

Authority always wins

Gay superheroes sneak into the mainstream with WildStorm Productions' *The Authority* **By Michael Giltz**

In the comic book *The Authority*, Apollo and Midnighter are typical muscle-bound superheroes—quick with a quip and a punishing blow. They're also lovers—something that's been made subtly clear (via Bert and Ernie jokes, for instance) ever since the comic's launch in 1999. Still, fans had to connect the dots for themselves.

Now penned for DC Comics imprint WildStorm Productions by writer Mark Millar and illustrator Frank Quitely (both of whom are heterosexually married with children in Scotland), *The Authority* is slowly upping the ante. Apollo and Midnighter now hug, and they even kissed after one nearly fatal battle.

Quitely, for one, thinks the go-slow approach could have unexpected advantages for educating the kids reading *The Authority*. "I'm sure there were some kids who thought [Apollo and Midnighter] were really cool," says Quitely, 32. "Then it started to dawn on them, and they thought, *I hope not; I hope not.*" He

laughs, then adds, "It's good for them to deal with."

Now those fans are dealing with a lot more. In a recent issue the bad guys made references to Richard Gere and Tom Cruise while pummeling Apollo. The superhero is seen slumped facedown over the hood of a car, his tight-fitting costume ripped and torn. Then one evil character, Commander, approaches Apollo for what will be, it seems, a sexual assault. That's something Batman and Superman certainly never had to fend off.

"Originally I drew Commander undoing his belt buckle and then doing it up again afterward," says Quitely. "But DC changed it to where Commander's just putting his thumbs inside his belt."

Readers still got the idea. "Mark goes online after every issue comes out," says Quitely. "And they were all saying they couldn't wait to see what Midnighter would do to the bad guys for messing with his man." ■

Giltz is a regular contributor to several periodicals, including the New York Post and Entertainment Weekly.



Superheroes in love

The mighty Apollo (left) and the black-clad Midnighter cuddle up in *The Authority*.