



BY
MIKE BARON AND
EDUARDO BARRETO

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MAR. 85



ATARI FORCE

"STATE OF SIEGE"



E. Barreto
J. Lopez

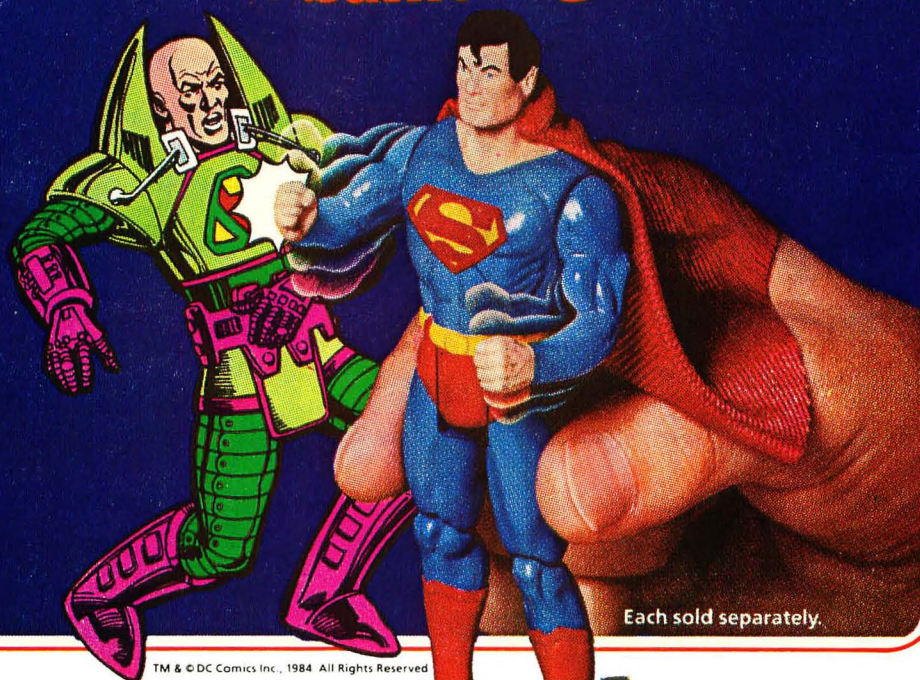


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SIEGE

A TALE OF THE ATARI FORCE



MIKE BARON ★ EDUARDO BARRETO
WRITER ARTIST
BOB LAPPAN LETTERS TOM ZILKO COLORS ANDY HELFER EDITOR

MOMENTS AGO, ON A NAMELESS PLANET IN AN UNKNOWN UNIVERSE, OFFICER RIDENT OF ATARI SECURITY SAVED BAKRAT FROM THE RAMPAGING KARGG BY BLOWING OFF KARGG'S ARM. SECONDS LATER, SCANNER ONE LANDED... MARTIN CHAMPION AND DART ARRIVED... AND RIDENT PLACED THEM ALL UNDER ARREST.

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR JURISDICTION, RIDENT. THERE *ISN'T* ANY ATARI HQ TO GO BACK TO. THERE *ISN'T* EVEN A HOME UNIVERSE...

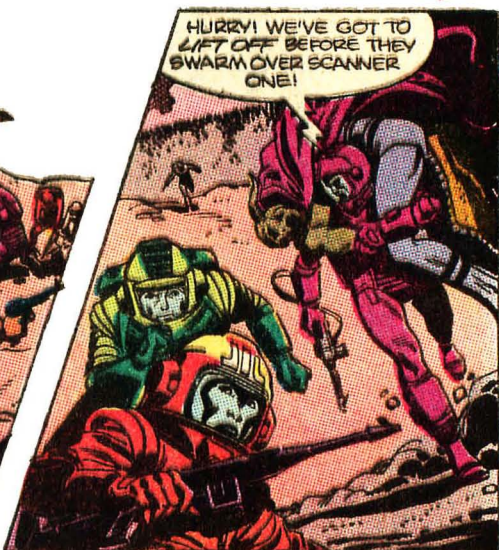
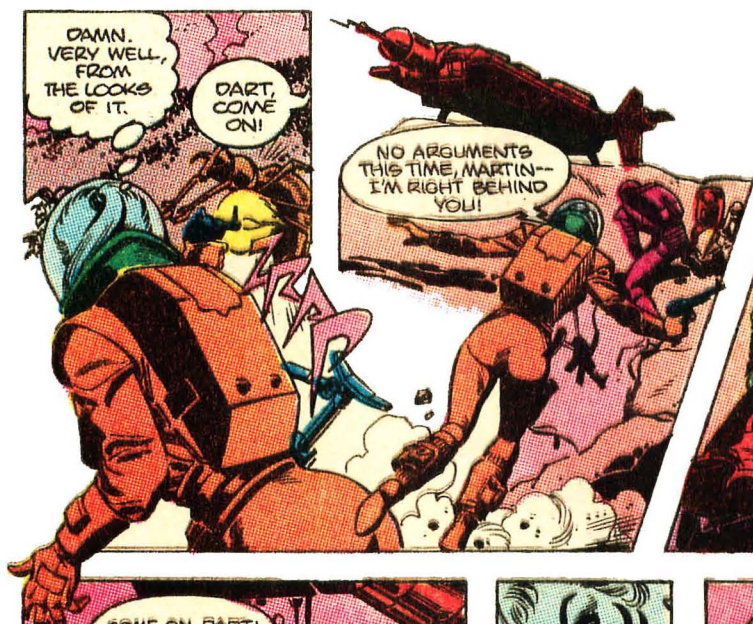
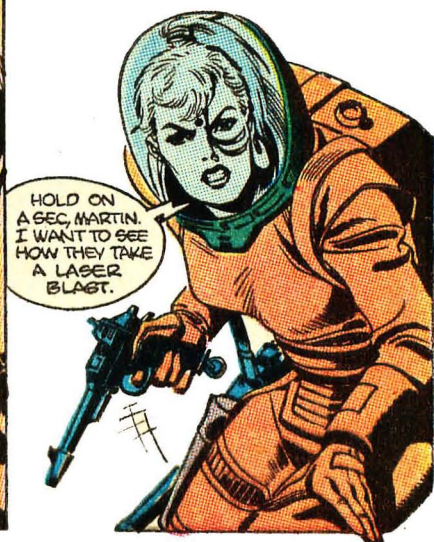
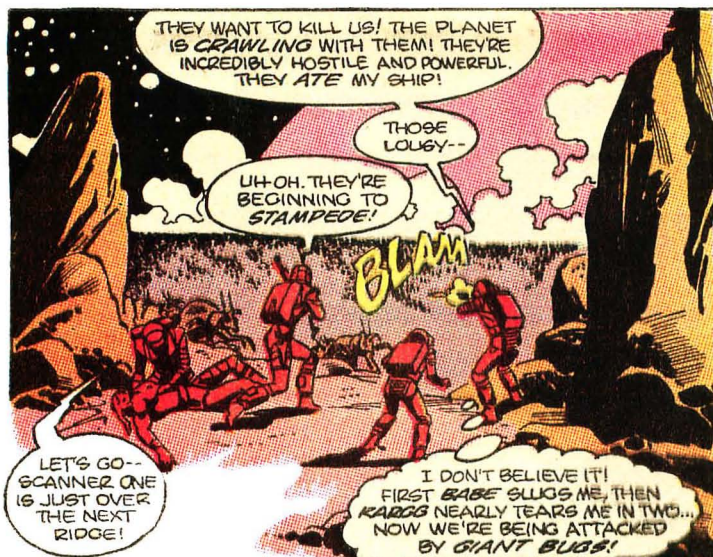
YOU'RE EITHER LYING OR YOU'VE LOST YOUR MIND. I'LL FIGURE OUT WHICH LATER. RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT TO GET TO SHELTER.

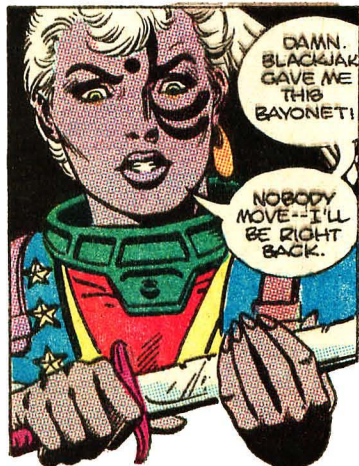
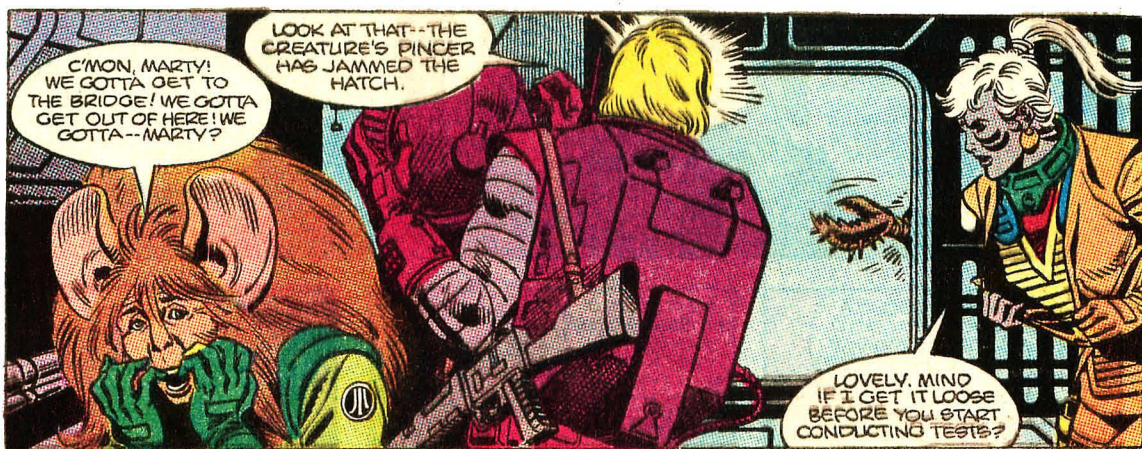
DO YOU SEE THOSE BUG-LIKE SILHOUETTES ON THOSE CLIFFS?

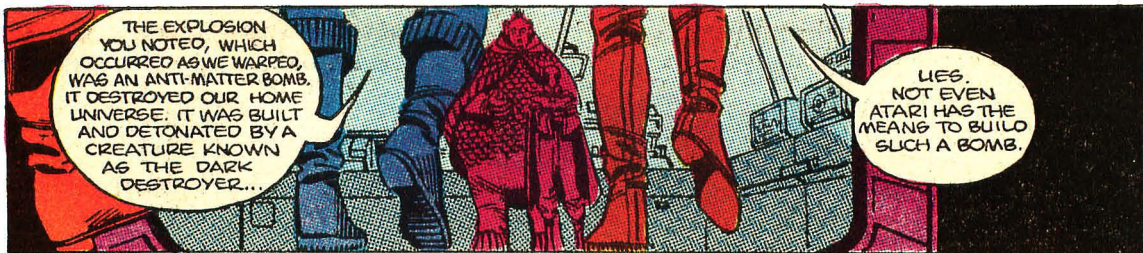
I SEE 'EM AND I DON'T LIKE 'EM. WHAT DO THEY WANT?

CREATED BY:
ROY THOMAS,
GERRY CONWAY AND
JOSE GARCIALOPEZ

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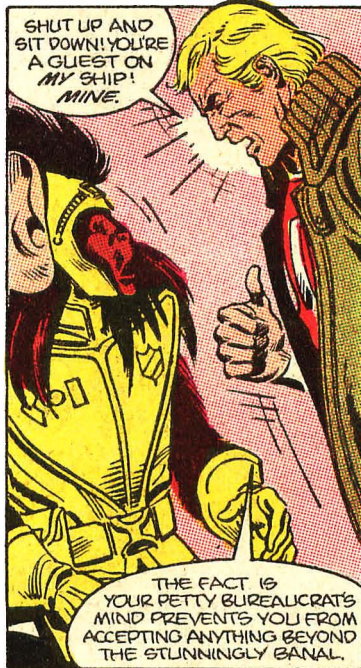


THE EXPLOSION YOU NOTED, WHICH OCCURRED AS WE WARPED, WAS AN ANTI-MATTER BOMB. IT DESTROYED OUR HOME UNIVERSE. IT WAS BUILT AND DETONATED BY A CREATURE KNOWN AS THE DARK DESTROYER...

LIES. NOT EVEN ATARI HAS THE MEANS TO BUILD SUCH A BOMB.



ALL THIS TALK ABOUT A DARK DESTROYER AND ANTI-MATTER BOMBS IS YOUR WAY OF PREPARING AN INSANITY DEFENSE. AM I RIGHT?



SHUT UP AND SIT DOWN! YOU'RE A GUEST ON MY SHIP! MINE.

THE FACT IS YOUR PETTY BUREAUCRAT'S MIND PREVENTS YOU FROM ACCEPTING ANYTHING BEYOND THE STUNNINGLY BANAL.



I AM MERELY ENFORCING THE LAW. MAY I REMIND YOU THAT YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGED WITH GRAND LARCENY, SEDITION, AND CONSPIRACY?

DART, HOW WE COMING?



SCANNER ONE BELONGS TO ATARI. AND YOU ARE NOT ATARI!



EVEN A COP OF YOUR LIMITATIONS HAS TO ADMIT--YOU'RE SO FAR OUT OF YOUR JURISDICTION, ANY TALK OF ESCORTING ME TO JAIL IS A JOKE! DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHERE YOU ARE?

NO...I ADMIT... I WAS UNABLE TO FIX OUR POSITION...



POOR BROTHER! HATE TO BE WRONG, HATE TO BE LOST...

BOTH OF YOU SIT DOWN AND STRAP IN. DART-- DO YOU COPY?

PROFESSOR--

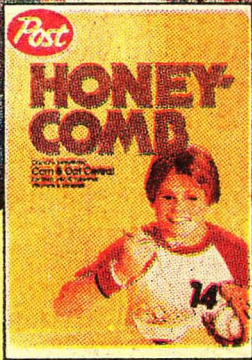
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GENERAL FOODS CORPORATION

50
DC

FOR THE PAST
12 MONTHS,
HE HAS BEEN
MONITORING
THE DC UNIVERSE...
WATCHING...
WAITING...
SCHEMING...

...NOW YOU WILL
FIND OUT
WHY!

DC
UNIVERSE:
CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS

THE DC UNIVERSE
WILL NEVER
BE THE **SAME!!**

DART, PREPARE FOR LIFT-OFF. AND SAVE THAT LIMB FOR ME, WILL YOU?

THE HATCH IS SECURED

BLEAGHH!

RRRRUMMBLE

WHAT'S THAT?!

THEY'RE ATTACKING THE LANDING STRUTS! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!

I'M TRYING! THE THRUST PLATES ARE OVERHEATING! THEY MUST HAVE JAMMED THEM WITH SOMETHING.

TRY TO GET A VISUAL.

"WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON OUT THERE?"

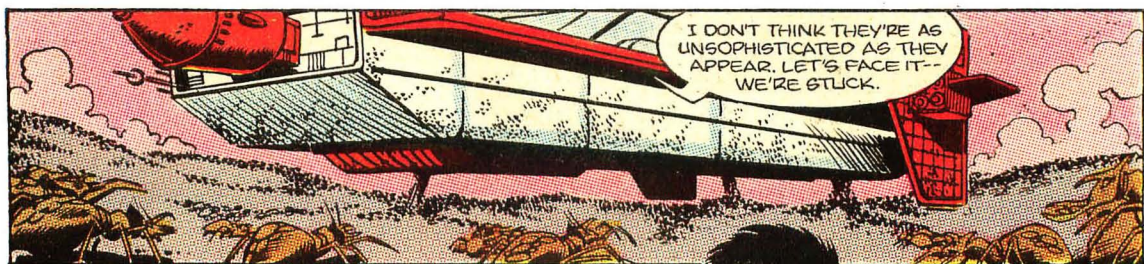
"OH, MY GOD... THEY'RE EATING RIGHT THROUGH THE LANDING STRUTS.

"AND THE THRUST PLATES! SOME KIND OF PASTE OVER THEM-- CAN'T BURN IT OFF WITHOUT RISKING AN EXPLOSION."

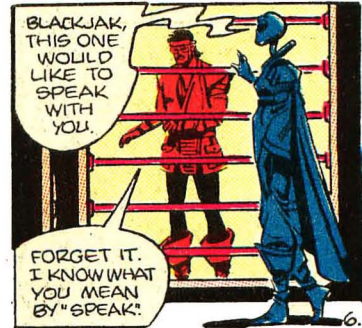
WHAT NOW, MARTIN? THAT LIMB I PRIED OUT OF THE HATCH BROKE THE BRILLIUM SAW BLADE.

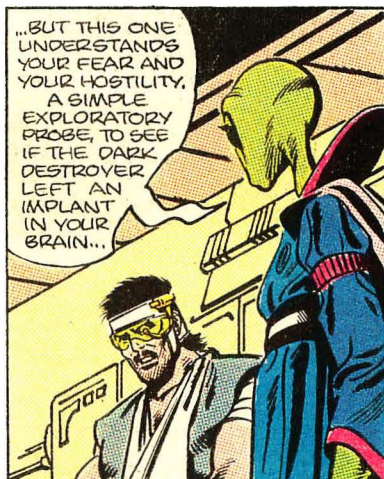
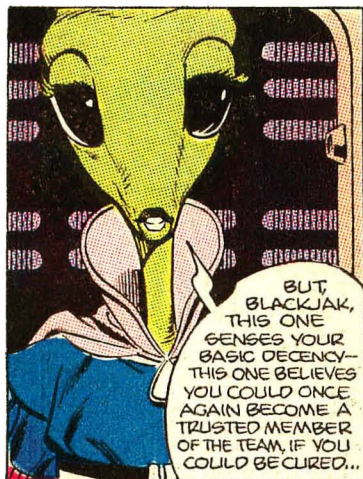
WE CAN'T CLEAR IT FROM INSIDE--IT'LL HAVE TO BE DONE EXTERNALLY.

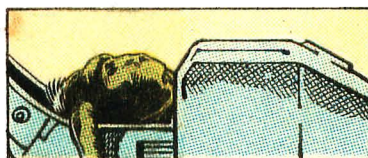
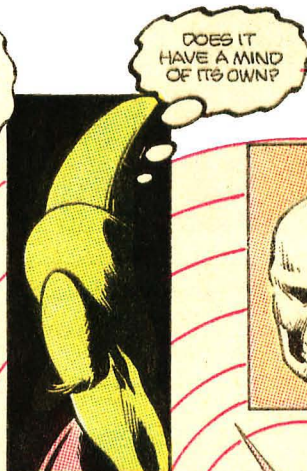
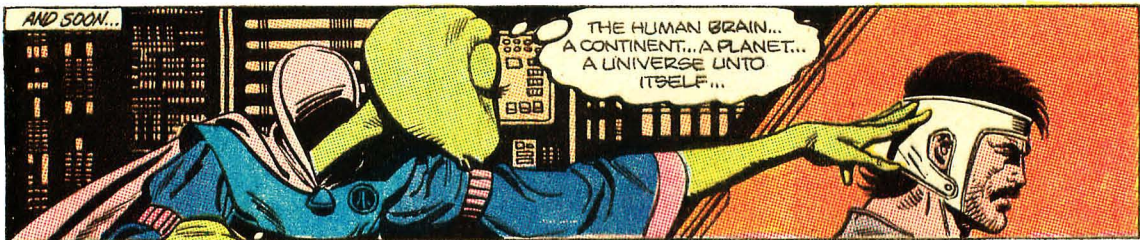
LOOK! THEY'RE BACKING OFF!



A SECURED CABIN
AMIDSHIPS. IT WASN'T
MEANT TO BE A JAIL
CELL, BUT THAT'S
WHAT IT HAS BECOME.







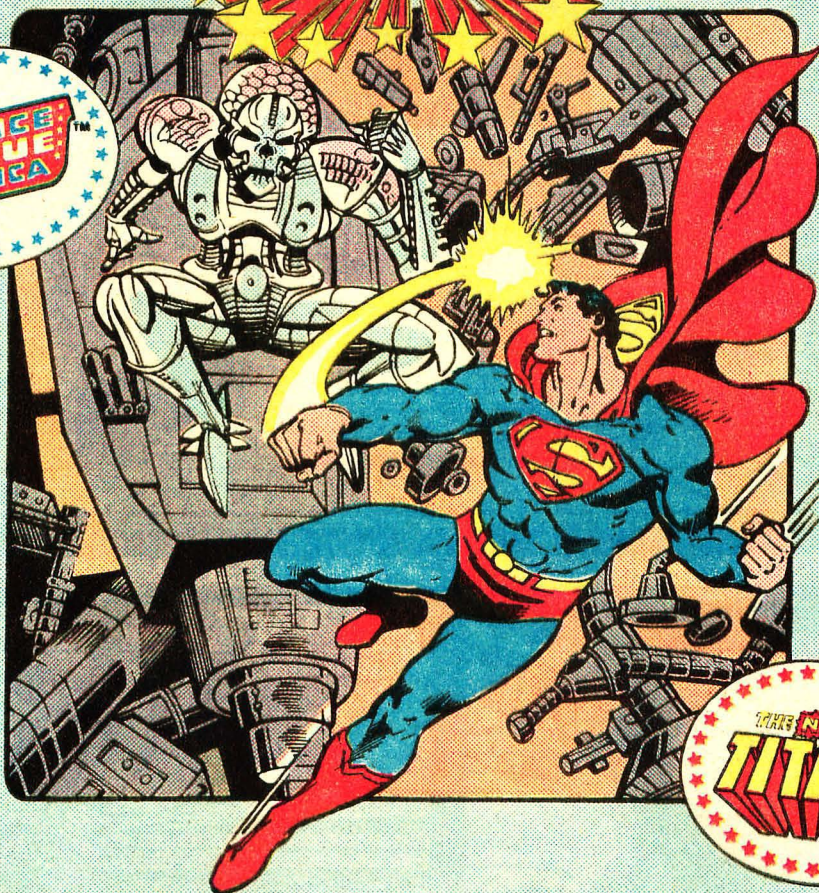
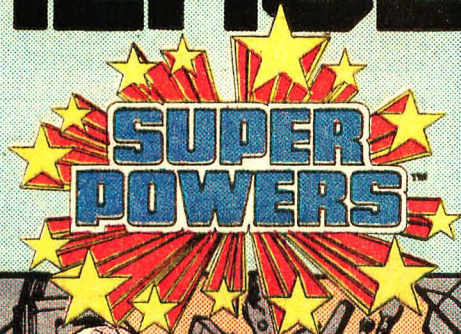
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Easy to learn!

HEROES

ROLE
PLAYING
GAME



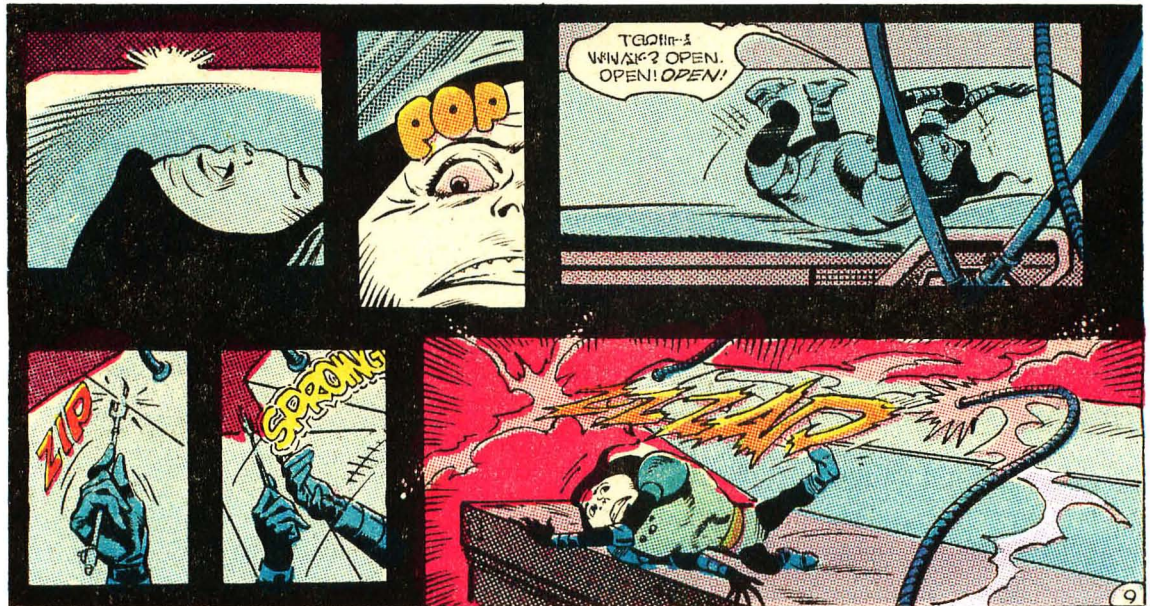
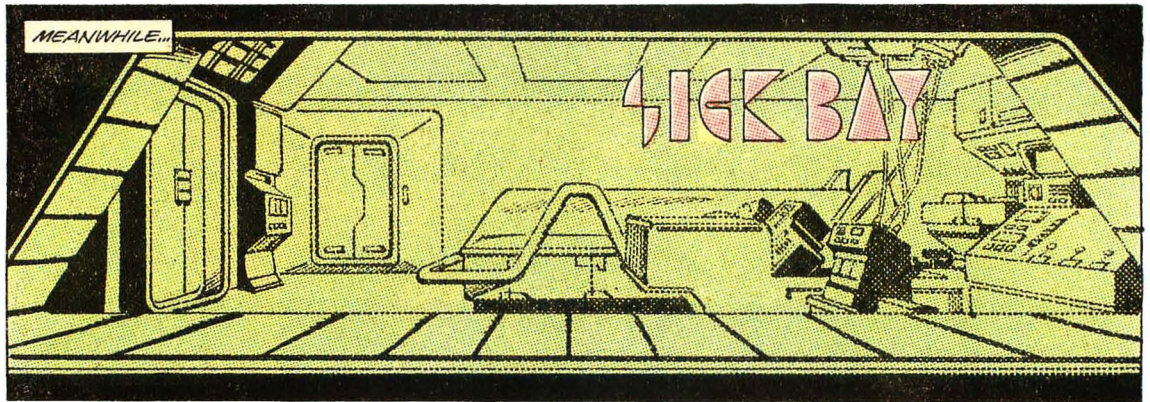
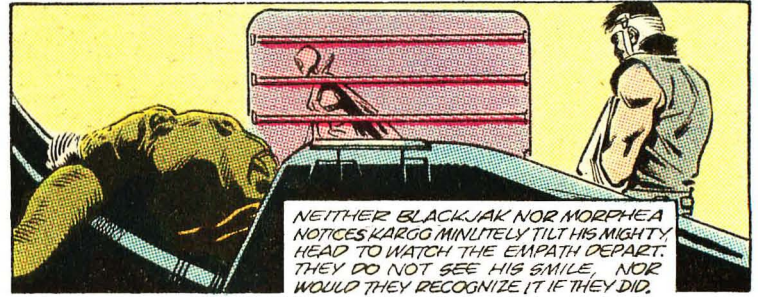
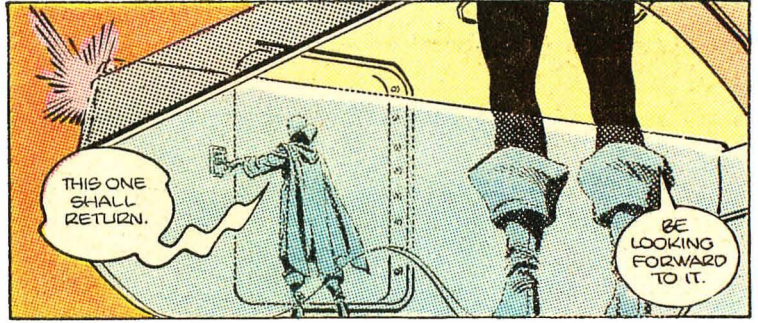
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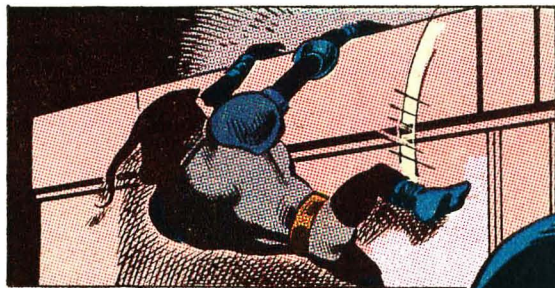
For ages 10 to adult.

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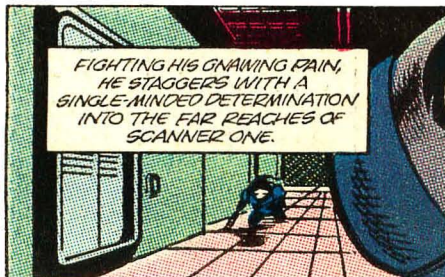
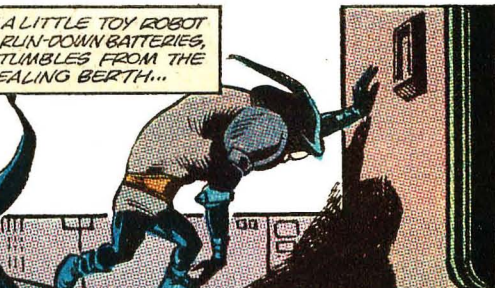
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LIKE A LITTLE TOY ROBOT
WITH RUN-DOWN BATTERIES,
TAZ TUMBLES FROM THE
HEALING BERTH...



FIGHTING HIS GNAWING PAIN,
HE STAGGERS WITH A
SINGLE-MINDED DETERMINATION
INTO THE FAR REACHES OF
SCANNER ONE.



LOOKING FOR
A SAFE HAVEN...



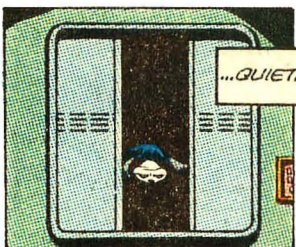
...SEARCHING
FOR A
REFUGE...



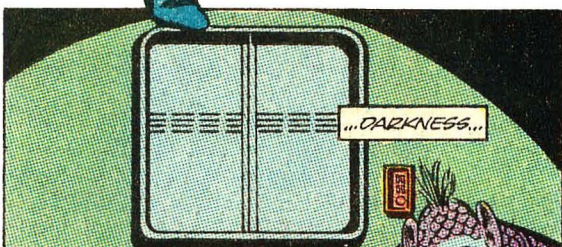
...AN
ESCAPE...



...PEACE...



...QUIET...



...DARKNESS...



THE BRIDGE.

I...I REFUSE TO BELIEVE
OUR HOME UNIVERSE
IS GONE.

YOU'D BETTER
START GETTING USED
TO THE IDEA.

NOT MUCH FUN
BEING A ONE-MAN
LAW ENFORCEMENT
AGENCY, EH,
BROTHER?

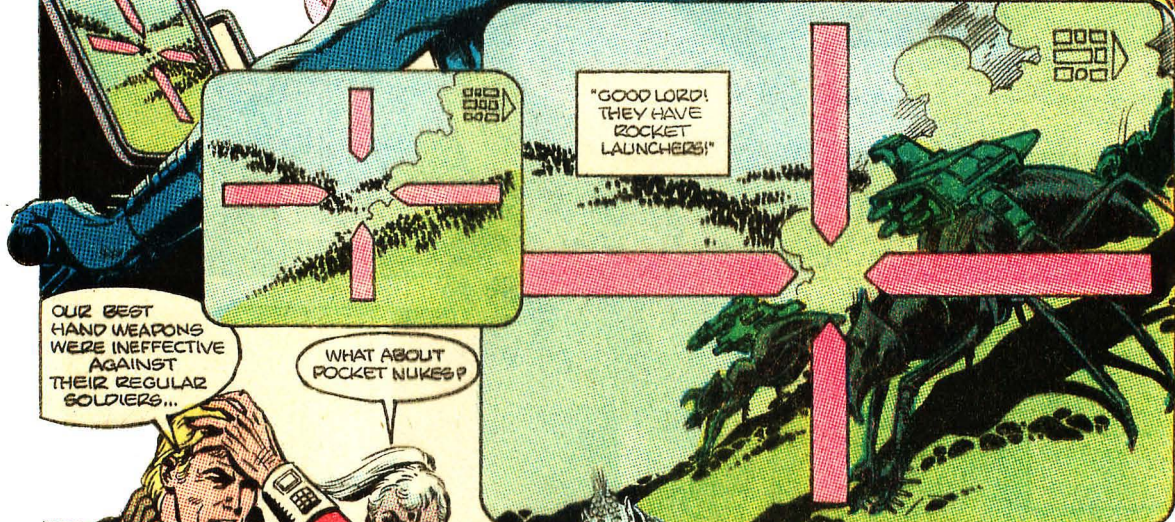
MARTIN--
LOOK AT
THIS!



SOME KIND OF WARRIOR CLASS... MASSING FOR A FINAL ATTACK, I'D GUESS.

ALL THE MORE REASON FOR US TO LEAVE HERE IMMEDIATELY AND RETURN TO NEW EARTH.

RIDENT-- SHUT UP.



"GOOD LORD! THEY HAVE ROCKET LAUNCHERS!"

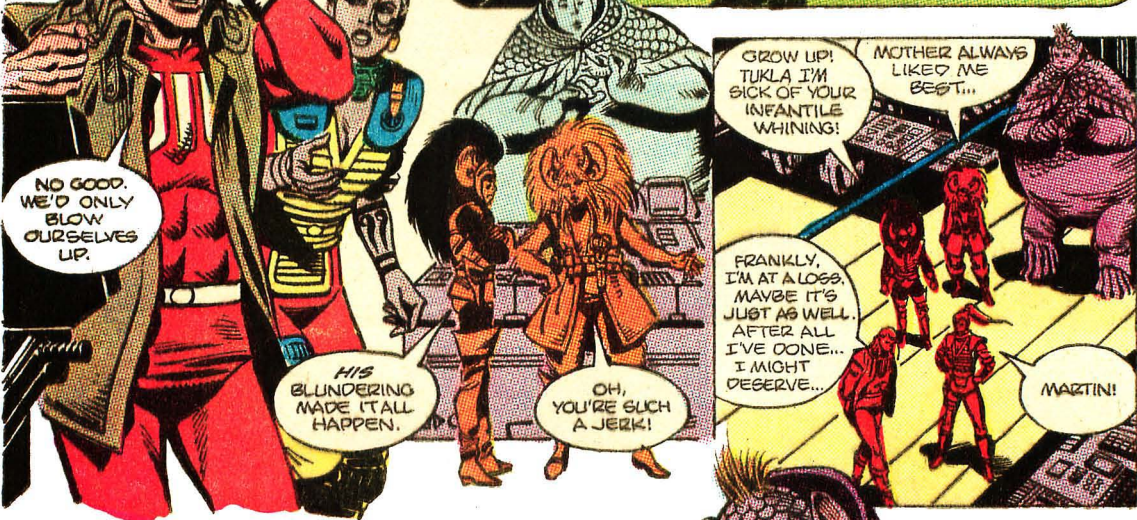
OUR BEST HAND WEAPONS WERE INEFFECTIVE AGAINST THEIR REGULAR SOLDIERS...

WHAT ABOUT POCKET NUKES?

NO GOOD. WE'D ONLY BLOW OURSELVES UP.

HIS BLUNDERING MADE IT ALL HAPPEN.

OH, YOU'RE SUCH A JERK!

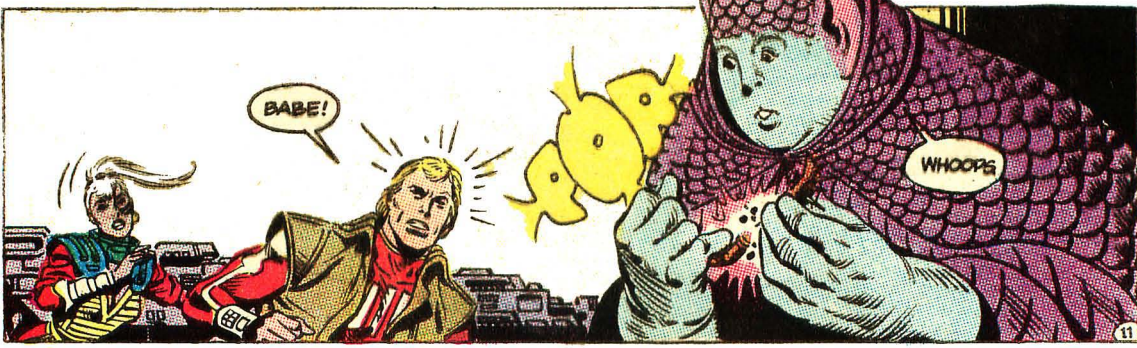


GROW UP! TUKLA I'M SICK OF YOUR INFANTILE WHINING!

MOTHER ALWAYS LIKED ME BEST...

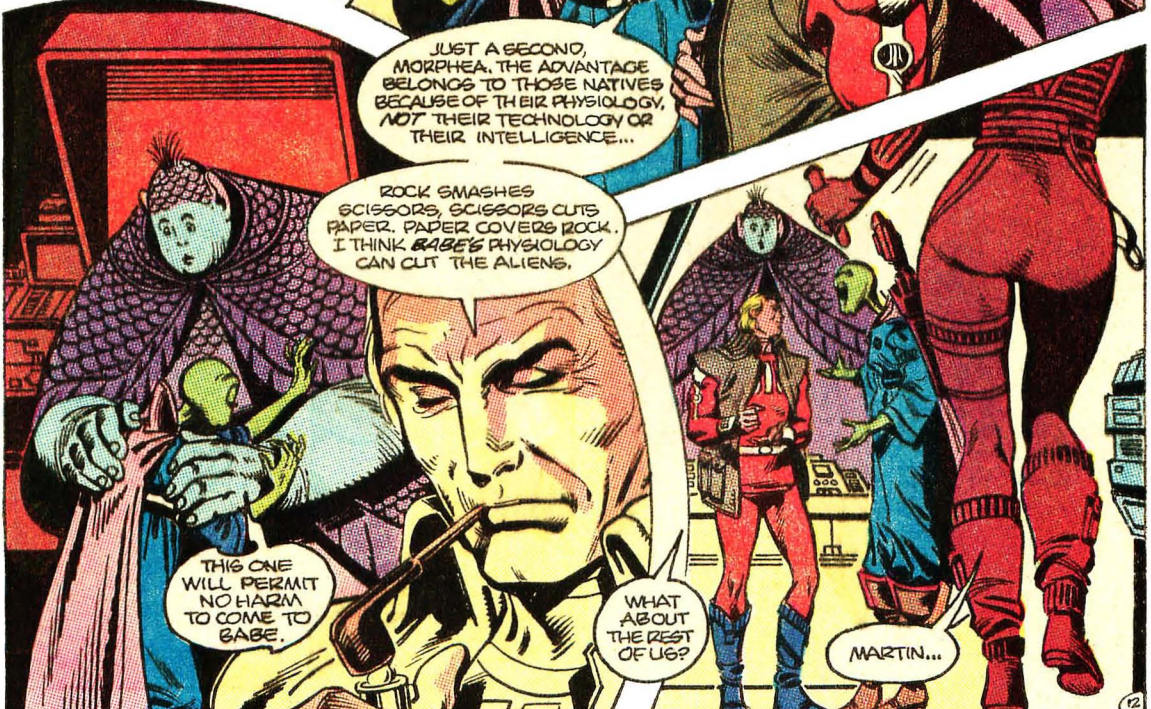
FRANKLY, I'M AT A LOSS. MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL. AFTER ALL I'VE DONE... I MIGHT DESERVE...

MARTIN!

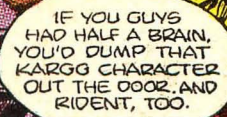


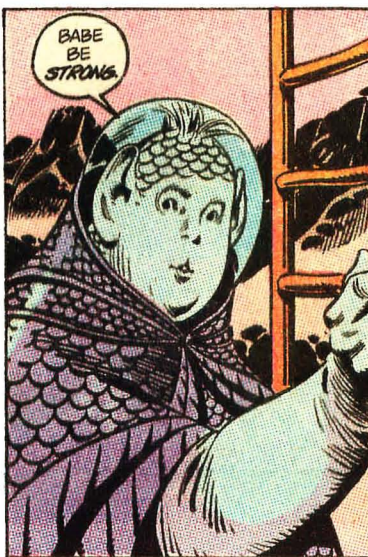
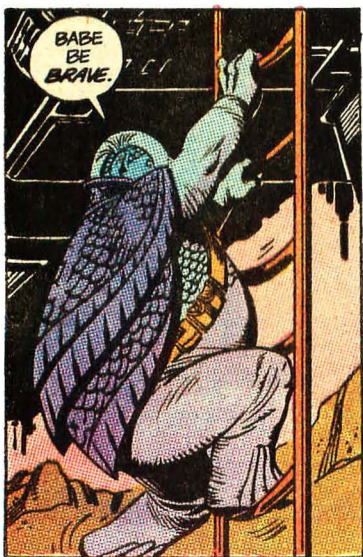
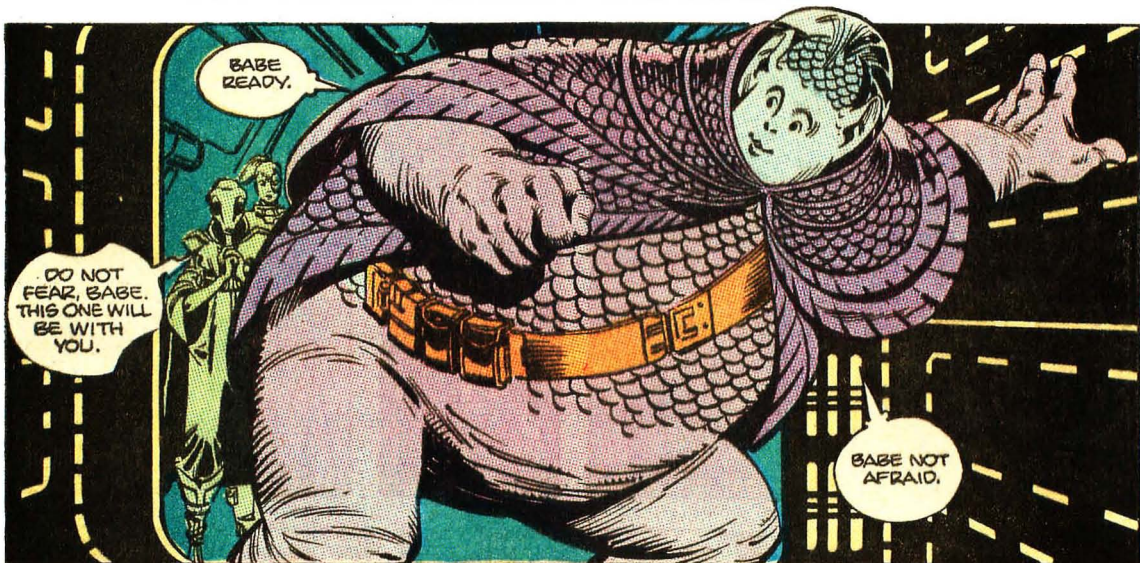
BABE!

WHOOOPS











FORCE FEEDBACK

L-1876

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The following is a transcript of a conversation between ATARI FORCE writer MIKE BARON and editor ANDY HELFER. It is offered to the reader as proof that most times difficult situations have a way of working themselves out.

"Hello, Mike?"

"Yep. Andy?"

"Right. I'm just calling to thank you for mailing the biography I asked you for a couple of days ago. I know you're busy and all, so it's especially nice that you—"

"Hold it, Andy—I didn't send you any bio!"

"Sure you did—it sez so right on top of the page. 'Mike Baron Bio for ATARI FORCE.'"

"Wasn't from me. Care to read it to me anyway?"

"Why not? Ahem—"

"I was born in a log cabin in South Dakota. No. Actually, I was born in Madison, Wisconsin, and grew up in SD. I graduated from the U. of WI with a degree in political science, which makes me ideally suited to write space comics. In 1971 I moved to Boston and wrote for the Boston Phoenix and the Real Paper, may it rest in peace. All my compatriots went on to write books that get reviewed by the New York Times. I had a column about comics in Creem ca. '72, and I wrote for numerous scrofulous rags

next to which Creem is The Smithsonian. One day I was sitting around with my friend and fellow comics collector Sutta leBerq when he declared that Neal Adams was God. Whereupon I yelled, "Hal Give me five years intensive work, I could draw better than Adams."

"Cannot."

"Can too." I set to work. I drew and drew. Life-drawing, pics from books. I had plenty of help—some of the best commercial artists in the country, friends of mine from the papers. Their first advice was, Why torment yourself, Mike?

"Look—I'll cut this short. At the end of five years I'd hauled myself up to a crude fannish level. I had some heavy choices to make—like, I could sell encyclopedias or starve. Whoops—I Sorry, wrong program. At the end of those five years, it was clear to me and my artist friends that I had a skill—I could map out a pretty decent comic story. I just couldn't draw it—not so someone would want to look at it.

"My comics career really began when I met Steve Rude. We lucked out. We found some guys who wanted to publish us, right back in Madison where we both live today. Thanks to Capital Publications, NEXUS was born, and because of NEXUS, I am writing ATARI FORCE.

'As a charter member of the Couch Potatoes, I subsist on a diet of cheese curls and jalapeno bean dip. My flesh is pale and when I stand I am unable to see my toes, much less anything in-between. I live in a log cabin outside Madison and etch my stories with charcoal on birch bark.'

"And that's it. Are you SURE you didn't write this, Mike?"

"Absolutely."

"Well, let me ask you this, then—is it at least accurate?"

"Sounds good to me, Andy."

"That's nice to know, Mike, 'cause y'see—I've got a hole in the next letter column and this bio would fill it up nicely, so I was thinking—"

"You want to run it anyway, right, Andy?"

"You mind terribly?"

"Not terribly."

"Thanks, Mike."

"One question, though, Andy—"

"Sure, Mike—shoot."

"Where do I send my bill?"

As a postscript, the management of DC would like to point out that, as of this writing, Mr. Baron has not yet received payment for the abovementioned bio. Legitimate claims for the bio fee can be mailed to FORCE FEEDBACK, care of DC COMICS.

We now return to our regularly scheduled letter column ...

Dear Andy:

After reviewing some past issues of ATARI FORCE, I realized that something does not click. Issue #1 says that Egg's people are mobile only until they reach puberty. If this is true, how do they ... uh ... how do they? I'd hate to be around when the big moment comes!

Matt McCullar
5801 Trail Lake Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76113

(If you read last issue's back-up story, Matt, you should have a little better idea of the process. Sorry we couldn't TOTALLY satisfy your curiosity—but after all, ATARI FORCE is a family comic!)

Dear Atari Crew,

So now we know the truth behind Blackjak's return. The confrontation between him and Dart in #11 was one of

the most heartwrenching I have read in quite a while. For situations such as Blackjak's return, there are two standard scenarios. Firstly, that it isn't really Blackjak; secondly, that it is the real Blackjak but he is being forced against his will to aid the Dark Destroyer but is just waiting for an opportunity to cross up DD. Page 4 made it clear that this was the real Blackjak and offered assurance that the second scenario was what we were beholding: Blackjak was doing DD's bidding but he was reluctant and disturbed in the process.

But in the battle with Dart it all became agonizingly clear. In a sense, this wasn't the "real" Blackjak. DD had exploited his weakness to mold him into a new Blackjak—for DD had broken Blackjak down to his core and at his core was this weakness that DD could exploit. This all makes Blackjak very human. Virtually all of us have, deep down, a great fear of death. In fact, many psychiatrists say that the only way we keep from going insane is by almost

denying or ignoring the reality of our inevitable deaths. Thus, one psychological ill (the ignoring or denial of reality) is applied in a very specific way to prevent another, greater psychological breakdown (insanity). And paradoxically, the times in which we do seriously contemplate the reality of our eventual deaths can trigger great psychological distress.

One definition of a hero is a person who ignores a threat to his own life in order to help others. Sometimes this is viewed as a result of foolishness or ignorance, but the fact remains when you come right down to it, some of us do stare death in the face and ignore it (or challenge it?) by placing other considerations before it. And it is hard to say who will meet this challenge or who will not. Blackjak did not. Thus, in our eyes, he is not a hero. He is ordinary. (Or, maybe we hope that he is less than ordinary, that ordinary folks like ourselves do indeed usually rise to meet the ultimate challenge—that only the

[CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.]

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED TO THE

BLUE DEVIL

ON THE WAY TO THE STUDIO...

...MEET

THE FURIES!

COLON/NOTO



NORM



GOPHER



MARLA



WAYNE



SHARON

THIS IS NOT YOUR NO-FRILLS COMIC,
PEOPLE! THIS IS THE **SERIOUS BUSINESS**
OF FUN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!

inferior can be psychologically mastered by death.) But the trick was that we expected him to come through and do the heroic thing. (In a way, romantic that I be, I'm still expecting him to come through.) Are not love and honor stronger than death?

Blackjak. Fallen hero? An ordinary man who had occasionally been heroic? A man to be pitied for his weakness? A despicable coward? He is all of these and none of these. He has turned out to be an interesting character enmeshed in a struggle of classic proportions. At the moment, I can think of no more that I could ask from a single issue of a comic book.

Yours truly,
"T.M. Maple"

(Thanks for your lengthy analysis of Blackjak. We've decided to run it in its entirety because it so accurately echoes the feelings we here have about the character and his dilemma. You're right on target this time, T.M., and it's really heartening to know that our readers are operating on the same wavelengths that we are!)

Dear Mr. Feedback,

A few months ago I wouldn't have considered reading a DC comic, lifelong prejudices having been unfortunately reinforced by the few that I've tried recently. That is, until I read a copy of ATARI FORCE. I was initially apprehensive for a number of reasons; it's a DC mag, it has an abundance of what seemed to be "cute" aliens, its title contained the word "Atari," and finally because it seemed to be mimicking the Micronauts comic (Baron Karza—Dark Destroyer, etc). Casting modesty aside, I'll admit that I've never been so wrong in my life. Well, once or twice, maybe. All of the characters have been finely developed, all are eminently likable, and above all, all are totally believable. The artwork is just as good as the writing, and even the lettering (not something I usually consider) stands out, and helps the whole book to do so too. Because of this comic I have started to collect other DC titles. Does this entitle you to a raise?

I'm sorry that I can't comment on recent issues more specifically, but I'm a month or two behind you at present, since to get the issues immediately requires special importing, and thus a surcharge. I'd love you to publish this letter, but don't print "Welcome to the club" or whatever below it, a share of your raise would do nicely!

James Richardson,
64 Porchester Terrace
London W.2, 3TP
England

(Would you believe "the check is in the mail"?)

Dear Force:

ATARI FORCE is great! The art is spectacular! The writing is sensational! I love the characters. I have been reading AF since #1. Issue #11 was terrific, as all have been. I have some questions and ideas:

1 Dart has markings on the left side of her body. What are they? Who gave them to her?

2 Could Blackjak join the Force if he changed his ways?

3 Could you please add some more characters like Doc Orion and Lucia Venture? Or add a girl rat, because Chris has his father, Dart has Blackjak (if he can change), Morpheus has Babe, Babe has Taz and Hukka, but Pakrat has no one.

4 In #'s 1 and 2 you had fact files. How about one on Taz?

Time to sign off. Thanks for making a GREAT comic, but p-l-e-a-s-e don't end it!

Jesse Tauriac Age 12
132 Turnpike St.
S. Easton, MA 02375

(To answer your questions, Jesse: 1) Dart's markings are tattoos. Their origins, as well as the story of her first meeting with Blackjak and her early adventures as a mercenary, will all be dealt with in a future issue. It may take a while, but you'll see it one of these days! 2) We're not sure—but old loves die hard, and we don't think Dart is ready to give up on the old pirate yet. The next few issues will tell for sure! 3) Funny you should mention it—"cause this issue's Pakrat back-up features the first appearance of Pakrat's Markian mate—Ferra! Naturally, this story takes place long before Tukla Oly ever even HEARD of Martin Champion—but still, it's proof positive of the old saying—"there's someone for everybody!" 4) As you can see, the Taz story is heating up—and once you see NEXT issue, you'll realize that everything you've been thinking about the 'lil devil is WRONG! Maybe we'll have a fact file page in the future, but for now, it would only spoil some really neat surprises!)

Dear Andy:

When I went to the comic store to get my weekly assortment of comics (GRIM-JACK, AMERICAN FLAGGI, BATMAN AND THE OUTSIDERS, PETER PARKER, KITTY AND WOLVERINE, etc.) the cover of ATARI FORCE #11 caught my eye. Since I had a little extra money, I decided to buy it.

It was amazing!

After buying the first six issues, I quit buying ATARI FORCE. I don't know why; the art was fantastic, and the story was up to Gerry Conway's regular standards. I did read a friend's copy of #8, but other than that I had almost forgotten about ATARI FORCE. Heck, I'm still constantly working my butt off trying to keep up with the other two dozen comics series I

read each month, but that cover intrigued me. I couldn't resist.

When I got home, I stared at it for a second. "Blackjak Is Back?" I thought to myself. "How can that be? And why would he betray the Force?"

When I finished reading, I almost couldn't speak. But let me tell you—I'm glad I got back in time for the conclusion of this 13-issue epic.

I do, however, have a few suggestions:

1 Since you're doing solo stories, how about one featuring Taz? I'd really like to know about him.

2 While you're at it, how about unpublished stories of the original Atari Force? Or stories featuring force members BEFORE they joined the Force?

3 Most important of all: KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!!

Michael Krupp
PO BOX 4156
Prescott, MI 48756

{ 1 } As mentioned before, we've avoided delving into Taz's past thus far for a very good reason—one that will be revealed next issue. But after the secret is out, well, anything goes! 2) There are some original Atari Force stories sitting on our shelves—but whether or not they'll ever see print is in good measure up to you. What do you think? Do you want to see these forgotten tales? Let us know. And finally, we're currently running a series of back-up stories that do exactly what you've requested—feature Atari Force members in stories BEFORE they joined the Force. The next two issues will conclude the Pakrat series. After that, you'll be seeing more Babe stories by Klaus Janson, a Marshall Rogers Hukka story, more work by Keith Giffen, Dave Manak, Mindy Newell, and many others! Don't miss a single one, okay?

NEXT ISSUE: The revelation you've been waiting for—what is the secret of Taz? Meanwhile: Babe battles the bugs! Blackjak chats with Karr! Dart's visions deepen! And much, much more. Story by MIKE BARON, with special guest penciller ED MANNIGAN performing his FIRST interior job for DC! We've seen it, and it works! And lest we forget—the second part of our Pakrat back-up, "RATRAP!" by Andy Helfer, Mike Chen, and Joe DelBeato. Buy one story, get the other FREE!!

—ANDY HELFER



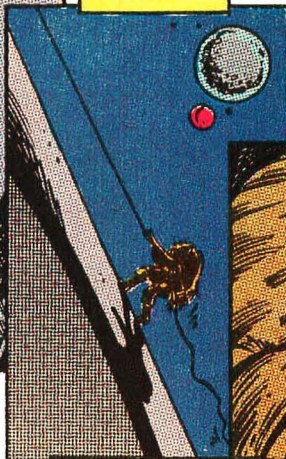
THE DELTAN EMBASSY TOWER GLOWED TEMPTINGLY IN THE MOONLIGHT. THE PRIZE WAS UP THERE AND I HAD TO HAVE IT.

BUT FIRST, I HAD TO GET IT.

MY AUTO-GRAPPLE WORKED LIKE A CHARM. IT ALWAYS DOES.

MY NAME'S OLV--TUKLA OLV. MY FRIENDS CALL ME PAKKRAT.

I'M A THIEF. MOST MARKIANS ARE. YOU MIGHT SAY IT'S MY BIRTHRIGHT. I LIKE TO THINK OF IT AS A JOB. I ENJOY MY WORK.



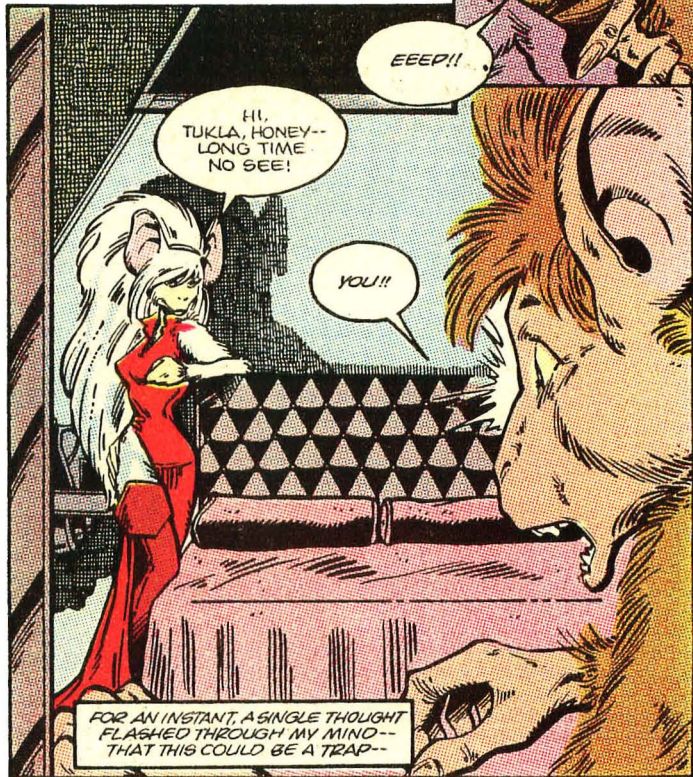
BUT THERE ARE TIMES...



EEEP!!

HI, TUKLA, HONEY-- LONG TIME NO SEE!

YOU!!

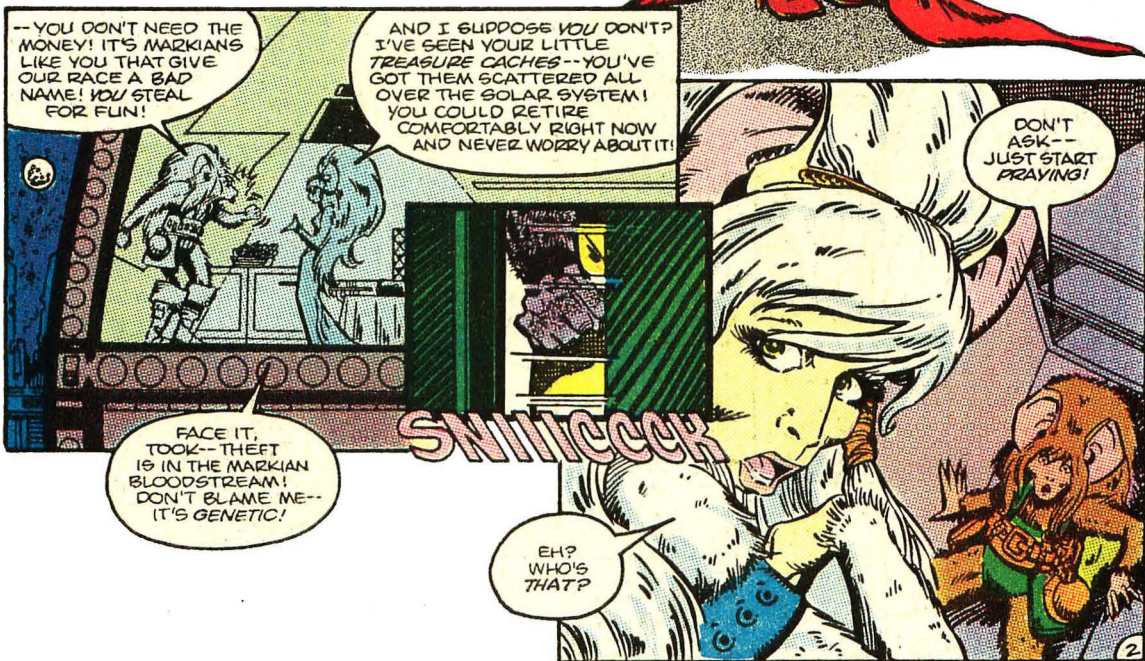
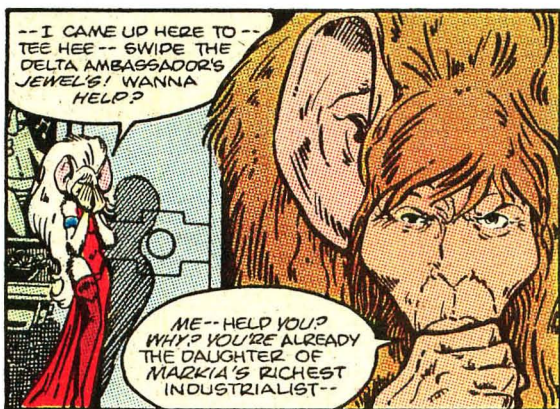
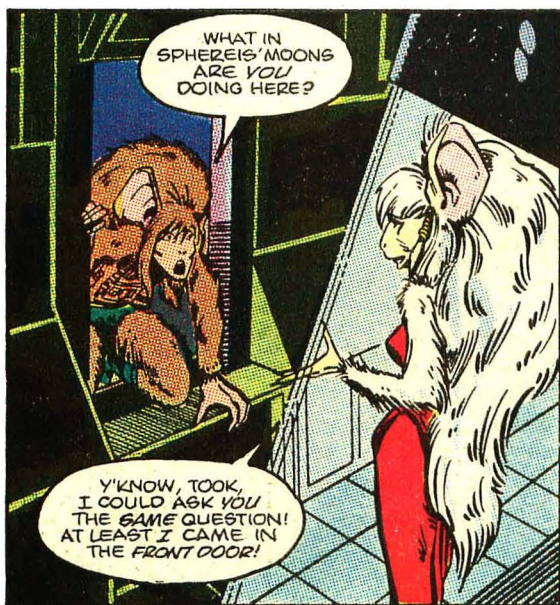


FOR AN INSTANT, A SINGLE THOUGHT FLASHED THROUGH MY MIND-- THAT THIS COULD BE A TRAP--

TO CATCH A PAKKRAT!

WRITER: ANDY HELFER
PENCILS: MIKE CHEN
INKS: JOE DELBEATO
LETTERS: bob lappan
COLORS: TOM ZILKO







SORRY, TOOK--I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE IN MIND!

HEY! YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO--ER--UH--

MPPPHH!



UH-- EXCUSE ME, UH-- MA'AM, BUT VEZ... AH...

MPPPHHH!



WELL-- SPIT IT OUT, GUARD! AND THIS BETTER BE IMPORTANT OR I'LL TELL YOUR BOSS ABOUT THE PEEPEES HE EMPLOYS--

WHEW!



SORRY, MA'AM-- *GULPE AMBASSADOR TUROK'S ORDERS--NO GUESTS IN THE BEDROOM!



AH, WELL--IF THE AMBASSADOR INSISTS...

...COME ALONG, TOOK...

GULPE



I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! WE WALKED RIGHT BY THAT GUARD-- LIKE WE BELONGED HERE!

WHEN YOU'RE WITH ME, DEAR TOOK, YOU DO BELONG!

I GUESS... BUT THE DIAMONDS--! WE'LL NEVER GET THEM NOW!

DON'T BE TOO SURE OF THAT...



OUR NATURAL FLUR COVERING HIDES A LOT OF THINGS, TOOKY--

...DON'T YOU AGREE?

NOW, LET'S GO DOWNSTAIRS-- WE'RE MISSING THE PARTY!

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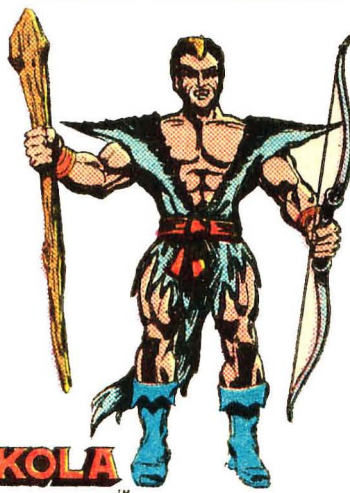


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MEANWHILE...

A day in the life of a Cartoonist/Commuter/Executive Editor

(Continued from some months ago. When we last saw Dick, he was finished with his early morning stint at his drawing board, he was shaved, showered, and shiny as a newly minted penny—sort of—and he was dashing for the Stratford station to catch the 7:28 for N.Y.)

Help! I'm being held prisoner on Metro-North!

Well, not in a literal sense, perhaps, but it's a feeling you get after commuting awhile. Especially when your door-to-door commute takes two hours on the good days. You start becoming paranoid about the "bad" days being "planned" by the management and/or personnel of the railroad and what ensues is totally beyond your control. Actually, I don't really believe "they" plan or cause the seemingly never-ending delays that maddeningly lengthen my commute. I do get the feeling that they would be considerably more efficient if there was another railroad or viable alternative for getting into the city. The only other way is driving into town and that ain't viable by any definition of the word. Imagine what comics published by DC or Marvel would be like if only one of us were publishing! Competition keeps you honest ... and more efficient.

I'll say this for Metro-North ... they are as creative as they can be in finding new ways to delay you or make your commute less comfortable. It's rarely the same way twice in one week, much less twice in a row! Two observations and I'll get off their case: 1) The trains only leave on time when I'm late arriving at the station. 2) In the past four years I've never used a lavatory in a Metro-North commuter car that provided all of the lavatory necessities: A) toilet tissue, B) soap, C) running water in the sink, and D) a

toilet that flushes twice on the same day. Nice way to start the day.

Anyway, I make the 7:28 ... only, it arrives at Stratford at 7:35 and because of road-bed-work-related delays that have been ongoing for several weeks, it's certain that we'll be 15-20 minutes late into the Grand Central Station. No matter. Pat Bastienne (our Editorial Coordinator and another Connecticut resident) and I settle into the usual morning on-train routine of sipping Dunkin' Donuts coffee from cardboard containers and distracting ourselves by various means so that the trip will be less painful and/or more productive. Pat takes her checkbook from her bag and starts writing some personal checks. I take some series proposal scripts from my bulging portfolio and settle back to read. I read two ... and they're mind-bogglers! I rarely find two proposals a month that are interesting enough to consider publishing. To find two in the same morning that I like so much is a rare bonanza. Now there's almost nothing Metro-North can do to spoil my mood. It's up! The first is a proposal from Alan Moore, **SWAMP THING** scripter, for a maxi-series starring the super-heroes we recently obtained from Charlton. The idea is gutsy, grittily realistic, and explores aspects of the super-hero never really dealt with before. Unfortunately, I can't really consider it for the Charlton heroes. For one thing, certain aspects of the plotline do things with and to these characters that would make it difficult for us to use some, if not all, of them after the series was over. Secondly, I'd already made plans, now pretty far along, to publish the Charlton heroes in tandem with some current and past DC favorites in a weekly comic book format. I like the idea so much, though, that I'm going to suggest that Alan create new characters for this maxi-series (in place of the Charlton heroes) and tell his story! ... It's a wonderful concept! (Note: since this was written, Alan has enthusiastically agreed with my scheme and is hard at work. Dave Gibbons is slated to illustrate. With luck, it will be a 1985 release tentatively titled "Watchman.") Incidentally, reading anything written by Alan Moore is a pleasure. His scripts are liberally dotted with asides,

bits of humor, relevant background information, and clear insights into his feelings about pivotal sequences or events that make it easy for the artist(s) to share his vision. Alan Moore is one of the more creative writers in comics. The ideas fairly bubble forth from his fertile imagination, and I am delighted that at least some of his almost unbelievable production will be for DC Comics.

The other series proposal is no less exciting. It's the outline for book #1 of a proposed 48-page, deluxe-format limited series. We've talked about this idea and the talks excited me, but nowhere near the excitement engendered by the script. It is written by Frank Miller. And I love it! And I can't say too much more until Mr. Miller puts his John Hancock on a contract. I can say that it is a very special story about one of the most popular super-heroes ever!

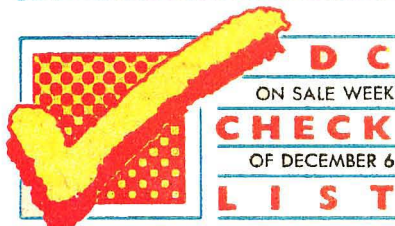
Anyway, by the time I've read these two scripts and taken the time to mentally outline my plans for both, we're about 20 minutes from Grand Central Station, and Pat and I start a conversation to bring each other up to date on the other's activities. Pat, along with Managing Editor Tom Condon, shoulders the day-to-day administrative responsibilities of running our department, and although we must work closely together, oftentimes the pressures of the day and our separate responsibilities make contact during the work day difficult. We use our commute as often as possible to compensate for this deficiency. Today, in addition to discussing the usual deadline and creative problems, we're also planning our trip to the Chicago convention later this week and the plans DC has for the three days ... We manage to go over most of the nuts and bolts before the train arrives at Grand Central ... 15 minutes late. We rush up two levels to the street (why does the train I'm on always come in on the track that is least accessible to the street?), exit through the Pan-Am building, hop a cab to the office (to try to make up the lost time), and get to the office, where I pour myself a cup of coffee and, so fortified, prepare myself for the day ahead ... a day that starts with an important 10 o'clock meeting ...

Will you look at that ... I've run out of room again! What started out as one column will now end up being three.

Oh, well...to be continued.

Thank you and Good Afternoon.

Dick



V 1: All-new stories based on the hit weekly television series!

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Best of DC Digest 58: An all-new Super Jr's tale. Plus Sugar and Spike!

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Superman: The Secret Years 2: More secrets from Clark's college days!
Funny Stuff Stacking Stuffer 1: DC's funny animals team up to save Santa in an all-new saga!

AND SOON...

CAN'T SAY
I'M TOO CRAZY
ABOUT THIS SCENE,
FERRA--HOBNOBBING
WITH THE JET-SET
JUST ISN'T MY
STYLE!

OH, TOOK,
REALLY! SOMETIMES
YOU AMAZE ME--RELAX
AND ENJOY YOURSELF--
THERE'S NOTHING TO
WORRY ABOUT!

YEAH?
WELL, TELL ME,
FERRA--HOW DO
YOU EXPECT TO
GET OUT OF
THIS PLACE?

WHY, THROUGH THE
FRONT DOOR, OF
COURSE!

UH--HAVE
YOU LOOKED
IN THAT
DIRECTION
LATELY?

"THOSE GUARDS LOOK LIKE THEY EAT
MARKIANS FOR BREAKFAST!--
AND THEY'VE GOT SENSOR BELTS BESIDES!

"WOAH AM
I GOING
PAST
THEM!"

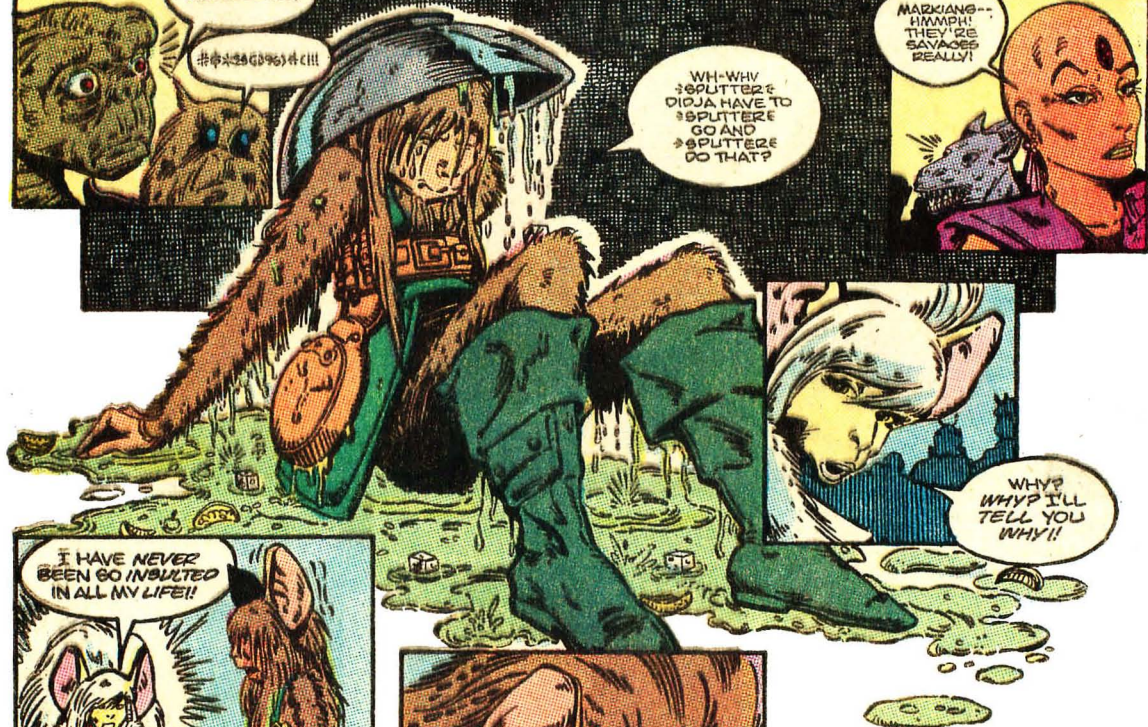
OH, TOOK--YOU'RE
SUCH A WORRY-
WART--

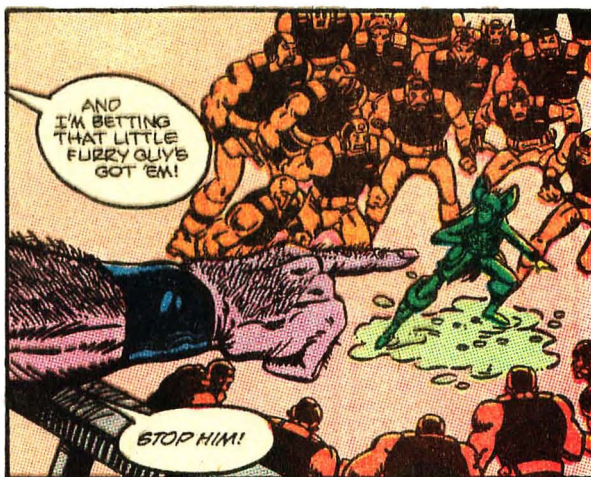
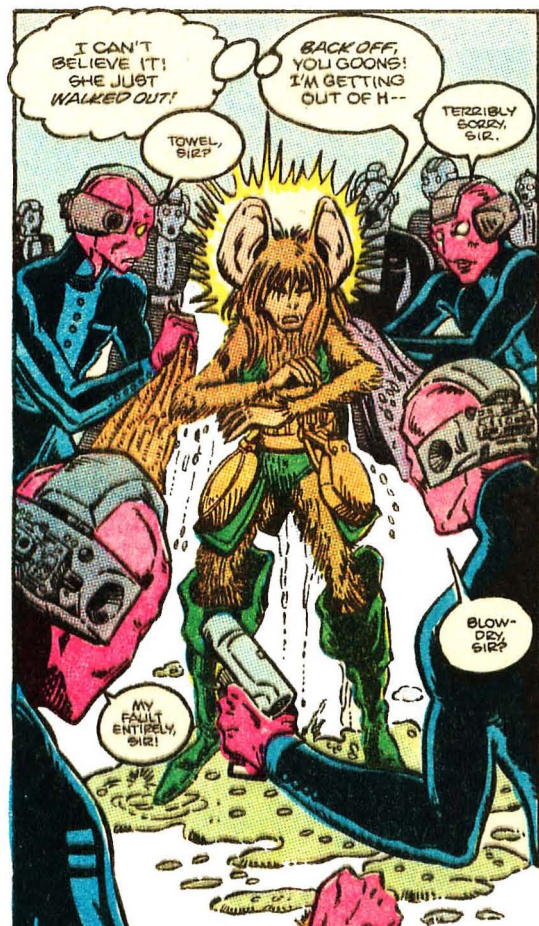
ALL I NEED TO
COVER MY WALK OUT
OF HERE IS A LITTLE
DIVERSION!

HERE--

"--HAVE
SOME MORE
PUNCH!"

SPLASH!



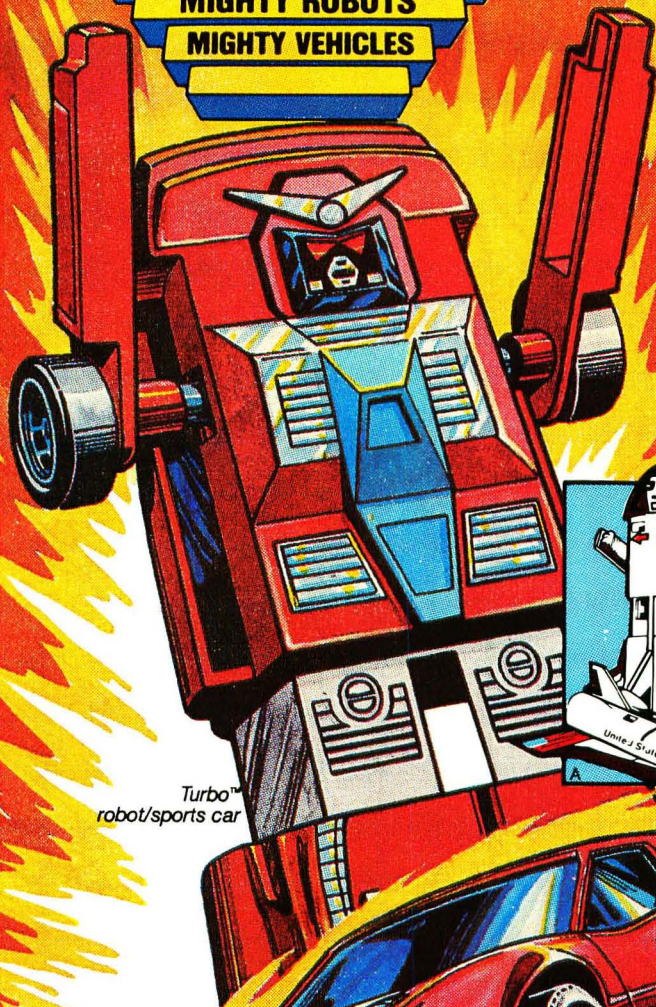


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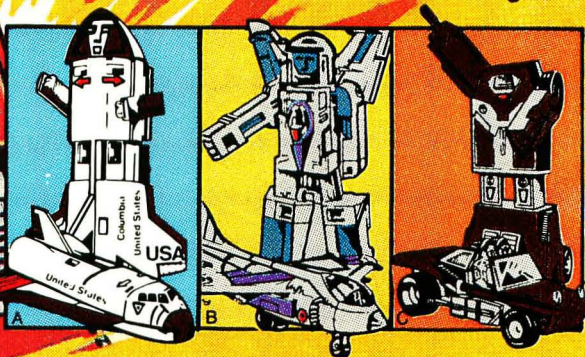
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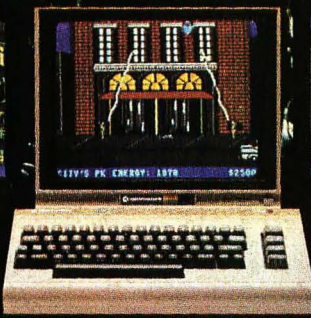
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