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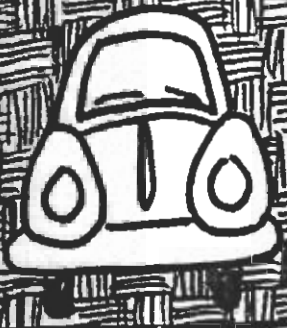
MUTATED

STILL
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WE STILL
GIVE 'EM
AWAY!

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NO. 2

WALANTH

IN THIS ISSUE!:



* WHAT IS THE
TRUE FATE OF
THE VLACKSWAGEN?

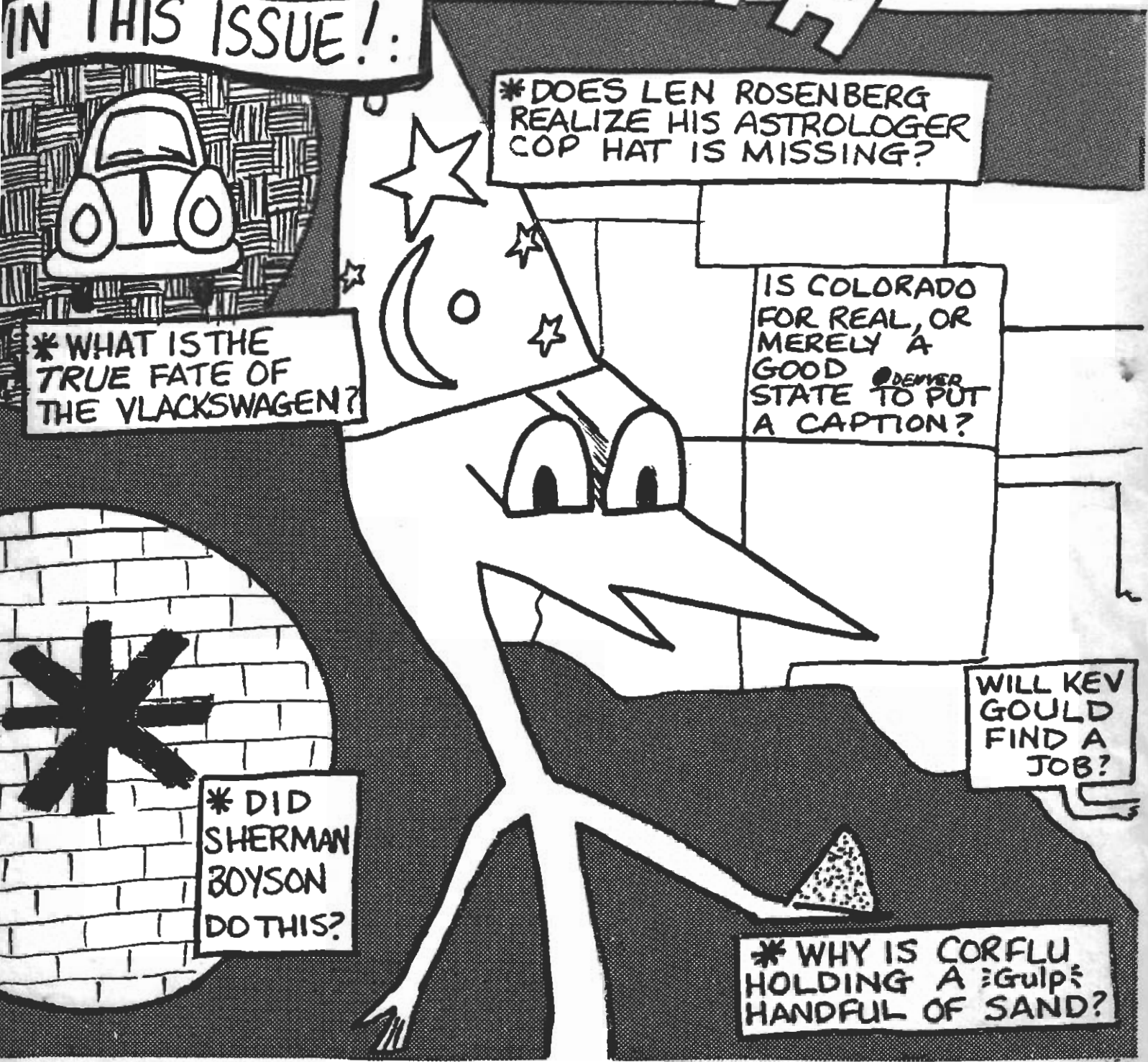
* DOES LEN ROSENBERG
REALIZE HIS ASTROLOGER
COP HAT IS MISSING?

IS COLORADO
FOR REAL, OR
MERELY A
GOOD ^{DENVER}
STATE TO PUT
A CAPTION?

WILL KEV
GOULD
FIND A
JOB?

* DID
SHERMAN
BOYSON
DO THIS?

* WHY IS CORFLU
HOLDING A 'Gulp'
HANDFUL OF SAND?



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MUTATED KLANTH #2 (Chapters 3 & 4), for INTERLAC #14, August
1978. As usual, it's brought to you by Mike Flynn and Jay
Zilber, that dynamic duo which makes the slogan "Teen Team
Action In The Slightly-Flung Present" come alive! Ol' Zilb's
current headquarters are located at Fan Central Station, 220
E. 85th Street #5-R, New York NY 10028. Now with phone: (212)
734-1994. Miggle, as usual, can be found at FSK Room, 812,
600 20th Street NW, Washington DC 20052, and can generally be
phoned at (202) 676-2424. Aren't you glad we use Dial? This
no mere BIG BROTHER RIPOFF PUBLICATION -- it's also a WPCzine
#74 (pfui!), and the world's first Spike/Punky 2 team-up!
=====

(((LAST TIME, YOU REMEMBER...))) A mysterious evil force had
drained fandom's Ken Gale of his
very fannish energy, which had unexpectedly been captured by Corflu,
his statuette/mascot. The energy animated Corflu and bestowed upon
him tremendous inexplicable powers, with which he teleported the entire
INTERLAC roster to Fan Central Station and instructed them to perform
fannish labors. This was the only way he could devise to generate
the fannish energies he needed to restore Ken to life, such as it was.
The first fannish labor was successfully performed by Val Beasley, Paul
Decker, Mercy Van Vlack, and Sherman Boyson, but that was two months
ago, and Corflu had not organized a single labor since then...

M U T A T E D K L A N T H
((((((Chapter Three))))))

Can a statue have an identity crisis?

The staccato pounding of the rain brought an added chill to Fan Central
Station as Corflu paced nervously from one end of the coffeetable to
the other.

The coffeetable. It had become his world. Go a little bit too far and
you fall off the edge -- literally as well as figuratively.

Jay Zilber had had a difficult time adjusting to the idea of living
with a comatose body in the bathroom and a neurotic animated statue on
the coffeetable. The body was easy enough to ignore, and to an extent,
life with Corflu was no worse than life with Ken, since one was merely
the alter ego of the other come to life. Corflu's speech patterns,
his habits, his idiosyncracies were identical to Ken's at first. Only
his physical size and shape differed radically from those of his creator.
And even that didn't stop Corflu from going uptown to sign for Ken's
unemployment check every Monday afternoon; as Corflu explored the range
of powers he'd been able to tap from the fannish energy flow, he dis-
covered they included an ability to cloud men's minds. Once Jay had
come home to find a seemingly alive Ken Gale, all 6'4" of him, pacing
furiously, back and forth, along the narrow confines of the coffeetable
top. His bewildered astonishment was cut short when it turned out to
be Corflu experimenting with his newly-discovered illusion-casting
skills. Very convincing, Jay thought...and very much a clue that led
him to suspect for the first time that Corflu was developing some sort
of emotional problem.

There were more. Corflu would go for days at a time without speaking; other times, he would bitch and gripe endlessly about anything and everything for no reason, threatening to crush into protoplasmic jelly anyone who disagreed with him. Occasionally he would leave the confines of the coffeetable to sit, for hours, in silent contemplation on the shoulder of Ken's unconscious body, which was still awkwardly propped in one corner of the bathroom. Jay suspected that Corflu, who had been unable to restore Ken's fannish energy in spite of all his powers, was merely reacting to his own helplessness in the same way that any mascot would react if this had happened to its creator. And yet, Corflu seemed to have discarded his original plan to have the roster of INTERLAC generate the fannish energy needed to revive Ken. It were as though, for some inexplicable reason...Corflu no longer wanted to revive Ken...

-- The phone rang. (Corflu had decided Fan Central needed a phone so that he could run Fireball II, although they'd had to get the phone in Jay's name when they learned that Ken's credit rating was zilch in every computer in the country. It was beyond even Corflu's power to deal in a rational, sensible manner with New York Bell.) Corflu levitated the phone over to his coffeetable world, and grasped the receiver -- his arms were just long enough to wrap around it, but he seemed to have no difficulty. He answered the phone: "Mangled Baby Ducks?"

"Oh, hello Corflu. This is Bob Soron..."

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As the symptoms of Corflu's neuroses multiplied, Jay had come to realize that the situation was growing intolerable. Corflu had stopped acting the role of Ken Gale; for all intents and purposes, he had become Ken, as though he'd resigned himself to the fact that the real Ken might remain comatose forever. Corflu talked about running Fireball as though it were his own convention. Corflu toyed with the idea of running for Leader of INTERLAC in the event that nobody else was prepared to enter the race. Corflu wondered who had drawn the story he had sold to Warren, and when it would be published. And Corflu talked about his career goals and aspirations to become an sf writer -- as soon as he finished Fireball and published Green Lantern's Light #2.

Today was the last straw.

As the summer thunderstorm grew in its intensity, as Bob Soron and Corflu chattered away in mindless conversation...quite unexpectedly, the ceiling in Fan Central began to dampen...droplets formed, then developed into a slow, repetitious drip. Jay had been hard at work on page 158 of his planned 207-pager for INTERLAC 15, tuning out all background noises...the rain, the phone conversation...until the alien-sounding splatt/splatt/splatt finally pierced his concentration as he came to the horrified realization that the roof was leaking.

As Jay tried frantically to mop up the oncoming flood, Corflu -- who could have sealed the roof with a single telekinetic thought -- sat on the edge of his beloved coffeetable, swinging his legs playfully, remaining oblivious to the oncoming emergency. He and Bob nattered endlessly about page counts...convention plans...photo pages...the latest fannish gossip...cottage cheese...which comics pro had stabbed which other pro in the back last week...all this while Jay was trying to align a series of pots and pans to catch water from a second leak,

and then a third. At length, with a rage that had grown and festered for two long months, Jay Zilber cried out at the top of his lungs:

"CORRRRRRRRRRRRRR-FLUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU!!!!!!"

The statuette locked up for a moment; barely acknowledging his roommate as an expression of utter disgust crossed his face. "Zilber, you are completely helpless, aren't you!" A wave of his tiny arm halted the leakage instantly.

Jay stood for a moment, letting his arms dangle weakly at his sides, as tried to restrain himself from reacting rashly to the indignity he was suffering. But finally, it was no use...

"Okay, Bird. You listen to me and listen good!" Jay pulled away the phone receiver, holding it close enough that Bob Soron could overhear every word. "Your attitude really stinks, bird. I'm sick of your self-righteous pigheadedness.."

"Hey -- let's not be insulting pigs!" Bob interjected over the phone.

But Jay wasn't listening now. "I wanna know what your problem is. You've completely immersed yourself in your own imaginary world where nobody counts except you, and the heck with anybody who doesn't fit your definition of a significant human being -- right?"

Corflu was silent, but Bob's eyes seemed to widen over the phone. "Are you sure you know what you're doing, Jay? He could dissipate your molecules with a single thought!"

"I know why you scrapped the fannish labors project, Corflu. Because if it's successful and we can revive Ken, you'll have to compete with your own alter ego to be the center of attention in fandom -- and you don't want to have to deal with that, do you, Corflu? Ken doesn't fit in your world, now that you've had a chance to think about it. And you'd just as soon let him rot in the bathroom."

Corflu looked away.

Jay collected some clothes and a variety of papers and projects, and hastily threw them into his briefcase. "I'll be staying with my aunt in the Bronx if you want to reach me. You know, it's a cliché to say that with great power there comes great responsibility...but it's true. Think about it. Give my regards to Ken someday." Jay slammed the door shut...then reopened it and pulled his umbrella off the coatrack, allowing the door to ease itself shut the second time. The room was silent.

In Arlinton Massachusettes, Bob Soron's telephone fell to the floor with a gut-wrenching crash. Bob reappeared in the center of the living room at Fan Central.

In Kingston Tennessee, the line forming outside the theatre where Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band had just opened was so long that it extended into the street and around the corner -- a record crowd which hadn't been matched since Saturday Night Fever. Suddenly, the line shortened by one person, and a dumbstruck Roger Caldwell materialized next to Bob.

In the back yard of a pleasant white cottage in Wharton New Jersey, an empty, human-shaped hollow area in the deep end of the swimming pool rushed to fill itself in again, as Brenda Mings unexpectedly found herself trying to swim in the air next to Roger.

And in Hoboken New Jersey, a line of trucks grew longer still as the drivers waited for the dispatcher to return from the bathroom or wherever he'd run off to. But Chuck Nanco was now standing in a puddle on the floor of Fan Central, which had formed from a combination of the leaky roof and Brenda's dripping swimsuit. Chuck exploded in uncharacteristic fury: "Jesus Windsor Twinkies, Corflu! You trying to get me fired? There's gonna be fifty trucks lining up because the drivers are too stupid to move until they've been logged! The whole New Jersey trucking industry is coming to a halt! Put me back!"

"Hey, C'mon Chuck," Bob Soron tried to console him, meekly. "Don't upset him -- it looks like he's already disintegrated Zilber!"

"WHAT?!" Brenda could barely restrain herself. Bring him back! You can't do that to --"

Corflu put his hands to what would have been his ears if he'd been designed with them. "I haven't harmed a hair on his head. He'll be back when he feels like it...right now he's, er, visiting his relatives, that's all."

"I assume we're here to perform another fannish labor," Roger Caldwell called from the kitchen, where he'd begun to rummage through the cabinets and drawers. Bob had to explain that Jay was unemployed and Corflu never ate, so there was not likely to be any nonessentials like cookies anywhere around...

"So...what's on the slab?" Brenda asked. You should have a really top-notch fannish labor planned with two months to work on it!"

"Well...not exactly. I decided that it would be easier to generate fannish energy if it were done spontaneously. I'll leave you to your work." Corflu faded away.

"Hold it! Come back! Choose someone else!" Chuck jumped up and down, frantically. "I gotta get back to Hoboken!"

"A reasonable request which he has chosen to ignore," added Brenda.

An aura of awkwardness filled the room. Bob Soron pieced together the nature of the situation from what he'd managed to overhear on the phone; a manic-depressive 1-foot-tall statue had transported a random group of INTERLACKers and abandoned them to their own devices. Now what?

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"Look -- as long as we're here --" Roger nervously eyed the bathroom doorway through which he could catch a glimpse of Ken's eerie silhouette, "-- we might as well do something to help...you know, Ken."

"Yeah...we could generate lots of fannish energy by devirginizing Roger!" Brenda squealed in delightful anticipation.

Chuck's eyes met Brenda's and recaptured their lost gleam. "And after we're done, we could take him to see Rocky Horror!" Bob Soron scribbled down the exchange of dialogue in a little notebook he kept in his back pocket for just such occasions.

Roger panicked. "Wait a minute, guys -- this doesn't sound fannish at all. Why don't we just go to a movie or something?"

Bob explained, "I think that's what they both had in mind, Roger. But that's not until midnight, so why don't we set up a game of Spaceopoly in the meantime?"

As Chuck landed in the black Hole for the 19th time, his face became etched with an I-am-suppressing-the-urge-to-emit-a-primal-scream expression. He climbed to his feet, shaking his head, his fists tightly clenched to the point where his knuckles were white. "No...no, this isn't going to work, guys. Corflu said we'd have to do something spontaneous ---"

As though in answer to unspoken prayer, the telephone rang.

Brenda...Chuck...Bob stared at each other, each thinking the same unspoken thoughts. A question mark hovered above Roger's head.

Chuck screamed, "I'll answer it! I've done this before! I ---"

"Wait! What are you going to say?" Bob asked meekly.

Pause.

- Second ring. Roger looked back and forth at his fellow LACKers, hopelessly confused. "Why don't you just answer the ---"

"Eat prune snack chicken windsor-twinkies and die!"

"Not fannish enough. Handful of sand is no sin..."

"At least you didn't vibrate..."

"Harry's gay ostrich Cuthbert!"

- Third ring.

"Cottage cheese and liverwurst!"

"Broiled monkey brains!"

"Gb#yzyln!"

"Suck that moose baby!"

"Eat Con reports and die!"

"It's alive...and it sucks!"

- Fourth ring. Outside, a web of lightning overdramatically lit up the New York skyline.

"Answer the phone, dammit!" Four pairs of hands reached as several, as Chuck stumbled over the others, clutching the receiver as the group collapsed in a heap of tangled arms, legs, and torsos. The phone fell to the floor, and Chuck lost his grip. Bob retrieved it first, then lost it in the scuffle.

It fell into Roger's hands, and he caught it awkwardly, proceeding to hold the mouthpiece to his lips. A hush fell over the clique.

"Say it!" Brenda whispered loudly.

Roger started to open his mouth, but a tinny voice from the other end of the line interrupted him. "Hello...?"

"He doesn't know what this is all about!" Chuck realized in horror.

"A fan central phone virgin!" Brenda gasped

Chuck stifled a scream. "You gotta say something fannish, Roger! Anything! But whatever you do, don't say..."

It was too late. Utterly baffled, Roger simply said:

"Hello. This is Roger Caldwell. Jay and Ken aren't here right now. May I take a message?"

Bob gagged, meekly.

The tinny voice at the other end replied, "Isn't this the 50th precinct?"

"No...you must have a wrong number." The line went dead; Roger quietly hung up. He dusted himself off. "Would you mind explaining what that was all about?" he asked with the innocence of Job.

Chuck displayed his best Oh-ghod-it's-a-minac contorted scowl. "You gans! You just missed a perfect chance to generate fannish energy! Nobody ever answers the phone in Fan Central by saying 'Hello!' That's the most unfannish thing you could possibly have done. You answer the phone with a spontaneous witty, clever in-joke or catch phrase not --" he exaggerated in a Pozneresque manner for effect, "--hel-lo!!!"

Brenda collapsed on the couch. "In other words, you muffed it."

"No he didn't." Corflu had conveniently reappeared, leaning nonchalantly at one corner of his favorite piece of furniture. "Mmmmmmm...I'll be able to restore Ken completely after a few more fannish labors of this intensity. I can feel those fannish energies recharging the very fiber of my being..."

"Conway...!" muttered Roger.

"Now that's how you should have answered the phone!" Bob said.

"No. Not true. Roger did the right thing," Corflu explained. "You see, Roger didn't know about your in-joke because he'd never been part of it before. He had to learn the hard way -- but he learned. And isn't that part of what fandom is all about?"

"How sentimental," Brenda observed.

Chuck glared at the statuette. "Why do you always gotta sound like Ken every time you open your beak? That's something Ken would say."

Corflu's pastel-white complexion turned a shade whiter. "Is it? I hadn't noticed..." With that, Corflu turned away, lost in one of his moods, and refused to say another word...

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Roger was devirginized that night. Just for the heck of it.

(((((END CHAPTER TWO))))))

