

trade show



KILLER OF DEMONS

IMAGE

He's the sole agent of Heaven on Earth fighting an army of disguised demons from Hell. Or, he's completely crazy.

Either way,

Chris Yost (*X-Force*) and Scott Wegener's (*Atomic Robo*) *Killer of Demons* is a three-issue collection full of laugh-out-loud humor and slam-bang action with a compelling story to boot—the kind of comic you just can't dislike.

Teamed with a stogie-smoking cherub to convince him he's doing God's work, current *Killer of Demons* and junior account executive Dave Sloan starts racking up a body count slicing through Satan-sent baddies only he can see while leaving corpse-filled White Castles in his wake. But the blood on his hands quickly leads Dave to think he's off his rocker, instead of Heaven's force for good against the burning legions from below.

Between fighting satanic underage stripper assassins and legions of demons, hiding his heavenly mission from his cop girlfriend and going up against the devil himself, Dave's battle with his own sanity might be the easiest fight he has in the whole series.

The setup isn't completely unfamiliar, as *KOD* is at times reminiscent of "Buffy The Vampire Slayer" and "Army of Darkness" with a bit of "Shaun of the Dead" peppered into the mix. But the Yost-penned witty banter and visceral action sequences by Wegener are sure to make this an instant favorite for fans of the aforementioned flicks—not to mention many other comic aficionados

AUG 12 | \$12.99 • JIM GIBBONS



get this!

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Killer of Demons cover cameo by artist Scott Wegener wearing an *Atomic Robo* shirt (see cover inset above)

CRIME PAYS



DARK AVENGERS VOL. 1: DARK AVENGERS ASSEMBLE PREMIERE HC

MARVEL

If you thought the Thunderbolts were bad news, wait until you see the level of carnage these horrible heroes cause in their inaugural mission. Former Green Goblin Norman Osborn, now in charge of America, handpicks his own group of sadistic superheroes to assemble as his Avengers. But there's not a lot of good you can do with a bipolar superman, brain-hungry Spider-Man and a bloodthirsty Hawkeye. In this storyarc, the quasi-heroes team up with Doctor Doom to overthrow sorcerous skank Morgan le Fay, who's out for revenge against the Latverian king. Big things are shaking in the Marvel Universe, and *Dark Avengers* by Brian Bendis and Mike Deodato is at the epicenter.

AUG 19 | \$24.99

• BRETT WHITE



FINAL CRISIS: REVELATIONS HC

DC COMICS

Part tie-in to Grant Morrison's mega-summer event and part capper of his own long-running set of stories about Renee "The Question" Montoya and Crispus "The Spectre" Allen, writer Greg Rucka presents equal amounts of creepy shocks and spiritual awakenings in *Revelations*. When the pair of tortured former detectives get trapped in a church with new heroine The Radiant while a Cain-possessed Vandal Savage pounds at the gates, they each experience a final crisis of faith. Philip Tan's shadowy art helps drive the story forward with horror-tinged tension, but the lack of connection between Judeo-Christian myth and the world of the New Gods makes this series feel slight for non-fans of Rucka's favorite characters. AUG 5 | \$19.99

• KIEL PHEGLEY



PUNISHER: DARK REIGN HC

MARVEL

Writer Rick Remender opens this newest *Punisher* series with a bang (literally): a Frank Castle-fired bullet aimed for Norman Osborn's head. The Sentry makes the save, but that's just the opening shot of this Punny-versus-a-criminal-run-America story. Frank is none too pleased that the Green Goblin has made his way to the top, and he's going to do something about it. He's got some new help, but so does Osborn, and what follows is a game of cat and mouse between Castle and the Hood that culminates in some serious demonic creepiness, but not before some gnarly bloodshed. Ever wanted to see what would happen if Ant-Man grew to full size from inside a guy? Check out this book and Frank will show you. AUG 19 | \$19.99

• LEE RODRIGUEZ

On Aug. 19, DC's mature readers imprint launches Vertigo Crime, a new initiative dedicated to the mystery and crime stories the publisher does best. *Wizard* got early editions of the first two 5.5-by-8-inch graphic novels (\$19.99 each), and here are the verdicts:

DARK ENTRIES

Who better to kick off Vertigo Crime than the publisher's prime paranormal investigator John Constantine? Veteran British crime writer Ian Rankin (*Inspector Rebus* novels) teams with artist Werther Dell'Edera (*Loveless*) to put the Hellblazer through his paces as he's hired to investigate the set of creepy new reality TV show "Dark Entries." Constantine enters a house full of 20-somethings tweaking out on personal terrors before the producers have even attempted to try creeping them out. Or so it seems.

Without spoiling the killer twist, it turns out things are far more frightful than they initially appeared, and it's up to Constantine to play detective, see how the pieces fit and find a way out of one helluva haunted house. Rankin's setup and unraveling mystery are solid and he gives Hellblazer plenty of flawless one-liners, all complemented by Dell'Edera's simple-yet-haunting interiors. • JG



FILTHY RICH

In this period-piece noir from writer Brian Azzarello (*100 Bullets*) and artist Victor Santos (*Mice Templar*), Richard "Junk" Junkin is a one-time football star who washed out of a pro career thanks to a ruined knee and a reputation for point-shaving. His wealthy boss hires him to play bodyguard for a socialite daughter

regularly featured in gossip columns, and that's where the trouble begins. Before long, Junk's locking lips with this femme fatale and cracking skulls at her behest, but is this former gridiron god set for a major score, or is he being played?



Filthy Rich treads familiar turf—tough-guy protagonist, stone-cold killer babes, double-crosses and hidden agendas—but Azzarello's pacing and wicked dialogue play well with Santos' heavy shadows and evocative panels, making *Filthy Rich* a tidy little read for noir devotees. • ANDY SERWIN



WHAT I'M READING DUANE SWIERCZYNSKI



"I'm pretty much a sucker for anything **crime** or **horror** on the racks, but my absolute never-miss is Ed Brubaker's **Criminal**. I'm literally counting down the days until it's back in September. Looking at my recently read stack, I've also been loving

Robert Kirkman's **Destroyer**—I can never get enough of old men kicking ass—as well as Brian Wood's **Northlanders** and Daniel Way's **Deadpool**. And a hundred others that I wish I had room to mention right now."

—DUANE SWIERCZYNSKI, writer of *Immortal Iron Fist* Vol. 5: *Escape from the Eighth City* Premiere HC (Aug. 26, \$24.99) and co-writer of *X-Force/Cable: Messiah War* (Aug. 26, \$39.99)

BEST OF TRANSFORMERS

With *Transformers: Best of UK Omnibus* (\$19.99) coming out from IDW Publishing in August, *Wizard* takes a look at the top Transformers comic collections you need to roll out, get and add to your bookshelf.

TRANSFORMERS: MEGATRON ORIGIN

BY ERIC HOLMES AND ALEX MILNE

Ever wonder who Megatron was before his Decepticon warlord days? This IDW-verse miniseries tells the tale of a humble mine worker's rise through the ranks of underground gladiator battles before eventually founding the Decepticon faction and sparking a deadly war.

TRANSFORMERS GENERATION ONE VOL. 1

BY CHRIS SARRACINI AND PAT LEE

What happened in the years between Season Two of the classic TV series and the animated movie? This Dreamwave mini sought to fill in some of those gaps, and it did it in style—the darkest Transformers story to date, punctuated by Pat Lee's stylized art.

TRANSFORMERS: ALL HAIL MEGATRON VOL. 1

BY SHANE MCCARTHY AND GUIDO GUIDI

This IDW miniseries is what happens when Megatron wins. With the Earth as their playground, the Decepticons reign over terrorized humans while the Autobots fight for survival on the very fringe of the universe.

TRANSFORMERS: THE WAR WITHIN OMNIBUS

BY SIMON FURMAN AND DON FIGUEROA

Collecting two of the three *War Within* miniseries from Dreamwave (the company went bankrupt before the third finished), this collection details the wars on Cybertron before the Transformers came to Earth. What's more, these stories feature the first appearance of the Fallen from this summer's blockbuster movie.

TRANSFORMERS/G.I. JOE

BY JOHN RIEBER AND JAE LEE

What if the Transformers awoke before 1984? In this mini, it's 1939 and evil terrorist organization Cobra has some new, gigantic Cybertronian back-up. But Cobra's new allies are resistant, especially that big blue and red one.

TRANSFORMERS: THE ANIMATED MOVIE

BY BOB BUDIANSKY AND DON FIGUEROA

In this four-part adaptation of the classic movie, fans are treated to a handful of "deleted scenes"—mostly a nostalgic love fest made better with some truly amazing art from a modern Transformers master. It's nothing you haven't seen before, but it's never looked this good. • LR



REIGN IN HELL DC COMICS

Things heat up in this showcase of DC's magical side as the co-leaders of Purgatory, Lord Satanus and his sister the Lady Blaze, start a war to take over hell by instilling hope in the damned. Knowing that current hell lord Neron being subverted by this new "less evil" damnation will have dire consequences, an all-star cast of Earth's mystical heroes must decide how they can best sway the outcome of the war. Writer Keith Giffen delivers an exciting political adventure full of magical monsters and demons, not to mention fan-favorite characters such as a way-over-the-top Lobo. The exaggerated dialogue serves to establish a clearly defined hierarchy within hell, using biblical references and rhetorical language to put the reader into the depths of the underworld. AUG 19 | \$19.99 • STEPHEN WETTSTEIN



ROBIN: SEARCH FOR A HERO DC COMICS

Taking the reigns after Chuck Dixon's departure from the title, writer Fabian Nicieza sets Robin on a crusade to fill the gaping hole left in Gotham City after Batman's apparent demise, but not in the donning-cape-and-cowl sort of way. Alongside artist Freddie Williams II, Nicieza deftly shows Tim Drake's struggle with focusing on the task at hand while mourning the loss of another father figure. Jason Todd, Spoiler, Lady Shiva and even Ragman factor into this tale of a hero left to pick up the pieces. How does he fare? Exceptionally, which shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone who's watched the Boy Wonder grow into the person he's become today... and more importantly, the person he will become tomorrow. AUG 12 | \$19.99 • SAL LORIA



X-FACTOR: TIME AND A HALF PREMIERE HC

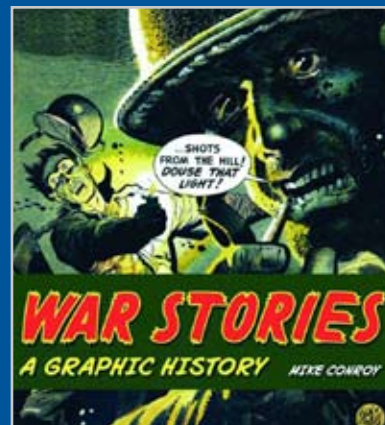
MARVEL

This long-running X-spinoff series shifts into high gear as writer Peter David and artists Valentine De Landro and Marco Santucci buckle up and head toward some truly dangerous curves. Starting with the long-awaited and truly twisted birth of Siryn and Madrox's baby, the opening storyarc will kick your emotions around like a hackey sack. And if that doesn't leave you an emotional wreck, then you'll also get to experience a second arc with time travel, broken fingers and an outrageous spin on a sword-swingin' early '90s mutant superstar. Even if you've never read *X-Factor* before, this engrossing climax to a number of the series' plotlines will have you clamoring for more Madrox. AUG 19 | \$24.99 • BW

BUY THE BOOK

War Stories: A Graphic History By Mike Conroy

The founder of the coveted and infamous Eagle Awards (Britain's fan-driven comics honor), Mike Conroy delivers *War Stories: A Graphic History* (Collins Design, \$24.99) depicting



his extensive knowledge of the history of war comics. Conroy covers every aspect, ranging from extremely personal stories of the Holocaust such as *Master Race* and *Maus*, to impersonal acts of violence like DC Thomson's weekly comic from the '70s, *Warlord*. Conroy delivers a very informative, unbiased, alluring insight on how war comics have developed from the late '30s to their status today. Whether you're looking for comic insight on Hiroshima, underground anti-war comix or more well-known fare like DC's *Sgt. Rock*, you're bound to find a footlocker full of interesting and enthralling information here. *War Stories: A Graphic History* is perfect for those knowledge-craving war comic historians out there. • SW

UNSTOPPABLE USAGI

Stan Sakai celebrates his rabbit samurai's 25th anniversary with a massive slipcover edition and a brand new color graphic novel

From his furry top knot to his ferocious sword skills, Stan Sakai's rabbit warrior Usagi Yojimbo continues to thrill readers with his smart, often supernatural tales of life in ancient Japan. And he's been at it for 25 years.

In celebrating Usagi's quarter-century of high-kicking, Sakai looks back to his earliest days with *Usagi Yojimbo: The Special Edition* (Fantagraphics, \$95), an August-shipping, two-volume slipcase reprinting the character's earliest appearances. And if 25 years sounds long for fans, the artist himself remains quite thrown when he thinks about the mindset he had drawing Usagi in 1984.

"Basically, I was more concerned about what I was doing the next month than what I was doing in 25 years. I never thought I'd be doing Usagi for so long. It's great, and I love it, but back then I couldn't have imagined that," laughs the artist.

"Even my approach to storytelling is different," Sakai says of his work today. "[Looking back on an old story recently] there were panels and plot things where I thought, 'Why did I do that?' It was very



different and interesting for me because I got to compare the choices I made back then to what I would do now. It was a big eye-opener for how much Usagi has changed."

On top of the killer reprints, current *Usagi* publisher Dark Horse plans to make the anniversary special with *Usagi Yojimbo: Yokai* (\$14.95)—a new, fully painted story coming to shops this November that Sakai referred to as "the most ambitious color story I've done."

"The story revolves around the Yokai—the ghosts and goblins of Japanese mythology. I love that stuff because Japan has such a rich tradition of folklore and monsters and demons. I included a lot of both the really horrible stuff as well as the really funny characters. It revolves around an event called The Light Parade of 100 Demons. There's a Japanese belief that once a year, all the Japanese monsters gather together and parade through the countryside. To look upon them, you'd die instantly. But on this night, they want to conquer the Earth. And Usagi and Sasuke the wizard have to defeat them." • KP

MARVEL

SPIDER-MAN

**Ultimate Comics:
Spider-Man #1**
CGC 9.8

\$49.99

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WIZARD

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