

MEG 219 £3.95
01 JUN 2004



J U D G E D E D MEGA ZINE



ROOM OF DOOM

MAN MACHINE SEZ 'KISS MARRIAGE!'



FEATURING • JUDGE DREDD • YOUNG MIDDENFACE • BLACK SIDDHA • THE GRIBLIGS • AND MORE

STRIPS

JUDGE DREDD
DAMNED RANGER
Part 2
05-16



Mega-City One, 2126 AD – where the lawmen dispense instant justice. A New Mutant Army has arisen in the Cursed Earth beyond the City's walls. When a troop of rangers led by Chief Dounrey is attacked, the legendary Judge Dredd is charged with exacting the City's revenge!

Judge Dredd created by John Wagner & Carlos Ezquerro

YOUNG MIDDENFACE
BRIGADOOM! Part 2
18-24



Oppressed by the vicious Kreeleers, mutants are the underclass of the 22nd century. Teenager 'Middenface' McNulty has joined the Highlands Resistance – but, escaping a Kreeleer patrol, he and Scaly McGurk have landed up in the cannibal village of Brigadoom!

Middenface McNulty created by John Wagner, Alan Grant & Carlos Ezquerro

MEAN MACHINE
ANGEL HEART Part 2
25-32



Mega-City One, 2126 AD. Equipped with a dial linked direct to his brain (set to either Surly, Mean, Vicious or Brutal), psycho cyborg Mean Machine has now been fitted with an over-riding mind-control device – and is allowed to marry his prison visitor, Porsha Wuss!

Mean Machine created by John Wagner & Mike McMahon

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GRIBLIGS?
35-40



COMPLETE THIS ISSUE! Mega-City One, 2126 AD. Eighteen years ago, a crewman on a spaceliner smuggled a pair of cute and cuddly Gribligs from the planet Plexus into the City. They're sociable, omnivorous, they breed like there's no tomorrow – and now they're here to stay!

The Gribligs created by John Wagner, Alan Grant & Barry Kitson

BLACK SIDDHA
KALI YUGA Part 2
41-48



Cursed by bad karma from his many past lives, young Rohan Bhandara must atone for the crimes of his incarnation as the fearsome Black Siddha by becoming a hero himself! His first mission is to destroy his former friend, the black magician Rak Shasa ...

Black Siddha created by Pat Mills & Simon Davis

CHARLEY'S WAR
Parts 33-38
57-74



CLASSIC BATTLE ACTION! The Western Front, August 1916. The Battle of the Somme rages on. Seventeen-year-old Charley Bourne has escaped a devastating German barrage – only to learn that Lt Thomas has been charged with cowardice for ordering the survivors to pull back ...

Charley's War created by Pat Mills & Joe Colquhoun

HELL TREKKERS
Parts 7-11
77-96



CLASSIC THRILL-POWER! The Cursed Earth, 2106 AD. Trekmaster Lucas Rudd leads a convoy of Mega-City escapees across 2,000 miles of the most hostile terrain on Earth in the hope of a better life in the New Territories. Two days out – and already ten lie dead!

HellTrekks created by John Wagner, Alan Grant & José Ortiz

FEATURES & REGULARS

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Steve Roberts

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Part 6: Burger me!
The banned episodes revealed

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Gordon Rennie – 2000's Mr Sex

98 METRO DREDD
It's Only Ruck 'n' Roll

EDITOR'S LETTER

Nice cover, innit? – and a welcome return to the pages of the Galaxy's Greatest Comics for veteran art droid Garry Leach, now of studio Ungara.

What you won't have seen, dear reader, is the palaver we had getting it to you – the artwork having been held temporarily hostage in an Oxford sorting office as we waited for the city's postal workers to call off (yet another) industrial dispute. Not our place to comment on rights or wrongs, of course ... but there were moments over the last few weeks when we wondered if we weren't on the cusp of a catastrophic Meg meltdown, what with episodes of *Damned Ranger* and *Brigadoom!* also being held for the duration. Which long-term Squaxx doesn't remember the terrible print strikes of the early 1980s, which held up 2000 AD Progs 165 and 377 for nearly a month apiece? The Winter of Discontent barely figured, and the Miners' Strike didn't touch High Barnet – but those two Thrill-droughts scarred me. Terrible, they were ... but in retrospect, I'm not sure I didn't enjoy them, in a perverse kind of way. When they finally did arrive, those Progs read better than any before or since ...

This year's National Comic Awards ballot form is on Page 49. If you love us, go on – tell the world!

“THEY TURNED HIM INTO A
SOFTY! THAT AIN’T RIGHT!”



50



98



219
COVER ART

ANYONE KNOW
ANY JUST CAUSE
OR IMPEDIMENT?

ART
UNGARA

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KIDS RULE OK!

Gerald Bostock – I wondered where he'd next rear his head. I remember him posting similar comments to those printed in *Dreddlines* 218 [in which he criticised the 'childish' style of recent stories, and asked for adults-only Dredd] on the message board at www.2000adonline.com – which was like waving the proverbial red rag to a bull. I've got to admit to quite ashamedly posting a reply that started in 'f' and ended with 'off'. Well, since his opinions have now made print I thought I'd afford Gerald with a more deserved response.

Whilst I think it's somewhat rash to base an opinion as to the editorial policy behind the direction of a magazine solely on one or two issues, I find it even more naive to assume that a comic should fall into the camp of catering exclusively to either children or adults. In a cultural climate where no subject seems off-limits within popular media, and where even that stalwart of children's drama *Grange Hill* has dealt with issues from child abuse, suicide and discrimination, it's somewhat ill-informed to assume that younger readers can't deal with mature subjects. Likewise, it would also be wrong to assume that most adults only want to read dark and brooding subject matter. If that were true, then how would you account for the success of *Viz* or the widespread appeal to both children and adults of the *Harry Potter* novels?

The trick isn't to place your audience firmly in one category but to strike a balance in the material you publish so that it will appeal to a broader audience. Take a look at *Charley's War*, for example: as a young reader when it first saw print I considered it to be a damn good World War I romp. Now as an adult I've been able to reappraise that opinion and see it for the highly political, anti-war statement it is. The story hasn't changed, I have. But the genius behind the strip has ensured that it can work on various levels.

I also disagree with labelling the comic 'For Mature Readers Only'. This doesn't necessarily equate to commercial success: for every *Preacher* that has seen print, a dozen *Revolvers*, *Crisises* and *Toxic!* have been consigned to comic history. The whole ethos behind publishing material with an age rating in mind can only serve to straitjacket creators. It's this kind of climate that finds authors having to ensure they've included the right levels of violence and expletives in each issue to meet that 'Mature' label, usually at the expense of good storytelling.

Finally, I want to address the really feeble attack on Roger Langridge's *Whatever Happened To ... Cookie?* artwork. Dismissively evaluating cartoonish artwork as childish not only manages to undervalue the talent of artists working across a range of children's titles but also writes off the value of works such as Stan Sakai's *Usagi Yojimbo* and Art Spiegelman's *Maus*.

Matt Pinder (Bradford, W Yorks)

I think Mr Bostock's brain-glue has come unstuck. At 33, I feel qualified to reply that indeed, yes, there is at least one person over 26 that still avidly enjoys reading *2000 AD* and the *Megazine* (credentials: Prog 131 to present-day). I don't know what possessed him to stop reading *2000 AD* for twelve years, but it seems to have added his mind. Yeah, sure, *Master Moves* and *Cookie* were a bit below par, but that's not because of a perceived lack of maturity. Check out the new *Mean*

Machine story *Angel Heart* in *Meg* 218. Mature? Dang right it ain't! Entertaining? Why you gotta keep asking me so many durn questyunz?

Of course there's room for dark, adult storylines, and we've got 'em in spades. Witness the disturbing tale of a tortured psyche that was *From Grace* in *2000 AD* (the supposed kids' comic). *Black Siddha* might not be every reader's cup of tea, but it deals with adult themes (and it's my Earl Grey, mushrooms optional: I don't know what the Kermodo Dragon's got against it).

Mr Bostock's claim that *Batman* has become a mature readers only publication is rather silly (one might say 'immature'). In the world of comics, on the one hand, yes, we've got *The Killing Joke*, *Arkham Asylum* and *Watchmen*, but these are always tempered by more widely entertaining fare such as *Mad Love*, *Lobo/Judge Dredd* or (and this is telling) *The Dark Knight Strikes Again* (aka *DK2*). Frank Miller took his own dark odyssey from the 80s and produced something thoroughly modern, amazingly entertaining and about as far removed from *DK1* as you could get. Personally, I think they're all classics, and it's not even possible to place them on some bizarre binary line of mature vs immature. Where does *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* sit? Or *Preacher*, for that matter? One minute you're laughing your ass off at Cassidy and his roguish antics, the next you're watching him destroy people's lives in the harshest of ways.

An age rating? Comics, so far, have managed to avoid overly invasive censorship, and bask in the same kind of freedoms that the medium of books enjoys. I pray to Grud it stays that way ...

For the record, I don't give a flying futsie what the supposed author-injected subtext of *Blood of Satanus II* was or wasn't. I thought it was a highly entertaining story with some amazing artwork from the Mighty Mighten: let's have more of the Duke. Pat Mills is a god – pray that he doesn't strike thee down for thy cantankerous online postings.

While I'm here, a big welcome back to John *Raggedy Man* Ridgway [*Dredd: Damned Ranger*]. His work always seems to involve gorgeous panoramas of a sun-scorched Cursed Earth and the accompanying stories are somehow more poignant as he breathes life into every character, however minor. Worth the cover price for this treat alone.

Linton Porteous (Dundee)

SECRET HISTORY?

I recently acquired most of the [mid-90s] DC *Judge Dredd* comics, and was appalled by the timeline discrepancies and clumsy attempts to bring it into line with the *2000 AD/Megazine* continuity. However, the idea of exploring the origins of the Judges – Judge Fargo, President Booth and the creation of the Mega-Cities – was a good one, just poorly executed. Surely it's time for the definitive, Wagnerian version of how it all began to be written?

I for one would love to see the Judgement of Solomon, the Judges taking control, Fargo being cloned, Dredd and Rico at the Academy, etc – not just for a one off, but a ten- to twenty-part mega-epic.

After various misleading stabs at the story (DC *Dredd*, the *Dredd* movie) we deserve to know the truth!

Justice must not only be done, it must be seen to be done ...

Matt Webster (Bradford, W Yorks)

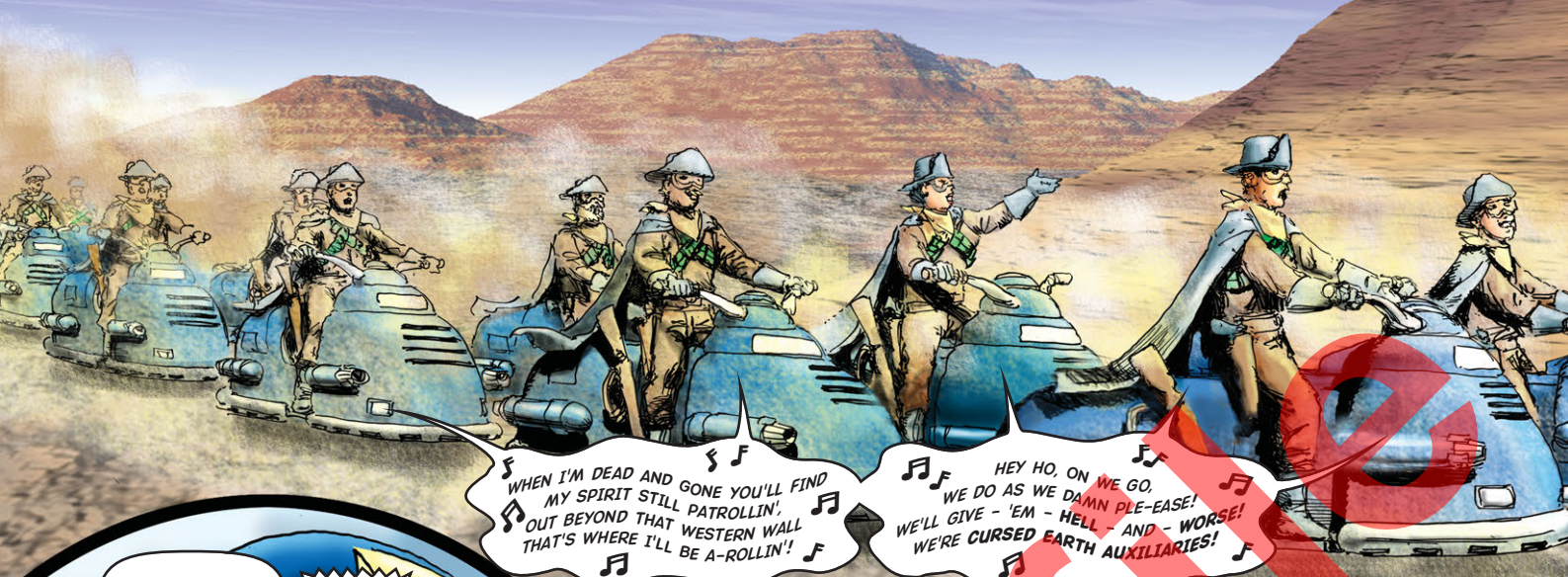
JUDGE DREDD

DAMNED RANGER **PART 2**

SCRIPT	JOHN WAGNER
ART	JOHN RIDGWAY
LETTERS	TOM FRAME

RIDE!

THEY WERE FOUR HUNDRED JUDGES STRONG, WITH FIFTY CURSED EARTH AUXILIARIES AND HOVER SUPPORT. THEIR MISSION -- TO DRIVE A STAKE THROUGH THE HEART OF THE NEW MUTANT ARMY!



WHEN I'M DEAD AND GONE YOU'LL FIND
MY SPIRIT STILL PATROLLIN'
OUT BEYOND THAT WESTERN WALL
THAT'S WHERE I'LL BE A-ROLLIN'!

HEY HO, ON WE GO,
WE DO AS WE DAMN PLE-EASE!
WE'LL GIVE - 'EM - HELL - AND - WORSE!
WE'RE CURSED EARTH AUXILIARIES!



DOUNREY, CAN
YOU SHUT THOSE
RANGERS UP!

YES, SIR!

KEEP THE NOISE
DOWN! ORDERS
FROM ABOVE!

JUST OUR LUCK
TO HITCH UP WITH
THE STIFFNECKS,
CHIEF!



GET OUT ON OUR
OWN, WE'LL SHOW THEM
MUTIE SCUM A LITTLE
MUTILATION!

MUTIE-LATION --
GET IT?

RECKON
THEY GOT IT
COMING!

RANGER
CURSED EARTH
AUXILIARY

THIS ISN'T
GOING TO BE ANY
PUSHOVER, LUTZ!



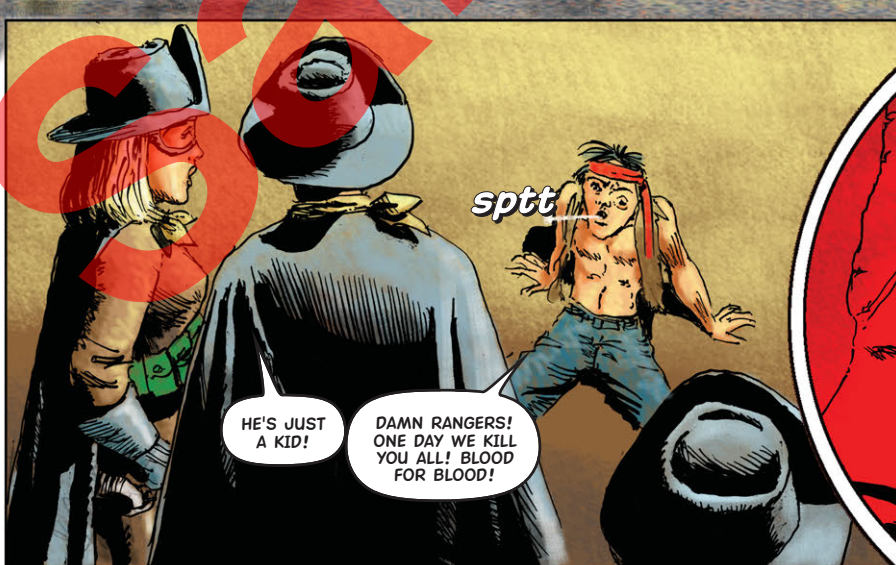
THE REST OF YOU, IF YOU
THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE A
STROLL IN THE PARK, GET THAT
OUT OF YOUR HEADS! THE NMA
IS A DANGEROUS ENEMY!

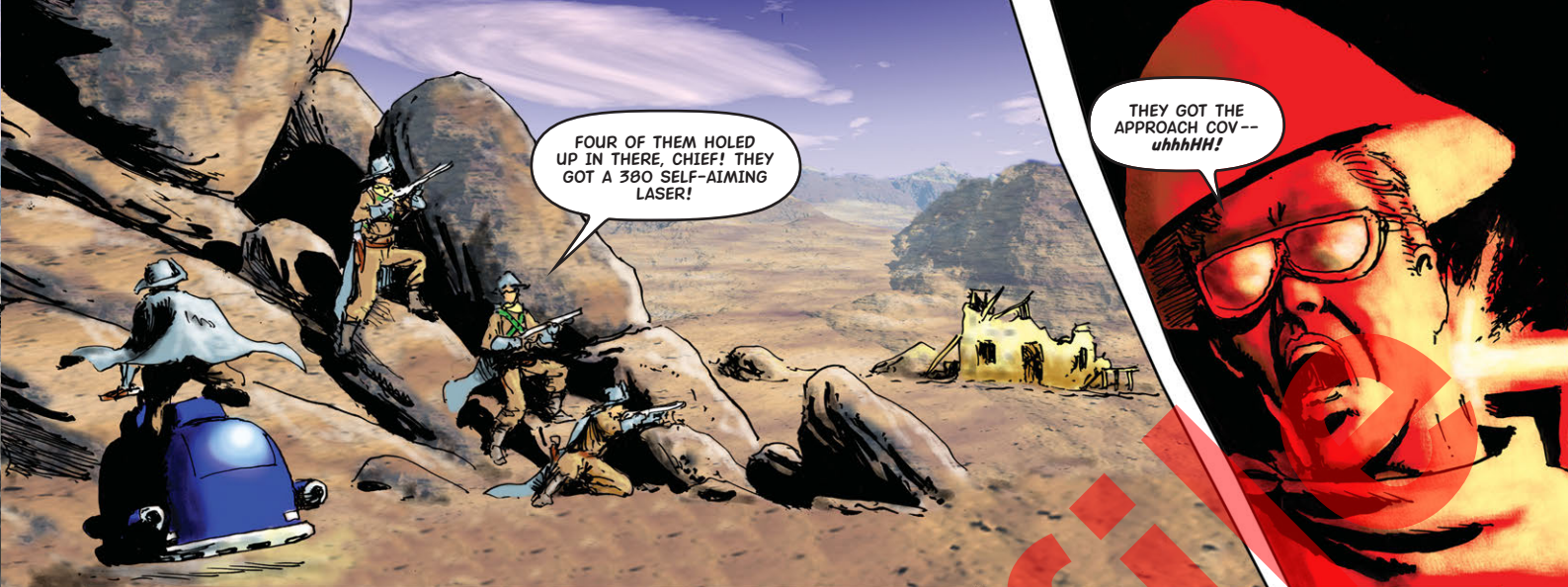
I DON'T WANT ANY
FREELANCING OUT HERE!
NOBODY STICKS THEIR NECK
OUT WITHOUT MY SAY-SO!
GOT THAT?

ALL RIGHT, CHIEF.

MAN, IS HE
UPTIGHT ABOUT
SOMETHIN'.







THEY GOT THE APPROACH COV--
uhhhhH!

