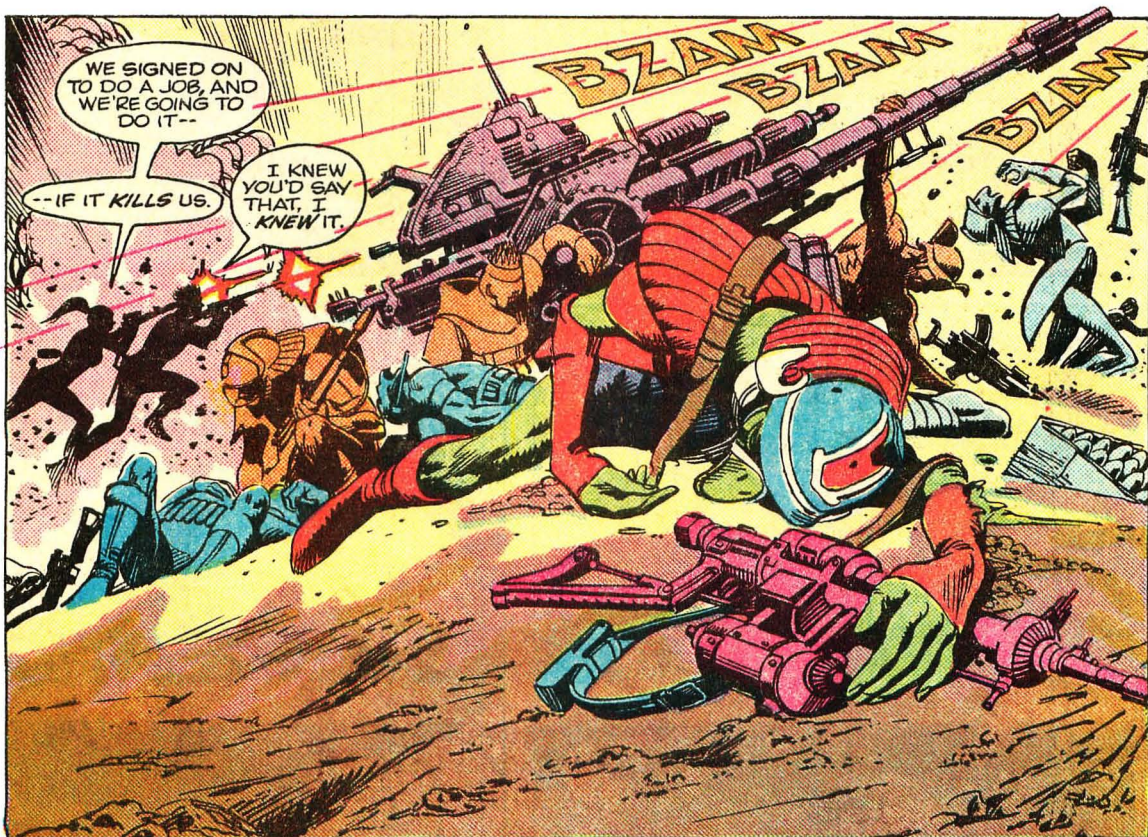


NEW

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JUST BECAUSE OUR LAST EMPLOYER, GENERAL K7, CHEATED US OUT OF OUR FEE BEFORE HE DISAPPEARED.

THAT'S NO REASON TO SIDE UP WITH HIS REBEL ENEMIES!

THEY'RE LOSING, DART!

HEY, LOVER-- IF IT WERE EASY, WOULD IT BE WORTH DOING?

INCOMING!

OH, WONDERFUL.

FAM FAM F

...AND WE, TOO, ARE PINNED DOWN.

ONLY A MATTER OF MINUTES, COMMANDER DART, TILL WE ARE ALL DEAD.

YOU WERE LAST HOPE.

THANK YOU FOR TRYING.

OH, I WISH HE HADN'T SAID THAT.

BLACKJAK, CAN THAT PLASMA BOW OF YOURS LAY DOWN A COVERING PATTERN--?

NOT FAST ENOUGH.

I GUESS I GO.

I GUESS YOU DO.

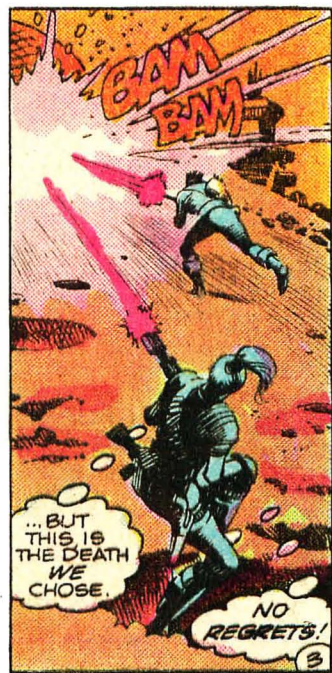
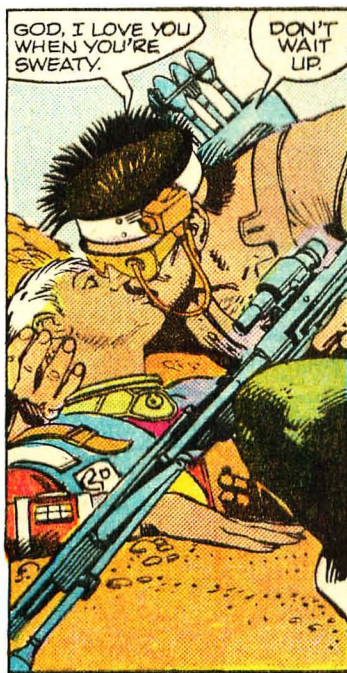
ATARI FORCE TWO

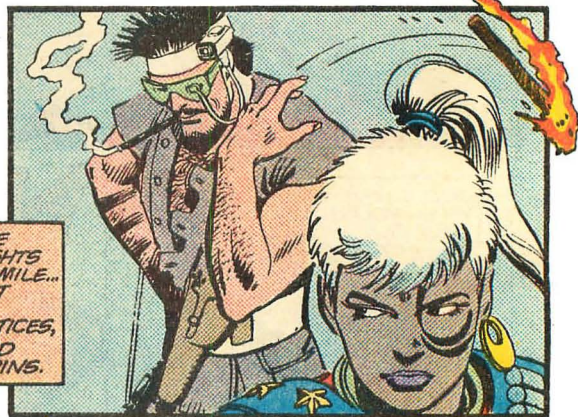
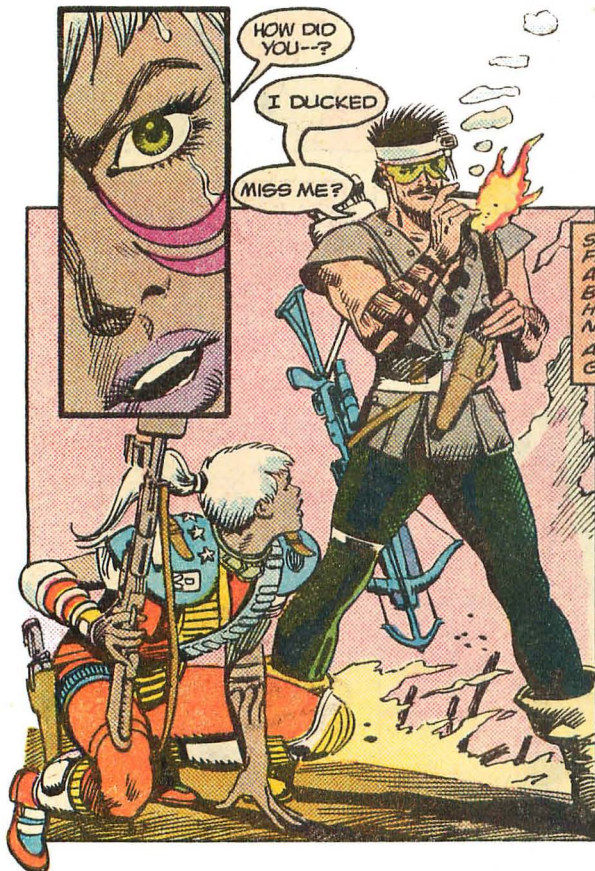
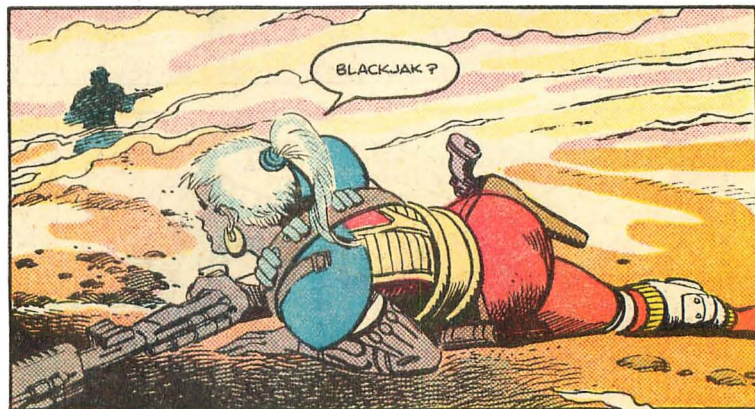
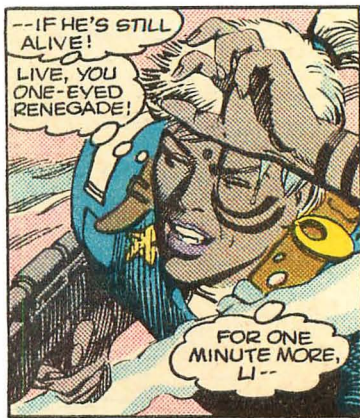
CREATED BY GERRY CONWAY, ROY THOMAS AND JOSÉ GARCÍA LOPEZ

WAR

BY GERRY CONWAY, JOSÉ GARCÍA LOPEZ & RICARDO VILLAGRAN

LETTERED BY BOB LAPPEN COLORED BY TOM ZIUKO EDITED BY ANDY HELFER





Q*bert
VIDEO GAME CARTRIDGE

6!#?@!



IT'S NOT EASY BEING Q*BERT,TM BUT IT'S FUN.

No one ever said it was going to be easy hopping the irresistible Q*bertTM from cube to cube and staying out of harm's way. Especially when he's trying to avoid creeps like Coily and Ugg.

But, there are times Q*bert can't escape. And just like in the popular arcade game, he doesn't take it quietly. Q*bert mutters a few choice words, puts his nose to the grindstone and comes back for more.

You'll grow so attached to Q*bert, you won't want to stop playing. He's one little character who's good to the last hop.

Now you can have the new Q*bert video game cartridge in your home, too.

For your Atari 2600 Video Computer SystemTM and the Sears Video ArcadeTM. Coming soon for Intellivision[®].

PARKER BROTHERS

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\$1 MILLION DOLLAR

Christmas Rebate Spectacular

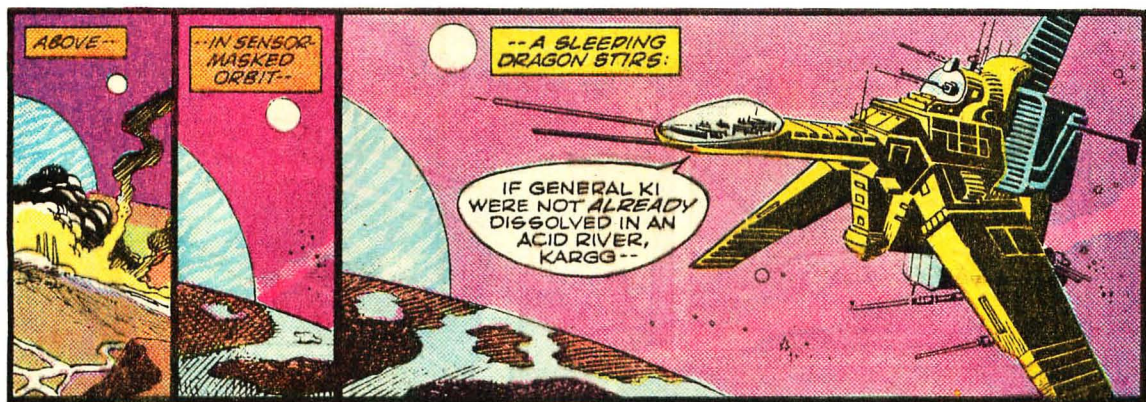
See your dealer for details



Ask Dad to help
you choose the
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or Spincast model
that's just right
for you!

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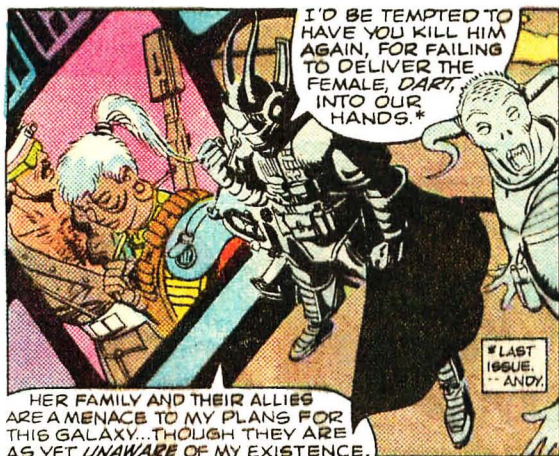


ABOVE--

--IN SENSOR-
MASKED
ORBIT--

--A SLEEPING
DRAGON STIRS:

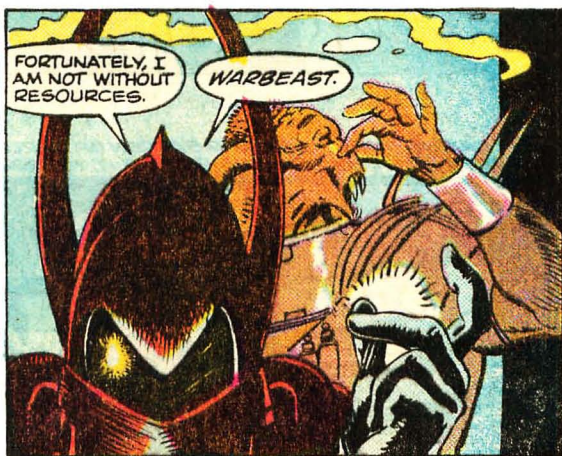
IF GENERAL KI
WERE NOT ALREADY
DISSOLVED IN AN
ACID RIVER,
KARGG--



I'D BE TEMPTED TO
HAVE YOU KILL HIM
AGAIN, FOR FAILING
TO DELIVER THE
FEMALE, DART,
INTO OUR
HANDS.*

*LAST
ISSUE,
--ANDY.

HER FAMILY AND THEIR ALLIES
ARE A MENACE TO MY PLANS FOR
THIS GALAXY...THOUGH THEY ARE
AS YET *UNAWARE* OF MY EXISTENCE.



FORTUNATELY, I
AM NOT WITHOUT
RESOURCES.

WARBEAST.



THERE ARE MANY WAR-WEARY
WORLDS IN THE *MULTI-
VERSE*, KARGG. ONE SUCH
IS THE PLANET *MALKA*,
WHOSE ELDERS BREED
A RACE OF GENETICALLY
ALTERED *WARRIORS* SO
DEADLY, SO POWERFUL,
THEY LAID TO WASTE
EVERY LIVING
THING ON
THE PLANET
BUT THEM-
SELVES.

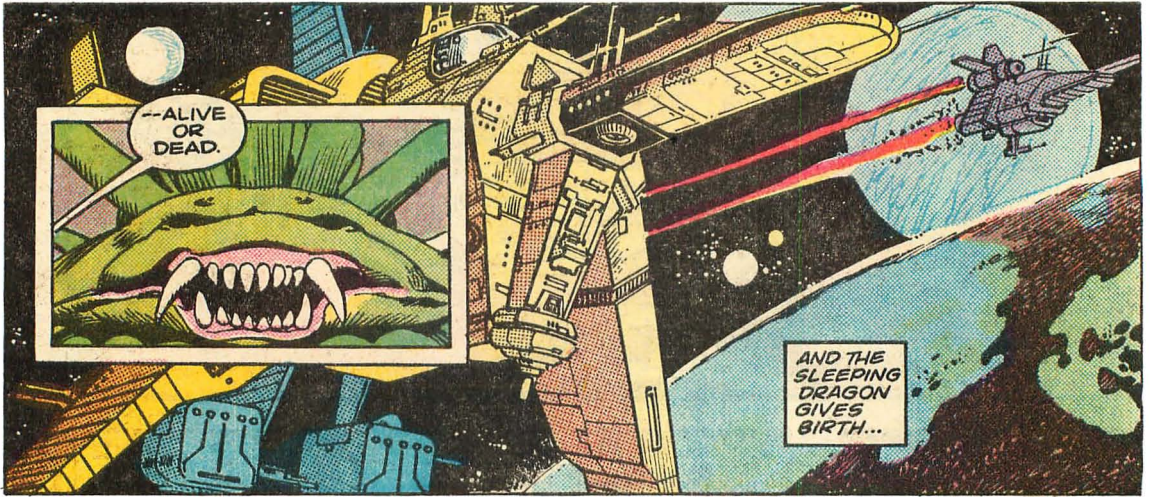
WARBEAST
IS THE SOLE
SURVIVOR OF
THAT RACE.
WHEN I
FOUND HIM,
HE'D BEEN
REDUCED TO
CANNIBALISM.

IT DID LITTLE
TO IMPROVE EITHER
HIS ODOR OR HIS
PERSONALITY.

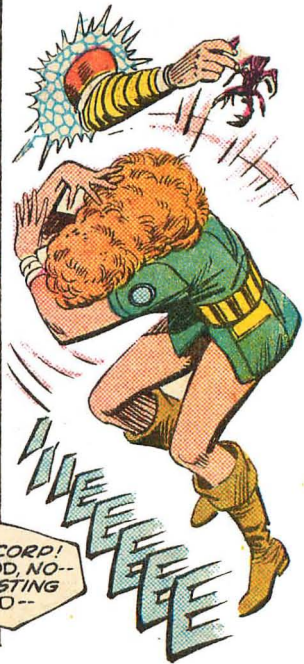
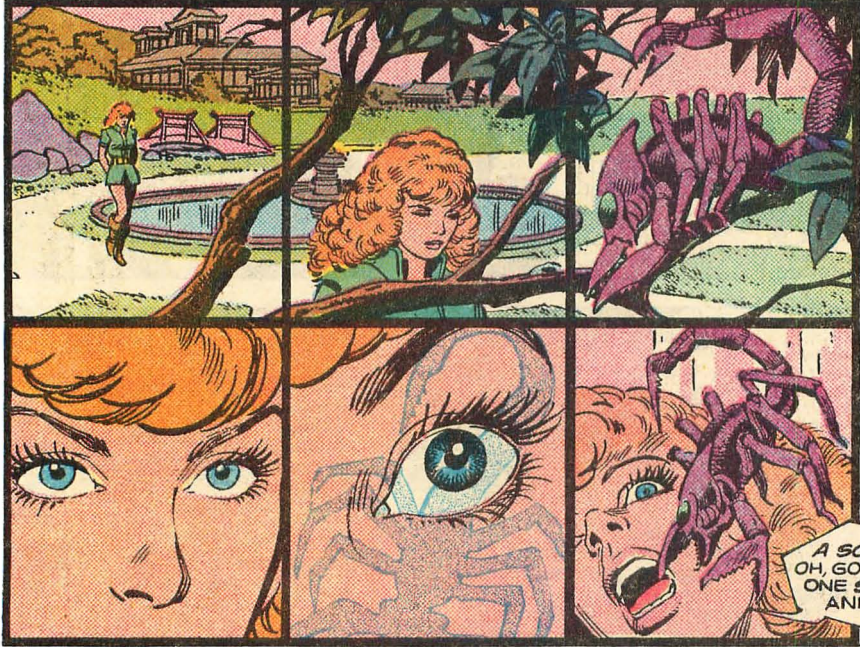


WARBEAST,
ON THE PLANET
BELOW YOU WILL
FIND A HUMAN
FEMALE WHO
CALLS HER-
SELF DART.

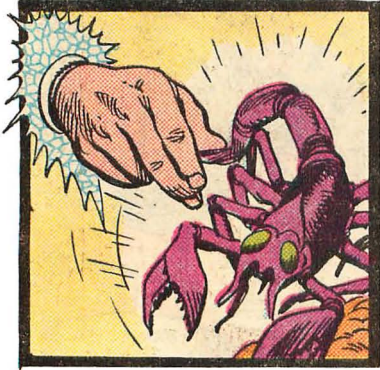
BRING HER
TO ME--

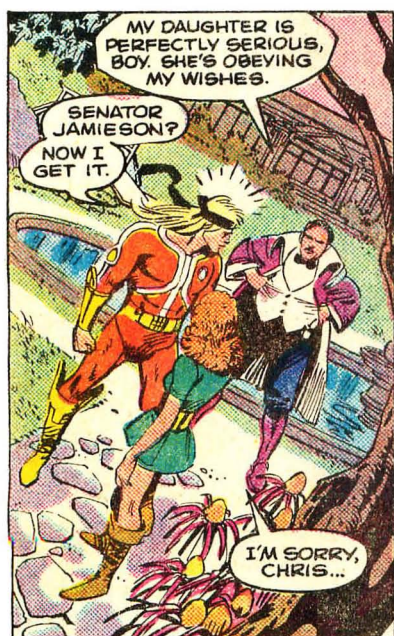
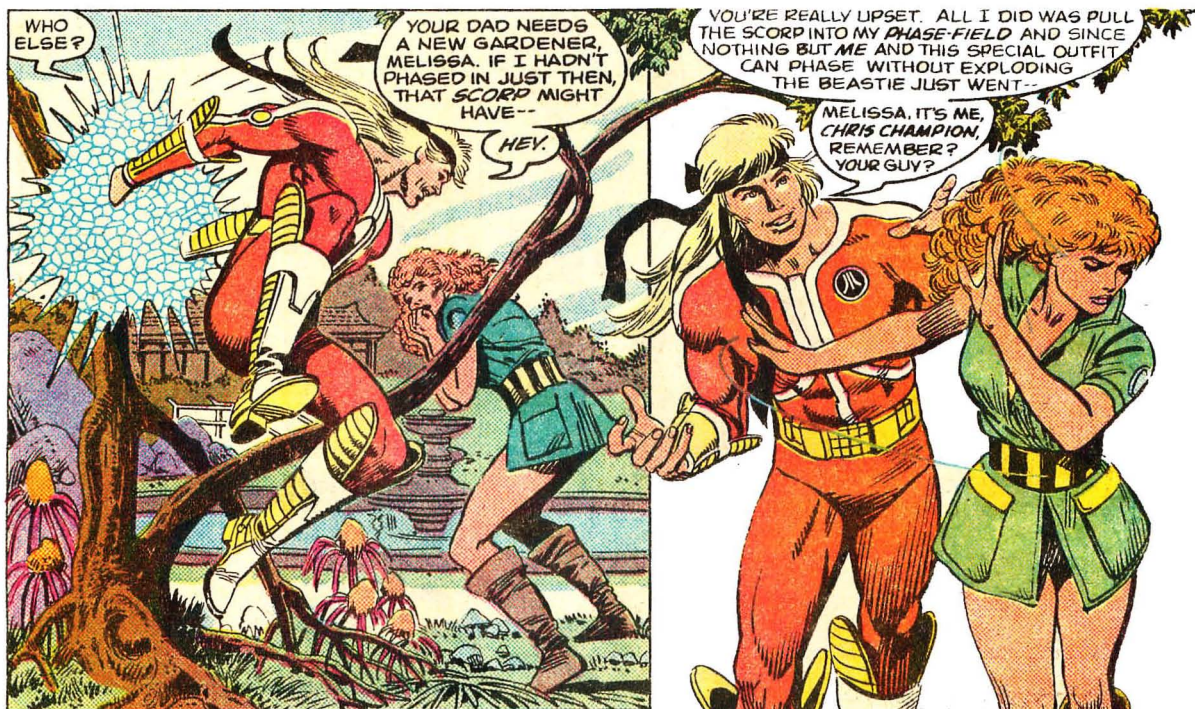


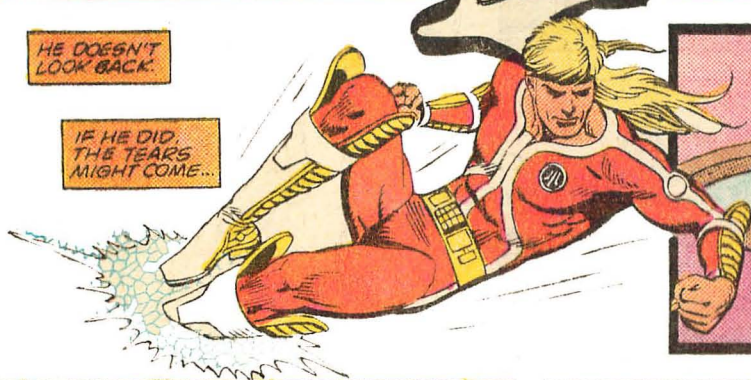
NEW EARTH: THE WELL-TENDED GARDEN OF WORLD SENATOR MICAH JAMIESON...
A GARDEN WHICH, LIKE OTHERS BEFORE IT, HARBORS ITS OWN KIND OF SERPENT.



SKIZAAAAA★

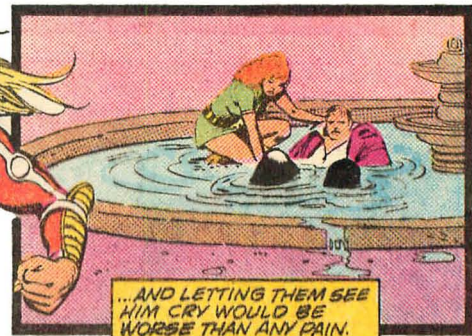




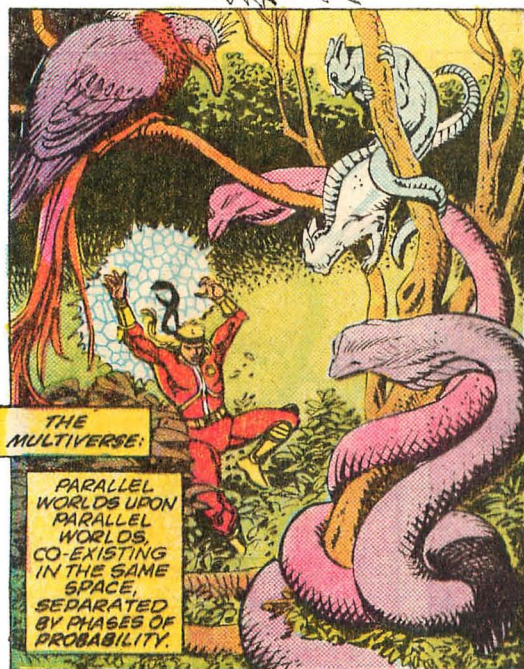


HE DOESN'T
LOOK BACK.

IF HE DID,
THE TEARS
MIGHT COME...

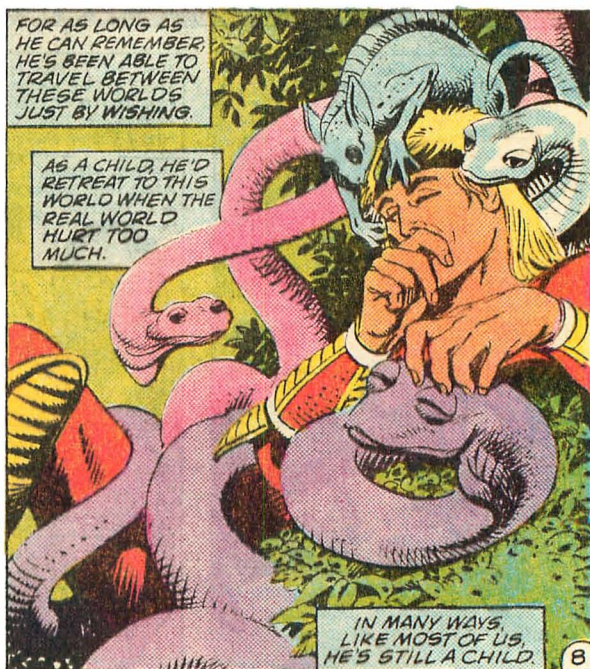


...AND LETTING THEM SEE
HIM CRY WOULD BE
WORSE THAN ANY PAIN.



THE
MULTIVERSE:

PARALLEL
WORLDS UPON
PARALLEL
WORLDS,
CO-EXISTING
IN THE SAME
SPACE,
SEPARATED
BY PHASES OF
PROBABILITY.



FOR AS LONG AS
HE CAN REMEMBER,
HE'S BEEN ABLE TO
TRAVEL BETWEEN
THESE WORLDS
JUST BY WISHING.

AS A CHILD, HE'D
RETREAT TO THIS
WORLD WHEN THE
REAL WORLD
HURT TOO
MUCH.

IN MANY WAYS,
LIKE MOST OF US,
HE'S STILL A CHILD.

POWER LORDS



In comic books. In action figures. Now the video game.

Out there, in the deepest reaches of space, looms a craggy chunk of age-old granite...the mighty Volcan Rock, now held by some of the most deadly aliens. It is up to you to activate all the anti-alien weapons and devices.

Your task is to help Adam Power, Leader of the Lords, fight the laser-eyed Space Serpent that guards the entrance to Volcan Rock. But be careful, there's more danger



lurking. Once inside, you must fight the fiery attacks of the evil Arkus. And even more scary, the attacks of the deadly accurate aliens.

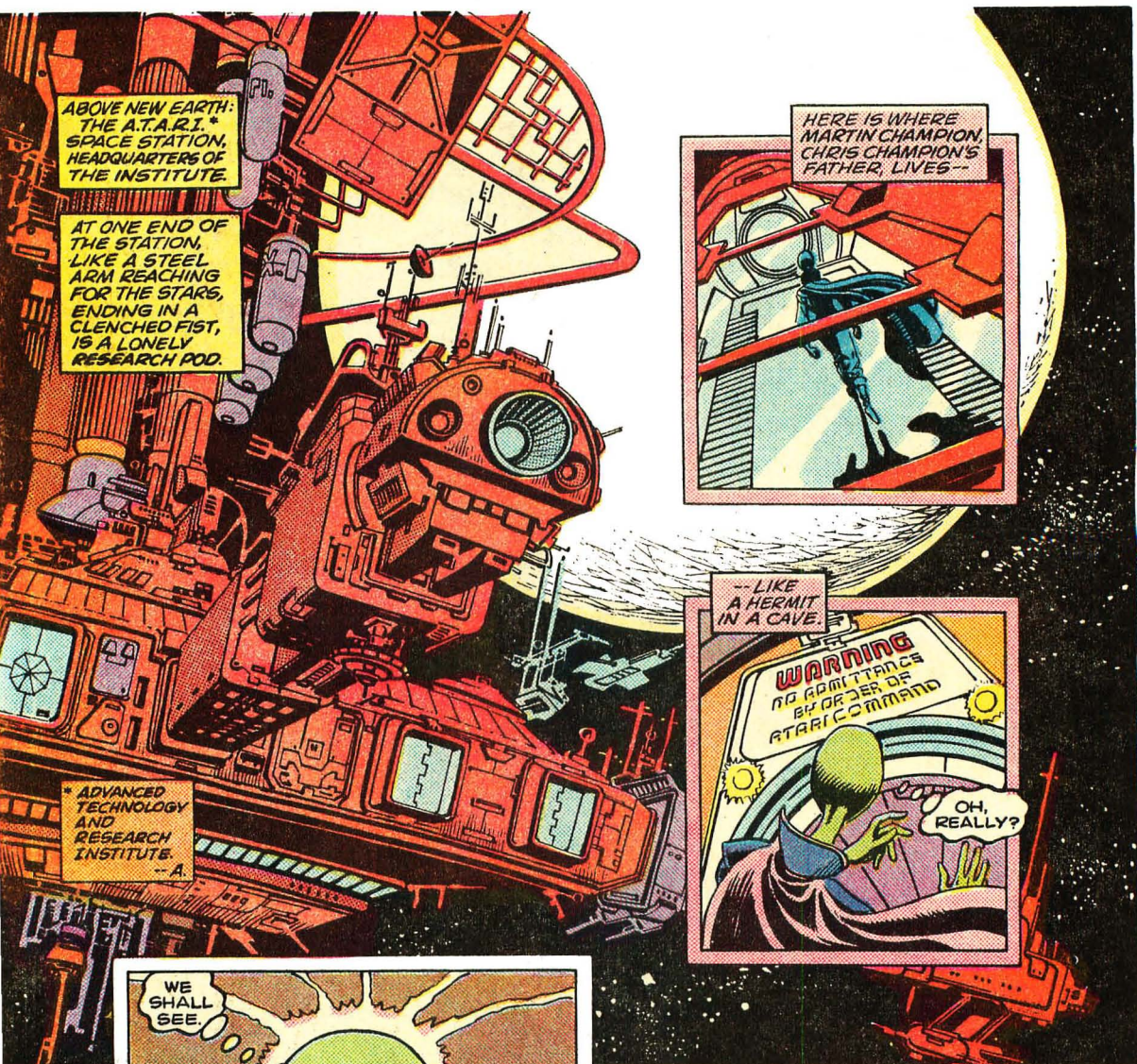
Just how good are you at defending the universe? Play **POWER LORDS** and find out. It's the intergalactic strategy, multi-board video game adventure from Probe 2000

that's challenging even the masters. Certainly you're one of them...

PROBE 2000
series

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ODYSSEY
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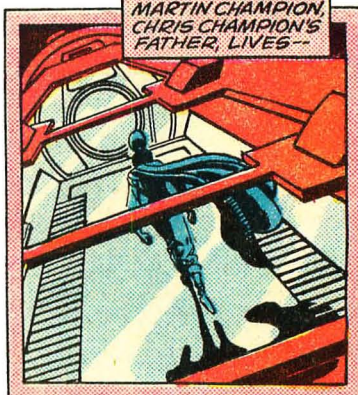


ABOVE NEW EARTH:
THE A.T.A.R.I. *
SPACE STATION,
HEADQUARTERS OF
THE INSTITUTE.

AT ONE END OF
THE STATION,
LIKE A STEEL
ARM REACHING
FOR THE STARS,
ENDING IN A
CLENCHED FIST,
IS A LONELY
RESEARCH POD.

* ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY
AND
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE. -A

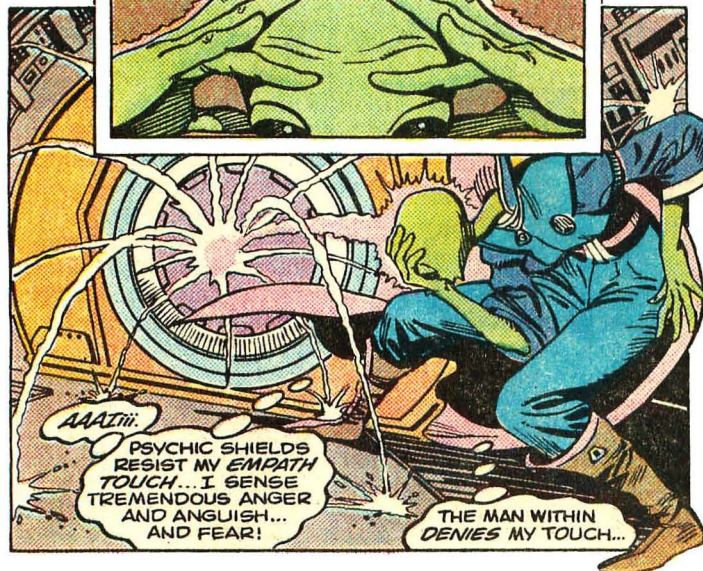
HERE IS WHERE
MARTIN CHAMPION,
CHRIS CHAMPION'S
FATHER, LIVES--



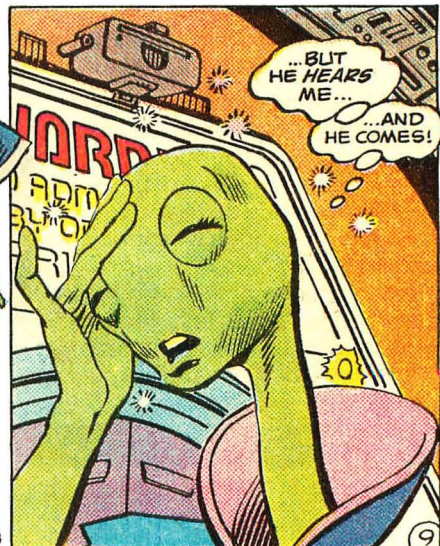
-- LIKE
A HERMIT
IN A CAVE.

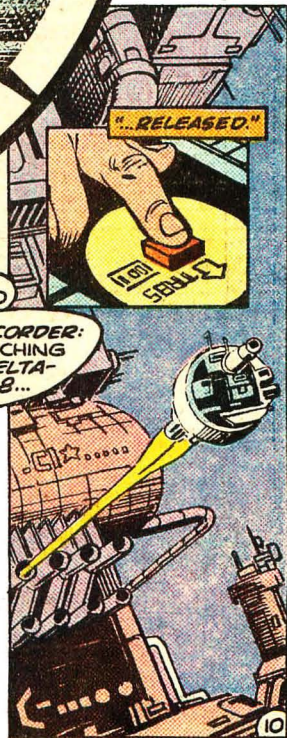
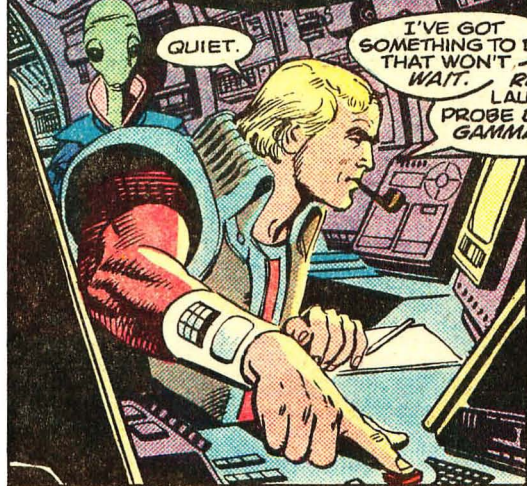
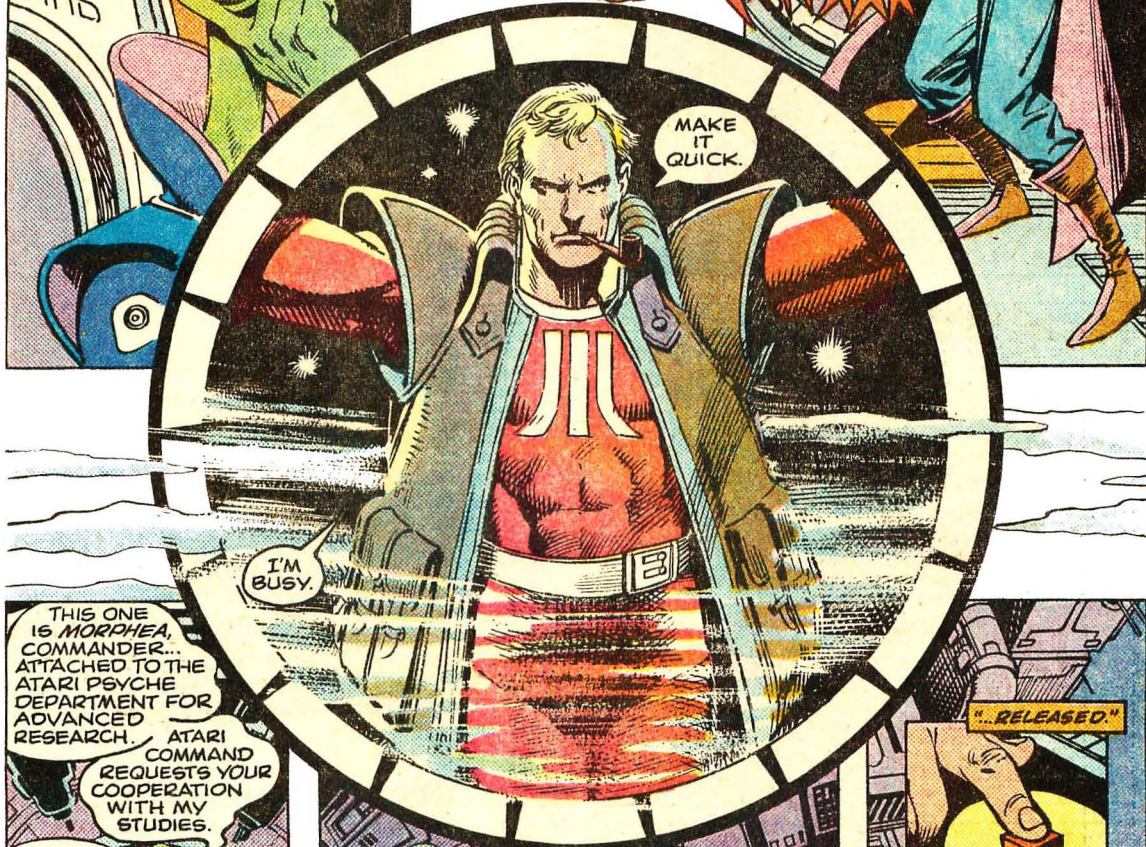
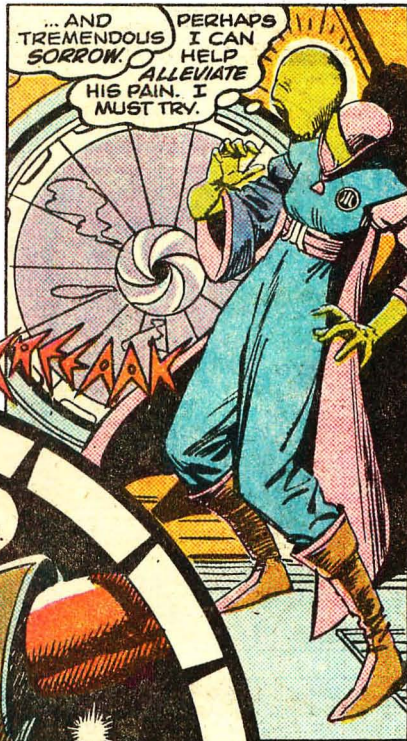


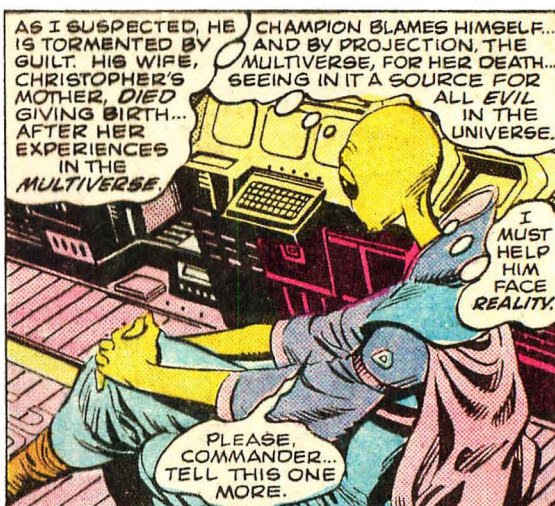
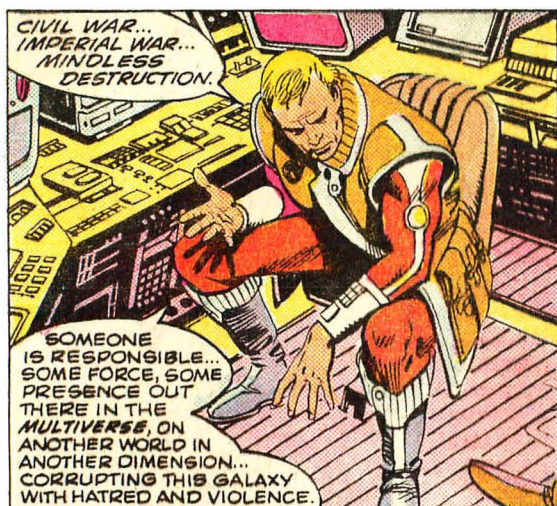
WE
SHALL
SEE



THE MAN WITHIN
DENIES MY TOUCH...

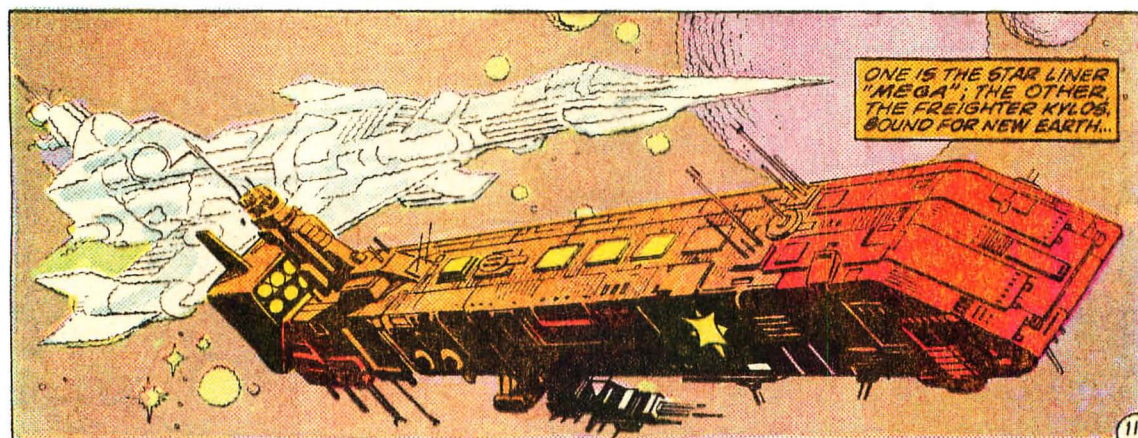




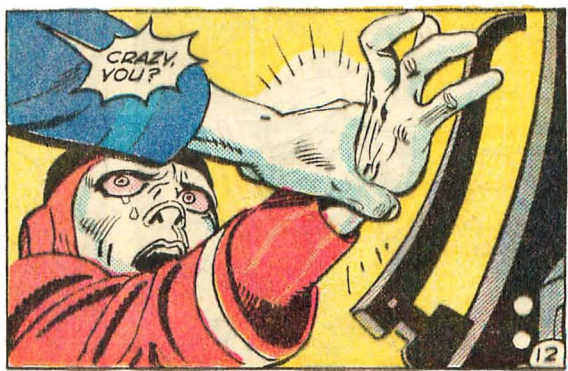
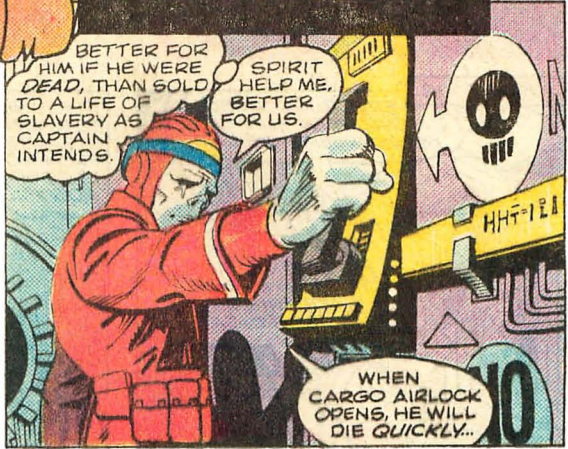
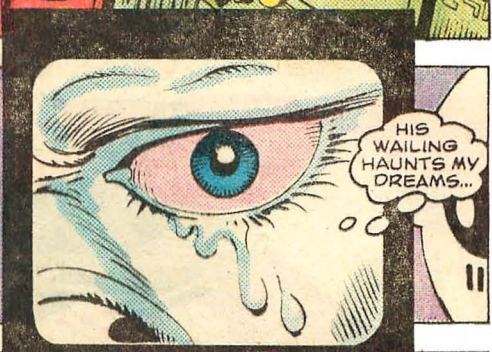
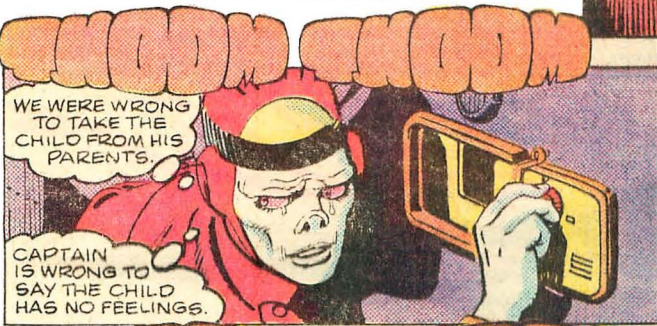
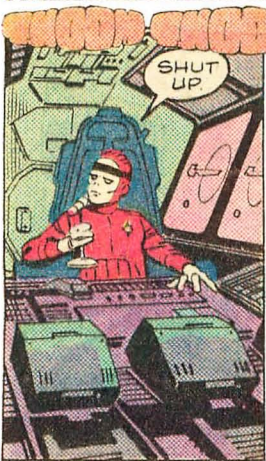


DEEP SPACE. IN THE VOID BETWEEN STARS.

FOR AN INSTANT, TWO VESSELS TRAVELING IN JUMP FIELD AT TRANS-LIGHT SPEED PASS WITHIN A HUNDRED "REAL-SPACE" METERS OF EACH OTHER ALONG SIMILAR ROUTES... AND FOR THAT INSTANT, EACH IS VISIBLE TO THE OTHER, HOWEVER BRIEFLY... LIKE PASSING GHOSTS...

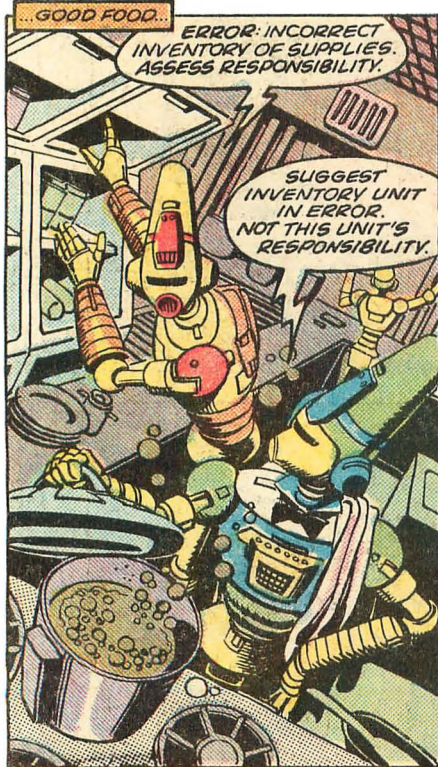
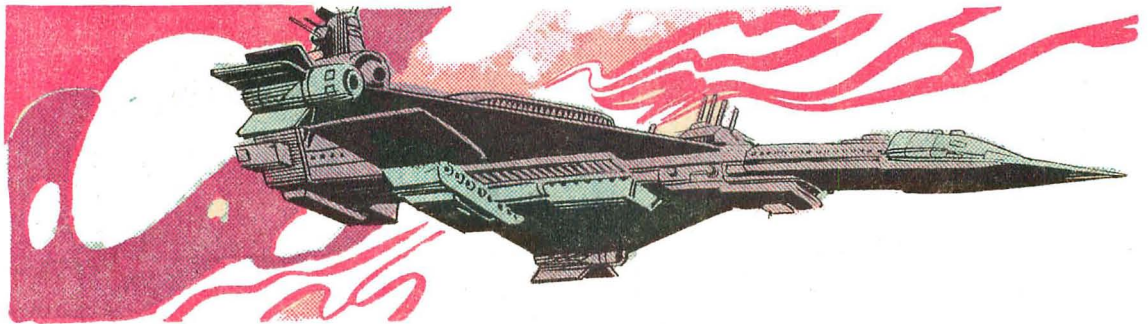


KYLOS, RECENTLY DEPARTED FROM THE JUPITER-SIZED PLANET KNOWN AS 'EGG'...



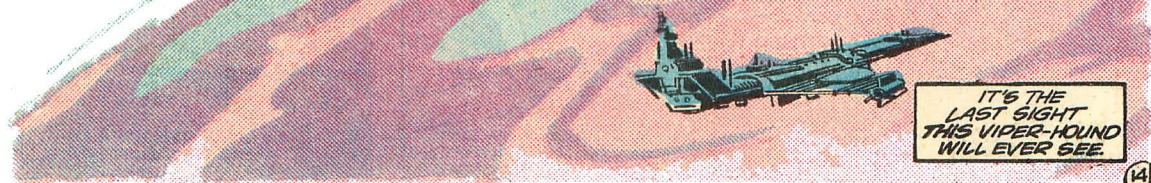
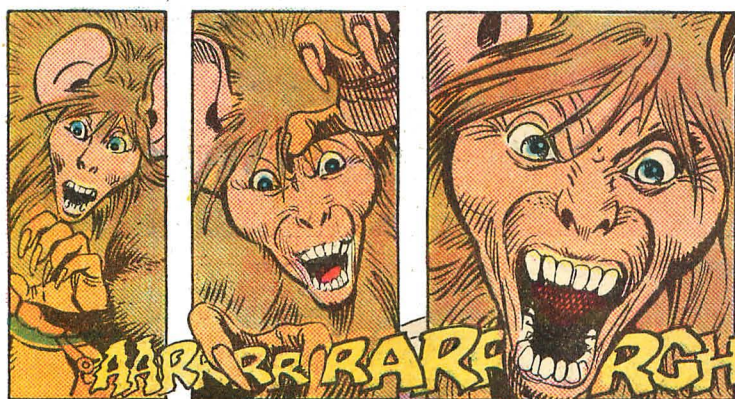
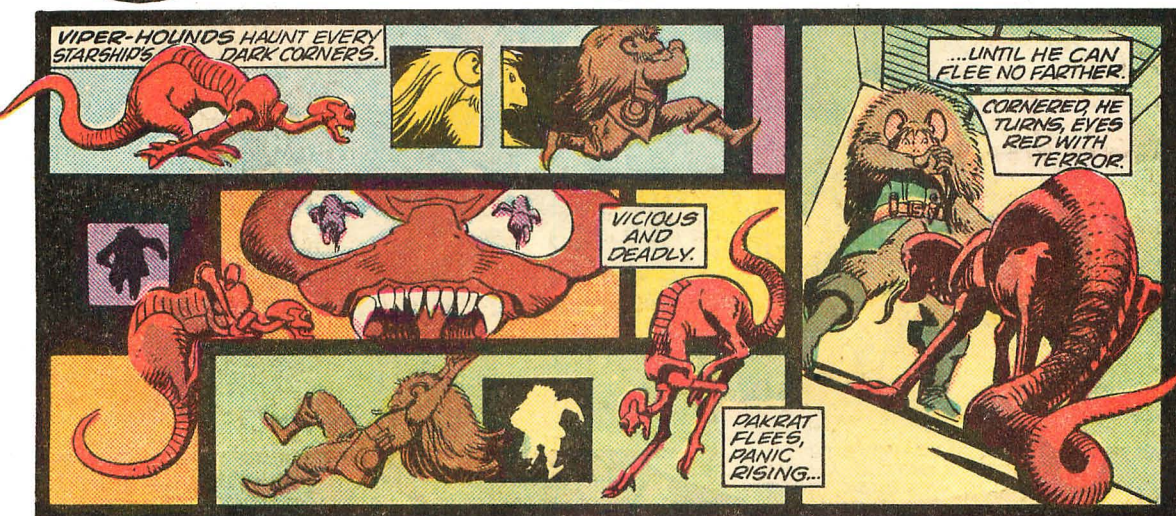
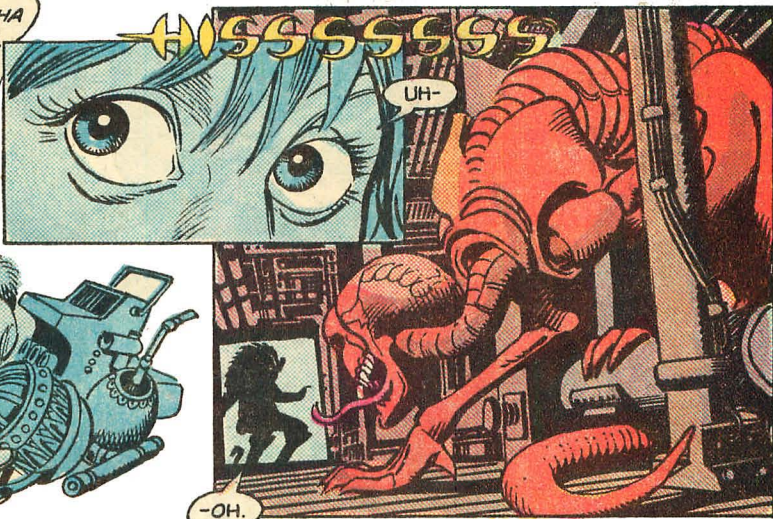
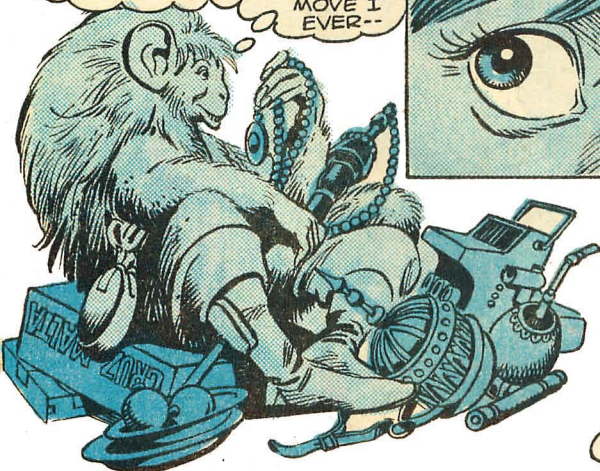


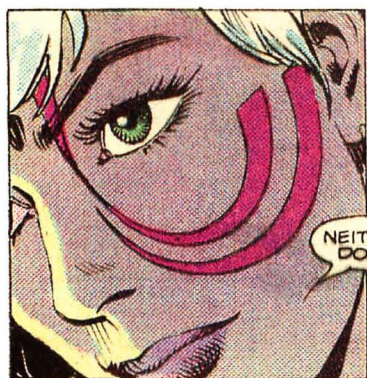
DEEP SPACE, IN THE VOID BETWEEN STARS: EN ROUTE FOR THE COMVEND WORLDS, THE STAR LINER "MEGA" PROVIDES ITS PASSENGERS WITH ALL THE AMENITIES SO NECESSARY ON A LONG VOYAGE... COMFORT AND QUIET AND, OF COURSE...

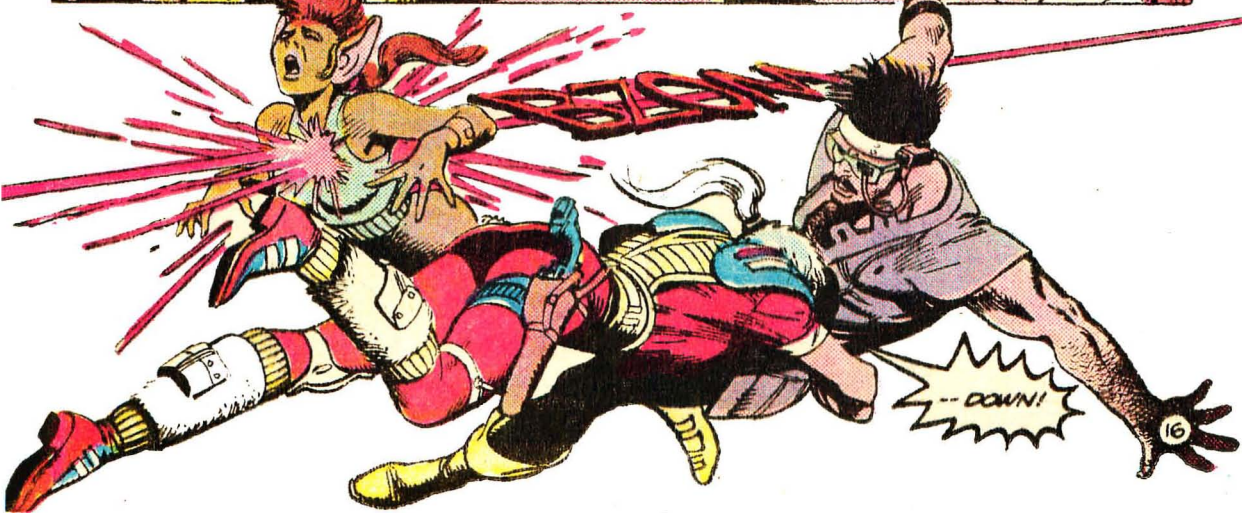
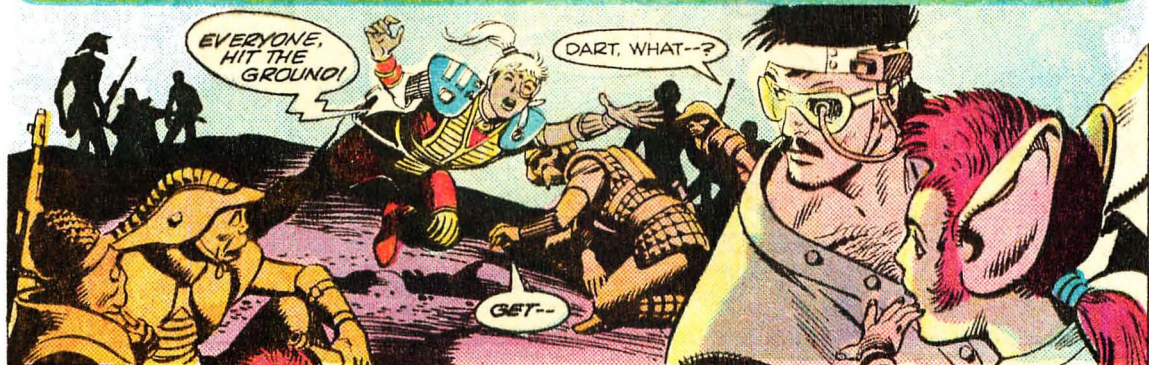
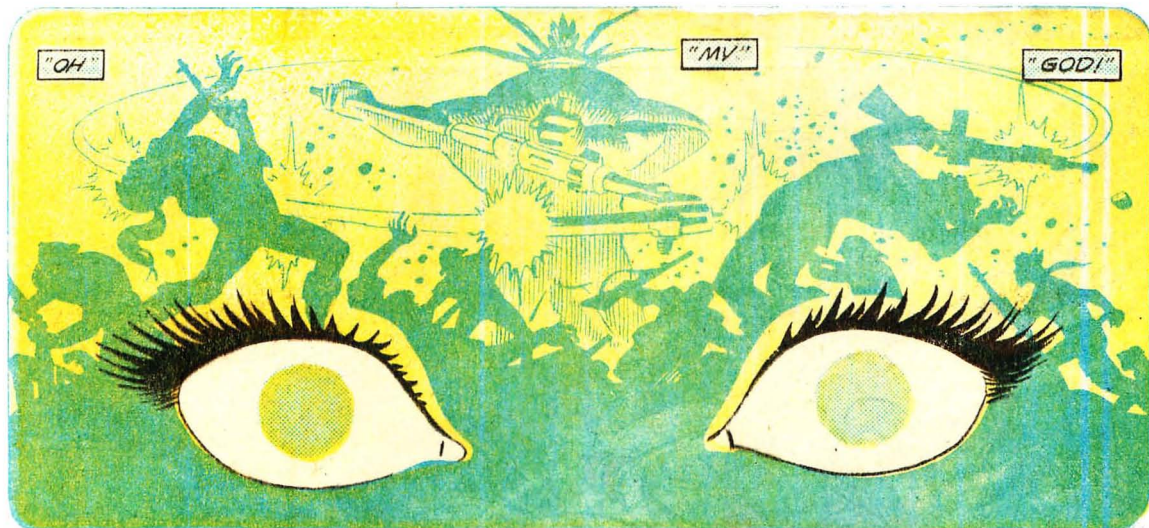


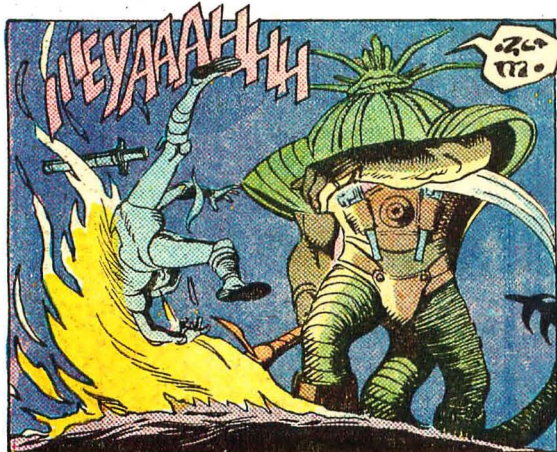
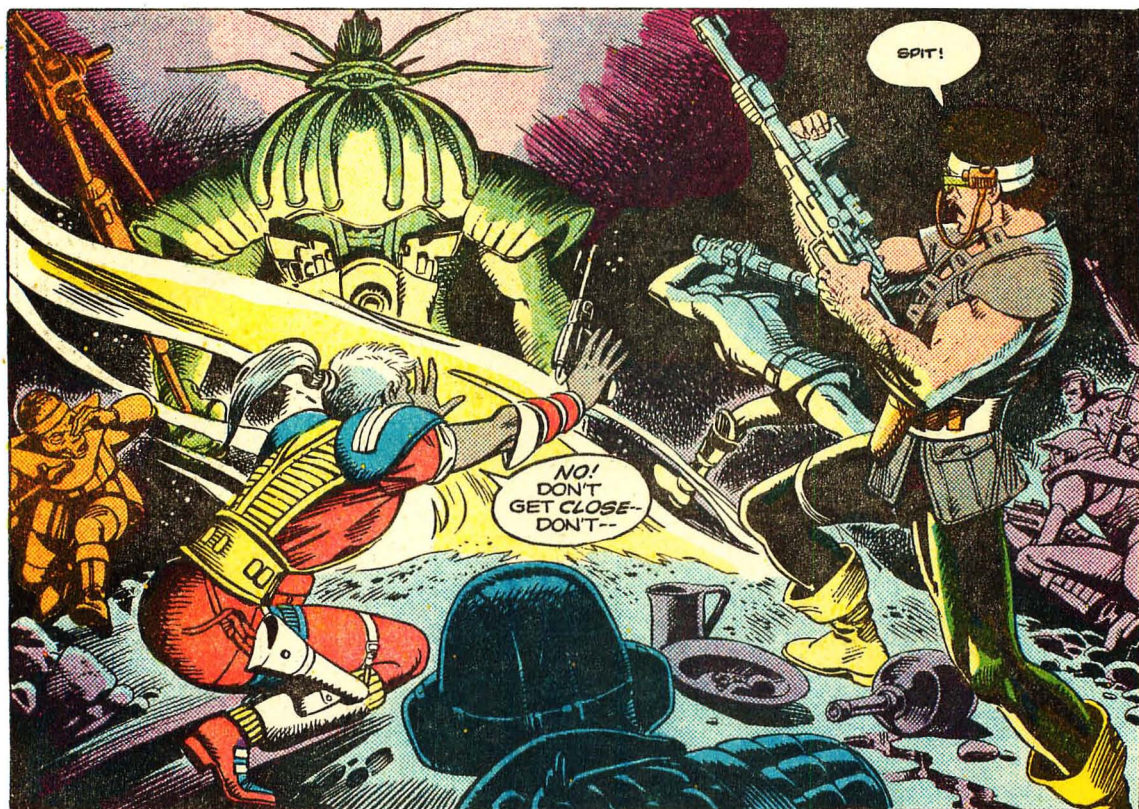
EVERYONE'S CONTRIBUTED TO PAKRAT'S COLLECTION THIS TRIP.

QUITTING MOON ALPHA WAS THE SMARTEST MOVE I EVER--









RIDE...RACE...WIN...
ON THE SAME SUPER-TOUGH HI-PERFORMANCE
FRAME/FORK SYSTEM USED BY COLUMBIA'S
WINNING FACTORY RACING TEAM!

Columbia **MUSCLE FRAME RACERS**



PRO-AM HP1

COLUMBIA
 The Great American Bicycle

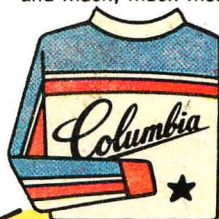
FREE
COLUMBIA TEAM
RACING JERSEY

Free with purchase of PRO-AM
 Muscle Frame BMX racer

Columbia's Muscle Frame is stronger
 than conventional BMX racers!
 Super tough, not super heavy!

The Pro-Am HP1 features:

- quick-release dual caliper brakes • Elina racing saddle • 2-finger brake levers and much, much more!



**HERE'S HOW TO GET YOUR FREE
 COLUMBIA TEAM RACING JERSEY!**

1. Purchase a Columbia Pro-Am 24 BMX Racer from the dealer named in this coupon before Dec. 24, 1983.
2. Provide proof of purchase and let the Serial Number and the Model Number of the bike in the spaces provided on this coupon. The Serial Number is stamped on the left side of the steering head; the Model Number on the right side of the steering head.
3. Complete this coupon and send it along with your dated sales receipt and \$2.00 for postage and handling to: COLUMBIA RACING TEAM SHIRT OFFER, One Cycle Street, Westfield, MA 01085. Your order must be postmarked no later than January 31, 1984. Allow 4 weeks for delivery.

SERIAL NO. _____

MODEL NO. _____

NAME _____

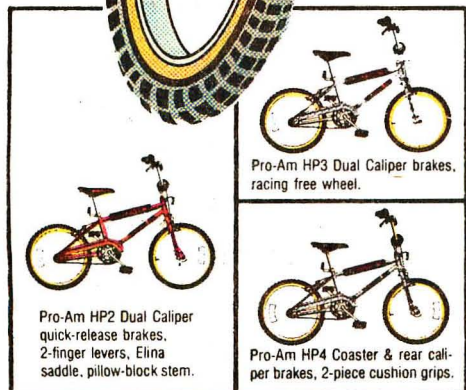
STREET _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

Shirt Size-Check One
☐ Small ☐ Medium
☐ Large ☐ X-Large



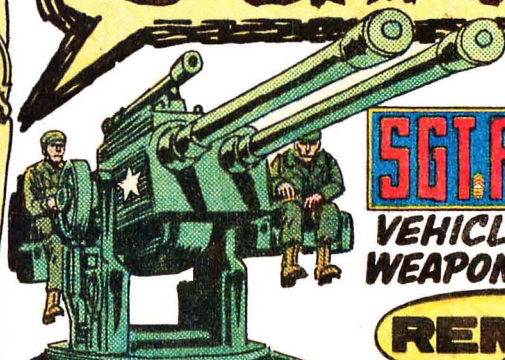
Pro-Am HP2 Dual Caliper quick-release brakes, 2-finger levers, Elina saddle, pillow-block stem.

Pro-Am HP3 Dual Caliper brakes, racing free wheel.

Pro-Am HP4 Coaster & rear caliper brakes, 2-piece cushion grips.



MOVE OUT!



WITH
NEW

SGT. ROCK

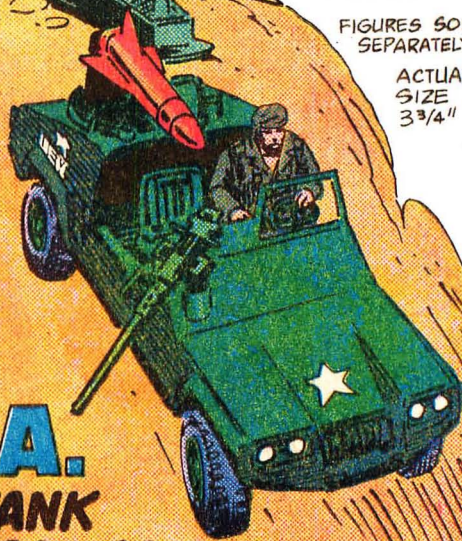
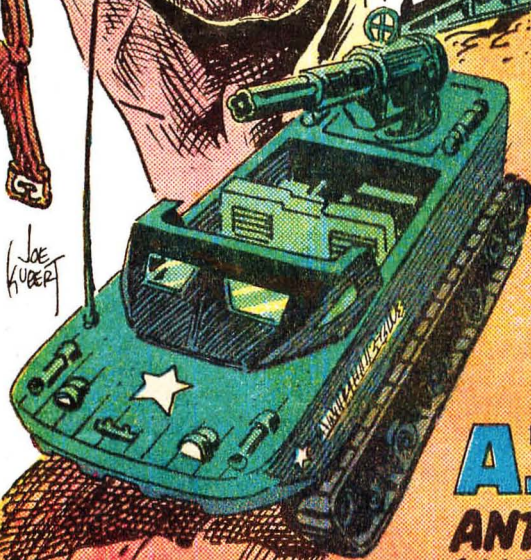
VEHICLES AND
WEAPONS FROM

REMCO

TOYS!

FIGURES SOLD
SEPARATELY

ACTUAL
SIZE
3 3/4"



A.T.A.
ANTI-TANK
ANTI-AIRCRAFT
WEAPON

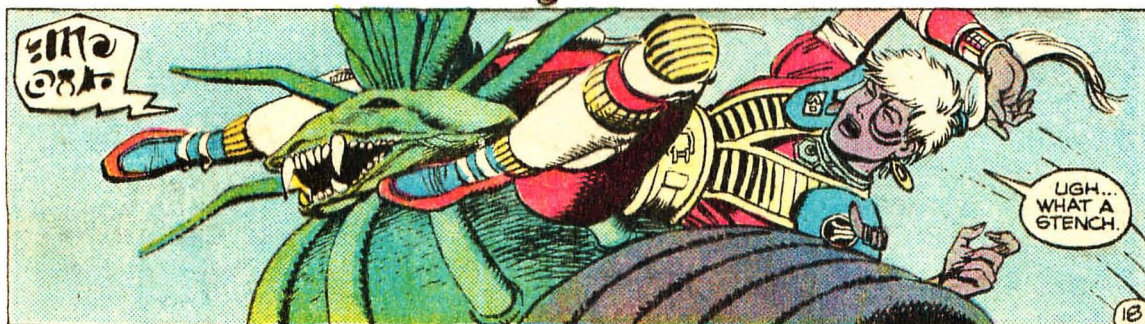
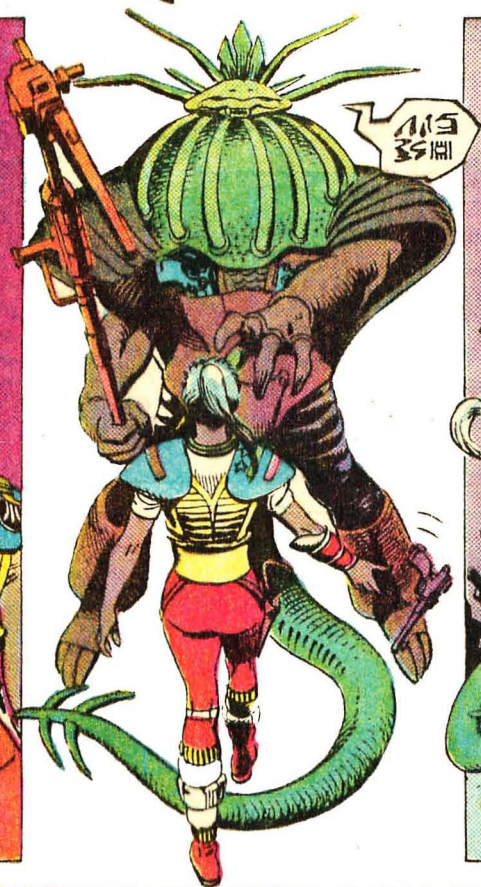
WITH DOUBLE-BARREL
"FIRING" ACTION!
(NO BATTERIES NEEDED)

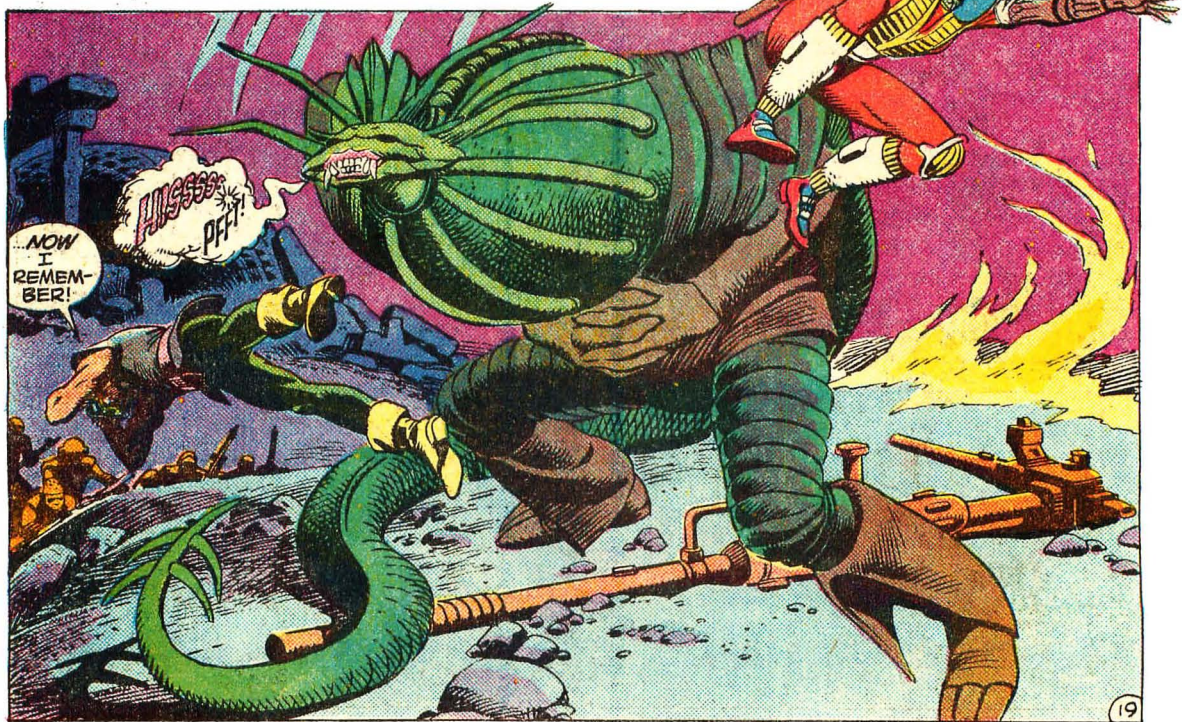
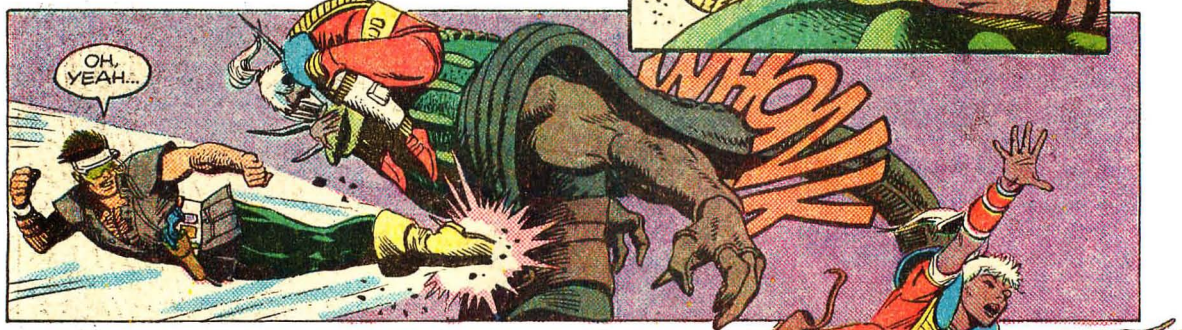
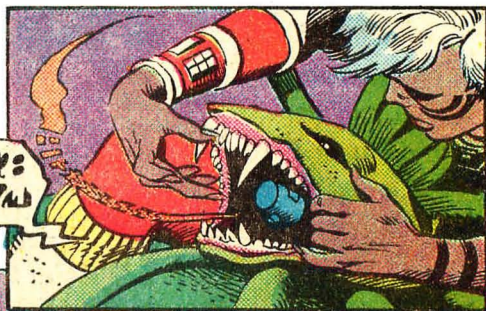
A.T.C.
AMPHIBIOUS
ARMORED
TROOP-CARRIER
WITH WORKING ACTION
GATLING GUN!
(NO BATTERIES NEEDED)

REMCO

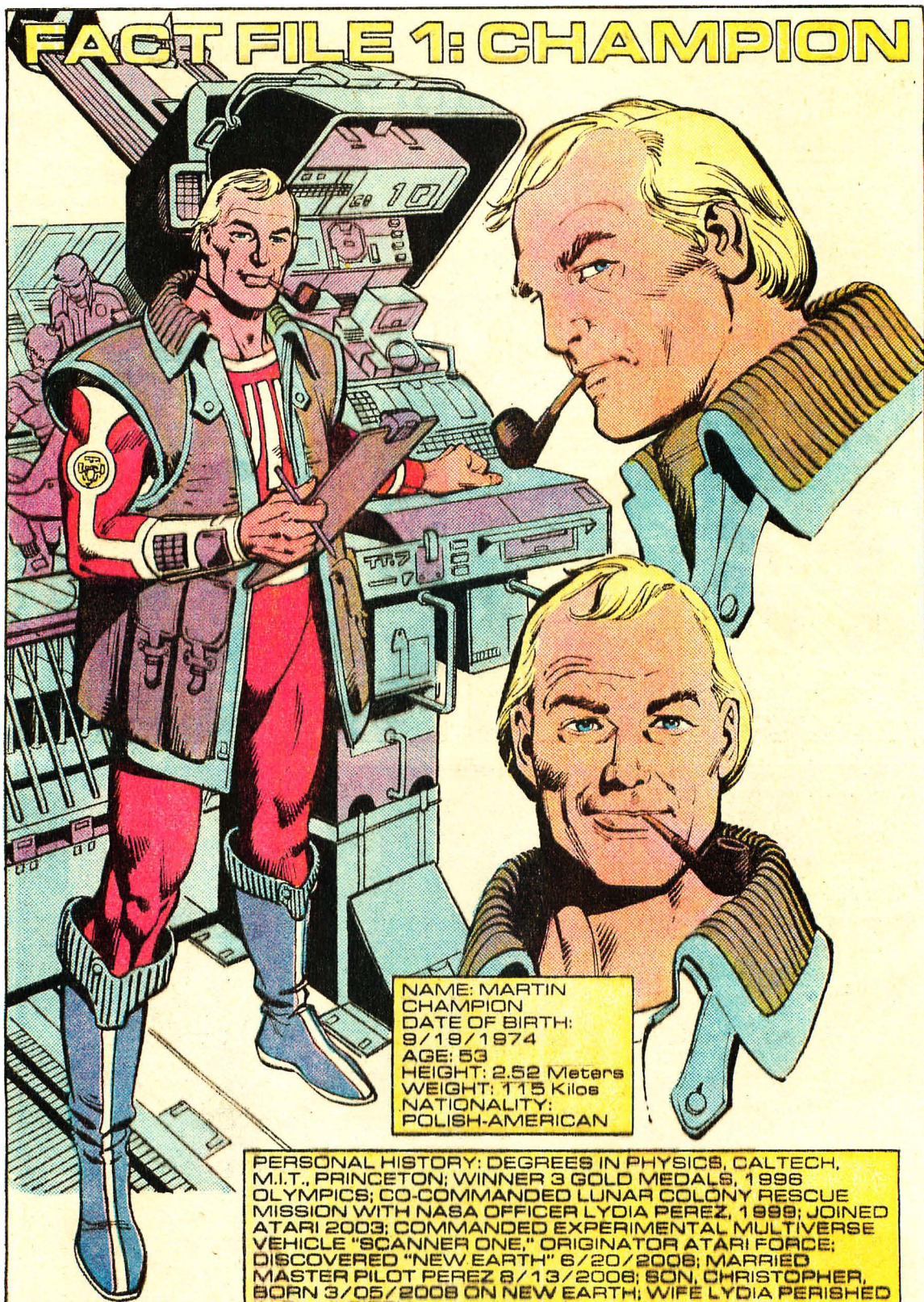
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FACT FILE 1: CHAMPION



NAME: MARTIN
CHAMPION
DATE OF BIRTH:
9/19/1974
AGE: 53
HEIGHT: 2.52 Meters
WEIGHT: 115 Kilos
NATIONALITY:
POLISH-AMERICAN

PERSONAL HISTORY: DEGREES IN PHYSICS, CALTECH, M.I.T., PRINCETON; WINNER 3 GOLD MEDALS, 1996 OLYMPICS; CO-COMMANDED LUNAR COLONY RESCUE MISSION WITH NASA OFFICER LYDIA PEREZ, 1999; JOINED ATARI 2003; COMMANDED EXPERIMENTAL MULTIVERSE VEHICLE "SCANNER ONE," ORIGINATOR ATARI FORCE; DISCOVERED "NEW EARTH" 6/20/2008; MARRIED MASTER PILOT PEREZ 8/13/2008; SON, CHRISTOPHER, BORN 3/05/2008 ON NEW EARTH; WIFE LYDIA PERISHED IN CHILDBIRTH

COMMENTS: OBSESSED WITH VIEW OF THE MULTIVERSE AS SOURCE OF "EVIL" IN GALAXY; DRIVEN BY SENSE OF PERSONAL GUILT FOR WIFE'S DEATH; ALIENATED FROM SON, SOCIETY, SELF. -MORPHEA, MEDICAL

[CONTINUED ON 237 PAGE FOLLOWING]



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MEANWHILE...

...BACK AT THE RANCH...

with guest columnist Robert Loren Fleming

If you enjoy team books such as **THE NEW TEEN TITANS**, **BATMAN & THE OUTSIDERS**, **THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES** and **THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA**, prepare yourselves for **THRILLER**... because it's **not** like **any** of them! **THRILLER** refers to the main character, an omnipotent, ethereal female who performs the godlike function of manipulating and coordinating earthly events. Sort of a cross between Jesus Christ and my mom.

THRILLER's team is called **THE SEVEN SECONDS** because they're her "seconds" in the fight against crime and evil. Actually, they function more as **operatives** than as a team, like **THE SHADOW**'s crew or **DOC SAVAGE**'s men. But if you get right **down** to it, they're not operatives **either**. They're an Italian family. The Salvotinis. Allow me to introduce you.

DANIEL GROVE is the only **normal** joe in this outfit. He's a cameraman for the Satellite News Network and all he wanted out of life was to **end** it. **THRILLER** had other plans for this reluctant hero.

DATA is a genius who lives in the back seat of his Rolls Royce (he drives the car with his **brain**). He's not interested in brushing his teeth or playing volleyball or seeing **SUPERMAN, THE MOVIE**; he just wants **information**. Big, heaping gobs of it!

WHITE SATIN is beautiful, but deadly! One brush of her fingers and you may die laughing ... or vomiting ... or you may fall asleep or stiffen like a board, and that's only assuming you won't just plain drop dead! She's the girl who **everyone's** in love with—but is it really **worth** it?

SALVO is Tony Salvotini, **THRILLER**'s twin brother and a crack shot who can blow your eyelashes off at thirty paces or rip off a thug's windbreaker with **live ammo**. He's **too good** a shot to ever have to kill ... his creed: "Only flesh wounds! Only out-patients!! I won't kill a fly, so don't ask me!!!"

BEAKER PARISH is an enormous

synthetic Roman Catholic priest, created in an Erlenmeyer beaker by two renegade Harvard medical students. Adopted by a Roman Catholic parish, including the Salvotini family, the artificial baby grew into a nine-foot-tall seminary student. **Amen!**

PROXY used to be Robert Furrillo, actor, before he almost burned himself to death freebasing cocaine. The synthetic skin that saved his life proved unstable ... it tends to **melt** every 24 hours. Now he can become **anyone** for a day, depending on how he applies his artificial flesh. (It comes in plastic bags.)

CRACKERJACK is an underaged illegal immigrant from Honduras who is also a master escape artist, pickpocket, safecracker and contortionist. But his **favorite** occupation is watching television and eating Froot Loops.

That's my family, hope you like them! They go on exciting adventures, fight horrible villains like **SCABBARD** (he's got a three-foot-long scimitar sheathed in the skin of his back! That's right!) and make new friends like **KANE CREOLE**, rock & roll bankrobber (thinks he's you-know-who). Hey, I **know** they're weird. That's family for you.



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P.S. Thanks, Dick!



You're welcome, Bob. I don't know if I had the energy to write this column anyway...too much travelin' lately. I'll tell you all about it next month! Thank you and good afternoon.

Dick

FACT FILE 2: PAKRAT

NAME: TUKLA OLY
ALIAS: PAKRAT
DATE OF BIRTH:
Sixth Moon Day, Oniyear
(2/18/2000, N.E. CALENDER)
AGE: 35 (28 Terran years)
HEIGHT: 2.1 Meters
WEIGHT: 50 Kilos
NATIONALITY: MARKIAN

PERSONAL HISTORY:
EDUCATED EIGHT YEARS
MARKIAN STATE SCHOOL;
TWO YEARS MARKIAN
MILITARY ACADEMY;
EXPULSED MARKIAN MILITARY
ACADEMY (8/04/2016 N.E.C.);
ARRESTED ON COMVEND
PLANET GAMMA-SIX FOR
SUSPECTED THEFT
(8/05/2016 N.E.C.),
RELEASED (9/11/2016
N.E.C.); ARRESTED
(9/12/2016), RELEASED
(10/30/2016 N.E.C.);
ARRESTED (10/31/2016);
DEPORTED OFFWORLD
(11/01/2016); ARRESTED ON
YUL'S ASTEROID
(04/22/2017); DEPORTED;
ARRESTED ON EDGEWORLD
(08/01/2017); DEPORTED;
ARRESTED...

COMMENTS: CONGENITAL CRIMINAL;
BY NATURE A COWARD, YET
CAPABLE OF GREAT VIOLENCE IF
CORNERED OR OTHERWISE
THREATENED; CHEERFUL AND
CHARMING, A COLLECTOR OF TASTE;
COMPLETELY IMMORAL; BUT
STRANGELY, INTENSELY LOYAL.
—MORPHEA, MEDICAL

FACT FILE 3: TEMPEST

NAME: CHRISTOPHER CHAMPION
DATE OF BIRTH: 3/05/2008
AGE: 20
HEIGHT: 2.55 Meters
WEIGHT: 95 Kilos
NATIONALITY: POLISH-HISPANIC-
NEW TERRAN



PERSONAL HISTORY:
SON OF LYDIA PEREZ &
MARTIN CHAMPION;
MOTHER'S GENES
ALTERED BY
UNSHEILDED EXPOSURE
TO MULTIVERSE IN
"SCANNER ONE,"
RESULTING IN
CHRISTOPHER'S ABILITY
TO "PHASE" FROM ONE
DIMENSION TO
ANOTHER AT WILL;
ABANDONED BY FATHER
AT BIRTH, RAISED BY
FOSTER PARENTS LI SAN
O'ROURKE &
MOHANDUS SINGH; HAS
TRAINED AT ATARI
INSTITUTE UNDER
GUIDANCE OF
PROFESSOR CAITLIN
VENTURE

COMMENTS: EMOTIONALLY ABUSED BY HIS
FATHER'S REJECTION; SELF-CONSCIOUS AND
UNCERTAIN; TOO WILLING TO RETREAT FROM
THIS WORLD VIA "PHASE"; DEPENDENT ON HIS
FOSTER PARENTS AND FAMILY; FEELS A DEEP
ATTACHMENT TO HIS ADOPTED SISTER, DART;
HE NEEDS LOVE.

—MORPHEA, MEDICAL

ATARI FORCE

L-1525

Hi, Gerry Conway here.

In the interests of historical accuracy, editor Andy Helfer has asked me to provide a short "origin of the origin", a record, as it were, of the day to day events, as it were, which led to the creation, as it were, of the old and the new *Atari Force*. As it were. Being the modest chap I am, I immediately asked, "Does that mean I get to write it in the first person?" Andy said yes, and herewith the herein.

To begin at the beginning, we have to go back to the start. May, 1981, and a phone call from Dick Giordano.

Before his ascension to godhood (excuse me, I mean to Executive Editor status), Dick Giordano was DC's Special Projects Editor, a title Andy Helfer now holds. (Don't get your hopes up, Andy.) Dick and I go way back, but apparently he doesn't hold that against me. He was the first editor to treat me as more than a footstool, and that was back in 1968 when, in point of fact, I was a footstool (and a damn good one, I'll have you know).

When Dick came to DC as an editor, I was delighted, but when he called Roy Thomas and me and asked us to take a PSA flight up to San Francisco to meet him at Atari Headquarters in Sunnyvale, I was less than enthused. Flying is not my favorite activity. On a list of my favorite activities, it rates somewhere below watching *Partridge Family* reruns—but somewhat higher than an evening spent with the *Brady Bunch*. What did rate high was the notion of meeting the people who designed Atari video games. So I went, white-knuckled all the way, and managed not to lose my lunch in the airport lounge.

Sunnyvale is a nice town if you have a phobia against three-story buildings. Its streets seem to be named after the villains in old science fiction movies. (Borregus Avenue? Wasn't Borregus the king of Mars in something? Why did the phrase "Klaatu Borregus Nicto" keep bouncing through my head? What did it all mean?) And believe it or not, it's very sunny in Sunnyvale. (Hard to credit, isn't it?)

We met some interesting people who showed us lasers and computers and a new game called *Missile Command* and otherwise boggled our minds, and then we went home.

On the way back to San Francisco to catch our plane, Roy and I asked Dick (simultaneously), "What was all that about?"

"Wait and see," Dick said mysteriously,

so that's what we did.

That first meeting with the personalities at Atari led to subsequent meetings. Which led to more meetings. Which entailed more flying. Which led to a permanent pinched-face expression on the face of yours truly. Which led to more meetings.

Which led to the creation of—the *Atari Force*, Model 1, and a series of four game cartridges with accompanying comics called *Swordquest*. (Forget *Swordquest* for the moment, we're talking about *Atari Force* here.)

Originally designed for inclusion as a comic book feature in various Atari video game cartridges, the *Atari Force* as first incarnated were designed to take a back seat to the game play of the cartridges they were to introduce. Well, we sure succeeded in that plan. The *Atari Force* were soon set to provide a forum for game play, but somewhere in the mix, the *Atari Force* themselves were somewhat diluted as characters.

Somehow, doped up on cold medicines, aspirins, nasal sprays, cough drops and vitamin C, I managed to crawl over to DC's offices where I was met by the chain-smoking ogre himself, Andy H. Who proceeded to fuss over me, get me coffee, find me a warm corner to nestle in, make mother hen clucking sounds, and otherwise do everything in his power to prove me a fool.

I hate it when people don't live up to your expectations. I really hate it.

As far as I can remember (which is not very far, dripping and sneezing and doped-up as I was), the next three days were marvelous. Andy brought in Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez to work on new character designs, and we spent hours every day in the DC conference room, talking and drawing and drinking coffee while Andy puffed away on his vile tobacco, squinting and nodding between the smoke-rings.

And somehow, between spritzes of Dristan and gulps of truly wretched coffee, somehow—the three of us began to bring life to a miracle.

Jose and I worked together on his first series in the mid-Seventies, the short-lived *Hercules Unbound*, and after that, on several *Superman* stories. I've admired his art for years, always knowing that, someday, he'd be recognised for the great talent he is. As his sketches took shape and became art...as BABE, TEMPEST, MORPHEA, PAKRAT and DART became living, breathing characters...I knew this was it, that we were onto something special...

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Bruce Bristow, Marketing Director
Arthur Gutowitz, Treasurer

How can you explain creation? An idea pops into your head, a vaguely formed notion—maybe a feeling, an emotion, a desire or a dream. Using what words you have at your command, you try to describe it. And an artist hears what you're saying, and draws something, adding his own dreams, his own feelings... And suddenly, there's BABE. There's TEMPEST.

Anyway, time passed. DC and Atari produced a number of "in-pack books" for the Atari game cartridges (you may have come across them in *Berzerk*, *Star Raiders*, *Galaxian*, and others), which were written by Roy and me, and drawn by Ross Andru. The world was not set on fire (you may have noticed something about that in the papers). And in the fall of 1982, we all went back to the drawing board.

Flash-forward: November, 1982.

By this time, Dick Giordano has moved on to higher things and the new Special Projects Editor is a pleasant-looking, slightly befuddled fellow named Andy Helfer. Befuddled, because he's been handed a hot potato and can't find the sour cream and chives.

His job: haul Gerry Conway from California to New York, and get him to revamp the *Atari Force*. His problem: Gerry Conway threatens violent hysteria if forced to fly. His solution: offer to do the revamping himself if Gerry doesn't hustle his butt to Pan Am pronto.

Picture this pitiable scene, gentle reader. Our Hero, by which I mean me, practically invalidated by an annual autumn cold, running a 100 degree fever, dripping mucus from every possible orifice, forced—nay, *blackmailed*—by heartless Andy Helfer (otherwise known as The Beast That Edits), forced to board the dreaded RED-EYE (do I hear violins and oboes? Give me some violins and oboes in the background, please.), forced to travel 3000 miles in a state of near terror, forced to drag himself at 6:00 o'clock in the morning into the Berkshire Place Hotel (a Dunfey Classic Hotel), forced to collapse in exhaustion in a modest three-room suite overlooking Madison Avenue, to grab a few minutes of rest demanded by his weary body...

—only to be awakened three hours later by the cruel jangle of a telephone receiver in his left ear, and Andy's bright, cheerful voice saying, "HI, GER, HAVE A GOOD FLIGHT?"

It's a hard life, writing comic books, and don't let anyone ever tell you otherwise.

There's DART.

(Sometimes, things turn out in unexpected ways. We didn't think this would be Dart's book when we started; we always thought of TEMPEST as the hero. But somehow, once we started work on our first issue, it became obvious that DART was our main character, our leader, our protagonist and focal point. TEMPEST still fascinates us, but it's DART who's stolen our hearts, as we think she'll steal yours. Unexpected.)

Unexpected: that's how I'd describe everything that happened in those three days. By the time we were done, we'd created new heroes and a new world, tied to the old Atari Force—yet new. A

second generation. And as we worked our excitement grew; enthusiasm spread like hickies at a sock hop.

We were on to something special, and we knew it. If you've read these first two issues, by now you know it too.

In the end, as I packed up my antihistamines and crate of Kleenex, and climbed into a waiting taxi outside DC, I felt a warm glow of satisfaction, or maybe fever.

It had been a long journey from May 1981 to November 1982, and it would be a long journey from November 1982 to October 1983, when *Atari Force #1* was due to premiere. But I felt good. Maybe it was the sense that we'd

accomplished something, Jose and Andy and I, or maybe it was the six decongestion tablets I'd taken five minutes before finally kicking in.

Whatever the reason, I felt good. Actually, I felt kind of light-headed and giddy. I felt like someone had just cleaned my sinuses with a vacuum pump. Whatever the reason, I felt good.

And then, as the taxi pulled away and Andy and Jose waved to me from the sidewalk, I suddenly realized it was going to be a long journey home, as well—BY PLANE! IN THE AIR!

3000 MILES!!!

"AAAAAAGGGGHHHHHHH!!!"

—Gerry Conway

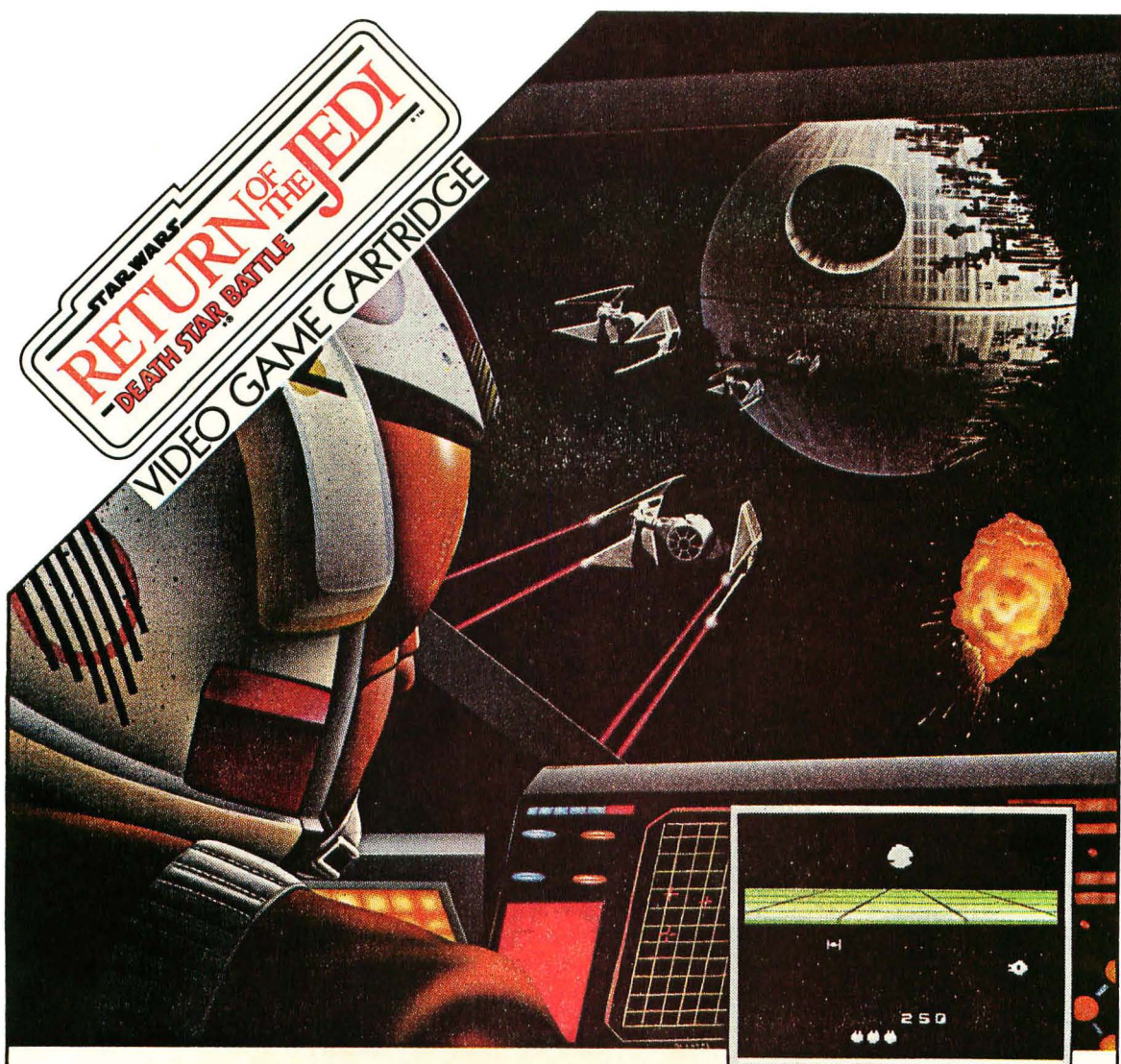
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