

COMICS' BRONZE AGE AND BEYOND!



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BACKISSUE!

WEIRD ISSUE!



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Batman's Weirdest Team-Ups • Orlando's *Weird Adventure Comics* • *Weird War Tales* • *Weird Mystery Tales*
Ditko's *Shade the Changing Man & Stalker* • Chaykin's *Iron Wolf* • Crumb's *Weirdo* • Starlin & Wrightson's *The Weird*

Volume 1,
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February 2015

**Celebrating the
Best Comics of
the '70s, '80s,
'90s, and Beyond!**

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BACKISSUE

Comics' Bronze Age and Beyond!



WEIRD ISSUE

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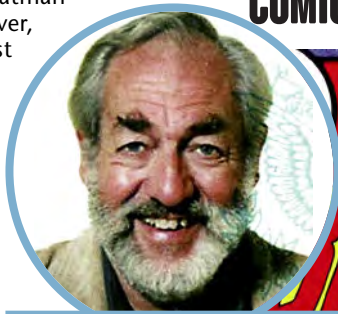
In selecting Batman's weirdest team-ups of the Bronze Age of Comics, and by "weird" I mean tales both supernatural and out-of-the-ordinary, one clear pattern emerged: Never judge the weirdness of a Batman team-up by its cover. More than likely, the interior story will be weirder. The strangest team-ups often make the most sense. "Normal" superhero team-ups are sprinkled with the oddest moments. Supernatural elements are treated as so matter-of-fact that "weird" need not apply. And one particular story stands apart (barely!) as uncanny because it could not have happened. So what do I know for certain? It's sure been a lot of fun researching for discussion the weirdest of Batman's weird team-ups during the Bronze Age!

Before we get to them, though, a different kind of weirdness requires some explanation, and that is Batman's character as interpreted by writer Bob Haney in *The Brave and the Bold* (*B&B*) scripts credited to him in this article. Batman in *B&B* was a strong, tough crimefighter. However, he was not always the World's Greatest Detective, escape artist, and hand-to-hand combatant as depicted by other Bat-writers during that time, among them Denny O'Neil, Frank Robbins, Len Wein, and David V. Reed. Haney's Caped Crusader could be flawed to suit Haney's stories. For example, whereas Batman could easily handle a group of attacking thugs in the pages of *Batman* and *Detective Comics*, the Batman in *Brave and the Bold* could just as easily be subdued by a similar group of ruffians, as long as it allowed Haney to put Batman in a dangerous situation that lent more excitement to the narrative.

Bob Rozakis, former writer, "Answer Man," and production manager at DC, recalls, "We used to joke in the office that all these stories took place on Earth-B (for Boltinoff, *Brave & Bold*, Bob Haney—your choice), but editor Murray Boltinoff's primary goal with his books was to tell entertaining stories. Sure, Bob drove the continuity train off the tracks all the time, but the stories were always interesting."

Haney's Batman also tended to act rashly, or inexplicably adopt an over-the-top Popeye Doyle tone to his temper, because the writer preferred his Batman reacting that way. Haney's Batman deviated in personality from others' interpretations, even his own, because in the end Haney's creative concern was not about character, it was about *plot*—driving it, propelling it, catapulting it, taking the reader on a thrill ride from start to finish. Because of all these factors, and long after the howl-to-do over it, Haney's *Brave and the Bold* stories have done something quite unexpected. They have stood the test of time. How weird, yet satisfying, is that?

So here we go. I've arranged almost two dozen Batman team-ups into manageable sections, basically to keep some order to the weirdness, ranging from supernatural to out of the ordinary to peculiar one-shots, all leading up to, in my humble, slightly addled opinion, THE weirdest Batman team-ups of the Bronze Age!

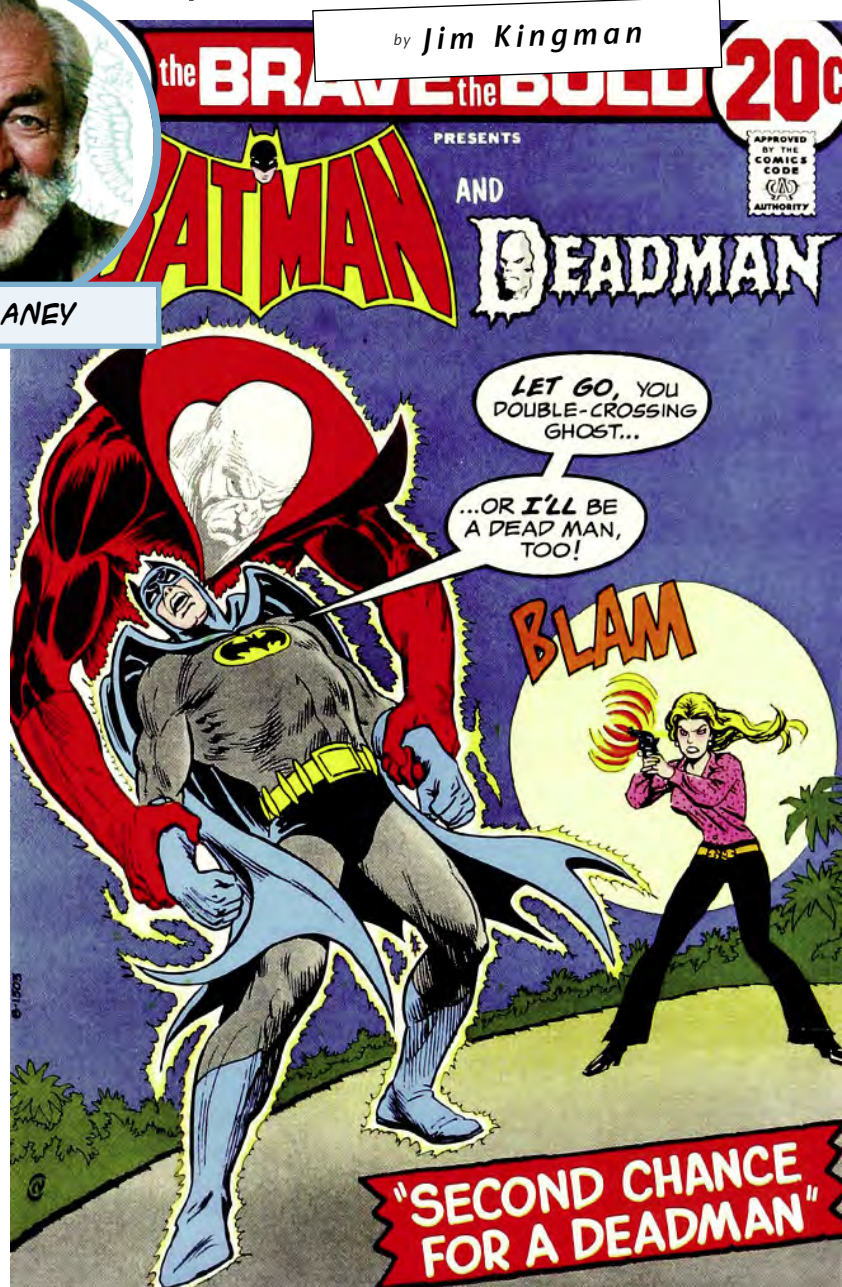


BOB HANEY

WEIRD BATMAN TEAM-UPS

THE CAPED CRUSADER HAD HIS SHARE OF SUPERNATURAL AND OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY TEAM-UPS DURING THE BRONZE AGE OF COMICS, AND THE WEIRDER THE BETTER

by Jim Kingman



The Things We Do for Love

Our cover stars are at odds in this offbeat Batman/Deadman adventure. Cover to *The Brave and the Bold* #104 (Nov.–Dec. 1972) by Nick Cardy.

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Weird, Wild Stuff

You don't see this happening every day in a Batman comic! (left) Cover to *Brave and Bold* #137 (Oct. 1977), penciled by Rich Buckler and inked by Jim Aparo. (right) Even the oddball Creeper considers this villain a "weirdo"! Cover to *B&B* #178 (Sept. 1981) by Buckler and Dick Giordano.

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Batman and Man-Bat

Introduced in *Detective Comics* #400 as both friend and foe of Batman, and also appearing in several subsequent appearances in *Tec and Batman*, Man-Bat only made two *Brave and the Bold* appearances: *B&B* #119 (June 1975) and 165 (Aug. 1980).

"Bring Back Killer Krag," by Haney and Aparo and published in *B&B* #119, is one of my favorites, although it doesn't do much to enhance the reputation of Gotham Natural History Museum curator Kirk Langstrom, a.k.a. Man-Bat.

Hitman Killer Krag has fled to the Caribbean island of Santa Cruz, where he will remain protected by its ruler, Domingo Valdez, after successfully making a hit on racehorse enthusiast Augie Moran, despite Batman and Commissioner Gordon's attempt to assure his safety. Moran's wife offers a reward for the capture of her husband's killer. While Batman is in it for justice, Man-Bat is in it for the money, and his arrogance, prompting Batman to call him an "ego-mad nightmare," will cost the lives of two ex-CIA agents who also attempt to claim the bounty. This is a taut thriller until we get to page 16, and then matters get really weird with one swig of the vial! Batman and Man-Bat have been taken captive, and are on the verge of execution. But Batman has become a bat-beast, startling his captors. Langstrom had secretly slipped Batman a pocketed bat-gland serum which transformed the Caped Crusader after he drank it. Two man-bats are better than one in this instance, and the two snag Killer Krag and flee Santa Cruz via immense bat-wings. Later, Batman reverts to his normal self after administering an anti-bat serum. Thank goodness! This climax is too much!

Batman and Swamp Thing

Batman's collaborations with Swamp Thing were chronicled by four different writers over a 24-year period: Len Wein (*Swamp Thing* #7, Nov.–Dec. 1973); Bob Haney (*The Brave and the Bold* #122, Oct. 1975); Martin Pasko (*The Brave and the Bold* #176, July 1981, which sets the stage for Swampy's big comeback in 1982); and Alan Moore (*Swamp Thing* vol. 2 #53, Oct. 1986). Moore's entry leans more Modern than

Bronze, but it's a great tale and deserves a quick nod.

In *B&B* #122, Swamp Thing is taken into captivity and strung up for show on a Gotham City street. This inhuman act will ironically lead to Swampy rescuing the city from destruction by a host of invasive giant plants.

"Murray enjoyed working with me as a colorist," remembers Carl Gafford, whose first coloring assignment was in *Detective Comics* #443, a reprint of the Creeper's first appearance in *Showcase*. "Either Joe Orlando or Paul Levitz didn't want *B&B* regular colorist Jerry Serpe to color the Batman and Swamp Thing team-up as Serpe was more concerned about getting pages done fast, so I was suggested, as I would follow the way Swampy looked in his own comic, colored by Tatjana Wood. Murray liked my work on that story, and in the following issue I colored a team-up of Batman, Plastic Man, and Metamorpho. Murray never got the recognition he was due, not at DC and certainly not by fandom."



CARL GAFFORD

Caricature by Carl Gafford.

BATMAN'S OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY TEAM-UPS

Batman and Kamandi

Time travel played a necessary role in uniting Batman with Kamandi, the Last Boy on Earth, in *The Brave and the Bold* #120 (July 1975) and 157 (Dec. 1979).

B&B #120, by Haney and Aparo, stands out.

Deep in a cave in Mount Rushmore, on a post-apocalyptic Earth where animals rule and men have become animals, a small group of trapped men and women seek help from the past to find a better future. Manton, the elder, sprinkles American Indian magic powder on the image of Batman on the cover of *The Brave and the Bold* #118, and then something very weird happens. In 1975, Batman suddenly collapses, and his spirit leaves his body and transports into the future, where he becomes whole and quickly learns he is in a world no longer his own. Soon after, he becomes Captain Bat, leader of a gorilla slave squad, heading the pursuit to capture "a yellow-haired animal," more familiar to us as Kamandi, the Last Boy on Earth! Eventually Batman and Kamandi will team up to aid Manton and his tribe escape the mountain where the presidential sculptures elicit awe and reverence from the

Adventure Comics was pretty super before it got weird. One of DC Comics' first titles had cover-featured at least one member of the Superman family since Superboy moved over from *More Fun Comics* with issue #103 in 1946.

When Joe Orlando was coaxed by DC editorial director Carmine Infantino to become a staff editor in 1968, readers immediately knew that he was there to shake things up. It was a transitional year for the company, as Jack Liebowitz sold the firm to Kinney Services and, preparing to retire, left Infantino in charge of editorial. As some of the old guard, such as Jack Schiff, also retired, Orlando's hiring was the first of several changes Infantino made to revitalize a company he felt was stale and rapidly losing ground to Marvel Comics.

Orlando cut his teeth at the legendary EC Comics and spent the intervening years honing his skills as a storyteller, eschewing superheroics for other genres. You could tell someone new was living in the *House of Mystery* as Robby Reed [Dial H for Hero] was evicted by Cain, the new caretaker. Supernatural tales signaled a changing of the guard and over the next few years, Joe's editorial load avoided DC's primary-colored cast of characters.

That changed in 1970 when Mike Sekowsky was fired as an editor late that year, leaving Infantino little choice but to assign *Adventure Comics*, featuring Supergirl, to Orlando. At the time, Joe was being assisted by E. Nelson Bridwell, who wound up writing an eight-pager in issue #409 (Aug. 1971), signaling a shift in tone. Orlando immediately replaced Sekowsky with writer John Albano, making his superhero debut, with artists Bob Oksner and Vince Colletta (who could at least draw pretty girls).

MIXING THINGS UP

Since these were the days of 25-cent/48-page books, each issue was rounded out with reprints, and Bridwell honored the title's legacy by using Legion of Super-Heroes reprints. But incrementally, things were changing. Albano quickly dispatched the storylines Sekowsky had been exploring and went for more offbeat tales with fewer recurring players. And as Bridwell made way for Mark Hanerfeld, a fan who was hired by DC to write some fan-oriented text pages and briefly became an assistant editor, the reprints selected also got more interesting. The Legionnaires were gone and in #412 (Nov. 1971) we saw "The Man with Animal Powers," the first Animal Man tale from *Strange Adventures* a few years earlier.

Weird Stuff Winging Your Way

The Joe Orlando-edited *Adventure Comics* bore no resemblance to its Silver Age stint as a Superman Family title. Cover to issue #425 (Dec. 1972–Jan. 1973) by Michael Kaluta.

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ORLANDO'S WEIRD Adventures:

FREED FROM USING SUPERHEROES, JOE ORLANDO'S ADVENTURE COMICS EDITORIAL TENURE DEMONSTRATED A WIDE VARIETY OF TASTES AND CHOICES

by Robert Greenberger



JOE ORLANDO

Photo by Bob Rozakis.



Teenaged Paul Levitz was a regular in the DC Comics halls, gathering up tidbits for *The Comic Reader* (which was once edited by Hanerfeld), and was therefore a witness to history. He comments to *BACK ISSUE*, "There was some neat stuff going on because Mark had more influence. Joe let Mark do the new-material backups by himself, and you can see his interests in what was produced. They have Mark's footprints all over them, while Joe was playing with the Supergirl stuff. Superheroes were something [Joe] could never get himself patently excited about."

Hanerfeld's tastes as a fan could also be found in the backup features which Orlando was commissioning to round out the 15-page lead stories. This explains the arrival of Zatanna in her first solo story, from Len Wein and Gray Morrow. Wein and Hanerfeld were contemporaries, but Morrow was a veteran who first began working in the 1950s and was an infrequent contributor to DC until that time. Wein went on to write several short Supergirl stories as Orlando experimented with the book's rhythms.

Steve Skeates, one of the newcomers editor Dick Giordano brought with him from Charlton Comics, got in on the fun with a Supergirl story in #417 (Mar. 1972), but he also co-wrote a Vigilante story with Marv Wolfman, illustrated by Morrow. "That Vigilante tale was an easy-as-pie example of what is usually referred to as the Marvel approach to comic-book construction—in large part due to Gray Morrow doing such a great job of pictorially telling Marv's story," Skeates said in his lengthy TwoMorrows interview (*Alter Ego* #84, *BACK ISSUE* #33-34). He continued to contribute to Supergirl tales, including stepping in to finish another Wolfman tale in *Adventure* #421. "I remember well one evening when Joe and I worked late into the night, rewriting, polishing, bouncing ideas off each other, trying to transform Mike Sekowsky's artwork based on a way-too fannish Marv Wolfman plot outline, trying to force that thing into somehow becoming an actual workable, downright readable story. That was a truly creative fun time, and (quite honestly) a memory I'll treasure forever."



STEVE SKEATES

Hanerfeld's eclectic reprints included one of the few Frank Frazetta Shining Knight tales and an Enchantress story. Over the following months we were treated to a brand-new two-part Black Canary tale from Denny O'Neil and the wonderful Alex Toth, while an unpublished Golden Age Dr. Mid-Nite story finally saw print. With Orlando now editing *The Phantom Stranger* title, the Stranger's original adventures were being reprinted in *Adventure*.

By this point, Infantino cut back on DC's assistant editors and Hanerfeld was out of work, although he later wound up replacing Gerda Gattel as librarian, and his reprint selections remained a fine mix. The Supergirl lead continued to shift to many hands including Sekowsky making a return to the drawing board, a situation that remained until issue #424.

Skeates describes to *BI* his early work with Orlando, saying, "Joe Orlando had suddenly become my main source of income at that company—mystery stories for *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets*, humor pieces for *Plop!*, and all sorts of fun stuff for *Adventure*!"

"I do believe Joe liked my dialogue and captions far more than my plots, which would explain why (subsequent to my first Supergirl story for which I did indeed provide the plot) I initially found myself *Adventure*-wise dialoging (that's what it's generally referred to, even though the so-called dialogist is also writing the captions) stories plotted by Marv Wolfman and E. Nelson Bridwell—mainly Supergirl tales,



Offbeat Superhero Stories

(top) Bob Oksner's bondage cover to Steve Skeates' "All Men Are But Slaves," from *Adventure* #417 (Mar. 1972). (This fall's *BI* #84 is a Supergirl tribute, commemorating the 30th anniversary of her death in *Crisis*.) (below) Title page to that issue's Vigilante backup, drawn by Gray Morrow.

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THOSE WERE WEIRD TIMES:

WEIRD MYSTERY TALES

by Steven Thompson



Back in 1972, I was 13 years old and I said the word “weird” a lot. As I used it, it meant groovy, cool, or awesome. It also meant odd, strange, or off-putting as well as neat, super, or just plain enjoyable. In other words, to me, “weird” was an all-purpose word. It was my own special word.

“Weird” was also a special word for DC Comics that year, with numerous titles bearing that adjective. Since 1968, Joe Orlando, the former EC, MAD, and Warren artist, had made a name for himself at DC editing its popular mystery titles. They weren’t technically “horror” titles. They weren’t allowed to be. After all, the Comics Code didn’t permit the use of the word “horror,” but it did, as DC noted, allow “Weird.” So DC put out mystery titles.

In 1971, DC’s 100-Page Super Spectacular line debuted with a one-shot entitled *Weird Mystery Tales*. It had a cover and a bit of new art from Berni(e) Wrightson, along with some new gag cartoons, but was overall a collection of 1950s reprints. I remember enjoying my copy immensely and being surprised many months later to see what I thought to be a second issue of *Weird Mystery Tales*. Only it wasn’t the same.

By 1972, both Marvel and DC were busy flooding the market in an unstated effort to drive out the competition ... as well as one-up each other. Every week seemed to bring half a dozen new titles. Marvel’s entries were mostly low-cost reprint titles of all sorts. DC had some of those, too, but also offered up some all new, non-superhero titles. The late DC publisher Carmine Infantino, in an interview with Jon B. Cooke in *Comic Book Artist* #1 (Spring 1998), quoted by permission, said, “...They could knock us off the stands. So I matched them book for book. I had to cover my rump.”

Paul Levitz, fan-turned-pro and himself later the president and publisher of DC, took over as assistant editor of *Weird Mystery Tales* starting with issue #10 (Feb.–Mar. 1974). He remembers, “At that time it wasn’t unusual for all comic-book companies to add titles in ‘hot’ genres very rapidly, then cancel them as fast when the genre grew cold.”

On his blog, *News From me* (sic), in 2013 (and quoted by permission), writer Mark Evanier pointed out why DC opted for more all-new mystery titles instead: “Ghost anthology titles like *House of Secrets* were selling decently—not great, but decently—and were making a profit. Much of that profit was due to the sudden and recent availability of comic artists in the Philippines. Because of the different standard of living betwixt there and here, it was possible to pay those guys a lot less (like a tenth) of what American artists were paid. The catch was that their work didn’t seem to lend itself to superhero comics and was most commercial in America on the ‘weird’ books. Orlando suddenly had to ratchet up production on them.”

KIRBY IS HERE! (EXCEPT ON THE COVERS)

Thus the *Weird Mystery Tales* name was revived and the first issue, cover-dated July–August, snuck out onto America’s newsstands in the late spring of 1972. The first three issues, though, were cut from a very different cloth than the remainder of the series. In fact, they seemed to exist solely for the purpose of burning off unused inventory stories, some from Jack Kirby’s never-published *Spirit World* #2 and Howard Purcell stories from, according to the third issue’s letters column, “a proposed book of supernatural tales a few years back.” Even the legally required (in order to maintain second-class mailing privileges) text pages in the first couple of issues were leftovers

Reach Out and Touch Someone

Michael Wm. Kaluta’s creepy cover to *Weird Mystery Tales* #1 (July–Aug. 1972).

TM & © DC Comics.

by Kirby's then-sidekicks, Mark Evanier and Steve Sherman, and taken also from the abandoned Kirby project.

Although the tasty *Spirit World* leftovers had the bearded Dr. E. Leopold Maas as their host, returning from the original black-and-white magazine, the comic itself was given a new overall host in the form of the blind, hooded, Rod Serling-like Destiny, keeper of the Cosmic Log, a giant book chained to his wrist. Destiny was credited as being a Marv Wolfman/Bernie Wrightson creation and the character, many years later, would be retconned into Neil Gaiman's *Endless* in his critically acclaimed *Sandman* series.

Oddly enough, Joe Orlando wasn't even around this title in the beginning. Wolfman served as assistant editor on the first two issues with E. Nelson Bridwell listed as editor on the first three. Those three issues, as I said before, each offered a Jack Kirby/Mike Royer story up front and a backup story written and drawn by Golden Age artist Howard Purcell and inked by Jack Abel.

Kirby, of course, was a creative force behind the early Marvel Universe and probably the most revered artist in the comic-book industry, but in the early '70s was in his fondly remembered but somewhat controversial DC period. Howard Purcell is best remembered, if at all, for his creation of 1940s DC character Sargon the Sorcerer and for drawing the cover of the very first issue of *Green Lantern*. These *Weird Mystery Tales* stories were his last published work in comics.

That first issue starts with a Mike Kaluta cover, though, that has only a vague, coincidental connection to one panel within the book's first story. No one could have had a clue just from looking at that cover that there was some prime Kirby art inside. If you were buying the other DC mystery titles, you probably picked this one up just because. If not, you probably stuck with *Superman* or *Flash* that month.



HOWARD PURCELL



The very first story in that initial issue is more an exploration than an actual linear, plot-driven story, in line with similar segments from the original *Spirit World* one-shot. With the unwieldy title "Horoscope Phenomenon or Witch Queen of Ancient Sumeria?" it offers brief episodes featuring personified astrological symbols, all done up sweetly in what has to be some of Jack's best art from this period. On page 9, we first see Dr. Maas, *Spirit World's* host (presumably replaced on page 1 by Wrightson's Destiny). The bearded character isn't named, though, which undoubtedly confused some readers as he finished out the story.

The mini-masterpiece that is "Tox1, the World Killer" leads off issue #2 (Sept.–Oct. 1972), again presenting some of Jack Kirby and Mike Royer's best work—without a trace of a hint on the cover. Mark Evanier, Kirby's then-assistant, has stated, "It was the one time I ever dialogued for Jack over his pencils. I wrote it in his style and he changed a few lines here and there." (Mark Evanier to Jon B. Cooke, *Jack Kirby Collector* #13, Dec. 1996. Quoted by permission.)

These two Kirby stories, along with "The Burners" from the following issue, were reprinted in 2012's *Spirit World* compilation. A fourth leftover story by Kirby and Royer, "The Psychic Bloodhound," appeared in color in DC's *Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion* #6 (also July–Aug. 1972) and is, like the others, reprinted in the 2012 collection.

While the King's stories tend to get mentioned a lot, the Purcell and Abel stories were also quite good, with the former's ghostly *Titanic* cover for the second issue (also done originally for the aforementioned abandoned project) being probably the best of the entire run and arguably one of the best of all the mystery covers of that era! The letters column in issue #4 points out that Purcell wrote his stories as well as drew them.

Although he seemed shoehorned in at first—which he was—Destiny made his august pronouncements on most of the stories in those initial issues. In the first letters column, it's pointed out that Destiny's appearance on the second issue splash of the

Purcell story was actually drawn by editor Bridwell, probably his only published artwork ever! That letters column, in the third issue, continues DC's tradition of having its mystery hosts humorously "answer" their own letters, thereby generating a particular personality for each individual title. The fact that Destiny didn't exactly lend himself to lightheartedness or humor, however, was a bit of a drawback. That, however, would actually play into his later use.

INTERCHANGEABLE MYSTERY TALES

With the fourth issue, the inventory material ran out. Joe Orlando took the title under his wing with the rest of his mystery books and the stories immediately became completely indistinguishable from most of those in *House of Mystery*, *House of Secrets*, *Witching Hour*, or any of the others in his stable. In fact, in an interview for this piece, writer Steve Skeates (perhaps best known for his late-'60s run on *Aquaman*) confirms that there was never anything special about the individual titles as far as the types of stories they printed. "My experience with the DC mystery books is that one never knew which mag one's contribution was gonna wind up in; I even had something I thought was gonna be in *House of Mystery* wind up in *Plop!* Or was it the other way around? Whatever! Anyway, it wasn't only Joe. When Dick Giordano was editing the mystery books, there, too, I never knew which one of the books my tale was gonna end up in!"

Evanier adds, "Put simply, [Orlando] needed a lot of scripts to send off to the Philippines."

The First Host

Destiny, as illo'ed by Bernie Wrightson, introducing a Kirby/Evanier *Spirit World* carryover. From the title page of *Weird Mystery Tales* #1.

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THE HORRORS OF COMBAT:



WEIRD

WAR TALES

by Don Vaughan



In the early 1970s, as the Comics Code Authority gradually eased restrictions on horror content in comic books, things quickly got “weird” at DC Comics.

While the preceding articles in this issue cite DC editorial director Carmine Infantino’s edict that “Weird” would sell comics, Bob Rozakis observes that it may have been *MAD* Magazine founder William Gaines who suggested the use of the word “Weird.” He reports that Gaines was an unofficial advisor to Infantino and even had an office at DC. “Gaines may well have suggested using it, since *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy* had been mainstays of the EC era,” Rozakis notes.

Nonetheless, DC’s first official entry in the “Wonderful World of Weird” was DC *100-Page Super Spectacular* #4, a “Weird Mystery Tales” one-shot—followed one month later by the first regularly issued “Weird” book, *Weird War Tales*, which premiered on July 1, 1971. While DC’s other war titles, such as *Our Army at War*, *Star Spangled War Stories*, and *G.I. Combat* continued to feature Nazis and other traditional foes, *Weird War Tales* dealt with the horrors of war in a decidedly different context.

THE WEIRDNESS BEFORE

It must be noted, however, that DC was no stranger to unconventional war stories prior to the premiere of *Weird War Tales*. *Star Spangled War Stories* #90 (Apr.–May 1960), for example, introduced what quickly became known as “The War That Time Forgot,” a long-running series of stories that featured American servicemen fighting dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures on a mysterious island in the Pacific.

Eleven issues later, in *Star Spangled War Stories* #101 (Feb.–Mar. 1962), readers met G.I. Robot, a mechanical soldier that made occasional appearances throughout the series, and was resurrected in *Weird War Tales* #101 (July 1981). The first G.I. Robot, created by Robert Kanigher and Ross Andru, was known as Joe. A second robot, named Mac, followed a few issues later. The character’s later incarnation in *Weird War Tales* was known as J.A.K.E. 1 (J.A.K.E. being an acronym for Jungle Automatic Killer, Experimental), and was soon followed by an improved model, J.A.K.E. 2. Interestingly, a more contemporary G.I. Robot, created by Lex Luthor for use by the US military, was featured in *Batman Confidential* #4 (May 2007).

The horribly disfigured Unknown Soldier also added an element of weirdness to DC’s war comics early in the game. Introduced in *Our Army At War* #168 (June 1966), with story by Robert Kanigher and art by Joe Kubert, the character didn’t make a return appearance until 1970, when he popped up in *Star Spangled War Stories* #151 (June–July 1970). A remarkable master of disguise, Unknown Soldier was an immediate hit and was featured in *Star Spangled War Stories* through #204 (Feb. 1977). With issue #205, the title

Any Time, Any Place

From the collection of Shaun Clancy, a 2003 *Weird War Tales* commission by Ric Estrada.

Art © 2003 Ric Estrada. *Weird War Tales* TM & © DC Comics.

Before Weird War Tales...

...*Star Spangled War Stories* often was out-there with its "War That Time Forgot" series. Shown here are (left) the cover to #101 (Feb.-Mar. 1962), featuring G.I. Robot (Mach One), by Ross Andru and Mike Esposito; and (right) Russ Heath's 2009 recreation of his cover to 1966's *SSWS* #128 (courtesy of Heritage Comics Auctions, www.ha.com).

TM & © DC Comics.

was changed to *The Unknown Soldier* and continued for another 64 issues. [Editor's note: See *BACK ISSUE* #37 for more about *The Unknown Soldier*.]

Whereas most of DC's war comics featured recurring characters, such as Sgt. Rock and Gunner and Sarge, *Weird War Tales* was initially an anthology series hosted by Death, who was usually presented wearing some type of military garb. Though all of the stories had some sort of military theme, the horror element and frequent O. Henry-style endings made the series unique among DC's war titles.

IN THE BEGINNING...

How *Weird War Tales* came to be is a bit of a saga. In a short text piece titled "The Story Behind the Story of *Weird War Tales*" featured in the letters column of issue #36 (Apr. 1975), editor Joe Orlando offered this revelation:

"...Few fans know it, but this issue really brings WWT full circle. At the beginning, *Weird War Tales* was not going to be a magazine of its own—just two issues of the *Super DC Giant* reprint series which was then running. Editor Joe Kubert assembled a collection of classics, and added a new introduction and a short story relating to the cover.

"But then *Super DC Giant* was canceled, and *WWT* was put on the schedule as a regular bimonthly. Caught

unprepared, the magazine was launched with its very heavy reprint content. It took Kubert several issues to get into the swing of doing new stories for this very different mag, and the output was low, although very good (as shown by the stories reprinted in this issue).

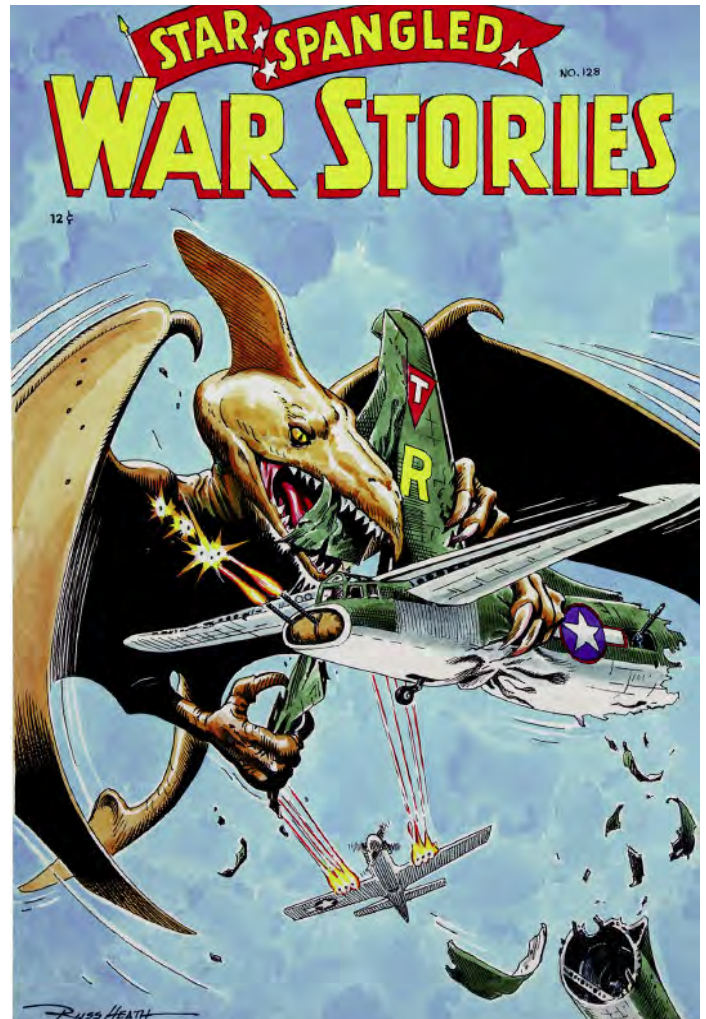
"Kubert eventually gave up all his war mags (except for his beloved *Our Army at War* with Sgt. Rock) and *Weird War Tales* came our way. The reprints were eliminated, and a monthly frequency assumed, and here we are today. Happy, except for the fact that we've never been able to inspire much reader comment about *WWT*."

Joe Kubert edited the first seven issues of *Weird War Tales* before leaving the title, and most of his other war books, to work on *Tarzan*, a title DC had acquired after a 206-issue run at Dell/Gold Key. This move was understandable because Kubert had been a die-hard fan of the fabled Ape Man since childhood, when he would immerse himself in Hal Foster's *Tarzan* newspaper strip, and later read the *Tarzan* novels by Edgar Rice Burroughs. When DC acquired the rights to Burroughs' many characters, Kubert was ecstatic. So was ERB Inc., which considered Kubert the perfect writer/artist to continue *Tarzan's* comic-book adventures.

Marv Wolfman assisted during Kubert's brief editorial stint on *Weird War Tales*. He recalls: "Kubert had me



MARV WOLFMAN



by Philip Schweier

IronWolf

When asked to be interviewed for *BACK ISSUE*, Howard Chaykin responded with an enthusiastic affirmative, followed by, "What's the article about?"

"IronWolf," I answered.

Over the phone, I could hear his eyes rolling back in his skull as he responded, "Who gives a sh*t?"

Anyone familiar with Howard's constant self-reinvention shouldn't be surprised. IronWolf is Chaykin's earliest creation, its original incarnation lasting only three issues. He is content to let it rest in peace deep in the fathoms of his professional history.

IronWolf dates back to *Weird Worlds* #8 (Nov.–Dec. 1973). At the time, Chaykin was still somewhat new to the comic-book business. Becoming a professional comic-book creator was all he ever wanted to do, and his career path was such that it became all he was suited to do. "I had limited skills, so I taught myself to compete," he says.

Following apprenticeships with Gil Kane, Neal Adams, and Gray Morrow, Chaykin was part of a new generation of artists. Forty years later, Chaykin continues the tradition of mentorship. On behalf of Marvel Comics, he and artist Klaus Janson frequently conduct seminars for the benefit of new artists who might be superb draftsmen, but whose storytelling skills could use some coaching.

In one such seminar, it was said that a young comic-book artist can expect to endure a great deal of shame and embarrassment the first ten years or so, as he or she develops and perfects his or her craft. "I didn't have the opportunity to do it in school," says Chaykin, "so I have ten years of shame, but I did it in public, so I can't disavow it.

That was my education."

Denny O'Neil, who collaborated with Chaykin first on *Sword of Sorcery* and later on *Weird Worlds*, says the young artist seemed to have a flare for fantasy material.

"He is and was a dream to work with. He was young, he was enthusiastic, he was a real pro from the get-go. He once told me, 'I'm in this for the long haul,' meaning that he saw it as a job."

O'Neil defines what a good comic artist is: "Someone who understands that what this is about is narrative. It's his job to provide more than half of the storytelling. A comic-book story is not 125 pictures, it is 125 pictures that form a continuity and a narrative. [Artists] have to either have learned or been instinctively familiar with all the tricks that movie cinematographers use, and at the same time bear in mind this is a printed medium; it's not a movie, and print has its own restrictions.

"All that, Howard was eager to learn, and he learned fast. By the time I got hold of him he was by any definition a working comic-book artist, and he continued to get better."

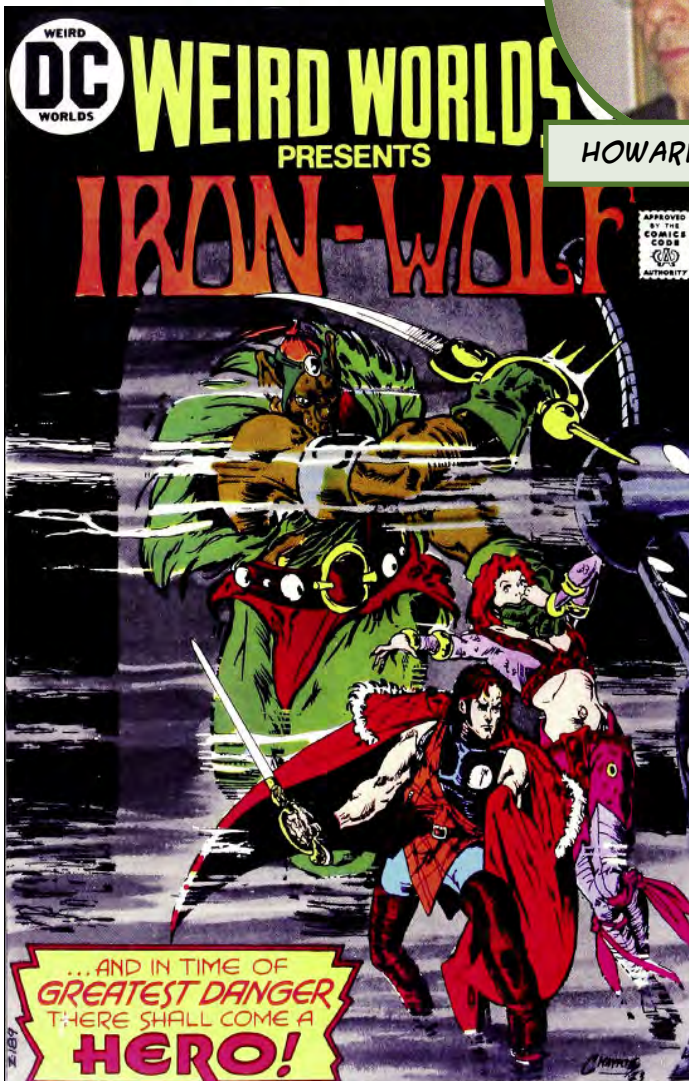
BEYOND THE FARTHEST STAR

In 1972, DC Comics acquired the rights to Tarzan. *Weird Worlds* was later launched as a companion title featuring other Edgar Rice Burroughs (ERB) creations such as John Carter of Mars and Pellucidar.

As a boy, Chaykin had devoured the Edgar Rice Burroughs books. "I read *A Fighting Man of Mars*, the seventh in the series, the day before



HOWARD CHAYKIN



During the Conan Craze

Weird Worlds #8 (Nov.–Dec. 1973), featuring the first appearance of Howard Chaykin's IronWolf (a.k.a Iron-Wolf and Iron Wolf).

TM & © DC Comics.

Ditko Double Shot

The house ads in DC comics in the mid-'70s were trumpeting a slew of new titles as the fabled "DC Explosion" began in earnest. One ad in particular featured seven new titles to include *Justice, Inc.*, showcasing pulp hero the Avenger; *Claw the Unconquered*; Joe Kubert's latest incarnation of *Tor*; *The Warlord*; *Beowulf, Dragon Slayer*; *Kong the Untamed*, a literal descendant of Howard Post's *Anthro*; and finally, "The Man with the Stolen Soul": *Stalker*. Most of these titles didn't see an issue #7 and *Stalker* itself only made it four issues, but *Stalker* left its mark through some particularly imaginative settings and moving, dynamic artwork that truly transported readers into another realm.

The creative team in place for this new saga of sword and sorcery was Joe Orlando as editor, Paul Levitz providing scripts, and art by the team of Steve Ditko and Wally Wood. Any comic fan worth their salt already knew that Ditko and Wood had collaborated numerous times in the past, even as early as 1966, right around the time the co-creator of Spider-Man walked away from his most well-known work. Steve did some penciling followed by Wood inks on Wallace's own *T.H.U.N.D.E.R Agents* title and later contributed to *Witwend*. The artistic team could also be found on a couple of issues of Atlas' *Destructor* and even a short humor piece likely planned for an issue of *Plop!* but printed in issue #13 of *The Amazing World of DC Comics*. Wood's lush inkwork was always a terrific embellishment to Ditko's pencils, but as Bernie Wrightson, who also inked Steve on an Atlas title (*Moorlock 2001* and *the Midnight Men* #3, July 1975) has observed: "Everything was there with Ditko's pencils. No matter who's inking him it always comes out looking like Ditko. He gives you very little to work with. It's just kind of basic shapes and outlines and if you're just going to ink him you just follow what he gives you and it comes out looking like Ditko. It's that strong."

One other notable thing about that house ad was the common factor of the majority of the characters wielding swords. Coincidence? Not according to Paul Levitz: "The success of *Conan* was the motivating force behind four of those titles (*Kong, Beowulf, Claw, and Stalker*)."

THE MAN WITH THE STOLEN SOUL

So, what was this new character all about? The opening page of *Stalker* #1 (June-July 1975) gives us a determined man climbing the turret of Castle Loranth, sword and scabbard at his side and dagger between his gritted teeth. He then begins quickly engaging a guard. The captions speak of the legends surrounding the nameless man known only as *Stalker*: "Damned by his own choosing, he dared challenge the lord of demons himself! Fear was his tool and death his weapon..."

For any who didn't note the cover, it isn't until the turn of the page that one notices there is more to *Stalker* than meets the eye. In fact, speaking of eyes, he bears only a crimson stare with no discernible pupils. Grimly, he forges onward until he is above a massive dining hall

continued on page 52

The Brief Story of

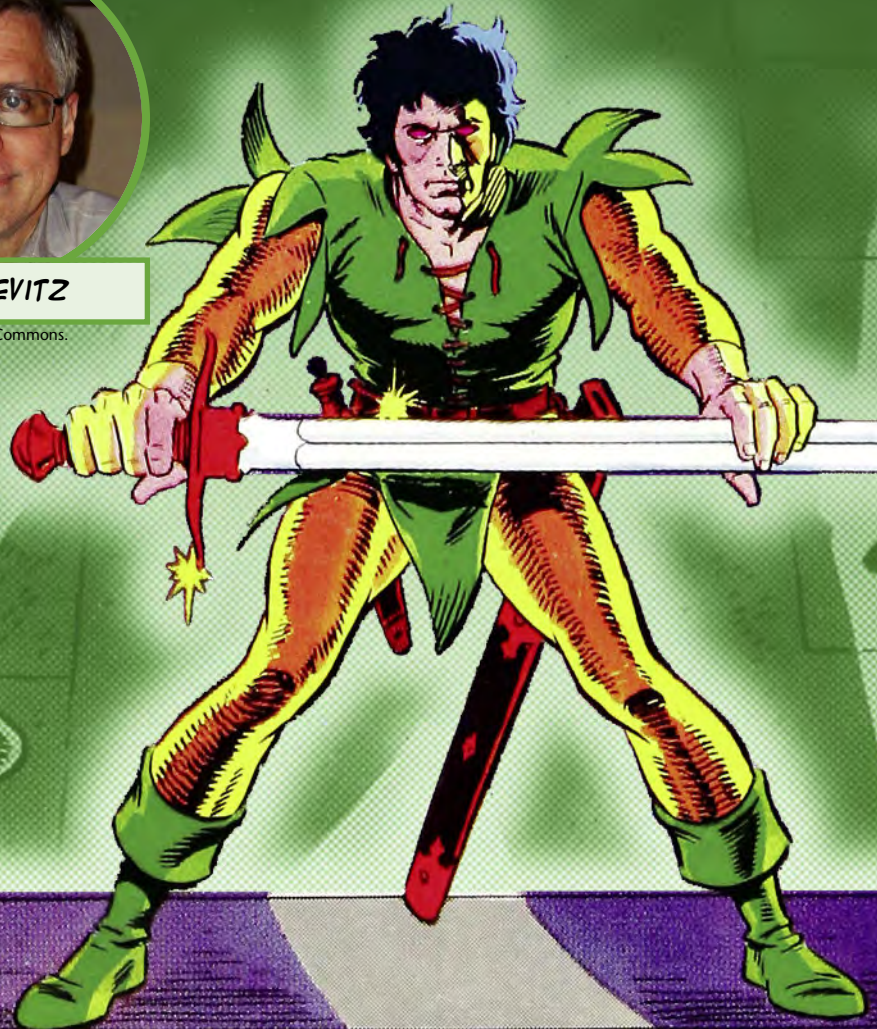
STALKER™

by Bryan D. Stroud



PAUL LEVITZ

© Luigi Novi / Wikimedia Commons.



SHADE™ THE CHANGING man

by Jay Williams



TM & © DC Comics.

Ditko Double Shot

This past Saturday, at this writing, my brother and our wives went to the movies to see *Amazing Spider-Man 2*. My brother, a now-retired Fortune top 20 executive, has always loved Spider-Man, and the two of us had a great discussion of the history of the Web-Slinger. We loved the fact that in the credits of the movie they gave credit to Stan Lee and Steve Ditko as the creators. This led me to think of Steve's other superhero creations or co-creations: Captain Atom (Charlton), Dr. Strange (Marvel), the new Blue Beetle (Charlton), the Question (Charlton), the Creeper (DC), Hawk and Dove (DC), and last but not least, the very weird Shade, the Changing Man.

DC Comics' *Shade, the Changing Man* first appeared on the newsstands on March 8, 1977, its first issue cover-dated June–July 1977. *Shade* #1 has an ad for itself between story pages 10 and 11. This is just one more thing that makes this title weird.

DC was the dominant comic-book publisher from 1956 to the early 1970s. By the early 1970s, Marvel caught and passed DC. To reclaim that number-one position, DC, under the editorial direction of Carmine Infantino, tried two things. First, in 1970, Infantino helped bring Jack Kirby to DC. Jack's magic at Marvel did not come over with him as he wrote his Fourth World series. After four years, Jack Kirby returned to Marvel. DC's second attempt was a line expansion which lasted from Infantino's tenure to the early days of his successor's, Jenette Kahn, culminating in 1978's page-count (and price) expansion, the DC Explosion—which quickly collapsed in the infamous DC Implosion. One of those new titles added in the '70s was *Shade, the Changing Man*, created by Steve Ditko. For most people, *Shade* was a weird comic and just one of the many failed titles of DC's Bronze Age. If it had not been for the great team of Steve Ditko (pencils, inks, and story), Michael Fleisher (dialogue), and Jack C. Harris (editor), this title might have joined the likes of many of the DC Implosion titles in the bin of forgotten comic books.

Yet *Shade, the Changing Man* is a complete contrast to Ditko's more straightforward late-Silver Age DC creations, *Beware the Creeper* and *The Hawk and the Dove*. You will find that *Shade, the Changing Man* is very much in the style of Steve's work on Dr. Strange in Marvel's *Strange Tales*.

THE WEIRD WORLD OF RAC SHADE

Shade, the Changing Man saw eight issues hit the newsstands, plus a ninth issue that was published after the DC Implosion in *Cancelled Comic Cavalcade* #2. As soon as you saw the cover of issue #1, anyone who knew much about comics recognized Steve Ditko's art. But it was not like a Spider-Man cover ... it was more like a Dr. Strange cover, but a whole lot weirder. *Shade* covers looked like no others being published by DC. Each progressive issue's cover seemed weirder and weirder.

One of the first things you will notice about *Shade, the Changing Man* is the bizarre names of almost all the characters: Rac, Mellu, Wizer, Ezak, Goens, Gola, Klugs, Xeleo, and Zokag. The main character is Rac Shade. Rac was a N-Agent (secret agent in our terms) from a dimension called the Meta-Zone. The Meta-Zone dimension was separated from the Earth-Zone Dimension by the Zero-Zone dimension. (In panel 2 of page 2 of

WEIRDO

by Mark Arnold



Editor's Note: This article contains material that some readers may find offensive. Especially the heirs of Tor Johnson.

R. Crumb in PG

Detail from R. Crumb's cover to *The Weirdo Years: 1981-'93*, released in 2013 by Last Gasp, compiling all of Robert Crumb's material from *Weirdo*.

TM & © R. Crumb.

When you think of humor magazines, the obvious ones are *MAD*, *Cracked*, or *National Lampoon*. Thinking a little harder, you might come up with Marvel's *Crazy* or even Joe Simon's *Sick*. Admittedly, most humor magazines typically do not last more than a handful of issues, but one that lasted an admirable 28 issues, despite being somewhat forgotten today, is Robert Crumb's *Weirdo*.

Weirdo took its cue from *MAD* and *Humbug*, both edited by Harvey Kurtzman, by having silly images surrounding the front cover border. Kurtzman also edited *Help!*, and *Weirdo* utilized its format as well, by including photo fumettis and introducing new and younger artists to national prominence. Robert Crumb, Gilbert Shelton, and Monty Python's Terry Gilliam all made their national debuts in *Help!*

Aline Kominsky-Crumb (Robert's wife) comments, "Quite a few great artists got their start at *Weirdo*, such as Joe Matt, Ted Jouffas, Julie Doucet, Dori Seda, Carol Tyler, Phoebe Gloeckner, Dennis Worden, Ace Backwards, Bruce Duncan, and many more."

Among those who contributed to *Weirdo* that are no longer with us include Harvey Pekar and Spain (M. Rodriguez), and S. Clay Wilson has unfortunately been incapacitated for a long time. Lorraine Chamberlain, who speaks for S. Clay Wilson, says, "Wilson can't speak, but he can answer yes or no questions. Frustrating, to say the least."

Last Gasp Publisher Ron Turner discusses how *Weirdo* started: "It was Robert Crumb's idea from the start, not mine. Crumb did the first nine issues, Peter Bagge the second nine, and Aline Kominsky-Crumb the third nine, with the last one happening after



GIVE ME BACK MY WEIRDO MAGAZINE, YOU HUSSY!!

I BEG TO DIFFER, YOU BITCH! THIS WEIRDO IS MINE!!



LADIES, PLEASE! THERE'S NO NEED FOR THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOR!



'CAUSE WE GOT PLENTY BACK ISSUES!

GET 'EM WHILE THEY LAST!!
 ✖'S 1, 2, 3 & 4 - \$2.25 EACH
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NOT ONLY HAS THERE BEEN A VAST INCREASE IN THE QUANTITY OF TRASH, BUT ALSO A DECLINE IN THE QUALITY... WHEN I WAS A KID IN THE 'FIFTIES WE USED TO FIND WONDERFUL THINGS IN TRASH-CANS AND DUMPS!

WOW!! KEY LOOK WHAT I FOUND!

WHAT!? WHAT!?

BOING

IN FACT, IT WAS BY PICKING IN BACK-ALLEY TRASH AFTER SCHOOL THAT WE GOT OUR REAL EDUCATION!

HUH! LOOKIT THIS OL' MAGAZINE!

PRETTY NEAT COVER!

GUY! THAT LOOKS REALLY OLD!

THERE'S A WHOLE STACK OF 'EM HERE!

Chicks Dig Weirdo

(left) Crumb and friends hawk back issues; from *Weirdo* #8. (above) Digging through the trash with R. Crumb in *Weirdo* #6.

TM & © R. Crumb.

they got to France. It ran its course. We never got complaints about Robert's pieces. The audience was sophisticated enough to understand what he was saying, and the voice it was said in. The early issues sold multiple printings. We still have a few of about four issues left."

Robert Crumb tells *BACK ISSUE*, "The whole idea of *Weirdo* magazine came to me all at once one day in early 1981—a sort of catch-all magazine including the off-beat feeling of Harvey Kurtzman's *Humbug* plus the latest 'new wave' of young cartoonists with elements of the 'punk' sensibility, plus odd and crazy 'outsider' stuff, plus some photo-funnies harkening back to the girlie mags of the 1940s/early '50s, plus the ongoing work of the original underground comics artists such as myself and others. I was frustrated with *Zap Comix* as an anthology title because some of those artists took so long to turn out a few pages that it was only coming out every couple or three years. Also, some of them insisted on keeping *Zap Comix* an exclusive club of the seven artists already involved. 'We're like a super-star rock band,' S. Clay Wilson used to say. I never wanted this to happen to my little funny book but I couldn't fight them, so I went along. The only other strong anthology title at the time was *Raw*, edited by Art Spiegelman and Françoise Mouly. I envisioned *Weirdo* as a sort of alternative to *Raw*. *Raw* was classy-looking, expensive, with lots of arty European graphic work in it. *Weirdo* would be cheap, sleazy, wise-ass, loose, nutty. When Spiegelman, in a printed

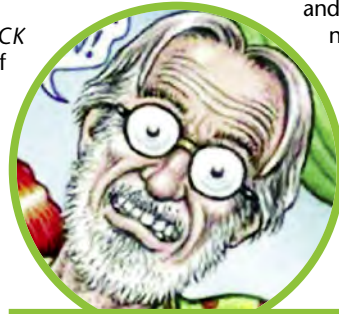
interview, called *Weirdo* a 'piece of sh*t,' I knew I was on the right track."

Aline Kominsky-Crumb adds, "Robert decided to start a new magazine in the fall of 1981, just at the time when our darling daughter Sophie was born. [*Weirdo*] was inspired by *Humbug* and *MAD*, as well as earlier 'girlie' zines, but was also a product of the underground comics culture and it was called *Weirdo*. It was a good idea. Comics and the whole counterculture had gone into a decline in the 1970s, lots of low-grade derivative stuff was being produced by people just to make a buck, capitalizing on the wave of success of the earlier underground movement. Robert and

I knew lots of great artists doing original and wacky work and there really were

not any good venues for publishing at that time. So why not take on a time-consuming, passionate, non-paying, stressful enterprise at the exact same time that our high-strung little princess arrived into this world??"

"Robert was the editor of *Weirdo* for the first three and a half years. He got very little positive feedback and we never knew if anybody really got our 'zine. Then



R. CRUMB

Caricature by and © R. Crumb.

when he was totally sick of editing, he passed that on to Peter Bagge. Peter changed the mood of *Weirdo* to a more punk 'zine, being a younger, more '70s kinda guy, but he kept the wacky brand-X feel and published a lot of great stuff (my fave: 'Martini Baton'). By this time we were getting a lot of submissions from unknown artists, including some difficult or even menacing nut cases, as *Weirdo* started getting a reputation for printing really off-the-wall art. At a certain point, we were getting more work than we could use, partly because there were hardly any other magazines being published at the time and partly because we had such 'low-brow' taste. *Raw* magazine started during this bleak decade as well and was the 'high-brow,' artistic alternative to *Weirdo*. Both publications had their place and there was some overlap of art in each. I did one of my all-time

BIG-EYED SUPERHEROICS: JIM STARLIN AND BERNIE WRIGHTSON ON

THE WEIRD

In the creative riches of the post-Crisis DC Universe, *The Weird* (Apr.–July 1988), written by Jim Starlin and penciled by Bernie Wrightson, with inks by Dan Green, exists, arguably, as one of the rarer gems. A superhero comic that confidently integrates horror and science-fiction elements, this four-issue miniseries explores new territory, positing the Justice League as the well-meaning antagonists against the inevitably explosive titular character, who is struggling to understand his newfound humanity and fatherhood while trying to save Earth from the evil Macroletts. Equally interesting as the story of *The Weird* itself are Mr. Starlin's and Mr. Wrightson's memories of this thoughtful collaboration.



JIM STARLIN

by Tom Powers
conducted by email, Winter 2014

TOM POWERS: How did you two first meet?

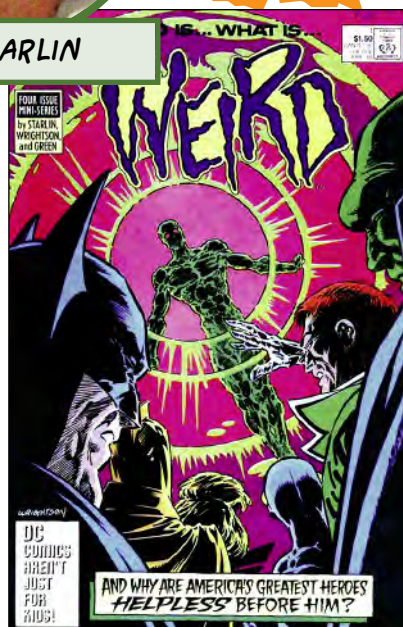
JIM STARLIN: Hard to say at this point. I imagine it was at one of the First Fridays that the Brunners used to throw. That's where I met most of my contemporaries in the business.

BERNIE WRIGHTSON: That sounds about right. I really don't remember. We may have met at the Bullpen at Marvel or the lunchroom at DC. Those were big gathering places back then.

POWERS: Before you worked together on *The Weird*, Bernie contributed two eight-page backup strips to *Dreadstar*, "The Interstellar Toybox," for issues #6 (Sept. 1983) and 7 (Nov. 1983). You both later proposed the idea to Marvel for the massively successful famine-relief jam comic, *Heroes for Hope* (Dec. 1985), and its follow-up, *Heroes Against Hunger* (Aug. 1986), to DC. What are your memories of these comics?

STARLIN: "The Interstellar Toybox" was Bernie looking for something to write and draw and me needing a break from filling all the pages of a monthly (or was it a bimonthly?) book. The famine-relief books? I can't recall if it was my or Bernie's idea originally to propose this project. A lot of musicians were doing similar fundraisers around that time. As I recall, both Bernie and I felt we'd get a better response from the companies if we approached them about it together. Later, I was involved in another fundraiser with a number of comic publishers without Bernie's participation, and it just fell apart and never happened.

WRIGHTSON: "Interstellar Toybox" grew out of the "Captain Sternn" story I had done for *Heavy Metal* a year or two earlier—funny science fiction inspired and influenced by *Star Wars*. Jim was in an overload situation at the time with all his projects and asked me if I'd do a backup story or two to help fill out *Dreadstar*. As it happened, I already had done some ideas for some short stories, so it worked out perfectly. As I recall, *Heroes for Hope* was initially my thought, just that—a thought. But Jim ran with it right away—how to break it down into two-page segments, each assigned to different teams of writers and inkers, all us working for free on the notion that all the writers and artists would hop on board unpaid if their workload was no more than two pages each. Jim got the ball rolling immediately.



Superman and Wonder Woman. Then there was a problem with that. As I recall, there were a couple of other Superman-and-someone possible pair-ups before we ended up with Nuklon [of Infinity, Inc.], a character neither Bernie nor I had ever heard of before.

WRIGHTSON: I don't have much to say about that part. I didn't read the *Justice League*, and *The Weird* was my first and only practical encounter with them. I wasn't involved with the editorial side of *The Weird* at all. Jim dealt with all that stuff himself and just left me alone to draw, for which I am still very grateful.

POWERS: *What are your thoughts on transforming Superman and Nuklon into temporary villains via the horror trope of body possession?*

STARLIN: Yeah, that was straight out of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Not much more to say about it than that.

WRIGHTSON: Possession and body snatching is always fun. Everyone likes watching familiar characters doing things they aren't supposed to. We revisited that idea again a bit in *The Cult*.

POWERS: *The book also provides a touching father/son-like bond between the Weird and his host body's son, Billy. How did this emotional undercurrent shape the comic?*

STARLIN: I think this had a lot to do with Bernie having his two boys. Having kids was something I never planned to do, but his boys got me thinking about the connections between one generation and the next. Plus, Karen Berger, the book's editor, liked the business between the Weird and his boy and pushed for more of it.

WRIGHTSON: One more thing that pulled me in and made this project fun—all the emotional levels—a bit more to it than just the usual superheroes slugging it out.

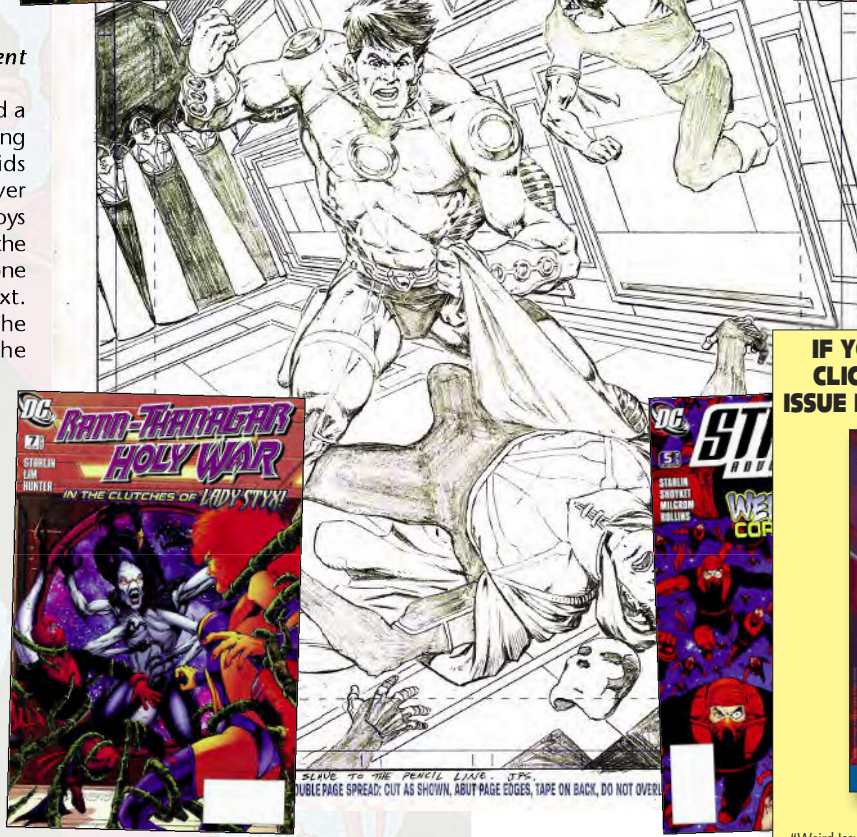
POWERS: *In what ways did your experience working together on this project shape your next DC collaboration, Batman: The Cult?*

STARLIN: For one thing, I learned that Bernie works best when he has someone to bounce ideas off and get feedback about his art on a regular basis. I made a point of stopping by a couple times a week to see how the series was going. After we finished *The Cult*, Bernie and I wanted to do a sequel to it. But DC Comics demanded that Bernie draw a Swamp Thing story with Len Wein. The trouble was, Len lived in LA, Bernie, in New York State. Bernie only got through less than half the first issue of the *Swamp Thing* before losing

Starlin Still Gets Weird

Jim and Bernie's offbeat cosmic character returned in the late 2000s in Starlin's various space epics he wrote for DC. Shown here, courtesy of Heritage, are Starlin's pencils for *Mystery in Space* #5 (Mar. 2007), guest-starring the Weird. Surrounding it is the published version of that cover, plus *MIS* #8, *Rann-Thanagar Holy War* #7, and *Strange Adventures* #5.

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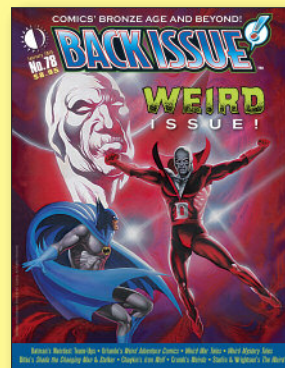
interest in the project and quitting it. We then took the Batman story we wanted to do over to Marvel Comics and changed it to a *Punisher* story, which became *P.O.V.* (May-July 1991).

WRIGHTSON: *The Cult* was lots of fun in its own way—creepy and edgy. It went pretty fast, too. Kind of a high-wire act for me. I was doing my impression of Frank Miller—not getting too fussy with the drawing, but concentrating more on the storytelling.

POWERS: *Looking back on The Weird, what are your lasting impressions?*

STARLIN: Looking back, I think the Weird was a much better character

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BACK ISSUE #78

"Weird Issue!" Batman's Weirdest Team-Ups, ORLANDO's *Weird Adventure Comics*, *Weird War Tales*, *Weird Mystery Tales*, DITKO's *Shade the Changing Man* and *Stalker*, CHAYKIN's *Iron Wolf*, CRUMB's *Weirdo*, and STARLIN and WRIGHTSON's *The Weird!* Featuring JIM APARO, LUIS DOMINGUEZ, MICHAEL FLEISHER, BOB HANEY, PAUL LEVITZ, and more. Batman and Deadman cover by ALAN CRADDOCK.

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special. But all the things I do one of the best writers I've friends, and a great human

TOM POWERS, a lecturer who *County Community College, local Marc Schuster*, of *The Greatest Guide to Doctor Who (McFarlane 2007)*.

end