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COMICS FANZINE

No.137

January  
2016

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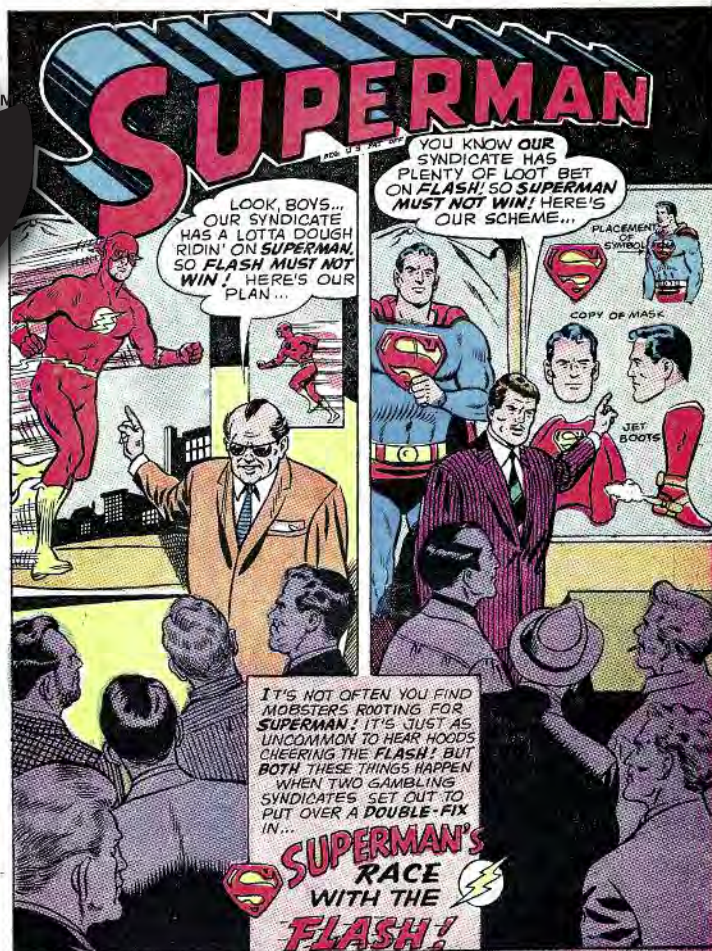
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**On Our Cover:** As it happened, the cover that accompanied one of **Jim Shooter's** earliest comics—and which is probably based on a cover sketch by the then-14-year-old writer of "*Tales of The Legion of Super-Heroes*"—turned out to be the perfect image to accompany our unabashed interviewee's commentary on his early career, which began half a century ago. Pencils by **Curt Swan**; inks by **George Klein**. See the original printed cover of *Adventure Comics* #352 (Jan. 1967) on p. 30 of this issue. Thanks to Doug Martin; the photo of young Jim Shooter first appeared on the writer's blog. [Art TM & © DC Comics.]

**Above:** **Jim Shooter's** script for an early *Superman-vs.-Flash* race, in *Superman* #199 (Aug. 1967), brought gambling and organized crime into the mix for 24 pages. Art by **Curt Swan** & **George Klein**. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]

This issue is dedicated to the memory of  
**Herb Trimpe**



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FIRST PRINTING.





# "It Was 50 Years Ago Today..."

**A**t the very outset of my comics career, and several years before we met even in passing, Jim Shooter made me feel old.

It occurred sometime during the two weeks I worked for "Superman" editor Mort Weisinger. Jim himself, in this issue, is uncertain precisely when he submitted his first script to Mort from Pennsylvania. He thinks it was "sometime in June 1965, or a little later."

As it happens, I'm in a position to attest it couldn't have been any *later* than early July of that year, and may have been late June. For, I arrived in New York City on Monday, June 28th, ready to begin my new job as Weisinger's editorial assistant on the seven "Superman" and "Superboy" titles. Mort speedily arranged a hotel room for me and sent me there, with instructions to start work the next morning. After the July 4th holiday, I worked Tuesday through Friday of the next week, July 6th through 9th... before, already fed up with Weisinger's browbeating, I accepted a job offer from Stan Lee and was at once ordered out of the DC offices.

Sometime during one of those eight workdays, Mort accosted me in the halls and proudly waved in my face a script (it must've consisted of penciled art layouts, as well) that he said was from a youngster... "a kid," "a teenager," I don't recall the precise word... who was clearly way younger than I myself was. (I was 24. Jim, I'd learn later, was still a bit shy of 14!) Weisinger was volubly impressed with the script and clearly intended to buy it, far as I could tell. It pretty much *had* to be Jim's first script for the "Legion of Super-Heroes" series in *Adventure Comics*.

Mort made no comparisons, invidious or otherwise, between Jim's first submitted script and my own initial "Jimmy Olsen" one, written that spring while I was still in Missouri, and which I was to rewrite at some future date. But I can't believe that any comparison at that time would've been worded to my advantage.

How in the world can I—or Jim, for that matter—reconcile the

above not dissimilar memories with Jim's recollection that Mort only purchased that script, plus several others, in one fell swoop in February 1966—at least seven months after I saw it? I won't even try, except to say: "Weird were the ways of Weisinger."

I don't recall hearing anything more about Jim Shooter—including, quite possibly, his very name—during those two truncated weeks; but in the ensuing months, there was much talk in comic fandom circles about the teenage "Superman" writer.

Then, in 1969, Jim was suddenly working on staff at Marvel in some capacity; he gives the how and why this issue. (I don't recall ever knowing before.) We had little contact. I'm sorry to say I never sought him out, and if he made any attempt to engage me in conversation, I don't remember that, either. Of course, if he'd stuck around a while, we definitely would've talked...but then, suddenly, after only three weeks, he was gone, and I didn't know why (and was too preoccupied to try to find out). I've always kind of regretted that. It was a missed opportunity for both of us.

It's well known now that Jim and I had—to put it simply—*differences* back in 1980. But those differences are neither here or there. Jim Shooter is an undeniable comic book talent; and 2015, just ending, is the 50th anniversary of *his* entry into the field as much as it is mine. So I felt it was high time he was featured in *Alter Ego*, and I appreciate his consenting to be interviewed by Richard Arndt.

Their talk was intended to deal with Jim's first decade in comics (1965-75), but the two of them also got off onto the topic of the Marvel years—and I'm proud to present the entirety of their conversation.

Happy 50th to you, Jim—from one who started out in 1965 ten years ahead of you—or ten years *behind* you, depending on how you count it!

Bestest,

*Roy*



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# “The Kid Who Wrote Comic Books” Speaks Out!

## JIM SHOOTER On His First Decade In The Biz—And Then Some!

Interview Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

**INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION:** Jim Shooter was born in Pittsburgh in 1951 and saw his first story written for comic books appear in *Adventure Comics* #346 (July 1966), when he was just fourteen. For the next four years, he drew pencil layouts for every story, including covers, that he wrote for DC Comics. Those stories ranged from the adventures of “The Legion of Super-Heroes” to “Supergirl,” “Superman,” and “Jimmy Olsen,” spread over various titles. He left DC for a short stint at Marvel in 1969, then vanished from the mainstream comic scene for six years. He returned to write for both DC and Marvel in 1975 and became an associate editor at Marvel in 1976. In 1978 he became the editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics and continued in that job until 1987. In 1989, he attempted to actually purchase Marvel but was unsuccessful. In 1989, Shooter launched Valiant Comics, which

revived Dell/Gold Key titles such as *Magnus – Robot Fighter*, *Turok*, and *Doctor Solar*, as well as beginning new titles, including *The Eternal Warrior*, *X-O Manowar*, and the team of *Archer and Armstrong*. Shooter parted ways with Valiant in 1992 and launched *Defiant Comics* in 1993. *Defiant* lasted only a little more than a year. In 1995 Shooter launched yet another comic book company—*Broadway Comics*—but the company folded when it was sold to Golden Books. Since then, Shooter has worked periodically for *Acclaim Comics* (which was a renamed version of *Valiant Comics*), *Marvel Comics*, *DC Comics*, and *Dark Horse Comics*. He also writes a blog on his comic experiences and his views on modern day comics at [www.jimshooter.com](http://www.jimshooter.com). This interview was conducted by phone on February 14, 2015.



### I Was A Teenage “Superman” Writer

Jim Shooter (at top of page) as a teenager—and two prime products from those years: the “Tales of The Legion of Super-Heroes” splash page of *Adventure Comics* #346 (July 1966)—and the lead splash from *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #110 (April '68). The former is the first story Jim ever sold, and was written in the summer of '65, when he was thirteen; the latter was produced as he neared the end of his first tenure as a DC Comics writer, which lasted into 1969. The first yarn was drawn by Sheldon Moldoff from Shooter's layouts; the second was penciled by Curt Swan and inked by George Klein. Thanks to Doug Martin. The photo came, originally, from Shooter's blog, although we picked it up from the Internet. [Pages TM & © DC Comics.]

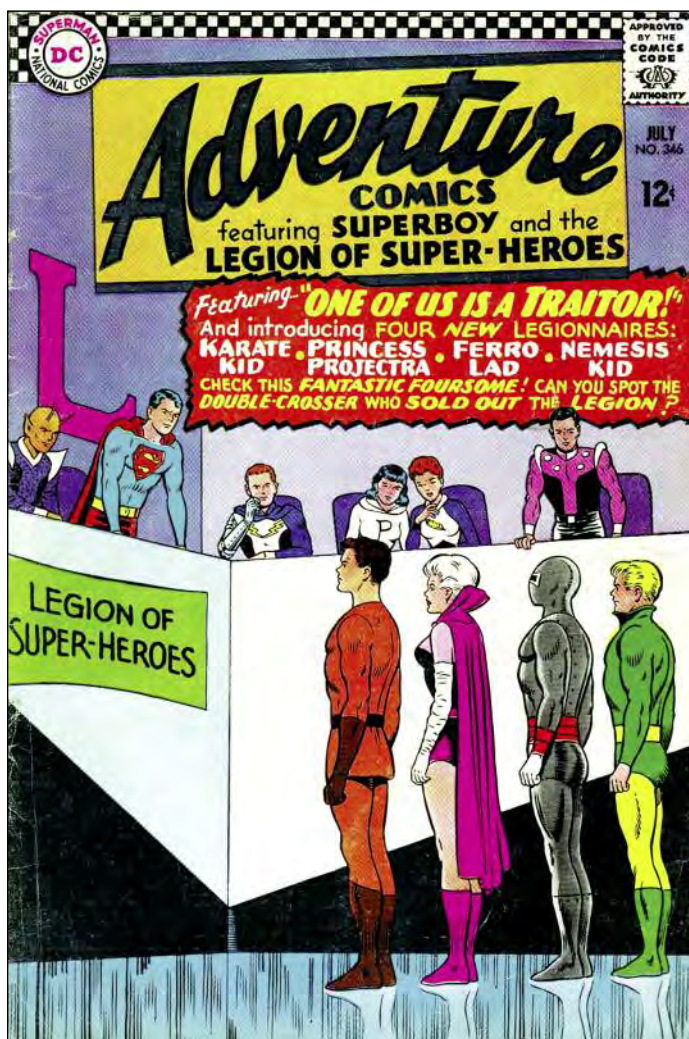


## "I Needed To Make Money For The Family"

**RICHARD ARNDT:** I know you're originally from Pittsburgh, but I don't know much more about your early life beyond that. Would you like to start with that?

**JIM SHOOTER:** Sure. I grew up in a suburb of Pittsburgh. I needed to make money for the family. I read comics when I was a little kid, but I grew bored with them when I was about eight. Then, when I was twelve, in 1963, I was in the hospital for a week and, back then, the kids' ward in hospitals had stacks of old comic books. When I was a kid, all kids read comics. It wasn't a little cult thing, like it is today. I discovered these new-fangled Marvel comics there. I got interested in those Marvel comics and started picking them up when I could.

In those days you could go collect glass pop bottles around the neighborhood and turn them in at stores and get two cents apiece for them. Comics were ten or twelve cents, so it only took five or six bottles to get a comic book. I was fascinated by those stories.



### Off To A Flying Start!

The Curt Swan-penciled, George Klein-inked cover of *Adventure Comics* #346 (July 1966)—the issue in which Jim Shooter, in his first-published (or at least first-written) comic book story, introduced Karate Kid, Princess Projectra, Ferro Lad, and Nemesis Kid. Overseeing both comic and cover was veteran "Superman" line editor Mort Weisinger. Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Then, the summer I was thirteen—somewhere in June 1965, or a little later, after school let out—I wrote and roughly laid out a comic book. I based my work on what I'd been reading recently—those Marvel comics. I knew I couldn't compete with Stan Lee, so I did the story using DC characters. Specifically, I did a "Legion of Super-Heroes" story. The "Legion" was appearing, at the time, in *Adventure Comics*. I tried to write the story like Stan Lee, though, because I thought that DC Comics were kind of boring. I thought that if I could write like Stan, I could sell this stuff to those guys at DC. Of course, when you're thirteen, they're not going to give you a job in a steel mill. If you need to make money, then you've got to make something and sell it. So I made a comic book. I was pretty sure I was going to sell it, so I sent it off to DC Comics.

I've had a conversation with Roy Thomas, who told me he'd started to work at DC for the guy who would turn out to be my editor—Mort Weisinger. He told me that Mort was going around the office showing off this comic that a kid sent in. Mort didn't know how old I was at first. So Mort wrote me a letter and told me that he thought my comic was pretty good, and he mentioned that he thought I could draw features for them someday, based on my layouts. He told me to send him another story, so I sent him a two-part story, which was kind of rare for DC at the time. I was taking a chance there. So I turned that in to him in September of that year, when I turned fourteen.



Curt Swan

## "[Mort Weisinger] Wanted To Buy Those 'Legion' Stories"

On February 10, 1966, I got a call from Mort. He said he wanted to buy those "Legion" stories that I'd sent in, and that he wanted me to write a "Supergirl" story. He wanted twelve pages and he wanted it in a week. So I wrote a "Supergirl" story called "Brainiac's Blitz!" that appeared in *Action Comics* #339 [July 1966]. It was a back-up story, which was fairly common for titles in those days. Later that month, that first "Legion" story appeared in *Adventure Comics* #346. That issue also introduced four new Legionnaires—Ferro Lad, Nemesis Kid, Princess Projectra, and Karate Kid, which I created.

After that, I just became a regular writer at DC. Every time I finished a story, Mort wanted me to do another one. He bought them all. He saw problems in some of them. One thing he said to me was that "You need to learn to spell." Things like that. But basically I never had to do any rewrites or corrections. I became the regular scribe on "The Legion of Super-Heroes." It was about that time that he found out I was fourteen.

He told me, "I want you to fly up to New York and spend a few days here." I hemmed and hawed, and he asked me, "How old are you?" I said that I was fourteen. [laughs] He said, "Put your mother on the phone!" [mutual laughter] So I had to wait until school was over, early in June, and I had to bring my mother with me on my first business trip to New York, which was maybe a little weird.



George Klein

Probably from the 1940s or '50s. Courtesy of the DC Comics Database.



Mort Weisinger

Undated pic from the Mort Weisinger Photo File at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming. Thanks to MW's daughter, Joyce Kaffel.



## Four On The Floor

This trio of pages from *Adventure Comics* #346 introduced Princess Projectra, Nemesis Kid, Ferro Lad, and Karate Kid, all instantaneous Jim Shooter additions to the series officially titled "Tales of The Legion of Super-Heroes." The Grand Comics Database credits scripter Jim also with "pencils"... with "inks" by Sheldon Moldoff. Since some of that data was confirmed by Shooter, this may indicate that editor Weisinger had Moldoff ink (though undoubtedly with some additional finish-penciling) directly over, or else "lightboxing," Jim's layouts, which JS probably hadn't intended to be used as actual artwork. Or, perhaps more likely, Moldoff merely used Jim's penciled layouts as a general guide.

(Far right:) 1960s fan Irene Vartanoff tells us that, in 1966, Weisinger sent her Jim's script/layouts for this story (which were done on 8½" by 11" paper) because of her letter reprinted on p. 7 of this A/E issue. It was recently returned to Jim, via former DC president (and "Legion" scripter) Paul Levitz. Irene is currently the author of the novels *Temporary Superheroine* and *Crisis at Comicon*, available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

(Too bad those breakdowns themselves probably no longer exist! And it would be interesting to see the pay records for that story, to see to what extent Moldoff was reimbursed for any penciling. Jim states that he received no extra money for his layouts.) Thanks to Jim Kealy & Doug Martin for the scans. [TM & © DC Comics.]



**Sheldon Moldoff**

In this early-1940s photo, the late artist is closer in time to the year (1965-66) when he inked *Adventure Comics* #346 than he is in the numerous pics taken of him at comics conventions in the 1990s and after. Photo sent to RT by "Shelly" circa 2000, for an interview in A/E, Vol. 3, #4.



**Roy Thomas**

at the Marvel Comics offices in late 1965 or early 1966. Courtesy of Flo Steinberg.





### Shooter's Blitz

(Above:) The splash and an, ahem, action page from Jim's first "Supergirl" story, which appeared in *Action Comics* #339 (July 1966)—the same month as his "Legion" debut in *Adventure* #346, even though the "Supergirl" assignment was made to Shooter half a year after he'd submitted the "Legion" script. Art by Jim Mooney, though doubtless based in part on JS layouts. Thanks to Doug Martin.

[TM & © DC Comics.]



**Jim Mooney**

Thanks to Eddy Zeno. See A/E #133 for a lengthy interview with the late artist.



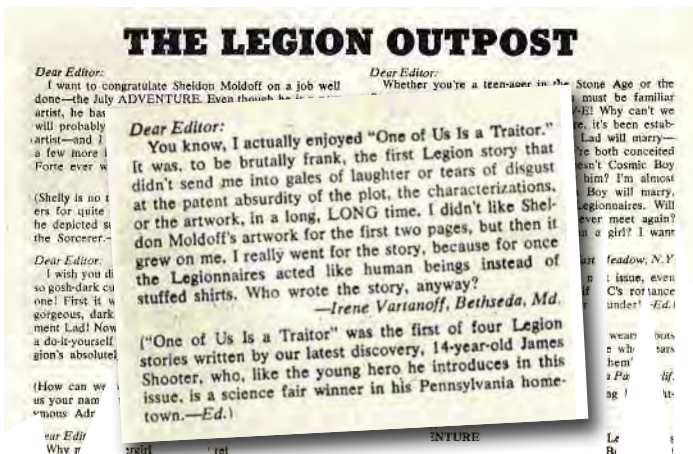
### Bulletproof Over Broadway

A black-&-white publicity shot for the 1966 Broadway musical *It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's Superman!*, which Mort Weisinger took a teenage Jim Shooter to see. Actor Bob Holiday was the original "Man of Steel," but the play's top-listed star was Jack Cassidy. [Publicity photo © DC Comics.]

DC put us up at the Lafayette Hotel, wined us and dined us, and took us to see the Broadway musical *It's a Bird... It's a Plane... It's Superman!* Mort had apparently arranged the license for *Superman* to the Hal Prince organization for that play. The theatre people knew Mort, and he was kind of a big shot there. So after the play we went to the stage door and they saw it was Mort and let us in. We met all the people in the cast. They showed us how they made Superman fly. I got the show's star, Bob Holiday's, autograph on a picture. It was pretty great! It was like a dream experience.

Around the time he found out that I was fourteen, Mort told me, "Look, I don't care if you're a kid. I'm going to treat you like any other writer." I said, "Fine." But what that meant was that he was going to be abusive. [much laughter] Which he was. He'd look at my layouts and yell at me on the phone. "What is in this guy's hand? Is that supposed to be a carrot or a gun?" Stuff like that. He used a lot of foul language. He'd call me a "f---ing retard" or just stupid. But he kept buying everything I wrote. He would call me every Thursday night, right after the *Batman* TV show got over. That was our schedule to call, partly because he wanted to make





### Letters We Get!

Jim Kealy sent us the "Legion Outpost" letters page from *Adventure Comics* #349 (Oct. 1966), which features this letter from reader Irene Vartanoff, who later was on staff at Marvel and is married to erstwhile Marvel writer and editor Scott Edelman. The answer to that letter, probably written by assistant editor E. Nelson Bridwell, mentions the fact that the "Legion of Super-Heroes" story in issue #346 was written by "our latest discovery, 14-year old James Shooter." Clearly, editor Mort Weisinger was proud of his "latest discovery"! (See p. 5 for related info on Jim's first "Legion" story.) [© DC Comics.]

sure I'd watched *Batman*. He'd also call me whenever he needed to, of course. But that was our scheduled call. We'd go over the scripts and layouts, and he'd yell at me about them. Pretty much every conversation ended with me saying, "I guess I just won't do this anymore." And he'd say, "Well, I guess I'll give you one more shot." He'd call me his "charity case," because he knew my family was poor.

**RA:** You mentioned earlier that you had to earn a living at a very early age for a kid. Was there any particular reason that you yourself needed to do that, besides the fact that you and your family were poor?

**SHOOTER:** My father was a steelworker. The steelworkers were the last big union to get a good contract. In those days, the steel industry was in a boom-and-bust cycle. The contract between the union and the management came up every two years. Because the people who were buying the steel were afraid that there would be a strike, they would stockpile steel. The mills would be busy as hell right up until the time for either a contract renewal or a strike. So, even if the steelworkers signed a contract and there was no strike, because so much steel had been stockpiled, the price of steel would drop and suddenly there was no work! People were laid off, sometimes for months. It was bad for the steel industry but also bad for the steelworkers. It was just a repeating cycle. Eventually, the Army, the manufacturers, and other big steel purchasers would buy steel from Japan and Germany, who were selling below cost because they were trying to capture market share. The steel industry went into a tremendous decline. There were more and more layoffs. More and more times when you were not called back to work.

My father, who was a hell of a man, got jobs where he could when there was a strike or no steel work. He would mow people's lawns and do what he could to make money. There just wasn't enough work like that to make *enough* money for a family. We didn't live fancy. We lived in a tiny house, but it was still very hard to get by. We were, most of the time, pretty desperate.

So I figured, little thirteen-year-old Jimmy, that I should help bring in some money. That would solve the problem! [laughs] That

doesn't usually work. Kids' first jobs are mowing lawns or something like that, but I did my best. It helped a little. There were times, though, that it was too little, too late. Still, it's like I worked my way through high school. I'd go to school all day. I was trying to earn a scholarship, because I knew that was the only way I'd be going to college. I'd work late into the night on the comics, because if you missed a deadline with Mort—Oh, my God! [laughs] He would just kill you.

This will crack you up. I would be getting down to the wire on a deadline. I'd finish the script and layouts late at night. I'd walk down to the trolley station, which was about a mile away, and catch a trolley into Pittsburgh. I'd go to the main post office, which was open 24/7, and mail the package airmail special delivery, which was 55¢, to New York. I thought that price was outrageous! It usually got there the next day. This was way before Federal Express or anything like that.

Then it got even worse than that. Mort and I would go over everything I did, and he would always yell at me, yet he paid me and used it all. He almost never touched a word. But it got to the point where I was afraid to put anything on the paper, because I knew that whatever I put down there Mort would consider wrong. Then the fear of missing the deadline would eclipse the fear of putting something on paper. [laughs] The last few days before the deadline, I would be working like a madman. I would take days off from school, stay up all night, I would do whatever I had to do to get that story done. I would drink a lot of coffee. I found out about this stuff called No-Doze, which was pure caffeine, and pop them just to stay awake all night. It got to the point where, on the due date, I would be up all night, finish the thing, drive my brother's car to the airport, and then get on an airplane to New York. I'd go to the DC offices and hand the receptionist the package, then run away before anybody, especially Mort, could see me and go right back to the airport to fly home.

If that sounds extravagant, to fly to New York, well, at the time the airlines had this thing called student standby, which cost \$25 round trip from Pittsburgh to New York.

**RA:** Boy, I wish there was something like that now!

**SHOOTER:** When they raised the price to \$28 a trip, I was outraged. The bus from Newark Airport to New York cost, just like the Post Office, fifty-five cents. Sometimes, when the deadline was the next day, I even resorted to traveling to the airport, finding a passenger who was going to New York and asking them, "Would you drop this in the post office in New York for me?" They always did. Those were exciting times!

I used to go up to New York fairly frequently and spend a couple of days in a hotel because Mort wanted to yell at me in person. Today, if a 15-year-old kid gets on a plane by himself,



### Another Man Of Steel

Jim's steelworker father, Kenneth Shooter. From JS blog. Unfortunately, we do not have a photo of Jim's mother.





### Fanning The Flame

(Above:) In his 1997 book *Fandom's Finest Comics*, Bill Schelly writes: "In 1967, I discovered that Jim Shooter, who was already writing for DC Comics, lived in a nearby neighborhood [another Pittsburgh suburb]. Jim briefly flirted with involvement in comics fandom, preparing this splash for [the "Falcon, Knight of the Quest"] strip that he would write and draw. He didn't finish the strip, however; this splash saw print in [my fanzine] *Sense of Wonder* #10 (1971)." [© Jim Shooter.]

(Above right:) Jim also drew the cover for *Sense of Wonder* #2 (Aug. 1967), perhaps before he began work on "Falcon." [© Jim Shooter.]

(Right:) Likewise in '67, Schelly and Shooter co-created "Brimstone," a character who appeared in *Sense of Wonder* #4 (1968). [© Jim Shooter & Bill Schelly.]



flies to New York by himself, and checks into a hotel by himself, the parents would be arrested. Such a thing is just impossible nowadays. But in those days, nobody batted an eye. Fifteen-year-old kid checking into a hotel room—that's fine.

### "I Used To Do The Layouts For All My Stories, Panel By Panel"

**RA:** If you had cash, that was all they cared about. Nowadays, that wouldn't be legal because you need a driver's license to check into most hotels and a 15-year-old wouldn't have one—not a legal one, anyway.

**SHOOTER:** Here's a little-known fact—I used to do the layouts for all my stories, panel by panel. The artists liked that, because I'd done the visual thinking for them, and, even if what I did sucked, they could see my intent, my point, and they could figure out what





### Comic Book Covers That Pack A Punch

Neal Adams' powerful cover for *Action Comics* #361 (March 1968) fronted a "Superman" story written by Jim Shooter and drawn by Al Plastino. Reportedly, editor Weisinger originally disparaged Adams' covers on other DC comics—but then, after giving him a shot at one from his own line, thereafter used him as often as possible. This cover was probably (at least loosely) based on a sketch by Shooter.

[TM & © DC Comics.]



**Neal Adams**  
as a relative newcomer to comic books in the latter 1960s.

I'd mean and come pretty close to it while drawing or improving on it. But the other thing I had to do was provide two cover sketches, in full color. So here's little Jimmy at home in his bedroom with his drawing board on his lap, drawing a cover, inking in the logo, even doing the Comics Code Seal so that everything looked right. All in pencil. Then I would color it in colored pencil. I had to do two of these for every story. The first thing Mort always asked for wasn't the plot or the story but "What's the cover?" If you didn't have a cover idea, you weren't going to sell the story.

So I'd do these two cover layouts and Mort would judge which was better and that would be the cover. The other was used as the splash page. In those days, at DC, the splash page often telegraphed a scene in the story. It didn't actually start the story. Mort always referred to the splash page as the "second cover." I was lucky because a lot of my sketches Mort gave to Neal Adams.

No matter how ugly my sketches were, Neal would know what I meant and he would draw it brilliantly. I'd look at the finished cover and say, "Yeah, that's what I meant!" [laughs]

So, one time, I sent in this cover sketch and my story had a thing that would turn people into glass [*Adventures Comics* #372 (Sept. 1968)] and Superboy had been turned into glass. This guy wearing a hood like an executioner was shattering Superboy with a sledge hammer. On my cover sketch I'd colored Superboy like glass. Whites and blues. Mort objected to that on the grounds that up until that point Superboy or Superman had never appeared on a cover in anything but their super-costumes' color—red, blue, and yellow. If Superman was at the center of the Earth or at the center of the sun, he appeared in his costume's natural color. But Carmine Infantino, who wasn't the publisher yet but was the DC art director, loved the idea and overruled Mort. When I was up at the office the next time, Carmine gushed over that cover.

**RA:** Do you remember the pay for doing layouts?

**SHOOTER:** There was no pay for layouts. I got paid for writing. Nothing for the cover designs either.

**RA:** I don't think cover layouts were paid for until the early 1970s. I recall Rich Buckler mentioning a run-in he had with Julie Schwartz about that.

Every writer and artist I've ever interviewed has that moment when they realized that they don't have to simply admire the artists or writers that they've been reading. They come to realize that "I can do that!" Clearly, that realization came at a very early age for you.

**SHOOTER:** In my case, it was just youthful stupidity. I was a kid.

It wasn't a big ego thing. The "I can do this" was just my not knowing any better.

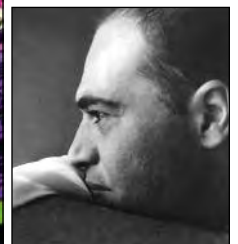
**RA:** I don't mean that it took a big ego to believe that, but just the realization that you had the skills to actually do that.



### Shattered Like A Glass Gobbledygook

The atypical coloring of Jim's sketch for the cover for *Adventure Comics* #372 (Sept. 1968) was rejected by Weisinger (see the interview for why), but the editor was overruled by editorial director Carmine Infantino—and Neal Adams' cover was colored just as its layout artist had hoped.

[TM & © DC Comics.]



### Carmine Infantino

Photo by Bill Crawford, as per Vanguard's 2001 book *The Amazing World*

of Carmine Infantino: *An Autobiography*, by the artist with J. David Spurlock. [© the respective copyright holders.]





### "Such A Perfect Blendship..."

(Above:) Jim's premier "Superman & Batman" effort came in *World's Finest Comics* #162 (Nov. 1966), in a tale with art by Curt Swan & George Klein—perhaps the first time Shooter wrote the Caped Crusader. This series and the next were also edited by Mort Weisinger. Thanks to Doug Martin. The quote above, incidentally, is a lyric from the pop tune "Friendship"—used in the late '40s and '50s as the theme song for the radio/TV series *My Friend Irma*.

(Above right:) First story in *Superboy*: #155 (Jan. '67), with art by George Papp. Thanks to Doug Martin for both scans. [TM & © DC Comics.]

(Right:) Collector Bob Bailey sent us this 1967 letter from artist Curt Swan to young Jim Shooter, which appeared on the Curt Swan Facebook page. [© Estate of Curt Swan.]



DEAR JIM —

AUG. 22 '67

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TAKING TIME TO WRITE AND THE VERY NICE COMMENTS & COMPLIMENTS. IT'S HARD TO 'CRITICISE' ANOTHER'S DRAWINGS BY CORRESPONDENCE AS THERE ARE MANY FACTS THAT REQUIRE STUDIED SCRUTINY AND DETAILED DELIBERATION. THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS STILL TO BE 'REMARKED' BY YOURS TRULY THAT I MUST WONDER IF EVER I WILL BE COMPLETELY COMPLACENT ABOUT MY OWN EFFORTS. PERHAPS THIS IS ONE TRUE PLEASURE OF CREATIVITY: THE CONTINUOUS SURPRISE OF 'NEW' DISCOVERIES. IT SEEMS TO ME THERE ARE TOO FEW PRIMARY INGREDIENTS TO ACQUIRING ANY SMALL MEASURE OF SKILL, AND THAT IS PRACTICE AND PATIENCE. HOW MANY TIMES ONE HEARS THIS AS ONE STUMBLE ALONG!! ONLY THROUGH PRACTICE WILL YOU SEE YOUR PREVIOUS FAULTS. IT'S WHEN THIS PATIENCE MUST BE CALLED UPON. (ASK AN OLD CROOK ADVICE AND YOU GOT CROOKY MATHEMATICS!) HOWEVER, IT CAN BE DONE AS PROVEN BY MYSELF AND MANY OTHERS. STILL, THERE'S NOTHING LIKE SCHOOL TO LAY DOWN FORMULA FROM WHICH YOU BUILD YOUR PERSONAL IDEAS AND INSIGHTS.

YOUR SKETCHES 'READ' VERY GOOD. HOWEVER, I FEEL YOU'RE BURDENING YOURSELF WITH TOO MUCH DETAIL AND SHORTCHANGING YOURSELF ON LAYOUT PRACTICE! (I SHOULD KNOW! THIS IS ONE AREA I MUST STRUGGLE WITH CONSTANTLY. I'M VERY KLEAN IN THIS AND IT GETS TOUGH AS THE YEARS SLIP BY. GET SOME BOOKS AT THE LIBRARY OR VISIT AN ART STORE FOR MATERIAL ON PICTURE COMPOSITION AND DESIGN. WHEN I COULD RECOMMEND SOMETHING SPECIFIC. ANOTHER AREA I PROBABLY SHOULD KEEP OUT OF: WRITING. BUT SINCE WE'RE DEBATING 'ROUNDRINGS' ON YOUR STORY-PLAT, MAKE NOTE OF PICTURE HIGH-LIGHTS. UNFORTUNATELY, MOST STORIES BECOME SO INVOLVED THEY REQUIRE MUCH VERBAGE TO EXPLAIN AWAY NOTHING. SIMPLICITY OF PLOT WITH LOTS OF ACTION WOULD BE A PLEASANT PLATFORM WHERE ALL CONCERNED WOULD GAIN PLEASURE. CARNegie INFANTINO IS EXCELLENT IN STORY LAY-OUT AND I'M SURE HE WOULD BE HAPPY TO PASS ON SOME IDEAS IF YOU WERE TO WRITE HIM AT NATIONAL TO END THIS BLATHER, I'D LIKE TO COMPLIMENT YOU ON GOOD STORY SENSE AND STORY-TELLERS HAVE NO PICTURE-SENSE AND LOAD UP A SCRIPT WITH WORDS WHEN ACTUALLY THE ART TELLS MUCH AND MAKES THE CAPTIONS OR BALLOONS REDUNDANT. AS AN EXAMPLE:—UPON RE-READING THE ABOVE, DECIDED AGAINST THIS!



KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, JIM. YOU'LL MAKE THE HEIGHTS, I'LL BET ON IT. Sincerely, Curt

**SHOOTER:** Well, I thought I could do a reasonable job based on what I'd learned and what I liked in reading Stan [Lee]'s comics. I really did analyze his work. Some kids would read a comic and throw it down. I actually sat there and studied it. Once I got an idea of what I thought he was doing, that's when I thought that I could do this thing. I actually tried to figure out what Stan was doing and why he was doing it. When I wrote that first "Legion" story, what I found out was that most people who sent in submissions, back in the day, would write in their first story something that would change the direction of the book, like "kill Aunt May."

Now, you can't do that. You have to write really good stories that don't have the forced drama of killing Aunt May. What an editor



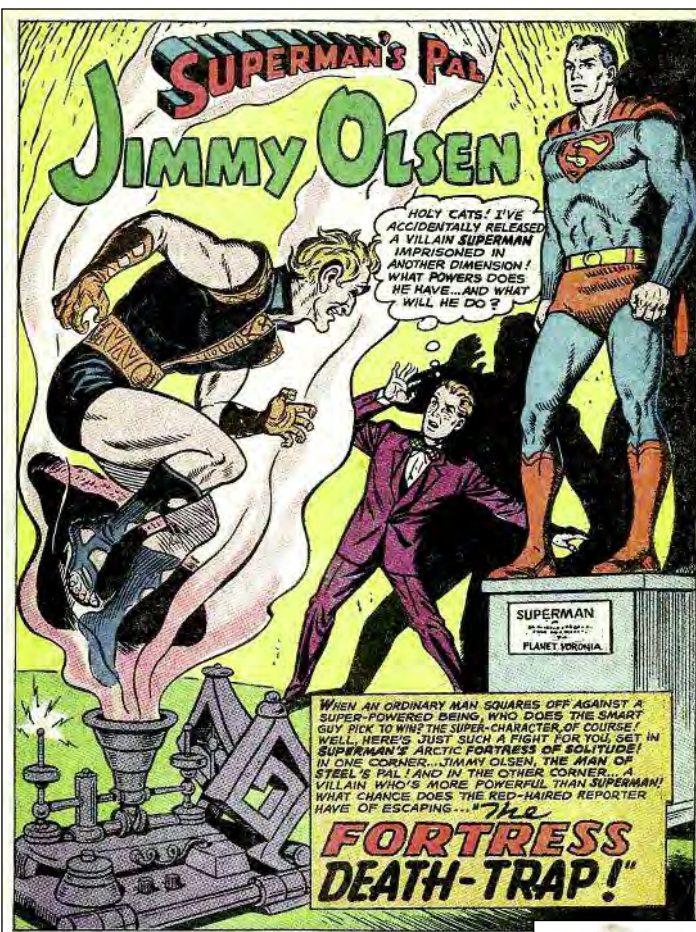
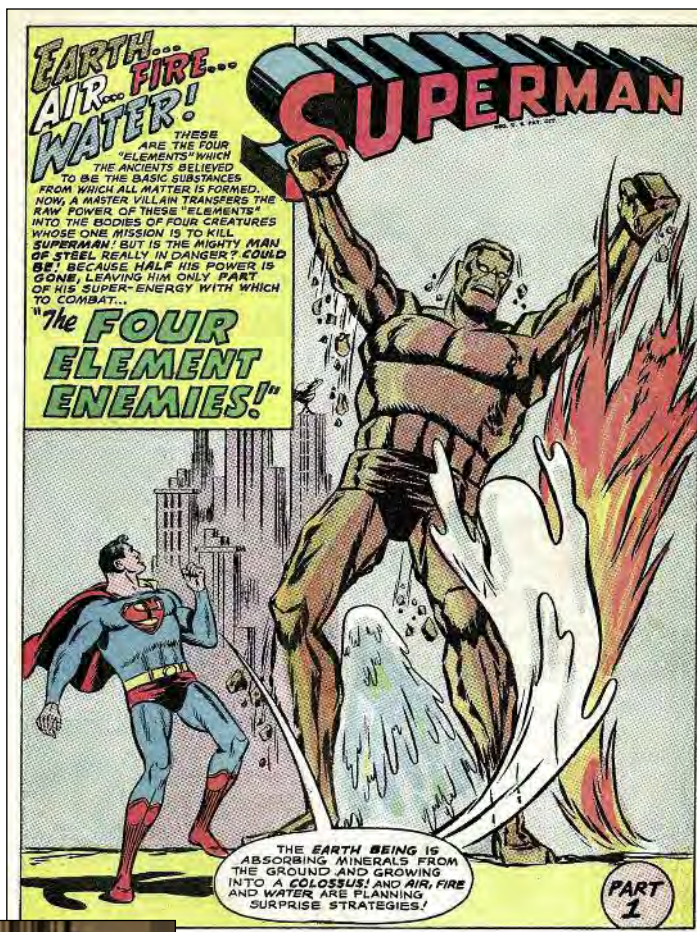
**George Papp**

At least, we hope this photo we found on the Internet is the George Papp who illustrated the first "Green Arrow" stories and later drew "Superboy" for years.









### Two For The Show

The cover date "Oct. 1966" (meaning the mag went on sale in July or August) saw the debuts of Jim Shooter on two DC series: *Superman* #190, an issue-length story with full art by Wayne Boring... and *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #97, drawn by Pete Costanza. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]



#### Wayne Boring

The definitive "Superman" artist of the 1950s—though by the 1960s his star had fallen at DC as Curt Swan's had risen.

wanted was a writer who could write a good story *without* killing Aunt May. Then maybe they'd be interested. So the first story I did—I admit, I thought the Legion Clubhouse thing was stupid! Did I change it? Noooo. I wanted to sell my story. I wanted to fit in with what was going on in that book. Maybe bring a little bit of hip sensitivity to it.

My first thought was that these other writers—Otto Binder, Edmond Hamilton—were terrible. Their stuff felt so out-dated. But the

more I got into it, I realized that these guys were geniuses! They were great! They were older guys, and they weren't real hip or in touch with teenage wants or whatever. I wanted to be more contemporary. At DC they used to call me their Marvel writer. DC did not like Marvel! [laughs] So that was really an insult.

The DC guys would discuss Marvel comics and dismiss them as ugly. "Why would anybody buy this? Look at the color. It's terrible!" They actually started thinking that, if they had worse art, the books would sell better. I remember thinking, "What's wrong with these guys?" One picture they looked at featured *The X-Men's* Angel flying, and he's taking such joy in flight. Their opinion was that Superman flies all the time. That Marvel page was stupid! Why waste a whole page on something like that?

But that sort of thing is not stupid. That was both the difference

and the source of the trouble between DC and Marvel. Superman flies all the time and nobody thinks anything about it! No reaction from readers. But wouldn't it be *wonderful* to fly? That's what Stan and the Marvel artists were doing. They were showing readers that sense of how wonderful it would be to fly! Of course, I couldn't say that because I was a kid. I learned to keep my mouth shut around Mort.

They hated things like, in a *Spider-Man* comic, there would be two pages of Peter Parker talking to Aunt May. Their thoughts on that were that kids would be bored out of their minds! The reality was that that sort of thing made the characters real. The DC editors had all the wrong sensibilities for the 1960s.

Around the time that Steranko started, they started believing that maybe the appeal was all those slanted panels. So they started telling Curt Swan, who was a great storyteller, to start doing the crazy, slanted panel pages. Slanted panels may have worked for Steranko or Adams or Gene Colan, but it was the wrong approach for Curt Swan. I didn't say anything to the contrary. You just didn't say anything to Mort.

They then thought that Marvel's coloring, which to their eyes was garish, was "it," so they actually started running color in the gutter! Colored the gutters. [laughs] Go-Go checks. Really?



#### Pete Costanza

1940 photo from his days as an artist for Fawcett Publications. For full pic, see FCA section of A/E #126; thanks to P.C. Hamerlinck.





### A New Slant On Things

Perhaps finishing penciler/inker Winslow Mortimer was following a new DC dictum, but we suddenly find slanted panel borders in *Adventure Comics* #373 (Oct. 1968). Pretty wild, huh? Script & layouts by Jim Shooter. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]

## "Here's My Stan Lee Cover Story"

**RA:** I spoke to Stan Goldberg once, and he told me that Stan liked colors on the cover that would really pop out.

**SHOOTER:** Here's my Stan Lee cover story. Before I was editor-in-chief, what happened was, whoever was editor, or probably John Verpoorten, the production manager, would look at the pen & ink art, then have the art photostated and have the stat sent to the house colorist, whose name was George Roussos. George had been an artist almost since the beginning of comics. He remembered Stan when Stan was just starting out. He was a great man. So George got this cover and sometimes, without context, he didn't know what was going on in the cover. He'd color it anyway, and then it would go out.

When I became editor, I went to George and said, "George, from now on when you get a cover to color, come to me and we'll discuss it." George was annoyed at that and asked what for. I said that I might be able to tell him some things that he would otherwise not know. I told him, "I'm not complaining about your color, but sometimes you may not understand what the artist's intent was and I do, because I'm involved with the entire

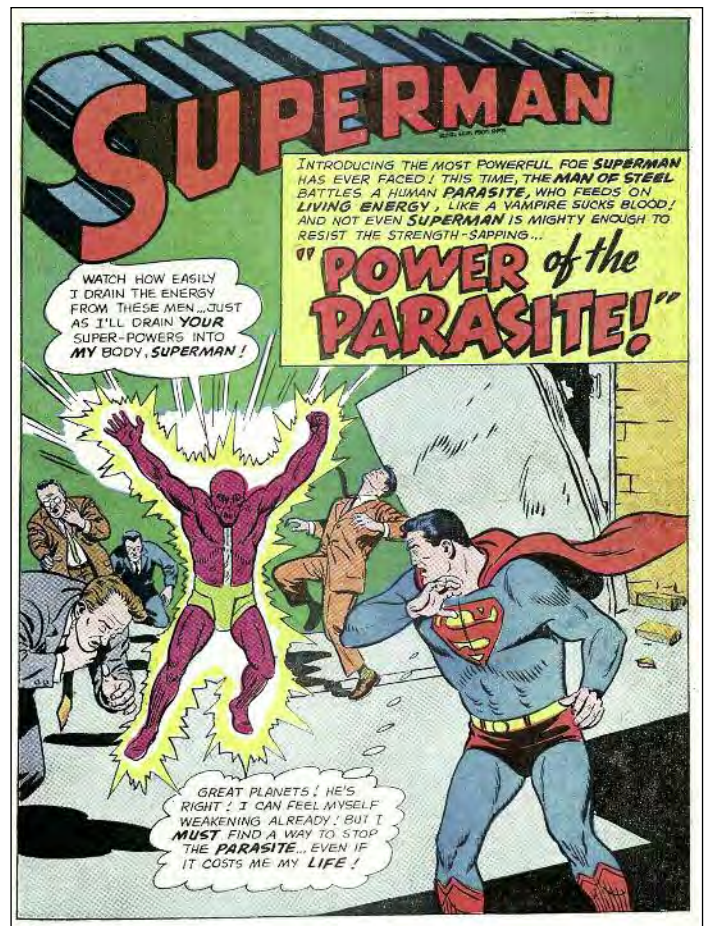


Winslow Mortimer

production line." So he grudgingly does this, and the first couple of times, it went okay. Then a *Master of Kung Fu* cover comes in and George brings it over to me. It was a very artsy cover. So I said I wanted Shang-Chi all golden and red, his colors, and the background a vivid green and make the logo yellow. George says, "We can't make the cover green." I said, "What do you mean?" "We can't make the cover green. Stan says no green covers." I said, "George, don't worry about it. It's on me. Make the background green." He storms away.

A few minutes later, Marie Severin comes in and says, "What are you doing to George?" I said "What do you mean? I told him what to do on a cover." She says, "You told him to make the cover green! You can never make a cover green!" I said, "You know, this is my job. If Stan fires me, that's fine. I'm not laying George out to fry." She replies, "You're just crazy!" She storms off. George comes back and says, "I'm not going to do this. I can't do this." I say, "George, make the cover green or go home." Off he goes.

The cover came out just like I imagined it. It looked great. George is going, "Stan's going to hate this. He's going to throw a fit." Well, first of all, Stan wasn't the boss anymore by then. Second, the cover looked great and Stan was going to love it. I told

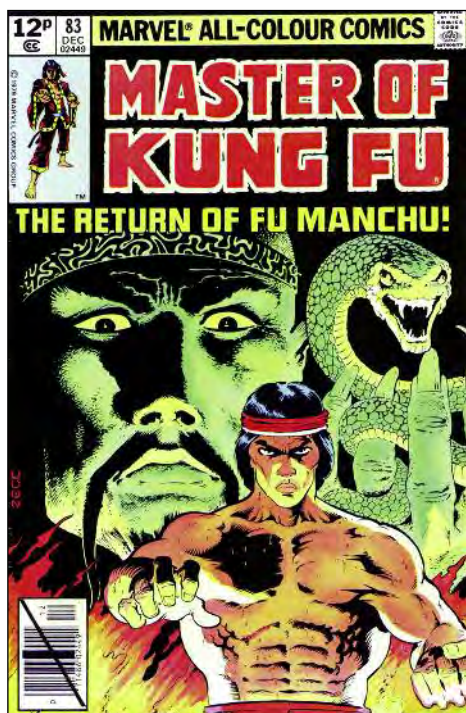


### Bad Is As Bad Does!

Jim Shooter created The Parasite to face Superman in *Action Comics* #340 (Aug. 1966), as visually imagined by Al Plastino. The Parasite became one of the Man of Steel's more memorable foes. Thanks to Doug Martin.

[TM & © DC Comics.]





**Stan Lee & Jim Shooter**  
back in the nigh-decade when JS was  
Marvel's editor-in-chief.



**George Roussos**



**Mike Zeck**

### Master Of Color Fu

We couldn't locate a *Master of Kung Fu* cover that matched Jim's description 100%—"arty," with a yellow logo and green background, and Shang-Chi in his trademark red-and-yellow—but both of these covers have green backgrounds, and one of them boasts a yellow *story* title, anyway, beneath a red title logo. If the cover in question is a *third* one, we hope Jim—or somebody!—will set us straight. Whatever Stan Lee may have said at some stage about coloring of covers, and however cover colorist George Roussos may have interpreted it, these two artistic tours de force by Mike Zeck (dated Dec. 1979 & May '81, respectively) turned out pretty well, we think! [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

George, "Come with me." We both walked to Stan's office. The door was open, as it always was. George wouldn't come into the office. He was afraid. I asked Stan's opinion of the cover and showed it to him. He says "Great!" I walked back out and handed the cover to George, who says, "But he hates green!" I said, "Let me tell you what he hates. What he hates is when a colorist uses a kind of medium color, like green or brown, and nothing in the cover pops against that color. The yellow logo on this pops against that green background and the gold and red of Shang-Chi pops against this green." After that, George and I were a lot closer. He started coming in and explaining some unusual cover effects that he liked to try out. They were great ideas! George was a good man and we were friends until he passed away. That's my Stan Lee cover story.

Stan learned his color schemes from Martin Goodman. You make the background dark or you make the background light. If the background's light, the logo color is dark. If it's dark, the logo is light. If it was a yellow logo, the shadow in the background might be red, against a dark background. When you do a medium color, and when I say medium, we're talking about the value here—the medium value on the color scale. It can be tricky. You have to make certain you've got hue contrast. Such as red and gold against green. Stan made his green rule because people didn't understand the logic that the logo has to be on the top and the color has to be able to register on the rack. That can happen all kinds of ways, but because somewhere he had a hard time getting that done with the green and the brown, he made these rules to not use those colors.

So back to my life through high school at DC. About the time I graduated from high school, I decided that I'd had about enough from Mort. One thing I will say for Mort, and that's that he taught me comic book logic. If you worked for Mort Weisinger, you

understood the logic! I will never take that away from Mort. He wasn't nice, but he taught me so much. It was unbelievable. Not only did he teach me a lot about writing, but, when I went to the office, he would set me down with this guy, DC's production manager and a wonderful man, and they would teach me about production. All the steps right up to printing. Mort would set me down next to George Klein, and he would teach me all about inking. I'd write to Curt Swan and we'd talk about storytelling.

### "Hi, This Is Jim Shooter. I'd Like To Talk To Stan Lee"

**RA:** *Would the production manager have been Sol Harrison?*

**SHOOTER:** No, no, not him. What *was* his name?? [A/E  
**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Maybe Jack Adler?*]

So I was getting all these lessons from Mort. He'd talk to me about licensing. About merchandising. He'd talk about media. Nelson Bridwell said he was grooming me to become like his successor. The good news was that I walked out of there knowing about the whole process of comics. More than most writers bothered to learn.

What I did next, though, was actually kind of stupid, perhaps the stupidest thing I've ever done.

I had a scholarship to NYU [New York University]. A full scholarship that even gave me \$200 a year to see Broadway plays—a cultural stipend. I was one of two "university scholars." So I was going to go to NYU. But I was eighteen years old and I had all kinds of debt. My mother never paid my taxes on the comic work, so I was in hock to the government and elsewhere. So, even though I had the scholarship and school was paid for, I still had to work.



After working my way through high school, I wasn't sure I could easily work my way through college, at least doing writing. So I asked Mort if there was some kind of half-time thing that I could do in the office... assistant editor or something... and he said, "No! I need you to write!"

I thought, "You've been yelling at me for four years about what a terrible writer I am, but you need me to write!" Then comes the stupid part. I decided that I was going to try Marvel, and I flew to New York. Then I call Marvel, [laughs] who knew nothing about me, and I say, "Hi, this is Jim Shooter. I'd like to talk to Stan Lee." For some reason, they put me through. I don't think anybody got to talk to Stan that way but, for some reason, I got through. I guess I sounded adult or something.

Stan asks me what he could do for me. I told him I'd been writing for DC Comics for 4½ years and that I'd really rather write for Stan. Stan's reply was, "We don't really need a DC Comics writer." I said, "Look, just let me come and talk to you for a minute." He said, "I'll give you fifteen minutes." So I went up to Marvel and started talking to Stan. He explained, "We don't like DC Comics. We don't like the writers that work there." So I told him, "At DC Comics they make fun of me. They call me the 'Marvel' writer because I write stories differently from them. It's not that I'm as good as you, but I learned to write from reading your stories." So we start talking about story and character and how to make a story more real or compelling. My fifteen minutes turned into two hours, and he hired me on staff.

The trouble with that was that it was a full-time position. There was no part-time to it. There was nothing I could do part-time during the day.

**RA:** *Hard to take a full slate of classes that way and still retain your scholarship.*

**SHOOTER:** Exactly. So I turned down NYU and a full scholarship to start work at Marvel. That was in 1969. My job there lasted about three weeks. [much laughter] Not because I couldn't do the work. Stan was thrilled with me. I was doing fine with the work. My trouble was I couldn't find a place to live. I had no money. I went for a couple of weeks with very little food. I just had no money. It got to the point where I just couldn't go on. There were only five or six people who worked in the Marvel offices at the time. Stan, Marie Severin, a secretary whose name I think was Holly, Morrie Kuramoto, and maybe somebody else. It might have been Herb Trimpe. Anyway, it was a very small crew. Oh, Allyn Brodsky, who was no relation to Sol Brodsky, was also there. [A/E **EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Jim has apparently forgotten that I was also part of Marvel's small staff at that time—and, for some reason, he states that John Romita "wasn't working there yet"; Romita had actually come on staff in mid-1965, so we have deleted that statement. The "Holly" Jim mentions was Holly Resnikoff, who was later married for several years to artist Michael Ploog. —Roy.*]

**RA:** *Yeah, Allyn Brodsky wrote a little bit, too. He did some mystery tales and some Iron Man, if I remember right.*

**SHOOTER:** Yes, but he mostly did letter columns and stuff. I worked there three weeks, and they put me in a room with Morrie, who was shooting Photostats and doing paste-up. Morrie was the one who taught me to do paste-ups. At Marvel, everybody was doing everything, and it had to be done quick! You know, when a character would overlap the logo on a cover, Morrie would cut the actual artwork and overlap the logo on it. It was amazing! It was like what they used to say on the M.A.S.H. TV show. It was a form of meatball surgery! So I learned paste-up from Morrie. I was doing proofreading. The first story I proofread was a "Millie the Model" that Stan had written. I found a giant mistake.

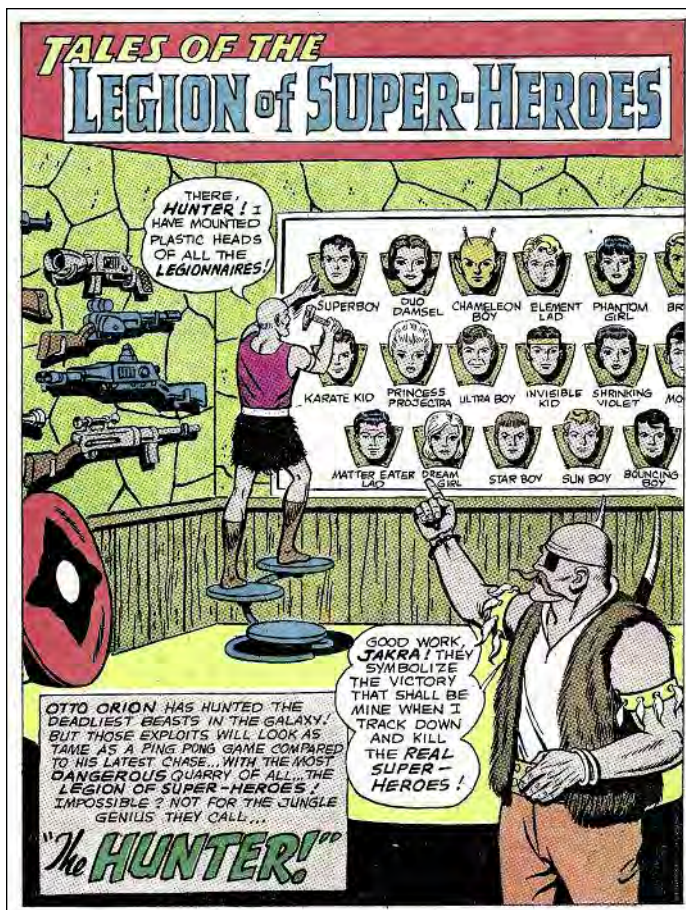
He had this whole "shaggy dog" story leading up to a punchline. But, by the time he got to the punchline, he'd forgotten what the set-up was. He was writing about twelve books a month, and he was writing them in pieces. A little bit on this title, a little bit on that one. So I knocked on Stan's door and said, "You said the moon here. Don't you mean Mars?" He goes "Oh, my God!" Some guys might have got upset about that, but he liked me. It was okay. I was doing everything there, even a little art correction. Whatever they needed.

But I just couldn't survive with no place to live. With no where-withal. I finally had to just give it up. I had to go back to Pittsburgh, where I could at least get a meal. I thought I'd really burned my bridges at both places.

Actually, the first day I showed up at Marvel to work—I guess the rumor mill had been going around—that first day I got a phone call. It was Mort and he was screaming at me. How dare I betray him after all he did for me? Well, whatever. [laughs]

**RA:** *I think Roy may have had a similar experience in that regard.*

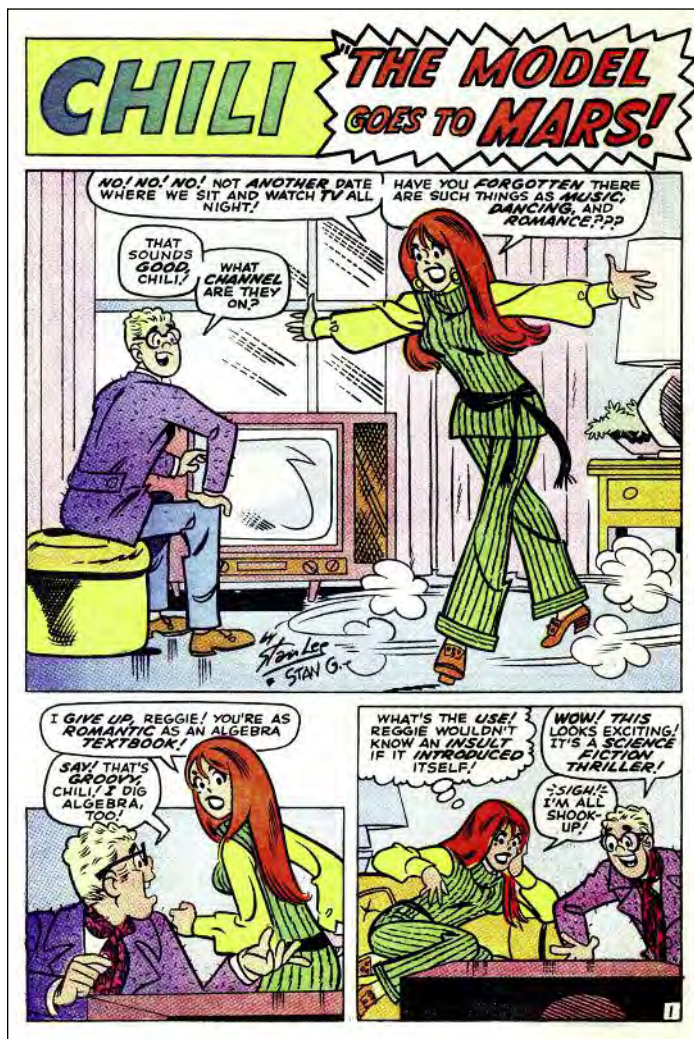
**SHOOTER:** Yeah, Roy worked for Mort for a very little while,



### Home Is The Hunter

Otto Orion, aka the Hunter became the DC answer to Marvel's Kraven the Hunter in *Adventure Comics* #358 (July 1967). Jim Shooter, script & layouts — finished art by George Papp. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]





### Mars—The Moon—Whatever!

In all likelihood, the "Millie the Model" story with a Martian theme that Jim mentions proofreading and correcting was this one from *Chili* #10 (Feb. 1970), which was scripted by Stan Lee and penciled by Stan Goldberg; inker unknown. Here are the first and last pages of that tale, which actually starred Millie's red-headed rival in the modeling agency. A/E reader Jim Van Dore sums it up: "Chili is abducted by Martians who take her to Mars to marry their king, but he is too young to be married and Chili has to wait until he grows up... but it's all a dream, inspired by the science fiction thriller [her boyfriend] Reggie is watching." For more info, read the interview. Thanks to Dusty Miller for the scans; thanks also to Sharon Karibian. And dig the Dr.-Strange-style cape one Martian is wearing! [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



**Stan Goldberg**  
From the 1969  
*Fantastic Four*  
Annual.

maybe three weeks or so. He got sick of it, walked out, same as I did. The difference was that Roy was older than me and only took Mort's abuse for a little while, but I was a kid. When a big important man from New York calls you up every day and tells you that you're an idiot, you tend to think you're an idiot. You know? It took four years for me to grow up enough to think that if I was such an idiot he wouldn't keep paying me. [laughs] He wouldn't keep printing this stuff. When he called me up at Marvel, I knew I was done with him. It was just "Goodbye with all that."

Unfortunately, I could last at Marvel but I couldn't last in New York. Not on my own at eighteen years old, anyways. It just wasn't happening.

### "I Had No Idea Who ['Man-Wolf'] Was"

**RA:** The sad thing about that circumstance was that Mort himself would retire probably less than a year later.

**SHOOTER:** That's true, but I didn't know that. Besides, as far as I knew, Mort was a big cheese at DC, and if he was done with me, I figured everybody else was done with me there, as well. So I went

home to Pittsburgh and got some work in advertising. Out of the blue, I got a call from this company named Lando-Bishopric. See, all though my high school years, the local papers would do a lot of write-ups on teenagers who were doing interesting things, and I became sort of known locally as the kid who wrote comic books. On a slow news day, they would do an interview with me on that topic. I even appeared in a national article in *This Week* magazine, which was a weekly magazine stuffed in the Sunday newspapers. I also did interviews on local TV and radio. I wouldn't say I was well-known, but I got some exposure in Pittsburgh.

**RA:** Well, for a kid, you were well-known.

**SHOOTER:** I guess so. So Lando-Bishopric called me up and asked if I was the kid who did comic books. I said, "Yeah, that's me." They said they had a job for me, and I started working for them. The jobs were all comic-book-related. Advertising done in comic book form. I did a number of projects, but the work wasn't steady. There's be a job or even a number of jobs close together, and then there'd be a space where there would be nothing. So I had to have a day job. Although working for two weeks for Lando-Bishopric was like working six months at Joseph Horn Company, which was





### Superboy Revisited

A pair of stories from Shooter's year-plus return to DC Comics, viewed through the lens of the *Superboy* comic. The words "*and The Legion of Super-Heroes*" were prominent on the covers, but were never part of the official indicia title. (Above left:) A page featuring Duo Damsel (both of her) from *Superboy* #209 (June 1975); art by Mike Grell. (Above right:) A splash from #222 (Dec. '76); art by Mike Nasser & Bob Layton. Jim's last issue of the title was #224. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]

a local department store. I made so much money working in advertising compared to working at a paint company. I did a bunch of stuff for them and was technically involved in comics, one way or the other.

Then, in 1974 or so, I got a call from a guy named Harry Broertjes, who was a journalist and a member of CAPA-Alpha, an apa [amateur press alliance], which helped fans who did monthly or bi-monthly or whatever fanzines. They'd send their fanzines all to a central-spot mailer, and the mailer would compile them all and send them back to everybody who was on the apa contact list. [NOTE: This apa was created 50 years ago by Jerry Bails and is still in existence today.] Broertjes was what we used to call a BNF—a "big-name fan."

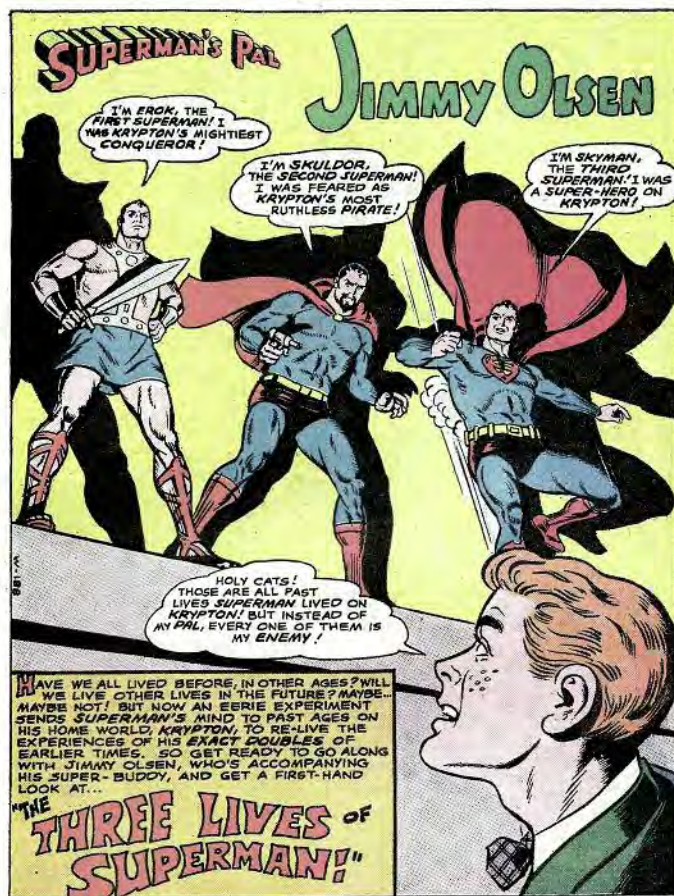
He kept calling my mother's home, where I didn't live anymore, but that was the only address he had. My mother kept telling me this guy kept calling her about me. So, finally, I was visiting Mother one time when he called, and my mother being who she was, insisted I talk to him. What he wanted to do was to come to me and do an interview. I thought, "All right," and gave him directions to a local landmark. I drove up on my motorcycle and gave him directions on how to get to my mother's house.

He did his interview, and when it was over he asked me why I wasn't working in comics any longer. I told him that I felt I'd burned my bridges. I'd left DC under bad terms. I'd worked at Marvel for only three weeks and bailed out—where was I going to go? He said people, both fans and guys in the business, talked about me all the time—wondering where I was and why they couldn't get work from me. I told him they could find me. I wasn't hiding. I was still on DC's comp list. I wasn't on Marvel's, but I was on DC's and had been for years. [laughs] Every month DC would send me a big box of their most recent comics. I told him they knew where I was, and he replied that he didn't think that they did. He didn't think the comp-list people were telling editorial that I was still around and could be located.

Apparently he went and called someone he knew at Marvel, a Duffy Vohland, who was some kind of assistant in the British department at Marvel, but he represented himself to me as an editor at Marvel Comics. I hadn't read a Marvel comic in a while, so I didn't know one way or the other. He asked me how soon I could get up to New York, because he wanted to take me in to talk to Roy. He thought they could really use my help. I said okay and told him that I'd be there the next day.

I still had my student standby card and flew into New York the





### Superman's Pal—But Not Mort Weisinger's

The splash page of a Shooter-scribed tale in *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #123 (Sept. 1969). By the time this Pete Costanza-drawn story was coming out, its young scripter had left DC's employ first for a scholarship to New York University, then for a very brief staff job at Marvel Comics. The latter earned him the "Superman" editor's high-decibel disdain over the phone! [TM & © DC Comics.]

next day and Duffy walked me around Marvel. I met Roy and talked to him. Roy said he could use me and that I could write "Man-Wolf." I had no idea who that was. I said okay, and I got some back issues to read. Reading it was like watching a Swedish movie with no subtitles.

### "You're The Guy Who Invented The Legion Of Super-Heroes!"

I went out to lunch with some guys, and they said I should go to DC, too. In my day, you didn't go across the street. You worked for Marvel or you worked for DC, but not for both. The few guys who actually did that and got away with it used pseudonyms. Gene Colan was Adam Austin. Frank Giacoia was Frankie Ray. Both were guys who "cheated" on the company where they used their real name. They got away with it because they used those pseudonyms and because they were so good that people turned a blind eye. Except for



### Duffy Vohland

Marvel production staffer who in 1974 encouraged Jim Shooter to come to New York City and apply for work at Marvel. From the 1975 Marvel Comics Convention program book.

Wally Wood, and Wally Wood could get away with anything because he was, well, Wally Wood.

So I walked over to DC. I knew Mort was retired, and I was trying to think who could still be there whom I'd know. Then I thought, "I bet E. Nelson Bridwell is still there." I was right, he was. He came out to see me and was glad to see me. We'd always gotten along. The only compliments I got when I worked for Mort were from Nelson. He was Mort's assistant, and he would, on rare occasions, be the one calling me and not Mort. Nelson would say, "Boy, this is really nice. I think you did a great job." [both laugh]



### Man-Wolf In The Promised Land

Roy Thomas says: "I have no recollection of talking to Jim Shooter in 1974 during my waning months as editor-in-chief and inviting him to write a 'Man-Wolf' story—but Jim says I did, and I have no reason not to believe him. Things were pretty frantic up at Marvel at that time, and Duffy Vohland was right when he told Jim we needed all the help we could get, especially from a proven comics writer. Of course, it made perfect sense to assign an entering writer a relatively minor strip to start out with; besides, Man-Wolf was the star of the comic—the astronaut son of J. Jonah Jameson turned into a science-fictional 'werewolf.'"

Above is the cover of *Creatures on the Loose* #33 (Jan. 1975), the last issue that sported Roy's name as editor, although #34 or even one or two stories after that might well have been commissioned while he was still on the job; so it's impossible to know in which issue a Shooter "Man-Wolf" story might've appeared, had he scripted one. The Man-Wolf figure on this one is reportedly by Gil Kane, and the basic inking by Klaus Janson; John Romita and possibly Marie Severin contributed to this cover, as well. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



### Three If By DC...

Three editors with whom Jim Shooter dealt in the mid-1970s when he returned for a time to DC Comics.



**E. Nelson Bridwell**



**Murray Boltinoff**



**Julius Schwartz**

A 1990s pic, courtesy of Jim Amash.

Anyway, Nelson walks me directly to Carmine Infantino's office, because Carmine had taken over the publisher's position since I'd been there. When I'd been at DC previously, he'd been the art director. Carmine had fond, if vague, memories of me from my previous work at DC. Carmine yells, "You! You're the guy who invented the Legion of Super-Heroes!" Well, no, not quite. I'd written it for a while, but I didn't invent them. Carmine asked me if I wanted work, and I said, yeah, sure. He walked me down to Murray Boltinoff's office, who was the current editor of the "Legion." Cary Bates was writing most of the "Superman" stuff at the time, but, according to Murray, Cary didn't want to write it all anymore, so he said I could write some of it.

Then Carmine walks me into Julie Schwartz's office and says, "Julie, this is Jim Shooter. I want him writing some 'Superman' stuff." Julie goes, "Well, you wrote for Mort, so you can write for me." I didn't realize it at the time, but Julie and Carmine did not get along. [laughs] Julie's thinking that I'm Carmine's kid. So Julie hated me. We had a stormy couple of years. It was kind of weird. It was really all a misunderstanding. He thought my being there was nepotism of some sort. I really didn't even know what was going on at first. So for a couple of years I wrote some "Superman," some "Legion of Super-Heroes."

Murray was great. He challenged you. He never accepted anything that was boilerplate or full of dull ideas. He wanted "new" all the time. For one story, I'd envisioned a sort of futuristic monorail thing which Superboy rescued somebody from, and Murray said, "Monorails are old! Get rid of that." So I invented a magnetic canal. [laughs] You didn't get away with anything with Murray! On the other hand, he was getting older, and he would forget the character's powers. Once he sent a story back to me and rejected it on the grounds that, "Well, that's Phantom Girl! They couldn't see her!" and I had to explain to him that people *could* see her; she could just go through walls, that's all. It was kind of an adventure at DC for a couple of years: Julie hating me, and Murray kind of forgetting who the characters were. I took that job over the Marvel job because I knew who the characters were and I had no idea who Man-Wolf was.

### "I Had Never Written Marvel-Style"

Sometime in the middle of it, I got a call from somebody at Marvel. It might have been Len Wein. They needed somebody to do a fill-in job on *Iron Man* or something overnight. I said sure. Now, I had never written Marvel-style. I didn't really know what

Marvel-style really was. So I got this plot, and now there's art coming. I didn't really understand why I was looking at penciled pages. At DC I had always done full scripts. I got hold of a guy who was a fan and asked what I was supposed to do with this. I should have called Marv, who was the editor by then, but every time I called Marv, the receptionist connected me with Dan Adkins. I guess the two of them had exchanged extensions or something. I'd call back again and explain to the receptionist who I wanted again. She'd say okay and then connect me to Dan Adkins again! [laughs] After the fifth or sixth time, Dan yelled, "I'm not Marv Wolfman!" and slammed the phone down! [more laughter] Finally, I realized that I had to go somewhere else for this information.

So I bluffed my way through it. The guy I talked to did enough for me to get through it. I did a couple more jobs that way for Marvel. I was really kind of at sea with that, but I needed the money.

Then, in late 1975, I got a call from Marv, and he said they needed someone in editorial. There wasn't a title for it yet, but he asked if I was interested. I was supposed to meet Marv at 9:00 A.M. I walk into the editorial office and there's like twelve guys there—Roger Slifer, Roger Stern, Scott Edelman, some others, and the lady who eventually married Chris Claremont. I don't remember her name. Nice lady.

As soon as I walked in there, they yelled, "The new guy's here!" They ran over to me and said they needed an issue of *Captain Marvel* proofread right now! I said, "I don't work here yet, but sure." So I'm sitting there marking up this issue of *Captain Marvel* and people kept coming over to me and asking questions like I was the boss. It felt really weird. I do this for a couple of hours or more, and about 11:30 Marv comes in, goes into his office, and closes the door. Then Len Wein comes in and they get ready to go to lunch. Marv says, "I'll see you after lunch." So I went to lunch with the editorial people. It was interesting, but I admit I was thinking to myself, "What a zoo!"

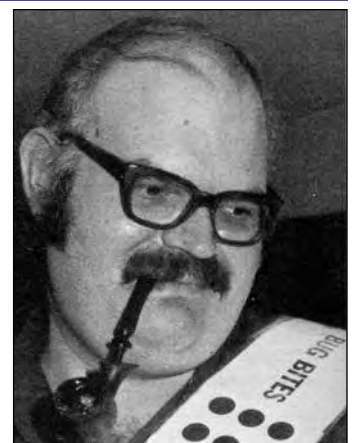
Still, it was really different from DC. At DC you were not allowed in the office unless you had a jacket and tie. DC looked like an insurance office. Marvel was way more relaxed. We got

Both photos from the 1975 Marvel Comics Convention program book.



**Marv Wolfman**

Editor-in-chief of Marvel, 1975-76.



**John Verpoorten**

Marvel production manager, 1970-77.





### Maybe It Should've Been Called Super-Villain Pile-Up!

*Super-Villain Team-Up* #3 (Dec. 1975) became one of Jim Shooter's first writing credits at Marvel. Pencils by George Evans, inks by Jack Abel.

[TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

back from lunch. Marv gets back and we finally go into his office. He explains to me that at one time Stan wrote everything and oversaw all the production. But, since then, the company had expanded to dozens of titles and that basically every writer was working as his own editor.

John Verpoorten was the production manager, and he actually kind of ran the ship. The editor got a writer to write the plot, John would get an artist to draw the pencils. Then the letterer would send the pencils directly to the writer. The writer would write the dialogue. The pages would then be sent to the letterer who would do his work. Then the lettered pages would go to the inker who in turn sent them to the office. The first time anyone in the office saw any of this stuff is when they were finished. Just before coloring. So there would be mistakes. Sometimes major mistakes, like, gee, this character's dead. [laughs] Yet he's very much alive in this story. The writer would go, "Oh, I didn't read that issue." It was chaos.

Besides which, these poor people in the editorial office were always playing catch-up. They're reading stuff



George Evans

in proofreader.

I said to Marv, "What you're basically saying is that I would be the editor." Marv said, "No, I'm the editor." My reply was, "No, you're the editor-in-chief. What you're asking me to do is read the plots, approve the plots, send them to the artists, get the pencils back, check them against the plot, send the pencils back to the writer for the script, script comes back and I read it, and if it's good I send it on to the editor. That's the editor." Marv said he didn't like the idea of me being an editor. So I asked him what he did want. He suggested the title of associate editor. I said I didn't care. Just pay me. So I was the associate editor, but it was kind of like being second-in-command. The proofreaders in editorial would come to me with questions and stuff. It was like being the general's



Archie Goodwin

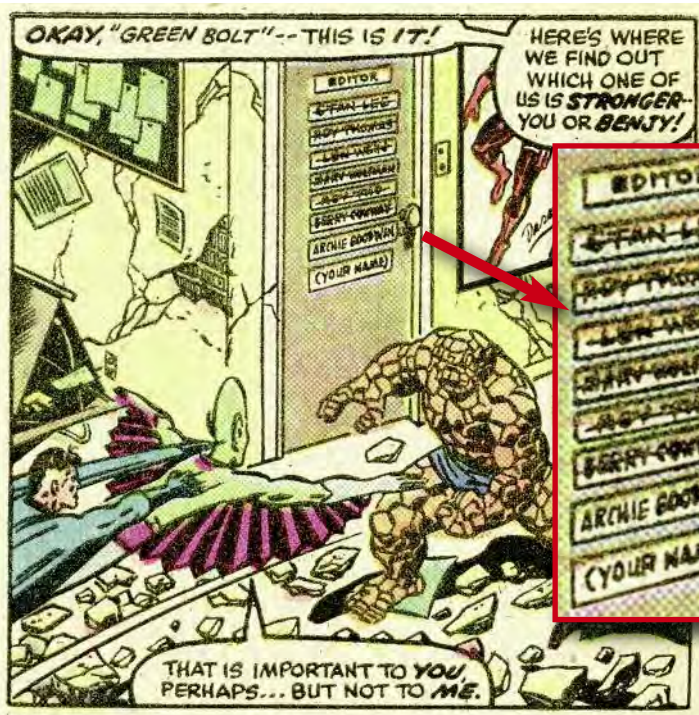


George Tuska

### Ironing Things Out

In one fairly early Marvel assignment, Jim dialogued a story plotted by editor-in-chief Archie Goodwin for *Iron Man* #90 (Sept. 1976). Pencils by George Tuska; inks by Jack Abel. Thanks to Barry Pearl. Both accompanying photos are from the 1975 Marvel Comics Convention program book. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]





#### (JIM SHOOTER'S NAME HERE)

The so-called editorial "musical chairs" situation Jim Shooter mentions, which existed from 1974-77 (or from 1972-77, depending on how you're counting) led George Perez to pencil this panel when he and scripter Roy Thomas were producing the oft-reprinted *Fantastic Four* #176 (Nov. 1976), wherein The Impossible Man paid a flying visit to the actual Marvel Comics offices. The next name on the door, of course, would be that of Jim Shooter, at the start of '78. Inks by Joe Sinnott. Thanks to Barry Pearl.  
[TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

chief of staff. The need that Marv had was so great that he hired me on a Thursday and he needed me to start work that following Monday. My first day at Marvel was the first working day in 1976.

I did that for a while. Needless to say, when there's anarchy and you try to establish order, the anarchists are not going to be too happy. I quickly became the Great Satan. I'd call writers and say, "Here's what I found here in this plot and let's talk about it. This can't take place because, for example, this guy's dead!" They'd be all mad at me. Some of them would swear at me and hang up. They'd tell me to fix it myself.

Mind you, in those days, everybody was paid by the page. Every hour you lost doing a re-do didn't get you any more money. You weren't getting paid for that extra work. A couple of guys, they would turn it in and if you didn't like it, go screw yourself. So I ended up doing a lot of fixing, which didn't help my popularity much. Some guys were great. Their scripts were clean as a whistle. Anything Archie Goodwin wrote was perfect. I was so very proud if I ever had reason to catch the tiniest little thing on Archie's scripts or plots. Same with Steve Gerber. Gerber's stuff was impeccable. With their scripts it was never anything more than little things, once in a while.

There were guys who were bulletproof and then there were guys who needed a little help. I understand that. You'd be writing three or four books a month. It was just like with Stan. You can get confused switching back and forth with the books. You lose track of something. I was the backstop. That went on for a couple of years.

At some point, Roy was actually going to come back as editor-

in-chief. Marv was only my boss for about three months. Then he left, as he put it. Marv is a great guy. I love him. The guy is an idea genius. His mind is like a machine-gun with ideas. But like a lot of writers, I don't think he was really interested with the administrative part of being an editor. He liked the creative side.

So he was followed by Gerry Conway. Gerry ended up firing guys like Steve Gerber, Don McGregor, and, I think, even Steve Englehart. He tried to keep Englehart, but there'd been some dispute and Englehart was not going to be told anything about anything. So Englehart went to DC. Gerry only lasted a few weeks, though.

Roy was supposed to come back in, I think after Marv left, but he changed his mind, and that's when they got Gerry. When Roy was still intending to return as editor-in-chief, he came into the office and was having meetings with several people. I sat down with him and told him that, when I worked in the advertising business, if a new boss came in, you offered your resignation in case he wanted to staff the place with his own people. You hope, as a result of that, that you'd get freelance work or whatever. But Roy said no, I was okay, and he'd keep me. But he changed his mind about coming back. I think he was planning to move to California or something like that. So that's when Marvel got Gerry.

After Gerry's very brief tenure, Archie Goodwin was hired as editor-in-chief. Roy had lasted about 2½ years as editor-in-chief. Len lasted eight months. Marv lasted a year. Gerry lasted three weeks, and Archie lasted nineteen months.

Everybody knew Archie was a creative genius. But it was soon apparent that he wasn't much of a businessman. He hated the administrative side of the editorial office. He had a superb work ethic. He'd spend all his time in his office, working on cover design. Doing all the creative stuff, which is what he wanted to do. Doing a budget or something like that, his eyes just glazed over. He hated stuff like that. So the way I got the job was that I continued on after Marv left, as Archie's assistant. That created a bit of conflict, because these writers were not cooperating, and I was having to shore up the bottom, as it were. You had to ignore what the best guys were doing because they weren't causing problems. It was simply impossible for one guy, or even two, to edit 45 titles a month, which Marvel was doing at the time.

So I was always having to deal with the worst. During the time I was associate editor, from 1976-1978, was also the time Stan stopped being a magazine publisher and came back to the comics. He'd been out of touch for a while with the day-to-day operations. When he got back, he started reading the make-readies. Do you know what a make-ready is?

### "Guess Who Was #33?"

**RA:** *I have a vague idea, but go ahead and tell me anyways.*

**SHOOTER:** World Color Press, Marvel's printers, would send these rough-cut proofs, called make-readies, which were comic books without covers, page edges untrimmed. They were supposed to be basically proofs of the colored comic. But we were always so late sending in the books that, by the time we got back these proofs, there was no time for corrections because the book would be nearly on sale or actually on sale. But we'd still get these "advance" proofs from the printer. Stan started reading these make-readies and he started calling Archie into his office and saying, "Archie, look at what's happening on this page. How could you let this happen? It's so stupid, etc., etc." Archie, of course,





John Romita

Photo from the 1975  
Marvel Comics  
Convention program  
book.

### Strip Tease

The *Amazing Spider-Man* daily comic strip for Nov. 11, 1977. Script by Stan Lee; pencils by John Romita; inks by Romita or another. As reprinted in the 2009 book *Spider-Man Newspaper Strips*, Vol. 1. At what stage Stan sought the plotting assist mentioned by Jim Shooter is unknown, so this daily is presented purely as a sample of the strip. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

knew what it was supposed to look like. He was one of the all-time geniuses in editing. He'd say, "Uh, Stan, I've got stuff to do." Finally, he sticks it on me. "Jim is the guy who actually deals with this stuff. You should talk to him." So he escaped, and I'm called into Stan's office every week.

Stan would be there with these make-readies all marked up and ask me, "Why is this guy saying this? It's idiotic. Where is this word balloon pointed to? I'm looking at this panel and I cannot tell what these people are doing. This guy has no expression!" On and on and on. He'd ask me, "Why are you letting them do this?" Me: [said in a very dull monotone] "I have 45 books, Stan." I knew what they were supposed to look like. I knew what a comic book page looked like. But there were so many books to work on!

After a while, Stan starts explaining this stuff to me as if I were a kindergartener and didn't understand anything. "Sееее, when a character's talking, you need a pointer on the word balloon that is a short straight point that is aimed at his mouth." I tell him I knew that, and he'd tell me to get it right next time. [laughs] Oh, Christ! He thought I was a complete idiot who didn't know what to do. I was just letting everyone run rampant.

Anyway, they'd just started the *Spider-Man* newspaper strip, around 1977, and Stan was going to write the dialogue for the strip and edit it, but he wanted to get somebody to do the plot for him because he didn't want to spend that much time on it. So somebody would do the plot, the penciled pages come in, and Stan would write the dialogue. That's what he wanted.

Stan asked Archie who Marvel's #1 writer was, and Archie, politically correctly, said Len Wein, which was probably close to right. Archie was actually the best, but Len was good. So Stan offers Len the job of plotting the *Spider-Man* strip. This was a fairly prestigious assignment. It was like a big deal. So Len did I-don't-know-how-many weeks of plot, but Stan hated it. And he fired him. Not from the company, just from the strip.

Now everybody's afraid of doing the plot for the strip, because Stan might fire them and their star will fall. So Stan goes back to Archie and asks him for a list of all of Marvel's writers, from best to worst. Archie leaves himself off the list. Archie had done some great newspaper strips. He knew how to do that sort of thing, but

he left himself off the list. The list was 33 names. Guess who was number 33?

### "Because I Know What I'm Doing!"

RA: I assume it's going to be you.

SHOOTER: You bet. I think Archie had a higher opinion of me than that, but I think he was also trying not to piss anybody off. The one person he could put at the end of his list that wouldn't quit or anything was his associate editor. Okay, fine.

Stan called 32 people to his office and 32 people all turned him down. So I was the last one left. So he calls me into his office, and he's pinching his nose—it looked like he had a terrible headache. He starts trying to explain to me how a newspaper strip was different from a comic book. I'd never actually written a newspaper strip, but I knew the process was different. He explained, in that very slow tone of voice he used when explaining the obvious, that every day something had to happen but you couldn't have too much happen in the daily because some people only read the Sunday version of the strip. So you have to make sure that it's all interesting during the week but that if the reader didn't read any of that he wouldn't lose anything on Sunday. There has to be lots of action, romance, and pretty girls. Like I said, he was talking to me like I was a kindergartener because, in his mind, I'd already proven to him that I was an idiot. [laughs]

I'm just the lowest dregs of the writer pool. He's really talking to me like it's the most futile thing in the world to try to explain anything to me. But I told him I got it and I'd do it. So I came in with my first plot a couple days later and he reads it. He says, "This is good." I said, "I know." "No," he says, "this is really good!" I said "Yes, I know." He says, "How come this is good?" [laughs] I say, "Because I know what I'm doing."

Stan tells me to keep going, and I say okay. Then he gives the day-by-day plot to John Romita, who was off-staff at the time and was doing the strip exclusively. They still gave him a room in the bullpen. John would sorta follow the plot, but he would "correct" things. Then Stan would call me in, and by then he'd forgotten the plot, and he'd tell me that this sequence wouldn't work at all. I'd tell him that John hadn't done what I said. Stan would go, "We have to change this!" So now I'm writing every plot twice. Once for John to ignore some of it, then again to make the plot work with whatever John drew.



I love John. I think he is one of the all-time great, hall-of-fame artists, but he was a little bit of a choirboy. For instance, when I would tell him to do a shot of Mary Jane from the waist up, John would draw her from the neck up because he didn't want to pander to anybody. So the next batch of plots that I brought in, I did layouts for them, just like I'd done in the "Legion" days. Stan would go, "This is great!" So Stan would write the dialogue right on my plot sketch/layouts. Then he would give the plot to John with the dialogue already in place, and John couldn't mess with it. The plot was now bulletproof. I think John hated me. John would still draw Mary Jane without her bust, but Stan said he didn't care. It was fun. [laughs] John and I got along, but we had different perspectives on things sometimes. Usually we just got along.

The only time Stan had a problem with my plots was when I would put notes in the margin to kind of explain things to the scripter. So I'd do that and, every once in a while, I write a little line of dialogue rather than go into some lengthy explanation of what Spidey was doing. Stan got pissed off at this: "I'm writing this. I can't use your words because I'm writing this. You wrote that stuff and now I can't use those words! And those are the words I was going to use! Never put any dialogue down! It has to be *all* mine!" I liked that about Stan. He really had integrity. He didn't want to use anybody's words but his own. He didn't care if you wrote the plot, but the words had to be his. So I would carefully avoid doing anything that suggested dialogue. I did that for a while. I don't remember how long, but during the course of that time, I think Stan started to realize that I actually did know what I was doing.

I think it was then that it really occurred to him that, when I said I had 45 titles and couldn't proof them all by myself, it didn't mean I was an idiot who couldn't do it, but that maybe *nobody* could do it. I think he was also starting to realize that Archie wasn't getting tough with the writers, so it wasn't that long after that when Stan proposed to me that he wanted to make Archie a "creative director" with a big raise and make me editor-in-chief.

I said okay. Marvel had used up everyone else. There really was no one left. I think, and I don't know for sure, but I think that Archie felt like I'd been cuddling up to Stan and had stabbed Archie in the back, which I didn't. I suspect he also felt he was being kicked upstairs, so he said he'd rather not, he'd rather leave; Marvel was just to give him a contract and make him a writer. So that was what they did. He got a contract to write three books a month. I became editor-in-chief.

All of the artists and writers who'd been afraid of me before, boy, they were more so now. They suspected that I would make the trains run on time. That's basically what happened. I took over on January 3, 1978, and started doing what I had to do to make the trains run on time. That month, the month of January 1978, Marvel was supposed to ship 45 color comics. We shipped 26—some of which were more than four months late. They should have been on the stands two months earlier, and they were still in house! [laughs] Unbelievable! It took me until April to get the right number of comic books going out every month.

At the end of the year, I got a letter from Bob... I can't remember his last name, but he worked at World Press. He said, "Congratulations! For the first time in its history, Marvel Comics is on time." [laughs] That sort of thing tends to *not* make you popular, because it means you're bringing in other writers. You're telling a guy who has four books a month but actually only delivers two books a month that he only gets to keep two, and if he does an extra issue of, say, *Captain Marvel*, that would be great. Get ahead on your two books a month and you can do four books, as long as

they're on time. I didn't want to take books away, but if you can deliver two books a month and if you can do an extra one or two for that title—then do two *Iron Man* or two *Ghost Riders* a month. Don't do those two titles plus *Avengers* and *Fantastic Four* and have them all be late. Give the other two titles to somebody else. This was before royalties, so the pay would be the same, and all four titles could come out on time.

That idea was still unpopular. If a writer felt like he was entitled to four books, he still wanted four books, even if he couldn't write all four books on time. Taking a book away from someone is traumatic. For some writers, if it's late—so what?

To be honest, it's a big "so what." We stood to lose our second-class mailing privileges, and there were consequences beyond that.

Of course, the month I started was the month the copyright law changed. At my first day at work as editor-in-chief, the phone rang from the company counsel, the legal department. She tells me,



### The Water Is Full Of Tiger Sharks!

While interviewer Richard Arndt and editor Roy T. were happy to give Jim a chance to expound at length on his 1978-1987 editorship at Marvel, *Alter Ego's* basic franchise is the years up to and into 1975 (the year in which the final Marvel comics with Roy's name listed as editor were published), so we wanted to maximize the printing of artwork from that period or soon afterward. Seen here, courtesy of Barry Pearl, is an action page from perhaps Jim's earliest Marvel credit, *Super-Villain Team-Up* #3 (Dec. 1975), with art by George Evans & Jack Abel. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



"Have you done the work you need on the Copyright Law of 1976, which took effect Jan. 1st?" I said, "What?" She said, "What have you done about it?" I said, "Lady, I've been here fifteen minutes. I don't know what you're talking about!" That little conversation was the lead-in to the whole thing with the Guild and the copyright-law battle, the work-for-hire document, none of which made me terribly popular.

That summer, DC had the big "DC Implosion" when they cut their publishing to about half, and all of a sudden the streets were awash with unemployed freelancers. A lot of Marvel guys had been reluctant to sign the work-for-hire document, but when they realized that all the DC guys were going to be showing up at my office the next day, eager to sign that document so they could stay working, things changed. When I arrived for work that day, the day after the DC announcement, there was already a line, a long line going around the elevator doors, of people wanting to see me. I told them I'd be seeing them in a few minutes and went to my office. I sat there and tried to calm down and finally said, "Why wait?" So we opened the door and all these people came in and they all wanted to sign the work for hire document. Most of them were already Marvel guys. They'd got there first. I wasn't promising anybody anything—work or anything else. But that Implosion pretty much ended the whole notion of a Guild.

After that, I made good on my promises. The head of Marvel Comics was the guy who hired me. Stan, by that time, was a figurehead. He really didn't have any responsibilities, except for the *Spider-Man* strip. There was nobody between me and the head of the company. If I got a professional review, he gave me the review. But before I took the job, I told him that I wanted to change the creator situation. I understood that we had to do work-for-hire, but that it didn't have to be *bad* work-for-hire. I wanted to pay the creators better. I wanted royalties. You know what he said when I mentioned I wanted people to have royalties? He said "You mean we don't?" He came out of the book publishing business and the idea of no royalties was insane to him.

So it was on that condition that I took the job. I kept telling guys that I was going to make it better. Stick with me. Neal Adams and I had been buddies forever, but he was doing the Guild and I was in management at Marvel. Guess what? He still invited me to his parties. We were always arguing about work-for-hire, and I kept telling him they won't change that. I was just going to make the situation better. And I did.

I started increasing pay rates. Adding standard benefits. I was able to get away with that because, once the books were on time, we started selling better. Isn't that amazing? Plus, we were the only shop in town that was kind of thriving. We started getting better people and were able to pay them more. I doubled the rates and was able to double them again.

For example, Don Perlin was getting almost nothing. He'd been in the business for thirty-something years, yet he was the lowest-paid guy at Marvel. It was because Don wasn't pushy. He wouldn't come in and demand anything. So I kept giving him raises. I got him up where he ought to be, up in the Buscema range. Don had been in the business forever and he'd earned it. There were guys like Frank Miller, who earned it because they were geniuses. But Don, guys like him, they're the reason that comic books have lasted.



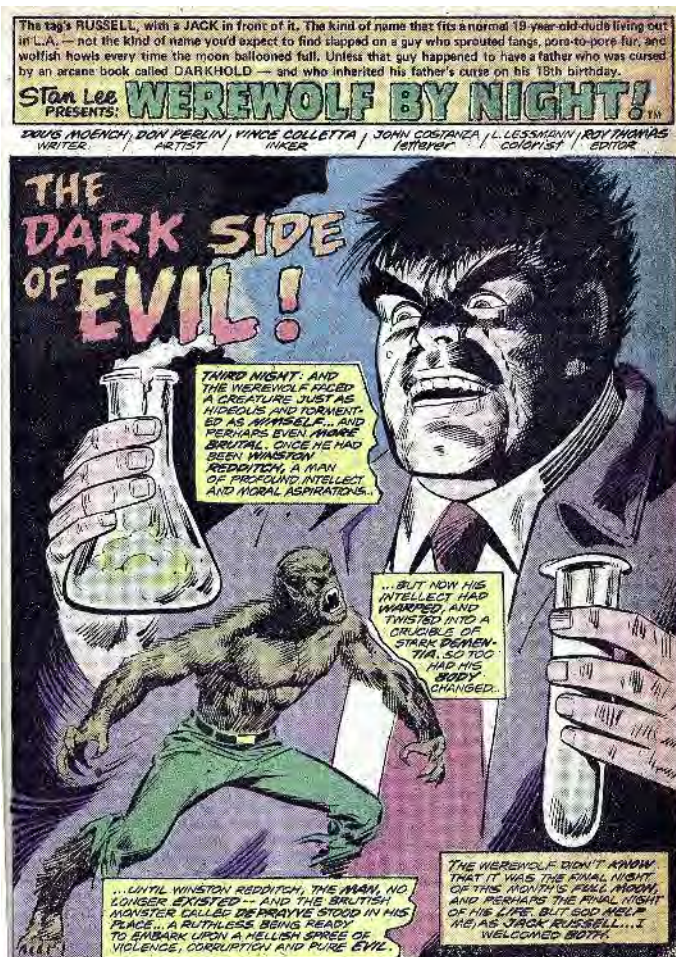
Don Perlin

Photo by JayJay Jackson. From JS blog.

I tried to get management to realize that if it had to be work-for-hire, we had to provide *everything*. You can't expect a cobbler to come to work at the factory and bring the leather, make the shoes, and then you own them. We had to provide everything. We'd always provided paper, but I made sure we provided ink, Windsor-Newton brushes, which are damned expensive, erasers, pencils, postage and, when it came around, FedEx. Phone bills. The business calls you make? Send us your phone bill and we'll pay the parts that are ours. Travel. If you have to come into the office, bring us your train ticket. If it's got to be work-for-hire, it's going to be good work-for-hire.

The first major incentive was for continuity. If you did so many issues in a row on a book you got a bonus. Some folks would come in and say they wanted to do one issue of a character. To a reader, that kind of sucks. My goal was to try to keep people on the same book. Then, after a lot of legal issues, I finally got royalties established. All of a sudden, guys like Claremont were making huge money, because *X-Men* sold so well.

Every single Marvel book paid royalties. DC had the same plan, except ours was better because ours went up to 8% and theirs only went to 4%. There were only three or four books at DC that made the royalties' threshold. You had to sell 100,000 books a month to get the royalties. *Every* Marvel book made the threshold. At DC,



### "Even A Man Who's Pure At Heart..."

By the 1970s, as Jim states, artist Don Perlin was already a longtime veteran in the comic book field. Seen above is his splash panel for *Werewolf by Night* #24 (Dec. 1974), a title he'd begun drawing with #17—and he'd be on it for a good while longer. Script by Doug Moench; inks by Vince Colletta.

[TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



*Superman* was dead even at 100,000. The others were the *Titans*, maybe even "The Legion of Super-Heroes" [in *Adventure Comics*], but there weren't many others. Vince Colletta came in; he had been doing some work for DC. He showed me three royalty checks from DC for work he'd done and all of them together did not total a dollar. [laughs] Here's so-and-so's check from Marvel and it amounted to \$40,000! For one month!

The royalty incentive really changed the situation at Marvel. Suddenly all these major talented guys were coming out of the woodwork to work for us. Walt Simonson, David Michelinie, Michael Golden, Marc Silverstri, and more. Archie! Archie came back, and Archie was the best you could do. All these great creators! One time, Roger Stern and I and a couple of others were sitting around and wondering which of the big names Marvel didn't have working for them at that time that we really wanted. We came up with only two names. George Perez had gone to DC. We wanted George back, but he was in love with the *Justice League* and the *Titans*. It just wasn't going to happen. The other was Jose-Luis Garcia-Lopez, whom you couldn't pry out of DC.

## "If You Do Something, We Pay You"

**RA:** *He still does quite a bit of work for DC and he's been there since the early 1970s.*

**SHOOTER:** He's a great guy. He's a genius artist. He's one of the few artists that John Buscema, who wasn't overawed easily, would see his work and say, "Wow!" John was not impressed by anybody. [laughs] But "Wow!"

We were on a roll there, and the more great talent we had, the less work the editors had to do. If you had Walt Simonson on a book, there wasn't much work for an editor to do there. "Yeah, I read it. It's fine." We were really on a roll there.

You mentioned layout pay earlier. At Marvel, I broke it down. There would be layouts, or what we would call breakdowns—simplified pencils—then there'd be full pencils, then inks. If a book had breakdowns from one artist, then you had a finisher, then the inker came in. The finisher had to do part of the pencil drawing. I did that sort of thing at Marvel because when I worked for DC there was so much that I did for which I was not paid. My first rule at Marvel was that nobody works for free. If you do something, we pay you.

Sol Brodsky had been the production manager in the 1960s. He went away for Skywald, a publishing venture that failed. He came back to Marvel because he needed a job but there really wasn't a job for him. John Verpoorten was now the production manager. Stan, for his friend, kind of went out on a limb and hired Sol for administrative stuff that Stan didn't want to do. He really just created a job for Sol. So Sol was there, and they called him the UK Operation Head or something like that. He'd do administrative stuff, but he was also going around changing light bulbs and stuff. It was really weird. Why was he doing the administrative work? It's because Len didn't want to do it. Marv didn't want to do it. Gerry wasn't there long enough. Archie didn't want to do it. So Sol was filling the vacuum there and taking care of stuff that nobody else was willing to do. Sol took over things that the editor-in-chief should have been doing.

What he was doing was fine, but when I started my job, I didn't want to have that situation. I asked what Sol's job was. He didn't even seem to be on the organizational chart. No one seemed to exactly know. He seemed to assert that he was in charge of stuff, but what he seemed to do was handle Stan's affairs. Everything



**Sol Brodsky**

From the 1978 Marvel Comics Convention program book. See A/E #134 for more coverage on "Jolly Solly."

that was legal, financial, technical, or complicated, Stan would hand off to Sol. What did Sol do with legal matters? He'd call house counsel. Same as I would do. He'd make a financial call to the financial V.P. I could do that. I didn't need a middle-man.

So the president asked if there was anything Sol could do. I replied that what was eating me alive, what was actually a royal pain, was doing presentation stuff that Stan needed to take to Hollywood—advertising projects, all of that stuff; and I hated to call it that, because it sounds like the kiss of death—but it was Special Projects. I said if it was okay with the Marvel president, we could give that to Sol. That way I could just work on the comics. The president said great, so I basically created a title and job for Sol, who really didn't have one.

Sol would handle all this peripheral stuff, pretty much on his own. Let's say they wanted a new corner symbol for the *Conan* covers. That would be Sol's operation. If they needed a stand-up *Spider-Man* display for Stan to take to L.A. Stuff like that. The pay rates for that stuff was phenomenal! When I came in, if you created a logo, a title logo for a book, the price was \$22.00. The coloring rates were pathetic. Previously, my predecessors had left that up to Sol. They didn't want to deal with that. But how do you get a guy to do a title logo that you're going to use for forever and not pay him well? Granted, it's work-for-hire, but you pay him 22 bucks? So I started to pay people who did that a thousand, two thousand, as much as I could pay them and get away with it. They were happier with that than the other way.

Mind you, I don't have anything against Sol. He was one of the cornerstones of Marvel in the 1950s and 1960s. Sol did that Special Projects job brilliantly. He was so happy to have his own little production department. He did fine. Sol took over Archie's old office. I was supposed to move in there when I became editor-in-chief, but I didn't have time. I decided to stay in my little office,



## Sol Right? Sol Right!

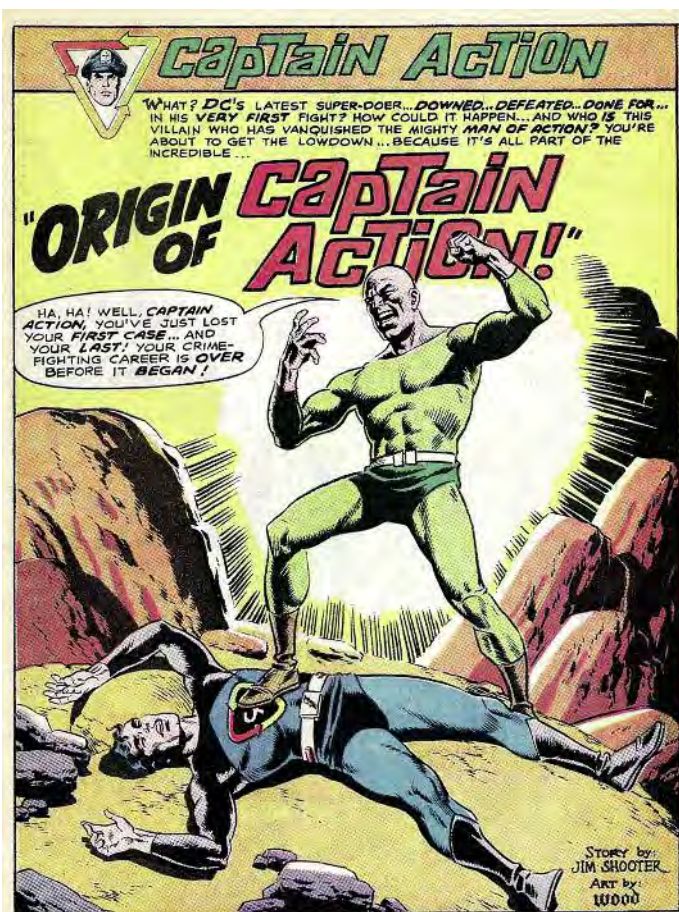
It must be said at this point that the official status at Marvel of artist and one-time production manager Sol Brodsky had seemed far more clear-cut to editor-in-chief Roy Thomas through late 1974 than interviewee Jim Shooter feels it was by early 1978, when he assumed that title. But perhaps Marvel UK and some of Brodsky's other duties had gone away in the intervening three-plus years. At any rate, Sol had been a mainstay at Marvel even back in the days when it was Atlas... as per his cover for *Marvel Tales* #113 (April 1953). Thanks to the Grand Comics Database.



which was closest to the bullpen, and told them to give that office to Sol. It gave him a place, and Sol was really good at the Special Products materials.

The whole time I was there, I was in the tiny office until we moved to 387 Park, where it was all built out for us. There I had this enormous office with a couch that went on for seven or eight feet. Fancy stuff.

At Marvel, after being in the business since 1966, I could talk intelligently to the printer, to the colorist, the penciler, the inker—of course, none of them would admit that. I had a good background and I understood business. Up to that point, I was the only editor-in-chief that was ever taken out to a board meeting with Cadence Industries, Marvel's owners. One reason was that I dressed presentably. I didn't come into work in the sneakers and jeans. Second was that Jim Galton, the president of Marvel, who was also on the Cadence board, knew I wouldn't embarrass him. He knew I wouldn't say stupid things. I knew enough about the business, especially the financial part of the business, that I was both presentable and credible. I'm not guessing this. Galton *told* me this. But I'd been learning this stuff since my time with Mort. I had more editorial training than nearly everyone who'd come before me.



### Lights—Camera—Captain Action!

Richard and Jim never quite got around to discussing the *Captain Action* comic he scripted in 1968 for DC Comics, which made a comic book hero out of a toy/action figure—and we couldn't take a chance on this interview ending without our giving you a delectable taste of it! The artist was the inestimable Wally Wood, who a few years earlier had drawn and even written *Daredevil* for Marvel. Seen above is the splash page of *CA* #1 (Oct.-Nov. '68). Thanks to Doug Martin. [© DC Comics; Captain Action TM the respective trademark holders.]

Since the early 1960s or maybe even the late 1950s, I can't name one person who was trained in everything you needed to do as an editor-in-chief. Even in those days, those guys who understood that part of the business were getting older. Comics hit their peak in 1951-1952, when Fawcett's *Captain Marvel* was selling two million copies a month. It hit a peak, and then the Kefauver Committee came about in 1954—the hearings about comics causing juvenile delinquency—plus all that stuff in *Seduction of the Innocent* by Wertham. When all that hit the fan, the comics went into decline. When comics are in decline, you don't have to develop new artists. There are a hundred unemployed ones just walking around the streets carrying their portfolios. It's easy to get someone to work for you.

You can count on one hand the significant figures who came into comics from 1955-1966. Buscema, perhaps. A few others. Not very many. So many guys left comics to do advertising because the jobs just weren't there. Or maybe they got tired of Mort, too.

### "The Streets Were Awash With Unemployed Artists And Writers"

**RA:** After the Comics Code started, around 50% of the comic book companies went out of business.

**SHOOTER:** Exactly! The streets were awash with unemployed artists and writers. There was a fellow—I think his name was Alvin Schwartz. He used to write "Superman" in the 1940s and early 1950s. I met him when he was about a million years old. He ended up in Canada, working on industrial films or something like that. I met him at a convention one time. He told me he used to write "Superman" and I told him, "Me too." He asked who I worked for. I said Mort Weisinger. He said, "Me, too! He's why I quit comics!" I replied "Me, too!" [laughs] He said, "I like you!"

The point here is, in those years, there was no reason to develop new talent. But by the mid-1960s, enough of the writers and artists had died, retired, or found other employment that all of a sudden they needed people. This new wave came in. I can't put them in order, but among this new wave was Archie Goodwin, Denny O'Neil, Roy Thomas, me, Neal Adams, Cary Bates, Marv Wolfman, Len Wein....

**RA:** Mike Friedrich and Gary Friedrich (no relation to each other) came in around that time.

**SHOOTER:** Yeah, somewhere in there. So there's this large generation gap between old and new. When I started working, everyone was fifty years old or older. I was thirteen. Archie and Roy were older, but only by about ten years. Those guys were really the

bridge. Neal is also ten years older than me. Most of them were older than me, but not as much as the old-timers. I was a kid, and fairly suddenly all those old guys were dying or retiring and the kids are running the ship. Most of them hadn't had any training whatsoever. Roy, I think, was an exception because he worked with Stan for a few years. Although I don't think working with Stan gave you much preparation for business or production work.



### Wally Wood

at a 1974 New York comics convention; the photo was printed in its 1975 program book.

All these guys, with very little to no training, were running the ship. In a lot of ways, they just didn't know what they were doing. Even with the best of intentions. Even though some of them were brilliant writers

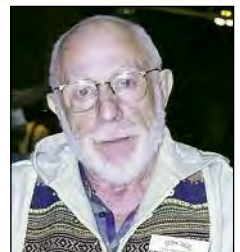




### "Me, Too!"

Back in the 1940s and '50s, Alvin Schwartz wrote numerous "Superman" and "Batman" yarns. He even reluctantly authored the very first "Superman and Batman" co-starrer to appear in *World's Finest Comics* (#71, July-Aug. 1954); seen above left is the penultimate page of that yarn, whereon Kryptonian and Caped Crusader play a trick on Lois Lane (who else?) in order to protect Clark's secret identity. At that time, Mort Weisinger and George Kashdan were "story editors" under Jack Schiff. Reproduced from the hardcover *World's Finest Comics Archives*, Vol. 1.

Jim Shooter was happy to scribe a goodly number of those team-up tales for then full-editor Weisinger, including the one, above right, in *World's Finest* #173 (Feb. 1968). Pencils by Curt Swan; inks by George Klein. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]



**Alvin Schwartz** was interviewed by Jim Amash for *A/E* #98. He's seen here at a comics convention held in White Plains, NY, in 2000. Courtesy of Joe Petrilak.

and none of them were bad ones. I think that's why between Stan and me, even counting Roy, the editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics was really the head writer, because he didn't do a lot of editing. During that period of time Roy wrote some incredible stories. But Marvel went from a few titles, 18 or so, to 45 titles overnight.

The reason for that was that for many years they were suppressed by their distributor, which was Independent News, who also distributed DC Comics. Martin Goodman was forced into that deal in the 1950s when his distributor collapsed just after they signed with it. He had to go begging to Independent News, and they took him on, but they limited how many comics he could publish, because they already had DC Comics. So, in the 1960s, while Marvel's sales were growing, they were limited from real expansion by the distributor deal.

When Marvel was sold by Martin Goodman to the company that became Cadence Industries, Cadence had their own distributor, Curtis Circulation. Marvel moved to Curtis Circulation, and all of a sudden Marvel could publish all the comics they wanted to. And they did. There was a giant explosion of Marvel Comics heading to the newsstands. Some of the stuff was just inexplicable. They tried an underground book called *Comix*. That "Man-Wolf" thing, for Christ's sake. All kinds of stuff.

At first that worked well, but as the 1970s moved on, the newsstands started to dry up. Marvel started losing money. Marvel was losing 2½ million dollars a year when I came in. Comics were just so newsstand-reliant. Getting better people to do the comics made a dent, but it wasn't stopping the slide.

**RA:** Did Star Wars help?

**SHOOTER:** Yeah, for a while, but the newsstand situation wasn't going away. I suppose I'd get 14.6% credit for the turnaround in Marvel's fortune, but the rest was the advent of the direct market. When I started, DC had about 30% of the market, and by the end of the year it was almost dead. Marvel was doing about 30-35%. At one point, in the early 1980s, in a growing market where everybody was rising, we got to 70%. DC was 18%.

## "Marvel Was The First Major Company To Make A Move [Into The Direct Market]"

**RA:** I can believe that, because I remember when the direct market began to be a big deal. In 1981 and 1982, there was an explosion of titles



appearing from independent companies, and both Marvel and DC started paying attention to that, as well.

**SHOOTER:** It evolved. Early on in my tenure as editor, somebody came in and handed me the print orders. I'd never seen one of these before, even at DC. It was all broken down. How much was going to Curtis, how many for subscriptions, how many for military, and whatnot. There was one item on there stating how many for Seagate. I'm looking at this, and Seagate was ordering fairly small numbers—1,000, 1500, 900, but *X-Men* was 4,000. The books that I thought we were publishing that were pretty good were all selling more, percentage-wise, through Seagate than through the newsstands. So I got to the circulation desk and I ask them to tell me about Seagate. He says, "Well, it's a little cost-plus deal I made just to sell more comics. I sell them at a super-deep discount to this guy, Phil Seuling, in Brooklyn, and he

distributes them to these little collector shops. It's just a little sideline, just small change."

I made a chart and month by month I tracked the figures through Seagate. *X-Men*: 4,000, then 5,500, then 8,500. *Avengers* 2,500, then 5,000. It was a consistent growth. How about that? The books that weren't my favorites, because, let's face it, we're all fans, those books weren't high on the list, but they rose, too. *Ghost Rider* 900, 950, and so on. I was watching this and thinking, if these numbers got high enough, we could publish a comic just for them. I did the calculations and

realized that reaching 30,000 books a month is where we could start selling a comic exclusively to that market.

Then this fellow comes to the receptionist's desk. His name was Chuck Rozanski, and he wants to see me. The receptionist tells me he's a retailer, so I said to send him in. He tells me that he tried to talk to the president and he wasn't interested and wouldn't listen to him. He says he wants to talk to me about the direct market, and I go, "You mean this?" and I pull my little sheet with the monthly orders out. He goes, "Yeah! You know about this!" So we talk, and he mentioned all these ideas. One of the things that came up was that our circulation had given that exclusive deal to Phil Seuling and that was illegal. And that same deal was just choking the market. He said, "You've got to publish trade terms. Anybody who can make the terms can get the deal." That was exactly what I had been thinking. [laughs] Chuck wants to know what we can do, since he can't get in to see Galton. I told him I can see Galton. I called Galton and explained what we'd been talking about and that we should get together.

We go upstairs and spend a couple of hours with Galton. Chuck had worked out this eleven-point program of what should be done to develop the direct market. We adopted ten of those ideas that day. We weren't alone in this. DC was starting to get involved. The independents were starting to spring up. There were lawsuits going on. Someone had



#### Direct Hits

(Left:) Marvel editor-in-chief Jim Shooter and Marvel publisher James Galton, circa 1980... a photo taken in conjunction with the launching of the company's *St. Francis of Assisi* special. From JS blog.

(Right:) Chuck Rozanski, president and CEO of Mile High Comics—and the man who helped comics develop the direct market in the 1980s.



#### The Mordru, The Merrier!

Reader Greg Huneryager writes that, at a recent comics convention in Kansas City, he spoke with Jim Shooter about the story he wrote that introduced the arch-villain Mordru. Greg was impressed that therein is a reference to Mordru's "first" battle with the Legion of Super-Heroes, which had ended with his entrapment. Jim revealed to Greg that "[comics writer] Roger Stern searched for that non-existent first battle for years." Greg feels that Shooter "elevated" the series with his "attempts to emulate Stan Lee—to bring some Marvel flavor to DC." At top right are some internal monologues from *Adventure Comics* #366 (March 1968) that wouldn't have been out of place in early issues of *The Amazing Spider-Man* or *The X-Men*—above is a nicely designed Mordru page from #370 (July '68). Thanks to Greg Huneryager and Doug Martin, respectively. [TM & © DC Comics.]



taped our circulation director saying things that were actionable. Different people will tell you the story of the direct market in a different way. I'm not sure I'm right. I'm not sure if any single recollection is right.

**RA:** *It may just have been an idea whose time had come.*

**SHOOTER:** Marvel was the first major company to make a move. We published trade terms and, all of a sudden, instead of one distributor there were something like eighteen overnight. That really made the direct market take off. Marvel sponsored meetings with all the direct market distributors. We flew them down to Florida, let them stay in a hotel, listened to their gripes, and got their suggestions. We also did a presentation of what we had coming up. We financed that for years. Carol Kalish started this cash register program. I had my issues with Carol Kalish, but that was a genius idea. A lot of these guys at the comic stores were working out of shoeboxes. We helped them get cash registers. We started doing a promotion of the market. Every year we would have a professional convention before a regular convention. The dealers and retailers would be there. Certainly not all of those things were my ideas, but Marvel started doing a lot of that sort of thing.

It was my idea that we should have a booth at the conventions. Nobody had a booth at that time. The next year DC had a booth. We worked out with Shel Dorf of the San Diego Comic-Con that we'd fly the entire *X-Men* team, and this was right after the "Dark Phoenix" storyline, to San Diego, at Marvel's expense. The only stipulation was that they had to be on the program and appear on panels. No company had ever paid for the creative team of a book to go to a convention and promote their stuff. We took that convention by storm! It was riotous. The next year, DC sent people and it became kind of commonplace. Not so much now, since everybody's pulled in their horns. I don't know if they still do that sort of thing, but for years they did.

We did whatever we could to help the direct market. Sometimes the upstairs people would complain that we were helping the competition to thrive. I said, these independent companies aren't our competition. They're the farm teams. Some of these people are brilliant. We're growing the market and, eventually, the good people working for the independents will be working for us. If they don't come to work for us and they make money, then God bless 'em.

If we consider the industry first, if we foster the industry, we win. If we get protective and defensive, we've lost. The biggest battle I lost, when the direct market really took off, was when the circulation manager and Carol Kalish, who was the sales manager, and others at Marvel really began fighting for going direct market exclusively. I was against that. I said, "If you lose the newsstand, then you lose the reach." With 70,000 newsstand outlets, some kid who's never heard of *Iron Man* will walk into some store, see a comic called *G.I. Joe*, and buy it. That first book is impulse, but once you get them hooked, then eventually they will find their way to a comic shop, because you can't always find what you want on a spinner rack. Then you have another direct market customer.

I kept saying that, but the newsstand became less and less important to Marvel and the direct market became more important. We'd done direct-market-exclusive comics. The first one was *Dazzler*, and it sold 428,000 copies. I suggested we do a newsstand exclusive. Everybody said that wouldn't work. The direct market



**Gil Kane**  
From the 1969  
*Fantastic Four Annual*.



### Action Doll

Gil Kane penciled *Captain Action* #2 from a Jim Shooter script (for Wally Wood to ink). Thanks to Doug Martin. [Captain Action page TM & © DC Comics, with Captain Action a trademark of the respective trademark holders.]

was the place for that. I said we had to support the newsstands because if we just let it die, we too will die. That really is what happened. We pulled out of the newsstands completely. Relied entirely on the direct market, and now we're right back where we started when the newsstands started to dry up. Nowadays *Superman* sells 25,000 copies.

The speculator market of the early 1990s was a disaster for the industry. The crash in 1995, which I predicted and I can prove it, caused the market to drop 80%. It's taken a long time to recover. I hear the market seems to be growing again, but it's growing from a tiny base. It's not anywhere near where it was. I think moving away from the newsstands was part of the downfall, and I couldn't stop it. I was gone from comics at the time it happened. I wonder if Roy would agree with me on that?

**RA:** *I appreciate you taking the time to do this interview. I've always liked your writing. Your death of Ferro Lad comic was the first "Legion of Super-Heroes" story I ever read. It was pretty darn good. I liked The Fatal Five.*

**SHOOTER:** Thanks. Mort told me to go see this movie called *The Dirty Dozen* and do a story like that. So I looked at the ad in the papers, and it was pretty clear. They got a bunch of thugs to go on

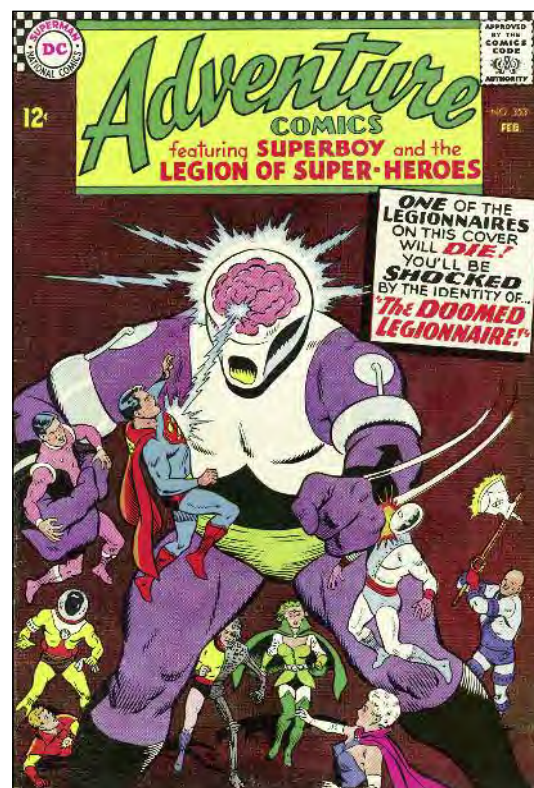
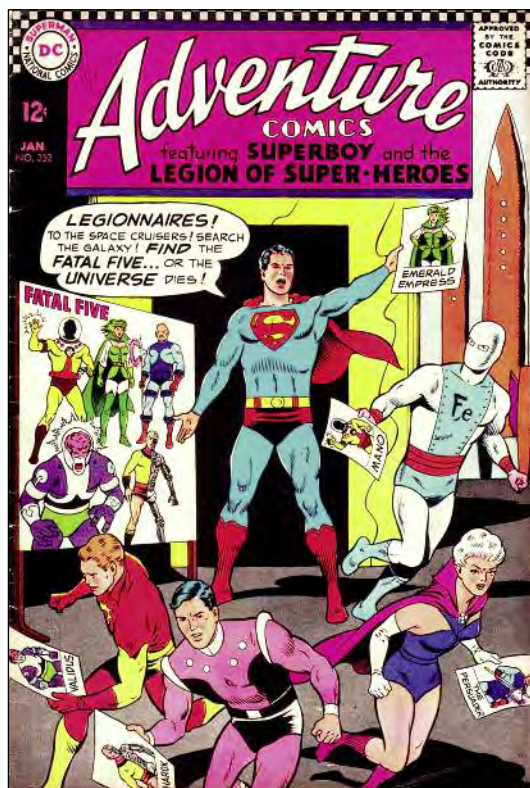




Jim Shooter  
in an undated photo.

**"Because I Could Not Stop  
For Death..."**

The covers and two interior pages from Jim Shooter's memorable "death of Ferro Lad" storyline that ran in *Adventure Comics* #352-353 (Jan. & Feb. 1967) and introduced The Fatal Five into "Legion of Super-Heroes" continuity. Art by Curt Swan & George Klein, though Jim provided layouts and may well have done the sketches for the covers, as well. Thanks to Doug Martin for the story pages. [TM & © DC Comics.]







### Convention-al Wisdom

(Left:) Marvel bigwigs on a panel at the 1982 San Diego Comic-Con. (L. to r.): editor-in-chief Jim Shooter, writer Steve Englehart, editors Archie Goodwin and Mary Jo Duffy, and circulation manager Carol Kalish. From Jim Shooter's blog.

(Right:) The cover of the 1984 Chicago Comicon program book sported a cover drawn by—Jim Shooter. Thanks to Aaron Caplan. [© Jim Shooter.]



a suicide mission. I wrote the story based on the ad. To this day I've never seen that movie. [laughs] But that's where the concept of The Fatal Five came from.

**Richard Arndt** is a librarian and comic historian living in Nevada. He has published articles, interviews, and columns in *Alter Ego*, *Comic Book Creator*, *Back Issue*, *Spooky*, and *From the Tomb*, and has written two nonfiction books on comics (*Horror Comics in Black and White: A History and Catalog, 1964-2004* and *The Star\*Reach Companion*), as well as a number of forewords and afterwords for other books. He is currently working on a book with Steve Fears called *American War Comics and the Real Big Five*.



### No Flash In The Pan

As per Bill Schelly's remarks on p. 8, Jim Shooter was already a pro when he did a bit of work in comics fandom. This cover penciled by Jim and inked by publisher Marshall Lanz fronted the one-shot *Flash Comics Special* (dealing, no doubt, with the features in that Golden Age AA/DC title) that has a Sept.-Oct. 1967 date. Thanks to Gene Reed. [Flash, Hawkman, Johnny Thunder, Thunderbolt, & Black Canary TM & © DC Comics.]

## The WHO'S WHO of American Comic Books 1928-1999

Online Edition Created by Jerry G. Bails

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Splash page from *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #106 (Oct. 1967)—script by Jim Shooter; art by Pete Costanza. Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]



# JIM SHOOTER Checklist

[This checklist is adapted from information in the online edition of *The Who's Who of American Comic Books 1928-1999*, established by Dr. Jerry G. Bails. Names of features that appeared both in comic books with that title and in other magazines, as well, are generally not italicized. **Key:** (w) = writer; (a) = full artist; (p) = penciler; (i) = inker. Jim Shooter sent penciled layouts with all his early scripts for DC Comics, but since these were mere guides for the penciler, not intended to be pencils for that artist to trace, we have not listed them in this checklist—but that does not mean that Jim Shooter did not contribute materially to the artistic storytelling of those tales. Some of this data was supplied to the *Who's Who* by Jim Shooter himself; the *Who's Who* covers the years through 2006.]

**Name:** James Charles Shooter (b. 1951) business; editor; writer; artist; colorist

**Pen Names:** Ken McDonald, Paul Creddick

**Influences:** Jack Kirby, Mort Weisinger, Stan Lee, Steve Ditko

**Print Media (non-comics):** writer – books: *After the Dinosaurs* (1989); *The Official Marvel Comics Try-Out Book* (1983). Novel: *The Avengers* (1979), Marvel

**Performing Arts:** Actor: *Nannaz* (1983); co-creator of film project *Copperhead: The Legend of Mongrel* (1983)

**Commercial Art & Design:** Art director/advertising: Lando/Bishopric (Pittsburgh; circa early 1970s)

**Honors:** Comics Buyer's Guide Award Favorite Editor (1984); Inkpot Award – San Diego Comic-Con (1980)

**Creator:** Captain Action (comic character tie-in with toy) and several members of DC's Legion of Super-Heroes (see main text)

**Promotional Comics:** Advertising comics (w) for U.S. Steel (date unknown)

**Fan & Trade Zines:** *Brimstone* (w)(a) 1968; *Comics Journal* (contributor) #51-52, #89, #96 – 1979/1984-85

## COMIC BOOK CREDITS (U.S. Mainstream Publications):

**Acclaim Comics (imprint: Valiant):** *Archer and Armstrong* (w) 1992; covers & back covers (p) 1991; editorials (w) 1991-92; *Eternal Warrior* (w) 1992; *Game Boy* (p) 1990; *Harbinger* (w) 1992; *Magnus* (w/some p) 1991-92; *Rai* (p) 1991; *Shadowman* (w) 1992; *Solar*, *Man of the Atom* (w) 1991-92; support (editor-in-chief/president) 1990-92; *Unity* (w) 1992; *WWF Battlemania* (p) 1991; *X-O Manowar* (w) 1992

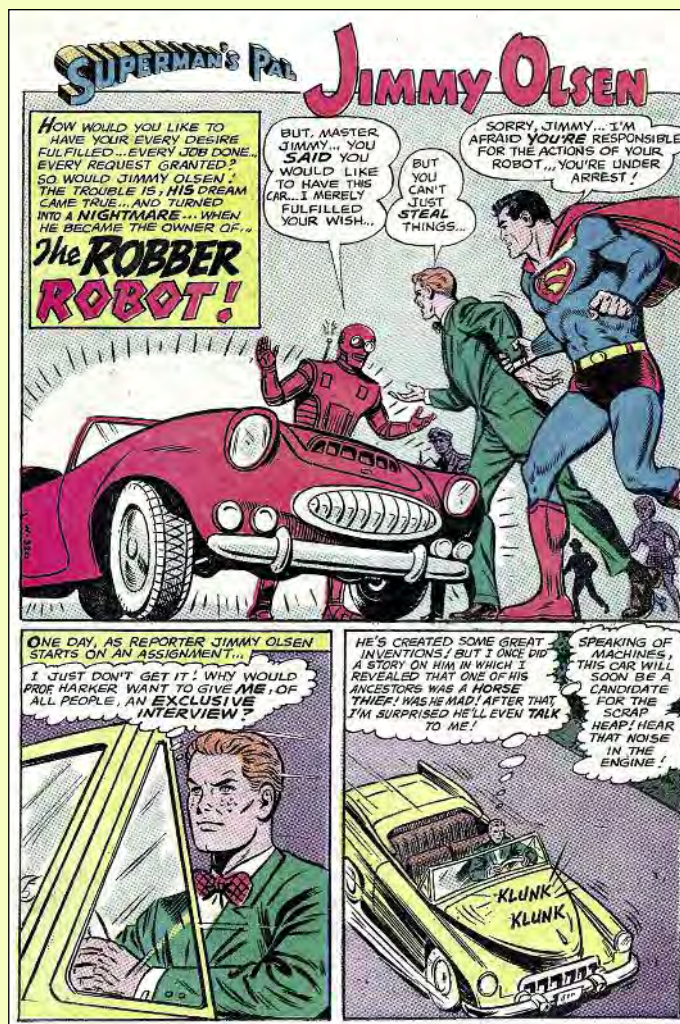
**Continuity Comics:** *The New Heroes* (w) c. 1989

**Dark Horse Comics:** *Predator vs. Magnus*, *Robot Fighter* (plot) 1992 (imprint: Acclaim)

**DC Comics:** *Captain Action* (w) 1968-69; *Jimmy Olsen* (w) 1966-69; *Legion of Super-Heroes* (w/some layout p) 1966-70, 1975-78; *Spider-Man and Superman* (w) 1981 (inter-company crossover with Marvel Comics); *Superboy* (w) 1967; *Supergirl* (w) 1966-67; *Superman* (w) 1966-69, 1975

**Defiant Comics:** *The Defiant Universe* (w) 1993; *The Defiant Universe* (w) 1994 graphic album; *Michael Alexander* (w/plot) 1993-94

**Marvel Comics:** *The Avengers* (w) 1976-82; *The Black Panther* (w) 1979; *Captain America* (w) 1979, 1981; *Captain Marvel* (w) 1978; *Crystar* (w) 1983; *Daredevil* (plot) 1985, (w) 1977-78; *Dazzler* (adaptation of movie script) 1984; *Dazzler* (w) 1983-85; *Fantastic Four* (w) 1977, 1986; *Ghost Rider* (w) 1977; *Hulk* (w) 1980; *Iron Man* (w) 1976-77; *Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars* (w) 1984-86; *Ms.*



## Shooter's Pal, Jimmy Olsen

Jim Shooter scripted and Pete Costanza drew (probably from JS's layouts) this tale for *Superman's Pal, Jimmy Olsen* #121 (July 1969). Thanks to Doug Martin. [TM & © DC Comics.]

Marvel (w) 1977; *Spider-Man* (layout p) 1981; (p)(i) 1987; (w) 1977; *Spider-Man and Hulk* (w) 1983; *Spider-Man and Superman* (w) 1981 (inter-company crossover with DC Comics); *Star Brand* (w) 1986-87; *Storm*, *Tigra*, *Wasp*, and *She-Hulk* (plot) 1985; *Sub-Mariner and Dr. Doom* (p) 1976, (w) 1975; support (editorial assistant 1969, assoc. editor 1976-77, editor 1977-78, editor-in-chief 1978-87, production/colorist 1976-78; text (w) 1982-84; *Thing* and *Black Goliath* (w) 1977; *Thing and Thor* (w) 1977; *Thor* (plot) 1987; *Tigra* (w) 1976; *What If Avengers...?* (w) 1977, 1982; *X-Factor* (plot) 1986; *X-Men: Heroes for Hope* (w) 1985





# The Many Facets Of DAN BARRY: The Latter Days Of *Flash Gordon* —And A Return To Comic Books

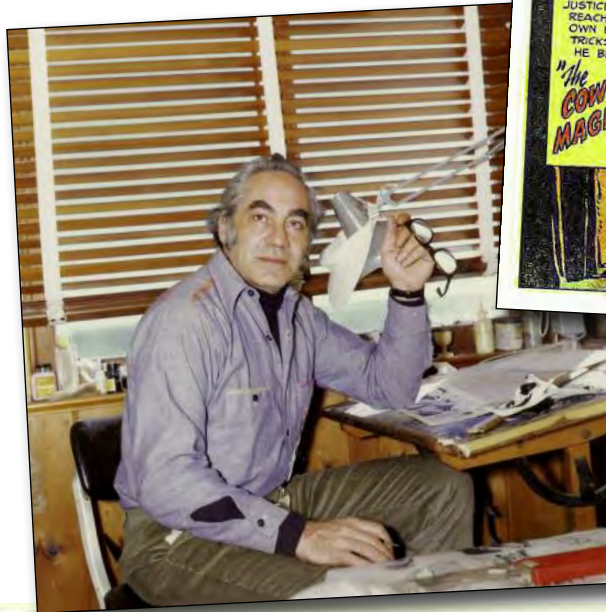
## The Final Chapter Of Our Look At A Controversial Artistic Talent

by Alberto Becattini

# A/E

**EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:** Issues #130, 131, & 134 presented the first three parts of this artistic biography of Dan Barry (1923-1997).

Unless otherwise noted, all art and photos accompanying this article were provided by Alberto Becattini. In his day, Dan Barry was both a leading comic book illustrator and the long-running force behind the iconic *Flash Gordon* newspaper comic strip that had been created in 1934 by Alex Raymond. The earlier installments dealt with Barry's comic book career; his and King Features' 1951 re-launching of the daily *Flash Gordon* strip (dormant for seven years since Mac Raboy's death); and Barry's first three decades of work on it, often with the help of a revolving door of friends and hired scripters and artists, with many of whom he had an often difficult relationship, including important artistic collaborator Bob Fujitani. In early 1978, Barry hired comic book artist Rich Buckler to ghost the daily strip, while he and Fujitani moved toward a parting of the ways after Barry unilaterally altered the financial terms under which they were co-creating a poster for the early-'80s *Flash Gordon* film produced by Dino DeLaurentiis. Fujitani kept drawing the strip for a time, despite their estrangement....



### Four Decades Of Dan

Dan Barry in Connecticut, early 1970s—flanked by a primo example of his early comic book work (a "Vigilante" splash for *Action Comics* #145, June 1950) and the *Flash Gordon* comic strip daily for April 11, 1977, drawn by Barry and Bob Fujitani (reproduced from a scan of the original art). The photo is courtesy of Fujitani and Shaun Clancy, via Alberto Becattini. ["Vigilante" splash TM & © DC Comics; *Flash Gordon* strip TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]





## Flash Gordon Cartoonist May Draw in Jail

The "Flash Gordon" comic strip may originate from jail for the next year. Daniel Barry, a cartoonist who creates the strip, was sentenced to a year in jail and fined \$10,000 for willfully failing to file a federal income tax return. Barry, a former Connecticut resident who now lives in Florida, was sentenced in Bridgeport, Conn. He failed to file for the years 1975-1978, when his income was estimated to be more than \$200,000.

### A Taxing Problem

Early 1982 newspaper item about Dan Barry's bout with the Internal Revenue Service. [© the respective copyright holders.]

There, Barry continued writing his outlines for the *Flash Gordon* comic strip, made quite a few friends—lawyers, bankers, embezzlers—and got a wonderful tan as he spent a good deal of the time as the greens keeper of the golf course.

Barry came out of jail early in 1983 and immediately went back to the drawing board. Besides scripting the *Flash Gordon* dailies, he was now writing and drawing the Sunday page, which took Flash and friends on an expedition to Mongo's twin planet Kkorbu, a world ruled by women whose queen, Matara, got married to Zarkov. It was around this time that Dan met Carolyn Hayes, who would later thus recall her brief yet intense relationship with him:

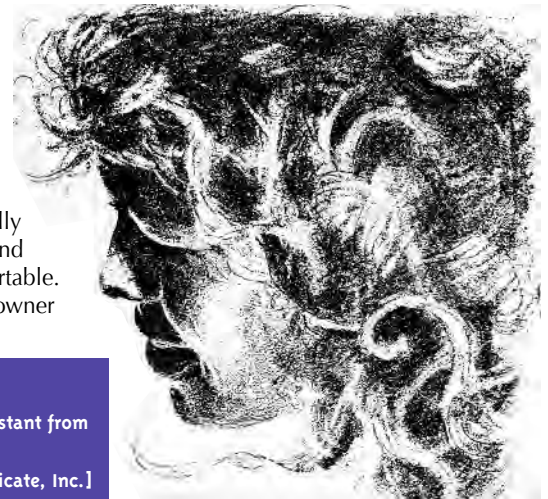
## Barry Behind Bars—And Back To The Drawing Board

From Connecticut, Barry moved to Sarasota, Florida, where he married Martha Subers Hetrick on June 21, 1981. Even this fourth marriage would end up in a divorce. Early in 1982, Barry got a call from the IRS. The artist had "forgotten" to pay income tax for four years, not filing returns during 1975-1978, when his income was estimated to be more than \$200,000. Eventually, only the fourth count was considered, but he was fined \$10,000 and sentenced to a year in jail for income tax evasion. He was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida, which was considered a country-club jail.

Dan Barry... I never lived with him. I spent a week with him at his home in Sarasota, Florida. The rest of the time I saw him was here in Sautee, Georgia. The year was 1983. I met him in May. He had come to this area to visit mutual friends. We became lovers. By the end of the summer, early fall, the relationship was over. Dan was 20 years older than me. He was a handsome man, intelligent, and to me, exotic. I was intrigued by the stories of his childhood in New York.... Dan had very strong opinions. I soon learned that everything in the end was about him, and that he was a very bitter person. The short time I spent with Dan was not bad, but I just knew he was not the person I wanted to have involved in the process of raising my son.<sup>22</sup>

That was also the time when Barry gave up painting to devote all of his time to the *Flash Gordon* Sunday page. His artwork was as fresh as ever. The lettering was now being done by Gail Beckett, whom Barry had met while spending a holiday in Georgia. Beckett recalled:

I had been doing some painting and carpentry at the Stoval House, a lovely bed & breakfast in Sautee Valley near Helen, Georgia. One Saturday I noticed there was a picnic and musical event in the yard of the Presbyterian Church I often attended about a quarter-mile away. One white-haired man really caught my eye, because he looked really out of place and very uncomfortable. Later on, the owner



### Beckett & Barry

(Right:) Gail Beckett self-portrait, circa 1970. Born in 1942 in Staten Island, NY, Beckett was Barry's assistant from 1983-97. [© 2015 Gail Beckett.]

(Below:) "Don" [sic] Barry's *Flash Gordon* Sunday page for March 27, 1983. [TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]

## FLASH GORDON







### A Spidery Interlude

Stan Lee (seen below right in the 1980s) regards the Sept. 2 and Oct. 9, 1986, *Amazing Spider-Man* daily strips drawn by Dan Barry with assistance from Gail Beckett. Reproduced from the original art. Thanks to Ger Apeldoorn for the photo. [Strips TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



of Stoval House introduced me to one of his guests: the white-haired man was Dan Barry, who had recently been released from prison and was considering relocating from Florida to this area, as his cellmate, David McIntyre, had recently returned to his wife and daughters here in Cleveland.<sup>23</sup>

Barry invited Beckett and her son Gabriel to go to Florida with him, but after two months they were all back in Cleveland, Georgia, where Barry settled at 160 Old Clarksville Highway. Beckett soon learned to letter and became Barry's full-time assistant.

### The Web-Spinner

When Bob Fujitani decided to quit drawing *Flash Gordon* for good in mid-1986, Barry needed someone to pencil the strip. So he called his old friend Fred Kida, who declined and in turn asked Barry if he would be interested in penciling the *Amazing Spider-Man* daily strip, which Kida had been doing. Barry agreed to talk to the strip's writer, Stan Lee, thinking he might pencil *Spider-Man* while just writing *Flash Gordon*. Lee's response was enthusiastic, and Barry's first *Spider-Man* strip appeared on July 28, 1986.

Barry was not satisfied with Mike Esposito's inking on *Spider-Man*, so he asked Lee to tell Mike to "dig in a bit." Lee fired Esposito, and Barry had to draw and ink the *Spider-Man* dailies. Although Barry was assisted by Andy Mushynsky and Gail Beckett, his workload quickly proved to be way too much, and

Barry had to leave *Spider-Man* as of the December 27, 1986, strip.

### The Last Flash Years

While Barry was also drawing *Spider-Man*, he was helped on *Flash Gordon* dailies and Sundays by old friends André LeBlanc and Frank Giacoia, and by the Filipino-born artist Dell Barras, who worked on the strip off and on from 1986-90. The 1980s Sundays were generally more interesting than their daily counterparts. During 1986-87 Barry disclosed Barin's origins, then teleported Flash, Dale, and Zarkov to Kkorbu, where Zarkov encountered his wife, the former queen Matara. Barry managed to sneak partial nudity into some of these pages; even Dale had very generous necklines which often showed her cleavage. Comics editor Jay Kennedy allowed Barry to do things that had never before been seen in a King Features strip. Yet, in the fall of 1989, some Michigan newspaper editors dropped the page after Barry drew a sequence in which Dale risked being raped by a gang of no-goods.

After Zarkov chose to succeed the late Matara on the Kkorbu throne, a 10-week sequence followed before Dan Barry quit the *Flash Gordon* Sunday page on July 15, 1990. Barry did most of the art on the dailies from 1988 onwards, making the rehashed Mongo storyline look good with expert staging and characterization. "Egon on Mongo" (1988-89) was set in the polluted world of 2080







### The Road To Kkorbu

(Above:) An early-1990s photo of Dan Barry.

(Right:) Matara, evil queen of Kkorbu, features in this black-&-white version of the Jan. 1, 1989, *Flash Gordon* Sunday page written and drawn by Barry with assistance from Gail Beckett. [TM © King Features Syndicate.]

Photos of André LeBlanc, Frank Giacoia, and Dell Barras were seen in *A/E* #131, 134, & 136, respectively.



A.D., whose people Flash and Egon found worshipping the image of Hari-Hari—a caricature of Dan's former collaborator Harry Harrison. Flash even made reference to Harrison's novel, *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966).

Andy Mushynsky helped Barry out on "Mission to Mongo" (1989-90) and "In Search of Ming" before Barry suddenly left the strip on July 7, 1990, with Ralph Reese bringing the latter sequence to a hurried conclusion after another week. As sudden as it was, Barry's departure was not utterly unexpected. In a 1989 interview Barry had in fact answered the question "Do you think you're going to stick with the strip?" by saying:

Only if I have to. I really am getting worked out. I just haven't been able to get my ass a day ahead. I had a guy out on the West Coast, who shall remain nameless, inking the stuff. Nice inking, but it isn't my stuff in the end. I'm always tempted to call in an inker again, start liberating myself and doing some comic books. What I really was hoping was that I could break someone in to take over the art entirely. Comic book guys—the good ones—are making more money than I am!<sup>24</sup>

## Comic Books: A New Beginning

One of the reasons Dan Barry stopped producing *Flash Gordon* in the fall of 1990 was that he wanted to go back to writing and drawing comic books. In fact, even before he left the strip, he penciled a story in the fifth and last issue of Valiant Comics' *The Legend of Zelda* (the comics adaptation of a Nintendo property), which came out with a Sept. 1990 cover date. The script was by George Caragonne, the inking by Andy Mushynsky.

As of late 1990, Barry started working for Mike Richardson's Dark Horse Comics on two different projects. He penciled the 24 pages which made up the first issue of the *Predator 2* movie adaptation (Feb. 1991), then devoted himself completely to the four-issue mini-series *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*, derived from a video game. Barry adapted it with William Messner-Loebs and Mike Richardson, and drew it



Karl Kesel

Thanks to Comic Vine website.



### Getting The Indy Spirit

*Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* splash page done for Dark Horse by Dan Barry and Karl Kesel. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd., & Dark Horse Comics, Inc.]





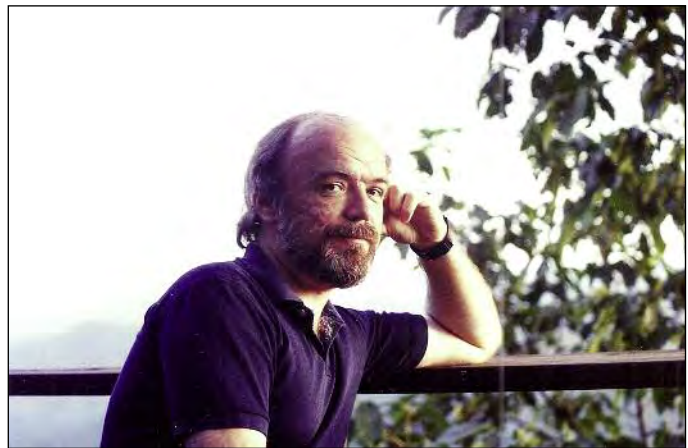
### The Trouble With Hari-Hari

(Top of page:) Flash, Egon, and "Hari-Hari" in the July 4, 1989, daily strip.

(Above:) Ming the Merciless reappears in the July 7, 1990, strip, the last drawn by Dan Barry (with assistance from Andy Mushynsky and Gail Beckett). [TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]

(Left:) A sketch of Ming done by Barry. [Ming TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]

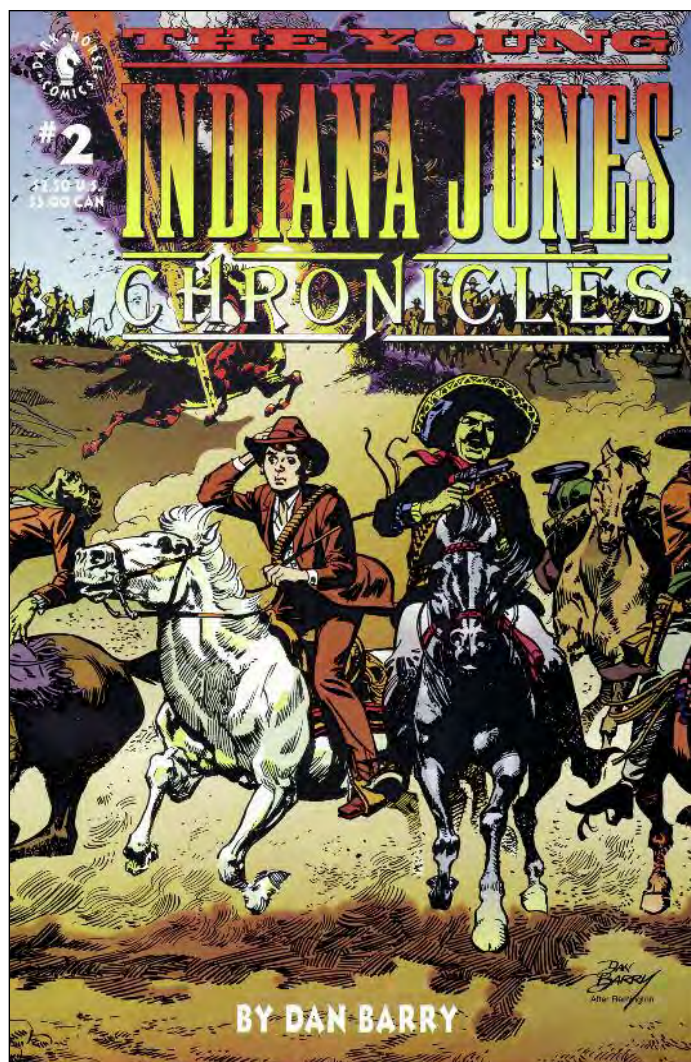
For Mike:



Andy Mushynsky

reposing on the balcony at friend David Anthony Kraft's home way up on Screamer Mountain, Georgia. Photo by wife Paulette Willard; date uncertain.





### Viva Villa!

Great Dan Barry cover for *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* #2 (March 1992), featuring Indie with Pancho Villa. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd., and Dark Horse Comics, Inc.]

with assistance from Karl Kesel. This was a classic “Indiana Jones” adventure, and the fourth issue, which Barry drew, inked, and colored himself, was by far the best one. The series earned Barry an Inkpot Award at the 1991 San Diego Comic Con.

## More Indiana Jones—And Predator

When Dark Horse bought the rights to the *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* TV series comics adaptation, Dan Barry was chosen to write and illustrate it. The comic book came out in early 1992 and actually predated the TV series (which first aired on March 4). For the first issue, Barry adapted the opening episode, “Young Indiana Jones and the Curse of the Jackal,” a fascinating yarn set in 1908 Egypt, with inking by veteran artist Frank Springer.

Another 11 issues of *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* followed until February 1993, all adapted from episodes of the TV series, which last aired on August 21 of that year. Barry wrote all the comics scripts and drew all the covers, besides drawing the interior stories for five



**Chris Warner**  
Thanks to Comic Vine website.

issues. Issue #2, in which young Indie rode with Pancho Villa in 1916 Mexico, and #10, set in 1917 Vienna, were memorable. On this series Barry was helped by another veteran, Gray Morrow (who did complete art for issue #3 and inking on #4-6), and by his former assistant on *Flash Gordon* and *Spider-Man*, Andy Mushynsky. The art on the remaining issues was unfortunately entrusted to lesser artists such as Gordon Purcell, Ian Akin, and Louis Daniel; but all in all *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* remains a fully enjoyable adventure series.

Early in 1992, Dark Horse also published two issues of *Predator: The Bloody Sands of Time*, an original tale of the alien hunter that Barry co-wrote with Mike Richardson. Partly set during the period of World War I, this was a very graphic, adult-oriented story in which Barry even had a chance to depict nudity and an explicit sex scene. His outstanding pencil art was carefully inked by Chris Warner.

In 1993, Barry went back to writing and drawing another *Indiana Jones* mini-series, *Thunder in the Orient*. Dark Horse published it in six issues from September of that year to April 1994. This was a totally original story, set in Libya, India, Nepal, Afghanistan, and China. Barry created such captivating characters as the young



### In The Trenches

(Above:) Alien menace meets World War I warfare in *Predator: The Bloody Sands of Time* (1992), for Dark Horse. Inks by Chris Warner. [TM & © 20th Century Fox Film Corporation & Dark Horse Comics, Inc.]





### The (Gunga) Din Of Battle

Dynamic Barry artwork for *Indiana Jones: Thunder in the Orient* #2 (Oct. 1993). That's young Khama! in panel 3. [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd., and Dark Horse Comics, Inc.]

Khama! the red-haired Sophie, Japanese General Kyojo, and General Serpent Lady, a modern replica of Milton Caniff's Dragon Lady from *Terry and the Pirates*. Barry was assisted by Mushynsky on two episodes artwise, while the final one was drawn by another comics veteran, Dan Spiggle.

Barry's last collaboration with Dark Horse was a "Judah 'the Hammer'" 10-pager he drew and inked for *Dark Horse Presents* #84 (April 1994).

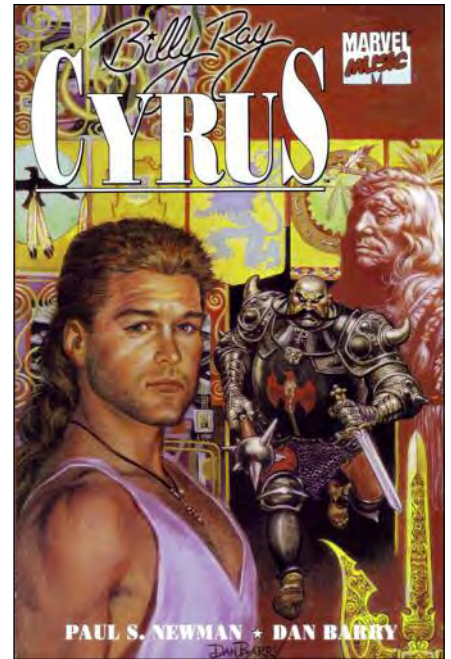
## Continuity, DC, & Marvel

While still working for Dark Horse, Barry also started contributing to Continuity Comics, Neal Adams' short-lived independent comic book company. Barry penciled a 24-page story, "Just a MAD In-fatuation," for *Ms. Mystic* #9 (May 1992), which marked Barry's return to super-hero comics after four decades. Barry also penciled issue #3 of *Crazyman* (July 1992), depicting young Danny Brody as he changed into the mad, bloodthirsty avenger called Crazyman. In fact, Barry mostly worked on the latter character, also penciling Vol. 2, #2-4 (Dec. 1993 & Jan. 1994).

He also penciled part of *Megalith* #4 (Oct. 1993) and inked part of #6 (Dec. 1993). He likewise penciled at least one issue of *Toyboy* (#11), which was never published, since the series ended with #7. This certainly worsened Barry's relationship with Neal Adams and Continuity, which ended up in a lawsuit in 1994. The lawsuit was later dismissed.

In 1994, Barry contributed a comic page to DC Comics/Paradox Press' *Big Book of Urban Legends*. Entitled "The Ski Accident," it pictures the misadventure of a beautiful blonde skier who stops to pee among the trees but slides down and breaks an arm.

In 1995, Barry drew two stories for a one-shot comic devoted to singer-actor Billy Ray Cyrus that was published by Marvel and scripted by comic book veteran Paul S. Newman. Barry also provided a painted cover for the comic.



### Sing For Your Supper

Painted cover by Dan Barry for the *Billy Ray Cyrus* comic book published by Marvel Comics in 1995. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



### A Barry Good Panel

Penciled panel by Barry for a "Toyboy" story that was slated for issue #11 of that Continuity title. It was left unfinished when the series ended with #7, and this panel eventually appeared in AC Comics' *Golden-Age Men of Mystery* #5 (1997). [TM & © Continuity Comics, Inc.]





### Comic Book Continuity

(Left:) *Solid Ms. Mystic* page by Dan Barry and Brian Garvey from issue #9 (May 1992). Repro'd from scan of the original (autographed) art.

(Right:) *Crazyman* goes berserk (what else would you expect?) in this page by Dan Barry and Richard Bennett from *Crazyman* #3 (July '92).

Both pages done for Neal Adams' Continuity Comics. [TM & © Continuity Comics, Inc.]

## His Final Fling—With A Sexy Twist

It seems as if, in the very last years of his 55-year-long career in comics, Dan Barry finally resolved to draw the female figure at its best—and nudest. Barry was one of the first artists to contribute to the adult comics magazine *Men's Adventure Comics*. The very first issue (cover dated April-May 1995) featured the parodistic Western adventures of "Slim & Nun." Written by George Caragonne and Tom Thornton, the series was set in 1871 northern Mexico and starred a handsome gunman named Slim Chance (a dead ringer for Clint Eastwood's Stranger in such 1960s "Spaghetti Western" films as *A Fistful of Dollars* and *The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly*) and a beautiful young blonde nun named Sister Joan of the Franciscan Mothers of Invention. Along the way, she was nearly raped by a gang of no-goods, and eventually she and Chance took to making love anytime they could. Supporting characters included the gun-slinging Rawhide Rita and Slim's friend Mac McLain, a John Wayne lookalike. As of the sixth episode, Barry also took over the writing, carrying on the series after it was moved to *Penthouse Comix* in 1996 and concluding it with the ninth episode, which was

drawn by Gray Morrow.

Before hosting the last three episodes of "Slim & Nun," *Penthouse Comix* featured another series drawn by Barry during 1995-96. Starting out in the setting of December 1939, "Doctor Dare" starred a beautiful American scientist, Dr. Johanna Dare, who "has developed a secret formula that transforms her into a fighting female fury with the strength of fifty men... but only for eight hours and only after she has sex." Dr. Dare became a special agent for the U.S. government, and after battling the Nazi menace across two continents she had to face the threat of the Axis powers in outer space. Written by Caragonne and Thornton, "Doctor Dare" featured another memorable female character, the Japanese Princess Sinfar. Barry had to quit the series after the first four episodes to resume work on "Slim & Nun," turning "Doctor Dare" over to Gray Morrow.

## Curtain Call

Barry was still doing extraordinary work, when Fate struck. Or rather, when years and years of chain-smoking took their toll. As





### What Are The Chances?

(Left:) Slim Chance and Sister Joan on the first page of the third episode of "Slim and Nun," from *Men's Adventure Comix* #3 (Aug.-Sept. 1995). Trust us—this is one of the few pages from the story we could show you in a family magazine!

(Right:) Red-haired Dr. Johanna Dare gets slapped by Princess Sinfar in episode 3 of the series, from *Penthouse Comix* #10 (Nov.-Dec. 1995). [TM & © General Media Communications, Inc.]

Gail Beckett recalls:

We generally dined together before I went home at night. Dan was a fine cook and we shared kitchen duties. At some point I began to notice that he wasn't eating with his normal gusto... especially red meat. Yet even he must have suspected something was amiss, because he actually went in for a checkup, then an x-ray (which showed a huge mass in the upper left lobe of his lung). Biopsy. Surgery. Radiation. Horrible!!!<sup>25</sup>

In the *Penthouse Comix* #20 (Feb.-March 1997) letter page, managing editor Eliot R. Brown wrote that "Dan Barry is taking it easy and preparing for a potential surgery, and he is still full of piss and vinegar." Unfortunately, Barry wouldn't make it. He passed away on January 25, 1997, in Cleveland, Georgia. At 74, one of the greatest comic artists of all time left this world. And yet, even the people who had known him best couldn't help uttering bitter remarks about him. When he heard of Barry's death, Fred Kida said, "I don't believe it. He's too mean to die." Gail Beckett added:

Still miss the unequalled brilliance of that old fart. Though multi-lingual and a brilliant artist and extraordinary intellect, he was a perpetually dissatisfied man. Wish he could have been happier.... The few times he smiled it actually looked kind of scary, so unaccustomed was his face to that expression. I do recall inking some comic pages very late and having to clean a long downward ink line off the page when I drifted off to sleep at the drawing board at home. I think that was one



### Family Photo

(Left to right:) Helene, Steve, and Gregoria (Greg) Barry in an August 1992 photo, courtesy of Steven Barry.



of the countless times Dan fired me, or I left in disgust at his treatment of me or my youngest son, who would often come to the studio after school. And [there was] Kathy Clark, whom Dan hired as a secretary and when she reported for work in high heels, straight skirt, and silk blouse, he told her to go clean his toilets—she did. Kathy's daughter, Karon, posed for the young lady in the *Billy Ray Cyrus* comic. He traumatized us all. He was definitely a force to be reckoned with.<sup>26</sup>

Steven Barry's picture of his father was not merciful, either. He said that:

Dad called us to tell us he was dying. He was a heavy smoker and died of lung cancer. It was very difficult to see somebody who had been so strong, athletic (he was also a boxer and weight lifter as a youth) look like he was wasting away (extremely skinny). Ironically, it seemed like I was closer to Dad when he was passing away than I had been for many, many years. At the age of 21, my father cut out child support while I was attending college and I went out to work full-time. Once my draft status was cleared up—the Vietnam War was an issue at that time—I went back to school at night. It took about three years to complete my degree (BS in Economics with a 3.9 index out of 4) and three years at night to complete my MBA in Finance at night (3.7 index). I later studied at night for three years to become a Certified Management Accountant (CMA). I am currently responsible for compliance in a publicly-held company. Dad was hard to deal with. That is one of the reasons he divorced four times (plus separated from my mother before I was born). The other is probably his artist's



Alberto Becattini.

temperament. My views are somewhat colored by mother, who spoke of him in disparaging terms after the divorce and throughout her life. (She passed away in December 2012 at the age of 91.) He was an extremely bright individual but did not interact well with others. If I might suggest a title for your essay, that would be "The Many Facets of Dan Barry."<sup>27</sup>

Well, I have followed Steven's suggestion.

## Footnotes For This Issues Segment:

- 24 Dan Barry, interview with David Anthony Kraft, in *Comics Interview* no. 84, 1990.
- 25 Gail Beckett, e-mail interview with Alberto Becattini, 15 July 2011.
- 26 Gail Beckett, e-mail interview with Alberto Becattini, 28 July 2012.
- 27 Steven Barry, op. cit.

Born in Florence, Italy, **Alberto Becattini** is a high school teacher of English who has been writing about comics, illustration, and animation for forty years. He has been a contributor to Italian Disney publications since 1992, and has also written for *Alter Ego*, *Comic Book Artist*, *Comic Book Marketplace*, and *Walt's People*, among others. An indexer for the *Grand Comics Database* and the *I.N.D.U.C.K.S.* project, he has written books about Milton Caniff, Floyd Gottfredson, Bob Lubbers, Alex Raymond, Romano Scarpa, and Alex Toth. He also writes about his favorite authors and strips on his blog at <http://alberto-s-pages.webnode.it/blog>.

## DAN BARRY Checklist

[NOTE: The following checklist has been prepared by Alberto Becattini with Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., with input from Jerry G. Bails' online edition of the *Who's Who of American Comic Books 1928-1999*. Key: (a) = pencils and inks; (i) = inks; #nn = no issue number given; (p) = pencils; V = volume; (w) = writer; (?) = uncertain attribution. No reprint titles are listed.]

### COMIC BOOKS AND COMIC MAGAZINES:

#### Publisher: ACE COMICS

(some p) Mr. Risk – *Our Flag* #5 (1942).

#### Publisher: ACCLAIM

(p) Cover – *The Legend of Zelda* #5 (1990); (p) *The Legend of Zelda* #5 (1990).

#### Publisher: BETTER/STANDARD/NEDOR

(some p) Doc Strange – *Thrilling Comics* #23 (1941), (some p) Ted Crane – *Exciting Comics* #22 (1942).

#### Publisher: CHARLTON

(p) *Black Fury* #2 (1955).

#### Publisher: CONTINUITY COMICS

(p) Cover – *Crazyman* #4 (1994); (i) Cover – *Megalith* #6 (1993), *Ms. Mystic* #9 (1992); (p) *Crazyman* #2-4 (1993-94); (i) *Megalith* #4, 6 (1993); (p) *Ms. Mystic* #9 (1992).

#### Publisher: DARK HORSE

(a) Covers – *Predator: The Bloody Sands of Time* #1, 2 (1992), *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* #1-12 (1992-93); (a/some w) *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* #1-4 (1991); (w/some a) *Indiana Jones: Thunder in the Orient* #1-6 (1993-94); (a) Judah "the Hammer" – *Dark Horse Presents* #84 (1994); (w/p) *Predator: The Bloody Sands of Time* #1, 2 (1992); (p) *Predator 2* #1 (1991);

#### The Great War Comic

Dan Barry's cover for Dark Horse's *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* #5 (June 1992). [TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd., & Dark Horse Comics, Inc.]





(w/ some a) *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* #1-12 (1992-93).

**Publisher:** DC COMICS/NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC.

(p) *Adventures of Alan Ladd* #1 (1949); (a) *The Big Book of Urban Legends* #nn (1994); (p) *Big Town* #1-3 (1951); (p?) *Boy Commandos* #35 (1949); (p) covers – *Big Town* #1-3 (1951), *Gang Busters* #2, 6-8, 19 (1948-51), *Real Fact Comics* #14-16, 20 (1948-49); (p) *Gang Busters* #1-13, 19, 22 (1948-51); (p) *Impossible—but True – Detective Comics* #154-169, 170-173 (1949-51); (a) *Johnny Quick – Adventure Comics* #144-145 (1949); (p) *Mr. District Attorney* #7, 11, 13, 17 (1949-50); (a) *Real Fact Comics* #14, 15, 16, 20 (1948-49); (p) *Strange Adventures* #3 (1950); (p?) *Tom Sparks, Boy Inventor – World's Finest Comics* #49, 50 (1951); (p/ some i) *Vigilante – Action Comics* #131-151 (1949-50).

**Publisher:** EASTERN COLOR/FAMOUS FUNNIES

(a) *Heroic Comics* #17-19 (1943)

**Publisher:** FAWCETT PUBLICATIONS

(a) *Bulletman – Master Comics* #81, 82 (1947); (a) *Captain Midnight* #56, 57, 61 (1947-48); (a) *Commando Yank – Wow Comics* #19, 35, 59, 61 (1943/45/47); (a) Covers – *Bulletman* #16 (1946), *Captain Midnight* #56 (1948); (p?) *Lance O'Casey* #3 (1946).



### Wow—What An Anachronism!

The World War II costumed hero Commando Yank was appearing in Fawcett's *Wow Comics* as late as issue #59 (Oct. 1947)—and so was Dan Barry. Scripter unknown. [© the respective copyright holders.]



### Johnny Be Nimble—Johnny Be Quick!

A "Johnny Quick" action page—one of Dan Barry's relatively few excursions into the super-hero genre—from *Adventure Comics* #145 (Oct. 1949). Script by Otto Binder. Thanks to Michael T. Gilbert. [TM & © DC Comics.]

**Publisher:** HILLMAN

(a/ some p only) *Airboy – Airboy Comics* V2#12, V4#11 (1946/48), *Air Fighters Comics* V1#11 (1943); (p?) *Bald Eagle – Air Fighters Comics* V1#11 (1943); (a) *The Boy King – Clue Comics* V1#1-V1#5 (1943); (a) Covers – *Airboy Comics* V3#11, V4#1-V4#3, V4#11, V5#1 (1946-48), *Air Fighters Comics* V2#3 (1943), *Clue Comics* V1#1, V1#3-V1#6, V2#2 (1947), *Real Clue Crime Stories* V2#8, V2#9, V4#4 (1947/49); (w/ a) *Gunmaster – Real Clue Crime Stories* V2#4 (1947); (a) *The Heap – Airboy Comics* V4#9-V4#11 (1947-48); (a) *My Date* #1, 2 (1947); (p) *Nightmare and Sleepy – Clue Comics* V1#1-2 (1943); (a/ some w) *Real Clue Crime Stories* V2#9-10, V3#2-3, V5#6 (1947-50); (p) *Sky Wolf – Air Fighters Comics* V1#09-V2#1, V2#2 [splash only], V2#6-7 (1943-44); (a) *Ultra Violet – My Date* #2, 3 (1947).

**Publisher:** HOLYOKE

(w) *The Blue Beetle – Blue Beetle Comics* #21 (1943); (p) *Flagman – Captain Aero Comics* V1#9, V2#4 (1942-43); (i) *The Hood – Cat-Man Comics* V3#05, V3#7 (1942-43); (a) covers – *Blue Beetle Comics* #20, 21 (1943); (w/ p) *The Tiger Squadron – Blue Beetle Comics* #20 (1943); (w) *Text Story – Blue Beetle Comics* #20 (1943).

**Publisher:** LEV GLEASON

(a) *Crimebuster – Boy Comics* #33-39 (1948); (a/ some w) *Crime Does Not Pay* #42, 48, 50, 55, 61, 65, 69, 70, 75 (1945-49); (a) *Daredevil*





### Having The Crime Of His Life

A Dan Barry splash page from *Crime Does Not Pay* #65 (July '48).  
[© the respective copyright holders.]

and the Little Wise Guys – *Daredevil Comics* #40-43, 45 (1947); (w/p) *Desperado* #2 (1948); (i) 13 and Jinx – *Daredevil Comics* #15 (1943); (a) *Tops* #1 (1949); (p) Young Robinhood – *Boy Comics* #3-6, 7-8, 31-32 (1942-43/46-47).

### Publisher: MARVEL/TIMELY/ATLAS

(p) *Billy Ray Cyrus* #nn (1995); (i) *Comedy Comics* #11 (1942); (a) Covers – *Billy Ray Cyrus* #nn (1995); (a?) *Dippy Diplomat* – *Captain America Comics* #18-21, 24, 25 (1942-43); (p?) *Men's Adventures* #10 (1951); (i) *Miss America* – *Miss America Magazine* V1#3, V1#5 (1944); (i/some p) *Patsy Walker* V1#3, V1#5 (1945); (p) *Sub-Mariner* – *All-Select Comics* #1, 2 (1943-44); (a/some w) *Tommy Tyme* – *Complete Mystery* #1 (1948), *Kid Komiks* #5 (1944), *Mystic Comics* #3 (1944), *Young Allies Comics* #7, 8, 10, 11, 14 (1943-44); (p) *Whizzer* – *Kid Komiks* #10 (1944); (p) *Young Allies* – *Young Allies Comics* #10-12 (1944).

### Publisher: NOVELTY PRESS

(p/some i) *Blue Bolt* – *Blue Bolt Comics* V2#7, V3#10-V4#6, V4#8 (1941-44).

### Publisher: PENTHOUSE INTERNATIONAL

(a) *Doctor Dare* – *Penthouse Comix* #8-11 (1995); (w/a) *Slim & Nun* – *Men's Adventure Comix* #1-5, 6 (1995-96), *Penthouse Comix* #18-20

(1996).

### Publisher: PRIZE/FEATURE

(a) Covers – *Treasure Comics* #10, 12 (1946-47); (p?) *Headline Comics* #48 (1951); (a/some p) *The Treasure Keeper* – *Treasure Comics* #10-12 (1946-47).

### Publisher: ZIFF-DAVIS

(p) *Amazing Adventures* #3, 4 (1951); (p) *Crusader from Mars* #2 (1952); (p) *The Hawk* #1 (1951); (p) *Weird Thrillers* #1, 3, 4 (1951-52).

### ADVERTISING/PROMOTIONAL COMICS, BOOKLETS, & POSTERS:

#### Publisher: BROWN SHOE CO.

(p) *Buster Brown Comic Book* #5, 7-12, 14-16 (1946-49); (a) Covers – *Buster Brown Comic Book* #7-11, 14, 15, 17 (1946-49).

#### Publisher: GENERAL COMICS

(a) Cover – *Fight for Freedom!* #nn (1949), *Watch Out for Big Talk!* #nn (1950); (a) *Fight for Freedom!* #nn (1949); (a) *How America Grew* – *Frontiers of Freedom* #nn (1950); (a) *Watch Out for Big Talk!* #nn (1950).

#### Publisher: POST-HALL SYNDICATE

(art dir) *Special Delivery Pogo* #nn (1951).

#### Publisher: THE RANK ORGANISATION

(i) *A Tale of Two Cities* movie promotional art (1952).

#### Publisher: 20th CENTURY FOX

(a) *Les Miserables* movie promotional art (1952).

### NEWSPAPER COMIC STRIPS:

#### Publisher: EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS, INC./UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE

(p/some i) *Tarzan of the Apes* daily strip 09/01/1947-02/05/1949.

Assistants/Ghosts: (p/i) Sy Barry, John Belfi, Emil Gershwin.

#### Publisher: KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, INC.

(w/a) *Flash Gordon* daily strip 11/19/1951-07/07/1990; (w) *Flash Gordon* Sunday page 06/07/1953-12/17/1967; (w/a) *Flash Gordon* Sunday page 12/24/1967-07/15/1990.

Assistants/Ghosts: (w) Harvey Kurtzman, Jan Sand, Bob Kanigher, Bill Finger, Sid Jacobson, Aldo Giunta, Larry T. Shaw, Harry Harrison; (p/i) John Belfi, Sy Barry, Mike Sekowsky, Ric Estrada, Jack Davis, Sam Burlockoff, Dick Rockwell, Frank Frazetta, Al Williamson, Roy Krenkel, Pete Morisi, Paul Norris, Carmine Infantino, Fred Kida, Ralph Mayo, Joe Giella, Leonard Starr, André LeBlanc, Tom Sawyer, John Giunta, Wally Wood, Frank Giacoia, George Roussos, Tex Blaisdell, William Juhré, Martin Asbury, Bob Fujitani, John Lehti, John Rosenberger, Rich Buckler, Russ Heath, Gail Beckett, Dell Barras, Andy Mushynsky.

#### Publisher: MARVEL COMICS/COWLES SYNDICATE, INC.

(p) *The Amazing Spider-Man* daily strip 07/28/1986-12/27/1986, 08/02-23/1986; (a) *The Amazing Spider-Man* daily strip 08/25-12/27/1986.

Assistants: (i) Mike Esposito, Gail Beckett, Andy Mushynsky.





### Stripping Down

(Above:) The 4-11-77 *Flash Gordon* daily strip, drawn by Dan Barry and Bob Fujitani. Repro'd from scan of original art. [TM & © King Features Syndicate, Inc.]

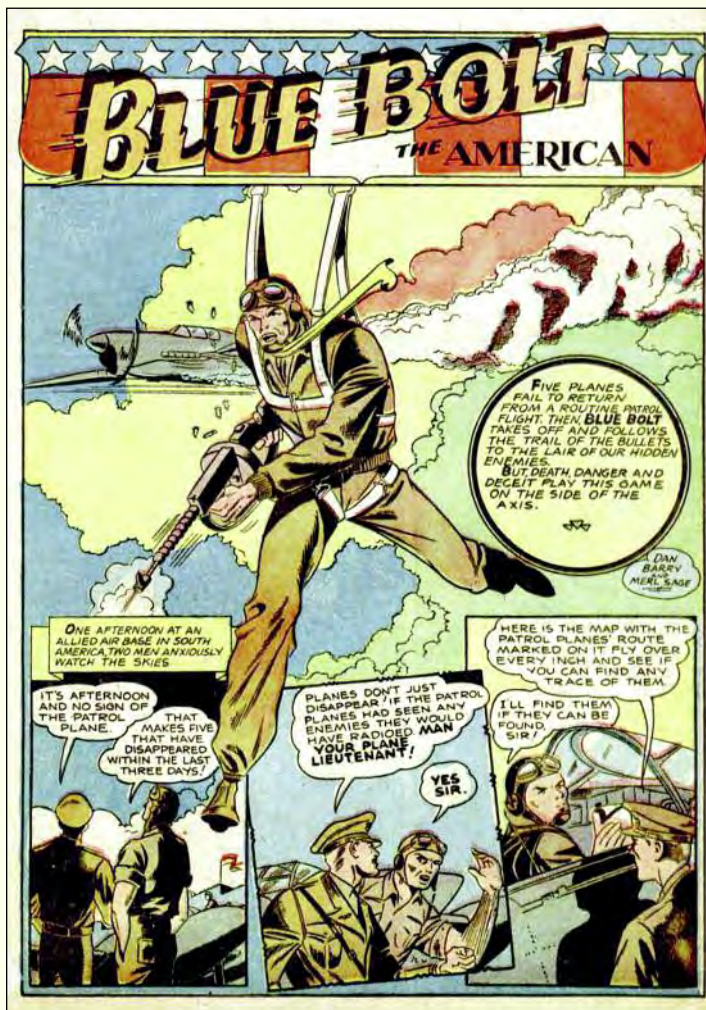
**Publisher:** WILL EISNER PRODUCTIONS/McCLURE  
NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE

(a) *Melba* daily strip (1947). Probably unpublished. One week's worth of strips said to exist.

**BOOKS:**

**Publisher:** CROYDON

(a) Cover – *Croydon Award Mystery* #10 (1946).



### Two Somewhat Different Approaches To World War II

(Left:) Dan Barry pencilled and Merl Sage inked this splash page from the non-costumed version of the titular hero in Novelty Press' *Blue Bolt*, Vol. 3, #11 (April 1943). [© the respective copyright holders.]

(Right:) A "Doctor Dare" page by Barry, from an issue of *Penthouse Comix* in the mid-1990s. [TM & © General Media Communications, Inc.]



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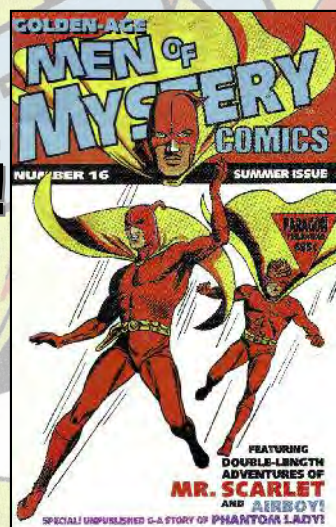
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SPY SMASHER  
SKYMAN • STUNTMAN  
THE OWL • MR. SCARLET  
COMMANDO YANK  
PYROMAN • GREEN LAMA  
THE EAGLE • IBIS



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The above is just a partial list of characters that have  
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GREATEST COMICS*. Virtually all issues published to date  
are still available for purchase 24/7 with PayPal, Visa, or  
MasterCard. To find over 100 quality Golden Age reprints,  
go to the AC Comics website at [www.accomics.com](http://www.accomics.com).





EVERY CARTOONIST HAS TO START **SOMEWHERE!** JAUNTY JIM STERANKO BEGAN HIS COMICS CAREER PENCILLING CHEESY CHARLTON LOVE STORIES FOR VINNIE COLLETTA IN THE LATE '50S. UNDERGROUND COMIX GENIUS BOB CRUMB PAID HIS DUES DRAWING NOVELTY CARDS FOR AMERICAN GREETINGS.

AND MY BOSS, MICHAEL T. ? WHY, HIS VERY FIRST COMIC BOOK STORY WAS SOMETHING CALLED...

## IN THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE!



### "...In the Interests of Science"

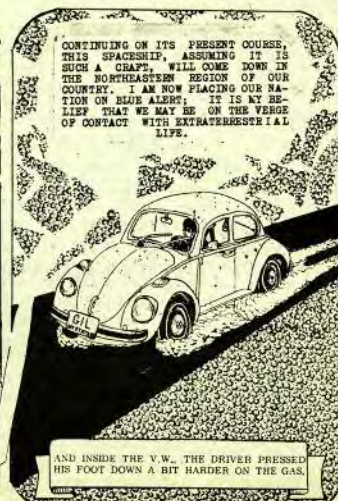
© 1971 Michael Gilbert

#### PROLOGUE

THE WIND HOWLED ON PALOMAR MOUNTAIN, AND, INSIDE THE OBSERVATORY, MENCURSED, A DISCOVERY HAD JUST BEEN CONFIRMED AS THE WIND WAILED ITS DISAPPROVAL.



THE DIRECTOR OF HUGE, IMPRESSIVE PALOMAR OBSERVATORY WAS A FIDGETY MAN WHO LOST NO TIME IN DIALING A SPECIAL NUMBER.



Story begins next installment...

Artist-Michael Gilbert Writer- Harvey Sobel

"Tricky Dick" Nixon made a cameo in the very first episode of *In the Interests of Science!* on December 1, 1970. It was all uphill from there!

[© 2015 Harvey Sobel & Michael T. Gilbert.]



# "In The Interests Of Science!"

by Michael T. Gilbert

**P**reviously, "The Crypt" spotlighted my "lost" late-'70s Berkeley Barb comic strip, *Inkspots*. At the time I stated that it was my first attempt at a newspaper strip. But that's not quite true.

My very first strip—and indeed my very first completed comic story—was one I drew shortly after graduating high school. A few months earlier, I'd met a fellow Commack High student at a gathering at my old girlfriend's house. Harvey Sobel was a couple of years younger, but the two of us were rabid comic fans and quickly hit it off. A few months later, he called and asked if I'd be interested in illustrating a sci-fi comic strip he'd come up with called *In the Interests of Science*.

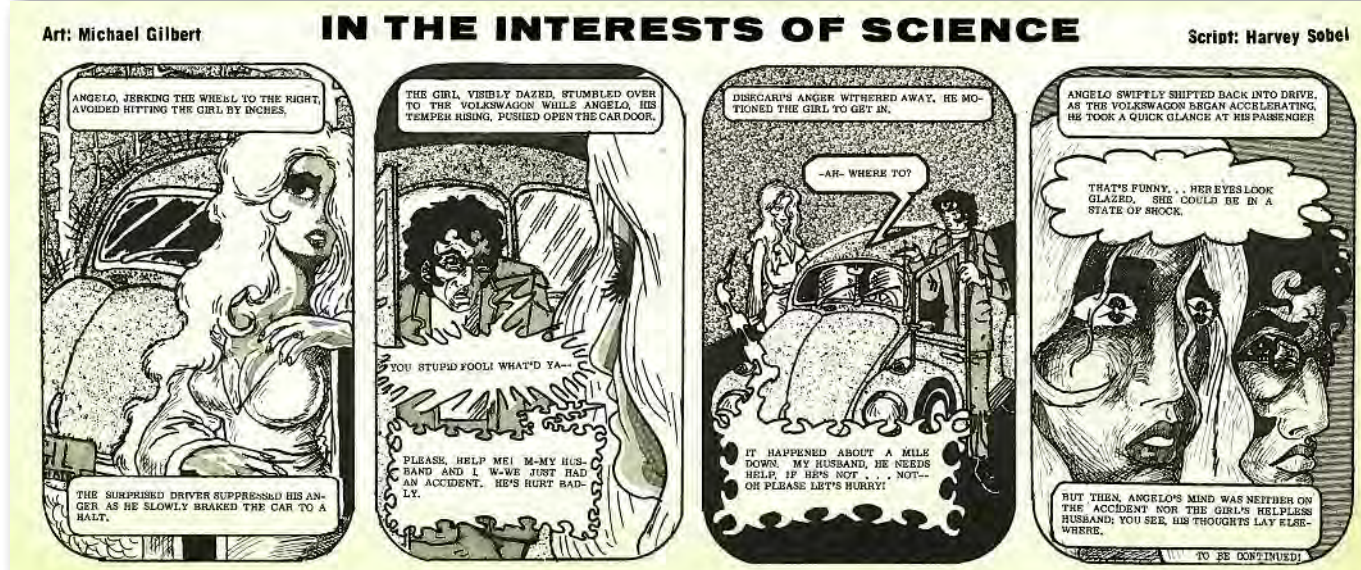
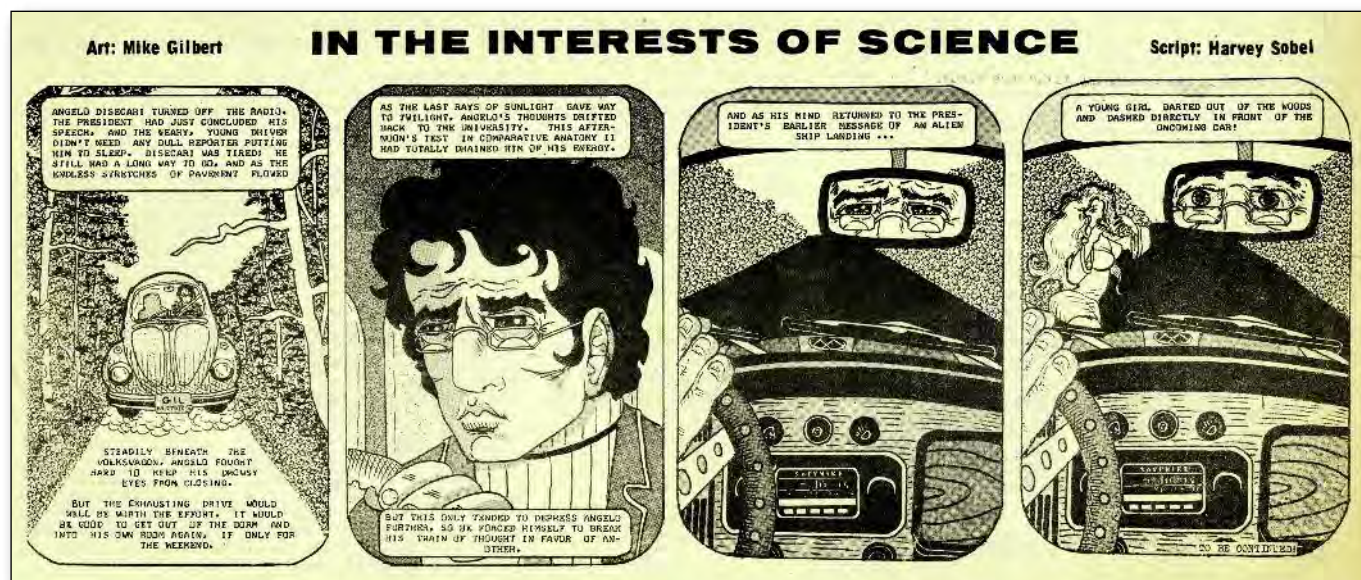
Earlier, I'd attempted a couple of comic book stories, but my

ambitions outstripped my abilities and I'd given up after a page or two. But this was different. Harvey planned to offer the strip to our high school paper, *Varohi*. The paper came out monthly, which meant I only had to do one daily strip every 30 days. Even at my snail's pace, that sounded quite doable.

I was still living on Long Island with my parents while commuting to nearby Suffolk Community College, which made it easy for Harvey and me to collaborate. We also stayed in touch after I transferred to SUNY New Paltz (in upstate New York) a couple of years later.

I hated lettering, so Harvey typed out the balloons and captions for me to cut and paste. With a month to draw four or five panels, you'd think it would be a snap getting the strips in on time. But college classes kept me busy, and I invariably found myself rushing to make my deadlines. The story of my life!

But it was a great training ground, and the single-strip format gave me the opportunity to experiment with a variety of layouts and art techniques. At age nineteen, my drawing skills were nothing to write home about, but my storytelling was solid enough, thanks to years studying Eisner and Ditko.



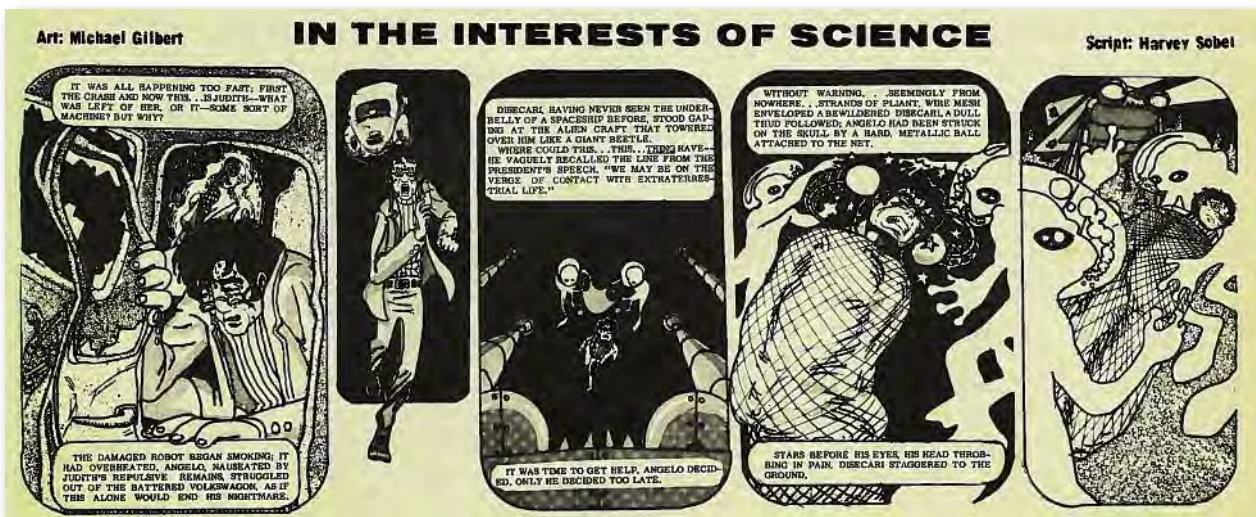
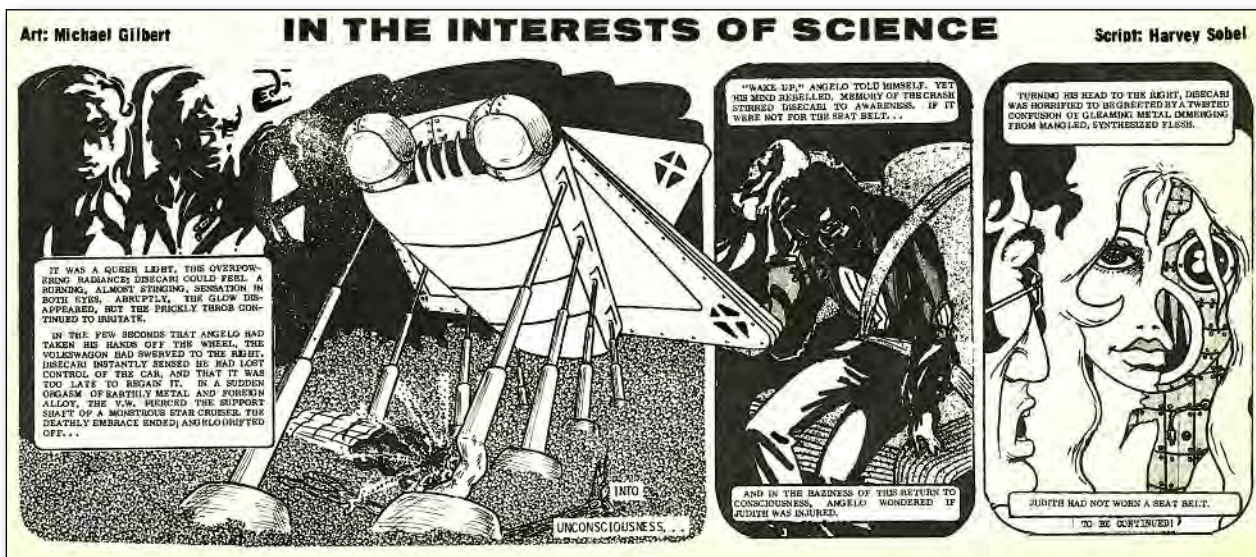
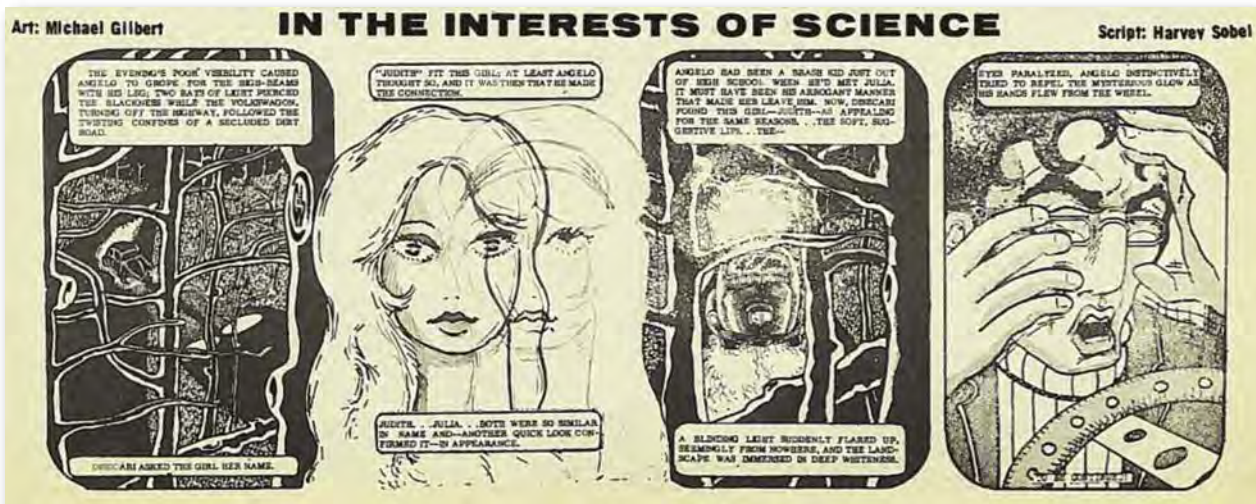


## Scientific Experiments!

As a teenager, I was mesmerized by the art appearing in early issues of Warren's *Creepy* and *Eerie*. Warren's oversized black-&-white format spurred Gray Morrow, Gene Colan, Reed Crandall, Alex Toth, and Steve Ditko to new artistic heights—and their

mastery of wash, charcoal, pebble-board, and Craftint inspired me.

*In the Interests of Science!* allowed me to try my own tiny experiments, month by month. For instance, I inked both the Nixon strip (on this issue's intro page) and the last panel of strip #2 with a #000 Koh-i-noor mechanical pen. I quickly discovered why professional





cartoonists never use a #000 Koh-i-noor mechanical pen. These super-fine pens are too thin to reproduce well, and they clog up when you so much as look at them. Ugh!

My "splatter" technique was more successful. After protecting my art by taping a large piece of tracing paper over the page, I'd cut away specific sections I wanted to shade. Next I'd drip ink on a toothbrush, aim it at the section, then run a ruler lightly over the top of the brush, causing tiny ink drops to splatter over the unprotected sections of the page. The splattered sections would turn different shades of gray, depending on how much ink was used (for example, the Volkswagen in strip #2). White diluted paint splattered on black areas would create stars or glowing lighting effects (see panel 3 of our third strip).

My long-standing love affair with Zip-a-tone also continued. Years earlier, I'd discovered those clear acetate sheets (with sticky stuff on the back to adhere to the Bristol board paper). The sheets had an intoxicating variety of patterns printed on them, from basic line or dot patterns to more ornate ones like the foliage pattern I used for grass and shrubbery. You can see the grass pattern in panel one of our third strip. Though trial and error I eventually learned "less is more."

Craftint, a special paper with art patterns invisibly imbedded in the paper itself, also fascinated me—especially after seeing examples of Roy Crane's magnificent *Wash Tubbs* strips. Special liquids would bring the patterns out. It was similar to Zip-a-tone, only instead of tediously cutting the acetate with an Exacto-blade, Craftint allowed the artist to simply paint patterns. The superimposed girl's face in strip #4 was my first attempt. Here I pasted translucent velum Craftint paper over the art, with mixed results. As you can see, the image is just barely visible.

Photo-montage? In the sixth strip I pasted a newspaper photo of an actual Volkswagen on my art to see if it would actually reproduce well. Happily, it did.

When one considers the graphic miracles any ten-year-old can do effortlessly on their computers nowadays, such crude experiments seem almost laughable. But in the early '70s this teenager was thrilled to discover that these simple experiments worked!

Looking back, I can also see my art slowly improve. The first strips are pretty crude, but got better as I went along. While I never had the natural ability of a Frazetta or Adams, I struggled to get better. And bit-by-bit I did.

## Scripting Science!

As the strip progressed, I found myself contributing more and more to the writing—and discovered I had a knack for it. Being teenagers, Harvey and I tried to slip some slightly saucy material past the editors. We'd crack each other up with risqué double-entendres. One caption in episode five included phases like "queer light," "prickly throb," "sudden orgasm," and "pierced the support shaft!" Did I mention that we were teenagers?

*In the Interests of Science!* appeared in ten installments (and one preview panel), from Nov. 9, 1970, to June 15, 1971. Even at the end, we found ourselves racing to meet a deadline.

I needed white lettering on black captions for our final strip, but we didn't have access to a stat machine. So Harv and I drove to the paper's printing plant at the last minute and asked the printer to shoot a reverse stat. With the



This eerie drawing of a lone figure running through a black void is a panel from a newspaper strip called *IN THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE*. The strip, a collaboration drawn by Michael Gilbert and written by Harvey Sobel, is futuristic in tone and story. It appears in an upper New York state daily. Sobel wrote us recently, asking what we thought of the strip. What do you think?

## "Fanfare" To Middling

(Above:) This panel from the "Fanfare" page in *Eerie* #37 (Jan. 1972) was Gilbert's first art published in a pro mag. Previously, the strip had also been reprinted in Michael's college paper. © 2015 Harvey Sobel & Michael T. Gilbert.]

**Seniors...**  
Buy Your Bids Now  
**The Prom**  
Leonard's, Great Room  
7:30-11:30 P.M.  
**\$25 Per Couple**

Art: Michael Gilbert

## IN THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE

Script: Harvey Sobel

OSCAR AWOKE. HIS BEATED HEAD STILL ACHING. HE STRUGGLED TO STAND UPRIGHT. BUT JUST MANAGED TO BARE HIMSELF ONTO ALL FOURS.

TIRED AND BEMULDERED, HIS MIND UNABLE TO FOCUS, OSCAR WAS NONETHELESS ABLE TO REMEMBER ONE THING...THE SPACESHIP. EVERYTHING ELSE—THE SET, THE LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS—WAS FUZZY AND UNCLEAR. BUT WHERE WAS HE NOW, HE WONDERED, OF COURSE...IN THE SHIP ITSELF!

IT WAS THEN THAT THE VIBRATIONS BEGAN. FIRST THE FLOOR STARTED GUDGING, THEN OSCAR'S EXHAUSTED BODY JOINED IN, SHAKING TO THE SAME RHYTHM.

IN DEFIANCE, OSCAR BOKE TO HIS FEET. WITH HIS EYES FULLY ADAPTED TO THE DIMMER LIGHTING, OSCAR NOW REALIZED HE WAS IN SOME SORT OF CELL. A TRANSPARENT ONE AT THAT. HE STRAINED TO MAKE OUT WHO WAS TO BE

"PAGNINA" PAIR 12

OSCAR WAS ONLY IN ONE OUT OF A LABYRINTH OF TINY RECEPTACLES. EACH Housed SOME QUINQUE, INHUMAN CREATURE. HIS MIND TRIED TO REJECT THE THOUGHT HE HAD JUST WITHHELD...BUT COULDN'T.

SUDDENLY THE VIBRATIONS STARTED PICKING UP. OSCAR WAS TORNED HELPLESSLY AGAINST HIS CELL.

REGAINING HIS BALANCE, OSCAR SPOTTED A CREATURE AT THE FAR END OF THE ROOM. A CREATURE WHO WAS NOT IN A CELL! COULD IT BE...AGUARD?

AS IF IT KNEW WHAT OSCAR WAS THINKING, THE ALIEN KEPT-ER TURNED ITS HEAD TOWARD HIM. YET DESPITE THE ALIEN'S REFUSAL TO LOOK STRAIGHT AT OSCAR, HE STILL COULD FEEL ITS HORROR, COLD EYES BEARING DOWN UPON HIM.

THE VIBRATIONS NOW STOPPED, BUT A CHILL RAN DOWN OSCAR'S SPINE.

## Ooops!

Of course, some experiments are flops. Above, Gilbert had a 3-panel sequence with a spaceship flying out of the comic strip in installment #7. Unfortunately, the printer didn't quite get the idea and superimposed an oversized picture of the spaceship onto an ad above the strip. I'm sure "Leonard's" was thrilled! I wonder if this ever happened to Eisner? © 2015 Michael T. Gilbert.]



Art: Michael Gilbert

## IN THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE

Script: Harvey Sobel



THOUSANDS PASSED, AND DISCARDER GREW HUNGRIER, YET HIS ALIEN CAPTOR REMAINED MOTIONLESS. AN ETERNITY HAD TRANSPIRED, BUT THIS CREATURE, ITS EYES STILL GLARING DOWN AT ANGELO, MANAGED TO STAY IN THAT SAME, SQUAT-LIKE POSITION. . . UNTIL . . . A LIGHT ON THE NEARBY WALL BEGAN BLINKING ON AND OFF.

THE CREATURE SWIFTLY JUMPED UP, MOVED TOWARDS THE LIGHT, AND PRESSED THREE BUTTONS ON A SWITCHBOARD HANGING THERE.

AS THE LIGHT WENT OFF, A SOFT HISsing SOUND BECAME DISCERNABLE, TURNING AROUND, DISCARDER SPOTTED THE SOURCE OF THE NOISE--AN AIR VENT ON THE FLOOR OF HIS CELL, COMING OUT OF THE VENT, GAS!

PUTTING HIS FOOT OVER THE GRATED OPENING, PROVED FETTER, THE NOISY PUMES RISE UP, LEAVING DISCARDER GASPING FOR AIR.



SECONDS LATER, ANGELO KEELED OVER, HIS FALLING TORSO SLIDING DOWN THE SLEEK, PLASTIC WALL OF HIS CELL.

LUNGS STINGING, HIS MIND CHURNING VIOLENTLY, THE FIRST CONSCIOUS DISCARDER COULD FAINTLY SEE THE GUARD AND A SECOND ALIEN APPROACHING.



THEY ENTERED HIS CELL; ANGELO COULD SENSE IT. ONLY HIS BODY REMAINED PARALYZED. . . TOO WEAK TO MOVE.

DISCARDER SUDDENLY FELT AS IF HE WERE BEING CLAWED APART, LIKE VULTURES PICKING ON A DEAD CARCASS. THE ALIENS BEGAN SQUEEZING HIM.

"RESET IT!" ANGELO TOLD HIMSELF. "KEEP FIGHTING IT!" HIS BODY THOUGHT OTHERWISE.



DISCARDER COULD NOW FEEL TWO, COLD HANDS SETTING HIM BY THE ARMS, HIS NUDE TORSO WAS YANKED UP AND DRAGGED OUT OF THE CELL.

AS THE TWO ENTERED ANOTHER ROOM--WHAT APPEARED TO BE A LONG CORRIDOR--ANGELO BEGAN WHEELING HARD. THE AIR, HEAVILY LACED WITH WATER VAPOUR, WAS HAMPERING ALL EFFORTS TO BREATHE.

Art: Michael Gilbert

## IN THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE

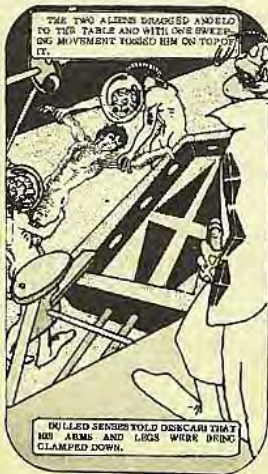
Script: Harvey Sobel



WARM BLOOD RACED THROUGH DISCARDER'S BODY. HIS HEART WAS POUNDING VIOLENTLY AS HIS LUNGS CHIEF OUT FOR MORE OXYGEN IN THIS OCEAN OF DAMP AIR.

IT WAS THEN THAT THE LIGHTS INTENSIFIED.

WHAT HAD BEEN A PITCH-BLACK CORRIDOR NOW RADIATED WITH A KEEN BRIGHTNESS. A BARRIER GLASS REFLECTED ONE'S INTIMATE EQUIPMENT SET NEAR A LAMING, RECTANGULAR TABLE IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM.



THE TWO ALIENS DRAGGED ANGELO TO THE TABLE AND WITH ONE BRISK, ONE MOVEMENT YANKED HIM ON TOP OF IT.

PULLED SENSORS TOLD DISCARDER THAT HIS ARMS AND LEGS WERE BEING CLAMPED DOWN.



THE TWO GUARDS WERE MENTIONED AWAY FROM THE BODY BY ANOTHER ALIEN, OBVIOUSLY A SUPERIOR, WHO UP UNTIL THIS TIME HAD CALMLY WITHHELD THE PROCEEDING FROM THE SINK-LIKE. IT NOW TOOK COMMAND, REMOVED AND EXAMINING A SHARP, METALLIC BLADE. ONLY THE CREATURE DIDN'T SETTLE JUST FOR AN EXAMINATION. WITH A PASSIVE FASCINATION, IT BEGAN POUNDING, JABING, THEN SLICING THE SOON MUTILATED BODY. AND ANGELO'S TORMENTED GROUND, THE ALIEN CONTINUED ITS BIPHASE DISSECTION. FOLDING UP BURNING FLESH WERE UNFOLDED, AND ANGELO LET OUT ONE FINAL CRY OF AGONY.

THE LAST FALLING BREATH WHISPERED INTO A MELLOW SILENCE.



TO BE CONTINUED

Art: Michael Gilbert

## IN THE INTERESTS OF SCIENCE

Script: Harvey Sobel



DISCARDER'S REMAINS WERE QUIETLY PICKED UP, HAULED OVER TO A NEARBY AIR LOCK, AND DISCHARGED FROM THE SHIP. HIS CLOTHES AND GLASSES WERE EJECTED NEXT, REMOVING ALL VESTIGES OF ANGELO'S "STAY" ON THE ALIEN VESSEL.

THE DEAD CARCASS FLOATED LISTLESSLY IN SPACE, ALMOST RESTLESSLY, DISCARDER'S INNARDS BEGAN INCHING SLOWLY OUT OF THE MUTILATED CORPSE.



THEN, WHAT WAS ONCE ANGELO DISCARDER STARTED TWISTING AND TURNING, HIS WHITENESS FORMED A STRIKING CONTRAST WITH THE VELVET BLACKNESS OF HIS SURROUNDINGS.

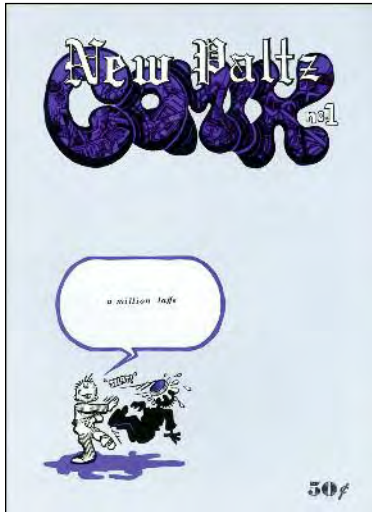


AND AS THE SPACECRAFT BEGAN ITS LONG JOURNEY TO ANOTHER WORLD PARADISE, THE ALIEN SUPERIOR COULDN'T HELP THINKING HOW USEFUL THIS DISSECTION WOULD BE AS PRACTICE FOR THE NEXT ONE.

EC For Me!

Gilbert's final strips (#8-10) of the series. Note the "EC" pushpins in the last panel of strip #9. Also, one alien in that panel holds a pad that says "Gil," Gilbert's signature at the time! [© 2015 Michael T. Gilbert.]





### A Million Laffs!

Michael's first stories appeared in 1973 in *New Paltz Comix* #1 (named after his college!). [© 2015 Michael T. Gilbert.]

our delight, Harvey received a reply from assistant editor J. R. Cochran dated 7/15/1971.

"Thanks so much for letting us see 'In The Interests Of Science.' Mr. Warren turned over your letter of July 5th and the strips over to me. We thought the strips were particularly good. Strips #'s 1-2-3 were just fair, but he loved the art on #'s 5-7-8-9 & 10, especially. We plan to use a panel from one of the strips in an upcoming *Eerie* Fanfare section."

The panel did appear in *Eerie* #37 (Jan. 1972), my first work in a professional publication. Better yet, Cochran invited us both to submit to their "Creepy Loathsome Lore" page. I particularly liked Harv's idea for a "Tokyo Reconstruction Squad"—the Japanese crew who kept busy rebuilding the city after Godzilla and his monster friends squashed it in every movie! But alas, we never did make that sale.

In the next year, I made two more visits to Warren, which I wrote about in *Alter Ego* #45. While I never did grab the brass ring, I knew I was on the right track.

## Science Disasters!

In late 1971 (my junior year) I transferred to SUNY New Paltz in upstate New York. Shortly before I graduated in late 1973, I reformatted *Science!* as a stand-alone comic book story for an underground comic the school paper was planning to publish. Our story did appear in the first issue of *New Paltz Comix*, though I somehow wound up publishing it myself.

Speaking of *New Paltz Comix*, I should mention an amusing (in retrospect!) disaster I had with one of my other stories in that 1973 comic. "Confrontation!" was my first solo effort, written and drawn during my senior year. The 10-page story was almost finished when I headed back to Long Island for summer break.

During summers I earned tuition money as a security guard in a construction trailer, while drawing comics under the dim light of a Coleman lantern. Still experimenting, I decided to draw the story's alien landscape entirely in Zip-a-tone, foregoing any black holding lines. After weeks of work, I finally completed my first solo story. I stashed the original art in my car trunk, but when I arrived home early next morning I forgot to take my pages out.

Unfortunately I was unaware of the effect moist, chilly air can

presses waiting, I quickly cut and pasted down the lettering. Let me tell you, before computer graphics, everything was a big production!

Varohi's editors planned to thank me in print for my efforts with a "Tribute To Michael Terry Gilbert" in that final issue. Unfortunately the printer's typesetter machine was already shut down, so I wound up hand-lettering a love note to myself. How embarrassing!

## Beyond Science!

When our story was completed, Harvey mailed copies to Warren Publications for possible use in *Creepy*. To



### Ooops - Part 2!

Michael's first solo story, "Confrontation!," almost ended in disaster when every piece of Zip-a-tone shading fell off! [© 2015 Michael T. Gilbert.]

have on the tacky stuff that makes the Zip stick to the art. When I opened the trunk and picked up my pages later that day, every single piece of Zip-a-tone fell off the art. AAAAGH!

I scooped up dozens of Zip-a-tone bits and spent hours rubber-cementing them back on my pages. Without holding lines, it was the mother of all jigsaw puzzles! And what did I learn from that fiasco? Sometimes even the coolest experiments can blow up in your face!

And then there was the time we talked a Long Island distributor into trying a few hundred copies of *New Paltz Comix* on consignment. While they did manage to sell a few dozen to college bookstores, we were dismayed to learn (after the fact) that they'd pulped all unsold copies of our precious comic. Double-AAAGH! Well, live and learn....

## And In Conclusion...

I'm happy to report that Harvey and I are still pals, all these decades later—and I remain grateful that he helped me jumpstart my comics career. I'm sure he's equally grateful he traded scripting comics for a very successful actuarial career. Smart move, Harv! Trust me, the pay's a lot better!

MICHAEL T. Gilbert





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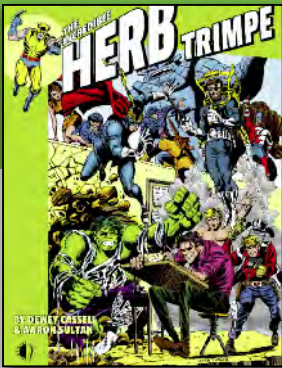
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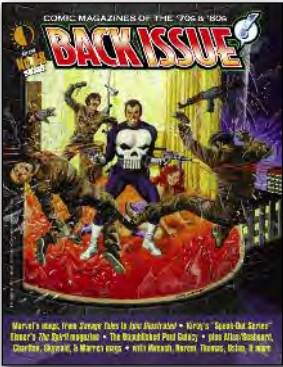
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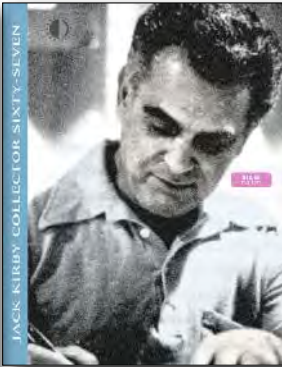
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# Two Heartfelt Tributes To HERB TRIMPE, Artist

## I. The Accomplished Herb: A Remembrance HERB TRIMPE (1939-2015)

by Jon B. Cooke

**B**y the time I was in my teens, I'd seen a fair share of famous people. I had viewed the Queen of England visiting the Smithsonian Institution, watched President Richard Nixon zoom through Dublin in a motorcade, and shaken hands with Dr. Benjamin Spock at an anti-war fundraiser. But, go figure, all of those encounters pale beside my experience when, while walking along in New York's Central Park, "Happy Herbie" Trimpe brushed by my brother and me while he was out taking a run. The Marvel Comics contributor, whom Stan Lee dubbed the Bullpen's "smilin' sunbeam," was tall, dark, and handsome, no doubt about that, but what impressed Andy and me the most was that this was the incredible Herb-freakin'-Trimpe, stalwart artist on *The Incredible Hulk*, whose work had given us so much joy and who had proven, at the 1973 Comic Art Convention we were attending at the time, an all-around nice guy, always ready with a smile and warm greeting for his fans.

Years later, Herb would confirm with an embarrassed chuckle that he did indeed take regular jogs through the park, and Roy Thomas recently remarked in this magazine that his dashing figure would be "mistaken for Alan Alda when he went running in Central Park, during the heyday of *M\*A\*S\*H* on TV. (At least one guy yelled out to him, 'Hey, Hawkeye!' And they weren't talking about an archer.)" If you had the pleasure of ever meeting Herb—and especially of becoming a friend—you'd agree that Heaven bestowed not only artistic talent on the late comics creator, but also that indefinable gift of charisma.

Robin Green, who had replaced "Fabulous Flo" Steinberg at the House of Ideas and would go on to fame as a writer on *Northern Exposure* and *The Sopranos*, discussed his sex appeal in her 1971 *Rolling Stone* feature about Marvel: "I had lunch with Herb, and it was good to talk to him. He'd been my favorite Bullpen artist, not just because I dug the way he drew the Hulk, but because he was so nice to look at. He's incredibly handsome, tall, and wiry with deep-set eyes and black hair. He looks like a super-hero, like the Phantom Eagle, or a good-looking Hulk. Or maybe the Hulk looks like an angry, ugly him."

Obituaries about the artist, who passed away suddenly on April 13, at age 75, all invariably mention in the lead the fact he was the first to draw Wolverine in a story, sometimes mentioning that Trimpe years ago *gave away* the page of *Incredible Hulk* #180 that featured the mutant's very first appearance (a page that fetched over \$650,000 in auction for a fan named Ben, who, it must be said, donated a sizable chunk of the proceeds of that sale to Hero



### Two Tall, Two Dark, One Handsome...

(Top left:) An undated snapshot of the "tall, dark, and handsome" Herb Trimpe, shared by his second-oldest daughter Amelia, via Jon B. Cooke.

(Above:) A detail from Trimpe's back-cover art for the "Hulk on the Rampage" issue of *Marvel Treasury Edition* (#5, 1975), depicting Dr. David Bruce Banner in various stages of metamorphosis changing into Ol' Greenskin. Thanks to JBC. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

Initiative, as well as giving a chunk of the remainder to the artist, in gratitude for his generosity to a kid). But, most of all, they describe the freelancer's long association with a certain green-skinned goliath, a character he drew for nearly eight years. In the fourth volume of the *Marvel Masterworks: Incredible Hulk* collection, Trimpe wrote, "Me being a textbook Gemini, the Hulk and I suited each other very well. People have commented on this, and I reluctantly admit that there were times when I related very closely to the Hulk's dual personality."

Trimpe's second daughter, Amelia, shares: "Herb was a fantastically complex man." And that is certainly true. The guy was





### Small World

(Top center:) Herb on his bike; courtesy of his daughter Amelia via JBC.

(Above:) Trimpe's Hulk (and Jarella) art done for the September page in the 1978 Marvel Calendar. Jarella, ruler of a sub-atomic universe, was created by SF writer Harlan Ellison in a synopsis done for scripter Roy Thomas and became the basis of *The Incredible Hulk* #140 (June 1971). She became a recurring presence in the jolly green giant's mag. Thanks to Dewey Cassell. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



"I came to Marvel straight out of the military," Trimpe confessed in his introduction to *Marvel Masterworks: The Incredible Hulk*, Vol. 5. "It wasn't easy. No portfolio, no samples, and not much sense to go with it. I had been turned down at DC. I was not hip, as they would say in the '60s, to what was going on in the comics business. I came into Marvel's hallowed halls (in reality, a dinky office space inside the parent company, Magazine Management), not at all humble, though not arrogant, either, but totally oblivious to the giants I would be working next to."

Among those giants, John Romita, Sr., recently shared, "Herb was ten years younger than I and brought a new attitude to the Marvel Bullpen. We were a group that grew in capacity by working together and had fun doing it. When Herb went freelance [NOTE: *H.T. was actually still on staff, but he worked at home*], it was less enjoyable for me. He was a pro and good company. He also was a hell of a storyteller... which is why he has stayed in the memory of fans and colleagues for so long."

The big boss in the office also well remembers the artist. Stan Lee told me, "Herb was a great guy. He did so many strips for us, though I think he did mainly *The Hulk*. But he could do anything, and he was a pleasure to work with. Nice, even-tempered, pleasant guy... I liked him."

Roy Thomas, himself a relative newcomer to the outfit when Trimpe arrived, said, "Collaborating with Herb Trimpe—or, really, dealing with him in any way—was almost always pure pleasure. He told a story in a straightforward way, but was eminently capable of subtlety when it was necessary. We seemed to have a natural rapport, perhaps because we were nearly the same age, even though his experience as an art student and even more so as a Vietnam veteran was so different from my own. I don't recall any time we ever got together in the office to work out a plot concept that one didn't come to us pretty quickly. It might flow from him or from me, but one was always there, as if just waiting for us to begin chatting to complete some sort of electric connection.... He was a real pro, and I'm glad that several decades of Marvel readers were able to enjoy his work while he was doing it... and that many more will be able to appreciate it in the future."

About Trimpe's own drawing ability, the artist told me with a laugh, "I'll tell you the truth: I never liked drawing that much. I never considered myself an artist in that sense. I had a reputation for being a good storyteller, and I think storytelling is above the art—art basically promotes storytelling—and I'd rather tell stories." His employer apparently agreed, as Trimpe related in the *MM: Incredible Hulk*, Vol. 4, introduction about an early job submitted to the Marvel editor: "Stan went through the pages, examining each one closely, his face expressionless. Then he looked up—and he smiled. 'Trimpe,' he said, 'you can't draw worth a damn, but your storytelling is terrific.' To this day, I consider that to be the nicest compliment I've ever had."

Trimpe, in that short time working in the office—where he met, fell in love with, and would marry co-worker (and Marvel writer) Linda Fite—toiled in the production department doing art corrections, manning the Photostat machine, and penciling pages. It was there that one of his collaborators would prompt what became a lifelong passion for the artist. Relates Trimpe in his *MMIH V4* intro,

married three times, a father of four, a Vietnam veteran, avid model-builder, aviation fanatic, beloved teacher, Episcopal chaplain at Ground Zero, and vocal critic of comic publisher treatment of older creators. He was sometimes bitter, often enthusiastic, once and again annoyed at comics fandom, and yet a man who wrote these words: "Who benefited the most? These True Believers have sent my kids to college, put food in our mouths, a roof over our heads, and encouraged me to appreciate my own work. I ask you: who has the greatest debt of gratitude?"

Herbert William Trimpe, son of Herbert and Anna, was born up the Hudson River from New York City, in Peekskill, on May 26, 1939. As a lad, he was an immediate fan of aviation, drawing pictures of airplanes alongside his friend, artist Bob Barthelmes, who specialized in drawing detailed pictures of birds. Herb also developed a lifelong appreciation for model building as a result of being bedridden for a couple of months, maybe in second grade, recovering from a combination of whooping cough and pneumonia. After high school, he took the train into the city to attend the School of Visual Arts, where he met future fellow Bullpeners John Verpoorten and Stu Schwartzberg, as well as future animator Bill Peckmann. Trimpe showed ability enough to moonlight on the Gold Key assignments of instructor Tom Gill.

With the military draft bearing down, Trimpe enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, serving in Vietnam for a year as a weather observer with the 1st Air Cavalry Division. Upon his return stateside, encouraged by former classmate Verpoorten (who was already working at the House of Ideas), Trimpe went to Marvel in the fall of 1966 and was hired by production chief Sol Brodsky, at first as a freelancer. Almost immediately, the artist started inking pencils for the Western titles, including *Kid Colt Outlaw*, and he very soon received his own penciling assignments.





### Plane Crazy — The Sequel

(Above:) Trimpe at the drawing table, quite possibly a screen capture from the early-1970s film *I Love You, Herb Trimpe*, made largely in the Marvel bullpen by Joe Policastro.

(Right:) A scan of the original art for the splash page for the "Phantom Eagle" story from *Marvel Super-Heroes* #16 (Sept. 1968), featuring the WWI aviator hero co-created by writer Gary Friedrich. This tale actually led Herb, eventually, to buy his own open-cockpit biplane, as covered in detail in Dewey Cassell's interview with the artist in *Alter Ego* #124 (May 2014). Thanks to JBC. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



"Grooves, as [writer Gary Friedrich] was called by his friends, [was] the easiest person in the world to work with [and] one fun guy who had a ton of writing under his belt, having done everything from romance to Western to super-heroes... so, when he came up with the [Phantom Eagle] featuring World War I airplanes, I think that was the day I became Happy Herbie. I was so thrilled and inspired, I actually went out and bought a PT-17 open cockpit biplane, and proceeded to terrorize the local cows in Ulster County, New York." (Herb would learn to fly some years after the "Phantom Eagle" story, when he and Linda visited Cornwall, England, in 1975-76, and they would purchase the biplane in 1978.)

Though he would be dismissed by the House of Ideas in the later '90s, after working for them some three decades (very publicly revealed in his scathing *New York Times* essay in 2000), Trimpe remained grateful for the early Marvel era. "Did I tell you, Jon, [about] that Bullpen in those years?" Trimpe enthused only a few years later. "That was the best job in the world. I mean, it was tremendous. I'm not kidding you. It was just so much fun.... It was the people. It was the Marvel Comics universe realizing itself during those years, you know? And egos were not in play, they really weren't. There were people who had really been around the block a couple of times, you know, and they weren't fools. They really weren't vying for some sort of 'top dog' position in terms of creativity. It was just a fun thing, and it was varied. There were some great people in there: Marie [Severin], John [Romita]. Oh, it was just very fun."

By the early '70s, after Trimpe's divorce from first wife Merilee, mother of their daughter, Melissa, the artist married Fite. Together they had three children—Alexander, Amelia, and Sarah—as the family settled in the Hudson River Valley. Herb and Linda would split in 2005, and the artist subsequently married Patricia Vasquez and became stepfather to Natalia.

Of course, we can recount the many stories the guy drew and the characters he depicted, but the measure of the man is found in those who loved him and in the lives he touched. Daughter Amelia shares: "He was an incredible father, especially when we were kids, because he loved to play. And as a grandfather, that spirit followed through, and his grandchildren loved visiting him. He was an artist, of course, but he was also a pilot, a teacher, a damned good baseball player, an author, a historian, a chaplain at Ground Zero, an ambulance driver, a mean head-stander, and a talker."

That time Andy and I were awed, when the artist ran through Central Park...? Little did these two young Trimpe fans know what was going through the artist's mind as he exercised. Trimpe expressed in an *Incredible Hulk* intro, "The last convention I went to, up until [the later '90s], was the day Alex was born. I was at the New York [Comic Art] Convention, at the Commodore [Hilton hotel], back in '73, and I just shunned those things, and my attitude was—maybe a little arrogant—I had a life, and I didn't want to make my life the world of comics. I drew the things, got the paycheck, did the job, but there were other things I wanted to do. I wanted to become involved with our local school district, wanted to talk to people who weren't always talking about comic books."

And beyond funnybooks, Herbert Trimpe would do other things he wanted and have an impact, especially as teacher (his students affectionately nicknamed him "Trimpdog"), church deacon, and volunteer at the "pile" of the destroyed World Trade Center towers. What he likely enjoyed most, though, was to strap into his biplane, start up the prop, and soar the skies above the Shawangunk Ridge. "[T]here's something about an open cockpit," Trimpe told me.





### "The Smiles We Gave To One Another..."

(Above:) Jon B. Cooke (on left) writes of this photo that it shows himself and Herb Trimpe at the 2013 Asbury Park Comicon, the last time Jon saw his friend. The day before his demise, Herb had attended the last day of the Asbury show's successor, the East Coast Comicon, with his wife Patricia.

While visiting the Trimpe exhibit booth, TwoMorrows proofreader Rob Smentek had heard the artist tell his spouse that he was tired and ready to go home. Godspeed, Happy Herbie! You were loved well....

(Below right:) The front "cover" of the program for the memorial service held for Herb. Thanks to Robert Menzies; retrieved from the website of artist Joe Staton. [Art TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

"You feel a lot more secure, even though you're in the open, because you're surrounded by wings and wires and struts and stuff, it's a real contraption kind of experience, you know? It feels very, very right. I just can't explain it any other way." The artist sold the airplane when his oldest, Alex, entered college, in 1991. Linda Fite shares, "That airplane phase was just one of Herb's skyrocketing phases of intense enthusiasm, attached to his lifelong love of all things aviation."

But, for better or worse, Trimpe will always be recalled by the greater world as an accomplished comic book storyteller. And he would eventually come to terms with that, shedding the ambivalence he long felt about the industry and finally accepting, regardless of how *he* judged it, that his work had meaning. "A couple of years ago," Trimpe wrote in 2008, "my wife encouraged me to accept invitations to comic book shows, reasoning that I had worked in the business so long, I owed it to myself to reconnect and to own that which I had chosen to do for lo those many years. I did so, and what finally sunk into my thick skull was that hundreds, if not thousands, of comic book fans *loved* the stories I drew. And worse than that, they *loved* the style I had grown to dislike (I won't use the word hate). Many a dear comic book folk described emotionally to me how meaningful these stories had been to them. I'm sure many artists and writers in this crazy business have heard these same sentiments, but when you experience it for yourself, it is mind-blowing. One fellow described to me how a particular issue I had drawn had *saved his life!* How does a guy who worked to make deadlines and get the paychecks respond to that? I was flabbergasted, and I continue to be flabbergasted by the many thanks I have received for the work I have done."

**Jon B. Cooke**, among his many other accomplishments, is currently the editor of the TwoMorrows magazine Comic Book Creator.

Alter Ego #124 was largely devoted to a lengthy interview with Herb Trimpe; by coincidence, comments on that issue can be seen in this issue's "re:" section, beginning on p. 66. In addition, see Dewey Cassell's 2015 TwoMorrows book *The Incredible Herb Trimpe*.

## II. Herb Trimpe: Artist, Storyteller, Veteran, Man Of Peace, Man Of God

by Joseph Kramar

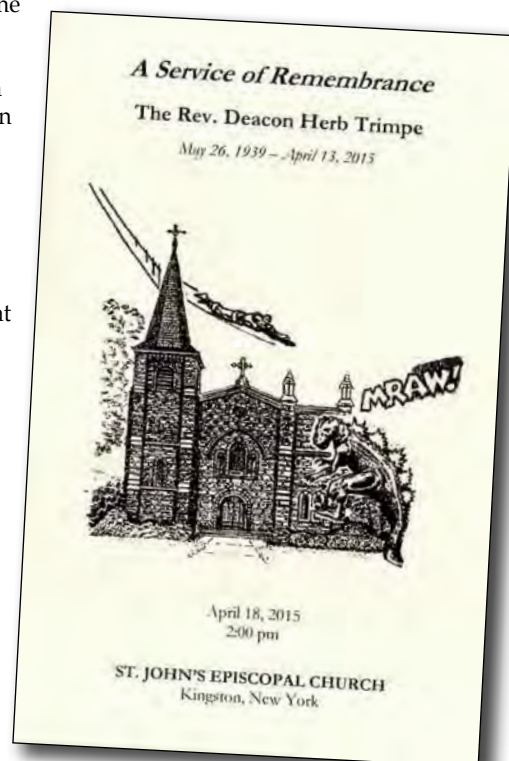
**H**erb was a gentle giant. A good-natured, humble man who served our country with honor. Vietnam veteran Trimpe served in the Air Force before landing at Marvel in the mid-1960s. He started off right away as an artist, but was soon offered a salaried position in production. He was the only one capable of operating the Photostat machine they had recently acquired. He enjoyed the work and additional money. He soon took over from Marie Severin as artist on *The Incredible Hulk* and drew the book for such a long period that he will forever be associated with the Hulk, as well as with Wolverine.

Herb and the gang at Marvel saw Wolverine as just an incidental character at the time. He was always pleasantly surprised that his co-creation went on to become such an international sensation. Marvel was a harmonious family in those early days. Stan Lee, Marvel editor, would enviously run his hand through Herb's thick head of hair and say, "I hate you, Trimpe."

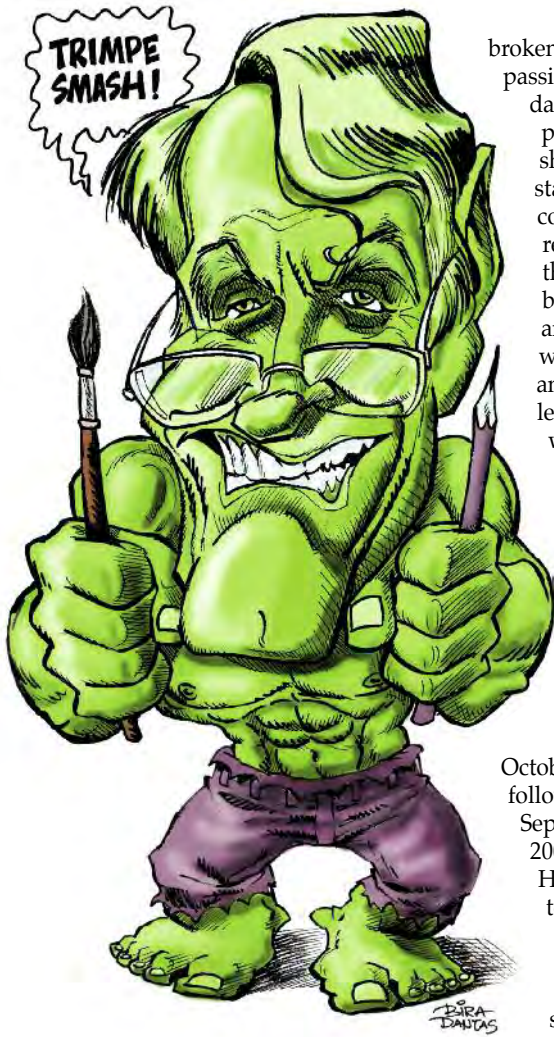
Paty Cockrum told me Herb would fly his biplane over their Ulster County home and buzz them, flap the wings. Navy veteran Dave Cockrum and Paty both worked at Marvel and were good friends with Herb. Everybody loved him, and he loved to fly. They all loved Stan and Sol and were disheartened when Stan moved to California in the early '80s. Things were never the same after Stan.

Herb was fired in the '90s when things at Marvel went from bad to worse. For a while he taught school in Eldred, Sullivan County, NY. I'd see him at events. We got a kick out of Eldred being in the middle of nowhere. Herb appreciated the articles I did about veterans. We last spoke earlier this year at a comics convention, while he was drawing the Hulk for a fan. He was so absorbed in our conversation on the epidemic of traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress, sexual assaults all covered up, swept under the rug—that he did not realize the patron had requested Wolverine, not the Hulk! Herb fought for women's and veterans' rights, also.

I told him it was best that I left him to his patrons and not distract him. I was heart-







### The World Remembers...

Memorial cartoon of Herb Trimpe drawn by Brazilian artist Bira Dantas. Thanks to Roberto Guedes. [© Bira Dantas.]

as an ordained Episcopalian Deacon. The workers needed to stop and talk with him many times. Herb remembered 40 to 60 clergy on average, with at least one Muslim. Like disciplined soldiers, everyone was committed to getting the job done. They were civil, solemn, somber, pleasant even cheerful at times to buoy the spirits of those who were on the verge of tears. Herb never forgot the compassion, humanity, warmth from the hearts of those who serve. Ironically, there was an actual noticeable warmth coming from this toxic area... the lingering effect of 2,000-degree molten metal that sank and permeated the sub-basements, the seven buildings, and surrounding real estate in that area.

It was a month before Herb heard the F-word. People were polite smiling talking to one another. "I felt there was a light shining on each and every one of us. It was a wonderful experience." This is how Herb described combing through the aftermath of that holocaust of horror looking for wallets, jewelry, ID, any identifying remains.

At that last con, he promised me a Hulk drawing to help the veterans. I know in my heart that it was a promise he meant to keep. He was at my comic and pop culture expo, though, because my Cockrum tribute panel now included a tribute to Trimpe. Two veterans who served: Dave in the Navy and Herb in the Air Force.

broken to learn of his passing only two days later. I feel perhaps I should have stayed and continued. I am respectful of the sacred time between artists and patrons who love them and always leave for a while when the crowd thickens. I wish I had returned, because I feel our dialogue was cathartic.

Beginning October 10th following the September 11th, 2001, attack, Herb volunteered to work at the World Trade Center Ground Zero site once a week on average, sifting through the neuro-toxic carcinogenic rubble for any identifiable remains

I was going to ask Herb to headline my Expo cause he was a veteran and had taken the time to contact me about some of the veteran articles I had written; he might even have been interested in an idea I pitched to him of a veterans-issues comic.

I feel Herb would have done all these things amid catering to the hordes of fans who bombarded him for sketches. He was one man, and he did everything humanly possible for his fans, patrons, women, veterans, victims, first responders. He was a man of God and Goddess. He helped all the people he could, regardless of race, gender, religion, or denomination. He was a trooper, a team player. He was grateful for his salaried position and freelance work at Marvel.

He wasn't a whiner. He had no pretentious airs concerning his part in the creation of Wolverine, whose super-stardom surprised everyone involved. He railed and raged against the machine, the corporate raiders who opportunistically plotted to exploit our beloved Marvel and run it into the ground. Herb served our country with distinction in Vietnam, conducted himself with dignity and humor at Marvel, compassionately consoled the 9/11 survivors with solace from the soul on that sanctified ground.

As Fury said in *Captain America* #113: "I ain't no good at making blasted speeches." What I can tell you from the heart is that when Herb Trimpe died, he died a hero.

**Joseph Kramar** is an artist, journalist, producer, promoter, historian, Squadron officer, Tai Chi chuan and Reiki Master, women's/veterans'/human rights and environment advocate.



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HELPING COMIC CREATORS IN NEED





# Survivors Of The First Comicon

## Fans "Who Were There" Appear On Panel To Celebrate 50th Anniversary Of The First-Ever Comics Convention

The Panelists: BERNIE BUBNIS, LEN WEIN, ETHAN ROBERTS, HOWARD ROGOFKY, ART TRIPP, FLO STEINBERG, and RICK BIERMAN

### Introduction by Bill Schelly

**O**n July 27, 1964, comic fans from the New York and New England area—as well as a number of fans from states to the west, such as California—gathered at the Workmen's Circle Building in Manhattan for what is generally considered the first comic book convention. The Comic Fandom Archive presented a special feature describing the event in detail in *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3, #7 (Winter 2001). "The 1964 New York Comicon—Two Views" consisted of an article by Ethan Roberts, who was part of the organizing effort, and a discussion of Bernie Bubnis's 1964 Comicon Souvenir Booklet by Yours Truly. (A few copies of that issue are still available at [www.twomorrow.com](http://www.twomorrow.com).) This panel transcript serves as a perfect adjunct to that original piece, and to the

guest column by Bernie Bubnis that appeared in A/E #118 (July 2013).

The "Survivors of the First Comicon" panel was organized by Ethan Roberts, who chaired it and taped it for posterity. The panelists were Ethan himself, Bernie Bubnis, Len Wein, Howard Rogofsky, Art Tripp, Flo Steinberg, and Rick Bierman. As you'll discover, due to certain technical deficiencies of the recording and to some panelists' tendencies to ramble, the discussion in places is a bit difficult to follow. However, the CFA is dedicated to presenting such important historical moments, whatever their vagaries—and with a minimum of editing. In that spirit, we present the following piece, transcribed by Brian K. Morris.

First, however: I asked Ethan to write a brief piece describing how the panel came about....



### On The Button

(Clockwise images, from above left, of the "Survivors" panel members, around the Comicon 1964 button designed by Art Tripp:) Group shot of most of the panelists. (Standing, left to right:) Bernie Bubnis, Art Tripp, Rick Bierman, Ethan Roberts. (Seated:) Len Wein. Howard Rogofsky; photo courtesy of Aaron Caplan. Flo Steinberg (with the afore-seen Bernie Bubnis); photo taken by Bernie's wife Lucille.



## Putting On The "Survivors Of The First Comicon" Panel

By Ethan Roberts

Fifty years is a long time. The first comicon, held July 27, 1964, with 44 attendees, has now been superseded by events with over 100,000 individuals. In 2012 it looked to me as if no one was paying attention to the con's upcoming anniversary. Public memory is short. Most comic book enthusiasts weren't alive for the first comicon. Comicon focus had shifted from Manhattan to San Diego.

I thought the 50th anniversary should be commemorated. So I decided to do something. For me, San Diego could not be the proper place anyway. San Diego celebrates its own milestones, but not those of other comicons. It had to be Manhattan.

For two years, I tried to interest ReedPop, sponsors of the New York Comicon (the largest NYC comicon) to host a celebration. I got no commitment. In early 2014 I tried again. A young female representative of ReedPop was favorably disposed to the idea. With that encouragement, I tried to invite survivors of the first con to the celebration. I attempted to find attendees in several ways. I contacted Roy Thomas and Bill Schelly. I put announcements with attendee names on the CFA-APA and comicon-I websites. I went on "white pages" computer sites to look for NYC area residents with rare names. There were too many Howard Levines or Thomas Wilsons to find the right ones. I checked names by age (64-70) to determine possibility and sent them letters. I was able to contact the panel

members plus Joe Azzato, Paul Gambaccini, Steve Keisman, Phil Liebfred, George R.R. Martin, Carole Seuling, Paul Vizcarrondo, Rick Weingroff, Malcolm Willits, and Andrew and Patricia Yanchus. Some did not want to come. Some could not



### Members Remembered

(Above:) Dr. Jerry Bails, fandom founder who first got the ball rolling for the 1964 comicon—by appointing fan George Pacinda to organize it. 1960 photo.

(Right:) Roster of the "members" of the 1964 New York Comicon, as published in the comicon booklet published by Bernie Bubnis after the event. Ethan writes: "The list is not completely accurate. Jerry [Bails] did not make it to the First Con. I found out later than Pat Yanchus was there but not listed...." Unfortunately, due to policies of the New York Comic Con, Ethan found himself unable to get

Andy and Pat Yanchus, or Carole Seuling and her daughter, free tickets to attend the panel, even though they had attended the con in 1964. Oh, and incidentally, despite Ethan's addressing him tentatively at the start of the panel, Paul Gambaccini, who has been a major presence on BBC-Radio for decades, was not at the con, though he had hoped to attend and Ethan thought perhaps he had showed up at the last moment.

come (illness, funding, other commitments). Some wanted to, as you will see.

Complications arose. I found out on June 14, 2014, that a panel spot was not assured. I had to apply for one, which I did. Our spot was confirmed on August 23, 2014. Unfortunately, tickets to the con began selling earlier in August, without my knowledge. By the time I learned about the situation, tickets were only available through ticket brokers. Prices were \$100 a day rather than \$35. I could only get five free tickets for panel members. Some survivors could not afford to buy tickets at \$100 and didn't come. I wish more could have attended. I think the panel was a success, but it would have been better had more survivors been able to attend.

## And Now—The Transcript:

**ETHAN ROBERTS:** If there are any other survivors who are in the audience or weren't formally on the panel... I've been looking for Len Wein. He's still to show up. Paul Gambaccini... anyone else who was at that first convention, we have a couple of extra chairs. You're welcome to come up and sit. [pause] Folks, it's closing in on time. We have a couple of panelists who haven't made it, but we're going to get started. This is the "Survivors of the First Comicon" panel. [audience cheers] We are here. We are all slightly older than we were on July 27th, 1964.

**MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER:** You need to be louder.

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE 1964 NEW YORK COMICON

George Martin, 35 E. 14th St., Bayonne, N.J.  
 Andrew Yanchus, 69 Hudson Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y.  
 Jerry Bails, 22529 Karen Court, Warren, Michigan  
 Paul Gambaccini, 8 Elizabeth Dr., Westport, Conn.  
 Len Berman, 123 Gifford Ave., Jersey City 2, N.J.  
 Carter de Paul, 375 E. Graton Parkway, E. Orange, N.J.  
 Bernie Velleman, 4105 Vermon Blvd., Long Island City, N.Y.  
 Anthony Fibbie, 124 Gatling Place, Brooklyn 9, New York  
 Margie Gemignani, P.O. Box 9432, Midtown Plaza Station, Rochester, N.Y.  
 Phil Librero, 25-12 46 Street, Long Island City 3, N.Y.  
 Don Schank, 7 Glendale Drive, Freshfield, N.Y.  
 Phil Liebfred, 105 Parkway Road, Bronxville, N.Y.  
 William Chapp, Jr., 58 E. 206 St., N.Y., N.Y.  
 Phil Seuling (Doug Berman) 2881 W. 12 St., Brooklyn 24, N.Y.  
 Don Foote, 703 South Perry St., Johnstown, N.Y.  
 Claude Held, 1152 Kensington Ave., Buffalo 15, N.Y.  
 Thomas Wilson, 625 Euclid St., Santa Monica, Calif.  
 Rick Weingroff, 3231 Southgreen Road, Baltimore, Maryland  
 Ethan Roberts, 226-20 68th Ave., Queens Village, N.Y.  
 Bill Mitchell, 8622 55th Ave., Elmhurst 73, N.Y.  
 Dave Ealer, P.O. Box 392, Cooper Station, N.Y., N.Y.  
 Paul Vizcarrondo, 2521 Burro Lane, E. Meadow, N.Y.  
 Rick Berman, 552 Wagstaff Dr., E. Meadow, N.Y.  
 Joe Azzato, 135 Cole Dr., E. Meadow, N.Y.  
 Dave Bibby, 40 Hillside Ave., Verona, N.J.  
 Alex Almaraz, 4528 South Pauline St., Chicago 9, Ill.  
 Fred Landerman, 87-21 160 St., Jamaica, N.Y.  
 Art Tripp, 6 Grand Boulevard, Wyndanch, Long Island  
 Al Russell, 6832 Felt Ave., Baltimore, Maryland  
 George Kopp, 10 Pillet Place, W. Orange, N.J.  
 Phil Ressegini, 1563 68 St., Brooklyn, N.Y.  
 Steve Keisman, 1165 Gerard Ave., Bronx 52, N.Y.  
 Steve Griffin, 1972 Harris Gate, Seaford, New York  
 Marc Madel, 512 Westminister Road, Brooklyn, New York  
 Peter Tulp, 235 Hartshorn Drive, Short Hills, N.J.  
 Thomas Chung, 217 E. 27 Street, N.Y., N.Y.  
 Karl Gutauski, no address listed  
 Howard Rogofsky, 246-87 135 Rd., Rosedale, N.Y.  
 Malcolm Willits, P.O. Box 85242, Santa Western Stat., Los Angeles, Calif.  
 Bill Thilling, Box 352, Station D, Cleveland 27, Ohio  
 also in attendance were Dick Lupoff and Howard Levine both from N.Y.

These are the people who made it all possible—the gang that helped me every inch of the way with their support. I know they'll all be back again next year for another fling and I hope each one brings a friend. I am almost positive that next year's attendance figures will be more than double those listed above. More people are now aware that the con was not a joke, but a serious excursion into the organized realms of comic book fandom. My best wishes go to all those who joined the con and I hope to see you all again next year for the '65 NYCON!



**ROBERTS:** [shouts] *Louder?* [audience laughs] *Okay, teacher voice. The folks up here were all at that first show and all of us got a button. [displays button, audience laughs] And people got it as they were walking towards where we were going to hold the convention. The person who was in charge of putting this together was Bernie Bubnis. I'm going to ask all the panelists a question, with an eye towards Dr. Fredric Wertham's prediction that reading comic books was going to turn you into a juvenile delinquent. Now we all know that's not true, because it's video games and rap music. [audience laughs] However, with an eye towards delinquency, I'd like to ask each of the panelists to give a short presentation of what they did over the last 50 years. Bernie is largely responsible for putting the convention on. Bernie?*

**FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Thank you, Bernie. [audience applauds]

**BERNIE BUBNIS:** It taught me that an idiot kid could do anything. [audience chuckles] I was a lost kid in those days. It was a great moment. After that, I really just started taking my life a little less seriously. I stopped reading comic books. I went in one direction and then... I got real lucky. I met this lady in the first row, my beautiful wife. [audience applauds as he points to Lucille Bubnis] I worked for a large advertising agency in the art department. I had a small agency myself after that, [and] wound up doing work for a number of millwork operations. One guy owed me so much money that I wound up in the millwork business for the rest of my life. I'm very happy that's where I went. I've enjoyed science-fiction and comic books most of my life. I had a long history of being a science-fiction fan before being a comic fan. In the early '60s, I wanted desperately to meet other comics fans, but the ways we had to communicate were much different than today. We didn't have the Internet, we had the U.S. Post Office. [audience chuckles]

**ART TRIPP:** Snail mail.

**BUBNIS:** It's just incredible that the people—guys that you'll hear about today—made me look like I was doing more than I actually accomplished. I'm real happy that I'm getting credit for something, but it's largely because I was able to work with some fantastic people. It's great to see so many of you in the audience. Thanks for coming. [audience applauds]

**ROBERTS:** *We have an unannounced panelist. He's Rick S. Bierman. Rick, what about the last 50 years for you?*

**RICK S. BIERMAN:** Well, first, it's pronounced "beer-man." Let's get the name correct. [audience laughs] I've been an attorney here in New York—still practicing—since 1978, and stayed out of trouble despite what Dr. Wertham predicted. [audience chuckles] I am married to the same wife for over 40 years, two lovely daughters, [audience applauds] and never lost my passion for comic books. I still read them, follow them. This is the first convention I've been to in, oh, 40 years... and I'm in shock at what has happened, considering we started off with 44, I believe—under 50 people at the 1964 comicon. It's just blown up, and I'm very happy to be here. I'm happy that you have shown an interest in hearing about the early days. We're going to share some of these experiences with you, so enjoy. [audience applauds] Thank you.

**ROBERTS:** *Our next speaker is Art Tripp, who is the second of the four con organizers. Art, what's the last 50 years been like?*

**TRIPP:** Uh... wild. [audience chuckles] At the time of the '64 con, I wandered through a whole bunch of

[inaudible]. I was working full-time, and I was going to college...

**FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER:** We can't hear you.

**TRIPP:** Oh, sorry. I'm one of those people who likes talking to the ground. Okay, 1964. I wanted to do something with my life, starting to college, working full time, trying to be a forest ranger, wound up—uh, the list is too long—so I joined the service. I spent six years in that, came out, wandered around a little bit. I was lucky enough to find a beautiful woman that gave me four beautiful children and I have a great grandson. I've kept my contacts through them. My son himself is a comic book fanatic, and my grandson wears Wolverine underwear. [audience laughs] I am here now. I am very proud to be back with these guys. They helped me form my own life and it was always straightened out. Thank you, guys. [audience applauds]

**ROBERTS:** *The third organizer could not be here because he has a medical problem. But his name is Ron Fradkin, and those of us old folks use old technology, so I have a tape recorder. [audience chuckles] And let's see if what he told me in the response to this question comes through. [technical difficulties in playing Ron's tape] I'm going to summarize what Ron said, because I can be louder than he can. Ron said he thought Wertham was off his nut. That he graduated college and spent 35 years working for insurance companies. [audience chuckles]*

**TRIPP:** That's kind of criminal, isn't it? [audience laughs]

**ROBERTS:** *Listen, we just heard from a lawyer. You wanna talk about criminals? [audience laughs again] All right, the next person, who was there as a professional, not a fan, is the lovely lady sitting in the middle. This is Flo Steinberg! [audience applauds] You probably know Flo as Stan Lee's secretary during the best pieces of Marvel history. And she came to the convention. Flo, what has the last 50 years been like for you?*

**FLO STEINBERG:** Hello, everybody. [inaudible remarks; audience cheers loudly] Thank you, thank you for coming. I worked in the '60s at Marvel and left in the later '60s. Then I had different jobs, worked at Warren Publishing for a few years, worked at other magazines, had a life.... Although those were great things, I always kept the friends from the comic book world from my first job. Then, in the '90s, [when I was] between jobs, I started working part-time at Marvel again doing proofreading. Sort of picking out the things Spellcheck doesn't, and all. [audience chuckles] I still work two days a week there, and living my life ... and I'm grateful for



### One End Of The Table

Ethan Roberts (at podium), Bernie Bubnis and Art Tripp on the panel; photo courtesy of Aaron Caplan. Sadly, we don't have any photos of the entire sitting panel.



# Attendees Of The 1964 Comicon



Alex Almaraz



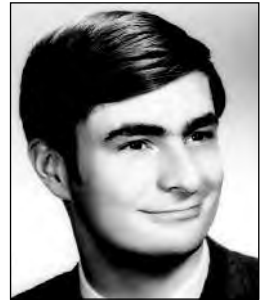
Bernie Bubnis



Steve Ditko



Ron Fradkin



Paul Gambaccini



Margaret Gemignani



Tom Gill



Claude Held



Larry Ivie



David Kaler



Richard Lupoff



George R.R. Martin



Howard Rogofsky



Phil Seuling



Flo Steinberg

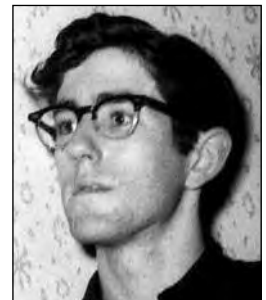
***Vintage Pics  
Of Some Of  
The Members***



Bill Thailing



Len Wein



Richard Weingroff



Malcolm Willits

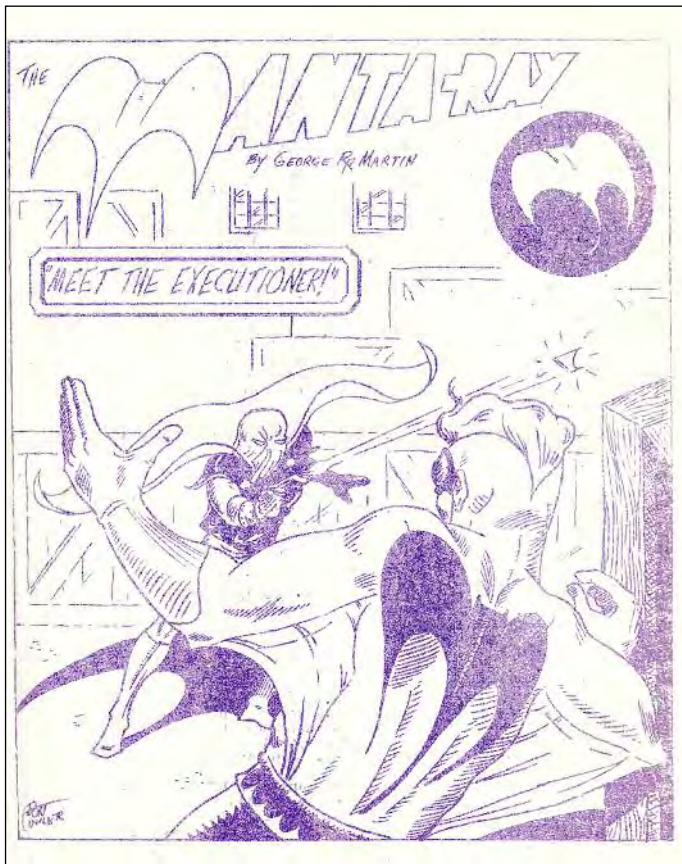


Andy Yanchus



Pat Yanchus





### Let's Talk This Over Manta Man

Splash panel drawn by Buddy Saunders (aka Don Fowler) for George R.R. Martin's first story, *Manta Ray* in "Meet the Executioner!", in *Ymir* #2 (1965).  
[© Buddy Saunders.]

everybody's good wishes. Thank you. [audience applauds]

**ROBERTS:** The next person on our list of survivors represents a group of people who were at the first comicon for different reasons than the rest of us. One of the earliest comic book dealers in the world, Mr. Howard Rogofsky! [audience applauds] Howard, what have you been doing for the past few years?

**HOWARD ROGOFSKY:** Well, as of next year, I will have been married the Big 5-0 [audience "oohs" and applauds] to the same person... [audience applauds again] to the same person I met in 1964, married in 1965. [audience cheers] I'm not selling comic books anymore. I went into other things such as magazines, Big Little Books, cereal premiums, and so on. But the Internet has killed my business, which doesn't bother me. [audience chuckles] My mother did my catalogs and took what I dictated until 1992. And while my father was alive, he used to wrap my packages. It was basically a family business. I think I'm one of the first mail-order dealers, and I bought from a lot of people. For example, I bought from Billy Joe White, who's no longer with us, a copy of *Detective Comics* #38 for \$2.00. [audience gasps] But you have to realize prices have jumped up. [audience chuckles] Also, when I was dealing, people wanted to read them and have them. Nowadays, people want to invest in them. They can't open them up, they can't really look at them, and that's what it has become. Recently, somebody sold to me on the Internet an *Action* #5 with no back cover, the front cover was not intact, Superman wasn't on the cover, for \$2,000. And now I'm relaxed and... glad I was invited to the show today. [audience applauds]

**ROBERTS:** The last of the organizers, who my wife of 40 years calls

"Sherman," [audience chuckles] is me. I'm Ethan Roberts. I got my Bachelor's degree in Biology Education from Queens College, City University of New York, got a Master's degree and a Doctorate in Zoology from the University of Massachusetts. I taught at Medger Evans College, City University of New York and at the Statue University of New York at Purchase. And for six years, I was the wild animal expert for the City of New York, mostly identifying bats. [audience laughs] After that, I worked for 30 years at the Veterans Administration and recently retired. Now there's something that hasn't been said here that I'm going to say now. With regard to Bernie, in regard to Art, regard to Steve Keisman, and Joe Azzato, who were there at the 1964 comicon... these are all Viet Nam combat vets. [audience applauds and cheers] I don't know everybody's records in combat, but I will point out that Art Tripp is a recipient of Purple Hearts, the Bronze Star, and the Silver Star. [audience stands and applauds]

**TRIPP:** I'm going to say to you that I didn't do it alone. I accepted it for my guys, okay? We worked as a team.

[During the cheering for Art Tripp and the other veterans, Len Wein has pulled up to the dais on a scooter!]

**LEN WEIN:** I made it!

**ROBERTS:** For those who don't know, this is Len Wein. [audience applauds wildly] He apparently didn't know how to ask for directions. [audience laughs]

**WEIN:** I'm the worst. [audience laughs as Wein crosses the stage] I made a wrong turn at Albuquerque. I may not live to get on. [sits down]

**ROBERTS:** The next question that we're going to discuss is, "What was your role in the comic convention? What did you do for the convention?" We're going to start with Bernie since he was the chairperson. Bernie?

**BUBNIS:** The original committee was a different group. Jerry Bails had put George Pacinda in charge of putting on the first New York con. Ron Fradkin and Len were two of the original committee members. That group was having no success moving ahead with this thing, and I was friendly with both of these guys. Nothing was getting done. There's no question, there was never going to be a convention with this group at all. So the three of us...

**WEIN:** We were 16 years old.

**BUBNIS:** Sorry?

**WEIN:** I said we were sixteen years old.

**BUBNIS:** Yeah, well, that's being young and not knowing you can accomplish something. So we had no idea we couldn't pull this thing off. [We decided] "we're going to fire the original committee and start this thing all over again," and that's really what we did. And we just put our minds to it. We weren't thinking about the money side of it. It was about the love affair that we all had with comics. Originally, we decided we were going to have it in Newark! Thanks to Ethan, that didn't happen. [audience chuckles] We wound up having it in New York.

**BIERMAN:** We weren't old enough to sign a contract for a venue. [audience chuckles again] You had to be eighteen.

**BUBNIS:** A lot of things had to come together. Like I said, I was lucky to have good people buffering me, pushing ahead the situation, and it worked out fairly well. Some of the people that attended that first convention have been incredibly successful in the arts. There's Len, and ... George R. R. Martin was there. Michael Uslan said he was there...



**ROBERTS:** *But we don't have any record of that.*

**WEIN:** No, but George does.

**BUBNIS:** No, but—

**WEIN:** George actually has the first badge. He bought the first membership. And I see George all the time. We're, you know, still friends.

[NOTE: In July 1964, George R.R. Martin was not yet known as a promising writer. His first published story didn't appear until Johnny Chambers' Ymir #2 (Feb. 1965). It was titled "Meet the Executioner" and featured his Manta Ray character. —Bill.]

**BUBNIS:** The story was—

**BIERMAN:** He actually showed me the badge once. He has the first membership badge. [chuckles]

**BUBNIS:** Well, George—no question George was there. I'm saying Michael Uslan has listed in his book that he was at the first New York convention. That's just background.

[NOTE: In his 2011 book *The Boy Who Loved Batman*, Michael Uslan, now a Hollywood producer, does indeed state that he attended the first New York comics convention, but he is actually referring to the 1965 con held at the Hotel Broadway Central in lower Manhattan. Some people count that as the first "real" comicon because it was held at a hotel and lasted two days rather than just one. But, traditionally, the 1964 con has been considered the first comicon, even though it took place in the space of one afternoon. —Bill.]

**ROGOFISKY:** Oh, my God.

**WEIN:** Real fancy.

**BIERMAN:** These two guys are still fighting. I have a letter in here we'll talk about later.

**WEIN:** Oh, Rick. [audience chuckles]

**ROBERTS:** *Put the letter away. We don't need—* [conversation inaudible due to many voices speaking over each other]

**WEIN:** It's been half a century!

**FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Please put the letter away.

**BIERMAN:** I think I have to defend you. [audience laughs]

**WEIN:** My wife is an attorney, it's okay. [audience laughs again]

**BUBNIS:** I think if the two of us have forgotten it after 50 years, I think that you can stop thinking about it. [audience chuckles]

**BIERMAN:** I just remembered it.

**BUBNIS:** We were young. Two egos hit. We're here fifty years later and I think we've had great lives. We're both married to great women.

[NOTE: By way of explanation of the previous several exchanges: at the time of the 1964 con, Bernie Bubnis and Len Wein were at odds, and Bubnis "banned" Wein from attending. However, Wein was "on site," if not inside the hall. Since neither of them wanted to go into the details of their long-past disagreement on the 2014 panel, we won't go into them here. —Bill.]

**NEXT ISSUE:** Part 2 of the "Survivors of the First Comicon" panel. Bill Schelly's web site is: [billschelly.net](http://billschelly.net)



# HARVEY KURTZMAN: THE MAN WHO CREATED MAD AND REVOLUTIONIZED HUMOR IN AMERICA

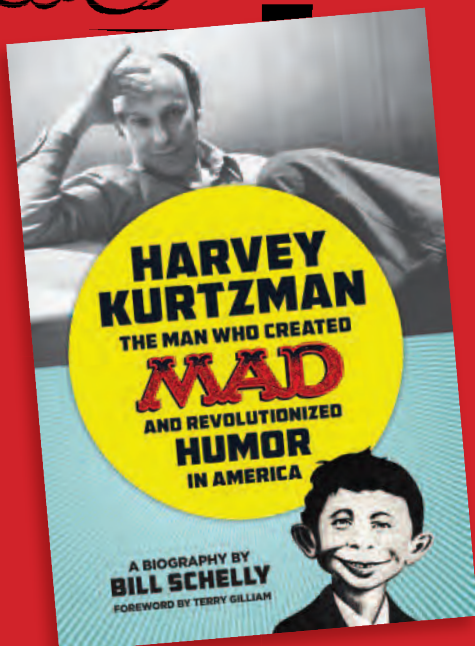
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"I always considered Alfred E. Neuman as a brother."  
—David Lynch

"Those early issues of *Mad* attacked the hypocrisies of a 1950s society that perceived itself as normal . . . and it wasn't afraid to make fun of alcoholism or sexism and racism."  
—Matthew Weiner, creator of *Mad Men*

"He was . . . a kind of unsung Mother Theresa for American comics artists, comedians, goofballs, outsiders, brainiacs and troublemakers." —Terry Gilliam



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**FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS**







**B**eneath a colorful homage to the Jim Shooter-scripted "Legion of Super-Heroes" artwork of Curt Swan & George Klein—produced by artist **Shane Foley** and colorist **Randy Sargent** coming through like champs, as usual—we rush headlong into a double letters/e-mail section to make up for the omission of a "re:" section last issue. [Alter Ego hero TM & © Roy & Dann Thomas—costume designed by Ron Harris; Captain Ego TM & © Roy Thomas & Bill Schelly—created by Biljo White.]

We begin with a fast look at **A/E #124**, which cover-featured an interview with the great (and since, alas, late) **Herb Trimpe**, whose work on *The Incredible Hulk* and other Marvel mags lit up the late Silver Age to the turn of the 21st century. Ironically, because it currently takes us well over a year to publish a letters section relevant to a given issue, our first missive is actually a bittersweet excerpt from an e-mail that **Herb Trimpe** himself sent, shortly after issue #124 hit the mails:

Hi, Roy—

The airplane that Big John [Verpoorten] and Stu [Schwartzberg] and Al [Kurzrok] are checking out is not mine. That's a World War I Nieuport Scout at the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome in Rhinebeck, NY. I wish it were mine!

Herb Trimpe

I (Roy) responded to Herb at the time, saying we'd print the true identity of the plane in a future issue. Animator and Trimpe friend Bill Peckmann, who was also present at that event, says that Herb and his brother Mike are also seen in that photo. In addition, Herb and several others pointed out—as we should have realized on our own, but failed to do so under time pressure—that the drawing of the Trimpe-co-created aviation ace Phantom Eagle on page 12 of #124 was actually an illo by Herb himself, not one by onetime EC star Jack Davis as noted. At least we caught that egregious error in time to correct it (with the actual Davis picture) in #125—and publisher John Morrow even managed to insert the correct artwork in the digital edition of #124.

Next, a couple more corrections from **Nick Caputo**, the gent responsible for sending us many of the examples of Herb's Western work that we printed in that issue:

Hi Roy—

A low-keyed, articulate guy who did some great work on those *Hulks*, particularly with you and Stan. I also loved many of his Western stories and covers, and he did a load of them in the '70s when they were mostly reprint.

You made one error on page 18. In a caption you stated that Herb never inked any "Hulk" stories penciled by Marie. Herb was actually correct: he inked Marie's "Hulk" in *Tales to Astonish* #94-98. Nice work, which I suspect Stan took notice of.

In addition, the *Mighty World of Marvel* (Avengers) cover attributed to Trimpe is actually the work of Ron Wilson, with inks likely by Mike Esposito and/or John Tartaglione. The *F.F. Big Little Book* you noted as "circa 1970" is actually 1968. I should know—I still have the original beat-up edition which my mom paid 39¢ for at Woolworth's back when I was eight.

Nick Caputo

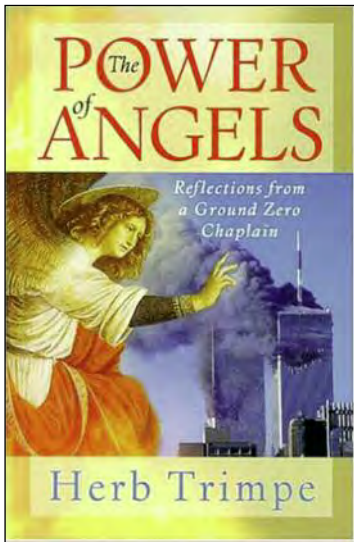
Somehow, I missed those several "Hulk" stories by the Severin/Trimpe team. Shane Foley and one or two others also pointed out that run of issues.



That's Incredible!

The Mexican edition of what in the U.S. had been Herb's cover for *The Incredible Hulk* #130 (Aug. 1970). That title, translated into English, is: *Hulk – The Incredible Man*. Thanks to Emilio Soltero. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]





### The Power Of Trimpe

(Above left:) Fan/collector Richard A. Pileggo writes: "Herb Trimpe was one of the best Marvel-style artists. I always felt his work was awkward... in a good way. Unless I missed it, though, there was no mention of his book *The Power of Angels: Reflections from a Ground Zero Chaplain*." You're right, Rich—it should've been included in the Trimpe Checklist. As Herb's and Ye Editor's mutual friend/colleague Tony Isabella wrote in his online obit: "Herb was ordained a deacon by the Episcopal Diocese of New York. After the tragedies of 9/11, he spent eight months as a chaplain at Ground Zero. He wrote about his experiences in *The Power of Angels: Reflections from a Ground Zero Chaplain* [Big Apple Vision, 2004]. [It] is an amazing book on every level. It's a record of faith and doubt and miracles and humanity at its best.... If you haven't read [it], I urge you to seek it out on the secondary market." [Cover © the respective copyright holders.]

(Above right:) Several letter-writers re A/E #124 mention The Phantom Eagle as prominently as the Hulk, even though Herb drew the masked World War I ace only in a couple of stories after he was created by Trimpe and writer Gary Friedrich. Here's a sketch Herb did of the Eagle, which popped up on the Rip Jagger's Dojo website. [Phantom Eagle TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

At this point, it's time to take note of a few additions to the artistic IDs in both A/E #124 & 125 by heeding the admonitions of a real expert: **Hames Ware**, co-editor of the 1970s print edition of *Who's Who of American Comic Books*:

Hey Roy:

Re A/E #124: The "Girl Soldier of Canada" splash seen on page 45 is by Jill Elgin, who also drew "Girl Commandos" for Harvey. The "Bulletman" / "Comedy of Crimes" on page 75 is Munson Paddock on pencils and Frank Koste on inks. [A/E **EDITOR'S NOTE**: That story is generally identified only as being by the Jack Binder comic shop.] And of course, as Jim Amash has probably already noted to you, it's Don Cameron, not Lou, on that *Stories from the Bible*.

Re A/E #125: The artist on page 25 [the cover of Ribage's *Crime Mysteries* #3] is Adolphe Barreaux, and it's H.L. Larsen on the *Jack Armstrong* #1 cover on page 26. Louis Zansky is the cover artist of *Crimes by Women* #6 on page 37.

Hames Ware

Ye Ed counts himself as not a complete duffer in IDing artists' styles, at least in certain contexts—but guys like Hames and his associate Jim Vadeboncoeur, Jr., are a whole nuther species in that area, and I'm in awe of them for their talent—which is combined, of course, with years of painstaking work and dedication. But as for the confusion between the names of writer Don Cameron and artist Lou Cameron—that seems to be

some sort of brain burp that I'm susceptible to, as I've made it more than once, as both the late Lou himself, and his interviewer and friend Jim Amash, reminded me on more than one occasion. I keep trying to shape up. You hardly needed to send all this info to maintain your lifetime complementary sub to *Alter Ego*!

Another impressive piece of Hames' comics-related scholarship is his carefully researched piece on "The Post-War Iger Shop," listing and discussing the artists who worked at the S.M. ("Jerry") Iger comic shop from 1944 until its demise in the 1960s. This article is on view in PS Artbooks' hardcover collection titled (ahem!) Roy Thomas Presents Rulah, Jungle Goddess – Vol. 3. See ad on p. 71.

Interestingly, #124's "Comic Crypt" article by Dr. M. Thomas Inge elicited a couple of strong responses, as well, the first from **Dean Smith**:

Dear Roy,

I read the M. Thomas Inge article on the comics censorship issue with great interest, as it's a subject that has fascinated me since I first got into fandom—and also because one of my earliest memories is reading a magazine article about the dangers of those awful American comics that were flooding the country and corrupting British youth. (I would have been 6 or 7 at the time.)

Dean Smith

By then, it was already too late for you, Dean. Now this from **Jeff Taylor**:

Hi Roy—

This issue's "Mr. Monster's Comic Crypt" sure takes on a different connotation with Putin's actions toward Ukraine (the land of my forebears, so, yes, I'm taking the situation personally) and his oh-so-familiar annexing of Crimea. Everyone made the mistake of relaxing when the land behind the Iron Curtain switched from Communism to capitalism, forgetting that America's real enemy was not a different economic-based belief system but tyranny—tyranny in whatever form it took.

And I must say how much I liked Jay Piscopo's Bulletman illustration on the first page of the FCA section. Loved the "retro" look (if that's the right word for a 21st-century redesign of a '40s character).

Jeff Taylor

And this from cartoonist **Steve Stiles**, noted (among other things) for his stories in Mark Schultz's long-running *Xenozoic Tales* comics:

Hi Roy:

I understand you recently ran a photo of Dan Adkins and myself with Wally Wood. The fourth, unidentified person in that photo was Colin Cameron, who was a fellow fanzine artist at the time and, by incredible coincidence, wound up



### One More Roosevelt To Worry About

Gene Popa informs us: "In the photo on page 51 [of A/E #124] listing the Fawcett Editorial Advisory Board, you identify one member of the board, Eleanor B. Roosevelt, as the wife of then-President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In fact, the First Lady's full name was Anna Eleanor Roosevelt. The Eleanor B. Roosevelt in question was actually the wife of Ted Roosevelt, Jr., eldest son of President Theodore Roosevelt, who was a fifth cousin of FDR and first cousin to the First Lady."

Guilty as charged, Gene. Here's a circa-1910 photo of Ted Roosevelt, Jr., and his wife Eleanor Butler Roosevelt, fresh from the Internet. How did we ever get by without it?



stationed in the same barracks as me in Ft. Eustis, Virginia. Colin later went on to become a professional bass player for a virtual who's who in country & western bands.

Steve Stiles

Thanks for the ID, Steve. Didn't Cameron also do some work with Wood on Tower's T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents in the mid-1960s, around the same time Dan Adkins did? Or have we got him confused with another British artist?

Next, we move on to correspondence re **A/E #125**, which cover-featured Harris Levey, aka Lee Harris, the early and later artist of the "Air Wave" feature in DC's Golden Age Detective Comics, in conjunction with Richard Arndt's interview with his son Jonathan.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Lee Harris' story, for me personally, was the enigmatic 1941 "Tarantula" origin/splash page drawn and quite possibly written by that artist (see A/E #125, p. 9), which was never printed back in the day and was crucially different in many aspects from the "Tarantula" feature that made its debut in DC's Star Spangled Comics #1 (Oct. '41). I had my own theory about it, which I voiced at the time to son Jonathan—and we also heard from noted comics historian **Will Murray**:

Hi Roy,

The mysterious alternate "Tarantula" reminds me of two interviews I did with DC artists who told the same story of offering [editor] Whitney Ellsworth an original character, and being given instead something supposedly created in-house.

Artist Hal Sherman told me that he offered a character he called "Wonder Woman," only to be given "The Star-Spangled Kid" to do instead. Later, another "Wonder Woman" surfaced. Paul Norris told me of creating a character he called "The Vigilante," only to be handed "Aquaman," later discovering a different "Vigilante" coming out months afterward.

This "Tarantula" may be another example of that. Lee Harris perhaps handed in the original "Tarantula," only to be given "Air Wave"—and the different version of his earlier character subsequently appeared.

All these incidents date to 1941, by the way.

What do you think?

Will Murray

My own theory, upon examining the "Tarantula" page-scan sent to me by Jonathan Levey, was pretty much the same as yours seems to be, Will—though I don't recall having heard before about Paul Norris' "Vigilante" experience. While it's impossible to be certain at this far-removed date, it seems possible that some early editors—either on their own or in reflection of an unspoken company policy—occasionally pulled their own variation of the old "bait-and-switch": receiving an idea for a hero feature from one artist and/or writer—effectively rejecting it—then giving that idea to another artist or writer as if it were the editor's own creation, generously handed out as a consolation prize to work on. (If so, I hope we someday learn who may have originally come up with the concept for "Aquaman," which DC editor Whitney Ellsworth reportedly gave writer Mort Weisinger and artist Norris to develop. Or maybe Weisinger came up with that concept himself; personally, I'd like to think he did, despite the fact that Weisinger was infamous, in the 1950s and '60s, for pulling that type of switcheroo with his various "Superman" writers, dismissing their story ideas as "garbage," then passing them on to other scripters as if they were his own.)

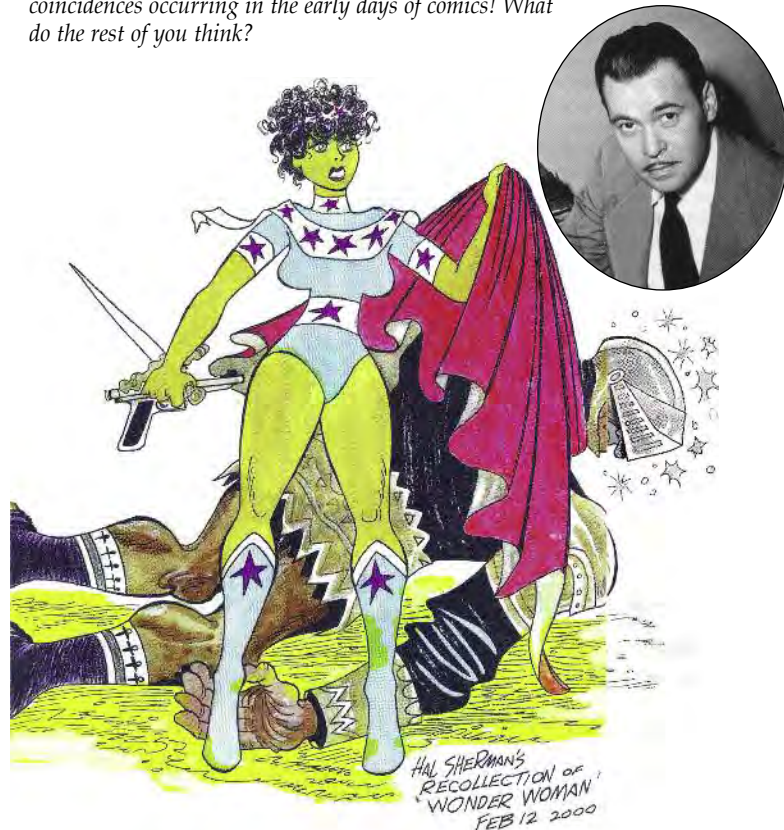
The next question is, in the case of "Vigilante," "Tarantula," and (perhaps) "Wonder Woman": what would the editor—or, ultimately, the company, since it was the ultimate owner of all these features—have gotten out of such an editorial shell game, if that's what it was? Perhaps

we should play our own game... one for which I understandably have some fondness... which we'll call "What If?"

What if it was desired, by some editors and/or a comics company—that writers and/or artists be discouraged from forming a personal attachment or connection to a feature as its "creator(s)"? If the company had gone ahead with Norris' version of "Vigilante"—however similar or dis- it may have been to the masked modern-day cowboy who emerged—Paul Norris might later have claimed some sort of status as the feature's "creator." But when that name (and whatever else?) was handed over instead to artist Mort Meskin to draw from the get-go, it would've seemed to Meskin as a pre-existing concept that he was "merely" drawing. Ditto, perhaps, with Hal Sharp, re "Tarantula." (It's intriguing that the scripter of the first story in the cases of all the features named above except "Wonder Woman" was the aforementioned Mort Weisinger—not that that suggests Weisinger was guilty of wrongdoing, for he may well have been given the idea by a superior. To one and all, it was just the way things were done.)

As for the three artists who had reportedly come up with the original notions of other characters—well, at least they were all given other assignments as paying work: Norris, "Aquaman"... Hal Sherman, "Star-Spangled Kid"... and Lee Harris, "Air Wave."

Of course, all the above is mere "what-if" speculation... but if that's not what happened, then there were some truly remarkable coincidences occurring in the early days of comics! What do the rest of you think?



### Wonder Woman—The Prequel?

Golden Age artist Hal Sherman (seen above right) wrote in 2000 that, in very early 1941, he had created and designed a character called "Wonder Woman" and had mailed drawings of her to DC head editor Whitney Ellsworth—but that, when he arrived in New York for a conference, he was instead given as his art assignment Jerry Siegel's script for the first "Star-Spangled Kid" story. Unable to recall sixty years after the fact how his own Wonder Woman had looked, Sherman accepted comics historian/journalist Will Murray's suggestion to work with a hypnotherapist, for whom he soon produced (among others) the color drawing seen above, which was first printed in *Comic Book Marketplace* #78 (May 2000). Will plans to examine Hal Sherman's comics career in a near-future issue of *Alter Ego*. [Art © Estate of Hal Sherman; Wonder Woman is a TM of DC Comics.]



And now, from **Craig Delich**:

Hi Roy—

The GCD [Grand Comics Database] lists Harry Shorten as the writer of the “Green Falcon” story. Listed as writing in 1941, he pre-dates the other listed writer (also 1941). Since *Blue Ribbon Comics* #8 is dated December of 1940, I would imagine Shorten is our man.

I also have a bone to pick with Richard Arndt for a statement he made at the top of page 8 of his Lee Harris-related interview. He states that “[Bob] Kane was usually credited with penciling or inking the figure of Batman himself, but that may not be correct, either.” Arndt is referring to stories in which Jerry Robinson and George Roussos were doing the “Batman” art and backgrounds. His Kane comment is way off. The *only* time Kane did the penciling of or some full inks of Batman figures (Robin, too) was in the stories drawn by Lew Sayre Schwartz. Schwartz told me this and verified story by story. Of course, Kane did many “Batman” stories with Charles Paris, Stan Kaye, or Ray Burnley inking, and I tracked down much of that, with Joe Desris getting Kane to verify the Burnley-inked stories.



### America's Ace Of The "Air Wave"

A dramatic “Air Wave” splash page drawn by Lee Harris, even featuring Static the parrot, that didn’t quite make it into *A/E* #125; it was done for *Detective Comics* #127 (Sept. 1947). Writer unknown. Thanks to Doug Martin for the scan. This caption’s heading, by the way, is a paraphrase of the radio catch-phrase of another DC (originally All-American) hero, the dashing aviator “Hop Harrison,” who was heralded on his radio series as “America’s ace of the air waves”! [TM & © DC Comics.]

Arndt’s statement after that, “It’s possible that your dad worked on just backgrounds or figures other than the actual Batman himself,” I can agree with, as it pertains *only* to the backgrounds. Robinson and Roussos teamed up all the time on many features, and with Lee being a friend of George’s, I can see where the background stuff *could* have occurred; these were inked, also. Too bad Harris didn’t tear out the pages of the “Batman” stuff he did. I just want this point made clear to readers of *A/E*... otherwise, people will go off on wild tangents about “Kane not doing stuff” as we have seen in the past.

Craig Delich

*Agreed, Craig. I’m every bit as convinced as was Jerry Bails, and as Mike W. Barr and numerous other professionals and comics aficionados are, that Bob Kane woefully wronged the original “Batman” writer, Bill Finger, by keeping him an anonymous, unacknowledged co-creator of that feature... a sin that, as this issue goes to press, may finally be about to be changed, at least as regards movies and TV. Even so, that doesn’t mean that Kane, who certainly was a co-creator (though probably no more than that) of the Darknight Detective, should in turn be robbed of any credit that is duly his. Richard Arndt, of course, was not saying that he was convinced Kane did not draw Batman figures in early stories otherwise drawn by Robinson and Roussos, but was merely allowing for the possibility. Still as you state, it is the burden of the Kane nay-sayers to prove that Kane didn’t draw what he said he did, not the other way around.*

*Speaking of the late and very amiable George Roussos, FCA cover editor Mark Lewis did a bit of sleuthing and found this extra piece of info about the feature “Air Wave,” which Roussos inherited in the early 1940s from A/E #125 subject Lee Harris:*

Hi Roy,

I was able to lay my hands on my copy of *Comics Interview* #2, in which George Roussos was interviewed by Mark Gruenwald, which tells of Roussos’ own connection to “Air Wave”:

**MARK:** After your four years at National on staff, what did you do?

**GEORGE:** I went freelance, and they had me do a 7-page back-up feature called ‘Air Wave.’ The strip was by a friend of mine, Harris Levy [sic], under the pseudonym ‘Lee Harris.’ When he went into the Army, Ellsworth said to me, ‘Why don’t you take it over? And I started with that.

**MARK:** You both drew and inked ‘Air Wave’?

**GEORGE:** And colored it.

Roussos goes on to say that he thinks he lettered the strip, as well, and that he felt the character was “quite silly. He wore stupid roller skates, skated on power-lines, and listened to radio waves.” Not a lot there, but it does confirm, at least, that Roussos colored the strip during the time he was drawing it.

Also: in the second installment of the Steve Perrin interview, I came across something that left me scratching my head. It had him referring to the “Livermore Grad Lab.” I lived in Livermore for a number of years, and unless there’s something that started there in the years since I moved away, there’s nothing I’m aware of called the “Grad Lab.” There is the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), which has been there a long time, and long-time Livermore residents still might refer to it as the Rad Lab. Perhaps that’s what Steve said, and was misheard when the interview got transcribed.

Mark Lewis

*Quite probably, Mark—with “Rad” being short for “Radiology” or “Radiation,” we presume?*



A few comments here from **Jonathan Levey**, the A/E #125 interviewee who is the son of Harris Levey, who at various times in his life was (even legally) known as Lee Harris:

Dear Roy,

Now I'm confused. I stated in the interview with Richard [Arndt] that my dad was a year older than Stan Lee, but that Stan graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School in 1939 and my dad graduated from there in 1940 because his high school years were extended due to his switching temporarily to a high school in Pennsylvania during his mom's illness.

Then tonight, when I was looking at his two illustrations printed in the DeWitt Clinton High literary book, *The Magpie*, I was shocked to see that they list my dad as a student who graduated DeWitt in 1939! So, according to his note, I was wrong: my dad and Stan Lee *did* graduate DeWitt at the same time and therefore likely knew each other throughout high school.

When Richard interviewed me, I gave him only the partial name of the last advertising agency my dad worked for prior to his death. "The Bomstein Agency" is/was actually "The Bomstein-Gura Agency." It was there that my dad genuinely enjoyed so his role of creative director and his positive collaborations with several co-staff, sometimes even mentoring the young art directors. Both of my dad's former bosses there, Howard Bomstein and Michael Gura, are likely to read the A/E article on him, so I would like to get the name right.

Jonathan Levey

Thanks, Jonathan. Unfortunately, as you know, your correction arrived too late to be included in A/E #125, but we're happy to offer it here. And thanks again for speaking with Richard Arndt about your father's fascinating career.

Here's a welcome tidbit of information provided by **Herb Rogoff**, once an editor at Hillman Periodicals:

Hi Roy,

A/E #125 prints the cover of Hillman's *Crime Detective* #9 on page 46. You list the identity of the artist of this cover as "unknown." In actuality, the art was done by longtime cover artist Dan Zolnerowich.

Herb Rogoff

Good to know, Herb. I first learned the name "Dan Zolnerowich," I believe, from the noted comic artist Murphy Anderson, who is an ardent admirer of the work of the artist who often signed his name "Zolne." Michael T. Gilbert featured a number of his splendid Hillman "crime" covers in the "Comic Crypt" section of issues #133-134.

Finally, here's a note from regular reader **Harlan Ellison**—yes, that Harlan Ellison, who, not so incidentally, is one of the foremost science-fiction writers of the past half-century or so... and thus always a pleasure to hear from:

Dear Roy:

As always, *Alter Ego* #125 was a standout, a joy in these parlous times. But the page that brought more than a few tears to my eyes was the obit for Larry Ivie. Larry was a pal of mine, back in the '50s when I first made my hegira to NYC to start my long career as a Writer. Larry and I hung out at my one-room tiny rectangle at 611 W. 114th Street, and one of our frequent visitors was Trina Perlson, now Trina Robbins. And dozens of other comics and science fiction artists, writers, fans, and Soon-To-Be-Famous-



#### Eerie, Dearie!

The segment of Amy Nyberg's 1998 book *Seal of Approval* that was printed in A/E #125 mentioned Avon Periodicals' *Eerie*, one of the earliest U.S. horror series—which spurred British reader Gerald Edwards (who also holds forth in this issue's FCA section) to send the above cover scan and this note:

"For all lovers of pre-Code horror comics: here is a little gem that has surfaced in Britain. This is the Thorpe & Porter contemporary reprint of Avon's *Eerie* #3, but with big differences! The cover has a "68 pages" blurb; the original Avon issue had only 32. To make up the page count, the comic was grafted with Avon's *Strange Worlds* #5. All interior artwork is in black-&-white. Interestingly, the covers had UK adverts, but the interior ads had U.S. addresses! The comic is undated, but the interior adverts for *British Classics Illustrated* definitely date this to very early 1952. This issue was long thought to have never been printed. Issues #1 & 2 were used in the UK version of *Seduction of the Innocent*, so it was thought that this issue was pulled. My research has shown that there are only three known copies of the UK issue of *Eerie* #3. Truly a Gerber 10!" No time to explain that last sentence—but the cover of *Eerie* #3 (published in the U.S. with an Oct.-Nov. 1951 date) was drawn by the great Wally Wood. [© the respective copyright holders.]

Somebodies. Larry was a matrix and a grand companion. We lost touch with each other when I married the first time, and then got drafted. He went West, and I didn't get out here till 1962; so by then... well... as J.M. Barrie put it: "God gave us memory that we might have roses in December."

Thank you for that page, Roy.

Now I'll go back to working on amending that long interview with Brian Cremins for an upcoming Fawcett section in *Alter Ego*.

Harlan Ellison

*I knew Larry Ivie slightly myself, Harlan, and I was sorry to hear*



### Spicing Up The Crime Comics

Paul Allen writes us: "I have been very much enjoying your reprinting of [Amy Nyberg's book] Seal of Approval. I thought the cover of Crime Mysteries #3 [in A/E #125] looked awfully familiar. It is actually a not so subtle swipe from the June 1935 issue of [the pulp magazine] Spicy Mystery Stories. Of course, Spicy Mystery had an even spicier history than Crime Mysteries, and issues with covers like these were probably sold under the counter in many cities." Thanks, Paul. The comic artist (identified earlier in this column by James Ware as Adolphe Barreaux) swiped the gal, the coffin, and the hands from within it, as a check with A/E #125 will readily show. Guess he figured that, more than a decade later, nobody was going to remember an old pulp-mag cover (whose artist's identity we still don't know). Not that the editor of Crime Mysteries probably cared if they did remember it!

(mostly from artist Sandy Plunkett) about the deterioration of his health in the months before he passed away. He made a real contribution to early fandom, and in other areas, as well... and I felt his passing should be noted in Alter Ego.

For those who didn't spot the next-issue ad on page 2 of this edition, or even the hint at the end of Harlan's letter: be it noted that Harlan Ellison will be the prime interview subject of A/E #138, primarily on the subject of the Fawcett Captain Marvel and the landmark "Monster Society of Evil" series that ran from 1943-45. We've been looking forward to this one!

Meanwhile, please send any A/E-related letters or e-mails to:

Roy Thomas e-mail: [roydann@ntinet.com](mailto:roydann@ntinet.com)  
32 Bluebird Trail  
St. Matthews, SC 29135

Meanwhile, if you find yourself on the Internet, why not head on down to the **Alter-Ego-Fans** online chat group to learn more about upcoming features in this mag—to get a chance to unselfishly help us out with needed art and photo scans (thereby winning yourself a free copy of an issue of A/E)—and to discuss Alter Ego, the Golden and Silver Ages of Comics, and anything else that might be on your mind? You'll find it at [group.yahoo.com/group/alter-ego-fans](http://group.yahoo.com/group/alter-ego-fans). If you run into any problems signing up, just contact our genial overseer Chet Cox at [mormonyoyoman@gmail.com](mailto:mormonyoyoman@gmail.com) and he'll walk you through them. You'll be glad you signed up—and so will we!

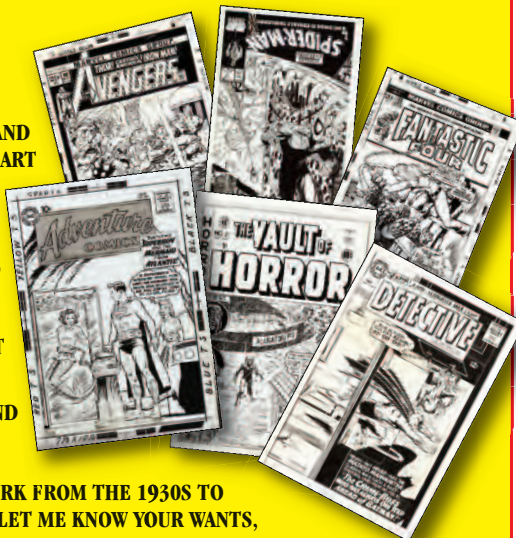


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#196

January 2016

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R



# Britain's Fawcetts— L. Miller Style!

## Captain Marvel & Co. In The UK—1943 To 1962

by Gerald Edwards

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck

**B**ritish publisher L. Miller & Son, Ltd., used their country's ban on importing printed matter to their full benefit (and to the satisfaction of UK comics fans) by producing hundreds of British editions of American comic books for 23 years—predominantly comics that had originally been published in the United States by Fawcett Publications... an association which eventually led to the 1954 creation of their Captain Marvel byproduct known as Marvelman. (The full story of Miller's hybrid hero was told in *Alter Ego* #87, July 2009.)

Established in 1943, Leonard Miller and his son Arnold signed a licensing agreement with Fawcett Publications two years later and launched their line of Fawcett black-&-white reprint comics with their own versions of Captain Marvel Adventures, Whiz Comics, The Marvel Family, and Captain Marvel Jr. L. Miller also went on to publish other Fawcett-originated books over the years (most with patchy frequency), including: Gift Comics, Master Comics, Wow Comics, Mary Marvel (1 issue), Spy Smasher, Bulletman, Captain Midnight, Ibis the Invincible, Lance O'Casey, Nyoka the Jungle Girl, Captain Video, Don Winslow of the Navy, Fawcett's Funny Animals, Slam-Bang, Puppatoons, Battle Stories, Soldier Comics, Life Story, Romantic Story, Romantic Secrets, Bob Swift, Mike Barnett, Motion Picture Comics, Fawcett Movie Comic, and numerous Western titles: Golden Arrow, Rod Cameron, Hopalong Cassidy, Bill Boyd, Ken Maynard, Bob Colt, Bob Steele, Lash Larue, Rocky Lane, Tom Mix, Tex Ritter, Monte Hale, Young Eagle, Western Hero, Six-Gun Heroes, Smiley Burnette, and Gabby Hayes. In their heyday, some titles were even bestowed with deluxe hardcover annuals.

By the late '50s, the Fawcett super-heroes were long gone, and Miller had dropped all their cowboy books. Even their very own Marvelman had shouted "Kimota!" one last time in 1963, after a prodigious 9-year run. L. Miller held on for a few more years, publishing pre-Code horror/mystery comics before shutting their doors for good in 1966.

Great Britain resident and erudite comics connoisseur Gerald Edwards



### Marvel Family Values

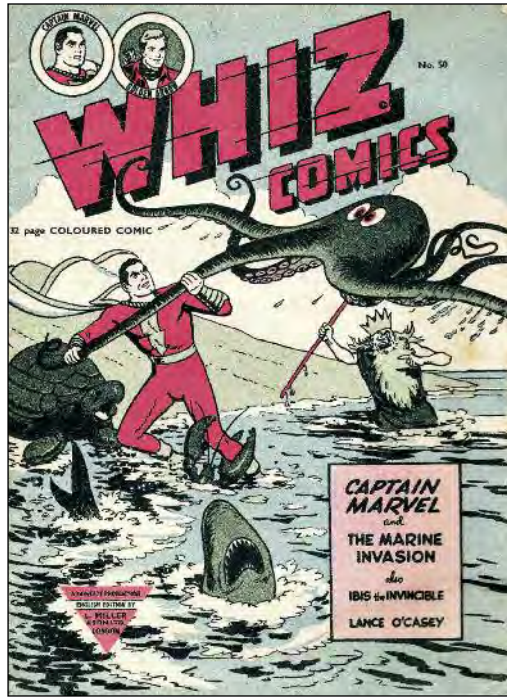
Variant UK covers that you probably never knew existed! Many of the British firm L. Miller's reprints of U.S. Fawcett material utilized 100% of the cover proof art, unlike the American versions—as seen here with Miller's larger-sized *Marvel Family* #59 from 1951 (reprinting the Beck-Costanza cover and contents from U.S. issue #19, Jan. 1948) ... and, with a later Miller issue, #88 (reprinting the Pete Costanza cover and material from Fawcett's *Marvel Family* #54, Dec. 1950), revealing even more "expanded" proof art, if you look close enough. Afraid you'll have to seek out the U.S. covers in the Grand Comics Database or somewhere, though—we've barely room to print all these UK covers, let alone their U.S. forebears! All covers accompanying this article courtesy of Gerald Edwards. [Shazam heroes TM & © DC Comics.]

takes us on L. Miller & Son's sprightly journey throughout the Golden Age of Fawcett comics in the UK. —P.C. Hamerlinck.

### L. Miller's Tale

After the end of World War II, Britain had no spare foreign currency to trade with the United States. This meant that no American comic books could be imported into Britain; this situation lasted until late 1959. In the meantime, in order to meet the demand for U.S. comics, some enterprising British companies bought the rights to reprint American comics in Britain. One of the biggest of these companies was L. Miller & Son of London, England. Len Miller owned the company and partnered his son, Arnold. (Later on, Arnold split away and formed his own comic book company called ABC—Arnold Book Company. They published many of the EC horror titles that were later banned, just like in America.)





### What Is So Rare As A Day In June? Well, As A Matter Of Fact...

Many early L. Miller comic books had a low survival rate. So, unless if you have one of these two old British issues stashed under your bed, then only one copy of each book is known to exist! The Miller *Ibis the Invincible*—circa 1948—partly reprints Fawcett's *Ibis the Invincible* #5 (Fall '46), cover art by Gus Ricca... and the Miller *Whiz Comics* #50 (actually #1) reprints material from the U.S. of A.'s *Whiz* #115 (Nov. 1949), with art by Kurt Schaffenberger. If these two issues were any rarer, they'd be nonexistent! [Shazam hero & Ibis TM & © DC Comics.]

L. Miller & Son had a deal with Fawcett Publications and took a large part of their previously published comic book inventory and reprinted it in London for the British market. This led to many Fawcett comics titles being reprinted in unusual combinations and often with divergent, British-produced covers, to a greater or lesser extent.

At the core of Miller's reprint objectives were Captain Marvel and family, as well as the rest of the Fawcett heroes. Many Fawcett Western books were also produced. In fact, L. Miller turned their hand to just about anything they could get the rights for. The British comic market had only just begun to recover by April of 1950 with the arrival of *Eagle* featuring "Dan Dare." At this stage, Miller comics were already well-established. They had started earlier publishing comics, beginning in the mid-1940s with just a handful of Fawcett comics titles. These initial Fawcett-Miller reprints were un-numbered and photogravure in nature—basically just newsprint publications with covers containing minimal colors, and with interiors mainly in black-&-white.

Only the prime Captain Marvel/Fawcett titles were reprinted in Miller's early days. They were issued very haphazardly during the '40s, undoubtedly because there was still rationing in Britain and paper was hard to come by. These early Miller comics were unpriced, as they were designed to be sold by street traders or small corner shops, so a fixed price was not necessary. The early Miller-Fawcett reprints are extremely scarce, due to the poor-quality paper not surviving the passage of time, and the relatively low print runs. They are also difficult to quantify, because there are no records extant from this early period; hence no one can be sure exactly what was printed. (Because of this rarity, all L. Miller comics pre-1950 are in the Gerber 8/9/10 categories and, I suspect, all will be Gerber 10s, as they are rarely seen.)

For example, the L. Miller *Ibis the Invincible* comic showcased in this article is the only copy known to exist. This particular issue, circa 1948, partially reprints the contents of the original U.S. *Ibis the Invincible* #5 (Fall '46). The cover is slightly different, reflecting the removal of the cents price and U.S. issue numbering. The beauty of the Miller comics is their deviation from their U.S. counterpart covers, thus giving Fawcett collectors an alternative or "variant" cover to add to their collections.

Miller obviously had access to Fawcett's original cover proofs. As many collectors are aware, cover proof artwork tends to be slightly larger than the final product, and allows for a full bleed of the image. Due to their size, many Miller covers have "extra artwork" at the edges of the cover image. Some of the early-'50s Miller reprints were quite a bit larger than standard comic size... then they became the same dimensions as US comics... and were later reduced to be even smaller in size! It appeared that Miller used different printers, so the sizes of their comics often varied.

The covers were altered in Britain to insert the L. Miller name and new numbering, and to take into account the various differing comic sizes, yet in all cases the "expanded" artwork still retains a seamless look to it. L. Miller simply used the *entire* cover art on the proof. The "extra artwork" modification on the Miller covers presents even more appeal to the Fawcett aficionado.

## Into The 1950s

In June of 1950, undoubtedly as a result in an easing of wartime restrictions, L. Miller started a new series of monthly issues of Fawcett title reprints. This was the first regular series of books that was ongoing and had consecutive numbering. They mainly started from issue #50, so as to appear to be a long-standing magazine; consequently, any issue bearing "No. 50" is actually issue #1.

The comic size dimensions increased only for *The Marvel Family* and *Whiz Comics*. The other titles remained closer to U.S. comic sizes. The larger-sized *Whiz* and *Marvel Family* only lasted 20 issues each before reverting to a standard U.S. comic book size. These early issues were printed in France; hence the probable reason for their size disparity. Page numbers also were variable... 28-, 32-, and 36-page comics were printed, perhaps due to paper shortages at given times. Generally, the British versions had a smaller page count, and not all the stories from the U.S. Fawcett edition would be in the Miller British edition. This was another cover variation to the books, since at times a reader could see the name of a strip that had been dropped in the British version. It was all a bit unsystematic, and in some cases completely inaccurate.

The cover of L. Miller's *Whiz Comics* #50 (reprinting U.S. version #115, Nov. 1949), has Golden Arrow pictured in the circle at the top of the cover, but he does not actually appear in the comic. Also,





including *Spy Smasher*, *Don Winslow of the Navy*, *Lance O'Casey*, *Vic Torrey* and *His Flying Saucer*, and *Fawcett Movie Comic*. Today, many of these issues are extremely scarce.

The years 1950 to 1954 marked the peak of L. Miller/Fawcett production. The books sold well to a comics-starved population. The stories found within the U.S. reprint comics far surpassed the quality of the home-grown British comics, apart possibly from *Eagle*. British comics of this period fell into two genres: either humor or more serious, text-only comics with perhaps an odd comic strip or two.

Fawcett material did not have the field to itself. L. Miller had competition from other UK comic reprinters, notably Atlas Publishing, which had the rights to reprint Superman, Batman, and Superboy in similar black-&-white formats. That said, the era was still predominantly the Golden Age of UK Fawcett comics!

With a regular monthly distribution and a series of different titles, it was almost like being an American comic-reading kid in the

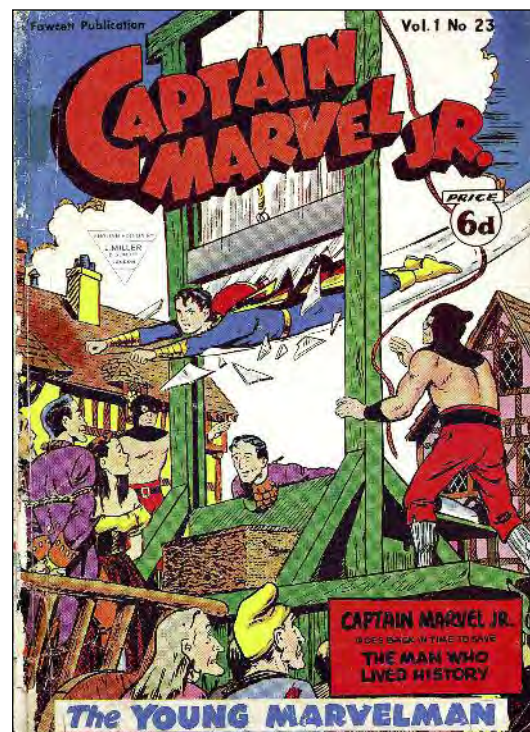
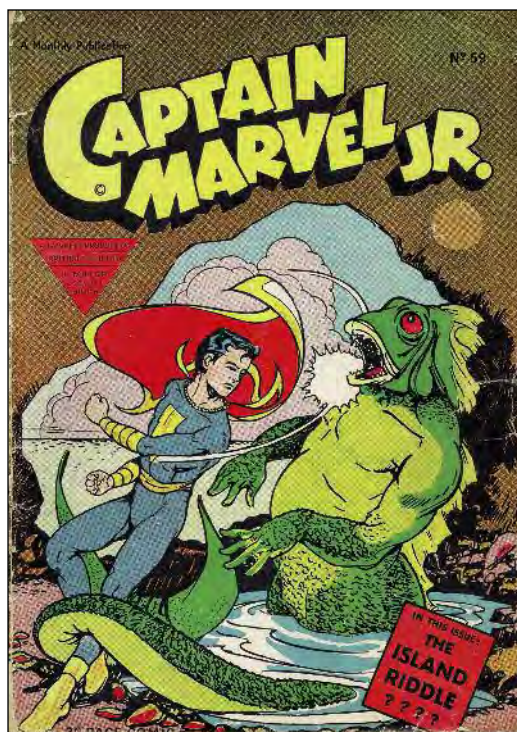
### Boot And Re-Boot

Miller's *Captain Marvel Adventures* #63 (reprinting Fawcett issue #119, April 1951) has complete C.C. Beck cover proof art; but the obvious difference from its U.S. counterpart is that it contains four instead of "5 Great Marvel Stories," due to the smaller page counts in the UK. A re-booted "Vol. 1" UK CMA series started in 1953, moving from monthly to a weekly comic. *CMA*, Vol. 1, #20 (reprinting material, including a Beck cover, from U.S. issue #71 (April 1947)), plowed back to earlier "Captain Marvel" stories from their deep inventory of Fawcett material. Interestingly, the Miller triangle logo removed "A Fawcett Production" from it. [Shazam hero & Mr Tawney TM & © DC Comics.]

this early photogravure copy has no price on its cover. Only one copy of this book is known to exist, so the Gerber 10 rating is not just confined to the earlier L. Miller issues.

The earliest L. Miller comics were priced at 3d in "old" British money (approximately 3¢), and the 1950s issues were priced at 6d (around 5¢). So, while cheaper than U.S. comics, the British books lacked properly printed glossy covers, had lower page counts, and, most importantly, had only black-&-white interiors (sometimes backed up by 2-color printing). They were not nearly as aesthetically pleasing as the U.S. originals, but they were all that was available.

The regular ongoing series of Fawcett material published by L. Miller from June 1950 onwards were *Captain Marvel*, *Captain Marvel Jr.*, *Whiz Comics*, *Master Comics*, *Nyoka the Jungle Girl*, *Captain Midnight*, and *The Marvel Family*. Various one-shots and short series were also released,



### Junior Achievement

The coloring on the Bud Thompson cover of UK *Captain Marvel Jr.* #59 (reprinting contents from U.S. issue #51, July 1947) differs from the American version, amongst several other curiosities. As with their *Captain Marvel* title, Miller's later issues of *CMJr* incorporated new "Vol. 1" numbering and a weekly frequency. *CMJr*, Vol. 1, #23 (material from U.S. issue #83, March 1950, with art by Kurt Schaffenberger), marks the very first time the name "Marvelman" was ever used... and a hint that a big change was on the horizon! [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]



UK! The exciting covers drew you in to excellent stories and superior artwork. The changes that L. Miller made to the books reflected either the contents or the perceived sensibilities of the respective audiences. The artwork on the covers may have often changed—sometimes quite dramatically—but that only gives the U.S. Fawcett collector something a bit different from the indigenous originals.

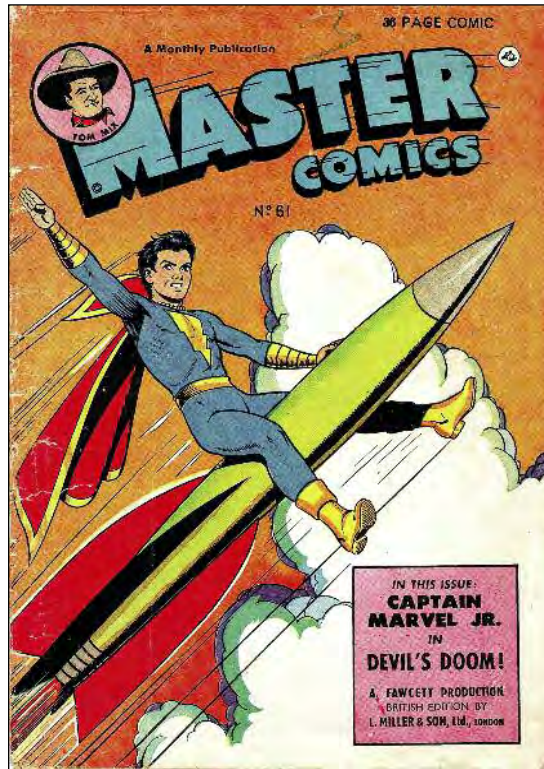
The “extra artwork” that appears around the edges of the L. Miller comics is not always so obvious if it's depicting the clouds in the sky or some such thing, but some covers do have more illustration to them beyond what appeared on the original proof covers. The printing plates were sent to L. Miller by Fawcett; the comics were issued much later in Britain, so any original U.S. print run had long since ceased. In many cases, the stories appeared in Britain several years after the original issue in America.

The Miller comics logo was an inverted triangle that normally stated “A Fawcett Production - English Edition by L. Miller and Son Ltd (Limited) London.” But the logo was subject to peculiar changes. In rare instances, “English Edition” was dropped for “British Edition.” Also, later issues drop the “& Son” from the L. Miller name once Arnold Miller had left the company. Sometimes the logo was just left out completely, probably by accident! Often the small original U.S. logo of “A Fawcett Publication” was left intact on the cover, so Fawcett got two mentions for the price of one! Once L. Miller started publishing material after the demise of Fawcett's comics line in the U.S., Fawcett's name vanished completely from the covers, even though it was Fawcett material that was being used. However, the Fawcett copyright line still remained on the lower part of the inside front covers.

## Some Faces In The Four-Color Crowd

Let's take a closer examination at some L. Miller comic books:

*The Marvel Family* #59 reprints U.S. issue #19 (Jan. 1948); Miller's version was published in 1951. This was a larger-sized comic, and what's quite noticeable is that the expanded cover art differs from the U.S. original, particularly the vapor trails of both Mary Marvel and Captain Marvel Jr. There's also added detail to Captain Marvel's boots, and there is more of the train on the lower left side. All of these aspects do not look as if they were simply added by L. Miller production staff members, but instead they all flow smoothly and continuously, and were thereby probably part of the



### Master Of Their Fate?

L. Miller's *Master Comics*, after an earlier brief trial run, was brought back in 1950 in a new series, with #50 as its first issue. UK *Master* #61 (reprinting from U.S. issue #120, Feb. 1951) was published in Britain just a few months after the Fawcett version appeared, which normally wasn't the case. *Master Comics* UK #81 (reprinting U.S. contents the final U.S. issue from #133, April 1953; art on both covers by Schaffenberg) had its “controversial” elements removed, as the anti-comics campaign swept its way over to Great Britain. Miller's *Master* endured until #140, even after its cover star Captain Marvel Jr. had split the scene in both the U.S. and the UK. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

original Fawcett cover proof.

A later L. Miller issue, #88—reprinting the U.S. issue of *The Marvel Family* #54 (Dec. 1950)—reveals on its cover more of the Earth's rings and Captain Marvel's boots and so on, even though this particular UK comic is the same size as the U.S. version, having reverted to standard comic book size by UK issue #70.

*Captain Marvel Adventures* (standard U.S. size throughout its run) #63 reprints the U.S. version of issue #119 (April 1951). Again, we see evidence of extra artwork from the cover proof, with Mr. Tawny having more of his shoulders depicted. The more obvious difference is that the US version proudly announces “5 Great Marvel Stories” inside whereas the smaller-page-count UK version has only four stories. There is considerable airbrushing done to the background, and the logo and additional text are all deleted on the UK version.

A new series of UK *Captain Marvel Adventures* was started in 1953. The series was doing so well for Miller, and they had such a large inventory of back issues to call on, that they changed CMA from a monthly to a *weekly* publication and re-numbered it to become Volume One. CMA, Vol. 1, #20, reprinted U.S. issue #71 (April 1947). This issue dug back to an earlier era of “CM” stories, revealing the unmethodical way these issues were put together, and showing the depth of material yet to be reprinted. The cover in this case is similar to the U.S. version, but there is more of the disc shown on right side and less of the left side artwork. The Miller triangle logo no longer has the “A Fawcett Production” line on it.

Similarly, the UK *Captain Marvel Jr.* #59—reprinting the original



U.S. #51 (July 1947)—has slightly more artwork to its cover, most noticeable on its left side. The U.S. 10¢ price has been airbrushed out, but someone forgot to add the UK 6d price to it. Curiously, this one has “British Edition” in the Miller triangle logo rather than “English Edition.” The coloring of this cover is also different from the original.

Again, as with CMA, later issues of *Captain Marvel Jr.* adopted the new weekly numbering system. *CM Jr.*, Vol. 1, #23 — reprinting U.S. issue #83 (March 1950)—went back to the “English Edition” line in the logo, but what is really significant about this cover is the descriptive line at the very bottom which reads: “The Young Marvelman!” This is the first time the Marvelman name was ever used. It was only seen again in the next issue, and then Captain Marvel Jr. vanished, just as Fawcett comics had done back in the U.S. [NOTE: See *Alter Ego* #7 for more about L. Miller’s *Marvel Family/Marvelman Family* transition. —PCH.]

*Master Comics* had two or three issues published before its main series started in 1950, again with #50 being the first issue. Miller *Master* #61, reprinting U.S. issue #120 (Feb. 1951), was published in Britain shortly thereafter. That was unusual, since many months would normally pass between U.S. and UK versions. The issue has the “A Fawcett Production” and “British Edition” lines. What’s noteworthy here is that all of Captain Marvel Junior’s cape is shown, whereas the US version crops off the end of it.

A greater cover-altering example is found on *Master Comics* UK issue #81—reprinting U.S. issue #133 (April 1953). Here we see the bats, the foreground cross, and the cover blurb all removed from the original U.S. version. I suspect this was due to increasing negativity surrounding horror-themed material in U.S. comics. We had our own version of *Seduction of the Innocent* here in the UK, prompted by the original American campaign. *Master Comics* did

not end with issue #81, as Miller had still a huge backlog of material waiting to be reprinted. The title lasted all the way to #140, although Captain Marvel Jr. was no longer along for the ride of its duration after he disappeared in the U.S.

Similarly, with UK issue #90 of *Whiz Comics*, Captain Marvel also vanished into thin air. In CM’s absence, all further UK issues had newly-created covers, or simply utilized interior splash pages as covers (as Miller did for UK *Whiz* issues 93 and 95, therefore having no U.S. cover equivalents). Miller’s *Whiz* survived until issue #130, featuring Fawcett second-stringers Ibis the Invincible, Lance O’Casey, Golden Arrow, and the new addition of non-*Whiz* alumnus Captain Midnight.

## From Captain Midnight— To L. Miller’s Midnight

Free from any troublesome legalities, Captain Midnight was an easier character for L. Miller to keep in print during the post-Captain Marvel years. The goggled hero had two or three issues published before his main series started in 1950. Miller seemingly delighted in never sticking with convention, and, for reasons unknown, the main *Captain Midnight* series began with issue #100.

UK *Captain Midnight* #105 reprints U.S. issue # 59 (Jan. 1948). The drawing of the outer smoke ring on right side of cover is completely rendered, unlike on the U.S. cover. But L. Miller would soon run out of U.S. covers to reproduce, as they obviously didn’t have access to as many of the U.S. cover plates as they did with Captain Marvel. Consequently, Miller’s staff artists started to produce their own covers.

The UK *Captain Midnight* #138 has no U.S. equivalent; therefore, a new cover was created, which was most likely drawn by chief

Marvelman artist Mick Anglo. At this stage there is no mention of Fawcett anywhere on the cover except for the copyright acknowledged on the inside front cover. The cover art was not related to any of the two “Captain Midnight” interior tales. They are backed up with a “Bulletman” story.

The UK run of this series of *Captain Midnight* concluded with the very next issue, #139. In 1962, Miller revived *Captain Midnight* for a short 12-issue run. All covers from that series were drawn by L. Miller staff artists in the UK. The artwork on these covers can only be best described as second-rate. The cover for UK *Captain Midnight* #6 from this series features Jagga the Space Raider. The Fawcett name is no longer found anywhere on the cover, and is not even found anymore

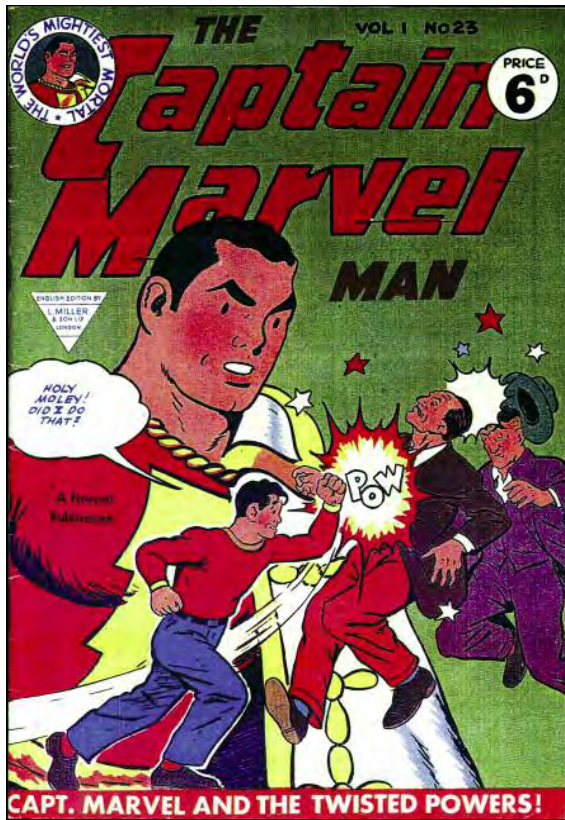


### The Whiz Second-Stringers

Captain Marvel had disappeared from Miller’s *Whiz Comics* beginning with UK issue #90. During the World’s Mightiest Mortal’s truancy, all further UK *Whiz* issues had newly-drawn covers, or else used interior splash pages as covers—the latter being the case re *Whiz* #s 93 & 95. *Whiz* UK stayed alive until #130, with stories of Ibis the Invincible, Lance O’Casey, Golden Arrow, and non-*Whiz* hero Captain Midnight. Artists uncertain. [TM & © the respective copyright holders.]



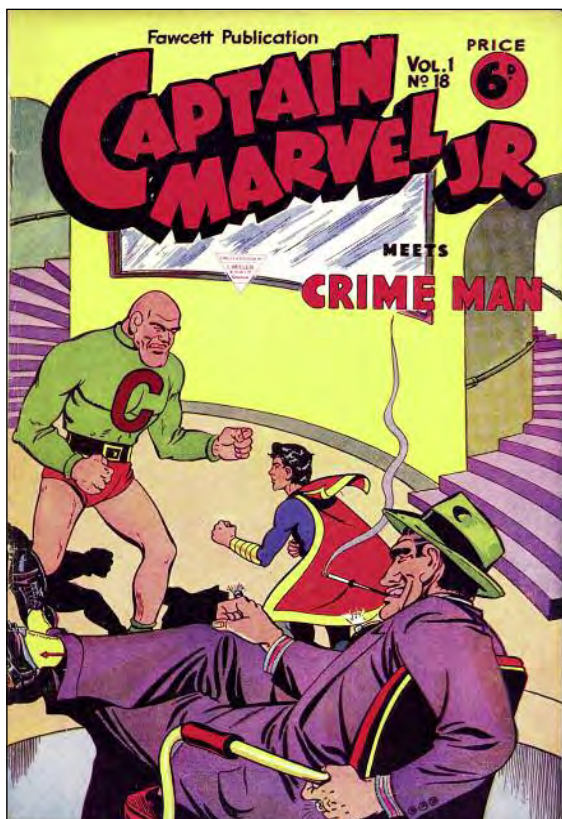
# All-Weekly British Wonders—Or Should We Say, Marvels!



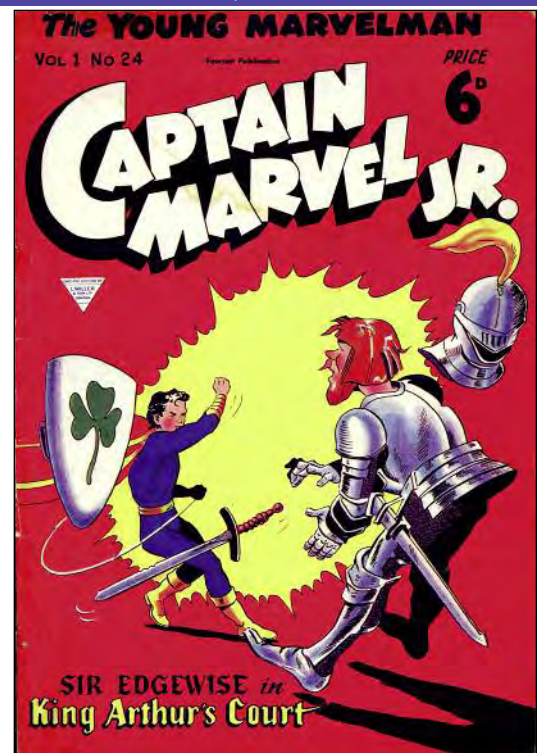
L. Miller *Captain Marvel* #18 (1953). Cover art by Beck & Costanza from U.S. *CMA* #50 (Dec. 1945) was used under the subtly hinting title "The CAPTAIN MARVEL Man."



L. Miller *Captain Marvel* #24 (1954). "Captain Marvel the Marvelman!" This one utilizes interior Costanza art from U.S. *CMA* #89 (Oct. 1948), altered by British artists, to hint at the imminent debut of L. Miller's own *Marvelman*.



L. Miller *Captain Marvel Jr.* #18 (1953). Joe Certa splash page art from U.S. *CMJ* #80 (Dec. 1949) utilized for a new cover.



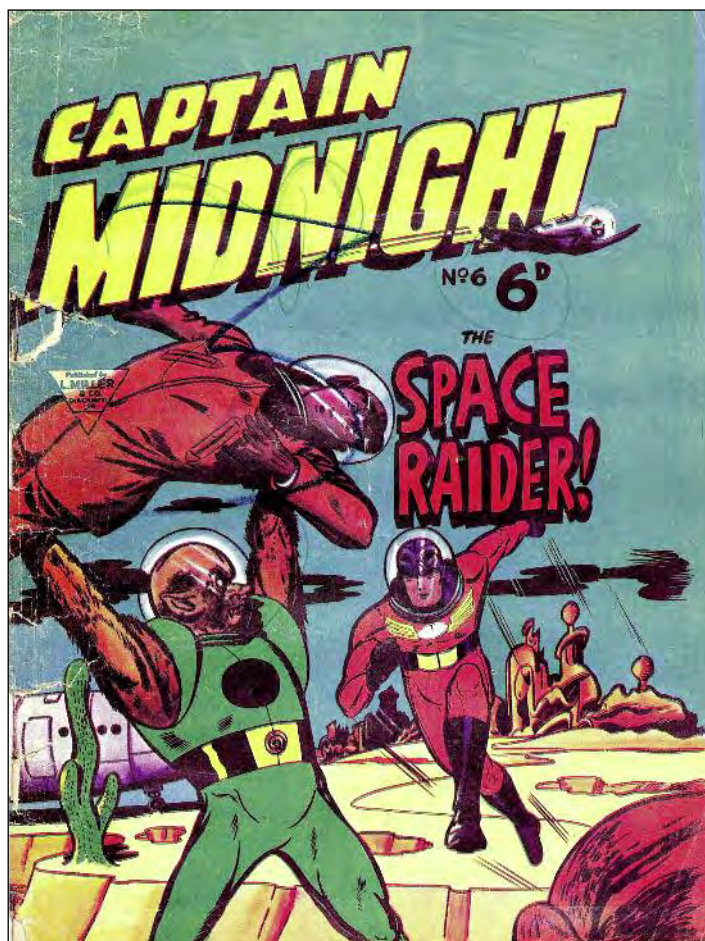
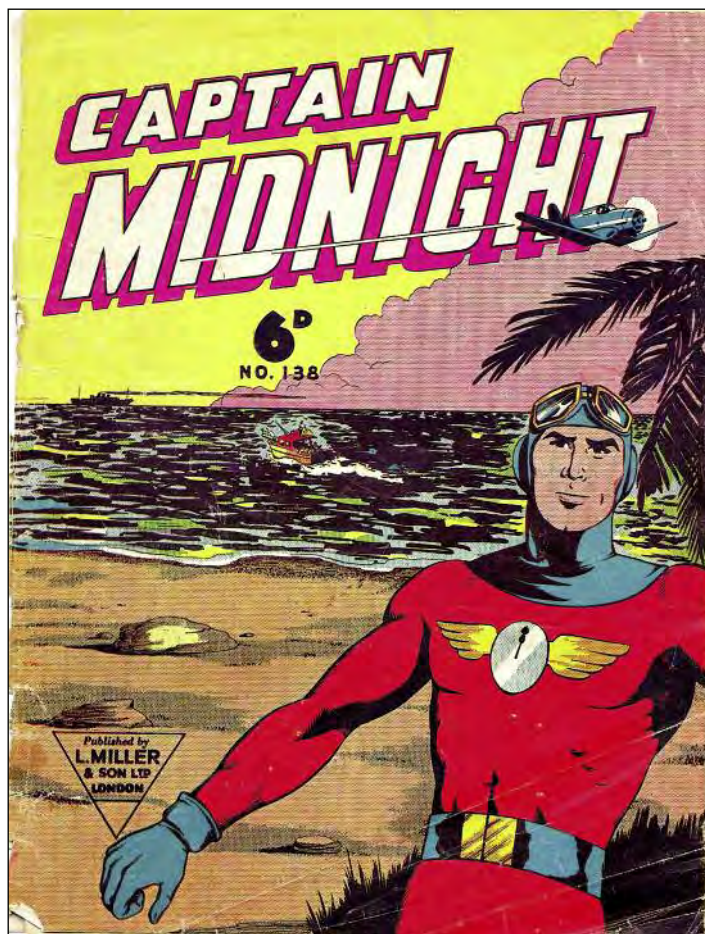
L. Miller *Captain Marvel Jr.* #24 (1954). "The Young Marvelman!" New cover utilizes art by Bud Thompson from U.S. *CMJ* #114 (Oct. '52). Final issue before the "conversion" to Young Marvelman. Time for a 12-issue run with new covers; shown above right is #6 from the brief series, with a cover drawn by an unknown British artist, perhaps using Bud Thompson elements. [All Shazam heroes on this page TM & © DC Comics.]





#### London At Midnight

UK *Captain Midnight* #105, with reprints from U.S. issue #59 (Jan. 1948), proffers "additional" Leonard Frank artwork beyond the U.S. version, which was cut off at the right side of the American edition... but L. Miller would eventually exhaust all the *Captain Midnight* cover proofs in their Fawcett inventory, after which they'd have to create their own new covers—as they did for UK *Captain Midnight* #138, with art attributed to Marvelman illustrator Mick Anglo. This cover art was unrelated to any of the issue's contents (which also included a "Bulletman" tale). The UK *Captain Midnight* series ran until #139. In 1962, Miller revived that hero one last time for a 12-issue run with new covers; shown at bottom right is #6 from the brief series, with a cover utilizing interior art by regular U.S. artist Leonard Frank. [Captain Midnight TM & © the respective copyright holders.]



in the small copyright line on the inside front cover. Instead, the line reads: "Copyright of L. Miller with the agreement of American Publishers USA."

By the 1960s, imports of genuine full-color U.S. comics had become commonplace in Britain. There was no longer a market—or desire—for the cheaper black-&-white UK issues, and Len Miller eventually called it a day. DC and Marvel were now the big shows in town. Nevertheless, L. Miller had entertained British comics readers and helped them get through the '50s with at least a glimpse of what was available Stateside.



*Gerald Edwards, a longtime DC comics fan living in Britain, discovered that homegrown comic books were much more of a challenge to find than were the original U.S. comics. He also delves for sci-fi toys, particularly from the 1950s.*





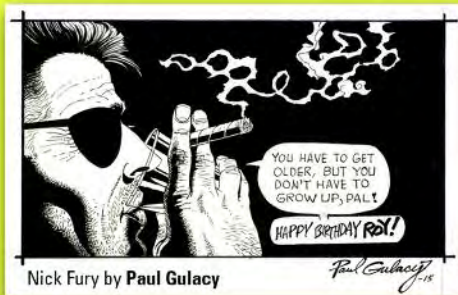
# LO, THERE SHALL BE AN ENDING!

TO CELEBRATE ROY THOMAS' 75<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY, AND 50<sup>TH</sup> YEAR IN COMICS, THE TWOMORROWS FAMILY SECRETLY ENLISTED SOME OF COMICS' BEST AND BRIGHTEST, TO CREATE THE ULTIMATE "JAM" DRAWING OF ROY'S HEROES, ALL RUSHING TO ATTEND THE RASCALLY ONE'S SHINDIG. UNBEKNOWNST TO ROY, INTERLOCKING SECTIONS APPEARED IN ALTER EGO #136, THEN ON TO BACK ISSUE #85, COMIC BOOK CREATOR #10, THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR #66, AND BRICKJOURNAL #37 (WITH A KEY TO THE ARTISTS INVOLVED IN DRAW! #31)! BUT LITTLE DID WE KNOW THAT, ONCE WE GOT TO THE BIG PARTY, A CERTAIN GAMMA-RADIATED BOUNCER WOULDN'T LET US IN! SO TURN THE PAGE AND SEE WHAT THE FUSS IS ABOUT!



"ROY CAME UP TO THE OFFICE AND I SAID, 'WHAT'S A KID LIKE YOU DOING UP HERE?' I FOUND OUT HE WAS A WRITER AND I LIKED HIM, AND AWAY WE WENT. HE WAS A GREAT GUY. HE COULD WRITE, HE COULD EDIT, AND HE DID EVERYTHING WELL. ROY HAS HELPED ME OUT WITH JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING. HE'S BEEN THE MOST VALUABLE GUY YOU COULD EVER WORK WITH. NOW THAT THE FIRST 75 YEARS ARE THROUGH, HE CAN REALLY GET SERIOUS AS A MATURE MAN AND DO SOME GROWN-UP WORK! TO ME, HE'LL ALWAYS BE ROY THE BOY!"

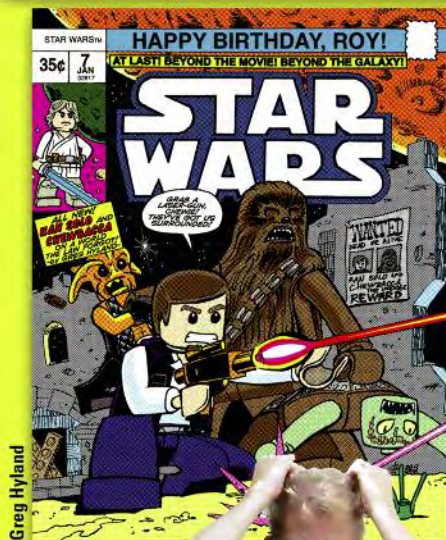
*Stan Lee*



Nick Fury by Paul Gulacy



Nick Fury, Ant-Man, Hulk TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.  
King Kull TM & © REH Estate.  
Star Wars TM & © Lucasfilm, Ltd.



Greg Hyland



Left to right:  
Jon B. Cooke,  
Pamela Morrow,  
John Morrow,  
Shane Foley,  
P.C. Hamerlinck (jumping),  
Michael T. Gilbert (sitting),  
Eric Nolen-Weathington,  
Bill Schelly (pointing),  
and Chris Day (pleading).  
The Immovable Hulk by  
Shane Foley with  
colors by Randy Sargent.



From the King and his All Star pals:  
**HAPPY 75TH BIRTHDAY,**  
**ROY THOMAS!**

Thank you. Thank you very much.



Have an awesome  
celebration, R.T... And please  
accept our gratitude and appreciation  
for all that you do in the name of comics!

— your friends in funnybooks

HAPPY BIRTHDAY-  
ROY

JOHN  
ROMITA

CONGRATULATIONS  
AND HAPPY BIRTHDAY,  
ROY THOMAS!  
BECAUSE YOU GAVE  
A GIRL A CHANCE,  
A FAIR-HAired  
ELF BOY GOT HIS  
CHANCE!  
MANY HAPPY  
RETURNS!  
WENDY  
2015 PINI

Elvis Presley by  
Mitch O'Connell  
All Star crew by  
Shane Foley  
with colors by  
Randy Sargent  
Logotype by  
Todd Klein

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