

TOP COW®



www.topcow.com

image®

6

\$2.99
US
CAN

NOVEMBER



DCSOFT



HICKMAN TORTOSA OBACK

CITY OF HEROES™

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

PART 3 OF 3

"Troy Hickman knocks it out of the park by getting to the heart of these characters."

HeroRealm.com

TM & © 2002 Top Cow Productions, Inc.

IMAGECOMICS.COM
DIRECT SALES



0 0611

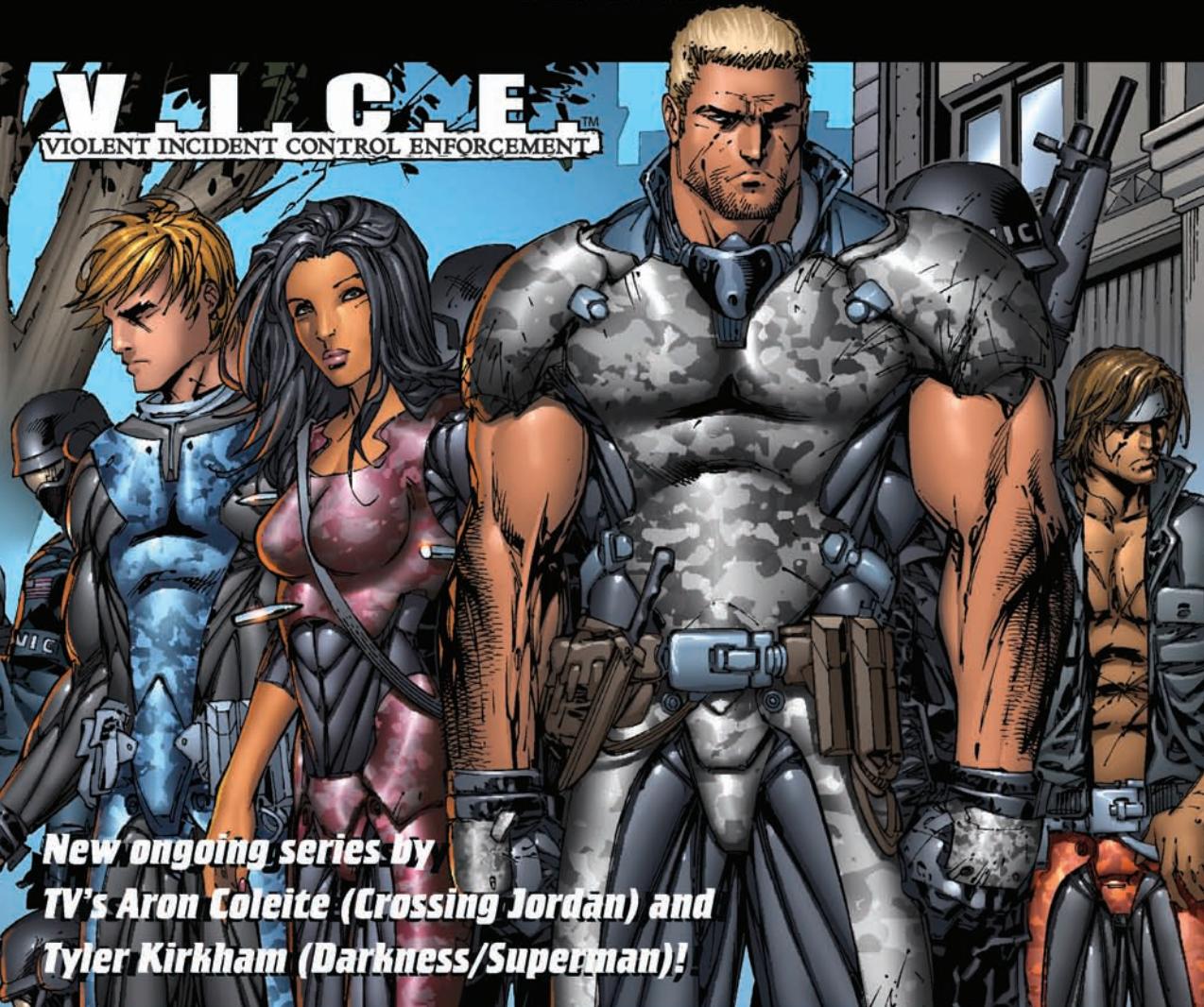


7 09853 00302 1

2005 IS THE

"YEAR OF THE COW!"

- WIZARD #162



New ongoing series by
TV's Aron Coleite (*Crossing Jordan*) and
Tyler Kirkham (*Darkness/Superman*)!

OCTOBER

ALSO AVAILABLE FROM
TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

CITY OF HEROES #6

NECROMANCER #3

DARKNESS #24

WITCHBLADE #91

HUNTER - KILLER #5



WITCHBLADE, NECROMANCER, DARKNESS and HUNTER-KILLER are © 2005 Top Cow Productions, Inc. CITY OF HEROES is © 2005 Cryptic Studios, Inc. and NCSoft Corporation. Cryptic Studios and NCSoft are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCSoft Corporation. City of Heroes is a registered trademark of Cryptic Studios, Inc. and NCSoft Corporation. Cryptic Studios is a trademark of Cryptic Studios, Inc. The Witchblade, "Hunter-Killer," "Darkness," and "Necromancer," their logo and the names of all series of characters are trademarks or registered trademarks of Top Cow Productions, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

SMOKE AND MIRRORS

Part 3 of 3

WRITER: TROY HICKMAN
PENCILS: WILSON TORTOSA
COLORS: SONIA OBACK
DESIGN: CHAZ RIGGS
LETTERING: TROY PETERI
COVER: RODOLFO MIGLIARI

Marc Silvestri, chief executive officer; Matt Hawkins, president / chief operating officer; Jim McLaurin, editor-in-chief; Renée Greenberg, vp of publishing / managing editor; Scott Tucker, editor; Chaz Riggs, production manager; Anne Pham, marketing director; Peter Lanz, webmaster; Phil Fonda, trades and submissions; Rob Lewis and Zach McHenry, production assistants; Conny Tolks, Jeff Hamada and Scott Neasey, interns.

SO TELL
ME WHERE THE
THORNS ARE HOLDING
THEIR CEREMONY, OR
YOU DON'T GET OFF
AS EASY AS YOUR
PALS HERE...

City of Heroes® Vol. 1 Issue 6, OCTOBER 2005, FIRST PRINTING. Published by Image Comics Inc. Office of Publication: 1942 University Ave., Suite 305 Berkeley, CA 94704. \$2.99 US, \$4.60 CAN. City of Heroes is © 2005 Cryptic Studios, Inc. and NC Interactive, Inc. NCsoft, the Interlocking NC logo, City of Heroes and all associated NCsoft logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. City of Heroes is a registered trademark of Cryptic Studios, Inc. and NCsoft Corporation. Cryptic Studios is a trademark of Cryptic Studios, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. The contents of this book are © 2005 Top Cow Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. The characters, events and stories in this publication are entirely fictional. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this book may be reprinted in any form without the express written consent of Top Cow Productions, Inc. PRINTED IN CANADA.

Plot Editing Assists: Sean Michael Fish
Statesman and Sister Psyche created by
Jack Emmert

Positron created by Matthew Miller
Manticore, Synapse and Lord Recluse
created by Sean Michael Fish
NCsoft Producer: Brian Clayton
NCsoft Product Manager: Kevin Sullivan





"THE END OF LIFE ON EARTH. THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT, VICTORIA. I JUST PRAY THE FREEDOM PHALANX CAN PUT A STOP TO THIS BEFORE THE THORNS BRING THEIR DEMON TO THIS WORLD."



"AT THE MOMENT, IT'S NOT LOOKING TOO GOOD."

"THE THORNS HAVE CAPTURED ME, A MODEL NAMED CANDY SOMETHING, AND A LITTLE BOY WHOSE NAME IS JIMMY, I THINK HE SAID."



"POOR LITTLE FELLA. I'VE TRIED TALKING TO HIM, TRIED TO CALM HIM DOWN, BUT HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS."

"HOW COULD HE? HOW COULD HE UNDERSTAND THAT HE'S PART OF SOME COSMIC ALIGNMENT THAT'LL BRING CHAOS TO THE PLANET?"



LEAVE HIM ALONE, CREEP!

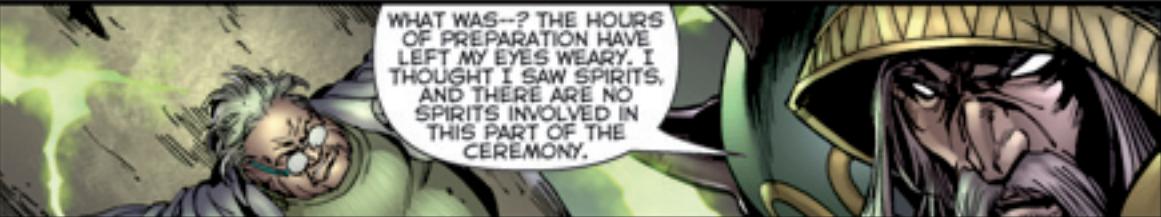
YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT TOUCHIN' THAT BOY, AND--

AND WHAT? YOU THINK I HAVE ANYTHING TO FEAR FROM A DODDERING OLD MAN?



"YOU TAKE THESE SHACKLES OFF ME, AND I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT THIS OLD MAN CAN DO."





WHAT WAS--? THE HOURS OF PREPARATION HAVE LEFT MY EYES WEARY. I THOUGHT I SAW SPIRITS, AND THERE ARE NO SPIRITS INVOLVED IN THIS PART OF THE CEREMONY.



STATESMAN! COME IN! I'VE FOUND THEM!



IT'S SYNAPSE! HE'S FOUND THE GATHERING!

WAY TO GO, BUDDY!

I RAN RIGHT INTO THE MIDST OF THEM. THEY'VE PUT UP SOME SORT OF CLOAKING SPELL THAT KEEPS THEM FROM BEING SEEN AT A DISTANCE.

PROBABLY HIDES THEIR THOUGHTS, TOO.

AND THEIR MYSTICAL ENERGY EMISSIONS...



EVERYONE, READY YOURSELVES! WE LEAVE HERE IN 60 SECONDS.

AND SYNAPSE? YOU REALLY DID IT. I'M... SORRY I DOUBTED YOU.

HEY, I MAY BE JOE SIXPACK COMPARED TO SOME OF YOU GUYS, BUT I'D LIKE TO THINK I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TOO, Y'KNOW.

YES, I KNOW, AND YES... YOU DO.

ON OUR WAY.



"I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN, VICTORIA, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE MAY BE TOGETHER SOON."

"I CAN'T WAIT FOR THAT, 'CAUSE YOU KNOW HOW I'VE MISSED YOU OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, HONEY."

"BUT I SURE DON'T WANT IT TO BE THIS WAY. I DON'T WANT EVERYONE ELSE TO LOSE OUT ON THE KIND OF LIFE YOU AND I MADE TOGETHER..."



"YOU REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST GOT HitchED? YOUR FOLKS DIDN'T WANT YOU TO HAVE ANY PART OF A SKINNY KID WITH NO PROSPECTS."

"HEH, I GUESS I DID OKAY FOR MYSELF IN THE LONG RUN, THOUGH."



"AND WHEN I TALKED YOU INTO SEWING TOGETHER MY FIRST COSTUME? YOU THOUGHT ME BEING A SUPERHERO WAS ABOUT AS SCREWY A NOTION AS YOU'D EVER HEARD."







NO, YOU FOOLS! WE OUTNUMBER THEM, OUR POWER IS AT ITS ZENITH, AND STILL YOU FAIL ME! DEFEAT THEM OR FACE MY WRATH!

OH, IT'S THE BIG, SCARY SPECTERS! I GUESS I SHOULD COWER IN FEAR, BUT HEY...

PSYCHE DON'T PLAY THAT.

AH, THE TENTACLES. BEEN THERE, DONE THAT. I'M AFRAID, AND THEY DON'T BEGIN TO HAVE THE POWER TO DEAL WITH MY LEVEL OF ENERGY.



BAH, I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS! THE TIME OF THE THIRTEEN KNELLS IS NIGH!
I SHALL END THIS NOW, WITH MY NEWFOUND POWER, I INVOKE THE SLEEP OF FOREVER ONYX!



FIND INSIDE
THE MIND OF
POSITRON...

MY
ARMOR!
IT'S FLAKING
AWAY, BIT BY
BIT! BUT
WITHOUT
IT...

...THERE'S
NOTHING TO HOLD
ME TOGETHER! I'M
JUST...OH, GOD,
HELP ME!



WHERE
AM I? ALL
THOSE
PEOPLE...
STARVING,
DYING...

...AND
I CAN'T DO
ANYTHING.
I HAVE THIS
COSTUME,
THESE
ARROWS...
BUT NO
FOOD OR
WATER.

NO...



NOW, WE MAY FINALIZE THE CEREMONY. PREPARE FOR THE KNELLS. THESE FOOLS ARE HELPLESS.

HELP ME, STATESMAN!

NO, HELP ME! MY DAUGHTER HAS BEEN ABDUCTED!

NO, I NEED YOU MORE! MY HUSBAND IS TRAPPED UNDER A COLLAPSED WALL!

NO, ME! I'M DYING!

NO, ME!

ME! ME!

GET BACK! I WANT TO HELP YOU ALL, BUT I CAN'T! I CAN'T!

THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO, AND I CAN NEVER DO IT ALL! NO MATTER HOW LONG I LIVE!

EXCELLENT! NOW IT BEGINS.

WE CAN'T LET THIS GO ON. I'VE GOT TO--

I THINK I HAVE AN IDEA.

HEY! HEY, YOU, MAGIC GUY?

LOOK, IF YOU'LL STOP THIS RIGHT NOW, MAYBE WE CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT, Y'KNOW? I MEAN, YOU AND ME? I'VE BEEN ON THE COVER OF COSMO, YOU KNOW.

QUIET, WOMAN! WHEN MY MASTER ENTERS THIS WORLD, I WILL HAVE YOU AND A THOUSAND THOUSAND LIKE YOU IF I CHOOSE.

YOU DO HAVE THE HONOR OF BEING HERE FOR HIS ARRIVAL, THOUGH. THE TIME HAS COME. ONCE I STRIKE THE GONG THIRTEEN TIMES, THE PORTAL SHALL OPEN, AND THE FUTURE SHALL BELONG TO MY KIND.

GET AWAY! WE'RE NOT TOGETHER ANYMORE! AND I'M MY OWN PERSON!

BUT YOU STILL CARRY PART OF ME INSIDE! WE STILL--

LIKE HELL! I MAY BE A LOT OF THINGS, AND SOME OF THEM AREN'T SO NICE, I SUPPOSE. BUT I'M ME...

...ME!

SOMETHING'S HAPPENING IN THE WAKING WORLD. OH, NO...

WE HAVE TO STOP THE IDIOT WITH THE GONG... FAST!

NOT SURE THIS WILL WORK, BUT IT'S ALL WE'VE GOT...

BACK AT HQ, MANTICORE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT WORKING TOGETHER.

HE'S A MOUTH, BUT SOMETIMES MAYBE HE'S GOT THE RIGHT IDEA.

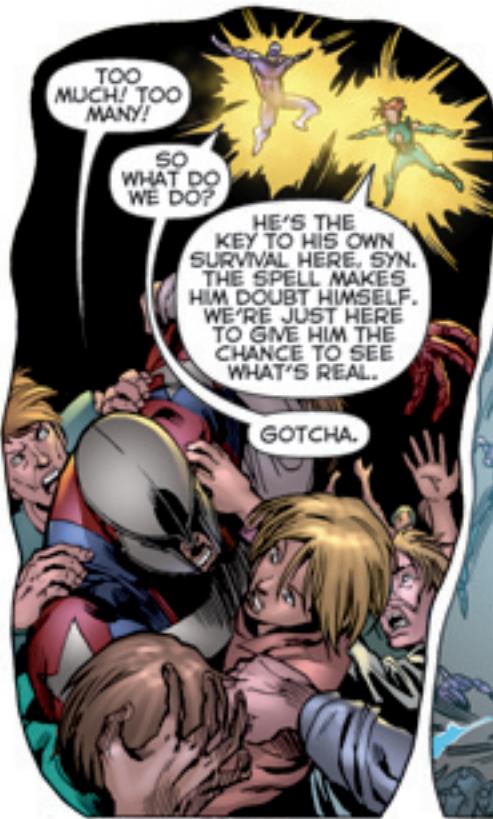
I CAN'T GET OUT OF THIS DREAMWORLD ON MY OWN, BUT IF I CAN TAP INTO THE DREAM STREAM...

COME, MASTER, COME INTO THIS WORLD, AND LET ALL BOW DOWN BEFORE YOU!

WEHWAHWAH
WEHWAHWAH

PHALANX, IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO SOMETHING, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, DO IT NOW!





SOON,
THERE WILL BE
NOTHING LEFT.
I'LL JUST
BE--

YOU'LL BE
THE SAME SACK OF
PUCKS YOU ALWAYS
HAVE BEEN, POS. NOW
PULL IT TOGETHER,
BUDDY.

WELL... YES,
IT'S OBVIOUS NOW. I
SUPPOSE THE SPELL
OF THE THORNS KEPT
ME FROM SEEING THAT.
IT PROBABLY WORKS
ON THE PRINCIPLE
OF--

NOT THE TIME,
OPPENHEIMER. WE
HAVE TO GET
CITADEL.



BE READY FOR
ANYTHING IN HERE,
BECAUSE WE--

AH, GOOD. I WAS
HOPING YOU'D
FIND ME.

CITADEL, WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THE REST OF US WERE
TRAPPED IN NIGHTMARES,
AND YOU'RE SITTING
HERE--

DRINKING
LEMONADE AND
READING A BOOK
ON DREAM
THEORY, YES.

YOU SEE, WHILE I HAVE
THE ABILITY TO DREAM, IN MY
CASE IT'S NOT A RANDOM ACT. I
ACTUALLY PROGRAM MY DREAMS
EACH TIME I SLEEP.

WHEN IT BECAME
OBVIOUS I WAS TRAPPED
HERE, I DECIDED TO USE THE
TIME READING A PROGRAM FROM
MY FILES REGARDING DREAMS,
TO SEE WHAT I COULD
DISCERN.

AND THE
LEMONADE?

I LIKE
LEMONADE.

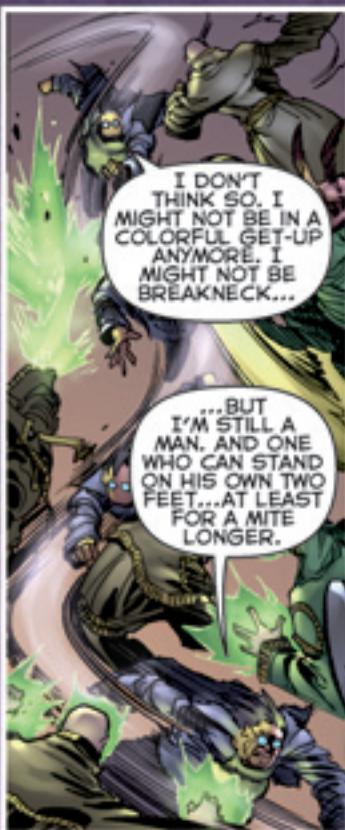
QUICK,
EVERYONE
JOIN
HANDS!

IS
THIS WHERE WE
SING "KUMBAYA"
AND--

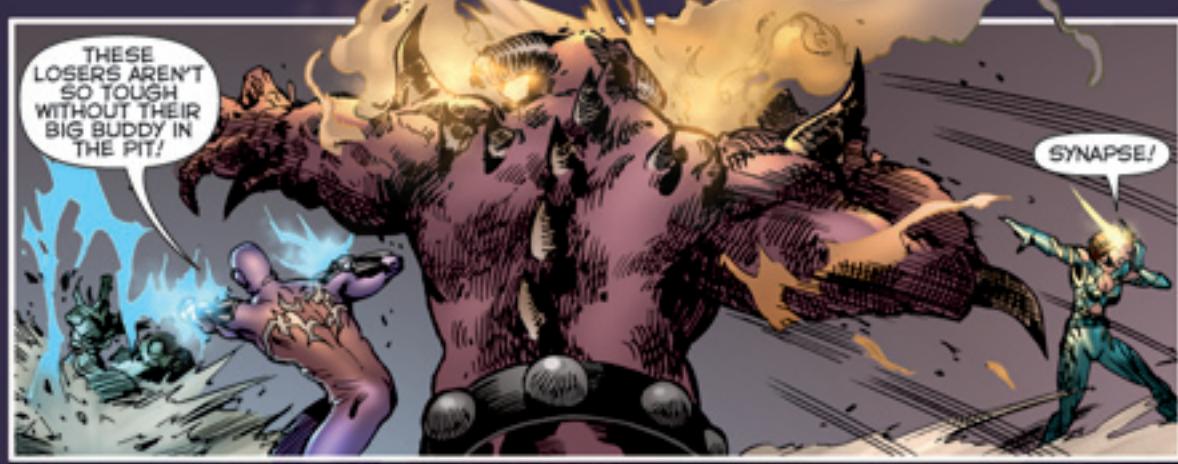
SHUT
UP! IF WE ALL
CONCENTRATE, I
CAN CHANNEL OUR
MENTAL ENERGY
INTO THE WAKING
WORLD! I CAN
BRING US OUT
OF THIS...

HURRY,
PSYCHE!











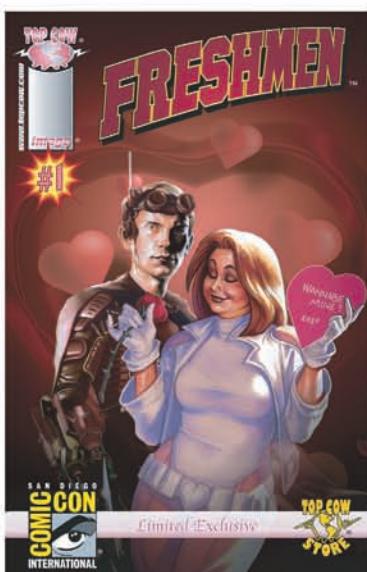




WWW.TOPCOWSTORE.COM

PRINTS • CONVENTION EXCLUSIVES • BACK ISSUES & MORE

LIMITED EDITIONS



ALL AVAILABLE NOW!

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.TOPCOWSTORE.COM
FOR MORE EXCLUSIVE MERCHANDISE

City of Heroes is © 2005 Cryptic Studios, Inc. and NC Interactive, Inc. NCsoft, the interlocking NC logo, City of Heroes and all associated NCsoft logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation. City of Heroes is a registered trademark of Cryptic Studios, Inc. and NCsoft Corporation. Cryptic Studios is a trademark of Cryptic Studios, Inc. Freshmen is © 2005 Seth Green, Hugh Stebakov and Top Cow Productions, Inc. "Freshmen," The Freshmen logo, and the likeness of all featured characters are trademarks of Seth Green, Hugh Stebakov, and Top Cow Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Necromancer is © 2005 Top Cow Productions, Inc. "Necromancer," the Necromancer logo, and the likeness of all featured characters are trademarks of Top Cow Productions, Inc. All rights reserved.