

DRAW!



#28

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The professional "HOW-TO" magazine on
comics, cartooning and animation

FAREL DALRYMPLE

MAKING A
PROPHET



PRODUCER AND
STORYBOARD ARTIST

DAVE BULLOCK

REGULAR COLUMNISTS

**JERRY OROWAY &
JAMAR NICHOLAS**

PLUS! MIKE MANLEY
AND BRET BLEVINS'

COMIC ART BOOTCAMP



DRAW!

THE PROFESSIONAL
"HOW-TO" MAGAZINE ON
COMICS & CARTOONING

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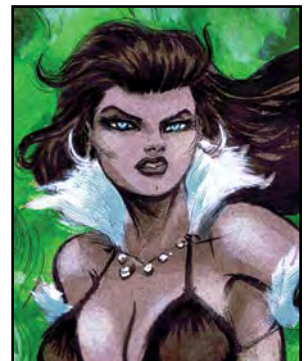
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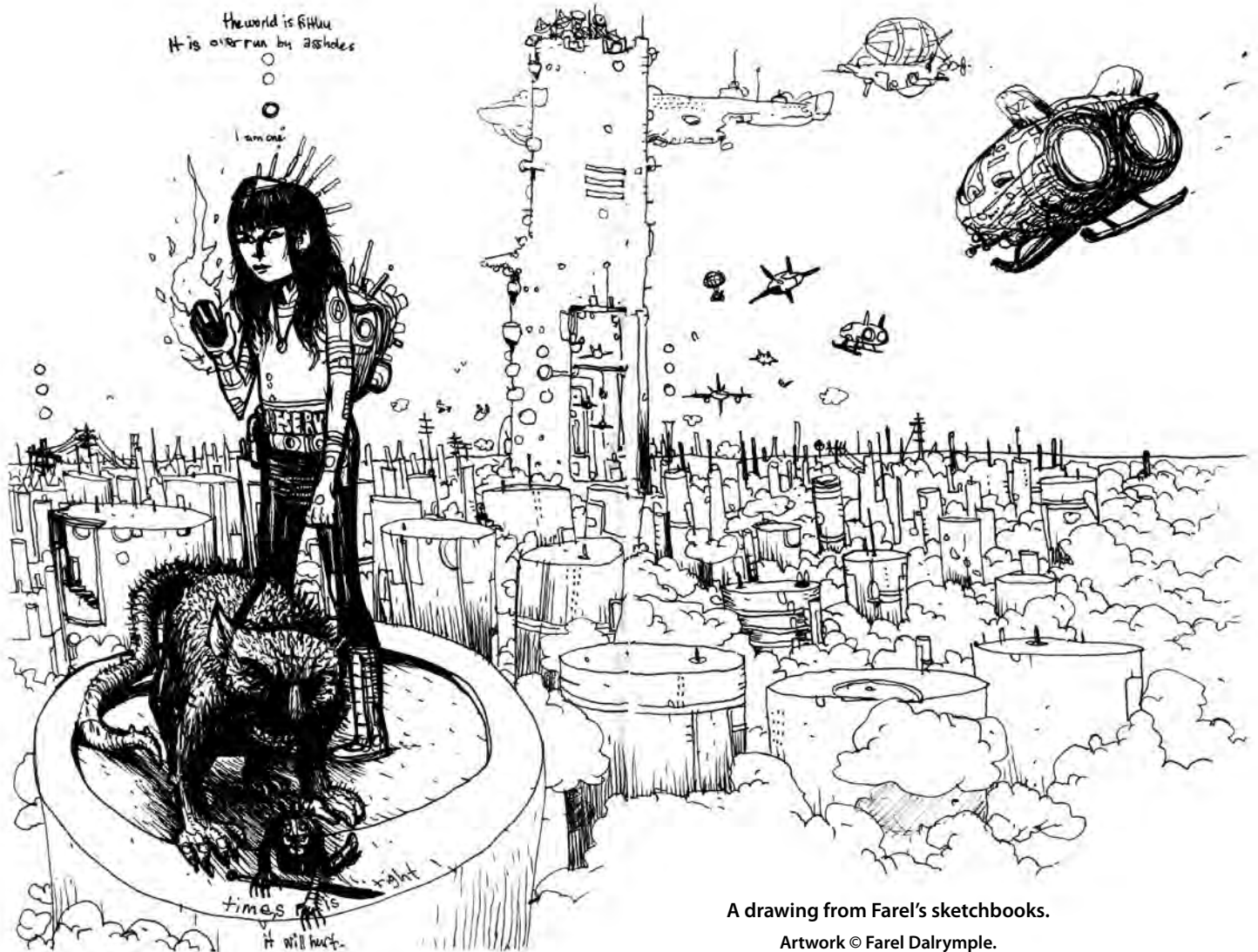
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COMIC ART BOOTCAMP

This month's installment:
In with the In Crowd: Drawing Multiple Figures



AGAIN AND AGAIN THE TERR



A drawing from Farel's sketchbooks.

Artwork © Farel Dalrymple.

DRAW!: You've been pretty busy.

FAREL DALRYMPLE: Oh yeah. [laughs]

DRAW!: You finished up *The Wrenchies* just a few months ago, and *Delusional* came out recently. Let's talk about *Delusional* first. What went into your editing process? How did you decide what to include and what to leave out, and how did it come about in the first place?

FD: The book came about because Chris Pitzer from AdHouse contacted me. I had done some stuff for some of his books, like *Project: Superior*, and he just asked me if I was interested in doing a book with him. I had been thinking about doing a collection of sketchbook stuff and/or a comic book collection of all the anthology work I've done over the years, so I told him, "Well, I want to do this, and I want to do this." He was like, "Why don't we just do them together?" so I gave him pretty much everything I had. [laughter] I think it was around 500 pages, and I laid each page out sort of how I wanted it. He sent me back some PDFs of the design he did on it. A lot of things he blew up or repositioned; he added tones to certain pages. Since I was trying to finish up *Wrenchies*, I asked him to do all that stuff. [laughs]

It was a lot of work for him. We went back and forth a couple of times. The book comes out at a little over 200 pages,

so half the stuff I gave him, he didn't use. I think most of that was sketchbook stuff. I think most of the comic stories I gave him, he used. A lot of the sketchbook material ended up on the cutting room floor.

DRAW!: So he took over most of that process, and you were mostly just approving his designs as things went along.

FD: Yeah. I gave him all the pages formatted, but he did all the design. He's good at that sort of thing. [laughter] Generally I like doing my own design on things like that—or at least making it look more like me—but it was kind of a mish-mash of art, and I really like the work that he did. He always produces really good books. He did James Jean's art books, Paul Pope's, Sterling Hundley's—I really like the way that book looks. I figured he knows what he's doing, [laughter] and I had other things to worry about. That's what he does for a living, [laughs] so I trusted him and I was really happy with the results. It's kind of neat just giving someone some artwork and seeing what they come up with. I mean, we went back and forth a lot on things, so he didn't surprise me with anything.

DRAW!: Was there anything you wanted to get in the book that didn't make the cut?

have it on glossy paper.” But other than that, they let him do pretty much what he wanted, and it might have even gone over budget. But they haven’t done a paperback collection. You said it was critically acclaimed, but at the time it was coming out, I didn’t really hear much about it at all from anybody, including Marvel. [laughter] Considering the writer is a *New York Times* bestselling author—I’m not trying to slag Marvel, because I appreciate them, but I felt like they dropped the ball on promoting it. Maybe that’s just sour grapes on my part. [laughter]

After the collection came out—maybe even a couple of years after—I started to get a lot of positive response to it, which was really weird. I mean, it was cool, I like the job I did on it, and I’m glad I got to work with Jonathan, but it was a couple of years later that I heard, “Hey, I meant to tell you, I really liked *Omega the Unknown*.” “Okay, cool, thanks. A couple of years after the fact, but thanks.” [laughter] At the time I was doing it, people were telling me, “This is going to change your life.” Maybe it did. Maybe that’s why First Second picked up *The Wrenchies*. “Oh, this guy’s doing work for Marvel. Let’s give him a book.” I don’t know, but no one said that. It wasn’t ever spelled out for me like, “Now that you’re doing *Omega*, your life is changing.” [laughs] It was cool getting to do it. I was and still am a fan of Jonathan, so it was awesome getting to work with him. And it was neat to fulfill a childhood fantasy of doing a series, even a limited series, for Marvel.

I feel like people really didn’t know what to make of that book, because it had an indie vibe to it, but it was still Marvel.

DRAW!: It came out after *Fantastic Four: Unstable Molecules*, right? So Marvel had already done something with a similar tone.

FD: Guy Davis drew that, right?

DRAW!: He penciled and inked from James Sturm’s layouts.

FD: Craig Thompson did the covers, and he was supposed to be the artist on that.

DRAW!: Yeah, he bowed out to work on *Blankets*.

FD: That was a cool series. That was even more subdued than *Omega*. We actually had fight scenes and action. [laughter]

DRAW!: We’ve brought up Brandon Graham a couple of times already, and *Prophet* has a pretty strong following.

FD: Yeah, I feel like that is the most mainstream thing I’ve done in a way. I don’t know if it’s just the strength of Brandon Graham’s rep in comics, but I’ve gotten more feedback from those two issues of *Prophet* I’ve done than almost anything else I’ve done in comics—even my own work. It’s been good exposure. And they were fun to do too. I like working with Brandon, and I love science fiction. It’s pretty much Conan in space, and I like drawing space barbarians. [laughter]

DRAW!: I’ve mentioned this to you before, but the book seems like it belongs to you guys—you and Brandon and Simon Roy and Giannis Milanogiannis—more so than it does Rob Liefeld. It doesn’t feel like you’re doing a work-for-hire job.



A finished panel from *The Wrenchies*.

The Wrenchies © Farel Dalrymple



THE RIGHT way, THE WRONG way, and THE ORDWAY!

**THE POWER OF WRITING
and DRAWING SHAZAM!**

by
JERRY ORDWAY

In this installment, I want to show the steps I followed in bringing an issue of the *Power of Shazam!* from start to finish. A little back story will be helpful for any readers not familiar with my past work as a writer-artist. One of my most enjoyable projects for comics was re-introducing the original Captain Marvel to DC comics readers. I created a fully painted 96-page origin story, *The Power of Shazam!*, which was published both in hardcover and softcover. A year later, I helped launch a new monthly series, as writer and cover painter, with artists Peter Krause and Mike Manley. With issue #42, I took over as penciler, in addition to my writing and cover painting chores.

With any comic, you start with a script. At the time, the most popular method was to write a detailed outline, or plot, which gave the artist the ability to lay out each page to his own liking. The writer would then customize his or her dialogue (the word balloons) to the artwork provided by the penciler. In the situation on *Shazam*, being the artist as well as writer, I could get away with writing a barebones outline. As you can see from the sample pages of plot, I described enough for the editor, Mike Carlin, to know what was going to happen in the issue. We had previously discussed the direction for the whole year's worth of stories, so none of this happened in a vacuum. For this particular issue, the plot was written a few months before I was ready to draw it.

FAX TO MIKE CARLIN, DC COMICS EDITORIAL (4) PAGES

POWER OF SHAZAM #42 / PLOT FOR 22 PAGES/ORDSTER/2-98/PAGE#1

Title:

PAGE 1: Splash page, Cap Marvel leaps at guy who's running out of scene.

PAGE 2: Cap nails the guy with a flying tackle, and we see guy is wired up with a bomb on his chest! "The president has to die! It's His fault!" We pull back to set the scene here--President, and some local officials are dedicating a quickie memorial to Fairfield, decimated in Atomic blast. Repoters abound, and we see Mary Marvel shielding the Prez with her body, as Cap grabs the guy and takes to the air! "He was philandering while Fairfield was bombed! My Sister and her family-- all dead because of him!" Cap says, "Look-- I grabbed you so the secret service couldn't just outright SHOOT you-- I know your pain, pal. I've been there."

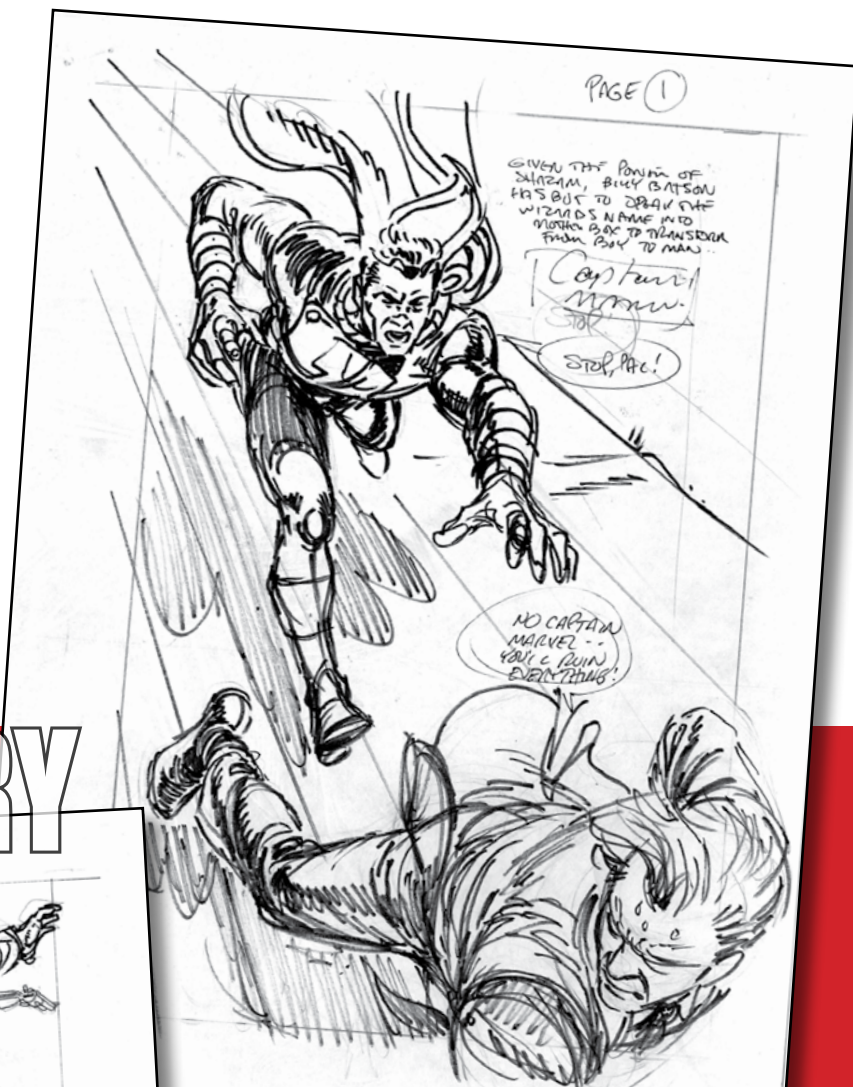
PAGE 3: Cap strips device off guy, and tosses it high in the sky, where it explodes harmlessly. They land, and Cap puts a hand up to ward of Agents, "He needs psychiatric care-- counseling--not strongarm business. Cameras take it all in, and the Pres does the Statesman-like thing of putting an arm on guys shoulder, "We all feel your loss. I lost some friends--former Yale classmates, who lived here. That's what this memorial is all about." Mary is surprised at Prez's compassion.

Page 4: Prez pulls sheet off the giant marble slab, which bears an inscription "In memory of" along with names of thousands who died here. Photo op time. Big shot of Pres, Mary, Cap, and the distraught guy. Last panel, we see Freddy Freeman in crowd, leaning on a crutch.

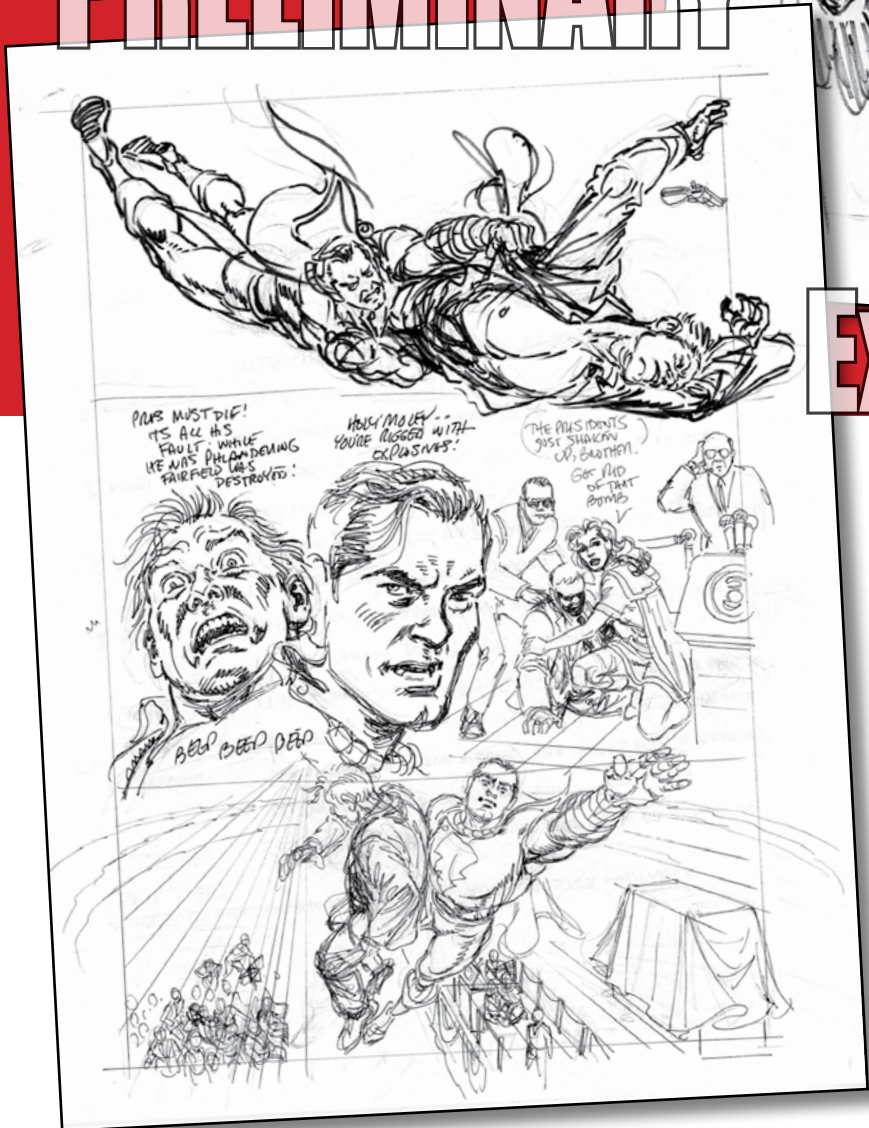
Page 5: Cap gestures to Freddy to join them on the podium, and Freddy says, "Captain Marvel," and as people turn, they see CM3! CM3 is pulled up by Mary, "Glad you could be here. It means a lot."

Page 6: Prez speaks, of tyranny and the like, and presents plaques to the Marvels. While they decide what to do with land that was Fairfield, the memorial will remind people passing on the highways of the country's great loss! Pres shakes Mary's hand, Photog snaps picture.

The time gap from my writing the outline until the start of drawing was helpful because it gave me the time to chew over the story beats and allowed me to second-guess what I'd written earlier. In drawing the layouts, I formulated the dialogue while I sketched. On the first two pages, I drew them at around 6" x 8" size, each on the clean side of a sheet of reused copy paper. I used a hard lead in my mechanical pencil, and scribbled in the shapes and forms loosely, creating a mess of lines in graphite. Once the motion of the scene looks right to me, I will "ink" the scribbles, picking out the shapes with a Sharpie permanent marker, or a fine-tipped Pentel marker for smaller details. Working with the markers allows me to be quite messy with my pencil, and refine the drawing in ink. Then I erase the graphite, leaving a relatively clean image to photocopy. Marker also insures that the lines you draw will be dark enough to show through when you put the photocopy under the sheet of two-ply Strathmore paper on the lightbox.



PRELIMINARY



EXAMINATION

Pages 3 to 22 were drawn smaller, with two prelim pages per sheet of paper. My only reason for doing so was to force myself to complete the layouts faster. I don't know why it works for me, but I could do two pages on one sheet in the same time I was drawing one larger prelim on a whole sheet. The larger layout size had me drawing tighter prelims, which made the enlarging and tracing a bit more monotonous.

For this monthly comic to be completed, I had to lay out the whole book in under a week, which left me about two weeks to pencil the pages onto the actual comic paper. Next I had to type up all the dialogue and captions, and mark up where the balloons fit, on accompanying copies of the pages. These were sent to the editor, who then sent them on to the letterer, John Costanza. Oh, and somewhere within that month I also had to reserve time in which to paint the cover and write another issue's plot! The deadline was tight.



DAVE BULLOCK

*Interview conducted by Mike Manley
and transcribed by Jon Knutson*

DRAW!: What are you up to these days? I think the last time we talked was when we worked on *New Frontier*, and then you were working on *He-Man*—the new-new *He-Man*.

DAVE BULLOCK: Well, we worked together in 2008 on *JLA: New Frontier* but last saw each other around 2000 when I was helping out on the *He-Man* series. He's on his way back again I think.

DRAW!: So every ten years they dust off Castle Greyskull, and a new generation of kids get to....

DB: Well, they're selling toys like crazy, I know. I've got a few of the new toys, so maybe it'll be back with a new cartoon. We'll have to wait and see, I guess.

DRAW!: And you worked on the adaptation of *The New Frontier*.

DB: That's right. I directed the toon adaptation of Darwyn [Cooke]'s great comic.

DRAW!: And then you did work on *Transformers*, or am I misremembering that?

DB: Yes, I was on for the full run of *Transformers: Prime*, probably about five years or so, maybe even six I was with

Hasbro. They've come out with something new... I don't know if they've announced it yet. I know there's a new series, but I don't know if they've mentioned the name of it publicly yet. But I've wrapped up with Hasbro, and now I'm doing some work for Valiant, and I'm helping out on a couple of little side projects that are pretty cool.

DRAW!: Valiant—you mean the comic book company?

DB: Yeah, I've mostly been doing some covers with them, but I've just started on an eight-pager with those guys.

DRAW!: Let's go back to the beginning. We actually worked on a lot of the original *Batman* toons back at Warner Brothers, and the one I remember specifically, was it "Heart of Ice"?

DB: You were probably there before me. I was there doing some *Superman* shows.

DRAW!: Bret Blevins and I started on the same show, *Superman*, which was the Lobo two-parter.

DB: Yeah, you guys were there probably three months prior to me getting on board.

DRAW!: Where were you before that?

DB: I was in college! [laughter]

DRAW!: Oh, really?

DB: Yeah, I was in college... You know what? I had actually done some work on the Fox *Spider-Man* cartoon. So I did put some time in on production, probably about a year prior to making the move over to WB. I had grown up a huge Superman fan, and when I saw a couple of images where WB was putting together a new *Superman* series, I figured I'd try to get involved. It was all about Clark Kent, and his story there. So yes, I went over to WB, and came in on a crazy episode with a demon called Karkhal.

DRAW!: Yeah, I remember that.

DB: You and I were on Dan Riba's unit. I remember seeing you had done some really fun stuff with the demons flying around the *Daily Planet* there.

DRAW!: That was the show where a demon was turning people into other demons, or something like that?

DB: Right, and you had a great Lois Lane demon.

DRAW!: I enjoyed working on *Superman*. That's actually when it seemed like the pressure was kicking up, and things were changing in the landscape of television cartoons.

DB: Right, and I didn't know any better, because I hadn't been in it for too long, but that's when cable started to really open up, and WB launched their own network. But I can tell you from my point of view, the explosions got bigger, and Lois' skirt got shorter. [laughter]

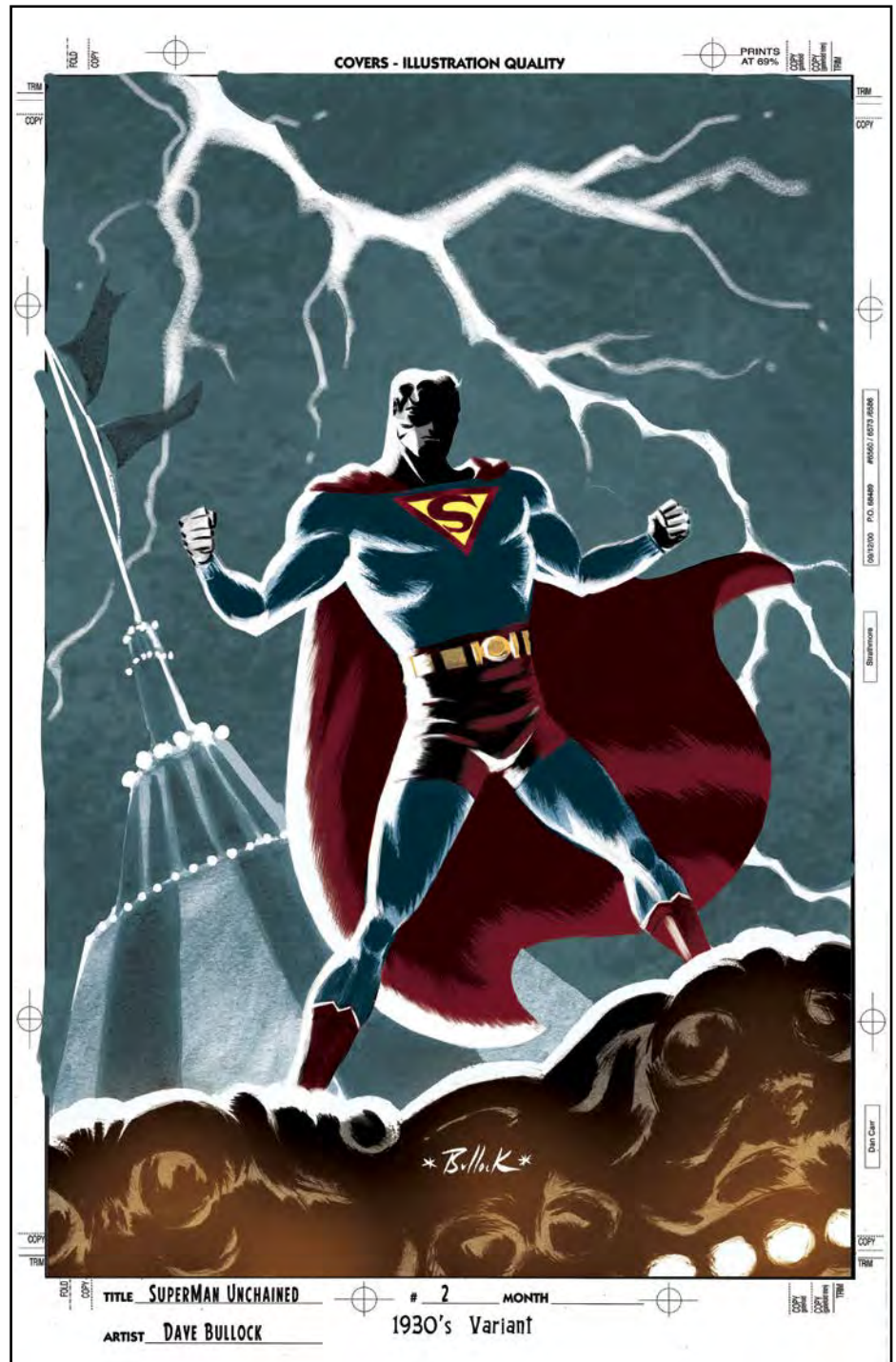
DRAW!: It wasn't too long after that that Saban got out of making the stuff, and everything really changed.

DB: The *Lion King* movie really blew up big, and opened up a lot of the animation. There was a lot more starting to happen. I guess that was the mid-'90s, about '96.

DRAW!: Yes, because I came on in '99. I was still working for DC, inking *Power of Shazam!*, which was the last monthly comic book regular series that I did, and I stayed on that while I started doing the boards. When the boards worked out, I stopped doing the regular comic books.

DB: Looking back, did you miss having your name directly on the front of the material as a comic book artist? I guess there are pros and cons to both, being a storyboard artist and a comic artist.

DRAW!: It's funny, because so many people I know in comics want to work in animation, and almost everybody I know in animation wants to do comics, so there's a real cross-feed back and forth. I think I was so burnt out on comics in a way that coming into animation was like a new territory, and I was very excited to do that. It didn't seem to matter to me that my name wasn't going to be out front. You still got your name on the credits as being the storyboard guy. Now, when you watch a show, they shove the credits over to the side and run them really super-fast so nobody can really read the credits anymore!



Dave revisits his Superman roots with a variant cover for *Superman Unchained* #2.

Superman © DC Comics

IN WITH THE IN CROWD



BY MIKE MANLEY AND BRET BLEVINS

Figurative artists—especially cartoonists, animators, and illustrators—in pursuit of their work constantly face a wide variety of challenges when creating visual narratives such as illustrations, comics strips, storyboards, and comic pages which depict the human figure in various scenarios.

Composing pictures with even one or two figures can tax an artist's compositional skills in getting the pose right, looking for a good angle, or choosing something that's dynamic and visually interesting but also clear. The more complex the image, the more the artist has to pay attention to compositional issues such as being careful to avoid tangents.

When you add multiple figures—let's say four or more figures—into a scene or a single composition, then things can become complicated very fast. The complexity of the composition and the primary issue of strong and clear staging of the figures for good storytelling in the scene then takes extra work and planning to make the composition and staging both clear as well as interesting.

Artists have wrestled with multiple figure compositions for hundreds, even thousands of years. With the invention of perspective in the Renaissance in the 14th century, artists were able to create pictures with the visual depth and complexity of real life and had a greater ability to make more realistic and illusionistic space.

Multiple figure compositions have been with us since the beginning of visual art by humans, for they were seen in the cave drawings by our ancestors featuring hunters and their prey they hunted, animals that were important to them and their survival. These were mankind's first stories. When we jump 20,000 years to Michelangelo's great Sistine Chapel, we find another grand example of dynamic multiple-figure compositions telling stories of God and man and stories from the Bible and history.

Michelangelo had the entire ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to play with his figures, but we humble cartoonists and illus-

trators have a less grand canvas to play with, yet we still deal with the same issues of multiple figures in space as well as Gods of Thunder and figures of great ability. Team books—comics filled with teams of battling heroes—is a standard. *X-Men*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Justice League* are just a few examples of comics that have a lot of panels and pages featuring multiple characters fighting and battling each other.

Some artists seem to revel in this type of comic. Jack Kirby, George Pérez, John Byrne, and John Buscema handled these types of comics with multiple-figure action well. But these types of comics can be a lot of hard work and the complexity of the compositions can trip up the artist as a result.

In dealing with comics or illustrated stories that have many figures, you must work a lot harder at the layout stage. The type of script—full script or plot—also makes a difference in the amount of space the dialogue will take up. If it's a full script then right away the artist knows who is speaking and how much room the dialogue will take up. If it's a plot to be scripted later, that means the artist must plan spaces into the composition to allow multiple characters' dialogue to be scripted later by the writer.

Whether it's a scene in a bar, the cabin of a starship, the hero's secret hideout, or a restaurant, in team books we often have scenes with multiple characters sitting in non-action poses, talking away to reveal a plot or story points. Interior scenes with a group of characters are a bit more difficult due to the fact that you do not have the visual motion of characters moving in dynamic poses in the compositions, and often the interiors are smaller in nature, such as a kitchen table, so they are not always in spectacular settings.

Then there are the battle scenes featuring multiple characters in grand landscapes fighting it out with each other. While these scenes offer the artist many opportunities to give the reader wild moments and spectacle, they also tend to be extremely complicated when trying to make everything not only clear but dynamic.