

JUDO MASTER



PETER CANNON
THUNDERBOLT

PENCILS - DON NEWTON
INKS - BOB LAYTON

YANG



SARGE
STEEL

E-MAN



BLUE
BEETLE

CAPTAIN
ATOM

Eleventh-hour addendum: As we were going to press our specially-commissioned Paul Gulacy full-pager had yet to surface from the quagmire of the U.S. Postal System. Hopefully it will surface in time for Charlton Portfolio II.

--the Management

What you now hold in your hands is the product of some ten months of all-night typing sessions, long distance phone calls, meandering deadlines, postal strikes, and other unbelievable goings-on.

It's a special presentation. It's a portfolio. And it's a tribute to a company that doesn't get half the recognition it should. It's also a showcase for the artistic abilities of some very talented people.

And there's more on it's way!

This is a bit of an experiment. It's not exactly a prozine. It's something more than a fanzine. Call it what you will, we sincerely hope you enjoy it. Your comments are eagerly awaited.

And in two months we will return to our more familiar format with all the art and features you can stand. And at a mere fifth the cost of this special double-issue.

In the meantime, why not pick up a Charlton comic? They're put out by good folks.

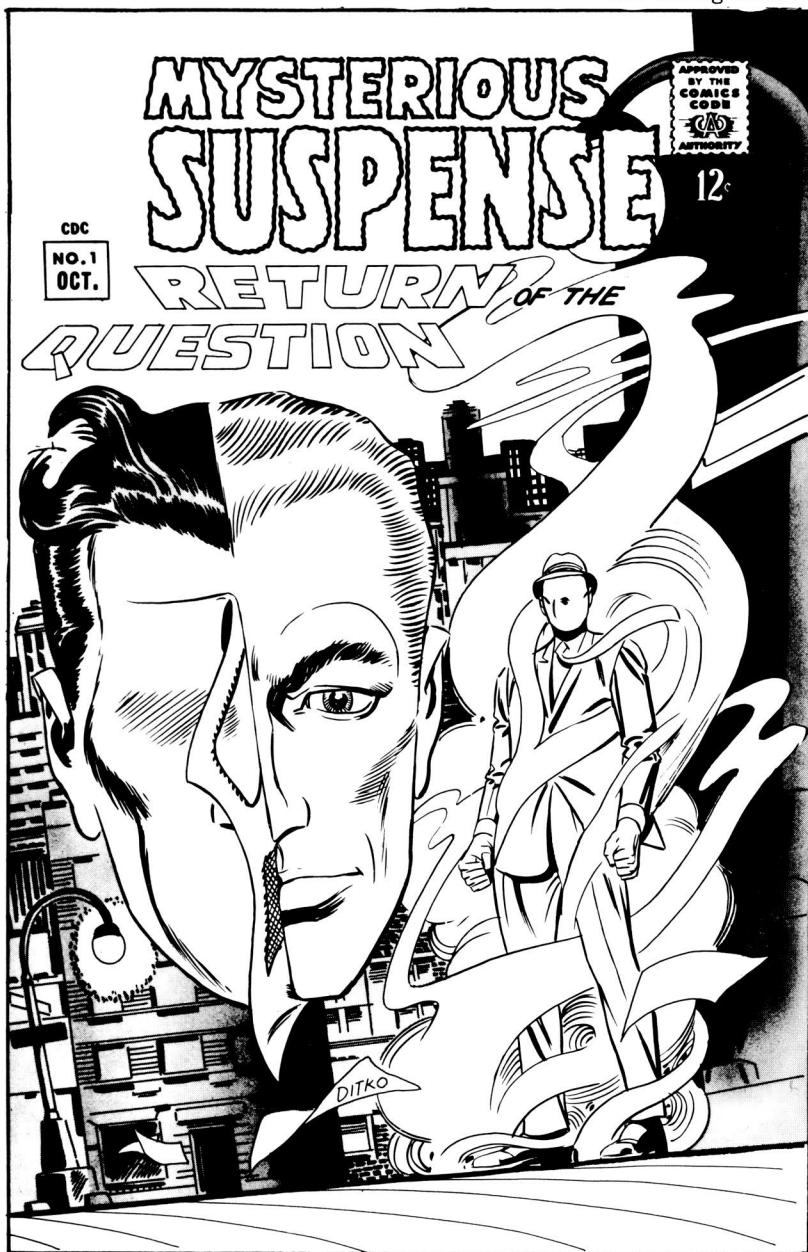
See you in the funny books.

--the CPL staff

We get by with a little help from our friends...

- Dan Adkins
- Jim Aparo
- Pat Boyette
- 'Doc' Larry Brnicky
- Harry Broertjes
- John Byrne
- Dave Cockrum
- Nick Cuti
- Steve Ditko
- Scott Edelman
- Paul Gulacy
- Dick Giordano
- A.Machine
- Don Maitz
- Frank Maynard
- Frank McLaughlin
- Jack Monninger
- Don Newton
- P.A.M.
- Don Rosa
- Roger Slifer
- Joe Staton
- Sterno
- Duffy Vohland
- Phil Wesner
- and
- Mr. George R. Wildman

Editor and Publisher.....Robert Layton
 Art Director.....E.E.Duffy Vohland
 Assistant Editor.....Roger Stern
 Taskmaster.....Rogie-2000



CPL **gang**
 publications

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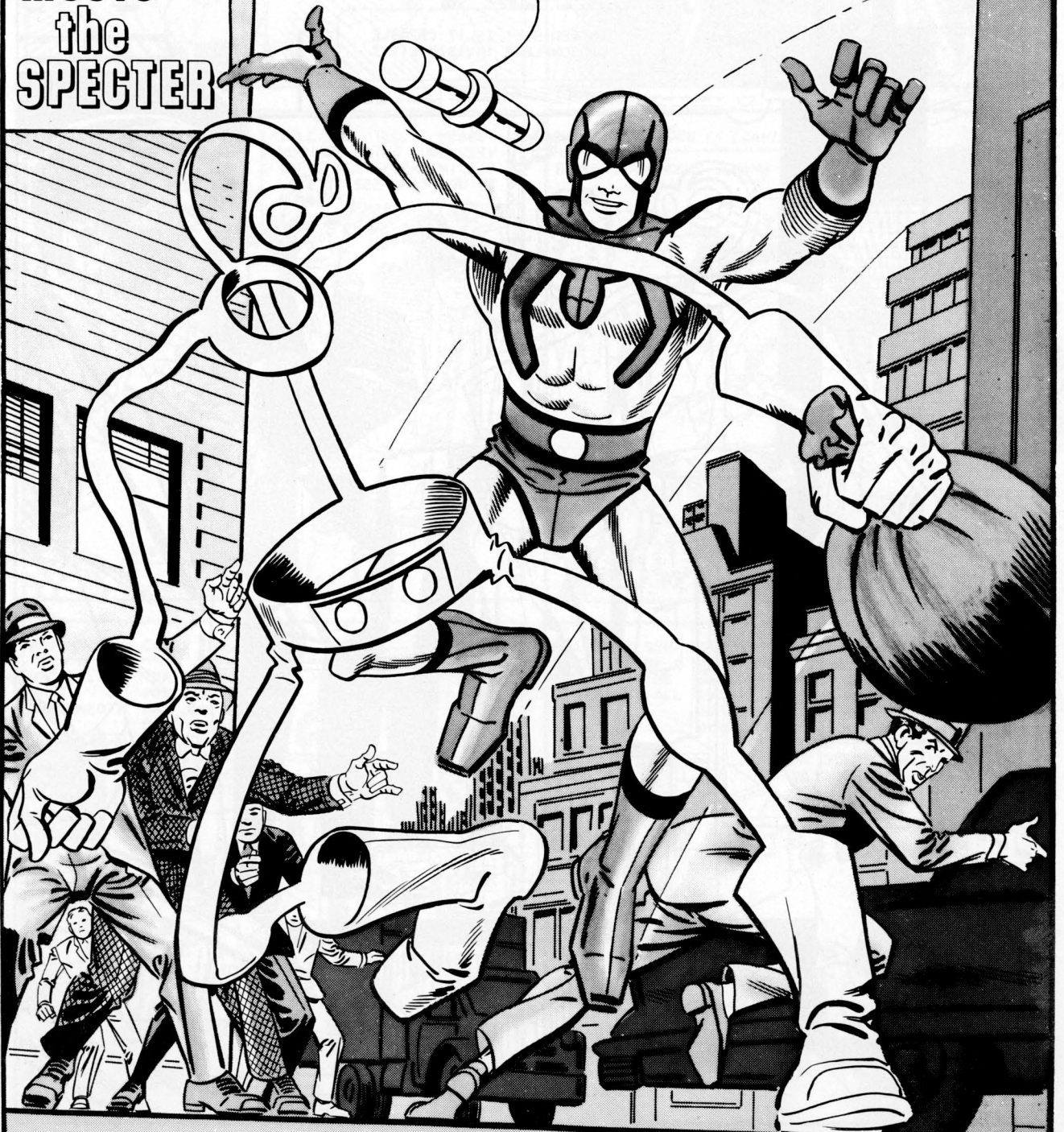
NO. 6
APR.
CDC

B. B.
meets
the
SPECTER



12¢

BLUE BEEETLE



the BLUE BEETLE

SCRIPT BY: D. C. GLANZMAN
PENCILLED BY: STEVE DITKO

INKED BY: STEVE DITKO

LETTERED BY: A. MACHINE

A SPECTER IS HAUNTING HUB CITY!



IN HUB CITY,
AT THE PRIVATE
RESEARCH LAB
OF DR. FAROL,
A DEMONSTRATION
IS TAKING PLACE.

THIS IS YOUR FIRST LOOK AT OUR INVISIBLE
MAN EXPERIMENT, PROFESSOR RODOR, BUT TED
WANTS TO SEE IT EVERY TIME WE TEST THE
SUIT! IT REALLY FASCINATES HIM!

I KEEP THINKING OF WAYS I COULD ADAPT IT TO
BE USED BY THE BLUE BEETLE! THERE ARE SOME
INTERESTING POSSIBILITIES!

INCREDIBLE! IS IT CAPABLE
OF COMPLETE INVISIBILITY?





NO! THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO DROP THE PROJECT! THE POWER UNITS IN THE BELT PROVIDE THE CIRCULATION OF RAYS OVER THE BODY BUT THE PATHS OF THE RAYS CANNOT BE MADE INVISIBLE NOR CAN THEY BE REDUCED MUCH LESS THAN THEY ARE NOW. ALL RIGHT, DR. JAMES, YOU CAN TURN IT OFF AND RECORD ALL REACTING DATA!



NOW COME ALONG, PROFESSOR, I'LL SHOW YOU SOME OTHER PROJECTS WE'RE WORKING ON!

I WONDER... IF I USED THAT DEVICE ON THE BUG... I'D HAVE AN ALMOST INVISIBLE SHIP... IT'S SOMETHING TO CONSIDER!



I CAN'T FINISH THE TOUR, I HAVE TO GET BACK TO MY OWN LAB! PROFESSOR RODOR, I HOPE I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE CITY!

I'LL TRY, TED. I HEARD YOU ARE DOING SOME VERY IMPORTANT RESEARCH! I'D LIKE TO SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE!



BUT AS TED KORD IS LEAVING...

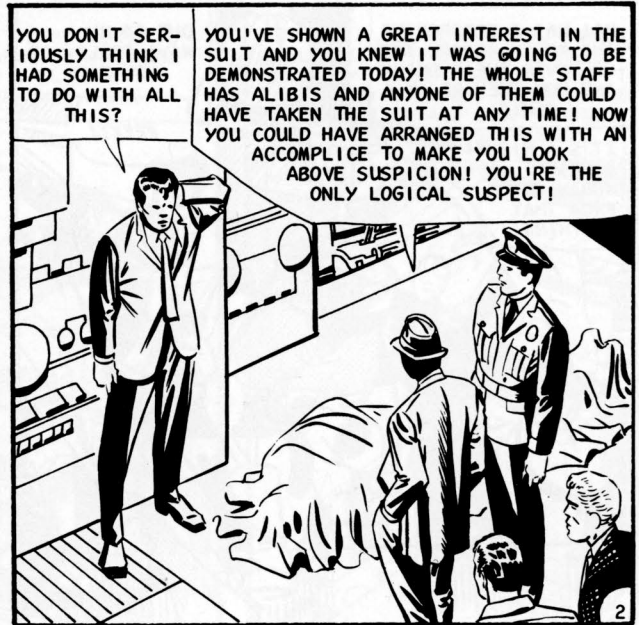
THERE'S A RUCKUS COMING FROM ...AA!



AND WHEN HE COMES TO...

WHO?... WHAT HAPPENED???

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE HOPING YOU CAN TELL US! DR. JAMES IS DEAD AND A SO-CALLED SUIT OF INVISIBILITY IS MISSING! WELL, KORD!



YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY THINK I HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH ALL THIS?

YOU'VE SHOWN A GREAT INTEREST IN THE SUIT AND YOU KNEW IT WAS GOING TO BE DEMONSTRATED TODAY! THE WHOLE STAFF HAS ALIBIS AND ANYONE OF THEM COULD HAVE TAKEN THE SUIT AT ANY TIME! NOW YOU COULD HAVE ARRANGED THIS WITH AN ACCOMPLICE TO MAKE YOU LOOK ABOVE SUSPICION! YOU'RE THE ONLY LOGICAL SUSPECT!

THE ONLY OTHER POSSIBILITY IS JACOBS, THE JANITOR, BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE SUIT! HE NEVER ENTERS THE LABS DURING THE DAY AND HE CERTAINLY COULDN'T HAVE HANDLED YOU AND DR. JAMES BY HIMSELF!

LT. DUNN, YOU'RE ALL WRONG ABOUT TED! HE HAS THE ABILITY TO CONSTRUCT A SIMILAR SUIT ANY TIME HE WISHES!

IT'S THE FIRST RULE OF CRIME, DR. FAROL, A GUY MAKES A GRAB FOR THE TOP PRIZE TO SPARE HIMSELF PUTTING IN THE EFFORT TO EARN IT ON HIS OWN!

YOU DON'T KNOW TED! I'LL STAND BEHIND HIM ALL THE WAY!

I'VE GOT NOTHING DEFINITE TO HOLD HIM ON, BUT HE KNOWS HOW HE STANDS WITH ME SO I'LL BE SEEING HIM...OFTEN!

LATER THAT DAY...!

SCIENTISTS DON'T CARE WHAT DANGER THEY EXPOSE TO THE WORLD! THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION ISN'T ENOUGH! NOW THEY MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR AN INVISIBLE KILLER TO RUN LOOSE AMONGST US. THAT KORD'S BEHIND IT, I KNOW IT, I FEEL IT IN MY BONES!

BECAUSE YOU'RE ALSO A SCIENTIST, TED, YOU'RE BEING SWITCHED FROM VICTIM TO AN EVIL MASTERMIND!

WHILE AT A NEARBY BANK!

DON'T ANYONE TRY TO STOP ME!

HE'S HERE... THAT INVISIBLE KILLER!

EEK! WHAT'S THAT?!

IT... IT'S LIKE AN EVIL SPECTER!

HAI HAI I SCOOPED UP THE MONEY BEFORE THEY GOT OVER THEIR SHOCK AND NOW THEY'RE IN A PANIC!

OUT OF MY WAY, FOOLS, OR YOU DIE!

EEKK!!

IT'S A NIGHTMARE! A... A HUMAN VOICE FROM THAT ...THING!

TRACEY, THAT'S THE STOLEN SUIT! I'VE GOT TO GET AFTER HIM!

NO, TED, HE'S GOT TOO BIG A LEAD! IF YOU DON'T CATCH HIM, WHO WOULD BELIEVE YOU REALLY WANTED TO STOP HIM?

THE WAY I PLANNED MY GET-AWAY, I'LL LOSE ANYONE WHO COMES AFTER ME!

WE LOST HIM AT THE JUNKYARD, LT. DUNN, BUT WE'RE KEEPING UP THE SEARCH!

CALL IT OFF, HE'S GOTTEN AWAY! WELL, LOOK WHO TURNS UP AS A SPECTATOR! THIS CAN'T BE JUST A COINCIDENCE!

WHAT COULD IT BE THEN, LT.?

IT COULD BE TO ESTABLISH AN ALIBI OR TO SEE HOW THE OPERATION WENT TO PLAN FUTURE JOBS ... WHY ARE YOU HERE, KORD?

IF YOU'RE CONVINCED OF THAT, THEN NOTHING I SAY WILL MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO YOU! COME ON, TRACEY!

THAT'S HIM, THAT'S KORD! THE PAPERS ARE AFRAID TO COME RIGHT OUT AND SAY SO, BUT MY SOCIAL CLUB BELIEVES HE'S MIXED UP IN THAT MURDER AND I'LL BET IN THIS ROBBERY, ALSO!

I BELIEVE IT, TOO. I HAVE AN INSTINCT ABOUT THOSE BRAINY TYPES.

YOU SCIENTISTS ARE ALWAYS CAUSING TROUBLE FOR THE WORLD! YOU'RE ALL MAD! THEY SHOULD PUT YOU AWAY BEFORE YOU DESTROY US!

SAVE YOUR BREATH, TRACEY. YOU CAN'T REASON WITH AN EMOTION. IT DOESN'T THINK, IT ONLY FEELS.

THE SPECTER, AS THAT IRRESPONSIBLE CREATION OF SCIENCE IS BEING CALLED, HAS FINALLY STRUCK AND WHO CAN GUESS HOW LONG HIS REIGN OF TERROR WILL LAST! IT SHOULD MAKE SANE MEN WONDER HOW FAR MAN SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PROBE INTO UNKNOWN AREAS OF NATURE. DO WE HAVE TO KNOW EVERYTHING?

IMAGINE AN INVISIBLE ARMY OF KILLERS! WE'D BE WIPED OUT IN OUR SLEEP! WHO COULD STOP THEM!

IT'S A PLOT! THE SCIENTISTS WANT TO RULE THE WORLD!

INVISIBLE MENACED TO WORLD

THE ROLE OF TED KORD?

I'VE FIXED THE SMALL BUG TO DETECT THE POWER OF THE SPECTER'S SUIT WHEN IT'S TURNED ON. THE BUG SHOULD LEAD ME RIGHT TO HIM!

WHOEVER STOLE THE SUIT HAS TO HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH DR. FAROL'S LAB SO I'LL HAVE THE BUG PATROL OVER THAT AREA.

BUT WHO COULD IT POSSIBLY BE?

WE'LL KNOW THAT WHEN THE SPECTER'S CAUGHT! RIGHT NOW, IT'S UP TO THE BUG! YOU'D BETTER GO AND ORDER THOSE SUPPLIES, TRACEY!

YOU'RE NOT PLAYING IT SMART, KORD! YOU DON'T HAVE ANY WITNESSES FOR AN ALIBI IN CASE THE SPECTER SHOULD STRIKE!

LT. DUNN! TRACEY FORGOT TO LOCK THE OUTSIDE DOOR AND I HAVE ON THE BEETLE OUTFIT!

HOW GOOD WOULD YOUR WORD BE FOR AN ALIBI IF I NEEDED IT, LT.?

YOU'RE NERVOUS, KORD. YOU TRYING TO HIDE SOMETHING FROM ME? A VISITOR ...OR A PARTNER??

NO! IT... IT'S JUST THAT AN EXPERIMENT IS GIVING ME TROUBLE!

HEY, WHAT'S THAT BUZZING FOR?

IT'S A SIGNAL FROM THE BUG. IT'S PICKED UP THE SPECTER, BUT HOW DO I GET RID OF DUNN? I'VE GOT IT!

IT'S A WARNING! MY EXPERIMENT IS OVERREACTING. I HAVE TO NEUTRALIZE IT BEFORE IT BLOWS UP, STAND BACK!

NO, I'LL DROP BACK LATER! YOU SEEM TO LIKE LIVING DANGEROUSLY. THAT'S A BAD HABIT, KORD. ORDINARY THRILLS CAN BECOME BORING BUT A NEW KICK CAN LEAD TO SOMETHING FATAL!

HE FELL FOR IT! I WONDER WHAT HE'LL THINK WHEN HE LEARNS THE SPECTER DID STRIKE WHILE HE WAS WITH ME!

NOW I'VE GOT TO MOVE FAST AND GET TO THE SPECTER BEFORE HE TURNS OFF HIS POWER.

I'M STILL GETTING A SIGNAL FROM THE SMALL BUG...

I SHOULD BE ALMOST ON TOP OF HIM BUT SINCE HE WON'T COME TO ME...

I'LL HAVE TO GO DOWN TO HIM! I'M STILL HOOKED ON TO THE SMALL BUG AND I CAN OPERATE BOTH BUGS THROUGH THE HAND HOLD CONTROLS.

NOW TO LET MY LITTLE SPOTTER LEAD ME RIGHT TO THE SPECTER ...!



I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THIS SUIT WILL WORK BUT I'M GOING TO GRAB WHAT I CAN, WHILE I CAN!



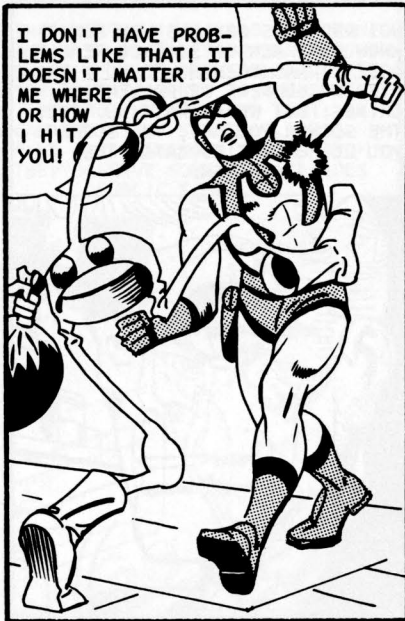
WHA! THE NO-GOOD BLASTED BEETLE!

YOU'VE GOT ALL THE WRONG HABITS, SPECTRE... MURDER, ROBBERY AND NAME CALLING!



WHAT ARE YOU BUTTING IN FOR? I'M NOTHING TO YOU!

YOU ARE "NOTHING", PERIOD! WHA? I CAN'T JUDGE EXACTLY WHERE YOUR FLAPPING JAW SHOULD BE!



I DON'T HAVE PROBLEMS LIKE THAT! IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME WHERE OR HOW I HIT YOU!



JUST SO I DO AND JUST SO YOU GO DOWN AND STAY DOWN! I SHOULD HAVE TAKEN A BAG OF SILVER TO CROWN YOU FOR GOOD!



WHA? HE RAN OFF FAST! I DIDN'T EVEN SEE WHICH WAY HE WENT!

HAI HAI IT'S LIKE BEING CAMOFLAGED. IT'S HARD TO RECOGNIZE A SHAPE IF IT'S ALL BROKEN UP AND HE NEVER FIGURED I'D TRY TO GET AWAY BY STICKING AROUND!



I'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE BUG. I MAY STILL BE ABLE TO PICK HIM UP!

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE TRIED TO FINISH HIM OFF FOR GOOD, BUT WHY RISK IT. HE'S NO PUSH-OVER.



BESIDES, I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT RUNNING INTO HIM AGAIN! SO LONG, SAP, YOU HAD YOUR LAST CHANCE AT ME!

I'D BETTER TURN OFF THE POWER! THE MORE I SAVE, THE LONGER IT WILL LAST!



NOW TO GET TO WHERE I HAVE MY CAR PARKED BEFORE I RUN INTO MORE TROUBLE!



I DON'T SEEM TO BE GETTING ANY READING FROM THE SMALL BUG!

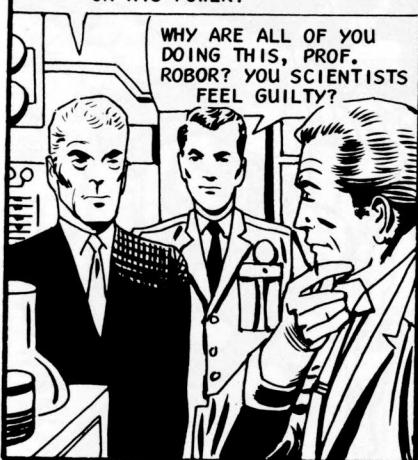


IT'S NO USE! THE SPECTER'S POWER IS OFF! THAT MAKES HIM "INVISIBLE" TO THE BUGS DETECTORS.



WHILE AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

BY USING SPECIAL DETECTORS DR. FAROL'S STAFF HAVE PREPARED FOR YOU, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO PIN-POINT THE SPECTER WHEN HE TURNS ON HIS POWER!



WHY ARE ALL OF YOU DOING THIS, PROF. ROBOR? YOU SCIENTISTS FEEL GUILTY?

NO! AND IT'S OBVIOUS YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT MEN OF SCIENCE REALLY ARE. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH FINDING MURDERS OR PREVENTING CRIMES, BUT WE'RE WASTING TIME. THE SOONER YOU ACT, THE SOONER YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CATCH THE SPECTER.



THAT CREATION OF SCIENCE, THE SPECTER HAS STRUCK AGAIN! IF THAT SUIT IS DUPLICATED WE CAN EXPECT A MASSIVE CRIME WAVE...

WHEN WILL IT END? WHY ARE SCIENTISTS SO IRRESPONSIBLE? AND THOSE OTHERS WHO STUPELIDLY AID THEM IN THEIR EVIL WORK THAT THREATEN HUMANITY ARE JUST AS GUILTY!



IT'S THE FAULT OF THOSE MAD SCIENTISTS LIKE YOUR MR. KORD. THEY'VE EXPOSED THE WORLD TO FLYING MISSILES, RADIOACTIVE DESTRUCTION, THREATS OF GERM WARFARE AND INVISIBLE KILLERS. YOU'RE ALL EVIL, YOU'RE DOOMING HUMANITY!

YOU FOOLS! YOU'VE NEVER TRIED TO UNDERSTAND MEN OF SCIENCE. IT'S EASIER TO BLAME THEM FOR WHAT'S EVIL THAN TO FIGURE OUT WHO THE REAL VILLAINS ARE IN THE WORLD!



DID MEN OF SCIENCE LIKE EDISON GIVE YOU LIGHT BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO KEEP YOU IN DARKNESS, OR INVENT COMMUNICATIONS AND NEW DRUGS BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO KEEP YOU IGNORANT AND DISEASED? MEN OF SCIENCE ARE SEEKERS OF TRUTH, NOT SEEKERS OF POWER. THEY SEEK TO EXPAND MAN'S KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES, NOT TO RESTRICT MAN'S FREEDOM AND HIS MIND! NO MAN SUFFERED AN INJUSTICE BECAUSE SOMEONE DISCOVERED A NEW TRUTH!

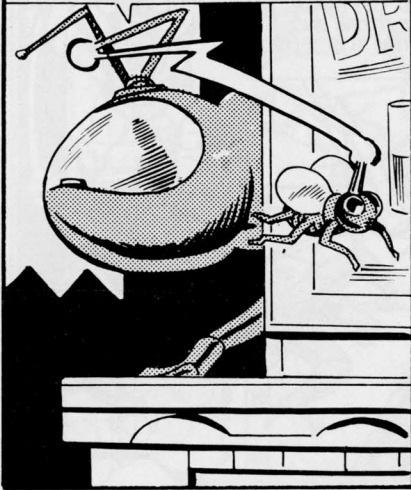


YOU SHOULD LEARN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEN OF SCIENCE AND MEN OF POWER. IT IS THE MEN WHO SEEK POWER, THOSE WHO TAKE OR CLAIM WHAT DOES NOT RIGHTFULLY BELONG TO THEM THAT CORRUPTS EVERYTHING, INCLUDING FINDINGS OF SCIENCE! BUT IN YOUR TWISTED LOGIC, MEN OF SCIENCE BECOME THE VILLAINS, AND WHAT OF YOUR POWER SEEKERS... THE DICTATORS, MURDERERS AND CRIMINALS? THEY'RE POOR MISUNDERSTOOD, MISGUIDED VICTIMS OF SOCIETY AND SCIENCE!



HUMPH! WELL I NEVER...

I'M NOT GOING UP YET! I'LL TRY A PROCESS OF ELIMINATION OF ALL POSSIBLE SUSPECTS AT THE FAROL LAB. ANY ONE OF THEM COULD HAVE STAGED THAT SUIT ROBBERY!



THE LATEST FIGURE ON THE ARMORED CAR HOLDUP IS \$30,000!

AND I DON'T GET ONE CENT OF THAT MONEY!

OH, OH. SO HE'S THE ONE!



IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME, HE'D NEVER HAVE GOTTEN HOLD OF THAT SUIT!

JACOBS! BUT WHO HAS THE SUIT?? I HAVE AN IDEA ON HOW I CAN GET HIM TO LEAD ME TO WHOEVER IT IS!



I'LL CUT IN ON THAT RADIO BROADCAST AND PUT ON ONE OF MY OWN! IT SHOULD GET A REACTION OUT OF THAT LYING JANITOR!



THE SPECTER IS MAKING A FORTUNE AND WITH NO TAXES OR PARTNERS TO SHARE IT WITH, HE SHOULD DONATE SOME OF HIS MONEY TO THE SCIENTIST WHO INVENTED THE SUIT! HE CAN CERTAINLY SPARE IT, HE'LL WIND UP STEALING MILLIONS AND THEY DESERVE SOMETHING BESIDES PUBLIC SCORN...

I DESERVE A SHARE!

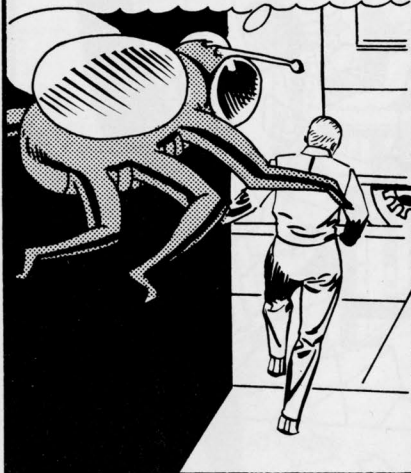


HALF OF WHAT THE SPECTER MAKES IS RIGHTFULLY MINE! AND I'M GOING TO SEE THAT I GET IT OR ELSE.



AND I'LL TAG ALONG TO SEE BOTH OF YOU GET THE "OR ELSE!"

NABBING JACOBS WITH THE SPECTER SHOULD SATISFY LT. DUNN UNLESS THEY CLAIM TED KORD WAS THE REAL RINGLEADER, AND TRY TO KEEP ME AS THE TOP FALL GUY. IT WOULD BE MY WORD AGAINST THEIRS.

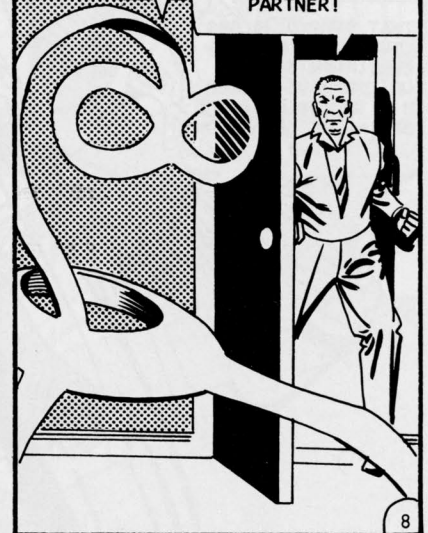


WHAT? WHO? THAT CAN'T BE THE COPS BUT I'D BETTER PLAY IT SAFE AND PUT ON THE POWER.



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I WANT MY SHARE OF OUR TAKE! I'M IN THIS AS AN EQUAL PARTNER!



I GOT A BEEP! THE SPECTER'S TURNED ON HIS POWER. LET'S GET A FIX AND MOVE IN ON HIM!

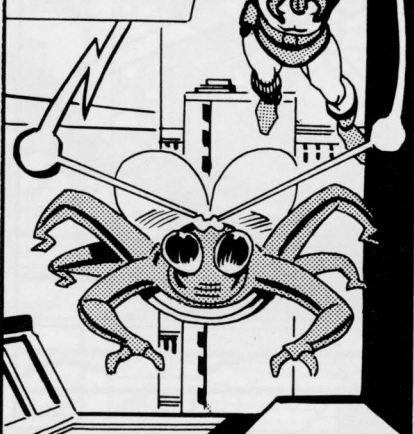


I KNEW YOU'D BE A PROBLEM FOR ME SOONER OR LATER!

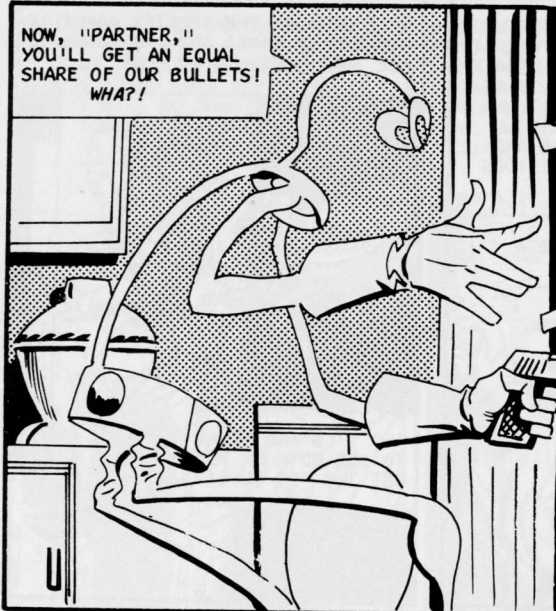
NO! YOU CAN'T! NOT AFTER WHAT I'VE DONE FOR YOU!



I CAN'T GET INSIDE IN TIME! BY SENDING THE SMALL BUG AHEAD I MAY BE ABLE TO DISTRACT THE SPECTER AND DRAW HIS FIRE!

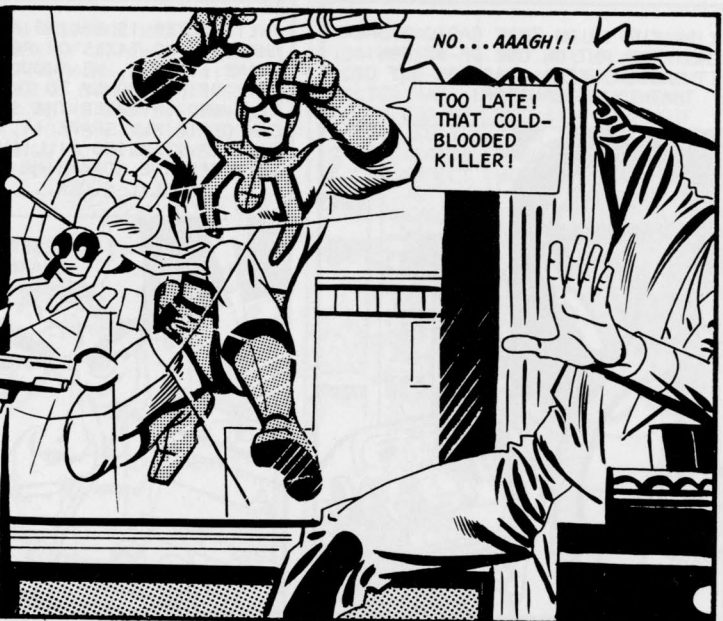


NOW, "PARTNER," YOU'LL GET AN EQUAL SHARE OF OUR BULLETS! WHA?!



NO... AAAGH!!

TOO LATE! THAT COLD-BLOODED KILLER!



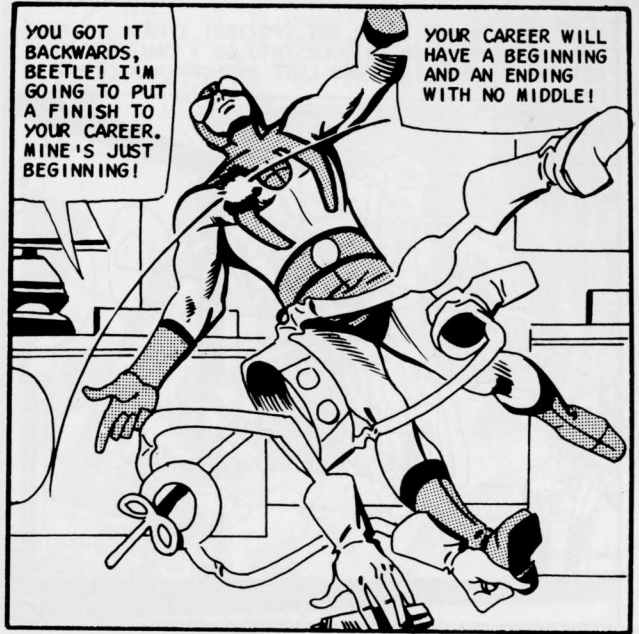
THAT STUPID JACOBS LED YOU TO ME. IF KORD HADN'T SHOWN UP I'D HAVE KILLED HIM IN THE LAB! I'D BE IN THE CLEAR NOW ...!

THAT WASN'T YOUR FIRST MISTAKE BUT I'M GOING TO STOP YOU FROM GETTING THE CHANCE TO MAKE ANY MORE!



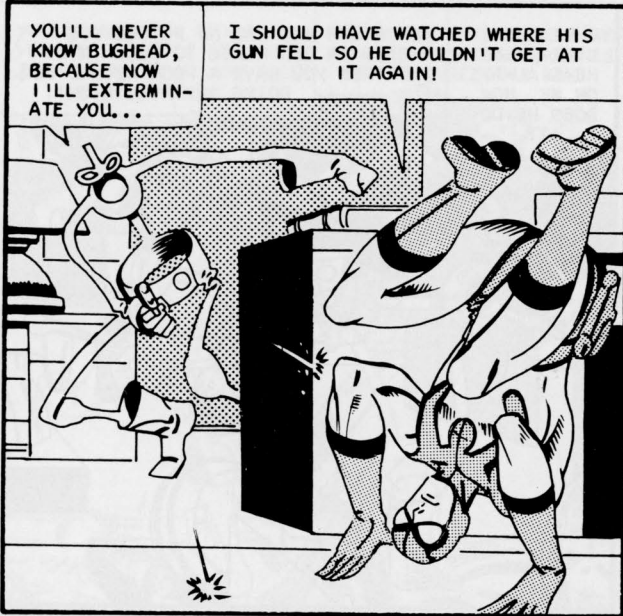


AS THE SPECTER, YOU'VE MADE A SPECTACLE OF YOURSELF LONG ENOUGH. YOU'RE ABOUT TO BECOME JUST ANOTHER PRISON NUMBER TILL ELECTRIC CHAIR TIME!



YOU GOT IT BACKWARDS, BEETLE! I'M GOING TO PUT A FINISH TO YOUR CAREER. MINE'S JUST BEGINNING!

YOUR CAREER WILL HAVE A BEGINNING AND AN ENDING WITH NO MIDDLE!



YOU'LL NEVER KNOW BUGHEAD, BECAUSE NOW I'LL EXTERMINATE YOU...

I SHOULD HAVE WATCHED WHERE HIS GUN FELL SO HE COULDN'T GET AT IT AGAIN!



WHEE0000

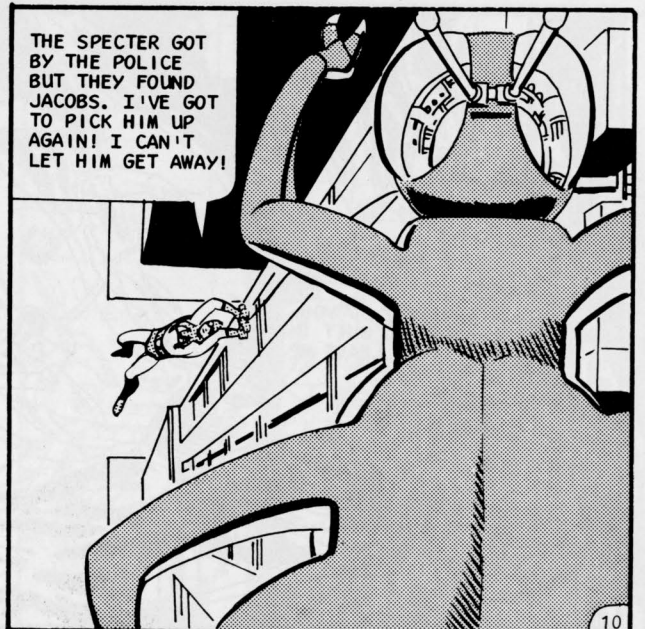
THE POLICE! THIS PLACE IS GETTING OVERCROWDED! YOU FOLLOW ME AND YOU GET A SLUG, BUG!

NUTS! ANOTHER SECOND AND I COULD HAVE STOPPED HIM WITH MY FLASH-GUN! AND I LOST COUNT OF THE SHOTS HE FIRED!

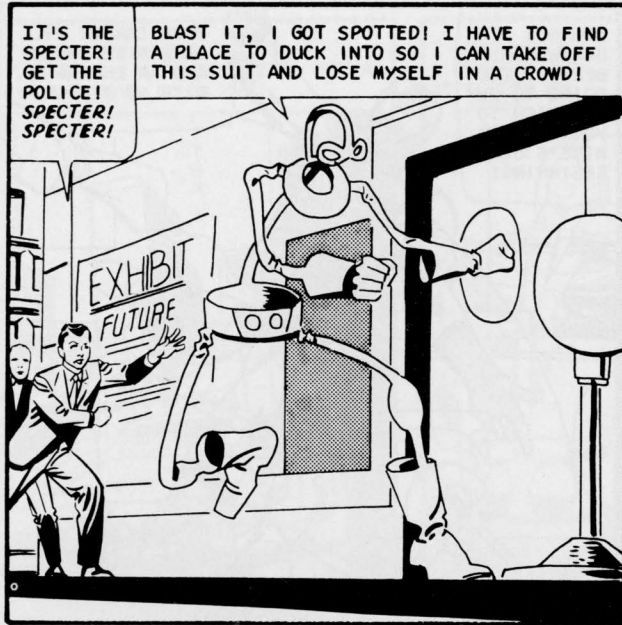


IT'S A GOOD THING THEY EXPECT TO SEE ME RUNNING AWAY AND NOT AS PART OF SOME CLEANING EQUIPMENT BECAUSE I'M OUT OF AMMO!

THE SPECTER'S A KILLER, ED, SO DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES WHEN YOU SPOT HIM!



THE SPECTER GOT BY THE POLICE BUT THEY FOUND JACOBS. I'VE GOT TO PICK HIM UP AGAIN! I CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY!



IT'S THE SPECTER! GET THE POLICE! SPECTER! SPECTER!

BLAST IT, I GOT SPOTTED! I HAVE TO FIND A PLACE TO DUCK INTO SO I CAN TAKE OFF THIS SUIT AND LOSE MYSELF IN A CROWD!



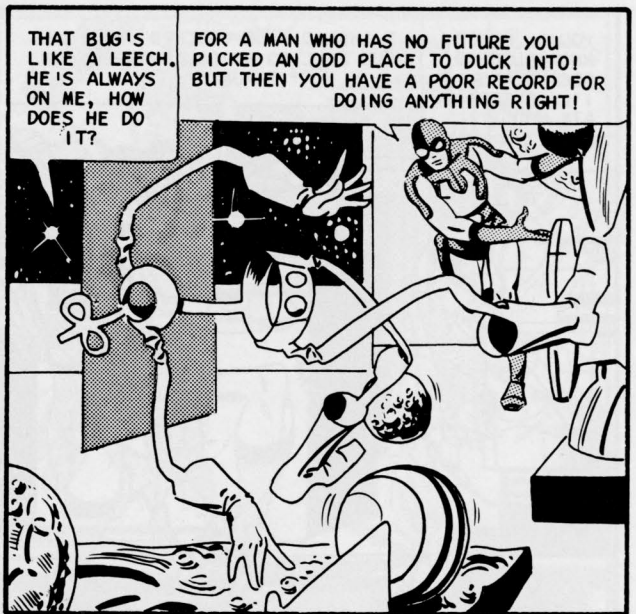
BUT FIRST I HAVE TO LOSE MY FOLLOWING LONG ENOUGH TO DO IT! WHO GAVE ME THAT BLASTED NAME!

THAT'S THE SPECTER! DON'T LET HIM OUT OF YOUR SIGHT ...! AFTER HIM!



IF I CAN FIND A SPOT WHERE I CAN BLEND INTO THE BACKGROUND, I CAN GIVE THAT MOB THE SLIP... WHA?...NOT AGAIN!

YOU DON'T THINK YOUR LOOKS OR YOUR THREATS SCARED ME OFF FOR GOOD?



THAT BUG'S LIKE A LEECH. HE'S ALWAYS ON ME, HOW DOES HE DO IT?

FOR A MAN WHO HAS NO FUTURE YOU PICKED AN ODD PLACE TO DUCK INTO! BUT THEN YOU HAVE A POOR RECORD FOR DOING ANYTHING RIGHT!



BLAST YOU! WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BUTT IN?! WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE ME ALONE?!

AND TELL ME, HAS THAT BEEN YOUR GREAT GUIDING PRINCIPLE, SPECTER, ALIAS ROBBER, ALIAS DOUBLE MURDERER?!

OKAY, BUG, YOU'LL GET WHAT EVERYONE ELSE GETS WHO STANDS IN MY WAY! I'VE HANDLED TOUGHER GUYS THAN YOU!

BUT I HAVEN'T COME ACROSS A LOWER TYPE THAN YOU!

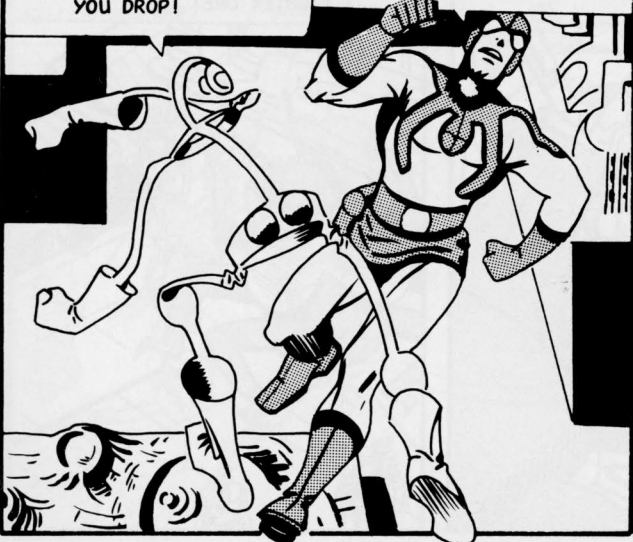


IT HASN'T BEEN A PLEASURE MEETING OR BEATING AN ANIMAL LIKE YOU! I DON'T ENJOY TYPES THAT CRAWL OUT OF THE SEWER!



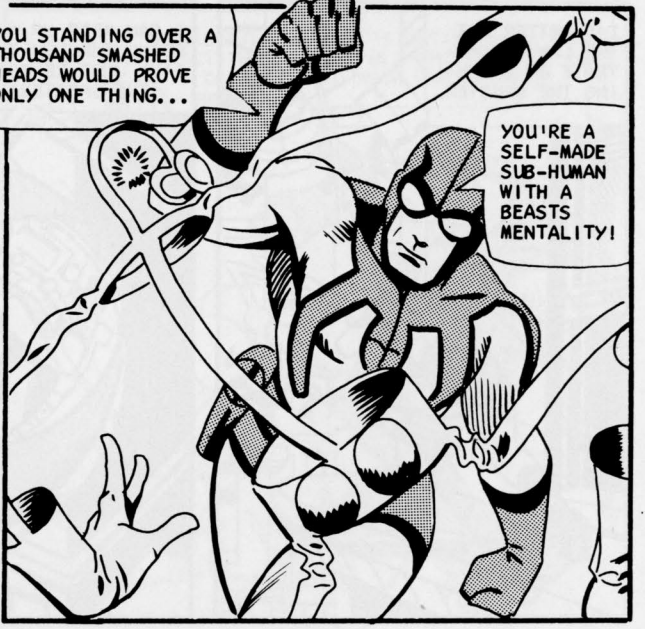
YOU SWINE! YOU THINK YOU'RE A BETTER MAN THAN I AM? I'LL BEAT YOU TILL YOU DROP!

YOU WOULD THINK THE POWER OF YOUR FISTS DETERMINES THE MEASURE OF A MAN!



YOU STANDING OVER A THOUSAND SMASHED HEADS WOULD PROVE ONLY ONE THING...

YOU'RE A SELF-MADE SUB-HUMAN WITH A BEASTS MENTALITY!



YOU DIRTY HIGH AND MIGHTY! WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE ME ANYWAY?!

WHY NOT! YOU THINK YOUR ACTIONS ARE NOT TO BE EVALUATED? THAT YOUR DELIBERATE SHOOTING OF A MAN IS NOT TO BE LABELED A COLD-BLOODED KILLING AND YOU'RE NOT TO BE JUDGED ACCORDINGLY?!



IT'S JUDGE AND BE PREPARED TO BE JUDGED, KILLER!

I WANT BOTH THE BLUE BEETLE AND THE SPECTER TAKEN. THE BEETLE GOT INVOLVED TOO QUICKLY TO BE JUST AN OUTSIDER! IF HE'S MIXED UP IN THIS IN ANY WAY, I WANT TO KNOW ABOUT IT...NOW, MOVE IN!





THE SPECTER TRIPPED UP THE BEETLE AND TOOK OFF WHEN HE SAW US BUT WHERE DID HE DISAPPEAR TO?

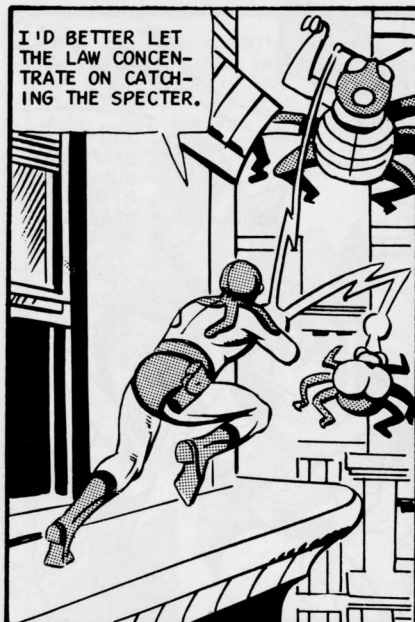
MAYBE HE CAN BECOME COMPLETELY INVISIBLE AFTER ALL!

IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK AT ME!

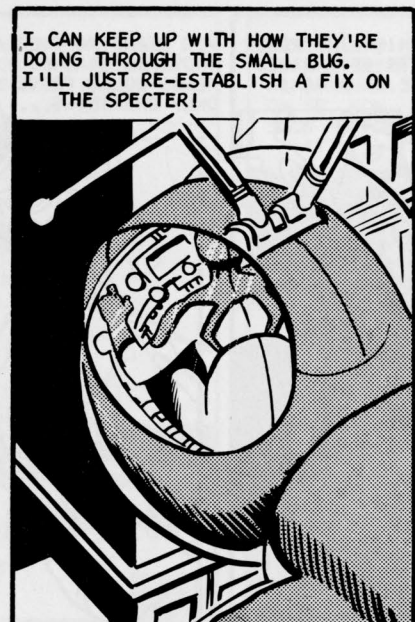


I DON'T KNOW WHAT LT. DUNN HAS IN MIND BUT THERE'S NOTHING THE POLICE COULD WANT ME FOR!

THAT BLASTED BUG THREATENS TO HIT INTO US! GIVE YOURSELF UP, BEETLE!



I'D BETTER LET THE LAW CONCENTRATE ON CATCHING THE SPECTER.



I CAN KEEP UP WITH HOW THEY'RE DOING THROUGH THE SMALL BUG. I'LL JUST RE-ESTABLISH A FIX ON THE SPECTER!



OH, OH. THE SPECTER THINKS HE'S SNEAKING OUT OF A TIGHT SPOT BUT HE REALLY IS SNEAKING INTO A TIGHTER ONE!



LOOK OUT FROM ABOVE!!

THIS TIME, THE SPECTER'S OUT IN THE OPEN WITH NO PLACE TO RUN OR HIDE!

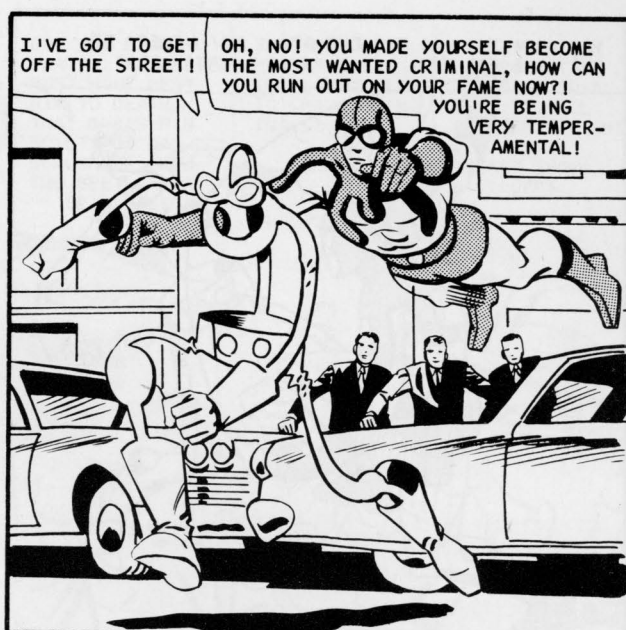
THE FOOL'S HEADING RIGHT FOR US!

WHAT'S HE TRYING TO DO?



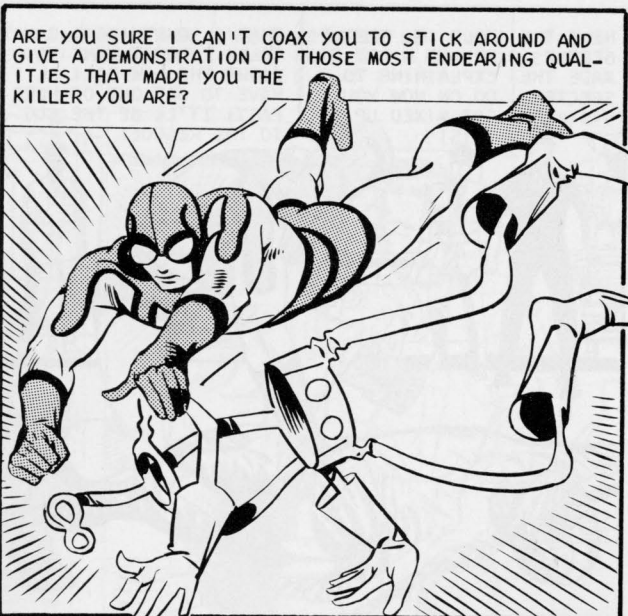
SUCH MANNERS! YOU RAN OUT OF A GATHERING THAT WAS CALLED ESPECIALLY FOR YOUR BENEFIT!

DON'T YOU EVER GIVE UP?!



I'VE GOT TO GET OFF THE STREET!

OH, NO! YOU MADE YOURSELF BECOME THE MOST WANTED CRIMINAL, HOW CAN YOU RUN OUT ON YOUR FAME NOW?! YOU'RE BEING VERY TEMPERAMENTAL!

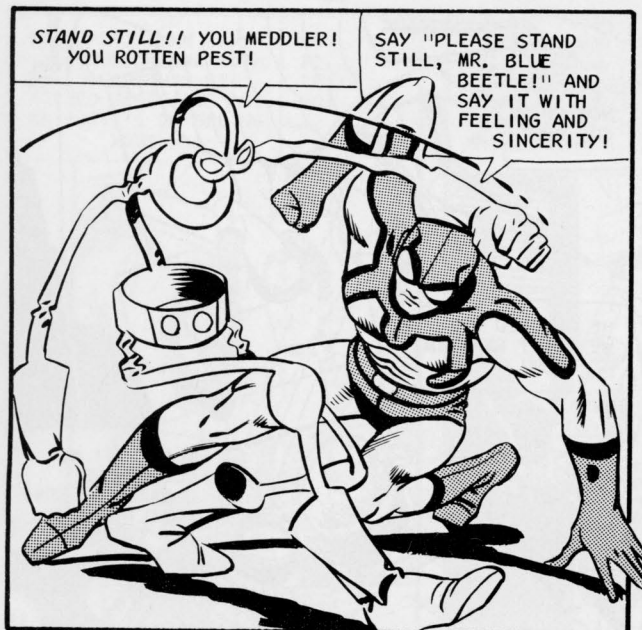


ARE YOU SURE I CAN'T COAX YOU TO STICK AROUND AND GIVE A DEMONSTRATION OF THOSE MOST ENDEARING QUALITIES THAT MADE YOU THE KILLER YOU ARE?



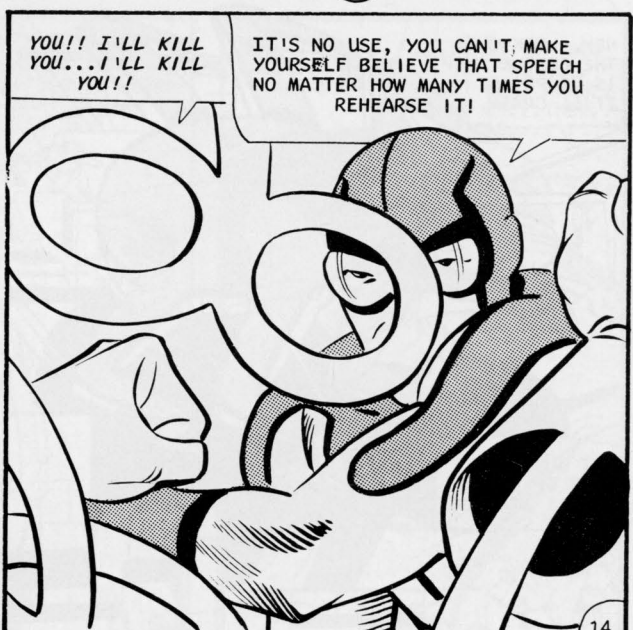
I'LL KILL YOU, BEETLE, IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO! I SWEAR IT!

THAT'S BETTER! NOW THAT'S THE OLD SPECTER I'VE COME TO KNOW AND DESPISE!



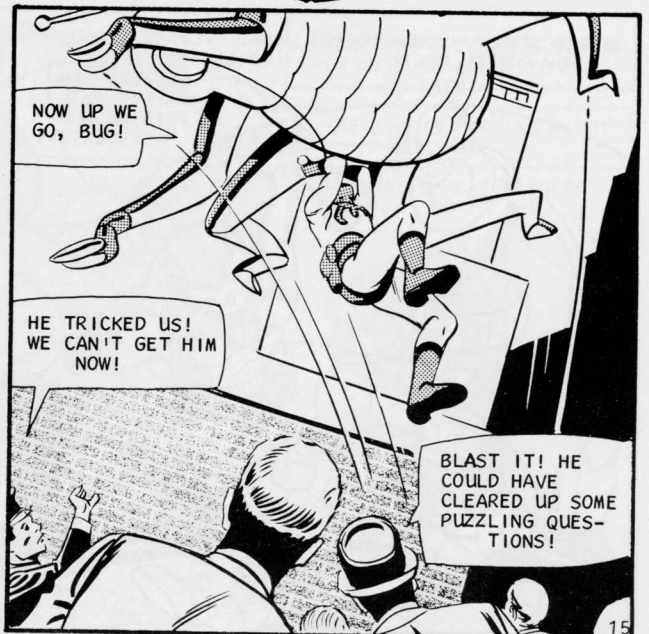
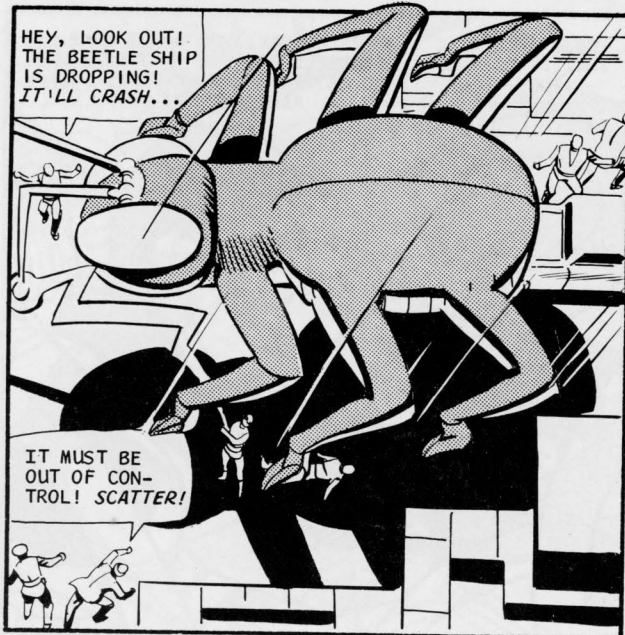
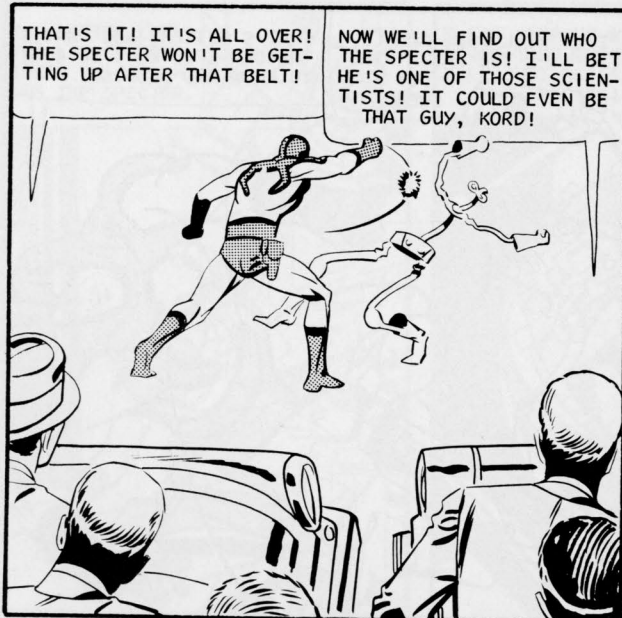
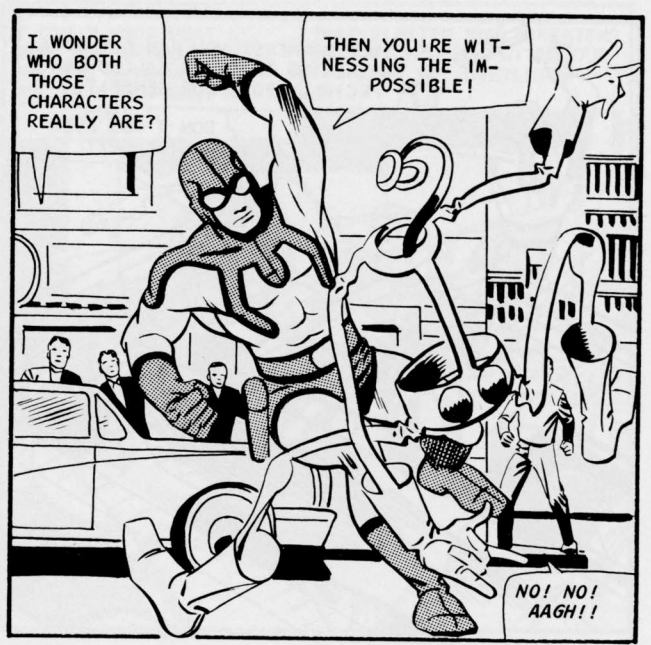
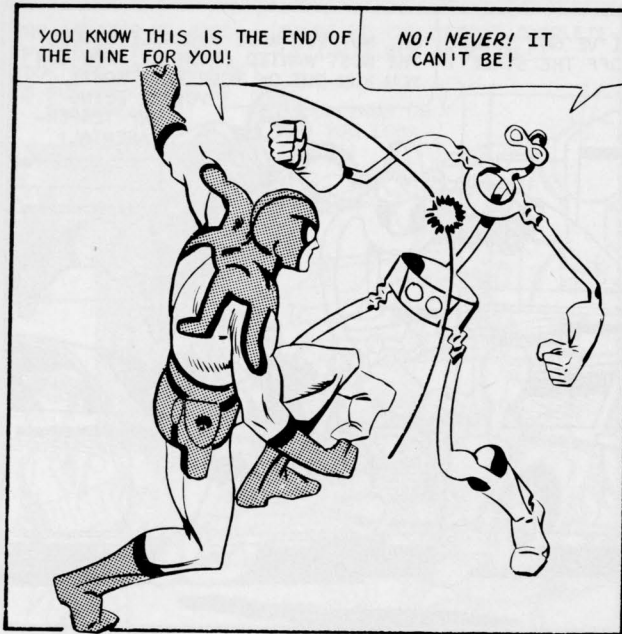
STAND STILL!! YOU MEDDLER! YOU ROTTEN PEST!

SAY "PLEASE STAND STILL, MR. BLUE BEETLE!" AND SAY IT WITH FEELING AND SINCERITY!



YOU!! I'LL KILL YOU... I'LL KILL YOU!!

IT'S NO USE, YOU CAN'T MAKE YOURSELF BELIEVE THAT SPEECH NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU REHEARSE IT!



HEY! THE SPECTER IS AMOS FEND, THE GAMBLER! HOW DID HE GET MIXED UP WITH THOSE SCIENTISTS?!

LT.! SOMETHING'S WRONG! FEND IS... IS DEAD!

DID YOU HEAR THAT?! THE BEETLE MUST HAVE BEAT HIM TO DEATH! THAT MAKES HIM GUILTY OF MAN-SLAUGHTER. NOW THE BEETLE'S A CRIMINAL!

THAT'S RIGHT! HE HAS NO LEGAL AUTHORITY TO CHASE CRIMINALS!

HE'LL HAVE TO BE BROUGHT IN TO STAND TRIAL...! IT WILL SERVE HIM RIGHT...! THAT MASKED SHOW-OFF!

TED! IT CAN'T BE TRUE! YOU DIDN'T ...!

HE DIED AFTER OUR FIGHT, TRACEY. WHAT ELSE COULD HAVE CAUSED IT BUT MY FISTS?!

NOW WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU AND THE BEETLE?

IT'S TOO EARLY TO SAY! EVEN THOUGH FEND WAS A KILLER, MY AIM WAS TO CATCH HIM, NOT TO BE HIS EXECUTIONER! MAYBE I DON'T HAVE THE LEGAL RIGHT TO FIGHT CRIME AND NO ONE COULD LEGALLY MAKE ME CATCH A MURDERER. I TOOK THE RISKS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE ON MY OWN!

KORD, LT. DUNN SAYS YOU SHOULD COME WITH ME. JACOBS HAS RE-GAINED CONSCIOUS AND HE INSISTS ON SEEING YOU!

WHY ME...? LET'S GO!

I DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU HIS STATEMENT COULD CLEAR OR IMPLICATE YOU IN THE WHOLE MESS!

LET'S WORRY ABOUT THAT AFTER WE HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY!

KORD IS HERE, JACOBS. GO AHEAD!

I...WANT TO TELL...THE TRUTH...ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED AT...THE...LAB...!

I...KNEW ABOUT THE... SUIT! I TOLD FEND ABOUT IT... I OWED HIM... GAMBLING DEBT!...

IF YOU'RE LYING I'LL FEED YOU TO THE RIVER!



WE WATCHED THE... DEMONSTRATION... FEND SAID HE HAD TO... HAVE THE... SUIT!...



WHEN DR. JAMES TRIED TO... STOP HIM... FEND... KILLED HIM...



I HIT KORD... I GOT... SCARED... DIDN'T WANT TO... GET CAUGHT... I... I... I...



HE'S DEAD! THAT CLEARS YOU, KORD! SORRY I GAVE YOU A ROUGH TIME!

FORGET IT! YOU DIDN'T HAVE MUCH ELSE TO GO ON!

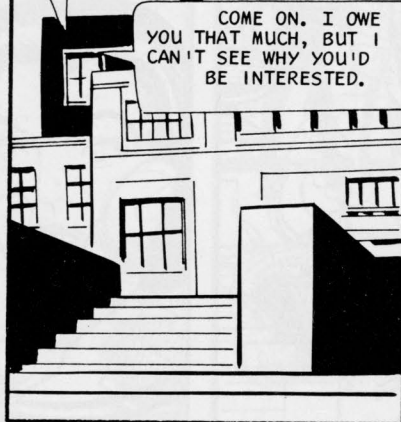


ONE THING, LT. WHAT KILLED FEND?

I'D LIKE TO SEE HOW IT'S GOING!

PROF. RODOR'S PERFORMING AN AUTOPSY. WE'LL NEED AN OFFICIAL EXAMINATION, BUT IT HAS TO COME UP, BLUE BEETLE!

COME ON. I OWE YOU THAT MUCH, BUT I CAN'T SEE WHY YOU'D BE INTERESTED.



THERE IS A GROWING DEMAND FROM ALL QUARTERS TO BRAND THE BLUE BEETLE A KILLER.

THEY'RE OFF THE MAD SCIENTIST KICK BUT I'M STILL ON THE HOT SPOT!



THE BLUE BEETLE IS NO MORE THAN A COMMON KILLER! THERE'S NO DIFFERENCE! WHAT'S BEING DONE ABOUT HIM?!

WELL, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE! FEND AND HIS KIND ARE A THREAT TO EVERYONE IN A SOCIETY. ANYONE COULD WIND UP AS THEIR VICTIMS. THE BEETLE IS A THREAT ONLY TO THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY VIOLATED OTHER PEOPLE'S RIGHTS, THE CRIMINALS! THE INNOCENT HAVE NO REASON TO FEAR ME AND COULD NEVER WIND UP AS MY VICTIMS.



SO, IF I MUST, I'LL OPERATE WITH THE OUTLAW BRAND ON ME AND KEEP WORKING AGAINST THOSE WHO PREY ON OTHERS. IT WOULD ONLY BE THE FENDS OF SOCIETY WHO WOULD PROFIT IF I QUIT BEING THE BLUE BEETLE! I'LL JUST HAVE TO TAKE THE ADDED RISKS!



PROF. RODOR, I'M CONVINCED YOU'RE RIGHT! EVERY TEST WE'VE DONE PROVES IT!

GO ON, KORD. YOU CAN HELP CLINCH THE CASE AGAINST THE BEETLE!

TED, COME LOOK AT THIS. WE CAN USE ANOTHER EXPERT SCIENTIFIC OPINION!

THAT'S A SLIDE OF FEND'S BODY TISSUE! WHAT DO YOU SEE?

GREAT SCOTT! DIS-INTEGRATION OF CELL STRUCTURE! THEN IT WASN'T THE BLUE BEETLE THAT KILLED FEND!

WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT... WHAT DID KILL FEND?!

YOU COULD SAY FEND KILLED HIMSELF WHEN HE STOLE THIS SUIT! THE POWER OF THE SUIT GIVES OFF A RAY AND AS WE KNOW NOW, A DEADLY RAY! UNDER NORMAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, ITS DEADLINESS WOULD HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED LONG BEFORE ANY HARM COULD BE DONE. BUT ONCE FEND STARTED USING THE BELT, IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME TILL AN OVERDOSE OF THE RAY KILLED HIM!

THAT CERTAINLY CLEARS THE BLUE BEETLE! I WISH I COULD TELL HIM MYSELF!

AND NOW THE BEETLE CAN CONTINUE HIS FIGHT AGAINST INJUSTICE WITHOUT THE STIGMA OF A KILLER OVER HIM!

I STILL SAY SCIENTISTS ARE A THREAT TO US ALL. MY BAKER SAYS HIS ASTROLOGER HAS PROOF AND I HAD A DREAM ABOUT THEM SO I KNOW IT'S TRUE!

A FRIEND OF MINE HEARD ABOUT A GUY WHO HAD MYSTIC VIBRATIONS REVEALING THAT THEY FAKED THE EVIDENCE TO CLEAR THE BEETLE! THAT'S A FACT!

TED, THEY'RE STILL AT IT!

TRACEY, MOST PEOPLE AREN'T INTERESTED IN TRUTH OR FACT! EVEN IF IT'S PRESENTED TO THEM, THEY DON'T WANT TO JUDGE FOR THEMSELVES, ESPECIALLY IF IT GOES AGAINST WHAT OTHERS BELIEVE! THEY'D RATHER GO ALONG WITH WHAT OTHERS SAY OR POPULAR OPINIONS. IT'S SAFER FOR THEM!

LEFT ON THEIR OWN, THEY'D RELY ON THEIR LIKES OR DISLIKES OR FEELINGS... ANYTHING BUT REASON AND LOGIC! THEY LIVE IN A WORLD OF REALITY BUT CHOOSE TO SEE AND ACCEPT ILLUSIONS. THEY CREATE THEIR OWN DEADLY SPECTERS, BLINDLY ACCEPTING INVISIBLE, UNPROVEN BELIEFS THAT TERRORIZE AND RULE THEIR LIVES!

STEEL AS

It was just after ten that Bess Forbes walked into the place. A fine lookin' woman that Bess! Just watchin' her stroll up to the bar you could tell she had a lot of class. I like to think that if I wasn't just a lousy bartender that there could've been something between the two of us, but...aw, what the hell! That's all past now.

"Hiya, Dick," she said. "Make it the usual...a double."

It always tears somethin' inside of me when I see her hit the sauce like that. But then, Bess has got a lot to forget...a lot of man called Steel.

Sarge Steel. It was Captain Sergeant Steel back in Nam. Yeah, he was a regular John Wayne with those Special Forces Joes. 'Course, that was before he crossed a saboteur named Ivan Chung. Ol' Ivan spent some time in the cages after that encounter. But his henchmen paid Steel back with a trick grenade that cost him his left hand. A thing like that would've broken a lot of guys, but not the Steeler! All it did was give him a free ticket home, some extra V.A. benefits, and a special steel mitt that a couple of army medics had dreamed up. Maybe that steel hand couldn't flex like the real thing, but it sure made one hell of a fist! Nothing could stand up to it...not jaws, not doors, not even bullets!

It was when he got back to the States that he met Bess. She became secretary, nursemaid, and all-around Girl Friday to the big lug. He had used some of that heavy combat pay to set himself up as a shamus. And he was a good one, too. And none of that wandering-husband stuff, either! He went after the big birds...international crime syndicates, Nazi war criminals, you name it! Remember those clowns who stole that fancy statue from the World's Fair back in '65? Steel was the one who got it back! And then there was that crazy goosestepper...what was his name? Von Wess? Yeah, that was it! He hijacked a whole nuclear sub, and tried using its Polaris missiles for some high-level extortion! Steel fixed his hash, too!

Tough? I'm tellin' you, Steel invented the word. He was like Sam Spade, Mike Hammer, and Peter Gunn all rolled into one! No kiddin'! Really, you had to see the guy operate to believe him! He was like a livin', breathin' Bogart film festival! Man, he fought all the big shots...Mr. Ize, the Smilin' Skull, the Lynx, and a bunch of others that would make a Dick Tracy think twice.

And the dames! I've never seen a guy for the ladies like the Steeler! I really don't know how Bess put up with it. But he sure didn't make no beans about it, I'll say that for him! You know, when you've been a bartender as long as I have, you meet a lot of women. But I bet I haven't met half as many as Sarge Steel! And each and every one of Steel's women was a knock-out...in more ways than one! You've heard the old expression "beautiful but deadly?" Well, the guy who coined it must've known Steel! There were some dames that would be kissin' him and measurin' him for a shroud at the same time! There was that Li-Li dame...they called her the Black Lily and she was some sort of Chinese secret agent or somethin'. Then there was that Italian broad...uh, Liza Monelli. She was tied up with Von Wess! And there was the Lynx! Everybody thought she was just an international jet-setter. Myself, I could never trust anyone who keeps panthers and ocelots for pets! Steel evidently wasn't fooled by her either! He exposed her as the head of an international crime ring! Of course, all the deadly ladies Sarge hung out with weren't a danger to him! Some, like that Nichole Planchet, were intelligence agents on our side. And from what I hear, those gals made Steel's goin' a lot easier!

Yessir, that Steel was somethin' else! Of course, along towards the end...well, I don't know if I should talk about that. Most of it was just rumor. But...well...Steel was workin' more and more with the government. Some say FBI, some say CIA, some...well, some ain't sayin'! But it was pretty clear that he had some sort of special status with the government. More than that I don't know. All I know is

that one day Steel left on some assignment and never returned. And ever since then, Bess has been a regular customer. "Dick?"

I looked across the bar at her. I could tell she'd had enough.

"Let's have another round, Dick. For old times..."

"Come on, kid. Why don't you let me call you a cab?"

"Am I that bad?"

"Afraid so, Bess."

"'sall right! I can get my own."

She turned from the bar and started for the door...and I felt like I'd just swallowed a handful of broken glass. I wanted to call out to her...to quit this crummy job and run off with her...run off to some place where she could really forget without drowning herself in a bottle! I wanted...but I couldn't. And as she reached the door she turned, and gave me that misty-eyed look.

"Dick, if you should see him...if you should hear from him...let the big lug know I miss him."

"I...I'll tell him, Bess."

It was going to be another lousy night.

Written by Sterno





Dick
GIORDANO

PETER CANNON...

THUNDERBOLT





FRANK McLAUGHLIN



FROM THE MYSTIC EAST

By
'Doc'
Larry
Brnicky

America's infinite fascination for anything diverting has chosen, in the last year, the martial arts as its pet craze. Anyone doubting this has only to check the ratings of television's Kung Fu or peruse his local movie listings for proof. The trend doesn't stop here though.

Always on the lookout for original ideas to modify or copy, comic editors recognized the potential of chop-socky heroics. Today judo comics are among the best sellers on the stands and no end seems to be in sight. All well & good for the publishers and the public at present but everyone seems to have forgotten the earlier heroes who pitted their training and prowess against life's seamier elements.

Charlton comics offered these "normal" super-heroes when Bruce Lee was still chaffering the Green Hornet and when all Fu Manchu had to worry about was Sir Denis Nayland Smith. The first Charlton hero who relied on a superbly trained mind and body was Thunder-Bolt. (I know Judo-Master first appeared in 1965 but when both received regularly published titles T-Bolt won out by a month.)

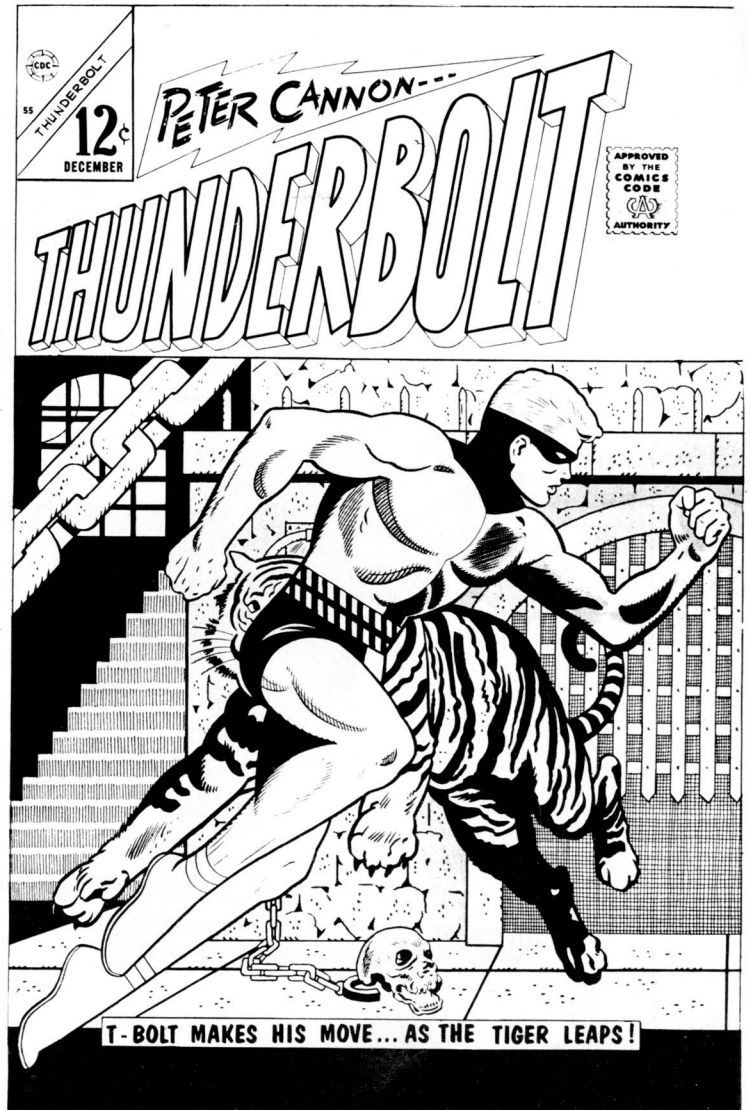
Peter Cannon had almost no say in receiving his mystic training. The choice was made for him by his parents when they chose to stay in the Himalayas to help check the spread of the deadly Black Plague. The disease finally disappeared but unfortunately claimed Dr. Richard Cannon and his wife Mary as its final victims. In gratitude for their sacrifice the village lamas trained Peter to the highest degree of mental and physical perfection. The years passed. One day Peter was allowed to study the Ancient Scrolls that revealed to him the mysteries and powers of the mind. Through these studies he gained the Power of Will, the ability to utilize his mind to its full potential.

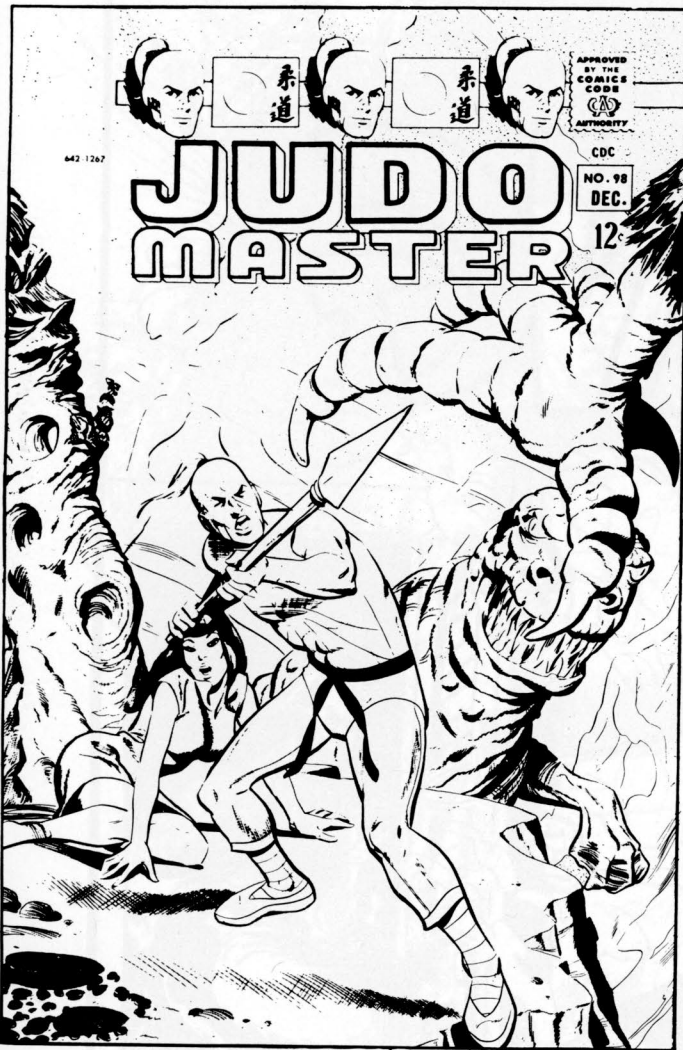
As more years passed the day came when Peter had to pass three tests of manhood and proficiency. He survived a volley of arrows by leaping fifteen feet straight up. He wrestled and killed a maddened tiger. The final test proved to be the most cryptic and the most difficult; an open door. Peter had to return to his home and there face the trials of life. With him went a former playmate, Tabu, now Peter's best friend.

Though expounding a philosophy of peace and understanding, circumstances and Tabu always seemed to combine to make the emergence of Thunder-Bolt necessary. The very first issue introduced the evil Hooded One, the first person chosen to study the Ancient Scrolls. When Peter arrived in America, the Hooded One combined gangsters and dinosaurs to herald Thunder-Bolt's premiere. In future issues the Hooded One would awaken the mummified body of Evila, Sorceress of the Nile, to hinder Peter's search for a vital drug needed to save Tabu, kidnap an American girl necessitating a quick trip to the Himalayas by T-Bolt, and animate wax figures of a gangster, a roman warrior and a minotaur in an assassination attempt.

Not that other foes didn't take their turn at eradicating Thunder-Bolt. While investigating the kidnapping of several prominent archaeologists Peter battles a awakened Egyptian slave (who looked like the Red Skull swathed in bandages). A kidnaped surgeon who was to operate on a small child sets T-Bolt against the evil Cobra. Even the Tong was out to get Thunder-Bolt with the aid of the giant Power-drill.

Throughout all stories Peter Cannon's only seeming powers were finely-honed agility and superhuman strength. But in one tale, Peter travels to the Himalayas to halt an invasion. Peter is captured by the Dragon, a master of illusion. In the final battle Peter visualizes an enormous dragon creature, giving it life through "extra-sensory materialization". This was the only instance of its use.





The second Charlton Karate comic was the diametric opposite of Thunder-Bolt. Its hero took an active part in the most universal period of unreason the world has ever seen, World War II. No call to action was needed, this hero lived for action. And while T-Bolt achieved power through his mind, this hero developed his body into the perfect combat tool! His name was Judo-Master.

In the origin, Sgt. Rip Jagger's squad is digging in on the combat perimeter when one soldier shoots at a movement in the bushes. Rip goes to the aid of the wounded person, who sounds like a young native. In crawling forward Rip comes under attack by Japanese soldiers. Hiding behind a tree, waiting for certain death, he watches as a native guerilla squad wipes out the enemy to a man. Taken to their leader 'sensei' Rip is informed that he is the last remaining American on the island. With no hope of rejoining his outfit Rip turns his energies to helping the guerillas and soon began learning the mysteries of jiu-jitsu. It quickly became apparent that Rip's speed and strength were exceptional and he received personal training by the island's most highly trained fighter, Bushiri. The island's situation gradually grew desperate as the demented Major Yoku attempted to find and destroy the dojo (place of training). It was decided that Rip must become a symbol of resistance for the islanders, dressed in appropriate attire, of course (Thank God for suggestions like this). Judo-Master was born! In conclusion of the origin issue Rip went on to inform the Japanese specifically what he would destroy and went ahead and fulfilled his promise.

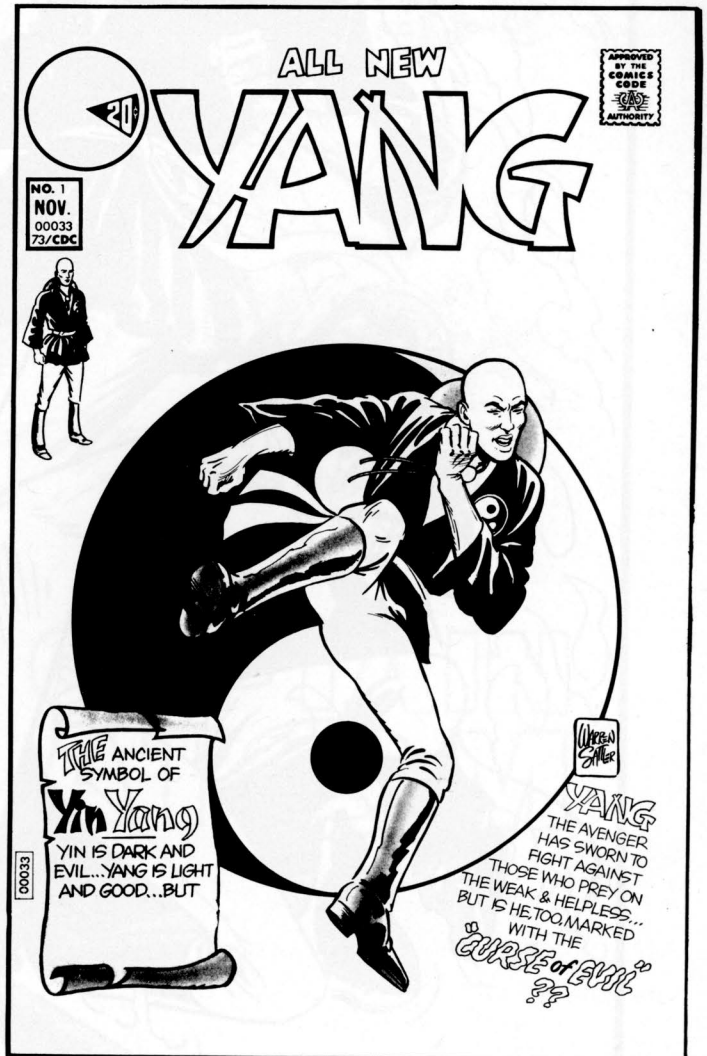
Future issues took Rip away from the island to become a special operative under General Hawkins. Early stories pitted Rip against the gigantic Mountain Storm during an escape from a Japanese concentration camp, a Kendo swordsman, the Cat, in a Japanese-American detention camp, and a German karate expert, the Smiling Skull.

This strip far surpassed Thunder-Bolt visually and the writing was a cut above average but a new cliché seemed to be lurking behind every corner. The native Rip saved which started the whole thing rolling was a girl, Suzi. And (son-of-a-gun!) by the third issue she was Judo-Master's girl friend. Junior-sized side-kicks not to be neglected, Judo-Master picked one up after his first battle with the Smiling Skull. Named Tiger, the youngster managed to pick up an unusually large amount of judo training in the 3-4 weeks allowed him. The excuse for coming up with Tiger was that Judo-Master had become blind, stretching circumstances a bit further. One idea which would have been excellent had not cliché entered was a contest between Mountain Storm, Smiling Skull, the Cat, and an unknown to decide who had the best chance to defeat our hero. The unknown wins and is dubbed the Acrobat. Oddly enough, he was revealed to be Suzi's brother and Suzi was Judo-Master's girl-friend. You can fill in the rest of the plot yourself.

The past will always be special because of certain heroes but the present is where future greats are operating. Charlton's present martial arts character is Yang.

Patterned largely after the main character of the Kung Fu television series the story-line follows Yang's attempts to free his fellow countrymen from slavery in the American West of the 1890's. His chief opponent is Chao Ku, who supplies Chinese to build railroads and smuggles opium for a different kind of enslavement. Most of the conflict, when not the martial arts variety, centers on Chao Ku's daughter Yin Li and her love for Yang. Despite this love Yin Li causes the capture and near death of Yang many times. And the best thing about all of this is that there will be more to come.

This certainly won't be the last Oriental-style fighter seen from Charlton or any other company. So long as personal and moral strength mean anything, Kung Fu books will be written, Kung Fu TV shows will be watched and martial arts movies will be produced.



YANG





CAPTAIN ATOM

THE NUCLEAR JOYBOYS

It all began with Democritus. He was the first to actually toy with the idea of atomic particles. And he did it some three hundred years before Christ. But it was Albert Einstein who really got the ball rolling! Atoms. Atomics. Subatoms! Relativity! And then one day the city of Hiroshima was all but disintegrated by the raw, unimaginable power of the atom! It was a force of truly mythic proportions. And as such, it was inevitable that it's power would touch the four-color page. It's power has touched Charlton twice. First there was Captain Atom. More recently there has been E-Man. Since it was inevitable that the two be analyzed, far be it from us to postpone the comparison! Onward

Consider first Captain Atom. Like most cold warriors of the comics, he was an Air Force man, a fly-boy. Just your average Air Force officer who happens to be a genius in chemistry, physics, and aerospace sciences in general! He was, intellect aside, just a normal human being. Was. But when Captain Adam--(first name? Last name? We never did find out!)--found himself trapped in that Atlas nose cone headed for a near-space nuclear test, he knew his number was up. And he took it like a hero! He just swallowed hard and prepared to meet his maker. And the mighty Atlas lifted into the heavens, and its warhead achieved fission, and the very good, very brave Captain Adam winked out of existence... ..and winked back into being just a few yards from the launch site! Through some billion-to-one twist of fate, the man had been disintegrated in space and reassembled at his point of origin! And he had changed. He was now a nuclear being! And so, they clothed his body in a uniform of diulustel shielding, and classified him top secret, and made him an atomic soldier in the service of his country. As the nuclear Captain Atom, his strength was increased measurably, his body chemistry radically different! He emitted his own form of atomic propulsion and could hurl atomic fireballs to confound his enemies. He could even render himself invisible through some nebulous form of transmuted refractivity. To be sure, he would be a formidable ally in any encounter! And there would be encounters aplenty!


As has been noted elsewhere, Captain Atom made his debut in issue 33 of *Space Adventures*, and his adventures appeared sporadically in that book throughout the first few years of the sixties. By mid-decade he had all but faded away, but suddenly Charlton brought him back in *Strange Suspense Stories* #75. That issue and the next two reprinted the myriad of stories from the Captain's past. And with issue 78, the title was officially changed to Captain Atom, and the old boy reigned supreme for two glorious years.

And in case you hadn't heard, Captain Atom was skillfully drawn throughout his amazing career by the one & only Steve Ditko!

The good Captain was a man of many sides. His stories ranged from cold war propaganda to space fantasy and super-heroic fiction. His book was like a spiritual cornerstone for Charlton's action-hero line. Things were always happening there. It was Cap's book that introduced the new Blue Beetle and Nightshade, the darling of darkness! Cap had the best of villains, too! There was the colorful Dr. Spectro, whose good nature was trapped within a Hyde-bound personality. And then there was the Ghost, master of teleportation and arch-foe of the nuclear ace. Yet the Ghost, as Alec Rois, became a close friend of Captain Adam! It was an interesting love-hate relationship. And there was change in Captain Atom. Midway through the run of his book he met a disastrous defeat in the heart of a nuclear reactor. He was captured and publically unmasked, yet he retained his secret identity (in his higher energy form, his hair turned white, you see)! His powers slightly weakened--altered, actually--he assumed a bright new costume and ultimately defeated his captors! He was reborn a second time! But it was not to last. Another five issues and Captain Atom was to disappear, perhaps for good.

Now a different being entirely is this E-Man! He's not actually a man at all! Just a sentient cluster of energy spawned in the nova of a star. And while he and the late Captain share an atomic nature, that is actually their only basic similarity. For E-man can convert his energy to mass, becoming a man, a cat, a chair, whatever! And naturally--or rather, unnaturally--he can convert back to energy again! For Captain Atom to have converted his mass to energy would have probably meant his complete disintegration. E-Man, on the other hand, not only changes forms easily, he revels in it! He can travel from place to place over phone lines, power lines, or any energy-conductor that happens to be available. What's more, E-Man in his few appearances to date seems to possess almost unlimited energy, even when faced with entropy!


Of course, E-Man cannot be discussed without bringing up his unique character! E-Man, as lovingly presented by Cuti and Staton, is a wonderful innocent! After all, he's still more or less a child in human terms, and so he approaches the world with a whimsical abandon, aided and abetted by the lovely Nova Kane, an exotic dancer of amazing proportions and talents. But don't worry, she's just working to finance her way through college! The E-Man stories are a delightful mixture of tongue-in-cheek adventure and non-sensical nomenclature little seen since the demise of Jack Cole's Plastic Man. And, hey folks! It's still on the stands!



CAPTAIN ATOM
12¢
SEPTEMBER

CAPTAIN ATOM

HOW DO YOU CATCH A GHOST?





FEATURING ... THAT DARLING OF DARKNESS, NIGHTSHADE, WHO TEAMS UP WITH OUR ATOMIC FIREBALL TO COMBAT OPERATION GOLDEN GHOST, AN INGENIOUS, EVIL PLOT TO UNDERMINE THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION...

Article by Franklin W. Naynerd and Robert B. Layton





THE
IMAGE
DEFEATED BY...

NIGHTSHADE

THE DARLING OF
DARKNESS

CREATED BY
DAVID A. KALER

THE CHARLTON MYSTIQUE

by Sterno

What's in a mystique? What qualities...what charisma... what chutzpah do certain things have that make them stand out?

A case in point: It is December 31, 1959. In a small midwestern drugstore a crewcut nine-year old plunks down two dimes for a pair of gaudy, four-color magazines. One of those magazines...those comic books...is Space Adventures #33. Interesting publication, that Space Adventures. It's not the fanciest book on the stands. Maybe the printing is not as good as the others...some of the colors tend to come off on the boy's hands. In fact, the stories aren't all that spectacular. Save for one! Ah, but that one story is worth the whole book and more! It's called "Introducing Capt. Atom", and the hero it showcases is deliciously different!

Captain Atom! Air Force captain turned atomic soldier! A normal man destroyed by the power of the atom and recreated as a nuclear being! Far-out fantasy, you say? Ah, but to the boy of nine, it was frighteningly real! It was a story that made sense in the fifties...that decade of Dulles, McCarthy, and the Cold War. And it was a story of hope! Here was a man who had survived the atomic bug-a-boo...a man who was totally destroyed, yet was born anew! And there was a final link with the so-called real world. When the radioactive soldier was finally ushered into an audience with the President, it was General Ike he faced! Ike, whose term of office was drawing to a close! Not some faceless, shadowy "President" who occasionally congratulated men-of-steel from just off panel, but Ike! Later, when the story would be reprinted, the figure would be retouched to appear less distinctive. But for then...at that point in time...it was good ol' Ike, and the boy was impressed.

The young boy read and re-read that comic book until it fell apart. He never forgot Captain Atom, though he would not see him for another eight years. Oh, the other comic he bought that night? He still can't recall what it was!

The Captain appeared sporadically for the next few issues. The boy was not to see those adventures, though. For you see, Charlton has always had mysterious problems with distribution. It is rumored that they've published some titles that no one has ever seen! And perhaps that does add to their mystique. Ponder that thought while we consider another case.

It is now some five years later. Charlton decides to jump into the super-hero business with both feet. The super-hero is enjoying the spotlight in the comics world, and of course, Charlton wants in! Their first efforts are a resurrected insect-man and a Greco-Roman demi-god. Neither is what you'd call spectacular. But it is now the mid-60's, and a crowd of motley comic book fans seemingly take the two crude attempts to their hearts. Some young fans send in costume suggestions. Others present story ideas. And wonder of wonders, it seems that someone in that fabled land of Derby listens! Some fans even wind up working for the company too!

And suddenly, things start to happen!

While the first crude books fall, others rise to take their place! From out of the mystic east comes a man of strange, thundering prowess! Out of the dirty wars of Southeast Asia comes the tough private eye! From the wars of decades past comes a true master of the martial arts! And from that coldest of wars comes...can it be? Yes, it is! Captain Atom! After half-a-decade of inactivity the nuclear

ace returns to face new foes and new times! And in Captain Atom's wake follow others. Some are four-color creations like himself. But others are craftsmen...writers...artists... a whole new crop of youthful, barely-tested, creative human beings! And the things they do are exciting! A veritable universe of characters springs up almost overnight! There are heavily-characterized heroes like the new Blue Beetle, mystery-adventurers like the Question, and even whimsical parodies like the Sentinels, whose fast-paced stories were...uh...something to marvel at!

Oh, remember the kid with the crewcut? He comes back into our story at this point.

It was the summer of '67. The summer of love, some would call it. For the kid with the crewcut it was just another summer...mowing yards...heading crosstown for a swim...and rediscovering comic books! He wasn't sure why he walked up to the newstand on that balmy afternoon, but suddenly he was glad he did. There on the stands was a book boldly emblazoned "CAPTAIN ATOM"! Somewhere in a drifting mind a contact connected. A load of good memories suddenly came rushing back, and the kid spent the rest of that afternoon amidst a heady atmosphere of coke syrup and top-40 radio renewing old-time acquaintances. It was going to be a good summer!

There was a new pool of talent in Derby in those days. A lot of brash new "kids" showing what they could. If you were fortunate, you found out about this little comics house. And when you found out, chances are you cheered them on! If you weren't fortunate, well, you'd hear of these people on another day at other publishers. But it would never be quite the same.

What a fantastic gathering of talent there was! Artists like Aparo and Ditko and Glanzman! Writers like O'Neil and Skeates and Freidrich! And, of course, there was the guy who made it all work...Giordano! It was under Dick Giordano's editorship that most fans first became aware of the boundless potential residing in the little independent company. Here was a spontaneous explosion of creative energies! And against all odds it seemed to work! Had it continued, Charlton might very well have become an important third power in comics. But there were a number of business problems that set in...not the least of which was Charlton's uncanny distribution handicaps. The sixties were starting the fast fade, and it seemed that the super-heroes were about to do the same. So, the powers-that-be axed the Charlton hero titles. They regrouped behind their more stable ghost books, while the elite "brain trust" of artists and writers left for other pursuits.

And so we return to the present. There are now in Derby the beginnings of a bold, new Charlton...with new talent and new ideas! We now see new titles...new super-heroes! What's more, Charlton is reaching out to fans for help in spreading the word. And it just might be working!

A final case in point: As these words are written, it's a Saturday night in the Midwest. The nine-year-old is a bit older now, and the crewcut is long gone. He sits back from his typewriter and stares out his window. Somewhere out there, he ponders, is another nine-year-old. And maybe tonight his folks will take him to the drugstore. And maybe... just maybe...that kid will dig down into his pocket and come up with a quarter for a copy of E-Man. And that would be great!

Man, that's charisma...that's chutzpah...that's...that's mystique!

CHARLTON'S ODDS & ENDS

by Scott Edelman

Obeying for once the dictates of reason, I thus alienate all those who know and misunderstand me. Reason has always been one of my most hated enemies, and this temporary compromise with it is difficult for me. But, for the sake of the sanity of the readership, and for Mom, blueberry pie (never cared much for apple), and the girl next door, I shall attempt to behave myself and exhibit clarity of thought. Now Duffy, will ya untie the straps of this freakin' straight-jacket!

So here I am, and here you are, and if either of us had any sense, we'd go on to the next article.

To begin: The Banshee.

The Banshee is a character who has only appeared once in the Charlton universe, and that was as a villain. In a seven page Question story in the back of Blue Beetle #2, the Banshee made his debut.

The Banshee was Max Bire, student of circus aerialist Dundo, who murdered his teacher in order to gain possession of a flying cape. Max used this cape in a series of fantastic robberies, but due to his inept handling of it was blown out to sea, thanks to the interference of the Question.

Now try to imagine a hero with the majesty that such a cape would lend. The power of flight, not through the gene structure of a superhuman, but through the pitting of man's skill and mind against nature. It seems that since Charlton is now making its big comeback, it would be sensible to re-vivify in changed form some of the characters which exhibited great potential in the past. Even though he has only appeared once, the Banshee fits in this category. With a little imagination and some reworking of plot, the Banshee can reappear. But this time--as a hero.

All that is necessary would be the introduction of one of Dundo's relatives who discovers the plans for the cape, and decides to use it to counteract the forces of evil. The public might be confused at first, due to the switch by Banshee from villain to hero, but that would make an interesting subplot.

Think you can do better? Mr. Wildman and Mr. Cuti are always receptive to suggestions.

Next, another possibility for villain turned hero: The Ghost.

This nebulous nasty first appeared in Captain Atom #82. He was foiled in his effort to steal the gold from Fort Knox by the interference provided care of Captain Atom and that Darling of Darkness, Nightshade. The Ghost was supposedly destroyed in this opening story, but was fated to return many times to cross the paths of Captain Atom and Nightshade.

The Ghost's powers involved almost instantaneous transmittal of objects by scientific means. With his power, the Ghost could blink out of existence and reappear anywhere on earth only moments later.

Once more, through possible plot maneuvers, the Ghost could and should be turned into an ally of justice, rather than an enemy of it.

Ah! And now onto the female portion of our little choral group: Nightshade! The little lady about whom we sometimes wondered: Did she also know what evil lurks in the hearts of men?

Able to blend into and become a shadow whenever in the presence of one, her origins were kept mostly in the dark.

Spawned by Captain Atom #82, that same issue which brought forth the Ghost, she aided Captain Atom on her maiden voyage. Her solo adventures, which were strung like pearls as backup features in CA were delightfully delineated by Jim Aparo, an example of which beautifully graces the pages of this book.

Now onto other matters, such as Charlton Premiere. Charlton Premiere was a book of which five issues were printed, and of which three issues are worth discussing. The first issue, #19, was a war book which was printed in order to get postal rights, and the last issue, #4, was an issue of Unearthly Tales. The issues with which we shall concern ourselves are issues 1, 2, and 3 which contained the following features: The Tyro Team, The Shape, Spookman, Children of Doom, & Sinistro.

Of the three features in Charlton Premiere #1, Spookman showed the most promise. It was concerned with the effects of the Moonstone Amulet on Aaron Piper, archeologist. The

Moonstone, aside from turning Aaron Piper into Spookman, also provided him with a method of time travel. Aaron used these powers to search for and verify dates of ancient artifacts.

Written and drawn by Pat Boyette, this, the only story of Spookman ever printed, showed great promise, which as yet lies unfortunately unfulfilled.

On the other end of the rating scale for that issue lies the Tyro Team, created and written by Steve Skeates, world famous for his fish stories. The Tyro Team, linked by the flimsy and unexplained excuse of mental telepathy (I mean, they go to school and dorm together), was the issue's weakest feature.

The third and final offering for that issue was the Shape. Written and drawn by fandom favorite Grass Green, the story holds that humor which one rarely expects to find.

The Shape, created through the laboratory bumbblings of Kevin Boyd, was the original owner of the smiling face which seems to haunt us so often these days. He is an innocent Frankensteinian rubber-man with the brain of a sponge.

In the following issue of Charlton Premiere, we are treated to a full length epic by Pat Boyette and Sergius (Denny O'Neil) O'Shaugnessy. The story, "Children of Doom", deals with the mutated survivors of the final war who save the earth from destruction.

Charlton Premiere #3 deals with Sinistro, Boy Fiend, the only credit for which is that of Henry Scarpelli. Obviously, the rest of the staff knew better. No further comment.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The above opinions no way reflect those of the rest of the staff. In fact in most cases, the other writers in this book fell totally opposite about the majority of the characters involved in this article. Personally I'm in love with Nightshade (see my "Duffy's Tavern" in Et-cetera #3 for further proof.) and believe the Banshee (as a hero) and Spookman especially, show unlimited amounts of potentiality as commercially-successful series stars.

--Duffy Vohland



CHILDREN OF DOOM

EDITOR DICK GIORDANO • SCRIPT SERGIUS O'SHAUGNESSY • ART PAT BOYETTE •

A CHARLTON CLASSIC



THE SPOOKMAN

THE SHAPE

THE TYRD TEAM

STATON VOHLAND



THE

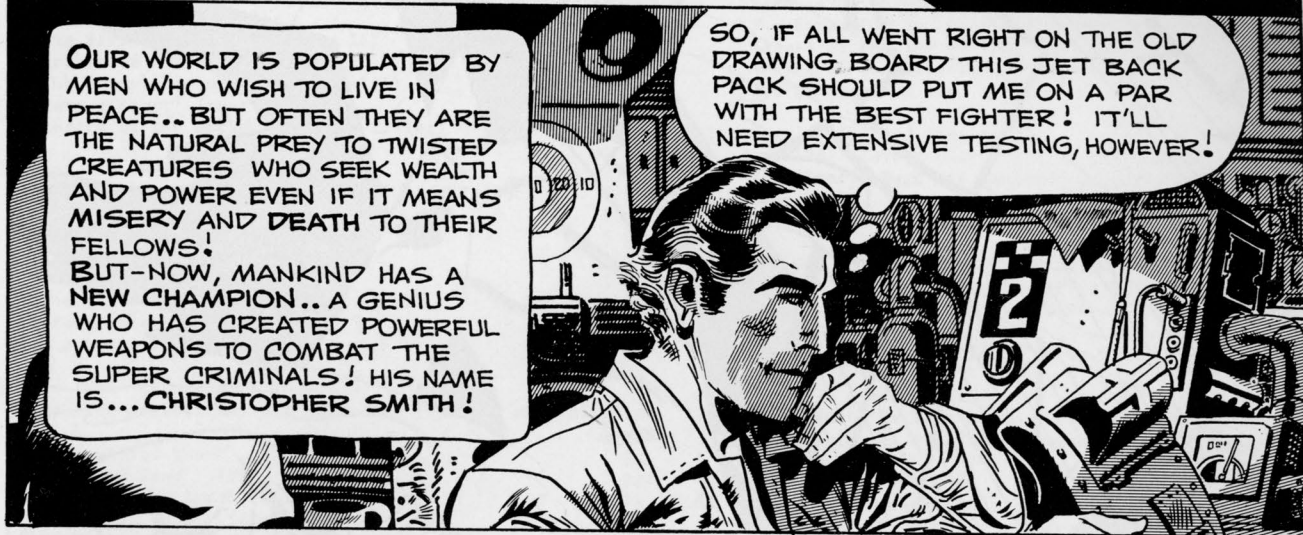


PEACEMAKER

OUR WORLD IS POPULATED BY MEN WHO WISH TO LIVE IN PEACE... BUT OFTEN THEY ARE THE NATURAL PREY TO TWISTED CREATURES WHO SEEK WEALTH AND POWER EVEN IF IT MEANS MISERY AND DEATH TO THEIR FELLOWS!

BUT-NOW, MANKIND HAS A NEW CHAMPION.. A GENIUS WHO HAS CREATED POWERFUL WEAPONS TO COMBAT THE SUPER CRIMINALS! HIS NAME IS...CHRISTOPHER SMITH!

SO, IF ALL WENT RIGHT ON THE OLD DRAWING BOARD THIS JET BACK PACK SHOULD PUT ME ON A PAR WITH THE BEST FIGHTER! IT'LL NEED EXTENSIVE TESTING, HOWEVER!



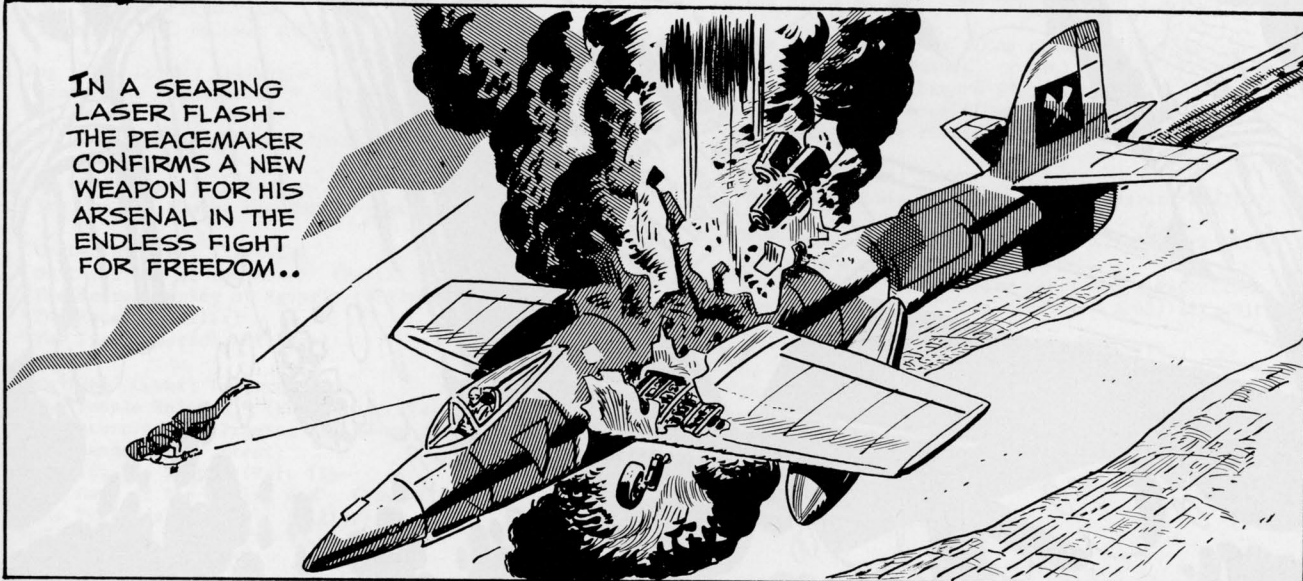
EDITOR DICK GIORDANO • SCRIPT JOE GILL • ART PAT BOYETTE •

HE DOESN'T KNOW IT YET... BUT THAT TESTING WILL COME IN A MATTER OF MINUTES IN AN INTERCEPT OF A DEADLY FOE WHO'S BEGUN AN ATTACK RUN AGAINST THE CITY OF GENEVA!



© CHARLTON COMICS .

IN A SEARING LASER FLASH- THE PEACEMAKER CONFIRMS A NEW WEAPON FOR HIS ARSENAL IN THE ENDLESS FIGHT FOR FREEDOM..



QUESTION



CHECKLIST

Compiled by DON ROSA

Blue Beetle

- #1 June 1964 Cover: unknown
"The Giant Mummy Who Was Not Dead"* (Chapter I) Origin of Blue Beetle. Art: Tony Tallarico 10 pgs
"Jungle Waters" -filler 1 pg.
"The Birth of Evil" (Chapter II) 5 pgs
"Freaks of Nature" -filler 1 pg.
"The Mummy's Return" (Chapter III) 5 pgs
"Have a Heart" (text) 2 pgs
"Record of the Rocks" (science filler) 3 pgs
- #2 Sept 1964 Cover: unknown
"Hot War in the Arctic"* (Part I) art: Tallarico 6 pgs
"The Waiting Game" (filler) 1 pg.
"Prisoners of Time" (Part II) 5 pgs
"Space Engineering" (text) 2 pgs
"The Thief" (filler) 1 pg.
"The Master Plan" (Part III) 4 pgs
"Atomic Death" (Part IV) 5 pgs
"The Lost City" (filler) 3 pgs
- #3 Nov 1964 Cover: Dick Giordano
"Mr. Thunderbolt and the Superstar" (Part I) art:Tallarico 5 pgs
"What Killed Them?" (filler) 1 pg.
"Storm of Fear" (Part II) 5 pgs
"The Smartest Apes" (filler) 1 pg.
"Flames of Fury" (Part III) 10 pgs
"No Killer Instinct" (filler) 3 pgs
...issue carried first letters section (2 pages)
- #4 Jan 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
"The Praying Mantis-Man"* (Part I) art:Tallarico 7 pgs
"The Silent World" (filler) 1 pg.
"The Chlorophyll Man" (Part II) 4 pgs
"The Garden of Crawling Death" (Part III) 4 pgs
"The Outpost" (feature) 3 pgs
"The Mantis & the Beetle" (Part IV) 5 pgs
...this issue contains a Blue Beetle Pin-up
- #5 Mar/Apr 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
"B.B. Challenges the Red Knight"* (Part I) writer: Gill, art: Fracchio & Tallarico 8 pgs
"The Gulf Stream" (filler) 1 pg.
"Capture of the White Queen" (Part II) 6 pgs
"Nightmare" (feature) 3 pgs
"Checkmate" (Part III) 6 pgs
"The Temple of Amon-Rd" (filler) 1 pg.
- #50 July 1965 Cover: Fracchio & Tallarico
(with this issue, the numbering system of Unusual Tales is assumed.)
"The Scorpion"* (Part I) writer: Gill, art Fracchio and Tallarico 8 pgs
"Tomb beneath the Sed" (Part II) 6 pgs
"Oil Strike" (Part III) 6 pgs
"Treasure Idol of Logo Ri" 3 pgs
- #51 Aug 1965 Cover: Tallarico
"Mentor the Magnificent"* Writer: Gill, art: Fracchio & Tallarico 20 pgs
"Slight Error" art: Rocke Mastroserio 1 pg
- #52 Oct 1965 Cover: Tallarico
"The Man Who Shakes the World" (Part I) Art:Tallarico 8 pgs
"Crater of Fire" (Part II) 8 pgs
"On the Trail of the Mole" (Part III) 4 pgs
"The Sacred Monkey of Egypt" (filler) 1 pg.
"The Race" (filler) 1 pg.
"The Insect World" (filler) 1 pg.
- #53 Dec 1965 Cover: Tallarico
"The People Thieves"* (Part I) art:Tallarico 8 pgs
...return of the Praying mantis-man.
"The Human Fish" (text) 1 pg.
"Baiting the Trap" (Part II) 5 pgs
"The Cave of the Living Sed" (Part III) 5 pgs
"The Pyramids of Givd" (filler) 3 pgs
- #54 Feb/Mar 1966 Cover: Tallarico
"The Eye of Horus"* (Part I) writer: Roy Thomas, art: Fracchio & Tallarico 8 pgs
"The Seven Cities of Cibola" (text) 1 pg.
"Slaves of the Ancient Eye" (Part II) 5 pgs
"Menace of the Mind-world" (Part III) 7 pgs
"The Gladiator's War" (filler) 3 pgs
- ### Blue Beetle (Second Series)
- #1 June 1967 Cover: Ditko (B.B. & the Question)
"Blue Beetle Bugs the Squids"* writer: D.C. Glanzman, Art: Steve Ditko 18 pgs
"Question" art: Ditko 7 pgs
- #2 Aug 1967 Cover: Ditko
"The End is a Beginning"* writer: D.C. Glanzman, art: Steve Ditko ...origin of new Blue Beetle; fate of old B.B. 18 pgs
"No title...the Question" art: Ditko 7 pgs
- #3 Oct 1967 Cover: Ditko
"The Madmen" writer: Ditko & Glanzman, art: Ditko 18 pgs
"No title...the Question" writer: Ditko & Glanzman, art: Ditko 7 pgs
- #4 Dec 1967 Cover: Ditko
"The Men of the Mask"* writer: Ditko & Glanzman, art: Ditko 18 pgs
"Kill Vic Sage" (...the Question) art: Ditko 8 pgs
- #5 Nov 1968 Cover: Ditko
"...Faces the Destroyer of Heroes"* writer: Glanzman, art: Ditko 18 pgs
"Prisoner 2222" (text) 1 pg.
"No title...the Question" writer: Glanzman, art: Ditko 8 pgs
...this issue's BB & Question stories have common tie-in.
- #6 ...this issue, while advertised, never saw the light of day...until this portfolio. Enjoy!
- ### Strange Suspense Stories...Presents Captain Atom
- #75 June 1965 Cover: Ditko
"Introducing Captain Atom"* art: Ditko 9 pgs
...origin (reprint from Space Adventures #33)
"The Magic Box" (text) 2 pgs
"The Ghost of Amy Rector" (filler) 1 pg.
"Captain Atom on Planet X" (reprint from S.A.#36) 5 pgs
"The Second Man in Space" (Cap reprint from S.A.#34) 7 pgs
"Out of this World" (feature by J. Severin, signed LaPoer) 3 pgs
- #76 Aug 1965 Cover: Ditko
"The Wreck of X-44" (Cap reprint from S.A.#36) art: Ditko 5 pgs
"The Little Wanderer"* (Cap reprint-S.A.#35) 5 pgs
"Frozen for the Future" (text) 1 pg.
"Test-Pilot's Nightmare" (Cap reprint-S.A.#39) 5 pgs
"A Victory for Venus"* (Cap reprint-S.A.#37) 5 pgs
"The First Space Pirate" feature by Mastroserio 3 pgs
- #77 Oct 1965 Cover: Ditko
"The Silver Lady from Venus" (Cap reprint-S.A.#42) Art: Ditko 5 pgs
"The Ageless Weapon" (Cap reprint-S.A.#39) art: Ditko 5 pgs
"Major Milex Marlin" (text) 1 pg.
"The Boy & the Stars" (Cap reprint-S.A.#40) Ditko 5 pgs
"The Space Prowlers" (Cap reprint-S.A.#37) art: Ditko 5 pgs
"High Danger" 3 pgs
- #78 Dec 1965 (title changed to CAPTAIN ATOM) Cover: Ditko
"The Grimlins from Planet Blue"* (Part I, new material.... art: Ditko & Mastroserio 10 pgs
"The Sun God" (text) 1 pg.
"Planet Blue" (Part II) 10 pgs
"The Vast Unknown" art: Ernie Bache 3 pgs

Continued on page 41....



The Sentinels

STATON
&
VOHLAND

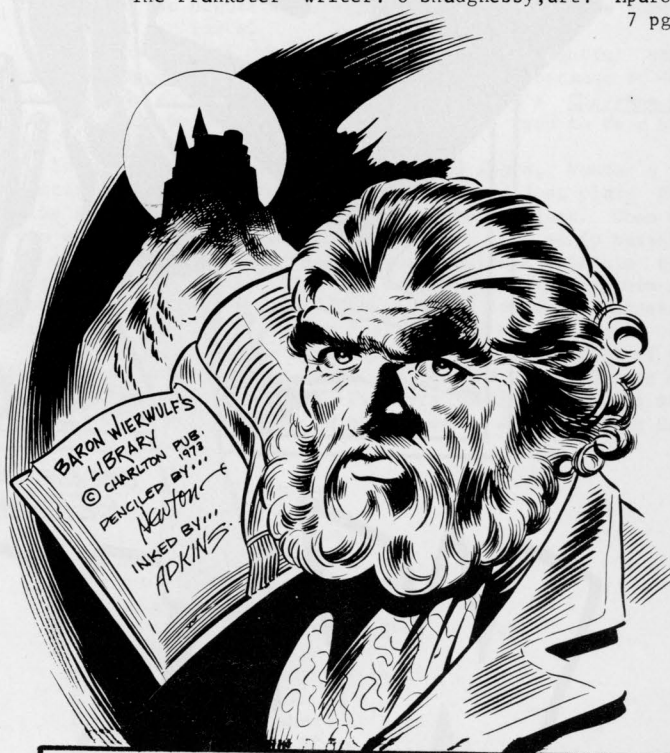
- #79 Feb-Mar 1965 Cover:(C.A.)Ditko & Mastroserio
 "Doctor Spectro, Master of Moods" art: Ditko/Mastroserio 20 pgs
 "The Dreadful Dream of Daniel Drelly " (text) 1 pg.
 "Moon Run " art: Ditko & ? 3 pgs
- #80 Apr-May 1965 Cover: (C.A.) Ditko & Mastroserio
 "Death Knell of the World "*art:Ditko & Mastroserio 20 pgs
 "Alpine Avalanche " (text) 1 pg.
 "Our Planet Earth " (science) 3 pgs
- #81 July 1966 Cover: Ditko & Mastroserio
 "The Five Faces of Dr. Spectro" art:Ditko & Mastroserio 20 pgs
 "The Strong Man " (text) 1 pg.
 "What Happened to the U.F.O.?" 1 pg.
 "Jiu-Jitsu: A Way of Life " 2 pgs
- #82 Sept 1966 Cover: Ditko & Mastroserio
 "Capt. Atom vs. the Ghost "* (1st Nightshade)writer: Dave Kaler, art: Ditko & Mastroserio 20 pgs
 "Sumo" (text) 1 pg.
 "Favorite Throws "(with Judo-master) by McLaughlin 2 pgs
- #83 Nov. 1966 Cover:(C.A. & BB) Ditko & Mastroserio
 "Finally Falls the Mighty " writer: Kaler, art: Ditko & Mastroserio 18 pgs
 "The Blue Beetle" writer: Gary Friedrich, art:Ditko-7 pgs
- #84 Jan. 1967 Cover:(C.A. & BB) Ditko & Mastroserio
 "After the Fall, A New Beginning"* (Part II continued.... from last issue) writer: Kaler, art: Ditko & Mastroserio 18 pgs
 "(No Title) Blue Beetle,writer: Friedrich, art: Ditko 7 pgs
- #85 Mar 1967 Cover: (C.A. & BB) Ditko & Mastroserio
 "Strings of Punch and Jewlee "(return of Nightshade) writer: Kaler, art: Ditko & Mastroserio 18 pgs
 "No title...Blue Beetle" featuring old B.B., writer: Gary Friedrich, art: Ditko 7 pgs
- #86 June 1967 Cover: Ditko & Mastroserio
 "The Fury of the Faceless Foe"* (return of Nightshade and the Ghost) writer: Kaler, Art:Ditko & Mastroserio 18 pgs
 "No title...Blue Beetle" (fights Count Von Stueben)story: Friedrich, art: Ditko 7 pgs
- #87 Aug 1967 Cover: Ditko & Mastroserio
 "The Menace of the Fiery-Icer "*writer: Kaler, art:Ditko & Mastroserio 18 pgs
 "The Image's Idyl." (Nightshade solo) writer:Kaler, art: Jim Aparo 7 pgs
- #88 Oct 1967 Cover: Ditko & Mastroserio
 "The Ravage of Ronthor "* writer: Kaler, art: Ditko and McLaughlin 18 pgs
 "Poetry of Peril "(Nightie...with the Image) writer:Kaler art: Aparo 7 pgs
- #89 Dec 1967 Cover: Ditko & McLaughlin
 "Thirteen "* writer: Kaler, art:Ditko & McLaughlin-18 pgs
 "Masque of Mirrors"(Nightshade) writer: Kaler, art: Aparo 7 pgs
- Judo-Master
 #89 June 1966(Formerly Gunmaster) Cover: Frank McLaughlin
 "Prisoner of War" (Part I) story & art: McLaughlin -8 pgs
 "The Finger of Fate " (text) 1 pg.
 "The Mountain Storm " (Part II) 12 pgs
 "Self Defense" (instruction) 3 pgs
- #90 Aug 1966 Cover: McLaughlin
 "Judo-master...TRAITOR!" art: McLaughlin 20 pgs
 "Melifera Adamson on the Warpath " (text) 1 pg.
 "The Roof of the World-Where Thunderbolt was Born"(promo) 2 pgs
- #91 Oct 1966 Cover: McLaughlin
 "Man Without a Country " story & art: McLaughlin 18 pgs
 "Case of the Double Agent" (file 110,Sarge Steel,part I), Also first letters page...
- #92 Dec 1966 Cover: McLaughlin
 "Judomaster Meets the Smiling Skull" story & art: McLaughlin... 15 pgs
 "Sport of Judo" (instruction) 3 pgs
 "Case of the Double Agent" (file 110, conclusion, Sarge Steel) 7 pgs
- #93 Feb 1967 Cover: McLaughlin
 "Meet the Tiger "* (continued from last issue; origin of Tiger) story & art: McLaughlin 15 pgs
 "The Kiai Shout" (instruction by McLaughlin) 2 pgs
 "Case of the Devil's Wife"(file 111, Sarge Steel)story by Joe Gill, art: Montes & Giordano 7 pgs
- #94 Apr 1967 Cover: McLaughlin
 "Tiger Hunt"* (Tiger, Mountain Storm) story & art: Frank McLaughlin 15 pgs
 "Karate Man vs. the Bulls "(instruction)McLaughlin and Giordano 2 pgs
 "Case of the Devil's Wife" (file 111,conclusion, Sarge Steel) story:Gill, art: Montes and Giordano 7 pgs
- #95 June 1967 Cover: McLaughlin
 "The Plot to Destroy Judomaster"* (partI, the Acrobat) story & art: McLaughlin 15 pgs
 "The Art of Stealth " (instruction) by McLaughlin 2 pgs
 "Case of the Village Moneyman" (file 112, Sarge Steel) Part I, story: Steve Skeates, art: Dick Giordano 7 pgs
- #96 Aug 1967 Cover: McLaughlin
 "The Plot to Destroy Judomaster"* (part II) story and art by McLaughlin 17 pgs
 "Case of the Village Moneyman" (file 112; Sarge Steel... conclusion)story:Skeates, art: Giordano 7 pgs
- #97 Oct 1967 Cover: McLaughlin
 "This One's for Pop"* story & art: McLaughlin 18 pgs
 "Case of the Widow's Revenge" (file 114, Sarge Steel) story: Skeates, art: Giordano 8 pgs
- #98 Dec 1967 Cover: McLaughlin
 "The Isle of Dragon "* story & art: McLaughlin 19 pgs
 "The Power of the Bow " (text) 1 pg.
 "Case of the Key West Caper " (file 115,Sarge Steel-7 pgs
- Judomaster (One-shot)
 #4 Nov 1965 (#1-3 "special War series") Cover: McLaughlin
 "Introducing Rip Jagger...Judomaster"* (Part I) writer: Joe Gill, art: Frank McLaughlin 8 pgs
 "Fight for Freedom" (text) 1 pg.
 "The Dojo " (part II) origin of Judomaster 6 pgs
 "Judomaster is Born " (Part III) 6 pgs
 "Sport of Judo " (with Sarge Steel) story & art: Frank McLaughlin 3 pgs
- Mysterious Suspense (One shot)
 #1 Oct 1968 Cover: Ditko
 Contents page: Mastroserio
 "The Question "* (Part I) story & art: Ditko 8 pgs
 "What Makes a Hero?" (Part II) 8 pgs
 (No title...part III) 9 pgs
- Sarge Steel
 #1 Dec 1964 Cover: Giordano
 "Pearls of Death"* (File 101, Part I, Ivan Chung) writer: Joe Gill, art: Dick Giordano 8 pgs
 "The O.S.S. in W.W. II " art: Tarrarico 3 pgs
 "The Spark " (text) 2 pgs
 "The Road to Freedom " art: Sam Glanzman 1 pg.
 "Nightmare in Saigon " (file 101, Part II, origin Sarge Steel) 6 pgs
 "Destination Death " (file 101, Part III) 6 pgs
- #2 Feb 1965 Cover: Giordano
 "The Man Who Blackmailed the World "* (File 102, Part I, Werner Von Wess) writer: Gill, art:Giordano 8 pgs
 "The Guardians" art: Tallarico 3 pgs
 "Raney's Rangers" (text) 2 pgs
 "The Millionaire Trap" (file 102, Part II) 6 pgs
 "It takes a Man " art: Tallarico 2 pgs
 "The Atomic Challenge" (file 102, Part III) 6 pgs

the
prankster



Don Maiz
Ruffy Vorland

- #3 Apr-May Cover: Giordano
 "Heritage of Hate"*(File 103, Part I, Smiling Skull)story
 by Gill, art: Giordano 8 pgs
 "The Smiling Skull " (file 103, Part II) 6 pgs
 "C.I." (text) 2 pgs
 "Doomsday" 1 pg.
 "The Silver Lugar" (file 103, Part III) 6 pgs
 "Straight Foot Throw Standing " (instruction by Frank
 McLaughlin 3 pgs
- #4 July 1965 Cover: Giordano
 "Kiss of the Cat"*(The Lynx, file 104, Part I)story:Gill,
 art: Giordano 7 pgs
 "The Strolling Statue" (file 104, Part II) 5 pgs
 "P is for Parachute" (text) 1 pg.
 "Death on Cat Cay" (file 104, Part III) 8 pgs
 "Osoto Gari-major Outer Reading Throw" (Whew! I hope it's
 easier to do than it is to say...!
- #5 Sept 1965 Cover: Giordano
 "Case of the Caged Brain"*(file 105, Part I, return of
 Ivan Chung) art: Montes & Bache 8 pgs
 "Special Services 3X" (text) 1 pg.
 "Fatal Beauty " (file 104, Part II) 6 pgs
 "Pick A Way To Die" (file 105, Part III) 6 pgs
 "Sport of Judo " (instruction) by McLaughlin 3 pgs
- #6 Nov. 1965 Cover: Montes & Mastroserio
 "The King's Assassin"* (file 106, Part I) story: Joe Gill
 art: Montes & Bache 8 pgs
 "New Old Ideas in Warfare" (text) 1 pg
 "Chase West " (file 106, Part II) 6 pgs
 "\$1,000,000 Ransom " (file 106, Part III) 6 pgs
 "What is Karate?" (instruction with Judomaster) by Frank
 McLaughlin 3 pgs
- #7 Jan 1966 Cover: Giordano
 "The Day They Killed Sarge Steel"* (file 107, Part I)
 Story: Joe Gill, art: Dick Giordano 8 pgs
 "The Gift of Two Deaths " (text) 1 pg
 "Live Bait in the Shark Tank" (file 107, Part II)...with
 P.O.W., Prosecutors Of the World 6 pgs
 "The Murder School " (file 107, Part III) 6 pgs
 "Sport of Judo " (instruction) by McLaughlin 3 pgs
- #8 Mar-Apr 1966 Cover: P.A.M. & Mastroserio
 "The Talon Takes Sarge Steel"(file 108, Part I) Writer:
 Gill, art: Montes & Bache 8 pgs
 "Tank Trouble " (text) 1 pg.
 "The Faceless Man " (file 108, Part II) 6 pgs
 "Trial of a Terrorist (file 108, Part III) 6 pgs
 "Blue Four-Top Secret " (exposed enemy top secrets....for
 only 12¢) art: Mastroserio 3 pgs
- #9 Oct 1966 Retitled: Secret Agent Cover: Giordano
 "The Warmaker "*(file 109, Part I, with Ivan Chung, the
 Smiling Skull, Werner Von Wess, the Lynx, & Mr. Ize)story
 by Gill, art: Montes & Bache 7 pgs
 "The Looters " (file 109, Part II) 7 pgs
 "The Warmaker's Stronghold "(file 109, Part III) 6 pgs
 "Sarge Steel's Scrapbook of Judo "(instruction-reprints
 by Frank McLaughlin 7 pgs
- #10 Oct 1967 Cover: Giordano
 "The Third Hand "*(file 113, Part I) story: Skeates,art:
 Giordano 6 pgs
 "Photo Finish " (file 113, Part II) 6 pgs
 "Blues for Linda "(file 113, Part III) 6 pgs
 "Espionage: Muscle Beach Style "(Tiffany Sinn, the C.I.A.
 Sweetheart) writer: Kaler, art: Aparo 9 pgs
- Thunderbolt (formerly Son of Vulcan)
- #51 Mar-apr 1966 Cover: P.A.M.
 "The Evil That is Evil"*(Special case #0002)(the Hooded
 One) art: P.A.M. 20 pgs
 "Physalia Physalis " (text) 1 pg.
 "The Atmosphere" (science) 3 pgs
- #52 June 1966 Cover: P.A.M.
 "Gore, the Man-Ape"*(special case #0003) story & art: P.
 A.M. 20 pgs
 "July 27th" (text) 1 pg.
 "Judomaster's Self Defense" by McLaughlin 3 pgs
- #53 Aug 1966 Cover: P.A.M.
 "Enter...the Tong"*(special case #0004) story &
 art: P.A.M. 20 pgs
 "Raymond, the Rain maker " (text) 1 pg.
 "Capt. Atom's Secret" (science with Cap) by Frank
 McLaughlin 2 pgs
- #54 Oct 1966 Cover: P.A.M.
 "This One's for Tabu "*(the Hooded One,special
 case #0005) story & art: P.A.M. 18 pgs
 "Behold...the Sentinels! writer: Gary Friedrich,
 art: Sam Grainger 7 pgs
- #55 Dec 1966 Cover: P.A.M.
 "Where Stalks the Mummy?"(S.C. #0006) story & art
 by P.A.M. 15 pgs
 "Beware...the Menacing Mind-Bender!"(Sentinels),
 writer: Friedrich, art: Grainger 10 pgs
- #56 Feb 1967 Cover: P.A.M.
 "Beware...the Cobra" (S.C. #0007) story & art by
 P.A.M. 15 pgs
 "Where Walks...the Titan!"(Sentinels)story:Fried-
 rich, art: Grainger 10 pgs
- #57 May 1967 Cover: Pat Boyette
 "Face of the Dragon" (S.C.#0008) art: Boyette 15 pgs
 "If This Be Triumph" (Sentinels) story:Glanzman,
 art: Grainger 10 pgs
- #58 July 1967 Cover: P.A.M.
 "Encore: the Hooded One"*(S.C.#0009) story & art
 by P.A.M. 18 pgs
 "Into the Lair of the Mind-Benders" (Sentinels),
 writer: O'Shaughnessy, art: Grainger 7 pgs
- #59 Sept 1967 Cover: P.A.M.
 "Assassins"*(the Hooded One) art:Boyette 18 pgs
 "Night of Doom" (Sentinels) story:O'Shaughnessy,
 art: Grainger 7 pgs
- #60 Nov 1967 Cover: Boyette
 "When Flies the Dragon" writer:O'Shaughnessy,art:
 Pat Boyette 18 pgs
 "The Prankster" writer: O'Shaughnessy,art: Aparo 7 pgs



More checklist will be published at a future date, since space was not available this issue. Titles not included (Super-hero) are Peacemaker, Charlton Premiere, Son of Vulcan, Jungle Tales of Tarzan, Hercules and Cheyenne Kid (featuring Wander by Aparo).



PHINEAS
J.
BLOAT

JEB
DOOLEY

CREATED BY -
SERGIUS O'SHAUGNESSY

TIM PARO '74

COONEYBOY

I keep my eyes on the flies
 On the long-fallen skies,
 And I don't let my friends get hurt!
 All you backroom schemers,
 Star-trip dreamers,
 Better find something new to say...
 'Cause you're the same old story,
 It's the same old crime
 And you've got some heavy dues to pay!
 I'm a Space Cowboy...
 But you weren't ready for that!
 I'm a Space Cowboy...
 I'm sure you know where it's at!
 -the Steve Miller Band

Once upon a time somebody got the bright idea that if western comics would sell...and space comics would sell... then space-western comics ought to sell twice as much! Well...maybe not. But the fact remains that in the mid-fifties Charlton did produce six issues of Space Western Comics, featuring that interstellar ranch-hand, Spurs Jackson! The less said about old Spurs, the better! But one must admit that his book was important in some nebulous historical sense. Granted, there were other "space westerns", the classic Buster Crabbe #5 comes to mind. But no one outside of Charlton ever attempted to sustain a series on this weird mixture of genre. And they did it twice! It was in the late sixties when the company that spurred Jackson...sorry.. brought forth another such series. And they called it Wander.

The comic strip that dares ask the question:
 Can a super-sophisticated visitor from another
 star find happiness as a traveling showman on the
 sprawling, brawling American frontier?

Cheyenne Kid #68

Wander...intergalactic visitor from Sirus-V, attacked by maurading space-bandits and forced to crash on the backwoods planet of Sol-III. Wander...interplanetary traveler stranded in the old west. A desperate perdicament? You betcha, Red Ryder! A tale of woe? Nope, far from it! For while Wander's adventures in the old west might take on an occasional bittersweet tone, his stories were for the most part shameless farce. Early stories were skillfully woven by Sagebrush Sergius O'Shaugnessy (A.K.A. Denny O'Neil) and drawn in a pleasingly humorous style by Jimson-weed Jim Aparo, both tongues firmly in cheek!

Of course, Wander was not alone on our little world! Shortly after his unfortunate landing he acquired two terran compadres...an old muleskinner named Jeb Dooley and the biggest fraud this side of Fields, Phineas T. Bloat, showman and snake oil salesman! With these two partners Wander roamed through a landscape littered with such God-forsaken places as Dismal Valley, Rotten Tooth, and the unforgettable Halitosis, New Mexico. Nor were Wander's antagonists without their own colorful characters! There was the foul-mouthed Mexican bandito, El Perro... (El Perro?)...who was continually on the run from charges of murder, arson, robbery, theft, counterfeiting, rustling, forgery, gambling, disturbing the peace, selling without a license, and air pollution. El Perro wasn't much on baths. And then there were vile mystery men like the Fellow With No Name...

My Paw wanted to call me Benedict! But that was my brother's handle...so he tagged me Fellow With No Name! My Paw was a nut!

Cheyenne Kid #71

Of course, this is not to say that all of Wander's foes were strictly earth-bound! Occasionally he'd find himself up against anti-social aliens like Madt Dulon, the fastest gun from the planet DeWast. And in one memorable episode the stellar range-rider found himself in the midst of an age-old feud between the McShootleys and the O'Guns while a pair of alien Froomians attacked in their spacecraft! Not your basic good day! If it weren't for the fact that outworlders all seem to be uncommonly strong, Wander might not have gotten out of that particular scrap! Of course, that powerful positronic wand hidden in his bullwhip didn't hurt any!

Oh, one thing we nearly forgot to mention! Wander picked up his knowledge of English from a book of Shakespear, so his speech was a bit...well...stilted. But, the editor was always glad to explain the situation to new readers in the first available footnote...

Wander talks funny because he learned English from an old book! Phineas T. Bloat talks funny because he's kind of a dope!

Cheyenne Kid #70

And so, we had this unlikely trio of Wander, Dooley, and Bloat touring the western territories with the latter's medicine show...the two terrans touting snake oil while their alien partner searched in vain for a little-known element known as uranium, said element needed to repair his ship. For though Wander did enjoy the company of Dooley & Bloat, he longed for the beautiful swamps of Sirus-V. There's just no accounting for taste!

(In case you're wondering how such a delightful strip ever escaped your attention, it's probably because it was tucked away as a back-up feature in Charlton's Cheyenne Kid from issues 66 to 87. And let that teach you to be a bit more judicious in scouring the stands!)

In the very able hands of O'Neil and Aparo, Wander's adventures were fast-paced, easy-going, and just plain fun. Like so many others, though, it was not to last. When the two originators left for other pursuits, the strip passed to other hands, while competent, just couldn't maintain the magic. And so Wander, like the action-heroes before him all faded away to the special limbo located somewhere between a trunk in the attic and your frontal lobes. But there are still times...when Gene Autry rides across the plains of the late show...or when some freak at that FM radio station decides to spin a Sons-of-the-Pioneers oldie...that the mind drifts back to the plains of yesteryear. And the Space Cowboy rides again!

And the same old story
 With a new set of words
 About the good and the bad
 And the poor.
 And the times keep on changin'
 So I'm keepin' on top
 Of every fat-cat who walks thru my door!
 I'm a Space Cowboy...
 Bet you weren't ready for that!
 I'm a Space Cowboy...
 I'm sure you know where it's at!
 the Steve Miller Band



THE LAST WORD

BY
George Wildman

News has been circulating that a number of improvements have been made in Charlton's line of Comics. It's exciting because Charlton has long been "A Sleeping Giant" and what's most exciting for me is to be its Editor during these advancements. When I became Editor of Comics in January of 1972, I knew that there were two kinds of editors - passive and dynamic. Since I have never been content with being just a new cog in an old machine I decided to execute several major policy changes of which you, as readers, have seen the results, but, are probably unaware of the reasons for them.

The first thing to keep in mind as I briefly run through some of these points is that Charlton is the only comic book company that creates a finished book from script, to art, to printing, to distributing, all under one roof. I therefore have control over many of the steps in the operation leading to a finished product which is why I can rarely be found behind my desk. If I am not discussing a print run with the plant manager, then I am going over quality control with the engravers or color separators. This necessitates the need for a capable assistant to keep the machine functioning when I am not there. Although I do read over each script and oversee the construction of each book, the mechanical tasks must still be accomplished by a skilled person. I selected Nicola Cuti because of his background in comics as both a writer and artist and to this day I have not regretted it.

Now I had a free hand to grapple the big, tough problem and that was to CHANGE THE CHARLTON IMAGE! Here are some of the methods I used to accomplish that end.

- * Charlton had been a 'closed shop' always using the same artists and writers. Many of these men were quite capable, such as chief staff writer Joe Gill, but I felt the need for new blood in our line and so I opened up our freelancing staff. The result has been the influx of such people as Tom Sutton, Don Newton, Mike Pellowski, Mike Vosberg and many others.
- * I redesigned our Company logo from the red box to a more colorful red, white, and blue bullseye. This made Charlton's products more easily recognizable.
- * Our trucks now carry pictures of our characters on the trailer box making them mobile billboards.
- * New titles have been added by dropping the deadwood.
- * Excessive wording such as balloons and blurbs have been removed, wherever possible, from our covers to give them a cleaner look.
- * Our Text Pages have been a dull spot in our comics so I asked our writers to make them more exciting and they will be illustrated.
- * The "pink" flesh color was changed to true flesh and the task of coloring the comics was handed to artists Wayne Howard and Wendy Fiori.
- * The comics line was divided into six categories so that each group could be researched separately for its strengths and weaknesses.
- * Our "House" ad (the ad which blows our own horn) was changed from a mere listing of some of our titles to a subscription ad with a complete list of our titles and a free offer.
- * I instructed my assistant, Nick Cuti, to write a Comic Book Guide in order that new comers to our business will be aware of the standards of comic art and we offered the Guide free with each subscription.
- * I cooperate with the fans by giving them information and material for their fanzines.
- * I personally became involved in Merchandising and Sales promotion and I've initiated projects that will increase our distribution, making our comics more available to our readers.

- * Instead of straight anthology books we are experimenting with using full length features.
- * When Lee Falk complained about the way we were handling his creation The Phantom we went to different artists and writers in order to satisfy him and the response from our readers as well as from Lee Falk shows that our move was correct.
- * I have re-entered the Super-hero field with two unique characters "E-Man" (by Nick Cuti and Joe Staton) and "Yang" (by Joe Gill and Warren Sattler.)
- * I have collaborated with King Features to bring out a series of Educational Comics designed to teach children painlessly how to read and be aware of future careers.

Many of you may not be impressed with some of these changes because you will say that the other companies have been doing some of these things (letter pages, full length features, super-heroes) all along. True, I have a lot of catching up to do but we have created a momentum that is constantly gathering speed and shows no signs of slowing. Every one of our innovations, thus far, has met with success and there are many things which we are planning to do that is... well... too new to mention yet. You will be the biggest gainers in our improvement campaign so: "Keep Your Eye On The Charlton Bullseye"! Our name will soon come to mean quality and leadership in the comics field.

