FIRST HORROR-FYING ISSUE!

THE VAULT OF HORROR

NO. 1 OCT

INTRODUCING A NEW TREND IN MAGAZINES...
ILLUSTRATED SUSPENSE STORIES
WE DARE YOU TO READ!

...AND HERE WE SEE THE STRETCH-RACK, ONE OF THE MOST DIABOLICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MEDIEVAL TORTURE EVER CONCEIVED! WATCH THE ACTION OF THE RACK UPON THE WAX DUMMY WHEN I PUT THIS MECHANICAL DISPLAY INTO OPERATION!

GOOD LORD...CAN'T THEY SEE I'M ALIVE...NOT A WAX DUMMY! I'M FLESH AND BLOOD...PLEASE SOMEONE, HELP ME...

EXHIBIT #3: STRETCH-RACK.
TORTURE DEVICE USED IN THE MIDDLE AGES.
GAINES WAX MUSEUM.
This new series of EC reprints is lovingly dedicated to the memory of William M. Gaines (1922-1992)
Ah, we meet again, dear reader! Heh, heh, heh... Welcome... Welcome once more to the Vault of Horror! This time I have brought out a special story for you that will chill the blood in your veins... and perhaps make you stop and wonder a moment when next you meet your best friend... Heh, heh! This literary gem of horrible unpleasantness is, of course, from my private collection, and I call it... Portrait in Wax!
NOW, LET'S SEE... OUR STORY OPENS IN PARIS IN THE MIDDLE 1930's! IN A SQUALID DWELLING ON THE LEFT BANK, WE FIND TWO STRUGGLING YOUNG ARTISTS...

ROBERT WAS A STUDIOUS PERSON, AND TRULY AN ARTISTIC GENIUS, BUT WITH NO DESIRE FOR FAME! HE WAS CONTENT TO WORK DAY AND NIGHT PRODUCING HIS MASTERPIECES.

AH! LOOK HENRY! I HAVE FINISHED ANOTHER ETCHING!

HENRY, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS PRECISELY THE REVERSE! HE HAD NO TALENT WHATSOEVER... AND HIS AMBITION AND JEALOUSY WERE RAMPANT!

THAT FOOL! THAT IDIOTIC FOOL! HE COULD SELL HIS ETCHINGS... HE COULD BE RICH... FAMOUS... AND YET HE DOESN'T CARE...

BUT... CARE! PERHAPS IF I SOLD JUST ONE... HE'D NEVER KNOW! AND I COULD ASK A GOOD PRICE...

AND SO, SOME HOURS LATER, AT AN ART BUYER'S OFFICE...

AMAZING! M'SIEU, I WILL PAY ANY PRICE YOU ASK, BUT I MUST HAVE THIS ETCHING! IT IS SUPERB! YOU ARE A GENIUS!

AH... THANK YOU, SIR! I MAY HAVE OTHERS IF YOU...

OTHERS? M'SIEU, I WILL GLADLY PAY YOU ANY PRICE FOR ANY OF YOUR WORK PROVIDED YOU SELL TO ME ONLY!

THIS IS BETTER THAN I EXPECTED!

THEN IT IS AGREED!

HA! HA! THIS IS TOO GOOD! BY SELLING ROBERT'S ETCHINGS AS MY OWN TO THAT GULLIBLE BUYER, I CAN RETIRE FOR LIFE AND AMASS A FORTUNE!

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

YES, DEAR READER, IT WAS QUITE A SET-UP FOR HENRY! HE SOLD A NUMBER OF ROBERT'S WORKS AND HIS POCKETS JINGLED MERRILY ALL NIGHT LONG UNTIL ONE DAY...

HENRY! HENRY! YOU BOUNDER! HOW COULD YOU DO SUCH A THING? How could you be such a CADAVERS TO SELL MY WORK AND CLAIM IT TO BE YOURS?

WH-WH-...? ROBERT HOW... HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?
I WENT TO A PRIVATE SHOWING OF AN ART BUYER’S COLLECTION! IT WAS MY WORK I SAW! I HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING, YET, BUT I...

NOW WAIT A MOMENT... WAIT A MOMENT, I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THE MONEY I HAVE, ROBERT......

MONEY? I DON'T WANT MONEY! YOU GET THOSE ETCHINGS BACK OR I'LL HAVE YOU PUT IN PRISON!

I CAN'T GET THEM BACK, ROBERT! MY REPUTATION WILL BE RUINED IF ANYONE FOUND OUT...

ALL RIGHT, HENRY! IF YOU WON'T GET THEM BACK, I'LL GO TO THE POLICE!

NO! NO! COME BACK HERE, YOU STUPID PIG! I WON'T LET YOU RUIN ME!

PUT THAT DOWN, YOU FOOL? THAT'S ACID? HENRY! DON'T!

AAAAGGGHHH! MY FACE! MY FACE! (GASP!) HEM... HENRY! HELP ME!

HE... HE'S FAINTED! I'LL... I'LL HAVE TO KILL HIM, NOW! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET OUT OF THIS MESS... THE ONLY WAY... BUT NOW? NO ONE MUST EVER FIND HIS BODY... WAIT! I HAVE IT!
But one day there came a shocking realization...

Great Scott! This is terrible! I've only a few of Robert's works left! They won't last long... and what will I do when they're gone? What will I do?

For many years Henry rejoiced in his luxury...

Ha! Ha! Ha! What a life! The critics call me a master! A genius! I can sell any of Robert's etchings as my own and no one knows... no one knows... Ha! Ha! This is perfect! Perfect!

I could never duplicate his technique and without his work I won't be able to make another dime! I've got to think of something... got to think...

ALREADY HIS NAME HAD PRECEDED HIM AND WITH EVERY SALE HIS FAME AND WEALTH GREW...

...THERE IT'S... DONE! (GLAACK!)
I... I suddenly feel a trifle... sick... better get back to my room... I'll feel better there... ha! ha! Robert's fabulous masterpieces... they're all mine!
DEAR SIR,

BECAUSE OF YOUR CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE LATE LORD CHERRINGWOOD, I THOUGHT YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING THAT A BEAUTIFUL STATUE OF HIM HAS BEEN CREATED BY AN UNKNOWN SCULPTOR LIVING AT 55 THAMESBROG ROAD. YOU WOULD DO WELL TO VIEW IT...

HMM... NO SIGNATURE...

...AND SO, A SHORT TIME LATER...

ER... I AM INFORMED YOU HAVE A STATUE OF THE LATE LORD JAMES CHERRINGWOOD. HE WAS A VERY DEAR FRIEND OF MINE. I SHOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO SEE IT!

YES... YES, OF COURSE! COME IN...

WHA... WHY, THIS STATUE LOOKS REAL! LIKE FLESH AND BLOOD! IT'S AMAZING! HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO GIVE IT SUCH A LIFE-LIKE QUALITY, MR... ER...

MY NAME IS JULES VENDETTE. THE STATUE IS MADE OF WAX. I HAVE BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH THIS PROCESS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS.
THE MONEY DOES NOT MATTER. I WILL ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSAL ON TWO CONDITIONS. FIRST, I'VE FOUND ANOTHER GENIUS! I MIGHT BE ABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON HIM AS I DID WITH ROBERT. THE STUPID PUBLIC WOULD PAY A GREAT DEAL TO SEE SUCH STATUES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE. YES, A MUSEUM! NOW IF VENETTE WILL ONLY COOPERATE...

JULES, I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU! I WANT TO OPEN A MUSEUM—A MUSEUM THAT WILL HOUSE YOUR WAX STATUES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE! ARE YOU INTERESTED? I COULD PAY YOU WELL, MY FRIEND....

THE MONEY DOES NOT MATTER. I WILL ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSAL ON TWO CONDITIONS. FIRST....

THAT I WILL BE ALLOWED TO WORK ALONE AND WITHOUT ANY INTERRUPTIONS! SECONDLY, THAT I MAKE MY WAX STATUES ONLY OF FAMOUS PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED! I LIKE TO THINK I AM GIVING THEM A NEW LIFE....

JULES, OLD BOY, YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN! FIRST, YOUR ETCHINGS, AND NOW THIS! YOU'VE SURPASSED YOURSELF, HENRY! IT'S SIMPLY INCREDIBLE HOW LIFE-LIKE YOUR STATUES ARE!

AND HENRY AGAIN LOLLED IN THE LAP OF HIS NEW WEALTH—HA! HA! HA! HENRY, YOU'RE A GENIUS! IN YOUR OWN RIGHT, YOU'RE A GENIUS! I'M REALLY PROUD OF YOU!
Yes, friends, Henry was proud! The fame of his wax museum spread like wildfire. Whenever a famous personality died, his or her wax replica would appear in the museum a week or so later...

How beautiful! The statue looks as alive as you or I!

So real, magnificent!

And so it went... until one day I had to make room for a new statue. Just move this one a bit... oops!

Drap! I've broken the great Scott! Am I seeing things? Beneath this thin layer of wax... a... a human hand?

What th... why, this is the corpse of Thomas Downe merely covered with a thin coating of wax! Jules! Jules! Jules!

Cheat! Faker! Thief! Now I know why you only wanted to make statues of dead people! So you could steal their bodies and coat them with wax! Grave robber! Grave robber!

HA! HA! HA! Ha! Ha! Ha! ha! HA!

I'll be ruined. You fiend! Ruined! Stop laughing!

HA! HA! HA! Precisely my plan, Henry! I sent you that letter telling about the statue I had made of Lord Cherringwood! I wanted you to take advantage of me! I planned all this!
YOU BLUNDERING IDIOT! YOU FIEND! I'LL SHOW YOU!

WH... WHA... YOUR FACE... IT... IT'S SHATTERED... FALLING APART. PIECE BY PIECE!

DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE ME UNDER MY FALSE WAX FACE, HENRY? DON'T YOU KNOW ME?

I'M NOT PRETTY TO LOOK AT, AM I, HENRY? ACID DESTROYS A MAN'S FACE SO COMPLETELY! YES, HENRY, YOU REMEMBER ME NOW, DON'T YOU?

ROBERT? NOT KEEP AWAY? KEEP AWAY!

WELL, DEAR READER, ABOUT A WEEK AFTER HENRY'S FUNERAL, THE EXECUTOR OF HIS ESTATE OPENED THE MUSEUM'S DOORS TO THE PUBLIC...

LOOK! WHY, IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!

HOW DID IT GET HERE?

AND SO, FIENDS... ER, I MEAN, FRIENDS, THAT ENDS MY STORY! OH, AH... IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING ABOUT THAT VAT OF ACID... IT WASN'T! IT WAS SIMPLY WATER! ROBERT'S ACID-BATH TURNED OUT TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN A BATH! LUCKY FOR HIM, OTHERWISE HE WOULD HAVE BEEN AWFULLY BURNED UP! OH, BY THE WAY, THE NEXT TIME YOU VISIT A WAX MUSEUM, DON'T LOOK AT THE PROPRIETOR TOO HARD. IT MIGHT BE ROBERT... AND HE MIGHT LOSE FACE! HEH, HEH, HEH! I'LL SEE YOU IN THE NEXT ISSUE WHERE I WILL HAVE ANOTHER TALE FROM THE VAULT OF HORROR!

IF YOU LIKE THE STORIES IN THIS BOOK, WON'T YOU WRITE TO: RUSS COCHRAN, POB 459, WEST PLAINS, MO 65775?
My name is Walter Mallory. I am an Englishman, and until recently, thought myself perfectly sane and normal. And then, when those horrible changes came over my body, when my blood hungered to kill, and raven in the full of the moon, I became part of...

The Werewolf Legend

It began in a deep, dense wood, just outside Mallory Dene, close to the moors of Devon. I was not myself! I was some shaggy, hairy monster.

Moon making my blood boil, making me... hungry! I am no man... not anymore! I am... a beast!
I leaped! Weakly, he lost his balance and fell. A growl rumbled in my chest...

There is a blank spot in my mind after that. Dimly I recall a bed...tossing...turning...moaning in my sleep. And then, there was morning brightness...

Why...it's daylight...and...and that must have been...some awful kind of nightmare!

Tonight...by the light of the moon...I will kill!

It wasn't a dream...there is blood on the counterpane and sheet...I...I...AAAGH!

In relief I staggered to the bathroom mirror...and stared into a hairy, ugly snout...

Mercifully, I fainted! When I awakened, Potts the butler was thrusting his head through the door.

Your cousin, Sir Gregory? Yes...would like to know...yes, if you will join him for breakfast, sir? I'll be down directly!
**Good Morning, Walter!**

**I didn't?**

**Why, Walter? You've gone white as a sheet!**

**Miss Faversham has just arrived!**

**What's this?**

**A Werewolf?**

**My blood chilled as I read on, unable to tear my eyes from that old vellum...**

**The first Mallory Werewolf was Edmund, who had gone on a Crusade. When he returned to his barony, he was changed. At the full of the moon, a strange transition came over him. His features coarsened, became hairy...**

**He went forth from the castle, a beast-like thing, full of hate and the lust to kill.**

**His weird cries sent chills down the spines of all who heard...**
The next Mallory to possess the lycanthropic germ in his blood was Dennis, Baron of Munroville. He said of him that he ran with a pack of wild beasts and was cursed by all...

...down through the years the taint descended. The last known Mallory werewolf was Arthur, in 1827. He was cornered and shot by an angry mob...

Not the last! The hereditary taint has come down to me... something in my blood... that makes me like the Beast! That makes me... want to kill!

Hollow-eyed, I staggered up to my bedroom that night. I had taken a long walk over the moors. I was tired. I would sleep deeply...

I'm exhausted! Tonight I will not be able to run in the woods again... tired... going to sleep... sleep...

And then... abruptly... I awoke! I felt hairs growing on my cheeks... felt my teeth lengthening... becoming fangs.

Want to run free... run in the woods!

Got to get in the open... breathe the clean air... find prey!
I felt the cool night air on my rainy face as I ran freely, effortlessly, like the inhuman wolf I had become...

Once I paused to sniff at the breeze! I smelt a man! My tongue swelled and my jaws snipped saliva...

But I reekoned without the horse; the animal scented me... shied in fright...

Easy, boy! Easy there! What is it that makes you so afraid?

He is not far away! I will be able to catch him easily...

Oo you hear... ohnh! I see him... the wenewolf!

The horse bolted in panic! His master, stunned, quinted him furiously... but still... I gained... fon I nan... as nuns the wolf... effortlessly...

Now I... nave you!...
ThAT NIGH T I WENT TO BED WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

O NCE AGAIN I WOKE WITH BLOOD SEDAREO ACROSS MYFAC E. ONCE AGAIN I FAINTED! WHEN I RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS...

I MIGHT... AS WELL... FACE IT. I'M A MONSTER! TO PROTECT INNOCENT PEOPLE, SOMEBODY MUST... KILL ME!

I WENT TO THE CONSTABULARY IN TOWN...

I KNOW THIS SOUNDS RIDICULOUS... BUT THERE IS A LEGEND THAT OUR FAMILY CASTLE IS A LAIR FOR A WEREWOLF! PERHAPS IT WAS THIS CREATURE WHO KILLED THOSE MEN...

S O THERE'S A FAMILY WEREWOLF, EH? HOW'D YOU LEARN THAT?

F ROM SOME OLD MANUSCRIPTS THAT HAVE BEEN IN OUR FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS! EH... MY COUSIN GREGORY SHOWED THEM TO ME!

I'M FROM SCOTLAND YARO. THIS STORY OF A WEREWOLF FASCINATES ME! SUPPOSE I HAVE YOUR CASTLE SURROUNDED IN CASE... AH... THE WEREWOLF APPEARS?

S PLENOIO, SIR! JUST WHAT I WANT! AND WHEN YOU SEE THE... THE BEAST... SHOOT TO KILL!

T HAT NIGHT I WENT TO BED WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE. IF I ROAMED THE MOONLIT MOORS AGAIN, THE POLICE WOULD SEE ME AND FIRE! BUT AS THE MOONLIGHT GREW STRONGER AND STRONGER, I FELT MY STRENGTH GROWING, AND MY TEETH LENGTHENING...
Again I roamed the forest. Again a human fled before me. What had happened? Why had the police not... killed me?

Again I floated up through dimly remembered horror, into the light of day...

The police failed! I told them to come here... to shoot me when they saw me leaving... but they didn't. I'll have to... shoot myself...

You? You did come for me! Thank heavens! Now I'll never hurt anyone again!

You've never hurt anyone at all, Walter Mallory!

It was your cousin Gregory... an accomplished hypnotist... who murdered those three men? They had been black-mailing him! He put that werewolf makeup on your face after having hypnotised you. He worked on your subconscious mind causing you to believe that you committed those ghastly crimes!

But they were real... to you! The hypnotic mind, if so directed, remembers what it has experienced under hypnotism? Gregory commanded you to remember!

They were real... to you! The hypnotic mind, if so directed, remembers what it has experienced under hypnotism? Gregory commanded you to remember!

He had these manuscripts prepared by an expert to fool you. He hoped remorse would overcome you... wanted you to kill yourself! You see, you stand to inherit a considerable fortune! By your death, he would have become next of kin!

But they were real! If they were dreams...

It was a malevolent plan, and yet a simple one? If you failed to kill yourself, he was in a position to order you committed for insanity. But he had to get rid of those blackmailers... and we caught him leaving the house last night... followed... and collared him. You're a free man, Walter Mallory...
His fingers relaxed and he left the body sliding away from him, toward the floor. The throat had blue marks as a result of the strangling! At last he had done it. He killed Montrose with his own hands! Now to get hold of that dazzling gold chain— the priceless piece he had wanted so much that he was willing to let it force him to MURDER!

He whirled and faced the window, his mouth dropping open momentarily. Those blinding lights! Someone was driving into the alley, the headlights of the car exploding against his bloodshot eyes. He had to get out.

They would find the body now in a matter of moments—he must get as far away from the corpse as possible! The gold chain it would have to wait! He'd have to come back later when no one was around. He couldn't risk being caught here, for there was MURDER in the balance.

With a screwdriver he was able to pry open the heavy brass hinges of the mausoleum door. The door squeaked open and he peered into the darkness beyond for a second before he slipped into the macabre stone-loored chamber. The funeral had taken place more than a week ago and he had time in the interim to sneak back to Montrose's house. He went over it with a fine-toothed comb! But his search had been to no avail—the gold chain had been nowhere to be found! And then the truth had struck him—that immensely valuable chain—it had probably been buried with Montrose! He would have it in his hands in a matter of moments—just as soon as he was able to open the coffin, take it from beside Montrose's cold cadaver!

It was there in Montrose's folded hands! He could see its dazzling surface gleaming under the rays of the small lamp he had placed at the head of the coffin. Montrose's hands held it and he felt the perspiration forming on his forehead as he tried to pry it loose from those unyielding, icy fingers! He wrenched and pulled but still the fingers held him! In desperation, under the tiny flickering light, he was able to move the fingers slightly apart, and slipped the gold chain free! A leer formed on his face as he bent far forward under the light to examine the treasure he held at last! His face brushed against Montrose's skin and he shuddered! And then he felt those fingers—the ones he had been able to pry apart—beginning to close again in death! Close inexorably—close like a steel trap! With a gasp he tried to wrench free. They were closing tighter, tighter around his own throat! He felt the icy tips digging into the soft flesh of his throat. He struggled to free himself—tore at the dead hands desperately! But there was no resisting those hands—they were retightening in death and he was being trapped by the very man he himself had strangled! A sob escaped from his lips— he felt a searing sensation in his lungs as he tried to gulp the air! And then everything was turning dark like a bulb that had been burnt out! And he was falling...
NEVER HAD TOM HAWKINS KNOWN SUCH FEAR BEFORE... NEVER HAD DEATH SEEMED SO TERRIBLY REAL AND CLOSE TO HIM AS IT DID THE NIGHT OF HIS TERRIBLE DREAM! HE HAD AWAKENED SHAKING WITH UNCONTROLLABLE DREAD OF THIS...

HORROR in the NIGHT


WHAT GIVES, ANYWAY? JUST STARTING THE DAY, AND HITTING THE BOTTLE ALREADY?

W-HWHAT, WHO? OH... IT'S YOU, JIM! I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE SOMEONE ELSE!
YOU'RE SHAKING LIKE A LEAF, TOM! WHAT IS IT? SOME TERRIBLE ACCIDENT... HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED TO YOU? SPEAK UP!

I DON'T KNOW, JIM! I HAVE THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN! I HAVE A PREMONITION OF SOME AWFUL DISASTER!

I WAS LAST NIGHT, JIM... A DREAM THAT WAS SO LIFELIKE, I HAVEN'T RECOVERED FROM IT! IT HAPPENED RIGHT HERE... AND IT SEEMED TO BE A WARNING TO ME... A WARNING OF TERRIBLE THINGS TO COME!

IT HAPPENED JUST BEFORE NOON, IN THIS DREAM! I HEARD THE SQUEAL OF BRAKES OUTSIDE... THERE WAS A CAR OUT IN THE DRIVEWAY...

CUSTOMERS STARTING EARLY TODAY!

HAWKINS TOURIST CABINS

MR. AND MRS. SMITH... JOHN SMITH! FROM... ER... NEVADA! HEADING EAST ALONG HIGHWAY 69? GUESS THAT TAKES CARE OF THE REGISTRY ALL RIGHT!

YEAH... THAT'LL DO FINE, MR... ER... SMITH!

THE MAN WAS ORDINARY ENOUGH... BUT HIS WIFE... THERE WAS SOMETHING EERIE ABOUT HER... JUST LOOKING AT HER SENT A CHILL UP MY SPINE! THERE WAS A WILD... A MAD LOOK ABOUT HER!

BRRR! THAT WOMAN'S EYES ARE LIKE A WILD ANIMAL'S... SEEMS TO BE AN UNCONTROLLABLE FIRE BURNING IN HER BRAIN!

IT ALL STARTED RIGHT HERE AT MY DESK... ORDINARY ENOUGH, EH?

YOU'LL THINK I'M GOING OUT OF MY MIND, JIM... BUT IT'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO SHARE WITH SOMEONE... AND A BROTHER IS BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE...

GOT A CABIN FOR TWO... JUST FOR OVERNIGHT? WE'LL BE LEAVING EARLY IN THE MORNING.

YOU BET, SIR! GOT A NICE ONE BACK OFF THE ROAD.
"I was busy all day, in that strange dream of mine...but I couldn't get the thought out of my mind that tragedy was close by...that the man and his wife were doomed to some horrible fate!"

"Somehow...by some strange power that can be explained only by the very nature of dreams, I was in Cabin Ten that night. Not in the flesh, of course. Not as Tom Hawkins! More as a hovering presence...a ghost, you might say."

"He's asleep...that's the only time I have my freedom...when he's asleep! I'll dress...escape from him!"

"I'm turning out the light, Emily! Those pills...they should make you sleep..."

"Somehow, by some strange power that can be explained only by the very nature of dreams, I was in Cabin Ten that night. Not in the flesh, of course. Not as Tom Hawkins! More as a hovering presence...a ghost, you might say."

"With bated breath I watched this strange story unfold before my eyes! The front door swung open...the ghostly moonlight crept into the room..."

"No! It can't be! Please save me! It's reaching out to touch me...death is here!

"He thinks he can keep me a prisoner, does he? I'll show him...I'll escape...and then I can do whatever I please! No one can stop me...once I'm free!"

"I'll kill you before you can touch me! I've killed you before...wherever I've met you...I'll kill you again!"

"N-no...stay away from me! You can't take me...you can't claim me! Don't touch me...death!

H-He's asleep...that's the only time I have my freedom...when he's asleep! I'll dress...escape from him!"
I FELT SICK. THIS APPARITION WHO HAD MATERIALIZED IN MY DREAM, THIS STRANGE MRS. SMITH... SHE WAS INSANE... DRIVEN BY A WAG LUST TO KILL!

MY MIND ROCKED WITH THE IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT MY ASTONISHED EYES WERE SEEING? THIS WOMAN... THIS WILD WOMAN... HAD DESCENDED TO THE LEVEL OF THE PREDATORY BEASTS! SHE WAS A RAGING, SKULKING MONSTER!

I TRIED TO LEAVE THE CABIN... BUT I, TOO, WAS A PRISONER!

"I'LL ESCAPE YET! I'LL GET BACK THERE... BACK TO THE CEMETERY!"

I'LL ESCAPE YET! I'LL GET BACK THERE... BACK TO THE CEMETERY!

THE BATHROBE... I DROPPED IT? I HAVE TO GET AWAY!

W-HA- WHAT... EMILY-- GIVE THE KEY BACK...
YOU WON'T STOP ME! YOU PRETEND TO LOVE ME... BUT YOU REALLY HAVE ONLY HATRED FOR ME! I'LL KILL YOU... THE WAY I'VE MURDERED ALL THE OTHERS!

EMILY... IT'S YOUR HUSBAND! I WANT TO HELP... N-NO... HAVE MERCY... N-NO...

"I WAS HYPNOTIZED AS I WATCHED THE TERRIBLE SCENE TRANSPIRING BEFORE MY EYES! AND THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO... I WASN'T EVEN THERE! IT WAS NOTHING BUT AN AWFUL NIGHTMARE... AND I WAS TRAPPED IN IT!

"YOU'VE BECOME A WILD ANIMAL... YOU SCRATCH AND SLASH LIKE A TRAPPED TIGRESS! I'LL HAVE TO KILL YOU WITH MY OWN HANDS!

"RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES... A HORRIBLE MURDER WAS BEING COMMITTED! A WAVE OF NAUSEA PASSED OVER ME... I FELT FAINT... BUT MY EYES WERE RIVETED TO THE NIGHTMARE IN FRONT OF ME.

"IT WAS AS IF THE MAN WAS TELLING ME THE REASON FOR THE TRAGEDY THAT HAD JUST OCCURRED.

SHE'S BEEN A RAGING LUNATIC EVER SINCE THE ACCIDENT... KILLED EVERY ANIMAL CROSSING HER PATH... AND TRIED TO KILL HERSELF BY LEAPING INTO THE GRAVE WHERE THE BABY IS BURIED, WHenever SHE WAS ALONE NEAR THE CEMETERY!

D-DEAD... I'VE KILLED HER! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN... EVER SINCE OUR BABY WAS KILLED... CLAWED TO DEATH BY A CAT... THIS WOULD BE THE INEVITABLE END!

"I WAS HY-
AND THEN I WOKE UP, JIM... FEELING CERTAIN THAT I HAD SEEN SOMETHING THAT WAS NEVER MEANT FOR MORTAL EYES! IT WAS HORRIBLE!

Y—Y—YES... THAT'S IT! OVERWORK! OR MAYBE SOMETHING I ATE THAT I DIDN'T AGREE WITH, EH? I'M TIED UP IN KNOTS... THAT MUST HAVE BEEN THE REASON FOR THE NIGHTMARE! I'LL JUST FORGET THE WHOLE THING! HERE COMES A CAR... I'LL TAKE IT!

AND THANKS A LOT... YOU DON'T KNOW HOW I FELT ABOUT THIS. IT WAS AS IF... AS IF... I HAD PEEKED INTO THE FUTURE... AND SEEN SOMETHING AWFUL! THANKS FOR TALKING TO ME! I FEEL A THOUSAND PERCENT BETTER ALREADY!

AND IT MUSTN'T BE! P-PLEASE... GO BACK... DON'T STOP HERE! THE MAN... AND THE WOMAN... IT'S THEM... THE SAME TWO!

IT'S COME HERE... DEATH IS HERE! I CAN FEEL IT IN THE ROOM... LIKE A COUPLE OF GHOSTS THAT I, MYSELF, HAVE CREATED AND WRAPPED OUT OF MY NIGHTMARE... AND THERE'S NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO TO STOP IT!
Actually, just the cover art is pasted into the book for each show. These covers are drawn by Mike Voesberg. —VK

First of all, I just picked up TALES FROM THE CRYPT #6, and the difference in the quality of reproduction was noticeable immediately, the colors jump out at you, and the blacks are not muddy like they were before. Although it seems strange to see EC’s reprinted in the flexographic process, they do look better now than any previous form of reprint (and I have them all, even the East Coast ones of the 70’s).

Although I possess many reprints, and a dozen originals, I had never seen the contents of this issue before. The CRIME SUSPENSTORES issue was good, but the TALES issue was terrific! Davis, Evans, Kamen, and Ingels were all masters of their form, and as usual, they did not disappoint.

Evan M. Lancot
Burlington, VT

Thanks for the good words, Evan! I look even better in offset, and the Crypt-Keeper and the Old Witch needed all the help they could get! (Even’s got East Coast Comix reprints, and you can have some, too! See our ad elsewhere in this issue.) —VK

In the atorae now (or available from us direct) are the first issues of NEW CRYPT, NEW WEIRD SCIENCE, and NEW MIND SHOCK. Out this month are the following titles:

- NEW WEIRD FANTASY #1
- TERROR TALES #1
- NEW HAUNT #1
- NEW WEIRD S-F #1, and NEW CRIME #1

To be sure of getting every issue of every title, why not SUBSCRIBE?

Send letters of comment to:
VAULT
RUSSELL COCHRAN
PO BOX 468
WEST PLAINS, MO 65775

THANKS FOR THE GOOD WORDS, EVEN! I LOOK EVEN BETTER IN OFFSET, AND THE CRYPT-KEEPER AND THE OLD WITCH NEEDED ALL THE HELP THEY COULD GET! (EVEN'S GOT EAST COAST COMIX REPRINTS, AND YOU CAN HAVE SOME, TOO! SEE OUR AD ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE.) —VK

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PO BOX 468
WEST PLAINS, MO 65775
The knife slashed down! These was a gasp then he straightened up and looked at the body of the paunchy circus owner, stretched there on the wooden floor one hand slowly relaxing from the canvas of the circus tent! He had done it... he would have to look around the headquarters tent last someone might come this way any minute!

He was bent over the tin box when he heard the footsteps! He straightened up as if he had been wound tight... and his eyes narrowed when he saw the three shadows strolling toward the open flap of the tent! His heart raced ominously he felt the skin on his neck prickle! Those roustabouts... they were headed here! He slipped the wad of bills into his pocket and looked around the tent in desperation! He couldn't go out the front door of the tent...for they were sure to see him! And he would hang for the murder! There had to be another way out...there MUST be another escape!

And then his eyes noted the barred door at the opposite end of the tent! As it a cage had been backed up against the far end of the tent! That was how he would escape through that barred door! His hands fastened around the handles near the floor and he gave a sturdy yank the door lifted up under his weight! It was a matter of seconds before he stepped beyond the door. released it and heard it slam shut behind him! Then he whirled, and peering between the bars, saw the three roustabouts pausing at the entrance to the tent! If he could remain here until they went away if he could remain hidden here behind the door, it would give him a little more time to think of how he was going to escape!

There was a low snarl behind him and he whirled... his eyes squinting into the darkness that surrounded him. His heart lurched inside him...not more than ten feet from him he saw those fiery eyes boring straight into his own! Cat's eyes, he realized with a shudder! And his own eyes had become accustomed to the light enough for him to know what it was that faced him, a snarling Panther! The fur at the back of its neck was rising stiff and straight it was getting ready to spring at him!

He whirled, his hands tearing at the barred door. But it was rock fast! He had slammed it shut when he entered it couldn't be opened from this side! His heart missed a beat he was suddenly bathed in cold, prickling perspiration! He opened his mouth and screamed at the men who were now moving away from the front of the tent! He MUST attract their attention before it was too late before he shuddered to think of what would happen to him there in the cage with the raging Panther! He screamed, tilting his head back... but the sound which issued from his lips was drowned out by a more frightening sound the panther emitting its blood-curdling roar as it prepared to leap! Drunkenly he turned, flattening himself against the wall...knowing that his voice could not be heard...that this time there WAS no escape for him! He saw the panther squat before it launched itself...and even as he stared at those fiery eyes the pain came over him like a wave...and he knew it was the end...the end...
HE WAS TRYING TO KILL ME! HE HATED ME! AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, HE ALMOST SUCCEEDED... THE NIGHT I RODE A...

TERROR TRAIN

ANOTHER SUSPENSTORY FROM THE VAULT OF HORROR!

IT ALL STARTED THE DAY I DECIDED TO RUN AWAY FROM RALPH! HE WAS GOING TO KILL ME! I KNEW THAT! I HAD TO GET AWAY! I PACKED A SMALL BAG AND HAILED A TAXI...

THE RAILROAD TERMINAL... AND PLEASE HURRY!

YES, MA'AM!

AS THE TAXI SPEEDED DOWNTOWN, I HUDDLED IN THE CORNER OF THE SEAT... AFRAID THAT HE MIGHT SEE ME! RALPH HATED ME SO! I DON'T REMEMBER HOW IT STARTED BUT IT HAD DEVELOPED TO A POINT WHERE I FEARED FOR MY LIFE! I REMEMBER ONE DAY, RALPH CAME HOME WITH A PACKAGE...

WHAT DID YOU BUY, RALPH?

OH... NOTHING, GLORIA DEAR! SOMETHING FOR MY OWN PERSONAL USE!

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IT WAS POISON! I HAD TO BE ON MY GUARD! I WATCHED THE BOTTLE CAREFULLY AND WHEN I NOTICED SOME OF THE POISON MISSING, I DIDN'T EAT... PRETENDING SOME EXCUSE I WAS CAREFUL. HE FAILED THAT TIME.

I SAID... HERE'S THE TERMINAL, LADY! OH... I BEG YOUR PARDON!


I... LIKE A TICKET TO... TO... NEW YORK! THAT'LL BE THIRTY-FOUR TEN, MA'AM!

I STUFFED THE TICKET INTO MY PURSE AND LOOKED AROUND? IF RALPH EVER CAUGHT ME DOING THIS... I DROVE THE THOUGHT FROM MY MIND! NO! I WOULD GET AWAY! I WOULD BE SAFE THEN! I SIT DOWN ON A BENCH IN A CORNER OF THE WAITING ROOM AND HID BEHIND A NEWSPAPER.

MY TRAIN WASN'T DUE FOR TWENTY MINUTES! SUPPOSE RALPH CALLED AT HOME? THERE WOULD BE NO ANSWER! HE WOULD KNOW! I THOUGHT OF THAT NIGHT LAST MONTH WHEN I AWOKE TO FIND RALPH STANDING OVER ME... A KITCHEN KNIFE IN HIS HAND...

RALPH!

I... FOUND THIS KNIFE ON YOUR NIGHT TABLE, GLORIA! YOU... SHOULDN'T LEAVE THINGS LIKE THIS AROUND!

PARDON ME, MA'AM? THAT'S YOUR TRAIN! YOU'D BETTER HURRY OR YOU'LL MISS IT!

HE HAD STAMMERED OUT A LAME EXCUSE! HE WAS GOING TO MURDER ME AND I HAD DISCOVERED HIM IN TIME!

I DIDN'T SLEEP THE REST OF THAT NIGHT... I JUST LAID THERE... LISTENING...

PARDON ME, MA'AM! THAT'S YOUR TRAIN! YOU'LL BETTER HURRY OR YOU'LL MISS IT!

OH... THANK YOU!

WENT OUT TO THE PLATFORM AND SANG THE TRAIN! I FOUND MY SEAT! WHY DIDN'T WE START? I GLANCED OUT OF THE WINDOW! SOMEONE WAS RUNNING DOWN THE PLATFORM! IT... IT LOOKED LIKE...

RALPH!

AS THE TRAIN BEGAN TO MOVE, THE MAN SWUNG HIMSELF UP INTO THE CAR BEHIND ME! I WASN'T SURE! IT COULD BE RALPH! IT... LOOKED LIKE HIM... AND YET I WAS FRIGHTENED? IT WAS TOO LATE TO GET OFF! THE TRAIN WAS ON ITS WAY!

IT'S... IT'S JUST MY NERVES! I... I NEED A DRINK! I WONDER IF THERE'S A BAR ON THE TRAIN?
I made my way to the club car? It was smoky and crowded! I slipped onto a stool at the bar...

What'll it be, lady? I... I'll have a scotch and soda, please!

I had gone out the wrong end of the club car? I was in a coach, not a Pullman! If I wanted to get back to my car, I would have to go through the club car again...

Ralph wouldn't look for me here in the coaches! He knew I always traveled Pullman. I sat down! I would wait till it was safe and then sneak back to my berth!

I was afraid to turn around? It was Ralph I had seen in the mirror? Had he seen me? I stepped away from the bar and ran from the car!

Oh... I beg your pardon?

Excuse me, lady!

Er... is this seat taken?

Why, not that I know of!

I thought about getting off the train at the next stop? But all my clothes... my money... my ticket... were in the other car? Why did he want to kill me? I remembered one night, about the time that it all started...

Perhaps that was it? The money? $25,000 is a lot of money! Suddenly, my heart stopped! I felt a hand on my shoulder...

Your ticket, miss?

Oh? I... I left it in the other car!
NO, REALLY? I'VE A BETTER SHOW ME, MISS!


THE CONDUCTOR LOOKED AT ME QUIZZICALLY! HE MUST HAVE THOUGHT I WAS TRYING TO RIDE FREE!

NO, REALLY! I'VE A BERTH BACK IN THE PULLMANS!

YOU'VE BETTER SHOW ME, MISS!

THIS IS MY BERTH! I'LL GET MY TICKET!

ALL RIGHT, MISS!

I'LL FEEL LIKE RALPH! I'LL FEEL BETTER IN THE MORNING...

IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMEONE WHO LOOKED LIKE RALPH.

...AND SAFER, TOO! THE TRAIN, HURTLING THROUGH THE NIGHT, WAS PUTTING MORE AND MORE MILES BETWEEN RALPH AND ME! I CLOSED MY EYES! THE TRAIN RUMBLED ON...AND ON... AND I FELT MYSELF DRIFTING INTO SLEEP... SLEEP...

SUDDENLY I WAS AWAKENED BY AN EAR-SPLITTING, PIERCING SHRIEK! I LOOKED OUT OF MY BERTH! THE CURTAINS ON THE OTHER BERTHS WERE ALL CLOSED... AND THE CAR WAS DARK EXCEPT FOR A SMALL LIGHT AT THE REAR! WHAT WAS THAT I HAD HEARD?

...A SCREAM?... OR WAS IT JUST THE TRAIN WHISTLE?

A BERTH AT THE FAR END OF THE CAR WAS MARKED "PORTER"! I MADE MY WAY TOWARD IT! I'D ASK HIM IF HE HAD HEARD IT TOO... I PULLED ASIDE THE CURTAIN!

...GASP... NO! NO! EEEEEEEK!

IT WAS GHASTLY! HE WAS DEAD! COLD AND STIFF! HIS EYES, WIDE WITH HORROR... THE BEDCLOTHES SMEARED WITH BLOOD... I CLOSED THE CURTAINS...
Here was no answer! No one stirred! I cried out again! Couldn't they hear me? Frantically, I tore aside the curtains of the next berth...

AAAAAAAAH!

Suddenly, I heard the shriek again... and I was thrown to the floor! This time it had been the shriek of brakes... the train had come to a stop.

This... this is my chance!

I ran to the end of the car and leaped from the train...

...my chance to get away!

It was horrible! The occupant of that berth was dead, too! Icy fingers closed about my heart! A wave of nausea swept over me as I went from berth to berth, flinging the curtains back! They were dead... all dead! I was on a death train! Ralph! It was Ralph! He was mad?

He must be on the train... looking for me...

As I stood behind a tree... watching, the train began to move! Squeeking... straining... slowly... it gained momentum! It was pulling away... and I had escaped! No one got off with me...

I... I'm safe!

I looked around me! A house? I saw a house on the top of the hill... and there was a light on! I made my way through the grass toward it.

If they have a phone, I'll call the police! They could stop the train at the next station...

Near the house, I noticed something strange! Someone had been digging... a yawning black pit... the shape... of...

A grave!
I pushed the thought out of my mind. Why do I think it was a grave? What was so strange about an excavation near a farmhouse? They were probably making a water trough! I knocked on the door...

Anyone in there? Open the door! Please...

I stepped inside! I looked around! The room was bare except for...

...GASP... A COFFIN!

I spun around! The door was closed behind me... and standing in front of it was...

RALPH?

I've been waiting for you, GLORIA!

He caught me in a vise-like grip! I cried out! I struggled, but I couldn't fight his overwhelming strength!

He forced me to the coffin!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO ME, RALPH?

DON'T YOU KNOW, GLORIA?

I could do nothing! He closed the lid of the coffin... down upon me... and I heard the sharp blows of a hammer! He was nailing me in...

Ralph! Please... nave mercy!
He was filling in the grave! The soft earth thudded on the coffin lid! Then... all was quiet! I guess I broke down at that point...

He's taking me outside to... to that grave?

Good-bye, Gloria! Sleep peacefully!

I was grazed with fear! I was going to suffocate... buried alive by a madman... my husband... Ralph! I pounded on the coffin! I could feel the flesh of my fists tear as I pounded! I lost all control! I screamed and beat the sides of the coffin...

Suddenly there was a blinding light! I sat up with a start and looked around me.

Here she is, gentlemen!

You'd better stop that racket, lady... and come quietly!

I... I had been dreaming! I was still in my berth on the train! And Ralph, with pity in his eyes, was comforting me... stroking my hand!

No! Keep away! Take him away from me! He wants to kill me!

Sure, lady! Sure? You come with us? We'll take care of you! He won't hurt you! We'll see to that!

The men in white took me away! They put me in a nice house with nice people... a house that has bars on all the windows so Ralph can't get in and kill me! And now I'm safe from him!

...and that's my story! Perhaps you'd like to come and... visit me sometime again?

Then I felt the coffin being dragged across the floor! I heard the squeak of the rusty hinges as Ralph opened the door...

I felt the jar and heard the hollow boom of the coffin as Ralph pushed me into the grave... then his fiendish laughter... his hysterical raving...

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