

RAZOR UNCUT: STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Synopsis: What starts as an evening of rowdy fun for a group of sadistic gang bangers ends in their grisly deaths, as the mysterious vigilante Razor arrives to impart her unique brand of justice on them. The only problem: Razor herself claims she *wasn't there*. While Nicole Mitchell investigates the incident, crime boss Michael Reich plots her death, as revenge for the murder of his brother.

Envisioned as a two-issue arc, ***Razor Uncut: Strength in Numbers*** will examine public perception of Razor's activities, as well as their effects.

RAZOR UNCUT

"STRENGTH IN NUMBERS"

Issue 1

Page 1

It's late evening as we open on a group of men, dressed in an assortment of denim and leather, grouped in a trash-strewn alleyway. Hawk sits on a dumpster, carefully digging the tip of a switchblade under his fingernails. Stanley is rooting through a garbage can. Drake watches, a chain draped around his neck. Lester is walking toward them from further down the alleyway, zipping up his jeans.

Stanley: Goddamnit, I know it's here! I know I left it here!

Hawk: Keep dreamin', Stanley. That shit's long gone.

Drake: Truth, brother. Some junkie's prob'ly got a first-class high right now, thanks ta you.

Lester: I can think'a better places to hide a stash, personally....

Stanley: Shut up! Just *shut up!* It's gotta be here!

Page 2

Panel 1

Drake and Lester crowd around Stanley as he raises up from the barrel. Hawk is looking to the left, out toward the open street.

Drake: Chill, Stanley! We ain't the stupid fucks that dropped two grand 'a blow in a friggin' trash can!

Stanley: *Fuck you, Drake! I done it this way lotsa times!*

Lester: That just means you were *stupid* lotsa times!

Hawk: Yo guys! You seein' what I'm seein'?

Panel 2

They look across the street, toward a trenchcoat-clad woman, her hands in her pockets, bundled up and defensive. Her face is concealed.

Lester: Woo!!! Check it out! Good eyes, Hawk!

Drake: Mama! Target is locked *in* and *sighted!*

Stanley: B-but guys! My *stash!*

Hawk: Fuck your stash, man! We got some action!

Panel 3

They've moved about halfway across the street, jogging toward her as she cuts down an alleyway.

Lester: Okay, you know the drill! Me first, then you guys can flip for it!

Hawk: Shit, Lester! I'm tired 'a your sloppy seconds! I saw 'er, why--

Lester: 'Cause I'm the Goddamned leader, that's why! Now shut up--she's duckin' down that alley!

Panel 4

They get about halfway down the alley; about ten feet distant, a homeless man sits against one wall, dressed in oversized trousers and a tank top. The woman is nowhere to be seen.

Drake: What the hell? Where'd she go?

Hawk: Shit! We had the bitch right in front of us!

Stanley: Oh! T-too bad! Let's go back and look for my--

Lester: *Fuck you!* She's gotta be--

Off-panel voice: Hey!

Page 3

Splash page, with Razor discarding her trenchcoat from a fire escape above them in dramatic fashion. Her blades are fully extended and gleaming, but hers have serrations on the edges.

Razor: You boys like to party? I do!

Lester: *Razor!!!* Oh, man....

Page 4

Panel 1

Razor jumps, pivots, and lands before them. Drake unwraps his chain and comes at her.

Drake: I got 'er! I'll take the bitch--

Lester: Knock 'er ass off, man!

Panel 2

Razor delivers a spinning crescent kick to Drake's chin, knocking him sideways.

FX: CRACK!!!

Drake: UUUUNNH!!!

Panel 3

With him now turned completely around, they watch as she drives her blades through him, emerging from his chest. Blood spews from the wounds and out of his mouth.

FX: SCHLUCK!!!

Drake: Yeeeeaaaagh!!!

Razor: Pig!!!

Panel 4

Razor ducks, pulling her blades back and out of the mortally wounded Drake, as Hawk narrowly misses her with his switchblade.

FX: SWISSSSH!!!

Hawk: Bitch!!! I'm gonna--

Page 5

Panel 1

Razor backfists him. The switchblade flies out of his hand.

FX: BRAK!!!

Hawk: UUUUGH!!!

Panel 2

Razor brings her fist back and slams a blow across his chin.

FX: CRACK!!!

Hawk: OOOOH!!!

Panel 3

Razor rares back with her blades, pushing up on his chin with the palm of her other hand, exposing his body.

Razor: And for my *next* trick....

Panel 4

Blood and meat spews toward Stanley and Lester as she opens him up from waist to throat with her blade.

FX: SCHLUCKKKK!!!

Hawk: YEAAAAAAAAAGHHH!!!

Lester: *Sweet Jesus!!!*

Page 6

Panel 1

Lester and Stanley go charging down the alleway, away from her. She stands behind them, drenched in blood, Hawk twitching across Drake's dead body.

Razor: What's wrong, boys? I thought we were gonna party?

Stanley: *OHGODOHGODOHGOD--*

Lester: *RUN!!!*

Panel 2

Stanley and Lester have come to a four-way intersection in the alley. Stanley is already breaking to the right.

Lester: JesusJesusJesus--Stanley, wait!!! We gotta--

Stanley: *Fuck you, man!!! I'm outta here!!!*

Panel 3

Lester breaks in the opposite direction; the look on his face betrays his fear as he sees something off-panel. The shoulder of the figure is visible in the foreground.

Lester: Manoman, I've gotta get to--oh, *SHIT!!!*

Panel 4

Razor pulls him toward her, holding him by the collar, blades ready to strike. She's strangely devoid of blood. Her razors are smooth, not serrated as before.

Razor: Going somewhere?

Lester: N-no, *NO--*

Panel 5

At the intersection of the alleys, the off-panel screams of both men fill the night air.

FX: *SCHLUCKKK!! SLASHHH!!! SLASHHH!!!*

Lester: *NOOOOOO--AAAAAGHHHH!!!*

Stanley: *YEEEEEEAAAAAGGGGHHHHH!!!*

Page 7

Panel 1

Back at her apartment, Kat is tapping away at her computer as Nicole comes in the door. She's wearing her Razor costume, and holding her arm at the bicep level; blood oozes down her forearm. She looks pretty frazzled.

Kat: Jeez, Nicole! Tough night?

Nicole: Don't ask.

Kat: I see. Hang on, let me get the kit.

Panel 2

Nicole is seated, holding out her arm, while Kat wipes away the blood.

Kat: What was it, anyway? Sword? Machete? Hacksaw?

Nicole: None of the above. I cut it jumping through a stained glass window.

Kat: I hate when that happens. Hold still, this is gonna sting.

Panel 3

Nearby, the TV is showing scenes of the dead bodies of Hawk and Drake. Kat is wrapping the cut with a bandage.

TV: *...still searching for more leads in the brutal murders of four reputed gang members a few hours ago near Queen City's Carverville region. Eyewitness accounts credit the costumed vigilante Razor for the attack....*

Kat: Wow, pretty grisly. Is that where you got hurt?

Nicole: No! No it wasn't.

Nicole: I...wasn't even *there*.

Panel 4

Kat looks at Nicole.

Kat: You weren't *there*?!? C'mon, Nicole, there aren't that many blade-wielding vigilantes out there, and even fewer are women. Are you--

Nicole: Of course I'm sure. I was nowhere near Carverville tonight.

Page 8

Panel 1

On the television is the homeless guy from the alleyway, with a microphone stuck in his face.

Bum: *I-I seen 'er! Razor, I seen 'er! She, y'know, she had these big blades, and these eyes! Devil's eyes, black like midnight, and--*

Kat: Sure sounds like you. Well, except the part about the "devil's eyes", I mean.

Nicole: But I wasn't there!!!

Panel 2

Nicole is standing; Kat is tying off the bandage.

Kat: Well, what do you think? Was he hallucinating?

Nicole: I--I don't know. I can tell I'm gonna have to do some digging--and I'm gonna have to start in Carverville.

Kat: Yeah, well, you'd better start tomorrow. You've lost a lot of blood, and you need some rest. Doctor's orders.

Panel 3

Nicole is still looking toward the television, as a beautiful blonde reporter appears on screen.

Nicole: Yeah, okay. This can wait a while. But not long.

Reporter: *Again, our top story: four gang members are slain in downtown Queen City, and once again the vigilante Razor is the top suspect.*

Panel 4

Close in on the television, and the reporter.

Reporter: *For WQUN NewsCenter, this is Jennifer Lee reporting.*

Page 9

Panel 1

Identical angle on Jennifer Lee's face, now intense, her hair swept back, a bandana tied around her forehead, her body wet with sweat, fists poised before her in a martial arts position.

Off-panel voice: Um, Jen?

Panel 2

Jen lets loose with a flurry of fists on a heavy bag, which rocks from the force. She's wearing a flimsy half-tee and skintight lycra short-shorts. Her body is attractively curved, but she's also toned and muscular. A man stands back from the bag, shaken from the force; he's dressed in a tank top and sweats. They're in a spa, with people and weight equipment visible in the background. They stand on padded mats off to one side.

Jennifer: HAI! HAI! HAI HAI!

Man: Jeez!!!

Panel 3

Jen follows up with a powerful kick to the bag. The force causes stuffing to blow out through the other side.

Jennifer: HYYYYAAAAIIIIIII!!!

Panel 4

Jen is staring intently at the bag, stuffing poking out of the gap, still poised.

Man: Jen? You, um, wanna talk about it?

Jen: Talk about what, Roger?

Man: Oh, come on.

Page 10

Panel 1

Roger stands beside the bag, holding out his hand toward the tear.

Roger: I present to you exhibit "A": ruined gym bag. This tends to indicate a state of dissatisfaction on the part of the ruiner, unless I'm just totally off-base here.

Roger: Something's bugging you, and we both know it. Was it those murders you covered last night?

Jen: No. Well...yes.

Jen: But not how you think.

Panel 2

Jen hands him a newspaper; on the front page is an artist's rendition of Razor, and beside that is a photo of the dead bodies from the alley. The caption above the article reads: "VIGILANTE KILLER CLAIMS FOUR".

Jen: Look at this shit! Razor risks her ass to clean up the streets, and some knee-jerk liberal *asshole* thinks she's a menace!

Roger: Hey, slow down, girl! You're preaching to the choir on this one, okay?

Panel 3

Roger's holding out his hands conciliatorily as she tosses the paper aside in disgust.

Roger: I'm a cop, remember? I gotta deal with the same shit every day--except I gotta follow the rules.

Roger: But Razor--she doesn't. She can take care of business however she sees fit. She's lucky, if you ask me.

Jen: I wish I could believe you.

Panel 4

He's leaning on the bag, holding it around the middle. Jen's smiling.

Roger: Look, Jen, as somebody who knows you, respects you, and wants to buy you an expensive dinner at the restaurant of your choice, you can take it from me: I'm sincere.

Roger: Forget those op-ed morons. Razor's okay.

Jen: Okay, okay, I believe you.

Page 11

Panel 1

Roger's scooping up his bag, about to leave.

Roger: Look, I'd like to hang around and help you wreck more helpless targets, but I gotta go. Just be cool, okay? Razor doesn't mind--and neither should you.

Jen: Yeah, you're right. Oh, and Roger?

Panel 2

She's smiling seductively.

Jen: Wednesday. Dinner. Pick me up at seven.

Jen: I like Italian.

Panel 3

Roger's walking away in the foreground, clenching his fist, grinning from ear to ear. Two other women are walking up to Jennifer in the background. They're both around the same height; the woman to the left (Rebecca) has thick, dark hair; she's clad in a pelvic thong-style leotard and tight half-tank. To the right is a woman with short brown hair (Janis), wearing a high-cut leotard and leg warmers. They are similarly toned and muscular.

Roger (low voice): Yes.

Janis: Hey, Jen.

Rebecca: Who's the yuppie?

Jen: Lay 'off, Rebecca. He's a friend.

Panel 4

Rebecca's got her arms crossed, rolling her eyes. Janis has her arm propped on Jen's shoulder.

Rebecca: Forget it. The words "friend" and "man" are mutually exclusive.

Janis: Hallelujah, sister.

Jen: He's different, okay? Now come on, let's practice.

Page 12

Panel 1

Janis is holding the bag, as Rebecca slams her foot into it.

Rebecca: I had fun last night.

Janis: No lie. When are we doing it again?

Jen: How does tonight sound?

Panel 2

They're smiling. Rebecca's stopped her assault.

Janis: Great! But so soon? Are you sure?

Jen: *Dead* sure. Those media assholes don't have the right attitude, so we're gonna work on rectifying that.

Jen: And besides....

Panel 3

Jen is smiling, predatorily.

Jen: I get the feeling that if we're lucky...

Jen: ...we might just meet somebody very important....

Page 13

Panel 1

Exterior view of *Erotica*, a high-quality strip bar. Outside is a sign reading "Featured performer: Mindi Melons".

Panel 2

The interior of the club is crowded with a mix of roughnecks and businessmen, situated around tables and various stages. On the main stage, a cowgirl in a bikini, boots, and chaps is pulling away a vest, to reveal her glorious body. Topless waitresses in bikini bottoms and high heels weave between customers, holding trays of mixed drinks. In the foreground sits Michael Reich, the club owner, wearing a tailored Armani suit. Beside him is Julia Seymour, a bountiful blonde wearing a skintight rubber miniskirt. Before her on the table is a manila envelope.

Reich: You got it?

Julia: Yeah. It was easy. Queen City's finest were more than happy to oblige.

Page 14

Panel 1

He takes the envelope from her.

Reich: No surprise. They're in here all the damned time.

Julia: Good tippers, too.

Julia: Look, are you sure you want to--

Panel 2

He's opened it, to reveal several photos of the previous evening's crime scene. They're appropriately gruesome.

Reich: Of course I'm sure, Goddamn it. Some psycho bitch cut up my brother, and she's gonna pay. *Period.*

Julia: I'm sorry. I didn't realize you were close.

Panel 3

Reich is looking at a picture of Lester's bloody corpse.

Reich: We weren't. He was a two-bit hood who didn't have the sense to work in the family business. But he was my brother. I've gotta do something.

Reich: Juh-eeezus, look at this. It's like he walked into a fuckin' blender or something. Where's the coroner's report?

Julia: Under the pictures.

Panel 4

Reich is reading some typewritten pages, while a waitress puts drinks on the table.

Reich: "*Cause of death: massive internal trauma from edged weapon, shock, blood loss....*"

Julia: Razor's M.O. all the way.

Reich: Yeah. And that bum saw 'er, too.

Page 15

Panel 1

Reich's sitting back, looking at Julia. She's resting her chin on her clasped hands.

Reich: I'll need good men for this. The best.

Julia: Snow is free. He just offed Councilman Dewey last week.

Reich: Not good enough. I need somebody special.

Panel 2

He's snapping his fingers.

Reich: Waitwaitwait a minute. I've heard about a couple of guys. They work out on the west coast, mostly. Ah, shit what are their--

Julia: Hack and Slash?

Reich: Yeah! Those're the guys! I want *them!*

Panel 3

She's taking the envelope back from him.

Julia: They're pretty expensive, Michael. We're talking six figures a hit, plus expenses.

Reich: I don't give a shit! I've got the money, call 'em!

Panel 4

He has his fists clenched.

Reich: Razor didn't just kill any thug, for Christ's sake, she killed a *Reich!* We've been major players in this city since prohibition!

Reich: And I'll be *damned* if some head case with a blade is gonna get away with murdering my flesh and blood!

Panel 5

Close on his face.

Reich: No, that bitch is going down, and going down hard. This won't just be a hit, this'll be a *statement*.

Reich: Now get those guys on the phone. Pay 'em whatever they want. And tell 'em that it's like this...

Page 16

Panel 1

The rest of Reich's sentence trails into this panel. We see the exterior of Kat's apartment through a window.

Reich: ...I want Razor dead inside the week.

Kat: Nicole, are you *sure* you're up to this?

Panel 2

Inside the apartment, Nicole's dressing for action. The bandage is still in place.

Nicole: As I'll ever be. I've gotta find out the story behind this lookalike thing before it gets too far.

Kat: Okay, but be careful. I mean, somebody might be trying to draw you out or something.

Nicole: Don't worry, I've thought about that. I'll watch out.

Panel 3

Nicole is sliding blades onto her right forearm.

Kat: Um...Nicole, have you stopped to wonder why somebody would do this? Dress up like you, act like you?

Nicole: Yeah. And I can only say this....

Panel 4

Close in her face, with her blades to one side.

Nicole: ...she'd better have a *damned* good reason.

Page 17

Panel 1

Razor now stands on the trash-hewn streets of Carverville, in the alleyway where Lester and company first debuted. A couple of scruffy young men in jeans and jackets are digging around in the trash can that initially occupied Stanley's attention. Mark is to the right; he's wearing a backwards baseball cap. Joey is on the other side, holding a beer, leaning on the rim while Mark digs.

Mark: I'm almost down there, man. He always put his friggin' stash in this can.

Joey: Stupid muthafucka. Ain't surprised he's dead.

Mark: No shit.

Panel 2

Razor's closer now. Mark and Joey don't notice her.

Joey: Man, that is *scary* how Lester's gang got fucked up. That Razor chick must be pure evil.

Mark: Yeah. But I ain't worried--I mean, she ain't dumb enough to show up in the same place the next night, right?

Panel 3

Joey's noticed Razor, and lets his beer fall out of his hand. Mark is still down in the barrel.

Mark: The way I figure it, for the next few nights, we are home *free*.

Joey: Uh....

Panel 4

Razor's standing right next to them. Mark raises up out of the can, holding a vial of dust.

Mark: *Bingo!!!* Five grams of Columbia's finest, picked by Juan Valdez him...

Panel 5

Mark's face turns deathly pale.

Mark: ...self?

Panel 18

Panel 1

He smiles broadly as he hands the vial to her.

Mark: B-boy, good thing you showed up, Razor! I mean, we were going to give this to the local authorities, but now we can j-just give it to you!

Joey: Y-yeah! Uh...nice blades, where'd you--

Razor: Get lost.

Panel 2

Mark and Joey go sprinting away at an Olympic pace.

Mark: C'mon, l-let's go study up for Eagle Scout!

Joey: Yeah! We shoulda just said *no!!!*

Panel 3

Razor examines the vial, seemingly considering it for something.

Panel 4

She hurls it behind her, shattering it against a wall, and stalks across the street.

FX: *KREESH!!!*

Panel 19

Panel 1

Razor walks into the alley where the bodies were found. There are still streaks of blood on the pavement and lining the bricks. In the foreground stands a figure in a trenchcoat and wide-brimmed hat.

Panel 2

Razor walks toward the figure.

Razor: Excuse me. I want to talk to you.

Panel 3

She's close to the figure now.

Razor: I need to know if you were here last night, when those men were murdered.

Figure: Why, yes. Yes I was.

Figure: And so were you, in a way.

Panel 4

The figure discards its trenchcoat; we see it's one of the Razors. Another Razor descends from the fire escape above, while a third steps out from the shadows further down the alleyway.

Razor: What the--

Razor #2 (Jennifer): And now that you're here...

Panel 20

The other three stand surrounding Nicole; her main distinguishing feature is the bandage on her arm, although they've each got unique blades (Jennifer's are smooth, Rebecca's are serrated, and Janis' curve inward a little more than the others).

Jennifer: ...let's all get to know one another, shall we?

NEXT ISSUE: ENTER--HACK 'N SLASH!!!