



ALSO IN THIS ISH:
Remembering
Jay Lynch & Skip Williamson

THE BIJOU BOYS

Recommended for MATURE READERS

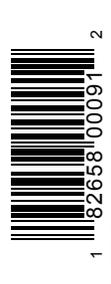
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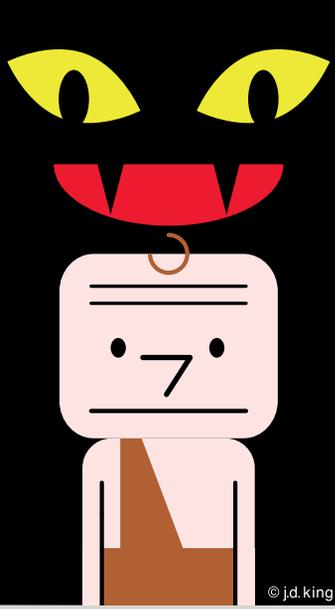
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AUTOS & ARCHOSAURS: THE ART OF MARK SCHULTZ

Cover art by Mark Schultz

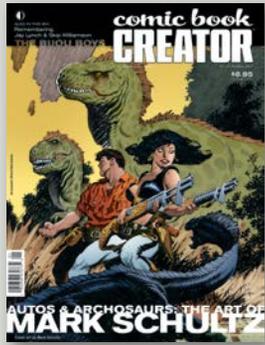


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CBC mascot by J.D. KING
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About Our Cover

Art by **MARK SCHULTZ**
Colors by **GLENN WHITMORE**



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Above: Jack Tenrec and Hannah Dundee, the protagonists of *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*, the epic future-world mashing of prehistoric beasts again roaming our planet, are depicted by creator Mark Schultz on this brand-new cover created especially for *Comic Book Creator!* Mark tells us that, after a 20-year-plus hiatus, he is currently at work on the next chapter of the series, which will see publication (possibly as soon as next year) as a (thus far untitled) 64-page graphic novel.

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COMICS CHATTER

In Memoriam — The Bijou Boys: With the participation of family, friends, fans, and peers, *Comic Book Creator* examines the life-long friendship and numerous collaborations of the late underground comix pioneers, Jay Lynch and Skip Williamson, best buddies who passed away within 11 days of one another this past March. Along with the recollections of Art Spiegelman, Denis Kitchen, Jay Kinney, Patrick Rosenkranz, and others, *CBC* zeroes in on the era from the cartoonists' Kurtzman-inspired fanzine work as teenagers up until the final issue of their superb creation, *Bijou Funnies*, either the second or third underground comix title, one born of the tumult of the Chicago riots in 1968! Um Tut Sut! 3

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Right: Detail from the *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* limited edition print by Mark Schultz, published by Kitchen Sink, and also used as the wraparound cover for the *Xenozoic Tales* collection, *Time in Overdrive* [1993].

Editorial Note: As fate is wont to bestow upon us mere mortals, sometimes intentions are dashed by an onslaught of events. While we had promoted that this issue would contain a number of secondary features, the editor was compelled to postpone that material until future issues. This was to make room for an extensive look at the lives of recently-departed Jay Lynch and Skip Williamson. We thank all contributors and readers for their understanding and appreciate any patience.

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The Brothers Bijou

The entwined fates of underground comix pioneers Jay Lynch and Skip Williamson

by **JON B. COOKE** *CBC Editor*

The pair, destined to become among the earliest of the underground comix creators, were first bound together as teenage pen-pals who shared a mutual devotion to the satirical genius of Harvey Kurtzman. Though each would go on to make his own distinct impression on American pop culture, as partners they would launch arguably the second underground comic book title and solidify their respective statures in the form's history. And, in a weirdly synchronistic twist of fate, they would also be linked in death, as Jay Patrick Lynch and Mervyn "Skip" Williamson, Jr., both aged 72, would finalize their brotherly connection by departing the realm of the living within eleven days of one another.

I was about 16 when a weather-beaten copy of *The Best of Bijou Funnies* [1975] made it into my eager cartoon-loving hands, though, by that time, I had already been thoroughly corrupted by underground comix, particularly the work of *Bijou* stalwarts Skip Williamson and Robert Crumb, whose work had already — and irrevocably — warped my still-developing brain. But that collection, overflowing with an eclectic array of material, both hugely entertaining and head-scratchingly bizarre, became a much-read, treasured addition to my then-scant library of the day's "books on comic books" because of Marty Pahl's detailed, jaunty, and informative introduction.

From my point of view, that well-written, engaging opening essay confirmed my suspicion that, despite being ignored by comics fandom in general and a category entirely absent in the purportedly authoritative *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide*, these irreverent funnybooks from out of the counter-culture were undeniably as much a part of comic book history as *Superman*, *Frontline Combat*, and *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*. I was grateful to Pahl's (Crumb's friend and brother-in-law) for widening a burgeoning appreciation of the form, and for especially sharing the story of the *Bijou* brothers, Jay Lynch and Skip Williamson, and the origins of their renowned Chicago-based comix anthology.

Pahl's, the writer behind three comprehensive biographical essays in *The Complete Crumb Comics* (and who, in 1989, died far too young), nailed the appeal of the duo's respective styles and signature characters — Lynch's "Nard n' Pat" and Williamson's "Snappy Sammy Smoot" — as well as being a neat complement to each other:

Nard (short for Bernard) and Pat were two real friends of Lynch—a conservative and a radical, respectively, just like their cartoon equivalents. Pat the Cat's wisenheimer belaboring of his "boss" smacks more than a little of the relationship between Charlie McCarthy



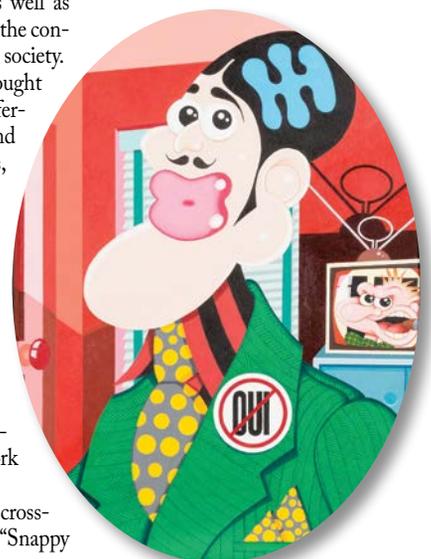
and Edgar Bergen. But, if "Nard n' Pat" was stylistically traditional as comic strips go, it was revolutionary to its audience. Readers who had had it to here with plotless, laughless psychedelia loved the burlesque-show banter of the new feature.

"Snappy Sammy Smoot," on the other hand, had antecedents in classic as well as popular literature. Like *Candide*, he was the consummate naif caught in the toils of a chaotic society. While Lynch shunned topical references and sought a timeless look for Nard n' Pat, Williamson's references were up-to-the-minute, and Sammy found himself coping constantly with black militants, rioting police, incendiary students, and revolutionary assassins.

Even the art styles of "Pat" and "Sammy" contrasted. Turning his back on girly-mag slickness, Jay returned to the "big-foot" cartoon styles of the Twenties and before, eventually honing and polishing his fine-line penwork to a burnished glow that remains the envy of his cartooning colleagues. Imaginative use of Zip-A-Tone and incredibly detailed renderings make a Jay Lynch page look like the work of no other artist.

Meanwhile, Skip developed the use of wide cross-hatching and broad, flat, open areas to give "Snappy

Above: *The Bijou brothers during the underground comix days. From left is Skip Williamson and Jay Lynch. Inset left: Lynch's trademark characters, Nard n' Pat. Below: Williamson's most recognized character, Snappy Sammy Smoot.*



Nard n' Pat TM & © the estate of Jay Lynch; Snappy Sammy Smoot TM & © the estate of Skip Williamson.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Any quotes within this feature that are not attributed are from interviews conducted by this writer.



of the paper was cross-hatching or something.”

Those contributing to *Bijou* #1, besides editor/publishers Lynch and Williamson, were Crumb (who had traveled with a bus-load of Yippies to the Second City), humor zine cartoonist Dave Herring, Gilbert Shelton (courtesy of two mailed-in pages of strip reprints), and a recently graduated high school student from the nearby Chicago suburb of Naperville. “I first met Jay and Skip in the summer of 1968, when I turned 18,” Jay Kinney shared. “Jay and I immediately hit it off — perhaps because we shared membership in the elite fraternity of guys named ‘Jay.’”

Kinney continued, “I was lucky enough to have Jay as a mentor: he literally taught me the craft of cartooning. ‘Use this bristol board... here’s a Rapidograph pen... this is a sheet of Zip-A-Tone... this is how you rule out lines using a lettering guide... this is how you do color separations on sheets of acetate,’ and all the other little secrets of professional cartooning. He also invited me to contribute to the first issue of *Bijou Funnies* and pushed me to improve my work with every strip I drew. I can’t begin to measure how much I karmically owe my old pal Jay Lynch, but it is plenty.”

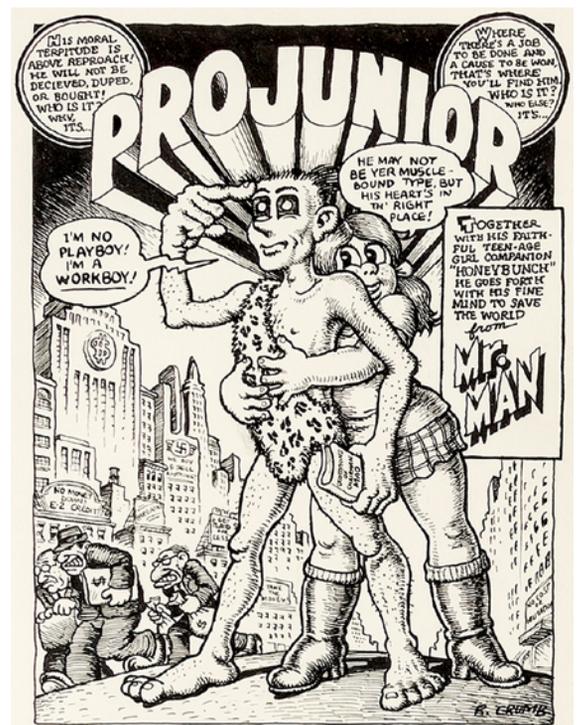
Curiously, Golden Age comic book artist Vince Fago, a childhood favorite of Lynch and Crumb, was slated to participate in the anthology. “I asked Fago to contribute to *Bijou Funnies* #1,” Lynch revealed, “and he did do something, but we didn’t print it. It was called ‘Flower Kids’ or ‘Flower Children,’ or something like that, and it had bombs falling on these cute little kids and they run away. But it didn’t have any dark side to it. It was like that ‘War is unhealthy for children and other living things’ poster. It really didn’t fit into what we were trying to do — the underground comix thing.”

That “thing” was humanized on the inside front cover of *Bijou* #1, with a photo (by Lynch’s across-the-hall neighbor)

which depicts the four main contributors — Lynch, Williamson, Crumb, and Kinney — holding pages of their work. Referring to the throwback nature of their styles, Lynch intended the group to be in make-up for the group shot. “We figured we had to explain this thing of comics that looked like they were drawn in the ‘30s,” he said, “but that were about sex and drugs and modern topics. So we were going to put on age makeup for the photo and pretend we were all cartoonists from 1910 who took acid, but we never got around to it.” The printed inside cover would go on to affect a future *Bijou* stalwart. “[T]hat was sort of an impressive picture because” Kim Deitch recalled, “the two people who seemed to really be into it was Skip and Crumb.”

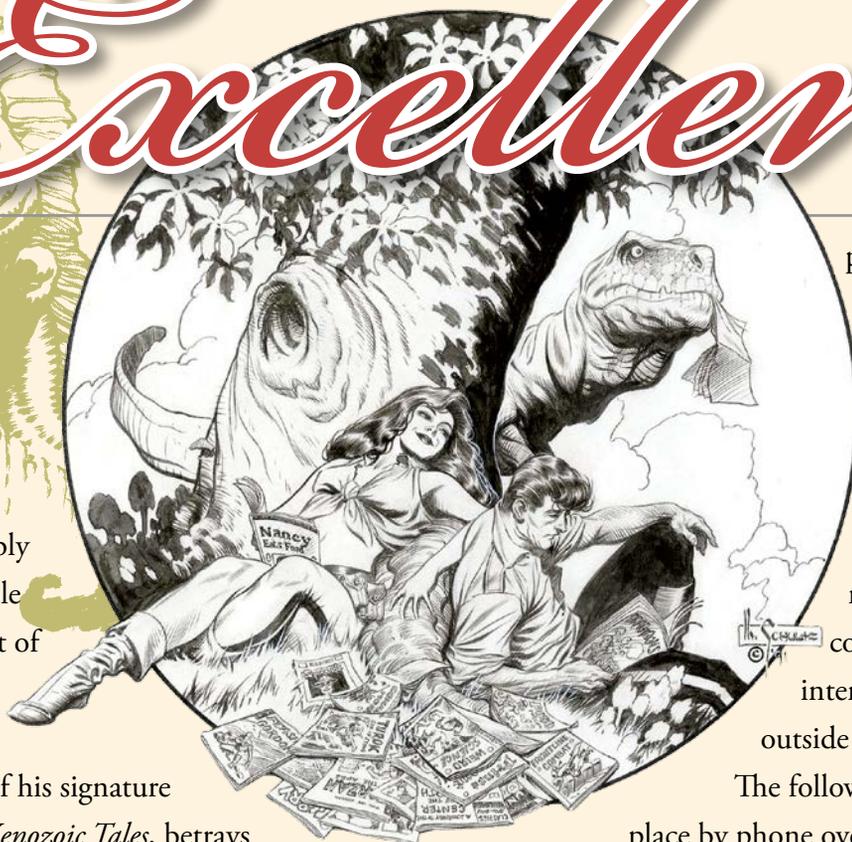
Most importantly for the joint editors, their most famous creations debuted in *Bijou Funnies* #1, with Nard n’ Pat and Snappy Sammy Smoot respectively gracing the front and back covers. Sammy, in fact, is featured on a “clip and save” pin-up, advising readers with his oft-quoted “handy hint”: “Don’t wee wee on yer tee vee set.” The characters would continue to be prominently featured in subse-

Above: Crumb’s delightful wrap-around cover adorned the *Bijou* collection published by Links Books in 1975. **Below:** Late ‘50s/early ‘60s fanzine mascot ProJunior found new life in the undergrounds, first in *Bijou* #4 [1970] by R. Crumb.



Mark of Excellence

Looking through the mammoth-sized *Xenozoic* omnibus collection published a few years back, it was startling to witness the remarkably swift and considerable stylistic development of Mark Christopher Schultz. The initial installments of his signature comic book series, *Xenozoic Tales*, betrays the influence of artist Wallace Wood. But in a few short issues — partly engendered, we will learn, by a friendship with the late, great Al Williamson — Mark's work was rapidly infused with a level of excellence that today



places him at the top of his field as a truly superb comic book illustrator. What's equally startling is, in getting to know Mark, to be exposed to the man's quiet, humble nature and thoughtful concern and abiding interest in the natural world outside of comic books.

The following interview took place by phone over three sessions this past January, conversations bracketed by the inauguration of a new U.S. President, a development of concern that weighed into the episodic conversation. The transcript was subsequently corrected and clarified by Mark.

Comic Book Creator: *If you don't mind, I would like to talk about your relatives. Even before you graced this planet, did you have people who were creative in your family?*

Mark Schultz: Not really. I mean, yeah, "creative." It's disparaging to think that people who aren't in the arts aren't creative, but my family in general tends to be more... They work more with numbers than with visual images. There was someone in my family who I never knew, who was gone before I came along. A great grandmother on my mother's side who was an amateur oil painter. She was good.

CBC: *What was her name? Do you know?*

Mark: It's terrible but I don't. Her married name was Pentecost. I need to find that out. I grew up with her oil paintings. But that was it. My parents were not inclined toward visual arts. My mom loved cooking, my father loved reading. Both those things did influence me.

CBC: *Where was your father from originally?*

Mark: Right where I live now: the Scranton, Pennsylvania area. Both my mother and my father grew up in this area of northeastern Pennsylvania.

CBC: *Was it a middle class life for your parents?*

The Mark Schultz Interview

Conducted by Jon B. Cooke • Transcription by Steven Thompson

back before it was protected, as it is now. He and a bunch of friends just climbed the damn thing. And also, he was in the Air Corps, so he had this interest in the warplanes of the time. He had all these great photographs, and I developed a real interest in World War II technology.

CBC: You mentioned he was a civil servant?

Mark: Yeah, he was in the Social Security Administration. All his adult life. As a result, to take promotions, we would move to different areas, so we moved quite a bit. All within Pennsylvania. We spent a lot of time in the Pittsburgh area, some in central Pennsylvania, and later in eastern Pennsylvania.

CBC: Did your mom work?

Mark: She was a mother and homemaker while I was growing up. Later, she went back to work outside the house. She worked as a bank teller before I was born and went back to that when the kids were grown.

CBC: Did they struggle during the Depression? Were there stories about that?

Mark: I don't think their families struggled a great deal, not like many others did, because their fathers both had secure jobs in the post office. It all sounded exotic to me as I was a kid, hearing about how they planted victory gardens during World War II. It was definitely a different time. They did not have cars. They relied on public transportation. But, no, they did not have bad lives comparable to other people in the Depression. Or, maybe they just didn't talk about the bad stuff.

CBC: Were they New Deal Democrats?

Mark: That's a good question. I've been trying to remember about my parents' political persuasions... they were supporters of Roosevelt. I can remember as a kid they went through different iterations just based on expediency, who they wanted to see put onto office at the time, who they thought was a better candidate, as opposed to having an hardcore political agenda. And then, later in life, much like myself, they became much more affiliated with the values of the Democratic Party.

CBC: When did they meet and get married?

Mark: Boy, my memory is foggy. They met in the early '50s. They got married in '54 and I was born in '55. I was the first child and I have a sister who is a little more than a year younger than me and a brother who is six years younger than me.

CBC: What are their names?



Mark: My sister's name is Lisa and my brother is Kurt.

CBC: And your parents' names?

Mark: My mother was Mary Frances Armstrong. And my father was Joseph Harry Schultz.

CBC: Was your father well read?

Mark: He was well read! He liked

to read a lot. In fact, one of my earliest memories is of him reading to us kids. I'm like eight years old and my sister was seven and he's reading Edgar Allan Poe to us. And he had a good speaking voice — a good reading voice — and he would read dramatically. He enjoyed public speaking and singing. He had a good voice and he could really do a good dramatic reading of "The Pit and the Pendulum."

CBC: Was he well liked?

Mark: My father was a very isolated person. He really was not a social person. He had kind of a typical German mentality where it was his way or the highway, so he could be difficult. He had a small group of friends from way back when, but, to be honest, he didn't really go out of his way to make new friends.

CBC: Was it a big family where he came from?

This page: Filmed simultaneously on the same RKO lot (by the same movie-makers and starring two of the same actors), King Kong [1933] and The Most Dangerous Game [32] were seminal movies for film aficionado Mark Schultz when he saw them as a youngster.



CBC: Did you try pot as a teenager and all that? Did you go down that road?

Mark: No. It never interested me. I didn't even really drink in high school. It just was not anything I felt comfortable with and then, when I got to college, all that stuff was right there on top of me, but I never became interested in smoking pot. [laughs] I started drinking in college—that was my thing, until I figured out it wasn't. Living in the dorms for my first couple of years at college, I saw a lot of drugs and hallucinogenics being abused. I stayed up all night a number of times with friends dealing with bad trips. I never found that world particularly attractive.

CBC: Were you dating in high school?

Mark: Not seriously.

CBC: Were you shy?

Mark: Very.

CBC: Were you pretty tall compared to your peers?

Mark: I was a little taller than average, I guess. Not Denis Kitchen tall. I'm 6' 1", so I probably topped out in high school at about that.

CBC: How was your facility when you were in high school? Were you a good artist by then?

Mark: I think I was good for high school. I look at what I could have been if I'd really applied myself and I shake my head. I could have learned so much more. But I was just getting by. I was interested in drawing, but I wasn't interested necessarily in the hard work of learning the fundamentals like I should have been. But I was good enough. Again, I went to a number of different schools and some had better facilities and better programs for the arts than others. But yes, I always was recognized as in that top echelon of students that are skilled in the visual arts at whatever school I attended.

CBC: Could you draw girls?

Mark: Yes. By high school, I was starting to get pretty good at that. Now I look at that stuff and it's awful. But, at the time, it was recognized as, "Hey, he can draw a pretty good!" It must have been my junior year in high school when one of the alpha jocks — a really good basketball player who was a good guy, too — he asks me, "Hey, Mark, can you draw me dunkin' a ball?" "Sure." So I did. I did a pen and ink drawing and got a lot of attention for that because I drew a portrait of the top dog in athletics at the school. All of a sudden, within that high school social structure, that's a credit to you, a validation.

CBC: Did you get a license at 16?

Mark: I guess so. Made sense for me because I was working weekends. It was easier for me to get back and forth to the restaurant.

CBC: Okay, you're renowned for a series that was eventually known as Cadillacs and Dinosaurs. Were you into cars?

Mark: No, I wasn't. [laughs] In fact, I sometimes curse the day that I made a car so prominent in my series. [Jon laughs] Because they're hard to draw and I'm just not... You know what? I love the period when that car was manufactured. I love the design, the look, of them. As far as the



mechanical end of things, how the engine works, how much power they generate... whatever? How quickly they can go from zero to sixty...? I know *nothing* about that. All I know is I like that streamline look — the design and the look from that era, the late '40s through early '50s.

CBC: So was it always the plan... did you always have in mind, "I'm gonna be an artist someday?"

Above: Al Williamson's cover art for Gold & Silver: Overstreet Comic Book Quarterly #4 (Apr.–June '94). **Below:** Al's Secret Agent Corrigan strip from his "Lost World" single-panel sequence, Dec. 8, 1970.





enced a period of time when they were isolated with comics. For instance, I was talking to Dick Giordano and he had a childhood ailment (scarlet fever or German measles) and he had a period of time when it was just him and comics. For me, my brother and I lived with our mom in Europe for a year and an intense relationship with comics started for us both. I've just noticed this phenomenon happening with dozens of different artists.

Mark: That's interesting. As far as an isolating illness and comics, I didn't have an extended one but, like I said, I did have that hallucinogenic thing with Joe Kubert's Hawkman in the hospital.

CBC: I think it's just having an intimate moment, really. Sometimes it takes a long period of time to "suddenly" fall in love!

Mark: You're right. It was spread out over time. I had many periods where we were moving and readjusting to a new locale and I hadn't made friends yet, so I'd be very immersed in what I had, which was comics and books!

CBC: It's these little things in life that make us "not normal"! [laughs]

Mark: Absolutely! They do add up to that type of person who chooses this as a career and a lifestyle.

CBC: There's this enormous conformity that goes on and creative types need something to get us knocked off course so that we can start going our own way.

Mark: I also think that people who go into this type of creative work, we like alone time. We choose to have more alone time than most people do.

CBC: Exactly. We get gratification from our own imaginations! Talking about imagination: I don't know if I can precisely frame the question because there's nothing cornier than asking, "Where do you get your ideas?" but allow me to ask, "Where do you get your ideas?" [laughter]

Mark: A lot of places. One thing I'm interested in is the nature of creativity in whatever field you're in. Basically, how

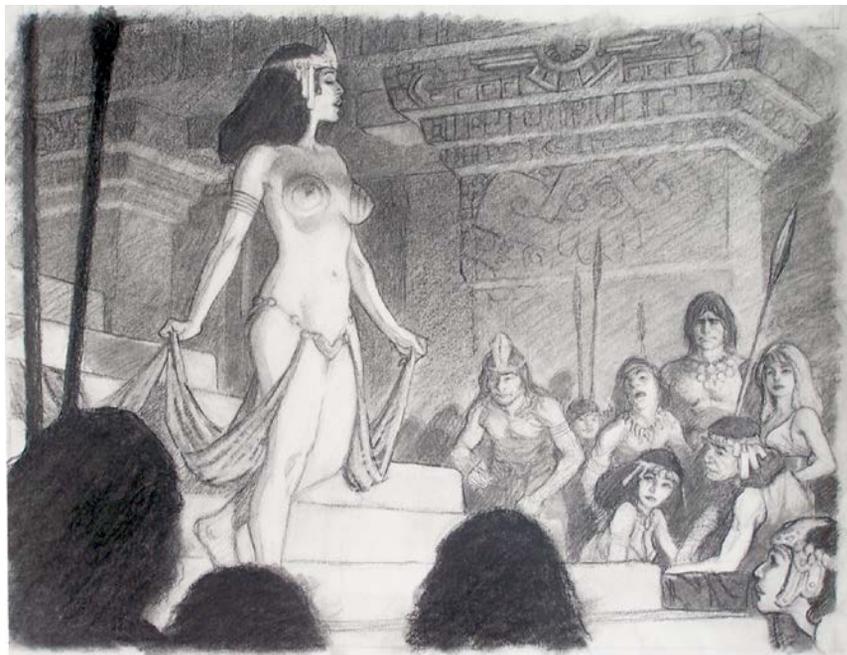
you come up with a different take on things. I mean, there's only so many ideas in the world, but how do you come up with something that takes things in a new direction? I have interests in a variety of different subjects and I draw from and then something that comes from my personal point of view, that, you know, takes it out of the realm of what's been done before. I don't know. It's just pulling from a lot of different places.

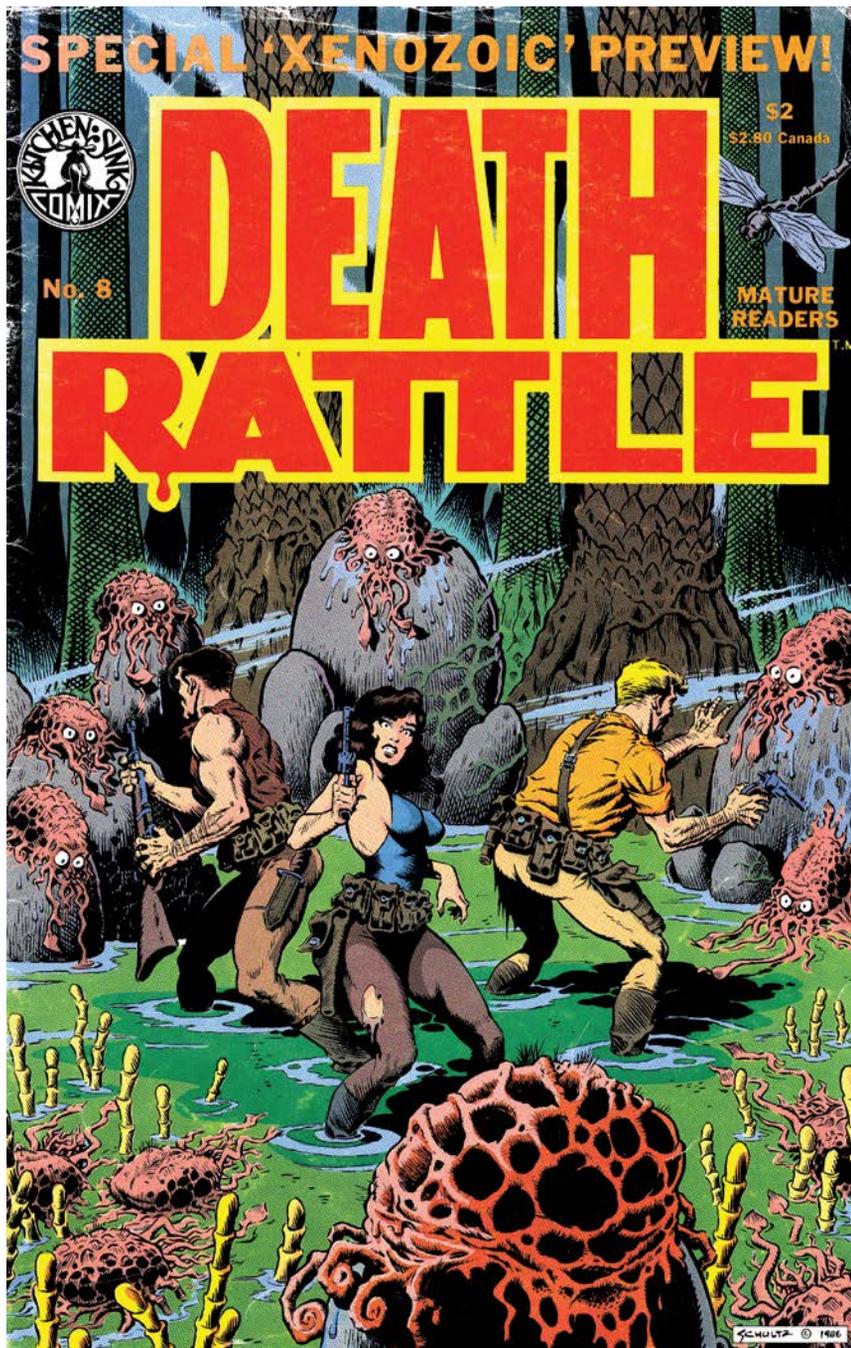
CBC: What's at the core of this? Did you crave an audience? Did you have some need to prove yourself?

Mark: I grew up loving comics and story in general,

Above: Mark's wraparound cover art for Dark Horse's Colossal Conan hardcover [2013], an omnibus collection. This gorgeous brush-&-ink illustration features the barbarian and Bêlit, the Queen of the Black Coast, as well as some nefarious critters.

Below: Conan illustration by Mark featured in his Various Drawings Vol. 2 [06].





Above: Mark was delighted to be given the cover for his first *Xenozoic Tales* entry, featured in Kitchen Sink's horror comics anthology, *Death Rattle #8* [Dec. '86]. **Below:** Leslie Carbarga's logo design for the eclectic Denis Kitchen comic book line.



whether it's story in literature or comics or movies. But by the time I got to college, I slid into the fine arts program and became more interested in technique. My images were never totally devoid of story, but story wasn't as important to me. It took me years after I graduated to finally figure out that what I was really interested in was story. *That* is the thing that motivates me. I like story and I like the idea of telling stories. Not to say that I necessarily think I do a good job of it, but that's the driving thing. I like the fact that stories can potentially reach a very broad readership, or audience, as opposed to doing, for instance, paintings, as I had been doing, to try to place in a gallery type situation. Even if you're very successful doing that — which I wasn't — you're reaching a very limited viewer-ship, you know? There's a limited number of people that are ever going to see gallery work and respond to it. But stories — getting your stories out through the medium of comics, that's a venue with much broader, much more democratic visibility. I'm not sure if I was driven by wanting an acceptance or a following. I don't think in those terms. But maybe I am.

I don't know. I think anyone who does this, it's a lot of work, so you better like the process. What excites me is figuring out the narrative — the choices I make to put the spin I want on things.

CBC: Now, did you subscribe to the notion that (to be extremely generalized) there are two basic schools of comic book and comic strip illustration, the Alex Raymond/Hal Foster illustrative style or the arguably minimalist style of a Noel Sickles/Milton Caniff?

Mark: Well, I think that's simplifying things way too far. I guess you could say, within adventure storytelling, that's a good place to start, to break things down that way, because that was the origin of adventure storytelling in comics. I'm sure some would argue, but I think it all starts with Roy Crane starting to push strips into the adventure realm, back when comics were all humor-oriented. He had that semi-bigfoot style for doing characters, but his backgrounds were more in a realist tradition. You see his *Captain Easy* evolving more and more toward adventure. What followed him was that Noel Sickles/Milton Caniff school. But Hal Foster essentially defined straight-on adventure with his *Tarzan* strip, and, after that, with *Prince Valiant*. Then Alex Raymond came along and developed his very romanticist *Flash Gordon*, and influenced generations of adventure and super-hero artists.

By the way, the terms I'm using, like "realist," are really squishy [laughs] because we don't have our own stylistic jargon in comics yet — we borrow from other arts. But I see where you're coming from on your question. It's Foster's and Raymond's more naturalistic approach, as opposed to Sickles' and Caniff's more minimalist look. But I don't think it's all that clear-cut anymore.

CBC: Let's talk about your relationship with Kitchen Sink Press.

Mark: In my spare time, back in 1986, I put together a six- or eight-page *Xenozoic Tales* proposal and I mailed it around to about seven different publishers. At the time, the ones I thought which might be the most interested and one was Kitchen Sink. I got a letter back from [KSP editor] Dave Schreiner, and it said they were interested in including a story in *Death Rattle* to run it up the flagpole and see how it did. So they had me tailor a story that fit into a horror/science fiction anthology. And that was pretty much it. It's not a real exciting story, Jon.

Denis wrote to me and — though I was familiar with KSP anyway — he pretty much laid out, "This is how we go about our business: It's your property." And that's why ever since we have had such a long relationship. There's a mutual respect. He comes from that tradition and respects the rights of the individual. And I respect what a publisher has to go through to have a sellable product. So we're on the same page with that.

CBC: Kitchen Sink?

Mark: Because I loved their product. In fact, I had an inkling that if anyone would be interested in *Xenozoic*, it would be Kitchen Sink. What I was picking up at the time that most impressed me was, of course, their reprints of *The Spirit*. *The Spirit* and Harvey Kurtzman is where I went to learn how to do comics — panel to panel — storytelling. So I was studying those *Spirit* reprints. And I was picking up *Death Rattle*, which was in part influenced heavily by EC, a big influence on my work, as well. So I just had an inkling that there was mutual ground there and if anyone was going to be interested in my *Xenozoic Tales*, it would be KSP. And it turned out to be right. It was KSP's philosophy that as the creator, you can pretty much do with it what you want as long as it sold well enough to be viable.

CBC: Was having Schreiner as your editor a plus?

Mark: I consider myself extremely lucky that I hit the ground with an editor who was a *real* editor, and sympathetic, someone who knew the business of editing. Dave Schreiner was a old-fashioned, out-of-journalism editor, and not just someone whose job was keeping the trains running

shooting through the Mojave desert, past the Joshua trees. I guess I combined those images with films and comics featuring dinosaurs. I don't know when it happened, but somehow those things came together and, visually, that was the gotcha moment for me. "Oh, yeah! This is something I can work with." When I infused the theme — our relationship with the environment — that solidified the whole thing for me.

CBC: Did you see it early on as, "This is something that has legs? That I can expand on?"

Mark: I didn't have a clue! Again, coming totally outside the industry and fandom, I had *no* idea if anyone other than myself would be interested in it. It was a complete shot in the dark.

CBC: So this idea gestated in your head for how long? Were you doing thumbnails?

Mark: I was doing little sketches of the characters, trying to refine their looks, and occasionally a little bit of thumbnailing a page or two of a story. This was over four or five years. I was just daydreaming about this stuff.

CBC: What was your schedule? You were a security guard during the day or night?

Mark: My work schedule jumped around, but, by that point in the '80s, I think I was working a day schedule. But it was mostly when I was sitting at the drawing table, working an exploded view of a microwave oven or something like that [laughs] — brainless, uninspiring work — that I'd be developing my comics story ideas.

CBC: Was it good money?

Mark: No. It was "local" money. It was okay, but it wasn't great. What I will say is that it taught me how to sit down and draw on a deadline, be professional and get the specs right.

CBC: How many publishers did you intend to pitch?

Mark: I think it was seven. I did an eight-page *Xenozoic* story that eventually morphed and was published as "Mammoth Pitfall," in the second issue of *Xenozoic Tales*. But the initial pitch was a six- or eight-page story that introduced the characters and, over a four- to six-month period, I drew this up when I had spare time. I made photocopies of my pencils as well as the finished piece and I mailed it around, as I said, to seven different publishers, including Marvel, DC, and Kitchen Sink. This was back when you could mail in a submission and actually get a response. I think I got responses from every company except one. DC sent me a form letter signed by Dick Giordano saying something like, "Thanks. We'll contact you if and



when we're interested." Marvel gave me an inking assignment—my first job in the business. It was inking a back-up story in *Savage Sword of Conan*. And, as I said before, I got an immediate, positive response from Kitchen Sink.

Today, when students ask me, "How'd you get in the business?" [laughs] I say, "Well, I'll tell you, but it has no relevance to what you have to do these days to get started." It was a totally different world then.

CBC: Was the idea for it to say, "This is what I can do," or, "I want to sell this specific story?"

Mark: "This is what I can do." I had in the back of my mind that I would do best at this type of adventure story, and, of course, you're always hoping that someone is going to want your idea. But in my cover letter I was very clear to say, "I'm showing you what I can do, but I'd be happy to take on whatever work you can offer me."

CBC: Did you know that comic book art was done one-and-a-half times up?

Mark: Yes. I'd picked up a couple of books about producing comics and I understood that. But I did most of my *Xenozoic* stories at twice-up, the pre-1967 dimensions, just because it's easier for me. I've tried it both ways and I just find twice-up easier. These days, of course, it doesn't matter at what size you want to work.

CBC: You said you inked a story for Marvel?

Mark: That was my first work, a back-up story in *Savage Sword*, #132 [Jan. '87]. It was a Kull story, "The Sea King," written by Chuck Dixon, with me inking over Val Semeik's pencils. That was panic time for me. Man! I had to produce on a strict deadline. It was interesting, but nerve-racking. I did that one job for Marvel back then and that was it. I didn't have any other work with Marvel until Denis Kitchen and [Marvel publisher] Tom DeFalco reached an agreement to reprint my first six issues of *Xenozoic Tales* as *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*, for Marvel's Epic imprint. We colored the stories and it appeared under the Epic banner.

CBC: Was it a good deal?

Mark: I think so. Tom DeFalco really went to bat for us. He was great. I don't want to misspeak because I don't remember the details, but Marvel wanted a lot more control over... I'm not sure if it was just financial or if it was actual control over the content. Denis sat down with Tom, and

Inset: Pair of *Xenozoic Tales* #13 [Dec. '94] pages, boasting evocative and ever-improving facility by the young artist. With his franchise's success, Mark was able to focus on that improvement.



Above: *Xenozoic Tales* was rebranded *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* and adapted as a Saturday morning TV cartoon show, lasting for 13 episodes in 1993–94. Marvel Comics' creator-owned Epic Comics line reprinted XT #1–6 (only now in color) between '90–'91 under the new name. **Below:** Splash page from XT #10 [Apr. '90].

the Marvel attorney kept saying, "No, they can't have that," and Tom would reply, "Let 'em have it." Tom understood that this was a creator-owned book. It wasn't something that I was going to let Marvel have any stake in beyond the once-and-done publication. The nature of Marvel (at least at the time) was to acquire. Tom understood it was mine and went to bat for me, and so, yes, Denis and he hammered out a good deal.

CBC: *You as a writer with other artists: Did that start with the back-up stories?*

Mark: After the first issue, I realized that I wasn't going to be able to do a full issue myself. It wasn't going to be able to consistently fill a 32-page comic myself, so we determined that I would do the first 20-page story in an issue and I would get someone else to do a back-up story that I'd write. It was a good deal for everyone. Steve Stiles was available and interested. So that worked out really well. He would do the back-up eight-page story, and I learned to write for someone else. Steve is an excellent storyteller. He does not screw up the script. He tells the story very clearly, very compellingly, which is what you want and not everyone can do.

CBC: *Getting back to this vague, ambiguous, "Where does it all come from?" thing: here you had been working as a cartoonist and writing your own material, and then you're faced with scripting, a demarcation of creative responsibility, where you'd lose some control. Was that intimidating*

at all?

Mark: It was *real* difficult at the onset. They thought my *Xenozoic* submission had potential, but they wanted something that they could fit into the more horror/science fiction-oriented *Death Rattle* anthology. So I went to work on a new story, and I had time to work on that and it went pretty well. I can't remember the amount of time I had, but it was not a tight deadline at all. That *Death Rattle* story was successful and led to Denis offering me the regular series. Of course, I thought that this was an ideal situation and that I could get it out on a bi-monthly basis, every two months. As I said, that turned out to be totally unrealistic for my abilities. I busted my ass to get that first one done on schedule and it just about killed me. I was working 16 hours a day or more. I'd go to bed, grab five hours sleep, get up, and continue working on it. I was miserable. I was convinced by the time I finally finished that up that I wasn't cut out for comics. But, you know, Denis realized that this was not working out and he said, "Let's forget the idea of bi-monthly. That's obviously not what you can do. We just won't announce a new issue until you have it in the can." That took a lot of pressure off me. That expectation that I should get it out on a fixed periodical basis was removed and that made it a lot more fun for me and a lot easier for me to really enjoy myself and get better at it. [laughs] Did I answer your question? I get going on these tangents sometime.

CBC: *We're gettin' there, Mark. What were your expectations and your needs? Let's be realistic: people have mortgages to meet, they've got to buy groceries, and all that. Was it tough in the beginning? What was the direct market like?*

Mark: Well, it was tough in the beginning. I was lucky to be working with Kitchen Sink — they always paid on time. My deal was basically a percentage of the cover price and number of copies sold. It was a fair deal.

I'm trying to remember if I got advances. If there was an advance, it was minimal. It was more a token than anything else. So, essentially, I didn't get paid until I got the work done. For that first two years, we were living pretty much off what Denise was making working in a jewelry store. What I made on *Xenozoic Tales* supplemented that. During those first couple of years, I was concerned. Our numbers were pretty good but it wasn't, in and of itself, enough to make an adequate living. I remember asking Denis, "Where is this going? What do you see coming, because I can't continue this indefinitely." And Denis said, "Just hang in there. Soon we'll have enough material to put out a collection of the stories in book form." And sure enough, by July '89, that first collection, *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs*, was published, and, all of a sudden, I'm making new money on work I've already completed. Sales were good. I saw that readers were willing to buy my work past the initial comic book appearance — there was an ongoing market for my *Xenozoic* stuff. That's proven to be the case. *Xenozoic* has stayed in print pretty much constantly to this day. Work I did back then in 1987 and '88 is still helping to pay the bills right now. But it did take a while. Those first two years were pretty scary, just going on faith that there would be a pay-off.

CBC: *I can imagine Europe responded very well to this. Is that true?*

Mark: We've done alright in Europe. We were reprinted very early on in France. The publisher, Glénat, serialized the stories first in an anthology magazine, and then collected them in albums. I think, at our peak, *Xenozoic* was translated in six different languages. I still have editions over there in several different countries. I can't say that the sales were ever phenomenal, but there's been a core interest in my work in Europe, especially in Spain! [laughs] Spain has been very good to me.

CBC: *Have you visited?*

Mark: I've been to Spain numerous times for conventions and I've had an exhibition of my original art in Majorca. I've always felt very much at home there.





Previous page: At top is Mark Schultz's pencil rough for his "Slither Apocalypse" illustration, and inset below is the artist's design for the Xenozoic Tales T-shirt produced by Graphitti Designs. **Above:** Tight pencils for "Slither Apocalypse." **Below:** Capitalizing on the impending Cadillacs and Dinosaurs animated series, Tyco Toys created an action figure line-up that also included vehicles (as well as dinosaur figures, some modified from the firm's "Dino-Riders" toy sets of a few years prior). Here are the Hannah Dundee and Jack Tenrec figures posed before Tenrec's tricked-out 1953 Cadillac Eldorado Supercharged auto, fueled by dinosaur poop.

Dinosaurs for mainstream recognition, being developed into an animated TV show, there was a period with a great deal of interest in creating attendant merchandise. There were action figures and all the other associated gobbledygook that goes with that. Also, KSP was creating *Xenozoic* prints, T-shirts, and eventually the candy bars, which all sold very well and which all added onto my income. So there was that period where it was more a business for me, with less time for actual comics work, but there was good money that came out of that. We were able to buy our house and start a retirement fund.

At one point, I think we were fielded four different suitors who were interested in developing *Xenozoic* into TV or film. Possibly the most left-field was the comedian/performance artist Gallagher, who had a production company and that was interested. He and his massive tour bus actually overnights at Denis' farm out in the hinterlands of Wisconsin. That didn't go anywhere, but eventually I signed with producers that developed into the animated television show. This was, obviously, all new to me and, I think, Denis's first big step into this interdisciplinary entertainment world. We were

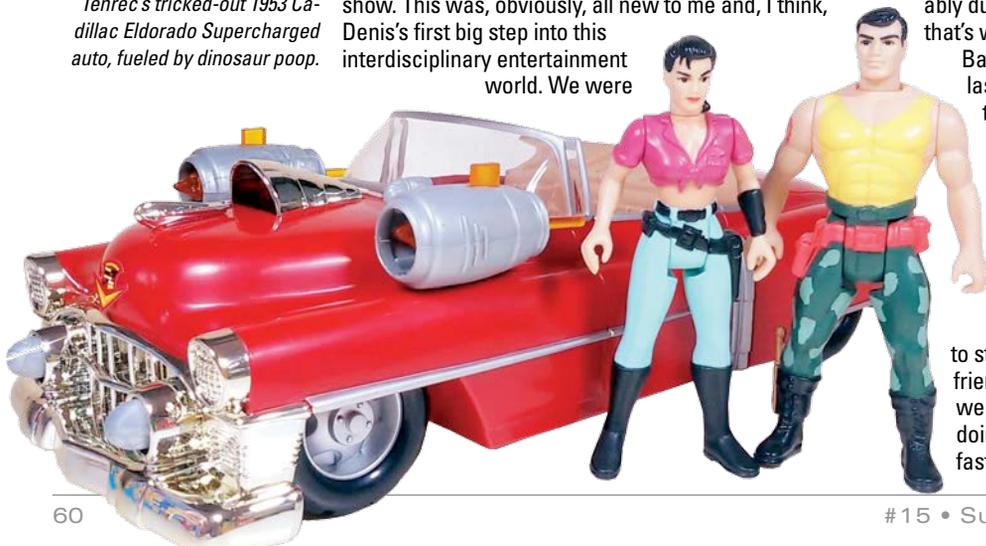
both learning as it we along.

It was amazing to be among the creators being published by Kitchen Sink at the time. Unfortunately I was totally intimidated by Kurtzman and Eisner, to the point where I missed chances to chat these guys up. I would lock up — I didn't know what to say to them that they hadn't been asked a million times before.

I did have a good relationship with Jack Jaxon. He was such a thoughtful guy. I think his nonfiction, historical work is so important. It was groundbreaking — broadening the scope of what can be done with comics. And there was Don Simpson and Jim Vance and Dan Burr... that was the great thing about Kitchen Sink: it was so diverse and it spanned back to the undergrounds and had all this history, right up until the contemporary stuff. Just amazing.

Kitchen Sink comics also had a unique look, and part of that was due to Denis and part to Pete Poplaski. There was a definite cohesion in the design — there was an aesthetic. The color choices on the covers were so attractive, probably due to Pete. For me, they jumped off the stands and that's what a cover is supposed to do.

Back to the animation: *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* only lasted one season and that was the end of all the potential for Hollywood-type money. I'd taken *Xenozoic* about as far as I could and, by the mid-'90s, Kitchen Sink was starting to falter. Denis had lost financial control of his company and his vision — which is what made KSP unique and viable — was lost to the dunderheads who had control. And I could see that they saw *Xenozoic* as a failed project that didn't interest them. So I had to start looking for other ways of generating income, if I was going to stay working in comics. Good for me, I had enough friends in the business who apparently liked my work well enough. I got scripting opportunities. I also started doing cover art for other publishers, though I wasn't fast enough to do interior art. I started writing for Dark





Horse. Phil Amara, who had edited at KSP, had moved to the West Coast and Dark Horse, and he offered me work writing mini-series, mostly for licensed properties like *Aliens*, *Predator*, and so forth. That led me to work for DC, writing *Superman*. I wrote *Superman: The Man of Steel*, between '97 and 2002. About four-and-a-half years.

CBC: How was that?

Mark: It was interesting. It was an education. This was at a time when DC kept the five *Superman* books linked. All the books had to work in lock step with each other — DC was publishing them one a week and they believed that sales would be improved by maintaining through storylines. So that meant that you couldn't really take your ideas in just any direction you'd like. You had to work with everyone else on the storylines, and doing that was an education for me. I got a taste of working collaboratively, of figuring out my contribution to the whole, whether it was of particular interest to me or not. It was a good paycheck and no huge hassle. But, by the end, I was ready to pack it in. I was glad I tried it, and it was good to work with a team in DC's sandbox, on an important property. But it wasn't something that I wanted to continue doing. It wasn't a career goal.

CBC: Why was it a good thing to learn? You had to produce comics by committee, right?

Mark: It was just a new learning experience. And I was happy to have a monthly paycheck. My goal originally was to use the money to create a financial cushion that would

allow me to do my own thing. It didn't work out that way because, well, I guess maybe just laziness on my part. Unfortunately, I got away from drawing in general. For those years, I didn't draw nearly as much as I should have. That was bad for me on a skill level, and, also, I wasn't visible and readers forget quickly. I wasn't a presence out there. So I had to rebuild my career as a visual artist after those years. But it was interesting, being in these conference

calls, in these meetings with the other writers on the *Superman* books, who were much better and much more

adept at doing story pitches. They were like pitches for a movie you wanted to produce. Some of those guys could just act out what they saw and they'd be doing this in front of the editors and Jenette Kahn, the publisher, and I'd just be sitting there, amazed, taking it all in. I'm just

not that guy who can do that. I was in awe of their ability to get across their vision in this venue, their ability to pitch like that. Then, at some point, somebody would turn to me and say, "Mark, do you have any ideas?" and I'd be all, "Y'know, just let me fill in the gaps. I really can't do this. My ideas aren't these big ideas that can be exploited across an array of *Superman* books, so my position was I'd just take their ideas and make 'em work in the context of what I could do in my book."

CBC: What an interesting experience you've had: you're an independent cartoonist who had a partnership

Above: Final colored "Slither Apocalypse" print. **Inset left:** The end roll of the *Nelvana* cartoon series *Cadillacs and Dinosaurs* included the listing, "Based on the characters and concepts created by Mark Schultz," and "Developed for television by Steven E. de Souza." **Below:** Mark's art adorned the cover of the video cassette collection of the series.

