

JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR SEVENTY-TWO \$10.95

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+ Dino!  
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Happy 100th JACK "KING" KIRBY!

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# THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

ISSUE #72, FALL 2017



For all the people who wrote letters to The Eternals in the 1970s, wanting Jack to make them part of the Marvel Universe, this mid-1970s commission piece likely makes them really, really happy!

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For a six-page filler in Prize Comics #8 (Jan. 1941), this one packs a lot of punch, with great art, well-detailed aircraft, and a compelling (if rushed) subplot. Be sure to check out page 2, panel 6, for a nice artistic touch where Major Dabney's arm literally rests on the panel border.



# SCOTT MCCLOUD INTERVIEW

Conducted and edited by Jon B. Cooke, and transcribed by Steven Tice



[Scott McCloud is perhaps best known for his groundbreaking 1993 book *Understanding Comics*, wherein he explored all aspects of the fundamental make-up of comics, from defining them to analyzing how they're formed.



(above) The book that made us all think: *Understanding Comics*, and (below) Jack's place in it.

(next page, top) A quiet moment from *Fantastic Four Annual #5* (1967), featuring a subtle conciliatory message from Stan to Jack, in the midst during a tumultuous year between the duo. Below is the calm before the storm starts in McCloud's *Destroy!!*

McCloud created the fondly-remembered sci-fi super-hero series *Zot!* in 1984, and in 1986 produced *Destroy!!*, his Kirby-inspired parody of super-hero fight comics. He's also done work for DC Comics, was author of the 1988 Creator's Bill of Rights for comics creators, an early champion of mini-comics, and conceived the idea of the 24-Hour Comics challenge. This interview was conducted on April 18, 2017, and edited by Jon B. Cooke.]

**THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR:** When do you recall first encountering Jack Kirby's work?

**SCOTT MCCLOUD:** Very early. I got into comics when I was about 14, I think, in middle school. Maybe 13. My friend Kurt Busiek got me to read a big stack of comics, and I think it was probably within a year or two when I ran into Kirby's work, possibly through Kurt, possibly through people like Rich Howell and Carol Kalish and the gang at the Million-Year Picnic, the legendary store in nearby Cambridge, Massachusetts, which Kurt and I encountered after a year or two of frustrating trips to our local convenience store. There we found the mother lode. [laughs] We grew up to Lexington, Massachusetts, so we were a couple of bus stops away, but Cambridge was Mecca for us. And I would say, within the first couple of years, with the guidance of Kurt, who was, I think, always a little ahead of me in plumbing the history of the stuff, I came to recognize that Kirby—who, at the beginning, looked a little raw to me—had a lot on the ball and was really the source of some of the stuff I was enjoying from people like John Buscema.

**TJKC:** Do you recall the work? Was it his DC work in the '70s or was it Marvel?

**MCCLOUD:** No, the first stuff that I encountered was prime *Fantastic Four*, so we're talking sort of the full-bloom of the Joe Sinnott years, and not the earliest stuff. The earliest work to me seemed more primitive, and it still does, actually. I mean, the very early *Fantastic Four* doesn't feel to me like he had quite hit his stride, and I wasn't really ready to enjoy the *New Gods* era. Things like *Devil Dinosaur* (which, I suppose, hadn't even come out yet) was an acquired taste later on. [laughs] But right now I think my favorite Kirby periods are still probably the mature *FF* issues and work like *New Gods*, which I think of as the mature, pure, and post-Marvel Kirby.

**TJKC:** Did you acclimate yourself to the material? Did Kirby become a favorite?

**MCCLOUD:** Well, by the time I was in high school and especially college, I was thinking of it more sort of as an ecology of styles, and I was very interested in going back to the source, the trunk of the tree, and I think I had come to recognize that Kirby was the trunk of the tree. By late high school I was also discovering American independent material, and my local library had a copy of the *Smithsonian Book of Comic Strips*, so the early comic strips were blowing my mind. I had found Eisner's *The Spirit*. So I wasn't as enthralled to the Kirby stylistic universe as any kind of be-all and end-all. I was getting into a lot of work by the end of high school, and my favorite comics were the contemporary comics being done, like the new *X-Men* comics. That, for me, was the top of the form. [laughs] Kurt and I were really into Claremont's *X-Men*, starting from the very beginning of, like, the Cockrum stuff.

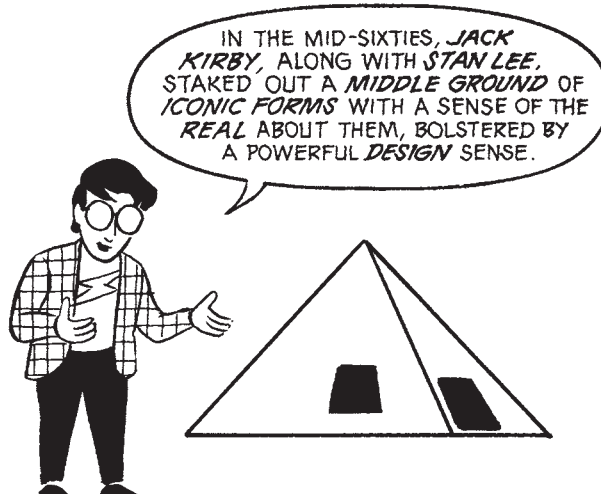
**TJKC:** When Jack went independent, did you pick up *Captain Victory* and that stuff?

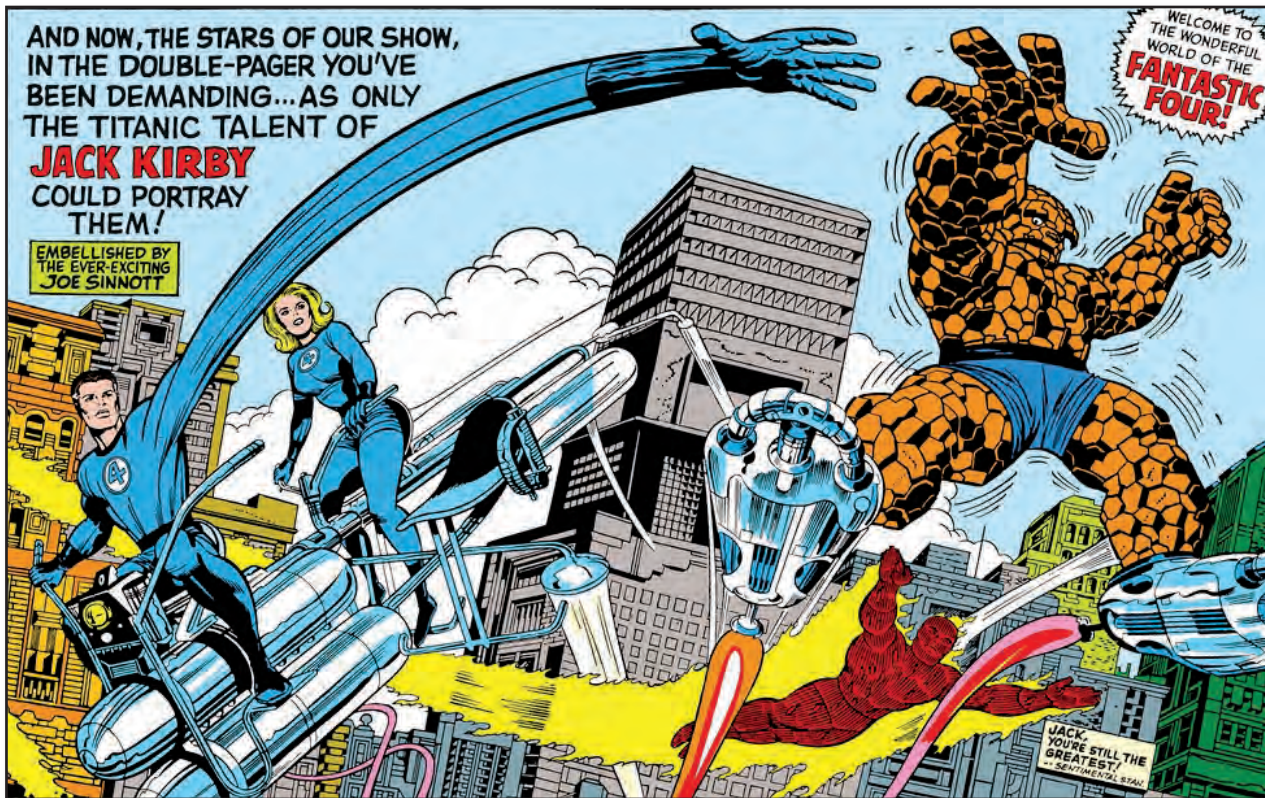
**MCCLOUD:** Yes. We were following *Destroyer Duck* and that sort of thing. But again, pretty early on I developed a kind of altitude on the form, so it wasn't that I was a fan of any one artist. I was more just trying to understand how the medium worked. That stuff kicked in very early. I was a very pretentious nerd from a very, very early age. I had all kinds of froofy, pretentious ideas about the form and trying to deconstruct comics. That stuff came quite early on.

The first comic Kurt and I did was this 60-page comic book called *The Battle of Lexington*,



ART: JACK KIRBY AND JOE SINNOTT (MY: FACSIMILE)  
SCRIPT: STAN LEE





where a bunch of super-heroes beat each other up in our hometown of Lexington, Massachusetts, in the process destroying the high school and that sort of thing. By the time that was even done, I was already trying to figure out whole-page compositions and getting turned on to Neal Adams' Deadman and weird stuff like that. Things were changing fast, I guess is what I'm trying to say. So Kirby, to me, was this avatar of a particular approach to comics that I was seeing in contrast to other approaches, and it stayed that way. It wasn't like I was following Uncle Jack onto *Destroyer Duck*, but I was more looking at it as, "Well, this is an interesting mutation," and you have creators' rights, and the stuff's going on at Eclipse, and all that sort of thing. And I guess I saw Kirby past a point as being a kind of avatar.

The later stuff I saw as lovably nutty. You know, it just made us laugh, as it seemed a little unhinged, frankly. Things like *Devil Dinosaur* seemed a little crazy, and *Destroyer Duck*, too. It was getting kind of nutty. And we appreciated it, but Kirby's significance for me was in his compositional ideas during his prime and the way that everything kind of followed from that. I just saw him as the granddaddy of everything that was out there in the super-hero world, that if you plucked him out, that just the entire, the phylum and species and genus of that whole evolutionary line would just vanish in thin air. Without Kirby, there would have been no Buscema. There would have been no playground for people like Ditko. Gene Colan, as different as he was, was still working in that world. Jim Starlin was still working in that world. He just started everything in the American super-hero tradition, and I guess because I was getting interested in other kinds of comics, that became more clear to me. Because I saw that there was an alternative, I realized that it all just came from Kirby. The whole



# THE FOUR-COLOR WAR

The Effect of World War II on Jack Kirby and His Contemporaries, by Christopher Irving



(above) Kirby depicts President Franklin Roosevelt in a retelling of Captain America's origin in Tales of Suspense #63 (March 1965).

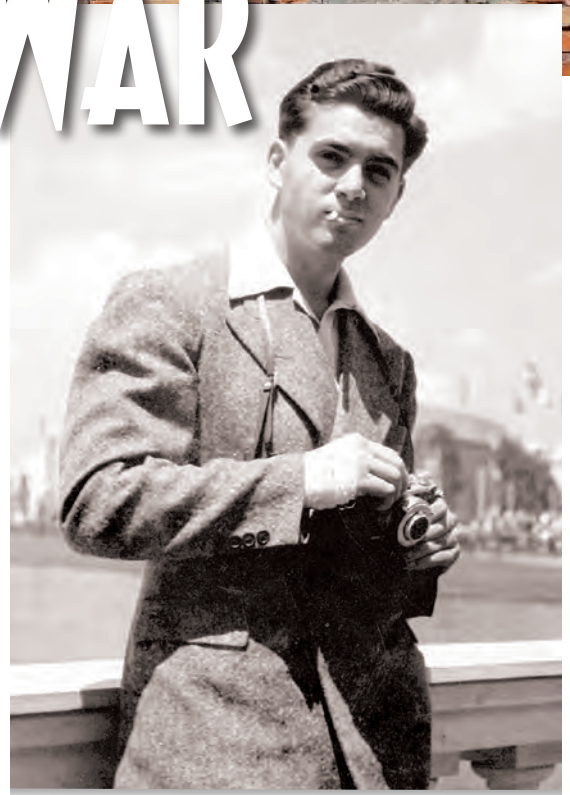
(right) A 22-year-old Jack Kirby at the 1930 New York World's Fair.

(below) Before serving in uniform, Kirby and Joe Simon bolstered US morale stateside with Boy Commandos #2 (Spring 1943).



This is, by no means, a comprehensive history of the Second World War, but a brief history of the greatest war man has ever fought. It has seemed that, in the past, many articles have done a great job reporting the World War II-inspired comic books that came out, while interviews have provided testimonies by Golden Age artists and writers who lived through or during the war. This article is an attempt to combine the comic book history with the history of World War II, to perhaps give a better insight of the period, and into the minds and hearts of the generation that endured the hardships... both on, and off, the battlefield.

The Great Depression was in its death throes by the late 1930s: Roosevelt's New Deal provided social and economic relief to a nation struck with a tragedy that had lasted just over a decade. The Roaring Twenties had ended in a fiery Stock Market Crash on October 24, 1929, known since as "Black Thursday." The economy plummeted, farmlands dried up, and businesses cut back due to overproduction, causing countless numbers of employees to be laid off. While President Herbert Hoover maintained hope that the economy would improve, it wasn't until Franklin Delano Roosevelt took the Presidential office in 1932 and eventually launched his New Deal, where numbers



of jobs were created, that the Depression started to look, well, less depressing.

It was also in the 1930s that the comic book, originally containing reprints of daily comic strips (starting with *Famous Funnies* #1 in 1934), first took form as an inexpensive kind of juvenile escapism. Eventually, reprint material would be succeeded by original material, which was then joined by a new genre: The super-hero, or "mystery man," in the guise of Superman in Spring 1938's *Action Comics* #1. The new brand of American optimism was hugely apparent in the New York World's Fairs of 1939 and 1940, where "tomorrow" was previewed in the vast theme park constructed over a former ash dump. Superman even had a presence of his own at the Fairs, in both issues of the *New York World's Fair* comic books, sold at the fair, as well as a "personal appearance" by a costumed actor. Also appearing in the 1940 issue of the *World's Fair* comic book were Red, White, and Blue, who first premiered in *All-American Comics* #1 in April 1939. Red Dugan, Whitey Smith, and Blooey, could be considered some of the first patriotic characters in comics.

"Bill Smith was a nice, young man, [and] had a goal of becoming an illustrator for

Given his missions by J. Edgar Hoover (the only other person who knew his identity), The Shield fought villains with names like The Strangler and The Hun. Aside from the amounts of violence meted out on the foreign enemies, there was a fair share of Good Girl Art injected in the strip as well.

The birth of The Shield may be considered by many as testimony to America's inevitable journey into the war, as Germany and Japan kept on with their plans of conquest.

On April 9 of 1941, after a pause in battle, the Nazis again struck, this time seizing Denmark and Norway. Germany would continue to take the war across Europe, invading France with the Italians. France fell under Germany and Italy, surrendering on June 22, and causing Hitler to set his sights on Great Britain. With Great Britain rejecting Hitler's plea for peace, the Battle of England began on August 9, 1940. Despite England's terror-bombing by Nazi aircraft, and a plea from Prime Minister Winston Churchill for American aide, it wasn't until September that Roosevelt granted fifty World War I American destroyers to Britain for naval bases in the Western Hemisphere. It is possible that Roosevelt, hoping to procure the Presidency for a third term in 1940, held off intervention for political reasons.

Whatever the political motivations, the Axis had become a threat not only to Europe, but to the whole world. On September 27, 1940, Japan joined the Rome and Berlin Axis, forming the three-tier Axis Powers that would terrorize the world for the next few years. FDR's campaign pledge was "I will never send an American boy to fight in a European war," and he tried to keep the U.S. from direct involvement. On March 8, 1941, Congress passed FDR's bill to "lend-lease" war supplies to nations that would further the defense of the U.S. by fighting the Axis powers.

Nazi Germany cemented the war with the U.S. when, in September of 1941, they fired on an American destroyer and forced FDR to allow any U.S. ship to fire on any Nazi craft. Apparently, the Nazis had the same qualm, as the U.S. destroyer Rubeen Jones was torpedoed on October 31, killing 100 Americans.

### HEROES AT WAR: THE COMICS INDUSTRY'S REACTION TO IMPENDING WAR

Around the same time as the Lend-Lease Act came into operation, Timely Comics had premiered their own patriotic hero, who was to prove the second-most resilient of the flag-adorned characters that would later populate comic racks. *Captain America Comics* #1 hit the stands, dated March of 1941, and featured the chain-mail armored hero slugging out Hitler on the cover. Born out of the duo of Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, Captain America was the first super-hero to have his own first issue before first trying out in another title.

Hailing from the S&K studio, Captain America was the product of a 4-F soldier named Steve Rogers who, in a desire to serve his country, is given the "Super Soldier

Serum," a miracle drug that grants him augmented strength and abilities. With his partner Bucky Barnes, and donning a red, white, and blue chainmail costume, Captain America fought spies, the most notorious of which was The Red Skull.

"The American flag is unbeatable for color combination and appeal," Kirby reflected. "So that was a must. The chain-mail business was strictly the warrior theme carried to modern times. The wings suggested themselves because they indicated the speed with which he moved at all times. Everything on the costume was symbolic of the character himself. He was a patriotic character: a speedy, hard-hitting type of hero."<sup>7</sup>

"We were always trying for new characters," Joe Simon said. "Captain America was a wartime thing, a patriotic thing, and we had the greatest villain you could think of: The Nazis, and Adolf Hitler... It was not the first patriotic hero in comics but it was the best. The kids ate it up."<sup>1</sup>

"I believe it was a spontaneous reaction on my part and my partner Joe Simon," Kirby said. "We discussed it at the time. There was patriotic fervor everywhere. It was just the climate for that kind of thing. Captain America was a super-hero of his own, specific type... My style was particularly adaptable to that kind of super-hero, and it went very well."<sup>7</sup>

The cover created quite a stir for the creative duo, as Simon

recalled:

"I liked the idea of having it political, and having Adolf Hitler on it, because that was about the best villain we could get in those days. Actually, it caused us a few problems with the American Nazi groups. They threatened us. We had police sent over to watch our office."<sup>1</sup>

The spade-like, triangular shape of Captain America's shield caused friction between Timely and MLJ, who produced *The Shield*, which it was outselling.

"They were way ahead and we were just trying to maintain a competitive edge," Gil Kane, then a young artist on MLJ's *The Shield*, said of Simon and Kirby's Captain America. "It wasn't a matter of anything [but] that there was an audience and a possibility of reaching them



(above) Jack Kirby during Basic Training at Camp Stewart near Savannah, Georgia. Kirby was drafted into the Army on June 7, 1942 and assigned to Company F of the 11th Infantry Regiment.

(center) Hitler tries to get revenge in *Tales of Suspense* #67 (July 1965) for his smack-down on Cap's debut cover (below).

(previous page, bottom) Foxhole #1 cover art (Oct. 1954), newly colored by Randy Sargent.



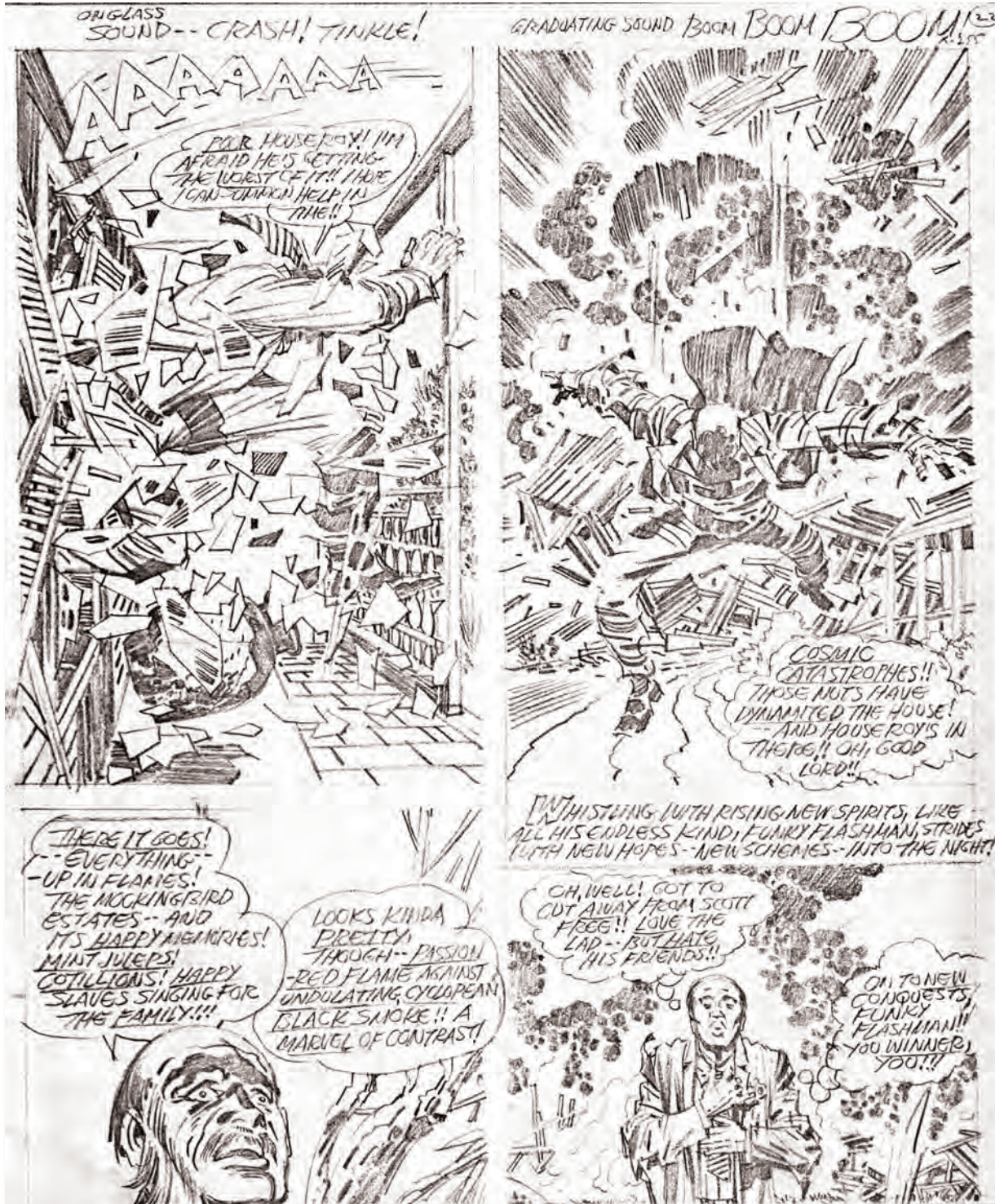
# KIRBY KOWARDS

When the going got tough, these characters got gone! by John Morrow

While Jack populated his stories with thousands of heroic figures, he also had his fair share of characters who turned tail and ran, rather than duke it out face-to-face with their adversaries. The Mad Thinker let his android do the heavy lifting, and Puppet Master relied on his dolls. The Skrulls chose to be turned into cows, rather than face the FF. Norton of New York and Buddy Blank both lived timid existences that didn't involve any day-to-day derring-do. And many of Jack's villains (especially the Nazis) were portrayed as lacking courage—so here's a few of my favorite Kirby Kowards.

(below) After throwing poor Houseroy to the wolves, Funky Flashman covers his tracks in this incomplete pencil photocopy from Mister Miracle #6 (Jan. 1972). Kirby got a bit carried away with this overly-broad caricature of Stan Lee, but in turn created one of his most memorable cowards in comics.

(page 33) Volstagg (a take-off on Shakespeare's Falstaff) took every opportunity to avoid conflicts, but still managed to save the day, often unwittingly. Pencils from Thor #162 (March 1969).



(page 34) Is there a more irritating Kirby coward than The Watcher? With access to near-limitless technology, this bulbous-headed ninny chooses to sit back and simply watch things unfold, avoiding all involvement—y'know, unless someone needs an Ultimate Nullifier or something. Show some consistency, Oatu! Here are pencils from What If? #11 (Oct. 1978), featuring the original Marvel Bullpen (including Jack) as the Fantastic Four.

(page 35) To the Forever People, peace and love meant leaving the real fighting to Infinity Man—which, when you think about it, was a total cop-out. But for a series where the main characters spend their time running away from trouble, it sure was fun. Pencils from Forever People #11 (Oct. 1972), the final issue.

(page 36) Don Daring was a different kind of coward—claiming to be brave (right down to his name), but letting Fred Drake do the actual heroics, both as his Hollywood stuntman, and as Stuntman the super-hero. Here is an unused page from the never-published Stuntman #3 story "Jungle Lord," circa 1946.



## ROOTIN' SHOOTIN'

by Will Murray

# MARVEL'S KID

Where can you find cowboys by Kirby? Mosey over to check out appearances of the cowpokes in these issues, buckaroo:

### Kid Colt:

*Gunsmoke Western*  
#65-67, 69-71, 73  
*Kid Colt Outlaw* #93,  
95, 96, 119

### Black Rider:

*Gunsmoke Western*  
#47, 51  
*Kid Colt Outlaw* #86  
*The Black Rider Rides Again!* #1

### Rawhide Kid:

*Rawhide Kid*  
#17-32, 34, 43

### Two-Gun Kid:

*Gunsmoke Western*  
#62-64  
*Two-Gun Kid*  
#54, 55, 57-62

(next page, bottom) *Two-Gun Kid* #62 (March 1963).

Not many fans realize it, but when the Marvel Age of Comics really took off around 1964, not all of the heroes were new creations or Golden Age retreats. One had been cavorting in his own magazine since 1948 making him, at that time, Marvel's longest-running continuing hero.

Not many realize this—because the character was Kid Colt.

Despite their importance to the company, Marvel's Western characters have been notoriously ignored. In fact, it was the Atlas-era cowboys, probably more than anything, which kept that company afloat through the grim '50s.

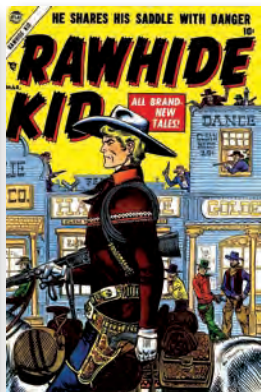
Kid Colt got his start in *Kid Colt, Hero of the West* dated August 1948. A commercial title change to *Kid Colt, Outlaw* came with issue #3. The comic continued, unbroken, to March 1968, and the character was so popular that he simultaneously appeared in a second venue, *All-Western*. Under shifting titles, *All-Western* featured Kid Colt until, as *Gunsmoke Western*, it expired in 1963. The artist responsible for about 95% of the zillions of Kid Colt stories was Jack Keller, who doesn't appear to have done much Marvel work that *didn't* feature that heard-riding character.

Kid Colt was not really an outlaw. He was born Blaine Colt, of Abilene, Wyoming. A hot-tempered teenager, he was so fast on the draw that he never wore his guns for fear of having to kill during unavoidable gunfights: The "No-gun Kid" they called him. But when owlhoot Lash Larrabee guns down Blaine's father Dan, the lad straps on his father's Colt Peacemakers and in a fair fight, annihilates Lash. One of Lash's boys tells the sheriff it was cold-blooded murder. Because Blaine was consid-

ered a gunshy milksop, his account was not believed. So he fled on his gray pony, Steel, and became the Robin Hood fugitive in the red shirt and white cowhide vest known as Kid Colt.

Other than taming down his pre-Code origin, the Kid Colt who got his start in 1948 is the same Kid Colt whom I first encountered, flushed with enthusiasm for the then-new Marvel line, in 1964. This is more than can be said for his two companion Kids, the Two-Gun Kid and the Rawhide Kid.

The debut issue of *Two-Gun Kid* was dated March 1948. Technically, he pre-dates Kid Colt by five months. But this is not the same Two-Gun Kid Marvel was publishing in the early '60s. I discovered this fact by accident when, while trading comics with a friend back around 1965, I scored a 1960



# COWBOYS



copy of *Two-Gun Kid*. To my amazement, this Two-Gun Kid wasn't the masked town-tamer I know, but a blonde cowpoke all duded up in black. Worse, he sang in the saddle like Roy Rogers. I couldn't figure it out.

What had happened was that the original Two-Gun Kid, after running in his own title from 1948 to 1961, had been canceled. But in 1962, Stan Lee, as he was doing with characters like the Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch, had revived the name, but revamped the character.

The first Two-Gun Kid was a footloose cowboy who rode a horse he called Cyclops. Kid's real name was Clay Harder, and he earned the nickname Two-Gun Kid when, after Bull Yaeger and his cowpokes shoot his father in an attempt to steal the family ranch, Clay went gunning for the killers. His wizardry with twin guns defeated the entire bunch, and a friendly sheriff dubbed him the Two-Gun Kid. He took the name to heart and rode the West hunting owlhoots. I guess it was a living.

When Lee reactivated the title, he transformed the outdated singing cowpoke into a cross between the Lone Ranger and Daredevil—except Lee hadn't yet created the Man Without Fear. Matt Hawk was the town of Tombstone's peaceable lawyer. But at night he dons a black gunslinger's outfit much like that of his earlier namesake—except he also wears a brown cowhide vest with black domino mask to conceal his identity. Hawk fought outlaws as an unofficial lawman, aided by strongman Boom-Boom Brown—a character anticipating Sgt. Fury's Dum-Dum Dugan. Two-Gun's

black stallion, Thunder, also had a dual identity. He pretended to be a swayback nag whenever lawyer Hawk rode him.

Lee gave the job of drawing the new Two-Gun to no less than Jack Kirby, who had briefly handled the old version in his final issues. Before that, Al Hartley and John Severin were most identified with the strip. Later, Dick Ayers did the post-Kirby honors.

A similar transformation happened to *The Rawhide Kid*. That title ran 16 issues from March 1955 to September 1957. The original Rawhide was a whip-wielding ranchhand who wore a buckskin jacket and rode with a kid sidekick named Randy Clayton. Somewhere along the line, he got a new black outfit with a Texas Ranger-style buttoned tunic. The Comics Code had forced him to toss away his trademark whip.

But in August, 1960—a year before *The Fantastic Four*—Lee reactivated the title. Superficially, the new version seemed to be the same character, except his blue-black outfit suffered minor changes and the character was drawn as a bantam-sized redhead where Bob Brown and Dick Ayers—the original artists—had depicted a strapping blond six-footer who was known only as The Rawhide Kid.

The revamped character's real name was Johnny Bart and, like Kid Colt, he was a fugitive. The lone survivor of a wagon train attack, Johnny was adopted by an old ex-Texas Ranger named Ben Bart, who taught him to shoot. When Bart was bushwhacked, Johnny went gunning for his killer, acquiring a powerful rep as a fast draw.



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# KIRBY KINETICS

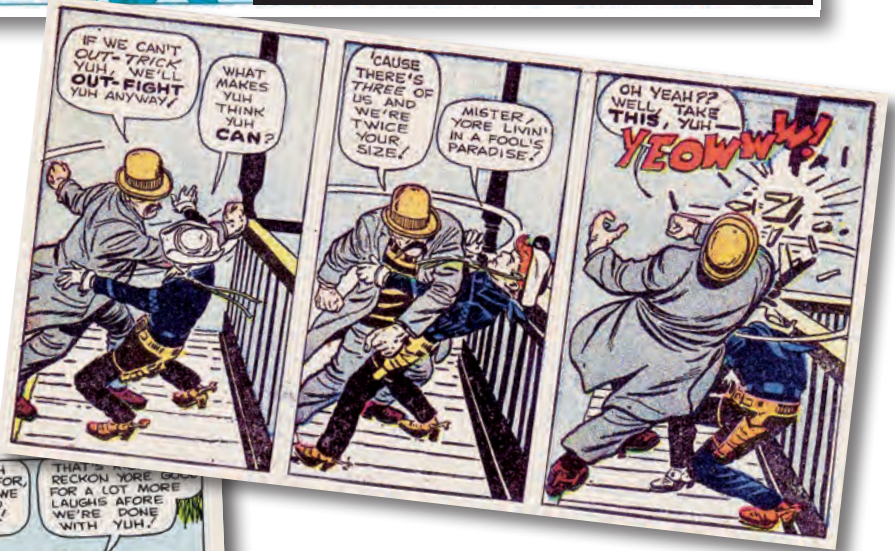
## by Norris Burroughs

An ongoing examination of Kirby's art and compositional skills



### RAWHIDE KID, BANTAMWEIGHT SCRAPPER

I discovered Jack Kirby at age nine. One of the first Kirby comics that I was exposed to was *The Rawhide Kid*. The action scenes were so exhilarating that I had



to figure out how Kirby did it. I studied the sequences over and over, amazed at the creative mind behind them. With the series debuting about a year before the first issue of *The Fantastic Four*, the smoldering young Rawhide Kid certainly felt like a super-hero in his skintight, ink-black outfit. He was supernaturally fast on the draw and a real scrapper in a fight. Next to Kirby's steely-eyed six footers, the Rawhide Kid was a bantamweight; a wiry little black leopard.

As he often did with Captain America, Kirby put the Kid through his paces, regularly pitting him in brawls against multiple foes, and many twice his size. Throughout his career, Kirby's fight scenes had always taken advantage of the sequential continuity of panels on a comic book page, using a certain degree of follow-through motion from one frame to the next. Kirby seemed to enjoy using a cinematic move/countermove, parry/thrust action to emphasize that the Kid fought strategically in order to outwit and befuddle his mostly larger foes. Sequences like this three-panel exchange [above] became common in the series, as the Kid's escapades took on an almost slapstick comedic style, with the Kid as a sort of trickster making fools of his opponents. Lee's dialogue also often pointed out the size disparity between the opponents.

The lithe black silhouette of the Rawhide Kid inspired Kirby to really explore the limits of kinetic continuity. The positioning of the Kid's negative shape was like an anchor for the eye, a naturally spotted black to give contrast and motion.

Black spotting is by some considered to be a mysterious art trick, and is often not well understood. In reality it is a reasonably simple concept. It is essentially about the contrast between light and dark. A black shape or dark shadow placed behind or next to another object will push that object forward or better define it. In this case from *Rawhide Kid* #32 [left], it is the Kid's black costume that



# THE GREAT KIRBY

by Shane Foley

(below) From *Captain America* #206 (Feb. 1977)—about as negative a letter column as you could assemble.

(next page, top right) Was this letter from “Steve Rogers” in *Cap* #202 real, or a fake by a *Marvel* staffer?

(next page, center) Is this “Kim Thompson” the late co-publisher of *Fantagraphics*?

More than once we’ve heard that Jack Kirby felt the letters pages in his ’70s *Marvel* books were stacked negatively against his work, with disparaging and critical comments being given greater voice than the positive, supportive ones. And there are certainly staffers from that period of time (Jim Shooter and Alan Kupperberg, for example, both interviewed online) who have publicly stated they felt Kirby was right in his suspicions.

However, I must admit that, while I knew there were many negative and critical comments on those pages, I had never felt that they were overly so, or that

For sure, the Kirby’s work of all-out action. **Anyone can tell you that Kirby can’t write worth half a penny, but at least the King has sense enough to know when to have action.** *Letter 11*

the opinions printed there were entirely unfair. So I sat down with every book Kirby did in that period, read every letter on every letters page, and counted what was there—rating them as either *irrelevant* (i.e. comments about something generic like “what the name of Cap’s letters page should be called,” etc.), *positive, negative, or somewhere in-between*.

I counted the letters in each title and into the Editor-in-Chief periods. (I used cover dates only, acknowledging that these are publication order dates only, months different from true production dates. And I realize, of course, that the demarcation between one editor’s work and another’s is never clear-cut, but it’s the best I could do.)

It is noteworthy that, unless an issue was an Annual, or a Treasury, or one of the first few of a new title where no letters were possible, there was not a single issue without a letter column until April 1978, the month *Machine Man* and *Devil Dinosaur* started and just after Kirby himself took control of the letter columns. This will be addressed a little later.

## THE MARV WOLFMAN ERA (January to September 1976)

Marv Wolfman was Editor in Chief when Kirby returned to *Marvel*, and on his titles dated Jan. 1976 to Sept. ’76. In that period, there were fifteen Kirby books released (*Cap* #193-201 and *Annual* #3, *Eternals* #1-3, as well as *Cap’s Bicentennial Battles*.) It also includes the *2001 Treasury*, which, though released later, was produced as part of Wolfman’s time. (An editorial comment stated that Kirby handed in the work a full twelve months ahead of schedule!)

All regular *Captain America* issues had LOCs, with 31 letters in all. 23 were positive, three negative, and five in-between.

*Eternals* #3 had the first letters to that new title and all three were favorable.

So under Marv Wolfman, the letters were healthily in Kirby’s favor. There were two negative things I see that could have annoyed Kirby: First, a letter by Kim Thompson in *Cap* #194 [next page], pleading with *Marvel* not to let Kirby edit and script, citing “destruction of one great concept after the other” at DC proving he can’t “develop or script a series.” The answer was to give Kirby a chance first, implying the reader was being quite unfair. But the question could be asked by Kirby: Why was such a comment printed at all? When Roy Thomas or Gerry Conway was to take over a strip, would there be letters published beforehand



Dear Whomever,  
It was late, Jack Kirby and CAPTAIN AMERICA were meant to be.

But...Cap and the Falcon have outlasted their partnership. I buy CAPTAIN AMERICA regularly to see the red-white-and-blue Avenger, and lately I have seen too much of the Falcon. To put it simply, he cramps Cap's style. Ish # 202 shows my point.

Eight and two-thirds pages of the Falcon, but only eight and one-third pages of Captain America. This is not the important factor, however. The eight and two-thirds Falcon pages were mostly action, while throughout most of the issue, Cap did little more than talk, sit, and admittedly get tired.

As a final note, I would like to say to the first and only King that I criticize for just one reason—I'm right.

Richard A. Buchko, Jr.  
2291 Eighth Street  
Wyandotte, MI 48192

To tell you the truth, Rich, yours was the first letter we've received in years telling us that Cap's and Falc's partnership was the pits. In fact, most people don't even comment on the team-up anymore, choosing just to remark on the story and art, perhaps in the belief that they don't want to buck the status quo.

Whatever the reasons, it seems that most of fandom wants the high-flying Falcon to stay where he is. And until an overwhelming majority decide that they want us to deep-six Falc, he's going to do just that.

Comprende?

Dear Marvel,

I just can't hold off any longer. I've been saving my comments on the Jolly One's take over of CAPTAIN AMERICA until he settled in and the strip improved...and it has. It's improved from downright awful to only slightly nauseating.

Really, fellas, Jack's stories were never more than very good, and his art always has left something to be desired. But now he's regressed tremendously.

I feel that unless Kirby experiences a small miracle, or you change writer/artists, Cap's mag will soon join SUB-MARINER, SILVER SURFER, and ABRGH! in the great beyond.

Also, all I've read in the letters pages so far is praise. I know you've gotten criticizing letters. How about covering all general opinions, huh?

Paul Butler  
809 Gannon Avenue  
Madison, WI 53714

Covering all opinions, huh?

Okay, Paul, just to foment a little furious discussion, we're printing the following letters.

Dear Folks,

I just read the Secret Empire/Nomad/Falcon's Past segment of CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE FALCON. Then, I read the Madbomb series. I wanted to cry.

I suppose it's fitting that the man who created Captain America be allowed to destroy him, but I can't let it go unnoticed. Kirby's credentials as an artist are well-known, perhaps too well-known since his hero-worshipping fans have tolerated scripts that would normally be unacceptable in a *Marvel* magazine. Didn't the Nomad teach us the dangers of hero-worship, class? Two complex, thinking characters have been turned into a couple of jocks who are incapable of thinking past their next punch. Falcon gets in his token reference to the ghetto every issue. He used to live there. Cap speaks every word as if giving a speech to the V. F. W. None of this dialogue has any lota of the eloquence of issues #176 or #183.

The Madbomb plot had potential, but it was immediately buried in ripped off subplots. We had the 1984 rip off, the ROLLERBALL rip off, and—that old standby—the low affair with the victim of a terminal illness. We see a rather ludicrous underground hideout. I couldn't even consider it dangerous when compared to the Secret Empire's HQ. There are also weird houses, and now other dimensions. Does Jack know how to write in the real world?

John McGraway  
(No address given)

Dear Jack, Stan, Steve, Frank, Marv, etc.,

Since you don't print any criticism about Jack, I know this letter won't be printed, but it still has to be said.

I believe the Golden Age of *Marvel* was about the mid-1960's. All the mag's were incredibly good, except for CAPTAIN AMERICA. Why? Because there was no character development. From the splash page to the ending there was nothing but senseless battle.

Now to 1973. Steve Englehart arrived! He breathed new life into a dying magazine. Cap began to question his and America's action. Those cliché-breaking issues of Steve's were among the best *Marvel* ever put out.

But on comes 1976. Jack Kirby writes Cap as if it was in the 40's or 50's. His writing on CAP breaks away from everything Steve did to make Cap realistic. All we see now is battle without sense or character development.

Cap is a symbol of democracy, right? But if he questions nothing he does, he's no better than the 1950's Cap from issues #153-156.

Jack, quit writing CAP. I for one want Steve back. I'm sure *Marvel*dom Assembled agrees.

Jim Caple  
2652 Fr  
Longview, WA 98632

Do they, Jim? We don't think so.

As we've said before, the difference between Kirby and Englehart is basically one of style. They each have their individual visions as to who Cap is, and both of their Caps are different in character than the way he originally appeared. We could argue forever about their respective merits and maladies, but there is nothing we can say about the book that the King can't say for himself in his work.

We feel that most of our readers like Jack's work, and whether we're right, only time and sales will tell.

Dear Jack,

The last we saw of Sharon Carter she was thinking of breaking off with Captain America. Are you planning to resolve that problem? I'd prefer you did not simply ignore it the way you ignore Steve's and Sam's previous identity problems. The extreme changes in personality that occurred in the heroes when you took over were unsettling.

Ann Nichols  
4864 Sioux Avenue  
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635

Just keep watchin', Ms. Nichols, Sharon Carter is back again as bombastic as ever, and the very subplot you speak of is in the process of being resolved.

Dear Bullpen,

I had a long letter all planned out full of criticisms and praise of this mag, but when I sat down to type it, I found I had forgotten everything I was going to say! Except, that this is my favorite comic! As for the criticisms, if I forgot them they must not be worth remembering.

Dee Waltz  
250 Forest Street  
Oberlin, OH 44074

We had a long answer all planned out full of appreciation, but when we sat down to paste up this letter column, we realized that we had run out of space, so all we have room to say is:

Thanks.

# KONTROVERSY LETTERS

pleading against them because the letter-writer thought they “killed” previous strips? Perhaps it was published because it represented the view of many (some staffers, we know, were against Kirby being allowed such autonomy), but Kirby probably did not appreciate it at all. And who could blame him?

The second objection by Kirby may have been a letter in *Cap* #196, and its editorial answer, which seemed to mock Kirby’s unorthodox stressed words. The writer commented of being bothered by something in Kirby’s writing style, with oddly placed italics used throughout the comment. The writer used italics in odd places, and the answer replied in kind:

However, there is one thing *about* Kirby’s writing style that bothers me a little, though I can’t quite *put* my finger on it. I’ll have to sit down *and* think deeply *on* it; maybe I’ll *be* able to pin it down someday.

Keep up the *good* work!

Keith N. Huntsman  
310-A Blackson Avenue  
Austin, TX 78752

As yours was *the* only letter commenting on Jolly Jack’s placement of stressed words within his script that we’ve received, Keith— we wonder *if* anyone else was bothered by them! But we will try to watch out *for* that in the future! See ya *in* thirty!

Some may see this as funny, but I’m sure Kirby, and his admirers, didn’t.

Still, it has to be acknowledged that letters favourable to Kirby’s work far outweighed the number of negative ones.

## THE ARCHIE GOODWIN ERA

(October 1976 to November 1977)

Archie Goodwin succeeded Wolfman as EIC as of October 1976-dated books. His leadership extended well after the October 1977 date cited above, but it was from November 1977 that Kirby himself took control of the letters pages in his books, hence this twelve-month period noted. It is understood that Kirby had great respect for Goodwin, yet under Goodwin’s editorship, the negative comments continued, and if anything, at times, increased.

61 letters of comment to *Captain America* were published, of which 29 were positive, 11 negative, and 21 wavering with pros and cons—which means 32 contained reservations or were not encouraging. Some (counted amongst the ‘wavering’ numbers) were back-handed compliments like “Jack Kirby has the best understanding of what adventure comics are supposed to present... anyone can tell you that Kirby can’t write worth half a penny, but at least the King has sense enough to know when to have action....” (*Cap* #203).

*Cap* #206 contained the most fiercely negative collection of

...and, whatever happened to Sharon Carter? I don't see any Editor since Jack just "retired" from Jack is still writing 1940's comics dressed up in just enough 1970's psuedo-relevance to cover up.

Steve Rogers

letters in any issue, with three very critical comments printed. One said, “I suppose it’s fitting that the man who created CA be allowed to destroy him,” and that “hero-worshipping fans have tolerated scripts that would normally be unacceptable in a Marvel magazine.” Then the page finishes with a letter stating that Cap is currently his favourite comic! The very next issue has a comment complaining about the “drivel demeaning Kirby’s writing abilities.” Not only did the widely disparate comments continue to be published—as opposed perhaps to simply commenting on Kirby’s artistic creativity or his story plots themselves—but nearly every letters page began with a yellow box reiterating the great “Kirby Kontroversy”—as if there was nothing else to talk about except whether Kirby was a good writer or not. So perhaps Kirby seriously wondered if good, solid letters on the actual story content were being ignored in favour of the “Kontroversy,” in which even the most supportive letters still reinforced the subject of Kirby’s validity as a writer. It must be noted, however, that during the second half of 1977, the tide of negative letters to *Cap* eased off considerably.

*Black Panther* fared similarly, with only 8 of the 17 letters published during this era being totally positive, while 5 were negative, and a further 4 expressed fears or problems alongside other positive aspects. One letter writer in *BP* #3 challenged Kirby on his editorial in #1, saying: “No, Mr. Kirby, it is not true that every character must retain the format from which he was created...” and asked for Kirby’s departure. In *BP* #5, there was another backhanded compliment, saying Kirby’s writing was “...no longer childish.” Again, I imagine Kirby would be concerned about the fact that over half the letters published in these two books during this period expressed less than positive comments, targeting his writing ability rather than the stories themselves.

*Eternals* and *2001* were quite different. Each there had positive comments that far outweighed the negative (*Eternals*: 46 positive, 6 negative, and 7 with a bit of both, while *2001* had 26 positives,

5 nay-sayers, and 5 with good and bad to say).


The *Eternals* letters were obsessed with whether or not the book should be part of the established Marvel Universe. Whether Kirby approved that debate or not is unclear, though I would have thought that the number of writers who asked that *Eternals* stay separate from established Marvel continuity should have gladdened him.

I’m not sure how relevant this is, but it surprised me that when Goodwin initiated the Bullpen Page credit box for the editorial lineup [below], Kirby was not included as a Consulting Editor until July 1977, even though the others (Thomas, Wein, Conway, Wolfman,

Gerber) had been listed there since December 1976!

But I have a plea; Please, please don't let Jack Kirby edit/ write **Cap**. Plot and illustrate, yes, but anybody who's suffered through his destruction of one superb concept after the other has got to admit that he can't develop or script a series.

Kim Thompson



<p><b>ARCHIE GOODWIN</b> Editor</p>	<p><b>JIM SHOOTER</b> Associate Editor</p>	<p><b>ROGER SLIFER, SCOTT EDELMAN, ROGER STERN</b> Assistant Editors</p>
<p><b>GERRY CONWAY, ROY THOMAS, LEN WEIN, MARV WOLFMAN</b> Consulting Editors</p>		
<p><b>JOHN ROMITA</b> Art Director</p>	<p><b>JOHN VERPOORTEN</b> Production Manager</p>	<p><b>IRVING FORBUSH</b> Choreographer</p>

HE  
TOOK...

...HIS  
LUMPS!



# INCIDENTAL ICONOGRAPHY

An ongoing analysis of Kirby's visual shorthand,  
and how he inadvertently used it to develop his characters,  
by Sean Kleefeld



With this issue, we're taking a look at what is arguably Jack Kirby's most iconic bruiser: Benjamin Jacob Grimm, the Thing. The classic rocky exterior Ben is most famously known by didn't really get solidified visually until three or four years into *The Fantastic Four*, and as this roughly coincides with Joe Sinnott taking on inking duties on a regular basis, a lot of credit has been given to him for refining that look. Sinnott does indeed deserve a great deal of credit, but that was actually closer to what Jack had been trying to do for a few years anyway.

Part of the problem with the Thing's visual is that the first several issues of *The Fantastic Four* feature a rotating crew of inkers. Dick Ayers was the first inker to stay on more than two issues, picking up in issue #6 after Joe Sinnott had to bow out after a couple pages. (Compare the close-up of the unmistakably-Sinnott Sue on the bottom of page two with a close-up of the unmistakably-Ayers Sue two pages later.) The Thing's appearance for those first several issues, then, is a little amorphous as a result.

Whatever Jack had penciled proved to be a little confusing for anyone trying to ink the character, and so different inkers took different approaches. Ayers later noted in an interview for *Alter Ego* #31 that, "I hated the Thing, because I couldn't figure out what he was made of... With those chiseled blocks, I can't figure—is he part alligator or what?" That he was colored an unnaturally bright orange probably didn't help in that regard.

Back in *Kirby Collector* #33, Glen Gold put forth another discovery about the character: That, at least as early as *FF* #15, Jack had been drawing the Thing with a more hard-edged, blocky exterior. Two paste-ups on the original art were covering Jack's original pencils, showcasing a design much closer to what we're familiar with. It was actually Ayers who had provided the softer version of the character by feathering in shadows that Jack had drawn as more solid.

Ayers wasn't the only one modifying Jack's pencils in that manner though. I was recently able to examine some original pages inked by George Roussos and Chic Stone (from issues #27 and #31)



and found similar changes. Roussos more or less followed what Ayers had been doing, whereas Stone ignored the indicated shadows entirely, inking only the rocky outlines. Jack's pencils, still visible underneath the inks, clearly show he had intended to depict Grimm in a much more jagged, angular fashion, and it was his series of inkers that were softening the character's look.

Interestingly, the first inker to really get to the lines that Jack put down was Vince Colletta in *FF* #40 [above]. The Thing that we see in that and his subsequent issues is much closer to the past-ed-over pencils from *FF* #15. When Sinnott finally takes over in #44, he initially takes the same approach, adhering very closely to Jack's pencils. It's only over the course of his next several issues that we begin to see the classically stylized version Sinnott became so well known for.

Now, Will Murray pointed out back in *Kirby Collector* #38 that the cover inking on *FF* #7

seems to be the closest

in style to Jack's pencils

from *FF* #15, surmising that

it was Jack himself who inked that cover. Given also that Sinnott was one of the most faithful



(circles, top to bottom) *FF* #5 inked by Sinnott, *FF* #6 inked by Ayers, and *FF* #7, inked by Kirby himself.

(below) Jack's final *FF* appearance of the Thing, in pencil from the story that eventually ran in issue #108.

(left) *FF* #1.



# KIRBY'S SUMMER OF LOVE

by Eamonn Murphy and David Penalosa



## "MAKE LOVE, & WAR" BY EAMONN MURPHY

The "Summer of Love" happened fifty years ago in 1967. *Sergeant Pepper*, released on June 1, was blasting out of every speaker. Flowers were in the hair and everywhere, their scent mixed with another strange, sweet odor. The counterculture was launching in Haight-Ashbury.

All super, but what was on the newsstands? More importantly, what did Jack Kirby have out in the world that season? Not as straightforward as you might think, this question. The cover dates are misleading because they lag by several months. I am indebted to Mike's *Amazing World of Comics* (mikesamazingworld.com) for accurate info on what was out there at the time, namely: *Tales of Suspense* #93-95 featuring Captain America, *Thor* #144-146, *Fantastic Four* #66-68 and *FF Annual* #5. That's a grand total of 198 pages of comic book action—not bad for one artist over three months.

## TALES OF SUSPENSE #93-95

Obviously it wasn't all peace and love in action-oriented super-hero comics. The ten-page Captain America stories of this era were usually all about fighting. Steve Rogers would pause occasionally to mourn Bucky or moon over Agent 13, but in general Nick Fury kept him busy busting bad guys. *Tales of Suspense* #93-94 was no exception, a classic two-parter in which Cap went up against A.I.M. and Modok.

"Into the Jaws of A.I.M." opens with a fantastic splash page of Cap underwater, heading straight at you wearing a S.H.I.E.L.D. long-distance mini-cruiser. He finds the A.I.M. sub he's after but they gas him, capture him and hold him with a magnetic field. As Cap is not metallic, there's no real reason a magnetic field should hold him, but never mind. Agent 13 frees him with her anti-polar coveralls. On page 5 Cap dives forward and punches out two bad guys, then goes into a forward roll and lashes out with his feet to get another.

"You put four of them out of action in as many seconds!" Agent 13 cries. Perhaps she's crying because she can't do sums: There were only three. The A.I.M. agents are being commanded by a stern, mysterious voice from their control panel. They recapture Cap and 13 and the story closes with her sinking into the floor and Cap helpless, about to be shot!

In the next issue ("If This Be Modok!") another A.I.M. agent reminds the would-be shooter they can't do anything without permission from Modok, and Cap is saved—not only that, but the agents decide to rebel against their new leader. Modok wants to study Cap, so they send him down, hoping to kill the tyrant while he's distracted. On page 4 Cap meets Modok, a new villain at the time, but another Kirby creation destined to become a Marvel mainstay. He's a little troll of a man in

[Editor's Note: In another of the continued string of Kirby Coincidences I've encountered in nearly 25 years of producing this magazine, two contributors approached me, unbeknown to the other, wanting to write about Jack's output during the 1967 "Summer Of Love"—when an estimated 100,000 hippies flocked to San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury neighborhood and took up temporary residence; "dropping out" of mainstream society, holding rock and art music festivals, complete with free love and psychedelic drug usage. It received widespread media coverage, and undoubtedly "squares" like Lee and Kirby were aware of its influence on the youth of America. So for this 50th Anniversary of that countercultural watershed event, let's drop out of all this fighting for a few pages, and turn on and tune in to what Kirby work might've been influenced by it, and how.]

(below) The pencils for this *Tales of Suspense* #93 splash ran back in TJKC #43.



# “WHAT WERE THEY SMOKING?”

BY DAVID PENALOSA

Although it was a half century ago, I can still remember very clearly how I felt in the Summer of 1967. I recall walking down the street with a spring in my step, the sun on my face, and exclaiming out loud “This is a *great* summer!” There was just something in the air. I could feel it! All across the country, young people were coming together and celebrating. It was the *Summer of Love*. “Peace and love” and “Flower Power” were the mottos of the exponentially growing youth movement. George Harrison recalled: “That period felt special because there was a great upsurge of energy and consciousness. All the things that were taking place—with fashion, and with filmmakers, poets and painters—it was like a mini-Renaissance.”<sup>1</sup> Kids were listening and dancing to new kinds of music. They were smoking marijuana and expanding their consciousness—and they were also taking lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD, a.k.a. ‘acid’) and having their minds blown wide open. For the first time in the nation’s history, the act of intentionally altering one’s consciousness through the use of powerful psychedelic drugs was a form of mass entertainment. For many, it was also an act of joyous liberation, a spiritual journey, and an act of rebellion against what many saw as the narrow mindset of the older generation, the so-called “Establishment.” At the heart of the youth culture was a blossoming counterculture. Throughout America, many young people were tuning in, turning on, and dropping out.

I, on the other hand, was eleven years old and a Boy Scout in 1967. I was reading Marvel comics exclusively that summer. The collaborations of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby were radically expanding the boundaries of the artform—and the Kirbyverse blew my mind wide open. “Make mine Marvel!” was my motto. Marvel of the 1960s was not the multi-billion dollar entertainment giant it is today. Back then it was still a relatively small comic book company, but that irreverent upstart brought about a comic book Renaissance. The best Marvel comics by far were the ones penciled by Jack, who also created the characters, and plotted the stories. Stan edited the books and wrote the dialogue.

Marvel comics were not just for children. Marvel was considered hip in 1967. College students and hippies read them. Ironically, whenever the guys at DC or Marvel tried to be hip by using what they considered to be contemporary lingo, the results were consistently embarrassing. The world Jack drew in 1967 didn’t look particularly up-to-date. His men still wore fedoras. What made Jack’s art so cool were his choreographed action scenes, his original designs, and a cosmically mythic reality—the Kirbyverse, erupting from his ceaselessly imaginative mind. Yet, for all of its unbound creativity and seeming relevance to counterculture aesthetics, Marvel was really more a part of the Establishment, than not. Marvel’s surprising popularity



with the counterculture prompted Stan Lee to clarify in several interviews: “I’m not a hippy.”<sup>2</sup> In the late ’60s Stan sported a beard, so perhaps that fact wasn’t obvious to everyone. Middle-aged Jack Kirby certainly wasn’t any kind of a hippie either, but working night after night on his drafting table down in the Kirby family basement, he created a separate reality that was as revolutionary and as mind-expanding to comics as the Beatles’ *Revolver* and *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* were to rock ‘n’ roll.

In fact, the pinnacle of the Beatles’ creativity, the period from 1965 to 1968—*Rubber Soul*, *Revolver*, *Sgt. Pepper*, *Magical Mystery Tour*, and the “White Album”—roughly coincides with what I consider to be the peak period of Stan and Jack’s creativity. Does that mean Stan and Jack were smoking pot when they worked on the Frightful Four story

arc (*FF* #36-38), and then dropped acid around the time of the Galactus trilogy (*FF* #49-51)? A lot of their stuff was definitely *out there!* At a 1993 gathering of fans held at Comic Relief in Berkeley, Jack told me “When I was drawing those scenes out in space, I was out there too, experiencing it.” And all of us were out there as well, experiencing it with him. Friends of mine who attended university in 1967 told me years later that they read Marvel comics back then, and figured Stan and Jack were getting high. “We just assumed they were doing the same things we were doing” a Yale graduate told me. It was a common assumption. I have never read anything suggesting Jack tried mind-altering drugs. Considering his documented anti-drug comments, it is safe to say he never did.<sup>3</sup>

Stan never did either, but he reportedly came close once. According to author Sean Howe, a Marvel staff member tried unsuccessfully to convince editorial assistant Denny O’Neil (a self-described hippie) to drop a dose of LSD into Stan’s coffee.<sup>4</sup> That would have been interesting (Excelsior!). Stan has stated for the record that he has never smoked marijuana, and his knowledge of illegal drugs appears limited.<sup>5</sup> He did not understand the difference between the mind-altering drugs popular in 1967 (marijuana, LSD and other psychedelics) and physically additive narcotics.<sup>6</sup> Stan and Jack were tripping in the late ’60s, but they were tripping without drugs. Ironically, the same cannot necessarily be

(above) In 1967, 50 year old Kirby still drew NYC’ers with fedoras, while the Beatles (left) sported more up-to-date threads.



(below) David Crosby of the Byrds (later of Crosby, Stills, and Nash) reads *Avengers* #22 (Nov. 1965).







(above) The WonderCon panelists, left to right: Mark Evanier, Steve Sherman, Rand Hoppe, Paul S. Levine, and Scott Dunbier. Photo by and courtesy of Nicholas A. Eskey.

(below) Steve Sherman, Kirby, and Mark Evanier in 1969.

Most images for this article are courtesy of the Jack Kirby Museum and whatifkirby.com. Thanks, guys!

## 2017 WONDERCON PANEL

Transcribed by Sean Dulaney from an audio recording supplied by Tom Kraft. Edited by Mark Evanier and John Morrow.

[The following panel was held at WonderCon in Anaheim, California on Sunday, April 2, 2017 at the Anaheim Convention Center.]

MARK EVANIER: I'm Mark Evanier. This is my friend Steve Sherman, ladies and gentlemen. [applause] We'll talk a lot about Steve's role in Jack's life in a few minutes. This is the Executive Director of the Jack Kirby Museum, Mr. Rand Hoppe. [applause] This is the attorney for the Rosalind Kirby Trust—I finally got the name right—this is Mr. Paul Levine. [applause] And this is IDW Publishing's Director of Special Projects, Mr. Scott Dunbier. [applause] He's up here because most of you are probably buying his special projects, which are exciting books that reproduce Jack Kirby art from the original art and... I would just say, Jack knew someone would do that someday. One of the reasons that art was so good was he knew that someday it would be printed with much better reproduction than the cheap little 10-cent, 12-cent, 15-cent comics on the crappy paper.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of Jack's birth. I don't think we need a reason to celebrate him, but that's as good a reason as any. I did an interview



yesterday for a documentary. We were down in the dealers room, and they said, "Why do you celebrate Jack Kirby?"

Why do you honor Jack Kirby?" and I said, "Because for one thing, Jack Kirby is sort of our industry. He's everywhere. Look around," and I didn't think to look for this before I said it, but I looked around, and over there was artwork influenced by Jack Kirby, over there were posters influenced by Jack Kirby, right around me—a 360 degree view around and everything was Jack Kirby-connected in some way. Either his energy or his characters... people swiping his poses... as you go through that dealers room downstairs, just silently count to yourself the Kirby influences you see. It's not everybody. There are some people making fuzzy bunny sculptures that, maybe, I can't make the connection to Jack on those. But so much of it is what Jack did, and not just imitations of specific characters. One of the things that Jack was very...

[Evanier's thought is interrupted as staff works to project a photo on the screen in the room]

Steve, do you remember this photo? [at lower left]

STEVE SHERMAN: I do remember it.

EVANIER: Do you remember who took this photo?

SHERMAN: I think it was Roz. What year is this?

EVANIER: I would say that's 1969. I was 17 years old. How old were you, Steve?

SHERMAN: I was 20, I think.

EVANIER: I think that was down in Irvine. When the Kirbys moved out to California, they lived for two years... [reacting to a ringing in the room] without cell phones interrupting them... [laughter]. They rented a house in a tract where every house looked like every other house. You had to have the exact [house] number. You could not find the house by its look, because they all looked the same. They were there for a couple of years until Jack accrued the necessary funds, and they found the right place to buy their first home, which was out in Thousand Oaks, California. They lived in another one in Newberry Park, which is right next to Thousand Oaks. And Steve and I went to work for Jack in—I think this is from before we were formally working for him.

SHERMAN: Right.

EVANIER: We actually started working for him formally in February of 1970, and for a month we sat on the biggest story in comics. We knew a month before the whole community did that Jack was leaving Marvel and going to DC. He took us out to lunch one day at Canter's Delicatessen on Fairfax, and he said, "I'm leaving Marvel. I'm going to DC." He took us into his confidence. We had to swear secrecy. Stan Lee didn't

printing Jack Kirby's stuff, Scott is in consultation with the estate and does it respectfully and we're very pleased that he's ethical about all this stuff.

LEVINE: Everyone at IDW has been terrific.

EVANIER: Rand, I don't think I've ever asked you this. When did you start getting interested in Jack Kirby?

HOPPE: I was in summer camp reading a *Kamandi* comic, [laughter] where he shot the grasshopper.

EVANIER: So, what is your favorite Jack Kirby body of work?

HOPPE: It completely varies, but most often the answer is *The Forever People*.

EVANIER: And when did you decide to start getting into the preservation and chronicling of Jack Kirby?

HOPPE: Well, there was a time when I decided I wanted to learn how to make a website, and I figured a Jack Kirby website would be a really fun thing. So I actually reached out to John Morrow on CompuServe. [audience "ooooohs" and chuckles] John is the publisher of *The Jack Kirby Collector*.

EVANIER: CompuServe was a service that ran on an Etch-A-Sketch. [laughter]

HOPPE: John didn't even know what a website was, but I asked him if he wanted a website for *The Kirby Collector*. So we worked it out and that's when I started my trail of Jack Kirby work.

EVANIER: And the Kirby many images in the library

HOPPE: I think we have... because he's better with t

TOM KRAFT: [from audience] and 7,500 photocopies.

HOPPE: 7,500 of the pen

EVANIER: I think it should be pencil photocopies, which work before it was lettered because, in part, Steve and a copy machine in the early working for a copy machine these pencil pages back to would sit down to draw to remember what the new wouldn't remember how no record of it.

In the Summer of 19 visited the DC offices and MAD magazine offices, and Ditko for a day. We went to want to tell this story in fiction can nod and verify this, because people don't believe it. At that point, none of Jack's DC work had come out yet. He was doing it, but it was not coming out until later that year, and most of the DC editors had not seen it.

MARK MOONRIDER OF THE FOREVER PEOPLE!!



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nt to lunch the first day we were there with Julie tz. He took us to a place that was noted for the waitresses wore really short skirts. [laughter] sat us down over lunch and he says, "What's new Gods' thing we hear Jack is doing?" Now his was twelve yards from Carmine Infantino's and off was under lock and key and almost nobody at seen it. They were so paranoid the ideas would en.

at was on a Monday we did that. On Tuesday, t to the Marvel offices and there were Xeroxes *Gods*, *Forever People*, and *Mister Miracle*—on the because Vince Colletta was showing the stuff when he came up to pick up work at Marvel. He owing it and they were copying it. So one day, ed a copy of *Forever People* #2 so he could fin because he couldn't remember what something looked like in it. He called DC and said, "Please send me stats of this," and they didn't. I called the secretary at Marvel and she took it off the wall and mailed it to him. [laughter] Great security, right?

(above) A fun loose sketch of the Forever People's Mark Moonrider, circa 1971, in honor of (and courtesy of) our buddy Rand Hoppe of the Kirby Museum. We're with him all the way in his appreciation of this under-appreciated gem of a series by Jack.