

watch ruining my judgement, but I found this story to be hilarious. The art sets the post-apocalyptic mood well, but the melodramatic dialogue is pretty generic and therefore hilarious ("I am judge... jury... and executioner..."). Interesting reading. Have fun with it.

And last, "Pleasant Dreams", Sue Smith's one page tale about a surreal breakfast. Good clean hallucinogenic fun.

Better layouts, better artwork, longer stories. A big improvement over issue one. And, it's available, which makes it even better.

Subterranean By Design unprecedented third issue: Cover art by Brett Taylor features a cyborg girl on a motorcycle. The already excellent picture is only enhanced by the neat blue and purple colour scheme. This was also the issue where the price was forced up, but don't let that deter you. This issue's feature pin-ups: A fantasy picture by Rob Walker, an advertisement for Scorn by Sandy Carruthers and a really wierd looking superhero by Jim Dickson. They're all great.

"Pool Hall Special": Another vampire story! What are the odds? John MacKenzie wrote this one while Jeffrey Lawless and Peter Murphy handled the artistic chores. This time out, a pool hall hustler encounters a creepy gent who just wants to learn the game". Creepy tale with moody art. A small critique on the artwork: the hustler's hair changes from blonde to black and back to blonde without notice. Why? I don't know. Otherwise, the Lawless\Murphy\Taylor teamup works very well. Maybe they should work together more often.

"Dr. V and the Violent Commandos part #2": This second instalment in the Callbecks' superhero soap opera nearly lives up to its great title. In this issue it is revealed that the "Dr. V" and other "extremists" were created in the Vietnam war when young soldiers got hit with chemicals. A series of flashbacks tells the tale, and Dr. V gets a chance to do some violent protesting. Note of interest: the little characters (with the exception of Dr. V) have thus far failed to appear. The artwork isn't as clean as the first installment, but it looks much better. Steve is improving.

"Harrison Deeds, P.I.": Two pages of failed comic strip by Peter Murphy. Good artwork in the grim Murphy style. This would have been a lot more interesting if it had ended on a cliff-hanger of some kind. As it is, there's no story. Very nice visuals, though.

"Missin' Twenty Grand": Brett Taylor's best art to date graces this grimy and violent private detective story. Great Chandleresque hero spits out some beautifully corny lines along with some really good ones. A fun, fast

Subterranean Blue Christmas Special: This is the big one! At forty pages, the Blue

Christmas Special is the most ambitious project to date. Luckily, it was worth the effort. Double covers feature the artwork of Sandy Carruthers and Fred Stirret. Sophie Djuk supplies a good surreal poem/pin-up, and Brett Taylor submits a pin-up of his super-group, The Lost.

"Storm Warning" by Peter Murphy brings the considerable talents of Rob Walker (the guy who did the fence on the St. Peter's road) to comic books. When repairs to damaged equipment on an inhospitable planet, are required, Commander Kelly rises to the occasion. Braving high winds and little stick-figure aliens, he drives his tank straight into a whole lot of trouble. Good artwork by Walker and Murphy. The little aliens are really kind of cute, in a



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grotesque E.T. sort of way. Fun sci-fi in the best pulp mag tradition.

"Knife": Sean Campbell's superhero-on-a-vengeance-kick tale is pretty typical stuff. Knife reminds one of Ghost Rider, Batman, Punisher and any number of other vengeful crusaders without being in the same league. Robert Harrison's artwork is a bit awkward in spots, but on the whole is very good. The whole story is drawn in white on black panels shaped like broken glass, which should guarantee a sinister feel. Unfortunately the story itself fails to set the proper mood as Knife slashes through muggers and a villain named Shadow Spawn. Harrison needs to work on his perspective, and Campbell needs a more original concept. Still, it does have a few good moments.

"Jobs From Hell": An achingly truth-

ful and painfully funny one-pager about the jobs the authors had before becoming cartoonists. In a word: ouch!" Scorn": Sandy Carruthers turns to superheroics to get across the message that violence against women is the fault of the attacker, not the victim. Scorn is a well-drawn and violent object lesson in the finer points of rage. The title character is a vengeance crazed femme fatale who rips apart a street gang when they attack an innocent woman. Somehow, the insane Scorn is far more interesting than Knife, despite their similar motivations. Perhaps Scorn's violent nature stems from a sexual assault in her past. If that's the case, as we suspect, she has a far grimmer origin than most superheroes. Her surprising depth (it's only a three page story, after all) is part of her appeal. Carruthers is to be commended getting across his message without being overly preachy.

"D.U.I." is short for Dying Under the Influence in this moral tale by Steve Callbeck and James Hagen. Steve Callbeck art on this tale looks rushed and is a definite step down from his previous work on "Dr. V". Still, it is effective and the strange script is entertaining. It's kind of like "The Dukes of Hazard Go Bad" as two good ol' boys get their fool selves in an accident while playing chicken.

"Path of Thorns" by J. Jeffrey Lawless is not what you'd expect from the guy who gave us "Da Pogeys Bais". This enigmatic tale is anything but funny. See, there's this girl. She walks home from church and a bunch of plants get mad at her and weirdness ensues. Creepy story with no words will leave you saying "wow" even as you think "huh?" Take solace in the knowledge that the author doesn't understand it either.

And finally, a wonderfully wicked parody entitled: "Santa: The Red Knight Returns". Frank Miller's graphic novel gets a brutal working over in a hilarious story that takes

stabs at both Batman and Santa Claus. A madman named Scrooge is attacking all that's jolly about Christmas, and the Santa must stop him. The artwork and script parody the Frank Miller style perfectly. Even those unfamiliar with Miller's work will appreciate the clever scripting. More than worth the price of the comic. It's like buying one story and getting six free!

And the madness continues! Sources inside SBD report that a new issue is on the way for March. Rumors as to content are vague at best, but the fact that the comic will continue is good news for the fans. So what are you waiting for? Support this worthwhile enterprise and buy some comics! Even if the words "Local Talent" make you want to run screaming into heavy traffic, you ought to check these guys out. You might be pleasantly surprised. ●