

44-PAGE ISSUE  
SPOTLIGHTING  
KIRBY IN  
HOLLYWOOD!

SIMON & KIRBY'S  
HOLLYWOOD HERO

## STUNTMAN

HOW DEEP IS IT?  
**THE BLACK HOLE**

WHY THE  
**LORD OF LIGHT**  
NEVER SAW THE  
LIGHT OF DAY

UNLOCKING JACK'S  
ADAPTATION OF  
**THE PRISONER**

FROM *THUNDARR*  
TO *SCOOBY-DOO*:  
JACK'S CAREER IN  
**ANIMATION**

**UNFILMED IDEAS**  
WILL JACK'S  
MOVIE IDEAS EVER  
GET MADE?

MAY THE *SOURCE*  
BE WITH YOU:  
**NEW GODS VS.  
STAR WARS**

**UNPUBLISHED ART**  
INCLUDING JACK'S  
PENCILS *BEFORE*  
THEY WERE INKED,  
AND *MUCH MORE!!*



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# THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

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# LIGHTS! CAMERA! PUNCH'EM!

*The Silver Screen Saga of Stuntman, by R.J. Vitone*

**S**tuntman, "The New Champ of Split-Second Action," occupies a unique but very obscure corner in the Kirby closet. Hitting the stands during a post-WW II comics glut, the title scarcely had time to find an audience before it was cancelled. And since its publisher only sporadically re-entered the super-hero market, the strip last saw print in mainstream comics in 1955, long before most collectors would have noticed it.

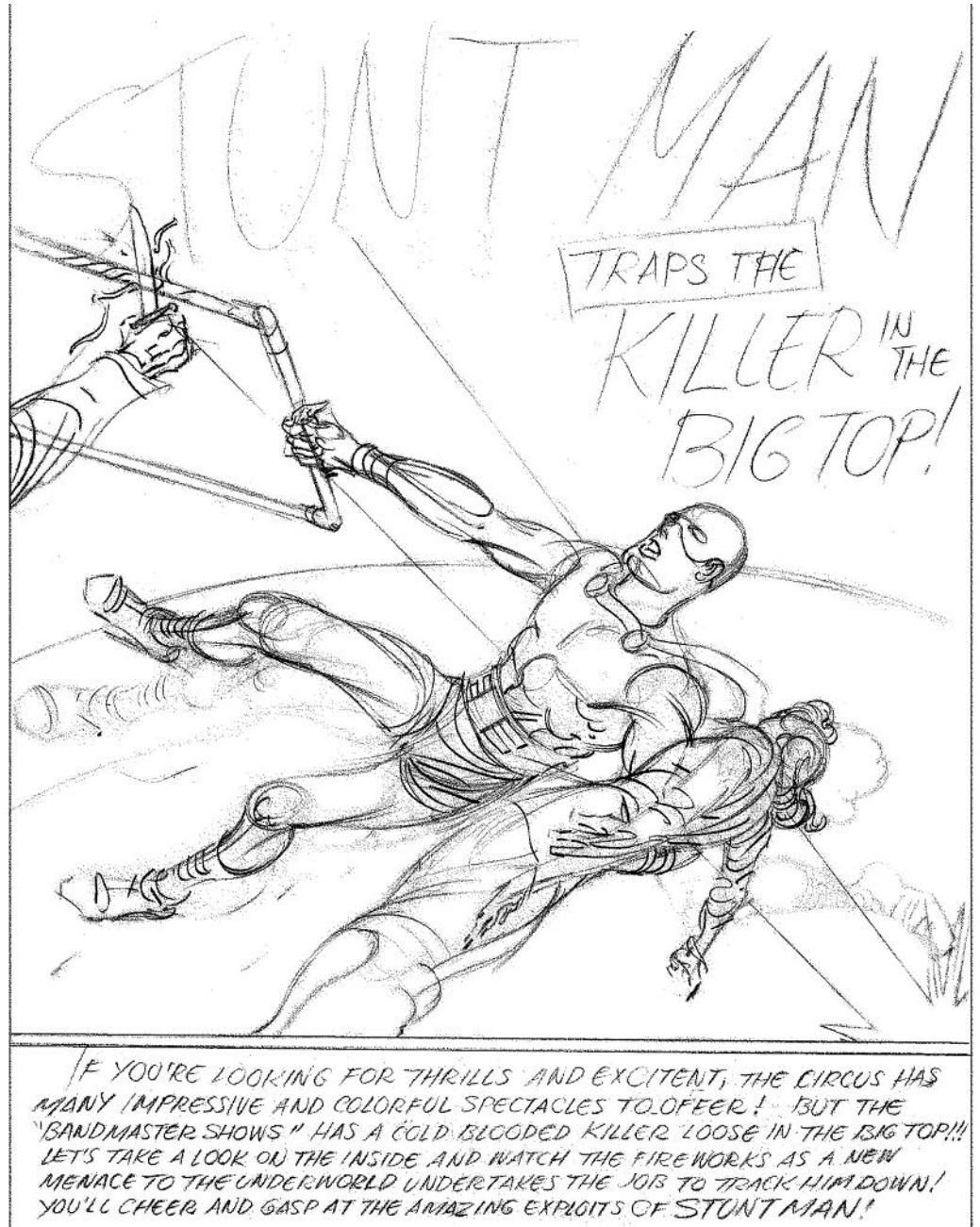
That's a shame, because *Stuntman* is a terrific Simon & Kirby package, and an important one as well. Even though the team was widely regarded as tops in the field, *Stuntman* stands as the only "traditional" super-hero created by them since *The Guardian* (in '42), and would be the last until *Captain 3-D* (in '53) and *Fighting American* (in '54)! When you think of how identifiable Kirby is with the genre, it's amazing to find that long of a stretch away from it.

*Stuntman Comics* #1 hit the newsstands early in 1946. Produced by Harvey Publications (with whom both Jack and Joe seemed to enjoy a decent working relationship over the years), the book must have held bright promise for S&K. They were back from the war, anxious to tackle new projects. *Stuntman* led the way at Harvey, to be followed a month later by *Boy Explorers*. It was time for a fresh start.

And what a start! The first story plays like a Cecil B. DeMille epic. Amid the pageantry of a traveling circus, calculated evil claims the lives of two of the "Flying Apollos." The surviving member, Fred Drake, dons a stylized version of his acrobat costume, determined to claim justice. Along the way, he meets foppish movie star Don Daring, who spends his idle time as an amateur detective. As (comic-book) fate would have it, the two bear an amazing resemblance to each other. Don hires Fred to act as his "stand-in" and perform physically demanding movie scenes for him, as well as to free up his time to pursue his sleuthing hobby. Beautiful actress Sandra Sylvan turns up in time to provide love interest and be menaced by the killer. *Stuntman* swings into action, saving the day by acting as a lion tamer. Newspaper headlines crown the new "Nemesis of Crime," and a legend is born!

S&K took the movie motif to heart. The plot is classic "who-dunit," with plenty of humor, romance, and menace thrown in. Jack used the circus as a visually colorful background for the events of the story, and the manic motion fills in the rest.

Kirby's art for the series is inspired. This was one of his "transitional" periods, and his figure work reached new heights of stretched looseness. *Stuntman*'s elongated figure is a far cry from the earlier



*This unused splash page from Stuntman #1 was penciled on thick illustration board, rather than thin bristol.*

muscle-bound *Captain America*. Although it looks different, there's an appealing flow to the work. Other familiar touches are on hand. Don Daring, handsome but ineffectual, is a typical S&K foil, and Sandra is a Wasp-ish blonde in the Sharon Carter/Sue Storm style. All the other Kirby trademarks are there—fluid storytelling, forced perspective, and hyperactive action.

If you follow the basic idea of “show-biz” elements, then the rest of issue #1 rounds out the series’ “pilot.” “The Crimes on Cauliflower Row” showcases Don Daring as he sets off on a new detective case. Meanwhile, Fred Drake “fills in” for the star in a slam-bang movie scene, while Sandra finds that her jewels are missing! Needless to say, all three are soon hot on the trail of the suspects. Stuntman has to tie up the case by beating up a gang of hulking boxers. It ends with a S&K twist, as Sandra remembers that she sent her jewels out to be cleaned!

“The House Of Madness” opens with a slick two-page splash that mixes the grim image of a madhouse with twisted elements of a fairy tale. Sandra gets trapped in the sanitarium with a bevy of strange characters, and in short order Don Daring blunders in. Stuntman arrives in his new sedan and a couple of pages of fights end the tale.

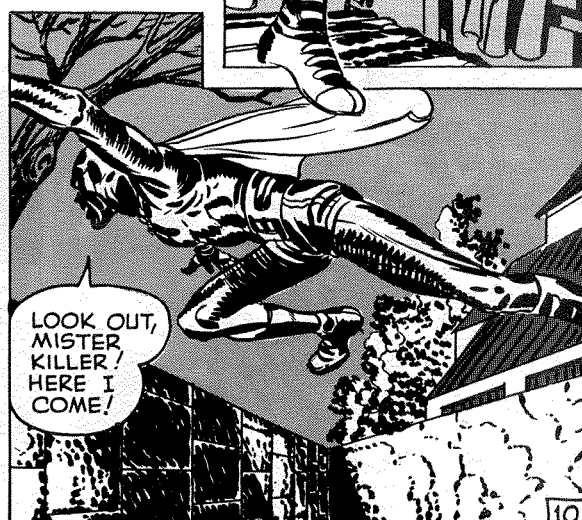
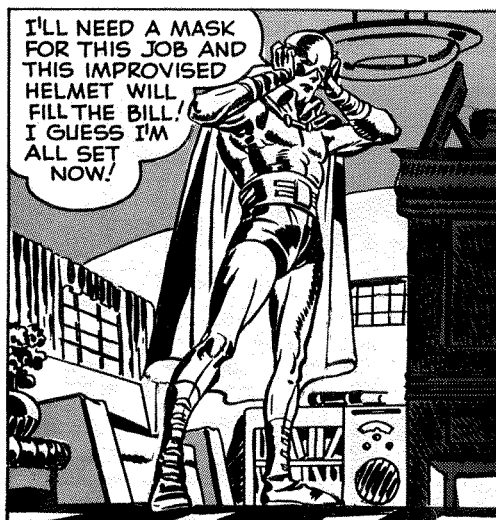
If the stories sound simple, don’t be fooled. The art and plots for the entire *Stuntman* run appear unrushed and tightly considered. Jack and Joe were at a new start of their career as a team, and at this point there were not a lot of demands for their time. This was also before they would assemble a large “bullpen” of artists to aid in production, so most of *Stuntman* is “pure” Simon & Kirby. Joe would ink many of the strip’s pages, as well as share in plotting and scripting duties. His work adds depth to the stories. Round panels, extra humor, dramatic inking, and explosive action highlight the entire run. There’s also more dialogue to read than in most Golden Age books, adding even more depth to the work. (Dialogue would grow in importance in S&K comics, reaching dizzy heights in the soon-to-develop romance titles.)

The stories in *Stuntman* #2 show no decline in quality. “The Backstage Killer” continues the “whodunit” formula, right down to another last-second twist ending. But “The Rescue of Robin Hood” is even better. Opening with a great heraldic double-page spread, the tale promises the excitement of story-book thrills combined with Hollywood make-believe. Every page delivers, as the movie studio films scene after scene of the familiar Robin Hood legend, using ineffectual Don



(above)  
A Kirby *Stuntman* sketch from 1977.

(right) When plots collide!  
Fred meets Don Daring, and  
*Stuntman* is born, in *Stuntman* #1.





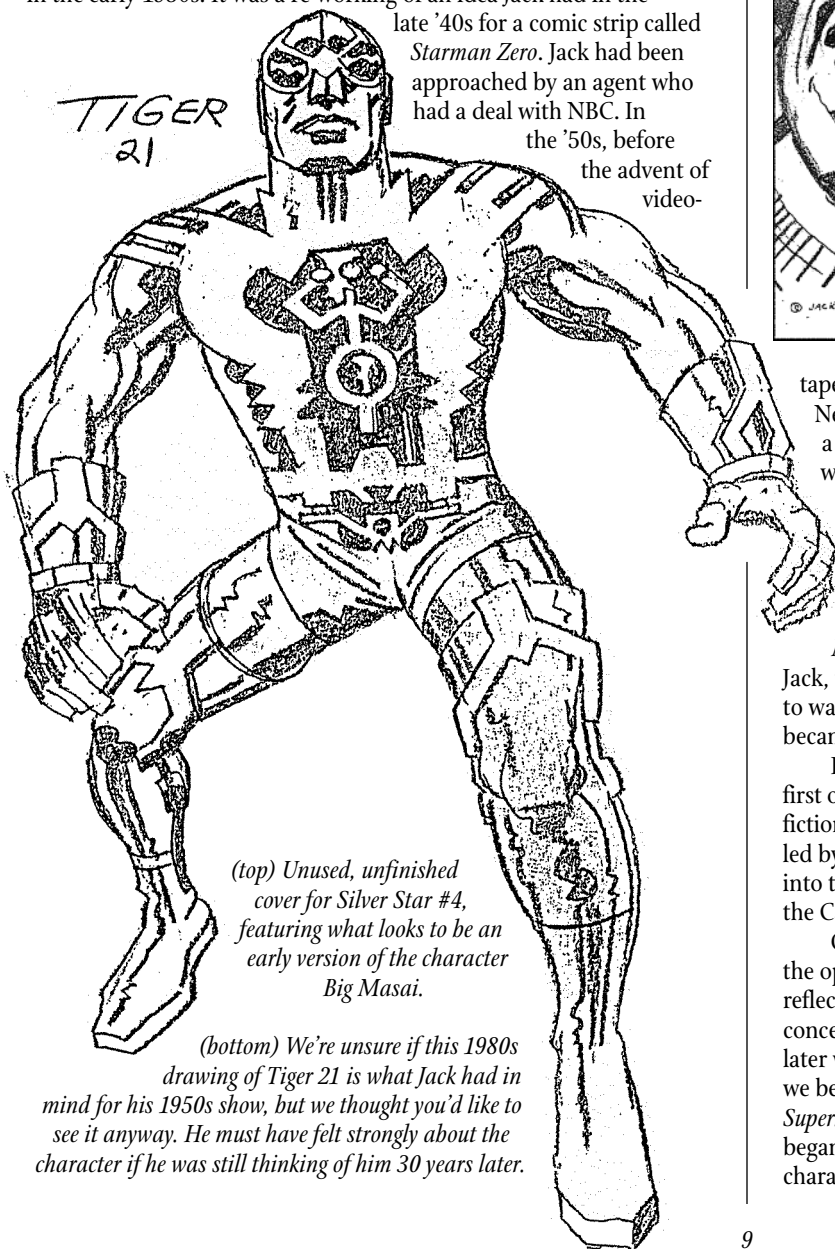
# THE UNFILMED IDEAS OF JACK KIRBY

by Steve Sherman

I'm writing this while sitting in a basement underneath Stage 15 at Sony Pictures Studios (formerly MGM) puppeteering the controls of an alien creature. Above me is a giant set of the interior headquarters of MIB (which stands for Men in Black). Based on the comic book, *Men in Black* is a science fiction picture produced by Steven Spielberg and directed by Barry Sonnenfeld. It's a story about aliens and cataclysmic galactic wars. Somehow it seems appropriate considering this article is about Jack Kirby and Hollywood.

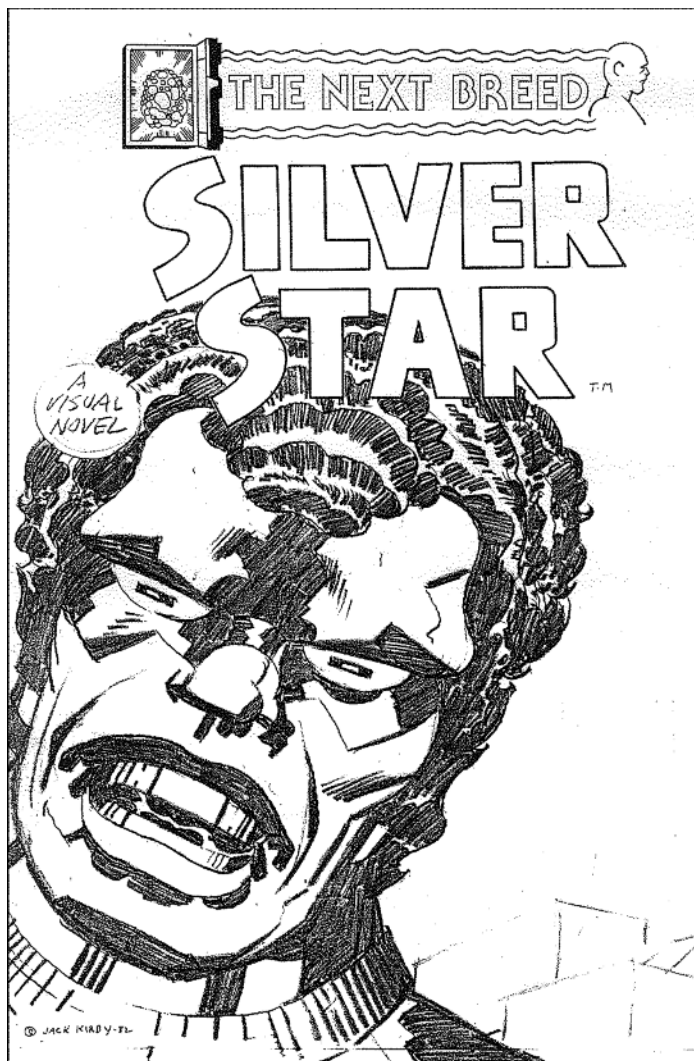
One of Jack's not-so-secret wishes was to direct a movie. To Jack, his comic book works were basically blueprints for movies. While many of Jack's characters have been translated into animation, Jack specifically wrote three concepts which he hoped would be produced as live-action pictures.

The first of these was a show entitled *Tiger 21* and was developed in the early 1950s. It was a re-working of an idea Jack had in the late '40s for a comic strip called *Starman Zero*. Jack had been approached by an agent who had a deal with NBC. In the '50s, before the advent of video-



(top) Unused, unfinished cover for *Silver Star* #4, featuring what looks to be an early version of the character Big Masai.

(bottom) We're unsure if this 1980s drawing of *Tiger 21* is what Jack had in mind for his 1950s show, but we thought you'd like to see it anyway. He must have felt strongly about the character if he was still thinking of him 30 years later.



tape, much of the live programming on television was produced in New York. The show was a half-hour science fiction program about a young hero who drove a vehicle dubbed *Tiger 21*. The location was a secret base on the moon called Command D. Each week the hero would be involved in adventures involving aliens and (this being the '50s) Soviet spies. Also vying for a spot on the network was another program entitled *Man In Space* which starred William Lundigan, and was more or less a realistic show about astronauts on the moon. NBC decided to go with *Man In Space* as the producer of that show was, according to Jack, the brother-in-law of someone at NBC. Not one to let things go to waste, Jack was later to use elements of *Tiger 21* in what eventually became *Kamandi, The Last Boy on Earth*.

In the early 1970s Jack again turned his attention to films. The first of two projects was entitled *The Lightning Lady*. This was a science-fiction picture about a small town that is invaded by a colony of aliens led by the *Lightning Lady*, a queen bee alien. Jack later turned this into the comic book *Captain Victory and the Galactic Rangers*, adding the *Captain Victory* characters to the plot.

One of the most enjoyable things about working with Jack was the opportunity to be able to just sit and listen to him spin tales or reflect on "what if" situations. One evening, we were discussing the concept of miniaturized worlds—something along the lines of what later would be termed nanotechnology. It was from this premise that we began discussing what would become the basis for *Silver Star—Superhero*. Jack thought that it would make an exciting picture and we began working on it. On weekends we would discuss the plot and characters and then during the week I would write it up. Eventually

# MAY THE SOURCE BE WITH YOU

Comparing *New Gods* and *Star Wars*  
by Fievel Elliott

There exists a belief among many Kirby fans that George Lucas' *Star Wars* trilogy may have been inspired by Jack Kirby's Fourth World series, or expressly *New Gods*. Emotionally and socially, *Star Wars* and *New Gods* may appear to dramatically delve into near bliss. More than a few professionals seem to agree. In the first issue of DC's 1984 *New Gods* reprint series, Mark Evanier wrote briefly about *New Gods* resembling a science-fiction trilogy in a text piece. "See, there's been this series of science-fiction movies, three in all the last few years..." Evanier said. "I've only seen one of them myself, and it seemed altogether Kirbyesque to me. More than a few folks who've seen all three have told me that it's *The New Gods*; that is, certain of the characters and certain of the villains seem to parallel a lot of what Mr. Kirby had going in the series... only, of course, he did it first."

Comic book artist and writer Frank Miller attends that Lucas likely did derive some ideas out of *New Gods* "...much [of] the genre of space opera, in story and visual design, came from Kirby. Ignore Lucas' smokescreen on naming films by Akira Kurosawa as his inspiration in creating *Star Wars*. Read *The New Gods*." ("God Save the King," *The Comics Journal* #105, Feb. 1986) But to accept that may mean denouncing a plethora of inconsistencies at the matrix of both creations. *Star Wars* does resemble *New Gods* on an emotional and social level, but to make comparisons on a grandiose scale can open room for doubt. To eliminate this doubt one needs to first and foremost know the facts.

By 1970 Lucas had already envisioned the idea of composing a heroic space fantasy in the form of *Flash Gordon*, and probably would have, until he found he couldn't afford the rights. Now, this is the point for some Kirby fans to contort, "Hey! That's the same year Kirby started his Fourth World stuff!" This is true; although, this does not christen the theory that Lucas peered into a copy of *New Gods* one afternoon and then suddenly—BOOM—we have *Star Wars*. This also

does not mark the moment that Lucas stepped into the cinema scene either, which in reality occurred around 1965 after meeting cinematographer Haskell Wexler. Already Lucas would have lived out what audiences would view in 1973 as *American Graffiti*. His first full length film *THX 1138* (1970) was a science fiction saga which already hinted toward the later mannerisms of *Star Wars*. From this point forward the inspiration of *Flash Gordon* would eventually flesh out into the movie all of us know today. But, forward in time serves no meaning at the present. With both *New Gods* and *Star Wars*, the audience must start out in the middle of the epic. The past retains a titanic proportion of the ideas and myth that distinctly led Kirby and Lucas down two distinctly different paths of thought, which in time found them bumping into each other.

## INSPIRATIONS

Lucas arrived at organizing reference for *Star Wars* by traipsing back through his predecessors, from Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers*, to Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan* and *John Carter of Mars* (obviously Lucas cherished the comic strip over the comic book). Other renowned authors of our past, without which *Star Wars* would not feasibly exist, include Cyrano de Bergerac, Edgar Allan Poe, Jules Verne, Hugo Gernsback, H.G. Wells, Ray Bradbury, and numerous others. Film-wise *Star Wars* combines elements of a plethora of past movies, including *Stagecoach*, *Capt. Blood*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Sands of Iwo Jima*, Tod Browning's *Freaks*, *The Searchers* (Lucas derived quite an amount from this movie, including the ideas for Mos Eisley Cantina and Luke returning home to find his aunt and uncle dead. Siskel and Ebert attest that *Star Wars* stands as one of the best westerns ever made), *B'wana Devil*, *The Crimson Pirate*, *Mark Of Zorro*, *Scaramouche*, *Knights of the Round Table*, *The Shadow*, *2001*, *Soylent Green*, and *Planet of the Apes*.

In May 1973 Lucas completed the first draft of *Star Wars*. In this



An enraged Orion bares little resemblance to Luke Skywalker. Here Orion battles Kalibak, in uninked pencils from *New Gods* #8.

# ONCE UPON A TIME: KIRBY'S PRISONER

by Charles Hatfield

What happens when your favorite cartoonist gets his hands on your favorite television show?

## THE PRISONER!

A British response to the 1960s' Bond-inspired fad for spy thrillers, *The Prisoner* was conceived in 1966 by writer (and former secret service agent) George Markstein, and brought to life by actor/producer Patrick McGoochan, co-producer David Tomblin, and crew (under McGoochan's banner, Everyman Films Ltd, but financed by the company ITC). A conceptual follow-up, if not a direct sequel, to McGoochan's popular series *Danger Man* (US title: *Secret Agent*), Markstein's *Prisoner* concerned a former espionage agent imprisoned in a retirement community for spies. As finally produced, the series elaborated on Markstein's premise by treating it symbolically: the spy thriller became an allegory of the tension between individual self and institutional authority—in McGoochan's words, an "allegorical conundrum" open to myriad interpretations.

The allegory rests on a plot elegant in its simplicity: a secret agent resigns his position, only to find himself a prisoner in the Village, a superficially quaint yet rather sinister locale. Unnamed powers want to know why he resigned, and try to force his secrets from him, but he refuses to say anything, and dedicates himself to escaping. Week after week, the Prisoner, dubbed "Number Six," fights to preserve his free

will and individual identity in the face of near-overwhelming odds; week after week, he succeeds in foiling all attempts to make him talk, yet fails to escape the Village. Ironically, he is never named, despite his repeated cry, "I am not a number! I am a free man!"

Though Number Six matches wits with a series of figurehead leaders, all known by the title "Number Two," the ultimate power behind the Village (Number One, presumably) remains unknown. Throughout the series, the stalemate between Village and Prisoner is challenged but never broken—that is, until the last two episodes of the series, an infamous two-part story in which No. 6 defeats his captors, encounters No. 1, and "escapes," only to begin the same cycle all over again!

Under McGoochan's direction, the series departed radically from its literal premise, so much in fact that writer/script editor Markstein eventually bailed out of the project. By then the show had become a truly strange blend of spy heroics, Orwellian SF, absurdist humor, and philosophical allegory. After more than a year of production, ITC pulled the plug on *The Prisoner*—which was, after all, costly, behind schedule, and (by TV standards) obscure. Broadcast in the UK in 1967-68, and in the US in the summer of '68, *The Prisoner* caused brief ripples of enthusiasm, puzzlement, and outrage; in fact, British reaction to the last episode was so hot that McGoochan went abroad to escape notice. Yet, once shown, *The Prisoner* faded into obscurity—only to be recovered by a growing fan following in the 1970s, and rerun in the States



Kirby's 2-page spread from pages 2-3 of his *Prisoner* adaptation. Inks by Mike Royer.

by PBS in 1977 (my first exposure to it). The show's memory lives on in numerous books, record albums, videotapes, and other merchandising, thanks in part to the efforts of Six of One, an authorized, international fan club. (Reportedly, McGoohan has recently signed with Polygram to write and produce a *Prisoner* feature film.)

References to *The Prisoner* in comics are many, but to my knowledge only two licensed *Prisoner* comics have been attempted: one, a four-part sequel by Dean Motter and Mark Askwith, published by DC in 1988-89; the other, an unpublished adaptation from Marvel Comics, written and drawn by none other than Jack Kirby! This unfinished, seventeen-page story, what was to have been the first in a series, was created by Kirby and partially inked and lettered by Mike Royer in the Summer of 1976 (to be published in Nov. '76, with a Feb. '77 cover date). Since Marvel scrapped the project, this single episode is all that remains of Kirby's plans for the series.

## WHY KIRBY?

According to Steranko's *Mediascene* (Nov.-Dec. 1977), Marvel's *Prisoner* began as a proposal by editor Marv Wolfman, which led to an effort by Steve Englehart and Gil Kane—an effort nipped in the bud by Stan Lee, who gave the project to Kirby. Lee later scuttled the series altogether. Given its history, one might expect Kirby's adaptation to be lukewarm, a matter of assignment rather than passion—but no, his *Prisoner* is an intense, ambitious comic, oddly in tune with his other 1970s projects.

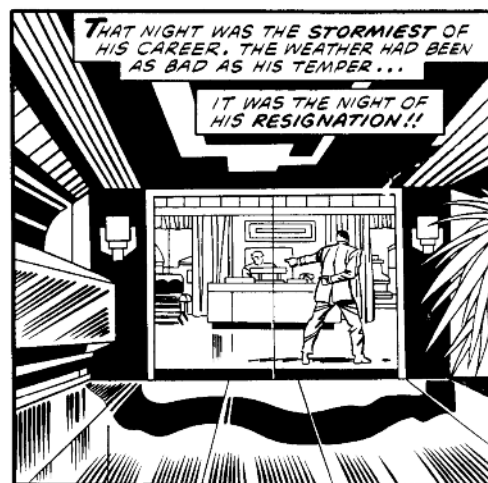
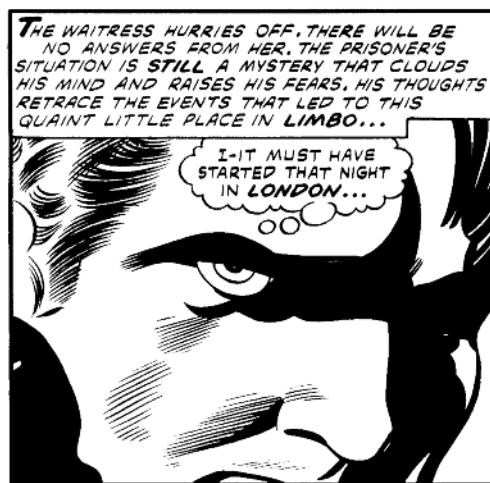
It's not hard to see why *The Prisoner* appealed to Kirby. Indeed, the series' concept, which Kirby glossed as "an individual's stubborn attempts to wrest freedom from subtle but oppressive power" makes perfect sense within Kirby's oeuvre. Its paranoid, Orwellian premise dovetails with the dystopian future of Kirby's *OMAC* (1974-75), as well as the Orwell riffs in Kirby's "Madbomb" saga in *Captain America* #193-200 (1975-76). Likewise, echoes can be found in the later "Mr. Machine" story in Kirby's *2001* #8-10 (1977), with its theme of free will vs. mind control.

Going back farther, we find the theme of freedom vs. control tackled most directly in Kirby's Fourth World saga (1970-74). *The Forever People*, in the "Glorious Godfrey" story arc (#3-6), confront brainwashing on a grand scale, in the form of Godfrey's evangelical crusade, then are imprisoned within Happyland, an amusement park which serves as a kitschy facade for Desaad's experiments in manipulation; later, in "The Power" (#8) they face a megalomaniac whose will-power can turn others into puppets. Over in *Mister Miracle*, the very idea of a "super escape artist" invites comparison to *The Prisoner*, with its stress on entrapment and escape; indeed, there are echoes of *The Prisoner*'s nameless Village in Granny Goodness' horrifying "Orphanage" on Apokolips. On a larger scale, throughout the Fourth World, Darkseid's ongoing quest for Anti-Life dramatizes the struggle between individual freedom and totalitarian

control (see *TJKC* #6).

Kirby's fascination with *The Prisoner* in fact dates back at least as far as *Fantastic Four* #84-87, which would have been produced in 1968, the very year *The Prisoner* was first broadcast in the US. That story focuses on a Latverian village constructed by Dr. Doom to entrap the FF, a village in which the falsely-smiling peasants seem just as cowed and evasive as the inhabitants of McGoohan's village. Stan Lee later (October '69) acknowledged this story as an homage to/parody of *The Prisoner*—clearly, the concept lodged itself in Kirby's brain soon after, or even during, the TV show's original run.

*The Prisoner* must have appealed to Kirby the storyteller on a gut level, as it raised philosophical questions in a disarmingly accessible form. McGoohan and Co. used the then-popular spy genre for all it was worth—despite its intellectual ambitions, and portentous tone,





# SEEKING THE LORD OF LIGHT

Producer Barry Ira Geller interviewed by John Morrow

(In November 1979, the movie industry was abuzz over the announcement of a planned \$50 million science fiction movie based on Roger Zelazny's Hugo award-winning novel *Lord of Light*. It was scheduled to begin filming in July 1980 on 1,000 acres of land near Denver, Colorado. The plan was that, instead of removing the sets after filming, they'd be incorporated into a new theme park called Science Fiction Land, which would've been three times the size of Disneyland, and would open in 1984. The entire project was the brainchild of screenwriter Barry Ira Geller, who commissioned Jack Kirby to provide a series of drawings for the theme park and movie sets, and incorporated them into a promotional package to help secure funding for the project. Legal problems eventually arose for which members of the local city council and Geller's second-in-command were convicted; and although Geller was cleared of any wrongdoing, neither the movie or theme park were ever completed. We asked Barry Ira Geller to elaborate on his experiences with Jack and the *Lord of Light*, and he generously allowed us this interview, conducted on January 18, 1996.)

**THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR:** Could you give us a brief synopsis of the plot of Zelazny's novel?

**BARRY IRA GELLER:** Basically, it's about a band of survivors fleeing the destruction of their planet which was called Urth. They were selected for their different psychic abilities or expanded-consciousness abilities. They later become the crew of a spaceship that lands on a planet they call Earth, as in our Earth, and turn themselves into the gods of the Hindu pantheon. In the course of a thousand years, they take over the creatures of the planet and build their own cities in a remake of Earth's ancient India. The story is really one of those love/hate triangles between three very powerful people, which ultimately ends in one of them fighting all his colleagues for the freedom of the planet, and the freeing of technology for mankind. His name is Sam, short for Mahasamatman, or the Lord of Light. His ex-lover was also the most powerful female goddess, and it's quite intriguing. Imagine having the most passionate, explosive relationship you can dream of... and having it continue for 800 years! The book was originally published in 1967, the same year it won the Hugo award.

**TJKC:** How did you get involved in making a movie out of the novel?  
**BARRY:** In the early 1970s, I was looking for a property like *Lord of Light*, because I felt there was a great message and a spiritual awareness of the rest of the universe, very much like Lucas did with *Star Wars*. I was working with a director who had initially optioned it. I was a screenwriter, and I dropped another job to take up the screenwriting on that one, and ultimately he left the project and I just bought it. This is in the mid-1970s. *Star Wars* had just come out. I was actually working on the first adaptation of *Lord of Light* before *Star Wars* came out.

**TJKC:** Did *Star Wars*' success give you greater incentive to proceed?  
**BARRY:** I guess you could say that. I was really pushing science fiction for several years as a screenwriter. I got turned down all over the place. (laughter) In 1975, I was living on options, and I did have a small film produced, but no one would listen to me. I talked to a lot of producers. I was promoting science fiction stories left and right, but no one would listen to me. It wasn't until after *Star Wars* that people started listening to me.

**TJKC:** Did you know Jack before you got him involved on the project?  
**BARRY:** No, I didn't. I took over and bought the first option in late 1977 or early 1978. For those who don't know, an option is when you purchase the rights to make a movie for a limited period of time, to see what you can do with it. Then if you want to, you can purchase the

full rights. Initially, I spoke to a couple of artists, and I'd say, "Can you do this like Jack Kirby does it?"

**TJKC:** So you were familiar with Jack's work?

**BARRY:** I read *Fantastic Four* #1 off the newsstand! (laughter) When I was a teenager, *FF*, *Iron Man*, *X-Men*, and *Thor* shaped my whole consciousness of super-heroes. I was very much into his knock-'em-dead artistic style. I went through two artists and wasn't happy with their work, and the obvious dawned on me. Why not just call up Jack Kirby? (laughter) So I did in 1978, and I found out he was living here in California. I was totally away from comics for years, so it was just my memories I was going on.

**TJKC:** At that point, had Jack ever read the novel?

**BARRY:** I don't think so. Jack really wasn't so much of a reader as a storyteller, so I put together an adaptation that I think he glanced through. But generally it was our conversations that gave him the greater idea. He was a concept man.

**TJKC:** When you first approached him, was he immediately enthusiastic about the project?

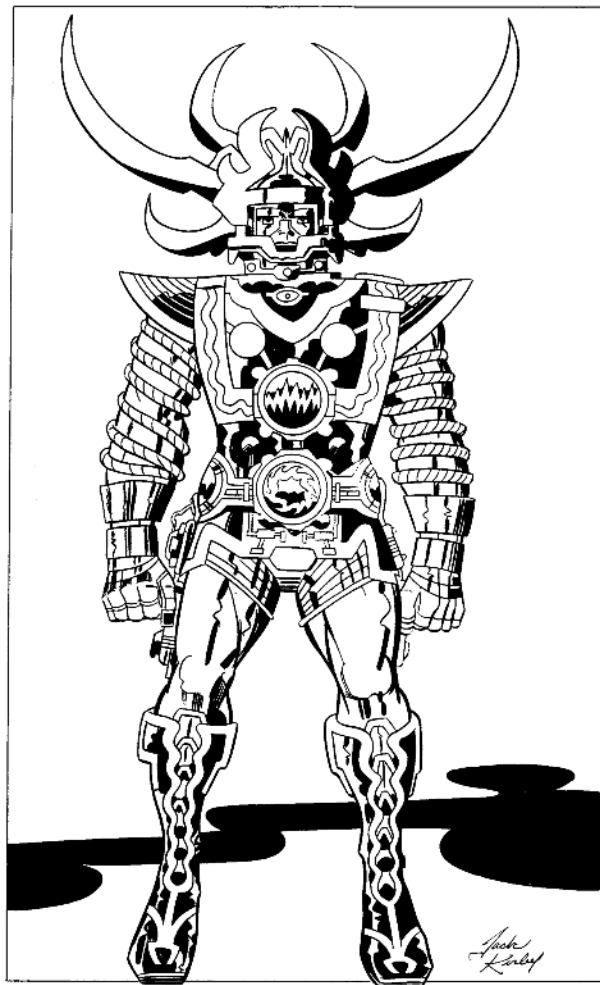
**BARRY:** Actually, he was. There was an interview our Public Relations person did with him, and he was quite excited

by it. He saw the characters as larger-than-life.

(Editor's Note: The interview Barry mentions accompanies this one.)

**TJKC:** What criteria did you give Jack to work from? Did you tell him how many drawings you needed, and of what?

**BARRY:** We were doing two things at once. I was involved in building a theme park at the time. In fact, it was the theme park that was going to be financing the film. Jack had the extraordinary feat of doing designs that would also be theme park structures. The drawings he did



"The Lord of Light" featuring the character Sam.



are for the theme park, but they're also for the *Lord of Light* movie.

Jack was probably the most incredible artist that I've ever worked with. I was working with top people in their fields; several Oscar winners, and the number one architect in the world at that time. And Jack was the most amazing one of all. It was kind of magical. I would basically sit down with Jack for a few hours, and we'd discuss concepts. For example, on *The Northeast Corner Of Heaven*, I came to Jack and said, "My feeling is, these guys are bringing their technology to this planet, and everyone copies them." We talked about the Hindu religion and mythology, and the Tibetan Mandala design of temples; it's a sort of traveling up through consciousness as you get to the top, and we sort of said, "This is a good place for the spaceship to be." And we just threw ideas back and forth.

It was the strangest thing. How do you know when someone got what you said? And the funny thing was that I'd see a certain kind of shine in his eyes, a certain glow. And I went, "Hmm, I know he's got it." (laughter) Normally if you give someone instructions, you don't know if they got it until they hand you something back, and you help them a little bit more.

I really am a believer in allowing a person to create. I think that was one of the most important aspects of our relationship. And I'd get a call two or three days later, and I'd come back to his studio, always bearing a box of Dunhill cigars. (laughter) And there it would be. He hit every one of those drawings first time out of the gate. It was amazing. I was awed. Then we'd get to work on the next one.

The first drawing was called *Terminal Of The Gods*. You'll notice it has a more Mayan feel. That was done just as he was finishing *Eternals*. At the end, you'll see he got much more Hinduistic and Eastern, based on our discussions and a giant picture book on India that I gave him, which helped us communicate. That book is still there on his bookshelf.



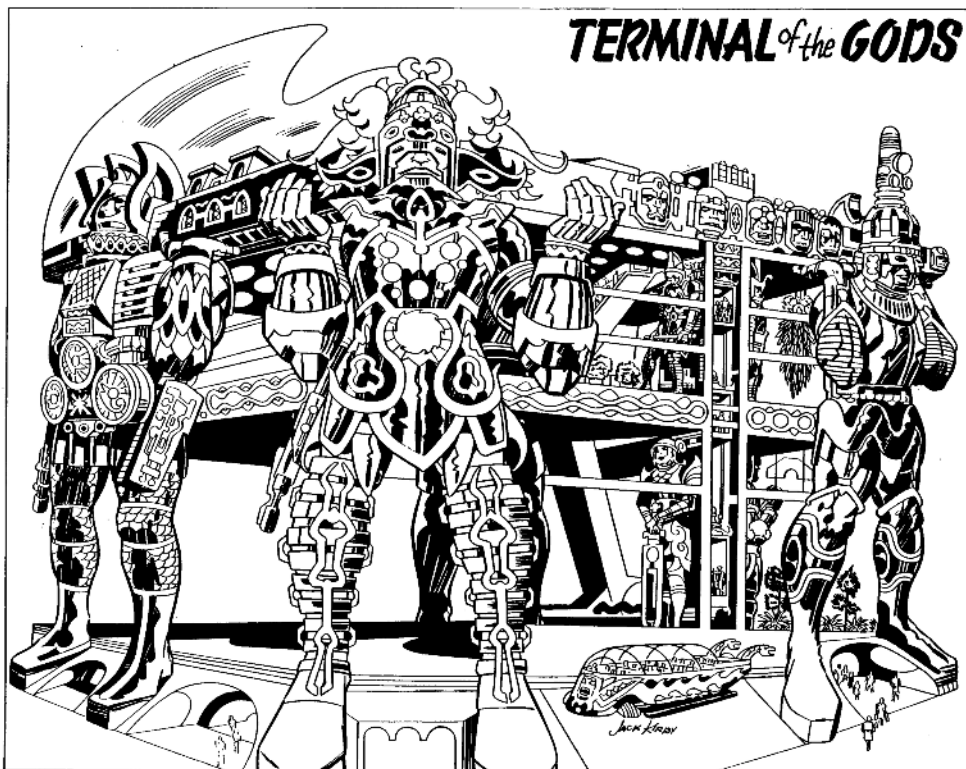
(above) "The Northeast Corner Of Heaven" • (below) "Terminal Of The Gods"

TJKC: Were you planning to use the movie sets for the theme park before Jack ever got involved?

BARRY: Correct.

TJKC: There's one here that looks like it was watercolored.

BARRY: That's the only one that wasn't what I was originally thinking of, and I gave it to him as a present. For that one, I asked for an idea of what the streets of Heaven looked like. That's all I said to him. He colored it in later and called it *The Angel*. It's called *Streets Of Heaven*. (A color reproduction of this piece can be found in *The Art Of Jack Kirby*.)



TJKC: How many drawings were there in all?

BARRY: Thirteen. One is a double-spread.

TJKC: Did you have black-and-white line art in mind from the beginning? And who picked Mike Royer as inker?

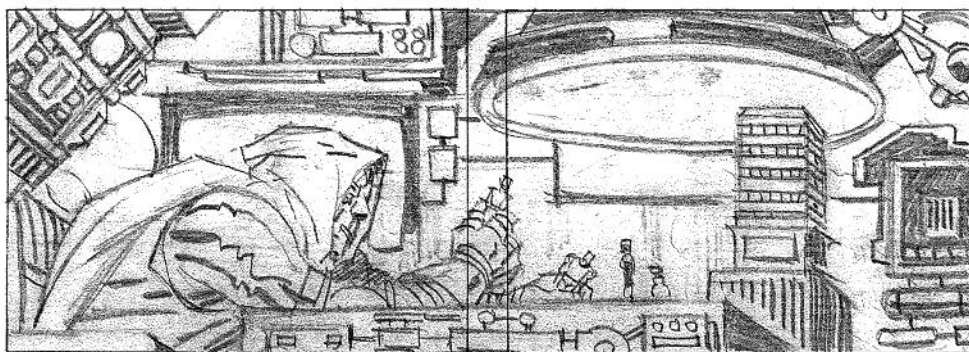
BARRY: Both were Jack's choice, and I agreed. The two pieces entitled *The Royal Chambers Of Brahma* are good examples of how I said, "Jack, I want to have something with 100-200 feet of revolving virtual image holograms of all the different people on the planet, and states of consciousness, and energies and emotions." Then I said, "Let's try it with just the revolving gardens," which is more like the novel. The novel doesn't really say where anything is, so I took artistic license with it.

TJKC: But in terms of who decided which scenes to depict, that was your decision?

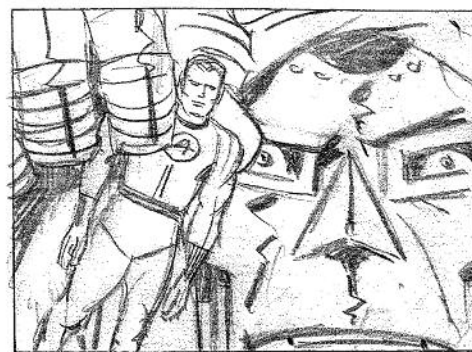
BARRY: Oh yes. I had very distinct ideas of different ones I wanted.

TJKC: Have they all been published anywhere?

BARRY: There was a Media Kit, but they weren't published, per se. Roz and I have plates of everything, and at some point we may



DOCTOR DOOM IS IN SANCTUM-LABORATORY (SMALL FIGURES ON TABLE AND MODEL OF BAXTER BUILDING)



TOYS WITH CHESS-TYPE FIGURES

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# THE ANIMATED LIFE OF JACK KIRBY

by Jon B. Cooke

When his comic book output declined to a handful of issues in the '80s, many Jack Kirby fans assumed the artist was taking a well-deserved retirement. But if you turned on Saturday morning TV during those years, you'd have seen the Kirby magic all over the airwaves, often in some pretty weird shows. In a few his influence is obvious, especially *The New Fantastic Four* and *Thundarr the Barbarian*. But in a number of unkirby-like vehicles like *Mr. T*, *Rambo*, and *Turbo Teen*, his contributions were also significant. In some shows, including *Super Friends*, *Sectaurs*, and *Scooby* and *Scrappy-Doo*, he designed vehicle, villain, or maybe background details to certain episodes.

Instead of enjoying a respite after an incredible career in comics, Jack was creating a huge body of work in an entirely new medium, his imagination still blazing to express new ideas. He became a master of presentation art, inventing unusual, innovative concepts and characters which became, as in his previous job, his forte. Jack's precise contributions to the 'toon biz are still mostly uncharted and the facts are confined to aging files in studio storage rooms, but his influence to those he worked with is still vibrant in their memories and it is a story well worth telling.

## THE NEW FANTASTIC FOUR

By 1978 the future must have looked anxious for Jack. He was on a leave of absence from his latest employer, Marvel Comics (where he was suffering increasing and arbitrary staff interference), when Jack confided over dinner to one-time assistant and longtime friend, Mark Evanier. He admitted that he didn't have the stomach to return to the field he helped mature into an art form, and said he was leaving Marvel—and comics—possibly for good. "He didn't feel that he had much of a future in comics," Evanier said, "and felt that he had gone backwards in his career." After forty years, 21,000 pages of art, and the creation of innumerable concepts and characters that enrich the copyright owners to this day, Jack needed to try something new.

Evanier was at Hanna-Barbera Studios as staff writer for their comics line when he heard a rumor. The art department was trying to imitate Kirby in preparation for a *Fantastic Four* cartoon series. The writer went to Iwao Takamoto, the studio art director, and asked, "Why not get the real thing?" The creator of the very concept might be available. A phone call and car ride with Roz later, Jack had found that something new: a career as designer for the animation studios of Hollywood, U.S.A.

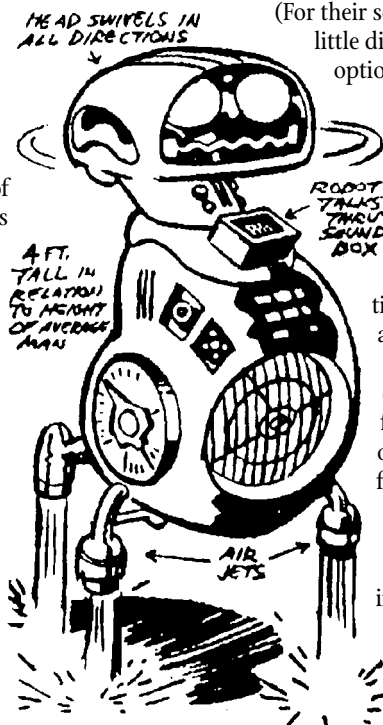
H-B hired Jack to do presentation boards—large renderings of concepts, characters and storyboards outlining typical episodes to pitch show ideas—and on the strength of those NBC bought *The New Fantastic Four* for the 1978-79 season. "At that point Marvel decided they wanted to do the show at DePatie-Freleng instead," Evanier said. Ultimately a deal was reached, where D-F traded off their *Godzilla* show (with comic great Doug Wildey, to boot!) and got Reed Richards & Co. in return. And they got Jack writing and drawing storyboards.

(For their second cartoon outing, Kirby's super-hero team was a little different. "At the time, the Human Torch had been optioned to Universal for a TV movie," Evanier said.

"Everyone thinks that Torch was left out because they didn't want a character on fire, but actually it was a legal problem." So in place of Johnny Storm, kids got the next best thing (?): wise-cracking H.E.R.B. — Humanoid Electronic Robot "B" model, or Herbie for short.)

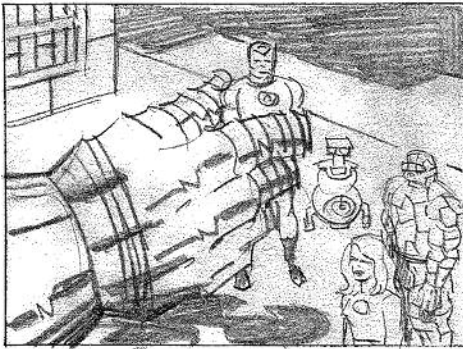
One would imagine that Jack's mastery of sequential art would make him ideal to panel out cartoon adventures. But storyboarding limited, low budget animation was a different and difficult task. "If you could do one show in five or six weeks, you're really fast," said John Dorman, who started at D-P and went on to become Jack's art director at Ruby-Spears. "My first encounter with Jack was when he would turn in a finished half-hour storyboard every week that he wrote while he was drawing it. It was alarming!"

What D-P tried with Jack was an experiment to introduce the Lee & Kirby style of comics production to cartoons. "Usually in animation, you write a script and a storyboard artist turns it into a series of panels," Evanier explains. "What they tried with Jack was having him storyboard first and then dialogue, imitating the Marvel method of doing a comic book. It didn't really work." Evanier cited two reasons: Jack's lack of experience in storyboarding and the necessity of sparse action and frequent dialogue in limited animation. "You have to cut off a lot of times during the speech to make up for the fact that the characters aren't moving very much. You can't really storyboard and figure out later how much dialogue there's going to be. It has to be the other way



(center) Jack's original design for Herbie the Robot.

(above and right) A beautiful storyboard sequence from "The F.F. Meet Doctor Doom" episode of *The New Fantastic Four*. The storyboards for the entire episode consist of 126 of these 3-panel drawings. The lettering under each panel is what Jack wrote to describe the action in each scene.



FIGURES ARE FF.



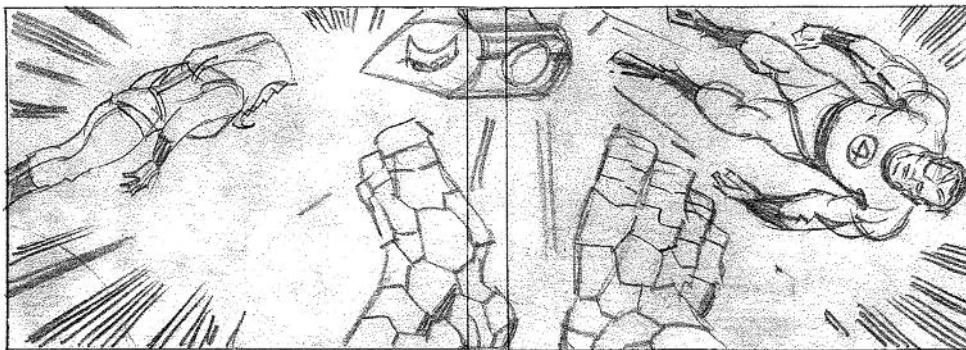
DOOM IS COOKING UP SOME KIND OF PLOT



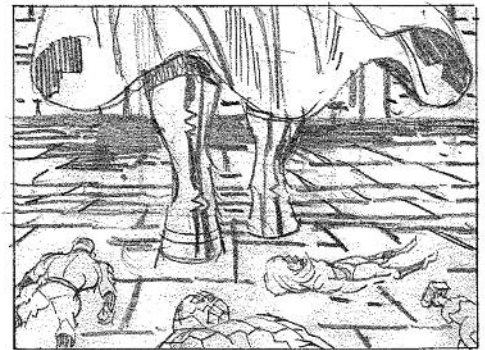
DOOM IS THROUGH WITH GAME



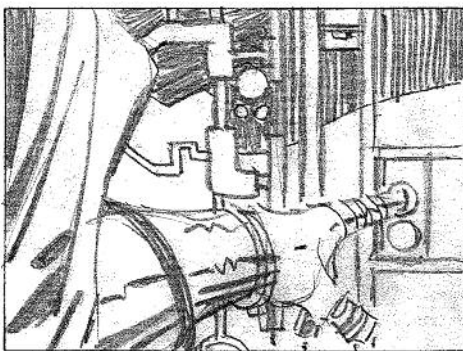
HE RAISES ARM



KNOCKS DOWN FIGURINES



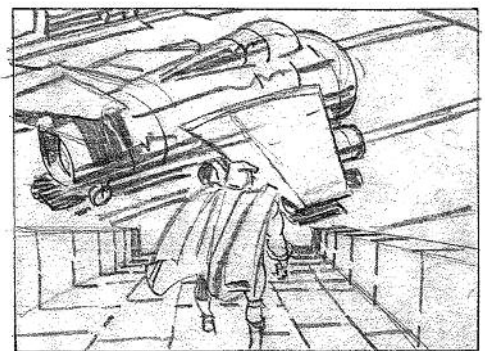
HIS INTENTIONS ARE OMINOUS...



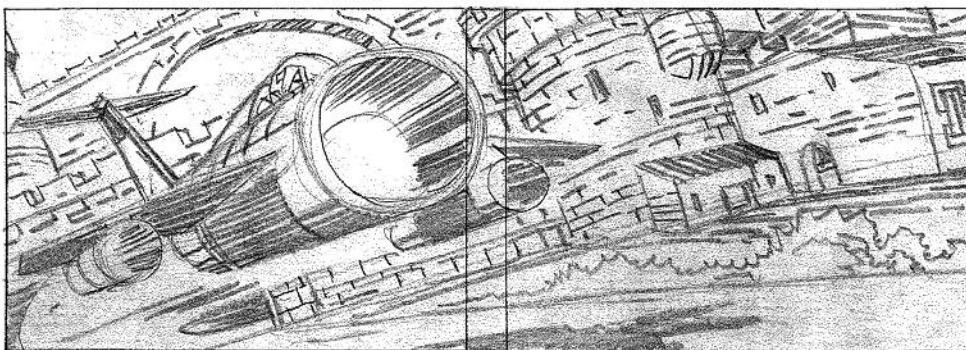
PRESSES BUTTON



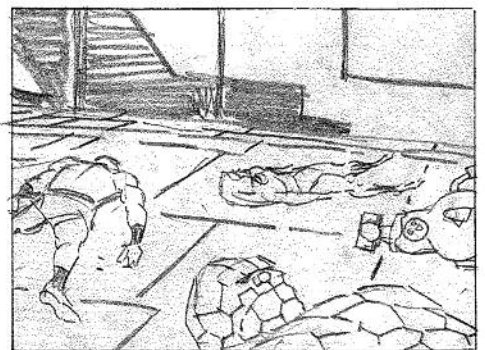
DOOR SLIDES OPEN



DOOM WALKS DOWN RAMP TO HANGAR



TAKES OFF IN PRIVATE JET FOR NEW YORK

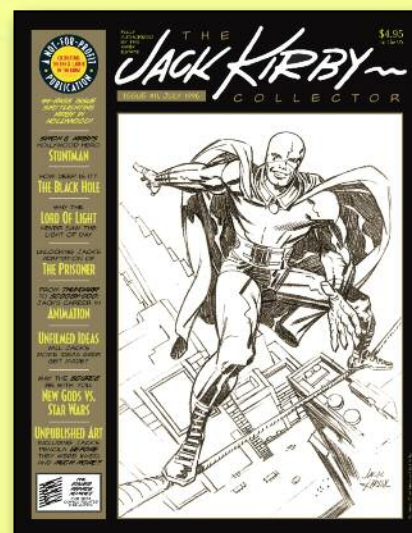


FALLEN FIGURES STILL LIE ON CASTLE FLOOR.





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*Here are Jerry Ordway's inks over Jack's pencils for the screenplay of the Kirby-inspired film Forever Amore™ Details are in this issue.*