

RAW
EDGE
COMICS

THE RED MASK FROM MARS



THE RED MASK FROM MARS

CREATED BY
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ARTWORK AND LETTERING BY

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**RAW
EDGE
COMICS**



YOU'VE BEEN
IN TOUGHER SPOTS
THAN THIS BEFORE,
RIGHT?

IF I LIED
WOULD YOU THINK
LESS OF ME?

IT MIGHT
STOP ME WANTING
TO KILL YOU RIGHT
ABOUT NOW.

THEN YES.
MANY TIMES.
THIS WILL BE A
PIECE OF CAKE!



BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING...

WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

WHAT ARE THOSE HIDEOUS
ALIEN CREATURES?

WHY IS A MAN WITH A BRIGHT
RED CRUSTACEAN FOR A FACE
KICKING ALL ANGLES OF ASS
(AND LOVING EVERY MINUTE)?

KRAK!

CRUNCH!

WELL... IT'S KIND OF
A FUNNY STORY.

AND WHERE BETTER TO START...

THAN WHEN IT ALL BEGAN...

MY NAME IS DOUGLAS STEWART.

I WAS A MEMBER OF THE FIRST BRITISH
EXPEDITION TO MARS, THE PATRICK MOORE VI.

I'D LIKE TO SAY OUR MISSION WAS TO BOLDLY GO WHERE NO MAN
HAS GONE BEFORE, BUT THAT WOULD BE A LOAD OF RUBBISH.

IT WAS A SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION OF THE RED PLANET AND ITS
NATURAL RESOURCES, WITH THE PRIMARY GOAL OF LOCATING AND
IDENTIFYING HYDROTHERMAL SYSTEMS THAT ULTIMATELY COULD PROVIDE
THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS NEEDED TO SUSTAIN
ROBUST MICROBIAL COMMUNITIES.



PUT SIMPLY... EVERYONE WANTED TO
KNOW IF WE COULD LIVE THERE IF PLANET
EARTH WENT DOWN THE TOILET.

COUNTLESS CORPORATIONS HELPED THE GOVERNMENT
FUND THE MISSION. THEY ALL WANTED TO BE THE ONE
TO BUY THE SPACE, PATENT A PROCESS OR COPYRIGHT
A CHEMICAL. A FEW OF THE CREW, SOME OF THE MOST
PROMISING MINDS ON THE PLANET, WERE EAGER
TO OBLIGE THE FAT CATS, OTHERS WERE BLINDED
BY THE EXCITEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY.

ME? I WAS JUST A PILOT WHO ALWAYS
WANTED TO BE AMONGST THE STARS.

WHATEVER OUR INDIVIDUAL MOTIVES WERE,
I KNOW ONE THING FOR CERTAIN...

MY LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN SO MUCH
SIMPLER IF I HAD BEEN A POSTMAN.

MY LIFE CHANGED ON A ROUTINE
MINERAL EXAMINATION ON
THE PLANET'S SURFACE



SEPERATED FROM THE
GROUP I WAS WITH,
I ENCOUNTERED A
STRANGE PARASITE...



ON CLOSER
EXAMINATION
IT SEEMED
TO BE ALIVE.



UNFORTUNATELY THIS
THEORY PROVED TO BE
HORRIFICALLY ACCURATE.



IT LASHED OUT, SMASHING
IT'S WAY INTO MY HELMET AND
ATTACHING ITSELF TO MY FACE
LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF
A SCIENCE FICTION MOVIE.

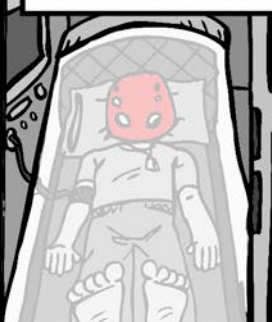
THE CLICHE WAS NOT LOST ON ME.

UNCONSCIOUS AND
WEARING OUR LATEST
FIND, MY FELLOW
CREW RUSHED ME
BACK TO THE SHUTTLE.



GOD BLESS 'EM.

THEY PLACED ME
ALONE IN
QUARANTINE OF
THE SHIP'S MED-BAY
FOR THE TRIP HOME.



UNFORTUNATELY, AND UNKNOWN
AT THAT TIME, THEY THEMSELVES
HAD ALSO BEEN INFECTED WITH
SOMETHING FAR WORSE FROM
THE RED PLANET'S SURFACE.



SOMETHING ALIEN,
ANCIENT... AND EVIL.



AN AIRBORNE,
SENTIENT VIRUS.
LAYING DORMANT.
AND WAITING FOR ITS
MOMENT TO ARISE.






UNFORTUNATELY MY
CREWMATES WEREN'T
BLESSED WITH SIMILAR
LUCK IN THE HEALTH
DEPARTMENT.



SHRRRIPPP!



AS THEY WERE GOING THROUGH
THEIR HEALTH CHECKS, THE VIRUS THEY
HAD BROUGHT BACK WITH THEM TOOK
CONTROL AND THEY ALL FELL FOUL
TO ITS HORRIFIC CURSE.

THEY MUTATED INTO BLOODTHIRSTY
ALIEN SPACE VAMPIRES!
(WELL, THAT'S WHAT I CALL THEM ANYHOW)

DRIVEN BY A LUST FOR BLOOD,
EAGER TO MULTIPLY AND CONSUME
ALL LIFE ON EARTH, NATURALLY.



THEY ESCAPED FROM THE SCIENTIFIC WARD THEY
WERE BEING KEPT IN AND HEADED FOR FREEDOM,
AND A FRESH NEW PLANET TO INFECT.



MOST OF THEM ANYWAY.

ONE OF THEM WAS JUST INTENT ON BEING A MASSIVE PAIN IN MY ARSE.

WAIT A MINUTE, RUN THAT BY ME AGAIN DOC...

YOU'RE TELLING ME THAT I DON'T NEED TO EAT OR DRINK EVER AGAIN?!

AS HARD AS IT IS TO COMPREHEND LT. STEWART THAT IS INDEED THE CASE.

THE PARASITE THAT IS FEEDING OFF OF YOU APPEARS TO ACTUALLY BE FEEDING YOU AT THE SAME TIME!

IT'S AN INCREDIBLE PROCESS AND IS KEEPING YOU ALIVE IN MORE WAYS THAN WE EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.

DESPITE THE BENEFICIAL ASPECTS TO YOUR PHYSICAL SELF, IT ALSO SEEMS TO BE A POWER SOURCE THAT IS KEEPING YOU CONSTANTLY FUELLED.

IT'S LIKE A BIOMETRIC KINETIC WATCH. AND IT'S CONSTANTLY REPAIRING AND REGENERATING, BOTH IT AND YOU, ON THE MOVE AT AN ALARMING RATE.

THAT'S WHY YOU NEVER GET TIRED OR RUN DOWN DURING THE PHYSICAL TESTS WE TRIED.

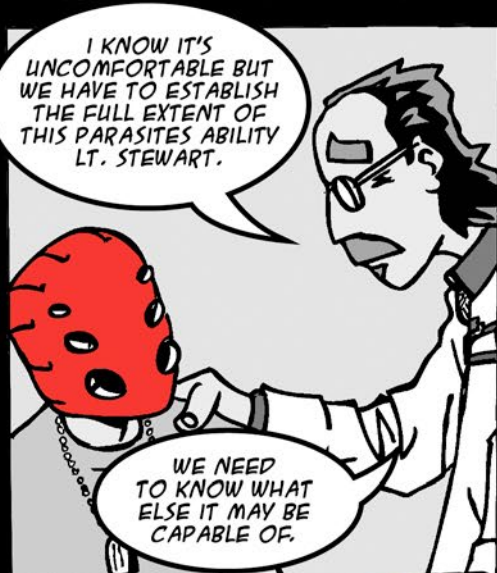
THEN WHY DID I SLEEP LAST NIGHT?

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS THE BEST NIGHT'S SLEEP OF MY ENTIRE LIFE.

ASTOUNDING. YOUR NEW 'PARTNER' IS OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN KEEPING YOUR VITALS WITHIN BENEFICIAL PARAMETERS. THE ONLY QUESTION IS WHETHER IT'S BENEFICIAL TO YOU OR TO IT?

I CAN ONLY ASSUME BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO. TELL ME, HOW DID YOU SLEEP?

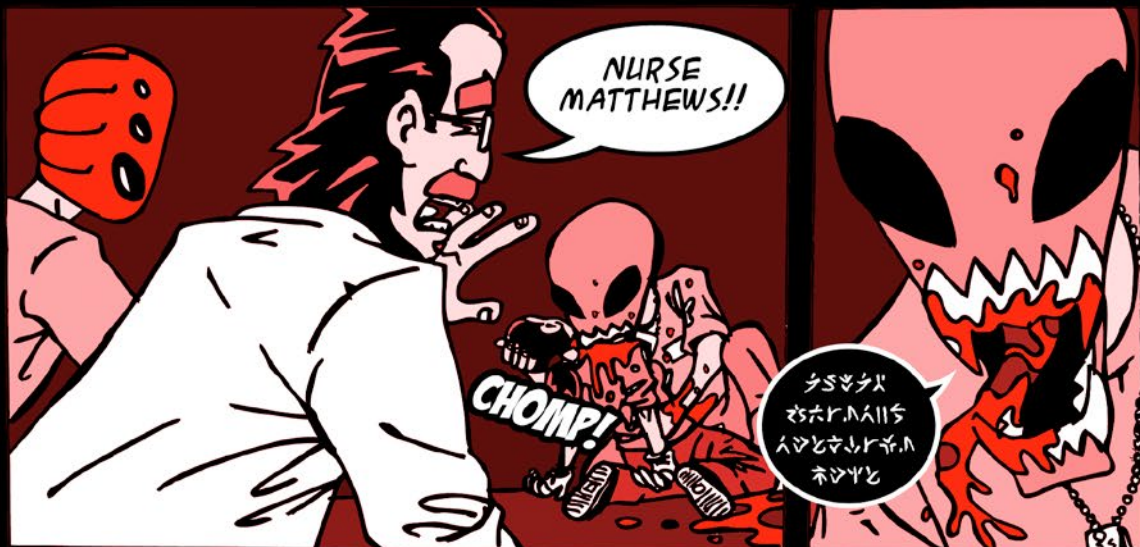
THAT'S SOMETHING WE NEED TO MONITOR AND CLOSELY, BUT I AM GLAD YOU'RE WELL RESTED. YOU DESIRED A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP AND FOR SOME INEXPLICABLE REASON IT OBLIGED - EVEN THOUGH IT DIDN'T NEED OR HAVE TO.



WARNING!WARNING!WARNING
LEVEL 5 CONTAMINATION DETECTED
PLEASE EVACUATE IN AN ORDERLY FASHION







TO BE HONEST,
JONATHON DRAKE
WAS NEVER THE
PRETTIEST CAKE IN
THE SHOP BUT EVEN
HE NEVER LOOKED
THIS BAD.

NOT STOP US TERRIAN!
WE WILL CONSUME ALL
IN OUR PATH AS WE
HAVE DONE FOR
MILLENNIA.

WHAT THE
HELL ARE YOU
TALKING
ABOUT?



YOU ARE FOOD.
AND WE WILL FEED.
WE WILL FEAST.
OUR NUMBERS WILL
REPLENISH.

THEN, IN
LEGION, WE WILL SUCK
YOUR BASTARD PLANET
DRY AND SAVOUR EVERY
DROP. YOU ARE NOTHING
BUT MEAT TO ME AND ONCE
I DESTROY YOU AND THIS
HUMAN YOU'VE BONDED
WITH, I WILL LEAD MY
RACE IN THE GREAT
FEASTING

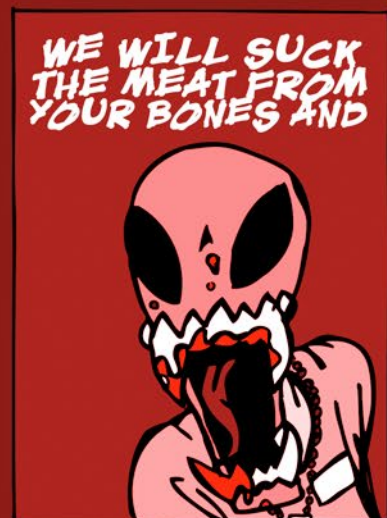
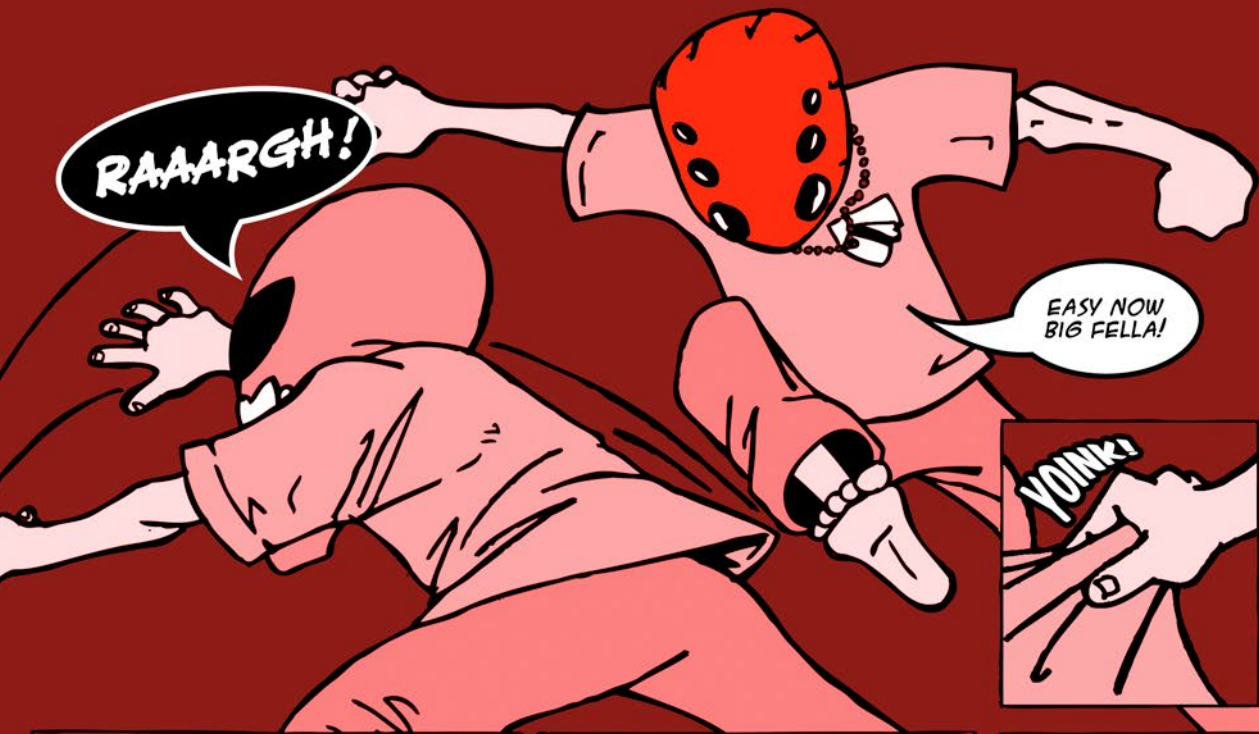
OUR TIME IN
THE SHADOWS IS AT
AN END. WE SHALL BE
STRONG ONCE MORE.
TO FEAST. TO SPREAD.
TO DESTROY...

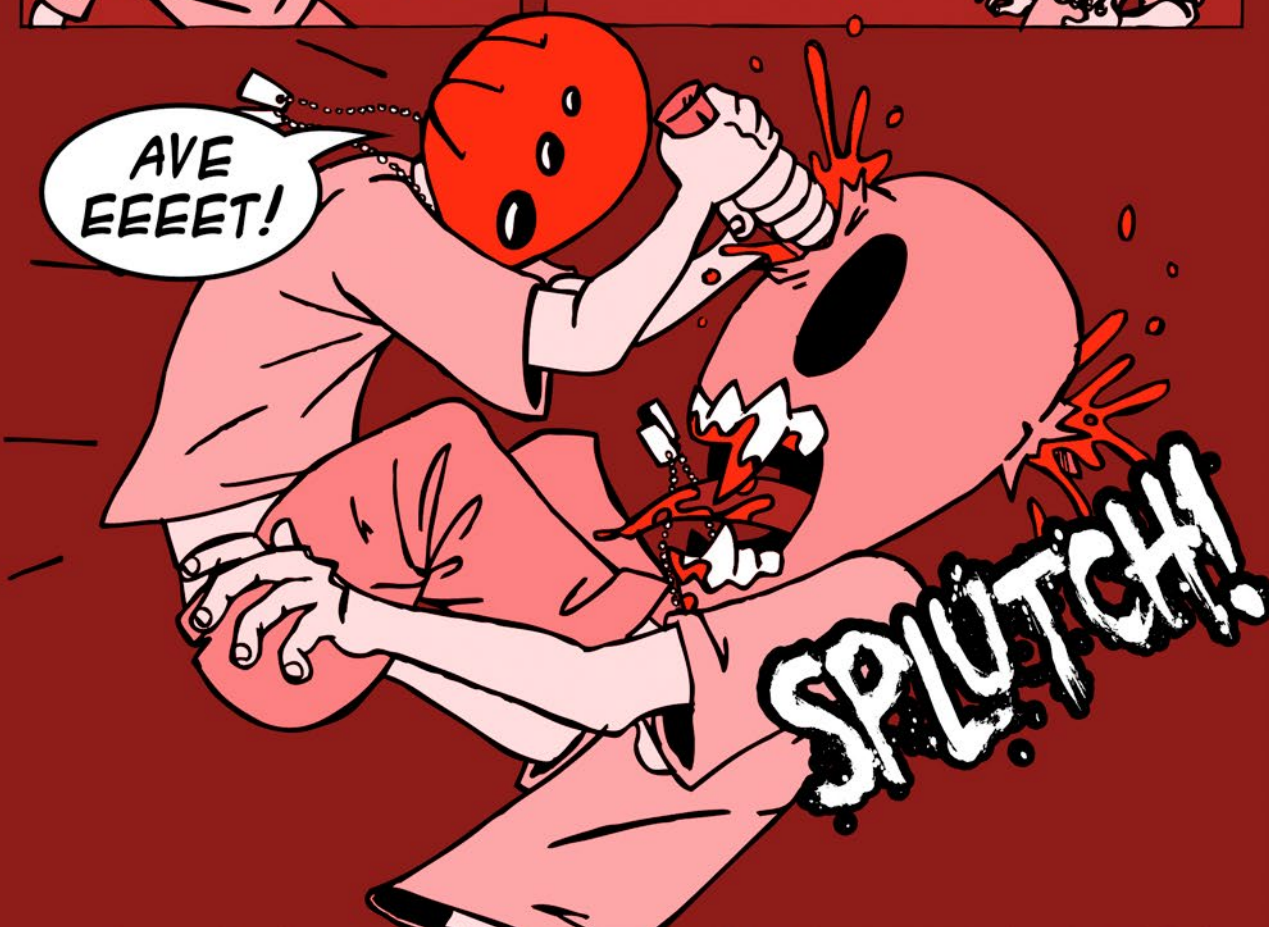
EVERYTHING!

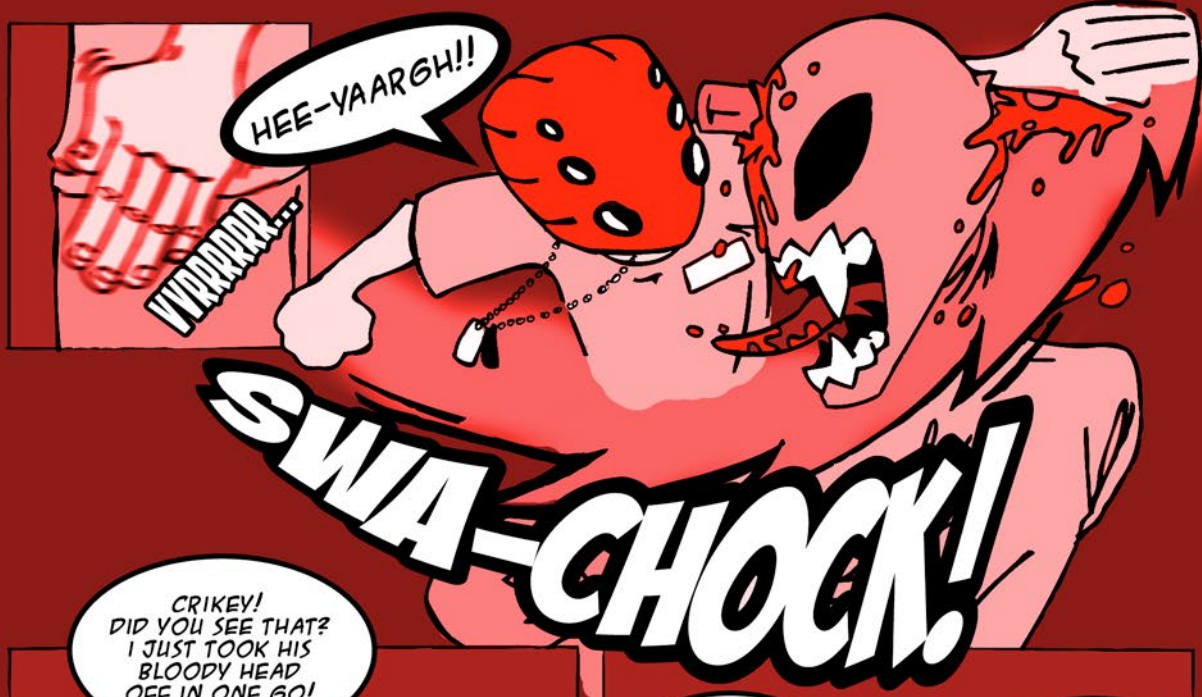
BOLLOCKS
YOU WILL.

DIE
MEAT
SACK!











IT SEEMED A CLANDESTINE GROUP OF INDIVIDUALS LED BY THE MYSTERIOUS BETHESDA (SHE'S THE ONE WITH THE KILLER LEGS OBVIOUSLY) HAD BEEN MONITORING THE ENTIRE SITUATION FROM THE MOMENT IT STARTED!

ALONG WITH STICKING THEIR NOSES IN AT THE APPROPRIATELY DRAMATIC MOMENT, THEY CALLED THEMSELVES 'XENOSPHERE'

A PRIVATELY FUNDED, GOVERNMENT APPROVED OPERATION AND UNDOUBTEDLY FULL OF THE MOST SUSPICIOUS FOLKS ALIVE.

CONSIDERING THE SITUATION AT THE TIME, I THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO DISSECT ME LIKE A FROG, BUT THEN BETHESDA DID SOMETHING THAT I DIDN'T EXPECT.

SHE OFFERED ME A JOB.

THERE'S A LOT OF CRAZY STUFF OUT AMONGST THE STARS, AND I CERTAINLY DISCOVERED THAT SOME OF IT CAN BE PRETTY DEADLY. LUCKILY XENOSPHERE ARE ALWAYS WATCHING THE SKIES FOR TROUBLE, SO WHEN THE POOP DOES HIT THE FAN AND THINGS HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH, THEY STEP IN TO HELP THAT OFTEN MEANS OVERT AGGRESSION AND A GOOD HARD SLAP IN THE FACE, SO NATURALLY YOU CAN SEE WHERE I FIT IN.

WITH MY NEWFOUND ABILITIES AND SITUATION, I WAS JUST THE GUY TO HELP THEM DEAL WITH ANY PESKY ALIEN THREATS, SO THEY PUT ME TOGETHER WITH A CRACK TEAM OF UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS TO KEEP THE COUNTRY SAFE FROM BOOGEYMEN FROM OUTER SPACE.

RED TEAM

I SWEAR THAT I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE NAME CHOICE. (ALTHOUGH IT IS RATHER APPROPRIATE IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT!)

ME!

HENDERSON WULF

SMOOTH TALKING, GUN-SLINGING AGENCY MAN OF MYSTERY WHO IS ALWAYS ONE STEP AHEAD OF EVERYONE ELSE AND FOR SOME REASON I TRUST HIM COMPLETELY. HAS A TASTE FOR EXPENSIVE SUITS, CHEAP TIES, AND ALWAYS SMELLS GOOD (IS THAT WEIRD SAYING THAT?) WEARS WHITE GLOVES, BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHY. MAYBE HE'S A GERMAPHOBIC. HE PICKED THE WRONG OCCUPATION IF THAT'S THAT CASE.

SGT. CASSANDRA PRICE

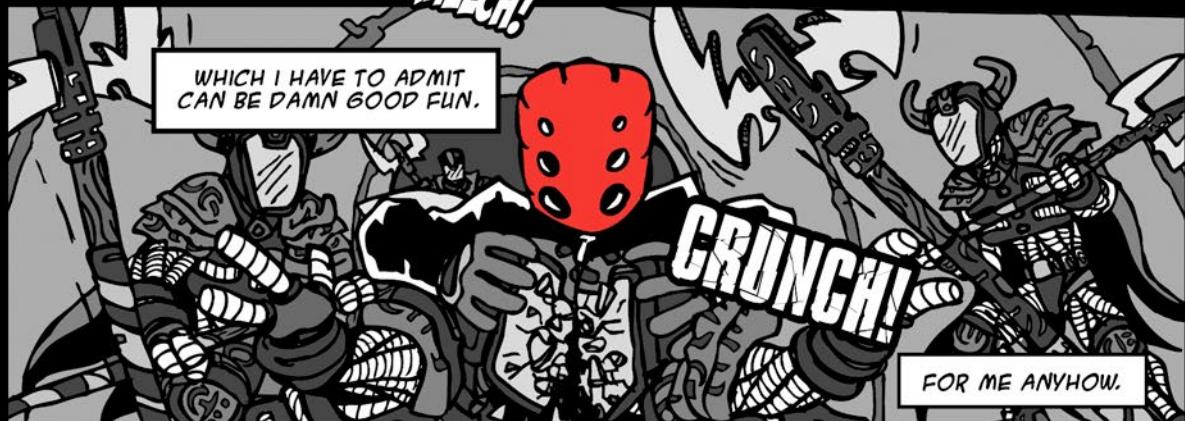
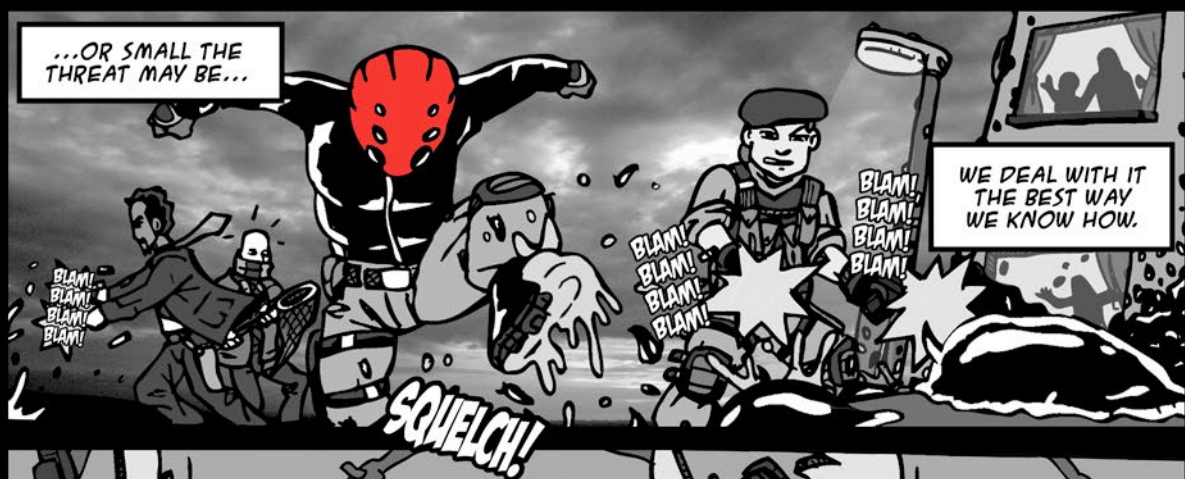
FORMER BLACK OPS MERCENARY. NEVER MORE COMFORTABLE THAN WHEN A GUN IS IN HER HANDS AND SHE'S BARKING ORDERS. KNOWS A BAZILLION WAYS TO KILL A MAN. SHE'S A NO NONSENSE TACTICIAN, WHICH DOESN'T LEAVE MUCH ROOM FOR A SENSE OF HUMOUR. IF THAT'S WHAT BEING A MARRIED MOTHER OF TWO DOES TO YOU I'M GLAD I'M NOT ONE.

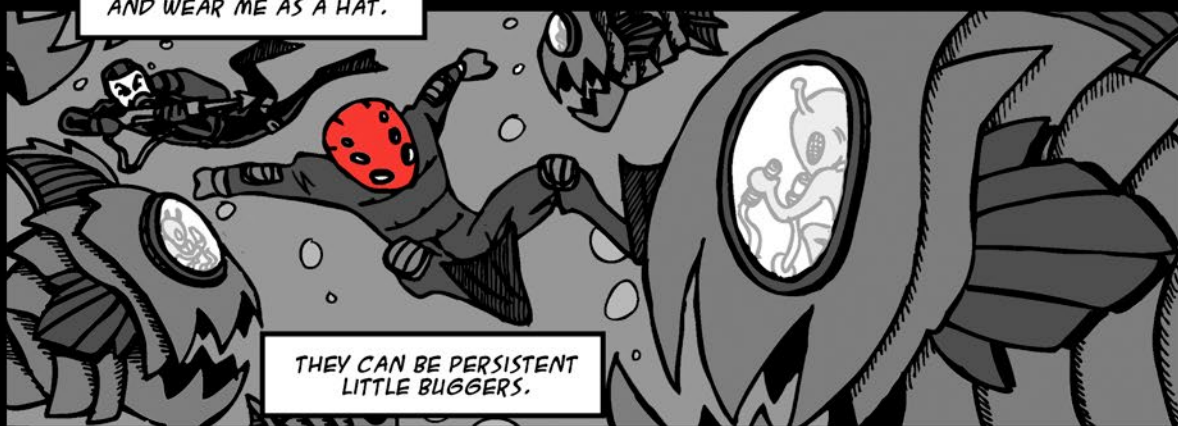
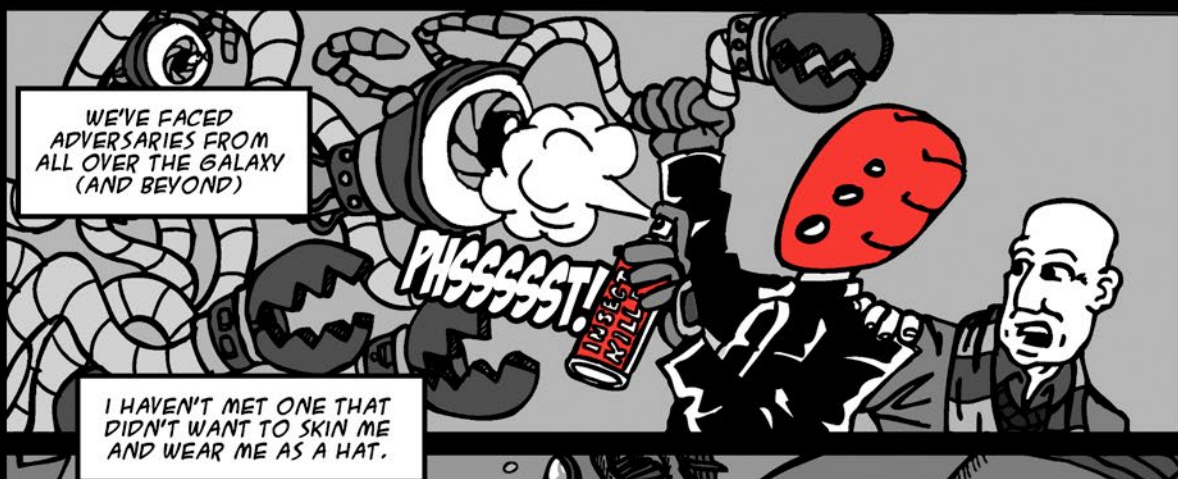
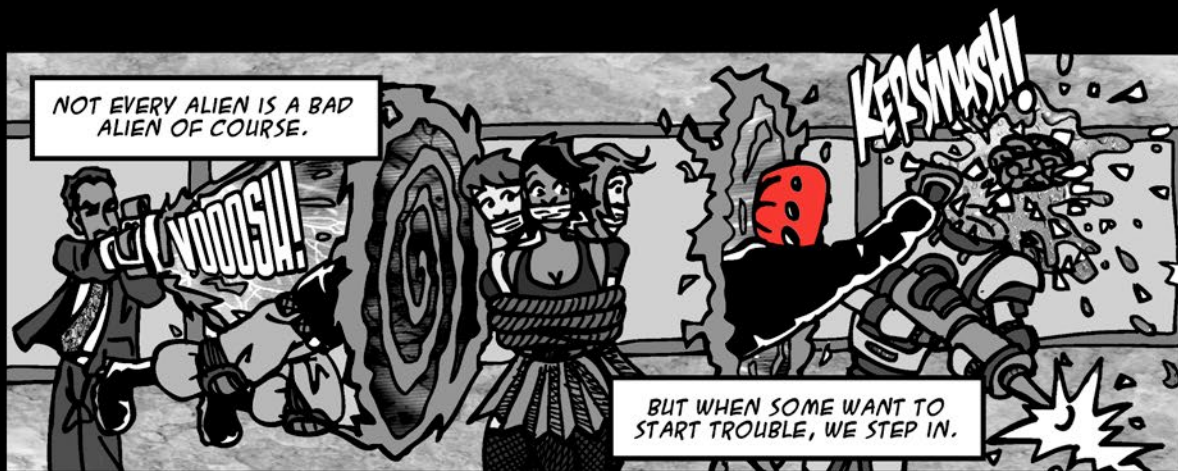
GEORGE MUNROE

USED TO BE AN AMATEUR UFO EXPERT, UNTIL THE DAY HE ACTUALLY GOT ABDUCTED BY ALIENS. NOBODY KNOWS WHAT THEY DID, BUT HE CAME BACK WITH NO HAIR, SKIN LOOKING LIKE WATERED DOWN MILK AND A KILLER SET OF PSYCHIC ABILITIES. HE DOESN'T APPRECIATE JOKES ABOUT 'PROBING', BUT OTHER THAN THAT HE'S A TRULY NICE BLOKE AND THE CLOSEST THING I HAVE TO A PROPER PAL.

DR. COCHRAN

XENOSPHERE INSISTED THAT HE JOIN THE TEAM AND FACED WITH ENDLESS SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY HE JUMPED AT THE CHANCE. HE'S THE PERSON WHO KNOWS THE MOST ABOUT MY CONDITION SO HAVING HIM AROUND IS DEFINATELY A BONUS. PLUS, CHECK OUT THAT 'TACHE!





BEFORE ALL OF THAT FUN THOUGH, I HAD
TO DEAL WITH A BUNCH OF BLOODTHIRSTY
ASTRONAUT SPACE VAMPIRES I USED TO
CALL FRIENDS, ALONG WITH WHOEVER
ELSE THEY HAD MANAGED TO INFECT.

IN A TWISTED KIND OF
WAY, I GUESS YOU COULD
SAY I WAS LOOKING
FORWARD TO IT...

HEY PRICE!
WHATS GOT TWO
THUMBS AND IS
AWESOME AT KICKING
ALIEN ARSE?

OH FOR
GOD'S SAKE...



HEY THERE LADIES, GENTS AND XENOMOPHANS OF ALL AGES!

THANKS A BUNCH FOR READING THE FIRST EVER ISSUE OF THE RED MASK FROM MARS. IN A WORLD WHERE THERES SO MANY AWESOME INDEPENDENT COMIC BOOKS OUT THERE BEING MADE BY TRULY TALENTED FOLK, YOU CHOSE TO GIVE THIS LITTLE TALE OF A HERO WITH AN ALIEN STRAPPED TO HIS FACE A TRY. YOU GUYS ROCK!

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING, FROM WHAT STARTED AS A DOODLE OF AN ALIEN SPACE VAMPIRE ON THE BACK OF AN ENVELOPE TO THE ROLLOCKING ALIEN SMASHING ORIGIN ISSUE YOU'VE JUST READ. THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED THE CREATION OF THIS ISSUE, AND SPECIAL THANKS GO TO MY PAL AND CO-SCRIPTER DANIEL CHANT FOR ADDING SOME SCI-FI BABBLE AND BRAINIATION (IS THAT EVEN A WORD?) TO THE PROCEEDINGS AND TO THE MAN-ONLY-KNOWN-AS-LLOYD FOR SOME MUCH APPRECIATED PROOF-READING AND EDITING. CHEERS FELLAS!

HOPEFULLY YOU ENJOYED READING ABOUT THE ORIGIN TALE OF HOW DOUG STEWART BECAME THE ASS-KICKIN-SMART-TALKING-SLIGHTLY-ON-THE-CRAZY-SIDE HERO HE IS TODAY, AND IF YOU WANT TO SEE MORE NASTY CREATURES FROM SPACE GET A GOOD SLAPPING, YOU'RE IN LUCK. WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN IN EARNEST ON THE FIRST MINI-SERIES, AND WITH A NEW BATCH OF BEASTIES TO SMASH AND THE GORGEOUS COLOURS OF MY GOOD CHUM SHAUN DOBIE, ITS GOING TO BE A CRAZY FUN TIME AND THEN SOME!

SO THANKS AGAIN, BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE AT WWW.THEREDMASKFROMMARS.COM AND DOUG'S PERSONAL TWITTER ACCOUNT @THEREDMASKFROMMARS FOR MORE GOINGS ON AND UP TO DATE SHENANIGANS!

UNTIL NEXT TIME, KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE SKIES PEOPLE!!

Vince

VINCENT HUNT IS AN ILLUSTRATOR, DESIGNER, COMIC BOOK ENTHUSIAST, CREATOR OF THE WEBSTRIP 'STALKERVILLE' AND GENERAL REPROBATE FROM THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND. FOR HIS BLOG AND MORE EXAMPLES OF HIS WORK VISIT WWW.JESTERDIABLO.BLOGSPOT.COM

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