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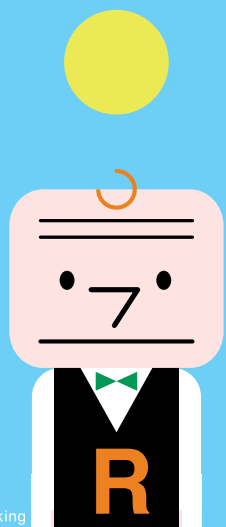
No. 16, Winter 2018



Don
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Dino!
2016

PLUS: RICH BUCKLER • MARIE SEVERIN • JACK KIRBY ON THE BOB SITCOM



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About Our Cover

Art by **DEAN HASPIEL**
& **DAN PARENT**

Colors by **GLENN
WHITMORE**



Above: Artists **DAN PARENT** and **DEAN HASPIEL** jam on our succulent #16 cover art, with Dan contributing the Riverdale gang and Dean sharing his take on MLJ superheroes of yore. Natch, this is a pastiche of Dave Cockrum's classic *X-Men* #100 [Aug. '76] cover.

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THE MAIN EVENTS

Dean Haspiel is On the Hook. *CBC* chats with Dino about his diverse and curious career in the world of modern funnybooks, including his start as assistant to legendary artists Howard Chaykin, Walter Simonson, and Bill Sienkiewicz, work in the alternative comics press, mainstream forays at Marvel and DC, work with star writer Mark Waid on Archie's *The Fox*, collaborations with the late and lamented Harvey Pekar, and his fascinating pedigree!..... 40

Our Pal Dan Parent. The longtime Archie Comics stalwart artist, today the imprint's "classic" style cartoonist, discusses his formative years at the Kubert School, early entry into Archie Comics, and his stream of successes with the Riverdale Gang, whether launching the first *Veronica* solo book, helming the *Archie Love Showdown* storyline, and creating the Archie universe's first gay character, Kevin Keller. We also cover Dan's ongoing creator-owned series *Die Kitty Die!*..... 60

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Right: At top is a detail of Dean Haspiel's cover illustration for the proposed *The Fox: Fox Hunt* collection and, below, a detail of Dan Parent's *Life with Kevin* #1 cover art, featuring his creation Kevin Keller.



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Buckler's Beginnings

Part one of a two-part interview with the late comic book artist Rich Buckler, Sr.

by **MICHAEL AUSHENKER** CBC Associate Editor

Rich Buckler, Sr., enjoyed a lengthy and storied career in comics before passing away on May 19, but the 1970s is when Buckler ruled the roost. Three words say it all: "Deathlok the Demolisher."

Debuting in *Astonishing Tales* #25 [Aug. 1974], Buckler's creation, which he penciled and co-wrote with Doug Moench, ran only 11 issues, but proved unusually dark and counter-culture for a Marvel comic book, made a deep impact not only on the comics industry with innovative panel-work and stark, bleak, and subliminally irreverent imagery inked by Klaus Janson, but also on the movie industry, with passages anticipating such science-fiction classics as John Carpenter's *Escape from New York* [1981] and Paul Verhoeven's *Robocop* [1987].

In 1973, Buckler also embarked on the first three issues of writer Don McGregor's "Black Panther" feature in *Jungle Action*. Then, in 1974, Buckler landed his dream book, Marvel's *Fantastic Four*, after a decade-long pursuit, and produced some of its most memorable post-Kirby issues.

Deathlok was not the only offbeat, hell-raising anti-hero the Detroit native forged during the Bronze Age. Buckler's 1975 character Demon-Hunter for Atlas/Seaboard later inspired a more popular and longer-lasting counterpart at Marvel dubbed the Demon-Slayer.

The Motor City penciler, whose Marvel credits also include "The Living Mummy" and myriad spectacular covers, has given back to his industry in more ways than one, penning how-to books as well as mentoring young artists. Two of them, George Pérez and a 14-year-old Denys Cowan (who would eventually pencil a Deathlok comic title that outlasted Buckler's more than three times over), have learned well under his tutelage.

Buckler's talent as an artist is so strong, it has over-

come accusations of "swiping" which has shadowed the artist following a 1983 *Comics Journal* piece. The resilient penciler nevertheless went on to draw *Justice League of America* and *All-Star Squadron* as well as work for *Archie* (as editor of their Red Circle imprint) and *Valiant*.

Long based in Manhattan, in the 2000s, Buckler turned to painting, proving prolific with some trippy, downright cosmic canvases exhibiting all over the country. And yet, he did not abandon his fans, especially devotees of his greatest creation: Deathlok the Demolisher.

On a more specific and personal note, Buckler's book *How to Become a Comic Book Artist* — along with *How to Draw the Marvel Way* by Stan Lee and John Buscema and Jules Feiffer's *The Great Comic Book Heroes* — became the holy triumvirate a budding ye assoc. editor checked out the most often at the Fairfax Branch Library, on South Gardner Street, in Los Angeles, back in the late '70s/early '80s. A few years back, yours truly caught

up with Rich "Swash" Buckler (as Lee would name him) for an email conversation. — M.A.

CBC: How did coming from Detroit — also home to Jim Starlin, Al Milgrom, Mike



Above: Self-portrait of Rich Buckler, who reinvented himself as a surrealist painter in the '00s. **Far left:** Buckler was, during an earlier stage of his career, a filmmaker. **Left inset:** Cover detail of the artist's trademark creation, Deathlok the Demolisher, which debuted in 1974.





Above: Rich Buckler's first professional job was a four-page historical adventure in the back of *Flash Gordon* #10 [Nov. 1967], starring the father of our country, George Washington. **Inset right:** The cover of that very same comic book, artist unknown. **Below:** Before becoming a full-time professional, Buckler was a prolific art contributor to comics fanzines in the 1960s, even publishing his own, *Intrigue and Super-Hero*. This is an ad for the former, replete with a self portrait.

Vosburg, and Alan Weiss — prepare you for the comics industry, Rich? **Rich:** Moving from Detroit to New York, that was a necessity back then, you know. There was no way around that.

These days we have e-mail, file transfer protocol, Federal Express, and UPS, so you can live just about anywhere and still work for the major companies. But, back in the late '60s, early '70s, you had to be there. If you were an artist and you weren't living in New York and didn't make yourself accessible at all times, well, not much could happen, no matter how good an artist you were.

While I was a teenager living in Detroit, my first few brave attempts at becoming a professional comics artist were done by mail. But to get those actual assignments, I had to be there each time in person.

I was 18 when I landed an assignment from King Features. That was my first printed work in the comics ["George Washington," *Flash Gordon* #10, Nov. 1967]. The penciling and inking for that story was done using the old "large-sized" original art format. This was just around the time that the industry was changing to the 11" x 17" standard size for comic art. I still own those originals. I still have quite a few of my original sample art pages that were done in that size, too.

Here is how I got that gig: I was attending the New York comic book convention as a fan, but during my stay in Manhattan I also took advantage and spent a few days to make the rounds of the comics publishers looking for work.

It was during those early treks to New York City that I connected in-person with other would-be pros too. Comics fans who were artists that I only knew otherwise via mail and telephone; like Tim Battersby, a young and very talented "fan artist" who worked as an assistant for Wally Wood. Tim was an early contributor to one of my fanzines that featured amateur comics. So we actually met for the first time in New York.

Tim arranged for us to visit with Wally Wood at his art studio. That was a real piece of luck! Yes, *that* Wally Wood. I was a bona-fide comic book geek back then, so this was earth-shaking stuff for me.

Those early comic fan days were seminal times for me as an artist. At that time Wally Wood was doing it all — writing, editing, drawing, and publishing, just like Jack Kirby did in the '40s and '50s. That was what I wanted to do! So it was really exciting. Really important, too, because that was also one of the earliest opportunities I had back then to view actual original comic art.

Another time, along with Marv Wolfman and Len Wein, I had the good fortune to meet with Frank Frazetta at his home in Brooklyn. During that memorable visit, Frank showed us every one of his original paintings in his attic art studio! And, let me tell you, there's a world of difference between viewing the originals and seeing the

paintings in print.

So, anyway, back to my beginnings... That "Washington Attacks Trenton" story for King Features was drawn in Detroit and it got printed in *Flash Gordon* #10. There I was appearing in the same book as Alex Raymond! Was I thrilled about it? You bet I was! But it was no cause for celebration because after that illustrious debut, King Features had no more work for me.

My second break came shortly after. It was a six-page story for DC's *House of Secrets* [#90, Mar. 1971] called "The Symphonies."

That assignment was also drawn while I was still living in Detroit. The artwork was mailed in to the publisher, but there was no follow-up on that one either and I was beginning to see a pattern forming there.

Detroit was somewhat of a hotbed of activity for early organized comics fandom. I knew Jerry Bails, and through Jerry, I met Roy Thomas. I was close friends with Shel Dorf, one of the founders of the Detroit Triple Fan Fair and later the founder of San Diego Comic-Con. Shel lived about ten

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Spotlight on 'Sev'

A recent visit with the great cartoonist and "Mirthful" Marvel Bullpen stalwart



Above: Marie Severin never shined brighter as a humor cartoonist than in Marvel's parody title Not Brand Echh. Here's the cover by Sev for #3 [Oct. 1967].

Below: Ye ed's candid pic of a playful Mirthful One taken during a recent visit.

Interview conducted by JON B. COOKE

[Sometimes you just have to go for it. Working on a future CBC feature about Mirthful Marie Anita Severin's late brother, John (like his little sister, one enormously talented artist), I discovered where the longtime Marvel Bullpen stalwart has been spending her years in retirement and, having been very friendly with her back in the old Comic Book Artist days, I decided, after making a call to see if I would be welcome, to make a drive down to the greater New York City area and spend a chilly late winter Sunday afternoon with the lady, one of my most favorite cartoonists ever! By the time you read this, Marie will be 88 and, as anyone can certainly understand, her memory on certain aspects of her career can a little bit hazy, but about much of what we discussed, the wonderful woman is sharp as a tack, and still as sly and witty as all get-out! Thus CBC is delighted to share the conversation, which took place on March 12 and was transcribed by Steven "Flash" Thompson. — JBC]



CBC: You're a great cartoonist, Marie, and I wanna give you this. [Hands her a copy of CBC#13.]

Marie: Ramona Fradon! Oh, good. She's nice. I like her. She's good! Oh, wow. That's great!

CBC: You'll really like the interview. She's quite a character. I hadn't known she did all that she did in her life!

Marie: Oh, yeah! She's talented. She doesn't push herself. I didn't know her when she was younger. Can I keep this?

CBC: That's for you.

Marie: Gee! Thanks! I'll draw anything you want!

CBC: [Laughs] You'll draw anything I want?

Marie: Yeah! Sure, I wouldn't mind.

CBC: You're still drawing?

Marie: Yeah.

CBC: I'd love to do a big interview with you. I'd love to do to you like I did with Ramona, if you'd like.

Marie: Sure. I have nothing better to do and it would be a good thing I would think. This is lovely. Can I have these?

CBC: Yeah.

Marie: Oh, wow. Gee, that's nice. I've got something to read! Yippee!

CBC: Let's talk about when you went into the Marvel Bullpen. That was around 1964?

Marie: I don't remember the exact year. You're probably right.

CBC: What was it like? Who was there?

Marie: Let me bring myself back.

CBC: There was Stan...

Marie: Yes, and Larry Leiber. I haven't thought of that era in so long. [laughs] Anyway, ask me questions.

CBC: Well, let's start with EC Comics. What did you go in for when you first came into the bullpen?

Marie: Let's see. My brother came out of the Army. All the guys — Jack Davis — and all of them. They got into comics and, all of a sudden, they needed all the help they could get from colorists. John knew that I liked to color because my father was an artist and so we were brought up as artists and had the materials. The only table I had was the kitchen table, which three times a day when the meals would be served, so then I had to color in my bedroom. [laughs] It was a metal table and it was just perfect for me. It was hard enough, you know, for paper to be on it. Both my brother and father shared this "studio." And my mother could make clothes. So the whole house was using the space to do things, you know? So I thought everybody drew.

CBC: Where were you living?

Marie: I was born out here in Oceanside, New York, which is right near East Rockaway, pretty near the water. Once the Depression hit and making money was hard, in the '30s, my father moved us to Brooklyn because then it was only a subway ride away, which cost a nickel, instead of a dollar and something, whatever it cost for the Long Island Railroad. So we moved to Brooklyn, and it was a nice section. My father, as an immigrant — as a two-year-old — came from Norway and they settled in the Scandinavian section in Brooklyn and it was nice.

CBC: You are Scandinavian?





4/50 HAND COLORED Marie Severin

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Marie: My father's Norwegian and my mother was from here. Her father was a Yankee from way back and her mother was from Ireland.

CBC: What was your mom's maiden name?

Marie: Powers. Oh, I forget her mother's maiden name. It was some Irish name. My father was born in Oslo, Norway. His father came over and was a shipbuilder. But the money was so bad that he moved to the States, set himself up, and then called for them. My father was two when he came.

CBC: Do you know roughly what year he was born?

Marie: No. He was drafted for World War I. He was in his teens when he went in the Army. I think about 17, maybe 18. When was that? 1917, '18, '19... something like that. That's when he went in. He was a kid.

CBC: So he was born around 1902 maybe?

Marie: Yeah. He had a job, in Manhattan, in an office. He must have had some schooling. So he had this job and when he left, two people took over his job. I don't know if it was accounting, but he was very good at math, which is unusual for an artist, they say. Because I came along and I was good in math, but my brother was terrible. [laughs] John was funny. John didn't like school. Well, he liked reading and history like I did, but he didn't like the studying, you know? Math and stuff like that. He could do it. He was a good student. But he'd rather draw. In drawing, you teach yourself because he was constantly bringing books from the library and my father had two sets of encyclopedias. When you're a foreign-born, you want to know when to shake hands with 'em in the country, so we'd got the encyclopedias and didn't have to run always to the library.

CBC: What was your father's name?

Marie: John Edward Severin. And my mother's name was Powers. She came from upstate New York. A real Yankee!

CBC: What was her first name?

Marie: Marguerite.

CBC: And your brother was John Powers Severin, right?

Marie: Right. On the Powers side, they didn't have a male to carry on the name, so my mother added it to my brother's name.

CBC: What is your middle name?

Marie: Anita, because my aunts' names were Ann, Gertrude, and Marie. I took Gertrude for my confirmation. So I'm Marie Anita

Severin and Anita is like Ann, so I had the three aunts' names, who had no boys.

CBC: So you're Catholic?

Marie: Yeah. And my father was whatever Norwegians are and then he converted. I was in grammar school when he converted to Catholicism.

CBC: Just for your mother?

Marie: Well, he was always bringing her to church and he liked it. He liked these Catholics so he got into it, you know, bringing her there. So he joined 'em. Made it convenient, you know? He got into the whole thing. We weren't big devotional people but they sent me and John to Catholic school.

Inset previous page: Self caricature by Marie from a reply sent to an EC Comics fan in 1954. **Above:** Despite also being the main colorist for the legendary line of EC Comics, Marie is best known as a member of the Marvel Bullpen from the 1960s-'80s. **Center inset:** For Denis Kitchen's button series, John contributed this portrait. **Below:** Folks probably best recall Marie's dramatic cartooning on her collaboration with John on *Kull the Conqueror*.



CBC: So, by '52, was John working for Harvey Kurtzman?

Marie: I think so, yeah. I think I was, too.

CBC: Did he make a spot for you? Did they need somebody and he said, "My kid sister can help"?

Marie: I remember John saying, "Gee, I have no time to do the coloring. I just don't have the time. My sister is good." Harvey said, "Well, try her out on this." The job came back and Harvey said, "She's in. She can work here all the time." So I did. And that's how it happened. Harvey was good because he was a perfectionist!

CBC: Did you like Harvey?

Marie: Yeah. You could see why some guys didn't like him because he didn't quite know how to correct people properly. He'd go, "I don't like it this way! It should be this or that" or, "You don't know how to draw that!"

CBC: He wasn't diplomatic?

Marie: Every once in a while he could be. I liked his personality. I got along fine with him. But, with some guys sometimes, I could tell he was acting too autocratic. But he wasn't bad! I got along fine with him. I understood why he was that way, you know?

CBC: You were learning, too, right?

Marie: Right! I learned a lot from Harvey. He liked to tell you how to do something but he told it well. He was very good. There were some things about him that were annoying but they didn't annoy me.

CBC: Did you like the New York type of guy?

Marie: Yeah, I thought they were smart. Smarter. But I liked 'em. Fun, faster talking...

CBC: Were you a "good girl"?

Marie: Yeah, I was pretty good.

CBC: Did you go out drinking with the guys every now and then?

Marie: Oh, not much. Later on, when I was in my 20s, but I wasn't a bad teenager. I was acceptable.

CBC: Did you like the EC Comics in the beginning?

Marie: Oh, yeah! I read them and EC, to me, was the best and I was really proud that I was working there. I was just a kid, still in my teens.

CBC: And your brother did just phenomenal art!

Marie: Isn't he great? You should've seen what my father did. And my mother could draw, too. She could sew like a dream so the whole thing was in the hands. Couldn't miss.

CBC: Your brother was good all the way to the end. I mean, he could ink! Herb had his own style but he inked over Herb and just gave him such a slick look... And he inked over your stuff for Kull... wow!

Marie: Weren't they great? I loved 'em!

CBC: Beautiful, beautiful stuff! **Marie:** Yeah.

CBC: Do you think you were a better storyteller maybe? It was really good to see him ink you because his stuff, on his own, was a little stiff, wouldn't you say?

Marie: Well, he was a very straight liner as far as character and I guess that showed. I liked the look of it! I liked that stiffness in it.

CBC: Yeah. Well, it worked for the military stuff and that was so much of his stuff!

Marie: Yeah, and he loved detail! He just was crazy about



12 BUCKS TO FIND OUT SHE'S ONLY GOT A VITAMIN DEFICIENCY!

doing it.

CBC: That's why he got along with Harvey so well, right? Because Harvey wanted the detail!

Marie: Oh, yeah! Harvey was a pest sometimes but I liked working for him 'cause I learned a lot. But he was a little autocratic. It didn't bother me but it bothered some guys...

CBC: Alex Toth just walked right out.

Marie: And he's so good. I could tell by the tone in my brother's voice once that he was going to sock Harvey any minute. I said, "No, don't do it!" [Laughs]

CBC: Did you know Wally?

Marie: Yeah. I liked Wally. He was a real character. He was fun but he was a character.

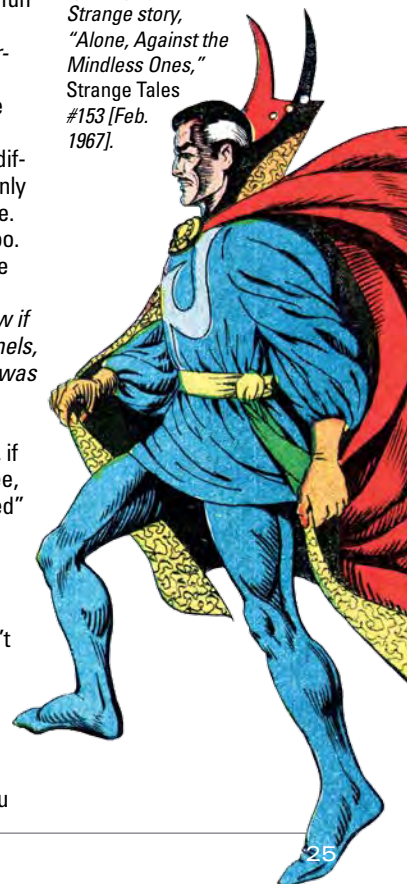
CBC: What made him a character?

Marie: I don't know. Just the way he moved around was a little... not funny, but he was different. Not obviously. It was only if you watched. I watch people. Jack Davis was interesting, too. And Bill Gaines! I liked him. He was really funny!

CBC: So that story about how if you didn't like some of the panels, you would color them all red, was that true?

Marie: Well... tell you what: if a panel was very gruesome, if I was scared ("ascared"! See, I'm a kid again!) I was "ascared" that the book would be canceled because the Code thing was just coming on so strong and everybody went, "The Code won't like it!" And I didn't want that because I liked that company! The guys were really great, and Bill Gaines was a doll to work for. I just wanted them to behave so we wouldn't get in trouble, you

Above: By the mystical cycles of menstruation! Marie writes that her rather adult gag was "One of a series of cartoons submitted to college papers — a Stan Lee project. **Inset left:** Ye Ed recognized the Mirthful One's unforgettable style when he purchased stickers from a toy vending machine back in the early '70s and he's kept 'em ever since. **Below:** Detail of the splash page Marie's first Doctor Strange story, "Alone, Against the Mindless Ones," Strange Tales #153 [Feb. 1967].



All About Bob and Jack

Paul Power on that time Kirby guest-starred on Bob Newhart's comics-based sitcom

by JON B. COOKE



Above: TV Guide cover from Oct. 3-9, 1992. **Below:** Cover detail by penciler Ty Templeton and inker Jeff Albrecht from *Mad-Dog* #1 [May 1993] the short-lived Marvel spin-off of the Bob TV series' fictional comic book title.

Twenty-five years ago and less than two years before his passing, the King of Comics received his widest recognition in front of an American audience when he was honored with a guest appearance — playing himself, the great Jack Kirby — on broadcast television. It was 9:30 p.m. (EST), on Friday, Jan. 29, 1993, when the comic book creator was first viewed on national TV in an episode of Bob Newhart's third headlining situation comedy, *Bob*, a short-lived series in which the comedian portrayed comics artist Bob McKay, buttoned-down creator of the super-hero Mad-Dog. This is the story of Kirby's moment in that spotlight, as told by Paul Power, an Australian-raised cartoonist and storyboard artist who facilitated the legend's appearance, as well as the participation of other comic book luminaries.

Described by *Wizard* magazine at the time as "short, muscular, and clean-shaven, with thinning

black hair," Power had been hired as the show's credited illustrator and, with his experience alongside any number of comic book pros while working in the animation field, he served as unofficial consultant on aspects related to the comics industry. During a story conference attended by the *Bob* team, one teleplay was almost discarded.

"On Monday," Power shared, "we would have our story meetings — the read-throughs — and I'd be there with the production crew and actors, and we'd figure out if there would be any problem putting on any particular show." The program's creator-producers — *Cheers* veterans Cheri and Bill Steinkellner, and Phoebe Sutton — were having doubts about their script involving an awards ceremony. "On that episode, 'You Can't Win,' they said, 'We're not sure we can do this,' because," Power explained, "it contained comic book artists (who weren't named) and they didn't think they could do it. I shot up, like a rat up a drain pipe, and said, 'I can make this happen!' They all looked at me and said, 'Alright, Paul,' and I said, 'Believe me, I can make this show happen,' so they said, 'Well, let's do it then!'"

And on *Bob*, which is set in the comic book bullpen of fictitious Chicago-based publisher Ace Comics, the diminutive body-builder from Down Under contributed mightily to the show's first season, including production of all the prop artwork, being the literal on-screen hand creating the drawings in the show's title sequence, serving as background actor (with an occasional line and onscreen credit), and — for "You Can't Win," which imitated an actual Eisner Award ceremony at the annual San Diego Comic-Con — Power was the de facto producer, enlisted to enhance the installment with touches of authenticity.

The episode's plot involves cartoonist Bob McKay and writer/studio head Harlan Stone reacting to multiple "Buster Award" nominations for their *Mad-Dog* series and the bullpen's appearance at the ceremony, which is attended by their "peers," real-life cartoonists and comics pros. Though an inter-company rival snags the lion's share of trophies, the *Mad-Dog* crew ultimately wins the "Best Comic Book" statue and McKay scores "Best Artist."

"So I got to produce that episode," Power said, "and, through [San Diego Comic-Con co-founder] Shel Dorf, I got [cartoonist] Mel Keefer's phone number and I asked Mark Evanier to get Sergio Aragonés. My concept was to get cartoonists who could act and knew show business — Sergio had done *Norman, Is That You?* and *Laugh-In*, and Mel had done the artwork for *How to Murder Your Wife* — and I wanted Kirby."

The storyboard artist had become a fan of Jack Kirby in 1963, upon picking up a copy of *The Avengers* #2. "Me being a cartoonist in the first place," Power said, "a lot of it had to do with loving the work of Jack Kirby." Thus, by the late 1970s, when he arrived in the U.S. to work at Hanna Barbera, Power was determined to make contact with the King of Comics, and it was at that animation studio where the two first encountered one another.

"One of the main things I wanted to do when I



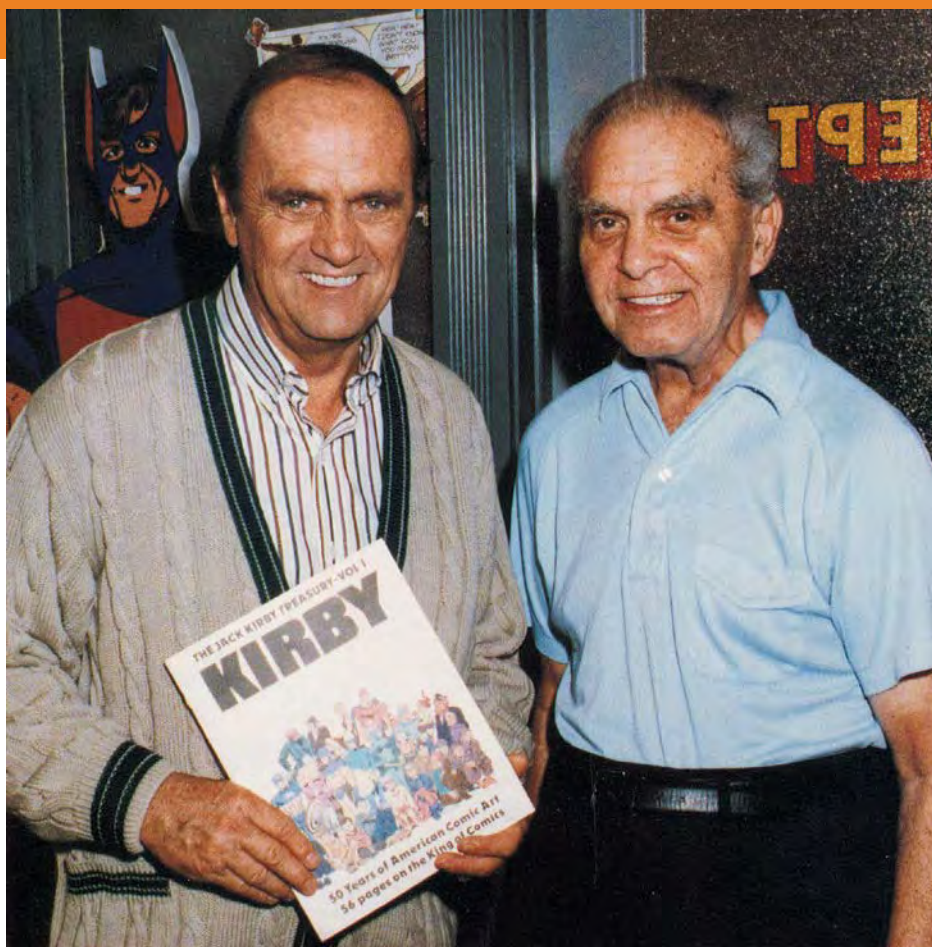
came out to California,” Power said, “was to meet Jack Kirby, shake his hand, and tell him, ‘Thank you very much!’” Whether the comics veteran was there to do design work or be interviewed, Power couldn’t recall, but the meeting was nonetheless unforgettable. “Well, he turned up and, you gotta understand,” he confessed, “I was built like a brick sh*thouse, and still am — I’ve always been in good shape, but I was in *fightin’* shape back then — so, when I see that Kirby’s there, I just shoot up out of my seat, forget about my job, because I was thunderstruck. I’m meeting *Jack Kirby!* It was like meeting Elvis! Your legs go all wobbly... and he looks at me and says, ‘Who’re you? Captain America?’ I said, ‘No, no, I’m more like Bucky,’ and we had a good laugh.”

Power continued, “Jack started telling me about the Aussies he met during World War II and we were talking about Captain America, and all this stuff. I told him how great I thought he was and he said, ‘Why? I thank you!’ Which was one of the things Jack would say... I was just knocked out! Anyway, I talked with him for about an hour (and can’t remember the whole conversation) but, the next day, I come to work and there’s this drawing of me in a Kirby pose and it says, ‘Paul: Really great seeing you yesterday. Jack Kirby.’ I’m *completely* knocked-out, gob-smacked, and can’t say anything. Then I see Dave Stevens and Russ Heath are snickering — ‘Hee-hee-hee!’ — and I say, ‘What?’ Mike Sekowsky really isn’t reacting and he says, ‘I’m sorry, Paul, that’s really not a Kirby drawing. We were playing a gag on you,’ and he sheepishly added, ‘I drew that.’ I said, ‘Oh, it’s all right, Mike,’ but I was crushed. It was a great drawing, man!”

(The star-studded line-up in TV animation during that era was chockful of extraordinary talent, many of whom doubled as legendary pranksters. At H-B, Power stated, “I moved into what I called the ‘Rude Room,’ with another Australian, Janine Dawson, a very good cartoonist, and Dave Stevens, Russ Heath, and Mike Sekowsky, and we had a blast! It was so funny! Scott Shaw was just across the hall, and in the next cubicle was Bob Foster of *Myron Moose* fame, and Don Morgan, who had worked for Chuck Jones and Walt Kelly, was our boss. Doug Wildey and Morgan took me on after Bill Hanna said to hire me.”)

Power periodically kept in touch with the King thereafter. “I went over to the Kirbys’ house a couple of times, usually with Shel Dorf. I’d see Jack at these art shows they held out in Orange County where he was a judge, and I went out to the house one time with Steve Rude... so I’d go out and see Jack and I’d call him and all that stuff.” Once, the Kirbys attended a party hosted by Power. “It was the first time Jack met my (now ex-) wife, Bea, who was a big, buxom, and six-foot woman (and I’m all of five-foot one), and he said, ‘Big Barda! Is it true you women are taking over the world?’ Which was great because she loved that and knew who Big Barda was!”

Power shared how he landed the sitcom job: “A few years before *Bob*, I was called by Anton Furst, the original production designer for *Batman* (a British guy who is no longer with us — he took a short walk off the roof of a three-story parking lot — really sad because he was a great guy). Anyway, he calls and I’m seeing all these great pen-



cil drawings... and I said, ‘What’s this?’ And he said, ‘The secret Michael Jackson project.’ I went, ‘Oh, bullsh*t! This is the next *Batman* movie! You’re going to have Michael Jackson as the Riddler!’ They laugh and go, ‘Oh, no, no, no!’ I said, ‘Don’t f*cking come with the raw prawn with me!’ So I was cracking them up. And at this stage I wasn’t bothered whether I got the job or not, and just having a nice time. They said, ‘No, no, seriously, this is what it is.’ I said, ‘Awright, awright. Have it your way. I’m up for it.’ They said, ‘Well, we like your work,’ because I had showed them my storyboards for *Predator* and they liked

Above: Bob Newhart and Jack Kirby on the set of *Bob*. **Below:** First row from left is Jack Kirby, Paul Power, Jim Lee, Bob Newhart, and Mel Lazarus. Second row, from left is Sergio Aragonés, Mel Keefer, Bob Kane, and Marc Silvestri. The artists all appeared in the award ceremony sequence in the Jan. 29, 1993, episode of *Bob* entitled “You Can’t Win.”



DEAN HASPIEL IS on the

Dishin' with Dino about his life, love for comics,

My longtime bromance with Dean Edmund Haspiel stretches back to the late '90s, when I met the Big Apple-born comics creator at some convention, likely the San Diego show. Gregarious, affectionate, and deplorably enthusiastic, the cartoonist is one of those rare birds able to perch between the mainstream and alternative scenes, whether as artist on the *Startling Stories: The Thing* mini-series for Marvel, as creator of Billy Dogma, "the World's Last Romantic Anti-Hero," or as artist-collaborator with the late, great Harvey Pekar on the graphic novel, *The Quitter*. Of course, in recent years, Dino is known for his partnership with celebrated comics scribe Mark Waid on oldtime Archie Comics' super-hero The Fox, of which the pair produced two memorable, highly entertaining mini-series starring the floppy-eared, uni-suited acrobatic character, *Freak Magnet* [2013] and *Fox Hunt* ['15].

He is also constantly working on many projects, whether creator-owned hero The Red Hook, or plays, or even a TV show.

This all-too brief conversation took place via Skype on Aug. 7, 2017, and was amended and corrected by Dean. The career of the writer/artist, who has worked in the field since the '80s assisting Bill Sienkiewicz, Howard Chaykin, and Walter Simonson, is, to our great regret, given too little space here and he is eminently deserving of a much more comprehensive chat. Still, we're delighted to include Dino in this issue.

Love ya, man! You do Brooklyn proud!

—JBC



The Fox TM & © Archie Comic Publications, Inc. Billy Dogma TM & © Dean Haspiel.

Dean Haspiel portrait ©2017 by Kendal Whitehouse.

hook

and wildly eclectic career!

Comic Book Creator: *Did you have creative people in your family, Dean?*

Dean Haspiel: Yes. My father always sketched and drew things, though not professionally. But he knew how to draw and he never pursued it. Still, whenever he had a pen in his hand, once in a while he would draw a little something and that always impressed me. But he went on to become a writer, with three books about Marilyn Monroe to his credit. The first book was about his friendship with Marilyn during the last eight years of her life. He met her when he was 16, a kid who left his family, lived on the streets at one point, re-started his own life, and during those hard times, meets an angel that greatly impacted his life and world view. And that angel was Marilyn Monroe. They established a mutual friendship. Later on he wrote articles about Hollywood and blonde bombshells for *Films in Review* and other magazines, and then ultimately got a book deal, and wrote about his experiences with Marilyn. He's also an expert regarding Marilyn. Larry King has interviewed him and he's been on other TV shows. He's in documentary films about Marilyn, and the BBC has come to him. Folks from Japan have reached out to him... I mean, from all over the place.

CBC: *Wow.*

Dean: So he's an authority on Marilyn Monroe. And he's the one who is very respectful about Marilyn because that's how he feels about her. So there was a lot of Marilyn Monroe in my life, growing up.

My mother, who hails from Gross Pointe, Michigan, was working in some capacity in the theater scene during her college years, and she befriended the actress Shelley Winters in the mid-1960s, who was in some production, I believe, in Michigan. Shelley became friendly with my mom, and my mom wanted to visit New York City and that's where Shelley introduced my mother to my father, and eventually they got married and had kids, and Shelley became my godmother. So I'm on planet Earth because of Shelley Winters! *[Jon laughs]*

My mother got a job as a secretary at the New York State Council of the Arts, and eventually became deputy director and worked there for 30 years. She was creative by helping the arts — you know, film, dance, art, poetry, theater, and all that stuff. She's a very good writer herself, but I don't think she would ever consider herself an artist. Nonetheless, I grew up in a very creative, boisterous family. I know there's a term called A-type personality. I would hazard that both my parents had A-type personality qualities that were obviously passed on to me in some ways, even though I sometimes feel shy, I try to punch through that by just letting my flaws stand out before you, because being vulnerable is what connects us, I believe. I came to understand that later in life. I came to understand that after befriending and collaborating with author Jonathan Ames, I realized that one of his go-tos, what he does thematically, is he makes himself vulnerable to a situation, and to the reader so that the reader or the environment can open up to letting something happen.

And not necessarily judging it, either, you know? Also, working with Harvey Pekar, I discovered one of the things he did was he observed. He listened. He would jot down what people were saying and doing and that would make up the bulk of his stories. Obviously, the man had his own opinions, but a lot of his stories are just revealing character. And those were the kinds of things I think I adopted from collaborating with Jonathan Ames, Harvey Pekar, and other authors, of course. And that kind

Interview Conducted by
Jon B. Cooke

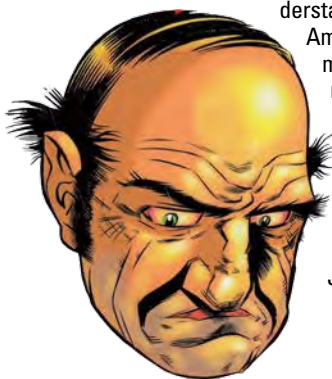
Transcription by Steven Tice

Portrait Photography by Kendall Whitehouse



This page:
Bottom left inset is Harvey Pekar caricature cover detail from *American Splendor: Another Dollar* [Jan. 2009]. Left is Haspiel's Brooklyn-based hero, The Red Hook.

Previous page:
Top center is vignette of Dean Haspiel's rendition of The Fox. Middle right inset is Dino at Wizard World Philadelphia in 2015. Bottom left is Billy Dogma vignette from the cover of *Keyhole #3* [Jan. 1997].





of stuff insinuated itself into my work.

CBC: What's the ethnicity of "Haspiel?"

Dean: The name is Austrian. And my mother is Polish, so I'm half-Austrian and half-Polish. And I think you can throw in a little bit of German and maybe even some Russian in there, too, I've been told.

CBC: What's your dad's name?

Dean: James Robert Haspiel.

CBC: And your mom's maiden name?

Dean: Mom is Barbara Zymalski, but she goes by Barbara Haspiel. She didn't change her name after they split up.

CBC: Do you have siblings?

Dean: I did. My brother Michael, and he unfortunately passed away, I believe, in 2005. At age nine, Mike discovered that he had juvenile diabetes and that was a tough time for our family, obviously, majorly for my brother. You know, you tell a kid he can't eat candy and he can't do this, he can't do that, and then he has to take an insulin injection twice a day. That changes everything. And I remember at age 10 or 11 giving my brother a shot in the morning before we went to school. And I think, because of that, becoming a juvenile diabetic and having to deal with the strict diet, and the insulin injections, and everything else, I think he rebelled at some point and decided he was going to go a little Rambo and live life accordingly. So he kind of became a bad kid. He would skip school, play hooky. He was also majorly into comic books and could draw, as well. I remember I would see him at home and he would suddenly have original artwork from Marvel and DC comics. I was like, "Where the hell did you get this?" And he sometimes would go visit Marvel or a comic book shop during school hours

where he would procure artwork. Michael was very charming. One of my family traits is that we're fairly charming people. But, I mean, what was happening is he wasn't really focused on getting passing grades, graduating, or getting a degree or anything. He was living life to his capacity, and then, slowly but surely, his physicality and his eyesight started to diminish greatly. At some point, when my mother left my father,

my brother split with my mother to Brooklyn, and I stayed with my father in the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where we grew up. And then my brother kind of fell into a bad crowd and started taking drugs and that kind of stuff, and became an addict. And I always wondered if maybe part of him gravitating toward that was because he was taking medicine just to survive, you know? He was medicating in different ways to cope with his fleeting mortality, his compromised chemistry. I don't know. There's a psychology to disability. But I'm no doctor or scientist.

CBC: Was he in a hospital for a while or was it sudden?

Dean: No, what happened is at some point, because of the drug thing, he had to go to a halfway house. He just got in trouble. And then he wound up at Roosevelt

Hospital and then they gave him a choice. They said, "Well, you can go here, here, or here." And he went to a halfway house in Des Moines, Iowa and rebuilt his life there, where he met a lot of great people and made good friends, girlfriends, and he babysat some guys who eventually became the music band Slipknot. But, little by little, his eyesight left him. He was almost fully blind at the end of his life.

CBC: Wow.

Dean: Mike was great friends with Slipknot. Maybe he was abusing drugs or not taking great care of himself and, at one point, he fell into a coma for three or four days, and when he survived it, which there was a good chance he wasn't going to survive, he woke up and had incredible damage done to his nerves and his fingers, and he was always in pain. So, at some point, some stupid doctor prescribed Oxycontin to him, and, as we came to know, Oxycontin is basically heroin, and you give Oxycontin to someone who is an addict, you're just basically sealing their death, you know? So, Mike started abusing Oxycontin. Like, if you have a monthly dosage, and you're supposed to spread it out over four weeks, he was probably taking it through about two weeks toward the end of his life and needed more, and basically what happened is that my brother lost a lot of weight, could barely see. He was 115 lbs. or something like that when he died. And he died of a heart attack from the stress of Oxycontin and needing that kind of chemical. And it's a shame. Mike was 37 when



Above and top: Dean's father, James Haspiel, has written extensively of his friendship with Hollywood superstar Marilyn Monroe while a teenager. At top are photos of the actress and her young pal, and above are covers of his various Monroe-related books.

Right: A snapshot, taken in 1967, of [from left to right] father James, baby Dean, and mother Barbara Haspiel.



Photos © the respective copyright holder.



This page: Discovering the legendary 'zine review newsletter Factsheet Five (above) was a revelation for the young artist, introducing Haspiel to the amazing world of self-publishing. Below is mentor Howard Chaykin's cover to Dean Haspiel's early effort, *Verdict*, a short-lived super-hero series published by *Eternity* and *Malibu* between 1987 and '88. At top right inset and bottom are various Haspiel covers of titles which include his long-standing character (and "last romantic anti-hero") *Billy Dogma*, who debuted in the pages of *Millennium Publications'* *Keyhole*, in 1996.



Simonson on *Thor*, and so on, and so forth. And I think, in a way, as much as I've come to love Jack Kirby, in a way I think my introduction to Jack Kirby was through John Byrne, because Byrne was doing a version of Kirby. A modern homage. You know, the auteur-style, the big panels, the grandiose stories. And, of course, Stan Lee was always narrating a lot of the comics in some way, or presenting them. "Who's this Stan Lee guy? He's got his fingers in everything." It was always "Stan Lee Presents," you know? And, also, he was the first comic book guy that you saw on TV, or you heard his voice. He was tooting the comic book horn. That was his greatest skill was tooting that horn and making comics cool and fun. And personal. That was another thing. Stan Lee made you feel like he was talking directly to *you*, y'know? And I always admired that.

CBC: Okay, so when did you encounter American Splendor? Roughly what year were you at SohoZat?

Dean: Oh, gosh. I mean, that must have been late '80s.

CBC: And you mentioned the *Dark Knight*, '85-'86 was a real watershed time for comics.

Dean: Oh, it's huge. It's groundbreaking. You had *Dark Knight*, you had *Watchmen*. *Love and Rockets* was amazing. I mean, come on! Something was happening in the '80s that was shifting. In retrospect, *Watchmen* and *Dark Knight* were more like super-hero commentaries, but then it changed comics, and everyone's been trying to do *Dark Knight* and *Watchmen* ever since. My work on *The Fox* was my criticism of that approach. I was trying to recapture the pulpy fun and zaniness of super-hero comics that weren't too serious, you know? Back when things weren't so bleak and apocalyptic.

CBC: And, in the mid-'80s, certainly you had the Jack Kirby art fight. You had *The Comics Journal* being the *bête noire* of the industry. You just had a lot of energy that was being point into that. You had the *Jim Shooter*—

Dean: Well, you know what it was? It was lifting the creative veil. At the time, the only thing I knew about who made these things were the names; that assembly line credit box of who was making what, and then comics culture lifted the veil. There was *The Comics Journal*, which I loved. I wish there was still that kind of monthly print magazine talking comics shop, reviewing comics, criticizing comics and holding the work up as literature. I know there's the internet and a plethora of comics websites but I miss the consolidated print version. The stuff that made muster. I also had a subscription to the *Comics Buyer's Guide*, edited by Don and Maggie Thompson. And then, of course, I learned about the business by reading all the different articles. There was something called *Factsheet Five*, which was a 'zine that listed reviews and the addresses of all the other homemade

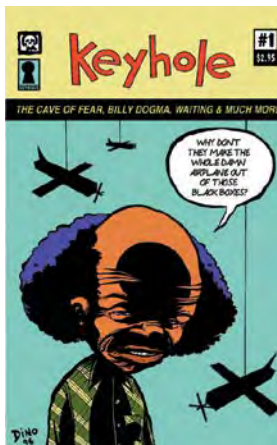


'zines and alternative comix in the country.

CBC: Right! Edited by Mike Gunderloy. A great 'zine!

Dean: A magazine that I loved, because I discovered more indie comics, like Xeroxed, folded and stapled, eight- or 20-page self-published zines and comics and stuff like that. And, of course, I grew up in New York City, so I had access to what I believed was *everything*. From St. Mark's Comics to ditty-bopping down the streets of the Lower East Side and discovering all kinds of weird stuff to these little underground shops that sold self-published wares and so much fringe culture from psychotronic movies, exploitation films, and pornography to indie/alt, underground comix, and back to the mainstream stuff. It ran the gamut and I was spoiled by that. I think one of the reasons why I can't leave New York City is because I wouldn't know how to survive in a small town that didn't have that kind of thing happening. Although, to be frank, it has diminished a lot because "print is dead," and everything's going online, and everyone lives on their smart phones and magic tablets.

CBC: And, getting back to '86 for a minute, because the veil was raised on the industry, did that compel you to be independent?



Dean: Yeah. I would say the veil was lifted between creator and creation, and so suddenly we heard about the infighting. We heard about who's an ass*le or who did what and all this stuff. I mean, to the point where that's the culture we live in now, which is just this obnoxious shame culture. Like, everyone's shaming each other and outraged. It's toxic. Back then it was like, at least you had to write a qualified article and then wait for it to be published in print, you know? [laughs]

CBC: And so did you get at all, for lack of a better term, politicized about the industry, the reality? You're in a unique position, I would say, within the industry of doing alternative comics and of working with DC and Marvel. You know, back then there was a real polarized climate in comics, like the political climate of today. One was pro-Jim Shooter or pro-Jack Kirby, pro-creator rights or comfortable being a cog in the Marvel machine... Did you envision either going to be work for yourself, the Harvey Pekar route, or working for a page rate for one of the Big Two?

Dean: I was never good enough to get hired. That's how I see it. I was just never talented enough as an artist to get hired by the Big Two. I mean, God knows, I tried. And I have technically succeeded, I've been hired, but I still feel somewhat shunned because of my art style. And, listen, one of the things I tell up-and-coming artists of any dimension, I declare, "You grow up in public," meaning not only as a person, but artistically. And that will come back in your face time and time again. A lot of people come to me at a convention today and slap a comic on my table for me to sign that I don't remember drawing, and I'll cringe looking at it. And I probably don't remember it because I don't want to remember what I did, you know? [laughter] My own embarrassment, you know. Your catalog comes back to haunt you. Out of laziness, people get quarantined, right? So if you were to say, "What did Frank Miller do?" At least he might have three things listed on his gravestone, even though he's done a ton of stuff.

Most people just get one thing that they did, and that's it. Like, you're remembered for one thing, either something that was a great hit or a great failure. I feel bad for people who are very public, very social celebrities who, as they get older, become more curmudgeonly, and then they get remembered for their curmudgeonly twilight years versus all the awesome stuff they did before that. And then they get slapped on the wrist for being a dick or something and that's how you remember them? I mean, that's awful. But, yeah, I think that if I was trying to hopscotch between alternative and mainstream. I mean, I always said I'm too alternative for the mainstream and I'm too mainstream for the alternative. Like, I was always hopscotching, but I've always been in the middle. I was a hybrid of both, because that's what I loved. And I'm more complicated than a person that just wants to draw a Curt Swan Superman or a Jim Ap-



aro Batman (not that there's anything wrong with that). If you desire to stand out or be an auteur, you've got to find your own thing. And I guess I was one of the early cartoonists who could toggle both sides. Maybe not greatly, but proficient enough to just continue to get occasionally hired and work in this business. (Which I don't recommend, by the way.) [laughs]

CBC: During the '90s, the scourge was the Image approach of everything in-your-face...

Dean: Agreed. Although, Image has reinvented itself today and is totally different.

CBC: Right. But then, all of a sudden, as far as what I noticed, by the '00s, I would say the mainstream was epitomized by [Marvel editor] Axel Alonso. There was a sudden influx of eclectic talent into the mainstream, at least trying to experiment with different stuff.

Dean: Well, think about where Axel came from. He came from journalism and then working at Vertigo under the helm of Lou Stathis. He's the one who started editing *Preacher*

Above: During the 1980s, young Haspiel learned the comics trade from three artists then at highwater marks in their respective careers — Howard Chaykin (then working on American Flagg!), Walter Simonson (Thor), and Bill Sienkiewicz (Elektra: Assassin) **Below:** Dino's Billy Dogma, 2014.



Our Pal Dan Pa



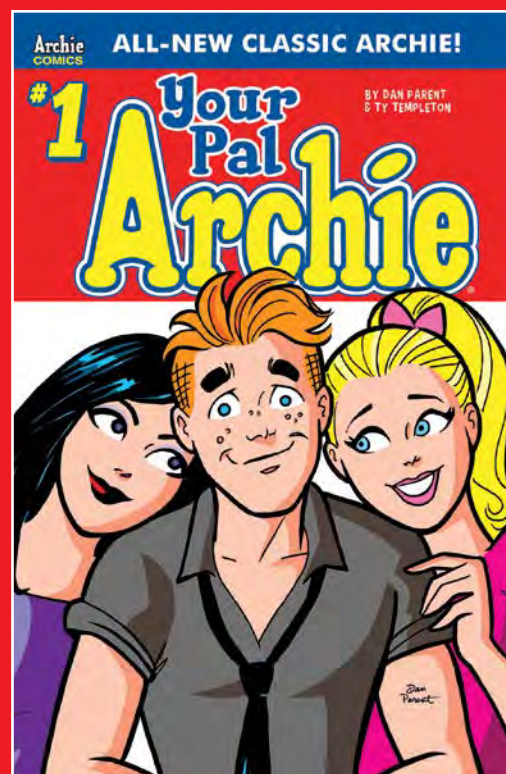
You have to hand it to mainstay Archie Comics contributor Dan Parent, a constant presence at comic book conventions nationwide. He's a relentless self-promoter, whether hawking his commissions or pushing the cartoonist's creator-owned properties, *The Carneys* and his ongoing collaboration with fellow Archie stalwart Fernando Ruiz, *Die Kitty Die*. Notably, for his creation of Kevin Keller, a recent addition to the Riverdale gang and the first openly gay character in the series, Dan received the "Outstanding Comic Book" award from the civil rights organization, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) in 2013. The artist/writer, currently drawing the "all-new classic" series, *Your Pal Archie*, was interviewed by phone on July 28, 2017.



Portrait photography ©2017 Kendall Whitehouse.

Chatting with the Archie Comics “classic” cartoonist about his favorite Riverdale girl, Kubert School training, his creator-owned Die Kitty Die, and bringing Kevin Keller to life in the Archie universe!

rent



Comic Book Creator: Are there any other artists in your family, Dan?

Dan Parent: No, not really. My mom had an artistic flair, but she never pursued it. I was really the only one who pursued it professionally.

CBC: Do you have brothers or sisters?

Dan: I do. I have a sister, Pam, who I call Mi-Mi. She's a year younger than me.

CBC: Where are you from?

Dan: West Burke, Vermont, a small town in the northeast part of the

state. I was also born in Vermont.

CBC: You grew up there?

Dan: Yes, I grew up in Vermont for most of my childhood. I was also raised in Connecticut for a period of time when my parents moved there, but we moved back to Vermont before I hit high school. So, I'm pretty much a Vermonter, raised in a pretty rural area.

CBC: What was it like?

Dan: Well, it's pretty much 10 miles to go to any kind of store, and the school was about 10 miles away. So, there was no going out of the house and walking to the store kind of thing. But it was good. I didn't enjoy it at the time, but now I appreciate it more.

CBC: Did you go to high school there?

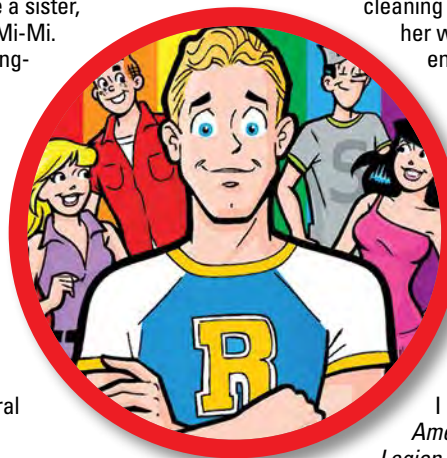
Dan: I did.

CBC: How many people in your class?

Dan: I know I graduated with 120 people. Is that a lot or not?

CBC: No, I don't think so.

Dan: I think there were 600 in the whole high school, but keep in mind this



was the whole county, basically.

CBC: Was it a pretty typical upbringing? You were into TV, music, and pop culture — that kind of stuff?

Dan: That's right. I was really into the TV big time and grew up watching a lot. I was big into reruns like *Leave It To Beaver*, *The Brady Bunch*, *I Love Lucy*, that kind of thing. Anything pop culture, really.

CBC: And when did comic books come into the picture?

Dan: Comics came into play when I was five, when mom was cleaning houses and she would have to bring me along with her when she was working. Just to keep me quiet or entertained, she started buying me comics. At the time, I think they were 15¢, so she'd buy six comics for a dollar and I would just reread them over and over again. She started me out on Harvey Comics and Archie. Those were definitely my first interests (though Harvey probably more so).

CBC: And did you graduate to the other imprints at all, Marvel and DC?

Dan: Yes. When I was probably eight or nine years old, I started getting interested in the super-hero comics, and I was definitely more of a DC guy. I was really into Superman and Batman, and I really enjoyed *Justice League of America*. Once I got to be 11 or 12, *The Legion of Super-Heroes* was my favorite, totally.

CBC: How come?

Dan: Why was that? What I liked about it is it was Superboy with the Legion of Super-Heroes. I liked that whole dynamic. I loved Superman a lot, so then I followed the whole Superboy thing into the Legion. I think it was because it was such a weird variety of



Interview Conducted by Jon B. Cooke

Portrait by Kendall Whitehouse • Transcription by Steven Tice (with Sean Delaney)



Top left: Young Danny Parent and his sister Mimi in their early years. **Below inset:** From left to right, Dan Parent, sister Mimi, and their mom.

Previous spread: At far left is Kendall Whitehouse's portrait of Dan Parent taken at the 2016 New York Comic Con. Left inset is Parent posing with his 2013 GLADD Media Award for "Outstanding Comic Book."

Top right is the first issue of Your Pal Archie, Parent's current regular assignment. Inset below are Parent-drawn vignettes of Veronica Lodge, Kevin Keller, and Kitty Raven-craft. **Below:** Parent drew the cover of Harvey Hits #4 [2017], and the Warren Kremer (whose Casper is seen in center inset below) influence is apparent in Dan's Die Kitty Die #2 variant cover Harvey pastiche.

characters. You know, the Justice League was pretty normal, generally, but the Legion had a lot of odd characters and I just liked that. I think I was attracted to that.

CBC: Did you get into The X-Men at all?

Dan: I did read X-Men in high school. The John Byrne/Chris Claremont era, of course. That was really popular. I did enjoy that, but the Legion still stayed my favorite.

CBC: There's always been a lot of talk about the X-Men representing outsiders and just being something for people who felt "alternative." I'm wondering if the Legion was like that at all for you.

Dan: I think I just related more to the Legion for whatever reason. Definitely I understood the whole thing with the X-Men, about people being attracted to that. People who felt like they were outsiders. The Legion was just more... goofy? [laughter] A little more light-hearted. It wasn't quite as dark as the X-Men got, so I think I appreciated that.

CBC: So, do you like "fun" comics? Not necessarily the way comics got dark in the '80s?

Dan: I definitely gravitate more towards the classic style of comics. I'm probably one of Darwyn Cooke's biggest fans, because I like the feel he brought to comics. I had stopped reading DCs and Marvels for a while because I was busy working for Archie and other stuff, but when



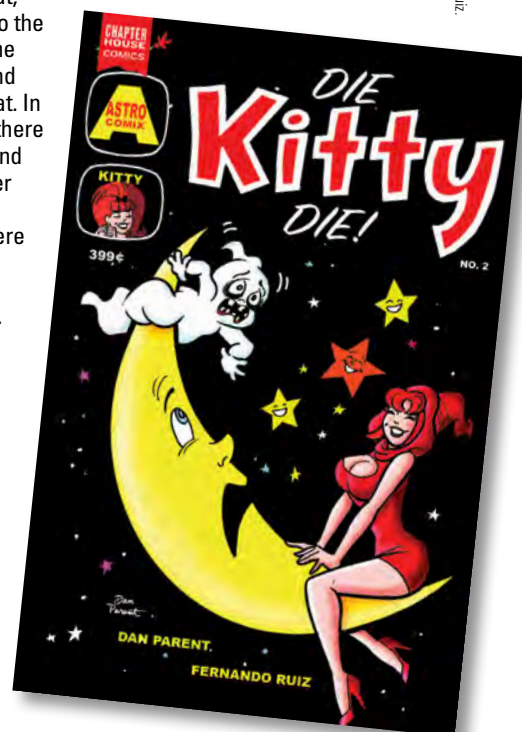
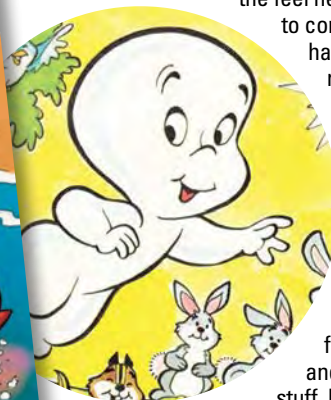
be a comic book artist or cartoonist?

Dan: I did, but I don't think I ever thought it was possible. I think I just thought, "Well, I love drawing and maybe I could be a professional." But I never really thought it would happen. I just knew I liked to do it. So I knew, like, in high school I just loved to draw. I just didn't think it would happen. [laughs] I just thought, "Well, you know..." I would draw and enjoy it on the side,

and then work at a real job! But somehow it worked out, strangely enough.

CBC: Were you known as an artist in grade school and in high school?

Dan: I think that started in junior high, where they could see I was really into it. I would never perform in plays and things like that, but I would do the artwork for the backdrops and things like that. In high school, there was myself and a couple other people in my class who were considered "the artists" of the school. Strangely enough, it was me and two of my friends that I went to high school with are actually working in the business, too. One is Scott McRae, who has been an



inker and artist for DC Comics. He does a lot of *Looney Tunes*, and Pat Brousseau, who is now a letterer now for DC.

CBC: You three were in this small Vermont school together and all three of you are pros?

Dan: All three of us, yeah! All three of us ended up going into comics.

CBC: Have you always been tight with those guys?

Dan: Yes. We're still great friends, and we all went to the Joe Kubert School together, too.

CBC: Wow! Who came up with that idea? When did you first consider that?

Dan: Well, they came up with it first. They were smarter than me. When we graduated high school, I thought, "Well, I've got to be practical." So I went to college to become an English teacher. They left right away to go to the Kubert School, and I very quickly regretted my decision. "Oh, I don't want to do this." And I was really upset and sad that they had gone on to do what they wanted to do and I didn't. So then I saved my money — and fortunately my mother and father were very supportive and they said, "Do what you want to do. Go where you need to go." So I took a year off to save money to then go down to the Kubert School. So, when I did go, Pat and Scott were in their second year at school, and I was in my first year, so we weren't in the same class because I had waited.

CBC: But back in high school, you in the same class, right?

Dan: In high school we were all in the same grade and graduated high school together, but when we went to Kubert School I started later because I dragged my heels. But strangely enough, I graduated from Kubert School and they didn't. They didn't go all three years. They got work in the industry, but I stayed the whole three years and loved it.

CBC: Did you always find the Archie comics appealing?

Dan: I did. As a kid, I just was fascinated with the whole Riverdale High School thing. You grew up and that's kind of what you wanted your life to be like. You wanted to live in a town like Riverdale where they're all friendly with each other and there's no major problems. I definitely gravitated towards that whole feel. I just liked the characters, which were really good. And then, when I went to the Kubert School, I started to gravitate back towards that approach. I was into the super-hero stuff in terms of drawing that, but everything I drew still has a little bit of a cartoony look to it. The Archie style really fit my style because, while I could draw well realistically, I always hated lots of detail. I always hated over-rendered and overdrawn stuff, and the Archie stuff just really seemed to really fit what I was trying to do.

CBC: Was the first comic book type work that you ever did, was it in the Kubert School? Or did you do some in high school or junior high?

Dan: Do you mean the first work that I got in comics?

CBC: No. I mean just comic book storytelling. Did you start doing it in junior high or high school?

Dan: You mean like doing my own stories type thing?

CBC: Yeah.

Dan: I know I did some assignments in high school and started to come up with my own stories. I think I even came up with a couple of Archie stories when I was in high school.

CBC: Really?



Dan: They were really bad. I remember that. They were really terrible. [laughter] I did send in some stuff to Archie. I think it was when I was in college before I went to the Kubert School. I sent in a story and, of course, it was rejected because it was bad. And then, a couple more times during Kubert School, I sent stuff in that got rejected. It wasn't, of course, until my third year at Kubert School when I had improved a lot, and that was when I was actually hired.

Later, after I was probably working for Archie eight or nine years, Victor Gorelick, the editor-in-chief, was going through his files, cleaning out his old files of submissions, and he found my submissions that I had sent in and showed them to me. [laughs] I was like, "Wow! You still have these." [laughter] They didn't send them back. They sent you a letter back but they wouldn't send the submissions back. It was kind of funny to see them and see how bad they were.

CBC: Do they still got them or did you get them?

Dan: I have them now. Yeah, they gave them back to me. I have them somewhere. Hidden away where nobody will see. [laughs]

CBC: You better dig them out for this, Dan! [laughs]

Dan: We'll see. I don't know about that.

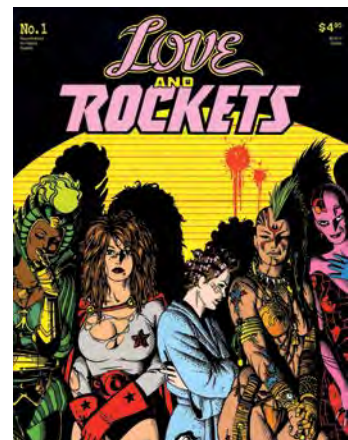
CBC: So, how was your high school experience? Were you sociable? Were you popular?

Dan: I think I was kind of middle of the road. I was kind of nerdy and geeky, but I got along with everybody pretty well. I mean, I certainly hung out with the nerdier kids, but I was able to get along with the more popular kids. I was definitely kind of in the middle somewhere, but I did like school. I enjoyed going there, probably because I lived out in such a rural area. Going to school was my social life, basically. There wasn't a lot to do when I was at home, so I think I did enjoy going and socializing with kids that way.

CBC: Now, were you openly gay when you were in high school?



This page: Two big influences on the development of comic book artist Dan Parent were the Legion of Super-Heroes and Love and Rockets. At top is Parent's clever mash-up of the Riverdale gang and the LSH and above is Joe Staton and Dick Giordano's cover for Superboy & the Legion of Super-Heroes #250 [Apr. 1979]. Inset left is the unaltered Jaime Hernandez cover art for Archie Meets Ramones #1 [2016]. (For publication, the band members' faces were blacked-out.) Below is L&R #1 [Sept. 1982].





This page: In 2012, *Riverdale* staffer and writer Alex Segura dreamed up the story behind *Archie Meets Kiss*, a mini-series teaming the *Riverdale* crew with the comics-inspired rock band. Dan Parent drew the four issues and, at top, poses alongside Segura with rhythm guitarist Paul Stanley and bass guitarist Gene Simmons (squeezing Parent's cheeks at far right) to promote the team-up. Parent's covers for the title are above and right. **Below:**

Though primarily drawn by Gisele Lagace, Dan Parent did contribute a variant cover to the recent *Archie Comics* crossover event, *Archie Meets Ramones*:

Next page: Dan Parent and George Takei (who guest-starred in *Kevin Keller* #6) at a Midtown Comics signing, Dec. 2012. At bottom are other *Archie* crossovers drawn by Parent.



Dan: I would define Kevin as like the boy next door. He is very good-hearted and a lot like Archie. In his storyline, Kevin is a kid who doesn't quite belong because his father's in the military and they move around a lot. So Kevin's always trying to find a home. He always feels a little unsettled. And we read stories about kids who feel that way, military brats who sort of never had that home base that they feel comfortable with. But with Kevin, even though he had that whole situation, he had a very strong family bond. So we basically just came up with a character who is a likeable kid with a good family.

There's two things you can do with a character who is gay: You can make it so his family doesn't accept him, or his domestic life is very difficult, or his coming out situation is much easier than what it would be in real life. We decided to go with Kevin having a very supportive family because it's an *Archie* comic book, and people look to *Archie Comics* as a place for an escape. So the people see Kevin's coming out story, as supportive and good as it is... I mean, some people have said, "Well, that's not really the way it is, but this is how it should be." So that's the *Archie* motto: it's fantasy and *Riverdale* is a place where you

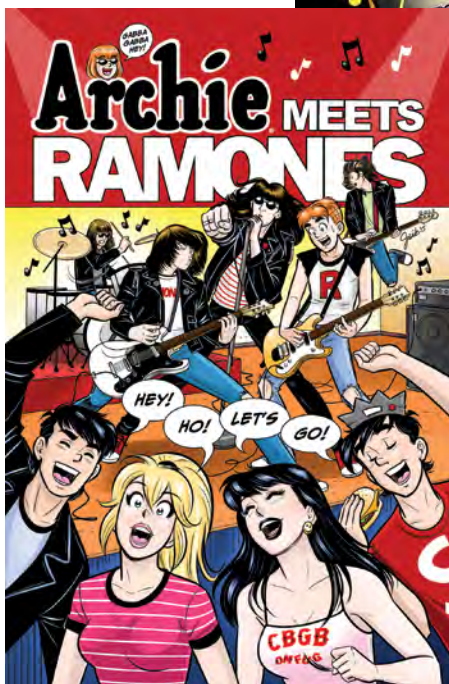
want to live. So that's why we decided to go with Kevin's coming out being as positive as it was.

CBC: It's interesting that, instead of having him feel alienated from straight society, you instead placed the outsider aspect by latching onto the fact that he was a military brat.

Dan: Right.

CBC: He was just moving from place to place. You were able to have your cake and eat it, too, so to speak. That's a clever approach to be able to still deal with it, the kid feels like he's an outsider, but not because of his homosexuality, which, in *Archie* world, is normal, right? It's just regular? But you were still able to convey that he needed to belong.

Dan: Right. In order to have a somewhat realistic story, we did show him getting bullied, and when he was a kid he was a scrawny kid who, they called him a sissy, that kind of stuff. So we did address the fact that he was an outsider to some people. And there were some bad kids in the school who got on his case for being gay. So we had to touch on that somewhat, but, basically, the framework of the story is that at least he had a very strong family unit and a good core group of friends, mainly the *Archie* characters, who were



in a character that was going to stick around. We wanted to make him a good character, and we wanted a really good storyline to introduce him, so we worked hard to make sure that it didn't come off like a stunt, that it came off as a good story. And we had planned to keep using Kevin. So while we weren't sure if Kevin would take off, or if it would get a lot of media attention (though we knew we would get some because it was a gay character in an *Archie* comic), we just knew that if we did it right, that if we did a good story, that it would serve its purpose to permanently include him in the gang and if the character takes off, great. And, fortunately for us, the character did take off and people really liked Kevin.

CBC: Taking away sexual preference, how would you define Kevin in a nutshell?

accepting. So we tried to cover both grounds. We tried to show both sides. But it wasn't like a gritty coming-out story by any means.

CBC: Are the Archie comics digests still being sold in Walmart?

Dan: They are! They're still huge sellers for us. They are in Walmart, Target, in a lot of supermarket chains, and I'm still writing and drawing classic stories, too, for the digests.

CBC: Do you think it's fair that they always call DC and Marvel the "Big Two," though Archie actually gets wider distribution because they're alone in the retail outlets? They're "Where America Shops," so to speak!

Dan: Well, I think that's definitely a way why Archie stays in the limelight, because we're still available to the general public. Since we had the reboot about two, three years ago, we finally got more of a presence in comic shops, but, really,

we've stayed in sight in a big way because of newsstand presence. There are so many Walmarts and supermarket chains, you know, where we have a very strong presence. When you're up there alongside of TV Guide, People magazine, you're really up there! So, I think, that's probably been the main way we've stayed in the limelight was from that exposure.

CBC: And it's also the perennial love triangle between Betty, Veronica, and Archie is a part of the American mythos, isn't it?

Dan: Absolutely! It always goes back to the love triangle. No matter what you do, no matter what character you have, or whether you bring in Cheryl, even when you bring in Kevin or another character, the storylines always revert back to Archie, Betty, and Veronica love triangle. And it's just something that's in everyone's blood at this point. "Are you a Betty? Are you a Veronica?"

People relate to Archie. I mean, it's just, yeah, it's hard to explain, but it's mainstream.

CBC: And it gets right to the sexual awakening of teenagers at a certain time.

Dan: It does. When you see this goofy Archie guy and these two gorgeous girls after him, I guess it kind of sets you up for failure, in a way!! You're thinking, "Gee, maybe this is what high school will be like." Of course it's



not, but it offers that whole fantasy element of high school that is so appealing.

CBC: Boy, a lot has happened to Archie in the last few years! I watched the Riverdale TV show. And I'm happy — and really shocked — to see how they've reinvented it. How do they do it? And just prove

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