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JACK
KIRBY

THE NEW
JACK KIRBY
COLLECTOR

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Back cover inks: ALEX TOTH
Cover color: TOM ZIUKO

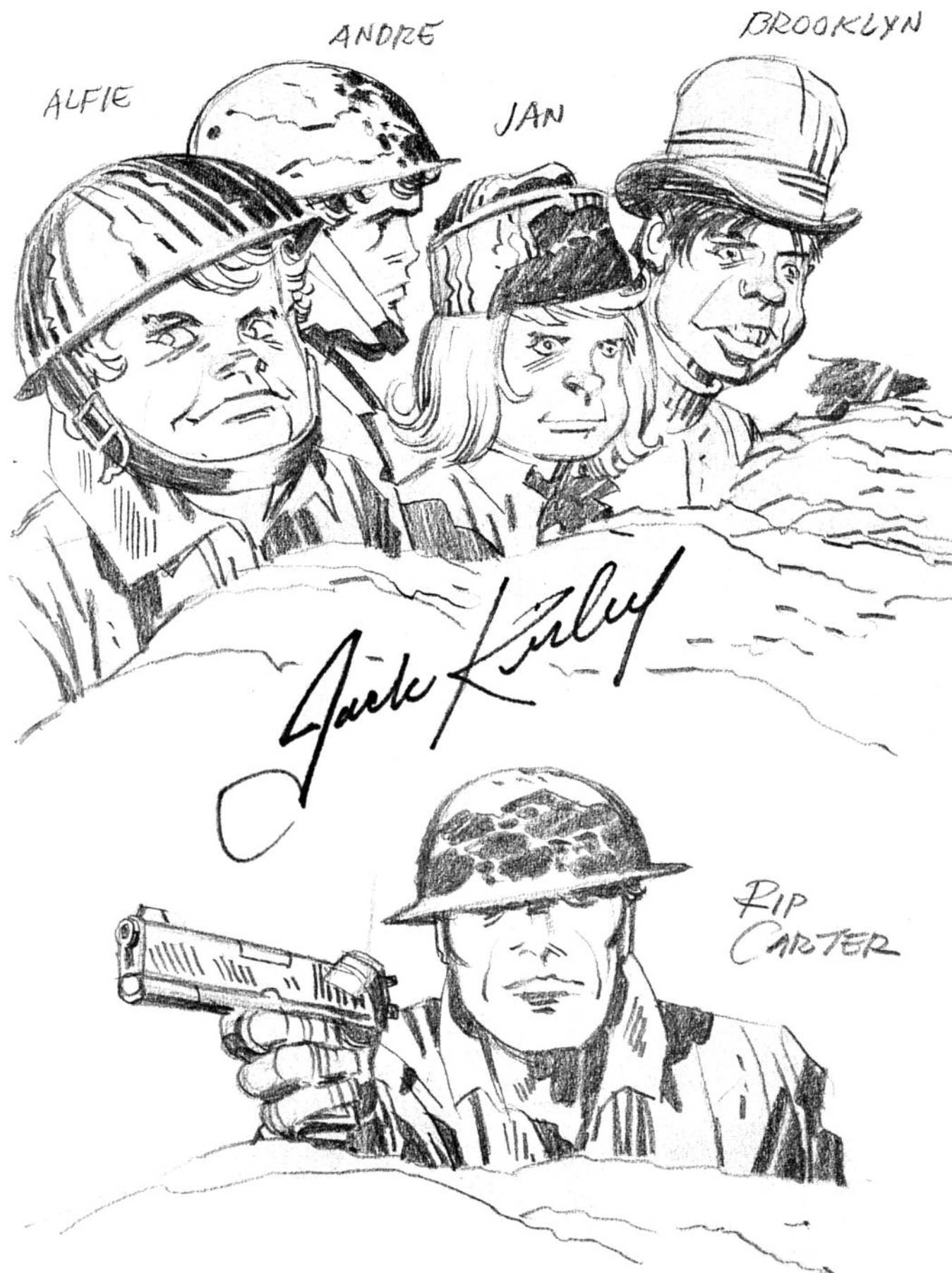
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THE NEW JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

ISSUE #34, MAR. 2002



(above) Custom 1960s pencil art Jack drew to include in his personal hardbound collection of *Boy Commandos* comics.

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OPENING SHOT

(background) Pages from Jack's work on that enemy of America, *Yellow Claw* #2-4 (Dec. 1956-April 1957).
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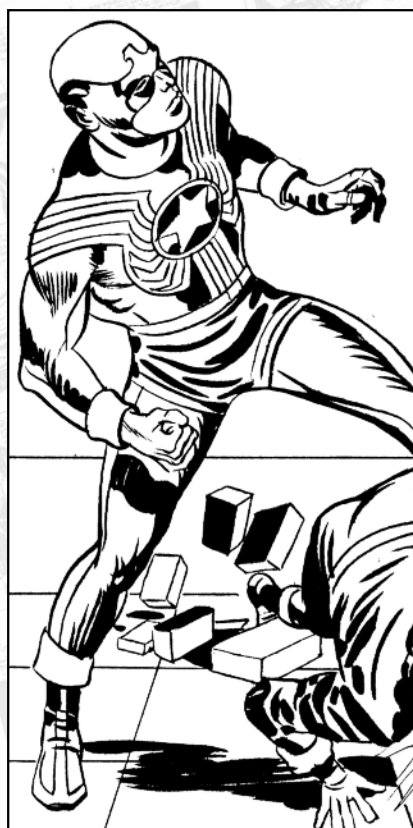
my lunch, for Pete's sake!) I detest hearing them ring in movie theaters, church, and other places where insensitive people forget to switch theirs off. But after learning how cell phones kept those passengers informed that day (not to mention how many victims of the Twin Towers' collapse were able to share a final farewell with loved ones), I've had a definite change of heart.

Back to Flight #93. Todd Beamer was one of those brave Americans who took on the hijackers, knowing their chances of survival were negligible. With his final words of "Let's roll," he and the others managed to keep that plane from slamming into its intended target. (One can only imagine the upheaval in this country if a large portion of Congress had been killed.) Not to take anything away from the brave police officers and firemen who perished that day, or

WAH-HOO, LET'S ROLL!

The events of September 11, 2001 have irrevocably changed the lives of all Americans. Though the death toll at the World Trade Center dropped from initial estimates of more than 5000 to less than 3000 now—some five months after those horrible attacks—and though I didn't personally know anyone killed there or at the Pentagon, a part of me (and of most Americans from what I can tell) feels like I knew them all; but as powerful as the images from Ground Zero are, it was the wooded area in rural Pennsylvania where United Airlines Flight #93 crashed that sticks uppermost in my mind these days. That flight, like the others that crashed that day, was hijacked and put on a collision course with one of our national symbols of freedom (presumably the Capitol Building in Washington, DC from what investigators have pieced together). Only the actions of a small group of true heroes—"fighting Americans" if you will—kept that from happening.

Let me state for the record: I hate cellular phones. I simply don't want to be interrupted at all hours, any time of the day. (Let me enjoy



the untold ordinary citizens who helped others during those dark hours, but those passengers on Flight #93 are, to me, "heroes" in the truest sense of the word.

No, the real-life drama of September 11 doesn't have anything to do with comic books—it even makes comics seem really trivial in the scheme of things—but it got me thinking about how Jack Kirby spent part of his youth fighting his own generation's Osama Bin Laden in World War II, and spent the rest of his life defeating evil on the comics page against a million cartoon villains, from the Yellow Claw to Darkseid. You just know that if Jack had been on Flight #93, he would have been one of the people heading up the aisle from the back of the plane, with whatever makeshift weapon he could

(inset) Details of Jack's various fighting Americans. This page, top to bottom: Jim Bowie, Fighting American, Davy Crockett, and Captain America and Sgt. Fury.

Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett ©2002 Harvey Comics. Captain America, Bucky, Sgt. Fury TM & ©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc. Fighting American TM & ©2002 Joe Simon & Jack Kirby.



(top to bottom) The Shield/Pvt. Strong, Sgt. Fury & His Howling Commandos, and the Patriot and Miss America.

Pvt. Strong TM & ©2002 Harvey Comics. Sgt. Fury, the Patriot, Miss America TM & ©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.



find, ready for one last fight scene with the bad guys. (I only hope I can find that kind courage if I'm ever in the same situation.)

Today, a lot of other Americans are fighting for our country's security overseas, and here at home, and we all should be thankful that there are "Fighting Americans" willing to put their lives on the line to protect our country, our freedoms, and our way of life—but it's those passengers of Flight #93 who are the inspiration for this issue, and I respectfully dedicate it to them. Let's never forget those brave Americans who went down fighting. ★

(above)
Jack Dempsey and Betsy
Ross entries from Kirby's 1947
48 Famous Americans J.C. Penney
giveaway comic.

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JACK F.A.Q.S



A column answering Frequently Asked Questions about Kirby
by Mark Evanier

Well, let's see what's in the old e-mailbag this month. A couple of folks whose names I've mislaid have written to ask:

"What was the deal with *Fantastic Four* #39 and #40, which guest-starred Daredevil? The DD figures in at least #39 are by Wally Wood. What happened there?"

Then Chris Colbert writes to ask:

"How were Kirby's inkers chosen at Marvel? Why did Joe Sinnott suddenly show up? Why didn't they get him earlier? And how did Jack feel about Joe's inking, which I loved?"

Two good questions which I think I can answer in one swell foop...

The *Daredevil* comic was not an immediate hit, and Stan Lee was not particularly happy with the early issues drawn by Bill Everett and Joe Orlando. With #5, Wally Wood came aboard and Stan felt he'd found another collaborator with whom he could have the same kind of fertile creative relationship he was enjoying with Kirby and Ditko.

To try and bolster the disappointing sales of the new book, Stan and Wally gave Daredevil a new costume in #7 and Stan scheduled the character for a guest appearance in the high-selling *Fantastic Four*, hoping to familiarize FF readers with the hero. About this time, *Fantastic Four* and *Spider-Man* were neck-and-neck as the company's top sellers and Daredevil had already guest-starred in *Spider-Man*. (Stan also arranged a cameo in *Journey Into Mystery* with Thor.)

One thing which some folks may not know about comic book production is that different books are done on different timetables. Jack was sometimes drawing the March issue of *Fantastic Four* at the same time that Steve Ditko was drawing the June issue of *Spider-Man*—or vice-versa.

To further confuse matters, the dates on the covers and in the indicia sometimes varied. For instance, *Daredevil* #8 went on sale, at least in some parts of the US, on January 26, 1965. This was the April 1965 issue. But the April '65 issue of *Fantastic Four* (#37) went on sale in December of '64.

Baffling? All you really need to know is that Jack penciled *Fantastic Four* #39—with the first part of Daredevil's guest-shot—before he saw the new costume. It may not even have been designed at the time but, in any case, he drew Daredevil in his old, yellow costume.

Chic Stone inked the cover to *Fantastic Four* #39. No one knows for sure but it looks like the Daredevil figure was later retouched [see above], probably by Wood, to reflect the new costume. (At the time, covers were often done before the inside of the book was finished, and occasionally even before it was begun.) This was one of Stone's last jobs for Marvel of the period. He decided he was tired of inking other artists and, when offered penciling work elsewhere, chose to take it.

Stan assigned the inking of the interior of *Fantastic Four* #39 to Frank Giacoia and both assumed that he would ink the book regularly from then on. However, the drawings of Daredevil had to be adjusted to match his new look and, to make sure it looked right, Stan wanted Wood to handle that—and while he was at it,

Woody inked all the appearances of Matt Murdock, as well. My pal Richard Howell recounts to me a conversation with Giacoia in which the inker told of having to sit in the waiting room at Marvel, waiting for pages, while Wood inked those figures.

Giacoia got the pages done but—and this was a recurring problem in his career—he brought them in long past the deadline. They had him ink the cover to #40 and #41, but Stan and his right-hand man, Sol

Brodsky, decided they couldn't count on Frank as the regular embellisher of the book.

At the time, Marvel was working with a rather small talent pool. Here is a list of everyone who was regularly freelancing for the company at the time (leaving aside books like

Modeling With Millie): Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Don Heck, Dick Ayers, Bob Powell, Mike Esposito, Frank Giacoia, Vince Colletta, Larry Lieber, and Wally Wood. Not a lot of inkers in that roster, you'll note.

(right) Wally Wood altered this Daredevil figure from the cover of *Fantastic Four* #39 (June 1965).

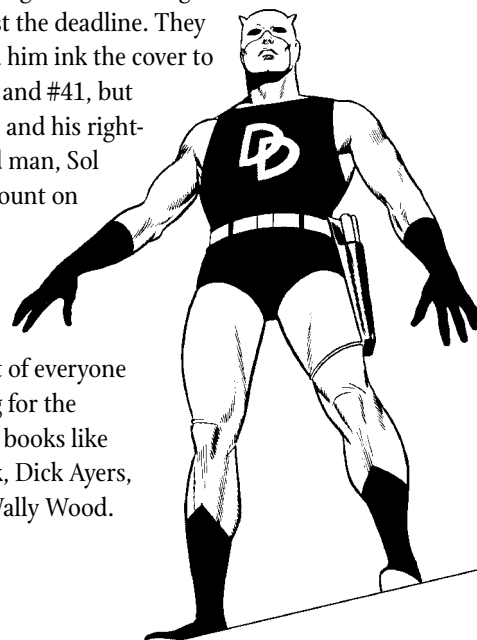
Daredevil, *Fantastic Four* TM & ©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.



(right) Chic Stone's sparse but suitable inks from FF #32 (Nov. '64), complete with Jack's pencil margin notes.

(center) Frank Giacoia inked the book, but Woody altered the DD figures throughout FF #39 to update his costume.

(far right) Daredevil's original costume, by Wally Wood; it appears Jack drew this version in FF #39, and perhaps in #40, requiring touch-ups when it changed.



REED RICHARDS, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

by Robert L. Bryant Jr.

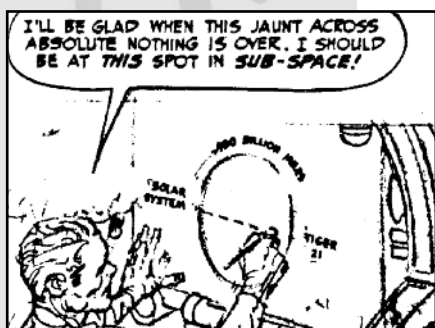
(below) Reed's most famous beard stubble, from *FF* #49 (April 1966).
©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.



(above) Reed says it (again) in *FF* #59 (Feb. 1967).
©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.

(below) Reed's sub-space diagram in *FF* #37 (April 1965) hearkens back to one he used to explain the concept in his unpublished late 1940s comic strip proposal *Starman Zero*.

Reed Richards, Thing TM & ©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.
Starman Zero ©2002 Jack Kirby.



If Reed Richards said it once, he said it a hundred times: “If I make the slightest miscalculation—we’re dead!” Think of the Stan Lee/Jack Kirby *Fantastic Four*, and you think of Reed in his lab, working feverishly over a bank of futuristic equipment, his face streaked with several days’ worth of beard stubble and creepily illuminated by Kirby Krackle as he tries to avert some galactic threat. When Reed Richards don’t shave, you better start praying, brother.

In a Marvel Universe of mad scientists, Reed was always the sane one. Kirby, a longtime science-fiction buff, understood the process of science well enough to make the *FF*’s strange science feel plausible to a reader of the time. And in Reed, Kirby created a leader who led by virtue of his brains, not his muscles—an infinitely flexible man (pun intended) who could bend to any occasion, but never break. His greatest super-power was between his ears.

Kirby used Reed as an icon of American science—his tufts of statesman-like gray signaled both knowledge and responsibilities—and Kirby was true to the realities of science, as much as possible. In the *FF*’s origin issue in 1961, for example, Lee and Kirby were wrong in thinking that “cosmic rays” could cause immediate and extreme mutations. Such rays do exist, but they’re harmless as light rays—cosmic rays are slamming through you and this paper as you read this, and it’s unlikely your hands are turning big, orange and rocky—but there were legitimate worries about space radiation, particularly the Van Allen belts, in the early 1960s, so let’s give the boys a pass on this one.

More important was the fact that Reed rarely if ever just reached into a cluttered closet in the Baxter Building and pulled out a ready-made device that was exactly what he needed to resolve a crisis. There were no boxes on the wall labeled: BREAK GLASS IN CASE OF GALACTUS. Reed typically had to work hard to conceive, design and build his inventions, and Kirby typically took pains to show that it was in fact hard, hard work.

Some examples:

- In *FF* #37 (“Behold! A Distant Star!”), Kirby is fully aware of the vast distances involved in star travel—even neighboring stars would be light-years away, and without some sort of “warp” technology that lets you jump many times faster than light, getting there would be like walking from Kansas to Katmandu. So Kirby spells out that the *FF* are using a space warp to travel to the Skrull galaxy. Stan Lee’s dialogue, presumably based on Kirby’s margin notes:

SUE: “But Reed, darling—they’re so many light-years away! No matter how fast we go, we’ll never—!”

REED: “We’re not going through normal space, Sue! Our flight will utilize a space-time warp... If I make the slightest error in my computations, we could be lost forever in the endless abyss of sub-space!... Remember Einstein’s theory—that the universe is like a ball? We’re in sub-space now—inside that ‘ball’—ready to break out into the Skrull galaxy!”

BEN: “Boy! Give you a piece of chalk an’ a blackboard and there’s no stoppin’ ya!”

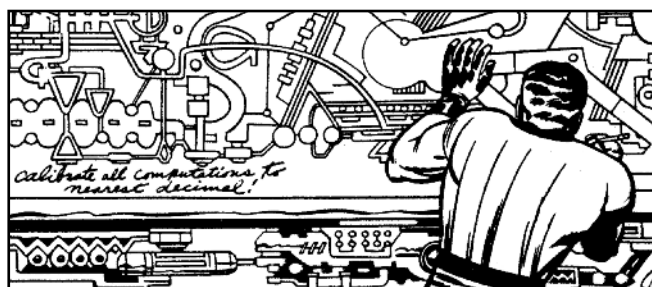
In science-fiction terms, this is all perfectly plausible. Gene Roddenberry’s *Star Trek*, in development at about this same time, would use a similar principle for the “warp drive” that gets the Enterprise from one star to another; and George Lucas’ *Star Wars*, more than a decade later, would use the same basic idea—“hyperspace jumps”—to allow for star travel. (Kirby’s “Boom Tube” from the Fourth World comics, for that matter, is basically a portable space warp.)

- *FF* #51 (“This Man, This Monster!”), when Reed explores the Negative Zone/subspace, Kirby draws him wearing his usual *FF* uniform, but with a space helmet enclosing his head—implying that this weird dimension has Earth-like pressure and temperatures,

but little or no atmosphere. It’s a nice touch, and a nod toward realism (but a full space suit would have been even better—and in later Negative Zone visits, even the helmet is omitted. Oh, well...).

- In *FF* #57-60 (Dr. Doom steals the Silver Surfer’s powers), it takes Reed a full four issues to define the threat, conceive a scientific solution, design it and construct it. Kirby depicts him working himself to exhaustion to make a prototype weapon that looks something like a metal bat with delicate electronic wings (“If I make the slightest miscalculation on any of these subminiaturized components, we’ll have had it!”) and even then, Reed’s device is no *deus ex machina*. It can’t defeat Doom, but only trick him into defeating himself. In this storyline, Kirby makes clear both the limits and the potential of science.

- In *FF* #66-67 (the Him storyline), Kirby illustrates Reed’s genius in figuring out what happened to the missing Alicia by using a “heat-image tracer” that uses some type of latent-infrared photography. Then Kirby shows the sheer hard work it takes for Reed to replicate the circuitry pattern of the teleportation bracelet her abductor used. (“Calibrate all computations to nearest decimal!” Reed notes to himself on a giant wall map of the bracelet’s electronics.) By the time he’s finished, Reed “hasn’t eaten—or shut his eyes—in over two days,” and again winds up with a face full of beard stubble—Kirby makes it look like a badge of honor; and, you know... that’s exactly what it is. ★



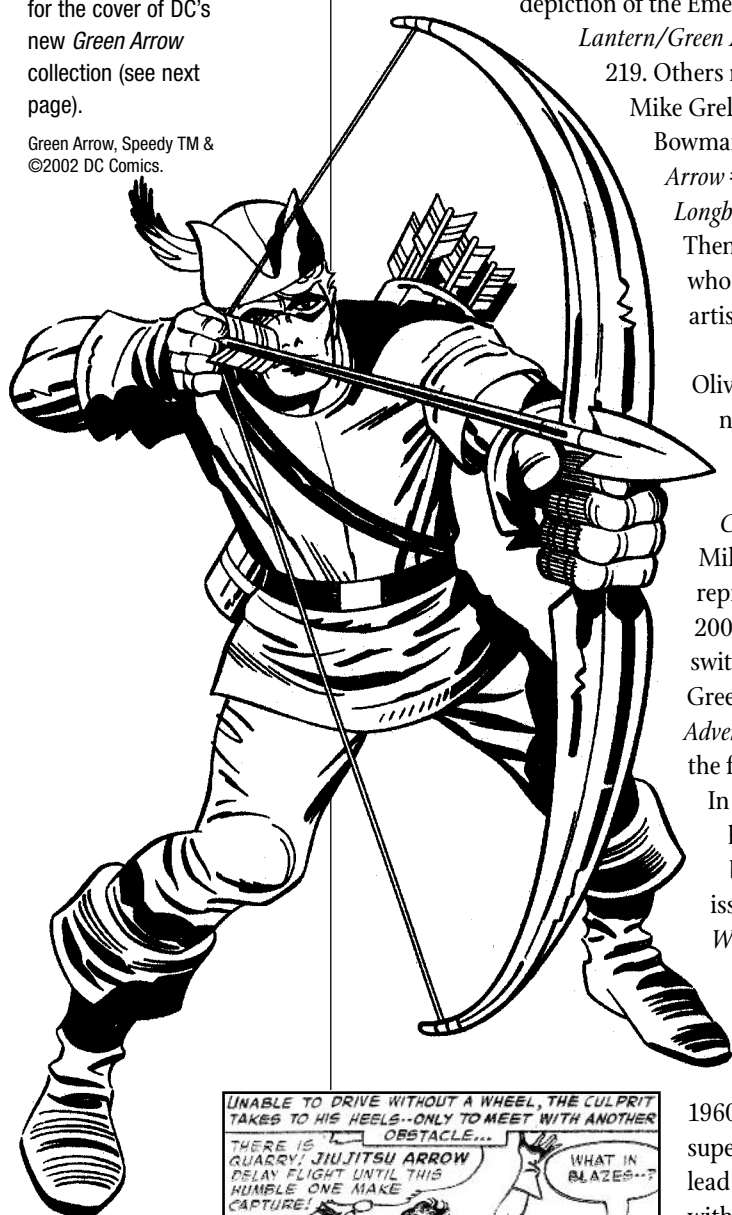
KING MEETS QUEEN



(above) An example of Green Arrow pre-Kirby.

(below) At DC's request, and with the approval of the Kirby estate, Mike Royer took a Bullseye drawing and reworked it for the cover of DC's new *Green Arrow* collection (see next page).

Green Arrow, Speedy TM & ©2002 DC Comics.



In the 1995 film *Crimson Tide*, Denzel Washington meets up with a pair of sailors in an escalating verbal disagreement. Ever the problem solver, Washington's character asks the sailors what is causing such an argument. The response was that one of them thought Jack Kirby drew the best Silver Surfer, whereas the other chap steadfastly believed Moebius penned and inked the definitive version of Norrin Radd.

This cinematic example illustrates how comic book fans get very opinionated about the best artist on a certain character or feature.

Take the long-time DC character Green Arrow. Now ask a group of comics fans "Who was the best Green Arrow artist?" Many folks would say Neal Adams, who won awards for his depiction of the Emerald Archer in *Green*

Lantern/Green Arrow #76-89 and *Flash* #217-219. Others might say the best was "Iron"

Mike Grell, who penciled the Battling Bowman in *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* #90-111, *Green Arrow*:

Longbow Hunters, and other issues. Then there's odd ducks like myself who say the best Green Arrow artist was Jack "King" Kirby.

First, a little history of Oliver Queen and Roy Harper needs to be summarized. The Green Arrow and Speedy debuted in *More Fun*

Comics #73 (DC published a Millennium Edition completely reprinting this book in late 2000). When *More Fun Comics* switched to more comedic stories, Green Arrow moved over to *Adventure Comics* with #103, where the feature ran until issue #269.

In the meanwhile, Green Arrow had also begun running in *World's Finest Comics* with issue #7, lasting there until *WFC* #140. While obviously a back-up strip, Green Arrow was popular enough to be continuously published from the 1940s into the

1960s, a feat achieved by few super-hero strips. This helped lead to the character joining up with the *Justice League of America* in issue #4 of the original series (sans Speedy—no kid sidekicks in the JLA). Mike Grell and Chuck Dixon did a popular take on the character in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Finally, famed Hollywood director/writer Kevin Smith has brought the Green

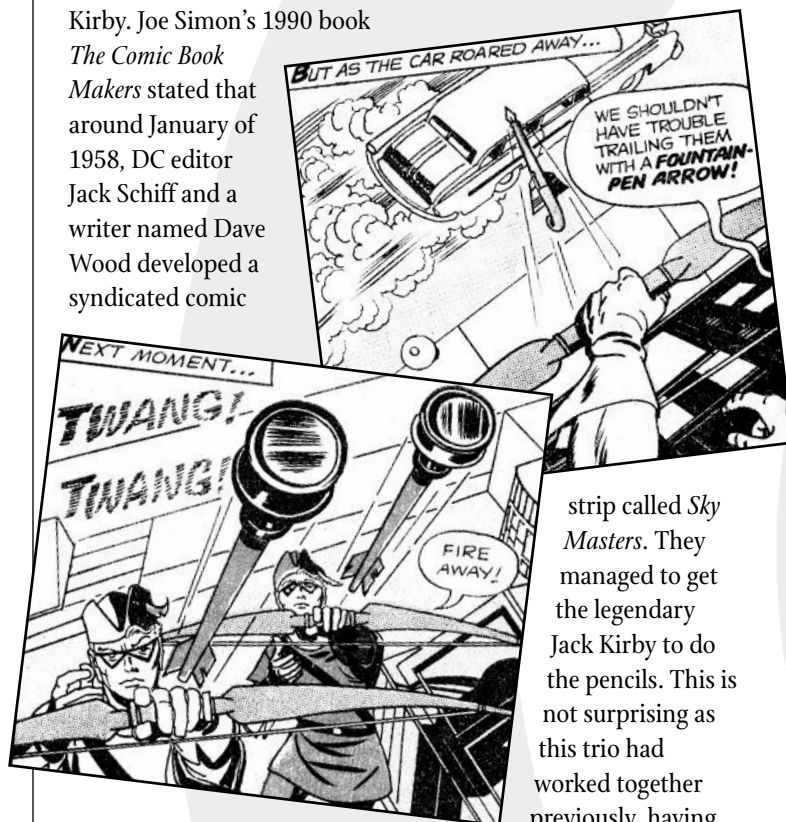
Arrow character to new heights of popularity in 2001.

The Emerald Archer was clad in a green short-sleeved loose shirt, with green tights, red gloves and boots, a domino mask, and the necessary Robin Hood hat (worn by all comic book archers—that's how you knew they were archers). Speedy wore the same outfit, with a red and yellow color-scheme. The classic outfit stayed until Neal Adams changed it and added facial hair to the character in the late 1960s. Around the same time, Denny O'Neil added a liberal, combative personality to GA, as well.

Green Arrow was often referred to as "Batman with a bow." He had a young ward and kid partner. He was a wealthy playboy in his secret identity of Oliver Queen. He had an arrowcar, arrowplane, and arrowcave. He was summoned by the police with the arrow-signal. He had a female counterpart named "Miss Arrowette." All he was missing was a butler and a friend in the commissioner's office. Needless to say, GA and Speedy found themselves in many scrapes similar to those faced by the Dynamic Duo. Probably, the difference that might have kept the Emerald Archer from attaining the heights of the Darknight Detective (among other things) were the villains; the Clock King and the Red Dart just weren't in the same league as the Joker and Two-Face.

Ah, but in late 1958, the Green Arrow began a series of adventures that took a back seat to no one. In came Jack Kirby. Joe Simon's 1990 book

The Comic Book Makers stated that around January of 1958, DC editor Jack Schiff and a writer named Dave Wood developed a syndicated comic



strip called *Sky Masters*. They managed to get the legendary Jack Kirby to do the pencils. This is not surprising as this trio had worked together previously, having

been associated with *Challengers of the Unknown*, dating back to *Showcase* #6 (Jan./Feb. 1957). Kirby was steadily working on *Sky Masters* and the *Challengers* during this time period. Schiff also edited *World's Finest Comics* and probably swung the Green Arrow assignment for Kirby to make some extra money. However it happened then, Kirby's Green Arrow then got used also in Mort Weisinger's *Adventure Comics* (remember, Green Arrow was regularly featured in both magazines).

The Jack Kirby run of Green Arrow stories takes place from *Adventure Comics* #250-256, and *World's Finest Comics* #96-99. I've seen several comic book dealers list *Adventure Comics* #248 and #249 as part of the Jack Kirby run. Not so. I've looked at those issues. I'm not good enough to identify who the artist is (my best guess is George Papp—the Millennium Edition *Adventure Comics* #247 lists him as the artist on that Green Arrow story), but I

(right) 1972 photo of Carmine Infantino taken at a San Diego con by Vince Davis. Courtesy of Richard Kyle.

©2002 Vince Davis.

(below) Cover to *Charlie Chan* #1 (June 1948) by Joe & Jack.

©2002 Crestwood Publications.



(right) Two Infantino splash pages from *Charlie Chan* #1, evoking the S&K feel. The *Kirby Checklist* lists the “Land of the Leopard Men” splash as Kirby art, but considering the Infantino signature (and the lack of telltale Kirby in it), we believe it’s all Infantino. Richard Kolkman, time for another update!

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(next page, top) Mort Meskin pencils for the never-published *Captain 3-D* #2 (circa 1954). Note the particularly Kirbyesque panel 3. ©2002 Harvey Comics.

(next page, bottom) We’re not sure what the old lady is referring to in this 1942 *Boy Commandos* sketch. There have been stories that Jack was drawing pages at night during his WWII basic training; perhaps this was a note sent to a DC editor who was waiting for him to finish a couple of *BC* pages?

Boy Commandos TM & ©2002 DC Comics.

Interview conducted by Jim Amash

(Carmine Infantino has done it all in comics. From his early days working for Joe Simon and Jack Kirby, through his fondly-remembered DC Comics work of the 1960s (including inaugurating the “new look” Batman, and drawing numerous Flash issues), to his years as publisher of DC, where he successfully lured Kirby away from arch-rival Marvel Comics in 1970. For this interview, we asked Carmine to elaborate on what it was like working with Simon & Kirby in the early days. This interview was conducted at Heroes Con in Charlotte, NC on June 16, 2000, and was copy-edited by Carmine.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: What was your first experience with Simon & Kirby’s work?

CARMINE INFANTINO: Oh, *Captain America*. The first *Captain America*. Frank Giacoia and I saw it and we were so excited. We had to find them. We went up to the city where they had this office where they worked, Joe and Jack, and they were very sweet. They invited us in, they let us look at their work, talked to us for a while, and Jack was very sweet. He showed us his artwork. We were two kids in those days.

TJKC: About how old were you then?

CARMINE: Sixteen. It was a nice day we had—they didn’t throw us out. *(Jim laughs)* They were busy, too—and a kid can be a pain in the ass.

TJKC: But they had a studio, right?

CARMINE: Tudor City in New York.

TJKC: Were a lot of people working for them?

CARMINE: No, just Joe and Jack and the letterer—who was the famous letterer they had?

TJKC: Howard Ferguson?

CARMINE: Ferguson. He was unbelievable. Great letterer. Cranky, very cranky, old guy. You



say hello, he would say, “Go to hell.” *(Jim laughs)* They were doing the stuff at DC then—*The Boy Commandos*, “Manhunter,” and what was the other one?

TJKC: “Sandman.”

CARMINE: And the “Newsboy Legion.”

They were churning out stuff like crazy.

TJKC: They were fast. So do you count them among your bigger, earlier influences?

CARMINE: Yes, extremely. Jack especially, but Joe, too.

Joe was a very sharp writer. People don’t give him much credit for that. He wrote most of his stuff; he would take—his idea would be take classics and turn ’em into comic book stories. Remember the *Boy Commandos* with the Trojan Horse? He did that all the time. He’d take a classic, twist and turn it around, and use it and it would be great. He was very clever. I don’t think he got enough credit in his whole process. But that’s not to take anything away from Jack, obviously—the combination was magic.

TJKC: So when you went to meet them early, you saw Jack draw. What was it like to see him draw?

CARMINE: What he would do, he never laid anything out. He’d start at the top of the panel and just draw. *(laughs)* I’d go crazy. I said, “I’ll never be able to do this.” It was incredible.

TJKC: How long after that did you start working in comics?

CARMINE: About a year or two. In fact, two years later, I went up to Timely Comics. No, no, I met them before, I’m sorry. I met Joe two years before that at Timely. He was the editor of Timely and they were doing *Captain America*. That was before the studio. But I did not meet Jack then; Joe I met before. I’m confusing this thing, I’m sorry. I did a story



INTERVIEW

called “Jack Frost” with Frank Giacoia at Timely Comics for Joe Simon, and I said to him, “Can we meet Jack Kirby?” and he said, “He’s busy,” but we met him later at Tudor City.

TJKC: How did you know they were at Tudor City? Was that common knowledge?

CARMINE: No, someone told me. I don’t know who the guy was that told me, but we tracked ’em down. When you’re a fan, you track down your idols.

TJKC: When you started working in the business, did you cross paths with them very often?

CARMINE: Let me see... yeah, years later I ran into them at Hillman Comics. When they came out of the Army, they didn’t go back to DC. They worked for Hillman, and so did I. That’s when we met. Then they went to Crestwood and they invited me over to Crestwood to do *Charlie Chan* for them and I went over there.

TJKC: Did you do *Charlie Chan* directly for them?

CARMINE: Yep, for them directly.

TJKC: So how did that work? Did you ask for the assignment or did they call you?

CARMINE: No, no, Joe called me and he said— and he knows I’m working with DC—“Will you come over here and do *Charlie Chan*?” I said, “I make a lot more money than you can pay for this thing,” but then I thought about it. I could be there working with Kirby and Mort Meskin. I thought it’d be worth it. I worked for less money and I worked for him for about a year. It was a great learning curve.

TJKC: Did you work in the studio?

CARMINE: In the studio and I would go home and do DC’s work at night. After a year, I was collapsing, I couldn’t continue.

TJKC: What was it like working in the studio with them?



CARMINE: Oh, Jack taught me—tremendous. He was unbelievable.

TJKC: When he worked, did he ever make conversation?

CARMINE: He’d make conversation. You’d ask him a question and he’d answer you. One time I did a story—it was about these two guys beating up an old lady—and I was drawing it and I was having trouble with it. I said, “Jack, what do I do to get this thing right?” and he says, “Don’t show them hitting her. Have one villain on the couch smiling and watching the shadow of the other villain hitting the old lady. That’ll work in the reader’s mind more than seeing the actual action,” and he was right; little things like that he taught me.

TJKC: Your figure drawing is so different than his. I assume the influence is more in terms of story-telling then.

CARMINE: No, he was in my drawing for a while; and then he and I did a comic strip together. I drew it and he wrote it—a western. We tried to sell it—a newspaper strip.

TJKC: What was the name of it?

CARMINE: I can’t remember now, but we couldn’t sell it.

TJKC: When, late ’40s?

CARMINE: A little later. It was in the ’50s—sometime in the ’50s.

TJKC: So you had a relationship ongoing—.

CARMINE: Yeah, a long time, and Joe and I and my family were very close. I was close to both of them for many years.

A CHAT WITH JACK KIRBY

Circa 1974, by Russ Maheras



In early 1974, at one of the monthly YMCA mini-comic book conventions in downtown Chicago, I overheard another young fan bragging that they had Jack Kirby's phone number and address in California. Today, it may not seem like such a big deal, but to the average fan in those days, possessing such information was akin to possessing atomic secrets.

At the time, I was in the process of putting together the first issue of *Maelstrom*, a fanzine I have published off and on for the past 26 years. I immediately thought that it would be a great idea to send Kirby a mail interview so I could publish it in my fledgling 'zine. After all, Kirby was one of my favorite comic book artists and I had lots of questions for him about the early days of his career. Pleading and begging, I somehow managed to wheedle the address from my fellow fan, and chortled all the way home with my newfound treasure wrapped in my hot little fist.

I typed up what I thought at the time were deep, meaningful questions and mailed them off. Weeks passed with no response. *Maelstrom* #1 went to press and still there was no Kirby interview. I began to doubt the accuracy of the information I'd been given. After about two months, I couldn't wait any longer. Using the phone number I'd been given, I decided to call Kirby up.

This was no easy task for a wide-eyed fan in the early '70s.

Long distance calls were primitive by today's standards—and very expensive. So not only was I calling a total stranger, I was calling another state 2000 miles away. To a young, Midwestern comic book fan at the time, it may as well been another planet. As I dialed, my prehistoric "fight or flight" instincts started to kick in. My heart pounded, my pulse raced and my mouth turned drier than a Death Valley alum factory. As the phone rang, I trembled.

Then a woman answered. The shock caused me to relax somewhat. It was Roz Kirby. Jack wasn't home, so she asked me what I wanted. I stammered something about how I was a fanzine publisher and how I'd sent Jack an interview two months ago, and could he please send it back when it was convenient? There was no hurry, I mumbled, but I was just wondering... Roz cut me off in mid-mumble and said something like, "You mean Jack hasn't responded and you sent it months ago?"

"Uh, yeah, but..." I started to say.

"Don't you worry," she said. "I'll make sure he gets to it and sends it out right away."

I mumbled my thank you and hung up. "Oh, geez," I thought, "I can't believe I just got Jack Kirby in trouble." A short time later, the interview arrived in the mail, postmarked May 13, 1974. It was published in *Maelstrom* #2, November 1974, and follows below:

QUESTION: What were the sizes of the originals for your *Captain America* strips during the '40s?

JACK KIRBY: 12 inches by 18 inches.

Q: Did you pencil and ink most of your *Captain America* work?

JK: I penciled the works and inked a bit too.

Q: About how long would you say it took you to do a finished page?

JK: A few hours.

Q: Was most of your work in the '40s and '50s done with a crowquill and #3 sable brush?

JK: We used a brush.

Q: Were you responsible for the bright colors used on many of your books during the '40s and '50s?

JK: I indicated color for special effects—although overall color guides were submitted in many cases.

Q: During the '50s on your *Black Magic* books, you experimented with different inking techniques. For instance, you used white enamel, or a scratchboard effect. Any special reason?

JK: Just experimenting for the sake of variety.

Q: What were the pay rates per page during the '40s?

JK: They varied for each artist.

Q: No other artist has been able to concoct monsters like the ones you originated for Marvel's fantasy titles. Do you have any explanation? And did the Comics Code Authority censor their teeth (none of them had any teeth)?

JK: No. They occasionally had teeth (at any rate, hard gums).

Q: Were the early years at Marvel (1960-64) set in a light-hearted, adventurous atmosphere?

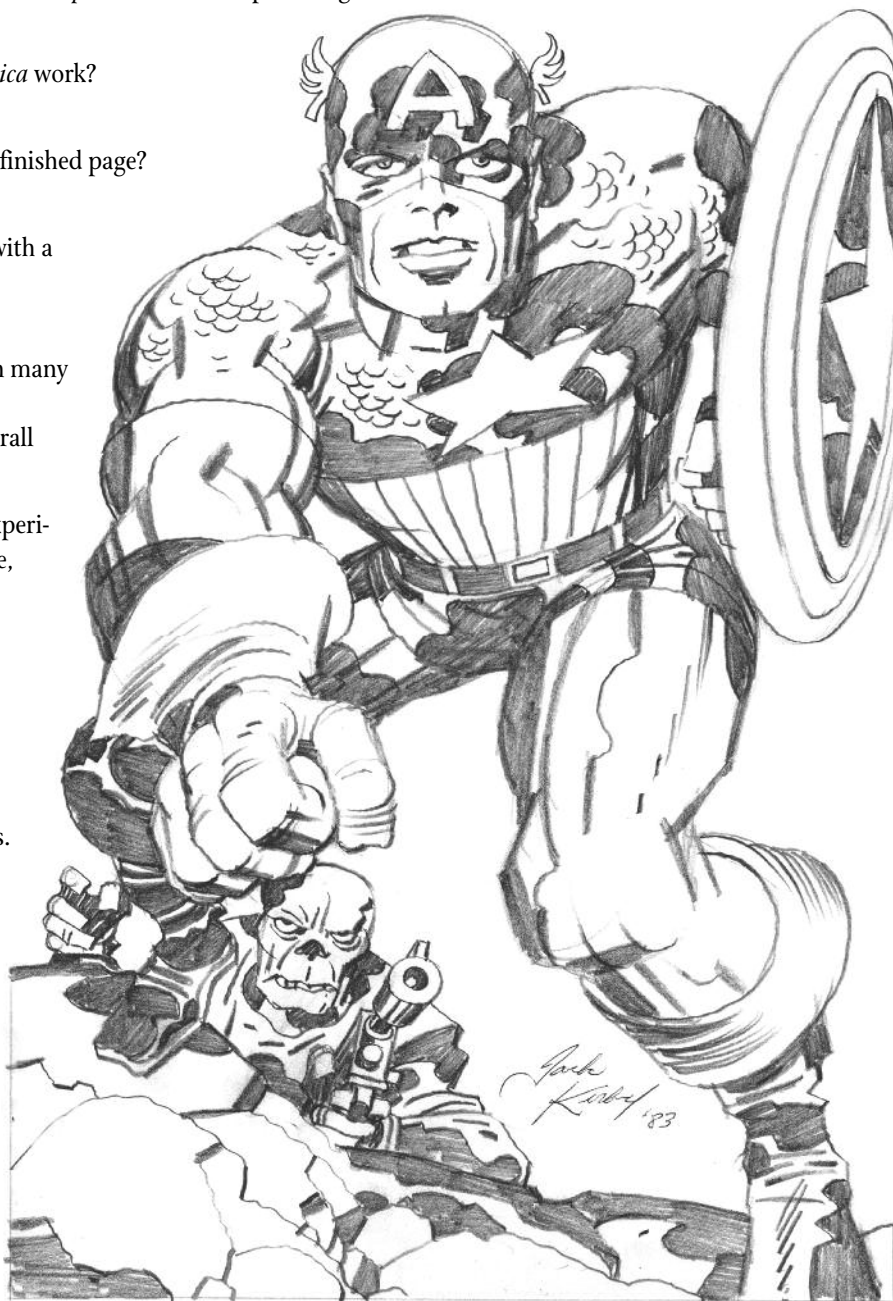
JK: I've always been light-hearted and adventurous.

Q: Have you any idea how many pages you've done over your whole career?

JK: It's too mind-boggling.

Q: When you and Stan hashed out plots for Marvel in the early '60s, it seems that you had a lot of fun putting them together. Do you think that writers today tend to stay more down-to-earth? Do they worry too much about scientific accuracy instead of entertainment, which is what comics are for?

JK: You're absolutely correct. ★



(above) A shot of Kirby taken August 20, 1973 at the San Diego Con by Clay Geerdes. Courtesy of Richard Kyle.

©2002 Clay Geerdes.

(right) A 1983 Captain America pencil commissioned by a fan.

Captain America, Red Skull TM & ©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.

THE LOSERS—EVERYMAN AT

(below) Detail from the Chapter 2 splash of *Our Fighting Forces* #161 (Nov. 1975), inked by D. Bruce Berry, and featuring British Major Geoffrey Soames.

(next page) Cover pencils from *OFF* #152 (Dec. 1974).

Losers TM & ©2002 DC Comics.

by Brian K. Morris

Imagine the surprise of a regular reader of *Our Fighting Forces* in late 1974. Sure, there was the usual cover by long-time war artist Joe Kubert, as it had been for years and years. But without the Internet or even a regular newsstand magazine dedicated to news of the comic book field, a person expecting the writer-artist team of Bob Kanigher and John Severin was in for a shock when they opened up issue #151. Now, they'd find the magazine under the total creative control of Jack Kirby, just as it would be until #162, over a year later.

Initially, Kirby had come to DC from Marvel in order to bring his concepts to life under his editorial control. However, he was professional enough to accept other assignments when offered. He'd done it with *Jimmy*

Olsen and would contribute artwork to other DC comics from other scripters until his eventual return to Marvel Comics—but like with Superman's Pal, Jack was going to do it his way.

Why were these dozen issues so unique? Sure, Jack had worked on War comics before. However, this was the first time this World War II veteran could tell stories of conflict without filtering them through another editor; and since Kirby was a veteran himself and had seen combat time, he would—and did—bring a special perspective to the intensity and brutality of war. He was also at the height of his creative prowess and with near-total control over the content of his product, he set out to do *his* war book.

While the lead characters (Captain Storm, Johnny Cloud, Gunner, and Sarge) looked the same, so much was radically different. Gone was the female "traitor," Ona, and the subplot of Gunner's conflicting feelings towards her. The noirish artwork of John Severin was gone as well as Kanigher's consistent reminders that the four soldiers were hard-luck heroes, bound together by

loss and tragedy—and given Captain Storm's limber nature, as in issue #156, you'd never know he had a wooden leg.

In several stories, *The Losers* took a back seat to some of the supporting characters in



WAR!

their own title. The focus switched easily from the four heroes to the “everymen” in each story. The Losers were four larger-than-life combatants the reader had seen time and time before. It was like Kirby felt there were more important stories to tell than a Navajo flying ace, a one-legged PT commander, and a pair of soldiers from the heart of New York. We learn almost nothing about The Losers but we learn so very much about Major Geoffrey Soames, Mile-A-Minute Jones, Panama Fattie, and Ivan.

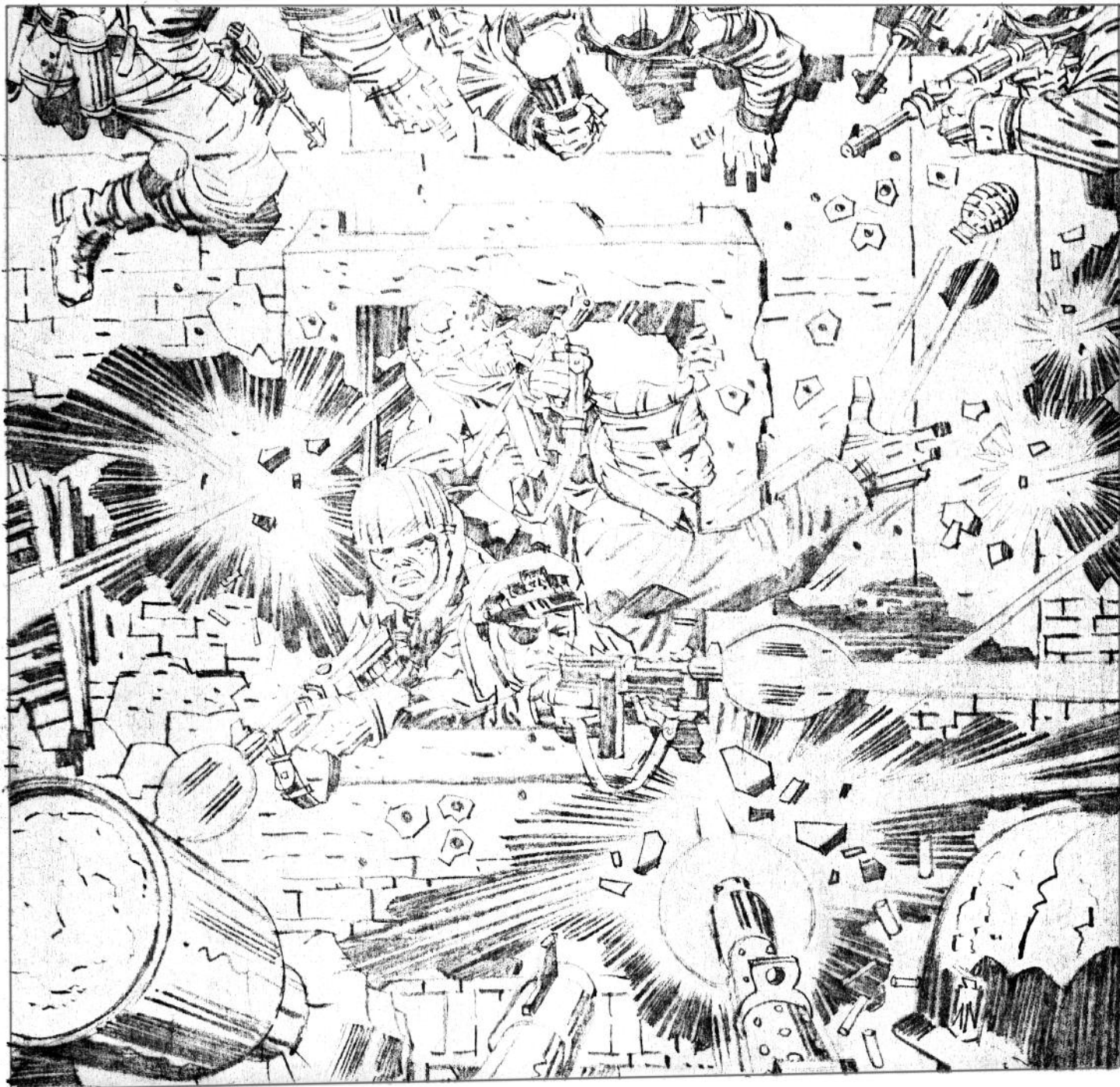
With a new generation of comics fans and creators so continuity-conscious, Assistant Editor Steve Sherman made a startling announcement: Sherman hadn’t read a war comic “since DC stopped publishing ‘Enemy Ace.’” In the letter column of issue #154, responding to criticisms of the abrupt abandonment of the

Kanigher-Severin storylines and the overall change in tone, Sherman replied “...Jack’s view of war and Bob Kanigher’s view don’t exactly coincide. And in order to get his view across, Jack has to interpret the characters the way he sees them... The biggest commotion, quite naturally, was over the sudden change in storyline. Hopefully, future stories will clear up the inconsistencies, which is just our way of saying that we don’t know what went on before, and it’s up to Jack to decide how he wants to work it out.”

It turned out that Jack wound up not deciding during his twelve-issue run—but in fairness, when Kanigher returned in issue #163, he didn’t immediately take up his old storylines either, although Ona did return in #168, several months later.

Only occasionally touching on the “even when we win, we lose” concept of the series, Kirby spelled out his take on the series in his first text page: “It seems to me that the Losers is... a ‘people’ thing. A small squad of ‘everymen’ caught up in the crushing tide of events, pushing their ‘know-how’ to the limit in a wild effort to survive.” He further promised that “if they can’t avoid a wound, they will take one. The idea is to make it a true war experience for the reader.” Also, “Speaking for this editor,” Kirby confessed in issue #153, “The Losers are not fictional characters, but bits and pieces of myself and the people who shared the war with me.”

Again, in the letter column of Kirby’s penultimate issue, it was stated “...the enormous numbers of people involved in wars tend to make individuals



shrink into insignificance—at least when compared to the long and crowded careers our stars have.” These would be tales of war from the “everyman” point of view, told by someone who’d been there, and made as real as the Comics Code Authority would allow.

While Kirby’s stories would startle and shock with their brutality, Kirby’s philosophy was explained in the letter column of issue #161: “While war is exciting... it is also a bit sickening when examined too closely, so we’d rather stick to fictionalized material which can capture the drama and action of war, without concentrating on its horrors.”

In Kirby’s first issue, #151, The Losers traveled to occupied France where their mission was to smuggle out Emma Klein, a local concert pianist who had never been photographed. During an attack by Panzers, Gunner was separated from the team and captured by the Nazi commanding officer. Despite brutal treatment, Gunner held out until the other Losers could rescue him and take the unnamed Major’s uncomely maid, secretly Emma Klein, to Britain.

The issue opened with a bang—or many of them as the Panzers’ explosions and gunfire flushed out the Losers just before they were led away by the Maquis; but pages seventeen through nineteen featured Allied forces shelling the French town into rubble and decimating the German Army. A particularly chilling sequence occurred at the bottom of page eighteen. In panel three, a German officer recoiled in horror at the sight of something off-panel. The caption read, “Men shout in VAIN [all emphasis

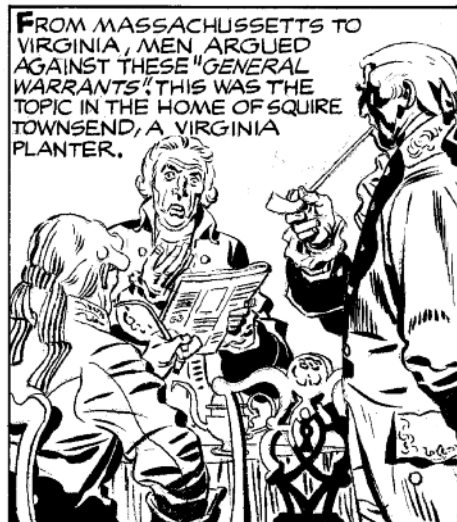
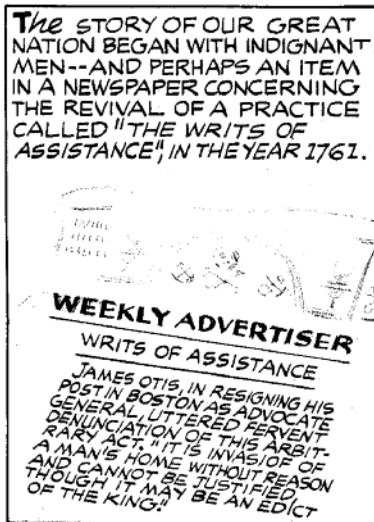
Kirby’s] against the holocaust... there’s NO place to run...” as the next panel was filled with an explosion. The page ended with the sight of the background destroyed and only the officer’s hat remaining to mark his violent passing. This issue’s combination of action, brutal verisimilitude, and delineating of supporting characters set the tone for the next eleven issues.

In the next issue (#152), The Losers were mistakenly dropped into the wrong town for a three-day pass, a town thick with German soldiers. The story was one long battle scene as the Americans attempted to fight their way out again. But as The Losers discovered an enemy squad just outside their hiding place, the town was pummeled by American artillery. As The Losers walked away from the battle, they encountered General George Patton, just as infantryman Kirby did back in the Second World War (see *The Collected Jack Kirby Collector* Volume Two). The General scolded them for their unkempt appearance, thanked them for their help after a fashion, and concluded as he drove away, “Fine boys, but ‘foul-ups.’”

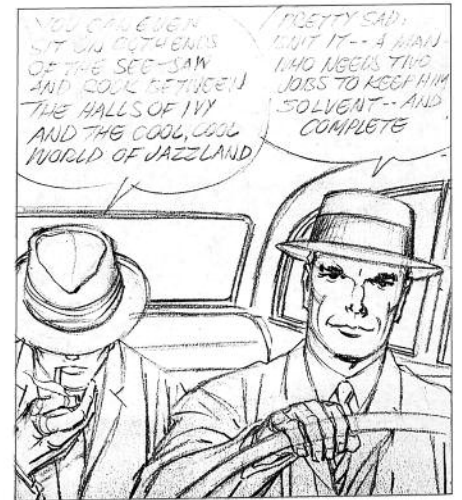
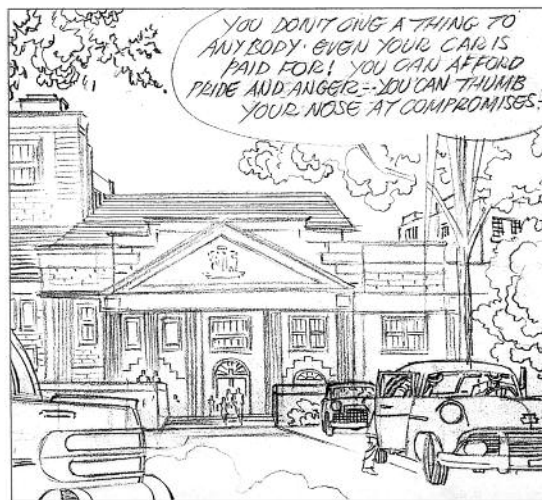
In this issue, aside from assuming cover art duties for the next several months, Kirby began a back-up feature that detailed the uniforms and weaponry of military men through the ages. Long accused of not being heavily into artistic research, Jack visibly committed himself to making this series as visually accurate as possible. “...contrary to what many people believe, Kirby is a diligent researcher,”

OLD PANELING

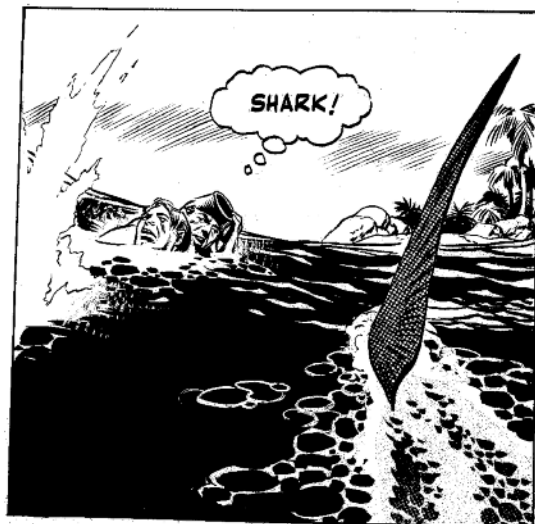
Kirby made numerous attempts to sell a syndicated comic strip in the 1950s; here are a few from his files:



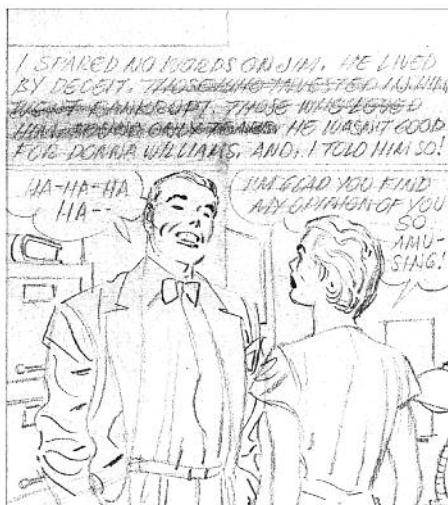
An unused Colonial American strip (probably for Jack's 1956 strip proposal *Master Jeremy*). All characters ©2002 Jack Kirby Estate.



Another of the unfinished *King Masters* strips, still in pencil. All characters ©2002 Jack Kirby Estate



Surf Hunter unused strip, inked by Wally Wood. All characters ©2002 Jack Kirby Estate

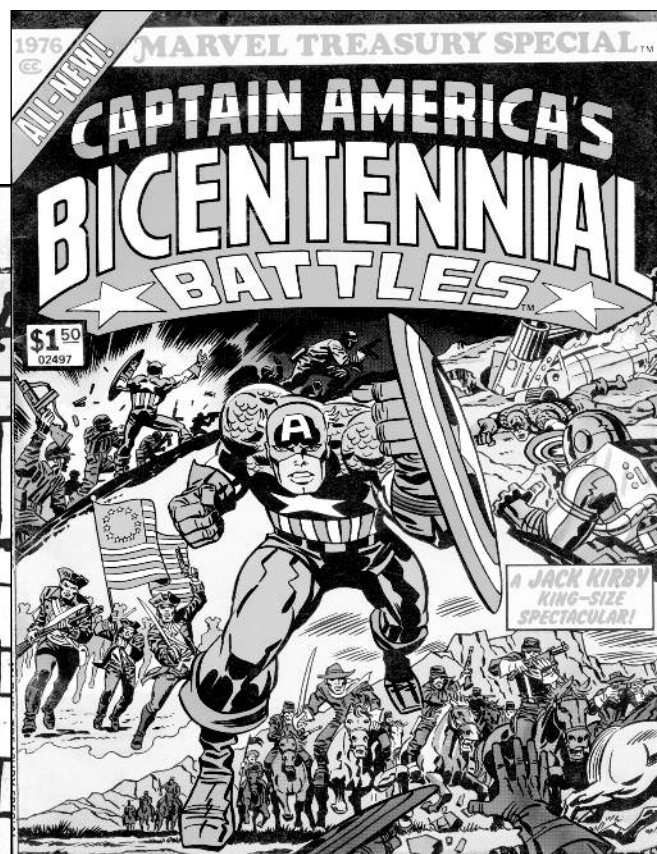


An unknown strip, featuring... well, a brother and sister arguing, circa 1950s. All characters ©2002 Jack Kirby Estate

GALLERY

Cover pencils for the *Captain America's Bicentennial Battles* Treasury Edition (1976). In the published version (shown at right), note the non-Kirby Colonial soldiers to the left of the main figure, and the addition of a non-Kirby Cap figure in the outer space scene to the right.

Captain America TM & ©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.



by Jean Depelley and Etienne Barillier

(Philippe Druillet was born in 1944 in Toulouse, France. After a few years as a photographer, he first ventured onto the

European comics scene with the character Lone Sloane's first opus *The Mystery of the Abyss* (1966), clearly establishing his talent as a visionary artist, strongly influenced by American fantasy literature. In 1970, Druillet revolutionized the medium with the publication of the first episode of "The Six Voyages of Lone Sloane" in the

French weekly *Pilote*. His art literally exploded the classic format with kaleidoscopic storytelling on gigantic splash pages where fabulous worlds and monumental architectures are peopled by Lovecraftian creatures. With its publication as a graphic novel in 1972, comics clearly became a visual art form, with graphic search predominating over linear scripts. In 1975, Druillet collaborated with Jean-Pierre Dionnet, the artist Jean Giraud (a.k.a. Moebius), and Farkas to produce the now classic *Métal Hurlant* monthly, which would revolutionize comics periodicals. The magazine's huge success finally resulted in the US publication *Heavy Metal* that proved to be even more successful. Druillet then explored somber themes after his wife's untimely death from cancer in 1975, which crystallized in his morbid masterpiece *The Night* (1976) and in Lone Sloane's next adventure, the very introspective *Gail* (1978). As a complete artist, Druillet has adapted to different art forms, from movie posters (Jean Rollin's films, *Star Wars*, *The Name of the Rose*) and book illustrations to Fine Art paintings and sculptures. He has also recently launched into animated graphics with the Wagner tetralogy on CD-ROM. Nevertheless, Druillet is still an authentic fan, always enthusiastic to discuss his passions for fine books and paintings (from the nineteenth century, of course!), cinema, or American comics. This interview was conducted by phone in French on September 6, 2000, for the promotion



of his new book *Chaos* (published by Albin Michel), which marks the long overdue reunion between the author, the comics medium, and his Lone Sloane character after 14 years. We wish to thank Jean-Pierre Dionnet for his precious information, Mona Fathoui (of Albin Michel) for this appointment so important to us as fans, and, of course, Philippe Druillet for his time and kindness. Welcome back aboard, Philippe!

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: Can you tell us how you discovered comic books, and Kirby in particular?

PHILIPPE DRUILLET: It was in the 1960s-70s. As a kid, I used to read the *Fantastic Four*, which is still my favorite Kirby series. My comics knowledge is not phenomenal compared to Jean-Pierre Dionnet's, for example, but I know this medium pretty well and I've always liked it. Here's a little preamble to settle the point: I am a multicultural man, with a half-caste origin. I was dragged along between Spain and France when I was a kid. I am from a modest family. My mother was a janitor and I couldn't study. I soon needed to broaden my mind, to grow richer in culture in numerous



(above) Photo of Philippe Druillet.

(right) Unfinished Bullseye layout by Kirby, probably from the 1960s. Joe Simon has commented that Kirby could never get the bow and arrow drawn correctly, and this is a good example. You try shooting an arrow when you're holding it like this! (Ouch!)

Bullseye ©2002 Joe Simon & Jack Kirby.

All Druillet art in this article is ©2002 Philippe Druillet unless otherwise noted.



(Above) Sloane on his "Mobius chair" visiting the cosmos (from Druillet's *The Six Voyages of Lone Sloane*, Dargaud, 1972), and (left) Kirby's unused cover art, supposedly for *Black Cat Mystery* #59 (Sept. 1957), but more likely for *Alarming Tales* #1 (also Sept. '57, which contained the story "Donnegan's Daffy Chair").

Cover ©2002 Harvey Comics.

SPIES, HYDRA, INTRIGUE & ESPIONAGE

A Look At Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD, by Mark Alexander

Back in Marvel's glory days when Jack and Stan were kicking around the idea of turning Sgt. Fury into a modern-day secret agent, it's doubtful they had any greater goal than finding a replacement for the failing "Human Torch" or "Giant-Man." What they couldn't have known at the time, was that SHIELD (Fury's not-entirely-original spying) would become a perennial Pandora's box that, once opened, would engulf the entire Marvel Universe, taking root in *The Avengers*, the *FF*, "Iron Man," and practically taking over the "Captain America" series.

It's impossible to imagine the mid-1960s Marvel Comics without the presence of SHIELD; it seemed to be everywhere. In *The Avengers*, the Black Widow was working for Fury undercover in the Far East, while in New York, Iron Man was battling A.I.M. alongside SHIELD agent Jasper Sitwell. Somewhere near Latveria, Fury and Dum-Dum were briefing the *FF* on Dr. Doom's latest weaponry. Down in the jungles of South America, Captain America was fighting side-by-side with Agent 13, and somewhere in the midst of all this SHIELD fringe-activity, Fury's agents were blazing into action in the pages of *Strange Tales*. It got to be very incestuous indeed.

Three-and-one-half "SHIELD" stories drawn by Jack Kirby would not warrant an article of this depth. What does, is the immeasurable impact that Fury's federation had on Jack and Stan's 1960s Marvel Universe; and to root out the origins of SHIELD, one must go back to the unique character with whom it all began.

A CONFLICT OF CREATION

The genesis of Nick Fury's origin is, like that of the *FF*'s, clouded by contrasting claims. In the late 1980s Marvel commissioned author Les Daniels to produce a lavish, oversized book called *Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics*.

In it, Stan Lee claims that *Sgt. Fury*



(next page, top) One month before SHIELD's debut in *Strange Tales* #135 (Aug. 1965), readers got their first glimpse of the "new" Fury (by Don Heck) in *Avengers* #18 (July 1965).

(next page, bottom) Fury faces off with Reed Richards in *Sgt. Fury* #3 (Sept. 1963), and again "25 years later" in *Fantastic Four* #84 (March 1969).

(below) The character that started it all, Sgt. Nick Fury.

(background) Excerpts from *Strange Tales* letter column, complaining about the declining quality of the Human Torch feature.

All characters this article TM & ©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.

and his *Howling Commandos* was born out of a bet between himself and his uncle, publisher Martin Goodman. In late 1962, Lee told his skeptical uncle that Marvel's newfound success could be attributed to the fact that he and Jack Kirby had created a new comics style which would work in any genre. To prove it, Stan bet they could score a hit even with an outdated war theme and a "horrible title." Thus, says Stan, *Sgt. Fury* was born. Jack Kirby, who also contributed to the Daniels book, never went on record to deny this claim; however, in *TJKC* #25 John Severin made the following statement: "Jack wanted to know if I'd be interested in syndication. He said we could be partners on a script idea he had. The story would be set in Europe during WWII; the hero would be a tough, cigar-smoking Sergeant with a squad of odd-ball G.I.s—sort of an adult *Boy Commandos*."

Unlike the dispute over the *FF*'s origin, which had Lee and Kirby contradicting each other's claim of authorship, this is a case where a totally neutral third party (Severin) recalls a conversation that he clearly remembers having with Kirby; furthermore, if you check the cover of *Boy's Ranch* #1 (in *TJKC* #25) you'll find the exclamation "WAHOO!" above the masthead (this of course, became the Howler's ferocious battle-cry some thirteen years later). You be the judge.

PASSING THE TORCH

Whether *Sgt. Fury* was born out of Kirby's fertile imagination or born out of a bet between Stan and his uncle is uncertain; what we do know is that "Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD" was born out of necessity. By mid-1965, the Marvel publication *Strange Tales* was clearly in trouble. Dr. Strange, who starred in the back-up strip, was alive and well; Marvel's "Master of the Mystic Arts"

was an odd and wondrous Lee-Ditko character

who traveled through

weird dimensions and even the

realm of sleep to battle dark, evil lords like

Nightmare and The Dread Dormammu. Ditko's hallucinatory landscapes stole the show, and the stories, although short, were tightly plotted, eerie and downright disturbing. It was arguably Marvel's most underrated strip. On the other hand, "The Human Torch" series, which claimed the lion's share of the magazine, had taken a decidedly downward spiral. Right from the start, even with Jack and Stan at the helm, the book seemed like (and was) a second-rate *FF* spin-off.

The Torch and his sister Sue were inexplicably disconnected from the Marvel Universe continuity. They lived a quiet suburban life (in Glendale) apart from Reed and Ben, and maintained secret identities, even though they were known to the world in the *Fantastic Four*. It made no sense. The stories consisted of colorless battles with one-dimensional foes such as Plant-Man, The Beetle, and (my favorite) Paste-Pot Pete. By today's standards, these villains would be imbecilic; back then, they were just plain bad. [Note: To Kirby's credit, he was able to take the worst of the lot, "Paste-Pot Pete," give him a complete make-over, and voilà, The Trapster, a respectable antagonist, was born.]

In any event, even the indefatigable Lee and Kirby, who were enjoying a hot streak unparalleled in

comics history, could barely concoct any worthwhile "Human Torch" stories. Of the ten issues they collaborated on (along with Larry Lieber) only a few, in my opinion, were noteworthy (see *ST Annual* #2, *ST* #114 and *ST* #120). Predictably, as

PIONAGE IN A LENGTHY DISSERTATION

soon as Kirby pulled out, the series sank like a stone; the stories were dully written (by Stan) and weakly drawn by a succession of lesser artists. In an effort to boost sagging sales, the Thing was brought in as a regular (*ST* #123) and the Beatles were brought in as guest-stars (*ST* #130) but neither could help. In the midst of Marvel's potent, revolutionary new comic titles, "The Human Torch" series (along with "Giant-Man" in *Tales to Astonish*) stood out like a sore thumb. Marvelites everywhere were writing to say how bad the book had become, and the axe was about to fall.



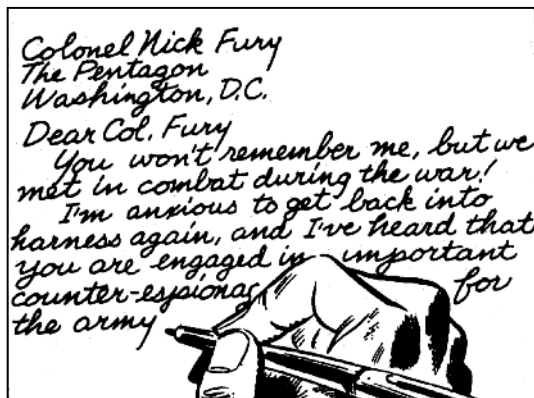
FURY COMES OF AGE: THE FF CONNECTION

Around the same time that *Strange Tales* readers were writing to decry "The Human Torch" series, Marvel was getting mail from Sgt. Fury fans asking what had become of Colonel Nick Fury after his appearance in *FF* #21 (above). At this point, it's easy to imagine a light bulb flashing on in Stan's head; but before the story gets ahead of itself, let's rewind to mid-1963: Stan Lee had always been fond of the old Atlas/Timely super-heroes; he loved bringing them back to the present day (mainly to get some more mileage out of them) and why not? Linking Marvel's past and present was one more way of showing that the Marvel super-heroes all co-existed in one consistent and unified "Marvel Universe." They'd already brought back 1940s stalwarts like Sub-Mariner, The Human Torch and Captain America, so why not resurrect their own WWII-era hero, the crusty, cigar-chomping Nick Fury? It didn't take long; when *Sgt.*

Fury and his *Howling Commandos* was only four issues old, a modern-day Nick Fury made his debut in *FF* #21 as a Colonel in the C.I.A. The "Official History of the Marvel Universe" claims that Fury was promoted from Sergeant to Second Lieutenant in Korea, and was later booted up to Colonel after spying for France in Vietnam in the 1950s. [Note: None of this pseudo-biographical information was conceived by Kirby himself.] The story didn't amount to much; Fury teams up with the FF (having met Reed in *Sgt. Fury* #3) to defeat a hooded rabble-rouser called the Hate Monger, who turned out to be Adolf Hitler. This issue was basically a stepping stone used by Kirby and Lee to move Fury into a more topical context; however, at this juncture (cover date December 1963) it's unlikely the writers knew what to do with the Colonel, and so for the next twenty months, the modern day Nick Fury would lie fallow.

THE AVENGERS CONNECTION

Fast forward to early 1965: At some point after *FF* #21, Jack and Stan developed the concept of Nick Fury as a super-spy, and in a very canny move they laid the groundwork for "Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD" in two separate issues of *The Avengers* which pre-dated SHIELD's debut in *Strange Tales* #135. First, in *Avengers* #15 (April 1965) Captain America wrote an "important letter" to Col. Nick Fury (whom he'd first met in *Sgt. Fury* #13); it read:



Like most of Marvel's 1960s angst-ridden characters (whom the *New York Herald-Tribune* dubbed "super-heroes with super-problems") Cap had been battling some considerable demons; he blamed himself for Bucky's death, and considered himself a "frustrated anachronism," stuck in a world where he didn't belong. Besides this, Cap had no income;

he loathed living in Avengers HQ with Tony Stark footing the bills (hey, isn't that what they call a "perk"?) and he sought to gain independence by moonlighting for Fury. Three months later in *Avengers* #18 (July 1965) Cap refers to the letter he'd written to Fury, and for the first time ever, we see the "new" Nick Fury, dressed incongruously in a suit and tie, wearing an eyepatch (later we'd learn that in World War II, a grenade blast damaged the optic nerve in his left eye,

which resulted in a gradual loss of vision, as seen in *Sgt. Fury* #27). The next issue of *The Avengers* (#19 Aug. 1965) would coincide with the premiere of

SHIELD, and it featured yet another SHIELD subplot. All in all, it was a very clever and subliminal way to usher SHIELD in

through the back door; more important, it would sow the seeds of an ever-evolving Avengers/Cap/SHIELD triangulation that would soon spill over into other Marvel titles as well; and finally, the stage was set for the coming of SHIELD.

THE MAN FROM S.H.I.E.L.D.!

"I was intrigued by the idea of having two magazines featuring Nick Fury, one dealing with his exploits during World War II and the other bringing him up to the present—but doing what?"—Stan Lee.

The answer came from television, where *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* had premiered the previous Fall. The hit TV series featuring Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin was capitalizing on the immense popularity of Ian Fleming's



© respective copyright holder.

James Bond novels and the movies based on them, which starred Sean Connery as Agent 007. In 1965, the entire western world seemed infatuated with



© United Artists.

espionage, and Bond's imitators were everywhere: *Our Man Flint*, *Secret Agent*, *The Wild, Wild West* and *The Saint* were just a few; *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* however, seems to be the premise which Jack and Stan patterned SHIELD after. Both agencies had

acronymic names, which (unlike the F.B.I. or C.I.A.) just happened to spell a tangible noun. U.N.C.L.E. meant United Network Command for Law Enforcement, and S.H.I.E.L.D. stood for Supreme Headquarters International Espionage Law-enforcement Division (well, except for "enforcement" it almost worked). Both agencies assigned numbers to their operatives (Napoleon was number 11, Sharon Carter was Agent 13) and both teams were engaged in perpetual combat against a vast, international terrorism cabal. U.N.C.L.E. battled T.H.R.U.S.H. (Technological Hierarchy for the Removal of Undesirables and the Subjugation of Humanity) while SHIELD was pitted against a fearsome fascist enclave known as HYDRA, which mercifully, wasn't



ing to be a lousy mag. stories. The old Torch strip which I liked. Issues like #

SIMON SAYS

A brief encounter with Kirby's partner and Captain America's dad, by Adam McGovern

Joe Simon isn't just the man acknowledged by many as the creator of Captain America—he's one of the George Washingtons of the whole comics industry. Starting out as one-half of the legendary Simon & Kirby team with this magazine's namesake, Simon collaborated in the creation, art and writing of some of the most successful and enduring characters and genres in the medium's history. These included Cap, the wartime number-one-seller *Boy Commandos*, and the entire "kid gang," horror comics, and romance comics forms—not to mention comics' first character revamps, of Manhunter and Sandman, a practice which led to renowned later reinventions of those same series by other hands, and became a cornerstone of the industry. After an amicable mid-century split, Simon solo went on to create the unacknowledged prototype for Spider-Man, and hippie-era heroes—such as Brother Power, the Geek and Prez, America's First Teen President—which remain touchstones of contemporary comics' eccentric indie spirit.

Simon has soldiered on as a comics historian and standard-bearer for creators' rights, culminating in his greatest real-life battle: a dispute to wrest the copyright for Captain America from Marvel Comics. The basic claim is that, in the murky prehistory of modern-day copyright law and the infancy of the comics industry, Simon only leased the rights for the character to a company he didn't work for as anything other than an outside contractor. In a similar suit by Blade creator Marv Wolfman, Marvel won with about as few producible documents as it's got in Simon's case, but the might of a corporate giant isn't the only uphill struggle Simon faces—there's also the ambivalence of many fans, who



(top right) A recent photo of Joe Simon.

(above) Early 1980s Captain America sketch, apparently inked with marker.

Captain America, Baron Zemo, Red Skull TM & ©2002 Marvel Characters, Inc.

(right) In 1979, at the request of fan Peter L. Myer (who was trying to track down all the unpublished/unfinished *Boy Explorers* stories), Jack drew this cover, which is very reminiscent of the cover of *Star Spangled Comics* #61 (Oct. 1946, shown above).

Boy Explorers ©2002 Joe Simon & Jack Kirby.
Star Spangled Comics, Newsboy Legion, Guardian TM & ©2002 DC Comics.

have long understood the Captain to be a Simon & Kirby co-creation.

Nonetheless, the fight rages on, through tragedies both memorial and current. Either Simon or Marvel was expected to recapture the copyright by the auspicious date of December 7, 2001, but at press time the legal action remained unsettled—and clearly, the unspeakable events of September 11 weakened neither side's resolve in this squabble over an American icon; indeed, Simon sees his cause in the light of the liberties at stake. When I asked what kind of hero he would envision to embody the times we live in, after his resonant run of wartime



EXTRA!

BIG GAME HUNTER!

Here's a previously unknown 1950s concept for a book called *Big Game Hunter*. As you can see from the art on the next three pages, each issue would feature realistic adventures with well-researched information and tips on dealing with wildlife. This is just one of numerous unrealized projects Jack was involved with in the 1950s; as if his published page count wasn't staggering enough, the existence of these types of previously unseen books makes his life's output even more phenomenal.

Professional hunters have no respect for a man who will shoot a gorilla. A gorilla has never been known to hurt a human unless the poor beast has been badgered or frightened beyond endurance. It's true that his howl is nerve shattering. And his habit of beating his chest, grimacing and threatening an intruder is frightening. When he tears up a small tree by the roots and makes for you, the chances are that you can stand your ground without fear of harm. IF YOU HAVEN'T PESTERED THE GORILLA, HE WILL SLOW TO A STOP, TEAR THE TREE TO PIECES WITH HIS TEETH AND TURN WAY GRUMBLING AT YOU OVER HIS SHOULDER. (BUT IF YOU WOUND HIM OR RETURN HIS THREATS, HE'LL CRUSH YOU TO A PULP AGAINST HIS CHEST)

THE MAN WHO TALKED BACK TO GORILLAS

HE'S COMING FOR US!

DON'T SHOOT, YOU FOOL!

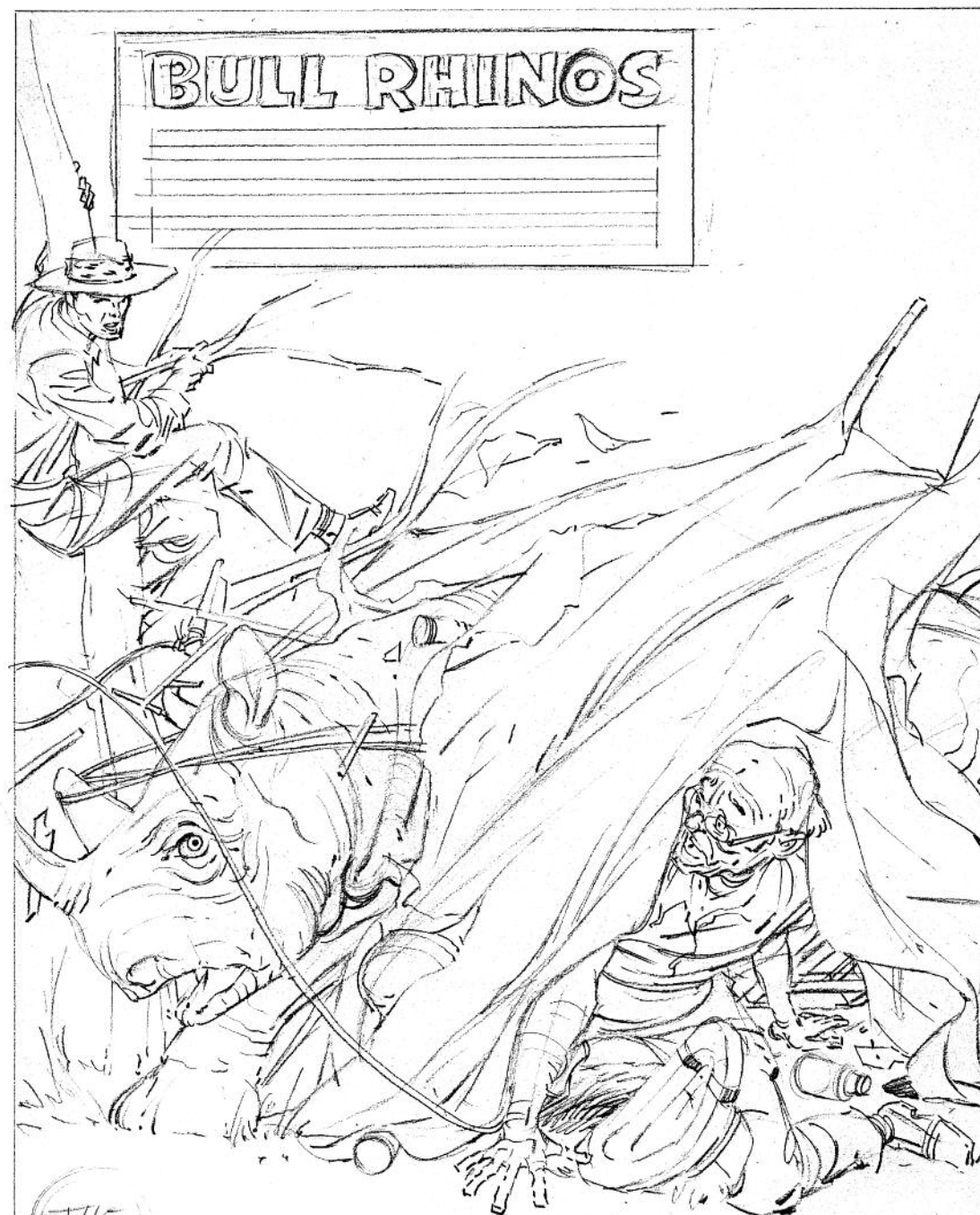


SUBJECT: JETINOCEROS

---HIS SENSE OF SMELL IS VERY ACUTE. HE BECOMES FRIGHTENED AND SAVAGE WHEN THE HUNTER STANDS BETWEEN HIM AND HIS WATER HOLE. HE WILL ALSO CHARGE WHEN HE'S WOUNDED.

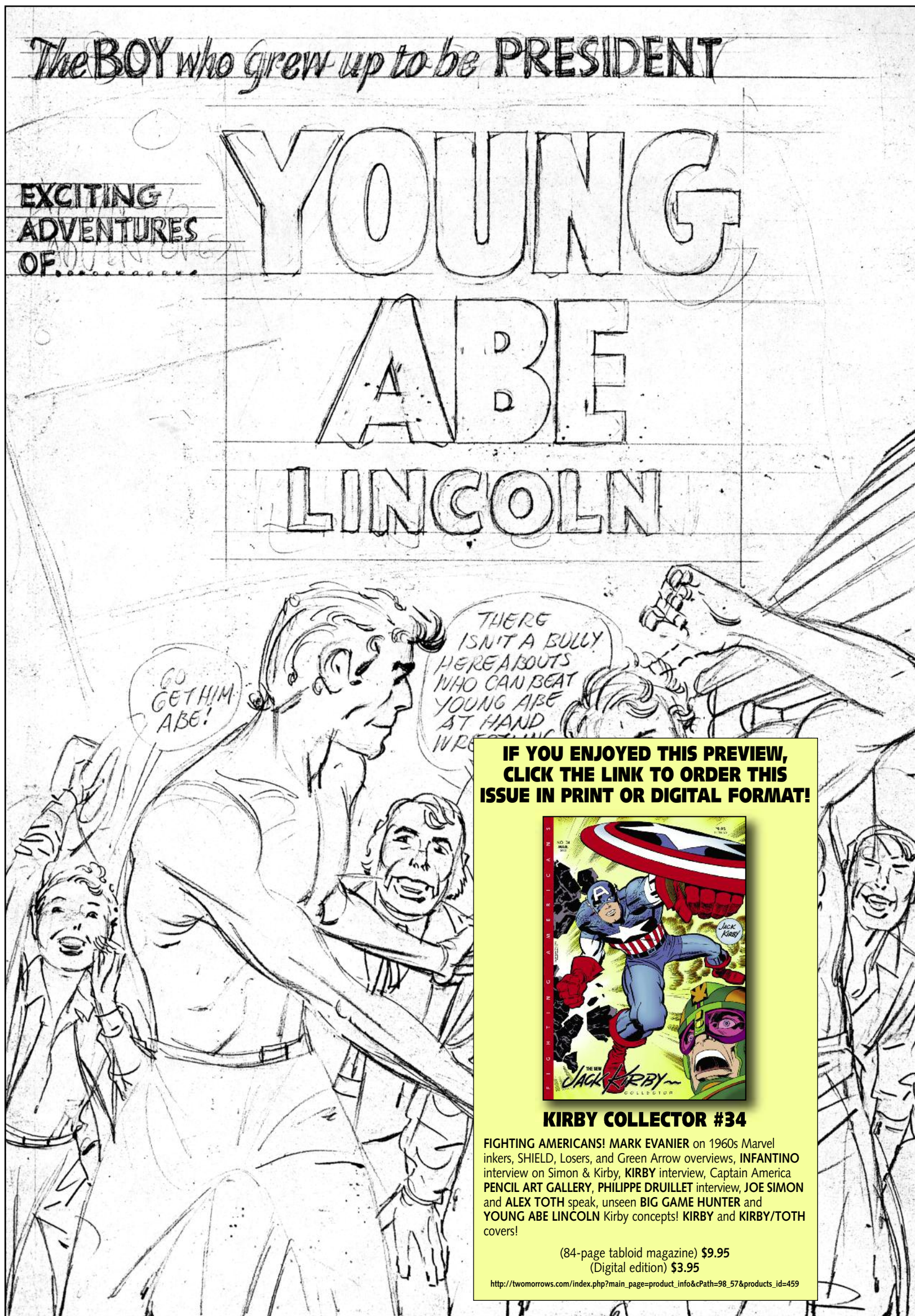
A SKILLED HUNTER KNOWS THAT THE RHINO IS PRACTICALLY BLIND AND CAN EASILY SIDESTEP HIS CHARGE.

BULL RHINOS



THE PROFESSOR ENTERTAINS
A TRUE STORY OF AFRICAN ADVENTURE

To wrap up the “fighting Americans” issue, I felt it appropriate to end with this never-before published cover for a *Young Abe Lincoln* comic, circa the 1950s. In these days of dark, supposedly “gritty” and “adult” comics, this unused 1950s concept seemed like just the thing we’re missing: a series about someone we can actually look up to. It probably wouldn’t stand a chance in today’s comics market, but if anyone could’ve made it an interesting book, Kirby was the guy.



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