

\$19.95 (US)
£14.99 (UK)

THE INVISIBLES represents the first scrawled draft of a self-aware manifesto from the future in the form of a madcap spy-fi hypersigil comic book. The text was written in states of trance, exhaustion, sickness, fever, intoxication, clarity and joy. Disguised as the seven volumes of THE INVISIBLES series, 'It' lives and breathes our air and looks out at us through the many eyes of those pages. It is alive, willingly captive and demands to be played with, to be stroked and petted and tormented with sticks. It brings power, taboo and strange knowledge.

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES dares to romp with the living, knob-encrusted monster that is the six-year-long INVISIBLES experiment. If, as intended, the series is a stained paper section through the body of some vast, soft intricate entity made of time, then ANARCHY is an historic first probe, a plucky Voyager bringing back and making sense of the many dripping, weird-angled splinters and fully authorized facets found deep in the hide and guts of my captive mega-terrestrial.

- Grant Morrison

A complete guide to every issue of THE INVISIBLES, featuring exclusive interviews with Grant Morrison and major behind-the-scenes players including Philip Bond, Phil Jimenez, Stuart Moore, Sean Phillips, Warren Pleece, Frank Quitely, Cameron Stewart, Jill Thompson, Chris Weston and Steve Yeowell. Plus comprehensive annotations, critical analyses, never-before-published artwork and more!

**MAD
YAK** PRESS


disinformation

ISBN 0-9713942-2-9



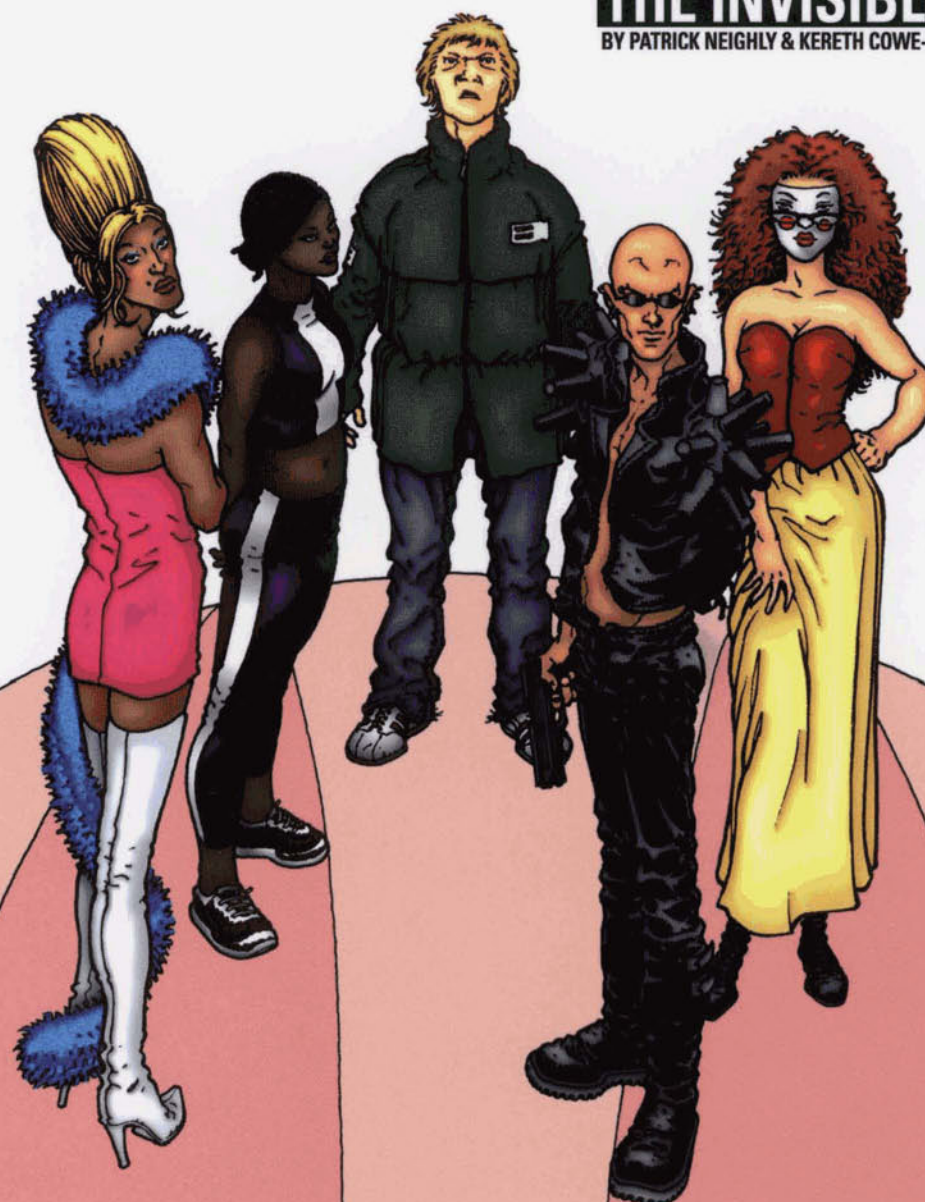
9 780971 394223


**MAD
YAK** PRESS

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES

THE DISINFORMATION GUIDE TO
THE INVISIBLES

BY PATRICK NEIGHLY & KERETH COWE-SPIGAI



Frank
Quitely

"Grant

Morrison

is this

generation's

William

Burroughs.

Somewhere

the Wild Boys

are smiling."

-Richard Metzger,

Disinformation

"ANARCHY FOR

THE MASSES

is a stunning

achievement.

Just fabulous,

both a fitting

exegesis and

tribute to

the series."

- Steven Grant,

Whisper

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES

THE DISINFORMATION GUIDE TO THE INVISIBLES

"[Now why]
would
anyone
have that
printed on
the side of
a can of
tomatoes?"

Copyright © 2003 Patrick Neighly and Kereth Cowe-Spigai

Published by The Disinformation Company Ltd.
163 Third Avenue, Suite 108
New York, NY 10003
Tel.: +1.212.529.2330
Fax: +1.212.387.8152
www.disinfo.com

An earlier edition of this book was published by Mad Yak Press LLC.
This revised Disinformation® edition is published by arrangement
with Mad Yak Press and the authors.

Design, colors and layout: Anne Marie Horne for Claudehaus.com
Cover art: Frank Quitely
Interior art: Frank Quitely, Chris Weston and Steve Yeowell

Original series covers: Copyright © 1994-2000 DC Comics

First Printing January 2003

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored
in a database or other retrieval system, or transmitted in any form,
by any means now existing or later discovered, including without
limitation mechanical, electronic, photographic or otherwise, without
the express prior written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2002109415

ISBN: 0-9713942-2-9

Printed in the United States of America

Distributed in the United States and Canada by:
Consortium Book Sales and Distribution
1045 Westgate Drive, Suite 90
St Paul, MN 55114
Toll Free: +1.800.283.3572
Local: +1.651.221.9035
Fax: +1.651.221.0124
www.cbsd.com

Distributed in the United Kingdom and Eire by:
Turnaround Publisher Services Ltd.
Unit 3, Olympia Trading Estate
Coburg Road
London, N22 6TZ
Tel.: +44.20.8829.3000
Fax: +44.20.8881.5088
www.turnaround-uk.com



disinformation

**MAD
YAK**
P R E S S

**"REALITY IS THAT WHICH, WHEN YOU
STOP BELIEVING IN IT, DOESN'T GO AWAY."**

Philip K Dick

Thanks to Gary Baddeley, Philip Bond, Jeff Heesch, Phil Jimenez, Richard Metzger, Stuart Moore, Sean Phillips, Warren Pleece, Frank Quitely, Cameron Stewart, Jill Thompson, Chris Weston and Steve Yeowell. Special thanks to Grant Morrison.

"This isn't
a story.
It's not
about
anything.
Read it if
you like."

Disinformation is a registered trademark of The Disinformation Company Ltd.

All characters, their distinctive likenesses and related indicia featured herein are trademarks of Grant Morrison and are used with permission. The opinions and statements made in this book are those of the authors and/or the interviewees. The Disinformation Company Ltd. has not verified and neither confirms nor denies any of the foregoing and no warranty or fitness is implied. The reader is encouraged to keep an open mind and to independently judge for himself or herself the validity of such opinions and statements. The Disinformation Company Ltd. shall have no liability or responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage arising from the information contained in this book or from the use thereof or reliance thereon.



ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES

THE DISINFORMATION GUIDE TO THE INVISIBLES

PATRICK NEIGHLY • KERETH COWE-SPIGAI



"Your search
for value is
part of your
pathology."

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	009
Volume One	011
Volume Two	093
Volume Three	167
Short Stories	219
Talking with Grant Morrison	229
Biographies	259
Bibliography	286





Illustration by Steve Yeowell

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES

INTRODUCTION

"Hasn't it
occurred to
you how
strange all
of this is?"

Don't believe anything you read in this book.

A strange way to open, to be sure, but taking any interpretation of *THE INVISIBLES* as definitive is to miss the point altogether. What we offer here is our interpretation, based on deep reading, extensive research, interviews with the series' creators and a healthy dollop of common sense.

In this book you'll find critical analyses of the series as a whole, its themes, characters, covers and even individual panels themselves. The series is analyzed volume by volume, issue by issue. Implicit in the author/reader relationship for this book is that you have already read the complete series. *Anarchy For the Masses* is a companion to an understanding of *THE INVISIBLES*, not a substitute for it. Brief summaries are included of each issue and the two short stories for readers who may have gaps in their personal collections – although of course we recommend obtaining the trade paperback compilations published by DC/Vertigo. But because the reader is assumed to already be familiar with *THE INVISIBLES*, individual chapters may make reference to future events and themes without pause.

Throughout the issue guide portion of the book you will find extensive panel-by-panel annotations. These are intended to aid readers who may not be familiar with aspects of history, magical tradition, religion, mythology, science or popular culture. Sometimes they merely point out an interesting composition or examine a particular detail from a specific panel. Others denote the first appearance of recurring characters, which is often not when some readers think they first appear. Our annotation format follows a descending hierarchy of volume, issue, page, panel. Thus 1.2.3.4 refers to Volume 1, issue two, page three, panel four. Annotations only include volume and issue locators for references outside of the actual issue discussed in a particular chapter.

Also included are biographies of key players in *THE INVISIBLES*, charting their often-convoluted personal histories and character development. While there's nothing in here that isn't revealed in the series itself, it's occasionally useful to consider, for example, Ragged Robin's story in a linear form.

Scattered among the issue guide are boxes exploring key elements or themes in more detail. Comments from many of the series' creators are included, where appropriate, based on exclusive interviews conducted especially for this book. And series creator Grant Morrison expands on his infamous alien download and thoughts on *THE INVISIBLES*' creation and cosmology in an extended discussion never before published, augmenting his illuminating commentary elsewhere in the book.

Anarchy for the Masses is designed to mimic the non-linear narrative of *THE INVISIBLES* itself. Every page offers multiple points of entry, scattered bursts of information to be absorbed page by page amid a pile of issues or holistically in a series of trips to the bathroom.

For intelligent discussion of *THE INVISIBLES* and other works of Grant Morrison, we recommend the excellent Barbelith community at www.barbelith.com.

Grant Morrison's personal Web site can be found at www.grant-morrison.com.

For alternate *INVISIBLES* annotations, discussion and other information:

<http://www.jaybabcock.com/barbelith.html>
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/invisibles/>

The Disinformation Web site contains several articles and dossiers on the topics of Grant and *THE INVISIBLES*:

<http://www.disinfo.com/pages/article/id2072/pg1/>
<http://www.disinfo.com/pages/article/id1446/pg1/>
<http://www.disinfo.com/pages/dossier/id987/pg1/>
<http://www.disinfo.com/pages/dossier/id94/pg1/>

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES VOLUME I

"His skill
makes us
believe that
we see a war
between two
great armies,
but there is
no war. There
is only the
dalang."

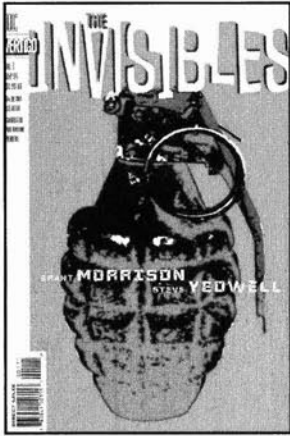


DEAD BEATLES

SEP 94

Grant Morrison *Writer*Steve Yeowell *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Electric Crayon *Color Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Rian Hughes *Cover*

Dane McGowan follows a psychic vision of Beatles Stuart Sutcliffe and John Lennon by spending a rowdy night with friends in Liverpool, England, stealing a car, assaulting a teacher and ultimately burning down their school. He and his pal Gaz are sentenced to ten weeks at Harmony House, an ostensible corrections school that is in reality run by a monstrous archon to brainwash kids into conformity. But just as he discovers this secret, Dane is freed by the mysterious revolutionary King Mob and abandoned in London.



1.1 The first line in the series illustrates some of its major themes: "And so we return and begin again." This touches on the fractal nature of reality, the life cycle from supercontext back to supercontext and even life as a video game.

The first image in the series of three volumes shows the three pyramids of Giza, which not coincidentally housed Egyptian nobility in the afterlife. They were also adorned with messages written in hieroglyphics, a pictogram-based system. Contrast this with the emphasis placed on deconstructing alphabetic language later in the series.

1.2 First appearance of King Mob.

First appearance of Effayed, who here describes the initiation each Invisible will undergo prior to contact with BARBELITH.

Khephra is a beetle that carries the sun in Egyptian mythology.

1.4 "Nice and smooth" is King Mob's catch phrase, taken from the Kinks' song David Watts.

1.5 A nearly eponymous dead beetle. Its mummification ties into the meaning behind the pyramids from the first panel and underlines the theme of rebirth.

2 First appearance of Dane McGowan. His name rhymes with that of Irish rock singer Shane McGowan. "McGowan" means "blacksmith."

Dead Beatles plays with the Khephra metaphor, the Lennon/Sutcliffe sequence and the idea that Dane and his friends are deadbeats.

Perhaps not so interestingly, the *Vertigo Preview* uncorrected proof uses a different font and layout for the story title and credits box.

Electric Crayon are Marc Siny and Steve Buccellato.

3.3 Note that Dane is destroying a library. Replacing current mindsets with a new paradigm is a key theme of *The Invisibles*.

4.1 First appearance of Gaz.

The Carlsberg brewery sponsors Liverpool Football Club. Dane's wearing a home shirt.

4.4 Note the King Mob graffiti.

Everton is a Premier League Liverpool football team.

Croxeth Hall Country Park is a country estate open to the public, managed by the City of Liverpool.

Note the GM graffiti: Grant is already imprinting himself into the series.

GRANT MORRISON ON CREATING *THE INVISIBLES*

Had the ideas for the book been kicking around in your head for a while before you wrote the series' proposal?

In a lot of ways, yeah, because there's always something kicking in the head. I came to it through every other comic that I'd done, I think. It just kind of summed up all the themes and ideas that I'd been pursuing through everything else. I became even more shocked when I looked back, because all throughout it I'd kept referencing back to earlier work and kind of drawing in elements and trying to make this a compendium of everything I'd ever done. And I found that even the earliest work I'd done, which was something like *Zoids* for Marvel UK – the toy tie-in, you know, which was a stupid comic – I really did the best I could back then. I was pretty ambitious; I was trying to make it interesting. And that contains all the themes of *THE INVISIBLES* in a toy comic.

So yeah, it was always there. But also the comic itself came about because I was on a tour with Steve Yeowell and Jill Thompson promoting the early Vertigo books, because SEBASTIAN O was out at the time and she was on *SANDMAN* probably. We talked about doing something. I had this vague idea for a big alternate series, kind of summing up all my interests. They all came from different areas, because most of them were based on things I'd intended to do in DC series. So the actual *INVISIBLES* stuff is *THE BOY COMMANDOS*, the Jack Kirby comic. I just loved the title, because it seemed like a classic William Burroughs title. I had this notion that we'd do *THE BOY COMMANDOS* but as a psychic scouts organization, because I had this weird dream that I'd found *The Psychic Scouts' Handbook* and thought, *I'll use this one!* I'd read all this stuff about [Boy Scouts founder] Baden-Powell. It's quite an interesting, weirdo thing derived from Baden-Powell in Africa and led into what would have been similar to *THE INVISIBLES* – the time travel stuff. But I think it was a lot wilder and a lot more Burroughs-like in the sense that it didn't even have a central story, it wasn't as connected to the real world. When we were out there in San Francisco, we went to this 50 Years of LSD celebration rave, and the whole thing started to come together then. I realized I had to talk to the mass culture which was emerging at the time, the psychedelic culture based on the dance culture that had hit America. That was '93, so it was kind of big in San Francisco at the time. It seemed like people were starting to push

through frontiers again that they hadn't been looking at in the yuppie era, and that suited me because I've always been interested in the fringe areas of thought. So it seemed a way to talk about the actual world and the way things were changing. And then of course the alien abduction experience happened later, which became what *THE INVISIBLES* is actually about.

The bottom line is there were a lot of different things. The King Mob character was based on... DC had an old character called The Whip from the '40s. No one had ever touched it; I found it and thought that was great, I can do this real kind of S&M superhero. The Whip is basically King Mob. The original designs for that, I just had this character who was bald and based on the fetish stuff at the time, which again was established in the underground and magazines like *Skin Two* [specifically photographs of clothing by Craig Morrison].

He's got [the Hood's] eyebrows, which then became Dan Dare's eyebrows. It was a nice touch. Now that I think back, I said to Steven, "I think King Mob looks like Daniel Day-Lewis with his head shaved," and in the very first image in issue one, first page of issue one, he actually does look like Daniel Day-Lewis, it's a Daniel Day-Lewis face. But then he becomes himself.

STUART MOORE ON VERTIGO'S FIRST CREATOR-OWNED SERIES

How did you first meet Grant?

There ought to be some answer involving talking cats, opium bowls the size of shark tanks, and ancient rune-

ON THE COVER

The purple grenade depicted in Warhol style tells us instantly that this series is going to subvert our assumptions, transforming weapons into art and making a statement about a civilization that has turned even war into a processed consumer spectacle. The use of a fifth color in the printing process helps to further differentiate *THE INVISIBLES* as something different, and the logo, created entirely from negative space, is a brilliant display of series as object.

"We are the boys!" is a play on "We are the mods!" from the 1979 film *Quadrophenia*.

5.2 Atom bombs are a major theme of Volume 2.

5.4 Note 'Gaz' graffiti. Dane and his friends loiter.

6.2 First appearance of Edith Manning.

7.2 *Mutual Aid* suggests that Darwin's theory of evolution was too heavily influenced by capitalist and hierarchical thought, and that success in nature is not defined by competition but rather by cooperation. The class lecture on revolution and *Mutual Aid* establishes that *THE INVISIBLES* will be, among other things, a political allegory.

Russian writer Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) spent most of his early years in military service. He lost faith in the government and became a revolutionary, writing and distributing anarchist and socialist pamphlets to the poor and producing articles for socialist publications.

The Bolshevik Revolution occurred in 1917 when the Russian Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924), seized control of the provisional government in Russia. This marked the rise of Lenin and the Soviets and led to the formation of the USSR. Kropotkin denounced the Bolsheviks on the grounds that they were, at their core, a political entity seeking centralized power for themselves, no different from the Tsars.

First appearance of Mister Six, here in his Brian Malcolm guise.

7.4 The October Revolution is another name for the Bolshevik Revolution.

7.5 Molotov refers to the Molotov Cocktail Dane used to blow up the library. A Molotov Cocktail is a simple bomb made by filling a glass bottle with gasoline. A rag wick is lit before the bottle is thrown. The Molotov Cocktail is named for Vyacheslav Molotov (1890-1986), chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR under Joseph Stalin (1879-1953). When he ordered the Red Army to invade Finland, they were met with these highly effective homemade bombs.

9.2 UK to US: arse = ass. Here it's slang for "can't be bothered."

9.6 Note the anarchy symbol and King Mob graffiti.

10.3 Dane is able to transcend the apparent linearity of time here, establishing another major theme of the series.

Lennon and Sutcliffe were the only two dead Beatles when this issue was published.

10.5 Singer-songwriter John Lennon (1940-1980) is generally regarded as the foremost member of the Beatles. Interestingly, Lennon and Lenin are homophones; both men are revolutionaries in different ways.

Stuart Sutcliffe (1940-1962) was one of the founding members of The Beatles. He left the band in 1961 to be with his new found love, Astrid. He died the following year of a brain hemorrhage.

11.2 American actor James Dean (1931-1955) is best known for his role in *Rebel Without a Cause* and a fatal car crash. His enduring fame is attributed to the notion that Dean somehow embodied the hopes and fears of all generations of youth.

French actress Brigitte Bardot (b. 1934) was a sex symbol in films such as *And God Created Women*.

11.5 The ripples suggest the butterfly effect, the

observed phenomenon that only slightly different initial conditions in a system can result in drastically different outcomes.

12.2 This sequence demonstrates how time bends around Dane. Mark David Chapman (b.1955) yelled, "Mr. Lennon!" just before shooting him. The "car backfiring" on the next panel is the gunshot report. Both 1961 and 1980 are bleeding into 1995. All times being one is a recurring theme.

12.4 "More like we're fucking alive and don't know it." Another recurring theme is the notion that we are unaware of our true nature, sleeping through existence without really living.

13.2 First appearance of Jack Frost.

13.3 Jack Frost is speaking in German. Roughly: "Good earthly method. Strong owner. Psychic land."

"Come home. The reverse of the moon." Both BARBELITH's location and its repeating message.

14.1 UK to US: TDA (taking and driving away) = grand theft auto.

UK to US: wanker = derogatory slang for one who obsessively masturbates.

UK to US: pissed = drunk.

14.4 UK to US: nick = steal.

14.5 Naturally Dane steals an Astra; the name may foreshadow the cosmic nature of the series and suggests his powers on the astral plane.

16.2 E is slang for the drug ecstasy, MDMA. Its use is characterized by increased sensitivity of all senses, feelings of love and acceptance, ego softening, and euphoria.

17.4 UK to US: shite = shit.

Dane basically describes the enemy here. And the Invisibles, too.

18.1 Chaos magick, which Grant practices, plays an important role in the series. It allows the practitioner to develop his or her own belief/symbol systems according to specific need. King Mob is performing an invocation for the purpose of divination. This particular ritual begins with the hallucinogen LSD to enter gnosis, a state of increased sensitivity and awareness. The following banishing ritual will protect King Mob while he's in this vulnerable state. The paisley shirt, Rickenbacker short arm guitar and Chelsea boots are all items associated with John Lennon and aid in King Mob's invocation. The Beatles albums pictured are *Rubber Soul*, *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. This invocation is inspired by an actual experience Grant Morrison had.

18.2 John Lennon had an affinity for the number nine. *Revolution 9* is a series of random sound clips, found on the *White Album*. Nine is also the number of Ganesh and the only number that becomes a different number upside down – six.

Lennon once said the Beatles were more popular than Jesus Christ; here one of them is a god.

Ganesh is the elephant-headed Hindu god of removing obstacles. Chaos magick allows King Mob to create a belief system that integrates rock psychedelia with traditional Hindu beliefs.

19.1 Tibetan prayer wheels, or *mani*, are strips printed with the mantra *om mani padme hum*, encased in spinning cylinder. Saying this mantra invokes Chenrezig, the embodiment of compassion. Here the pun refers to CDs or records.

A mantra is a sacred verbal expression from the

carved passageways, but it was probably at a convention. The truth is that I don't remember – obviously *they* made me forget.

How did editing the first volume of THE INVISIBLES come about? Were you present at the pitch stage?

Karen Berger wasn't editing much anymore herself, Art Young was doing limited series exclusively, and Tom Peyer had left staff, so as I recall Grant just kind of faxed it over to me with a note that said, "I guess you get this." It was pretty fully formed.

How much input did you have during the early days, when the original Psychic Boy Scouts idea was hammered into what would become THE INVISIBLES?

None whatsoever. I've never heard the phrase "Psychic Boy Scouts." Or ... have I?

Grant said he had editorial problems with the Marquis de Sade issue from Karen. What was the issue there? What was the breakdown of responsibility between the pair of you? What was your normal process per issue? How often did the rougher edges such as the original Marquis story have to get smoothed over?

Well, you have to remember that THE INVISIBLES was Vertigo's first creator-owned ongoing series, and we were feeling around as to what we were comfortable publishing in such a book (as opposed to what a DC-owned character book would allow). At the same time, the culture was undergoing a sea change around us in terms of allowable language, violence and sexual portrayals. The Marquis de Sade story was kind of a test for all of us.

There were no changes made that affected the core story; it was all language and art details – clothing adjusted to cover a bit more, extreme language toned down. I would show script and art to Karen as they came in, and probably Jenette Kahn – I don't remember all the details, but she was usually the last word on these matters at that time. As I recall, Grant was unhappy with the changes, in part because material started appearing soon in PREACHER that was at least as rough. To that extent he had a point – as I said, we had no hard-and-fast rules written down, and these things are very much subject to interpretation based on context. But I don't think any of the changes compromised the story.

STEVE YEOWELL ON DRAWING *THE INVISIBLES*

Grant had explained in general terms the concept behind *THE INVISIBLES* to Jill Thompson and myself during our leg of the Vertigo “Spin Across America” signing tour of 1993. I’d a couple of project proposals in the pipeline at the time, so despite being tempted when he asked if I wanted to become involved, I decided to decline.

DC eventually accepted Grant’s proposal. Jill was supposed to be drawing the first couple of story arcs, but because of other commitments, wasn’t able to meet the schedule that DC, who were keen to get the whole thing under way, wanted. In the meantime, I’d finished my current projects and the other proposals had all come to nothing so I was looking around for work. *THE INVISIBLES* came up in conversation and it was suggested that I draw the first story arc and Jill draw the second.

What were your feelings on launching the series?

There was a quality to the proposal that, for me, made it the most exciting thing Grant had come up with since *ZENITH*. It enthused me enough to work extra hard on that first issue. I thought it was a good solid story with enough intrigue to keep readers interested, so I had high hopes. I was actually quite pleased with the advance orders – about 70,000-90,000 I think – although DC were disappointed. Not surprising really – advances for first issues were much higher at the time.

PN: *THE INVISIBLES* begins with a bang – almost literally. Like any good fractal, the entire series is contained in this single issue, which takes advantage of its extra pages to provide a self-contained story about Harmony House that serves as a nice intro to Dane’s character.

There are some nice ideas present, including the notion of invoking John Lennon as a god and Gelt reincarnating as a beetle. Ironic mention must be given to the coincidental back cover, an advertisement for the film *Natural Born Killers* featuring a photo of actor Woody Harrelson looking much like King Mob.

The major themes of the series are present from the very first line, which describes the fractal nature of reality and takes on an unexpected twist by the final issue, through to the recurring statements about politics, rebellion, conformity, rebirth and even the binary nature of reality. All in all a great start to an iconic series.

Hindu tradition that is repeated in prayer or in a ritual, such as the invocation of a God. Mantras can aid the practitioner in attaining a state of gnosis.

“Looking glass language” refers to glossolalia, the supercontext and the Beatles song *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*. How language influences reality is another recurring theme of the series.

“Revolving head revolver” may refer to the head of John the Baptist from 1.8, who mentions a different sort of revolution. *Revolver* is a Beatles album.

19.2 The eggman is from *I am the Walrus* from the Beatles’ *Magical Mystery Tour* album. One theory holds that John Lennon purposefully created nonsensical lyrics to befuddle an education establishment that was making Beatles lyrics a part of the curriculum. The first line of the song is significant to *THE INVISIBLES*: “I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together.” The machine elves that appear on 3.6.4.2 could be described as eggmen.

“Let me take you down” is from the Beatles song *Strawberry Fields Forever*, which explores self, consciousness and perception.

19.3 “It is not dying” refers to both *THE INVISIBLES*’ theory of death and *Tomorrow Never Knows* from the Beatles album *Revolver*. “Say the word” is a refrain from the Beatles song *The Word*. The word, incidentally, is love.

19.4 Apple is the Beatles’ record label. It is also symbolic of forbidden knowledge in Christian mythology. Apples will reappear throughout the series as a recurring image.

“Bonnie Jock Lennon is dead and gone” refers to Lennon’s assassination.

Beautiful Boy is a song from John Lennon’s 1980 album *Double Fantasy*, about his son Sean.

21.2 UK to US: bizzies = cops.

21.3 “Other ways” implies lateral thinking, another series theme.

22 The judge’s language is reminiscent of Anthony Burgess’ (1917-1993) 1962 novel *A Clockwork Orange*. As the title suggests, the book is about the uselessness of trying to mechanize a living organism – specifically a form of aversion therapy the government administers to a young hooligan. The presence of the judge adds a second oppressive institution – after education – to Dane’s life.

22.5 The quotation marks around the word rebellion delegitimizes it, touching on language as reality.

23.2 First appearance of Miss Dwyer. Several of the series’ villains wear similar glasses. If eyes are the window to the soul, they may be hiding their soulless nature. *Dwyer* is Gaelic for “dark one.”

Note that Dane wears the same clothes for several days – this is generally a symptom of depression.

23.3 “Worry” holds dual meanings here.

23.4 Note the irony of the name Harmony House. Music recurs as a leitmotif in relation to the villains.

24.2 Gelt’s speech echoes the *Invisibles*’ own position. Another recurring theme is the similarity between the opposing sides.

24.5 Boy reiterates Gelt’s sentiments here in 1.7.19.4. Both sides being the same is a theme.

25.3 The yes/no playing cards are a binary system, not only suggesting that Harmony House is programming the boys like machines but also

establishing another recurring theme, that the universe is a binary system.

25.4 Gelt means "castrated one."

26.1 The tarot is a divinatory card system.

Isxis, the moon, is card 19 in the tarot. It is the darkness that gives birth to light, echoing the rebirth theme first shown with Khephra.

26.2 First appearance of Ragged Robin. A ragged robin is both the plant *Lychnis flosculi* and an overly made-up woman in ragged clothes.

26.3 King Mob's outfit here is based on clothing shown in the fetish magazine *Skin Two*.

27.2 The Invisibles are in a classroom here, an suggesting they essentially want the same thing of Dane as the enemy. Note the apple.

Why does Robin express skepticism over the tarot if she knows Fanny and Jim Crow?

We never do learn why Fanny is at the Academy.

27.4 Note that King Mob wears a mask, just as Gelt and Miss Dwyer do. Both sides are the same.

"Spy series." Reality as fiction is a recurring theme.

28.4 The poster suggests that Harmony House is a public institution that doesn't hide its mission. A recurring theme is that the forces of oppression are so ingrained in daily life that we don't even notice them.

28.5 UK to US: two fingers is the equivalent of the middle finger. A "fuck you" gesture.

29.3 First appearance of the King-of-all-Tears. Here he's called the "King-in-Chains," suggesting submission. Combined with "unborn and barren" we have the enemy in a nutshell – devoid of life and requiring slavery.

29.4 Gelt has literally been castrated, and had his sight removed as well. He is now without humanity's chief means of perceiving the world.

30.2 Dane is running from Gelt to the archon – from the phantom menace to the real thing?

31.3 Gaz is speaking in binary.

32.1 The Conspiracy removes souls literally as well as metaphorically.

33.3 "It's not good to wake up" is the opposite of BARBELITH's message.

33.5 "Smooth between the legs, smooth between the ears," like Gelt himself. Note Gelt is posed as though wearing handcuffs, in submission.

35 King Mob shoots the guards in the crotch and head, echoing Gelt.

35.3 First appearance of Bobby Murray.

35.4 "This isn't happening." Denial of reality is a recurring theme.

36.2 Begging for submission is a recurring theme.

36.5 *Goodbye Mr Chips* is a book by James Hilton (1900-1954) about an English headmaster who falls for a younger girl.

38.1 "Not Gaz." Harmony House, like the institution in *A Clockwork Orange*, appears to be a limited program, as Gaz is eventually released.

38.2 The insect is Gelt.

40.2 Dane's first and last words in this issue are "fuck," echoing Elfayed's cyclical opening line.

ILLUSTRATING THE GODHEAD

Artist Steve Yeowell on illustrating the psychedelic invocation of John Lennon

Originally I made a light-box tracing of that famous solarized photo of Lennon [by Richard Avedon], which of course was a no-no with the legal department. So I had to redraw it in such a way that it suggested the original without being too similar. The psychedelic background came from a 1970's album cover.

KCS: *Well, this series kicks off with a bang. Take one Warholesque grenade cover, add a few molotovs and guns. Mix well. Garnish with a few "fucks," "sbites" and "arses" and you've got yourself one tasty treat. But for all the piss and vinegar, the first issue of THE INVISIBLES treats the reader to more subtle and complex flavors. The first page provides a beautiful summary of the series' cosmology and as the issue progresses, we get to nibble at the edges of Dane's psyche – his past and future, his anger, his sensitivity. Yeowell's art is fitting for Dane's story, encapsulating his relative innocence. And Grant contrasts this well with a jaded, if overdone, King Mob. John Lennon as a god is a fantastic idea, even if the presentation is a bit arduous. And our introduction to the Conspiracy (especially the vagina-headed King-in-Chains) provides a healthy dose of ickies. But you never really know how great the first issue is until you've read the whole series.*

"When was
the last time
you had a
thought
that wasn't
put there
by them?"

PART ONE

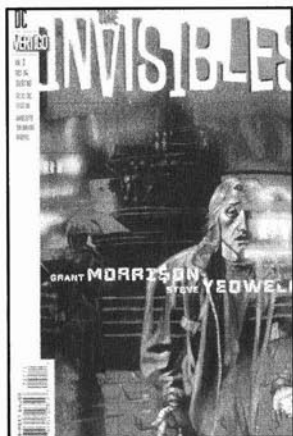
DOWN AND OUT IN HEAVEN AND HELL

OCT 94

Grant Morrison *Writer*Steve Yeowell *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Electric Crayon *Color Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

Dane has been homeless for some time and has partnered with a young punk, unaware (as is the reader) that the Invisibles are keeping tabs on him. He meets the seemingly barmy Tom O'Bedlam, who takes him on a journey of magical initiation in which Dane sees an alternate London and has hallucinogenic contact with aliens, who reveal the existence of a dimensional stoplight.

Meanwhile, a gang of aristocrats has been hunting the homeless and, after being abandoned by Tom, it appears that Dane is next in their sights...



1 The rantings of this conspiracy theorist are both metaphoric and literal. In the context of our world, we are all receivers for the bombardment of advertising and brand culture our corporate giants flood the airwaves with, which alter the way we perceive the world.

The location is Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park, London, a symbol of free speech on which one may say anything without fear of arrest. The speaker may be King Mob, in keeping with the disguised Invisibles elsewhere in this issue. Or, he may be the unnamed hitchhiker seen in 1.14.

1.3 ELF (extremely low frequency) transmitters were used during the Cold War to communicate with submarines. Some conspiracy theorists claim they are involved in mind control.

1.4 "Wake up" is a recurring theme.

Note the length of Dane's hair; he's been homeless for some time now.

1.5 "When was the last time you had a thought that wasn't put there by them?" Via advertising, law, school...

2 Dane may be breaking through the fourth wall to address the reader here, again suggesting the interplay between fiction and reality.

The title is a play on George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*, which explores the conditions of the lower classes in those two cities.

3.5 First appearance of Boy.

Note how Dane slowly blends in with the surrounding garbage in this sequence, both a metaphor for his gradual decay and also his invisibility.

4.1 Ragged Robin. The Invisibles are keeping tabs on Dane throughout his initiation.

4.2 First appearance of Kate Sutton.

4.4 Note that Robin gives Dane a pound. Not out of generosity so much as "in for a penny," perhaps.

4.5 Tom is quoting from an anonymous 17th century poem called *Tom O'Bedlam*.

English playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is most well known for inflicting agonizing exams on schoolchildren everywhere.

5.2 First appearance of Tom O'Bedlam. The moniker is the name assumed by Edgar while pretending to be insane in Shakespeare's *King*

GRANT MORRISON ON TIME IN *THE INVISIBLES*

The series begins playing with our perception of time almost immediately, when Dane and Tom see Edith and Freddie at the church.

That was a long-term plan. After the abduction, the whole series became about time being a single object and what might happen to relationships within it. I began to see how you could do it within the thing, and time became really important. Especially once you get into the second volume and you start to see there are clocks everywhere and time is everywhere, and it's always now. No matter when it is, it's always now.

STUART MOORE ON EDITORIAL INFLUENCE

How much input did you have over the covers and stories?

Virtually none over the stories. Grant knew exactly what he wanted to do, and the whole thing always felt like such a delicate mosaic to me – scenes and bits of language would recur months or years later, revealing other meanings – that I never wanted to wade in and screw around with it.

Grant often had ideas about the covers, and so did Sean Phillips. I don't know that I came up with many ideas from scratch, but we all had our hands in.

STEVE YEOWELL ON DESIGNING *THE INVISIBLES*

Almost all of the major characters in *THE INVISIBLES* appeared in your initial story arc. How much leeway did you have in designing the lead characters? What about the ancillary cast (Edith, Mister Six etc.)?

DC sent me everything produced thus far – Grant's concept proposal with his designs for the Jack Frost costume and King Mob's battle dress, and some concept drawings Jill had done: a group shot of King Mob, Fanny, Boy, Ragged Robin (though she had a different name then – I forget what) and Jack Frost.

King Mob's face was hidden under his war mask in all of the drawings, and Grant's description of him wasn't any more concrete than him being bald and kind of tough looking, so I got to design his appearance from scratch – I based him on The Hood from *Thunderbirds*.

The pre-Jack Frost Dane I based on Mark, from British boy band Take That.

Boy, Fanny and Robin I took pretty much from Jill's concept shot, although I couldn't face drawing Robin's corkscrew hair and altered it!

The ancillary cast I designed on the spot as they appeared – using whatever description, if any, Grant had provided in the scripts as a guide.

If I took too much leeway then nobody complained!

How do you balance accuracy versus storytelling needs in regard to real locations and people (e.g. Egypt, Liverpool, the Beatles)?

I tend to go for accuracy in the broad sense whilst not worrying about the details. I'll use well known images for establishing scenes as it seems to me that there are some shots of famous landmarks that have become so familiar that not using them means you risk the reader not recognizing the location.

"Celebrity characters" I design the same way I would any other, using as much reference material as I can find.

Other locations I either make up or base on any reference material that is (or seems) similar – one cobblestone back street looks pretty much the same as any other!

SEAN PHILLIPS ON CREATING THE VOLUME 1 COVERS

How did you land the covers gig for Volume 1?

The then editor, Stuart Moore, called and asked me.

What guidance did you have from the editors or Grant?

None that I can remember. I just read the scripts and came up with ideas for sketches. Hopefully Stuart or Grant selected the best one.

ON THE COVER

Dane is literally becoming invisible. The S in Morrison in the credits is a dollar sign for the next three issues.

Lear. The name traditionally refers to a mental patient discharged from Bedlam asylum and left on the streets. Its use in a politicized comic book like *THE INVISIBLES* is likely a critique on the mental health policies of most Western nations, which tend to release mental patients onto the streets to save money.

Most of Tom's quotes on this page are from Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which suggests that Tom may only be pretending to be mad.

5.4 "You thing rike jellyfish pretty soon now" is from William S Burroughs' (b.1937) "cut up" novel *Nova Express*.

6.3 Planet X is a comic shop in London, although here it looks more like a fashion boutique.

8 This scene echoes a famous sequence in the 1977 George Lucas (b.1944) film *Star Wars*, in which the hermit Obi-Wan Kenobi misdirects a soldier looking for Luke Skywalker, who like Dane will apprentice into a mystical rebellion. Life as fiction.

9.2 The quote is from *King Lear* III.iv and is incorrect, in that only the Prince of Darkness is another name for Satan. Modo and Mahu are lesser demons.

9.5 Tom is quoting *King Lear* again.

10.1 Another *King Lear* quote.

11.1 The notion of two Londons deals with perception on a metaphoric level, and also the binary theme again.

11.2 Winston Churchill (1874-1965) was prime minister of England during the second World War.

Niagara Falls is a massive North American waterfall.

12.1 *Big Issue* is a paper benefitting the homeless.

12.3 First appearance of Lord Fanny.

13.2 UK to US: poofs = derogatory slang for homosexual males.

14.3 First appearance of Sir Miles Delacourt. The hunting clothes establish the dehumanization of his enemies, a recurring theme throughout the first volume. The fact that they are hunting in broad daylight is probably the point – those in power can do what they wish.

15.3 "Little vixen" has a double meaning here.

15.4 Bleeding is a ritual in which a young hunter is initiated by smearing the blood of his first kill on his face. Another initiation reference.

16.2 Trains are a recurring image, suggesting the commoditization of people as per the Holocaust.

16.3 The Underground is essentially a modern cave system. Caves are a place of great importance in initiations traditionally – King Mob's initiation in issue 1.18 occurs in a natural cave.

"The road to Heaven runs through the depths of Hell," sums up the darkness into light theme that recurs throughout the series, exemplified by Fanny.

16.5 The guardian is made from a cross and a television, referencing the two main influences of Western culture.

17.3 *Luan-Dun* is literally Celtic for "City of the Moon." Legend has it that a temple to Diana, Goddess of the Moon, once stood in the current location of St. Paul's Cathedral.

18 The red/green circle is the cosmic stoplight, which governs access to the Invisible College in the "healthy" Universe A.

18.3 "Speeding up." Another recurring theme is that time is a fractal that is moving faster as the end date of December 12, 2012 approaches.

18.4-18.6 BARBELITH likely derives from the Greek words *barbaros* (alien/foreign) and *lithos* (stone).

19.1 The airships signify entry into a different London – or at least a differently perceived London. The airships may be yet another cultural perception of BARBELITH, along with the angels/aliens/archons. Or this may be a "healthy" version of London from the Universe A intersection, as compared to the unhealthy Universe B version shown in 1.5, 2.22 and 3.2.

Note the green traffic light, tying to the cosmic spotlight.

19.3 Dane's scar is explained on 1.16.10.5. Rapid healing may be among his powers, as he appears to regrow his severed pinky as well as heal the scar.

20.1 The French Situationists believed that capitalism and technology created a condition in which humans did not perceive reality as it was, but instead perceived it as it was shown to them via television, radio and computers etc. As a result, most would stumble through life watching it as it was presented to them instead of experiencing it.

20.3 Possibly the first appearance of a non-, a subculture ultimately created by the Marquis de Sade that aspires toward genderlessness.

20.4 The statue is based on an illustration from William Blake's *Urizen*, about a false god.

William Blake (1757-1827) was an English artist and poet. He is famous for his many engravings and poetry such as the *The Book of Urizen* and *The Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. Blake rejected materialism in favor of imagination and was disturbed by the effects of industrialization on England.

20.5 Dreams as reality suggests that life may be fiction, a recurring theme.

21.1 Dragon lines are also known as ley lines, believed to be routes of magical energy crossing Britain.

Canary Wharf is Britain's tallest building. Note that it's capped by a pyramid.

Buckingham Palace is the residence of the British monarch.

22.1 The "dog star" is Sirius. The Dogon tribe of Africa believe that they were visited by the amphibious Nommo aliens, who came from Sirius B. The burial chambers in Egyptian pyramids point to Sirius.

22.6 *Child Roland to the Dark Tower Came* is a poem by Robert Browning, which partially inspired Stephen King's *Dark Tower* series. *Childe Rowland* is also an English folk tale in which Rowland rescues his sister and two brothers from the king of Eftland's Dark Tower.

UK poet Robert Browning (1812-1889) is best known for *The Ring and the Book*.

US author Stephen King (b.1947) is the world's most popular and successful horror writer.

24 These fox hunters are actually the Invisibles. One common aspect of initiation is challenge by peers. Note that both the Invisibles and the Conspiracy have appeared to Dane as fox hunters, touching on the theme that both sides are the same.

How did you approach creating the covers?

After sketch approval, I took whatever photo reference I needed and then just did the painting. All the covers, with the exception of #25, which was pen and ink on colored paper, were painted with acrylics on board.

Were you happy with the way the covers were ultimately presented?

Yes, Rian Hughes did his usual great job on the logo.

PN: *An intriguing follow up to the debut that continues to throw out references to the series' overarching themes in scattershot bursts, this issue comes off slightly the worse for wear for the lack of character development.*

We get the first of several conspiracy theories from the first page, and the foray through the alternate London is interesting. Dane's homelessness is well dealt with for a mainstream comic book, with some lovely metaphoric illustrations by Steve Yeowell. And the introduction of (what we later learn are) the Invisibles is an example of the power of subtlety. But the Shakespeare-mangling Tom O'Bedlam seems slightly out of place, a token of the early Vertigo style monopolized by Neil Gaiman's SANDMAN. Luckily for the character, he will be drawn more credibly in the following volume.

As for Dane, without development we're still left with an unlikeable protagonist; but his predicament is interesting and with Morrison dealing questions faster than answers the reader has no choice but to come back next month...

KCS: *As we rejoin young Master McGowan, we find him a bit worse for wear – gaunt, shaggy and plagued with explosive acne. Props to Steve Yeowell for his stunning portrayal of Dane's decay. The highlight of this issue: Mad Tom, Mad Tom and Mad Tom. His Shakespearean spouting is a bit reminiscent of SANDMAN, but Grant pulls it off by not taking himself, or Tom O'Bedlam, too seriously. The humor also serves to offset what could easily have been tedious and preachy philosophical ramblings. Instead, the reader is treated to a tour of another London courtesy of the fabled blue mold. And we get a sneak peak of Dane's first real contact with BARBELITH. The fox hunt on the street is a bit over the top, but it sets up the scope of Dane's initiation rather nicely. And while Fanny's coloring is off, fear not, Daniel Vozzo will get it right sooner rather than later.*

PART TWO

DOWN AND OUT IN HEAVEN AND HELL

NOV 94

Grant Morrison *Writer*Steve Yeowell *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Electric Crayon *Color Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

"The world

is sick, boy.

Very sick.

A virus got

in a long

time ago

and we've

got so

used to its

effects, we've

forgotten

what it

was like

before we

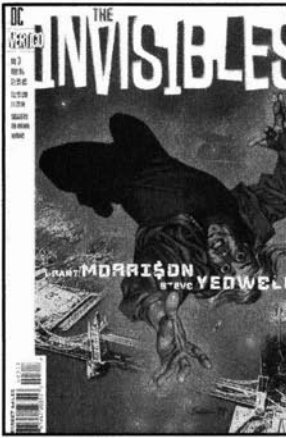
became ill.

I'm talking

about cities,

see?"

Tom decides to up the ante following a magical tour of London by showing Dane the world from a pigeon's point of view. The pair have a ghostly encounter at St. Dunstan's-in-the-East before Tom assaults Dane on the banks of the Thames, trying to force him through trauma into enlightenment. Dane realizes that his knowledge of self has been programmed, is able to transcend this into a tabula rasa. Tom then decides to put Dane through one final test of faith – leaping from the top of Canary Wharf.



4.5 Tom is quoting *King Lear* III.vi.

5.3 One of the Beatles wore a blank badge at a press conference in New York in 1968 to announce the formation of Apple Records.

6.1 "Summer is a'comin' in" is from *The Cuckoo Song*, a thirteenth century English lyric heralding the rebirth of spring.

6.2 Note Boy's hair. Is she attempting some poor disguise or just poorly colored?

6.4 "Time's going past" touches on the fluidity of time around Dane.

6.5 Crom-Cruch was a god worshiped in Ireland prior to the Christian infiltration. His name means "bloody crescent" or "bloody bent one," hence Lord Word. On Samhain, members of his cult would make sacrifices to him in order to ensure a good harvest. Samhain is a pagan holiday celebrated on 31 October. It is a time of reflection and of seeing, or divination

Totem animals are spirit guides or protectors that lend guidance during life's journey. Each individual is said to have his or her own totem animal.

7.3 Tom presumably smacks Dane to move his assemblage point. The assemblage point, as described by Carlos Casteneda, determines the range of a person's perceptions. By moving our assemblage point, we can perceive aspects of reality otherwise hidden to us. Normally, our assemblage point is between our shoulder blades. Here, Tom may be preparing Dane for what is to come on the following pages.

9.3 This is St. Paul's cathedral. The bird seems able to perceive much more than the average human, perhaps because it is not subject to the programming that we are. The archon perched over St. Paul's is a metaphoric image reinforcing the notion of religion as an oppressive institution.

10.3 "Our world is sick." Disease is another recurring theme of *THE INVISIBLES*, especially in Volume 1.

10.4-10.5 Note the overlapping panels, while Tom's voice is omnipresent. Another illustration of the single time theme.

11.1 Tom's talking about hyper-observation – magick.

11.2 This may be the first appearance of the timesuit/fictionsuit.

12.1 "Open your eyes" suggests that we are visually programmed rather than independent thinkers.

STUART MOORE ON THE LOOK OF *THE INVISIBLES*

Who selected the individual artists, and Sean Phillips for the covers? Was the variant cover on issue five an editorial edict?

Grant and I agreed on Sean early on. Most of the artists were his suggestion, a few were mine. Jill Thompson and Steve Yeowell were both planned to do the book early on; Steve had collaborated with Grant several times before, and Jill had been talking with him about doing something – so had John Ridgway. I know I suggested Tommy Lee Edwards for the one issue [1.20], and I kind of brought Phil Jimenez into Grant's orbit. After Phil drew an issue of Mark Millar's *SWAMP THING*, Grant wanted him on *THE INVISIBLES*.

STEVE YEOWELL ON DRAWING *THE INVISIBLES*

Do you prefer to draw conversational or action sequences (and what did you think of the overt violence in the scripts)?

I enjoy drawing both. I didn't have a problem with the overt violence in the scripts – although I was surprised at the lack of reaction (that I noticed anyway) to the exploding head shot in issue one: I actually went far beyond the panel description when I drew it.

Which characters did you like to draw most? Least? Why?

I liked drawing Dane and King Mob the most, maybe because they were the major cast members I felt I'd contributed most to.

Ragged Robin I liked the least at the time because of her corkscrew hair – and when I came back to her at the end of volume one I couldn't get out of drawing it! That and her being an alternate version of Crazy Jane from *DOOM PATROL*, who I also disliked.

SEAN PHILLIPS ON HIS PERSONAL BEST

Which covers are your favorite and least favorite, and why?

My favorite was #15. It was simple, graphic, bold and a little bit rude... My least favorite was #17. It was just so badly painted, truly awful. Rian almost saved it by adding a fractal background, though.

ON THE COVER

A different interpretation of Dane experiencing what it is to be a pigeon, with reference to the blue mold.

PN: *Dane's initiation continues, onward through the realm of chaos magick and its attendant emphasis on expanded perception. As with much of the first volume, characterization remains negligible, with ideas taking center stage. Steve Yeowell moves from strength to strength in these early issues, dynamically tackling what might otherwise be a dull series of talking head segments. But the true star is Morrison himself, writing a rare story about magick itself rather than the usual nonsense about warlocks and fairies. The mystery of the Invisibles remains strong after three issues (indeed, the reader has no reason to suppose the term refers to a team at all), and the metaphor of the blank page is worth the \$1.95 cover price alone.*

KCS: *Another juicy issue indeed. With a creepy bird's-eye view of St. Paul's, the secret of cities revealed and a mini session of Reichian therapy to crack Dane's armor, one is left wondering how on Earth Grant crams so much into one issue. The distinct lack of transition after the opening scene probably helps. When does the pigeon scene occur? An hour, a day, a month after the opening scene? Hard to tell. Nonetheless, Tom continues Dane's education and Grant manages to make it entertaining and thought provoking. The blank page is a stunning revelation, and probably the first point in the series when I felt I was reading something more than the average Vertigo book.*

"Go back to sleep" is the opposite of BARBELITH's message, which urges us to think for ourselves.

"Here endeth the lesson" is a traditional ending to Biblical lessons read in church.

13.1 "Cut the apron strings" relates to the recurring theme of growing up.

13.2 KAR 120C is the license plate of Number 6 from the UK television series *The Prisoner*, a political allegory about a man who refuses to explain why he resigned from a government job. Elements from *The Prisoner* frequently recur in *The Invisibles*, most notably in Mister Six.

This is King Mob's car.

13.5 Life as fiction is a recurring theme.

15.1 Pan and Dionysus are the Greek gods of nature and pleasure, respectively. Her invocation of them suggests a hedonistic lifestyle.

15.2 First young Edith and Freddie. See 2.10.

15.3 Tom is quoting from *King Lear* III.vi. Note that Freddie knows the quote.

Frateretto is a demon.

Nero was the emperor of Rome when it famously burned.

15.4 Traditionally, a Hand of Glory was a charm made by cutting off the hand of a murderer still hanging from the gallows. The hand was then pickled and dried, and sometimes dipped in wax. Candles were occasionally lit between the fingers. Hands of Glory were often used by burglars and robbers for luck, and to frighten their prey.

16.1 Both the *Bible* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* portray Mammon as a deity associated with wealth.

A sigil is a symbolic representation of desire used to implant said desire in the unconscious mind where it can become reality.

16.4 "We want you, we want you as a new recruit" is a quote from the Village People song *In the Navy*.

17.3 The obelisk is Cleopatra's Needle, an 1819 gift from Egyptians to the British that now sits on the bank of the Thames river in London. It was originally built around 1500BC. Note the Khephra hieroglyph on the left side.

19.3 A reference to Reichian therapy, a version of which Dane is about to undergo.

People as robots is another *Invisibles* theme, evoking the sleeping through life theme.

20.2 Tom is quoting *King Lear* IV.i. Obidicut, Hobbidance, Mahu, Modo and Flibbertigibbet are demons.

20.4 Tom may be talking about the supercontext.

21.5 Part of the rebirth process is the destruction of the ego. The blank badge seems to symbolize Dane's first step in that process.

22 The blank page represents Dane's ego destruction and subsequent rebirth; his head emptied of programming, he is now a blank slate.

23.4 "Filling you up with silver" hints at magic mirror.

23.6 Tom's words here are a loose paraphrase of Noel Coward's song *If Love Were All*.

"We're

trying to

unfuck

your

head."

DEC 94

Grant Morrison *Writer*Steve Yeowell *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

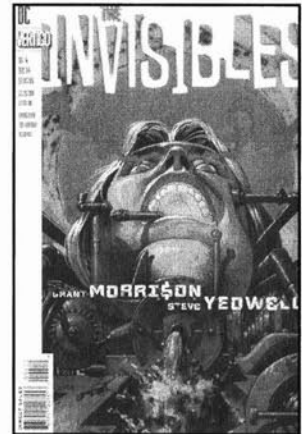
PART THREE

DOWN AND OUT IN HEAVEN AND HELL

Dane rejects the Jack Frost name and the notion that his destiny is in any way not his own before agreeing, under the influence of the blue mold, to leap from Canary Wharf. The trauma induces contact with BARBELiTH, but true to his word Dane flees. BARBELiTH catches up to Dane, who seems to know what it is. Later, a note from Tom leads him to the Invisibles, who press him to join. Uncertain, Dane leaves with them just moments before the enemy's soldiers find the hideout. Elsewhere, Tom O'Bedlam wanders deeper into the subway toward a green light...

ON THE COVER

A representation of Dane as a machine, built, programmed and used by society. That it's his head suggests manipulation of knowledge; meanwhile BARBELITH is hovering, ready to make contact.

STEVE YEOWELL ON LEAVING *THE INVISIBLES*

Grant's original idea was to use different artists for different story arcs. Mine came to an end!

How do you feel other artists handled "your" characters? Which artists' visions of them did you prefer, and which do you feel missed the boat? For example, your versions of both Robin and Boy are quite different than the portrayals they eventually received.

I was disappointed King Mob lost the Asian caste I'd tried to give him, but maybe it never came over in the drawing! It's fairer to say that my version of Robin was different from the portrayal she was supposed to receive.

PN: *The final segment of Dane's initiation begins well enough, with him and Tom enjoying a respite before leaping from Canary Wharf. But his contact with BARBELITH is truly bizarre, leaving the reader with questions the series hasn't provided a context to even frame. Ultimately, answers are a full year's worth of issues away. Dane's meeting of the Invisibles is nicely understated, and the quartet is visually intriguing if nothing else. All in all something of a damp squib on its own, but in the context of the full series it's really rather special.*

KCS: *The opening scene is dazzling, with a glowing and energetic Dane, starkly contrasting the brooding youth we've come to know. The scene on the train is priceless: "the Bible and a nice apple," those were the days. The art and colors in the post-jump sequence are stunning, and Mad Tom's demise is poignant and dignified. I've only known him for three issues, but I'll miss him just the same. King Mob is too cool for me at this point, and his casual dismissal of what Dane's been through leaves a bad taste in my mouth, even if his behavior is part of Dane's initiation.*

3.2 The old friend is Edith.

4.2 Language defining reality is a recurring theme.

4.3 UK to US: crisps = chips.

5.2 In Carlos Castaneda's work, sorcerers are often referred to as warriors.

5.5 Throwing the red frisbee may be a visual rejection of BARBELITH at this time.

8.5 The auric interference is likely the result of the tower blocking the flow of energy along the ley line.

9.1 "Just like a postcard." The background in this panel is a postcard – the series bridging "reality."

9.4 Waking up is a recurring theme.

10.1 In *King Lear*, Edgar (disguised as Tom O'Bedlam) and Gloucester jump from a hill to bring the latter out of his malaise – to "reawaken" him.

12.1 Note that BARBELITH appears after trauma.

17.1 Big Brother is the oppressive regime in George Orwell's novel 1984.

19.5 "It's a man's life in the Invisible Army" is a play on the former British Army slogan: *It's a man's life in the modern army*. Note the reversal of expectations here – King Mob is standing between two women and a transvestite.

20.2 The blood is the work of Orlando.

20.3 *Rex Mundi* is Latin for "King of the World."

First appearance of Orlando, who may be named after the Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) character from the 1928 novel of the same name. Both characters are marked by fluid identity.

20.5 Conspiracy theorists link the CIA Monarch mind control program with "sex circuses."

10 Downing Street is the home of the English prime minister.

UK to US: spunk = slang for ejaculate.

21.4 A myrmidon is one who mindlessly obeys.

22.3 "You can sit by his grave for the rest of your life." This is what Dane does in a vision in 1.23.

23 This is Tom O'Bedlam's last speech in *King Lear*.

24.3 Who is Boy writing this message for? The soldiers? Or is she addressing the reader?

24.4 Some Neosts called everything "Smile" to sabotage language as a restrictive labeler.

"His skill
makes us
believe that
we see a
war between
two great
armies, but
there is no
war. There
is only the
dalang."

ARCADIA BLOODY POETRY

JAN 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Jill Thompson *Pencils*

Dennis Cramer *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors*

Clem Robins *Letters*

Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*

Stuart Moore *Editor*

Rian Hughes *Cover*

In 17th century Venice, poets George Byron and Percy Shelley discuss the concepts of destiny and utopia, Shelley arguing for direct action while Byron claims that paradise is a mental state.

In India, King Mob learns the story of the *dalang* puppeteer before returning to England through a shortcut in reality. He rejoins the Invisibles in London, where Boy has been training Dane in martial arts and the nature of the conspiracy. At dinner, King Mob reveals that they have instructions to relocate another Invisible through time to the present. They travel to an abandoned windmill and psychically project themselves through time to revolutionary France.

Meanwhile, the faceless demon Orlando has taken up residence in the home of a murdered family in order to track down the Invisibles...

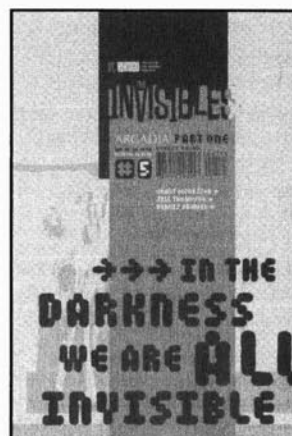
GRANT MORRISON ON THE COSMOLOGY OF *THE INVISIBLES*

When King Mob travels through the Universe B intersection as a short cut, where does the woman with the baby come from? Is she an imaginary representation, or a real person?

She's just a representation. She's as real as any representation might be. She's at the interface where on one side is the Invisible College, which is a microscopic, atomic, folded-up superstring universe, and on the other side there's the supercontext. The interference point of the supercontext is using the elements of the Outer Church as an antibiotic. The interference point where the Outer Church touches human consciousness manifests itself as all human fears. All the fears that have come bleeding out of human consciousness, which is the individual sovereign self consciousness. The Outer Church, when you first touch it, first appears as our worst nightmares, death camps, atomic destruction, hopeless people, mutated horrors, no hope for humanity. It's the end. And then you go a little further in and there's monstrous insect flea things doing their droppings in cities that you recognize. And suddenly you're deep inside and there's I/YOU cubes and the whole kind of surgical ambience, the nightmarish Clive Barker scalpel world. And deeper and deeper until you're at the altar of all control, where there's no hope and nothing needs interpretation, it is what it is. And the other world interpenetrates with it, which creates the soils in which the little larva grows and learns its tricks. It's the world of the supercontext, of ultimate freedom, ultimate possibility. Where that touches human consciousness we experience it as the

ON THE COVER

This issue was released in four covers, parodying the then-current trend to sell issues on the strength of variant cover editions rather than strong stories. Also note the cheap pulp stock and the lack of illustrations, a meta statement on the disposable nature of comics. (Indeed, in the letter column for issue one Grant instructs the reader to destroy the comic after reading it!) The slogans reinforce the political nature of the series and subvert our expectations of the ubiquity of a cover image.



1.1 Arjuna was one of the five Pandava brothers, who fought to save their kingdom from the hundred Kurava brothers during the battle of Kuruksetra. During the battle, Arjuna was delivered the *Bhagavad Gita*, the repository of Vedic teachings.

Krishna is considered to be the eighth avatar of Vishnu in Hindu belief system. Known for bravery in the face of evil, it is Krishna who delivered the *Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna on the battlefield. Incidentally, the Hindu are still waiting for the ninth and final avatar of Vishnu. Dane, perhaps?

Vishnu is the sustainer aspect of the Hindu trinity comprised of Brahma, himself and Shiva as the creator, preserver and destroyer.

1.2 Duryudana led the fight against the Pandava brothers. The *Mahabharata*, an epic history of ancient India, describes him as the embodiment of evil.

1.3 Grant: "Agus is a guy I met when I was in Java. He was just this guy I knew, a kid who drove people around on his motorcycle."

1.3 A *dalang* is a puppet master behind the Indonesian *wayang* shadow puppet show. A dying breed with the advent of television, the *dalang* were once believed to communicate with spirits.

1.4 A *gamelan* is a percussive orchestra that specifically accompanies *wayang* shows.

1.5 The description of the *dalang* is a metaphor for the "war" between the Invisibles and their enemy. Both are part of the same structure, controlled by the same force.

2 The text on this page is Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo*.

3.1 First appearance of Byron and Shelley.

UK poet Lord George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) was a political radical most famous for his work *Don Juan*.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) arguably one of the greatest of the romantic poets, was known for his radical politics, including atheism and anarchism.

3.3 Shelley's description of a poet's duty echoes the primary goal of the Invisibles as stated by King Mob in 1.8 ("We just want to remind people where the exits are").

3.4 French painter Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) was a pioneer of French classicism. Unlike many of his peers, he refused commissioned work to

pursue philosophical pieces.

4.3 "Club-footed sodomite." Byron was both crippled and homosexual.

5.1 Paradise existing in the mind is a recurring theme throughout the series. Paradise is not a place, but a state of mind.

5.3 "Mind forg'd manacles" is from William Blake's poem *London*, about the misery of city life. The original line was "German forged links."

6.1 The Hindu Prambanan temple, or Lorjonggrang Temple, is the largest temple complex in Java.

6.5 We'll see this in Volume 2.

8.1 Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea's *Illuminatus!* trilogy is also concerned with the magical number five. Groups in these novels also contained cells of five agents. On a lighter note, the animated superhero series *Captain Planet and the Planetheers* includes a group of five environmental freedom fighters, each with an elemental power.

8.3 Saju Jirugi is a basic combination of movement and technique (blocks and punches) practiced in Tae Kwon Do by the beginning student.

9.5 The man at the piano is from *Julian and Maddalo*, touching on the dubious distinction between fiction and reality.

10.2 US rap group Naughty by Nature is best known for the album *Poverty's Paradise*.

10.3 *Uttanasana* the yoga pose "Standing Forward Bend," as illustrated in the panel

11.2 "Keep us asleep" is the opposite of BARBELITH's message.

11.3 Boy's speech is a harbinger of things to come.

11.4 *Vrksasana* is the yoga "tree pose," as shown.

12 King Mob's shortcut is through the "diseased" Universe B intersection, in spite of the fact that he is able to enter the "healthy" Universe A section at will. Mister Six uses Universe A for his shortcuts, suggesting that King Mob chooses the other option. Perhaps to keep him focused?

12.2 First appearance of the woman with the one-eyed baby.

12.2 The Berlin Wall was built in 1961 to separate East and West Berlin. Later expanded to separate the two Germanies, it became an iconic symbol of the Cold War. It was removed in 1989 with the reunification of Germany.

13.5 Mohandas Gandhi (1869-1948) pioneered peaceful civil disobedience to force the British occupation out of India. His story was later turned into a film, suggesting the life as film theme.

14.1 UK to US: 99s are ice cream cones that cost 99 pence.

14.4 Xipe Totec, or "Our Lord the Flayed One," was the Aztec god of the spring. He wore a freshly flayed human skin in honor of the rebirth of spring.

16.2 UK to US: starter = appetizer.

16.5 The Freemasons are a fraternal order that allegedly controls the world through highly placed members.

17.5 Robin demonstrates her telepathy again, pinpointing the arrival of King Mob. But in *Entropy in the UK* she claims that he is "psi-invisible." An error?

Invisible College, which is a place of learning, magick, wonder. The place we go in dreams, where we feel most at home.

STUART MOORE ON THE VARIANT COVERS

The variant cover was suggested by DC's then-marketing director, Bruce Bristow. I liked it, and as I recall Grant appreciated the extra attention. Rian Hughes did a beautiful job with those covers.

JILL THOMPSON ON GETTING THE GIG

How did you come to draw THE INVISIBLES?

I'd been working on BLACK ORCHID when Vertigo first launched, and they were doing that big Vertigo tour in the spring of 1993. There were two legs of it – Neil Gaiman, I think Peter Milligan and some other guys were doing one part of it in one section of the country, and then myself, Grant Morrison and Steve Yeowell were doing the other part. We went to Atlanta, the San Francisco area, toured all around. I of course brought work with me, brought xeroxes and stuff of the things that I had worked on in the last couple of months and showed it to Grant and said that at some point I'd really like to work with him. And he said, "Well, I've got this thing that I've been putting together that I want to propose to Karen, and I'd love you to do it."

It turns out that I still had BLACK ORCHID to finish, or else I would have been the one to launch the series. Steven and me and Grant just kind of coordinated our schedules.

So it was planned from the beginning that Steve was only going to do the first four issues?

I believe so. Grant ... said at the time that he wanted to do something like Neil had done on SANDMAN, which was work with different artists for different storylines. I don't know if he eventually changed his mind about that, but he wanted people to do certain story arcs. I couldn't do the first one.

I might be thinking totally wrong about this. It was either that Steve only wanted to do the first one, or something like that, and he had another one coming up that would be good for me, and I was totally into it. I remember doing character sketches and designs and things for

solicitation and advertising for it right off the bat, but that was from Grant's already drawn sketches.

PN: *If readers found the first four issues rough going, they were in for a shock with this, a challenging philosophical exercise in which questions are asked of the reader, rather than answered. Grant's intention to have the series directly interact with the reader really begins here. The appearance of Byron and Shelley is bold, but at this point they and Orlando do little to set THE INVISIBLES apart from other Vertigo titles such as SANDMAN, and the series continues to struggle with its own identity. Few of the regulars emerge from types to become individuals at this stage, although Jill Thompson's subtle linework does wonders for conveying emotion.*

KCS: *Fractals. Infinity contained in a finite space, the whole reflected in every part. Page one of Bloody Poetry sums up the entire series. Grant has a wonderful knack for revealing the complete cosmology of the series in metaphor, in this case using the dalang – and of course this early in the series, we have no idea he's doing it. This issue is a hard first read. The sudden jump from present day London to Percy Shelley and Lord Byron is a jolting one. And the last thing I wanted to see on page two was poetry. But before I give the impression that I'm slamming part one of Arcadia, let me quickly point out that it is one of my favorite storylines in the entire series.*

Most of the important messages are here, and Grant pushes at our notions of what the comics medium is and what it can do. The exchanges between Boy and Dane are fabulous, and although I was a bit confused by the exact nature of King Mob's shortcut, it is nice to see him cooing lovingly at the deformed baby. At last! Evidence of a soul.

Although Jill Thompson's Dane rattles my chain a bit, she has Fanny dead on, and all of the scenes with Shelley and Byron are gorgeous. And Daniel Vozzo seems to have gotten the hang of coloring Fanny, so I feel altogether warm and fuzzy about issue five and, poetry aside, bring on issue six.

19.2 The painting is *Les Bergers d'Arcadie* by Poussin.

23.1 The *dalang* metaphor reappears.

24.1 The quote is from the 23rd Psalm of the Bible, a common verse said at funerals or at the time of death. Another 23 appearance.

In the letters column for this issue, Grant writes: *The theoretical scaffolding for the entire INVISIBLES series is revealed herein, but I'm still not sure whether people will actually want to persevere with page after page of rambling historical bullshit. And indeed they didn't – according to the letters column for 2.7, sales fell from 64,000 to 20,000 copies over the space of the next few issues and didn't begin to recover until early in the second volume.*

"Somehow

it's always

a surprise

when it

actually

works,

isn't it?"

FEB 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*Jill Thompson *Pencils*Dennis Cramer *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

ARCADIA

MYSTERIES OF THE GUILLOTINE

The Invisibles arrive in revolutionary France and track down Etienne, a 17th century Invisible aiding their time travel through magick. He tells them about insect-like men feasting on the corpses from the guillotine as they ride through Paris to retrieve the Marquis de Sade, the Invisible they must relocate to the 20th century.

The Invisibles rescue the Marquis from Myrmidon agents and attempt to mentally return to the windmill, but King Mob, Boy and the Marquis find themselves in an idyllic glade instead. The other Invisibles begin to awaken from their time travel trance, but Orlando has already located the windmill and prepares to dissect his weakened victims with pruning shears.

Meanwhile, 25 years later, a stranger joins Mary Shelley on a coach to Venice. He offers her an apple and warns that while the world needs dreamers, they must not forget the unintended consequences their revolutionary actions bring.

JILL THOMPSON ON DRAWING *THE INVISIBLES*

Both of your arcs were marked by lengthy historical sequences. What sort of research did you do in terms of settings and characters? How important is it to get the detail right as opposed to storytelling needs?

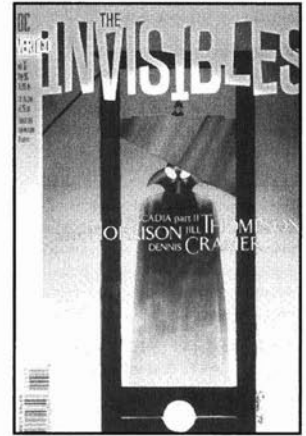
If I'm working with the writer, I like to fulfill their expectations, especially if they give a sight reference. Grant was not great for sending you references, but he was definitely great for telling you what he was thinking of, or where his ideas were coming from, or if you wanted to find something, this is a good book to look at. I found it important to go and at least try to get what he may have mentioned, and then if it was impossible for me to find these things then to try and find something that was similar enough.

For the Marquis storyline I went out and tried to see if there were any depictions of the Marquis at all. I found that he was generally described as a little, pale sickly man, because he'd been in prison, and that was not what Grant wanted. But then I was like, *God, do I have to go out and buy this and read it before I start this arc?* So what I ended up doing was skimming a lot of stuff, and Grant of course had put a reference in the script itself, so I felt like all that could be easily drawn, because what you do is leave a lot of it to the reader's imagination. You make sure that things aren't shown on-panel – things are shown in shadow. I can't draw anything as graphic as people's imaginations. I went out and picked up as much historical references as I could on him.

For Shelley and Byron, I went and got some books of their works and poetry. One had an actual example of – was it Shelley's or Byron's – handwriting. The splash page that had the poem on it, I actually tried my best to copy the style of writing of the author. Then the letterer just did it on a stat and pasted it over my page! But they also had some pencil drawings and portraits that were done at the time of both men, so I tried to use that as a reference for my cartoon caricatures of them.

ON THE COVER

A literal image of the concept that the Conspiracy is behind the Terror.



1 *Les tricoteuses*, or "the knitters," refer to the legendary throngs of Jacobin women who tended to their knitting while enjoying the spectacle of execution.

3.3 Note that Dane seems aware of *les tricoteuses*' significance.

3.4 Marquis Donatien Alphonse Francois de Sade (1740-1814) was imprisoned for his outrageous sexual behavior and novels such as 1797's *Justine*.

S&M, short for Sado-Masochism, named for the Marquis de Sade and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, respectively. The practice involves simultaneous practice of Sadism (sexual pleasure derived from inflicting pain on others) and Masochism (sexual pleasure derived from receiving pain).

5.2 Count Cagliostro (b. Giuseppe Balsamo, 1743-1796) was a magician and alchemist prior to the French revolution. His wife betrayed him to the Inquisition, who sentenced him to death. He ended up remaining in prison, where he died.

All time as one is a recurring theme.

5.4 King Louis XVI (1754-1793) was the final absolute monarch of France, executed during the French Revolution for treason.

6.2 First appearance of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797-1851), best known for her 1818 novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*.

6.4 First appearance of Satan, here apparently modeled after the English actor Peter Wyngarde. Wyngarde's television character Jason King served as the inspiration for Mister Six. Note that Satan is handing Shelley an apple; he's done this before.

6.5 Anonymous members of the Pythagorean Brotherhood, a precursor to the Freemasons and Rosicrucians, offered one another apples as a show of identity.

7.1 St. Germain (b. Claude Louis, 1758-?), a legendary French alchemist and occultist, is said to have discovered the elixir that grants eternal life. If you meet up with him, please let us know. We'd love to interview him for the second edition.

The Jacobins were a French political club started in 1789. Decidedly anti-church, they were responsible for thousands of guillotine executions and were most often associated with the Terror.

9.2 *Pop goes the Weasel* is a children's song about a monkey who kills a weasel. The song will take on a different significance in the series' final issue

as a metaphor for human existence.

10.4 King Mob is also describing the angels/aliens.

11.2 The Innocents, or *Les Innocents*, is a Paris cemetery, as well as the term given to the victims of the guillotine.

11.4 The CIPHERMEN seem to be partly inspired by the Cybermen, from the UK television series *Doctor Who* (1963-1989, 1996) The Cybermen are an emotionless race who gradually replaced their organic parts with mechanics until they lost their humanity. A cipher is an object of no inherent value or meaning.

11.5 *Ghostbusters* is a 1984 Ivan Reitman film about four men who investigate the paranormal.

12.3 First appearance of the Marquis de Sade.

14.1 *Frankenstein* is Mary Shelley's novel about a doctor who creates a living sentient being from human remains and subsequently abandons his creation. It is both a feminist tract and a retelling of the Prometheus myth.

In Greek myth, Prometheus stole fire from Olympus and gave it to man in a symbolic allocation of knowledge and responsibility.

14.3 Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) was the mother of Mary Shelley and a feminist pioneer. She authored *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, in which she railed against prevailing gender roles and the male hegemony.

14.4 US diplomat Gilbert Inlay (1754-1828) was Mary Wollstonecraft's lover and the father of her first child.

15.3 The Rosicrucians were a society of occultists interested in the Quaballah, alchemy and other esoteric pursuits. The origin of the group is unclear, although some speculate it may have begun as early as 1407.

15.6 Note that Satan doesn't leave his name. In magick, to name something is to have power over it.

17.2 UK to US: bollocks = balls.

17.4 Jimmy Cricket served as a conscience and totem protector in the Disney film *Pinnocchio*.

20.4 This is Marie Antoinette (1755-1793), wife of King Louis XVI.

21.6 In eastern thought, the Mandala symbolizes connectedness and wholeness. Perhaps the concept could be used to access points in time.

24.6 Dane's severed pinky is a manifestation of Joseph Campbell's "wounded hand," an element of primal mythology most notably featured in Luke Skywalker's fate in the 1980 film *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Incidentally, Grant Morrison would surely be aware that William S Burroughs cut off part of his pinky as a young man.

If it's worth it, I try to do a lot of research. I have to get it all done and out of the way before I start into something, because I hate getting half of an issue or three-quarters of an issue and then really start plugging along and get into a nice rhythm for it, and then find out that on panel three, page 18, I really need an extensive picture of an outdoor market in Thailand. Oh, man! Then you have to go out and look for something...

How much time did you have to pencil an issue?

About four weeks. That's probably being generous. Sometimes three.

You designed several characters...

Orlando's one that I was really pissed off about how he came off. That's the one thing I was really pissed off about with what Dennis [Cramer] did to my pencils. At one point I had taken a Negro pencil – that's what it's called – and because it was a rough paper I had used, I wanted this crazy pencil section. The way Grant described was until he takes somebody's face off, he just has this blur for a face. It's really hard to draw a blur with ink. If I had wanted Dennis to ink that section, I would have suggested he use a dry brush. But what happened was he saw my charcoal-looking pencil on these pages, and actually inked it. I didn't get to see it until it came out, and I went insane. But that's what happens when you collaborate.

Of course, I did not actually write on the side: *Dennis, don't ink this*, because I thought it was so apparent that you shouldn't. What I have learned throughout working with myself and other people is never take for granted that somebody knows what you're thinking. You always write a note down. If you want a color note, write it right on the page, because if you write color notes on another piece of paper they may never get to the colorist. Make sure it's on the page so the colorist can see it on the copy.

What about the Myrmidons?

He had explained them pretty well in his script. He may have sketched the Myrmidons out. I remember one thing where it was in the script, and he'd obviously printed it out and then drawn something, and faxed the whole thing through to DC, so when I got it there was like a little drawing. But I can't remember if it was the Myrmidons. But most of that stuff was just like the main characters.

That's when he did the character description and then a sketch next to it for them.

PN: *This storyline is where THE INVISIBLES finally comes into its own, although in fits and stops. The opening conceit of Les Tricoteuses feels more suited to SANDMAN, and it's no accident the technique is soon dropped from the series.*

Of particular note are the first appearance of the always-unnamed Satan and the horrifying vivisection sequence, which somehow builds to a greater terror when the victim is revealed as a rat.

While perhaps uncommercial, Jill Thompson's art here is wonderfully evocative, never forgetting that the reader's imagination is more potent and terrifying than any overly detailed scene. Her work is a large part of this storyline's critical success, and it's difficult to imagine it succeeding with a more mainstream Image approach.

KCS *Joy of joys! There is a hell of a lot to like about this issue. Juxtaposing Orlando's gory antics against the violence of the French Revolution is utterly brilliant. The exchange between Mary Shelley and Satan is also a high point. The image of her chomping on his apple is oddly disquieting, and I am glad that Grant is developing the Shelley portion of the storyline slowly and fully. I was dreadfully afraid the poets were being thrown in to make the series appear "literary" and that after issue five we wouldn't hear from them again.*

In this issue, though, the Marquis de Sade steals the show, by fuck! His indignation at the treatment of hospital patients is endearing, and humorously ironic when in the next scene he is seduced by visions of a murdered and mutilated woman's innards. My motivation to read issue seven comes not from Dane's plight back at the windmill, but from wanting to find out what Grant has in mind for the Marquis.



"[Poets]
 remake
 the world
 with words
 and in the
 image of
 their dreams.
 The rest of
 us must
 then live
 in it."

MAR 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*Jill Thompson *Pencils*Dennis Cramer *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

ARCADIA 120 DAYS OF SOD ALL

King Mob, Boy and the Marquis de Sade discover that they have shifted through reality to materialize inside the subconscious, represented by the Poussin painting *Et In Arcadia Ego*. They soon arrive at Silling, the location of de Sade's *120 Days of Sodom*. While there, they can do nothing but observe the dehumanization of children at the hands of representatives of the social powers that conspire to render individuals into commodities for personal use – capitalism, government, religion and wealth. The abuse culminates in the total destruction of the world.

In the 20th century, Orlando cuts off the tip of Dane's left pinky and attacks Fanny when she gouges out his eye. With the rest of the team out of commission, Dane finds himself alone with a very angry Orlando.

Meanwhile, Robin finds herself in Rennes-le-Chateau, where she encounters a blind chess player who warns her from entering the church. Inside, Robin discovers the animated head of John the Baptist, but the Myrmidons have arrived there first...

GRANT MORRISON ON CENSORSHIP AND *THE INVISIBLES*

As early as *THE INVISIBLES*' seventh issue, things went awry both inside and outside the series. Sales were plummeting with each issue of *Arcadia*, even as Vertigo censors began altering interior pages.

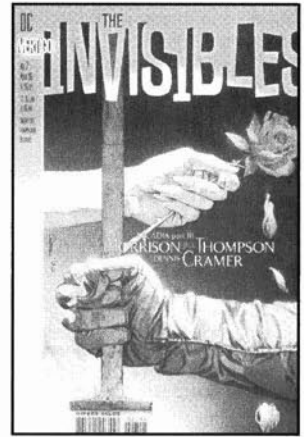
They kept drawing little vests and pants and things. Jill had already made the effort to think where to put what's seen. Obviously she knew what her parameters were and she was trying her best to either keep things either in shadow or ambiguous enough so that it had the effect without being gross. But even that wasn't enough for the censor's pen.

The censor's pen wormed its way to the story itself, which is remarkable for a creator-owned series in a line for mature readers.

Oh, yeah. I had back and forward calls with [Vertigo executive editor] Karen [Berger] about it, and Karen just would not have it. My point of view was that what I was trying to show was that de Sade's vision of these four evil bureaucrats – which is basically what they are – in a castle where no one can tell them what to do is a metaphor for the world if you look at it through the paranoid's eyes. They see the world as a prison from which nobody can escape and the bad guys are in charge and they can do anything they want to. I said to Karen, "You've got to face the fact that your child," because she'd just had a little baby, "your kid is owned by the US Government. If they want that kid to go to war, they will take him off you and send him to war. And that's what I talk about in this story." de Sade was a utopian. Sure, he was a pornographer. He was a pornographer because he was stuck in a cell for however many years with nothing but a pole for company, as he says. But he was a utopian, he was savage, he was set to destroy the world so he could make a better one, so he could live his lovely libertine

ON THE COVER

Warring ideologies represented by the feminine rose and the masculine brand. The brand of course is a visual pun on the latest incarnation of masculine imperialism, while it's no mistake that love is represented by a rose, which can hurt even the holder.



1 This page depicts the timeless symbols of power and oppression – money, religion and government. The image of the clothing on mannequins not only underlines that these characters are archetypes, but also reinforces the theme of the enemy as soulless automata.

1.1 The Castle of Silling is the setting for *120 Days of Sodom*.

2.2 Note the links between Robin's makeup and that of the fictional characters here.

3 The title is derived from the Marquis de Sade novel *120 Days of Sodom*, which this issue explores. "Sod all" is a UK expression meaning "fuck all," or "nothing."

4.3 "Ontic" means "of real being." The ontic sphere is so named because it manifests according to the unconscious mind. Because the imprint comes from within the traveler, information is not subject to perception, which mutes and dulls reality. Therefore the ontic sphere can be said to have "real being" or existence, as opposed to consensus reality, which probably does have "real being," but humans have no way to know it. Here it probably refers to the Universe A and Universe B intersections.

4.4 Gnosticism is the idea that matter, the physical world, is the root of turmoil and that salvation, enlightenment etc. come from the pursuit of esoteric spiritual knowledge.

6.3 Many cannibal tribes believe that to eat something is to gain its knowledge and powers.

9.2 This is the Ponte dei Sospiri bridge in Venice.

Richard Belgrave Hoppner was the Consul General in Venice and a good friend of Lord Byron.

9.4 *Laon and Cynthia*, originally published in 1817, tells the tale of a young hero who dreams of liberty and freedom for himself and for all of humankind. Shelley's publisher deemed it too radical and demanded he change the text. He consented, and the revised version was published the following year with the title *The Revolt of Islam*.

9.5 Mary and the Hoppners here look similar to the Harlequinade.

10.1 Madame Guerin is a character from *120 Days of Sodom*.

10.4 Duclos is a character from *120 Days of Sodom*.

10.5 Henriette is a character from *120 Days of Sodom*.

11.3 Note the bar code; the “powerful” consider other people commodities.

12.1 The Enlightenment was a philosophical movement in the 18th century that rejected traditional spiritual, social, and political values in favor of rationalism.

12.3 “Door made of words” touches on the fiction as reality theme, suggesting that we make our own reality.

13.3 Saturn is the Roman equivalent of the Greek Titan Kronos, who ate his children as they were being born. He is also known as the god of time, or Father Time.

14.4 Robin has an American accent because she’s from San Francisco, as revealed in 2.7. Note that Satan is not surprised by her bizarre appearance.

14.5 Berenger Sauniere (1852-1917) was the priest who renovated the chapel at Rennes le Chateau. During the renovations he supposedly found buried treasure as well as some scrolls. When he went to Paris to have the scrolls translated, he returned, rather inexplicably, a wealthy man. Much has been made of the possibility of treasure at Rennes le Chateau. Some believe the head is there, a remnant from the Templars. Others believe the grounds are littered with the spoils of the Visigoths, including artifacts from Rome and Jerusalem. King Mob’s postcard depicts a headstone located in the cemetery at Rennes le Chateau.

15.1 The Templars were an order of Monastic Knights who gained much power and recognition after the first crusade. Their mission was to escort Christian pilgrims safely to the holy land. But eventually, they became too powerful for their own good. In 1307, Amid rumors of idolatry (it was said they worshiped a head of some kind) and heresy, King Phillip had them arrested and their assets seized. It was the beginning of the end for the Templars, who were all but wiped out by 1314.

15.3 Asmodeus is a demon of greed and anger, mentioned in the book of Tobias.

16.3 The act of ownership and violation perpetrated by the four men in this issue is symbolic of how authority destroys the individual, a theme to be revisited with more force in the second volume.

16.6 The general is a new character, added by Grant Morrison to de Sade’s story. His inclusion suggests that the commoditization of humanity will ultimately result in total destruction.

17.5 “Christ is within you, child.” A visual representation of the mental rape perpetrated by organized religion to manipulate its subjects while ostensibly providing a benefit.

18.3 Again a character seems to address the reader directly. Here, the judge is admonishing our inaction in the face of oppression. Exhortations to the reader will appear again, notably in 3.2. The INVISIBLES is a spell to create Invisibles.

19.1 The snowflakes suggest the metaphorical blank slate. Each is unique, but they combine into the blank white of the supercontext as shown in 3.1.

19.2 King Mob is suggesting that those in power believe power is all there is, but in reality it is just as empty and fruitless as slavery. Power is slavery in itself because it blinds those who possess it to their true nature. The opposing forces are two sides of the same coin.

19.4 Boy’s remark here echoes the Archons’ rhetoric, who want the subjugated to thank them. Likewise,

life. I was trying to make them see that it’s worth being a bit savage. Jonathan Swift would do it; Mark Twain would even be more savage. I was trying to say it was in this tradition. I was using a previous text, and trying to incorporate it to have a new meaning and defend the context of what THE INVISIBLES was about. But these things just didn’t wash. The very idea that I was suggesting that Karen’s child could be taken into the US Army I think really upset her. But there’s truth in it, we are owned in certain ways, and we have to find ways to make sort of Temporary Autonomous Zones, as Hakim Bay called it.

What was taken out?

References to the fact that it was kids in the story, because I’d used de Sade’s original text, and it was children. Everybody gets fucked in those stories. But there was a lot of objection to using children, so they’d write something like “lost souls” or something. I think it’s actually worse to do it to lost souls! My point was that it is children, it is developing minds that are in danger. I was trying to drag all these things out and show that to reach utopia people will go through hell and that you have to be prepared for some hell, and not be caught up in it. And it’s to see from the Invisibles’ perspective that the castle wasn’t a locked place; it was actually only locked because they’d locked themselves in it. I think a lot of that wasn’t allowed to come across in that story, because it couldn’t be as savage as it should have been. But even so, after all that, it kind of carried the message, you know?

I don’t think it was that that harmed the sales of THE INVISIBLES, but the fact that it was quite intense. The subject matter was too abstract. It wasn’t really abstract at all; it was intellectualized maybe beyond what the comic reader had been expected to deal with up until that point. I was thinking, *People can handle this, they’re reading Neil Gaiman’s SANDMAN, and it’s pretty intellectual.* But I think I’d gone that little bit further, because that wouldn’t have been a story. The Invisibles were in there demonstrating philosophy. I basically had the story set up to provide action through the philosophical junk.

JILL THOMPSON ON ILLUSTRATING ARCADIA

Your first arc, *Arcadia*, had a high level of violence, sex and gore...

Oh, there were horrible, horrible, horrible things in it. When I was reading it, I was like, *Oh, man! How am I*

going to show this? And then I realized, it won't be shown. When so-and-so violates someone, I'm not going to show it. But I'm going to show a grimace and an angle that you can tell that something really wrong is going on on the other side of that panel, but you can't see it. I'd rather do it through facial expression or shadow or something like that than anything that's really graphic. You don't need to see somebody – I personally don't need to see somebody getting violated that way.

Do you think the scenes would have been handled much differently if the arc had been drawn by a male artist?

Maybe. Maybe they would have been graphic. If Tim Vigil did it you'd see everything. In that specific comic, it didn't matter who drew it – nobody was going to see anything. The funny thing on that issue is there's so much that I didn't illustrate on those two unfortunate characters that were being used as the example that were in the Marquis story. I never showed any genitalia, I never showed any buttocks or anything like that. This is how I qualified it: If someone was naked, they were nude. They weren't naked. So I didn't show anything raw, and there was a shadow or arms or something. But the powers that be were so freaked out about that story that they had production go in and draw shirts to cover the characters.

How extensive was the editorial interference over the *120 Days of Sod* All issue?

Well, for me, if they just trust that I'm not going to draw anything... Because I won't. I have plans on how to do this creatively that'll be disturbing but won't show anything. But they were too freaked out about it anyway. Nobody interfered with me, but they really fought with Grant. That was probably Grant's least favorite anything ever. I know he had big fights with them. I think they kept chopping and chopping and chopping at his script, moving passages. I was told, "Make sure you don't show this, make sure you don't show that." I'd already drawn most of it and was like, "Don't worry, I didn't."

The one thing that I wished that they'd have shown is there was this guy, when the Invisibles pop into the Marquis' area and come to the quote-unquote hospital, which was pretty much just like a place where sick people are dying with a lot of dead people around them, there's an old man who had passed away, and he had elephantitis of the testicles. That was the only thing I drew that was

Boy suggests that the Invisibles expect the same recognition for their services. Both sides think they are doing the right thing. [Is Boy's remark sarcastic, or is this line supposed to support the dalang metaphor by presenting the Archons and Invisibles as part of the same structure?]

20.2 *Mazeppa* is a 1819 narrative poem by Byron.

20.4 Poets, like magicians, remake the world with words. Chaos magick often involves the abstraction of a linguistic statement; words can be the chief means of practicing magick, or remaking the world.

23.2 Ocnomomus is a demon.

24 John the Baptist was the Jewish revolutionary who baptized Jesus and acknowledged him as the son of God. He was beheaded by Herod who fell prey to the machinations of his wife.

graphic, because I found it to be so unusual medically, and I wanted to draw something that was disturbing but not titillating. He got a big shirt covering his testicles. When I got it back I peeled the shirt off and I said, "Oh, that's gross." There were bugs and stuff crawling on him, and the man that was too ill to move this rigor mortis corpse with the big testicles that was kind of just clawed onto him and he was like, "Eh, help me!" No, you're in a hospital.

I took that issue with me when I was doing a convention in Montreal, and totally almost got stopped at the border for obscenity. I realized, *I do have obscenity on me! I've got artwork featuring the story of the Marquis de Sade!*

PN: *The first true masterpiece of THE INVISIBLES, 120 Days of Sod All is an astonishing work that would perhaps never have been published in a corporate-owned comic book. The fourth wall is broken several times as Grant intensifies his direct communication with the reader. The series is revealed to be something special even as less attentive readers were departing in droves. The censoring appears especially pointless when one considers the obscenity and relevance of the themes; it's unlikely that anyone able to comprehend and digest the story itself would be put off by the fact that human beings are occasionally nude. But the spirit of the story remains intact, and while "lost souls" may seem even more precious than "children," it's easy enough to see through the red pen in context.*

KCS: *Well, 120 Days of Sod All – the controversial issue. I fail to understand how one can agree that portraying the incessant rape and degradation of children is okay, but a penis or breast hanging in the breeze is too much. What were they thinking? "Okay folks, let's find a way to make all this rape and murder a bit more tasteful." Ha! Fortunately, the censorship didn't damage the storyline too much, and it turns out to be a great issue. The highlight for me is the fight between Fanny and Orlando. The art is absolutely fabulous, and Dane's trouble with King Mob's gun yanked a few guffaws out of me. The Silling sequence is a bit difficult to swallow, but it's an engaging illustration of how power can not only get out of hand, but be a trap in itself. Power is as much an enslaving force as weakness or apathy. The only thing that doesn't quite work for me is Robin's sequence. Why is she separated from the others? It's intriguing to see Satan again, his reappearance setting him up as someone to watch.*



"He was
talking about
revolutions.
Or *the*
revolution.
I suppose
there only
is ever one."

ARCADIA

H.E.A.D.

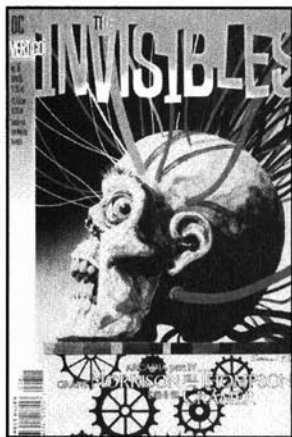
APR 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*Jill Thompson *Pencils*Dennis Cramer *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

The spirit forms of King Mob, Boy and the Marquis de Sade wile away the time until reincorporation with their physical bodies in a San Francisco S&M club, while Robin realizes that the head of John the Baptist tells everyone what they want to hear, and is therefore useless.

In the 17th century, Shelley, reunited with his family, is distraught after the death of his daughter. He struggles to put his conversations with Byron into words, but a friend points out that the present outweighs preoccupation with the future. Shelley realizes that utopia exists in the mind and can therefore be achieved at any time.

In the windmill, Fanny vanquishes Orlando to the Aztec hell Mictlan. The Invisibles emerge from their trances. Elsewhere, the spirit form of the Marquis recruits a young club-goer and a male prostitute to form his own cell of Invisibles.



1 Another direct address to the reader.

1.1 The bus theme here is expounded on in Mason's *Speed* monologue in issue 2.1.

1.3 Timothy Leary (1920-1996) was a Harvard psychologist who began studies on the therapeutic value of LSD. His studies were shut down when LSD became a controlled substance.

Ken Kesey (1935-2001) and the Merry Pranksters toured the US in a school bus. Their trip was partially documented by Tom Wolfe (b.1931) in *The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test*.

LSD is a potent hallucinogen that was discovered in 1939. The effects last for 8-12 hours and include visual and auditory hallucinations.

3.1 "O brave new world that has such people in it" is from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* V.i.

3.3 This conversation is similar to one Timothy Leary had with murderer Charles Manson (b.1934), detailed in Leary's *NeuroPolitics*. Manson argued that Leary had a responsibility to lead people down the path of expanded consciousness he had introduced via LSD. Leary argued that freedom meant allowing people to choose whether to expand on his lessons.

4.6 The head initially quotes the Dead or Alive song *You Spin Me Round*.

Eschaton is a term for the end of the world.

Some records spin at 33 1/3 revolutions per minute.

5.1 Other records use 45 or 78 RPM.

5.2 "Time getting faster" is a recurring theme.

6.1 *The Subterraneans* is a Jack Kerouac (1922-1969) novel about an interracial relationship.

6.2 *Beat Girl* is a 1962 Edmond T Gréville (1906-1966) film about a rebellious girl who becomes a stripper. It was scored by John Barry (b.1933), most famous for his work on the James Bond films.

UK actress Gillian Hills (b.1946) starred in *Beat Girl*.

6.4 Auschwitz is the Nazi death camp, located in Poland, where millions of Jews were slaughtered.

6.6 The silver balloon suggests the moon.

8.3 If the Invisibles have fought Orlando before, why doesn't he realize Fanny is a transvestite?

8.4 Transformation is a real store in London.

9.1 Smart drinks consist of amino acids and other nutrients that help boost neurotransmitter levels.

JILL THOMPSON ON FAN REACTION TO HER WORK

There were probably people out there who hated it more than anything, but none of them told me about it. I got great feedback, because the people who talked to me knew where Grant was coming from. They were kind of on the same wavelength as what his references were. I would actually agree with people at DC that it wasn't as easily accessible as another series might be. It was really intellectual and it may have been hard for people to grasp onto right away. And starting off with Steve Yeowell and then my art – I would have to say it wasn't the most vibrant. That's probably a bad use of terms, because I consider both Steve and myself good artists. But if you're launching a series in the time Image was coming out, it may not have been the best time to come out with that art to launch a series.

Everybody says that Robin is Jill Thompson.

Well, Grant drew a long-faced, prominently nosed, red-haired, curly haired woman. That was the sketch that he had drawn before I came into the picture as an artist. So I just took what he did and drew it, and of course it looks like me because I look like that. But it could look like Kathy Griffin or something, too.

Did you reference yourself when drawing Robin, or did you approach her as an independent character?

Well, I would say the Scary Godmother looks more like me than Robin does, because I tried to intentionally not make Robin have the witch's nose. I wanted to give her the long face and things like that, but try and make her nose not look like mine. But I guess it's the whole pointy red-head that is the overall impression, and not just specific parts of her.

Robin started out looking like a unique character, but as the series progressed she became visually blander, more of a generic heroine look.

Maybe she didn't have enough sex appeal looking like me. You need a heroine who can wear one of those bustiers. I don't know if that's something Grant said, you know, like, "Make her look more tarty." I really enjoyed Phil Jimenez's version of her. I like Phil's art; I thought she looked good. Everyone puts their own touch on every character.

Grant's notorious for giving stage directions that stump artists.

Yeah, that happened. The only frustrating thing that Grant would do I found was he would mention, "When I was in

ON THE COVER

The mechanized head of John the Baptist, suggesting that even in death we are not safe from dehumanization and commoditization.

India..." He would mention something that he wanted drawn. And because he'd been there, he said he had photographs of it. And they would never, ever come. So you'd be waiting. You'd leave those pages off until the end, expecting that he's going to send it. There was also no way to get in touch with him. He was not a person you could phone up. I had been in a different situation when I was working with Neil Gaiman – I would talk to him every day. I'm not saying that I necessarily even need that kind of feedback, but going from one extreme to the other... When I had a question and tried to get in touch with Grant, there was no way to get in touch with him, so then I would get in touch with Stuart, and Stuart would say, "I don't know where he is, there's no way to get in touch with him, so just draw whatever you think is right."

PN: At this point *THE INVISIBLES* is charging at full steam, unleashing a new cell upon the world in the form of the Marquis and obliterating Orlando through magick. Major themes begin to emerge here, with the glossolalia, the game metaphor and the acceptance that paradise is a mental rather than physical state. It's telling that all of the most interesting sequences have nothing to do with villains or action set pieces. *THE INVISIBLES* is a series about ideas, as this issue demonstrates perhaps more than any other.

KCS: Whatever difficulties characterized the first three issues of *Arcadia* vanish in H.E.A.D. This issue is delightful on so many levels. First, let me praise Jill's dazzling pencils. From Robin's nonchalant expressions as CIPHERMEN penetrate her spirit-form to the explosive end of Orlando, she had me begging for more. Many thought the Shelley storyline extraneous, but Grant ends it beautifully with Shelley's revelation on the topic of paradise. He uses every avenue possible to bring his ideas across, making it impossible to miss them. At the same time he's proving to us that these ideas are everywhere, and have been for a very long time. The best issue of *Arcadia* is its last.

10.1 Fanny said this on 1.5.16.4.

11.4 Glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, is the pure and original language of the universe, through which the listener hears what he or she wants to hear.

12.1 "Other flowering isles must be in the sea of life and agony" is from the last stanza of Shelley's *Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills*.

12.5 A Pantisocracy, literally an "equal rule of all," is an Egalitarian form of organization.

Playwright Robert Southey (1774-1843) was poet laureate of England for 30 years.

UK poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) is best known for his poems *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*. His strange writings stem from an opium addiction.

13.1 Byron's eyes here are one sign that Shelley is hallucinating in this scene.

13.3 The lowercase font indicates whispering.

13.4-13.5 We've seen that paradise is a mental state; here we discover we have forgotten this state, but each possess the power to reclaim it.

14.1 Ometēotl is the Aztec god of all, having dual properties – time and space, order and chaos.

Tlaloc is the Aztec god of rain.

Tezcatlipoca is the Aztec god of the night sky.

Chiuhtlicue, the Aztec goddess of fresh water and streams, is Tlaloc's companion.

14.2 Xiuhtecuhtli is the Aztec god of fire.

Tlazolteotl is the Aztec goddess of sorcery and lust.

14.3 Mictlantecuhtli is the Aztec lord of the dead.

15.1 Mictlan is the Aztec land of the dead.

16.1 Terrible music is associated with opening doorways into other realities.

16.6 "Downloading into my brain" suggests Mason's homeopathic software.

Syrian Rue is a hallucinogenic plant.

17.2 First appearance of de Sade's driver.

A singularity is a collapsed star or black hole.

Terrence McKenna (1946-2000) was an expert on shamanism and psychedelic plants. Under the influence of DMT, he claimed to have met machine elves who knew the secret of reality.

The I-Ching is a Chinese predictive system.

18.4 The citizens of Babel built a massive tower that was destroyed by God in Christian myth. As punishment, God gave all the builders different languages, so they could no longer communicate.

19.2 Notice how the pawns have the king cornered – a chess representation of the invisible struggle.

19.4 The ongoing struggle as a game again.

20 The poem is Shelley's *Written among the Euganean Hills*, North Italy.

23.1 Note the graffiti; the city is speaking.

First appearance of Thierro.

23.2 "Boys becoming girls who do boys like they're girls" is a rough form of the Blur song *Boys and Girls*.

24.3 "I am to be fluid, mercurial" suggests the magic mirror. Is androgyny our original state?

"Maybe we
should all
light up
cigarettes
and try to
give the
soldiers
lung
cancer."

JUN 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Jill Thompson *Pencils*

Dennis Cramer *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors*

Clem Robins *Letters*

Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*

Stuart Moore *Editor*

Sean Phillips *Cover*

23: THINGS FALL APART

In 1992, King Mob and John-A-Dreams discover strange Lovecraftian plants in the basement of a Philadelphia church.

Back in 1995, the Invisibles find the windmill surrounded by Myrmidon troops. Trapped without weapons when the soldiers break in, King Mob leads a surprise attack by pretending to be Orlando. Dane flees in King Mob's car with the rest of the team in pursuit; unknown to Dane, an anti-theft device will blow it up unless the proper sequence is keyed in. A Myrmidon roadblock sends Dane crashing into a tree. Before he can get away, a soldier catches him and Dane is forced to shoot him in self-defense. Realizing what he has done, Dane suffers an emotional breakdown.

JILL THOMPSON ON FINISHED ARTWORK

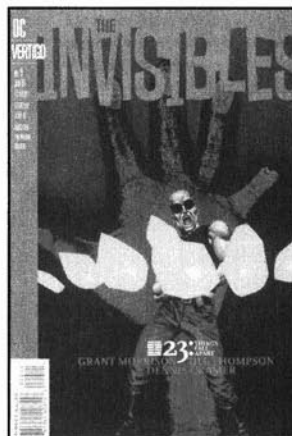
How do colors and inks affect the way your original intent came across?

Oh, it can totally screw it up. With the inker, you can expect one thing and get a completely different thing. Your art can start out angular and sharp, and turn into something that's been rounded out and flowing. I found that happened when Dennis Cramer inked my work. I really love his work on his comic *MARA*. He did such great figure work and all these textures and stuff. I assumed he was going to mesh really well with me. He didn't do a bad job; he did a fine job. But it wasn't what I expected. He rounded out a lot of the planes and angularness that I had added into my work at that time. It's fine, but at that point I realized that I probably should have been inking myself, and Dennis should ink himself. I don't know that he's necessarily an inker; more of a complete artist unto himself. There are people that do a great job inking anyone, and I find them to be the people who are inkers. They're trying to create their own style, and they're hooked up with someone who's style that they complement, like Paul Neary and Alan Davis. That's always a really hard job; to get someone to finish your work is an unenviable task. I would not want to be an editor who had to find an inker for somebody. Inkers can also bring out all these wonderful qualities and add texture and another depth to your work that you may not have been able to bring because that's not the way you think.

Colorists have a really hard job. They can flatten out the most interesting and many leveled perspectives in a panel. A colorist is not just a person who dabs color here or there or uses a computer to add all these cool shadows and effects. You have to know color theory. You have to know how to place warm and cool colors. You have to know what your important focus in that panel is. You have to take care – the artist writes color notes like moods

ON THE COVER

King Mob's violence extends to the reader over a backdrop of the mythic wounded hand. The I-Ching hexagram used on the cover for *Po/23* is incorrect – it should not have the line across the bottom.



Hexagram 23 in the I-Ching is *po*, the symbol of falling. It represents both natural decay and political overthrow, and essentially means that no move in any direction will be advantageous. The symbol shown in this issue for *po* is incorrect: the actual hexagram has no bottom line. And of course 23 is a magick number.

1.1 The narrator may be Dane, Robin or Reynard.

1.3 A totem animal is a protector and spirit guide that communicates through dreams or visions. The frog as totem symbolizes water energy, cleansing and rebirth in several North American mythologies.

The formula of the *voltigeurs*, a French order practicing around the 16th century, is said to have allowed them to mentally leap outside of time and observe reality from the outside.

2 The plant looks like one of the Old Ones described in *At the Mountains of Madness* by Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), an essayist, poet, and author of American short fiction in the Gothic mode. He created the Cthulhu mythos, which other authors have borrowed. He also wrote of the *Necronomicon*, a book many believe to be an actual ancient text.

The plant is a timesuit/fictionsuit, perceived through a Lovecraftian cultural lens.

3.1 Note that John and King Mob react to the structure differently. They may be seeing different things.

3.2 The fictionsuit is used to penetrate the barrier between reality and fiction. Note that King Mob and John-A-Dreams are talking about Tsathoggua, who is a fictional deity from the Cthulhu mythos, as opposed to one who is in an actual historical pantheon.

6.2 Note that there is discrimination within the enemy.

6.5 Karma, in Buddhist and Hindu traditions, is a force generated by a person's actions that will determine the nature and circumstances of their next life. Or, to be overly simplistic, what goes around comes around.

8.3 Fanny's not experiencing a moment of vanity. The importance of her lipstick is revealed on 1.15.22.4.

9.5 *The Producers* is a 1968 Mel Brooks film in which the main characters set out to produce the worst play ever written and get rich off of it.

21.4 "Life just gets cheaper and cheaper." Note that King Mob is conscious of the carnage he has created so far. The Invisibles' reaction to their methods is another ongoing theme of the series. The statement also touches on the enemy's common perception of people as commodities.

that have to be expressed throughout the story. An excellent colorist right now is Patricia Mulville. She colors 100 BULLETS. Man oh man, she's my favorite colorist right now.

PN: *On first read this issue seems like filler, perhaps because very little actually happens in its pages. But a closer read reveals that Grant is starting to give the characters shading, differentiating what, until now, had been a collection of interesting types rather than individuals. We get our first real inkling that King Mob is the svelte spy he later becomes thanks to the clever Orlando gambit and an outrageously unnecessary car (what with this and the tantra, one would suspect that he might be compensating for something). The team are funny and relaxed around each other, and one can sense that they must be friends above teammates. But the standout is Dane, still unsure nine issues in that he wants any part of this comic book world. The violence of the preceding issues (and comics in general) is criticized in Dane's stunned reaction to taking another life. It's too bad that just as the characters begin to shine, Grant pulls the rug and doesn't reunite them for a full year.*

KCS: *Well, if there was a call for more action in THE INVISIBLES, Grant certainly answered it. The first two pages are tantalizing indeed. I was so disappointed to turn the page and discover present action that I flipped through the entire comic to try and get back to Philly. Despite my disappointment, the rest of the issue is a big win for me. After all of the dense, thought-provoking material of the last four issues, I was delighted, and somewhat relieved, by the quick pace and tension of issue nine. It's a quickie, and not one I felt inclined to read twice, but it delivers enough thrills to satisfy. The escape is brilliant, as is the scene building up to it, where all seems hopeless. It's classic comic book conflict. "How will our heroes ever escape? Stay tuned to find out." Lovely!*

The big shebang is the last page, though. Dane's trauma over committing murder contrasts with King Mob's ability to mow 'em down without a thought. KM's flip remark about life getting cheaper and, as Boy puts it, "gallows humor" show his self-consciousness, but do not hint at any real motivation to avoid killing. It is business as usual for him. Dane's experience with killing another human being, on the other hand, is a tragedy, even though he killed in self-defense.

Oh, and Jill, wherever you are— that last panel is gorgeous.

"Straight

outta

Camptown!"

SEASON OF GHOULS

JUL 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*Chris Weston *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

When the NYPD prove unable to solve a series of grisly crimes, the grandmother of one of the victims performs a Voodoo ritual to summon the *loa* Papa Guedhe, who arrives in the guise of Invisible Jim Crow. While two detectives fail to make progress on a link between the crime spree and corporate giant Unitol, Jim Crow uses the liquid magic mirror to travel to the realm of Voodoo insect-loa Baron Zaraguin. Zaraguin allows him to recover the souls of addicts killed by a deadly new strain of crack put on the streets by Unitol. In exchange, Jim must bring Zaraguin the souls of Unitol's board of directors, who have been inhabiting the victims' animated corpses via a new technology in order to commit rape and murder without being caught. The detectives finally crack the case, only to discover the Unitol board in blackface, eating their chairman.



1.3 Note the words "dead" and "beetles."

2.2 *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1965) is a US television anthology series of odd, scary stories.

The Outer Limits (1963-1965) is a US television series in the same vein as *The Twilight Zone*. Incidentally, one episode was titled *The Invisibles*.

3.1 *Les morts* means "the dead."

Les mysteres refers to the Voodoo *loa*, or spirits.

Les Marassa are the Voodoo Divine Twins.

3.3 A *mambo* is a Voodoo priestess.

The "water-woman" is Erzulie, the *loa* of feminine sexuality.

Papa Guedhe is the Voodoo *loa* of death, but also a vulgar trickster and protector of children. The ace of spades in his hat is a symbol of death. Guedhe Nimbo and Gedeve are other names for Papa Guedhe.

3.4 Note the use of psychedelic guitarist Jimi Hendrix in a role similar to John Lennon in 1.1.

Baron Samedi is alternately another name for Papa Guedhe or someone in his family.

Simbi is a powerful water snake *loa*.

Note the *veve* on top of the television. A *veve* is a charm or other object believed to hold power.

3.5 Jim Crow is singing a Voodoo song about an actual event, in which priests possessed by Guedhe stormed the Haitian presidential palace.

4 First appearance of Jim Crow. In the US, Jim Crow refers to 19th century laws designed to create a racial caste system to oppress African Americans. The name stems from a minstrel show character first appearing in 1843.

Note the name on the gravestone: artist Chris Weston. Another example of the commingling between the comic and reality.

6.2 *Scooby Doo* is an animated series in which a cell of five young detectives solve ghost mysteries.

6.3 Voodoo is a religion that has its origins in Africa 6,000 years ago. There are over 60 million people in the world who adhere to the Voodoo faith. During Voodoo ritual, the priest or priestess, and initiates, dance until one of them becomes possessed by a *loa*. Often animal sacrifices are offered to the *loa*. The animal is then cooked and eaten; it is nourishment for the *loa* who will in

CHRIS WESTON ON JOINING *THE INVISIBLES*

Before you started with Volume 2 for *THE INVISIBLES*, you did a fill in issue for the first volume.

Yeah, Jim Crow.

How did you get that gig?

Through Stuart Moore. He was the editor at the time; I'd done a *SWAMP THING* for him and he really liked that, and also Grant himself wanted me to do one, and he thought that one would be right for me.

That issue didn't have any actual *Invisibles* in it – it was a Jim Crow solo story. Did it feel strange coming onto the book that way?

No – in a way I'm glad it happened that way, really. It was nice to do a script that could stand on it's own, you know, a complete story in itself.

Did you design the Jim Crow character?

Well, Grant designed him, really. He sent me this sketch of what he looked like, and I just embellished it a bit. I'd say it's 90% Grant.

VOODOO INFLUENCES

From www.grant-morrison.com

The Voodoo stuff I referenced for *THE INVISIBLES* was mostly based on my own research and increasingly severe personal experimentation, which was in its turn based on reading Maya Deren's *The Divine Horsemen* and other Voodoo source books I'd managed to dig up at the time. I cobbled together some rituals based on what I'd read and began an extended and danger-fraught contact with Papa Ghede and Erzulie. I read about the weird work of Chicago's Couleuvre Noir group in Kenneth Grant's books on magick (Grant's odd, cabalistic screeds are required reading for *INVISIBLES* fans who want to know what Sir Miles, Beryl and Tom O'Bedlam were up to in the '50s, by the way).

ON THE COVER

Seen from the bottom, it's a psychedelic rendering of Jim Crow releasing the magic mirror. Seen from the top, it's a ceremonial rooster gushing blood. One gets the impression Jimi Hendrix would have been proud.

PN: *Grant Morrison takes three issues to expand the world of THE INVISIBLES, and in each case it pays off beautifully. Jim Crow is a revelation as a Haitian rapper who is both an Invisible and a student of Voodoo. The possession plot is genuinely spooky, twisting the standard zombie tale into something original. It's to Grant's credit that a story with precisely the same theme as 120 Days of Sod All plays completely differently. Chris Weston is superb, both in the inspiring realization of Jim Crow and the fluid pencil work that yanks the reader firmly into the world of Baron Zaraguin. At the risk of fan heresy, this is the best issue of the series to this point.*

KCS: *Well, I was a blubbing mess when I found that Jill and her pencils had said adios to this, my favorite book. It wasn't pretty. But all my sadness and melancholy dissolved at the brilliant work of Chris Weston. Wow. First, Jim Crow looks fabulous. Chris puts so much detail into him and his clothes. He's sexy, spooky, intimidating and comforting all at once. And that's partly the script of course, but Chris – wow! Each panel is so richly rendered, from the dead eyes of the crack addicts and zombies to the lecherous grins of the corporate monsters. So thanks, Chris, for making Jill's departure bearable.*

As for the story, well, it's a stroke of genius, with the corporate men modeled after de Sade's libertines. Having read every INVISIBLES issue many times, this is the one I like to come back to the most. It's a tale of poetic justice taken to a new level. At the end of 120 Days of Sod All, the judge admonishes inaction. This issue depicts a woman who uses what little resources she has to effect change. This issue is about the power of individuals to create their own world, their own experience, whether it be through magick or some other method. It's about the power to be in the driver's seat instead of being the passenger. Fantastic!

return, provide good fortune or healing.

Creole refers to both a type of language as well as to various cultures around the world. A creole culture is one that was created when European colonists mixed with the indigenous populations of their colonies, as in Louisiana.

6.4 The Shrine is an offshoot of Freemasonry.

7.1 Malcolm X (1925-1956) was a civil rights activist known for the credo "By any means necessary."

7.2 It is common practice for magicians to keep journals of their magical activities.

7.3 Rada rhythms are drum beats associated with one of three orders of loa. Guedhe isn't a Rada loa, however.

7.4 This speech is a mix of West African languages.

7.5 The graveyard hour is midnight.

7.6 The Divine Horseman refers to Guedhe.

8.1 Season of Ghouls is another name for Halloween. The interface between our world and the spirit world is said to be thin at this time, hence the October meadows.

The blue puddle has obvious links to the magic mirror. Users of DMT often report encountering similar forms of intelligent liquid.

8.2 Jim Crow's ouija bird is a pun on ouija board, a device used for communicating with the dead. One is used on 3.9.16.2.

9.6 *I Walked With a Zombie* is a 1943 film by Jacques Tourneur (1904-1977).

10 Jim Crow appears to be able to use the Universe B shortcut as well as King Mob.

10.1 "Ville-aux-Champs" is probably a typo for Ville-aux-Camps, or Laviokan, the city of the dead.

The sigil on the interstate sign is the symbol of the amphibious Nommo from Sirius B.

11.1 *Le miroir fantastique* is the magic mirror.

11.3 Baron Zaraguin is a spider/scorpion loa.

Mystere araignee means "spider loa."

Mystere toile-d'araignee means "loa of the spider's web."

12.2 A stag party celebrates a bachelor's last night before a marriage, usually in raunchy style.

12.5 One popular conspiracy holds that the CIA introduced crack into urban America to undermine African American communities.

14.1 This is a raunchy Guedhe song about sex.

14.3 Zozo means "penis."

14.4 The "good" and "bad" UFOs suggest perception. These are probably interpretations of BARBELITH.

17.2 Note that King Mob also invokes Zaraguin.

22.4 Baron Piquant and Baron Cimitiere are two more names used by Guedhe.

22.5 Jim Crow is quoting the opening lines of the Michael Jackson (b.1958) song *Bad*.

24.1 Minstrel shows featured actors exaggerating racial stereotypes for the amusement of racist white audience.

"Straight outta Compton" is a pun on *Straight Outta Compton*, a song and album by controversial US rap group NWA.

"Questions

aren't

asked

here. It's

important

to know

one's

place."

AUG 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*

John Ridgway *Art*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors*

Clem Robins *Letters*

Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*

Stuart Moore *Editor*

Sean Phillips *Cover*

ROYAL MONSTERS

Jeremy Sutton is a most unusual butler, working for Sir Miles as caretaker of an other-dimensional beast known as the Moonchild, which the Conspiracy wish to crown the King of England. Normally distant and passive, Sutton is astonished to discover his missing daughter among a group of homeless abducted for use as prey in Sir Miles' human fox hunts. Sutton tries to rescue her but is caught by Sir Miles, who has discovered that the butler is in reality an Invisible working as a sleeper agent. He offers Sutton a choice: Kate's life for detailed information about the Invisibles. Sutton agrees to betray the Invisibles, but to his horror Sir Miles orders Kate killed. He already knows anything Sutton might, and merely wanted him to realize his own weakness. A broken man, Sutton numbly acquiesces as his only friend, another servant at the castle, prepares to feed him to the Moonchild.

GRANT MORRISON ON THE MISSING INVISIBLES

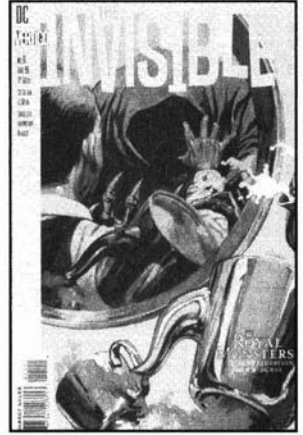
You followed up *Arcadia* with a series of one-off stories which worked quite well, yet you never returned to the format.

It was going to be much bigger. In my mind, it was going to be much bigger even though I hadn't done the calculations, because it still had to end, as far as I was concerned, on the start of 2000. When I'd started it, it was this vague thing stretching out forever, so I'd kind of factored in a lot more of that one-off thing, jumping around the world and looking at other people who might be Invisibles. But I was finding that was taking away the focus too much from the main characters. I think I was losing what makes comic books work; I was forgetting I was still doing comic books, and had to pull it back. I brought those five guys back into the spotlight and kept them there. I felt that people didn't know enough about them, and they were interested enough in them to want to know more. I kind of figured out how the book worked by issue thirteen.

PN: *Another excellent tale, this time centering on an Invisible in deep cover as the caretaker of Sir Miles' captive future king of England. The return of pink-haired punk Kate, last seen advising a homeless Dane to ignore Tom O'Bedlam, is nicely done, adding a chilling spark to Dane's early days (it wasn't just the Invisibles keeping tabs on him). John Ridgway's reserved art suits the story, creating atmosphere in a series that hasn't always had it. But the standout element of course is Sutton himself, a brilliant reversal of comic book convention who finds that his time serving Sir Miles has dehumanized him. In a commentary on the influence of social roles on personality development, Sutton has come to accept authority. He identifies with his monstrous charge more than his own daughter ("What have you done to your hair?" is perhaps the saddest line in the entire series), and his willingness to sell out the Invisibles comes across as a double defeat. Superb.*

ON THE COVER

The Moonchild attacking butler Sutton, seen in the reflection of a tumbling tea tray. In a story about mirrors, what else could you expect?



This is the first issue of *The Invisibles* without swearing.

1.1 The pentagram is a magical symbol.

1.4 Five distinct hand movements is a return of the number five. Hand movements are important throughout the series [activating the Hand, the hand itself, folding the origami time machine.]

1.5 Sutton is describing the basic concept of holography. Holograms are important to the series, representing a holistic model of existence that is adapted for *The Invisibles'* cosmology.

Of course there are five ripples; five is a magical number.

1.6 French filmmaker and artist Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) is best known for surrealist films such as 1945's *La Belle et la Bête*.

2 First appearance of the Moonchild.

3.2 *Alice in Wonderland* is a psychedelic children's novel by Lewis Carroll (b. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, 1832-1898), about a girl who finds a strange world within a rabbit hole.

3.4 Note that the beast looks similar to King Mob's mask, again reflecting the theme that both sides are merely part of the same whole.

4.2 First appearance of Tarquin.

Miles' wish comes true, an example of magic, the imposition of one's will on reality.

4.3 Miles continues to dehumanize his enemies.

6.1 Glamis is Macbeth's castle; this story takes place in Scotland. Glamis castle is said to be haunted in real life; visitors can see the Blue room in a tour.

6.2 Queen Elizabeth II (b.1926) is the queen of England.

6.4 Lord Halifax compiled the *Ghost Book*, a compendium of haunted locations in Britain.

7.1 Diana Spencer (1961-1997) married into the UK royal family to become the Princess of Wales.

7.2 Diana is the Roman goddess of the moon.

7.4 English naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) proposed the theory of evolution in his book *Origin of the Species*.

7.5 An etheric window is a place where the boundary between our world and the spirit world

is thin, such as a haunted house.

12.1 Des is reading *The Killing Moon* by Kirk Morrison, a King Mob cover identity under which he writes airport thrillers to finance the Invisibles. The novel is about a werewolf, again suggesting the binary duality between good and evil.

12.2 Another example of the fractal nature of *THE INVISIBLES*. The description of *The Killing Moon* is also an apt description of the series, which in itself is a description of our reality.

12.3 "See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" is a refrain of unknown origin, generally represented by three monkeys, each covering his eyes, ears or mouth.

13.1 The reappearance of Kate Sutton, the young punk trying to dissuade Dane from listening to Tom O'Bedlam in issue 1.2.

14.6 "The game's afoot" is the catch phrase of fictional detective Sherlock Holmes.

22.5 "Starring role" touches on the life as fiction/film theme.

KCS: *Royal Monsters is, on the whole, a great issue. John Ridgway's art fits the mood perfectly, and it's our opportunity to get to know aristocratic villain Sir Miles and his plans for the subjugation of Earth. The first few pages are filled with a foreboding for the pathetic Sutton. But slowly, Sir Miles becomes the pathetic figure as he projects his own wretchedness onto Sutton. What is Sir Miles but a servant in his own right – one of the Outer Church? For the soulless bastard he seems to be, he is all too aware of the hurt caused by callous parents and oppressive guilt. Sir Miles is the monster of the story, much more so than the Moonchild, and at the same time he is no different than Sutton. He's the villain and he's one of us. Is it sinking in yet?*

THE INVISIBLES' HIERARCHY

The hierarchy of the Invisibles movement is never properly explored in the series, although several clues are dropped throughout. The group seems to work in cells of five members, who rotate roles to avoid stagnation and the entrenchment of a particular authority figure.

Cells appear to remain fairly stable over time; King Mob's cell lasts from at least 1992 to 2012 in an evolving form, while the Golden Age cell seems to remain together from at least 1918 to at least 1924. The movement itself is shown to stretch back to at least revolutionary France.

Although loosely organized, some form of centralization is evident. Most Invisibles appear to be taught at the north African academy in large classes, while Robin is able to mobilize "every Invisible in North America" to search for Boy. We learn Dane has been watched by Invisibles agents "for a couple of years." King Mob's cell received instructions to retrieve the Marquis de Sade from revolutionary France, so the cells don't operate with complete autonomy. The ultimate revelation that the Harlequinade is the head of the Invisibles, yet also comprised of every human being, suggests that Invisibilism may be a subconscious reaction to social trauma, with "instructions" relayed via impulse or race memory.

"I don't
want to be
like this.
I'm not a
bad man."

BEST MAN FALL

SEP 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*Steve Parkhouse *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Annie Parkhouse *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

Toddler Bobby Murray names his teddy bear Boody after overhearing a disembodied voice. He grows up in the shadow of his abusive brother before leaving home to marry Audrey. When his wife gets pregnant, Bobby decides to join the armed forces and fight in the Falklands war. Discharged with injuries after being caught in an explosion, Bobby returns home to discover that his new daughter is stricken with cerebral palsy. Unable to cope, he settles into a dead-end job and an abusive relationship with his wife. When a friend offers well-paying security work at Harmony House, Bobby is keen to accept. But one night on the job, King Mob breaks into the school and shoots Bobby in the face, leaving him to die...



Best Man Fall is a game in which children pretend to be a soldier killed by various weapons. The player with the most theatrical death scene wins.

1.1 "Try to remember" is a recurring theme.

1.3 Reappearance of the life as a game theme.

4.2 Bobby's father is singing a jingle for the Standard Fireworks company.

7.4 Edith actually said to call on Buddha. Time is thin here.

8.1 *Ain't She Sweet* is a 1927 jazz song by Jack Yellen and Milton Ager.

8.3 First appearance of Audrey Murray.

11.4 The gas mask recalls the Myrmidons and King Mob's mask, suggesting the binary sides and the dehumanized nature of their warriors.

12.3 Live Aid was a 1985 benefit concert for victims of the Ethiopian famine.

12.5 Margaret Thatcher (b.1925) became the UK's first female prime minister in 1979.

The Tories are the UK conservative party.

12.6 Marlboro is a brand of cigarette.

13.4 Cerebral palsy is a disease affecting muscle control.

14.2 Argentina occupied the Falkland Islands in 1982 over a territorial dispute with the UK, which retaliated with a brief but bloody war.

15.1 He's referring to Harmony House.

16.1 Bobby's perspective of the events of 1.1 begin.

Baywatch (1989-2001) is a US television series about scantily clad lifeguards. The "woman" is probably Pamela Anderson (b.1967), known for her outrageous Barbie figure.

16, 17, 20, 23 These pages retell the events of 1.1 through Bobby's perspective, casting him as the innocent and King Mob as the faceless villain. A recurring theme of the series is that the difference between the two sides is often one of perspective.

19.1 The astronaut is Neil Armstrong (b.1930), who in 1969 became the first man on the moon.

20.1 Bobby is confronted with his childhood fear.

24 The return to the opening page recalls Elfyed's observation in the first panel of the entire series. A fractal issue.

ON THE COVER

Bobby Murray dressed for combat in the Falklands, superimposed on a target. The cover works on several levels, not least of which is the fact that as a soldier he is a target. That Bobby's killer, King Mob, would go on to wear mod target t-shirts throughout the second volume is eerie in hindsight. There's also a subtle commentary on the theme of authority using humans as commodities, as the target is actually the symbol of the Royal Air Force.

GRANT MORRISON ON *THE INVISIBLES* FIRST YEAR

The first twelve were me just testing and seeing what this was actually about. And if you see, even in *Arcadia*, they're all time traveling – they never do that again. By that time I thought the time travel aspect was too unrealistic for the way I was trying to mesh it with the real world. So my initial Burroughs-type idea – these time-traveling, transsexual assassins – had to be scaled back a little because I wanted it to be more real. So there's a lot you can see in the first twelve thrashing toward what it would be, and then in the next twelve it sort of consolidates itself, and by Volume 2 it's actually *THE INVISIBLES*.

PN: *Comic conventions obliterated. An otherwise anonymous soldier casually killed in the first issue is revealed to be a human being with a full life story, betraying the fetishistic approach to violence-without-consequence popularized in mainstream comics. Ironically, deeply flawed Bobby Murray engenders more sympathy in this one issue than any of the regulars have across the year to date. For the first time, the reader has serious doubts that the Invisibles are justified in their actions just because the series is named for them.*

KCS: *Best Man Fall is one of the finer installments of THE INVISIBLES, a tragic representation of how life can become nothing more than a cycle of brutality. It subverts our expectation that the "heroes" of THE INVISIBLES are "good," and the villains are "bad." By casting Bobby Murray as a real human being instead of just another "bad guy" we see complexity. We see how a person is never cut and dried – black and white. Fabulous work Grant. Fabulous.*

"When have
I ever been
myself,
darling?"

SHEMAN

VENUS AS A BOY

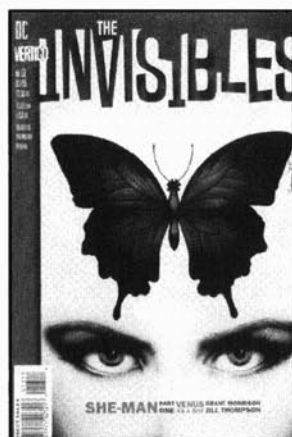
OCT 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*Jill Thompson *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

Hilde Morales, later to be known as the Invisible Lord Fanny, is born in the slums of Rio to the anger of her *bruja* grandmother, Dona Isola de Rios. After accepting that a granddaughter is not forthcoming, she decides to raise Hilde as a girl so that a line of sorceresses isn't broken. When Hilde turns eleven, her grandmother brings her to Teotihuacan to perform the ritual discovery of Hilde's *nagual* animal guide, which turns out to be a butterfly representing Tlazolteotl.

In 1995, Fanny takes King Mob to the Transformation store in readiness for a night out clubbing. But when King Mob leaves to ask Edith for advice about the missing Dane, Fanny finds herself ill at the club, vomiting magic mirror in the bathroom. The mirror alters her perception of time so that biographical events are experienced simultaneously.

Meanwhile, Sir Miles has set agent Lewis Brodie on the Invisibles' case. Torturing abducted transvestite Kirby leads Brodie to Fanny's favorite club, where he finds her in a bad way...



Note that "sheman" is only one letter different than "shaman," a sorcerer generally associated with transformation. *Venus as a Boy* is a song by Björk; Venus is the Roman goddess of love and sexuality.

1 Elayed will discuss a caterpillar on 1.17.9.3.

1.2 The Aztecs believed that our world is the fourth in a series.

1.3 Quetzalcoatl is the Aztec god of light.

2.2 Time getting faster is a recurring theme.

2.3 Apocalypse and armageddon are two more names for the end of the world.

This is the first time we see Fanny without a wig.

2.4 The "dirty job" is sleeping with the elderly Edith.

2.6 Fluid identity is a recurring theme.

3.2 UK to US: poofster = slang for homosexual.

4.3 Note that Fanny has telepathic powers.

5.1 Christians waged the Crusades to spread their beliefs and stamp out Islam.

5.3 Hilde becomes empowered through her transformation into Fanny. Here she's assuming the pose of the Cristo Redentor.

5.4 The Cristo Redentor, or "Christ the Redeemer," is a massive statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

7 Lewis Brodie looks like Lewis Collins (b.1946), who played William Bodie in the UK television series *The Professionals* (1977-1983), about agents who combat terrorists (an apt description of the Invisibles). Bodie's boss was called George Cowley, an inspiration for Patrick Crowley in Division X.

7.3 This scene is told from Dane's POV in 1.16.

7.4 A dreamcatcher is a small net used by Native Americans to filter bad dreams.

Oneric energy is sleep or dream energy.

Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is generally considered the founder of psychotherapy.

8.1 HP Lovecraft had a cat named Niggerman.

Note Santa Claus on the target – killing dreams.

8.2 Who reopens Division X? Crowley?

8.5 Some US soldiers collected ears from Viet Cong victims during the Vietnam war.

10 This storyline features art styles from different

GRANT MORRISON ON THE CONTROVERSY OVER FANNY'S SEXUALITY

Sheman has been criticized for implying that Fanny is gay because she was raised as a girl, not because of a biological imperative.

The thing is, that's open to interpretation. The way I saw it was that Fanny had been turned into something, basically, by other people. But it was obviously what she wanted to be; they turned her into the thing that she most wanted to be. Fanny was always going to be Lord Fanny in the Invisibles, it had to happen, and they just fulfilled their roles in the entire predetermined structure of what the universe is. Fanny's the strongest and most free character in the entire book, maybe because of that. Fanny was told what to do and then learned to transcend it, but the role is right.

It's a misunderstanding of how magick works and how time works, and the difference is something they wouldn't have known. Fanny had to become Fanny, that's the whole point for that story. You can't feel bad about it. Was she biologically gay? Yes, she liked to get fucked up the ass!

STUART MOORE ON THE SERIES' SHRINKING READERSHIP

Grant said readers departed in droves during the French revolution storyline. Was there reticence to bring the same team back for an equally challenging story just a few issues later and possibly lose the remaining readers?

I've never been sure if I agree with Grant's interpretation of this. *THE INVISIBLES* was always a pretty challenging book and one that read a lot better in big chunks than in monthly installments. I always thought it was a specialized taste, and you can't really judge its actual readership by the first four issues, which were ordered before retailers had much feedback on its sell-through. But who really knows?

ON THE COVER

Lord Fanny's totem butterfly above a bleached image of her eyes. Or from a metaphorical perspective, Fanny is a butterfly in her mind.

Either way, we never discussed this as a problem regarding *Sheman*. In a lot of ways, it's *not* as challenging a story as the Marquis de Sade one, which features some plot elements, like the entire subplot involving Robin, that didn't pay off (or even make much sense!) for years. *Sheman* was shorter, a lot more linear, and very focused on the one character.

JILL THOMPSON ON BECOMING ROB LIEFELD

That was one of the hardest things I'd ever had to draw. You had to do everything wrong on purpose, do perspective wrong and anatomy really wrong. It was tough, because you've been training your whole life to try and do the right things and here you have to make yourself do things that aren't right.

PN: *An interesting attempt to breathe badly needed life into some of the core characters. The different comic forms used throughout are fun for the trainspotting comic reader, but ultimately a failed experiment as Jill's pencils link the segments too tightly (indeed one feels that these issues are where the art jam of the third volume should have been). But the intention comes across well enough as a play on perception. The suggestion that Fanny is gay because she was raised as a woman borders on the offensive and has little basis in reality, where most transvestites are heterosexual. If it was always this easy to track down Fanny (and by extension the other Invisibles), why hasn't it been done before? Despite these problems, Venus as a Boy works, becoming the most personal and compelling examination of these characters to this point. And Sir Miles and Brodie destroying dreams in the firing range is worth the cover price alone!*

KCS: *Yay! Welcome back, Jill! Venus as a Boy certainly does Fanny justice. She has always been my favorite character, and after the last few issues, I was happy to get back into the thick of things. The issue is filled with suspense—Sir Miles is on the hunt and the Invisibles are in disarray. With Jack gone, Fanny depressed and booking up with the wrong guy, and Edith's grim assessment of the situation, I felt that I was in for a wild ride indeed. I think I will gush about the art here, giving Grant credit for a masterful script and Jill credit for beautiful execution. The sequences in Mexico are stunning. Jill handled all of the art styles Grant requested of her unobtrusively yet effectively. A fabulous return to the team with the promise of much to be revealed.*

comics, reinforcing the ongoing theme that reality is more a question of perception. This page pastiches the action style of Rob Liefeld. Edith's dismissal on 11.1 holds a dual meaning.

11 This page pastiches the *WATCHMEN* miniseries by Alan Moore (b.1953) and Dave Gibbons.

11.3 "Smoke him out," says Edith, holding a pipe.

11.6 Skunk is slang for hash or marijuana.

11.7 The print on Edith's wall is from a real poster for *le Grand Bal de Nuit*, by Russian artist Nataliya Goncharova (1881-1962).

Edith's "gone walkies" puns both the painting of the woman walking her dog and Edith's own wheelchair.

11.8 Another pun, as Edith tells a knife-wielding King Mob that he's "lost that edge."

12 The South American scenes are drawn in the style of the Gilbert Hernandez comic *Love and Rockets*.

12.5 *Bruja* means "witch."

13.2 *Naualli* is the Aztec word for sorcerer.

14.1 Hilde's mother appears to die at the same sort of party where Hilde is raped.

14.2 Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés (1485-1547) "discovered" Mexico and destroyed the Aztecs.

14.5-14.6 These two panels seem to suggest that gender roles are a malleable social construct.

14.5 *Rapé dos Índios* is a hallucinogenic snuff.

Maconha brava is marijuana.

15.3 Teotihuacan is the Aztec "City of the Gods."

15.4 This panel is a pastiche of the *Ripley's Believe it or Not!* newspaper comic strip.

Noah saved two of every animal in the Christian flood myth of *Genesis*.

15.5 Quetzalcoatl as Morningstar suggests Satan.

16-17 These two pages are a pastiche of Frank Miller's black-and-white crime comic *Sin City*.

16.5 Naomi Campbell (b.1970) is a UK supermodel.

17.2 Heaven is a gay nightclub in London.

Vivienne Westwood (b.1941) is a fashion designer.

17.3 David Lynch's (b.1946) *The Elephant Man* is a 1980 film about a man with Proteus syndrome.

18.1 The hallucinogenic tea is probably *ayahuasca*.

18.4 BARBELITH is at all initiations in the series.

19.2 Hilde's grandmother's face paint is a mask.

19.5 A *nagual* is a totem protector.

20 This page is another *WATCHMEN* pastiche.

20.3 Another pun, as King Mob literally pursues a "higher purpose" with the marijuana smoke.

20.4 Another pun: "elements" with fire shown.

20.5 Note the pyramid on Edith's shelf.

20.6 Another pun: rising smoke and "raising morale."

20.8 Another pun: Edith cores an apple while claiming King Mob will be shaken "to the core."

20.9 Another pun: "dragon" as Edith breathes smoke.

22.4 Fanny's initiation is timeless.

23.4 The reflection of reveals that Brodie is death.

"There is
only ever one
day and it
is today,
the Day of
Nine Dogs,
day of
magicians,
day of
initiations."

NOV 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*Jill Thompson *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

SHEMAN
**DAY OF
NINE DOGS**

Eleven-year-old Hilde continues her initiation and discovers that she must snatch the heart from the snapping breast of Tezcatlipoca or be killed. To Tezcatlipoca's surprise, Hilde wins the dare and must be granted one wish. She chooses to travel to Mictlan, land of the dead, and learn magick. As she passes through the world on her journey, everything appears to be two-dimensional. She arrives, only to discover that Mictlantecuhli intends to kill her.

As Edith agrees to help King Mob find Dane in 1995, detective Jack Flint is informed that secret organization Division X has been re-opened. Later, King Mob picks up an unnamed hitchhiker and enjoys a cryptic discussion about conspiracy. Stopping at the club to pick up Fanny, he is furious to learn that someone has been hunting her.

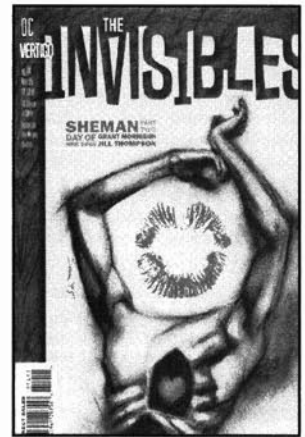
Elsewhere, Fanny decides to bring Brodie home from the club, still disoriented from the magic mirror incident. She experiences traumatic moments in her life simultaneously – in Mictlan aged eleven, a battered prostitute of eighteen in Rio and now, in 1995, decapitated. She snaps back to the present to discover that Brodie has trained a gun on her...

GRANT MORRISON ON PUSHING THE MEDIUM'S BOUNDARIES

After that came *Sheman*, which is almost you pushing your luck after the *Arcadia* disaster. Was there any editorial reticence to return to such challenging territory so soon?

No, by that time they may have given up. Nobody was that bothered; comics were still doing well enough that nobody really noticed. So Vertigo just said, "Fine, you've lost a lot of sales, but that's okay, it's you. You've done work for us before; it should be okay." But I was panicking. As far as I was concerned, by the time I got to *Sheman* I thought the age of experimentation was behind me. I was trying to do something a bit more understandable to people. The model for me on *Sheman* was I'd just seen *Natural Born Killers*, and I thought it was amazing, because it was the bricolage postmodern effect I'd been looking for. It didn't fragment things, but it took every possible style of film you could think of and managed to make them all work together, because that's the way perception seemed to work as far as I was concerned, and obviously as far as Oliver Stone was concerned at the time. It was media perception; it was cut ups. It was like a sex scene would be interpreted as a porno scene rather than just a sex scene, taking on a certain gloss depending on the subject matter.

We could use comic styles in the same way that he used cinematic styles. Whenever the Spanish scenes are in there it's done like the Hernandez Brothers' LOVE & ROCKETS style, or when King Mob is leaping through the skylight Jill draws him in a Rob Liefeld style. Then you have the gag strips, there's a RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT page in there, a bunch of other stuff. A Frank Miller SIN CITY black-and-white, violent scene. So that was just kind of to make it flashy. I wanted to get more MTV excitement in there. I started to play with time – that's when I realized I wanted to play more with how time works. You'd see one scene from Jack Frost's point of view, and then see the same scene two issues later from, say, Brodie's point of view. You recognize how they all fit together, but the whole



1.3 "All times are the same time" is a recurring theme.

4.4 Narc is slang for a narcotics officer, and also someone who sells people out to authority figures.

4.6 "Seen this before" suggests we originate from the magic mirror – the supercontext.

5.4 Dean Martin (1917-1995) and Jerry Lewis (b. 1926) played a double-act comprised of a smart, handsome man and an unattractive, goofy one in several films.

6 Controversial Spanish artist Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) pioneered cubism.

Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) was a French artist who pioneered "readymade" art, placing everyday objects in new contexts.

The Great Gatsby is a 1925 F Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) novel about a poor man who reinvents himself as a wealthy playboy.

Man Ray (b. Emmanuel Radnitzky, 1890-1982) pioneered surrealist photography.

9.3 First appearance of Jack Flint.

10.5 These strips are a pastiche of *Sugar & Spike*.

11.8 The death card in the tarot denotes sudden change.

12.1 The script calls for the dog to be yellow.

13.3 Xolotl the Great founded the Texcoco Dynasty.

14.4 UK to US: biscuit = cookie.

15.2 Note that, like Mary Shelley's hitchhiker, this one doesn't give King Mob his name. Note, too, that he exchanges information – last time for an apple. He's radiating an aura suggesting time displacement, as with King Mob in 2.8.9.2.

16.3 James Bond is a fictional British spy.

16.4 The SAS is the UK special forces.

16.6 Quid is UK slang for pound sterling.

The dance floor looks like a record.

17.1 Another in-joke in the background: Thompson's Coffee, named for the artist.

17.3 Nahuatl is the Aztec language.

17.5 The extreme close-up on the taxi sign reads: AXI, further linking Fanny's deadly encounter with Brodie to her initiation with the "Axe of the

ON THE COVER

An impressionistic image of Tezcatlipoca, with a lipstick mark for a head.

Night." Recall that Tom O'Bedlam taught Dane that cities contain magical words such as *IXAT*.

18.1-18.3 These are moments in Fanny's life when she has been close to death, with the final panel a premonition of events in the next issue. That she sees these scenes during her initiation suggests the ongoing nature of initiation in the series.

18.4 Like Jim Crow, Fanny associates with the gods of death. Death in *THE INVISIBLES* is not something to be afraid of, but instead part of the cycle of rebirth.

22.1 The heart-shaped word balloon around Fanny's "ohh" is exactly the sort of dramatic irony only comic books allow, contrasting her innocent attraction to Brodie with the readers' awareness of his intent.

22.3 *The Crying Game* is a 1992 film about an Irish Republican Army operative who unwittingly falls in love with a transvestite.

22.5 The surprise in *The Crying Game* is that the woman is really a man. Here, the man already knows.

23.3 See pages 7.3, 8.6 and 22.4.

23.4 More on the nature of time: "I understand the secret of magick. There is only one day. There is only ever one day and it is today, the Day of Nine Dogs, day of magicians, day of initiations. I am here in Mictlan where I belong." Fanny learns the true nature of the universe; her perception has been altered, possibly through meditation or the tea her grandmother gave her. It's important that Fanny does not perceive time linearly here, but rather thematically. She sees the moments in her life when she is closest to Mictlan.

24 The ultimate visual representation of the gun as penis metaphor.

Note the Wonder Woman doll and the mug of the evil queen from *Snow White*.

comic's operating on all these different people moving around the city looking for the same person.

JILL THOMPSON ON DRAWING LORD FANNY

Your version of Fanny actually looks like a man with a wig on!

Well, it's a man with a wig on, right? I thought Phil did a great job of drawing a transvestite, too. I tried to make sure that Fanny looked like some of the transvestites I'd met. You'd look and go, "Damn, she looks good!" and then go, "Of course she looks good, she's a guy!" There was a quality of this weird perfectness to her, but then you realize that it's so... I don't know. I liked to make sure you could see that it still was a guy. You'd kind of be uncomfortable, like when Brodie was making out with her, I'd think, I feel bad for her, because she thinks that he's really into her, but he knows that she's a guy and he really wants to humiliate her.

PN: *Another intriguing issue, revealing the secret of magick and establishing yet another major theme in one statement. Hilde and her adventures are ironically far more interesting than Fanny, but the splicing of near-death moments of her life into a simultaneous event is brilliant. It's interesting that Grant answers many of the series' more metaphysical questions almost immediately, given that so many readers come out of their first reading of THE INVISIBLES demanding explanations. The developing relationship between King Mob and Edith is another highlight. And Brodie – homosexual bastard or opportunistic pig? Great stuff.*

KCS: *Again, one of the finer issues in the series. Jill is perfect for this story arc. Tezcatlipoca and Mictlantecubtli are frightening, as they should be. I love how Jill is able to create such revealing facial expressions on Mictlantecubtli's fleshless skull. Thematically, we get a good look at some of the larger issues the series is trying to tackle. We find two-dimensional people in Hilde's passage to Mictlan, just like the ones in Mason's abduction story. Time is described as a solid condensing in on itself, and King Mob's enigmatic passenger speaks of human evolution on a massive scale. It seems that every issue, every page reflects some part of the whole, and it is just now in the series that this becomes as plain as day. I love the little things about this issue. Page 17: a taxi sign – the city speaks. Page four: Brodie handles the magic mirror. He's seen it before. The little hints are everywhere.*

"Why is it
that I have
memories
of things
I've not
yet done?"

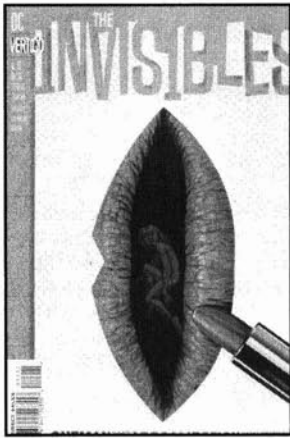
SHEMAN

APOCALIPSTICK

DEC 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*Jill Thompson *Pencils*Jill Thompson & Kim DeMulder *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

Mictlantecuhtli tells an eleven-year-old Hilde that she owes him for saving her friends when Orlando threatened them in the windmill in 1995. She offers a joke instead of her life and Mictlantecuhtli accepts. Deciding he likes her, Mictlantecuhtli tells Hilde that gods are nothing more than masks and allows her to continue her initiation. Hilde encounters the obsidian butterfly Izpapatl, but with Mictlantecuhtli's advice in mind sees through the creature to make contact with BARBELiTH. Afterward, her grandmother declares that Hilde is accepted as a witch and gives her a tube of lipstick.



1.4 "Six in a row, plus the bonus ball" is a reference to the hardest win in the UK lottery.

3.6 Tzitzimine are monsters that attack during eclipses, according to Aztec mythology.

5.4 The glowing sphere may be a captive soul, as shown in 1.1 and 1.25.

8.3 Carnival is a massive four-day party held during the summer in Rio de Janeiro.

9 This page is pastiche of the style of Frank Miller's Batman comic *THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS*.

9.1-9.4 The newscaster is reporting on damage caused during Dane's confrontation with Sir Miles in 1.16.

9.3 The Irish Republican Army is waging a guerrilla war with Great Britain for the reunification of Ireland with Northern Ireland. The Ulster peace process is designed to halt hostilities.

9.4 As part of the establishment, the police work for the enemy, covering up Orlando.

9.5 First appearance of Pennington.

10-11 Here Fanny's redemption is represented. Recall that the beetle Khephra is a symbol for plunging into the darkness to emerge with light. Here we see that metaphor applied directly to Fanny. Her experience and actions reflect a descent into the worst that humanity has to offer, yet she rises from the filth bathed in light. "I will rise from darkness, shining like the morning star. Illuminated woman am I." This theme will be explored with other characters, notably in the final volume. The "illuminated woman" statement touches on *Illuminatus!*, while "morning star" again suggests that Satan is on the Invisibles' side.

10.3 Cruzeiros are Brazilian currency.

12.1 Fanny has an Archie Comics poster on her wall. The Archie comics are notable for their wholesome storylines.

14.4 Cot death is the sudden death of a baby for no apparent reason, also known as SIDS, or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

15 "We gods are only masks." Here again is the motif of cultural perception. Religious and mythological models of perception order experiences we do not have the language to define. Who is Mictlantecuhli anyway? Is he any different than Papa Guedhe? Here, death feeds life in a cycle.

15.4 The menstruating tree is a shamanist symbol

GRANT MORRISON ON CHANGING THE FUTURE

Talk about the scene in *Sheman* where Fanny trades deaths with Brodie. In specific, there's a controversial panel where it appears her head has been shot off. It's a deliberately misleading panel, isn't it?

Yes. You've seen her earlier having this experience, where she's seen her own future and appears to be dead, with her head blown off. But the blood is King Mob's blood. That's what she doesn't understand. So I asked Jill to draw it in a way we could assume [she had] no head. She was just leaning back, and then she gets up again. But the blood is King Mob's. What we thought was her death is actually not her death at all.

JILL THOMPSON ON EMULATING DIFFERENT COMIC STYLES

How did you find the challenge of imitating the various comic styles in the *Sheman* arc?

I liked it. I enjoyed it. Neil Gaiman used to do stuff like that, too. He'd make reference to an artist that he wanted a panel done in the style of Arthur Rackham, specifically calling to mind a specific illustration, or the art from the Winnie-the-Pooh guy or *Sugar & Spike* or whatever. I thought that was pretty interesting.

He said he wanted the first thing, the "Ragged Robin and Boy," to look like an Archie Comics sort of thing, and then the rest of it is just where you find Ragged Robin and Boy, what they're doing. At the time, I wish I had discovered my Scary Godmother style, to be able to draw some of it like that. But I didn't even know I was ever going to do that at that point.

When I got the *Apocalipstick* trades I went through and read the Lord Fanny story again because I hadn't read it in ages. I thought it held up really well, and I really liked the art that I did. I liked my story. I had just forgotten so many little aspects of it. I was really proud of it.

Who were your favorite characters to draw?

I liked drawing everybody, really. I loved drawing Fanny. That one presented so many challenges: How to make this look like a sexy woman but make you know that it's a guy? So that one worked on a lot of different levels. She was fun.

ON THE COVER

Hilde seeks refuge in the womb, represented by an incredibly vaginal set of lips, as a phallic tube of lipstick inches toward penetration. It doesn't get any more Freudian than this, folks.

How do you feel Grant handled women?

I'm a comic fan, so I'm not a good person to ask. You have to give a comic to my mom or something and see if she goes, "I can't believe you portrayed women like that!" or, "Oh! What a fantastic portrayal of women!" Unless it's extremely, uncomfortably overt it probably doesn't stick out to me. I'm really bad with stuff like that. I think Grant writes terrific women – they're very strong. I felt bad with all the stuff that's going on with Boy. I felt bad when bad things would happen to the people, but they were the characters. They were Grant's babies, and I was along for the ride.

PN: *Another in a string of excellent issues. By this point THE INVISIBLES has moved out of growing pains and come into its own. The story of Fanny's lifelong initiation is fascinating (it's interesting that both Fanny and Jim Crow ally with death). The secret of magick – and indeed the universe – as revealed last issue is reiterated, and we get our second clue that contact with BARBELiTH is Reichian in nature. Special mention must be given to the criminally underrated Jill Thompson, whose command of facial expression and body movement here goes a long way to creating the empathy we feel for these characters. The art throughout Sheman is nothing but class, and it's a shame Jill won't return to the series for another five years.*

KCS: *What a climax. The King's up shit's creek now, isn't he? Remember the first page of the series? Elfayed talks about Khéphra, the Egyptian beetle who emerges from darkness bearing the sun. Sound familiar? We're talking initiations, baby. This issue is a mind-blower, and just the quality ending to Sheman that I'd hoped for. Rarely does one come across a comic series that can maintain continuity and interweave plot elements over four issues, let alone 59. Fantastic work, Grant.*

in many traditions. The World Tree holds up the sky and produces a river of life-giving milk.

16.1 Izpapatl is an obsidian-clawed butterfly in Aztec mythology.

16.3 Evidence that gods are how humans perceive BARBELiTH.

16.4 The shadows may be the Harlequinade.

16.5 Fanny changes the future here (see 19.3).

18.5 Brodie shoots Fanny's head off.

19.3 "This one in my place." In 16.4, Fanny changed the moment of her death (originally fated for 18.5) to save King Mob and kill Brodie.

20.1 Note that Brodie has been effectively castrated. This isn't a coincidence in a story about gender.

21.2 All time as one is a recurring theme.

22.4 Fanny receives her lipstick from her grandmother, a symbol for both her passage into womanhood and her initiation as a sorceress. It also functions as part of Hilde's Fanny mask.

"The soul
is not in
the body.
The body
is inside
the soul."

JAN 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Paul Johnson *Art*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Ellie deVille *Letters*

Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*

Stuart Moore *Editor*

Sean Phillips *Cover*

LONDON

Unable to cope with killing the Myrmidon while escaping the windmill, Dane has returned to homelessness on the streets of London. He hides even from Robin and Boy, who he sees looking for him. The sight of a pigeon reminds him of seeing the world through their eyes, which spurs memories of entering the Underground with Tom O'Bedlam for a drug-induced initiation. Dane is startled to find that he now remembers what happened in the tunnels – he was abducted by aliens, who inserted a device in his forehead that acts a conduit to the magic mirror. They told Dane that he is the chosen one who can bring about global harmony. When Dane rejected the concept of aliens, the scenario vanished and Dane discovered he was experiencing a second contact with BARBELiTH.

Dane is snapped out of his reminiscence by the arrival of Sir Miles and his fox hunters. Sir Miles tries to persuade Dane to join his side, but the boy uses his Jack Frost powers to escape. He retrieves the bag Tom told him was hidden in a bus station, cuts his hair and hitches a lift to Liverpool.

STUART MOORE ON THE THREAT OF CANCELLATION

The letter columns indicated that *THE INVISIBLES* was nearly cancelled (e.g. the infamous magick “wank” column). How precarious was *THE INVISIBLES*’ existence that first year?

It was kind of a case of looking at the trend of the sales and thinking, *If this goes on...* No one ever came down the hall and said, “We want to cancel this.” It was more a concern that we wanted to arrest the downward trend, and this was all happening just as the comics market was taking a nasty turn in that direction. So we were all a little worried.

JILL THOMPSON ON MAGICK

Is it true Grant healed your cat with magick?

Yeah! Well, we both healed it. He healed him once and now Fishbone has passed away. He got this goofy, huge, crazy tumor in his leg. Fishbone had a lot of problems. He had epilepsy. [We were] lying in bed one night and suddenly the cat starts flipping all over the place and losing control of all its bodily functions. You feel horrible for it, its little tongue sticking out. You just hold him until he’s done, and then you go clean him up and wash all the bedding. He was a beautiful, beautiful cat. He looked like a Maine coon cat. He had a big bottle-brush tail and a beautiful raccoon mask for his eyes. Very sexy and sensual. He showed up in *SCARY GODMOTHER* after he passed away.

It looked like somebody stuck a baseball to the side of his leg. Nobody knew what it was. I didn’t know what to do. Grant’s a cat person, and he’s, you know, magicky, so I called him up. He’d healed one of his cats before. I was crying and telling him what was going on. He told me what he was going to do, and he told me what to do, and



2.3 First seen on 1.13.7.3.

3.2 Note that Robin can’t sense Dane here. Is he masking himself?

3.5 There are several cybercafes on Tottenham Court Road.

4.4 First shown on 1.9.20.

5 A retelling of 1.3.8. The dialogue is new – Dane is remembering.

6.6 *The Invisible Man* is an 1897 novel by English author HG Wells (1866–1946), about a man who becomes invisible. It was subsequently the inspiration for several films and television series.

7.3 The Root Doctaz are Jim Crow’s rap act; their UK tour explains his presence in London.

Supergrass are a UK Britpop band.

7.4 Pulp is a UK pop group known for the 1996 hit *Disco 2000*, which is also the title of a short story anthology featuring an *INVISIBLES*-related tale by Grant Morrison. Many of their songs are about class warfare.

Underworld are a UK dance band.

“At This Stage I Couldn’t Say” is a poster for *The Smell of Reeves and Mortimer*, a 1993–1995 UK television series starring English comedians Vic Reeves (b.1959) and Bob Mortimer (b.1959).

8 First shown on 1.2.18.

9–12 These pages reveal what happened to Dane in the subway in 1.2.

10.2 “The interpenetration of /l/ /j/ into your three-dimensional continuum appear as a lens form capable of altering its shape” is a description of magic mirror BARBELITH often communicates in closest-word analogies or use untranslatable terms signified by the /l/ /j/ punctuation. Often the brackets enclose a series of words, suggesting that we have several interpretations of the actual concept being discussed, further reinforcing the perception theme that mythology and culture determine how we interpret sensory data.

10.5 The third eye and Ajna Chakra are two terms from eastern belief systems used to describe the same spiritual appendage.

The implant here causes the scar seen on 1.2.19.5. As the scar subsequently vanishes, we can assume that Dane has healing powers (a theory substantiated by the restoration of Sir Miles’ aura

ON THE COVER

A surprisingly standard image of Dane abducted by aliens with a bit of probing about to ensue. The color and placement of the alien and BARBELITH alert observant readers that they are connected before the cover is opened.

in 1.24], that the aliens/gods/force implanting the device use advanced surgery techniques, or that the encounter is mental rather than physical. In this latter scenario, it's possible that the scar is in fact a scar, and Dane perhaps bumped his head on the subway wall.

Many shamanistic initiations involve a deconstruction of the psyche, with an extra component added upon reconstruction.

11.4 Another description of the magic mirror: "A four-dimensional super-conducting crystal structure designed to bond with neural DNA."

12 This is very similar to Fanny's experience on 1.15.15.1. Note the magic mirror, BARBELiTH and the phrase "find it out."

12.1 Note the blood looks like a bar code; if we destroy the antibodies, we will become commodities.

12.3 "As a child we spoke to you through your toys," Quimper mentions he could do this, too, supporting the theory that John-A-Dreams uses the suit to rotate into our reality, and later into the supercontext, from which he returned to the fictional reality of *THE INVISIBLES* as Quimper.

12.4 Another reference to life as fiction (film).

13 "The soul is not in the body. The body is in the soul" is a near-quote of a statement in Aleister Crowley's *The Book of the Law*: "The *Khabs* is in the *Khu*, not the *Khu* in the *Khabs*." *Khu* means "spirit," while *Khabs* means "star."

The mobius strip here will reappear on King Mob's shirt in 3.1. A mobius strip is a ribbon looped so that it has a single side.

13.3 "Try to remember" is a recurring theme.

"We are you." You, Dane? You, humans?

14.3 Dane probably picked the name after UK rock band Oasis' Gallagher brothers.

15.4 Pamela Anderson (b.1967) is a US actress as well known for her fantasy Barbie doll looks and sex video as for television series such as *Baywatch* and *VIP*.

18.3 Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas. So how would the hunter know he's exposed to it?

21 Note the supercontext snow effect seen in 1.8 and 3.1.

23.4 Tesco is a UK grocery chain.

23.5 Note that the magick bag is discovered on page 23 in locker 23. And of course it's retrieved on panel 5 (5 = 2+3).

then we both, you know, did the magick. The biopsy came back and it was nothing. They didn't even know what the growth was – it was like a growth they'd never seen before. So they cut it all out, and it didn't grow back.

PN: London *retroactively plugs themes introduced in the last few issues into the series' debut storyline, as Dane sees through the masks of the 20th century's gods to make pure contact with BARBELiTH. His ability to transcend normal perception, demonstrated in the first issue as he overhears Beatles Lennon and Sutcliffe, is revealed here to be amplified by BARBELiTH, thereby ensuring his position as the future Buddha. Of course BARBELiTH selects the least likely candidate – that's the point. The admission of alien abduction into the realm of mythology is a nice touch. On first impression the art is distressingly below even DC standards, but a more considered examination finds that the rough, scratchy lines convey the skittish state of Dane's head at this point. BARBELiTH's manner of communication is inspired, underlining the notion that language limits our knowledge to things we have words for. For a series so concerned with concepts and ideas, *THE INVISIBLES* is often surprisingly lacking in the atmosphere category. Not so here, where Dane's encounter with Sir Miles is truly spooky.*

KCS: *I'm not a Paul Johnson fan. Okay I lie. I wasn't at first, but by the end of the issue, he'd grown on me. I'm all about body language and facial expressions in comics. And not just the staple "Here I come to tear your head off" facial expressions so often found in mainstream comics. I'm for subtlety. Comics, after all, are a cooperative art form. The writer must portray as much as possible through dialogue, but a successful comic depends on art. The best script with crappy art, will be, well, crap (as we will eventually see). So, while I might not find Johnson's rendering of these characters compatible with my vision of them, he does convey a whole lot, particularly on page four when Dane is feeling sorrow over the soldier he killed and page seven, at the bottom, where he looks with wonder at BARBELiTH painted on the wall. He also handles the alien sequence quite well. I think Grant plays it right by spending this issue with Dane instead of going headlong into King Mob's predicament. It builds suspense, and I've missed the bugger. I had been wondering if we'd ever find out what happened to him down in the abandoned subway. Another piece of the puzzle revealed. The sex image with Boy is confusing. Is Grant trying to provide motivation for Dane to return? What is the purpose?*

ENTROPY IN THE UK

DANDY

FEB 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*Phil Jimenez *Pencils*John Stokes *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

"Man,
like the
caterpillar
or the
maggot, is a
creature in
its larval stage.
We consume
to fuel our
imminent
metamorphosis."

In 1994 Egypt, Elfayed reveals the fractal nature of reality to King Mob, telling him that humanity is in its larval stage and preparing for a metamorphosis.

In 1995, King Mob resists interrogation by claiming to be author Kirk Morrison; Fanny, he says, is his boyfriend. As Sir Miles attempts to penetrate his mind, a deeply wounded King Mob hides himself in a spiraling series of cover stories inspired by the Jerry Cornelius tales of Michael Moorcock and the psychedelic 1960s spy series *The Prisoner*.

Locked in a cell elsewhere in the building, Fanny assaults her captors with kindness, while Miss Dwyer opens a gateway through reality to allow the entry of the King-of-All-Tears.

Meanwhile, Robin and Boy return to a safehouse after failing to locate Dane and wonder where their friends are, and George Harper is notified of the re-opening of Division X.



The title is a play on the Sex Pistols' song *Anarchy in the UK*. One of UK author Michael Moorcock's (b.1939) Jerry Cornelius stories is titled *The Entropy Tango*. The cross-time adventures of spy Jerry Cornelius are a huge influence on the portrayal of Gideon Stargrave in this issue, down to his appearance, to the point that Moorcock took issue with how closely Stargrave is modeled on his character.

Gideon Stargrave first appeared in *NEAR MYTHS* #3 in 1978 in *The Vatican Conspiracy*, by Grant Morrison.

1.1 Pink Floyd is a UK ambient rock band known for anti-authoritarian songs, experimental sounds and drug use.

"Don't shoot until you see the luminous blues of their eyes" is a variation on first US president George Washington's (1732-1799) directive, "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes."

UK singer-songwriter Syd Barrett (b.Roger Keith Barrett, 1946) was a founding member of Pink Floyd, squeezed out of the band for odd behavior.

1.2 This panel is an homage to the St Hilary's films.

Hope I Die Before I Get Old is a song by UK rock group the Who, on the album *My Generation*.

1.3 "Wizard" is UK slang for brilliant or spectacular.

"Prang" is second World War pilot slang for crash.

1.4 Mr. Fish was a popular London clothing boutique in the 1960s.

Marks & Spencer is a UK department store.

Shelley's Shoes is a real store on London's Carnaby Street, popular in the 1960s.

1.5 The Doppler shift, named for Austrian scientist Christian Doppler (1803-1853), measures the change in wavelengths between an object and its observer to determine whether the object is approaching or moving away.

Luxury ocean liner Titanic famously sank on its maiden voyage across the Atlantic in 1912.

Second Law of Thermodynamics says that the change of entropy and its surroundings in a given process is zero or higher. Essentially, entropy increases – ordered systems tend toward chaos.

3.1 The short chapters and titles evoke Moorcock's Jerry Cornelius books.

GRANT MORRISON ON SAVING THE SERIES THROUGH MAGICK

Magick made its debut in the letters column when you had everyone wank to a sigil to save the series.

And it worked! The sales were dipping badly then, and I thought, *Let's try this*. I thought it would actually work, and Jill I remember warned me. She said, "You'd better watch out, you'll let a lot of energy loose." I thought, *No problem, Jill, I can handle it*. The series did recover, remarkably, but I was in the hospital a few months later. There was a lot coming down at that end. At that point, when that sigil was done, I think that was the moment *THE INVISIBLES* was really empowered and kind of came to life.

And you think that's why the series wasn't cancelled?

Yes, because it was dying on its feet. I didn't even know where to go with it. I knew, but it just seemed like it was such an ordeal at that point, and then getting sick... I'd been sick for a year before I ended up in hospital. I didn't know what was wrong; it was coming out in all different ways. Something was going on, but I didn't know what. Obviously, I knew what was happening. It's all about bacterial invasion. It gets more and more feverish toward the end of Volume 1. It gets sick when you're really close to the end of that volume. The Outer Church is invading reality. After I'd written it I'm sick, you know, this crawling bacterial infection which is like invasion by the Outer Church.

BEFORE THE INVISIBLES

King Mob prior to V1: It's established that King Mob is in Africa and Egypt in 1995, the year *THE INVISIBLES* begins. As John-A-Dreams has been missing for some time and Dane is soon to be inducted into the Invisibles, perhaps King Mob is purposefully continuing his initiation in an effort to be at a spiritual peak prior to the series' launch? As the volume opens with King Mob in Africa, it seems likely that he stops by the Academy to visit Elfayed after his rites at Ayer's Rock. From Egypt he flies to Paris for a reunion with Edith before finally flying to London to free Dane from Harmony House.

ON THE COVER

King Mob as Gideon Stargrave in full Jerry Cornelius mode, complete with sound gun. The background is a fractal, suggestive of King Mob's recursive cover stories in this storyline, the fractal storytelling of *THE INVISIBLES* and the nature of reality itself.

Phil Jimenez says it wasn't the wankathon, it was him.

I believed in the wankathon, he didn't.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON JOINING *THE INVISIBLES*

You first came to *THE INVISIBLES* with three fill-in issues for Volume 1. How did that come about?

Stuart Moore, the editor at the time, called me and wanted to know if I would do it. I had worked on an issue of *SANDMAN* with Stuart, and I really like Stuart a lot. I knew Grant Morrison's reputation from his work on *ANIMAL MAN* and *DOOM PATROL*. His run of *ANIMAL MAN* remains one of my favorites in comics. I was very excited about the prospect of working with Grant Morrison. Then I was told that I was one of the very few artists who would work for both Vertigo and the DC Universe. Sales had really been damaged after *Arcadia*. They were hoping a commercial artist might bring some notice, some recognition to the book. So I was basically hired in the hopes that someone with some superhero following would bring some of those readers over, which I'm told I did a little bit.

So the series was on shaky ground for a while?

It was very shaky. It was very shaky.

Why wouldn't artists cross the DC/Vertigo boundary?

At the time I think it was just stylistically – I mean, this was the mid-'90s – and there was a lot of that Image-style art happening. My instinct is that they just wanted to avoid bringing that tone to Vertigo. Fortunately my style was sort of naturalistic enough that it would be [a good fit]. I could draw things other than large-breasted, sword-wielding women. Which I'm doing now [on DC Comics' *WONDER*

3.2 *Magna* means "holy."

3.4 *Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun* is a song on the Pink Floyd album *Saucerful of Secrets*.

5.3 *Physical Interrogation Techniques* is an actual book by Richard Krousher, detailing interrogation methods.

7.1 Biggles, or James Bigglesworth, is a fighter pilot in a series of 98 childrens' books by Captain William Earl Johns (1893-1968).

7.2 *Baby's in Black* is from the Beatles' album *Beatles for Sale*.

7.3 The symbol on the bomb is the Greek letter *omega*, or end.

8.6 Nuclear weapons are a recurring theme in the second volume of *THE INVISIBLES*.

9.3 Another caterpillar/butterfly. Are they echoing our pattern, or us theirs?

9.4 "As above, so below." A recurring theme.

On the original copy of this page, the star pattern is completely different. It originally showed a spiral galaxy, like the Milky Way. There's a new layer of film on top with the star pattern shown in the final issue. This scene must take place during the Elfayed sequences of the first issue.

10.1 Trappist monks are an offshoot of the Christian Benedictine movement, founded in the 17th century at la Trappe monastery and focusing on austerity.

11.1 Leichner is a make-up manufacturer.

12 Miss Dwyer is making the hand movements required to bring the Archon through, as in *Royal Monsters*. Hand movements will be important in the other two volumes [folding the time machine origami, and Mister Six mimicking the Harlequinade dwarves].

12.3 Occam's Razor is a philosophical tenet formulated by English philosopher William of Occam (1285-1349) championing parsimony. The rule basically says that the simplest explanation is usually correct.

14.1 Familiars are servitors in magick rituals, usually represented by animals.

14.3 *Time Out* is an events listings magazine published in most world-class cities such as London and New York. Note that the cover reads: *Whose side are you on?*

Casper, the Friendly Ghost is a childrens' television series about a happy spirit of the same name.

Robin's 6 badge and the general lines of her dress recall *The Prisoner*.

15.4 The band is the Root Doctaz if she's going to contact Jim Crow.

15.5 Robin's déjà vu is actually a premonition; see 1.24.20.4.

16.1 The first appearance of George Harper.

17.4 HG Wells' *Invisible Man* wore bandages to hide his condition.

17.5 Note the caterpillar theme.

19.1 "Old ultra-violence." Alexander DeLarge from Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* uses this phrase to characterize his criminal high jinks.

19.2 Prince Charles (b. 1948) is the future king of England.

First appearance of Genevieve Stargrave.

19.3 Pictures of Reagan, Thatcher, the Ballad of John and Yoko, Duran Duran's *Decade* album.

"The ballad of John and Yoko ends with murder" refers to the Beatles song *The Ballad of John and Yoko*, and Lennon's murder itself.

19.4 The wicker man dates back to Celtic traditions of burning hollow effigies filled with animals and humans as sacrifices. One features prominently in the 1973 film *The Wicker Man*, as well as Volume 3.

19.5 Jerry Cornelius pursues an incestuous relationship with his sister.

20.4 The 1968 film *Planet of the Apes* is a thinly veiled racism allegory about a human astronaut who lands on a planet run by intelligent apes.

20.5 The Move, the Shop Assistants, the Times, the Television Personalities, the Pastels, the Sex Pistols, the Buzzcocks, the Byrds and the Jesus and Mary Chain are all bands, linking with the music theme running throughout both *The Invisibles* and the Jerry Cornelius stories.

The Mixers is a psychedelic punk band Grant Morrison used to play in, as are the Five.

21.1-21.3 These panels and dialogue are taken from the opening credits of *The Prisoner*, in which a former spy is interrogated.

21.2 The white ball is the Rover security creature from *The Prisoner*. [For the disease theme, it could be an antibody.]

21.3 Sir Miles is in the role of *The Prisoner's* Number Two, an agent of an unknown power charged with interrogating kidnapped ex-spy Number Six. Number Two was played by a different actor each week, representing the facelessness of the enemy and the redundancy of individuality. *The Prisoner* is obsessed with the self/not self paradigm.

21.4 Note the windmill time machine.

21.5 Note the reversal of Descartes's famous philosophical axiom, "I think therefore I am."

22.1 Another pastiche of *The Prisoner*, specifically the episode *Once Upon a Time*.

23.1 Room 101 is the interrogation room in George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*.

WOMAN]. I think that was sort of a divide. It was a matter of trying to set a tone, and keep a tone, for the universe.

PN: *Phil Jimenez crashes into THE INVISIBLES like an extinctive comet, and suddenly nothing is going to be the same. His documentary style is a revelation in this collection of psychedelic sketches of Gideon Stargrave, whose otherwise-unpublishable adventures are surely the whole point of a storyline in which little else of interest occurs. (Other than King Mob's theft of Sir Miles' aura, does anything of significance actually happen in Entropy in the UK?) It's nice to see Fanny hold her own in captivity – in many ways she is the strongest of the team. The overt display of influences by representing the opening credits of The Prisoner almost word for word betrays the comic convention of endlessly recycling stale ideas while claiming to be something fresh and new. Bizarrely, the vibe of the Beatles '65 version of Gideon Stargrave ends up bearing far more resemblance to the surreal Pet Shop Boys video I Wouldn't Normally Do This Kind of Thing, which was in rotation as Grant wrote this, than the Beatles themselves. The omnipresent lists of bands and songs reveal this for what it is, a collection of pop singles in comic book form.*

KCS: *First, Gideon Stargrave is a bit too fantastical for me. He fits well for King Mob's alter ego, no doubt, but he's no fun to read about. Perhaps if Stargrave was a character unto himself he'd be more entertaining. But then, I suppose he'd be Jerry Cornelius. That being said, I'll quickly add that the Prisoner references are brilliant, as are the King's flashbacks with Elfayed. The interrogation-as-plot-device-to-get-to-know-King-Mob thing works for me even though it's a bit more contrived than the natural flow of Sheman. The origins of King Mob seem like such an outlandish detail to even include, because up until this point he has been little more than a caricature, a shell holding not a person with a soul, but a hypercool anarchist. Is this man to finally have a soul? Even in his cover-story persona he's a selfish bastard. Fanny, his supposed girlfriend, has supposedly been tortured by the enemy, and all he can say is, "I need to get to a hospital." Well, at least the art is good. After Johnson's pencils, it's great to get an issue with a fair amount of detail and high-quality workmanship. The art is a bit hard to adjust to, being not altogether my favorite style, but the characters are so crisp and the faces so expressive that I can't help but love it. Oh, and Daniel Vozzo's colors are better than they've ever been.*

"I'm prepared
to take the
coward's
way out if
you are. It's
reincarnation
or nothing."

ENTROPY IN THE UK

MESSIAH

MAR 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*Phil Jimenez *Pencils*John Stokes *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

In 1994, King Mob travels to Australia to undergo further initiation at Ayer's Rock. Entering the rock, he discovers BARBELiTH in the form of a massive, fish-like submarine and makes contact.

One year later, as King Mob continues to hide within a swirling collection of mental stories, Sir Miles steps up his interrogation with the drug Key 17, which makes the subject interpret written words as reality. Sir Miles tries to psychically examine King Mob, but is trapped in his own memory of his first bloody fox hunt as a child. He turns to Miss Dwyer, who in suckling him transfers Outer Church nanomachines into Sir Miles' bloodstream. He psychically links with King Mob again and evades an occult defense by Zaraguin to discover that King Mob and Edith located Dane through a magical sex ritual. The boy is headed for Liverpool.

Meanwhile, Boy looks for King Mob and Fanny in a Brixton flat used as a cover location for Mob's Kirk Morrison author persona, only to discover that police are executing a search warrant. She eludes capture and returns to Robin and the safehouse, only to learn that Jim Crow has arrived to help out.



1.1-1.2 Gupta is essentially describing the Khephra metaphor again, the idea that descending into darkness or trauma precedes illumination.

1.1 Chod is a Tibetan rite for cutting through dualism.

Bon-Po is the minority religion of Tibet, a blend of Buddhism, shamanism and magic rituals.

1.2 The Hindu caste system separates people into different social strata according to ancestry.

1.3 UK actor Peter Sellers (1925-1980) played a series of Indian characters in films in the 1960s, and released a single with Sophia Loren (b.1934) titled *Goodness Gracious Me*, singing in character as an Indian.

Tulpa is the Tibetan word for a thought form, or servitor.

Gupta is exploring the recurring theme that different mythologies are simply re-interpretations of the same phenomena.

1.4 Tantra is a Buddhist and Hindu tradition in which the practitioner is unified with certain deities via yogic and sexual ritual.

The Tongue of the Dakini is a secret language known by the Dakini, the founders of tantra.

The Twilight Language, or *Sandhya Bhasya*, is a secret language purposefully designed to prevent the misuse of tantric formulae.

2 The nude women in an exotic location around Gideon Stargrave is reminiscent of the opening credit sequences to James Bond films.

3.1 Zen Buddhism is a splinter tradition found in China and Japan, focusing on meditation.

Allah is the god in the Muslim belief system.

5 Key 17 appears to be inspired by Philip K Dick's story *Time Out of Joint*, in which a character discovers that reality is comprised of words on paper, which his neighbors believe to be real. A character in Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise* includes a drug similar to Key 17 – someone reading the word "bullets" would be killed. But considering the sheer quantity of Dick "homages" in *THE INVISIBLES* it's likely that *Time Out of Joint* is the inspiration.

5.3 Necrotizing fasciitis bacteria dissolves flesh. Grant suffered a facial abscess after writing this issue, as detailed in the letters column to 1.24.

RNA, or ribonucleic nucleic acid, delivers the information genetically stored in DNA to a cell's

STUART MOORE ON *THE INVISIBLES*' SCHEDULE

In the later volumes Grant became notoriously late with scripts. Did this affect the initial volume as well?

Not at all. Grant was always punctual – as he is today, by the way, on the books I'm working on with him at Marvel. His problems began with his illness, near the end of Volume 1, and I was smart enough to give up editing the book right around then.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON KING MOB AND LORD FANNY

For your first story, you spent most of your time with King Mob and Fanny. Was it strange not doing much with the rest of the team?

It was a little disappointing simply because King Mob is my least-favorite Invisible, basically because I'm offended by his archetype. The sort of assassin's hero I just have personal issues with. King Mob is a little too cool for me. I'm like, "Get over it. Get over yourself, you're not that cool. You're a guy with a shaved head who kills people for a living." I'm troubled by that. I was very happy to see Grant deal with it in Volume 2, King Mob's problems with that, like suddenly developing a conscious about it. But that was basically it. I don't tend to respond to hyper-cool, because I just don't think it is. It's almost too self-conscious.

How did you feel about Fanny? She's also self-consciously cool.

In a very different way though, I think. Fanny was very cool. King Mob, there was such an intense ego about how cool he was, like he was trying too hard. Fanny, it just seemed to me, as a character was cool because she's a transvestite shaman from Brazil. You can't help but be cool when you combine those three elements. As Grant wrote the character, and as I responded to the character, there was not as much ego involved in her being cool. She just was. Unlike King Mob. The way I responded to the character, it was more of an effort to be cool. A conscious decision: "I'm going to wear this, I'm going to defy that, and I'm going to shoot people because that's going to make me cool." Fanny just put on some clothes and some makeup and there she was.

SEAN PHILLIPS ON CENSORSHIP AND THE BIG PICTURE

I did get to read the scripts for the Marquis de Sade arc before it was censored, but I've never had to change anything I've drawn.

ON THE COVER

King Mob as the 1965 Beatles incarnation of Gideon Stargrave.

As far as the covers go, I think I did some good work. For the time they were different to what else was out there. Grant was okay with having more symbolic covers rather than just the heroes doing their stuff. It always helps to work with a writer who actually wants to do something different, to broaden the scope of the sort of stories comics can tell and how they can be told.

PN: *Although popularly received thanks to Phil Jimenez's crisp art, Entropy in the UK is something of a damp squib. A closer reading of Messiah reveals that little actually happens; the Boy sequence is pure filler and the story would have read identically without it. Surely with content this slight more space could have been devoted to King Mob's contact with BARBELiTH? Sir Miles begins his shift toward sympathetic victim with the fox hunt memory, while Miss Dwyer and Key 17 are both suitably creepy. But the best thing here is the opening bus sequence with Stargrave and Gupta, suggesting that a miniseries is long overdue.*

KCS: *Oh dear. It's just as I feared. More Gideon Stargrave. At least there are some words of wisdom from the ill-fated Doctor Gupta. The central character of this issue isn't King Mob so much as Sir Miles. His relationship with Miss Dwyer and obvious fear of the Archons provide insight into his character that will prove important later on. All of Miles' peers in the Outer Church seem to adore their place as submissive servants of the Archons. Yet Sir Miles rebels. Is it just his blue-blooded arrogance as Miss Dwyer suggests, or is it something deeper? I find myself wanting more on Sir Miles and less on King Mob. Jimenez is a thrill again, but his Jim Crow lacks the oomph that Chris Weston put out. Dig Robin's anti-gravity hair, though.*

protein manufacturing sites.

6.4 First appearance of Mary Brown. Her line, "Would you like anything," is from a similar sequence in the 1973 Lindsay Anderson (1923-1994) satiric musical film *O Lucky Man!*

9.1 Uluru, also known as Ayer's Rock, is a massive monolith in the middle of the Australian outback. Large enough to be a mountain, it's actually comprised of a different stone than the surrounding landscape. Tests indicate that it is in fact sitting on the ground, and not a part of it. Australian aborigines hold it to be a sacred place, and refuse to allow foreigners to see the rear side. There's an obvious corollary with Dane's implant here.

9.4 The Dreaming has different meanings for different aboriginal groups. In general it is an embodiment of creation, giving meaning and order to the world.

10.2 Djang is an aboriginal term for spiritual energy.

10.3 King Mob doesn't demonstrate telepathy again after this point.

13.2 Communion is a Christian sacrament in which participants symbolically eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, thereby gaining eternal life.

16.1 Wandjinas are creatures believed to bring monsoons in Australian aboriginal mythology.

16.4 Note the green glow of the cosmic spotlight; King Mob's initiation is about to begin.

17 This sequence portrays King Mob's initiation.

17.1 King Mob may be encountering BARBELiTH through a cultural lens formed through reading books like *Illuminatus!*, which featured a sci-fi submarine.

18.2 The Qabbala is a mystic Hebrew book concerning the origin of life.

18.3 King Mob is speaking glossolalia. His temperature and pulse indicates that he is in an extremely altered state, perhaps near death.

20 This scene shows King Mob's two overlapping sex rituals with Edith, suggested on 1.14.6 and shown on 2.10.15.

Note that Sir Miles is narrating this sequence.

20.6 This image suggests a link between Edith and Kali, the Hindu goddess of time.

21 This page again suggests that the gods are actually the same.

21.8 This panel reappears, with dialogue, on 2.10.15.5.

The letters column for this issue marks the first suggestion that *The Invisibles* will be a trilogy.

"[The
alphabet]
and all
the names
it generates,
were
designed
to set
limits upon
humanity's
ability to
express
abstract
thought."

APR 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*Phil Jimenez *Pencils*John Stokes *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Clem Robins *Letters*Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*Stuart Moore *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

ENTROPY IN THE UK

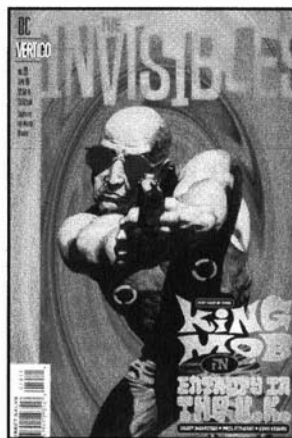
ASSASSIN

Sir Miles excavates King Mob's mind and pieces together his biography. Further penetration reveals the Invisibles' training academy in north Africa, where the scorpion loa taught King Mob how to destroy souls. Elsewhere in the building, Fanny constructs a Voodoo doll of Sir Miles from a handkerchief and uses it to disable him, allowing King Mob to psychically attack Sir Miles and remove his aura. He possesses Sir Miles and uses him to free himself, while Fanny defeats her cell guard. The pair rendezvous and consider their escape, unaware that Miss Dwyer has activated her fourth-dimensional armor in readiness for attack.

Meanwhile, Jim Crow, Boy and Robin drive through London in an effort to locate their missing teammates. They make psychic contact with Fanny and home in on Sir Miles' base.

ON THE COVER

King Mob aiming a gun at the reader. It's interesting to note that both Gideon Stargrave covers use the gun as an accessory, while the King Mob image uses it as a weapon.



PN: *While it's great to get some biography on King Mob (and strangely all of the Invisibles are more interesting before they actually joined the team), this issue still suffers from the problem of slightness that affects all three parts of Entropy in the UK. Some good concepts, especially the idea that the alphabet is a spell to limit human thought, but King Mob's sudden spring into action strains the reader's suspension of disbelief after the previous two issues. The scenes with the rest of the team can be reduced to one page, and though Robin's increasing smart drink fixation is an interesting subplot it ultimately goes nowhere. Pop fluff.*

KCS: *Assassin is definitely the finest installment of Entropy in the UK. First, there is only one miserable page of Gideon Stargrave nonsense. Yay! Secondly, the last page is worth \$2.50 alone. Miss Dwyer – I'm scared. Aces to Phil on the body armor. She's still actually recognizable as Miss Dwyer, and yet totally changed. And Phil's version of the Archons is the best rendering to date. While I hadn't previously cared about King Mob's past, the images of the Academy are interesting and I think it's a pity the series doesn't spend more time there. If we could take time out to meet Bobby Murray, perhaps we could have spent an issue at the Academy. This issue is full of the little things that make Grant's work glow. Robin running in to get smart drinks is one small point. It's a minor detail, but one that could easily be overlooked, and having it there provides just that little bit of realism to make all of the other freaky crap that's going on seem believable. The idea of a psychic triangulation is utterly brilliant, and King Mob's conversation with Fanny in the hallway after his escape from the chair is both touching and amusing while maintaining the issue's sense of urgency. Big scores to Phil for his fine work here. On page sixteen, Fanny's wiles are both funny and terrifying. It's the first time we really see what she can do. Her postures and facial expressions are perfect. But one gripe – what in God's name is going on with Sir Miles' eyeballs? Check out pages four, six, and seven to see what I mean.*

1.1 That may be the Harlequinade beneath the plane.

Sir Miles attended Eton, judging from the clothes.

1.4 "I yam an antee-christ" is the first line of the Sex Pistols' song *Anarchy in the UK*.

2 Images include the US space shuttle, Pamela Anderson, "shock" rocker Marilyn Manson and accused murderer OJ Simpson. This page may represent the end of our empire, as evidenced by Morrison's statements about death obsession elsewhere in this book.

3.1 The Five alludes to the Fauves, a band Grant Morrison used to play in. Five is an important number to Discordians; note the Invisibles are organized in a cell of five members. Five is also 2+3 – another 23.

"An occult group in Leeds" probably refers to the Illuminates of Thanateros chaos magick group formed there in 1978 by Peter Carroll and Ray Sherwin.

3.2 Dis is Hell, a region within it, and a Kirk Morrison novel, depending on the context.

4.3 The panel suggests that we have a sense that orders time linearly. Sir Miles' perceptions are out of whack because of the Archon interface.

7.1-7.2 The theme of linguistic programming again.

7.6 17 is another magick number.

8.2 The sigil on the door is the zodiac sign for the scorpion, King Mob's loa protector.

8.6 First appearance of Jolly Roger.

9.4 King Mob possesses the ability to destroy souls.

10.2 Jim Crow's Crowmobile is a play on the Batmobile, Batman's car.

11.2 Michael Jackson and Lisa-Marie Presley were briefly married, to media delight.

18.1 Jim Crow is holding an A to Z index of London streets.

21.1 "Be seeing you" is the double entendre farewell catch phrase of *The Prisoner*.

23.1 The hanging image is the same as the Hanged Man in the tarot, as well as Sir Miles' death in 3.2.16.4.

Odin is the head of the Norse pantheon of gods.

23.5 The archangel Gabriel will blow his trumpet to signal the end times in Christian mythology.

"We never
do see
the things
right there
in front
of us."

MAY 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Tommy Lee Edwards *Art*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors*

Clem Robins *Letters*

Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*

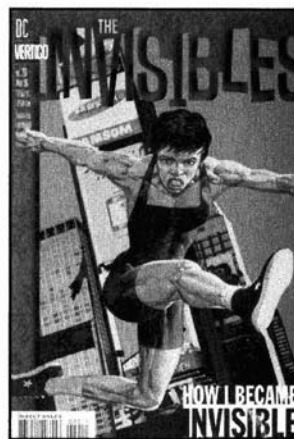
Stuart Moore *Editor*

Sean Phillips *Cover*

HOW I BECAME INVISIBLE

In 1990, NYPD officers Lucille Butler and Oscar witness conspiracy theorist Mohammed Khan shot to death by federal agents, who carry the body away in a black helicopter. An unhappy encounter with rapper brother Eezy D at her mother's birthday party is followed by a fake burglary notice, where Lucille and Oscar nearly die in an explosion. Eezy D tells Lucille that Mohammed's death and the explosion are related. She refuses to accept a conspiracy until Oscar goes missing. Rifling through his desk, she discovers a listing of train times and heads to the station. There, she discovers that her older brother Martin is part of the Conspiracy, believing it to be an effort to eradicate street gangs. He resigns on the spot, but federal agents try to put him on a train bound for a secret concentration camp for American dissidents. He begs Lucille to shoot him, but she can't. Eezy D appears and shoots Martin, only to be killed by federal agents. A wounded Martin is dragged onto the train, which departs. Before she can be killed for witnessing events, Oscar saves her and tells her that she will shortly be contacted by John-A-Dreams and King Mob.

In 1995, Lucille (now known as Boy) takes a train north in order to bring Dane to London to help rescue King Mob and Fanny. She passes the time by writing an account of her introduction to the Invisibles. Arriving at an interim station, Boy burns her notes in a trash can, unaware that Mister Six is also awaiting the Liverpool train.



ON THE COVER

A leaping Boy superimposed over a photograph of New York City. Some fiction/real-world interaction commentary there?

STUART MOORE ON EDITORIAL DUTIES

What sort of day-to-day role did Julie Rottenberg play?

Julie was assistant/associate editor for my run on the book. We worked very closely together, but I don't remember her having a great deal of creative input on this particular title, mostly because Grant knew so clearly what he wanted to do. Julie's now story editor of *Sex and the City*, by the way.

PN: *It's funny how the stand-alone issues of THE INVISIBLES tend to work much better than ongoing arcs, and How I Became Invisible is no exception. The "conspiracy" issues always work best when they focus on ordinary people rather than glamorous heroics. It's to Grant's credit that the rap aspect works; all too often attempts at portraying inner-city minorities descend into stereotype and cliché (see the embarrassing 100 BULLETS). But the ongoing subversion of reader expectations has become a pattern, and the revelation that gangsta Eezy D is a hero while respectable Martin is in on the conspiracy comes as a surprise to nobody. Another rare issue with genuine atmosphere, and the concepts cling to the reader well after the final page. The art by Tommy Lee Edwards suits the story well, and one can't help but wonder how THE INVISIBLES would have progressed if the gritty, street-smart visuals had continued past this issue. A series highlight.*

KCS: *I was quite anxious to get to Boy's story, but this doesn't quite cut it. It's too much that both her partner and her brother are actually Invisibles. If we were really surrounded by Invisibles, they wouldn't be, er, invisible. It would be the Boy Scouts, except that they'd let in queers and women. The highlight of this issue is Boy's anger. It's vicious and palpable. It's real, and brings a bit of pragmatism to a group of people who read minds and practice magick. She's matched in pragmatism only by Dane; is this why she falls for him? The art matches my preference for this type of story. There's a sense of stillness to it that gives it a slow, revealing quality.*

1.1 The train motif will repeat throughout Volume 2.

4.1 First appearance of Oscar.

The sign behind Boy's head reads: W.A.S.T.E. This is a reference to Thomas Pynchon's (b.1937) 1966 novel *The Crying of Lot 49*, which will influence the second Boy arc, *American Death Camp*.

8.1 Note the turning invisible motif.

8.3 See page 155 for more on black helicopters.

9.4 The homeless man talking about the Black Iron Prison looks like Philip K. Dick.

"The Empire never ended" refers to the gnostic belief that time stopped at the crucifixion of Christ – therefore, we are still all living in Roman times. This phrase, a key tenet of Philip K. Dick's novel *VALIS*, will reoccur throughout the rest of the series.

10.2 Wesley Snipes (b.1964) is an actor best known for action films such as 1998's *Blade*.

10.3 *The Cosby Show* (1984-1992) is a US television series about a middle class African American family.

10.4 Eezy D is slang for "easy dope." The name is derivative of NWA rapper Eazy-E, who died of AIDS.

12.2 The Multi-Jurisdictional Task Force is allegedly a secret law enforcement agency comprised of the US National Guard, local police and street gangs.

See page 200 for more on REX84.

12.3 Another 23.

13 Two cops investigate a fire involving mannequins at the beginning of the *Illuminatus!* trilogy by Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea.

14.4 Eliot Ness (1903-1957) was the FBI agent who finally put gangster Al Capone (1899-1947) in jail.

15 Eezy's words define what the Invisibles fight for.

15.1 Bloods and Crips are opposing LA street gangs.

16.6 Note the train times. Another 23. 17 is an associated number in the *Illuminatus!* trilogy, and of course refers back to Key 17.

23.5 Boy as an individual becomes invisible, small and untraceable, the antithesis of the "beast" who is so visible and huge so as to be unnoticeable. Boy's invisibility is subversive, while the "beast's" is oppressive.

That's Mister Six in the foreground, on his way to Liverpool for reasons of his own. Does he know Boy? Does he see Cell 23 retrieve the journal?

"I know all
the names
sound stupid
and that, but
that's what
they do
so nobody
knows who
they are."

LIVERPOOL

JUN 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Paul Johnson *Art*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Ellie deVillie *Letters*

Julie Rottenberg *Associate Editor*

Stuart Moore *Editor*

Sean Phillips *Cover*

Dane arrives at his friend Billy's in Liverpool. Billy seems to have lots of expensive new things, and Dane realizes that he's been paid off to alert Sir Miles if he shows up. He escapes down a drainpipe just as police storm the bedroom. On the way to his mother's, Dane bumps into former history teacher Mr. Malcolm, unaware that he is the Invisible Mister Six.

Mister Six follows Dane home, but Mrs. McGowan tells him to leave, saying that she hasn't seen Dane for a year. She offers Dane all her money if he'll disappear again, but the police arrive before he can escape through a window. With the timely intervention of Boy and the aid of his Jack Frost powers, the police are subdued. Dane agrees to accompany Boy and Mister Six back to London.

As these events occur, Dane finds himself awakening more repressed memories about his time with Tom O'Bedlam, specifically his first contact with BARBELiTH after leaping from Canary Wharf. It transpires that BARBELiTH brought him to the Invisible College and then created a Jesus construct to tap into Dane's mythology structure. The Jesus form shows Dane the past horrors of humanity, and he decides he must fight to make a finer world.

STUART MOORE ON LEAVING *THE INVISIBLES***Why did you leave the series after the initial volume?**

I was starting the Helix science fiction imprint at DC, and gave up all my Vertigo titles for a while.

What do you think of what the series became after you left, and how do you feel about your time on it?

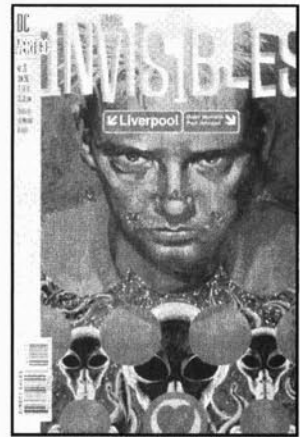
It was great fun. I always like Grant's work; I'm into a lot of the same strange stuff he is (though not as deep) and I like the way he turns a phrase. The rotating artists situation was an interesting creative and scheduling challenge to me as an editor – I like doing that kind of advance planning. Volume 2 I thought was great because Grant really delved into the characters. When he sits down and focuses on characterization, he's probably the best in the business at it. I thought Volume 3 started off a bit confusing, but picked way up as it went along.

I'm very glad the whole thing will soon be available in trade paperback, and one of these days I'll have to sit down and reread it all. I always thought it would make a terrific CD-Rom or a huge interactive web site, so you could read issue one and click over to *Best Man Fall* and then to the related scene in Volume 2, or else just read it in order. You'd get a different experience each time you picked it up.

PN: *Another atmospheric issue, one resonating with previous events (Mrs. McGowan's "Who cut your hair anyway?" recalls Sutton's estrangement with his own child). It took nearly two years, but Dane finally becomes an empathetic figure as the reader realizes that despite his bravado he's still just a kid who needs love. In a moving pair of scenes, we see that Dane's friends ultimately don't care about him*

ON THE COVER

A montage of Dane and three gray aliens. The falling red circles recall BARBELITH and the snowing supercontext. Integrating the issue's title and creator credits into a street sign is inspired.



1.1 Billy first appeared in issue 1.1 as part of the Croxteth Posse.

4.5 Dane is remembering the "missing" events from 1.4 little by little.

4.1 The postcard image here is a different cityscape than the one shown on 1.4.9.1.

5.4 Note that the Archons are also called the "Lost Ones." Both sides being the same is a recurring theme.

8.2 Salomon's House is another name for the Invisible College. In the Utopian treatise *The New Atlantis*, Francis Bacon (1561-1626) writes that Salomon's House, or the House of the Wise, overshadowed the rest of Atlantis as a place of reason and wisdom.

8.4 First appearance of the Invisible College, not to be confused with the North African academy.

11.3 Note the Oasis poster on the wall. Oasis is a Beatles-inspired UK pop band from the 1990s.

Nush is a UK dance band.

13.2 Jack the Ripper is notoriously considered the first serial killer, in a case with many Masonic elements. The name was created by the press to describe the murderer of five prostitutes in London's Whitechapel in 1888. His identity was never discovered.

13.4 *Doctor Who* (1963-1989, 1996) is a UK science fiction television series chronicling the adventures of a heroic alien who travels through time and space in a police box that's bigger on the inside than the outside. Many have viewed the program as a Buddhist parable, pointing out that the lead character "dies" every few seasons only to be "reborn" in a newer, wiser body.

14.1 Note the Harlequin masks on the wall.

15 BARBELITH explained – a cosmic alarm clock to wake us up should we "sleep" too long. Unlike other characters in the series, Dane recognizes BARBELITH.

15.6 "You made me." Dane or humanity?

16.1 BARBELITH deconstructs mythological models once and for all here.

19.5 That's the anarchic UK band Radiohead on the television.

20.2 The knowledge imprinted in Dane's head is coming out; he recognizes the magick word.

Top of the Pops is a UK television series in which current pop stars mime their latest hits.

20.3 The portrait on the wall is of Marilyn Monroe (b.Norma Jean Mortensen, 1926-1962), an iconic American actress as well known for her mysterious death and romantic liaisons as for films such as 1953's *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

23.1 BARBELiTH is hidden behind the dark side of the moon.

23.2 This page suggests the evils of man, which will be used against Dane in the House of Fun.

23.3 This suggests we make reality.

23.5 A return to the theme of *Arcadia*, a paradise within, tied to another recurring theme of the series: As above, so below. We are the pattern makers. The world is a reflection of us; we are not a reflection of it. BARBELiTH seems to be telling Jack to grow up.

23.5 "As above, so below." As Elfyaid said on 1.17.9.4.

CHRIST AND THE INVISIBLES

From www.grant-morrison.com

Christ is represented by BARBELiTH, the good UFO, the alchemical Pelican breaking its own breast open to feed its young and also by the mysterious red light of the Pelican crossing 'STOP' sign on a rainy night in dear old Glasgow toon.

DATING THE INVISIBLES

Mrs. McGowan tells Mister Six that she hasn't seen Dane for a year, which means the 1996 issues actually take place in 1995. A year relaxing in America is added between volumes to bring the series back into "real time," with buffer room in the form of an indeterminate period before the team actually leaves the UK after the events in the House of Fun.

while his abusive mother does in her own wounded way. Dane's growing infatuation with Boy neatly contrasts with the previous issue, where it's revealed that she apparently can't stand him! But more importantly, what's the deal with the massive drainpipe on page eleven?

KCS: *I like what Grant has been doing for several issues now. He's letting things develop naturally. Here he provides us with more insight into Dane. He's wandering England, having flashbacks of his contact with BARBELiTH, and when he finally arrives in Liverpool – home, a safe haven – he is met with a friend's betrayal. The issue is rather heartbreaking in that regard, and while his mother hasn't sold him up the river, her welcome isn't the warmest. I truly feel for Dane in this issue. His mother wasted his entire childhood, and Dane tries to protect her from the bad guys on the other side of the door. He collapses in her lap, seeking the comfort he knows she can't give. What does this vulnerability mean? Perhaps we're beginning to see why Dane is the "one" and why he is so important.*

"Nobody
ever fucking
listens to
me, do they?"

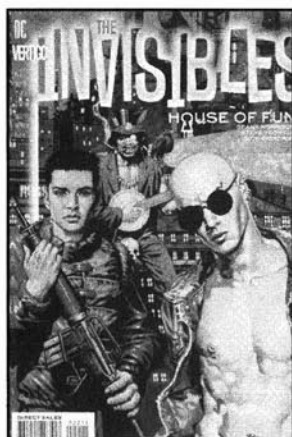
HOUSE OF FUN

JUL 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*Steve Yeowell *Art*Dick Giordano *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

As Miss Dwyer and the King-of-All-Tears transform the building into a viral contaminant, Fanny and a dying King Mob return to the interrogation room. King Mob injects himself with the blood of Sir Miles, whose Archon nanotechnology cures him. Miss Dwyer arrives in her 4D armor, and the two Invisibles find themselves fighting for their lives.

Meanwhile, Robin and Jim Crow find the novelty store House of Fun, in reality a front for Sir Miles' interrogation facility. Jim Crow invokes Papa Guedhe and the pair enter, only to discover that the Archon has warped reality and the building is now a transdimensional horror. Dane, Boy and Mister Six arrive soon after, but once inside are separated. Mister Six discovers that the building is a reality abscess; if it breaks, the world will end. Elsewhere in the building, Jack finds himself face to face with the King-of-All-Tears.



House of Fun is a song by UK ska group Madness, which includes the highly appropriate lines, "welcome to the lion's den/temptation's on his way" and, "I'm sorry son, but we don't stock/party gimmicks in this shop/try the House of Fun."

4.3 Lestat is a vampire in the novels of Anne Rice (b. Howard Allen O'Brien, 1941).

7.2 Jim Crow is asking Papa Guedhe to empower his penis in Creole. Presumably for his *zozo* gun, although of course he could be advance planning his victory celebration.

9.5 Dane is also called a "Lost One," reflecting the both-sides-are-one theme.

11.4 King Mob and Sir Miles becoming blood brothers furthers the notion that both sides are part of the same larger thing.

12.1 Jim Crow is asking Papa Legba to open the door for him in Creole. Legba is the Voodoo *loa* of the crossroads and gateways.

13.1 This looks a lot like what King Mob and John-A-Dreams found in Philadelphia, although it may simply be that the Invisibles are again interpreting things their minds can't register normally through a Lovecraftian cultural lens.

13.2 "Welcome to the House of Fun" is a line in the Madness song *House of Fun*.

20.5 A skeleton key is supposed to open any lock. This one actually looks like a skeleton.

21.1 Life as a game is a recurring theme.

STEVE YEOWELL ON RETURNING TO *THE INVISIBLES*

You returned to complete the first volume. How did that come about, and what was it like returning to characters you helped to create?

I'm a little hazy on this. I can't remember if I was filling in because the original choice of artist was unavailable or if Grant and Stuart Moore didn't have anyone in particular in mind and just decided I'd be a good choice to round off the volume as I'd started it. Two years on though, the characters didn't feel as if they were "mine" any more.

What are your opinions of drawing from Grant's scripts?

I always think there's a "beat" or a rhythm in a good comics story and it's part of the artist's job to find that rhythm in the script and express it visually. It's hard to pick up on it in some writer's scripts but with Grant's it's exceptionally easy. I also find that good dialogue provides me with more visual prompts as regards body language or facial expression than any amount of written description. Not only does Grant write great dialogue, he writes convincing dialogue.

PN: *Here the volume's viral theme gallops to the forefront, making this issue a fevered, hallucinogenic read. But despite the frenetic pace and the horror induced by the artwork, very little seems to actually happen. As with Entropy in the UK, one gets the impression this climactic storyline could have been well handled in a double-sized issue. Nevertheless, plot points conspire to reinforce several of the series' themes, notably when King Mob and Sir Miles become blood brothers. And in a nice symmetry, Steve Yeowell returns to close out the volume he launched.*

ON THE COVER

Jim Crow, King Mob and Lord Fanny. Note that Fanny is depicted on a cover in her "real" male form for the first time. This cover and the following two form a triptych image (perhaps reflecting the series' three volumes). Each issue title includes an icon in the place of a letter (in this case a keyhole).

VIRAL MAGICK

In 1996 Grant Morrison was hospitalized with a collapsed lung, chronic pneumonia and a fungal parasite, presaging the viral subtext of the House of Fun storyline from the first volume. This period is probably the beginning of the mystical interchange between THE INVISIBLES and Grant's own life that defined the final two volumes. He later tried to recreate the atmosphere of the illness during Mister Six's scenes in the final chapter of the House of Fun. Jesus' speech to Dane in the same issue features verbatim dialogue from a hallucinatory encounter Grant had during the same period. A detailed account of the illness, written by Grant, appears in the letters column to 1.24.

KCS: Well, here we are – back to the House of Fun. This is plain old-fashioned good stuff here. Yes, it is. I love how Grant can so effortlessly move from a near heart-breaking, character-driven story to a jacked-up, plot-driven para-superhero conflict that entertains and astonishes. It's what keeps the book from becoming too much of a good thing, sort of like THE UNCANNY X-MEN under Chris Claremont (the first time). I was happy to see Jim Crow back in the ranks, as well as Steve Yeowell. He draws a pretty mean Archon, I have to say. It's sort of refreshing to see King Mob down and almost helpless physically, but able to still contribute his thinking skills by figuring out how to cure the cancer. The Mary Brown bit is a little much for me. It seems gratuitous, and needlessly cruel. But I suppose that describes the Archons as well, so there you go. I think those pages could have been put to better use, though. We've gotten the point that Grant makes on those pages before, and we will get it again in the future. Drilling it into us here is unnecessary and indulgent, to say the least.



"It's not just
like some
sort of
satellite TV
shite; it's
been there
forever and
it talks to
us: even
when we
don't hear it,
even when
we don't
answer back,
it never gives
up on us."

THE LAST TEMPTATION OF JACK

AUG 1996

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Steve Yeowell *Pencils*

Dick Giordano *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Clem Robins *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Sean Phillips *Cover*

In the House of Fun, Mister Six uses magick to locate Robin and Jim Crow, who are fending off zombies. Elsewhere, Fanny is protecting an unconscious King Mob from the insectoid Miss Dwyer.

Meanwhile, Dane surrounds himself in an ash circle to defend himself from the King-of-All-Tears. But the Archon attacks psychically, attempting to shame Dane by dredging up a memory of taking advantage of his first girlfriend, who later dumped him. The King-of-All-Tears tries to lure Dane with sex, crush him with a vision of his death, and craze him with guilt over the Myrmidon soldier he shot while escaping from the windmill. In each instance, Dane remains steadfast. Efforts to persuade Dane to leave the circle by imitating Boy and fabricating a visit by his future self are similarly unsuccessful. In the moment of victory, Dane attains enlightenment, only to discover it was a trap all along. The reality abscess is strained to bursting...

On December 22, 2012, Dane cradles his friend Gaz on the streets of Liverpool and tells him of the Invisibles' battle in the House of Fun.

ON THE COVER

Dane as Jesus, complete with BARBELiTH as halo. The title icon this time is a crucifix.

STEVE YEOWELL ON PRODUCTION

You were one of the few artists to work with both of the series' editors. How would you contrast the experience; how does the editorial process affect you as an artist?

Shelly wanted to approve breakdowns before moving to finished pencils and then inks. With Stuart I'd send in a batch of penciled pages and if he wanted any changes I'd make them before moving on to inks.

How long did you normally have to draw an issue?

Usually, about a month to pencil and maybe three weeks to a month to ink.

SEAN PHILLIPS ON THE INTERLOCKING COVERS

How did the triptych come about for 22-24?

Shelly Bond had just taken over as editor and promptly fired me! *THE INVISIBLES* was getting a new volume with a different cover artist. To soften the blow, she suggested a triptych, thinking it might be easier to paint than three separate covers. It wasn't; it took over a week to paint.

PN: *Where to begin? Dane as Buddha doesn't come any more obvious than this, enduring his trials almost note for note. And what's this? Dane likeable? The terrific material stands out even more against the obvious padding that are the other Invisibles' storylines. Steve Yeowell's art feels rushed here, with the non-Dane sequences particularly spare and cartoony. The most uneven of a wildly lopsided climax for the volume, veering between brilliance and filler.*

KCS: *Note the Technoccult poster on the wall on the first page and smile fondly. Yes kids, Grant does plan ahead. This issue provides the most text on BARBELiTH in one issue, revealing*



1.2 Dane on the evening of December 22, 2012 with his friend Gaz, who was altered by the enemy in issue one. Note the Technoccult poster.

1.3 *Jingle Bells* is a traditional Christmas song about listening to bells on a sleigh ride.

1.4 Life as fiction is a recurring theme.

5 The title refers to the Nikos Kazantzakis (1885-1957) novel *The Last Temptation of Christ*, later made into a 1988 film by Martin Scorsese (b.1942), in which Jesus is almost duped into forsaking the world and living happily ever after.

6.1 The Disneyland theme park motto is "The Happiest Place on Earth."

6.2 *The Fly* is a 1958 film by Kurt Neumann (1908-1958), about a man who creates a teleportation device. As he tests it, a fly enters the machine—mixing DNA to create a fly-man and a man-fly. The film was remade in 1986 by David Cronenberg (b.1943).

7.4 African American boxer Muhammad Ali (b. Cassius Clay, 1942) won the heavyweight title in 1964. Ali endured much controversy in his career, notably for converting to Islam and rejecting his "slave" name, and boycotting the Vietnam War, famously stating, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Viet Cong." Known for his balletic boxing style, the press agreed that he "floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee."

7.5 Life as a film.

8.1 "Special effects" touches on life as a film.

9.1 Biactol is an acne medication.

9.3 UK to US: shag = sleep with.

9.4 UK to US: slag = slut.

Dane's middle name is Paul, according to the tombstone. This links back to the Beatles with singer Paul McCartney (b.1942) and also the Christian evangelist who wrote the epistles.

13 Dane's middle name is missing on the tombstone.

14 Dane's trial with the Archon parallels the Buddha's path to enlightenment. First he is tempted with sex, but does not move.

14.1 The mark on Dane's forehead suggests the nams, the Hindu caste mark and BARBELiTH.

14.5 Life as fiction is a recurring theme.

15-17 In his second trial, Buddha is confronted

with images of his own death, but remains steadfast. Note that he remains sitting under a tree, just like Buddha.

16.2 "V. sad" is diary shorthand for "very sad."

17.1 An astral body is a projection of one's mind to remote locations.

18.5 Circles are strong barriers in magick.

19.4 A Manichean worldview is one governed by a strong sense of dualism – specifically of good and evil.

20.1 This "future Dane" is another trap, trying to convince Dane that humanity is inherently destructive.

The flower is a lotus. The spirit chakra in is also known as the thousand-petalled lotus.

20.5 The Buddha's tempters also admit defeat, and he attains enlightenment. But as in *The Last Temptation of Christ*, this is not the end for Dane.

21.1 Robin's bracelet is future technology, as will be revealed in Volume 2. She hasn't been shown wearing it before now, though.

22.2 This is how we appear outside of time – see 3.2. and 3.1.

22.3 Note that everything is circled to the same point. This is the most straightforward explanation yet of the nature of reality in the series.

23.1 In most editions of *The Cat in the Hat* the third word on page 14 is indeed "fear."

Professor Plum is a character from the detective board game Clue (known in the UK as Cluedo).

much more about the mystery satellite we've all wondered about since the beginning. But Jack aside for a moment, I've been enjoying the interplay between Jim and Robin, and Boy and Mister Six, but they all seem to have the exact same sense of sarcastic and ironic humor that it's beginning to feel like Grant's just talking through all of them. Not to mention that the women are relegated to standing in the wings and panicking. The issue feels rushed, most especially the art.

DATING THE INVISIBLES

Grant Morrison from the letters column of 2.5

The backstage sequence of events [for Year Two of *THE INVISIBLES*] went like this: King Mob went to Paris after breakfast, on August 15, 1995, and took part with an old woman and her 24-year-old "past" self, simultaneously, in what Sir Miles ... described as "debased sex rituals." These rituals – of which more salacious details will be revealed in the ... upcoming *Sensitive Criminals* – were used to locate Jack's presence in Liverpool (who immediately contacted Ragged Robin and Boy in London) and headed back to London to meet his team and go get Jack. The plans fell apart when KM got sucked into all the repercussions of Fanny's disastrous liaison with secret agent Lewis Brodie, which resulted in the death of Brodie, the near-fatal wounding of King Mob and the King's subsequent interrogation by Sir Miles!!!

Therefore King Mob had already located Jack when he was captured and it was this information which Sir Miles pried from his head in #18. ... It all comes together when you realize that the entire sequence of realtime events in issues 13-24 pretty much occurred within the space of less than 60 hours.

GOODBYE BABY RABBITS

SEP 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*Steve Yeowell *Pencils*Dick Giordano *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

"I am not
the god of
your fathers.
I am the
hidden stone
and break
all hearts."

King Mob realizes that Miss Dwyer can be defeated using Key 17. He injects the drug through her armor, and Fanny shows her a mug reading: World's Greatest Dad. Miss Dwyer mentally regresses to childhood.

Elsewhere, Mister Six sacrifices his Brian Malcolm persona to close the reality abscess. With the House of Fun returned to its normal state, Jim Crow easily finds the interrogation room. He kills Miss Dwyer with his love gun.

Meanwhile, Dane is contacted for a third time by BARBELiTH, which generates a Jesus interface to communicate through. Dane learns the truth about god-figures, and emerges from the circle to challenge the King-of-All-Tears. When Dane says he knows the Archon's name (and thus has power over him), the Archon flees. Dane finds the interrogation room and heals King Mob using magic mirror. As the Invisibles plan to head to America for recovery, Dane sneaks off to restore Sir Miles' aura.



5.1 Another call to "wake up."

6.1 Life as a game is a recurring theme.

7.1 Onorthocrasi, Efememphi, locho, Nenetophni and Blaomen are demons in *The Apocriphon of John*.

7.2 What is happening to Mister Six here?

7.5 Life as film is a recurring theme.

8.2 BARBELITH needs time because things can't grow without it.

8.3 This scene is a transcription from a vision Grant Morrison had while ill.

10.2 A sigil is an image or sign that holds magical power.

13.1 UK author Barbara Cartland (1901-2000) wrote more than 700 romance novels and non-fiction books. She was famous for wearing pink.

15.1 Recall that names have power in magick.

15.2 The King-of-All-Tears may be shifting himself to 2.6.16.3 here, to attack on a different front.

16.1 First appearance of the cloud photograph that proves the universe is a fractal.

16.6 Robin might be narrating this in 2005 as part of her rewrite of *The Invisibles*. Note that on this page she's looking at her photograph from 1997, the key to time travel.

17.2 Italian author Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) wrote *The Divine Comedy*, the first part of which is *Inferno*, which details the author's journey through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven.

17.3 Life as film is a recurring theme.

20.4 Robin's déjà vu from 1.17.15.5 occurs. But unlike traditional déjà vu, Robin knows it's happening the first time.

20.5 Dane has magic mirror inside of him – like Jim Crow and Fanny.

21.4 "Ones and nothing" describes the binary coding used in computers.

23.2 Abominable Plateau of Leng, a continental shelf under what is now Tibet, is referenced in Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* as the city of the Old Ones.

23.5 Dane returns Sir Miles' aura, reflecting the teachings of peaceful spiritual leaders of the past. From this point, both the Invisibles and Sir Miles

STEVE YEOWELL ON THE PRESENTATION OF FINISHED ARTWORK

How do inks and colors affect the impact of your pencils?

My pencils will never look the same inked by someone else as they would if I inked them myself – it's like someone with different handwriting tracing over your own. But I look at it this way – a penciler's job is to tell the story, and as long as I feel I've done that to the best of my ability then any changes to what a reader familiar with my work might consider my style that come about because of the pencils being inked by someone else aren't important. Unsympathetic coloring can impact on a story by failing to suggest the correct mood, or by confusing a panel visually.

What do you think of the final presentation of your art in the series?

Couldn't be happier.

Looking back, what do you think of your time on *THE INVISIBLES* overall?

If you can remember what it was like working on *THE INVISIBLES* then you weren't there!

PN: *A nice end to a wobbly climax, one which finds Boy, Fanny, Robin and Jim Crow used as nothing more than irrelevant padding for three issues. Mister Six sacrificing his Brian Malcolm persona is interesting, presaging the third volume and solidifying the theme of fluid personality. It's good to see Grant subscribing to the Chekov school in spades, planting the gun on the mantle eight issues ago. But the real star here is Dane, restoring Sir Miles' aura because it's the right thing to do. Nice one.*

ON THE COVER

Ragged Robin, Boy and Lord Fanny, this time in full drag. The title icon is a pair of looped rings – the full map of the hologram universe signaled by the vesica pisces and also reflective of the triptych covers themselves. Now complete, one sees that Dane serves as the dividing line for two worlds – one urban and masculine, the other organic and feminine.

become increasingly self-conscious of their actions.

Grant Morrison, from the letters column for 2.5:
 "The entire sequence of real-time events in issues 13-24 [of Volume 1] pretty much occurred within the space of less than 60 hours."

JESUS' SPEECH

Jesus' speech in this issue echoes imagery we've seen before. Dane had a "hidden stone" implanted by aliens/BARBELiTH, and has also been wearing a t-shirt with a heart in a circle with a line through it (a "broken heart"). BARBELiTH appears to be saying that it is Dane, and by extension, the rest of us. This is a reiteration of what Mictlantecutli told Fanny, that "gods are masks. Find out who wears us." The answer, of course, is "we do." We invented the gods and the rules 'they' hand down. This also has some bearing on the *Arcadia* theme that utopia is in our heads.

KCS: *Bullets bounce off Miss Dwyer, but a hypodermic needle pokes through just fine? Yeah, whatever. That's just one of those things I can't let go, especially from a book that has avoided such tactics in the past. Can't a villain just have impenetrable armor? Why do they always need a soft spot? I suppose the problem is the illustration more than anything. Fanny is supposed to make Miss Dwyer drop her armor, and we can assume she succeeded because the needle went in, but it would have been nice if the appearance of her armor could have changed. Again, I felt put off by the marauding male heroes and the women waiting in the wings. For Christ's sake, at least let Boy get up and walk on her own after it's all over. And who is that butt-white blonde woman on the cover supposed to be? Fanny you say? Harrumph!*

Despite all the rambling here, there are a lot of good things about this issue, most notably the end, where Dane returns Sir Miles' aura. This particular arc is a disappointment on many levels but, at the very least, we get to know Dane a lot better, and his role in the Invisibles is becoming much more clear. I yearn for the beautiful storytelling of Sheman, and have high hopes for Volume 2.



"It doesn't
matter
whether the
battle is
black against
white, good
against evil,
is against
isn't."

OCT 96

Grant Morrison *Writer*Mark Buckingham *Pencils*Mark Pennington *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Clem Robins *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Sean Phillips *Cover*

6 AND A HALF DOZEN OF THE OTHER

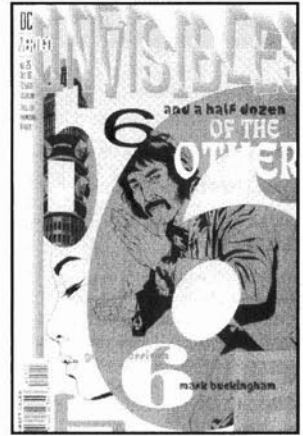
Left without a persona, Mister Six adopts the personality of '60s television character Jason King. He meets up with the reformed Division X to investigate a reported incident at the House of Fun, where a jar of ectoplasm launches them on a chain of interviews ultimately leading to a strip club run by the dwarf Quimper. A stripper gives George Harper a videotape, telling him it shows sex with aliens. Division X watch the tape, which reveals Princess Diana forced to have sex with the Moonchild. They race back to the strip club, but Quimper is gone. He calls from his limousine to tell Division X the man behind the tape: Sir Miles.

ON THE COVER

Mister Six looking exactly like Peter Wyngarde as Jason King, complete with token female companion and the fab '60s Post Office Tower (latterly BT Tower). In a portent of the Volume 3 cover trope, six sixes appear. This is also the only time THE INVISIBLES' logo is depicted with depth.

PN: *An utterly bizarre coda to THE INVISIBLES' first volume, and one which features none of the same characters bar the new-model Mister Six, gleefully fashioned after Peter Wyngarde's always-fun Jason King. The Moonchild is given a purpose a year after his introduction, and Division X is perversely more enjoyable than the Invisibles in this single issue. A pity that by the time this storyline is resumed, two years later, most readers had forgotten who these characters are. Mark Buckingham's art suits Mister Six, and we get the arrival of THE INVISIBLES' most inspired villain in Quimper. A delight.*

KCS: *I did wonder, after reading issue 24, what guise Brian Malcolm would assume after his "sacrifice." This issue is a nice little romp, I have to say. The reopening of Division X has been popping in and out of the story for a while now and it's satisfying to finally see Division X open and on the case. The introduction to Quimper sets up Black Science nicely, and we get to meet Jack Flint as well – two sides of the same coin, so to speak. Mister Six's dialogue in the bar is priceless – Grant back to true form. I like the suspense in this side story, and of course I know it will have implications later on, or it wouldn't be here. Volume Two, here I come.*



1.4 First appearance of Denise.

1.5 Ohrmazd and Ahriman are two primal spirits present at the creation of the world in the Zoroastrian dualist cosmology. Ohrmazd created time as a trap for the destructive Ahriman.

2.1 The television show is *Father Ted* (1995-1998), a UK comedy series about three Irish priests.

2.3 Irish author Flann O'Brien (b Brian O Nuallain, 1911-1966) wrote a satirical political column for the *Irish Times*, a play and three novels.

2.5 *The Third Policeman* is a 1976 novel by Flann O'Brien, about a murderer's comic descent into an Irish hell and the nature of reality.

3 The borders of this page reflect the severe color arrangements in the title sequence to *Jason King*.

3.1 *The Mirror* issue is a real paper, and this is a real issue – the Sex Pistols once said "fuck" on UK television, leading to the firing of the program's host.

3.5 Eva Fraser is a "facial fitness" instructor, offering a range of courses and videos of exercises designed to keep women looking younger.

4 Mister Six looks exactly like Jason King here.

"Six of one, half a dozen of the other" is a saying that means either of two situations is as good or bad as the other.

Division X has looks and personalities based on characters from late '60s and early '70s UK television shows, as the characters themselves later admit. Mister Six is based on Jason King, played by Peter Wyngarde (b.1933) in *Department S* (1969-1970) and *Jason King* (1971-1972). King was a novelist who had bizarre adventures (an apt description of both King Mob and Mister Six). Jack Flint is Jack Regan, played by John Thaw (b.1942) on *The Sweeney* and its spinoff films, while George Harper is based on another character from *The Sweeney*, George Carter, played by Dennis Waterman (b.1948). The Flying Squad on *The Sweeney* were cops who used illegal and underhanded tactics to solve cases – as shown in *THE INVISIBLES*. These television-influenced personalities tie in with the notion of fluid personality that defines *THE INVISIBLES*, and the life as fiction theme.

6.1 Note that the Winston Churchill statue on the left looks like Quimper's profile.

7.1 Note the animal masks in the window; they're similar to the ones worn at the parties attended by Fanny and her mother.

7.3 The acronym for Paranormal Investigations Squad, amusingly enough, is PIS.

8.1 This appears to be one of the captive souls from Harmony House. It's ability to mimic the mind of the observer suggests another form of glossolalia.

8.3 UK to US: rent boy = (usually homosexual) gigolo.

"Harper, take that mask off!" Fluid identity.

9.6 "You're nicked, my son," is the catch phrase from *The Sweeney*.

11.3 "Tekeli-li" is the cry of the shoggoths in Lovecraft's *In the Mountains of Madness*. Shoggoths were created by the Old Ones as dumb servitors in Lovecraft's Cthulhu myths. They're also mimics, and may be echoing the Tsalal bird noise from US horror writer Edgar Allen Poe's (1809-1849) *The Narrative of A Gordon Pym*, published in 1838.

Postman Pat (1981) is a UK animated children's television series about a mail man.

12.4 The National Front is a UK racist collective committed to preserving English purity.

13.1 "Hele, conceal and never reveal" is a Masonic oath.

13.5 *Death in Venice* is a novel by German author Thomas Mann (1875-1955), about an aging writer who goes to Venice for inspiration and becomes obsessed with a 14-year-old boy, losing his dignity.

The Starlight Players are a young boys' amateur drama group.

La Cage aux Folles is a 1978 French film by Edouard Molinaro (b.1928) about two middle-aged gay men who find themselves posing as husband and wife.

15.1 George Harper, looking awfully like Shaggy from *Scooby Doo* here, sums up that series.

15.2 Armageddon is the Biblical end of the world.

The fifth world comes after ours, signaling the end of the world in both Hopi and Aztec tradition.

Ragnarok is the Norse end of the world, brought on by a war between the gods.

15.3 Note Mister Six's "ludicrous cocktail!"

16.1 First appearance of Quimper. Note his clothing is similar to John-A-Dreams.

16.3 The pig mask evokes Quimper's rape at the orgy in Rio. Note that all the pictures of nude women have their faces torn off in a none-too-subtle commentary on objectification. The calendar is open to October – the same month as this issue.

20.5 "Queen of Hearts" is a nickname given to Princess Diana by the UK press.

21.1 The woman in the video is Princess Diana.

22.1 Creation as trap is a gnostic conceit manifesting as the Black Iron Prison in Philip K Dick's *VALIS*.

22.3 "Which side are you on?" is a recurring phrase.

23.2 The recurring theme of people as commodity here – note the plastic sheen on the woman, as though she's a toy or mannequin.

Quimper appears to be drinking the bottled souls seen earlier, reinforcing the theme of people as commodity.

23.3 On page 23, Mister Six calls number 23 on the roulette wheel.

LIES, DAMNED LIES!

Not all predictions can come true, and that's certainly the case with *THE INVISIBLES*. Grant Morrison used the *Invisible Ink* letters column as a means to interact with readers, answering questions, telling stories and making the occasional bum forecast (*Sensitive Criminals* was published in 1997, not 1995). Here's what might have been:

1.1 "When [THE INVISIBLES] reaches its conclusion, somewhere down the line, I promise to reveal who runs the world, why our lives are the way they are and exactly what happens to us when we die."

1.2 "Just worked out most of issue 11, which features the Haitian *hougan* Jim Crow."

1.3 "One of my intentions in *THE INVISIBLES* is to examine possible alternatives to the type of government we've been coerced into accepting."

1.5 "All of your questions should be answered as the series hops along towards its conclusion some 70, 80 or 100 issues down the line."

"Who are the Invisibles?" will, however, be the last question answered."

1.6 "One of the upcoming storylines for the third year of this book brings in a great deal of material from the Moslem world."

1.18 "Jack Flint and his seedy colleagues in the mysterious Division X will be playing a larger role in the forthcoming Book Two of *THE INVISIBLES*."

2.3 "The [Moonchild] will reappear next year [1998] to be crowned Shadow-King of England in a nightmarish midnight ritual in Westminster Abbey."

2.14 "THE INVISIBLES has only 20 issues left before it ends in January 2000."

"It's like a
stupid film.
The whole
thing..."

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES VOLUME 2



BLACK SCIENCE BANGIN'

FEB 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

CHAPTER 1

"It's so

horrible to

discover

you're just

the same

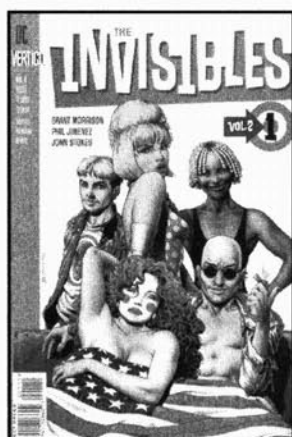
as everyone

else,

isn't it?"

In Archuleta Mesa, New Mexico, while trying to steal an HIV vaccine, Jolly Roger and her band of lesbian Invisibles are defeated by Conspiracy forces, Roger barely escaping. She turns to King Mob's cell of Invisibles for help in upstate New York, where they've been staying with billionaire Mason Lang for the past year in an effort to recover from the events of the House of Fun. King Mob and Ragged Robin, who have slid into a sexual relationship, agree to help, joined by Dane, Boy and Fanny, who have returned from vacation in New York City.

VOLUME 2



The first page is a reintroduction to *THE INVISIBLES* and has no page number.

1 Jolly Roger's clothing and pose suggests video game icon Lara Croft, subverting fantasy for the likelier reality.

"It's the end of the word as we know it." A play on *It's The End of the World as we Know It*, a song by US pop group REM. Much of this volume (and indeed the series) is concerned with the use of language.

4 "Bangin'" is slang for both drum beats and sex. All of the *Black Science* titles are dance slang.

King Mob wears a Che Guevara t-shirt. Guevara (1928-1967) was an Argentinian revolutionary who joined Fidel Castro's communist movement in Cuba. Guevara left Cuba in 1965 to pursue revolutionary activities in South America. He was eventually killed by Bolivian government troops.

5.7 This time it's Robin who opens a volume with "nice and smooth." Note that this time around she's team leader.

6.2 *David Watts* as mentioned is sung by Ray Davies (b.1944) of UK pop group the Kinks, later covered by UK rock group the Jam on their 1978 album *All Mod Cons*. The opening lines provided King Mob with his "nice and smooth" catch phrase. The song is about a disaffected youth who aspires to be as cool as the eponymous character.

6.5 Boy and Jack have spent at least part of the previous year in New York, perhaps presaging their relationship later in Volume 2.

7.1 Nanomachines are self-replicating, atom-sized robots conceived by K Eric Drexler in the book *Engines of Creation*.

7.2 Mason Lang's mansion is described as "the most luxurious Invisibles safe house in America," implying that not only are there several safe houses, but that Invisibles cells work within a larger structure. This also seems to fit with the North African academy, but appears to contradict the behavior of some cells we see (King Mob's cell seems unaware of both Cell 23 and the Division X cell at various points).

7.3 "The horror, the horror." The dying words of Kurtz from Joseph Conrad's (1854-1924) 1902 novel *Heart of Darkness*, subsequently borrowed by Francis Ford Coppola's (b.1939) 1979 film *Apocalypse Now*, itself a loose adaptation of the book set during the Vietnam war. The novel

GRANT MORRISON ON MOVING TO CONSISTENT ARTISTS

Why did you move to consistent artists in Volume 2?

Well, Philip was brought in to do the interview thing [Volume 1] because he'd done some great stuff for Mark Millar over on *SWAMP THING*. He did just such a beautiful job on it. I'd obviously decided that the next one had to be glossy; it had to look like a \$100 million movie, and Phil had done that stuff. He was just perfect. He was there at the time, he came on board. Getting Brian Bolland on the covers was obviously a deliberate move to pump up the gloss quotient a little bit. We made Ragged Robin into this really sexy babe, which upset Jill.

You and Phil Jimenez disagreed about what sort of clothes King Mob would wear.

I was very concerned. I was being seen as the character, so I wanted him to wear what I wore, which was whatever seemed to be fashionable at the time for me. And King Mob was not wearing anything that I would ever have worn in my wildest dreams. I had to keep telling Phil. I don't know why, because Phil is very stylish himself. He should just draw King Mob as this kind of gay fetish guy, which is what this guy was, with the kind of overcoat. He was into the '60s, so he'd wear white jackets, he'd wear paisley shirts, he would wear tight pants, like Jim Morrison. [The bowling shirt] was weird.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON DRESSING THE INVISIBLES

How much of the clothing was in the scripts?

Some of it was in the scripts. Later on, Grant would get really irritated with me because his vision for *THE INVISIBLES*, I believe, was a little bit grittier than mine. My mission statement when I took this book was to make the characters look more glamorous. They were all kind of ugly. This is me being really shallow, but my thought was that I wanted to draw pretty people, or at least hip people, which is ironic because I so didn't respond to King Mob being so hip. But I just wanted to draw pretty people. King Mob, I had a different clothing sensibility for him than Grant. I know that Grant was not happy about that. So there were some things in the script and some things that were not. Some things he left me alone with. When it came to King Mob, he started to have more input just because I wasn't drawing him the way Grant envisioned him.

Like the bowling shirt in 2.1?

The thing is I had actually found an image that I loved. It was colored more as bowling shirt; it wasn't supposed to be a bowling shirt. *Details* magazine at the time [had a picture of] this bald guy with shaded circle glasses and this outfit. The shirt was very similar stylistically to a bowling shirt, but I think the material, the fabric, was different. That's just something that doesn't translate into comics. It looked a lot cooler than it ended up translating in the comic. You're right, there was a line where the lesbian with the eye patch is like, "Perry Como." That was the end of the Perry Como look. In that issue, and issue six, I'd drawn him in another outfit, and we had to go through and change it, and that's where we added the target shirt. Grant was very specific, like, "No, get rid of those clothes and put him in this outfit."

PN: *The triumphant return of THE INVISIBLES in a glossy new volume, Grant clearly having taken the time to reorganize his thoughts on the series and settle on a focused target. Robin's complete lack of character in the first volume is an asset here, allowing her to move in a great new direction. Mason is a nice addition to the roster of characters, evidence of a spillover effect from JLA, which Grant was also writing at the time. The scene with the redneck is pure Tarantino and therefore just as derivative, but it works, serving to remind us that the*

ON THE COVER

The five Invisibles. The cover hints at the changes in store for the team – Ragged Robin and King Mob are in bed together, and the American flag tells us instantly that things are going to be different. A few points of interest: King Mob strangely wears a leather jacket to bed and holds a lighter (alluding to his affinity to explosives rather than smoking). Bolland and Jimenez can't seem to agree on the placement and number of his piercings. Dane's shirt features a smiling BARBELITH alien, while Fanny wears a wig never seen in the series itself. This is the first issue to feature the issue number in the artwork itself, and the only one to include the volume number. The red logo, white background and blue Vertigo strip reinforce the American motif.

chronicles the narrator's journey into Africa; deep in the jungle, he encounters ivory merchant Kurtz, an embodiment of evil.

7.4 "It's so horrible to realize you're just the same as everyone else, isn't it?" A key tenet of *THE INVISIBLES* is the abandonment of personal identity in readiness of absorption into the super context, where we're all the same. Note Robin's fluid personality between the first and second volumes.

8.6 King Mob has dental fillings.

9.3 Mason talks as though he's unfamiliar with the nature of the Invisibles' conflict here.

9.5 This scene is an homage to the dining hall sequence in the 1989 Tim Burton (b.1958) film *Batman*, based on the comic book character.

11.2 The Holy Grail is the cup that caught Christ's blood at the crucifixion. Note that Christian theology has been referenced with Dane's abduction (1.21.16). Liquid information features prominently in Philip K Dick's *VALIS*.

Quimper's mask resembles Mason's aliens.

11.5 Note that King Mob is more interested in the aliens' language than of details of Mason's abduction experience. Mason's aliens "use emotional aggregates," like BARBELITH.

11.5 DMT users often report encountering intelligent blobs, which try to teach them a new language.

12.2 Note Mason's reflection in his drink.

12.5 Mason has an Alfred to his Bruce Wayne. Does he know Mason's Batman?

13.3 *Little Fluffy Clouds* is a 1990 ambient dance song by the Orb. The song lyrics are a dialog between two people about the skies of their youth; singer Rickie Lee Jones (b.1954) recalls little fluffy clouds in Arizona. The song was subsequently used to sell Volkswagen Beetles.

13.5 King Mob apparently acquired an eyebrow ring during his American recuperation.

14.2 The *maitreya* is the messianic future Buddha.

14.3 King Mob is referring to Jim Crow, although this isn't spelled out until 2.4.3.1.

14.5 KM has doubts about returning to active duty.

14.6 Clint Eastwood (b.1930) is a US actor known for antihero roles in spaghetti western films.

14.7 The first of many images this volume fore-shadowing KM's death (note that Mob often wears the ubiquitous mod target t-shirt, which was based on the Royal Air Force symbol).

15.1 "Listen to the voice of Buddha" is a refrain from the song *Being Boiled*, by UK pop group Human League.

15.2 Jeeves is Bertie Wooster's butler in the *Jeeves and Wooster* stories of British author PG Wodehouse (1881-1975).

15.3 The Chrysler Building is a 77-floor art deco skyscraper built by William Van Alen (1883-1954) in 1930 to be the tallest building in the world.

15.4 It's interesting that it's Boy who picks up on Robin and Mob's affair instantly.

16.1 Fanny and Jolly Roger exhibit the antipathy stereotypically shared between lesbians and drag queens.

16.2 For more on Archuleta Mesa, see page 98.

16.3 Delta Force is the US Army's elite unit.

17.2 One conspiracy theory holds that the CIA created AIDS as a biological weapon.

17.3 Jolly Roger seems to believe in aliens, if this is what she means by "ultras." With what King Mob's cell already knows about the true nature of the grays, this suggests that information isn't widely shared between cells.

The Ebola filovirus was discovered in Zaire in 1976. Beginning with hemorrhagic fever, symptoms progress to vomiting, abdominal pains and eventually massive internal bleeding.

17.4 "Only two of us got out." Which other member of Jolly Roger's cell survived, and where is she now?

17.5 *Mektoub* is a Muslim saying meaning "it is written." Language as reality again.

18.1 The remote viewer captured here may be Austin, as revealed next issue.

The Outer Church doesn't fear the "paranoid press," even though they write about them. Perhaps, like the Conspiracy on *The X Files*, they use them to make credible witnesses appear paranoid?

First appearance of Colonel Friday.

18.2 Colonel Friday: "Deep down, we all just want to be the same." He should love the super context, then. Is this what KM means when he says that if we win, the bad guys will get what they want?

Note that Friday wears the same circular black glasses Gelt and Miss Dwyer did.

19.1 *Speed* is a 1994 film by Jan de Bont (b.1943) about a commuter bus rigged to explode if it slows below 50 miles per hour.

19.4 Another 23.

20.1 *2001: A Space Odyssey* is a 1968 film by Stanley Kubrick (1928-1999), written by Arthur C. Clarke (b.1917). It examines the concept of human evolution.

20.3 *Pulp Fiction* is a non-linear 1994 film by Quentin Tarantino following the interconnected exploits of various antiheroes. The film is notable for popularizing dialogue laden with pop culture references.

20.4 Note the framing of this scene; Jolly Roger is literally at Mason's throat!

20.6 Quentin Tarantino (b.1963) is a US director of such films as *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction*.

Postmodernism is a deconstructionist critical approach to art characterized by ironic detachment and the juxtaposition of elements from different contexts into a new whole.

22.2 "Well, is that you, John Wayne? Is this me?" A quote from Stanley Kubrick's 1967 Vietnam war film *Full Metal Jacket*, used to mock drill sergeant Hartman, played by R Lee Ermey (b.1944). KM is echoing the film and mocking the redneck.

John Wayne (b. Marion Michael Morrison, 1907-1979) is a US actor notable for archetypal male hero roles in western and war films.

22.4 "Big Arnie" is a reference to Arnold Schwarzenegger (b.1947), an Austrian bodybuilder who subsequently became a Hollywood comic actor, notable for such films as *Kindergarten Cop* (1990) and *Twins* (1988).

24.3 Jolly Roger is being controlled by Quimper.

ARCHULETA MESA - UFO HOTBED?

Archuleta Mesa has been rumored to be a secret underground alien base for more than twenty years, the most popular of such mythic locations until *The X Files* dragged Area 51 back into the cultural spotlight. Aside from the obvious questions, however, the mesa is an unlikely candidate. Located near Dulce, New Mexico, Archuleta Mesa is on land belonging to the Jicarilla Indians, who aren't likely to be doing the US government a favor by participating in a cover up. The land is open to mineral exploration, so there clearly isn't a fear that test drilling may expose underground tunnels, notwithstanding the fact that an underground facility so close to a fault line would likely have been detected by seismic equipment by now.

Invisibles' fight is a personal one despite the ponderous Archons and eerie dwarves. Phil Jimenez is superb throughout, with innovative panel designs and an overall sense of style. The attention to detail is breathtaking, from King Mob's shirt coming untucked on 6.2 to the laden table in the diner. Even Danny Vozzo's pastel colors work well, although Robin appears to be colorblind (does anyone really wear yellow and purple together?). A promising start to the American incarnation of THE INVISIBLES, with a smashing Bolland cover that, in photograph form, should surely be the movie poster for the impending film (although why King Mob would wear a leather jacket to cover his modesty I've no idea...).

KCS: *The first issue of volume two left me drooling for more. For the first time in the series I feel like I can connect with King Mob. His vulnerability is endearing and makes him feel much more like a human being than the caricature he was throughout most of Volume 1. I really felt for the guy and was anxious to see how he would continue to develop. I was also a little intrigued by Robin and KM's romance, though it seems a bit contrived for now. Are they in love, or are they just having sex? Time will tell, I suppose.*

The scene at the diner is priceless, from KM's corn flakes to the homophobic cowboy. Phil Jimenez is aces in my book. Like Chris Weston, he has a knack for minute detail (just take a look at Robin's hair!), and he is a master of body language. Check out Fanny and Jolly Roger meeting for the first time. Er... Yikes! Can't wait for part two of Black Science.

"We all
die
together."

BLACK SCIENCE KICKIN'

MAR 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*Phil Jimenez *Pencils*John Stokes *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

The Invisibles draw lots for new roles in the group, Robin becoming team leader. They drive cross-country to Archuleta Mesa, stopping at a pueblo for rest. While Boy and Jolly Roger practice unarmed combat, King Mob, Mason, Dane and two friends, Austin and Emilio, take LSD on a mesa in a male bonding ritual. The next day, Robin compares her cloud photograph from the House of Fun to a cloud formation at the pueblo, and sees her parents and younger self take the photo in her hand.

Later, King Mob, Robin, Boy and Jolly Roger infiltrate the Conspiracy's underground base, while the remaining Invisibles wait in a hotel room. The latter soon find themselves under paranormal attack, while King Mob and company discover an imprisoned mass of magic mirror being transported. Before they can investigate they are surrounded by enemy troops. Quimper takes control of Jolly Roger's mind, and the team find themselves in a Mexican standoff.



The New Mexico sequences in this issue were based in part on experiences Grant had while living on the San Ildefonso pueblo for a few months.

2.1 Oppenheimer actually said, "I am become death, destroyer of worlds," after the detonation of the first atomic bomb at the Trinity site in Jornada del Muerto ("journey of death") at 5:30am on July 16, 1945. The quote is from the Hindu holy book, the *Bhagavad Gita*, and will be revisited by both King Mob and Jim Crow later this volume.

Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967) was a physicist who headed US atomic research at Los Alamos, New Mexico, leading ultimately to the creation of the atomic bomb in 1945.

2.3 At the time of the Trinity detonation, blind University of New Mexico student Georgia Green, in a car roughly 50 miles away, asked her brother, "What's that?" While popularly used to suggest the power of an atomic explosion, it's likely that Green was reacting to the swerving car rather than seeing any kind of light.

2.4 Note Mason is posed like Oppenheimer.

3 "Kickin'" is slang for a good dance track.

King Mob's referring to Ganesh.

4.6 Silat is a martial art from Malaysia and Indonesia featuring several different styles.

5.5 Controversial Peruvian author Carlos Castaneda (1925-1998) wrote a series of allegedly autobiographical books detailing his time with Don Juan of the Yaqui tribe, who taught him sorcery and the power of hallucinogens. The first of these is 1968's *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*.

6 Note the Native American figures on the lower left with their Quimper-esque mouths.

6.1 "If it wasn't for the bats, insects would take over the world." More evidence for the Mason as Batman theorists. Much of this conversation was taken verbatim from a tape recording made by Grant and the real-life Emilio.

6.2 Mason believes the universe is a hologram.

7.3 *Easy Rider* is a 1969 US film by Dennis Hopper (b.1936), about two bikers discovering themselves during a cross-country trip of America. See also 2.14.6.1.

7.4 Spanish explorer Hernan Cortes (1485-1547) conquered Mexico in 1521 after the native Aztecs

GRANT MORRISON ON REALITY AND FICTION

You use real dialogue when King Mob and company go up the mesa in Volume 2 and use LSD before invading Dulce.

That was real. That was a tape recording of everyone talking; that if there wasn't any bats, insects would rule the earth. My friend said, "What, would they take over the governments?" We were being really serious about it. So that was real life stuff.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON RETURNING TO THE INVISIBLES

After *Entropy* in the UK you were invited back to launch Volume 2. How did that happen?

The editor was changing, and the assignment was given to Shelly Roeberg. I don't think I'd ever worked for her before, but she made this hard-core sales pitch. I think I decided in one day. I got the inker I wanted. I was like, "I'll do it, but I want a certain letterer." Stuff like that is hugely important to me. I wanted Todd Klein to letter it. So she's like, "If I can get Todd Klein to letter it, will you draw it?" And I said yes.

There were a couple of things I wanted. I wanted a team book. I'd been at DC for a year and I'd just sort of been hopping around, and I wanted certain things to draw if I was going to be on them for a while. One of them was a team, and I wanted fairly new characters because I wanted a team I could imprint on. This is all ego, mind you, I'm not kidding myself. The cool thing about *THE INVISIBLES*, and I think the thing that was also its detriment, was that the characters in Volume 1 tended to be there to move plot along. They had not been fleshed out. I think they could have been fleshed out if there was a more consistent art vision. I know Grant had wanted to do something like *SANDMAN*, where there were different artists for different arcs, but I think that a book like *THE INVISIBLES* would have done much better with a single artist with a very strong vision of who these characters were. You can do a lot of storytelling, you can get a lot of character, just through body language. When you have different artists with different ideas, there's no consistency, and I think that hurt the book in the long run because Grant was also so busy. I tend to think *THE INVISIBLES* was a plot-heavy book, and he was less interested in exploring character backgrounds.

So basically with Volume 2 I had a group of characters who really had no character. They had character, but [not] that I could play with, that I could say, “Yes, Boy stands like this,” and “Yes, Fanny makes these gestures when she’s laughing.” Because that stuff really hadn’t been explored.

You were tossed into cultural references almost immediately. How important is getting accurate likenesses of historical figures?

I actually tried very hard. Oppenheimer – it was really hard to find a full frontal shot of him, I remember. I had to make up that face a little bit from a lot of three-quarter photographs of his. Josephine Baker – there was plenty of reference for her. I remember correcting Stokes’ inks on the Josephine Baker face to try to make it a little bit more accurate.

How did you approach the sex and the violence?

I approached them as any other scene. I didn’t use as much reference – I made up the gore. I mean, how nasty would that be, to actually see the gore?

Like the soldier holding his own guts...

That was so funny! That was great! It all depended on the context of it. In the script I thought it worked so well; I thought it was a great moment. I’d completely forgot about that. I just try to do it accurate and use it to convey the story.

were decimated by European disease.

7.6 Dane somehow knows of Mason’s previous encounter with BARBELITH (in the guise of an alien abduction), although he wasn’t present last issue when the story was told.

8 The background illustrations may be the line art made by Nazca native Americans. The illustrations were only discovered after the advent of the airplane, visible only from the sky. Some use them to suggest that the Nazca were adept at remote viewing, while others maintain they were meant for visiting extraterrestrials.

8.5 KM’s premonition of a porcelain train comes true on page 18.

9.3 “The way I see it, there’s only one time.” KM understands a fundamental tenet of the series.

9.6 Is that the bat symbol in King Mob’s glasses?

10 The idea of the Invisibles routinely switching roles calls into question notions about individuality and individual responsibility and echoes much of Robert Anton Wilson’s *Quantum Psychology*. In a sense, they are anticipating the super context.

10.2 Boy’s white tab suggests that she’s “spirit.” Edith’s comment “spirit has a mind of its own” in Volume 1 presages Boy’s actions later this volume.

11.2 Donald Duck is an animated character owned by the Disney corporation, known for spastic fits and a near-unintelligible voice.

12.5 Kula Shaker is a UK guitar band characterized by mystical lyrics and Indian sounds. Grant Morrison wrote on his Web site: “King Mob would have loved Kula Shaker at that point in the story and I should know, so there it was. And the lads got together after seeing their name in the comic and sent me a book about UFOs in ancient India [*Alien Identities*]. Phil Jimenez drew the sleeve for one of their singles [303, with inks by John Stokes]. All so typical of those marvellous, marvellous times.”

This is Robin as a young girl in her original timeline. Note that she must dye and perm her hair!

21.1 *Independence Day* is a 1996 US film by Roland Emmerich (b.1955), concerning an alien invasion of Earth that improbably fails when a computer virus uploaded from a Macintosh laptop infects the invading mother ship.

22.5 A popular conspiracy holds that routine medical vaccines, such as those for polio, actually contain implants to track citizens.

ON THE COVER

A team of scientists in full biohazard gear transports the downloaded magic mirror in a cart. The figure blocking the camera in true celebrity fashion breaks the fourth wall to blend the division between reality and fiction. It’s interesting that at this point the nature of the magic mirror clearly hasn’t been settled editorially, as Bolland paints the download as a tentacled jellyfish creature rather than a slivery blob of reflective matter. It’s a bold move to veer away from the main cast for just the second issue, let alone abandon the contemporary story to illustrate a scene from 1947.

There was a lot discussion about that first Robin/King Mob [sex] scene in the first issue of the second volume. I just remember thinking I was going to have fun with it, since I could. What shocked me was that you could show certain things, but not say certain words. We couldn't use the word "orgasm," but you could show it. You could show this woman, her bare breasts flopped all the over the place as King Mob eats her out, basically, but could not say the word "orgasm." I thought that was very interesting. But that scene was actually so much fun to draw.

My whole other approach to it is *How can you draw it and not make it look extreme?* I don't tend to draw anything gratuitously extreme. I wanted it to be as seamless as possible, where the attention is brought to the scene and not to the art itself, if that makes any sense.

PN: *It's interesting on reflection to see how slowly this new volume of THE INVISIBLES really begins. For all of the ultraviolence and slick posturing on display, what we're really reading is an issue and a half of exposition and old-fashioned character development. The mesa sequence in particular serves little purpose other than to let the characters run free for a few pages. It's interesting that for a series Morrison claims (incorrectly) predates The X Files, this new volume seems to draw so much from it. Jimenez, Stokes and Vozzo continue to complement each other perfectly – the sense of craft on display here is stunning, and the reader can't help but be caught up in a rare instance of the creative team firing on all cylinders. The clever page borders and panel compositions show what can be achieved in monthly comics under certain conditions. Bolland's subdued cover is oddly one of his best.*

KCS: *Okay. The acid trip is a bit indulgent, but it does have its value in that Grant takes the opportunity to portray LSD as a consciousness-expanding substance, as well as bending time a bit. Dane's immediate recognition of BARBELiTH is a nice touch, and a nice clue since most readers haven't figured out what BARBELiTH is yet. And Mason's bat speech is priceless, reminding me of his Bruce Wayne persona. I love the sequence of Robin seeing herself as a child. Her mystery is one that the series ignores for too long, and I'm glad to have her tale front and center. On the down side, I found it totally unrealistic that they could infiltrate the facility so easily, and for a series that has been so far out on the fringes, yet remained plausible, the lapse is disappointing. It appears that Volume 2 might go Hollywood. We shall see...*



BLACK SCIENCE
SORTED

"They
have better
weapons
than we
do. On the
other hand,
we have
the best
corn,
darling."

APR 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

As Austin defends the hotel room by burning sage, Fanny realizes their teammates are in trouble. They use corn to form a magick circle around the base and Fanny charges a sigil to introduce chaos to the enemy ranks.

In the underground base, Ragged Robin manages to control an enemy agent and introduce an element of chaos to the confrontation. King Mob seizes the moment and takes on the enemy soldiers, while Quimper is overwhelmed by having his control broken by Robin and collapses in a seizure. Colonel Friday, head of the Conspiracy's Archuleta Mesa operations, takes him to the Outer Church for healing. King Mob frees Roger by forcing her to recall the White Flame meditation defense from their training at the Invisibles' North African academy. The Invisibles manage to find the HIV vaccine but are split up before they can escape. King Mob and Jolly Roger find themselves on a porcelain train in an underground city.



1.5 The "You fuck I" written on the mirror is an exercise in duality – within the supercontext we are all one. A message, then, that by hurting the agents of the Outer Church the Invisibles are only hurting themselves.

2.3 "Your mother fucks Hitler in Hell." An allusion to the 1973 William Friedkin (b.1939) US film *The Exorcist* ("Your mother sucks cock in Hell"), based on the William Peter Blatty (b.1928) novel about a young girl possessed by Satan. Note that Austin is essentially exorcising the hotel room.

3.2 "He speaks with forked tongue" is a Native American saying about invading Europeans, who typically said one thing and did another.

4 "Sorted" is slang for being prepared – generally in terms of having drugs for the evening.

5.2 A poltergeist is the result of a spirit interacting with its surroundings (i.e. books appearing to move of their own volition).

7.5 Huey, Dewie and Louie are Donald Duck's nephews in the Disney cartoons.

9.5-9.9 Martin Lincoln's life flashes before his eyes as he dies in a process Victor Sanchez calls recapitulation.

10.5 Note that the Outer Church is always presented without color. Monochrome – a duality.

12.6 Mister Six and ElFayed in their teacher roles. Based on the dates given for King Mob's induction into the Invisibles and Mister Six living as Brian Malcolm, Six must have taught at the North African academy after classes in Liverpool.

12.7 Note that Roger has both eyes in 1988.

14 Quimper: "I was once a little light." We begin to glimpse the true nature of Quimper here and on the following page.

Note the precise location of the Outer Church: "Rut 7, Sub-Grid Zero, Hive Tesseract A, Cell 10310." The extended locational directions reinforce the notion of hierarchical dominance. Note too that the caption boxes use both upper- and lower-case letters, again suggesting duality.

The cube reads: *This sculpture means total control only.*

The flat chair at the top of the page later appears on 2.10.3, with King Mob sitting on it.

15 Note the I/You sphere – still more symbols of duality.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON THE CREATIVE PROCESS

What was the design process like for Jolly Roger and Colonel Friday?

Jolly Roger I think he just described. I think Grant drew Quimper, because Grant can draw really well, which a lot of people don't know. I honestly don't remember. Jolly Roger, my thought is that I either got a drawing of her or a really complex description.

Did you run up against any censorship issues?

It was mostly dialogue editing. I don't think I got much editing. There was some discussion about the Robin scene. Fanny masturbating in the third issue to cast the spell – there was some discussion about that, but nothing we couldn't handle. Like there was never some moment where I was like, "I'm going to draw this or I'm walking off the book." There was nothing like that. This is going to sound far more conservative than I am, but it's DC Comics, and they can publish what they want to. They have a right to say, "No, we don't want to publish this." I'll really fight for certain things, but the bottom line is it's their company, and they have the final say. So if they need to make me change something I'll change it.

There was a line where she's masturbating to a picture of someone, and I forget who the original someone was, but we had to change the name, because DC was uncomfortable with the name. So now it's like King Kong or something – oh, Bigfoot! Some ridiculous thing. It was some politician, which I thought was interesting. There was a last-minute pull of that.

GRANT MORRISON ON CENSORING *THE INVISIBLES*

So Fanny ended up masturbating to Bigfoot...

That was supposed to be Ross Perot. We named names in that third book, and they were just being crossed out. Even Jerry Springer's name was taken out. We were just referring to Jerry Springer as someone on television. We weren't insulting him or saying anything about him.

PN: *Jimenez proves what a brilliant illustrator he is, using a documentary style to ground the more psychedelic aspects of the series even as he sets the reader on edge through slightly off-kilter angles (see page 19). The sheer detail of his lines is*

ON THE COVER

A posed "publicity shot" image taken featuring a sultry Ragged Robin in front of King Mob, her lipstick mark still on his mask (the kiss itself happens within the issue). There's a subtle fiction/reality interplay occurring here, the idea being that *THE INVISIBLES* is a film populated by actors who can take time between takes to pose for media photographs. It's almost surprising we don't see flashes.

amazing in light of the monthly publication schedule – the original boards for pages 18 and 19 are among those in my collection and reveal far more detail than is ultimately reproduced in the finished comic. Morrison's storytelling skills come to the fore here, deftly mixing characterization with action so that the two become integral components of the story. Of particular note are the recapitulation of the soldier Lincoln (how many comic book authors are literate enough to even have an awareness of the idea?) and the brilliant explanation of Robert Anton Wilson's quantum psychology by Mister Six and Elfayed. Other nice touches include the empathy Morrison engenders for Quimper, the bold decision to print the Outer Church scenes without color, and the way Jimenez crafts a unique body language for each character (compare the fluid Boy to the posture-perfect Robin).

KCS: *The best part of this issue is the black-and-white spread of the Outer Church. The image of the "I/You" ball is a perfect symbol for the slavery of words and the separation and alienation propagated by the oppressive forces of the Outer Church. We also get a hint as to Quimper's origins: "Once I was a little light." There is a sadness in those words; Grant has a talent for one-liners. As always, the dialogue is crisp and often amusing, which is helpful amid such mayhem and slaughter. Fanny manages to be the highlight character this time around despite having a bit part. Both Fanny and King Mob spout the same message: Chaos always defeats order. But Fanny does it with so much more style. We do, after all, have the best corn. I am impressed most in this issue by the consistency of character that seemed so lacking in the waning days of Volume 1. Boy's reactions to the violence around her and the impossibility of the situations the Invisibles seem to find themselves in seem genuine. As a pragmatist, Boy is extremely effective in grounding the series. I'm pissing myself for issue four. Just what is that underground city?!!*

15.1 Children were once happy to see Quimper in their dreams. The child here appears to be Bobby Murray, with his bear Boody. The aliens told Dane in 1.16.12 that they "spoke to you through your /toys/" when he was a child, suggesting that Quimper is one of them.

15.2 Colonel Friday: "You were bought and sold, Quimper." The enemy repeatedly refer to people as commodities.

Note the "obey" inside Friday's glasses. It's intriguing to consider that some Outer Church agents may be acting against their will. Could the Conspiracy members wearing the round glasses be under the influence of Key 17?

17.4 *Doom* was one of the first "first-person shooter" video games, sending players into claustrophobic killing zones ... just like the one the Invisibles are in here.

18.1 King Mob flew a stealth bomber like this as Gideon Stargrave on 1.17.20.

18.4 "Fly brother, fly" is a quote from a Kula Shaker song *Into the Deep*, about a "long-forgotten sleep." Waking up is a recurring theme in the series. Recall that KM was listening to a Kula Shaker cassette prior to the mission (in 2.2.12.5).

19.3 "We're not in a film." Life as film is a recurring theme.

22 Fanny is practicing a variation of the masturbation spell Grant Morrison later asks readers to do in the letters column to issue 2.7. The picture was originally supposed to be of failed US presidential candidate Ross Perot.

22.1 Dane is making a pentagram, a powerful occult symbol commonly used in magic.

22.2 The *National Enquirer* is an American tabloid newspaper largely known for fabricating unbelievable stories about celebrities.

24.1 Quimper isn't human, but he's "from here," according to Jolly Roger. Which is true, as we ultimately discover with the revelation that he used to be John-A-Dreams. But how does Roger know? It's probably a lucky guess; Roger believes in the "ultras" after all.

24.2 King Mob claims to have seen the porcelain train as a kid. It may be another part of the race memory.

24.3 Trains are a recurring image.

24.5 "Be prepared" is the Boy Scout motto.

25 Lord Robert Baden-Powell (1857-1941) was an Englishman who founded the Boy Scouts in 1908.

From the letters column: An eerie premonition when Danny Vozzo's bio ends with the line: "Even the experts, like Captain Ahab and Danny, can sometimes make heartbreaking mistakes." Vozzo's erratic colors add to the mess of the final confusing issues of Volume 3 and were widely criticized by fans. Captain Ahab of course is from Herman Melville's (1819-1891) 1851 novel *Moby Dick*, about the danger of hubris.

"Creepy
bastards
just about
scared the
fucking
maxi-pad
out from
under me."

MAY 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

BLACK SCIENCE
SAFE

To help add to the chaos confusing the enemy soldiers, the native American Austin performs a rain dance. Ragged Robin and Boy escape with the HIV vaccine, but King Mob and Jolly Roger find themselves even deeper in the Conspiracy base, where they see legions of cyborg Myrmidons being trained by hypnosis. The pair soon find a Level 6, a holding area for Roger's captured teammates, who have been mutated into strange creatures. They beg for mercy, and King Mob kills them all.

On the way out of the base, Jolly Roger is confronted by Quimper, who tries once again to possess her. Instead, she shoots him. King Mob is shot by Colonel Friday, who manifests an advanced form of 4D liquid armor. Before he can attack, Mob activates a bomb and blows up the room. He and Roger escape the base. But as the Invisibles flee, Quimper manages to place a sliver of himself in Robin's mind.

ON THE COVER

An evocative shot of Quimper removing his mask to smile for the camera. Two elements of foreshadowing here, as we later discover that Quimper is obsessed with his image and also find his mask pivotal to the climax of the volume. Still more editorial dissonance, however, as Quimper's face here looks nothing like the one revealed in the issue itself. Bolland seems to have favored the "burned" explanation. This cover is featured in the following issue, shown when King Mob reads this very comic book.



PN: *Jimenez hasn't yet begun to show signs of the rushed schedule that would ultimately drive him from the series, experimenting with layout and even daring to open the issue with a full-page illustration of one of the THE INVISIBLES' most minor supporting characters. The attention to detail is still a delight— who else would bother to draw a military installation that actually looks used (note the damaged wall on 2.3)? The only real downside here is the slightness of the plot and the loss of the previous volume's more subdued take on the Invisibles' struggle. The personal conflict of that volume has been replaced here by a beautiful mix of slick action and glib wordplay that, while fun, leaves the reader feeling slightly empty on subsequent readings. Which, as a critique of vacant American culture, is no doubt the point. The Bloody Hell in America trade paperback collection of these early issues is a blockbuster movie in paper form, an Invisibles graphic novel that distills the essence of the American volume into four dizzying issues and is the more powerful for it. And yes, I know I'm the only reader to find the cover painting less than inspiring, but then showing what Quimper looks like under the mask rather defeats the point, doesn't it?*

KCS: *Jolly Roger's confrontation with Quimper is a high point for me. Her no nonsense desire to destroy Quimper because he messed with her head illustrates the point that not all Invisibles are "good." King Mob's reaction to the magic mirror is touching, an epiphany for both him and the reader. I love Morrison's explanation of the Roswell recovery, but am a bit troubled by the explicit gore. Perhaps Grant is trying to turn the audience off to the violence, thus making King Mob's admission of sickness at the whole affair more palpable. But I was already turned off, and didn't need to see intestines...*

2.5 Another foreshadowing of KM's early death.

4 The Outer Church is outside of time— King Mob and Jolly Roger can see everything at once.

7.6 Finishing school is where girls from wealthy families are traditionally instructed in the ways of the socialite— posture, pouring tea and so forth.

10.1 *If I Could Talk I'd Tell You* is a song by US rock band the Lemonheads.

10.2 It appears that we come from the supercontext, and return there when we die.

15.1 Dopey is one of the seven dwarves from the 1937 Disney animated film of *Snow White*.

16.2 Quimper is aware he cannot die, because he understands the holographic nature of the universe and the fact that we are all one. He may also be referring to his ability to re-enter the game.

17.5 KM previously saw 4D armor on Miss Dwyer.

18.5 "There will be an electronic policeman in every head." Note the WINTER'S EDGE story, *And We're All Policemen*.

20.3 Inquisitors of various religions used Katherine wheels to force recantations from their victims. The device, named for 4th century Christian martyr Katherine of Alexandria (d.311), is a spiked wheel, with the victim impaled via centrifugal force.

21.1 Azathoth, according to Lovecraft, is "a bubbling idiot mass of nuclear chaos."

21.4 In *THE INVISIBLES*, time is synchronous.

22.1 "The Reverse Universe." The hologram theory is being slowly expanded throughout this volume.

23.2 Dane is referring to the fact that the word "fanny" refers to a woman's butt in the US, but her vagina in the UK.

23.6 A reference to Friedrich Nietzsche's *Jenseits von Gut (Beyond Good and Evil)*. "He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster. And if you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you."

23.7 Note Quimper's mask in Robin's iris. If both the observer and observed (the abyss) gaze into each other, who comes out on top?

24.1 A *burriko* is a Lolita figure, a fake girl/child.

24.2 Sega Corp. is a Japanese video game company.

24.5 Note that the timesuit looks like a scorpion.

"It's only
you fighting
them that
gives them
strength."

TIME MACHINE GO

JUN 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

The Invisibles leave New Mexico for California with the HIV vaccine. King Mob travels to Berkeley to meet up with his old girlfriend, Jacqui, who left him over his actions in the Invisibles. Meanwhile, Dane and Lord Fanny go to the Power Exchange in San Francisco, an S&M club where they hope to meet the Harlequinade and obtain the Hand of Glory.

Two Aum Supreme Truth cultists break into one of Mason Lang's research labs in an effort to steal a timesuit that hasn't been invented yet and travel to the end of the world. They kill one of Mason's employees and wound another, Takashi Satoh, and Ragged Robin. King Mob returns from Berkeley in time to save Robin from a bomb left by the cultists, while Boy, looking on, believes they have perished in the explosion.

GRANT MORRISON ON THE SHAPE OF THE TIMESUIT

Is the timesuit supposed to look like a scorpion *loa* on purpose?

No. The time machine's a weird thing. I think Phil just came up with that design. I think it was supposed to look like – was it an angel? Or a bug? Some design element that had to do with origami and light somehow. I don't even remember what it was. The fact that we got everything is perfect.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON HIS ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Your style is almost documentary – the anti-Rob Liefeld.

Which I'm sort of proud of. I actually thought that would be one of the strengths I would bring to the book, because I am so mainstream, even in the way I live my life. I'm all about *Erin Brockovich* and Starbucks, and Grant is not. I actually think we were a perfect team. The thing I brought to it that other people may not is an open mind. I had no hesitations about drawing anything, as long as you could tell me what it looked like. Being mainstream probably made whatever I drew a little more accessible. Having George Perez as my inspiration, I'm hugely into representational art, because I think we're telling stories. My art can appeal to the broadest variety of people. That's one of the reasons I liked working for Vertigo and the DCU, because I have this naturalistic, representational art. It appeals to more people than a lot of more stylized, but sometimes alienating, art.



1 Note that the panels on this page are "folded" like origami. The series itself is a creation of paper.

1.1 1945 is the year of the first atomic bomb detonation.

1.3 The jumping frog has many associations here, from released energy to forward leaps to chaos theory.

2 "Time Machine Go" is a play on the Thunderbirds' motto, "Thunderbirds are go!" *Thunderbirds* (1964-1968) is a UK television series featuring animated puppets, about a comic book-style rescue team. Grant would later model his New X Men on the series.

"It's about time" was the advertising slogan for the 1996 *Doctor Who* US TV movie, which would have aired around the time Morrison was writing this issue.

4.4 "There are too many people around all the time." Robin's specifically talking about Mason, pictured here in the foreground. We'll learn why in issue 2.21.

5.1 The Tokyo subway attack depicted here actually occurred on March 20, 1995.

Sarin is a colorless, odorless gas, which is lethal at just 0.5 milligrams. It was originally developed during biological weapons research in 1942.

5.2 The Aum Supreme Truth is a Japanese doomsday cult organized in 1987. The cult, which combines elements of Buddhism and Christianity, claimed 20,000 members at its peak.

5.4 Shoko Asahara (b.1955 as Chizo Matsumoto) founded the Aum Supreme Truth cult. He is regarded as Christ by his followers.

6.3 The razor blade scene here apparently actually occurs — Grant Morrison used the idea after having it described to him by a convict, according to the letter column of issue 2.7.

7.3 Perry Como (b.1912) was a popular singer of the 1950s. Coincidentally, his 1955 debut album is titled *So Smooth*.

7.4 *And I Love You So* is a 1973 Perry Como tune.

9.2 The first appearance of Pierrot and Columbine, the Harlequinade.

Pierrot is a character from French pantomime, characterized by a child's mind inside a man's body.

ON THE COVER

A straightforward image of Ragged Robin lying unconscious on the floor of Mason's lab, having been shot by the Yakuza. Her telepathic enhancement circuit is exposed, although here it looks more like a smooth metal skull plate. She's holding the origami representation of the timesuit and appears to have spilled far more blood than seems possible for the wound she received. Incidentally, neither her shoes nor her glasses match the ones she actually wears in the issue itself, and her wrap appears to have vanished. Still, at least Bolland got the right gunman.

Columbine is the lover figure in the *Commedia del Arte*, generally depicted in a servile role. She's notably a mimic, and often serves as a solitary thinker.

Harlequin is a sprite in English pantomime invisible to all but Columbine. It's worth noting that the Harlequinade (or *Commedia del Arte*) features prominently in Michael Moorcock's Jerry Cornelius books, themselves an inspiration for *THE INVISIBLES*.

10.1 The Manson girls refers to the female members of a loose collective that sprung up around Charles Manson (b.1934) prior to the gang's infamous killing spree.

10.3 King Mob is reading the fourth (and immediately preceding) issue of *THE INVISIBLES* Volume 2.

11 Is Jacqui written into the Gideon Stargrave stories? An interesting insight into King Mob that he would write her as his sister.

12.3 The quote is from Philip K Dick's (1928-1982) 1981 novel *VALIS*, a book that shares many themes with *THE INVISIBLES*. Based on an incident Dick claimed to experience in 1974, the book is about a higher power communicating with humans through their gods. It's also notable for featuring plasmate, a material similar to *THE INVISIBLES*' magic mirror.

12.4 *The Secret Ascension*, also known as *Philip K Dick is Dead*, *Alas* is a science fiction novel by Michael Bishop questioning the veracity of reality through the return of Philip K Dick.

13.3 The ring echoes BARBELiTH, which is appropriate as Jacqui and King Mob in this panel reflect the "positive space" of a hyper-dimensional entity, as seen on the cover of issue 3.2.

14.1 Note the scorpion tattoo on King Mob's lower back.

14.3 The "death god" is Baron Zaraguin.

15 The background image is magic mirror.

15.4 The Undertones were a late 1970s Irish punk band.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944) was a painter of the futurist movement, a genre begun in pre-World War I Italy concerning the dynamic impact of technology.

15.5 Manga are Japanese comic books.

"Teenage kicks right through the night" are lyrics from the chorus of the Undertones' song *Teenage Kicks*.

16.2 Takashi probably wouldn't be able to buy "crisps" in the US!

16.4 Takashi spells out the space-time theory of *THE INVISIBLES*. Despite hints in previous issues of this volume, this is the first time the hologram theory is discussed in scientific terms. (Previous explanations included Aztec mythology, such as the Day of Nine Dogs).

19.4 *Harumagedon* is a Japanese concept similar to armageddon, the climactic battle leading to the end of the human race.

PN: *The calm after the storm, this. Some lovely character moments as we see Fanny in Hilde mode and meet the delightful Jacqui, whose criticism of the Invisibles is badly needed by this point (and will influence the remainder of the volume). The suggestion that nudity in print can be non-sexual is great, and the insertion of the actual INVISIBLES comic book into the series is a brilliant move. Fanny's comment that it's not in the interest of pharmaceutical companies to make drugs that actually work is chilling in its truth. But the violence of the Yakuza gangsters feels out of place, more reminiscent of the early days of Vertigo than the glossy world of THE INVISIBLES. On a more anal point, Robin's wearing the wrong shoes on the cover.*

KCS: *These karma accountants (when did OK Computer come out?) are disgusting. They reek of gimmick and quite frankly seem a horrible rip off of all the other disgusting things Vertigo writers were trying to do around this time. Thank God for Jacqui. If she hadn't popped in there to rip the King a new one, I don't know how long I could have continued to read. I'm somewhat troubled by Grant's obvious consciousness of how gratuitous and brutal the violence is. He seems unwilling to ever really correct it. Jacqui seems to have the obvious answer here. Nothing needs to be done. The war is a lie. This seems an accurate representation of what Grant has been hammering home over the last thirty issues. It's all a game. The heroes and the villains are the same. Isn't the knowledge of that enough? It's an interesting debate to be sure. Bottom line – this issue was over the line. I guarantee if I hadn't been reading the trade paperback at the time, and hadn't already had the next issue, I wouldn't have bought the next one. I don't think I would have touched the book again. I'm ultimately glad I read on, obviously. But this one issue, particularly the scene in Vegas, is easily the most ill-conceived and most revolting issue in the series. Oh, and didn't King Mob just get shot in the shoulder last issue? Shouldn't he at least have a bandage on, or a scab or scar or something?*

"Our reality's
the pattern
on the
wallpaper
and this
place is
the wall."

THE GIRL MOST LIKELY TO

JUL 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Pencils 1-7, 18-24*

Michael Lark *Pencils 8-17*

Keith Aiken *Inks 1-7, 18-24*

Marc Hempel *Inks 8-17*

Rick Taylor *Colors*

Heroic Age *Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

King Mob has transported Robin to the Invisible College, the intersection between the healthy Universe A and our reality. He explains the nature of reality to Robin, who recovers from her wound. She tells King Mob she is from the future, possessing an anti-nanite bracelet and a skull implant to augment her latent telepathy.

In 2012, Robin prepares to be the first person to travel through time in a suit invented by Takashi. As she activates the suit, the King-of-All-Tears breaks into the facility, attacking the remaining Invisibles.



In the letters column for this issue, Grant Morrison describes the script as having “detailed background material on almost every aspect of life on the cusp of doomsday.” The script was given away to one reader in a competition.

2.1 Note that the cosmic spotlight and BARBELITH are two different things.

3.1 “I knew him when he was older.” By know, clever readers should have picked up that Robin’s from the future.

3.4 Sir Francis Bacon’s unfinished *The New Atlantis* (published after his death in 1627) is an account of the government and culture of the imaginary island of Bensalem. Of interest is the nation’s center for scientific study, called Solomon’s House. The book eventually inspired the creation of England’s Royal Society.

3.5 These are alternate names for the Invisible College.

4 Note the airship. Similar vehicles appeared in Dane’s alternate London during his initiation in issue 1.1. Note that the airship looks like a bomb.

The Girl Most Likely To is an archaic phrase, with “get pregnant” following silently. Considering the pop music references throughout the series, it’s also probably a play on *The Girl Least Likely To*, a song by Morrissey.

The Invisible College is a book by Jacques Vallee. In it, Vallee theorizes that UFOs are a modern manifestation of a phenomenon occurring throughout history. This ties into the series itself, as Jack believes that Mason wasn’t abducted by aliens but was, instead, contacted by BARBELITH. Mason is interpreting the contact through his contemporary cultural lens.

Alternately, “The Invisible College” is also a name used by the Rosicrucians in reference to their “secret masters.”

5.1 “Oh my brothers.” Dialogue from the Anthony Burgess (1917–1993) novel *A Clockwork Orange*, subsequently turned into a 1971 film by Stanley Kubrick (1928–1999). The story examines the questionable morality of removing violent tendencies from hooligans through psychological conditioning.

5.3 Tom O’Bedlam taught King Mob how to access the Invisible College, implying that he was an active Invisible as late as 1988.

5.4 The figure on the left may be Doors vocalist Jim Morrison (1943–1971), known for dream

PHIL JIMENEZ ON THE SERIES’ PRESENTATION

How did the inks and colors affect your original pencils?

That’s interesting. I hated the paper the book was printed on, and I actually thought the ink work looked better on less-glossy paper. John had worked with me on *TEMPEST*, the mini-series, and I thought the color and inks on that book looked so much better than the way they printed on *THE INVISIBLES*. Unfortunately, asking for a paper downgrade at the time was like, “What are you talking about?” So I was actually never as happy with the final product as other people were, partly because John inks in a particular way where it looked better printed on a different kind of paper. The colors unfortunately were never my favorite. I had just come off of *TEMPEST*, which was and remains such an amazing working experience, because the end product was so close to what I imagined it to be. I had a great inker and great color, and it was printed on a paper that I liked – cheap! Here, with this book, I didn’t like the paper. I was having trouble conveying to the colorist...

Danny Vozzo tended to color in pastels. I wanted more extreme colors. That was difficult to explain to him. As the work went on I got more detailed, John had problems. I think his early work is really amazing, but again, the sort of line work and tools he used always look better on different kinds of paper.

So I was never as thrilled with *THE INVISIBLES*’ art as everyone else seemed to be. I have to say, I’ve always gotten a lot of compliments on it. But for me, I look at it and for me it’s still full of production flaws. It’s very hard for me to appreciate that art and my work on it.

John did do a couple of amazing things, though, I have to say. In that dancing sequence, Fanny’s dress – and that shocks me, because I found that dress in some *Vanity Fair* magazine – I would draw all the little circles and write, “Fill in all the blacks.” It shocked me how great that dress came out. It was so terrific. There were certain things he did that always amazed me, certain little techniques and textures he would add.

I talked to Danny some. The thing is I think Danny just had a particular palette. It’s just one of those things – certain colorists have a palette. I just realized this on *WONDER WOMAN*. My [initial] colorist was the *PREACHER*

colorist, and her colors are great on Steve Dillon, but I think it's a different kind of paper and a different kind of work. It's a completely different sensibility. She just did not adjust to my work well at all, because I think there was so much going on. With Danny I think it's the same thing. He has a palette, and to try to say, "No, no, color darker," was just against his sensibilities. It was probably a lot more difficult for him. So that was a little frustrating.

PN: *The Girl Most Likely To is an often-overlooked gem, packed with interesting ideas (the vesica pisces as map of reality), experiments (the characters' awareness of living in a comic book) and plain visual humor (note that by 2012 we're drinking from ten-packs!). The Michael Lark section works in precisely the same way the Volume 3 experiment doesn't, and the fat Fanny is a delight. But visually it's the beginning of the end for Phil Jimenez, whose pencils here feel rushed and unsatisfying. Frustratingly, the Invisible College is never adequately explored after this issue, and one gets the feeling that perhaps Morrison realized its presence would have shifted THE INVISIBLES too far from its "realism" roots and squarely into superhero territory. As it is, this issue proves how much better Robin looks without her makeup! And the cover is brilliant, by the way.*

KCS: *The Girl Most Likely To does a lot toward redeeming the spectacle that is Time Machine Go. This issue is a special treat for me, having always been an admirer of David Bohm, the physicist who first conceived of the universe as*

ON THE COVER

A very minimalist image of Lord Fanny, Ragged Robin and King Mob standing together, each looking startled in a different direction. None of the characters are wearing what they do in the issue. Fanny only appears inside as the fat future incarnation from 2012. Surprisingly, Robin is holding a gun, something she never actually does for the duration of THE INVISIBLES. The cover text includes a mod target icon. The issue title is featured on the cover for the first time this volume, perhaps to attract new readers who might be intrigued by the Morrissey pun.

images in his songs. The pair on the right may be Sex Pistols bassist Sid Vicious (b. John Simon Ritchie, 1957-1979) and his murdered girlfriend, Nancy Spungen (1958-1978).

6.1 Note the blind chessman on the right.

6.2 Robin is from 2012, the year we ascend into the supercontext.

6.3 More magic mirror, this time inside the Invisible College.

7.1 "Lie back and think of England" is a quip referring to a woman's reluctance to sleep with a man; the suggestion is that it's good for the country.

7.3 In THE INVISIBLES' cosmology, the famous gray aliens are actually antibodies for the ills of our universe. It's probable that all essence from the supercontext appears to us through cultural filters, so that antibody elements such as these look like grays, but so too does BARBELITH itself (as indicated by Dane's vision in the first volume) and some fictionsuits (Quimper's "original" form).

8.1 First appearance of Shae Fox, one of King Mob's varied efforts to indoctrinate Invisibles via Technocult in 2012.

8.3 Ragged Robin's real name is Kay.

9.1 Note the non — ultimately revealed as a product of the Marquis de Sade's research in 3.8.10.2.

9.4 The caste mark, or *bindi*, denotes one's position in Hindu societies.

9.5 "Technocult are financed by the conspiracy." For whatever reason, King Mob seems to have severed even passing ties with the Invisibles by 2012, or at least hasn't told them of his day job.

10.1 Robin lived in San Francisco in 2012.

10.4 "Magic matter." Could the nanoswarm described in this sequence be the origin of magic mirror?

11.2 The date must be December 21.

Note the Technocult poster on the bus.

12.2 Note that Takashi has only one eye in 2012. His look here seems inspired by Hadji from the 1960s animated television series *Johnny Quest*.

13.1 The image on Fanny's fingernails, a newscast depicting an eye shooting a beam at the Earth, is similar to the Decreator shown in DOOM PATROL 33. Also described as the Eye of Horus, the Decreator is intent on destroying the world. Note that this is the last day of the world in THE INVISIBLES' cosmology.

14.2 Actually, her first words to Dane are, "Tom's gone. Why should you care?"

14.3 "You were the bravest," Dane says of Robin, presumably for volunteering to trial the timesuit.

15.5 First appearance of Reynard. She apparently learns to actually manipulate 4D liquid armor between the illusion she presents Sir Miles in 1999 and the Archon attack in 2012.

18.2 In Egyptian mythology, the phoenix was a bird that was reincarnated in fire.

"The eagle has landed" was famously said as man first landed on the moon.

Note the crucifix imagery on the timesuit.

19.3 *Barbarella* is a 1960s French comic characterized by picaresque adventures and generous doses of sex and nudity, later made into a 1968 film by

Roger Vadim, starring Jane Fonda. King Mob is clearly talking about the film version.

Famous Monsters was a US science fiction magazine featuring articles and photos from films.

21.1 The vesica piscis is a fish emblem used by Christians; it's often found on car bumpers (sometimes given feet to denote a belief in evolution over creationism). Here King Mob uses it to illustrate Takashi's holographic universe theory, which is also described in Philip K Dick's novel *VALIS*.

21.2 Note that Bootsy Collins (b. 1951 as William Collins) is present in the Invisible College. Collins is a funk bassist often associated with George Clinton (b. 1941) of the P-Funk All Stars, known for claiming to be from another planet.

The gnostics were adherents of gnosticism, a philosophical movement during the late Hellenistic and early Christian periods, primarily concerned with a dualistic nature of the universe. Derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, gnosticism promised salvation through occult knowledge and was a major early rival to, and influence of, Christianity, claiming that the Christian god was one of a race of evil archons holding humanity's spirit in thrall. The only true gnostic sect extant today is Iran's Mandaeans.

21.3 A notable characteristic of holograms is that any individual portion contains the information of the whole. Is this fractal nature the reason why contact with the magic mirror, a portion of the holographic universe, allows one to see everything?

21.5 Note King Mob's stance here is similar to those taken later by Mason, Oppenheimer and Mister Six.

22 King Mob is seemingly aware that he inhabits a comic book – or perhaps Morrison is suggesting that the universe is to us as we are to the fiction of the comic.

Note the mirrored page numbers.

23.2 King Mob wants to be Jerry Cornelius – not a surprise considering that's what his Gideon Stargrave novels (written in the Kirk Morrison persona) are shameless replicas of.

One theory of time travel holds that the amount of energy required to operate a time machine would be impossible to achieve. Collecting such energy may be enough to destroy the world. It's possible that Robin may have triggered the supercontext on 22 December 2012 just by activating the timesuit.

Dane appears to be in both San Francisco and Liverpool on 22 December, 2012. Not so difficult, if he is able to use the same dimensional shortcuts enjoyed by King Mob and Mister Six. He could help Robin get ready for her timesuit launch in the morning, traveling to Liverpool that afternoon to be with Gaz as the supercontext begins to coalesce.

a hologram. It's also a treat to see the pisces vesica described as a map of the universe. Any questions that readers had about the structural aspects of THE INVISIBLES' cosmology should have all been cleared up by now. My biggest problem now is the whole time travel thing. I've never been all that into time travel stories. Simply a matter of taste, I suppose. The best part of this issue is the flash forward to 2012. It's a little hard to read, but it should be, because it is a different world. And it's the little things that delight. The Technocult logo on the side of the truck, Fanny's holographic nail polish, Takashi's eye. Brilliant.

HELGA VS REYNARD IN 2012

Some fans have suggested that Helga is the dark-haired Invisible present at the timesuit launch in 2012, linking her manipulation of the liquid armor in the future to the illusion she creates during her 1999 interrogation of Sir Miles. But by the end of *The Invisible Kingdom*, Helga has quit the Invisibles and become Olga Tannen once more.

But issue 3.1 clarifies that the future Invisible first seen in 2.6 is in fact Reynard. "You'll be there when the timesuit goes off?" asks King Mob on 3.1.12.2. Several days later, when he rescues Fanny after the King-of-All-Tears' assault on the San Francisco timesuit facility, Reynard is there, wearing the same vest outfit as shown on 2.6.13.3 (although Ashley Wood draws her in a tank top on 3.4.3.6).

The only wrinkle in this theory is King Mob's reassurance that Robin is "one of us" when Reynard sees her emerge from the supercontext. A strange slip, as she obviously knows who Robin is (and has in fact just witnessed her disappearance in the timesuit moments before), and as King Mob earlier confirmed that Reynard is part of Robin's cell and would be present at the launch, he *knows* that she knows who she is. Perhaps with the onset of the supercontext and the accompanying splintering of reality and perception (e.g. "Is it the timesuit or is it the King-of-All-Tears?" on 3.1.16.4), King Mob is assuming from Reynard's stunned reaction that she isn't registering the visitor as Ragged Robin.

"This guy
just died.
That's if
anybody's
keeping
score."

THE SOUND OF THE ATOM SPLITTING

AUG 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors*

Heroic Age *Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

The Aum Supreme Truth cultists torture Takashi for information on the time machine he has yet to invent, slashing his right eye. King Mob bursts into the room, killing one cultist and mortally wounding the other. He, Boy and Robin argue over whether or not to interrogate the survivor through telepathic means. Robin relents and learns that the cultists wanted to travel to Harumagedon at the end of the world.

At the Harlequinade's residence, Dane and Fanny find themselves forced to entertain the Clown Prince. They decide to dance, and are rewarded for their efforts with the Hand of Glory.



1.4 The Yakuza is the Japanese mafia.

6.5 "You look like someone with an interesting story to tell." Dead men don't tell tales, unless they're killed by King Mob (e.g. Bobby Murray).

7 *The Sound of the Atom Splitting* is a song by the Pet Shop Boys. The lyrics are a conversation between two madmen, who are unable to understand each other.

8.1 "Hollywood finish." Life as film is a recurring theme.

8.3 Note how uncomfortable Robin is with the violence around her. When she steps on the wounded cultist who was about to kill Mason and Takashi, she apologizes!

8.5 If liquid lens technology is created in four years, why does Takashi sport a patch in 2012?

8.6 Note that King Mob throws up after the assault. This is a pivotal sequence in his Volume 2 arc, suggesting for the first time that he may have regret over his violent ways. Note that his glasses here make him look like a Conspiracy agent.

9.2 Charlie Chan is a fictional Chinese detective.

9.5 Mr. Moto is a fictional Japanese detective.

9.6 We've previously seen Robin use telepathy to detect approaching Myrmidon troops in 1.9.

11.4 "This is how the collapse appears to those condemned to live in it." All times occurring at once is a recurring theme. According to *The Invisibles'* cosmology, we are indeed experiencing the end of the world in the first decade of the 21st century.

12 Note the origami shape of the panels.

12.1 Where does the origami that Takashi's great-great-grandfather finds come from? Since all times are one, does his grandfather find in 1901 the sculpture Takashi makes in 1997?

13.4 Boy's always been the least-willing Invisible. Her statement here sets the scene for her "defection."

14.1 Strangely, the Harlequinade seem to have rented a house.

14.4 Note that Jack is illustrated as a series of moments here, showing that if we could see ourselves from outside of time, we would appear as a solid string of all our experiences.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON CHARACTERIZATION THROUGH POSTURE

Body language really starts to define the characters midway through your run; for example, Fanny and Jack dancing at *The Power Exchange*.

I loved that scene. I was just looking through that volume again recently, because I usually take about a year or so to look at work with any sort of objective eye, and I hadn't looked at *THE INVISIBLES* for a while. Grant wrote that sequence beautifully. The one thing that was always amazing about working on that book was those scripts were just genius. All the information you needed was right there. It was just so much fun working on those scripts. Jack was a character I hated until I started drawing him, and then I figured him out. I find that's true with me with most characters. If I can figure out a body language for them, and a way for them to act and behave, I tend to figure the characters out. He was exactly one of those characters. [After] a couple of Grant's scripts, I became very fond of that character.

PN: *With this issue, THE INVISIBLES reaches the pinnacle of its violence – in theme if not in fact. King Mob's behavior is so disgusting by this point that one almost wishes for THE ADVENTURES OF FANNY AND JACK to replace the series. Which is, of course, the point, if driven home a little too unsubtly. By this point Jimenez has abandoned gleeful experimentation for workmanlike production, with only the fantastic dance*

THE INVISIBLES AS SIGIL

From www.grant-morrison.com

It's an experimental miniature universe, a holographic alembic containing the mad experiments in chaos magick, sickness, drug abuse, genderflexing hedonism, martial arts and travel of the '90s. I don't think it fits completely into any current categories but there are as many ways to read the story as there are readers. At its root *THE INVISIBLES* is a highly charged dynamic sigil. The first of its kind to be tested, *THE INVISIBLES* is to the sigil concept what the Manhattan Experiment was to the bullet and unless deactivated it will expand and destroy consensus reality.

ON THE COVER

Harlequin sitting on a toilet, holding the book *In Out In*. Bolland appears to be seeing internal pages by this point, as Harlequin's costume is fairly exact, pedantic niggling about his mask aside. Here however he is sitting on an open, functional toilet in a scene not featured in the actual issue – and indeed seems to be using it! A mainstream comic book first?

Grant Morrison on Arthur Highe:

I just made up the name Arthur Highe. It's just a version of the British actor Arthur Lowe. It's just some friends, an in joke that only they would understand. Arthur Highe is this fictional '60s actor that we'd created, and that was his autobiography: *In Out In*. I've seen people pondering that one, but there's no significance at all. It's just a joke for friends.

sequence standing up to the "golden age" of the first four issues receding so rapidly into the past. But for those six pages he shines, notably on the bottom of page 17. Another brilliant cover, but I suppose by now pointing that out is redundant.

KCS: *Is it a coincidence that all of the very coolest scenes in THE INVISIBLES include Fanny? I think not, amigos. Phil... Grant... you've outdone yourselves with that dance spread. These are the pages readers gaze lovingly at for days at a time. Okay, maybe I've descended into the dirty realm of hyperbole, but bloody hell, I do so love those pages. Damn! The car scene is nice too, Dane having shed his homophobia enough to be slightly insulted that Fanny isn't attracted to him. The gore in this issue is a deal breaker for me again, but everyone seems so revolted by it that I feel it has to come to an end soon. I'm delighted by the appearance to the Harlequinade and very much look forward to meeting up with them again. The Hollywood sheen that this volume has maintained up until now is starting to wear on me, though. It's too much of a blockbuster, like the Invisibles, or more specifically King Mob, on crack. I only hope he can get the monkey off his back. The future of the series depends on it.*

15.1 Note the optical illusion staircase.

15.4 "There is really only one of us." The first clue to the true nature of the Harlequinade, which will finally be revealed in 3.2. Note that the pair's genders appear to be switched in this sequence; also note that Pierrot refers to Columbine as "our sister" in front of Fanny.

15.8 Pierrot speaks like BARBELITH here, suggesting that the Harlequinade is BARBELITH, seen through yet another cultural lens.

18.3 "They talk in emotional aggregates." In this case, dancing.

21.2 Dane seems to be talking about magic mirror.

22.3 "I heard it makes you go blind." King Mob is punning meditation for the old wives' tale about masturbation.

23.2 "He passes into understanding" makes sense after the final revelation that we are all absorbed into the supercontext after death. Takashi's great-great-grandfather perishes in Hiroshima (thereby tying together the atomic testing captions over previous panels).

24.2 King Mob shoots a Buddha statue. What that does to his karma is anyone's guess. The sequence echoes a Buddhist saying, "When you see the Buddha, kill the Buddha." The saying is not meant to be taken literally; rather, the speaker is supposed to reflect on life without the Buddha, and thereby learn to respect the value of what the Buddha has taught. King Mob has yet to understand this.

"I believe
in the
automobile,
and the
Charleston,
and the dry
martini."

SEP 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors*

Heroic Age *Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

SENSITIVE CRIMINALS

POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL

In 1924 Edith Manning and a young Frederick Harper-Seaton, the future Tom O'Bedlam, travel to India to learn the secret of the tantra. Later, in New York, Edith pulls a gun on Papa Skat in New York City, demanding the Hand of Glory. He magically obtains the gun and reverses roles.

In 1987, King Mob decides to psychically travel back to 1924 to discover how to activate the Hand of Glory from the earlier generation of Invisibles. While the team watches him, Boy sneaks into the night with the Hand.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON STEREOTYPES IN *THE INVISIBLES*

What do you think of the way Grant handled the gay characters?

I actually had this conversation about stereotypes recently in *Wonder Woman*, because I'd drawn a black carjacker. There was an interesting discussion about do we use stereotypes or not use stereotypes. But my thought on gay characters still sort of remains – as long as they're a great character. I live in New York City, where I'm surrounded by stereotypes constantly. Particularly gay stereotypes, which are ridiculous, because they're everywhere. They exist. I live in a world where stereotypes exist, and I'm surrounded by them, and my friends are of various stereotypes etc. So I don't mind their use, as long as they're used well. Fanny was such a well-developed character.

I thought his take on why she liked men was very interesting, because it was very specifically about being raised as a girl. If I remember correctly – and I haven't read these stories, mind you, in a while – I thought there was a bit where he became interested in boys ultimately as a result of being raised as a woman. There's that whole, "Is it biology, is it not biology?" There was no other possibility. I just happened to be reading a book right now about that Patient X, who was that kid back in the '70s who was surgically altered into a girl but basically became a boy again. He fought his condition, he fought his surgery. The book leans very heavily to suggest there are biological, hormonal differences to boys and girls. They react differently to different things. So I would think that would be true, too, of gay people. That's my instinct on gay people, anyway, and I don't remember that being a possibility in Grant's story.



1.1 This panel is evocative of jazz album covers from the 1920s.

1.2 Skat is a vocal jazz style in which a singer uses random sounds in time with the music.

1.3 Papa Skat tells Edith, "Your life line is very deep." She lives to be 99.

2.4 The dancer is Josephine Baker (b. Freda Josephine McDonald, 1906-1975), an American jazz singer and dancer who became a sensation in Paris for the controversial 1925 show *La Revue nègre*.

3 Papa Skat and Edith's conversation about the Normmo and modernity echo a main theme in *The Invisibles*, namely that time both occurs simultaneously and affects itself. Both Skat and Edith get it wrong by embracing only one half of the full truth (perhaps this is why Edith's *Invisibles* cell doesn't stop the Archons?)

3.3 William the Conqueror (c. 1027-1087), duke of Normandy, defeated England's King Harold (c. 1022-1066) at Hastings in 1066 and declared himself King William I. His ascendancy saw the eradication of the incumbent Anglo-Saxon upper class and the imposition of Norman feudalism.

The Dogon are a West African tribe living near the Niger river. A sedentary, agricultural people cut off from the rest of humanity for thousands of years, they are best known in the West for their artwork.

The Dogon believe that the Earth has been visited by the Normmo, amphibious aliens from Sirius B.

3.4 There are so many different appearances of Shining Ones throughout various mythologies that it's almost impossible to catalogue them all. The most relevant appears to be a group of Hindu and Buddhist exalted spiritual beings known as *deva*, from the Sanskrit word for "shining ones." In Hinduism, *devas* can be spiritually superior humans, those who have attained enlightenment or a visualization of Brahman. In Buddhism, the term refers to gods who reside in paradise due to good works. Traditional occultism also uses the term *devas* to describe any number of celestial and demonic creatures.

4 *Poor Little Rich Girl* was written by Noel Coward for *On With the Dance*, his 1925 tribute to the roaring Twenties. The musical reflects many of Edith's sensibilities, inspired by Coward's own observations of hedonistic life among society's elite at that time.

ON THE COVER

The 1924 flapper Edith Manning as Shiva, holding a cigarette, champagne glass and pistol. She's dancing on a Hindu disc, in front of a star whose six points highlight busts of – clockwise from top right – Billy Chang, the Golden Age King Mob, Edith herself, the modern King Mob, the 1924 Tom O'Bedlam and Queen Mab. The Vertigo strip features a period interlocking flower design.

5 Robin and Mob are play-acting to help fool Quimper into believing Robin is under his control and therefore set the stage for Volume 2's finale. In this sense Mob and Robin are playing roles, hence the quotations.

7.2 "That was a bit weird ... in bed last night." King Mob and Robin have been performing a sex magic ritual, an early experiment with the role play later shown in issue 2.14.

7.8 The tarot card is a phallic symbol. The people jumping from the tower, along with the fire and lightning, suggest Mob's orgasm. The Tower card represents violent change.

8.1 The gargoyle crouching over the city is a visual metaphor echoing the pigeon's view in 1.3. Gargoyles were originally used to frighten evil spirits away from buildings.

9.1 The far left photo on Edith's table reappears (with dialogue!) on 3.11.8.4. Another picture is of Josephine Baker.

9.4 Edith's letter to Freddie reveals how she sees him: her "special project; the awkward caterpillar cousin I set about transforming." As Tom O'Bedlam, Freddie will later set about transforming Dane into Jack Frost. Another reflection of one of *THE INVISIBLES'* main themes, that of the fractal, ever-repeating nature of reality.

10.2 F Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1948) was one of the most influential American writers of the 20th century. His books chronicle the outrageous flapper society in which he himself lived. He is best known today for *The Great Gatsby*, a cynical indictment of 1920s opulence and the nature of the American dream.

Tallulah Bankhead (1903-1968) was a US actress better known for her controversial antics than her roles in films such as 1931's *My Sin*. A member of the legendary Algonquin roundtable, Bankhead was known for such *bon mots* as, "My father warned me about men and booze, but he never mentioned a word about women and cocaine." Interestingly, she played the Black Widow on the 1960s *Batman* television show.

10.4 The way Boy looks at Jack in this panel sets the stage for the revelations in New Orleans. Note too how Jack in this panel is framed by Fanny's waist, echoing how Jack's character is in some ways framed by Fanny's.

11 The Ganges sequences in *THE INVISIBLES* almost invariably include a cremation. This appears to be Edith's own death, echoing through time.

11.3 Those baptized in the Ganges river are believed to be spared from reincarnation and proceed straight to illumination in Hindu belief system. The river's coliform bacteria levels are 10,000 times higher than the limit set by the World Health Organization.

11.6 Bodies are traditionally cremated on the Ganges.

12.1 Edith standing in the Ganges, looking at the sun. Or is it BARBELITH?

13.1 Kala is the god of time in Hindu mythology.

14.4 Takashi realizes the secrets of time travel from looking at Robin's picture.

15-16 Note that these pages are almost perfect mirror images.

17.2 King Mob putting a leather jacket over his bowling shirt suggests the clothing conflict

I had a bigger issue, I have to say, and one we argued over, over Boy liking Jack. I had huge issues with that, partly because of Grant's reasoning for it when it was first explained to me, and partly because it seemed like, quite frankly, he was living out some fantasy through Jack's character. I didn't understand. There was nothing [to suggest that] Boy would fall in love with Jack. And nothing ever convinced me that Jack would have anything to offer Boy at all. I don't think he [Grant] ever clicked with that character.

He drops her after the second volume. She wasn't really a fit for the rest of the team, in that she wasn't self-consciously cool and didn't even want to really be an Invisible.

That's why I was so into her. She was doing it out of vengeance; she was doing it to find her brother, who'd been taken from her, which I thought, again, was a motivation I could relate to so easily. That's why she was the most interesting character to me, because of all those various conspiracies and things that he was exploring, you know, the aliens turning us all into worker bees thing is interesting, [but] the black helicopters for some reason has some more real resonance to me. It's something I can believe in a little more. It just touched me more, it frightened me more. So I really just responded to her. I was always so sad that she was in the background as much as she was. I don't think Grant was interested in her the way he was in other characters.

That was the thing that bothered me the most. I wrote this two-page letter to Grant about why I didn't think Boy should be with Jack. That was actually one of the only arguments [or] discussions we ever really had.

PN: *Sensitive Criminals is perhaps the best storyline in THE INVISIBLES, paced sublimely like good television and generally coming across as something special. Unlike almost every character in fiction to get one, Edith's back story actually enhances her modern character, transforming her from a mysterious crone to one of the series' strongest and most heartbreaking figures. It's interesting that the sex on page seven seems gratuitous for the first time, and there's not even any nudity! The illustration work is breathtaking, aping contemporary album covers, playing with mirrored page spreads and generally making Edith in the 1920s seem the most fabulous creature to have lived. Special credit to Phil Jimenez here on all points. A lesser artist*

THE FRACTAL TIMEWAVE GRAPH

Inspired by a 1971 encounter with an alien intelligence in Columbia, Terrence McKenna began mathematically examining the King Wen sequence of the I-Ching. The result was the Timewave Graph, which traces the ebb and flow of novelty, an intrinsic element of time. The graph maps to important events in history, such as the extinction of the dinosaurs, and notably drops below the baseline in November 2012. McKenna shifted this date slightly to match the end of the Mayan calendar on 22 December 2012. He claimed that this point represented a singularity, the end of current history and the ascent to a radically transformed consensus reality – the inspiration for the supercontext of *THE INVISIBLES*. The graph is fractal in nature, mapping to a vision of time McKenna first unveiled in his book *The Invisible Landscape*.

between Phil Jimenez and Grant Morrison.

19.1 The modern generation of Invisibles choose “magical names;” the previous generation used Latin monikers.

The picture may be of UK actress Florence Farr (1860-1917), who joined the occult Golden Dawn group. Or it could be Freddie’s mother.

20.2 The Ark of the Covenant is a small box holding the Ten Commandments and other religious artifacts, according to the *Bible*, with the power to smite Israel’s enemies. The Ark is described as a box made from acacia wood, just over a meter long, topped with a carving of two kneeling Cherubim (between which lay the essence of God). Of course it’s best known in popular culture from the 1981 Steven Spielberg film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

22.1 Couleuvre Noir is a Voodoo group based out of the less-than-spooky city of Chicago.

The lyrics are from Noel Coward’s 1928 song *Dance Little Lady*.

22.2 King Mob describes the influence of the *loa* over the strands of space-time.

22.3 Mahakali is a Hindu goddess who can help one defeat even death. *Kaal* also means time or future; a worshipper of Mahakali can become clairvoyant, able to view past or future events.

wouldn’t have taken the time to make sure the background crowds in the historical section were accurate down to the period haircuts. All this, and rounded out by one of the series’ best covers. Superb!

KCS: *Edith Manning. Certainly not the “girl next door,” but we all wish she lived next door, if you know what I mean. The beauty of this issue comes from Phil’s skillful pencils. The ‘20s scenes are rich with detail, providing a real feel for the era. The clothes, the hairstyles, the backgrounds, the band – all wonderful. It’s a shame almost that the entire series doesn’t take place in the ‘20s. The scenes in India are just as rich for all of the same reasons. Edith proves to be such an interesting character that it seems a shame she doesn’t have her own series.*

Dane finally professes his feelings for Boy, who I think looks appropriately surprised, and Dane almost looks like a sweetheart, gazing up at her with his baby blues at the top of page 18. Perhaps the bastard has some charm after all. I’m intrigued by the Hand of Glory, and even more intrigued by its disappearance. The first issue of Sensitive Criminals promises much, and delivers. Here’s to a storyline that doesn’t descend into razor blade-studded mayhem! Re: page seven – does anyone actually kiss like that?

"Freddie,
dear.
Everything's
just gone
quite mad."

OCT 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*Phil Jimenez *Layouts*Space Boy *Pencils*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Heroic Age *Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

SENSITIVE CRIMINALS

MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN

King Mob arrives in 1924 and backs up Edith. Outnumbered, Papa Skat admits that he is an Invisible and doesn't have the Hand of Glory. With Freddie, the quartet decides to locate the Hand, pursued by Myrmidon agents. The four meet Pierrot and Columbine in a New York apartment. They invite Edith to meet the Harlequinade, while the other three stand guard. As the men hold off the Myrmidon agents, the Harlequinade exposes Edith to BARBELiTH and the magic mirror, revealing their true identity and the nature of the magic mirror. She emerges with the Hand of Glory.

King Mob, Edith and Freddie travel to London, where they join with the remaining Invisibles – Billy Chang, Queen Mab and the original King Mob. They stage the first operation of the Hand, opening a doorway through reality...

PHIL JIMENEZ ON MONTHLY PRODUCTION

There was one fill-in issue during your run...

Chris Weston – those were over my layouts. Then the last story arc, which I was so bummed about, because it was with Boy – it was my favorite character – and I had to do these really crappy breakdowns. I was generating five pages a day to give to the inker to finish. There was no time to draw any of it. We had to get different inkers just to catch us up.

Do you prefer action or conversational scenes?

I love those – I know most comic artists don't, but I love standing in a room talking, because you can do so much. You can convey so much information.

Grant's scripts – I love them. They're some of my favorite scripts to work from, partly because they give you just enough information to do your job. They never impede with the artist being creative in any way, but at the same time they're full of suggestions and possibilities. He was just so terrific to work with for that reason.

I never thought, *How am I going to draw this?* I always thought, *I hope I draw this the way he wants it drawn.* That was my bigger concern. The thing about working on

ON THE COVER

The modern King Mob and the Golden Age Queen Mab in a dynamic, traditional comic book cover. Perhaps a sly commentary on comic cover traditions, showing us the character we expect rather than the one who is appropriate to the scene. The bomb actually reads: BOMB in a parody of the sort of no-thought-needed action comics the cover parodies. Our heroes defy the laws of physics to hang in mid-air, held in poses no normal person ever makes. The jumbled background of the Houses of Parliament and the Tower of London is exactly the sort of damn-the-facts attitude so prevalent in the worst of action comics. Not for the first time, the characters don't wear the same clothes they do inside. There is no Vertigo strip for this issue.



1.1 King Mob's lip ring has changed lips since the last issue!

2 *Mad Dogs and Englishmen* is a song by Noel Coward written for *Words and Music* in 1932. The song is a satire of English colonialism.

"Space Boy" is a pseudonym for Chris Weston.

Note King Mob holding his gun in a modernly cool sideways manner, as opposed to the old-school Papa Skat. Notice the way Edith looks at Mob in this panel.

3.1 Zaraqun, the scorpion *loa*, seems to be several *Invisibles'* patron – recall Jim Crow and the scorpion tattoo at the base of Mob's spine.

3.2 Edith tells King Mob that "we already have a King Mob," as though they come in six-packs.

Note the scorpion shadow.

3.4 Papa Skat welcomes Edith into the *Invisibles*; as with Dane, it appears members are inducted without their knowledge or consent. Skat's threat of violence and cryptic, confrontational language may be an *Invisibles* test of some sort.

4.1 Note how Edith and Mob are standing apart from Skat, as a couple might.

4.3-4.4 The glib King Mob is at a loss for words meeting the younger Edith.

8.4 The 1924 *Invisibles* appear to be locked in the same battle as the modern cell.

Dadaism was a nihilistic movement among European artists and writers between approximately 1916 and 1922. Dadaism stressed the absurd and criticized traditional aesthetic values, frequently accompanied by political overtones. The movement eventually evolved into surrealism.

8.5 Irish writer James Joyce (1882-1941) was one of the most influential voices of the 20th century, introducing radical techniques to literature.

American-British poet TS Eliot (1888-1965) was another innovative voice of the early 20th century, marked by a sense of desolation.

9.1 Note the Harlequinade appear in clothing appropriate to the period (albeit fancy dress). They are wearing Robin's makeup.

9.3 The Harlequinade also give Dane and Fanny the Hand of Glory. The proximity of these two exchanges demonstrates the fractal nature of reality, an *Invisibles* theme.

Note that the Harlequinade finish each other's sentences. They are essentially the same being.

10.5 The Ciphermen work out of deep isolation tanks. Counterpoint this to the Invisibles working in cells; isolation versus social interaction.

10.6 Is King Mob intentionally violent to appease Zaraguin?

12.2 A hint that the Harlequinade was formerly human.

13.4 Edith can't accept the nature of reality when confronted with magic mirror and BARBELITH. What does she think she's seeing? What was she expecting? This is her BARBELITH catharsis after trauma. Note that she never receives the green stoplight.

14.2 More hints at how the other side understands the world. The Cipherman tells Freddie he is "required" to tell him the entry point to the Harlequinade – as though there is a set of rules to be followed.

15.4 "Cut!" Life as fiction/film is a recurring theme.

16.2 Mob's gun focuses his will to scramble Cipherman time travel mantras. This patchwork of technology, humanism and magic is part of the ethos of *THE INVISIBLES* – everything is real.

16.3 "Silent era" suggests life as a film. Early films had no sound.

16.4 Note Edith's expression after leaving the Harlequinade with the Hand.

16.5 The Hand of Glory has feminine nails.

18.3 The Hand of Glory has an x-ray effect on Edith's arms as she clasps it; it may be radioactive, tying into the atomic weapon analogy.

18.4 BARBELITH appears to be spherical here.

19.1 First appearance of Queen Mab.

First appearance of the Golden Age King Mob.

21.1 Traveling from New York to London by ship in 1924 took about two weeks, demonstrating that King Mob's "dream time" is distinct from his relative time in 1997. What happened between he, Freddie and Edith during the two weeks spent on the ship?

21.2 First appearance of Billy Chang.

21.4 The Gargoyle Club is a slight anachronism here – it was actually founded in 1925. The Soho club was known for its decadence in the 1920s but slowly degenerated into a watering hole.

22.1 The Invisibles of 1924 consist of Edith, Tom O'Bedlam, Billy Chang, Queen Mab and King Mob. Note that only three of them used code names (and even those only rarely).

22.4 Beryl sees into the future. "The girl with red hair" is Robin; sharp readers by now have realized the "little man inside her" is Quimper. Yet another allusion to mental invasion as rape: "He's touching her! It's awful!"

23.1 King Mob picks up on Beryl's mention of Robin.

24.1 Note Edith's reactions on this page; does she know what's coming?

24.2 It's raining inside Billy Chang's club, demonstrating once more that all times are one. The rain originally fell before the club was built.

THE INVISIBLES was it was such a specific vision. One of the fun things, and also challenging things, was trying to impress Grant and give him what he wanted and at the same time having fun and being creative. Like that negative universe shot, I remember coming up with how we were going to do that. He described it in certain ways; so I would draw scenes, and the letterer came up with some great stuff for that, and Shelly came up with some great stuff. It was a lot of fun.

PN: *Chris Weston's finishes here are terrific, adding an element of lived-in grime to an issue that may have had less impact under cleaner lines. Nobody draws magic mirror as well as he does. By this point, however, the increased violence feels out of place, its novelty value exhausted and thematic relevance lessened by the delay in maturing King Mob. And in possibly the most heinous crime of the whole series, Sensitive Criminals makes the 1920s Invisibles seem far more interesting and worthy of a series than their 1990s counterparts! Surely there's a limited series in there somewhere? Bolland's cover is under par for the first time since issue five – the characters appear to be hovering in midair in defiance of physics and he painted the wrong King Mob!*

KCS: *More Harlequinade! What a delight. What a mystery. And the Hand – finally we get to see it in action, but what will it do, and why do the '90s Invisibles need it? All good chapters leave unanswered questions. It makes it impossible for the reader not to continue reading, and that is just what Grant has done here. For the first time since Sheman, I felt as if I was reading not only a fabulous comic book, but just plain fabulous fiction (a standard many mainstream books tend to ignore). Forget all of the lovely pictures for a moment. Grant is giving us flat out good story here. The interplay between Freddie and King Mob, Edith's brash flapper wit and Pierrot and Columbine all combine to create an entertaining and thought-provoking story. The art can only complement it.*

And speaking of art, it isn't quite as smooth admittedly as it would have been if Phil had done more than the layouts, but there is still a high level of detail and ambiance, as well as some great panels. The bottom of page 13 is one, as is the bottom of page 16. I love the fact that the story takes place in part on a cruise liner. So often characters are zapped from place to place with no sense of how they got there. I like that Grant can show all of the mundane shit, like a boat ride, and yet advance the story.

"I preferred
time when
it was
confined to
my watch
and only
moved
in one
direction."

SENSITIVE CRIMINALS

PARISIAN PIERROT

NOV 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*Phil Jimenez *Pencils*John Stokes *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Heroic Age *Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

The first activation of the Hand of Glory sends the Golden Age Invisibles scattering through time for a brief moment. They decide to proceed to the second activation. Edith and Freddie travel to St. Dunstan's-in-the-East for a second meeting with the Harlequinade to discover the second operation of the Hand.

The evening before the second activation of the Hand, Edith and the modern King Mob have sex, unwittingly aiding a cross-time magical sex act between them seventy years in the future to locate the missing Dane McGowan in 1995. The next day, the second activation goes awry, with the Outer Church breaking through reality. Before he can learn what happened, King Mob is transported back to 1997. He discovers that Boy has stolen the Hand, and the team decides to go after her.



1.1 Billy Chang's suggestion that the rain inside the house fell before or after the club was built is yet another instance of all times being one, a prime *INVISIBLES* theme. Note Chang's acceptance and understanding of time; why do the characters *au fait* with time seem to be Asian in this series?

King Mob's lip ring has changed lips again.

1.2-1.5 Note that these panels are broken into the hours of a clock.

1.2 Beryl is incorrect that the Hand of Glory "only looks like a hand," as we'll see in Volume 3.

1.4 Chang suggests the "visitors" might express themselves not through space, but time.

2 *Parisian Pierrot* was written by Noel Coward after a visit to a decadent Berlin nightclub in 1922 and was included in Coward's first revue, *London Calling*, an "ultra-modern mix of high fashion and social satire." As is *THE INVISIBLES*. The title reflects the Harlequinade, obviously.

3 These letters appear to be written shortly before Edith's death in August 1999.

3.3 Chanel No. 5 has been one of the world's most popular perfumes since chemist Ernest Beau introduced it to Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel (1883-1971) on May 5, 1920. Incidentally, Chanel's life is quite similar to Edith's – outrageously extravagant, marked by scandal (one beau was a German spy during the Second World War) and ending in loneliness.

4 Activating the Hand has sent the 1920s *Invisibles* through time. Edith sees her older self on 4.1. Beryl sees the bombing of Guernica on 4.3. The Golden Age King Mob sees Bobby Murray from issue 1.12 and then Beryl in the 1960s.

4.4 This precise scene echoes throughout *THE INVISIBLES*. Everything occurs simultaneously.

5.1 The 1920s King Mob sees Beryl at an art exhibition in the late 1960s. Note that we do not see her hands in this sequence in a nice bit of foreshadowing. This scene will be revisited in Volume 3.

The man looking at Beryl is Sir Miles.

5.2 Beryl is looking at Picasso's painting *Guernica*. She's crying because the painting depicts the bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War, during which her lover, Ronald Tolliver, the 1920s King Mob, died.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON ILLUSTRATING REAL-WORLD SETTINGS

The thing I loved about *THE INVISIBLES* was having to balance those things. I loved having to find a reference for that stuff. I found tons of it – I would go shopping, I would go on the Internet. There's a church in that story that Grant asked for, a very specific church, and he said, "Oh, I'll send you a reference," and never did. So I ended up having to go the Internet, just making search after search for pictures of this one church, and found it. When it came to any historical or structural reference, I would search to the ends of the earth, and if I couldn't find it, I'd make it up. But for a story like the '20s story, I desperately wanted to use references, I wanted it to be accurate. You use those elements to create the story. You create the mood of the story. Very rarely did I fudge it if I could avoid it.

I would go to the Metropolitan Museum, I would go to the Fashion Institute and get the appropriate clothing of the time. I had books on cars of the 1920s and all that kind of stuff. I loved that – that's my favorite part of this job, is you have no budget. You can recreate a time period, you can recreate a space. You can create a base on the moon or a '20s speakeasy or whatever. Sometimes you would have to [make it up], if you were running out of time.

PN: *It took nearly a year for THE INVISIBLES to return to the style and tone of the first volume, and the series is all the better for it. In many ways I feel this second outing is the worst of the three volumes, sacrificing experimentation and a presumption of reader intelligence for slick commercial appeal. Sensitive Criminals is the closest Volume 2 comes to the classic heights of 120 Days of Sod All or Sheman, and this issue is a strong factor. The dissolution through time*

SECRET ORIGINS: BERYL AND EDITH

From www.grant-morrison.com

Edith was cobbled together out of *Cabaret's* Sally Bowles and a few friends, but Beryl's a strange one. I'm not sure where she came from and the more I think about her and her role in *THE INVISIBLES*, the weirder it gets...

ON THE COVER

A sensual image of the 1924 Edith Manning with the modern King Mob, reclining in an opium den with two hookahs. Both appear to be clad only in their underwear. The Vertigo strip is an interlocking series of flowers.

upon the activation of the Hand of Glory is fantastic, with echoes through THE INVISIBLES' past and future. The piano sequence is oddly grand, a lovely post-coital moment that demonstrates how far above the average comic book writer Grant really is. The codas for the "Golden Age" Invisibles are a nice touch, and it's to Grant's credit that the reader is actually interested in what became of these characters a mere three issues after their introduction. Bolland's cover is the best of the whole series, sexy without being exploitative.

KCS: *The final issue of Sensitive Criminals sucks! But only because it means we won't get to hang with the glamorous 1920s Invisibles any more. Well, some of the questions are answered, such as the mystery of the Hand – we know what it does now. But the burning question remains. Why has Boy taken off with it? Read and see...*

What I love about this particular issue is the seamless flow of plot elements from other points in the series. The sex scene between KM and Edith overlaps into the '90s sex scene, and an exact image of part of the Outer Church from Black Science appears on page 20 so that we know exactly what the Hand is doing – opening a fracture. And there's poor Tom at ground zero. Who wouldn't go mad?

It was nice to finally see Robin take charge at the end of the issue, instead of continuing to rely on King Mob's advice and leadership. She's coming into her own as team leader, and it's a credit to Grant that he allows her some ambivalence, letting her develop as a fleshed-out human character. But as I mentioned before, the worst thing about this story arc is that it is over. I almost don't care what's going on in 1997. Almost.

5.3 It seems to be raining blood; or is this glow from BARBELITH? If BARBELITH is a placenta for the universe, is this menstrual precipitation?

5.4 The red spotlight appears. This is not BARBELITH as the characters do not reach catharsis. They are in fact being denied access to BARBELITH.

6.1 The 1920's Invisibles forget the events in Chang's club.

St. Dunstan's-in-the-East (a real location in London) is the best place in London to manipulate the Hand of Glory, possibly through a Masonic connection (the church was designed by alleged Mason Sir Christopher Wren (1662-1723), who also designed St. Paul's Cathedral). This scene is seen from Dane's perspective in 1.2. Everything occurs at once; residual effects of using the Hand the previous evening?

6.4 Legend has it the Hand makes one "truly invisible." Edith is failing to view the larger context here, adding credence to the notion that Invisibles cells are largely autonomous and not following an overarching master plan.

6.5 Edith says they must be "incandescent" when she and Freddie meet the Harlequinade. As were Fanny and Dane in issue 2.7. Incandescence also suggests "illumination."

7.2 Freddie sees his older self. This panel is seen from a different angle on 1.3.15.

St. Dunstan's Church is supposedly haunted by jolly phantom monks.

8.4 Futurist art originated as a movement in Italy around 1910, and focused on depicting the violence and energy of modern life, generally through an association with machinery.

8.5 This appears to be King Mob's car, although the color is wrong. Either a coincidence or a miscolored suggestion that time is compressing (King Mob having driven past this location at some other point in time).

Whitehall is the UK equivalent of America's Capitol Hill, so called because the white buildings lining the streets make a stark corridor.

9.2 In keeping with the relevance of the two surrounding time shifts, this airplane may contain the modern Invisibles, flying to America after the events in the House of Fun from Volume 1.

9.3 Canary Wharf from 1.3.

10.5 Is Freddie taken out of time here?

11.1 "Stage left" suggests life as fiction/play, a recurring theme.

11.3 Columbine appears in "modern" Harlequinade garb here. In Christian mythology, to look at the face of God is to be destroyed, one reason the Harlequinade may wear masks.

12.4 The candles on the Hand's fingers are from a folk belief that using a Hand of Glory as a candleholder strengthened its powers. A hand in this configuration can be seen in the 1973 Robin Hardy film *The Wicker Man*.

Billy Chang's suggestion it takes five human minds to equal one of "theirs" may be why there are five Invisibles in any given cell.

14.5 Edith cruelly shares her tantric sex with King Mob with Freddie via their psychic connection. She may be trying to drive him mad deliberately, suspecting it will make him a better magician.

Freddie was at the Sackville-West's masquerade in May of 1924. Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962) was revolutionary British writer Virginia Woolf's sometime lover. Woolf (b. Adeline Virginia Stephen, 1882-1941), with her fluid sexual identity and "new sentence" is likely one of King Mob's starting points for the future; was she an Invisible?

15 The voice on this page is Sir Miles, interrogating King Mob in late 1995. See 1.18.20.

15.5 This panel was first shown on 1.18.21.8. Here it has dialogue.

16 This page shows that both sex rituals are linked; are Edith and King Mob able to have spirit sex in 1924 only because they have physical sex in 1997?

17.3 The Oedipus complex is the psychological term for a son's obsession with his mother, named after the Greek myth in which King Oedipus unwittingly marries his mother and kills his father, the revelation of which drives him mad. The Oedipus complex is generally a development stage rather than a permanent condition.

17.5 King Mob tells Edith that they'll meet in Benares — is this why she goes in the first place?

18.1 Steven Patrick Morrissey (1959) was the singer for seminal 1980s UK indie pop group The Smiths.

18.4 A magus is another word for magician or sorcerer. One of the three wise men from the New Testament who traveled to Bethlehem to pay homage to the baby Jesus was named Magus; Aleister Crowley also took the term as one of his many titles.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was an occult fraternal order founded in 1888 by the Freemasons and led by S. L. MacGregor Mathers (1854-1917). Aleister Crowley was expelled from the order in 1900 and founded the rival Argenteum Astrum order in 1905.

18.5 This may be more evidence that Edith is trying to drive Freddie mad on purpose. Her prediction here is correct.

20.5 The I/YOU sphere suggests a binary planet.

22.4 Francisco Franco Bahamonde (1892-1975) was dictator of Spain from 1939 until his death.

23.5 The letter warning Edith of his death is one in a series of five (naturally). It is sent by Tom O'Bedlam.

24.1 King Mob describes the doorway the Hand opens as leading to "the other side.... The human subconscious." More evidence that not all Invisibles have access to the full set of facts about the enemy (as detailed more explicitly in *American Death Camp*).

SELL OUT!

THE INVISIBLES was occasionally featured outside of the series itself and the two short stories.

In 1994 SkyBox released a series of trading cards based on Vertigo characters and comics. Card 69 featured the then-upcoming series THE INVISIBLES, replete with colorful descriptions of "subversive PTA moms" and Ragged Robin still under her original moniker Raggedy Ann. The card featured original art by Steve Yeowell focusing on King Mob, with the other Invisibles behind him. Dane for some reason is wearing heart-shaped sunglasses.

The July 1997 issue of *Wizard* magazine includes a free Invisibles poster penciled and inked by Phil Jimenez, featuring the five core members over a green-tinted montage of characters and situations from the first two volumes.

VERTIGO WINTER'S EDGE 2 features paper dolls of King Mob and Lord Fanny, also drawn by Phil Jimenez.

The second issue of Marvel Comics' initial MARVEL BOY miniseries, written by Grant Morrison, shows Dane and Fanny in the first panel of page nine. After the dissolution of their Invisibles cell in 3.2, they apparently relocate to New York (in order to recruit a new team?). Marvel Boy himself appears to be the Marvel Universe incarnation of Jack Frost.

Promotional materials for the launch of the series itself included house ads, posters (one of which ended up as part of the set of Darlene's bedroom in the US television series *Roseanne*) and a white badge such as Dane receives, which faintly read: THE INVISIBLES. A large-format promotional copy of the first issue was distributed with a text-based cover. The black-and-white preview contained the first 16 pages of the issue, including an abandoned layout of the titles and credits on the splash page.

AMERICAN DEATH CAMP COUNTING TO NONE

DEC 97

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks 1-15, 24*

Ray Kryssing *Inks 16-23*

Kevin Somers *Colors*

Digital Chameleon *Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

"Punctuality.

That's a

strange

trait in an

anarchist,

don't you

think?"

The Invisibles trace Boy to Seattle, where she has been abducted by Invisibles faction Cell 23 while trying to locate the REX84 internment camp her brother Martin was taken to in 1989. Cell 23 subject Boy to a series of conditioning processes, exploring a variety of alternate personalities before telling her that she is an Outer Church agent who had been lost in deep cover...



1.4 Boy is being watched by the Invisible in the striped coat, as mentioned on page 22.

2.3 The radio says "Somebody better catch me, because I'm falling for this BS." BS of course is short for "bullshit." A foreshadowing of Boy's imminent conditioning.

2.4 Boy may be listening to the Doors' song *When the Music's Over*, about the end of the world.

3 Note that the city appears to be burning.

4.2 Coyote is a trickster figure in the mythology of northwestern native Americans, an amoral trouble-maker.

4.3 Maya, as Coyote points out, is the Hindu goddess of illusion and deception. It's also the name of a South American culture that seemingly disappeared almost overnight – became invisible.

5.1 Note the poster in the background. "The empire never ended" is a recurring phrase in *The Invisibles*, appropriated from Philip K Dick's *Exegesis*.

6.1 Coyote's talking about Oroborus, the snake devouring its own tail. Oroborus is a symbol of infinity, rebirth and regeneration, as well as a gnostic symbol associated with Abraxas, Lord of Darkness and Light.

6.2 Coyote's infranet seems awfully similar to Tom O'Bedlam's philosophy of cities, and appears inspired by Philip K Dick's novel *Radio Free Albemuth*.

6.4 Note the BARBELITH graffiti, and the green spotlight on the garbage dumpster.

7.1 Note the "tripleyou" secret letter on the wall.

8.4 Maya Angelou (b. Marguerite Johnson, 1928) is an American poet who worked with Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) and later gained fame as the author of such resistance poems as *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and *Still I Rise*.

8.5 magic mirror?

9 The captions on this page read like script directions, reinforcing the life as film theme.

9.2 For more on REX84 see page 200.

9.4 Trains are a repeating image.

10.6 The "fade" caption suggests life as a film, a recurring theme.

12.1 The image of Boy in the glass recalls the bottled souls in Harmony House.

PHIL JIMENEZ ON DRAWING THE SERIES' CHARACTERS

Who were your favorite characters to draw?

All of the women, actually, including Fanny, if you want to be not so literal about it. My favorite character was Boy, simply because I could relate to her the most, and her reasons for being in the *Invisibles* were the most interesting to me. I was really into her. Fanny was fun – I wished I had more opportunities to draw her in different kinds of clothing. She was sort of in the background a little more in Volume 2. And of course Robin is terrific. Robin was someone else sort of interesting. We kind of glammed her up a little bit so she wasn't quite the psycho ward child. She was a much more elegant, glamorous chick.

You're one of the few artists to draw Fanny with an ethnicity.

That was actually a big deal to me, partly because I'm Mexican so I have a big nose. Not that Mexico and Brazil are the same thing at all, but... There are certain attributes that Latin American people [have] you can generalize and stereotype and bring to art as little indicators. And also, it was a matter of color, making sure Danny colored her a certain way.

I don't know any non-white colorists, as an interesting aside. When they're coloring group shots, I honestly don't think they think beyond... Unless there's some outrageous physical attribute, like a drawing that's obviously of a black person, I don't think it's their instinct to color them anything other than white. Danny was great in that he brought that sort of tannish color, that lighter brown, to Fanny's skin.

Your Fanny is also fairly unique in that she looks like a man with a wig.

I always drew her as a man. I never drew her as a woman. You know who I thought was great about that was Jill Thompson. I think Jill Thompson really nailed Fanny quite well in that second arc that Jill drew [*Sheman*], which is one of my favorite stories ever. [It] really played to her strengths. I thought she just nailed Fanny, because she didn't draw a woman, she drew a man in women's clothes.

ON THE COVER

The Hand of Glory giving the victory sign. Or, if the image is reversed front to back, the UK hand gesture for "fuck off." The hand itself is feminine and gives off a slight glow. Bolland appears to prefer the gnarled stump approach, but as this changes from flat to gnarled to protruding bone within the series itself we won't hold this against him. There is no Vertigo strip for this issue.

PN: *After the sterling How I Became Invisible, this really is a backward step. Boy's various possible cover identities are confusing, and it's a discredit that the issue isn't ultimately either resolved or more strongly shaped into a thematic point. The art and colors are a letdown, although it's obvious this issue was on the set of The Matrix. All in all one of the most unsatisfactory issues in a long while.*

KCS: *Talk about a head trip – fucking hell. I'm troubled by this issue for several reasons. First, I like Boy. Now, I know how the story turns out, so I know what's going on, but when I first read it I thought, Oh great – double agent head games. The storyline doesn't catch my fancy, really, but seeing the team mobilized for the purpose of looking after their own has a galvanizing effect and brings the team members together in a way that we haven't seen yet. Let's face it, most of their missions involve splitting into teams. Even in Black Science, we didn't get to see them all operating together. It's a refreshing change. And Dane's obviously worried sick and itching to find her, which is a nice touch. Perhaps he wants more than just a shag? The art suffers from having two inkers – the latter half of the book has a totally different feel from the first part. And Phil's art seems to be slipping here as well. But one can only do so much with late scripts. Tt!*

12.6 Boy's reflection in the liquid suggests her malleable personality.

14.5 *Cleopatra Jones* is a camp 1973 US "blaxploitation" film by Jack Starrett (1936-1989), about a female drug enforcement officer who takes on a powerful dealer.

15.4 More grist for *The Matrix* plagiarism allegations (see the literal "bug" photo on right).

16.1 We saw Boy write it in 1.20.

16.3 The black beret is awarded to the elite US Army Rangers. The African American militant protest group the Black Panthers also wore black berets.

18.2 "Who you think you are is a fiction. Let it go. Become what you truly are." Another theme of the series, driven home explicitly with Jack Flint's explanation of the fictionsuit on 3.2.

Innana is the Mesopotamian queen of Heaven. One myth has her descending into Hell to visit her sister Ereshkigal, queen of Hell. As she progresses, she must abandon an item of clothing at every gate. She reaches her sister nude and angry, she attacks her, and is punished to miseries in Hell. Innana's lover agrees to take her place so that she may go free. Mesopotamia is widely regarded as the first civilization, located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in what is presently Iraq.

Note that the dialogue text is backwards and white on black – a complete reversal of standard speech.

19.2 This panel has a dual meaning, suggesting (with 19.3) that Boy is hallucinating (and therefore her subsequent "persona" is not the real Boy), and also reinforcing another theme of the series, largely that we aren't unique, unchanging individuals (e.g. we wear personalities like clothes).

20.3 Her eyes are probably hurting because she's wearing two pairs of contacts!

21.2 Both of King Mob's lips are pierced here!

22.4 "The Hand of Glory's like ... it's the hydrogen bomb." Both devices are able to pierce into the domain of the magic mirror.

23.5 Robin's hesitant about Portland because she was sent to an asylum there in 2008, as revealed in 2.21.

24.2 Trains are a recurring image.

"It's one
of their
words,
man. If
our words
are circles,
their's are
bubbles."

JAN 98

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Phil Jimenez *Layouts*

John Stokes *Finishes*

Kevin Somers *Colors*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

AMERICAN DEATH CAMP COUNTING TO FIVE

As the Invisibles wait in a hotel for dinner on their way to find Boy, King Mob relays the story of the second activation of the Hand of Glory. As the Outer Church broke through reality, he found himself in his childhood home, with Dane boiling a green glove in his kitchen.

Later, they psychically trace Boy to the headquarters of Motech, one of Mason's many companies. Dane is especially eager to find her, telling King Mob that he read her mind and discovered that he may have a chance with her. They break into the Motech building only to wind up defeated, King Mob at the mercy of an Outer Church-controlled Boy...

PHIL JIMENEZ ON WORKING WITH EDITOR SHELLY ROEBERG

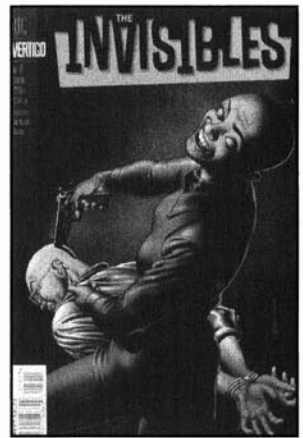
Shelly Bond. I'm very in love with that name. I have to say I learned more from that woman about how to tell a story than any other editor I ever worked with. We worked on every page together, basically, and even if we didn't always agree on stuff, sometimes she would give, sometimes I would give, on certain storytelling devices. She was just amazing to work with. She kept that series together. She was going through a really hard time – her boyfriend at the time was in the hospital for much of that run. Grant wasn't generating work. I was getting ready to quit because Grant wasn't generating work. Yet somehow she managed to keep it all together. It was really amazing. I have to give her many props.

She was really the driving visual force. She's the one that got Brian Bolland on the cover. She just kept everything together.

When I was working on that book, the concern was getting emotional beats back into the book, because I thought that one of the problems with the book was the characters were types as opposed to individuals. Grant was worried about turning the book into too much of a soap opera. He didn't want that. I love soap operas, so I was all about the soap opera. Shelly was a great mediator to explain my concerns, and if I was going to stay on the book, what I'd want out of it etc. She was just terrific. Grant says in the final issue that the book would have fallen apart without Shelly, which is absolutely true. Put that in there.

ON THE COVER

A minimalist image of a bald, insect-eyed Boy grinning wildly as she prepares to shoot King Mob in the back of the head. Bolland and Jimenez still can't seem to agree on how many piercings King Mob has, nor in this case what clothes he's wearing during the featured scene. There is no Vertigo strip for this issue.



2 Times Square in the Universe B intersection that King Mob uses as a shortcut. The image seems based on the works of Flemish painter Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c.1525-1569), notably *The Triumph of Death*. Note that the men don't seem to be anatomically correct here, which may be a witty comment on our mental conditioning but is more likely pre-emptive censorship despite THE INVISIBLES being "for mature readers." The figure next to King Mob is wearing the same dress Fanny wears on the Wizard magazine INVISIBLES poster.

3 "Our memories include future events also." Because all times are one – a recurring theme.

3.3 Abaddon is alternately the place of the dead and the angel of the abyss in the Bible.

6.1 Another Philip K. Dick empire reference.

6.3 Fox Mulder is an FBI agent who investigates alien abductions and other conspiracies in the US television series *The X-Files* (1993-2002).

6.4 Discordians worship Eris, Greek goddess of chaos, who set the Trojan War in motion by tossing a golden apple inscribed: *To the prettiest one into Mount Olympus* and watching the havoc ensue. Discordians try to demolish accepted paradigms and beliefs without offering anything to replace them.

Note that Dane is psychically following Boy's movements, although he appears unaware of it.

7.2 *Taxi Driver* is a 1976 film by Martin Scorsese (b.1942), featuring Robert DeNiro (b.1943) as Travis Bickle, an unstable Vietnam veteran who lashes out at society. As a last effort toward humanity, Bickle tries to get a young prostitute, played by Jodie Foster (b.1962) off the street.

9.1 David Lynch (b.1946) is an American director, known for such surrealist films as *The Elephant Man* (1980), *Blue Velvet* (1986) and the US television series *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991).

Like Dane, King Mob is a child of divorce.

9.3 Who's blood is on the wall?

10.1 Note that Dane is wearing the target shirt generally worn by King Mob in this volume, now colored like BARBELITH.

10.2 The glove here is for the same hand as the Hand of Glory. This appears to be a dream association, as King Mob confirms in the next panel.

11.2 Life as fiction – a recurring INVISIBLES theme.

13.3 "How come you don't believe in God but you believe in the devil?" Because only the devil, or rather, the Gnostic Christ, appears in *THE INVISIBLES*.

13.4 *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995-2001) is a camp US television series about a renegade female warrior in ancient Greece.

14.1 In fact Boy is the only Invisible without psychic powers, interestingly.

19.1 *Georgie Girl* is a 1966 film by Silvio Narizzano (b.1927), based on Margaret Forster's (b.1938) novel about a dowdy London girl's metamorphosis. The reinvention theme is shared by the related hit song of the same name by The Seekers.

21.4 Adam Kadmon in the Kabbalistic term for unsullied man before the fall.

MOVING BEYOND THE EGO

From www.grant-morrison.com

As I wrote in the final *INVISIBLES* issue, the ego, the individual self was only ever scaffolding for the ... superself ... MeMePlex of *THE INVISIBLES*. Scaffolding is a necessary part of any construction project but for the last couple of hundred years we've been encouraged to mistake the scaffolding for the building, so proud of learning to toddle that we stop trying to walk and talk.

PN: *American Death Camp really doesn't work for me, and I'm not entirely sure why. Perhaps it's the half-hearted stabs at textual gaming, such as the Miss Dwyer look-alike character, who serves as little more than a red herring. Or maybe it's Grant forgetting that having one of your best friends sell you out, a mundane horror so effective in the first volume, is far more terrifying than alien Klansmen riding mechanical horses through a comic-book hell. But there's little tension here, and our lack of empathy for Boy at this point only shows how neglected she's been in the series to date. Which isn't to say there aren't some good moments here – King Mob's dream is suitably eerie (and ultimately relevant to the series) and the Asian influence works far better on Fanny than the typical Barbie mode. Showing the Invisibles driving is exactly the sort of thing that grounds the series so well, yet still gives an eerie edge to the mundane – the same effect achieved early in *The X-Files* when the leads are shown going to the bathroom and washing dogs. Sadly, the art is a shadow of earlier issues.*

KCS: *The highlight of this book for me is the King's description of what happened to him when the Hand was activated. It's eerie watching him wander through time, and his moment with Jack is priceless. Jack is the star of this issue easily. His rant on pages 12 and 13 provides a needed critique of the Invisibles and their methods once again. One gets the sense that he's the only one who really "gets" anything. I'm still uncomfortable with what Cell 23 are doing to Boy, and when I finished reading it for the first time I thought, If she's one of them I'll be pissed, and if she's not I'll be pissed too, because who's in love with trick endings? Oh, and Fanny – the Asian motif – stick with it. You look fab.*



AMERICAN DEATH CAMP

COUNTING
TO TEN

FEB 98

Grant Morrison *Writer*Phil Jimenez *Layouts*John Stokes *Finishes*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Heroic Age *Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

Before finding himself prisoner before a gun-wielding Boy, King Mob and the other Invisibles break into the Motech building. Cell 23, which has decided that the Hand of Glory is worthless, defend their position using the reality shaping words of the true 64-character alphabet. An initial word attempts to render the Invisibles impotent by forcing them to critique their ego scaffolding, while a second simulates the frenzied senses of an alien contact. Ragged Robin telepathically erases the team's short-term memory to protect them from the attacks. Left without resources, Cell 23 uses a word that turns off human consciousness.

King Mob awakens to find himself at the mercy of Boy, apparently controlled by the Outer Church. Boy fights her programming and King Mob frees himself, turning the tables on Cell 23, who claim that the whole scenario was a ruse to remove a Conspiracy implant in Boy's mind. Boy's former NYPD partner, Oscar, who reveals himself to be a member of Cell 23, tells Boy that her desire for revenge for the fate of her brothers – and therefore her motivation to become an Invisible – were implanted by the Conspiracy and would have ultimately consumed her. Disgusted, the Invisibles leave. Cell 23 keeps the Hand of Glory, foiling the Invisibles' efforts to retrieve it in the first place.

"A creation
of commodity
culture, [the
anarchist-
hero figure]
allows us
to buy in
to an
inauthentic
simulation of
revolutionary
praxis."



3.1 *Psycho* is a 1960 Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) film, based on the Robert Bloch (1917-1994) novel about a man who believes he is instructed to kill by his dead mother.

Lang Enterprises is a play on Wayne Enterprises, Bruce Wayne's company in the *Batman* comics.

4.2 "I still say we can bring this movie in under budget." Life as film is a recurring theme.

5.1 "Feels like the scary part of the movie." Life as film again

6.1 Detournement is essentially the hijacking of the news or dominant theories of a culture to satirize the underlying inequalities of that society. Ad-busting (subverting corporate advertising by, say, painting skulls over the faces of supermodels) is a good example.

The Situationists originated in late 1950's France as a loose collective of artists and intellectuals determined to abolish the boundaries between art and culture. By the mid-1960's they had developed a Marxist political streak, which held that capitalism made all relationships transactional and reduced life to spectacle. The notion of the "spectacle" is the keystone of Situationism [and, ultimately, The Insurrections].

6.2 Robin's auto-critique acknowledges that she is undermined by her appearance. She stands for revolution but is instead only seen as a sex object. Note that despite this realization she doesn't stop dressing like a hooker!

6.4 Life as film again

6.5 Only Dane seems unaffected here

7.1 Fanny's autocritique here is based on a letter by Cody Schell printed in the letters column for 1.10

7.6 "How do we fight words?" With Keys 23 and 64, as we'll see.

8.2 Several recurring images here: Trains, magic mirror and the dream UFOs last seen in 1.10.

9.1 "I had one of these when I was little," recalls earlier statements by Quimper.

9.2 This sequence – and this panel in particular – are based on Morrison's first DMT trip. Richard Metzger: *The circumstances were that I had just that very day met Grant for the first time, when I interviewed him on my Infinity Factory talkshow. Afterwards, we went back to my apartment ... and Grant smoked DMT for the*

PHIL JIMENEZ ON *THE INVISIBLES* AS A JOB

Why did you only stay on the series for a year?

Because Grant was really, really, really late with his scripts. I was horrified, partly because it was damaging the work. *THE INVISIBLES* is a book that's really reference heavy. It's not something that you can crank out in a week or two and still have a high-quality product. The thing that was just frustrating with Grant was that he just would not generate work, and then I was late; it was impacting on my inker, he couldn't afford to stay on. It was just kind of a big bummer. That was a book I would have stayed on forever if Grant could have generated the work.

How much time did you have to draw each issue?

There were times, because we were cutting corners, I could crank out a book in two or three weeks. The first arc started out okay, and then it just got really, really, really bad. We would just be waiting and waiting and waiting, and he would turn in a page here and a page there. We never had any idea where he was going, and we would just sort of get these pages. I wouldn't know how to build off them. You couldn't really lay in anything that you could build off of later. I was kind of difficult. I'm sorry that he didn't generate quicker, because I'd have loved to stay on the book for a while.

Did you keep reading the book after you left?

No, I let it go. I picked it up here and there. I find that true with a lot of artists, though. It was one of those things

ON THE COVER

A shocked Dane, King Mob, Ragged Robin and Lord Fanny under the influence of the alien alphabet's auto-critique command – in this case critiquing the series itself, an ostensibly revolutionary tract published by a major media conglomerate as salable merchandise (one almost suspects a “steal this book” balloon was vetoed). The characters all feature typed slogans obscuring word balloons, while the series’ title becomes a subtitle, running beneath the banner: *FOR SALE! ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES!* Hmm.

where I chose to give it up because of scheduling reasons. I thought Chris Weston was a nice replacement. But I sort of felt, *Oh, he's not getting that right*, or *Oh, I would have done that differently*. I didn't want to go through a series reading like that.

I read parts of Volume 3. I read it sporadically just to see what was going on.

What did you think of the other artists on the series?

Chris I thought actually had a pretty good handle on it. Chris is probably the best of them in terms of being able to draw the most – the different kinds of things. That's the thing I felt was missing with other artists. I don't think Jill was cut out for *Arcadia*, but she was perfect for *Sheman*, for example. I got the feeling that Chris was one of those people who could handle most of these different assignments and locales that the Invisibles would end up in.

How do you feel about your time on the series, looking back?

I love my experience on *THE INVISIBLES*, partly because it exposed me to completely new ways to tell stories, about the kinds of stories that could be told. There's a scene in issue five, where they go back to the tear gas bombing in 1995 in Japan, and Grant recommended this book to me. I ended up reading that book, and it was amazing. It was on cults, and the Aum cult in particular. So I ended up learning a lot while I was on that series. Just having to do all that research, you learn all these different things. That was actually very exciting for me.

Also, just reading Grant's scripts was amazing. Grant can write a script like nobody's business, and he can draw, so he tends to think visually, which is always just the coolest, to get that from a writer who's thinking in terms of visuals rather than words, which I think is a problem often in comics. I tended to think of *THE INVISIBLES* itself – this is going to sound a little bit harsh – but kind of like an ambitious failure. It was such an amazing project that didn't quite pull off for a number of reasons. One was multiple artists, and one was some mis-timed stories, and another is I get the feeling that his feelings about the world changed between Volume 1 and Volume 3, so the focus of the book shifted. I think the world started to become a better place in his head. It wasn't quite the dark terror that he started out with. I don't think he was expecting that. The world changed so dramatically from when he started

first time. I still have a microcassette of him speaking about it after he came out of the DMT trance. He was exclaiming something about being in a place that appeared like a gigantic, glittering psychedelic shopping mall with elevators moving up and down all around him and there were these two evil-looking clowns who were peddling stationary bikes. The "exhaust" produced by the peddling is what "makes" our reality.

Mason seems to confirm that they are in contact with magic mirror and/or BARBELITH here, interpreting the event through a new paradigm (just as Dane and Mason both interpreted their initial contacts differently).

The mask on the wall has Robin's makeup.

9.3 The insect looks similar to those seen during Fanny's initiation on 1.13.18.2.

9.4 This suggests that their earlier sexual role play was Robin's idea. She must not have told King Mob what it was for. He doesn't seem to know that Quimper is in his head.

10.1 It's interesting that Robin deletes everyone's short-term memory just as King Mob realizes that Quimper is present.

Again, only Dane sees things how they really are.

11.1 Dialogue here seems to suggest that the Hand of Glory is actually a human hand, which contradicts Beryl's comment in that it "only looks like a hand," but matches Beryl's fate.

12.1 A reference to the "I am not a number!" catchphrase from *The Prisoner*.

13.1 The "Conspiracy" soldiers are colored wrong.

15.3 "Cell 23." 23 is a magick number.

Candid Camera is a US television series running irregularly from 1946 to the present. The show involves ordinary people being caught in various gags by hidden cameras.

18.1 *Romeo and Juliet* is a c.1595 play by William Shakespeare about young lovers from dueling families who commit ironic tandem suicide.

19.1 "Twenty minutes into the future" is from the opening credits of *Max Headroom*, a US science fiction television series (1986-1987) about the mind-controlling power of television (specifically, Network 23).

19.4 Note that Leo wanted to be an astronaut, just like Bobby Murray in 1.12.

21 Boy encounters BARBELITH after confronting her own dark side. Cell 23 seems to understand how contact with BARBELITH works (or at least the conditions for attaining it). As with Dane, it seems that the contactee must undergo an emotional catharsis prior to contact.

Waking up is a recurring theme.

BARBELITH's first words to Boy are the same as they were for Dane.

Note that Boy is the only person to speak to BARBELITH.

22.2 "It's like being in your mother." As will be revealed, BARBELITH is alternately midwife and placenta for the new universe to be born, so this statement makes sense.

22.4 *Star Trek* (1966-1969) is a US science fiction television series chronicling the adventures of a spaceship crew.

22.5 *Mission: Impossible* (1966-1973) is a US television series about an elite covert operations unit, later turned into a series of films.

King Mob paraphrases George Orwell's 1946 novel *Animal Farm*, which shows a successful communist revolution by barnyard animals undermined by the capitalist motives of a group of pigs.

24.2 Oscar is probably about to say "Harlequinade."

"Yes, sir. No, sir. Three bags full, sir," is from the children's rhyme *Baa Baa Black Sheep*. The phrase generally used to imply a propensity for following orders unquestioningly. Grant may be referring to the Kinks song *Yes Sir, No Sir* from the album *Arthur* (or *The Decline of the British Empire*).

24.3 "We love Big Brother" is a saying from Orwell's novel *1984*, about a totalitarian state in which even thought and memory are policed.

the series to when he finished it, which I think altered the sort of stories he was going to tell.

PN: *The self-critique segment is a nice summation of THE INVISIBLES' previous letter columns, but comes across as an obvious gimmick. Far better is the "off" switch for human consciousness," which stands as one of the few visually innovative moments of the storyline. The UFO scenes are surprisingly poor, and the unfinished illustrations on pages nine and eleven show just how out of whack production on the series had become by this point. It's a sign of Phil Jimenez's sheer professionalism that the absent backgrounds, commonplace in the perennially late comics of today, stand out. Daniel Vozzo miscolors the "enemy" soldiers – a negligible mistake here, but his inattention to detail will ultimately undermine King Mob's character arc in the third volume. For what it's worth, no one would actually be able to wear textured contacts shaped like the ones featured here. Great cover, though.*

KCS: *Well it wasn't quite a trick ending. It was damn close, though. What saves this issue, and indeed the whole storyline, is King Mob's indignation and the rest of the team's genuine concern over Boy's well-being. I think this storyline serves once again to illustrate the idea that the Invisibles are the same as the enemy. Plus, there is the language attack at the beginning that is just good old-fashioned top-notch sci-fi writing. And Boy's contact with BARBELiTH is touching. Her "bi" is just in character for Boy, especially in her fragile state. Boy's definitely been raked over the coals throughout this series, so it's naturally no surprise when she calls it quits. I would call this story the beginning of the end for her. I'm anxious to move on to something new.*

"Everybody's
a bad guy."

ONLY LOVERS LEFT ALIVE

APR 98

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Chris Weston *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors*

Heroic Age Separations

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

Colonel Friday and Sir Miles meet in a dream to update each other on the progress of the Conspiracy, with Sir Miles beginning to express uncertainty about his role in the plan.

Meanwhile, the Invisibles have traveled to New Orleans for some relaxation following the events at Motech several months ago. Fanny has a one-night stand with a guy she meets at a club, while Ragged Robin provokes King Mob into sexual role play, seemingly under the influence of Quimper. Dane tells a disbelieving Boy he fancies her, persevering until finally she admits that she's attracted to him as well. They kiss.

Elsewhere, Takashi tells Mason Lang that he may have found an abandoned but operative timesuit.



1.1 The numbers on the milk carton add up to 23. Sir Miles' drinking milk may imply that he has ulcers, reflecting his new-found stress and uncertainty with his role in the Conspiracy after Dane restored his aura. Number 2 in *The Prisoner* episode *The General* drank milk for the same reason.

1.3 Charlie Chaplin (b.Charles Spencer Chaplin, 1889-1977) was a British silent film actor/director known for physical comedy.

Mr. Bean (1989-1995) is a UK television series in which the eponymous character, played by actor Rowan Atkinson (b.1955), has adventures mimicking those of the silent comedy actors like Charlie Chaplin.

2 *Only Lovers Left Alive* is a 1964 dystopian novel by Dave Wallis about youth creating a new society. It's also a refrain from the Pet Shop Boys song *Dreaming of the Queen*.

3.1 Princess Diana Frances Spencer (1961-1997) was killed in an automobile accident on August 29, 1997 in a tunnel at the Pont de l'Alma bridge in Paris. In mythology, Diana is a moon goddess with an affinity for hunting.

3.2 The tarot is a card system used for divination or fortunetelling. The name may derive from the Italian *tarocchi*, referring to the deck and trick cards games played with it in Italy.

Note the milk carton Colonel Friday holds – the images include a cow and what might be BARBELITH, both sacred icons.

4.1 Note that Sir Miles is beginning to express guilt over some of his actions after having had his aura restored by Dane in the House of Fun.

4.3 Myra Hindley (b.1942) took part in the notorious Moors Murders, in which she and her lover killed four children on Saddleworth moor. The opposite of Diana's "nourishing mother."

4.5 "Mobile hoardings, advertising the multinational corporations which control their minds." This issue is awash with logos hidden in the art.

5.1 The missing child on the milk carton is shown on a television broadcast later this issue (14.3). As the carton exists in the dreamspace shared by the Colonel and Sir Miles, we can assume he's a victim of Miles' "child management program" (which may be a replacement system for the destroyed Harmony House).

5.6 Sir Miles appears to have a wife. Does she know what he does for a living?

GRANT MORRISON ON WRITING BOY

One relationship in the second volume is between Boy and Jack. Phil Jimenez said that he was unhappy with the way you presented this, that the development wasn't in character and you were just acting out a fantasy.

Having sex with a black girl? I thought I was being true to the characters; I'd actually lost control of them by that time, to be honest. That's the point in *THE INVISIBLES* that comes after issue 13 I think, when it gets pretty dark; the Hand comes on board and Boy's getting [messed with]. I was losing control. That was 1997 and a lot of really weird, bad things were happening in my life. I was trying to put that in the comic, about relationships and how things go wrong. That was really the Boy and Jack thing. That relationship was inevitable from the start, but it was inevitable that it would never work and it was part of why she would leave. Actually the characters were driving that; I couldn't get control. I didn't want them to. I had nowhere to take it. I thought, *They don't work. But they keep coming together.* And I just let them come together. In issue 14 they're all in New Orleans, it's got a great dam burst. It's this sexy, filthy... It's rainy, and the neon... You can feed off it. That's when I let them go. I thought, *Do what you want.* And then over the next few issues they fell apart. Phil's making a mistake in thinking I drove this. I was actually enmeshed in an ongoing meta-fictional, magical narrative. Nobody's ever done anything like it. They wrote it; I was just channeling them. I don't even remember writing a lot of those issues.

CHRIS WESTON ON SIGNING ON FOR VOLUME 2

You returned to complete Volume 2 after Phil Jimenez left; how did that happen?

It's because I did another fill in issue – from Volume 2, I think it was.

Right – the 1920s issue.

Yeah, that's right. Shelly seemed to like what I did, and the fact I'd got it done on time, and my style seemed to sort of flow quite naturally from Phil's. We had a lot in common, style-wise, at that point.

What was it like following Phil, who at that point was the fan favorite?

It was more following his ability to meet the deadline that I found daunting. I didn't find it daunting, you know, trying

to match him on an artistic level, but mostly he managed to put that book out every month with that amount of detail, on time. He didn't let the quality slip – I found that daunting, thinking, *Bloody hell, can I repeat his performance?* But I wasn't worrying about, you know, could I draw as well as him.

The second volume is marked by a massive increase in sex and violence over the first volume. How did you approach that?

There was a lot of sort of negotiating going on with me and Shelly. I'd draw a scene, and she'd say, "No, that's too rude. Now draw another one." And it'd still be too rude. There was a lot of faxing going on between us. She wanted to see a lot of my breakdowns and layouts before I went on to finish the pencils. I would do everything as a layout first, and it was just a case of me drawing it and her deciding whether we could get away with it, really.

The scene with King Mob holding a gun to Robin's head – that was far ruder in the original version. He was taking her from behind, and it was a long shot. Full body. We kept cropping in closer and closer and closer, until it was just a head shot of the two of them.

PN: *The second issue named after a Pet Shop Boys song this volume opens with the delightful return of Sir Miles. His dream self is a brilliant piece of character shading. Chris Weston seems to have cast him as Nicholas Courtney here, and by God it works. Weston gets a lot of flack from fans, but his professionalism and competence here show how skilled he really is. His characters actually have facial expressions, an absolute rarity in comic illustration. His nude Robin is shaped like an actual woman instead of a comic-book Playmate fantasy, and the level of detail on display is refreshing after the increasing sparseness of previous issues. It's always nice to see the team in their off*

6.1 Peter Fonda (b.1939) is an American actor, known for films such as 1969's *Easy Rider* and 1981's *Cannonball Run*.

Dennis Hopper (b.1936) is an American actor known for films such as *Easy Rider* and 1955's *Rebel Without a Cause*.

6.2 Juju is an African form of black magick, focusing on a *waganga*, or witch-doctor, who casts spells and makes sacrifices in an effort to get spirits to do his bidding.

6.3 The Gestapo was the German internal security police under the Nazi regime. The term is loosely used today to describe any police force known for using terrorist tactics on its own citizens.

8.2 The kangaroo icon is the logo for clothing company Kangol.

8.3 Note the return of insect imagery.

Adidas is an athletic clothing company.

8.4 DKNY is an acronym used by design house Donna Karan New York.

Rise is a UK dance club.

Note the *Clockwork Orange* t-shirt.

14.2 Note the Quimper image on the wallpaper.

14.3 This is the same missing boy featured on Sir Miles' milk carton.

15.4 Note the Quimper image on the mirror.

18.3 Public Enemy is an American rap group best known for the album *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* and songs like *911 is a Joke*.

Niggaz with Attitude was a seminal gangsta rap group from Los Angeles best known for its superstar members, including Dr. Dre (b.Andre Young, 1965), Eazy-E (b.Eric Wright, 1964-1995) and Ice Cube (b.O'Shea Jackson, 1969). Their 1988 album *Straight Outta Compton* brought hardcore political rap to mainstream US culture. Songs like *Fuck tha Police* prompted an FBI investigation into the group.

23.1 "So now I'm from fucking Mars, am I?" *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus: A Practical Guide for Improving Communication and Getting What You Want in Your Relationships* is a controversial 1992 pop psychology book by John Gray (b.1951), light on research and heavy on assumption, which alleges men and women have different ingrained needs.

23.4 UK fish and chip shops generally sell a pickled onion for a few additional pence.

ON THE COVER

A sultry Lord Fanny, looking strangely like an actual woman, slumped against the wall on the floor of her New Orleans hotel room. The wallpaper pattern is composed of the lines of Quimper's mask.

DATING THE INVISIBLES

Only Lovers Left Alive probably takes place roughly two months after *American Death Camp*, based on the length of Boy's hair.

THE INVISIBLES is one of the few comic book series to try to pace itself in accordance with real time. Grant employs several devices to align THE INVISIBLES with the real world after the distortion that inevitably accompanies the serial form, in which a story that takes place over a few days may be published across the course of a year (Volume 1 took more two years to publish but takes place across no more than six or eight months). The one-year gaps between the volumes help; Boy's hair, which slowly grows longer across the next several issues, is a masterstroke.

hours (in fact the series in general tends to come across far better as a drama serial than an action adventure, something the filmmakers would do well to keep in mind). It's the small things that make The Invisibles work. The Boy/Dane relationship feels right, and one is tempted to forgive the rushed pacing in light of the character development it affords Boy. After his tsk tsking last issue, I feel obliged to cheer Daniel Vozzo for the great colors this issue. Isn't it interesting that Brian Bolland always seems to paint Fanny as a biological woman?

KCS: *Glad to see Chris Weston back, although his Jack Frost is a bit off for me. Even so, he lives up to the expectation of detail and craft that was the Jimenez standard. This is a great non-action issue, the kind where the characters just hang out, being themselves. Nice to see Fanny with someone who wants to have a good time instead of rape or betray her. The bit with Robin and the King is a bit odd, and the Quimper mirror image is just too damn creepy. I was hesitant about any kind of relationship between Boy and Dane, but now that it's played itself out it turns out to be a good thing, and convincing. They are both the pragmatists, the no-nonsense aspect of the group, and they make a good pair. I find myself most anxious to discover when and how the group's meeting with Quimper will play out.*



"What
would a
human
being look
like who
had learned
to move
freely in
space and
time?"

THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT

MAY 98

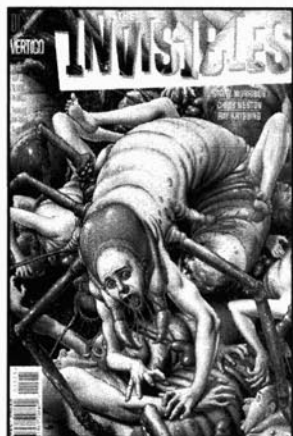
Grant Morrison *Writer*Chris Weston *Pencils*Ray Kryssing *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Heroic Age *Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

In 1992, King Mob and John-A-Dreams find an abandoned timesuit in the shape of a Lovecraftian plant in a Philadelphia church. Further exploration reveals a roomful of mutated insect-men.

In 1998, King Mob tells Ragged Robin that he wants to return to the church and try to find John-A-Dreams. They arrive to find the church empty, but before long they sense the presence of John-A-Dreams and panic at the notion that he may have joined the Conspiracy.

Boy and Dane spend time in New Orleans getting to know each other better. After King Mob and Robin leave for Philadelphia, Fanny summons the others and informs them that she has detected Quimper in Robin's mind.

Meanwhile, Satan arrives at the Conspiracy's Dulce headquarters and is told that Quimper has 30% control of Robin, while Takashi calls the US government and gives them the timesuit's liquid hard drive.



2 The Philadelphia Experiment refers to an alleged US Navy project during the second World War with the intent of rendering battleships invisible to radar through the use of magnetic fields. Subject ship USS Eldridge is instead said to have teleported from Philadelphia to Norfolk, Virginia, driving the surviving crew mad.

In many ways, democracy itself could be considered "the Philadelphia experiment," as that's where the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Michael Lark receives a "special thanks" credit in this issue's masthead for help with inks.

4.4 Satan's proximity makes Colonel Friday bleed, but strangely no one else.

5.1 Satan appears to have been present at Quimper's rape in Brazil; this means Fanny's met him, too. Or to put it another way, Satan was present at a ritual that created two agents for opposite sides of the war, suggesting the life as game theme.

7.3 "I think they're just vehicles." The organic object John-A-Dreams finds in Philadelphia is another timesuit, which he and King Mob see through a Lovecraftian cultural lens.

8.3 "I don't much fancy yours" is a UK expression, generally used by the craftier of two men to lay claim to the prettier of two women the pair have just met in a pub etc. More mobile insect-men were encountered in the House of Fun during Volume 1.

11.1 ANU-9 is a combination of Anubis and the number of Lennon (*Revolution 9*) and Ganesha. We're not sure which is more interesting; that King Mob bought the same model car as the one that exploded in 19, or that he appears to have had it flown to the States.

11.2 "Nice car. Wanna show me what it can do?" A line from a satirical UK car ad for the Peugeot 603, in which a man has spontaneous sex with a woman he's just met in the parking lot.

Note that King Mob throws away the ticket. He appears to combat authority in all forms (although strangely he's quite taken with being team leader).

12.3 "Maybe that's how it chose to show itself." Masks and identity are recurring themes.

13.1 An incubus is an evil spirit that rapes women while they sleep. The term is also used to describe a nightmarish burden.

CHRIS WESTON ON WORKING FROM GRANT'S SCRIPTS

The huge chasm with skyscrapers – I loved stuff like that. If I got that in a script I'd think, *Yes! Here's a point where I can really let rip and really go for it and do something that's totally outrageous.* I didn't have a problem with that, really. It's all the sitting round and just talking that I find difficult. You know, the scenes of them chatting. If it's something like a giant monster inside a cathedral and soldiers all shooting I think, *Yes, I can draw that!* It's the philosophical chats I used to hate.

PN: *The recurring filmic storyboard motif used for the Satan POV sequences is absolutely fantastic, not so much for the mystery of his identity but for the delightful character work it affords Friday and Quimper. Robin on 10.1 appears to have undergone antigravity breast enhancement surgery – some trick of the enemy, no doubt. As a saving grace in the panel, King Mob has a flat human ass instead of a curvy Playgirl fantasy. In a great bit of character color, it appears that KM rents the same model sports car while in America that he owns back in England. The John-A-Dreams sequences are spooky fun. The thematic interplay between Boy and Dane is good, and false breasts are never a bad thing in comic books. Incidentally, this is the cover that always grosses out company when left on the coffee table.*

KCS: *There was a lot to like in this issue. To begin with, we get a bit more "banging around" time. It's a treat to see Boy and Dane just chilling at the mall, playing video games. Of course, the fun has to end sometime, right? Two big mysteries are addressed here. First, we have our first real acknowledgment from Robin that she knows something is going on inside her head. And Fanny knows who it is. Second, we're revisiting John's disappearance, getting more details. Coincidence that these two mysteries are being explored simultaneously? I think not. I'm still adjusting to Chris' version of these characters – can he make this series his now that he's got it?*

ON THE COVER

A morass of insect-people from the vision experienced by King Mob and John-A-Dreams when they discovered the timesuit. There is no Vertigo strip for this issue.

THE OTHER INVISIBLES

Although Grant dropped plans to explore other Invisibles after the first year of the series, we nevertheless encounter several diverse cells.

Division X is comprised of Invisibles in deep cover, but these don't appear to be members of the same cell; indeed, they seem unaware that each other (or even themselves) are Invisibles at all. When we finally meet Mister Six's cell in 1999, it's comprised of Helga and Purves (and possibly George Harper and Jack Flint, although there is no evidence to support this).

An Invisibles cell is active in London in between 1918 and 1924, comprised of Edith Manning, Billy Chang, King Mob, Queen Mab and Tom O'Bedlam.

Edith Manning and the modern King Mob encounter Papa Skat, a member of an Invisibles cell working out of New York City in 1924.

Jim Crow works with an unidentified Invisibles cell that may operate under cover as the rap group the Root Doctaz, although this isn't stated.

Jolly Roger was formerly part of a cell called the Poison Pussies, accompanied by Bobbie, Bambi, Bumper and one other woman, only one of whom escaped a raid on the Conspiracy's Dulce base.

The most organized cell we encounter outside of King Mob's is Cell 23, which brainwashed Boy to acquire the Hand of Glory. This is comprised of Mr. Kadmon, Coyote, Georgie Girl and Boy's former NYPD partner, Oscar.

When the Marquis de Sade arrives in 1995 he forms his own cell of Invisibles, initially comprised of his nameless female driver and Thierro.

King Mob's cell mutates after his departure, by 2012 comprised of Lord Fanny, Ragged Robin, Takashi Satoh, Reynard and Dane.

Not all Invisibles appear to work within the cell structure, however. Jeremy Sutton works alone in deep cover at Glamis, while Elfayed now seems to only teach at the North African academy.

14.1 *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* is a 1969 western film by George Roy Hill (b.1922) about two robbers who flee to Bolivia. Life as film is a recurring theme.

14-15 The video game sequence suggests the blurring perceptions. The players are shooting at "terrorists" who look like police.

15.5 Fanny's room is 235 – 23 and 5 are magic numbers (and 2+3=5).

16.3 The Hand of Glory disappeared in 1959; it's possible the Harlequinade obtain it at this point, although their apparent mastery of time means the precise date is unimportant.

16.4 "They were a cult" may refer to MOVE, an African American separatist group who occupied a series of Philadelphia row houses in the early 1980s. Most were eventually killed when police burned down the building.

17.2 US writer Clark Ashton Smith (1893-1961) created the character of Tsothoggua, an amorphous, toad-like elder god, as part of HP Lovecraft's Cthulhu myths.

18.1 Shoggoths are massive, protoplasmic beasts of burden in the Cthulhu myths, created by the star-headed Old Ones. They eventually became capable of primitive thought and lost a rebellion against their masters. According to the myths, shoggoths cry out, "Tekeli-ii!"

Cthulhu is the high priest of the elder gods in the myths of the same name. The tentacled Cthulhu remained on Earth after the stars changed, asleep in R'lyeh, a city hidden beneath the Pacific ocean.

Yog-Sothoth is one of the Outer Gods in the Cthulhu myths, said to possess the powers of space-time. He appears in many guises, including a black, amorphous blob and a multi-limbed human.

18.3 "I think they'd found a way to become pure thought." This would essentially be the function of a fiction suit.

19.4 John-A-Dreams seems to have entered Universe B from the church in Philadelphia.

19.5 King Mob theorizes that they performed surgery to turn him to the other side, although this is probably incorrect.

20.2 We see this in 1.15.5.4.

20.3 Quimper isn't quite a spirit, although this is how Fanny interprets his presence.

21.1 The sideways manner of holding a gun and the white doves are images usually associated with the Hong Kong action films of Chinese director John Woo (b.1946).

21.4 Public schools in the UK would be called private schools in the US. King Mob's implying that John-A-Dreams comes from a rich family, and as such has everything handed to him.

23.2 The "star" of the match links Satan and John-A-Dreams. Note they both wear white suits...

"Have you
ever noticed
how the
world has
been in
constant
crisis since
World
War Two?"

JUN 98

Grant Morrison *Writer*Chris Weston *Pencils*Ray Kryssing *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Heroic Age *Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

SCORPIO RISING

Mason, affected by his alien abduction and a sighting of the cracked Liberty Bell in childhood, celebrates the triumph of his Trojan horse timesuit scheme with the US government at a party in New York with his sister, Kathryn.

In Philadelphia, King Mob and Ragged Robin flee deeper into the church, believing themselves to be pursued by John-A-Dreams. Eventually they realize they have been subjected to paranoia-inducing microwaves. The church is empty.

In Chicago, Jolly Roger meets up with Jim Crow in preparation for a second attack on the Conspiracy's Dulce headquarters.



1.4 *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* is a camp 1975 film by Jim Sharman (b.1945) about transsexual aliens.

2.5 *Starship Troopers* is a 1997 film by Paul Verhoeven (b.1938), loosely based on Robert Heinlein's (1907-1988) book about a fascist human culture locked in a battle with giant alien bugs.

4 The events on this page are also depicted in 2.1. Note that Mason is remembering them slightly differently.

5.1 *Hercules* is an animated 1997 Disney film based on the Greek myth of the son of Zeus.

7 *Scorpio Rising* refers to the 1964 Kenneth Anger (b.1927 Kenneth Wilbur Anglemeyer) film about bikers, magic, sex and violence.

Michael Lark receives a "special thanks" credit in the masthead for helping with inks.

7.1 Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch (c.1450-1516) is best known for horrific scenes of the biblical Hell. His style was widely copied after his death, notably by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, whose own work influenced *THE INVISIBLES*.

Helix is a now-defunct DC Comics imprint.

11 Satan's sketches of Quimper are another form of naming an object to gain power over it; in this case the "naming" is done visually rather than through representative language. The pair are each iterations of John-A-Dreams; Satan is actually drawing himself.

11.5 How does Quimper know the picture is of him?

15.5 Trains are a recurring image.

17.5 All fates are worse than death, if in death we're absorbed into the supercontext.

19.5 The time may be 23:05.

20.1 Life as film is a recurring theme.

The door King Mob shoots reveals a brick wall sporting his name. In this sense King Mob can be said to be shooting himself. A similar paradox occurs on 2.1.14.7.

20.3 The Xener test for ESP is comprised of a short series of cards depicting simple line illustrations.

ESP, or extra-sensory perception, is a common name for paranormal mental powers.

22.1 A refrain from the Frank Sinatra (1915-1998) song *New York, New York*.

ON THE COVER

King Mob's pose parodies the movie posters for *The Full Monty*. Note the crossed fingers on his right hand. The bullet-riddled shirt (which incidentally isn't the one he wears in the actual issue) is another foreshadowing that of King Mob's death, a theme for the volume. Britpop is the collective term for the type of music released around 1996 by UK guitar bands such as Blur and Suede.

CHRIS WESTON ON DRAWING DANE

I don't think [the other artists] got the cheeky urchin in him. I think Steve did, the first guy.

PN: *A great issue, and one of those comparable rarities in THE INVISIBLES — a story with atmosphere. The tension building throughout the Philadelphia scenes is palpable, and by the time King Mob and Robin have worked out what's happening the reader is as excited as they are. Another sign of Grant's writing talent is on display with the airplane sequence — how many comic book writers take into account that moving from A to B requires transport? Some dodgy early artwork leads into some truly dynamic illustration work. Nobody draws a city like Chris Weston. I love the notion that Quimper keeps a collection of illustrations of himself. Colonel Friday is always cool in his black armor, even if it is ripped wholesale from one of the main villains of, bizarrely, Sailor Moon. Mason's strange behavior was annoying at the time, coming across as little more than a red herring. The Full Monty cover nails the spirit of the series at this point, and for some reason I recall this period as the most exciting time spent in anticipation of each new issue.*

KCS: *I'm not sure I've ever felt that much suspense while reading something, and I knew the enemy wasn't real. Quite an accomplishment on the part of our artistic team. I love the scenes in Dulce. The perspective is fabulous. I found it truly fascinating that Quimper wants to keep the sketch. Does he know what he is? I was a little disturbed by the implication that Mason could be a traitor. It's bad enough that the Invisibles are so much like the enemy. I don't want them to be the enemy. But even that isn't a valid distinction, really.*

"It's the
soul on
the outside
looking in
at the
body."

AUG 98

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Chris Weston *Pencils*

Ray Kryssing *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

BLACK SCIENCE 2 NEWTON'S SLEEP

As the Invisibles prepare for their attack on Archuleta Mesa, Boy decides to quit the team, having had enough of a lifestyle that doesn't ever seem to make things better for anyone. Dane tries to persuade her to stay, but in the end she merely agrees to continue his training until the attack. Later, Fanny tells Dane that the mission will come down to the pair of them, while Mason reveals that he acquired the Hand of Glory from Cell 23.

In the Conspiracy's Dulce headquarters, Satan offers Colonel Friday an apple "for the prettiest one," hinting that he may be a cat amongst the pigeons...

CHRIS WESTON ON WORK AS AN ARTIST

Did you retain your original layouts?

No. If I did that my studio would be full of artwork. Every now and then I just clear it all out. At the end of a job, like *THE INVISIBLES*, I just go through everything, bag it up and take it to the dump.

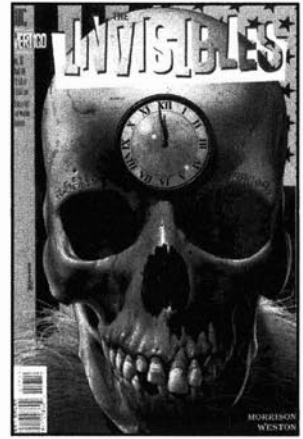
How do colors and inks affect your original pencils?

Well, this was the first time I'd really been inked by anyone other than myself. I'd very much come from the school that an artist should do the whole thing himself. So I found that quite difficult. I think I was quite hard on the inker, really, which I do regret, because now I see myself inked by other people and think he did a really good job.

Looking back, what do you think of the final presentation of your work?

No real problems. I was quite happy with it.

PN: *I'm not so sure about Fanny's wig; does she travel with them all? But the transformation sequence itself is superb, underlining one of the strengths of the Sheman arc and reminding the reader of the difference between Fanny and Hilde. Another example of a story element that would have suffered in the hands of a lesser writer. Mason's description of the ever-changing videotape is one of those moments THE INVISIBLES is all about. The postmodern interpretation of Doctor Who described on the first page is brilliant. The*



1.4 1963 was the year of the first episode of the UK television series *Doctor Who*. In the first episode, two school teachers discover an alien living in a time machine, and subsequently travel backwards in time to give cavemen the secret of fire. Jim Crow is recasting *Doctor Who* as a black power conspiracy myth. Note that he's co-opted burning crosses as a symbol of black power.

2 Inevitably, a volume focused so heavily on film features a sequel story. As the original *Black Science* used terms from dance culture for issue titles, so *Black Science 2* uses scientific concepts for titles. All four titles fit the format "Scientist's X."

Isaac Newton developed a theory of gravity after a falling apple hit him while he slept beneath a tree, according to folklore. The term "Newton's Sleep" was coined by William Blake to criticize the way in which Newtonian physics was then being used to describe all phenomena.

Note the US flag is a color negative.

3.1 Note the James Bond Voodoo doll. *Revenge for Live and Let Die?* The camp 1973 Guy Hamilton (b.1922) film features James Bond against a heroin cartel armed with a tarot reader and Voodoo forces.

3.2 KY jelly is a popular lubricant for sex.

4.2 The logo on Dane's shirt is for the French ambient music duo Air, best known for the album *Moon Safari*.

9.5 John Travolta (b.1954) is an American actor known for such films as *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994). He's also a Scientologist, a member of a sect characterized by secret initiations and belief in alien contact.

11.2 This panel is an homage to the famous photograph by Roy Schatt of James Dean in Times Square.

Note the pyramid in the CBS 'eye' logo – an inverse of the Masonic symbol.

12.3 Of course they're transporting it on the Z3rd. 23 is a magick number.

12.4 Life as a game is a recurring theme.

18.1 Snow White is a fairy tale about a princess cursed to eternal sleep by her wicked stepmother, popularized by the 1937 animated Disney film.

Note that the apple is also a globe.

18.2 "For the prettiest one" is the engraving on the

ON THE COVER

The flag image is a color negative. If you stare at it for a few moments and then look at a white surface, you should see a "proper" flag. The clock is the nuclear clock of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, intended as a representation of the likelihood of nuclear war. Also called the Doomsday Clock, its current setting is nine minutes to midnight, a result of India and Pakistan's escalated nuclear testing. Jim Crow wears a clock on his hat that would sit at the same position as the one on the skull.

golden apple tossed into Mount Olympus by Eris, goddess of discord. In Greek mythology, three goddesses thought the apple was meant for them; they employed the human Paris to choose which one. Instead, he gave the apple to Helen of Troy, thus starting the Trojan War.

18.4-18.5 Life as a film is a recurring theme.

20.1 "It's all about movies." Life as film is a recurring theme, if you hadn't noticed.

20.5 Mason's statements echo a famous line from American anarchist Hakim Bey: "Any oppressor who works through the image is susceptible to the power of the image."

21.1 A key figure in French Situationism, Guy Debord (1931-1994), co-founded International Lettrism in 1952 and the International Situationist in 1957. His key book is 1967's *The Society of the Spectacle*.

GRANT MORRISON ON QUIMPER

From a 1999 interview with *Sequential Tart*

I go back to *THE INVISIBLES* and I know what Quimper is – he's an abortion me and my girlfriend had when we were 20 and he's back and he wants to make sure that I knew who he was.

image of Jack on 4.5 is another example of Weston's artistic strength – that's a unique person, by God, oozing personality. And note that Boy's hair is slowly growing back across issues. Robin is sexy in the black wrap on Mason's balcony. The Dane/Boy breakup is well handled, feeling much more organic and real than their coming together. Page 18 is cool for myriad reasons, not least of which is Weston's superb handling of Satan. But at least one element on display jars – no self-respecting street kid from Liverpool would ever wear an Air t-shirt! A truly excellent cover, by the way.

KCS: *Way way back in the days of Volume 1, there were so many times when I really wished the series would just come out in one big book. Volume 2 goes a long way toward changing that, and so far it has worked well as a monthly title. Until now. Just what the hell is going on with Mason Lang? It's too much. I need all answers now. I'm simply too impatient and addle-brained for this book, it seems. If only I could remember where I left my keys, I might be able to hold all of the pertinent details of this series in my mind.*

All that aside, Black Science 2 seems to have all the promise of the first Black Science way back in the day. It's fab to have Jim back, drawn by Chris Weston no less (a real treat) and Jolly Roger is a welcome, if heartburn-inducing, addition as well. The animosity between Robin and Roger is a bit overdone. Robin has become a person over the last fifteen or so issues, while Roger is still nothing more than a stereotype. It doesn't work. Chris Weston has some really great images this issue. Satan's face is fucking creepy, with those crystal blue eyes. And Colonel Friday's mouth – oh my, what large teeth you have. Weston's Fanny is growing on me as well, although no one draws Fanny quite like Jill Thompson.

"Reality
can suck
my dick,
darling."

BLACK SCIENCE 2

EINSTEIN'S MONSTERS

SEP 98

Grant Morrison *Writer*Ivan Reis *Pencils*Mark Pennington *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

The Invisibles realize that rumors of a train transporting the Roswell download are a Conspiracy trap, and decide to take the battle straight to Archuleta Mesa. Robin leads an infiltration team, wearing a replica of Quimper's mask. Outside, Dane is surrounded by Conspiracy forces, while King Mob and Jolly Roger are captured by Quimper.

In San Francisco, Takashi watches as US government forces begin dismantling the timesuit.



1.1 Life as film is a recurring theme.

1.4 Michael Keaton (b.1951) is an American actor primarily known for comic roles in such movies as the 1988 Tim Burton (b.1958) film *Beetlejuice*.

Batman is a 1989 film by Tim Burton based on the long-running DC Comics series.

3 *Einstein's Monsters* is a short story collection by UK author Martin Amis. In the book's preface, Amis says the title "refers to nuclear weapons, but also ourselves ... not fully human, not for now." Einstein famously helped the US develop the first atomic weapons in a race against Nazi Germany.

Michael Lark receives a "special thanks" credit in the masthead for help with inks.

Note the pentagrams in the poster.

The nuclear explosion shown on the Times Square Jumbotron is one of Einstein's titular monsters.

5.1 Trains are a recurring image.

8.4 Julius Caesar was the emperor of Rome, killed by a mob of senators, including his friend Brutus. King Mob is probably referring to the 1979 BBC film adaptation of William Shakespeare's play, directed by Herbert Wise (b.1924).

11.4 Where did Robin get the mask?

12.1 Bruce Lee (1940-1973) starred in several Kung Fu action films, notably *Enter the Dragon* (1973).

13.3 Note that Satan is multidimensional.

14.1 In *The Great Divorce*, CS Lewis postulates that Hell is smaller than Earth, which in turn is smaller than Heaven.

14.2 Colonel Friday was on the USS Eldridge (see 2.15), which in *THE INVISIBLES'* universe appears to have entered the Outer Church during the ill-fated Philadelphia Experiment.

16.5 Jim Crow is wearing a pentagram.

20.5 Mason's full name is Mason Andrew Lang. Masons are famed for secret initiations and conspiracy theories. Former US president Andrew Johnson's (1808-1875) supporters were called King Mob by his detractors. Fritz Lang (1890-1976) was a revolutionary Austrian political filmmaker.

21.4 Life as film is a recurring theme.

Jolly Roger is referring to Monica Lewinsky (b.1973), who had an affair with US president Bill Clinton, thus triggering his impeachment trial.

ON THE COVER

Ragged Robin, kneeling in front of an American flag while wearing a Quimper mask. In terms of the storyline this should actually be Lord Fanny, but the eyes are green. Note that all four *Black Science* 2 covers use an American flag rotated a quarter turn to the right for a backdrop; the Vertigo strip is cleverly made up from one of the thirteen stripes on each flag.

PN: *A difficult issue to review, this one. Little of interest happens aside from the marvelous interplay between Boy and Dane. Her plea for him to leave the Invisibles strikes the reader as emotionally true. The hypothetical train attack is a waste of space, yet ironically the Invisibles' infiltration of Dulce seems rushed. It's interesting to speculate from Satan's comments that Friday was at Roswell when the magic mirror downloaded. I'm not sure I can get behind Ivan Reis' pencils, although we'll see far worse before the series is over.*

KCS: *Well, the game's afoot, what? This is a solid action issue with all of the requisite elements: A carefully laid plan, a well-executed assault and a trap on the part of the enemy, all while the driver of the van gets caught with his pants down. I like what's going on in the beginning of this issue. Mason's given King Mob something to think about. What if it's all a sham? What if it's all fake? What if it's all just a game? Well it is, and we know it is, but does the King really know? Is he beginning to learn? Jack has it figured out as usual, but it's refreshing to see King Mob a bit unsure of himself, if even for a moment. And you know what? Ivan Reis does a damn good job as guest penciler. Where's he been hiding?*

"Do you
ever dream
in more
than three
dimensions?"

BLACK SCIENCE 2

PAVLOV'S DOGS

OCT 98

Grant Morrison *Writer*Chris Weston *Pencils*Ray Kryssing *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

In San Francisco, the US government takes the timesuit from Takashi and Mason.

In the Conspiracy's Dulce base, Dane has been delivered to Satan, who is unable to bend Dane to his will. Satan warns Dane not to dismiss him, hinting at a connection to BARBELiTH.

Quimper, controlling King Mob and Jolly Roger, leads them deep into Archuleta Mesa until they enter a massive chamber in which a giant machine is harnessing the magic mirror download from Roswell. He causes the mirror to swarm around King Mob and Roger, who promptly begin experiencing their worst fears. They watch as Robin is subjugated to his will – but Quimper is stunned to discover Lord Fanny behind the mask, in full command of the magic mirror.



Note that the captions for this issue begin red and slowly turn green – just like the cosmic spotlight when providing access to the Invisible College.

1.1 Note the pentacle Air Force emblem on the wall.

2 Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) was a Russian researcher notable for stimulus experiments with dogs. He found that after ringing bells while feeding dogs, the animals eventually began salivating at the sound of a bell even if food wasn't present. In many respects, Alex from *Invisibles* influence *A Clockwork Orange* is one of Pavlov's dogs.

3.2 King Mob and Roger are entering the 7th level here – one level further than the previous *Black Science* arc.

7.1 This isn't what Dane was wearing when he was caught last issue.

7.2 Satan sits at a right angle to the board; apt, as he's playing both sides. Note that the white pieces (light) are on his left, while the black pieces (darkness) are to his right. A political statement?

Note the return of the globe apple.

8.1 Satan suggests that reality may be a game in which he is but one player.

10.2 Note that Quimper controls the magic mirror.

14.3 Note that Satan sees Dane without his "suit." See 3.7.19

15.5 "I am not the God of your fathers." BARBELiTH says the same thing to Dane in 1.24.8.3.

16.2 Jolly Roger's nightmare vision appears based on the Philip K. Dick novel *A Scanner Darkly*, in which the protagonist sees strange aphids everywhere, although nobody else can see them.

19.5 Linda Lovelace (1949-2002) is an American actress known primarily for 1972 porn film *Deep Throat*, directed by Gerald Damiano (b.1928).

20.4 Paul Newman (b.1925) is an American actor known for such films as 1967's *Cool Hand Luke* and a line of salad dressings.

Robert Redford (b.Charles Robert Redford Jr, 1937) is an American actor known for such films as 1967's *Barefoot in the Park*.

20.5 *The Sting* is a 1973 film by George Roy Hill (b.1922) about two con men plotting revenge on a racketeer.

GRANT MORRISON ON WRITING OUT BOY

Boy had to go. It was taking off some air. Boy always kind of represented air, to me, anyway. I'd become annoyed as well, because people kept saying I shouldn't have written Boy, because I didn't know anything about black people. I'm entitled to write about what I choose to write about. People would say, "You don't know anything about the black cultural experience." I know what the human experience is. Shouldn't they be kind of similar? And they said, "That only shows a lot of clichés and stereotypes yet again," even though there were over eight black characters, all with different motivations.

Well, obviously you should have written only about bald Glaswegians.

I think that would limit me as a writer. But Boy had to go, because she represented air and the thing was taking off. It was no longer tied to her. She was Marcus in *The Speed of Light* and she couldn't go with them anymore. Plus, she'd achieved apotheosis. Once I'd put her through her thing and she'd met BARBELiTH and saw her multiple selves dissolving, she saw what a human being actually was. The decision she made then was, "I don't need to save the world. What I should be doing is having kids and just having a life. Go back and work in the world to make it better."

PN: Pavlov's *Dogs* is a marvelous return to form. Quimper's opening speech is excellent. Chris Weston's early spread is astonishing in its scale. The detail of the skyscrapers underlines his sheer professionalism on this series. Dane's interaction with Satan is both eerie and fun, for the first time suggesting the real power behind Jack Frost. Is Satan playing the two sides against each other, or persuaded to change sides out of respect? Boy's sudden return is a touching surprise. Indeed, the level of character building

ON THE COVER

Ragged Robin lying prone on a bed, Quimper perched atop her. Note the wolf on the left side of the cover. This image is an homage to the Henri Fuseli painting *The Nightmare*.

22 Johnny Rotten said the same thing during UK punk group the Sex Pistol's final performance in San Francisco.

THE BLACK HELICOPTER CONUNDRUM

Black helicopters carrying government agents on secret raids against civilians are popular in conspiracy theory, particularly among the US right-wing militia movement. Such vehicles would be untraceable, bearing no distinguishing marks or registration numbers. Considered logically, however, the black helicopter conspiracy falls down. By now every viewer of *The X Files* to witness one buzz their neighborhood would be on the phone to the media, while any imminent victim would have driven off the moment she saw one on the horizon. Really, if a government wanted the ultimate in untraceable transport, wouldn't they deck them out in McDonald's logos and other everyday sigils? Black helicopters incidentally would be funded by a "black" budget – that is, one which doesn't appear on government records.

here is great all around, from King Mob's deepest fear (that he's ordinary) to the look of evil triumph on Fanny's face. The bug things on page 16 are a rare example of a stunning monster working really well in *THE INVISIBLES* – it's a pity we won't see them again until the series' penultimate issue (and then in artistically neutered form). Quimper seems oddly powerful here, but quibbles aside this is great stuff. As usual, it's the little things that make *THE INVISIBLES* a step above its peers: The pentacle USAF emblem on page one a case in point.

KCS: The exchange between Dane and Satan is brilliant. I love how they sit in relation to the chess board. Neither of them takes sides. Quimper's speech to Jolly Roger and King Mob is so near the truth, but even Quimper doesn't recognize that his supposed objective interpretation of things is yet another subjective lens. And Fanny popping up there at the end doesn't qualify as the dreaded trick ending – Grant gives us plenty of hints. Weston's spread of the magic mirror is beautiful and frightening all at once. No one, and I mean no one, can draw magic mirror like Chris Weston. I don't have any trouble believing in its divinity whatsoever. Beautiful work, Chris.



"If I write
hard enough
and honestly
enough, I
think I
can make
it real."

NOV 98

Grant Morrison *Writer*Chris Weston *Pencils*Ray Kryssing *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

BLACK SCIENCE 2

SCHRODINGER'S CAT

Fanny reveals that Quimper never had control of Robin, but instead has been trapped in a false memory. She tells Quimper that they were victims at the same Rio orgy, deflecting his magic mirror attacks but refusing to retaliate. Instead, she overwhelms him with love from the positive aspects of the magic mirror, returning him peacefully to the supercontext. Meanwhile Satan takes Dane into the magic mirror to explain the nature of the universe.

Elsewhere in the base, Jim Crow claims to have a deadly hantavirus, which he uses to bargain for King Mob and Jolly Roger's freedom. In San Francisco, Robin gets ready to return to 2012 in a secret duplicate timesuit hidden away by Mason and Takashi.

In 2008, Kay writes the story of the Invisibles, altering reality as she goes.

CHRIS WESTON ON CENSORING *THE INVISIBLES*

The Robin sex scene with the gun is the one thing that sticks out in my memory [as being censored].

That horrible scene at the party, where they're all wearing animals masks – that was pretty grim, but I think we actually got away with that one.

That was a scene that was previously explored in the first volume. Do you go back and try to match the original illustrations?

Definitely. I wanted to follow it as closely as possible.

There's a lot of sex things [that were censored]. When [Robin is] going back in the time machine – I don't remember what number it is, it's called *All Tomorrow's Parties* – there's a sex scene in there that has a lot of shadow that we put over it. That's about it, really.

Did the bargaining over artwork bother you?

No. I found it quite amusing, really.

PN: *The revelation of Quimper's origin is great (and a far better resolution to the John-A-Dreams story than his reappearance in the third volume), as is his link with Fanny's induction into the Invisibles and the party's link with the bureaucrats of 120 Days of Sod All (although thematically this aspect would have worked better with*



1 Erwin Schrodinger (1887-1961) theorized that unobserved objects exist in a mathematical *eigenstate* in which all possibilities co-exist. In 1935 Schrodinger proposed the example of a cat in an *eigenstate*. For an extremely simplified version of Schrodinger's cat, imagine that the animal is locked in a box with a poisonous gas pellet that has a 50/50 chance of having exploded after ten minutes. After that time, there is a 50% chance the cat is dead, and a 50% chance the cat is alive *until the point an observation is made*, when one of the two possibilities becomes a 100% certainty for the observer. The exercise reinforces the idea that our model of the universe is comprised of possibilities reliant on perception.

Jim Crow's story about the fox and the scorpion was first brought to pop culture attention in *The Crying Game*, a 1992 Neil Jordan (b.1950) film about an Irish revolutionary's unwitting affair with a transvestite.

22 *Amadeus* is a 1984 film by Milos Forman (b.1932) about the life of composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791), as told through the eyes of rival composer Antonio Salieri (1759-1833).

Ganzfeldt means "total field" in German. *Ganzfeldt* tanks are probably sensory deprivation devices used in ESP experiments.

5.1 Tepictoton, or Tlaloc, were dwarfish attendants of the Aztec rain god Tlaloc.

5.2 This panel and the next are direct quotations from 1.15.5.

6.1 A recreation of events first seen on 1.7.16.

7.1 Uncle Remus is a US folk character best known from Disney's 1946 film *Song of the South*, a blend of animation and live action directed by Harve Foster and Wilfred Jackson (1906-1988). The film, which has been decried as racist and kept from circulation for several years, finds Remus telling his nephew about the misadventures of Brer Rabbit.

A hantavirus is a virus that rapidly mutates, and is thus difficult to eliminate. One example is AIDS.

7.3 Maya Deren (1917-1961) was an experimental filmmaker and ethnologist who became interested in Vodoun (Haitian Voodoo). The book Robin mentions may be Deren's 1951 work *The Divine Horsemen*, which Deren also made as a film.

8.2 The background music is *David Watts* by the Kinks, as mentioned on 2.1.6.3. Judging by the

ON THE COVER

Jim Crow sitting among his voodoo paraphernalia, raising his hat. Note the sigil in his monocle. The two sigils on the rocks at his feet are repeated several times throughout the picture. For the sake of pedantry, Bolland and Weston can't seem to agree on Jim Crow's tattoos, although they correspond well enough in the majority of instances. The illustration is completely at odds with how Jim Crow appears in the issue itself, where he wears skull face paint. His skull codpiece is the same photograph used on the cover of 2.17. The mingling of paint and photography touches on the blurring of fiction and reality theme.

number of "fa" notes present, it could (much more appropriately) be *Psycho Killer* by the Talking Heads. As King Mob notes, this sequence owes more than a little to the final episode of the *The Prisoner*, in which the chaotic climax occurred to the Beatles' *All You Need Is Love*.

8.4 "Be seeing you" is the standard farewell in *The Prisoner*.

9.2 Is Robin actually altering reality here?

10.1 Satan speaks glossolalia to the soldiers.

10.5 Trains are a repeating theme.

11.3 Robin's friend wears scarabs and the Mason eye-in-a-pyramid icon.

There actually was Che soda for a brief time.

11.4 Note the *Chinatown* poster.

12.2 The man with the video camera may be Mason, who has a penchant for films.

12.5 This reinforces the idea that creatures from the supercontext are changed by the huge pressure of our reality – Quimper, the Moonchild, the insect-men and so forth.

14.3 "You shall go to the ball!" From *Cinderella*, a transformational fairy tale about a young scullery maid who wins the heart of a prince by attending a royal ball in disguise.

15.1 "All this shite's happened before." All times are one, a recurring theme.

15.4 Satan knows Dane's real name.

15.6 Both Quimper and Fanny have shed their masks.

16.4 English author Jane Austin (1775-1817) wrote comedy of manners. She is most famous for such novels as *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*.

17.3 Note the SS symbol in Friday's glasses.

Robin as the victim). But it's in Fanny's triumphant love for Quimper as a fellow human being and their merging within the magic mirror that the genius of THE INVISIBLES shines. Events and images echo the series' major themes here in a way they haven't since Volume 1, particularly the obvious mask panel on page 15. While it's nice to have Jim Crow back, his nicked Crying Game scorpion story suggests a bit of creative bankruptcy in a series renowned for fresh ideas (or, alternately, the culmination of a volume full of cinematic allusions). The 2008 Kay scenes are great, but ultimately disappointing as Grant throws them as a major curveball without daring to really explore the implications. The American flags in the backdrop of all the covers for Black Science 2 are a nice touch.

KCS: *Here's what I can't get out of my mind. Those sad moments between Fanny and Quimper. Their stories follow the same path, but Quimper is never able to climb up out of the muck, so to speak. Fanny demonstrates empathy for him in a moment that is the most moving since Jack returned Sir Miles' aura to him in the House of Fun. We're getting bits and pieces of Robin's story now, too, spending more time with her in 2008. I'm hoping for full disclosure by the end of Volume 2.*

I'm a little troubled by the idea that Robin "wrote" herself into THE INVISIBLES. After the first read, one could get the idea that this whole wild ride is nothing more than an entry in someone's diary. The trick ending to beat all trick endings. But Grant, as we have all come to learn, is a tease, and only patience will answer questions. Hmph.

"Was there
a moment
where you
saw time
from a
different
angle?"

ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES

JAN 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Chris Weston *Pencils*

Ray Kryssing *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

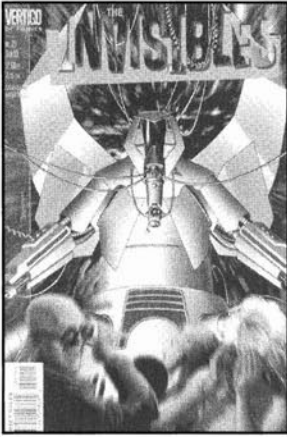
Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

Ragged Robin says her goodbyes to the Invisibles before activating the timesuit to travel home to 2012. But the suit malfunctions, bouncing her across time and space before ultimately sending her into the supercontext. The remaining Invisibles decide not to dwell on Robin's departure and instead instigate an intervention-style meeting with King Mob to reign in the casual bloodlust he's displayed for the past few years.

In 2008, Mason Lang finds Kay in a Portland asylum and frees her. She is eventually introduced to Takashi and the Invisibles.



1.5 These events are also depicted on 2.6.16.4.

2 Kristy Kryssing receives a "special thanks" credit in the masthead of this issue.

All *Tomorrow's Parties* is a song by US experimental rock group The Velvet Underground about finding clothes (and identity) for a party.

3.2 Saint Theresa of Avila (b. Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada, 1515-1582) was a Spanish Carmelite nun and mystic who became a leading figure in the Counter Reformation movement. She was canonized by the Catholic church in 1622.

4.3 Life as film is a recurring theme. Note that Robin has a traffic light poster, turned to red. This matches her state under the cosmic spotlight at this point, having not yet begun her journey.

Robin asks Mason if he is a rapist. She's psychic – does she "see" him at Fanny's rape in 1990?

4.4 "The movie's called *The Invisibles*." Life as film is a recurring theme.

Robin may be wrong about Mason's age; he would have been 36 in 2008 based on previous dates we are given. The other option is that Mason lied about his age on 2.1.10.3, but the caption on 2.16.4.1 seems to support his claim. Are we to believe that Mason is 25 during Volume 2?

5.1 Why is there a UK license plate on a car on the Golden Gate bridge?

6.1 Note that the inside of the timesuit helmet has the same pattern as the sky of the Outer Church.

6.2 Amida, or the Buddha Amitabha, is the focal point of Mahayana Buddhism in China and Japan. Amitabha vowed to save humanity by offering them rebirth in his realm, the "Western Paradise."

Namu Amida Butsu, or homage to Amitabha Buddha, is recited by Pure Land Buddhists in the belief that calling on Amitabha with sincere devotion will grant them rebirth in the Western Paradise, presaging easy entrance into Nirvana.

7.3 The floor is patterned after a chessboard, suggesting the life as game theme.

12.1 "Rewind. Pause. Play." Life as video/film is a recurring theme. Note that this is a flashback. The story has rewound.

12.4 "Part of my mission here was to take Quimper off the board." Life as a game is a recurring theme.

GRANT MORRISON ON TIME TRAVEL

When Ragged Robin goes through time, that's when BARBELITH gets her. She goes farther than the last day. She's actually entered the supercontext, and she comes back as the thing at the end of issue one. She bounces across the solid, which is why she appears in a lot of different scenes, but she's actually taken outside. When her timesuit finally stops and there's a huge red light outside, we're actually outside space and time completely. When she comes back, she's completely enlightened as to what's out there. So she arrives back at the end of the world, which also precipitates it.

CHRIS WESTON ON FAVORITE CHARACTERS TO DRAW

Oh, Jim Crow, definitely. I liked King Mob, and I liked the lesbian with the eye patch. Definitely those three. I hated Robin completely. I hated drawing all that curly hair and the makeup she wore. She just didn't work for me, that character. I couldn't work out whether she was meant to be a strong female or a weak female. She was submissive one minute and aggressive the next. She just didn't work for me, really.

I wasn't keen on drawing King Mob, actually. All the piercings were a pain to draw.

PN: *A touching conclusion to the previous storyline, from Robin's tragic incarceration in 2008 to her moving "I'll never kiss you again." Takashi's human response to the malfunctioning timesuit is great! Robin's bounce through time before ultimately entering the supercontext is handled well, and there's something primal about her nude scene in the desert with King Mob. I like the Invisibles-as-Lone-Gunmen vibe present in Robin's introduction to the team – did they really stay in one place long enough to have a filing system and publish an underground zine? The last panel, with Dane, Boy and Fanny presumably performing an intervention over King Mob's violence level (judging by his behavior in the following issue) is fantastic. Chris Weston seems to be making the same mistakes toward the end of his run that Phil Jimenez made in his – cars on the Golden Gate bridge don't generally have UK license plates and tax discs on their windshields! The cover illustration of what a dematerialization would look like from a TARDIS' point of view is fab.*

ON THE COVER

King Mob, Boy, Dane and Lord Fanny recoil as Ragged Robin activates the second timesuit. A blurring effect suggests that time is shifting from the "present" of the timesuit, which is the only object to remain in focus. For the nitpickers, of the pictured Invisibles only King Mob and Fanny are present at the timesuit's launch (and Fanny is off-panel the whole time). Dane and Fanny aren't wearing the clothes they are in the actual issue, and Fanny even has a different wig. Bolland and Weston can't agree on exactly what the timesuit looks like.

The overall effect of the discrepancies between covers and interiors throughout the series fits quite nicely in *THE INVISIBLES*, alluding to the theme that an objective reality is unknowable – instead there are as many perceived realities as there are observers.

KCS: *It's the sad goodbye issue, all the while flashing back and forth across Robin's experience with the Invisibles. It's a head trip figuring how Robin wrote herself into the series, but an apt metaphor for the power individuals have to shape the course of their lives. And it's not wholly unreasonable that reality and fiction could have such an incestuous relationship. Fiction and reality are impossible to distinguish in many cases. Which had a greater impact on your life, your reality – reading this comic book series or watching the nightly news? The answer is different for everyone, naturally.*

But I appreciate the guts Grant has to come out and put the subject of fictional reality in his book. Chortle if you will, but go out into the world and find me solid and incontrovertible proof that Batman isn't real, and then we'll talk. Chris Weston seems to have really come into his own on this book, and it's a shame it's ending. He draws a dead scary Archon to rival Phil Jimenez and his Lord Fanny just keeps getting better and better.

12.5 "Why are you talking like we're in a movie?" Life as film is a recurring theme.

13.3 "You told me in 2010, when everything turned into a movie." Life as film is a recurring theme, positively rampant in this issue.

13.5 Note that Fanny's dialogue is reversed when she speaks in the mirror.

14.1 American poet Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) is probably best known for her 1962 novel *The Bell Jar*. Characterized by her volumes of dark poetry, she ultimately committed suicide.

14.2 "A machine made of time, its moving parts are the days of your lives." Originally from 2.10.15.4.

"Your little lives, powered by blood." Originally from 2.10.16.5.

14.3 Dom Perignon was a 17th century monk said to have invented champagne. An expensive line of champagne is named for him.

15.1 Robin is present at the séance held by the Golden Age Invisibles. They perceive her timesuit to be an archon.

17.1 Takashi's great-great-grandfather sees the timesuit *after* he's made the origami.

18.3 Life as film – Robin as scriptwriter.

20.2 Ebenezer Cobham Brewer (1810-1897) compiled *The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* in 1870. The actual listing for "ragged robin" reads: *A wild-flower. The word is used by Tennyson to mean a pretty damsel in ragged clothes [in Idylls of the King].*

21 Robin has contact with BARBELITH – no one will see her again until the other side of the super-context.

22.3 Note the tarot cards – the Lovers and the Tower. The Lovers is the sixth card in the major arcana, signifying relationships, sexuality and personal beliefs (drawing the card can indicate a moral or ethical dilemma ahead). The Tower is the 16th card in the major arcana, representing sudden change or release, a dramatic upheaval or the reversal of fortune.

"Kennedy
was a good
man. Nixon
was a bad
man. Is that
true or is
that just
what we've
been told
is true?"

THE TOWER

FEB 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Chris Weston *Pencils, Inks 1-4*

John Stokes *Inks 5-22*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

Sir Miles fields a phone call from the defeated Colonel Friday and tells him that his services are no longer required. Friday is devoured by Outer Church creatures.

Dane tells the Invisibles that Satan took him to the diseased Universe B intersection, used by King Mob as a dimensional shortcut, and explained part of the nature of reality to him. The others dismiss him as having a fever dream, and Fanny nurses him back to health. Boy explains that she followed the Invisibles to Dulce and found Dane unconscious, pulling him to freedom. She tells Dane to call her when he's through with the Invisibles and leaves to start her new life.

Later in Washington, DC, King Mob and Mason Lang discuss the nature of the American Dream and the Conspiracy. King Mob reveals that the Invisibles' intervention has caused him to embrace a pacifist path. Back at Mason's New York mansion, Mob throws away his gun. Mason tells him that Takashi has entered backdoor codes into the software stolen by the US government, giving him control of the Western military industrial complex. King Mob responds by blowing up Mason's mansion, demonstrating that possessions restrict freedom.

CHRIS WESTON ON BEING PART OF *THE INVISIBLES*

Were you a fan of the book before you got the art assignment?

Yes, very much so. I stopped reading it after I stopped drawing it. I don't know what that shows. I read the final one, because Frank Quitely drew it, but that has more to do with me being a fan of his art than *THE INVISIBLES*.

Which of your contemporaries on the series do you most admire?

Steve Yeowell. I think he should have drawn all of Volume 1. Except for the Jim Crow episode, of course. And I like John Ridgway, as well. I think he's a very, very underrated artist. They're being hunted by that creature in the mirror – I really liked that episode [1.11]. He did the best Sir Miles, I think. Him and Steve Yeowell. I think Steve really set the pace.

How do you look back on the series?

I'm not sure. It wasn't much fun to do. It was bloody hard work; I put a lot of effort into it. I was never away from my drawing board. It did make me wonder, *Do I really want to be doing this for a living?* I spent so long – there's so many in a day – drawing it, in order to meet the deadline. It did make me wonder if I was cut out for this job. But then again, when I saw the *Kissing Mister Quimper* collection, which is pretty much all of my *INVISIBLES* in one book, I felt really proud. I felt, *God, I drew this*. And it's enormous. I looked through it, and I think I did some pretty good artwork for it, and so I felt quite proud of the achievement. So mixed feelings, really.

My main goal was to bring a bit of consistency to it, because until then with all the different changes of artists



1 The Tower represents violent change in the tarot. Note the juxtaposition with the Washington Monument in Washington, DC.

2.1 A new era for King Mob; note his clothes.

2.2 King Mob and Mason are at the Lincoln Memorial. The colored sky and black helicopters were previously seen on 2.14.2, when Colonel Friday and Sir Miles meet outside the material plane. Grant seems to be implying that the change has begun.

2.3 Planet Hollywood is a chain of theme restaurants owned by actors and featuring props from films as décor.

3.1 Former US president John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963) was assassinated under mysterious circumstances.

Richard Milhaus Nixon (1913-1994) resigned as president of the United States shortly before being impeached for criminal actions in the 1974 Watergate scandal.

3.2 The black mark over Mason's dialogue is similar to the censor marks made on sensitive US government documents released to the public. Grant Morrison: *The line originally read "Walt Disney was a shit," but DC's lawyers insisted on having it removed.*

The moon landings being a government hoax is a popular conspiracy theory.

"Especially movies." Life as film again – or any form of fiction. A recurring theme.

3.3 The original background to this panel in Chris Weston's rough pencils was the Washington Monument.

3.4 Mason's speech here is true. He's referring to US president Franklin Delano Roosevelt's (1882-1945) 1933 "War and Emergency Powers Act," which gives the president the authority to rule without regard to the Constitution. The first sentence of the 1973 Senate Report 93-549 (Exhibit 10) reads: *Since March the 9th, 1933, the United States has been in a state of declared national emergency.*

The Bruce Willis movie is probably the 1998 film *The Siege*, directed by Edward Zwick (b.1952). Bruce Willis (b.1955 as Walter Bruce Willis) is an American actor notable for action films such as *Die Hard* (1988).

4.3 *Lolita* is novel by Vladimir Nabokov (1899-

ON THE COVER

Dane, King Mob, Lord Fanny and Boy joining hands "all for one" to push down an old-fashioned bomb plunger. A map of Earth is – somewhat poorly – mapped to the cube of the detonator. It's interesting to note that after issues of painting Fanny as a biological woman, Bolland adds the detail of male arm hair here. There is no Vertigo strip for this issue.

1977) detailing a man's obsession with an underage girl. King Mob is probably more familiar with the 1962 Stanley Kubrick film.

4.6 "It feels like science fiction now." Life as fiction is a recurring theme.

5.1 Trump 16 is the Tower in the tarot.

5.2 "The empire is dead." A recurring image.

5.3 Mason's referring to the advertising campaign for the 1998 Roland Emmerich film *Godzilla*, based on the long-running Japanese film series about a lizard mutated into a giant monster by atomic radiation. For supermodels bigger than *Godzilla* see the *And We're All Policemen* story in the first *VERTIGO's* *WINTER'S EDGE*.

6.2 "It'll make a great film." Life as film is a recurring theme.

7.1 *The Magic Christian* is a comic novel by Terry Southern (1924-1995), about a wealthy man who makes a homeless man his heir in a criticism of commercialization. The book served as the basis of a 1969 film by Joseph McGrath (b.1930).

7.2 Raquel Welch (b.1940) is an American actress best known for roles in *One Million Years BC* (1966) and *Fantastic Voyage* (1966).

Ringo Starr (b.1940 Richard Starkey) was drummer for the Beatles.

8.1 Chris Weston's rough draft for this issue shows a different statue in the background of this panel, if you must know.

10.1 Universe B, which King Mob uses as a short cut. The woman and child were previously seen in (1.5.12).

10.3 The Berlin Wall was a concrete wall dividing Berlin from 1961 to 1989, serving as a symbol for the division between the Eastern and Western power blocs during the Cold War.

10.5 The Nicaean Council was a collection of about 300 bishops gathered by the Roman emperor Constantine in 325 AD to reconcile the disparate strands of Christianity that had developed in the empire. The council, under Constantine's instruction, declared Jesus to be God, an identification most Christians of the time would not have made. The Nicaean Creed basically created modern Christianity and overturned earlier Gnostic beliefs about the nature of God and Satan. Constantine, incidentally, wasn't a Christian, but rather saw an integrated religion as a matter of military pragmatism.

"Once my name was John" explicitly pulls Quimper's origin into the open, in case the clothing and surgeonfish clues left anyone guessing. He is, of course, John-A-Dreams, re-entering reality to play the game again following his initial journey in the timesuit.

11.2 "That's not playing the game." Life as a game is a recurring theme.

11.3 "Edith said to call on Buddha." This statement echoes throughout time (since all times are one) in a mangled form: "Edith says to call him Boody" (1.12.7.4 and 2.10.10.4).

12.2 Note the SS symbol in King Mob's glasses.

12.3 Note the television – an apt description of MTV.

12.5 Note the Root Doctaz poster.

13.4 Several images from Dane's time with the

and stuff the book looked really inconsistent. I just wanted to calm it down a bit.

Did the experience scare you off of doing a monthly series?

Oh yeah, definitely. Actually, I dived straight in again, with *LUCIFER*. Unfortunately, it wasn't until after one issue of *LUCIFER* that I really finally realized, *Nah, I can't do this every month*. It's either miniseries or doing a much lesser role, like breakdowns or something.

PN: *As a coda to Volume 2, The Tower shines. Yet it's also a bit redundant, in a Scooby Doo "So that was the theme of the volume all along!" kind of way. King Mob blowing up Mason's house is a nice touch, but then it's always easy to prove that we're imprisoned by our possessions by removing someone else's. King Mob's more pacifist incarnation resolves the somewhat awkward anti-violence arc of the volume, working well in retrospect but not entirely convincing on the face of it. The real highlight here is Dane's trip through the magic mirror, brilliantly illustrated by Chris Weston and more clearly tying together the two volumes. Friday's demise is great in a Doctor Who kind of way, and for good measure there are out-in-the-open explanations of the true identities of both Quimper and Satan that, for some reason, seem to have flown over the heads of most readers. A fine end to a patchy volume.*

KCS: *It's an ending, and a beginning. But what isn't? With Robin gone the gang is left to clean up the mess. This is a great issue for tying up loose ends though, isn't it? We find out what happened to John-A-Dreams and Mason/Bruce Wayne/Batman is released from his daily grind by a presumptuous King Mob – no doubt his first act of ontological terrorism. It's a warm and fuzzy ending, one that fills me with hope for these people. And what a sigh of relief I breathed when King Mob gave up his gun. It's been a long time coming, that. Dane's well on his way to recovery, and we finally get to see Fanny in her nurse outfit. Oh, and we learn who the blind chessman is. What a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. See you for Volume 3.*

THE TRADE PAPERBACK COLLECTIONS

DC/Vertigo has released **THE INVISIBLES** in a series of trade paperbacks. These books were released out of order and without a uniform trade dress or spine numbering system to tell new readers how to follow the series. The short story *And We're All Policemen* was reprinted in the wrong sequence within the series (more properly located after the final issue of the third volume), while *Hexy* wasn't reprinted at all (it should have preceded the first issue of Volume 1). *The Invisible Kingdom* features corrected dialogue, with new art sequences by Cameron Stewart replacing controversial original pages by Ashley Wood.

Say You Want a Revolution

Collects 1.1 to 1.8

Cover by Steve Yeowell and Rian Hughes

Introduction by Peter Milligan

ISBN: 1-56389-267-7

Apocalipstick

Collects 1.9 to 1.16

Cover by Brian Bolland

ISBN: 1-56389-702-4

Entropy in the UK

Collects 1.17 to 1.25

Cover by Brian Bolland

ISBN: 1-56389-728-8

Bloody Hell in America

Collects 2.1 to 2.4

Cover by Brian Bolland

ISBN: 1-56389-440-0

Counting to None

Collects 2.5 to 2.13 and *And We're All Policemen*

Cover by Brian Bolland

ISBN: 1-56389-489-0

Kissing Mister Quimper

Collects 2.14 to 2.22

Cover by Brian Bolland

ISBN: 1-56389-600-1

The Invisible Kingdom

Collects 3.12 to 3.1

Cover by Brian Bolland

ISBN: 1-4012-0019-2

Invisibles, including the soldier he killed (1.9), Orlando (1.8) and the gray alien form of BARBELITH (1.16).

14.1 *Carry On...* is the blanket name for a series of camp UK films that began with 1958's *Carry On Sergeant* and continued through 1992's *Carry On Columbus*.

14.3 Mason as Batman again, and another hint that King Mob won't survive the series.

15.4 *If...* is a 1969 Lindsay Anderson film about a rebellion at a British boys' school. The film's catch phrase was an apt "Which side would you be on?"

19.1 The Trojan Horse was a gambit used by the Greeks to win the Trojan War. Unable to penetrate Troy's walls, the Greeks constructed a giant wooden horse and hid inside. The Trojans, being of a particularly gullible nature, thought the horse was a gift and dragged it inside. The next evening, the horse evacuated Greeks and the slaughter began.

Chris Weston's original rough sketch for this panel is completely different, a close-up of King Mob and Mason descending the stairs to the pool.

21 The destruction of Mason's house imitates a sequence in *Casino Royale*, the first Ian Fleming (1908-1964) James Bond novel, subsequently turned into a 1967 film by Val Guest (b.1911) and no less than four co-directors!

22 Note some of the graffiti: "Trust no one under IQ 150" refers to *And We're All Policemen*, as might "Generation Rex," although it also means Generation King (which makes sense, as this is the final generation in *THE INVISIBLES'* cosmology). The "Bobbitt" on Roger's knife refers to Loreena Bobbitt, who famously cut off her philandering husband's penis.



Illustration by Chris Weston

"I stopped
needing to
save the
world.
Saving
is what
misers do."

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES VOLUME 3



"This is the
way the
world ends.
Thank god
I brought
champagne."

SATANSTORM

COMMON PEOPLE

APR 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*Philip Bond *Art*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

In 1999, George Harper and Jack Flint, monitoring Sir Miles' activities, are intrigued to learn that he leaves flowers at the grave of Beryl Wyndham every year. Trailing him through London reveals a meeting with an important politician, a stop at occult bookshop Atlantis Books and a surprise rendezvous with the Moonchild, which is being transported somewhere. An encounter with thug Scottish Andy reveals the disturbing news that the beast is to be crowned king of England. Later, Harper meets with Mister Six and Helga to view a video of Sir Miles as a test subject for an LSD experiment conducted in 1960. Suddenly Harper has a psychic flash that Jack Flint, who unknown to him has been drugged and kidnapped by mysterious paramedics, is in danger.

In India, King Mob is approached about joining in a propaganda television project, while at the Academy in North Africa, Elfayed has taken on the role of Dane's teacher.

Elsewhere, Sir Miles receives a visit from the King in Yellow in a dream.



1 The Invisibles are depicted as shop mannequins, products for consumption (as in issue 2.13). Note the Invisibles-brand tags on the clothes.

MK Ultra, as seen on Dane's shirt, was a covert CIA program begun in the 1950s concerning mind control techniques via radio waves. The program was disbanded in 1973 by CIA director Richard Helms. The name is also used by a San Francisco rock band and an industrial rock magazine.

2.1 MI6 is the UK Secret Intelligence Service, founded in 1911 for overseas espionage.

2.2 The 33rd degree of initiation is the highest level attainable in Freemasonry.

2.5 Eton is a UK public (private) boarding school frequently attended by royalty. The all-male students (aged 13-18) are groomed for Cambridge and Oxford.

3 This is the wrecked Mercedes that took Princess Diana's life in 1997.

"Come, armageddon, come" is a lyric from the Morrissey song *Everyday is Like Sunday*, a song about the appeal of nuclear destruction over a life of mundanity.

Common People is a song by the UK pop group Pulp, criticizing the upper class for co-opting working-class style as fashion trend.

4.1 The censor marks echo those found on sensitive government documents released to the public. These comments were actually censored by the Vertigo editorial team.

4.2 Atlantis Books is a real book shop in London, founded in 1922 and focusing on occult and pagan books. Sir Miles acts like he's just bought pornography!

The Psuedonomicon by Phil Hine is a short booklet examining magick and the Cthulhu mythos.

The R'lyeh Text by Robert Turner is a companion to the *Necronomicon* which purports to reveal previously hidden manuscripts.

4.3 The bus is number 23.

The dust incident is a reference to Morrissey's 1988 single *Everyday is Like Sunday*, which describes nuclear snow as "strange dust."

4.4 The time is 4:01 (4+1 = 5). There's also a 5 on the gate.

6.3 Division X have had the same car since 1995.

PHILIP BOND ON SIR MILES' FLASHBACKS

You got the enviable prize of drawing the 1950s acid beatnik version of Sir Miles, and excellent fun it is, too. Yet in the 1965 sequence where he murders Beryl, you drew him as the 1990s version. Was this a scripted detail, an oversight, or a coloring error?

I'm not sure if Grant specified in the script how Miles would look here. As I see it, this is not a historical recreation, but a memory/vision of Sir Miles, and he looks however he sees himself rather than however he looked at the time.

WARREN PLEECE ON JOINING *THE INVISIBLES*' ART TEAM

I contacted Shelly Bond, who I'd worked with on several past Vertigo projects, to see if there was some work available, basically. I'd had a break of several months after finishing a run on *HELLBLAZER*, and had been looking after my kids, but needed to get back to work. Philip Bond was working on *THE INVISIBLES* but needed a hand getting up to date with the deadline for the next few issues. We lived ten miles away then, me in Brighton, him in Worthing. It seemed like a good idea!

DATING *THE INVISIBLES*

In January 1999, Jack Flint reminds George Harper that they've been pursuing the Moonchild for two years. This places Division X's investigation of the House of Fun in late 1996 or early 1997, at least a year after the Invisibles confront the King-of-All-Tears there. Crack detective work, that.

The events of *Black Science 2* are dated at various points in the fall of 1997. Even allowing for a gap between that storyline and issue 2.22, the Invisibles have been apart for at least a year as Volume 3 opens.

325

Nicaean Council removes Satan's stories from the canon

1793

The Invisibles retrieve the Marquis de Sade

1795

Moonchild born

ON THE COVER

Note the 12 in the background (each digit in its own circle). The pyramid is a Masonic symbol, and with the Sphinx also harks back to the first page of Volume 1, set in Egypt. The figure is a literal “sun-king,” and may also represent Hierophant, the fifth card in the major arcana of the tarot, signifying authority and conformity. Grant Morrison calls this cover a “Masonic nightmare!”

For this volume, a banner was added above the logo reading: *Countdown to the Millennium*. Perhaps a misguided idea for twelve issues beginning in April 1999 (notwithstanding the fact that the millennium didn’t begin until 2001 anyway). The banner was finally abandoned after issue three, when it became clear the series wouldn’t conclude until well into 2000.

PN: *If it was odd ending a volume without the Invisibles, it’s surely odder still to begin that way. But somehow it works—the series’ greatest flaw is that the supporting characters are all more interesting than the core team. Adding pathos to Sir Miles at this late stage is a brilliant subversion of comic norms. Philip Bond’s art is beautiful, giving the series a glossy sheen that makes it somehow closer to a pop single than a mainstream comic book. A splendid return to a series that seemed to have lost the plot in the recent past.*

KCS: *Well, it is a bit odd at first, not having the old team there, but I got into it. Besides, I’ve got a tender affection for the chaps at Division X. And it’s high time we got back to investigating Sir Miles. I’m glad Jack is at the Academy. A good move I think, but I don’t see why Roger is with him. Is she rounding up a new crew, or what? I’m strangely taken in by Philip Bond’s art, even though everyone appears to be four feet tall.*

1893

MAY Beryl Alice
Wyndham born

1900

JUN 21 Edith
Manning born

1901

Takashi Satoh’s
ancestor finds
origami timesuit
in garden

10.1 *Crawling Chaos*, by HP Lovecraft, is an anthology of short stories, including Cthulhu tales.

10.2 Characters in *The Invisibles* seem to change personalities as though they were clothes.

The Last of the Famous International Playboys is a song by Morrissey about Reggie and Ronnie Kray, twin gangsters from the 1960s London underworld and whose lives became the focus of the film *The Krays*. The song questions the cult of celebrity that springs up around violent criminals.

10.3 This seems to suggest that Mister Six is bisexual, which fits with the fluid personality motif.

11.15 The badge is a picture of Jason King, Mister Six’s television alter ego.

11.16 Mister Six gets a green cosmic spotlight.

“And so to work” is a play on English diarist Samuel Pepys’ (1633–1703) famous closing line, “and so to bed.”

12.2 Sirius and Procyon are stars in the constellation Canis Minor, the smaller dog. Sirius A, located in the Winter Triangle, is notable for its white dwarf companion star. Procyon A, the sky’s eighth-brightest star, is located 11.25 light years away in Orion. A subgiant entering its death phase, Procyon A also has a white dwarf companion.

13.1 Sky is a UK satellite television service.

13.2 Josef Goebbels (1897–1945) was the Reichminister of propaganda and national enlightenment for Nazi Germany. He used mass media to manipulate a popular belief of the destiny of German rule.

14.2 First appearance of Helga. She’s reading *Stuffe* magazine!

Swiss researcher Erich von Daniken (b.1935) wrote the 1968 book *Chariot of the Gods*, which postulates that aliens visited Earth in ancient times.

15.1 The doll is an homage to the titular *Teletubbies* from the UK children’s television series. The show, debuting in 1996, was popular with club-goers for its psychedelic visuals. It’s especially appropriate in *The Invisibles* for its trope of consciously repetitive storytelling and fixation on television (indeed, the *Teletubbies* have televisions embedded in their stomachs). The cross on the doll’s head in *The Invisibles* may be a reference to US evangelist Jerry Falwell, who claimed the show promoted homosexuality.

The “invisible star” is Sirius B. Invisible to the naked eye, the Dogon knew of the star’s existence before its location was discovered by astronomers; in mythology it’s home to the Nommo.

15.3 Mystic Meg is a UK tabloid psychic who appeared on National Lottery broadcasts.

15.4 Diana Spencer rode in a black Mercedes the night she was killed.

16.2 *Blue Peter* is a long-running UK children’s television variety show first broadcast in 1958. Viewers get the badge—a white shield featuring a blue ship—by either appearing on the show or having a letter, art, etc. broadcast.

Mrs. Grundy refers to a nosy neighbor. The phrase first appeared in Tom Morton’s 1798 play *Speed the Plough*, when a harried farmer tries to quiet his wife: “Be quiet, wull ye? Always ding, dinging Dame Grundy into my ears. What will Mrs. Grundy say?”

Existentialism is a 20th century philosophical movement centered on free will and the ability to make rational choices in an irrational universe. Existentialism proceeds from the famous statement "God is dead" and the resultant drive to create our own destinies. Existentialism heavily critiques the bourgeois propensity for following orders and anti-intellectualism.

16.3 The time is 5:23. More magick numbers.

16.4 *Stuffe* magazine includes chemistry articles!

17.1 *Hello* is a UK celebrity tabloid magazine.

17.2 Note the wicker men in the background.

17.4 Joan of Arc (Jeanne D'Arc c.1412-1431) lead a French uprising against the English after claiming to hear the voice of God in her head. After being captured and tried for heresy and witchcraft, she was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431 in Rouen. She was canonized in 1920.

18.1 OAPs = Old-Age Pensioners.

Safeways is a UK grocery chain, known in the US as Safeway.

First appearance of Purves.

19.1 Note the ambulance is number 46 – or two 23s.

20.2 Evel Knievel (b.1938) is a US stunt man famed for public stunts such as jumping across canyons on a motorcycle.

20.3 Derived from the name of a 12th century BC Aegean culture, the term philistine generally refers to ignorant, boorish individuals antagonistic to art and culture. In the 17th century, the term was used to refer to literary critics!

Jolly Roger calls Dane "Ringo" because they're both from Liverpool – Dane sounds like former Beatle Ringo Starr to her ears. Is Roger American?

21.2 Waking up is a recurring theme.

21.3 *The King in Yellow* is an 1895 anthology by Robert W Chambers, comprised of stories about the mysterious eponymous play, the reading of which drives people mad. In the Cthulhu myths, the King in Yellow is a messenger for Nyarlathotep, who takes the form of a giant man in a yellow mask. The King in Yellow looks giant here because he is framed by two dwarves.

22.3 *New Scientist* is a science and technology magazine focusing on alternative and cutting edge developments and theories.

Superstring theory attempts to resolve the incompatibility between quantum physics and the General Theory of Relativity. It suggests that the basic constituents of elementary particles do not resemble points, but rather strings.

The sunspot cycle averages eleven years.

22.4 "This is the way the world ends," is from TS Eliot's 1925 poem *The Hollow Men*. The text continues, "not with a bang but a whimper." Or perhaps a Quimper?

22.6 The etching on Beryl's tombstone is from Percy Bysshe Shelley's 1813 poem *Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem with Notes*.

THE INVISIBLES AS BIOGRAPHY

From www.grant-morrison.com

THE INVISIBLES has an indecently high percentage of diary detail woven through its sci-fi spy-punk storyline ... which may or may not make it post-modern in approach. I'm not sure. I prefer to see it simply as my record of my passage through the years 1994-2000 processed down onto paper in the service of the relentless monthly deadlines of my chosen format: So when King Mob's at a *wayang* show in Jogjakarta talking to a cool operator named Agus it's because I've just been at a *wayang* show with an operator called Agus. When Jack and Fanny are visiting the Power Exchange in San Francisco, it's because I've just been there. When the Invisibles are struggling against crawling insectile infection from the Outer Church, I'm dying in hospital with septicaemia, clutching a pen. The magical rituals to summon John Lennon and the scorpion *loa* are from my diaries just like the tantric sex and the trip on the mesa and the changing styles of clothes etc. The martial arts styles, yoga positions and meditation methods were based on whatever I was doing at the time. The descriptions of "alien abductions" are from experience. People I met became characters or fused in to characters after I met them or vice versa. When the third volume gets heavy with text and theory it's because I'm celibate and buried in books, waiting for the goddamn eclipse and the year and the gestation process to end. Only the large-scale acts of terrorism in THE INVISIBLES are fictionalized: the rest is memory and story and spell.

1907

Frederick Harper-Seaton born

1916

Ronald Tolliver fights in battle of the Somme

1918

Edith Manning joins the Invisibles

SATANSTORM

COLD BRITANNIA

MAY 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*Warren Pleece *Layouts*Philip Bond *Finishes*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

"I can't
explain what
I know. Try
explaining
red to a dog
and see
how fast he
gets bored."

Mister Six and George Harper use a button from Jack Flint's jacket to psychometrically track him, but the trail leads only to a scarecrow. Knowing he needs help, Mister Six calls on King Mob, who has returned from India, where he had been outlining a plan to use the power of television against the establishment.

In Africa, Elfayed shows Dane a jet housed inside an ancient building. After passing out, Dane awakes to find himself alone inside the jet, hurtling over the Earth.

Meanwhile, Sir Miles receives a satellite photo he foresaw in his dream with the King in Yellow: BARBELiTH has emerged from behind the moon and is heading toward Earth.

All this while Jack Flint awakens from the drugging to discover he is trapped inside a wicker man, which has started to burn...



1 *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em* (1973-1978) is a UK sitcom about bumbling idiot Frank Spencer.

"Cold Britannia" is a variation on the "Rule Britannia" patriotic slogan, widely used by Mod youth. Here it alludes to "Cool Britannia," a slogan of the UK's Labour Party intended to brand Britain as hip and modern. Continuing the pop music theme for many of the series' issue titles, it is also a 1966 song by The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band.

Note the photograph on the bottom right – the Moonchild is acting like a celebrity!

2.3 Lammas Eve, also known as Lughnasadh, is one of four major Sabbats of the witch year, representing the fall of the sun king and the ascendancy of his dark self. However, it's on 31 July and not 11 August.

There was an eclipse on August 11, 1999 in the UK.

3.1 Note the pub is the "Wicker Man."

UK to US: grass = tattler or spy.

3.6 What top secret organization hands out membership cards?

4.2 *Jaws* is a 1975 Steven Spielberg film based on the Peter Benchly novel about a giant killer shark.

5.2 *Noel's House Party* (1991-1999) is a UK variety television show.

Tony Blair (b.1953) became England's prime minister in 1997.

The Millennium Dome was designed by architect Zaha Hadid to commemorate the millennium. It sits on the bank of the Thames river.

EastEnders (1985 onward) is a popular UK soap opera concerning a working-class London borough.

Pohnpei is an island in Micronesia.

Nan Madol, or the Place of Intervals, contains ruins from the heart of the Sau Deleur dynasty. It also features a pylon important to the Temple of Set, an occult group focused on the Egyptian god.

King Mob seems to have gotten over Robin quickly.

5.4 Ladakh, also known as "Little Tibet" or "Moon country," is a Himalayan region populated largely by Tibetan refugees.

Manali is an Indian town known as the gateway to the Himalayas.

King Mob seems to have fictionalized his fear of Indian buses in 1.18. Write what you know...

PHILIP BOND ON DRAWING *THE INVISIBLES*

Later issues in your story arc saw the addition of Warren Pleece on breakdowns. What was the situation? How did that affect your creative input?

That's just my way. I'd committed to full pencils and inks but I was getting behind on deadlines, so Warren was brought in to layout the pages. Creatively it's not ideal but the pressure was eased. Warren's storytelling *nous* is excellent, so I could just concentrate on enjoying the drawing.

Do you prefer drawing action sequences or conversational scenes?

Actually I like both, I certainly don't think there need be anything boring about people talking for page after page.

How do you prepare for the variety of settings, buildings and vehicles in a script? Your stint on *THE INVISIBLES*, for example, took us from England to Africa to the cockpit of a jet fighter.

Hours of painstaking research. I love a good establishing shot and everything has to be just right (or a good approximation). God is in the details.

On a similar note, your issues included new versions of scenes and locations previously seen in the series. What was your approach to these sequences? How do storytelling needs affect the inclusion of specific details? For example, the sequence with Beryl at the museum shows her in the same dress as Phil Jimenez's depiction, but with a different crowd, while the windmill location doesn't jive with Jill Thompson's version.

As far as possible I'd go back and check earlier issues. It's a shame but the monthly deadline means some things are bound to be missed or just let go. Maybe one day there'll be a definitive reprint where we all get to go back and fix our mistakes and I can change that windmill, or Jill can change hers.

1924

Golden Age
Invisibles activate
the Hand of Glory
in New York City

1933

Edith Manning
miscarries at
Fortnum & Mason

1937

Roland Tolliver
dies at Guernica

ON THE COVER

The cover is a pastiche of the UK children's television series *Teletubbies*, which featured exaggerated, flowery hills, oversized rabbits and a large, sparkly sun. The wicker man is a pagan sacrificial instrument in which livestock were burned as an offering to the sun god. One features notably in the 1973 Robin Hardy UK film *The Wicker Man*. The numerals strapped to Dane and King Mob combine to form 11. There are also 11 animals – nine rabbits and the two cattle in the wicker man.

Did any of Grant's concepts provide illustrative challenges? How did you find working from his scripts?

There were constant challenges throughout, but always challenges rather than chores. I guess the constant globe-trotting meant lots of establishing shots, which are difficult but worth it rather than just impossible. Grant's scripts have to be some of the most trouble-free I've worked with and I regard him as a thorough professional.

PN: *A difficult issue to judge on its own merits, as relatively little actually seems to happen. But it's the details that matter in Satanstorm, and the continued biography of Sir Miles enthralls. But more importantly, when did King Mob suddenly get chest hair?*

KCS: *Well, Philip Bond is really growing on me. It's the smooth lines – simple and expressive. This Division X mystery is so much fun. Volume 2 was so bi-fi and shiny. This issue is mellow and well paced. It's all about mood and intrigue. Don't get me wrong, I miss the absent ones, but Division X has really stepped in and plugged up the hole. King Mob in a suit is kinda scary – I liked the scruffy version. Hopefully he won't turn into an arse again now that he's bald.*

1943

USS Eldridge rotates into the Outer Church

1945

JUL 16 First atomic explosion overseen by Oppenheimer

1945

AUG 6 Takashi's ancestor killed at Hiroshima

6.2 *Test Card F* is an Irish anthology criticizing the influence of television.

7.3 *The X Files* (1993-2002) is a US television series about FBI agents who investigate the paranormal.

8.4 This photograph originally appeared on 2.8.9.1.

9.1 The Ordo Templi Orientis is a mystical conspiracy group founded by Austrian Carl Kellner (1851-1905), combining elements of Freemasonry, the Rosicrucians and the Illuminati.

9.2 *The Outsider* is a literary study by Colin Wilson criticizing mental constraints imposed by society.

Brother Raoul was a Templar who confessed to worshipping an idol that may have been the head of John the Baptist.

9.3 The human fox hunt has been explored in 1.2 among others.

9.4 "Dark side of the Force" is a reference to the *Star Wars* films.

9.5 Note Churchill's funeral on the television.

12.2 UK to US: chips = french fries.

12.4 Dogs are colorblind, and therefore would easily tire of a conversation about red.

14.4 The Roshaniya, or Illuminated Ones, were an ancient Afghan society focused on the abolition of nations, private property and religion.

15.2 Hurricane Mitch pounded Central America in 1998; England appears to have control of the weather at this point, which could be an allusion to the 1997 film version of *The Avengers*.

"Exterminate!" Rossiter is imitating the war cry of the Daleks, tank-like robots from *Doctor Who*.

15.3 US astronaut John Glenn (b.1921) piloted the Mercury-Atlas 6 spaceship in 1962.

18.1 Glastonbury Tor is a hill in England at the center of several mystical legends.

John Michell wrote *New Light on the Ancient Mystery of Glastonbury*, a history of the Tor.

Ley lines, "discovered" in 1921 by Alfred Watkins (1835-1935), are alignments of ancient sites throughout the UK. Watkins theorized that ley lines were ancient trading routes, while modern legend has it they are lines of cosmic energy.

JRR Tolkien (1892-1973) wrote the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, begun in 1954.

18.2 Sir Edmund Hillary (b.1919) was the first Westerner to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

K2 is, at 28,250 feet, the second-highest mountain on Earth. Climbers consider K2, located on the border of China and Pakistan, the most dangerous peak.

18.5 The Underground is London's subway system.

19.1 "Quelle dommage" is French for "what damage."

19.3 "Heil Hitler" was the Nazi salute.

Former German leader Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) attempted to conquer Europe and exterminate the Jews.

20.3 The Knights of the Round Table were noble warriors in UK myth who helped King Arthur search for the Holy Grail.

21.2 "Be seeing you" is the standard exit line from *The Prisoner*. Note that King Mob's gesturing for Mister Six to fuck off.

"What was
your face
before
you were
born? Try to
remember."

JUN 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Warren Pleece *Pencils*

Philip Bond *Finishes*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

SATANSTORM

THE "IT" GIRLS

Division X continues to search for Jack Flint, who is actually being initiated into the Invisibles with the aid of Key 23, a more powerful variant of Key 17 that makes the user believe everything he reads. Jack believes he is in a wicker man, a metaphoric accompaniment to efforts to burn away his personality.

In Africa, Elfayed offers Dane, trapped in an airborne jet, a choice: Enlightenment or piloting skills. Dane chooses life, and Elfayed talks him through landing procedures. In London, Fanny responds to King Mob's call to action, while Sir Miles' assistant, Tarquin, drunkenly wanders into a pen of prisoners remaining from Quimper's videos and is killed.

Mister Six joins his Invisible cell – comprised of Helga and Flint's abductor, Purves, to aid with Flint's initiation. But Harper has followed, shocked to learn of Mister Six's apparent betrayal. Six pleads with him to listen, but Harper shoots him. Outside, Sir Miles arrives, SAS troops on standby...

PHILIP BOND ON CHARACTER ILLUSTRATION

Your four issues are notable for the introduction of Helga and the King in Yellow. How did you approach the character designs, and how much input did Grant have over the end result?

The story I hear is that Helga was an incidental character until Grant saw her, when she became a full Invisible. I think in Grant's script she's a blonde, but I must have missed that bit because she always had short black hair in my mind. Because she wasn't going to be a recurring character she was hardly designed at all, I just went with the first thing that came into my head.

Which characters were your favorite to draw?

All of Division X were fun, I got to know them pretty well, Helga, of course, and Jack. I think I enjoyed the characters where I really knew what Grant was going on about, you have to really know who these people are if you're going to feel confident and enjoy drawing them.

ON THE COVER

Combine the circle in the background with the standard Vertigo strip on the left and you've got the number 10. The remote control touches on the recurring theme of life as fiction, and the buttons are reminiscent of BARBELITH's speech patterns (10 is also the only number on the remote). The woman is presumably Fanny, although she appears to have real breasts and isn't wearing a wig.

It's interesting that Philip Bond gets a higher credit placement on the cover than Warren Pleece, who is credited inside with actually penciling the issue.

1947

JUL 2 magic mirror
downloads into
our reality in
Roswell, NM

1951

Edith Manning
visits Organon

1957

Miles Delacourt
and Beryl
Wyndham in Ordo
Templi Orientis



1.3 The photograph on Crowley's desk shows detectives Bodie and Doyle from the UK police television series *The Professionals* (1977-1983).

2 UK to US: sellotape = tape.

The It Girl is a phrase used to describe fashionable new faces in media circles, as well as a 1996 album by UK pop group Sleeper.

3.2 Salvador Dali (1904-1989) was a surrealist painter most famous for images of melting clocks. His diaries were notoriously obtuse.

3.5 A Bentley is a luxury car. John Steed drove one in *The Avengers*.

Mister Six imitates film spy Austin Powers: "Grrr!"

4.1 Waking up is a recurring theme.

See 1.24.9 for Mister Six ending his Brian Malcolm identity by getting rid of "the credit cards, the wallet, the life."

4.2 UK to US: bollocks = balls.

4.5 Remembering is a recurring theme.

5.1 The *bardo* (gap) of *dharmata* (the essence of things as they are) is the Buddhist stage between death and rebirth, occurring after inner-most dissolution. In this *bardo* an individual has an experience of luminosity, encountering five colored lights. One's reaction to this encounter governs rebirth. A person aware of being in this *bardo* is able to psychically travel to any point in time and space, incidentally.

5.5 Key 17 plus Mr. Six equals Key 23. Or, 17 hex (base 16) equals 23 decimal.

6.1 Dane's jet is number 23.

7.2 *Terra firma* is Latin for earth.

9.3 *Staphylococcus aureus* is a spherical bacterium that causes foodborne illness. Symptoms include vomiting and abdominal cramping, with most patients recovering in two days. It is rarely fatal.

9.6 Ayrshire blue is an Irish potato strain.

10.3 A diamante gown is one covered in sequins.

11.1 Tarquin was last seen in issue 1.11. But isn't that Rossiter?

12.3 *Rosemary's Baby* is a 1968 Roman Polanski (b.1933) film based on the Ira Levin (b.1929) novel about a woman who believes she bore Satan's son and fears he will be taken by a cult.

14.4 The SAS are the UK special forces, founded in 1941. In an attempt to confuse German spies, they were named after the non-existent Special Air Service brigade. Incidentally, the SAS logo features a stylized Excalibur, tying in with the Camelot theme of this volume.

15.4 Fanny's transsexual television presenter is Lily Savage (Paul O'Grady).

18.2 There actually was a *Doctor Who* serial called *The Sea Devils*, broadcast in 1971. The Jon Pertwee serial concerned the British Navy discovering an ancient race of amphibious reptile people.

20.2 *Travesti* is French for transvestite.

21.1 Canary Wharf, the building Dane and Tom jump from in issue 1.4.

21.4 This must be the poster Crowley was holding on page 2. It's a parody of the logo for the Ministry of Sound, a UK superclub and dance music record label. Princess Jekyll and Sister Hindley are references to Diana Spencer and Myra Hindley (see 2.14.4.3). In the 1886 Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a Scottish doctor occasionally transforms into a monstrous brute. Note the map of reality made by the globes.

Strange Days is both a song by The Doors and a Kathryn Bigelow film about the final days of 1999. The words are also a refrain in the John Lennon song *Nobody Told Me*, to tie back to the first issue.

Aggro is slang for aggravation.

Ironically, your stint on THE INVISIBLES is notable for very few appearances by the core team.

Yeah, I'd done sketches of some of the usual cast before I got the script, but for all the disappointment there's relief. I'd like to have tackled Quimper, but I had to do Robin's curly hair for one panel in the WINTER'S EDGE story and I wouldn't want to have drawn four issues of that.

WARREN PLEECE ON TAKING OVER PENCILING CHORES

It was just because the deadline was looming up even faster, so I had to do a little more here and there. There's even a few inked windmills if you look closely (which I did from memory but got the mechanics all wrong – I only realised later, when I went to visit one with my kids!)

Would you have liked the opportunity to have penciled a issue solo?

It would've been nice, but Philip was doing a really good job and it all seemed to work so well.

PN: *Another difficult one, as tables are turned, motivations undermined and the reader at this point is none the wiser three issues into the story. But Fanny's return is worth the wait – THE INVISIBLES has remembered that it's no use winning the game if you can't have fun doing it. More winning art from Philip Bond, who benefits hugely from Warren Pleece's dynamic layouts.*

KCS: *Well, we knew Mister Six was an Invisible from the beginning, but George? An interesting question to ask yourself might be, What are these guys forgetting? Who were they before? Looks like Helga will be a part of King Mob's new cell (having proved her worth by taking a potato). I approve. And yay! Fanny's back. Marvelous. I really love the pacing of these issues. So much is revealed in each issue, yet it doesn't have a frenetic atmosphere or any sense of urgency at all. Normally, that might be a bad thing, but it works here.*

1959

The Hand of Glory disappears

1960

Gideon Starorzewski born

1960

Miles Delacourt LSD overdose experiment taped by the BBC

SATANSTORM

DIGGING UP BERYL

JUL 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*Warren Pleece *Layouts*Philip Bond *Finishes*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

Mister Six tells Harper that Jack Flint's Division X cover personality is scheduled to die of a coronary, so the Invisibles have arranged to initiate him through to a new personality in order to save his life. George reveals he knew Division X were Invisibles the whole time, and is angry that Six didn't treat Flint with more dignity. Suddenly, Sir Miles bursts into the room, training a gun on Harper.

To his horror, Sir Miles learns that the entire scenario is a trap. His man, Pennington, was a deep cover Invisible operative. With three telepaths in the room, the Invisibles explore Sir Miles' mind and discover that he killed Beryl Wyndham and delivered her left hand as passage into the anti-brotherhood. The Invisibles dose him with Key 23 and stand behind a projection stating: WE ARE THE FUTURE.

Later, King Mob, Fanny and Helga dig up Beryl Wyndham's skeleton. Division X head Paddy Crowley gambles a bluff with Sir Miles, telling him that the Invisibles have captured the Moonchild and his masters have washed their hands of him. As King Mob drives him back to London, Sir Miles finds himself strapped in next to the skeleton of Beryl Wyndham...

"Sometimes
you see them
like aliens
or monsters –
or else
they're
ancient gods
or fairies or
some shite. I
wanna know
what they
look like in
the nude."



3 "Action." Life as fiction is a recurring theme.

4.1 Geezer has a different connotation in the UK than the US, where it means "old man." In the UK it means "decent bloke."

4.5 It was Jack Frost, on 1.24.23.5.

6.4 As mentioned on 3.11.20.1.

8.2 "The beasts prepare to inherit the Earth" is a play on the Biblical passage: "The meek shall inherit the Earth."

9.5 Note the infinity symbol on Beryl's tombstone.

10.1 Panatella is generally considered the best of Cuban cigars.

10.5 This scene was previously depicted on 2.10.5.

Beryl and Sir Miles first meet during this art exhibit – the older Sir Miles is recalling events and superimposing himself over the younger version.

11.1 Now we see why the Picasso on 2.10.5.1 made Beryl weep. This is the battle at Guernica, where the Golden Age King Mob was killed. In actuality Beryl is looking at Picasso's representation of the battle, but through them she sees the true events.

11.2 Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) was a Soviet premier during part of the Cold War.

11.4 Note which hand Miles places the handkerchief in.

12 This page tells yet another creation myth, a recurring theme.

12.1 The thirteenth sign of the zodiac is Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer, depicted as a man wrestling a snake. Although mystics tend to divide the sky into twelve signs of equal space, the ecliptic is actually comprised of thirteen irregular sections.

12.2 Zarathustra famously calls the masses the "despairing ones" in Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844-1900) existentialist text *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, first published in 1883.

12.3 Toads have a large role in magick, both in the traditional witches' brew and in a psychotropic sense. Toadstools are mushrooms, which often impart hallucinations; some species of toad produce a toxin on their skin that also causes hallucinations.

12.5 The man in the hood is Tom O'Bedlam.

Frater Nemo was the name used by Anthony Fischer in the Hermetic Alchemical Order of the

GRANT MORRISON ON COINCIDENCE IN *THE INVISIBLES*

Helga wasn't originally going to be a recurring character – Philip Bond said that you saw his drawings of her and fell in love with her.

That's what it was. She was Mister Six's girlfriend. I wanted a classic Swedish blonde. But [the drawing] was completely different. Suddenly I thought, *Well, she looks like somebody else*. Her voice came through because of it. Suddenly she became essential to the characters, to the point where she kind of runs off with King Mob at the end and shakes up everything. She ends up really prominent.

Some fans have theorized that Helga is the surviving member of Jolly Roger's cell.

No, she was never in Jolly Roger's cell. She was always with Mister Six.

In *Black Science* it's made clear that only one other member of Roger's cell made it out of Dulce, and then in the third volume there's a reference to the mission between Helga and Roger.

Oh, you're right. I hadn't actually intended that. I just thought she was the weird girl in Mister Six's life. There

BEHIND THE HAND OF GLORY

Digging Up Beryl may reveal the origin of the Hand of Glory, for those interested in such things. It's almost certainly Beryl's hand, with Sir Miles unaware of the true reason his occult masters want him to undertake the mission. The Hand in its earlier appearances is definitely female. A hand of glory is traditionally made from a murderer's hand; Beryl fits that description – most obviously from the police station bombing shown in 2.9. However, on his Web site Grant claims the Hand of Glory isn't a human hand...

1960

MAY Miles Delacourt first publishes *The Invisibles*

1962

Mister Six steals champagne from Harrods

1965

JAN 28 Miles Delacourt murders Beryl Wyndham; cuts off her hand

ON THE COVER

The image is a pastiche of a famous photograph of UK punk band the Sex Pistols. Note the Nazi lightning tattoos on Jolly Roger and Fanny: combined with the I on King Mob's shirt and the E on Dane's they spell out nine, for issue 9. Despite being on the cover, Jolly Roger doesn't actually appear in this issue.

are things in there that even I don't know about. I've read things on the boards and thought, *God, did I do that? I didn't know that!*

PHILIP BOND ON *THE INVISIBLES* FROM A DISTANCE

Reaction to the first four issues of Volume 3 was decidedly mixed; how do you react to readers who weren't prepared to accept such stylized illustration?

I think you just have to ignore it, at least until you're finished, or just read the good reviews. I like what I do and if some people don't like it that's just their bad taste. (Ha ha! I'm being funny, right?)

Whose work on *THE INVISIBLES* do you most admire?

Brief as it was, Michael Lark's future Fanny.

Looking back, which aspects of your work on *THE INVISIBLES* are you most proud of?

I'm just proud of being part of what I feel will be regarded as a very important book, and to have produced art that Grant was pleased with. I'll be there on my deathbed, surrounded by grandchildren and great-grandchildren, all dressed as King Mob and Ragged Robin: "Hey kids, I drew Helga."

1968

Mister Six adopts a new persona in Paris

1969

Edith Manning stops drinking

1970

Edith Manning briefly returns to England from exile in America

QBLH, which he formed on April 1, 1960 with its leader, Frater Damon (William W Webb). The title is Latin for "Brother No One."

The never-ending initiation is a recurring theme.

Master Therion was a title used by Aleister Crowley.

13.1 Horus is the Egyptian sun god, son of Osiris and Isis. Most often depicted with the head of a falcon, Horus avenged his father's murder by defeating Set, god of evil and darkness. As a child, Horus is often shown as a small boy with a finger to his lips. In this guise, called Harpocrates by the Greeks and Romans, he is the god of silence. The Aeon of Horus refers to an age of change in Aleister Crowley's *The Book of the Law*.

13.3 They're bluffing.

13.5 "Nothing stays buried forever." See 3.9.3.

14.1 Jolly Roger's reading a David Icke book. Icke (b.1952) is a former UK footballer who declared himself to be the second coming of Christ and espouses a collection of conspiracy theories, most notably that the UK royal family are secretly reptiles.

14.2 A sufi is a Muslim mystic. Sufism combines elements of Christian monasticism, gnosticism and Indian mysticism; its adherents are frequently the target of conservative reformist movements for their tendency to integrate non-Muslim elements.

Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273) was a Persian Islamic mystic poet. He wrote the six-volume *Mathnawi* collection of Sufi lore, and founded a Sufi order known in the West as the Whirling Dervishes.

15.1 "The truth dazzles gradually, or else the world would go blind." This is a misquote of Emily Dickinson (1830-1886).

15.4 Another BARBELITH image.

16.1 This scene was previously depicted in 1.18.11.4 with Miles at his actual age. This panel demonstrates how we view past events through the lens of our present.

16.2 A ouija board is used to communicate with the dead.

16.5 Beryl knows Sir Miles is going to kill her. Why does she let him?

17.4 *This is Your Life* (1955 onward) is a long-running UK television show in which celebrities are ambushed by a presenter and forced to meet friends and relatives from their distant past.

"We're not going to war with you this time. No guns, no bodies." A near quote from the Pulp song *Mis-Shapes*: "We won't use guns, we won't use bombs. We'll use the one thing we've got more of – that's our minds."

18.1 Anti-masonry is a fictional order created for *THE INVISIBLES*. The term is used in real life to describe actions taken against Freemasonry.

Anti-matter, predicted by Paul Dirac in 1928, was ultimately verified experimentally in 1933 with the creation of a positron, or positively charged electron. Anti-matter isn't quite the opposite of matter – although every particle has a corresponding anti-particle – due to charge/parity violation. Scientists theorize that our universe contains very little anti-matter. Matter and anti-matter do indeed vanish in a flash of energy when they come into contact.

Qaaba is the holy stone of Mecca, toward which

all Muslims face during prayer. The cube has been reconstructed up to twelve times, with only its black stone walls being an original feature.

18.5 *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is a 1956 Don Seigel (1912-1991) film based on the Jack Finney (1911-1995) novel about alien duplicates taking over a small town. The anti-communist parable was refilmed in 1978 by Philip Kaufman (b.1936). Of course, the body snatchers this issue are King Mob, Fanny and Helga.

20.1 The newspaper is a parody of *The Sun*, a UK tabloid. The top right box refers to Page 3, which traditionally features a photograph of a topless woman.

Crowley's bluffing, incidentally.

20.4 "Jacques de Molay, thou art avenged," was supposedly heard at the execution of Louis XVI. De Molay (1244-1314) was the head of the Templars when they were crushed in France. de Molay also lent his name to a branch of the Masons.

21.5 The Village in *The Prisoner* is a psychedelic island on which nameless prisoners go through approximations of normal life between various interrogation efforts.

22.1 The dog in the television on the left side of the panel is Parapa the Rappa from the Sony Playstation video game.

Note the reversed British flag.

Did Helga, King Mob and Fanny just have sex?

22.2 UK to US: knee's up = party.

WARREN PLEECE ON MECHANICS OF THE JOB

How do you approach breakdowns, especially if you know who is going to finish them? How detailed do you get?

It depends. Sometimes I'll be asked to add more detail; almost as finished as someone handling pencils. For the most part, I'll try and work as much in the style and format of the artist I'm supposed to be working with so you can't see too many joins.

How did you find working from Grant Morrison's scripts?

Fine and fun. He's quite good, really. I enjoyed the playing around with the *Sweeny* characters and the *Wicker Man* thing. It's always nice to be one of the first ones to find out what happens, even if you're none the wiser when you've read it!

What did you bring to your issues of the series that might not have been present had Philip Bond drawn them on his own?

Badly drawn sausage hands.

PN: Digging Up Beryl is one of the high points of an altogether classy final volume. The literary equivalent of a Russian doll, each revelation begets a new mystery, a deeper layer of strangeness that finally unravels into the sad "secret origin" of not only Division X and Sir Miles, but the Hand of Glory as well! Even better is that the reader is given no advance clues to the final outcome of the mystery, yet it plays back perfectly on the second reading. Distressingly, Beryl appears to have been buried in the nude.

KCS: After the terror of the House of Fun, after the fuming Sir Miles searching high and low for the hated King Mob, it is eerie to see the King walk right up behind him and put a hand on his shoulder. Satanstorm is filled with high points, such as Sir Miles becoming a tragic figure. Will he get the chance at redemption that Quimper was afforded?

1972

Mason Andrew
Lang born

1972

Hilde Morales
born

1976

Division X
disbands after the
enemy discover
their identities

KARMAGEDDON TANTRIKA

AUG 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Sean Phillips *Pencils*

Jay Stephens *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

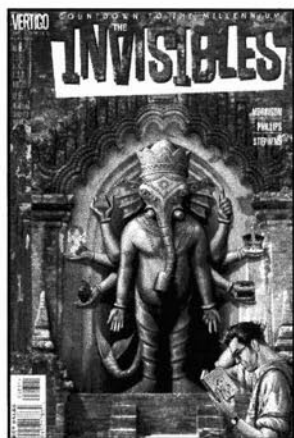
CHAPTER 8

"I once
lived with
six cats and
an Irish
wolfhound,
monsieur.
Public farting
and shitting
do not
constitute
a radical
confrontation
with the
psyche
to me."

Edith Manning visits the Marquis de Sade at La Coste, where she learns of his efforts to change the world through sexual revolution. A tour of the facility reveals an orgone accumulator, private housing for those undergoing bizarre therapy and an artificial womb to divorce children from the inadequacies of their parents. She emails accounts of her visit to King Mob.

In London, Dane and Jolly Roger go to Mister Six's apartment and meet Helga.

A month later, King Mob wanders through Varanasi and receives an email from Mister Six, who says he has been recruited by the King in Yellow.



1.1 Note the email addresses. An ariel is a sprite or fairy; *rex pop* is a Latin approximation of King Mob.

1.2 *The Time Machine* is a 1960 George Pal (1908–1980) film based on the HG Wells (1866–1946) novel *The Time Machine, An Invention*. First published in 1898, the novel concerns an English scientist who creates a time machine and travels to the far future, only to discover that humanity has separated into two species.

1.5 The Queen of England sends a telegram to people reaching their 100th birthday.

Actually, 9 is the number of endings in numerology. Edith is making a pun.

2.1 King Mob's email address has slightly changed.

2.2 The text on the Buddha statue is reminiscent of King Mob's dialogue on 2.7.24.2. Grant Morrison opened the letters column for issue 1.2 with the declaration, "Oh Buddha! Up yours!"

3.1 The Marquis de Sade owned and adored a chateau in the small village of La Coste in Provence, France. As it was sacked in 1792 during the French Revolution (visitors to the site can still see the ruins today), the Marquis is almost certainly operating out of a reconstruction located elsewhere.

3.4 *Doucement* is French for "softly."

4.4 The postcard's arrival was shown on 2.10.23.5.

4.5 UK to US: ta = thanks.

5.1 An Indian summer is a period of warm, hazy weather occurring in October or November.

25°C = 77°F.

5.2 NATO is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, founded on April 4, 1949 by a collection of Western nations with an aim of suppressing Soviet expansion during the Cold War.

Dead from the Waist Down is a single by UK pop group Catatonia about soulless consumer culture, from the album *Equally Cursed and Blessed*.

King Mob is taking pictures at Khajuharo, notable for its relief statues commingling spirituality and sexuality.

5.4 Ken Wilber (b. 1949) is credited by some with developing a unified field theory of consciousness, although critics claim he's done nothing of the sort. The book might be *The Marriage of Sense*

SEAN PHILLIPS ON ILLUSTRATING *THE INVISIBLES*

How did you land the four-issue penciling stint on Volume 3?

I had just finished drawing the MINX for Shelly and was looking for something else to do. She suggested the INVISIBLES arc, but Grant wasn't sure. He wanted to continue the cartoony look started by Philip Bond. I did some character sketches to show how I'd approach it, and we got Jay Stephens to ink the figures.

How did you find working from Grant's scripts?

Really good. Even though Grant knows exactly what he wants, his scripts are open enough to allow the the artist to have fun with it.

How did you approach illustrating the cast? Some of them look more like Philip Bond's work than your Volume 1 paintings.

With the characters that Philip had designed, I tried to be consistent with his arc. For the others, I just drew them how I'd done before.

Which characters were your favorite to draw?

Dane was the easiest, but King Mob was my favorite. He was just so well designed, simple, iconic and cool...

ROBBIE WILLIAMS: SECRET INVISIBLE?

From www.grant-morrison.com

The video for *Rock DJ* [in which Robbie Williams strips down to his skeleton] ... does in about three minutes what took me six years to do in *THE INVISIBLES*.

1976

MAY Mason Lang sees the Liberty Bell and realizes America's flaw

1978

US government gets HIV vaccine

1979

Gideon Starorzewski backpacks on Glastonbury Tor

ON THE COVER

Mason should be the last person who needs to read *India on a Shoestring!* The central figure is a combination of Ganesh (head, although Ganesh is traditionally only missing one tusk), Shiva (arms) and the Nommo (amphibious features). Note the BARBELITH *bindi*, also a feature of the Nons. He has eight eyes and eight arms, to match the issue number, and his trunk looks not unlike a Myrmidon gas mask. Note the hands, clockwise from bottom left: An invisible object; a grenade for the cover of 1.1; the origami time machine model; a Masonic pyramid; lipstick and painted fingernails for Fanny; a crown for the Moonchild's coronation; a typewriter for life-as-fiction; the Hand of Glory posture from 2.8. Alternately, the hands represent Boy (missing from this volume); King Mob; Robin; Mason; Fanny; the enemy; Grant and Dane. Ganesh's tusks have been poached. The psychedelic Vertigo strip is a nice touch, while the combination of photography and painted illustration once again touch on the recurring theme of life as fiction or art.

PN: *Perhaps taking a lesson from the intricate knot of the previous four issues, Karmageddon begins with a more or less self-contained tale, Edith's visit to La Coste. And it's a great trip, brimming with real-life namedrops, buzzwords and philosophies that make a welcome respite from the more outrageous elements of the past few storylines. It's nice to see that the real world is infinitely stranger than fiction, and any comic book that ably sums up the theories of Wilhelm Reich must be doing something right. It's a difficult judgement to weigh, but ultimately this third volume is the best of the bunch, owing largely to issues like this. So near the end that cancellation is no longer a threat, Grant clearly has jumped back into the fire that produced Arcadia and Sheman. It's nice to see Sean Phillips on penciling after the Volume 1 covers.*

1980

Dane Paul
McGowan born

1981

JULY Mason Lang
encounters
BARBELITH in
form of aliens

1983

Hilde Morales
undergoes magical
initiation in
Mexico

and *Soul: Integrating Science and Religion*, published in 1998, around the time this issue was probably being written.

6.1 This is Theirro and de Sade's nameless driver.

7.2 Dane's mangling the chorus to Kylie Minogue's 1988 hit single *I Should Be So Lucky*.

7.3 Tommy Nutter (1943-1992) was a UK fashion designer who opened an influential Savile Row shop in 1969 with financial backing from pop singer Cilla Black and Apple Records' Peter Brown.

8.3 *Out of Africa* is a 1985 Sydney Pollack (b.1934) film based on Isak Dinesen's (b.Karen Blixen, 1885-1962) memoirs about establishing a plantation in Africa.

9.2 Orgonaut is an unofficial term for the adherents of Wilhelm Reich's orgone theories.

Austrian psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957) theorized the existence of orgone, a biological, sexual energy, found throughout the universe, that rejuvenates those suffering emotional or physical ills. Low levels of orgone can supposedly be replenished by sitting in a special cabinet. The US government declared that orgone did not exist and between 1956 and 1962 ordered all books and materials containing the word "orgone" to be burned in state incinerators. Reich himself, charged with violating a Pure Food and Drug Administration injunction, was incarcerated in Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary, where he died.

9.3 Orgonon was Reich's Maine estate.

10.1 This is Dane and Jolly Roger – time is becoming fluid as we approach the supercontext.

10.2 According to Robin, nons become public before 2012. Here we learn that de Sade has pioneered the new gender by 1999.

11.2 "All wars are sex wars" echoes Mason on James Bond from 2.15.22.5. "All scenes are sex scenes."

A popular conspiracy theory of the time held that the United States cracked down on alleged Yugoslavian genocide as a method for diverting attention from President Clinton's infidelities with Monica Lewinsky.

11.5 Edith uses an iMac, naturally. Although the prevalence of Apples in the series ties nicely with the fruit of knowledge myth and the presence of Satan in *The Invisibles*, Grant Morrison didn't write them into the scripts.

Tulpas are Tibetan "thought forms," magical creatures created as servants.

Alexandra David-Neel (1868-1969) was a French feminist and Buddhist scholar who became the first European woman to explore the forbidden Buddhist city of Lhasa.

12.5 *Ghats* are basically flights of steps leading down to the bank of a river.

13.5 A flashback to May 1, 1988.

"Caligula would have blushed." King Mob is listening to *Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now* by seminal 1980s UK indie rock group The Smiths.

15.1 The "johnnymonolith" segment of Mister Six's email address is an in-joke.

16.2 *Animal Hospital* is a BBC television series dealing with veterinarians.

17.2 "I've heard some of the gory details" dovetails

with "we think we know why" from the previous arc. More evidence that the Hand of Glory is Beryl's hand.

18.2 The dream first appeared on 2.12.9.

19.2 "*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*" is French for "That's not a pipe," a reference to a reactionary saying about Freudian symbolism: "Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar." The line itself is from Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte's (1898-1967) post-modern painting *The Treachery of Images*, which features the slogan printed above an image of a pipe, illustrating that symbols representing objects are not the object themselves. For more information see Robert Anton Wilson's *Quantum Psychology*.

19.3 Czechoslovakian psychiatrist Stanislav Grof (b.1931) postulated that birth traumas shape personality. Basic Perinatal Matrix III is Grof's description of birth trauma.

19.4 She's talking about the Khephra metaphor.

20.2 *Nigredo* is the first step in alchemy – examining what we do not know about ourselves.

Beelzebub is either a demon or another name for Satan, depending on cosmology.

20.3 *Lord of the Flies* is a 1963 Peter Brook (b.1925) film based on the William Golding (1911-1993) novel about a shipwrecked group of English schoolboys who revert to savagery. The film was subsequently loosely remade in 1990.

21.2 What-the-butler-saw machines, or Mutoscopes, were coin-operated devices that showed short film clips via flip cards, generally of a mildly sexual or violent nature.

21.3 *Hoi polloi* is a patronizing Greek term for the masses.

THE MICHAEL GRADY UNIVERSE

UK physicist Michael Grady proposed that the universe was originally a four-dimensional liquid "protospace" in the February 1999 issue of *New Scientist*. Hovering just below its normal freezing point, the slightest impurity may have caused the protoverse to explode into an enormous frozen crystal (the Big Bang). In this model, humans perceive only three dimensions because we exist on the surface of the solid.

Much like the cosmological model adopted in *THE INVISIBLES*, Grady suggests that there may be multiple universes. An intersection between two of these, such as Universe A and Universe B illustrated by the *vescica pisces*, would be "just like one soap bubble colliding with another. The portion of the surface where one bubble touches the other eventually pops and is replaced by the other bubble," says Grady. Hence our world as the juncture, with the "bad" Universe B apparently poised to replace the "good" Universe A.

KCS: *Karmageddon kicks off with a bang. Edith is no longer scrawling handwritten notes but sending emails, a welcome upgrade. It may be a new team indeed, but they're up to their old fun again, and I can't wait to get into the thick of it. Of course, any story that prominently features Edith is sure to be a good one, and the foreshadowing of her death makes me a bit melancholy. I'd always thought that people like Edith lived forever. I appreciate her critique of de Sade's erotic village as well as her always-scathing wit. And finally, eight issues before the end, we get to see de Sade in action. It's a more subdued de Sade, not the feisty libertine of the Revolution anymore, by fuck! He works, though, the beneficent patriarch of his love nest. The giant orgone accumulator was a trip for sure. Mister Six going to the other side? Other side of what?*

1985

Gideon
Starorzewski
publishes *Dis* as
Kirk Morrison

1985

NOV 3 Gideon
Starorzewski
meets Jacqui

1986

Mister Six
becomes Brian
Malcolm

"Time can
be tricky.
One false
move and
suddenly
you're a
hundred."

KARMAGEDDON

TYPE Ω

OCT 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*Sean Phillips *Pencils*Jay Stephens *Inks*Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

In India, King Mob and Mason pass the time waiting for Edith to arrive by discussing their contacts with BARBELiTH and wondering why they interpreted the same data in vastly different ways. Afterward, Edith tells them what happened when the 1920s Invisibles activated the Hand of Glory, and a story about her tantric teacher, Mr. Reddy, revealing to her the true form of humanity. Finally, she reveals to King Mob that she has come to Varanasi to die.

Meanwhile, the Invisibles humiliate Sir Miles by mailing out staged tapes involving an S&M judge. Later, Mister Six visits the King in Yellow while Harper keeps tabs on Jack Flint, who has regressed to a primordial personality.

Elsewhere, Fanny, Dane and Jolly Roger prepare for a mission, while in space BARBELiTH approaches the Earth...



1 The statue is Kali, the Hindu black earth mother who gives life only to take it away. She is worshiped by assassins and symbolizes combat, creation and the moon, all associated with the Invisibles. Note that she holds a gun and a syringe – the old and new weapons of the Invisibles.

2 The background of this spread echoes those of 2.2.6-2.2.9.

The illustration of Dane on the upper right originally appeared on 2.7.18.6.

2.1 "Eleapits" should read "fleapits."

2.2 King Mob was at Ayer's Rock for an initiation on 1.18.9 and 1.18.16-17.

Russian astronomer Nikolai Semenovich Kardashev (b.1932) developed a hierarchy of civilizations based on their level of technological achievement. King Mob actually has more than just Kardashev's spelling wrong; Kardashev would class us as a Type 0 civilization. He believed few civilizations attain Type 1 status, with most destroying themselves beforehand.

3 Note the recurring image of a nuclear explosion.

4 The background image is another depiction of Mason's abduction experience.

All things being the same is a recurring theme.

5.1 Whitley Streiber (b.1945) famously claimed he experienced an alien abduction in the 1987 book *Communion*, subsequently turned into a 1989 film by Philippe Mora (b.1949). Streiber's account introduced the wide-eyed "gray" aliens to mainstream culture.

Note the cave paintings.

5.3 A VAT (value-added tax) inspector is a UK tax auditor.

7.2 *Carrie* is a 1976 Brian de Palma (b.1940) film based on the 1974 Stephen King novel about an unpopular girl with telekinetic powers exacting revenge at her high school prom.

8.5 The flying insect recalls the insects from 1.1.

9.7 *Crimestwatch UK* is a BBC television program akin to *America's Most Wanted*, in which authorities broadcast details of fugitives in the hope that viewers can provide information leading to their capture.

Calvinism is a strain of Protestant Christianity characterized by a belief in predestination.

PN: Another in a string of superlative issues, this time not a contained story so much as a series of philosophical musings and character vignettes. Clues to the skeleton supporting the mass of *THE INVISIBLES* come thick and fast – those paying attention will no doubt have realized our true nature and the 'location' of the missing John-A-Dreams. Edith is a delight, and it's good to see Mason back, if only to hammer home the quantum psychology theme underlying appearances by BARBELiTH. Only the Dane/Fanny/Roger scenes disappoint, the three characters not really ever developing the chemistry to carry pages of story. Sean Phillips' framing of several panels via Edith's smoke is inspired.

23 OF ONE

Robert Anton Wilson addresses the number 23 in his book *Cosmic Trigger*, recalling a period where he encountered 23s everywhere and attributed it a great importance. Upon hearing his story, Wilson's wife pointed out that he only saw 23 everywhere because he was looking for it – ignoring the vast amount of other numbers he saw each day. While Wilson saw 23 as a Discordian indicator signposting change, it may be more accurately tied to the notion of self-fulfilling prophecies.

Nevertheless, the number 23 retains a great deal of interest from certain quarters, not least of which is Wilson himself, who explored the number most notably in the *Illuminatus!* trilogy with Robert Shea. *THE INVISIBLES* touches on the role of 23 in the I-Ching in 1.9, while William Burroughs touches on its strange nature in *23 Enigma*.

In *THE INVISIBLES* 23 takes on increasing importance, until ultimately it seems scarcely a page goes by without a reference to it in the third volume.

1988

Gideon Starorzewski publishes *Lord Worm* as Kirk Morrison

1988

MAY 1 Gideon Starorzewski meets Edith Manning in India

1988

Gideon Starorzewski joins the Invisibles as King Mob

ON THE COVER

Death and the 1924 incarnation of Edith are playing a variation on paper, scissors, rock; note that their fingers equal seven. A numeral 7 is also visible in the background; there are seven chess pieces on the board (Invisibles Jolly Roger, Jim Crow, Lord Fanny, King Mob, Helga, Mister Six and Dane). The seven figures dancing on the ridge in the background is an image taken from the 1957 Ingmar Bergman (b.1918) film *The Seventh Seal*, about a knight returning from the Crusades as plague spreads through Europe, only to find himself challenging Death to a game for the right to live. Edith, in a wonderful bit of subversion, appears to be challenging Death for the right to die. She wins, it seems. The monochrome image both reflects the film and the duality theme running through *THE INVISIBLES* itself, while the filmic reference touches yet again on the life as fiction theme. Note that Edith is playing games with Death, just as she does in the storyline as well. Here Edith wins – scissors cut paper. Edith is also a near-anagram of death.

KCS: *Sean Phillips is a great replacement for Philip Bond. He's a bit more crinkly around the edges, but again, his style matches the content of the story, which I'm all for. Edith tells the King she's planning to die. Particularly striking in this issue is Jack Flint's regression. "John-A-Dreams is a complex structure." Yeah, Jack, I suppose he/you/me is a complex structure. It's amazing how a single line can clear things up. Mason's musings on society are brilliant. This volume is not so much answering questions at this point as allowing us to confirm our theories. I'm anxious to go with Six into the tunnel, and questions answered or no, there's still the coronation to come. This series isn't over yet, although you can feel it winding down. I'm enjoying this volume so much more than the other two. It's a smooth and enjoyable read.*

1988

Jolly Roger joins
the Invisibles

1988

June 14
Kay born

1989

Invisibles agent
Jeremy Sutton
goes under deep
cover at Glamis

10.2 *Antiques Roadshow* is a UK television program (subsequently franchised in other countries) in which experts describe and value antiques presented by viewers. Despite Mister Six's assertion, they probably don't profile antique dildoes.

10.3 "The masks are off." A recurring theme.

10.5 Harpocrates is the child form of Horus, Egyptian god of light and change. His sign is a finger to the lips – the sign used to indicate silence.

"The top's a long way down." The seat of Hell is at the bottom in Dante's version.

11.2 The glyph in Flint's dialogue first appears on 2.13.8.1.

12.1-12.2 Previously shown on 2.8.11.4.

12.1 The raj refers to British dominion over India between 1757 and 1947.

12.2 A sitar is a stringed Indian musical instrument, generally made of gourds and teak.

13.1 The Eurythmics were a 1980s UK synthpop duo with several hit singles.

13.2 *Sweet Dreams* is a hit single by the Eurythmics more famous for its video, which featured singer Annie Lennox sporting a fiery red crew cut and a men's suit.

14.1 Flock of Seagulls are a 1980s UK synthpop band best known for ridiculous hairstyles.

14.2 *Dancing Queen* is perhaps the best-known single from the Swedish pop group ABBA.

Annie Lennox (b.1954) was the singer for the Eurythmics. She is now pursuing a solo career.

14.3 Fanny's referring to Dave Stewart (b.1950), the other member of the Eurythmics.

15.3 *Vogue* is a fashion magazine.

16.2 A Lagonda is a car made by Aston Martin.

16.3 Edith's describing Universe B. Freddy must have gone there when the Golden Age Invisibles activated the Hand of Glory.

"Alice" is a reference to the eponymous heroine of Lewis Carroll's novel *Alice in Wonderland*.

18.1 "Perhaps it's still happening now." Everything happening at once is a recurring theme.

18.3 Mr. Reddy, through Edith, seems to be implying that we are inhabiting time suits.

18.4 Kundalini – or coiling – is a reservoir of creative and/or libidinous energy at the base of the spine. Several yogic exercises have developed in India to harness and balance this force throughout the body. The Hindu deity Kundalini is considered to be the universal life force.

19 "Then he stripped off." Mr. Reddy absent the human-form time suit; Dane would say this is the "nude" form of humanity. Removing masks is a recurring theme. Satan saw Jack this way on 2.19.14.3.

21.2 Why does the Harlequinade speak normally in this form?

Trains are a recurring image.

22.4 Why is BARBELITH finishing Edith's sentence? Note that BARBELITH has moved out from behind the moon, and is approaching Earth. Apparently it travels quite slowly – astronauts won't make contact for thirteen more years (3.1)!

"The
microbes
are part
of the
magick."

DEC 99

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Sean Phillips *Pencils*

Jay Stephens *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

KARMAGEDDON

SIX MINUS SIX

Helga injects herself with Key 23 and exposes herself to the 38 secret letters of the alphabet. Lost in glossolalia, she has a vision of creatures destroying the first four letters required to form the word MASTER. The beings say they are trying to help, but before she can learn more Helga snaps back to normalcy. Later, she uses Key 23 to make Sir Miles believe she is an Archon. But his fear of the Outer Church overwhelms the power of the drug and Sir Miles is able to deduce that Helga is behind the illusion.

In Whitehall, Sir Miles' accomplice Rossiter kills Pennington, whose body becomes possessed by Orlando.

In India, King Mob says farewell to Mason and then returns to care for Edith. They celebrate her 99th birthday and Edith tells King Mob about a miscarriage she had at Fortnum & Mason and a man who caught the fetus in his hat as it bounced down the stairs. The next day he takes her to be baptized in the Ganges. Shortly after, Edith dies. King Mob burns her body in the river, removing her from the wheel of karma.

GRANT MORRISON ON TRANSLATING SCRIPTS TO ART

The script for 3.6.13 is quite different to the final result...

I'd got to this stage where I just thought everything that went into it was supposed to go into it, even though by the end some mistakes were getting too much to bear. I kind of just said, "Okay, if that's the way the artist wants to see it, then fine, I'll have to assume the collaboration has demanded that, and I'm sorry to see that element go missing, but let's hope something else may emerge from it." Again, because I didn't tend to speak to the artist, they probably felt quite isolated. I think Sean did a brilliant job on the Marquis de Sade issues, one of my favorites. But some of the other stuff maybe was just neglecting details because he was rushed, or not involved enough, or not getting enough direction.

SEAN PHILLIPS ON TRANSLATING SCRIPTS TO ART

I don't think most writers expect the artist to include everything in a script. A lot of it is there for the artist to select from. Sometimes things are omitted for the sake of making the story flow better.

ON THE COVER

Six sixes here: Mister Six, standing on a six and holding a six-sided die with six facing up, plus the issue number – and the total number of issues listed. Note that the other two numbers on the die are two and three, or 23. The Vertigo strip is comprised of text repeating the words: MISTER SIX – six times.

The cover image itself touches on both the recurring life-as-game theme and the interaction between series and reader – life as fiction. Mister Six is offering the reader the opportunity to play the game. Mister Six isn't in this issue.



1.1 Note the time: 23.00. Also, there's a 23 on the syringe label.

The *angular gyrus* is one of the parts of the brain responsible for language.

1.3 Mister Six was lying about Helga not having a sister in addition to not knowing English.

Nirvikalpa samadhi is the state of absolute nothingness, the ultimate spiritual attainment in Hindu religion at which one is removed from the reincarnation cycle. At this moment, one is faced with one's soul, and finds that it is of the same essence as the Creator.

1.5 26 letters plus an additional 38 equals 64; also the total number of combinations in the I Ching.

1.6 *Übersprech* is a German approximation of "super speech."

Helga uses a Macintosh G4 tower; an Apple.

1.7 *Logonaut* would be Greek for "word sailor."

1.8 Note the time: 11:23, or 23:23 in a 24-hour system.

3 Echoes of Robin on 2.20.2.

4.2 "We're trying to free them but they don't understand." This echoes Invisible initiation. The figures may be the egmen mentioned on 1.1.19.2. The egg-shaped men look like Terrence McKenna's machine elves, and appear to be mining letters – destroying the alphabet? The letters spell MAST(er?).

4.4 Of course it's 5 o'clock – five is a magic number.

4.5 Another recurring BARBELITH image.

5.4 The statue is the Egyptian cat goddess Bast, who governed sex, drugs, music, creativity and lesbianism.

5.5 An RVM module is a remote video surveillance device.

6.1 *The Three Lives of Thomasina* is a 1964 Don Chaffley (1917-1990) film about a cat whose "death" and reappearance bring a family together.

6.2 BARBELITH's view of Mason and King Mob echoes Satan's in 2.19.14.2.

7.3 "I thought you were the Grim Reaper." Well, he's the bringer of death, at any rate.

8.1 The Eastern European nation of Kosovo is the

1990

DEC Lucille Butler joins the Invisibles as Boy

1990

Takashi Satoh takes photograph of fractal cloud formation

1990

Hilde Morales and Quimper are abused at a party in Rio

site of an alleged genocide conducted during the Bosnian war. The region has been devastated by NATO, who apparently took a "destroy it to save it" approach through a bombing campaign.

9.4 The return of Orlando, last seen on 1.8.16.

10.5 The Baader-Meinhoff gang were leftist German revolutionaries who resorted to terrorism to change society, escalating from robberies to murder. They enjoyed popular support, particularly among youth, before being caught by German authorities in 1972. Several terrorist actions during the following years failed to bring about their release, and on October 17, 1977 Andreas Baader (b.1943) and two other imprisoned gang leaders committed suicide.

11.1 Jacqui said basically the same thing to King Mob on 2.5.12.

11.2 The Rosicrucians saw the Black Grail as the antithesis of the Christian Holy Grail, symbol of the forces of darkness and hate.

Judas betrayed Jesus to the Romans in the Christian belief system.

This panel foreshadows 3.2.16.5.

11.4 Generation^N essentially refers to an infinite refinement of the technology. It's also the slogan Nintendo uses to refer to players of its video games.

13 For the next two pages, the finished artwork deviates considerably from the original script; dialogue has been altered or is missing altogether. The trade paperback *The Invisible Kingdom* restores the original dialogue. The original script is represented here by kind permission of Grant Morrison.

13.1 From the script: *Back to India. King Mob and Edith are having a last supper and the next two pages take place as they eat and drink amidst the sumptuous surroundings of the Clark's Varanasi. Candles everywhere. The fan turning lazily. It's clear that it's Edith's birthday -- big birthday cake and candles and a couple of cards, whatever. Maintain the birthday atmosphere.*

CAP.: Varanasi, India:

EDITH: ...The key to it all was Billy Chang, in the end.

EDITH: It's all in my memoir; scandal after scandal.

13.2 From the script: *Circle in as King Mob pours Edith a glass of champagne. She has a tiny portion on her plate but there's still a sense of abundance with tons of Indian Thali stuff on the table. Like the Indian down the road but classy. Edith raises her hand. Dope smoke drifts languidly [off] course.*

EDITH: There was some beastly business in 1924 when he was locked away for a year in Wormwood Scrubs.

EDITH: They deported him in the end, from Albert Docks...

EDITH: Enough! Enough!

The dialogue in this panel is corrected in the *The Invisible Kingdom* trade paperback.

13.3 From the script: *King Mob pours a glass for himself, looking at it. Edith takes a sniff of her glass.*

EDITH: I haven't had a drink since 19 ... 69!

EDITH: Now Billy ... Of course we tended to romanticize the Chinese in those days; they

PN: *Edith's death is quite moving, despite (or perhaps because of) advance warning. It's rare to see a character die of natural causes in a comic book, and rarer still that it's allowed to occur with the dignity present here. If there's a criticism to be made, it's that some of the other storylines are slight enough to be irrelevant. Perhaps some judicious editing could have strengthened the Edith scenes by shuffling the other plots into surrounding issues. On a different note, the Pennington/Tarquin identity debacle has already reached epic proportions (instigated apparently by an unwitting artist and a less-than-attentive editor), to the degree that Grant himself will ultimately have to comment in the series itself in a few issues' time.*

KCS: *This is such a touching issue. King Mob has become something new to me. His tenderness during Edith's last days is refreshing and serves to counteract all of the bad feelings I've had about him, especially during Volume 2. I always wanted him to become something more than an assassin. It seems his time in the mountains listening to crickets screw had a good effect on him. Edith's death has the proper amount of dignity. A relief, almost. Helga is a fascinating character, and I'd usually say that introducing new people at this late stage is a mistake, but Helga is a fine addition. I was disappointed that Mister Six doesn't appear. The cover made me think he might show up somewhere this issue. My mistake.*

DATING THE INVISIBLES

King Mob tells Edith that he met her in the 1920's two years ago as of June 1999, placing *Sensitive Criminals* in mid-1997. *Black Science* must take place in the fall of 1996 if we date by the color of the leaves in upstate New York, which corresponds with statements that the team spent a year recuperating following the fall 1995 battle in the House of Fun. The upshot of this is a gap of at least half a year between issues 2.4 and 2.5.

1990

Hilde Morales joins the Invisibles as Lord Fanny

1992

SEP King Mob and John-A-Dreams find the timesuit

1992

SEP King Mob travels to Africa

MORRISSEY AND VOLUME 3

From www.grant-morrison.com

I was trying to feel British again and the sound of Morrissey's solo greatest hits album is clearly audible between the panels of the *Satanstorm* story arc ... from the echoes of "Come Armageddon, Come" on page three and the "strange dust" falling on my ex-girlfriend's postal district onwards, the entire piece is haunted by the awful specter of Mozzer.

GRANT MORRISON ON GLOSSOLALIA

From www.grant-morrison.com

I was doing a lot of "speaking in tongues" experiments in the early '90s and it occurred to me that the seemingly incoherent minds of glossolalia could be seen as the voice of the "subconscious" body mind and could be interpreted by the unconscious minds of others — everyone hears different words in a string of glossolalia. Everyone makes their own interpretations of such "inspired" vocalizations, based on body language cues, intonation and the mis-handling of phonemes according to personal bias. We all hear what we need to hear in a glossolalic exchange, making it a truly international language. Or so it seemed at the time.

SEAN PHILLIPS ON ILLUSTRATING ACTION VS SOAP OPERA

I prefer drawing people standing around talking. It's more of a challenge to keep the pages interesting.

1993

The Invisibles remind Jeremy Sutton to kill the Moonchild

1994

King Mob has contact with BARBELITH inside Ayer's Rock

1994

FALL King Mob kills Joni

seemed so decadent and deep but Billy was a very strange and remarkable man.

KING MOB: And?..

13.4 From the script: KM looks up, fork in hand. Ambience of ragas and sitars.

EDITH: He vanished in the end, you see. There were rumors that he'd died deaf, blind and penniless but...

EDITH: That wasn't it at all.

KING MOB: Maybe I'll just read it.

KING MOB: Why does this birthday have a Last Supper ambience?

The Last Supper (c.1495) is a painting by Leonardo DaVinci (1452-1519) illustrating Jesus' final meal with his disciples before being crucified by the Romans.

The dialogue in this panel is corrected in the *The Invisible Kingdom* trade paperback.

14.1 For Edith's miscarriage see 3.1.14.4.

14.2 Fortnum & Mason is an upscale British department store.

15.3 Milton H Erickson (1901-1980), widely viewed as the leading hypnotherapist of his time, pioneered a system of hypnosis marked by the importance of recasting situations through a new lens.

Neuro-linguistic programming, developed in the 1970s by Richard Bandler and John Grinder, is similar to Ericksonian therapy in that it focuses on transformational grammar and the influence of semantics.

15.5 Some species of spider are characterized by the female eating the male after procreation.

16.4 "There was no cremation. Only you saw it." The cremation seen throughout the series is Edith's, attended alone by King Mob. But other characters see it at different times because all times are one.

16.5 In some ways, the entire series is about rebirth. See "And so we return and begin again" on 1.1.1 and the multiple rebirths this issue (Rossiter reborn as an invertebrate, the return of Orlando in a new form).

19.2 As he did on 2.8.13.3.

19.5 The "funny songs" were sung on 2.10.17.2.

20.3-20.5 Additional scenes from the sequences shown in 1.3.15 and 2.10.7.

21.3 The crack is Edith's pulse, eventually flattening in the direction of Shiva.

21.10 Edith dies at 11:23, or 23:23.

"The 'paint'
is wet on
everything
if you
squint hard
enough."

JAN 00
Grant Morrison *Writer*
Sean Phillips *Pencils*
Jay Stephens *Inks*
Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*
Todd Klein *Letters*
Shelly Roeberg *Editor*
Brian Bolland *Cover*

KARMAGEDDON
SMILE

Dane and Jolly Roger infiltrate the Porton Down weapons research center in plain sight to sabotage a secret facility for growing CIPHERMEN.

Elsewhere, Helga lets Sir Miles go free, gambling that his prolonged absence and Key 23 injection will sabotage his place in the enemy's hierarchy.

In the disused Underground station where Dane was initiated, Mister Six agrees to accompany the King in Yellow, whose dwarf assistants are making strange hand gestures. Mister Six mimics the movements with a piece of paper, which folds into an origami model of the timesuit. The King in Yellow reveals itself to be the Harlequinade, which informs Mister Six that he has moved outside of his role in the game and must be repositioned.

In Varanasi, King Mob reminisces about Edith before gathering her driver and Thierro and heading for London for the penultimate showdown...

SEAN PHILLIPS ON ILLUSTRATING REAL LOCATIONS

With locations such as Varanasi I think it very important to get some accuracy. Atmosphere is more important than detail. Careful selection of what to put in is better than cramming in loads of buildings, people, vehicles, etc.

PN: *It's interesting to see just how far The INVISIBLES has come to this point, as aspects of the series across three volumes begin to coalesce. The idea that the British government is creating the CIPHERMEN seems a bit of a let down with the rise of The X Files in the intervening years since their introduction. But Tom's ghost visiting Edith before she dies is a lovely moment. So too is the original meeting between Edith and King Mob, previously described and finally shown as a coda for her story. Helga's release of Sir Miles demonstrates how far the Invisibles themselves have come (hands in the air whoever thinks the Invisibles of Volume 1 wouldn't have just shot him and been done with it). The fate of Mister Six here is an appropriately Prisoneresque blend of tantalizing clue and existential mystery.*

KCS: *Miles free, Six gone underground, Edith dead, Dane and Roger in suits. What is the world coming to? What is astonishing about this volume is how consistent things have remained. Even shifting between the two artists, a certain feel of calm inevitability has run through the past*



1.1 King Mob's referring to the cheap animation technique of *Scooby Doo*, which looped backgrounds during motion sequences to save expense.

1.2 Lots of threes and twos here – 23. This panel was first seen in 3.8.1.1, but with a plant.

1.3 A thought thinking itself is German philosopher Georg Hegel's (1770-1831) description of God.

2.1 Another Macintosh, or Apple.

3.1 Kali is a female personification of the fierce Hindu god, representing power over time.

Note the KALI acronyms throughout this issue.

3.2 Saddleworth Moor, near Manchester, England, is where the so-called Moors Murders took place.

3.3 Cruel Britannia is a pun on Tony Blair's "Cool Britannia" political motto.

Lila is a Sanskrit term for "divine play." In other words, the gods play games with mortals.

3.4 The Balkans are the collective countries separating the former Soviet Union from Eastern Europe.

See 1.10. for more on the Voodoo spider-queen.

3.5 "Five trips was three too many." Three and two are 23; they also add up to five.

4.2 Dane and Roger are mimicking the Men in Black, an American urban legend about dark-suited federal agents involved in conspiracies.

Silver nitrate on the lip combats an autopsy's stench.

4.3 Note that instead of a card, Dane is holding a mirror; the staffer is seeing what he wants to see.

5.1 Is Jack using telekinesis to destroy the camera?

5.4 Simply Red is a UK soft rock band.

6.2 "Here we go round the mulberry bush" is from the children's song *Pop Goes the Weasel*. See 3.1.17.1 for the song's climax. Orlando plays *Pop Goes the Weasel* in *Arcadia*.

6.5 *The Matrix* is a 1998 film that "borrows" many core concepts and moments from *The Invisibles*. The Andy (b.1967) and Larry Wachowski (b.1965) film is about a false reality indistinguishable from ours.

7.1 38°C = 100.4°F

9.4 *The Midwich Cuckoos* is a 1957 novel by UK author John Wyndham (1903-1969) about a race of malevolent alien children birthed in unison by the unsuspecting women of a sleepy English town.

ON THE COVER

The creature is a fractal – a central hub with five protuberances leading to central hubs with five protuberances. There are five sets of five in the hands, for the issue number. Note also the broken 5 image on the bottom left, and the five tentacles.

The insect motif echoes a recurring theme.

1994

SEP King Mob joins Elfayed in Cairo

1995

SPRING King Mob travels to India and Africa

1995

Tom O'Bedlam dies

Cuckoos leave their eggs in the nests of other birds.

10.4 Patricia Campbell Hearst (b.1954) was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army in 1974 and famously arrested for aiding her captors in 1975.

11.1 Last seen on 1.21.15.2.

11.2 Note the blue mold from 1.2.17.

Crowley's statement is an inversion of "nothing is true, everything is permitted," an occult phrase originating with mystic Hassan i Sabbah.

11.3 In gnostic theory, *hylē* refers to the material, as opposed to the spiritual.

11.4 Initiation is a recurring theme.

11.5 *Health and Efficiency* is a UK nudist magazine.

12.1 UK to US: dodgems = bumper cars.

12.3 A Möbius strip is a ribbon twisted so that it only has one side, which continues for eternity.

12.5 Note that Mister Six's smoke rings are forming the map of reality!

14.1 Note Tom O'Bedlam's corpse; it's not decomposing after four years!

14.2 Life as a game is a recurring theme.

15.1 The Nazis used the Bergen-Belsen transit center as a concentration camp.

On April 20, 1999, two students of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, killed 13 other students and faculty before committing suicide.

The Khmer Rouge communist faction, led by Pol Pot (b.Soloth Sar, 1925-1998), overthrew the Cambodian government in 1975, killing 2 million people.

15.4 The fetus in space is an image from the Stanley Kubrick film *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

16.1 "Edward and Sophie" are Prince Edward (b.1964) and his wife, Sophie Rhys-Jones (b.1965).

"Posh and Beckham" are former Spice Girl Victoria Adams (b.1974) and her husband, Manchester United football star David Beckham (b.1975).

16.4 From Shakespeare's *King Lear*, III, iv.

17.2 Life as a game; a recurring theme.

Monopoly is a board game in which players take on the role of capitalists trying to bankrupt others.

17.5 More numerals relating to 23.

18.2 Osiris is the Egyptian god of the underworld and vegetation, frequently symbolizing rebirth.

19.1 UK to US: Cluedo = Clue, a board game in which players try to solve a murder.

20.1 *Hatful of Hollow* is the Smiths' second album.

21.1 "Is it the Holy Grail or two faces talking?" See the cover to 3.2. Also, language as reality.

21.3 See 1.1.6.2 for the Paris prophecy.

21.4 "The Invisibles ride again" is a play on the Max Brand (b.Frederick Schiller Faust, 1893-1944) novel *Destry Rides Again*, about a reluctant cowboy hero.

Why does King Mob bring Thierro and the driver if they don't participate on the Westminster Abbey attack? And where's Purves during the attack?

22.1 "No sleep till 2012" is a play on the Beastie Boys' song *No Sleep Till Brooklyn*.

22.4 More 23.

eight issues. Last volume I was always fretting: How will they get out of this? Is Boy working for the other side? Is Mason? But there is no fretting now. Just passive enjoyment. It's almost like television. Odd, that. Really dug Sean Phillips on this run and I'm sad to see him go. But onward, to the end!

GRANT MORRISON ON THE UNCONSCIOUS

From an online chat with *Next Planet Over*

It embarrasses me to say that a lot of what goes down on paper is purely unconscious. I often read comics I've written with no memory of having been involved at any level. It's like elves cobbling your shoes at night. This isn't a way of sliding out of admitting that sometimes things which don't necessarily appear meaningful can hide in the narrative cracks, but it often seems that my unconscious mind does nothing but wrestle with the dreamlike aspects of *THE INVISIBLES*, et cetera, and more than often loses the scuffle. Much of it is beyond explanation but not beyond contemplation.

SO WHAT DOES HAPPEN TO PARIS?

"Paris is soon to be picturesque ruins."

One of King Mob's first comments in *THE INVISIBLES* is also his most enigmatic. Thierro seems to imply that a prophet has foretold Paris will be destroyed on August 11, 1999. Does King Mob know of this prophesy and make a joke of it to Edith in 1995?

1995

MAR 18 Aum Supreme Truth attacks Japan subway with sarin

1995

SUMMER Dane McGowan joins the Invisibles as Jack Frost

1995

Division X reactivated; Moonchild eats Jeremy Sutton

THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM

PLANET

STEPFORD

MAR 00

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Steve Yeowell *Art 1,2,5,6,11,12,15*

Ashley Wood *Art 3,4*

Philip Bond *Art 8,9,20*

Jill Thompson *Art 10, 16-19*

Steve Parkhouse *Art 13,14*

John Ridgway *Art 7,21,22*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

CHAPTER 4

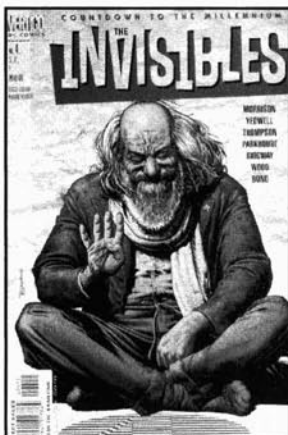
"The
Invisibles'
is an
immune
program:
Triggered
by the
BARBELITH
buoy when
the game
crashed and
embedded
the player."

Mister Six accesses the supercontext before rotating back into place in 1999, where he reveals that the Harlequinade are the secret head of the Invisibles.

The Invisibles prepare for the final battle in their own ways, Fanny returning to the depths of her youth in an effort to weave a glamour around London on their behalf.

In Westminster Abbey, Sir Miles prepares for the coronation of the Moonchild and the descent of the Archons, who have sent a replacement for Miss Dwyer in the form of John-A-Dreams. As parishioners arrive for the coronation, King Mob, hidden in the rafters, summons the Invisibles to action.

On December 22, 2012, Dane continues telling the story to Gaz, having worked his way through events up to the final raid on Westminster Abbey. Elsewhere, the Invisibles fight off an Archon attack as Robin activates the timesuit...



1.3 Mount Vesuvius is a volcano that most famously erupted in 79AD, burying the Greek city of Pompeii.

Note that Mister Six stands as Oppenheimer did on 2.2.2.2 and King Mob on 2.6.21.5.

1.4 Like King Mob on 2.6.21.5 Mister Six appears to be manipulating reality; bridging the interface between the real and fictional universes.

2.1 Ontology is a strain of metaphysics dealing with the nature of existence. Ontological shock in this case probably refers to an overload of information about the essence of being.

Note the snowflake effect, previously seen in issue 1.7 and later in issue 3.1.

2.6 Christmas is actually on a Tuesday in 2012.

This scene continues from 1.23.1.

3 This scene is a continuation of 2.6.16.

3.7 The Invisible cell of 2012 has mastered the 64-letter alphabet.

A memeplex is a collection of memes, or ideas.

4.2 Life as a game is a recurring theme.

5 The building is the seat of UK power, the Houses of Parliament.

Note the poster from 3.10.21.4 and Fanny taking Mason's role from 2.16.22.

6.2 Note that the flag is in reverse colors, a *Ja* King Mob's shirt in the second half of Volume 2, the cover to 2.17 and the flag on 3.9.22.

7.1 The symbol on the flag was originally a swastika, censored by Vertigo for final publication.

7.2 The return of John-A-Dreams, and the first time he appears contemporaneous to the story.

7.3 *Sabaoth* is the Hebrew plural form for "host" or "army." In the Catholic belief system, it generally refers to angels.

7.4 Guy's Hospital is a real UK hospital, located near London Bridge. It was founded by Sir Thomas Guy (d.1724), opening in 1726 after his death.

8.2 For those wondering how an image of a toilet wound up in an illuminated manuscript, it's obvious from the scissors and glue that Helga is creating her own version of the text. This of course is another instance of the interplay between fiction and reality, and the magical ability to write one's

GRANT MORRISON ON THE ARTIST'S JAM ISSUES

Does the confluence of artists in these final issues adequately convey your original intent? Many fans found them confusing or unsatisfying.

The last three but one were all jams. Initially the idea was to do that, because I wanted everyone who'd ever worked on the series to come back and do a bit. At the end the structure of it, which is a reiterating spiral, I didn't get mad because I'd crammed too much in it – that's the point. The spiral gets tighter and tighter, so the same gestures are repeating themselves faster and faster and the plot sort of starts to disintegrate. But it's all there. Everything's still there, it just gets smaller and smaller into a point.

The first one I thought was brilliant. It really, really worked, because it starts off and Ashley redid the action bit [originally seen in the future segments of 2.6], and the Philip Bond stuff. Everyone's work really meshed well. It was just a really great comic. And then the second one I didn't think worked as well, and the third one just seemed to be a bit of a disaster.

JILL THOMPSON ON RETURNING TO *THE INVISIBLES*

How did you land the assignment?

They approached me.

Your return to the series veers from your earlier work toward your newer, more signature lines.

Yeah, I was in the midst of working on *SCARY GODMOTHER* when I got that, and because it was just a few pages it was hard to consciously switch back to something else. Grant had mentioned that he really liked that style a lot, and he wished that I could do *THE INVISIBLES* that way.

It was weird, because when I'm drawing *SCARY GODMOTHER*, none of them are real people to me, so it's easy to draw Max the vampire with the big long neck and the billowy, skinny body, but you throw a bunch of piercings on him and he'd

1995

OCT *The Invisibles* leave for the US after battle at the House of Fun

1996

FALL *The Invisibles* regroup in New York; Robin new leader

1996

Kay takes photo of fractal cloud formation in New Mexico

probably make a really good King Mob. But I'd have a hard time drawing King Mob without more realistic features, so I did add some of that back.

Which scenes do you enjoy approaching as an artist?

I have to say I like conversational scenes. There's a certain kind of action I like better, but it's not my strongest point. I have to say my action in *SCARY GODMOTHER* is much more active than the action in *THE INVISIBLES* was.

Some of my favorite scenes are things that most people would consider boring. If a writer wrote something where in a different instance you may just get six panels of peoples' heads talking, I'm trying to move the camera around, trying to make it more interesting. Even though we're staying in the same room, try and use different angles. Make sure expression comes through in peoples' faces. That's one of the things I really pride myself on, really subtle moments. I love to make sure that I can tell the story without people having to read the captions.

PHILIP BOND ON COORDINATING THE ARTIST'S JAM

How did your relationship with Shelly affect the work [Philip and *INVISIBLES*' editor Shelly Roeberg are married]?

Actually I don't think it made much difference. I've always had a good relationship with Shelly as an editor, that just

own life script.

Both sides being the same is a recurring theme.

The "crinkly edges of complexity" are fractals, the edges of which contain the larger pattern within them and therefore appear "crinkly."

9.1 Winnie the Pooh is Christopher Robin's stuffed bear in AA Milne's (1882-1956) books, which were subsequently filmed as animated features and shorts by the Walt Disney company.

!Kung! is the language of the Kalahari bushmen of Africa. The ! represents a click of the tongue, as when making tick-tock sounds.

9.5 In the tarot, *The Lovers* signify love and sexuality, specifically a bridging of the distance between male and female. Which, if the cover of 3.2 is considered, is the key to an understanding of the universe.

10.1 UK to US: In the UK, A levels and O levels are tests signifying a level of academic achievement.

The text here seems to imply more how Fanny sees herself, rather than an actual caption (she's really 27 at this point) or personal ad (unless she advertised her services to aid the magick). This page has been the subject of much debate in fandom, but it's obvious from the following page that Fanny is weaving a magick glamour around London to aid the *Invisibles*' impending assault on Westminster Abbey.

11.1 Glamour has two meanings – beauty, or a magick spell or charm. Fanny would think she's been spreading both!

11.2 UK to US: A maisonette is a small apartment that generally has a separate entrance to the main building.

13.2 Note the black helicopters.

13.3 Thelernites are followers of Aleister Crowley.

13.4 *Strange Bedfellows* and its sequel are (probably fictional) porn films.

14.1 Automaker Ford Motors manufactured the Cortina family sedan in the UK beginning in 1962, continuing through the early 1970s.

14.4 *Compos mentis* is Latin for "of sound mind."

15.2 Compare with 3.6.20.5.

17.2 The Knights of the Round Table helped King Arthur on his various quests in the English myths.

17.4 *Onward Christian Soldiers* is a Christian hymn.

18.4 "All for one and one for all" is the motto of the three musketeers in Alexandre Dumas' (b. Dumas Davy de la Pailleterie, 1802-1870) 1844 novel *The Three Musketeers*.

18.5 This image is a parody of the three musketeers' action when saying "all for one and one for all." They use swords, however.

19.2 11 is significant number in the Crowley system of magick.

Quatermass is the blanket name for a series of BBC science fiction serials broadcast in the 1950s, subsequently remade as films by the Hammer studio. The serials detailed the adventures of Bernard Quatermass of British Rocket Group as he dealt with various alien invasions. Written by Nigel Kneale (b. 1923), the three hugely influential serials debuted with 1953's *The Quatermass Experiment*.

ON THE COVER

Tom O'Bedlam is on the cover but doesn't appear in the issue. There are four fours for issue four; the circle on the ground, Tom's fingers, the clover on his lapel and the issue number itself. The crinkled cover effect echoes Grant's earlier assertion that *THE INVISIBLES* is a disposable work, with issues to be thrown away after reading.

1997

Takashi Satoh discovers the key to time travel

1998

MAY Satan arrives in Dulce

1998

King Mob and Ragged Robin arrive in Philadelphia

22.1 A byblow is a child born out of wedlock.

went a step further. I don't get any special treatment or attention, so if it works it's no thanks to her.

On reflection, how do you feel the artist's jam issues worked? Why did you only contribute to one of the three?

As an artist I'm bound to find these jams interesting, but it works with what Grant's doing – it's not so much the storytelling, but the showcase of language and images that I find exciting. As far as my meager contribution, it was a matter of timing, I was already late on a HELLBLAZER story [the HELLBLAZER: BAD BLOOD limited series] so I couldn't do more. It's a privilege to be thought worthy enough to be squeezed in, though.

STEVE YEOWELL ON RETURNING TO *THE INVISIBLES*

What was it like to return with so much water under the bridge?

Pretty much the same as it had been returning at the end of Volume 1.

REX84: A CONSPIRACY FACT?

In 1984 US president Ronald Reagan is said to have signed the REX84 order, which gives the Federal Emergency Management Agency the authority to deputize the US military and National Guard for domestic law enforcement. Under the authority of REX84, FEMA allegedly established up to 600 concentration camps across the US for the incarceration of up to 21 million immigrants, African Americans and other "subversives."

Although it seems preposterous, dozens of these camps have been photographed, empty yet mysteriously guarded, making REX84 one of the most evidential conspiracy theories.

1998

JUN Takashi gives timesuit's liquid hard drive to US government

1998

JUN 1 Jack Frost, Lord Fanny and Boy arrive in Philadelphia

1998

JUN 4 Boy quits the Invisibles

Had you followed the series in the interim?

I read most of the first volume, parts of the second and the occasional issue of the third.

PN: *THE INVISIBLES* shifts into its climax in slow gear, and it's surprisingly appropriate. There's a nostalgic ambience to the final supper before the battle, and though the gang has been slowly losing members across the past year it's still touching to think we'll never see them again. Seeing the preparations for the coronation introduces a lovely mundanity to the villains which somehow brings the otherworldly menace down to Earth, and the low-key appearance of John-A-Dreams after all this time is a nice touch. The scattered artwork also works well in this issue, nicely illustrating the quantum psychology theme of the series. A pity it would imminently degenerate into an incomprehensible mess.

KCS: After Karmageddon, it's hard to believe that Grant could come up with something better, but he does. First off, the artistic scheme works wonders for the script, condensing the entire series in its final episodes, the whole contained within the smallest unit. It's rather genius and a damn shame it doesn't work in the next two issues. The images of Dane holding Gaz in the streets are tender. Dane is heroic and vulnerable, spending armageddon comforting (and finding comfort with) his old friend, recapitulating and waiting. The sudden appearance of John-A-Dreams is almost startling, even if half-expected, and with him comes the promise of many things explained. One gets the sense that loose ends are to be tied in the coming issues, as Grant begins to spell out the answers to the series' many questions. The final image of KM in his mask looking quite like the bastard mirror monster was a perfect sum-up of the issue, and the point Grant has been hammering home since the beginning: *We are all the same thing.*

1998

JUL The
Invisibles' second
Dulce infiltration

1998

JUL Timesuit
confiscated by US
government

1998

JUL Ragged Robin
activates new
timesuit; travels
to supercontext



"You just
gotta make
friends with
'em. Make
friends with
them until
they beg
for mercy."

APR 00

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Steve Yeowell *Art 1,2,4*

Rian Hughes *Art 3*

John Ridgway *Art 5-9*

Paul Johnson *Art 10*

Michael Lark *Art 11,12*

Jill Thompson *Art 13-17*

Chris Weston *Art 18-22*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Will Dennis *Assistant Editor*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM

GOODBYE RAG

The evening before the attack on Westminster Abbey, Dane and King Mob burn the time machine windmill. The next day, with everyone in position, Division X interrupt the coronation of the Moonchild and brandish the Hand of Glory. Crowley is cut down by Orlando, and Sir Miles orders the slaughter of the Abbey. Orlando kills Jack Flint, but not before he explains to Harper that they are all players experiencing the game in fictionsuits. Sir Miles discovers that the CIPHERMEN tanks have been sabotaged and he is without backup. He orders the coronation of the Moonchild as King Mob, Fanny and Jolly Roger emerge from hiding in a captive lot of homeless people. Fanny attacks Orlando as Roger is grabbed by an Archon. A stunned King Mob is taken aback to find Sir Miles training a gun on him...

After the attack, a critically wounded King Mob calls Jaqui in a delirious ramble.

CHRIS WESTON ON RETURNING TO *THE INVISIBLES*

Despite your work experience on the second volume, you returned to the series for the final storyline. Were they just casting a net for all the people who'd worked on the series previously?

Yeah, that's pretty much it. It's sort of like when the reunion comes, in the encore they wheel out everyone who had been involved in the production.

How did they coordinate the production?

God knows! I really don't know. I just got the script for my pages, plus the artwork of the artists who were on either side of me.

What did you think of the end result?

I don't think it worked at all. It was terrible. I thought it was only going to be for one issue, but they did it for like three. I think one would have been enough. If anything killed *THE INVISIBLES* in sales, it's the fact they had so many different artists on it. I think the final issues just compounded that, really. It just looked a mess.

Ooh, I'm being a bit controversial, aren't I?

The blind chessman...

Was he John-A-Dreams? I didn't quite understand that, in the final few ones. This is the confusion caused by too

ON THE COVER

An obvious 3 this time, plus the three members of the Harlequinade. Note the marijuana leaf on Pierrot's mask. Harlequin holds a toilet brush, an allusion to the cover of 2.7.

1999

JAN King Mob
ponders *Invisibles*
TV in India

1999

JAN 28 Division X
follows Miles
Delacourt on
surveillance

1999

MAY Edith
Manning visits
La Coste



2.1 Raudive EVP (electronic voice phenomenon) recordings are tapes of the ambient noise in haunted houses. When played at a high volume, strange voices are supposedly audible. Konstantin Raudive (d.1974), a student of Carl Jung (1875-1961), was a Latvian psychologist who expanded on earlier efforts to capture spirits on tape, eventually amassing a collection of more than 100,000 recordings. He wrote several books on the subject, beginning with the 1968 text *The Inaudible Becomes Audible*.

BT is UK telephone operator British Telecom.

2.3 See 2.5.14.2.

2.5 Rag, Tag and Bobtail are three puppet animals featured on the BBC children's television series *Watch With Mother* (1952-1980), the first series to specifically target preschool children.

3 A rag is a piece of music played in ragtime, a style of jazz notable for a syncopated rhythm in the melody, generally played on piano. The title also plays off the end of the Rag, Tag and Bobtail episodes of *Watch With Mother*, signifying a nostalgic return to early childhood, suggestive of the personality regression experienced by Jack Flint and the wounded King Mob.

5.2 The song is a slight misquote of the final verse of the Christian hymn *O Worship the King*, written in 1833 by Robert Grant (1779-1838) to accompany music by Johann Michael Haydn (1737-1806). It should read: "O tell of His might, O sing of His grace, whose robe is the light, whose canopy is space."

5.5 The conscious mind can hold only seven things, according to folk wisdom.

7.2 A clip from the recordings last seen on 3.12.16.5.

9.1 Where do all these people go?

10.1 "This is just a suit for experiencing 'The Invisibles.'" Life as fiction/game, a recurring theme. Note King Mob and Fanny in the foreground, in their homeless disguises (although on 16.5 King Mob is wearing his headdress).

Flint is a fiction suit, worn by John-A-Dreams. King Mob is a fiction suit worn by Grant Morrison.

10.2 Tom Hanks (b.1956) is an American actor best known for films such as 1994's *Forrest Gump*, in which a man accidentally blunders into meetings with several historical figures.

Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1974), generally known as LBJ, was president of the United States between 1963 and 1968 following the assassination of JFK.

Life as a film is a recurring theme.

Note Stuart Sutcliffe and John Lennon walking past the phone booth, a *la* issue 1.1.

10.3 The Tripping Darlings is a term used by Scottish minister Robert Kirk in *The Secret Commonwealth* (c.1690), a text on Gaelic folklore, referring to the faerie and the ancient propensity for referring to potentially dangerous beings by kindly names.

The Good People is another traditional name for the faerie.

10.3-10.4 The Harlequinade stroll past the phone booth.

10.5 "She was a girl from Birmingham" is from *Bodies*, a song by the Sex Pistols on their 1977 album *Never Mind the Bollocks*. The next line is, "She just had an abortion," perhaps a reference to the Moonchild or Quimper.

13.3 "The lord's my chauffeur." Bil Keane (b.1922), in his *Family Circus* (from 1960) newspaper comic strip, featured an episode in which one of the children returns from Sunday school and says, "Know what we learned in Bible class? The Lord is my chauffeur, I shall not walk." The actual line is, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

13.4 Gordonstoun, founded in 1934, is a public (private) school located in north Scotland.

20.5 Stephen Hawking (b.1942) is widely believed to be the world's foremost theoretical physicist in the fields of general relativity and black holes. The British scientist is best known for his 1988 book *A Brief History of Time*, which describes the nature of the universe in layman's terms.

Note that Helga carries her cut-and-paste grimoire from 3.4.8.

21.1 Lara Croft is the heroine of the *Tomb Raider* video games series and the 2001 Simon West (b.1961) film *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*.

21.4 "The king is dead, long live the king" is an English phrase of royal succession; each heir to the throne becomes king at the moment of the previous king's death.

22.1 At some point after 3.3.17.1 King Mob found the time to put on a shirt, apparently.

many artists on the final book. Too many cooks spoil the broth. This is where it suffers – you look and think, *He looks a bit like John-A-Dreams there*. Maybe that was deliberate – maybe Grant wrote: Make him look a bit like John-A-Dreams. It was quite hard to follow toward the end, I think. There were little things that annoyed me, like their clothes would change from page to page. I mean, they should have sat down and drawn a style guide and sent that out to all the artists. You know: *He is wearing this, this and this*. When I got my pages, I could take my pick of what I wanted them wearing, really.

An interesting experiment. I enjoyed the challenge of trying to do the best pages in it. That's why I did mine as a big double-page spread. I was definitely thinking, I'll blow the others away! I think John Ridgway ended up the man of the match, to be honest.

JILL THOMPSON ON CHAOS BEHIND THE SCENES

How did they handle continuity for that final storyline?

[Laughs.] They didn't. I was just given the pages I was supposed to draw, and I said, "Please send me some reference of what has gone before so I put these people in the correct position, or they're in the same building, for God's sake." Luckily a couple of my pages were just stand-alone pages where Fanny was out. No one else had to draw those series of scenes where she was before, because she was just here, there and everywhere. One of them I fell back to one of the first scenes I drew for all of THE INVISIBLES – I think that's why I was chosen for that, when all the Invisibles are out. It's a scene that comes right before or right after when Jack wants to drink champagne.

...and a few panels went back to the *Sheman* arc.

Yeah, with all the mirror stuff that comes out of Fanny.

Do you think the jam was a successful experiment?

I thought it was okay. I don't know.



STEVE YEOWELL ON COORDINATING THE FINAL STORYLINE

What sort of editorial coordination was there to handle the variety of artists?

I was sent the script for the entire issue that I would be contributing to, photocopies of those pages that had already been turned in (pencils if the pages hadn't yet been inked), and either photocopies or published copies of the three or four issues leading up to mine.

I faxed half-size breakdowns for approval by Shelly Roeberg. After any requested changes had been made and approved, I enlarged the breakdowns on a photocopier, light-boxed them over to DC board and completed the pencils. After the finished pencils were okayed, I inked them up.

What do you think of the jam effort on this storyline in hindsight?

As a reader I prefer to see an artist on a book for longer than the short runs that were used in the first volume, so speaking personally, I didn't find the "artist's jam" issues very satisfying.

PN: *A haunting issue troubled by an ill-advised mish-mash of artists who are clearly the worse for wear for not having a strong editorial hand ensuring internal consistency or even that artists are assigned appropriate sequences. (Why in the world would you kill off long-running characters under an artist with an expressionistic style associated neither with the characters nor the series? Any emotional impact is reduced to virtually nil.) Astonishingly, the worst is yet to come in this regard. John-A-Dreams frustrates, coming across as an Outer Church cipher rather than the man with a burning story to tell we expect him to be. But the Jacqui sequences resonate, and the cameos toward the end are nice. The splash page by Rian Hughes is wonderful, and special marks to Chris Weston for the great image of the Archons descending.*

1999

Edith Manning
dies in India

1999

AUG 10 King Mob
burns the time
machine windmill

1999

AUG 11 The
Invisibles hold a
last supper during
solar eclipse



GRANT MORRISON ON BILLY CHANG

From www.grant-morrison.com

Billy "Brilliant" Chang is both a higher-dimensional midwife occupying a timesuit and a real person. His fascinating story can be followed into *Dope Girls: The Birth of the British Drug Underground* by Marek Kohn.

KCS: *Goodbye Rag* isn't quite the follow-up I'd hoped for, but it has its high points. Ridgway's dark and dreary rendering of the church fits the mood quite nicely. John-A-Dreams makes the perfect foil to the fearful Sir Miles. He still dreads "modification," and there is John beside him, the product of it, robotic and terrible. It's a fabulous combination. Their dialogue on page seven is chilling and I felt a horrible pang for John, who seems at this point in the story to be horribly lost.

The other high point is Jill Thompson's art. Fanny bursting out of her disguise, spewing magic mirror on page 17 is a gorgeous image, as is the last panel on the same page. Jill Thompson has always had Fanny dead on. Equal praise goes to Chris Weston for the remarkable page 18; the four Archons are vaguely reminiscent of de Sade's libertines in *120 Days of Sod*. I guess the biggest let down is that not much actually happens. Sure, the Archons arrive and the Invisibles burst forth in all their glory, but I was impatient for the actual showdown, and resented having to wait another month. Damn monthlies!



1999

AUG 12 The Invisibles prevent the coronation of the Moonchild

2001

King Mob builds POP! gun

2001

MAY Dane recruits Reynard into the Invisibles

THE INVISIBLE KINGDOM

THE MOMENT OF THE BLITZ

May 00

Grant Morrison *Writer, Pencils* 22Steve Yeowell *Art* 1The Pander Bros. *Art* 2,3,6,7John Ridgway *Art* 4,5,10,11,15-17Cameron Stewart *Art* 8,9 *Inks* 22Ashley Wood *Art* 12-14Mark Buckingham *Art* 18,19Dean Ormston *Art* 20,21Daniel Vozzo *Colors*Digital Chameleon *Color Separations*Todd Klein *Letters*Shelly Roeberg *Editor*Brian Bolland *Cover*

"God bless

you, Audrey

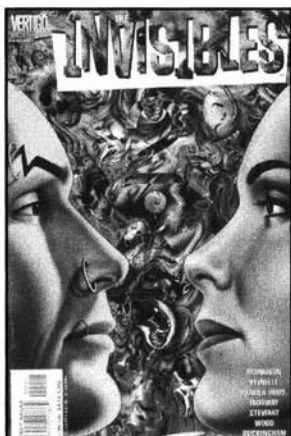
Murray. I

hope you

inherit

the Earth."

As chaos erupts in Westminster Abbey, Sir Miles shoots the Moonchild and then Jolly Roger, but not before the latter manages to zap him with a dart tipped with Key 23. A trap preset by the Invisibles spills hundreds of words across the Abbey floor, trapping Sir Miles. Fanny banishes Orlando back to Mictlan, and John-A-Dreams reveals that he had re-entered reality in a fictionsuit as Jack Flint. The magic mirror, he explains, is liquid space-time. Helga and Mister Six give Sir Miles a rope, with which he hangs himself.



1.1 Dane is narrating; he's telling the story to Gaz during the final moments in 2012.

1.3 Note Sir Miles' revolver. By page four, it's become an automatic.

2.2 According to the script, the hair in King Mob's headdress is laced with razor wire.

3 American artist Roy Lichtenstein (1923-1997) painted in the style of 1950s comics, replete with spot colors and sound effects. *Whaam!* is one of his most famous paintings.

Why is the Abbey suddenly empty?

The Pander Bros. are Arnold and Jacob Pander.

4.2 The Killing of the King is an alleged Masonic ritual, enacted in the assassination of JFK, who was shot three times. Kennedy's alleged assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald (1939-1963), is also said to have fired three shots, although acoustic analysis reveals four shots and popular theory holds that six bullets from various weapons were fired.

6.3 According to the script, Roger is trying to say, "Suck my clit, asshole." Her arms are in the same position as those of *The Magician*, which represents action from conscious awareness, or the creation of something from nothing, in most tarot decks. Note the papers on her arm: "Life" points downward (toward the ground/firmament e.g. our earthly existence) while "Tomorrow" points upward. This meshes with the series' cosmology (see the final issue).

7.3 "11:11 precisely. Totality." Or, in binary, completely switched on. Eleven is a special number for Thelemites.

8.1 "Last time" was 1.8.15.5.

8.5 "Flint was just a suit." John A-Dreams used the timesuit to return to our reality in several roles.

9.1 Artist Cameron Stewart on the defunct Nexus Internet board: "I had originally drawn this panel as a Jack Kirby scene of chaos, huge screaming face in the foreground, frenzied panic in the background, but was asked to change it to how it now appears, which in my opinion is a far more boring layout."

9.3 John has the converted eyes of the Outer Church.

9.4 Binary iteration is a process for making fractals.

10.2 Where do these people come from? The Abbey is empty on page three.

Meanwhile, Dane mentally forces off the Archons and enters the Moonchild's mirror, which takes him to the interface of the diseased Universe B, where he meets Satan. As they walk through the Outer Church, it slowly changes, and they eventually find themselves near the Invisible College. Dane understands that they are on the same circle. He then learns the secret of creation – that the universe is crystal growing in liquid information, a larval entity that only exists in our dimension because things can't grow without time. Humanity itself is a larval creature poised to advance to the next level on December 22, 2012. Dane also learns the true nature of the Harlequinade – they are in fact everyone who has ever lived, divorced from their limited individual personae.

After the battle, the authorities move in to clean up the Abbey, burying Jolly Roger's body in a mass grave. The surviving members of Division X reunite and agree to embark on new adventures, while Oscar returns to take the Hand of Glory back to Cell 23. Dane and Fanny decide to head to Rio and form a new Invisibles cell. Elsewhere, King Mob is found bleeding in a phone booth and taken to the hospital by Audrey Murray. When he recovers, he joins Helga. They decide to abandon their Invisibles identities and return to their original names, agreeing to continue the struggle in new ways for the next twelve years.

Two years later, Dane, now a teacher like Brian Malcolm before him, summons an unruly student after class to discuss her behavior. But rather than berate her, he produces a blank badge and asks her if she knows what it is...

On December 22, 2012, Dane tells Gaz the story of the Westminster Abbey battle as the supercontext begins to form around them.

GRANT MORRISON ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE ARTIST'S JAM

The third issue of *The Invisible Kingdom* is the key to the entire series, yet the jam only throws more confusion at the reader. Specifically, Ashley Wood ignores crucial stage directions in the panels where the cosmology of *THE INVISIBLES* is supposed to be explained. The sequence is rendered incomprehensible because he didn't adhere to the script.

2005

Recreational drug
Sky comes into
use

2005

Mason Lang's
processors
standard US
military issue

2005

Kay illicitly uses
ganzfeldt tank at
Berkeley to write
The Invisibles

Not at all. I mean, you just don't know what's been drawn there. I just saw it and thought, *Well, that doesn't look like much. I don't know if people will understand it.* And they didn't.

Some people did – I've read some people who just completely got it, but it was definitely not what I'd described, and it doesn't even suggest what I'd described. It would take a really keen understanding of everything else in the series to make sense of the three pages, and if you hadn't quite grasped all of the other things in the series, this issue should have explained them to you. But it doesn't in the slightest.

And again, there were a lot of production mistakes that were made there. For once it wasn't my fault. Draft dialogue got thrown up on the pages; the actual dialogue wasn't there.

John Ridgway made a similar blunder in the panel that was supposed to reveal the true secret of the Harlequinade (15.3).

We're supposed to be seeing everyone from the series rather than this cheesy fill-in effect here. It's like Dane is supposed to be multiplying into everyone we'd ever seen.

There's a lot more like that. The eclipse was supposed to be a *vescica pisces*, which is the Christian fish symbol extended into two interlocking circles, which to me was the model for the universe. He just draws a solar eclipse.

ON THE COVER

Two faces for issue two; King Mob and Helga. Also, a numeral 2 beneath the logo. The background/grail image contains artwork from previous covers.

2006

Kay becomes a student at Berkeley

2008

OCT 25 Mason Lang frees Kay from asylum

2009

Kay meets Takashi Satoh

11.1 *Regina Mundi*, Latin for "queen of the world," is a title used to refer to Mary of Nazareth, Jesus' mother in the Christian belief system.

Sabaoth is another name for God; it also refers to the armies of heaven. In the Gnostic belief system, only the evil god uses armies.

11.2 The Templars allegedly worshiped an idol called Baphomet, which took the form of either a black cat or head. Others believe Baphomet to be the source of all evil; Aleister Crowley took it as one of his names. One etymology of the name pins it on a commingling of two Greek words meaning "absorption into wisdom."

12 The next four pages differ greatly from the original scripts; as this is perhaps the key sequence in the entirety of *THE INVISIBLES*, script extracts are reprinted here with the kind permission of Grant Morrison.

This page was redrawn by Cameron Stewart for the *The Invisible Kingdom* trade paperback.

From the script: *The next few pages are probably the most important in the whole series – this is the grand unveiling that the readers have been waiting for since 1994. There's some pretty weird shit visuals here, so stretch. We're defining a whole new cosmology here, so let's really make it pretty.*

12.1 From the script: *Jack is walking with Satan – as seen in V.2:20 – through the devastated London of the Outer Church.*

12.3 From the script: *Jack [and] Satan walk across the dreadful wasteland past the girl with the baby. We follow them. Up ahead, there are huge grotesque Chris Weston bug-things glimpsed through a swirl of toxic mist. Beyond that, we see what could be towers like Westminster in the haze of the bleached horizon. This is a world of repeating horror, defoliated and bombed and roamed by the monsters of the Outer Church.*

12.5 From the script: *Jack and Satan walk under the hideous flea-monstrosities. Jack looks up at the horrors which really don't seem so horrible after all.*

13 This page was redrawn by Cameron Stewart for the *The Invisible Kingdom* trade paperback.

13.1 Anti-Maat would be a goddess of lies and injustice; Maat is the Egyptian goddess of truth and justice, presiding over souls in the underworld.

From the script: *Helga's face unfolds into biological horror – the unfolding of Kali, death and devastation, life and generation.*

13.2 From the script: *Jack and Satan. The great flea-things seen in background are reaching up to pluck fruit from luscious trees that grow here. Grass emerging from the cracks and ruin in the distance as the landscape subtly changes, flushing with life. Greenery begins to appear between the cracks.*

13.3 From the script: *Long shot following Jack and Satan towards the Invisible College, alive with lights in the wonderful twilight. Three figures wait ahead, silhouetted by the green light of an eerie floating circle. We've never seen the Invisible College from here before. We're behind it and there's a river with a bridge and the general ambience is of dreaming spires and scholarly evenings.*

13.4 Note the Harlequinade.

13.5 From the script: *Jack turns his head and we see the movement as a process through time, like a solid timelapse, bone merging to bone, the turning mouth like a yawning gash of teeth, the eyes repeated.*

14 This page was redrawn by Cameron Stewart for the *The Invisible Kingdom* trade paperback.

14.1 From the script: *With the head of the creature in the foreground, the time maggot that is Jack Frost stretches toward us. The actual illustration is misleading; see 3.1.19.1 for a better representation of the idea.*

14.2 From the script: *Pull back from the moment, Jack extends into the future also and the future is seen as a steaming amniotic information broth in which potential forms are curled in wait. Quite a different image is ultimately presented. Note the binary notation in the background.*

14.3 From the script: *And back in a great knotted life cast – the shapes we make in the surrounding space as we progress through time.*

14.4 From the script: *And back – a huge centipedal tree of time, human lives extended back – the whole thing glimpsed through the smoky red light of the seething crystal sphere in which the whole monstrous anemone of all life on Earth and all the failed branches ... a great timetrack expressed back to the mitochondrial roots. The true shapes of life on Earth. The spheres intersect and swallow one another like hungry sphincters, collapsing and whirling tunnel vortices across the structure of the time solid – the universe as a single entity.*

14.5 From the script: *And a final glimpse of the beyond – the time crystal itself with its great and monstrous coiled, twitching anemone of life is growing back into whirling electric-colored info-space. The crystal is attended by glowing silver blobs, metamorphic magic mirror entities of the 5th dimension – our true selves – the adult form of which we and all our ancestry are but the larva.*

15.2 Note Pierrot and Columbine as infinite worm-like views through infinity; this is what 3.2.14.1 should have looked like. Note the background of this panel and the next; Dane is supposed to be outside of time seeing everything at once, a recurring theme.

From the script: *The Harlequinade are still behind [Jack] but they've changed and are in their traditional costumes. Pierrot and Columbine make hand shapes. More images vibrate off them – Edith, Tom, Robin, King Mob...*

15.3 From the script: *Now they are the King in Yellow and his dwarves, making hand movements. Behind them, a whole crowd seethes – everyone who's ever appeared in the series... The Harlequinade is everyone.*

15.4 "Try to remember" is a recurring theme.

15.5 From the script: *Helga looks up off panel – a final word falls, dislodged by someone high in the vaulting. We can read "Murderer."*

16.1 Sir Miles is singing the Eton College Boating Song. Where is his moustache?

16.2 A rare uncensored swastika in the background.

16.4 The script specifies that six pages fall from Sir Miles' book. He's in the shape of the Hanged Man from the tarot, symbolizing death and rebirth.

16.5 According to the script, Helga is collecting Sir Miles' urine. It's unlikely he would actually do much more than break his leg jumping like that.

There's a controversy over whether or not the hanging of Sir Miles was censored.

Initially I'd had him hanging normally, which actually makes more sense. But then for some reason at the end I thought it had to be the actual Hanged Man [from the tarot].

PHIL JIMENEZ ON RETURNING TO *THE INVISIBLES*

Why didn't you return for Volume 3?

That's a really good question; I can't really remember. I was asked. I could have sworn I drew something. I honestly have no idea. I remember talking about what pages we would get, because I was going to get Jack explaining how the universe worked, and then it just never happened.

SEAN PHILLIPS ON MISSING THE ARTISTS' JAM

Why didn't you participate in the final jam arc?

I wasn't asked. I hadn't read an actual issue since Steve Yeowell stopped drawing it the first time. After that I just read the scripts. By the time the comic was printed, I'd flick through it but would hardly ever get around to reading them. I read very few comics nowadays, especially ones I've been involved with. After I've stopped drawing them, I find it very hard to just be a reader after being so involved. Sorry Grant, but it was just a job. *THE INVISIBLES* was Grant's baby. I was just there to help it along.

PN: *The art selection is abominable, with major plot points rendered unintelligible thanks to poor editorial coordination and some frankly unpublishable art. (Anyone figuring out that King Mob is slashing the soldier's faces with razorwire in his headdress on page two without the benefit of reading the script gets bonus points.) The Abbey alternates between empty and full, and Sir Miles can't seem to make his mind up about which pistol to use (or even how short to trim his moustache), not to mention the sabotage to the revelation of the*

KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

From www.grant-morrison.com

The final volume of *THE INVISIBLES* drips equally with Grail imagery and overt Arthurian references. It's an aspect of the story that's rarely commented on but the book included, among other things, my attempt to update and revitalize a number of >cough< "Archetypical Themes and Patterns" from the Grail romances and their weird Celtic precursors.

Harlequinade's identity. Absolutely unforgivable are the Ashley Wood pages, the climax of the entire series itself, in which virtually nothing in the script is illustrated (doubly maddening is the revelation that these pages were originally to be handled by Phil Jimenez). Indeed it's tempting to wonder if, in the spirit of chaos, Grant hadn't engineered to have this issue edited by a locked roomful of monkeys. But the final page is sublime, and the return of Audrey Murray and subsequent vindication of Gideon Starorzewski is deeply moving, a brilliant conclusion to the series as a whole. Who knew the best was right around the corner?

KCS: *I don't even know where to begin. Who are these Pander Bros. and why were they brought into a series they were never involved with to draw such important pages? The same can be said for Cameron Stewart and Ashley Wood. At least Stewart draws recognizable pictures for quality, publishable art. Wood's art should have been sent back. I can't think of a single excuse to print this issue the way it was. It's almost as if DC was intentionally sabotaging the series. Two extremely important sequences rendered meaningless by bad art. Part of an editor's job is to say, "Hey, this is unacceptable." Who cares if a book ships late? I paid my three bucks for this issue, for the culmination of the entire series, and I got shafted. I'm sure there are great moments here, but they're lost now.*

17.1 From the script: *The eclipse passes and for a moment the sun and moon cross one another in the shape of the vesica pisces.*

17.4 This panel recalls Nazi disposal of Jewish internment camp victims during the Holocaust. Note Jolly Roger in the foreground.

17.5 This is supposed to be King Mob, although the figure appears to have hair.

18.2 Harrod's is a famous department store located in Knightsbridge, London.

18.3 Note the quotation marks around the Hand of Glory.

18.4 Note Audrey Murray passing the cafe on the left.

18.5 "Nobody ever dies," according to Grant they get re-absorbed into the supercontext.

19.5 Though it isn't the same one, Tom left Dane a Tesco bag on 1.16.23 in a nice bit of symmetry.

20.1 Audrey's husband is Bobby Murray, killed by King Mob on 1.1.35 (revisited in issue 1.12). The police are looking for King Mob.

21.3 Life as film is a recurring theme.

Go Tell It on the Mountain is a Christian hymn, as well as an autobiographical 1953 novel by James Baldwin (1924-1987).

22.1 The person in the foreground wears the logo for the Nexus, a defunct real-world online collective of *INVISIBLES* fans.

22.2 This is the recruiting of Reynard. Her clothing, according to the script: *Straight Edge/Stepford wife/New Romantic/Early 80s Ladi Di/Blouse and Jodhpurs/Midwich Cuckoos/Cute handbag on table/Avon Lady/Straight Edge X on hand. Happy face Nazi armband. Badge: SEX DRINK DRUGS MEDIA.*

22.5 According to the script, Jack is wearing Sir Miles' Eton tie.

2012

Rogue swarm of nanomachines escape at Changi Airport

2012

DEC 22 Robin activates original timesuit; travels back in time

2012

DEC 22 Jack Frost with Gaz as he dies

"Our sentence

is up."

GLITTERDAMMERUNG

JUN 00

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Frank Quitely *Pencils*

John Stokes *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

In December 2012, Dane and former student Reynard break into the global headquarters of Technocult. He's not entirely surprised to find it secretly run by Gideon, who has developed a game called *The Invisibles*, delivered via inhalant can, in the hope of nonviolently transforming the world into Invisibles. Dane plays the game while, elsewhere, Robin and Takashi head for the timesuit launch. The supercontext approaches and Gideon finds himself moving through time, first watching Takashi die in the Archon attack on the timesuit, watching Edith meet the Harlequinade and then witnessing her miscarriage, and seeing Dane boiling the green glove. He then finds Fanny in the wreckage of the timesuit launch on December 22, and pulls her out of the room. The timesuit rotates into 2012, revealing itself to be the King-of-All-Tears. Gideon doses it with Key 64 and shoots it with a gun that spits out a flag reading: POP! The Archon vanishes, while in space, astronauts make physical contact with BARBELiTH, which crumbles away. Robin emerges from the supercontext to reunite with Gideon just moments before the falling snow of the supercontext coalesces, leaving reality a *tabula rasa*...

GRANT MORRISON ON THE END OF *THE INVISIBLES*

The third volume was supposed to count down to the millennium, but it got derailed somewhere along the way.

The countdown was actually Shelly's idea, and I just thought, *Oh, I'll do it*. I didn't care. It would have been funny in the end to end on number one. A lot of people bought it thinking it was a great new comic, and there were no more!

Everyone who worked on *THE INVISIBLES* had a very weird experience. It must have been so weird, because it was coming out of one person's experience. I think it must have been hard for the others to grasp.

[Frank Quitely's] great. Ragged Robin trailing off into time like that (3.1.19.1) is what it should have looked like, that's what Ashley Wood should have drawn (3.2.14.1).

ON THE COVER

A giant numeral 1 for the first issue. Continuing the Arthurian aspects of this volume, the arm with the gun is a pastiche of the Lady of the Lake, who held aloft the sword Excalibur in English mythology. Note the BARBELITH behind the gun. If you rotate the cover 90° counter-clockwise you can see tiny photographs of series' creators' faces hidden in the reeds.

Written on two blades of grass on the right is: "It's a cat on a bowling ball;" this refers to an issue of *Wizard* magazine that featured mock covers. A cover shot of a cat on a bowling ball licking its paw was labeled: The end of the world or just a cat on a bowling ball? with the accompanying caption reading: *INVISIBLES* (Vol. 3). Cover artist Brian Bolland is referring to the fact that it's not the end of the world.



1 Dane and his student Reynard from 3.2.22. They're climbing a massive video wall of Invisible Shae Fox in a nice bit of meta-reflection (reynard being French for "fox," the two being examples of the two divergent strands of Invisibilism by 2012). Reynard is narrating.

2 *Götterdämmerung* is an opera cycle by German composer Richard Wagner (1813-1883), about Ragnarok, the destruction of the world in a final battle between the gods and the forces of evil in Norse mythology. Wagner coined the term *gesamtkunstwerk* to describe the total unification of all art – a sort of supercontext?

2.1 Straight-edge is a punk movement stressing zero-tolerance for drugs and sex.

AI stands for artificial intelligence, a term for "thinking" computers.

Manichaeism refers to duality, primarily the battle of light (good) and dark (evil). The term takes its name from the third-century Persian scholar Manes (b.Shuriak, also known as Mani or Manichaeus; c.216-276), who taught dualistic philosophy as a new religion.

A memeplex is a collective group of ideas or skills, individually known as memes, that propagate better together than alone. In *THE INVISIBLES*, Grant coins the term *MeMePlex* to describe personality.

A context is the positioning of information relative to other pieces of information; the supercontext is probably *all* information presented at once without interrelation; or, the *one* piece of information that makes everything else make sense.

2.2 Note the Technocult poster in the background; Gideon's gig since quitting the Invisibles in 1999.

Turn-mo is a Tibetan yogi exercise to create "inner fire." Jack is heating Gaz, though in reality the aim is to turn negative emotion into positive force.

2.3 Lemming-brand shoes is a nice touch; lemmings are small mammals that follow each other blindly to the sea, where they generally drown.

2.4 UK to US: trainers = tennis shoes.

3 Note that this volume opens and closes with group shots of the Invisibles – despite the fact that they're not together as a team for the duration!

King Mob's shirt is a RAF target symbol twisted into a mobius strip, itself a kind of infinity symbol.

The balloons here foreshadow the supercontext.

2012

DEC 22 Takashi
Sato dies in
Archon assault

2012

DEC 22 Gideon
defeats the King-
of-All-Tears

2012

DEC 22 Advent of
the supercontext

4.1 The 1897 Bram Stoker (1847-1912) novel *Dracula* details a Transylvanian vampire loose in Victorian London. Dracula went on to become perhaps the most famous monster in Western culture.

4.2 The *X-Men* is a long-running comic book franchise published by Marvel Comics beginning in 1963. Created by Stan Lee (b.Stanley Lieber, 1922) and Jack Kirby (b.Jacob Kurtzberg, 1917-1994), it concerns the adventures of a group of genetic mutants who defend the same human societies that ostracize them for their super powers. Grant Morrison wrote the series *New X-Men* from May 2001.

Note the McDonald's logo on the moon on the top of this panel. PepsiCo. has threatened to project the Pepsi symbol on to the moon for years.

At the bottom of the panel, it appears as though the contact with BARBELITH is being televised.

4.4 "The Either/Or Millennium." Binaries again.

5.1 In Kundalini Yoga, the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, or Sahastrara Chakra, is the highest point of spiritual advancement, representing a union between the masculine Shiva and feminine Shakti powers (the foundation of reality, as seen on the cover of 3.2). *Thousand-Petalled Lotus 2* is probably a video game by Technocult replicating the experience.

Piezoeactive means activated by pressure.

5.2 Dane's wrong – Edith emailed her memoirs to King Mob on 3.5.1.4.

Mason must have died earlier the same year, if Robin's prediction that he controls the military industrial complex by 2012 is correct.

5.5 "The Church of Crow-Daddy," implies that Jim Crow established a Voodoo church at some point.

6.1 Note the Hand of Glory in a box on the right. King Mob must have retrieved it from Cell 23 (where it was returned in the previous issue).

Note the butterfly shadow on the ground – a butterfly is meant to be powering the quantum computer with the flap of its wings (also shown in the next panel) in a sublime reference to the butterfly effect.

6.2 It looks like Invisible TV actually gets off the ground; see 3.12.13.2.

6.4-6.6 King Mob as portrayed in each volume.

7.1 Magic Eye pictures were a brief fad in the mid-'90s; they consisted of a seemingly chaotic series of nonsense images that resolved into a picture if viewed from the correct perspective.

7.2 Transynthesis is the union of two things to form an all-new third.

Oreos are a snack from the Nabisco company, comprised of two chocolate cookies sandwiching a cream filling. If you need this note, God help you.

7.3 Note the cover of Volume 1 Issue 1 on the gas canister (although the logo has been misspelled). Reality as a game is a recurring theme.

7.4 Binary fractals.

7.5 "Extreme Impact Environmental Immersion Option" = EIEIO, the refrain from the children's song *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*, in which the singer "becomes" various farm animals.

8.1 Life as film, a recurring theme. If we're under continual surveillance, we are in a movie.

That final issue has the essence of the whole series in it.

And even then it just keeps condensing. "Our sentence is up" is the entire series again, but now it's reduced to just words. And then it goes right then in to "up," which is the actual word which is telling us what to do. And then it goes right in to the point, which is the universe collapsing completely, and we are liberated by a full stop.

Why does it take us 13 years to get from spotting BARBELITH emerge from the moon via satellite and actually sending astronauts to check it out?

The idea is that NASA just isn't up to it. They got there and they'd kind of examined it, but this is the first time they'd actually done anything. Fate, basically, is what had happened. The motion of touching BARBELITH is the minute the universe's seal is opened and the placenta disengages and we grow up. Or it's also the moment when the time machine is engaged, which allows people from the future to enter our space and allow us entry into the complete, whole future. Or it's the moment when the nanomachines go rogue and eat the Earth and intuit this atomic thing that's pure consciousness and can turn itself into anything. Or it's the moment when the game breaks. Or whatever.

IS ROBIN QUIMPER'S MOTHER?

"If I ever have a baby," says Ragged Robin on 3.1.11.4, "I'll call her Quimper." Another conundrum long debated by fans, but simple observation suggests that Robin is not Quimper's mother.

Most obviously, Quimper is male. But it also seems unlikely that normal biological functions continue in the supercontext; although Robin is pregnant in our reality one suspects that means nothing outside of time (where, after all, things can't grow). A much stronger case can be made that Quimper is actually John-A-Dreams.

It seems likely that Robin meant the gesture as a triumph over Quimper, a vindication of her experiences in much the same way Boy named her daughter Robin or Reynard chose hers.

FRANK QUITELY ON COMPLETING *THE INVISIBLES*

How did you get assigned to illustrate the all-important final issue?

I thought I never would. I first worked with Grant on FLEX MENTALLO, which I started in '94, then NEW TOYS, and then EARTH 2. Grant was always telling me how much he liked my work, and I had mentioned more than once that *THE INVISIBLES* was my favorite comic, so I had always been secretly crushed that he'd never asked me to draw an issue. I think he waited 'til halfway through Volume 3 before he did.

Had you been reading *THE INVISIBLES* previously?

Yes. I started out buying them, and at some point during the run DC put me on their comps list and I ended up getting them for nothing. So I read them – monthly, in order – as they came out, letter pages and all.

How did you approach completing a series that you weren't previously associated with?

I suppose I could have had all sorts of reservations about it because it was such a big deal to me, but it was the easiest, most enjoyable thing. I hadn't drawn any of the previous issues, but I felt associated with it the way anyone who reads it and gets really into it would. The fact that there had been so many different artists on it previously made it easier for me, because the readers were used to seeing the characters and settings depicted in a wide variety of styles.

What was it like working from Grant's script, which called for a lot of non-linear and abstract imagery?

It's a joy to work from any of Grant's scripts. I've had the pleasure of working on quite a few over the years. Getting a new script from Grant is like getting a big present with a bow on it, not like an Aunt Moira present, more like an Uncle Jimmy present (use two extremes from your own extended family and you'll know what I mean).

As for the non-linear and abstract – well, if Grant can imagine it, he can write it down; and if I can read it, I can draw it up. Which isn't to say that what you see on the page is what Grant saw in his head – there's always likely to be a bit of the Chinese whispers effect. But he's

Liber AL vel Legis (also known as *Liber CCXX* or *The Book of the Law*) is a 1904 Aleister Crowley text allegedly channeled into his mind from another intelligence, and Crowley's subsequent analysis and commentary. Its essence is summarized as "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law."

The Kabbalah is a collection of mystical teachings based on an esoteric interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures, focusing on the nature of reality.

Note BARBELITH on the right-hand screen, while the icon on the left screen is an allusion to Mason Lang's homeopathic software (liquid information).

A quark is one of two basic elements of matter.

Jesus as television star, unsurprisingly.

8.2 Of course you can play a can 5 times; 5 is a magick number.

8.3 Zion alternately refers to Jerusalem, Israel, any theocracy focused on the Christian god, and heaven.

Changi Airport is a real location in Singapore. It's interesting to speculate whether this rogue nanite swarm might not be the origin of magic mirror (it wouldn't be the first "multiple explanation" in the series). This nanite swarm is not the one that spurred Robin to wear the bracelet. The events were previously visited on 2.6.10.4.

8.4 Gideon may as well be talking about the series.

8.5 "I use the en-eh-mee" is a lyric from the Sex Pistols' song *Anarchy in the UK*.

9.6 Life as film again, a recurring theme.

10.1 This scene was last seen in 1.1.16.

10.2 This scene was last seen on 2.6.11; Robin appears to be watching the same soap opera.

10.3 Takashi and his wife echo the Lovers tarot card last seen on 3.4.9.5.

10.4 This is the aftermath of the Archon attack on the timesuit facility.

11.1 This scene was last seen on 2.20.21.

11.2 "Alphabet fish and spelling sharks in the deep neon fathoms of meaning. On Sky in deep therapy tanks in the basement at Berkeley. Kerry's in love with a Straight Edger boy. Says I'm sick behind the eyes and doesn't believe she's part of the story too. Am I sick?"

11.3 "Try to remember: It's only a game." A theme recurring so often King Mob quotes the series itself here. Note the quotation marks; King Mob knows it's a theme (which shouldn't come as a surprise as he knows he's in a comic book, too).

11.4 "I think I'm going mad, but feels like the best thing that ever happened to to. Happened to to to we."

Note that the panel is in the shape of *THE INVISIBLES*' logo.

12 Note the way the backgrounds change on this page. Time is shifting as events get closer together prior to the supercontext.

12.2 UK actor Christopher Lee (b.1922) is most famous for playing Dracula in several horror films. Gideon's referring to the 1974 James Bond film *The Man With the Golden Gun*, directed by Guy Hamilton (b.1922).

12.3 King Mob as seen from outside of time.

12.5 Note the scorpion inside the gun barrel; the return of "nice and smooth."

13.3 Athena is the Greek goddess of truth, wisdom, warfare and cities. She sprang fully formed from the forehead of her father, Zeus.

The destroyed lab was first shown in issue 2.6.

14.1 See 2.12.10.5 through 2.12.11.3.

14.2 A new segment of the scene on 2.10.11.

14.3 A continuation of the scene on 14.2 as Edith meets the Harlequinade. Note that she is standing in the New York hotel room where she first encounters them, which fades to St. Dunstan's-in-the-East on the left and Varanasi on the right. The confluence of these important points in Edith's life reinforces the theme that all time (and therefore space as well) is one.

14.4 This scene was previously described, but not shown, in 3.6.14.4-5. Note Dane in the background — everything happens at once, a recurring theme.

14.5 This scene was previously shown in 2.12.10. Note Dane's speech — Gideon is outside of time.

A person's hand is shaped like a claw when manipulating a computer mouse.

The Hand may manifest as a glove in the dream sequence because everyone can wear a glove.

15.3 After Dane and Reynard break into Technocult, Gideon goes to the time suit facility and meets up with Lord Fanny.

15.5 This scene was originally shown on 1.13.2.3.

15.6 This scene was originally shown on 1.13.22.4.

16.4-16.5 The King-of-All-Tears appears to actually be the timesuit. As with BARBELITH, it seems that encounters with the Archon are seen through a cultural lens (plants/timesuit/Archon).

17.1 Key 64 must be an improved version of Key 23 — the Archon believes that what he reads is real; thus King Mob killing him with the "pop" flag. A triumph of pacifism, the power of language and the new Gideon. Note also 2.12.10, in which an older Jack tells King Mob that "They'll ask you for a word, right? But the word's not a word. It's one of their words, man. If our words are circles, theirs are bubbles." To destroy a bubble, you *pop* it.

17.3 BARBELITH appears spherical here (the circle becomes a bubble).

17.5 When a woman is about to give birth her water breaks; something similar may be happening here as BARBELITH prepares humanity for its birth into the supercontext.

19.1 Now that time is collapsing into the supercontext, Gideon is reunited with Robin, who's been there since 2.21.21.

21.1 Bill Clinton (b.1946) was president of the United States from 1992 to 2000.

22.1 The white bubbles overwrite the present/past — creating a blank slate. That's how "everybody gets what they want."

22.4 Dane's statement has two meanings; it is both the end of humanity's imprisonment under current reality and mindset, and humanity's turn to speak (or formulate the "rules" of reality).

22.5 Language as reality in its ultimate form. The universe is collapsing into a single point, the statement directly affecting our reality.

pretty good at painting pictures with words, so it's always challenging and refreshing trying to translate them.

How do you approach translating a script to images?

Always the same. Read. Re-read. Re-re-read, if necessary. Thumbnail sketches in the margins of the script, spilling out onto other sheets of paper if need be. Find any reference, arrange thumbnails into page layouts, phone with any questions, or occasionally suggestions, and draw the pages.

Looking back, what do you think of the finished issue?

As with every thing I do, I like it and I think it works, but it's not as good as I'd have liked it to be. So, because I can't draw it again, I'll make the next thing I do even better. That's how it goes; that's how I feel about everything I do. It's a double-edged sword. It keeps me going, it's one of my main drives, but as a result I'm never completely satisfied with my own work.

What were your favorite characters to draw, and why? Were there any characters you would have liked to have drawn?

Jack and King Mob are probably my favorite main characters (that's me and Grant, of course — me being omnipotent and omniscient, Grant being bald), but I didn't have any favorites to draw. One of my favorite supporting characters is Orlando, but I'm so glad I didn't have to draw him, because I don't know how I would have got it to work without copying Jill Thompson's approach, which suited her style perfectly but probably wouldn't work as well with mine. For the life of me I can't think of a better way of depicting him.

I think of all the artists who worked on *THE INVISIBLES* — and some of them did really brilliant stuff — Jill's work is probably my favorite. Another real highlight in both art and story was Steve Parkhouse drawing the stand-alone *Best Man Falls*.

Some artists felt a connection to the series, while others said it was just another job. How did you see it?

There's a really deep connection for me. FLEX MENTALLO was a really personal project for me, and still a favorite; WEIRD WAR's my favorite short story I've worked on; JLA was a dream; and I've had the pleasure of working on ten brilliant NEW X MEN issues since.

But *THE INVISIBLES* has the added significance of being the last issue of what I personally consider to be the best comic ever. In some small way I'm a different, richer, and maybe better person for having done *THE INVISIBLES* (the whole thing), and I'm planning on doing it again.

PN: *After the appalling mess of The Invisible Kingdom, I came into Glitterdammerung expecting the worst. Who knew that Grant had saved the best for last, capping an innovative series with an innovative issue worthy of the three volumes that preceded it? Frank Quitely's art is breathtaking, completely suiting the strange new world of 2012 and the onrush of the supercontext. The script sparkles, wisely unspooling as a greatest hits reel with one eye firmly on the future. The Robin sequence in particular is inspired, explaining the nature of reality*

22.6 Note that the series ends with a blank panel (recall the blank page on 1.3.22).

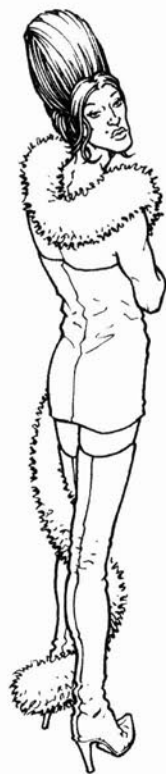
Note too that Dane is quoting – *THE INVISIBLES* actually ends with off-panel quotation marks, signifying the transition from the fictional universe of *THE INVISIBLES* to our own. Grant Morrison frequently describes the series as a narrative hypersigil – this is the point at which the spell extends into reality, the reader shifting from passive receptor to active participant.

EXPOSING SHAE FOX

One of the more enduring fan theories about *THE INVISIBLES* postulates that Reynard and Shae Fox are the same person. The theory hinges on the French/English translation of the word fox, but while the image of Reynard climbing a massive video wall of her own face appeals to one's poetic sensibilities, upon closer examination the theory doesn't hold up.

The most telling evidence is that Dane is surprised to discover that Gideon is behind the Shae Fox persona as part of his Technoccult activities, and Gideon and Reynard don't seem to recognize each other (he doesn't, for example, know the details of her initiation). Occam's Razor precludes the assumption of a byzantine double-agent with multiple secret identities, especially for a character who appears so briefly.

One possible explanation of Reynard's name choice might be a willful subversion of the "homeless hunters" urban legend, assuming the victim identity as a form of empowerment. With Reynard joining the *Invisible*s well after Sir Miles' defeat at Westminster Abbey, she could be delivering a post-modern "fuck you."



SO THAT WAS THE POINT ALL THE TIME!

From www.grant-morrison.com

I believe *THE INVISIBLES* to be a work of great emotional depths, but I realize most people tend to concentrate first on the surface glamour of the book, which is fine and pretty much as intended. Go back and read it again, concentrating not on the clothes, the guns, the sex and the philosophy, but on King Mob's attempt to get over the loss of his girlfriend and the death of his cats by turning himself into a pop god with a gun. Read it for Edith Manning's guilt, humor and unstoppable enthusiasm or most importantly, read it for the invisible backstory of Audrey Murray, the book's central character, and her refusal to let a shitty life turn her into a shitty person.

one last time for those who had yet to puzzle out the series. It's nice to see her used thematically.

But for all of the brilliance of the script, the glitter of the art and the nostalgia of seeing our favorite characters one last time, there remain some aspects that don't quite work. Reynard is a clever conceit in the previous issue, but here she works against the story slightly. It's now that the series needed the grounding it forsook after Volume 1. If the supercontext comes about because a high enough proportion of the population have ascended to the appropriate state of illumination, surely it would have been more direct to show us this by replacing Reynard with a housewife mother of three? And really, no room for a goodbye from Mister Six or Jim Crow? Hands down the best issue of the series.

KCS: *I was scared after last issue. Oh so scared, but then the heavenly Frank Quitely came down and saved me. Beautiful pencils aside, this issue, a bit difficult on the first read, is nevertheless the cherry on the sundae, so to speak. Grant's future world is dazzling and terrifying. He clearly put a lot of time and craft into this script. Seeing Boy again is a marvelous treat. I had tears in my eyes as BARBELiTH dissolved into space, and was delighted that Grant let Dane finish the book, once again giving us the skinny, just in case we missed the message along the way. It's clear as crystal, Grant. Thanks for the ride.*



"Gideon

Stargrave hits

the opening

credits at

lightspeed."

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES

SHORTS



HEXY

WINTER 95

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Duncan Fegredo *Art*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors*

Clem Robins *Letters*

Julie Rottenberg *Assistant Editor*

Stuart Moore *Editor*

Various *Cover*

"Christ!

Sometimes

it's a real

pain in the

neck being

an assassin."

King Mob finds a Voodoo doll of himself in an Invisibles mail drop and brings it to his dominatrix friend Joni for analysis. She tells him it's a hex; he must locate a defusing sigil before it's too late. While driving around in search of the random sigil, King Mob has an epiphany and returns to kill Joni. He realizes that her blood streaked on the wall is the defusing sigil. He leaves, safe, but not before strangling an MP availing himself of Joni's S&M services in order to offer a death in place of his own.



1.1 A fetish is a charm or other object believed to have magical power.

1.2 "The rest of my team are out of the country right now." As the Invisibles don't leave England until after 1.24, this issue cannot occur during Volume 1.

1.3 A hex is a sign or spell believed to bring bad luck.

3.1 The A34 is an English highway, technically spanning Winchester to Preston.

3.2 In 1939 Gerald Gardner claimed to be initiated by a coven of witches in England's New Forest. He subsequently wrote the *Book of Shadows*, regarded as the first how-to book of witchcraft. It has long been assumed that an ageing Aleister Crowley actually ghost-wrote the book, based on similarities in writing style.

6.3 Trefoil, vervain, St. John's Wort and dill are ingredients for a Wiccan protection spell.

GRANT MORRISON ON *THE INVISIBLES* INFLUENCES

Hexy is fairly difficult to fit into the series, because King Mob behaves completely differently to anything we see in *THE INVISIBLES*.

That one was more a kind of homage to the Gideon Stargrave Jerry Cornelius-style stories I used to do in *NEAR MYTHS*, which were eight pages. *And We're All Policemen* was an update of that idea. I'd gone back to the roots of the *NEAR MYTHS* stories, the Gideon Stargrave stories I'd done when I was 18. They were always eight pages in the back of little underground, black-and-white comics. *And We're All Policemen* I thought was a really good end. I loved it. It totally changed my head. I got a new way of thinking, a new way of working.

But the *Hexy* one is more just a straight-up kind of story like I used to do when I did my own comics based on Jerry Cornelius. It's a Jerry Cornelius story. It's even written like Michael Moorcock. The captions are in the style of Moorcock. It's weird. It's nothing like what you'd see in the book. Whoever drew that, the splash page is great, with the sex cards. What's his name? Duncan?

PN: *An intriguing five-page story (the sixth page is merely a credits-filled splash), Hexy presents a ruthless King Mob rarely seen in the series proper. It's nice to see King Mob actually inside the fetish subculture instead of just referencing it in his appearance. The linking of the S&M ads papering UK phone booths and the Conspiracy is clever,*

DATING *THE INVISIBLES*

For continuity buffs, *Hexy* must take place before the series proper begins. King Mob mentions that the rest of the Invisibles are out of the country, yet they're all present at various stages during Dane's initiation. The first volume's "present tense" is a solid line for King Mob, after which he travels to the US in extremely poor health. When KM leaves the States he abandons his guns, so it can't occur during or after the second volume. The final clue is the autumn description, which places *Hexy* in the fall of 1994, roughly six months before the series begins, in spring 1995.

SIGILIZING FICTION INTO REALITY

From www.grant-morrison.com

Sigils are actually great for meeting foxy chicks and hunky guys, but sometimes it *all goes wrong* as when I famously sigilized for someone who looked exactly like Brian Bolland's drawing of Ragged Robin on the cover of *INVISIBLES* 2.3 and shortly thereafter I found myself embroiled in a brief hell. If you're serious about effective love magick with the best possible chance of a favorable outcome ... sigilize for the person you *need*, and not the person you *want*.

ON THE COVER

Appropriately enough, *THE INVISIBLES* doesn't feature on the cover despite being the only new story in the collection.

and as with And We're All Policemen and the series' self-contained issues, the short length is a strength rather than a hindrance. But King Mob's casual murder of the innocent MP is jarring and unpalatable.

KCS: *Well, for not being a big fan of King Mob, I sure did enjoy this pre-series yarn. It's a bit rough and brutal, but that's the point. It was a shame that KM had to kill Joni, but at least it was in self-defense, unlike a lot of his kills. The execution of the soldier, while necessary in the context of the story, was carried out with a little too much glee, but this is King Mob we're talking about. Even so, I felt strangely sorry for him. The betrayal of a friend after all, is a horrible thing. Duncan Fegredo's art is perfect – fluid yet gritty. All in all, Hexy is a welcome addition to THE INVISIBLES.*

"I'm a
false icon!
The media
collaborate
in promoting
my superficial
lifestyle as
somehow
more valid,
more worthy
of attention
than your
real lives!"

AND WE'RE ALL POLICEMEN

1998

Grant Morrison *Writer*

Philip Bond *Pencils*

Glyn Dillon *Inks*

Daniel Vozzo *Colors and Separations*

Todd Klein *Letters*

Shelly Roeberg *Editor*

Brian Bolland *Cover*

Gideon Stargrave attends a party held by his multiply cloned sister Genevieve in Buckingham Palace to herald the dawn of a new aeon. Along the way, he experiments with pornoplasm, mulls his sister's new egg-child and tries to free his fans from the cult of celebrity.

GRANT MORRISON ON BUSTING CONTINUITY

You take King Mob out of the context of *THE INVISIBLES* in *And We're All Policemen*.

I wanted to do more of that. That was a big breakthrough for me. I did that story in 1997 when I felt the rave culture was dying, and I was trying to imagine what was coming next, and I pretty much got it right. I was thinking the children of the ecstasy generation have grown up brain damaged, and I was thinking of things getting more punky and nasty, and the humor getting blacker, which sort of worked out. With the flower power decade revisited during the '90s I saw the response to that being a return to the kind of angry, punky... You got things like new metal begin to emerge, and you got black humor like Chris Morris over here in Britain become really popular. I was kind of into that. That was King Mob in the supercontext, in the first moment of engulfment, when he creates his own universe and then dies at the end of the supercontext as the ultimate pop figure. Everyone's taken his picture, everyone on Earth has taken his picture. That actually takes place after the end of issue one even. It's kind of his death experience. I hope my own is similar!

PHILIP BOND ON JOINING *THE INVISIBLES*

How did you land the *WINTER'S EDGE* assignment, and by extension the Volume 3 assignment?

The *WINTER'S EDGE* strip came out of nowhere, really. I hadn't done much comics since *KILL YOUR BOYFRIEND*, a year before. I think I clicked with Grant as far as his pop sensibility goes, and I guess Shelly likes my work so I was always in line for something but my slow pace precluded me from the monthly books. Actually both Glyn and I are very slow workers so having us draw eight pages between us was, I think, Vertigo trying to coax us back into the fold. Glyn got frightened off, but I was in.

ON THE COVER

King Mob (dressed more like Mister Six!) and Ragged Robin join in a conga line of other Vertigo characters.



This story takes place immediately after 3.1, inside the supercontext.

An alternative text version of this story, narrated by Gideon, appears in the anthology *Disco 2000*, edited by Sarah Champion.

2 The full title of this story is *And We're All Policemen The 20th Century Died Yella Sex Dog Popism Girlism Boyism Nowism England Wakes The Awesome Toys*.

"For Lou and Shelly" refers to DC editors Lou Stathis and Shelly Roebeg. Stathis died of brain cancer on May 4, 1997, while Shelly was the current editor of *THE INVISIBLES*.

The script states that Gideon's gun is a "glass sound pistol" and calls for this page to look like a tarot card for *The Assassin*. Note that he's standing in front of a reversed British flag.

3.3 *The Stepford Wives* is a 1975 film by Bryan Forbes (b.1926 as John Theobald Clarke) about feminists who are transformed into submissive housewives.

Terminator 2 is James Cameron's (b.1954) sequel to *The Terminator* (and to engage in anal mode for a moment, the text incorrectly refers to it as *Terminator II*). The reference here is to the villainous T-1000, a robot composed of liquid metal able to morph into any shape.

3.4 The woman is supposed to be modeled after Saffron from the UK pop group Republica, but the hair coloring ruins the effect.

3.5 *Hamlet* is perhaps Shakespeare's most famous play, about an anguished prince. It probably would make a good ad for zit cream, actually.

4.3 Virtually none of the scripted characters are drawn here, including No. 6 from *The Prisoner*, Alex from *A Clockwork Orange*, Geri Halliwell, Peter Stringfellow, Diana Spencer and Alice from *Alice in Wonderland*. The naked guy with the glasses on the right is artist Philip Bond.

4.4 The figure on the right is supposed to be Carl Jung, although he looks more like Albert Einstein.

5.4 "Gaze upon my works, ye mighty, and despair!" A misquote from Shelley's poem *Ozymandias*. Shelley himself was last seen in 1.8.

6.1 In the *Bible*, three wise men from the east travel to present gifts to Jesus at his birth.

6.2 *The Village of the Damned* is a 1960 Wolf Rilla

(b.1920) film about mysterious alien children, based on John Wyndham's (1903-1969) novel *The Midwich Cuckoos*.

The Roc is a monster from the 1958 Nathan Juran (b.1907) film *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*.

6.3 Steven Spielberg's 1993 film *Jurassic Park*, based on the Michael Crichton (b.1942) novel, is about cloned dinosaurs running amok.

Beltane is celebrated on 1 May (or 15 May in Scotland) to herald the arrival of summer. It's also an important date for pagans.

6.4 An atavism is the reappearance of genetic material after generations of absence.

6.5 Eva Braun (1912-1945) was Hitler's mistress.

7.1 The image on the right television screen is a famous photograph from the Vietnam war.

7.2 Stoli is slang for Stolichnaya vodka.

The figure on the right is Keith Flint, lead singer for UK electronic group The Prodigy.

7.3 The giant woman is Gori Halliwell, better known as Ginger of the UK pop group Spice Girls. Gideon is referring to her in the caption box as well.

HAL-9000 is the homicidal computer in 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Mama is a song by the Spice Girls.

7.4 Chronos, last of the Titans, was the father of Zeus in Greek mythology. The Titans were a race of gods destroyed (and replaced) by Zeus. "Chronos" means "time," which destroys all things.

8.1 Life as a game, a recurring theme.

The figures beating the alien on the left are from Stanley Kubrick's film version of *A Clockwork Orange*.

Gideon's pornoplasm girl is supposed to be morphing into someone who looks more like Ragged Robin.

The script calls for No. 6 from *The Prisoner* to be chased by the Rover sphere, but this is not drawn.

The butler spraypainting is actually supposed to be an old woman, "a blue-rinsed Tory type" painting "F**k the Lord! Try suicide, let's be dead!"

8.2 *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987-1994) is a US science fiction television series, set 75 years after the original *Star Trek*. The holodeck is a room equipped to replicate any environment via solid holograms. Another illustration of the universe-as-hologram theory.

Thomas the Doubter was one of Jesus' apostles in the Christian mythology, so named because he refused to believe accounts of Christ's resurrection until he saw for himself.

8.3 Gideon's image of the end of the world is fairly similar to the supercontext seen in 3.1.

8.4 The script asks for this panel to look like the end of *O Lucky Man!*, with Gideon taking the Malcolm McDowell role, disappearing in an onslaught of flashbulbs.

You drew yourself into the WINTER'S EDGE story. What degree of background freedom did you have? And *We're All Policemen*, for example, is crammed with little stories appearing in the background of many panels. Were these scripted by Grant, or your creation?

With that story in particular it was pretty much all Grant. We probably couldn't get everything he wrote in there, so despite the creative freedom there just wasn't much room for anything extra.

PN: *The fractal that is THE INVISIBLES spins faster and smaller in this fiction-within-fiction piece that again finds the entirety of the series condensed into eight pages. A return to the Stargrave avatar of the first volume, And We're All Policemen is a delight, taking full advantage of its non-literal style to barrage the reader with concepts and situations. Philip Bond's art as always is a blast, especially suited to the dayglo dream nature of the story. Incidentally, why this was printed in the Counting to None trade paperback instead of its proper place after 3.1 is beyond me.*

KCS: *I've never been much of a fan of King Mob, and even less a fan of his Gideon Stargrave persona, so And We're All Policemen didn't do much for me. It's a relief to know that we all get our own version of paradise inside the supercontext. Seeing KM's version of paradise makes me like him even less. The art is great though. As always Philip Bond gives me a wacky cheshire grin all the way through. I wish he'd done much more of THE INVISIBLES than his brief stint on Volume 3. The one thing KM and I do agree on ... paradise is drawn by Philip Bond.*

"Dress
the
dandy,
dad!"

PAPER DOLLS

1999

Grant Morrison *writer*

Phil Jimenez *pencils*

Kevin Knowles *inks*

Daniel Vozzo *colors and separations*

Shelly Roeberg *editor*

Mike Allred *cover*

Not a story, but rather cut-out paper dolls of King Mob and Lord Fanny, "always ready to hurl battery acid on the innocent face of conformity." King Mob (in Union Jack briefs!) comes with mask, leather jacket, PVC pants and mod target t-shirt, as well as blond wig and purple velour suit for play as Gideon Stargrave. Fanny comes with six wigs, false tits and five outfits ranging from an evening gown to the down-home country attire seen in 2.1.

ON THE COVER



King Mob gazing out of a comic panel to watch the misadventures of other Vertigo characters. In the photography studio behind him are a pink dress and a pair of Union Jack briefs on a clothes line.

BARBELITH



Illustration by Chris Weston

TALKS ON *THE INVISIBLES* WITH

GRANT MORRISON

"They're
like Peter
Greenaway
movies.
You can
sit and
study
them all
week."

This book offers one (or more) possible interpretations of *THE INVISIBLES*; you've been pretty clear that there shouldn't be a definitive explanation of the series.

There actually are people who are doing definitive versions. The Barbelith board – there's a guy there who gets it, completely understands it. It's shocking to me; this guy's in my head. He understands every single aspect of what I was doing with it and kind of has it in context. There are people who actually understand what I was trying to do with it. It's there for people to interpret, even if they interpret it badly or accuse me of doing something wrong or they've just misinterpreted it, at least I've got their reaction.

A lot of it isn't even interpretation. A lot of it is just people assuming that something they've forgotten suddenly isn't there. It definitely is there, it's just a lot of people miss connections because there's so much in the book that it's kind of hard to keep everything [in your head].

How did you pitch the series to DC?

I'd done a couple of miniseries for them and was working on *KILL YOUR BOYFRIEND* and *THE MYSTERY PLAY*, and I suggested to

them that I wanted to come back and do a regular monthly book, but rather than use one of their characters I'd come up with this new thing, which was *THE INVISIBLES*. Part of it was the fact that I'd spent all the money, as well. I'd made my mark on *ARKHAM ASYLUM* and got quite rich off it, but I bought a house and I traveled around the world a few times and the money was gone. I decided I'd better do some work again. I'd actually done no work at all from '92 to '93, and I was just kind of assembling notes and traveling and kind of taking drugs and going a bit mad.

The first one was a pretty big seller and it got really good publicity; it was in all the papers. It was even questioned in the House of Commons because it was so anti-authoritarian supposedly. So it got out and did pretty good business, but by the time *Arcadia* came out people just couldn't handle it. I kind of perversely did it deliberately to see if they could handle it. I knew they couldn't, but I wanted to say, "Here's the philosophy behind this – if you can't take it, then tough." Most of them couldn't take it.

Yet they stuck with *SANDMAN*, which *Arcadia* is quite similar to in some ways. In *SANDMAN*, however, the philosophy would have been merely a background for the story, whereas in *THE INVISIBLES* the story is a background for the philosophy.

The primacy of ideas is what the series is about, really. Everything is dramatizing ideas. The spy story or the terrorist story in it is just a misdirection. It can engage your attention while the you're getting this other stuff pumped into you.

How much thought did you give to the way you portrayed gay characters? Fanny and Jolly Roger aren't exactly exploding any stereotypes.

I just based it on people I knew. I wanted to use those things. You could just as easily say, "King Mob's got bald hair and piercings, so he looks like every guy in an S&M club during the '90s." Yeah, that's the point. Those are the people I was meeting and they were like that. I did meet transvestites; they were like Fanny. The lesbians I met did have short hair and did talk like that and they drove vans with a bunch of them in there and they wore shorts and big old kicker boots. I was just drawing on people I knew.

It always annoyed me when people said they were stereotyped. People are stereotypes. I'm a stereotype; I fit the exact stereotype of an Aquarian, every inch of it. Stop fighting it. So what? I'd still be a real character if you put me in a comic.

You did.

Yeah, exactly. I can see why people would [complain]. If you're an individual in what's perceived to be a minority group you're more concerned about your individuality. In actual fact you don't look too fucking individual to anyone else. Get used to it. I don't look individual to a group of media boys. I look exactly like every other media guy in Glasgow, despite my attempts to be an individual. We are what we eat.

Entropy in the UK sees the series start to wear its influences on its sleeve, but it also sees the overt onset of magic around the book.

Well, I was getting more confident. I'd used magick. The first arc is about Jack learning about magick, and it's my ideas about magick, which was something I was interested in at the time, taking Situationist ideas and applying them to magick. So it was basically the notion of shamanically empowering your own town, because that's what a shaman would do. It's not about going to South America and taking [drugs]. It's a nice holiday, but a shaman is supposed to be walking his area. That's the point; you're supposed to do stuff. Because of the experience [in Kathmandu] I had a different view of what magick was. It just became more intrinsic – the comic became an act of magick rather than a comic about magick. There'd been many comics about magick before that, but I've done it. I touched on it in *KID ETERNITY*, but that was kind of to give it color, to make it more exotic. But *THE INVISIBLES* actually became an act of magick. I got so inexplicably drawn into it. It was roundabout that time; I think you can see me getting more enmeshed in the text from the time of *Sheman* onwards.

This was the time you had your illness...

That came afterward. The time leading up to it was really strange. There was a lot of weird experiments going on. From '92 onwards I got really involved in magick and really involved in drugs and really involved in weird sex. The whole thing is in there. *THE INVISIBLES* became about that. The transvestite stuff was me doing it, and going out like that to see what it was like, and then coming back and writing about it. It's not like I was fucking people or anything, but I wanted to be in that head. So I'd go and do that and be Lord Fanny for a night and come home and try to write that stuff. A lot of that was verbatim, so it's got a kind of creepy edge off it; you think, *This is something for real*.

After the virus storyline ends, the series relaunches with a new volume. Had that been the plan all along?

What I had in my head was Volume 1, and then Volume 2 was this vague area. I knew they were going to go to America, I knew some of the points.

There were always going to be three [volumes]. It was based on a lot of things – one of them was the Buddha's experience, so there's different extremes in it. The first one was going to be British, have that kind of questioning, intellectual, caption-laden quality of British comics of the time. The second one was an American adventure, so the violence goes up and the guns go up and the glamour goes up. That was always intended. The third one was going to be a global thing, which is a confusion of everything that's been, and pushed toward what might be. So I'd had it planned, and the first one always had to be the way it was going to be, but as the second one progressed it came to life. The actual series came to life. My life and the series became indistinguishable.

It was also my experiences. It's difficult to talk about *THE INVISIBLES* because it's fractal. We could go on forever and ever and ever. There's a story in there; there's also a critique of the story in there; there's also a biography in there; there's also

a critique of the biography; there's also an alien abduction being dissected by the person who thinks he's been abducted via the medium of the comic; there's a spell in there. There's so many things that could be talked about. There's also just me doing what was happening at the time. At that point I was spending a lot more time in America, so the series suddenly became about the American experience and about the glamour and the infection that America lives under, the infection of itself. I began to see that's what it was, and that's where *THE INVISIBLES* ends up. It begins with an action movie, and by the end the action movie's been cut into pieces and there's nothing left. It's the Tower. America's fallen at the end, Mason's house has fallen. I began to see America at the end of its century. Its hardest century, and it's about to collapse and decline the way Britain did over the last century. I saw the signs of it.

I realized that America controls itself and the world through the medium of light. That was a genius thing. The British empire used ships to conquer the world. But Americans thought if you create an image of yourself that's so seductive, regardless of whether it's true or not, everyone will want in. So they present an image of America that was '50s deluxe curtains, atomic families, beautiful cars. Everything was perfect. The Beaver, you know? Everybody was good: Velcro was good, the Army was good, everybody's your friend. Atoms are your friend.

But in actual fact the country was recovering from depressions. It was rap groups, your revolutionary movements, beatniks, drunks, drug abuse, racial tensions. And it continued, and those things erupted. And yet the films kept saying, "Hey look, Tom Hanks is in charge. Bruce Willis is here. America's intact."

In the amount of time I spent there I felt there was an America on the east coast, and it's one America. There's an America on the west coast that's a completely different America. Those two can almost talk, because they've got commerce in common. And somewhere in the middle is this entire void with lots of weird shit. There are people who don't even know there are other countries in the world. We would turn up for signings in the middle of places and it'd just be weird rednecks and always the one kid who was a goth. So he was pissy because he was this little guy who'd go down to the mall and get the shit kicked out of him every day because he was the one rebel in town. America's not what it pretends to be. Not where the wealth is, nor the land of Nike and success and those elements and certain parts of it. But it has sold that image completely through movies, and we've believed it, because we believe the movies. They seem real. People talk and emote and act in them, and they're all beautiful. America must be doing well; it must be the place to go to.

You can see it in America's scripted president, the way Bush initially focused on repealing change, Cheney's drive back to the atomic power glorified in the '50s.

They believe their own hypnosis. Those are guys that I believe can be hypnotized. [They're what] Ken Wilber would call blue thinkers, who live in a tribal, territorial mindset, when everyone else is moving on desperately trying to get to what Wilber calls the green mindset, which is an inclusive, global ... way of thinking. But, I mean, [Bush is] not even at that. So it's no surprise. He probably fell for all that stuff.

Not that he's a bad guy; I think he honestly believes that the dogma he's said is the truth, and that he is helping people by giving them more atomic power or by allowing corporations to cut down the rainforests which actually allow us to breathe.

It was interesting to see the official response to the western US power crisis in early 2001. The problem wasn't the American way of life, but rather too few power plants. Nobody in an official position ever stops to ask if this picture we're putting out about us is wrong.

And there's loads of ways to do it. There's people [in denial], which has always annoyed me, because being an Aquarian and a utopian sometimes you do feel like [telling them], "You're living on the fucking planet Earth. Be reasonable! Let us do this and everything will be fine. Stop arguing like it's some kids' argument." But you have to stop putting these guys in charge, because the only people who want power are people who think like children. Anyone who's smart doesn't want power. I don't want power.

It's in decline, but I think it'll be good. It'll be a shock to America's system, but I think they'll handle it. The thing is, Britain took 50 years to get over the empire, and then suddenly, "Oh, okay, we can have the Beatles and the Stones and psychedelia," and suddenly this country goes insane. America's in the same position. I said it again in *THE INVISIBLES*. I wondered why at the end of the '90s *SPAWN* was popular and Marilyn Manson was popular, and new metal and skate goth was so popular, because it's not over here and people don't care about that kind of stuff. But in America, where there's such conspicuous consumption and such obsession with glamour and beauty, why is there a shadow side that's so obsessed with death, decay, destruction, stress, fucked-up bodies and torn steel, misery, depression... 'Feel the love' stuff goes best over there. It's just college kids who moan, "Why have I never been poor?" They've been drinking their milk all their life. They've actually got nothing to complain about; the complaint is this vague, existential thing.

I linked it to the fact that over a hundred years ago the British were obsessed with séances, corpses, graves, Jeckyll & Hyde. It's actually the same thing: The country knows its soul is dying, and it becomes obsessed with energies of death and destruction, death and decay. Because it's over. Back then, the empire was finished but didn't want to admit it. But the fantasists knew it, and the people who were allowing the influences from outside into their heads were intuiting it and talking about it. The same thing is happening in America.

You'll get over your empire. It swept across the globe in a westward direction. It always ends up: These people take over the world, cause a lot of junk, don't know what to do, fall into decline, and then get into parties and fashion and pop music and so forth. That's what America's got to look forward to. In France there's just parties, fashion, pop music. In Britain there's just parties, fashion, pop music.

King Mob was your avatar – how did Jill Thompson deal with losing hers when you refashioned Ragged Robin as a fetish sex kitten for Volume 2?

That wasn't connected. It started out that King Mob was kind of drawn like me and had no hair – I'd had hair during the whole first series. I shaved it off for the second

series and kind of just became the character then. I put a bit of myself in the book and a bit about my life. So I like to have a fantasy character, and I was also thinking that Neil [Gaiman] had done pretty well by sticking himself in *THE SANDMAN*. He was getting a lot of interesting goth girls coming to him at conventions, and I thought, *That's cool. Maybe if I start that and become the character, people will come up and talk to me.* So there's a lot of thinking in there. But Jill obviously had drawn Ragged Robin as her, because we'd been in San Francisco together, and I'd said, "We'll do this character." I wanted her to be like Crazy Jane from *DOOM PATROL*. I'd kind of taken elements of that. Crazy Jane had been based on Patti Smith and on the schizophrenic multiple personality case, Trudi Chase. It was the kind of character I thought there was mileage in; it was a female character, which hadn't really been done before. So I found this way to get into it. A lot of people I knew were that type of girl, the long, really knotted hair and they wore a big floppy hat like Sylvia Plath would. As the series went on I realized the character wasn't working. It's because I'd identified King Mob and Ragged Robin too much as me and Jill, so I didn't want anything to happen to them. They weren't even getting any personalities, because I didn't want to do anything Jill might get upset with. Everyone said that, especially in the first one, they didn't know who that character was. The weird occult shit that surrounds it was suddenly technology in the bracelet that protects her from nanomachines. I thought, "Where'd she get that? Ragged Robin's from the future! Oh, of course!" Suddenly that was *THE INVISIBLES* there on a plate at the end of the first volume. There'd been no time machine in it at all up until the end of the first volume. I hadn't even planned for the time machine. I knew it was something to do with a time machine, but it wasn't Robin. It wasn't what happened in Volume 2. So suddenly she became a character and I thought, *Well, I have to allow her to live.* And I thought, *How did King Mob deal with stepping down as leader?* They have to breathe a bit and talk a bit and show us the characters. That's what the Invisibles do, which is change their personality every time. Whenever there's a new person in charge they change their personality, to become a new person or swap roles. I leveraged this from the fact that I saw it as Jill. So the character became this other person, drawn slightly differently, made to look a bit like whoever it was at the time, some actress – the one from *Starship Troopers*. I thought, *If we could make her look a bit more like that...* And [Brian] Bolland just caught it perfectly in that third cover, she's become this sort of sex kitten. I think Jill was a little, "They're having sex. Are you trying to get me?" Her husband was like, "What the fuck's this? He's shagging my wife by proxy!"

You've been accused of brushing off Boy instead of investing in the character.

I think Boy's a great character. A lot of people feel that I've neglected her, but she makes a decision in it. The rest of them go forward into just a kind of self-disintegrating pop overdrive. But Boy steps out and goes into the world again and brings back everything she's learned into the real world. She has a kid, and we see her when she's older. She's great, but she didn't fit anymore. She had nothing to do with what had to be said in the last book.

She goes through what King Mob goes through at the end of the third volume, when he leaves the Invisibles to found Technoccult.

He does it in a different way, a completely different way, but it's the same thing. I actually think she's a strong character. And again, she wrote her part in the story; she wrote her way out. There was nothing more to be said.

Phil Jimenez said he left the series because the scripts kept coming later and later, and Chris Weston said that he enjoyed working on the book upon reflection but that it wasn't any fun at the time. What was going on?

The comic and the life were the same thing. I was working really hard, and I was doing JLA as well. I was very late because I'd been sick. My friends were concerned about me. You find yourself six months behind deadline, always, so you can never catch up. I'd get up in the morning at nine, I'd work thirteen hours and then go to sleep and do it all again. And that was all that was happening. I'd get maybe a page to Phil one day, and then he'd get another page. It must have driven him mad. It drove Howard Porter mad on the Justice League book. But somewhere along the line we just created magic. I got into it and began to serve the magic. I couldn't write that way again – I wouldn't even want to. Things were coming out that were just outrageous concepts. Anything just to get it on the page, no matter how insane or what I might think of next. Just put it on the page because Phil's waiting for it.

Did that carry through to the third volume?

No, by Volume 3 it was starting to slow down, you can tell. But Volume 2 was just manic energy. That's why it's so great, and why so many people come into THE INVISIBLES via that and then kind of get dragged into the other stuff. It was just insane. It was the truest INVISIBLES. It was the most channeled. I didn't know what the fuck [was going on]. I'd just gobble some drugs and write THE INVISIBLES that day, and it was just whatever I felt like, whatever theory was going through my head. Because of that it works; it actually all hangs together and makes sense. I trusted the process; I trusted that THE INVISIBLES was this thing being downloaded through me and it had to come out. It didn't matter what state I was writing it in; I was writing it on drugs, I was writing it on painkillers, I was half asleep, I was sick with pain, and still it kept coming through.

Yet ironically the second volume is the most traditional – a fairly straightforward action comic.

I'm probably best when I just do that. The more I let the intellectual pretensions through, the work is poorer for it. I think it's better to run with it.

THE INVISIBLES is a spell to create Invisibles.

Yep. It was a lot of things. It was a very complicated spell. I worked on it while I was in New Zealand. I drew [a sigil] on my chest and held it in my hand and I jumped off a bridge. I did a bungee jump to power it, and then threw it in the water and wiped it off. It was very wide-ranging. Initially it was just supposed to change aspects of my life I wasn't happy with, which it did completely, in a frightening, dramatic way. And it was supposed to create links with people around the world that felt the same way but hadn't spoken at the time.

Back then it's hard to remember there was no *X Files*, there was no Internet. People weren't connected in that way. And through *THE INVISIBLES* I met Doug Rushkoff and Richard Metzger. All these people that were interested in the same stuff. And suddenly, from having lived in the *Planet of the Apes* you finally meet people you can talk to. You can spend time with your own kind and talking about stuff that you know because you've experienced it. People aren't going to laugh at it or misunderstand it. Everyone's there talking. What does it actually mean? What are the gaps that we all know are there but no one ever wants to talk about? And all of a sudden the world's got this crazy international community of brilliant minds that I've now got access to.

I also wanted it to invade the culture, because I didn't like it. It was boring. I felt that if you could invade the culture with energies that I like... You know, guys in Jerry Cornelius coats. And then bang! You get *Austin Powers*. You get *The Matrix*, which is all Gnostic stuff and insect machines from other dimensions.

Can we clear up how you feel about *The Matrix*?

The first time I saw it was in Melbourne. I saw it on acid with some friends. I just thought it was the greatest fucking movie I'd ever seen in my life. It was fantastic. But then I came back home and thought, *It was great, it's like this stuff*. But Mark Millar said, "It's so like this stuff. You should go back and read Volume 1 of *THE INVISIBLES* again." Then I got really kind of pissed off, because I saw how much had been lifted.

If you cut out every panel of *THE INVISIBLES* and arrange them in a new order you can practically storyboard *The Matrix*.

Yeah. It is that close. I don't think they could deny it. After the initial rage, when I really went through it plot point by plot point and image by image... The jumps from buildings, the magic mirror, the boy who's being inducted called the One, the black drones, the shades, the fetish. The Kung Fu as well. The dojo scene. The whole thing – the insect machines that in fact are from a higher dimension, which supposedly enslaved their own. The entire gnostic theme.

But then I began to think, *Well, wasn't that what the spell was supposed to do? Quit griping!* You see more of it in every Backstreet Boys video on MTV. Suddenly I felt my territory invaded. That was stuff that nobody had even been doing in comic books or in pop culture. It was always there in the underground, because that's where I'd come out of. But suddenly it was everywhere; you kind of feel that the gazelles have come to your watering hole and are drinking in your water. So for me it was the end of *THE INVISIBLES*; a kind of a farewell to that and trying to move forward into a different way of thinking, a different way of working. Because everybody was into psychedelia and drugs and other realities, the comic was becoming a set of clichés – you know, the group who opposed strange forces from other dimensions. The initiated ones who stand between us and the dark side. So many of these things started to crop up. *THE INVISIBLES* was on the set. People who were there have told me. Those guys are comic

fans. They were Vertigo fans in particular. The fact that they put Kung Fu and fetish and bald heads and sex all in the one movie...

Shifting gears, how did you get into magick?

When I was a kid. My uncle Billy was really into magick. My mum believed. So everybody was kind of a bit witchy. We had an amazing library. I got into mythology books first as a kid, and then magick. It just seemed bizarre and exciting. I read a lot of it. I was purely a reader until I was about nineteen; then I thought, *Well, these guys claim that if you do this, this will happen. If you follow these instructions in this recipe, you will get a demon, or you will get the god Mercury.* So I'd read all this stuff. I'd made up stories about superhero priests fighting the dark side and used these kind of things to color it. [I thought] it was a curio; they were just saying this because it was interesting. And then I tried an experiment and it worked. I made what seemed to be a contact with another intelligence. I was a nineteen-year-old boy; I'd never had a drink. I hadn't taken any drugs or done anything like this up until that point. I was shocked. I just began to experiment from there on in. I did more and more, and I guess that by the time I was doing *THE INVISIBLES* I was a really good practicing magician. *THE INVISIBLES* changed everything. The art and the magick and the work and everything else just became one thing. I stopped doing magick. It happens. It happens in a zen framework.

How much of the book's cosmology do you believe?

Pretty much all of it. I don't know if I believe it; it's just a good working model. It came to me in a series of intuitions and understandings and downloads. I trust it. I came up with my own stuff; it wasn't stuff I read in books. I read the books to get validation for what had happened. I found so much validation I'm fairly close to believing it. Enough that it's my personal religion, why I don't have the same fear of death I had, because I actually do think we're part of some hyper-dimensional entity about to be born.

Do you believe in the supercontext?

Well, the supercontext is where it gets born into. The supercontext is where I was taken in my alien abduction. That's what the larva is born into. It includes space and time, but space and time are only parts of it. The reason you have to grow the larva in space and time is because only in time do things grow. Our universe is actually a very simple fractal generated by a simple process, and it only has binaries in it. Humans can conceive beyond good and evil, and beyond duality, but yet we can't do it. The universe stops you. But in mathematical states people can actually go beyond duality. We know it exists; these things are there already, I think. They seem to be; it's just on another level. A fifth-dimensional consciousness. Outside the three dimensions of space and one of time you can look at it like an object, and that's where the babies are, just floating.

What happens when we die?

What happens when we die is we wake up through birth. Everyone dies simultaneously.

The timesuit takes Robin into the supercontext, where she is reunited with King Mob in 2012?

Yep.

The supercontext is where we all end up. Is it where we all come from as well? Is this what we are trying to remember?

You're right. That's how it would be from their perspective. From their perspective, we're individualized. It's kind of the Buddhist idea of when raindrops fall, they think of themselves as raindrops. Every one of them's [saying], "Oh my god! We're all raindrops! Isn't this amazing!" And the ocean goes, "Fuck!"

It was that feeling. That would be the feeling of the supercontext from our point of view, and for some people that dissolution into a higher absolute reality would mean ultimate terror. They would have to go through a phase of ultimate terror. Or for people who had prepared for it, they would be prepared for it like Buddhists are prepared for death, or the witch would be prepared for death, using whatever symbol system they had to to make it a pleasant experience or a horrific experience. The point of *THE INVISIBLES* was actually to try and break away, kind of sum it up and say you can have the unpleasant and pleasant experiences together, because the Outer Church will come for you. The Outer Church just represents the experience of existential horror at the fringes of the human personality. It's where we stop, where everything that is not-us starts to move in. It wants to erase our personalities, it wants to take over. It's stuff outside, and stuff we're afraid of. *THE INVISIBLES* is about embracing a higher reality, and the higher reality of the supercontext doesn't differentiate. In the higher reality of the supercontext, evil will be [present] as a necessary inoculation, which allows the developing larva to experience bad feelings and integrate them into itself.

I've come to the conclusion that the world is tested through activations. I've been influenced by Terrence McKenna's timewave theory. I saw these activations. I began to see that the Dark Ages was a kind of huge dark night of the soul for that period of history. But then the second World War was a much more condensed and compressed dark night of the soul for humanity at large. I think we keep going through these initiated experiences, which is the moon experience from the tarot card, which is good through darkness. Through the worst experience, actually the darkness is just some part of light. The two things define each other. Darkness and light are just things on a spectrum. Good and evil are on a spectrum, they're on a line. The supercontext is way out past that line. It and the spectrum are opposite existences, they're opposite ways of being. The all-engulfing sensation of becoming an adult in a higher dimension.

Do you believe in a literal supercontext?

My own experiences, my own actual apparent contacts with these things is utterly convincing. I can't prove it, and it would be insane to try to say that it's the truth, but as far as I'm concerned I'm completely convinced. I've no fears that this is what will happen when I die. I can contact these states before we die – magick is about

that, and meditation is about that. The dissolution of evil is where that state begins. If we can do that in our life, we're ready for it when we die. Imagine the experience of *I am not an individual, I am connected to everything, including every bug and every amoeba. I can feel their beating wings somewhere over there. I can feel my thousand eyes. Fuck, what am I?* For some, that's the nightmare of the Outer Church, the nightmare of the discarded timesuit. But actually it's just life. The timesuit is just all biological life, twisted, seen as an evolutionary line.

THE INVISIBLES is also concerned with conspiracy. Do you think government conspiracies are intentional, or the result of unconscious biases and influences?

I think it's everything. It's foolish to say all conspiracy theories are ridiculous. You have to face the fact that if you get a bunch of powerful people together in a room, they will conspire to keep power in whatever way that is necessary. They will conspire against us if we threaten that power. I conspire. Mark Millar and I conspire to write comics that we know will sell in two years, because we know what direction pop music will take, and what direction pop culture will take, so if we write this thing we know that's going to be successful. It tends to work that way. So of course people conspire.

But I don't believe in the kind of overarching super Illuminati lizard conspiracy like David Icke wrote. It's a beautiful, Biblical model of history, but it reeks to me of schizophrenia. I think there are conspiracies everywhere. But there are conspiracies against those conspiracies, and conspiracies within them. People are always trying to stab each other in the back, or help each other out to be helped out in the future.

The weakness of conspiracy theory is that human nature is to fuck up.

Yeah, of course! I said that in *THE INVISIBLES*, the idea that no matter how many surveillance cameras you put up, the guy in the surveillance screen room is jerking off. He's not watching; he's playing computer games and looking at some magazine or whatever it is he's doing. You don't have to worry about it. I think we live in a self-perfecting system and we just don't know it. Everything is fine. It's working perfectly; just let it correct itself, and do what you can to help it correct itself when you become aware of it.

Isn't that a justification for apathy?

It only looks like apathy. It's why Buddhist monks seem apathetic to us. I think it's because they've figured it out. But it's the kind of system that perfects itself. Even if you become apathetic, there's always someone else who'll come up who hasn't reached that stage yet and will do all of that. All those people who tie themselves to trees. They make people think about things they might not have thought about yet. Ultimately they change things. But they, too, will just go on to say okay, I did that, I tied myself to a tree, but even if I hadn't, the world would have produced someone who would have tied themselves to a tree. It always does. There's never a year when no policemen are born. There's never a year when no doctors are born. It's so obviously a system, and we can't see it because

we're so uptight of our individuality within it. To actually watch it correcting itself, learning from its mistakes... It learns long and hard, but it does it slowly but surely and works its way through what seem to me to be fairly obviously developmental stages. You can see civilizations move through it, and they slip back, but they always come back. Kids go through the same stages. Everything maps itself. It's so simple. It's one organism, and everything absolutely repeated, which is what the Hermetic axiom was: As above, so below. The gothic magical formula. Everything is part of it. It's a fractal. Every hologram, every bit of it contains the rest of it, which is why we can work magic. It's simple. We live in a very simple construction.

In the series, you use different religious and mythological models to talk about this, including the modern alien abduction mythology.

Well, I saw them all as the same thing. I'd also had this experience. The interesting thing is I drove the experience. I wanted it to happen all my life. When I was a kid I used to sit on the roof and check for flying saucers. Did it happen then? Does it work backwards in time? Was I interested back then because of what happened? Did I write about these things up until the event because I was getting shockwaves moving in all directions in time? Or did I make it happen because I wanted it? Who the fuck knows?

I went to Kathmandu and this thing just happened on the last day when we were there. I was with a friend. I'll describe it in another book, so I don't really want to go too much into it. [*Fortune Hotel*, edited by Sarah Campion, contains an account of the period around Grant's abduction experience.] But we were stalked. We were really out of our faces all the week, and obviously people will just say, "You were on drugs." I'd spent an entire ten years on drugs. I knew when I was tripping. A lot of people who don't take drugs assume that if you're on LSD the whole world is dancing around like an *Alice in Wonderland* cartoon. But it's not; what happens is the world around you takes on extra significance and extra symbolic meaning and potency. So generally, unless you're massively high, a car is still a car. It might look like the car of the gods or the car of the devil. A car is still a car, and you know what it is.

But this became something quite different. I wasn't on LSD, or DMT or mushrooms. It was Afghanistan hash, basically the kind of thing that would give you a dreamy afternoon in the sun in Kathmandu. We climbed Swayambunath, which is a British shrine. It's supposed to be one of the most holy places in the world. Any devotion performed here is 19 billion times more efficacious than anywhere. I thought, *That's a pretty good number!* There's a hundred, a thousand stairs there, I forget how many. If you climb them all at once you're promised enlightenment in this life. So me and my friend went over. We were into this stuff in the '90s, you know, ambient albums and smoking dope and just chilling out. Everybody was loosening up and getting more psychedelic because the culture was starting to get on. We went, just getting into the whole vibe of [UK techno group] The Shamen and all that kind of stuff. We did it. We ran up the stairs, no problem. So obviously something was primed for it to happen. I'd started *THE INVISIBLES*, I'd done the bungee jump. I'd kind of set in motion this thing. I'd begun to write

about people having initiations and alien abductions. THE INVISIBLES I guess, the whole thing is an initiation. It's an initiation for the readers, an initiation for the writer, for every character that's involved. And I'd had some little magical initiations from doing ritual magick all these years. Suddenly, this is like the real thing. On top of this roof garden, the whole reality skewed out. I was lying on a bed and these things appeared, which were kind of what [the magic mirror was] during the love-love-love sequence in THE INVISIBLES – you see two silver blobs interacting. These things came into the room and were kind of interpenetrating the substance of the room, moving in and out of it. They kind of said they were going to explain stuff to me.

I said, "What do you bloody want?"

And they said, "Well, where do you want to go?"

I said, "What are you talking about?"

They said, "We can take you anywhere in the universe. Where do you want to go?"

And I said, "Alpha Centauri." It was the first thing I could think of, as you would. Suddenly – I can't explain it – the room just collapsed, went in on itself. It was like *Stargate* stuff, really strange. Then it was like I was in real space, an actual experience of being in space. There were three suns, and this huge planetary surface that was blue and green. You could get stuff like that, I'm sure, on a really extreme mushroom trip. It was a very intense visualization, but I couldn't see anything else. The rest of the world wasn't getting in. They took me down to this planet, and lots of weird kind of stuff happened. They showed me these forms of life that looked like moving neon tubes.

And then I said, "What is this?"

And they said, "We're going to take you right out now. We're going to show you now. Get ready for this." And they took me off of space-time. I looked back, and I could see everything falling away, but it was like Shakespeare's just over there, and the dinosaurs are around the corner from him, but you can see them. I started to see it seething, and how it was interlinked and it was seeping in on itself. I don't know how to describe it. What it seemed to me was like being taken off the surface of three space dimensions and one time dimension. And then I was completely, "Of course!" Eureka! I was surrounded by these entities, which were like the blob-things. There were little bits coming off them, silvery kind of structures, and I was one of them, because I could see myself reflected in it. And suddenly everything was clear. It was amazing. I said, "Can we go back? Can we go back in?" I could see a nursery of universes. I said, "How do you do this? What is this?"

And they said, "We play in here." I was in some kind of huge, expansive space, and they moved through it the way you would imagine whales would move through the ocean. It seemed to be enclosed, but also infinite. You could see it was filled with lattices of light, and they said it was an information space. It was a medium of pure information they could get interactive with.

I tried to say, "What's that all about?" And they said, "Well, we play in there." They said next time I could be the mother and you could be the other person. There was also a baby, but they played in the baby and taught it stuff.

I'm trying to explain this. A lot of it I don't have; a lot of it was just what is in the comic and nothing more. They explained to me how you make one, and I detached a part of myself and kind of plugged it into this information space we were in, and it began to grow. And they said, "That's how you make a universe, and it's how you play in one."

And I said, "What?" The thing started to grow, and it completely surrounded me. And then there was this huge weight and BANG! I'm back in my body. This is a truncated version, it was a lot more detailed. I was completely shattered. I felt like I had actually been shown the structure of reality. I was utterly convinced.

Why you?

Because at the time I think everyone was getting it. I think why Terrence McKenna, whose experiences I then read? I got through and thought, *Fuck! Silvery beings from the fifth dimension!* I read every book on abductions I could get. I realized that these people were having the same thing, but interpreted differently. And then I read everything about shamanism, and I thought, well, the whole shamanic experience is that you're taken away and dissected and you're returned to Earth with a stone in your head. The exact same as an abduction experience. And I was looking at satanic abuse cases, and the fairy abductions of the seventeenth century, and they were all reporting the same thing. I think loads of people in the '90s, it seemed to be a really popular time for abduction. The alien icon started to appear everywhere. Something was going on. I don't think it was just me. I think it's why the culture started producing more psychedelic energy. Films like *The Matrix* and ads that looked like surrealist films. Something got in. I'm utterly sure something got in. I've read everything. I've read Philip K Dick, who had the same experience. His is almost even closer to mine. I think his and McKenna's are the ones I most resonate with. I don't know if it's aliens. I think they've always been with us, which leads me to think it might just be a human developmental potential is opening up, in the same way a kid gets to seven and suddenly understands perspective, whereas you cannot explain it to a kid of five, he doesn't have the structure to cope with it. Or explaining something to a kid who's flooded with hormones at 14 that you could easily explain to him when he was 13. We know there are different stages.

We know that babies go through different stages growing up. My current deconstructionist view is that it might just be a peek at a developmental stage, and a lot of people have been getting it recently, so it's becoming more popular. Maybe the drugs are helping, maybe the drugs are opening it, because the drugs seem to kind of facilitate a kind of superconducting thinking that is more inclusive.

I don't think it's aliens. Maybe there is. Maybe there is just other dimensions. That could be just as real. But in terms of your experiential thing on Earth, it

seems interesting to assume that it might be just the brain opening up. Is that our future fate?

A lot of the stuff we've been talking about, I keep getting it corroborated. I put it in *THE INVISIBLES* in Volume 3, the bit where King Mob discovers this article by Michael Grady. I'd just seen this in *New Scientist* that week. Michael Grady's this little left-field physicist who was taking it more seriously. He started to suggest that there was data to support that the universe is a crystal, time and space is a crystal growing out in an information fluid in five-dimensional space. I'm reading that and going, "Fuck!" Things were starting to get like that all the time on *THE INVISIBLES*. In *New Scientist* this week, there's an article about time travel. They said because they've learned to slow light down to a crawl, if they can put it in a tubular shape, apparently inside the tube, time becomes space. So you can walk into a tube and walk backwards in time. The interesting thing is this is why we're not getting visited by people in the future, because you can only come back to the point when the device is switched on.

If we accept that humanity is a developmental stage, what's the point of anything that happens now?

The point is to have fun and be very creative, it seems to me. If you get to be creative, it seems to be more and more fun. Being god if you want to. A lot of people don't have any fun, because [fun is an] imposition. I used to feel that way. Doing *THE INVISIBLES* is about taking all those conditions off, to even see them, to even notice that you've put these roles on.

Why are people so afraid of breaking down the conditions? Why do you think things like drugs are so demonized, even to the point of banning medicinal uses of things like marijuana?

They're frightened that the world might fall apart. But actually we might be cooler, we'd like each other better. The buses might not run on time, but so what? They don't run on time in Fiji or Barbados, and everybody seems pretty cool and happy.

But I think it threatens our dominant entertainment speed culture. As I've said in *Invisibles* letter columns, I'm always pointing out things that drive me mad. That coffee's tolerated in huge quantities. In fact, you must work on coffee. You should be taking this intense stimulant in the morning just after you've got up to enable you to work. It's safe to stock the shelves with stress packs and things to stop headaches. The whole culture's driven by sugar and speed and anything that will make people work faster and obey these ridiculous seventeenth century mill owner's time schedules. Why don't people work at night?

It's different outside the West. Thailand operates on 'Thai time,' which basically means things get done when things get done. Stress is a foreign concept.

That's what I saw in Fiji. I remember waiting for the bus, and people were just, "Oh, Fiji time." In Thailand – exactly the same. Just wait for the thing. Look at the sky. Inevitably the bus turns up. We need to break that... Clocks and schedules. Speed. I think the fear is that it will all fall apart. The schedules will fall apart if people smoke dope or take psychedelics. It hasn't stopped Alan Moore!

How do you combine ethics with magick? If *THE INVISIBLES* is a spell to create Invisibles, or open up peoples' thinking, how much does that interfere with free will?

I just don't believe in free will. I'm part of an organizing system, and I'll just do what I feel I've been impelled to do. Maybe I'm abdicating free will. Free will is just maximizing insanity. I remember Timothy Leary handing out acid, but whether that's socially good or not I don't know. To me, I think it is. It think it accelerates development. It causes problems in other areas, but the developmental acceleration always deals with the problems. I'm inclined to push it. I can't necessarily be trusted. I'm not Gandhi. I'm just a guy who writes stuff. What I think is that at least the stuff I'm pushing writes me out of it as any sort of figurehead or guru. If you look at the Barbelith board, most of them hate me. People don't want to be following any leader, and I think that's great. A lot of people just do their own thing. We should get rid of that feeling that there are leaders or gurus. I want to see other people doing their comics and inspiring me. I don't want to see people doing my comic back at me.

You do want people to pay attention, but what they should be paying attention to most is about this thing. Don't trust us; judge what you think. Try to experience it. It drives me mad if I talk to people about magic and they say, "Oh, that's absolute bullshit."

And I say, "If you honestly do this, you'll probably get an effect."

"Nah, I'm not doing that. It's just bullshit." Most people are still scared. It's just hangover from two thousand years of Judeo-Christian monolithic culture. Five hundred years ago they would have killed me for doing what I'm doing. It's why magic became so occult and so surrounded by ritual and symbol. It should actually be stripped back to what it is; it's a basic imagination technology. I don't know how it works, but it seems to work. There's something to do with recognizing the similarity in all the structures within the universe and working with the similarities to make things happen. The world has done enough of it to prove it works. But try telling people. All you're saying is do it and see what happens. If you're poor, use magick and get rich; see what happens. You might hate being rich.

Have you had any scary experiences with magick?

Yeah, I've had terrible experiences. Part of my illness I think had to do with it. As Jill said, there was probably a big kickback of energy from the wankathon. At the same time, I was doing some deals with scorpion *loa*, the ones from the Jim Crow story, and it really got out of hand. I think part of my sickness was being stung by contact with these energies, or whatever they were, and that was really freaky. There were things that will never be described until I write it as an autobiography, but really strange events. Insectile, sick encounters. There's a lot of bad stuff. I always went for the edge. I thought if you were going to summon anything up, make it one of Lovecraft's monsters and then deal with it. It was a way of training the imagination. All monsters can be defeated if you figure out how. Doing stuff like JLA taught me a lot about magick. I use superheroes in

magick, because superheroes always win. So if you conjure something or encounter something out of hand, bring in Superman and say, "Hey man, there's the problem. How do we defeat it?" The superheroes work it out. That's all they exist for, to defeat enemies. I find that it's a good symbolic system to use in magick, because they can always find the thing's weakness, talk it down or trick it or do anything. They're there, whether they're just forces from your own unconscious, because they're really scary, personalized nightmare figures or sensations of bad feelings – the worst day on Earth.

Do you believe things like the scorpion loa are independent entities out there in the universe or manifestations of ourselves?

Well, the story with them is I was interested in Voodoo. I wanted to bring in the Jim Crow character and I wanted to be honest about Voodoo. So I thought, *Well, I better try this and see what this feels like*. I knew it was quite savage; Voodoo is bloody and kind of primitive and it doesn't give a fuck. These are brutal gods. They have their artistic, clever, funny, weird sides, but they're pretty brutal, let's face it. I wasn't into the blood thing. I just contacted them. I didn't even know what I was trying to deal with, but they came through as these scorpion things. They were trying to teach me psychic martial arts. It's in *THE INVISIBLES* as King Mob learns to rip off people's auras. They were trying to say, "We'll show you how to rip off a human aura. That leaves them completely unprotected against astral forces, and then you can destroy them." It was bad. I felt, "This is really bad. It was bad, bad stuff that I don't want to know, and they're going to get angry." And you don't want to make these forces angry. They insisted that I get a tattoo of a scorpion at the base of my spine. I dealt with them later on, because I used Jim Crow. Once I was thinking about how I could use the comic as magick, and use the figures in it as totems and allies, I began to work with the scorpions. But this initial encounter was really strange. I came out of it feeling quite sick, like something bad just happened and I shouldn't have dealt with it that way. I turned on the TV and it was *Howard the Duck*. I don't know if you've seen *Howard the Duck*, but these fucking scorpions come from another dimension and they looked almost exactly like what I'd seen. They were like scorpions with bodies upright at the front and a weird, almost human head. It was too much.

So then I got this book I'd been searching for by Michael Bertiaux, the *Voudon Gnostic Workbook*. I was reading through that, and it's one of the most bizarre, impossible, schizoid kind of reads. If you can persist with it, it's like reading JG Ballard or something. But I get to this whole thing where he's talking about the families that are attached to Guedhe, who's the death loa, who as a character seems to be pretty interesting and decent. But there are some really sinister ones, kind of the left-hand path. The zombie master, the really dark side, the unpleasant stuff. There are entire insect families of loa. And suddenly I'm reading about how there's a scorpion family, scorpion loa. Baron Zaraguin and his family, Ti-Zaraguin and the kids. They govern the base of the spine. And then it's all this other stuff, and, "This is how they might appear." And I said, "Oh, for fuck's sake!" After that I was sick. I was sick for a year and in hospital.

The deal I made later was to say to the scorpions, is I said, "What I'll do for you" – and this is the deal I usually make with spirits – "is I'll put you in the comic. I'll make you more real. People will believe in you. This gives you a context." I also did that with my illness. There's a bit in issue five of the countdown, the last year of THE INVISIBLES, where King Mob is talking about translating an illness into text as a method of defeating illness. And when I was dying of the *staphylococcus* infection, that's what I decided to do. I thought, "I'll write it into the text as a cosmic villain. I'll make you bigger if you spare my life. I will make you the biggest thing there is, the ultimate cosmic destroyer that's eating away the planet. I'll give you a huge significance if you let me go. Spare me and I'll make you a star!"

I made a shamanic bargain with the illness, with the animal, the actual spirit of the *staphylococcus* bug. It's one of the most lethal killers in the world, I later found out. I survived it. I feel that it's an ally.

Why didn't you want to die if you'd already seen the other side?

I was terrified. I just thought, "I've not done my shit yet. I've not finished THE INVISIBLES; I've not finished JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA." I knew it wasn't right. They told me that if I'd been taken in a day later I'd have been dead. So I was pretty far gone. I was hallucinating. I saw Jesus come in, and that's when I decided I didn't want to die. My mum was upstairs, she was cleaning the cats' boxes. This was the very last night of two weeks of fever. I'd been diagnosed wrong and there'd been a lot of very weird circumstances. Strange, interlocking events, like getting this other doctor, who diagnosed me instantly and got me in a hospital, which saved my life. The night before, I was lying there and this column of light came in the room. Bear in mind I'd been hallucinating, so I thought it was the greatest hallucination ever. Again, there's bits of it in THE INVISIBLES. And it was Christ. It was this Gnostic, kind of savage little brooding bastard. It started off with that thing that's in THE INVISIBLES: *I am not the God of your fathers. I am the hidden stone that breaks all hearts.* He went into this monologue and I was running in tears. It was the most beautiful thing I'd ever heard. I wish I'd had a tape recorder and got it all down. That happened, and he said, "You get this choice. You can use your work to spread the light, or you can die." And I thought, "No, I fancy staying on." THE INVISIBLES Volume 2 came out of that. How can you sell the light, whatever that is?

Is that why you brought Satan back into the story?

Yeah, I had to deal with it. I was having these experiences, and it all seemed to be part of THE INVISIBLES, or to color themes in THE INVISIBLES, or to feed back in. Everything became inextricable. It was a really strange thing. As I explained before, once I knew what was happening, I could make myself deal with it; I could have abduction experiences or anything. I decided to make King Mob have a really good time. I would meet these women who looked liked Ragged Robin all the time; it was really strange. And I would go out with them but terrible things would happen, and it was really wrong for me. It taught me a lot about using magick. The great tip about sex magick or love magick is always enchant for what you need rather than what you want, and you will do well. If

you do it for what you want, it's terrible. Writing him a good life led into stuff manifesting in my life. I realized what you could do with comics and magick. That's when I developed the idea of a hypersigil, which is an extended sigil that would actually involve your own life, and transform it as part of the work. You could write you into it and it would happen in your life.

I wrote the whole thing for King Mob in the last issue to see if I could do it, sell games and things. See if I could actually make it happen.

It makes sense. It works. People think, "Well, why has it been suppressed all these years?" And I say, "Well, because any time you mention it people laugh." Nobody wants to talk about it.

I think we're conditioned not to believe in anything. I didn't believe in magick until I actually tried a sigil, and it worked. Some guy decides to write a book, and suddenly the doors open up. Everybody he calls decides to talk with him. I wound up here in your home. It works.

It does. I've had all kinds of remarkable results from magick. I'm sure Jill told you the cat incident. I had a ginger cat in here. I cured him. He had cancer all through him. It was '97. It was a weird time. It was me coming out of my dark time, and *THE INVISIBLES* was about all that plague shit in '97. I just felt invulnerable after the abduction and surviving death. I'd gone really inflated and messianic at the time; I felt anything could happen. But that cat was dying. Someone taught me the spiritual healing method, the laying on of hands. I had light coming off my hands and everything. I loved the cat so much. We picked him up and the vet said, "We can't find any tumors at all," even though they'd diagnosed him the day before. And I was talking to Jill on the phone and she said, "It worked." Something is going on. We don't have a good model, we don't have things to explain it. So I'm always interested in the mad theories. Is there a fifth dimension? How would its energies emerge? How would we see things that happened? How would we interact?

Do you think that 3,000 years of government and religion have robbed people of the ability to think for themselves?

No, because we're doing it. Obviously not. Anyone who thinks for themselves just makes other people think for themselves probably. Again, I see it now as a development process. I'm quite convinced by the Ken Wilber model. I'm not a fan of structures or hierarchical setups, but he's got quite a beautiful structure for explaining developmental processes that seem to cover a lot of different systems. I like his scales and his structure, because things seem to work within them. It's probably a good little workbook for however many years we've got as at least a model to talk about certain things that may be happening. I think we're just passing through all the different stages we need to, the way a baby is born and it lives in this sort of maternal bliss state where everything is provided for. It's unindividuated. Everything is there for it. The universe exists for its pleasure, the garden of Eden we all longingly look back towards. Slowly as the child individuates, it begins to define itself as an individual, which is quite a shock. And individuals then begin to claim territory, because they want space in which they exist as individuals, and that's when the self/not-self boundary is

suddenly erected, which we have so much trouble getting by in our culture. We just progress through it, and cultures do as well. Territorial babies are the same as the great territorial empires. At first they want to tame chaos, because the chaos existed before. It was the baby state of the garden of Eden, where we were just all savages living off whatever we could eat. The world provided for us. If it rained it was for us; if there was lightning it was to scare us. That's the same in primitive cultures. Then you get to the rational stage of an adolescent beginning to define its own identity through ideas or through style, which corresponds to the rational enlightenment stage, where, "No, there is no magick. We stand for science and a new way of thinking." That in itself reaches limits. The limit of that lies again in boundaries, walls, ideological conflicts, existential terror. If the sovereign soul dies up there, then we die at this point. We have this fear, which is the existential movement. But beyond that there is actually non-existential selves, there is beyond self. I think these developmental stages probably work, and I think we should trust the process a bit more, but try to help the process. Once you're aware of these, you're doing everything you can to help it along.

When you talk about how long we have left, do you mean until 2012?

Well, it would be interesting. Obviously that's McKenna's date, which enchanted me, and also the end date for the Mayan calendar. I think McKenna was on to something. I think he's still on target. Things are developing as fast and as accelerated as he predicted. So he might be right. It'd be pretty cool if it were real.

THE INVISIBLES never hid its many influences: Philip K Dick, *Doctor Who*, Jason King, *The Prisoner*, *Illuminatus!* and so many more. What do you feel you've given back?

Basically my experience, in the same way that Philip K Dick used his experience. This is my version of it. It's always the same search for the Holy Grail. This is just another person in a new generation. I'm really aware of that. I think this is the same story that's been told constantly by what has always been seen as counterculture or rebel elements in culture at any given time. It's the story of struggle against overwhelming, crushing structure. About liberation, about freedom and creativity. Obviously a group of people are going to keep telling it. Romantics are going to keep telling it. I think it's my version of it. And given that there've been so many different versions, what if it's true? It's another voice that says what if this shit works? Just remember I've tried it and it worked, and here's how it worked for me.

I strained it through a filter of having grown up with those TV shows you mentioned, all those influences like the *Illuminatus!* and through my own life as someone who was into music and being in bands and meeting certain types of people and going to clubs. And through science fiction, which to me seems to make sense of the world. A Ballard, Moorcock kind of glossy, sexy sci-fi take on the world. It cheered me up in Thatcher's Britain to think of myself as Jerry Cornelius, to wear those clothes and be in a band. I found that you can actually cheer things up by pretending to be things. And the more I realized it worked I knew it was magick, as well. I think THE INVISIBLES gives that.

You can be anything. You can be King Mob; you can be Lord Fanny; you can be Jack Frost. You can actually assume these roles and test them out, test drive different human potentials but realize then that you, too, are only one of those potentials. It ends with these ideas about discarding the dualistic self and the MeMePlex, which is a sort of compound self, the multiple-personality self. If you go in to it they won't be mollified.

Mister Six is probably the best example of this in THE INVISIBLES.

I think he became the self-image in the book. As you know, I began to discard King Mob. I thought he was a better self-image for a man approaching his forties than King Mob was. I saw that and he became Jason King because it was cool. So I became Jason King as well, just to see what it's like. It works. He's a great one, because Jason King's a writer as well.

You play with that earlier with King Mob's Kirk Morrison books.

The Killing Moon is actually a book I wrote when I was 25. It was my first horror novel. It was about a werewolf. It was pretty good, but it was never published. I never finished it. It was about 100 pages shy of the end. It was one of those 700-page Stephen King things. There were a lot of good ideas in it.

Were you consciously trying to push the envelope with the sex and violence in Volume 2 or did it develop organically?

It was there. I started it off with the cunnilingus sequence because I thought we hadn't seen enough of that. I was getting sick of Howard Chaykin showing a blow job as much as a left hand. We never really got that. I just wanted to extend King Mob into that sex god area, and also I was playing with that stuff in my life. I was trying to live the James Bond life and do all that and see what it was like, and it was kind of strange for me. I wanted to do what I was seeing in the movies and then push it, because you could push it in comics and then critique it completely.

When you finally get to the autocritique, the Situationist attack on the Invisibles, exposing its hidden racist or establishment agenda, it turns out they do serve the status quo. It's just a bunch of guys dressed up in a stereotyped image rebellion. Lord Fanny means nothing. To show again you mean something if you decide to mean something, if you choose to mean something. But the critique is still there, it's still sound. The anarchist figure, the hero, is just a projection, which stops us from being heroic in our own life.

Phil Jimenez said there were words you couldn't say. You couldn't say "orgasm."

I never knew that. No, that's not true. He made that up! Maybe he's not allowed to have an orgasm. It's a comic. We can say anything. I was never stopped from saying anything, except "cunt" or using the names of public figures, which became a real fight in the end. They were starting to black them out in the text. That wasn't any kind of post-modern kind of trope. That was me actually being edited out.

Spin offs? Is the world ready for a DIVISION X miniseries?

I've thought about all these things, but I don't know if I shouldn't let them lie. I want to do a King Mob thing.

How much of the second de Sade story came out of your experiences with Reichian therapy?

All of it. I just began to understand it. For me at least, and it seems to be echoed in a lot of other things I've read, the only way through was through the shit. You have to deal with the worst aspects of yourself constantly. You have to work with the ugliest sex fantasies or the ugliest fantasies of violence and revenge, the way that you can think about other people, and the things you do to yourself. It's a scouring perspective. That's what it was about. I thought people had to go through that. An initiation, confrontation of the dark side, dreams and the chaotic side. It was absorbing more of that, integrating more of that into the comic as psychotherapy. It was an upgrade for me, taking on ideas that were so appalling and turning them into poetry. Part of what I'm doing in *THE FILTH* has to do with that. I thought I'd trawl through Internet porn, and I thought, *That's real social history stuff*. Assaults on everything we hold dear, that's what porn's about. That's society's toilet, that's where the shit's getting flushed away. And I saw all this stuff you could work with, and turn it into poetry. Make people laugh at the things that terrify them, or things that become nightmarish or taboo.

You've said you think Volume 2 is the purist form of THE INVISIBLES.

I think so. It's just the sexiest, you know? Phil was brilliant in the face of adversity, and Chris was great. When he did it, it was starting to corrupt. So his more biological renderings were perfect for the energies of the fragment of the super-context embedded in this underground city. It was incredible. All that weird biological stuff, the timesuit. That was great. Chris was getting to the point where the whole thing was disintegrating. King Mob's having a nervous breakdown, kicking down doors and running nowhere.

I was at the end of my tether. What was this series about? What am I getting to? And every time, it would break open again, give me some new idea, new insight. And still, I don't have that same intensity doing the things that I do.

You've addressed this already, but a lot of people think that Ragged Robin is Crazy Jane from DOOM PATROL.

Well, she is. She's *THE INVISIBLES'* universe version of Kay Challis, who is, in the DC universe, Crazy Jane. It is part of the whole DC Hypertime. I like to link everything up. I felt ecstatic when I had the brainwave of making King Mob Gideon Stargrave, and linking my very first teenage work with the work I was doing at the time. It was just a way of tying everything in. There's loads of references to everything else I've done in *THE INVISIBLES*; there's characters who appear that might have appeared in other things, and *BARBELiTH* appears in a story way back in a comic called *A1*. There's lots of little links to everything. I tried

to deliberately do that, because it was a summing up of everything I'd done in the past, as well as the thing it was on its own.

How much were the characters changed from your initial ideas for the series and the first issue?

Quite a lot. Robin was originally called Raggedy Ann, which fit the makeup better, obviously, and presented these doll-like qualities. I always knew that was there. I wanted her to be a bit more rounded as a woman; she could also incorporate elements of weakness. Comic guys are afraid, they're always trying so hard to make strong women. I wanted her to be dodgy sex fantasies, or she could be weak as well as strong. She could get things wrong. I wanted to give her a bit of scope. But I think Raggedy Ann would have made as good a name. To be honest, Ragged Robin was just something I found in *Brewer's*, where I found most of the names. I just thought, *What am I going to do now? I can't do this doll-like Raggedy Ann thing.* I found that in the seventeenth century these young women were called Ragged Robin if they painted their faces and wore their hair in plaits. It was a default, to be honest, but it grew to suit her more in the end. What is Robin – a boy's name? Is it a girl's name? And it has that comic book connection. I think it's a better name.

Did you deliberately link her makeup to the bureaucrats in *120 Days of Sod AI?*

Yeah, because she's a victim, as well. She's the pin of it all. Ragged Robin's a complex figure. I think that's why a lot of women like the character. There's a lot going on in there. A lot of people and a lot of personalities kind of fade into making the characters come to life. She was the lynch pin of it.

At the same time, she's the victim of the entire experiment. She's the one who gets put in the timesuit and sent back, and forced to endure stresses beyond any known human being. So she's always the victim. She chose to be the victim, as well. She processed being a victim into being the savior of the entire universe, in the same way that Fanny did.

It seems like the entire team has their moment as the savior of the universe aside from Boy.

Well, Boy is, too. She lets herself go into the cycle of life, which everyone seems to find difficult.

Did you put Fanny and Jack in *MARVEL BOY*?

It was actually the artist, but that is what they'd want to do. That was just a perfect synchronicity.

THE INVISIBLES is a story within a story...

The entire story is being told by Jack to Gaz. We see that early on. He's actually telling him everything the reader experiences. The reader is being Gaz as the story's being unfolded, who is the most wretched, most hopeless character, but yet dies in a glorious way.

And it's also being written by Robin. And it's also being written by Kirk Morrison, and Grant Morrison. There were people getting in touch with me.

There was a girl who sent me her own version of things, and that sort of fed into it. It'd all become alive. Her interpretation of *THE INVISIBLES* was, *What if Ragged Robin wrote the whole thing?* What if my readers hijacked the text? Because that's what I wanted them to do. What would it become under someone else's hands? The last issue stems from the point of view where *THE INVISIBLES* has become more culturally involved than it is just now, and people know about it or whatever. That's written for kids in 2012 who have rejected this entire culture.

Today we have *THE INVISIBLES* comic; in 2012 they have Shae Fox.

King Mob's behind that one as well. I'm getting into movies. There will probably be an *INVISIBLES* movie, and it will coincide just in time for a new little twist, with psychedelic kids. Globally aware kids from a giant Internet mind will suddenly understand that this mess is about them. It's programmed to do that. Issue one should actually be unwrapped and read on the actual moment of 2012 when it's supposed to occur. I think there'll be enough cultural references in there people will recognize based on the way things are going.

A lot of people missed the crucial return of Audrey Murray due to coloring discrepancies. How did you feel about the series' coloring, an aspect of comics usually underappreciated?

Most of it was okay. I kind of felt that Danny tended to favor a horribly muted palette. I'd rather the whole thing was Day-Glo all the way through. That didn't work, it wasn't set up to do it. I've known Danny for a long, long time. I'm happy with his work. But for me, obviously I see these things in three dimensions in living Technicolor. Any gettable color is never suitable. Bolland's covers got it, and that's about it. But the interiors tend to be painted in porridge.

How much input did you have on the covers?

Not a lot. I'd comment, but a lot of them he would just do on his own. I tended to leave him to his own devices on the last volume. The first one is like a Masonic nightmare of that series. Bolland's covers are brilliant. They're like Peter Greenaway movies. You can sit and study them all week.

***THE INVISIBLES* was notorious for its letter column.**

They were great. I hated it when they were stopped. I loved them. I had nothing to do with [their end]. I believe it was actually because the letters pages in *THE INVISIBLES*, and Garth Ennis' *PREACHER* and *TRANSMETROPOLITAN* by Warren Ellis were getting a bit out of control and talking about drugs. I actually think that's why they were stopped. It didn't have anything to do with space at all. We were saying too much. We were openly admitting to drug abuse and cannibalism and all kinds of other things. I thought *THE INVISIBLES'* really was the best.

Well they were supposed to be for mature readers...

"Supposed to be" is the key phrase. I think it was terrible when they did it. It completely undermined a lot of the connection I had with people. And it was part of the spell. I thought, *Okay, I'm going to really implicate myself in this comic. I'll tell people what's going on in my life and all kinds of stuff.* It got to the point there were people on the Barbelith board getting sick of what they perceived to be my fame. In actual fact they were just mistaking that kind of glamour I made around THE INVISIBLES as real life.

I think it's natural, especially with the kind of people I encourage. You want to say, "I don't have any masters, I'm my own man." Even though it's obvious you're influenced by everything. It's adolescent to deny your influences. At the same time, a true master learns from his pupils. I think it's fine. It keeps me humble. Rather than me being the leader of some international gang of idiots, people are becoming their own idiots. They're figuring it out for themselves and moving on.

It pains me when I realize that people don't get what I'm doing with it, or why I've been in the media, or why it works a certain way to create a glamour. I wanted THE INVISIBLES to make revolution sexy. It had become wooly and beardy and kind of boring. I wanted it to get really sexy again so people would want to be revolutionary. Baader-Meinhoff – that was the last time it was cool. And then it got tree protectors and crusties and wooly guys tying themselves to redwoods. The idea was to make it shiny and sexy and its like these people are fucking tantric sex gods. They're really cool; they travel internationally with platinum credit cards. To make it actually work. To take over the world and then it's so glamorous that you could have revolution become people's air that they breathe without realizing it. My idea at the end again was to dress revolution in the clothes of MTV and of fashion shoots so that people would absorb it. They'd absorb ideas so toxic and so destructive that it would undermine their normal consensus reality. You've got to sell them the celebrity aspect of your culture, I won't deny it, which is like the Gnostic denial of the flesh. Embrace the Spectacle. Learn how to use it. For me, the BSE scandal and the outcry that happened here with people dying of cattle disease seemed like a great metaphor for revolution. But instead, at the time, most protesters saw it as a way of meeting the police. All these protesters, they want to get off on the police. I don't want to ever have to encounter a policeman in my life, unless we're going drinking together. There are people who want to just engage the police in struggle. There's something S&M about that whole view.

And of course a main theme of THE INVISIBLES is that we're really all on the same side.

We're all drawn on the same paper. All the characters in THE INVISIBLES were drawn on the same paper. The sooner we just fucking get over it and start realizing it and start working with that, we might be able to achieve that.

There's irony in the fact that THE INVISIBLES is a revolutionary tract unwittingly published by AOL Time Warner, the largest media conglomerate in the world.

That has to be the brilliance of it. I began to see that we could be pathogens within the culture. Ideas that actually distort the mind. We know magick and ideas of consciousness evolution change people, change the way you think, change the

way you experience the world. So if you make them so sexy that the world wants to eat them up – because the Spectacle wants to eat everything that it can sell, and everything it can sell back.

Suddenly you get *Buffy [the Vampire Slayer]*, and you get *The Matrix*. You get people saying, “I want to be Buffy,” or “I want to be like the girls in *Charmed*. They can make reality happen.” And then somebody says you can do it; here’s a spell-book dating back thousands of years. We actually have the technology to change your reality. And suddenly a culture that’s eaten the bug that it shouldn’t have eaten, that bug is rewiring its brain. It’s completely changing it. It’s dissolving everything that held it together before, because it’s more seductive than a culture of sitting in front of the TV and not doing magick and not seizing control of the very atoms of the air around you. If it works – and I’m completely convinced it works – put it in the hands of people who are trapped in boring jobs and give them the opportunity to change everything. Put it in the hands of an idiot. Put it in the hands of scientists. What would happen? So it’s becoming a pathogen. The infiltration is to be so seductive; they want to buy everything; they want to buy your soul. And then they buy your soul and the soul is so toxic it turns them into what we want them to be.

How much do corporations and governments use magick? Are some logos actually sigils?

Totally. I think we’ve overlooked it. Some of them know what they’re doing. They’ve got access to some of the smartest minds on the planet. They’re paying some of the cleverist people to develop NLPs, hypnotic strategies, to create fantasy realities so that we will buy, buy, buy or partake in these wonderful worlds they’re offering. So we have to know; you’ve got to defend yourself against people who are trying to exploit your ignorance. Magick is actually so democratic. It’s so communistic in its way, because it empowers everyone. It empowers even the lowest person. I mean, get a Voodoo doll and kill your boyfriend!

What happened with the proposed BBC *THE INVISIBLES* television series?

It died a death. I wrote two [episodes] and really detailed outlines for the rest. I was really pissed. We went all the way through; we were doing really well. [I’ve put two of] the scripts on the Web site. They were brilliant. They were quite different from the original. They were based on the first four issues but really updated, tied into what was going on in British culture. There was some interesting stuff in them. Because they went through a lot of rewrites they were a lot tighter. Jack comes much more across as he really is. The Harmony House stuff is really interesting and tight and it explores it a lot more than it does in the comic.

They got all the way up to this woman in the BBC high command and she just said, “No one will understand what telepathy is.” I said, “Right now your biggest show is *The X Files*. These people look at weirder things than telepathy every week!” And she said, “No, I don’t get it.” It was ridiculous. That was it; it just died. It went around, but nothing’s really gone on. There was a movie

deal that almost happened. But the interesting thing is that Richard Metzger's company has picked it up. He did the *Disinfo* stuff. He understands it, and he's connected to everyone who's into this kind of stuff. He's the kind of spider at the center of the counterculture web. So they've got it, I've sold it to them. I'll be working with them, so I'll be really involved in it. I think it's more likely to be based on stuff from the second volume, the time travel and all this stuff.

How would you differentiate an INVISIBLES film from *The Matrix*?

Well, I thought *The Matrix* went for a lot of the Volume 1 stuff, so we're going to concentrate on Quimper and breaking into bases and the glamour of anarchy and the sexy life these guys have. The thing is the way you sell it. You send people back to the comic, which will hit them with a real depth charge.

The TV show was pretty close. There were a lot of different elements. It was pretty tight – it was better than the comic, I think. I always wanted Daniel Day Lewis as King Mob. He's now aged himself past the role of the early King Mob.

We'll just do it so people won't be able to say [THE INVISIBLES movie is ripped off from *The Matrix*], which is a challenge for me. How can we make things fresh? The characters are sound. The characters are still cool. People are only catching up with what was counterculture when I was doing it. Things like Fanny are mainstream. Even though the counterculture might be sick of Fannys and sick of bald pierced guys. The mainstream is getting exciting. They're coming over the rocks and finding us under here. Mainstream is fine. I want it to infect a lot more. I want the game. I want the INVISIBLES game, the utterly immersive 300-player game. I want to see if I can actually do what's in the comic. It's that grandiose. My magical ambition with the whole thing was that ambitious.

Do you think you'll always be identified with THE INVISIBLES?

It seems to be. It's horrible to think I've done my greatest-ever project. Something like THE FILTH seems to me like the way *Masks of the Illuminatus* would stand to the *Illuminatus!* trilogy, which is as "That's obviously Morrison's download. He's had the contact and is making the download, and everything else kind of spins off it." But if that was my download, that was the abduction moment, and everything else relates to it or plays off it or refers to it until I get another one.

Because THE INVISIBLES was so channeled, so downloaded, there were lots of things that got one mention and then the next minute it's on to something else. It was it like Aleister Crowley "receiving" *The Book of the Law*. It's just, "Fuck! I've got to get this down, get it down, get it down before the transmission stops." I can come back to it. There are things that are just so outrageous. There are elements that can be expanded, directions to move in. There's no end to it for me. The next stuff is coming off it. That was the comet that hit me. The X-MEN is exactly the same. It's a bunch of guys with weird powers out to change the world, make it better, make it more inclusive and more diverse and more creative, with forces of oppression against them.

How do you feel looking back on the series now that you've moved on?

It was kind of what I hoped. I expected it to be bigger. I expect it still will be bigger. It was written for people in the future. The people who got it are few and far between. People argue over it. But that's what I wanted. I wanted it to be like *The Prisoner* or *Twin Peaks*, constantly in debate, which is why I kind of hate to nail down what I felt when I was writing. That makes it real then; it loses the element of interpretation. *THE INVISIBLES* is poetic. I think people sometimes misunderstand it. They talk about plot points and miss the fact that it has more to do with music than films or storytelling.

BARBELiTH speaks in emotional aggregates; that's what a song is, or a dance is.

Exactly. A line explains everything and your heart will break, because it's set to the right combination of chords. I forget what the quote is: All art aspires towards the condition of music. And it does. Music is so abstract, but it can encapsulate any human emotion. I was always driving towards that. The plot was a constant annoyance to me. I wanted to have the freedom of William Burroughs, to just go abstract. In the end I think the plot made it more real, it brought it down and anchored it to reality.

Why are people like Sir Miles so afraid of the supercontext?

Because they're not aware of it. They don't understand what it is. They stop at the point of the Outer Church. They experience the Outer Church and think they've encountered total reality. But the Outer Church is really just a little part. Sir Miles is actually quite a tragic figure in the whole thing, because he's like King Mob; he's like all of them. He's a beatnik; he's an experimental; he's an explorer. But he encounters the dark side, and becomes convinced that he can't go any further. He's trapped. They create the legend of anti-Masonry to confound him, the idea that the foundation stone of the universe is a block of anti-matter and everything's crushing down on him into a hole. He's different to people like Fanny, who have been brutalized to the point of no return, but passed through it. Or King Mob, or Jack, Dane, whoever. They've all gone beyond the Outer Church experience, integrated it and gone into a kind of supercontext experience where they see the Outer Church, the darkness, as a soil. It grows the beautiful flower of the supercontext. But Sir Miles never gets to BARBELiTH, and if he sees BARBELiTH, BARBELiTH's a thing to obey or destroy.

John-A-Dreams keeps coming back into the game, doesn't he?

The white suit. Always look for the white suit. He's the midwife. He's helping the baby along, reminding it what's happening. Every time he keeps waking it up and saying, "You're soon to be born, you're soon to be born." He gets closer all the time until he finally reveals what's going on.

What's the difference between him and the Gnostic Christ figure, the chess player?

Not much. He's attained the same position there. John-A-Dreams is present in

him, as well. And the Harlequinade. But he is the reader who puts on the timesuit and understands the structure of the series as well, and can come back in. It's like walking into *Hamlet* and saying, "Stab the guy now, because you're going to be dead on page 38." He affects this thing; he tinkers with things. He's kind of me as the plotter in there, as well, and the one who understands that the whole thing's a structure and people have to be moved into place in order to fulfill the roles within the series.

In a way all the characters are aspects of John-A-Dreams...

He's only seen as the governor when Jack Flint is stripped back to the ultimate identity behind everyone. That was the whole point of his [story], that if we go too far with this deprogramming, we find the ultimate human self, which is John-A-Dreams.

When you re-enter the game, you forget who you are.

Exactly. You're taking the point of view of a player in the game.

So when John-A-Dreams plays yet again as the Jack Flint character, he doesn't actually remember that he's really John-A-Dreams.

No, he's just Jack Flint, who's someone else pretending to be Jack Flint.

How hard did you have to fight to finally get the rest of Volume 1 in trade paperback, years after the first collection?

It wasn't so bad once everyone realized the X-MEN was coming. The things are coming back in fashion. The things are selling okay. Everything's in there. I always get annoyed when people say I've missed out. But actually explained, everything's connected.

Aside from Bruce Wayne, is Mason based on Drake from *Illuminatus*?

You think? Actually I thought Sir Miles was Drake, because Drake's the one who goes wrong in his quest for enlightenment. Mason is based on Bruce Wayne at the start. He's kind of a projection of me with money, because I was earning some money. What would happen if you had that much money? Could you be trusted? And Mason's kind of representative of "Can we trust him?" There might be some of the people with money, maybe we should trust them. Maybe they've got ideas, too, because we're all human beings. And I drew also on John Mack's abductions book, that may be actually the genesis of it, because there's a story in there about some guy who's an abductee, and he gets ten pages to himself. He was a super rich heir to money, and he lived in upstate New York. I think the idea of someone like that having the experience fed into the Mason character.

For a character so obviously representative of America, it was interesting that his only appearance in the third volume takes place in India.

When you see the sequences in 2012 in the second volume, India's obviously become this huge economic power and a cultural power, so Mason's in exactly the right place. All that's unfolding. He can't be trusted in a lot of ways.

Well, there's something twisted about fancying Robin as an Invisible in the 1990s and then putting the moves on her in the future, when she doesn't know he knows her.

Yeah, she's much younger! There's a lot of that in there. Some people have actually suspected it's Mason who's present when Fanny's getting raped by the four guys who are like the de Sade figures. I kind of like that. It wasn't intentional but I think there's a possibility that maybe he was there.

Quimper's there. Sir Miles is there, and a couple other people are there. You see Quimper hanging up – that was when he got his start.

I think THE INVISIBLES is getting mainstream. I'm glad the trade paperbacks [are available]; people can get them. People are reading it and understanding it who couldn't understand it back in 1994. It really was pretty out there. The types I made use of in THE INVISIBLES are now really familiar. People forget they didn't exist in the culture. Back then they existed as the underground or in the heads of a bunch of psychedelic experimenters. I'd like them all in one big book, a Tokyo directory kind of thing. It was designed to be involving. I think people should be reading it as a huge, immersive experience. The sooner I can actually translate it into a game, the better.

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES

BIOGRAPHIES

"Once I was a

little light."

In a series that deals with time travel and fractured reality as often as *THE INVISIBLES* does, it's helpful to consider some characters' personal histories. Included here are the life stories of the major players in the series, told chronologically for the first time. Dates have been calculated from clues within the series in an effort to provide a glimpse at what occurs between the panels. However, with some biographies awash in conflicting information (is Mason Lang born in 1963, as *Ragged Robin* suggests, or in 1972, as a caption in Volume 2 implies?), what we present is merely one interpretation (narrative caption trumps hearsay, and so we opt for 1972 despite Mason's obvious age in the illustrations).

BOY Lucille Butler

Lucille Butler and her two brothers grew up in Harlem, where she was beaten by her father until older brother Martin was old enough to put a stop to it. She idolized Martin, following him into the NYPD. While both of her brothers moved out, Lucille stayed at home as an adult, investing her time into her work rather than her private life, a trend that continues into her time with the Invisibles.

In December 1989, Lucille discovers that her partner Oscar is an Invisible on a case that ends with the death of her brother, the rapper Eezy D, and betrayal by Martin, who is revealed to be working for the enemy. Oscar, who had partnered with Lucille to test her suitability for the revolution, contacts John-A-Dreams and arranges for her to be inducted into his cell. She agrees, joining the Invisibles under the codename Boy to avenge Eezy D's death and vindicate Martin's work by fighting to repair it. [Cell 23 alleges that the Conspiracy implanted a bug in Boy's mind at this point, hidden in her desire for revenge. This is unlikely based on the sheer mechanics required; there is no evidence in *How I Became Invisible* to support the claim, and the story itself doesn't seem to leave room for such an operation. A more plausible explanation may be that Cell 23 needed a pretext to "detain" Boy or face the threat of King Mob's cell exacting revenge for the kidnapping and theft.]

Boy is the most grounded of the Invisibles, weary of their more outrageous antics – although she participates in the fox hunt of Dane, her facial expression suggests that she's the only Invisible refusing to get in character [it is perhaps due to this reluctance to engage in role play and fluid personae

that makes Boy so susceptible to brainwashing by Cell 23]. Her betrayal by Martin, whom she idolized, and the realization that Eezy D's conspiracy theories were correct instill a sense of conflict inside her that isn't resolved until she transcends combat altogether to leave the Invisibles in 1997.

She appears to be the fight instructor for the team, teaching Dane martial arts. More than any other member, Boy takes Dane under her wing, explaining to him the mechanics of time travel and the basic structure of the Invisibles and their conflict. It is Boy who takes the time to notice that Dane lost his finger to Orlando, and Boy again who tries to hunt down both him and King Mob when they go missing.

She enjoys European techno music and doesn't have much time for rap, despite [or perhaps because of] her dead brother Eezy D being a gangsta rapper. Boy seems to dislike fantasy in general [possibly a result of having to fight so hard to attain a "normal" life in Harlem], turning her nose down at the bondage scene at the Power Station and having little relish for time travel. This attitude extends to finding Jim Crow's car ridiculous and criticizing King Mob for his gallows humor. Yet ironically she thinks the British are too uptight. She has a poor sense of smell and avoids drugs and smart drinks. She is probably a fan of Maya Angelou [which seems a likelier source for her secondary codename than a knowledge of Hindu religion].

Boy's unarmed combat skills appear to be unparalleled in the team; despite the mythic status attributed to King Mob, it is Boy who manages to infiltrate Dulce completely unaided. Despite this, she is unable to defeat Jolly Roger

in combat. She's a quick thinker in action, able to use even a baseball bat as a weapon or tool, and has solid detective skills. Boy employs these tools with the strictest morality of all the Invisibles, unable even to shoot her brother Martin on his pleas that imprisonment by the Conspiracy will be much worse.

She believes she will marry someone like her brother Martin. She's excellent at first-person shooter video games, and doesn't believe Jack has learned any combat skills from her in their three years together. She is open-minded enough to accept Eazy D's conspiracy theories given evidence, and compassionate enough to continue living with her father as an adult despite her childhood beatings.

Boy falls for Dane while the Invisibles are in America, but she's mature enough to realize from the beginning that it can't last. The roots of this relationship occur early on Dane's side, perhaps inspired by misreading the attention she pays him. Boy falls for Dane much more slowly, perhaps experiencing the first stirrings on their trip to New York City in 1996 while the rest of the team recuperates in Mason Lang's safehouse.

In 1997 Boy steals the Hand of Glory from her teammates, unable to adequately explain why. [It seems likely that Oscar, being a member of Cell 23, which seems to be the Invisible faction responsible for the Hand, implanted a subliminal retrieval order in the likelihood that Boy's cell actually ever came across it.] This lack of mental defenses is further evidenced by the ease with which Cell 23 brainwash her through a series of false memories and identities [that Lucille is the "true" identity seems evident by virtue of her unwillingness to shoot King Mob under orders from Cell 23]. Dane is

able to read her mind with ease, yet she refuses to allow any of the Invisibles to establish a psychic link with her.

Boy struggles with her membership in the Invisibles, writing an account of her induction in late 1995 as a form of therapy. In 1997 she makes contact with BARBELiTH after the trauma of her brainwashing [this contact probably leads to her resignation from the Invisibles shortly afterward].

By the summer of 1997 Boy realizes that simply by joining the Invisibles the enemy has won. She is the first member of the cell to reach this understanding [Robin and King Mob also eventually make the realization], and opts to return to a "normal" life. She feels disenchanted with her friends while on vacation in New Orleans, and ultimately leaves the team prior to their second infiltration of Dulce, moving back in with her parents. She still cares enough about Dane at this point to try to talk him into leaving the team; when he doesn't, she infiltrates Dulce by herself to make sure he survives the experience. But she is able to let him go and move on. She similarly tries to talk Robin out of using the timesuit to return to 2012 to no avail.

Soon after leaving the Invisibles Boy has a daughter, who she names Robin. [There is no evidence that she attempted to rescue Martin from the dissident camp in Batavia, New York. Her sense of justice may lead her to believe Martin deserves his fate; alternately she may have been unable to locate him, or indeed possibly did free him.]

She remains fond of her former teammates, although she appears not to have been in contact with any of them before King Mob visits her in 2012, when she asks about Dane.

BILLY CHANG

By 1924 Chinese occultist Billy Chang owns a London club that fronts for an opium den, dedicated to overthrowing the remnants of Victorian culture by aiding the spread of subversive behavior. Chang is a member of the Golden Age Invisibles [perhaps choosing the code name Billy Chang with ironic intent]. He is a master of the occult, understanding implicitly that the Hand of Glory is capable of altering reality and remaining calm during its activation.

Some time afterward Chang is arrested on what appear to be trumped up charges and spends more than a

year in Wormwood Scrubs. Later, he is deported from England.

Edith calls him the key to everything [presumably because out of all the Golden Age Invisibles only Chang realizes that the successful path to revolution is through behavioral modification; he's beaten the modern King Mob to this realization by 75 years and is therefore far ahead of his time].

Billy Chang disappears from history "like a ghost." [It's interesting to speculate that he finds a timesuit and enters the supercontext. Or perhaps he is just John-A-Dreams once more, advancing the game in yet another fictionsuit?]

SIR MILES DELACOURT (d.1999)

Miles Delacourt was born in England in the late 1930s to an upper class family. He attends a fox hunt with his bullying father at a young age but is traumatized by the experience, particularly the blooding ritual. [Perhaps it is the callousness with which the hunt is carried out. The event may have been robbed of its significance by the brutality of the act, coupled with his father or brother's attitude about it. It's as if they want to hurry up and get it over with – as if the experience is important enough to drag Miles through, but not important enough to respect.]

Miles is estranged from his father at an early age [and it's possible that much of the abuse he suffered as a child was, like Dane McGowan, in the form of neglect]. His unhappy childhood informs his opinion of parenthood as an adult [notably in his reaction to Jeremy Sutton's failure as a parent in 1995].

Miles is sent to school at Eton.

Shortly afterward, he may have manifested psychic abilities. He becomes interested in the occult and begins frequenting niche bookshops.

By 1957 Miles has become a beatnik. At a modern art exhibit he meets Beryl Wyndham, and his compassion for her as she cries in front of Picasso's *Guernica* spawns a deep friendship. Through Beryl, Miles becomes involved with the Ordo Templi Orientis and meets Frederick Harper-Seaton.

[During this period Beryl appears to have told Miles about her past with the Invisibles, and may have even tried to induct him.] In 1960 Miles participates in a government LSD experiment recorded by the BBC. The experiment goes awry, and Miles makes contact with the Outer Church.

Believing the Outer Church to represent the true nature of reality, Miles refocuses his life. The same year he founds the publishing company Nimoo Yoy Editions to self-release a tell-all

about Beryl's time with the Invisibles called *The Invisibles*. The book ruins Beryl [and likely ends their friendship]. He later joins the Anti-Masons and, as part of an initiation, agrees in 1965 to murder Beryl and remove her hand, to prove that he is beyond human compassion [and most likely to retrieve a hand suitable for creating a Hand of Glory]. He carries out his task, but spends his life feeling guilty about it, leaving flowers at her grave every year.

The event transforms Miles, who reacts to his guilt by sublimating it with anger toward the lower classes. From this point he feels no guilt about any of his savage actions in the service of the Outer Church. He quickly rises through the ranks of Anti-Masonry to attain the 33rd degree. He comes into his inheritance and is eventually knighted. By 1995 he has the highest level of security clearance in the UK and US, with direct contact to the Queen and secret military installations. He hunts the homeless for sport.

Miles is an active agent of the Outer Church, in early 1995 personally supervising the fox hunt of runaway Dane McGowan in an effort to find a host body for the Archon. But his arrogance causes him to inflate his importance in the Church's hierarchy. He fears and avoids modification and often bucks the orders of his superiors. By late 1995 the Church's patience with Miles is wearing thin. Miss Dwyer is sent to supervise Miles' interrogation of King Mob, during which time she must reprimand him twice.

Miles has a seething hate for the Invisibles, especially King Mob [likely fueled by his sublimated guilt over Beryl and a history of setbacks caused by Mob's cell. Perhaps Sir Miles subconsciously desires King Mob's life, or even desires King Mob. He appears extremely self-conscious

in 1995 when he is telling Brodie he should follow up on a lead within the gay community. That could point to repressed gay tendencies, but there is little else to back this up].

Miles has theatrical tendencies, dressing in fox hunting clothes to supervise hunts of the homeless, but he has no sense of humor, annoyed to discover that someone has replaced firing range targets with images of Santa Claus. He has little time for subordinates and rarely remembers their names. He continues to secretly frequent occult bookstores through 1999.

In late 1995 a psychic interrogation of King Mob goes awry, resulting in the theft of his aura. Dane restores Miles' aura shortly afterward, and the event appears to have broken free much of his repressed guilt. From this point on Miles exhibits less certainty about his role with the Outer Church, a sense of self-doubt that manifests most notably in his dream form.

By 1997 Miles is married.

In 1999 Miles is kidnapped by the Invisibles and subjected to a drug-induced interrogation. He finds himself face to face with Beryl's corpse, further contributing to a pending mental breakdown.

In August of 1999 Miles presides over the attempted coronation of the Moonchild in Westminster Abbey. During a fight with the Invisibles, he shoots Jolly Roger but is finally forced to accept that his life's work is ruined when Dane absorbs the King Archon rather than being possessed by it.

Miles is so blinded by his life's devotion to the Outer Church and its crushing authority that he makes a last, insane plea to serve Dane, but is instead handed a rope. Miles commits suicide by hanging himself by the ankle in the rafters of Westminster Abbey.

ELFAYED

Elfayed makes contact with BARBELiTH sometime in the 1960s while piloting fighter jets for the Egyptian military. Shortly afterward he pursues study in Sufism, an esoteric branch of Islam. He is inducted into the Invisibles by 1968 [possibly making contact as a result of his earlier experiences] and trains at the North African academy with Mister Six. That year, the pair traveled to Paris, where Elfayed sees Mister Six adopt a new persona.

[Whether he ever participates in missions on the front line or is always an instructor at the academy is unknown.] His experience appears practically unrivaled [by 1994 he is able

to explain the nature of the universe to King Mob]. Like Mister Six, he may be an “ascended master” of some kind. Despite this, Elfayed isn’t above saying “fuck” every now and again. He and Mister Six are quite good friends, probably equals in their wisdom and knowledge. He may be gay.

He appears to have a close relationship with King Mob [probably developed while King Mob was training at the Academy], eager to lend a hand in looking for a “sign in the desert” in 1994. He seems to have an affection for teaching, as he is still at the academy when Jack and Roger arrive to study Kung Fu in 1999.

JACK FLINT (d.1999)

John-A-Dreams, perhaps frustrated by his ill-fated organic re-entry into reality in the form of Quimper, re-enters once more via a fictionsuit and becomes Jack Flint. Unaware of his true nature, Flint joins an Invisibles cell [presumably peopled by Mister Six, George Harper and possibly Paddy Crowley, although they may well each belong to different cells].

Flint elects to go into deep cover in the Division X paranormal investigations unit, basing his new persona on the popular television character John Regan from *The Sweeney* and erasing his true identity as an Invisible from his conscious mind. It is at this time that Flint adopts the Jack Flint moniker [and presumably the rank of detective inspector].

After Division X disbands following a disastrous investigation in 1976, Flint appears to have gone downhill,

trapped in a loveless third marriage and spending time in strip clubs. He performs fake tarot readings for old women to get cash. His favorite television show is the sitcom *Father Ted*, and he thinks Flann O’Brien’s *The Third Policeman* is one of the best books in the English language. As a detective inspector, he’s not averse to beating suspects for information.

When Division X is reactivated in 1995, Flint is ecstatic for the escape from his mundane life, hunting down and re-enlisting former teammate George Harper. Flint works out that the enemy is planning to crown the Moonchild, discovered in a video produced by Quimper, on 11 August, 1999.

In 1999 Flint is kidnapped by an Invisibles cell headed by former Division X cohort Mister Six and subjected to a drug-induced deprogramming

session. He discovers that he is a deep-cover Invisible whose "Jack Flint" cover persona is scheduled to die of a fatal heart attack the next day. But the re-conditioning has touched on Flint's primordial persona, and he begins to realize that he is merely a fictionsuit for John-A-Dreams.

By August 1999 Jack Flint realizes the true nature of the universe, able to predict events by observing the solid surface of time. He predicts his own death in the attack on Westminster Abbey to prevent the coronation of the Moonchild, and is killed by the demon Orlando.

GEORGE HARPER Eric Millet

Anarchist Eric Millet joins the Invisibles prior to 1976, meeting Mister Six and Jack Flint. The trio agree to assume new identities based on popular UK television characters while infiltrating Division X and the Paranormal Investigation Service (PIS) under deep cover: Millet became George Harper, submerging his Eric Millet identity in his deep subconscious and adopting a persona based on the popular television character George Carter, from *The Sweeney*. As Harper, he remains with Division X until a disastrous case in 1976 splits the group and exposes their identities to the Conspiracy.

Harper has limited psychic abilities, able to perceive things through time and psychometrically obtain data from physical items. He suffers from temporal lobe epilepsy, taped Princess Diana's funeral and envies the vice squad for

getting paid to watch pornography. He objects to the coercive methods used by Mister Six to decondition Jack Flint [though strangely he's not averse to beating suspects for information].

In 1995 Harper is recruited into a reformed Division X via Jack Flint, and together with Mister Six they spend the next few years hunting down the Moonchild, having discovered him on a tape produced by Quimper.

By 1999 Division X has located the creature, but a failsafe heart attack programmed into the Jack Flint identity prompts Mister Six to begin emergency deprogramming on him. Harper, who has spontaneously recalled his original identity and membership in the Invisibles, objects to Six's methods, and shoots him. Ultimately Harper joins with Six and Paddy Crowley to continue taking the PIS to new levels.

HELGA Olga Tannen

Born in Sweden, Olga Tannen is inducted into the Invisibles prior to 1999, adopting the codename Helga [perhaps with ironic intent] and joining Mister Six's cell. She's a genius with language, and spends much of her time as an Invisible learning and synthesizing

the alien alphabet. She appears to be a master of body language and is able to determine a person's emotional state through taste.

The most telling piece of data about Helga comes from her own mouth: "I lie compulsively about everything. And

I make the most outrageous things happen just by thinking about them and putting all the pieces together in the right shape." So any seemingly supernatural talents Helga possesses may simply be lies. In this sense she is much like King Mob, perhaps surpassing him. Helga creates her own reality in the tradition of the chaos magician – perhaps the best illustration of this is Helga's grimoire. She creates her own, cutting and pasting images as her needs require – she uses images of a toilet to represent the Black Grail. She claims to have impregnated her brother and to possess a little brass engine instead of an appendix.

Helga and King Mob take an instant liking to one another – engaging in some kind of sexual mischief their first night together. Helga's version of events involves a potato; King Mob's might not.

She spends part of 1999 riding around with Mister Six and supervising Sir Miles' interrogation. She reads *New Scientist*, is fascinated with the alien alphabet and enjoys photography and filmmaking. After hooking up with King Mob and Fanny in 1999, she films them digging up Beryl's bones. The three may have had a *ménage à trios* shortly afterward.

Her methods are unorthodox to say the least, a quality that is probably endearing to Mister Six. This leads her to release Sir Miles from captivity, to

much controversy from her associates.

Her experiments with the alien alphabet are traumatic, but she continues to work with the letters, her passion for language overriding any sense of self-preservation. After an early experiment with the alphabet makes her vomit in the toilet, she merely increases her studies by dosing herself with the psychotropic Key 23. This trial initiates contact with beings [likely a form of Terrence McKenna's machine elves] that are trying to manipulate language.

Prior to the attack on Westminster Abbey in 1999, Helga shaves off all of her body hair [perhaps inspired by de Sade's nons]. She and Mister Six spring a language trap on Sir Miles and provide him with rope to hang himself with.

Helga is quite interested in Dane's experience in the mirror, asking him if he saw time. It is likely that Helga's experimentation with the alien language is representative of her thirst for knowledge in general. [Her motivation for joining the Invisibles may have come almost entirely from her thirst for knowledge – her desire to experience the Universe as it is, not how it is perceived.]

After the final showdown with the Archons, Helga quits the Invisibles, reverting to her Olga Tannen identity and joining King Mob to pursue ontological methods of terrorism. By 2012 the pair are no longer together.

JACK FROST

Dane Paul McGowan (b.1980)

Dane McGowan is born in 1980, growing up in Liverpool with his mother after his father abandons the family. Although intelligent and well read, Dane becomes a criminal, vandalizing and thieving with a group of friends known as the Croxteth Posse.

He possesses psychic abilities, manifesting a Jack Frost avatar to cope with stressful situations. Dane is also able to perceive time non-linearly, and by the age of 15 is nonplussed by the sudden appearance of historical figures.

Dane deals with parental neglect by hiding behind a rebellious attitude. He needs to prove himself to his friends, betting them that he can steal cars and instigating an arson attack on his school [signs of a vulnerable child rather than shows of bravado]. He smokes, and wears the same clothes for several days [a sign of both depression and neglect]. He is impressed by US rap music and rabidly homophobic.

In early 1995 Dane leads his friends in an attempt to burn down his school, in the process assaulting his teacher, a disguised Mister Six, who had attempted to show Dane some empathy. He is sentenced to 10 weeks in a reform center dubbed Harmony House, which in reality houses a Conspiracy brainwashing facility. Before he can be altered, Dane is rescued by King Mob and abandoned on the streets of London. His friend Gaz is not so lucky.

Dane spends the next several months homeless on the streets of London, where he meets Tom O'Bedlam, who introduces him to magick. Dane initially distrusts Tom, but eventually the pair develop a bond as Tom secretly prepares him for contact with BARBELiTH and induction into the Invisibles. Dane and Tom part company after jumping from the top of Canary Wharf together, Dane materializing in Universe A and encountering BARBELiTH. He loses most of his memories of this time.

Shortly afterward, Dane meets King Mob's cell, joining as the Invisible Jack Frost. He spends time learning the basics of Invisiblism and martial arts from Boy, quickly noting the absurdity of waging a war when one can't tell which side one is on. He is uncomfortable in the Invisibles, refusing to use his codename or exhibit camaraderie with Lord Fanny. Dane is unable to hold his alcohol, and doesn't

time travel well.

After a mental journey to revolutionary France, Dane finds himself at the mercy of the demon Orlando, who cuts off his pinky. [His impotence here may be augmented by Fanny's easy defeat of Orlando.] Afraid, Dane abandons the team and steals King Mob's car.

After crashing the car trying to avoid a Conspiracy trap, Dane finds himself threatened by a Myrmidon agent. He shoots the soldier in self-defense, triggering a nervous breakdown that sends him away from the Invisibles and back to homelessness on the streets of London.

During this time, Dane begins to recall the events surrounding his contact with BARBELiTH and acknowledge his true role in the war. He returns to Liverpool in an effort to find a place where he belongs, but is betrayed by a friend. Dane flees to his mother's apartment, where he is discovered by Boy and Mister Six, who have been trying to find him.

Finding no solace with his friends or family, Dane finally accepts the mantle of Jack Frost and returns to London with his teammates. He uses his new confidence to defeat the King-of-All-Tears during a mission to rescue King Mob and Fanny from the Conspiracy in late 1995, and completes his metamorphosis by healing King Mob with magic mirror and compassionately restoring Miles Delacourt's aura.

Secure in his role with the Invisibles, Dane spends much of 1996 vacationing in New York with Boy and Fanny, with whom he has begun to bond. In 1997 Dane obtains the Hand of Glory from the Harlequinade with Fanny, at which point he accepts her homosexuality and cements their friendship.

Shortly afterward, he becomes

romantically involved with Boy. He develops a strong psychic bond with her, able to track her remotely following her disappearance in 1997. They break up later that year, when Boy decides to quit the team.

Dane, much like Boy, is extremely pragmatic. He's often frustrated by his team's techniques, yet he remains and does his part. Dane's most strained relationship is with King Mob. He disagrees with King Mob's methods in almost all situations, despising the violence, which seems useless and brutal.

In late 1997 Dane meets Satan in the Conspiracy's headquarters in Dulce, traveling to Universe B to learn the nature of reality. By 1999 his cell has more or less dissolved, and Dane travels to the Invisibles' North African academy to learn Kung Fu. He trains with Elfayed, who teaches him the value of priorities. Later that year, he teams with Jolly Roger to destroy a CIPHERMEN birthing facility, demonstrating powers on a par with Tom O'Bedlam.

In August 1999 Dane takes part on an assault on Westminster Abbey in an effort to prevent the coronation of the Moonchild and the subsequent arrival of the King-of-All-Tears. Dane defeats the Archon by absorbing him, rather than being possessed by him. He meets Satan again, traveling to Universe B and discovering that it is connected to Universe A – both are part of the same system.

His original Invisibles cell disintegrates after the events at Westminster Abbey, but Dane decides to form a new cell with Fanny. In 2001 he recruits Reynard, having come full circle by becoming a teacher. By 2012 his cell includes Ragged Robin and Takashi.

On 22 December 2012 Dane locates his old friend Gaz, who is dying. Knowing the supercontext is materializing, Dane comforts his friend, telling him the history of the Invisibles and their war. Afterward, he shepherds humanity into its new phase of existence, proclaiming the evolution to a startled throng.

JIM CROW

Jim Crow is born in Haiti, joining the Invisibles prior to 1992. He leads an Invisibles cell and the Voodoo rap group Root Doctaz [who may be one and the same]. He uses his spirituality as the basis for his activism, embarking on a grass roots black power campaign, encouraging black Americans to eschew the restrictive conservatism of Christianity and Islam and embrace the root of black power in Africa. He uses his popularity and notoriety as a rap artist and activist to hide himself out in the open.

By 1992 Jim is close friends with

John-A-Dreams, embarking on long philosophical and occult conversations. The pair's cells work together on a mission in Haiti. He enjoys the music of Jimi Hendrix [possibly identifying with him as a child].

Jim blends technology with his practice of Voodoo, using a video tape of himself to enter trance. Jim is truly an Invisible of the people, allowing his patron *loa* Papa Guedhe to ride him in the service of the Voodoo community. He has a keen sense of poetic justice, and is ready and eager to help the oppressed. He has regular contact with

the magic mirror prior to most of his comrades, and is able to navigate the spirit world with ease.

He has integrated death as a part of life and has no fear of it. He is surrounded by tokens of death – his pet ouija bird is a crow, he has an Ace of Spades in his hat, he wears a skull as a codpiece and he drives a hearse. This makes him particularly effective against the dark magick of the enemy.

He has unusual psychic powers, performing a psychic triangulation with Robin in 1995, a procedure normally associated with radio waves or electricity. He carries a *zozo* gun, which converts love energy to death. [Jim may have vision trouble in his right eye, frequently wearing a monocle.] He is overtly theatrical and sports a streak of black humor, notably in his

choice of code name.

Jim Crow is not afraid of death or its agents, speaking casually to the scorpion *loa* Baron Zaraguin [indeed, he may have facilitated King Mob's contact with the *loa*]. Despite leading an Invisibles cell, Jim isn't opposed to working alone, or with other cells. He is willing to kill his enemies, in 1995 shooting Miss Dwyer as a sacrifice to Guedhe. But he prefers to outsmart his foes, defeating US soldiers in 1997 with a bottle of water disguised as a deadly hantavirus.

In 1999 Jim aids King Mob's cell remotely during its attack on Westminster Abbey to stop the coronation of the Moonchild. Afterward, he establishes the Church of the Crow-Daddy in Chicago.

JOLLY ROGER (d.1999)

Jolly Roger joins the Invisibles by 1988, training at the North African academy with King Mob under the tutelage of Elfayed and Mister Six. There she develops a friendship that is close enough to make King Mob's girlfriends jealous, despite the fact that she is a lesbian. [Their closeness seems to come from their ability to talk shop.] They both have a love of kicking ass and machismo, and they both project a dangerous persona to others. Jolly Roger's version consists of a skull-and-bones t-shirt and eye patch as well as her stereotypically masculine behavior. This particular persona seems to point to a certain fear of vulnerability and inadequacy [which is perhaps another reason she gets along with King Mob so well. They understand each other]. She loses an eye after 1988.

By 1996 she is head of her own

lesbian cell of Invisibles, dubbed the Poison Pussies. On a tip from an insider at the Conspiracy's underground base in Dulce, they mount an attack on the facility to steal an HIV vaccine. Roger is one of only two in the cell to escape, heading for Mason Lang's safehouse. There she reunites with King Mob, beginning the first of several missions in conjunction with his cell. The escapade fuels her hatred of the US government, and she holds it responsible for the death of her team and all who suffer from AIDS. This hatred causes her to spur the Invisibles' second infiltration of the Dulce base.

Jolly Roger dislikes Ragged Robin and Lord Fanny [the former for her closeness to King Mob; the latter for her femininity, or perhaps a stereotypical distance between lesbians and gay men]. She meets Jim Crow prior

to 1996.

Despite learning the White Flame meditation, she falls to Quimper's mind control efforts and bears a personal vendetta against him ever after. Her susceptibility to mental assault is a factor in late 1997, when she falls victim to a magic mirror attack by Quimper.

Roger is adept at physical combat. By 1999 she is at the Invisibles' North African academy studying Kung Fu. She and Dane develop a camaraderie, partnering to destroy a Ciphermen growth facility in advance of the attack on Westminster Abbey. She is bored

when not presented with action, passing her time at the Academy flipping through magazines or threatening insects when Dane is occupied.

Jolly Roger's violent approach eventually leaves her behind the growth curve of the other Invisibles, who have adopted a more pacifist attitude toward revolution. She charges into the battle at Westminster Abbey in 1999 as the only Invisible armed with a gun. She is disarmed by an Archon and dies in the melee, murdered by Miles Delacourt. Her body is dumped in an unmarked grave.

JOHN-A-DREAMS

Prior to joining the Invisibles, John-A-Dreams is part of the upper class, attending public school. He eventually becomes the leader of King Mob's Invisibles cell, responsible for inducting new members Ragged Robin, Boy and Lord Fanny. Notable for his sense of humor, John is prone to spending hours discussing Voodoo with Jim Crow. He is obsessed with locating the Hand of Glory, a search that ultimately brings him to a Philadelphia church in September 1992, where he and King Mob discover a discarded timesuit that appears in the form of a colony of mutated humans and vegetables. John enters the timesuit and rotates into the Outer Church.

Believing that the Outer Church is the limit of objective reality, John-A-Dreams consents to surgery that alters his eyes and may influence his freedom of thought. He returns to objective reality in August 1999 for the abortive coronation of the Moonchild in Westminster Abbey.

In defeat, John-A-Dreams returns to the Outer Church, attempting to re-enter reality and alter events so that the Outer Church emerges triumphant. One of these returns occurs in the form of Quimper; another, Jack Flint. In both instances, John-A-Dreams' objective self is sublimated by the subjective selves of Quimper and Flint, who remain unaware of their true nature.

KING MOB Ronald Tolliver (d.1937)

Nothing is known of Ronald Tolliver prior to 1916, when he participates in the battle of the Somme during the first World War. After his return to

England he meets and falls in love with Beryl Wyndham, who introduces him to the Invisibles.

By 1924 he is the most active of the

Golden Age Invisibles, a violent anarchist who, in his King Mob guise, brings the war directly to the establishment by hurling bombs into police stations [presumably the horrors of the war turned him against the same institution he served]. Yet for all of his politics he is unable to rise against the bulk of his cultural conditioning, still calling blacks “niggers.”

King Mob is present at the activation

of the Hand of Glory in London. The event transports him through time, where he sees an older Beryl weeping at an art exhibition and an infant Bobby Murray.

Tolliver ultimately dies in the bombing at Guernica in 1937 during the Spanish civil war. In his final moments he sees Beryl, inexplicably young [herself transported via the activation of the Hand of Glory].

KING MOB Gideon Starorzewski (b.1960)

[It seems reasonable to assume that the memories Sir Miles discovers in *Entropy in the UK* are for the most part real; certainly he reveals his real name – as demonstrated in 3.2 – and the Kirk Morrison cover identity. Therefore, we have accepted the biographical information presented in *Entropy in the UK* at face value unless otherwise noted. We use the earliest of the indeterminate birth dates given in the series – 1960/1961 – on the basis that King Mob’s vanity makes it likely that he is older than he likes to reveal. A case in point is his obsession with his face after escaping Sir Miles’ interrogation in *Entropy in the UK*.]

Gideon Starorzewski is born to a Polish artist father and an English political radical mother in 1960, growing up in a Chelsea high rise. In school, he spends hours learning to write with his left hand, and reads Michael Moorcock’s Jerry Cornelius stories in addition to *Famous Monsters* magazine. On television he watches *The Avengers*, *Doctor Who*, *The Prisoner* and *Jason King*; he wants to grow up and live in one of these shows, spawning a pop culture obsession that will last his entire life. He has his first drug experience at age 19 – hash, while his parents are on vacation. The same year he backpacks on Glastonbury Tor. By 1981 he is performing in the Beatles-inspired psychedelic band The Five, moving later

into the punk subculture, where he meets Jacqui in 1985.

That year, his first novel, *Dis*, is published under the pseudonym Kirk Morrison. The novel is followed up by *Lord Worm* in early 1988, and *The Killing Moon*, about a werewolf. Flush with royalties, Gideon begins searching the world for hidden meaning and truth, finally meeting Edith Manning on May 1, 1988 during a suicidal bout of depression [possibly linked to the divorce of his parents and his subsequent estrangement from his mother], listening to Morrissey on the steps of the Manikarnika in Varanasi, India. Despite these travels, he never learns to like Indonesian food, although he eats *nasi goreng*. He has a fear of Indian buses so strong it forms a part of his subconscious mental defenses.

Sometime between 1988 and 1989 Gideon joins the Invisibles as King Mob [It is likely that Edith introduces him to the team shortly after their meeting in Varanasi]. He trains in Africa with Jolly Roger under Mister Six and Elfayed, and wears a mask topped with a mane of razor wire on missions. Book royalties enable him to buy a modified sports car, which is rigged to explode if a code sequence isn’t keyed into the ignition.

As an Invisible, he retains a flat in Brixton for use in his Kirk Morrison persona. He claims to be a master assassin, but rarely uses these powers in the traditional assassin's role, instead serving as soldier. He learns psychic martial arts in a deal with the scorpion *loa* Zaraguin, a deal he has not repaid. Despite formidable psychic defenses, including the ability to remove auras, possess enemies, destroy souls and hide in shifting cover personalities, he is not totally resistant to the mind drug Key 17. His prime mental resistance is the White Flame meditation, which appears to be a personal entrenchment of E-Prime (English without the word "is").

In September 1992, King Mob and fellow Invisible John-A-Dreams discover an abandoned timesuit in a Philadelphia church. The episode drives him insane for a month, and he is subsequently unable to deal with the disappearance of John, whom he idolizes. During his time with John, he meets Boy, Lord Fanny and Ragged Robin, whom he at first finds spooky but later falls in love with.

Sometime in 1994, he travels to Ayers Rock in Australia to continue his magical initiation, at which time he makes contact with BARBELiTH, which appears to him as a giant, *Illuminatus!*-inspired submarine.

As King Mob, Gideon sinks into bloodlust, casually killing his close friend Joni over a hex in late 1994. At some point during this period Jacqui leaves him, unable to handle his violence [We theorize this occurred after discovering the timesuit in September 1992 sent King Mob into a month's flirtation with madness; this event likely contributed to his rising bloodlust, which in turn, along with his interest in "black magick," contributed to Jacqui's departure. As with any pattern, this in turn probably contributed to

increasing his callous violence, to the point where he kills Joni in 1994 and is able to kill with impunity as the series opens, in early 1995]. He never recovers from this separation, calling Jacqui after the disastrous attack on Westminster Abbey in 1999, when he believes he is dying. At some point after separating from Jacqui, he collects a series of scars on his back.

In late 1995 King Mob becomes blood brothers with Sir Miles in a blood transfusion, subsequently removing his nemesis' aura. He is intensely loyal, preferring to die in custody than allow Fanny to be injured helping him escape from the House of Fun. He has considerable tactical skills, in evidence during the cunning Orlando impersonation in the windmill and his use of Key 17 to defeat Miss Dwyer in the House of Fun. He is not averse to forcing allies to perform specific deeds (demanding that a frail Edith Manning aid in locating the runaway Dane McGowan), and can be uncaring about those outside the boundaries of his mission (leaving Gaz behind in Harmony House despite Dane's plea). Although he will be looked after from a distance, King Mob is quite willing to abandon Dane in London. Despite this, he has a soft spot for babies.

King Mob places great importance on being individual. Despite his efforts to appear a straightforward "lad," he enjoys performing oral sex on women and volunteers to perform a sex ritual with a 95-year-old Edith to locate Dane McGowan. He uses drugs for magick and recreation. His magical framework is a personal form of chaos magick that draws heavily on Indian mythology and the Beatles. He has a scorpion tattooed at the base of his spine, and makes an offering to the Hindu god Ganesh at the start of each endeavor. He has a strong sense

of smell, which is rankled by time travel, and believes in the power of Reichian therapy.

One of his oldest friends is Emilio, a Scot working in New Mexico. He enjoys UK guitar bands such as the Kinks and Kula Shaker. He has read *THE INVISIBLES* comic book, and found it far-fetched. Contact with the magic mirror draws out his worst memories – Jacqui leaving him and his cats dying – and also projects his greatest fear, namely that he is a slob who hasn't accomplished anything. Indeed, given the opportunity for autocritique, he fears that the cool anarchist figure he represents really supports authority.

Tom O'Bedlam taught him to access the Invisible College, and presumably how to use the Universe B shortcut to travel long distances in short periods. King Mob rather likes the sordid environment, making friends with one of its denizens and looking forward to spray-painting his name on the Universe B version of the Berlin Wall.

In late 1996 he loses control of the Invisibles to Ragged Robin in a lottery drawing. The following year he psychically travels to 1924, where he meets the young Edith Manning, whom he

sleeps with. They spend the next day, which he considers one of the best of his life, composing silly songs at the piano. He enjoys cookies, tends to exaggerate when telling stories, likes Italian suits and can tell the time by the position of the stars. Despite all the violence in his life, he considers digging up Beryl's corpse the worst thing he's ever done.

By late 1997 he stops using guns, opting for what he calls ontological terrorism. The transformation is complete in 1999, when he sacrifices the King Mob identity and becomes Gideon Starorzewski once more, exchanging the Invisibles' lifestyle for a more culturally informed strategy. He makes a special gun in 2001 for combating the King-of-All-Tears 11 years later. By 2012 he is head of the massive Technocult corporation, which sells the Invisibles' experience through interactive gaming in an effort to spur awareness and thereby trigger the supercontext. On December 22, 2012, he defeats the King-of-all-Tears and forces the metamorphosis of reality. Absorbed into the supercontext, he becomes a famous pop star author enjoying an infinite party.

MASON ANDREW LANG (1972-2012)

Mason Lang encounters BARBELÍTH at the age of nine while being driven home from a birthday party. He interprets the event as an alien abduction and is haunted by it afterward. At some later point in his childhood his father comes into a large fortune, either through an inheritance or business [it's unlikely the Langs are very rich during the abduction period, judging from the styling of the car and the fact that his mother is driving it, although they may certainly be well off. This late experience with money

may be why Mason is not snobbish].

By 1995 Mason Lang runs an Invisibles safehouse in upstate New York [presumably having come across an Invisibles cell during his investigation into other abduction experiences]. He's heavily into conspiracy theory and popular culture, seemingly unable to watch a film without spotting dozens of occult or conspiratorial scenes. As an Invisible, Mason uses his fortune to research liquid computer technology, having received a vision

of a Holy Grail of liquid information during his abduction experience. A number of companies are set up for this and other purposes, including environmental and time travel research, although Mason doesn't know what all of his companies are up to.

Mason drives with the Invisibles cross-country in late 1996 to New Mexico, where he is happy to take LSD with King Mob and his friends in the desert as a prelude to the Invisibles' infiltration of the Dulce base. Despite the trip, Mason is not a fighter and doesn't enter the base with them.

Although he is considerably grounded for a billionaire, Mason nevertheless seems unprepared for the reality of Invisibles missions when he actually accompanies them in the search for Boy at the Motech building. His autocritique experience under the

alien alphabet weapon suggests that he secretly sees people as commodities, and indeed he tries to buy his way out of problems. He is also willing to bluff his way through them, as when the US military tries to take the timesuit.

Mason is friendly with his sister Kathryn, taking the time to attend a party of hers in New York City even as the Invisibles prepare for their second attack on the Dulce base.

After the Invisibles leave America, Mason spends some time traveling the world. He meets King Mob and Edith Manning in India in early 1999.

In 2008, Mason frees Kay from a mental institution, introducing her to Takashi Satoh. They have a brief affair, during which he lies about his age.

Mason dies in early 2012, having won control of the Western military industrial complex.

LORD FANNY Hilde Morales (b.1972)

Hilde Morales is born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1972 to Adelinda and Eugenio Morales. Hilde grows up in a family of *brujas*, her grandmother being the most feared in the city. Hilde's mother is unable to give birth to a daughter, the traditional beneficiary of the line of *bruja* knowledge. After a second attempt at giving birth to a daughter ended in miscarriage, Hilde's grandmother decides to raise Hilde as a girl. Hilde accepts the new gender assignment [with a joy that suggests she was born with an inclination toward femininity]. Hilde also takes a liking to boys at an early age, her role as a female perhaps making it easier to accept her homosexuality.

In 1979, Hilde's mother is murdered at a party in Rio by a man wearing a *papier maché* mask. Instead of staying

with her father, who had rejected the idea of raising her as a female, Hilde goes to live with her grandmother and "aunt." While still a pre-adolescent, Hilde is taken to Teotihuacan in Mexico for her initiation. There she is left on the steps of one of the great pyramids, her thigh cut to simulate menstruation. Her grandmother gives her a hallucinogenic drink, possibly *ayahuasca*, and she undergoes a magical initiation that reveals her patron goddess to be Tlazolteotl, deity of filth and lust.

Hilde outwits Tezcatlipoca during this trial, winning safe passage to Mictlan, where she discovers that gods are masks. Her life is spared by Mictlantecuhtli, god of the underworld, on the condition that she offer someone to take her place.

Returning to the land of the living, Hilde demands to see Izpapatl's true face, and is rewarded with a view of the structure of the universe and time.

By 1990 Hilde has become a prostitute in Brazil. One evening during Carnival, Hilde is taken to a party held by men in *papier maché* masks, like her mother before her. She is brutally raped and tortured, along with Quimper, who has emerged into reality from the supercontext in the form of an alien antibody. The experience drives her to suicide, but before she can overdose she has an epiphany and realizes that she is able to transform the darkness around her into light. She flushes her pills, and moments later meets John-A-Dreams, who inducts her into the Invisibles as Lord Fanny.

Fanny uses her magical abilities to defend the Invisibles on their missions, lacking the fighting skills of Boy or King Mob. She avoids weapons, and tolerates Dane's insults after he joins the team. She spends most of her time in drag, viewing her female persona as more powerful than her male self.

Fanny lives alone, although she gets along with all of the Invisibles bar Jolly Roger. She reads *Skin Two* but doesn't usually dress in fetish gear [perhaps she gives King Mob fashion tips]. She's seen Barbra Streisand in concert, likes Archie comics and loves to dance. She's not afraid to humiliate homophobes in public. She spends early 1995 at the Invisibles' North African academy.

Fanny's nemesis is the demon Orlando, whom she defeats in 1995 and again in 1999. She is a quick thinker in combat [saving Dane from Orlando by attacking him with her shoes].

She is kidnapped in late 1995 by the Conspiracy after a dizzying encounter with the magic mirror,

which revealed that her initiation is ongoing. She offers Brodie, her assailant, to Mictlantecuhltli in her place, meeting a debt from her initiation.

By 1997 she is close friends with Dane, the pair having bonded while obtaining the Hand of Glory from the Harlequinade. Later that year she psychically detects Quimper in Ragged Robin's mind and organizes a surgical strike on the Conspiracy to eliminate Quimper.

Having previously met Quimper in 1990 and seeing him as worthy of sympathy and deserving redemption, Fanny bathes Quimper and herself in magic mirror, showing him the positive side of the mirror he's not yet seen. It is in this moment that Fanny transforms from the redeemed into the redeemer, having the empathy and love to illuminate Quimper instead of destroying him. Later, Fanny nurses Dane until he recovers from a shamanic fever. Shortly afterward, the team disbands.

In 1999 Fanny rejoins King Mob's cell in preparation for the attack on Westminster Abbey to prevent the coronation of the Moonchild. She aids in Miles Delacourt's interrogation and may participate in a *ménage à trois* with King Mob and Helga.

Fanny prepares for the attack by spreading a magical glamour over London [probably in the form of drunken debauchery]. In the Abbey, she defeats Orlando and is stunned to encounter John-A-Dreams, her redeemer, working as an agent of the Outer Church.

Fanny travels with Dane to Rio in 2000 via New York City. She helps him form a new cell, which eventually includes Reynard, Ragged Robin and Takashi. By 2012 she is extremely fat.

On 22 December 2012 she helps send Robin back in time, and is injured in an Archon attack on the

timesuit facility. She is rescued by King Mob, witnessing the ultimate

defeat of the King-of-All-Tears and the onset of the supercontext.

EDITH MANNING (1900-1999)

In 1918 Edith Manning meets Beryl Wyndham. A lesbian affair ultimately leads to Beryl inducting Edith into an Invisibles cell containing herself, Ronald Tolliver, Billy Chang and Edith's cousin Freddie. Edith is attracted by the glamour of the scene, but views it more as a playground than a commitment [although she's happy enough to do solo work such as challenging Papa Skat, it appears that she was never committed enough to select a codename].

Edith embraces the roaring '20s head on, following the flapper lifestyle and a life of money, drugs and bisexuality. She's quite racy [nevermind her lesbian affairs – a white woman alone in a black New York bar listening to jazz would have been beyond the pale], and in her time has affairs with Tallulah Bankhead, Aleister Crowley, F Scott Fitzgerald and Pablo Picasso. [Despite her embrace of debauchery, Freddie says she never had a *ménage à trois*].

In early 1924 Edith travels to India with Freddie. There, she learns the tantra from Mr. Reddy, who thrills her with his 101/2-inch penis, and is baptized in the Ganges, thus removing her soul from the wheel of reincarnation. Reddy also shows her the true form of humanity as a man-shaped mass of energy.

In 1924 Edith meets the modern King Mob, who has projected an astral form back in time in an effort to learn more about the Hand of Glory, which Edith's cell discovers. Although she is a vivacious flirt, Edith is also quite steeled, more than willing to pull a gun on Papa Skat in an effort to steal the

Hand. She volunteers to meet the Harlequinade to win the Hand, and although the experience leaves her distressed for at least a few weeks [as evidenced by her behavior immediately afterward and on the ship to London, a voyage that in 1924 would have taken at least two weeks], she is also the only person to have contact with BARBELiTH without undergoing a trauma immediately beforehand.

Edith views Freddie as her pet project, determined to make him the most powerful magician of his age. Her deliberate cruelty toward this end accomplishes the goal, but at the expense of his sanity. The two share a mental link, which is temporarily severed by her second activation of the Hand of Glory. Upon being shown the true nature of reality, she is unable to comprehend how all times can be one and has a breakdown.

Edith falls for King Mob during his limited time in 1924. They sleep together, Mr. Reddy having shown her how to have sex with a thoughtform, and spend the next day composing silly songs at the piano.

By the 1930s Edith is traveling in the same circles as the Langs [suggesting her fortunes have fallen somewhat]. In 1933 she has a miscarriage on the steps of a Fortnum & Mason department store. A passing gentleman scoops up the fetus in his hat and returns it to her, for which she is eternally grateful. By 1937 her Invisibles cell has fallen apart, destroyed by the death of Ronald Tolliver. Edith moves to America, where she marries twice.

In 1945 Edith stops wearing Chanel No. 5, even though it is her favorite perfume.

In 1951 she visits Wilhelm Reich at Organon.

At 65 Edith retires unhappily. By 1969 she stops drinking, and the next year she returns to England briefly before moving to Paris, where she lives alone, all of her lovers dead. She is childless, unable to have children [possibly as a result of radiation from cradling the Hand of Glory]. Like King Mob, Edith is quite vain, displeased with growing old. She is nostalgic for her past, but bears extreme guilt about what she did to Freddie.

On May 1, 1988 Edith comes across a young King Mob on the Manikarnika *ghat* in Varanasi, India. Recognizing him, she introduces herself and inducts him into the Invisibles.

By 1994 Edith has fallen out of touch with King Mob [who hasn't spoken to her since before John-A-Dreams' disappearance,

which she discovers through other sources]. They resume a strained relationship in spring 1995, consisting mainly of Edith helping him with specific requests. By 1999 however their relationship has become quite close again, and it is he whom she requests to be present at her death.

Edith visits the Marquis de Sade at La Coste in May 1999 but is unimpressed with what she finds, claiming his plans for the future of humanity have no emotion.

In early 1999 Edith receives a series of five letters from Tom O'Bedlam, telling her it is time to die. She is visited by an apparition of Tom shortly before she passes away.

Edith wills herself to death in 1999, determined not to give the Queen the pleasure of sending her a centennial birthday telegram. King Mob burns her corpse in the Ganges. By 2012, he has turned her memoirs into a video game intended to help create Invisibles.

MISTER SIX aka Jon Six aka Brian Malcolm

["Mister Six" appears to be a general code name for this individual and not, as some fans theorize, specific to the Jason King persona. The Invisibles use the name throughout the first volume, before he adopts the new guise.]

Little is known of Jon Six prior to 1968, save that he steals champagne from Harrod's in 1962. He studies at the Invisibles' North African academy in 1968 with Elfayed. That year, the pair travels to Paris, where [perhaps for the first time, using newly learned skills] Six changes personalities.

By the mid-1970s, Mister Six joins Division X, a department of the UK government dedicated to investigating paranormal phenomena. The members

of Division X adopt personalities based on popular television characters of the time to hide their true identities. Six chooses Jason King, played by Peter Wyngarde in the series *Department S* and *Jason King*. By 1976 an unnamed enemy discovers the identities of Division X when a case goes awry; as a result the department disbands. Six's fortune wanes and he spends the latter part of the '70s in a bedsit shared with a hash dealer. [It is perhaps during this period that he alternately worked at Khalso Kebab in Stoke Newington and the Samaritans.]

He becomes Brian Malcolm in 1986 and by 1988 is teaching history in Liverpool [possibly as part of an effort

to create Invisibles, although he may merely have been trying to repair a life gone downhill since the Queen's Jubilee]. This persona possesses a short temper, although his Mister Six personality does not. As Brian Malcolm, the school becomes his life [unless his evening presence in 1.1 is an anomaly, although Boy suggests in 1.5 that he has been specifically fostering Dane]. The Malcolm persona loses the fighting skills associated with Mister Six – he's easily overcome by a trio of boys and later proves no match for Dane's Jack Frost powers. He is a union member [presumably the teachers' union].

While Brian Malcolm, he continues to teach at the North African academy with Elfayed, training both King Mob and Jolly Roger in the White Flame meditation. [It's probable that Mister Six teaches specialized lessons on school holidays, unless we assume he teaches afternoon classes in Africa and travel daily via the Universe A shortcut. If the shortcuts used by Six and King Mob are tied to geographic locations, a doorway may well be in the Liverpool school, explaining his evening presence in issue 1.1].

While helping King Mob's cell in the House of Fun in 1995, Six sacrifices his Brian Malcolm persona to seal a reality abscess.

Mister Six reassumes his Jason King persona with the reactivation of Division X, of which he falsely believes himself to be the only Invisible member. In this persona, he possesses the ability to read minds. He helps Division X track down the Moonchild, rejoins Elfayed in teaching at the North African academy, and joins [and perhaps founds] a third Invisibles cell, this time joined by Purves and his girlfriend Helga. In 1999 he accepts an invitation to join the King in Yellow, from whom he learns the true nature of reality and that the Harlequinade are the secret head of the Invisibles.

After the events at Westminster Abbey, Six and his teammates reform Division X.

Six has a fully developed self-awareness, to the point of fluid personality, discarding personae like clothing with no perceived ill effects. He is extremely confident, able to urinate in public and unconcerned when his girlfriend sleeps with King Mob, although he admits he is scared during the Westminster Abbey affair. He condones aggressive deconditioning techniques and is a proponent of change through crisis [indeed one suspects he'd have had a much happier time at La Coste than Edith did].

QUEEN MAB Beryl Alice Wyndham (1883-1965)

[The dates presented for Beryl's birth don't correlate with other, more reliable information presented in the series. Although her tombstone records her birth in 1896, Edith says the pair met when Beryl was 25 and Edith 18. This places the year of meeting in 1918, when, according to the tombstone, Beryl would have been 22. It seems unlikely that a young woman of Beryl's nature would claim to be older than she is, rather than younger; therefore, we assume that Edith is correct and

that Beryl maintained a healthy three-year reduction in her stated age, which carried over to her tombstone.]

London socialite Beryl Wyndham joins the Invisibles by 1924, adopting the name Queen Mab, the mythical queen of the fairie. After a brief lesbian affair at the age of 25 with Edith Manning, whom she inducts into the Invisibles,

Beryl has a love affair with Ronald Tolliver, who has adopted the moniker King Mob and who she also inducts into the Invisibles. With Tolliver, Queen Mab conducts a terrorist war on the British establishment, blowing up police stations. When her links to the bombings become public knowledge in 1960, she is ruined.

Beryl possesses some form of psychic ability, able to see a vision of Ragged Robin while in a trance, and contact spirits through a ouija board. When the Hand of Glory is activated, she witnesses Tolliver die in the battle of Guernica.

In 1957 she meets Miles Delacourt at an art exhibition. The pair strike up a friendship, joining the Ordo Templi

Orientis. During this time she tells Miles about her time with the Invisibles.

In 1960 Miles publishes a tell-all book called *The Invisibles*, exposing Beryl's activities. The fallout from the book ruins her, and she withdraws from society.

In 1965 Sir Miles murders Beryl, chopping off her left hand in a ritual act ostensibly to prove his inhumanity. In reality his cult masters use the hand – that of a murderer – to create the Hand of Glory.

In 1999, Beryl's skeleton is dug up by the then-contemporary King Mob, Lord Fanny and Helga, and used as part of an effort to brainwash Sir Miles.

QUIMPER (d.1997)

Quimper emerges from the supercontext as a spirit, perceived through various cultural lenses by children around the world beginning at some point just prior to 1990 [Quimper's rape is likely to occur quite soon after he first appears in our reality to so radically alter his worldview]. Visiting Rio as an alien gray in 1990 he is kidnapped by a consortium of masked men who crucify him at a private orgy, attended by both Satan and the pre-Invisibles Lord Fanny, then working as a prostitute. At the party, Quimper is physically and psychologically abused before being raped [and possibly burned alive]. He survives the experience [possibly with the aid of the surgeon fish of the Outer Church, to whom Sir Miles may have sold him in an attempt to curry favor and advance in the ranks] but is horribly disfigured.

By 1996 he is operating several strip clubs in the Soho district of London. A

side business in custom pornography allows him to pursue a few hobbies, presumably including collecting images of himself [itself an obsession possibly resulting from his disfigurement]. Among these videos are sequences filmed for Sir Miles in which the Moonchild rapes a series of women, including Diana Spencer, in an attempt to produce a king to be crowned in Westminster Abbey during the eclipse of 1999. Quimper takes to wearing a stylized mask and avoiding mirrors. He adopts a white suit [presumably the suit is a vain attempt at appearing human, probably an unconscious remembrance of his former self, John-A-Dreams, who wore a similar suit]. Quimper can only see in shades of gray, although whether this is a congenital defect, the result of the burns, or a side effect of the surgeon fish is unknown.

The collapse of his strip club

enterprise due to the untimely investigations of Division X sends him to a secret US military base in New Mexico [where he likely seeks to evade capture with the protection of Colonel Friday]. Perhaps as a result of his time with Friday, Quimper becomes more aggressive in the use of his psychic abilities, embracing casual violence and the degradation of others.

Either through natural ability or technology, Quimper is able to control the magic mirror, using it as a weapon against the Invisibles. His telepathic powers are quite strong – it's not until encountering Jolly Roger in 1996 that he finds someone able to break free of his possession.

Quimper has the ability to implant a replicating incubus in the minds of others, allowing him to take control of his victims at any point. Yet he's also able to be fooled by false memories, and isn't capable of reading minds in general [he's completely unaware that Fanny is acting as a Robin decoy during the Invisibles' second infiltration of Dulce]. Unlike Friday, Quimper doesn't bleed when Satan is near.

Quimper's life in objective reality is quite short, ending in 1997 when Fanny envelops him in magic mirror, delivering him into the supercontext [from which he will return, more successfully, in a fictionsuit called Jack Flint].

RAGGED ROBIN Kay (b.1988)

Kay is born on June 14, 1988 and learns to speak watching movies such as *The Magic Christian*.

Eight-year-old Kay sees a future vision of herself at the Ildesonso pueblo in New Mexico in 1996. The encounter haunts her to the point where she keeps a photograph of a cloud formation taken that day. The obsession sends Kay into an occult phase, during which she discovers Miles Delacourt's *The Invisibles* [and presumably the 1990s comic book series], falling in love with a picture of the author.

In 2005 Kay uses Sky with her friend Kerry; the drug simulates contact with extraterrestrials. Although not yet a student, she bribes a guard into letting her use a *ganzfeldt* tank at Berkeley to write her own version of *The Invisibles* by allowing him to read her sex diary. In her version of the story, she inserts herself as a character

and changes history for others [she rewrites the second Dulce attack so that Jolly Roger doesn't get shot].

By 2008 Kay wears white and red facepaint regularly and has dyed her hair red, inspired by her knowledge of the Invisibles [likely based on the characters from *120 Days of Sodom* in an ironic gesture similar to Reynard's choice of name, transforming darkness into light. This ironic mode of combat manifests itself in her decision to call her daughter Quimper]. A rogue nanomachine swarm spurs her to wear an anti-nanite bracelet, which she wears out of habit even in the past. Her work on *The Invisibles* consumes her, and she becomes afraid to finish the book, fearing she may become trapped in the words. She suffers a breakdown that year and is committed by her parents to an asylum in Portland, where she is randomly given

the Xener test for ESP, on which she scores quite highly.

On October 25, 2008 she is released from the asylum by Mason Lang, who has been monitoring Xener ESP test results. They have a brief affair, traveling around the world. In 2009 she meets Takashi, who introduces her to the Invisibles in 2010, at this point comprised of Dane, Fanny, Reynard and Takashi. She is exposed to magic mirror and the nature of the revolution, agreeing to be the debut pilot for Takashi's new timesuit and adopting the codename Ragged Robin. During this period Robin lives in San Francisco at home with her brother, Toby. On television she watches vintage episodes of *The Prisoner*, follows the gay soap opera *Dolly Boys Down Under* and has little time for top model Shae Fox. She drives a motorcycle, and believes the large Technocult corporation is a tool of the Conspiracy. Dane is her pillar of support while in the Invisibles.

On December 22, 2012, as the King-of-All-Tears descends on the Invisibles' headquarters, killing Takashi, Robin uses a timesuit to travel backward in time. She lands at some point prior to September 1992, at which point she is recruited by John-A-Dreams into his Invisibles cell, which is primarily concerned at that time with printing underground magazines.

Robin doesn't believe in Voodoo or the tarot, but carries a tarot deck with her and conducts random readings. She occasionally refers to herself in the third person [possibly because she spent so much time writing her own story]. Robin is the most compassionate of the Invisibles, unable to get into character during the fox hunt of Dane and handing him a pound coin when he's under surveillance. She thinks psychic interrogation is unethical, and

is uncomfortable with violence. She has killed enemy soldiers, but considers it murder. Nevertheless, she is willing to erase the Invisibles' short-term memories when necessary. She has seen *Easy Rider*, and always wanted to re-enact the graveyard LSD scene.

Meeting Dane in 1995, she forgets that her first words were supposed to be, "I'm Ragged Robin, I'm nuts," blurting it a few moments later [perhaps she is stunned to see how different her anchor is; this may also be why she's so close with Dane in 2012 but slightly distant throughout the 1990s]. In 1995 she begins wearing frilly clothes and ratty hair, based on the grown Dane's recollections. She's not comfortable in the clothes, and by 1997 has reverted to the sexier gear she was used to in 2012.

Robin is slightly telepathic, able to detect the presence of Myrmidons and locate the Marquis de Sade. She's not strong enough to break through Dane's mental shields when he's hiding on the streets of London in fall of 1995. [However, her telepathic powers are probably strong enough to cloud the thoughts of random passersby to the point that they don't recognize her outrageous makeup, as nobody in the entire series ever comments on it.] When Quimper plants an incubus in her mind in the fall of 1996, she is clever enough to trap it in a false abuse memory. She has a cybernetic implant on her skull to augment her telepathic abilities.

Robin doesn't have many fighting skills, but she's not frightened of Myrmidons, haunted houses or Satan. Robin's a pragmatist, easily dismissing the Head of John the Baptist despite its profound historical significance because it's of no use to her personally. She's calm under pressure, and although unafraid of Satan, she is wise

enough to decline a game of chess with him. Robin has a slightly addictive personality, acquiring nearly instant obsessions with Sky, smart drinks and, later, King Mob. Despite her history with Mason, she suspects he may be hoaxing the 1990s Invisibles after the Scorpio experience. Nevertheless, she doesn't pay much attention to preventing a temporal paradox, and is happy to tell Mason his fate. Her autocritique under the alien alphabet focuses on being a filmic sex symbol instead of a woman of substance.

Robin remains more loyal to her contemporary group of Invisibles than the 1990s cell, with her love for King Mob an unanticipated complication.

She is friendly enough with Boy, but remains aloof during her early years, allowing her forceful personality to emerge only after becoming team leader in 1996. She's willing to keep the team in the dark about Quimper's attempted possession for nearly a year, viewing her mission in the past to be his removal from the battle.

By fall 1997 Robin is pregnant by King Mob, but decides to return to 'her' Invisibles in 2012 via the timesuit anyway. The device fails, and Robin bounces across space-time before being absorbed into the supercontext, from which she emerges just moments before it envelops reality on December 22, 2012.

REYNARD

Reynard is inducted into the Invisibles in 2001 by Dane McGowan, acting as a teacher at her high school. Relieved to get out of school, which she hates, Reynard finds herself enduring a three-year initiation into the team as a trainee accounts manager.

[It's unknown whether her code name is chosen or assigned; it may be that Dane calls her Reynard in an ironic remembrance of his own initiation, in which he was chased by fox hunters.]

Following the end of her initiation, Reynard spends seven years as an Invisible in Dane's cell.

She thinks of herself as a "post-nowist," aggressively modern to the point that she calls Dane "granddad" and prefers to assign herself a series of memes rather than a personality.

In 2012 Reynard breaks into the Technocult headquarters with Dane, surprised to discover that it's secretly run by King Mob.

As reality collapses into the supercontext, Reynard is unprepared, frightened when Ragged Robin reappears into reality. Ultimately King Mob calms her down, and she enters the supercontext content.

MARQUIS DE SADE

Donatien Alphonse Francois Sade (1740-1814)

Imprisoned in an asylum in part for works such as *Justine* and *The 120 Days of Sodom*, the Marquis de Sade

is freed by the Invisibles during the French revolution when they bring him to 1995 as a *tulpa* thoughtform to

establish a new template for humanity. Although he initially finds the modern world “mad,” he soon embraces its possibilities on a trip to the Power Exchange bondage club in San Francisco, inducting the hustler Thierro and a young girl into his cell of Invisibles.

Despite wishing to be buried in an unmarked grave with his books destroyed, the Marquis instead transcends death to help usher in the supercontext through changing behaviors and attitudes through his sex research at La Coste. There he constructs an orgone accumulator and develops a new gender, the androgynous non, which is commonplace by 2012.

The Marquis is rather different in person to his writings. Instead of a perverted fantasy, *The 120 Days of Sodom* is his warning about what humanity will become if it insists on treating people like commodities. Although he embraces sexuality as a means for transforming the world, he is gracious to critics such as Edith and appears primarily interested in helping people, as evidenced by his work with Reichian therapy. He considers “normal” people to be perverts and hopes to one day enable children to grow up free from their parents’ foibles. However, despite a revulsion at the sight of the vivisected Myrmidon victim, de Sade is also entranced by its bloody state.

TOM O’BEDLAM Frederick Harper-Seaton (d.1995)

Son of a famous mage in the tradition of the Golden Dawn, Frederick Harper-Seaton joins the Invisibles by 1924 – along with his cousin, Edith Manning, with whom he shares a psychic link. He accepts his enhanced mental abilities but is fearful of other magical phenomena [perhaps as a result of his father’s occult activities].

Freddie is intimidated by his father, but rebels in small yet meaningful ways. He adopts the name Tom O’Bedlam, demonstrating a blasé attitude toward magick and invisibilism. At the same time, there appears to be love and a certain amount of respect for his father, as demonstrated by the debilitating effects of the memory of his death. In many ways, he follows in his father’s footsteps.

If Tom has a weakness, it is Edith. He is desperately in love with her, and jealous of her sexual exploits. She sees

him as her protégé and pet project, and he half-heartedly goes along with her antics in order to spend time with her. Their relationship is quite special on account of their psychic link [they were probably playmates as children]. She may have goaded him into joining the Invisibles [he certainly appears apprehensive of their activities, when not ridiculing the group]. Tom accompanies Edith to her meetings with the Harlequinade in search of the Hand of Glory in 1924, but does not directly assist her.

Edith believes Tom is homosexual, which is a supposition he doesn’t confirm or deny. [His jealousy over Edith’s sexual escapades are possibly related to the fact that he wants her time and attention more than he wants her sexually. Perhaps he views Edith as rather indiscriminating in her choice of lovers, and therefore feels inade-

quate because he was never chosen.]

He behaves in an extremely juvenile fashion in regards to Edith's personal affairs, making snide remarks under his breath and eavesdropping on her while she's having sex.

Edith takes over the controlling role in Tom's life from his father, pushing him into uncomfortable places and experiences. His rebellions are weak and ineffectual, and until the incident with the Hand of Glory, Freddie remains very much a child.

In 1924, the Invisibles complete the final operation of the Hand, opening a fracture into Universe B. Tom is at ground zero, and as a result goes completely mad for six months.

By 1960 Tom has become a mage in the Ordo Templi Orientis under his real name, placing himself on the commanding side of authority for once. During this period he encounters Miles Delacourt.

Tom maintains contact with the Invisibles at least through 1988, teaching King Mob how to generate shortcuts across space by using the Universe B intersection.

But by 1995 Tom is homeless, living on the streets of London. [Perhaps Delacourt's *The Invisibles* ruined Tom as it did former Invisible Beryl Wyndham. Or perhaps having experienced both the controlling and subservient modes of authority, he volun-

tarily rejects hierarchy – and by necessity the culture that produces it – altogether.]

Tom maintains contact with Edith, and agrees in the summer of 1995 to induct Dane McGowan into the Invisibles. [That Tom is entrusted to indoctrinate the “messiah” suggests that he truly is the greatest magician of them all, as Edith always hoped he would be.]

Tom is comfortable being homeless, learning to observe reality from a new perspective. He spends a season educating Dane, appearing to develop a real affection for him. He helps Dane defeat his personal demons, which involve his sense of abandonment and loss over his father leaving, and the armor his psyche built to protect him from those feelings. [It's a personal battle that Tom himself may have undertaken and won, and so he is particularly interested in seeing Dane succeed.]

Tom eventually induces contact between Dane and BARBELiTH. Before they go their separate ways, Tom compiles his belongings for his protégé, storing them in a bag in a locker. The bag serves as an inheritance of sorts – shortly afterward, Tom ambles off into the Underground to die, homeless, free of all earthly possessions, the most powerful magician in the world.

TAKASHI SATOH (d.2012)

As a child, Takashi Satoh is shown how to fold a peculiar origami shape by his mother, who in turn learned it from her father, who died in the Hiroshima bombing.

In 1990 Takashi takes a photograph of a cloud formation in New Zealand.

By 1996 Takashi works for Mason Lang in San Francisco, propelled by the belief that he has already unlocked the secret of time travel in his own personal future, building a timesuit shaped like the origami of his childhood and traveling back in time to show his

grandfather. As such, he labors to develop homeopathic software for Lang while secretly waiting for the key to time travel to be delivered to him. The moment arrives when he sees a photograph Robin took of a cloud formation in 1996 that matches his own.

Shortly after this he loses his right eye while being tortured by the Yakuza. Takashi does not hold the incident against the Invisibles, opting instead to assist them through his work. By 2009 he has become a fully fledged Invisible, and three years later is poised to launch the world's first timesuit.

Takashi is kind, driven to tears by the death of his coworker, Shoji. Yet he isn't necessarily trusting, unsure of whether to believe Robin. He plays rape videogames. He keeps a diary,

and at some point after 1998 begins wearing a turban. After his accident, Takashi sees only in monochrome, yet he refuses to wear a liquid lens to replace his lost eye.

By 2012 he is married to a Japanese woman, possibly his girlfriend from 1999. [It's unclear whether Takashi returns to Japan or remains in America, visiting the Invisibles' San Francisco headquarters to test the timesuit. But the bulky and intricate nature of the experiment suggests that Takashi is based in California and has merely installed a traditional rock garden in his home.]

On December 22, 2012 Takashi is killed by the descending King-of-All-Tears just as the timesuit launches for the first time.

"I'm writing a
book, I'm
floating in a
warm ocean
of living
words."

ANARCHY FOR THE MASSES BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE INVISIBLES is an extremely literate series, playing with fictional norms and traditions established not only in earlier comic books, but the broader spectrum of literature. Perhaps not surprisingly, several of the characters within the series shared this literacy, namechecking dozens of books through the course of the three volumes. Grant Morrison used THE INVISIBLES' innovative letters column to expand on ideas featured in the series, recommending texts that inspired certain storylines and books for further exploration. Contained here is a complete list of those books, handy for readers wishing to further immerse themselves in the world of Invisiblism. Interestingly, several notable influences – the *Illuminatus!* trilogy, *VALIS* – are never mentioned by name, even though occasionally quoted outright in the series.

The 120 Days of Sodom
By the Marquis de Sade

The 120 Days of Sodom (play)
Adapted by Nick Hedges

1984
By George Orwell

Alien Identities
By Richard L Thompson

Ariel
By Andre Maurois

Atlas Shrugged
By Ayn Rand

Aztec and Maya Myths
By Karl Taube

The Big Book of Conspiracies
By Doug Moench

Bloody Poetry
By Howard Brenton

The Cat in the Hat
By Dr. Suess

Chaos Ritual
By Steve Wilson

Chaosmosis
By Jason Hoelscher

Coleridge: Early Visions
By Richard Holmes

Come Before Christ and Murder Love
By Stewart Home

Condensed Chaos
By Phil Hine

The Cornelius Chronicles
By Michael Moorcock

Cyberia
By Douglas Rushkoff

Dark Eros
By Thomas Moore

Digital Justice
By Pepe Moreno

The Divine Comedy
By Alighieri Dante

The Divine Horsemen
By Maya Deren

The Ecstasy Club
By Douglas Rushkoff

Einstein's Dreams
By Alan Lightman

The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test
By Tom Wolfe

Extraterrestrial Friends and Foes
By George C Andrews

Frankenstein
By Mary Shelley

The Great Gatsby
By F Scott Fitzgerald

The Guillotine and the Terror
By Daniel Arasse

Haunted Britain
By Anthony D Hippisley Cox

Historical Illuminatus
By Robert Anton Wilson

The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail
By Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln

Hotter Blood
Edited by Jeff Gelb and Michael Garrett

Hottest Blood
Edited by Jeff Gelb and Michael Garrett

The Illuminoids
By Neal Wilgus

Lord Halifax's Complete Ghost Book
Edited by Charles Lindley

The Marquis de Sade
By Robert Del Quiaro

Mama Lola
By Karen McCarthy Brown

Mary Shelley
By Muriel Spark

Metal Sushi
By David Conway

Monstrous Cults
By Stephen Sennitt

Mutual Aid
By Peter Kropotkin

Naked Lunch
By William S Burroughs

NLP The New Technology of Achievement
Edited by Steve Andreas and Charles Faulkner

On the Bus
By Ken Babbs and Paul Perry

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
By Ken Kesey

The Passionate Philosopher: A de Sade Reader
Selected and translated by Margaret Crossland

Physical Interrogation Techniques
By Richard Krousher

Pissing Away the American Dream
Edited by David Rees

Poetical Works
By Bysshe Shelley

Prime Chaos
By Phil Hine

Quantum Psychology
By Robert Anton Wilson

Rapid Eye 3
Edited by Simon Dwyer

The Sadeian Women
By Angela Carter

Secret and Suppressed
Edited by Jim Keith

Sexual Anarchy
By Elaine Showalter

The Shaman's Body
By Arnold Mindell

Shelley – The Pursuit
By Richard Holmes

The Starry Wisdom
Edited by Dave Mitchell

The Teachings of Don Carlos
By Victor Sanchez

The Third Policeman
By Flann O'Brien

The Tree of Lies
By Christopher S Hyatt

Ulysses
By James Joyce

Undoing Yourself with Energized Meditation and Other Devices
By Christopher S Hyatt

A Vindication of the Rights of Women
By Mary Wollstonecraft

Voodoo and Hoodoo
By Jim Haskins

The Voudoun Gnostic Workbook
By Michael Bertiaux

When the Whip Comes Down
By Jeremy Reed

Words of Fire, Deeds of Blood
By Olivier Bernier



