

# Continuity #1 (one-shot)

## Script

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### Preliminary Note

Let me begin with a note about the descriptions I give for the art. If you've ever read any scripts by Alan Moore or Neil Gaiman, they include (at least all the ones I've seen) notes along the following lines: "I write a pretty full script, for the most part. Having said that, it's a guide: if you see a way to improve it, make it work better, then go for it. You're the artist, after all." (Gaiman, *Calliope* script); "...none of this rambling junk is sacred. If there's stuff that doesn't work visually or that you think would work better another way then just go ahead and do it. I only put in all this laborious detail so you'll have an idea of the effect that I'm after. If you have a better way or a more practical way to achieve it then that's fine by me. For fuck's sake don't be intimidated by it, and please sling in all the ideas and suggestions that you want." (Moore, *From Hell* script).

I certainly heartily echo those sentiments. I would very much hope that I would even if other writers hadn't done so first: the point here is to make the best comic we can, and while I have some ideas on how that might work, you might have better ones -- "You're the artist, after all" -- and I'd hate to see those get lost. But even if I *wouldn't* have said that anyway, how can I not? I mean, *Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman*, arguably the two best comics writers in the business, say that their directions aren't sacred. So how could I say any less?

And I don't. I'm going to write down how I see the comic. If you see it better, hallelujah. (This includes, really, anyone reading this who is simply reading it and visualizing it in your head. But throughout the script "you" is, obviously, addressed to an artist who is actually drawing the comic.)

### Cover

The cover image is a small room in a boarding house (the same that will be the setting for the main story inside). In the back of the room (that is, towards the upper-right part of the cover) we see a young man (Jack a.k.a. Conflagration), perhaps in his early twenties. He is sitting on the corner of a well-made bed, holding a costume loose in his hands. In front of him is a closed closet door, with a full-length mirror on it. The man looking both at the costume and, beyond it, at the mirror. In the mirror, rather than an accurate reflection of the scene before us, we see the man actually wearing the costume, perhaps in the same pose that he has in real life, or (even better, if it can be made to work visually) in a heroic pose. The costume itself is, deliberately, pretty standard superhero fare: a skintight costume covering all but the eyes and jaw, in a standard two-color scheme, say white and gold, one being the base color, the other being the color of gloves,

boots, belt, insignia, etc. The insignia is a starburst or flame of some sort, to go with his name and power.

Behind the man, in the front of the room (that is, towards the lower-left part of the image) is another man, watching the first. This second man (The Traveler) is sitting in a chair. We are looking over his shoulder, so that all we see is his shoulder, an arm, the back of his head. So far as we can see, he is dressed all in black: black clothes, black mask. He is a brooding, ominous presence, one that the brighter and sunnier (though pensive) man he watches is utterly unaware of.

On the floor between them is the shadow of The Traveler, stretching out toward Jack... except that, instead of an ordinary shadow, we see, as a simple, shadow-colored silhouette, a collage of the incidents described on the 10th and 11th pages of the comic (or perhaps just one of those incidents): The Traveler preventing the rise of the heroes and villains of entire world. These are simply done, cut-out style, and shaped so as to conform (in their overall layout) to the shape of The Traveler's shadow, as if someone had set up a latticework to cast them that way: the point is that The Traveler's shadow metaphorically includes these incidents: Conflagration is being physically watched by The Traveler, but the incidents that are shadowing his life (though he doesn't know it yet) are the ones these shadows suggest.

And, in the end, if this shadow idea doesn't work well visually then it (like the mirror image that shows Conflagration in costume when he, standing before it, is simply holding it up) isn't essential. The cover could simply be Conflagration holding his costume and The Traveler watching him, his shadow cast between them. But I think that, if it works, the other way would be both cooler and more meaningful.

Incidentally, remember all that stuff I said a minute ago about if-you-see-a-better-way-to-do-it-please-do-so? There may be a place where it is more applicable than the cover image, but if so I can't think of it. More than anything else in the comic, the cover is a *purely* visual experience. Further, its point is to "sell" the comic (if only in the sense of enticing a reader to go ahead and read something we're offering for free); perhaps what I just suggested might not work at all. So do what you think works, as long as it's a good cover. I'd argue strongly against a standard, boring, here's-a-person-pose that so many comics are doing these days because, well, it's standard and boring and as such won't attract anyone's eyes or sell anyone on anything apart from the idea that we're standard and boring. But if you can think of something *more* interesting, *more* unusual, in short, *cooler* than what I described: go for it.

### **Page One**

Ten panel page, based on an even 12-grid. What we have is a basic, even 12-grid, save that the first two panels on the second tier are merged into a single panel, and the final two panels in the fourth tier are likewise merged. In other words, it looks like this:

1	2	3
4		5
6	7	8
9	10	

### Panel One

We are in a small boarding-house room. (We may not be able to see the entire room in this first panel, but I'm going to describe it for reference.) It's plain, with little decoration and few personal items. Our viewpoint is from the wall of the room opposite the entrance door, the wall with the sole window in the room (which we can't see, obviously, but it may have lighting effects you want to take into account). Against the wall with the window (where, again, we probably can't see it) is an armchair, under (or slightly to one side of) the window. On the opposite wall are two doors: one on the left, which leads to the hall, the other on the right, leading to a closet. On the latter door is a full-length mirror. On the right side of the room, against the wall, is a crisply-made bed, its head towards us. On the left side of the room is a dresser, a small table or desk with another chair (this one quite plain, a simple wooden thing) and another door (to a bathroom). The entire effect is dreary and solitary.

This panel is basically a medium shot of a person: this is JACK (a.k.a. CONFLAGRATION), one of the two main characters in our story. Jack is sitting on the edge of the bed nearest the closet, wearing something basic like briefs and a T-shirt (since he's about to put on another outfit). He is gearing himself up for something: a bit sorrowful, perhaps, but determined. He's about to cross the Rubicon, alter his life forever, and he knows it.

No dialogue.

### Panel Two

Same angle as before. Jack has now stood up and opened the closet; he is getting a costume out: his Conflagration costume. This is the first time he is putting it on. What we are witnessing (although this is simply implicit in the images, we won't spell it out in dialogue until a page or two down the line) is the archetypal moment in a standard superhero origin: having discovered his powers, Jack has made himself a costume, and he is about to Don His Costume For the First Time. To repeat what I said in describing the cover image: the costume itself is deliberately standard superhero fare: a skintight costume covering all but the eyes and jaw, in a standard two-color scheme, say white and gold, one being the base color, the other being the color of gloves, boots, belt, insignia, etc; the insignia is a starburst or flame of some sort, to go with his name and power.

No dialogue.

### Panel Three

Same angle as before. Jack has closed the closet door and is now once again sitting down on the bed. Now, however, he is holding the costume up (by its two shoulders), so that it hangs limply down. He is examining it, preparing himself for the Momentous Act of Donning It.

No dialogue.

### Panel Four

This is the first wide one. The angle here is pulled back slightly so we can see almost the entire room. Jack is to the far right of the panel; the empty arm chair is to the far left of it. But basically this is more or less the same angle and image as the previous panel: the only difference here is that we can now see more of it, as if the third panel were simply the right half an image and now we can see the whole thing.

Jack has probably stood up by this point, and is removing his shirt. The costume has been laid on the bed.

No dialogue.

### Panel Five

A trunk shot of Jack pulling the main part of his costume over his now-bare trunk. His head is in that awkward place that it always finds when pulling a shirt on where it just slightly sticks on the neck so the shirt muffles the face.

No dialogue.

### Panel Six

A close-up shot of one of Jack's gloved hands pulling the other glove on.

No dialogue.

### Panel Seven

A shot from a slightly low angle, up into the mirror, so that (save for an edge of the door, and possibly a bit of the real bed or a bit of Jack's foot sticking into the edge of the frame) the panel essentially *is* what we see in the mirror. Jack has stood up so that he can pull on his boots: his body is shown full-figure in the mirror, almost entirely dressed: no mask yet, but otherwise he's in costume. He has a boot on one foot: the other is lifted slightly

off the floor as Jack forces his foot into it. In the bottom left of the panel, we can see the reflection of the empty arm-chair against the far wall.

No dialogue.

#### Panel Eight

Same angle. Jack has now almost donned his costume: as the final step, he's just pulling on the mask. His full body is again framed in the image. As before, in the bottom-left of the mirror, we can see a reflection of the armchair. But this time, all of a sudden, someone is sitting in it: this is THE TRAVELER, the other main character in the story. He is sitting calmly, as if he's been there watching Jack dress the entire time, just waiting for him (although in fact he hasn't been there until this instant).

The Traveler dresses all in black, a stark contrast to the gold-and-white brightness of Jack's Conflagration costume. Further, for the most part, he dresses in ordinary clothes: a button-down shirt, slacks, a belt, a trench coat loose and open over all of that, standard-looking shoes -- but all sooty black. (If the all-black costume doesn't work visually, then just try a mix of dark, plain, somber colors -- dark grays or browns.) *Under* his clothes, however, The Traveler wears a skin-tight, all-black costume: of course this only shows with his hands, which are covered in sheer black gloves, and his face, covered in a black mask. I envision this as a full-face mask (i.e. no holes, like Spiderman, not Batman), perhaps with two white spots to mark his eyes but otherwise a full, featureless, all-black mask. But a full-feature mask such as this might not work insofar as it would block us from sufficiently showing any emotion in The Traveler. I think it might -- artists manage to make Spiderman work, after all; and for the most part The Traveler is a pretty calm, in-control guy -- but it's really your call. If you think it *isn't* working, then lessen the mask as much as you need to -- instead of white spots where the eyes should be, there could be holes in the otherwise-solid-black mask to show the actual eyes; you could do an eyes-and-chin-free version, à la Batman or Captain America; or even an around-the-eyes only mask, such as Eisner's Spirit wears. Your call.

No dialogue.

#### Panel Nine

Same angle. Jack is now in costume as Conflagration. He hasn't yet noticed The Traveler: he is busy admiring himself in the mirror: he is holding out one of his hands, where a wisp of white flame plays about his fingertips. (Jack's superpower involves flame: he can shoot hot bursts of flame out of his hands, and probably do other things with it too although we won't show anything else specifically.) The Traveler hasn't moved: he is waiting, calmly. But he speaks: the dialogue balloon probably should point off-panel, since it is The Traveler (and not his reflected image, which is of course all we see) speaking. Further, it should be on the far, lower-right of the panel if at all possible, to indicate that it is spoken at the tail end of the events depicted in the image: i.e. Jack is admiring himself when suddenly he hears a voice from over his shoulder.

THE TRAVELER  
All dressed?

Panel Ten

The second wide one. This is the same shot as panel four -- indeed, that was the purpose of panel four, to contrast Jack's isolation in an empty room with the sudden claustrophobic feeling when the room has two people in it. So we see everything in its same place, save for the people.

Jack has, at this point, whirled around, startled by The Traveler's voice: ideally the panel itself will show some motion (with motion lines or blur or however you want to do it). The Traveler, meanwhile, hasn't moved (although of course we're seeing him from a different angle, from his left rather than a head-on view of his mirror reflection),

JACK  
Aaaaahhh!

Page Two

This page is a standard 9-grid (three tiers of three equal-sized panels) -- although I'm not that concerned about the precise equality of the panel sizes, if you want to make one a bit bigger (and another correspondingly smaller) that's great. Nine *roughly* equal-sized panels.

(We begin two pages of dialog here, by the way -- don't worry, things get more visually interesting after that. But in these pages, as always, feel free to shift things around to make things more visually interesting -- by which I mean, you should always feel free, but it may be more *necessary* in the purely conversational pages since they are more inclined to visual boredom.)

Panel One

This is more or less the same shot as on the previous page, except that we're only seeing the Jack half of it. Jack's looking at The Traveler (who is probably off-panel, though if he's on panel that's fine too) and trying to collect himself.

JACK  
Who are --  
What --  
How'd you get in here?

Panel Two

This is a straight-on shot of The Traveler, showing him sitting in the chair, his elbows on his legs with his hands clasped under his chin. I envision this as a sort of 2/3 body shot, i.e. say from the knees up, encompassing most of the chair; but you might want to push in even tighter than that. The advantage of the former option, of course, is that it's about time we got a good look at The Traveler. But if the latter option better captures his ominously calm presence, you might do it that way. In any event, The Traveler is looking at Jack, and us, calmly, firmly.

THE TRAVELER  
I am called The Traveler.  
As for how I came to be here --  
I go where I wish.

### Panel Three

View on Jack, probably from the side, maybe from the front; probably a 2/3 body shot, possibly a tighter focus on the face. At this point, Jack remembers that he's a superhero now: sort of inwardly draws himself up. He's been challenged -- hell, invaded -- and he is going to answer in kind. His answer itself is a bit weak, perhaps, showing the slight uncertainty underlying it (he's never done this before, after all), but he's trying.

JACK  
What do you want?

### Panel Four

Wider shot, encompassing both Jack and The Traveler.

THE TRAVELER  
I'm here to warn you.  
You're going to stop.

JACK  
Stop what?

### Panel Five

Same shot as the previous panel. The Traveler is gesturing towards the costume Jack's wearing (which is basically the first time we've seen him moving).

THE TRAVELER  
That costume.  
You're about to put it on for the first time --

JACK  
How did you k--

THE TRAVELER  
But you can't. You mustn't.

#### Panel Six

Straight-on shot of The Traveler. Here I am envisioning a rather close-in view, say a head-and-shoulders framing. But whichever way you think best emphasizes the words, and the coldness of his tone.

THE TRAVELER  
You won't.

#### Panel Seven

Pull back out to a similar shot to panels four and five. Now, however, The Traveler has stood -- maybe even turned his back on Jack (since he's soliloquizing, and utterly unconcerned about anything that Jack might do to him).

JACK  
Listen, I don't know w--

THE TRAVELER  
You control flame, don't you Jack? So you're probably planning to call yourself "Human Fire" or "Starblazer" or something like that...

#### Panel Eight

Shot on Jack, probably 2/3 body shot. He's looking down at his costume. Jack is overcome by two contradictory emotions. First, he's feeling the slight sense of embarrassment that any grown-up must feel when contemplating putting on a pair of tights and calling themselves a name like "Conflagration". But second, he's also feeling discomfited: how does The Traveler *know* that he controls flame? Or that his name is 'Jack', for that matter?

JACK  
Conflagration.

#### Panel Nine

The Traveler here glances over his shoulder, nods approvingly. Jack thinks that what The Traveler's saying is condescending -- the reader probably does too -- but actually there's more respect in it than one might think. The Traveler, after all, also calls himself a funny name and dresses in a costume; the fact that he's here to keep Jack from doing likewise doesn't mean that he thinks Jack is silly for thinking of it.



THE TRAVELER  
Conflagration. Wonderful.

THE TRAVELER  
You control flame, and you think that you, Conflagration, are going to be the first ever  
real-life, honest-to-God superhero.

**Page Three**

This page is based on the standard 9-grid, save that the first two panels on the third tier are collapsed into one larger one, so that there are only eight panels. In other words, it looks like this:

1	2	3
4	5	6
7		8

**Panel One**

Shot on Jack. He's sat down on the bed again. For a moment, he gets it, he's not worried: in fact, all of a sudden, it's kind of silly. This emotion will change again in a few panels, of course, but for right now he's relieved that this is all some sort of strange quibble about priority.

JACK  
Ok, I get it. I'm not the *first*, right? *You're* the first superhero.

**Panel Two**

A fairly wide shot of The Traveler here. He may be moving back towards the chair -- he'll be sitting again by panel three -- or may still be standing, facing away from Jack, talking half to himself.

THE TRAVELER  
No.  
I'm not the first superhero.

**Panel Three**

This panel is done in silhouette. As for the view, it's either a side view of The Traveler sitting in his chair, looking at Jack sitting on the bed, or a straight-on shot of The Traveler in his chair, going fairly wide so that the chair is fully in frame with the apartment around it, the window behind him (i.e. rather wider than panel two on the previous page). I think that the straight-on, wide shot might work better, but see what you think.

THE TRAVELER

I'm the last.

#### Panel Four

Close-up on Jack: he's astonished, confused.

No dialogue

#### Panel Five

A wide shot showing them both -- perhaps from above, almost a ceiling-angle shot. They're both sitting, conversing.

THE TRAVELER

Have you ever wondered why there aren't any superheroes? Real superheroes?

JACK

I always assumed that no one got superpowers--

#### Panel Six

A close-up shot of just The Traveler's face, only half in frame.

THE TRAVELER

You got them. Why wouldn't others? Do you think you are that unique?

#### Panel Seven

Okay. This is the long one -- mainly because The Traveler says a bit more here. Again the image is on The Traveler, probably in a pretty wide shot to encompass Jack too. There are a lot of different angles that would work here, frankly -- do whichever one you think best.

THE TRAVELER

Anyway, why should it matter? You read comics as a kid. Batman didn't have superpowers. Captain America didn't have superpowers. Lots of superheroes had no powers. So why aren't there any real superheroes?

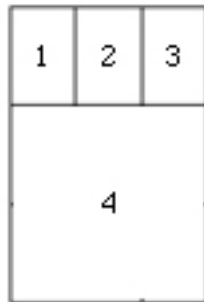
#### Panel Eight

Shot on Jack. Lots of ways you could go here: just a face shot, pull back a lot and show his entire body in the frame, etc. The point is to convey his uneasy, mixed emotions: Jack here is tense, preparing himself for a battle -- since he's clearly being challenged -- while at the same time scared of it; on top of that, however, he's genuinely curious.

JACK  
Why?

#### **Page Four**

This page too is based upon a standard nine-grid, but this time the entire bottom two tiers are collapsed into one large splash panel. In other words, it looks like this:



#### **Panel One**

Close-up on The Traveler. Probably just a head shot, or a half-head shot, or maybe just the face in frame: Jack is riveted now, he's focusing on The Traveler, hypnotized by his words, by the eyes swallowed up in the black mask; and we focus with him.

THE TRAVELER  
Because I stopped them.  
Like I'm stopping you.

#### **Panel Two**

Shot on Jack, but wider, emphasizing that he's a bit small, a bit hesitant. He's realizing that what he's saying is true -- and that if so, it has consequences. He's trying to be brave, but he's new to this, and it's hard.

JACK  
Sounds more like you're a *supervillain*.

#### **Panel Three**

Again a close-up on The Traveler, yet even more so than in panel one: now just the eyes, maybe.

THE TRAVELER  
Call me what you wish.  
But you *will* stop.

#### Panel Four (Splash Panel)

This panel involves two superimposed images, a sort of collage effect. The first is a straight-on full-body shot of The Traveler narrating: sitting in the armchair, telling us about the supers who are not using their powers. I imagine this as a sort of lighter image underlying the others. Superimposed over this -- in the various corners, so that the central image can still be seen -- are four smaller scenes depicting the four people described in the captions: a man in Kansas, a woman in China, a person in Brazil and a person in Turkey. (I image the latter two as one male, one female, but do it how you want, since any combination will (by design) fit with the captions. Obviously people would get superpowers in rough gender parity, so I am aiming for that, but we don't have to be strict about it -- these are just examples.)

I think that the scenes of the four people should fairly closely illustrate the captions, so that the man in Kansas would be literally carrying a fruit basket, the person in Brazil would be in a jogging uniform jogging along (perhaps being passed by another pair of joggers, contemptuous at his/her slowness), and the person in Turkey would be in a soccer uniform (an amateur game, nothing fancy) with their teammates stretching and warming up around them, as they look stiffly on. If we *don't* do this, I fear it won't be clear what these are pictures of at all. But if, looking at it, you think that so close a match between the words and visuals is unnecessary, then you might show the people doing slightly different (but still distinctly everyday) things. See what it looks like on the page. But I'd lean towards a close illustration, here.

The woman in China, obviously, is described in sufficiently non-specific terms that she might be doing anything. But perhaps it'd be best if she was doing something in which mindreading would be an obviously useful skill while looking slightly puzzled or helpless to emphasize that she is not, in fact, reading minds. Playing a game might work (mahjong, maybe, although I don't know enough about it to say if it has 'secrets' in the way that, say, most card games keep their hands secret).

Part of the clarity in this drawing will be carried by the colors: I think that The Traveler should be subdued -- possibly distinctly lighter, even done just as a line drawing; or you could go the opposite way and show him shadowed, a picture heavy in browns or blacks or blues. The four scenes from everyday life, in contrast should be more strongly, brightly colored, making the relationship between them clear. Anyway, the point is to distinguish them.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Right now, somewhere in Kansas, there's a man who could raise a mountain above his head who never lifts anything heavier than a fruit basket.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

There's a woman in China who can read minds, but has only done so once.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

There's someone in Brazil who can run faster than the speed of sound who never does more than a plodding jog.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

And someone else living in Turkey whose body can stretch and distort itself like a piece of rubber who won't even do warm-up stretches before a soccer match to keep from slipping up.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

They all live without their powers. All live normal, everyday, mundane lives.

**Page Five**

Okay, another rather talky page here before we get back to the stranger visuals. As with most of our talking pages, this one will be based upon a standard nine-grid. Again, though, we have a collapsed panel -- this time on the second tier, again the first two panels being collapsed into a single one. That is, it looks like this:

1	2	3
4		5
6	7	8

**Panel One**

A straight-on, medium view of The Traveler -- say, from the waist up -- looking straight at the viewer. In a way, it's a bit of the image from the previous splash panel (i.e. The Traveler looks the same as he did in that image, although we are more zoomed in on him), but this time without any distractions from the other images. Just The Traveler, resolute, dictating.

THE TRAVELER

Just as you will.

THE TRAVELER  
From this moment on.

Panel Two

This shot is done from over The Traveler's shoulder, so that we see his back and head (or part of them, the room from his view, and Jack, sitting on the bed, looking at The Traveler (and, hence, at us). Jack's resolute, ready to fight for what he believes in -- but also a bit scared. His words are, of course, a challenge: but they are a challenge with a hint of uncertainty, afraid that there might actually *be* an answer to this question.

JACK  
And how exactly do you plan to stop me?

Panel Three

Same angle as the previous panel. Jack's mouth is perhaps a little open, in surprise -- not shock, not horror, just taken aback at The Traveler's answer.

THE TRAVELER  
With words.

THE TRAVELER  
I'll tell you a tale, and you'll stop.

Panel Four

This is the double-sized panel. It's a wide shot of the room so that we can see both of them. Each is sitting in silence -- The Traveler in the armchair, Jack on the bed. The Traveler is waiting, letting his words sink in. Jack is thinking about what The Traveler just said. After all, it's unsettling. Somehow it would be easier if The Traveler would just *threaten* him, since he'd know how to respond to that. But announcing that he is going to stop him with words -- particularly given his calm certainty about it -- is somehow more quietly menacing, or at least unnerving, than an outright threat would be. So Jack has to think about it.

No dialogue.

Panel Five

A similar shot -- again, encompassing both of them, although obviously it's somewhat different since it's once again a smaller panel. (*Alternatively, it could be the reverse of the shot from panels 2 & 3, looking over Jack's shoulder at The Traveler, with the room from his viewpoint.*) Having waited patiently, The Traveler adds a few words -- not impatient, just calmly moving things along. Jack is still thinking -- he can't see quite how it would hurt to listen, but he's worried that somehow it will. So he's wary. But since he

can't point to any way it would hurt -- and he isn't sure what else to do -- he agrees. At least it buys some time.

THE TRAVELER

Come, now. It can't hurt to listen.  
You want to solve everything with punches and bolts of flame?

JACK

Yeah, okay. I'm listening.

#### Panel Six

Each of the three bottom panels is a straight-on shot of The Traveler, who has again folded his hands under his chin; each one zooms in a bit. This first one, therefore, is wide -- we see the whole chair and the whole of The Traveler in it, framed neatly in the panel.

THE TRAVELER

When I grew up, there were lots of superheroes. Supervillains. Super people with a morally ambiguous status.

THE TRAVELER

Supers everywhere, of every variety.

#### Panel Seven

Again a straight-on shot, but this time tighter in: say, an upper-body shot, filling the frame, with the background being the back of the chair.

THE TRAVELER

I read about them, of course. But not like you did -- not in comics.

#### Panel Eight

Now a very close-in shot. This will either be just a head-shot, or even just an eye-shot.

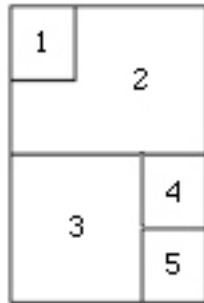
THE TRAVELER

We read about them in newspapers.

#### Page Six

Okay, this page is a little different. We have two small panels -- say, the size that they would be in a standard twelve-grid -- one in the upper-left corner, and one in the lower-right corner. The rest of the page is a large image bleeding off right onto the paper margins in every direction. I say "image", but it's actually three images running into each other, one largish one taking up the top half of the page, a second almost-as-large

one taking up the bottom-left part of the page, and a small one occurring right above the second small panel. In other words, it is going to look something like this:



I'm going to describe the three images (#2-4) as if they were panels, both to show what captions should go with what images, but also just for the sake of convenience. But again, I'm not thinking of them as (strictly speaking) panels at all, but as part of a montage of three images, with each running into each other, perhaps with pseudo-panel barriers formed by the ground (in the top image, #2 above) and buildings on the interior edges of either of the two lower images (#3 & #4 above). Of course if you think it'd work better to draw them as panels that's fine too.

(You might even consider doing this as a series of horizontal strips as is common these days, with #1 & #5 being smaller, #2 & #3 being bigger, and #4 being in-between. But I think it would work better *not* to do it this way, for a variety of reasons. First, the montage-feel will hearken back to the comics of the 60's and 70's, in a way that would work thematically, since what The Traveler is doing is describing a continuity of superhero events, of the sort depicted in comics in that period, that never really occurred. (I think that the images in panels/sections #2-4 should have a bit of retro feel anyway, as I will detail in a moment, but the layout would probably help.) Second, I'm sort of trying to save the horizontal look (and the more modern feel/layout) for a bit latter in the comic, when there will be an actual honest-to-God action sequence between The Traveler and Conflagration. And finally I think that the first option would be more interesting visually. -- But the horizontal thing *is* another option, if you strongly prefer it.)

### Panel One

In this panel, let's focus on the window behind The Traveler, so that that takes up most of the frame. In the lower-left corner, though, The Traveler's head appears (or head and shoulders) -- in shadow, since the light from the window is predominant. (The focus on the window, of course, is meant to reinforce The Traveler's words about hearing things in the distance.)

THE TRAVELER  
But more than that.

THE TRAVELER



We heard the roar of their fire in the distance.  
Heard the explosions, like bombs.

### Panel Two (i.e. Top Half of the Big Bleeding Image)

This depicts the full-on fight between a superhero group and a supervillain group. Neither exists, of course, so you'll have to -- or, as I hope you'll think of it, get to -- make them up. The whole thing, in any event, should have a slightly retro feel, like one of those big fights from a 1960's or 70's comic. Those were often very destructive -- probably just as much as the more modern, Authority-style fights -- it's just that the damage was magically whisked away between issues. So we're showing a fight like that, without the magic clean-up.

The superhero group is called the Avenging League, which is obviously a dual reference to the Avengers and the JLA. Exactly what they look like is quite flexible -- for the purposes of the comic, it doesn't really matter, except that they should look quite iconic -- in the way that all those mock-hero groups (the Squadron Supreme, the Authority, all of the various Astro City heroes, various groups Planetary encounters, etc, etc) all look vaguely like the classic superhero groups without being any of them. Unlike some of those examples, however, we don't need or want to ape any *particular* heroes here: just the general feel. Similarly the villains, the Committee of Evil, is every Brotherhood-of-Evil-(Mutants)-style supervillain group you've ever read about.

Here's what I envision for the superheroes. (We'll be seeing this group several different times, incidentally; same with the villains.) There should be a strong-man, the aforementioned man who can raise a mountain (this is, in case it isn't clear yet, an alternate timeline where the man who can raise a mountain *was* a superhero -- that's why he's here in a battle, contradicting what we said a minute ago. The other depicted heroes are *not* the same as the ones we just saw, since there are a whole lot of heroes and only one example happens to overlap.) In addition to the strong man, there should be some sort of flying character, probably shooting beams from their eyes or hands or some such; there should be a woman superhero, although probably only one or at most two since those classic groups always seemed to have precisely one woman member (Wonder Woman, Invisible Girl, the Wasp, etc.). Some sort of agility-based hero might be another classic to include, as might an archer. If you want a sixth, an equipment-based hero -- either in powered armor, or in a small vehicle with guns, or just carrying a lot of futuristic, bad-ass weaponry, would be another idea. And that should probably be enough, I'd think. But do as many as you want -- have fun with this, play around; we won't be dealing with any of these heroes individually as characters, just as a group, so all this description is more to get you started than anything else.

Three of the villains we'll be mentioning by name later, so I'll describe them by those names here. There is THE CRUSHER, a strongman character similar to the one in the Avenging League, although The Crusher is (as the villains tend to be!) uglier and larger than the parallel superhero, more clearly a monster. Then there is a smaller character, THE STRATEGIST, probably some unusual color (green or blue or something like that)

with an unusually large head. A third supervillain, THE POISONER, is thin and dresses in red and black and is shooting a deadly beam (from the eyes or the hands or something). There should be a few more, too -- a villain controlling animals of some sort maybe, insects or snakes or tigers or something, and another with a bunch of guns and grenades and so forth. And any others you want (and have sufficient space!) to throw in the mix, of course.

And, of course, the two groups are in the midst of a pitched battle, full of destructive force: throwing each other into buildings, shooting beams that miss and hit nearby cars, etc. A lot of collateral damage, in infrastructure as well as in human lives.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

One time the Avenging League fought the Committee of Evil in the middle of Manhattan.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

You know what happened?

Panel Three (i.e. Bottom-Left of the Big Bleeding Image)

This is the same location as the previous image, but later, once the battle's long over. (Close to the same shot, although you might want to pull it back a bit to show more of the scale of the devastation.) There are a lot of bodies around; the buildings are in ruins. Rescue workers are all over the place, tending the wounded, putting out fires, etc. It is, in short, a scene of utter destruction, as if a WMD went off (which, basically, is what happened.)

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Half the island was destroyed.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Twenty-two thousand people died.

Panel Four (i.e. Bottom-Right of the Big Bleeding Image, directly over panel five)

Again in Manhattan. You might do yet a third version of the location in panels two & three at yet a later time (after the rubble's been cleared away), but probably just elsewhere in Manhattan would be best. Soldiers are everywhere: there's a group of soldiers on patrol, guns drawn; other soldiers stand around on guard. A few citizens walk here and there, though only a few (they're outnumbered by the soldiers): heads down, backs bent, hurrying along under the watchful eyes of the military. One cradles a back of groceries; another leads a child by the hand, keeping them close. Overhead (if we can see overhead, it's not crucial) we see a squadron of military planes doing a flyover.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

The city was under martial law for *two years*.

### Panel Five

A close-up shot on The Traveler, say a head-and-shoulder shot. His head, however, is bowed: for the first time since he began the conversation, he is showing some genuine emotion. He's momentarily overcome with the memories he is describing, and the irony of the words he's saying. It's painful, and we see it. (This might work as a side-shot, or you could do a straight-on shot (possibly slightly off, with The Traveler to the left or right of the panel) if that seems to work better. Whatever best shows the Traveler's pain at the memory.)

THE TRAVELER  
And *that* was a victory.

### Page Seven

A page based on a standard nine-grid, with the final two panels collapsed into one larger one, i.e.:

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	

### Panel One

Okay, the first four panels on this page are the origin of The Traveler, in flashback, the first two being his gaining his superpowers, the latter two being his donning *his* costume. In this first panel, we're in a laboratory of some sort -- a physics lab, probably. The panel is a shot of a man, entirely in frame, standing in front of a large, complex machine -- something strange and science-fictiony, like you see in old Jack Kirby comics. The man is wearing a white lab coat and has his back to us (so we can't see his face or really anything of what he looks like); he's holding his hands up, shielding his eyes or perhaps his whole face from a sudden burst of heat and light. The machine is having a malfunction of some sort: and a burst of greenish or yellowish energy is exploding in the guy's face.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
It was right after that that I gained *my* superpower.  
I was sixteen.

### Panel Two

Okay, this is our first shot of the SPACE BETWEEN TIME, which we will get a much better and closer look at on pages eighteen & nineteen. But since you'll need to draw it here, here's what I think it looks like. Above all, the space should just look damn weird: perspective is off, we see things from different angles all at once. Obviously there are lots of ways to do this: you could go the surrealist route, the cubist route, the collage route -- whatever you think works best. I envision the background as black, but black with intricate designs and patterns inscribed in gold or silver -- mystical lines to give the entirety a sort of weird, outer-worldly feel. And the black may not work, of course, since The Traveler dresses in black (not in this panel, but in every other instance of the space between time that we see), in which case some other color would do -- deep red, deep blue, or something even odder than that. Another option is to go with swirls of different colors or shades, a sort of fractal pattern. The point is to contrast with the normal, linear world of life in time, and to have a consistent look so that in the number of places we see it in the comic we come to understand what we're seeing.

It is important to note that on later pages we show The Traveler moving through time by showing him outside of the panels, showing the "space between time" outside panels rather than within them -- since panels represent "time". But this is a *flashback* to his discovery, rather than an *example* of his using his power, so that this should take place within a normal panel boarder, and not outside them (as later instances of the space between time will). What we see is The Traveler -- still wearing the white lab coat from the previous panel -- drifting or swimming in the strange, perspectiveless space. He's still turned away from us so that we can't see his face properly, but now not straight-on, rather at an odd angle, as if he were floating underwater.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
I learned to travel through time.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
I found I could step into the space between time --  
The vast rippling nothingness that flows between moments,  
filling the cracks that time doesn't reach.

### Panel Three

Without being *too* obvious about it, this (and the next panel) should be a very similar scene to the first few panels of the comic, in which we saw Jack putting on his costume. The angle and framing, in any case, should be the same, and this scene also takes place in a bare room -- not the *same* bare room, it's differently furnished, but The Traveler is sitting (or standing) in front of a mirror in one of the stages of putting on a costume that we saw Jack in earlier: holding it up before putting it on, pulling it over his head, adjusting a boot -- one of those. (I think that, again, we shouldn't see The Traveler's face, so you should choose one which allows you to hide that -- but there should be several which work for those purposes, I think.) The Traveler's pose should be directly modeled on Jack's pose in the earlier panel.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

So I did what any upstanding superpowered individual does:  
I donned a costume, and went to do good.

Panel Four

This panel should be directly modeled on the ninth panel of page one. Obviously in this case there isn't someone sitting behind the central figure watching him, nor is the central figure producing flame with his fingertips. But he has now fully Donned His Costume and is admiring himself in the mirror, shot from a low angle so that we're looking up at his reflection.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

I became The Traveler.

Panel Five

Okay, for one panel we're back in the boarding house in the present -- i.e. no longer in flashback but looking at The Traveler actually narrating. We should see The Traveler fairly clearly in this panel, and should see enough of the background to be clear where and when we are, but apart from that there is a lot of leeway on how you want to do it: a close--up shot of The Traveler in his armchair, modeled on panels like the first panel on page five; a wider shot so that we see The Traveler talking to Jack, either from above or from the side; a simple side-shot -- any of those could work well.

THE TRAVELER

And the first battle I ever fought was against the storm that had engulfed my city.

THE TRAVELER

Slain my parents.  
Destroyed my home.

Panel Six

This panel shows The Traveler in the secret headquarters of the Committee of Evil. He's snooping, probably with his hands on some fancy-looking computer console (one of those ones that supervillains always seem to have that's waist-height, semicircular and doesn't look anything like an actual computer), which is in a large room filled with strange, large machines. There is an open door behind him where we can see it, and through that door, though with back turned towards us, is one of the members of the Committee of Evil who we recognize from page six.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

First I tried simply preventing the battle itself.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

The facts were easy enough to gather, slipping into the moments when people weren't looking. If anyone caught me, I'd step back and try again, this time distracting them first.

Panel Seven

Now we're in the secret headquarters of the Avenging League. Two or three members of the Avenging League are standing around, looking at a letter -- i.e. one of them is holding it, and two are standing on either side looking on. (Let's say that the strong man is holding it, one of the women is on one side and maybe the archer on the other.) If there's room, and you feel like, maybe another member or two is visible in the background.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

I left the Avenging League a letter, detailing the identities, plans and hideouts of the Committee.

Panel Eight

This is the double-sized one. This panel is similar to the large image from panel two of page six in which we saw the first incarnation of the battle. It should be clearly in a different location, with different actual fighting maneuvers going on. But the people involved are the same, doing similar if not the same things: slugging each other, shooting high-energy beams and arrows and bullets, throwing cars and smashing buildings.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

But it didn't help.

The battle still took place.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Or rather a similar battle did, six months earlier.

In Chicago.

**Page Eight**

A page based on a nine-grid, with the first two panels collapsed into one:

1		2
3	4	5
6	7	8

### Panel One

A double panel, very similar to the previous panel (and, hence, panel two of page six): again it's clearly a different city, clearly a different set of events insofar as the characters are attacking each other in different ways and doing different sorts of damage with different buildings being destroyed and different civilians running away in terror -- but, at the same time, clearly the same set of people on both sides, and, basically, clearly the same battle in all its *essential* aspects with only minor tweaks.

#### THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

A second, more detailed letter simply displaced the battle again,  
to the following summer, in London.

### Panel Two

Back in the present, again focusing on The Traveler, narrating. I see this as an extreme close-up, as if it were a follow-up to panel six on the previous page, perhaps (or the bottom tier of page five), even more zoomed in than any we've seen yet. (*Alternatively, it might be good to do a straight-on silhouette, particularly if our last silhouette had the two of them in side view.*) Probably it'll be obvious, but if we could *somehow* make sure it's clear where and when this is taking place, that'd be a good thing.

#### THE TRAVELER

I realized I would have to try something more fundamental.

### Panel Three

We're in some sort of super laboratory, the kind that supervillains use for one nefarious purpose or another. It's round, with a mezzanine walkway around the top. In the center is a vast cauldron of a bubbling green liquid, doubtless filled with eye of newt and toe of frog. A small person -- the mad scientist otherwise destined to become the Crusher -- is off to one side, looking at a readout or adjusting a lever or something. Up on the walkway we see The Traveler, holding a large round cylinder about the size of a fire extinguisher; he's pouring a dense black powder into the cauldron. It's just starting to hit the surface; at the point where the powder is coming into contact with the liquid the liquid is not bubbling, and a yellowish color is starting to spread outwards.

#### THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

So I kept the Committee from ever existing.

#### THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

I neutralized the acid that would have given super-strength to the Crusher.

### Panel Four

Night. A truck is outside a fast food restaurant at a takeout window; the driver is leaning out to pick up a burger. The angle is wide, with the focus on the back of the truck. One of the doors is open; the Traveler is stepping down from the back of the truck with a cylinder with a "warning - radiation" symbol on it.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Stole the radioactivity that would have raised the Strategist's intellect to superhuman heights.

Panel Five

We're in an empty classroom; a black widow spider is scuttling across the floor between two desks; The Traveler is about to casually crush it with his boot.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Slew the black widow spider that would have imbued the Poisoner with deadly rays.

Panel Six

We're back in the boarding house. The focus here should be on Jack: Jack is (despite himself) on the edge of his seat, listening. A lot of different angles will work here; the key is that we can see Jack well enough to see his body language and emotion (since it will change next panel). You might even decide to use a fairly distant shot, so that we can see both of the protagonists (if so: they're still sitting in the same places; The Traveler is simply narrating, his calm contrasting with Jack's excitement).

THE TRAVELER (OFF-PANEL)

And it worked. The Committee never formed.

Panel Seven

The same shot, almost precisely, except that Jack's head has dropped a bit, in disappointment at the statement that The Traveler is making.

THE TRAVELER (OFF-PANEL)

The Syndicate did instead.

Panel Eight

Okay, this is one of those slightly odd, schematic panels that you see in comics from time to time. It's not really *of* any actual scene. What it shows is two columns of three people against a plain background (i.e. a single color or pattern that isn't anywhere, just a background). The people are staring straight ahead. They're shown in full, like an action figure laid down on its back. (My sense is that that will work best with what I have in mind, but if you prefer they could all be shown with some other shot, e.g. they could be shown just in a head-and-shoulders shot; of course, whichever you choose, all six figures



should be done similarly.) The figures in the column left are three of the supervillains from the Committee of Evil: say, the Crusher, the Poisoner and one of the others from the battle scenes who is *not* the Strategist, say the gun-totting supervillain. (The point is that the three shown, like the three tales that The Traveler told in the second tier on this page, are random selections from the group, so they shouldn't be precisely the same set; I don't really care which of the three you do, but there should be partial but not complete overlap with the Crusher/Strategist/Poisoner set.) Then, in the right column, are three new characters whom we haven't seen before. Each is an analog of the one on the right. They aren't *that* similar; but the Crusher is matched with a new super-strong supervillain, the Poisoner with another supervillain with a ray-based weapon and the gun-totting supervillain with someone a bit different -- maybe a robot. I like robots.

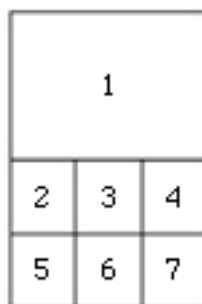
The really tricky thing is that we should somehow suggest *replacement*. I'm not sure what will work best. If it doesn't look too silly we could just have arrows pointing from each of the left figures to each of the right figures. Alternately, we could slightly blur the right side of each of the Committee figures, to show that they are fading out of existence, and slightly blur the left side of each of the members of the Syndicate, to show them fading in. Or something else to get across the idea.

#### THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Different people. Different powers. A different diabolical plan.

#### Page Nine

This page has seven panels, with the entire top tier being a single panel and then two rows of three panels each. My sense is that you might want to base the structure on a twelve-grid rather than a nine-grid, so that the top panel takes up half the page and you can really give a lot of detail to the battle scene:



But, if you prefer, you could base it on a nine-grid and have each of the tiers take up a third of the page --

1		
2	3	4
5	6	7

Or anything in-between. I'd say err on the side of making the top panel take up half the page, but obviously it's your call.

### Panel One

This is the big panel at the top of the page. It is our fourth version of the battle-scene, obviously (and also the last, incidentally). This one has more space because (just as with panel two on page six) we're showing supervillains who we've never seen before (except for the three in the schematic last panel on the previous page). In general it's another big battle scene, with lots of heroes fighting lots of villains and buildings, cars and bystanders getting destroyed all over the place by the ferocity of the battle. It should be totally clear that the superheroes are the same Avenging League we've seen before, with the same six or seven or howevermany characters that we've seen in the last three battle scenes. At the same time, it should be totally clear that the supervillains are *not* the same. Three of them we've seen on the previous page; the rest are new, although roughly analogous to the various members of the Committee of Evil (replacing characters with others of vaguely similar powers and appearances). Have fun with it, I say.

#### THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

And this time it was Los Angeles that was destroyed.

#### THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Eleven months after the first battle never took place.

### Panel Two

On this tier, we're once again back in the boarding house watching the conversation. I think we should do another zoom, not unlike the one on the bottom of page five, except this time we'll be zooming *out* -- and, probably, up. So the first image should be of just The Traveler, from a slightly upward angle -- probably just an upper-body shot, but maybe with the angle you'll get more in. The point is that we have a moderately close-in image of The Traveler narrating.

#### THE TRAVELER

So I took a step back and tried to understand what I had done wrong.

### Panel Three

Now we've zoomed out and up a bit: Jack is now visible too, still sitting on the bed listening. Now we're a bit up, and can see much of the room in the frame.

THE TRAVELER

Slowly I came to realize that supervillains were created by the superheroes themselves.

THE TRAVELER

Not any particular superheroes.

### Panel Four

Okay, two ways you could go here. One is that you might draw an extremely distant, extremely high-up angle -- from the very top of the ceiling, as it were -- so that the characters are tiny, dwarfed by the room they're in. The question is, does this look silly, raising questions of isn't-the-'camera'-bumping-the-ceiling and shouldn't-we-see-more-of-the-walls-anyway, or can you time the three zooms so as to make this work? The other way we might do this is to have the zoom go out the window (not really a zoom I suppose, since it's in a different direction -- more of a cut), so that we're looking at the wall of the boarding house and looking through (and down into) the window of the room, seeing The Traveler and Jack small and divided by the beams (?) of the windowpane. (If you go this second route, we'll probably be well able to see other windows; I'd make them dark and/or with shades drawn, so as not to distract the eye -- but if you want to draw what's in 'em go ahead (deliberately dreary, everyday scenes -- people with lots of hope and good fortune don't live in this boarding house.))

THE TRAVELER

The mere *existence* of superheroes.

### Panel Five

A burning building -- a full-out, five-alarm fire. We're at medium distance, showing a window with flames within. Coming out the window is SOARING EAGLE, a character we've not seen before (this should clearly be someone new since I don't want to give the impression that the Avenging League are the only heroes around). Soaring Eagle is a standard winged character with a blue-and-white uniform and perhaps some sort of sword or staff. Soaring Eagle is carrying several people out of the building -- say, a child cradled in one arm, with the other hand holding a mother who is in turn holding an infant. Classic Saving-The-World stuff.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

People in tights trying to save the world --

### Panel Six

Now we again see the Soaring Eagle, but this time fighting his/her arch-nemesis, DRAGONFLY (again a character we haven't yet seen). Dragonfly is also a winged character, with less eagle-like and more insect-like wings, and a costume of green and black. Dragonfly and Soaring Eagle are grappling in mid-air. Behind them a crowd of bystanders look on in fascination and fear.

#### THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

-- gave rise to other people who worked to destroy it.

#### Panel Seven

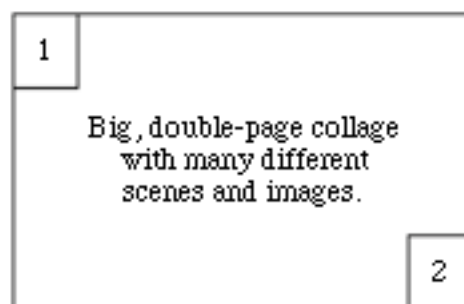
Back to the boarding house, back to a straight-on shot of The Traveler: I think that again we should alter the angle a bit, so that The Traveler's head-and-shoulders are slightly to the lower left of the frame, and the window behind him is in the upper right... but not to such an extreme extent as in the first panel on page six -- i.e. somewhat closer in than that: I think that the Traveler's head should take up at least half the frame here, it's just that putting it off-center might make for a more interesting visual. If you like, you could draw the moon through the window behind him, just to play off the word "cycle(s)"; but it's not important.

#### THE TRAVELER

I had to stop the cycle of violence.

#### Pages Ten - Eleven

With the exception of a small-sized panel in the upper left-hand corner of page ten, and a similar small-sized panel in the lower right-hand corner of page eleven, this entire two page spread is a gigantic collage of many scenes.



I'm going to leave the layout up to you -- it all depends on how things work visually -- and just describe the scenes as I envision them. I think there should be at least eleven or twelve images all mixed together in the space. But you might do a lot more if you like, simply devising scenes parallel to the ones I have described. It all depends on how busy you want to make the image, what you feel like drawing, etc.

#### Panel One

This is the panel in the top left corner of page ten. It's small and simple -- just a basic shot (a straight-on shot or a side view or any angle in-between), since the attention will obviously be on the big damn collage spread over the two pages. The corners are just to provide grounding for the collage.

#### THE TRAVELER

I went back and stopped *any* superpowered beings from ever coming to be.

#### Big Damn Collage on Pages Ten & Eleven

The collage here shows The Traveler in his activities over the years: preventing the existence of an entire world of superheroes and supervillains. The images should be as iconic as possible: the point is to remind people of all the superhero/villain origins they've read, and then see them weeded out. The number of such scenes, their placement, their order, are all in the end up to you; what I describe below is more of a minimum than anything else. I have also tried to tag the image descriptions to specific captions.

Early on -- near the top-left of the image where people will see it right off the bat as their eyes move across the page -- we should show The Traveler standing beside a crib, holding a small, glowing green stone. We're not literally showing the scene, of course, but this might make our readers imagine The Traveler using kryptonite on the infant Superman so that he never gets his powers. This image should be accompanied by the first caption.

Another image: an alley, and The Traveler attacking (perhaps seizing from behind in a headlock or something of the sort) a mugger holding a gun on a young couple and their small son. Again, we have the thematic inversion of an iconic superhero origin, Batman in this case. This image should be accompanied by the second caption.

Then three more images; the third caption should accompany one these three images. In the first, The Traveler is seen in a high-tech lab or even a hanger, standing alongside a spacecraft of some primitive sort; he is ripping out some wires or stealing a piece of machinery or something of the sort. (This puts our readers in mind of those superhero origins involving outer space (the Fantastic Four, for instance), and imagining what it'd be like if they never happened.)

In the second, we see The Traveler loading some radioactive waste into a container of some sort. This undoes a scenario parallel to all sorts of superhero origins (largely silver-age Marvel stuff), from Spiderman to Daredevil and beyond.

In the third, we see The Traveler holding another glowing stone -- a different color, red perhaps. This is a thematic reference to all the superheroes who got their powers mystically (the Green Lantern, Thor, etc.)

Now, in addition to those five, I think we should see at least another three or four, probably even more, instances of The Traveler sabotaging the arising of Superpowers. In each case, we should see that he is getting there (of course!) just in the nick of time. And whichever superhero or supervillain origins you wish to parody/pastiche here is fine with me. Since so far we've done mostly heroes, a few supervillain origins might be good -- although in my experience they're less iconic. But there are a lot of others to choose from here -- Hulk and Wonder Woman come to mind just as examples. Then there are non Marvel/DC heroes and villains to consider: it might be good to throw in some of those as well. The one that comes centrally to mind here is Tom Strong, but I am sure there are others -- from the Wildstorm universe, from still other superhero universes I am not thinking of -- that would work well. The point is to sweep up the entire superhero genre in all its manifestations to as great an extent as possible. Two of these images should be accompanied by the fourth and fifth captions.

Mixed in with these images is one other image, without an accompanying caption, smuggled in as if it were simply one among many; but it is a very distinctive and important image. This image should show The Traveler shooting someone in the back. The Traveler is using a pistol of some sort; the other person does not look threatening in any way -- just an ordinary person who never saw it coming. The point of this image is that while The Traveler *largely* tries peaceful methods -- after all, we've seen him go to great lengths to prevent the rise of superpowers without harming anyone (unless the prevention or removal of a superpower is considered harm), he *is* willing to kill. There's no caption to point this out; it's simply there visually. But it is an important piece of visual information to get across. (I also think there should be *only* one example of The Traveler killing someone to prevent superpowers, since it *is* a last resort with him.)

So now we've done nine or ten images, accompanied by five captions. Note that I certainly don't think that the caption-less images should strictly follow the caption-bearing images; rather I think it would work better to have them mixed in *with* them, spacing the captions out across more of the two-page spread. so that the eye reads the captions in order, mixed in with a lot of other images, so that the reader is a bit overwhelmed by the sheer variety of what they see as well as by the level of interference that The Traveler has engaged in.

By this point I think we've covered at least three-quarters of the available space. The images at the bottom-right of the collage (or wherever the reader would naturally read them last) should show The Traveler dealing with people whose superpowers he cannot prevent: that is, him talking them out of (read: threatening them out of) ever using their superpowers. Two of these will probably be sufficient, but you might want to do three or even four -- it depends on how busy you've decided to make the rest of the collage. The sixth caption should accompany one of these two images. At least one of these images should depict The Traveler talking with one of the four superpowered individuals who we met on page four -- which one doesn't really matter, but The Traveler is simply speaking with them. For some reason I imagine that particular image to be outside (whether in Kansas, China, Brazil or Turkey) -- probably because it strikes me as easier to indicate (at least suggest) the location that way. The other of these images (if you are only doing

two) should be indoors, yet another bare room that is not the bare room in which most of our story occurs nor the bare room we saw on page seven in the origin of The Traveler, but is similar to both. This image should show The Traveler talking to someone who is *not* one of the four people we meet on page four -- so that we don't think that those four are the only ones in their category. I imagine them talking in a bare room, probably in an angle which is parallel to one you've used before, to indicate that the story we're reading is only one of many instances in which almost the same events have occurred. (If you decide to do more than two of these images, then you could either do more than one of the four we've met before, or simply random images of The Traveler in conversation -- at a bar or on an almost-deserted train late at night or wherever looks good.)

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
[COLLAGE CAPTION #1]

I started with the very first hero -- made sure his powers were neutralized when he was still a child.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
[COLLAGE CAPTION #2]

I saved parents from being slain to prevent vigilantes from being created.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
[COLLAGE CAPTION #3]

I sabotaged experimental space-flights,  
transported radioactivity to safety,  
destroyed mystical gems.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
[COLLAGE CAPTION #4]

In most cases I could simply prevent the powers from occurring, and therefore end the costumed career before it began.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
[COLLAGE CAPTION #5]

I went through time, the sharpest editor you can imagine, red-penning even the beginnings of any superhero or supervillain.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
[COLLAGE CAPTION #6]

In those cases where, for one reason or another, I couldn't stop the powers from occurring, I simply talked to their possessor and made sure they would never use them.

## Panel Two

This is the panel in the bottom right corner of page eleven. Again, keep it simple, as it's just grounding the collage in the reality of the narration. The image I have in mind is a precise reverse of the image in panel one: that is, a shot of Jack that is from the same

angle as that shot of The Traveler was. Jack is just stunned from the cumulative weight of the stories that The Traveler has just told him.

THE TRAVELER (OFF-PANEL)

As I am now doing with you.

### **Page Twelve**

Time for another conversation page. This one will have nine panels in eight unevenly-divided tiers. The first tier will be a full-width single panel; the second tier will have three equally-sized panels. The third tier will have three panels, with the central one being considerably wider than the outer two; the fourth will have one long and then one short panel. In other words, something like this:



The precise dimensions are up to you (whatever looks good), but -- as I will explain in describing each panel -- there is a method to my madness as far as the rough proportions go -- trying to get the feel of the pacing and emotion of the conversation across. (As always, if you can think of a way to do the same thing better, please do it.)

#### **Panel One**

So this is the top tier, a single panel stretching all the way across the page. It's a fairly wide shot, focusing on The Traveler (showing him either from the waist up or the entire chair), but showing him swallowed up with empty space to either side. My hope is that the width of the panel, and the smallness of The Traveler within it, will emphasize the slowness and deliberateness of his words; and will add to the overall sense of menace.

THE TRAVELER

You will destroy your costume. You will never again use your flame powers for any reason.

THE TRAVELER

You will lead an ordinary, mundane life and die an ordinary, mundane death.

#### **Panel Three**



Now, in the second tier, we have three rather close-up shots of Jack, all the same, all in a row, to emphasize the passage of time in a different way: a long silence, drawing out his obvious thought process. So we're close on Jack: he looks nervous, maybe looking at his hands, maybe biting his lip, maybe looking to one side or bowing his head. He's processing, thinking. This wasn't in the manual; he doesn't know how to think of about it, what to make of what The Traveler has just told him, is asking him to do.

No dialogue.

#### Panel Four

Same panel: drawing out the thought here by repeating it. Adding another beat to the time.

No dialogue.

#### Panel Five

Same panel yet again, to emphasize both how long this took, but also how what he is saying is in some sense *part* of the silence: swallowed up by it; the same ruminations having produced both the lengthy pause and the question that Jack asks here.

JACK  
What if I refuse?

#### Panel Six

Another tier of three. To break up the page visually, and to make the implied sense of time work, I think that the first and third panels on the tier (i.e. this panel (panel six), and panel eight) should be shorter, with a wider central panel.

This first panel, panel eight, is a straight-on shot of The Traveler: however close or far you think you need to make it work, but I imagine that it's almost identical to Panel One with the edges shaved off, i.e. similar angle and size, but smaller, tighter.

THE TRAVELER  
You won't.

#### Panel Seven

This is another silent panel of Jack thinking: but here I think we should pull back to show more of the room, including The Traveler watching him. I think Jack is a bit more bowed than in the previous tier: crushed by fear and hesitation and doubt. The Traveler is watching him, an ominous presence, still ringing with the words in the previous panel.

No Dialogue

### Panel Eight

Now The Traveler speaks again. Shot on The Traveler, who has stood up: stretching his legs after all this time. He's walked over to the side of the room, leaning on the dresser, speaking conversationally: now he's not being ominous, he's just *informing*. I see this as a full-body shot, entirely in frame.

THE TRAVELER

But if you had refused, I would have killed you.

### Panel Nine

Now we're on the bottom tier, and this first panel on it takes up most of it, stretching across (let's say) three-quarters of the page. It's a wide-angle shot of the two of them talking. The Traveler is still standing; Jack is still sitting (which nicely emphasizes the power relationship here, I think.)

JACK

Would have? But --

THE TRAVELER

Time is not linear for me.

I would have done it long ago.

THE TRAVELER

But I haven't--

Since I know that you will, in the end, do as I am asking.

THE TRAVELER

I've stopped more supers than you can imagine from every taking up the cape.

### Panel Ten

Far to the right side of the page, a thin, narrow panel, focusing in on The Traveler. I'm imagining this as a silhouette, from the same angle and with similar framing to panel eight.

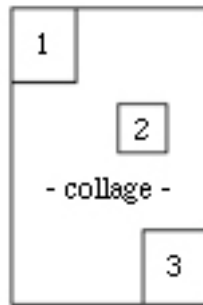
THE TRAVELER

I'm stopping you.

### Page Thirteen

This page will be a collage of images, with panels anchoring the upper-left and lower-right corners (i.e. the same layout as pages ten-eleven, save on a single page), except that

there will also be a "floating" panel on top of the collage somewhere in the middle of the page. That is:



Precisely where the floating panel is depends on the layout of the collage, i.e. wherever it looks best. Because of the way this sort of thing looks visually, there will be -- I hope -- two equal paths to tempt the reader: first, to read the panels one-two-three while (momentarily) bypassing the collage and its captions; second, to read the collage and its captions right after panel one while (momentarily) ignoring the floating panel.

#### Panel One

Here the focus is on Jack. I envision an upper-body shot, straight on or only slightly to the side. He's gesturing with his hands a bit, expressing some combination of bafflement and resentment.

JACK

But why was that all you did? Why not... I dunno, eliminate war? Hunger?

#### Panel Two

This is the "floating" panel, that will go over the collage. It is a close-up of The Traveler, probably just head-and-shoulders. His head is bowed, turned slightly to the side: his body posture expresses shame and regret and failure.

THE TRAVELER

I tried.

#### Collage

In some ways this collage will be even trickier than the earlier ones. Earlier collages consisted of (more or less) equal images: showing a huge variety of events through a random, scattered sampling. This, on the other hand, is supposed to show a specific *series* of events, so it will have to be constructed more carefully, to be sure the eye goes in the direction that we want.

The basic idea here is a series of four images (with a fifth one off to the side, see below): we see The Traveler intervening in a war, then we see a battle scene from a (obviously different) war; we see The Traveler intervening in a famine, and then we see a scene of a (obviously different) famine. My sense is that the second and four scenes should visually dominate the page: this should be a page largely about large-scale human suffering. Our first glimpse of this page should be of war and hunger. Then, just above (i.e. just prior in reading order) to each of those images should be a companion image: The Traveler preventing war and famine, respectively. In order to convey that these are *different* famines/wars, we should make them occur in different parts of the world.

I think that the best way to go about this would be to make the second and fourth images represent *real* famines/wars -- the implication being that the world we (the readers) actually live in was brought about by The Traveler's intervention. Which wars and famines you want to draw are, really, up to you. For the wars, you might go the (sort of obvious) route and show a scene from World War Two -- storming the beach at Normandy, something like that. But it might be cooler if you chose a slightly *less* obvious war -- one that was horrible but isn't the sort of war-you-always-draw-to-show-the-existence-of-war cliché that WW2 is. I suggest the Korean war: a horrific conflict (millions died), one that is somehow easy to imagine *not* happening (easier than WW2, anyway). In terms of famines, again, it's up to you: I'd perhaps avoid the famines caused by Mao since we already have an East Asia scene (assuming we're going with Korea). There was a terrible famine in Ethiopia in the 1980's that got a lot of press and so should have plenty of images for references if you want to dig one up; there was the famine in Bangladesh in the early 1970's... honestly, there is (alas) no shortage of appalling scenes. Pick whichever you feel is best.

As for the other images: in this case suggest (as much as possible: it might not be the sort of thing every reader will pick up on, and that's fine) that these are cases of The Traveler preventing wars and famines that *did not occur* in the real world. In one case, perhaps, we see The Traveler interfering with the full-out Cuban-American war that (did not) follow the Bay of Pigs -- there are a number of ways we could suggest this, either him talking to JFK or showing him actually in Cuba somehow interfering with an armed conflict. (Note: the fact that the Bay of Pigs comes *after* the Korean war is a feature not a bug, since it suggests not that The Traveler did this once (and eliminating *this* war led to *that* one) but rather many times: he eliminated many wars, many others occurred; we know that this particular pair is not a direct causal link because it couldn't have been. These are just some of the wars he's stopped/initiated.) In the other case, we see The Traveler preventing a famine (something basic maybe, like directing a fleet of trucks come to deliver food -- no reason to get fancy here) in, let's say, post WW2-Europe: supplies were short there and there was real danger of hunger for several years, but there wasn't a massive famine of the sort that we're depicting in scene four. And having shown other parts of the world, showing Europe might help balance the world tour here.

Okay. Those are the four main images. But there is a fifth image in the collage as I envision it. This, I think, might come in the lower-left corner, otherwise surrounded by the famine scene. This is actually just an image of The Traveler narrating to Jack -- yes,

in the collage (in addition to all the panels) we have a (smallish but present) scene from the boarding house. This image is where The Traveler says the thing in the fourth speech listed below (which is why it's not called a caption.)

The point of placing this image there is for it to be slightly unmoored from time: it's not entirely clear where this fits into the sequence implied by the three panels and/or captions, although it's obviously part of the same soliloquy that The Traveler is delivering. In other words, this statement of The Traveler floats a bit outside of the linear narrative: he says it at some point, he suggests it, but we're not sure precisely when. (That's also why I am suggesting that it not be simply another panel: the panels form a very specific train of speech/events, as do the captions; this is not part of any of them -- hence its being grouped with the slightly more timeless scenes as part of the collage.)

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Eliminate one war --

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

-- one famine --

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

-- and worse ones arise.

THE TRAVELER

Perhaps this *is* the best of all possible worlds.

#### Panel Four

The Traveler is speaking to Jack. The focus here could be just on The Traveler, or on both of them. Perhaps a side view of The Traveler -- i.e. directly from the side, focusing just on the head-and-shoulders or even just on the face -- would work best. But if you'd prefer a wider shot including Jack (and can fit it comfortably in!), that's fine too.

THE TRAVELER

Superheroes have always selected particular beats to walk, picked the domains within which they will fight.

THE TRAVELER

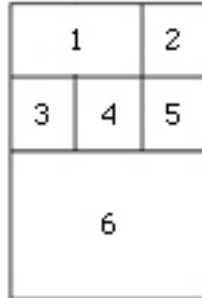
I do what I can.

I keep the costumes down.

#### Pages Fourteen

The top half of this page is in two tiers: the first tier has two panels, the first approximately twice as long as the second, while the second tier has three equal panels. The bottom half of the page is one big splash panel. In fact, you might even want to use a bit more than half of the page for the splash panel, keeping the upper two tiers as tight as

you can while still making them clear. It might even be nice if the splash panel had no panel borders, bled out to the edges of the page, and continued up to be glimpsed in the gutters behind the top two tiers. But in any event, the page should look roughly like this:



#### Panel One

A wide angle, including both Jack and The Traveler, Jack on the right, The Traveler on the left. Jack absorbing what the Traveler has told him. I envision this as from straight from the side.

No dialogue.

#### Panel Two

Focus on Jack. I think this should be from the same angle as the previous panel, except that it's half as big, so we see only Jack.

JACK

And that's it? That's all you do?  
Keep people from fulfilling their potential?

#### Panel Three

I think that this panel, and the one following it, should be from the same angle as the first panel on the page, looking at the two of them in conversation from the side. But we've zoomed in slightly, so that we're seeing largely The Traveler here. (He's looking right, across the gutter, at Jack in the next panel, although of course the gutter is necessary because the panels are zoomed-in enough that they are closer than they would be if we merged the panels together.)

THE TRAVELER

If their potential is the slaughter of thousands, then yes, I do.

#### Panel Four

The reverse of the previous panel: close-up on Jack, from the same angle as the two panels in the top tier but zoomed further in. Looking to the left at The Traveler in the previous panel.

JACK  
How do you live with yourself?

#### Panel Five

Direct shot on The Traveler, but from a slightly off angle, perhaps just slightly down or up or from a side. The angle is wide enough that we see The Traveler (who is, remember, still standing, probably still leaning against the dresser) entirely in the frame, but focused enough that we don't see Jack.

THE TRAVELER  
Quietly.

#### Panel Six

This is the big splash panel (or page-bleeding image, if you want to go that way). We have an aerial view of a standard, boring, 1950's-fantasy suburb. The point, of course, is that The Traveler is keeping things normal -- safe but boring -- and that that's where he lives. We're looking down a street, with small Levittown suburban houses lining either side as far as we can see. It's a sunny summer Saturday afternoon: kids are playing in their yards, a few people are washing their cars or sitting on lawn chairs reading. In one of the two houses close to us (i.e. either left foreground or right foreground) we see The Traveler with his back towards us. He's in civilian clothes, indistinguishable from the those of his neighbors; we'll understand that it's The Traveler largely through the placement of the captions and the subtle focus of the framing. But the image overall is definitely about the context, The Traveler's secret identity surrounded by his (leisure time) world. The overall feeling is (to quote Gilbert & Sullivan from another context) "His capacity for innocent enjoyment/Is just as great as any honest man's."

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
I have a secret identity.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
Like any good superhero.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)  
Of course my only job is -- in the language of a tax form -- "lottery winner".

#### **Page Fifteen**

This page is laid out identically to page nine: one big panel on top, with six smaller ones in two tiers below. I think, however, that unlike page nine (where I suggested you err on

the side of making the splash page bigger) here I'd suggest that you might want the big splash panel to take up slightly *less* than half the page -- to make it closer to three even tiers than to a half-page splash panel. You might even want to go all the way and have it *be* three even tiers, but maybe you want the top panel to have a bit more room than that.

### Panel One

This is a wide-angled view of The Traveler -- again from behind, so we can't see his face -- at the dinner table, probably from slightly up rather than a straight-on horizontal shot. He's inside the house whose lawn we just saw him mowing on the previous page. At the table are his wife and his 2.5 kids (okay, not literally, this isn't a horror scene with half a kid: the point is that they all look very 1950's-image-of-utopia *average*. I'd say a boy and a girl, or maybe a boy and a girl and a baby of indeterminate gender (the boy-girl-baby trio worked for The Simpsons and The Incredibles, it might work for us.)) The table is laden with dinner on a nice white tablecloth: they are eating, happy, but not laughing or ecstatic or anything; just a normal, everyday family dinner.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

But I go home at night and lead a perfectly normal life.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

All the neighbors think I work in insurance.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Which -- after a fashion -- I do.

### Panel Two

We see both Jack and The Traveler still in frame, from a distant, somewhat off angle: I'm imagining it being a view from above, encompassing a bit more of the room. (Or, if you think it works better, perhaps from below, or even something such as from outside with Jack and The Traveler framed by the window.)

JACK

Who are you?

THE TRAVELER

It's a *secret* identity for a reason.

### Panel Three

Medium-shot on The Traveler, from the waist up. this could be a straight-on shot, but it might work better from a somewhat lower angle, looking up.

THE TRAVELER

I can't imagine that you could harm me in any way --



THE TRAVELER  
-- but I am not about to let you try.

Panel Four

Swing around and pull back: sideways shot, including both The Traveler and Jack.

THE TRAVELER  
That's my tale.

Panel Five

Even though The Traveler is speaking here, this last tier should tighten in on Jack -- a progressive zoom over three panels. We start with a medium shot, parallel to the one in panel three: Jack half, or even two-thirds, in frame, looking straight at The Traveler -- and (therefore) at us -- thinking about what is being asked of him. Gearing himself up to resist (which he is about to do).

THE TRAVELER (OFF-PANEL)  
Now destroy that costume, and get on with your life.

Panel Six

Zoom in tighter on Jack: now just a head-and-shoulders shot, or perhaps even just a head shot.

THE TRAVELER (OFF-PANEL)  
Your mundane, ordinary life.

Panel Seven

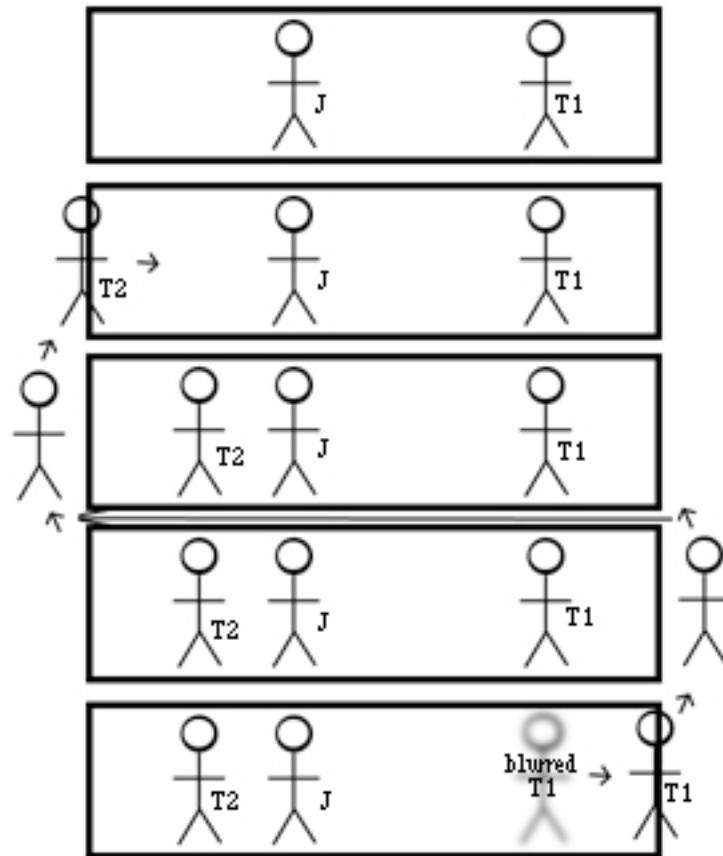
And tighter still: if before you went with a head-and-shoulders shot, this will be just a head shot, or a face shot; if before you went tighter, then this will probably be just the eyes.

THE TRAVELER (OFF-PANEL)  
Which is -- from now on -- all you will have.

**Page Sixteen**

Okay. Action sequence here. I imagine it being laid out somewhat differently from the rest of the book. I'm thinking of it as two pages of five full-width (horizontal) panels each -- sort of the current standard action-page layout (i.e. "widescreen"-style). But the panels are drawn a bit thinner, with the gutters a bit thicker, because *behind* these panels we see -- bleeding off into the edges of the page -- the space between time, represented as

the space between *panels*. (This should be our standard depiction of the space between time; the description of how I envision it is at both panel three of page seven and in the next double-spread, pages seventeen & eighteen.) And, along the edges of the panels (in a manner I will describe in detail) we see The Traveler floating backwards in time, slipping from a late moment (in the fifth panel) back a few seconds in time up to the second panel). I'm going to give a larger schematic, with stick figures, to clarify what I mean:



This will, hopefully, make more sense once I've described precisely what is going on in each panel.

Also note that the scene takes place in slow motion, so that each panel is almost identical to the others, save for the motions of the main characters.

### Panel One

A medium shot, with Jack -- who we probably ought to call Conflagration here, since this is it, he's decided to Be A Superhero and Fight The Evil Power, but hell with it, I'll stick

to Jack for clarity's sake -- over in the left of the frame having just stood up: he's made his decision, he's determined. He's raising his right arm so as to point it at The Traveler, who is in the right of the frame. The Traveler continues calmly standing still, just as he had been a moment before.

JACK  
No.

### Panel Two

[Starting in this panel, there will be *two* Travelers in each panel for most of the page; so we will call the first one -- the normal one, the one who was just in the previous panel and still hasn't moved -- T1; the other one we'll call T2.]

Same shot from the same angle. Jack has now finished pointing his arm at The Traveler [T1]: the ends of his hand are beginning to flame in preparation for his shooting out a bolt of sheer liquid heat. T1 remains motionless, unconcerned (insofar as one can tell behind his mask! -- this'll all be in body language, I suppose). At the same time, to the left of Jack (i.e. behind him, where he can't see (focused as he is on aiming at T1)) -- we see a *second* figure of The Traveler [T2]: he is entering from out of frame. We are representing The Traveler's time-travel here by his slipping into and out of panels: in this panel The Traveler [T2] is coming back from the past, therefore he is slipping into the panel over on the left. I think he really should be half-in and half-out if you can make it work, to show that this is a *transition*. (More on this below when I talk about what's outside the panels.)

No dialogue.

### Panel Three

Same shot from the same angle. Jack's arm is now shooting out the death-dealing blast of heat: but his arm has been wrenched upwards, so he's shooting it into the ceiling. T2 has fully materialized behind him (i.e. he's fully in the frame) and has grabbed his arm and yanked it upward, causing him to miss. T1 is still standing motionless, unperturbed, not having moved from the panel before.

No dialogue.

### Panel Four

Same shot from the same angle. Jack has now let his arm -- still in the grip of T2 -- go limp, without any sign of the flaming power it displayed the panel before (or, perhaps, a wisp or two of flame at the very end of his fingertips, clearly dying out). He's turning to look at T2, sheer bafflement on his face. (If there's some subtle way to indicate that he's looking back and forth between the two Travelers, so much the better.) T1 still hasn't

moved an inch. There are probably some flames licking at the ceiling where Jack just blasted a hole the panel before.

JACK  
Wait -- What -- I mean --

#### Panel Five

Same shot from the same angle. Jack has freed his arm (not violently: T2 just let it go, and it dropped to his side). He is now looking straight at the spot where T1 has been standing: but T1 is starting to fade out of this reality. I think there should be a blur in the precise spot where T1 has been for the four previous panels (to indicate what Jack actually sees), while behind (i.e. to the right of) that blur, T1 is half-in, half-out of the panel -- just slipping out of time so that he can go back and *become* T2. T2, meanwhile, has perhaps stepped back half a step: in any event he is now just watching, relaxed, confident.

No dialogue.

#### Edges of the Page, Outside the Panels

As I said earlier, the entire background of the page, bleeding all the way to the edge, should be the "space between time" look that we've glimpsed briefly in panel three of page seven, now forming the background to the page as a whole. And we've already noted that T2 is slipping out of the right side of panel five, and then (having "become" T1) is slipping *into* the *left* side of panel two.

Well, I think we should have a few figures of The Traveler in the margins, totally outside the panels. One, for example, to the right of panel four: clearly swimming or floating up, i.e. the next moment after slipping out of the panel right below: here The Traveler is moving back in time, so of course we read *upwards* on the page. Then, perhaps, we have another figure of The Traveler half-observed behind the right side of panels three and four: he's about to move behind the panels, and we can see him (a moment later than the full figure that's to the right of panel four and below)

Then we get just a few tiny glimpses in the gutter between panels three and four of The Traveler passing *behind* the Panels -- not interacting with them at all, just moving.

Then we see yet another figure of The Traveler emerging (still half-observed by the panels) from the gutter of panels three and four, swimming out into the left side of the margin. Then, slightly above that (that is, to the left of panel three) we see a full figure of the panel in the margin, swimming up. This then goes into the figure which is half-in, half out of panel two.

If you go back and look at my schematic again, I think this will be clearer.

## Page Seventeen

Same layout as the previous page: it's more or less all one 'unit' and should probably be drawn as such. Certainly the space behind time (represented, again, as the space outside the panels) will again serve as the background to the page, and should extend across the whole of the two-page spread, bleeding all the way out to the edges. (It will do so again on the next two page spread, incidentally.) As for the formatting of the page, once again we have five, page-width horizontal panels; once again we see The Traveler slipping out of one panel and 'swimming' back up to re-enter an earlier one (although re-entering in a slightly different place).

As there will, once again, be two Travelers in this set of panels, I am going to refer to them as T2 (that being the same figure from before) and T3 (the new, additional figure entering (i.e. time-traveling) in).

### Panel One

We see, one last time, the same shot from the same angle as in all five panels on the previous page: but now T1 has disappeared, leaving only an empty space in the right half of the panel. Jack and T2 have hardly moved at all: Jack is staring at the spot where T1 used to be; T2 is in the same pose as he as in the last panel on the previous page.

No dialogue.

### Panel Two

Okay, new shot from a new angle, probably the reverse of the previous angle, or anyway swung around to a different view, but keeping roughly to similar proportions as in the previous panel (i.e. we're seeing it from the same distance). Jack is looking at T2.

JACK

There were two of you -- for a moment --

T2

By the time you readied your aim, I was already here.

T2

You can't hit me. It's simply not possible.

### Panel Three

Same shot as the previous panel. Jack is once again raising his arm, his fingertips starting to flame, but -- you guessed it -- once again, behind him, another version of The Traveler (T3) is phasing into this moment in time -- represented pictorially as entering into the panel from the space outside the panel -- half in, half out. T2 isn't moving.

JACK  
No!

#### Panel Four

Same shot as the previous panel. This time Jack doesn't even get a shot off: before he can ready himself, T3 has fully materialized (represented as now standing fully in frame) and has grabbed him in a headlock. T2 hasn't moved: he is standing still, speaking calmly, as his future self (future by a few seconds, but still future) secures his attacker.

T2 [*NOT* T3]

You see? Before you can start to attack me, I will already have blocked it. I need merely hop back a single step. In the end...

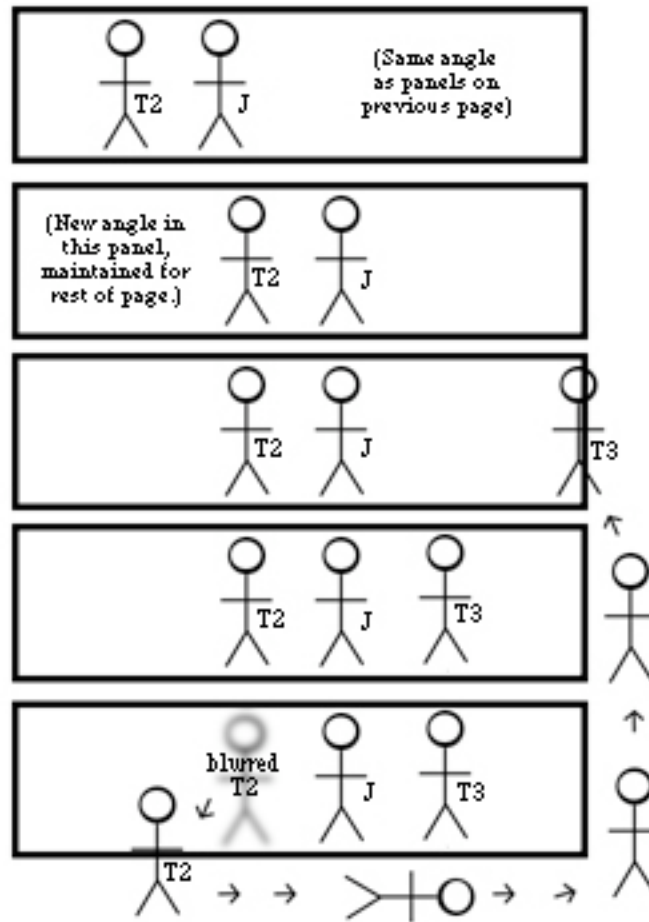
#### Panel Five

Same shot as the previous panel. Jack is still in the headlock, possibly starting to sag slightly as he knows he's beaten. T2 is in the process of going back in time (i.e. to two panels before) to rescue himself: the spot where he was standing in the previous panel is now just a shimmer, and another version of him is half-in, half-out of the panel, representing his fading out of normal time. (This will look roughly like the fifth panel on the previous page.) Meanwhile T3 continues his thought from a moment before (interrupted, in his experience although not in Jack's nor in ours, by the action of grabbing Jack in a headlock) from his position of holding fast to Jack.

T3  
...you're helpless.

#### Edges of the Page, Outside the Panels

This is similar to the previous page. The background is, to repeat, the space between time -- more on what that looks like on the next page. And we again have a superimposed series of figures of The Traveler to show his journey through that space. Just for variety if nothing else, perhaps we could have The Traveler slip *down* out of panel five, swim horizontally along the bottom of the page, then swim vertically up the right side of the page until he re-enters the world of the panels through the right side of panel three. Again, a schematic might help make this clear:



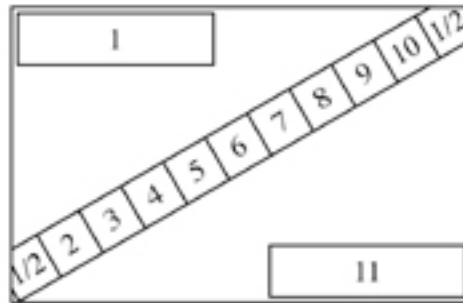
### Page Eighteen - Nineteen

This is a two-page spread. On the left side -- i.e. on the top of page eighteen -- is a long horizontal panel of the same proportions as were the panels on the previous two pages. Then, at the bottom of the right side (i.e. on the bottom of page nineteen) is another, similarly-proportioned panel. In other words, this page is laid out like pages sixteen and seventeen were -- except that instead of ten horizontal panels largely obscuring the space between time (which was functioning largely as a background), we have only two panels -- the first and the last -- which allow us to see, on most of the page (again, bleeding out all the way to the edges) the space between time as our main focus -- which should be strange and wild and hopefully fun to draw. This is, if you like, a payoff page to our earlier glimpses of the space between time, in which we get to really focus on it.

Off in the distance, behind most of the things we see in the space between time, is a big two-dimensional ribbon arching back from the bottom left to the top right corner. (Bits of this may fall behind The Traveler, and other things, as they float above and in front of it in the space nearer to us). This ribbon is a series of panels, laid out like a film strip. Each of the panels is the same size -- about the size, say, that a panel from a single-page

sixteen-grid would be -- except for the fact that it is distorted by its bending outward. I'm not entirely sure how many panels will fit comfortably on such a ribbon: I'm going to describe nine of them, which (fooling around with the dimensions) sounds as if it's about right. If you need a few more, you could simply make up a few innocuous scenes parallel to the ones I describe; if you need a few less, the ones to eliminate are probably (in order) panel five, panel eight, then panel nine.

Here, very roughly, is what I imagine the page looking like:



In describing the two long panels flanking the top-left and bottom right of the page, and I am going to continue my "T3" nomenclature from the previous page -- adding in T4, since The Traveler is going to, once again, jump back in time. Most of the page will show a series of superimposed figures of The Traveler moving up and to the left through the space between time -- like what we did in the margins of the previous two pages, save that we'll be able to take a much better look at it this time.

(Incidentally, the "1/2" numbers at the edges of the ribbon in the schematic above are there to show that there might be bits of panels at the edges of the ribbon that we can't fully see (coming in time before panel 2 in the lower-left and after panel 10 in the upper-right.))

#### Panel One (Long, Wide Panel in the Left (Top of Page Eighteen))

A wide shot of the room. Jack is roughly in the middle, trying to steel himself to be determined, but with the dawning fear that he might in fact be beaten -- beaten before he could even begin. He is facing right, looking at T3, who is standing still -- perhaps slightly wary, but mostly relaxed, confident, in control. Behind Jack a future-by-a-few-seconds version of The Traveler (T4) slips into the panel from the space outside it (so we'll probably have a figure drawn half-in, half-out of the panel in *addition* to T4 standing fully in place), and then stands there in more or less the mirror pose to the one T3 (i.e. his self of a few moments before) has taken. The splitting of the words between them is deliberate, of course, intended by The Traveler to add to Jack's disorientation. Jack is mainly focused on T3, with T4's voice coming unexpectedly from behind him.

JACK

No. There's a way. I will *find* a way --



T3

No. There *is* no way. There is nothing that you can even try --

T4

-- that I cannot pre-empt.

### Space Between Time

(i.e. all the space not taken up in the panels)

We've caught glimpses before this (and will again afterwards), but this is the place where we get a really big, juicy look at the space between time that The Traveler passes through.

First of all, since this is the place where we really get a good look at it, I'm going to repeat my earlier description of the space between time: above all the space should just look damn weird: perspective is off, we see things from different angles all at once. Obviously there are lots of ways to do this: you could go the surrealist route, the cubist route, the collage route -- whatever you think works best. I envision the background as black, but black with intricate designs and patterns inscribed in gold or silver -- mystical lines to give the entirety a sort of weird, outer-worldly feel. And the black may not work, of course, since The Traveler dresses in black, in which case some other color would do - - deep red, deep blue, or something even odder than that. Another option is to go with swirls of different colors or shades, a sort of fractal pattern. The point is to contrast with the normal, linear world of life in time, and to have a consistent look so that in the number of places we see it in the comic we come to understand what we're seeing.  
[/repeated paragraph]

Apart from the sheer look of the space itself, the main focus of our eye here is The Traveler, floating up from the bottom right (panel eleven) to the enter panel one in the top left. So we'll have a series of several figures -- one half-in, half-out of each panel, as previously indicated, and several others in a series moving up and left across the page. As for pose, I imagine it as something like swimming, something like floating in zero gravity: he's definitely moving with some deliberate purpose and direction, but there's no rush and it's not strenuous, and he sort of twists and turns in various directions as he floats up.

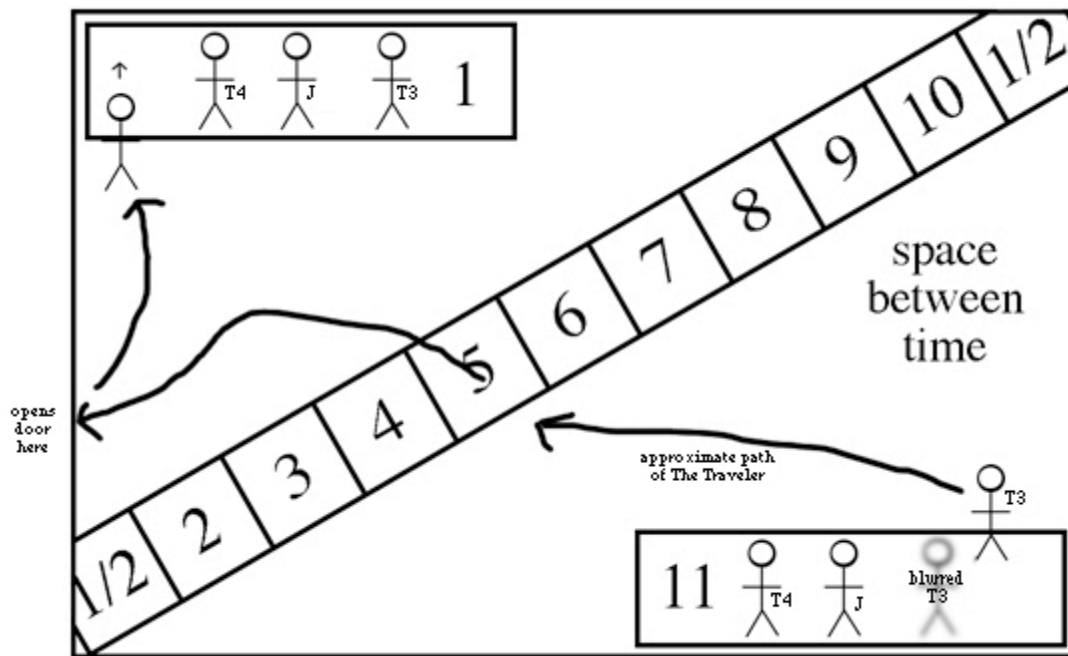
But there is a break in this straightforward up-and-left-ward movement: The Traveler actually takes a brief detour. This will involve another series of figures: he will be floating up across the page, then will float horizontally off to the right. (I say "right" because we see this again on a later page, so making it that side of the page sort of connects them. (If it works, you could even match the place on this page with the place on page twenty where he re-enters... but because of the look of the ribbon this may not work, and anyway isn't crucial.) But looking at my diagram, it seems like it might look better with a detour off to the left -- and, really, that's okay too. Up or down would also

work. The key point is that it should look like a *detour*; that the main figures should go up and to the left; and that the caption placements should work.)

So the detour will consist of a series of figures arcing off to one side, and then another series (on a parallel line, or rather a separate arc, somewhat above or below the aforementioned one) going back, eventually rejoining the procession of up-and-left-ward figures. Once at the side of the page, The Traveler will enter normal-time space by opening a door. I think the door should be in the very side of the page, as if The Traveler is literally opening a door off the comics page and stepping off it -- which he is, since in a page or two we'll see him come through the other side of the door (this is on page twenty-one). The door should be a crack in space, half-opening, with light -- the bright light of normality, a glare -- shining in (although rapidly dissipating in the strange darkness of the space between time itself: it's just a small, localized flare).

Then, apart from the progression of time-traveling Travelers (say *that* five times fast!) and the two anchoring panels, there is -- behind everything else -- the ribbon of panels I mentioned before. This ribbon relates to the second and third captions in which The Traveler describes being able to see Jack's whole life: it is a visual representation of this, with the panels on the ribbon being scenes of various moments within it. At least one of those panels may be obscured by a superimposed figure of The Traveler from the up-and-left-ward progression, and that's fine. So far as I am concerned the ones it is most important to see clearly are panels Two, Three, Six and Ten, and at least one of Seven, Eight or Nine; the least important is Five, followed by Eight. It'd be great to have most of them visible -- I think they'd add a lot, particularly to a second reading -- but it might not be possible to do them all clearly, so that's my sense of the order of priority, of which panels you should try hardest to make clearly visible (not standing out, just readable if the reader twists the page slightly and looks at them).

A slightly larger schematic might help clarify what I have in mind:



So those are the focuses to which our eye should be drawn. In the background we could just have the dark color with the strange designs -- obviously there's already a lot going on in this space, and maybe we don't need any more. But you could also draw, smaller, far-off, clearly in the background, some strange, otherworldly figures. These could be of several types. First, we might see still other versions of The Traveler (which would quite clearly be *other* versions since he'd be smaller, far off, not right in front of us, part of the progression/detour route) passing through the space on his way to other errands. (We might even see -- since there is no 'time' here and all events are simultaneous -- The Traveler in his lab coat, a reprise of panel two of page seven.) Second, we might see twists or portals or gaps in the space itself, which is non-Euclidean and has turns and tears every whichway. And third, we might even see some strange creatures that live in the space between time: not so much monsters (they're not threatening, and we won't deal with them so we don't want them to take too much attention off The Traveler's movements) but more like those fish that live in the deep ocean, drawing sustenance from the heat of the earth rather than the sun: strangely-shaped, slow, inscrutable. It'd be nice to fit a few of those in, just for fun, unless it is simply too distracting.

Anyway, first priority is to show The Traveler move (with a brief detour) from one panel to the next; our second priority is the ribbon; after that, weird is the name of the game.

A note on the placement of the captions: the first caption should be near the lower-right, just after The Traveler leaves the lower-right panel; the second and third captions should clearly relate to the ribbon in the background (i.e. the closest figure of The Traveler might be looking down in that direction); the fourth and fifth relate to the detour, and

should be placed to clarify that; and the sixth should be in the upper-left, after the return from the detour, as The Traveler moves back and up towards Panel One.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

I slip back a few seconds.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Looking down, I can see his entire life: it's ordinary beginnings, its lonely and shrunken end.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

If only he could see how I see him: see him spread out through time, like a frog pinned down for dissection.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

As I dance back, I decide to stop and buy a child an ice cream.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Children like ice cream.

THE TRAVELER (CAPTION)

Then I continue, slipping back in time, making sure to remember what I wanted to say just as I return.

#### Panel Two: First Panel in the Background Ribbon

Two parents in a hospital bed, cradling an infant: the infant is Jack, the parents are his. These are the first moments of Jack's life.

No dialogue

#### Panel Three: Second Panel in the Background Ribbon

Jack is six years old, sitting in the front yard of his house. He's playing with superhero action figures, and is wearing a superhero costume of the sort a kid playing might wear. This is the scene from *just* before the first panel of page twenty-one from Jack's point of view. Until the reader *gets* to that panel, however -- or, more accurately, gets to it and then goes back, rereads and realizes this is the same scene -- then it's just a kid playing superhero.

No dialogue

#### Panel Four: Third Panel in the Background Ribbon

Jack is twelve years old. He is lying on his stomach on the floor of his bedroom, swinging the bottom half of his legs in the air. He's reading a superhero comic book; dozens of other comic books are scattered around on the floor near him.

No dialogue

Panel Five: Fourth Panel in the Background Ribbon

Jack a few days before the majority of this comic takes place. He is holding out his hand; flame is shooting up from it. He is clearly, unmistakably startled: this is the very moment where he is discovering that he now has the power to control flame -- before he decides to take that power and use it to be Conflagration, just the precise moment of discovering that he has the power at all.

No dialogue

Panel Six: Fifth Panel in the Background Ribbon

This (as should be obvious from the dialogue) is the scene from earlier in the comic on page four, panel two (and the first half of the time encompassed by panel three). You'll probably want to do a different view of the scene, if only because we are taking a slightly different time-slice here (i.e. what was in two panels on page four is collapsed into a single panel here), but what we're seeing (e.g. where they're sitting, their expressions, etc.) should be the same as on the previous page.

The dialogue given below is *within* the panel on the bent ribbon, and is bending with it: i.e. it is in time (not the space between) -- in the ribbon of time that these series of panels represent -- and is *not* a caption; the Traveler's dialogue listed below here is spoken by the figure *within* the distorted panel, not by the figure floating above and before it.

JACK

Sounds more like you're a supervillain.

THE TRAVELER

Call me what you wish.

Panel Seven: Sixth Panel in the Background Ribbon

Jack is in his late twenties. He's in a cubicle, working in an office.

No dialogue

Panel Eight: Seventh Panel in the Background Ribbon

Jack is in his late thirties. He's sitting in his living room, watching television.

No dialogue

Panel Nine: Eighth Panel in the Background Ribbon

Jack is forty-five or so. He's working in the same office as in panel seven -- in a the same cubicle, in fact.

No dialogue

Panel Ten: Ninth Panel in the Background Ribbon

A picture of a small sailboat, sailing alone on a lake of some sort; we can see Jack in the boat, sailing by himself. Jack is fifty-six years old. (This is -- all we'll learn only at the very end of the comic -- the final day of Jack's life.)

No dialogue

Panel Eleven (Long, Wide Panel on the Bottom Right (Bottom of Page Nineteen))

Same shot as in panel one. Jack is turning (with surprise) upon hearing T4's voice (as he did at the very end of the time represented in panel one). T3 is slipping out of the panel upwards -- again we'll want to have a shot of him half-in, half-out of the panel, maybe in addition to a blurred shot of him standing as he was a moment before, or maybe we won't even need the latter. T4 has, as it were, taken over; he is now the one speaking to and dealing with Jack.

T4

It's hopeless. You've got to give it up.  
Or I'll kill you years ago.

**Page Twenty**

After several exciting (I hope!) pages, we have another standard 9-grid conversation page: Jack and The Traveler are talking again. By "The Traveler" I mean the figure I was just calling T4; but henceforward I'll simply call him The Traveler again, as there will from now on only be one per panel. I'm describing a lot of the visuals here as very similar -- i.e. panels two and three, and the entire second tier -- with the idea that the body language is carrying the emotion, and we're keeping the viewpoint steady to emphasize that fact.

Panel One

This panel is similar to the last panel on the previous page, although it's obviously smaller. But we should see a similar angle on Jack and The Traveler; they're standing in roughly the same places they were in the previous panel, although by now Jack has fully turned around to face The Traveler. At the same time, the energy has dropped out of

their body postures somewhat: that is, they are back to talking, and it is obvious that Jack is not about to launch yet another assault -- and that The Traveler knows this.

JACK

Kill me years ago...? I don't understand --

#### Panel Two

Medium shot. The Traveler is sitting down again, back into the armchair from which he stood up on page twelve -- again, emphasizing that the battle is over, and both of them know it. I envision this as showing both The Traveler and the chair in full frame, but probably not much more of the room than that (i.e. it's not a wide shot).

THE TRAVELER

Yes you do.

#### Panel Three

The same angle as the previous panel, but now The Traveler is fully seated, comfortable, ensconced in the armchair, speaking at his leisure. I see this as a full-frame picture of the Traveler in the chair.

THE TRAVELER

If you don't do what I say, you'll never have this conversation.

#### Panel Four

Okay. We're still on The Traveler, but you'll want to swing around to a different angle for variety's sake if nothing else. I envision this as pulling back, with a side view of the two characters talking -- yes, I think they should be both in frame if possible. The Traveler is sitting, narrating; Jack sitting in the chair at the desk, not so much on the edge of his seat because he's anxious (i.e. not in the colloquial sense of the term), but simply because he's only partly sitting, not letting himself relax into the chair, having lost his cues and not being sure where this goes, what he should do, from here.

THE TRAVELER

Or, I should say, if you *hadn't* done what I told you to, we *wouldn't* have.

#### Panel Five

Same shot, same angle as the previous panel: building up repetition here to get more of a bang out of the minor change in the third panel on this tier.

THE TRAVELER

But you do. You did. You will,

THE TRAVELER

You see how hopeless it is? I even know how this will end.

Panel Six

Jack turns his head, thinking. The impact of all this is hitting him. The idea here is after two panels with The Traveler and Jack both in frame, the former relaxing, the latter looking uncertain, we see essentially the same scene, with the alteration in Jack's body language and posture carrying the punch.

No dialogue.

Panel Seven

Focus on The Traveler, medium shot, at a slightly off angle -- from above or from below: not overly so, just a bit, for variety.

THE TRAVELER

Here's how easily I can get to you. Remember the time I bought you ice cream?

Panel Eight

Pull back and up: this is again a shot of both of them talking, but it's wider than the shots in the second tier, and from above: almost a top-of-the-room angle, except that we're a bit lower so that we can see their faces and not just the top of their heads. Security-camera angle, we might call it.

JACK

What? You just --

THE TRAVELER

No. Not now. Not today.

THE TRAVELER

Years ago. When you were a child.

Panel Nine

A close-up on The Traveler: perhaps one of those panels with only half the face in frame might be good. But in any event it should be a Traveler-focused panel. (When figuring this out, bear in mind that page twenty-two panel one will have the same framing as this panel will, so that whatever choice you make should work visually on both pages.)

THE TRAVELER

Come on. You remember. It was a sunny June day --



## Page Twenty-One

This page is based on a standard nine-grid, with a few tweaks. The first and last panels are missing (to show a bit of the space between time); and the middle tier collapses its second and third panels into one long panel. In other words, it looks like this:

no panel here	1	2
3	4	
5	6	no panel here

The space between time should also be the background of the whole page: visible in the gutters, bleeding off the edges of the paper.

### Empty Space In Upper Left Corner

Here we see a small scrap of the space between time that we saw most clearly in the middle of pages eighteen & nineteen. As much as possible within the limits of the space, we have the same weird effects as we did then. The space has two versions of The Traveler in it. One is to the far left of the page, coming out of a door which is opened (as it were) in the edge of the page itself. (As before, there is a small burst of harsh, bright light pouring out of the door itself.) This, of course, is The Traveler coming in from page eighteen, where we saw him open a door in the side of the page and go through it. (It'd be great if we could emphasize that somehow, e.g. by showing him half-in, half-out of the door on that previous page, so he's only half visible, and then showing *the other half* on this page, in what is clearly the same pose (possibly even from a wildly different angle -- this space is weird, after all.) But it should be fairly clear even if this doesn't work.)

The other figure of The Traveler here is at the other edge of this bit of space, slipping into the left side of panel one. If there's room, you could put a third picture of The Traveler moving through space between the two -- but I don't think it's necessary.

No dialogue.

### Panel One

A medium shot, with Jack as a child on the right and The Traveler on the left. We're in the very ordinary looking front yard of a very ordinary looking house in a very ordinary looking American suburb (though not the one where The Traveler lives -- it's not important to emphasize that fact, but don't draw them specifically to be the same). A small child -- say, six or seven or eight -- is sitting in the grass and playing with

superhero dolls, er, action figures. If possible, the child is wearing one of those superhero outfits that kids wear, e.g. a red cape. But it has to be clear that it's just one of those costumes-for-kids, i.e. we are *not* talking a kid superhero like Power Pack or anything like that. He's just playing dress-up. (True story: apparently, when I was five or so, I had a period where I went around 100% of the time wearing a Superman outfit. It was all I would wear.)

Meanwhile The Traveler has entered the frame, and is standing on the sidewalk as if he's just another pedestrian. He's looking at Jack, but not in any particularly threatening way: he likes kids. (That may creep us out, but it *is* just a normal, non-threatening liking.)

THE TRAVELER

Hey, Jack. Would you like an ice cream?

### Panel Two

Same shot. Jack is now looking up at The Traveler, still sitting on the grass, still clutching his superhero action figure in his hand.

JACK

Mom said not to go off with strangers.

THE TRAVELER

I'm not a stranger. We've met, many years from now. I know your name, right?  
We'll just go down to Parlor Ices. You've been there lots of times.

JACK

Ok.

### Panel Three

Medium shot, from the side. Jack and The Traveler are walking along the sidewalk, side-by-side. They're just walking, just buddies: they're not holding hands or anything. Jack is still clutching his superhero figure in his hand.

No dialogue

### Panel Four

This is the long panel: it's a wide shot, with lots of context from the rest of the ice cream parlor, and maybe the street outside through the window. We're looking at Jack, sitting in a booth, a half-eaten dish of ice-cream -- hell, an ice-cream sundae -- on the table in front of him. There's ice cream around his mouth. He is clutching a spoon, still eating. His superhero figure is lying on the table next to the bowl of ice cream. The Traveler is sitting in the booth across from him, watching Jack eat. We're looking over The Traveler's shoulder, enough that we can see him clearly, but the focus is on Jack and The

Traveler's view of him. The angle mimics one we've seen before, in, for example, panel two of page five -- not to mention the cover of the comic -- except we're pulled back so we can see the whole scene.

Otherwise, the background is just an ice cream parlor. The width and wide shot should emphasize the silence, make the whole scene feel a bit creepy.

No dialogue

#### Panel Five

Now we're closer in, with a straight-on side view of the table. The sundae is finished; Jack is swinging his feet, already a little bored. The Traveler is in his usual relaxed pose, sitting back, watching Jack (actually with some affection). The action figure is still on the table.

JACK

How'd you know that peppermint was my favorite flavor?

THE TRAVELER

I just knew. I told you I wasn't a stranger, didn't I?

THE TRAVELER

C'mon, let's get you home before your mom starts to worry.

#### Panel Six

We're back at Jack's house, looking at the front yard and sidewalk from the same angle as in panels one and two. Jack is in his yard, heading back towards his house, turning back to wave good-bye to The Traveler but basically moving inside, already having forgotten the strange man who bought him ice cream. (He is *not* holding the action figure any more.) The Traveler is standing on the sidewalk, watching him go back into the house.

THE TRAVELER

Bye, Jack. Maybe I'll see you again some day.

#### Space in the bottom-right corner

Again a glimpse of the space between time. Here all we need to see is The Traveler (only half-visible) slipping off the page to the right, through another doorway.

#### Alternative layout for the end of page twenty-one:

*If you think it can be done, here's a tweak. Instead of two panels and a space in the bottom tier, squish the second and third panel a bit to have three panels and a little sliver of space.*

no panel here	1	2
3	4	
5	6	7
		no panel here

*This would allow a panel six to show Jack and The Traveler walking back (basically the reverse of panel three), in silence. (In this case, what I have described above for panel six would be in panel seven.) It might be a nice symmetry, and given that all we really need to show in the space in the bottom-right corner is The Traveler disappearing off the side of the page, which might not take much space, there might be room for this. It would also allow us to show again -- subtly -- that on the way back Jack isn't carrying his action figure. But it's more important that panel five and panel seven (six in the old numbering) look good then that we have a reverse-walking panel. So see what fits and what looks good.*

### **Page Twenty-Two**

This page has four tiers with an uneven number of panels, twelve total. The first tier will have four panels -- but perhaps not evenly spaced: you might want to give the first two panels a bit more space, the second two a bit less. The second tier will have three more-or-less-evenly spaced panels. The third tier will have two panels, the first taking up approximately a third of the tier, the second taking up the rest; the fourth tier will, like the second, have three more-or-less evenly spaced panels. Here's a schematic of what I have in mind:

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	
8	9		
10	11	12	

The precise spacing is not crucial (particularly if you think that tiers two or four would work better with somewhat unevenly spaced panels); as usual, we're going for the feel of the thing, not the precise dimensions.

### **Panel One**

Should be precisely the same shot as page twenty, panel nine, to help communicate the continuity of the words (i.e. The Traveler says the words in these two panels as one sentence, with the intervening page as a flashback to Jack's (newly-minted) memories.) This will, therefore, be a close-up of The Traveler -- a half-framed face if you went that way with the earlier panel, or, if you made another choice, repeat that instead.

THE TRAVELER

-- your mom was furious and told you never to go with a stranger again.

### Panel Two

An *angle* similar to the previous panel (again for the feeling of continuity), but pulled as far back as you can manage -- if you can get Jack in, that's wonderful, but anyway returning to a feeling of space -- even, if possible, a feeling of a very brief moment of silence between the previous panel and this one (what they describe in movie scripts as "a beat"). The Traveler has pulled young Jack's action figure -- which he picked up from the table when young Jack forgot about it -- out of his pocket, and is either holding it up or holding out to Jack.

THE TRAVELER

Remember?

### Panel Three

Yes, Jack remembers -- now. And The Traveler has the action figure (long lost, long sought-for) to prove it. This is a moderate close-up of Jack, say a head-and-shoulders framing, simply hanging his head. Alternatively, you could show a slightly wider shot of Jack (say, waist-up), hanging in his head, holding the action figure limply in his lap. This panel represents Jack's realization of his utter, total defeat. He realizes, suddenly, how helpless he is: Jack can't fight someone who could go back and kill him before he's even learned who he is. This panel is the moment of his surrender.

No dialogue.

### Panel Four

The same shot as in the previous panel, visually continuing the defeat that is here acknowledged verbally.

JACK

What do you want me to do?

### Panel Five

Focus on The Traveler. What we want to do here is see him as Jack would: cold, relentless, dictating. I am envisioning this as a silhouette, emphasizing the bleakness,

remoteness, blank nature of the commands. In this case we would see him in the chair (or most of him, down to the knees or waist maybe), a black cutout against the light coming from the window. A hole in the world, issuing commands.

THE TRAVELER

You will never use your powers again. Ever. For any reason. Not to save the life of your child. Not to save the life of a bug. Not even to save your own life.

THE TRAVELER

It is as if they don't exist.

#### Panel Six

Similar to the pairing of panels three & four, this panel and panel seven are again about acceptance. But this time let's go with a somewhat wider shot, from above, showing Jack swallowed up by his room, small in the frame. (He's probably put the action figure aside, on the desk -- it shouldn't take too much of our focus, it was just a token, a sign to Jack of how utterly helpless he is.)

No dialogue.

#### Panel Seven

Same shot as the previous panel.

JACK

Ok.

#### Panel Eight

A straight-on, look-at-the-camera shot of The Traveler -- perhaps a from-the-waist-up shot. As with panel four, we want to emphasize the command in his words, although since this is a more immediate command, I think seeing him simply look straight at us (instead of the slightly more remote, absolute look of a silhouette) would work. (And we can't use two silhouettes on one page anyway.)

THE TRAVELER

And you destroy your costume. Right now.

THE TRAVELER

And never make another.

#### Panel Nine

This is the bigger panel in this tier. It's a wider shot, seeing both of them, sitting, talking. Jack is explaining, a prisoner talking to his guard. The Traveler is patient, still, explaining how things are.

JACK.  
It won't burn.  
I designed it not to burn.

THE TRAVELER  
Walk over to your dresser. You'll find a pair of scissors -- sharp enough to cut even it.

JACK  
I don't have --

THE TRAVELER  
Just look.

#### Panel Ten

We see Jack standing at his dresser, looking in the top drawer, stirring it around to see what's in there. I envision this as a full-body shot, seeing all of him in frame.

JACK  
I don't see --

THE TRAVELER (OFF-PANEL)  
Under the white socks.

#### Panel Eleven

Same angle as the previous panel: Jack silently pulls a pair of scissors out of his drawer. We won't spell this out, but the point here, obviously, is that Jack didn't know about them because he didn't have them: at some point The Traveler simply time-traveled in, placed them in his drawer, and stepped out again, delivering the scissors so that they would be there for precisely this moment.

No dialogue.

#### Panel Twelve

Extreme close-up of The Traveler: just the head or even closer, maybe even just the eyes. This is his final command. It is, in a way, unnecessary: in the same way that he has simply ordered Jack to never use his powers, he could simply order Jack to never wear the uniform. The point here is for The Traveler to make it real for Jack, make it physical. (Sort of like that moment in movies where a villain will force someone to say something, since the mere act of vocalizing affects a person's consciousness (they do this a lot in

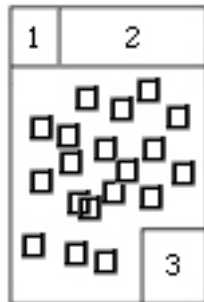
*Pulp Fiction*, for example.)) The Traveler is, in a way, being cruel, but its not simply gratuitous cruelty: it is to make sure the point is fully and finally driven home.

## THE TRAVELER

Cut it.

### Page Twenty-Three

Here we have two panels along the top of the page, with the second much longer than the first, so that there is a small square panel in the top-left corner, and then a second panel stretching the rest of the way across the page (taking up at least two-thirds of the space). Then, in the bottom-right corner of the page, we have another small, square panel, paralleling the first. In between these panels we have a collage of multiple images -- really small panels, bent and turned and twisted this way and that. The overall effect is something like this:



#### Panel One

A close up of Jack's torso: he is pulling his costume off over his head, the reverse of the moment we saw on page one in panel five.

No Dialogue

#### Panel Two

The long panel on top. Here we see Jack, sitting in the chair at his desk, wearing only his underwear, wielding the scissors that he just pulled out of his dresser. He is cutting the uniform to shreds; bits and pieces of it are falling down to the floor...

No Dialogue

#### Collage

...and, indeed, the uniform pieces are falling out of the panel, whereupon they become little panels themselves. In other words, we see a rain of uniform (within panel two) merge seamlessly into the rain of little panels that make up the majority of the collage.



Within the little panels are, largely, pictures of bits of the uniform itself: some falling through the air, some resting on the floor. A few of them may be pictures of Jack cutting it up -- an extreme close-up on his hands wielding the scissors, or of just his eye as he destroys the costume and, with it, his ambitions and plans and dreams.

I think the background here should *not* be the space between panels visual that we've established before: we're not seeing The Traveler go through time here -- we're just having a (hopefully cool) visual of Jack cutting his uniform to shreds, drawing it out a bit to emphasize its emotional resonance for him. So I would suggest just plain white. -- Unless you think it might work to have the small, falling panels *over* a larger image. In that case, I would suggest a medium-shot of Jack cutting, so that we see the pieces fall (and the close-ups of his cutting) superimposed over a large image of the cutting itself. But the focus should be clearly on the fragments of falling time.

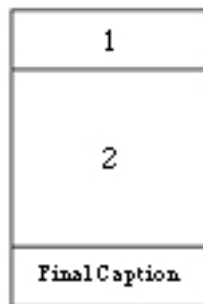
### Panel Three

Medium shot of Jack, from his right side (i.e. his main body is facing to the right side of the page), except that he is turning (while still sitting), turning his shoulders back in order to say something to The Traveler behind him. The scissors are still in his hand.

JACK  
It's destroyed.  
Are you--

### Page Twenty-Four

This page has a long, page-wide panel at the top, followed by a big splash panel taking up most of the page, and a final, page-wide panel at the bottom (which is a final caption of white text against a black background). Like so:



### Panel One

This should be the same shot, the same angle as in the final panel on the previous page, except now that it stretches across the page we can see a lot of the room whereas before we could see only Jack. (Jack is in the far right of the frame here.) And the point is: the

room is empty. The Traveler is gone. As Jack cut his uniform to shreds. The Traveler silently vanished: Jack is turning around as he speaks (possibly has now turned all the way around in his seat, but probably is still turning around in place), suddenly noticing the empty space in the left of the frame.

JACK  
-- happy now --

### Panel Two

Big splash-page panel of Jack, sitting in his chair (still wearing only his underwear) -- but pulled back, so we can see more or less the entire room. All around the bottom of the chair are the hundred or more pieces into which he has cut his uniform, lying willy-nilly all about, like the hair in a barbershop after a busy day. Jack has put the scissors down on his desk; the action figure is there too. Jack has buried his head in his hands, his elbows on his knees. Otherwise the room is empty and silent and still.

No dialogue.

### Final Caption

This is a panel-sized box, all-black, with white letters forming caption that constitutes the final words of the comic. (Incidentally, we won't make a big deal out of this, but the implication of the "hypothermia" is supposed to be that Jack *could have saved his own life* if he'd used his powers, whether to fly or simply warm himself until help came. In other words, he drowned when he could have lived, so resolute was he in sticking to The Traveler's orders.)

CAPTION  
Jack Kurtz, briefly known as Conflagration, died at age fifty-six.

CAPTION  
Cause of death was hypothermia, brought on by a sailing accident on Lake Michigan.

**END**



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