

# THE ORION MAGAZINE

THE DOMINION OF CANADA'S QUARTERLY REVIEW OF  
SCIENTIFIC ROMANCE AND ILLUSTRATED ADVENTURE

VOLUME I, NUMBER 7 ~ MARCH, 2007



SOMETIMES, WHODUNIT IS THE WRONG QUESTION.

## THE HAUNTING OF MACGRATH



In this special number, *The Orion* proudly presents a preview of a new illustrated adventure to be featured on that wonder of the modern age, the visual inter-telegraph.

By Messrs. Mark Shainblum and Jeffrey Alward

# MURPHY'S LAWYER

MARK SHAINBLUM'S LITTLE PIECE OF MIND

## WORDS, QUICKLY

Hi! Please excuse the rather thin offering this time out, but (as of this typing) I'm working flat out at McGill and Andrea and I are expecting our baby within about six weeks. That's the major news in my life at the moment.

In not-so-major but still interesting news, as you can see from the cover, I'm quietly launching a new webcomic entitled *The Haunting of MacGrath*. It's based on an as-yet unpublished prose story I started almost four years ago, and illustrated by my *Canadiana* collaborator Jeff Alward. I think I'll let the preview speak for itself.

I hope all you guys are doing well! More next time!

Best,

Mark Shainblum



# Orion

THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE OF TIME AND SPACE

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ANGLOMAN ILLUSTRATIONS BY GABRIEL MORRISSETTE  
COVER ILLUSTRATION FROM "THE HAUNTING OF MACGRATH" BY JEFF ALWARD

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**WRITTEN BY MARK SHAINBLUM  
ILLUSTRATED BY SANDY CARRUTHERS, JEFF ALWARD  
AND SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST BRENDA HICKEY**

**CANADIANA CREATED BY SANDY CARRUTHERS**

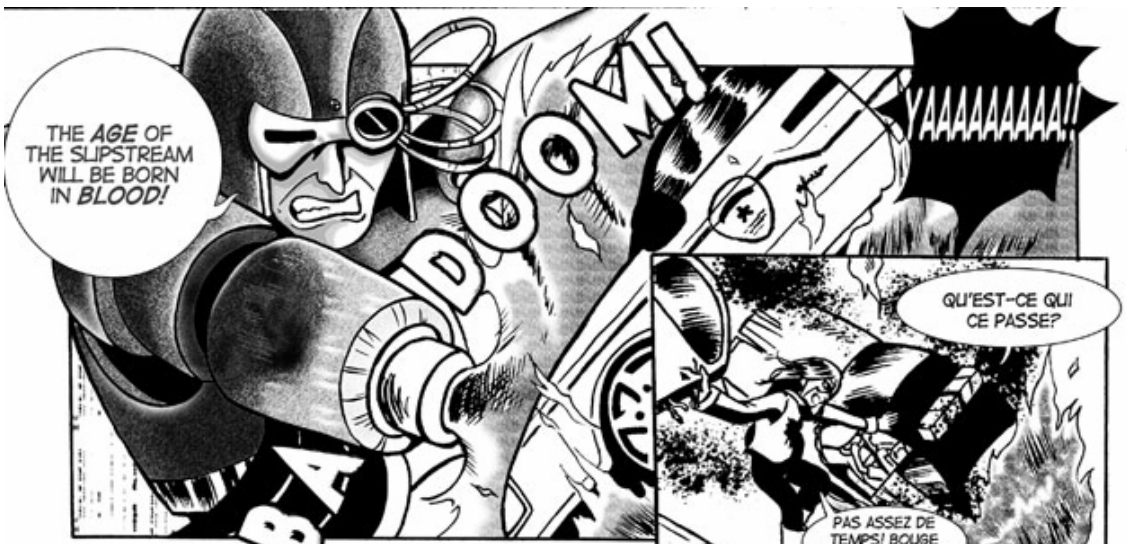
*Canadiana* has been progressing in fits and starts over the last several months, and for once, it's not my fault! I've actually written it at least ten episodes ahead, but Sandy Carruthers has been so busy drawing graphic novels and teaching graphic design that he just hasn't had enough hours in the day to work on it.

At first we thought we could lighten his workload by switching to black and white, but that didn't help much. Lately we've been recruiting fill-in guest artists to help us catch up a bit. In this issue you'll see a rather dramatic style shift as Sandy's student Brenda Hickey takes on a visit to mangaland for several pages. Let me know what you think!



**CANADIANA FAN ART BY THAT CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK, ERYN CARRUTHERS**





THE AGE OF THE SLIPSTREAM WILL BE BORN IN BLOOD!



QU'EST-CE QUI CE PASSE?

PAS ASSEZ DE TEMPS! BOUGE TOI! BOUGE TOI!



CRISSE!



FERNAND!  
IL EST TOUJOURS  
DANS L'CHAR!



NON! NON!  
FERNAND!

C'EST TROP TARD!



NEXT: QUITE A BIT OF PUNCHING.





# MEDIAWATCH

REVIEWS AND OVERVIEWS OF THIS AND THAT

*Webcomics*

## GETTING A BIG HEAD AT BIG HEAD PRESS

**ROSWELL, TEXAS**

[WWW.BIGHEADPRESS.COM/ROSWELL](http://WWW.BIGHEADPRESS.COM/ROSWELL)

By L. Neil Smith and Scott Bieser

**THE PROBABILITY BROACH**

[WWW.BIGHEADPRESS.COM/TPBTGN](http://WWW.BIGHEADPRESS.COM/TPBTGN)

By L. Neil Smith and Scott Bieser

**LA MUSE**

[WWW.BIGHEADPRESS.COM/LAMUSE](http://WWW.BIGHEADPRESS.COM/LAMUSE)

By Adi Tantimedh and Hugo Petrus

Just some quick capsule reviews this time out!

*Roswell Texax* is a great alternate-reality series, set in a universe where Texas never joined the United States and became a major North American power.



military man, Meir Kahane and Malcolm X as loyal sons of Texas, and Texas Rangers to boot!

It's a well-written and well-illustrated strip where the greatest fun is spotting the alternate-universe doppelgangers of famous people we know. Walt Disney as the president of the independent Republic of California, John Wayne as his top



On the other hand, longtime science fiction author L. Neil Smith is well-known for his radical libertarian “all government is evil” beliefs, and the series showcases his idealized Texas where government secrets are illegal, there’s no standing army and gun ownership is mandatory, to name just a few points. If you can ignore the politics and just read the story, it’s still an extremely fun read.

The same can’t be said for an earlier Smith/Bieser collaboration, *The Probability Broach*. Originally published years ago as a graphic novel, it’s now being offered for free on the Big Head website. Although it’s just as competently written and illustrated as *Roswell, Texas*, it’s nowhere near as much fun. Smith spends too much time beating his libertarian drum, and it’s really impossible to view the story as anything other than hammer-to-the-head propaganda. And sorry, libertarianism – especially Smith’s radical “every man for himself with a gun” form of it – is just a silly organizing concept for a society.



Pulse-pounding libertarian action in *The Probability Broach*

*La Muse* is an original superhero-ish (or at least superhuman-ish) series being presented for the first time on Big Head’s site. It’s still in the early stages, but its title character is a woman who is forced to reveal that she has superhuman powers during a terrorist attack in London, and subsequently gets swept up in the New York/Hollywood star-making machinery.



A panel from an early page of *La Muse*

It epitomizes why I like Big Head as an online publisher so much, despite their obvious political agenda. Everything they publish is fully professional, well illustrated and well

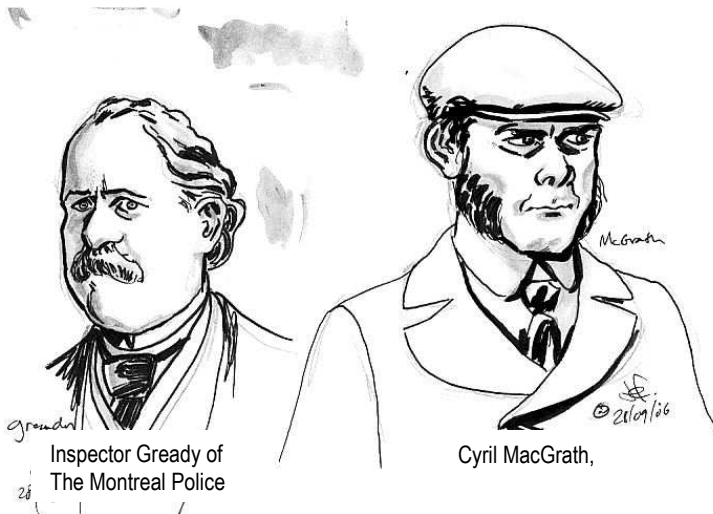
written. I don’t know who Adi Tantimedh and Hugo Petrus are, but I can imagine paying money for their work. And moreover, *La Muse* doesn’t read like a political pamphlet. At least, not as much as the Smith-written series, and what politics it does have seem much closer to the non-woohoo! side of the ideological spectrum. Check it out! And don’t miss *The Hook* and *The Architect*, created by longtime comic book writer Mike Baron, of *Nexus* and *Badger* fame.

SOMETIMES, WHODUNIT IS THE WRONG QUESTION.

# THE HAUNTING OF MACGRATH

A special preview of the new webcomic by Mark Shainblum and Jeff Alward

Look for it soon at [www.webcomics.ca/haunting](http://www.webcomics.ca/haunting)



Honoré Dupuis, columnist at *L'Etandard*



Farmhouse on the Cote Saint Luc Road. Site of the murder?



IT WAS THE SUMMER OF 1889  
WHEN THE *DREAMS* BEGAN..

I HAD ONLY RECENTLY CLOSED THE BOOKS ON  
THE *AFFAIR OF THE BELGIAN IMPORTER*.



A MORE CONVOLUTED AND *TIRESOME* CASE  
COULD SCARCELY BE IMAGINED.

*The Affair of the Murdered Lawson*

IT HAD INVOLVED TWO TEDIOUS ATLANTIC CROSSINGS  
AND ONE CONSULTATION WITH MY *MENTOR* IN  
LONDON.

TO SAY THAT MY MENTOR IS NOT AN *EASY MAN* WOULD BE  
THE GROSSEST OF UNDERSTATEMENTS.



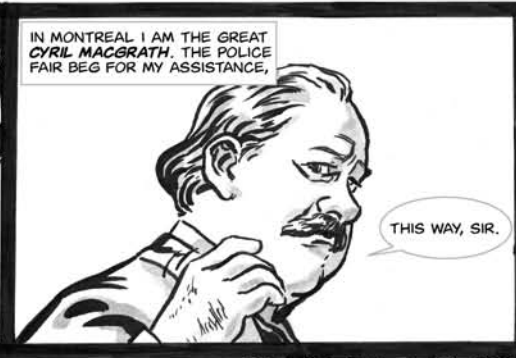
AND THAT MILKSOP WHO PLAYS AT  
BEING HIS BOSWELL SETS MY  
TEETH ON EDGE, I COULD NEVER  
ABIDE *SERVILITY*.



MR. MACGRATH,  
QUICK AS LIGHTNING,  
AS ALWAYS.

INSPECTOR  
GREASY.

EVEN THE BRIEFEST OF  
VISITS TO MY MENTOR IS  
A TRIAL.



IN MONTREAL I AM THE GREAT  
CYRIL MACGRATH. THE POLICE  
FAIR BEG FOR MY ASSISTANCE,

THIS WAY, SIR.



THE PRESS LAP UP MY EVERY  
UTTERANCE LIKE CATS AT A  
TROUGH OF CREAM.

YET IN THOSE OH-SO-PLAIN BAKER  
STREET ROOMS, I FOUND MYSELF  
**REDUCED**, TRANSFORMED FROM THE  
**FINEST** PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR IN  
THE DOMINION...



...TO THE POOR, DIMMITTED  
COLONIAL COLUSIN.

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Horse-Action  
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