



MECHA  
"DELIVERANCE"

story TIM ELDRED  
pencils HARRISON FONG  
inks ROBERT CARACOL  
letters PAT BROUSSEAU

Massive alien robots are discovered in several countries across the Earth. Each is activated by the touch of its discoverer, and nervous systems link in a bond broken only by death. With the robots' fearsome powers at human command, global tensions increase to the boiling point. As World War looms, the alien machines are needed to face an even greater threat—invasion from the stars. The robots are severely damaged in the first assault and are now sequestered with their human pilots in the immense orbital fortress, *Deephold*. Time is running out as man and machine prepare to reenter a world gone mad.

How rewarding to  
hear their screams

...to add  
one more.



I watch with  
interest as the  
frail Earthman  
races to his  
destiny.

I try to imagine his  
terror, but cannot. It  
is raw, primal. Such  
emotion can never be  
mine.

This is easier  
for me. I take  
pity on him.

Instead, I envision his  
bewilderment as he wrestles  
with unfamiliar controls all  
demanding his attention.

I relish the pity. It  
is what separates me  
from the others.



I will enjoy demonstrating exactly how different we are.

MECHA

DELIVERANCE!



DAMN YOU, MEREK! A CINGH TO LEARN, HUH?

MAYBE FOR SOMEONE WHO'S BEEN AROUND MACHINES ALL HIS LIFE...



E-EVEN TERRY COULD DRIVE ONE OF THESE.

ALL THOSE VIDEO GAMES OF HIS...



O'MON DAD, THEY'RE NOT THAT HARD TO LEARN!

MOM USED TO LIKE...

NO. I'M SORRY, SON.

I TRIED... TO BE A BETTER FATHER AFTER SHE DIED.



WHEN I SEE HER AGAIN... SHE CAN TELL ME... HOW I SHOULD HAVE TRIED HARDER.

WHA-?!



How pathetically slow they are.

How rewarding to hear their screams.

How easy it would be...

...to add one more.



GREAT! NOT LIKE I EVER DID ANYTHING FOR YOU, HUH?

PLEASE, MISTER HYER. LEAVE THIS TO US.

CHANG AND I HAVE BEEN WITH YOU A LONG TIME NOW, TERRY...

...TIL JACK TURNS UP AGAIN...

...YOU KNOW YOU CAN CONFIDE IN US.

I'M SORRY, HYER.

I REALLY CAN'T TELL YOU ANY MORE.

THANKS, WORELY.

I WILL WHEN I NEED TO.

YOU MISS YOUR FATHER, DON'T YOU, TERRY?

I MET HIM JUST A SHORT TIME AGO. HE MISSES YOU VERY MUCH.

I KNOW HE'D TRUST US TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.

MISS BJORNSETH. I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY.

AND BEFORE I CAME HERE, I'D HAVE BEEN HAPPY TO PLAY "LITTLE BOY" WITH YOU.

BUT I'M GROWN UP NOW.



As I approach, I deign at least to reach out for the emotions of these creatures I have chosen to pity.

First, there is fear. But then... more...

Frustration.

Anger.

Wonder.

Even disdain.

But the child is with them and can guide them with his magnificent purity.

I am satisfied.

It is time to shed this old body. This group... is sufficient.

MY GOD! WE CAN'T USE THE GUNS, OUR ROBOTS ARE DOWN... HOW CAN WE FIGHT IT?

WE WON'T HAVE TO...

IT'S ONE OF OURS.

THEY'RE ENTERING THE LAUNCH BAY!

HYER-- THAT SMASHED ROBOT! CHANG AND I SAW IT WHEN--

THAT'S OL' JOLLY GREEN! I FOUGHT MEREK WHEN HE TOOK IT BACK ON EARTH.\*

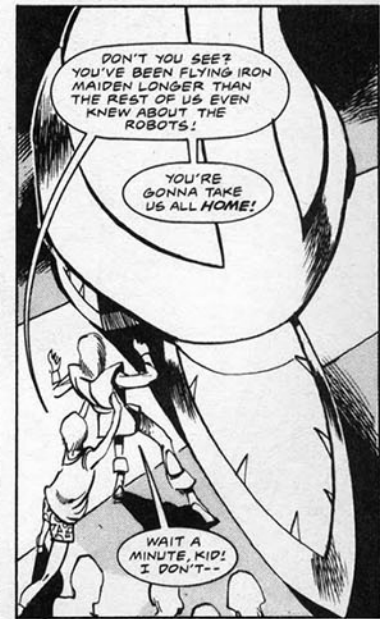
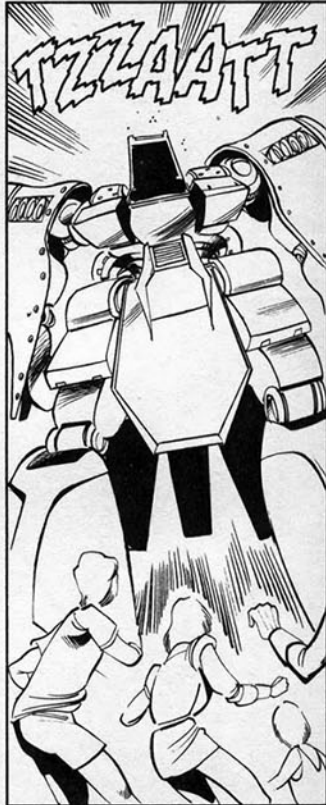
\* AS SEEN IN MECHA #6.

AN' IF HE'S STILL INSIDE, OUR FIGHT ISN'T OVER!

HOLD IT! THE HATCH IS OPENING!

M-MARTE? IS THAT YOU?

THIS... THIS IS DEERHOLD! BUT WHAT'S IT DOING IN SPACE?





## letters from people

c/o Dark Horse Comics

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### Chris Warner's big talk

Lest some of you might have thought you'd rid yourself of my petty tirades when *The Mark* went on hiatus (that's "cancelled" in hyperbole), well, y'all got another thang comin', podnuh. Here in your own personal hands rests the latest Dark Horse treasure entrusted to the learned stewardship of "The Hardest Working Editor in Show Business." Assuming that you aren't one of those nuts who reads the letter columns first, you've probably read the issue and are either in a state of rapture or in the process of mailing a pipe bomb. In either case, I hope you'll see fit to vote for me in the *CBG* awards as your favorite editor; because, after all, I *am* your favorite editor! Admit it! You love me!

With luck and the grace of God, some of you readers may have been around for those halcyon days when the rivers ran clean, mighty pterodactyls dotted the skies, and *Mecha* and *The Mark* had their own titles. And a few of you not languishing in dingy Third World prison cells may recall those wacky *Mark Badger Mask* stories in *Dark Horse Presents*, which had readers from coast-to-coast scratching their heads in confusion and awe. Those glory days have gone the way of kinescope, eight-track tape, and Panamanian voter ballots, but leave it to Dark Horse to reopen old wounds in new and interesting fashions!

What we have here is a monthly anthology title. Now, most recent anthologies suffer from two problems: (1) each story episode is so short that even with weekly frequency, the reader has to spend about twenty bucks to get the same amount of story he used to get for a few quarters; and (2) they don't have *Concrete* stories. *Mayhem* hasn't leaped that second hurdle, but we've whupped #1 like Uncle Sam did the Hun. Every month, you're gonna get three stories, twelve pages a pop. And with a measly \$2.50 price tag, you're getting the equivalent of a book-and-a-half for about what you'd pay for some skimpy Canadian funny-animal pamphlet that doesn't even have any cool guns in it! 'Nuff said!

*The Mask* is a personal favorite of mine. Mike Richardson created the character years ago, and then turned it over to Mark Badger, who turned it over to the deepest recesses of his diseased intellect and created one of the wildest visual-narrative meat grinders of recent funnybook memory. When faced with the challenge of putting together a new creative team, I knew that only John Arcudi and Doug Mahnke—they of *Homicide* infamy—had the talent, guts, and prerequisite contempt for Mankind needed to pull it off. Boy was I right! Hell, I'd pay these guys out of my own pocket just so I could see their version of the Leering Lunatic (well, no I wouldn't, but you don't know that...). Of course, I just had to do the cover to this *Mask*'s maiden voyage, complete with my loving tribute to *Evil Dead 2*. You figure it out.

*The Mark* was the first book I edited for Dark Horse, and I even designed the guy, for Pete's sake. The book was plagued with scheduling problems, creative team turnover, and just about every other unforeseen disaster short of having an Exxon tanker run aground on it. What it never suffered from was lack

of quality, and it remains as one of the most powerful adventure strips of the past few years. Jerry Prosser, whose stint on *The Mark*'s last three issues was extremely well-received by both readers and critics, remains as the strip's writer and is continuing to define the book's focus. Wayne Tanaka, a newcomer from Hawaii, is the new visual force behind the series. Wayne showed us his stuff at last year's San Diego Con, and we were impressed with his unconventional, visceral stylings. Expect a lot in the future from Mr. Tanaka.

*Mecha* also had its troubles in its inaugural run, not the least of which was penciller Harrison Fong's broken wrist, which kept him pencil-free for longer than he'd care to remember. Harrison and inker Robert Caracol have taken up where they left off in bringing America some of the best giant robot bashing to be had anywhere. Tim Eldred takes up the scripting and layout reins, gaining the assignment on the strength of a fully laid out, 200-plus page, post-apocalypse epic he submitted last year. He writes and draws and designs and may even do his own laundry, I don't know. In any case, he's putting together a terrific *Mecha* epic that should bring the series to new heights.

But that's not all, sports fans! We have an impressive lineup of guest cover artists scheduled. Next issue's *Mark* cover is by *Faust*'s Tim Vigil, and I think you know what that means! Following Tim will be paperback illustrator Dave Dorman, Mitch O'Connell of *Ginger Fox* fame, original *Mark* artist Larry Stroman, and a hoard of other pencil-pushing luminaries. Collect 'em all, fanboy!

And even that's not all, K-Mart shoppers. This may well be the first time that a first issue of a book contains a letters page with actual letters! We still have stuff in the files from *Mecha* and *The Mark*, so we thought we'd let these poor souls off the hook and out of the file cabinet and into your homes. Please be advised that letters are edited for brevity, clarity, and to make us look better and the competitors look really bad.

### more big talk

Dear Mr. Stradley,

Now that your *Mecha* title has been officially cancelled, I'd like to take this time to give you my thoughts on it.

I must have been one of the seven or eight people who actually supported the book throughout its run. I did so because it, like most of Dark Horse's other titles, was a good book: well-written, well-drawn, just plain well-produced overall. I was pleased, when it first came out, to see both it and *The Mark* break the color barrier. I fretted over the delays, and when you finally gave up on color, I was pleased with the prospect that we'd see it on a regular basis. Sadly, we never did, and now, even more sadly, the book is no more.

It sometimes amazes me that I was able to enjoy the book at all. Giant robots have never been my cup of tea, ever since Marvel beat the subject to death with their laughable *Shogun Warriors* book a few years

ago. I am also left cold by Marvel's *Transformers*, another concept that shares traits in common with *Mecha*. So why was I able to even stomach *Mecha*, let alone collect it?

I think the underlying reason for that must be that you spent more time on characterization than Marvel has in either of its robot books. One of the things that makes other giant robot books so damn boring is that the creators are so much in love with their special effects and their robotic battles that they often lose sight of the fact that there are people in the book, too. *Mecha* never lost sight, though, and by not making the robots the stars of the book, you captured my attention and my interest. It could truly be said that *Mecha* was a giant robot book for people who hate giant robot books. It was certainly true in my case. And for that, I'd like to thank you.

I look forward to seeing the series return in the pages of *Mayhem*. I hope that after *Mayhem* has run its course, we will be able to look forward to the return of *Mecha* in a title of its own.

David Peattie  
Concord, CA

*Geez, the robot book for people who hate robot books. We kinda hoped people who liked robot books might buy the thing, but I guess we missed our target audience big time! Of course, Randy Stradley edited that book. 'Nuff said! I must agree with you, though: other companies books suck, and ours are great!*

Dear Mr. Warner,

Just a few quick lines to comment on *The Mark* on this, the occasion of his cancellation.

I've always loved costumed heroes. Have ever since the mighty Batman stepped onto my TV screen in 1966; the Bat-guy is still my favorite, over twenty years later. So any time someone introduces a Bat-like hero, one that's dark, mysterious, driven and determined, the odds are that it'll be a series I'll collect. Sure enough, the Mark fit the bill.

However, the Mark is not a Batman ripoff. In terms of physical power, the Mark owes more to Capt. America than to the Batman, and while both deal exclusively with crime and hordes of super-villains, the Mark's main thrust is fighting his own corrupt government just for the basic human rights we USA residents take for granted. In that light, at least, the battles of the Mark are more poignant.

There's no point in denying that the book's erratic schedule hurt it considerably. For many comics fans, out of sight means out of mind, and there are many who refuse to collect a book they can't depend on. I myself have an unlimited comics budget, and I can afford to collect any title I choose; thus, I stayed with *The Mark* until the bitter end. I've never regretted it, and I'd like to take this time to thank all the folks who contributed their talent to these six issues for a job well done.

I'm going to miss this book. I look forward to seeing the series resume in *Mayhem*, and I'm hoping that *Mayhem* will prove successful enough to launch brand new books for both *The Mark* and *Mecha*, its "sister" series in the DH color experiment.

David Peattie  
Concord, CA

*Hey! it's David Peattie again! This must be two-fer night at Mayhem! Y'know, I loved the Batman TV series, too. I always wondered what happened to the great Adam West's "Caped Crusader," but I understand*

*that a new movie based on the TV show and starring Michael "Mr. Mom" Keaton is being released this summer. Who knows, if the movie is successful, maybe Batman will get his own comic book series!*

This issue's Malcolm Bourne letter!

*This is the postcard Malcolm sent us. We never got as far as the back of the card. 'Nuff said?*



©Chris Wroblewski, from the book "Skin Fantasies"

This issue's Charlie Harris letter!

Dear Chris and Randy,

What's going on? Did you bite off more than you can chew? Dark Horse used to put books out on a schedule, but now all your titles are late. I don't care about *Mecha* or *Insane* (not my style), but the *Wizard of 4th Street* looked good. Where did it go? I really enjoy *The Mark* even though the creative team changes every issue, but six issues in sixteen months? *Aliens* must be one of your hottest titles but even the reprints are late!

I can't imagine ever dropping *Dark Horse Presents* or *Concrete* but I wish you'd get your titles on schedule before you accept any new projects. I'd hate for you to lose your credibility like so many others have. Hire more people or put some projects away for awhile, but please don't make promises you can't keep, okay?

Actually, I'm writing about *The Mark* #6. Jerry Prosser is doing a fine job. He has a strong direction for the character. Robert Caracol was a good fill-in artist. Next issue in *March*. Oh well.

Sorry to come down on you guys so hard. After *Kitchen Sink*, you're still the best. (Yeah, I know; their books are always late, too.)

Charlie Harris  
Tucson, AZ

