

The Blue Mantis #9 - "Behold, the Deliverer"

Written by Steven Bland

In 1963, a giant robot rampaged through Times Square in New York City. The giant robot was piloted by a mad scientist named Dr. Lou Cypher, who was bald, wore goggles, and had a short red goatee. In the nick of time, the Deliverer, a tall, strapping, dark-skinned blond superhero flew in under his own power and arrived on the scene to take on the giant robot. The Deliverer's costume consisted of a blue short-sleeved body suit with a big red guardian symbol on the chest, a red belt with a big oval belt buckle which had a stylized yellow "D" on it, red boots with a V-cut, and a short red cape that was flung over his right shoulder.

"Well, Deliverer," Dr. Cypher said over the robot's loudspeaker. "What do you think of my latest model, hmm?"

"Doesn't matter how new your toy robot is, Cypher," the Deliverer said. "I'll still turn it into scrap."

The giant robot fired a concussive force blast at the Deliverer, staggering him, but the superhero managed to power through it.

Then, with superhuman strength and durability, the Deliverer threw devastating punches at the robot, destroying it. Once the automaton was demolished, the superhero flew toward the cockpit.

"It's over, Cypher," the Deliverer said. "You're going to prison."

"I think not," Cypher said defiantly as he ejected from the robot into a rocket-powered escape pod which was launched into space.

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The Deliverer flew after the escape pod. When he got closer to it, the superhero saw that Cypher had cryogenically frozen himself.

I need to be ready for him when he reawakens from his suspended animation so that he can never threaten the world again, the Deliverer thought as he flew off.

The superhero arrived at his destination: Swan Labs.

Inside, the Deliverer met with the chief scientist Dr. Julian Schwartzman there and gave him a brief explanation.

"So that's it, Dr. Schwartzman," the Deliverer told the scientist. "When Lou Cypher reawakens from cryostasis years from now, he would be free to take over the world and I may not be there to stop him."

"Unless.." the superhero added.

"Unless you, yourself were to be placed in cryostasis as well so that you could be reawakened to once again protect the world from Cypher?" Dr. Schwartzman asked.

"Correct," the Deliverer answered. "I want you to put me in suspended animation with cryogenics."

"Very well," Dr. Schwartzman said.

Soon, in another room of Swan Labs, the Deliverer entered a cryogenic chamber. Once the superhero was inside, Dr. Schwartzman closed the chamber door and began the freezing process.

The Deliverer was being cryogenically frozen.

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In the present day, one morning, Dr. Cypher's rocket broke orbit and returned to Earth, traveling to his underground laboratory, where the mad scientist underwent the unfreezing process.

I've *done* it! I've made it into the future, Cypher thought with a sinister smile. And I'm still in my prime.

Soon, a disguised Cypher paid a visit to his front company, Veritech, and was impressed that he now had access to technology much more advanced than it was back in 1963.

It's like I've stepped into a futuristic age, he thought. And I don't have the Deliverer to stand in my way.

Then, he read newspaper clipping of other superheroes like the Techni-Crusader, the Sprintress, the Blue Mantis, Gale-Force, and others.

Unfortunately, these new heroes, who are just as superpowered as the Deliverer, will most likely pose a new threat to my goal of world domination, Cypher thought. But, alas, I don't have powers of my own.

Then, Cypher smiled an evil smile as a thought popped up in his head.

At least, not yet, anyway, he thought.

Using the advanced technology which was now at his disposal, the mad scientist immediately got to work.

Hours later, Cypher completed work on a new high-tech harness.

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Drawing inspiration from my old foe, the Deliverer, I have crafted a harness which, once activated, should surround me in an inertia field that can absorb kinetic energy and will enable me to manipulate that energy in numerous ways.

After donning the harness and activating it, Cypher hit a nearby wall as hard as he could, hoping that the blow would generate kinetic energy to be absorbed by the harness. It did.

It *works!* My Inertia Harness works, an overjoyed Cypher thought.

Cypher continued to hit the wall as hard as he could multiple times until his Inertia Harness built up enough energy. It did.

Now, I am ready, the mad scientist thought with an evil smile.

Later, at the United Nations, the delegates inside the building received an unwanted visitor in the form of Dr. Lou Cypher, who had punched through the wall with a kinetic energy blast.

"Wh - Who are you? What do you want?" One of the delegates asked.

"My name is Dr. Lou Cypher," the mad scientist answered. "And I'm here to demand that you make me - -."

"- - KING OF THE WORLD!" Cypher exclaimed.

"NEVER," another delegate exclaimed.

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"You can't deny me," the empowered Cypher said as he picked up a bunch of pens from the table and threw each one with superhuman force toward a nearby wall. Each pen hit with the force of a high-caliber bullet. The delegates cowered in fear.

"I AM INVINCIBLE," Cypher exclaimed.

Soon, U.N. Guards arrived on the scene and quickly aimed their guns at Cypher.

"HALT! HALT, OR WE'LL SHOOT," one of the guards said.

"Go ahead and shoot," a defiant Cypher said. "You can't stop me!"

The guards fired their guns at Cypher, but his harness's inertia field absorbed the impacts from their bullets. The kinetic energy from the impacts added more power to the Inertia Harness.

"You've all had your shots," Cypher told them.

"NOW IT'S *MY TURN*," he exclaimed as he fired a kinetic energy blast at the guards, overpowering them.

"SOON, *EVERYONE* WILL BOW DOWN BEFORE LOU CYPHER," the mad scientist exclaimed.

Meanwhile, Wesley Walker arrived at Ditko High School ready to begin the day. However, before he could enter the building, he received a call on his cell phone.

"Hello," Wesley asked.

"Wesley, this is Leonard," Leonard Larvan said over the phone.

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"Hi, Leonard," Wesley said. "Where's Stanley?"

"He's busy working on a couple of things for a scientist at Garrett Laboratories, so I'm pitching in for him right now. "Anyway, I've just listened to a news report that a superpowered bad guy is terrorizing the United Nations building."

"Who is it?" Wesley asked.

"The guy calls himself Lou Cypher," Leonard answered. "And he's a mad scientist demanding them to make him King of the World."

"Okay," Wesley replied. "I'll check it out."

Soon, Wesley was turning away from the building and looking for a secluded spot.

Mom will be mad at me for skipping school, Wesley thought as he found a secluded spot he was looking for. But I have to save the delegates at the United Nations again.

First it was Tigereye and the Ice Queen, and now this, he thought as he changed into his Blue Mantis costume.

Sprouting his large insectoid wings, the Blue Mantis took to the sky and flew off.

With any luck, I'll have this taken care of as soon as possible, he thought.

Elsewhere, at Swan Labs, scientists Dean Cavill and Amy Hatcher had just heard a startling news report on the television screen.

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"The United Nations building was under attack five minutes ago, by a menace we had thought disappeared in 1963, Dr. Lou Cypher," the newscaster reported.

"But now, he's *back* – and displaying powers he never had before," the newscaster added.

"Powers which he used to overpower the U.N. Guards."

"Isn't there anything we can do?" Amy asked.

"Just one," Dean said. "Follow me."

Dean lead Amy to a special room in the laboratory which housed a cryogenic chamber. Once inside, Dean showed Amy who was inside the chamber.

"Dean, isn't that - - ?" Amy asked.

"Yes," Dean answered. "It's the Deliverer."

"When Dr. Cypher cryogenically froze himself in 1963, the Deliverer came here to ask Dr. Julian Swan to put him in cryostasis until he was needed," Dean added.

"And we definitely need him now," Dean told Amy. "Let's bring him back."

Soon, the two scientists immediately set up the equipment. Once the equipment was set up, they began the process of unfreezing the Deliverer and bringing him out of suspended animation.

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Soon, the Blue Mantis arrived at the United Nations building. Upon entering through a nearby window, the superhero retracted his shoulder wings.

"Dr. Lou Cypher, I presume?" asked the Blue Mantis.

"You presume correctly, Blue Mantis," Dr. Cypher replied. "I am indeed, Dr. Lou Cypher."

"And I am also - - YOUR *EXECUTIONER*," the mad scientist said as he fired kinetic energy blasts at the Blue Mantis.

"You'll have to hit me first," the superhero said as he used his mantis-like agility to evade the blasts. "And you *won't!*"

The Blue Mantis managed to move closer to Dr. Cypher and deliver a powerful punch to the mad scientist, who absorbed it.

"Hah! You think you can beat me?" Dr. Cypher asked defiantly. "I have the power to manipulate kinetic energy"

"Your puny mantis powers are useless against me," the mad scientist said as he delivered a kinetic energy punch to the superhero, rendering him unconscious.

After blowing a hole in a nearby wall with a kinetic energy blast, Dr. Cypher picked up the Blue Mantis's unconscious form.

"And now I will dispose of you as I would a crumpled piece of paper," Dr. Cypher said as he hurled the superhero out through the hole in the wall and sent him flying from the building.

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As the Blue Mantis fell toward the street, he started regaining consciousness. However, he was seconds away from making impact.

Suddenly, the insect-themed superhero was caught and saved by the Deliverer.

"Looks like I've arrived just in time," said the Deliverer. "Are you all right?"

"Yeah, I am. Thanks," the Blue Mantis answered. "But, who are you?"

"I'm called the Deliverer," the Deliverer answered. "And you must be the Blue Mantis."

"Yes," the Blue Mantis replied. "And Dr. Cypher is at the United Nations building trying to get the delegates to make him King of the World."

"I know," the Deliverer answered. "That's why I'm here, too. How about we work together?"

"Sounds good to me," the insect-themed superhero replied.

"Then, let's get back to the U.N. Building, shall we?" The Deliverer asked as he flew off, carrying the Blue Mantis with him.

In seconds, the Deliverer flew the Blue Mantis back to the United Nation's building headquarters and joined him in his fight against Dr. Cypher.

"THE DELIVERER," Dr. Cypher exclaimed upon seeing his old foe.

"Yes, Dr. Cypher," the Deliverer said. "We meet again."

"And *this* meeting will be our *last*," Dr. Cypher vowed as he surrounded the Deliverer in an inertialess field.

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"And now I'll deal with your friend," the mad scientist asked as he attempted to surround the Blue Mantis in an inertialess field as well. However, the insect-themed superhero used his camouflage power.

"WH-WHERE DID HE GO?" Cypher exclaimed before turning his attention back to the Deliverer.

"Well, no matter," Cypher said. "Now, I can finally rid myself of you - - FOREVER!"

Dr. Cypher manipulated the inertialess field surround the Deliverer to prevent oxygen molecules from reaching the hero's lungs.

"Can't - - breathe," gasped the Deliverer.

"Soon, old foe," Cypher said. "Soon, you will lose consciousness. And then - - "

"- - YOUR LIFE," Cypher added.

Unknown to the mad scientist, he was watched by a still-camouflaged Blue Mantis.

I've got to do *something*, the insect-themed superhero thought.

Desperately, the still-camouflaged Blue Mantis came from behind Dr. Cypher and grabbed him.

"WHAT?" A startled Dr. Cypher asked.

Having been caught by surprise, the mad scientist released the Deliverer from his kinetic energy prison, freeing him. The hero started to recover.

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Dr. Cypher deliberately backed toward a wall as fast as he could until he hit it. Taking the brunt of the impact, the Blue Mantis was shocked into dropping his camouflage and releasing his hold on the mad scientist.

"Unnhh," the stunned Blue Mantis moaned. His plight was noticed by the Deliverer.

"BLUE MANTIS," the concerned Deliverer cried out before turning his attention to his old foe.

"If you've hurt him, Cypher, I'll - -," the Deliverer said as he charged toward the mad scientist.

By releasing all of the energy in his inertia field, Dr. Cypher managed to stagger the caped superhero with a single blow.

"Oooff," the Deliverer said.

"YOU'LL *FALL*," a crowing Dr. Cypher exclaimed.

Having recovered from the impact from being hit against the wall, the Blue Mantis made a realization.

When I fought Dr. Cypher the first time, my punches had no effect on him, he thought. But I managed to subdue him by grabbing him from behind while I was camouflaged. That means...

The Blue Mantis turned his attention to the Deliverer.

"Deliverer," the insect-themed superhero called out. "Dr. Cypher is manipulating kinetic energy!"

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"And that's most likely due to that high-tech harness he's wearing," the Deliverer said.

"Because, in my day, he never had those kinds of powers before."

"And since his harness is the *key* to his 'new powers'," the Deliverer said as he fired laser beams from his eyes at the mad scientist's Inertia Harness. The laser beams overheated the harness's circuitry.

"NO," Dr. Cypher exclaimed. "MY INERTIA HARNESS IS RUINED!"

Executing an acrobatic flip, the Blue Mantis landed in front of Dr. Cypher.

"Then, you won't be needing it anymore," the insect-themed superhero said as he removed the defunct Inertia Harness from the mad scientist's person.

"I was so *close* to becoming King of the World," Dr. Cypher muttered. "So *close*!"

The mad scientist looked up at his old foe.

"CURSE YOU, DELIVERER," Dr. Cypher exclaimed. "CURSE YOU!"

"Well, Deliverer, he's your archenemy," the Blue Mantis said. "You want to take care of him?"

"Let's do it together," the Deliverer said with a smile.

The Deliverer and the Blue Mantis both flicked their fingers at Dr. Cypher's forehead at the same time, knocking him unconscious.

"Well, I guess that's that?" The Blue Mantis asked.

"Not quite," the Deliverer answered. "There's still one more thing to do."

The caped superhero frisked Dr. Cypher's body.

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"What are you doing?" The Blue Mantis asked.

"I'm checking his person for hidden devices that he might use to escape once he's in prison," the Deliverer replied.

Soon, he found one, and then quite a few more. Upon finding the hidden devices, the caped superhero seized them and stored them in a secret pocket hidden in his cape.

"The police should have no trouble keeping Cypher in prison, now that I've confiscated all of his hidden escape devices," the Deliverer said before proffering his hand to the Blue Mantis.

"Thank you for your help, Blue Mantis," the Deliverer said as the two superheroes shook hands. "If there's anything you need from me at any time, name it."

"Can you give me a lift to Ditko High School?" The Blue Mantis asked.

"Consider it done, my young friend," the Deliverer answered with a smile, before flying off, carrying the insect-themed superhero with him.

The Deliverer and the Blue Mantis soon arrived at Ditko High School, where the insect-themed superhero soon saw the secluded spot where he changed from his civilian clothes into his costume.

"Drop me off here," the Blue Mantis told the Deliverer, who complied with the request.

The insect-themed superhero looked around and saw that his civilian clothes were right where he had left them.

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Good, my clothes are still there, a relieved Blue Mantis thought.

"I have to be going now, my friend," the Deliverer said. "There is so much about the modern world that I need to learn so that I can adjust to it."

"Farewell," the Deliverer said.

"Farewell," the Blue Mantis said.

The two superheroes shook hands.

The Blue Mantis waved goodbye as the Deliverer flew off.

THE END

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