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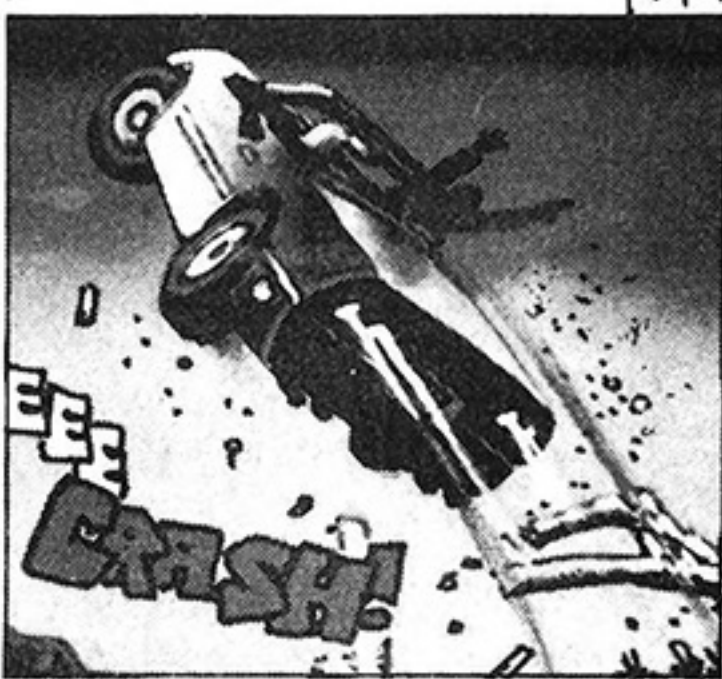
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AMAZING READERS

DAN MISHKIN ON A MITE-Y MATTER, AND MORE.



OUR COVER: Star Brand, drawn by John Romita, Jr. and Al Williamson, heralded the beginning of Marvel's New Universe. Star Brand is © 1986 Marvel Comics Group.

RIP IN TIME

Cops. Toughs. Girlfriends. Dinosaurs. And, of course, the ever-present secret government organization. Sound like an unlikely combination? Not if that secret government organization happens to be experimenting with time travel, and certainly not if what you're reading is *Rip In Time*, a bi-monthly limited series that premiered this month from Fantagor Press, courtesy of Bruce Jones and Richard Corben. The five-issue black-and-white series combines all of the above concepts and more.

Despite the seemingly disparate elements of the series, the plot, says

Jones, is "very simple. There is a secret government organization [who] develops a means—they hope—of traveling in time. They don't know. They think they have. They're just in the formative stages of testing it."

On the night of the first major test, four other characters who have nothing to do with the government installation stumble into the thick of things. "A cop, his girlfriend, a tough, and *his* gun-moll girlfriend get into a scrape together and inad-

vertently crash through the secret complex and through the time barrier," Jones explains. During the tussle, the cop's girlfriend is grabbed by the hoodlum, and the gun-moll is dragged through by the cop. In effect, they switch partners. "They damage the equipment going through and close the barrier behind them. The people who are in real time, in *our* time, are stuck knowing what's happened but not being able to follow. The people who went through have no idea where they are or what's happened," leaving the four to fend for themselves in the Cretaceous Age.

By Geoff Schmidt

All of this takes place in the first issue.

After that, says Jones, "it's really just one long chase." Of course, there are a few complications involved (*besides* the fact that it takes place in the Cretaceous, and the lead characters have switched partners, none of them are quite sure how they got there in the first place, etc., etc.). For one thing, Jones hints that for some reason, "the government is very upset that there are people tramping around in that era. They decide to do something to bring all of this to a halt."

These twists aside, Jones and Corben set out very deliberately to create an uncomplicated storyline. "We set up a very simple plot," Jones explains, "so that we'd have

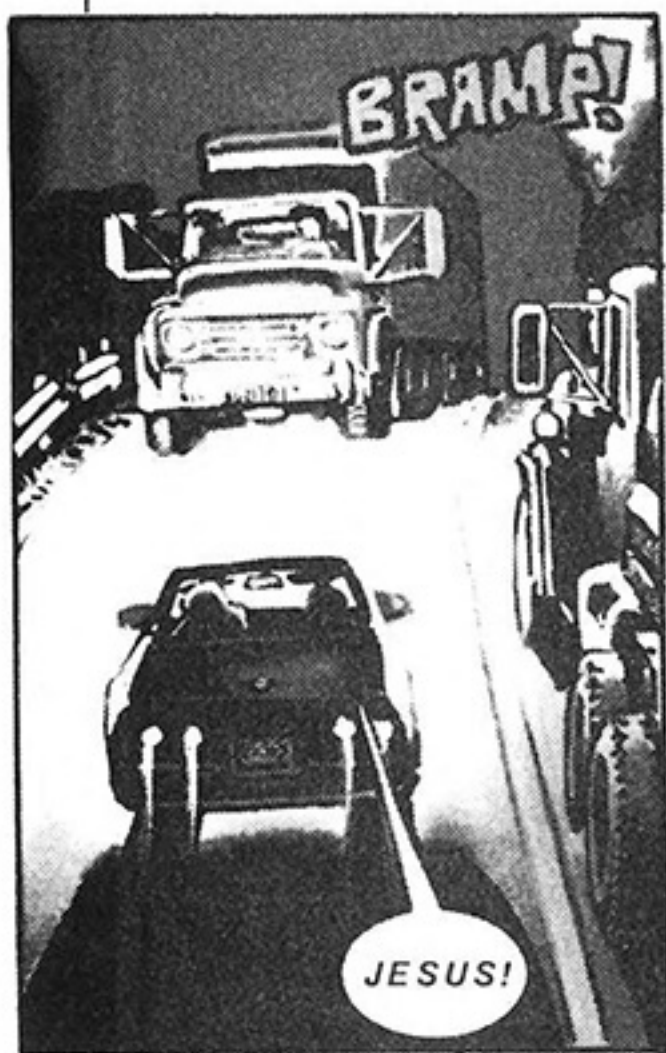
lots of space to stretch our characterization and stretch out the time-frame. We'll have something that would normally cover one or two panels take up a whole page."

This desire to experiment, to place an emphasis on characterization and unique storytelling, should come as no surprise to anyone who knows the work of Richard Corben and Bruce Jones. Corben is one of the most gifted artists and storytellers working in the field today, and is known for both his black and white and color work. Jones is a widely-acclaimed writer, having worked on such diverse strips as *Ka-Zar*, *Somerset Holmes*, and *Twisted Tales*. They have often collaborated, and both are known for their sophisticated adult comics. As Richard

Corben explains, "Bruce and I sort of have the reputation of doing adult stuff—maybe me more than him, even, because of my background. I feel I want to break into a new market and find a new audience. [*Rip in Time*] is not a kiddie story, it's still an adult story—but kids who pick it up won't be struck by lightning if they read it."

Jones agrees that "Rich wants to hit both audiences, which is fine with me, as long as we don't have to sacrifice anything." In fact, publishing a comic book which appeals to a variety of audiences is, in many ways, more challenging. "We're using a modicum of four-letter words and nudity, [a restriction] which I initially objected to because I like to write more mature





comics. But on the other hand it's a challenge to cut back and not do that and still be able to come across with something that is hopefully more creative."

Another pleasant surprise for Corben fans who have only seen his color work is that *Rip In Time* will be printed in black and white. Corben is using gray tones, a method which gives him black, white and two grays, and allows him to use the thresholds between the grays, to ex-

plore a subtle gradation "I love it," says Corben. "In fact, it's kind of a relief after doing color for so long. It has a special quality. I'd say it's a little more intimate than color." Jones has nothing but praise for Corben's work in black and white. "He's brilliant at color. . . but I really think that some of his best work [is in black and white]. He really understands film noir, he understands black and white. It's not as though it's just working with someone who's doing black and white instead of color. I think that's very rare. I'm very excited about it."

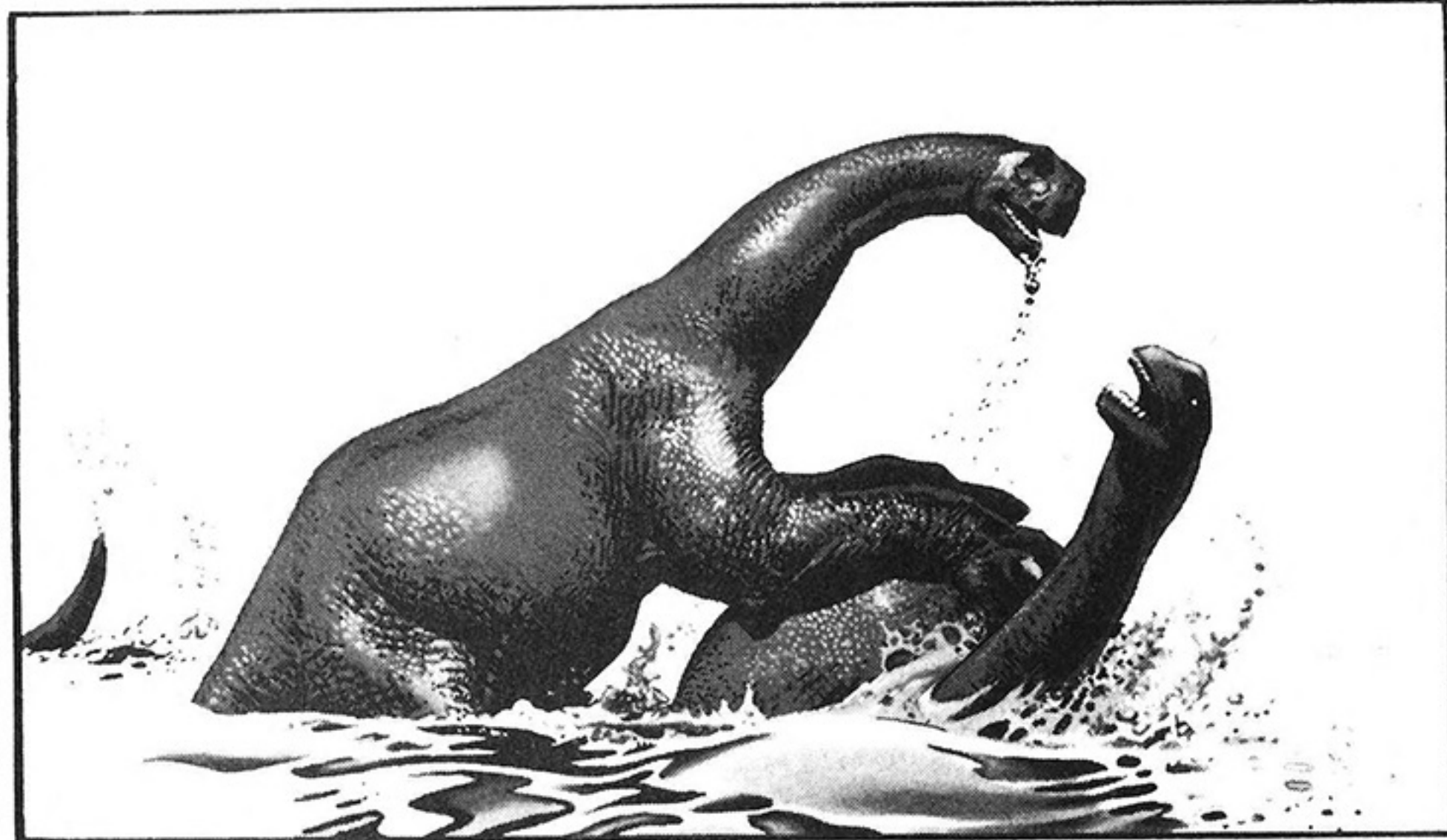
"Richard really was the instigator" of *Rip in Time*, Bruce Jones says. "He wanted to get back into publishing his own material with Fantagor Press, which is Richard Corben." As Corben himself explains it, "I was the one who wanted to publish it. I wanted to do something with time travel and dinosaurs and I wanted a concept that I'd be interested in that might also have a wide appeal. Bruce and I had talked about doing something with dinosaurs—in fact, we did do one thing for Warren that had dinosaurs." About the Cretaceous Age in general, Corben says, "I did a lot of research. But still I wanted to keep my version as original as I could." And anyone who is familiar with Corben's work knows just what a treat that can prove to be.

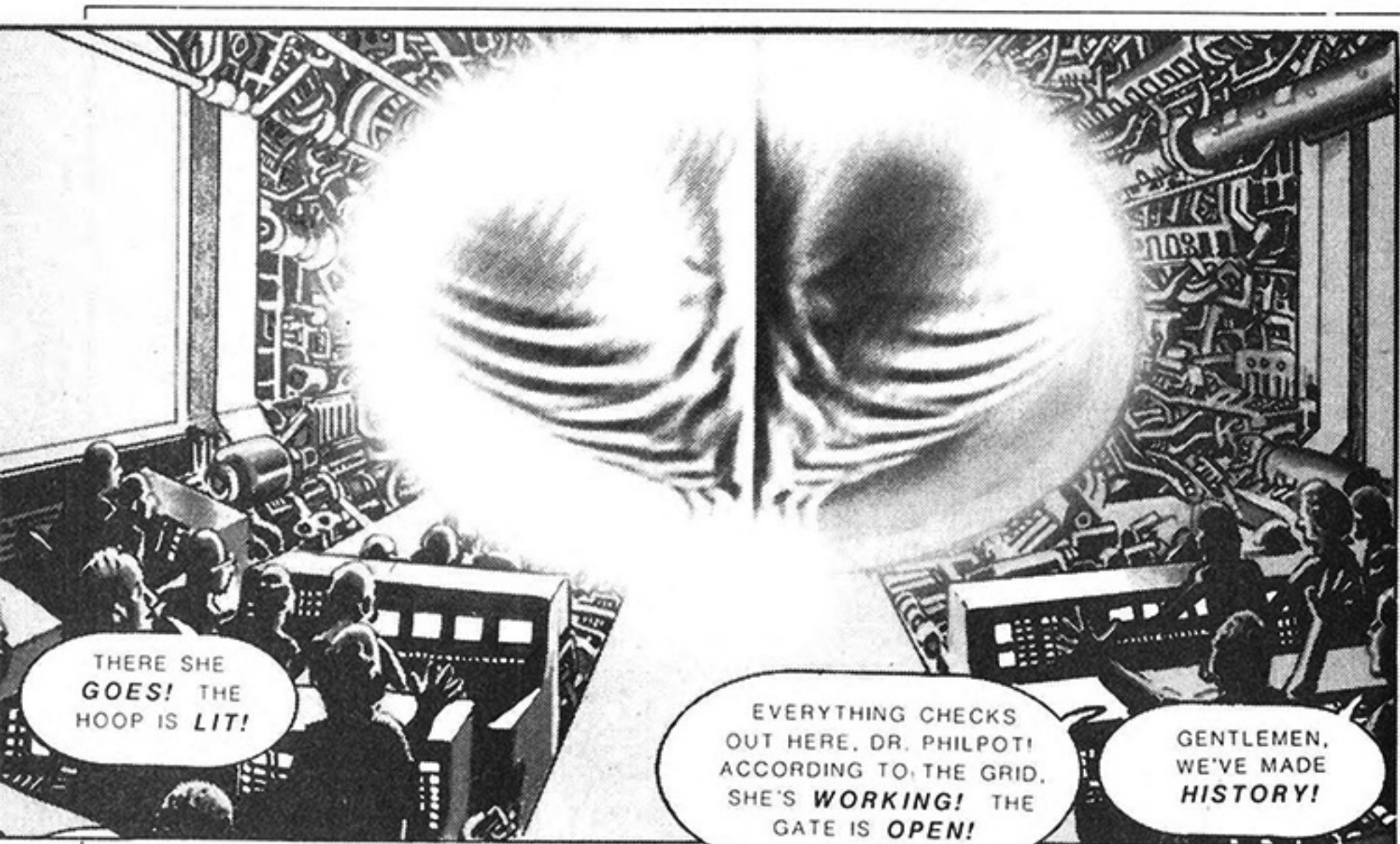
After developing the initial concept, Corben continues, "I told

Bruce what I wanted and then he just re-did it all himself [laughs]. I wanted to give Bruce as much freedom as possible. I did give him a rough synopsis of a story I had written. He said he had another idea that was slightly different and I said, 'Okay, fine.'"

This sort of creative freedom is greatly appreciated by Jones who is, as he puts it, "not really happy with the state of things in comics." Working with Corben, however, is a refreshing experience for him. "I'm happy to say that other than wanting his dinosaurs, Richard's been very generous with the direction and giving me a free hand, which makes it wonderful. It's just great when you get that, and I seem to be one of those people who really need that—I never did work very well for the so-called major companies, or with editorial guidance." Thus, after establishing the initial concept together, Jones has an almost entirely free rein as far as the plotting and the scripting is concerned, while Corben handles all of the graphics and design. "The only thing he's done in terms of editing at all," says Jones, "is to cut back a little bit on my language"—again, in an effort to appeal to as wide an audience as possible.

It is apparent that Corben and Jones have a tremendous amount of respect for each other. They both display such trust in the other's work—both giving the other nearly-





THERE SHE GOES! THE HOOP IS LIT!

EVERYTHING CHECKS OUT HERE, DR. PHILPOT! ACCORDING TO THE GRID, SHE'S WORKING! THE GATE IS OPEN!

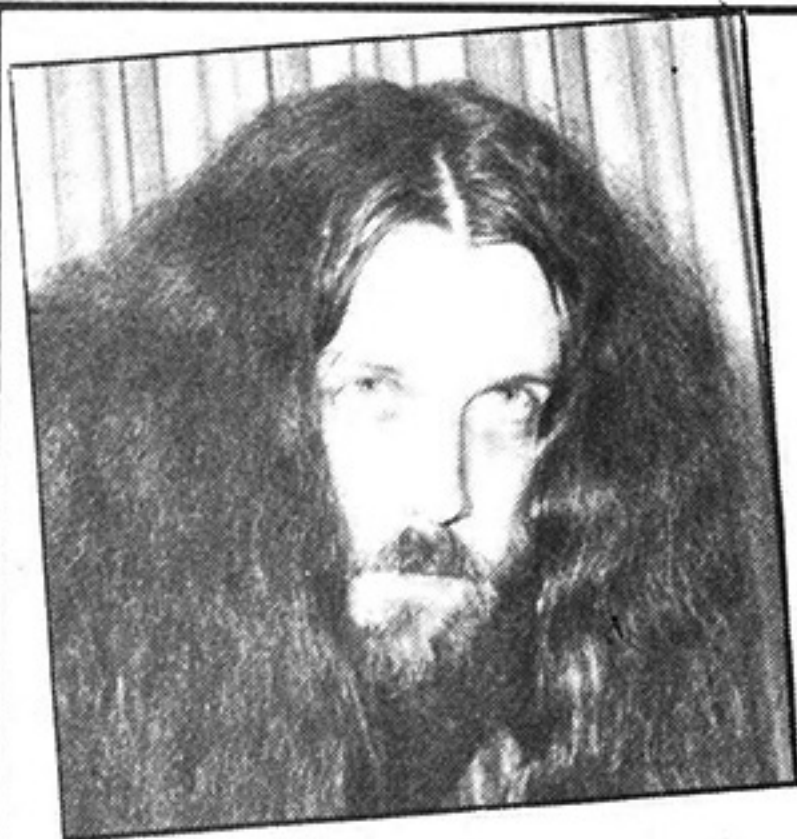
GENTLEMEN, WE'VE MADE HISTORY!

complete creative freedom—that they seem to have created an atmosphere which provides for a more intensely creative partnership. Certainly in the past their collaborations have been extremely successful. “Any opportunity to work with Richard Corben I would jump at.”

Jones states simply. “For some reason—and I don’t know what it is—I always seem to do my best work for him.”

And after *Rip In Time*, what will each creator move on to? Bruce Jones is largely occupied in film

work. As for Richard Corben, he wants to “continue doing the comics because I love ‘em.” For now, though, we’ll have to content ourselves with cops and toughs chasing each other through the Cretaceous—and dinosaurs...lots of dinosaurs. ●



“My childhood was a dark and baffling affair, punctuated by screaming women with their heads on fire.”

—From “Brasso With Rosie,” the childhood reminiscences of Alan Moore in HONK! #2

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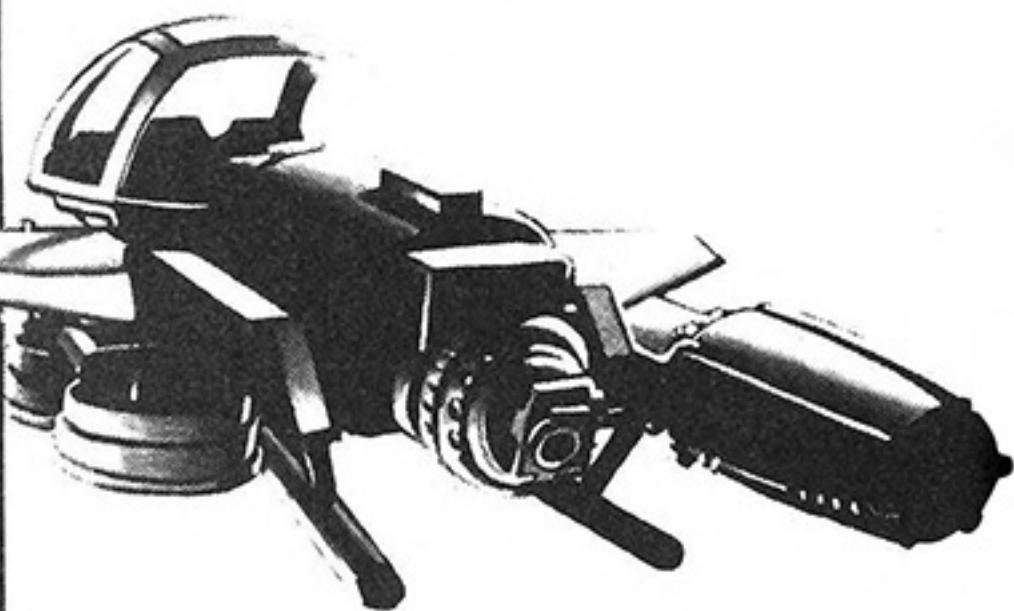
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HONK!

Photo by and © 1986 Jackie Estrada



STRANGE GADGETS!



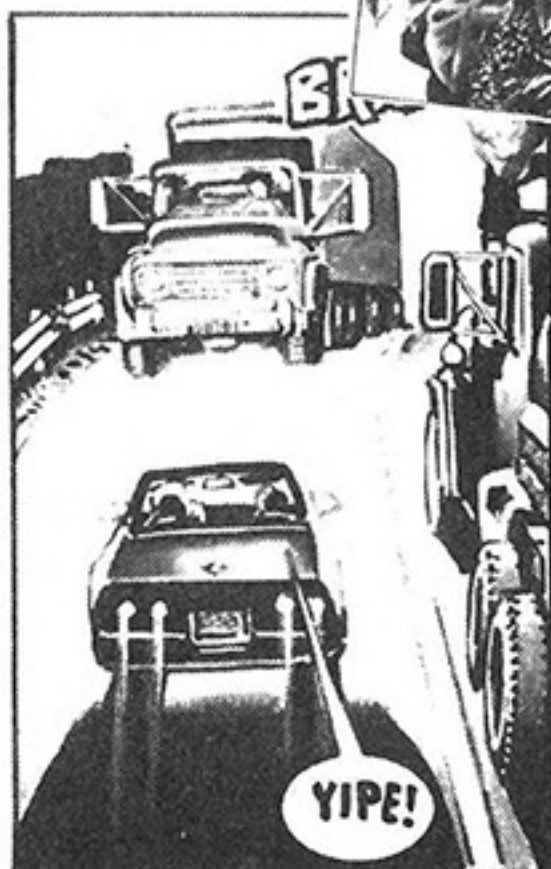
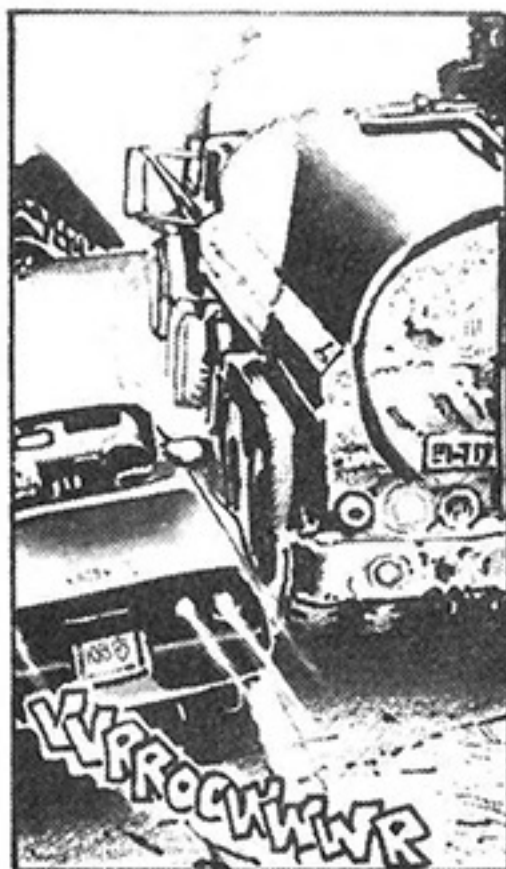
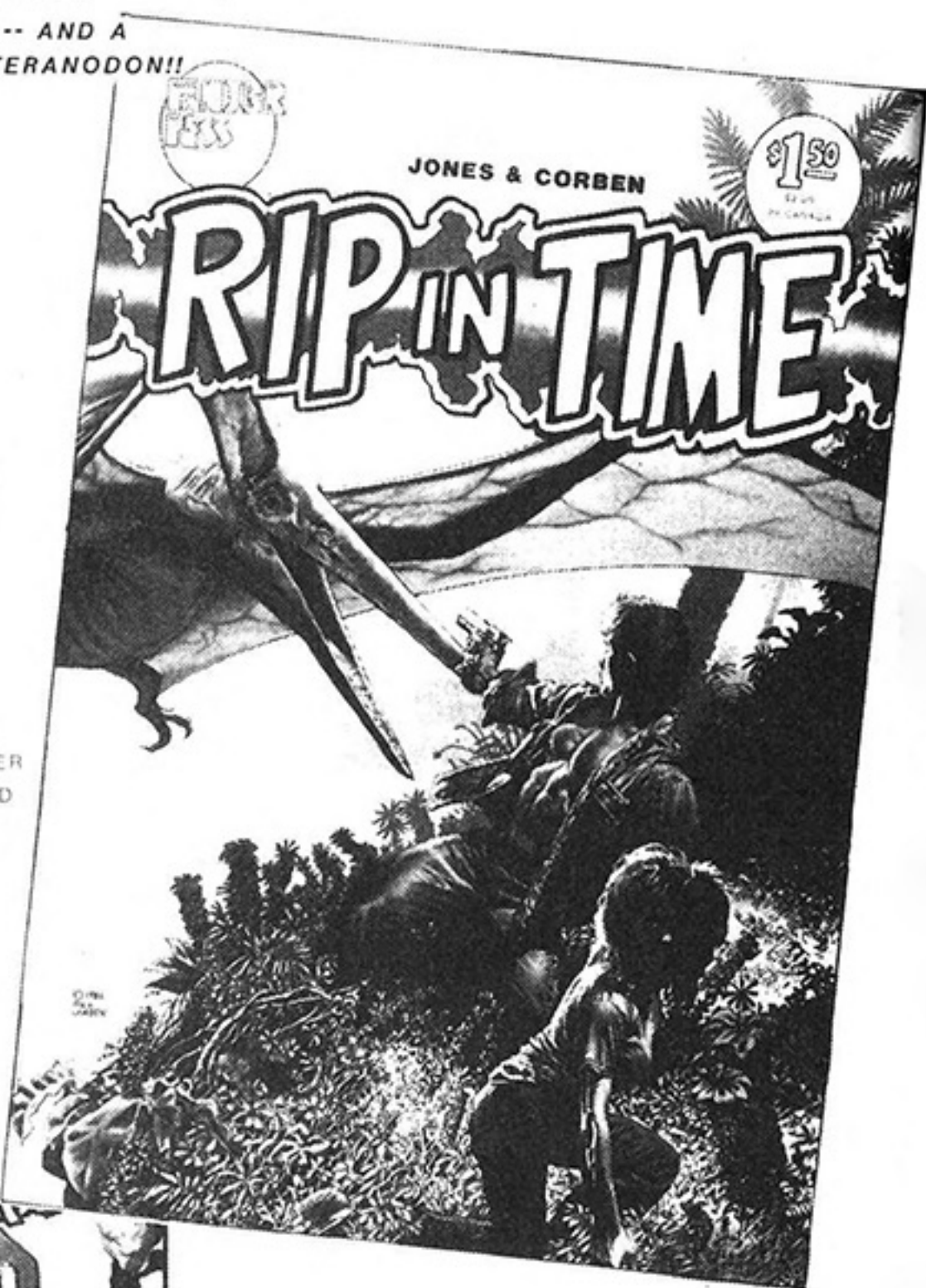
INEXPLICABLE
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-- AND A
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COP VERSUS DINOSAUR!

WHEN RIP TRIED TO SAVE HIS FIANCEE FROM THE CLUTCHES OF A TWO BIT PUNK, HE FOUND HIMSELF FACING A MONSTER FROM 135 MILLION YEARS AGO!

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