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NO 4

FUSION



the PENUMBRA

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Aviation adventure from the classic newspaper strip.

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Greyen invites Boronweto to join the Daughters of Death. Picks up where the Epic series left off!

PINK SKY: It's still too dark to see the keyboard, but since i can check myself on the green glowing screen, i don't need to turn the lights on. The sun will be up soon enough. Around me, outside, the sky is that peculiar pinkish orange of clear dawn. It has that "dawn effect" i like to see Steve Oliff or Sam Parsons colour with an airbrush.

No, i haven't been up all night drinking coffee and feeling like the star of a 1930s movie about newspapermen. In fact, i left the office early last night, and i did it in full knowledge that i was blowing my deadline for the July Penumbra, which was supposed to be on Sean's desk by nine o'clock this morning. I didn't give a fig; i went home and read a book by Irwin S. Cobb. Slept well too, the sleep of the irresponsible and the damned.

But here i am, and it's not even light yet.

I dunno. I just woke up. Next thing i knew i'd put on my flannel housecoat and walked over to the office. I think it's about five thirty. Dean is still asleep, and i ought to get back before he rolls over and misses me. But the birds are singing so nicely, and it's cool now after yesterday's heat. And i am supposed to be a writer, and the typesetter will need this as soon as she gets into her office this morning.

Sure is pretty outside. The window is wide open and i can look away to the east, to where the sun will come up behind the trees. It happens every day, but that's no reason someone shouldn't mention it in print.

I don't suppose you read these pages to learn about the daily habits of the sun, but, well, the sorry truth is that i haven't got much else on my mind at the present. No thunderous orations about the future of comics are bursting from my brain right at this time. It's too quiet and still out there for a hard sell pitch about how great our books are, although i surely hope you will buy dozens of them this month. And even though it's getting lighter now, i don't think i shall dig out any more lists of readers' names and occupations to print. Nope.

Today i am a transparent sky watcher, a leaf awaiting photosynthesis, a bird among the birds of the garden. I am not human yet, i have not a lot to say.

The sky is turning yellow and a robin is singing very loudly behind the house. The blue jays are at it too, and the neighbor's rooster. Early traffic on Covey Road sounds like distant hissing steam. Today is Wednesday, and the friendly Basque man who owns Sunrise Salvage will be along within the hour to empty the garbage cans down at the foot of the driveway.

And now the dawn has reached the bleached out moment; the colour is utterly gone from the sky. In the east all is white, a cool breeze eases through the open window and the trees turn from dark grey to somber green. As of this minute i can say i "just got up early" rather than that i am "running around in the middle of the night in my housecoat."

Not that anyone's here to ask me, mind you, but just in case they did.

And there's the sun. It's morning. A crow is cawing in the old walnut tree. I've filled my page with type and I can go back to the house, brush my teeth and put on my clothes. Won't Sean be surprised when he comes in at nine and sees this on his desk!? He thought i'd blown my deadline.

Holy hell—the phone's ringing! Six o'clock in the a.m. and the phone's ringing in the office. Let's see who's there...

Why, it's Paul McSpadden from the Dallas Fantasy Fair! Hi, Paul! No, you didn't wake me—I've been up for hours!

catherine yronwode


THE STORY SO FAR:
THE CREW OF THE GOOD SHIP TSUNAMI HAS
PAID A TERRIBLE PRICE--THE LIFE OF CREW-
MATE HERRICK. IN EXCHANGE THEY RECEIVED
TWO ITEMS OF DIFFERING VALUE: THE FREEDOM
OF CAPTAIN INDIO, AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT
THE PLANET SKELDS CONCEALS A
TERRIBLE SECRET...

HERRICK IS
DEAD BECAUSE OF
YOUR LIES, CHATK.
I WANT THE TRUTH.
I WANT IT NOW.

WE ARE AN HONORABLE
PEOPLE. WHAT WE DID,
WE DID TO SURVIVE.

**THE SOULSTAR
COMMISSION
PART II**

STEVEN BARNES
WRITER

LELA DOWLING / STEVE BALLACCI
ARTISTS

K. NATHAWAY
LETTERS

LETITIA GLOZER
EDITOR

LEX NAKASHIMA - CONCEPTUAL EDITOR



YOU REMEMBER THE WAR, AND THE DESPERATION THAT IS BORN OUT OF FEAR.



WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF OUR SOULSTARS?

PSIOS TETRASILICATE. ONLY KNOWN PSYCHIC ENHANCER. THE ONLY SOURCE OF TRANSLIGHT COMMUNICATION.

YOU WERE ONE OF THE FIVE SOURCES OF SOULSTARS. THEN YOUR ECONOMY COLLAPSED.



TELL ME, CAPTAIN TREMAINE... WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER FOUR PLANETS?



NOTHING. THEY STILL PRODUCE SOULSTARS. I DON'T--

I DO.

CARZ...?

D'HUNG.

CARZ?



MY PEOPLE HAD A MINING COLONY ON D'HUNG. IT WAS THIRTY YEARS AGO.

WASN'T THAT WHERE... THE WOMEN...

THE WOMEN WOULDN'T LET THEIR MATES THROW THEIR LIVES AWAY. THEY SURRENDERED THE MINES. THE WOMEN AND CUBS FORMED A WALL WITH THEIR OWN BODIES.



EVERY SOURCE OF SOULSTARS BECAME A BATTLEGROUND. CULTURES FELL. MILLIONS DIED. WE SAW IT COMING.





I FULFILLED MY PART OF THE BARGAIN AND EXPECT YOU TO FULFILL YOURS.

LIEGE! THIS WOMAN'S INEPT...

SILENCE! CAPTAIN TREMAINE, YOU MAY TAKE TEN SOULSTARS.



PERMIT ME TO KEEP WHAT REMAINS OF MY HONOR. I AM SORRY FOR THE DEATH OF YOUR FRIEND. IT WAS NEVER INTENDED.

TEN SOULSTARS? THAT'S A FORTUNE!

IN A FEW DAYS, IT WILL ALL BELONG TO T'KOP ANYWAY. A BAG OF SAND STOLEN FROM A DESERT.



IT IS SO VERY LITTLE...



I'M SORRY, CH*TK. THESE ARE BAD TIMES. NOBODY CAN AFFORD TO BE A HERO ANYMORE.



OH, HERRICK, I'LL MISS YOU...



THE WARS HAVE MADE EVERYONE SO NO ONE WILL LIFT A FINGER TO HELP SOMEONE ELSE.

I KNOW: THE BAD OLD DAYS WHERE FIFTY TAC SUITS CAN WIN AN EMPIRE.



MIGHT AS WELL BE FIFTY THOU...



WAIT JUST A MINUTE. MOST OF THOSE SUITS ARE UNSHIELDER.

INDIO?









IT IS NOT
A LARGE
FORCE...

YOU FORESEE
SUCCESS.

IT IS NOT THE SIZE OF THE FORCE
ALONE. WE NEED ONLY TO CAPTURE THE
PALACE AND ELIMINATE CHWTK. WE SHALL
USE QUICKNESS AND TERROR
AS OUR MAIN WEAPONS.



I BROUGHT YOU JAGGER. I
WILL BRING YOU VICTORY. THEN
YOU WILL GIVE ME THE WEALTH
I SEEK. THE BASE I NEED. THEN
I WILL BUILD A FORCE SUCH AS
JAGGER NEVER DREAMED.

WE WILL
BUILD.

OF COURSE. YOUR
PARDON, MY LIEGE.



RIGHT. I KNEW
YOU'D STILL BE
HERE.

AND WHY
SHOULD I
LEAVE?

DO YOU SERIOUSLY
EXPECT TO STAY
IN BUSINESS?

COME NOW. T'KOP HAS
SENT EMISSARIES ASSURING
ME OF MY SAFETY.



TELL ME... RED TO MOVE
AND BLACK CAN ATTEMPT CHECK
ON HIS NEXT MOVE.

SHOULD I MAKE A
PREMPTIVE ATTACK, OR
IMPROVE MY POSITION
AND WAIT?

IMPROVE YOUR POSITION
AND WAIT. IF YOU WANT TO
PLAY IT SAFE.

YES, THAT IS ALWAYS
THE CONUNDRUM, IS IT NOT?
TELL ME, WHY HAVE YOU COME?
CYN AND... CARZ, I BELIEVE.
I AM AFRAID I DO NOT KNOW
THE OTHER TWO.

DON COOK,
FIRST MATE,
TRAMPSHIP
TSUNAMI.

AH, YES. YOUR CREW BROUGHT A
SHIPMENT OF CORONIAN BRANDY FOR
ME. IT WAS EXCELLENT.



DO YOU BELIEVE
T'KOP'S PROMISES?

I HAVE REIGNED IN
THE UNDERWORLD HERE
FOR OVER A CENTURY.
LITTLE IS KEPT FROM ME.



A
CENTURY?

OH, THIS... A LONGEVITY
TREATMENT THAT BACK-
FIRED. I WILL NEVER GROW
OLD. A BLESSING I SUP-
POSE. STILL, THERE ARE
CERTAIN THINGS I REGRET.

EVERY SILVER LINING HAS
ITS CLOUD. NOW, CYN, YOU TOLD
ME OF A PROPOSITION.



YOU HAVE MEN AND WEAPONS.
YOU CONTROL EVERYTHING THAT
MOVES IN THE CRYSTAL STATE.
WHY WON'T YOU FIGHT?

BECAUSE I'M NOT A FOOL.
IF THERE WAS SOMETHING TO
FIGHT WITH ... NONSENSE, I
CANNOT DEFEAT AN ARMY.



IN THIS
CASE, YOU
CAN.

CYN IS NOT A
FOOL. WHAT IS
THIS CHANCE?

WE NEED
TO TALK
PRIVATELY...



IS NO CHANCE. LOOK
IS FOOL. COWARD.
BRAGGART.

HOW DID
YOU GET
OUT?

HAVE FRIENDS.
PAY FINES. I
REPAY DEBT.



REPAY
HOW?

FRIENDS SAY
CHANGE COMES.
SMART ONES WAIT.
DON'T INTERFERE.

"FRIENDS."
I CAN GUESS
WHO.

ADVISE RIGHT. STAY
OUT OF THIS.



HOW LOOK. WHATEVER HAPPENS,
YOU LOSE. I SUCK YOUR
MORROW. I SWEAR IT.

I'M SHAKING.
EIGHT-BALL.

WATCH MY
BACKSIDE.

WE CAN HAVE
THAT PRIVATE
CONVERSATION,
MR. LOOK.

SILLY
BOY



IT IS TRUE. I NEVER
CONSIDERED, AND NEITHER, I'LL
WAGER, HAS T'KOP. I WILL STILL
WANT CONCESSIONS FROM CHOTK.
AN OPEN FRANCHISE, IN PERPETUITY.

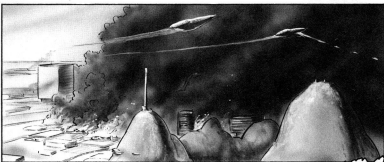


"WE WILL. WE HAVE TO."

REMEMBER, ALIVE. KREELI HAS BUSINESS HE WISHES TO FINISH AS SLOWLY AS POSSIBLE.

I'VE GOT IT.

BE SURE THAT YOU DO.



YOU'RE SURE... THEY WON'T BOMB THE PALACE?

THE PALACE IS A SYMBOL. TKOP WILL WANT IT STANDING.

YOU HAD BETTER THE HELL HOPE SO. IT'S THE ONLY CHANCE WE HAVE.

BOOOOON!

NIVEG, WE'VE GOT TO GET DOWN INTO THE CATACOMBS.

NOW!

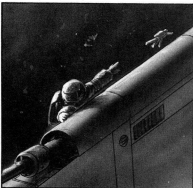
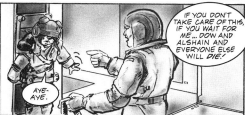




HAVEN,
WATCH
YOURSELF.

MAKE
A DO.

THAT'S IF DOWN AND THE
OTHERS HAVEN'T ALL BEEN
KILLED BY NOW.











TO BE CONTINUED ...

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OUT!!**

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Take Off!



Dear FUSION,

I am a big fan of FUSION. I was very lucky to pick up one of the last copies of FUSION #2, because the local comic book store sold out of it, fifteen minutes after receiving it. I just happened to have been at the right place at the right time! I can't wait to find out what happens to Indio. I hope that she gets killed, because I think she is very stuck up.

Steve Gallacci and Lela Dowling's art is incredible, and Steven Barnes does a great job on the story. I also enjoy Ken Macklin's "Dr. Watchstop," and I am looking forward to "Contractors."

Jon Hopkins
10504 NE 152nd Street
Bothell, WA 98011

Dear Eclipse,

Recently, as you are well aware, black-and-white comics have lost their draw. The facade of value put forth by small-time, one-shot publishers has been broken. Very few black-and-whites are still good, and even fewer good ones spark any interest. Somehow, though, you have managed to put out a black-and-white comic of highest quality in a time when I wouldn't have thought it possible.

I'm talking about FUSION. FUSION is a wonderfully rendered piece, full of vibrant characters and a wonderfully wrought storyline and plot. I love each and every member of the Tsunami, and I look forward to learning more about them all.

It is with sincerest thanks that I welcome FUSION into my collection of all-time favorites. But if you continue to publish other excellent new black-and-white titles, there might be a resurgence of black-and-whites ... and we wouldn't want that now, would we?

Jason Potar
166 E. Maujer Street
Valley Stream, NY 11580

Kill her for being stuck up?!? Ouch! Oh, and if you ever have any problem getting copies of either FUSION or The Dreamery, write or call the Eclipse offices, or make a big noise at your comic store! Copies of all Eclipse comics should be available for at least three months following release.

Contractors is going to be great!!!

Dear FUSION,

I love it! Not without some qualifications, of course -- that simply isn't in the nature of someone with my temperament -- but the second issue of FUSION gives substance to number one's promise that the series will be a winner. The alchemy resulting from the blend of Lela's and Steve's distinct styles has produced something outstanding in the field.

Now for the criticisms:

ART: Throughout the book, the visual point of view has a sameness that is departed from only a few times. Only a masterful interplay of close and long shots prevents this from becoming tedious.

Neither Steve nor Lela has much strength in backgrounds, and on some pages the predominance of empty white space is a little too evident. In this respect, the first issue was a bit superior. (But how much can you do with the interior of a holding cell?)

Washes and overall balance of shading have been handled much better than the overdone muddiness of Steve's airbrushing in Albedo's "Erma."

STORY: The situation presented in the first issue has been done so many times, it is commendable that you came up with as readable a version of the scenario as you did -- but it would have been better to have started with something more original than a bar fight.

Transition between scenes is classily handled, and your sense of dramatic timing is the best I've seen in a long while. Each scene lasts precisely as long as it should and segues neatly in to the next.

The Mother Stone scene comes across as a big expository lump. The necessary background information could have been presented with a lot more grace.

All the crew members are only slightly-fleshed caricatures: the tough lady captain, the Daedalus-style techie, the egoistic lover/brawler... Nives and 'her Majesty' too we've met before in many stories in the genre.

The second issue rounds out some of the personalities a little more, especially Dow's, presenting a plausible motivation for his pugnacious quest for oblivion -- but he is still far from being a three-dimensional player. You have done an effective job, however, in generating reader sympathy for him.

Wolf lahti Duby
1514 N 38th
Seattle, WA 98103

Your comments are noted and appreciated. The process seems to be running more smoothly now that Steve and Lela are getting the hang of each other (so to speak). Hopefully, issue three showed you what they are capable of, as it is the issue where the art and story really began to sing. We're still working on the toning ...

The first issue, besides setting up the longer story, was for fun. We knew that coordinating the writer and artists on the first issue would be a bear and to alleviate the pain, we did something that both artists and writer could have fun with. Want to make an artist happy? Give him or her a bar fight on an alien world to work with. As for characterizations, wait for issues six, seven and eight (immediately following The Soulstar Commission story). Trust me.

Dear FUSION crew,

Sorry this is a bit late, blame pressure of work, but I've finally found time for a leisurely read of the second issue of FUSION, which I found as thoroughly enjoyable as the first, and at the same time much more clarifying. After the first issue, I was pretty confused about just what it was all about. Now, the larger picture is emerging. The little text piece on the crew members was a great help, and a much better way of presenting the information than filling the story with word balloons.

Lela Dowling's art is really lovely, be it in black-and-white or the colour cover. As I said last time, it's really nice to see her working on a regular strip -- is this an open-ended title, or a limited series? She draws the varying physiognomies of the races that populate the FUSION universe marvelously. I wish she and Steve would use the grey tones more, as when they do, it complements and never obscures the line work. She and Steve also clearly understand the need not to clog up the panels with needless details. All in all, this gives the whole strip an easily understandable look, while maintaining the high quality of the art.

As for the storyline I hope the quest that Indio has been forced into doesn't keep her and her crew separate for too long, as they function so well as a group. Emotional blackmail is a very powerful tool, and Indio has fallen victim to it. It seems that Cyn's revelations will mean a swift reunion, as I can't see Dow Cook and company doing anything but their utmost to aid their obviously beloved captain. Whatever, you've set up an interesting and original comic book, and I can safely say that I'm aboard for the ride.

Malcolm Bourne
87 Greenfield Gardens
Cricklewood
London NW2 1HU England

Thanks for the kudos! The story really would be easier to follow if it were monthly, though the mere mention of this idea sends the artists into conniptions. FUSION is intended as a continuing series, though the current storyline will conclude in issue five.

Fellow FUSIONites,

When I first heard about FUSION, I was only going to buy it because Steve Gallacci's name was mentioned, since I've been a big fan of his work in Albedo and Critters, but after reading the first two issues, I may end up being a bigger fan of Lela Dowling and her artwork, here and in The Dreamery. This collaboration may be the best thing that ever happened in comics (and I've seen collaborations that've failed).

Steven Barnes' storyline is most impressive, on both humorous and serious levels, as well as the equally important contributions of Buhalis and Glozer. Each character is interesting in his or her (or its) own way. The action is colorful, which is not easy for a black-and-white comic book, and the illustrations are most stylish.

My only quandary about FUSION lies in its letter department, which sometimes garners positive, and sometimes negative responses. For that reason, I thought that a better name for that page should be "ProFUSION and ConFUSION", but then, what do I know? I'm not in the comic business.

At any rate, here's wishing both crews, the FUSION staff and everyone aboard the Tsunami, smooth sailing in future endeavors.

Jed Martinez
71 Crystal Street
Elmont, NY 11003

Thanks for the good wishes. As for the letters page, sometimes you get ecstatic letters, sometimes you get critical ones. What we finally print is approximately the same ratio of good/bad letters that we receive. Regarding negative letters, we try to print those that most eloquently put forth constructive criticisms. Your letter is actually kind of unique, in your comments about the letter column. Besides Noel Tominack, you're really the only one to do so.

See you all next issue!
— Lex



Just a note to anyone planning on attending the San Diego Comic Con:

Lela Dowling, Ken Macklin, Steve Gallacci, Lex Nakashima and the rest will (hopefully) be sharing a set of tables somewhere in the dealer's room. As usual cat, Dean and the rest of the Eclipse crew will also be there in force. Come on by and be sociable! Find out where things in Dreamery and FUSION are going! Ask embarrassing questions!

Welcome to the fourth issue of **FUSION**, where death and destruction run rampant and desperate gambles are a way of life.

It is sometimes necessary to "assemble" a particular issue of **FUSION** in a rather unorthodox manner, in order to meet our deadline. For example, this issue was finalized at Baycon, a science fiction convention held annually in San Jose, California. Mad inking sessions, red vines and inflatable killer whales were all brought together as the **FUSION** crew worked in a chocolate-controlled frenzy. One of the more interesting things to come out of this mammoth session is the "How we do it" section, which will probably result in the defenestration of several key artists. So much for a low profile.

As mentioned in the letter column, interesting things will be happening with the various **FUSION** characters. After the dramatic conclusion of "The Soulstar Commission" in issue five, there will be some character pieces on current players, the introduction of several new characters and more fun than a leg full of weasels.

This issue was lettered by the heroic Kurt Hathaway, who (with very little notice at all) managed to rescue us when the talented and pre-assembled Lois Buhalis succumbed to some noxious vapors and fell ill for several weeks. Thanks, Kurt! Get better, Lois!

— *Lex Nakashima, Knob*

RESULTS:

The winner of the last (ill-considered) contest, that of designing a multi-species toilet for the ship is: **Jed Martinez!** The entries were judged by Steve Gallacci, Ken Macklin, Lela Dowling, Gordon Garb and Lex Nakashima. We'd like to thank Jon Hopkins, Eric Day, Noel Tominack, Dorothy Bradley (who suggested a traditional Japanese-style toilet -- you must dislike future space travelers greatly, Dorothy), John Henry Sain, Matthew-Louis Levin, Adam Hopperstead, Brian Wagner, Arthur Reyler, Kevin O'Mahoney and Mitch Rodriguez for their entries, creative as they were!

For those who are curious, Steve Gallacci describes the whole batch of entries as follows: "There were two vacuum hose types; one (a strap-on torture device) had provisions for two orifices (the other to be used for tidying up the ship). There was also a 'kitty-litter' cubicle, an omni-configural backboard, several centrifugical bathrooms and a number of rude comments about the management and staff." Nuff said.

— *Lex Nakashima, mea culpa.*

CONTEST!

Well, not really. This time I'd just like to find out where everyone's been getting their copies of **FUSION**. On a standard postcard write your name, address and the city and name of the store where you buy **FUSION**. We're curious. If you're already sending us a letter (which are extremely appreciated!) just write the info on a plain 3 by 5 inch card and throw it in with the letter. We need to receive all entries by **August 31, 1987**. On that day we will draw three cards from the lot and send those winners a sketch by either Gallacci or Dowling of their favorite character (write your preference on the postcard!). Also we'll throw in the additional rule of **one entry per person**. If you shop at more than one shop, list them all.

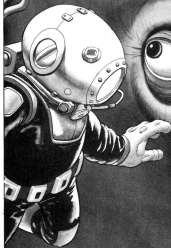


The "Bush Guide" illo, based on one of the zebroids in **FUSION**, was drawn by Mary Lynn Skirvin, a Chicago-based artist. Brilliant, Mary!

Dr. Watchstop

IN
"GONE FISHING"

I THOUGHT
PERHAPS YOU
COULD HELP
ME...



ART & STORY BY
KEN MACKLIN
LETTERING BY
L. LOIS BUHALIS

I'M LOOKING
FOR A
SHIPWRECK.



WHAT
SORT OF
SHIP?





AN INTERPLANETARY
SHIP! ABOUT TWENTY YEARS
AGO, AN UNMANNED PROBE
SHIP WAS PASSING THROUGH
YOUR STAR SYSTEM...



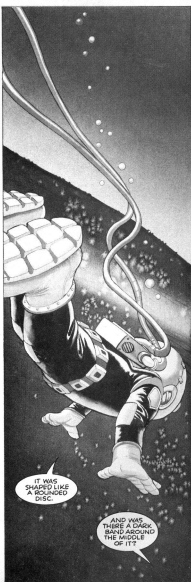
...IT MALFUNCTIONED
AND CRASHED INTO
THIS WATERY
WORLD.

THE
WRECKAGE
OF THE PROBE
COULD CONTAIN
VALUABLE
DATA.



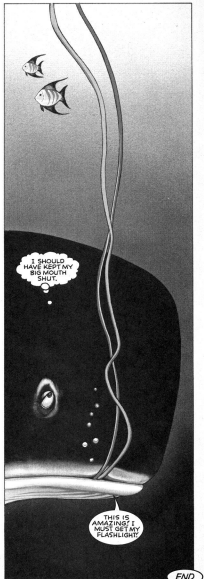
WAS IT
SORT OF
METALLIC
AND
SHINY?

WHY,
YES, IT
WAS?



IT WAS
SHAPED LIKE
A ROUNDED
DISC.

AND WAS
THERE A DARK
BAND AROUND
THE MIDDLE
OF IT?





TOP OF THE NEWS



ECLIPSE PRESS

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Hampton, Jones, Campbell Finish *Silverheels*; Eclipse Graphic Novel Features 21 New Pages

"It felt real good to know that *Silverheels* was going to be completed," says artist Scott Hampton of his Eclipse graphic novel written by Bruce Jones and April Campbell. "I was upset that the readers were left hanging." It's been five years since Hampton started the project, which was initially serialized at Pacific Comics but never completed.

"The three issues published by Pacific garnered rave reviews," says editor Letitia Glozier, "but they're hard to find nowadays. Now readers can pick up the whole package, including 21 new pages of art and story. People who were impressed with Scott's early things will be utterly amazed by the new pages—he just keeps getting better!"

Hampton also feels that his work has improved. "I've gotten better technically, but I think the new stuff has the same quality of energy." Sometimes he fears that his technique may overshadow his youth and enthusiasm. "After all," he says, "that's a very important part of my work, something I want to hold onto. I'm wary of too much sophistication. I hope readers can enjoy *Silverheels* for the Wowsville stuff."

Working with writers Jones and Campbell was a treat for Hampton. "They're very easy to get along with, give an artist autonomy, are able to give artists good advice. Our working relationship is the best that I can think of."

Silverheels ships June 23 and is available in a trade paperback (\$7.95), hardcover (\$14.95), and limited edition signed and numbered hardcover (\$24.95).

Paperdolls From the Comics Is Released

Eclipse has just published *Paperdolls from the Comics*, a collection of comic strip paperdolls from the thirties through the fifties, edited and annotated by Trina Robbins.

In her introduction to the collection, Robbins writes, "Back in the golden years of the thirties, forties and fifties, when paper was cheap, there was enough room in the comics section of the Sunday papers to print paper dolls of the comics characters. Strips as unlikely as *Terry and the Pirates*, *Dick Tracy* and *Alley Oop* (sweaters for a dinosaur?) featured paper dolls as a gimmick to attract readership."

This survey of such paperdolls includes the three aforementioned characters, in addition to such stalwarts as *Brenda Starr*, *Winnie Winkle*, *Dixie Dugan* (modelled after silent actress Louise Brooks!), *Katy Keene*, *Smilin' Jack*, *Torchy Brown* and others. Robbins also adds brief and informative biographical information of each comic strip.

John Burns Brings A New Look To *Espers*

Espers has a new look and a new artist starting with issue 5 (now on sale). Award winning British artist John M. Burns provides the visuals in a fully painted medium that is "utterly incredible," according to writer James D. Hudnall. Reaction to John's art has been phenomenal so far, with retailers across the country reporting the issue immediately selling out in their stores.

"John's art has completely exceeded my expectations," says Hudnall. "This is some of the most beautiful art I've ever seen in a comic. People keep coming up to me at conventions saying how 'gorgeous' this book is and how much they like it. I think this may be a sign that it's catching on!"

Despite rave reviews and critical acclaim from such people as Harlan Ellison, Ray Bradbury, Will Eisner, Don Thompson and Dave Gibbons, the first four issues of the series (drawn by David Lloyd) have not met with the success one would expect. None the less, Eclipse and Hudnall felt confident and determined enough to continue it as a regular series.

Feazell Stages Coup!

Matt Feazell, author-artist of *The Adventures of Zot!* in *Dimension 10½*, the funniest back-up in comics, has staged a bloodless coup by overthrowing *Zot!* creator Scott McCloud for one issue, completely switching chores on the popular cult hit. For one turbulent issue, Feazell will write and draw everything McCloud usually creates—and vice versa. Since McCloud's normal stories of *Zot*, Jenny and co. run twenty-five pages to Feazell's one, this marks quite a change in the look of the issue in question.

The Adventures of Zot! in *Dimension 10½* will ship September 29 as a regular black & white 32 page comic from Eclipse. The price will be \$2.00. The issue will be numbered "14½" to explain both its relation to continuity and its position on the schedule between the regular *Zot!* #14 and #15. As a result, the normally bi-monthly *Zot!* will ship with a three-month space between #14 and #15.

The tradition of "half-numbered," Feazell-drawn issues of *Zot!* began with the now-famous *Zot!* #10½, a mini-comic which outlasted the original colour run of the series by thousands of copies, and which is a highly sought-after collectible. The popularity of this issue, led to the continuation of the "Dimension 10½" feature as an ongoing back-up in *Zot!*.

"*The Adventures of Zot!* in *Dimension 10½* #14 will take up the story where the back-up story leaves off in *Zot!* #14, and the one-page *Zot!* back-up by McCloud will fall into the continuity between parts one and two of "Season of Dreams" which will run in the regular series' issues #14 and #15," explains editor Catherine Yronwode. "And if you understood that without having to read it a second time, you are exactly the sort of intellectually adaptive reader this series appeals to."

B. C. Boyer's *The Masked Man* Is Back in Town Longest Running Eclipse Character Returns in Black and White

The Masked Man B. C. Boyer's hard-hitting hero with a heart of gold, returns this July in the first of a series of black and white specials in the format that has made *Crossfire* and *Zot!* such strong sellers.

Like *Zot!* and *Crossfire*, *The Masked Man* had a strong core of fans yet never managed to pull the large audience required for a colour book. The recent success of Eclipse's other "human" heroes in black and white led editor Fred Burke and creator Boyer to begin work on the new series, projected at thrice yearly publication. The new book will make *The Masked Man* Eclipse's longest running character, having appeared in the black and white *Eclipse Magazine*, the colour *Eclipse Monthly*, and nine issues of his own colour comic. "A new issue of *The Masked Man* really helps make the schedule seem complete," says editor-in-chief Cat Yronwode.

Boyer feels he has a definite mission in comics. "With every issue, I'm trying to give the readers more than just a couple of minutes of fast adventure," he says. "I want to leave them with the sense that there is good in the world."

The Masked Man #10 retails for \$2.00 and will ship July 21.

Strike! Debuts In August Dixon, Lyle Update Golden Age Hero

Chuck Dixon and Tom Lyle, the creative team on the ever-popular *Skywolf* back-up in *Airboy*, are at it again, this time taking the power belt from an obscure Golden Age super-soldier and passing it on to a black teenager in the heart of Baltimore. When *Strike!* makes its debut in August, fans who have been clamoring for a "straight" superhero saga from Dixon will finally get their wish.

"I've always wanted to play with the genre," says Dixon, "but up 'til now I never had a project that interested me enough. The whole idea of *Sgt. Strike* piqued my interest. I'm going to try to take the all-out action of my adventure stories and add in the classic superhero elements."

"Well, if that's what he's trying to do," laughs editor Fred Burke, "then he's certainly succeeding! Some of the fight sequences in *Strike!* #3 make Miracleman almost look like a pussycat."

"Basically," says Dixon, "*Strike!* is about a present day teenager who finds the costume of a Golden Age superhero in his mom's attic. Issue #1 will tell the story of the Golden Age Sgt. Strike's origin. Continuing issues will show Dennis Foreman, the new *Strike*, and how he copes with his newfound powers."

The first issue of the monthly, colour, *Baxter Strike!* ships August 11 and retails for \$1.75.

Milton Caniff's America New Book Collects Patriotic Strips From Entire Career

Milton Caniff is universally regarded as one of the great comic strip creators of all time and a new book to be published by Eclipse in late June collects an important aspect of this most important career.

Edited by Shel Dorf, *Milton Caniff's America: Reflections of a Drawingboard Patriot* collects in one book the many patriotic and holiday strips created by Caniff over the years. Dorf calls it "a very important book in Milton's career," and says that he is including over 70 daily strips and 13 Sundays drawn from *Terry and the Pirates* and *Steve Canyon* (including the *Terry* page which was read into the *Congressional Record*), as well as single panels, Caniff's personal Christmas cards, illustrations for the Boy Scouts, Sigmund Chi, and more.

Milton Caniff's America will be on sale at Flagg Plaza as well as in specialty stores. The book is approximately 100 pages, in a format to match other Caniff collections (10 inches by 8 inches).

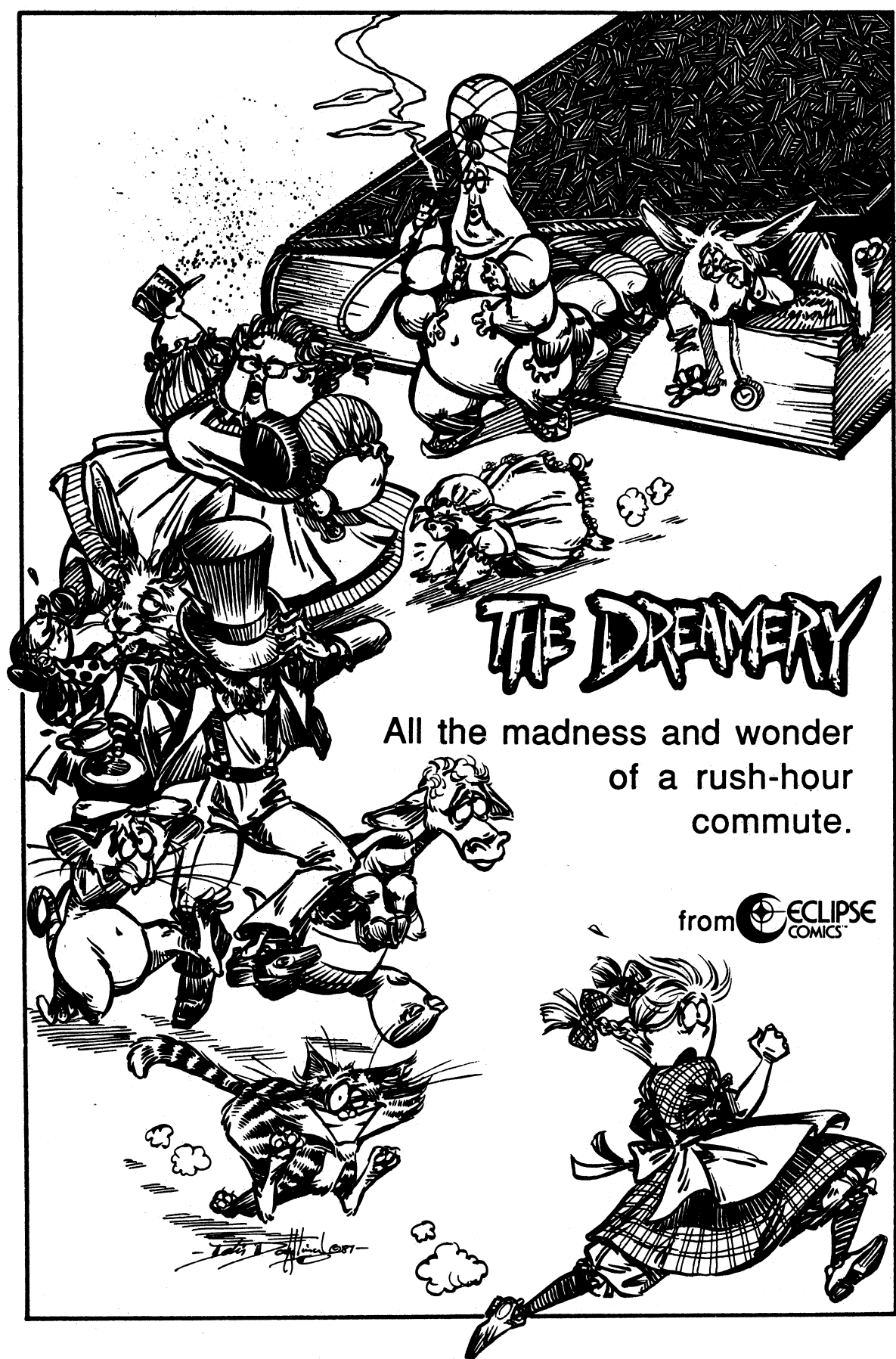
Release date for *Milton Caniff's America* is July 4, 1987.

Scout Flexidisc Earns Outside Media Attention

Scout #19, which retails for \$2.50 and features a soundtrack recording on flexidisc, shipped to comics shops May 5. "Advance response to the songs on the flexidisc has been unanimously favorable from the people we've played it for," says *Scout* creator Timothy Truman, who composed and plays guitar on the songs. Truman spent several years as a practicing professional musician before turning his efforts to comics. "Eclipse and the musicians who helped me on the recording are quite proud of the quality of the music, as well as how well the music works with the visuals."

Eclipse notes that press packages were sent to such magazines as *Spin*, *Rolling Stone*, *Guitar Player*, and *Rip*, as well as to radio stations WMMR in Philadelphia, WNEW in New York, KFOG in San Francisco, and KLOS in Los Angeles, among others. "As a result," says publisher Dean Mullaney, "we've been notified that *Creem* magazine (one of the best-selling and longest running newsworld rock and roll periodicals) and *Modern Drummer* (a slick publication catering to music professionals and sold at all major music stores) will be running news about the issue and illustrations taken from the comic. We certainly expect other publications to follow suit."

Truman hopes his record won't be lost amidst all the publicity. "I want people to play the flexidisc rather than just leaving it in the comic, putting the comic in a bag, and filing both away somewhere with their other collectibles. We put a lot of sweat into this project, Eva Tone has done a great job of reproducing the music exactly as it was mixed, and the flexidisc itself is incredibly durable and wear-resistant. I think that most folks are really going to enjoy the record."



THE DREAMERY

All the madness and wonder
of a rush-hour
commute.

from  ECLIPSE
COMICS

HOW WE DO IT! AFTER MANY QUERIES
AS TO WHO DOES WHAT AND
WHY—GIVEN THE LENGTHY
LIST OF CREDITS—THAT COME
WITH EACH ISSUE, WE'VE DECIDED
TO LET YOU-ALL IN ON THE SECRET.



LEX STARTED IT ALL,
COMING UP WITH THE CONCEPT
A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO.



HE GOT US ALL
TOGETHER TO
DISCUSS THE
PROJECT.

WE DEBATED
THE CONCEPT—AND
AFTER CAREFUL
CONSIDERATION—
WE DECIDED TO
GO FOR IT.

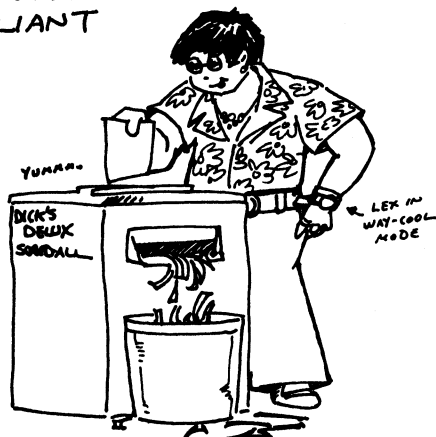




EACH EPISODE STARTS WITH
STEVE BARNES - AFTER EXTENSIVE
RESEARCH - WRITING THE BRILLIANT
SCRIPTS -.

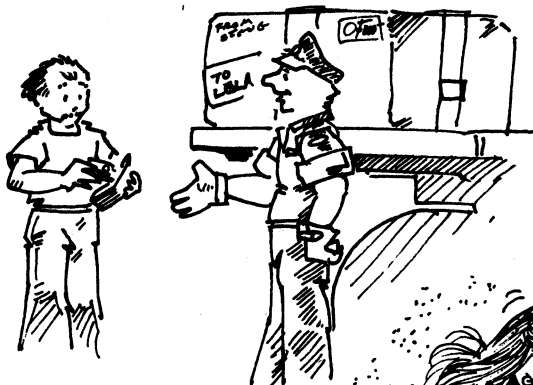
LEX MAKES ANY
EDITORIAL
ADJUSTMENTS -

AND FORWARDS IT ON
TO STEVE GALLAGHER.



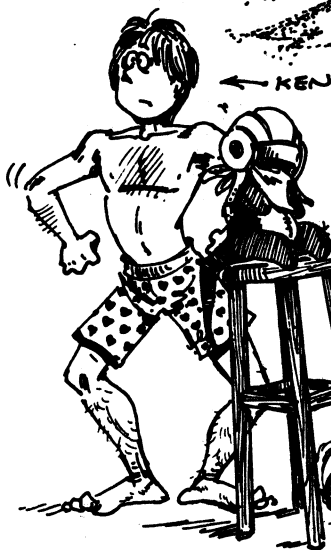
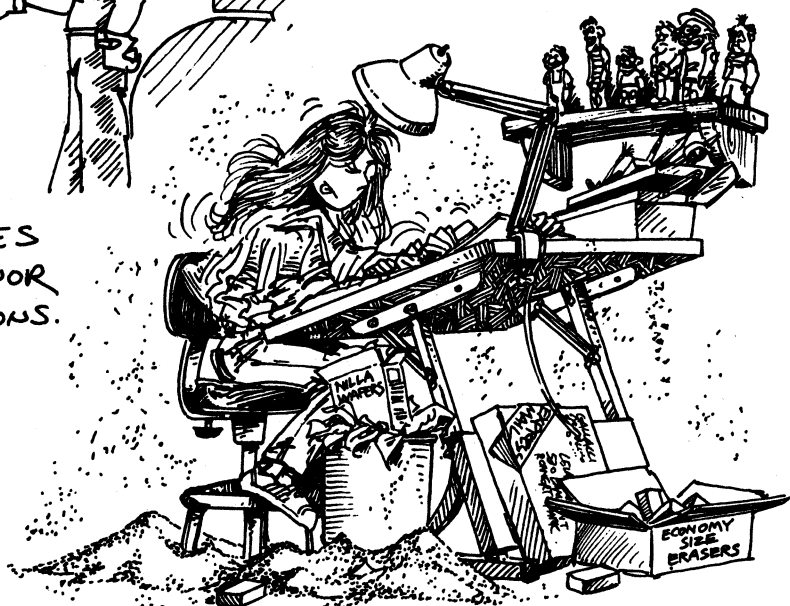
HE PENCILS THE STORY
LAYOUT ON ILLUSTRATION
BOARD. (on the kitchen table)





HE THEN SHIPS IT
OFF TO LELA —.

-WHO MAKES
ANY MINOR
CORRECTIONS.



SHE FILLS OUT
STEVE'S LAYOUTS, DOING
THE DETAILED PENCILS
AND THEN INKS THE
MAIN CHARACTERS.

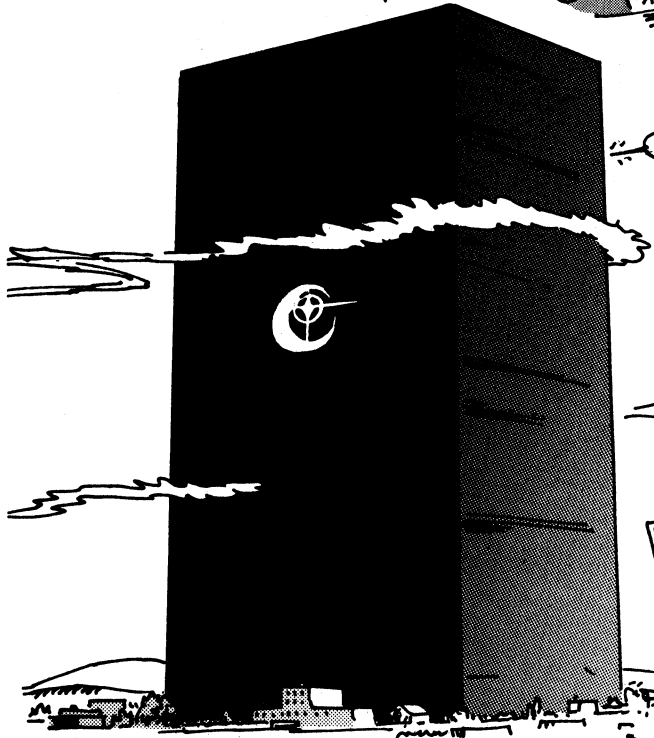


LELA THEN SHIPS
THE WORK BACK TO
STEVE AND SENDS
COPIES TO LOIS
WHO DOES THE
LETTERING ON
OVERLAYS.





STEVE FINISHES OFF
THE INKING AND, ON
PHOTO-COPIES, DOES THE
INK AND AIRBRUSH
TONE WORK (LELA DOES
SOME, TOO)



THEN EVERYTHING
GOES TO ECLIPSE
FOR FINALE PREPARATION,
AND THEN TO
THE PRINTER.

THAT'S THE STORY.
HOW EACH EXCITING-
ISSUE OF FUSION IS
PUT TOGETHER.
HONEST!



Earth Island's "DO-IT YOURSELF" SDI Survival Test

SDI'S BACKERS CLAIM IT WILL DESTROY 95% OF INCOMING MISSILES...

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

TO FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF...

...TAKE 1 "IMPREGNABLE" LID FROM A STEEL DRUM...

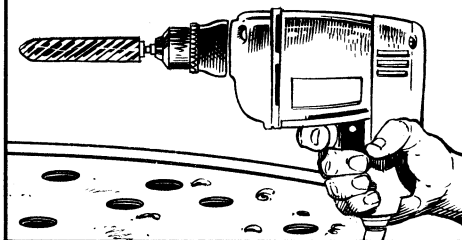


...MARK OFF 5% OF THE SURFACE AREA,

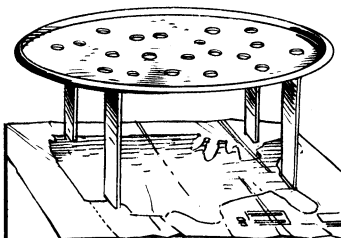
FIND HOW MANY DIME-SIZED HOLES WOULD FILL THIS SPACE.



DRILL THE SAME NUMBER OF HOLES IN THE SURFACE OF THE SHIELD.



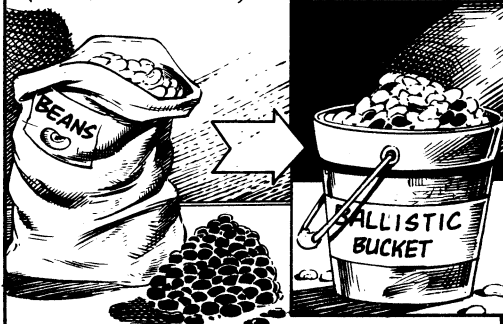
ERECT YOUR "\$1 TRILLION SDI SHIELD" OVER A ROADMAP OF THE U.S.A.



NOTE: SDI LEAVES US OPEN TO ATTACK FROM ALL SIDES.

BUY 3 1/3 LBS. OF SMALL BLACK BEANS (=10,000 WARHEADS) + 33 1/3 LBS. OF SMALL WHITE BEANS (= 100,000 DECOYS.)

MIX THE BEANS TOGETHER IN A LARGE PAIL.

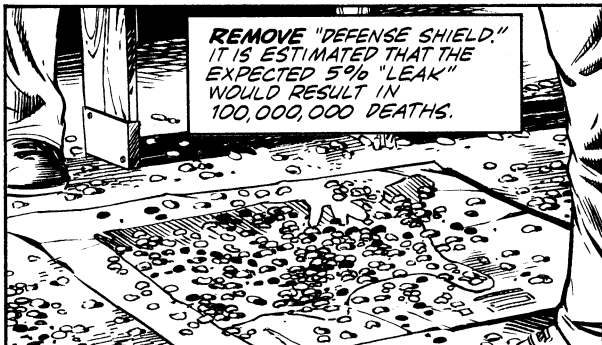


DEPLOY THE BALLISTIC BEANS! THIS SIMULATES AN ATTACK EQUAL TO 1/3 OF THE TOTAL USSR NUCLEAR THROW-WEIGHT.



IF EVERYTHING WORKS... "ONLY" 5500 BEANS WILL HIT THE U.S. OF THOSE, "ONLY" 500 WILL RESULT IN NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS.

REMOVE "DEFENSE SHIELD." IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE EXPECTED 5% "LEAK" WOULD RESULT IN 100,000,000 DEATHS.



TEST RESULTS

WHICH CITIES ON THE MAP WERE HIT?

WAS YOUR HOMETOWN HIT?

IF THE U.S.S.R. HAD DEPLOYED ITS ENTIRE NUCLEAR ARSENAL INSTEAD OF THE 1/3 USED IN THIS TEST HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD DIE?

IF 100,000 TO 300,000,000 OF YOUR FELLOW AMERICANS DIED BECAUSE S.D.I. DID NOT PROTECT THEM, WOULD S.D.I. HAVE BEEN WORTH THE 71 MILLION DOLLARS PER DAY PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS ASKED TO FUND IT?

IF YOU HAD 71 MILLION DOLLARS A DAY TO SPEND ON OUR COUNTRY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH IT?



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Jones



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