

Prophet (Image Comics)
Ongoing comic book series, \$2.65/copy
Writer: Rob Liefeld
Artists: Stephen Platt and Marlo Alquiza

Prophet # 6 (the issue examined for the purposes of this review) had slightly less substance than the weather channel, and was much less aesthetically pleasing. The story consists of little more than the verbal and physical posturing typical of the World Wrestling Federation, as the title character runs for his life from a cyborg posse whilst spouting pseudo-biblical phrases at irregular intervals (seemingly for the hell of it).

Jonathan Taylor Prophet, "a genetic super-soldier from another time," has escaped a gig as a government guinea pig, apparently slaughtering a few zillion soldiers on his way out. Government-types Leonard Noble and Philip Omen (obviously from the Bureau of Stupid

Names) and agent Mary McCormick (from the Bureau of Short Skirts) survey the carnage and send some alien Sgt. Fury rip-off called Jackson Kirby (sacrilegious in-jokes, anyone?) to bring down the escaped Prophet with the aid of the aforementioned cyborg posse: the Disciples, a trio of ridiculously heavily armed robot soldiers with very big guns and very little sense of humour.

They chase Prophet around the woods for a while, and the issue ends with him subduing and brainwashing one of the cyborgs with the aid of computer cables that Prophet apparently stores in his head for just such an occasion-- he's a regular boy scout (no wonder his muscles are in such knots).

Storywise, this sucker's bankrupt. There's a smidgen of characterization at

the start with the conflict between the obligatory cold-blooded government s.o.b. (Omen) and the issue's token female (McCormick), but that's just the first three pages, and while McCormick seems perhaps the most intelligent char-

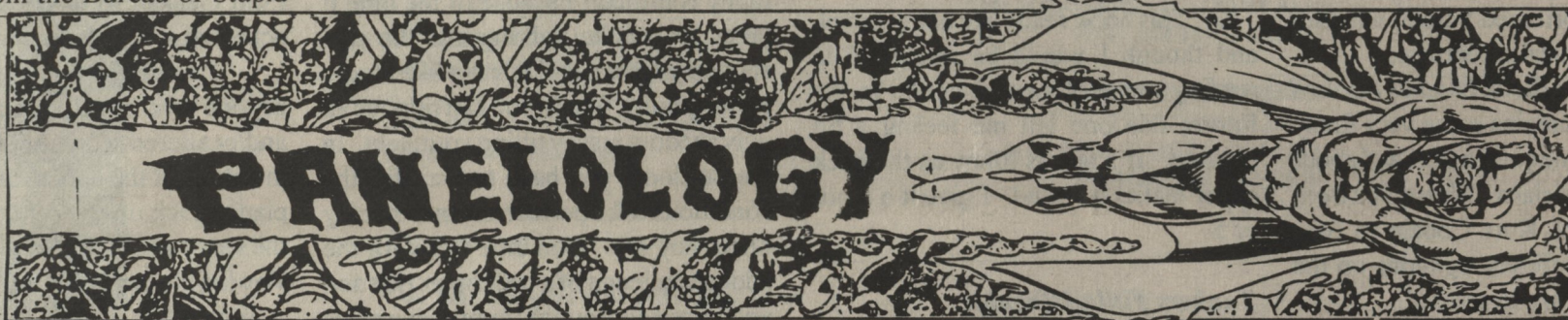
acter in the story it's hard to take her too seriously since Platt draws her (and dresses her) as a typical comic book sex object. As for Prophet, he's big, he's surly, and his dialogue consists of nauseatingly melodramatic, sometimes pseudo-religious and often redundant thought captions ("I race seconds before death." KA-BOOM! "Seconds before eternal judgement."). And it only gets sillier from there, especially when he's making with the religious references.

Lastly, this comic left me wonder-

ing just how the heck penciller Platt became the red-hot fan-favourite he allegedly is. He's simply yet another Image-style artist, drawing zillions of tiny lines and grotesquely exaggerating almost everything. Platt's over-muscled, vein-bulging heroic figures are among the most ridiculous and repulsive in the medium (rivalled perhaps only by Tom Tenney) and seem ready to burst like Jiffy-Pop at any moment; and all the characters are so artificially and over-dramatically posed as to make everyone look like they're on a fashion runway, filming a music video, or engaged in stretching exercises. Even moreso than Liefeld, Platt seems incapable of drawing a relaxed or marginally normal human figure. Add in all the blood, ammo shells, and extraneous lines, and the artwork is an often incomprehensible mess, which nicely sums up the comic as a whole. *Prophet* is a mess.

-- Sean McQuaid

KA-BOOM!!



Title: New Men

Company: Image (eXtreme Studios)

Issues Reviewed: 3,4,5

Cover Price: \$3.55 Canadian

Sounds almost like some kind of feminist newsletter, doesn't it? Well, it's actually yet another of Rob Liefeld's *X-Men* clones. While it's tons more fun than most of the rest of Liefeld's *eXtreme* comics line, it's still no *Justice League*

Here's the set-up: The New Men were a group of legendary heroes who vanished long ago. One of the surviving members, a fellow named Proctor, goes searching Professor X-style and recruits a team of highly immature mutants to form the All-New, All-Different New Men.

Trouble is, they're untrained and extremely cocky. Byrd, Reign, Kodiak, Exit and Dash all share this flaw. Most of them also have the same personality-wise-cracking, power-happy little idiots so dense that they actually like their gaudy costumes.

So far, the story-telling is typi-

cally Image: full of flash and bang and not much else. The New Men get beaten up in issue three by a fat blob of a villain named Girth. They blast him, he blasts them, everyone makes a few smartass remarks and then Girth gets dropped through one of Exit's portals. Then the team stands around laughing like the Rescue Rangers. Issues four and five detail the New Men's epic (?) struggle with Ikonn the Unlimited. Ikonn is a big, red, three-eyed would-be-world-conqueror with the ability to absorb people and add them to his power. Only with the help of a gratuitous guest star (Ripclaw, of *Cyber Force*) are they able to defeat him. Isn't that cool?

Well, not really. The fight with Girth is kind of fun, but silly and predictable. As for the fight with Ikonn, well, there's a nice plot twist at the end when Ikonn's true identity is revealed, but for the most part it's kinda dull. The worst part is the unconvincing way all the characters come together. Reign goes

out for a walk, bumps into Ikonn, they fight. Ripclaw shows up, fights Ikonn. New Men get a message from Reign, they show up, and mistake Ripclaw for the menace they have to combat. Didn't this sort of plotting go out of vogue in the seventies?

The artwork by Jeff Matsuda is not that great, either. The fight scenes are cramped, contorted, and convey little feeling of movement. In addition, the anatomy is unconvincing and covered in those trademark Liefeld little, tiny lines. It gets very hard on the eyes very quickly.

On the plus side, it does have a unique attitude. While the wise-cracking teen thing could get dull after a while, it is a pleasant change from the usual eXtreme Studios histrionics. The characters also seem kind of interesting. While I have yet to see anything cool done with Byrd (flight powers, attitude), Dash (speed powers, large breasts) or Riegn (telepathic powers, gem em-

bedded in forehead) there are two team members who stand out. Kodiak, the team brick, is a big hairy brute with a heart of gold and a very simple battle strategy: hit the enemy hard until he stays down. The other is Exit, who stands out as my favourite character in the series. His power to open portals from one location to another is very interesting and is surprisingly well-handled. Exit uses it to zip in and out of battles, turn weapons back at enemies, give people head-noogies from across the room, and so on. His one flaw is a unique but silly-looking mask. Oh, well, no one's perfect.

If you want to have some fun watching posturing teenagers make flip remarks at creatures twice their size, you could watch *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*... or you could read the *New Men*, which is marginally less dangerous to your mental health slightly better written. Who'd have thunk Liefeld's bunch had a sense of humour?

--Trent Drake