

OCTOBRIANA
3 Jun '97



£2.15 U.K.
\$2.95 U.S.
\$4.15 CAN

TAYLOR &
O'FARRELL

SHORT &
ANDREWS

OCTOBRIANA

VS

HEAVY DUTY



Octobriana, Heroine Reborn!

We wonder if Petr Sadecky knows about this comic book?

In his book, Octobriana and the Russian Underground,

Sadecky claims that Octobriana was created by a dissident group in the Soviet Union, during the 1960's. He

presented himself in the book as a 'technical adviser' during the P.P.P.'s production of the Octobriana strips. He was ultimately responsible for Octobriana's arrival in the West - he smuggled some of the P.P.P.'s work with him when he defected.

However, it is considered by some, with the benefit of hindsight, that Sadecky had never been to the Soviet Union, the P.P.P. never existed and that it was all a somewhat elaborate hoax. But the appealing thing about hoaxes is that when they are finally revealed to be such, everyone can have a good laugh at the 'suckers' expense and claim that they never fell for it in the first place. So, if Octobriana is a hoax, isn't it about time that Petr Sadecky (or whoever he maybe) comes forward to admit it? If only someone knew where Sadecky is, then we might just be able to solve the mystery of the Russian Devil-Woman's origins.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE

Whether Mr Sadecky knows about this Octobriana series or not, we sincerely thank him for giving us the Spirit Of The October Revolution to play with in each issue. Incidentally, try as we might, we cannot seem to find Jack Kirby's credit on the 'new' Fantastic Four comic... even though all the characters have been designed by him and he also seems to have plotted it, too! Hmmm.

John A Short
& Stuart Taylor
December 1996

APOLOGY TIME!

The artist on The Return Of Octobriana this issue is the talented Darrell Andrews. Stuart would like to humbly apologise for spelling Darrell's name wrong last issue (and in the *Diamond Previews* bump!). Consider his knuckles well and truly rapped.

THANKS TO...

Ian 'The Fiend' Feeney for his design expertise (but not for his hyperactive bowels!), Ross Andrews for his overwhelming generosity and the official Octobriana Web Page, Mike Kidson for all the help and advice and everyone who has supported us throughout (that means You, people!).

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THE RETURN OF OCTOBRIANA

EPISODE THREE
DEUS EX MACHINA
SCRIPT : JOHN A. SHORT
ART: DARRELL ANDREWS

THE STORY SO FAR:

HANS INGERSOL, HEAD OF THE SOVIET SCIENCE BUREAU, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CRUSHING THE HIPPIES OF THE PPP. AND CAPTURING OCTOBRIANA, BACK IN 1968. SHE SWORE THAT SHE'D KILL HIM FOR WHAT HE DID TO HER FRIENDS.

BUT SHE REMAINED LOCKED AWAY IN A SIBERIAN PRISON FOR 28 YEARS, UNTIL GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANT VLADIMIR DRENKOV ACCIDENTALLY BROKE HER OUT.



INGERSOL KNOWS THAT SOONER OR LATER SHE WILL COME AFTER HIM AND NOTHING WILL STOP HER KEEPING HER PROMISE TO HIM... NOTHING! UNLESS, OF COURSE, HE CAN KILL HER FIRST.



MEANWHILE, VLAD TAKES OCTOBRIANA TO MOSCOW, TO SHOW HER WHAT LIFE IN 1990'S RUSSIA IS ALL ABOUT. OCTOBRIANA EXPLORES HER NEW WORLD, BLISSFULLY UNAWARE OF THE PLANS BEING DRAWN AGAINST HER--



SO LONG...
BEEN HERE SO LONG.

THE URALS 1996.

REPORT LÖNNQVIST...

THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS STILL ON-LINE, HERR INGERSOL, BUT IT HASN'T BEEN UP-LINKED TO THE BODY UNIT IN TEN YEARS...

... NOT SINCE IT WAS BROUGHT BACK FROM AFGHANISTAN AND WE WERE SHUT DOWN.

INPUT THE MISSION DATA, LÖNNQVIST. IT'S ORDERS ARE TO LOCATE AND TERMINATE OCTOBRIANA.



MISSION
OBJECTIVE
SIGHTED.



PRIME WEAPON SYSTEMS AND
PLUMP LIP FRANKIE GOES TO
HOLLYWOOD'S "TWO TRIBES".

The Return of **OCTOBRIANA**

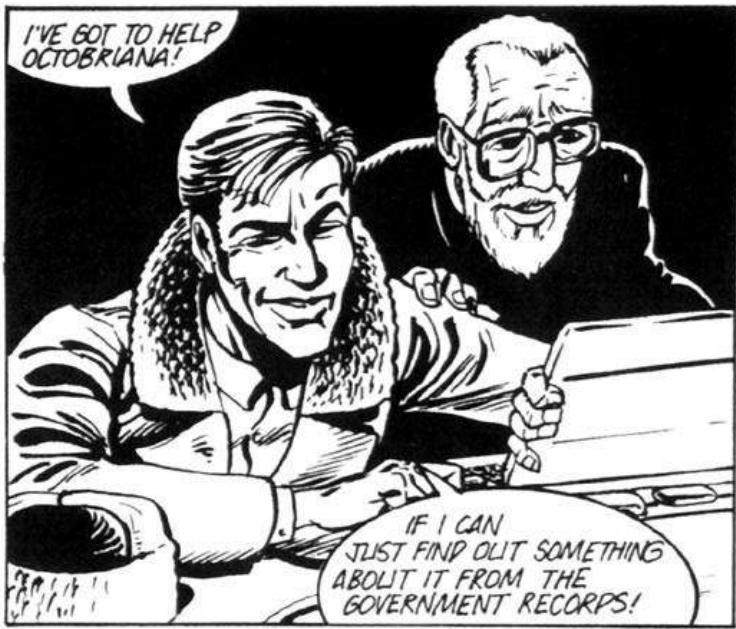
DEUS EX MACHINA

SCRIPT - JOHN A. SHORT
ART & LETTERS - DARRELL ANDREWS

MY LIFE
IS JUST GETTING
TOO WEIRD!





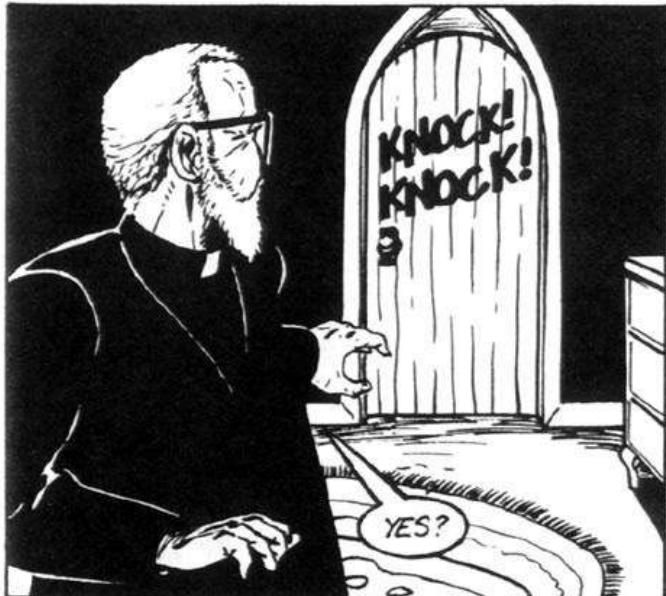






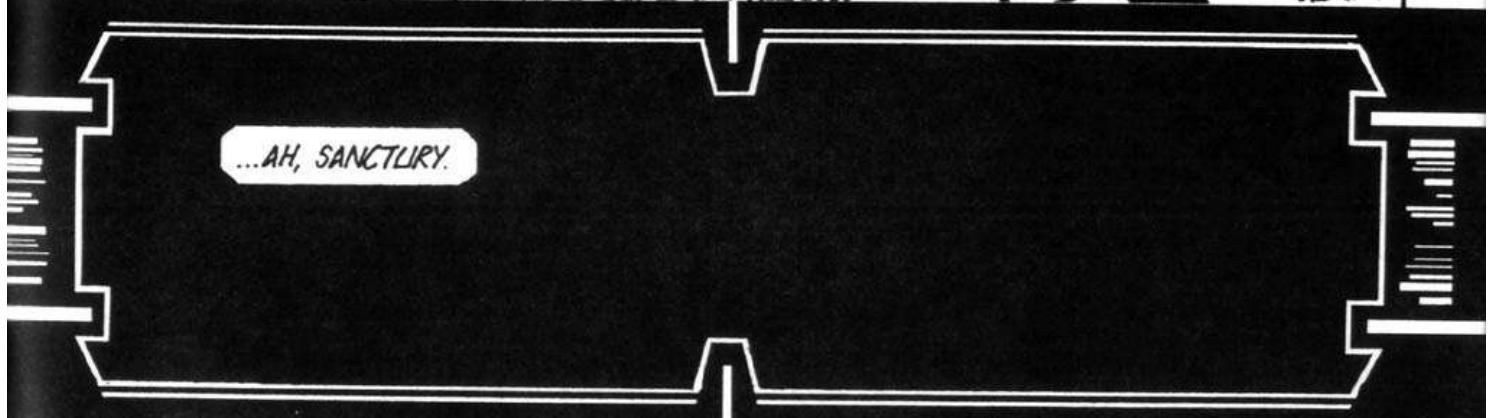


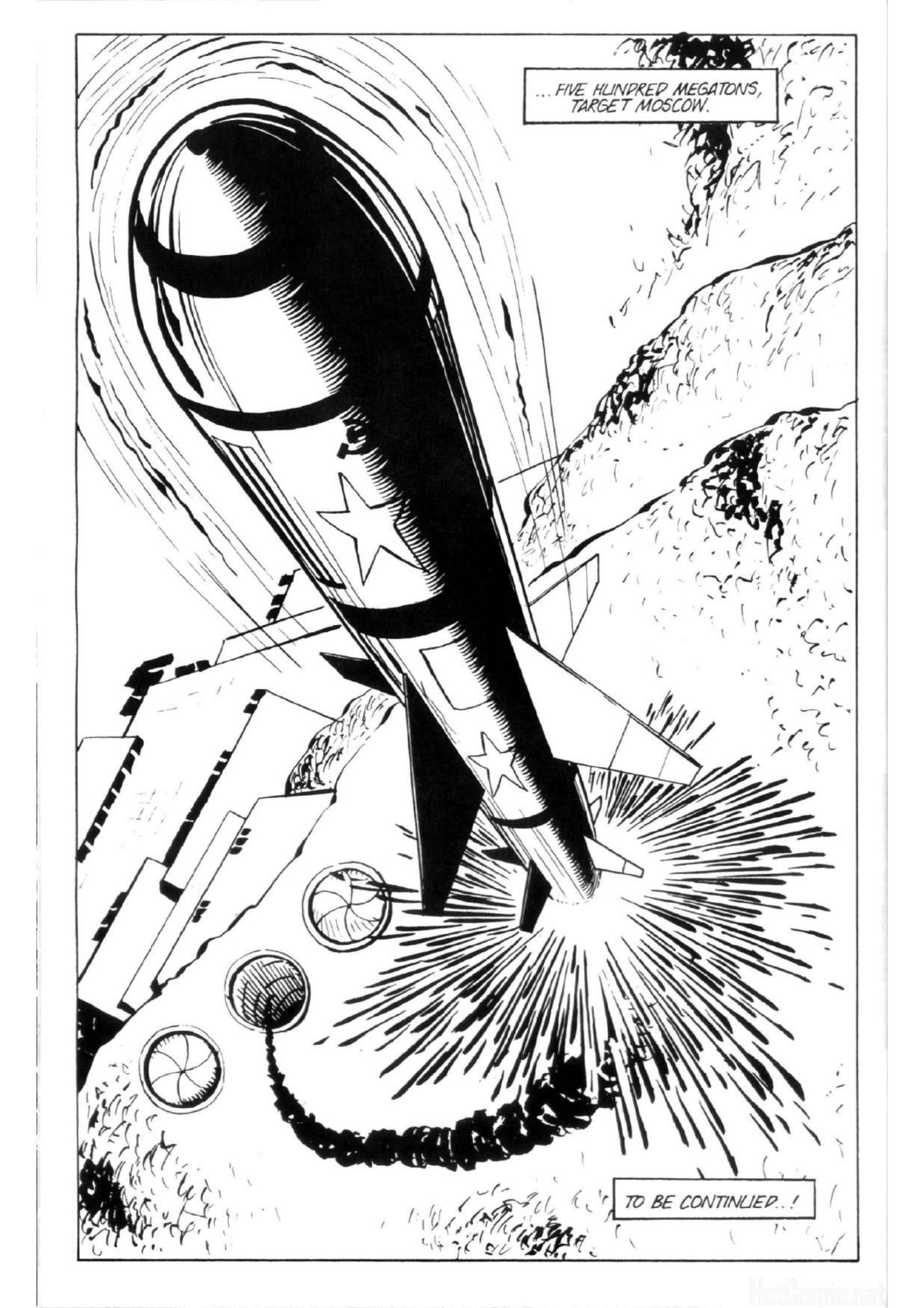






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...FIVE HUNDRED MEGATONS,
TARGET MOSCOW.

TO BE CONTINUED..!

THE OCTOBRIANA FILES

EPISODE THREE
HOST IN THE MACHINE

SCRIPT : STUART TAYLOR
ART: BLAKE O'FARRELL

EXTRACTED FROM THE PRIVATE JOURNAL OF HANS INGERSOL

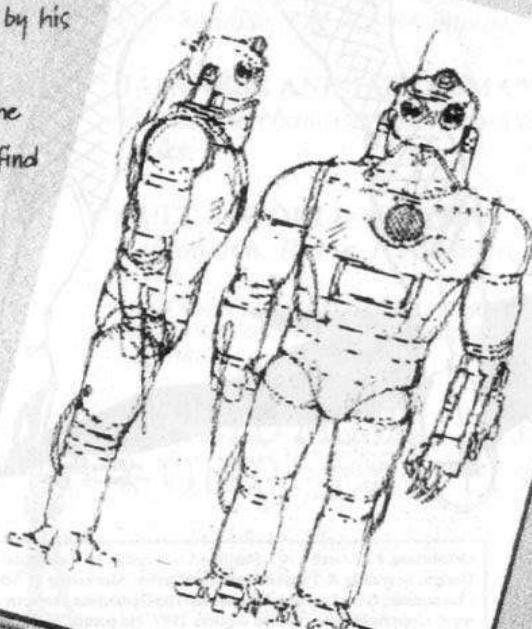
21st July 1967

Today has been a difficult one... Navoski's attempts at integrating Yuri's brain with the Heavy-Duty prototype have initially proved to be a failure. As I have previously noted, the Heavy-Duty project seemed to be one way of ensuring the prompt return of Octobriana to the Science Bureau - she has decided to take a more public role as spokesperson for the P.P.P., something which could seriously jeopardise my position within the Soviet regime. Particularly if the general public find out that Octobriana is more than just a 'fictional' comic strip character. However, this could well be academic, as it seems that other parties have taken an unhealthy interest in what is rightfully mine.

A being (claiming to be a Norse God of all things!) visited Navoski's lab this morning, during our preliminary tests with Yuri/Heavy-Duty. Mani, as he calls himself, claims to know all about Octobriana and the Tunguska incident. This is indeed unfortunate (for Mani anyway) as I will not tolerate anyone interfering with the plan... I have come so far, struggled too long, to let some jumped-up deity take it all away.

This arrogant fool dared to tell me to leave Octobriana alone, stating that he had his own plans for her. I believe that Mani was even trying to impress me with his parlour tricks, using some sort of 'magic' to reanimate Yuri/Heavy-Duty. However, it must be noted that, with this gesture, Mani has succeeded where Navoski has failed, by bringing Yuri back from the dead. Unfortunately however, the shock of discovering that he is a brain trapped within a metallic shell has driven Yuri insane. Five good scientists died by his hand before Navoski managed to shut down the Heavy-Duty system. I came close to becoming the sixth victim, something which Mani seemed to find highly amusing.

It is essential that Octobriana is recaptured whilst she is still in the Stolovia Mountain range, trying to reason with her ex-lover. Navoski tells me that he has inserted a device in Yuri's brain to block the memory of his death. Whether this implant will work is as yet unknown.



THE SOVIET UNION. JULY, 1967.

NESTLED BETWEEN A MOUNTAIN RANGE, DEEP
BENEATH THE SURFACE, LIES THE SOVIET SCIENCE
BUREAU'S BASE OF OPERATIONS.

A HEAVY ATMOSPHERE HANGS
OVER THE PROCEEDINGS AS A
GRISLY EXPERIMENT
REACHES ITS CONCLUSION.

I'M SURE THAT
YESTERDAY'S UNFORTUNATE
INCIDENT IS STILL AT
THE FOREFRONT OF
EVERYONE'S MIND--

--BUT I ASK THAT
YOU CONCENTRATE ON THE
MATTER AT HAND. NONE OF US
WANT A REPEAT PERFORMANCE,
DO WE?

HOST IN THE MACHINE

HANDLE THE
SPHERE WITH CARE,
PIOTR. THERE ARE ONLY
A FEW LEFT NOW.

CLUNK

THE SYSTEM IS
NOW ON, MR
NAVOSKI, SIR.

GOOD! THEN SHALL
WE SEE HOW OUR TEST
SUBJECT IS FEELING
THIS AFTERNOON?

THIS IS MR
NAVOSKI SPEAKING.
CAN YOU HEAR
ME YURI?

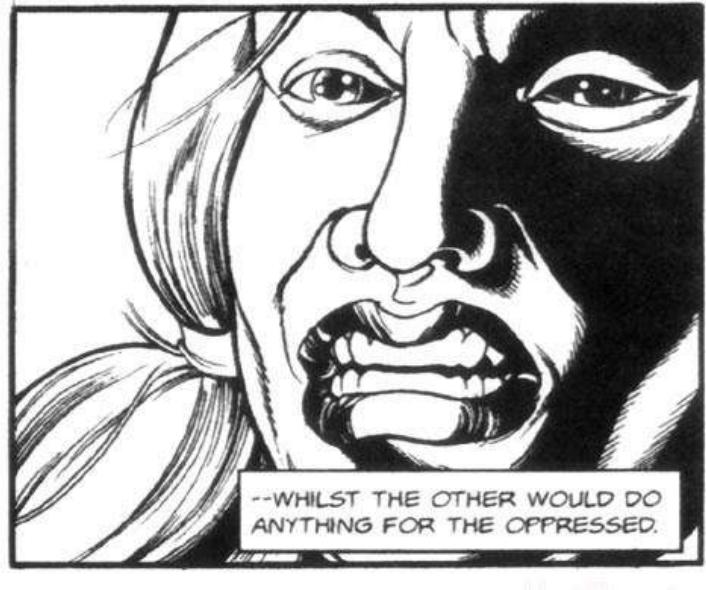
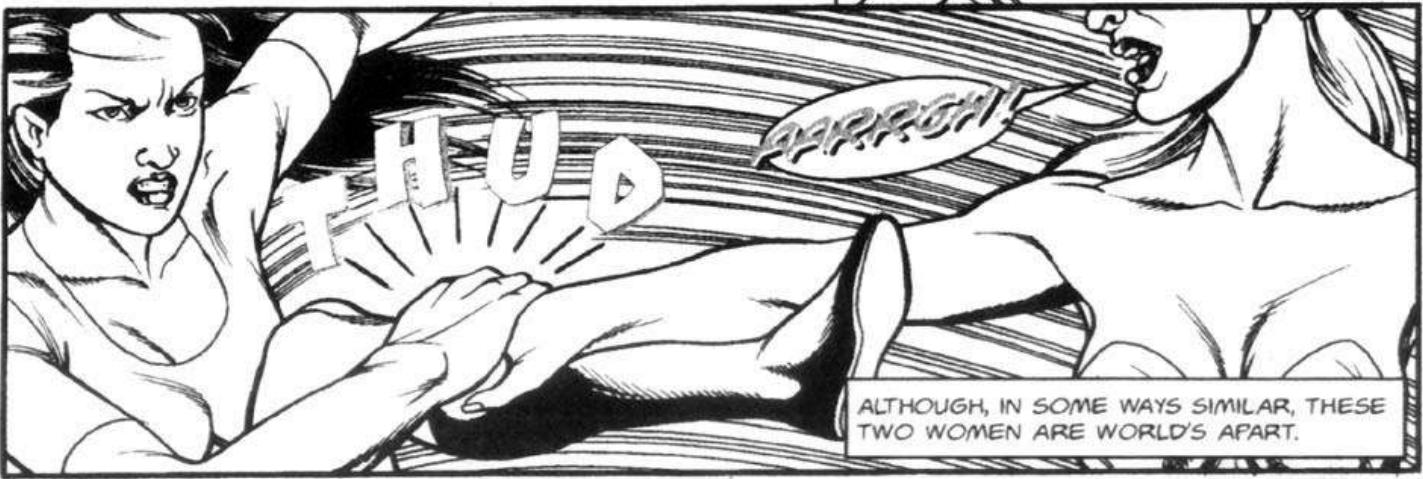
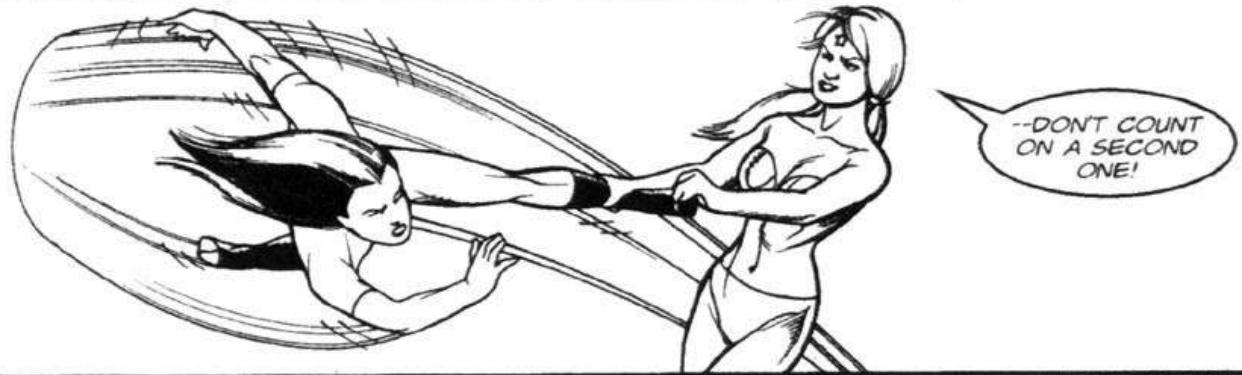
blake
O'FARRELL
PENCILS/
INKS

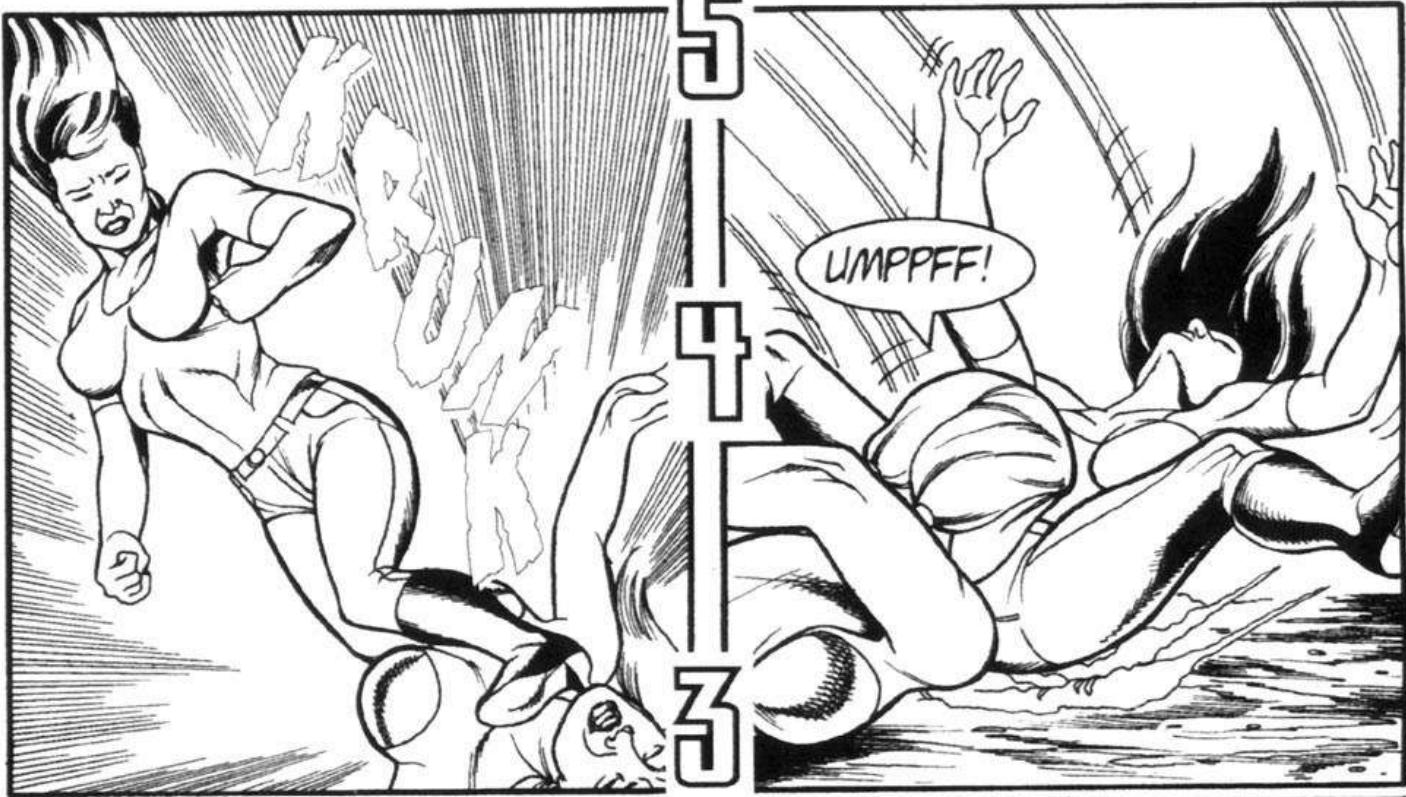
The Octobriana Files
Episode .003

stuart
TAYLOR
SCRIPT/
LETTERING









I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS, OCT, BUT YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO RETURN WITH ME TO THE SCIENCE BUREAU.

IT WILL MAKE THINGS EASIER ON EVERYBODY IF YOU DON'T RESIST--

-- AND I'LL ALSO BE GRATEFUL IF YOU KEEP OUT OF THE WAY, NATASHA!

WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT 'THAT' SEEMS TO KNOW WHO WE ARE.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? OF COURSE I KNOW WHO YOU ARE—

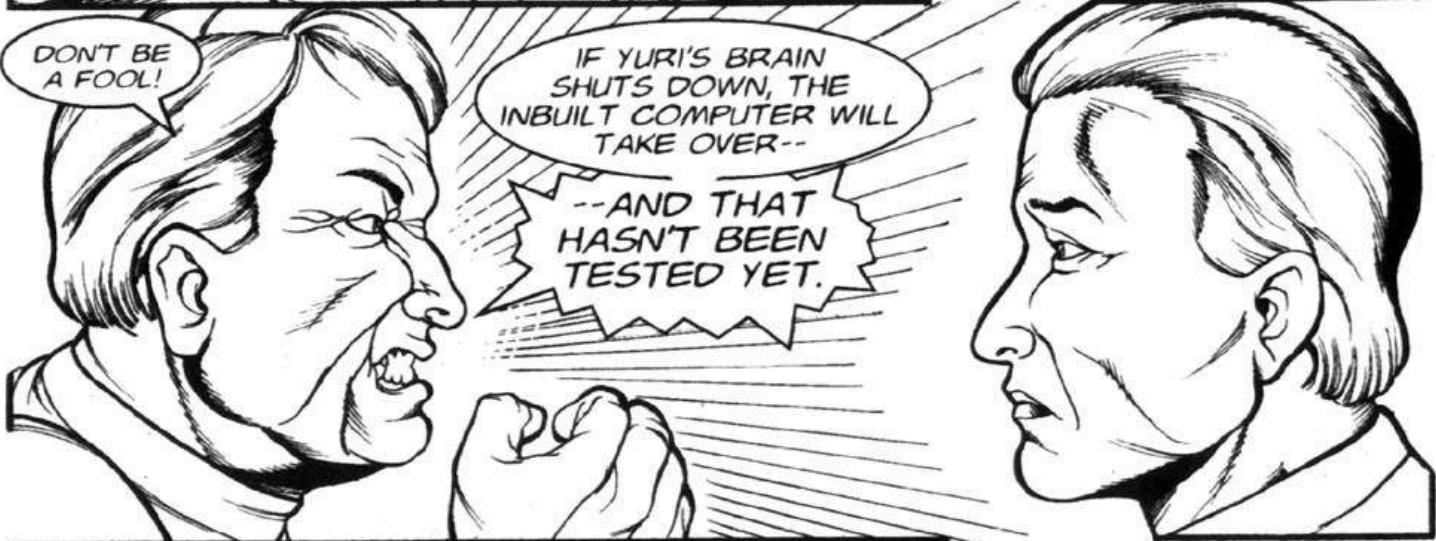
-- IT'S ME, YURI!

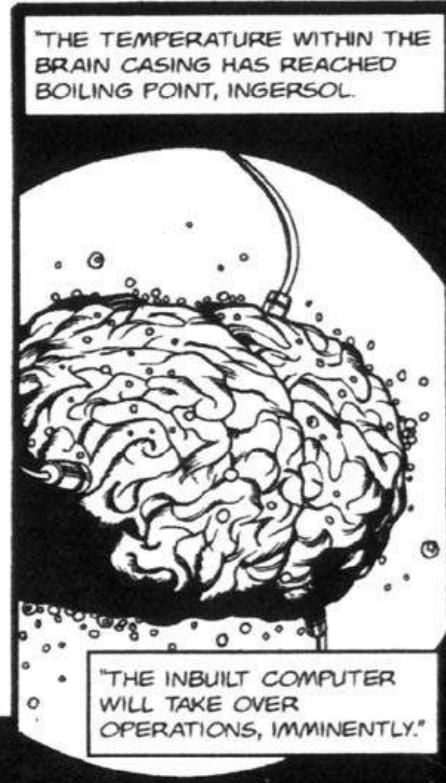
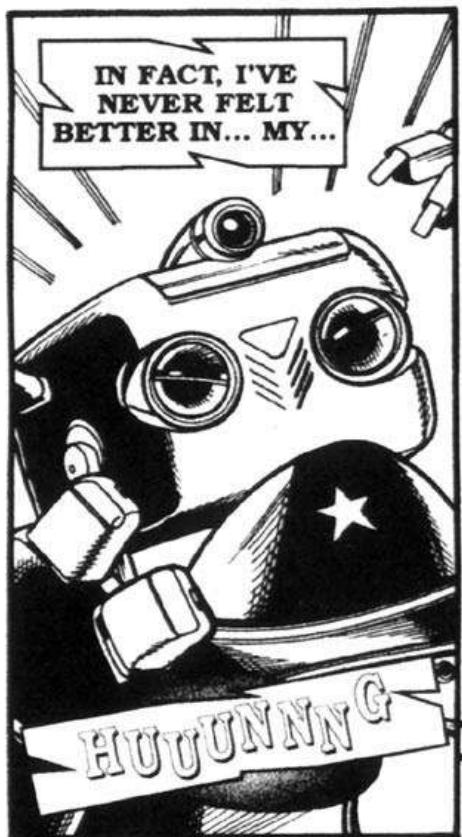
HMM, MAYBE IT'S ME--

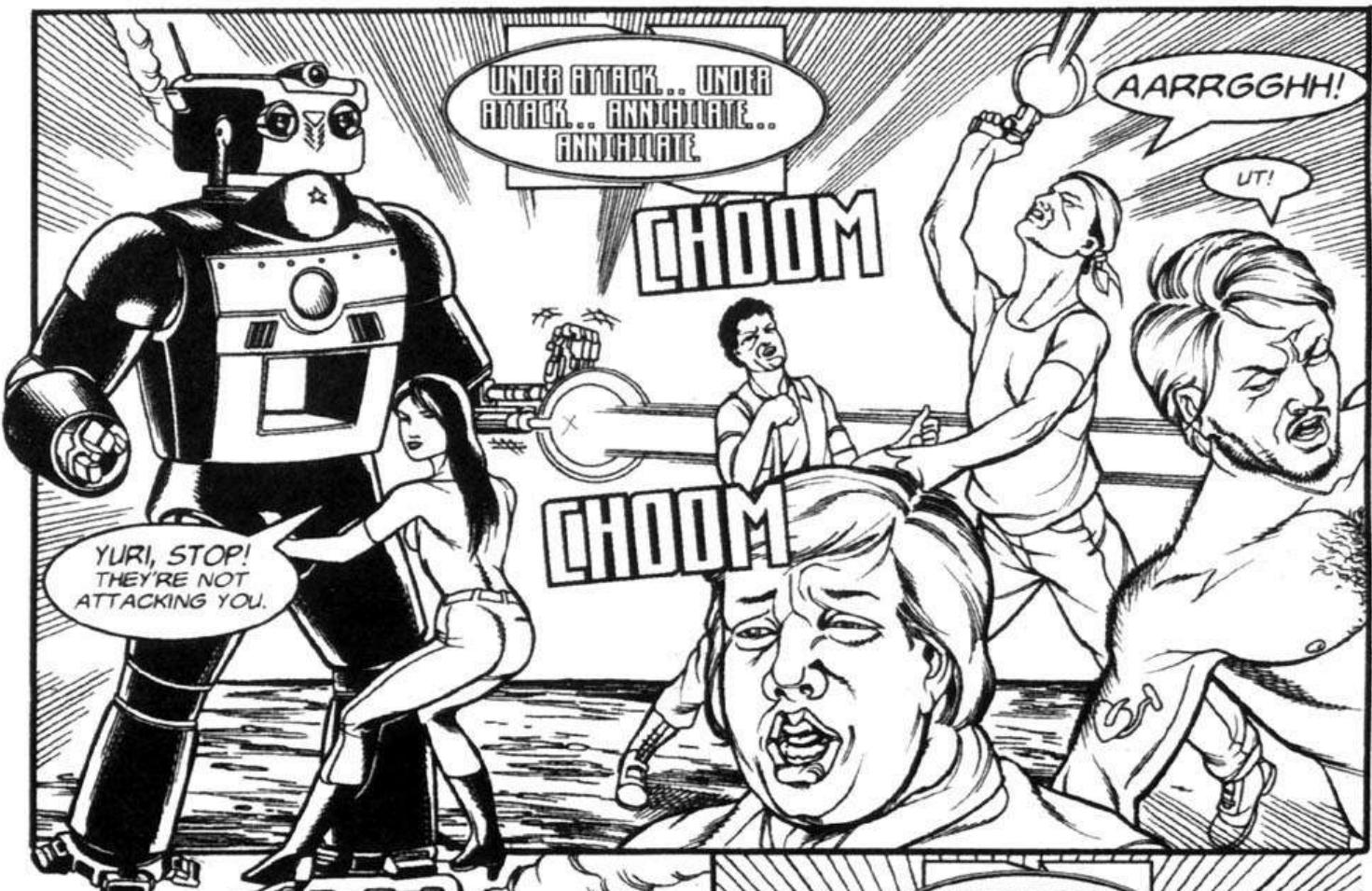
--BUT THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT HIM.

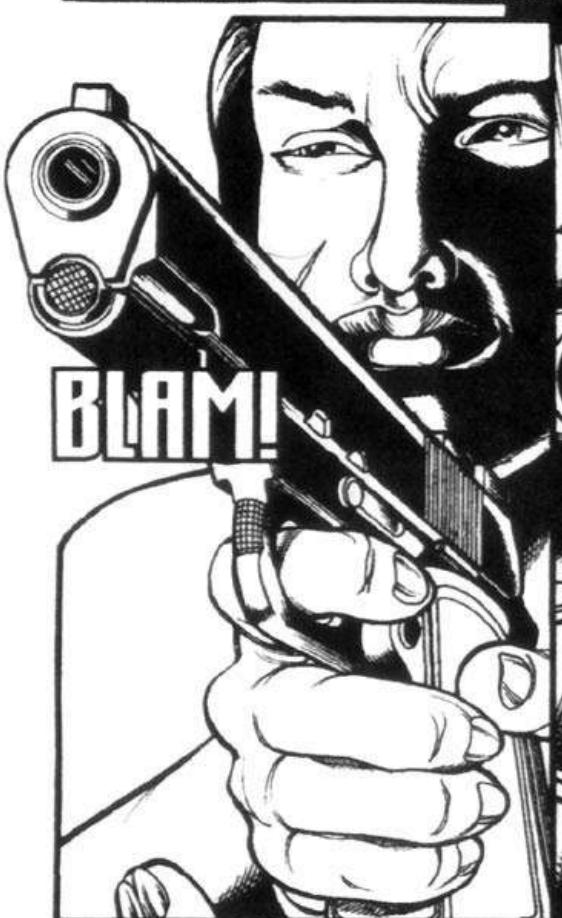
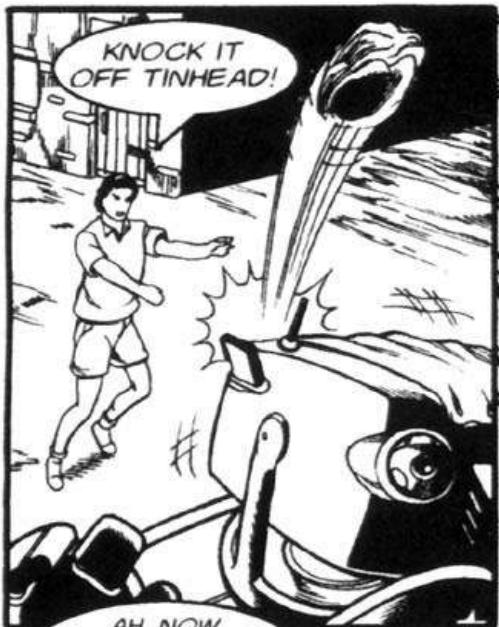
YEAH, I NOTICED THAT, TOO.

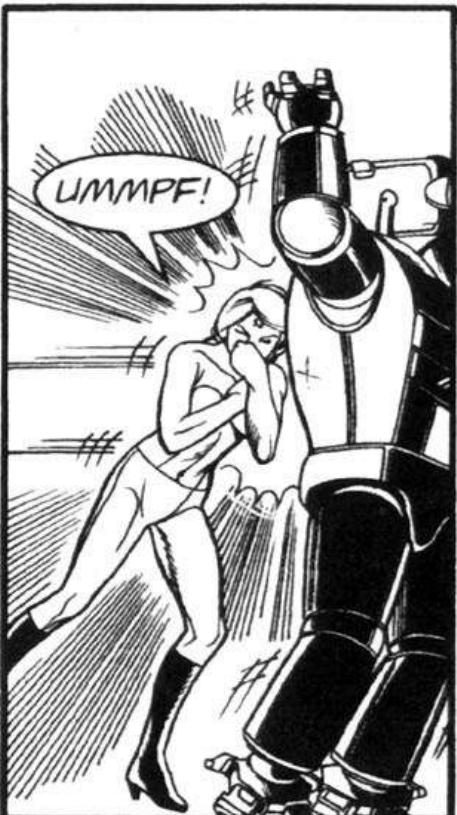
IT'S NOT HIS HAIR, IS IT?

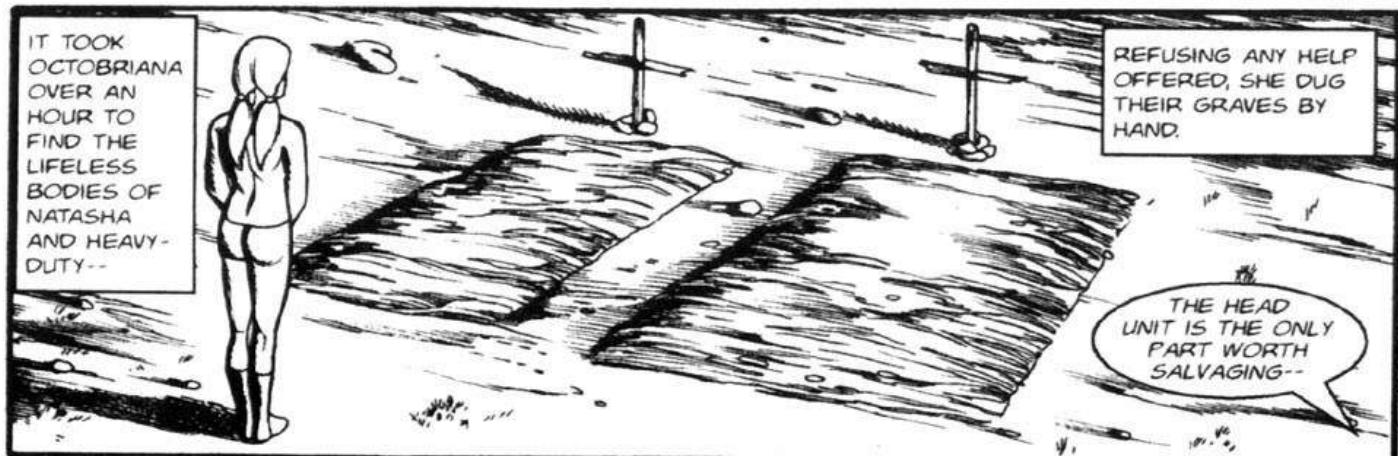












NEXT ISSUE: MYTHOLOGY

NEXT ISSUE

THIS MAN WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO
RETAIN THE POWER HE HAS SPENT
HIS WHOLE LIFE
FIGHTING FOR

THE PLOTLINES OF THE RETURN OF
OCTOBRIANA AND THE OCTOBRIANA
FILES COME TOGETHER IN THE
PENULTIMATE ISSUE OF THE MINI-SERIES.

ON-SALE
MARCH 9





OCTOBRIANA #2

RED MAIL

20 Grants Avenue, Springbourne, Bournemouth
BH5 2EE, ENGLAND

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE REACHED ISSUE THREE ALREADY, BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY WHEN TIME FLIES!

THIS TIME AROUND, JOHN ANSWERS MOST OF THE LETTERS WE HAVE RECEIVED AS STU HAS BEEN WORKING HIS BUTT OFF TRYING TO MAKE THIS ISSUE LOOK AS GOOD AS IT CAN (THAT'S HIS EXCUSE, ANYWAY).

ALTHOUGH IT'S PROBABLY MORE LIKELY THAT HE'S BEEN PLAYING TOO MUCH DARK FORCES!).

Wayne Heywood
CrawshawBooth
Rossendale
England

In reply to the letters commenting on my artwork, may I just say 'thanks!' Any observations, good or bad, are better than no mention at all. It's only by gaining outside opinions that artwork of any form can develop. In response to what Trina [Robbins] had to say about the 'bad girl' image, well, as I can see it the underlying character of Octobriana toys with the co-existence of many characteristics. Part of her is strong, almost masculine, and yet she uses her feminine sexuality in her control of other characters, particularly Vlad. She is cast as 'The Russian Devil-Woman', aggressive to the point of becoming almost a savage beast. But her control of this persona turns the roll on its head and transforms her into a superheroine.

To be honest, I think that she is a

'bad girl'. She's bad, but as you get to know the character the subtleties make you appreciate that she's a little different. The tongue-in-cheek scripts, brimming with innuendo, also add an important dimension to her character. One of harmless flirtation and sexual domination. If that ain't a bad girl, what is?

Jessica Nitro
West Midlands
England

Thanx for the copies of Octobriana! All I can say about them is: stylish! Very stylish indeed! I've seen Adrian Bamforth's art before so I was expecting good stuff from him, but Blake O'Farrell's handling of Octobriana was niiice. I must say I prefered the second story, John's scripting was scary! So I take it Vladimir Drenkov is Octo's new tour guide? Maybe he'd be better as a sidekick?! I can see it now - *Octobriana and Counting-Roubles-Man!* Or not. Anyhoo, nice package in total. *JAS: Thanks Jessica. You'll be able to see some more of Jessica's own work sometime during the course of the mini-series as she's done some smart illustrations of Oct for us. And, if like them, check out her own title, *Psychosense*.*

Patrick Bedford
Dublin
Ireland

I'd heard of Octobriana before (although I've never seen the now legendary 1971 book) and I was fascinated by the idea of a Russian superhero. It seemed to me that there was a vast potential for storytelling in such an idea. Using a character gives

writers the opportunity to explore the Russia of the last 30 years, commenting on the extraordinary country that it is. But having read the first two issues I find myself disappointed. Where are the stories of soldiers that haven't been paid for months, who now have to beg? Where are the stories of the war in Chechnya? Where are the food queues and the new Russian mafia and the failing nuclear reactors?

It would seem to me that Russia, as a setting for superhero stories, is brimming with material, but you just don't seem to be using it.

*JAS: There are two reasons why *The Return of Octobriana* doesn't have much comment on current political and social problems in Russia:*

Firstly, I wasn't sure that the tongue-in-cheek nature of the strips would be the best place for social commentary.

Secondly, I was writing the scripts so far in advance of publication that commenting on, say, the Chechnya situation or even who the President was, could have been out-of-date by the time the comic saw print.

*You will find some of the things you mention sprinkled throughout the strips, but only as background detail. The new Russian mafia (all be it a tongue-in-cheek version) are the villains in one of the strips I have done for *Dark Zone*, and Vlad mentions Chechnya (without going into specifics) in issue #5.*

*Of course, if you think *Octobriana* would be a good vehicle for a strip about the current (or past) problems in Russia, there's nothing stopping you doing it!*

Carl Peters
Los Angeles
USA

Back in the seventies, I used to own a copy of the book, *Octobriana and the Russian Underground*. I wish I still had it,

but I've a feeling my mom threw it out, along with a load of other good stuff. I must admit I fell for the whole thing hook, line and sinker. It all seemed so plausible, through the rose-tinted glasses of youth.

Loved issue #2, and the dual storylines are really catching my imagination. That the shadowy Mr Ingersol is involved in both strips as a behind-the-scenes villain started me wondering how linked the stories will be. Is Nikita from *The Octobriana Files* the same woman that we see in the 1979 flashback sequence in *The Return of*? It's all very intriguing.

*JAS: Are comic readers mum's the same the world over? Glad you like our 'new' Oct, Carl. And yes, *The Return of* and *The Files* are indeed very much linked (Nikita is Vlad's mum).*

Michael Russell
Milton Keynes
England

As usual John Short's script in *The Return of Octobriana* was both witty and inventive - I loved the device of Vlad's horoscope and its inaccurate predictions. And Ingersol is starting to look more and more like Dr Emil Gargunza in *Miracleman*, which is no bad thing: I have a soft spot for mad Teutonic scientists. However, I must give a thumbs-down for Wayne Heywood's art. It is good in its kind, but I feel that it is not appropriate for the script. Which is, when all's said and done, an adventure story. Wayne's art would be perfect for an avant-garde or experimental strip. As it was, I found it difficult to follow the narrative, and the distortion of the character's appearance (while artistically good) often made it difficult to identify them. His art is good, but not appropriate for the story, is my verdict. For what it's worth.

As for *The Octobriana Files*, I'm not sure what to make of the script, as the story is still unfolding. And it's a pity that we didn't

get to see Octobriana's adventures with the phallus of Rasputin, the Mad Monk! Now that would have been something to see. Anyway, the artwork of Blake O'Farrell is very competent. His draughtsmanship is excellent, but I feel that his figure drawing, especially in the action scenes, is a bit wooden. His characters tend to look a bit like animated Action Men or Barbie dolls; I think he needs to loosen up his style a little. Apart from that, his work is of a professional standard.

All in all, I'd say you're still on the right track and I look forward to the next issue. Keep up the good work!



OCTOBRIANA #1

ST: Now, Michael, don't hold back and tell us what you really think about the book.

Just kidding. Any comments we receive (however critical) are warmly received. Everyone involved is learning something new as we go along, so I reckon by series end you're going to see some great stuff all round.

The main reason that you didn't see the Rasputin tadger tale is that (due to its somewhat unsubtle content) I intended it for publication in an adult magazine. However, the negotiations have been dragging on for far too long, so don't be too surprised if it pops up in next summer's one-shot!