

INDEPENDENCE OR BLOOD: PATRIARCHY BE PUT TO DEATH!

SISTER

ISSUE 1: *THEIR KISSES KILL!*

CELL^{XXV}

STORY BY GREG AHARONIAN

WRITTEN BY K.S. HADDOCK

ART BY

BRUNO OLIVEIRA

ALEX LEI



I am dedicated to Her

Sister Cell xxy

ISSUE #1: THEIR KISSES KILL!

Story By Greg Aharonian

Written By K.S. Haddock

Pencils By Bruno Oliveira

Inks By Alex Lei

Design By Andrea Rice

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BRUNO
OLIVEIRA
2008
ALEX LEI



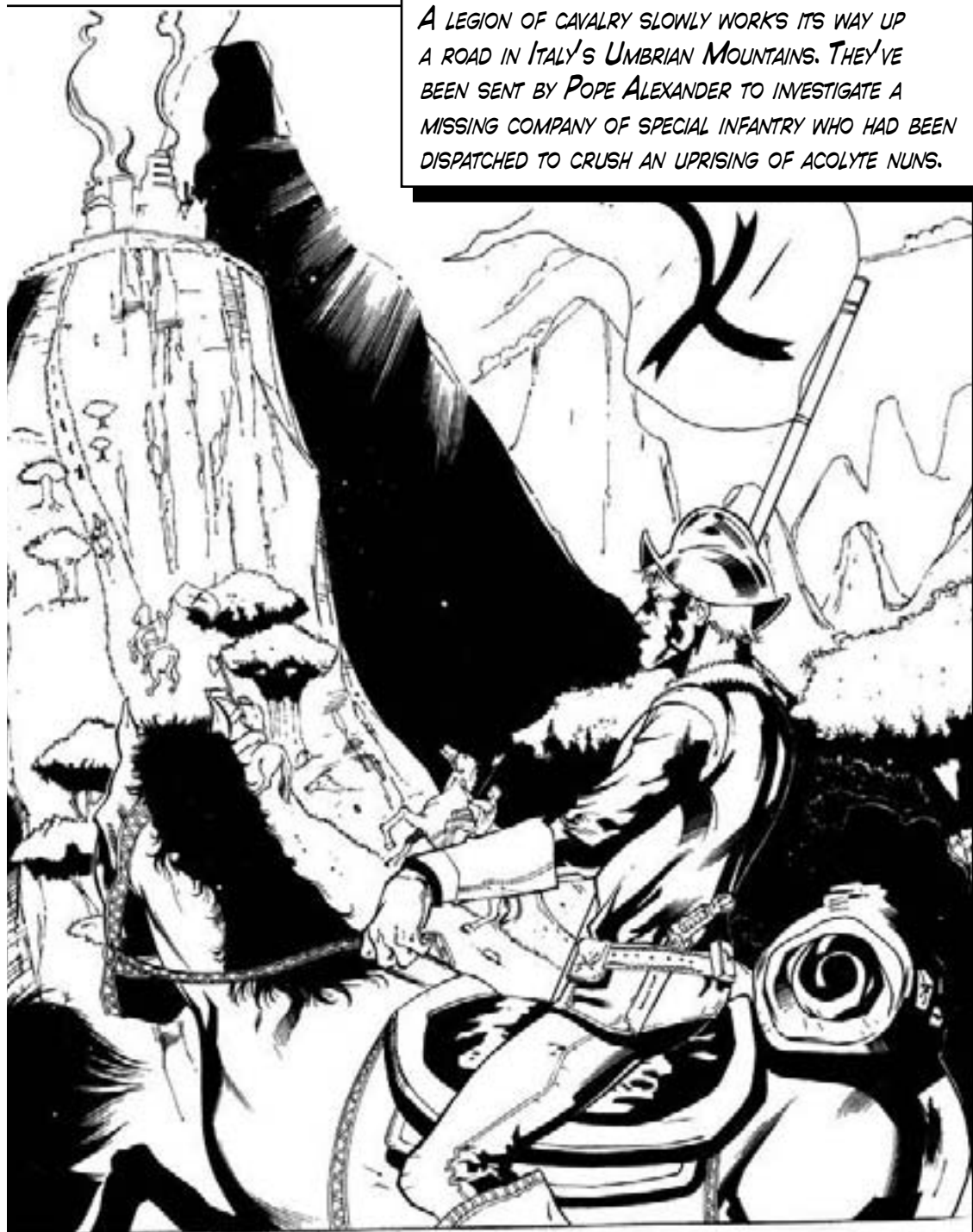
Πιστει και αυτη σ-α-ρ-ρ-α: δυναμιν εις καταβολην
σπερματος ελαβεν και Παρα καιρον ηλικιας



BATTLE AT THE ABBE DI SUORE
DI GUIDITTA, ITALY, 1697



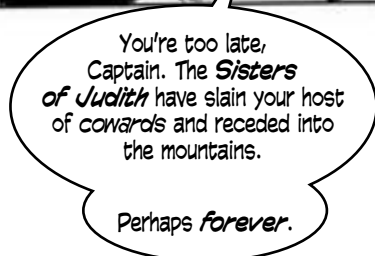
A LEGION OF CAVALRY SLOWLY WORKS ITS WAY UP A ROAD IN ITALY'S UMBRIAN MOUNTAINS. THEY'VE BEEN SENT BY POPE ALEXANDER TO INVESTIGATE A MISSING COMPANY OF SPECIAL INFANTRY WHO HAD BEEN DISPATCHED TO CRUSH AN UPRISING OF ACOLYTE NUNS.



CAPTAIN DI RISIO OF THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR SIGHTS THE ABBEY ON THE MOUNTAIN AND WHAT REMAINS OF HIS MEN.



IT IS A SCENE OF CARNAGE.





You'll pay for that remark old man.

With your life!

Di Risio raises his sword...

...but the monk is spry and slashes his horse's leg!



My horse! You bastard!



Di Risio fires!



His lieutenant hears the girl's report.

Mark my words!
The Papacy will answer to the Sisters for this *treachery*,
Signore Captain!



As his lieutenant approaches, Captain Di Risio sees to his horse's bleeding leg.

Captain, the entire abbey is empty. We did not find one Sister of Judith. They have fled.

What transpired here, My Lord?

An old monk said we didn't exist. I killed him.

Ah, I understand, my Lord.

What orders?

Send ten men to find the Sisters' Trail.

Make that *twenty* men. Lead them yourself.

I'll send word to Rome of what has happened to Corporal Sangiovese and his men. The rest of us will make camp.

Very good, Captain.

Captain...how could this have *happened*?

It happened like *all* defeats, Lieutenant Moretti.

We underestimated our opponent. The Sisters shall *not* win again. Now, find these *heretical witches!*

The year is 1983, at a women's retreat in California. Two mothers have just given birth to unique baby girls as part of a nanogenetic experiment.



THE BARBARY COAST, A STRIP CLUB IN SAN FRANCISCO, PRESENT DAY.

Put your hands together
for our new girl...
Lil Evie!

Take out
your wallets
and show your
appreciation,
gentlemen!!

THUMP!
THUMP!

THUMP!
THUMP!

THUMP!
THUMP!

I like lap dance!!

THUMP!
THUMP!

Whooa!
You cute!

Thanks!

THE STRIPPER WEARS
A PURPLE BRACELET.

Kiss me, I beg you!!

NNNNGH!

Okay,
just for
you!

↓

THUMP!

SAN FRANCISCO, PRESENT DAY, AT THE UNIVERSAL AQUARIAN CHURCH OF CHRIST.



A PRIEST PREACHES HIS LOVE WHILE THE PARISHONERS LINE UP FOR THE "KISS OF PEACE".



EVE SWAMMER, A YOUNG SISTER OF PEACE, SPREADS THE LOVE.



SHE WEARS A PURPLE BRACELET.



COUNTY FAIR, MODESTO, CALIFORNIA, PRESENT DAY. THREE FRATERNITY BROTHERS CAROUSE THE FAIR, SEEKING FUN.



Look! Four bucks to kiss a chick!

Sweetheart, trust me. You should be paying me!

SHE ALSO WEARS A PURPLE BRACELET.

I'm sure you're a real lady-killer, Junior, but I'm worth every penny.

Yeahh!

Hey, dudes! Kiss this one...she's got talent!

SMOOCH!

AFTER THE FAIR, THE BOYS HEAD HOME.



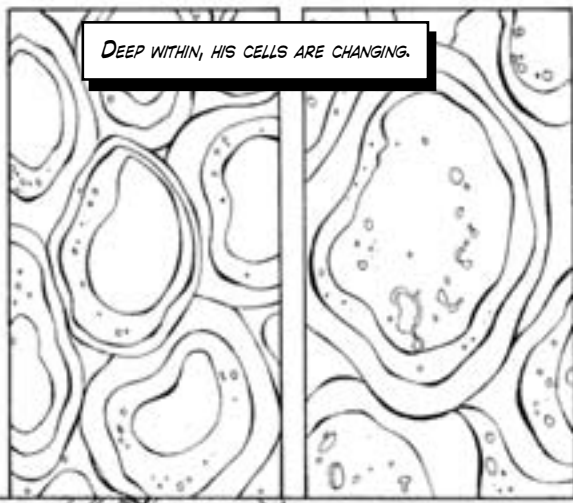
I feel sick, guys. Let's bail.



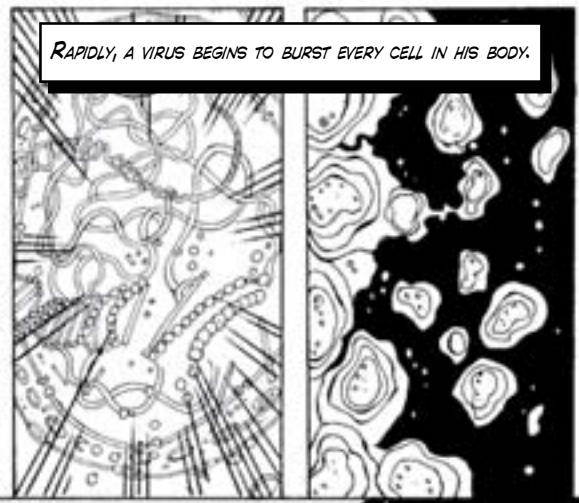
VROOOM!



I mean it guys, let's pull over.
I think I'm gonna hurl.



DEEP WITHIN, HIS CELLS ARE CHANGING.



RAPIDLY, A VIRUS BEGINS TO BURST EVERY CELL IN HIS BODY.



Dude!!

A DEADLY VIRUS HITS CALIFORNIA.



THE BODY COUNT RISES.



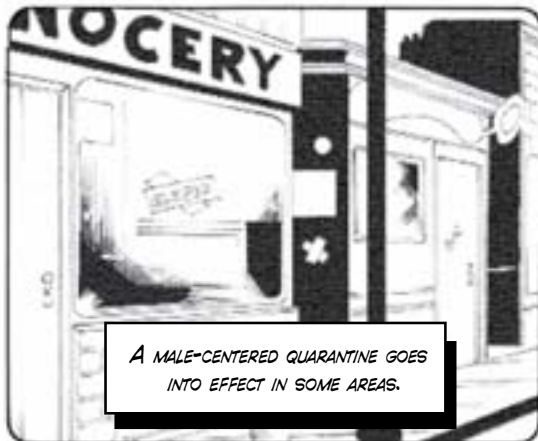
THE VICTIMS ARE ALL MEN.



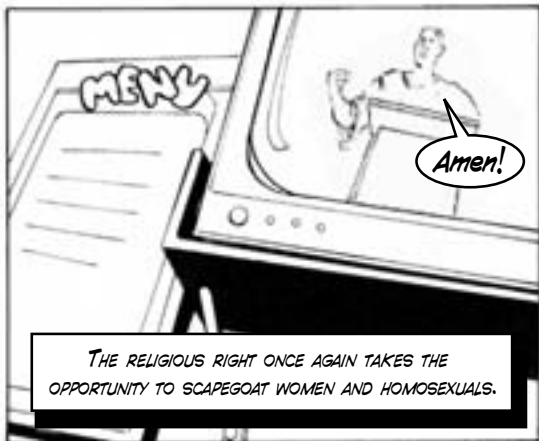
RIOTS ENSUE.



THERE IS 24 HOUR CNN/FOX COVERAGE OF THE EPIDEMIC.



A MALE-CENTERED QUARANTINE GOES INTO EFFECT IN SOME AREAS.



THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT ONCE AGAIN TAKES THE OPPORTUNITY TO SCAPEGOAT WOMEN AND HOMOSEXUALS.



MEANWHILE, IN A CAFE IN SAN FRANCISCO...



MEET ROXANNE MOSS AND SIMON BELVEDERE, FBI
SPECIAL AGENTS, HOMELAND SECURITY UNIT.



What are you so worried about, Simon?

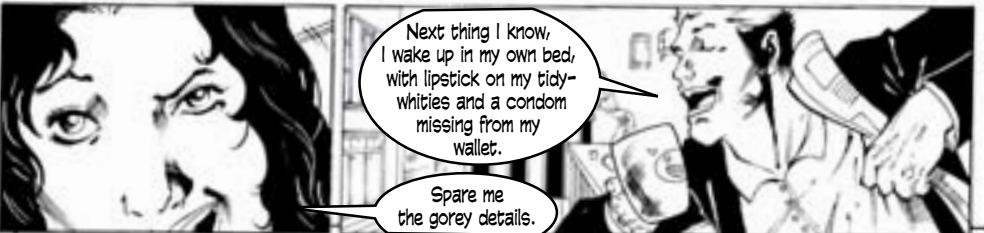
Let's just say last Friday night was a blur.

What do you mean? We had a beer and then you took a cab home.



Yes, you put me in a cab...

...which took me to a tavern where I made friendly with a group of Irish girls.



Next thing I know, I wake up in my own bed, with lipstick on my tidy-whities and a condom missing from my wallet.

Spare me the gorey details.



One question...

...You wear tidy-whities?

They're hip right now.

Did I mention there was more than one Irish girl?



So when do you think Chauncey's gonna ask us to investigate a possible link between the virus and the Taliban?

Funny.



ROXIE'S CELL PHONE RINGS.



THEIR FIRST ASSIGNMENT: TO MEET WITH THE ASSISTANT CORONER AT THE CITY MORGUE.



You're gonna want to put on these hazmat suits for this.



No open casket funerals for these poor bastards.

What's the total body count for the disease so far?

Two hundred thirty.



So how does the virus work?

They kiss a woman, get a fever, start sweating...

...then every cell in the body bursts...



The victims even get buboes.



Buboes? As in the Plague?

Swollen glands that burst.



The victims go into a coma and die in about 6 hours.



You can relax now, Simon. Your Irish girls were three days ago.

Bless me lucky charms.

FBI WEST COAST H.Q. ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ROBERT CHAUNCEY'S OFFICE.

Look, the administration doesn't want to get caught with it's pants down.

The terrorist angle may be a totally useless exercise, but it makes people feel better.

What a concept... investigating something out of good will.

They've cleared three sites for us to start investigating...

...a strip joint, a carnival and a church-

There's a joke in there somewhere.

It's a kissing virus. Do the math.

Told you there was a joke. I'll change into my altar boy disguise.

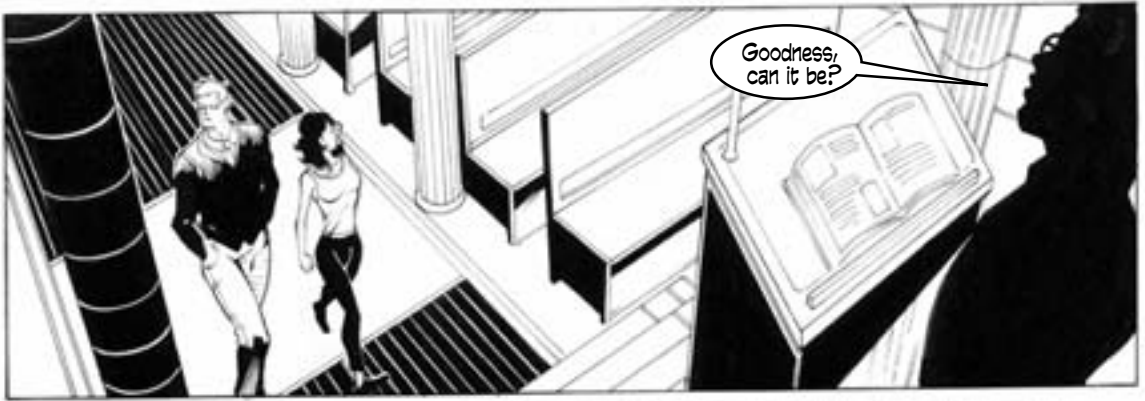
Did you ever get the stains out?

Argh!! Good-bye, you two. While you're at it, put on your FBI Special Agent disguises and pretend you're professionals for a change.

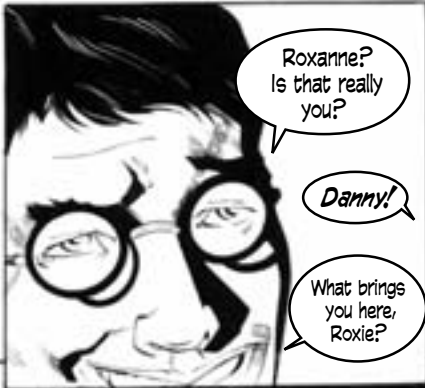
ON TELEGRAPH AVENUE IN BERKELEY TODAY, A GROUP KNOWN AS THE STRAIGHT MEN ADVOCACY CO-OP HELD WHAT STARTED AS A PEACEFUL RALLY AND ENDED TRAGICALLY...

AT THE AQUARIAN UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Hello?
Anybody home?



Goodness, can it be?



Roxanne? Is that really you?

Danny!

What brings you here, Roxie?



Official FBI business, Dr. Dan.

Why you ever left divinity school, Roxanne, I'll never know.



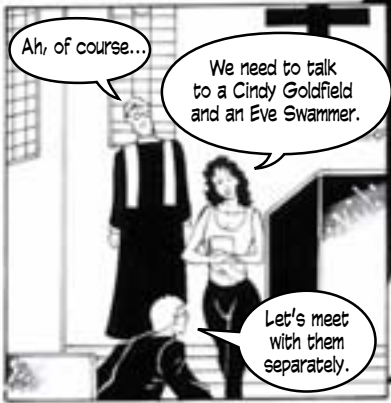
And that's my partner, Simon Belvedere. Churches make him nervous.



You're following up on the Man-Killer Virus. The gentlemen from the CDC already um...

...took blood samples.

We're investigating the terrorism angle.



Ah, of course...

We need to talk to a Cindy Goldfield and an Eve Swammer.

Let's meet with them separately.



Which one of you would like to talk to Eve? She headed up our "Kiss of Peace" campaign.

Ah, that would be me.

Better leave that to me, Simon. Remember the Irish girls?



I couldn't possibly!

You think a terrorist church call is spreading the Man-Killer Virus?

We're hoping to rule that out by talking to you.



There was this email once.

I thought it was a mistake. A foreign attorney said I was going to get a big inheritance.

May I take a look at that email, Cindy?



Do you have relatives living outside the United States who may be sympathetic to a worldwide Jihad?

Shit. I got family across town sympathetic to a Jihad. But they're either too busy lookin' for jobs or watchin' their kids to put the revolution in motion.



Yeah. I don't have any Jihady relatives living in the Axis of Evil.

Alright. Here's my card if you think of anything that might help us.

By the way, is that a Kabbalah string bracelet you're wearing?



Uh... it's a friendship bracelet from one of my girlfriends.

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.

Ah, a bright sunny day. Perfect weather for some kissing booth action at the County Fair.

Ever the romantic, eh Simon?

I just hope the cotton candy's good.

Can we buy a cow for dinner at the livestock auction?

I see the kissing booth. We're going to have to do our jobs.

AT THE KISSING BOOTH.

Nice blazer. FBI, I presume?

I'm FBI Special Agent Moss and this is Special Agent Belvedere.

We'd like to ask you a few questions.



Simon, that was totally unprofessional of you, back there with that kissing booth girl.

What? She aroused my suspicions!

Or something! We're looking for a brunette, Simon. That girl was blonde.

Only one way to find out, Rox.



This girl is our best candidate -- Eve Graaf.

Her name is Eve, too... coincidence?



Knock knock knock



Who is it?

FBI. We have some questions for Eve Graaf. Is she home?

I already answered questions.



We need to ask you a few more.



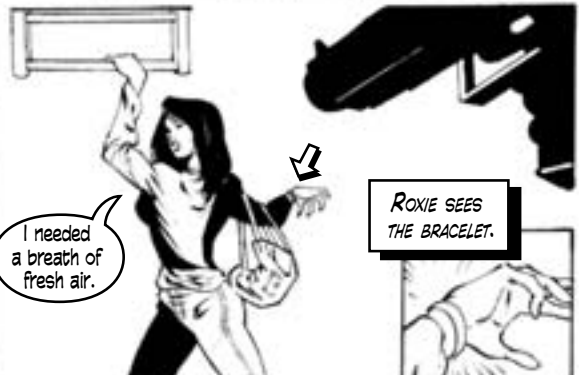
I'll cover the back alley in case she makes a run for it.



Just a minute, I'm putting on a shirt. I was just in the shower.



No use running, Ms. Graaf.



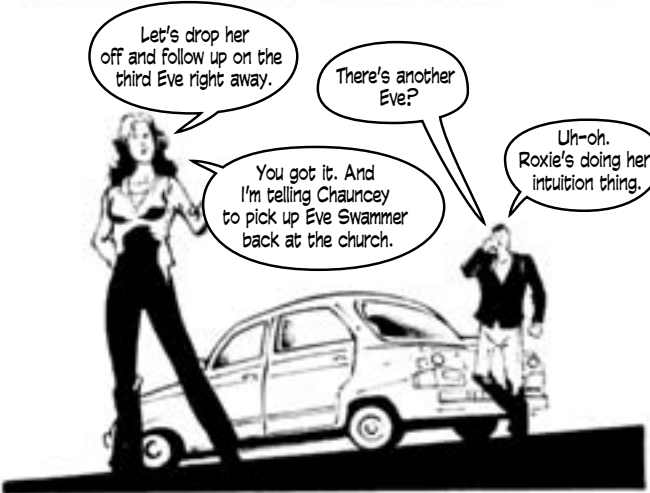
I needed a breath of fresh air.

ROXIE SEES THE BRACELET.



Aren't you going to read me my rights?

Rights are so September 10th, Ms. Graaf.



Let's drop her off and follow up on the third Eve right away.

There's another Eve?

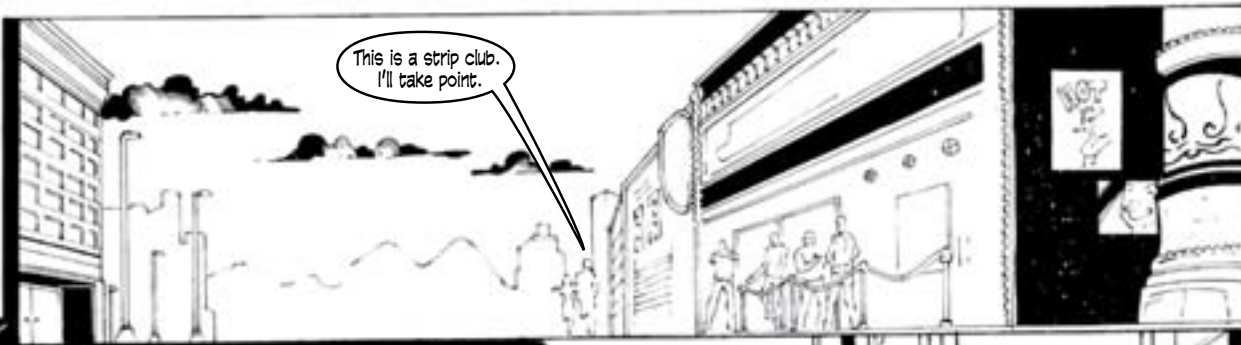
You got it. And I'm telling Chauncey to pick up Eve Swammer back at the church.

Uh-oh. Roxie's doing her intuition thing.



You're going to laugh, but I think we may actually have a case.

If this turns out to be a chick terror cell, I'm never voting for Nancy Pelosi again.



This is a strip club. I'll take point.



A strip club assignment makes you too happy for my liking.

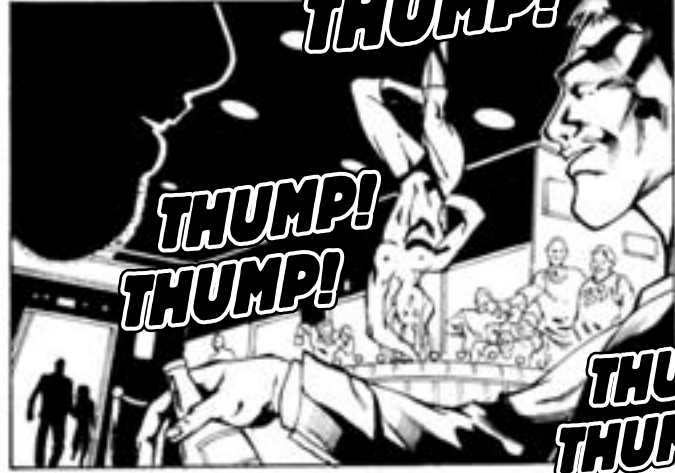
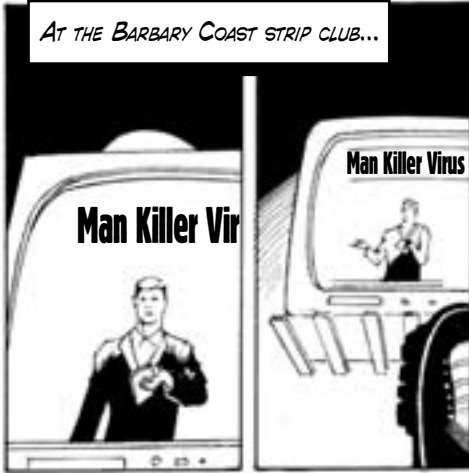
I happen to have a Ph.D. in strippers.

Wow. You're a stripperologist.

Go ahead. Take point. I don't want to get in the way of you and a future girlfriend.

THUMP!
THUMP!

At the BARBARY COAST STRIP CLUB...



THUMP!
THUMP!



Special Agent Belvedere. I need to talk to your manager.

He's in the back, through that curtain.



Masterful.



MANAGER AND KIN

FBI. We're looking for Eve Steno.



Why? She in trouble?

Goddamn it. Now I'll have to cover her fucking shift.

She's in the dressing room. Go down the hall til you find a room full o' pussy.

Hey girly, I'll give you a C-note if you cover Evie's shift.

Perhaps you'd like to come in for questioning, too?





Hi, FBI.
We're looking for
Eve Sterno.



Ms. Sterno?



Am I about to miss
my shift? 'Cuz I just spent
the last hour on Muriel to get
here and I need to
make rent.

'Fraid so, Miss Sterno.
We need you to come
in for questioning.



Am I under
arrest? Did I miss jury duty
or something?

It may be nothing,
but we need you to
come with us.



Um, we...
Are those
real?



Put on some
clothes Ms. Sterno,
and come with
us please.

Hey!

Yes, ma'am!



Get it together,
kickstand.



BACK AT H.Q.

Shall we play good cop/bad cop with these chicks?

How about you be you and I'll be me.

That oughta confuse 'em.

And remember, no water-boarding.

But the CIA says it's okay, Rox.



Diiiiing!



Chauncey.



Change of plan.

Let's go back upstairs to my office.

But Chauncey...



...We have three suspects waiting.

Not anymore.



The CDC is taking over the investigation?

This is so fucked, Chauncey.

Do they even have an interrogation unit?



I know it's not fair to you guys.

But the CDC wants these women quarantined.

It's a public health issue.

But they tested negative for the virus.



Talk to Dr. Paul Damasco about it.

You'll be delivering the suspects to the CDC headquarters in Atlanta.

You'll also be under his command, so mind your p's and q's...

Yeah, right, Chauncey.



Don't be an ass, Bel. I hear Damasco shits diamonds.

Quite a talent.

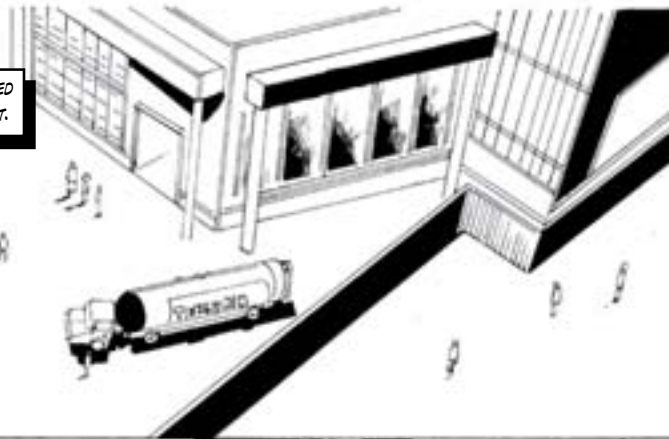


I'll keep an eye on Simon.

Yeah?

Who'll keep an eye on you?

AT SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT THE SUSPECTS ARE BEING LOADED ONTO THE PLANE STRAPPED INTO WHEELCHAIRS, AND CUFFED HAND AND FOOT.



Is all this really necessary?

Dr. Damasco seems to think so.



IT WAS A LONG FLIGHT TO ATLANTA...

I think L'I Evie back there likes all the attention.

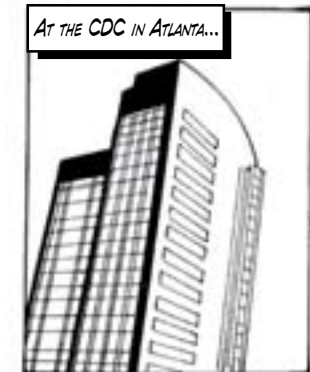
You think I should search her again?



Go for it. I think she's trying to flirt with you now.

Wink!

SMECK!



AT THE CDC IN ATLANTA...



Ah, Agents Moss and Belvedere. Have a seat.

How was your flight?

Without incident.

I wouldn't go that far.

That turkey tetrazzini could be considered a terrorist act.



I want to thank you, Agent Moss, for your very detailed notes on the case.

It gives the CDC a very good starting point.

Simon and I are going to begin our background investigation as soon as we get back.



Actually, that won't be necessary.

The CDC is taking full command of the case.

You both can go back home and resume your regular protocols.



I do apologize for the redirection, but it seems we won't need your expertise.

But--



Again, I apologize for any misunderstanding, but I have a 4:30.

I assume you can find your way out?



This is such bullshit!

Something is up.

That's why we're going to stay on the case in California anyway.

That Damasco guy gives me the creeps.

Yeah. He didn't laugh at my tetrazzini joke. That's creepy.

IN A SECRET LABORATORY SOMEWHERE IN THE BOWELS OF THE CDC, DR. DAMASCO BEGINS HIS INTERROGATION OF THE "EYES".



Don't be afraid,
Ms. Swammer.

I am simply
going to "ask" you
a few questions.

Hopefully,
my questions won't be...
painful.

But that'll
be up to *you.*



MEANWHILE, AT SISTER SARAH'S ART COLONY REHABILITATION CENTER AT THE FOOT OF THE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS...



THE OFFICE OF THE MOTHER SUPERIOR.



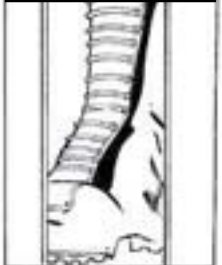
MOTHER AND SISTER CALLAHAN MAKE THEIR WAY TO A SECURE AREA OF THE FACILITY...



ONCE THEY ARE SAFELY BEHIND THE GATE...

...THEY DISCARD THEIR NUN'S HABITS...

...AND EMERGE...



...OFFICERS OF A SECRET FEMALE MILITARY SECT CALLED "THE CLUSTER"!!!





THEY PASS THE LAB...



THE CADET TRAINING ROOM...



CONTROL CENTRAL...



AND APPROACH THE BOARDROOM...



...WHERE A MEETING IS NOW IN SESSION.



Three of our *Eves* are being held by that bastard Damasco at the CDC

And thus ends our short-lived social experiment.

Can someone please tell me how this happened?

The other *Eves* have been tested and we can find no hint of viral infection.

Keep testing.

What's the extraction plan for Steno, Swammer, and Graaf?

We have to activate *Velasquez*. It's our only choice.

That's why we put her there.

Velasquez?

We've planted women from the Cluster in crucial government institutions as a failsafe.

They stay dark for ten-year stretches.

Velasquez is our woman at the CDC where Steno, Swammer, and Graaf are being held.

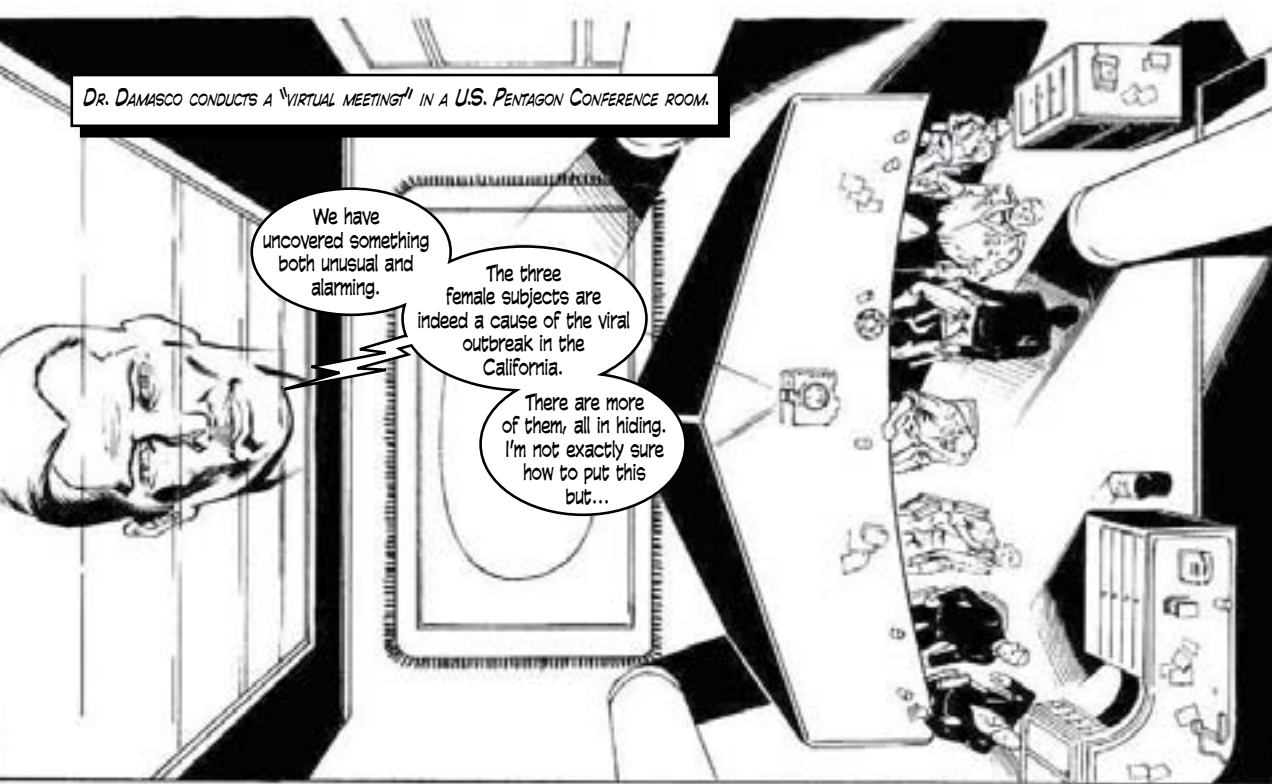
How long has she been out there?

Nine years.

Send a team to Atlanta and activate *Velasquez* before they find out too much.

Who knows what they're going through out there in the world of men.

DR. DAMASCO CONDUCTS A "VIRTUAL MEETING" IN A U.S. PENTAGON CONFERENCE ROOM.



We have uncovered something both unusual and alarming.

The three female subjects are indeed a cause of the viral outbreak in the California.

There are more of them, all in hiding. I'm not exactly sure how to put this but...



...these women are not really women.

What do you mean 'not really'?



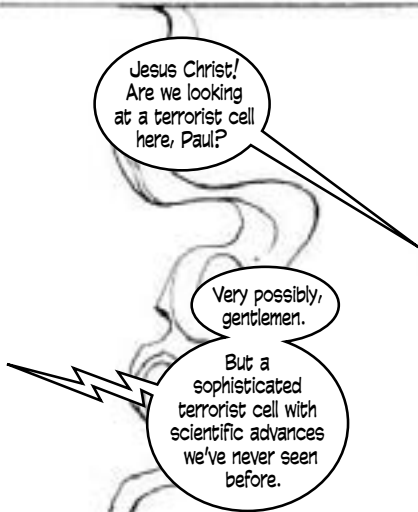
Well...for one thing, they have no fathers.

And they have what looks like an artificial Y chromosome.



Are they spies?

Or some kind of weapon?



Jesus Christ! Are we looking at a terrorist cell here, Paul?

Very possibly, gentlemen.

But a sophisticated terrorist cell with scientific advances we've never seen before.





ROXIE'S APARTMENT. THE CDC HAS INFORMED THE MEDIA THAT THE MAN-KILLER VIRUS WAS MERELY A FREAK OUTBREAK OF THE E. COLI VIRUS.



The outbreak has been contained and is no longer a public threat.

Nice way to spin it.

ROXIE'S CELL PHONE RINGS. IT'S SIMON.

Hi Simon. I was just going to call you.



Oh yeah?

Yeah. I was using different search engines to look up info on our three Eve's...



...and when I put their last names together in the search...

--Stero, Swammer, and Graaf--

...I found something peculiar.

What's that?

All three were 17th Century scientists...

...who had something to do with the discovery of the egg in human females.

Simon?

Why did you call me?

Funny you should ask.

I'm *not* in the command center, and Misha *isn't* sitting next to me helping me.

Hi, Misha

Rox says hi.

SIMON AND MISHA HAVE BEEN INTERCEPTING CELL PHONE TRAFFIC, ISOLATING CONVERSATIONS WHICH REFERENCE "MAN-KILLER VIRUS!"

We're getting unusually heavy chatter from a remote region of the Sierra National Forest.

There's also a lot of satellite-uplinked traffic coming through from that area.

Microwave and satellite dishes in government bandwidth.

The FCC has no licenses in that area.

Huh.

What's the chatter like?

Mostly encoded. But you're going to love this...

"Female Sperm!"

Come again?

Very funny. "Female sperm" is used over and over...

...often in conjunction with the *Man-Killer Virus!*

This is getting really weird.

We're also picking up a lot of Italian and Latin in the chatter...

...Also, this name or phrase keeps appearing...

...*"Suore di Guilditta"*.

What does *that* have to do with anything?

You tell me. You're the one with the *theology degree*.

These communications are coming from *Vatican City*, of all places.

Can you come down here and take a shift with Misha?

Sure. Where you going?

I have a meeting.

SIMON'S MEETING IS AT THE KICK BOXING GYM, WITH HIS FRIEND TOM.



So when are you going to fuck Roxie already, Simon?



Christ, Tom. She's my partner.



So what?

uhh!



So what?

It'd be like doing my sister, dude.



That's hot.



Yeah? How's this?

OOOF!



Come on, Simon, come clean...

...I can't believe you haven't screwed her yet.

What's a matter-- losin' your touch?



Heh, heh. Of course I've tried to get with her.

We were both instantly attracted to each other.

We decided we would remain partners if we kept it platonic.



Sigh. You're a better man than I, Bel.



SIMON'S CELL PHONE RINGS...

Speak of the devil...!



Damn!

What?

Two of the chicks we sent to the CDC last week escaped from their hospital ward.



SIMON AND ROXIE ARE RUSHED BACK TO THE CDC IN ATLANTA...

Looks like there was a struggle.

Where's the witness?

Not-so-quietly melting to death in another part of the facility.

Show us.

Don't worry. We now know that it's not airborne.

Man-Killer Virus?

Yes.

ROXIE NOTICES A PURPLE STRING BRACELET NEAR HER SHOE.

SHE SPOTS AN OPEN DOOR...

Hey Damasco, what's in here?

A GRUESOME SCENE.

SLAM!

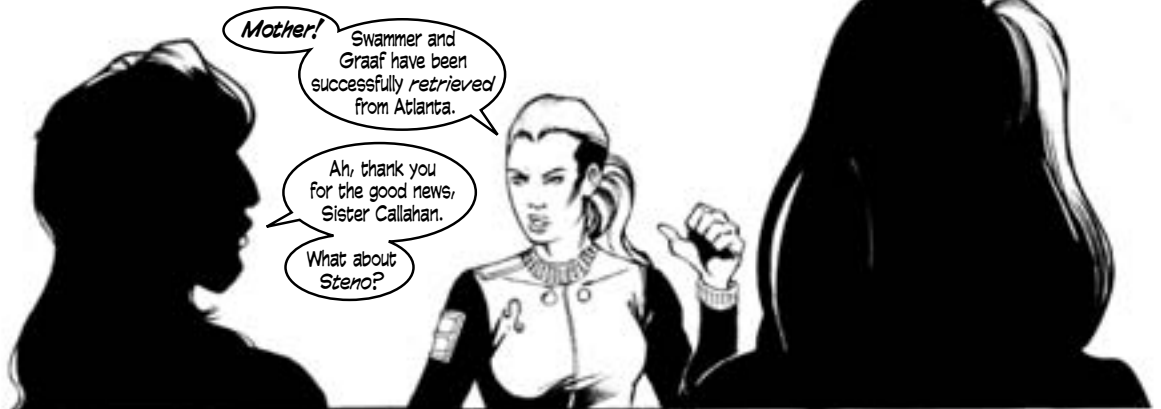
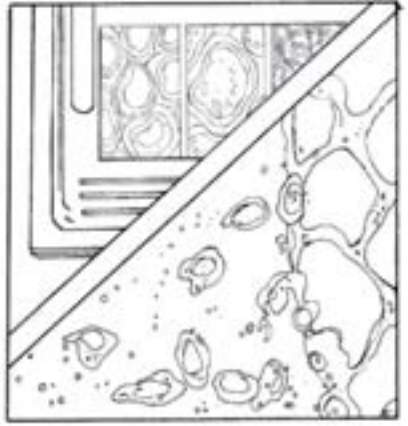
What the...?!

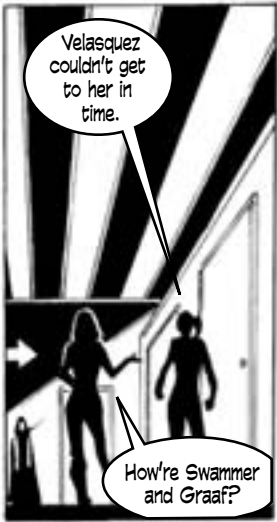
That's just another isolation room.

It's being...er, renovated.

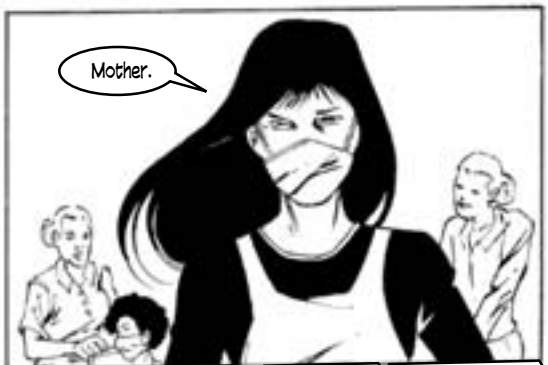
Where's Steno?

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE CLUSTER, SISTER DILARA SEARCHES FOR CLUES TO THE GENESIS OF THE VIRUS.





THE RESCUED SISTERS ARE WHEELED INTO THE CLUSTER, LED BY VELASQUEZ. ALL WEAR PROTECTIVE MASKS.



Mother.

Sister Velasquez, welcome home.

It's good to be back.

Graaf and Swammer aren't doing so well.



You are all to report to the infirmary for testing.

I'm sure you'll be fine testing.

Wait a minute, Velasquez. Let's have a look at you.



Do I look the same, Mother?

I'm nine years older.

It's been a rough wait.



You're very highly regarded here.

This is Sister Callahan.



I've been reading your file.

Quite impressive.



Sister Callahan will debrief you while you're in the infirmary.

We've expanded the Cluster while you've been gone.

You'll be pleased.



BACK AT THE PENTAGON CONFERENCE...



Everyone inherits both female and male genetic markers...



It's called genetic imprinting.



But the 'Eves'...

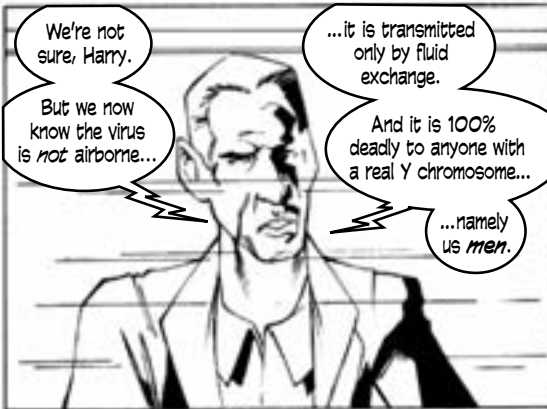


THE INTERN WEARS A PURPLE BRACELET.



...have an extra female marked male - or Y - chromosome.

What in Sam Hell does this all have to do with the goddamn d/sease, Paul?



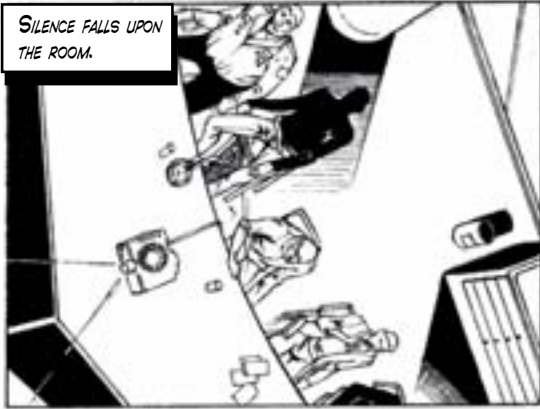
We're not sure, Harry.

But we now know the virus is *not* airborne...

...it is transmitted only by fluid exchange.

And it is 100% deadly to anyone with a real Y chromosome...

...namely us *men*.



SILENCE FALLS UPON THE ROOM.



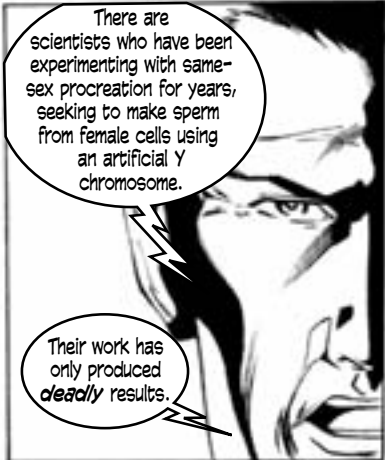
Brass Tacks, Paul...

is it those goddamned Islamo-fascists again?



Shit, Harry.

Don't you think Islamo-fascist scientists would be getting rid of *women*?



There are scientists who have been experimenting with same-sex procreation for years, seeking to make sperm from female cells using an artificial Y chromosome.

Their work has only produced *deadly* results.



Female spunk, Paul?

Shit, next they'll want the vote.

Or worse.

This is serious, gentlemen.

We could all wake up one morning with our *dicks* cut off and thrown out the *window*!



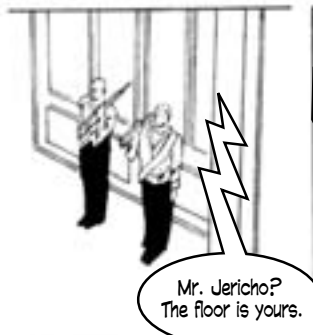
What this means is that men are for the first time *optional*.



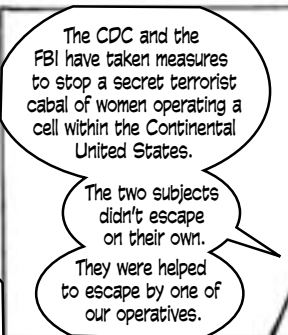
Excuse me.

Could all *non-essential* personnel leave the room, please?

That means *you, honey*.



Mr. Jericho?
The floor is yours.



The CDC and the FBI have taken measures to stop a secret terrorist cabal of women operating a cell within the Continental United States.

The two subjects didn't escape on their own.

They were helped to escape by one of our operatives.



Without their knowledge, the two escaped women have been infected by a virus similar to the ones they infected the men with.

In fact, we just reverse engineered the properties of the *Man-Killer Virus*.

This new virus kills only *women* with the *pseudo-Y* chromosome.

We're expecting to receive a signal from our operative shortly.



Can we trust *any* goddamned woman at this point?



They're all the *daughters of Eve*!



Let's just say that our double-agent isn't exactly what *SHE* seems.

I trust *her* without question.



