

# MAELSTROM

THE ULTIMATE FANZINE

No. 1, Spring '74



The  
Avenger

THE  
Shadow

DOC  
SAVAGE

STREET SMITH

## ~ DEDICATION ~

**I** WISH TO DEDICATE THIS FIRST ISSUE OF *MAELSTROM*, TO FANDOM'S **GREATEST** ARTIST. A MAN WHO HAS DRAWN MORE FOR FANZINES THAN ANY OTHER. A MAN WHO, FOR OVER A DECADE, CARRIED ON AN ALMOST SINGLE-HANDED CAMPAIGN TO PERPETUATE THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL, **CAPTAIN MARVEL**. A MAN WHO HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO COMIC FANDOM, BUT HAS YET TO RECEIVE THE FULL RECOGNITION HE DESERVES. I MET HIM,,,,, AND I **RESPECT** HIM, HE IS A TRUE PROFESSIONAL. TAKE A BOW **ALAN JAMES HANLEY**, YOU DESERVE IT!!!

SINCERELY,  
**RUSS MAHERAS**  
EDITOR, MAELSTROM  
MAGAZINE



# MAELSTROM

## THE ULTIMATE FANZINE

Vol. 1, no. 1

May, 1974

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COVER; MIKE W<sup>M</sup> KALUTA

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**E. BRIAN MURPHY** ~ WRITER, AND  
LITERARY CONSULTANT

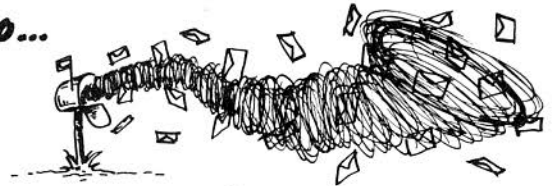


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We're small, so we read 'em all!



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CHICAGO ILL. 60651

Letters...

# NEXT ISH

(unless nobody writes)

## Editorial

by Russ Maheras

Welcome to the first issue of MAELSTROM. This fanzine is hopefully one of the better fan publications around today, and hopefully worth your hard-earned dollar bill.

MAELSTROM exemplifies each staff-man's effort to improve, as well as possible, on the way illustrated magazines now appear. This IS the first issue, though, and each individual is still grasping for a definite way to express his ideas. Thus, by the time issue number two sees print, sometime in August, you can expect much better art and story continuity.

The idea of a fanzine first crossed my mind around two years ago, when I saw George Breo's CHRONICLE. I said to myself "Man! Why can't I do something like that?", and I went to Roy's (who was a whiz on movies, and who I had already been drawing with for over a quarter of a decade), and said "Hey, let's do a fanzine." That night, a cover (done on typing paper), the name MAELSTROM (which I picked just because it sounded good), and two pages were done. Two years later, work started again. Now, after six months of hard work and frustration, you hold in your hands the finished product. The one original page that survived the two year wait is SUPERHEROES IN THE CINEMA, and that only after a complete rewrite by Roy.

And now, meet the meager staff:

RUSSELL MAHERAS, 19 - Like most other artists, I hope to draw for the pros some day. I've been drawing now for six years and have had to pick up what I could by myself. My biggest influence has been the Kirby-Ayers team, yet I have never directly swiped any of their work. I've read all the early Marvels so many times, that I have Lee, Kirby, and Ayers ingrained in my style. I'm not nearly as good, but I try.

ROY KINNARD, 22 - Although Roy is a talented writer-artist, his heart is with movies, and primarily special effects such as three-dimensional animation. His enthusiasm stems forth from years of viewing films, beginning with KING KONG, when he was five years old (he claims that since then he's seen it thirty-seven times). His major influence with comics is, like myself, Lee and Kirby. Again, Roy does not believe that swiping is the answer to a good strip. All of the work he does is his own.

E. BRIAN MURPHY, 25 - Brian's background stems from a cornucopia of literary genres. With a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature, Brian enjoys all types of reading material. However, his obsession is the bloody pulps, with which, as you can find out for yourself in the article A HOUSEFUL OF DEATH, he handles fairly well. Brian's favorite comics are REX THE WONDER DOG, WONDER WOMAN, and THE SHADOW.



ORIGINAL MAELSTROM CONCEPT, CIRCA 1971.





A FREAK OF NATURE UNFOLDS THE MOST STARTLING TALE EVER TOLD, WHEN A MURDEROUS GANG FROM THE 30'S RETURNS TO KILL AGAIN! WATCH OUT FOR THE DEADLY....

# BRENNAN MOB



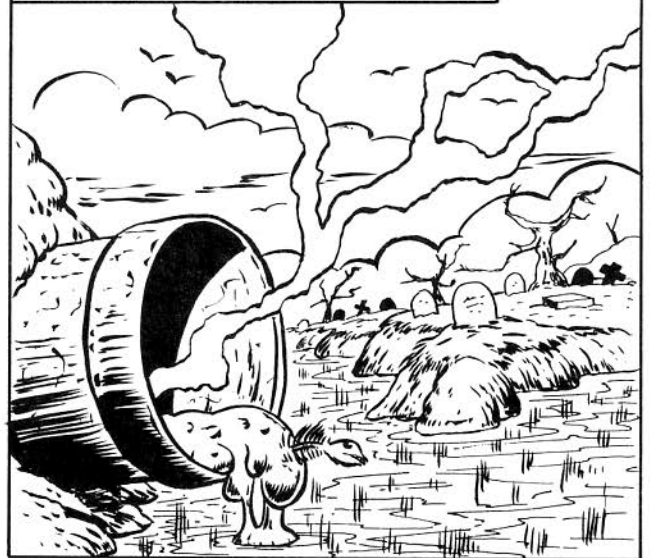
BLAZING ACTION!  
THRILLING SUSPENSE!

PLOT & CHARACTERS by ROY KINNARD - SCRIPT & ART by RUSS MAHERAS

OUR STORY OPENS ALONG A TYPICAL RIVER NEAR THE SPRAWLING INDUSTRIAL SECTION OF COSMOPOLIS. FOR YEARS, FACTORIES HAD SPEWED THEIR RAW SEWAGE INTO THE RIVER'S MAW.



THIS RAW SEWAGE, MADE OF COUNTLESS CHEMICAL WASTES, HAD, DURING THE YEARS, MIXED AND REMIXED INTO COMPOUNDS UNKNOWN.



THESE COMPOUNDS SEEPED INTO THE LAND BY THE BANKS OF THE RIVER, AND OVER THE YEARS BLENDED WITH THE SOIL, UNTIL... ONE DAY... THEY FINALLY CAUSED...



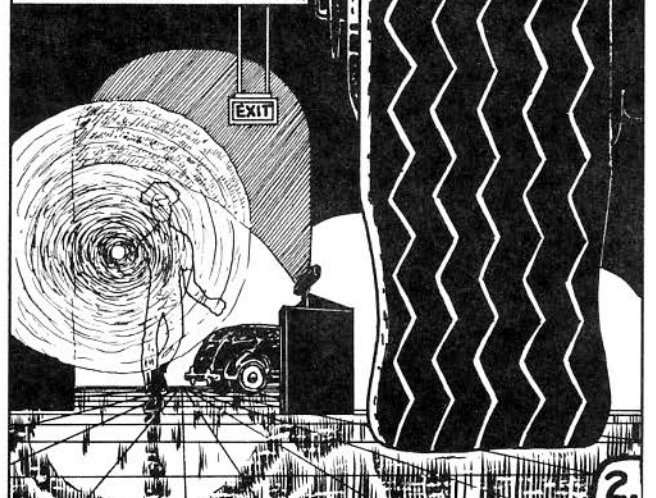
A STARTLING... REACTION!



LATER THAT NIGHT, AT THE LOCAL MUSEUM, THERE IS AS OF YET, NO SIGN OF THE GRIM TALE WHICH IS TO UNFOLD. THE ONLY SOUND WITHIN THE STRUCTURE IS A FAMILAR ONE...



IT IS THE STACCATO BEAT OF THE NIGHT WATCHMAN'S SHOES UPON THE ANCIENT FLOOR. HIS EVENING TREK AMID THE RELICS OF THE PAST IS UNEVENTFUL. THAT IS, UNTIL HE ENTERS THE ANTIQUE AUTO WING...





FOR WHERE THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A RARE ANTIQUE, THERE WAS NONE!

THE CAR, IT-- IT'S GONE!



NEWS TRAVELS FAST, SO MINUTES LATER, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, THE POLICE CHIEF IS INTERRUPTED BY AN URGENT REPORT!

CAP'N BOGART! ANOTHER MUSEUM ROBBERY!!

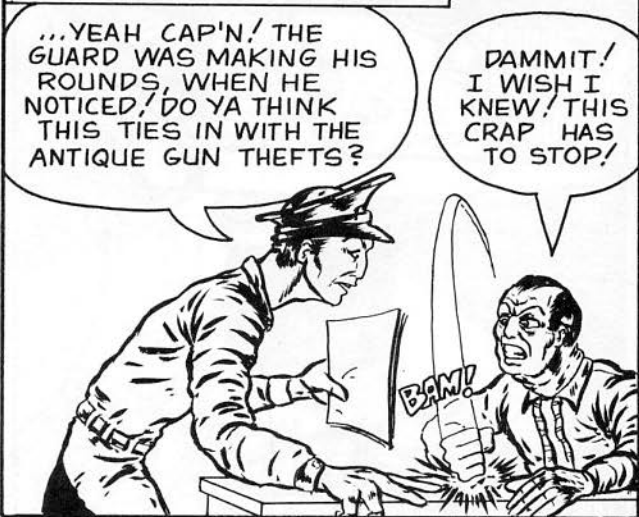
WHAT TH--?



THE DESK SERGEANT QUICKLY GIVES CAPTAIN R. BOGART THE DETAILS OF THE BIZARRE ROBBERY...

...YEAH CAP'N! THE GUARD WAS MAKING HIS ROUNDS, WHEN HE NOTICED! DO YA THINK THIS TIES IN WITH THE ANTIQUE GUN THEFTS?

DAMMIT! I WISH I KNEW! THIS CRAP HAS TO STOP!



AS THE SERGEANT LEAVES THE CAPTAIN TO BROOD, BOGART TRIES TO FIND A MOTIVE!

BOTH THOSE ROBBERIES WERE TIED IN! THE GUNS AND THE CAR BOTH USED TO BELONG TO CHOKE THE SLIM BRENNAN MOB! BUT THEY'RE LONG SINCE DEAD! I-IT COULDN'T BE!

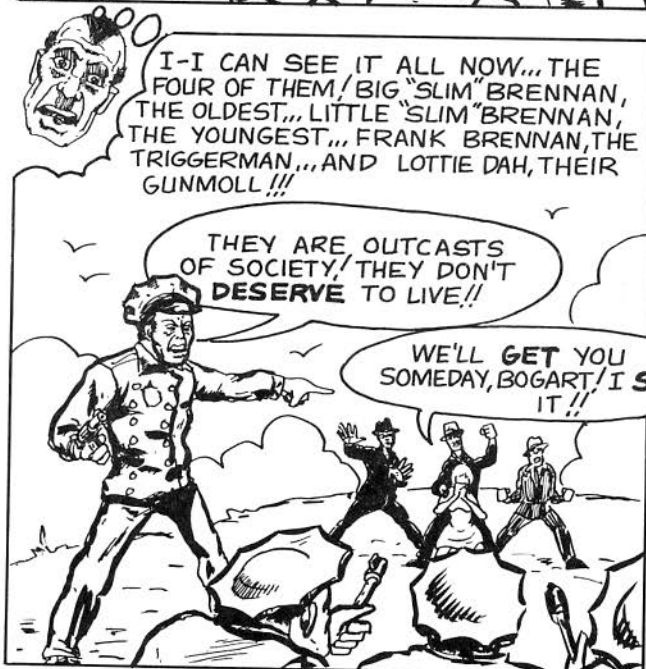
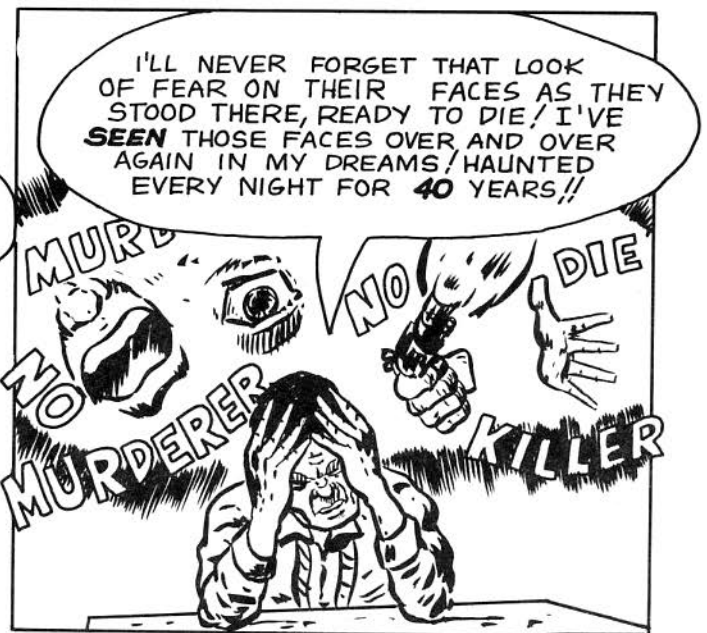
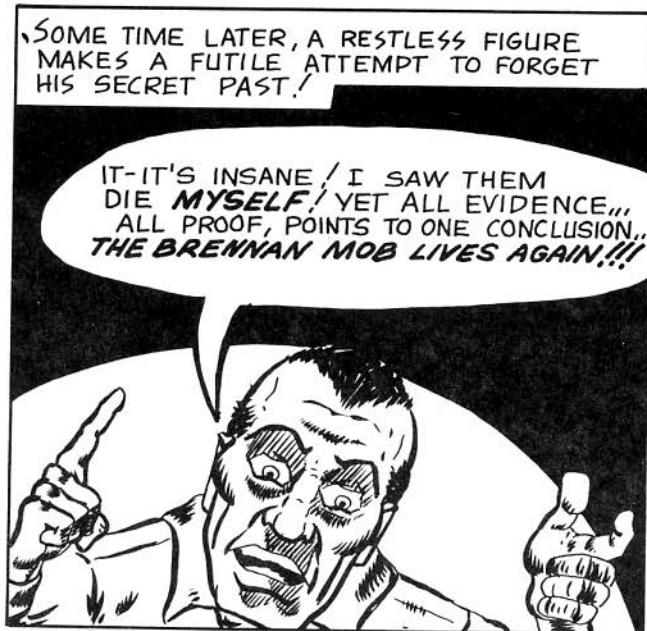


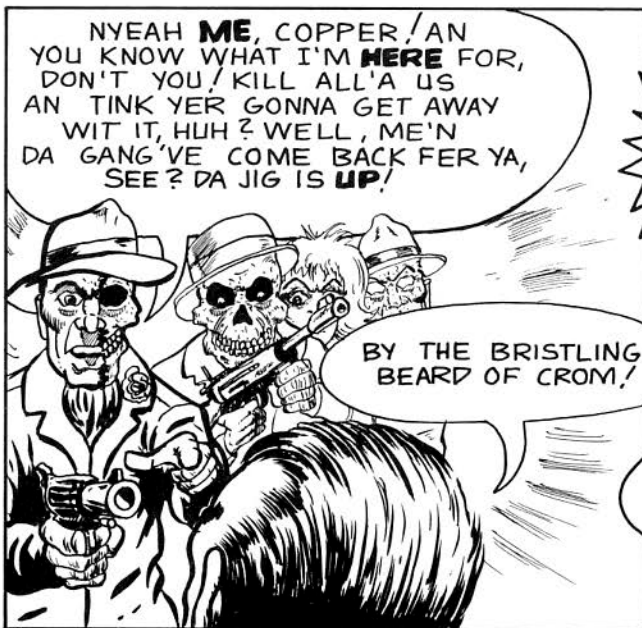
MISSING GUNS...MISSING CARS...THE PUZZLE IS INTRICATE, BUT CLOSE TO SOLUTION!











**HEY!** ARE YOU ONE OF THOSE MORONS WHO LIKES TO ENTER ALL KINDS OF RIDICULOUS CONTESTS? IF SO, THEN THIS IS FOR YOU...

**Announcing for the FIRST TIME...**

**ANYWHERE...**

*The Official*

# **MAELSTROM** **Contest**

**NAME  
THE  
VILLIAN**

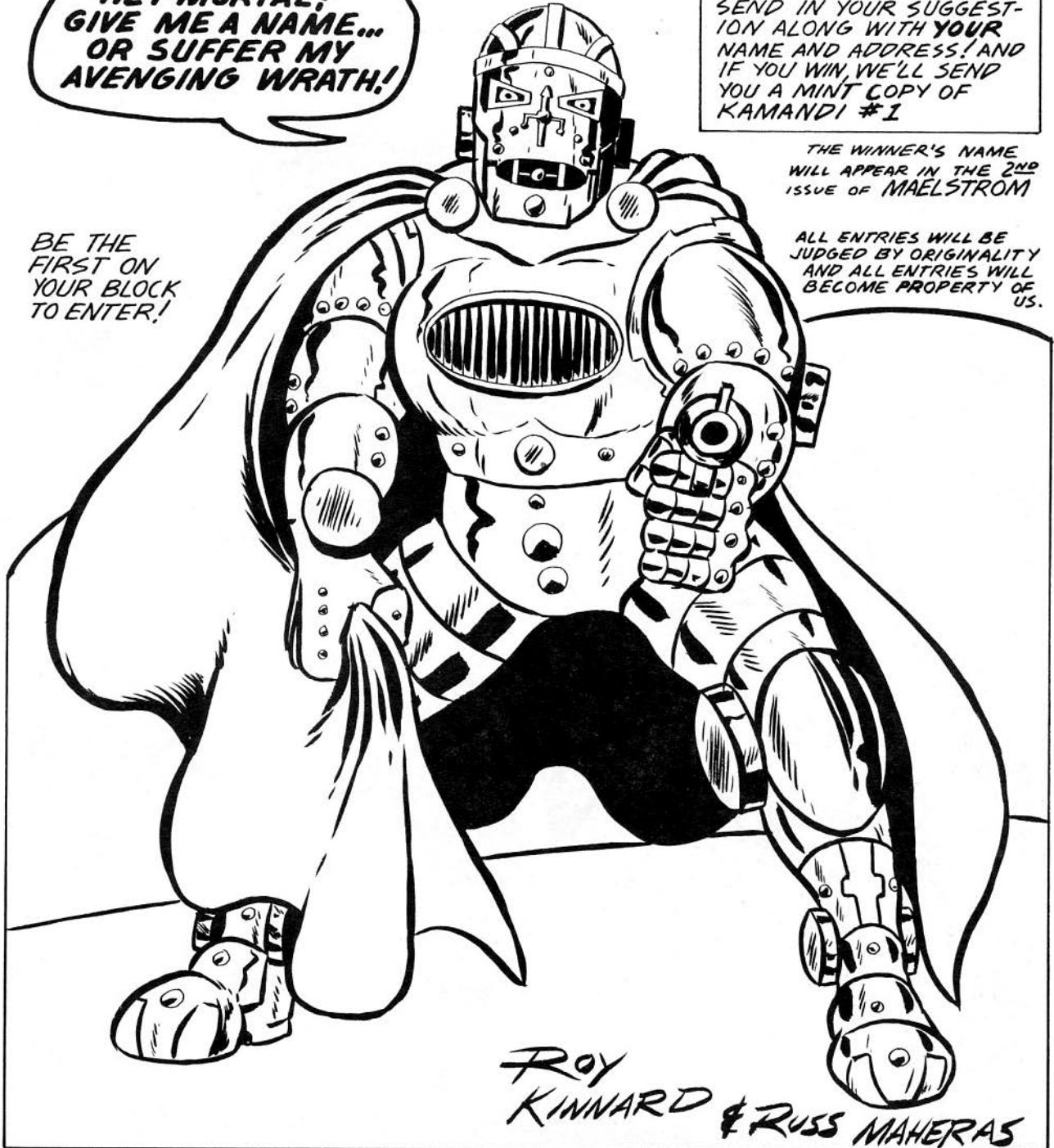
**HEY MORTAL!  
GIVE ME A NAME...  
OR SUFFER MY  
AVENGING WRATH!**

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS NAME THE VILLIAN!  
YES, THAT'S ALL! THEN SEND IN YOUR SUGGESTION ALONG WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS! AND IF YOU WIN, WE'LL SEND YOU A MINT COPY OF KAMANDI #1

THE WINNER'S NAME WILL APPEAR IN THE 2ND ISSUE OF MAELSTROM

BE THE FIRST ON YOUR BLOCK TO ENTER!

ALL ENTRIES WILL BE JUDGED BY ORIGINALITY AND ALL ENTRIES WILL BECOME PROPERTY OF US.



**ROY  
KINNARD & RUSS MAHERAS**



HE *LIVES!!!*  
HE *BREATHS!!!*  
HE'S THE MIGHTY ....

# GACK!

*PUNY FOOLS! RUN...  
RUN! FOR I AM... GACK!*

THE CREATURE FROM PLANET  
**ZAK!!**

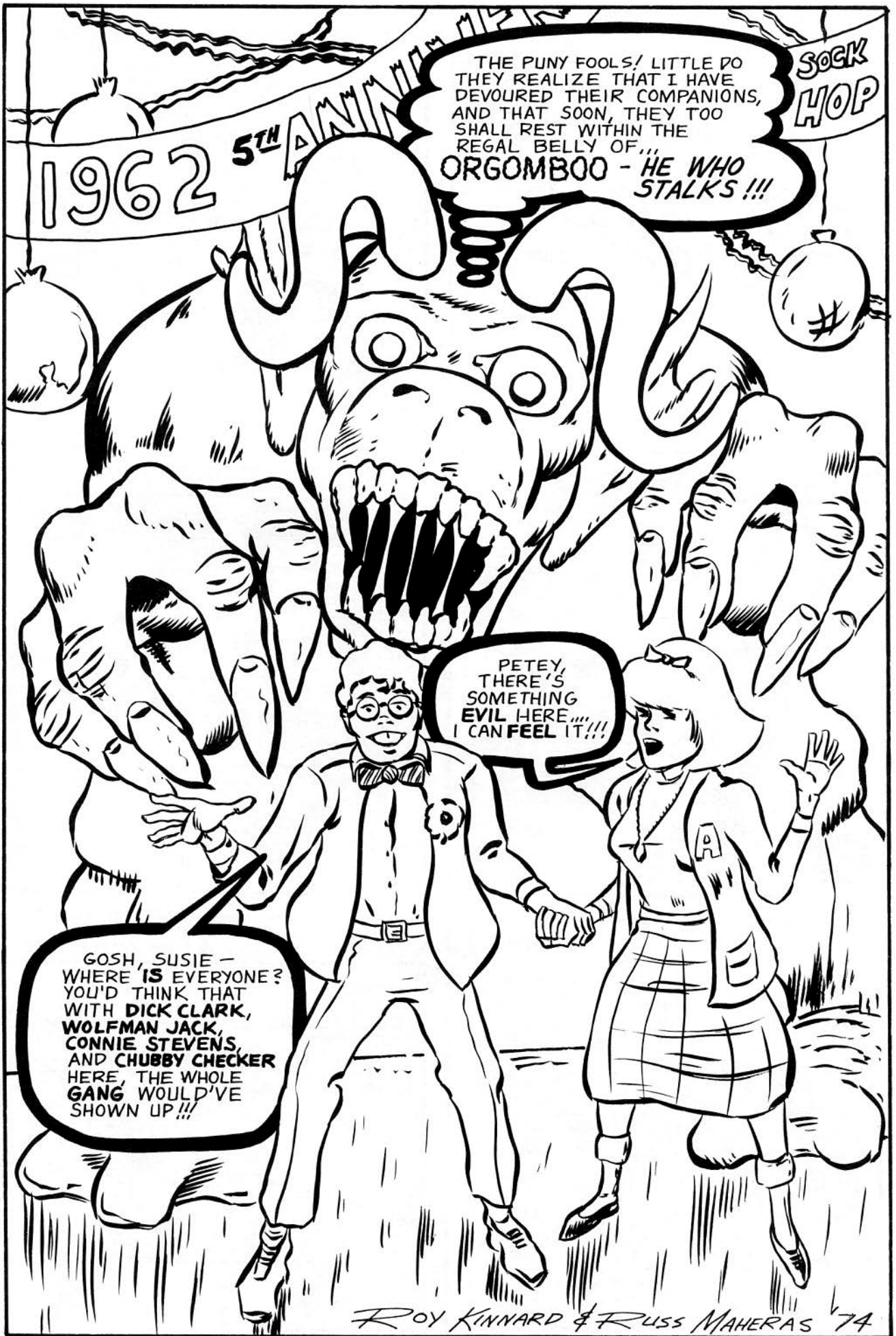
RUSS MAHERAS '74

HEY JACK! GRAB YOUR BACK-  
PACK AND DON'T STOP FOR A  
SNACK, 'CAUSE THE FLACK CAN'T  
FORCE BACK THE SAD SACK GACK,  
FROM PLANET ZAK, WHO'S GOT  
THE POWER TO HACK OUR ACK-ACK  
TO HELL 'AN BACK, AS THO IT  
WAS NO MORE'N A TACK! EYACK!

YEAH!







THE PUNY FOOLS! LITTLE DO THEY REALIZE THAT I HAVE DEVOURD THEIR COMPANIONS, AND THAT SOON, THEY TOO SHALL REST WITHIN THE REGAL BELLY OF... ORGOMBOO - HE WHO STALKS!!!

SOCK HOP

1962 5TH ANNUAL

PETEY, THERE'S SOMETHING EVIL HERE... I CAN FEEL IT!!!

GOSH, SUSIE - WHERE IS EVERYONE? YOU'D THINK THAT WITH DICK CLARK, WOLFMAN JACK, CONNIE STEVENS, AND CHUBBY CHECKER HERE, THE WHOLE GANG WOULD'VE SHOWN UP!!!

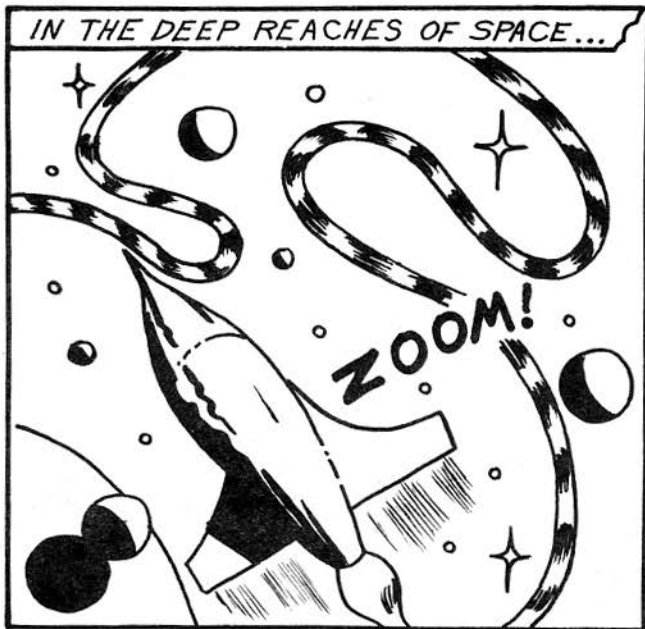
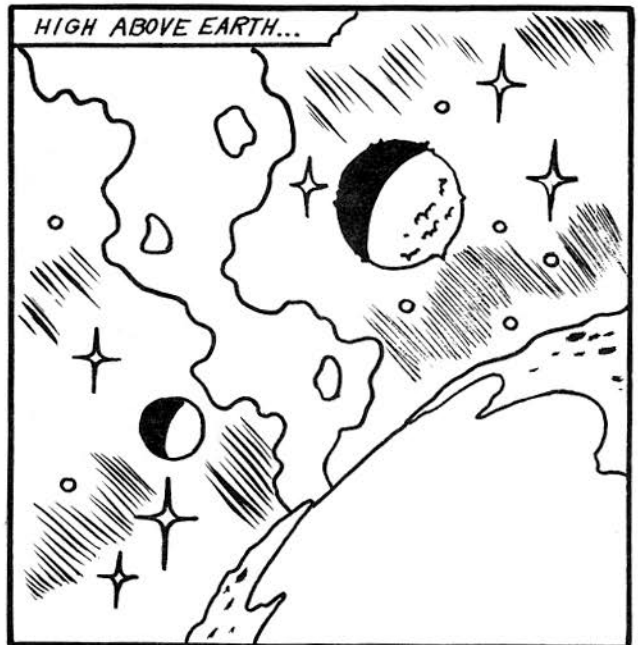
ROY KINNARD & RUSS MAHERAS '74

# SPACE-DOLL

A  
ROY  
KINNARD

FANTA-COMEDY

"AVENGING ANGEL OF THE SPACEWAYS!"



YES, SPACE-DOLL! THE AVENGING ANGEL OF THE SPACEWAYS! POSSESSING DYNAMIC STRENGTH AND AWESOME POWERS, SHE ROAMS THE UNIVERSE, RIGHTING WRONGS!

~~~~~  
BUT WHO IS SPACE-DOLL, AND HOW DID SHE COME TO BE???? FOR THE STARTLING AND ASTOUNDING ANSWERS TO THESE BURNING QUESTIONS, WE MUST TURN THE COSMIC CLOCK BACK... BACK...





UNFORTUNATELY, THE CUSTOMERS PATTY SERVED WEREN'T VERY NICE!!

MOLDY FRAZZGADS!!

HUBBA-HUBBA, BABY!!!



IN FACT, THEY WERE DOWNRIGHT OBNOXIOUS!!!

HAW, HAW, HAW!!!

BOOT!

JEEZUS MOMAWATTS!



AND THEN ONE DAY...

BUS STOP

SIGH!!

PATTY WAS ATTACKED BY A MUGGER, AND AT THAT INSTANT, A METEOR STRUCK HER IN THE HEAD, ENDOWING HER WITH SUPER-POWERS!!



ZZZZZZZ!!!

POW!

ACK! A MUGGER!



OOK! FOR ONE SO INCREDIBLY FRAGILE YOU DEMOLISH MY CRANIUM WITH ASTONISHING EASE!!!

GOLLY BEJEEZUS, THIS IS FUN!!



GOLLY BEJEEZUS!!

AND SO WAS BORN SPACE-DOLL-AVENGING ANGEL OF THE SPACEWAYS!!!!

END



# A Houseful of Death!

by E. Brian Murphy



**A**N EERIE SILENCE DESCENDED UPON THE ROOM. SCRIBBLE, SCRIBBLE... "WAS HE BULLETPROOF?" SAID THE ARTIST. "NOT REALLY, HE WORE A CELLUGLASS--NO, THAT WAS THE AVENGER--DOC SAVAGE'S BULLETPROOF VEST WAS A METAL MESH. HE ALSO WORE A METAL HELMET THAT LOOKED LIKE HIS HAIR. THIS WAS BULLETPROOF, TOO."

"KINDA REMINDS ME OF THE 'BAMA' DOC SAVAGE."  
HE GESTURED AT THE POSTER ON THE WALL AND I NODDED.

RUSS, MY ILLUSTRATOR FRIEND, HAD BEEN GROPING FOR A PULP SUBJECT TO DRAW FOR THIS ARTICLE:

"WHO WAS THE TOUGHEST VILLAIN HE EVER FACED?"

"THE TOUGHEST ONE--EH. WELL, THE ONLY ONE I KNOW THAT DOC FOUGHT WHO LATER RETURNED WAS JOHN SUNLIGHT. BUT AS FAR AS THE TOUGHNESS ALONE, THERE WAS THE OLD MAN ON FEAR CAY, AND THE SPOTTED MEN..."

THE PROPOSED ACTION SCENE QUICKLY FADED FROM RUSS'S GAZE AS I RATTLED OFF ONE TOUGH VILLAIN AFTER ANOTHER ONE. HE FINALLY SETTLED FOR THE IDEA OF SKETCHING A COMPARISON OF THE DOC SAVAGE OF THE FORTIES AND

THE DOC OF THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES. AS I NOTED HIS FEELING OF EASE AT THE PROSPECT OF MATCHING PENCILS WITH THE MASTERS, I HAD TO REMARK:

"DON'T BE FOOLED," I SAID, "BAMA IS A PRETTY HARD ACT TO FOLLOW." RUSS STARTED TO WORK; I STARTED TO DREAM...

THE STINGING WORDS OF "EL DIABLO" BROUGHT ME TO MY SENSES. WHERE WAS I? I GUESS IT DIDN'T MATTER. I WAS BOUND TIGHTLY TO A POST IN THE MIDDLE OF A SMALL ROOM. MY ONLY TWO AIDES IN THIS CASE--PIERRE AND PRONTITO--WERE BOTH BOUND TO THE POST ALONG WITH ME. THE OLD, FAMILIAR FEELINGS CAME BACK TO ME: I BEGAN TO TEST THE ROPES THAT HELD ME FOR THEIR HIDDEN WEAKNESSES. PIERRE AWOKE WITH A START. I BEGAN TO TAP ON HIS BINDINGS IN MORSE AS "DIABLO'S" VOICE GRATED OVER THE P.A. LOCATED ABOVE THE DOORWAY:

"WHY DID YOU COME ALL THIS WAY ONLY TO BE TRAPPED LIKE A RAT, SEARCHER? WHY ARE YOU GIVING YOUR LIFE BECAUSE OF ME?"

THE P.A. RATTLED ON--IT SEEMED ODD THAT THE VILLAIN DID NOT REALIZE THE AMOUNT OF TIME HE WAS GIVING ME. TITO WAS AWAKE. THE VOICE FROM THE BOX DRUMMED ON--NOW I KNEW!



THE VOICE OVER THE SPEAKER WAS A RECORD. WE HAD TO WORK FAST.

"TITO! CAN YOU WORK YOUR WAY FREE?"

"NO, SENOR--TOO TIGHT!"

"PIERRE, CAN YOU BREAK THE ROPE?"

"OUI--THEES ROPE, SHE IS NOT SO BAD. EET IS THEES ROOM THAT GEEVE ME THE WORRY."  
"TITO, TAKE A DEEP BREATH--YOU'RE GOING TO NEED IT."

I COULD HEAR THE INTAKE AS MY AIDES AND I PREPARED FOR WHAT I HOPED TO BE THE FINAL ACT IN THIS BIZARRE ESCAPE. THE PRESSURE BEGAN IMMEDIATELY. PIERRE LOST NO TIME. HIS MONOLITHIC STRUCTURE STRETCHED AND PULLED UNTIL I COULD HAVE SWORN I HEARD A CRACKING SOUND IN TITO'S RIBS. THE SNAP OF THE ROPES CUT THROUGH THE DRONING OF THE SPEAKER. WE WERE FREE--BUT AT SUCH A COST! SEVERAL OF PRONTITO'S RIBS WERE BROKEN. HE LAY OUT-STRETCHED ON THE FLOOR, GASPING FOR BREATH.

MY GASP WAS ALMOST VISIBLE.

"RUSS, THAT'S A FANTASTIC SKETCH."

"GREAT. NOW TELL ME ABOUT THE THREE PULP HEROES, LIKE YOU PROMISED."

SO I BEGAN TO TELL OF THE EXPLOITS OF WALTER GIBSON--OR WAS IT LAMONT CRANSTON--OR WAS IT MAXWELL GRANT?

THE FIRST OF THE BIG THREE MONEYMAKING HEROES OF THE PULPS (BY MODERN STANDARDS OF POPULARITY) IS A LONG DISTANCE RUNNER NAMED THE SHADOW. AMONG THE FIRST OF HIS INFAMOUS ADVENTURES, HE IS RUMORED TO BE A SCARRED SPY INVOLVED IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR, WHO LATER ADOPTED THE DISGUISE OF A BLACK OUTFIT WITH FULL CAPE, BLAZING FORTY-FIVE'S, AND A FLOPPY BLACK HAT. THE TRUE EXTENT OF THE CHARACTER'S ABILITIES IS REVEALED AS THE SERIES PROGRESSES. THE TRUE ORIGIN AND IDENTITY OF THE SHADOW IS NOT REVEALED UNTIL THE AUGUST 1, 1937 ISSUE OF STREET AND SMITH'S THE SHADOW, WHERE IT IS RECOUNTED THAT THE HERO IS IN REALITY A RECENTLY FOUND AVIATOR NAMED KENT ALLARD, WHO PRETENDED TO BE SHOT DOWN BY THE ENEMY IN WORLD WAR ONE AND SPIED FOR THE DURATION. ALLARD RETIRED FROM THE WAR TO TURN AGAINST CRIME. HE PURPOSELY CRASHED IN GUATAMALA TO FAKE HIS OWN DEATH, WHILE HE TRAVELED TO AMERICA TO TURN HIS SPYING TECHNIQUES AGAINST EVILDOERS.

THE SHADOW MAGAZINE BEGAN IN APRIL, 1931 UNDER THE AUTHORSHIP OF WALTER GIBSON, ALIAS "MAXWELL GRANT." THE SHADOW MOVED DEFTLY THROUGH THE DARK HABITATIONS OF CRIME UNTIL HE BECAME ADEPT AT CONCEALING HIMSELF FROM THE EYES OF MEN. THE MYSTERIOUS POWER HE ACQUIRED FOR "CLOUDING MEN'S MINDS" WAS, IN THE MAIN, THE INVENTION OF THE RADIO WRITERS OF THE STREET AND SMITH DETECTIVE SHOW. THE ACTUAL MAGAZINE RAN AN INCREDIBLE THREE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE ISSUES, OVERPOWERING THE STAFF OF THE MAGAZINE AND THE FANS OF RADIO WITH ITS POPULARITY. THE CHARACTER ON THE RADIO WAS THE VOICE OF ORSON WELLES, FOLLOWED ON THE SCREEN, LATER, BY THE FACE OF VICTOR JORY. THE SERIES ENDED IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE YEAR OF THE ULTIMATE CATASTROPHE IN THE PULP WORLD: 1950.

THE CHARACTER CREATED BY GIBSON IS CLOAKED IN MYSTERY. MOST OF THE DETAILS OF THE ORIGIN ARE VAGUE OR PURPOSELY IMPRECISE. ONE OVERPOWERING TRUTH IS CLEAR: THAT THE IDENTITY OF LAMONT CRANSTON IS TAKEN OVER BY THE SHADOW. IN THE THIRD ADVENTURE, CRANSTON IS CONFRONTED BY HIS DOUBLE IN THE PERSON OF THE SHADOW, WHO INFORMS HIM THAT HE MUST MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY IF HE DOES NOT WANT TO BE "EXPOSED" AS AN IMPOSTER BY A MAN WHO HAS STUDIED THE ROLE OF THE PLAYBOY TO SUCH PERFECTION THAT HE IS ABLE TO GIVE AN IMITATION THAT IS AS REAL OR BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL. CRANSTON IS FORCED TO FLEE, ALTHOUGH THE SHADOW LATER SUMMONS HIM BACK TO AID HIM IN HIS PURSUIT OF CRIMINALS.

THOUGH THE BASIS OF THE CHARACTER IS FOUND IN THE VOICE OF THE NARRATOR OF THE ORIGINAL STREET AND SMITH DETECTIVE SHOW OF THE RADIO, THE ENDLESS ATTRACTION OF THE PULPS STEMS FROM THE INEXHAUSTIBLE MIND OF WALTER GIBSON. HIS SKILL FAR SURPASSED THAT OF HIS IMMEDIATE CONTEMPORARIES IN THE PULP FIELD. THE FULL-LENGTH SHADOW WORKS NUMBER ABOUT 178. THE WORLD OF THE AUTHOR WHO MADE THESE FULL-LENGTH WORKS COME ALIVE OFTEN TURNED INTO A LONG NIGHTMARE, SIMILAR TO SOME OF THE ONES HE PICTURED FOR HIS HERO: THE WRITERS OF HIS DAY WERE, FOR THE MOST PART, MORE APPRECIATED FOR THEIR ABILITY TO TURN OUT FAST WORK RATHER THAN FINE WORK. "MAXWELL GRANT" WOULD, IN A HALF-SLEEP, SEE HIS FINGERS RISE FROM THE KEYBOARD COVERED WITH A FILM OF BLOOD. GIBSON WOULD SOMETIMES WORK FROM ONE TYPEWRITER TO ANOTHER WITHOUT STOPPING. HE WOULD FIND HIMSELF ENTERING THE CHARACTERS FROM ONE STORY INTO ANOTHER. A PIECE OF A SHADOW PLOT WOULD BE FOUND LATER IN THE MIDDLE OF STREET AND SMITH'S DETECTIVE TALES.

THE FIRST, AND MOST NOTED, OF THE SHADOW'S AIDES IS HARRY VINCENT, WHO IS SAVED FROM SUICIDE BY AN ELUSIVE STRANGER WHO CLAIMS THE RIGHT TO USE VINCENT'S LIFE IN ANY WAY THIS SAVIOR SEES FIT. VINCENT GRADUALLY BECOMES A VITAL LINK IN THE CHAIN OF COMMAND ORGANIZED BY THE SHADOW. ANOTHER VITAL LINK, CLAUDE FELLOWS, IS KILLED EARLY IN THE WORKS. HE IS THE AIDE WHO COMES BEFORE VINCENT, CHRONOLOGICALLY SPEAKING, AND WHO SEEMS TO KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT THE HERO SO EARLY IN THE SERIES. WHERE THE LEGS OF HARRY VINCENT BECOME IMPORTANT AS TOOLS OF THE TRADE; THE MIND OF CLAUDE FELLOWS BECOMES HIS BASIC WEAPON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CRIME. HIS IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS AND HIS TALENT FOR DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE REASONING PROVE QUITE VALUABLE UNTIL HIS DEATH



"THE WEED  
OF CRIME  
BEARS  
BITTER  
FRUIT!"

IN GANGDOM'S DOOM, THE ONLY SHADOW ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF AN AIDE IN THE LINE OF DUTY, THE THIRD OF THE SHADOW'S AIDES, MARGO LANE, RECEIVED MORE ATTENTION ON THE RADIO THAN IN THE PULPS. THE REMAINING AIDES: HAWKEYE, CLYDE BURKE, CLIFF MARSLAND, BURBANK, MOE SHREVNITZ, AMONG OTHERS, PRESENT TOO MUCH MATERIAL TO BE COVERED IN DETAIL.

THE RADIO SERIES WORKED MORE TOWARD PUTTING MARGO LANE IN THE PULP MAGAZINE, INSTEAD OF VICE-VERSA. THE PULP FANS WERE IN FAVOR MORE OF KEEPING THE WOMEN OUT OF THE BOOK--THEY WERE A MALE AUDIENCE THAT READ ONLY "MANLY" MAGAZINES. THE CHARACTER OF MARGO WAS USED BOTH AS A FOIL AND AS A POSSIBLE ROMANTIC INTEREST. THE RADIO SERIES ALSO PUT MORE STRESS ON THE SECRET IDENTITY MYTH OF THE SHADOW--CRANSTON WAS A FICTIONAL PERSON, NOT ANOTHER SUIT OF CLOTHES FOR THE HERO. THE SERIES FOR THE LISTENING AUDIENCE COULD BE ACTED OUT IN A CLOSET; OPPOSED TO THE PULP STORIES THAT ARE FILLED WITH PERIL-

OUS TRAPS AND FAST-ACTION SEQUENCES THAT COULD BRING TO THE IMAGINATION IMAGES OF MANY A TIGHT SQUEEZE...

PIERRE THREW HIS OVERPOWERING FRAME AGAINST THE DOOR--WITH NO RESULTS. THEN HE BEGAN POUNDING AWAY WITH HIS MASSIVE FISTS. HUGE CHUNKS OF SOUNDPROOFED WOOD WERE TORN AWAY TO REVEAL A COATING OF SOLID STEEL! I PULLED PIERRE AWAY FROM THE DOOR LONG ENOUGH TO CONVINCE HIM THAT HE SHOULD BE POUNDING THE SLATS AWAY FROM THE MOLDING--LOOKING FOR THE CIRCUITRY THAT MIGHT ACTUATE THE DOOR MECHANISM. I TOOK HOLD OF ONE LARGE, BROKEN SLAT AND BEGAN TAPPING THE CEILING WITH IT. I HIT A HOLLOW SOUND ABOVE MY HEAD AND I CALLED TO PIERRE TO LIFT ME UP. I COULD SEE THAT THE PAINT AND PLASTER COVERING THE AIR VENT WAS POROUS. I BATTED IT WITH MY FIST AND THE COVERING FELL AWAY IN A THOUSAND LITTLE PIECES. I USED MY OWN BODY AS A LEVER AS I GRIPPED THE GRATING, HOLDING STEADY WHILE PIERRE PULLED ME DOWN FROM THE CEILING. I FELT THE GRATING GIVE WITH A LOW SQUEAK. I PULLED IT FREE. THE OPENING WAS VERY SMALL--A JOB FOR THE COMPACT PRONTITO. I TOOK A LAST LOOK AT HIS PATHETIC FORM, STILL GASPING FROM A SET OF CAVED-IN RIBS, BEFORE I MADE A FORCED ASCENT THROUGH THE CONFINES OF THE VENTILATOR SYSTEM. I DARED NOT YET REVEAL TO MY AIDES THE SCENT THAT THEIR LESS-DEVELOPED SENSES COULD NOT YET DETECT--KEROSENE AND FUEL OIL COURSEING THROUGH THE DUCTS. DIABLO WAS PREPARING TO FIRE THE BUILDING!

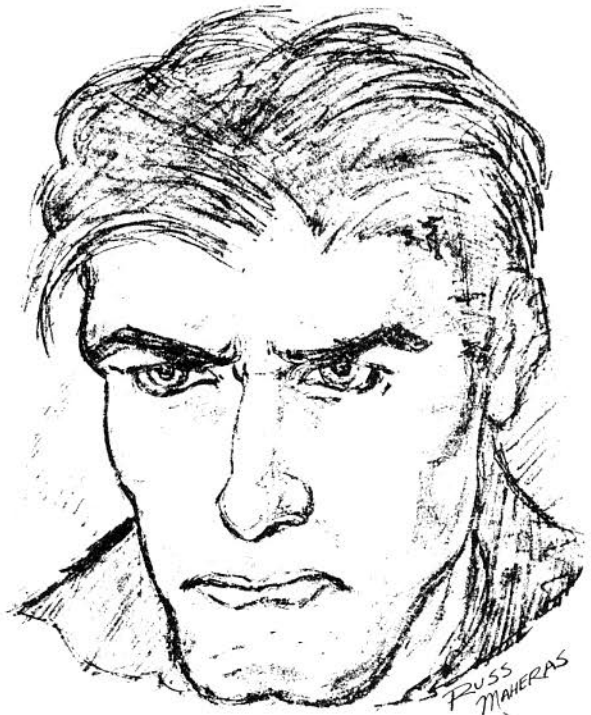
THE NEXT SENSATION TO REACH MY SENSES SENT A SICK FEELING TO THE PIT OF MY STOMACH: MACHINE-GUN FIRE SOMEWHERE BELOW ME. IT LOOKED LIKE THE MASTER CRIMINAL HAD NO FURTHER USE FOR HIS UNDERLINGS. I COULD CONFRONT EL DIABLO AND HIS LIEUTENANT NOW, BUT MY AIDES ALWAYS CAME FIRST: NO VILLAIN WAS AS IMPORTANT AS THEIR SAFETY. I SLID DOWN A SECTION OF THE DUCTS AND BEGAN TO KICK MY WAY OUT OF ITS CLAUSTROPHOBIC SPACES, IN THE DIN CREATED BY SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE. THERE WOULD STILL BE PRECIOUS MOMENTS LEFT UNTIL DIABLO FIRED THE BUILDING. I REACHED THE SPOT OUTSIDE THE STEEL-LINED ROOM AND BEGAN PROBING FOR THE PRESSURE PLATE THAT WOULD RELEASE THE DOOR. DEEP DOWN IN THE LOWER REACHES OF THE HOUSE I HEARD A CHILLING LAUGH--I COULD GUESS WHAT THE ARCH-CRIMINAL WAS UP TO. SUDDENLY, THE STEEL DOOR RUMBLED BACK AND PIERRE STEPPED FORWARD HOLDING TITO IN HIS ARMS. THE LITTLE MAN WOULD NOT UTTER A SOUND, BUT I KNEW THAT THE PAIN OF BEING MOVED IN HIS CONDITION MUST BE EXCRUCIATING. WE STARTED DOWN INTO UNKNOWN PERIL...

UNKNOWN PERILS WERE THE SPECIALITIES OF THE SECOND TRIUMPH FROM STREET AND SMITH. THE PUBLISHERS OF THE SHADOW WERE INTENT IN THEIR USE OF THIS NEWLY "FOUND" FORMULA FOR STORYTELLING AS A QUICK WAY TO THE MONEY. THEY SEARCHED THE CONFINES OF THE FIRM FOR A MAN WHO COULD MEASURE UP, IN SOME WAY, TO THE MACHINE-GUN TYPEWRITER OF WALTER GIBSON, AND THEY FOUND HIM IN THE PERSON OF LESTER DENT, WHO WAS DUBBED WITH THE COLORFUL HOUSE NAME OF KENNETH ROBESON. DENT WAS NOT STRONG IN GRAMMAR AND STORY STRUCTURE AS WERE SOME OF THE REMAINING STAFF, BUT HE COULD CHURN OUT DIME NOVELS WITH INCREDIBLE SPEED. DENT PINNED THE FORMULA FOR THE NOVELS HE WOULD WRITE ON THE WALL ABOVE HIS TYPEWRITER. BY FOLLOWING THIS FORMULA CLOSELY, VARYING IT FROM NOVEL TO NOVEL, KENNETH ROBESON WROTE 165 OUT OF THE 181 DOC SAVAGE MAGAZINES.

CLARK SAVAGE JUNIOR, "DOC SAVAGE," IS THE NUMBER TWO MAN IN THE LONG DISTANCE RACE OF THE HERO PULPS. HE WAS CREATED TO THE SPECIFICATIONS OF THE PUBLISHERS IN THE IMAGE OF THE ALL-AMERICAN BOY, WHO IS GOOD

WITH GADGETS, A LOOKER AMONG THE LADIES, AND GOOD TO THE CORE. DENT OUTDID HIMSELF BY PRODUCING A WELL-MUSCLED MARVEL OF BRONZE SCULPT WITH THE BRAIN OF A "QUIZ KID" AND THE GOODNESS OF GENERAL MILLS. THE WOMEN ARE VISIBLY STIRRED WHEN DOC ENTERS THE ROOM; HE MAKES ALL ATTEMPTS TO DISREGARD THEM, SINCE HIS HAZARDOUS OCCUPATION FORCES HIM TO DO SO IN ALL FAIRNESS AND CONCERN FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY. WOMEN ARE A DEFINITE WEAKNESS OF THE ALOOF HERO. DUE TO HIS HOPELESS INNOCENCE, THEY ARE CONSTANTLY BEING SAVED BY HIM, PUT OFF BY HIM, AND ENCHANTED WITH HIM. AT OTHER TIMES, THEY ARE CHASING HIM, TRAPPING HIM, BEGUILING HIM, AND TRYING TO FINISH HIM OFF.

THE SHADOW HIDES IN HIS OWN BLACKNESS; DOC ALMOST RADIATES A BRONZE GLOW. THE SHADOW WALKS THROUGH WALLS; DOC BREAKS THEM APART. THE FORMER IS LIKE AN UNDER-TOW; THE LATTER LIKE A GIANT WAVE. THERE IS NO POSSIBLE BASIS FOR A COMPARISON OF THE TWO CHARACTERS: THE FIRST APPEALS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO MYSTERY FANS; THE SECOND TO THOSE WHO CRAVE FAST ACTION. IN THE SHADOW, THE MYSTERY IS IN THE HERO. IN DOC SAVAGE, THE MYSTERY IS IN EACH OF THE VILLAINS OR IN THEIR "MODI OPERANDI." THE SHADOW CAN ONLY BE SUMMED UP IN A BOOK; WITH DOC SAVAGE, IT



## DOC, CIRCA 1938

CAN BE DONE IN A PARAGRAPH. BUT WHERE THE SHADOW POSSESSES UNBEATABLE MYSTERY--DOC HAS COLOR.

THIS SENSE OF COLOR IN THE SAVAGE NOVELS IS SEEN IN SEVERAL WAYS: IN THE NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE VILLAINS; IN THE VARIOUS OUTPOSTS TO WHICH THE HERO AND HIS CREW TRAVEL; AND IN THE UNCOMMON DEVICES USED FROM TIME TO TIME. ALMOST EVERY DOC ADVENTURE WISKS THE READER AWAY TO SECRET STRONGHOLDS OF THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST VILLAINS. DENT'S NAME-CALLING RANGES FROM THE MOST COLORFUL: JOHN SUNLIGHT, TO THE MOST RIDICULOUS PUT-ON: HECK NOE. THE READER IS ALWAYS IN FOR A GOOD TIME. CLARK SAVAGE JR. TRAMPS AROUND THE WORLD TO PLACES NEVER SEEN OR HEARD OF: A TROPICAL LAND OF THE JURASSIC GENRE UNDERNEATH THE POLE; A FORGOTTEN HIDE-OUT OF A RACE OF VIKINGS; AN ISLAND OF GOLD OGRES; A LOST MAYAN CIVILIZATION; A CITY UNDER THE SEA; AND AN EERIE WORLD ROOTED IN

THE TENDRILS OF THE SARGASSO SEA. SOME OF DENT'S PANORAMIC MATERIAL WAS BORROWED BY LATER WRITERS OF FICTION AND COMICS: IAN FLEMING USED THE "FANTASTIC ISLAND" AND ITS WARRIOR CRABS FOR A SEQUENCE IN DOCTOR NO; NATIONAL DC "LIFTED" DOC'S FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE--IT BECAME SUPERMAN'S FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE IN ACTION COMICS #241.

DOC SAVAGE'S AIDES ARE COMMON KNOWLEDGE TO PAPERBACK AND PULP FAN ALIKE. THE FABULOUS FIVE ARE ABOUT THE MOST "CAPTURED" OF THE HELPERS OF PULPDOM. THEY POSSESS MONI-KERS LONG ENOUGH TO OCCUPY THE GREATER PARTS OF THE ADVENTURES, WERE IT NOT FOR THE TRITE NICKNAMES APPLIED TO EACH MAN:

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ANDREW BLODGETT MAYFAIR MUST BE THE MOST WELL-CHARACTERIZED SECOND FIDDLE IN THE PULPS; HE IS ABLE TO TAKE THE LIMELIGHT FROM DOC HIMSELF ON OCCASION. MAYFAIR'S NAME IN THE ADVENTURES IS MONK, A NAME INDICATIVE OF THE MASTER CHEMIST'S NE-ANDERTHAL APPEARANCE. MONK'S ARMS HOVER AROUND HIS KNEECAPS, AND THE MAJOR PART OF HIS BODY IS COVERED WITH A SOLID LAYER OF FINE, RED HAIR. MONK IS ENDOWED WITH THE IMMORTAL "FACE THAT ONLY A MOTHER COULD LOVE." WALTER M. BAUMHOFER'S MASTERFUL RENDERING OF



**DOC, CIRCA 1968**

THE CHEMIST'S UGLY KISSER, ON THE COVER OF THE PULP THE SPOOK LEGION, MAKES DENT'S DESCRIPTION OF "HOMELY" SEEM LIKE A COMPLIMENT IN COMPARISON. THE PULP PAINTING OF BAUMHOFER IS REPRODUCED IN ALL ITS GLORY ON THE COVER OF THE NEWLY RELEASED DOC SAVAGE: HIS APOCALYPTIC LIFE. MONK IS AN ENDLESS SOURCE OF COMIC RELIEF FOR THE WRITER, WHOSE STOCK, GAG LINE IMPLEMENTED BETWEEN THE HAIRY CHEMIST AND HIS FELLOW FOIL IN THE SERIES, THEODORE MARLEY BROOKS, IS THE LINE USED IN FRONT OF THE PRETTY GIRLS: THAT ONE OR THE OTHER OF THE TWO AIDES HAS A WIFE AND THIRTEEN IDIOT CHILDREN. MAYFAIR AND BROOKS CARRY ON THEIR HEATED, BUT FRIENDLY RIVALRY IN OVER EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE DOC SAVAGE NOVELS WRITTEN.

BRIGADIER GENERAL THEODORE MARLEY BROOKS, CALLED "HAM," IS THE EXACT COUNTERPART TO THE STUPID-LOOKING, UNCOUTH BUT YET LOVEABLE MONK. HAM IS A PEERLESS DRESSER--

SO MUCH SO THAT NEWSMEN FROM THE FASHION COLUMNS FOLLOW HIM FROM PLACE TO PLACE TO OBTAIN LEADS ON THE NEWEST STYLES. HAM CARRIES ON A RUNNING ARGUMENT IN THE STORIES WITH HIS CLOSEST FRIEND--YES, MONK. THOUGH THE TWO CHARACTERS APPEAR TO BE COMING TO BLOWS, THEY ARE WILLING TO LAY THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE FOR EACH OTHER--A FICTIONAL SET OF FACTS WHICH THE AUTHOR USES VERBATUM IN NEARLY EVERY ADVENTURE TO HOLD THE NEW READERS (AND PAD THE EPISODE?) HAM IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS WASPISH AND SLENDER, AND HE IS FURTHER DISTINGUISHED BY HIS FREQUENT USE OF A SWORD-CANE DIPPED BY ITS TIP INTO AN INSTANT, SLEEP-INDUCING DRUG. BROOKS RECEIVED HIS NAME FROM THE RESULTS OF HIS OWN PRACTICAL JOKE ON MONK DURING THE WAR: THE LATTER WAS ABLE TO FRAME HAM FOR STEALING SEVERAL SLABS OF SAID MEAT--THE FRAME WAS SO SUCCESSFUL THAT BROOKS NEVER CLEARED HIMSELF OF THE CHARGE. THE VERY THOUGHT OF HAM OR THE MENTION OF THE WORD INFURIATES BROOKS, SINCE HE IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST LAWYERS--AFTER DOC SAVAGE, OF COURSE.

COLONEL JOHN RENWICK IS THE ONLY AIDE IN THE GROUP WHOSE HEIGHT IN ANY WAY RIVALS THAT OF DOC SAVAGE. WHAT MONK POSSESSES IN BULK WEIGHT (260+ POUNDS), "RENNY" CLAIMS IN HEIGHT. THIS GIANT, WITH THE HUNKS OF BEEF FOR HANDS, DELIGHTS IN A SOMEWHAT UNNERVING HABIT OF PUNCHING PANELS OUT OF SOLID OAKEN DOORS TO THE CACOPHONY OF A REVERBERATING "HOLY COW"--HIS STRONGEST LANGUAGE. RENNY USUALLY STORMS HIS WAY INTO THE THICK OF A FIGHT, LASHING LEFT AND RIGHT WITH HIS MEAT-HOOKS, ONLY TO BE INEVITABLY CLOBBELED FROM BEHIND BY A POOR SPORT, THE BOOMING COLONEL IS THE ENGINEER OF THE GROUP; HE SPORTS A SOURPUSS WHEN HE IS HAPPY AND A GRIN WHEN DANGER THREATENS. THE ONLY MAN IN THE WORLD WHO HAS ACQUIRED A GREATER EXPERTISE IN THE ENGINEER'S CHOSEN FIELD IS--YOU GUESSED IT--DOC SAVAGE.

THE FINAL TWO DOC SAVAGE AIDES ARE THE LEAST FEATURED IN THE SERIES. WILLIAM HARPER LITTLEJOHN IS THE "BONY ARCHEOLOGIST" WHO IS USUALLY REFERED TO AS JOHNNY. HE IS ALSO THE RESIDENT GEOLOGIST, AND HE PRIDES HIMSELF ON THE USE OF THE LARGEST WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. HIS PET TERM IS: "I'LL BE SUPER-AMALGAMATED!" LONG TOM, MAJOR THOMAS J. ROBERTS IS THE ELECTRICAL GENIUS OF THE CREW; HIS ELECTRICAL DEVICES USUALLY RECEIVE MORE EXPOSURE IN THE STORIES THAN HE, HIMSELF. HE IS ALWAYS DESCRIBED AS THE MOST EMACIATED, UNHEALTHY-LOOKING MEMBER OF THE GROUP--BUT HE CAN LICK HIS WEIGHT IN WILDCATS, AND HE SOMETIMES DOES.

THE LAST OF THE CHARACTERS THAT ROUND-OUT THE DOC SAVAGE TEAM ARE PAT SAVAGE AND THE PETS. PAT IS THE FEMALE COUNTERPART TO DOC, POSSESSING HIS BRONZE SKIN AND PERFECT FEATURES. SHE WAS INTRODUCED IN THE STORY, BRAND OF THE WEREWOLF, TO THE ENDLESS CHAGRIN OF DOC. IN THE PHANTOM CITY, MONK ACQUIRES AN ARABIAN HOG WHICH HE USES TO HARASS HAM BY NAMING IT "HABEAS CORPUS." HAM, IN TURN, FINDS A PET "WHATSI" THAT SO CLOSELY RESEMBLES MONK THAT STRANGERS SOMETIMES THINK THEY ARE SEEING DOUBLE WHEN THE TWO OF THEM STAND SIDE-BY-SIDE. THE CLOSEST DEFINITION THE AUTHOR GIVES OF THE PET IS THAT IT IS SOME SORT OF APE.

"WHAT ABOUT THE HIDALGO TRADING COMPANY MENTIONED IN THE STORIES?" ASKED RUSS, SHATTERING MY REVERIE.

"THE WAREHOUSE STOCKED ALL OF DOC'S PLANES, BOATS, AND CARS."

"BUT WHAT ABOUT THE NAME ITSELF?"

"THAT'S ONE OF LESTER DENT'S LITTLE PUT ON'S: THE WORD 'HIDALGO' IS A SPANISH IDIOM MEANING, LITERALLY, 'THE SON OF A SOMEBODY'."

"--DOC SAVAGE, OF COURSE, BEING THE SON



OF THE SOMEBODY: CLARK SAVAGE, SENIOR--"

I NODDED. IT WAS ONCE AGAIN TIME TO RETURN TO WORK--ONE IN THE MORNING AND NO END OF THE ARTICLE IN SIGHT. RUSS RETURNED TO HIS WORK, AND I TO MY FORMER PREOCCUPATION..

I SLIPPED FORWARD TO THE EDGE OF THE STAIRS IMMEDIATELY ABOVE THE SECOND FLOOR WHEN I AGAIN HEARD THE GIGGLE THAT GAINED FAMILIARITY WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT. THE MASTER VILLAIN WAS, AT THIS TIME, CARRYING OUT HIS FINAL COUP BEFORE VANISHING INTO ANONYMITY. I KNEW HE INTENDED TO KILL THE MAN WHO HAD HELPED HIM TAKE THE LIVES OF THE REST OF THE GANG: EL DIABLO'S FIRST LIEUTENANT. THEY WERE ABOUT TO CONFRONT EACH OTHER AS THE PAINFUL ECHOES OF THE PRECEDING CAR-NAGE FINALLY DIED AWAY...

"NOW IT'S JUST YOU AND ME, JIMENEZ."

"SI, DIABLO. WHEN DO WE START THE FIRE?"

"YOU WILL BE THE FIRE, AMIGO. I THOUGHT AT FIRST THAT I WOULD SPARE YOU BECAUSE OF ALL THE FINE WORK YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME. BUT I THINK NOT. EVEN THOUGH YOU MANAGED TO CAPTURE BRIAN THOMAS AND HIS SEARCHER CREW, I AM GOING TO HAVE TO KILL YOU. YOU KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT ME TO STAY WITH THE LIVING."

THE LIEUTENANT'S ACCENT SUDDENLY DROPPED:

"YOU MUST BE JOKING. EVEN WITH AN EMPTY MACHINE GUN, I CAN STILL PULL MY THROWING KNIFE BEFORE YOU CAN RAISE THE MUZZLE OF YOUR GUN TO FINISH ME. WHY DON'T WE START THE FIRE AND LEAVE--SETTLE OUR DIFFERENCES LATER?"

I WAS WORKING IN NEAR-PERFECT SILENCE. PIERRE HELD AN UNCONSCIOUS TITO IN HIS ARMS AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, WHILE I RACED ACROSS THE SECOND FLOOR TO FIND AND QUIETLY SOAK AS MANY BLANKETS AS POSSIBLE. I HEARD THE TWO OPPONENTS CONTINUE THEIR EXCHANGE AS I WORKED IN HASTE:

"THIS IS NO JOKE, MY FRIEND. IT LOOKS LIKE A STAND-OFF, BUT I HOLD THE TOP CARD IN THIS DRAW. YOU MIGHT TAKE A GLANCE AT THE GASOLINE SPILLED AT YOUR FEET TO SEE THAT I AM NOT KIDDING IN THE LEAST. SORRY TO HAVE TO DO THIS, BUT I CAN AFFORD NO RISKS WHILE I'M STILL AN INITIATE IN THE ORGANIZATION. I HAVE TO PROVE MY CAPABILITY IN ALL WAYS."

I DIDN'T NEED TO SEE THE LOOK OF DISMAY THAT CROSSED THE FACE OF JIMENEZ AS HE NOTED THE SUBTLE TRAIL OF GAS THAT CURLED AROUND HIS FEET. THE KNIFE WHISPERED, THE MACHINE GUN CRACKED, AND JIMENEZ UTTERED AN INHUMAN CRY OF AGONY, FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF A PAINFUL DEATH. I COULD SURMISE WHAT HAD HAPPENED: THE MASTER VILLAIN DID NOT NEED TO RAISE THE MUZZLE OF HIS GUN TO BEAT THE ARM-THROW OF HIS LIEUTENANT. HE SIMPLY FIRED AT THE PUDDLE OF GASOLINE FORMING AROUND THE FEET OF THE RIGHT-HAND MAN.

I WATCHED THIS HORRIFYING TABLEAU OF A MAN BURNING TO DEATH WHILE I STOOD MUTE AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS. DIABLO VANISHED AS I KNEW HE WOULD. THE RECORD AND THE STEEL-WALL ROOM WERE A PLOY--A FEINT TO DIVERT MY ATTENTION TOWARD THE SAVING OF MY AIDES AND AWAY FROM THE ESCAPE COVER OF EL DIABLO. TITO AND PIERRE WERE PREPARED FOR THE WORST AT ALL TIMES. WITH MY PLANNING, IT MIGHT NEVER COME TO THAT. THE SOAKED BLANKETS WERE SECURELY WRAPPED AROUND TITO AS THE BUILDING BEGAN TO ACCEPT ITS DEMISE, STARTING AT THE FIRST FLOOR IN THE GAS-SOAKED REMNANTS OF THE RIGHT-HAND MAN FOR THE GREATEST MODERN CRIMINAL OF SOUTH AMERICA. IT SUDDENLY CAME TO ME--THE FAMILIAR NOTE IN DIABLO'S VOICE; FOR I HAD ONCE SHAKEN THE HAND OF THE BIGGEST TRADE MONGER IN LATIN AMERICA. THIS MAGNATE: RICHARD L. CLARK, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF HUNDREDS OF PRONTITO'S PEOPLE--THIS IS EL DIABLO, MY ENEMY, WHO SELLS REVOLUTIONS FOR PROFIT.

"PIERRE, GO DOWN TOWARD THE FIRST FLOOR AND GET AS CLOSE AS YOU CAN. USE THE BODY OF JIMENEZ AS A GUIDEPOST AND JUMP OVER THE FLAMES. ROLL ON THE IMPACT AS YOU WOULD IN A

PARACHUTE. SIGNAL ME WHEN YOU ARE CLEAR AND FREE OF FIRE. I AM GOING TO TOSS TITO OVER THE FLAMES AND INTO YOUR ARMS. COUNT TO FIVE WHEN I SIGNAL--OKAY?"

"BUT WHAT OF YOU, MON AMI?"

"I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF. JUST GET TITO TO A HOSPITAL--NOW GO!" THE PINT-SIZED AIDE BEGAN TO STIR UNCOMFORTABLY OUT OF HIS UNCONSCIOUSNESS.

THE PLAN WENT LIKE CLOCKWORK, EXCEPT THAT I WAS TOLD LATER HOW PIERRE NEARLY LOST HIS LIFE TRYING TO NAVIGATE OVER THE BURNT TIMBERS THAT THREATENED TO GIVE-WAY BENEATH HIM AND HIS PRECIOUS BURDEN. I TURNED TOWARD THE ONLY EXIT I HAD REMAINING: THAT BELONGING TO THE MASTER OF MALICE, EL DIABLO.

THE LEADER PLANNED TO USE THE SUPPORT OF THE STEEL LINING OF THE APARTMENT HOUSE TO HOLD OPEN HIS ESCAPE UNTIL THE FATAL MOMENT WHEN THE ENTIRE BUILDING WOULD COLLAPSE OF ITS OWN WEIGHT. I SCoured THE SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS, SEARCHING FOR A SMALL SIGN, AN IMPERFECTION, IF YOU WILL, TELLING WHERE THE SECRET ESCAPE ROUTE WOULD PASS THROUGH THE WALLS. IT WOULD BE A SMALL STAIRWAY CURLING UP THROUGH THE BUILDING, BRICKED OR STEEL-LINED TO PREVENT PENETRATION, UNTIL IT EMP-TIED ONTO THE ROOF. DIABLO PLANNED HIS EXIT WELL.

ONE, TINY, ARCHITECTURAL INCONSISTENCY REWARDED THE PRECIOUS SECONDS OF MY SEARCH: A BATHROOM WALL--OUT OF PROPORTION WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE FLOOR OF ROOMS. THE WALL SPACE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SHORTENED TO ACCOM-DATE THE SECRET PASSAGE. I STARTED TO TAP THE TWO SIDE WALLS WITH THE BUTT OF THE TINY AIR-HARPOON PISTOL I CARRIED FOR ODD JOBS. ONE OF THE SECTIONS OF WALL RANG HOLLOW WITH EACH TAP.

I RETURNED THE AIR PISTOL TO ITS PLACE IN A FALSE HEEL IN MY BOOT. THE OTHER HEEL CONTAINED THE MINIATURE HARPOONS TO FIT THE FIREARM OF MY OWN DESIGN. ALSO OF MY OWN DESIGN WERE THE DIAMOND-STEEL ALLOY HEADS USED TO CAP THE HARPOONS, MAKING THEM RAZOR-SHARP AND ABLE TO PENETRATE THIN STEEL. THE HEELS OF MY BOOTS CANNOT BE OPENED EXCEPT THROUGH A SPECIAL MINIATURIZED MECHANISM IMBEDDED IN THE INSIDE OF MY JAW. THE ONLY OTHER WAY INVOLVES A CATCH RELEASED BY SLIDING A FINGER-NAIL ALONG A CRACK BETWEEN THE SOUL AND HEEL WHICH EVEN THE CLOSEST SEARCH CANNOT DISCERN FOR ITS SHEER SECRECY. LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT THE EXTRA PROVISION I CONSTRUCTED FOR OPENING MY BOOT WOULD SAVE MY LIFE. AT THIS POINT IN TIME, I REPLACED THE PISTOL AND REMOVED YET ANOTHER DEVICE I USE IN MY TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES.

I ASSUMED THAT THE SECTION OF WALL CON-FRONTING ME WAS COATED ON THE INSIDE WITH A LAYER OF STEEL. FROM MY BOOT HEEL I WITHDREW AN OBJECT RESEMBLING IN INNOCENT TUBE OF TOOTHPASTE. THIS WAS ACTUALLY A MIXTURE OF POWDERED LEAD ENWRAPPED IN A COATING OF NON-POROUS OINTMENT OF MY OWN CONCOCTION. ONCE APPLIED, THE OIL BEGINS DISSOLVING, EXPOSING THE POWDERED LEAD TO THE AIR. THE RING OF PASTE BURST INTO METAL-EATING FLAME. I LOW-ERED MY SHOULDER TO THE WALL SECTION WITH- IN THE RING AND IT CLANGED INWARD, UNCOVER- ING A SET OF STEEL STAIRS.

THE BUILDING WAS SLOWLY DISSOLVING BE- NEATH ME. IT WAS A GHASTLY CARNIVAL OF HEL- LISH COLORS: WALLS WERE MELTING AWAY TO RE- VEAL THE HIDDEN RECESSES OF THE STEEL-LINED HALLWAYS AND METAL COVERED STAIRS. MY SHOES CLANGED SOFTLY ALONG THE STEPS THAT FOUND THEIR WAY TO THE ROOF--BUT WOULD MY QUARRY STILL BE THERE? I WOULD SEEK HIM OUT, NO MAT- TER WHERE HE RAN. I REACHED THE TOP OF THE STAIRWAY AS I CHOKED FROM THE FUMES AND SMOKE. I COULD FEEL THE HEAT FROM THE METAL STEPS SEEP THROUGH MY SPECIALLY DESIGNED SHOES. I ESTIMATED THAT THE BUILDING WOULD FALL IN ABOUT TEN MINUTES...

TEN MINUTES CHANGED THE LIFE OF MIL- LIONAIRE-ADVENTURER RICHARD HENRY BENSON.



AS HE RUSHED TO FORCE HIMSELF, HIS WIFE, ALICE, AND THEIR DAUGHTER, ALICIA, ONTO A BUFFALO PLANE LEAVING FOR MONTREAL--BENSON KNEW NOTHING OF THE DRAMA ABOUT TO UNFOLD OVER THE GREAT LAKES. HE RETIRED QUIETLY TO WASH HIS HANDS. WHEN HE RETURNED, HE FLEW INTO A STATE OF HALF-SHOCK, HALF-RAGE TO FIND HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER GONE COMPLETELY FROM THE CONFINES OF THE PLANE AS IT JOURNEYED FAR ABOVE THE GROUND. HE FOUGHT. HE WAS KAYOED FROM BEHIND. HE AWOKE THREE WEEKS LATER TO FIND HIMSELF IN A SANITARIUM. THEN HE LOOKED INTO A MIRROR...

THIS BEGINS THE SAGA OF THE THIRD OF STREET AND SMITH'S "BIG THREE." 1931 SAW THE ADVENT OF THE SHADOW; MARCH 1933 DISPLAYED THE FIRST DOC SAVAGE; 1939 PREMIERED THE SHORTEST RUNNING OF THE THREE MOST WELL-KNOWN STREET AND SMITH HEROES: THE AVENGER.

THE STORY IN THE FIRST ISSUE IS CONSIDERED A LANDMARK IN THE FIELD OF PULP WRITING: JUSTICE, INCORPORATED. H.W. SCOTT DREW THE OVERPOWERING FACE AND BALEFUL, COLD GREY EYES THAT LOOM OVER THE CITY BELOW IN ITS INIQUITY. (NOTE THE INSET) H. W. SCOTT PORTRAYED RICHARD BENSON IN THIS OMINOUS MANNER UNTIL A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE MAIN CHARACTER NECESSITATED A CHANGE IN THE MOOD OF THE COVER.

THE SIXTEENTH STORY, THE HOUSE OF DEATH, SAW GRAVES GLADNEY START THE COVER ASSIGNMENT. HE SLIMMED-DOWN THE HERO, STRESSING THE COAL BLACK OF THE HAIR. THE GLADNEY COVERS LASTED FOR FOUR ISSUES. THEN LENOSCI RETURNED TO THE SCOTT PORTRAYAL OF A BROAD BUILD, A VESTED SUIT, AND A WIDE, GRIM FACE. THE SUIT WAS DROPPED IMMEDIATELY IN FAVOR OF AN OPEN-COLLARED SHIRT, AND LENOSCI ENDED HIS FOUR-ISSUE STINT IN THE ORIGINAL PORTRAYAL OF THE ANGRY AND DOWNCAST EYES OF THE AVENGER AS HE AGAIN PRESIDED OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF WARRING

CRIMINALS. A. LESLIE ROSS FINISHED THE SERIES WITH THE IMPRESSIVE COVER OF THE WILDER CURSE; HOWEVER, THE LAST COVER CARRIED THE KEY TO THE ULTIMATE DOWNFALL OF THE AVENGER IN THE FORM OF A SMALL, INSET SEAL THAT SAYS BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS FOR VICTORY.

A GOYA COVER COULD NOT HAVE SAVED THE SERIES; NOR COULD THE FINE WRITING EFFORTS OF THE TRUE INTELLECT OF THE SERIES, PAUL ERNST. ERNST PROPOSED THE STORY CHAIN BASED ON A STRONG CENTRAL CHARACTER WITH A DEEP, PERSONAL CONFLICT. THE PUBLISHING COMPANY DECIDED TO "PLAY IT SAFE" BY SELLING THE WORKS ON THE NAME OF KENNETH ROBESON. WITH THIS HOUSE NAME, THE STORIES BECAME A NATURAL OFFSHOOT OF DOC SAVAGE. (IN MODERN TELE-

VISION TERMINOLOGY: IT WAS A SPIN-OFF) BY THE TIME OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH ISSUE, AVENGER WAS OUTSELLING THE DOC, HIMSELF.

SEPTEMBER, 1942: THE WAR WAS CLOSING IN. THE UPSWING IN DEMANDS FOR PAPER CUT THE ALLOTMENTS TO THE PUBLISHERS. IN SPITE OF ITS SUPERIOR SALES, THE AVENGER WAS SHELVED, AS DOC SAVAGE AND THE SHADOW CONTINUED IN A SMALLER, DIGEST SIZE. RICHARD HENRY BENSON RETIRED INTO ANONYMITY, (EXCEPTING THE EMILE TEPPERMAN NOVELETTES IN CLUES DETECTIVE AND ONE SHADOW) UNTIL PETER CARAS DEPICTED THE PIERCING VISAGE ON THE COVER OF THE 1972, PAPERBACK LIBRARY EDITION OF JUSTICE, INC.

... BENSON LOOKED INTO THE MIRROR AT THE DEATHLY FIGURE STARING BACK AT HIM. HE HAD BEEN IN A SEVERE STATE OF SHOCK. THE FACE IN THE GLASS WAS ASHEN GREY, FRAMED IN SNOW-WHITE HAIR. HIS LIPS TRIED TO SHOW HIS IN-

CREDULITY--THERE WAS NO EXPRESSION WHATSOEVER. HE TRIED TO URGE HIS FEATURES TO FORM WITH HIS FINGERS. THE ATTENDING NURSE SCREAMED. HIS FEATURES RETAINED AN IMPRESSION WROUGHT BY HIS HANDS. HIS NEW FACE HAD TAKEN ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SOFT CLAY. HE WOULD LATER USE THIS TO ADVANTAGE AS A MEANS OF DISGUISE. HE WOULD NOW SEARCH FOR HIS LOST WIFE AND CHILD.

BENSON WAS STOPPED COLD BY THE PEOPLE WHO WITNESSED THE FAMILY'S DEPARTURE. HE HAD BOARDED THE PLANE ALONE. HE HAD DISEMBARKED ALONE. THE AVENGER PROBED TO NO AVAIL; THEN HE MET FERGUS MAC MURDIE. THIS SCOTTISH DRUGGIST HAD ALSO FACED THE LOSS OF HIS FAMILY TO A CRIME RING--A FACT THAT PROMPTED HIM TO THROW-IN WITH THE AVENGER. THE ADVENTURE CONTINUED. ATTEMPTS AT BENSON'S LIFE AND THE SUBTLE SIGNS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY SERVED TO SHOW BENSON THAT HE WAS PITTED AGAINST A CRIME RING THAT SPECIALIZED IN KIDNAPPING MAJOR STOCKHOLDERS OF A CERTAIN COMPANY. BENSON TOOK HIS FOUR-CHAMBER .22 PISTOL, MIKE, OUT OF



RETIREMENT, ALONG WITH HIS THROWING KNIFE, IKE. (A PAIR OF NAMES INSPIRED, PERHAPS, BY THE INFAMOUS CLANTONS?--ED.) LASTLY, THE NEW CRIMEFIGHTING PAIR MET ALGERNON HEATHCOTE SMITH. THE AVENGER BECAME, IN THE WORDS OF HIS MAKER, "A FIGURE OF ICE AND STEEL." HE THREW ALL OF HIS INVESTMENT RICHES AND INFLUENCE INTO HIS NEW CRUSADE--SETTING UP A HEADQUARTERS ON BLEEK STREET IN NEW YORK. CRIMINALS BEWARE!

THE AVENGER AND DOC SAVAGE HAD ALMOST AS MUCH IN COMMON AS NOT. BOTH HEROES HAD FIVE FULL-TIME AIDES, TWO OF WHICH WERE UNDERPLAYED. THE NAMES OF THE SETS OF AIDES DIFFERED IN TREATMENT, HOWEVER. DOC'S WERE HEAVY-HANDED AND TRITE. BENSON'S AIDES HAD OR-

NATE, BUT BASICALLY SIMPLE NAMES. THE NICK-NAMES, IN THE LATTER'S CASE, WERE NOT OVERDONE. BOTH OF THE MAIN HEROES INVENTED BULLETPROOF VESTS; BOTH HAD SPECIAL ARMORIES AS WELL AS CUSTOM-MADE MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION. THE DIRIGIBLE IS CONSPICUOUSLY MISSING FROM THE AVENGER--IT HAD GONE OUT OF STYLE BY THE TIME THE MAGAZINE REACHED ITS HEY-DAY. DOC ACTED OUT OF ALTRUISM; BENSON OUT OF ANGER AND VENGEANCE. DOC STORIES WERE PUZZLES; THE AVENGER WORKS WERE MUCH CLOSER TO TRUE MYSTERIES. THE FORMER'S ENDINGS CAN BE DEFINED AS "BLOW-UPS"; THE LATTER'S WERE "SHUT-OUTS." SAVAGE'S VILLAINS BROUGHT ABOUT THEIR DESTRUCTIONS BY ACCIDENT; BENSON ARTFULLY DESIGNED THE FALLS OF HIS FOES. BOTH HEROES HAD CHIEF AIDES WHO WORKED IN CHEMICALS, AND BOTH HAD WOMEN IN THE GROUP--BENSON'S FEMALE AIDE, HOWEVER, WAS MORE A PARTICIPANT AND LESS A PEST. PAUL ERNST BROKE THE RACIAL BARRIER BY INTRODUCING TWO NON-STEREOTYPIC BLACK HELPERS, THOUGH THEY WERE USED, TO A MAJOR DEGREE, AS WATCHDOGS. DOC WAS "MADE" OF BRONZE; BENSON, OF STEEL. LASTLY, BOTH CHARACTERS HAD SPECIALLY DESIGNED QUARTERS.

A PROFILE OF THE AVENGER'S AIDES IS ESSENTIALLY A SORT OF RESTATEMENT OF DOC'S HELPERS IN DIFFERENT PROPORTIONS (AND GENDERS). THE FIRST AIDE IS FERGUS MAC MURDIE: BIG-FISTED, STONY-FACED, SERIOUS, AND VERY SCOTCH. WHEN A BATTLE TAKES A GOOD TURN, HE IS UNHAPPY AND PESSIMISTIC; WHEN THINGS GO BAD, HE IS OVERJOYED AND OPTIMISTIC. MAC'S GREATEST ASSET IS THAT HE IS AN EXPERT IN HANDLING DRUGS AND CHEMICALS. ALGERNON HEATHCOTE SMITH, "SMITTY," WOULD RATHER WADE INTO A GANG OF THUGS THAN STAND STILL TO HEAR HIS FULL NAME. THIS 300-POUNDER IS THE ELECTRICAL ENGINEER OF THE GROUP--HE HAS TO DUCK THROUGH MOST DOORWAYS. HE IS CAPABLE OF KILLING WITH HIS BARE HANDS, AND HE OFTEN SENDS CRIMINALS INTO ECSTASIES OF PAIN BY SIMPLY GRABBING A LEG OR AN ARM AND SQUEEZING. BENSON IS THE ONLY MAN EVER TO BREAK SMITTY'S "BEAR-HUG"--A FEAT THE AVENGER PERFORMED IN THE FIRST STORY, DUE TO A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY ON THE PART OF SMITTY. THE ENGINEER ENLISTED WITH BENSON TO HELP FIND A WORTHWHILE LIVELIHOOD AFTER BEING FRAMED AND IMPRISONED. HE IS FIERCELY LOYAL TO THE AVENGER, AND HIS ONLY WEAKNESS IS FOR THE NEXT AIDE IN THE GROUP.

THE YELLOW HOARD, THE SECOND ADVENTURE, SAW BENSON ACQUIRE A GOLD STASH SIMILAR TO DOC SAVAGE'S MAYAN GOLD. BENSON ALSO FINDS A NEW AIDE: NELLIE GRAY. MINUS THE TAILORED AFFECTIONS, NELL IS A PERFECT FEMALE COUNTERPART TO HAM BROOKS. SHE IS A MASTER OF ORIENTAL DEFENSE, AND SHE OFTEN CATCHES THE HOODS OFF-GUARD WITH HER AGGRESSIVENESS. SHE IS ALSO SKILLED IN HER FATHER'S FIELD OF ARCHAEOLOGY. NELL JOINED BENSON OUT OF A TRAGIC DEATH DUE TO CRIME; SHE ALSO JOINED OUT OF A DEEP AFFECTION FOR THE MAN TO WHOM SHE RENDERS UNQUESTIONING LOYALTY. SHE FINDS A PLEASANT PASTIME IN TEASING SMITTY. THE LAST OF THE TWO AIDES, JOSHUA AND ROSABELLE NEWTON, SIGNED UP IN THE THIRD STORY. THE AUTHOR SAYS LITTLE ABOUT THE BLACK, HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM EXCEPT FOR THEIR LOYALTY TO BENSON AND THEIR TUSKEGEE EDUCATIONS. JOSH DRAWLS FOR PROTECTIVE COLORING, AND USUALLY ORDERS ANOTHER MAPLE-NUT SUNDAE, HIS FAVORITE, AT MAC MURDIE'S DRUG STORE.

THE AVENGER STORIES CARRY A DIFFERENT KIND OF EXCITEMENT THAN THE DOC SAVAGE STORIES. DOC RACES THROUGH HIS ADVENTURES; THERE IS A CONSTANT PHYSICAL MOVEMENT. BENSON STORIES ALSO HAVE THIS MOVEMENT, BUT TO A SLIGHTLY LESSER DEGREE. THE TRUE EXCITEMENT OF AN AVENGER STORY LIES IN THE INEVITABLE--IN THE FINAL MOMENT, WHEN THE HERO AND THE VILLAIN STAND FACE TO FACE. WHEN THE AVENGING ANGEL VENTS HIS FINAL WRATH ON THE FALLEN ANGEL. WHEN THE PROTAGONIST OF GOOD FINALLY CATCHES UP TO THE VAIN ANTAGONIST, FLOUTING THE HERO TO HIS FACE...

HE WAS STANDING OUTSIDE ON THE ROOF THAT

NEIGHORED THIS BUILDING WITH A TOLERANCE OF ABOUT SIX INCHES IN HEIGHT. A WOODEN EXTENSION LADDER WAS ATTACHED BY ITS ENDS TO THE EDGES OF THE ROOFTOPS--MORE OF EL DIABLO'S HANDIWORK.

HE JUST STOOD THERE--ON THE OTHER ROOF--AS IF WAITING FOR OUR FINAL CONFRONTATION. I COULD ONLY ASSUME THAT THIS MASTER OF MENACE COULD NOT RESIST THE PLEASURE OF CONFRONTING ME DIRECTLY: IN A DUEL THAT WOULD SURELY BE THE DEATH OF ONE OF US.

THE NEXT BUILDING WAS A WAREHOUSE OF SOME SORT, WITH A ROOF THAT STRETCHED FOR NEARLY TWO-THIRDS OF A BLOCK. AT THE END OF THAT ROOF I SPIED THE RESULTS OF THE PLANS DIABLO HAD MADE FOR HIMSELF: A COMPACT MIDGET PLANE LAY IN WAIT AT THE BASE OF A CATAPULT--ESCAPE BY AIR.

I HAD BEEN GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE, OUT OF PURE VANITY ON THE VILLAIN'S PART, TO RID A WORLD OF ONE OF ITS SOURCES OF EVIL. DIABLO STOOD FORWARD AT THE EDGE OF THE WAREHOUSE ROOF, SEVERAL STEPS FROM THE LADDER HE HAD



USED TO CROSS OVER FROM THE BURNING BUILDING UPON WHICH I STILL STOOD. I STEPPED FORWARD AT MY END OF THE LADDER TO FACE HIM. I ADDRESSED ME IN MOCKING TONES:

"FIGHT ME ON MY HOME GROUND AND WIN, AND I AM YOUR PRISONER. LOSE, AND I WILL BEGIN AGAIN SOMEWHERE ELSE, FREE OF YOU."

"PERHAPS I CAN MAKE THE STAKES A LITTLE HIGHER BY REMOVING YOUR MEANS OF IMMEDIATE ESCAPE."

A SMILE HAD GRACED THE FEATURES OF DIABLO AS HE STEPPED ONTO THE LADDER--NOW, IT VANISHED PROMPTLY. I HAD ANTICIPATED THIS MOMENT WHEN I WAS CLIMBING THE STAIRS: AT THE ISSUANCE OF HIS CHALLENGE, I BEGAN TO PLANT MY FEET FIRMLY AND SLOWLY PULL MY AIR HARPOON PISTOL TO EYE LEVEL. I COUNTED ON BEING ABLE TO PIERCE THE FUSELAGE OF THE MIDGET PLANE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO IGNITE THE FUEL TANK. DIABLO CAME STORMING ACROSS THE LADDER BRANDISHING A SOLID STEEL KNIFE:

"YOU HAVE YOUR WISH, SEARCHER. THERE ARE NO STAKES ANY MORE; ONLY DEATH!"

THE PLANE WENT UP IN A SHATTERING WRENCH, CONSUMED IN A DUST-FILLED CLOUD OF CHAR AND FLAME. DIABLO WAS NEARLY THROWN FROM THE LADDER AS HIS KNIFE WENT CLATTERING DOWN THE AREAWAY BENEATH OUR PERCHES. MY OWN WEAPON WAS THROWN FROM MY HAND--IT LANDED WELL OUT OF MY REACH. WE WERE EVENLY MATCHED, NOW, AS



I STEPPED ONTO THE LADDER; MY BACK BEGAN TO SWEAT FROM THE HEAT THAT MARKED THE PRESENCE OF THE FIRE ON MY ROOF. THE TEN MINUTES WERE GONE. THE BUILDING SHUDDERED BENEATH MY FEET AND DIABLO FOUND HIS OPENING AS I REGAINED MY BALANCE. HIS FIST BROUGHT A PAINFUL BLOW TO THE UNDERSIDE OF MY JAW. I SUDDENLY REALIZED, IN THE MIDST OF THE ENSUING BATTERING, THAT THE CONTROL IMBEDDED IN MY JAW WOULD NO LONGER FUNCTION TO OPEN MY BOOT IF THE NEED PRESENTED ITSELF. ADDED TO THIS, THE BUILDING COULD GO ANY SECOND. THE ROOF PERIODICALLY SHRUGGED ITS SHOULDERS, SENDING THE TWO OF US GRABBING FOR THE RUNGS OF THE LADDER TO STEADY OURSELVES.

BELOW US, A DIFFERENT TABLEAU UNFOLDED. AMBULANCES HAD MOVED IN WITH SEVERAL UNITS OF FIRE ENGINES. SIX FLOORS OF THE STEEL-LINED BUILDING WERE BATHED IN WATER, YET THE METAL REINFORCEMENT WAS INHIBITING THE EFFORTS OF THE FIREMEN. I HOPED THAT SOMEWHERE DOWN BELOW, ONE OF THOSE AMBULANCES WAS DELIVERING SUCCOR TO MY TWO PRIZED AIDES.

IN DESPERATION, DIABLO FEINTED A RIGHT AND DELIVERED A CROSS WITH HIS LEFT HAND THAT GLANCED OFF THE SIDE OF MY HEAD AND BLURRED MY VISION. THE BUILDING SHUDDERED. I WAS PITCHED FORWARD INTO THE OPEN ARMS OF MY ASSAILANT, WHO RIGHTED HIMSELF IN TIME TO USE MY MOMENTUM TO FINALLY PUSH ME FROM THE LADDER.

TEN THOUSAND IMAGES POURED INTO MY MIND AS I FLAILED IN ALL DIRECTIONS, GRABBING FOR THE LIFE I WOULD NOT YET FORFEIT.

I CLAWED AND CAUGHT HOLD OF ONE OF THE RUNGS TO THE SOUND OF A LOUD CRACK. MY OTHER HAND REACHED FOR AND FOUND THE SUPPORT AS THE RUNG GAVE WAY UNDER THE PRESSURE OF STOPPING MY FALL.

IMMEDIATELY, THE GRINDING PAIN BEGAN AS DIABLO FORCED HIS ENTIRE WEIGHT ONTO THE SMALL SPACE COVERED BY MY LONE HAND. I INSTINCTIVELY WENT FOR MY BOOT WITH MY FREE HAND--THE LATCH! THE SECRET CATCH! HOW COULD I ENDURE LONG ENOUGH TO FREE THE HEEL AND PULL OUT THE SPARE HARPOON?

THE GRINDING CONTINUED--I SUBDUED THE URGE TO CRY OUT AND THUS BOLSTER THE WILL THAT GUIDED THE EFFORTS OF DIABLO TO SNUFF OUT MY LIFE. SKIN GAVE WAY. THE TENSION OF THE CROWD BELOW RADIATED TOWARD OUR STRUGGLE HERE ABOVE. THE SHOE OPENED AND THE HARPOON NEARLY FELL THROUGH MY HAND. DIABLO KICKED AND POUNDED AT MY FINGERS WITH EACH SECOND. THE BUILDING AGAIN SHUDDERED, THREATENING TO SHAKE ITSELF TO CHARRED PIECES.

DIABLO REGAINED HIS BALANCE AND REDOUBLED HIS EFFORTS ON MY AGONIZED HAND. IT WOULD DO NO GOOD. THE PAIN HAD NUMBED IT. I REACHED UP WITH THE RAZOR SHARP BARBS OF THE HARPOON AND RAKED IT ACROSS THE ONLY AREA OF THE FOE THAT WAS OPEN TO ASSAULT: HIS ACHILLES' TENDON. THE LIGAMENT WAS CHEWED HALF-THROUGH BEFORE THE OUTLAW GAGGED THE MUFFLED CRY THAT MARKED HIS APPROACHING DEATH. THE MUSCLES OF HIS DAMAGED LEG TURNED TO SO MUCH WATER, AND HE TEETERED ON THE EDGE OF DEATH. THROUGH A WHITE-HOT AGONY OF THE PAIN, HIS FACE WAS CROSSED WITH A FEAR HE HAD NEVER BELIEVED HE WOULD KNOW. EL DIABLO--RICHARD CLARK--WHISPERED THE NAME OF HIS SUCCESSOR AND FELL TO HIS DEATH BELOW.

I HAD NO TIME FOR VIEWING THE SPECTACLE--THE BURNING BUILDING WOULD DIE WITH ITS MASTER. THE CROWD WAS FILLED WITH SCREAMS AS THE PEOPLE RUSHED TO SAVE THEMSELVES FROM THE HIDEOUT'S COLLAPSE. I SCRAMBLED ACROSS THE LADDER TOWARD THE ONLY EXIT REMAINING OPEN TO ME: THE TOP OF THE WAREHOUSE.

BLOOD DRIPPED FROM THE MANGLED MEMBER I ONCE CALLED A HAND. BLOOD FROM THE GLANCING BLOW I RECEIVED ON THE TEMPLE WAS BLINDING ME. THE FEW YARDS I HAD TO COVER TO REACH SAFETY TURNED INTO MILES. THE LADDER GAVE WAY AS I STRUGGLED TO THE EDGE OF THE WAREHOUSE ROOF. FOR PRECIOUS MOMENTS I DANGLED ABOVE THE CROWD, ALMOST JOINING EL DIABLO IN HIS FATE.

THE POLICE AND SEVERAL AMBULANCE MEN RAN ACROSS THE ROOF TO HELP ME--OR MAYBE THEY THOUGHT THEY WOULD HAVE TO ARREST ME. I STOOD UP AND SHRUGGED OFF MY HELPERS--I HAD TO FIND MY AIDES.

DOWNSTAIRS, I COLLARED THE FIRST OFFICER I COULD GET MY HANDS ON. SUDDENLY, I COULD SEE WHY THEY DID NOT IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZE ME AS ONE OF THEIR OWN--I WAS ONCE AMONG THE RANKS AS A LIEUTENANT. I WAS PRACTICALLY COVERED WITH BLOOD. I WAS BLINDED AND REELING. THE OFFICER PULLED ME OVER TO A NEARBY AMBULANCE:

"THEY WOULDN'T ACCEPT ANY MEDICATION UNTIL THEY KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO YOU--SO THEY MUST BE YOURS."

TITO NOTICED ME FIRST AND RECOGNIZED ME THROUGH THE FILM OF BLOOD. HE SMILED AND LAY BACK, ACCEPTING A LITTLE OXYGEN TO HELP HIS STRAINED BREATHING. PIERRE TURNED AROUND AND ASKED ABOUT DIABLO:

"MON AMI, DID YOU DO MORE BAD TO HIM THAN HE DO TO YOU?"

"I THINK SO, PIERRE. DIABLO IS DEAD. TITO AND HIS PEOPLE WILL NO LONGER BE VICTIMS TO HIS SOUTH AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY PLOTS. HE WAS THE NINTH FINGER IN THE 'DEVIL'S HANDS.' AS IS THE CUSTOM WITH THEM, THEY GIVE THE NAME OF THE NEXT 'FINGER' TO WHICH THE TASK OF VENGEANCE FALLS."

"AND WHAT WAS THEES NAME, MONSEUR BRIANE? WHO IS HE?"

"HE IS A FAMOUS BANDIT OF THE ORIENT WHOM I WOULD HAVE NEVER OTHERWISE ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEVIL'S TEN FINGERS. HE IS...SCAR LOO. I THINK WE ARE DUE FOR MANY MORE CLOSE CALLS FROM THE DEVIL'S EIGHTH FINGER. WE MUST REST NOW, MY FRIEND. I THINK WE WILL NEED IT."

"THE BIG CHASE...GETTING THE AIDES OUT OF DANGER...THE FINAL CONFRONTATION...THE VILLAIN FALLS...AND THE HERO SHRUGS-OFF THE LAST OF THE CLEAN-UP WORK TO START INTO THE NEXT ADVENTURE--ALL ARE STOCK ELEMENTS OF THIS TYPE OF READING ENTERTAINMENT."

THE ROOM BEGAN TO REFLECT, ON THE FAR WALL, THE DAWNING OF THE SUN.

"DID THE MAIN HEROES EVER DO THE CLEAN-UP DETAIL?"

"ALMOST NEVER--BUT I READ SEVERAL TIMES IN DOC SAVAGE WHEN THE CLEAN-UP PROVIDED A SORT OF COMIC RELIEF FROM THE TENSENESS OF A PARTICULARLY STRENUOUS ADVENTURE...PADDING, MAYBE? THE AVENGER STORIES ALMOST ALWAYS END ON THE LINGERING NOTE THAT THE HERO'S FIGHT AGAINST CRIME WOULD NEVER BE OVER, THAT HIS NEED FOR PERSONAL REVENGE WOULD NEVER BE SATIATED. THOUGH MY CONTACT WITH THE SHADOW IS, UNFORTUNATELY, SLIGHT--I HAVE NOTED THAT SOME OF THE STORIES ARE ENDED BY THE NARRATOR OR ONE OF THE HELPERS, WHO USUALLY RECOLLECT A PHASE OF THE ADVENTURE OR THE SHADOW WHICH IS ONLY KNOWN TO THE HERO, AND WILL, OF COURSE, PROBABLY NEVER BE REVEALED BY HIM. INCIDENTALLY, HOW IS THE DRAWING COMING, RUSS?"

HE SHOWED ME THE FINE SKETCH HE HAD JUST DRAWN OF "THE SEARCHER."

"YOU HAVE A DISTICTIVE STYLE, RUSS; IT'S CALLED LUCK."

"THANKS A HEAP."

"YOU'RE WELCOME A HEAP."

"SPEAKING OF LUCK--HOW'RE YOU GONNA END THIS THING?"

"PROBABLY GIVE A LITTLE BACKGROUND MATTER ON HOW THE PULPS GOT TO WHERE THEY ARE NOW--MAYBE BRING THE READER UP TO DATE ON WHAT'S IN THE WORKS FOR THE THREE HEROES."

"...AN EDITORIAL-TYPE STATEMENT."

"IF YOU CAN CALL IT THAT--"

I THINK RUSS WAS FINALLY GETTING THE IDEA OF THE ARTICLE...



THE PULPS HAVE RECEIVED SUCH A VARIED RECEPTION BY THE READING PUBLIC, THAT THEY COVER A CROSS-SECTION THAT ENCOMPASSES NEARLY EVERY READER AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER. THE HISTORY OF THESE DIME MASTERPIECES SPANS FIVE WARS, COVERING A PERIOD OF OVER SIXTY YEARS. IMMORTAL HEROES AND AUTHORS HAVE COME FROM THIS WRITING: THE SHADOW, TARZAN, NICK CARTER, THE SPIDER, BLACK MASK, THE AVENGER; JACK LONDON, AMBROSE BIERCE, TALBOT MUNDY, AND MANY OTHERS. THE RADIO HAS BEEN BETTERED AND TELEVISION ENRICHED. CRIPPLED BY WAR PAPER SHORTAGES, WASTED BY THE PAPER DRIVES AND BOOK BURNINGS, NEARLY FINISHED BY ADAMANT DISTRIBUTION--THE PULPS HAVE SOMEHOW COME INTO THEIR OWN IN THE SEVENTIES. PART OF THIS IS DUE TO THE PAPERBACK BOOM.

THE PAPERBACKS HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REVIVALS OF DOC SAVAGE AND THE AVENGER. THE NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS ARE THE FOLLOWING:

DOC SAVAGE CONTINUES DOGGEDLY THROUGH THE BANTAM PAPERBACKS. THE SOUTH POLE TERROR IS NUMBERED AS SEVENTY-SEVEN. A TELEVISION SERIES OR SPECIAL HAS APPARENTLY BEEN COMPLETED TO A DEGREE. THE STRONGEST CONTENDER FOR THE ROLE OF DOC APPEARS TO BE RON ELY, THE TV TARZAN.

THE AVENGER HAS LONG BEEN CONSIDERED FOR MOVIE MATERIAL ON THE BASIS OF ITS LAND-MARK STORY: JUSTICE, INCORPORATED. THE PRODUCER-DIRECTOR WHO MENTIONED HIS INTENT TO BRING THE HERO TO THE SCREEN HAS GIVEN NO FURTHER WORD. THE PAPERBACK SERIES STARTED BY WARNER BOOKS IS ABOUT TO RUN OUT OF MATERIAL. THE LAST WORD IS THAT THE SERIES WILL BE CONTINUED BY A NOTED ADAPTOR OF PAPERBACK MATERIAL, WHO WILL CONTINUE THE TRADITION OF THE HOUSE NAME: KENNETH ROBESON.

THE SHADOW HAS ALSO BEEN CONSIDERED FOR THE TV SCREEN IN THE FORM OF A SPECIAL. IF IT IS MADE, THE SPECIAL IS SLATED FOR THE 1973-74 TELEVISION YEAR. CURRENTLY, THE SHADOW HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED IN AN EXCELLENT COMIC FORM, THOUGH THE COMIC WORLD IS NOT LONGED FOR BETTER DAYS AHEAD. HOPEFULLY, THE TITLE-CHOPPING CEREMONY WILL NOT BE EXTENDED TO THE SHADOW, SHOULD THE COMIC COMPANIES RUN INTO PROBLEMS.

[FINI]

...DEDICATED TO ARTHUR DOBIN,  
A PULPSTER'S PULPSTER.

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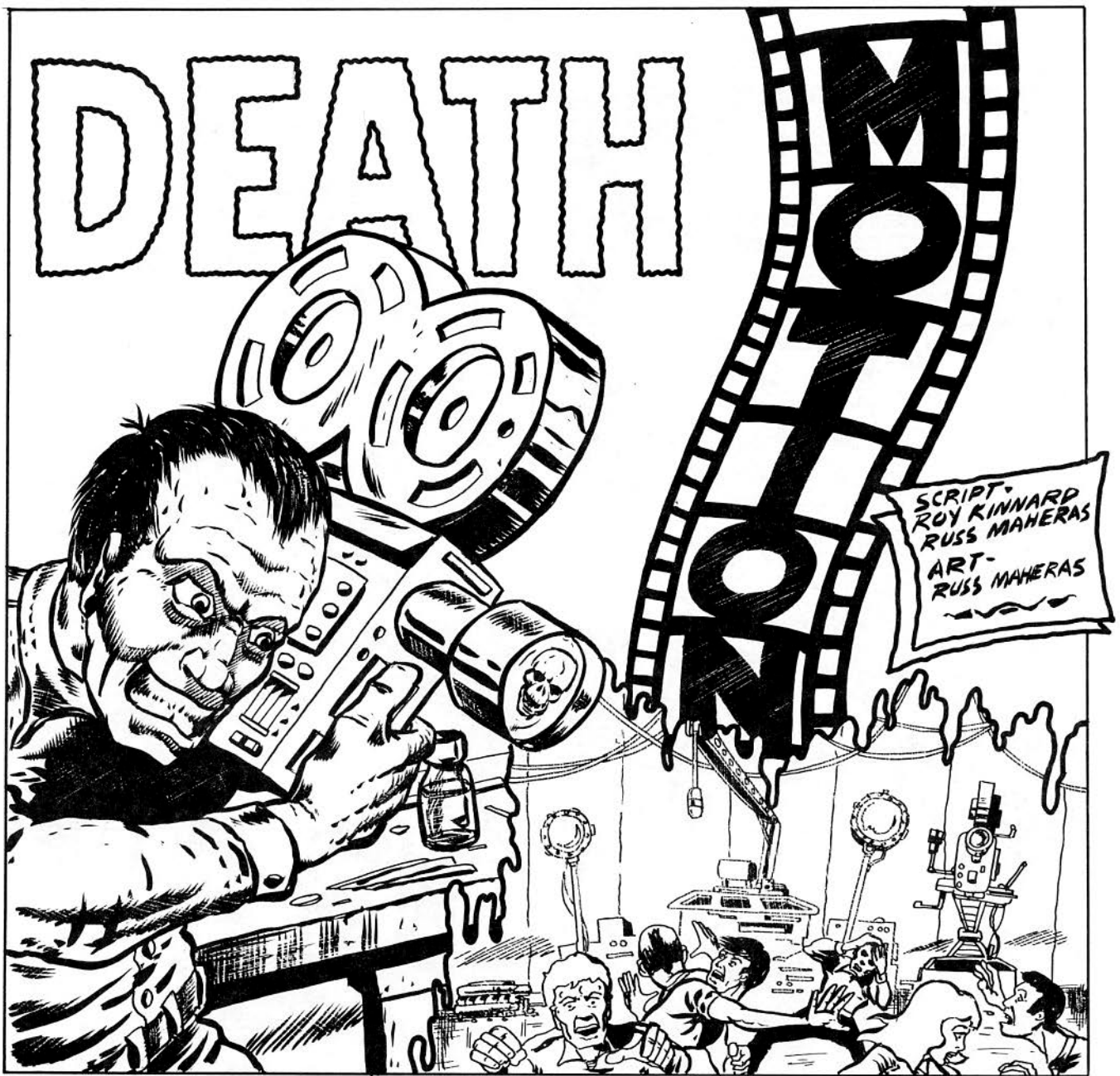
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E.B.M. 2/13/74



WHO KNOWS WHAT COMMENTS  
LURK IN THE MINDS OF READERS?  
WRITE AND TELL US !!!



AMONG THE SCORES OF MOVIE BUILDINGS LOCATED ON THE VAST GROUNDS OF THE FAMOUS ACME STUDIOS, THERE IS ONE STRUCTURE THAT CONTAINS A SILENT ARTIST OF A UNIQUE NATURE. HIS NAME IS HARRY RAYHAUSEN... AND HE IS A MASTER AT THE ART OF... **STOP MOTION!**



STOP MOTION IS A PROCESS WHICH EMPLOYS THE USE OF RUBBER OR PLASTIC MODELS, USUALLY A HUMAN BEING, OR SOME KIND OF BIZARRE CREATURE. IN THE JOINTS OF EACH MODEL, A PIECE OF FLEXIBLE STEEL IS INSERTED, TO ALLOW MOVEMENT IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THE MODEL IS PHOTOGRAPHED EACH TIME A LIMB IS MOVED, SIMULATING LIVE ACTION ON FILM. DELICATE WORK INDEED!



YES, STOP MOTION IS VERY DELICATE WORK, AND ONLY THE MOST PATIENT AND DEDICATED PERSON CAN BE AN EXPERT AT IT!

I HAVE TO--I MUST DO WELL ON THIS FILM! ALL OF THE ANIMATION MUST MOVE SMOOTHLY AND REALISTICALLY! MY REPUTATION... MY ENTIRE CAREER DEPENDS ON IT!



SLOWLY... METICULOUSLY... FRAME BY FRAME, THE MAD GENIUS BREATHES LIFE INTO HIS CREATIONS!



UNTIL... DISASTER!

WHAT TH-! NO! NO!

SNAP!



AAAARGH!! I-LL HAVE TO START OVER!!



SUDDENLY, A SHARP VOICE SHATTERS HIS THOUGHTS...

RAYHAUSEN!

AS CRUEL FATE WOULD HAVE IT, RAYHAUSEN'S BOSS, PRODUCER B.C. DEGENERATE, CHOOSES THAT EXACT MOMENT TO VISIT THE MASTER TECHNICIAN...

WHA--?

RAYHAUSEN!! I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO HAVE THESE STOP MOTION SCENES FINISHED IN THREE DAYS!!

B-BUT B.C.!! IT'LL TAKE THREE MONTHS TO ANIMATE THIS FILM PROPERLY!!



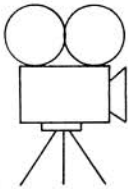




AS B.C. DEPARTS IN A RAGE, A GRIM SHADOW OF SILENCE CLOAKS THE ROOM, LEAVING THE UNHAPPY GENIUS ALL ALONE TO PONDER HIS FATE---



THE NEXT DAY, THE STARS OF B.C. DEGENERATE'S LATEST HORROR FILM BEGIN TO MYSTERIOUSLY VANISH, ONE BY ONE....



FIRST DASH LAFLAIR, THE LEADING ACTOR,...



CHUCKLE!

THEN, SALLY SILICONE, THE LOVE INTEREST!



HAHAHAHA!!

MMMPH!

AND THAT VERY SAME NIGHT, THE MOST STARTLING OF ALL... THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A DOZEN EXTRAS!!!



HEH, HEH!

SOUND STAGE 10

AT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING THE NEXT DAY, B.C. DEGENERATE IS IN AN UNDERSTANDABLE UPROAR!



YES, B.C.!!

YOU MORONS!! IF THIS LUNACY KEEPS UP... ACME STUDIOS WILL BE RUINED!  
=CHOKE=

YES, B.C.!!



IMMEDIATELY THE STUDIO POLICE ARE SUMMONED TO RAYHAUSEN'S WORKSHOP IN SOUND STAGE 13



IN A FLASH, THE POLICE REACH THE LAIR OF THE STOP MOTION GENIUS!



A WOOD OAKEN DOOR HALTS THEIR WAY--BUT ONLY FOR AN INSTANT!



SECONDS LATER, THE TENSE GUARDS PEER INTO THE DIMLY-LIGHTED SHOP, WHERE A MORBID SIGHT GREET'S THEM!





YES RAYHAUSEN WOULD FINISH ALRIGHT! HIS GRISLY DEED WOULD ALSO FINISH B.C.--- AND ACME STUDIOS! RAYHAUSEN HAD THE LAST LAUGH---FROM A PADDED CELL IN THE LOCAL INSANE ASYLUM!!



HAHAHAHAHA!  
NOW I'LL MAKE IT!  
MAYBE B.C. WILL  
GIVE ME A RAISE  
TOO! HEE, HEE!

TH-THEY'RE ALL DEAD!  
AND HER! SHE WAS MY  
FAVORITE ACTRESS!

GAGG!

≡CHOKE≡

OH DEAR LORD!  
TH-THIS CAN'T  
BE HAPPENING

6.

# SUPERHEROES IN THE CINEMA



By  
R. E. KINNARD  
\*\*\*\*\*

Since the comic strip and the motion picture both depend on visuals for narration, it was inevitable that a link would be formed binding the two together. Of course, the bridge linking the two mediums has often been a shabby construction, but it exists nevertheless; and this aesthetic union has continued to provide exciting and vital film entertainment for over three decades. From "FLASH GORDON" in 1936 to "BARBARELLA" in 1967, there has been a vast array of comic strip characters on film.

Universal Pictures, Hollywood's top producer of fantasy and horror films in the twenties and thirties, began production on "FLASH GORDON" in 1936, and almost immediately assigned the lead to Olympic swimming champion Larry 'Buster' Crabbe, who made a visually perfect Flash, for with his hair bleached blonde, he bore an uncanny resemblance to Alex Raymond's character.

Jean Rogers, only a teenager at the time,

was cast as Dale, Frank Shannon secured the role of Dr. Zarkov, and as Emperor Ming, Charles Middleton turned in a more than adequate performance. Directed by Fredrick Stephani, "FLASH GORDON" was thirteen chapters in length, costing a total of \$300,000 - quite a large budget for the time. The film was the only serial ever to play evening performances in showcase theaters - and the only serial ever reviewed by TIME magazine - favorably, as a matter of fact. "FLASH GORDON" was a tremendous commercial success - it was the second largest box office draw for the fiscal year of 1937.

In 1938, Universal produced a sequel, "FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS", which was fifteen chapters in length. In this film, the same cast from the original picture was retained, with the addition of Beatrice Roberts as the magical Queen Azura. Slugging his way through fifteen chapters of solid action, Flash and his friends battled Clay People, Forest People, and all manner of monsters, mutants, and sub-humans, all in a valiant effort to prevent Ming The Merciless from depleting the Earth's atmosphere with his dreaded Nitron Lamp.

1940 saw the production and release of a third serial, "FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE". Slick and glossy in appearance, it is the shortest of the three films, lasting only twelve chapters. There was a cast change in this last serial: in the place of Jean Rogers, actress Carol Hughes portrayed Dale.



Watch future issues of  
**MAELSTROM** for more on  
Superheroes In The Cinema!!!



**ACTION! SUSPENSE!! THRILLS!**  
AS NEVER BEFORE! WHEN.....

**The MIDNIGHT  
STALKER**

Meets:

**THE BEAST  
of BERLIN!**

**DIE, SUBHUMAN,  
AMERICAN DEGENERATE!!  
YOU WILL MAKE A  
MOST INTERESTING  
GIFT FOR DER FUHRER  
HA! HA, HA! HAHAHAAAA!!**

**JACK/IN THE  
NAME OF GOD--  
DO SOMETHING!  
GAG**

**I-I CAN'T PATTY !!  
EVEN WITH MY STRENGTH,  
THIS PLEXI-GLASS IS.....  
UNBREAKABLE !!**





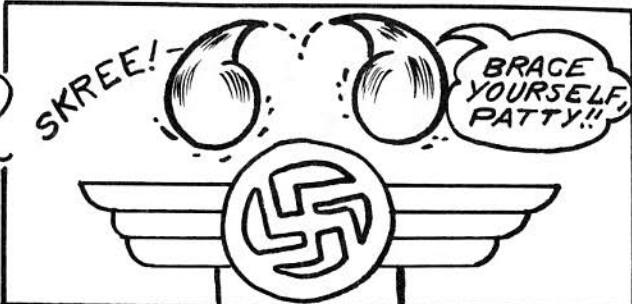


1975...1956...1942



JACK-  
WHAT'S  
HAPPENING  
TO US!?

WE'RE TRAVELING  
THROUGH SOME  
SORT OF SPACE-  
TIME WARP!!



STALAG 17

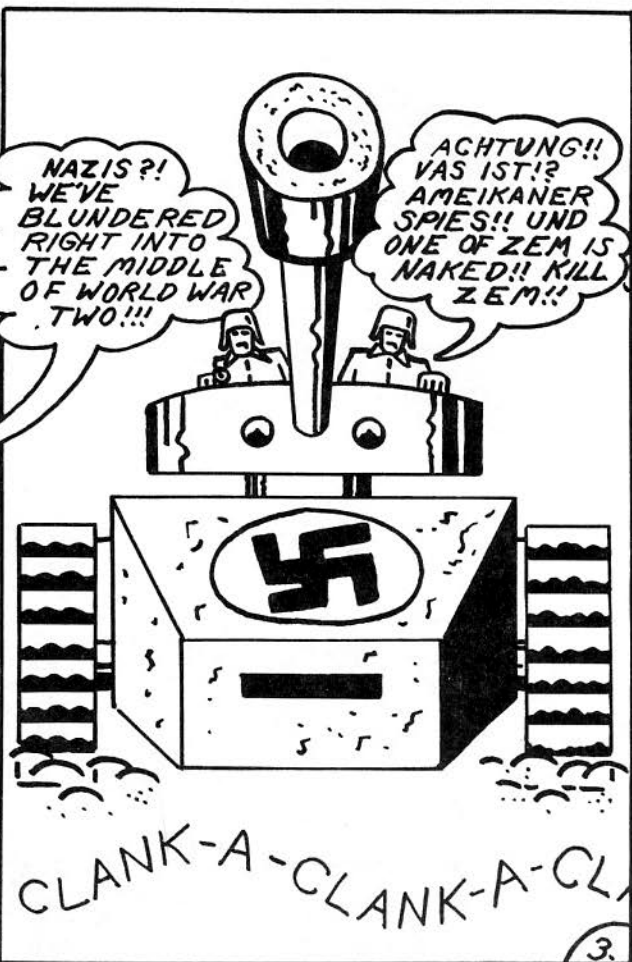


BOOM!



OH JACK-  
LOOK...  
LOOK!!!

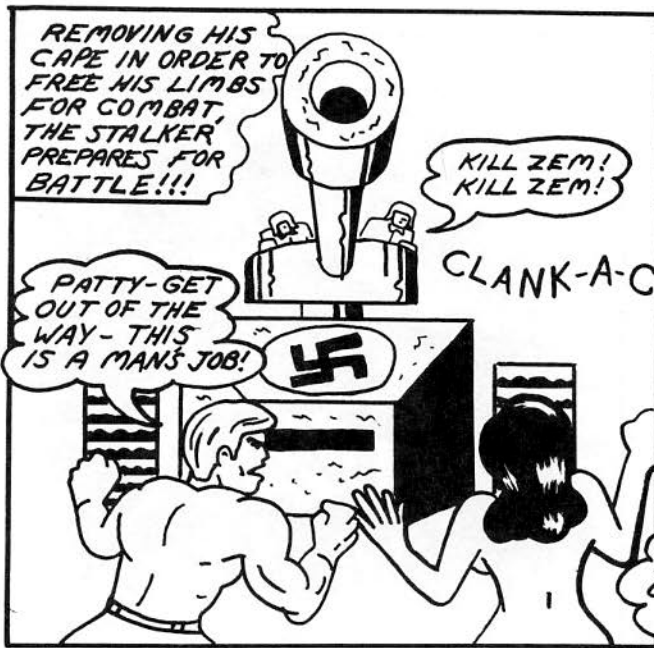
WHAT TH-?



NAZIS?!  
WE'VE  
BLUNDERED  
RIGHT INTO  
THE MIDDLE  
OF WORLD WAR  
TWO!!!

ACHTUNG!!  
VAS IST!?  
AMEIKANER  
SPIES!! UND  
ONE OF ZEM IS  
NAKED!! KILL  
ZEM!!

CLANK-A-CLANK-A-CL





JACK UNLEASHES HIS RAGE ON THE TANK, AND HE ROARS WITH INSANE LAUGHTER!!!



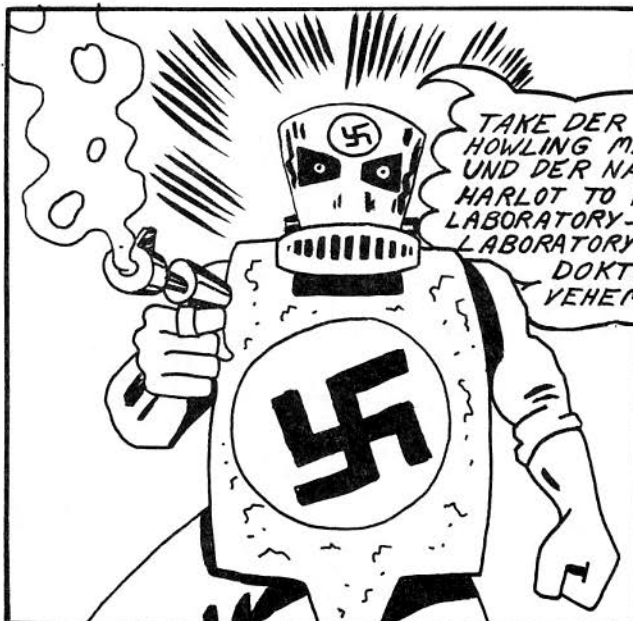
AH, HA, HA, HA, HA!!  
AA 0000000000!!!

THE STALKER'S POSITION AS VICTOR, HOWEVER, IS SHORT-LIVED!!!



POW!!!

UNNHHH!!!



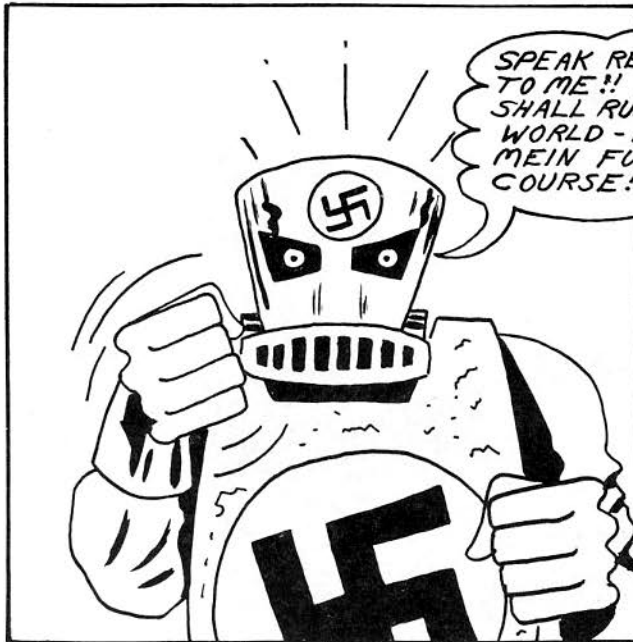
TAKE DER  
HOWLING MAN  
UND DER NAKED  
HARLOT TO MEIN  
LABORATORY- DER  
LABORATORY OF-  
DOKTOR  
VEHEMOUS!!

LATER, IN A SECRET UNDERGROUND ROOM FULL OF BIZARRE MACHINERY...



WHY, YOU  
GOOSE-STEPPIN  
WEASEL-!

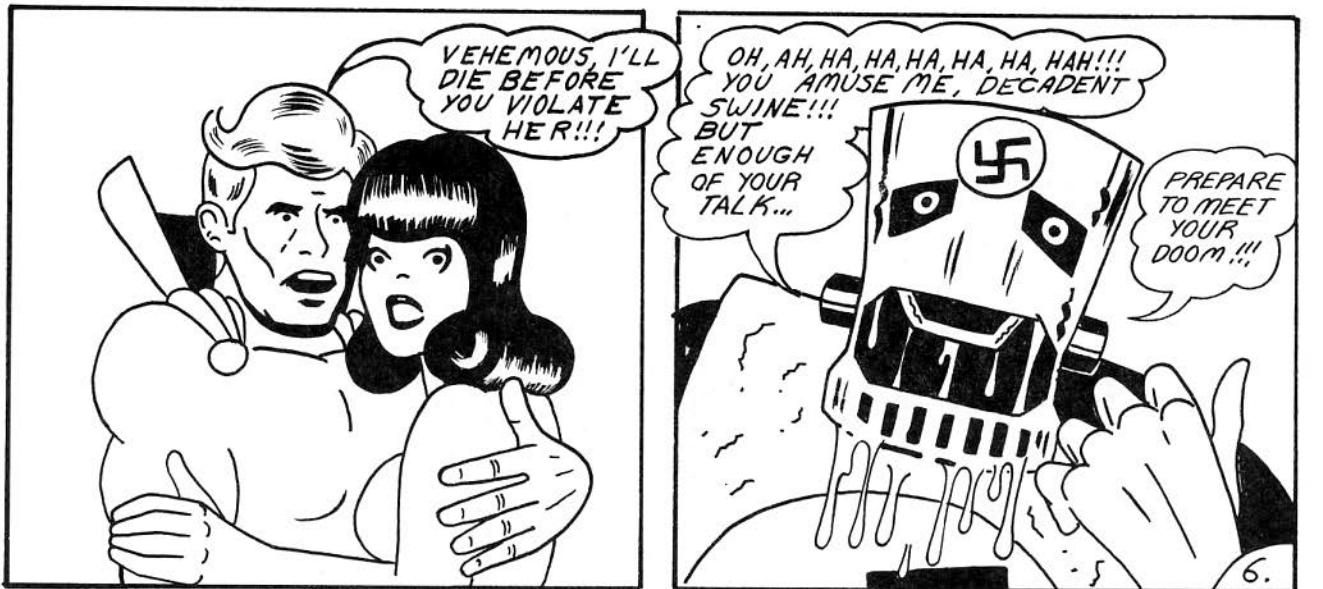
SILENCE!!!



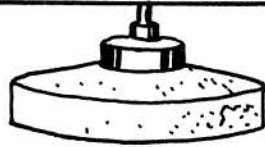
SPEAK RESPECTFULLY  
TO ME!! I, VEHEMOUS,  
SHALL RULE DER  
WORLD-ER, BESIDE  
MEIN FURHER, OF  
COURSE!!!



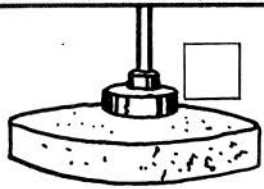
BUT EVEN A  
GLOBAL DICTATOR  
NEEDS - FEMALE  
COMPANIONSHIP'!!!



VEHEMOUS MAKES IT CLEAR TO MASON THAT TWO IS COMPANY, BUT THREE IS A CROWD!!! THE MASTER NAZI PULLS A FATAL LEVER, AND A HEAVY STONE LID IS HOISTED FROM THE LAB FLOOR!!!



AND IN THE CHAMBER BENEATH - HORROR!!!



GRRR!!!

UND NOW, FOOL, MEET - DER GOLEM!!!



I-AM-FREE!! FREE-TO-DESTROY-FREE-TO-KILL!!!



DER GOLEM IS MEIN GREATEST CREATION!!! HE IS IMMORTAL!!! HE CANNOT DIE - HE VILL LIVE FOREVER, SERVING DER REICH!!! GOLEM!!! KILL DER MAN!!!

PATTY - MY GOD!!!

NAKED-WOMAN-MINE! MAN-IN-UNDERWEAR-MUST-DIE!!!

JACK - EEEEE!

OOOOOOOO!!!

BUT JACK MASON IS MORE THAN WILLING TO MEET THE CHALLENGE!



AHHH -



BAM!

UH??

DIE!!!



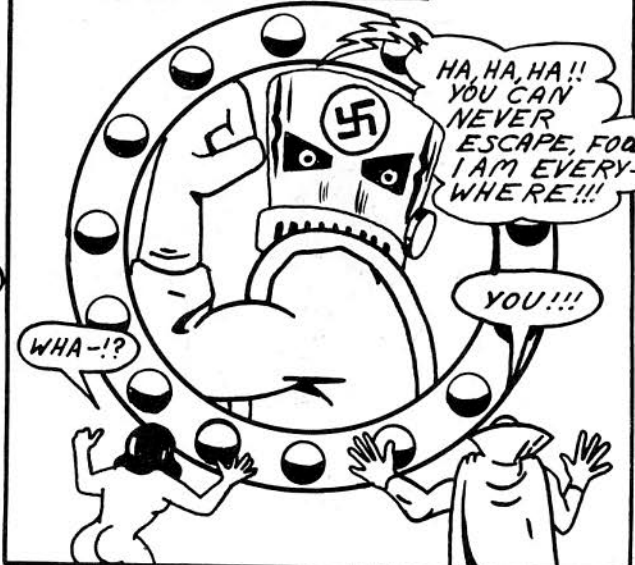
JACK SAVES PATTY FROM A FATAL PLUNGE, AND THEY ALIGHT BEFORE A HUGE TELESCREEN!!!



JACK - I SAW VEHEMOUS ENTER A PASSAGE -!

I'LL FIND HIM - WHEREVER HE IS!!!

SUDDENLY, THE TELESCREEN CRACKLES TO LIFE!!!



HA, HA, HA!! YOU CAN NEVER ESCAPE, FOOL! I AM EVERYWHERE!!!

YOU!!!

WHA-!?

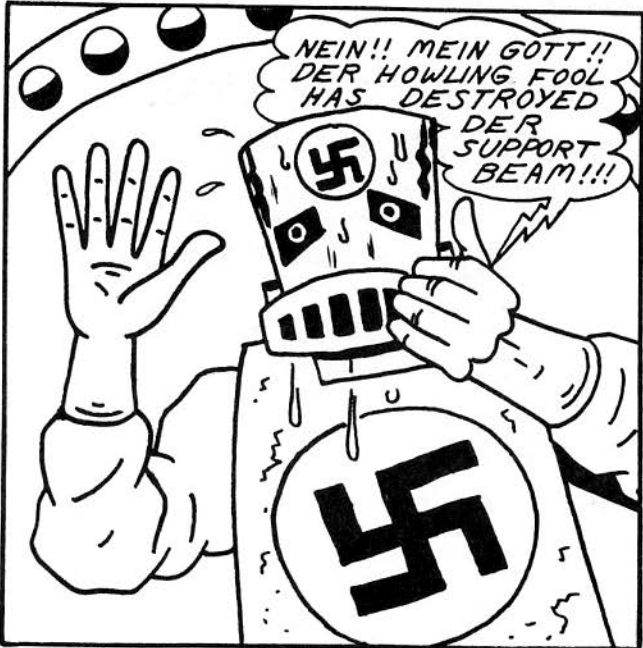


WAITAMINNT!!! THAT BEAM - IF I CAN JUST LEAP FAR ENOUGH, WITH JUST ENOUGH FORCE -!!

THE STALKER BOUNDS UPWARD WITH ASTONISHING SPEED, AND...

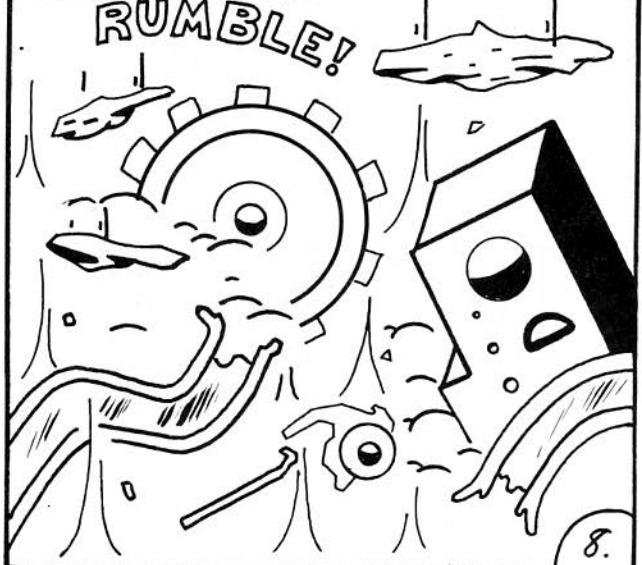


AAA0000000!!!



NEIN!! MEIN GOTT!! DER HOWLING FOOL HAS DESTROYED DER SUPPORT BEAM!!!

AN APOCALYPTIC EXPLOSION RESULTS -!



RUMBLE!

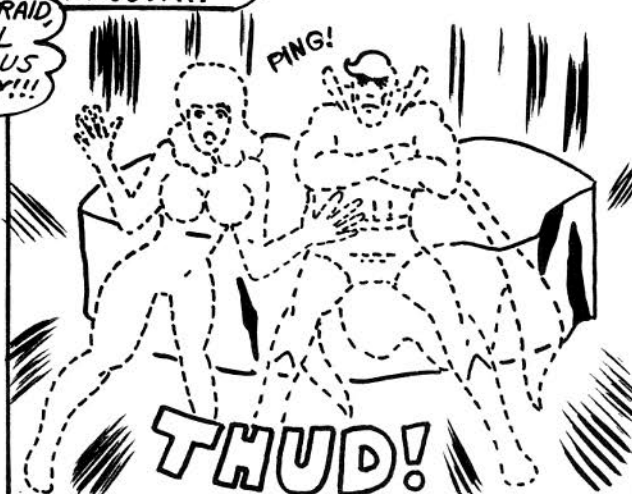
TONS OF DEBRIS RAIN DOWN UPON THE HAPLESS ADVENTURERS!!!



OH, JACK-!

DON'T BE AFRAID, PATTY - I'LL TELEPORT US TO SAFETY!!!

THE STALKER EMPLOYS HIS UNCANNY TELEPORTATION ABILITIES!!! HE AND PATTY FADE FROM VIEW JUST AS A HEAVY STONE FALLS TO THE FLOOR!!!



PING!

THUD!

AND AFTER A HAIR-RAISING JOURNEY THROUGH ELDRITCH DOMAINS...



JACK - ARE WE BACK?

YEAH, PATTY - WE'RE BACK -

-BACK IN A WORLD OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE, WHERE THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE IS CONSIDERED PASSE, AND PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO WALK THE STREETS!!!



OH, JACK, I'M SO AFRAID-!

WE ALL ARE, PATTY!! MORE DANGER LIES AHEAD - I CAN FEEL IT!!!



YES, MORE DANGER LIES AHEAD, AND YOU, THE READER, CAN SHARE THE THRILLS, IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF **MAELSTROM** 'THE ULTIMATE FANZINE'

# SGT. FURY

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Russ Maheras '74



# MORE TRIUMPHS FOR US MORONS..!

APPROVED BY THE FINE PRINTING COMMISSION

THE WORLD'S GRUBBIEST COMIC MAGAZINE

## Fantastic Fourty

IND.

SEE 000 FAMOUS BOURTIVY THE WORLD'S FINEST FANTASTIC FOURTES OF A FIGHT THE HORRORIFIC DEVILUS, DEMONICAL DOCTOR DUB!

YARBLE COMICS GROUP 85¢ NOV. 190

APPROVED BY THE FINE PRINTING COMMISSION

## AMAZING CIDER-MAN

IND.

IT'S GIDEY'S GREATEST CHALLENGE, AS HE TACKLES... THE FOUR DOOM JUGS OF DOOM!

YARBLE COMICS GROUP 50¢ AND 177¢ NOV. 2 Box Tops

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## DERANGED TALES

IND.

CAN DR. MAGIC EVEN OVERCOME THE FEARSOME PLOT OF BUNDORR THE KILLER BUNNY?!

PLUS 000 A THRILLING TALE OF SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE!!!

YARBLE COMICS GROUP 2 WEEKS 188¢ HURD LABOR NOV.

**NOT ON SALE**  
(FORTUNATELY)

RUSS MAHERAS '74

INTRODUCING: THAT ONE-MAN, BONE-CRUSHING, SKULL-SPLITTING, HERO OF TOMORROW...

# ANTHONY WADE

THE STERILE FLOROTUBE LIGHTING MADE THE INTERROGATION ROOM A KIND OF SICKLY CLEAN, AND THE FEEL AND ODORLESS SMELL OF ALL THAT CLEANLINESS MADE ME WANT TO THROW UP. THE ROOKIE COP WAS POLISHING HIS TIN FOIL BADGE, ALL THE WHILE GIVING ME STUPID LOOKS LIKE HE WANTED TO SMASH MY HEAD MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. BUT IT'D BE TOO DAMN BAD FOR HIM IF HE TRIED, BECAUSE I WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO MASH HIM FLAT AS A PANCAKE! PAXTON BRUBBA, THE CHIEF OF POLICE WHO HAD BEEN A PAIN FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, LOOKED UP FROM HIS CLEAN MANILLA FOLDER AND TRIED TO STARE ME DOWN, BUT HE LOST OUT, THE COWARD, AND HE STARTED TALKING WHILE HE FIDGETED AND PRETENDED TO READ SOME REPORT OR OTHER----

MR. WADE... DESPITE YOUR SOMEWHAT--ER--UH TARNISHED REPUTATION, WE FEEL THAT YOU ARE THE ONLY INDIVIDUAL AVAILABLE WHO IS CAPABLE OF HANDLING THIS MOST DIRE EMERGENCY!!



STORY - KINNARD  
RE. KINNARD  
ART - RUSS MAHERAS

BULLCRAP, YOU JERK!  
WHAT YOU MEAN IS THAT YOU COULDN'T FIND ANYONE STUPID ENOUGH TO HANDLE IT!!

HUH?

URK! NO!  
PLEASE!



DIRTY, SUBVERSIVE...

FOOL!



TRY TO SNEAK UP ON ME, HUH? WELL... YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET IT, CHUM!

IGNORANT, SUBHUMAN, ACK!





THERE IS A BLUR OF CRIMSON VIOLENCE AND AS THE SMOKE CLEARS...

WELL... AT LEAST HE MAKES A PRETTY DESIGN ON THE FLOOR...

≡GAGG≡ OH MY GOD!!



...DON'T HE ?!!

OH, YES SIR, HE CERTAINLY DOES, SIR! EXTREMELY DECORATIVE INDEED, SIR!! ≡GASP≡



ALRIGHT, PUKEFACE, NOW GET THAT CRUMMY MESS CLEANED BEFORE IT DRAWS FLIES, AND THEN WE'LL DO BUSINESS!!

YES SIR, YES SIR, YES SIR... I... NO! AGGGGGH !!!



LATER...

AND NOW, HALF-WIT, EXACTLY WHAT WAS IT YOU WANTED ME FOR ?

WELL...







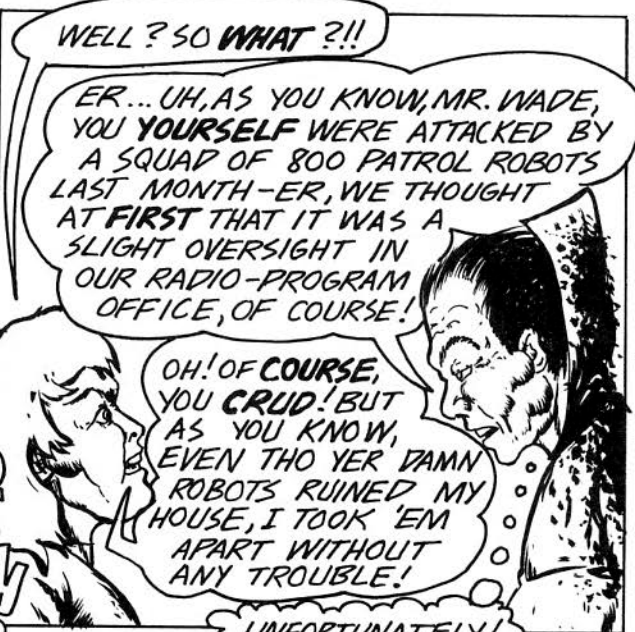
IT HAPPENED ABOUT A WEEK AGO! ONE OF OUR SINNER EXECUTION SQUADS WAS OUT ON PATROL WHEN SUDDENLY A FAMILY OF DECENT CITIZENS WAS ATTACKED!!

CRUNCH!  
SMASH!  
LOOK FRED! GIANT ROBOTS!  
SHADDAP, CREEP! I'M WATCHIN' FOOTBALL!



...IT WAS JUST HORRIBLE... DIE, PLINY HUMANS!

SHADDAP, CREEP! I'M WATCHIN' FOOTBALL!



WELL? SO WHAT?!!

ER... UH, AS YOU KNOW, MR. WADE, YOU YOURSELF WERE ATTACKED BY A SQUAD OF 800 PATROL ROBOTS LAST MONTH - ER, WE THOUGHT AT FIRST THAT IT WAS A SLIGHT OVERSIGHT IN OUR RADIO-PROGRAM OFFICE, OF COURSE!

OH! OF COURSE, YOU CRUD! BUT AS YOU KNOW, EVEN THO YER DAMN ROBOTS RUINED MY HOUSE, I TOOK 'EM APART WITHOUT ANY TROUBLE!

UNFORTUNATELY!



AS I WAS SAYING, OR ABOUT TO SAY, MR. WADE, IT'S COME TO OUR ATTENTION THAT THESE MARAUDING ROBOTS -- DO NOT BELONG TO US !!!!!!!



WHAT!

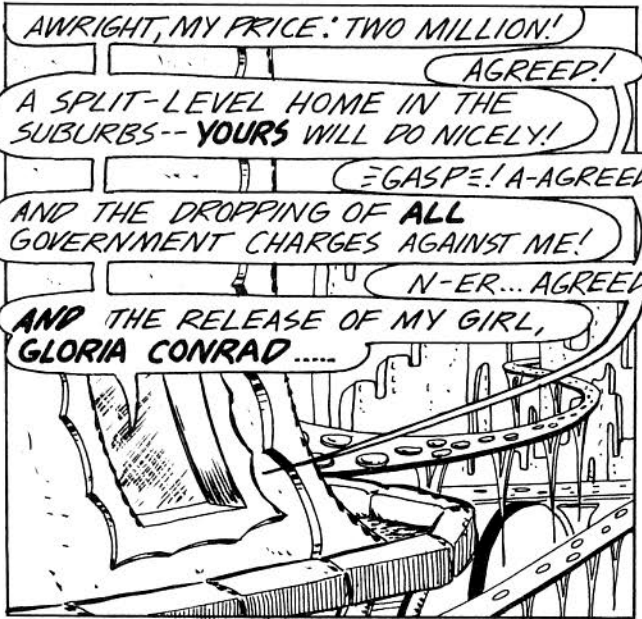


THAT'S RIGHT! THEY WEREN'T OURS!! THE ROBOTS ARE MERELY CLEVER REPLICAS...

AND **NATURALLY**, YOU WANT **ME** TO...

...MANUFACTURED AND CONTROLLED BY EXTRA TERRESTRIAL ALIENS!!! EVEN **NOW** THEIR SHIP IS CIRCLING THE PLANET...WAITING... WATCHING!!!

...STOP THE INVASION!!! WE'RE PREPARED TO MEET **ANY** PRICE YOU NAME!



AWRIGHT, MY PRICE: TWO MILLION!

AGREEP!

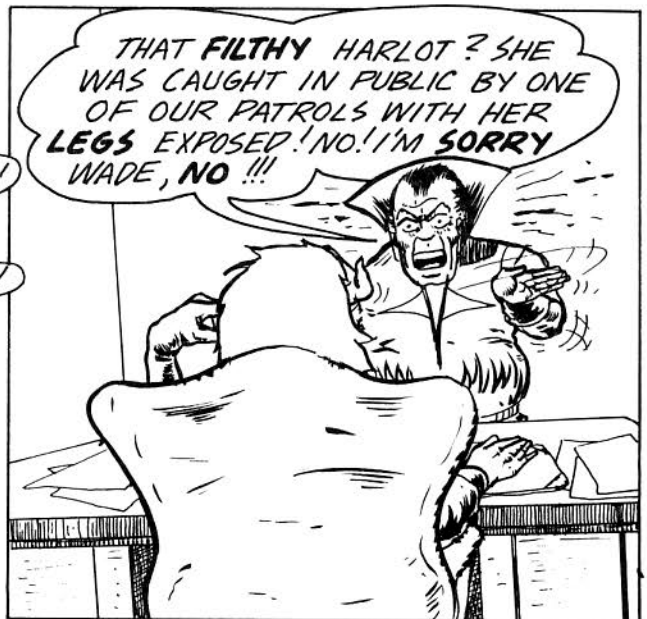
A SPLIT-LEVEL HOME IN THE SUBURBS-- **YOURS** WILL DO NICELY!

≡GASPE! A-AGREEP!

AND THE DROPPING OF **ALL** GOVERNMENT CHARGES AGAINST ME!

N-ER... AGREEP!

AND THE RELEASE OF MY GIRL, **GLORIA CONRAD**.....



THAT **FILTHY** HARLOT? SHE WAS CAUGHT IN PUBLIC BY ONE OF OUR PATROLS WITH HER **LEGS EXPOSED**! NO! I'M **SORRY** WADE, **NO**!!!



WHAT WAS THAT??

ER, AH, WELL ≡GASPE! I GUESS THINGS **COULD** BE ARRANGED!!

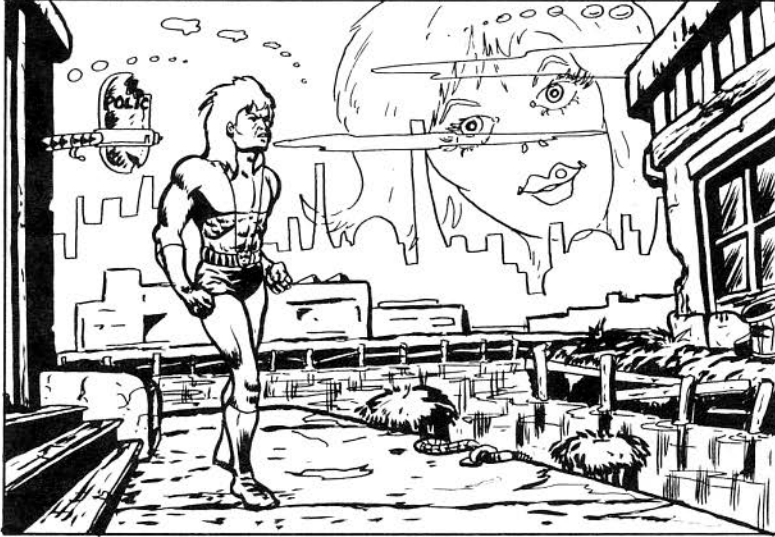


IT HAD **BETTER** BE ARRANGED! OR THE NEXT THING I KICK IN, WON'T BE THIS DOOR!

**KA-RUMPH!**



I WALKED OUT INTO THE GARBAGE-INFESTED EXPANSE THAT THEY HAD THE NERVE TO CALL A CITY. I HAD TO SEE GLORIA, HAD TO RELEASE HER FROM PRISON...



I WAS CALM, NOT VIOLENT, BUT THEN SOME POOR FOOL MADE A FATAL MISTAKE!



HEY LADY!!!  
YA GOT A MATCH?

WHA-?



YOU INSIGNIFICANT MICROCOSM! YOU DARE ASK ME FOR A MATCH?!!

HEY!  
WHATTA YA DOON?



HAHAHA! TAKE THAT YA MEELY MOUTHED, CHICKEN SCRATCHIN' LUNK!

ACK!

SPLISH



AW C'MON!  
JUST ONE LOUSY MATCH?

YOU CRUD!

SNAP



WHEN I GET DONE WITH YOU, YOU AIN'T GONNA NEED A MATCH!

SLISH!  
SLOOSH!  
SLURSH!  
GURGLE



HERE COMES A SEMI! I'LL LET IT FINISH THE JOB FOR ME!!!

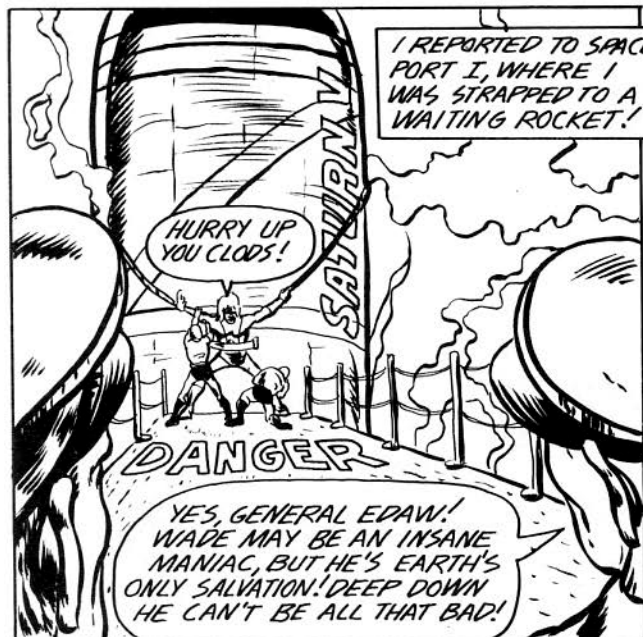
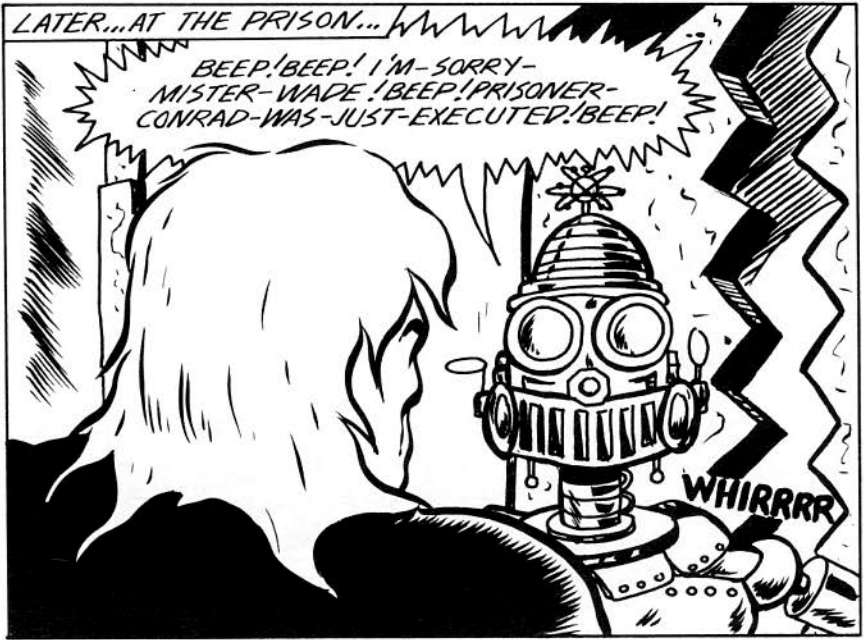
ONE MATCH?



AHAHAHAHA!

GUNCH!





THE PAD IS SOON CLEARED AS THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS...



THEN... LIFT OFF!



SUCCESSING IN HIS DEATH-DEFYING LEAP WADE STEALTHLY RIPS OUT THE SIDE OF THE SHIP!





CAUGHT BY SURPRISE, THE ASTOUNDED SPACE-CREATURES HAVE LITTLE TIME TO REACT, THUS GIVING WADE VALUABLE TIME TO STRIKE A BLOW FOR MANKIND!!





WITH DEADLY ACCURACY WADE HEAVES THE CANNON THE LENGTH OF THE SHIP!

FLYING MACHINERY SENDS WADE SCURRYING DOWN THE MAIN CORRIDOR. FOR IF THE SHIP GOES, EVEN HIS STEEL-HARD FRAME MAY GO WITH IT!

# SNASH!

GOOD MORC!  
HE HIT THE  
NITROMIC ENGINE!

# RUMMMMBLE!!!

THE SHIP...  
IT'S GONNA...

BROKOW

THOOM!

# RRRUMMMMBLE

# THA-BOOM!!!

"THE BLAST TORE THE SHIP TO SHREDS... YET I  
MANAGED TO BYPASS THE BRUNT OF IT!!"

"THE BATTLE WAS OVER AND I  
FREE FELL BACK TO EARTH..."

"...THERE WERE A  
FEW PEOPLE I  
HAD TO TAKE CARE OF!"

DO YOU WANT TO SEE MORE OF ANTHONY WADE? WRITE AND TELL US!!

END



BOY! THESE  
HORROR MAGS ARE  
REALLY **STUPID!** WHO'S  
GONNA BELIEVE ALL OF  
THIS GARBAGE ABOUT  
DEMONS, MONSTERS  
AND JUNK LIKE  
**THAT?**

VAMPIRES ARE STALKING THE STREETS OF CHICAGO!!!  
IN THE 1970'S!!! THE HELLSPAWN, THE VERY CHILDREN OF  
SATAN HIMSELF ARE UPON US ALL!!! EVEN NOW, A LOWLY  
PROSTITUTE IS UNDER DEATH'S COLD SCRUTINY!!!

# THE BLOOD- SUCKERS

WRITTEN AND  
DRAWN BY  
YOR DRANNIK



THE EVIL EYE EXISTS!!!  
IN MERE SECONDS, THE  
POWER TAKES EFFECT!!!

THE HAPLESS  
VICTIM DIES IN  
A FINAL SPASM  
OF FORBIDDEN  
PLEASURE!!!

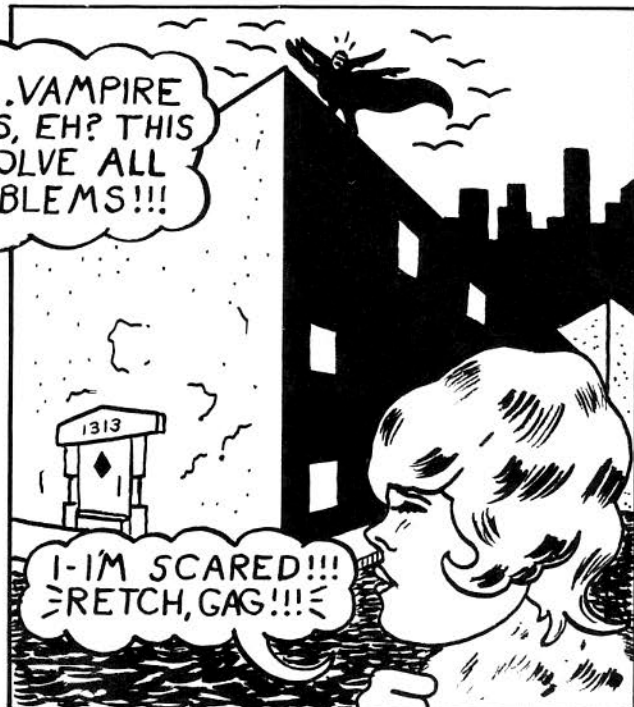




YES, THE GIRL DIES, THE VICTIM OF A MONSTER!!! BUT MONSTERS COME IN ALL VARIETIES!!! JUST LOOK AT COLUMNIST MONA BARRETT...

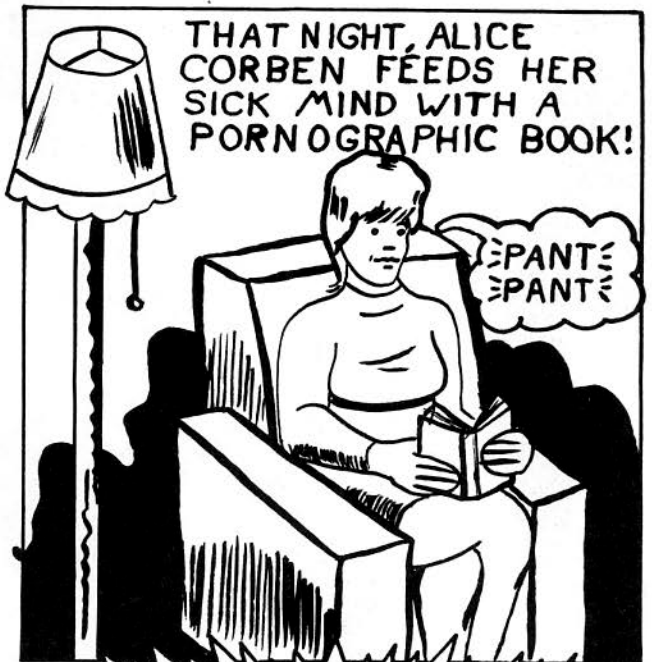


MONA PLACES A DISCREET AD IN THE DAILY PAPERS, AND RECIEVES A MYSTERIOUS ADDRESS IN REPLY!!! THE BUILDING IS A DARK AND FORBIDDING ONE...



MONA GROPEES HER WAY DOWN A FETID CORRIDOR!!! A CHILL RUNS ALONG HER SPINE AS SHE SEES... HIM!!!





LATER, MONA IS SUMMONED TO PASTAFAZOO'S RESIDENCE...



WELL, THERE IT IS, MY DEAR-- THE CORPSE OF ALICE CORBEN!!! HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?!??

CHOKES  
RETCHES



AND NOW, MY DEAR, THE LITTLE MATTER OF ~~THE~~ PAYMENT!!!



OH, YEAH (HEH, HEH) ~~CHOKES~~ PAYMENT!!! HOW MUCH?? \$1,000? \$2,000?!??



YOU MISUNDERSTAND COMPLETELY, MY DEAR!!! THE ONLY PAYMENT I WANT --- IS YOU!!! ARAGHH!!!

AIEEEEE!!!

THE END 4.





MAHERAS '73

**Well... that wraps up the first issue!  
Hope you liked it!**

**WE NEED YOUR LETTERS OF COMMENT!**

WRITE TO : **MAELSTROM**, 950 N. LARAMIE, CHICAGO, ILL., 60651

**CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME !!!** ALL CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE CONSIDERED AND ALL MUST CONTAIN SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE IF TO BE RETURNED!!! REMEMBER THO! OUR SPACE IS LIMITED SO WE CAN'T POSSIBLY USE EVERYBODY'S! THANKS!

**FANZINE REVIEW**.... Next Issue!!!

GOSHAROOTIE!

MAHERAS

36 big pages

DON'T MISS... **ALL AMERICAN JACK**

APPEARING IN ALAN HANLEY'S **COMIC BOOK NO. 6**

SEND ONE DOLLAR TO:  
COMIC BOOK % ALAN HANLEY  
6228 N. WINTHROPE, CHICAGO, ILL. 60626

ROGER, CAP'N I GUESS  
THE SCIENTISTS WERE RIGHT!  
MARS IS TOO BARREN TO  
SUPPORT LIFE!!



Russ MAHERAS '74



# THE INSULT THAT MADE A CORPSE OUT OF "MAC"



## Let Me PROVE I Can Make A SUCKER Out Of YOU!!!

Are you "fed up" with seeing all the big clods walk off with the best of everything. Sick and tired of getting bazookas shot off in your face - leaving you only half alive? Well, my secret method, called dynamite tension, can change all that...

have to do is gamble one thin dime, for a muscle-building method that has been passed down through the ages on papyrus scrolls by two immortal hunchback monks, who dwell within the forgotten vaults of Genghis Kahn, located somewhere in the towering peaks of the Himalayas. This method will put 20" on neck, 72½" on your arms, and eventually 5" off your wallet! Hurry! Order now! Quick, before you figure out we're a bunch of crooks!!!

### HERE'S HOW!!!

Yes, dynamite tension can make you a huge monolithic mountain of sinewy sinews! And all you

CHARLIE WORLD, Plot 80 Z  
115 East R.I.P. Rd., NEW YORK, N.Y. 10001

Dear Charlie: Help! I need these muscles:

- |                                            |                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broader Muscles   | <input type="checkbox"/> Magnetic Muscles        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ironhard Muscles  | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscular Muscles        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tireless Muscles  | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Muscles        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energetic Muscles | <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered Muscles |

Print Name ..... Age.....  
Address .....  
City & State ..... Zip .....  
Code.....