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Cover color: **TOM ZIUKO**

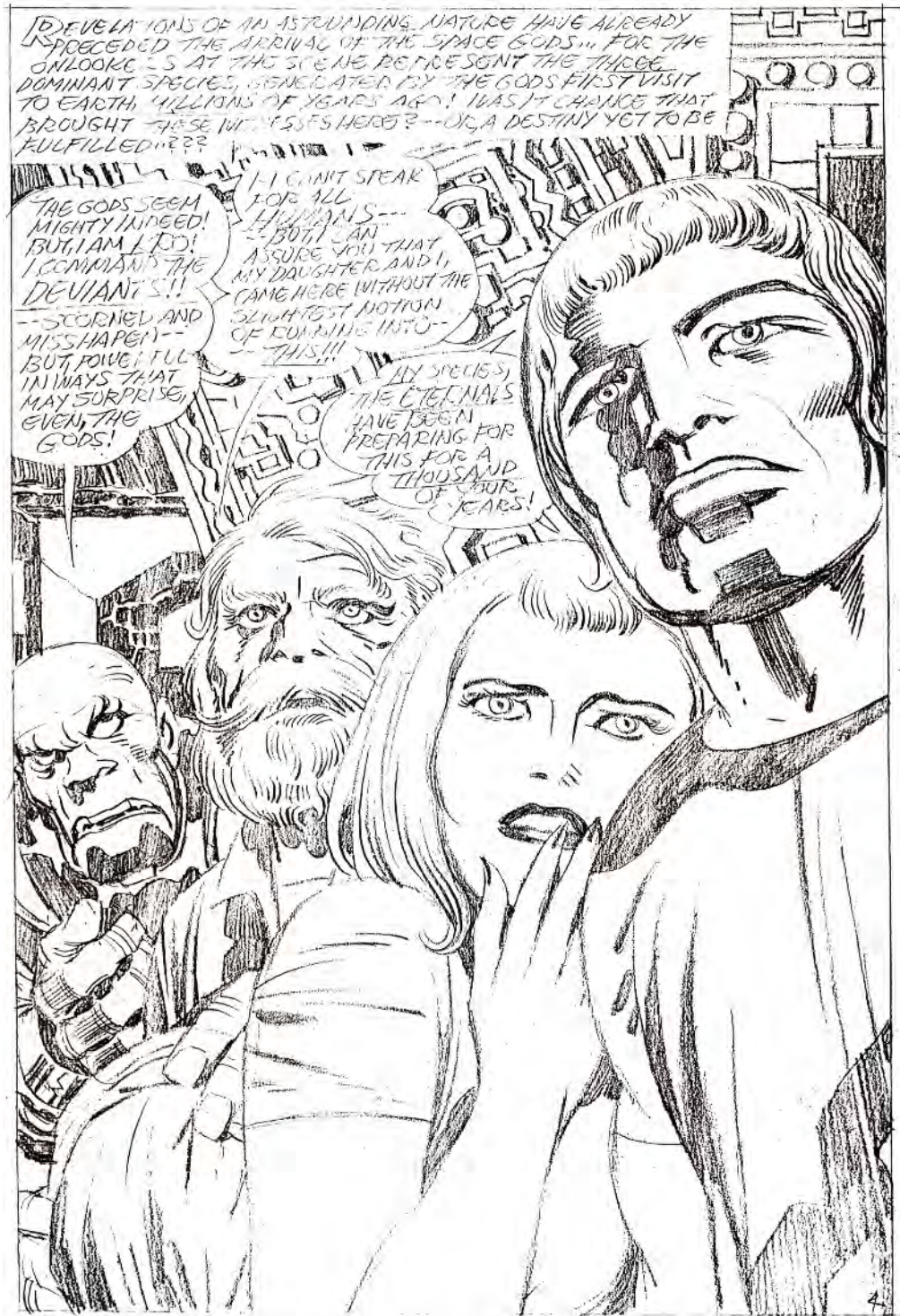
This issue dedicated to the memory of historian & researcher **STAN TAYLOR**



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# THE JACK KIRBY COLLECTOR

ISSUE #70, WINTER 2017



Man, Eternal, Deviant—the three species since the beginning of time, according to Kirby. Page 4 pencils from Eternals #2 (Aug. 1976).

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Compiled by Marvin Taylor, with a tip of the hat to Harry Mendryk and Ray Wyman, Jr.



Here are some firsts and records set by Jack Kirby, as compiled by reader Marvin Taylor. We at *TJKC* also want to recognize historian Harry Mendryk for his informative article “Simon & Kirby Firsts” (<http://kirbymuseum.org/blogs/simonandkirby/archives/3699>) for helping us verify some of Marvin’s information, and Ray Wyman Jr.’s book *The Art of Jack Kirby*, which accounted for some of these entries.

Fans are encouraged to dispute any of these, as there could be examples that pre-date these which we weren’t aware of:



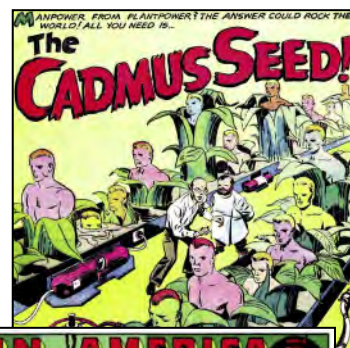
- First romance comic (*My Date* #1, 1946—or *Young Romance* #1, 1947, if you think *My Date* doesn’t qualify)
- First cover featuring a real person in cartoon form (Hitler, *Captain America Comics* #1, 1941)



- First Kid Gang (*Young Allies* #1, 1941—or the Newsboy Legion in *Star Spangled Comics* #7, 1942, a truer representation of the genre)
- First all-new Annual (*Fantastic Four Annual* #1, 1963)
- First use of clones in comics (“The Cadmus Seed” in *Alarming Tales* #1, 1957, more

than a decade before clones in *Jimmy Olsen*)

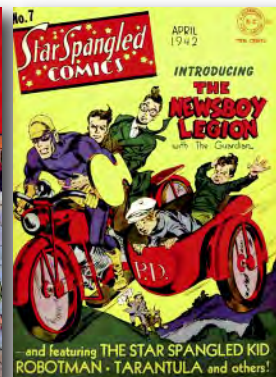
- First two-page spread (*Captain America Comics* #6, 1941—if not the first, they certainly popularized and mastered it)



- First time artists names were used on a cover to promote the comic (*Adventure Comics* #80, Nov. 1942)



- First cosmic hero (Silver Surfer, *Fantastic Four* #48, March 1966)
- Most “Captain” characters drawn (seven—can you name them? Try, then see next page\*)
- First comics wedding (*Fantastic Four Annual* #3, 1965)
- Most #1 issues drawn (100)
- First Silver Age team (Challengers of the Unknown, actually created well before publication)





# INTERVIEW WITH JACK KIRBY

by G.J. O'Hara & John Millinder, originally published in Stan's Weekly Express #74, April 15, 1971

(next page, top) Jack drew this cartoon announcing the birth of first child Susan on December 6, 1945, at the time Simon & Kirby were working on Stuntman. Shown (l to r) are Alfred Harvey, Joe Simon, and Jack.

(next page, bottom) Vince Davis photo of Jack taken at the April 1971 Disneyland Con put on by Jerry O'Hara.

(below) 1978 New Year's greeting book for Jack's synagogue.

[Editor's Note: The following was sent to me by Richard Kyle over a decade ago, and sat in my files until I felt I had the right place to run it in TJKC. It was conducted at the mid-way point of Jack's Fourth World series; Kirby's mention that the books were confusing readers—a message that would've been conveyed by Carmine Infantino—likely signals he was entering the start of Infantino curtailing the creative freedom Jack had at the beginning of his DC era.

Stan's Weekly Express ("WE") was a weekly comics adzine published from 1969 to 1973 by Stanley Blair of Houston, Texas. The following interview was labeled "Part One" when it appeared in issue #74, but collector Ken Stringer says Part Two was not in #75, and Jerry O'Hara can't recall if it ever ran. If you know the whereabouts of the second part of this interview, we'd be grateful to see it!]

(On February 28, 1971, John and I drove out to Jack's house in Thousand Oaks, California. John had interviewed Jack previously the year before, but I had no idea what to expect. Our main objective was to entice Jack to the Disneyland Convention for all

three days, and to make a tape up for the local radio stations in order to get some coverage for the con. We both figured it would be a mere fan-pro meeting of exchanging menial courtesies, and that both parties would inevitably suffer out each other for the span of an hour or so... but we soon learned otherwise.

Jack took us through his spacious abode out onto the back patio by his swimming pool. Behind Jack's house is a wide-open prairie of hills and gulleys, and John and I commented on his "sparse" surroundings as we began to break the ice. Jack is a very likable guy, and it wasn't long before he had us at ease and we started discussing everything from politics to art.)

G.J. O'HARA: I think what the trouble is, Jack, parents nowadays just don't recognize the comic book as a literary achievement.

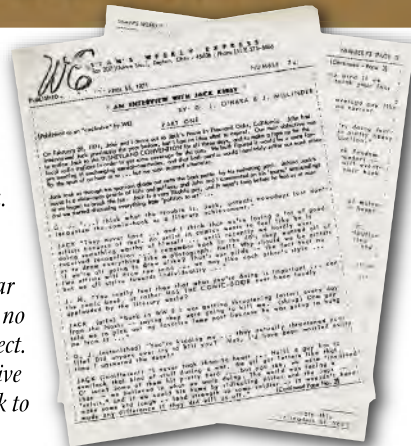
JACK KIRBY: They never have, and I think that we're losing a lot of good artists because of that. An artist in comics wants to feel like he is doing something worthy of himself. Until recently we hardly ever received recognition. I remember back in the '40s they wanted all of us to draw everything like a photograph. Hell! Why should we be artists if we're all going to draw alike? That's our pride—the fact that no two artists will draw the same. We may like each other's style, but we all strive towards individuality.

JOHN MILLINDER: You really feel then that what you're doing is important—can the comic book, or rather *has* the comic book ever been loudly applauded by the literary world?

KIRBY: (grins) Back in WWII, I was getting threatening letters every day from the Nazis, saying they were going to kill me. (shrugs) One guy told me to pick out my favorite lamp post because he was going to hang me from it.

O'HARA: (astonished) You're kidding me... they actually threatened your life! Did anyone ever try to kill you? Man, I'd have been worried every time I answered the door!

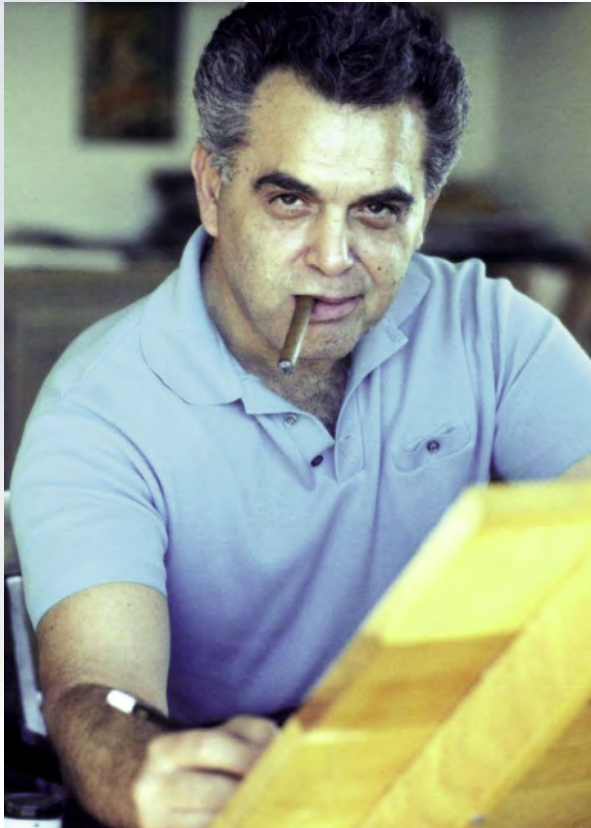
KIRBY: (indifferent) I never took them to heart. Hell, a guy has to overlook that kind of stuff during a war. We





# LITTLE HUMANS &

(below) Jack in the late 1960s, courtesy of Jeremy Kirby.



The most cutting edge artists are experienced archaeologists, digging beneath the loam of mainstream society and uncovering the unique symbols of the collective unconscious that remain buried perpetually from century to century. Over the passage of time, these symbols can morph into startling new forms. Jack Kirby, as a cutting edge artist himself, was no exception to this rule. Indeed, Kirby could very well have been one of the most accomplished archaeologists of the 20th Century.

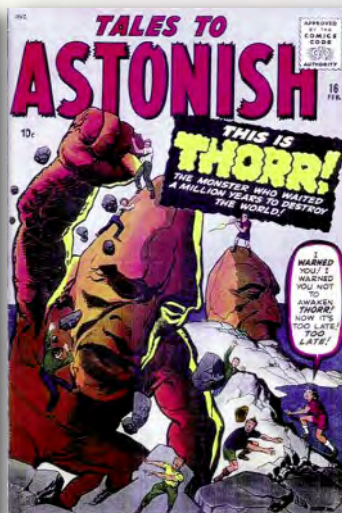
Jack Kirby uncovered the greatest pantheon of modern day gods since the poets of ancient Greece. Even people who have never heard of Kirby know the names of the mythological beings that erupted from his imagination: Captain America, The Fantastic Four, The Incredible Hulk, The Mighty Thor, Iron Man, The Avengers, The Silver Surfer, The X-Men. All of these characters have recently been transformed into blockbuster Hollywood films, solidifying their hold on the collective unconscious of not just the United States, but

a fair share of the rest of the world as well.

With the exception of Captain America (created by Jack Kirby and his long-time partner, Joe Simon, during the 1940s), all the characters mentioned above were born while Kirby worked for Marvel Comics in the 1960s. After parting ways with Marvel at the dawn of the 1970s, Kirby moved to Marvel's rival, DC Comics, where he created characters who are far more obscure but nonetheless represent the pinnacle of his prolific career: The New Gods, Mister Miracle, The Forever People, The Demon, Kamandi, and OMAC. There were other characters that Kirby produced in that time period as well, but the titles mentioned above are the ones in which Kirby amped up his fascination with the mythological and analyzed the meaning of gods and demons in a deeper way than he'd ever attempted before.

The purpose of this particular article is not to analyze Kirby's epic sagas, however, but to shine a light on five of his more obscure short stories, plus a single chapter from one of his later super-hero titles produced in the 1980s, and by doing so highlight Kirby's little known status as a "Tiki artist"—an "extraterrestrial Tiki artist," to be more specific—as well as his significant contribution to America's fascination with *moia* and/or extraterrestrial imagery.

"Tiki Culture," a microtrend on the ascendancy today, is a revived American subculture that draws heavily upon Polynesian mythology and Tiki art objects in a freewheeling, highly stylized manner that owes more to the imagination of American kitsch than the Polynesian art forms that spawned it. Tiki Art, and what's now known as "Tiki Culture" in general, originally emerged from the Hawaiiana craze that became so popular in midcentury America. This trend was reflected not only in the Tiki-themed bars and restaurants such as Don the Beachcomber and Trader Vic's that sprouted up all over America as early as the 1930s, but also in popular music (e.g., the 1950s "Exotica" albums of such





without using a single spike, nail, or wire rope, named it "Kon-Tiki," and proceeded to let himself and his five Scandinavian crewmen drift on the Humboldt Current from Peru to Polynesia.

After only three months on the open sea, the Kon-Tiki succeeded in reaching the Polynesian shores. The book about the voyage entitled *The Kon-Tiki Expedition* was first published in Norway in 1948, where it received unfavorable reviews, the whole endeavor being likened to "going over the Niagara Falls in a barrel." But this criticism did not deter the public's interest in the intrepid undertaking.

Shortly after publication in England and America in 1950, it became evident that the publishers had a bestseller on their hands. Eventually *Kon-Tiki* was translated into sixty different languages—the only book other than the *Bible* to reach this wide distribution. The film shot on the voyage met a similar fate, first being rejected by American distributors because of its technical flaws. Nevertheless it received the 1951 Academy Award for best documentary and was seen by millions of people. The world had just come out of the trauma of the Second World War and was longing for pacifist adventure.

The unprecedented worldwide Kon-Tiki fever fueled America's fascination with Polynesian culture. Though "Tiki style" as a term was not in use during the '50s and '60s, the vernacular "Kon-Tiki style" was a popular way to refer to Polynesian architecture. Thor and Tiki, the Norse god of thunder and the Polynesian god of the sun, had united to become popular heroes.

## TERROR ON THE ISLAND OF LIVING STONE!

It seems as if this culmination of Kirby's *Aku-Aku* obsession exorcised the image of the *moia* from his imagination for several decades, as they do not return to Kirby's drawing board\* until the November 1985 issue of *Super Powers*, a six-issue limited series featuring the major characters of the DC Universe such as Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, etc. This series was created in collaboration with writer Paul Kupperberg, one of the rare times Kirby willingly worked with another writer in the latter half of his career. In the third issue of the series, entitled "Time Upon Time Upon Time" (the cover features the far more Kirbyesque title, "Terror on the Island of Living Stone!"), a trio of heroes—Wonder Woman, Green Lantern and Dr. Fate—travel back nine hundred years into the past of Easter Island to fight the vanguard of an alien race called the M'MTNEK who resemble the *moia* statues that have not yet been created. In this variation, the *moia* aliens have imprisoned the inhabitants of the island, which they plan to use as a base from which to

\* See the end of this article for one other we found! — Editor.



control the entire world. The juxtaposition of the "primitive" and the futuristic that always occurs in Kirby's *moia* tales is perfectly encapsulated at the top of page 14 where we see two disparate images placed side by side: On the left we see an idyllic image of the Easter Island natives going about their simple lives amidst thatched huts, while on the right we see a domed flying saucer decorated by Kirby's seemingly random geometric shapes—his shorthand for "alienness."

Inevitably, our trio of heroes subvert the nefarious plans of the M'MTNEK by using Dr. Fate's magical abilities to transform them into immobile statues.

*Green Lantern*: "Amazing! You realize what you've done, don't you, Dr. Fate?"

*Dr. Fate*: "I have merely eliminated a *threat* to our world's past,



# IN THE BEGINNING...

Beginnings and starting points for Kirby, as chosen by John Morrow



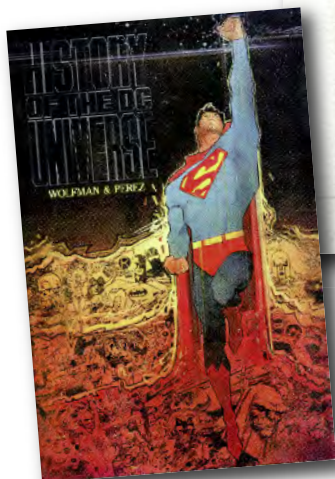
(left) The version of this art that ran on the cover of TJKC #8 in 1996 was inked by Steve Rude and colored by Tom Ziuko. Here's Jack's original hand-colored version (inked by Mike Royer), showing his idea of a futuristic football stadium (for NFL Pro magazine). I like to think of it as cosmic fans heading to the pre-game show at New Genesis' Supertown Stadium, where Orion's playing quarterback.

(page 32) 2001: A Space Odyssey #1, page 17 (Dec. 1976). In Kubrick's film, the "New Seed" was a nebulous concept, and Jack does his best to flesh-out the idea, while staying true to the movie. It's nicely dialogued, but after a Treasury Edition and seven issues all ending with this new beginning, it's easy to see why Jack gave the series a reboot with Mr. Machine, and let it transform into Machine Man.

(page 33) Here we see, in pencils from OMAC #1 (Sept. 1974), the lead-in to the birth of the title character. Nebbish Buddy Blank is a throwback to characters like Peter Parker and Chip Hardy (as detailed in Stan Taylor's article elsewhere this issue)—he's ignored by girls and picked on by bullies. But fans likely missed a subtle in-joke referencing Jack's own beginnings in comics, as Kirby channels his days working for "Mr. Fox" at Fox Features in the late 1930s, where Victor Fox (below) would pace around saying, "I'm the King of the comics!"—a moniker eventually given to Kirby himself.







(above) For 1988's *History of the DC Universe* hardcover, the company enlisted Jack to write an essay on his Fourth World series. Titled "Even the Gods Have Flaws," Jack opined, "Yes, that was the premise for the saga-type super-series which I created for DC Comics on a broad canvas of four magazine titles." Jack also produced this full-page illo of his characters—and a particularly nice one, considering how late in his career it was done. Steve Rude added the finishing touches with inks, cleaning up a few of the weaker elements, to produce Jack's final take on his signature creations. Steve Oliff's colors are shown on the next page.

For that same book, Jack and inker Mike Royer contributed the above figure of Darkseid for the massive fold-out jam drawing of DC's main characters.





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**MR. T** ✓ 4/19

"MYSTERY OF THE GHOST FLEET"  
— CHARACTERS —

P. 17 ① **CY WINSLOW** — "A RICH MAN, WEARING A BLUE YACHTING BLAZER, WHITE PANTS, GOLD-BRAIDED YACHTSMAN'S CAP." A VILLAIN. PASSES HIMSELF OFF AS AN HONEST SHIPPING BUSINESSMAN. ABOUT 45 YEARS OLD WITH THINNING SILVER HAIR AND DISSIPATED, FORMERLY HANDSOME FACE.

18 ② **SHARKEY** — WINSLOW'S HENCHMAN, "A BEADY-EYED MAN IN A WATCH CAP AND A TURTLENECK SWEATER." THOROUGHLY BAD. UNCONVINCING AS AN HONEST MAN. 6' 9", MEDIUM BUILD, STOOP-SHOULDERED BUT POWERFULLY BUILT. A DRINKER.

8 ③ **RED** — WINSLOW'S OTHER HENCHMAN. A HUSKY RED-HAIRED MAN WITH A PENCIL-THIN MUSTACHE. UNRULY HAIR, FRECKLES, STARING EYES, NERVOUS MANNER. A FORMER HEROIN ADDICT. ABOUT 5'10". INTELLIGENT BUT CORRUPT. GAMBLER.\*

32 ④ **OLD SALT** — A CRUSTY OLD SEAMAN WHO NOW SPENDS HIS TIME MOOPING AROUND THE DOCKS, MAKING SHIP-IN-A-BOTTLES. YOUR ARCHTYPICAL OLD SAILOR... BIG BEAK, ALMOST TOOTHLESS, SQUINTY, WHITEHAIR, HUNCHBACKED. WEARS PEACOCK AND STEVENS-TOPE CLOTHES...

\* WATCH CAP & TURTLENECK ALSO.



(this spread) After pondering the thousands of drawings Jack did for animation in the 1970s-80s, I've always wondered: How did each project begin? For new concepts, he'd go off on his own and conceptualize ideas to propose to the studio on giant art boards. But for established series like Thundarr, where did his involvement start?

Mr. T was a series that Ruby-Spears produced, airing on NBC on Saturday mornings from 1983 to 1986. The items here show how the process worked once a show made it to air. Storyboard artist Jim Woodring (after getting a script from an episode's writer) would send Jack a handwritten description of the main characters, props, and settings. From there, Kirby would visualize those descriptions, creating a plethora of images for animators to use as a guide when producing the final, simplified art.

Inset are still images from the finished episode, to give an idea how much (or little) of Jack's designs made it through the animation process.



## SPIDER-MAN:

(right) Rough Spidey by Jack, from unused Marvelmania art.



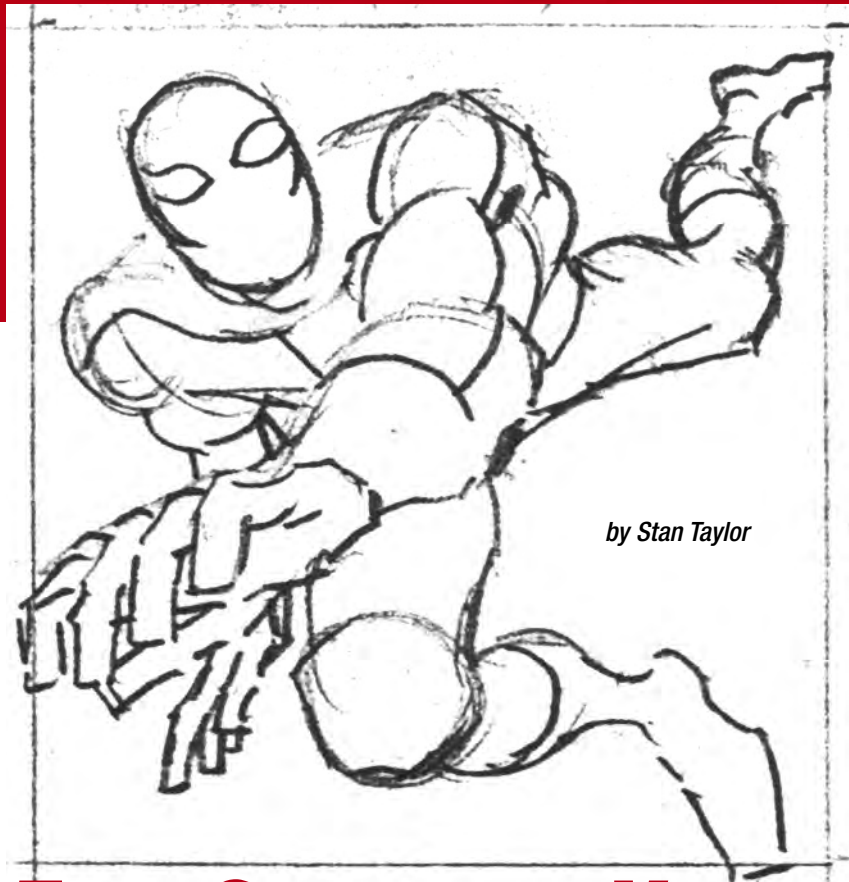
(next page) Jack inexplicably drew this Marvelmania poster with the X-Men's Sentinels going after Spidey. Marvel had regular Spider-Man artist John Romita redraw it, using Jack's basic layout and main figure pose, but adding more Spidey-centric villains (above).



**W**ho created Spider-Man? One of the great comic book fanboy debate topics—utterly fascinating because of the three distinct and passionate personalities involved, each having rabid fans ready to lay waste to any who would deny that their favorite was the true creative genius behind this pivotal character. Ultimately, of course, it's a futile exercise of mental masturbation because we are powerless to do anything about it, even if we could prove it one way or the other. However, not being averse to masturbation, I am going to weigh in with my opinion.

## A LITTLE HISTORY

Jack Kirby has stated clearly time and again that he created Spider-Man, never more adamantly than in a 1982 interview conducted by Will Eisner, and printed in issue #39 of Will Eisner's *Spirit Magazine* (Kitchen Sink Press, 1983). Kirby maintained his claim even when close friends and assistants advised him not to pursue it. Can he be believed? Well, his memory was spotty, and he has made other claims that have clearly been shown to be wrong. So as a witness, he leaves room for doubt.



## THE CASE FOR KIRBY

Stan Lee says, "All the concepts were mine" (*Village Voice*, Vol. 32 #49, Dec. 1987). It is his contention that he singly came up with the idea, produced a script, offered it to Jack Kirby for illustration, and when he didn't like the look of Kirby's rendition, he then offered it to Steve Ditko. Can he be believed? Not really. Stan would go so far (or stoop so low!) as to claim that a minor character named The Living Eraser from *Tales to Astonish* #49 (Nov. 1963) was his creation. This character had the dubious distinction of being able to wave people out of existence with a swipe of his hand. "I got a big kick out of it when I dreamed up that idea," Lee is quoted. (*Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics*, page 97.) He further embellished this tale by stating how hard it was to come up with an explanation for this power. The fact is, this ignoble power and explanation first appear in a Jack Kirby story from *Black Cat Mystic* #59 (Harvey Publications, Sept. 1957). If Lee will take credit for an obvious minor Kirby concept, which nobody cares about, then he certainly would take credit for another's creation that has become the company's cash cow.

The third person involved with the Spider-Man origin is Steve Ditko, and unfortunately, the little he has said about the creation of



just what changes could be done to make this concept more interesting. These memos were in Joe Simon's Silver Spider file, they were unearthed, and originally published in *Pure Images* #1. The pertinent section of memorandum #2 is shown at left.

There is no ambiguity, vagueness, or doubt; Sid Jacobson suggested that for the Silver Spider to work, it would have to become what we recognize as Spider-Man!

It appears as if Kirby later took some of Jacobson's suggestions to heart when he cobbled together the character of The Fly, for he added the detail of inherent insect attributes (though Jacobson was not specific on these attributes), but his first actual use of the Spider motif shows up with the creation of The Fly's arch-nemesis. In an interesting reversal of Jacobson's suggestion of "natural enemies," Spider Spry, from *Adventures Of The Fly* #1, would have those long bony arms and legs, though Kirby gave him a bulbous head and torso (more spider-like). He easily walked up thin silken lines, traps the Fly in a weblike net, and wears a colorful costume complete with a spider icon. More on this character later.

Move forward three years, when Goodman decided to go the superhero route; Kirby is asked to come up with another character, and now the parallels between the Spider-Man creation and the Jacobson memo become undeniable.

Spider-Man would have the natural instincts and powers of a spider; he could walk up walls and across ceilings. He would have the proportional strength and agility of an arachnid. And more importantly, he could emit a silken thread that he could walk across, or use as



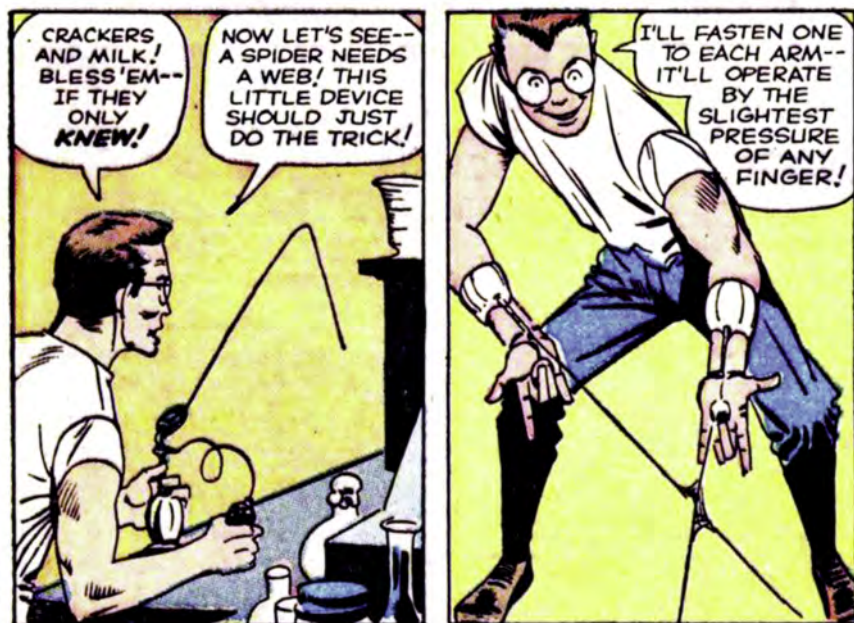
a swing. His webbing, a synthesized liquid, which emanated from his costume, was also adaptable as a net in which to ensnare villains, all of this directly traceable to Jacobson's suggestions.

The addition of the extra sense that warns of impending danger, first seen in *The Fly*, seems to have been an original Kirby item, since it was not present in either the Silver Spider proposal, or mentioned in the Jacobson memo.

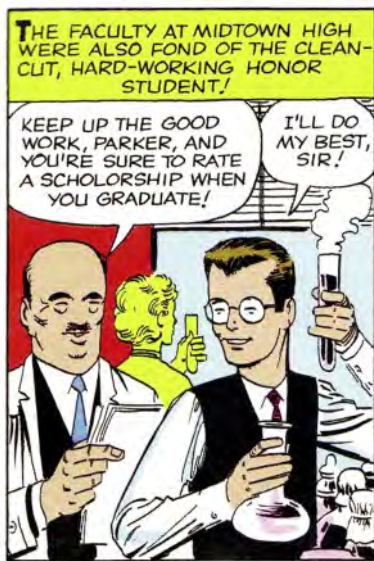
Some may imply that if all Kirby did was rework a Simon project, or follow a Jacobson memo, shouldn't they get the credit? To some extent I agree, but as I have shown, every facet of Spider-Man's character that matches up with The Fly is an element that Kirby added to the Fly—nothing was taken from the Silver Spider except the original title, and that had been rejected by Simon. Simon, on his own, had never used the logo, or acted on Jacobson's suggestions. Simon and Kirby was a partnership; when they broke up, all unused concepts

(above) Splash page from *The Fly* #1 (Aug. 1959).

(left) *The Fly* gets his insect powers in his first issue (previous page), while Peter Parker invents his web-shooters in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 (Aug. 1962).







(above) Science-whiz Peter Parker debuts, a few years after Chip Hardy (right).

(below) The loss of a dear friend from *Private Strong* #1 (June 1959, top) and three years later by Ditko.

(next page) A Kirby-drawn Spidey symbol for Marvelmania.

The coincidences needed for Stan Lee or Steve Ditko to have come up with these exact elements, absent Jack Kirby, is astronomical. If this was all that Kirby provided to Stan Lee, he would deserve co-credit, but there is more to creating a character: One must also come up with a storyline that showcases the new character, and it is here that the coincidences become positively mind-boggling.

## THE PLOT

The plot of *Amazing Fantasy* #15 is simple, yet unique: An orphaned teenage boy receives super-powers via a scientific experiment. After gaining his powers, a loved one is killed due to his inaction. This remorse leads him to vow to never let it happen again, thus becoming a hero.

Again, after cross-checking stories by these three men, it became obvious that in structure and theme, the basic plot for Spidey's origin came from one of the three persons involved: Jack Kirby.

The first plot element has to do with an orphaned, older teenager, who gets super powers via a scientific experiment, and this is intriguing. Even though I tried to approach this in an entirely objective manner, I still had some preconceived notions of both Kirby's and Ditko's proclivities. Many of these were shattered by my actual findings. One of these was that it was Ditko's nature to use older troubled teenagers for his heroes, while it was Kirby's nature to use younger kids.

So strong is Ditko's aura surrounding Spider-Man, and Hawk and Dove, that I just assumed that it was a Ditko trait, but I was not able to track down a single use



of older orphaned teenagers, troubled or not, by Steve prior to Spidey.

What shocked me was how easy it was to find the Kirby template for the orphaned older teenaged hero, and a title that would provide key elements in piecing together the puzzle.

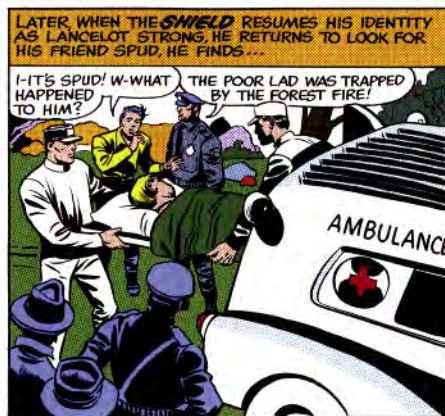
In *The Double Life of Private Strong* (Archie Publications, 1959, not coincidentally the companion title to *The Fly*), the hero, Lancelot Strong, aka The Shield, is an orphaned high school senior; and like Peter Parker, his surrogate parents were gentle, compassionate, and supportive. His powers were the result of a scientific experiment—in this case, genetic engineering.

Around this same time, Kirby was also working on the proposed newspaper strip, *Chip Hardy*, with a teenaged science whiz hero. In fact, from about 1959 on, just about all of Kirby's youthful heroes would be older teenagers, and most orphaned. Johnny Storm, Rick Jones (both predating Peter Parker) and the X-Men also fit into this mold.

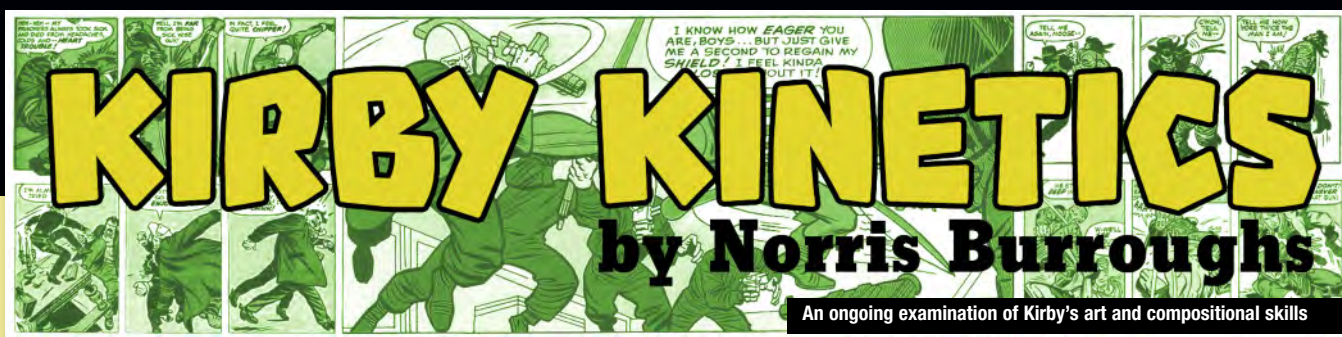
I could find nothing that matched in Ditko's, or Lee's (sans Kirby) recent past.

The next element is very important: After gaining his powers, the hero loses a loved one due to his inaction, thus providing the impetus for becoming a hero. This may be the critical element that separates Spider-Man from almost all other heroes—and it's found in *The Double Life of Private Strong*. While rushing off to test his newfound powers against a rampaging alien monster, The Shield (Lancelot Strong) in his teen exuberance, ignores and leaves his best friend Spud in harm's way. After defeating the brute, the Shield returns to celebrate his triumph, only to learn that the monster has killed Spud. The distraught Shield blames himself, and vows that it will never happen again. Similarly, Spider-Man, in a moment of conceit and arrogance, ignores a thief, only to learn that that same thief would go on to kill his uncle, which in turn, spurs him into action. He then vows that it will never happen again.

So in one book, done less than three years before Spider-Man, Kirby used most of the critical plot elements that would show up a few years later in Spider-Man. Certainly Spider-Man's is







## KIRBY'S COSMIC SEEDS

In the beginning, was "The Source." All life and ideas flow from it. Kirby conceives a new idea and must decide on an origin, on how it came into being. An origin connects the concept to the passage of relative time, which is life, as we know it.



As origins go, Kirby has always been fascinated by the idea of a cosmic seed. In this 1960 story from *Journey Into Mystery* #56 (left), we see a dinosaur grow from an intergalactic seed. This is one of Kirby's pre-hero monster stories, but it's a great concept and as a bonus, has classic Kirby dinosaurs.

This splash page, inked by one of my personal favorite Kirby inkers Chris Rule, shows an Earth scientist/astronaut on planet X-41, fleeing some intergalactic saurians. The splash is a wonderful wedge-shaped composition with a great sense of propulsion, as we see these creatures chase the protagonist out of the panel. The stage is full of great local planetary scenery, and Rule's ink line is strong and sure, with sharp precise black spotting. Kirby always grounds his story-scape with believable details. In the case of the splash panel, he gives us a solid background of volcanic rock, and the foreground's perilously thorny branches also frame the action while counterbalancing the motion of the figures.

As the narrative develops, the scientist brings home some lush red blossoms native to X-41 and extracts some of its seeds. He plants and nurtures them carefully, and the seeds germinate





REX  
IS...

...SEEING  
RED!



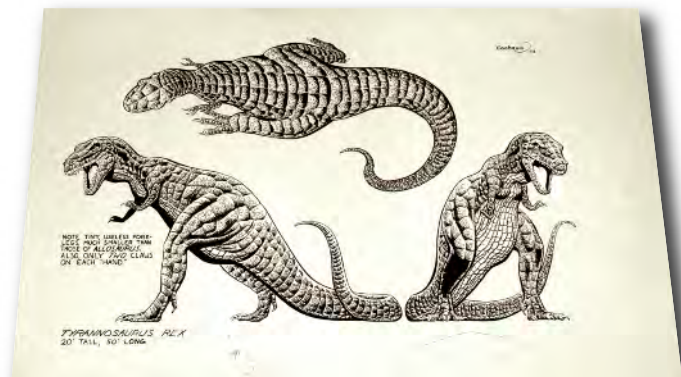
# INCIDENTAL ICONOGRAPHY

*An ongoing analysis of Kirby's visual shorthand,  
and how he inadvertently used it to develop his characters,  
by Sean Kleefeld*



It was a full decade ago that I took a look at *Devil Dinosaur* in my “Incidental Iconography” from *The Jack Kirby Collector* #45. In that piece, I largely looked at the notion of Jack drawing his version of a Tyrannosaurus Rex and what he modified from what was actually known (or at least believed!) about T-Rexes at that time. Jack’s reference material—the T-Rex itself—seemed so obvious that I spent much of my research in comparing Jack’s drawings against skeletons and museum reconstructions. What I didn’t realize was that Jack, behind Dave Cockrum and Joe Kubert, was actually the third comic book artist to draw *Devil Dinosaur*!

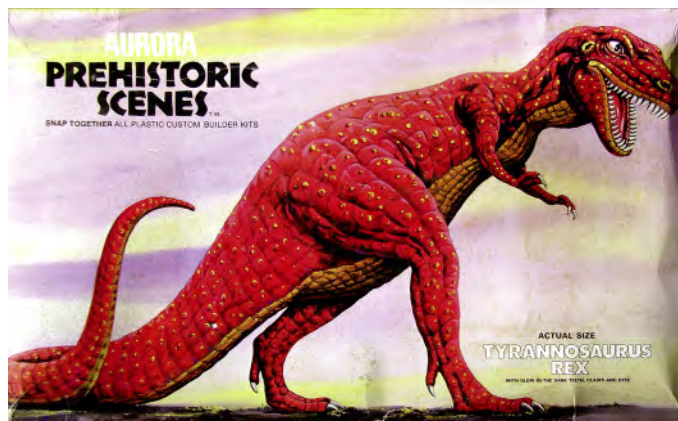
Or, more precisely, a primary red Tyrannosaurus Rex that interacted with humans.



Cockrum is perhaps best known for revamping the X-Men, co-creating several significant characters that are still strongly associated with the team. His run on “Legion of the Super-Heroes” is highly regarded as well. Less well-known about his career, however, is that he worked as a designer for the model manufacturer Aurora for several years in the early 1970s.

Aurora started producing mostly airplane models in the early 1950s, but beginning in 1957, they began producing kits of figures, which sold well. They expanded to include media properties, like Marvel and DC characters, in the 1960s. In 1972, a chance meeting at a convention led Cockrum to meet up with some of the Aurora people, who were looking to expand their “Prehistoric Scenes” line. They were impressed with Cockrum’s design abilities, and he was hired to design their next figure: a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Cockrum’s T-Rex design is, as should come as no surprise, very dynamic and included several joints to allow the completed model to act almost as an 18" tall poseable action figure. But, of more significance for our discussion here, it was also bright red, defying the long convention of coloring dinosaurs in browns and greens.



Cockrum’s figure drawing was used on the box art itself, colored bright red, and the model parts were even molded using red plastic. Aside from the illustration style, it’s *Devil Dinosaur*!

But to add an additional layer of pedigree to the character, Aurora knew that their customers were ones who also read comic books. After all, they had acquired those Marvel and DC licenses years earlier, so they had several years of a connection with the comic book industry—which led to taking out a double-page ad in numerous comics in the mid-1970s timeframe that featured Tarzan encountering many of the dinosaurs in the “Prehistoric Scenes” line, including—even spotlighting—the giant, bright red Tyrannosaurus. And who better to draw a comic featuring Tarzan than the then-current *Tarzan* artist Joe Kubert? It’s by far not Kubert’s best work and *Tarzan* is pretty minimally included, but the T-Rex breaking out of the single bottom panel is memorable.





# COMING DOWN TO EARTH (JUST A LITTLE)

by Shane Foley

The artists amongst Kirby fans—and probably a lot of not-so-artistic ones as well—are often amazed and a bit daunted by the reports of how Kirby just drew his images directly onto the page with little obvious planning. “He started top left and worked down,” many eyewitnesses have said. “There are no preparation pages to be published,” Mark Evanier has stated. Another said something to the tune of “He’d put a rough head shape here, a foot there—then go for it.” How could he do that? While it’s true that there are many other artists

who worked quickly and directly onto the art board—sometimes with lots of sketchy preparation guide lines, sometimes without—few did it with the creativity and dynamism that Kirby achieved. Other masters, like the great John Buscema, would first scribble out a rough layout on light paper, then tighten it a little (often with arrows meaning ‘move this figure up more,’ etc.), then lightbox that onto the art board. This way the action and flow of the page was right before being committed to the art board.

But, apparently, not Kirby. It sounds like he attacked the board and got it right from the very start.

So what preparation did Jack do? Was it all entirely in his head before being committed to paper?

Now, in no way do I doubt the sincerity of commentators paraphrased above, or that they watched gob-smacked as images appeared almost miraculously before them as Jack drew. But I believe we can infer from them a little too much of the miraculous. I believe there were a little more of the usual artistic basics going on in Kirby’s drawing than is often credited. Following are a few clues found in scans of his pencil work.

## EXAMPLE #1

(left) Did Jack draw panel 1, complete it, then move to panel 2? The legend would seem to suggest so. But sometimes, Jack did indeed roughly lay out the whole page before completing panels. An incomplete page from *Fantastic Four* #80 shows this. Clearly, Jack was planning the action before completing anything.

## EXAMPLE #2

(right) Again, did Jack complete panel 1, then move on to panel 2? In a different way to the point above, the answer is no. Jack often completed the action and figurework on a whole page before completing backgrounds.

A great example of this is *Forever People* #6, pages 12, 13 and 14 (shown on the next three pages).

For some reason, Jack copied these pages before he had completed them.

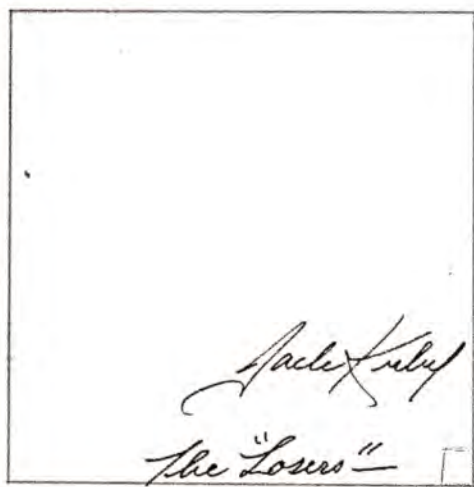
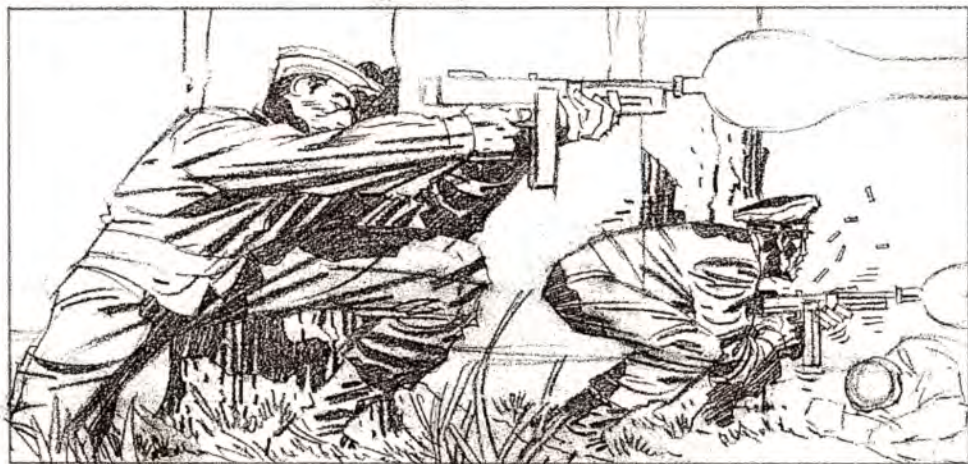
Compare page 12 pencils of panels 1 and 2 to what was published. The pencil copies have empty backgrounds, while the published inks have well designed blacks.





Another example of this approach is seen in Forever People #7, page 4 (left). The copy of the pencils shows panels 1, 2 and 5 are incomplete.

(this page and next) Two unused "Losers" pages also show back-grounds incomplete while figure action in the following panels is worked on.



Jack Kirby  
The "Losers"

RUBY-ARS



BIG HANDS (EMBARRASSED)  
"AW SHUCKS, 'TWERENT  
NOTHING."



GIZMO SAYS,  
"SEZ YOU!"



"THAT WAS THE  
THIRD AMBUSH SINCE  
WE GOT ON THIS  
CRUMMY TRAIN."

This speedy drawing process served Jack well throughout his career, but perhaps never more so than during his late era animation work, where he could quickly block in simple, but effective figures for storyboards, such as this example from the unproduced Roxie's Raiders TV series. No detailed backgrounds needed here!





We have announcements. Let me point out to you that the year 2017 is the 100th anniversary of the birth of Jack Kirby. The Comic-Con in San Diego is going to do a lot of stuff timed with this. The convention people, the same people who run Comic-Con run WonderCon, and a couple of the people from the convention have been asking me how they can maximize their Kirby content, so there's been some interesting

planning going on. But if you are a Jack Kirby fan of any sort, if you go to no other San Diego Comic-Con, you must go to 2017.

### Be a part of the Comic-Con Program Book!

Submit short snippets of your encounters with Kirby at San Diego (500 words or less), and we'll share them with Comic-Con for possible inclusion this July! Send to: [twomorrow@aol.com](mailto:twomorrow@aol.com) with subject line "Kirby Encounter."

**CHARLES HATFIELD:** Is there any videotape of interviews with him, or anything?

**EVANIER:** There are some videos on YouTube of interviews with Jack. This is just my opinion, but I don't think they're very good, generally, not because of the interviewers. Jack was not good at being interviewed live. He stiffened up a lot. Steve and I used to hear the funniest damn stories, and then when we got a video camera in front of him and tried to get him to repeat those funny stories, he never could do it well. He just got very—

**STEVE SHERMAN:** He just thought he had to be somebody else in front of a camera. He just got worried.

**HATFIELD:** Those just might be good to gather together for 2017.

**EVANIER:** How many people here met Jack? (hands go up) Maybe a fourth of the audience. You know, and you'll all nod your heads as I say this, that he was a very interesting

(next page, top) In June 1974, the Kirbys received a letter from the University of California, Davis, asking Jack to loan materials for a comic art exhibit that would run from January 8-February 5, 1975—making it one of the first museum exhibits of Jack's work. Based on the note Roz sent with the loaned art on November 18, 1974, we're taking our best shot at reassembling those pieces to illustrate this issue's WonderCon panel:

"Two hand-colored proofs of 'Sky Masters' Sunday strips intended as color guides for printer to follow." (see page 82)

"Penciled page from 'Thor' issue, Galactus segment. Characters: Thor, Galactus, and Odin." (see page 78)

"Penciled page for Losers third Kirby issue." (see page 79)

"Daily strip presentation done for syndication in 1959—pencils done by J. Kirby inks by Wally Wood." (Surf Hunter, see page 81)

"Substitute page 9 of 'Forever People' Million [sic] Dollar Bates episode. Inks done by John Pound. Characters: Moonrider, Beautiful Dreamer, Vykin the Black." (see page 89)

"Bulls Eye title splash, 1957. Penciled and inked by J. Kirby." (see page 84)

"Original collage used in FF Comics." (see page 85)

(right) Steve Sherman with Jack, mid-1970s.

## 2016 KIRBY WONDERCON PANEL

Held Sunday, March 27, 2016 at 3:30pm at WonderCon in Los Angeles, California. Featuring Steve Sherman, Charles Hatfield, and Paul S. Levine, and moderated by Mark Evanier. Transcribed by Steven Tice, edited by John Morrow, and copyedited by Mark Evanier and Charles Hatfield.

**MARK EVANIER:** Good afternoon. This is a Jack Kirby panel so I guess that means I'm Mark Evanier. This is my friend Steve Sherman, folks. (applause) This is Professor Charles Hatfield. (applause) This is attorney The Honorable Paul S. Levine. (applause) We have no real agenda here. We spend so much time at these conventions talking about Jack so we're going to just talk about Jack for a while. If you have questions about Jack, somebody up here will know the answer.

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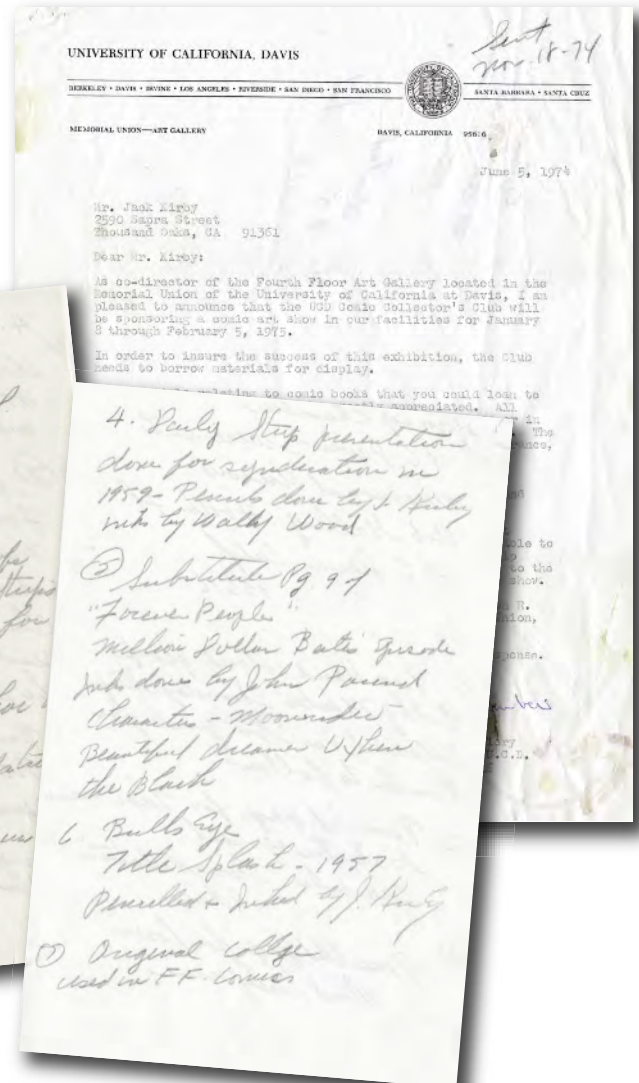
man, perpetually interesting. You had to listen to every second because there would be some pearl of wisdom in there which you couldn't always understand instantly. You'd replay it later in your mind and go, "Oh, I see what he was talking about." He would just jump from thought to thought. Sometimes there would be part of one sentence finished in the next thought, and you'd come away feeling, no matter who you were, smarter and more creative, and better if he gave you any sort of approval. You'd feel complimented and enriched. At the same time you'd be aware that this man was in another league, that he was thinking on a different level than you could think, he was doing things on a different level than you could. And he had this amazing way of speaking that jumped from topic to topic, and you had to keep up with him. Sometimes he'd lose me, and I'd go, "Wait a minute, what's he talking about now?" He'd jump forty years on me without the benefit of *segue*. And to this day, I'll think of something he said to me and I go, "Oh, I get it now, I see what he was talking about there." I have a pretty good memory, so I can recall things he said to me and get them years later, and understand them. And then, as I get older, I understand them even more. You know how, like if you watch *Rocky and Bullwinkle* cartoons now, you get jokes that you heard, that were there the first time, but you didn't get them because you hadn't lived long enough? You weren't as smart then. I feel smarter thinking about things Jack said to me, now. He used a phrase, "looking at the Big Picture." He was always talking about looking at the Big Picture. And he had a way of looking at the Big Picture, and you'd say something to Jack about some little thing, and you would not get the reaction you expected from him because he was thinking on a different level. He was thinking on kind of a cosmic level about what does this mean in the grand scheme of the universe. So if you said to Jack, "Hey, should we go to *Roy Rogers* for lunch," he would say, "No, we must go to *Du-par's*." And the reason was cosmic. The reason had ramifications. Steve is nodding. (laughter)

SHERMAN: No, I just know, he'd go to *Du-par's* because of cake. (laughter)

EVANIER: There used to be these *Roy Rogers* roast beef sandwich places which had no relation to the current *Roy Rogers* chain.



Steve Sherman



SHERMAN: Except for the horse meat. (laughter)

EVANIER: Except for the horse meat, yeah. And Jack liked that you could go to this *Roy Rogers* place and they would have ketchup in one dispenser, and they would have barbecue sauce in another dispenser, and Jack would get barbecue sauce for his french fries. And he'd be dipping his french fries in barbecue sauce, and Roz would say to him, "No, no, you're supposed to put the ketchup on the french fries and barbecue sauce on the sandwich." And he did it the other way around. They would argue about this—as much as they ever argued, they argued about this kind of stuff. And Jack goes, "I like barbecue sauce on my french fries, and I like ketchup on my roast beef." We must have gone there a half-dozen times, and it was the exact same discussion every single time. And that was fun for Jack, because that was thinking on a different level. It was such a simple level, because the rest of the time he was thinking of gods, and creatures, and the future, and all sorts of things. I've got to read back over the *New Gods*, because I'm sure, I don't know where he is, but I'm sure Donald Trump is in there someplace. (laughter)

PAUL S. LEVINE: Now, imagine you're his lawyer and you're trying to figure out what he wants. (laughter)

EVANIER: Paul helped Jack through some very—I wish Jack had had Paul ten years before he did.

LEVINE: Or twenty or thirty.

EVANIER: Yes. There was a period where Jack did not have great legal representation, and to the extent he did, Marvel refused to talk





Paul S. Levine

(below) One type of art Jack made for his own gratification—and to display—was his personal collage work. Here is one from 1969 that measures 56 inches x 17.5 inches, and was still framed in the Kirby home at the time of Roz Kirby's passing.

said, “Kid, you and I are gonna get along just great!” (laughter)

EVANIER: Did you read any of his stuff?

LEVINE: I did (laughter) To the haven't read any Marvel stuff. Of course, I did make the needed to be in DC in 1981 or ever that was.

course, I met Mark at the same time, because with Jack and Roz that day, as well.

EVANIER: There was one meeting where they me in. It was the only time Jack and I ever had words, and we were disagreeing about some story stuff and things like that, and we had an We didn't speak for a while after that. But I the day I met Paul for the first time.

LEVINE: Of course.

EVANIER: And the thing that impressed me was found fascinating was, Jack was working on or looking at the story, who'd done what, and what he'd contributed, things like that. And Paul and the other lawyer in the room was Steve...

LEVINE: Steve Rohde.

EVANIER: ...was trying to steer Jack, “Okay, now, we've got to rephrase this in legal language.” Certain points to legal relevance, and then it some of the dates. Jack wasn't done what or what time, to Jack suddenly, “What appear in?” he wouldn't have read, or something like that. I was there. I was correcting in this book, that was in Joe Sinnott, that was Dick I was saying. And he got at point, and we started

Steve Rohde and Paul were turning it into legal terms. fit in with past laws built look at other cases. When I al Labor Relations Board on we had to take what we did it into the language of coal law was written for coal were trying to make Jack his story, Jack was off on dif- ed in there saying, “No, Jack, That character wasn't here,” Steve kept on top of it, and kept the emotion out of it and focused, and got to a very strong, good resolution of everything. Steve is, by the way, my attorney, also, and handles lots of my deals

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