Behold the World of Magic!

This is the theme that motivates the 14th issue of Comic Crusader!

For the first time, and I hope not the last, we have Raymond Miller with us. Ray has undertaken the monumental task of documenting the history of Fawcett Publication's man of magic...BILLY the INVINCIBLE. To illustrate this fine article, some of the finest artists in random have submitted their work for your approval...Don Newton, Keith Fukuizumi, Gary Kato, myself and Dennis Fujitake. Dennis also took time out from a busy schedule to do this issue's cover, which Bill Black inked. My thanks to all of them.

Speaking of covers, this issue back cover came about as a result of my reacquaintance with two of the nicest people in or out of random...Richard and Wendy Fini. Wendy, as many of you may know, is the former Wendy Fletcher and I'm very pleased to present her fine work here on the Cosmic Crusader. Wendy is also a special favorite of my daughter Jolene. After she and Richard last paid us a visit Jolene walked around for days saying, "Wendy, Wendy, Wendy."

In this issue's interview with Mandrake the Magician's artist, Fred Fredericks, you will find some art by a new addition to the Cosmic Crusader staff. His name is Tom Armstrong. Tom is a devotee of the graphic media and I'm sure you'll be seeing a lot more of his work. Hopefully in C.C.!

Recently, Tom Pagan introduced me to a series that just overwhelmed me. Without a doubt, the Mr. Mystic series has been one of the most beautifully written and drawn series ever produced. Tom has done what I consider one of the best articles ever on a certain phase of the Mr. Mystic adventure. This article is an outstanding piece of work on Tom's part and I really enjoyed illustrating it!

A while back, some of you may have heard that Steve Ditko was once again creating something for D.C. Plans fell through at National, but Steve went ahead with his idea any way. The result is Part 1 of this issue's Steve Ditko "O" series. Steve's hero believes that you don't have to wear the same costume all the time to be effective...rather, a certain kind of costume for a certain kind of job. I'm really pleased to be featuring the initial episodes here.

Bob Cosgrove's work speaks for itself and in this issue it speaks quite well. Bob returned home from college long enough to turn out two fine pieces. One on Black Magic and the other on "The Art of Pencilling." His pencilling article is an introduction to this issue's special pencil page treat...Two pages of fantastic work by Jack Kirby and a beautiful rendering by Jim Steranko.

Put an Anthony Kowalk, Comic Chatter logo, and art by Fred Fredericks, Wayne Pond, and Bruce Patterson together and you have the rest of this magic oriented issue.

Magic has been around in comics since 1934, when Mandrake the Magician was created by Lee Falk. Since then, magicians have roamed throughout comics from Balbo, the Boy Magician to Zatara. This issue is dedicated to them!

Hope you enjoy the issue,

Best,

Martin L. Greim
TWAS JUST OVER 4,000 YEARS AGO IN ANCIENT EGYPT THAT THE BLACK PHARAOH TOOK IT TO MIND THAT ALL EGYPTIANS SHOULD BE SLAVES SAVE ONE, HE!

THUS, THRU MESA, HIS FALSE PROPHET, THE AMBITIOUS PHARAOH ENLISTED THE AID OF SET, GOD OF THE INFERNO, AND HIS DEMON ARMY!

HOWEVER, WHEN THE EVIL MONARCH ATTEMPTED TO INITIATE HIS RULE, A SPONTANEOUS REVOLUTION ERUPTED, LED BY PRINCE AMENETEP OR IBIS!

BUT THE DEMON ARMY OF SET CRUSHED THE UPRISING! THE PEOPLE WERE ENSLAVED AND IBIS WAS CAST INTO A DUNGEON!

THE PHARAOH'S EVIL DESIRE INCLUDED THE BEAUTIFUL TAIA, IBIS' BELOVED! THE CERUL RULER HAD HER BROUGHT TO HIM!

IBIS, HAVING PROVED HIMSELF DURING THE REVOLT, WAS SLIPPED THE "IBIS STICK."

BY HIS UNCLE! A LITTLE PRACTICE AND IBIS WAS READY TO RIGHT THE WRONGS OF THE BLACK PHARAOH!
WITH THE AID OF THE ENCHANTED IBIS STICK, IBIS FREED THE ENSLAVED EGYPTIANS AND CRUSHED THE DEADLY DEMON HOARDE!

FORSEEING INEVITABLE DEFEAT SET DESERTS THE BLACK MONARCH! WITHOUT THE INTERFERENCE OF SET IBIS RUSHES TO THE PALACE AND CONFRONTS THE PHARAOH! DURING THEIR DUEL ONE OF THE PHARAOH'S EVIL HENCHMEN ATTEMPTS TO SLAY IBIS, ONLY TAIASACRIFICES HERSELF!

UNABLE TO RAISE HER WITH THE IBIS STICK, THE BROKEN HEARTED IBIS WAS INFORMED THAT THE ARROW WAS DRUGGED AND THAT TAIASLEEP FOR 4,000 YEARS! THUS, THE YOUNG PRINCE INTERRED HIMSELF WITH TAIAS USING A SPELL THAT WOULD ALLOW HIM TO AWAKEN WITH HIS LOVE! TO ARISE AGAIN IN THE 20TH CENTURY!
by Raymond Miller

A. everyone knows, the most popular type of comic book character of the late 30’s and early 40’s was the super or costume hero. But how many of our readers are aware that during another very popular group of characters? This was the Magician, and almost every publisher carried at least one on their roster of stars. DC had Zatara, Sargon and Lando. MLJ had Zambini and Karda. Fox had Zandber and Yarko. Timely went with Dektor Master Magician, Kazzak the Mystic and Monako. Quality had Merlin and Magic Masters; Tor the Magio Master. Perhaps the most famous was El Carin (Miracle spelled backwards), and the most famous of all - PRINCE IBIS the INVINCIBLE.

Ibis made his debut, along with other Whiz mainstays Captain Marvel, Spy-Gar the Jungle Boy and Prince O'Casey, in Whiz Comics #1, Feb. 1940. (Ed. Note... Actually, even though this was the first published issue of Whiz, its number was #2. The first issue never made it on the stands. DC had Zatara, Sargon and Lando. MLJ had Zambini and Karda. Fox had Zandber and Yarko. Timely went with Dektor Master Magician, Kazzak the Mystic and Monako. Quality had Merlin and Magic Masters; Tor the Magio Master. Perhaps the most famous was El Carin (Miracle spelled backwards), and the most famous of all - PRINCE IBIS the INVINCIBLE.

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Ibis had his beginning in ancient Egypt, 4,000 years ago. Prince Ibis, also known as Prince AMITEP, had been taught much wisdom by his uncle, Osiris, God of Justice and he longed for the power his uncle promised him so he could not only do good for the people, but be worthy of his love. The Princess Taia. However, Osiris tells Ibis the power could not be his until he had proven himself in a trial. Meanwhile, the cruel Black Pharaoh also wishes to inherit the crown of Egypt and has planned to put an end to freedom the Egyptians had been enjoying. With the aid of his Chief Advisor, the evil Dwellers of the Depths (evil Gods with heads of animals) led by SET, the Master of Inferno, were summoned to help him enforce his rule. The Egyptians were terrorized. The Black Pharaoh then summoned all the men before him, and told the Egyptians in so many words, that freedom was over for them and that their first task was to build him the greatest pyramid of all time and let no one stand against him. Prince Ibis led the Egyptians in a revolt, but found they were no match for Set and his Dwellers of the Depths. The rebels are killed by a rain of arrows and Ibis is taken alone. He is then subdued and thrown into a dungeon. With no leader, the Egyptians are slaves of the Black Pharaoh and to make matters worse, Taia is dragged to the Pharaoh’s quarters. Meanwhile a very weak Ibis lies in his dungeon prison. But unnoticed by the prison guards, Osiris appears at the window of Ibis' cell and tells him he has proven his courage and the power is now his... The Power of the Ibstick! The Ibstick, which was the source of the greatest magic ever, had but one flaw: it would not work against other magic. Ibis first commands the Ibstick to set him free, then orders it to complete the great pyramid. He then frees the slaves and they attack the Dwellers of the Depths, who being evil and cowardly cannot stand against a brave attack and vanish back to where they came from. During the revolt, Set appears before the Black Pharaoh and warns him that his time is running out and that someone had learned the secret of his evil and in a puff of smoke returns to Inferno. Minutes later Ibis breaks into the Throne Room where the Black Pharaoh, Mesu and Taia stand. In a sword battle Ibis slays the Pharaoh and in revenge Mesu shoots an arrow at Ibis only to hit Taia who throws her body in front of Ibis and takes the arrow in her heart. Mesu in turn is quickly beheaded by Ibis' sword. Osiris arrives to find the dead Taia in Ibis' arms and to hear Ibis command the Ibstick to strike him dead. But nothing happens, since the Ibstick will only do harm to the one who orders it. Osiris then explains to Ibis that Taia is not really dead. Mesu's arrow has only put him to sleep for 4,000 years. Upon learning this, Ibis commands the Ibstick to put him to sleep for the same length of time. We are now up to the time where the first Ibis story begins. Prince Ibis awakens in an American museum and after the Ibstick has dressed him in modern clothes, he goes forth to locate Taia whom he finds in a museum in the land of his birth - Egypt. The orig story in Ibis #1 ends.

This complete origin tale was written by Otto Binder. Editor, Martin Green recently talked to Mr. Binder and gleaned a bit of information about the man of magic's creation.

In 1939 Bill Parker became Fawcett's first comic book editor. He had selected several adventure themes to be used in this and a magician was one of them. His was the original story line! However, it is Mr. Binder's belief that Ed Herron, who took Parker's place in 1940, did the most to guide the story line. Otto related a humorous anecdote regarding his rewrite of Ibis' origin. Ed Herron called him in and told him they were coming out with an Ibis book and that he was to rewrite the origin. When Otto asked for some information on the character, the only reply
was, "Oh, it has to do with Egypt and a magician!"
When asked about Taia, Otto explained that she was in
the stories for window dressing - nothing more!
It should be noted that Ibis' origin was added to again
in one of his own books. Thus, Ibis received his
Ibistick from a statue of the Egyptian God THOTH. Thoth
was a real Egyptian God too. He was the god of wisdom
and magic.

Back to the first Whiz adventure. The story has no
real organized plot. It just follows Ibis doing good,
like restoring a battered out city. The story ends with
a thief stealing the Ibistick and leaving Taia in a
glass case. In the 2nd issue of Whiz, Ibis follows
the thief and after some degree of trouble, traps him.
The thief ordered the Ibistick to turn Ibis into gold,
but since the Ibistick will never harm its master, the
thief instead is turned to gold. Ibis then rushes
back in time to save Taia from her tight glass case.
In Ibis' 3rd adventure he defeats King Sameoari, who
had returned to life and intended to punish the
explorers who had disturbed his tomb and in #4 they go
to the aid of some boys who had been mistreated and
who were slaves to a bunch of crooks lead by Murder
Malone. Malone captures Taia and takes her away, bound
and gagged in an airplane. In the 5th story the Ibistick
creates an airplane and Ibis follows them. Again,
the Ibistick backfires, as Malone orders it to turn
Ibis into a toad after stealing it. It is rumored that
Malone is still waiting for a princess to kiss him.
Next the Ibistick is accidentally dropped out of a
window of an autogyro and it falls to the inside of the house
where a fisherman gives it to his nephew. Before long, it
falls into the hands of a hobo and the Ibistick turns
him into a power mad millionaire, complete with mansion.
By the time Ibis and Taia locate the hobo, he wants to
be Emperor of the World. However, he is turned into
a block of ice when he orders the Ibistick to do so to
Ibis.

The next few issues are important, as they introduce
a regular to the Ibis cast of characters. In Whiz #7
thru #10 Ibis and Taia go to a carnival where they
save a young boy named Tommy and take him to Holly-
wood where he ends up a kidnap victim. Tommy will
be quite a few of the coming Ibis adventures. Search-
ing for Tommy, Ibis has the Ibistick stolen by Carl
Brand who is using Tommy so Ibis will sign the owner-
ship of the Ibistick over to him. When the police and
Ibis finally catch up to Brand, he convinces the police
that Ibis stole the Ibistick from him and Ibis and
Tommy go to jail. While they languish in jail, Brand
in turn makes off with Taia. In a crystal ball Plang
the Terrible sees all this and wants to use Taia to
give him the secret of life. Brand refuses to turn
Taia over to him and Plang kills him. However, in the
end, Ibis and Tommy save Taia and Plang is defeated.

It seems the Ibistick was out of Ibis' possession more
than it was in it. Ibis loses it this time to Cram

Thoth

Deeters, a convict who orders the Ibistick to take him
to Egypt where he brings a Sphinx to life. Instead,
in the end Ibis recovers the Ibistick and defeats the
convict. Meanwhile Tommy is having troubles in a mil-
itary school with Mrs. Zorn, cannibals and a professor.
In the end, we find the Professor rescuing Mrs. Zorn
from the Cannibals and falling in love with her. Fin-
ally, Ibis and Taia return to the Military School and
to Tommy.

In issue #13 Ibis meets Trug, an oriental criminal who
also has magic powers. Trug is the first major villain
to confront Ibis and he'll plague him for a number of
issues. Trug uses his magic on Tommy to steal the
Ibistick and when he's confronted with Ibis, he takes
Taia, the Ibistick and vanishes into the air. In issue
#14 Trug and Taia end up in the far north. Using
a crystal ball, Ibis is able to locate Trug's castle.
As he enters the castle, Trug orders his plans to
destroy Ibis, but they bomb his castle instead. As
Taia drags the half dead Trug to safety, one of his
men gets the Ibistick. The man becomes a giant and
puts Trug and Trug in jail while he fights Ibis. Ibis
defeats him and recovers the Ibistick. Then ret-
stores the giant to normal and they become friends.
Ibis goes about rescuing Taia and turns Trug into a
statue of marble. For the moment Trug is out of the
way. Ibis' next foe is a jewel expert named Rismam.
Rismam steals a ruby the Eskimos gave Ibis, but he
recovers it with the use of the Ibistick. However,
as Ibis and Trug drive off Rismam shoots the tires
and their car goes over a cliff. In issue #15 the
Ibistick saves them and eventually Rismam is killed.
Returning to the north, Ibis discovers a tribe has
taken Trug's statue and placed Ibis' friendly tribe
in slavery. Ibis is forced to restore Trug to life and
the Eskimos think Trug is a god. They change
their minds when Ibis battling Trug and defeats him.
After this, the two tribes become friends and Trug
swears vengeance on Ibis.

The art in issues 2-6, 8-15 appear to be done by the
same artist (Jack/Esten) while the art in #7 is
different. In #7 the title logo and general appear-
ance of the whole strip is different. The title logo
is also different in issue #8.

Ibis and Taia continue their battle with Trug thru
Whiz #20. After helping an old lady find her missing
son, Ibis and Taia return to the Military School to
visit Tommy only to discover he is missing...Trug has
kidnapped him! With the aid of the Ibistick, Ibis and
Ibis traced Trug and Tommy to a remote mountain, only to come up against a 4 Armed Demon. By now Ibis and Talia are in such an evil location that the Ibistick only has power enough to save one person, so they save Tommy and send him back to the Academy. Powerless, Ibis and Talia are tied to the legs of giant birds and flown to a castle high above the clouds where they are imprisoned by a giant. However, with a group of small people like themselves, they manage to break free and escape. Ibis climbs up a cable, only to discover that it is a great spider web. He is attacked by the spider and is saved from certain death by a wasp who attacks the spider. Ibis then defeats the giant by turning him into a normal sized man and returns to New York.

Trug is still up to no good and is now working with the Devil. In a fight, Ibis beats the Devil who turns out to be Trug in disguise. Ibis' battles with Trug end here, as he sails his in a cave forever. Now a new chapter in Ibis' life begins.

Returning to their hotel, Ibis and Talia find a message warning of a threat to the U.S.A. by secret forces. In issue #21 General SERVISS sends Ibis on a secret mission to Europe. His airplane is shot down, but Ibis manages to parachute to safety using the Ibistick's magic. On the ground, he is able to escape the enemy (who are obviously Nazis), but is later caught by a man known as HALF MAN. Half Man lost both his left arm and right leg in war. The left side of his face is also gone, but is covered by a piece of cloth. Half Man had learned the art of Black Magic while he was recovering from his wounds. He planned to use his powers to help bloody tyrants overthrow Europe. Meanwhile, Talia has followed Ibis to Europe, and she, Ibis and Half Man are caught in a house that is bombarded. Half Man manages to escape with Ibis as his prisoner. Later, when Talia is pulled from the wreckage, she has the Ibistick but has lost her memory. After her memory is restored, Talia uses the Ibistick to locate Ibis. The Ibistick shows Half Man sending Ibis over to a Priest for a human sacrifice to the Angry God! In a frantic state, Talia commands the Ibistick to help Ibis. Half Man's evil magic is so great that it neutralizes the Ibistick's powers. Refusing to give up, Talia concentrates the power of the Ibistick to just one small point...the rope that ties Ibis! The rope fell apart and Ibis kills the Priest. Meanwhile, thinking Ibis dead, Half Man's army starts to overrun a small nation. However, the little nation's small army stands ready to fight to the death, hoping their ancient legend would come true. It was written that a hero would come from heaven to save them in their country's hour of need. After this rejoined Ibis, Ibis had the Ibistick take them to the small army. The army upon seeing Ibis and Talia appeared out of the sky, believing the legend had come true. When Half Man's army attacks, the little army stands its ground and Half Man is forced to call on Black Magic. However, Ibis' white magic is more powerful and he defeats Half Man and restores him to a whole man. In thanks for his restoration, the Half Man uses the last of his magic to send Ibis and Talia home. So ended Ibis' first battle in Europe.

Now Ibis was to take his turn at horror, and in Wiz #25 he was to face BAKKEX, the living Mummy! Returning to the land of their birth, Egypt, they find the Mummy of King Dameses, the mightiest ruler of old Egypt, once again lives and plans to conquer the country. Dameses was a ghastly sight! Nothing but skin and bones with rotting skin wrapped partly in mummy cloth. The battle that followed was magic against magic. Dameses and his army against Ibis and his friends. Bullets had no effect on Dameses' army because they were ghosts - creatures of the night. Dameses was winning until Ibis and the Ibistick made it to tomorrow. With the raising of the sun, the army of Dameses vanished. Seizing Ibis, Dameses tells him nothing can overpower him until he is in his tomb again. Ibis orders the Ibistick to bring the tomb to Dameses and the monster is again entombed, but only until #26, when Dameses returned. At the end of this story, Dameses ...but the Ibistick's, Dameses and the Ibistick... retold, the black depths of a great sea, into which Dameses had escaped. But will Ibis catch him? It was never told in Wiz Comics, because the continued stories ended with issue #26, Jan. 23, 1942 and in #27, Feb. 20, 1942 the story concerned the Flying Dutchman legend and the art is by a different artist. It was about this time that Fawcett underwent a change. They dropped most of their lesser heroes and began building up the remaining ones. There were art changes; new characters like Commander Yark and Phantom, and more art from the Jack Binder studios. Continued stories were cut and complete stories in. All characters appearing in Wiz Comics - Capt. Marvel, Spy Sm and the Ibis Arrow and Ibis would be appearing in their own book before 1942 was over. Only Lance O'Casey, Pawett's adventurer of the high seas, was denied a comic book of his own, but he would have one later in 1946.

Ibis

by
Moving ahead a few issues to Whiz #30, May 15, 1942 we find Ibis and the Late Nightman to battle the Headless Horseman. This time the Ibisstick creates many Ibis’ to battle the Headless Horseman. Then in issue #31 the issue that teamed Capt. Marvel and Spy Smasher, we find Ibis killed the Headless Horseman and Attica the Run in a story drawn by Al Carrero.

In issue #32 there is an oddity. Sir Derek Nace, an explorer, while in Africa kills a Witch Doctor. Before the Witch Doctor has a chance to kill Derek Nace, the Ibis stick changes Derek Nace into a kilian. On the night of the full moon he had but one desire - to kill all the Ibis. In the end the Ibis stick kills the kilian and the Ibis stick changes back into Derek Nace. Nace’s death has broken the spell. The oddity here is, that some years later, in Captan Comics #27, Nov. 25, 1943 this same story appears as a basis for the Demon in a story in that issue. The only difference being one Eric VonDome turned into a tiger with the first full moon.

Whiz #36 was a special Halloween issue - or “Special Spook Edition” with all the Ibis making ghosts in them. In Ibis’ case, it was the Black Witch. The Black Witch wasn’t defeated. The humans with their jitters and Halloween pranks were just too much for her, so she rode her Ibisstick into the skies before Ibis could capture her.

I might add that around this time Ibis enjoyed some pretty good art - perhaps his best.

In Whiz #37 the Flying Dutchman returned and in #39 it was magic again in “The Slaves of the Lagoon”. In the best “Spider” Ibis and the Genie from the Lagoon battle with the plan to tame the Genie in the background. Issue #40 had Ibis in “The Adventure of the Living Paintings.” In #42 it was called “The Black Sorcerer.” The art had slipped, but it still had a very spooky setting as Ibis battled ghosts in a cemetery. Issue #43 had “The Man Who Sold His Soul To The Devil” with Ibis defeating Satan. By #47, Alex Blum was doing the art on Ibis. Blum was one of the real workhorses of the F.M. Iger shop. It was the story of “The Man in the Moon Monstrous in #47 and the “Horrors of the Himalayas” in #48. In this story Ibis and Maia go to the Himalayas to help the Chinese soldiers battle the Inhabitants of the Planet Mootum. Mootum was the most distant and powerful planet in the universe. Because the world had nothing to live for, they landed in the Himalayas because they couldn’t breathe at lesser altitudes. They were using the Ibisstick to change altitude on, so they could see how they lived in heavier air. With the Ibis stick, Ibis creates air at the mountain top and the aliens are defeated.

From about Whis #38 thru #48, in my opinion, Ibis was at his peak. The stories all contained 10 pages each and in #42 Ibis was awarded his own book. The original was told in the first issue, as previously mentioned. In this issue Alex Blum was really doing his stuff on the Ibis stick. Roosevelt, Stalin and Hitler join forces to fight Ibis. In the end, Ibis orders the Ibisstick to cause the world to be destroyed. Everyone had never been born. Fong vanishes and even Ibis forgets about his existence. It was as if it had all been a dream. The 3rd story pits Ibis against a Nightmare in the 4th story and then the Ibis stick he and Maia journey to Central America to defeat Zootil and his Fat People. The second issue of Ibis came out early in 1943, with Ibis meeting the Villagers at Death on a Holiday, meets Bananee the Monkey on the mountains of Mr. Discor. Alex Blum’s art is featured on the cover, both Ibis and Maia are featured. Both Ibis #142 contained 68 pages. Issue #3 didn’t contain any cover story, but contained only 36 pages, with Ibis and the Jaguar Man, Robot Madman and Karlen, the Last of the Sorcerers.

Ibis also appeared in Xmas, Gift and Holiday Comics (Giant giant reprint books) as well as the 1948 weekly Gift Magazine. Also Ibis was featured in a comic book of his own called “The Adventures of Ibis.” This book was an Ibis miniature and had the cover story and lead story as Ibis #1. The second story was from Whiz #39 and the third story from #41. Ibis was also featured in Pocett’s one-sho #200 and Hero #1. This was a book I think should have made it to #2. A line up of Capt. Marvel Jr., Capt. Midnight, Lance & Cap and Ibis and Spy Smasher was hard to beat. The stories were top notch and Ibis was no exception, with some of Alex Blum’s best art and a perfect story to boot. This Ibis story still remains one of my all-time favorites. Ibis introducing BANANEE O’BRIEN - Boy Enchanter in the “Mystery of the Modern Monster.” Starting like a Hollywood movie, we find a busload of children heading for the city when out of the night comes a massive giant - A Hydra! The following morning the police learn that the bus was attacked by some sort of supernatural beast. The next night the 100 headed Hydra

strikes deep in a tunnel and The District Attorney calls on Ibis. That night Ibis and the people of the town trap the beast in the middle of a bridge and Ibis orders the Ibisstick to destroy the Hydra, however, for the first time, nothing happens - the Ibis stick is powerless! The Ibis stick worked only against the old evil of the planet, and was powerless against the Hydra, an evil created by the foulness and disease of modern day cities. Suddenly, a young boy appeared before the Hydra and pointed at the beast with a magic wand. A flash of light appeared and the monster fled into the river. The boy was Bananee O’Brien, who had tried to help a dying man and was given a magic wand. The new wand had the power to kill the Hydra. Ibis and Bananee became partners and followed the Hydra to an amusement park. Bananee’s magic didn’t always work and it failed this time, so Ibis had to utilize the Ibis stick. The Ibis stick clamped them in armor and they started to fight off the monster’s heads, only to find they grew faster than they could cut them off. Dawn was coming and the Hydra fled underground into the World of Horrors. Ibis and Bananee followed in close pursuit, only to have Ibis lose the Ibis stick. Their only hope now was to run. Later, after finding the Ibis stick, Ibis tells Ibis and Bananee that he now knows how to destroy the Hydra. Since it was born in darkness, the one thing it feared was light. Next our heroes confront the menace at the shipyard, in true Hollywood fashion they try to kill it with electricity, using Bananee’s current and the Ibis stick to direct it to the Hydra. However, Bananee couldn’t hold on and the Hydra slipped from him. Now bigger than ever, there seemed no way to stop the Hydra. Suddenly Bananee cried out to Ibis to make the sun come out. In full light, the Hydra began to get smaller and smaller until finally it vanished. Bananee also appeared with Ibis in some of the original stories as his partner.

By the mid 1940’s all of Pocett’s characters, outside of the Marvel stars, became mostly filler characters. Ibis was no different. However, Ibis was now reduced to only 6 pages. The art was no longer as good as it had been in the early 40’s, but Ibis was not one to give up. Infact, Ibis appeared in every issue of Pocett from #1 thru #35 (the last issue except for issue #107).

In Whiz #72, March 1946 Ibis came up against the Mysterious of the EVIL IBSITICK. Humphrey Keene had just discovered he was the new hero, but discovered he had power and he had nothing. So Keene sold his soul to Apollon, in exchange for a
Cat Priest gets the Isteblick. He orders it to blow Ibbs to atoms. By now, we all know what will occur don't we... The Priest lost another life! Ibbs retrieves the Istebick and orders it to take him to the temple of the Cat Worshippers. He is just in time to save Taia, who was about to be sacrificed. Ibbs destroys the temple and discovers the giant statue of the Cat Worshippers was really alive. The Istebick turns it to ice and it melts. So ended one of the best Ibis stories since the early forties.

There were no more outstanding stories until issue's #101 and 102, when Ibbs gets his next adventure. Ibbs battled The Vampire Twins! Baron Orsay and his sister Maryani had fled their native land and came to America to find fresh prey. However, they found Ibbs instead. Ibbs destroyed the Baron by exposing him to sunlight in issue #101 and Maryani got her comeuppance in #102.

In #117 Ibbs fought Apollyon, The Destroyor. He returned, with his Devil Imps in #123. In #126 Ibbs battled the Headless Horseman. This was the same story that appeared back in #30, but it was along the same lines. Issue #128 finds Taia and Ibbs on the moon and deep within the earth in #132, fighting a huge brain.

The remaining stories aren't really worth mentioning and with #155 June 1953 Ibbs' long career finally came to an end... almost. I say almost, because he did make one more appearance in Charlton Comics' "Danger and Adventure" in 1955. The story was drawn by Alex Blum and had Ibbs pitted against a Viking Horde. For some reason, Ibbs' turban was white in the adventure, where in all his previous adventures it had been red.

Writers for the Ibbs stories were Malloy Wade Wellman in 1941 and Otto Binder from 1942 to 1946. Artists were many, with most of it coming from the Jack Binder shop. Mac Raboy worked on Ibbs and Nat Champin did some stories in 1942. Both Bill Ward (of Terry and the Pirates) and Dick Hylands did pencils. Ray Harford and Jim Porter did inks around 1942. Al Carrero did some art in 1942 and Alex Blum had stories during '43 and '44. Sam Cooper also got into the act in 1945, while Kurt Schaffenberger did the load in later years after 1945. Both C.C. Beck and Pete Costanza did the early stories and Maro Swayne did at least one after the war. Stories were written by different art shops - Harry Chealer's, Jack Binder's, S.M. Iger's and last C.C. Beck.

Ibis is gone now; but who knows, with DC re-presenting Capt. Marvel perhaps the man of the Ibis will re-appear us once again!
Mandrake’s Magic Maker

An Interview With...

Fred Fredericks

by

Martin L. Greim

few moments later, by Patrick. Al and I had brought along some art—some by ourselves and others by Steranko, Wood, Kirby and Williamson. We talked for quite some time about art and found Fred liking uncluttered art (art without a lot of “spinach”, as Fred put it) best. I asked why Fred had moved from New Jersey to Eastham, Mass. He explained that for years he’d visited the Cape on summers and one day he decided to get away from the hustle and bustle and move there. As Fred put it... “I can sell my art in just as easy from here, as New Jersey.”

Fred asked us if we’d like to see some movies from his movie collection. Naturally, we agreed! I’ve been a movie serial fan for years and I was overjoyed to see that Fred had many of my favorites. Films such as “Red Barry” starring Buster Crabbe, “Dick Tracy”, “The Clutching Hand”, and “Dardevils of the Red Circle” with Charles “Ming the Merciless” Middleton as the villain 3903. Fred also had a very special treat in store for us. He had a copy of an unaired Mandrake the Magician television pilot film. You can be certain, not many comic fans have seen this film. The film starred Joe Morton as Mandrake, Woody Strode as Lothar, and Lisa Howard as Narda. The characterization and costumes were perfect. Lothar had a little hair on his head and sometimes wore a flowing leopard cape, but other than this, it was as though the characters from the Mandrake strip had stepped right out of the comic page. The story was filmed in Bermuda and dealt...
Fred sets up the movie screen, smiles and says, "Now we’ll show some movies!" However, like any of us who’ve shown home movies, he runs into a bit of trouble... to say the least.

with Mandrake and Co., helping a government agent escape from a South American country. The show might have made it, except for the fact it was so horribly written. With all the chances for Mandrake to perform magic, he wound up saving the day by knocking the gun out of the villain's hand with a pen knife. It’s a shame that this show, which had many possibilities, wasn’t blessed with a better script. Perhaps if the show's producers had consulted with Lee Falk, Mandrake might be on television today.

Fred set up his silver movie screen and proceeded to transfer selected files from movie cores (spools that films are stored on) to movie reels. However, it was as if the astral form of The Cobra, Mandrake’s arch foe, was present causing trouble. The movie reel slipped partially off the core and it took Fred quite some time to untangle it. Finally, with all the film safely on reels, we sat back and enjoyed seeing the fantastic aerial action of yesterday. Dick Tracy bravely roaring infernos and blazing guns, Red Barry fighting Russian spies and oriental villains, and the Daredevils of the Red Circle fighting crooks and outrunning torrents of water rushing through an underground transit tunnel were only part of the afternoon’s action.

After the movies were over, Fred presented me with something. I’m very pleased to have in my collection. It was an original Sunday page representing some of his early work on Mandrake. The page was dated December 26, 1965. Portions of this Sunday page are represented in this article, along with some art Fred drew especially for me.

At this point we stopped for supper. Connie had prepared a very tasty meal that both Al and I found very filling. After supper, tape recorder in hand, we went into Fred's studio and taped the following interview.

INTERVIEW:
Q. Will you give us some information about yourself... where you were born...art training and early strips, prior to Mandrake?
A. I was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey in the year of the CRASH, 1929. I was editor of the school paper and when I went into the Marines I was the staff cartoonist on the camp paper...The Camp Lejune Globe. After I got out, in 1953, I went to Cartoonists and Illustrators School. I went there 3 years, nights only, and studied with Hogarth, Dan Barry and Jerry Robinson. In 1957, I sold a local history strip to the Elizabethtown Journal. It was called "New Jersey’s Patriots" and it was about the Revolutionary War. The strip had a run of about 2 years and appeared in papers all throughout New Jersey. In 1960, I started a strip called "The Late, Late War" which was a Civil War past-a-day thing. One day a fax about the South, the next day the North. It was played for laughs, but when the papers down South started to carry it they said... "There's nothing funny about the Civil War!" and that was that. After we lost papers on that, we did something in the same vein as "New Jersey’s Patriots" for Adocks Associates Syndicate. It was a 6 times a week strip about the Confederate side of the Civil War, and it was called "Under The Stars and Bars." The strip started at the beginning of the war and took it right up to the end. It ran for a year, or a little over. At that time I was also doing comic books for Gold Key. I started there by writing such books as Nancy and Sluggo, Terry-Toons, Mighty Mouse, and in 1961 I got a break...I wrote and drew my first book. It was called, "King Leonardo and His Short Subjects."

Q. How did you get interested in comic art?
A. Like everyone else, I guess. I looked at the comics every day. My favorites were Dick Tracy, Terry and the Pirates, Mandrake and The Phantom. I also liked Scorchy Smith and, believe it or not, Harold Gray. I used think that if I could do cross hatches like Harold Gray in Little Orphan Annie, I’d have it made!

Q. Phil Davis was Mandrake’s first artist; followed, after his death, by his wife. Did you take over the strip after her?
A. Yes! I took it over in April of 1966. Actually the drawings were supposed to begin in June, but I was asked to take over toward the end of a story and to do it in the same style as was then appearing in the strip. I did this for two weeks and then was able to switch it over to my own style.

Q. Speaking of style...Has Davis’ art influenced you and has any other artist particularly influenced you?
A. Yes, Davis has influenced me. He was very good and got away from the pin-up art style of the 1930s. Many artists did, in where they all drew like Alex Raymond. It was a popular style. Lyman Young had it and Charles Flanders and even in the old "Radio Patrol" strip,

MAESTRO, A DOZEN PROJECTS IN AS MANY NATIONS DEMAND YOUR DECISIONS! CAN YOU NOT POSTPONE THE MANDRAKE MATTER?

NO, UDD, MANDRAKE WILL NOT BE ALERTED NOW, AWARE THAT I AM ALIVE!

HE’S THE ONLY MAN THAT I FEAR--
Charlie Schmidt used it. It seemed to be the style of the time and it payed off for them.

Q. Do you have any favorite comic strip artists today?
A. Well, I read them all and like most of them. I can appreciate how hard it is to pick what you can into strips that are four columns wide and are not too tall either. It's like you have a little more room than a postage stamp for each panel, but you do with it what you can. Of the stuff that's around today, I still like what John Prentice is doing on Rip Kirby. It's good and clear and doesn't look muddy at all. That's one of the problems you have when stuff is reduced so small. I like what by Barry is doing on The Phantom. Again it's good and clear and easy to read. That's half the battle right there. If it's too loaded with "splash" and mud, people will say, "why bother?" and go on to something else that they can figure out. So I think a lot of the stuff that appears on the comic book page is fine, but it can't work in the comic strip, because there just isn't the space.

Q. Do you have much control over Mandrake's actions? Does Lee Falk give you explicit story lines to follow, or do you control the way you depict the characters?
A. In a story Lee wants someone to look a certain way he'll tell me the way to depict him, otherwise I can do it my own way. Lee's scripts are very good and easy to follow. He knows what he wants, but unless it's something special, he leaves it up to me on how to make the characters look.

Q. How do you go about laying out your panels?
A. First, I do my own lettering and decide where the word balloons are going to be. Then I try to vary my shots, almost like a movie. You have a close-up, then a medium shot, then a long shot. You try to keep the camera moving, just like in a film.

Q. How many weeks in advance do you work from the actual publication of the art?
A. Five weeks for the daily strip and ten weeks for the Sunday page.

Q. What type of material do you work with?
A. I use an Esterbrook #2 pen point, with which I get a good thick and thin line. After I ink the figures with a pen, I put in the blacks with a #3 Windsor-Newton brush and always keep the white paint handy in case of mistakes!

Q. Do you get much fan mail, especially now that more fans see Mandrake in The Kenosha Puck Gazette?
A. Yes, a little bit more and I'm always happy to get it, as I know how tough it is to write a letter. They say that for every letter you get, that's for a hundred that wanted to write. That's what leads us onward. The knowledge that there's a hundred people out there that wanted to write, but can't!

Q. What is your work week like?
A. Well, I'm lucky if I can get two days off in a row. I do the lettering of the dailies and the Sundays all at once and while I pen the page, I like to switch off and ink another one. It keeps me in the mood. You can jump from one to the other, before you start to get tired. The hours are long, but it's still fun. I'd rather be doing this, than working down at Kinney Shoes.

Q. Have you ever used an assistant?
same things when they were younger...like the movie serials and the old radio programs. You get together with a bunch of guys and you find out they liked the same shows and the same movies when they were younger. The serials helped me a lot. I'd see a good chapter and I'd want to go home and put something like that down on paper. About 10 years ago I found out these were a lot of silent pictures for sale, mainly shorts, not too many features, in B/W. They weren't too expensive, so I started with that, then went to 8mm sound. However, none of the old serials were being released in that area, so I had to go to 16mm.

Mainly, I like the serials that were based on comics. Serials like Doc Eady, Dick Tracy, Radio Patrol and Ace Drummond. I found out something funny one time when I was visiting Al Williamson, another film buff. There was a great serial called "Daredevils Of The Red Circle," where the "Heaven" was known by his code number, which was 3901. Whenever, I draw a picture of a convict or a mug shot, the number under it is always 3901. Whenever, I draw a picture of a convict or a mug shot, the number under it is always 3901. I mentioned this to Al and he laughed and told me he did exactly the same thing. You see what I mean about people in this line of work being influenced by the same things?

Q. Do you read comic books at all, and if so, do you have any favorites?

A. Oh yes! I still look 'em over. And of course my daughter buys them too. I like to look them over and see what's going on at D.C. and Marvel. The only outfit I ever worked for was Gold Key. I worked for them for 3 years and never had a chance to go over to D.C. or Marvel with my portfolio, because I was lucky enough to be kept pretty busy there. When there was nothing going on in the adventure department, they'd give me something with funny animals or a gag book like "Bullwinkle" or "Mr. Ed." Then, when there would be something cooking with "Soror Caras" or "Twilight Zone," I'd get a straight adventure story too. Today, I like the books that have the reprints from the "Golden Age" in them; because it's a chance to look at them without paying an arm and a leg.

Q. Many comic books and a few comic strips have dealt with socially significant subjects. Has Mandrake ever done this, and do you think this type of subject has a place in comics?

A. In Mandrake, I believe Lothar was the first black man to appear. Although in "All in Color For A Dime" I think they called him an Hawaiian or something. I don't think socially significant subjects have a place in comic strips. In a daily strip, for about 15 seconds a day, people like to forget the cares of the day and read about adventure or get a laugh. I think people would rather see Mandrake battle the Cobra and leave the socially significant material to the editorial page.

Q. Is there any kind of "code" that governs the way you draw a comic strip and have you ever had to change any piece of art?

A. No, I've never had to change anything. Although it's supposed to be the old thing...good taste that governs the way you do a lot of work. A lot of times these days seem to be yelling that comics should be more adult, like the movies, etc. But I think they forget that even though adults read the comics, it's still the thing kids ask for first. I feel that if things get too adult parents who used to say, "You can't go to that movie," may wind up saying, "You can't read those comics." I know in England, a lot of them try to get as spicy as they can, but that's a whole different world. In the U.S. it never seemed to go. It may change...I don't know. If it does, I think it will just be something else to help wreck the comic page.

Q. Do you research anything for Mandrake? Like a locale, autos, costumes, etc.

A. Oh yes! You always have to look things up...make sure you're doing it right. Like with autos...you can't use any specific model, but if it's in 1973, you have to have a 1973 looking car. It wouldn't be right to have a guy driving a Packard and claiming it's a 1973 car. If a local changes, I try to research the costumes or at least try to make them look right. If it looks right, then you're half way home.

Q. Back around 1966, Alain Resnais was going to make a Mandrake movie, but became disinterested. Have you any idea why this happened?

A. I heard a little about it. I believe he was side-tracked by something he was doing with Stan Lee. I do know Resnais gives Mandrake and The Phantom a lot of credit; saying he got a lot of the camera angles and the way a story is told from these strips.

Q. Can you offer any advice to aspiring writers and artists who wish to break into the comic strip field?

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Here's the serum you ordered—the antidote for that poison. What do you want with it now?

The cobras' method of insuring loyalty: his workers are given poison—if they don't return in a given time for the antidote, they die.

Analysis of the poison that killed that poor climber. Extract of cobra venom with a delayed-action chemical.
A. In adventure strips, it's mighty tough. The syndicates seem to be buying the funny strips more readily than the adventure ones. However, in Europe, Sweden in particular, it seems to be just the opposite. They want in for the funny, gag-a-day strips, but now adventure is very big with them. The adventure strip today seems to be better accepted in the comic book than in the comic strip. If you had a good gag strip, I think you'd stand a much better chance of selling it to a newspaper syndicate than if you had an adventure strip.

Q. Let's talk about Mandrake. About how far back does the 8 organization go and the villain called The Cobra?

A. The Cobra, I believe, was the first big villain Mandrake faced. He was actually a man called Lucifer, who was Mandrake's teacher at The School of Magic. He wears a silver mask because he was badly burned in a fire that he blames Mandrake for. The sign of 8 organization only goes back to 1965. In fact, I did the first story on them. They show up every now and then and get nastier each time.

Q. Is there any particular character in the Mandrake series you enjoy working on more than the others, or any particular story line you enjoy working on?

A. No. There all fun to draw. There was one adventure, a while back, I especially enjoyed. It was one in which two of Mandrake's villains teamed up... The Cobra and The Mole.

Q. What does the future hold for Mandrake and Fred Fredericks?

A. Well, let's see... Mandrake has had a run now of 40 years...beginning in 1934; so as long as the hand is quicker than the eye and Mandrake can keep up with the tricks, I'll be there. Mandrake is very popular in Italy, France and South America. He's in many papers in the U.S., but his popularity overseas is really strong. Like The Phantom, I think he'll keep rolling right along.

With the interview ended, Al and I prepared to leave on our long trip home. We had both spent a wonderful afternoon that we would long remember.

In closing, Fred imparted a story to us about how he had gone to a local school to give a chalk talk. He had felt pretty good about going there, until he realized that the kids had expected to see a magician doing tricks. Ah, yes, the price you pay for not being syndicated in the Boston area.

Fred Fredericks is a man who enjoys his work. He works hard at it, doing both the daily and Sunday Mandrake strips. Still, with all this work, he maintains his sense of humor and love for the graphic media. I'm pleased to have met Fred Fredericks and that I can call him friend!
The Art Of Pencilling
by BOB COSGROVE

The production of a comic book can be broken down into a number of basic stages:
The writer, who conceives the story.
The breakdown artist, who takes the story and translates it into a series of picture layouts.
The penciller, who takes the breakdowns and transforms them into finished line drawings.
The inker, who goes over the pencils with ink, so that they can be reproduced.
The letterer, who does the text and word balloon lettering.

Aesthetically speaking, it is usually best if the writer, breakdown artist, penciller and inker are the same man, but often this is not the case. The most important job is that of the breakdown artist, for it is he who sees that the story is told simply, directly, and visually. Very often the penciller and the breakdown artist are the same man.

Pencil drawings can be done in two basic ways - line and tone. A line drawing uses the point of the pencil to outline the content of the picture. Later, the artist may indicate areas of shadow. This is a somewhat artificial way to proceed, because when the human eye looks at an object, it does not see a black line outlining it, such as the artist draws.

The alternate approach - which most artists use - is tone. Using the side of the pencil, the artist creates subtle variations in shadows, playing dark areas against light to create the illusion of three-dimensional form.

However, the tonal approach is very rarely used by comic artists, simply because they are doing illustrations which will later be inked. Without using crosshatching, or ink wash, subtle tone effects are difficult to achieve. Because of this, pencillers are for the most part line drawings, because pencillers themselves can not be reproduced very successfully. However, attempts have been made by National, and with somewhat more success, by Warren Pub. One way to prepare pencils suitable for offset reproduction is to draw with a very thin black pencil on a highly textured paper called Ross Board. Pat Boyette did this for Charlton's "Children of Doom" story.

Drawing for mass reproduction, and unable to always count on the co-operation of the inker and the colorist. The penciller must be a trained artist. He must employ basic techniques to make sure the panels hold together. These methods involve composing the picture according to pre-determined intellectual rules. These include locating the main action at a pre-determined "center of interest," composing the picture in the shape of a triangle, placing the main figure at the picture's "vanishing point," or using perspective in some other fashion.

Very few artists use another fairly old technique, designing the picture in terms of directional thrusts. Almost no artists use optical composition or compositional color.

Some artists, like Steve Ditko, will fill up the pencilled page with nothing but outline - leaving the solid blacks to the discretion of the inker. Others, like John Buscema and Jim Steranko, do a complete finished drawing with all the areas of solid black indicated. Some artists, like Gil Kane or Steranko, do layouts first, then proceed to pencil, working from their preliminaries. Others, like Jack Kirby, simply start in pencilling, perhaps making a preliminary line or two, then plunging right in.

The Kirby pages which follow, illustrate Kirby's style. Almost no preliminary lines can be found upon scrutinizing the original - the pencils are pure line drawings, beautifully complete. The very speed and ease with which Kirby works is apparent in his forceful, stylized lines. The subtleties of tone work are entirely absent.

The drawing of Merlin was probably a left-over comic book page, while the dynamic Demon double page was most likely a presentation piece for D.C. Demon fans will note that Kirby has eliminated the scallops on the cape, deleted the chest insignia and tunic effect and changed the spikes on the Demon's wrist bands to mere white circles - all to the detriment of the character's conceptual appearance.

The Steranko drawing of Wonder Woman is an extremely interesting one. At first glance, it may appear to be a toonal study, but it actually is composed of many fine lines, one on top of the other, put on in layers which give the appearance of tonal drawing, but only the appearance. Since his appearance in comics, Steranko has moved from a fairly stylized approach to pencilling, to a more realistic, "line art" style. However, even his most carefully crafted pencil studies fail to betray any use of tools which creep routinely into the most mundane line drawings of, say, Neal Adams.
SAVE US MAGICIAN, CRIED WE AND CAME THE ANSWER ... "I FAILED TO SAVE THE ONE THING I LOVED MOST!"

by TOM FAGAN

By rights it should have been the end, but it was the beginning!

A tiny plane blown off course flutters helplessly into the jaws of a "mysterious canyon somewhere in the Himalayas." From a lofty crag far overhead, almond eyes study the descent and final crash. "Look, An Omen!" softly breathes an excited companion and together the two rush to inform five other Orientals gathered about a warming fire inside a pagoda that: "Brothers! Hark! It is Time Our Prophet Has Come!"

It is June 2nd, 1940. Mr. Mystic is about to be born. Seventy centuries have awaited his coming. The world trembles, without quite knowing why. Seven monks alone know the reason why.

The setting is colorful, wild and outrageous. As fantastic as only that true spawn of American culture... the comic strip...can make it. Yet it is a bastard son of that shall birth the latest savior of mankind.

Neither newspaper nor comic book; still the strip is both the same but not quite either. Call it a supplement if you will—the first being 16 pages in length...a miniature comic book that for years to come will be tucked tenderly between the folds of mammoth mother-Sunday pages of your favorite seventh-day reading summary of humanity's harangues and hurrahs of the week just past.

Out tumbles Supplement One and before your eyes is The Spirit..."America's only middle class crime fighter" and "truly adult character," he\'ll be called later. But this is 1940 remember and you simply read to enjoy, not discourse learnedly. Ah, then luscious, leggy Lady Look-lovable lust object; but like she\'s a lady, man, so dispense with the longing...could there be more. In the best is yet to come...at least in those early issues he was the grandest.

In art and story line (Will Eisner notwithstanding) none could beat the lord of legerdemain, the sovereign
of sorcery... The master magician Mr. Mystic materializes...

This is his story—or rather part of it—for one need not know everything about a man to understand him... no, one only has to recognize a portion of the psyche to perceive future fulfillment or succeeding sorrow.

Here then is the tale of Mr. Mystic. Of what happened to him between that first Sunday in June of 1940 until another Sunday, this one dated March 2nd, 1941. It isn't particularly long recounting. Less than a year is involved and then only certain happenings will be told. It isn't particularly important either... unless you consider the life of a single individual to be of import.

If you read on not only will you make the acquaintance of Mr. Mystic, you'll meet Madam Elena, the Shadowman, Penny Douglas and others who touched upon one another's lives to a lesser or greater degree.

You agree? Splendid! Now judge then for yourself. It begins here. You are back in 1940. The United States isn't yet involved... but...

"Like An Angry Flood, the Second World War Surges Across Europe, Engulfing All That Lies Before It... Small Countries, Peaceful, For Centuries, Are Swept Into The Maelstrom And Destroyed"...

Evacuation in the path of the oncoming unidentified invader. Planes taking frantically. An American (Ken) realizes a premier official is being left behind. "Quick, Professor! Take My Place In The Plane! You're a Genius... The World Needs You... I'm Just An Attaché!

However, Prof. Padewski demurs only to have his objections overruled by an American right to the chin and unconscious is carried aboard the waiting spy-craft...

Left behind, Ken discovers that the Premier has dropped his "memories." "These Scrape Of Paper May Eventually Bring Peace, I've Got To Get These Back To Him!" He also realizes, as the story relates, that he will be in a real pickle! if he is captured with the papers on his person.

Ken dashes to an abandoned hanger and "luckily" finds a plane left there. Adrenal shot and shell and general hell, the plane nose into the air and as Dorothy's cyclone pitched her into Oz, Ken is flung into the less heavenly retreat of a Himalaya canyon... all the more remarkable because his plane was a standard model and certainly not a long-distance tripper!

Is it chance, or was it preordained this strange course of events? No matter, a hero is about to be born... for a high priest reads from an ancient scroll: "As It Is Written In The Book Of Ages: On The Seventh Hour After Sunset, On The Day In The Seventh Month In The Seventeenth Century After Our Deity's Death, Our Prophet Shall Come To Us From The Sky! Aye! Verily, It Is He!"

A sharp command: "Quick Bring Him Here! We Shall Brand Him With Our Sign And Make Him All Powerful! Pester Him!" An order carried out with swiftness: Arrows the priest: "After We Burn The Symbol On His Forehead, The Mysteries Of Life Shall Be Known To Him!"

Heated iron bites deep into skin; a cabalistic marking centered for a lifetime. The pronouncement: "With This Brand, I Name Thee Ruler Of Magic, Disciple Of The Seven Lamas And Knight Of Righteousness!"

Pain-shocked awareness... an awake and angry American. At his touch, restraining bonds melt away. Lamas and Pagoda disappearing from view. Another miracle... a thought, the wrecked plane is fully restored. And:

"Suddenly Ken Finds Himself CLOthed And A Great Voice BONE FROM THE SKY... "You Will Be Known As Mr. Mystic, Enchanted With Unlimited Powers To Combat The Forces Of Evil Plaguing The Earth. Go And Do Your Work!"

Strange and colorful is his ravishment. A turban of sarforn swatches the head. An ankle length, wide flared collarless cape is bound to the chest with a golden choker. About the neck, a mystic amulet of other. A shirt of immaclulate whiteness, contrasting dress bow of black. A great jacket of brilliant blue. A scarlet sash to compliment the cape. Knife-creased trousers matching the jacket's hue. But most conspicuous of all, the forehead band staring in its raised and reddened flesh.

This is Mr. Mystic, whose adventures will continue weekly in Sunday newspaper supplement form until May 14, 1944. The beginning stories have the name, "Mr. Montereau" assigned to them. Don't be fooled, the author and artist is really that late great of cosmic
PENNY

art, S. B. (Bob) Powell

Powell will do the mystic strip for some two years (Oct. 3, 1940), was the last issue with his name on it.) before being called into the armed services. Stories thereafter will be by Fred Guardineer. However, it is Powell, who'll bring the strip into prominence. You'll find his name signed on the last panel of the second story (June 9, 1940) but later it will be moved up to its rightful place beneath the main logo. And there will come a time when the Powell signature will end with the flourish of Mr. Mystic's brand as part of the overall penmanship? The Creator and the Comic are one!

Perhaps, that last statement is a bit flashbombant, but Mr. Mystic did continue on to be one of the most popular magician strips of its time and it was competing against such series as Tarzan, Tom Swift, Kirby the Terrible, The Wizard, and the%%%

There is Natural Magic; there is Black Magic; there is the Magic of Love... before we speak of all three shall we investigate if the trust of the Seven Lamas and the confidence of the Great Voice were well placed?

It was and more! Still writing "My Pies of Peace To The World" was Professor Pawelki, now secluded in an Alpine village, bent on his assassination are two assassins who had failed in the attempt once before. Mr. Mystic confronts the trembling duo, as their chief-tain is apparently airbornes and speeding away to comparaive safety. Suddenly, a mountain-high Mr. Mystic appears and with a gesture, turns the plane into a bird. "WEED!" screams the leader, plunging thousands of feet earthward.

Who is right... the peacock's of the 10% or the patriot of the 50%? Your choice, man. Mr. Mystic's philosophies, "I Should Kill You Like Your Leader. By You Have An Exeuse For ignorance." (Even Mr. A. would have cause to smile at such a naive statement as that?)

In the beginning Mr. Mystic's powers were infallible... well, mostly so... the grand lama may have overlooked a thing or two. However, he could do such things as turn an ordinary squirrel into a steed for riding; or transform himself into a mountain goat to skip across crags at will; become invisible; walk through walls and allow others to do so; grow gargantuan or shrink to sliver height, fly through the air or teleport himself by thought wherever he pleased... sometimes merely by hissing it with intense concentration, or by relying on the amulet, even resorting to plain old-fashion parlor magic... and, if all else failed, a hard right to an opponent's jaw proved as effective as any magic known to man or demon.

However, it was a woman who taught Mr. Mystic the most powerful enchantment of all—the magic of love. Her name was Elena—a Raven-haired beauty.

They would meet as sworn enemies, only to fall in love and know a romance that would rage across continents, literally touch the moon and even transgress the boundaries of death itself.

The story line was Powell at his best and he began it in the second Mr. Mystic adventure dated June 9, 1940. A million dollar reward has been offered for the capture of Karoly Gore, a dictator and "Europe's Most Powerful Man." Mr. Mystic wants the reward, not for monetary gain, but because "Magic Could Do Lots Of Good In This Topaz-Turvy World!"

Yet Gore is not the real foe as Mr. Mystic soon dis-
As the bird's carcass drops to the floor, Elena changes it into a giant monster which, upon destroying the cat, turns then onto Mystic. The magician, likewise, assumes his magical height. In a tree-slinging melee the monster is killed and Mr. Mystic resumes his normal size.

It is the hour of truth. A downcast Elena confesses, "My Power Was Even Over The Land, But Now I Have, My Magic Has Foiled You Yet!" In a firm voice and with a magical pass of the hands, Mr. Mystic orders, "Then I Command You, Elena. To Return To Your Former Self, But This Time To Put Your Talents To Work On The Side Of Righteousness!"

Mr. Mystic for a second time holds Elena in his arms. There is no fear of death this time, only the promise of life...of two people wanting to be free. Elena, it resolves to bend forward saying softly, "Since I First Saw You, I Wanted To Do Something! Miss, The Time Has Come! Only the faithful moon is witness to the enchantment of their kiss, and Elena responds...Magician and maiden, bewitched by the spell eternal!

What of Cardin? Dialogue and captions tell all in the August 15th, 1940 story, "You Are Evil, Cardin, And You Tried To Kill Elena! For That You Die! Shouts Mr. Mystic And Cardin Sways As He Turns To Sand..."

Swears Mr. Mystic, "Beast To Dust, Cardin! You Are Well Repaid!" Hurling sand in a man carrying an unconscious woman flee. The repugnant sight of a castle vanishes, as a gesture of Mr. Mystic's hand the Kingdom is restored. Signs Elena, "Now Nothing Can Ever Take Me Away From You Again!" (Who could do less for one's fiancée; for truly she was on the path of righteousness and on the marriage trail of the master magician.)

What would take America to the 1960's to do, Elena and Mr. Mystic were to do 20 years earlier. TheirCooky Company had rushed across the continents of Europe, North America, Asia, and it reached a high point (Sept. 1st, 1940) with a zoom to the moon. No rational debt liability was entailed; just a minor threat to Elena's assets.

For the "King of the Moon" desired Elena and he was willing to trade "a rocket force powerful enough to destroy ten worlds" for her, to a Hindu went on earth and consulting Mr. Mystic. He did neither. A grave in the gray void of space was his reward; an empty bridal chamber was the lot to the moon king; his fiancée and fairely whirled through the fourth dimension back to their own time and place on earth.

Keeping unwanted suitors from his beloved, became a fairly regular task for Mr. Mystic. Her latest admirer, as of Dec. 1st, 1940, was a Spanish Don Juan De Leon. While no other woman might have been flattered by the attentions of royalty, Elena was less than impressed. Her Don Juan had been dead since April 1st, 1859. The phantom proponent was laid to rest with a fiery finale...by a maddened Mr. Mystic, not an entrancing Elena.

Some people court death finding it desirable and having a magical attraction all of its own. One of these was Elena and as such as she loved her fiancé....

The setting was in Portugal. A grand masquerade ball was in progress, that evening of Dec. 22nd, 1940. While Mr. Mystic performed sorcery to amuse a social audience, Elena danced a Waltz with a strangler whose face was hidden in Shadow. They agree to a tryst in the garden.

Elena had only met the man that very afternoon...a chance encounter, while out costume shopping with her fiancé. Yet the Doctorin that he was so cared for her friend's fiancée is revealed in her reaction to Elena's engaging in conversation with the stranger. People who are engaged to a Man Like Mr. Mystic And She Can Play With Him As If What A Capri!

The stranger has charmed Elena. However, Mr. Mystic knows the truth for he has met him on at least two previous occasions (stories dated Sept. 22nd and Oct. 23rd, 1940). It is The Shadowman. He has another name, which the magician now reveals: "Elena, If You Wish To Break Up Our Engagement I'll Not Stop..."
You, But Don't Fool Around With This Man! Anyone Else, Elena. But Not Him! He's Death, Elena! Death! Do You Hear? If You Meet Him In The Garden It's The End Of Everything!...

Elena refuses to listen. Mr. Mystic follows after her, but before he can catch up with her he is downed by a knife-wielding assassin. Penny Douglas saves him and at the same time makes known her true feelings: "The B-Big Bug! If He Had Hurt You, I'd-a'ed Scratch His Eyes Out! W-Well? What Are You Waiting For? Your Precious Elena Is Keeping Her Rendezvous...Get Going Before It's Too Late!" A new look crosses Mr. Mystic's face as he says, "Er...Yes...Of Course, Come With Me."

They are too late. Even now The Shadowman holds Elena in his arms. "Do You Know Who I Am? Do You Know What This Means? You Can't Ever Turn Back!" Leaning forward to embrace him, Elena answers, "I Know, Yes! Take Me! I Love You! I've Loved You All My Life!" In shadow a kiss is exchanged...a magical moment suspended in moonlight, a lifetime of waiting consumed in a moment of eternity.

And as they walk away into deeper darkness, beneath a full moon. Turning for a wave of departure, The Shadowman calls out, "It's Too Late My Friend! She Belongs To Me Now! Don't Worry! I Promise You That She Shall Live In Eternal Happiness!"

As Mr. Mystic's origin tale was reminiscent of "Lost Horizons," this story is reminiscent of "Death Takes A Holiday." A stunned Penny Douglas can only murmur, "Oh, Elena! Elena!" His grief almost too much to bear, Mr. Mystic stands, with head bowed, "I'll Never See Her Again, Penny. Not In This World Anyway...Goodbye, Elena, Goodbye! "SHE'S GONE! NOTHING CAN BRING HER BACK! I FAILED TO SAVE THE ONE THING I LOVED MOST!"

Grief has a way of healing, and soon, with Penny Douglas "as a constant companion," Mr. Mystic continues his "tireless fight against evil." Elena's name is mentioned in a March 2nd, 1941, conversation. "You Still Love Her Very Much, Don't You?" "No," replies Mr. Mystic..."I THOUGHT I Loved Her, But I Found Out I Was Wrong When I Met YOU, Penny...You've Shown Me The Real Thing!" He bends to kiss her, unaware a gun is pointed at his back.

What is romance, becomes horror. Lead tears along on a savage errand...a body slumps to the floor. "You KILLED him! You Killed Mr. MYSTIC!" Words Penn repeats over and over as she grabs up a gun. "I Swore I'd Get Him For Sending Me To The Pen!" snarls Max Luckner in explanation..."Stop Looking At Me Like THAT! I'll..." The sentence is never finished; the speaker is silenced forever!

A life slipping away. What magic is there to save it? What magic can possibly halt the Shadowman already escorting Mr. Mystic beyond the veil? Is the love of one woman and the respect of another more powerful than death itself? Are prayer and persuasion strong enough to restore the miracle of life?

Penny prays...there is nothing else she can do. And even so, Mr. Mystic's heartbeat falters. Adrenaline is administered. A physician's observation..."If He Doesn't React To This...It's The END!" The heart is apparently still.

Yet a heart is a mystical thing...not bound by the limitations of blood and flesh. It can reach out to retrieve, to caress, to comfort, to heal. If one heart has the power for this, then how much wonder may be worked by three?

Mr. Mystic following The Shadowman saying he has forgotten to say goodbye to Penny. The cold answer, "That's All Right...In A Case Like This, People Aren't Expected To Say Goodbye!"

And at the entrance of the "Land of the Dead," Elena stands waiting. The first question Mr. Mystic asks is..."Are You Happy?" "Oh, Yes!" she reassures him before turning to The Shadowman: "Not Wait! Don't Take Him Across The River! YOU CAN'T CUT His Career So Short! He's..." And surprisingly enough death re-leaves.

In life and love, Mr. Mystic and Penny are reunited. Watching from a spectral distance, Elena - her arm around The Shadowman; her hand in his - says softly: "I'm So Glad You Let Him Go Back! There's A REAL Happy Ending...Thanks To You!" And The Shadowman answers, "Me Or YOU, Dear?"

By rights it should have been the end, but it was the beginning. Was there happiness ever after? That's another story to be recounted another time...another place.

Surfice to say, the magic lived on. Still lives on. In fact, in the minds of those who, on so many Sundays, were fortunate enough to have as their weekly visitor none other than...MR. MYSTIC!
Recently, National Periodical Pub., Inc., announced that they were reviving a Simon & Kirby title published by Headline Publications in the early fifties. The title's name? BLACK MAGIC!

Black Magic was the Kirby entry into the world of horror reigned supreme at EC, and eagerly entered by a host of EC imitators.

From the start, Simon & Kirby shunned the pory, blood and guts horror that EC's superlative artists made presentable and its shoddy competition made simply disgusting. Emphasis in the Black Magic books focused on the sense of mystery that accompanied magic and the supernatural. The story stood on its own merits—not on the amount of red ink splattered from panel to panel. This policy was a mixed blessing. When Simon & Kirby were at their height, nothing could beat them. When they began to lose interest in the book, doing simply covers and a short plotless story, the powerful Simon & Kirby style still carried the book. When the pair left, however, their successors continued the policy of letting the stories stand on their own merits. Usually such merits were non-existent, and readers found themselves wishing for a bit of blood and thunder.

This then, is a brief survey of the title called Black Magic; one that will hit the high points and plumb the depths of the book, with special attention to stories that were of peculiar interest.

One such story appeared in the second issue of Black Magic. Simon & Kirby introduce "Mr. & Mrs. Robert Clark," specialists in interpreting dreams. At the moment, they are busy helping a man named Edward Morrow, the victim of a terrible, recurring dream. In his nightmare, Morrow finds himself racing down an icy winter road, clad only in his pajamas, an old celluloid collar and tie. Reaching a colonial town, he seeks shelter, but an old Puritan named Joshua, his hostile features painted a macabre crimson, slams the door in Morrow's face.

In a second dream, Morrow finds himself the defendant in a trial conducted by monsters. As he pleads with his captors, they cry "bring in the girl!" Before the startled salesman, the monsters hurl a wretched, beaten girl who screams "I have seen him! He's the man who whip me anymore." The girl's accusation brings a concerted howl of triumph from the grotesque assemblage and Morrow finds himself borne aloft by a roast of arms and hurried off in the ensuing chaos. He is bound to a post and stripped to the waist in the snow! A man detaches himself from the ghoulish crowd and moves menacingly toward Morrow with a whip in hand. "Sixteen lashes! Always sixteen lashes! I counted them between my clenched teeth in every one of the dreams that followed!"

How to explain the dream? That was Simon & Kirby's problem. They solved it by digging up an ordinary incident in Morrow's past. As a young, smooth-talking salesman, he had engaged in a clandestine romance with a simple young farm girl. When Morrow deserted her, her puritanical father learned of the forbidden romance and whipped the girl.

The idea of converting ordinary incidents into exotic symbols had tremendous possibilities. One had only to take, for example, the number of days Morrow had known the girl, and insert them into the dream, and one had an exotic symbol of why sixteen lashes.


In the earliest and best issues of Black Magic, Simon & Kirby drew two of the stories and the cover. For example, in the same issue as the Morrow tale, S&K produced "The Cloak," a tale of a garment fashioned by Satan which brings violent death to any who wears it.

Most of the other artists who worked on Black Magic were competent story tellers, but rather unexciting. An exception was a frequent Simon & Kirby co-worker, Mort Meskin. Although Meskin could be disastrous inking Kirby's pencils, he was himself a brilliant penciller. His story telling style, built around medium shots, was as simple and direct as his inks, which were bold and powerful. Meskin had a particular mastery of composition and perspective, which gave his work the same sort of depth Kirby achieved through exaggeration and forced perspectives. Meskin was at his chilling best in telling simple stories with a chilling twist. It could be "The Cheerful Old Lady in Black," a lady named "Miss Baines" who gives a rain-soaked lad a lift and turns out to be Death, on her way to pick up the boy's parents. Or, consider "Curee On You," about Gideon Ridges, a natty little man who can make people drop dead simply by wishing it.
An artist who sometimes collaborated with Keskin also essayed in several Black Magic Appearances. His name? Jerry Robinson, an integral part of the team that made Batman the sensation of the forties. Robinson’s stories were well-illustrated, but usually unexciting.

Kirby’s interest in werewolves was often apparent.

In Black Magic #3, for example, he and Simon produced an 11-page story about a beautiful, silver-haired girl who became a white wolf, eventually shot by her lover. The basic story has been done many times, most recently perhaps by Reed Crandall in the pages of Warren Publications, but never more beautifully than Simon and Kirby drew it. Another were-tale was issue #27’s “The Cat People.” In this tale, a traveler in Spain visits with some gypsies. Not ordinary gypsies—satanists who play cat’s cradle and are themselves transformed into screeching, clawing, satanic beasts. Kirby also used cats—people in his famous Captain Marvel series, and resumed the theme twenty years later when he introduced his Captain Marvel book.

That same issue carried an interesting tale of murder, paranoia, and time travel, entitled “A Hole In His Head.” The art is unsigned. In issue #29, the same artist has a tale entitled “Mystery of the Master,” about a Nicholas Dana, who exposes phony mediums. Sort of Black Magic’s answer to Terence Thirteen. The wizened old woman, the mist-shrouded mansions, the distinctive inks and emphasis on hand gestures and facial expressions lend no doubt as to the artist’s identity: it is Steve Ditko!

In spite of such treats as Ditko appearances, the overall quality of Black Magic was dropping, as Simon & Kirby drew only covers, and short interior stories. The lead story invariably carried the box “produced by Simon & Kirby,” although many times it might, with equal veracity have proclaimed “produced by Cecile B. DeMille.”

Some of the stories have acquired a retrospective interest. One such story is “As Real As Life” a lackluster production in a lackluster issue, Black Magic #24. The man buys a picture at an auction of belongings owned by a man who is reputed to be a sorcerer. The man’s daughter claims to play in the picture. The father scoffs, but when his daughter disappears he asks the auctioneer, “didn’t you say everything in that house was exorcised?”

He replies, “Everything but the picture you bought! On the day the house was purified, the picture wasn’t there. It had been taken away to be repaired!”

So what? Well, make the picture a mirror, jazz up the story a bit, and have it illustrated by the talented Alexander Roth, and you have “The Devil’s Doorway” in House of Mystery #182, published sixteen years after the Black Magic tale. You see, it isn’t only artists who swipe!


The stories never got better, though at the very end of Black Magic’s life, they had switched from tales of the supernatural to 3rd rate science fiction yarns. The “saving grace” of the magazine’s dying days was the acquisition of Illustrator S. Robert Powell, of Mr. Ratlin, Glamor, Queen of the Jungle and Man in Black called Fate fame. Powell filled the book with his competent story telling and his wonderfully expressive homely faces.

One such book was Black Magic Vol 3, No. 4 (Sept-Oct 1961). This book had Powell stories from cover to cover. The first story, “Caged,” dealt with an idea Marvel Comics used many times in their pre-super hero days...the changing of places between human and caged animal. In this case, gorillas from another planet captured two circus owners and put them on display on their planet. The next story, “The Monster,” also dealt with a much used theme...an alien coming to earth to eliminate all disease and is mistakenly attacked as a monster.

The other three stories in that issue were “The Companion,” “The Carrier,” and “Earth’s Core.” They were fairly original in their presentation and dealt with a robot problem on earth, a plague carrier in the year 2032 and a mining machine. None of these stories, as you can see, had anything to do with Black Magic.

Black Magic finally faded from the newsstands. Nobody missed it, but if its return at D.C. means a return to the Simon & Kirby fare of the earliest issues, a number of people will welcome its return.
HERO:
ANY PERSON ADMIRER FOR HIS QUALITIES OR ACHIEVEMENTS AND REGARDED AS AN IDEAL OR MODEL.
MAN:
A RATIONAL ANIMAL.

PART 1. QUALITIES UNDER ATTACK!

WHAT IS THIS? EVERY SCRIPT IS ABOUT MAN AT HIS WORST. ALL MEN ARE CORRUPT OR NEUROTIC WITH SUFFERING THE ONLY THEME OF LIFE.

IF THE BAD, FAILURE AND MISERY ARE POSSIBLE, WHY NOT ALL THE GOOD, SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS?

I DON'T WANT TO MAKE MOVIES THAT REJECT LIFE AND HAPINESS! I WANT TO BE LIKE HIM, DOING SOMETHING GREAT, EXCITING, IMPORTANT.

WAKE UP, SKYS! THESE SCRIPTS HAVE RELEVANT SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE! THEY SHOW MAN'S TRUE NATURE AND LIFE AS IT IS!

MAN AT HIS BEST IS ALSO LIFE AS IT IS! SO WHY CHOOSE AN IDEAL MAN'S WORST QUALITIES OVER HIS BEST?

NOW THE TRENDS IS TOWARD ANTI-HEROES. PEOPLE ARE INSULTED BY ANY IDEAL THEY CAN'T REACH... SO HEROES HAVE TO BE BROUGHT DOWN TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE... FLAWED! VIEWERS NEED TO IDENTIFY WITH WEAKNESS — NOT WITH STRENGTH!

BESIDES, THERE IS NO BEST... NO TRUTHS, NO ABSOLUTES, EVERYTHING IS RELATIVITY. THEORIES ARE USELESS. WHEN IT'S WHAT SUCCEDS NOW THAT COUNTS... AND THAT IS — CLAIMING THE MOST IMPORTANT MEN ARE THE UN-HEROIC, THE FLAWED, THE NEUROTIC... THE COMMON MAN!

BE REALISTIC! MOVIES ARE A BUSINESS! OUR TASTE DON'T MATTER! WE'LL MAKE WHATTHEVER THE PUBLIC WILL PAY TO SEE... EVEN IF IT IS TRASH! THE BEST... THE GOOD IS WHATEVER SELLS!
COME OFF IT! IT WAS THE EXCEPTIONAL MEN WHO SLOWLY BROUGHT MANKIND FORWARD WITH KNOWLEDGE, THEORIES AND SCIENCE—ABOUT ELECTRICITY, SOUND AND PHOTOGRAPHY!

OTHER\'S COMMONLY APPLIED THE SCIENCE-DEVELOPED TECHNOLOGY, PRODUCING LIGHTS, SOUND RECORDINGS AND CAMERAS; THEN STILL OTHERS, UNCOMMON MEN ORGANIZED IT ALL INTO A BUSINESS!

THIS INDUSTRY IS A RESULT OF A LONG HISTORY OF THE EFFORTS OF MEN AT THEIR BEST TO USE THE PRODUCTS OF THE BEST TO GLAMORIZE MEN AT THEIR WORST IS USING REASON TO GLAMORIZE IRRATIONALITY!

LOOK, I\'LL PLAY ANY ROLE... AS LONG AS SOME IDLE SHOWS A MAN AT HIS BEST! BUT I WON\'T JOIN THOSE WHO DENY THE EXISTENCE OF THE BEST OR ITS IMPORTANCE IN HUMAN LIFE!

THAT\'S ALL BESIDE THE POINT! YOU\'RE UNDER EXCLUSION CONTRACT! YOUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO ACT FOR US OR NEVER ACT AGAIN!

THINK IT OVER! WE HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE YOU OR BREAK YOU. GET USED TO THE FACT OF LIFE THAT WHATSOEVER WE OR THE PUBLIC WANT... YOU\'LL USE YOUR ABILITIES TO GET IT ACROSS. WE DECIDE, YOU JUST FOLLOW AND OBEY!

WELL, BROTHER, YOUR STUNT IS ALL OVER TOWN. YOU ALMOST BLEW IT! THE STUDIO IS LIKE CITY HALL, I.D., YOU CAN\'T FIGHT THEM... AND WIN!

BUT UNLESS I DO FIGHT—I CAN\'T WIN! TO ME, ED, IT\'S WORTH IT?

D, TAKE IT FROM ME, I\'VE BEEN THROUGH IT. I ALSO TRIED TO STAND UP FOR NOBLE PRINCIPLES AND GOT THE WORST OF IT EVERYTIME. YOU EITHER BEND WITH POWER OR YOU GET BROKEN.

COMPROMISE! PLAY ALONG WITH THEM. BUT TAKE GRAB-MISSES ALL! THE FAME, MONEY AND POWER YOU CAN\'T HAVING IT IS WHAT COUNTS! I SHOULD\'VE HAD IT... YOU CAN GET IT ALL! DON\'T LOSE THIS CHANCE FOR ANYTHING!

SUKS COSTUME? PROPS? RENTAL!
GET IT INTO YOUR HEAD, D.,
COMPROMISE IS THE ONLY
WAY... NOT JUST TO GET TO
THE TOP--BUT TO SURVIVE!

BUT IF I SELL-OUT--WHAT
DOES THAT MAKE ME?

ALL THAT
MATTERS IS
THIS IS YOUR
CHANCE TO
BE SOME-
BODY BIG!

BY BLIND-
ING MYSELF? I HAVE TO LEARN
THE HARD WAY!

KEEP YOUR IDEALS
AND WIND UP A CLEAR-
EYED NOBODY!

NOW WHAT
WILL YOU
BE DOING?

STUDYING...
THEY'LL COME
AROUND WITH A
BETTER SCRIPT??

SOD, SKYS KEEPS IMPROVING HIS
SKILLS AND ABILITIES, WIDENING HIS
UNDERSTANDING OF MAN AND HIS WORLD,
PREPARING HIMSELF FOR THE DAY WHEN
HE WILL BE CALLED ON TO PERFORM...
TO BE READY... TO BE AT HIS BEST?

I THOUGHT THEY'D SEND ME AN
IMPROVED SCRIPT BY NOW??
THIS WAITING CAN BECOME
IRRITATING!

I'M LIKE A PRIZE FIGHTER IN
TRAINING BUT WITH NO
FIGHT SCHEDULED... AT
TIMES, IT ALL SEEMS LIKE A
WASTE... SENSELESS...

IS IT? NO! WHATEVER
HAPPENS, SOMEDAY
I WILL ACT AGAIN!
I'M PREPARING FOR
THAT DAY!

RELAX, D., IS A PRISONER OF HIS
OWN PASSION FOR ACTING! HIS
BELIEF IN PRACICAL AND WORKING
WILL WIN OVER HEROIC IDEALS
THAT MEAN UNEMPLOYMENT??
AND ONCE HE RENOUNCES HIS
PRINCIPLES, HE'LL NEVER
AGAIN GIVE US ANY TROUBLE!
YOU GUYS WHO DON'T PAY GAMBLING DEBTS ARE A LOW FORM OF... FHEW... THIS JOINT NEEDS AN AIRING!

...SPOT! I'LL HAVE THE MONEY IN A FEW DAYS... HONEST...

LYING AGAIN, BOYS, HE NEEDS A LESSON! AAGHH! WHY DON'T YOU CLEAN THIS FILTHY PLACE. IT'S UNHEALTHY!

NO SPOT, PLEASE!

WATCH OUT! DIRT TRYING TO INFECT ME.

...ANTISEPTIC PILLS... HURRY! GIMME A CLEAN SCARF... DESINFECT THE FOUL AIR AROUND ME... DIRT...

YOU FILTHY SLOB, MAKING ME COME TO THIS DERM... FOR NOTHING! GIMME A CLEAN GLOVE!

IF I HAVE TO COME BACK TO THIS FILTH, I'LL BURN IT DOWN WITH YOU IN IT! I WANT THAT 3 GRAND...

...TO MORROW AFTERNOON?

AAAAGHHH! GET THESE DIRTY PAPERS OFF ME!

GET OFF ALL THE DIRT... SPRAY MY CLOTHES... HURRY! I FEEL THAT FILTH SMOTHERING ME!

DIRT'S ALL GONE, SPOT?

MAKE SURE! DON'T MISS ANY SPOTS?

I'D DO ANYTHING TO GET OUT OF BEING EXPOSED TO DIRT AND FILTH?

WHY DIDN'T YOU PARK CLOSER? KEEP SPRAYING UNTIL I'M INSIDE!

I'VE GOT TO GET TO BE A BIG BOSS! I HAVE A CLEAN PROTECTED INSIDE LIFE!
ED'S VISITORS PLAYED ROUGH!
TOMORROW AFTERNOON!!??
I'LL ALSO BE HERE! NOW I OUGHT TO GET TO THAT LECTURE!

...SOB, IT IS NO USE...WHY BOTHER...LIFE IS EVIL...SYSTEM IS ROTTEN...WHY DOESN'T SOMEONE CARE...LOVE ME...NEVER HAD A CHANCE...OTHERS TO BLAME...SELFISH...I TRIED...CAN'T HELP BEING THE WAY I AM...NO CHOICE...WHY CAN'T I HAVE MY WAY...SOB...WHY ME...SOB...

I FEEL HUMBLE MAKING SUCH A PROFOUND SOCIAL MOVIE!

THAT WAS TO BE D'S ROLE...CURSE HIS ARROGANT SELFSISHNESS...WITH HIS FAVORABLE MOVIES AND OUR RELEVANT THEME, THIS FILM COULD HAVE BEEN A FINANCIAL, SOCIAL AND ARTISTIC SUCCESS!

BUT D'S ATTITUDE IS ANTI-HUMANITARIAN DUTY, SELF SACRIFICE TO OTHER'S NEEDS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY OBSESSION ABOUT SELFISH, PERSONAL CONCERN! TRUE HEROISM IS NOT INDIVIDUAL BUT SOCIALLY ORIENTED, A COLLECTIVE ACHIEVEMENT!

ALMOST WASN'T IN TIME!
PLeASE...TELL SPOT A CHECK'S DUE...TOMORROW! I SWEAR...

SPOT SAID YOU PAY NOW OR WE WRECK YOU AND THIS STINKING PLACE!

NO, PLEASE, ONE MOR-GOFF!

...THOSE SUB-HUMANS? I CAN'T JUST RUSH IN THERE TO HELP ED. NEED AN EDGE...SOMETHING TO SHAKE THEM UP...WAIT...YAH...

MY IDEA BETTER WORK...A QUICK CHANGE...
HEH NO!

GET THAT! AAAAAH!

SEE NOW. well practice your language of force.

SOME MENTAL DEGENERATES.

LET US REASON TOGETHER.

GET TO KEEP THEM OFF-GOING.

JUST LEAVE THEM OUT... TO GET OUT OF HERE?

DON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO GET OFF THE DEFENSIVE.

I'LL GET THEM OFF.

MAARGGHH...
... AND STAY OUT!
TROUBLE'S OVER, YOU CAN PAY THEM OFF TOMORROW!
YOU FOOL! EVEN IF I CAN, NOW WE'RE BOTH IN WORSE TROUBLE!
THEY'LL BE BACK-WANTING THEY YOU! I'LL BE FORCED TO EXPOSE YOU! THERE IS NO ESCAPE FOR EITHER ONE OF US... JUST STUPID HEROICS... THAT KIND WOULD.

SO WE TURN IT OVER TO THE LAW.
YOU CRAZY! NO POLICE! I'LL DENY EVERYTHING. YOU'RE ASKING TO GET US KILLED!
SPOT IS A NUT! WE'RE LIKE GERMS TO HIM... CALL THE POLICE AND FOR SURE... SPOT WOULD KILL US!

IF WE BREAK THEIR RACKET WITHOUT THEM KNOWING WHO DID IT?
IT CAN'T BE DONE! I WANT NO PART OF IT!

NO PART... "YOU MADE SPOT AND HIS RACKET POSSIBLE BY DEALING WITH HIM..." YOU FEED HIM... NOW YOU WANT TO PROTECT HIM... SO HE'S FREE TO HURTUS? IF NO POLICE, THEN IT IS UP TO US! TELL ME ALL YOU KNOW ABOUT SPOT KLEANER?

... AND THAT'S ALL I KNOW!
ITS ENOUGH! NOW HOW TO GET SPOT TO GIVE UP HIS RECORDS? WHAT IF..

YES!... IT'S THE EDGE I NEED TO PUT SPOT ON THE SPOT', A VERY SPECIAL COSTUME!

DON'T MAKE ME GIVE UP MY LIFE!
STOP ASKING ME TO GIVE UP IT UP!
WELL ANOTHER ISSUE OF COMIC CRUSADER COMES TO A CLOSE.
I HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT! THE ILLUSTRATION IN THE UPPER
RIGHT HAND CORNER OF THIS PAGE IS BY SPANISH ARTIST,
CARLOS SIMON. YOU REGULAR READERS MIGHT REMEMBER
HIS BIOGRAPHY FEATURED IN C.C. #12. I'M INDEBTED TO
COMIC CRUSADER'S EUROPEAN "FOREIGN-PAN PARE," EDITOR,
JOHN RANDFIELD, FOR OBTAINING THAT REPRODUCTION.
I WOULD LIKE TO THANK PATTERSON FOR HIS HUMOROUS CARTOON WITH
THE IMPORTANT MESSAGE... "WRITE! REMEMBER YOU CAN'T HAVE
A LETTER COLUMN WITHOUT LETTERS!" SPEAKING OF MAIL,
LET'S DIP INTO THE CIRCULAR FILE AND SEE HOW YOU
LIked LAST ISSUE.

MARK LUCKE
211 East Cleveland Street
Beavercity, Texas, 78102

I'm not much for colorful LOC's, as you might have
suggested if you've seen some of the letter letters
I've had printed in various National comics. Thus,
again, sometimes my critiques come off halfway
decently. At any rate, I couldn't resist sending you
a little at two of my opinion of Comic Crusader #1.
Starko's cover, needless to say, was awe-inspiring.
He certainly has a way with interpreting the female
figure. I enjoyed the Defender strip, even though
I hadn't seen its opening segments. I'm sure you
your work is as good as many a pro's, and, as a read-
er previously commented, your inks style is unique.
I can say the story itself was all that original
but again, it easily measured up to much of today's
professional work.
Tom Pagan's "O5701" was okay; I'm not actually that
fond of book reviews, but there Tom managed to pull
it off in such a way that it seemd the worth
it took to read it.
The Staton interview was perhaps the most worth-
while presentation in the issue. I don't know much
about Charlie's creative side, so naturally, I
found the article interesting.
Finally, Steve Ditko's Mr. A strip proved indeed
to be interesting and provoking. Kadon to Steve for
this strip.
I did miss the presence of "Comic Chatter"...I'm kind
of partial to newsmakers, and I hope this feature will
return next issue.

I THANK YOU FOR THINKING MY WORK IS AS GOOD AS A PRO'S.
IT IS ALWAYS GOOD TO KNOW SOMEONE APPRECIATES WHAT YOU'RE
DOING NOT AS THE DEFENDER EDITORIAL... THER埃 I HAVE TO DISAGREE!! I MAY SWIPE ART ON OCCAS-
ION, BUT NOT STYLE LINES. THAT CONCLUSION TO THE
DEFENDER STORY WANTED TO BE.NOTHIN... THE
DEFENDER ART WAS,x IN WORDS, THE EMBLEM OF THE
DEFENDER STORY. IT TOOK QUITE A FEW ISSUES TO MAKE ALL THE PIECES FIT.
THE WHOLE IDEA BEHIND COMIC CRUSADER IS THE REVIEW OF
COMIC CHARACTERS FROM THE PAST. TOM PAGAN IS TOPS AT THIS
TYPE OF INFORMATIVE ARTICLE. I HOPE THAT HE WINS THE
BEST FAN WRITER AWARD THIS YEAR, IN DON & MAGGIE THOMPSON'S "COMIC ART AN AWARD." HE CERTAINLY DESERVED IT! I HOPE YOU LIKED STEVE DITKO'S CONTRIBUTION
TO THIS ISSUE, AS MUCH AS HIS MR. A SERIES. I
PUT IN "COMIC CHATTER" WHENEVER I HAVE NEWS TO DI-
VULGE ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS IN C.C., OR BITS OF COMIC
BOOK NOSTALGIA. IT'S SORT OF A SEMI-REGULAR FEATURE.

LAURINE WHITE
9480 Leader Avenue
Sacramento, Calif., 95841

Comic Crusader #13 certainly had beautiful covers; the
solid black areas are so effective. Gil Kane's back
cover is similar to his Warlock cover on a recent
RECO.
Between the covers, The Defender was better than any-
thing else! The art on that strip was superb, magnifi-
cent, etc. I really like your artwork and the Kelly
Wood effect you give it.
Tom Pagan's article was overwritten. It is fine to
wax glorious for something on heroes like the Golden
Age, but Captain Atom in 1967? I just didn't under-
stand what was happening there. He should have
mentioned a few of the villains and battles from

Lady Luck, "13," and especially The Black Cat. The
paragraph on Trigger Burke was only a start on what
the article needed to enliven it.
Joe Staton's picture was too cluttered. It should
have been of Primus. After all, he was Primus' artist.
Too much propaganda in the Ditko story. And some-
where in a paragraph in issue #13, you should have put
in some information about yourself. How is your child?
How are you doing? I mean, what's new in your life?
Don't you think that we fans care? Please say some-
thing about these things in Comic Crusader #14.

TOM'S ARTICLE WAS PAR FOR THE COURSE! CAPT.
ATOMIC WAS INCLUDED BECAUSE OF THE CHARACTER HE FOUGHT
IN THE ISSUE REFERRED TO... "13" AND PAUSTUS. THE ARTI-
CLE WAS ON 13 OR LUCK ORIENTED CHARACTERS YOU KNOW.
TOM ONCE TOUCHED ON EACH CHARACTER - GIVING THE FLAVOR
OF EACH. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO GIVE THE WHOLE HISTORY
OF EACH CHARACTER. IF TOM HAD DONE THAT, THEN THE
ARTICLE WOULD HAVE BEEN OVERWROTTEN, AS IT WOULD HAVE
TAKEN THE WHOLE ISSUE TO DO IT. HOWEVER, TOM HAS
PROMISED TO DO A COMPLETE LADY LUCK ARTICLE AT SOME
FUTURE DATE. I LIKE YOU, TON! THE ART OF TONY
"13" ORIENTED ARTICLE EXTREMELY INTERESTING! ALL THE
WRITERS SHOW GOOD AND EVIL TO AN EXTREME, WITH
EMPHASIS ON A MURAL POINT. IT JUST WOULDN'T BE ME. A
WITHOUT THESE ELEMENTS. I DON'T OFTEN TALK ABOUT MY
SELF IN C.C., BECAUSE IT'S A PUBLICATION ABOUT COMICS.
NOT THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF MARTIN L. GREEN.
IF SOMETHING REALLY GREAT HAPPENS TO ME, THEN I MIGHT
SOMETIMES INCLUDE IT IN AN ISSUE. HOWEVER, SINCE YOU
ASKED... I LIKE DAUGHTER JULIET IS FINE! SHE WILL BE 2
YEARS OLD IN APRIL AND JUST ENJOYED A PANCAKE MEAL! WT'S
MY EYES ARE SLIGHTLY WORSE. THE CONDITION CAN BE
CURED OR IMPROVED, AND I'M TOLD WILL RESULT IN EVENTU-
AL RECOVERY. HOWEVER, THAT MAY NOT HAPPEN FOR YEARS
AND I TRY TO THINK IN THE POSITIVE ON THIS MATTER. I
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONCERN!

JAMES BRINDON
Rt. #2
Norton, Ark. 72461

I was very surprised to open my mailbox and find C.C.
#13 inside! You don't put out C.C. very often, but
they are always welcome when you do.
You've had some weird covers for your last two issues.
I have never seen art of this style come from Steranko before. I must say it was very good. The Defender finally returns! Since issue #8 I've wondered just what was going to happen. Your art wasn't quite as good in #7's saga as it was in #8's. So, the Defender and the Sailor know each other. Well, that figures. That shot of Surrute on the Time Probe platform was the best in the whole zine. I don't suppose there is anyway you can bring back the Defender. To my notion, he is the best character in random. Today, when the amateur superhero is on the way out, I welcome his return. I don't think you could replace him with another character. I liked "05701" by Tom Pagen. The full page Bill Black illustration helped put it on its feet. The best character analysis (?) was "Syrue". You might like to have seen more of Thirteen and Faustus, from the Dept. Atoma story. The Man Behind The First Man of the Sea was better than last issue's interview. I didn't know anything about Stanton until I read this interview. His long answers were really quite informative. Mr. A was very good. The first page was best. It really characterized our "great" country. After that first page however, I don't agree with Ditko on his philosophy. He seems to think that to be good you have to be perfect. I'm certainly not perfect, but I don't consider myself evil, which seems to be Ditko's way of thinking. Mr. A's back cover was received much better than last issue's back cover. This is the first Kane art I've liked in two years. Oh yeah, tell Ronn Foss I like his long underwear hero... If he won't do any more Eclipse stories (#Note See C.C. #12) maybe you could talk him into letting you do the strip. Also, when will we see Pandemonia's Finest again?

YOU DON'T THINK I CAN BRING THE DEFENDER BACK, EH? WELL JAMES, YOU'RE WRONG! I LEFT AN ESCAPE CLAUSE IN THE STOVEM. HIS PATE DEPENDS ON TWO THINGS: FIRST - HOW MY SIGHT HOLDS UP. SECOND - MY OWN FEELINGS ON WHETHER I WANT TO DO A SEQUEL OR NOT. I WOULD NEVER ATTEMPT TO WRITE THE DEFENDER. MY WAY OF THINKING, RONN FOSS IS THE ONLY ARTIST FOR THAT CHARACTER!

EVEN GEORGE
105 Upper 8th Ave.
Montclair, New Jersey. 07042

Having ordered and received Comic Crusader #12 and #13 I am completely delighted with both, but #12 especially. I was in Spain for 6 months and became a great fan of Carlos Gimenez and his Delta 99. I have collected the Delta 99 books from issue #1 to #27 (May 1974). All to be published in Spain. Before a Christmas gift, which was a collection of various issues of the book. The coloring is bad and its covers are all different, and the pages are in black and white. The book is now available in Spain and it is quite good. A book called Trinaca is especially well done. A strip called Manos Kelly is simply without peer in the realm of adventure-westerns. In terms of concept, art (the color is incredibly beautiful) action, suspense, violence, etc. it is the most fulfilling and enjoyable strip I have ever read. The artist, Manos Kelly, is a master and deserving of the greatest renown.

By the way Gimenez's "Dani Futuro" also can be found in the Spanish "Tin-Tin". A truly fine work. Trinaca, though, is the premier comic-book and has the entire range of stories, from detective to adventure to sword and sorcery to Western type stories. I thought you might be interested in this information.

NOT ONLY AM I INTERESTED IN YOUR INFORMATION, I'M SURE MANY OF MY READERS WILL BE TOO. NOW, IF YOU BUY THE WARREN PUB. MAGAZINES AT ALL, YOU MUST KNOW THAT WARREN IS REPRINTING ALL THOSE OLD DRACULA BOOKS (FEATURING WOLP) IN A $5.00 COLLECTION VOLUME. THE DRACULA BOOKS ARE ALSO BEING REPRINTED IN ENGLAND BY THE NE ENG LIBRARY, BARNARD'S INN, HOLDEN, LONDON, E.C. 1, ENGLAND. THESE BOOKS ARE NOT IN A COLLECTOR'S LEATHER, BUT ARE IN THEIR 25 PAGE ORIGINAL FORMAT... BEAUTIFUL COVERS AND ALL! YOU EVEN GET A FREE MOROTO POSTER WITH THE FIRST ISSUE. I'M COLLECTING THE WHOLE SET INSTEAD OF BUYING WARREN'S $5.00 VOLUME. I'D LIKE TO SEE SOME OF GIMENEZ'S WORK PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES. HE'S TOPS, IN MY BOOK!

IT'S TIME TO CLOSE NOW, BUT BEFORE I GO I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU SOME INFORMATION ON SUBSCRIBING AND ART CONTRIBUTIONS. YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE, BUT FOR 2 ISSUES IN ADVANCE ONLY! WHEN YOUR SUBSCRIPTION RUNS OUT, YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED ON THE PLAP OF C.C.'S 18 ENVELOPE. SUBSCRIPTION RATE IS $1.50 FOR 2 ISSUES! ART AND WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME! KEEP IN MIND THAT THE WORK MUST BE AS GOOD, OR BETTER, THAN WHAT IS NOW APPEARING IN C.C. FOR WRITTEN WORK I PREFER RESEARCHED ARTICLES OR WELL DONE INTERVIEWS. I HAVE NO REAL USE FOR SHORT STORIES.

WELL, UNTIL NEXT TIME; STAY WELL! BEST - K.C.

GET THE LEAD OUT... WRITE!

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