

THE
STORY
OF



FUTURE SHOCK

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FUTURE SHOCK

CAST AND CREW

DAN ABNETT
GEOFF BARROW
EMMA BEEBY
KAREN BERGER
LAUREN BEUKES
DAVID BISHOP
BRIAN BOLLAND
WILL BROOKER
D'ISRAELI
WILL DENNIS
ANDY DIGGLE
IAN EDGINTON
GARY ERSKINE
CARLOS EZQUERRA
HENRY FLINT
NEIL GAIMAN
LEE GARBETT
ALEX GARLAND
DAVE GIBBONS
ALAN GRANT
PAUL GRAVETT

JOHN HIGGINS
SCOTT IAN
JOCK
CAM KENNEDY
JASON KINGSLEY
COLIN MACNEIL
PETER MILLIGAN
PAT MILLS
MICHAEL MOLCHER
LEAH MOORE
GRANT MORRISON
KEVIN O'NEILL
JOHN REPPION
MATT SMITH
BRYAN TALBOT
KARL URBAN
NACHO VIGALONDO
JOHN WAGNER
CHRIS WESTON
ROB WILLIAMS
STEVE YEOWELL

Directed by
PAUL GOODWIN

Produced by
SEAN HOGAN & HELEN MULLANE

Executive Producers
NICK HARWOOD & JIM HINSON

Cinematography & Editing by
PAUL GOODWIN, NICK HARWOOD & JIM HINSON

Music by
JUSTIN GREAVES

Title Sequence by
ZEBRA POST

Animation by
3PS

Motion Graphics by
JIM HINSON

Colourist
ANDREW PARKINSON

2000AD
Created by
PAT MILLS

2000AD artwork courtesy of Rebellion and © Rebellion A/S

2000 AD: THE COMIC THAT INVENTED THE FUTURE

by Pádraig Ó Méalóid

1976 was an interesting year. The sixties were long since over, and their promise of peace and love had somehow not come to pass. Long hair and flared trousers were increasingly out of place in a world that was crueller than it used to be. Into the increasingly commercialised social and cultural world left behind, the Sex Pistols launched their brief but hugely influential assault on the ears, wardrobes, politics, and morals of British youth, much to the abhorrence of pretty much everyone in the establishment. Their concert of 4 June 1976 at Manchester's Lesser Free Trade Hall would become the stuff of legend, the spark that lit the fire for Punk Rock's anarchic road map to nowhere, and the launching pad for a thousand other bands. Predictable, the mainstream press hated them. Old hippies *really* hated them. But the youth of the day *loved* them. Revolution was in the air, mere anarchy was loosed upon the world, and something had to change.

A few months before that, in February 1976, a British comics' writer and editor called Pat Mills had created *Action*, a socially realistic comic in the style of, amongst other things, Richard Allen's then-popular *Skinhead* series of pulp novels, and containing stories so violent that a crusade was started against it by right-wing social campaigner Mary Whitehouse, who would also turn on the Sex Pistols, soon thereafter. Her crusade was eventually successful, and *Action* was closed down. But Pat Mills had other ideas up his sleeve. If he couldn't do his social commentary one way, he would do it another.

Pat Mills already had form in the UK comics business, having started working with DC Thomson as a sub-editor - which generally meant making the tea and removing all efforts by the comics' artists to sign their work, a process known as 'bodging' - before going out as a freelance writer, along with his long term partner and co-conspirator, John Wagner, an American-born Scotsman with a liking for a lot of violence in his work, much like Mills himself. *Action* and *2000 AD* would be Mills's first major works, but he would go on to play an important part in numerous other influential British comics of the time, including girls' comic *Misty*, *Crisis*, and *Toxic!* But *2000 AD* is undoubtedly the jewel in his crown.

There's this weird old trick, if you're a writer, that if you want to make an unpalatable point about something, you disguise it as fantasy. George Orwell did it with *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*. JRR Tolkien did it with *Lord of the Rings*. Jonathan Swift had done it



with *Gulliver's Travels*, way back in 1726. And that's what Mills did in 1977, with *2000 AD*. The name reflected a then unimaginably distant future point, when surely things would be different to how they were in 1977, although not necessarily for the better. There was a hint of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and a suggestion of *Star Wars*. They were going to use the future to teach us lessons about the world we were living in, right now.

Right from the start, *2000 AD* was just what the comics readers of Britain wanted. Up until then, British comics with titles like *Victor*, *Valiant*, and *Warlord* had been produced by anonymous men in cardigans and slippers, smoking pipes and publishing endless stories about how the plucky English Tommies had beaten those dirty Gerries in World War Two, stories which simply weren't relevant to anyone, in the harsher and less forgiving light of the 1970s. Unsurprisingly, the British comics business was in a sharp decline by 1977, when IPC Magazines launched *2000 AD*. It sold 200,000 copies of its first issue, and is still being published today. And it's not an exaggeration to say that it changed the face of comics forever, both in Britain, and further afield.

Which is not to say that the opening line-up was perfect, but it was certainly promising. Harlem's Heroes, a kind of futuristic take on the Harlem Globetrotters crossed with the recently released film *Rollerball*, but with jet packs and lots of violence, gave a glimpse of the comic's future, as did *Flesh*, a strip about time-travelling cowboys, travelling back to prehistoric times to farm dinosaurs for their meat. Less successful was a revival of *Dan Dare*, which simply never got the traction on the public's imagination that it once had.

2000 AD broke with established British comics publication standards in virtually every way imaginable. One of the ways it differed from other comics was that it attempted to treat its readers as equals. They published letters and artwork readers submitted, entered into dialogue with them via the letters' page, with Tharg the Mighty, the comic's green-skinned Betelgeusian editor, awarding prizes to those he particularly liked. They also regularly held polls to find out what the readers did and didn't like. One of the things the readers *really* liked was Judge Dredd, created by John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerro, which first appeared in the second issue, and is the comic's longest running character, having appeared in virtually every issue since then. What is unusual about Judge Dredd is that, in a comic that could be seen as left-leaning, he is an ultra-conservative and neo-fascist future policeman; judge, jury, and executioner rolled into one, ruling Mega City One with a ruthlessness that early twentieth century fascists could only have dreamed of. Despite this - or indeed because of it - he has been the readers' favourite character virtually from the start, and any attempts to moderate his behaviour into something more human have been violently resisted by them, every time the subject comes up. And the readers' wishes were always seen as being paramount, so Dredd stayed as he was, if not more so. These days older readers,



Nemesis THE WARLOCK™



once crusty anarcho-punks, or black and purple satin-clad Goths, but now all settled middle aged suburbanites, still read his adventures, and still love him just the way he is.

Judge Dredd wasn't the only strip the readers loved which also carried a less than covert political content. There was John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra's Strontium Dog, on one hand a story about intergalactic Search and Destroy bounty hunters, or SDs, but on the other addressing issues of racism and segregation in a grim future. And Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill's Nemesis the Warlock is arguably an allegory for and reaction to their childhoods as Irish-descended Catholics being educated by middle-aged nuns preaching hellfire and brimstone, whilst probably going through the hellfire of menopause themselves. It's not difficult to see that the same processes were at work here as were influencing punk rock, with Irish-descended artists like Johnny Rotten, Elvis Costello, and Shane McGowan, amongst many others, growing out of the oppression of the *No Black, No Dogs, No Irish* mindset that was still common at the time. Another story by Mills, Sláine, which was loosely based on Irish myth and legend, was a less political representation of the broader Celtic ancestry of these islands.

One important area where *2000 AD* broke ground was in the use of female characters, especially in what was seen at the time as being largely a boys' comic. The title character in Alan Moore and Ian Gibson's *The Ballad of Halo Jones* remains a high point in the characterisation of an ordinary person in extraordinary circumstances. Other noteworthy female characters from the comic include the schoolgirl Roxy from the story *Skizz* - a sort of cross between the science fiction of *ET* and the grim social realism of *The Boys from the Black Stuff*, and which I still cannot reread without getting a little tear in my eye at the end - and Judge Anderson, originally a supporting character to Judge Dredd, but popular enough to soon feature in her own stories.

One decision, to actually name the creators who worked on their stories, was to have long-reaching, and possibly even world-changing, consequences. Traditionally, in the UK, comics were produced without any information of any kind about who wrote or illustrated them - in fact, most people though they were probably created by machines, if they gave it any thought at all. Within the first year of its existence - in fact, to be exact, in issue #36 or, more correctly 'prog' #36, in October 1977 - *2000 AD* initiated the use of what were called 'credit cards' - a small text box in the bottom right-hand corner of the first page of a story, containing the names of the writer, the artist, and the letterer in it, which meant that for the first time readers knew who was responsible for the stories they liked - and didn't like. It's true that American comics had been naming their creators for decades, but this was the first time it was systematically used in the British comics industry. At that time, the American and British comics industries were both figuratively and literally separated by a vast ocean, but the decision to put in those credit cards was to change that, in ways

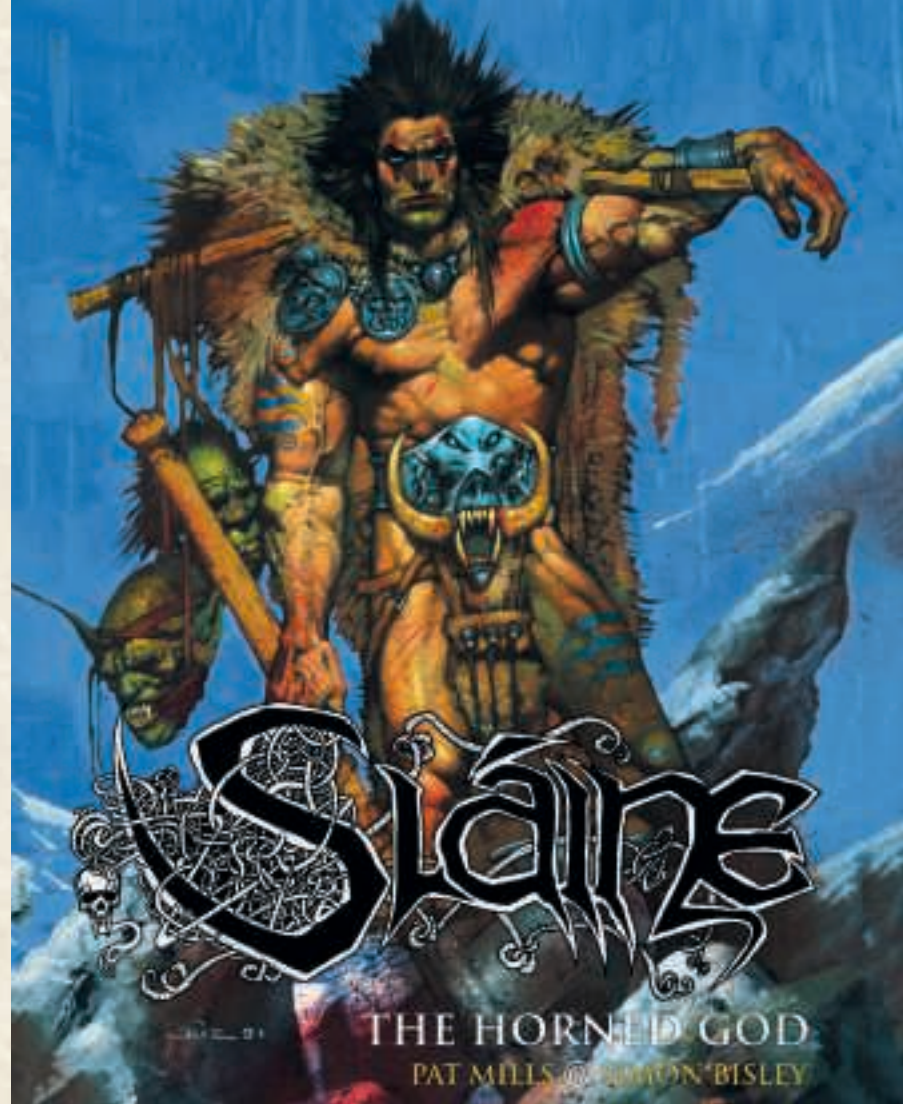
nobody could have predicted. Once those writers and artists were named, it meant that their names became their calling card, and with recognition came attention in the fan press, and the ability to use that fan attention as a bargaining tool. Naming them brought not only recognition, but gave them far greater control over their own destinies within the comics business.

At around the same time as *2000 AD* first appeared a group of British comic retailers and fanzine publishers had between them set up the Eagle Awards, to honour comics and their creators, named after the 1950s *Eagle* comic, which was at the time considered as the high point of British comic creation. Although the awards were originally designed to focus on the creators of the American comics that the people behind the awards were interested in, within a few years names from UK comics started to appear on the polls.

One of the very first names from *2000 AD* to appear as a winner in the Eagle Awards was writer Alan Moore, in 1983. Years later, Moore would say that 'the comic industry awards are all voted for by thirty people in anoraks with dreadful social lives.' Despite this unflattering assessment, across the Atlantic, in New York, there were American comics companies who must have taken them seriously, because it was in that same year that DC Comics editor Len Wein asked him to take over writing their ailing *Swamp Thing* title. It was heading for inevitable cancellation anyway, so there seemed no harm in letting this English guy play with it, just to see how he did. And what he did was change it utterly, and within a few months elevated it into one of the most important and influential comics in America, then and since.

Alan Moore was not the only British creator from *2000 AD* to work on the other side of the Atlantic, nor was he even the first, as artists Brian Bolland and Dave Gibbons had been there before him, working on *Camelot 3000* and *Green Lantern Corps*, respectively. But Moore was different, because he became the first superstar comics' writer, on either side of the Atlantic, and undoubtedly became the greatest, too. Without *2000 AD* there might have been no *Batman: The Killing Joke*, created by Moore and Bolland, or *Watchmen*, created by Moore and Gibbons, or *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, by Moore and Kevin O'Neill.

Other British comics writers who did early work in *2000 AD* went on to become important across the pond, too. Writers like Jamie Delano, Garth Ennis, Neil Gaiman, Peter Milligan, and Grant Morrison, all helped to bring a modernity and a complexity to mainstream American comics storytelling that simply had not existed before, and undoubtedly shaped that industry into what it is today, where every bookshop has a Graphic Novels section, where comics writers win major literary awards, and where every university worth the name has courses and degrees in comics' studies. And it wasn't just the writers, either. Besides the abovementioned Bolland and Gibbons, and Kevin O'Neill, artists like Simon Bisley, Alan Davis, Steve Dillon, John Higgins, and Bryan Talbot all brought their own





2000 AD



THE PERFECT STORM!
ALL-NEW STORIES START INSIDE

distinctive styles with them to American comics, so much so that O'Neill's first major work there, Alan Moore's Tygers in DC Comics' *Tales of the Green Lantern Corps Annual* No. 2 in 1986, was immediately objected to by the Comics Code Authority, set up in the wake of the moral panic about EC's horror comics in the 1950s, who, rather than point out any individual issues with his work, as was usually the case, said the whole thing was objectionable from start to finish. DC chose to ignore their objection, and the CCA has now been consigned to the wheelie bin of history, whilst Kevin O'Neill's work continues to go from strength to strength.

This current documentary, this aptly named *Future Shock!*, takes its name not only from 'Tharg's Future Shocks' - a blanket title for one-off short stories by various creators in the comic, originally created by the late Steve Moore - but also from Alvin Toffler's highly influential 1970 non-fiction book, *Future Shock*, which defined the title as meaning that sense of 'too much change in too short a period of time,' surely a concept we can all appreciate all the more in these troubled times. It is full to the brim of famous names from the past, present - and undoubtedly the future - of this wonderful comic. Something like forty different people, mostly writers and artists from *2000 AD*, but also editors, comics' scholars, and others, tell the story of the comic from its conception, and original reception, through some rocky times here and there, due to differences over the rights of creators to their creations, and some bad marketing decisions, to their position now, in safer hands, and stronger than ever.

These days *2000 AD* has at least one second-generation writer, with Leah Moore following her father Alan into their pages. Alan Moore himself does not appear in this documentary, but none the less his presence permeates it, as does that of its former editor and co-creator Pat Mills, who very much *is* in it. One other sad omission is current Judge Dredd writer Michael Carroll, who used to be my postman, here in Dublin. Although only writing Dredd stories since 2011, he's already up in the top five most prolific Dredd writers. Perhaps for the next documentary, in 2057, beamed directly into our brains from the smoking stump of King's Reach Towers, when he has neutralised all the other contenders, and finally ascended the Throne of Tharg, he'll talk to us, surrounded by an army of Nth generation Moorebots, Millsdroids and Kevborgs, still producing the Galaxy's Greatest Comic.

2000 AD and its writers, artists, and editors, have, in its own very special and very British way, irrevocably changed the cultural landscape around us. The year the comic is named after has come and gone, but for some of us *2000 AD* will always represent the future. May it ever be thus. Splundig vur Thrigg, Squaxx dek Thargo!

2000AD artwork courtesy of Rebellion and © Rebellion A/S

THE FOUR DARK JUDGES!



THIS CITY
ISS GUILTY!

THE CRIME
ISS LIFE!

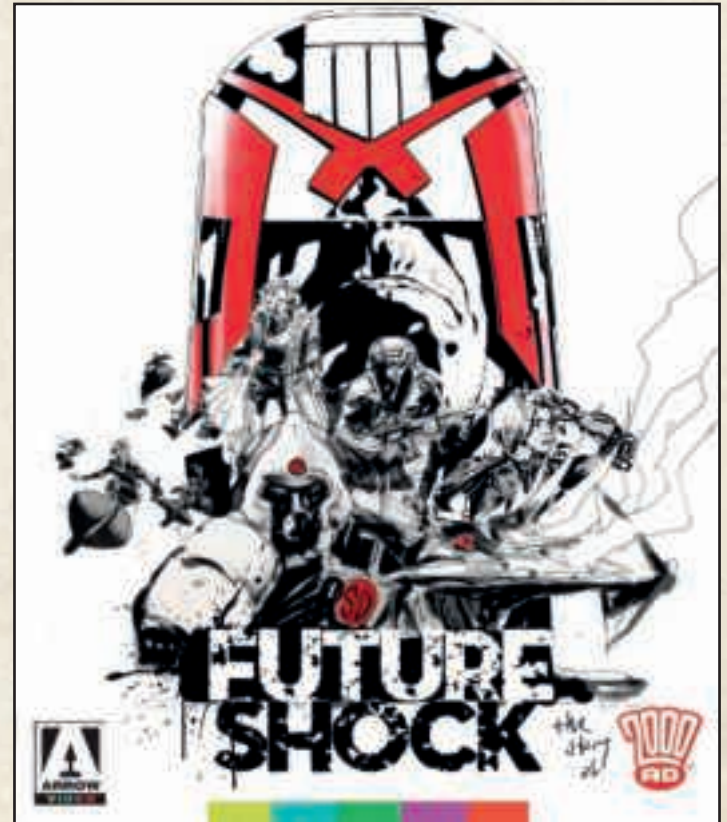
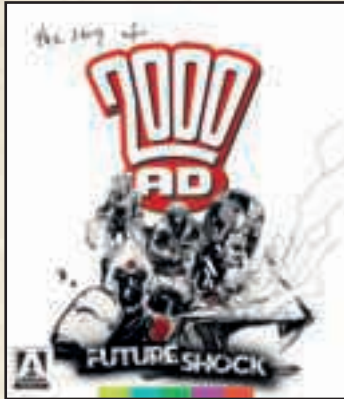
THE SSENTENCE ISS...

DEATH!



EVOLUTION OF THE SLEEVE ARTWORK

For this release of *Future Shock! The Story of 2000 AD*, Arrow Video commissioned legendary comic book artist Jock for a fresh approach of several of the key characters from the 2000 AD Universe. Below are a selection of his initial sketch ideas, printed with his permission.





*Future Shock
Jim Hinson, Paul Goodwin, Sean Hogan,
Helen Mullane, Cam Kennedy, Nick Harwood*



ABOUT THE TRANSFER

Future Shock! The Story of 2000AD is presented in its original 1.78:1 aspect ratio with 2.0 stereo sound. The HD master and all bonus material were supplied by the filmmakers.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Discs Produced by Nora Mehenni

Booklet Produced by Mike Hewitt

Executive Producers Kevin Lambert, Francesco Simeoni

QC Manager Nora Mehenni

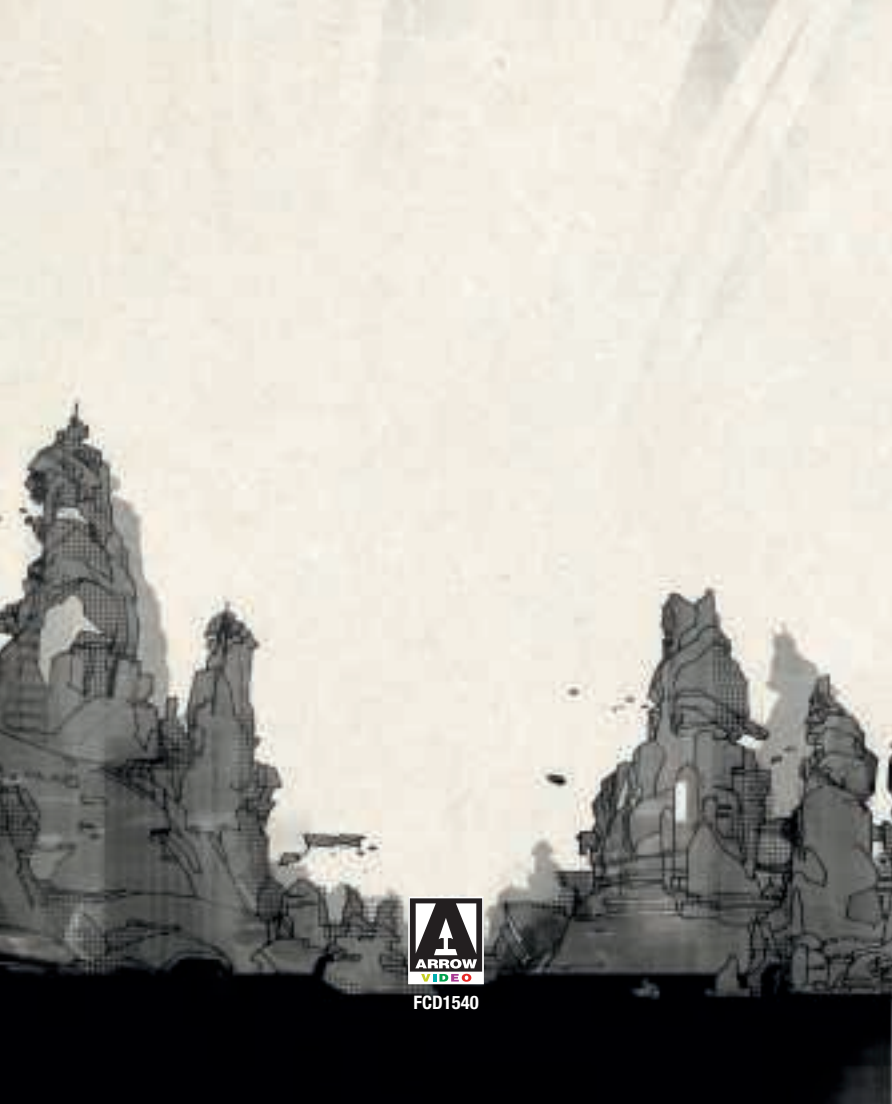
Authoring DCU

Subtitling The Engine House

Design Obviously Creative

SPECIAL THANKS

Alex Agran, Paul Goodwin, Sean Hogan, Jock, Pat Mills, Rebellion, Pádraig Ó Méalóid, Rebecca Masterson, Veronika Šedivcová



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