



A 68-PAGE
ISSUE ON KIRBY'S
VILLAINS!

AN UNPUBLISHED
KIRBY INTERVIEW

INTERVIEWS WITH
**STEVE RUDE &
MIKE MIGNOLA**

COMPARING KIRBY'S
MARGIN NOTES TO
STAN LEE'S WORDS

STUNNING UNINKED
**FANTASTIC FOUR
#49 PENCILS**

SPECIAL FEATURES:

**DARKSEID,
RED SKULL,
DOCTOR DOOM,
ATLAS MONSTERS,
YELLOW CLAW,
& OTHERS**

THE GENESIS OF
KING KOBRA

UNPUBLISHED ART
INCLUDING PENCIL
PAGES *BEFORE*
THEY WERE INKED,
AND *MUCH MORE!!*



THE **JACK KIRBY** COLLECTOR

ISSUE #22, DEC. 1998

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Back cover inks, collage, and color: Jack Kirby

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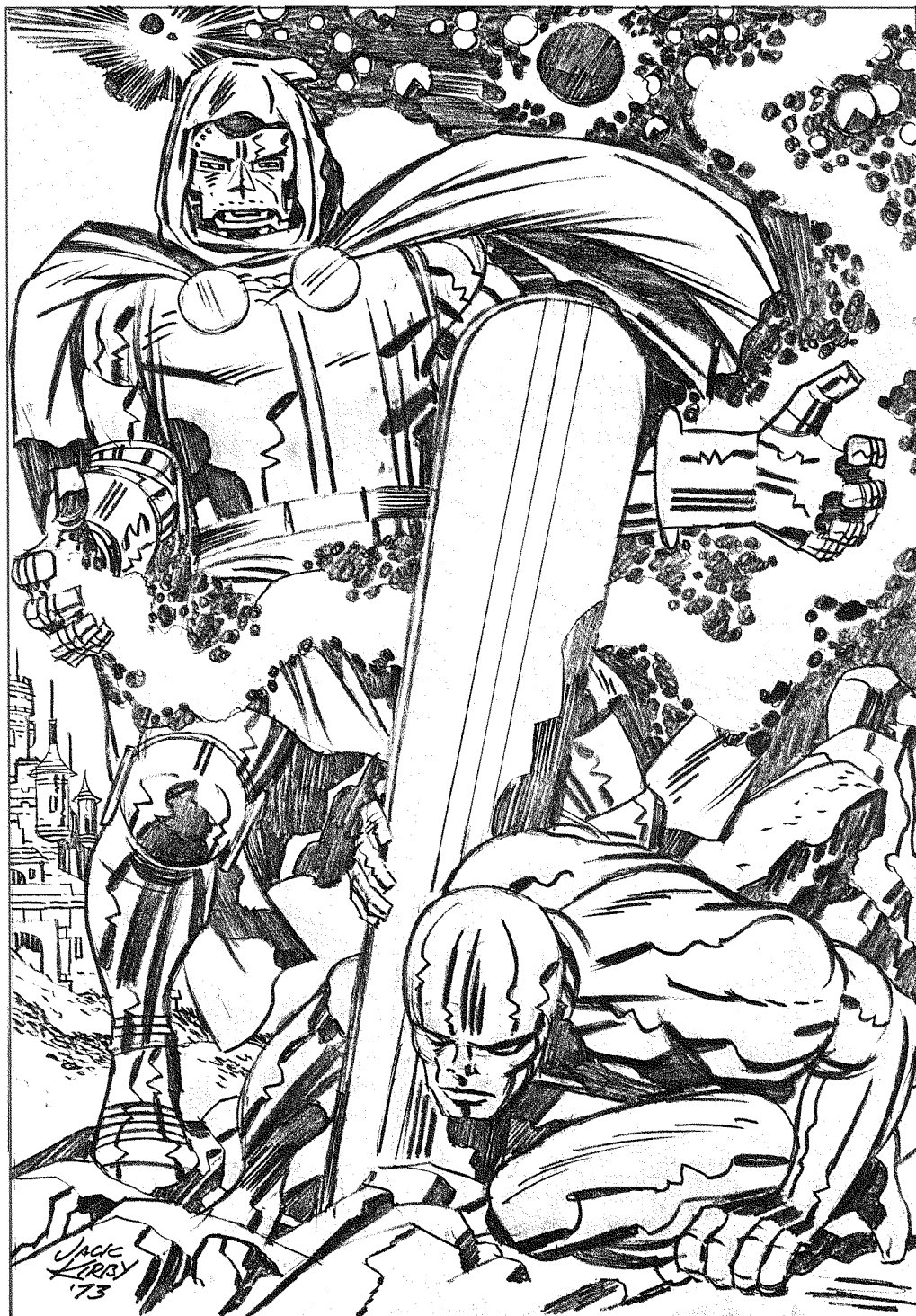
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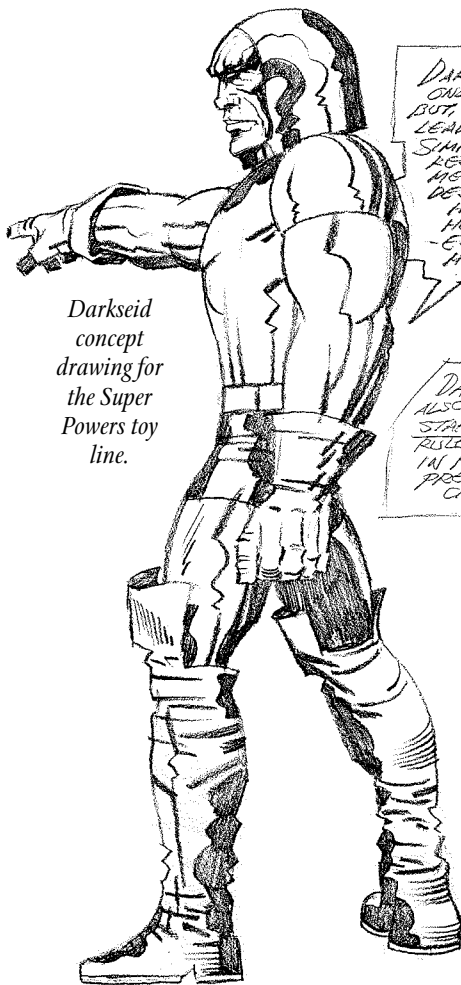


Dave Stevens was only 18 when he inked this commissioned piece for a fan in 1973, and it graces this issue's cover. Our back cover this issue is the original Darkseid concept drawing, in ink, watercolor, and collage by Jack himself!

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FASCISM IN THE FOURTH WORLD

An examination of the Third Reich's similarities to the conflict of the gods, by Jerry Boyd



Darkseid concept drawing for the Super Powers toy line.

So much can be read into Jack Kirby's Fourth World opus that subsequent readings over time only add to the genius of this unfinished, yet endlessly entertaining masterpiece. The beautifully-orchestrated interplay of technology, intrigue, spirituality, biological engineering, etc. can all be commented on in depth, but one of the most fascinating aspects to me in all of this was Kirby's take on Nazi history as it was presented in the world of Apokolips.

Kirby had been a soldier in WWII serving in General George Patton's Third Army which became world-renowned for its crushing breakthroughs on the German defenses after D-Day. Like any other infantryman, he witnessed firsthand the horrors of war, and had seen or learned afterwards the terrors the S.S. had kept hidden: The extermination camps.

The Nazis had threatened a world, and for a time had seemed unbeatable. Their philosophies, use of technology, new approaches to warfare and ethnicity, etc. seduced a significant part of their nation, and sadly, continue to inspire new worshippers to this day. Years after Hitler's "thousand-year Reich" fell in May 1945, comics creators would create fictional would-be world conquerors like the Yellow Claw, Magneto, and Doctor Doom. Older characters like Fu Manchu and Dr. Mabuse would be revamped for a post nuclear-age movie crowd and a cruel, calculating scientist/despot named Dr. No would calmly tell super-spy James Bond how he planned to plunge the world into WWII in the first of the Ian Fleming-based film adventures. Kirby had spent the better part of the '50s co-plotting and drawing monsters and madmen who ate, slept, and breathed tyranny; but just as the world couldn't (and shouldn't) forget the Big One, neither could he.

HITLER & DARKSEID

Hitler, the ultimate villain of the 20th century, is mirrored somewhat in Darkseid, the "ultimate" — period. In writings on and recollections of the Fuehrer, his desire for war is apparent. In his book *Mein Kampf*, the young Hitler expresses his desire for a large Germanic living space — *Lebensraum* — which would take place not in colonial possessions overseas, but in Europe. What if the Europeans (the present possessors) object? "Then the law of self-preservation goes into effect; and what is refused to amicable methods, it is up to the fist to take." He goes on to write: "Mankind has grown great in eternal struggle, and only in eternal peace does it perish..."

Darkseid is the archenemy of peace. "Wielder of holocaust! Disciple of power and death!" Orion describes him as he stands before the demon's statue in *New Gods* #1. Kirby makes Darkseid's worldview less complicated (and wisely so) and gives him three main objectives:

- The acquisition of power (leadership of Apokolips) — *New Gods* #7
- War with New Genesis (the entire tetralogy)
- The attainment of the Anti-Life Equation (one attempt thwarted in *Forever People* #8)

Like Hitler, Darkseid is cruel, manipulative, charismatic, and aloof. It has been said about Hitler that he had no "real" friends, only cronies, hangers-on, and worshippers who sought to curry his favor for personal reasons. Hitler had a good intuitive sense about his associates, and after releasing the barbaric nature of his followers, sat back in the position of leader/warlord in efforts to twist the world into fitting his monstrous vision. Hitler took the undercurrent of anti-semitism, ethnic prejudices (against Slavs and Gypsies), political mistrusts (against Communists and outsider democracies), and gave those frustrated, impoverished, brutal, and sometimes perverted members of his Nationalist Socialist Party a slow, but steady reign of terror which ended in the Nazification of Germany.

In Kirby's writing, Darkseid's agenda needs no great amount of time. The "power beings" of Apokolips are inherently evil, their planet having been "saturated with the cunning and evil which was once a sorceress." Evil is manifested in many types: Desaad and Kalibak are tormentors, Kanto's an assassin, Granny Goodness and Wonderful Willik are lesser tyrants, and even Mantis desires a "share of the booty here (Earth)." Like Hitler, Darkseid gives free rein to the evil in his cohorts in order to facilitate his gaining of "the ability to control all free will!"

While the Fuehrer and the ruler of the shadow planet inspire respect (and terror) from their accomplices, true love eludes them. Hitler's great love was his niece, Geli Raubal, who committed suicide in 1931, after quarreling with her lover/uncle. To the Nazi princes Adolf confessed forever afterward that she was the only woman he ever loved. The core of Hitler grew ever colder after her death.

Darkseid was denied an early love in his life. Suli died mysteriously as a result of court intrigue. She is mentioned briefly in *New Gods* #11, but without affection by her paramour. Her death may have hardened the heart of the ruler of the dark world. Tigra and Darkseid are placed together briefly in



New Gods #7, but “irreconcilable differences” are shown between them, and Darkseid has her whisked away in continued exile after announcing his plans for Orion.

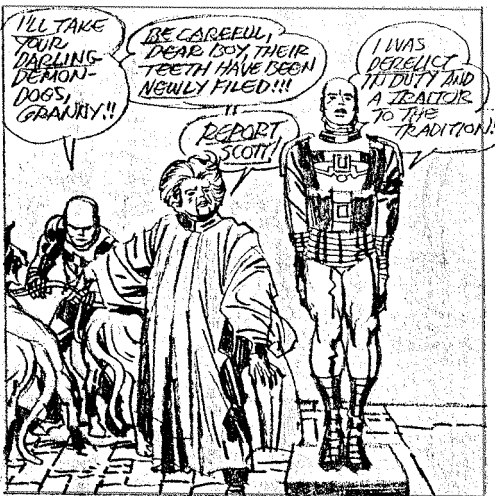
Darkseid’s two sons are extensions of his plans: Orion, part of a political pact, and Kalibak as a brutal warrior/enforcer. He is not warm or friendly to either. Hitler was friendly, playful, but not warm toward the children he knew. He saw children as an extension of the “state,” and the state’s future would be manifested in tall, athletic, blond barbarian/soldiers that would dominate the world. The egos of the two leaders would not permit a real heir to the positions of power that they had mapped out for themselves.

CREATURES OF CONFLICT

Aside from the Hitler/Darkseid similarities, two other characters stand out in comparison. Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Germany’s Minister of Propaganda, was one of the Fuehrer’s most trusted henchmen and an important personage in the brainwashing of the German and Austrian peoples. Goebbels staged Nazi Party rallies, art exhibits, oversaw film productions, made speeches, and gen-



Goebbels (top) & Glorious Godfrey (below).



(this page and next) Uninked pencils from the “Young Scott Free” back-up in Mister Miracle #5.

erally oversaw the “selling” of National Socialist ideology to the masses. Later, when the war would go badly, the “bloodthirsty noncombatant” would call for German deserters to be shot.

In short, he sold Hitler’s brand of “Anti-Life.” Glorious Godfrey, Darkseid’s pompous preacher, is his counterpart. Godfrey (*Forever People* #3) sends out the “Justifiers,” suicidal human bombs who strike out at those resistant to their philosophy. Godfrey whips people into a frenzy with his sweeping oratory (like Goebbels) and then sits back to view the carnage. Kirby even began *Forever People* #3 with a quote from — Adolf Hitler.



In *Amazing Heroes* #47 (May '84), Kirby compared Metron, “the academic god,” to Edward Teller, who developed the hydrogen bomb. “He had to create the bomb; that was his capability, and he followed his capability.” Jack’s contention is that a person has to follow his drives, his ambitions and capabilities — and often-times, without thinking what it might do to the people or world around him. Metron sets in motion some of the technology used in the war of the gods, but he is emotionally and morally unattached. His own great

SO GLAD TO BE SOOOO BAAADD!

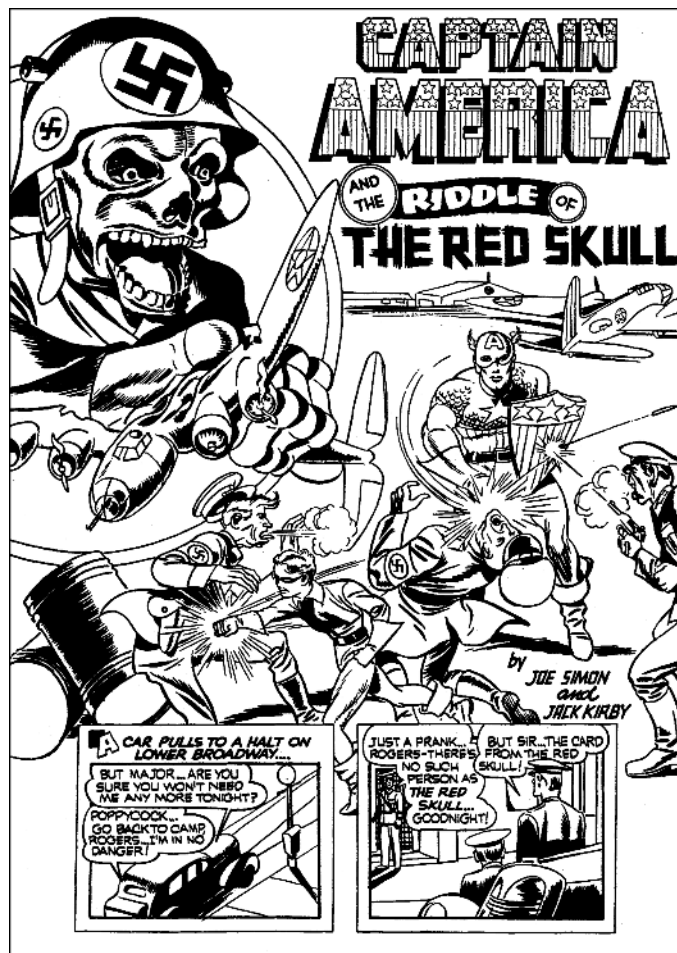
The Top Ten Simon & Kirby Golden Age Villains, by R.J. Vitone

How do you rate “evil”? How do you choose the ‘best’ of the ‘worst’? What elevates one bad guy over the next? Tough choices, especially when you have a colorful crowd to pick from. Jack and Joe liked their heroes, so they created some great villains to menace them. The team’s early days at Novelty Press produced plenty of menaces, but only one truly memorable foe. At Timely, the advent of WWII and the free-wheeling “anything goes” house style called for darker, more terrifying threats. (So it should come as no surprise that many of the names on this list spring from the pages of *Captain America*.) Over at DC, the feel of the stories softened; less gore was spilled, more sugar-coating ladled on. The result? Less chances to develop many scenery-chewing bad guys. And after the War, “real life” crime comics and romance titles left traditional super-villains behind. But the early years of the Golden Age and the War leave us plenty to choose from! So here’s my “stab” at it:

THE TOP TEN S&K GOLDEN AGE VILLAINS

1) *The Red Skull* (by S&K: *Captain America* #1, 3, 7, *Young Allies* #1 (part); by others: *Captain America* #16, 37, 61, 74, *Young Allies* #4, *All-Select* #2, *All-Winners* #12)

Was there any doubt? Such melodramatic malevolence! Such single-minded hatred! The Red Skull embodies true comic book evil and was created for tyranny’s sake. Compared to him, all the rest of S&K’s Timely gore-corps aren’t half as menacing to the US and Cap! He gave you the feeling that the War was merely a minor excuse for his activities, that he’d be doing *even worse* deeds without it. An intimate of Hitler,



the Skull had his own agenda (“I’ve got a world to conquer—and no man will stop me!”). A powerful fighter, truly a “hands-on” killer, he seemed just as happy to strangle a single victim to death as he was killing thousands with some engine of mass destruction... and he just wouldn’t die! In his first appearance, he’s poisoned. Then he’s blown up. Then he drowns. In one story, Cap chokes him to death. (Really!) Didn’t matter. It also didn’t matter that he was *unmasked* in a few stories and looked like an older version of George Maxon from *Captain America* #1. The Skull’s appeal was the attitude that came with the mask: The sheer *joy* that he showed while running soldiers over with a tank; the heartfelt *glee* he exhibits while hanging helpless hostages (“DIE! DIE! HA-HA-HA-HA-HA!”); the *pride* he took in his work (“WAIT ‘TIL ADOLPH HEARS OF THIS!”). And don’t forget his mad determination to kill Cap and Bucky. He continued his vile ways after S&K left Timely. *Cap* #16 and *Young Allies* #1 and 4 contain epic-length tales of terror. As the War wound down, so did he. By *Cap* #61, he was robbing banks with a gang of thugs. In the end, inevitably, he went to Hell to fight Cap one last Golden Age time. The trail of corpses he left behind led him right to the top of this list. Congratulations, bonehead!

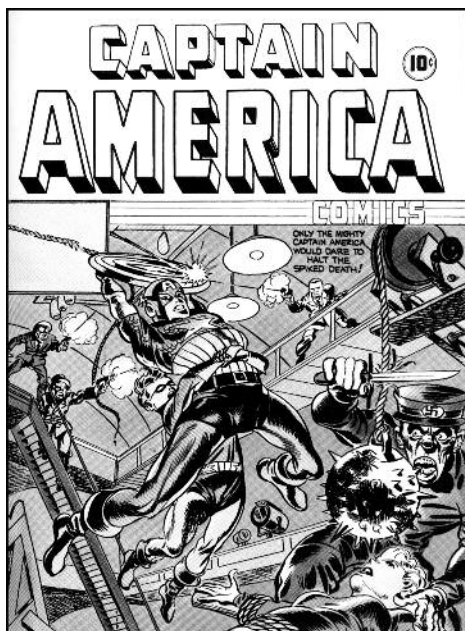
The Skull’s S&K *Cap* stories are reprinted in Vol. #1 and 2 of *Captain America: The Classic Years*. His first story is in the *Marvel Milestone* edition of *Cap* #1. His final S&K story is in *Fantasy Masterpieces* #6. *Young Allies* #1 was reprinted by Flashbacks in the ‘70s.

2) *Satan — The Devil — Pluto* (various issues)

Got ya on this one, huh? Didn’t expect to find the “Prince of Darkness” on the list, did you? Well, that’s part of the charm of Simon & Kirby. These guys drew on every



“Next issue” ad from *Captain America* #1. Back in 1941, you could see an ad like this in a Timely comic — and then go buy the book for only 10¢! (above) The Skull’s first splash.



(below) The original, unpublished version of the cover to Captain America #7 (shown here from a Timely house ad) featured the Red Skull. Why he was replaced before publication is a mystery.

(right) Always a funster, "Satan/Pluto" goes to a party in the Hurricane story from C.A. #1.



source possible for new story ideas: Pulp, old movies, heroic myths, current events, even other comics! Is it any wonder that Lucifer showed up — not once, but several times? In *Red Raven* #1's "Mercury" strip, he's the Hitler-esque ruler of a warring nation. In *Daring Mystery* #6, he menaced the Fiery Mask. In *Captain America* #1, a "Mercury" story was reworked into a "Hurricane" story, but the Devil looked sharp! *Marvel Mystery* #27 contained the final S&K "Vision" strip, and they really went to Hell. It's always nice to see Satan referred to as "L.S." by his demonic minions! And what an artistic interpretation of Hades —

it's shown as a big-time business, complete with Kirby creatures working as typists. (Could this have been Jack & Joe's vision of the Timely offices, which the team was leaving soon due to financial differences?) Over at DC, a sweet little Fudd-like Satan met the Boy Commandos in a tussle over a Nazi's soul — a great blend of action and fantasy, especially the part about the Nazi having a soul. So you see, Satan belongs on this list! The two Mercury/Hurricane stories and the Fiery Mask strip are reprinted in *The Complete Jack Kirby* volumes. The Vision and Boy Commandos strips have never been reprinted. (Damn!)



Satan has Vision trouble in *Marvel Mystery* #27 (Jan. 1942). Then just a year later, S&K use him in *Boy Commandos* #5 (Winter 1943).

JACK KIRBY INTERVIEW

Conducted by Glenn Danzig with Mike Thibodeaux in the early 1990s
Transcribed by Glen Musial

GLENN DANZIG: I'm doing an article on how the prices for your artwork have jumped, especially since I've been collecting, and it's kind of great. Is it gratifying to see people really appreciate your stuff now?

JACK KIRBY: It would be gratifying to anybody, to know that what you're doing is not only valuable but worthwhile. It appeals to people. That's immensely gratifying. I enjoy that feeling.

GLENN: Do you think there'll be another age like [the 1960s] again? That stuff was just so imaginative.

JACK: Certainly, of course. Because, as time goes on, changes come with new times and those changes have to be interpreted by the people of that particular period.

GLENN: Do you think there'll be Renaissance guys like you and Joe Simon and Stan Lee, who were under the gun and had to produce ten titles a month? These guys now do one book and they can't even get out twenty pages in a month.

JACK: At that particular time, the business was young. The routine was certainly not developed as well as it is today. So we did what we instinctively felt had to be done.

MIKE THIBODEAUX: You still had the quality, though; the quality was good.

JACK: I've always had the quality because it was the kind of quality I wanted. I felt that each man that does any kind of a task believes that he can do it. I mean, when you consider the kind of environment I came from, you say, "A fella that came from the Lower East Side — where did he get the idea that he could draw, and do art, and develop his art to a high degree?" Well, I did.

GLENN: Y'know, there are a lot of artists now who can draw technically good drawings, but there isn't the heart behind it; there isn't that excitement. When you see a Kirby drawing, it jumps off the page! Now you look and say, "Okay, it's balanced, but...?"

JACK: My stories were true. They involved living people, and they involved myself. They involved whatever I knew. I never lied to my readers.

GLENN: It came out in your artwork. Whatever was going on inside you and where you came from, it came right out in your artwork — what happened in your life. That's what I'm saying: Maybe some of these artists, because of the way the world is now — I don't know if it's coming out in their art. Maybe they haven't lived the stuff that you lived.

JACK: I must admit that at the time I started, it was certainly a period of turbulence and doubt and fear, and everything was happening to give people cause to think. Not only that, it gave people cause to fight, and so I found myself in the midst of that kind of a period. And what came out of me, you'll find in *Captain America*.

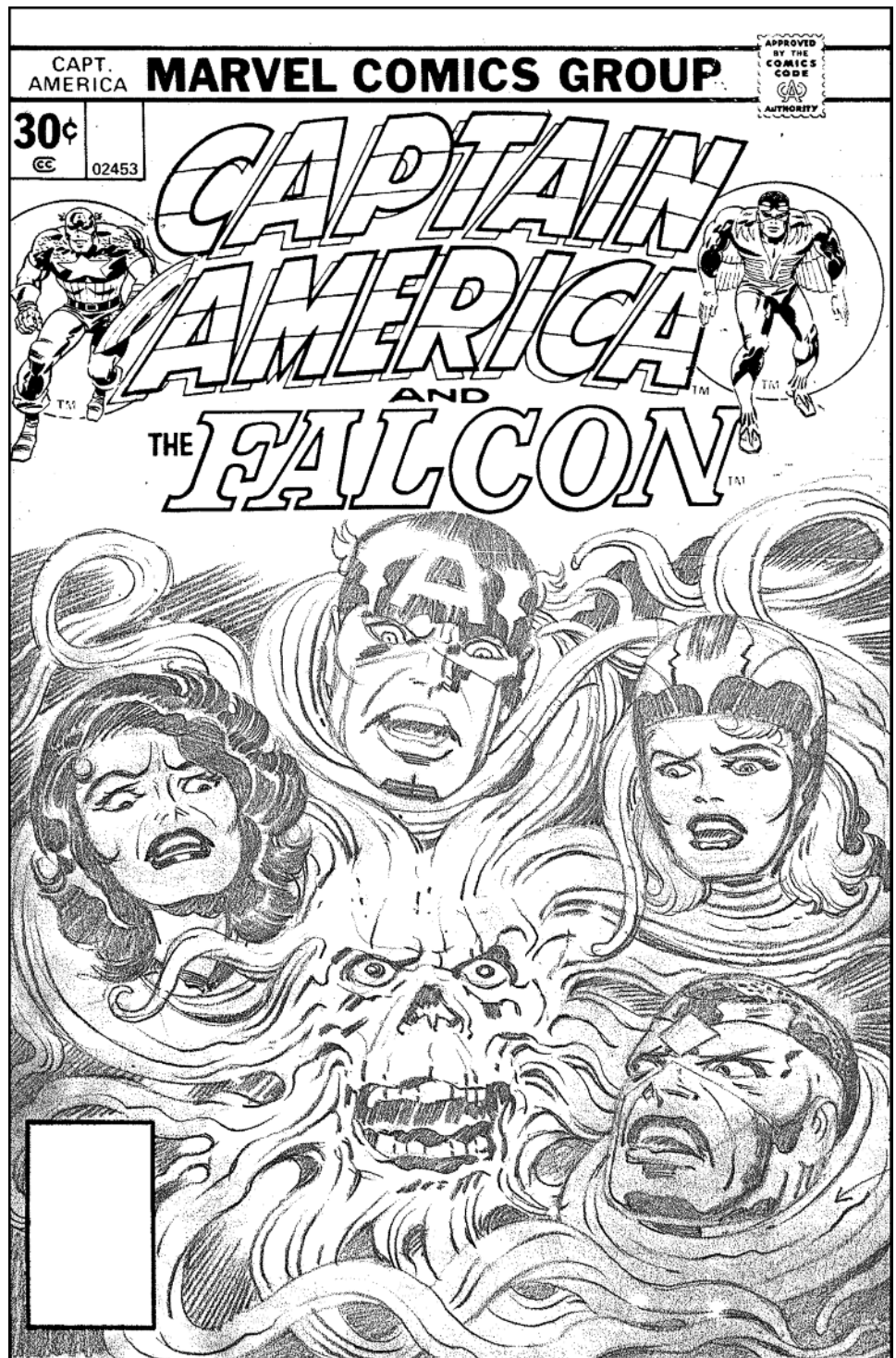
Captain America would fight six guys at a time.

GLENN: Y'know, you always had a knack for that misunderstood kind of anti-hero. Not so much Captain America but — well, even Captain America. In the beginning, he was this skinny kid, y'know? And when you re-did the Sub-Mariner, he goes back home and his race was gone after he was a bum in the bowery, or whatever.

JACK: Every story has to have a little pathos.

GLENN: Something somebody can associate with, who's feeling maybe not in time with the world.

JACK: Actually, I was telling myself and the reader that we can do it! If we want to write a good story, then we could write a good story. If we want to run a mile, we can run a mile. If we want to win a hockey



Cover pencils from Captain America #210.



Kirby pencils, Sinnott inks from Fantastic Four #102.

game, we can win a hockey game. And I did; I played hockey in the gutter in New York. I played with wooden sticks, with people who wanted to win, too. And it's human to want to win; to beat the other guy and say, "I won this game and I feel great about it." Why? Because I know I would. And that's the way I felt. Now, when I began to draw, certainly I wasn't Rembrandt. I drew on the tenement floor and I remember the janitor coming up and bawling me out, and he'd erase my drawing on the tenement floor. And I would draw another one, y'know? (laughter) And, of course, I found out that I liked it and I pursued it.

GLENN: A lot of people don't know that you actually scripted a lot of these stories — most of them. Even the Marvel stuff.

JACK: I did.

GLENN: You always gave the villains — Dr. Doom, or Magneto, or Sub-Mariner, or whoever — they were the ultimate villains and they were evil, but they had their other side; the internal turmoil. You

would always see them fighting with themselves; they actually had their own personality. They weren't just evil guys and that's why you'd love 'em. They actually had personality, too. You could identify with them.

JACK: I saw my villains not as villains. I knew villains had to come from somewhere and they came from people. My villains were people that developed problems. What was wrong with Dr. Doom? He was a very highly-regarded scientist and what happened was that there was an explosion in his laboratory and it ruined his face. It scarred his face for life and, being the perfectionist that he was, he had to hide that face. And how did he hide that face? In a mask of iron and steel. Doctor Doom became a man with a deep, deep problem, and a man with a deep problem is going to give all the people trouble. (laughter) These are the roots from which villains spring if you dig deep beneath the stereotypes, and I did, y'know?

There were people on my block who became gangsters; there were people on my block who became cops. My best friend said, "I'll become an artist like you. I'll take you to my mother and you can tell her that you're making money at drawing," and of course he told his mother. He said, "Jackie is an artist and they're paying him for his drawings, and if I do the same, they'll pay me, too." And his mother says, "No, no!" I remember that. People really believed in stereotypes and she says, "I know all about artists and I want you to be someone—something different." She says, "I want you to go out and get a decent job." (laughter) When I came back from Basic Training, my friend was a New York policeman and he retired as a police inspector. Can you find a job more decent than that? Mothers being the sacred objects that they were, a man would obey his mother.

GLENN: Back then also, if your dad was a cop, they wanted you to be a cop. And if your dad was a plumber, they wanted you to be a plumber.

JACK: Of course; that kind of thing was prevalent.

GLENN: Was there any pressure on you to *not* be an artist?

JACK: No, no. My dad was a factory worker, and my dad loved me and my mother loved me. They always supported me and whatever I wanted to do, they knew that I would do the decent thing.

GLENN: Even in the lean times, did they say, "Go do your art"?

JACK: Yes, yes. They had a deep faith in me. I loved them for it. I made up my mind to make my parents proud of me and I tried my best. Of course, I'd have tried my best in other fields; it could have been in any field. My object was to make my parents proud, and I loved them deeply.

[At this point, there is a break in the recording, and it resumes with a discussion of the Achille Lauro incident. In October 1985, members of the Palestine Liberation Front, a member-organization of the PLO, hijacked the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro while it was at anchor in Port Said, Egypt in the Mediterranean Sea, and held its passengers hostage. Many American tourists were on-board, including elderly, wheelchair-bound Leon Klinghoffer, who was a boyhood friend of Kirby's. The terrorists shot Klinghoffer in cold blood and threw his body overboard. To rub further salt into the wound,

MIKE MIGNOLA INTERVIEW

Interviewed by Jon B. Cooke

(Mike Mignola grew up in Oakland, CA. Heavily influenced by such diverse artists as Vaughn Bode and Bernie Wrightson, Mike did early work on the Hulk at Marvel, and continued with other super-heroes until he found his niche with gothic subject matter, including a movie adaptation of Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula*. His work on DC's *Cosmic Odyssey* exposed him to Kirby's Fourth World characters, and led to a heavy Kirby influence in his art — an influence that can be found in his current work on the critically-acclaimed *Hellboy* at Dark Horse. This interview was conducted by phone on November 8, 1998.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: Were you interested in comic books as a young child?

MIKE MIGNOLA: I'd seen them, and my cousin had them when I was growing up. He was buying things like the *Fantastic Four* and *Sgt. Fury*, but it was many years later — the late-1970s — I started collecting.

TJKC: Did you recognize Kirby's work when you were young?

MIKE: It stood out. I distinctly remember a couple of *Fantastic Fours* my cousin had, and they did stand out glaringly from the other stuff. There was the issue with "Him" and the wonderful white cocoon cover [FF #66], and many issues later there's one with green tentacles grabbing out at the FF [FF #88]. Those covers made such a huge impression. As a kid, the power that was in those images left a mark on my brain. Years later when I did start buying comics, one of the first things that got me started collecting were those *Marvel's Greatest Comics*, with the *Fantastic Four* reprints.

TJKC: Were you attracted to Kirby's work more than the better renderers, like say, Bernie Wrightson?

MIKE: I was a Marvel brat. I remember going to the newsstand and seeing *Swamp Thing* there, but it never

occurred to me to pick it up because it was a DC comic. I was already so entrenched in Marvel comics, I couldn't be swayed over.

Later, with the exception of Frazetta, Bernie took the biggest chunk of my time devoted to studying just one artist, and that probably went on for a solid two years.

TJKC: Did you have an interest in the macabre when you were young?

MIKE: I remember in sixth grade reading *Dracula*. I think some kind of light bulb went off in my head, and I said, "That's it. I just want to be interested in monsters." Somehow that didn't translate into comics at the same time. My favorite comics were *Fantastic Four* and *Thor*. Even when Marvel started doing monster comics, I was into the super-hero stuff.

By the end of high school, I had pretty much lost interest. I was collecting, but I'd stopped reading the stuff. It just didn't hold my interest. At the same time, I was really getting into fantasy stories; I discovered Robert E. Howard and Michael Moorcock, and I was much more interested in that kind of stuff. I was just the quiet guy who sat in the corner and did nothing but read.

TJKC: It's interesting that the two covers you mentioned from *Fantastic Four* both have sort of gothic imagery; they're atypical

Kirby, in the sense that you had the

cocoon, and the house with the tentacles.

There's a very strong influence in your work that seems to be Kirby.

MIKE: As a kid, I never sat down and said, "I want to be Jack Kirby."

When I was reading

comics, Jack must've been off at DC, because all I was seeing was the Marvel reprint stuff. When he came back to Marvel to do *Captain America*, I was already getting into guys like Wrightson, so those books were so wacky, it just lost me entirely! (laughter)

I appreciated Kirby; especially the old stuff — which I loved on a gut level — but I wanted to be a "pretty picture" guy like Wrightson and Kaluta and all those guys. Around the time I started doing comics, I realized I was never going to draw as well as a guy like Steve Rude or Jerry Ordway; my work is kind of clumsy and awkward.

One of the guys I really gravitated to in those days was Frank Miller, and his drawing came second to the way he was telling the story. That really clicked. Suddenly I was seeing comics as more than just pretty pictures. Frank's drawing was very simplistic even then on *Daredevil*, and I got into drawing figures for power, not for accuracy. Walt Simonson was another real direct descendant of Kirby's; his work was so powerful. When he started doing *Thor*, it had become almost Kirby. I knew Kirby was behind all this, but I wasn't sitting down looking at Jack's books until I did *Cosmic Odyssey* for DC. I was using Kirby for reference, and it was like a light bulb going off! I'm not happy with my work on *Cosmic Odyssey* — I got super-heroes out of my system, which I guess is a good thing — but the best thing that came out of that period is I had Kirby on the drawing table so much of the time. I'd seen the *New Gods*, but never read it; I really didn't care that much about it, but to work off of that, and learn — "Wow, that figure doesn't make any sense, but boy does that thing move! There's power there!" — I started realizing all the guys



Mignola cover from a *Hellboy* mini-series.

out drawing super-hero comics were looking at this stuff! Everybody should, because comics are so boring compared to this! There's different kinds of people doing different kinds of comics, but if you're doing super-hero comics, you should really be looking at Kirby's work.

TJKC: Did you have any exposure to his early 1960s monster work?

MIKE: I had seen a lot of that when I was young, and I always loved that. If it came out of Marvel — and they had reprints of that stuff — I generally saw it.

TJKC: Did you always have aspirations to be in comics, or did you want to be an illustrator?

MIKE: I was pretty unrealistic. I got to the point where I wanted to draw nothing but monsters. Around the end of high school I started realizing this might be a problem, (*laughter*) so I started looking at comics. I knew I couldn't draw well enough to

do comics, so by the time I got out of art school, I'd set my sights on being an inker. I'd pretty

much copied that whole *A Look*

Back book of Wrightson's; I'd

worked out a brush

technique, and I

was just

horrible at it. So I became a penciler because I was such a horrible inker, and I couldn't do anything else. (*laughter*)

TJKC: As you developed, you seemed to become fearless in your use of blacks.

MIKE: I'll fess up in print; it began as my way of covering the things I didn't know how to draw. It wasn't me being really into Alex Toth.

TJKC: But you started to understand light and shadow.

MIKE: Yeah. Early on, that was mostly coming from Frazetta. Though Wrightson uses a lot of black, his drawing was a lot fussier and a lot prettier. For awhile that was really appealing to me, and then I got sucked away from Wrightson toward these big, powerful shapes. I lost interest in the fussy brush rendering, and went back for the more primitive, heavy-handed kind of stuff, which led really nicely into Kirby. Jack, on a much more abstract level, was doing the same kind of stuff. It wasn't this pretty, fussy drawing; it was these big, strong blacks. Jack isn't generally a guy you think of for spotting blacks, but he was putting enough highlight on certain things so you had a big, black, powerful drawing. That's when I started realizing that the less you draw, in a lot of ways, is really more important. What became most important was editing your drawing — like, if it's a silhouette, but we see the star on the guy's chest, we know it's Captain America.

TJKC: You had a lot of strong covers coming out in the 1980s. Did you want to be a cover artist for a period of time?

MIKE: When I first started as an inker, the goals I set for myself were: I'd be an inker so I can be in this business, and someday before I die

I'd like to do maybe a ten-page story. It won't have women or horses in it, because I can't draw them. (*laughter*) I can draw some kind of story of Conan fighting a monster for ten pages, then I can die saying, "I drew a comic."

(*laughter*) But I also thought I'd like to do some covers.

I saw Terry Austin doing some covers — here's a guy who's an inker and also doing covers. It didn't seem like a realistic thing, but it happened pretty fast. My first year of being penciler, I did a whole year's worth of *Hulk* covers. I liked that; I had a certain take on doing single illustrations. One year I did almost nothing but covers, and at that point I'd started liking doing comics, and covers were getting in the way.

I got to a point where I felt like everything in mainstream comics I wanted to draw, I'd drawn, except for a Kirby monster. (*laughter*) I remember someone calling me from DC asking me to do an *Aquaman* cover. I'd never cared about Aquaman to begin with, but they said, "It's got the Deep Six." (*laughter*) I'd never read the *New Gods*, so I said, "What's that?" They faxed them to me, and I said, "I'm on board!" If you look at that cover, Aquaman is about the size of your thumb, (*laughter*) and he's mostly in silhouette. But boy, did I lovingly draw the Deep Six! (*laughter*)

TJKC: Your Kirby influence really shows on *Cosmic Odyssey*.

MIKE: Some of the stuff on *Cosmic Odyssey*, when I brought it in, the editors said, "That looks pretty weird." But I'm sitting here looking at the *New Gods* all day long; it doesn't look too weird compared to that stuff! (*laughter*) I was on-fire looking



Mike's Aquaman cover, featuring the Deep Six.



**SO! 'T WAS YOU WHO CONSPIRED TO HIDE THIS PALTRY WORLD
FROM THE EYES OF GALACTUS! KNOW YOU NOT THAT NONE
MAY THWART MY WILL ??**

**HEED MY WORDS, PILLAGER OF THE PLANETS!
THIS TINY SPECK OF MATTER UPON WHICH WE
STAND CONTAINS INTELLIGENT LIFE! YOU
MUST NOT DESTROY IT!**

**OF WHAT IMPORT
ARE BRIEF, NAME-
LESS LIVES...TO
GALACTUS??**

A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE: PART TWO

by Mike Gartland (featuring Jack's uninked pencils from Fantastic Four #49)

THE FABULOUS F.F. FACE THE MOST POWERFUL FOE OF ALL!

"IF THIS BE DOOMSDAY!"

GALACTUS HAS LANDED ON EARTH! ANY ADDITIONAL WORDS OF OURS WOULD SIMPLY FALL BESIDE THE AWESOME PORTEMENT OF THAT ONE STAGGERING PHRASE! GALACTUS HAS LANDED ON EARTH... AND HUMANITY ITSELF TOTTERS ON THE BRINK OF ... DOOMSDAY!

GALACTUS HAS SEEN THE WATCHER! THEY'RE FACING EACH OTHER! STAY BACK! ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN!

HE'S A GIANT! HE SEEMS TO BE POWER PERSONIFIED! REED... WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO US??

THE WATCHER IS SPEAKING TO HIM! THEY... THEY ACT LIKE THEY KNOW EACH OTHER!

IF WE'RE GONNA HAVETA TACKLE HIM, THIS WILL BE A GOOD TIME TO GIT INTO SOME OTHER KINDA BUSINESS!

IF YA ASK ME, THAT BOZO LOOKS LIKE HE COULD PULVERIZE THE WATCHER WITH HIS EYES SHUT!

WRITTEN IN THE MASTERFUL MANNER OF **STAN LEE!**

ILLUSTRATED IN THE MAGNIFICENT MOOD OF **JACK KIRBY!**

INKED IN THE MAJESTIC MOOD OF **JOE SINNOTT!**

LETTERED IN THE NICK OF TIME BY **S.ROSEN**

What can be written about Galactus that hasn't been expressed already by historians far more informed and eloquent than I? But let's start off within the context of this issue's theme: Is he a villain? By textbook definition he is not; he's more of an adversary or antagonist, and given the previous opponents super-heroes had faced up to his appearance, he represents either the ultimate adversary or antagonistic overkill — take your pick!

Galactus is a prime example of the thinking man's opponent; i.e. an adversary that is so powerful it quickly becomes apparent that physical opposition will do no good in subduing him. A plan has to be devised or a way found to defeat him. In earlier stories for Marvel, Jack played with the notion of an alien visitor of enormous power, but they were more or less misguided (Impossible Man or Infant Terrible), or they posed no threat to mankind (the Stranger). Galactus, on the other hand, is not misguided — quite the contrary; because of his very reason for being, he poses the ultimate threat to mankind.

In interviews, Jack would say that "Galactus was God"; I always wondered if Jack really meant God. Granted, Galactus was definitely a "god" but surely not *The* God. To speculate, perhaps Jack was saying that if super-heroes were ever to face God, Galactus would be about as great an adversary as they could encounter. Super-heroes have faced aliens before, and powerful ones too; but it was the

OPENING SHOT! ON ROOF OF FANTER BLDG., THE FF WATCH ... UNINKED CHARACTERS

STEVE RUDE INTERVIEW

Interviewed by John Morrow

(Steve Rude was born on New Year's Eve, 1956, in Madison, Wisconsin. After a childhood of influences from Kirby comics to the Space Ghost cartoon series, Steve made a name for himself with his remarkable work on the independent comic *Nexus* with writer Mike Baron. Steve later made the move to mainstream comics, doing breakthrough work on various series at DC, including the fondly-remembered tribute to Kirby in the one-shot *Mister Miracle Special*. His latest project is a Jimmy Olsen one-shot in *LEGENDS OF THE DC UNIVERSE #14* — out in January — featuring much of the original Kirby cast in another homage to the King. This interview was conducted by phone on November 6, 1998.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: Did you grow up reading Kirby's work?

STEVE RUDE: Growing up, there was a guy named Bob Bestoer; I called him "Hun" because I made a nickname for everyone that I grew up with. This guy was an only child, and he had everything a kid could ever want. So if I wanted to read the latest comic book, I'd go over to Hun's house. (laughter) Of course, he had a bunch of Kirby comics. I never really bought them on my own; I went over and read Hun's. Comic books for me were a process of self-discovery later on, when I moved from Madison and made new friends. I wanted to read comic books again, and I obviously couldn't go over to Hun's house anymore.

TJKC: What was the first Kirby work you remember seeing?

STEVE: At the local Stop-N-Go around 1966, I remember seeing this *Tales of Suspense* cover of Captain America falling from the sky, with these two hoods with guns on the rooftops. It may not have been my first exposure to Kirby's work, but I remember thinking, "That's the coolest thing I've ever seen!" (laughter) Kirby made everything so exciting; obviously when you're a kid, you're always looking for something to be excited by. It was perfect match: A kid and a Jack Kirby comic book.

TJKC: Who were your other influences?

STEVE: I remember 1966 as the year everything kind of happened media-wise for me. That's the year *Space Ghost* came on, the year *Star Trek* premiered. My other specific influence was going into the library around sixth grade or so and stumbling upon a book called *Drawing Heads And Hands* by Andrew Loomis. I remember opening up the book and seeing these utterly handsome men and beautiful women; I just completely gravitated towards that. I thought, "Who wouldn't want to draw like this?" It was just one of those things I was kind of meant to do, I think.

TJKC: I've always seen a bit of Alex Toth in your work. Was he a big influence?

STEVE: Alex was an influence by accident. I had no idea who was the designer behind *Space Ghost* when I was ten years old. Even

when I was doing *Nexus* in 1980, I still didn't know who Alex Toth was. I was confusing him with Alex Niño for a while! (laughter) Another weird thing about me; when I was reading Kirby's books in high school, I never knew what an inker was. It never occurred to me it was a guy who went over the penciler's artwork. I thought it was the guy who colored the book with colored inks or something.

TJKC: How'd you get started in comics? Was *Nexus* your first pro work?

STEVE: It's the first work that ever got published. *Nexus* got published finally in 1981; I seem to remember me and [Mike] Baron thinking up the idea in 1980, but it didn't see print until a year later.

TJKC: So you guys were friends for a while before working on *Nexus*?

STEVE: Yeah. Baron and I had tried for two years; we'd done various stories together, one of which was published in some Pacific book



Steve Rude's pencils from the upcoming Jimmy Olsen story in *Legends of the DC Universe #14*.



Cover pencils from *Super Powers*, the 1980s series that let Jack draw nearly every major DC villain.

later on. It was twenty-four pages, which took me forever to do. It was a great time to be going after something in life; it was an exciting time. I was 21 or something, and we were ready to grab the world by the scruff of the neck and see what we could do with it.

It was such a funny time, and an innocent time; the idea of getting money — like, really good money — for what you've done was almost unimaginable. You just want to draw, and that attitude hasn't changed a whole lot over the years. I'm still kind of like that. I'm driven to do it, regardless of what kind of fan attention I'll get, or what kind of money's involved. I almost concluded one time that I wasn't meant to make money, (laughter) because everything I was doing was always critically applauded, but... (laughter).

TJKC: Early on, I wondered why an artist with your talent would stay with the independents; was it a conscious decision on your part to keep away from Marvel and DC? Was it tough breaking into the mainstream?

STEVE: Before I got success with *Nexus*, I was rejected by Marvel and DC time after time. Before *Nexus* came around, I was going up there; I spent every penny I had to fly to New York. I wanted to get opinions, and help on what I needed to get better at. I never liked being not good

enough. I wanted to be good enough to somehow get in there. I was hoping they'd offer me work, but in retrospect, it's better they didn't. I wasn't good enough at that time to be doing comics.

TJKC: Did the success of *Nexus* have a lot to do with you finally getting work from them?

STEVE: Yeah, but I was 24 at the time I did *Nexus*. There are guys who are in and out of the business by the time they're 24. I was a late bloomer, but eventually I got better. Issue after issue I'd make some leaps. I tried to learn how to use photographic reference to make my work look real.

TJKC: Did *Nexus* have any overt Kirby influences or tributes? I remember one scene with a Jack lookalike.

STEVE: Yeah, that was within the last couple of years. Kirby was in there because Baron called the character a Brooklyn street-fighter kind of guy, so I drew Jack Kirby. That's why he showed up there. The influence was always there; I knew the only way you could ever make any kind of impact on someone reading a comic book was to do exciting, dynamic work, no matter what you drew like. Who could you ever want to look at besides Kirby for that kind of emotional punch?

TJKC: How did the *Mister Miracle Special* come about?

STEVE: I think I was taking a hiatus off *Nexus*, and I offered myself to the major companies. I got snatched up by DC to do something with Marv Wolfman on *Teen Titans*, and Marv and Mark Evanier were good friends, and they somehow got the idea that when one was done using me on their book, I'd hop over to the other one. (laughter)

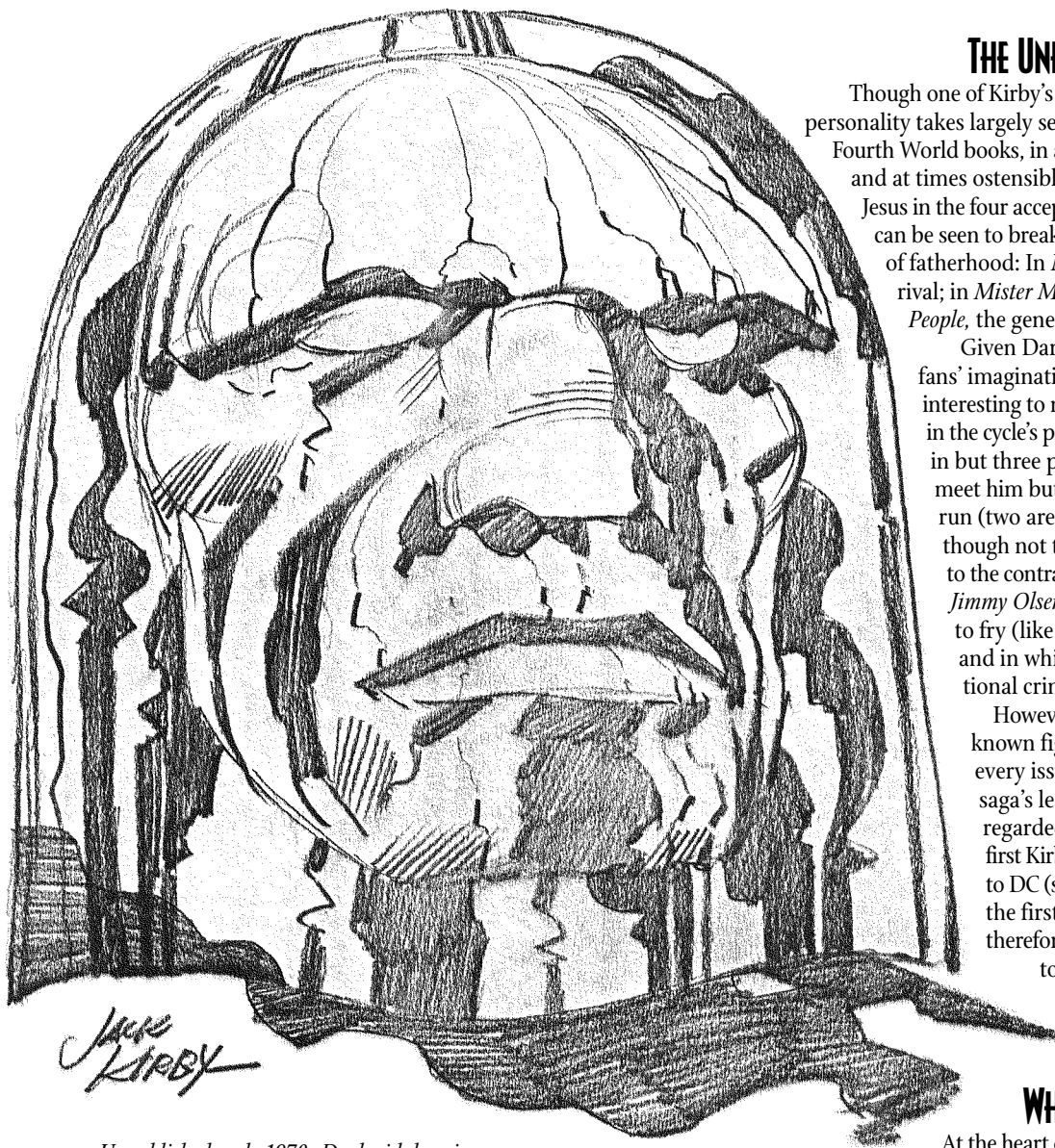
TJKC: Did you know Mark at that point?

STEVE: I did know Mark. I used to come

out and stay with him when I would visit L.A., and Mark was always very generous and kind. He put me up at his place, and we talked about Kirby all the time. We went up to see Doug Wildey and Kirby a couple of times. He was my liaison to the world of Hollywood that I knew so little about.

Y'know, we'd all seen the Kirby characters done at that point by different artists, and they were all less than satisfying. (laughter) You can't do Kirby characters without entering into the visual world of him. When this whole *New Gods* thing [the proposed series that *Evanier and Rude* were to do] was coming about, some people up at DC really got ticked off at me for trying to emulate Kirby's style. To me, there's no other way but to do it like that. I grew up in high school training to draw like Jack Kirby. That's what I wanted to do. Eventually other influences come into your life and you become your own man, but that influence was so strong.

When you draw his characters, you want to make it seem as if you're reading a Kirby comic book. To get that feel, you've got to draw like him. So that was my big impetus and goal, and reason for doing it; to make it look like, "Hey, there's another Kirby comic that I missed somehow."



Unpublished early 1970s Darkseid drawing.

SATAN, THE FATHER: THREE FACES OF DARKSEID

by Adam McGovern

Involved in the creation of an uncommon quantity of indelible characters, Jack Kirby was always a master of pop folklore — stories and personae exceptionally in tune with their times. For his artistic maturity, Kirby set out to graduate from folklore to myth — tales and figures which resonate with the human condition in *any* time. He knew that he lived in an age and a society in which not only such heroic scale, but such human depth, was hard to come by. But his rare instinct for what chords to strike amidst the cacophony of superficial modern living led him to his goal.

One significant way in which Kirby understood the modern-day construction of myth was in his knitting together of apparent inconsistencies so the reader understands things on a multi-perspectival, “hyper-logical” level. For taking this three-dimensional approach, there could be no better challenge than that most one-dimensional of literary figures: the villain. And villains don’t come any more monumental than Darkseid, the towering antagonist of Kirby’s signature Fourth World opus.

THE UNHOLY TRINITY

Though one of Kirby’s most distinctive characters, Darkseid’s personality takes largely separate forms between the three major Fourth World books, in a way not unreminiscent of the diverse and at times ostensibly contradictory characterizations of Jesus in the four accepted *Gospels*. These differing treatments can be seen to break along the lines of varying conceptions of fatherhood: In *New Gods*, Darkseid is the Oedipal rival; in *Mister Miracle*, the absentee dad; in *Forever People*, the generational adversary.

Given Darkseid’s prominence in Kirby’s oeuvre, fans’ imagination, and DC’s ongoing marketing, it’s interesting to note how seldom he physically appears in the cycle’s principal trilogy. We encounter Darkseid in but three pages of *Mister Miracle*’s 18 issues; we meet him but four times in all of *New Gods*’ original run (two are brief walk-ons). The same pattern — though not this article’s thematic focus — pertains to the contractually-obligated (if wildly imaginative) *Jimmy Olsen* series, in which Kirby had other fish to fry (like envisioning the era of gene-splicing) and in which Darkseid is seen in more conventional criminal-mastermind cameos.

However, the saga’s unifying and most widely known figure appears prominently in nearly every issue of *The Forever People* — that same saga’s least-remembered (and arguably least-regarded) title. This series, significantly the first Kirby completed an issue of upon returning to DC (see “Jack Kirby’s X-Files,” *TJKC* #17) and the first of the trilogy proper to see print, is therefore ripe for reassessment as being central to the cycle as a whole. The reason why is best reached through drawing a prior contrast with that cycle’s other two components.

WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

At the heart of the Fourth World saga is a superlative act of negligent fatherhood: New Genesis’ and Apokolips’ rulers, Highfather and Darkseid, exchange sons to barter a truce in their cataclysmic war. This pact defines the difference between the Darkseid we see in *New Gods* and that we see in *Mister Miracle* (the two books focused respectively on the traded sons, Orion and “Scott Free”). While portrayed as a distant, personified phobia in each book (“When you cry out in your dreams — it is Darkseid that you see!”), his remoteness is anything but disengaged in the former: Orion is prophesied to return and battle him to the death. And in this book, between exercises of his omnipotence, we see Darkseid brooding morosely on his own matricidal past (the means by which he came to rule Apokolips) and his son’s patricidal destiny. In a telling episode from the series’ final issue, Darkseid eliminates his henchman Desaad for effecting an unfair advantage for his other, Apokolips-bred son Kalibak in a battle with Orion — thus risking the prevention of the foretold Oedipal conflict.

A telling episode, but what does it tell? Certainly it shows us the enigmatic ambiguity of this uncommonly realistic villain: Are we seeing a secret sentimentality for his own flesh and blood? An unacknowledged feeling of guilt and welcoming of retribution for his own, earlier parenticide? Perhaps. But one thing we’re surely seeing is Darkseid’s acculturation to the idea of parenticide as the natural mechanism of generational passage. He adheres unshakably to the unpeaceful transfer of power, while by the same token ensuring the perpetuation of a certain *model* of power. In this branch of the Fourth World story, in which Darkseid’s father-figure role is literal, his violent opponent Orion identifies with him, embraces his tactics and, arguably, ultimately affirms his values.

THE CREATION OF KING KOBRA

by Steve Sherman

Writing *King Kobra* was not only one of the best experiences of my life, it was also one of the worst. It marked the end of my “comic book” association with Jack Kirby; but it was interesting, because it did give me an insight into how masterful Jack could be in creating characters, and it taught me a few lessons that to this day come in handy when putting together ideas for presentation.

The genesis for *King Kobra* came about when publisher Carmine

Infantino came to the conclusion first issues of comics sold really well, while the second and third issues tended to drop off, so he came up with the concept of *First Issue Specials*. These were one-shot titles, designed to grab readers (and collectors) since they were all #1s. Jack was not particularly happy about this — not that he found it difficult to come up with characters, but, by this point he still wanted to do a novel in comic book format. To just crank out books with different characters wasn’t part of Jack’s agenda.

It was at this point that I approached him about coming up with a book. Prior to this, Jack’s agreement with DC stated that all material had to be written and drawn by Jack Kirby, but by now, Jack felt that it would be acceptable. Plus, as I recall, he was now doing work for other editors.

An idea had been going through my head. I was fascinated at the time by the *Dr. Phibes* movies starring Vincent Price. For some reason, I really thought that the idea of a villain who used different

means of killing his opponents was really cool. Of course, this type of adventure goes back to the serials — but comics and serials do have that similar concept of recurring characters in outrageous situations.

When Mark Evanier and I were researching material for *In The Days of the Mob*, I had come across a book that had described the thugs of India. It is where we get the word “thugs.”

I also was following one of Jack’s story precepts that, in order to have a strong hero, you need a really strong villain. I didn’t want to do a long underwear hero, mainly because there was no way I could come up with anything nearly as well as Jack. Instead I focused on a villain, figuring also that there were few comics that starred the bad guy. I needed to come up with a bad guy worth starring in his own book.

I should also mention that at the time, I had no idea there had been a movie entitled *Curse of the Cobra Woman*. Had I been aware of it, I probably would have borrowed some things from it. Anyway, combining the thugs with *Dr. Phibes*, I came up with the image of a cobra. Since it was to be a Jack Kirby comic, I changed the “c” to a “k.” Obviously, what goes with “Kobra”? Well, if he wants to rule the word, “King.”

I then needed a hero, of course, to battle the King. Who better than a Los Angeles police detective? Somehow, I wanted to pit an ordinary lawman against this ultra science-fiction villain. I suppose I was being too “cinema” and not “comic booky” enough. At any rate, I typed the whole mess up, beginning with a splash page of a giant robot smashing through a window of a crowded restaurant. Jack of course was busy turning out the one-shot specials (I think “Atlas”) and was leaving it to

BIRTH MADE THEM INSEPERABLE! FATE MADE THEM DEADLY ENEMIES! THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE!...AND THE CRIMINAL GENIUS WANTED BY EVERY POLICE FORCE...FOR EVERY CRIME THAT COULD SHAKE THE WORLD!!!

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KING KOBRA



Jack's original splash page to King Kobra #1.

me to work the book out so that hopefully all he had to do was pencil it.

Upon taking it over to Jack, he read it, looked at me, and said, "Boy, does this stink." Actually he liked the title and the character of King Kobra. What he didn't see was the hook that would tie the whole thing together. I don't think he appreciated the humorous touches I had put in either. I was somehow trying to go for a cross between a Marvel comic and *The Spirit*.

Sitting at Jack's kitchen table, his initial thought was to cut each of us a piece of chocolate cake—something he was still allowed to eat back then. As we talked, Jack lit up a cigar—another thing he was still allowed to have. Finally, after a few minutes Jack looked at me and said, "*The Corsican Brothers*." "What?" said I. "*The Corsican Brothers* by Dumas. Identical twins, one good, one bad," said Jack. And with that he had not only tied the whole series together but had given the characters a sense of depth that I had missed — and it worked. Now we had a story that really had punch to it.

The more we discussed it, the better it became. By the time I left that evening we had plotted out not only the first book, but another as well, completely forgetting that this was a one-shot book.

By the time I returned the following week with new written pages, Jack had already begun penciling the book. It was really exciting to see the whole thing suddenly come to life on the penciled pages. Jack had already broken the story down into panels.

It seemed as if maybe we were finally on the road to what Jack had originally envisioned when he moved to California — starting a series of books that he didn't have to write, and perhaps in the future, not draw.

About six weeks later I was out to Jack's house to pick up the letters for the *Kamandi* book. I'd like to say that I noticed there was something odd about Jack and Roz's demeanor, but I didn't. Jack told me that he had received the *King Kobra* book. I was excited to see it and as soon as I opened it my heart sank.

Someone else had been given credit for writing it and the panels had been re-pasted in a different order. "What happened?" I asked Jack. Apparently DC needed to make some changes and they decided to make them in New York. Jack didn't seem too happy about the whole thing. Then he dropped the bombshell: "I'm leaving DC and going back to Marvel," he said. I was more than a little stunned. "I don't think that there is much more that I can do at DC," he said. It was understandable.

Jack had hoped to try to push the envelope at DC, and in some ways he had, but it seemed inevitable that if he continued there he would soon find himself in the same position he had been in when he had left Marvel a few years before.

For me it was a sobering experience. If they could treat Jack Kirby



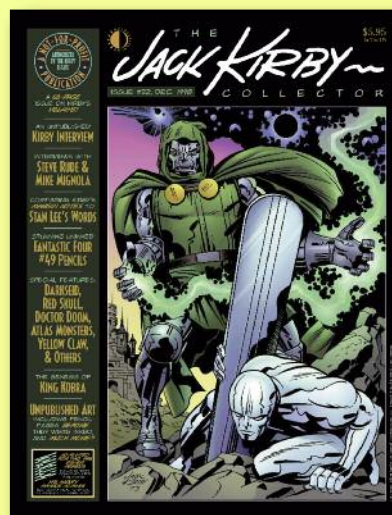
Unused Kobra pencil page; we're unsure if this was part of Jack's original story.

this way, what kind of treatment could I expect? Over the years King Kobra has surfaced in various DC titles which is kind of gratifying to see. Looking back there are some things I would do differently with the characters, but in general, I'd say that it was a pretty good shot. It would have been fun continuing creating characters with Jack. It was always amazing to toss him a "what if" question and hear him come up with the most spectacular ideas and stories.★

(Presented on the next pages are Steve Sherman's original outline for King Kobra #1—showing his first crack at the story—and the script that evolved after discussions with Jack. Our thanks to Steve for sharing these!)



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