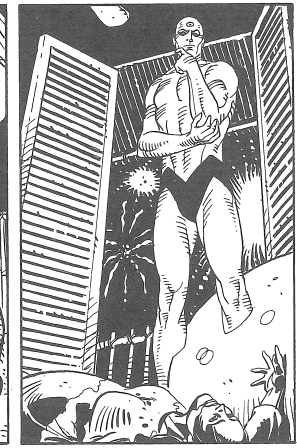
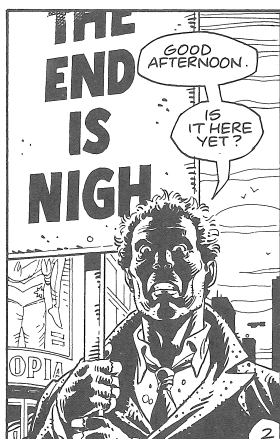
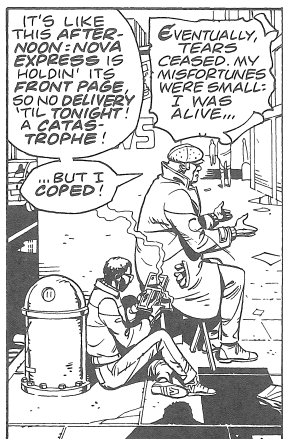
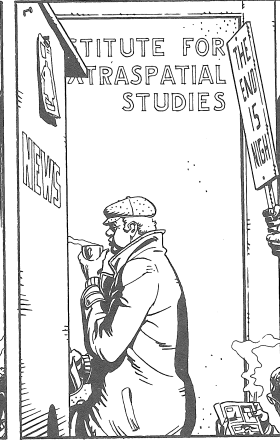
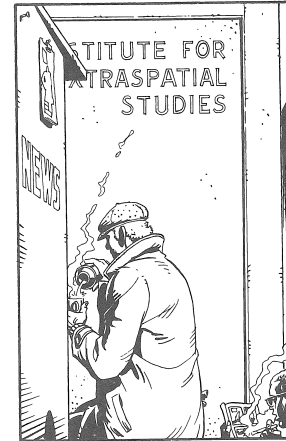
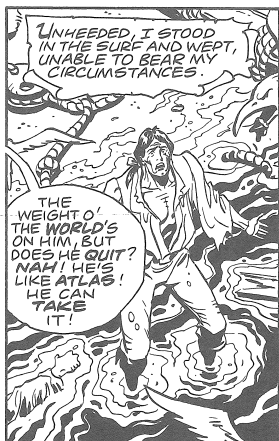
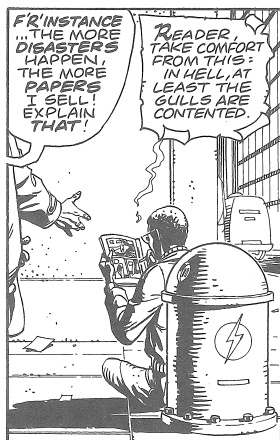
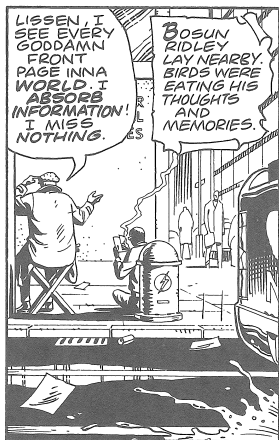
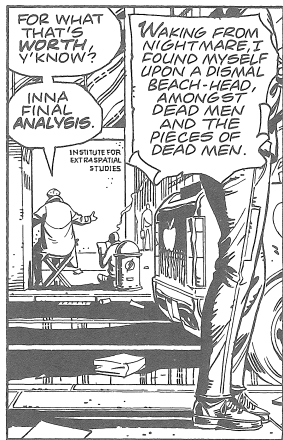


II. 14-15 COLORMARKING #1



III. 2-3 COLOR MARKING #2



IV.24-25 COLORMARKING #3

IT'S 1981 NOW. LAURIE AND I ARE SETTLING INTO OUR NEW QUARTERS AT THE ROCKEFELLER MILITARY RESEARCH CENTER IN NEW YORK.

IT'S WELL-EQUIPPED FOR MY WORK, BUT LAURIE FEELS WE'VE LOST OUR PRIVACY.

SAT
SPE
TALEN
ONLY

SHE'D LIKE IT HERE.

THROUGH MY BLUE FINGERS, PINK GRAINS ARE FALLING, HAD-HAZARD, RANDOM, A DISORGANIZED STREAM OF SILICONE THAT SEEMS PREGNANT WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF EVERY CONCEIVABLE SHAPE...

... BUT THIS IS ILLUSION. THINGS HAVE THEIR SHAPE IN TIME, NOT SPACE ALONE. SOME MARBLE BLOCKS HAVE STATUES WITHIN THEM, EMBEDDED IN THEIR FUTURE.

IN NEW YORK WE GO WALKING.

THE STREETS SMELL OF OZONE RATHER THAN GASOLINE. FLAT INTANGIBLE BLOTS OF GRAY SLIDE ACROSS THE SUMMER SIDEWALKS, THE SHADOWS OF OVERHEAD AIRSHIPS.

ERSMAN

IN 1959, A CHILD IS WEEPING FOR ITS LOST BALLOONS.

ANY MOMENT NOW, JANEY'S WATCHBAND WILL BREAK. SOMEWHERE, THE FAT MAN IS ALREADY LUMBERING TOWARD THE SHOOTING GALLERY, STEPS HEAVY WITH UNWITTING DESTINY.

IT'S AUGUST, 1985. I'M WALKING THROUGH GRAND CENTRAL STATION WITH LAURIE. WE STOP AT THE NEWSSTAND AND BUY A COPY OF TIME MAGAZINE, COVERING HIROSHIMA WEEK.

ON THE COVER THERE IS A DAMAGED THROUGH POCKET-WATCH, STOPPED AT THE INSTANT OF THE BLAST, FACE CRACKED...

TIME

... HANDS FROZEN.

24

IT'S SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12TH, 1985, AND WE ARE BEING INFORMED OF EDWARD BLAKE'S MURDER.

LAURIE'S MOOD SEEMS RESTLESS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE WEEKEND.

WEDNESDAY THE 16TH. LAURIE IS VISITING HER MOTHER WHILE I ATTEND BLAKE'S FUNERAL.

A THIN MAN IN A BLACK COAT LEAVES ROSES, THEN WALKS AWAY. DO I KNOW HIM?

SATURDAY THE 19TH NOW. MY HANDS ENCIRCLE LAURIE'S FACE...

IN 1966, THE COSTUMED PEOPLE ARE ARGUING.

IN 1959, I AM TELLING JANEY I SHALL ALWAYS WANT HER.

IT'S LATER. LAURIE IS WALKING OUT ON ME.

ON A ROOFTOP IN THE PAST, I PULL HER SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD BODY TO ME, BREATHING HER PERFUME, NEVER WANTING TO LOSE HER, KNOWING THAT I SHALL.

SPECIAL TALENT QUARTERS
VISITORS' ENTRANCE

LATER STILL, AND IN THE CROWDED TV STUDIO, I AM BEING ACCUSED OF KILLING THOSE CLOSEST TO ME.

THE WORD "CANCER" RUNS THROUGH THE AUDIENCE ON A FIRECRACKER STRING OF ANXIOUS WHISPERS.

I AM TIRED OF THIS WORLD; THESE PEOPLE. I AM TIRED OF BEING CAUGHT IN THE TANGLE OF THEIR LIVES.

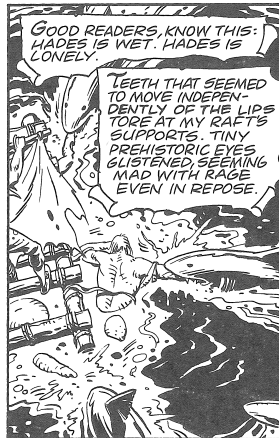
IN ARIZONA, I'M ENTERING THE RUINED BAR WITH A SENSATION OF DÉJÀ VU...

... AND I'M TAKING THE SNAPSHOT FROM ITS BROKEN FRAME...

geness and Charm.

... AND I'M GONE.

25



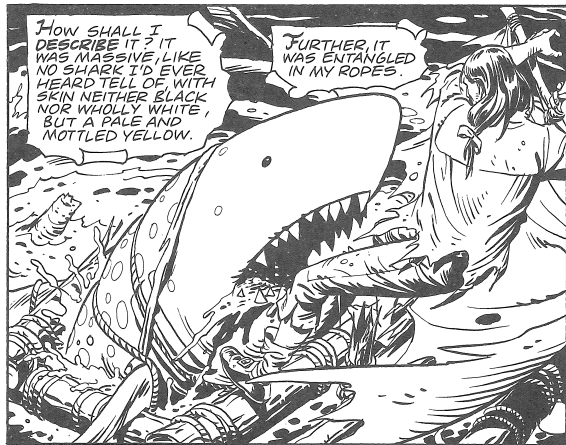
GOOD READERS, KNOW THIS: HADES IS LONELY.

LEETH THAT SEEMED TO MOVE INDEPENDENTLY OF THE LIPS TORE AT MY RAFT'S SUPPORTS. TINY PREHISTORIC EYES GLISTENED, SEEMING MAD WITH RAGE EVEN IN REPOSE.



WHATEVER WAS BENEATH MY BOAT COMMENCED A VIOLENT THRASHING, ALMOST SPILLING ME AMONGST THE SHAWING HORRORS.

CLINGING TO MY MAST AS THE PLATFORM TILTED FURTHER, THE WATER BEGAN TO BOIL WHITE. SOMETHING WAS SURFACING.



HOW SHALL I DESCRIBE IT? IT WAS MASSIVE, LIKE NO SHARK I'D EVER HEARD TELL OF WITH SKIN NEITHER BLACK NOR WHOLLY WHITE BUT A PALE AND MOTTLED YELLOW.

FURTHER, IT WAS ENTANGLED IN MY ROPES.



TERRIFIED LEST IT SHOULD RE-SUBMERGE AND DRAG ME WITH IT, I FELL TO MY KNEES CLUTCHING A SPLINTER OF MAST THAT HAD SNAPPED OFF IN MY HAND.

THE SHARK'S STAINED MARBLE EYE LOOKED UP AT ME...



... AND, IN THAT INSTANT, WE KNEW EACH OTHER.



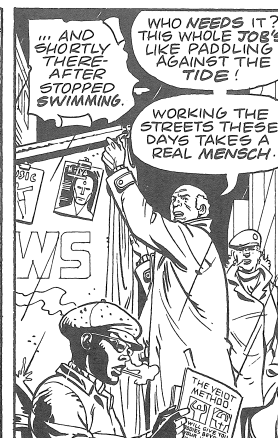
HALF BLIND; HALF DEAD; WHOLLY DERANGED BY AGONY; THE YELLOW LEVIATHAN ATTEMPTED TO SWIM AWAY, DRAGGING MY RAFT IN ITS BLOODY WAKE.

I HUNG ON DESPERATELY, CURSING IN THIS BURNING STINGING SPRAY.



THIS GODDAMN PAIN IN THE BUTT RAIN! DON'T IT EVER LET UP?

EVENUALLY, THE SHARK DIED...



... AND SHORTLY THERE-AFTER STOPPED SWIMMING.

WHO NEEDS IT? THIS WHOLE JOB'S LIKE PADDLING AGAINST THE TIDE!

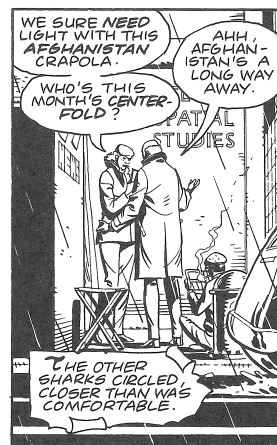
WORKING THE STREETS THESE DAYS TAKES A REAL MENSCH.



MAN, CABE DRIVING ME BUSTING MY NUTS? GIMME A COPY HUSTLER.

HI, JOEY. I WANT THE PROMETHEAN? STILL BRINGING LIGHT TO THE WORLD?

RELIEF WAS FLEETING, MY PROSPECTS STILL DARK.



WE SURE NEED LIGHT WITH THIS AFGHANISTAN CRAPOLA.

WHO'S THIS MONTH'S CENTER-FOLD?

THE OTHER SHARKS CIRCLED, CLOSER THAN WAS COMFORTABLE.



IT'S PAKISTAN OUGHTTA WORRY. THEY'RE WIDE OPEN.

MMM.

WELL, WE'RE ALL PRETTY VULNERABLE.

THEY WORRIED THE MORSELS FROM MY RAFT, WHICH I PRAYED WOULD SATISFY THEM.



THAT REMINDS ME. I GOTTA POSTER MAYBE COULD DISPLAY, SO IT WON'T GET TORN UP.

AFTER EATING, THEY DEPARTED, REPLETE FOR THE MOMENT, I WAS SAFE.



THAT NIGHT EATING SHARK I WOULD HAVE CHUCKLED AT THE INVERSION OF NATURAL ROLES. HAD NOT MY PARDED LAUGHTER SEEMED SO HATEFUL.

GAY WOMEN AGAINST RAPE?

IS THIS A JOKE?



IT'S A BENEFIT GIG. NOW YOU GONNA NAIL IT UP OR AM I GONNA ALTER YOUR LOOKS?

MY RAFT GREW INCREASINGLY GROTESQUE, REFLECTING MY OWN GRADUAL TRANSFORMATION.

PINK TRIANGLE LOVE AT THE GAY WOMEN AGAINST RAPE BEING



WITH SUCH THIN WHITE TO COMFORT ME, I DRIFTED ON, MAST-LESS INTO THE DAWN.

BRINGING LIGHT TO THE WORLD.

MY ASS.

