



A SPECIAL
DOUBLE-SIZE
THEME ISSUE
FEATURING
**THE FOURTH
WORLD!**

JACK'S
**ORIGINAL ENDING
FOR NEW GODS!**

REAL REASONS
**WHY DC
CANCELLED IT!**

INTERVIEWS WITH:
**MARK EVANIER
STEVE SHERMAN
& MIKE ROYER**

MISTER MIRACLE'S
FEMALE FURIES

A LOOK AT THE
**1971 NEW GODS
PORTFOLIO**

THE
HUNGER DOGS
YOU NEVER SAW

RARE AND
UNPUBLISHED ART
FROM THE SERIES,
INCLUDING JACK'S
PENCILS *BEFORE*
THEY WERE INKED

FAN MEMORIES,
ANALYSIS, AND *MUCH
MORE!!*

FULLY
AUTHORIZED
BY THE
KIRBY
ESTATE

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

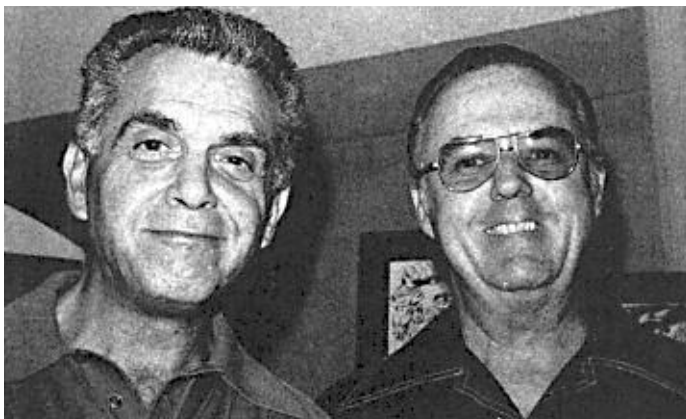
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Jack with Joe Sinnott at their first face-to-face meeting during the 1975 Mighty Marvel Comics Convention in New York. (photo by Sam Maronie)

THE TWO BIG QUESTIONS...

Two questions have been eating away at me since the early 1970s. And they both revolve around what I think was (conceptually at least) Jack's greatest achievement in comics.

As most of you know, Jack left Marvel for DC in 1970, and immediately created an incredible tale that wove through a series of books. It was unlike anything seen in comics up to that time.

New Gods. Forever People. Mister Miracle. And most unlikely of all, *Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen!* Together, the series came to be known as the Fourth World (you'll find out why in this issue). And as this tightly woven tapestry began to unfold, readers everywhere were amazed at what Jack could do when given the creative freedom to fully explore his imagination.

But the freedom didn't last long. DC management demanded more control over the books, and Jack was forced to modify his stories. Soon Jack had left *Jimmy Olsen*; *New Gods* and *Forever People* were canceled; and *Mister Miracle* no longer adhered to its Fourth World roots. DC claimed it was due to low sales, but rumors of other reasons abounded. Regardless, the war between New Genesis and Apokolips stayed unresolved, and the final battle between Orion and Darkseid in the slums of Armagetto was never fought.

Time passed, and new management took over at DC. Jack was invited back to produce the *Hunger Dogs* Graphic Novel in the early 1980s, supposedly to conclude the series. But as you'll see in this issue, *Hunger Dogs* is totally unlike what Jack originally had planned, and it left many readers unsatisfied.

Which brings me to the two big questions:

- 1) Why did DC *really* cancel the series?
- 2) How did Jack originally plan to end it?

When I started *TJKC*, I set out to get answers to these questions. You'll find the results of my search here, as well as fan recollections and analysis of the series. And you'll also get some insights into the behind-the-scenes workings of the Fourth World through Part 2 of our interview with inker Mike Royer, and new interviews with Mark Evanier and Steve Sherman, Jack's assistants in the early 1970s. Our thanks to all of these gentlemen for sharing their time with me for this issue.

I approached this issue with the assumption that you're already familiar with the Fourth World books. It would take far more space than we've got here to fully explore all the concepts and characters

Jack put into the series. Even by making this a double-size issue (plus four extra pages!), we've really only scratched the surface. Perhaps we'll examine each of the four books separately in future theme issues. My apologies to those readers who sent in submissions for this issue but don't see them here. Your efforts are greatly appreciated, but this issue filled up fast. I'll try to run them in an upcoming issue.

For now, sit back and return with me to a time that was brimming with possibilities; a time when Jack's fertile imagination was turned loose on unsuspecting comics readers.

And let's get some answers to those two big questions!

Long live the King!

John
John Morrow, Editor

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(This issue's cover is a drawing Marty Greim commissioned Jack to do for his publication Comic Crusader in 1974. The inks are by Joe Sinnott, who never worked on the Fourth World books. Rumor has it Joe offered to ink one of the books, but DC turned him down, preferring instead to have Vince Colletta ink them all.)



As a teenager in the mid-1970s, I tried to produce my own ending to the Fourth World, using some pretty awful Kirby swipes. I finished a cover and two pages before I realized I could never do justice to it. (I only wish some of the other people who tried over the years would've had the same revelation!) But since I always wanted to see it published, here's the cover I created. Ahh, the advantages of being Editor...

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR #6

EDITED BY:
JOHN MORROW

DESIGN & PRODUCTION:
JOHN & PAMELA MORROW

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STEVE SHERMAN,
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JON WARREN,
& OF COURSE,
ROZ KIRBY.

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS:

JERRY BOYD,
ALLAN CHAO, JEFF CLEM,
BOB COSGROVE,
ROB DANIELS, SHEL DORF,
MARK EVANIER,
DAVID HAMILTON,
CHRIS HARPER,
CHARLES HATFIELD,
MICHAEL JACOT, JIM KORKIS,
RICHARD MARTINES,
MIKE ROYER, STEVE RUDE,
STEVE SHERMAN, CARL TAYLOR,
DANIEL TESTMOINGT,
GREG THEAKSTON,
KIRK TILANDER,
PETER VON SHOLLY,
ELAYNE WECHSLER-CHAPUT,
AND BRUCE ZICK.

(EACH RECEIVES ONE FREE ISSUE FOR THEIR EFFORTS!)

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KIRBY NEWS

KEEP SENDING LETTERS TO DC!

Keepp writing letters of encouragement to DC editor Bob Kahan, urging DC to publish their proposed *Jimmy Olsen*, *Challengers of the Unknown*, and Simon & Kirby *Sandman* reprints. His new address is DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

JACK KIRBY: A CELEBRATION

Mark Evanier reports that things are progressing nicely on *Jack Kirby: A Celebration*, the tribute book he and Frank Miller are co-producing. It's still too early to release a list of all the artists who will do their interpretations of Jack's characters, but practically every living Kirby collaborator will be represented. A few who never worked with Jack will also, including Al Feldstein and other EC artists. This artist's gallery will only account for part of the book - there'll be plenty of Kirby art as well. Stay tuned for more details.

THE COMPLETE KIRBY

Kitchen Sink has expressed interest in Greg Theakston's proposed Kirby reprint series, *The Complete Kirby*. But Greg still needs a few comics for this project. Subscriber Frank Johnson supplied Greg with *Famous Funnies* #75, and Greg also found *Blue Bolt* #7. He still needs *Blue Bolt* #4 & #9, *Famous Funnies* #80, and *Justice Traps The Guilty* #2. If you know where Greg can acquire these, call him at (404)424-5151.

SEND LETTERS TO MARVEL!

Keepp those letters going! As you know, Dr. Mark Miller originated the letter-writing campaign to get Marvel to give Jack co-credit for his creations. *TJKC* has helped get copies of the letter circulated throughout Canada, England, France, and other parts of Europe. Despite a recent positive response from Marvel, nothing has been done so far. Send letters to: Mr. Terry Stewart, Marvel Comics Co., 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.

PATIENCE, EVERYONE!

We know you're anxious to receive each new issue of *TJKC*, but give the Post Office time to deliver it! To keep costs down, we mail new issues by Third Class Bulk Mail, which can take up to three weeks to be delivered (although it usually doesn't take that long). Since *TJKC* ships at the beginning of the month, please don't call to say you haven't received it until the end of the month that it shipped. To my knowledge the Postal Service hasn't lost a single Third Class issue we've mailed to date (although they've taken their sweet time delivering some of them!).

Because of Bulk Mail sorting, zip codes with ten or more subscribers receive theirs first. So don't automatically assume yours is lost if a friend already has theirs. To speed up your delivery, get nine

friends in your zip code to subscribe! Or as an alternative, call your local Post Office and find out what your NINE-digit zip code is, and send it to us. I'm told it really makes a difference in delivery time.

HELP COMPILE THE KIRBY CHECKLIST

Our goal is to compile an accurate checklist of everything Jack ever had published (including reprints), and offer it as a separate at-cost publication. As a starting point, we're using the Kirby checklist from Blue Rose Press' *The Art Of Jack Kirby*. Already, we've received numerous lists of uncredited Kirby work, and we're incorporating them into one final, accurate checklist. So if you remember seeing an error, omission, or inaccuracy in the *AOJK* checklist, or if you've got an accurate list of your own to contribute, write us!

THE KIRBY EDUCATIONAL FUND

Don't forget that you can still make donations to the educational fund that was set up in Jack's name shortly after his death. Send your contributions to:

The Jack Kirby Educational Fund, Temple Etz Chaim, 1080 Janss Rd., Thousand Oaks, CA 91360.

TJKC IN COMIC STORES

We're proud to announce that *TJKC* is now carried in a number of comic shops nationwide. This has increased our print run, which allows us to add extra pages from time to time, like in this issue. If your local shop doesn't carry *TJKC*, show them a copy and give them our address. And look for our poster wherever comics are sold - it means you're dealing with a store who understands the importance of keeping Jack's memory alive throughout fandom.

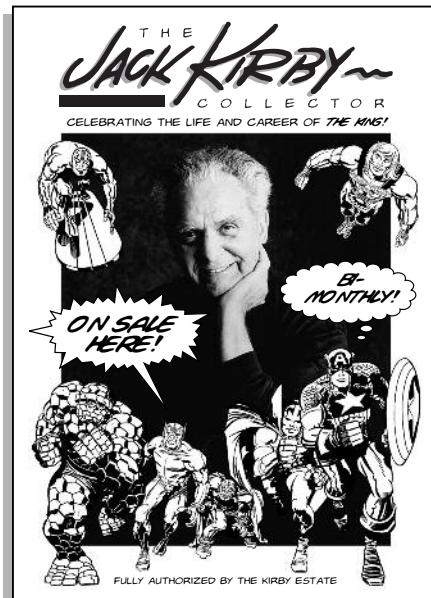
SEE YOU AT THE DALLAS AND SAN DIEGO CONS!

We'll tentatively be attending the San Diego Comic Con (July 27-30) and the Dallas Fantasy Fair (August 11-13). And we'd like to meet our subscribers! If plans materialize, we'll be putting on a display of unpublished Kirby art at each show, like the one we did at Heroes Con, June 16-18. Look for us - we'll be wearing t-shirts bearing the retail poster design you see above. Hope to see you there!

MORE THANKS!

Special thanks to Jon Warren, publisher of *Comic Source*, for helping spread the word about *TJKC*. If you've never seen *Comic Source*, check it out! It's a BIG monthly publication for true fans of comics, featuring great articles on all aspects of fandom. Plus, it lists hundreds of comics for sale from different sellers, in alphabetical order for easy searching. Subscriptions are \$23.45 from *Comic Source*, 2401 Broad St., Chattanooga, TN 37408, phone 615-265-5515.

Also, thanks to Ryan Dillman for again plugging *TJKC* in his review-zine *Alternate Entertainment* (not Alternative Entertainment, as I incorrectly stated in issue #4). For info on *Alternate Entertainment*, contact Ryan at 6144 E 00 NS, Greentown, IN 46936.



THE NEW GODS PORTFOLIO

Background information supplied by Allan Chao.

Darkseid (Jack utilized collage in the original. Notice how much less threatening he looks with ears.)



Orion



Lightray (note the mask, which only appeared intermittently in New Gods #2.)



Mantis



BUZZING IN THE BOOM TUBE WITH STEVE SHERMAN

Interviewed by John Morrow

(Steve Sherman, along with Mark Evanier, served as an assistant to Jack throughout the Fourth World series and beyond. I “spoke” with Steve on March 29, 1995 via computer on America Online.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: What was your earliest exposure to Jack’s work?

STEVE SHERMAN: My earliest recollection of a Jack Kirby comic has to be around 1959 and the first issue of *The Fly*.

TJKC: How did you meet Jack, and end up working for him?

SS: The short version is that sometime in the spring or summer of 1969, I, along with almost the entire Los Angeles Comic Club went to work for Marvelmania International. Jack and his family had just moved to Southern California and settled in Orange County. One afternoon, a group of us went to visit, since Jack had single-handedly done most of the artwork for the catalog and posters that were being hawked by Marvelmania.

After that visit, Mark and I kept in touch with Jack and it must have been a few weeks or a month later when Jack told us that he was leaving Marvel for DC. He said that he would be driving up to Los Angeles and that he’d come by the Marvelmania offices to pick up some artwork that belonged to him. I think we all went out to lunch and Jack just sort of asked Mark and myself if we would be interested in working with him on some projects. We were both ready to leave Marvelmania so it worked out. I left first and Mark followed as soon as he had finished the issue of *Marvelmania Magazine* that he was working on.

TJKC: Was it weird having Jack Kirby ask you to work for him?

SS: Yes and no. We had been working at Marvelmania for a while, so having been immersed in dealing with Jack and Stan and the other artists, it just seemed like a natural progression.

TJKC: Describe a typical work session with Jack.

SS: There really wasn’t a typical work session since Jack was running a pretty informal operation. First of all, he had no budget. He was

being paid by the book to write, pencil and edit. Any extras would have to come from the editing fee he received. When Mark and I first started, we would usually drive out on Sunday afternoon to Jack’s house in Thousand Oaks. Jack would show us what he was working on, or we would go over ideas for various new things that Jack wanted to do. Then during the week, Mark and I would get together at Mark’s house and come up with either outlines or character ideas and the following Sunday spring them on Jack. Later, we’d sometimes come out during the week as things got busier.

TJKC: It sounds like you both had some creative input from the start.

SS: Only from the standpoint of Jack showing us what he was doing, and asking our opinion.

TJKC: Did he use your opinions generally?

SS: Sometimes. He was very gracious about listening to any ideas we

had. If he felt that they were good, he incorporated them into stories.

TJKC: What are examples of things you contributed?

SS: Mostly we came up with things for *Jimmy Olsen*. This was because Jack had more leeway in the direction of the stories. The other books he pretty much had plotted in his head. I remember Mark and I suggested the Loch Ness story. We were all fans of Laurel and Hardy and Jack got a kick out of drawing Jimmy Finlayson.

TJKC: Where did the term “Fourth World” come from?

SS: As far as I can recall, and this is 20 years ago, the term “Third World” was just becoming a catch phrase in the media. Jack loved words and he loved coming up with punchy names or crazy alliterations. Fourth World was a unique and familiar sounding term to describe this new world that he was creating.

TJKC: I’ve heard it came from a typo on one of the covers...

SS: Well, I don’t think so. Jack was using the term before the comics were even printed.



Jack's pencils for the cover of Jimmy Olsen #144, before inking by Neal Adams.

A BRUSH WITH MIKE ROYER – PART 2

Interviewed by John Morrow

(Here's the conclusion to our interview with Mike, which began in #4.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: How did Vince Colletta get assigned to ink the DC books?

MIKE ROYER: Basically, Infantino wanted hands-on control and Colletta and his, as I've been told, staff of "wrists" who worked for him were right there where Carmine could control the books. Colletta did it for a price which was less than the going rate, and they got what they paid for.

TJKC: What happened that allowed the switch from Colletta to you?

MR: I don't really know how Jack got his way. I suspect Steve and Mark kept showing Jack all the stuff Vince and his crew were leaving out. So I assume, with their encouragement to scream bloody murder, that's exactly what Jack did.

TJKC: What do you remember about DC pulling the plug on the Fourth World books?

MR: First, let me say that I don't think Jack got a fair shake. I think there was an audience for Jack's books that the people at DC and Marvel chased away. At the time, all I can remember is Jack saying, "Well, we're not doing that anymore, we're doing something else." I don't remember any sort of period of mourning or any exasperation. It's only thanks to Mark Evanier and the stuff he's written in the last year or so that I realize how many promises were made to Jack and were broken. Everything Jack did, he seemed to be so enthused about it. It's like, "I might've loved doing *New Gods*, but now we're doing *The Demon*." Even though *2001*, *Machine Man* and *Devil Dinosaur* weren't books that I personally cared about, Jack still seemed to attack them with the same kind of artistic integrity and verve and enthusiasm and Freudian symbolism for power that he did with everything.

TJKC: Did you get to keep some of Jack's originals through this whole inking period at DC? Marvel?

MR: Not exactly... Jack's originals were Jack's originals. They all went back to him. However, once he gave me one of the three *Captain Americas* I inked for him, and like a fool I traded it to Richard Kyle! (laughter) As much as I loved Jack's work, I didn't collect *me*. Now twenty years later, I look at those pages and it's not me anymore. And I go, "God, I'd like to have those originals."

He gave me the *Captain America*, and later a *Sandman*, and the first half of *What If?* #11. I inked the first half, which was the dull half, and because Jack had something else he wanted me to work on, and at my recommendation, Bill Wray got to ink the other half with all the action in it. (laughter)

You know, Roz and I still laugh about the time when I took over the inking on Jack's books, how many people wrote in and complained because I had replaced Colletta. (laughter) But then again, they'd never seen *Kirby* before.

TJKC: It probably scared them!

MR: Maybe they didn't know what the hell it was. Although, for a time I really liked Joe Sinnott's inking, even if he really slicked Jack up and made things awful pretty. But I wonder what the hell I did that makes some people really not like me.

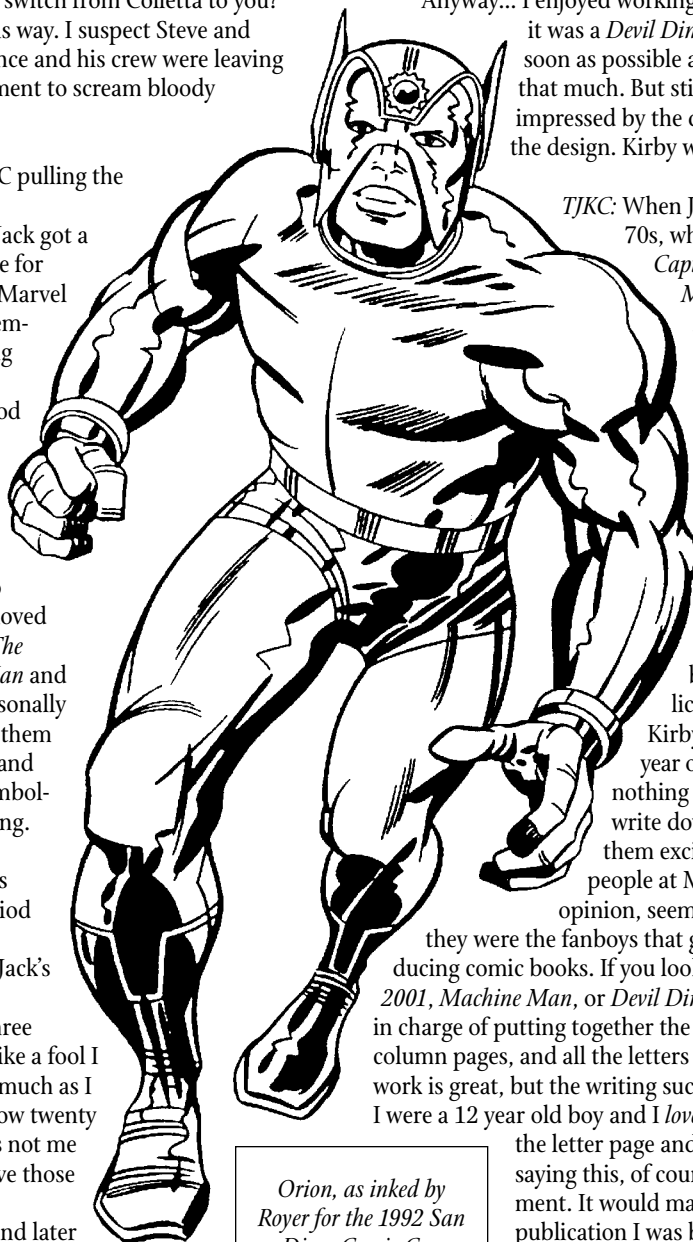
Anyway... I enjoyed working on all the Kirby comics, even when it was a *Devil Dinosaur* that I needed to get done as soon as possible and I didn't even care for the story that much. But still with every panel, I could be impressed by the dynamics of it, and the thinking and the design. Kirby was one hell of a designer.

TJKC: When Jack went back to Marvel in the mid-70s, why weren't you assigned to ink *Captain America*?

MR: They wanted Marvel people to ink the books. I guess that's when I continued doing stuff at DC, inking Chic Stone *Kamandis*, etc...

TJKC: What are your feelings about Jack's treatment at Marvel in the 70s?

MR: About 12 years ago, I was on a comics panel sitting right next to guys like Kanigher, Roy Thomas, John Buscema, who had agreed with me privately before the panel began but didn't back me up publicly. My viewpoint was that what Jack Kirby was doing was comic books for 12 year old boys, and that there was absolutely nothing wrong with that... You didn't have to write down to your audience, you just gave them exciting adventure stories. All of the people at Marvel Comics at the time, in my opinion, seemed to want to justify the fact that they were the fanboys that grew up and were now the ones producing comic books. If you looked at any of the Kirby comics like *2001*, *Machine Man*, or *Devil Dinosaur*, the "boys" in New York were in charge of putting together the letter columns. I read these letter column pages, and all the letters in essence were saying, "Oh, the art-work is great, but the writing sucks." And I voiced the opinion that if I were a 12 year old boy and I *loved* this comic book, and then read the letter page and all of my comic-buying peers were saying this, of course I would question my own judgment. It would make me question the validity of the publication I was buying, and question my own taste. A 12 year old is subject to "peer pressure" from all arenas. I was booed by the audience because I espoused the opinion that all of these fanboys at Marvel were sabotaging Jack, because they all felt their own "writing" would fix (re: save) Jack's books from declining sales. I feel this editorial slant



Orion, as inked by Royer for the 1992 San Diego Comic Con program book.



The self-portrait on the indicia page of *Hunger Dogs* is Greg Theakston's inked version of a pencil drawing Jack gave him as a wedding present.

THE HUNGER DOGS YOU NEVER SAW

by John Morrow

If you thought DC finally let Jack wrap up his Fourth World epic in the 1980s, think again. The 1985 *Hunger Dogs* Graphic Novel and Jack's new "conclusion" in the 1984 *New Gods* Reprint #6 bear little resemblance to the story he started out to tell when DC made the offer. Here's my attempt to piece together the chain of events, based on information supplied by Roz Kirby, Mike Royer, Mark Evanier, Greg Theakston, and my own research.

IT STARTED AS A STANDARD COMIC

Hunger Dogs started as a 24-page standard-size comic story called "On The Road To Armagetto" that would wrap-up *New Gods*. After a six-issue series reprinting *New Gods* #1-11, the plan called for the second half of the sixth issue to be Jack's new conclusion. After an initial meeting with DC about the story, Jack wrote and penciled the

pages. If Mike Royer's memory is correct, the story ended with both Orion and Darkseid dead, and Esak representing hope for the next generation. Metron may have also made an appearance at the end.

NOT WHAT DC HAD IN MIND

When Jack showed DC the pencils, it wasn't what they were expecting. Perhaps it wasn't the superhero slugfest they wanted, with Darkseid and Orion in direct combat. More likely, it killed off characters that DC had merchandising plans for. Whatever the reason, DC felt it wasn't publishable.

Plans were made to change the ending, and to have Jack do a separate Graphic Novel to follow the comic story (see the blurb on the Royer inks on page 14 of this issue). Why they added the Graphic Novel is unclear; maybe they wanted to give Jack a little more space to work with, or as Greg Theakston speculates, perhaps DC wanted to make use of rejected pages from the original ending. Regardless, Jack reworked the pages and made copy changes, then sent the revised pencils to Mike Royer for inking.

To get an idea of the revised story at this stage, isolate pages 12-18 & 31-46 of *Hunger Dogs*. Rearrange them into the following order: 31-33, 12, 34-37, 13-18, 38-46. Although some of these pages are altered from Jack's original story, this order makes more sense than the published version, and approximates Jack's original sequence of events. Also, this utilizes all 23 published pages with Royer inks.

DC also decided to include "Himon" from *Mister Miracle* #9 in the reprint series since Himon figured into Jack's story. This caused Reprint #6 to go from 48-pages to 72-pages.

STILL MORE CHANGES

DC was still unsatisfied with the revised comic story, and an adversarial situation arose because they wanted to have someone rewrite it for Jack. To diffuse the situation, Joe Orlando was assigned as the new editor.

DC ended up rearranging the pages of Jack's revised story, making some copy changes, and moving it all into the Graphic Novel. They also abandoned the "Himon" reprint, leaving a 50-page hole in Reprint #6. In the midst of drawing new pages to fill



TO AND FROM THE SOURCE: MARK EVANIER

Interviewed by John Morrow

(Mark Evanier, along with Steve Sherman, served as an assistant to Jack throughout the Fourth World series and beyond. I spoke with Mark on April 6 and May 30, 1995 by telephone to conduct this interview.)

THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR: What was your earliest exposure to Jack's work?

MARK EVANIER: Oh boy. I think probably Green Arrow in *Adventure Comics*, or *Challengers of the Unknown*. I remember I started buying *Fantastic Four* around number 10 or 12. I knew who he was by then, I knew that style. But I didn't really become a fan of Jack's until I really got into the Marvel stuff.

TJKC: Why did DC *really* cancel the Fourth World books? Was it due to bad sales?

E: That's what they said at the time, that's what the former publisher still says. For years, I'd heard his successors at DC say that Jack's Fourth World books were among many that they felt should have not been cancelled, that sales did not warrant it and you have to expect some new books to take a while to catch on. For the Kirby tribute book we're putting together, Paul Levitz, who is now the publisher, specifically dug into the DC files, looked up the numbers, and gave me a quote that they were mid-range books. They were selling better than some books that were continued, according to Paul. So everyone can believe whatever they want.

You know, someone pointed out a couple of things to me the other day which are not irrelevant to this discussion. One is that DC was going through a bad period at the time. Almost every new book they introduced lasted five or six issues and some of them were very good comics. There has been the insinuation that, if *New Gods* didn't sell at a certain level, there was something wrong with the content of the book, that Jack somehow did something wrong. Comic book history is filled with books that sold poorly but later caught on big. *Conan* is one example. The first run of the *Hulk* only lasted six issues. *X-Men* was cancelled at one point. So even if Jack's epic sold poorly, maybe it was the wrong time for it or maybe it should have been marketed differently... or something.

The first few issues of the Fourth World books, like everything at that time, were 15¢. Then there was a paper and printing increase and DC went up to 48-pages for a quarter and they stuck reprints in the back. I don't think that was a very commercial format and apparently, since they retreated from it, it hurt sales on the entire line, across the board, especially with Marvel undercutting them. So one could say that, right when *New Gods* might have been catching on, DC raised prices in an experiment that didn't work. *New Gods* may have been a casualty of that experiment.

TJKC: Do you think what Jack did near the end of the each book's run, to make them less complicated for new readers to follow, was good?

E: No, I don't. I think Jack got lost in the last couple of issues of most of the books. With all due respect, they aren't my favorite Kirby work. I don't think any of them are the equivalent of "The Pact" or "Terrible

Turpin" or "The Glory Boat." I see Jack's work on the Fourth World books as three separate periods. There were the early issues that laid groundwork and started to get folks hooked.

Then there was the middle period where Jack really got cooking and I thought the material was excellent and getting better — but the books were in that disastrous

25¢ format so maybe not enough people saw these. And then there was the late period when Jack was getting panicked about some sales reports on the middle period books and was maybe trying too hard to please a lot of folks who had suggestions on how to make the books more commercial.

TJKC: How much creative involvement did you have in the series?

E: Just this side of none. I made a few suggestions, Steve made a few, we talked Jack out of a couple of ideas, or at least into delaying a few of them. (laughter) Jack was very eager to prove he was a creator of new characters. My feeling was, one of the weaknesses of *New Gods* was just too

much personnel at once. He introduced too many things at once, he was rushing himself too much. Jack would sometimes tell us a whole storyline he had in mind, a brilliant concept, and then he'd cram it into three panels in the story so he could jump on to the next concept. He had enough ideas there for a hundred issues, and he was eager to get them all established. At no point was he ever thinking of the books as closing off at number eleven. I'm sure if he'd said in the first place, "These books will only run a dozen issues," he would've written them entirely differently. He was writing the first chapters in a 200-part story.

TJKC: So you think Jack hurt himself by being too conceptual?

E: I think that's the main problem with the books. I think Jack was trying to do an epic, and DC was viewing it as a bunch of bi-monthly comics. A lot of stuff that didn't go anywhere in some of those issues would've made a lot of sense if Jack had done another forty issues. Particularly the Black Racer and the Darkseid/Orion relationship would've made more sense if Jack had gotten deeper into it. It's like any good novel; a lot of things that happen in the third chapter don't pay off until the last chapter, and Jack never got to the last chapter.

To get back to your question of how much involvement I had, I corrected some spelling, suggested a couple of names for characters. I



Jack handed out copies of this pencil drawing to fans at conventions in the early 1970s.

think collectively I wrote about three pages out of all the issues, not counting *Jimmy Olsen*. Steve and I wrote a bunch of things for *Jimmy Olsen*. We did the letter pages, and gave Jack a little bit of input, some of which he followed, but most of it he didn't. I can't really claim any credit for anything that's good in those books. I think they're wonderful comics, and I think they're 99.99% Jack Kirby.

TJKC: Did Jack explain the entire Fourth World saga to you from the outset? Did he have a beginning, middle and end worked out?

E: He had a beginning, middle and end in his head, and he gave us pieces as he went along. He revised as he went along. Jack was a very instinctual creator. He created by instinct. If you asked him a question about why he did something in an issue, he'd figure out a perfectly logical answer then, but it wasn't necessarily something he'd articulated explicitly in his mind at the time. And he only gave you the reason if you forced him too. If you nailed him down and said, "How come Darkseid treats Desaad that way?" he'd give a perfectly valid 25-minute explanation, but that doesn't mean it was fully formed in his mind when he drew those sequences.

He viewed it as a novel that DC would someday repackage and print in a deluxe format, not necessarily completed. They might've left certain sections out for the final collection, like in European comics where they serialize a strip and collect it into a novel later. That's what Jack ultimately had in mind. He originally conceived of *New Gods* as a novel but DC put it into a more conventional comic book format. When he went to DC, one of the things he was interested in was doing new sizes and shapes of comics, new formats. He didn't want to just do the same kind he'd been doing, and that's all DC wanted out of him.

TJKC: Is this how *Spirit World* and *In The Days Of The Mob* came about?

E: Sort of. I really don't understand why those books came out the way they did, or why they came out at all. I don't think anyone was too happy with the format, including the distributors. As I said, Jack went to them with ideas for adult comics, large comics, magazine tabloid comics, everything. *Spirit World* and *In The Days of the Mob* were about as far as DC was willing to push the format at that time and Jack didn't like it. Jack never really liked black-and-white comics. He had something vastly more upscale in mind with color and slick ads and typeset lettering and more adult content and I guess DC didn't feel that format was worth pursuing at the time. I think they canceled the books and decided not to print the second issues before they even had any sales figures on #1.

TJKC: Did Jack view *New Gods* as the logical extension of his *Thor* mythology?

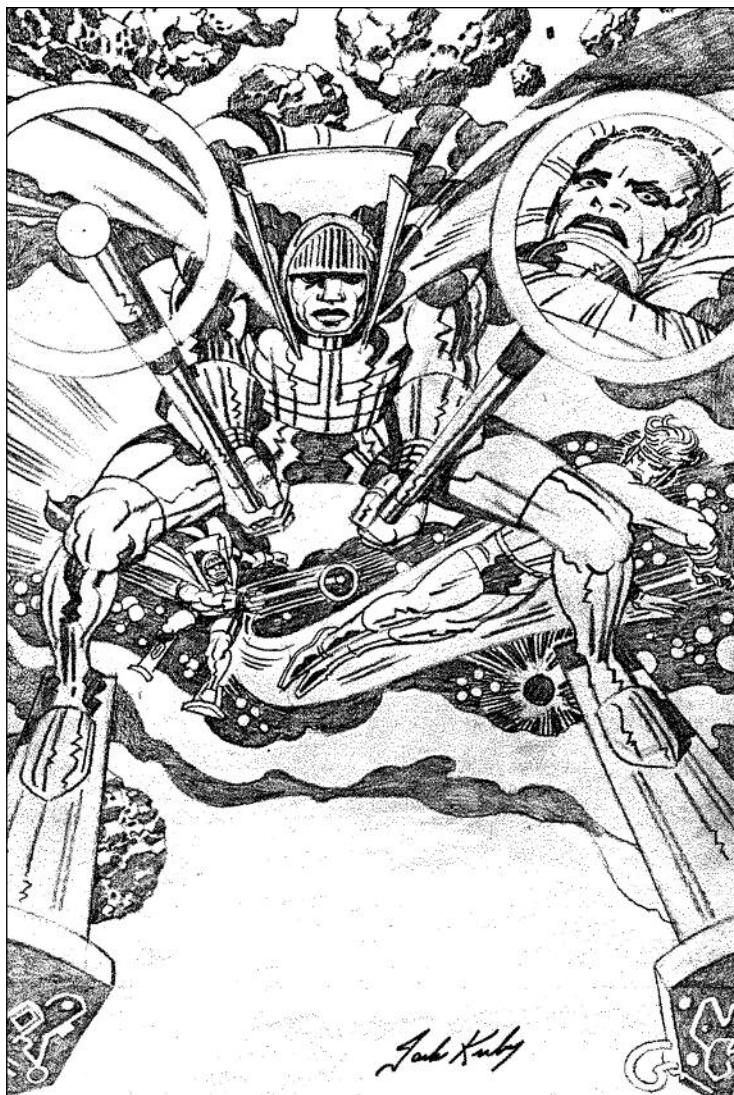
E: Yes. If you look over some of the later *Tales of Asgard* stories, you'll see references to young gods. There was a point when Jack was contemplating presenting the concept there as a spin-off comic but he was unwilling to give it away for both financial and creative reasons. In fact, at one point, I know one of the Marvel writers wanted to do a *New Gods* imitation that would have evolved out of those *Tales of Asgard* stories.

TJKC: Which of the Fourth World books was your favorite?

E: I don't think I had a favorite. I don't think I ever viewed them as separate books. If you put a howitzer to my head, I'd probably say a couple of *New Gods* issues; "The Glory Boat," "Terrible Turpin," and

"The Pact" were some specific stories I liked. On the other hand, *New Gods* was the most frustrating book because it was the most overpopulated, and characters disappeared in it.

To give you an example, Jack had this whole concept developed for the *Black Racer*. Well, *New Gods* #3 was too soon for it. In #3, we still hadn't figured out who Metron and Orion and Lightray were. I remember being at Jack's house and he told Steve and myself this whole story about the *Black Racer*, and I said, "Gee Jack, that's a great story, but why don't you hold off and give us three or four more issues of Orion, Lightray and Metron before you put the *Black Racer* in." And I thought I'd talked Jack into it. When Steve and I left that day, Jack was determined not to put the *Black Racer* in for three or four more issues. We went back the following week and Jack had the first *Black Racer* story almost drawn! (laughter) He just felt compelled to do it. He couldn't help himself. I think in small part he was worried Marvel would beat him to it. Sketches of some of these characters were floating around and I think he was afraid he'd wake up one morning and the *Black Racer* or something similar would be in a Marvel comic.



A 1980s drawing of *The Black Racer*, a character Jack felt compelled to use.

TJKC: Where did the term "Fourth World" come from? I've heard it came from a typo on a cover...

E: That's my understanding. Len Wein, oddly enough, is the one who told me this. I had never heard the term until suddenly I discovered everyone was using it. It kind of snuck up on us. The fourth issues of *New Gods*, *Forever People* and *Mister Miracle* all say that, and I think it was intended to be that each comic is a world in itself, so here's the fourth world, the next issue will be the fifth world, the next the sixth world (laughter), but they only did that gimmick on the fourth issues.

TJKC: Steve said Jack was using the term before the comics were even printed.

E: That's possible. I'm not saying Steve's wrong, I just don't remember it. I looked up what the equivalent of a trilogy was with four books,

and it was a tetralogy. I was pushing that term in letter pages, and it never caught on.

TJKC: How did Jack work? Did he outline and thumbnail? Did he start at page 1 and work in sequence, or bounce around?

E: It was never sequential, he would just start drawing. He would do sequences. He would roughly know what a story was about when he started, but it could change completely by the time he got to the end. There were dozens of cases where Jack told us this wonderful story he was going to do in the next issue, and then sat down and did something completely different.

TJKC: Is that why some of the “next issue” blurbs in the letter columns weren’t accurate?

E: Correct. But Jack would start drawing with key sequences, and occasionally a sequence would be kept for another comic when he ended up with extra pages. If you notice, most of the cuts between scenes occur on page breaks. That’s a function of him juggling pages

back and forth and doing sequences out of order. Occasionally, if it cuts in the middle of a page, he’d erase half a page in order to start it there. He just basically worked it through, and the first page of the comic might be the last thing drawn, or the first thing drawn.

One of the duties Steve and I occasionally had was to look through the story and say, “Hey Jack, you’re short a page.” The Funky Flashman story in *Mister Miracle* #6 was short a page, and Jack said, “Figure out where to put something.” So I wrote the page where Big Barda takes a bath. (*laughter*) If you look at the issue, you can see that the story can be told completely without that page. I just wanted to put Big Barda in the bathtub. (*laughter*) That issue probably has about half my contributions, in that I named a couple of the Female Furies.

TJKC: Do you remember which ones?

E: Lashina and Stompa, I think. What happened was that I came up with a character that Jack liked. I’m not sure if it would have wound up in *New Gods* or would be a separate comic. It was a girl with ESP called Phantasmagloria. Jack loved the name, and when he started the



This unused page from *Forever People* #8 is the result of Jack penciling in sequences. After assembling the sequences into the final story, he ended up one page over, so this page was never used. (next page) A *Mister Miracle* pencil drawing done for an early San Diego Comic Con.

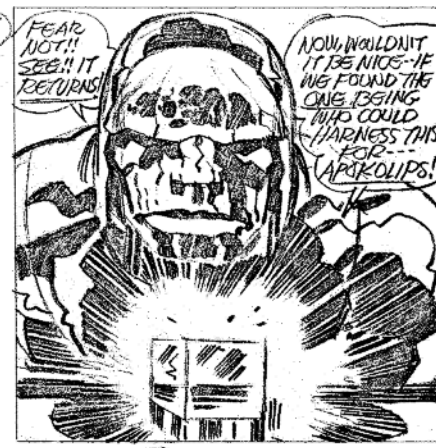
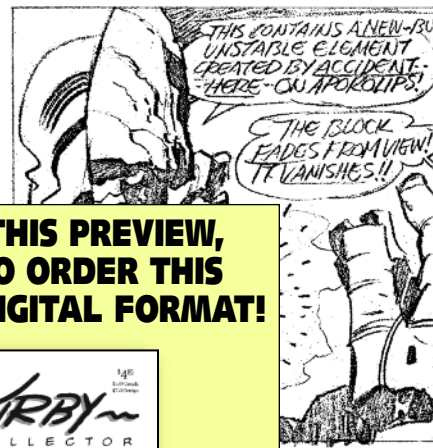
Female Furies he was going to name one of them Phantasmagloria. But then he decided the name was too good to waste on a small character, so he asked me to give him some other names. I jotted down a whole bunch of names and two or three of them made it into the final grouping. The only page in that whole book that I had any story input into was that one page. I plotted the page and wrote most of the dialogue on it. I think that’s the only page in all of *New Gods*, *Mister Miracle*, and *Forever People* that I actually wrote in any way. Steve and I did almost nothing on the *Forever People* issues that have our name on them.

TJKC: What type of reaction did the Funky Flashman story get from inside the industry?

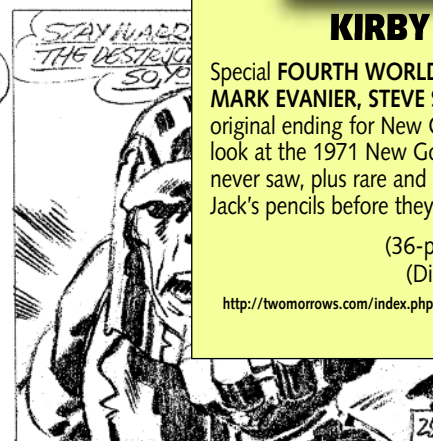
E: I’ll tell you how that issue came about. Steve and I had worked for Marvelmania International, a Marvel mail order firm. The guy who ran it was... well, let’s just say that a lot of kids never got the Silver Surfer posters they ordered and a lot of artists and folks who worked for him never got paid. When Jack asked us to come up with ideas for stories, we suggested, “Hey, let’s do him.” Funky Flashman was originally conceived as our version of that guy we’d worked for at Marvelmania. When Jack started doing it, the character started turning into Stan Lee. I don’t think Jack consciously decided, “I’m going to parody Stan.” I think he just sat down to draw this character who was going to be sweet-talking Mister Miracle into working with him and his personal reference points for that kind of relationship led him to start drawing Stan.

The issue ended up coming out more Stan Lee than Jack had intended and I have to believe that something triggered that. You know, something of a peace has now been made between the Kirby side and Stan. The hard feelings have been set aside and the genuine love and respect has been allowed to live... but there were times in the past, as everyone knows, that that wasn’t the case. There were times when Jack would pick up a fanzine and someone at Marvel would be saying, “Oh, all Kirby ever did was draw up Stan’s ideas” or someone would credit Stan with creating Captain America or something like that. Any time you heard Jack say anything negative about Stan it was in direct response to one of those insults... and sometimes things would escalate from there.

I’m sure Jack set out to do a story that would only tenuously have referenced Stan and then one of those



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