

Razor Uncut

"Strength in Numbers"

Part 2

by Mike Shoemaker

Page 1

Razor stands surrounded by Jen, Rebecca, and Janis, poised and wary.

Razor - "Who the hell are you?"

Jen - "Relax. We're not here to fight."

Page 2

Panel 1 - They've come up from their poses somewhat, and moved a little closer. Razor has her back to the wall of the alleyway.

Jen - "We just wanted to meet you. You're our inspiration, after all."

Razor - "Great, a fan club. Just what I always wanted."

Panel 2 - Jen, Rebecca, and Janis are pulling away their wigs.

Jen - "You should be flattered. I went through hell trying to duplicate your costume. All we had were some grainy security films."

Jen - "Let's get better acquainted."

Panel 3 - They're now unwigged, with their real hair flowing freely down. Jen's is drawn into a ponytail, which now falls behind her.

Jen - "My name is Jennifer Lee, I'm a reporter working for a local television station. I've covered several of your hits, most recently your job on the Jeffries Gang."

Jen - "These are my friends Rebecca and Janis."

Rebecca - "Charmed."

Panel 4 - They're talking.

Jen - "At first, I bought what all the analysts were saying--that you were a menace, no better than the punks you killed. But as I covered your activities, I came to realize that what you were doing wasn't barbaric or inhuman at all."

Jen - "I realized that what you were doing was *right*."

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Panel 1 - More discussion. Razor has straightened up from her defensive posture.

Razor - "That's nice, but--"

Jen - "No, hear me out. While media 'experts' were labeling you a menace and a vigilante, I was seeing the importance of your work. You were *protecting* the innocent, guarding us against the scum that breeds like rats in our cities."

Panel 2 - More discussion.

Jen - "I lost my mother to the kind of dirt you put out of commission. She was killed for drug money. Rebecca was raped and left for dead while jogging through Hyatt Park."

Jen - "Janis was jumped by gang-bangers doing an initiation. The plastic surgeons spent six months putting her face back together."

Panel 3 - More discussion.

Jen - "We've been victims of the kind of terror you're trying to prevent. We decided that you couldn't--shouldn't--do it alone."

Razor - "What are you suggesting? You want to team up with me or something?"

Panel 4 - More discussion.

Jen - "That's exactly what I'm saying. Imagine the good we could do. Imagine the lives we could save by--"

Razor - "Forget it. Look, I'm sorry for what you've been through, but I--"

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Panel 1 - More discussion.

Jen - "But what? You work alone? No help wanted?"

Razor - "Yeah. Exactly."

Jen - "That's bullshit."

Panel 2 - Jen's getting more intense, pointing at Razor.

Jen - "I thought you were a crusader. I thought you wanted to achieve a goal, by whatever means necessary. I thought you wanted to make a difference."

Panel 3 - Closer on Jen.

Jen - "Now I'm hearing that this isn't about the people you're helping-- it's about *you*, about what *you* want. That maybe this is some kind of Goddamned *catharsis* instead of a crusade."

Panel 4 - Jen's turning to leave, and motioning to Janis and Rebecca.

Jen - "And if that's the case, then I'm glad I found out before I wasted more time on you."

Jen - "C'mon, let's blow--"

Razor - "Wait."

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Panel 1 - Razor looks at Jen, a slight smile on her face.

Panel 2 - Jen looks back, still smoldering.

Panel 3 - Razor stands with her hands on her hips.

Razor - "This is messy work. You can't just be a killer--you have to be smart, and quick, or you won't last long."

Razor - "But if you want to commit suicide with me, then who am I to stop you?"

Panel 4 - Razor and Jen are shaking hands.

Jen - "You won't regret this."

Razor - "Too late."

Jen - "Okay. What first? We're ready to go."

Panel 5 - Razor is smirking.

Razor - "For now, we just go out looking. But don't worry...."

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Panel 1 - A shot of a darkened city street; a beautiful brunette (Michele) in a scant high school cheerleader costume is emerging from a car, holding a few textbooks. The driver (Lori) is dressed identically.

Razor (caption) - "...something always turns up."

Michele - "Thanks for the ride, Lori. Nice wheels!"

Lori - "Thanks. You sure I can't drop you off at your house, Michele? It's just a few streets down."

Michele - "That's okay, I can walk. It's a beautiful night."

Lori - "Okay. Seeya."

Panel 2 - The car pulls away, and Michele starts down the sidewalk. She's listening to headphones, and singing along. Visible over her shoulder is a nondescript van, approaching briskly. (The song she's listening to is Soundgarden's "Let Me Drown".)

Michele (singing) - "*Stretch the bones over my skin...Stretch the skin over my head....*"

Panel 3 - The van is just a few feet away now. The side door is opening, and a jacket-clad thug is emerging.

Michele (singing) - "*I'm going to the holy land....*"

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Panel 1 - The thug (Billy) is jerking her into the van by her arm, scattering her books to the pavement.

Billy - "Got 'er! Luke, floor it!"

Michele - "Oooh! Let me go--"

Panel 2 - The van wheels around a corner, down into a trashy alleyway. Luke, the driver, is leering through the windshield. Beside him on the passenger side, a man (Pedro) is rigging up a palm-sized camcorder.

Luke - "Get the camera ready, Pedro! Woo-haaaa!!!"

Pedro - "Locked and loaded, baby! I love technology!"

Panel 3 - In the back of the van, Billy is holding Michele down from behind by her arms, while a fourth man (Vince) is using a hunting knife to cut open her sweater. If we can swing it, a copy of Verotika #4 is on the floor of the van. To one side is a blowtorch.

Michele - "Oh, God, please! Please--"

Billy - "Shut up, bitch! We gonna do you just like that comic we read!"

Vince - "Oh, yeah, this is gonna be sweet...."

Pedro - "Stop jiggling so much! You're gonna ruin the shot!"

Panel 4 - Still within the van, except we can't see the driver's compartment. Pedro's fussing with the camera as Vince unbuckles his pants. Tears are streaming down poor Michele's face.

Billy - "Can you believe her *daddy's* payin' us to do this? Jesus!"

Vince - "Yeah. He don't wanna have to send her to some pricey college."

Pedro - "Aw, shit, low battery! Luke, hand me that spare, man!"

Pedro - "Luke!"

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Panel 1 - A shot of the driver's side door, wide open, with a spray of blood on the door glass and part of the dashboard. Luke is nowhere to be seen.

Pedro - "Luke?"

Panel 2 - Pedro is staring at the door; his friends have stopped what they're doing to look. Vince is holding the blowtorch, now lit.

Pedro - "Dudes! Chill! Check it out!"

Vince - "What?"

Pedro - "It's Luke! He's gone! Look at the blood!"

Panel 3 - Billy is pulling out a Beretta, while Pedro is putting the camera down and producing a switchblade.

Billy - "I don't like this...."

Vince - "Shit. Cocksucker's probably just fuckin' with us. Pedro, check it out."

Pedro - "Me?!? Why--"

Panel 4 - Pedro's sliding open the van door, tentatively emerging.

Vince - "'Cause I'm the fuckin' leader! Now do it, asswipe!"

Pedro - "Fuckin' prick...."

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Panel 1 - Pedro is standing beside the van. Luke's body lands beside him from above.

Pedro - "Yo, I don't see--"

Pedro - "Uh...."

Panel 2 - Pedro has turned, wild-eyed. Razor and Rebecca stand atop the van, Rebecca to the right, her blades dripping with blood from Luke's evisceration. Jen is emerging from the front of the van, and Janis from behind it. Jen, Rebecca, and Janis have re-donned their wigs (observant readers will be able to tell who's who from the different blades, and the bandage on Razor's arm....)

Pedro - "Oh hell...."

Vince - "Pedro! What is it?"

Panel 3 - Pedro lunges at Jen, who casually sidesteps the stroke. She has her blades raised.

Pedro - "Get away! Get away, or I'll--"

Jen - "Didn't your mother ever tell you..."

Panel 4 - A down stroke severs his forearm.

SFX - SCHLUCK!

Jen - "...not to play with knives?"

Pedro - "YEEEEEEAAAAAGH!"

Panel 5 - An upstroke guts him, sending him reeling back.

SFX - SSSSHRRICK!!!

Jen - "See you in hell, you sonofabitch!"

Pedro - "UUUUGGH!!!"

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Panel 1 - Janis throws open the rear doors, surprising Billy.

Janis - "Show's over, assholes!"

Billy - "AAAAAAAAAH!!! Vince! Vince--"

Panel 2 - Billy's being pulled out the back, off-panel, as blood spews toward Vince. He's holding the blowtorch defensively, as Michele cringes against one side of the van.

SFX - SHLUCK!!!

Billy - "GUH--UCK!!!"

Vince - "Wh-what the fuck?!?"

Panel 3 - Razor stands in front of the open van door.

Razor - "Okay, stud."

Razor - "Come out and play."

Panel 4 - Vince lunges out, sending a searing jet of flame just past Razor's head.

Vince - "AAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!"

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Panel 1 - Razor sidesteps and kicks him, slamming him face-first into the brick wall. He drops the torch.

SFX - BRACK!!!

Vince - "UUUUNH!!!"

Panel 2 - He's slowly standing. In the foreground, Razor now holds the torch.

Vince - "I--I'll get you...I...oohhh...."

Razor - "Hey, big boy..."

Panel 3 - Flame spews toward the reader as Razor ignites him.

SFX - FWOOOOSH!!!

Razor - "Need a light?"

Panel 4 - Vince ignites.

Vince - "YEEEEEEEEAAAAAAGHH!!!"

Panel 5 - A few minutes has passed. Dead bodies are arrayed everywhere. Jen is holding Michele as she sobs against her, re-dressed in the tatters of her cheerleading costume.

Caption - "Later...."

Michele - "They said muh-my father did this! God, why? Why...."

Jen - "I don't know, honey. I don't know...."

Razor - "Where do you live?"

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Panel 1 - Michele sobs out the answer, still held by Jen. Rebecca's coming toward them, holding a brown paper bag.

Michele - "Twelve-fifteen Gardener. But I can't go back--"

Razor - "No, and after tonight, you won't need to. I'll see to that."

Rebecca - "Look what I found in the van."

Panel 2 - The bag is full of crisp bills.

Janis - "Looks like about thirty grand. Guess that's what you were worth to your old man."

Jen - "Bastard."

Michele - "B-but I just don't --"

Panel 3 - Razor has a hand on her shoulder, and is giving her the bag of money.

Razor - "Never mind why. It doesn't matter now."

Razor - "Take this. My friends will see that you get to someone who'll put you up."

Jen - "You sure? We'd like to help you finish this."

Panel 4 - Razor is shaking hands with Jen. Janis and Rebecca are consoling Michele.

Razor - "No. I'll handle this myself. You make sure she gets to a friend's house."

Jen - "So, you still regretting letting us come?"

Panel 5 - Razor is stalking away from them.

Razor - "Not as much. Meet me at the usual spot, tomorrow night. We'll do it again."

Razor - "Now if you'll excuse me, I need to make an orphan of our little friend...."

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Panel 1 - We're inside Reich's club, at his favorite booth. The usual stripping activity is taking place. Beside Reich, as always, is Julia, wearing a bikini top, g-string, and hip boots. A pair of big men (Hack and Slash) in sweaters and jackets are sliding to sit across from them. Hack is a blonde; Slash is a dark-haired man.

Reich - "Gentlemen! Glad you could make it. Please, sit down."

Hack - "It's cold in here. You cold?"

Slash - "Quit complainin', you wuss."

Panel 2 - Reich is sliding an envelope across to them.

Reich - "My check cleared, correct?"

Slash - "Yeah. We're ready to go."

Reich - "Outstanding. Here's the information you'll need."

Panel 3 - Hack's rubbing his arms, while Slash looks at a picture from inside the envelope.

Slash - "Razor, huh? I heard 'a her. She was messin' around with some Von Drake guy a while back."

Slash - "Shouldn't be too tough. We can do it tonight, easy."

Reich - "I'm happy to hear it. Look, there's been a slight change. I want you to bring her here and do it."

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Panel 1 - More discussion.

Slash - "That's gonna be extra. I don't like hauling people around."

Reich - "No problem. I just wanna see the look on her face when she gets what's coming to her."

Panel 2 - Slash has been pulled out of the booth by a beautiful stripper (Karen), and Hack is being yanked out by a pair of twin blondes (Lisa and Linda).

Reich - "Now please, gentlemen, enjoy my hospitality. Karen, Lisa, Linda--give these men whatever they want."

Karen - "Yes sir, Mr. Reich."

Slash - "Oh, mama!"

Panel 3 - Slash is holding his girl in his arms; Hack is being led away, still unhappy.

Julia - "You sure about bringing her back here? That exposes you pretty badly."

Reich - "I don't care. I want this done right, and I want to be there when it happens."

Reich - "All that matters to me now...."

Panel 4 - A shot of a sketch of Razor, on top of the envelope, still on the table.

Reich (off-panel) - "...is that before the night is over..."

Reich (off-panel) - "...that bitch Razor's gonna be *dead*."

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Panel 1 - An exterior view of Queen City Precinct 33, a streamlined glass-and-steel structure abuzz with squad cars and foot traffic. A sign designating the precinct name should sit in the foreground. It's now daytime.

Panel 2 - Inside, Roger is walking into the office of Lt. Andrea Richardson. The room is small and square, with a pair of leather seats situated before her mahogany desk. A few potted plants are placed on stands around the room. Andrea herself is a leggy redhead, clad in a form-fitting business suit and matching short business skirt. The jacket hangs on a stand behind her desk. Her long hair is pulled back into a pony tail.

Roger - "Lt. Richardson? You wanted to see me?"

Andrea - "Yeah. Close the door."

Roger - "Uh oh. Sounds bad."

Panel 3 - She drops a file onto her desk before him as he sits.

Andrea - "It is. Our mole inside Reich's camp has some bad news."

Andrea - "He's hired a couple of pros to hunt down Razor."

Panel 4 - Roger's opened the file. Inside are a number of documents, and a pair of sketches. They depict a pair of well-muscled men, wearing skintight bodysuits, reinforced with curved kevlar plates over the torso, abdomen, arms, and legs. Cycle boots, long leather gloves, and forearm greaves complete the look; long, curved blades are welded to the greaves. Both are wearing half-masks which tie in the back, with the knot falling loose behind them. The man to the left is wearing a black bodysuit, and the man to the right is wearing a grey ensemble.

Roger - "Great. Who are these yokels?"

Andrea - "They call themselves Hack and Slash, and don't take them lightly. They've hit more targets on the west coast than we'll ever know about. If they're on the job, then Razor's in trouble."

Panel 4 - Roger's looking up at Andrea.

Andrea - "Roger, the mayor notwithstanding, some very important people are secretly behind Razor. With crime as bad as it is in Queen City, they want to make sure she stays safe and sound."

Roger - "I gathered as much. Personally, I'm on their side."

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Panel 1 - More discussion.

Andrea - "I know. You've done a lot of research on her, and I was hoping you might have come into contact with her by now, so maybe you could warn her. This reporter you've checked out, Jennifer Lee...is she--"

Roger - "Razor? No. I don't think so. I've traced her to some recent jobs, but I think she's a copycat."

Panel 2 - More discussion.

Andrea - "A copycat? You mean she's working *separately*?"

Roger - "Yeah, I think so. Evidence puts her at several of the scenes-- places she didn't cover as news stories. But that's not all."

Roger - "Forensic samples show differences in several of the wounds, and the positions of some of the bodies don't jibe with a single attacker. I think she's working with friends."

Panel 3 - Andrea's sitting back in her chair.

Andrea - "Great. A team of vigilantes. This thing is escalating."

Roger - "Possibly. But we'll have to worry about that later. What about Hack and Slash?"

Panel 4 - More discussion.

Andrea - "They're already in town, meeting with Reich. We can't do much about it now, but I want you to stake out his club tonight. If it looks like something's going down, I want you to be there."

Andrea - "But understand that I've got to send you alone. We can't risk exposing our sympathies."

Roger - "Understood."

Panel 5 - Roger's getting up from the chair.

Andrea - "Be careful, Roger. These guys are dangerous. I doubt even Razor can handle them."

Roger - "Well, maybe. But if history is any indication..."

Panel 6 - Roger's smiling as he takes the door handle.

Roger - "...they're in for a lot more than they bargained for."

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Panel 1 - Jen, Rebecca, and Janis have returned to the alley in which they first met Razor. Rebecca is leaning against the wall, while Janis and Jen flank her.

Rebecca - "Think she stood us up?"

Jen - "No. She's not that kind of person. If she's late--or can't make it--then there's got to be a reason why."

Panel 2 - From above them, as the silhouettes of Hack 'n Slash look down.

Janis - "Maybe she's in trouble."

Jen - "Maybe. But let's give her a few more minutes. She might've had to stop on the way to take care of some business. Besides, we've got plenty of time."

Panel 3 - Frontally on Hack and Slash.

Hack - "What the hell? There's three of 'em!"

Slash - "Jesus, I dunno. Reich never said anythin' about this!"

Panel 4 - They're leaping over the ledge.

Slash - "Okay, we bring 'em all in! But Reich's payin' double!"

Hack - "Yeah! Let's go!"

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Panel 1 - Janis turns just as Slash enters the frame. He catches her alongside the head with the flat of his blade.

SFX - KANNNGG!!!

Janis - "Uuuunfh!!!"

Jen - "What the hell--"

Rebecca - "Look out!"

Panel 2 - Slash hits Rebecca from behind with a big forearm, knocking her over.

SFX - BRAKKK!!!

Rebecca - "Ooooh!!!"

Slash - "Comin' through!"

Panel 3 - Jen is back against the wall, in a defensive posture.

Jen - "Come on! Come on, you bastards!"

Slash - "Get this! She's got spunk!"

Panel 4 - Hack has produced a police-model taser; he fires it, and the charged cables twist toward the reader.

Hack - "I'll take care of it."

Slash - "Yeah, I wouldn't wanna damage the goods before payday!"

Panel 5 - Jen gasps as volts sear through her body, from where the cables connect with her chest.

SFX - BZZZZZZZ!!!

Jen - "UUUUNNNHHH!!!"

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Panel 1 - Hack and Slash begin collecting up the unconscious bodies.

Slash - "Not bad. We can get 'em to Reich before nine. Might even get a chance to catch the X-Files."

Hack - "Yeah. Isn't this the episode with the UFO?"

Panel 2 - From over their shoulders, a distinctly female silhouette watches them.

Slash - "Brother, they all got UFOs...."

Hack - "Most of 'em, yeah."

Panel 3 - We now see that the silhouette is Razor, who glares menacingly after the men.

Panel 4 - A black square to denote passage of time.

Panel 5 - Same square, except that light begins to shine through.

Voice - "She's coming around."

Panel 6 - Now some distinctly male figures are coming into focus.

Voice - "Good. Now maybe we can get down to business."

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Jen, Rebecca, and Janis are cuffed and lying on the floor, rousing before Reich. Julia stands off to one side, as do four men in mafia-issue suits. Hack and Slash stand behind them menacingly, Hack frowning, Slash grinning broadly.

Reich - "Welcome back, ladies. Before you die, I just need to know one little thing...."

Reich - "Which one of you psycho *bitches* is Razor?"

Next issue: Showdown!!!