

CHAPTER XI



OBSERVATION:

MULTI-SCREEN VIEWING IS SEEMINGLY ANTICIPATED BY BURROUGHS' *CUT-UP* TECHNIQUE. HE SUGGESTED RE-ARRANGING WORDS AND IMAGES TO EVADE RATIONAL ANALYSIS, ALLOWING SUBLIMINAL HINTS OF THE FUTURE TO LEAK THROUGH...

AN IMPENDING WORLD OF EXOTICA, GLIMPSED ONLY PERIPHERALLY.



PERCEPTUALLY, THIS SIMULTANEOUS INPUT ENGAGES ME LIKE THE KINETIC EQUIVALENT OF AN ABSTRACT OR IMPRESSIONIST PAINTING...

PHOSPHOR-DOT SWIRLS JUXTAPOSE; MEANINGS COALESCE FROM SEMIOTIC CHAOS BEFORE REVERTING TO INCOHERENCE.

TRANSIENT AND ELUSIVE, THESE MUST BE GRASPED QUICKLY:

COMPUTER ANIMATIONS IMBUE EVEN *BREAKFAST CEREALS* WITH AN HALLUCINOGENIC FUTURITY; MUSIC CHANNELS PROCESS INFORMATION-BLIPS, AVOIDING LINEAR PRESENTATION, IMPLYING LIMITLESS PERSONAL CHOICE...

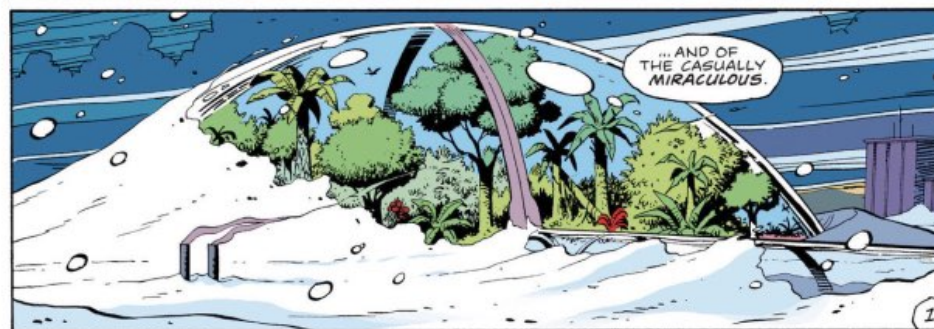
THESE REFERENCE POINTS ESTABLISHED, AN EMERGENT WORLDVIEW BECOMES GRADUALLY DISCERNIBLE AMIDST THE MEDIA'S WHITE NOISE.

THIS JIGSAW-FRAGMENT MODEL OF TOMORROW ALIGNS ITSELF PIECE BY PIECE, SPECIFIC AREAS NECESSARILY OBSCURED BY INDETERMINACY.

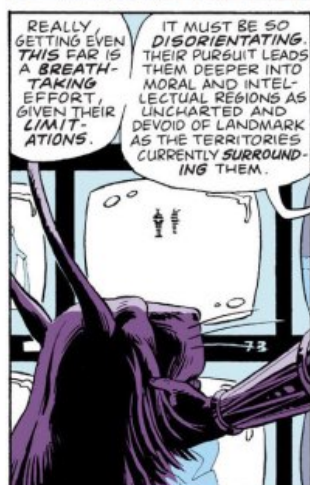
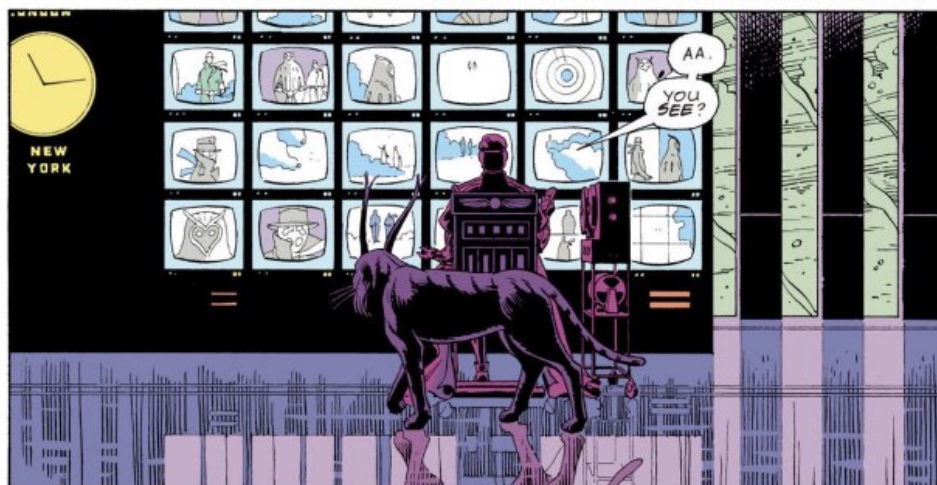
HOWEVER, BROAD ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING THIS POSTULATED FUTURE MAY BE DRAWN. WE CAN IMAGINE ITS AMBIENCE. WE CAN HYPOTHEZIZE ITS PSYCHOLOGY.

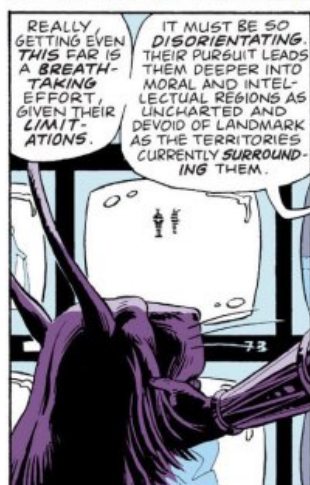
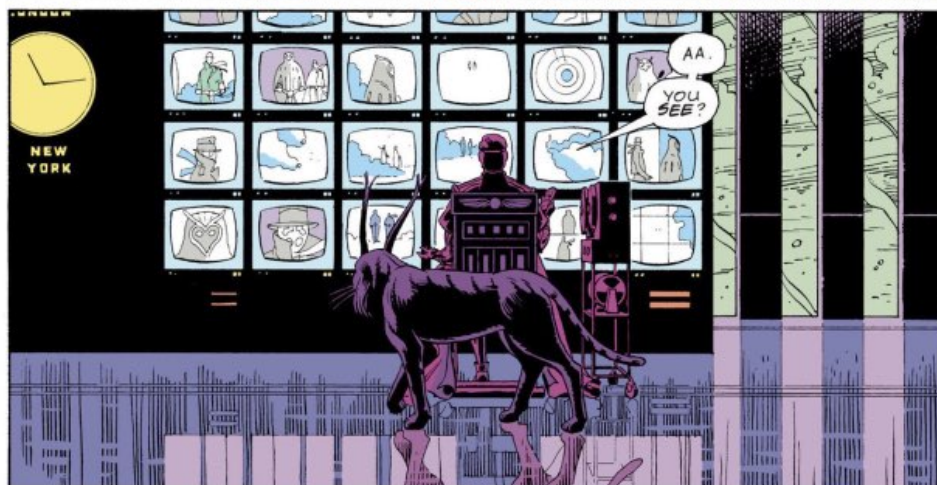
IN CONJUNCTION WITH MASSIVE FORECASTED TECHNOLOGICAL ACCELERATION APPROACHING THE MILLENNIUM, THIS OBLIQUE AND SHIFTING CATHODE MOSAIC UNCOVERS THE BLUEPRINT FOR AN ERA OF NEW SENSATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES.

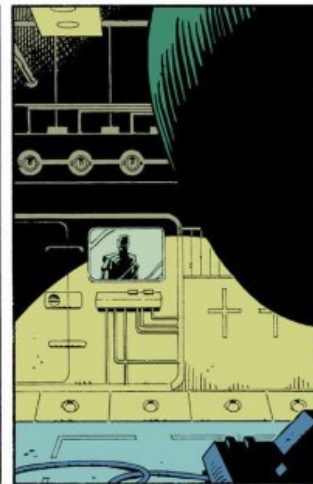
AN ERA OF THE CONCEIVABLE MADE CONCRETE...



LOOK ON MY WORKS, YE MIGHTY...









PARTYIN'! HOLOCAUST COMIN', GODDAMN KNOT-HEADS GOTTA PARTY! I CAN HEAR THAT GOD-FORBID-I-CALL-IT-MUSIC CLEAR FROM MADISON SQUARE!

YANG YANG! MUSIC TO DROP BOMBS BY IS WHAT IT IS...

DAVIDSTOWN SLEPT, DESERTED SAVE FOR SILENCE.



LEATHERING BOTH HORSES TO THE VERANDAH, I ENTERED MY FORMER RESIDENCE NOISELESSLY, CAREFUL NOT TO ROUSE THE BUTCHERS OCCUPYING IT FROM THEIR DEBAUCHED SLUMBER.

THEY'LL ALL COME OUT FIGHTIN' DRUNK, COVERED IN TATTOOS AND EAR-RINGS...



AN! IT'S RIGHT DOWN THE AVENUE! I TELLYA, THIS IS A BAD INTERSECTION. YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'S GONNA TURN UP NEXT.

UNAWARE THAT DEATH WAS AMONGST THEM, THEY'D KNOW ITS DARK EMBRACE WITHOUT EVER UNDERSTANDING WHY.



ONE, HOWEVER, WAS AWAKE.

IN FACT, I SEE ONE MORE STUPID HAIRCUT, I'M GONNA...

OH, HI. GETCHA SOMETHING?

FRANTIC LEST HE SHOULD RAISE ALARMS, I SET UPON HIM AS HE ENTERED THE NIGHT-WRAPPED CHAMBER.



NAH, GUESS JOSEPHINE POSTED THIS, LIKE SHE SAID. Y'KNOW, SOMETIMES SHE REALLY TRIES. SHE FINISHED WORK YET?

JOSEPHI...? OH, JOEY! YOU MUST BE HER... UH...

GIRL-FRIEND EX. WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING.

IN CATARACT DARKNESS, I BLUDGEONED HIM, HIS SCREAMS UNNERVINGLY SHRILL.



OH, WELL, I AIN'T SEEN HER LATELY...

NO SWEAT. I'LL WAIT OUTSIDE THE PROMETHEAN. I'M NOT RELISHING THE ENCOUNTER.

NO PIRATES CAME, BUT SOMETHING WORSE. I LOOKED UP INTO FACES FAMILIAR SAVE FOR THEIR TERROR.



LISTEN, TELL HER HUSTLER'S DUE IN TOMORROW!

HUSTLER? GOD, IF IT'S OKAY, I'LL LET HER FIND OUT HERSELF.

THE CHILDREN WAILED. I LOOKED DOWN AT THE FIGURE BENEATH ME, THROUGH PUFFED AND BLOODED LIPS SHE MOUTHED MY NAME.



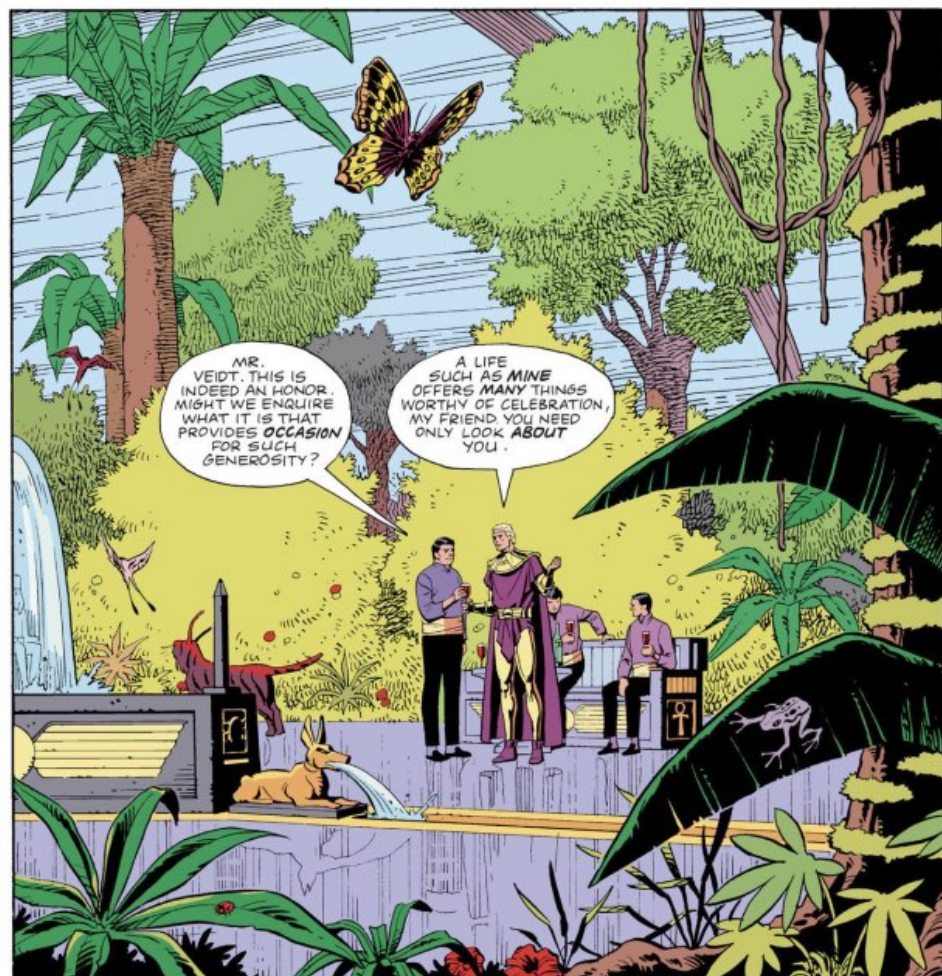
HUH? WHADDI SAY? DON'T GO AWAY MAD...

THERE CAME AN UNDERSTANDING SO LARGE, IT LEFT NO ROOM FOR SANITY. AS I FLED PAST THE MOUNTED CADAVER OUTSIDE, LANTERNS FLARED IN NEARBY WINDOWS.



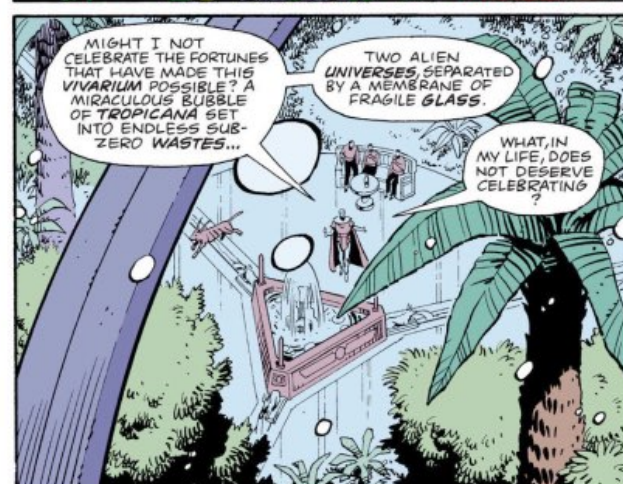
HUH! TIMES LIKE THESE, PEOPLE GOTTA BE HOSTILE? ME AN' ROSA SHOULD A QUIT THIS TOWN LIKE SHE WANNED AN' ESCAPED FROM EVERYTHING.

I RAN, BUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF MY DAMNATION PACED ME, GLOATING, CELEBRATING ITS AWFUL VICTORY.



MR. VEIT, THIS IS INDEED AN HONOR. MIGHT WE ENQUIRE WHAT IT IS THAT PROVIDES OCCASION FOR SUCH GENEROSITY?

A LIFE SUCH AS MINE OFFERS MANY THINGS WORTHY OF CELEBRATION, MY FRIEND YOU NEED ONLY LOOK ABOUT YOU.



MIGHT I NOT CELEBRATE THE FORTUNES THAT HAVE MADE THIS VIVARIUM POSSIBLE? A MIRACULOUS BUBBLE OF TROPICANA SET INTO ENDLESS SUB-ZERO WASTES...

TWO ALIEN UNIVERSES, SEPARATED BY A MEMBRANE OF FRAGILE GLASS.

WHAT, IN MY LIFE, DOES NOT DESERVE CELEBRATING?



...BUT YOU ARE RIGHT, OF COURSE. TODAY MARKS AN EVENT ESPECIALLY WORTHY OF SUCH ATTENTIONS.

IN MANY WAYS, IT REPRESENTS THE CULMINATION OF A DREAM MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND YEARS OLD.



"...ALTHOUGH TO UNCOVER THE REASONS FOR MY CURRENT ELATION, ONE NEED NOT DELVE QUITE SO DEEPLY INTO ANTIQUITY.

A MERE FORTY YEARS WILL SUFFICE, BACK TO MY CHILDHOOD.



"MY PARENTS REACHED AMERICA THE YEAR I WAS BORN, 1939.

"ENTERING SCHOOL, I WAS ALREADY EXCEPTIONALLY BRIGHT, MY PERFECT SCORES ON EARLY TEST PAPERS AROUSING SUCH SUSPICION THAT I CAREFULLY ACHIEVED ONLY AVERAGE GRADES THEREAFTER."



WHAT CAUSED SUCH PRECOCIOUSNESS? MY PARENTS WERE INTELLECTUALLY UNREMARKABLE, POSSESSING NO OBVIOUS GENETIC ADVANTAGES.

PERHAPS I DECIDED TO BE INTELLIGENT, RATHER THAN OTHERWISE? PERHAPS WE ALL MAKE SUCH DECISIONS, THOUGH THAT SEEMS A CALLOUS DOCTRINE.



"BY SEVENTEEN, MY PARENTS WERE BOTH DEAD AND I FACED A DIFFERENT DECISION.

"MY INHERITANCE OFFERED LIFE-LONG IDLE LUXURY, AND YET, NEEDING NOTHING, I BURNED WITH THE PARADOXICAL URGE TO DO EVERYTHING.

"DO YOU UNDERSTAND?"



MY INTELLECT SET ME APART, FACED WITH DIFFICULT CHOICES, I KNEW NOBODY WHOSE ADVICE MIGHT PROVE USEFUL. NOBODY LIVING.

THE ONLY HUMAN BEING WITH WHOM I FELT ANY KINSHIP DIED THREE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.



"ALEXANDER OF MACEDONIA. I IDOLIZED HIM. A YOUNG ARMY COMMANDER, HE'D SWEEP ALONG THE COASTS OF TURKEY AND PHOENICIA, SUBDUING EGYPT BEFORE TURNING HIS ARMIES TOWARDS PERSIA...

"HE DIED, AGED THIRTY-THREE, RULING MOST OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD."



RULING WITHOUT BARBARISM AT ALEXANDRIA, HE INSTITUTED THE ANCIENT WORLD'S GREATEST SEAT OF LEARNING.

TRUE, PEOPLE DIED...PERHAPS UNNECESSARILY, THOUGH WHO CAN JUDGE SUCH THINGS? YET HOW NEARLY HE APPROACHED HIS VISION OF A UNITED WORLD!



"I WAS DETERMINED TO MEASURE MY SUCCESS AGAINST HIS. FIRSTLY, I GAVE AWAY MY INHERITANCE TO DEMONSTRATE THE POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING ANYTHING, STARTING FROM NOTHING.

"NEXT I DEPARTED FOR NORTHERN TURKEY, TO RETRACE MY HERO'S STEPS."



I WANTED TO MATCH HIS ACCOMPLISHMENT, BRINGING AN AGE OF ILLUMINATION TO A BENIGHTED WORLD.

HEH.

I WANTED TO HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY TO HIM, SHOULD WE MEET IN THE HALL OF LEGENDS.

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HI.

BOY, THIS IS SOME KINDA DUMP, RIGHT?



SURE, YOU'D RATHER BE AT MADISON SQUARE WITH A BUNCH OF DOPED-UP KNOT-TOPS, LIKE THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAN US, RIGHT?

OH SHIT, LOOK, THIS ISN'T WORKING OUT. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY WAY WE CAN SALVAGE THIS RELATIONSHIP.



IT'S WHERE I WORK, OKAY? NOT IN SOME DINKY LITTLE MAGAZINE OFFICE WITH A BUNCH OF SUPPLIES!

YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE THAT TERM. WE SHOULD RESPECT GAY PROFESSIONALS WORKING OPENLY...

HEY, FELLA, EXCUSE ME...



UHH-HUH. SO THAT'S IT, JUST LIKE THAT? I TRIED MY GODDAMNED BEST, ACTIN' LIKE YOU WANTED ME TO...

SEE? OVER THERE? I PUT YOUR STUPID DYKE DISCO POSTER UP...

SURE. SAME PLACE YOU BUY HUSTLER.



I'M MEETING MY BROTHER, HE'S THE MANAGER HERE. KNOW WHERE HE'S AT?

MILO'S IN THE FRONT OFFICE. GETS OFF AROUND ELEVEN-THIRTY.

JOSEPHINE, CAN WE WALK FOR A WHILE? I DON'T LIKE THIS KIND OF NEIGHBORHOOD.



I...LISTEN, I DON'T HAVE TO JUSTIFY ANYTHING TO YOU. I LIKE NICE CHICKS, YOU GIVE ME THIS POLITICAL SHIT...

JOSEPHINE, LOOK, I... AW, PLEASE. DON'T CRY.

I'M NOT CRYING! WHO THE HELL SAYS I'M CRYING?



OKAY. I'M SORRY, I... LOOK, THIS BOOK'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS. I THINK IF YOU READ IT, IT'LL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENED TO US...

I DON'T WANNA UNDERSTAND SHIT! I JUST WANNA GO TO BED WITH YOU ONE TIME!



I I WANNA GO TO BED WITH YOU, AND...

JOEY, PLEASE, I CAN'T HANDLE THIS...

OH JOEY, DON'T...

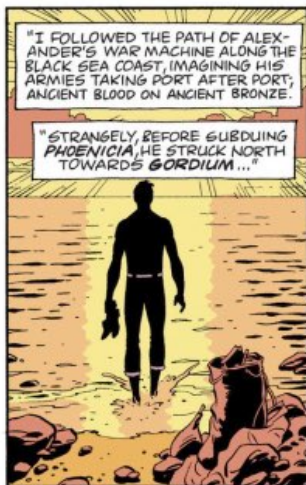


...AND, AND I WANNA BE DEAD...!

EVENUALLY I CAME TO AN ASH-COLORED SHORE, A DISMAL BLACK OCEAN STRETCHING ENDLESS BEFORE ME

HOW HAD I REACHED THIS APPALLING POSITION, WITH LOVE, ONLY LOVE, AS MY GUIDE?

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"I FOLLOWED THE PATH OF ALEXANDER'S WAR MACHINE ALONG THE BLACK SEA COAST, IMAGINING HIS ARMIES TAKING PORT AFTER PORT, ANCIENT BLOOD ON ANCIENT BRONZE."

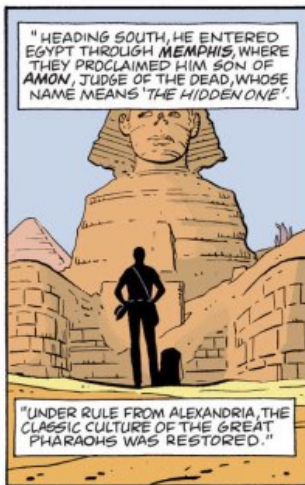
"STRANGELY BEFORE SUBDUING PHOENICIA, HE STRUCK NORTH TOWARDS GORDIUM..."



"PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THE CHALLENGE IT PRESENTED: THE ANCIENT WORLD'S GREATEST PUZZLE WAS THERE, A KNOT THAT COULDN'T BE UNTIED."

ALEXANDER CUT IT IN TWO WITH HIS SWORD.

LATERAL THINKING, YOU SEE, CENTURIES AHEAD OF HIS TIME.



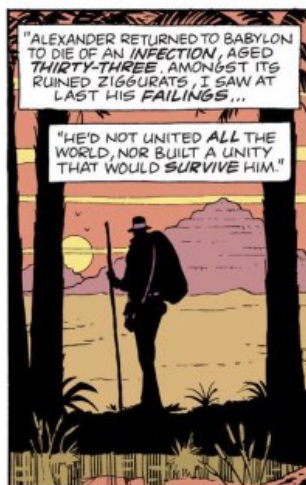
"HEADING SOUTH, HE ENTERED EGYPT THROUGH MEMPHIS, WHERE THEY PROCLAIMED HIM SON OF AMON, JUDGE OF THE DEAD, WHOSE NAME MEANS 'THE HIDDEN ONE'."

"UNDER RULE FROM ALEXANDRIA, THE CLASSIC CULTURE OF THE GREAT PHARAOHS WAS RESTORED."



I FOLLOWED HIM THROUGH BABYLON, UP THROUGH KABUL TO SAMARKHAND, THEN DOWN THE INDUS, WHERE HE FIRST MET ELEPHANTS-OF-WAR.

WHERE HE'D TURNED BACK TO QUELL DISSIDENT AT HOME, I TRAVELLED ON THROUGH CHINA AND TIBET, GATHERING MARTIAL WISDOM AS I WENT.



"ALEXANDER RETURNED TO BABYLON TO DIE OF AN INFECTION, AGED THIRTY-THREE. AMONGST ITS RUINED ZIGGURATS, I SAW AT LAST HIS FAILINGS..."

"HE'D NOT UNITED ALL THE WORLD, NOR BUILT A UNITY THAT WOULD SURVIVE HIM."



DISILLUSIONED BUT DETERMINED TO COMPLETE MY ODYSSEY, I FOLLOWED HIS CORPSE TO ITS RESTING PLACE IN ALEXANDRIA.

THE NIGHT BEFORE RETURNING TO AMERICA, I WANDERED INTO THE DESERT AND ATE A BALL OF HASHISH I'D BEEN GIVEN IN TIBET.



"THE ENSUING VISION TRANSFORMED ME. WADING THROUGH POWDERED HISTORY, I HEARD DEAD KINGS WALKING UNDERGROUND; HEARD FANFARES SOUND THROUGH HUMAN SKULLS."

"ALEXANDER HAD MERELY RESURRECTED AN AGE OF PHARAOHS. THEIR WISDOM, TRULY IMMORTAL, NOW INSPIRED ME!"



WHAT INTELLECTUAL MAGNIFICENCE THEIR SYSTEM ENCOURAGED...PTOLEMY, SEEKING THE UNIVERSE'S PIVOT FROM HIS LIGHT-HOUSE AT PHAROS; ERATOSTHENES, MEASURING THE WORLD USING ONLY SHADOWS...

THEIR GREATEST SECRETS, HOWEVER, WERE ENTRUSTED TO THEIR SERVANTS BURIED ALIVE WITH THEM IN SAND-FLOODED CHAMBERS.



"ADOPTING RAMESES THE SECOND'S GREEK NAME AND ALEXANDER'S FREE-BOOTING STYLE, I RESOLVED TO APPLY ANTIQUITY'S TEACHINGS TO TODAY'S WORLD."

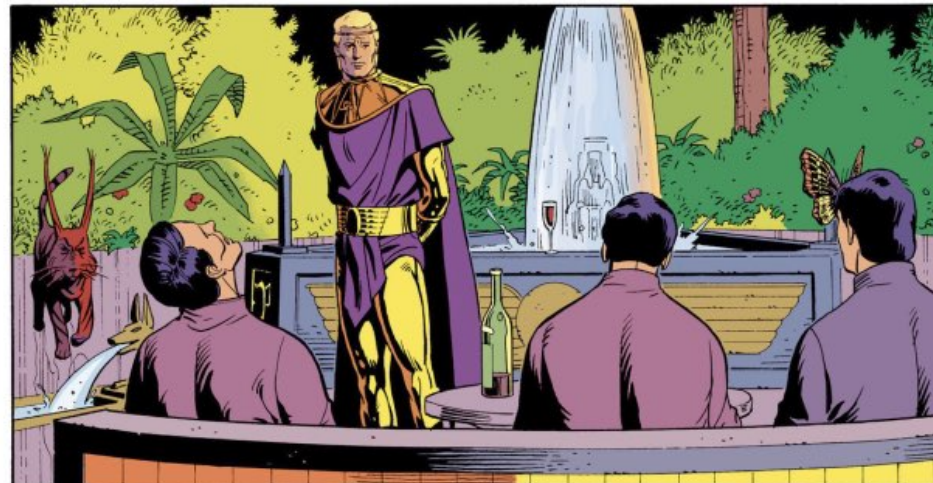
"THUS BEGAN MY PATH TO CONQUEST...CONQUEST NOT OF MEN, BUT OF THE EVILS THAT BESET THEM."



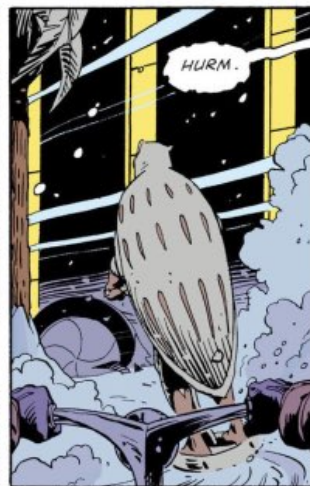
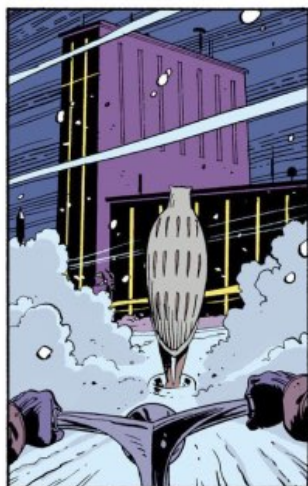
TODAY, THAT CONQUEST BECOMES ASSURED, IN WHICH YOUR UNQUESTIONING ASSISTANCE HAS PROVEN INVALUABLE.

DO YOU COMPREHEND THE TRIUMPH TO WHICH YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTED, THE SECRET GLORY THAT IT AFFORDS?

DO YOU UNDERSTAND MY SHAME AT SO INADEQUATE A REWARD?











DAMMIT, YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS ABOUT! PYRAMID DELIVERIES ARE BEHIND THIS WHOLE MESS, AND YOU'RE BEHIND PYRAMID.

YOU KNOW!

CHRIST, ADRIAN. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?



WHAT WE ALL TRIED TO DO, AFTER OUR INITIAL STRUGGLE TO FIND OUR FEET. I'M TRYING TO IMPROVE THE WORLD.

LIKE WHEN I STARTED OUT.



"MY FIRST CASE MADE IT SEEM POSSIBLE TO END INJUSTICE BY DEMOLISHING CRIME SYNDICATES."

"THIS NOTION, THAT CRIMINALS MONOPOLIZED EVIL WAS ITSELF DEMOLISHED BY MY SECOND CASE."



RESEARCHING MY MASKED PREDECESSORS I INVESTIGATED THE MID-FIFTIES DISAPPEARANCE OF HOODED JUSTICE.

AN OPERATIVE, GOVERNMENT SOURCES REVEALED, HAD TRIED UN-EARTHING HIM BACK THEN, REPORTING FAILURE...



"UNEARTHING THE OPERATIVE, TRACKING HIM TO DOCKLAND, PROVED EASIER."

"EDWARD BLAKE."

"AS INTELLIGENT MEN FACING LUNATIC TIMES, WE WERE VERY ALIKE, DESPISING EACH OTHER INSTANTLY."



RECOGNIZING ME, HE ATTACKED ANYWAY, "MISTAKING ME FOR A CRIMINAL."

I STUDIED HIS LIMITATIONS: SKILLFUL FEINT; DEVASTATING UPPERCUT; LITTLE ELSE...

HE WON, IN THE SHORT TERM.



"HAD BLAKE FOUND HOODED JUSTICE, KILLED HIM, REPORTING FAILURE? I CAN PROVE NOTHING."

"WE NEXT MET IN 1960. I AVOIDED HIM, MORE FASCINATED BY JON."



STILL, I OBSERVED BLAKE OVER THE YEARS...

KNOW WHAT? HE WAS IN DALLAS, MINDING NIXON, THE DAY KENNEDY DIED.

NOBODY'S SURE WHY NIXON WAS THERE.



"EVER READ J.F.K.'S INTENDED SPEECH?"

"WE IN THIS COUNTRY, IN THIS GENERATION, ARE BY DESTINY, RATHER THAN CHOICE, THE WATCHMEN ON THE WALLS OF WORLD FREEDOM."



WAS HE REHEARSING IT, PERHAPS, AS THE MOTORCADE REACHED THE PLAZA...

...NEVER SUSPECTING THAT ON THE WALLS OF WORLD TYRANNY, CROSS-HAIRS WATCHED HIM.



"WE ALL REALIZED THEN HOW BAD THINGS WERE. I CONTINUED ADVENTURING, BUT IT SEEMED HOLLOW."

"I FOUGHT ONLY THE SYMPTOMS, LEAVING THE DISEASE ITSELF UNCHECKED."



I DESPISED MYSELF; MY SHAM CRUSADE. KNOWING MANKIND'S PROBLEMS, I'D BLINDED MYSELF TO THEM.

I FELT HELPLESS AGAINST FORCES GREATER THAN ANY I'D ANTICIPATED.



"TOO COWARDLY TO CONFRONT MY ANXIETIES, I HAD LIFE'S BLACK COMEDY EXPLAINED TO ME BY THE COMEDIAN HIMSELF AT THE CRIMEBUSTERS FIASCO IN '66."

"I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER."



HE DISCUSSED NUCLEAR WAR'S INEVITABILITY; DESCRIBED MY FUTURE ROLE AS "SMARTEST GUY ON THE CINDER"...

...AND OPENED MY EYES. ONLY THE BEST COMEDIANS ACCOMPLISH THAT.



"I REMEMBER THE CHARRED MAP BETWEEN MY FINGERS; NELSON SAYING 'SOMEONE'S GOT TO SAVE THE WORLD'; HIS TREMULOUS, COMPLAINING VOICE..."

"THAT'S WHEN I UNDERSTOOD."



THAT'S WHEN IT HIT ME.



"CONSOLING NELSON, I LEFT. OUTSIDE, BLAKE ARGUED WITH LAURIE AND HER MOTHER."

"I SWORE TO DENY HIS KIND THEIR LAST BLACK LAUGH AT EARTH'S EXPENSE."



I ALSO SWORE THAT WHEN NEXT I MET BLAKE OR ANY OTHER FOE, THOUGH PERHAPS NOT ON MY TERRITORY...

...IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE ON MY TERMS.





OTHER FACTORS EMERGED: ARMS EXPENDITURES BOOSTED INTERNATIONAL LENDING RATES. TO REPLY SOARING DEBT INTEREST, NATIONS LIKE BRAZIL LEVELLED THEIR FORESTS.

NUCLEAR POWER, PROVIDING VITAL WEAPONS-GRADE WASTE, BECAME MANDATORY.

WAR ASIDE, ATOMIC DEADLOCK GUIDED US DOWNHILL TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL RUIN.



TONY'S PRESENCE ACCELERATED THIS, THOUGH LESS THAN YOU'D IMAGINE. ANY SIGNIFICANT POWER IMBALANCE WOULD YIELD SIMILAR RESULTS.

NEVERTHELESS, HE SOMEHOW SYMBOLIZED MANKIND'S PROBLEMS. AS TENSIONS ROSE, THE ELEVATION OF COSTUMED HEROES BECAME A DESCENT...



I FORESAW THAT BY THE LATE SEVENTIES, IT WOULD REACH BOTTOM.

THIS LEFT TEN YEARS TO BUILD A FORTUNE AND REPUTATION TO SUSTAIN ME BEYOND THAT POINT, ALLOWING ME THE POWER AND LEVERAGE TO SURELY NEED.



DEVELOPING THE BASIC PATENT FOR PUBLIC SPARK HYDRANTS, I FINANCED DIMENSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE PROCEEDS.

MY PLAN REQUIRED PREPARATION FOR THE DAY WHEN I'D ASSUME THE ASPECT OF KINGLY RAMESES, LEAVING ALEXANDER THE ADVENTURER AND HIS TRAPPINGS TO GATHER DUST.



EACH STEP HAD TO BE TAKEN CAREFULLY, CONSTANTLY STRIVING TO KEEP IN MIND THE ENORMOUS SCALE OF WHAT WAS AT STAKE!

THE EARTH, HUMANITY, ALL WE'VE EVER KNOWN... "END OF THE WORLD" DOES THE CONCEPT NO JUSTICE.



EVEN OUR PAST WOULD BE CANCELLED. OUR STRUGGLE FROM THE PRIMAL OOZE, EVERY CHILD BIRTH, EVERY PERSONAL SACRIFICE RENDERED MEANINGLESS, LEADING ONLY TO DUST, TOSSED ON THE VOID-WINDS.



THE WORLD'S PRESENT WOULD END ITS FUTURE, IMMEASURABLY VASTER, WOULD ALSO VANISH.

SAVE FOR RICHARD NIXON, WHOSE NAME ADORNS A PLAQUE UPON THE MOON, NO HUMAN VESTIGE WOULD REMAIN.

RUINS BECOME SAND, SAND BLOWS AWAY... ALL OUR RICHNESS AND COLOR AND BEAUTY WOULD BE LOST...

...AS IF IT HAD NEVER BEEN.



THE WORLD I'D TRIED TO SAVE WAS LOST BEYOND RECALL. I WAS A HORROR: AMONGST HORRORS MUST I DWELL.

A ROPE SNAKED DOWN SPLUTTERING, I GRABBED IT...

SEE, PEOPLE DON'T REACH OUT AND MAKE CONTACT.



...AND FROM THE DECKS ABOVE A CHEER WENT UP, BOTH GROSS AND BLACK, ITS STENCH AFFRONTING HEAVEN.

THE END.

THAT'S WHY THERE'S THIS COMMOTION ALL THE TIME, THIS CONFLICT. PEOPLE DON'T CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER.



IT'S LIKE, YOU BEEN COMING HERE WEEKS, READIN' THAT JUNK OVER AN' OVER, AN' YET WE AIN'T EXACTLY CLOSE...

'CAUSE THEY DON'T MAKE SENSE, MAN! THAT'S WHY I GOTTA READ 'EM OVER.



THAT AIN'T THE POINT.

LISTEN, WHEN MY ROSA DIED, MOST OF OUR FRIENDS WERE HER FRIENDS: THEY STOPPED CALLING. I TOOK THIS JOB TO MEET PEOPLE, Y'KNOW?

SO...WHAT'S YOUR NAME? WHADDAYA DOIN' HERE?



MY NAME'S BERNIE. I'M HERE BECAUSE MY MOM'S WORKING, AN' MY SISTER, SHE'S OUT TOO, AND THESE HYDRANTS ARE WARM, Y'KNOW?

BERNIE? SHORT FOR BERNARD? WELL I'LL BE HORSEWHIPPED! THAT'S MY NAME!



SO? AIN'T NO BIG DEAL. LOTTA PEOPLE CALLED BERNARD, MAN. DON'T SIGNIFY FOR NOTHIN'.

WELL, SURE, BUT... WAIT A MINUTE. WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON...?



FIGHT. PULL OVER.

STEVE, YOU JUST GOT SUSPENDED. THIS AIN'T YOUR PROBLEM. SOME OTHER UNIT CAN HANDLE IT.

I'M STILL ME, JOE. PULL HER OVER.



LISTEN, MILO, YOU LEAVE WORK EARLY FOR A BEER WITH YOUR BROTHER, BUSINESS AIN'T GONNA COLLAPSE.

AW SHIT...

NO, BUT... HEY... POLICE, WHAT'S HAPPENING?



THAT'S JOEY! THAT'S ONE OF MY DRIVERS, IN A FIGHT...

HELL! ANOTHER MINUTE, WE'D HAVE BEEN GONE. TALK ABOUT LOUSY TIMING!



EACH STEP WAS SYNCHRONIZED.

JON, BEING TOO POWERFUL AND UNPREDICTABLE TO FIT HIS PLANS, NEEDED REMOVING. THUS, DIMENSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS HIRED HIS PAST ASSOCIATES...

...AND GAVE THEM CANCER?



YES, WEAVER FIRST, SLATER AND MOLOCH LATER. UNWITTINGLY EXPOSED TO RADIATION, THEY WERE CLOSELY OBSERVED, CULTIVATED AS WEAPONS AGAINST JON.

MEANWHILE, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY, I RESEARCHED GENETICS... BUBASTIS WAS AN EARLY SUCCESS... AND TELEPORTATION.



SINCE JON PROVED TELEPORTATION POSSIBLE, WHY DEVELOP ELECTRIC CARS? MY RESEARCHERS WERE VITAL... LIKE MY ISLAND, SECRETLY PURCHASED IN 1970.

THE ONLY HERO RETAINING PUBLIC SYMPATHY, I QUIT TWO YEARS BEFORE THE KEENE ACT, CONCENTRATING ON MY PLAN.



"UNABLE TO UNITE THE WORLD BY CONQUEST... ALEXANDER'S METHOD... I WOULD TRICK IT; FRIGHTEN IT TOWARDS SALVATION WITH HISTORY'S GREATEST PRACTICAL JOKE."

"THAT'S WHAT UPSET THE COMEDIAN WHEN AWARENESS OF MY SCHEME CRASHED IN UPON HIM:

"PROFESSIONAL JEALOUSY."



BLAKE'S MURDER. YOU CONFESS?

CONFESSION IMPLIES PENITENCE. I MERELY REGRET HIS ACCIDENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

RETURNING FROM NICARAGUA BY AIR, HE SPOTTED A SHIP DOCKING AT AN UNCHARTED ISLAND, SUSPECTING SANDINISTA BASES, HE RESOLVED TO INVESTIGATE.



"I PICTURE HIM, SWIMMING TO THE ISLAND, DAGGER IN TEETH, PENETRATING ITS INSTALLATIONS. WHAT HE FOUND MUST HAVE COME AS A TERRIBLE BLOW."

"IMAGINE...THE PERFECT FIGHTING MAN DISCOVERING A PLOT TO PUT AN END TO WAR..."



"...AN END TO FIGHTING."



HOW COULD GENETICS AND TELEPORTATION END WAR?

WELL, WITHOUT JON'S GUIDING MIND, TELEPORTATION PROVED LIMITED. ANYTHING LIVING DIED OF SHOCK UPON TRANSFER, OR MATERIALIZED IN AN OCCUPIED SPACE AND EXPLODED...



"...BUT THAT WASN'T WHAT BLAKE FOUND ON THE ISLAND. HE FOUND A COLLECTION OF MISSING ARTISTS AND SCIENTISTS, WORKING UPON A MONSTROUS NEW LIFE FORM."

"UPON LEARNING THE CREATURE'S INTENDED PURPOSE, BLAKE'S PRACTICED CYNICISM CRACKED."



THOUGH APPALLED, EXPOSING MY PLAN WOULD PRECIPITATE GREATER HORRORS PREVENTING HUMANITY'S SALVATION.

EVEN BLAKE BALKED AT THAT RESPONSIBILITY, TELLING ONLY MOLOCH, WHO HE KNEW WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND...

...BUT I HAD MOLOCH'S PLACE BUGGED, AND I UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY.



"THE PLAN BLAKE HAD UNCOVERED WAS THIS: TO FRIGHTEN GOVERNMENTS INTO CO-OPERATION, I WOULD CONVINCE THEM THAT EARTH FACED IMMINENT ATTACK BY BEINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD."

"I'M AFRAID THE DISCOVERY RATHER DROVE THE WIND FROM HIS SAILS."



AHHA...

HA HA HA: ADRIAN, COME ON, WHAT...

YOU'RE SERIOUS?

PERFECTLY. AN INTRACTABLE PROBLEM CAN ONLY BE RESOLVED BY STEPPING BEYOND CONVENTIONAL SOLUTIONS. ALEXANDER UNDERSTOOD THAT, TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO, IN GORDIUM.



"BLAKE UNDERSTOOD, TOO. HE KNEW MY PLAN WOULD SUCCEED, THOUGH ITS SCALE TERRIFIED HIM. THAT'S WHY HE TOLD NOBODY. IT WAS TOO BIG TO DISCUSS..."

"...BUT HE UNDERSTOOD."

"AT THE END, HE UNDERSTOOD."

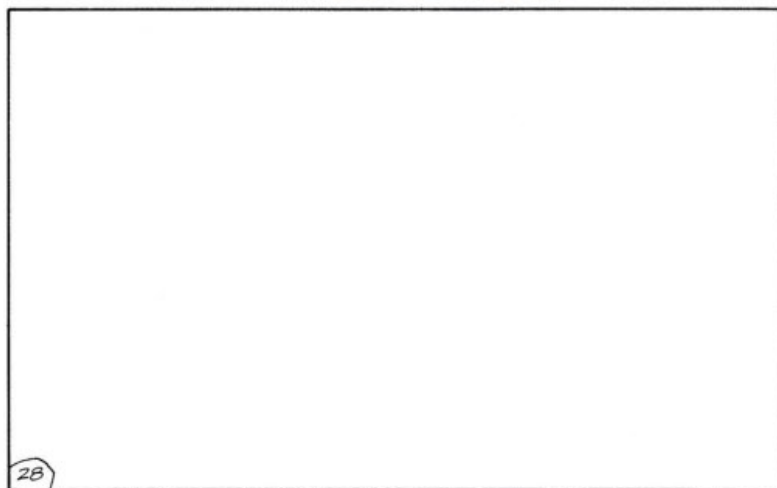


"HE UNDERSTOOD THE PORTENTS, KNEW A DAZZLING TRANSFORMATION WAS AT HAND FOR MANKIND."

"THE BRUTAL WORLD HE'D RELISHED WOULD SIMPLY CEASE TO BE, ITS FIERCE AND BRAWLING DENIZENS RUSHING TO JOIN THE MASTODON IN OBSOLESCENCE..."

"IN EXTINCTION."





My name is
Ozymandias,
king of kings:
Look on my works,
ye mighty,
and despair!

—Ozymandias
Percy
Bysshe
Shelley



AFTER THE MASQUERADE:

Superstyle and the
art of humanoid watching.



DOUG ROTH VISITS ANTARCTICA
TO INTERVIEW ADRIAN VEIDT

VEIDT: "The frightening thing about the campaign to re-elect the president is that in the wake of the victory in Vietnam, I don't see how they can fail. C.R.E.E.P.! What a terrible acronym. I wonder who coined that one? Somebody who watched too many 'Man From U.N.C.L.E.' episodes in the sixties . . . Liddy, or one of those other Washington humanoids."

"Humanoids." I'm sitting talking with a retired superhero in a glass dome filled with tropical flowers and hummingbirds, while outside the antarctic wind builds snowdrifts against the glass. I would imagine myself beyond surprise by this point, yet the sudden use of such an odd term is startling. Have I detected a hitherto unnoticed contempt for mere humans behind that eminently likable golden facade? Why "humanoids"? I put this to him, and he chuckles.

VEIDT: "I'm sorry, it's a sort of one-man private joke. I've been referring to Nixon's close subordinates as humanoids since I heard about the banquet . . . and this is true, I promise . . . where one of the presidential aides spilled a glass of water over Vice-President Ford. The aide was incredibly apologetic, obviously, but Ford just smiled and said 'Oh, that's okay. Nobody's human.' (Laughter) I've called 'em humanoids ever since."

Continued

The laughter of Adrian Veidt is deep and rich, filled with a warmth I hadn't anticipated as the jet he'd arranged lowered me gently from the blank white antarctic sky towards the dangerously small-looking black hyphen of the landing strip, set into the endless pack ice far below. The landscape was hard and cold, too big to get to grips with, and I expected much the same of any man who'd choose to live in it.

The plane was met at the landing strip by three enthusiastically friendly Vietnamese men who led me between obelisks of dark marble with rolling purple highlights towards the fortress dominating the nude white reaches beyond.

Servants? My liberal sensibilities recoiled at the concept with a predictable knee-jerk. Later, however, on learning that the men had been Vietnamese refugees in danger of losing their lives in the purges following America's victory without Veidt's intervention, I wasn't so sure. Since Antarctica is owned by no nation, the men are theoretically safe from extradition, and their nominal boss seems to treat them more as respected friends than as lackeys. Certainly, they themselves seem deliciously happy with both their lot and their landlord.

"Mr. Veidt has made the effort to understand our culture. He talks to us often concerning our religious beliefs, asking many questions." The man who tells me this is sincere and heartfelt in his testimonial, showing an almost fatherly protective anxiety that this magazine should not misrepresent his employer:

"He is not one of your pop music stars. He does not inject drugs, or treat young women badly. Make sure that you say that."

When we reach the fortress, Veidt is still completing his daily workout in a gymnasium of vast, almost dreamlike proportions, where parallel bars meet at infinity. I'm cordially invited to watch while he finishes up, and as I observe that perfect swiss-watch of a body twirling and circling above me in easy defiance of gravity, all my earlier doubts concerning Veidt's accessibility return.

There he is, right up there above me: the man. Adrian Veidt. Ozymand . . . whoops. Uh-uh. We don't call him that anymore, do we? The mask is gone, but as he loops the high bar in slow, graceful centrifuge he still wears the golden leotard, and the headband. Every girlfriend I've had in the past four years has wanted to lay this guy, more than Jagger, more than Springsteen or D'Eath or any of those also-rans, and now here I am, squinting up at him, and yes, goddamn it, I have to goddamned admit that he looks like a goddamned god! I can't quite believe he'll submit to being interviewed by someone so obviously mired in the dregs of the gene pool as myself . . .

... but here he comes, dropping to the floor, picking up the purple towel that I realize later is actually the tunic of his costume, and wiping himself beneath the arms with it in a distinctly

Homo sapiens fashion. He's walking towards me, his smile somewhere between Jackie Coogan and JFK., sticking out a hand that grips mine strongly enough to make me glad it's friendly. He glances towards the gymnasium windows, outside which a blizzard seems to be commencing and smiles again.

"Not the sort of snow you're used to in California, Mr. Roth."

A coke joke! Adrian Veidt, Ozy-freakin'-mandias himself has just told me a coke joke! Whoooo-e! We fall easily into conversation from that point on, and after he's dressed he takes me for a tour of his fortress, opulent beyond the wildest dreams of Versailles. We end up in a large section of the main hall where one wall appears to be entirely covered with TV screens, all tuned to different channels. It is here that we hold our interview, and I notice his eyes often drifting across the riot of clashing images as we speak. It's only after I express worries concerning background noise and my recording equipment that he thinks to turn the sound of the multiple televisions down. They don't seem to affect his concentration at all.

Before launching into my interview spiel, I take a breath and remember why I'm here. Almost lost in the cacophony surrounding the old Trickster's Constitutional amendment scam, one of America's best-respected and most consistently left-leaning superheroes quietly retired from crimefighting to pursue a career in business. When this magazine phoned him to ask why, he kindly offered to fly me up to his antarctic retreat where we could conduct the interview in comfort. Exhaling, I press the record button and begin.

NOVA: So, how do you get to be a superhero? Were your parents rich? I mean, did that give you advantages?

VEIDT: No more than I could help. My mother left me a lot of money when she died, but I gave it to charity when I was seventeen. I wanted to prove that I could accomplish anything I wanted starting from absolutely nothing. Also, I wanted to free myself of concern for money. Consequently, it's never been a problem for me. To answer your question, you get to be a superhero by believing in the hero within you and summoning him or her forth by an act of will. Believing in yourself and your own potential is the first step to realizing that potential. Alternatively, you could do as Jon did: Fall into a nuclear reactor and hope for the best. On the whole, I think I prefer to stick to my own methods. *(Laughter)*

NOVA: You'll forgive me for saying so, but isn't that philosophy a little Norman Vincent Peale? That self-realization stuff? How exactly do you exploit that potential to the degree that you obviously have?

VEIDT: The disciplines of physical exercise, meditation and study aren't terribly esoteric. The means to attain a capability far beyond that of the so-called ordinary person are within reach of



everyone, if their desire and their will are strong enough. I have studied science, art, religion and a hundred different philosophies. Anyone could do as much. By applying what you learn and ordering your thoughts in an intelligent manner it is possible to accomplish almost anything. Possible for the "ordinary person." There's a notion I'd like to see buried: the ordinary person. Ridiculous. There is no ordinary person.

NOVA: Returning to your costumed career, why did you quit?

VEIDT: There were a number of reasons, but I suppose basically it boiled down to my increasing uncertainty about the role of the costumed hero in the seventies. What does fighting crime mean, exactly? Does it mean upholding the law when a woman shoplifts to feed her children, or does it mean struggling to uncover the ones who, quite legally, have brought about her poverty? Yes, I've busted drug rings and been accused of being an establishment pawn for doing so . . . that happened a lot in the sixties. I've also uncovered plots by breakaway extremist factions within the Pentagon, for example the plot to release some unpleasantly specific diseases upon the population of Africa, the exposure of which led to the *New Frontiersman* denouncing me as a "Puppet of Peking" on the strength of my youthful travels through the East. I guess I've just reached a point where I've started to wonder whether all the grandstanding and fighting individual evils does

much good for the world as a whole. Those evils are just symptoms of an overall sickness of the human spirit, and I don't believe you can cure a disease by suppressing its symptoms. That whole *Contact-400* approach to our society's problems, I despair of it. It doesn't work. Maybe as a businessman I can do more good, on a more meaningful scale.

NOVA: What sort of world do you see it being, in the future?

VEIDT: That depends upon us . . . each and every one of us. Futurology interests me perhaps more than any other single subject, and as such I devote a great deal of time to its study. Even so, technology is progressing at an ever-accelerating pace, and by early next century I would hesitate to predict *any* limitations upon what we might be capable of. I would say without hesitation that a new world is within our grasp, filled with unimaginable experiences and possibilities, if only we want it badly enough. Not a utopia . . . I don't believe that any species could continue to grow and keep from stagnation without *some* adversity . . . but a society with a more human basis, where the problems that beset us are at least *new* problems.

NOVA: You don't think there's a possibility we may have damaged the environment beyond repair, or that we might someday have a fatal nuclear showdown with the Soviets?

Continued

Veidt cont.

VEIDT: Of course. Of course I do. I'd be ignoring the facts if I didn't accept those things as strong possibilities. As I said, it all depends on us, on whether we, individually, want Armageddon or a new world of fabulous, limitless potential. That's not such an obvious question as it seems. I believe there are some people who really do want, if only subconsciously, an end to the world. They want to be spared the responsibilities of maintaining that world, to be spared the effort of imagination needed to realize such a future. And of course, there are other people who want very much to live. I see twentieth century society as a sort of race between enlightenment and extinction. In one lane you have the four horsemen of the apocalypse . . .

NOVA: . . . and in the other?

VEIDT: The seventh cavalry. *(Laughter)*

NOVA: Changing the subject entirely, do you listen to much music? I wondered what your tastes might be, as a superhero . . .

VEIDT: I like electronic music. That's a very superhero-ey thing to like, I suppose, isn't it? I like avant-garde music in general. Cage, Stockhausen, Penderecki, Andrew Lang, Pierre Henry. Terry Riley is very good. Oh, and I've heard some interesting new music from Jamaica . . . a sort of hybrid between electronic music and reggae. It's a fascinating study in the new musical forms generated when a largely pre-technological culture is given access to modern recording techniques without the technological preconceptions that we've allowed to accumulate, limiting our vision. It's called dub music. You'd like it, I'm sure.

NOVA: How do you get on with the rest of the superhero fraternity? Some of them seem very right-wing in contrast with your own stance. I'm thinking of Rorschach, the Comedian, Dr. Manhattan . . .

VEIDT: *Jon?* Right-wing? *(Laughs)* If there's one thing in this cosmos that that man *isn't* capable of

doing it's having a political bias. Believe me . . . you have to meet him to understand. I mean, which do you prefer, red ants or black ants?

NOVA: Uh . . . ? Well, I don't have any particular preference . . .

VEIDT: Exactly. Well, imagine how Jon feels. Rorschach, I don't know very well. I believe he's a man of great integrity, but he seems to see the world in very black and white, Manichean terms. I personally believe that to be an intellectual limitation.

NOVA: And the Comedian? I understand there's no love lost between you. I heard that he beat you in combat, back when you were just starting out . . .

VEIDT: Yes, well, that was a case of mistaken identity and general misunderstanding. For some reason it happens a lot when costumed crime-fighters meet for the first time. *(Laughter)*

NOVA: But you and the Comedian don't like each other?

VEIDT: My, but you're determined, aren't you? *(Laughs)* No, we're not great friends. It's largely a political difference. He sees me as an intellectual dilettante dabbling in national affairs that don't concern me. I see him as an amoral mercenary allying himself to whichever political faction seems likely to grant him the greatest license. The difference is as simple and as profound as that.

NOVA: There's no general sense of disillusionment with your fellow crimefighters, then?

VEIDT: Not at all. Some of my dearest friends are numbered amongst them. I wish them all nothing but luck in the years that lie ahead.

NOVA: In closing, you've often been referred to in the press as the world's smartest man. Is that true, and does it bother you?

VEIDT: No, that isn't true, but it's very flattering and I don't mind a bit. If somebody wants to call me the world's best-groomed man, then hey, that's okay too. *(Laughs)* No, no, I don't mind being the smartest man in the world. I just wish it wasn't this one. ☒

THE TIMES THEY ARE A 'CHANGING

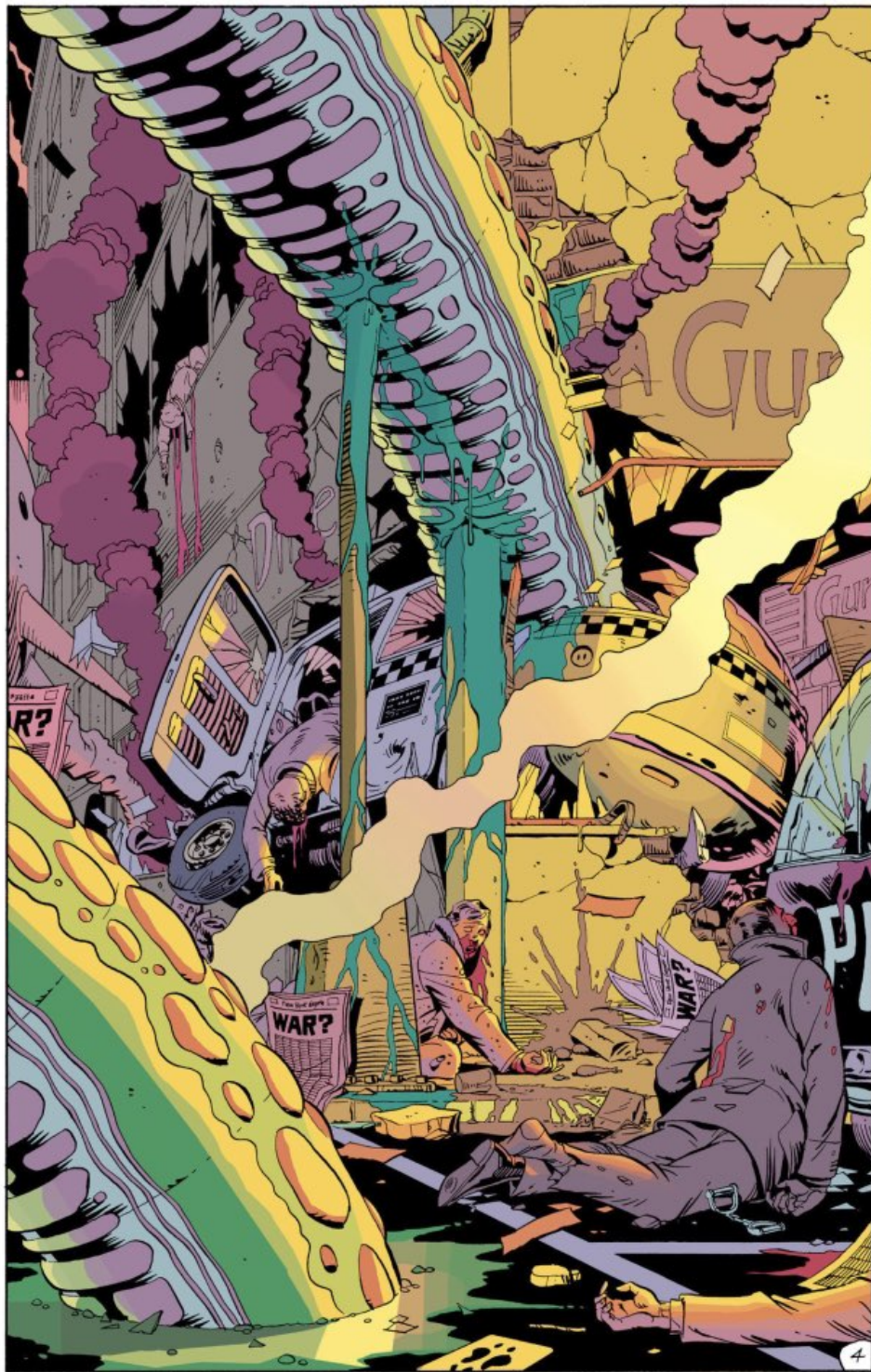
NOSTALGIA BY VEIDT



CHAPTER XII









A STRONGER LOVING WORLD





...AND INSTEAD, THEY GOT...

I MEAN, WH-WHO'S SAFE? HOW CAN ANYONE PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST A WORLD WHERE THIS HAPPENS? I...

UHH...

NOW, LET ME SEE...



TACHYON PARTICLES, TRAVELLING BACKWARDS IN TIME, OCCUR RARELY, SOMEONE MUST BE GENERATING THEM.

IF I PROBE FAR ENOUGH, I SHOULD STUMBLE UPON THE SOURCE OF THE DISTURBANCE...



...THOUGH THIS STATIC MAKES SCANNING DIFFICULT. ALSO, THERE'S APPARENTLY MORE THAN ONE GENERATOR.

MOST ARE FAINT, BUT A PULSE FROM THE SOUTHERN POLAR REGION IS STRONG...

REASSURINGLY POWERFUL.



LOGICALLY, WE SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE ANTARCTIC SIGNAL IMMEDIATELY, ASSESS ITS CONNECTION WITH THIS CATASTROPHE...

WORKING BLIND, WE CAN'T USEFULLY PREPARE OURSELVES...

GET ME OUT OF HERE.



OUT? CERTAINLY WE CAN TRACE THE TACHYONS TO THEIR SOURCE, AND...

JON, I JUST WANNA BE AWAY FROM THESE PEOPLE, AND THAT THING, AND, AND...

...HRRREUGH...



I'M SORRY. HOW THOUGHTLESS OF ME. THIS MUST BE A DISTRESSING TIME FOR YOU...

JON, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE! I WANT TO BE OUT OF HERE, OKAY?

JUST TAKE IT AWAY IS ALL...



TAKE IT AWAY.



TAKE CAT AWAY, VEIDT. TAKE CAT AWAY AND FACE ME...

WHOA.

ADRIAN, I'M SORRY, I DON'T BUY THIS HOAX INVASION STORY.

COME ON, WHAT ARE YOU REALLY UP TO?

VEIDT, GET RID OF CAT.

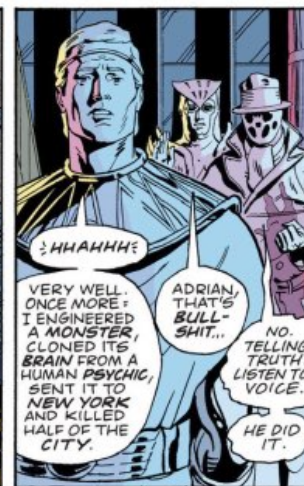
HAHHH?

VERY WELL. ONCE MORE: I ENGINEERED A MONSTER, CLONED ITS BRAIN FROM A HUMAN PSYCHIC, SENT IT TO NEW YORK AND KILLED HALF OF THE CITY.

ADRIAN, THAT'S BULL-SHIT...

NO. TELLING TRUTH, LISTEN TO VOICE.

HE DID IT.



LOOK, NOBODY COULD DO THAT. YOU'RE BEING...

HE DID IT.

HAHHH?

ADRIAN, THAT'S BULL-SHIT...

NO. TELLING TRUTH, LISTEN TO VOICE.

HE DID IT.

ADRIAN, THAT'S BULL-SHIT...

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NO. TELLING TRUTH, LISTEN TO VOICE.

HE DID IT.

ADRIAN, THAT'S BULL-SHIT...

NO. TELLING TRUTH, LISTEN TO VOICE.

HE DID IT.



NO, I DON'T THINK SO. AFTER ALL, HER PRESENCE SAVES YOU THE HUMILIATION OF ANOTHER BEATING.

HURRR...

RORSCHACH, HE'S KIDDING YOU. HIS STORY, IT'S FULL OF HOLES...

ADRIAN, YOUR ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT: YOU COULDN'T HAVE PLANNED IT! WHAT IF HE'D SHOT YOU FIRST INSTEAD OF YOUR SECRETARY?



NO, I DON'T THINK SO. AFTER ALL, HER PRESENCE SAVES YOU THE HUMILIATION OF ANOTHER BEATING.

HURRR...

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ADRIAN, YOUR ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT: YOU COULDN'T HAVE PLANNED IT! WHAT IF HE'D SHOT YOU FIRST INSTEAD OF YOUR SECRETARY?



YOU ...?

NAHH COME ON. THAT'S COMPLETELY ...

YOU COULDN'T REALLY DO THAT?

I SUPPOSE I'D HAVE HAD TO CATCH THE BULLET, WOULDN'T I?



YOU ...?

NAHH COME ON. THAT'S COMPLETELY ...

YOU COULDN'T REALLY DO THAT?

I SUPPOSE I'D HAVE HAD TO CATCH THE BULLET, WOULDN'T I?

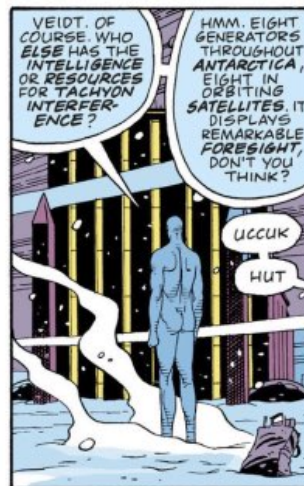


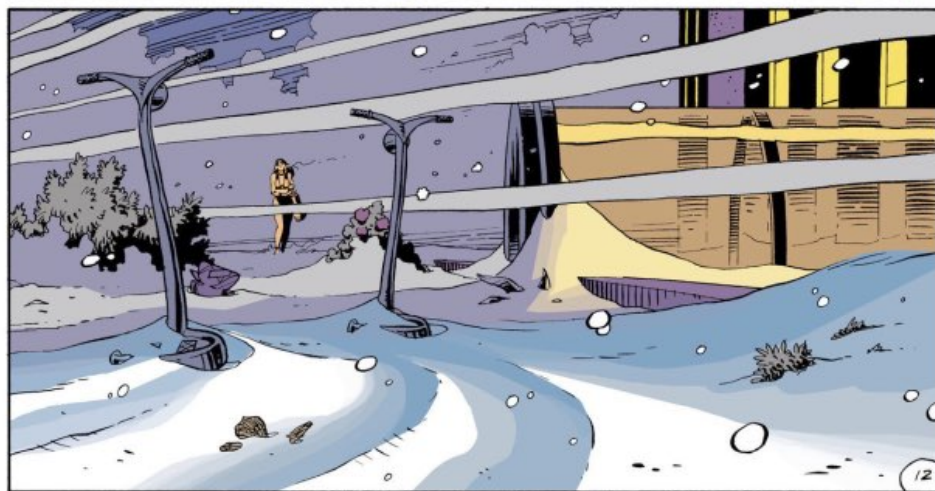
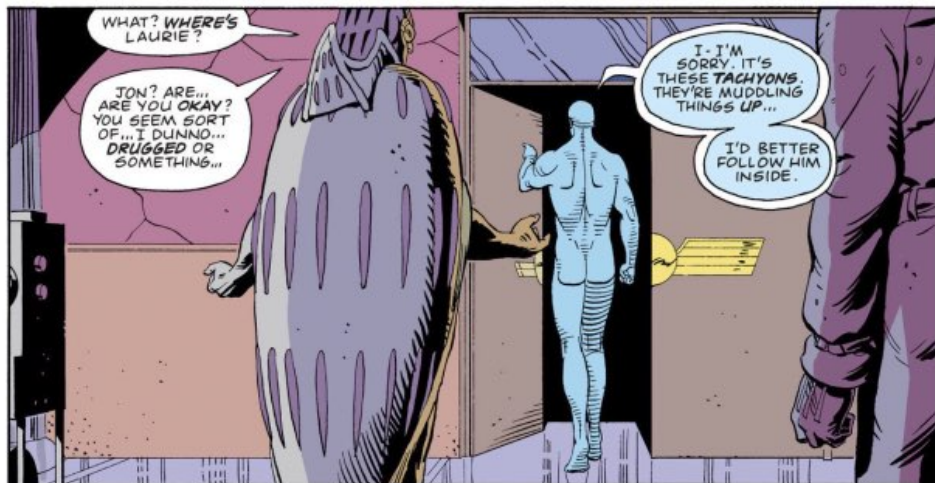
YOU ...?

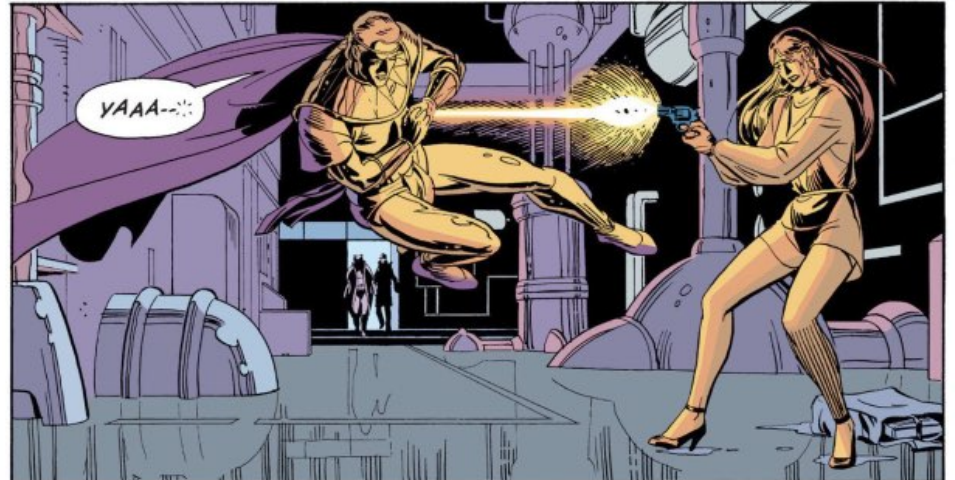
NAHH COME ON. THAT'S COMPLETELY ...

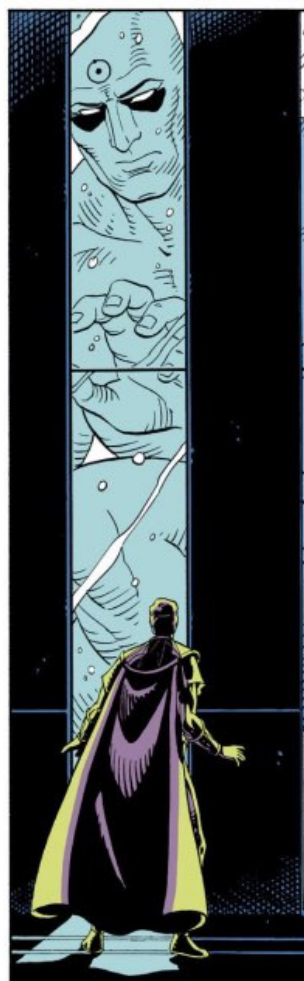
YOU COULDN'T REALLY DO THAT?

I SUPPOSE I'D HAVE HAD TO CATCH THE BULLET, WOULDN'T I?













I SAVED EARTH FROM HELL. NEXT, I'LL HELP HER TOWARDS UTOPIA. IT IS AS RAMESES SAID:

"CANAAN IS DEVASTATED, ASHKELON IS FALLEN, GEZER IS RUINED, YENDAM IS REDUCED TO NOTHING..."



"...ISRAEL IS DESOLATE AND HER SEED IS NO MORE, AND PALESTINE HAS BECOME A WIDOW FOR EGYPT..."

WAIT A MINUTE... "NEXT"? AFTER WHAT YOU DID? YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THAT...



"ALL THE COUNTRIES ARE UNIFIED AND PACIFIED."

CAN'T GET AWAY WITH IT?

WILL YOU EXPOSE ME, UNDOING THE PEACE MILLIONS DIED FOR? KILL ME, RISKING SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION? MORALLY, YOU'RE IN CHECKMATE, LIKE BLAKE.

LET'S COMPROMISE.

WHAAT?



LOGICALLY, I'M AFRAID HE'S RIGHT. EXPOSING THIS PLOT, WE DESTROY ANY CHANCE OF PEACE, DOOMING EARTH TO WORSE DESTRUCTION.

ON MARS, YOU DEMONSTRATED LIFE'S VALUE. IF WE WOULD PRESERVE LIFE HERE, WE MUST REMAIN SILENT.



NEVER TELL ANYONE? W-WE REALLY HAVE TO BUY THIS?

JESUS HE WAS RIGHT. ALL WE DID WAS FAIL TO STOP HIM SAVING EARTH. JESUS...



HOW... HOW CAN HUMANS MAKE DECISIONS LIKE THIS? WE'RE DAMNED IF WE STAY QUIET, EARTH'S DAMNED IF WE DON'T. WE...

OKAY. OKAY, COUNT ME IN. WE SAY NOTHING.



JOKING, OF COURSE.



RORSCHACH...? RORSCHACH, WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING? THIS IS TOO BIG TO BE HARD-ASSED ABOUT! WE HAVE TO COMPROMISE...

NO. NOT EVEN IN THE FACE OF ARMAGEDDON.



NEVER COMPROMISE.



HMM. NOW WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THAT, I WONDER?

"BLOTTING OUT REALITY" PERHAPS?



AH WELL... IN ALL LIKELIHOOD IT'S OF NO CONSEQUENCE. AS A RELIABLE WITNESS, RORSCHACH IS HARDLY... HOW SHALL WE PUT IT... "WITHOUT STAIN"? STILL...

STILL. I THINK I SHALL MEDITATE NOW, IN MY ORRERY.



OBTUSELY, YOU MUST BOTH MAKE YOURSELVES AT HOME. THERE ARE SEVERAL RESTROOMS, SHOULD YOU WISH TO FRESHEN UP.

"BOTH"?

I JUST WANT TO GO SOMEWHERE ELSE. CAN YOU GET US OUT OF HERE, JON?



JON?



WHERE'D HE GO? WHERE'D EVERYBODY GO?

I KNOW. LISTEN, LET'S FIND SOMEPLACE QUIET, AWAY FROM THESE LIGHTS. WE NEED TO THINK, TO TALK...



BUT WHERE'S JON? HE'S BEEN ACTING SO STRANGE: HE PREDICTED I'D TELL HIM ABOUT YOU AND ME, THEN SEEMED ANGRY WHEN I DID!

UH... HOW ANGRY?



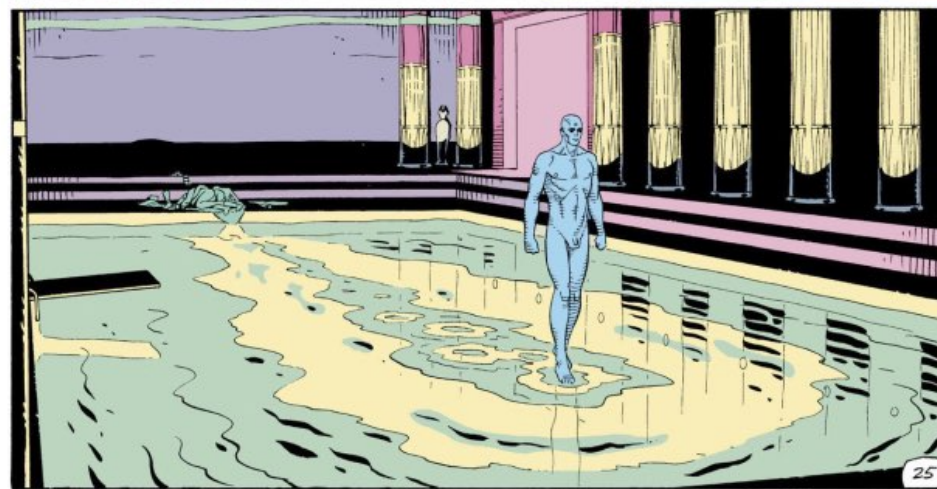
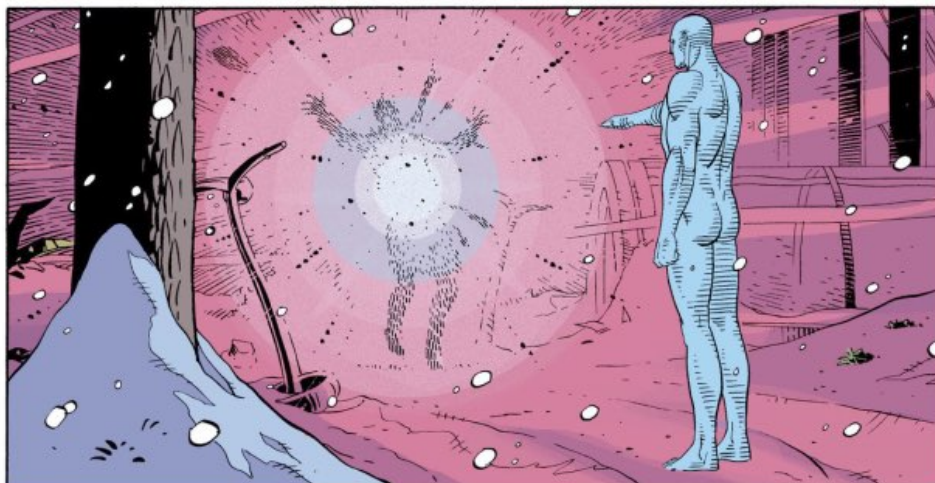
I'M SCREWED UP ALREADY. I LEARNED STUFF ON MARS AND THEN NEW YORK...

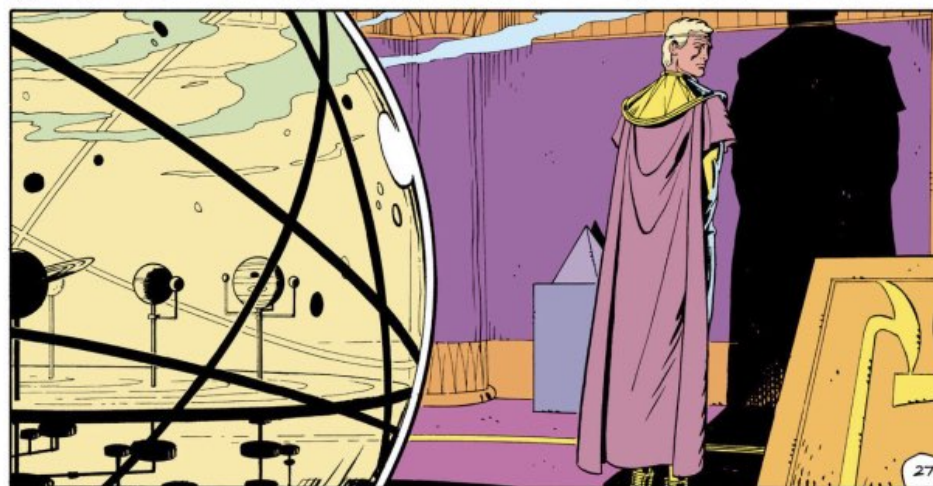
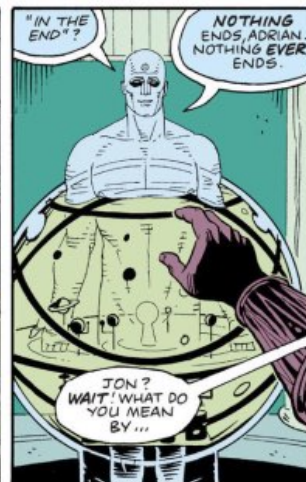
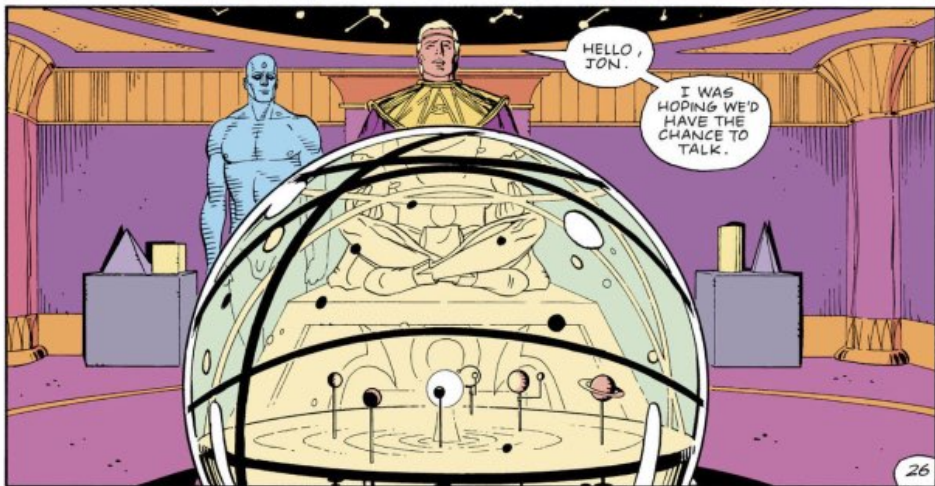
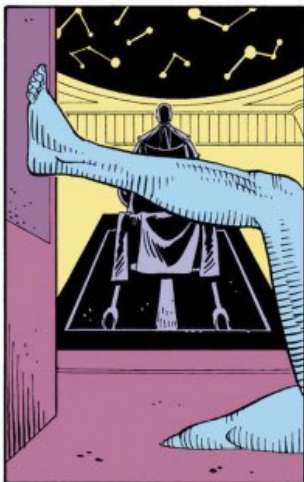
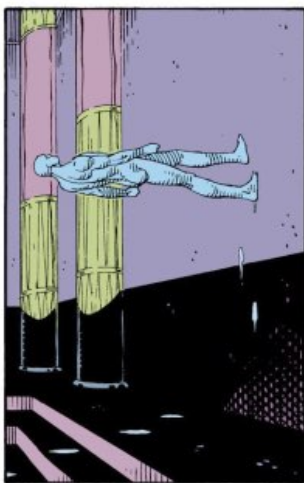
I... I STILL CAN'T IMAGINE THIS WHOLE THING, WE'RE JUST, I DUNNO...

DEAD. EVERYBODY WAS JUST... DEAD.

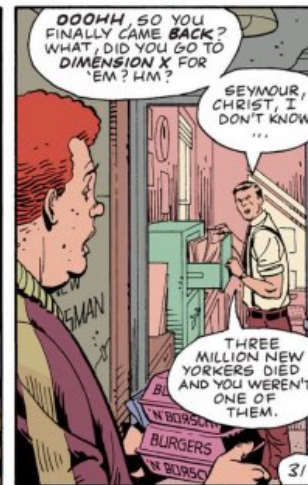
OUT OF OUR DEPTH.













It would be a stronger world, a stronger loving world, to die in.
—John Cale



**Quis custodiet
ipsos custodes.**

Who watches the watchmen?

—Juvenal, *Satires*, VI, 347
Quoted as the epigraph of the
Tower Commission Report, 1987

GLIMPSES

Conceptual Sketches, Process, and Development

TO JAMES MCCANN, DC COMICS
FROM DAVE GIBBONS

① OF 1



Marker rough for the third Mayfair Games roleplaying module.



Dear Alan, Len, Ed, Richard, fellow Americans,

Here are the cover and ad sketches for your perusal.

The ads are open to re-arrangement -- perhaps the bottom line could be dropped and just have 'Who watches the Watchmen' more clearly seen in the picture. Or maybe just have the logo and 'Coming soon...' info.

I've done a whole batch of covers to show that there is some mileage in the basic idea of a semi-abstract non-figurative design. Hopefully, the stark simplicity of the covers will make them leap off the stands. Note that the cover leads into the story and also that there is at least a 'face' in each, albeit a badge, a clock face or a chalked-up doodle.

As far as the treatment of the artwork goes, it could either be the usual line drawing with added color (perhaps on blue/grey line for more subtlety) or a full-blown tromp l'oeil painting. In this case, I would do the design and John Higgins could do the finished full-colour rendering. We did this on a recent DR WHO album cover and it worked well.

Looking forward to your comments,

Dave



Opposite top: Correspondence from Dave Gibbons to DC Comics editors and art directors concerning Watchmen promotional art.

Opposite bottom: Rough thumbnail sketches of the first group shot of the Watchmen.

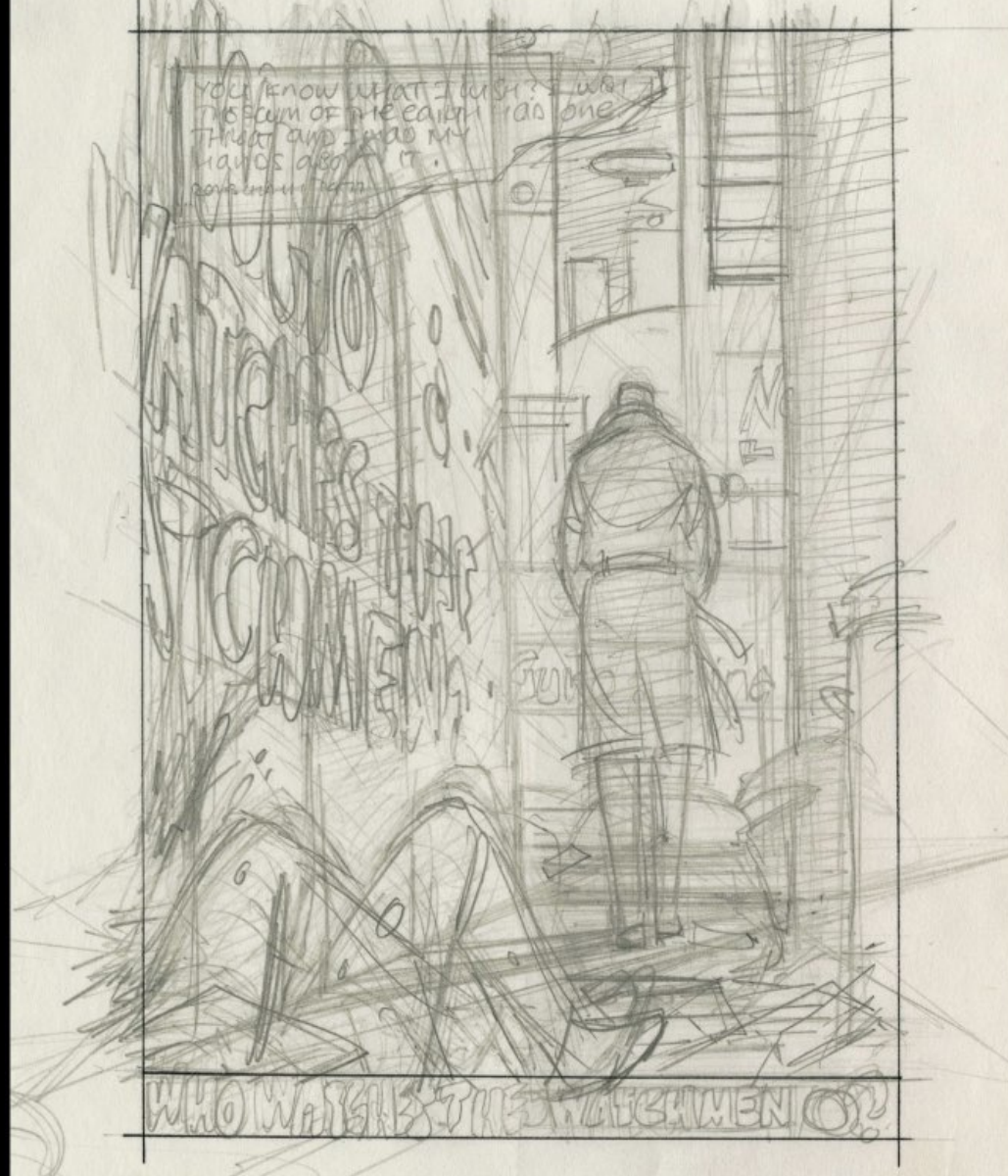
Final inked illustration of the Watchman that appears in DC Comics Who's Who.





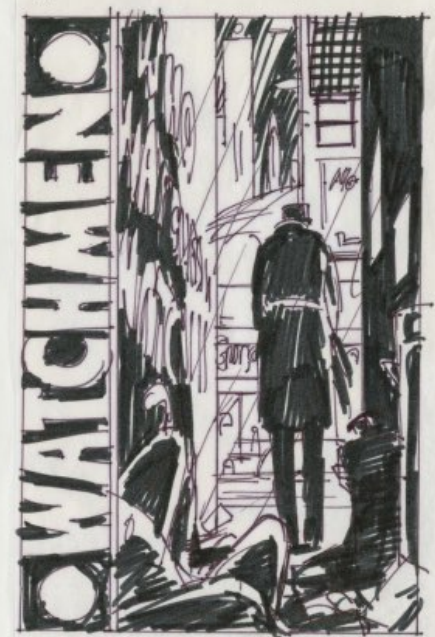
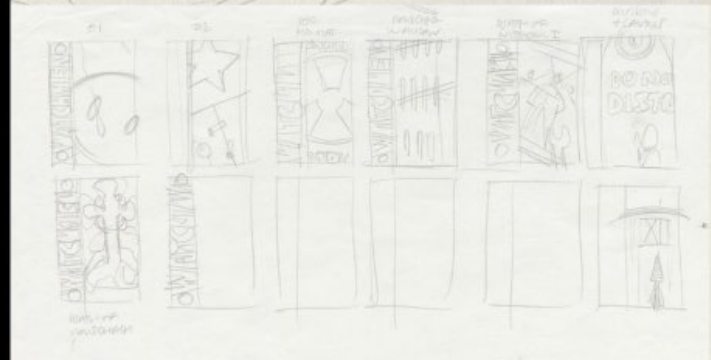
Preliminary sketches and inked roughs for three of the black and white character portraits featuring the Comedian, Nite Owl, and Silk Spectre which ran in the portfolio edition.

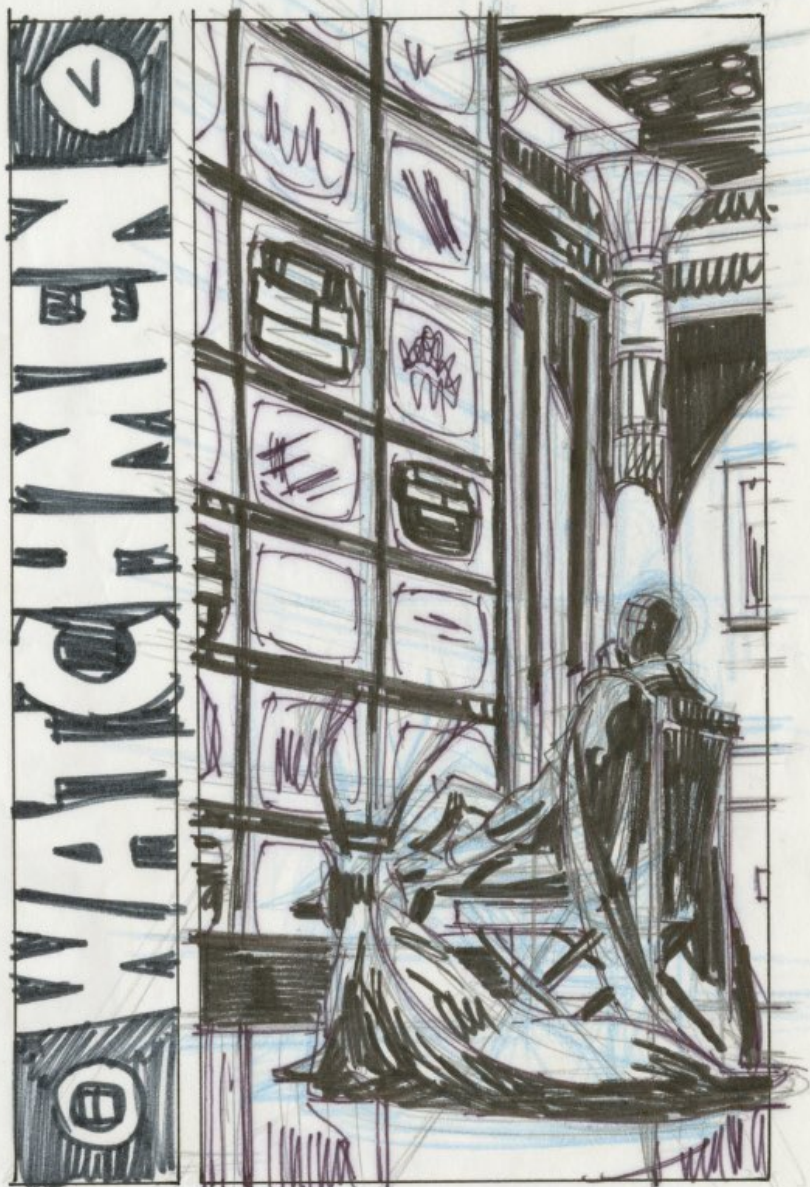




Progression of thumbnails, pencils, and inks of promotional Watchmen artwork.

Opposite bottom left: Unused cover designs.





Preliminary rough sketch for Ozymandias promotional artwork.

Opposite: Character sketches of Laurie and Dan.

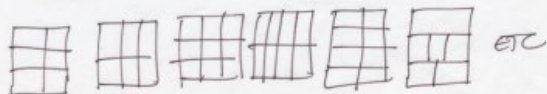


SPATIALY GENERATED ENERGY RESORTUM PROJECT S G E R P

CANNON 'DICTATES' MEMOIRS FOR POSTERITY
BIG SHOCK WHEN WE SEE CLOCK AT 00:01 (WE'VE SEEN SO MUCH OF IT JUST BEFORE MIDNIGHT)

WHAT IF SYLVE SPECTRE'S MUM WAS ORIGINALLY DOC MANHATTAN'S GIRLFRIEND + HAS BEEN REPLACED BY DAUGHTER? MUCH ANGUISH ALL ROUND, OH?

STRICT FORMAT



EXPRESSIVE LETTERING LIKE THIS NOT LIKE THIS
STRONG B+W CONTRAST + TEXTURE
NO BLAND CHARACTERS - ALL TEND TO CARICATURE
BLEED VERY SPARINGLY USED - FULL PAGE ONLY?
LOW KEY COLOUR
WEATHER - TIME OF DAY - ATMOSPHERE STRESSED

Dave Gibbons' handwritten notes concerning the look of Watchmen.

Opposite bottom: Pencilled headshots of Adrian Veidt, Edward Blake, and Dan Dreiberg.

WORLD

GEODESIC DOMES
REAR ENGINED ELECTRIC CARS (LIGHTWEIGHT POLYACETYLENE BATTERIES
REQUIRING RARE LITHIUM FOR MANUFACTURE)
DOUBLE BREASTED SUITS
UNUSUAL FAST FOODS
UNUSUAL FADS, ADDICTIONS
NO DISEASE
(NO POVERTY)
WIDESPREAD FEELINGS OF INADEQUACY, LACK OF MOTIVATION
PIRATE, MEDIAEVAL, WESTERN KATHOLIC THAN SF. MOVIES ETC?
LESS SEXUAL RESTRAINT
AIRSHIPS
SUBMARINE FREIGHTERS
EARTH ORBIT = ANTARCTICA
ANTARCTICA = RICH KIDS HOLIDAY PLAYGROUND (MAYBE OZ'S HQ HERE)
WEATHER CONTROL

CAPTAIN ADAM (DOC MANHATTAN)

BOWIE
ERIC
ALONATED, ISOLATED
MYSTICAL HOLMIT
PERMANENT 25 GOM, ON 44

SEES WORLD AS
SUB-ATOMIC SYSTEM

THUNDERBOLT (OLYMPIAN)

10x HUMAN INTELLIGENCE
YOUNG 37 WILL LIVE TO 150
REDFORD, KENNEDY
POPULAR CELEBRITY
RICH
PERFECT
LOVER
'PRESIDENT' THRU INTELLIGENCE

SEES WORLD AS
ORGANISM WITH HIM
AT CENTRE

BLUE BEETLE (NITE OWL)

ORDINARY, FALLIBLE, HUMAN
HEROIC, THO NOT NATURALLY COURAGEOUS
SCIENTIST
DEEP THINKING, CONCERNED, DOUBTING
'VETERAN' HERO, UNADJUSTED
SUBSTITUTE FOR ORIGINAL
NEWMAN, FURRIER

DOESN'T KNOW
HOW HE SEES
WORLD

QUESTION (ROLLSHACK)

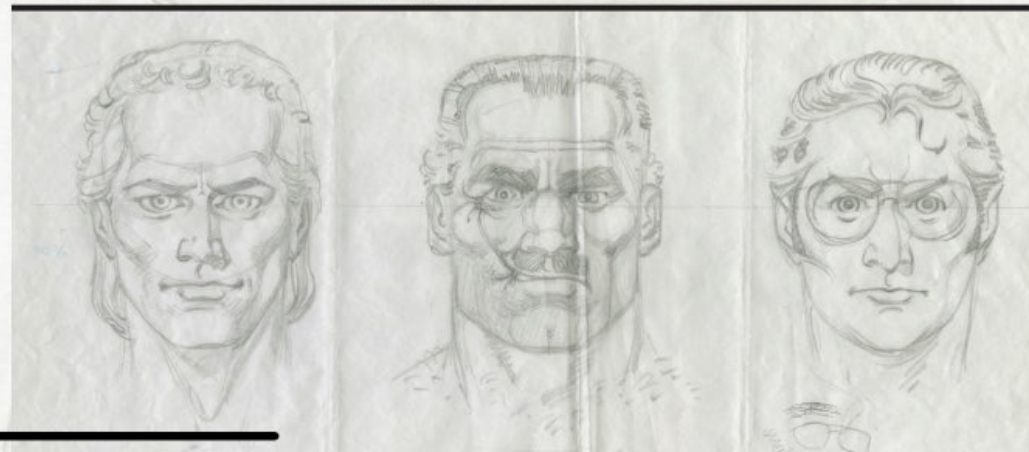
MURDERER
PSYCHOPATH OR SAINT?
QUINTESSENTIAL 'DITCO'
UTTERLY ALONE
UNPLACABLE
RUTHLESS
UNPREDICTABLE
'WILD CARD'
BRONSON, 'LOVELY'

SEES WORLD AS
IMMORAL + FEARFUL +
IN NEED OF STRICT
MORAL CODE

PEACEMAKER (THE COMEDIAN)

DIRTY FIGHTER, RETIRED
ATHLETIC, ANIMAL
(DIRTY HAWK?) (MEETS NICK FURY?)
(MEETS HANNIBAL OF A-TEAM?)
'SERIOUS PEOPLE'
WORKMANLIKE
NIGHTSHADE (SILV SPECTRE) (?)
DEPRIVED CHILDHOOD
DUNN, SLEEP

HAS NO TIME
OR INTEREST FOR
'SEEING' WORLD



- MAJOR CUL
- PHOTODUPLICATION
- TRUST
- HIGHLY ABLE ORG
- NOVEL
- AMOR
- JAMES GATTIN



Aging faces of the Comedian, Silk Spectre, and some supporting characters.



Opposite top: linking and lettering style practice by Dave Gibbons for *Watchmen*.

Opposite bottom: Reference sketch for the Mars photograph and Dr. Manhattan's hydrogen symbol featured in Chapter 9. The mapping allowed for consistency in its many appearances throughout the issue.

DC Comics, Inc.

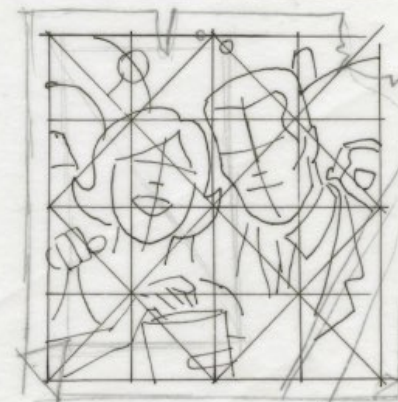
BOOK:

STORY PAGE #: 4

THE ACCUMULATED FILTH OF ALL THEIR SEX AND MURDER WILL FOAM UP ABOUT THEIR WAISTS AND ALL THE WHORES AND POLITICIANS WILL LOOK UP AND SHOUT "SAVE US!"...

AND I'LL LOOK DOWN
AND WHISPER "NO!"

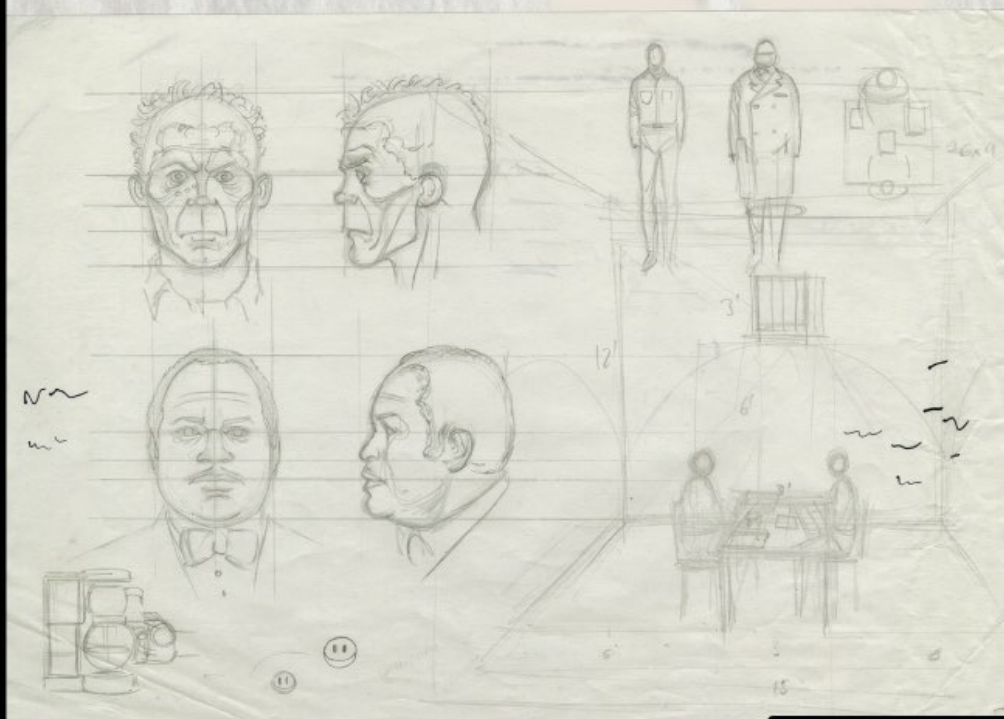
IN MIXED CASES, TOO.





Above and below: Character sketches featuring Walter Kovacs and his psychiatrist, Malcolm Long.

Opposite: Inking tryouts of Rorschach, the Comedian, the detective, and a generic tough guy.



(8)

1. ABEALATS AND
2. RORSCHACH DRESSED

3. COMEAT - ADVANCE

4. PARM!

5. SPANCOSEY

6. SCRIPT

7. HIGGINS

8. TUCK-CHUCK

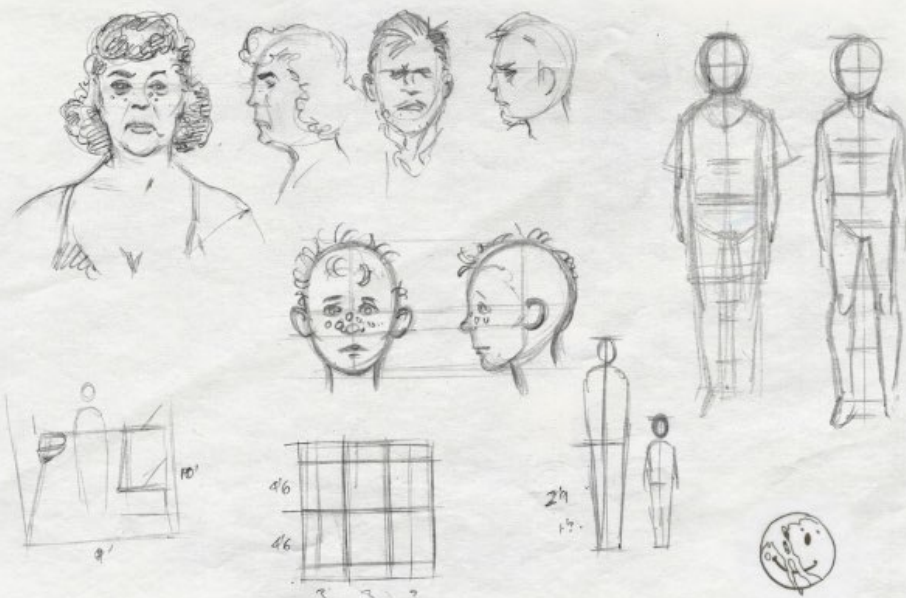


DAVE
GIBBONS
85



Above and opposite: Inking warm-ups on tracing vellum.

Below: Alternate blood-spattered smiley version and character studies of young Walter and his mom.





Model sheet for the two Bernies.

PERHAPS THE WORLD
IS NOT MADE. PERHAPS
NOTHING IS MADE.
PERHAPS IT SIMPLY
IS, HAS BEEN, WILL
ALWAYS BE THERE...

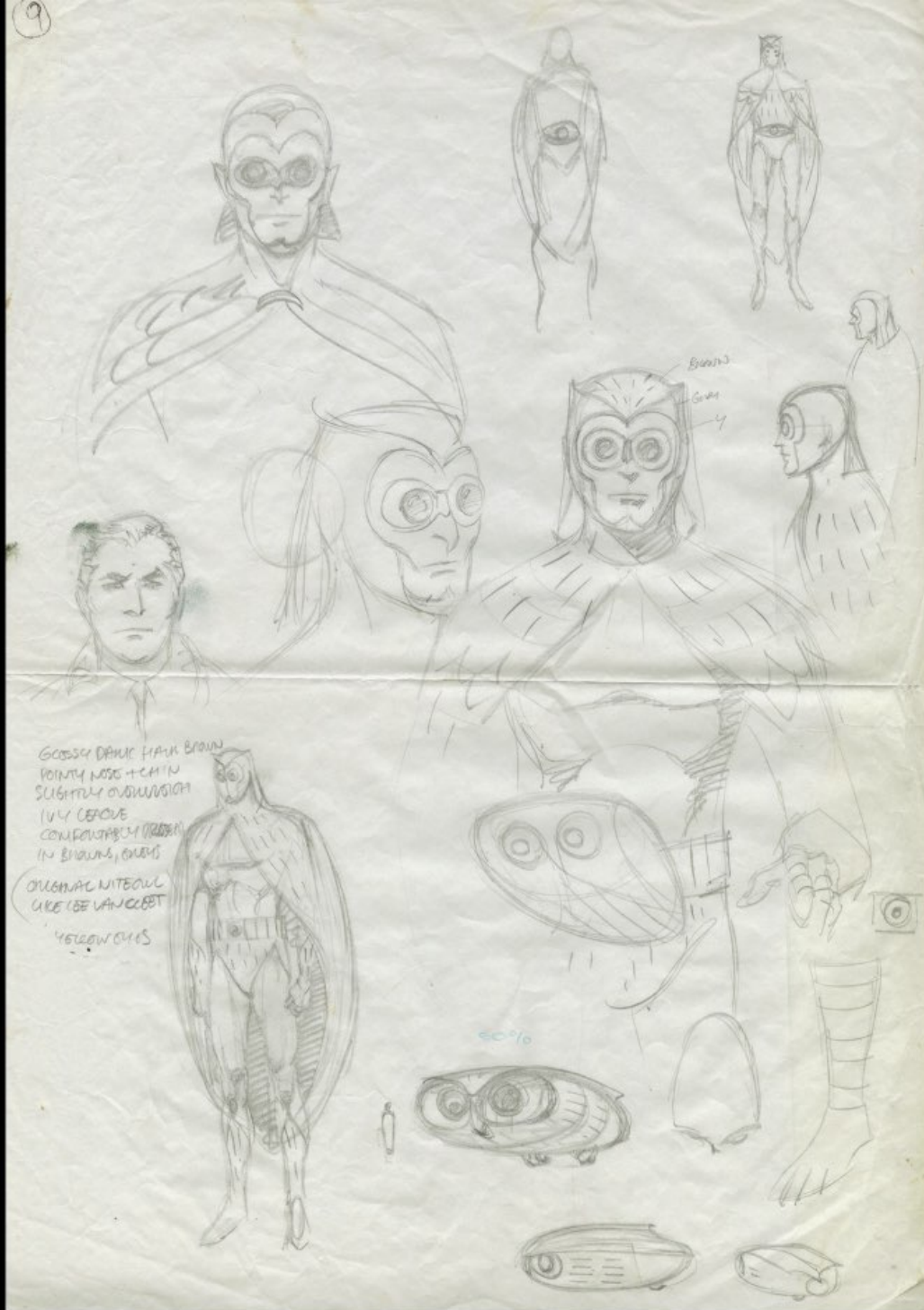
A CLOCK WITHOUT
A CRAFTSMAN.

I AM STANDING ON A
BALCONY OF PINK SAND,
HARDENED TO GLASS. IT
GLITTERS IN THE TEN-
MINUTE-OLD SUNSHINE.

THE LIGHT
OF TWO
HOURS PAST
WILL JUST BE
REACHING
PLUTO.

Redrawn panels from Chapter 9, featuring
Dr. Manhattan's Martian palace.

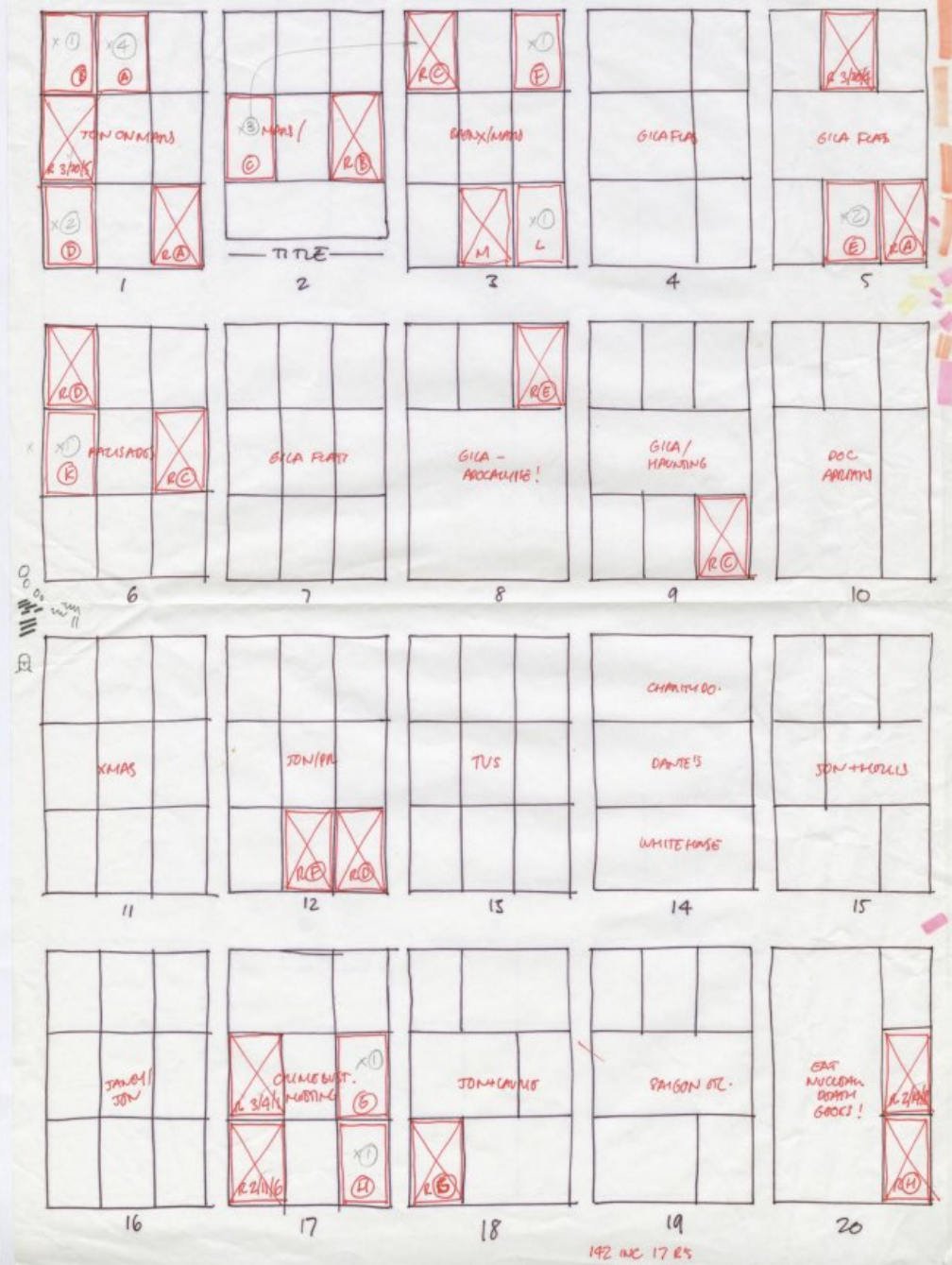
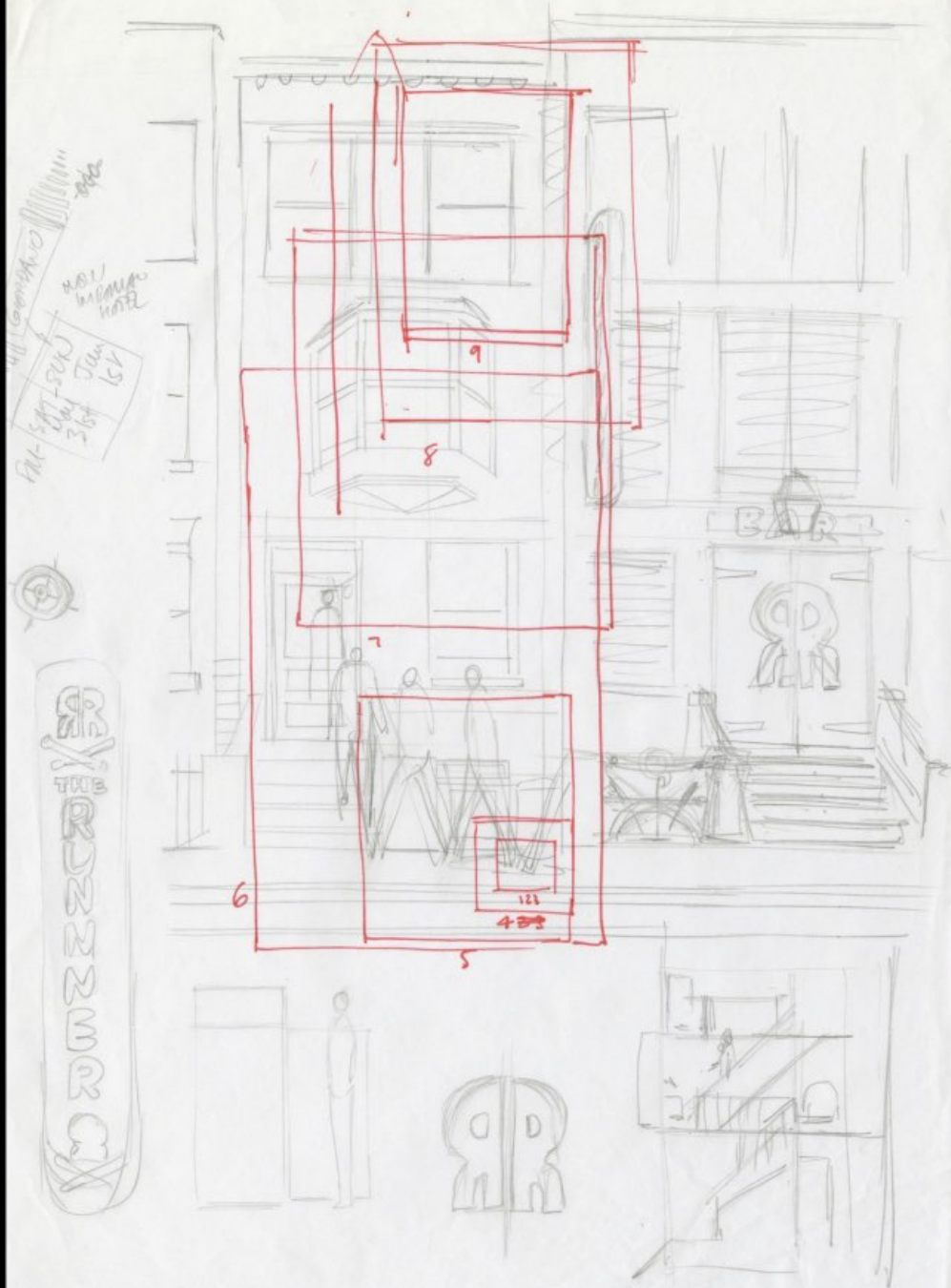
ABOVE THE NODUS
GORDII MOUNTAINS,
JEWELS IN A MAKER-
LESS MECHANISM, THE
FIRST METEORITES
ARE STARTING TO FALL.



Above: Character sketches of Nite Owl.

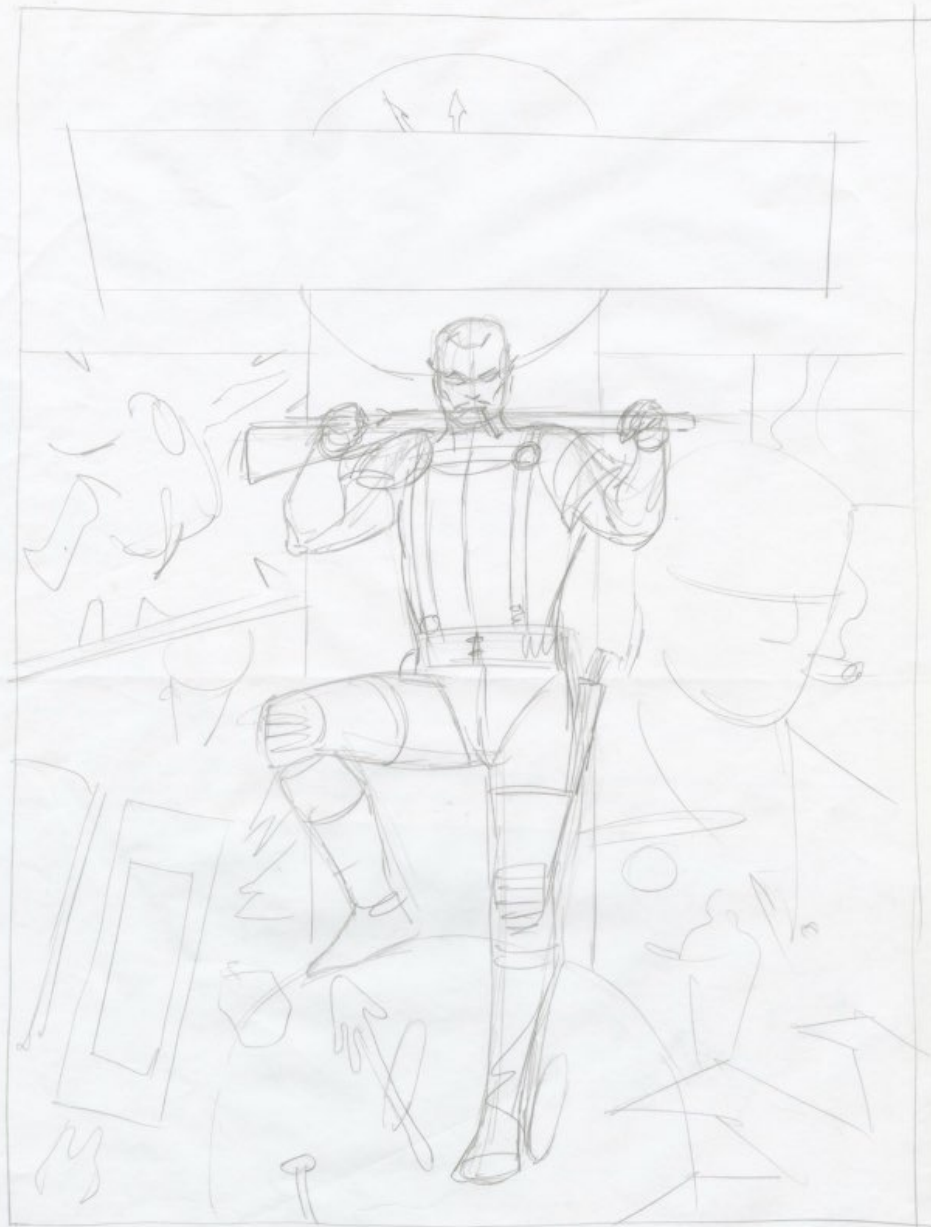
Opposite: Redrawn panel from Chapter 9.





Opposite: Schematic for Moloch's house, showing "camera movement" for Rorschach's approach and interior architecture.

Above: Partial issue plan, showing division of pages and scene lengths.

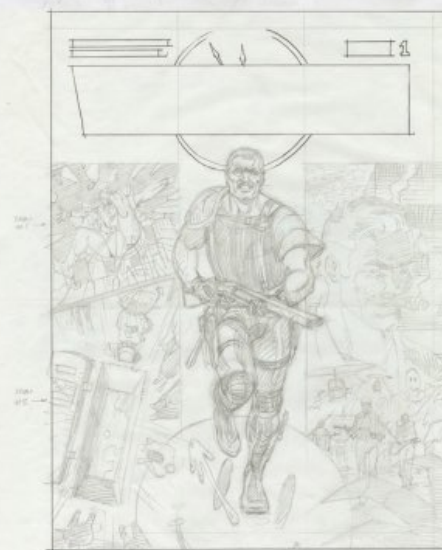
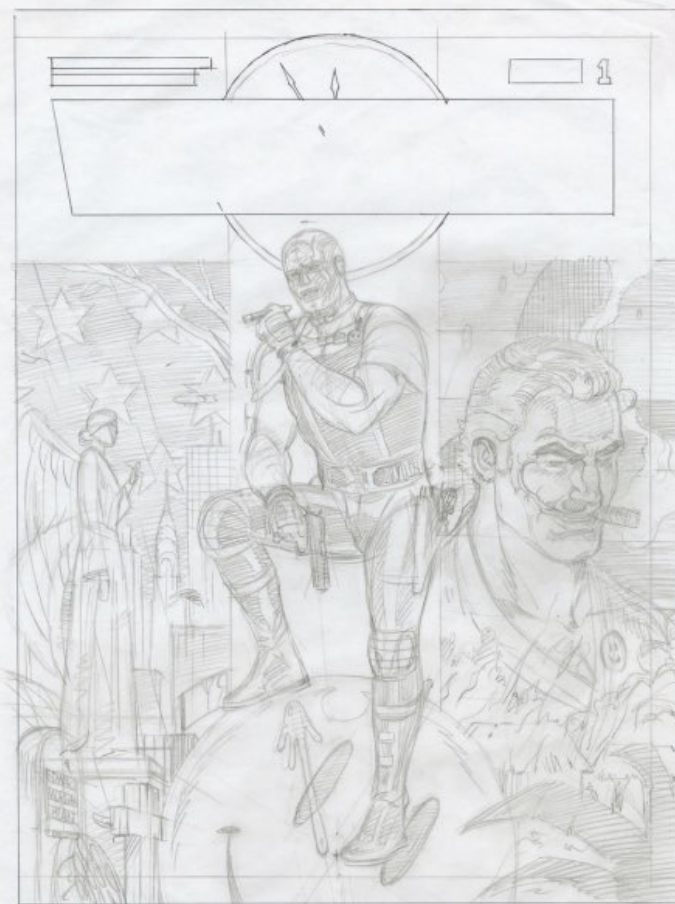


DOUG - I COULDN'T SELL YOU ON THIS, COULD I? I THINK
A ROSE LIKE THIS HAS MONACE, WHOOPS A RUNNING
PORE COULD LIKE 'ACTION MAN' ON 'GI JOE' AND IS
A LITTLE OUT OF CHARACTER WITH THE SERIES

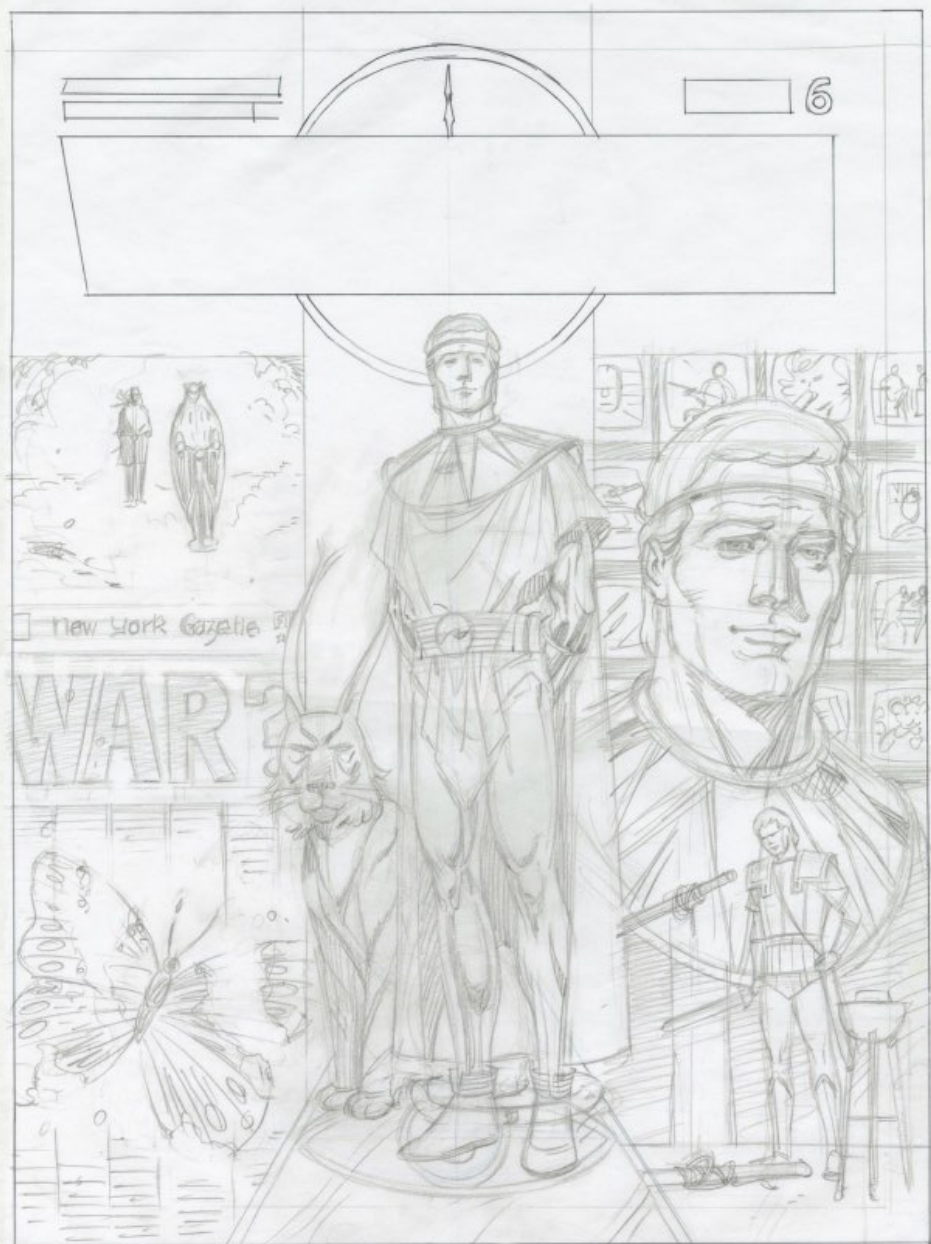
Dave

(CALL ME LATE WEDNESDAY OR EARLY THURSDAY!)

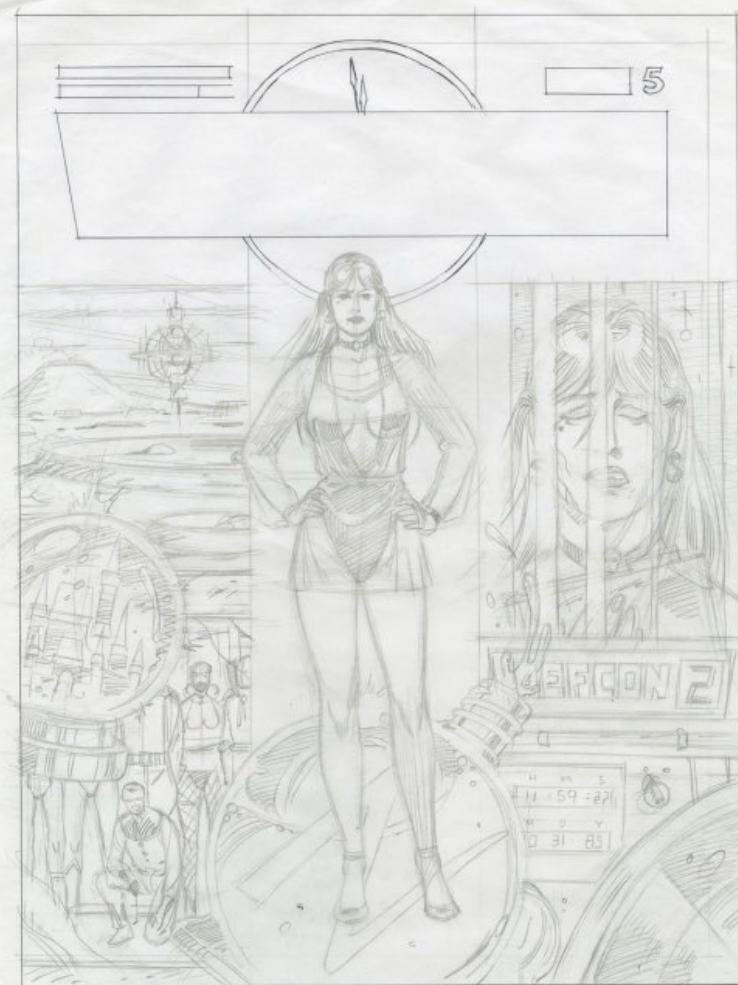
Preliminary roughs
for the first volume
of the French album
edition featuring the
Comedian.



DAVID COOK, 2004. DICKENS, 2004. 100% COPY



Preliminary and finished pencilled covers for the French album editions featuring Ozymandias, Silk Spectre, Nite Owl, and Dr. Manhattan.



Cover illustrations for the French album edition. John Higgins painted over pencils, then Dave Gibbons added detail.

