

ROY THOMAS' IRON-FISTED  
COMICS FANZINE

# Alter Ego™

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**DOUG  
MOENCH**

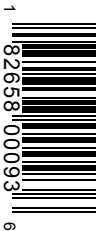


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P.C. Hamerlinck presents John G. Pierce's parade of South American Marvel Family covers.

**On Our Cover:** When we asked celebrated longtime Master of Kung Fu artist **Paul Gulacy** to suggest an illustration by himself for this issue centered around the early work of Doug Moench, he sent us scans of a number of wonderful commission pieces he's done in recent years. This was the pick of a lusciously-drawn and -painted litter. Thanks, Paul! And thanks to photographer Eliot Brown for the photo of Doug Moench. [Shang-Chi, Nick Fury, & Black Widow TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.; Fu Manchu TM & © Estate of Sax Rohmer; other art © Paul Gulacy.]

**Above:** Writer/artist **George Brenner's** "The Clock" was the first masked-hero feature created for comic books, appearing in such titles as Comics Magazine Company's **Funny Picture Stories**, Vol. 1, #2 (Dec. 1936). Courtesy of Mike Kooiman's blog "The Quality Companion Companion." [TM & © The respective trademark & copyright holders.]



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FIRST PRINTING.



This issue is dedicated to the memory of  
**Ken Barr, George Brenner,  
Daniel Keyes, Ethan Roberts, & Paul Ryan**



# The Rising & Advancing Of A Spirit

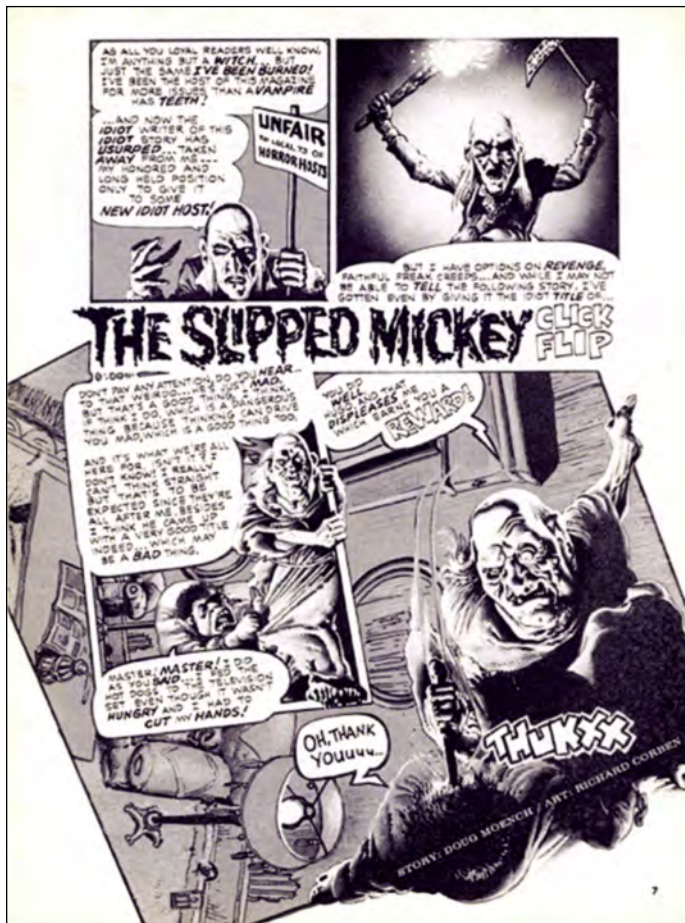
## DOUG MOENCH Talks About His Early Years In Comics

Conducted & Transcribed by Richard J. Arndt

**D**oug Moench began his comics career in 1970, writing horror and mystery stories for Warren, Skywald, and DC Comics. In 1973 he began working for Marvel Comics, writing first for their various black-&-white magazines and then for such color comics as Master of Kung Fu, Astonishing Tales ("Ka-Zar" and "Deathlok"), Werewolf by Night, Frankenstein, and others. He co-created Moon Knight with artist Don Perlin and wrote two superior original series for the Planet of the Apes franchise—"Terror on the Planet of the Apes" and "Future History Chronicles"—with artists



Mike Ploog and Tom Sutton. With Ploog he also created Weirdworld. In addition, while at Marvel he worked on licensed characters such as Kull the Destroyer and Doc Savage. After leaving Marvel, Moench worked for many years on "Batman," creating several new villains for the Dark Knight's mythos, including The Black Mask. With frequent collaborator Paul Gulacy, he has worked on such acclaimed titles as Master of Kung Fu, Batman, Six from Sirius, and Slash Maraud. This interview was conducted by phone on October 3, 2015.



Doug Moench

presides over pages he wrote for the two comics companies for whom he did the most work during the first half of the 1970s: Warren Publishing's *Creepy* #54 (July 1973), with art by Rich Corben—and Marvel Comics' *Master of Kung Fu* #25 (Feb. 1975); pencils by Paul Gulacy, inks by Sal Trapani. Thanks to Nick Caputo & Shane Foley for the scans. [Creepy page TM & © New Comic Company, LLC; MoKF page TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]



## "What The Hell Is That?"

**RICHARD ARNDT:** Thank you for agreeing to this interview. Could we start out by learning something about your early life?

**DOUG MOENCH:** Born in Chicago. My mother was born and raised in Scotland. She met my father when he was stationed there in World War II. He brought her home after the war.

**RA:** What memories do you have of your early comic book reading?

**MOENCH:** My earliest memories are of reading the "Uncle Scrooge" and "Donald Duck" stories by Carl Barks. Those stories remain some of my favorites of all time. I don't know if I actually have a memory of the EC Comics or have just convinced myself after the fact. I would have been very, very young to have read them when they were first published. However, I seem to remember being fascinated by the EC books.

I didn't really buy comics at that time because I was too young. Didn't have any money, but I used to sit on the floor in the corner store and read them all. I also liked *Tomahawk*. I remember a *Bugs Bunny Annual* that really held me spellbound. The annuals, I guess from Dell, were really long at the time.

**RA:** Yeah, they didn't run any ads in their books. Even their regular-size comics were a full 52 pages when you started reading.

**MOENCH:** Lots of pages. The annuals were square-bound, nice and fat. I don't remember when *Atomic Mouse* was being published, but that would have been a favorite, too. What year would that have been? Would you know?

**RA:** It certainly was the 1950s or early 1960s. [INTERVIEWER'S NOTE: *Atomic Mouse* was published by Charlton from 1953-1964.]

**MOENCH:** If it was the early 1960s, that's what I remember reading around age twelve or so. Yeah, good book.

I don't remember exactly when, but at one point, I started reading *Superman* and *Batman*. I remember I was tutoring a kid who lived down the block and his mother would, at the end of the tutoring session, take me into a room in their house that had magazine racks—wood ones, they were furniture. The racks had all these great comics in them. I don't know if they were her husband's stash or the kid I was tutoring's older brother's comics, but she would let me pick out comics on top of paying me money for the actual tutoring. I remember taking the *Batman* and *Detective Comics* all the time. Some of those comics were pretty old. I knew they were different from the *Batman* comics I could buy at the corner store.

I read everything! I read *Herbie*... you know, the fat guy who wore a toilet plunger on his head. To make a long story short, there came a point when I was twelve or thirteen and decided that

comics were kid stuff and it was time to grow up. I just went cold turkey. That period of not reading comics lasted only a couple of months, because one day I went to a different mom-and-pop store than my usual one. This one was where I used to get a Coke and French fries all the time. I'd slather ketchup all over the fries. It was a great time.

I remember doing this one day and I glanced around at the magazine racks, which was where the comics were also kept. Remember, I no longer had any interest in comics but something caught my eye. It was a logo where the words seemed to talk about an adventure comic but the style of the logo suggested a humor comic. I thought "What the hell is that?" It was *The Fantastic Four*. It looked like it should have been a funny comic, but *Fantastic Four* sounded like something totally different. I went and picked it out and it was *Fantastic Four* #1. I read it while I was eating my fries, and I bought it to take home. I was hooked all over again on comics. In fact, more than ever!

After that book, I don't know what came next—"Thor" in *Journey into Mystery* or maybe "Iron Man" in *Tales of Suspense*. There was a whole bunch of things coming, it seemed, very fast—"Spider-Man" and on and on. I got really, really into comics then.

## "There Was This Guy Named Don Glut..."

**RA:** How did you get your start as a writer? I know you were writing before you began to write comics...

**MOENCH:** Well, early on, I wrote for the school newspaper, but I was into comics way before I started writing for publication. I wrote a letter to [Amazing] *Spider-Man* and it was published in the letters page. This was when they still published your address with your letter. There was this guy named Don Glut, who became one of my good friends. He saw this letter in *Spider-Man*, and whenever he saw anyone with a Chicago address on the Marvel letter pages he would look them up in the phone book and call them.

I got this call out of the blue—"Is this Douglas Moench?" I go, "Yeah." "My name is Don Glut, and Saturday I'm showing all fifteen chapters of *The Adventures of Captain Marvel* serial in my basement. And if you'll pitch in a dollar, my mother will make popcorn! There's six other people coming, and they're helping to pay for the rental of the serial!"



### That Toddlin' Town

(Above:) Don Glut, 1960s. The Chicago writer provided the photo to accompany an in-depth interview in *A/E* #143.

(Right:) A 1964 snapshot of a quartet of Windy City comics fans. (L. to r.): Doug Moench, unknown, Billy Placzek, & Alex Almarez. In a notation by the late Jerry Bails, the "unknown" person is listed as "dftric," but that abbreviation hasn't helped us ID him thus far. Thanks to Jean Bails for the pic, of which Doug writes: "[The 'Nov. 1964' date] on the border makes me 16. Which means the Beatles and Ed Sullivan took months longer than I remember to work their radical transformation of me. Must've begun minutes after this photo was taken, however, because it took me three months to lose 70 pounds, and 1965 was my senior year in high school (graduated in January '66, having started school a half-year early back when that was still possible), and I know I was fully transformed for my senior year."







### From Eerie, Dearie!

Splash page of a story scripted by Moench and drawn by Tom Sutton for Warren Publishing's *Eerie* #36 (Nov. 1971). Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © New Comic Company, LLC.]

that's what it turned into.

So my *Midwest Magazine* editor Richard Takeurchi asked me to tell him about this Jim Warren guy. He asked me what the deal was with Warren. Warren wanted, at one point, to sue the *Chicago Sun-Times*. I think it started amiably, with Warren getting his hundred copies and being able to mention it in *Creepy* or where ever it showed up, but then he got nasty and lawyers were saying that the *Sun-Times* owed him money and if they didn't pay up he was going to sue them. I had some of my own problems with Warren. When I started selling stories to Skywald, he got kind of pissed off.

**RA:** Yeah, he had this edict, started when *Web of Horror* came out in 1969, but he continued it when *Skywald* appeared, that if you worked for him you couldn't work for his direct competitors on the newsstands.

**MOENCH:** That's right! I explained to him that if he wanted me to be exclusive to him, then he had to be exclusive to me. He couldn't buy stories from any other writer. If I can't sell all of my stories to you, then you can't buy stories from any other writer. He had to at least buy everything that I wrote. If you want everything I write to go to you, then you have to take everything I write! If you don't want it, of course I'm going to send it somewhere else. His editors were sending me back stories without even reading them! So it's

### This Just In?

Although Doug mostly stopped sending comics scripts to Warren Publishing in mid-1973, illustrated versions of his yarns continued to come out for several years—as witness this tale drawn by Leopold Sanchez, from a color section in *Eerie* #72 (Feb. 1976). Thanks to Nick Caputo. [TM & © New Comic Company, LLC.]



James Warren

Original publisher of the Warren Publishing material.



Tom Sutton

not like they were wretched stories. The editors admitted that they just had too many with my name on them.

**RA:** To be honest, I never saw any difference in quality for the stories you wrote for either Warren or Skywald.

**MOENCH:** No, because there wasn't any! I never knew where my stories were going to end up. I didn't know which Warren magazine they were going to appear in, let alone what Skywald book. They were just written as my latest brainstorm and there you go. So Warren got all pissed off and he didn't really have any answer for it. He kept arguing with me, and after the phone call ended without the matter resolved, Warren sent me this letter. I sent him a letter back, again explaining my viewpoint. Then he sent me another letter, and I thought this letter was really beyond the pale, just crazy. So my next letter back to him read simply, "Dear Jim. Okay. F\*\*\* you!" and I signed my name to it. That was the whole letter.







### A Zombie By Any Other Name...

One of the story-titles Doug made up on the spot so that Roy Thomas would have an excuse to okay a bunch of advance vouchers for him was "Jilimbi's World," which popped up some months later in *Tales of the Zombie* #3 (Jan. 1974). Art by Enrique Badia (aka Enrique Badia Romero), noted artist of *Axa* and *Modesty Blaise*. Thanks to Mark Muller. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

**MOENCH:** I think one was called "Jilimbi's Word" [*Tales of the Zombie* #3 (Jan. 1974)]. Probably "Nightfilth Rising"...

**RA:** That one sounds like a Skywald title, although it appeared in a Marvel book [*Tales of the Zombie* #4 (Mar. 1975)].

**MOENCH:** Again, I never earmarked anything specifically for Skywald. I went through a phase where I was trying to do really weird titles. Those "Spook" titles were a part of that. I don't like most of the titles, but I did like one called "The Slipped Mickey Click Flip" [*Creepy* #54 (July 1973)].

**RA:** That was a great story, though, too. Beautiful Richard Corben art.

**MOENCH:** Most of them were good stories, but they had ridiculous, outrageous titles!

**RA:** Perhaps, but in the case of "The Slipped Mickey Click Flip" the outrageous title accurately fit the story. You had another good Corben story called "The Low Spark of High Heeled Noise."



Rich Corben



Enrique Badia Romero

**MOENCH:** That one was because I was listening to a song by the band Traffic. I don't exactly remember the original—"The Low Spark of High Heeled Boys" maybe? I don't know. Now that I've corrupted the title I can't remember the original! But I loved Traffic and their lead singer Steve Winwood. I would play that album over and over while I was writing these stories.

I wrote a story for *Master of Kung Fu* about a heavyweight champion named Midnight Carter. The name of the story was "Carter's Super Midnight" [*Master of Kung Fu* #96 (Jan. 1981)], and the title described how he won the bout at midnight and became the new champion. But the title came about because I picked up the carbon paper—I was still using carbon paper for the second copy back then—and I noticed the carbon paper's brand name was actually called "Carter's Super Midnight," so I used that as the title for that story. I would pick up on stuff like that and use them for titles, not even knowing sometimes where the words came from. I was using that title, thinking it probably came from a song, and then realized I'd gotten it from the carbon paper!

**RA:** After writing a fairly large number of stand-alone stories for the black-&-white magazines, you did gradually move into the color books.

**MOENCH:** Like I said, during that initial two-week tryout, I did



### A Divine "Spark"

Splash page of the full-color, long-titled Doug Moench/Rich Corben story from *Creepy* #57 (Nov. 1973). Thanks to Jim Kealy. [TM & © New Comic Company, LLC.]





### What About Its Sequel—"Carter's Little Liver Pills"?

It's years outside A/E's usual franchise era, but since Doug related the story behind the title "Carter's Super Midnight," we figured we might as well print the tale's splash, from *Master of Kung Fu* #96 (Jan. 1981). Art by Mike Zeck & Gene Day, whose photos will be seen a few pages from now. Thanks to Jim Kealy & Leonardo de Sá. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

my first work on the color books, but it was just the one issue. It was because the regular writer couldn't do it for whatever reason. So they gave it to me because I was churning this stuff out.

I was actually hired to be an assistant editor, and at that time an assistant editor was nothing more than a glorified proofreader. There were two of us—me and Don McGregor, who became one of my best friends.

I hated it. I just *hated* it. When I was in Chicago, I was reading these comic books and having a great time. My favorite stuff was the Neal Adams-Denny O'Neil *Batman* stuff and Roy doing *The Avengers*. Len Wein's *Swamp Thing* and, for a lighter break, Gerry Conway's *Spider-Man*. Gerry became a friend, too. He lived right around the corner from me in New York. Anyway, I read the stories one right after the other and enjoyed reading them. Now, at Marvel, I had to proofread some of these same books, and the first one I did was *Spider-Man* by Gerry Conway. So I started proofreading this story and it became that thing where you can't see the forest for the trees. You get so wrapped up in the minutiae that you can't enjoy the story! The way Don and I did this was, we had our own white-out and X-Acto-blades. We would actually scrape off where the inker went across the panel border or white it out. We would fix real easy writing errors if there was just one word there

that needed to be fixed. Otherwise, you had to send the page to the bullpen and that was a pain in the ass because it could take forever to get the page finalized.

So I was always sitting there making sure there's the right number of stripes on Captain America's shield or whatnot. But I was talking about my first proofing effort, which was *Spider-Man*. I'm so lost in the minutiae that I get to the end of the story and I'm thinking, "Wow! What the hell happened to Gerry Conway? That sucked!" [laughs] I just hated it! The process of proofreading something just kills the flavor of a story. I realized that I had no idea of whether it sucked or not. I couldn't remember what happened on page 1 by the time I got to page 17! Every little letter was perfect, but I had no idea what the story was about.

Marvel hired me to do this for eight hours a day—sometimes it was nine hours. Then I'd go home to my new girlfriend and I'd have to sit at home and write! Because Marvel was also expecting me to write all these stories! I'd be up to two or three in the morning. I'd get a couple hours of sleep, then head to Marvel to do my proofreading. I think I had the shortest tenure on proofreading at Marvel ever. After two or maybe three months Roy called me into his office. I thought to myself I must not be working out or whatever. He was so serious! So Roy looks at me and says, "We're going to need more writing from you." I go, "What! You've got to be kidding. I'm already writing way more than any other writer here, plus I'm working in the office full-time! Forty hours a week!"

Roy goes, "Yeah, I know." I told Roy that I was barely sleeping as it was, and if he wanted any more writing from me, then I was going to have to stay home. Roy goes, "I was afraid you were going to say that. OK, stay long enough to train your replacement and then stay home and do more writing."

At that point I finally realized that I was going to be doing a lot of color books. Not just the black-&-white stories. I think they had already given me "Man-Wolf," in *Creatures on the Loose*, and *Master of Kung Fu*. Then they offered me *Werewolf by Night*. I said "C'mon! You're already got me doing 'Man-Wolf.' Two werewolf books? Give me a break!" So I dropped the "Man-Wolf" book and took *Werewolf by Night*, because I liked that book more. Soon I was doing enormous amounts of writing. People didn't realize it, I think. I was writing the monthly *Planet of the Apes* black-&-white book, which was 60-some pages every month.

**RA:** Yeah, there were two or three serials per issue.

**MOENCH:** Yeah! That wasn't a 17-page title! I was doing the *Doc Savage* black-&-white, which was another 60-odd-page length. All those little black-&-white stories and some very long ones as well. I remember doing a 30-odd-page "Morbis" story for *Vampire Tales*. There were also some long science-fiction adaptations for *Marvel Preview* and *Unknown Worlds of Science Fiction*.

So, as it turned out, I hadn't had to move to New York after all! Now I was there, though, so, you know... it all worked out.



**Don McGregor**

Marvel writer and friend of Doug Moench—as depicted in a photo spread in *Creem* magazine for April 1973. Thanks to Sean Howe. [© the respective copyright holders.]



## "Englehart's Giving Up Master Of Kung Fu. Do You Want It?"

**RA:** Can you tell us a little about how you got involved with Master of Kung Fu? Because you were on that book for a long time... you clearly pretty much defined the character.

**MOENCH:** Yeah. I was on that book for ten years. Over a hundred monthly issues, five giant-sized issues, and lots of stories in the black-&-white *The Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*. It was unbelievable how much kung fu stuff I was writing.

You know, I just got the fabulous news that Marvel has finally worked out the details with the Sax Rohmer estate, and they are going to be reprinting the entirety of *Master of Kung Fu* in a series of hardcover, or possibly softcover, volumes.

**RA:** I'm so excited about that! That's one of the great Marvel books I thought would never get reprinted because of the problems with having Fu Manchu, a non-Marvel character, all the way throughout the series.

**MOENCH:** I think this was maybe the fifth time Marvel tried to free up the rights. About a year and a half ago, Marvel told me that they were real close to a deal. I was so sky-high! Then the rug got pulled out from that effort. At the last minute the deal just went south. This time they told me, "I know we've said this before, but it looks like it's really going to happen this time."

**RA:** I understand the upcoming books are going to be Omnibus volumes. All the color stories appearing in four volumes. An Omnibus is a big, fat book that collects a lot of stories. The Jack Kirby Thor volumes I have contained between 30 and 40 issues in each book. More than 700 pages per book.

**MOENCH:** How many pages? Are you kidding me? I was talking to my wife and I thought it would be along the lines of ten hardcovers, especially if they included all the black-&-white stories. The *Moon Knight* books are fat books, but nothing like that! Still, every single page of my *Moon Knight* is in print, no matter whether it was color or black-&-white.

**RA:** I'm hearing four volumes for Master of Kung Fu plus two separate *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu* books, which will collect the complete black-&-white magazines. The material in the Thor Omnibuses, of course, has been reprinted many times in much smaller trade paperbacks and in the Marvel Masterworks hardcover series as well. Maybe down the road, that will happen with Master of Kung Fu as well.

I'd would like to talk about the artists you had on Master of Kung Fu, because you had a series of really great artists on that book.

**MOENCH:** It was one of the books I wrote that I really liked. I personally would make the point of handing the proofreading of the book to Don McGregor so it wasn't ruined and I could actually

read it. Steve Englehart wrote three or four of the first issues, I don't really remember....

**RA:** He wrote the first three color books and the first two black-&-white stories.

**MOENCH:** I think I got the book because Roy overheard me saying that I liked it. Englehart was going to start some other book, I think a new title, but I have no idea what it was. Something had to give and he, I thought, like an idiot, gave up *Master of Kung Fu* to do this new book. Still, who am I to say, if he's having a better time writing everything else? Still, he gave up the book. I really don't know the reasons why he gave up the book.

But Roy said, "Englehart's giving up *Master of Kung Fu*. Do you want it?" I said, "You betcha." After I did several issues, I thought, "Oh, I bet *this* is why Englehart gave up the book!" It was the realization that the realities of the stories were a real dead end. You had this pacifist who's a real good fighter and he never wants to fight but he really has to fight all the time. It boiled down to: every issue, he'd be walking down the street and a bunch of assassins would come out of manholes or off the fire escapes and he's forced to fight. It's OK if that happens for a three-issue arc or something like that. It's what I did for the first batch of stories I wrote, but, in the long run, this was untenable. You couldn't write a serialized book for very long that way.



**Paul Gulacy**  
and his wife Nanci, in a light moment  
at a comics convention. Photo by Keif  
Simon & Jim Murtagh.



### Changing Horses In Mid-Kick

Doug Moench began his tenure on *Master of Kung Fu* by scripting the latter half of issue #20 (Sept. 1974). Gerry Conway had written the first half. Thanks to Mark Muller. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]





# REED CRANDALL

## Illustrator of the Comics

From the 1940s to the '70s, REED CRANDALL brought a unique and masterful style to American comic art. Using an illustrator's approach on everything he touched, Crandall gained a reputation as the "artist's artist" through his skillful interpretations of Golden Age super-heroes **DOLL MAN**, **THE RAY**, and **BLACKHAWK** (his signature character); horror and sci-fi for the legendary **EC COMICS** line; Warren Publishing's **CREEPY**, **EERIE**, and **BLAZING COMBAT**; the **THUNDER AGENTS** and **EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS** characters; and even **FLASH GORDON** for King Features. Comic art historian **ROGER HILL** has compiled a complete and extensive history of Crandall's life and career, from his early years and major successes, through his tragic decline and passing in 1982. This **FULL-COLOR HARDCOVER** includes **NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN PHOTOS**, a wealth of **RARE AND UNPUBLISHED ARTWORK**, and over **EIGHTY THOUSAND WORDS** of insight into one of the true illustrators of the comics.

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# The Clock Strikes!

## A Son's Remembrance of GEORGE BRENNER, Creator Of Comic Books' First Masked Hero

Conducted & Transcribed by Mike Kooiman

### Interviewer's Introduction

**G**eorge Edward Brenner was one of the earliest comic book creators. His obscurity belies the notable fact that he created the first original masked hero for a comic book. This radar blip was called "The Clock," a hero who, like his radio and pulp-mag predecessors *The Shadow* and *The Green Hornet*, wore a suit and hat and covered his face with a sheet-like mask. The Clock's first two appearances were in two magazines that appeared in the same month: *Funny Pages* #6 and *Funny Picture Stories* #1 (Nov. 1936), both published by Comics Magazine Company.

Comics Magazine was started by two defectors from National (DC), Bill Cook and John Mahon. (After a series of acquisitions, Comics Magazine Co.'s titles were eventually published by the Centaur group.) Jim Steranko's *History of the Comics*, Vol. 2, noted that Everett "Busy" Arnold, founder of Quality Comics, had advised Cook and Mahon, and this is probably how George Brenner first met Arnold as well. Comics Magazine Co. began to fail just as Arnold was establishing the company that became known as "Quality." A year later, Quality took on Brenner and "The Clock," beginning in *Feature Funnies* #3 (Dec. 1937).

Brenner also created Quality Comics' first masked hero, *The Hawk* (T. James Harrington II, a former football star and wealthy heir). "The Hawk" appeared in *Feature Funnies* #2, but when "The Clock" moved to Quality with issue #3, "The Hawk" disappeared after that lone adventure. Even the finale of *The Hawk*'s story heralded *The Clock*'s arrival next month. [For the record, comics' first (externally) super-

powered super-hero was Dr. Occult (*New Fun Comics* #6, Oct. 1935), and the first real super-powered hero was, of course, *Superman* (*Action Comics* #1, June 1938). Both these heroes were created by writer Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster—but neither of them wore masks, which soon became an equally important comic book tradition.]

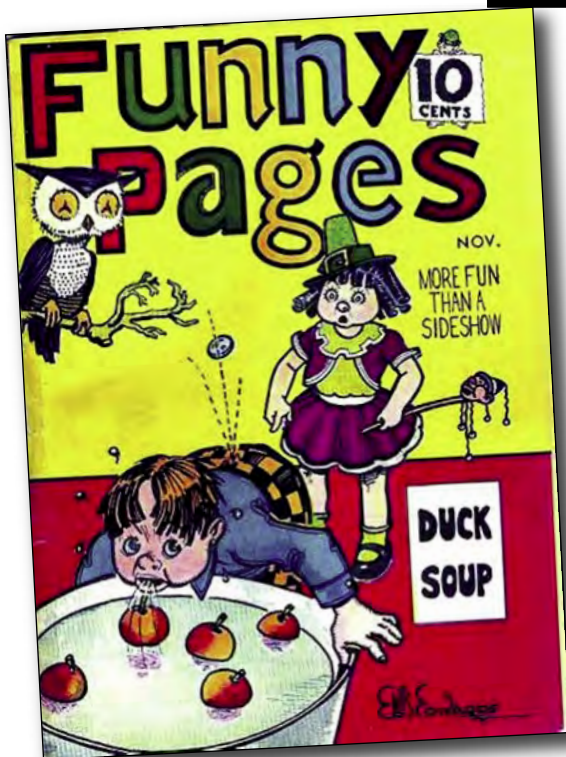
"The Clock" was Brenner's first signed comic strip, though he had started out doing production work. He was an untrained storyteller, so it was his first foray. Brenner was a sports enthusiast who had briefly studied dentistry in college, but the Great Depression forced him, like so many comics pioneers, to take the job to help his family.

Most would agree that he was a stronger storyteller than an artist, but Brenner's work frequently showed flashes of brilliance. He presented novel characters and often delivered the unexpected. His creative



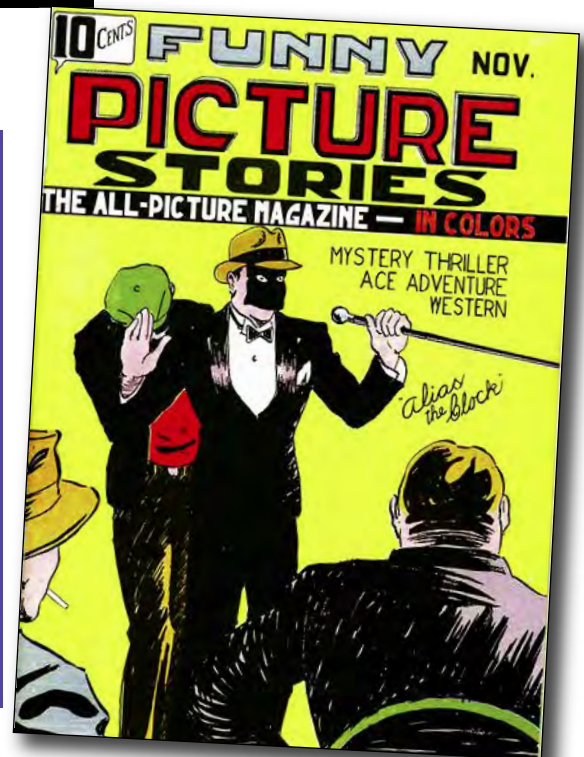
George Brenner

in a "pre-1937" photo supplied by his son, John Brenner. This photo was taken during a card game with his friend Gerard Kane.



### Setting "The Clock"

Brenner's feature "The Clock" debuted in two comics in the same month, both from Comics Magazine Company: *Funny Pages*, Vol. 1, #6, and *Funny Picture Stories*, Vol. 1, #1 (both Nov. 1936). The cover of the former is by Ellis Edwards; Brenner penciled (and perhaps inked) the latter. "The Clock" ran in 2-page installments in *Funny Pages*, Vol. 1, #6-11... and in 7-page stories in *FPP*, Vol. 1, #1, 3, & 5, before the latter title was changed, first to *Detective Picture Stories*, then to *Keen Detective Funnies*. Yeesh... only one caption into the interview, and we're already exhausted trying to keep everything straight! [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]





contributions were largely over by 1943, when he graduated to editor-in-chief at *Quality*, a position which he held through 1949. After that, he wrote freelance Westerns for about a year, and in 1951 he was recruited by Helen Meyer to be an editor at Dell.

While researching *The Quality Companion* (TwoMorrows Publishing, 2012), I failed to uncover any significant information about George Brenner. My profile was pieced together with anecdotes from various Alter Ego interviews conducted by Jim Amash. After publication, I continued to dig and found some Brenner family information on *Ancestry.com*, including Brenner's obituary:

GEORGE EDWARD BRENNER, age 43, died on September 13, 1952, at his home in Greenwich, Fairfield County, Connecticut. He was born on September 28, 1908, in Brooklyn, Kings County, New York, the son of Walter Brenner, Sr. and Catherine Sheridan. His parents were natives of New York City, NY, and Ireland, respectively. He was a magazine editor and was survived by his wife, Grace Kane Brenner. Burial on September 16, 1952, at Holy Cross Cemetery, Brooklyn, NY. Informant - Mrs. Brenner.

I happily blogged about this on "*The Quality Companion*," but abandoned hope of learning anything more. Brenner



### "The Clock" Ticks On

Two more Brenner "Clock" panels—precise comics (and companies) unknown. The one on the left appeared on Pappy's Golden Age Comics Blogzine; the other was found on the Internet. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]

had died early, and by that time he was estranged from everyone at *Quality Comics*. (He had been fired in 1949.) I read no mentions of any children and assumed that, if any existed, they might have been very young at the time of his death. Then, one day, I received an unbelievable call from Brenner's only child, John. To my surprise, John Brenner had been fifteen when his father passed away—which meant that he'd known his father very well. Our talks have helped complete the portrait of George Brenner, a Golden Age mystery-man in his own right. Thanks to John, we can share the colorful life and tragic fate of a notable comics figure—plus a rare piece of *Quality Comics* history!

**MIKE KOOIMAN:** I was surprised to learn that you were fifteen when your father passed away. I'd read no mention of George Brenner having any children.

**JOHN BRENNER:** I was born on August 15, 1937, in Brooklyn. Shortly after, maybe five years afterwards, we moved up to Greenwich, Connecticut, and that's where we were up until the time my father died. And he died in my arms; he had a heart attack. He went in for a gallstone operation and it put a lot of stress on his heart. One morning, a couple weeks after surgery, he woke up and he was in distress. My mother went to get a neighbor because he was starting to flail and I sat down on the bed next to him and I held him, and that was it. He just sort of died in my arms.

**MK:** When he got ill, was it prolonged?

**BRENNER:** No, he had a sudden attack of gallstones. While he was in surgery, he had an asthma attack, and the clamps came off a couple of the vessels and created some additional problems for the surgeon. Afterwards, I can remember visiting him in the Greenwich hospital. He looked like death. He was in an oxygen tent, and then he pulled out of it, and they sent him home.

I remember it was a hot summer night in September and he was sleeping upstairs. We had a screened-in porch in the front of the house. And it was so hot he said to my mother, "I'm going to go downstairs and sleep on the porch where it's cooler." There's a bit of confusion about whether it was a heart attack or a blood clot that broke loose. He went down to the porch and about five in the morning went back up to bed, and that's when all the problems started. He wasn't able to make it to the hospital.

**MK:** Can you tell me what you remember of his younger days?

**BRENNER:** I remember him going down for his physical



### "Hawk"-ing His Wares

A Brenner page of "The Hawk" from *Quality's Feature Funnies* #2 (Nov. 1937). The character was clearly a doppelgänger of "The Clock," who displaced him in the very next issue of *FF*. Perhaps there was some question at first of whether *Quality* could take over publishing "The Clock"—a query which, if it happened, was soon answered in the affirmative. Thanks to the Who's Whose in DC Comics site. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]



# The Golden Age Super-Hero That Never Was!

## MARVIN LEVY & The 1942 "BILL OF RIGHTS"

Introduction by Roy Thomas

**O**ne ambition of most fledgling comic book artists is, and probably always was, to "catch lightning in a bottle" by creating a feature that garners fame and at least a slight taste of fortune—like Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster with "Superman" in 1938—Bob Kane (albeit shortchanging Bill Finger) with "Batman" in 1939—and so on.

Comics artist Marvin Levy (1925-2012) is remembered primarily for his humor work for Feature, Spark, Frank, Promotional Publishing, Pines, etc. (See his interview by Jim Amash in *Alter Ego* #75, and his tribute/obituary in #110.) Still, when he entered the field in the early 1940s, super-heroes were the name of the game; so he wrote and drew several such stories and submitted them as samples to comics shops like Funnies, Inc., and Harry "A" Chesler.

One such, done in 1942, was the ten-page origin tale of a patriotically garbed mystery-man with the clever masked monicker "Bill of Rights." The name of his equally colorful ladyfriend, introduced in that same yarn, would turn out to have considerably more mileage: "Liberty Belle." If a publisher had rushed 17-year-old Marv's story into print, the DC heroine of that name, who'd debut in Joe Simon & Jack Kirby's *Boy Commandos* #1 (Winter 1943) and who's had a second life since her 1981 induction into the *All-Star Squadron*, might well have been forced to adopt a different secret identity!

Back in 2007, Marv gave me his enthusiastic blessing to publish that story; but alas, I didn't get around to it before he passed away. His widow, Mrs. Barbara Levy, has renewed that permission; and we're pleased and honored to present the complete adventure here for the first time ever in print, as a tribute to the memory of a talented cartoonist.

Oh, and since, like nearly all comic book tales of that era, "Bill of Rights" was meant to be printed in *color*, we're thankful to Randy Sargent, who's colored many of Shane Foley's "maskot"



Marv & Barbara Levy

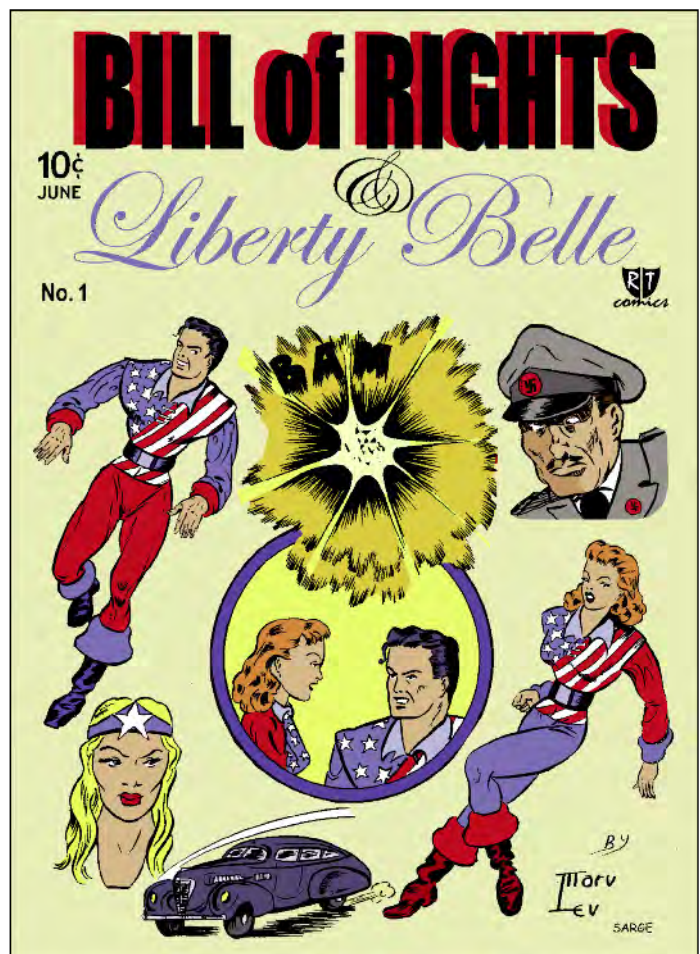
in a cartoon (by Marv) that they sent Ye Editor some years back.



Marvin Levy

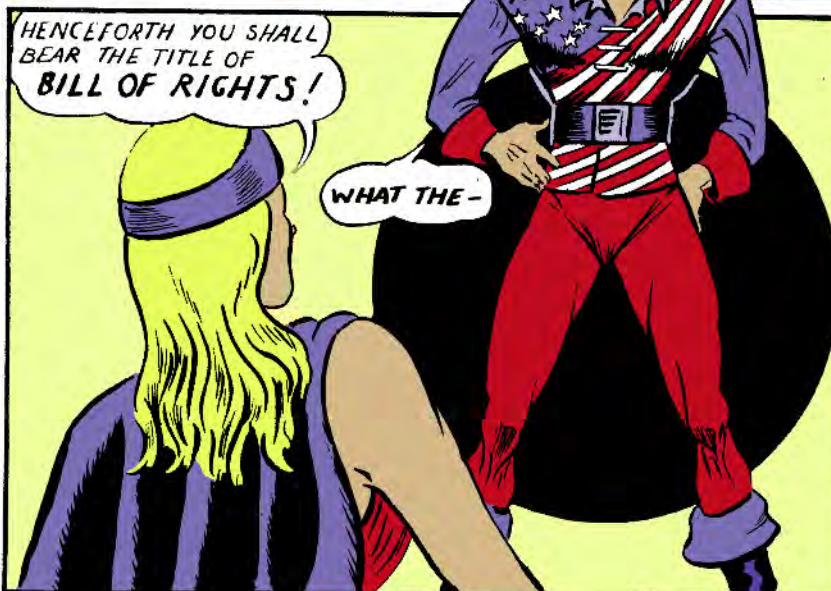
in uniform in 1943, age 18½, while in training as a rifleman at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

illos for our letters section, for adding vintage-style tones to it. In fact, Sarge got so enthusiastic that he even composed and colored a sort of "cover" for what could've been an entire issue of *Bill of Rights & Liberty Belle Comics*, as seen below. After you peruse that—turn the page for the 75-years-late four-color debut of "Bill of Rights"....!



Mock-up cover of a *Bill of Rights* comic, done by Randy Sargent, utilizing the art of Marvin Levy. Colors by Sarge. [Art on this and succeeding nine pages © Mrs. Barbara Levy.]









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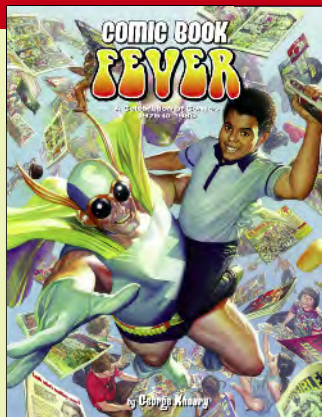
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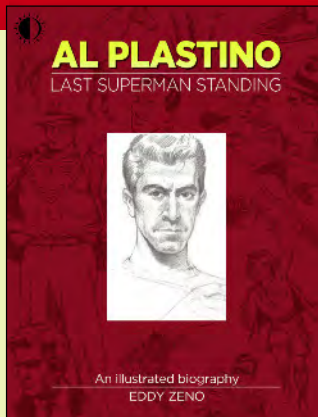
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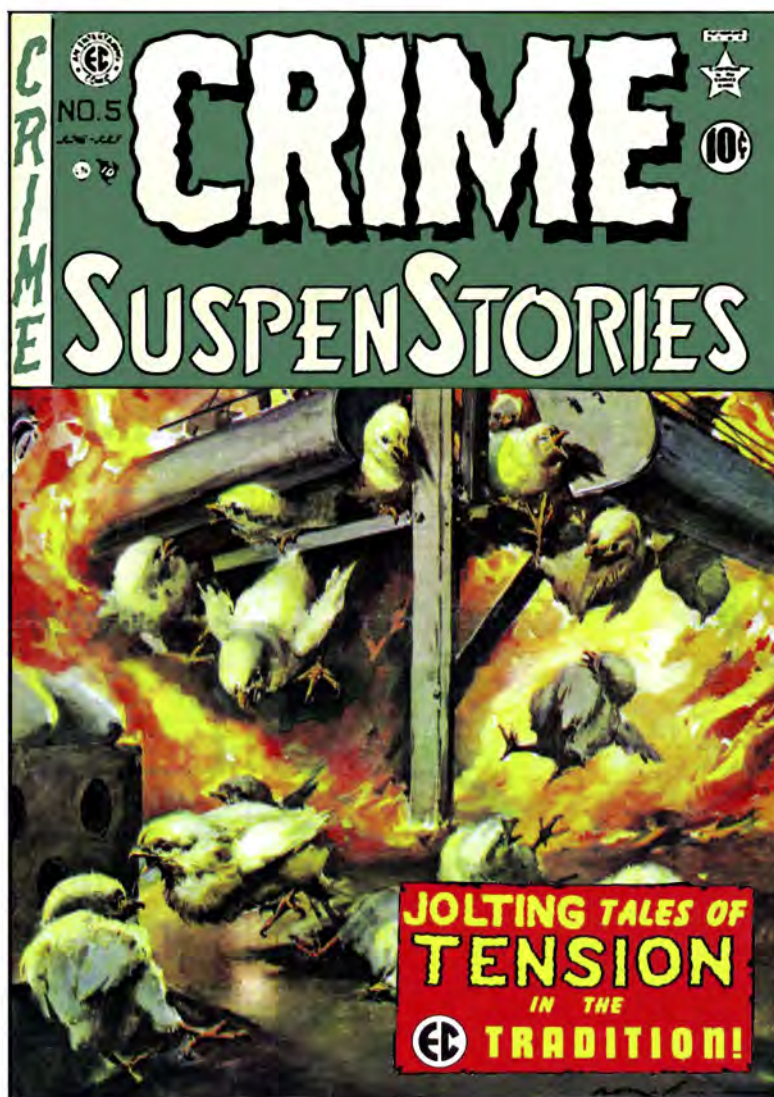


ON JUNE 3, 1992, 70-YEAR-OLD EC PUBLISHER **WILLIAM M. GAINES** PASSED AWAY. A YEAR LATER, THE CONTENTS OF A SMALL, ABANDONED **STORAGE LOCKER** WERE SOLD IN A **BLIND AUCTION**. THE SPACE WAS EMPTY, SAVE FOR A LARGE ART **FILE CABINET** COVERED IN **DUST**.

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# THE VARIANTS?



## Hot Chicks

(Above:) This unpublished EC cover was painted in the 1950s by renowned Italian illustrator and comic book artist **Walter Molino**. Was it too horrifying even for EC? [Image © Estate of Walter Molino; CSS logo TM & © William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc.]



# The EC Variants?

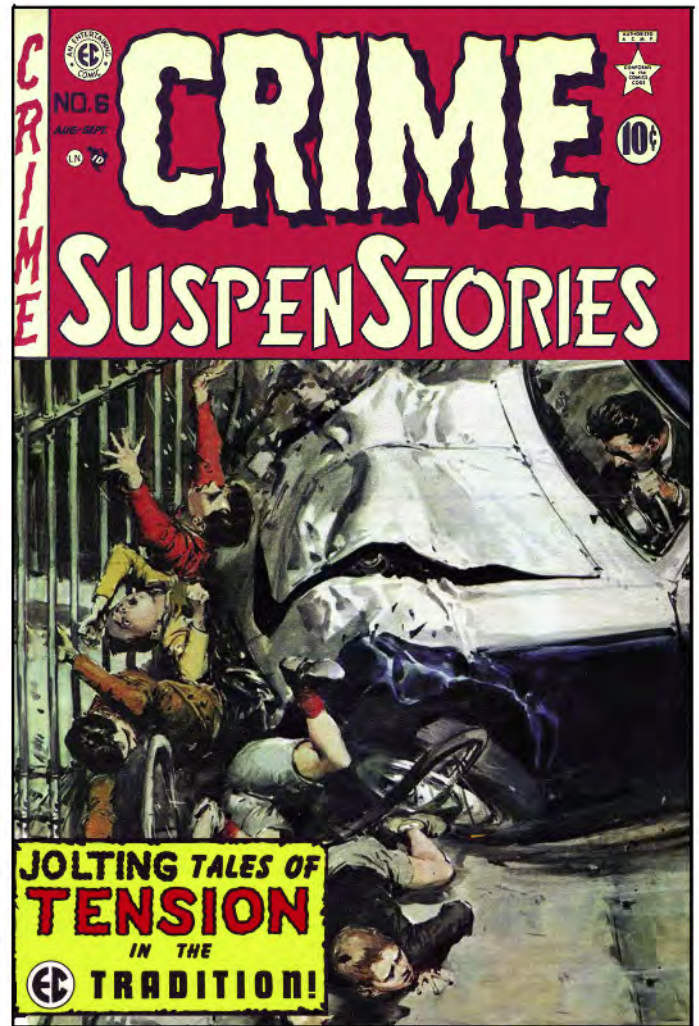
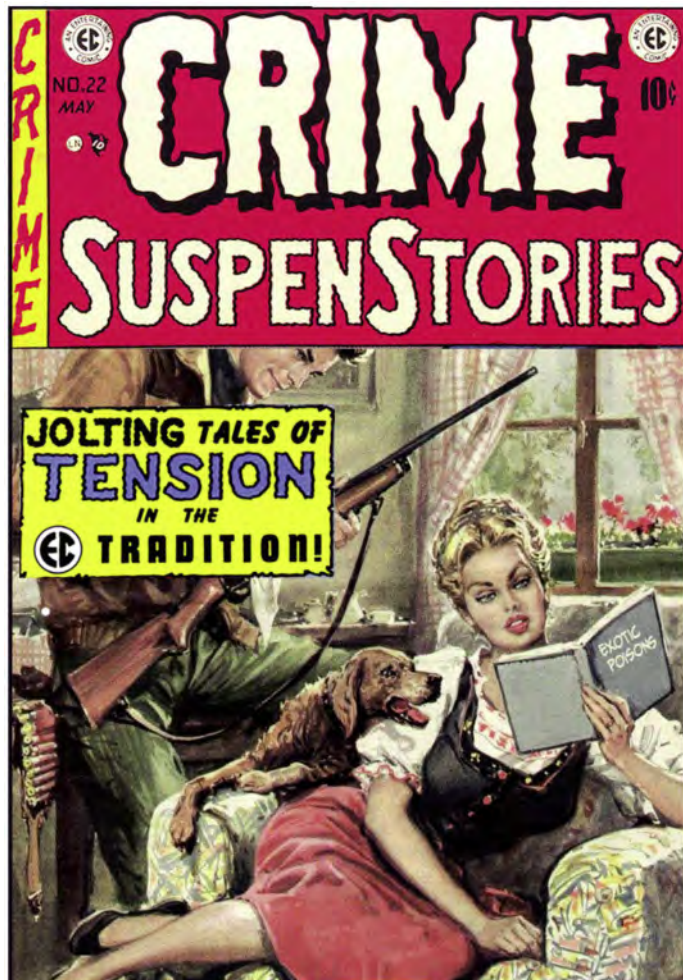
by Michael T. Gilbert

Imagine you're a fan of EC comics—*Weird Science*, *Tales from the Crypt*, and all the rest. You love the stories and each cover is burned into your brain. And then imagine that one day you wind up accidentally stumbling onto a cache of forgotten EC covers, created in the 1950s during the company's golden era. Unpublished covers! Well, no need to imagine. According to one collector, that's exactly what happened!

The gentleman (who prefers to remain anonymous for legal reasons) states that he purchased them in 1993, little more than a year after EC publisher Bill Gaines passed away.

The man put down a bid of \$335 at a blind auction, and won the contents of an abandoned storage locker. The items were sold to pay off back storage fees. When the shed was unlocked, it was empty except for a single overstuffed recliner, a lamp, and a large art flat file. Printed covers and original paintings, untouched for almost 60 years, lay hidden inside the file.

The owner, a comic collector, tried to find where the art had been printed, but failed. By then he knew he'd found something extraordinary, but kept his discovery under wraps for two more decades, fearing possible legal complications. Recently he decided to share these images with *Alter Ego*. Though unable to personally verify his story, I will suggest that the covers themselves speak volumes!



## Crime Time!

Unlike any of EC's published covers, this Molino *Crime Suspense Stories* #6 cover (above) featured graphic depictions of children being harmed. More typical is the *Crime Suspense Stories* #22 image (at left) of a loving husband and wife planning matrimonial mayhem! [Art © Estate of Walter Molino; CSS logo TM & © William M. Gaines, Agent, Inc.]

## Unanswered Questions!

Even so, everything that follows should be taken with a grain of salt. Even assuming one takes the owner at his word, there remain a number of puzzling questions, foremost of which is why Gaines would commission the unpublished covers in the first place?

One noted Gaines biographer recently offered his theory "off the record":

"By the time of the Kefauver hearings and the institution of the Comics Code, Bill was incredibly frustrated. No matter how tame he made the books, it was never enough. He truly thought they were out to get him. This, of course, was more than mere paranoia on his part. I theorize that Gaines commissioned the covers as a release of sorts, a form of therapy."

"Once *Mad* took off, Gaines had the money to indulge his whims. Bill was a wonderfully eccentric guy. He loved gourmet food, exotic travel, fine wines... the works! And if he felt like commissioning covers he loved without any interference from the bluenoses, well, why not? It was a fun hobby, and a chance to



# TED WHITE On Comics

## Part 1

### "The Boy With 10,000 Comic Books!"

#### Introduction

by Bill Schelly

**B**orn in 1938, Ted White was a central figure in science-fiction fandom and fanzine-publishing since he was a teenager, ultimately winning a Hugo Award for Best Fan Writer in 1968. Beginning in the 1960s, he wrote or co-wrote over a dozen SF novels, such as *The Jewels of Elsewhen* (1967), *No Time Like Tomorrow* (1969) and *Trouble on Project Ceres* (1971).

As a youth, however, Ted was a fervent comic book fan, and has done a lot of interesting things in comics fandom, much of it in the 1950s and 1960s. Since comics are our bailiwick at A/E, I asked Ted if he would agree to an interview focusing exclusively on his comics-related interests and achievements. Happily, he agreed, and we had two long interview sessions by telephone in November of 2014. (Apologies to Ted for the time it has taken to get this into print!)

Among the topics we discussed for this multi-part series were the story about him in the *Washington Daily News* in the early 1950s, titled "The Boy with 10,000 Comic Books!," his writing "The Spawn of M. C. Gaines" (the second installment of the "All in Color for a Dime" series in the fanzine *Xero*), his involvement with EC fandom, interviewing Stan Lee for *Castle of Frankenstein* magazine, writing the 1968 paperback book *Captain America: The Great American Gold Steal*, and editing *Heavy Metal* magazine in 1979 and 1980. We begin, however, with a discussion of Ted White's boyhood as a comic book reader and collector. This interview was transcribed by Brian K. Morris, and was checked by Ted before publication.

**BILL SCHELLY:** I see that you and Superman were thrust into an unsuspecting world in the same year, 1938.

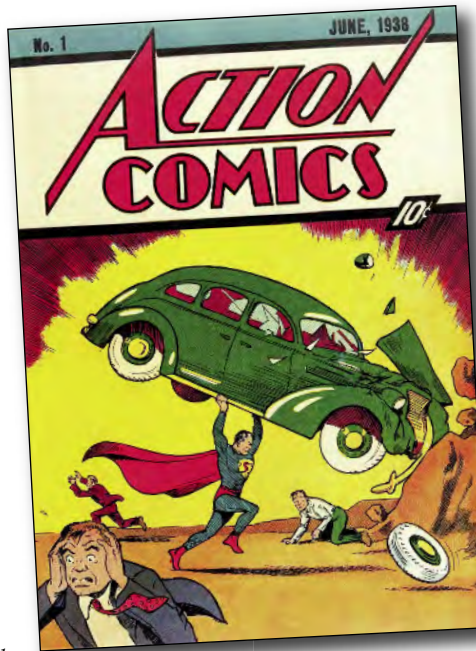
**TED WHITE:** Yeah, I don't know when in 1938 "Superman" was first published. Do you know?

**BS:** Yeah, I believe it came out in April of 1938. *Action Comics* #1 is dated June. What day were you actually born?

**WHITE:** I preceded it by a couple months. I was born on February 4, 1938.

**BS:** Okay, so what that means to me is that you started becoming conscious of comics and things like that toward the end of the World War II.

**WHITE:** I tried to remember exactly when I first became aware of comic books. I was aware of other kids having comics, and we kids



#### "Men Of Tomorrow" — 1938 Edition

Ted White was Guest of Honor at the 2016 PulpFest in Columbus, Ohio. Photograph: William Lampkin. Special thanks to Mike Chomko of PulpFest.

Ted and *Action Comics* #1 debuted within a couple of months of each other, in February and April of 1938, respectively, although *Action* #1 is dated June. [Cover TM & © DC Comics.]

traded them around among each other. There was no real sense of ownership. You just got it, you read it, and then you passed it on.

**BS:** How about if we get a little family background before we get into the comics, just to "set the scene," as they say?

**WHITE:** Sure. What would you like to know?

**BS:** Where did you grow up?

**WHITE:** I grew up in Falls Church, Virginia. I was born in Washington, DC, but lived my entire childhood in Falls Church. It was a very small town, semi-rural. The street in front of my house in my earliest memories was two dirt ruts with grass growing between them. My family bought 50 acres of land with two other families and split it in thirds. We had the middle third. And up the hill, there was a family that had the upper third, and then down the hill there was a family that had the bottom third, and theirs was a farm, complete with cattle. When I was little, one of the first things I learned to do as a toddler was to climb a tree if a cow got too close to me, because I didn't want to get stepped on.

**BS:** What did your father do for a living?

**WHITE:** At the time I was born, he worked at the general store in Falls Church, which subsequently became a hardware store and still exists. But somewhere around 1940 or thereabouts, right before World War II, he went to work for the Navy Yard in their photo



P.C. HAMERLINCK'S

# FCA

Fawcett Collectors of America

#205  
May 2017

Art by Aluir Amancio.  
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## SOUTH AMERICAN

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# The Marvel Family's South American Adventures

## A Brazil & Argentina Comic Book Cover Gallery

by John G. Pierce  
with P.C. Hamerlinck

**A**lthough the original Captain Marvel was the best-selling comic book super-hero in the United States (and thus in the world) for a while in the mid-1940s, it could be argued that the country where he enjoyed even greater popularity was Brazil.

I speak not in terms of sales figures, to which I am not privy, but rather simply to his longevity there, a lifespan which considerably exceeded what he had enjoyed in his native land. Our Brazilian gallery herein represents comics published from the '40s to the '90s. The Marvel Family saga in Brazil began not with the appearance of Captain Marvel, or even of Captain Marvel Jr.—but of *Mary Marvel*—in a comic book entitled *O Guri* (which, ironically, means “The Boy”), dated September 1, 1943 (as seen in *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3, #1). Her brother made his debut the following month in *Gibi Mensal* #34. The popularity of this 100-pager was so great that even today the word “gibi” is used as a synonym for comic books. Captain Marvel Jr. and Hoppy the Marvel Bunny (Capitão Joca Marvel) followed later.

While comics starring the various members of The Marvel Family ceased publication in the USA and Great Britain in 1953, following the settling of the DC v. Fawcett lawsuit, they simply kept going in Brazil. Stories already reprinted there were sometimes offered *again*, this time redrawn by local artists; but these were supplemented by original stories both written and drawn by Brazilians. One of the most intriguing of these was a team-up between Fawcett’s Captain Marvel and Timely’s original Human Torch, in 1963, long after both characters had ceased being published in the USA! This team-up predated the Superman/Spider-Man crossover by many years. (For more on The Marvel Family’s appearances in Brazil, and the Captain Marvel/Human Torch tale, see “When Marvels Clashed!” in *Alter Ego* V3, #1. The CM-HT story was later translated and serialized in *Alter Ego*, Vol. 3, #52-60.)

In addition to stories of the members of The Marvel Family themselves, Brazilian publications also featured translated tales of their British counterparts/successors, The Marvelman Family, who were known there as “Jack Marvel” and “Jack Marvel, Jr.”, i.e., Marvelman and Young Marvelman, respectively. Their stories not only shared space in the same comics as the U.S. Marvel Family, but oftentimes their adventures outnumbered those of the originals and even supplanted them on the covers. Brazilian readers could be forgiven for thinking that these interlopers were possibly just extensions of the Family, particularly when some stories even showed Jack Marvel, Jr., as using “Shazam” as his magic word.

The Marvel Family saga endured in Brazil until the latter half of 1968, but Brazilian readers didn’t have to wait long for their return, courtesy of reprints of the DC revival in early 1973. As contrasted



### Holy Moley—Holy Grail!

Considered by many Brazilian comic collectors to be their “Holy Grail,” *Gibi Mensal* #34 from 1943 marked the first appearance of Captain Marvel in Brazil—published (and mis-colored) by O Globo Publications, Brazil. Special thanks to Brazilian collector Skye Ott for this and the following art scan.

All other art in this FCA section appears courtesy of John G. Pierce and P.C. Hamerlinck. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

to the roughly 20-year absence in the USA, in Brazil the Marvels held forth for 25 years and were gone a mere five!

Other magazines featuring Fawcett characters included *Shazam* (long before DC used the magic word as a title) and *Biriba Marvel Magazine*, a 64-page black-&-white comic, started with a date of Jan. 1953, not too long before the Marvels would cease publication in the USA. Although *Marvel Magazine* itself ceased publication with #61, in 1963, another title, *Capitao Marvel Magazine*, began in January/February of 1955, in the same format (64 pages, and initially black-&-white).

Very little is known about the writers who scribed original



# A Gallery Of The Marvel Family In ARGENTINA

(Featuring the artwork of Carlos Freixas, of Universal Publications – Argentina)

scans courtesy of Toni Torres



## The Big Red Chief

*Capitán Jefe Marvel* #1 (Aug. 1953), Universal Publications, Argentina.  
"Jefe" literally means "chief" in Spanish, so apparently it's a way of saying "Captain Marvel Senior" as contrasted to "Captain Marvel Jr."  
[Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]



## We Didn't Even Know Cap Was Mad At Billy!

*Capitán Jefe Marvel* #2 (Sept. 1953), Universal Publications, Argentina.  
[Shazam hero & Billy Batson TM & © DC Comics.]

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