

**Tommi Gunn:**

**Datastorm**

**Synopsis--Issue 3**

**Synopsis:** We open in Roderick Tyler's conference room, where during the course of discussing business, we find out what an utter bastard he is. When someone expresses a dissenting opinion regarding the Datastorm project, he kills him on the spot. Later, we join Tommi and Jason as they race toward the site of Jeffries' last transaction. They pause to tour the crater left by a tac nuke during a corporate war, and discuss a little of that. They arrive at the terminal, and are attacked by the War Machines, a brutal street gang that intends to kill Tommi and rock Jason's world, as it were. She recovers from their attack, and a brutal fight follows, where Tommi takes them out. Tylyn, the corporate operative from the last issue, observes them the whole time. Later, they track Anna to an unused warehouse owned by Tyler, and they discover Jeffries there. Tommi grabs her, but Tylyn seizes Jason, and a brief standoff occurs. They resolve it peacefully, and the horrors of Datastorm are revealed to them. Agreeing that the project must be stopped, they enact a plan to infiltrate Tyler's headquarters and put an end to the plan for good.

**Promo blurb:** While braving the dangers of New Miami's ruins, Tommi and Jason are thrust into further intrigue as they endeavor to discover the deadly truth behind Datastorm.

tommi gunn:

datastorm

by Mike Shoemaker

Issue 3

Page 1

Roderick Tyler stands at the head of a long, black conference table, around which are situated the company officers of Tyler Dynamics. Tyler is dressed in his traditional black jumpsuit. They number twelve in all, five of which are women. Most are mature-looking, with three of the men and two of the women being relatively young. Behind Tyler is a video wall, 8 feet across and six feet high, currently displaying the stylish Tyler Dynamics logo.

"I believe our first order of business is the situation in Malaysia," begins Tyler. "Kroffat, what's the latest?"

"The transitional government still opposes our plans to establish a munitions factory there," answers a man. "Their new president is especially adamant. He's revealed that our plant won't meet safety standards, and will involve child labor."

"If it wouldn't be too much trouble, I'd like to have him killed," answers Tyler. "Make it messy. And it would be *delightful* if his family were watching."

"Yes, sir. I'll have it taken care of."

Tyler turns to a female executive, a beautiful woman with long raven tresses. She bears a sinister smile.

"Miss Warner, I believe you were conducting a study on our waste disposal procedures."

"That's correct, and our investigators have concluded that we have zero exposure in the discovery of our by-products in St. Catharines. The containers were unlabeled, and all witnesses have been...dealt with."

"Even that Kirk fellow?"

"I saw to it personally."

Page 2

A man to Tyler's right (three seats down) raises his hand. He's an older gentleman, with glasses and a salt-and-pepper beard and mustache ringing his mouth.

"Good news for a change!" Tyler smiles broadly. "Outstanding!"

"Thank you, sir."

The man with his hand up asks, "Um, sir?"

Stevens is visibly nervous, adjusting his tie as he speaks.

"Yes, Mr. Stevens?"

"Well, a number of us have been talking, and...we'd like to share our concerns with you regarding the Datastorm project."

"By all means, I'd love to hear them."

The executive wrings his hands together as he speaks.

"Sir...if Datastorm sees fruition, then the effects on the world will be nothing short of disastrous. The resulting chaos would be incomprehensible."

"Stevens, old boy...you aren't going soft on me, are you? You're the man who singlehandedly arranged our insurrection in Paraguay, and did such a *splendid* job. We certainly took no prisoners there."

Stevens continues to speak. Tyler has his hands out as he responds. He continues to smile.

"I-I'm aware of that, sir. But the scale of the operations is immeasurably different. Such a technological catastrophe would cast the planet into a new dark age."

"I'm aware of that," he says, "and that's part of the beauty. Such an endeavor only works if it's done on a *global* level."

Stevens stands, his fist on the table, as Tyler slowly withdraws a pistol from behind his back.

"Mr. Tyler...I speak for a number of us here when I say we are opposed to the implementation of this plan. We've all done some fairly hideous things, but we won't have this kind of blood on our hands. I'm sorry."

"Don't be. I respect your right to voice a dissenting opinion, especially when that opinion is shared by so many."

Tyler blows a gaping hole through Stevens' forehead (**KA-BRAM!!!**) All the employees—except Vanessa—recoil in horror.

The body flops back into its chair, blood gushing out the back of his skull.

"I also respect your right to die."

Tyler confronts them again, as they struggle to re-gain their composure.

"There's nothing like a stimulating dialogue on company policy, wouldn't you all agree?"

"Now that that's taken care of, let's press on with the next topic. Miss Fabian, is our frame-up of Senator Lowell progressing smoothly?"

Page 4

Tommi and Jason are cruising over the concrete-and-glass canyons of New Miami on her skycycle, Jason clinging to her like superglue. Below them is a debris- and rubble-filled crater, a quarter mile in diameter; most of the neighboring buildings are twisted, hollow shells.

"A-Are we there yet?" asks Jason.

"No, it's going to be a little longer. Just relax, will you?"

Jason is looking down.

"I don't come this way very often. Were you around when the bomb went off?" he asks.

"No," she answers, also looking. "I was born a little after that. I grew up in the rubble."

They swoop down closer, touring it.

"This was the site of the DataComm central headquarters. They were making a lot of enemies in the corporate community by intercepting encoded transmissions and selling them to rivals.

"They messed over one too many companies, and got hit with a nominal-yield neutron bomb."

"Wow," offers Jason.

They're pulling away from the crater.

"Back then, the city was just called 'Miami'."

"That kinda thing doesn't happen that often, right? I mean, I don't hear about nukes falling very much."

"It's rare. Most of the larger corporations got together and signed a mutual non-nuclear agreement. They abide by it most of the time."

Wind whips through her hair as they ride. She's looking down a bit, toward something not yet visible.

"I guess the corps pretty much control everything," he says. "I'd hate to see one of them get absolute power."

"No kidding," she answers. "Things would go from bad to worse overnight." Then she adds, "I think I see our target. Let's have a look."

Tommi and Jason have set down in a seedy section of town, with deserted, dilapidated buildings surrounding them. It's close to the crater they just passed, so many will be fairly crumbled. They stand beside a wall with an inset auto-teller, which appears to be dented and out of service.

"We can't be at the right spot," she says, looking it over. "This thing is trashed."

"Well, yeah, it looks that way. But...let me check something out."

Jason's half-inside a panel below the machine. Tommi's watching him, her hands on her hips.

"Ah-ha!!! Just what I thought."

"Jason, what are you—"

Suddenly, the terminal lights up and goes active (**BZZZZZT!!!**).

"Got it!", he exclaims.

"Good going!"

They're standing and watching it as a gang of four men stand in the distance behind them, in silhouette.

"What did you do?"

"Well, I figured that if this thing were still tied into Global Financial's network, that somebody clever might try to use it for a transaction. Granted, the terminal's all busted up, but they could still tie in from here with the right equipment."

"But why use a broken-down piece of crap like this?"

Tommi lurches forward toward him as she gets hit in the back with a round (**BRA-KOW!!!**)

Jason replies, "Because nobody would think it was a usable system and—"

"Uuunh!!!" Tommi exclaims.

Stunned, Jason holds Tommi, who's fallen into his arms. The men responsible for this terrible deed are visible in the foreground, looking at him. Tommi has a smoking hole in the back of her jacket, and we can't yet see that the round didn't penetrate her skin.

"Jesus! Tommi! Tommi, are you okay?"

"You bastards! If—if you've hurt her—"

"Whatcha gonna do, techboy?", asks one.

We now get a full-on view of the men; they're massively-muscled, streetgear-clad versions of the rock group *Kiss*, with facepaint similar to the "classic" 70's look. "Paul" is holding a huge ka-bar-type knife in one hand and a smoking high-caliber pistol in the other; "Gene" holds a massive battleaxe in one hand, and being the biggest, looks big enough to swing it with authority. "Peter" holds a chain with a spiked ball at the end, and "Ace" has a gauntlet on his right hand with curving claws affixed to the back. They've all got holstered sidearms of various kinds.

Paul asks, "You gonna short us out or somethin'?"

"He's got the 'short' thing nailed down," says Gene.

"No shit," adds Peter. "He's a fuckin' runt."

"That's alright," interjects Ace. "He's got a *real* pretty mouth."



Tommi is rousing from below the teller. Jason is gone.

"Oooh," she moans, holding her head. "J-Jason? What happened?"

She looks up, panicked.

"Jason!!!"

In the distance, she sees Jason, being held stomach-down on a crate, as our Kiss clones are tugging at his clothes. Paul has his ka-bar at Jason's throat. Gene is standing behind him, fiddling with his codpiece.

"Oh my God!" she says.

At the scene, Paul's got Jason's head back by the hair, exposing his throat and holding his knife against it, but he's still struggling gamely (as many non-homosexual men might in this situation, I suspect...) Gene is pressing him down with a big hand in the middle of his back.

"L-Lemme go, you queer sonsabitches!"

"He's a fighter!" Gene has an evil, delighted expression on his face. "This is gonna be sweet meat!"

Paul answers, "Yeah, just make sure you don't pop 'im so hard that you kill 'im. The War Machines are gonna rock and roll ALL night on this little cherry!"

"And party every day!" shouts Ace.

Tommi literally flies in from off-panel, administering a brutal double clothesline to Ace and Peter; blood spews from their mouths. It should be plain to the reader that it's a mortal blow. Gene wheels around.

"Glllllk!!!" offers Peter.

"Huuuurk!!!" exclaims Ace.

Paul charges, his ka-bar poised overhead, as Tommi slams a boot into Gene's midsection (**BRAK!!!**); the blow sends him flying back over the crate (and Jason).

Gene exclaims, "Oooof!"

Paul shouts, "Bitch! You wanna play?"

He drives down with the knife, which she blocks easily by making an "X" with her forearms and catching his wrist in the crux.

Paul exclaims, "I'm gonna—"

"Stuff it, asshole!" she says.

Tommi is turned away from him, holding his arm overhead by the wrist with her hands. He's hyper-extended, off-balance.

Still holding his wrist, she turns and sinks his own knife into his gut, up to the hilt (**SCHLUCK!!!**).

Paul exclaims, "Aaaack!!!"

Tommi wheels, pulling a pistol, as Paul collapses, clutching at the knife. Nearby, we see Gene, holding Jason, whose pants are pulled mostly up now, but unfastened. Gene's trousers, on the other hand, are down low, and we can see his black leather underwear (believe it or not, this'll be important in a second). Gene has a gun to Jason's temple.

"Hey, babe," says Gene, "you'd better chill, or I pull the trigger on my love gun, you dig?"

Tommi keeps him sighted. Gene is running his prodigious tongue up the side of Jason's face. Jason is understandably repulsed.

"Let him go, you twisted *freak!*"

"Mmmmm...what's the matter, babe, don't like to share?"

Jason swings his fist down, slamming it into Gene's crotch (the codpiece is no longer there to protect the family jewels...)

"Share *this*, you bastard!" yells Jason.

"OOOOOOH!!!" shouts Gene, who slackens.

Jason dives aside as Tommi blows a hole through Gene's chest (**KA-BLAM!!!**).

"Jason--*duck!!!*" she shouts.

"Aaaargh!!!" screams Gene.

Gene buckles, spitting up blood, just like he does in concert!

"Uuuurgh..." he moans.

Tommi clings affectionately to Jason, who leans against a nearby wall.

"Jason! Lover, are you okay? I'm so sorry!"

"You're sorry? Tommi, you got *shot*, for cryin' out loud! If you weren't cybered-up, you'd be bleeding all over the sidewalk!"

"I know, but I dragged you down here, and—"

Tommi's kissing at his neck, and prying at his pants.

"No prob. I agreed to come, you can't blame yourself."

"Jason...you're so *brave*..."

"Um, Tommi...are you sure this is such a good idea? I mean—"

She has him pressed against the wall, pulling down her half-shirt, allowing her gorgeous bosom to spill out. One of her legs is wrapped around his hips.

"Why not? There's nobody around. Nobody breathing, anyway."

"Well, uh..."

She yanks his face down into her cleavage, sandwiching him, her head tilted back slightly.

"...okay—umfff!!!"

"Mmmmm..." she moans.

From a nearby rooftop, we see Tylyn, parked on her bike, watching, as Tommi molests Jason in the alley.

On her face, as she smiles slightly.

(A small black square might denote a passage of time at this point...)

Tommi and Jason hover over a long warehouse, which is surrounded by a tall chain-link fence. Various crates are stacked around it. It appears to be deserted.

"So you think she's here?" asks Tommi.

"Yeah," he answers, looking at the open datacomm strapped to his left forearm. "This is one of Tyler's warehouses, and it hasn't been used in a quite a while. It's still got a hook-up to the corporate headquarters, so if Jeffries were trying to hack in, she might try from this location."

Tommi and Jason continue to survey the facility.

"Why do you think she might try to break into Tyler's computers?" he asks.

"Well, it doesn't look like Jeffries took off just because she was a captive. She seems to have left because she was afraid of this project Tyler's so excited about. I've got a hunch she'd like to take it down remotely, if she can."

"Okay. Can you read what kind of surveillance might be in place?"

Close on Tommi's eyes, where we see the vague patterning of circuitry against them.

"Just a sec..." she says.

Over the warehouse are a number of criss-crossing beams.

"I see an infrared grid in place. There appear to be some fairly big gaps in it, though."

"Good. Let's set down."

Tommi's bike is parked in the background as they stand by an outside door. Jason has the wall-mounted keypad linked to his datacomm, which he's typing on. Tommi has a gun drawn.

"How's it coming?"

"Piece 'a cake. Just a second...got it!" (**KLICK!!!**)

Tommi leads as they enter; she's surveying the warehouse, which is rather dark, and mostly empty, with the exception of a few scattered crates. Off to the right is a wall and a door, leading to offices.

"See anything?", he asks.

"No," she answers. "I've scanned the whole spectrum. It's clean. Not even motion sensors."

They enter, walking toward the office door.

"Jason, stay here for a second. I'm going ahead and checking things out."

"Okay. Just be careful."

Tommi cracks the door a bit, peering in.

Now with the door more widely open, she sees Anna Jeffries seated in the foreground, VR glasses on her face and a pair of articulated gloves on her hands. She's waving them around before a monitor.

"Hmmm...can't get to it that way...damn firewalls..." murmurs Jeffries.

Tommi pulls Jeffries up from the chair, the goggles falling from her face. Her arm is under Jeffries' bosom, hiking it up substantially. Jeffries' back is arched as well, making this an all-around cool shot. Tommi is holstering her pistol with her other hand.

"Gotcha!" says Tommi.

"OH!!!" exclaims Anna.

Tommi's got Anna close, her cheek against Jeffries'.

"Okay, Miss Jeffries, we've got some talking to do.

"Jason, it's clear, you can—"

"Do nothing," answers an off-panel voice.

Now in the room is Tylyn, holding Jason helpless, her "electro-hand" gripping his throat. He looks fairly displeased.

"Twice in one night," he says. "Sorry, Tommi."

"Now that I've got your attention," says Tylyn, a slight energy discharge crackling from around her hand, "unless you want your boytoy here permanently toasted, I recommend you let my friend go."

Tommi is still holding Anna as she speaks.

"Relax, okay?" Tommi says. "Don't hurt him. We aren't here to fight."

"I'd like to believe you," says Tylyn.

Tommi opens her arms, releasing Anna.

"You can," she says. "I'm not lying. I'm just here to talk."

Tylyn pulls her arms away from Jason as well.

"That's more like it," says Tylyn. "Now that things are a bit more civil, let's make introductions." She then adds, "You first."

Anna has rushed to Tylyn's side, and is nestled against her. Imply that there's a lot more to this relationship than we've seen thus far with this clinch. Jason stands beside Tommi, rubbing his throat.

"I'm Tommi Gunn, and this is my partner, Jason Hooks. I was hired by Tyler Dynamics to find Anna Jeffries and bring her back. But don't worry, that's not what I'm here to do."

"I see. My name is Tylyn, and as you already know, this is Anna Jeffries. I'm Tyler's personal bodyguard, and I know all about your assignment. I was following you."

Tommi and Jason are a trifle surprised.

"I guess I'm confused," says Tommi. "You know how badly Tyler wants Jeffries back. If you work for him, and knew where she was...why didn't you bring her in?"

"Simple. I'm the one who broke her out."

More discussion.

"You aren't doing much to clear things up," says Tommi.

"That's understandable. Let me explain."

Rounded corners in these panels will denote that we're flashing back. We see Anna standing in a lab full of monitors and banks of machinery, wearing a white lab smock. Tylyn is with her, shaking her hand; she's wearing a form-fitting, black, sleeveless jumpsuit (unzipped to show off some cleavage) and matching tight, glossy, tall boots.

"Anna is a foremost researcher in artificial intelligence, and has been retained by Tyler for around four years now. I was assigned to be her bodyguard, and I befriended her."



Another flashback, as Tylyn and Anna are standing close, speaking earnestly.

"As she got deeper into her project, Anna became concerned about it, and shared some details with me. It was called *Datastorm*, and it's implications were frightening. Trust me, given some of the things I've done, that's no easy feat."

We're back in the warehouse.

"It was simple enough to break her out of there, given what I know about the complex," adds Tylyn. "I hated to do it—I have *some* company loyalty, after all—but what Tyler intends can't be permitted."

"So what's so scary about this 'Datastorm' project, anyway?"

Anna speaks.

"Datastorm is a self-modifying computer virus of my design, she says. "It uses cutting edge artificial intelligence to analyze the operating system of whatever computer it's introduced to, and determine the fastest way to render it inoperative.

"Previously, viruses had to be tailored for specific machines, due to incompatibilities in the hardware. But Datastorm can overcome that limitation, and halt the operations of any system it meets."

Rounded panels, as we get dire projections of disasters to come. We start with a shot of hovercars colliding all over the place, and spinning out of the sky, into buildings, and exploding.

"The effects would be unimaginable. Within a day or two, most of the worlds systems would collapse. Traffic control computers would cease operation, resulting in collisions and destruction."

Another prophetic shot, as a panicked surgical team loses all power to their laser scalpels and support equipment.

"Power facilities would lose their ability to generate and direct electricity. This would leave hospitals, nurseries, and homes without energy."

Yet another shot, as satellites from orbit blaze away at surface targets with missiles and lasers.

"Cut off from their providers, corporate weapons satellites, programmed to counterstrike independently, would wreak mass destruction on presumed enemies. The snowball effect would mean the deaths of millions."

We're back in the warehouse. Anna has an urgent look.

"This can't be permitted to happen!", she says. "Tyler must be stopped!"

"Wait, I don't get it," says Jason. "Why would Tyler do something so destructive when *he* would lose his computer systems, too?"

"I can answer that one," says Tylyn. "The moment before Datastorm is visited on the world, Tyler intends to close off their systems and weather the aftereffects. When the dust settles..."

Tommi smiles slyly.

"...Tyler has the only operational computers on the planet, with his infrastructure nearly intact," says Tommi. "Instant monopoly."

"Exactly," says Tylyn.

Tommi addresses Anna.

"With you out of the picture, isn't Tyler screwed?"

"Not necessarily. I'm afraid I left note files behind that could be deciphered and used to complete the project, given time. He hasn't discovered them yet, or you wouldn't have been hired to find me."

Tommi addressed Tylyn.

"That settles it, I guess," says Tommi. "We'll have to go in and delete those files, and fuck up his labs beyond all recognition. You could help there."

"Easier said than done," answers Tylyn. "He isn't aware that I broke Anna out, but if I start poking around, he'll get suspicious."

Tommi has an evil grin on her face.

"Not necessarily," she answers, caressing Anna under her chin. "He won't suspect a thing...if he gets what he's looking for."

Anna splutters, "I-I don't understand."

"Don't worry, hon. I've got a plan," she answers. "C'mon, everybody--there's somebody I want you to meet."

The gang is arranged around Matt's lab, as Tommi stands before him, holding up her jacket and examining the hole in the back. He's rubbing his chin thoughtfully.

"I'd like to say I'm surprised," he says, "but given who we're dealing with, I know better. This project would mean the end of the world as we currently know it.

"It's imperative they be stopped."

"Our thoughts exactly," answers Tommi.

Matt looks over at the sensor couch Tommi used in the first issue, where Anna Jeffries lies, wearing a lacy thong and nothing else. Small, articulated arms are focusing penlight-type probes on her, highlighting parts of her body in interesting ways with lighted circles.

"As for your infiltration plan," he says, "it would be terribly expensive to implement, but given the nature of the threat, it seems warranted."

"I'm glad you agree," she answers. "And don't worry about the cost. I think we can recoup that, and then some."

Tommi is helping Anna out of the sensor couch.

"This seems very risky," says Anna. "Are you sure there's no way to do this remotely, via computer?"

"Miss Jeffries, were that possible, my associate Jason would have done it an hour ago. When he tells you it can't be done, it can't be done."

Tylyn is standing next to them. Tommi gently holds Anna's chin in her hand.

"So that settles it. We go with your plan."

"Yes. And I'm confident we'll be able to infiltrate his facilities..."

Tommi smiles menacingly at Anna. She's got a cute little concerned pout.

"...by giving him *exactly* what he wants."

Roderick Tyler has Miss Warner across the conference room table, with her blouse open and skirt missing (she wears white panties with flower print), and is variously groping her. She has her legs hiked up inside of his arms, her ankles on his shoulders. He's not wearing his shirt.

"So, Miss Warner...would you be so kind as to read that interoffice memo to me again?"

"I'd be delighted," she says.

"*Incoming message for Roderick Tyler,*" chimes a voice from nearby.

He makes no effort to move from his current location.

"Source?" he asks.

"*The caller is identified as 'Tommi Gunn'.*"

"Splendid! I'll receive it."

Tommi appears on the monitor.

"Miss Gunn! You have good news, I hope."

"Yeah. I've tracked Jeffries down, and I can bring her to you."

"Delightful! When can we arrange this?"

"Tomorrow. I'll be sending her over with somebody. But first...there's the little matter of payment."

Miss Warner is examining her fingernails as they speak.

"Completely understood. Please, transmit your required sum to my financial division, and they're cleared to approve payment at once.

"Just understand that should you attempt to take the money and run..."

"I'm not that stupid, Tyler. Don't worry about it. You may rest assured that tomorrow at this time..."

Close on Tommi's face, as she strikes a deadly serious expression.

"Anna Jeffries will be back in your hands."

***Next issue: Impossible Mission!!!***

