

ROY THOMAS' MONSTROUS
COMICS FANZINE

Alter Ego™



\$8.95
In the USA

No.138
March
2016

PRESENTS

HARLAN ELLISON®

VS. THE
**MONSTER SOCIETY
OF EVIL!**



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PLUS!
C.C. BECK
ON THE
DC/FAWCETT
LAWSUIT

BONUS!
TWO TITANIC
TRIBUTES TO
**FRED
KIDA**



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Contents

Writer/Editorial: One Tuesday Down A Rabbit Hole 2

FCA [Fawcett Collectors Of America] #197 3
P.C. Hamerlinck leads off the issue this time—with a great Mark Lewis cover!

“Nay, Never Will I Serve Thee, Mr. Mind!” 4
SF great Harlan Ellison tells Brian Cremins why he loves The Monster Society of Evil!

Captain Marvel’s Day(s) In Court [& Sequel] 17
Artist/co-creator C.C. Beck’s 1944 deposition in the case of Superman vs. Captain Marvel.

Seal Of Approval: The Bibliography 27
Lushly illustrated listing of the sources of Amy K. Nyberg’s 1998 study of the Comics Code.

Mr. Monster’s Comic Crypt! “In Defense Of Comic Books” . . 45
Michael T. Gilbert shows Lev Gleason, publisher of *Crime Does Not Pay*, speaking out in ‘52.

The Secret Lair Of Dr. Strange 51
Paris Liu relates this history of Doc’s abode at 177A Bleecker Street, NYC.

ComicFandomArchive:SurvivorsOfTheFirstComicon–Pt. II . . 59
Bill Schelly heralds the 2014 panel celebrating the 50th anniversary of a major event.

Two Tributes To Fred Kida 67
Paying homage to the noted Golden Age artist—plus a never-before-published interview.

In Memoriam: Earl Norem & Steve Moore 74

re: [correspondence, comments, & corrections] 77

On Our Cover: We had a cover all prepared for this issue that spotlighted the one and only **Harlan Ellison**. But then Harlan told us he had an idea of his own: the cover art for Fawcett’s Whiz Comics #22 (Oct. 3, 1941) by original “Captain Marvel” artist **C.C. Beck** and his colleague **Pete Costanza**, with the head of a young Harlan E. superimposed over Billy Batson’s, plus a captured (and Bell-jarred) Mr. Mind in another Beck image. So we scrapped our earlier cover notion and went with Harlan’s. You can’t improve on perfection! [Shazam hero, Billy Batson, & Mr. Mind TM & © DC Comics; photo courtesy of Harlan Ellison.]

Above: Nothing better illustrates the capriciousness of the early days of the Comics Code Authority than what it did to stories printed in Avon Periodicals’ barely-limping-along comic book line. For instance, in this panel from a **Howard Larsen**-drawn story reprinted in Wild Bill Hickok #26 (Jan.-Feb. 1956), the Code folks forced the editors to white out an entire balloon coming from a woman being hauled up onto a ledge by a couple of owlhoots. But this particular act of censorship set us to wondering: What could the young lady possibly have been saying that would’ve so aroused the wrath and/or moral probity of the CCA? You tell us—and no fair looking back at the original printing of the tale, even if you can figure out where it was! (Neither we nor the Grand Comics Database can.) We’ll have the best reader-response lettered in that balloon for a future issue. Of course, just to be ironic about it, all submissions must be written in language suitable for this magazine! We can’t ask the original scripter what she said—because we don’t know who he is! Thanks to Richard Arndt. [© the respective copyright holders.]

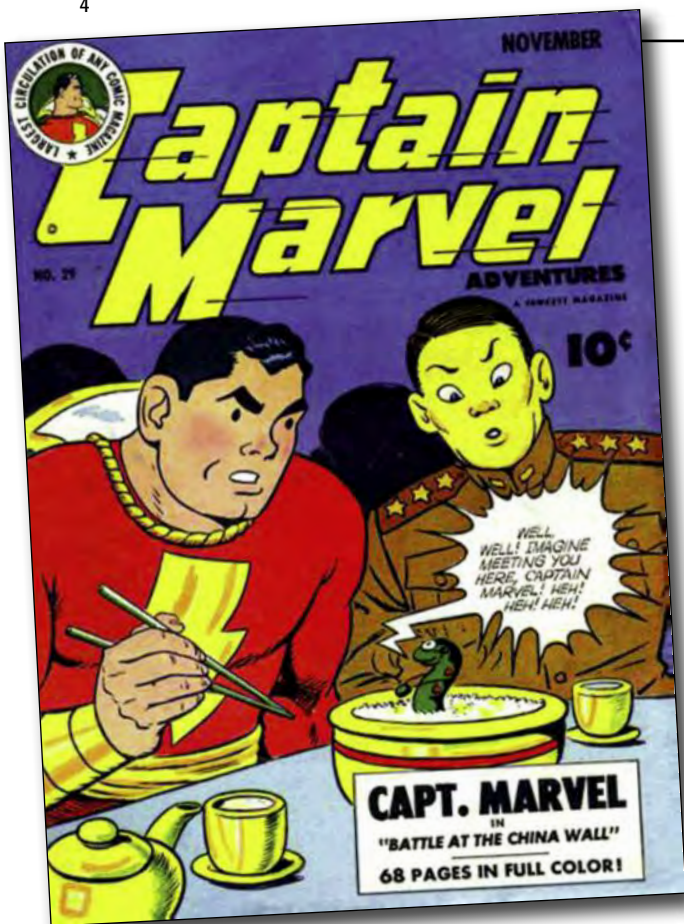
This issue is dedicated to the memory of
**Fred Kida, Earl Norem,
& Steve Moore**



Alter Ego™ is published 8 times a year by TwoMorrows, 10407 Bedfordtown Drive, Raleigh, NC 27614, USA. Phone: (919) 449-0344. Roy Thomas, Editor. John Morrow, Publisher. Alter Ego Editorial Offices: 32 Bluebird Trail, St. Matthews, SC 29135, USA. Fax: (803) 826-6501; e-mail: roydann@tinet.com. Send subscription funds to TwoMorrows, NOT to the editorial offices. Eight-issue subscriptions: \$67 US, \$85 Canada, \$104 elsewhere. All characters are © their respective companies. All material © their creators unless otherwise noted. All editorial matter © Roy Thomas. Alter Ego is a TM of Roy & Dann Thomas. FCA is a TM of P.C. Hamerlinck. Printed in China. ISSN: 1932-6890

FIRST PRINTING.





“Nay, Never Will I Serve Thee, Mr. Mind!” Or, “I Think I Was A Fawcett Kid”

An Interview With HARLAN ELLISON®

Conducted, Transcribed, & Edited by Brian Cremins, Ph.D.

Redacted/Vetted/Engrossed by Harlan Ellison

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INTERVIEWER'S INTRODUCTION: “I’m a comic book fan. I love comic books,” explains Harlan Ellison in his introduction to Ken Viola’s 1987 documentary *The Masters of Comic Book Art*. “Comic books were the training ground for me in terms of ethics, in terms of the things I learned about courage, good, and evil, what heroism was, right and wrong. Comic books are the Grimm’s Fairy Tales of the popular culture.”

On January 10, 2014, I had the opportunity to speak with Ellison about his life-long affection for Captain Marvel and Billy Batson; his memories of C.C. Beck; and his continued devotion to the craft and discipline of storytelling. Along the way, he recalled his days as a young comic book fan in Painesville, Ohio, his memories of the “Monster Society of Evil” serial from *Captain Marvel Adventures*, and his friendships with, among many other legends, Alfred Bester and original 1970s DC *Shazam!* editor Julius Schwartz.

Always prolific, Harlan Ellison, who turned 80 on May 27, 2014, is in the process of publishing new editions of his novels and short story collections through E-Reads. Meanwhile, Harlan Ellison Books (www.harlanellisonbooks.com) offers readers a selection of his teleplays and screenplays. Online, you can watch Ellison on his YouTube channel as he speaks about everything from his disgust with the distor-

tions of fact in the film *Saving Mr. Banks* to his love for jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt.

Early in January 2014, I contacted Jason Davis, publisher of Harlan Ellison Books, to see if I could ask Harlan a few questions about Billy Batson and Captain Marvel. A few days later, after a week of sub-zero temperatures, I was sitting with poet Tony Trigilio in the Heartland Café

Mind-ing Our Own Business

(Top of page:) C.C. Beck’s cover for *Captain Marvel Adventures* #29 (Nov. 1943)—and (at right) the image of interviewee Harlan Ellison gracing what was originally to have been the cover of this issue of *A/E*. (See page 1 for the story behind the switch!) The former is the first of only three covers (out of a possible 25) that spotlighted images of Mr. Mind and/or The Monster Society of Evil while the immortal serial was running—and the latter was designed by Mark Lewis under the aegis of P.C. Hamerlinck, utilizing a photo taken by Thomas De Soto. Full disclosure: It was *A/E* editor Roy T. who insisted on adding the “SHAZAM!” balloon. [Shazam hero & Mr. Mind TM & © DC Comics; art in background on unused cover © the respective copyright holders.]





Don't Knock The Spock!

(Above:) That Ellison kid sure got around! Here he is—curiously, looking exactly the same as on this issue's cover—with Mr. Spock and Captain Kirk! Thanks to Harlan and Brian Cremins.

(Right:) A page from *Star Trek: Harlan Ellison's Original The City On The Edge Of Forever Teleplay #2* (IDW, 2014) the comic adaptation of Harlan Ellison's *Star Trek* script. Art by J.K. Woodward.

(Far right:) Harlan's short story collection *Approaching Oblivion*, 1974, which includes the autobiographical tale "One Life, Furnished in Early Poverty." The cover is the work of Leo and Diane Dillon. [TM & © the respective trademark & copyright holders.]



HARLAN ELLISON: Superman was already an established icon, but Superman was beyond any danger. Captain Marvel was closer to me in identifiability because he was Billy Batson at the same time. And Billy Batson had to say "Shazam!" before he could become Captain Marvel. That made him vulnerable, and it also gave him the powers of the wizard Shazam—which were Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, and Zeus, and on

and on. And that led me into reading about the gods and studying about Solomon and—being an autodidact and a voracious reader—I already knew how to read because I had taught myself at, I think about the age of two, off cereal boxes. There was a legitimate, historical, mythological tie-in to Captain Marvel and Billy Batson. So I was able to

on the North Side of Chicago when I noticed a voicemail on my phone: "I'm charming and equitable and surly and I'm sure you'll find the conversation rewarding," Harlan said at the close of his message. I'd like to thank Harlan for taking the time to speak with me, and for his kindness, his humor, his wisdom, and his generosity. I'd also like to thank Jason Davis for helping to set up this interview, Roy Thomas and P.C. Hamerlinck for encouraging me to transcribe it for FCA, and Allison Felus for copyediting the transcription.

Ellison Wonderland, Approaching Oblivion, Deathbird Stories, Shatterday, An Edge in My Voice, Angry Candy—those are just a few of the 102 books Ellison has published over the course of his career, a selection of my favorites. What are yours?

I began by asking Harlan about the origins of his love for Captain Marvel, Billy Batson, and the other heroes and heroines of The Marvel Family.

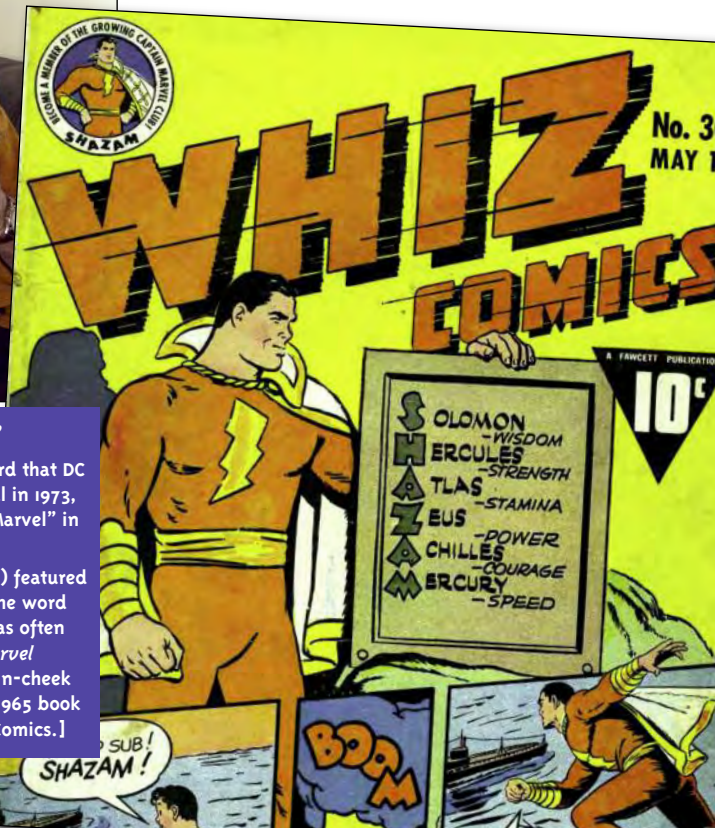
So now, ladies and gentlemen, Harlan Ellison...



"M" Is For The Million Things You've..."

(Above:) Ellison in a Shazam! shirt, utilizing the magic word that DC Comics had to make its title for a "Captain Marvel" revival in 1973, due to Marvel Comics' by-then-trademark on the word "Marvel" in logos. Thanks to Harlan and Brian Cremins.

(Right:) Beck's cover art for *Whiz Comics* #30 (May 15, 1942) featured the names of the six fabled gods and heroes who gave the word "Shazam" its potency. An explanatory illo of this sort was often included on a contents page in issues of *Captain Marvel Adventures*. The heading above is Jules Feiffer's tongue-in-cheek notion of what the "M" in "Shazam" stood for, as per his 1965 book *The Great Comic Book Heroes*. [Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]





Gator Aid

(Above:) Beck's cover for *Captain Marvel Adventures* #43 (Feb. 1945) was the final one of the trio that spotlighted the serial—but by then, the tide was definitely beginning to turn against Mr. Mind and the remnants of his Society. [Shazam hero & Mr. Mind TM & © DC Comics.]

Ego, Vol. 3, #3, Winter 1999/2000. For C.C. Beck's view on that lawsuit—and for some actual testimony from it—stay tuned to this magazine! —BC.]

ELLISON: [pauses] Give me a moment. That was a time after I'd foolhardily run away from home, gone on the road, gone across country, joined a carnival (because, unlike *Toby Tyler*; or, *Ten Weeks with a Circus*, I couldn't find an actual circus), had come home, done school, run away again, and I was driving a dynamite truck in North Carolina... [pauses] a long story for another time... or you could buy my books... most of it's in there... and sometime in there I guess I had a caesura in my steady reading of comic books... or maybe I just discovered girls, who knows, but by 1952 I was briefly in college at Ohio State University, and I wasn't paying much attention to the awful legal battle between Superman and Captain Marvel.

BC: *But you were aware of it at the time?*

ELLISON: Aware, but barely cognizant. Tough time for me. I was between despising college and all that crap, and tugging at my own leash to get to New York to start writing professionally. So I sort of knew what was going on, and I hated National—or DC—or Detective—or whatever they were calling themselves in 1952—for bringing such a case of creative infringement. I mean, yes, of course, every super-hero is a reboot or restatement of what Siegel and Shuster dreamed from the git-go, but even a low-grade Everyman can see there's a world, a universe, of difference between Superman and Captain Marvel, and I don't give a rat's ass what the Supreme Court said... and though I have worked for DC many times over the years, as recently as *this* year, I can never flense my memory of how much I hated the Suits who won that greedy,



Rod Reed



Will Lieberson



Wendell Crowley

Who Edits This Stuff?

And let's not forget about the trio of Fawcett editors who oversaw the serial during its two-year course. As per P.C. Hamerlinck, Rod Reed was *CMA* editor when "The Monster Society" began in early 1943; "the comics position then went to Will Lieberson, then Wendell Crowley joined in mid-July 1944." Thanks to Richard Lieberson for the photo of his father & Crowley.

mean-spirited case! To kill Captain Marvel for a buck, for a million bucks, to cheat and deny children all that joy! Un****forgiveable!

BC: [concerned] *Let's move on. Did you ever call him "The Big Red Cheese"?*

ELLISON: [still angry] Hell, no! That's what Sivana called him, what the worm would have called him. He was my *hero*, and others may think it's "cute" to refer to him that way, but when I was impressionable, as a kid, and I needed heroes, Captain Marvel was as real to me as Charles Lindbergh or Bob Feller. To this day... [pauses] ...just go on.

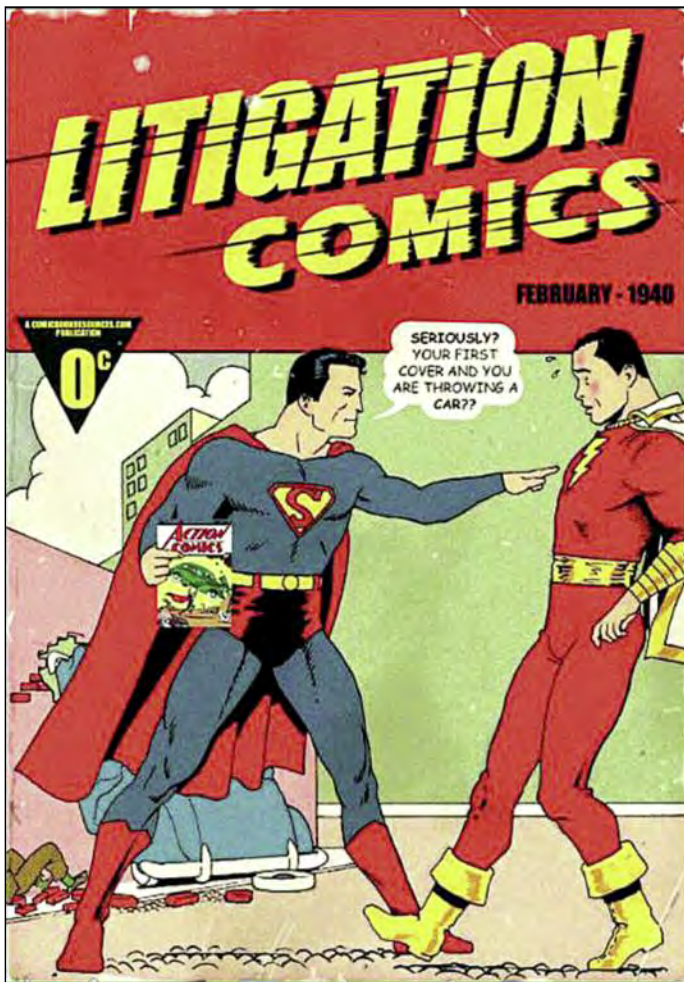
BC: *Apart from that old memory, how do you feel about DC today?*

ELLISON: [soberly] There are three things in the world I have sworn I will never do. One of them is set foot in Germany. I have many friends and readers in Germany, my books are popular there, but I will never set foot in Germany. I know it's a new age, a new time, a new world, but I'm a Jew... and I'll never set foot in Germany. National became DC—and I've loved working for DC—



Due Process—In Fact, Overdue!

(Above:) Mr. Mind was caught, tried, and executed in *Captain Marvel Adventures* #46 (May 1945). Script by Otto Binder, art by C.C. Beck. [Captain Marvel, Billy Batson, & Mr. Mind TM & © DC Comics.]



Let's Make Flivver-Flinging An Olympic Event!

British fan/artist Nick Perks did the above *faux*-cover that illustrates at least one thing that Fawcett's lawyers definitely couldn't claim Captain Marvel did before Superman. P.C. Hamerlinck spotted the illo online, and we thank Nick for giving us permission to run it. You can see this and more of Nick's humorous art on his "The-Line-It-Is-Drawn" website or at the deviantart.com website. [Superman & Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics; other art © 2015 Nick Parks.]

but when it was a different time and they fired Siegel and Shuster off *Superman*, they treated every writer like they were dog-ditch dirt, and they became Time-Warner, which owns half of everything that Geico doesn't own in the world. Well, I've got a long memory, and I've never forgiven DC, National, Detective Comics, All-American Comics, whatever name they went by, for doing that because, though they *could have* settled for some money—and maybe Captain Marvel was an imitation by, you know, three months, [but] it is so *clearly* and *distinctively* its own thing in a genre which they, admittedly, or arguably, may have come to first, but they didn't own, so I've never forgiven them for that and I've never thought that C.C. Beck or Binder got—so I'm glad you're doing the book—never got their proper level on the pantheon of the illustrator gods.

BC: Right. I don't think Binder and Beck and the other Fawcett writers, artists, and editors have received the full respect and recognition they deserve outside of comic fandom.

ELLISON: They had a golden, long moment. It was almost twenty years long. And then their time passed. Beck resented it, hated it, didn't think he'd ever gotten his proper due, I knew that much. And I agreed with him. I agree with him to this day. Binder, I'm

not so sure he gave a ****, really. He may have. You may have correspondence that says otherwise, but I think Binder knew that his time had been during the '30s, and it went on into the '40s, and it went on into the '50s.

BC: Earlier you talked about being heartbroken over Captain Marvel's demise. I get the impression that a lot of the Fawcett editors, writers, and artists were also heartbroken when it was over. Binder and Beck, for example, were professional colleagues but they were also friends. The best of the Golden Age "Captain Marvel" stories, I think, are lasting documents of that unique community of writers and artists. [NOTE: To read more about Fawcett's editors, writers, and artists, see Bill Schelly's *Words of Wonder: The Life and Times of Otto Binder*, Hamster Press, 2003. Actually, it's out of print, but due to be republished any day now. —BC.]

ELLISON: Well, it's interesting to note that very few of the writers or artists who worked for Fawcett when that loop closed down—and Fawcett closed down a lot of stuff—went to work for DC. They had good careers in magazine illustration, or in other cartoons, or in newspaper strips, but very, very few of them drifted to DC, which was the other big, open maw at that point.



"Holy Moley! It's 1943 Again!"

This fabulous approximation of Beck art was used in the flyer advertising the American Nostalgia Library's wonderful 1989 hardcover reprint volume *The Monster Society of Evil*, which offered the entire 25-chapter serial. Since DC changed its mind, a couple of years back, about reprinting the story on its own, due to a few racial stereotypes or some such ahistorical nonsense, those who have copies of this huge book—actually the product of a British company—treasure it all the more! [Shazam hero, Billy Batson, & Mr. Mind TM & © DC Comics.]

Captain Marvel's Day(s) In Court

C.C. BECK's 1944 DC Vs. Fawcett Deposition

Assembled, Abridged, & Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck with J.T. Go

INTRODUCTION by P.C. Hamerlinck: *With its two other passengers on board, we hitched a ride on that sleek, modernist subway train which delivered us to a dream—a world where the utterance of a single word could transcend its own remarkable reality, colorfully brought to our eyes uncluttered and simplified, allowing our imaginations to thrive in and between the panels. From the very beginning, Bill Parker and C.C. Beck had gone the extra mile to differentiate Captain Marvel from the indomitable flood of comic book heroes popping up almost daily during the early '40s, despite what some folks might have you believe.*

When Beck later deliberated on the dissimilarities between the Man of Steel and the World's Mightiest Mortal during his tenure as FCA editor in the early 1980s, he pointed out that Superman was "a full-grown man... a creature from another planet who went about disguised as a human," while Captain Marvel, by contrast, was only a small boy with a magic word. (Beck himself always considered Billy Batson to be the true hero of the Captain's tales, anyway.) The biggest difference between Superman and Captain Marvel, according to Beck, was that "Captain Marvel knew he was in a comic book and loved it, while Superman always seemed to be ashamed of appearing in one."

It appeared Superman wasn't invulnerable after all, and thus began DC's copyright infringement case against Fawcett Publications, droning on for over a decade. During all those years, DC's attorneys—led by Louis Nizer—were never able to scrape up one witness who would testify that anyone at Fawcett had been mandated to copy Superman.

C.C. Beck left the official employ of Fawcett and opened up his own studio at the end of March 1943. In April of '44 he formed a partnership with fellow artist Pete Costanza. The Beck-Costanza Studio produced exclusively "Captain Marvel" artwork for Fawcett, in addition to other accounts. Besides the DC vs. Fawcett embroilment, the only other time Beck had felt the repercussions of legal entanglements was when he created the minuscule electron hero "Hot Shot Galavan—The Mighty Electronic Mite" for Vic Verity Magazine (1945). Soon after Galavan appeared, Beck received a "cease and desist" letter from General Electric, which claimed his creation was a direct ripoff of their famous Reddy Kilowatt character.

The following trial transcriptions are excerpts from C.C. Beck's DC vs. Fawcett deposition from 1944. The depositions of W.H. Fawcett, Jr., Roger Fawcett, and editorial director Ralph Daigh, also all in attendance that



"Do You Swear To Tell The Truth, The Whole Truth...?"

Even poor old Shazam was put on the witness stand in this splash panel from *Captain Marvel Adventures* #79 (Dec. 1947). Script by Otto Binder; art by C.C. Beck & Pete Costanza. This courtroom drama was probably a lot more fun to observe than the one between DC and Fawcett—but the stakes were high in both! [Shazam & Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

day, took place right before Beck's, and were actually recorded at Fawcett's New York City office. Beck would later take the courtroom stand and face off against Nizer in March of 1948, which we'll look at another time.

If you can get past their arrant banality and repetitiveness, some brief instances of actual informative scraps of comics history can be rummaged up from the thousands and thousands of pages that the trial produced. However, as fascinating and engrossing as it may seem to peruse through old trial transcripts of a decade-long case involving your favorite super-heroes, the overall cumulative consequences of studying even a moderately small-sized portion of them is a punishingly monotonous, mind-numbing, barbarous exercise. The transcripts make me eternally grateful I didn't have to sit and endure any of the proceedings first-hand.

[Special thanks to Brian Cremins, who supplied FCA with a stack of court transcription photocopies, and who wrote an overview of Bill Parker's 1948 testimony for *Alter Ego* #131.]

U.S. DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
DETECTIVE COMICS, INC. and SUPERMAN,
INC., Plaintiffs
vs.
FAWCETT PUBLICATIONS, INC., REPUBLIC
PICTURES CORP. and REPUBLIC PRODUCTIONS, INC., Defendants

Deposition of C. CLARENCE BECK, taken at the office of Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1501 Broadway, New York City, at 10:00 AM on April 12, 1944.

Walter S. Beck of Phillips, Nizer, Benjamin & Krim
Attorney for Plaintiffs

Wallace H. Martin of Nims, Verdi & Martin
Attorney for Defendants

Clarence Beck, called as a witness by the plaintiffs; direct examination by Walter S. Beck

Q. Mr. Beck, where do you reside?

A. 12 Anna Place, Baldwin, Long Island.

Q. When did you begin working for the defendant Fawcett Publications, Inc.?

A. 1933.

Q. When did you receive instructions in connection with the preparation of the strip cartoon known as Captain Marvel?

A. The fall of 1939.

Q. Do you remember if those instructions were oral or written?

A. They were oral.

Q. Whom did you get those from?

A. Mr. [Al] Allard [Fawcett art director].

Q. Where did this conversation take place?

A. In Mr. Allard's office. On the 23rd floor of this building.

Q. What did Mr. Allard say to you?

A. He said that we were going to set up a cartoon department, of which I was possibly to be the head, and that I should go out and find some cartoonists.

Q. What did you say?

A. I said, "Okay, when do I start?"

Q. Will you give me the approximate date when you first submitted drawings [of characters]?

A. September of 1939.

Q. Now, when you sat down to draw those characters, did you have any idea as to whether they would be infants in a crib or great big men, or a football hero or a scholar or a scientist or an athlete?

A. Yes.

Q. Who gave you that idea?

A. Mr. [Bill] Parker.



Beck To The Future

A snapshot of Captain Marvel co-creator/artist Charles Clarence Beck, taken in 1933—the year he began working for Fawcett Publications, Inc., soon to be the home of "The World's Mightiest Mortal," much to DC/National's vexation. Photo courtesy of FCA's CCB estate archives.

Q. Give us a substance of what he said.

A. We talked things over and we tried to work out...

Q. Just tell me what you said, not what you tried to work out. What was the substance of what he said about the type of character that he wanted you to draw?

A. Well, what I was trying to say was that we worked it out between us; we agreed thoroughly that naturally we wanted heroic figures, men as the acceptable type of hero that has always been used, and that immediately would eliminate any old lady characters, any little children or anything like that.

Q. Well, did you ask Mr. Parker what type of hero he wanted?

A. No, we both knew and agreed.

Q. Well, you mean it was just a case of mental telepathy—that he conveyed the thought of something to you or you something to him?

A. He had been writing for children and adults and I had been drawing for children and adults for years before, and when we wanted to start some comic characters, we felt pretty sure that they would be tall, strong, handsome young

men.

Q. And did he say to you, "I want you to develop a character that will be a tall, strong, handsome young man"?

A. No, it wasn't necessary.

Q. I didn't ask you whether it was necessary. Was there some discussion concerning the character [Captain Thunder] before you started to draw it?

A. Well, as well as I can recall...

Q. Just answer my question. Do you understand my question?

A. Yes; I am trying to help you out.

Q. Were these [drawings] prepared by you after you had had discussions with Mr. Parker concerning the nature of the character?

A. That is right.

Q. What else, if anything, did Mr. Parker have to say to you about this character, other than the fact that his name was to be Captain Thunder, and that he was to be born in a crash of thunder?

A. That he was to be a dual character, and his alter ego, as we call it, was to be a small boy, if possible a poor, honest and starving boy.

Q. Anything else?

A. And that he was to be pretty much on the military side because of his name Captain, and that he was going to carry some kind of a little wand or token, with lightning on its tip, and to have spurs with lightning, and there are other things in there that I have forgotten that did develop into other characters that I was working on at the same time. Those characters are still in existence.

Q. To which characters are you now referring to?



Anything You Can Do...

Superman and Captain Marvel were unquestionably distinctive in their own ways, but similarities such as our invulnerable heroes both being strong enough to toss automobiles or bring tanks to a standstill or to suddenly halt speeding locomotives was more than DC/National was willing to tolerate. Compare and contrast Joe Shuster's for *Action Comics* #13 (June 1939) with C.C. Beck's cover for *Whiz Comics* #18 (June 1941).
 [Superman & Shazam hero TM & © DC Comics.]

Q. How did you know about it?

A. I only knew about it because I had come across it.

Q. Had you seen any of the magazines in which Superman was published prior to January 1940?

A. Yes. I saw a small portion of one copy, somewhere in the fall of 1939.

Q. Who showed it to you?

A. I picked it up myself from a pile of comic magazines in Mr. Parker's office.

Q. When did you learn for the first time that there was a magazine by the name of Action Comics?

A. Maybe a couple of years ago.

Q. That would be 1942.

A. Yes.

Q. Now, when you saw the copy of Action Comics in Mr. Parker's office, in the fall of 1939, how many pages of cartoons of Superman did you look at in that book?

A. About the first three pages.

Q. Are you positive that you had never seen any cartoon of the character Superman at any time prior to the date when you picked up this book in Mr. Parker's office?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. Now, after you saw Superman in Mr. Parker's office, did you say anything to Mr. Parker or Mr. Allard or Mr. Daigh that there was a striking resemblance between Superman and Captain Thunder?

A. No.

Q. There was no discussion about it at all?

A. No.

Q. Well, did Mr. Parker discuss with you the powers of Superman as compared with the powers of Captain Thunder?

A. No.

Q. Did he discuss with you Superman's appearance as contrasted with the appearance of Captain Thunder?

A. No.

The World's Mightiest Waste Of Time And Money

Testimony & Opinion By C.C. BECK

Originally presented in *FCA/SOB* #8-10 (*FCA* #19-21), 1981

Edited by P.C. Hamerlinck with J.T. Go

It's absolutely incredible," says David Weiss, a court reporter who has dug up documents and transcriptions of the famous DC-Fawcett lawsuit. "You wouldn't believe the reams and heaps and stacks and rooms full of material that this trial produced!"

We are glad that the lawyers who worked on this case produced something for the money spent. Weiss informed me that court reporters are paid by the page and do very well. As we all know, lawyers make huge sums of money for their services—and even witnesses and jurors are paid for their time in court.

Comic book writers and artists are paid by the page, too, but they unfortunately never make much money. What comic book writers and artists can say in a half-dozen pages, it takes a lawyer several hundred or thousand pages to say the same thing.

I was called in to testify in 1944. Here is an excerpt from the testimony transcription:

DC ATTORNEY: *All the conversations, I take it, took place in the Fall of 1939?*

C.C. BECK: That is right.

Q. *Was there anything said about the supernatural characteristics of this individual at this time?*

A. We called them "magic," yes, sir.

Q. *I did not ask you what you call them, I asked you what was said by Mr. Parker to you or to Mr. Parker about supernatural characteristics that this individual was to have.*

A. I don't recall his using the word "supernatural."

Superman's lawyers tried their best to get witnesses to say that they copied or "stole" material from "Superman" stories. Here is the way Republic Pictures' president Morris J. Siegal answered such insinuations:

DC ATTORNEY: *When and under what circumstances did you see any cartoon strips containing the figure or character Superman?*

MORRIS J. SIEGAL: Well, we had purchased the rights to make a serial of Superman, and it was at that time I believe I saw some Superman strips.

Q. *What happened in regard to the production of the Superman motion picture serial?*



At His Beck And Call

At a 1972 comics convention in Tempe, Arizona, C.C. Beck talks with some early "cosplay" folks—before the term was invented. (Back then, they just had masquerade contests, such as this one that Beck helped judge.) Most of the heroes in this grouping were characters he'd drawn at one time or another. From left to right, we see Captain Tootsie, (unidentified), Captain Marvel Jr. (a character Beck hated), Dr. Strange, Minnie Mouse, Ibis the Invincible (collector Bruce Hamilton), and Captain Marvel himself (portrayed by soon-to-be DC *Shazam!* artist Don Newton). How did Doc and Minnie and that other guy get in there? Photo courtesy of Alex Jay.

A. Subsequently, some several months later, I understood there was some legal problem involved, and we discontinued work on the serial.

Q. *At the time of the production of the Captain Marvel serial were you then familiar with the story and characters portrayed in the Captain Marvel serial?*

A. Yes, I discussed it and generally knew what the character was.

Q. *Do you recall whether the story or any of the characters [or] incidents in the Captain Marvel serial contained any material which had been prepared in connection with the proposed Superman serial?*

A. My recollection is that none of the Superman material was used in preparing the Captain Marvel continuity.



Dr. Amy Kiste Nyberg

Seal Of Approval: The History Of The Comics Code



The Bibliography Of The 1998 Study Of Comics Censorship By DR. AMY KISTE NYBERG

A/E

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION: In A/E #136, we concluded our multi-issue reprinting of the main text of Dr. Amy K. Nyberg's book

Seal of Approval: The History of the Comics Code, originally published in 1998 by the University Press of Mississippi (in trade paperback form, and still available from them at www.upress.sate.ms.us). Our re-publication was spread over A/E #123-128, 130, & 133-136. Once again we wish to thank Dr. Nyberg—and Dr. M. Thomas Inge, under whose general editorship the work first saw print and who was of crucial help to us in securing permission to present it in *Alter Ego*. Our thanks, also, to William Biggins and Vijah Shah, acquisitions editors past and present of the UIPM... and to Brian K. Morris for a typing assist.

Because Seal of Approval is extensively footnoted (in the Modern Library Association style), we wanted to finish by reprinting Dr. Nyberg's bibliography, as well, since the book would not be complete without it... nor would any reader be able to check her original sources for his/her own enlightenment or research. Naturally, we've thrown in a few art spots (and our own captions) along the way to illustrate the history of comics censorship, the Comics Magazine Association of America, and the Comics Code Authority....

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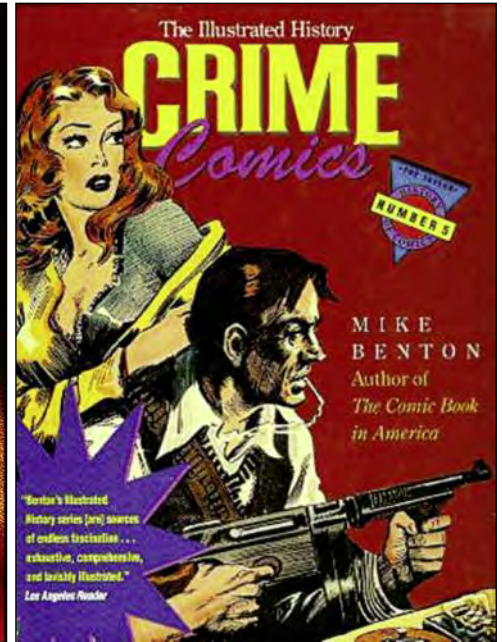
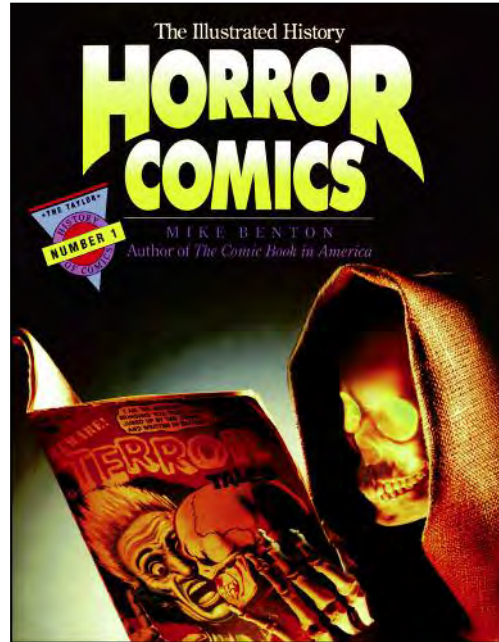
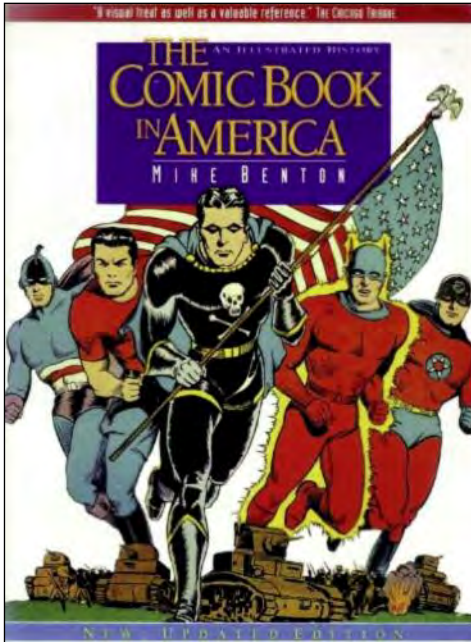


"I Have In My Hand..."

A member of the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, in early 1954, holds up a "random sampling" of crime and horror comics as evidence of publishers' pernicious perfidy. From *Changing Times* magazine.

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A Taylor-Made History Of Comic Books

Between 1989 and the mid-'90s, author Mike Benton and the Taylor Publishing Company produced seven volumes in the Taylor History of Comics series, including the three pictured here—plus entries on science-fiction comics and on super-heroes of the Golden and Silver Ages, and *The Comic Book Artists Hall of Fame*. Too bad the series (or the company?) ran out of steam before it got around to studies of Western, jungle, humor, romance, et al.—but every one of these volumes is worth seeking out! [Art © the respective copyright holders.]

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LEV GLEASON PUBLISHED SOME OF THE MOST SENSATIONAL COMICS OF THE GOLDEN AGE! UNDER THE KEEN EDITORIAL EYE OF WRITER/ARTIST CHARLES BIRO AND CO-EDITOR BOB WOOD, SEX AND VIOLENCE PROVED TO BE A WINNING COMBINATION. THEIR BOOKS SOLD MILLIONS!

CRIMEBUSTER

meets

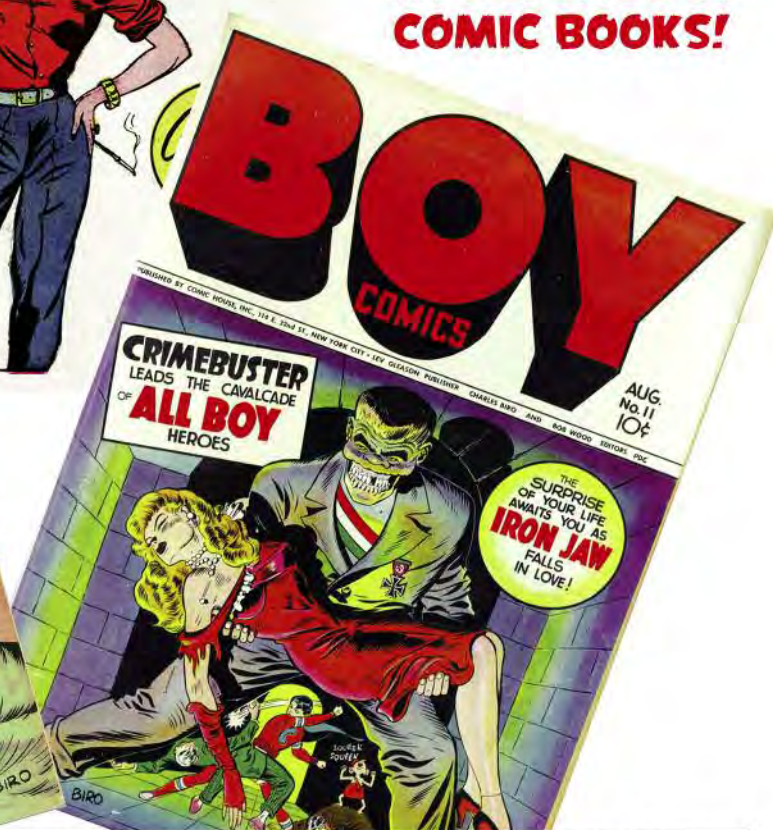
BY CHARLES BIRO

HE SHE



BUT BY THE EARLY '50S, THE MARKET HAD CHANGED! SO HAD LEV GLEASON. IN THE FACE OF WITHERING CRITICISM, HE CONVERTED HIS LINE TO MORE KID-FRIENDLY FARE. AND WHEN HIS CRITICS CONTINUED TO ATTACK, GLEASON FOUGHT BACK WITH A WELL-REASONED ARTICLE . . .

IN DEFENSE OF COMIC BOOKS!



The Terrible Trio!

Three tasty Charles Biro illos. (Clockwise from far left:) Cover to *Daredevil* #6 (Dec. 1941), the splash to *Boy Comics* #9 (April 1943), and the cover to *Boy* #11 (Aug. 1943).

[Pages © the respective copyright holders.]

In defense of comic books



Prepubescent & Publisher

(Above:) H. Walter drew this header illustration for Lev Gleason's article. [© 1952 *Today's Health*.]

(Right:) Drew Friedman's superb portrait of Gleason appeared in his book *Heroes of the Comics*. You gotta pick this book up! [© 2015 Drew Friedman.]

Introduction

by Michael T. Gilbert

Comic book publisher Lev Gleason made a small fortune printing some of the most wonderfully gruesome, depraved comics of the Golden Age. In their prime, each issue of *Daredevil*, *Boy Comics*, and the notorious *Biro & Wood Crime Does Not Pay* sold millions. But by 1952 the comic book landscape had changed—and so, it appeared, had Gleason. In response to attacks by critics like Dr. Fredric Wertham, Gleason began publishing more kid-friendly titles like *Slugger*, *Squeeks*, *Dilly*, and *Uncle Charlie's Fables*—fairy tales told by writer/editor Charles Biro. The critics may have approved, but the kids stayed away in droves. None lasted past five issues.

But Gleason's heart was in the right place, as seen in this spirited defense of comics that appeared in the September 1952 issue of *Today's Health*. Our thanks to Comics Detective Ken Quattro for sharing this article.



In Defense Of Comic Books

by Leverett Gleason

In at least 20,000,000 American homes today there is a youngster avidly reading a comics magazine. Chances are there is a sizeable stack of these magazines waiting their turn for his attention. The home may be humble or lavish. The child may be brilliant or dull. The fact is that this enthusiasm for the comics is universal in our current generation of youngsters.

Well over 75% of all children between four and 19 are regular readers of comics magazines. Sales total between 60 and 70 million copies a month. More than 400 different comics magazines are on sale today.

They constitute more than a third of all the newsstand reading matter in this country. The influence that this part of the reading diet has on children has become an important consideration for parents, educators, sociologists, doctors, and, in fact, the entire population.

Now that the comics magazines have been popular for nearly 15 years, psychologists and educators have been able to make extensive studies of their effects and to develop some significant theories.

Comics magazines, they declare, offer an amazing potential. They can actually help mold their young readers into happier, more intelligent adults, if developed with that in mind. They can be conceived to catch the child's interest, give him fun and excitement in a decent moral and ethical framework, foster a realistic understanding of life and a sense of discrimination in literature and art. One authority has told me that if he could control all the editorial material that goes into comics magazines, he would be able completely to shape the future thinking of this country. That may be an extreme viewpoint, but many agree with him.

Sidonie Matsner Gruenberg, director of the Child Study



He Also Serves...

This Morris Weiss drawing appeared in *Daredevil* #16 (April 1943) and depicts Leverett Gleason during a stint in the Army Air Corps. [© the respective copyright holders.]

Association of America and a recognized authority on the subject, expresses it in another way:

"We are dealing with a relatively new means of communication. Like movies and radio, in fact, the spoken or written word, comics can say almost anything one may want to say. However good or bad and whatever we may want to say or teach, comics can be more quickly and widely understood by young and old than the written word. The comics thus contain the possibilities of valuable, positive contributions to better



How Slugger Survives!

Slugger was the only member of Daredevil's Little Wise Guys to earn his own title—though only for a single issue (April 1956). Art by Charles Biro. [© the respective copyright holders.]

mutual understanding and better living everywhere."

Another authority, Josette Frank, educational associate of the Child Study Association, adds that the comics magazine has a high potential value because it is so acceptable to children and it can be timely and contemporary in a way books cannot. Here, perhaps more effectively than elsewhere, she adds, we can find an opportunity to give children forward-looking attitudes, ideas, and ideals about the world they live in.

The effect of brutality, sex, sadism and cruelty in children's reading matter is self-evident. No comic book which includes such matter can ever be acceptable. The strict code of ethics set up by the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers has brought about the elimination of such scenes from the magazines published by association members. Every issue of the magazines put out by members is examined before it is printed by an arbiter retained by the association. It is his job to order any changes he deems necessary and members must conform. Not all comic book publishers are members of the association, but many who do not belong carry on their own self-censorship. Alert parents may have noted some slow but significant results.

It is important that parents recognize the influence of comics magazines. It is useless to think that children can be prohibited from reading them and the task of selecting suitable ones thereby avoided. Unless a child is sealed in a cave it is next to impossible to keep him from reading comics magazines, since they are every-

The Secret Lair Of Dr. Strange, His Creators, & A Ghost Of Christmas Past

The Unknown History Of 177 [& 177A] Bleecker Street, Greenwich Village, New York City

by Paris Liu

[Originally published in NYMag.com's *Bedford + Bowery* on Dec. 25, 2014. © 2014 Paris Liu. —delayed from *Alter Ego* #136.]

If you walk past 177 Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village and see a middle-aged guy in black clothes and a flowing red cape making a horn sign with both hands, watch out for the multi-dimensional mayhem about to be unleashed.

To us mere mortals, 177 Bleecker may be a stately Queen Anne-style apartment building that rises five stories above a busy Manhattan street. But in the Marvel Universe, the building has long been the home of Dr. Strange, the Sorcerer Supreme who'll be played by Benedict Cumberbatch in a hotly anticipated film. Since Marvel introduced the master magician to the comic world in the 1960s, he has lived in his Sanctum Sanctorum at 177 Bleecker Street, and much of the universe-threatening action perpetrated by the forces of darkness against our unsuspecting world has taken place within these walls.

According to the South Village Historic District Designation Report, the building dates back to 1887. It's the work of Alexander I. Finkle, a New Orleans-born architect and builder whose other noteworthy designs include a synagogue at the corner of Lexington Avenue and 72nd Street. But Finkle seemingly did his best work on private residences. He was responsible for a row of Queen Anne houses in the Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District, but only one of these is still standing. He also designed two German Renaissance Revival style tenements in NoHo, as well as another two in the East Village. But in Greenwich Village, the buildings at 171, 173, 175, and 177 Bleecker Street are today his most visible legacy.



Zeroing In On Doc's Domicile

(Above:) Panels from the sixth "Dr. Strange" story, in *Strange Tales* #117 (Feb. 1964)—the first-ever depiction of Stephen's mysterious dwelling-place, and it's actually just an image in the palm of his arch-enemy, Baron Mordo! The *real* McMansion is shown three panels later. Script & editing by Stan Lee; art (and probably co-plotting) by Steve Ditko. In the very first "Dr. Strange" yarn, in *ST* #110 (July '63), there's just a verbal reference to the magician living "on a quiet side street in New York's colorful Greenwich Village"; in the third one, in *ST* #114 (Nov. '63), it's called "a shadowy Greenwich Village apartment"; the next issue, it's "a shadowy, candlelit apartment on a back street in Greenwich Village." Note that, this first time its exterior is depicted, Doc's mansion stands on a *corner*. Thanks to Barry Pearl. [TM & © Marvel Characters, Inc.]

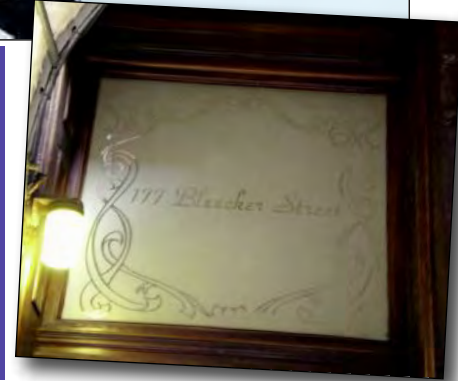
(Left:) Today, 177A Bleecker Street—as the street address read in 1965-66—is a part of "177 Bleecker Street"; but Bleecker was and is definitely *not* a "quiet side street" or "back street." In this photo, a passerby gives a mystic sign in front of the doorway now bereft of the "A." Thanks to Paris Liu for the photo.





Bleecker & Bleaker

(Clockwise from above:) In 1808, Anthony Bleecker and his wife deeded land in the Greenwich Village area to New York City... which is surely enough to get a street therein named after you. Hence, a Bleecker Street sign from the modern era—and the glazed-glass address above the doorway at 177. Thanks to Paris Liu for the latter.



Got To Believe We Are Magic!

The photo (above left) of the entire building at 177 Bleecker Street a few years back is from Bob Cromwell's fun website "Fictional Architecture of Manhattan," and was seen with Paris Liu's original online publication of her article. On his site, Cromwell explains to readers that "The structure is much larger inside than outside," since it also contains "Doctor Strange's *Sanctum Sanctorum*" with a "library of occult works such as the *Book of the Vishanti* and his meditation room... in the upper levels," plus living quarters for Doc and Wong and space for occasional guests.

Cromwell adds that the Sorcerer Supreme "hides the true nature of his townhouse by magically disguising the ground floor as yet another Greenwich Village tattoo parlor [NOTE: recent update: 'grocery store.']" In regard to another of his photos, Cromwell reports that the array of door buzzers inside the 177-marked door (seen above right) is "mysteriously blank." All of this, he assures us, is "just an illusion maintained by Dr. Strange." At the end of the entry, he adds the tidbit of info that "Marvel writers and artists Roy Thomas, Gary Friedrich, and Bill Everett shared an apartment here on Bleecker Street in the late 1960s." [© the respective copyright holders.]

buried on Christmas Day 1885. The newspaper did a follow-up on him a year later.

Paine had interesting ancestry. He was the grandson of one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Robert Treat Paine, a fact that the *Times* found noteworthy enough to include in its one-year follow-up. The newspaper listed the "atheist Thomas Paine" as another ancestor, although a detailed biography of Robert Treat Paine by a contemporary merely states that the ancestors of both men came from the same region of England.

One thing that's somewhat clearer is that the Bleecker family, for whom the street is named, had something to do with the house. According to the Designation Report, the Bleeckers acquired the land in the late 1700s from the Bayard family, which had ambitiously acquired that and other property in South Manhattan during the previous century. Anthony Bleecker and his wife signed over the land on which 177 Bleecker now sits to the city in 1808.

And, lest we New Yorkers get too contemptuous when seeing those Southern mansions depicted in *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone With the Wind*, the Designation Report clearly states that slave labor was commonly employed in many of the estates in South

Manhattan. In fact, Nicholas Bayard, the patriarch of the family, not only had slaves, but "was also a merchant who participated in the slave trade." Little wonder that Dr. Strange has so many malevolent specters to fight!

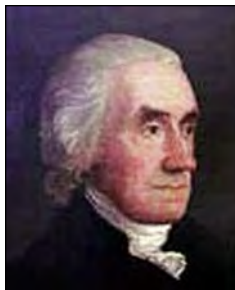
Anthony Bleecker, on the other hand, seems to have been primarily a developer with a flair for literature. He regularly published his prose and poetry, and even garnered a nice compliment from the noted American poet William Cullen Bryant: "Anthony Bleecker, who read everything that came out, and sometimes wrote for the magazines, was an amusing companion, always ready with his puns." An amateur writer could certainly be made to do with a bleaker epitaph.

Early History & James H. Paine The Miser

Details are sketchy about the building that preceded the present-day 177 Bleecker, but the Designation Report notes that the houses on the street were part of "an affluent residential area in the early 19th century" whose rise "began in earnest during the 1820s and 1830s, when unprecedented growth pushed the limits of the city northward and—for some four decades—made the blocks of the historic district one of New York's most prestigious residential neighborhoods." Some of the houses even had pretentious-sounding names, such as Carroll Place, but if 177 Bleecker had one, it does not seem to have survived.

One of the few existing documents about the former building is a curious *New York Times* clipping from 1886 about a former resident named James H. Paine, who lived and died in the building's attic in 1885.

Paine was an old "miser" (so termed by the *Times*), who was either a music critic or avid music fan, and made the news when the then-substantial sum of \$40,000 was discovered in his attic room after his death. He died just before Christmas and was



A Paine In The Attic

(Left:) Thomas Treat Paine (1731-1814), ancestor of the secret miser James H. Paine who "lived and died [in 1885] in the attic" at the Bleecker Street address.

(Right:) A possible relative of both the above gents: Thomas Paine (1736-1807), author of the tract *Common Sense*, which helped spur the American Colonies toward revolution against England.

Survivors Of The First Comicon

On The 50th Anniversary of the first New York Comicon, five fans “who were there” appeared on a panel at the 2014 New York Comic Con to reflect on how it all got started.

The Panelists: BERNIE BUBNIS, LEN WEIN, ETHAN ROBERTS, HOWARD ROGOFSKY, ART TRIPP, FLO STEINBERG, and RICK BIERMAN

Part 2 - Introduction

In this issue, we conclude our two-part feature on this historic panel, which brought together seven people who attended the first New York Comicon, held on July 27, 1964. That first comics convention was held on a Monday because it was thought there was a better chance of attendance by comics professionals if it took place on a working day. The 50th-anniversary panel was organized by Ethan Roberts, who served as moderator. The first half of the panel was transcribed in our previous issue, and we now pick it up midway through.... —Bill Schelly.

ETHAN ROBERTS: The list you see up there is a list of the folks who attended the convention. [Refers to a slide that is projected large enough for the audience to read; the list was printed last issue, with Part I] The names in blue are professionals then who attended then. You see Steve Ditko. It was the only convention he ever attended. We must have scared the hell out of him. [audience laughs] Tom Gill was the artist of The Lone Ranger and various Dell comics for many years. Larry Ivie was a semi-pro.

The folks shown in green were the dealers. So we have up there—if I could only see—Len Berman was the partner of Phil Seuling. You should all know the name “Phil Seuling.” [audience cheers] Phil was at

the first convention, and the second convention. Phil ran the third convention. For years, the July 4th convention in New York City was the biggest convention anywhere, and Phil ran those. [A/E EDITOR'S NOTE: Actually, the main New York cons from 1965 through 1967 were hosted not by Seuling but by David Kaler, with another in '66 from John Benson and one in early '67 from Calvin Beck. Seuling's baptism of fire was the so-called SCARP-Con in 1968; he put them on on his own beginning in 1969.] In addition to that, how many of you have ever been to a comic shop? [audience chuckles again] Phil Seuling started the distribution pattern that created the comic shops. So he was there with Len Berman.

Another dealer who was there was Claude Held, who came from upstate New York. We already know Howard [Rogofsky] was there. Another dealer, Bill Thailing, came in from Cleveland, Ohio. And Malcolm Willits came in from California. He came from the farthest away. Malcolm is 80 years old or better, and now lives in Palm Desert, but he's still alive. [NOTE FROM BILL: Malcolm Willits was born in February 1934.] Howard is waiting to outlive him, too. [audience laughs]

I want to make a big deal about the name up there, “George Martin.” That's George R.R. Martin. You all know him primarily as the author of the A Song of Ice and Fire series, better known to those of you who don't



“Déjà Vu All Over Again!”

(Clockwise from left, with the usual apologies to the late great Yogi Berra:)

Lacking a pic of the entire “Survivors of the First Comicon” panel, we’re repeating this group photo taken at the New York Comicon sometime that day of most of the panelists. (Standing left to right:) Bernie Bubnis, Art Tripp, Rick Bierman, Ethan Roberts. Seated: Len Wein. Missing: Howard Rogofsky & Flo Steinberg. A photo of Howard can be seen on p. 62.

The “Comicon 1964” button, shown as an insert, was designed by Tripp.

On the panel at the 2014 New York Comicon: Bubnis, Bierman, Tripp, and Steinberg. Unseen in this pic are moderator Roberts, Rogofsky, and Bierman.

Both photos courtesy of Lucille Bubnis, Bernie’s long-suffering wife.

Mug shots of a number of other attendees of the 1964 con were seen last issue.

read very often as *The Game of Thrones*. [audience cheers] We talked about all of us having these clean criminal records. Well, as far as I'm concerned, George is a killer.

[audience laughs] He will knock off your favorite character like that. [more laughter] Anyway, let's go on. Art, as a committee member, what was your role at that first convention?

ART TRIPP: I've always called myself "chief cook and bottle washer" of the con. [audience chuckles] Early in the morning, I went over to DC and asked, "Have you got anything we could give [as prizes] at the comic book convention? Carmine Infantino turned around and said, "Yeah, give me a minute or two," and handed me a stack of original art. [indicates a foot-tall stack; audience oohs]

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Nice.

TRIPP: Then I went over to Marvel and saw Stan Lee. I said, "We're going to do a comic book convention." "A what?" "A comic book convention. You know, for the guys who read the books." "Oh, hold on a minute." Everyone who went got one or two pieces of original art—free. [Refers to the slide, which shows the 1964 Comicon button.] We handed all those [buttons] out for free, too. I had those ready a couple of days before the con. I would have had Superman and Spider-Man on there, but for the copyright [issues]. So that's why it's plain. When [Lone Ranger artist] Tom Gill showed up, he had me sit on his car to make sure someone didn't steal his wheels. [audience laughs] I had a lot of fun. I met a bunch of people and... none of them have ever turned around and disappointed me. Thank you.

ROBERTS: Len ...?

LEN WEIN: I am currently [labeled as] the firebrand of the thing. I honestly still don't remember, Bernie, the exact reason I got excised from the convention. [chuckles] But I was bound and determined to go. My grandfather, God rest him, was an attorney and he said, "They got no legal right to keep you out of your own convention, so you're going." I was there for the show and then it would still [inaudible due to applause]. The one thing I claimed credit for was actually coining the word "comicon." [He spells the word] God, if I'd only trademarked it! [audience laughs] It's amazing. It changed the world with this thing, and at 50 years [inaudible]. There's a great song from *Follies* by Stephen Sondheim, which is "I'm Still Here." And I think about that a lot.

[NOTE FROM BILL: It's not my wish to take any credit away from Len, but the word "comicon" had been floating around in fandom for some time. For example, in his "Trip Report" article in *The Comicollector* #10 (March-April 1963), Ronn Foss wrote, "We were already planning the next get-together, possibly at some form of comicon in the immediate area." This was about six months before George Pacinda, et al., began planning the first New York con. However, Len probably independently thought of the same idea. That kind of thing happens all the time.]

ROBERTS: Art knows about that free art you handed out—Marvel art, DC art—this is what I got. [Roberts holds up a twice-up page of original art; audience "oohs" and "ahs"]

MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh, wow. Oh, my God.



Ronn Foss
1960s editor and publisher of
Dateline: Comicon.

Dateline:
Comicon
THE ASSN. OF AMATEUR AUTHORS & ARTISTS
Number 8 March 1964

- COMICON -

NYC CON - Help from the Academy money-wise is not what I am seeking. If need be, I could pour ALL my money into this - out what good is a hall without sufficient number of fans to make it look like a convention. I guess the word 'con' should be changed to 'meet' since this bit will last only about 6 hours or so. ((WHA-a-at??)) As it stands now I am the only guy working on the meet, the Len Wein and Ron Fradkin hold down the titles of co-chairmen. At this writing we have 4 paid members of the 'con.', plus 6 other LI ((Long Island)) fan who have promised the \$1.50 tab but have not responded as yet. The only kind of publicity we need is that a group of fans are finally putting some action into the age-old comic fans' hope for a convention. ((Bernie's picked up the ball; let's help him carry it!)) / I'm slated to have my Helios strip appear in FIGHTING HEROES #11; please let me know your reaction. / HERE IT IS - The B*I*G*E*S*T News Feature for the Con's Progress Report: Issue #4 will feature a photo-offset cover of Capt. America - pencilled by Jack Kirby and INKED BY Joe Simon; how's THAT for a collectors' item!! I worked like a demon to pull this deal thru; along with it might come Simon as a featured speaker at the con - with Jack Kirby! - BERNIE BUBNIS

(any side-bets you can't get a representative of National? - RONN

Dateline: Comicon

Bernie Bubnis' letter leads off *Dateline: Comicon* #8 (March 1964), announcing his plans after he took over the chairmanship of the New York con. *Dateline: Comicon* was a newszine (= news-related fanzine) originally established as a "news wire" for the most active participants in comicon, i.e., fanzine editors, writers, and artists.

FEMALE AUDIENCE MEMBER: How nice.

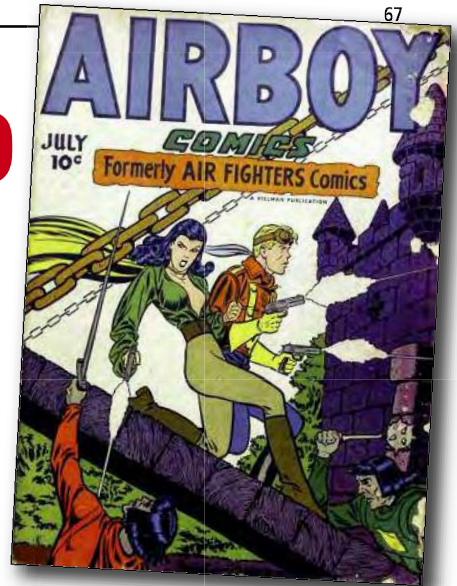
ROBERTS: Fury art by Tom Gill! [audience laughs]

WEIN: Nice black-&-white style. Old professionals.

ROBERTS: Next, we're going to hear from Ron Fradkin, who was the third member of the con committee, by tape.



Two Tributes To FRED KIDA (1920-2014)



I. "It Was As If He'd Been Doing These Guys For Years"

by Ben Herman

Fred Kida was born on December 12, 1920, in Brooklyn, New York. After high school, he attended The American School of Design. He first broke into comic books in 1941, working as an inker and background artist for the S.M. Iger Studio. Less than a year later, Kida was on staff at Iger client Quality Comics, where he produced his first-known credited work, a "Phantom Clipper" story in *Military Comics* #9 (April 1942).

Shortly afterward, he began what would be a seven-year association with Hillman Comics. He worked on various Hillman features, most notably "Airboy," the teenage air ace originally devised by Charles Biro. In the pages of *Air Fighters Comics*, Vol. 2,

#2 (Nov. 1943), paired with inker Bill Quackenbush, Kida introduced the femme fatale Valkyrie, a sultry Nazi aviatrix who quickly defected to the Allies, becoming an occasional supporting character in the "Airboy" feature.

In 1982, Kida, interviewed by Catherine Yronwode concerning his work on "Airboy," stated: "Milton Caniff was my main influence at the time." Kida acknowledged that Valkyrie "was based on the Dragon Lady [in Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates* newspaper comic strip]. That's all there is to it."

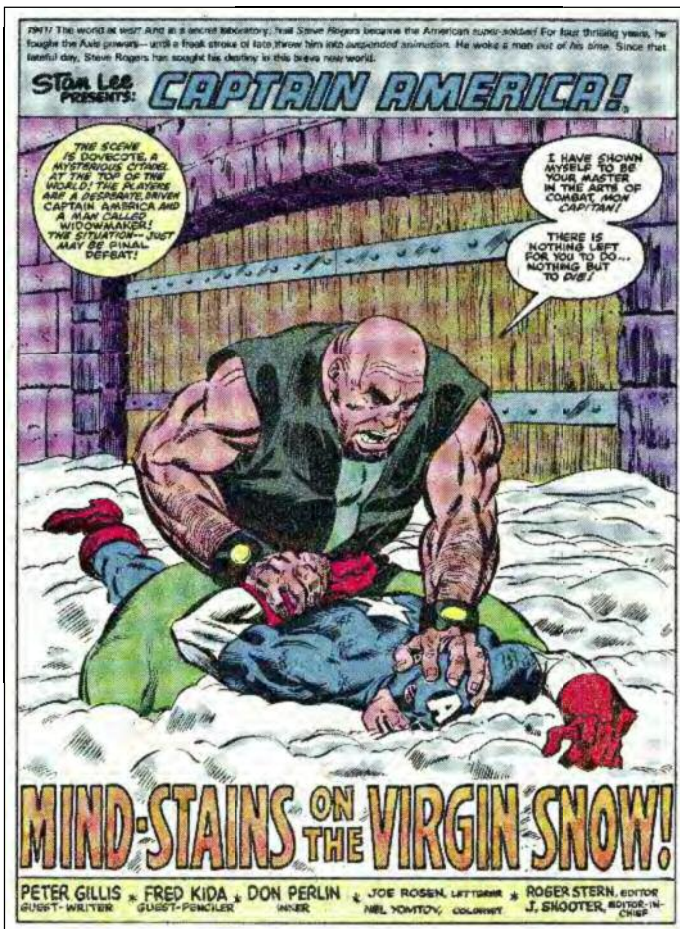
While at Hillman, Kida also briefly worked with writer Robert Bernstein on the *Judge Wright* comic strip from December 1946 to June 1947. Soon after that, Kida and Bernstein collaborated on a pair of monthly comic strips, *Science Silhouettes* and *The Eagle Trailer*, which ran in *Boys Life* magazine.

Beginning in late 1948, Kida was at Lev Gleason Publications, his work regularly appearing in *Crime Does Not Pay*. Demonstrating his versatility, Kida also became a contributor to the company's romance titles *Boy Meets Girl* and *Lovers' Lane*.

Kida's work also appeared in Timely/Atlas comics, in such titles as *Action*, *Bible Tales for Young People*, *Worlds*, *Jungle Tales*, *Ringo Kid*, and *Iron Man*.

He notably assisted Dan Froyen on *Iron Man* from 1958 to 1961, then on *Iron Man* again from 1963 to 1964. In these two stints, he did occasionally ghost on both the *Iron Man* comic strips. He also began illustrating landscapes and portraits for Marvel from 1961 to 1964. He was paired several times on *Captain Britain*, *The Defenders*, and *Iron Man*, that Kida worked on were *Captain America*, *Iron Man*, *Ka-Zar*, *Master of Kung Fu*, *Team-Up*. This saw him inking and coloring, which included George Perez, Keith Pollard, Ron Wilson, and Sal Buscema.

Ride Of The Valkyrie
(Top left & above:) Fred Kida in later life—and his classic cover for *Airboy Comics*, Vol. 3, #6 (July 1946), featuring the Caniff-influenced Valkyrie. Thanks to Ben Herman and the Comic Book Plus website. [© the respective copyright holders.]



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