

# It's A Frame Up

**Did a comic strip portray Johnny and Edgar Winter as "murderous, half-witted, necrophiliac, pig-f\*cking worm-freaks"? Not exactly, says Paul Slade.**

**S**EE IF this rings a bell. Two albino brothers from Texas, one's called Johnny and the other's Edgar. Both have pale skin, red eyes and long white hair. Johnny wears a stovepipe hat.

Sounds like Johnny and Edgar Winter, everybody's favourite pale-of-pigment blues-rock siblings from the Lone Star State, doesn't it? This Johnny and Edgar, however, are monstrous half-human freaks, fathered by a giant worm which raped their mother. Grown to adulthood, the pair indulge in casual, dim-witted murder, screw the barnyard sows (sometimes after killing them first) and sport a mass of slimy green tentacles growing from their chests. Their surname's not Winter. It's Autumn.

The Autumn brothers first appeared back in 1995 as the villains of a DC Comics mini-series starring

**Box frenzy:** Johnny (left) and Edgar were not amused by cartoon parodies.

**WHAT GOES ON!**



cowboy anti-hero Jonah Hex. The five-issue series, *Riders Of The Worm And Such*, was written by Joe Lansdale and drawn by Timothy Truman, both fans of the Winters' music. It's set in 1870s Texas, a violent, sordid world which Lansdale and Truman depict with some relish. Hex closes the final issue by shooting Johnny and Edgar dead in the lair of the



giant worm creature they've served.

A Winters fan alerted Johnny's manager, Teddy Slatius, to the series, and the Winters decided to act. They sued DC Comics in March 1996, claiming the company had defamed the Winters by falsely portraying them as "vile, depraved, stupid, cowardly, sub-human individuals who engage in wanton acts of violence, murder and bestiality for pleasure and who should be killed". There was also a misappropriation charge claiming DC had infringed the Winters' commercial rights by using their names and likenesses without permission.

The case has since bounced around the US legal system, producing four separate verdicts and three appeals. Both sides have their supporters, with the National Organisation For Albinism & Hypopigmentation lining up behind the Winters and the Motion Picture Association Of America behind DC. *Winter v DC Comics* was finally resolved this June, when the California Supreme Court threw out what was left of the brothers' original charges to find in favour of DC. "Although the fictional characters Johnny and Edgar Autumn are less-than-subtle evocations

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of Johnny and Edgar Winter, the books do not depict plaintiffs literally," said Justice Ming Chin.

"They were very disappointed at the court verdict," said Slatius. "But they've put it behind them, and that's it." It's taken eight years, four trials and God knows how much in legal fees, but the

matter is settled. Johnny and Edgar are NOT murderous, half-witted, necrophiliac, pig-fucking worm-freaks and have the court papers to prove it.

One issue, however, remains outstanding. This involves DC's efforts to promote *Riders* through interviews and ads in the comics press that

**Twins of Evil:** the Autumn boys get them some tasty pig's brains.

sometimes used the Winters' real surname. These would have to be resolved by the Court of Appeal in a fresh hearing. While delighted at their victory, Lansdale and Truman are reluctant to comment in detail until this final issue is sorted out. "Those representing us have made the quite understandable recommendation that we don't speak to the press until every aspect of the case is over," Truman told MOJO. "One side of me rails against this, because I have nothing to hide and am proud of the parody we did. However, the side that has been through eight years of this useless shit will honour the wishes of our legal reps."