

SELF-INDULGENCE OR A NEW ART FORM? READ...


NUMBER 1
JUNE, 1978



TROUTMAN
ZINE GROUP

MUTATED KLANTH

A



BIG
BROTHER
RIPOFF
PRODUCTION



OKAY...! NONE OF
THOSE "FOHRTZ" JOKES
OUT OF YOU, BUDDY,
OR I'LL SLICE YOUR
HEAD OPEN!

HOW ABOUT
"VIBRATING"
JOKES?

HANDFUL OF
SAND?

JP '78

BEGINNING: THE EPIC SAGA YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD
EASILY DO WITHOUT... THE

CORFLU vs. GEEK

MUTATED KLANTH #1 (Chapters 1 & 2) is brought to you by that conspicuous team of Jay L. Silber and Miggle Flynn. Jay is currently working out of Fan Central Station, 220 East 85th Street, Apartment 5R, New York, NY 10028, and wishes to remind his audience that while he has no telephone, this is still PUCzine #69 (Fiawolf). Miggle, who is now semi-officially in residence at Apt 312, 600 20th Street NW, Washington, DC 20052, and who claims a telephone number of (202) 676-2424, also reminds everyone that this is a BIG BROTHER RINGOFF PUBLICATION. The ditto'd stuff's Jay's fault; all other ballast is the handiwork of the redoubtable PUNKY 2!

((WAIT! WE CAN EXPLAIN!))

There are times one creates one's own monster. Or digs one's own grave, so to speak. Bites off more than one can chew. In fact, things can mutate right before one's eyes if one isn't too careful.

Well, gang, we've thrown caution to the winds here. The story goes something like this:

In March of 1977, Mike spent three days of his spring break visiting Jay when Jay lived in Philadelphia for the semester. Mike had been a member of APA-5 for but three months, and already was in desperate need of a quickie 'zine. Jay, too, had a 'zine on his schedule, and, while sitting down to do a one-shot (a tradition since spurned mightily by Mr. Flynn) the main problem was: how does one do a one-shot with a little bit of originality?

What emerged was a bizarre synthesis of the strangest nature. It was a cross between faan fiction, convention reports, Mike's youthful memories, and an in-joke. It was MUTATED PANTHER. The in-joke was the title; it referred to Jay's roommate's little puppy dog, China, who insisted upon looking like a mutated feline. The plot of the story had its basis in an eighth grade project Mike had once undertaken: a fiction piece about his classmates. The rest fell into place. MUTATED PANTHER would be a fiction story of the members of APA-5 at a San Diego Comic Convention, and their reactions to the murder of Harry Broertjes. In this story, however, HCB was a certifiable baddie -- in fact, for all intents and purposes, he was Alan Light. We played around with a few lives, and wound up doing a two-shot that was the only 'zine MF's ever done in an apa to win first place in an egoboo poll.

That behind, Jay and Miggle began to continue working together on a number of projects: a KARATE KID pitch that didn't sell, a mystery story that didn't sell, and the outline for the Legion Academy for THE MANUAL (which will one day see print... at least I'm not as slow as Harry. Yet.)

Cut to: March, 1978. Jay, this time, is visting Miggle in Washington, DeeCee. Miggle hands Jay a yellow legal sheet with two words Flynnscrawled on it: Mutated Klant. After five minutes of hysterical cackling, and without a word further said, it was obvious that the two were once more working on the same wavelength. At last the idea for PANTHER had come where it belonged: INTERLAC. The apa where the people know each other well enough to understand all the nuances and in-jokes. The apa which we felt most obligated to turn in a sterling performance to. The apa we called home. *APAX! Now can you write captions like this without getting bored?*

So, we figger, it should all be self-explanatory. Enjoy!

JZ Miggle

MUTATED KLANTH

CHAPTER ONE

Fan Central Station. Ken Gale stood outside the front door and watched the sun set behind the New York skyline. He chuckled inwardly at the nickname given 220 East 85th Street Apartment 5-R. And how true it was -- aggravatingly so at times, but somebody has to do the dirty work, he rationalized, lest fandom fall apart at the seams.

Ken skipped up the four flights of stairs with his usual multiple-step-at-a-time gusto. As he fiddled with the keys, he began humming a tune which an observer might have described as sounding vaguely like "My Generation." The lock clicked open, and Ken locked it again behind him. Zilber was gone. Probably out on the town with ol' what's-her-name, Ken mused. "Which suits me just fine. Fan Central Station this may be, but tonight it's just me, the typer, Pete Townshend on the stereo, and a quire of stencils which will be converted into another INTERLAC zine by morning." As he slipped the appropriate record out of its jacket and onto the turntable, Ken turned to the statuette on his desk. "Isn't that right, Corflu?"

No reply. The perfect guest, Ken thought. He may not always agree with me, but he never talks back either, unless I want him to. The skinny, pastel white-ish statue occupied a place of honor at one corner of the heavy oak desk. It had been a gift from Erich Heinemann some months ago; its shadow against the wall looked exactly like the outline of Ken's own awkward sketches of his ape mascot, Corflu. Ken's heart skipped a beat as the first guitar chords of "I Can't Explain" drifted from the earphones. This put him in the perfect mood to finish the mailing comment to Sherman Boyson which he'd started a few days ago, before Julycon interrupted everything. He mentally discarded an entire repertoire of "asshole one-liners" before settling on a suitable one for the MC. As he typed the first sentence, his heart skipped another beat. And another. Ken became aware of a dull pain at the base of his head; his breathing grew raspy, shallow...

Ken stopped typing. He rubbed the back of his neck. The excitement of the last few days must be catching up with me. A glass of water, maybe...?

He stood up and tried to focus on the glass he'd set atop the refrigerator, but there were two glasses there now...or was it three? The entire room seemed to have been distorted by a fisheye lense.

How much sleep DID I miss this week? Ken started toward the kitchen and stumbled over a pile of green crudsheets, banging his knee on the coffeetable as he fell. What's happening to me? How can I feel so rotten when I'm listening to The Who? He winced in pain.

As he lay on the floor, caressing his injured knee, he became aware of ...something. Another presence in the room. Which should have been impossible since the door was locked and bolted. "Jay? Is that you?" No answer. Strains of "Happy Jack" were just barely audible from his earphones which had fallen off and lay at the other side of the room. But there was another sound now...no, not a sound. A...presence. Ken's head was pounding now, he could barely catch his breath. He stood up shakily and hobbled to the couch. Where was that sound coming from? From behind... He whirled around, though the air seemed to have the consistency of jellonow, and reached out blindly towards what he expected would be another person standing there. But there was nothing

there save empty air. A sharp pain ran through his head now. Ken collapsed on the couch. Right before he blacked out, he thought about saying "my brain hurts," except that his brain hurt too much to say anything at all.

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The population of Colorado decreased significantly at 11:25 p.m..

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Len Rosenberg shuddered. The subway car had been almost full at 86th Street, but as it pulled out of the Fordham Road station in the Bronx, he noted with mild concern that he was now sharing the car with only two old ladies with shopping bags and a near-lookalike for Lou Ferrigno, green makeup and all, who displayed a distinctive Sal Buscemaesque sneer on his face. Len coughed, nervously, and the shopping bag ladies eyed him with suspicion. One of them gripped her shopping bag tighter. Lou Ferrigno sneered harder. Ghod, why me? thought Len. He fumbled around in his briefcase for a comic book or a newspaper -- anything he could hide his face behind for the duration of the subway trip. Five minutes more, and he'd be at the relative safety and comfort of the Mosholu Parkway stop. Home was just a couple more blocks from there. New York is such fun.

The train slowed to a halt at Bedford Park... one stop to go, thought Len. The shopping bag ladies toddled off, and -- Joy of joys! -- Lou Ferrigno decided to follow them, though not without giving Len a good-bye sneer first. Len grinned back, and immediately buried his nose in his briefcase again until the train pulled out of the station. He sighed in relief -- he'd be home in no time at al --

The grafitti-coated MOSHOLU PARKWAY sign blinked in and out behind the moving train as it gradually decelerated and screeched to a halt. The door whooshed open. Nobody left the car. The doors clamped shut again and the empty train disappeared into the distance.

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There had been no witnesses, no other drivers on the lightly-travelled Pennsylvania back road, so the wreck wasn't discovered until the light of dawn. The volkswagon, registered to a Mercy Van Vlack, had evidently hurtled off the curve while doing at least 60 miles per hour, crashed through the guard rail, and plummeted 20 feet down into the thick underbrush, coming to a halt only when it struck the base of a large maple tree. The front end of the car was totaled; the steering column would have impaled the driver had there been one at the time of the accident. When the ambulance arrived, they searched the area for a body that might have been thrown clear, but there was none to be found. Anywhere.

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"Where's Valeria this morning?" said Mr. Beasley.

"What?" said Mrs. Beasley.

"Never mind," said Mr. Beasley.

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Ron Coyne must have run away from home. His parents had called the police earlier in the morning, frantically. Ron had gone to bed around 11:00 the night before, and he didn't come to breakfast. He must have sneaked out during the night, but he hadn't taken anything with him, no food, no clothes, no money. He was doing well in school, and he'd

never had any serious discipline problems. If only he hadn't gotten involved with that comic book crowd...

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Jenette Kahn smiled. "What on earth could be keeping Paul?"

"Darned if I know, Jenette. I've been phoning his apartment every fifteen minutes...no answer. I'll keep trying, but..." Mike Gold's voice trailed off as he spied Marty Pasko sauntering out of Julie Schwartz's office. "Hey, Marty...!"

"Yeah, Mike?"

"You got any idea where Levitz is this morning? He's usually in by nine, and it's almost 10:30."

"Paul?" Marty scowled his how-should-I-know? scowl. "I think he was up last night writing a JSA script. Could be he overslept. Try calling him?"

"All morning...no answer. It's very strange. Paul's one of the most punctual people in the world. It's not like him at all."

Jenette sighed. Running a comic book company wasn't all fun and games, and this was one of those days. First Neal Pozner had missed his DC Direct Currents #12 conference, and now Paul hadn't shown up at all, with no explanation. Oh well. No use moping about it, just because DC Comics might grind to a halt without its Editorial Coordinator. So Jenette smiled again.

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Why did everything have to go wrong? Karin the Nurse knocked furiously on the door. "Haaaaaaa-reeeeee! I know you're in there! Wake up! Some nerd parked a moving van in front of my car, and I need someone to help me move it out of the way. Haaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa-reeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!"

Something was wrong, she sensed. Karin put her ear to the door; the faint buzz she'd heard earlier grew even louder. "C'mon, Harry. I can hear Schroeder humming. I know you're in there." Still no answer. She tried the door...locked, she cursed. There was only one answer left now. Much as she loathed physical violence, Harry might be in trouble. Summoning all the adrenalin her system could muster, Karin the Nurse stepped backwards a few feet, paused, and then hurled herself at the door with all her might. The lock shattered instantly, shards of metal and wood exploded in every direction as the remains of the door flew open.

It was not a pretty sight. She surveyed the room, littered with inky, smeary mimeo stencils and old newspapers. The stereo had been switched on and left that way, as though someone had been listening to records all night and had forgotten to close up shop. She switched off the power and slipped the record, still on the turntable ("The Gizmos? Her eyebrows shot up!) back into its jacket. "Harry...?" she whispered, "where are you?"

The typewriter was still humming also, as though it were trying to speak. Karin the Nurse clicked it off; the ensuing silence was even more ominous than the typer's hum. "If only you could really speak, Schroeder...what stories you could tell." Then she glanced at a half-empty bottle of Dr. Pepper which sat by the typer. Harry can be such a forgetful slob, she sighed. As she leaned over to put the stale-smelling bottle away for him, she caught sight of something which had

been typed at the top of an otherwise-virgin stencil which seemed to have been very hastily pulled from the carriage. Holding the stencil to the light, she read aloud:

I'm out of my hed,
Please hurry or I may be dead
They musn'

Karin the Nurse dropped the stencil as though it had burnt her and, reflexively, she drew her hand to her lip. Harry hadn't even enough time to finish the message. What horror could he possibly have been drawn into this time?

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There they stood in temporary stasis, all 46 of them. Fan Central Station was crowded, to be sure, but there was no other place to put them all. Guess it's about time to bring them back to consciousness.

This is going to be interesting, he thought, as 92 eyelids fluttered open simultaneously.

"GET YOUR ELBOW OUT OF MY EYE!" Rick Taylor squeaked. He paused to look about, and then up at the confused, apologetic face of Valeria Beasley. "Er...what are you doing here, Val?" Rick refocused his eyes. "What am I doing here?" It began to dawn on him that he and the entire roster of INTERLAC was crowded into the Gale/Zilber residence, and his jaw dropped three inches, almost brushing the top of his shoes. All he could utter was a feeble "wooooo wooco.....!"

The next few moments saw the unleashing of a cacaphony of fannish madness, the likes of which, had it been envisioned by Jerry Bails when he founded comics fandom, would surely have given him cause to gafiate even before there was a fandom to gafiate from. Roy Thomas would have burned those first classic Alter Ego ditto masters. Julius Schwartz would have speedily abandoned his plans to print full addresses in his letter pages; better these people should remain ignorant and isolated than to permit the insanity which was destined to occur 17 years later in a location for which the term "Fan Central Station" could never have been more appropriate.

If only Ken Gale could have appreciated it.

It was Liam O'Conner who took control of the situation. "OKAY, EVERYBODY -- LISTEN UP!" Dead silence followed.

Liam climbed onto the coffeetable, wringing his hands until his knuckles cracked. "Okay now," he bellowed calmly, "I'm afraid I don't know many of you people very well, and I don't know exactly what's going on here, but let's just remain cool and calm and sort things out here in a nice, rational manner." Carol Strickland started to protest, but Liam quickly added, "And anyone who doesn't wanna behave in a nice, rational manner -- me and Mike Flynn are gonna play 'sandwich' with ya!"

He winked at Mike from across the room. Mike was forcing his way through the morass of fen in search of Harry, who was worming his way toward the center of the room, climbing over Tom Mitchell, who had fainted into Liz Smith's arms while, nearby, Neal Pozner stood in a corner trying very hard not to socialize with Bob Rodi, who was trying equally hard to avoid socializing with Neal, as Ray Chan and Richard Burton quietly conferred about the cost of overseas return airfare. As the hubbub began to grow in proportion again, Liam slammed his massive fist into the table and again demanded silence. There was silence.

