

CONWAY INTERVIEW • TV SPIDEY • CLONE SAGA • and MUCH MORE!

BACKISSUE!

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SPIDER-MAN®

IN THE BRONZE AGE!



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**Celebrating
the Best
Comics of
the '70s,
'80s, and Beyond!**

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Detail from John Romita, Sr.'s original art to the back cover of the 1974 Spider-Man Marvel Treasury Edition. Courtesy of Anthony Snyder. © 2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.

SPIDER-MAN®

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CLONE SAGA

BY Keith Veronese



The Clone Saga has its origins in *Amazing Spider-Man* #142 (Mar. 1975), written by Gerry Conway, an issue featuring the return of a female looking remarkably like the recently deceased Gwen Stacy. This led to a six-month storyline that proved the Gwen Stacy look-alike to be a clone created through a misplaced act of love by the Jackal, also known as Miles Warren, Gwen and Peter's Biology professor at Empire State University. The first clone storyline ended with the Jackal forcing Peter Parker to fight a clone of himself in *Amazing Spider-Man* #149 (Oct. 1975). To learn more about the early days of the Clone Saga, I talked with Conway about the original 1970s storyline.

Pro 2 Pro
roundtable

— Keith Veronese

KEITH VERONESE: *Why did you choose to bring back Gwen Stacy after she was killed in *Amazing Spider-Man* #121 (June 1973)?*

GERRY CONWAY: That was in response to a demand by Stan Lee. Stan was doing appearances at colleges and was being pummeled by some fans for the death of Gwen Stacy. Instead of saying, "This is just a story, we're happy with how it turned out," he said, "Oh, no, it was a terrible mistake, I wasn't in the room when they decided what they were doing, I was out of town on vacation," and so on. So he told us we had to bring her back. And we said, "Stan, it's not like she went missing. [laughs] She's dead, and there is no way we could legitimately bring her back." And if we did bring her back, the fans would be very upset, because we made it very clear that she was dead. And Stan said, "I don't care what you do, I don't care how long you bring her back for, she has to come back."

So, after dealing with some in-house humor about that (Steve Gerber said we should bring her back in a backup story and call her "Grave House Gwen"), we decided to bring her back as a clone, and not as Gwen Stacy, and actually deal with the fact that this was not the Gwen that Peter had mourned. And that was the basic impetus for the whole thing. It wasn't a creative decision *per se*, as it was a fiat handed down by Stan Lee.

VERONESE: *One thing I liked during your tenure on *Amazing Spider-Man* was that in the absence of Gwen Stacy you were able to bring Mary Jane to the forefront.*

CONWAY: That was the intention. That's why I decided to kill off Gwen in the first place. I preferred Mary Jane as a character and as a love interest to Peter.

VERONESE: *How did the Spider-Clone come into all of this? As of *Amazing Spider-Man* #142, there is Gwen Stacy Clone and the Jackal, and then seven issues later we have the Jackal staging a fight between the Spider-Clone and Spider-Man in Shea Stadium.*

CONWAY: One of the things I was trying to do at that time was take ideas to their logical, yet absurd conclusion, *reductio ad absurdum*. The idea there was that if we have Gwen Stacy brought back as a clone, how can I up the stakes when I get rid of her? When I write her out of the book, what can I do to make that really effective and to punctuate it, to bring it to the next level? And I thought, if we can clone Gwen, we can certainly clone Peter. I was also at that time enamored with titles that played off of old, melodramatic Stan Lee titles of the past. I did

There Goes the Spider-Clone!

A pinup of the Scarlet Spider kindly created for this article by *Web of Spider-Man* penciler Steven Butler.

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Clone Clashes

(left) Jackal taunts Spidey with the Gwen clone on this original-art page from *Amazing Spider-Man* #147 (Aug. 1975), by Andru and Esposito. Courtesy of Heritage Comics Auctions. (right) Spidey vs. the clone on the Kane/ Giacoia cover to #149.

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"My Uncle, My Enemy" (*Amazing Spider-Man* #131, Apr. 1974) as a play on an old Stan Lee title. I came up with the title, "If I Kill Me, Will I Die?" It was basically a parody of an old overdramatic Stan Lee title, but I also thought it was a good title in general. So that's really what the impetus was—to raise the stakes, give us a good finish to the Gwen Stacy saga, and to allow me to have a little fun with the storytelling conventions of the time.

VERONESE: *Amazing Spider-Man* #149, the issue where you introduce the Spider-Clone, was your last issue of your tenure as writer on *Amazing Spider-Man*. Was there any sort of a desire to go out with a bang?

CONWAY: I don't know if [at the time] I was completely aware that it would be my last issue. By the time I was writing it I knew it would be my last issue, but in the planning of the storyline I didn't know. I certainly didn't think I

would be leaving the book. My leaving the book and Marvel was kind of abrupt due to some personal issues I was having. It wasn't part of a master plan. I don't think I was really intending to bring things to a conclusion.

VERONESE: Was the Spider-Clone initially a "One and Done" character?

CONWAY: Yeah. I figured it would be in and out, we would do it and then we would never do anything with it again. Although, as we all know, in the world of comics, nothing ever stays dead for long, especially in the Marvel Universe. It was totally possible that at some point we might bring him back, but I never had any intentions at the time.

VERONESE: When "Gwen Stacy" packs her bags and leaves in

Amazing Spider-Man #149, was that essentially it for the character? Did you have any further plans for the clone of Gwen if you stayed on *Amazing Spider-Man*?

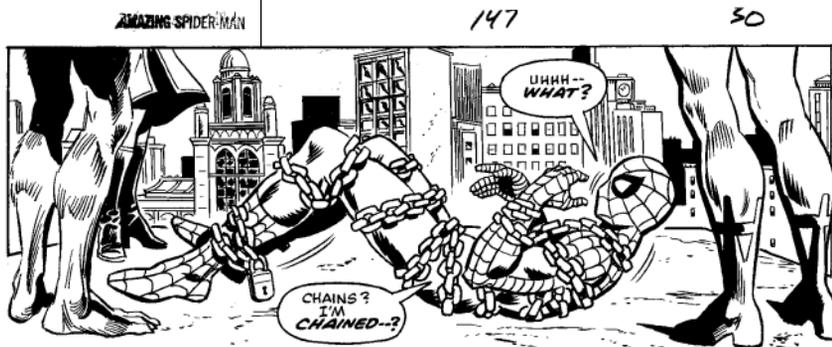
CONWAY: Yeah, but remember, that's not Gwen Stacy. That's a clone. So as far as I was concerned, she was done. If I had stayed on the book, I would not have brought her back. Again, you should never say never, but I had no intention of ever bringing her back. I had brought her back for that sequence because Stan Lee wanted her back, and I wanted to make it as interesting as I could for myself and the readers, but it was always going to be a short-term storyline.

VERONESE: Did you have any input on the 1990s *Clone Saga*? Did any of the writers or editors give you a call?

CONWAY: Oh, no. Nor should they have. It was their storyline. When I did find out the gist of the story, that the previous ten years of *Spider-Man* stories didn't happen, I thought, this is a wonderful thing for a writer, because it means when I left the title, the book stopped. [laughs]



GERRY CONWAY



THE RETURN OF THE CLONE

After Conway's Clone storyline was finished, the Spider-Clone's body was disposed of in a very uncharacteristic move by Peter Parker. Years pass and Aunt May becomes gravely ill. A mysterious stranger, passing himself off as a distant relative, makes contact in an attempt to learn more about Aunt May's failing health in series of cameos beginning in Spectacular Spider-Man #216 (Sept. 1994). Upon learning of the grave situation, the stranger travels cross-country to New York City. The stranger is soon revealed as the believed to be deceased clone of Peter Parker, acting under the pseudonym Ben Reilly ("Ben" for Uncle Ben and "Reilly" for Aunt May's maiden name). Reilly has been working odd jobs and living a nomadic life for the past five years, all while being followed by a "defective" clone of Peter Parker, Kaine. Shortly after arriving in New York City, Ben, blessed with the same powers and abilities as Peter Parker, is forced to jump into action, creating a makeshift costume and taking up the moniker of the Scarlet Spider. To gain some insight into the designing and creation of the Scarlet Spider, I spoke with artists Steven Butler (penciler of Web of Spider-Man at the time, the de facto Scarlet Spider title) and Mark Bagley.

Early Scarlet Spider

(left) An early concept sketch of the Scarlet Spider by Mark Bagley. This design was later altered to create Ben Reilly's version of the Spider-Man costume. From the *Spider-Man Collector's Preview* one-shot (Dec. 1994).
 (below) *Spectacular Spider-Man* #217, page 6. Art by Sal Buscema.

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STEVEN BUTLER

VERONESE: *The Scarlet Spider costume is one of the iconic designs of the mid-1990s. It sums up a lot of what was going on in comics during that time period.*

What role did you have in designing the Scarlet Spider?
MARK BAGLEY: It was pretty straightforward. [Editor] Danny Fingeroth basically gave the artists the task of designing the Scarlet Spider costume. His only real direction was that the costume not look like a costume. I tried a number of approaches, but never really felt like I nailed the idea. Tom Lyle came up with the hoodie design, and we all went with that. Later, Bob Budiansky decided to go with a slightly altered version of a design I did for the updated Spider-Man costume.

STEVEN BUTLER: I didn't design the Scarlet Spider's costume, but I had the privilege of drawing his first appearance in costume (*Web of Spider-Man* #118, Nov. 1994), and the story in which Ben Reilly goes about getting it. I remember the editorial staff wanted to make his costume different than the Spider-Man costume; much more utilitarian. They wanted it to look like something he could move around in and all, but they also wanted it to look like something he could have picked up at a clothing or sporting-goods store, which is exactly what he did in the storyline.

VERONESE: *What was your opinion of the costume when you were drawing it, particularly considering you were helping the art on the Scarlet Spider's title, *Web of Spider-Man*?*

BUTLER: I personally liked the costume, and it made sense for Ben, who was more concerned with functionality than how "cool" he looked. I remember all the artists drawing the costume a little differently, especially the belt and the web-shooter gauntlets. I think I patterned mine after the bracelets the Black Widow used to wear back in the 1970s. I liked the hood, too, but obviously somebody in editorial didn't, because after an issue or two they had the hood ripped off and Ben never changed into another hoodie!

Even though I didn't design his costume, I do remember getting to design the way he would use his different webbing spikes and impact pellets.



MARK BAGLEY

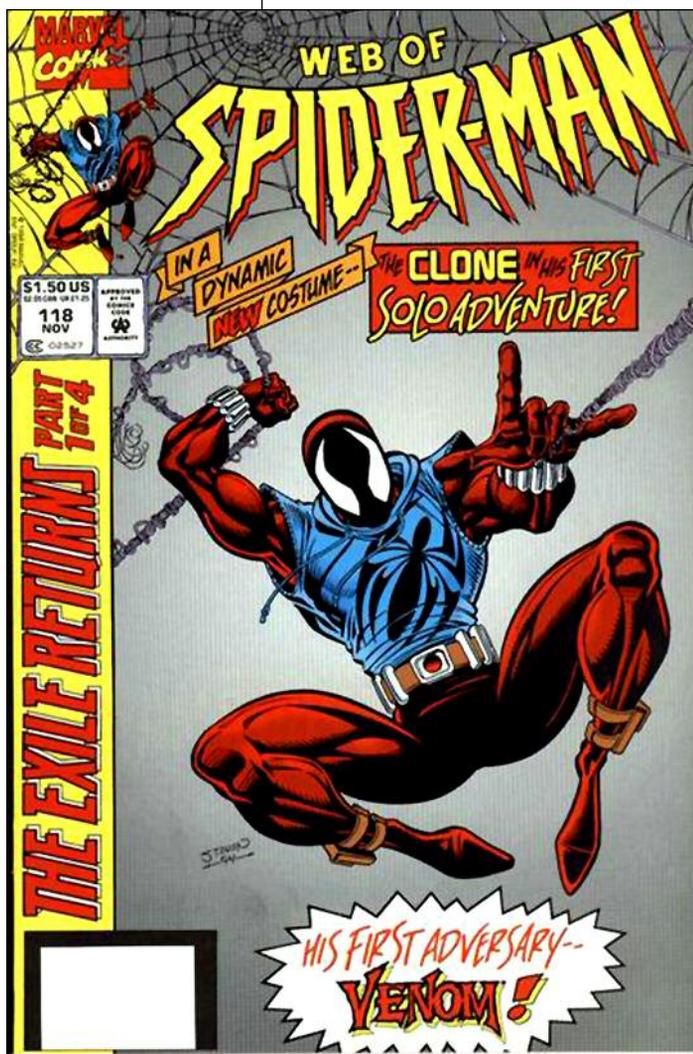
Send in the Clone

(left) The cover of *Web of Spider-Man* #118 (Nov. 1994), which introduced the world to the Scarlet Spider and officially kicked off the Clone Saga. Art by Steven Butler.

(right) Original art to the cover of *Web of Spider-Man* #120 (Jan. 1995), featuring the Scarlet Spider and Kaine. Art by Steven Butler.

Courtesy of Heritage (www.ha.com).

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Again, Tom Lyle did some of that, too, so I don't remember really who came up with what. It was more like everybody throwing something into a pot and mixing it together. I think he looked great, and you could do a lot with that hoodie while he was in action, suggesting fast motion and all. I dug it.

VERONESE: *Was there any disappointment in taking the helm of a Spider-Man title and then finding out that Peter Parker/Spider-Man would not be the main character?*

BUTLER: I don't remember being disappointed at all. I warmed to the character of Ben Reilly immediately, and had just as much fun drawing the Scarlet Spider character as I did the Spider-Man character. I mean, really, he was the same character as far as how he moved and acted visually. Also, if I remember correctly, at the time, Peter was going through a very dark phase, very distraught and not quite so stable mentally. Ben, on the other hand, was a guy who was practical and level-headed, doing the superhero thing because it was the right thing for him to do. I hated it when they killed him off. I wanted to see him evolve as a character separate from Peter, with his own cast of characters.

THE 1990s CLONE SAGA

What started as a storyline in Web of Spider-Man became a 100-plus-issue saga that spanned over two and a half years. During this time a menagerie of villains were in conflict with Ben and Peter, including the Jackal and Kaine, along with Ben and Peter constantly being played against each other through scientific revelations and "special issues" promising to reveal whether Ben or Peter was the "true" Peter Parker.

The Saga eventually broke up the Spider-titles into an "Age of Apocalypse"-style miniseries with Scarlet Spider taking the helm of the Spider-titles for a short time,

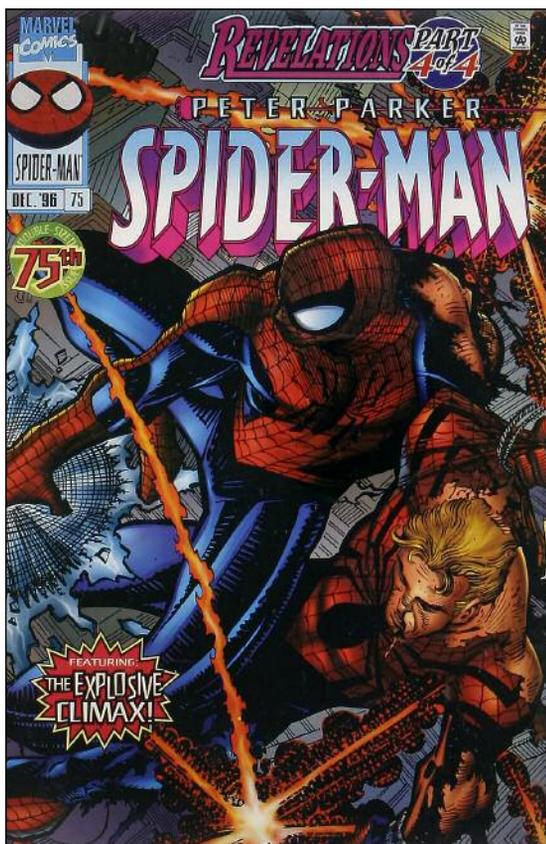
restarting each series with a #1 issue. This lasted only a couple of months, and concluded with Ben Reilly taking up the helm of Spider-Man, using a slightly different costume and a blond hair dye job and beginning a new spin-off title, Sensational Spider-Man. Peter Parker effectively "retired" from the superhero lifestyle during this time. The Clone Saga was officially wrapped up in December of 1996, finishing in Spider-Man #75 with the death of Ben Reilly. A number of one-shots followed, including the tongue-in-cheek 101 Ways to End the Clone Saga (Jan. 1997), which featured actual proposed endings of the Clone Saga taken to a comical end, and Spider-Man: The Osborn Journal (Feb. 1997), which explained Norman Osborn's return to the Marvel Universe and how Osborn masterminded the entire Clone Saga.

I was able to talk with several members of the Spider-Man "Think Tank" at the time, including **Howard Mackie**, **Tom DeFalco**, **J. M. DeMatteis**, **Glenn Greenberg**, and **Danny Fingeroth**, to get their opinions on the construction and follow-through of the Clone Saga.

The Life of Reilly

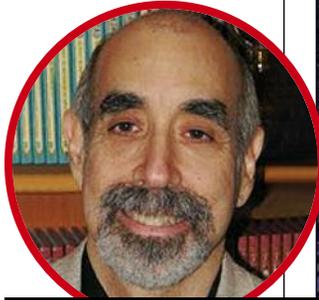
(left) Peter Parker, Spider-Man #75 (Dec. 1996). (right) Original art from Scarlet Spider #1, page 4 (Nov. 1995), pencils by Gil Kane and inks by Tom Palmer. From the collection of Chau-Jye Chuang.

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HOWARD MACKIE



J. M. DeMATTEIS



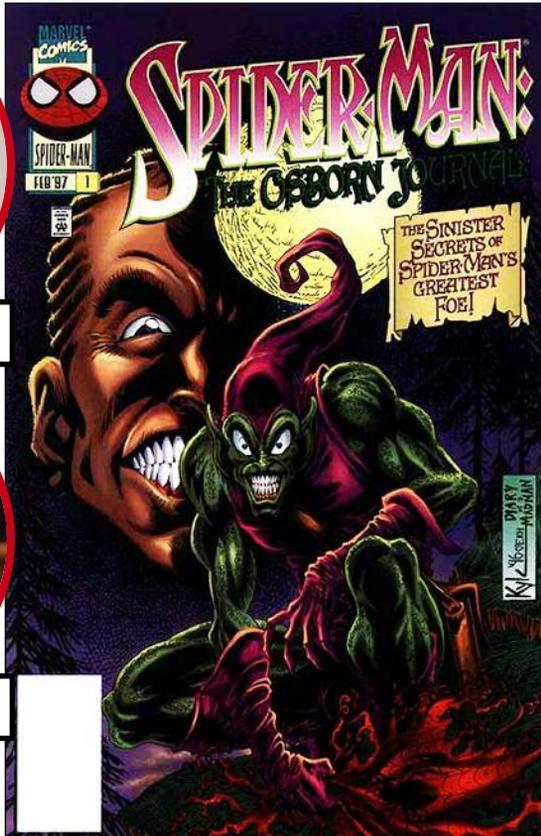
DANNY FINGEROTH



TOM DeFALCO



GLENN GREENBERG



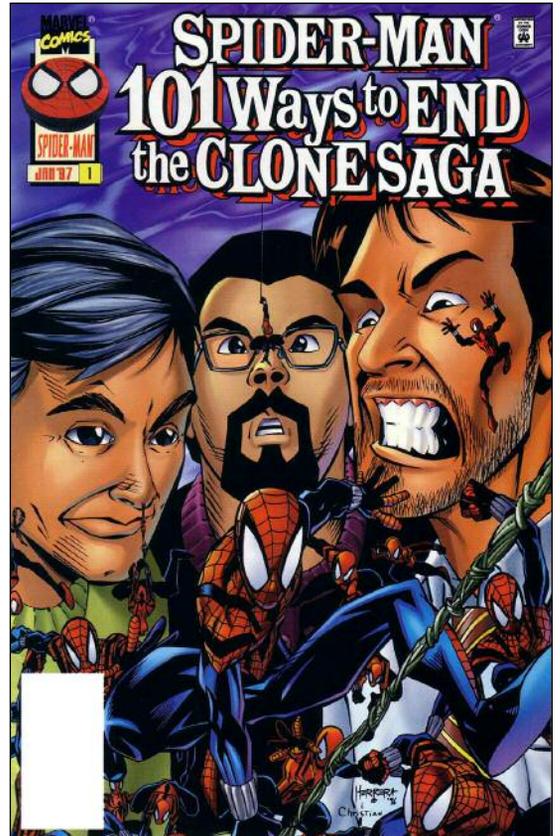
VERONESE: *What was your role in the Clone Saga?*

HOWARD MACKIE: I was there from the beginning. Terry Kavanagh was the one who came up with the original concept of revisiting the clone story done by Gerry Conway. This was at a time when the creative teams were being pressured to come up with the "Next Big Thing" for Spider-Man and Marvel. Terry, who remains one of my closest friends to this day, approached me with the simple questions, "What if the clone was not really dead?" and "What if he was the real Peter Parker/Spider-Man?" That got my mind spinning, so I twisted Terry's arm to present it to the editorial and creative staff at a meeting. He did, and off we went.

J. M. DeMATTEIS: We were all in a big Spider-meeting. Every writer, artist, and editor working on the books at the time was locked in a conference room at a New York City hotel. Terry Kavanagh brought up his "Return of the Clone" idea. I'd heard rumblings about it from Spider-editor Danny Fingeroth and my first reaction was, "God, no!" But, as Terry explained it, I began to see the story as an opportunity to do something with Spider-Man that jumped into Philip K. Dick/*Twilight Zone* territory: a twisted exploration of personal identity and a journey deep into the primal question, "Who am I?" What would a man do if he discovered that everything he believed about himself was a lie? It's a powerful question and I thought, and still think, it was a wonderful idea, one well worth exploring. By the end of the day, we were all on board.

DANNY FINGEROTH: I was the group editor who initially approved the concept. When the writers brought it to me, [I] had to bring it to my boss, editor-in-chief Tom DeFalco, to get his approval on the idea.

TOM DeFALCO: When it was first pitched, I was the editor-in-chief and I okayed the original storyline and eventually began plotting *Spectacular*



Clone Clean-Up

(left) Norman Osborn's role in the Clone Saga is explained in the *Spider-Man: The Osborn Journal* one-shot (Feb. 1997). Cover by Kyle Holtz. (right) Marvel pokes fun at itself in the *Spider-Man: 101 Ways to End the Clone Saga* one-shot (Jan. 1997). Cover by Ben Herrera.

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Spider-Man. After I was relieved of my staff position, I also took on scripting *Spectacular Spider-Man* and it was my job to tell the best stories I could.

GLENN GREENBERG: [My role] evolved over time. I started out in the capacity of an assistant editor on Spider-Man-related series and special projects, including *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* and various Spider-Man annuals, one-shots, and limited series.

I didn't work on the "core" Spider-Man titles, but I was certainly part of what you might call the Spider-Man "Think Tank" and I played a role in setting the direction for the books. The *real* heavy lifting was done by the writers (J. M. DeMatteis, Tom DeFalco, Howard Mackie, Todd DeZago, and Dan Jurgens) and the senior editors, particularly Danny Fingeroth, Bob Budiansky, and, eventually, Ralph Macchio. As time went on, I became more and more involved, especially after the big reveal that Ben Reilly was the "one, true, original Spider-Man." As the Clone Saga wound down, I became even *more* involved, not just in an editorial capacity but also as a writer. Behind the scenes, I charted out a detailed back story for Norman Osborn that explained how he survived his apparent death (in *Amazing Spider-Man* #122,

Scarlet Spider's Tangled Web

Original art from *Scarlet Spider* #2, page 28 (December 1995), featuring pencils by John Romita, Jr., and inks by Al Williamson. From the collection of Keith Veronese.

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July 1973) and what he was doing during the time when he was supposed to be dead. I created the timeline to get everyone on the same page and to set down a possible, logical continuity that would give the return of Norman Osborn some sense of reality and credibility. Ralph Macchio liked it a lot, and determined that it should be considered canonical. This in turn led to me writing the one-shot *Spider-Man: The Osborn Journal*, which explained Norman's entire role in the Clone Saga.

VERONESE: *If there was one thing you could change about how the 1990s Clone Saga unfolded, what would it be?*

DeMATTEIS: Our original intention was to keep the story under control, fairly short. The clone comes back, chaos ensues, we learn that Ben is the one, true Spider-Man, and then Peter and Mary Jane go off to have their baby and live happily ever after. [This lasted for] six months, a year at best. Then we were going to reboot all the Spider-books and have, shall we say, a "Brand New Day." If we would have done it with reasonable speed, as planned, I think the story would have worked beautifully. The longer the story went on, the more it circled around and got confusing. I bailed on the story early on. As much fun as it was to plan out those stories, I found writing chapter two of a multi-part story month after month to be incredibly frustrating. Plus, Marvel was going through crazy behind-the-scenes changes and it just wasn't fun any more.

MACKIE: Too many things to list. The original story was supposed to run in four books over a period of three months—I have my original notes to prove it—and somehow the story became a saga that lasted two and a half years.

GREENBERG: It took way too long for Ben to finally become Spider-Man. We should never have done those "Scarlet Spider" books that replaced the Spider-Man titles for a few months. That only served to delay the transition from Peter to Ben. It was a hastily conceived gimmick, and the writing and art suffered for it. Also, I think once Ben became Spider-Man, he should have adopted the Peter Parker identity. Spider-Man is *not* a blond-haired guy named Ben Reilly. Lastly, I disagreed with the decision to bring back Norman. Harry would have worked fine as the mastermind, and it would have elevated him as a villain, a threat, and a member of Spider-Man's rogues' gallery. The argument for making Norman the mastermind was that Harry never had the stature or the presence of his father; that Harry was never the threat that his father was. I think that if Harry had been revealed as the architect of the Clone Saga, he would have achieved that stature and presence and become that much of a threat.

VERONESE: *Was there anything that was supposed to happen in the 1990s Clone Saga that didn't see the light of day? Anything you wanted to see come to fruition that didn't materialize?*

DeMATTEIS: Well, the original ending, for one thing. Pete and MJ having their baby and [living out] their lives happily ever after; Ben beginning a new life as Spider-Man. There were other things, but the upending of our ending was the main one.

As I said before, had the story been done in a much shorter time span I think people would have accepted it and Ben (the real Peter) and Peter (the married clone) could have existed side-by-side in the Marvel Universe.

GREENBERG: It was decided in early 1996 that Norman would be the mastermind. At that time, we were in the home stretch of working out the conclusion of the Clone Saga and we had come up with a framework for how everything was going to play out. The storyline itself was planned to wrap up in April 1996. We were about to launch a storyline, called "Blood Brothers," and that was supposed to lead directly into the final chapters of the Clone Saga. The character of Gaunt was supposed to be the big mastermind, and he was ultimately going to be revealed as Harry Osborn. Harry had become Gaunt because his body was decaying from within since his "death" in *Spectacular*



Spider-Man #200 (May 1993), and he needed a life-support suit to remain alive and active. In the concluding chapters of the Clone Saga, Seward Trainer would have restored Harry's body and his health, Harry would have been revealed as the architect of the whole thing, and Spider-Man and Harry would have had a big showdown.

However, there was an editorial regime change in early January 1996, and suddenly we had a new editor-in-chief. He was apprised of our plans, and he came back to us with two edicts: 1) It had to be Norman, not Harry; and 2) the conclusion of the saga had to be delayed six months, until October 1996. We used those six additional months to set up the fact that Gaunt wasn't the mastermind, but that he was working for the mastermind. We went about planting the seeds for the revelation that the real villain was Norman. During that time, we all met to discuss the hows and whys having to do with Norman's return and his activities during the time in which he was supposed to be dead. And I wrote the "Norman Osborn Timeline" that worked out all of the details. And that timeline was the basis for the *Spider-Man: The Osborn Journal* one-shot that I wrote later on.

VERONESE: *What was your favorite part of the 1990s Clone Saga?*

DeFALCO: Danny Fingeroth, the Spider-Man group editor, often called all the writers together to discuss the upcoming twists and turns in the story. I loved those meetings. It was just great to bounce ideas off Danny, J. M. DeMatteis, Howard Mackie, Todd DeZago, and the rest of the editorial crew.

DeMATTEIS: I actually had two favorite parts. The first was the regular, biweekly writers meetings we would have up at Marvel, overseen by Danny Fingeroth and his editorial team. I think I had more fun during that period than at any other time in my comic-book career. We were a group of guys who liked and respected each other. We would bat ideas around,

Marvel Two-from-One

(left) The Scarlet Spider looks on at a captive Spider-Man on the cover to *Spider-Man: The Clone Saga #2* (Oct. 2009), by Miguel Angel Sepulveda.
(right) Cover to *The Clone Saga #5*.

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praise each other, insult each other, and, most of all, laugh our heads off. It was a wonderful time.

My other favorite part, on a purely creative level, would be writing *Amazing Spider-Man* #400 (Apr. 1995, featuring the death of Aunt May, beautifully illustrated by Mark Bagley) and *Spider-Man: The Lost Years* miniseries (Aug. 1995 to Jan. 1996, illustrated by the amazing John Romita, Jr.). Whatever creative stumbles and bumps in the road there were with the Clone Saga (and there were many), I can look back on those two stories with pride. I think they're among the very best superhero stories I've ever written.

MACKIE: It is hard to separate the original concept from what the story eventually became through a long series of marketing, editing, and creative changes and decisions. So, the short answer is that I loved the story that existed in the room that day and on a few subsequent days. I loved the original concept. Still do.

FINGEROTH: I enjoyed the build-up with the mysterious stranger motorcycling across country to see Aunt May as she was dying and the anticipation that we were trying to build up regarding the mystery of who he was and the fact that he was destined to wreak havoc in Peter Parker's life.

I also liked the Scarlet Spider's attitude toward Venom (*Web of Spider-Man* #119, Dec. 1994). He saw a bad guy and decided to take him down. [There were] no deals with Eddie Brock that Peter had felt compelled to make over the years.

GREENBERG: I loved working with the creative people involved. I learned a lot from all of them, and remain friends with several of them to this day.

VERONESE: *Fifteen years later, what are your feelings on the finished product?*

DeMATTEIS: It had its ups, which were pretty up, and its downs, which were very down, but the Clone Saga gave us Ben Reilly and Kaine, two of the richest characters in the history of the Spider-verse. For that alone, I hold it in high esteem.

Did it end up as a big muddle? Yes. Did Marvel literally throw away the baby with the bathwater when it purged all the Clone Saga elements from the book? Absolutely. That's why I'm happy to see some of those elements resurfacing in the Spider-verse. In fact, I just finished a Ben Reilly solo story for *Web of Spider-Man*. What goes around comes around!

MACKIE: There was some fun stuff in there, and some really poignant stories and scenes. Overall, it just lost focus and ran too long.

DeFALCO: To be honest, I have never sat down and read the entire Clone Saga from beginning to end. At the time I was working on it, I read the other guys' plots and scripts but rarely got around to the actual comics, so I don't really have a clear idea of the finished product. Maybe I'll read it after I retire. Maybe not.

GREENBERG: In a nutshell, it's a bloated, overextended, gimmick-laden, poorly planned mess with some very good stories mixed in, some great artwork, and an ending that would have been far more satisfying and palatable had we been allowed to do it as originally conceived.



FINGEROTH: It is funny how the Clone Saga characters and plot points are just that now—characters and plot points. The way people reacted at the time it appeared and for years after—in retrospect it seems as if the industry (and segments of fandom) were having a collective nervous breakdown and became fixated on the Clone Saga as the symbol of what was “Wrong with Comics.” It wasn’t just a story that some people loved and some hated, but this weird group-mind totemic thing that became a figurative scapegoat for people who’d never even read it. Today, the hostility has subsided, and it’s just another piece of continuity to make new stories from.

THE FINAL WORD

A decade and a half after the Clone Saga began, Howard Mackie and Tom DeFalco were given the opportunity to tell their side of the story in the six-issue Spider-Man: The Clone Saga miniseries released by Marvel Comics in late 2009. The series was an excellent read with a decidedly fun feel, featuring fluid art by Todd Nauck and with the Scarlet Spider, Kaine, and both Harry and Norman Osborn playing key roles. Series co-writer Tom DeFalco sat down to answer some questions about the miniseries.

VERONESE: *How did the Spider-Man: The Clone Saga miniseries come into being?*

DeFALCO: As I understand the story, Howard Mackie found his notes for the original Clone Saga and mentioned them to Marvel editor Ralph Macchio. Ralph mentioned the notes to Marvel editor-in-chief Joe Quesada. Joe and Ralph got to talking and asked Howard if he’d be interested in writing a miniseries based on his notes. Since the Clone Saga always employed a team of writers, Howard suggested I co-write the miniseries with him. My initial reaction was to run for the hills. I had no interest in revisiting the Clone Saga, but I had a *big* interest in getting a chance to work with Howard and Ralph again.

VERONESE: *How much of it was produced from the initial notes for the 1990s Clone Saga?*

DeFALCO: We followed Howard’s notes religiously. However, the notes only contained a basic outline of the story. We had to fill in a lot of details and action. We also had the benefit of hindsight and knew that fans would expect to see certain characters. The original outline never mentioned the Jackal or Kaine, but we knew they had to be included.

VERONESE: *Howard Mackie and yourself wrote the series together. How did you two go about dividing the workload?*

DeFALCO: One of us would do a rough plot outline for an issue and then pass it to the other guy who would do a more polished outline. We would keep passing the plot back and forth until we were happy with it. We eventually figured out that it worked better if I did the first draft of the plot and Howard did the first draft of the script.

VERONESE: *Based on events that happen in the Spider-Man: Clone Saga miniseries, was Aunt May’s death not a part of the original Clone Saga?*

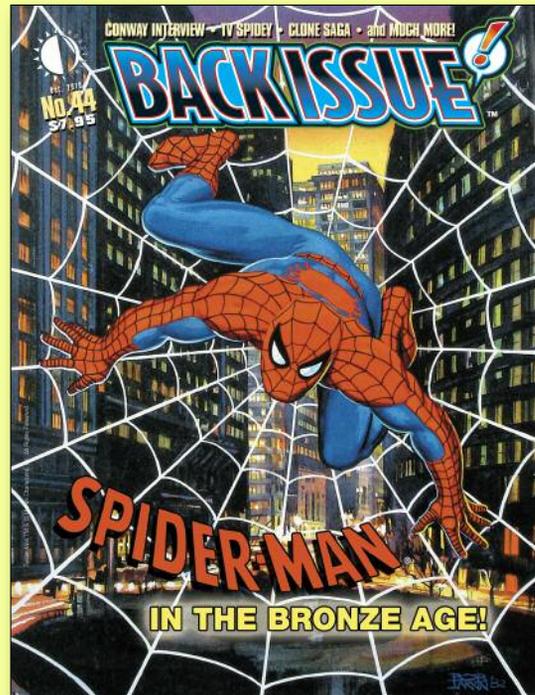
DeFALCO: No, it wasn’t.

VERONESE: *What is the one event or character you most looked forward to altering for the miniseries?*

DeFALCO: The ending. I loved the idea of giving Peter, Mary Jane, and little Mayday the happy ending that they should have had (like the one they currently have in the *Spider-Girl* series!). I was also thrilled to give Ben the chance to star in his own series since our original plan was to pull a *Thunderstrike/War Machine* and launch Ben in a *Scarlet Spider* title.

VERONESE: *Is it surprising that the new Clone Saga miniseries (and the Clone Saga in general, with the*

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BACK ISSUE #44

“Spider-Man in the Bronze Age!” Drug issues, resurrection of Green Goblin and Gwen Stacy, Marvel Team-Up, Spectacular Spider-Man, Spidey Super Stories, CBS and Japanese TV shows, Clone Saga, **CONWAY, ANDRU, BAGLEY, SAL BUSCEMA, DeFALCO, FINGEROTH, GIL KANE, STAN LEE, LEIBER, MOONEY, ROMITA SR., SALICRUP, SAVIUK, STERN**, cover by **BOB LARKIN!**

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upcoming hardcover re-release of the 1990s Clone Saga by Marvel Comics and Boba Fett-esque popularity of the character of Ben Reilly/Scarlet Spider) is greeted rather warmly by the current generation of readers?

DeFALCO: I am surprised that so many readers liked the series. I was afraid this new series would be a total lose/lose scenario. I figured that the readers who hated the original Clone Saga would hate this one, too, and that readers who liked the original wouldn’t like the changes we made in this one.

KEITH VERONESE should be working on his Ph. D. dissertation in Biophysical Chemistry, but instead, he wrote this article. He is also compiling a book about comic-book writers and artists who moonlight in the video-game industry and has a novel to be released in 2011. He likes fake mustaches.



end



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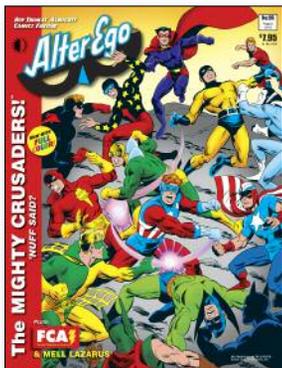
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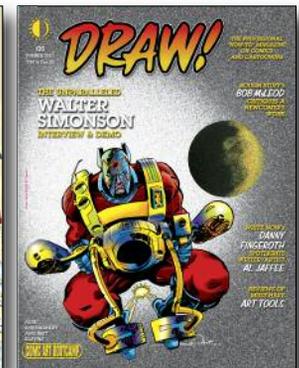
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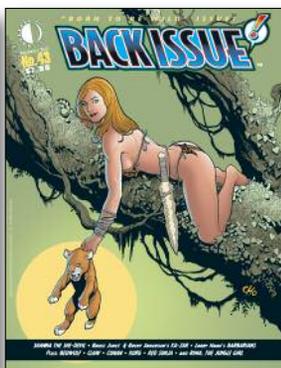
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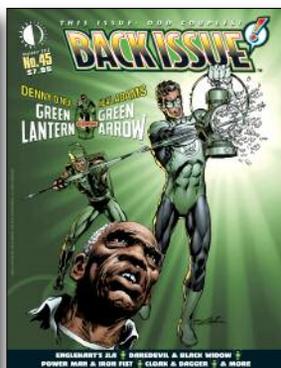
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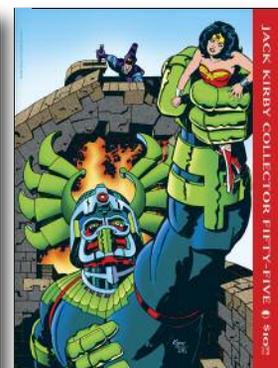
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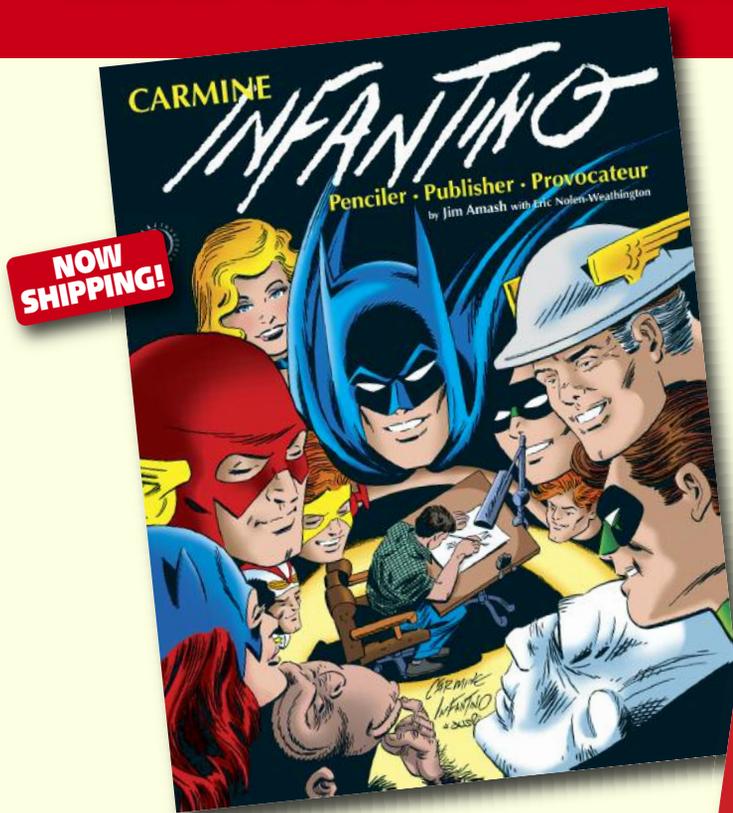
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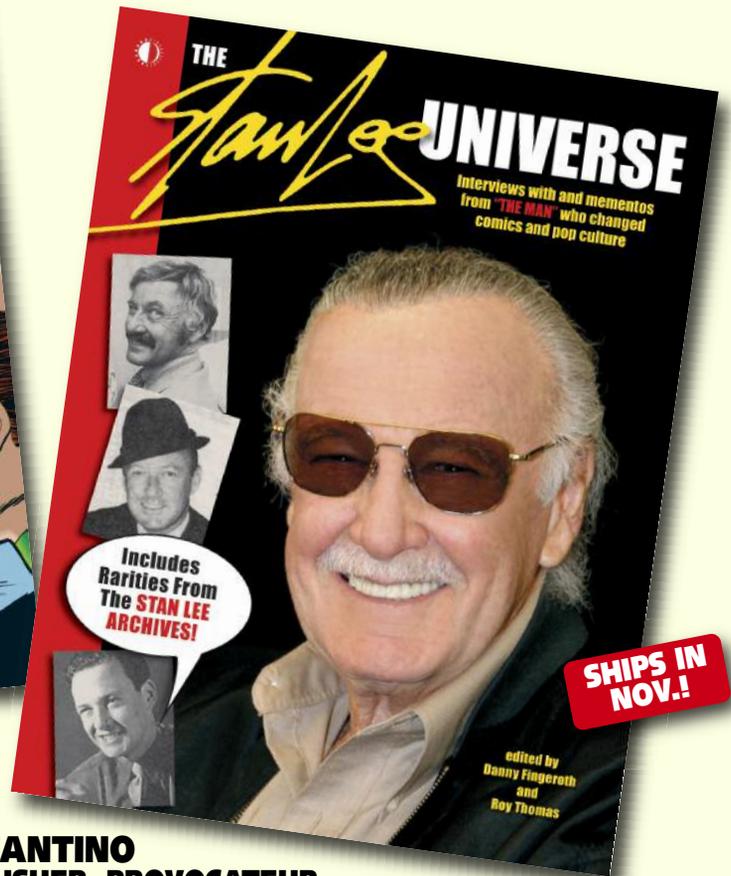


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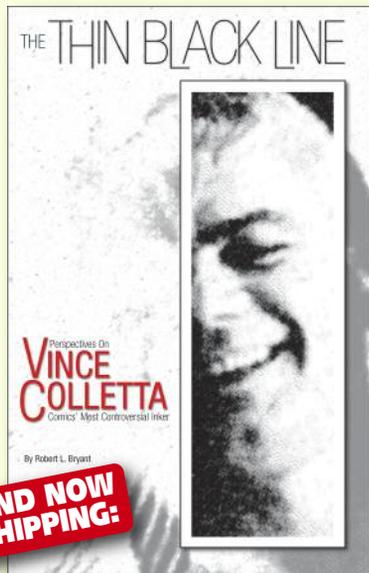
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