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THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO:

ROBERT L. KLINE * JIM PINKOSKI * GARY GROTH
DAN ADKINS * MIKE KALUTA * RICHARD CORBEN
* WOODSTOCK *

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er and the artist and/or author.

JOE KUBERT

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kubert is a name that's been associated with the comics industry for quite some time. In fact, Joe's been at it for 28 years now. Ahh, the inevitable question: "How does he do it?!"

The year was 1941; and Joe Kubert, then only a youth of 13 not yet out of high school, had already made his mark in the comics field. Reflecting on his earliest efforts, Joe said: "I started working for Mr. Harry A. Chessler; this was in the early forties. I worked in his office 1 1/2 hours a day after school, and he gave me five dollars a week. ...I was allowed the run of the place--to look over the artists' shoulders and watch them work --and to ask their criticisms of my own work. These guys were just wonderful --their patience and their helping hands did much to engender a desire in a very young boy to be a successful cartoonist."

"Seems to me I remember a little fat kid-type coming up to the place for which I worked... about 30 years ago!" writes Irv Novick. "he was a bit obnoxious while insisting that he wanted to become a cartoonist for the comic books..." In a 1944 issue of *All Star Comics*, Joe Kubert's first job for *National Periodical Publications* was printed. It was soon after that people started to define Kubert and *Hawkman* as the same thing.

All through the 40's Joe worked for *National*, changing and developing his style. During this period, he handled a good number of DC's heroes, including: *The Flash, Wildcat, Zatara, Crimson Avenger, Shining Knight, Newboy Legion, the Star Spangled Kid, Sargon the Sorcerer, and Johnny Quick*. Fans have said that Kubert's art on these characters may have been the best they had ever been portrayed in. Still young, still developing, Kubert faced the 50's.

During the 50's, Joe slackened his pace at *National* to do some free-lancing for the other companies. *Crimestopper* for *Lev Gleason Pubs.*, *Son of Sinbad* and some terror tales for *St. John Publications*, small jobs for *Avon* and the others, and even a short stint with the famous *EC* comics company.



MAN WORKS FROM SUN TO SUN --
A CARTOONIST'S WORK IS NEVER
DONE!

Joe
Kubert
1/23/90

But two of Joe's achievements of these years stand above all his other efforts: *Viking Prince*, with Robert Kanigher for *National*; and *TOR*, with Norm Maurer for *Archer St. John*.

Having full-reign at the *St. John* studio, Kubert took new directions with his mags. He and Maurer developed for the comics media what had recently been popular in the movies: 3-D. *TOR* was the first 3-D comic produced; and the *TOR 3-D* comics border on the verge of fine art. Said Joe concerning his work at *St. John*: "I enjoy all subjects --providing they're done where the writing utilizes the art, rather than using the art merely to enhance the writing. My preference toward *TOR* is simply because this is my own personal idea and property. In the *TOR* books (1,000,000 Years Ago) I created the character; wrote it, drew it, lettered it, colored it; and at one point, took the original art down to the engraver and set 'em up in front of the cameras, for shots to be set on the metal to be etched." --Obviously, *TOR* was not only a work of love, but an actual part of Kubert, the man. --And a quite creative part, at that!

The 60's rolled in; and Joe again turned his creative efforts towards *National*. *Hawkman, Sgt. Rock*, and other projects, both large and small, kept him extremely busy... but happy. "Unlike many people in the comic book business," said Joe, "I don't feel myself demeaned in working for comics. The fact is: I've always enjoyed this media --and I've always given what I felt is my best to it. I'm not 'saving' my 'greatest works' for painting, or advertising art, or even 'pop' art! My best efforts are what you see now!" However, in the spring of 1966, Joe departed from the routine of the *DC bullpen* to collaborate with Green Beret officer Robin Moore on a syndicated newspaper strip.

"*Tales of the Green Beret*" started on Monday April 4th, 1966; and ran as a daily strip with a color Sunday supplement with Kubert at the art helm, until the winter of 1967; when Joe turned the strip over to John Celardo (Who, as a result, had to relinquish *Tarzan* to Russ Manning.).

Back again to his full-time job at *DC*, Joe worked with Bob Kanigher developing a new character. A character who presented the enemy's side of the conflicts and insanity of War...*The Enemy Ace*. In a recent issue of *Star Spangled War Stories*, Joe expressed his feelings on what he thought *Enemy Ace* had accomplished: "...Von Hammer is the proto-type of all men caught in the whirlpool of War. He reflects the suffering all men endure in battle ...The point of our 'War Magazines' has been to show the futility of war, while stressing the human qualities that are driven to peak-highs under the duress of battle. If these elements become recognizable to you, the readers, then we have reached our goal."

Truly, Kubert and Kanigher have accomplished something with *Enemy Ace*... Something...noble ...Something the other comic companies know they cannot duplicate. But, time goes on, and things change...

In the summer of 1968, Robert Kanigher was forced to retire from his editorship because of health, and Joe Kubert became editor of *DC's* war mags, as well as part-time editor of *Showcase*. Soon, even the *Enemy Ace* steps down from the limelight for another Kubert/Kanigher creation.

A crimson-haired white man, adopted at infancy by the chief of the Black-foot tribe finds, as he attains manhood, the greed and relentless purge of Indian land by the white man, and his fanatical search for the shiny, "yellow rocks" he foolishly values above all else. This 'white Indian', *Firehair*, must search the land... hew-out a place for himself in a world he cannot begin to understand.

The keystones Kubert helped create have started things moving. Dennis O'Neil and Neal Adams have paralleled the understanding behind *Enemy Ace* and *Firehair*, directing *Green Lantern* and *Green Arrow* to "find America." And so they search... with *Firehair* and *Von Hammer*, for a world that may not even exist. --Joe Kubert seems to have started a new, promising trend in the comics industry. Who knows what the future holds?

Now, in the summer of 1970, Kubert delights his fans with a new treat. He & Bob K. have been at it again, and have created...*The Unknown Soldier*. "The odyssey of a man, who has lived through ages past and present by this credo: "I dedicate myself...as you have given yourself... to uphold the right against any who would attempt to destroy that which we all hold dear..."

It is now the present. And you have read just how Kubert "did it"... and how he still does.

WE NOTE WITH REGRET, THAT THE INTERVIEW WITH JOE KUBERT WAS NOT AS PENETRATING AS WE HAD HOPED IT WOULD BE. THIS WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT MR. KUBERT'S PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENTS KEPT HIM TOO BUSY TO HAVE SPENT AS MUCH TIME WITH THE INTERVIEW AS WE EXPECTED.

THE INTERVIEW

What was the first job you did for National? When was this?

I've worked for DC on and off over a period of 20 years, and I can't recall the first job.

When did you start drawing Sgt. Rock? How many years has that been?

Robert Kanigher created the written character of Sgt. Rock, which I pictorialized, about 12 years ago.

Why did you finally give Sgt. Rock up to Russ Heath, and decide to work mainly on covers?

When I became editor, about two years ago.

Who was the man behind the idea of Enemy Ace?

Robert Kanigher.

In *The Brave And The Bold* #84 (the Batman and Sgt. Rock teamup issue), the whole of page 14 looks like it was done entirely by you. What's the story behind this?

Neal Adams was in the progress of inking the story towards its completion. I happened to be in the office while he was working, and I asked if he could use a hand. He did. And then I did. Incidentally, I think it was only parts of the first two or three panels I inked.

Many new fans know little of what happened to Viking Prince. Care to comment on why he was dropped? Any plans for his revival in the near future?

Viking Prince reprints have and perhaps will appear again in current issues of Star Spangled War Stories.

Concerning FIREHAIR...

You seemed to somewhat change your style concerning backgrounds which in part, reflect the style of Kelly Freas. Were you aware of this? --Would you consider this an "experiment" on your part trying to graphically portray scenic views? Looking back on it, are you pleased with the way it all came out?

No, I wasn't aware of the similarities you mention; but, yes-- I was trying for a slightly different look. I believe the effects I tried for what would develop into something that ultimately will please me.

Firehair lasted a mere three issues of *Showcase*. Are there any plans for his regular appearance in any of the mags you edit?

Yes.

Concerning HAWKMAN...

By luck, we have obtained original art from one of Hawkman's *Brave & Bold* appearances; how do you feel about we fans getting ahold of these items?

I've no objections to any work that has been obtained by anyone--legitimately. I object most strenuously when the artwork becomes another person's property without the knowledge of the artist.

We agree. ...We've heard that many pieces of original art are actually destroyed after printing because certain people, billing themselves as "fans" are making tremendous profits on the re-sale of such art?

Yes. --But not before the artist has the opportunity to acquire it. A few years ago, the policy was to destroy the artwork and not give the artist the opportunity to save it. Carmine Infantino has been very instrumental in stopping this practice.

Which do you prefer: Pencil or Inking?

I think it's rather important to handle both chores-- to make for a completely satisfying job.

Would you ever consider teaming-up with another artist in the future, to work somewhat like "Simon & Kirby" did?

No.

How long does it take you to pencil a page? To ink a page? Do you always use a brush? --Why've you switched from pen to brush?

Time variations are too tremendous to try to generalize. I don't limit myself to a brush, or pen. I'd use the back end of a mop if I thought it'd give me the proper effect!

What size do you do your art on?

10" x 16" --half again the size of the final copy.

Tales of the Green Berets



Illustrated by JOE KUBERT

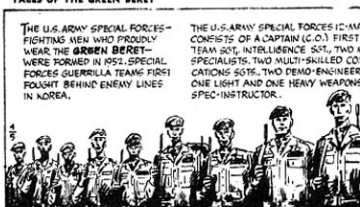
TALES OF THE GREEN BERET

BY JOE KUBERT



TALES OF THE GREEN BERET

BY JOE KUBERT



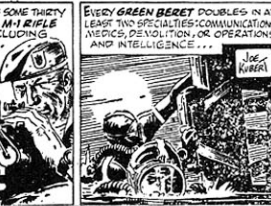
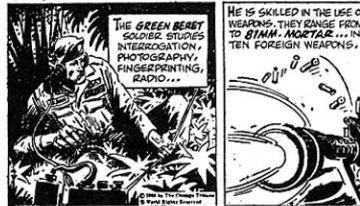
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BY JOE KUBERT



TALES OF THE GREEN BERET

BY JOE KUBERT



TALES OF THE GREEN BERET

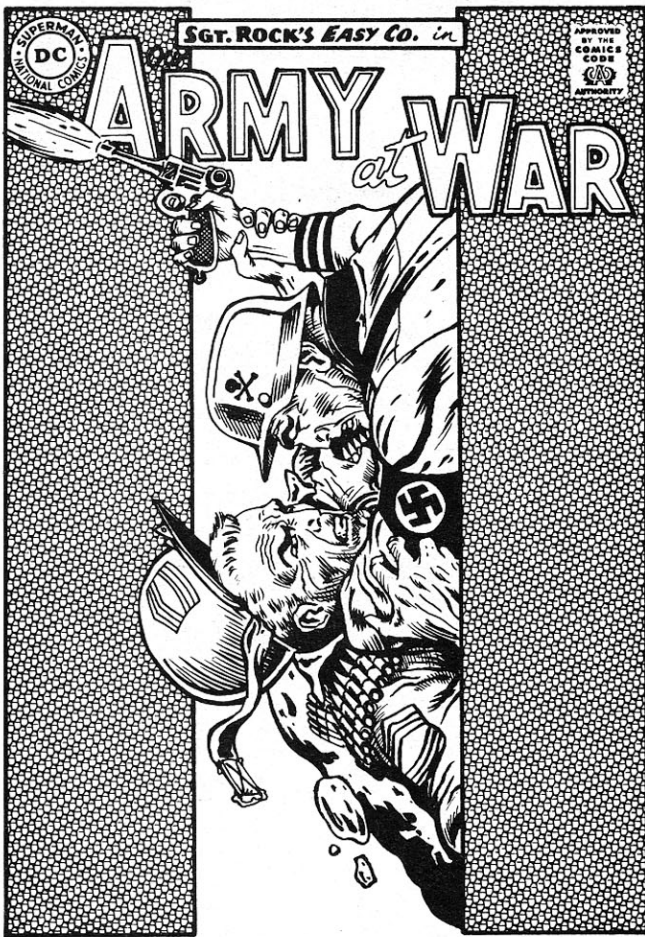
BY JOE KUBERT



TALES OF THE GREEN BERET

BY JOE KUBERT





And that size is the standard for all other DC artists?

Yes.

What type of paper do you do your artwork on?

I use Strathmore 2 ply (kid & plate finish).

And your other materials (pencils, brush & pen types, etc.)?

I did a full page special entitled: "So You Want To Be A Cartoonist", which explains most questions pertaining to artists' materials. It will first appear in Our Army At War #217, and other DC books after that.

Who does the coloring at National?

A staff of the best colorists in the business: Jack Adler, Jerry Serpi, Walter Herlichek, and Tommy Hiclosi.

What's your opinion of Neal Adams as an artist?

Neal is one of a breed of new artists that possess more talent than any one person should! He and fellows like Jim Steranko, Gray Morrow, Jim Aparo, and others have the facility to revitalize old "dinosaurs" like myself.

And your opinions on Marvel's staff?

They're terrific.

And what do the DC staffers have in store for us?

Bigger & better, newer and more novel things are yet to come.

Have you ever done any "ghost" work?

Not that I can recall.

Concerning fanzines: Do you ever have time to contribute to any of them? Do you have any favorites? What have you done?

Once in a while-- I've no favorites in particular. The fact that I'm here in the office 2 hours beyond the time when I should've gone home is the reason I do a minimal amount of "contributing".

Any plans for any further work on the character Tor?

Perhaps--in the future.

To date, is there any of your artwork you consider your best?

"Best"? --I'm not sure. However, I always enjoy the job I'm working on right now--whatever that may be.

And what were you doing in the line of art when this interview reached you?

I've just completed a new feature called "The Unknown Soldier", which will be appearing regularly in Star Spangled War Stories.

Concerning the syndicated strip: Tales of the Green Beret...

What prompted you to enter this area of comics?

I'd never had a syndicated strip published before... I tried to sell Tor as applied in the syndicated strip form but my efforts were to no avail.

Why'd you finally drop the strip, then?

I dropped it because I felt I'd lost control of the strip's directional thrust.

Jack Able worked on the strip with you for a time before you quit...

Yes. --Jack Able inked several Sunday pages and dailies.

Why?

Because deadlines were becoming constricting!

Concerning Jim Warren's magazines: When Blazing Combat was being produced, did you get an offer to do a story for the mag?

No.

It seems strange that you wouldn't try to do something for the Warren mags... a wash job or something using various media uncommon to the regular comic book medium. Why haven't you done anything in this vein?

The opportunity/occasion just never arose.

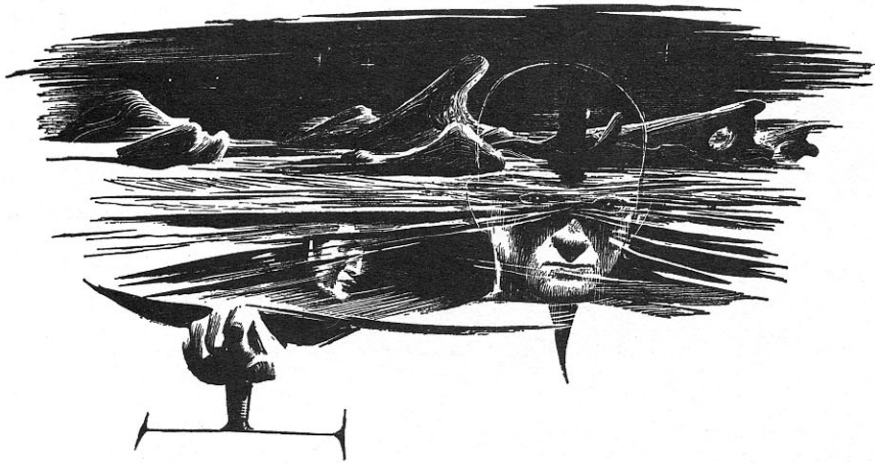
In closing: Is there anything about yourself that you consider strange?

The fact that I'm sitting here answering questions--when I have 13 deadlines on my back!



JOHN SCHODENHERR'S

FANTASTIC SCRATCHBOARD ILLUSTRATIONS



FROM

analog
science fiction — science fact



KNOW WHAT'S WORSE THAN FIGHTING-OFF A FRENZIED HOARD OF GROPING FAN FANATICS?!!

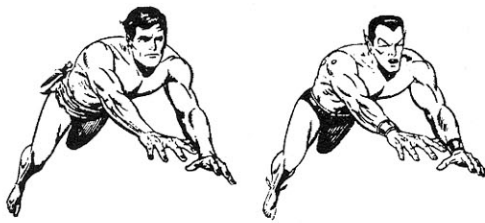
HAVING A GROUP OF PROFESSIONAL PUBLISHERS TAKE THEIR PLACE AND BEGIN HUNTING YOU DOWN!

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Thanks people, we're nowhere without ya!





DEAR MR. ADKINS...

[Of all those objecting to Jim Vadeboncoeur's article last issue, Martin L. Greim, editor and publisher of Comic Crusader, was the most remonstrative.

...We feel that Jim V.'s article this ish seems like more of an answer to Martin's arguments than to those presented by any other reader. Therefore, instead of appearing in the letters column, Mr. Greim's latest, and, in fact, his final word on the matter appears here as a prelude to Jim's article.]

To Jim Vadeboncoeur:

Yes Jim, I called you all the things you mention in your article. I did say you had the poor taste of a 9 year old. At the time I said this (after reading your first article) I believed I was dealing with a 9 year old. However, since then I have found you are an adult; and that, sir, makes the Dan Adkins article even worse! I could see, perhaps, a 9 year old writing a tasteless article like "Dan Adkins & the Incredible Tracing Machine", but for a grown man to--boy!

You call me childish for name calling. Perhaps in this you are right; but even more childish was your attempt at name calling Dan Adkins.

I'm not about to debate with you on swiping; for you seem to be the type of person who would ban "West Side Story" because it was based on Romeo & Juliet. Plus the fact, I believe enough damage was done by your article without me turning the pages of MCR into a battleground. To do this would only be lending me to your cause.

So you may keep your logic and your opinions of me --you may go protesting swiping in the streets --I don't care. I've said all I'm going to on the matter. However, while you're doing this, I'm going to enjoy Dan Adkins' art --swiped or not; and I'm going to do a little creative swiping myself. So, lots of luck!

--Oh! I do want to apologise for calling you a strange little kid. I did make a mistake in that. It just is, that your article, in poor taste, gave me that impression. But then I suppose you couldn't help that.

--Martin L. Greim
2/24/70

Last issue I compiled a list of "swipes" that I observed in stories illustrated by Dan Adkins. I then wrote a short article describing my personal reaction to this discovery. It was not an attempt at sensationalism, nor was it challenging Mr. Adkins' talent as an artist. From the response that it provoked, it became obvious to me that I had failed to get these two points across. I feel that it is necessary for me to clarify my feelings on the subject of "steals" and Mr. Adkins. But first, I would like to explain a little bit about myself.

So far, in response to my article, I have been called "an ass, a little kid, a little strange, and told to Go To Hell" by Martin L. Greim; accused of "Muckraking and Character Assassination" by Berni Wrightson; and called "an irrelevant" by Jeff Jones. I really don't feel that this is an accurate representation of myself. I hope the following will help in understanding exactly what "I was trying to prove" when I wrote that article.

My name, as you probably know, is Jim Vadeboncoeur (how nice to be infamous). I am 23 years old but a relatively new member of fandom. I started buying comics in 1966 while majoring in art at Foothill Junior College. I had always read comics but had never been interested enough to purchase one until I saw *Spider-Man #33*. I was so impressed by Ditko's dynamic drawings that I began to buy comics in earnest. For over a year I was collecting in total ignorance of fandom. When I suddenly discovered other collectors, it was like the opening of a new vista. I discovered a realm of art which I had not even dreamed of. Artists like Williamson and Frazetta, Hogarth, Raymond, Foster, Wally Wood and Reed Crandall had been unknown to me. I had never seen such a wealth of beauty as was suddenly arrayed before me in the collections of my new-found friends. Since art had always been my primary interest, I began to search-out the work of these artists. I was introduced to *Creepy* and *Eerie*, Frazetta paperbacks, Tower publications, and all of the old comics that contained their art. Each new discovery was like taking another step into a brand new world, a world populated only with beautiful things, dynamic people, and exotic landscapes. A world which I realized I could never be a part of.

Each new story that I saw by these artists was not only a step into beauty, but also a private disappointment. It was a deep tragedy to discover that I lacked the talent to help create more worlds of excitement and beauty. I was not capable of even approaching the quality of art produced by these men. So I admitted the obvious and looked to

other talents which I possessed. I changed my major to Business Management, worked my way through college, and am now happily employed at a Micro-Metalurgy firm as Quality Control Manager. During this time I continued to collect comics and expand my appreciation and interest in the Graphic Art form. I "discovered" other artists like Russ Manning, Will Eisner, Alex Toth, John Buscema, John Severin, Angelo Torres, Harvey Kurtzman, Jack Davis, Joe Orlando, Russ Heath, Joe Maneely, Bernie Krigstien, Doug Wildey, and Joe Kubert. This period also brought about an involvement in fandom. I published the first issue of a magazine devoted entirely to the comic art form. I also began to pick up on the new artists appearing in the comics and underground fields. These artists included Vaughn Bode', Jim Steranko, Rich Griffin, George Metzger, Neal Adams, Robert Crumb, Jeff Jones, Berni Wrightson, and, (quite honestly) Dan Adkins.

That brings me to the present and the article that appeared in the last issue of this magazine.

I did not write that article as an "expose" of Dan Adkins. I believe that most fans were well aware of the swipes occurring in his work long before I even conceived the notion of writing the article. Since it was common knowledge, how could I expose it?? Nor was I condemning him. If the tone of the article carried that impression, then it was due to my lack of writing skill and knowledge of my readers. I wrote that article half tongue-in-cheek and half in pity. Since I quite obviously failed to convey my message, I will attempt to clarify it. I hope that I succeed this time.

The title was a take-off on a typical Tom Swift book. The "Incredible Tracing Machine" was supposed to be the "Magic Art Reproducer", which was advertised constantly in comics of the late Fifties. I didn't actually believe that Mr. Adkins actually used such a machine, but since I was writing an article for comic fans I thought that I would use comic related material. It was symbolic, although many readers took it to be an actual magical machine or else called my attention to the fact that such a device can be obtained for over \$800 not \$1.98

as I suggested. I thought that the last sentence carried my feelings about the whole thing. It was meant to convey the fact that Mr. Adkins was not pleased with his use of other artists work and that anyone else who "swiped" art would not be any too happy about it either.



It was pure naivete on my part when I mentioned those artists whom I thought did not swipe. From the number of letters informing me otherwise, it is unreasonable to continue to believe that none of them do. I do maintain that few could possibly do so in the volume that I have observed in Mr. Adkins' work. This is not meant slanderously, nor is it an attempt to criticize the quality of his draftsmanship. It is a fact. I did not pursue the morality of "swiping" in my first article because I believe that morals are an individual thing. I have no more right to impose my personal beliefs on Mr. Adkins than Mr. Martin L. Greim has to inflict his on me.

Since my reasons for writing that article have been challenged, I am going to express my opinion. I do feel that "swiping" is unethical. It's plagerism. An artist is not just selling a drawing to a magazine, he is selling his talent. The quality of art in a comic is a determining factor in the quality of sales, and, though not the major factor, it can make or break a comic. Stan Lee, for example, attempts to increase the sales of a poorly selling mag by putting a popular artist on it. It may fail in the end, but it shows that he is aware of the influence a good artist can have on sales. Everyone in Fandom and the Editors of *Marvel* and *National* keep insisting that comics are an art form, a legitimate art form; yet when someone attempts to apply the standards of the rest of the Arts regarding plagerism, the outcry is to the effect that comics are exempt because of their frequency of publication. Since an artist is required to produce such a plethora of panels, he does not have to account to anyone regarding how he obtained his material as long as it is submitted on schedule. If that's the case, then I maintain that such an artist is either a hack, or that he has not really prepared himself for his work.

I think that Dan Adkins falls in the latter category. If you reread my first article you will find no pious condemnation nor even an attempt to force anyone to subscribe to my own ethical standards as expressed in the preceding paragraph. I merely presented the facts to be judged by the readers' individual standards. It appears that my thoughts about the ethics of the situation are not widely held, but that does not prohibit me from believing in them. This is known as Freedom of Speech and Freedom of the Press.

As I said, I think that Dan Adkins has not completely prepared himself for the comics field. I feel that I possess a fairly discerning eye for good art and I think that Dan is a very talented artist. He does good layouts, is a capable story teller and penciler, and has a fantastic inking style. I just want to know why he feels that it is necessary to "swipe". The answer is that he can't draw fast enough to fulfil his commitments. Take, for example, "The Day After Doomsday" which appeared in *Eerie* #8. This, to me, is some of the best work that Mr. Ad-

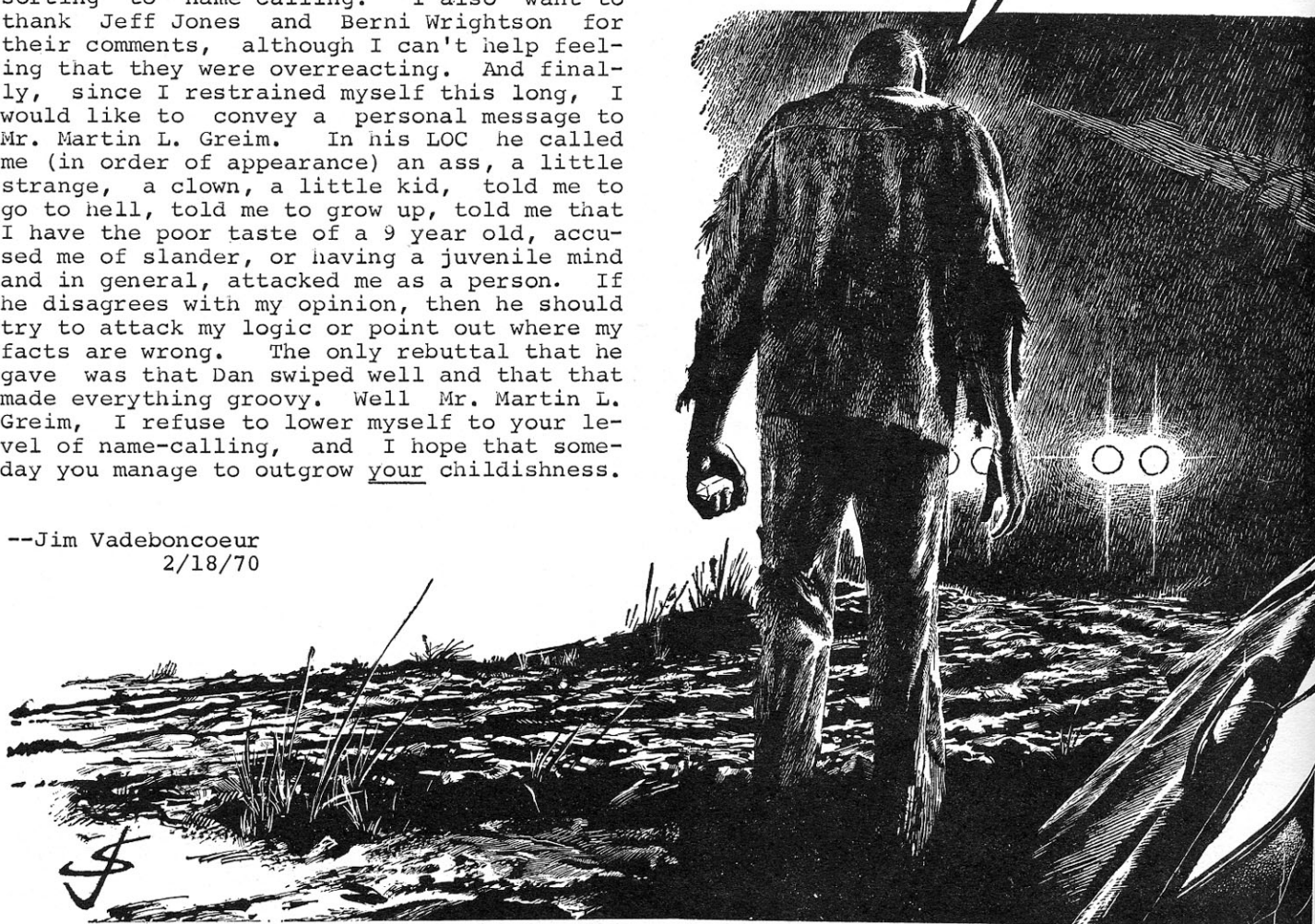
kins has ever done. He must have spent weeks, or even months, to produce it. The fantastic detail, incredibly fine inks, and beautifully-done figures attest to the time he spent on it. I can't understand why he would want to include someone else's work in such a magnificent masterpiece. I can almost picture the pride, effort, and sweat involved, and then the personal grief he went through when he decided that it was necessary to copy some of John Schoenherr's scratchboard work to complete it. Dan wanted to create beauty and was succeeding up to the point where the economics of the situation prompted his borrowing it instead of creating it. Mike Kaluta said in his letter that I gave the impression that Dan was proud of his "swipes". I was definitely not attempting to convey that at all. If I did, I'm sorry. I'm also sorry that Adkins does swiipe. He knows the quality and the quantity that he is capable of producing, yet he continues to accept more work than he can handle. I wish that he would be honest enough with himself to admit his limits and work within them. I wish him luck and hope that the day arrives when he doesn't find the need to "swiipe".

I would like to thank Mike Kaluta for nis very interesting and informative letter. He was able to make his point without resorting to name calling. I also want to thank Jeff Jones and Berni Wrightson for their comments, although I can't help feeling that they were overreacting. And finally, since I restrained myself this long, I would like to convey a personal message to Mr. Martin L. Greim. In his LOC he called me (in order of appearance) an ass, a little strange, a clown, a little kid, told me to go to hell, told me to grow up, told me that I have the poor taste of a 9 year old, accused me of slander, or having a juvenile mind and in general, attacked me as a person. If he disagrees with my opinion, then he should try to attack my logic or point out where my facts are wrong. The only rebuttal that he gave was that Dan swiped well and that that made everything groovy. Well Mr. Martin L. Greim, I refuse to lower myself to your level of name-calling, and I hope that someday you manage to outgrow your childishness.

--Jim Vadeboncoeur
2/18/70

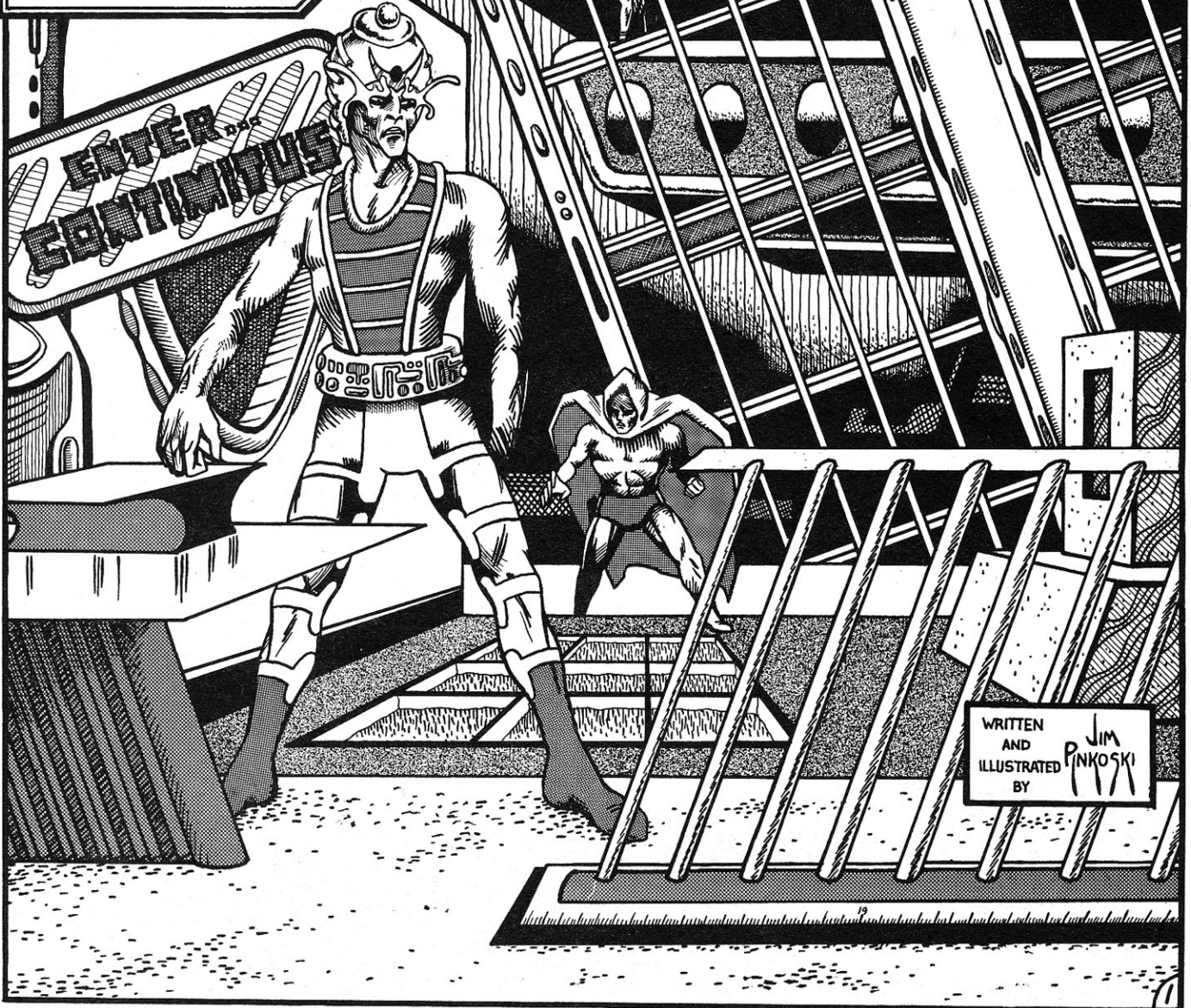
--THIS WHOLE MESS
JUST BURNS ME UP!

EVERYBODY'S BITCHING AWAY,
BUT NOBODY SEEMS TO CARE
ABOUT WHAT I HAVE TO SAY!
THINK ABOUT IT, MAN--!



NOMAN

THIS ADVENTURE IS SOMEWHAT LIKE OTHERS -- BUT THEN AGAIN, IT IS *VERY* DIFFERENT. NOMAN, RENOWN FOR HIS WAR AGAINST EVIL, HAS TRULY MADE HIMSELF A PRIME TARGET FOR THOSE WHO WOULD GAIN PRIDE AND PRESTIGE IN THEIR WARPED MINDS BY KNOWING THEY HAD OVERCOME HIM. THIS STORY IS VERY UNIQUE. T.H.U.N.D.E.R.'S AGENT IS ABOUT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE STRANGEST, MOST IMPORTANT HAPPENING IN HIS LIFE -- ONE THAT WILL CHANGE HIM PERMANENTLY... FROM ANOTHER IRRELEVANT PLANET CAME A DANGER THAT ESTABLISHED ITSELF UPON OUR WORLD, AND IT WAS READY TO STRIKE...



WRITTEN
AND
ILLUSTRATED
BY
JIM
PINKOSKI

THERE WAS A CRY FOR HELP---
IT CAME FROM IN HERE!

WISH THESE BLASTED
DRAINAGE TUNNELS HAD
LIGHTS IN THEM--!

Ooohh

THAT MOAN--SOUNDED
LIKE A GIRLS!

A SUDDEN
BARAGE OF VICIOUS
SOUND WAVES...

UHH!

TRAP...

AND
AGAIN WE
MEET, NOMAN!
A SHAME YOU
CAN'T HEAR
ME-- BUT
YOU WILL KNOW
EVERYTHING
SOON! AND
YOU'LL BE
POWERLESS TO
DO ANYTHING
ABOUT IT
TILL THE DAY
YOU ROT IN
YOUR GRAVE!!

NOMAN AND THE EQUIPMENT ARE
LOADED ON A WAITING TRUCK.

IS NOT IT TRUE THAT GOOD ALWAYS FINDS SOME WAY TO CONFRONT EVIL, MY HELPLESS FRIEND?

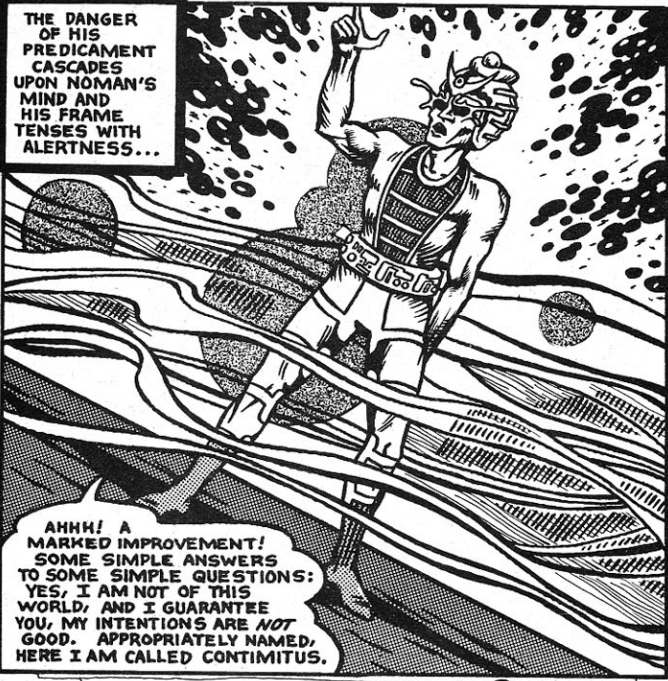
WHERE-- AM I--?

AH YES, THAT DOES APPEAR TO BE A TOO SOPHISTICATED QUESTION TO PUT BEFORE A PERSON IN YOUR PRESENT CONDITION, NOMAN. WE SHALL WAIT A MOMENT TIL YOU HAVE RECOVERED YOUR SENSES.

READY THE MACHINE.



THE DANGER OF HIS PREDICAMENT CASCADES UPON NOMAN'S MIND AND HIS FRAME TENSES WITH ALERTNESS...



AHHH! A MARKED IMPROVEMENT! SOME SIMPLE ANSWERS TO SOME SIMPLE QUESTIONS: YES, I AM NOT OF THIS WORLD, AND I GUARANTEE YOU, MY INTENTIONS ARE NOT GOOD. APPROPRIATELY NAMED, HERE I AM CALLED CONTINITUS.

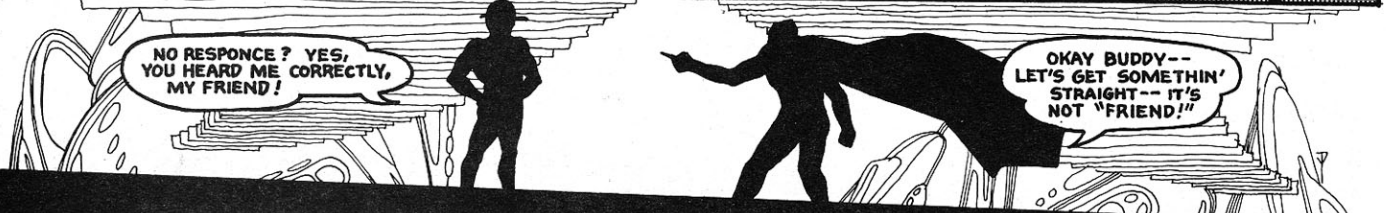
I REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE ENCOUNTERED OTHERS LIKE MYSELF WHO HAVE STRIVED FOR THE SAME GOAL. BUT UNLIKE THOSE BEFORE, I AM ENTIRELY CAPABLE AND DO POSSESS THE MEANS BY WHICH IT CAN BE LOGICALLY ACHIEVED. YOU SEE, I AM GOING TO CONQUER AND RULE YOUR WORLD!



VIBRAMAN!

NO RESPONSE? YES, YOU HEARD ME CORRECTLY, MY FRIEND!

OKAY BUDDY-- LET'S GET SOMETHIN' STRAIGHT-- IT'S NOT 'FRIEND!'

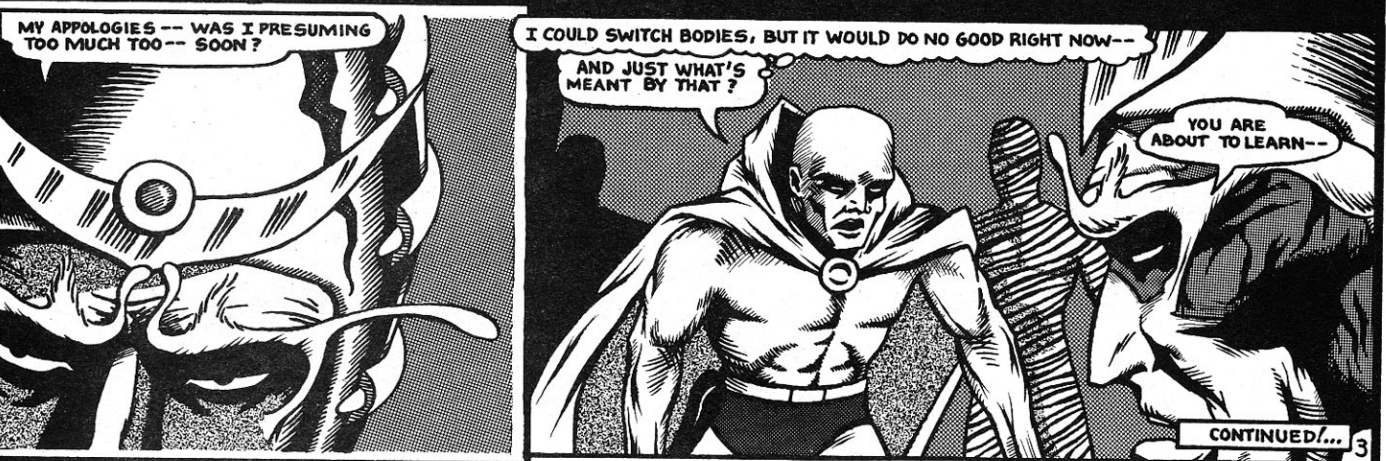


MY APOLOGIES -- WAS I PRESUMING TOO MUCH TOO-- SOON?

I COULD SWITCH BODIES, BUT IT WOULD DO NO GOOD RIGHT NOW--

AND JUST WHAT'S MEANT BY THAT?

YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN--



CONTINUED/... 3

KNOCKS AND BOOSTS



William R. Lund SN B849185
NAS Gallery
Mirimar, California
92145

Dear John,
Congratulations on MCR #3; it was a 100% improvement over issues 1 and 2! The cover was, perhaps, the best I've seen this year on any fan mag; excepting the RBCC and the Comic

Crusader. The rub-on lettering made for a more impressive magazine; one step a lot of fanzines should try. The Frazetta cover checklist of his paintings was very helpful, and much better than those you had before.

Bill Henley's article was interesting. He spent quite a deal of time just to make his point...that a live-action Spider-Man TV show would be very appropriate in helping along our comics. If as much work as was put into Jonny Quest were used for the Fantastic Four, it would have been extremely well-taken. Better today than Jonny Quest was a few years back.

Interviews I always enjoy, short or long; always finding some added information never before publicized. I also enjoy a person's frank opinions on certain topics. The interviews with L. Sprague de Camp and Jim Sterank were no exceptions.

Jim Vadeboncoeur's article, as far as I see it, was the best article in the issue. Though I am one of those who detest people calling these borrowed illustrations "swipes." I, myself will see a certain form that would look perfect in a strip I'm doing, so I'll draw it (not trace it), adding my own style. Dan Adkins' work resembles Wally Wood's so much that he is accused of swiping more than others...like Frazetta, Williamson, and Neal Adams. I bet there is not one artist who has not borrowed a certain scene he enjoyed. More than anything, that artist is showing his greatest appreciation of that scene by borrowing it. Fans like Mike Howell are very much against it [swiping] and would rather down-grade the artist, pro or fan, than look at the artist's own style within the illustration.

The art in MCR #3, by the way, was very good. --Especially the strips. I thought they all were of varying quality and style. The layout I enjoyed...and I like your idea of showcasing signatures in your letters column.

Well then, until the future brings forth the highly-anticipated MCR #4... Good Night, and may God bless.

Yours,
William R. Lund

[Thanks, Bill, for your highly-complimentary LOC. I guess it's more a matter of pride than anything else, but we'd like to think that Bob Kline's fantastic cover this ish is the best presented on any fanzine, any year.

...Since you mentioned Dan's art resembling Wood's so much, maybe you weren't aware of the fact that Dan was Wally Wood's assistant a few years ago. Ralph Reese took over Dan's place when Dan left for "greener pastures;" and Wayne Howard is Wood's current prottge'.]

Jeff Jones
(Address Withheld: Policy)

Dear John:
Thanks for the copy of MCR #3. It looks as though you're putting a lot of effort into it. Over all, I thought it was an interesting issue. However, I feel I must comment on one particular article: "Dan Adkins and the Incredible Tracing Machine," by Jim Vadeboncoeur.

I don't know what Mr. Vadeboncoeur thought he was trying to accomplish, but I guess he did. The article appeared to be extremely vindictive. It is really nobody's business what means an artist uses in his work. I am not defending Dan Adkins or anyone else, only their right to do their work their way without being patronized by an irrelevant. If an artist, any artist, thinks he has been wronged or used in any way by some other artist, it is a matter between those two artists and no one else.

This article is in very bad taste, and as an editor, it is a reflection on you. Because a publication of any kind reaches so many people, there is a great amount of what is called Responsible Journalism attached.

When used constructively, fanzines are very worthwhile projects. They can provide a place for many people, creative people, to show their work. A fanzine can link many people together with similar interests. And it can give you, as an editor, a real sense of accomplishment.



Don't let MCR turn into a scandal sheet.

Good Luck,

JEFF JONES

Michael William Kaluta
(Address Withheld: Policy)

Dear John,
There seems to be a copy of MCR #3 kicking around the city of a Thousand Suns. My immediate reaction was to write a letter, because the first thing I flipped to was Jim Vadeboncoeur's article on Dan Adkins. But I withheld my hand and read the entire editorial contents, including the letter column. I also studied the artwork, art being of particular interest to me. So, to give this long letter a readable and understandable order, there are four Roman Numerals and numerous sub-numbers.



I. The Adkins Article:
I have to correct Jim V. on a few points: first, if I am to rely on the word of mouth transcription of Dan's midnight phone call, Dan is right when he speaks of the tremendous strain inherited when you make a living doing

comic work. This strain is evident even in your own magazine. In your closing editorial you mention that Capt. Starr wasn't so great because Tom Christopher was hard put to meet a deadline. If Tom keeps pushing, he'll be one hell of a good artist--in the professional sense of the word. But that phrase, "in the professional sense of the word," means Professional art. If a professional artist gets in a hole, especially a newly pro artist like Dan, working for a very finicky publishing house like Magazine Management Co., can't bash-out crudely-drawn panels or the company will crush him like an ant, sweep him out the door, and he'll end up in Greenwich Village, sitting in a doorway begging for dimes.

The second point is this pet list of professional swipers that both you and Jim use, along with a list of artists that don't swipe. Both lists need one hell of a lot of reconstruction. I won't name names --if an artist swipes that's entirely his business. But Boy! are you guys in for some colossal surprises. I will tell you that not one pro artist I know has not swiped--and the pros I know would make quite an impressive list.

Third Point: Jim gave the impression that Dan, and therefore any artist that swipes gets some kind of a joy out of using other artists' material and also that the artist passes-off the swiped stuff as his own and is proud of it. This is Not the case --with a capital N. Jim needs a brush-up course on the artistic ego. It really hurts to swipe because you know that either you could do just as well if you only had the time, or you just can't draw that well. The latter hurts the most. Ask Jim Pinkoski if he is proud of the very noticable swipe in his "ALIENS" strip; you know the one. Ask him how much he enjoyed doing it. Every artist I know that has swiped makes a practice to point-out the swipe and where he got it. An artist is never proud of a swipe--his ego could not survive it.

Point Four: It does not come as a shock to find your work swiped by another artist. Neither do you foam at the mouth, or buy a gun to hunt-out the bastard with the intent to shoot him between the eyes. You laugh. Again it's the artistic ego. You know you did it first and your ego is flattered to see someone else using your art. I say this from personal experience. The only horror that slyly creeps up is the fear that possibly the fans will think you swiped it from him. Obviously your ego tells you that he is an inferior artist--he swiped from you, didn't he? The only kind of swiping that does offend falls into two categories: a) Idea and Mood swipes. Let's say somebody looks at Vaughn Bode's lizard worlds and then goes about building universes and histories, much as Vaughn did, peoples the universes with nitwitted, pitiable sadists; and then sells it as his own. --That's a crime. And, b) Somebody that swipes something from you and obviously does it better than you could ever hope to do. Which makes you wish you never did it in the first place.

Point Five: The "Incredible Tracing Machines" do not sell for \$1.98. As a matter of fact, they list in the area of \$800. You can actually see one of these beautiful monsters if you ever visit the art studios of National Periodical Publications.

Point Six is not a point of correction; yet it is the saddest point of all, and I will quote Jim's parathetical interjections: "...[my ex-idol]..." --Because Dan Adkins swipes? As Jim gets a little older and a little wiser, I hope his condemnation of "swipers" will fall by the wayside. If not, he is going to be hard-pressed to find any idol at all among professional and fan artists. You've got to take the bitter with the sweet. --Swiping is an institution born of necessity, and the only Neros that will throw a swiping artist to the lions dwell somewhere in fandom.

I would think that you, John, as editor-in-chief of MCR would realize that anything printed in your zine is a reflection of your tastes. The Adkins article was in very poor taste --why don't you leave the mud-slinging to those who dwell in it? And for the sake of your editorial reputation, don't go through with your planned campaign against artists that swipe. It's very petty and doesn't show your abundant knowledge of the comic art field, but your lack of knowledge concerning the actual processes concerned with the business.

II. Well Jonn, here we come to the controversial part of your opening editorial:

Are you in touch with all of fandom? I doubt it--I haven't heard from you and I am a devout E.C. fan--even done some artwork for 'zines such as Spa Fon, Graphic Showcase, and Mythos (one that fell through). How can you speak for "comic fans" when addressing Stan Lee concerning your wants? I am a comic fan, and I want Stan Lee to get out and hire guys like Al Williamson, Roy G. Krenkel, Frank

Frazetta, Grañam Ingles, Al Feldstein, Joe Orlando, Wally Wood, etc. and start putting some guts back into comics. There are far too many Muscle-Beach Fagots in colored tights running around and breaking down real estate and generally acting foolish. But seriously, I read Marvels and enjoy Hell out of them. Question: Would you rather see John Buscema doing the *Avengers*, or George Metzger? Steve Ditko doing *Doctor Strange* or Jim Pinkoski? I know your answer. Yet you take these two fan artists over Stan Lee's choices. Don't you think Barry Smith is trying? Do you think Jim Pinkoski will be drawing the way he does today, a year from now? No. Neither will Barry Smith. Marvel hired him because they saw his potential for becoming a great Marvel artist. Could you imagine "Conan the Adventurer" from the same hand that drew all those Funny Animals? Face it--Stan Lee knows what he's doing --he's re-arranging. Like it or not, I think super heroes are dying, and horror is on the rise again. Lee, if he wants to eat, must bend with the wind. In a society as large as ours, it is always the "brainless children" that get what they want; because unlike fandom's multiple hundreds, the "brainless children" number in the millions. Nothing is "fair" to a minority when the "Silent Majority" runs past the six-zero mark --dig? III. Those were the two main beefs I had/have with MCR #3--the Adkins thing being the major. A discussion concerning swiping, with pro's and con's from the fan viewpoint and the necessities and fan instigated stigma from the professional viewpoint would be an article worth printing. --But throat-slitting should be left to little gatherings of friends where it is entertaining and nobody gets hurt. This is my belief.

A few more trivial things that irked me and I'll shut up, OK? I don't think you, as editor should bring it upon yourself to make excuses for your artists' work. It's obvious you feel it's good material--you printed it! If you feel an artist has been wronged unjustly, give him a spot in your zine to sound off on his art--his likes --his dislikes --his aims. After all, you know these artists for the most part, personally; while the greater number of your readership know them only by their art. A getting-acquainted paragraph or so would do much for the artist. I personally disliked Jim Steranko's art up until the time I met and became friends with him. Totally to my surprise, I found that our views and directions in the art field and the field of story-telling were much along the same lines.

The only other thing I want to suggest, as far as the entire magazine goes, concerns the next issue. You're upping the price and promising more pages. Why not put the money to a better use, keeping about the same number of pages (which is pretty healthy) and concentrate on polishing the format and printing? You say with #3 you did a lot of art editing --do more. It's your job to see that only the cream of your artists' drawings gets printing space. Sure, some guy does you a favor, and a drawing... if the drawing stinks--tell him, in a way that will spur him on to do better. when you print a fanzine it is a statement. Make it the best statement you possibly can.

IV. I haven't seen the earlier issues of MCR, so I can't contrast #3 with them. I do agree with you concerning your contents page--immaculate. The minute typing was a bit eye searing, but the wash-out was the bothersome part. The interviews, especially the de Camp, didn't fulfill my need --I've always wanted to know who de Camp was; your interview was not comprehensive enough. The Steranko interview was much better, and a true portrait of Jim at his flippant best--especially question #39--a real laugh.

Concerning the letter column--this was good--so good it made me feel a definite loss by never seeing the Dwight Decker article.

You've got a grand bunch of artists! I've got to say I enjoyed Juanillo's "Dragon World" the most--I've always been one for cracking rockets against cliffs, buildings, planets, and what-have-you. But for scope, who can deny Jim Pinkoski? I do think, though, that Jim falls back on technique a little too heavily--get him a George Bridgeman book compliments of MCR and there'll be no stopping him. You know what he's almost got too much of? Mood. This guy Pinkoski goes mad with mood! --Dig the inside bacover--simple--quite to the point. --But you can smell what warrior's eyes burning! His *Noman* strip was the best commercial stuff --the fine crosshatch, etc. in the "Aliens" will not work in comics today --they just don't have the quality reproduction they had back when *Thun'da* was printed.

Another of Pinkoski's mood masterpieces is the bacover of *The Collector's Chronicle #1*. This is also the best piece of conceptual thinking I've ever seen by Jim--It has almost no reference point for the viewer to grab and hold--just an aura of STRANGE that lifts little bumps on the back of the neck. This type of conceptual thinking is something I'm into; it's a joy to find someone else just as far out.

All in all, John, you've got a mover on your hands --I can't wait to get into the articles I haven't read. You've got some stiff competition in the ranks of fandom, so don't go lazy on us. A good fanzine reeks of midnight oil and editorial sweat.

Luck,

MW Kurbava

[Whenever anything "controversial" appears in print, there's bound to be the usual phenomenal amount of misconceptions, "pros & cons," sham and fakery, thoughtless actions... in a word: a hassle. So it went with "Dan Adkins & the Incredible Tracing Machine."

...In his article this issue, Jim Vadeboncoeur presents a viewpoint which is seemingly different from his viewpoint last issue. OK, that's his prerogative as an individual and a writer. But as an editor, my position is somewhat "delicate." When Jim V's article was printed last ish, I felt as Jim did. Now, I find my ideas and outlook on the matter of "swiping" have changed, and are in almost total opposition to how I felt back when MCR #3 was published.

...You, Jeff, and you, Mike, in so many words have said that Jim was trying to slander Dan Adkins. Maybe this is true --or it could have been the way you interpreted a closing statement which could have been taken a number of ways. One reader interpreted, by the closing statement, that Jim Vadeboncoeur was



talking down to Dan is if he were scolding a naughty child. Was this the impression you received too? If so, your reasons for annoyance are most valid.

...I believe that if a person has been "wronged" (to use the popular term) he should have the chance to openly defend himself and his beliefs. Therefore, Jim Vadeboncoeur's article this ish; even though Jim's views oppose mine. That's also the reason I'm pleased to run a rebuttal article by Dan Adkins in this issue.

...There was no "campaign" against swiping artists. Poor word choice on my part was misleading. But, we decided not to use the article anyway, for obvious reasons.

...I agree. Horror, as well as Fantasy, are on the rise again. The appearance of Conan and King Kull at Marvel are very encouraging. But, as long as the publishers of today's comics aim their product at the younger audience, the chance of Frazetta, Williamson, etc. going back to "start putting some guts back into comics," as you put it, are very slim.

...When I said that I thought amateur artists like Jim Pinkoski, Bob Juanillo and George Metzger were better than some of Marvel's crew, I was speaking in terms of development. Jim Pinkoski, for example, is completely separated from all contact with professional artists. The learning process is quite restricted when an artist has no opportunity to compare his originals with those of other pros his age --To learn from them --Be stimulated by them to really develop to his full potential.

...Now Herbe Trimpe (again, just as an example) was able to attend the School of Visual Arts for three years. --To study under and learn from the masters. Yet Trimpe's art lacks a certain illustrative and entertaining quality that Pinkoski's art does have. So when it comes to comparing the two on a scale of personal development, I'll have to say, truthfully, that I prefer Pinkoski's art to that of Mr. Trimpe.]

Joe Kurbava
C/o Route #40
Alwood Post Office,
Clifton, New Jersey
07012

MCR keeps improving! The only real fault to be found with issue #3 was the microscopic printing. A truly impressive work by Jim Pinkoski overshadows his fine artwork within MCR's pages. Juanillo's illustration in the Conan folio has to be the best in the ish, and--surprise!--Randy Adams' depiction of the character deserves the second spot in this category; if only for the great improvement shown over any of his previous work.

The best article was Dwight Decker's "The Princess Charisma." Dwight is either the proud possessor of an eidetic memory, or one of that rare breed of authors who take the time and trouble to research their work thoroughly before committing it to paper.

Jim Jones' LOC was outstanding. I think he expressed what I was trying to say in a much more effective manner. He speaks true.

"Swiping" is necessary. Take, for example, Mike Alroy's illo of "The Atom of Old." Though highly stylistic in its own right, it doesn't come within a skunk's smell of presenting *The Atom* as he originally appeared. Conversely, his illo of the *Hangman*, and Jim Vadeboncoeur's pic of the *Enemy Ace* showed the characters as Kubert presented them; though no credit was given to Joe. These, then, are also "swipes." To me, anything of this nature is definitely permissible, even though no credit is given to the original artist. I am of the firm opinion that characters should be done in a style they were most popularly presented, with the possible exception of crude art exemplified by *Amazing Man Comics* in most of the issues.

John, in commenting on Mike Robertson's LOC, listed Al Williamson as an artist with an original style. I love Al's work! Indeed I do! BUT--Al has already stated that he swiped from Raymond during his younger days. Eventually, Raymond's style became his own. So, if swiping can produce an artist of Williamson's stature --then, what, pray tell, is wrong with swiping?

And yes, Randy, I definitely would prefer Frank Springer's work over Jim Pinkoski's. Frank was, at one time, an excellent artist--still is a good one. His work for *EVERGREEN'S Phoebe Zeitgeist* was much more indicative of his talents than his work at Marvel. I tend to think that Marvel, itself, is responsible for most of the bad art within its magazines' pages. Any company that prints junk like Barry Smith's can't be all good! Take, for instance, Gene Colan's double-jointed heroes. You take 'em--I won't. Gene has done much more impressive things for Warren, and that's a company that's printed more than its share of rubbish!

To change the subject --Has anyone else noticed that artists seem to recognize females as the only gender sporting nipples upon their breasts?

Finally, we come to the matter of the identity of Scorpio. Randy Adams and Mike Howell stand victorious! Scorpio is Nick Fury's brother! Marvel, "The House of Ideas", is rapidly becoming "The House of Idiocy", and that's for sure!

I don't know if my deduction of Scorpio's identity was synonymous with Jim Steranko's visualization of his alter ego, but I'm damn sure Marvel's conception of the character just had to be their own. Steranko couldn't have come up with so perurle an ending. Marvel could --and did! Believe it or not, Marvel wrapped up the whole mystery surrounding Scorpio's identity in *Avengers #72*. But, did Masterful Marvel need one whole issue to do so? Did Masterful Marvel need one whole page to do so? NEVER!! Magniloquent Marvel explained the question of "Who is Scorpio?" in one mind-shattering sentence! Nick Fury (*Avengers #72*, page 21, panel 1) speaks: "I guess ... I ALWAYS knew it was Jake ... somehow!" That's it? Yes, fans, that's it!

I think Jim Steranko's answer to question #22 in his interview from MCR #3 readily shows that he had nothing to do with the conclusion of the Scorpio soap opera. Even without that answer, one would have to seriously doubt that Jim would go to all the trouble of weaving an intricate plot and then nonchalantly toss it out the nearest window in favor of explaining all with one inane sentence. "I guess ... I ALWAYS knew it was Jake ... somehow!" Indeed!!!

I would have preferred covering the subject in a much more thorough manner, but find it extremely hard to type while retching upon the keyboard of my typewriter.

So, I'll cut off abruptly and bid you a hasty adieu...

Best--

Joe

[We've always been partial to things concerned with the graphic story, and good art in general. That's why, when we had the chance to analyze the issue's general contents we found that we had not allotted enough space for the amount of text we wished to present. That meant we could either reduce the text contributions or print a mere one-quarter of the written material we planned to use.

...As you can see, we chose the former selection as the answer to our problems. However, you should notice the use of different type styles compensates for the reduction to a certain extent. ...Also, we've spaced the written features out within the issue so that they're well-separated by illustrated features.

...Finally we designed each page so that it wouldn't be as hard on your oculars as was the type in MCR #3.

...Part of the credit for the success of Randy's Conan illustration last ish should go to Jim Pinkoski. Jim, as no one seemed to notice, over-inked both Randy Adams' and Mike Nolan's illustrations in the Conan Portfolio.

...I'll take issue with you on the matter of Al Williamson... You see, I did not list Al Williamson as an artist with an original style; I stated, falsely, that Al didn't swipe. Williamson's style, however, is original. Though he swiped from Raymond in his early days, and though his style is patterned after Raymond's, Al still has his own particular style.

...I've had occasion to view copies of Zeitgeist with Frank Springer in the art department... and I was most impressed. I believe the reason Randy didn't like his art for Marvel was that he (Randy) was too used to Jim Staranko's style on *Wak Fury*. I enjoyed Frank's art at Marvel, but I could see he was having a bit of trouble "getting into" *Wak Fury*.

...As for Barry Smith; well, he may eventually surprise you. Though I haven't been too fond of his art in the past, I can see his work on Conan the Barbarian, as well as his material for Warren is showing the potential that Mike Kaluta talked about. --That's for sure! ...It seems all your work and research into the Scorpio matter was for nothing. Check Paul Dushkind's letter, just to the right of my trite oracular, to see where you blew it. --But before you do, I'd like to thank you for your LOC. --Consider yourself "thanked."

Berni Wrightson
(Address withheld: Policy)



of yellow journalism. True, *Seven Mirror* and the *National Inquirer* and things of that ilk do seem to sell well, but have you ever seen the dolts that buy this trash? Character assassination is the lowest form of sensationalism, and appeals only to minds on the same level.

The other thing, in reference to the remark that the fan artists are better than Marvel's crew. If they're so damn good, what are they still doing in fanzines? Comic magazines are produced for and aimed at the youngsters, that is, those between age 8 and 12, roughly. A simple, direct and powerful style is what these kids go for. Show an eight year-old a Romita *Spider-Man* and Frazetta's *Thunda*. Now, baring preference to subject matter, I'd bet he'd take the Romita.

This goes for all of Marvel's titles. Stan Lee has been in the business for quite a long time and by now, he surely knows what sells and what does not. As far as I'm concerned, I'd rather look at Herbe Trimpe's worst, than Jim Pinkoski's best. You should tell Jim that unless he learns to draw the best he'll be an inker. Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not putting J.P. down, I just used his work to make a point. He's got a lot of potential but as he probably knows, it's gonna take a lot of hard work to get on a professional level, and my advice is that he take a step backwards and work on his drawing and worry about the slick rendering later. I've been through it myself, so learn from my mistakes.

Goodbye, and good luck on #4.

Berni Wrightson

[I'll skip over answering the portions of your LOC that overlapped those introduced by Jeff Jones and Mike Kaluta, and get right into this "yellow journalism" business you applied to Jim Vadeboncoeur's article.

...First, I think you should be made aware of the fact that the article was not meant as a slander piece against Dan Adkins. It was



never advertised as such in any of our ads --and, at the most, was mentioned as "an article on Dan Adkins' swiping."

...Secondly, the article was written by a person who believed in his views on the matter... who wanted to present his views (statements, opinions, etc.) by some factual evidence (eg: reproductions of actual swipes by Dan.)

...Finally, though it may seem odd to you, most of the response we received concerning the article was of this nature: "I wasn't aware that Adkins swiped so much... I still enjoy his art, however..." and "It was an interesting article... one of the best I've read..." Not one single letter that came in expressed the opinion that Dan was a "bad person" (a bad artist, etc.) for swiping. This is important for two reasons. One being that the article couldn't have had the "slander" effect you mention if nobody got that impression. The second reason is that fandom, who most professionals feel are down on artists who swipe without understanding the professional world, seemed to understand what Jim V. was talking about. If Jim's article accomplished that, without, in truth, hurting anyone, then perhaps it wasn't as bad an article as some people believe it to be.

...Jim Pinkoski seems to be developing faith with his illustrative abilities, which is something not easily gained. Other artists will be more inclined to understand this intangible sensation. Jim's very critical of his work, and fully realizes his shortcomings; although I'm sure no one else could point them out as to exactly what he feels they are. Also, Jim has this habit of "comparing" his development against the best established professionals. Maybe he should try to save himself from sleepless nights, and more often compare his work with the numerous not-so-good "professionals." Maybe. I doubt if he will.]

Paul Dushkind
290 Tamalpais Rd.
Fairfax, Calif.
94930

Dear John,

While looking through SHIELD issues 1 and 5, I noticed a few flaws in Joe Kurnava's deductions concerning the identity of Scorpio.

I'd like to comment on all of Mr. Kurnava's article, so I might as well start with how poorly it was written. First he wastes half a page giving rather footless evidence as to why Scorpio is not Fury's brother. Unnecessary, since Staranko himself marked that Scorpio was not the perdurable SHIELD agent's brother. Then, Joe proceeds with an absolutely inane testimony as to why Scorpio would be either of Fury's parents, --which is more ridiculous than Kurnava thought, since his evidence is totally non-existent! Where, from casual dialogue, Kurnava gets suspicions that Scorpio was one of the Fury family members, is beyond my comprehension.

Part II of the article, as far as I could see had nothing to do with Jimmy Woo being Scorpio... or anything else, for that matter. The actual article, part III, did elevate a few good points... points which I will now dissect, and then discard:

For some reason, Fury sent Pickman to spy on Scorpio, although he didn't know it was actually Scorpio he had Pickman stalking. In issue 5, page 10, panel 4; Pickman thinks: "I trust this will give Fury the answer he's been seeking these many years!" "...These many years!"? --Fury hasn't known Woo that long.

Hence, Woo is definitely not Scorpio. Who then, cloaks himself behind Scorpio's cosmic iridescence? I haven't the vaguest inclination. I've perused my copy of *Avengers* #72--But as far as I'm concerned, Scorpio's identity will never be revealed until, and unless, Staranko himself sees fit to do so.

Nevertheless, let me re-examine the evidence for you. The following dialogue is quoted directly from SHIELD #5:

VAL: "Nick, what took you so long? I wanted to talk to you before the test began! By the way, Jimmy Woo said... (Hesitation)... that he'd be late!"

Scorpio (as Fury): "Don't worry about it! He... (interruption)" VAL (thinking): "If only I could have spoken to Nick! Something's wrong! Should I tell him?"

VAL: "Nick! I... I... Never mind!"

Now Joe said something like "Why doesn't Scorpio put Woo on report? This is proof that Woo is Scorpio!" Because Woo was not needed at the test, that's why he didn't show! Before he was interrupted, Scorpio might have planned to say: "Don't worry about it! We don't need him here!" Or, perhaps, he was going to try to explain why Woo would be late. But he wasn't making excuses for him: none were needed! We have no way of knowing for certain what Val was talking about. Is Woo hiding something from Val, Fury... or from both? These are questions that obviously would have been answered in a future Staranko-written and drawn episodes. More than a pity, it's a downright loss that there won't be any.

Perhaps Woo and Fury are conspiring together. The fact that Nick didn't want to get SHIELD involved doesn't rule out the possibility of involving one individual... in this case: James Woo.

Scorpio has knowledge of the inner workings of SHIELD, to some extent; which may reflect the probability that he is a SHIELD agent. We know that Scorpio and Fury have something in common, or that Fury and another of Scorpio's enemies have some factor in common; because of Scorpio's thought: "He (Fury) always was the lucky one!"

Fury and Scorpio know each other. We know this because of his astonished recognition when he rips Scorpio's disguise from his face, as they run through the corridors of SHIELD headquarters. Joe said that it was not recognition, but frustration instead. I suggest he re-read the final panel's dialogue, which reads as follows:

"What strange secret now lay locked in Fury's heart... what revelation has caused the taut, grim visage he now wore like a mask? Was the search over of had it merely begun?" Staranko knows the answers...but, he isn't telling.

Sincerely,

Paul



J.S. Strnad
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Wichita, Kansas
67211

John--
First let me explain that I'm not much of a comics fan. I did, for some time a couple years ago, rabidly collect MARVEL comics and various other miscellany along the same lines. I eventually decided that, unlike Dwight Decker, I would rather use the money for pursuit (literally) of, uh, "outside interests." I now have considerably more record albums, a newly-decorated rec-room lair, my own fanzine, and many fond memories. The only comics I now buy are those with exceptional art. (One question you might pose to Mr. Decker the next time you correspond: has an old "Hangman" comic ever given him a massage?)

However, even though I see very little in any comic book now being produced that would give it much redeeming value, I am quite fond of art (illustrative) and the concept of the graphic story. The fact that no professional publisher is taking the slightest advantage of the wonders the comic strip medium has to offer, and that everyone seems content to produce solely a lot of super-hero offal, is quite unfortunate. Luckily, though, we have fandom, fanzines, and the underground media who are all much more diversified, and infinitely more interesting, than the pro publishers.

The comics field is collapsing. This is not speculation, but fact. Comic companies are dropping title after title that has stopped making money, and some of the more creatively-minded companies are searching for new directions to take along the comic book line. The popularity of Vaughn Bode's comic-like work is an example of this reaching-out, and shows the heartening possibility of the comics' survival.

So what does this have to do with MCR #8? It simply explains why I was much more interested in the Conan and SF material than I was in, for instance, the "Woo Is Scorpio" and "Nomad" bits. The former is a rising, developing, kinetic field; the latter is a dead end.

Jim Pinkoski's art varied from quite well done illustrations like the page 25 Conan pic, to pretty poor work like (and I know you won't agree with me here) the cover. Most of it fell somewhere in between, favoring the better end of the spectrum. Generally, his art lacked finish and definition, as though he is not yet quite sure of each pen stroke. (Keep in mind that I'm comparing his art to pro work, and so it will naturally suffer in comparison. Jim is past the point where he is to be compared with other amateurs; eyes forward, goals upward, straight ahead, and all that.)

Juanillo's art was good also. I don't see the purpose of a single page strip like "Dragon World" though. Unless it's a complete gag or somesuch in itself. In this case, we've all seen spaceships crash before, and Flash Gordon is much better at it than Madoc was.

"The Devil in Silver" was better written than most fan fiction. The idea of a god losing its power when faith in that particular diety wanes is very similar to Harlan Ellison's "O Ye of Little Faith." In Harlan's story, the anti-hero finds himself transported to the land of dead gods, where ancient forgotten dieties dwell when faith in their existance dies. The explanation for the "hero's" presence in this limbo land: No god, or man, believed in him; he aroused no one's faith; no one at all. As Harlan says in the closing of the story: "For as he had believed in no god... No god believed in him."

I too, find it impossible to believe Dan Adkins' statement that all artists copy other artists. True, even the Romans copied the Greeks, and Nicola Pisano copied the Romans, and Giovanni Pisano copied Nicola Pisano, ad infinitum. But each "copy" was in actuality a reinterpretation, a progression. Sometimes the new product was better than the old, and sometimes worse. But in each case, the new artist did possess scads of his own talent, or else he soon faded into oblivion (providing his copies ever raised him from obscurity.) Thus, Frank Frazetta can occasionally reinterpret Foster, but Adkins will get nowhere merely copying others.

That's about all for now.

Best of stuff...

J.S. Strnad
J.S. Strnad (Ed. Anomaly)

[The reason Jim's art "lacked finish and definition" was because he was going through a transition period; where he was forming out of three distinct styles one that he liked best. The new art by Jim this issue is a fine example of his current style, the outcome of his experiments and changes. ... "Dragon World" was an experiment on Bob's part with brush and fine-screen zip-a-tone. An experiment which failed because we were unable to have it printed with a metal plate. ... We decided that instead of printing a "gargantuan issue", or a "double issue" of average quality to print instead, the best we could possibly come up with. This issue is what "we could possibly come up with."]

Richard V. Corben
1503 East 83rd Street
Kansas City, Missouri
64131

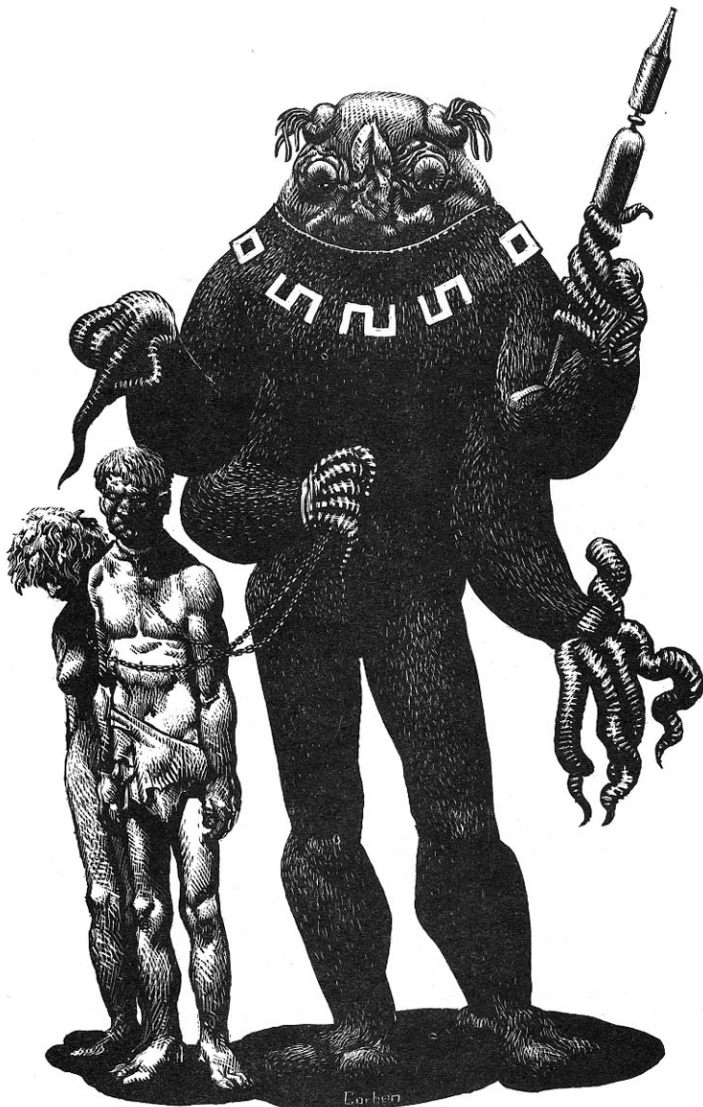
Dear John,

I will be looking forward to the comments on the Dan Adkins article. My views on "swiping" are that it is okay if you have to draw an object that is unfamiliar to you. Then the swipe material should only be a technical reference. Say you were to draw an ancient Greek soldier; it would be necessary to find material on Greek costume, weapons, even photos of the Greek countryside and buildings. Then the objects lifted from the reference material should be altered to fit your drawing as to angle, perspective, lighting, etc. "Swiping", when done to the extent shown in your article on Dan Adkins, is admitting a basic drawing weakness. Apparently the publishers don't mind, or even encourage the practice. In other fields of commercial art, such "swiping" would be adequate grounds for a law suit. Obviously, a comic book artist that must produce several pages of figure art each day couldn't afford to pay full time models. But, since he has put himself in this profession, he should have enough experience in drawing from a model that he can make up the poses himself. Perhaps the editor has instructed the artist to draw in the "style" of Ditko. If the artist accepts this, he also accepts the editor's judgment that he isn't as good as Ditko. This means the artist's own potential will never be realized. Could this artist be as good as Frazetta or Eisner, yet in his own style? He'll never know.

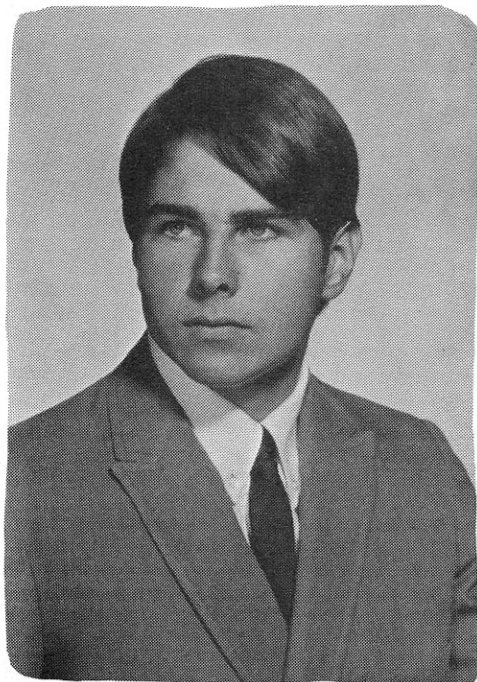
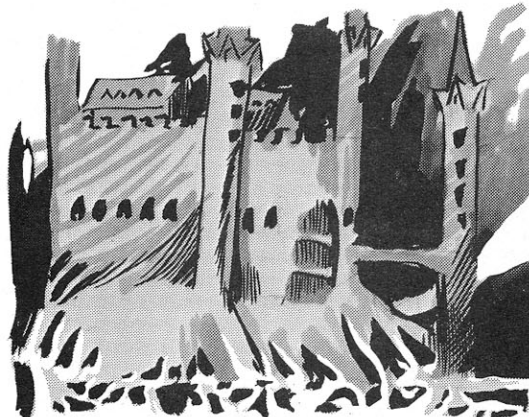
Sincerely,

Richard V. Corben

[Editor's note: Rich has been contributing to fanzines for quite some time now, as well as doing a few assignments for the Warren magazines--all of it excellent work. Breaking out on his own, he plans to do an all-strip fanzine of his own. Support him, in any way you can--like, buying his beautiful posters.]



PORTFOLIO



T. CHRISTOPHER = 69





T. CHRISTOPHER

THE SPINAL COLUMN [part 1]

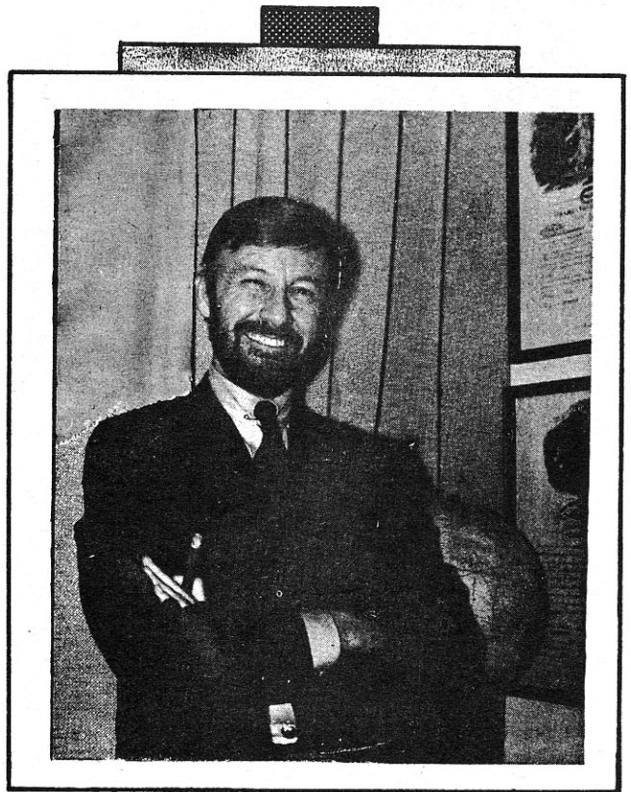
"The Theological Aspects of Marvel Comics"

by Dwight R. Decker

In recent *Marvel* letter columns, the question has come up from the readers as to just what is the cosmic chain of command in the *Marvel Cartooniverse*. Who created the universe, who is worshipped by *Marvel* people, What is the exact role of Odin, and so on. After some speculation on the subject, I think I can offer a few viewpoints./ Stan Lee (born Stan Lieber) is a Christian, despite his Jewish name. This much is obvious from stories like "Monsters On Mercury," with its Christmas message (and Ditko, the artist, could hardly have been responsible for it since he is an atheist), and the

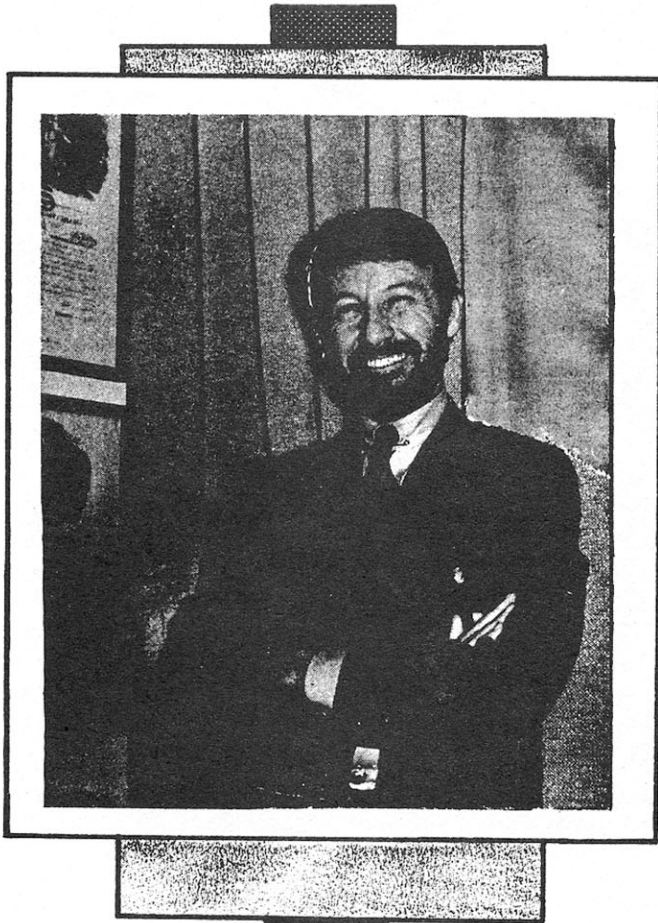
story in *Captain America #105* with its reference to Christ. Lieber may be somewhat indefinite about religion: various interviews he has given put across the picture of a bland, uncontroversial person with no outstanding political, social, or religious philosophy. What religion he does have might

probably be a mild Christianity, not thought through, but simply something he has absorbed all of his life and never questioned./ Comic books written by Lieber reflect his personality in at least that regard. While the Christian religion is obviously the dominant one in his *Cartooniverse*, obvious, because of reference to Christmas, an occasional depiction of a minister, and the comment of *Captain America* in #105 of his own magazine, it is for the most part ignored. Depicted, too, have been Jews and Moslems. Thus the religion on the human level is not greatly different from the way it is here./ Religion is a funny thing. It must be accepted without proof and many people are willing to die for their faiths never realizing that for all the evidence that exists their faiths could easily be erroneous and those of their enemies, correct. Despite all attempts at compromise, one central fact remains: there is only one reality. A Christian and a Hindu cannot both be correct in their interpretation of reality, and both are probably wrong. It is doubtful if the situation in the *Marvel Cartooniverse* is any different. Different people will believe different things about the nature of the universe, but A is A and only one reality can exist./ Since Lee is a Christian, it is doubtful if he seriously intended for Odin to be the supreme, omnipotent, and all-powerful lord of the Universe; especially since he introduced Zeus, who is, if anything, Odin's opposite number and equal. Not only have two separate line-ups of gods been introduced, those of Asgard and Olympus, but in one of the *Thor* letter columns, the door was left open for still more by a half-veiled qualification./ I personally suspect that Odin is of quite recent origin, and while possessing vast power, is still not master of more than a fraction of the cosmos. Perhaps eons ago three races of man developed. Mortal man, the Inhumans,

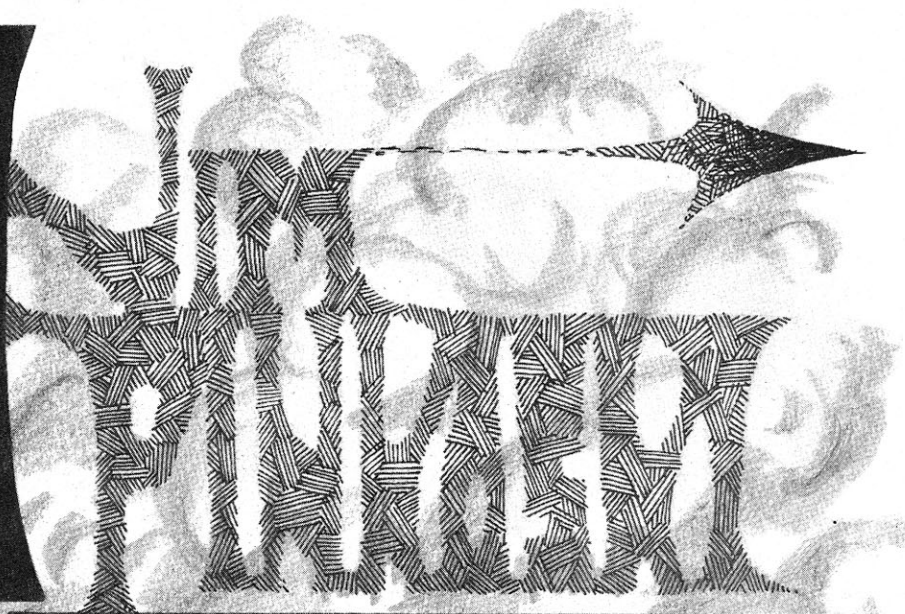


and those who would eventually be the gods of Asgard and Olympus. The gods departed Earth first for some reason, and two communities of deities grew up in what might be called dimensional vacuoles. Neither Asgard nor Olympus seem to be co-existent with Earth, and are probably separated by a slight variation in the space-time plane, which while quite simple for a god to bridge might be utterly impossible for a human. The machinery controlling and stabilizing Asgard's dimensional position is located in the Odinsword, the pulling of which is popularly supposed to result in the end of the Universe. I

doubt that it would be that cataclysmic; what is far more likely is that the sword's removal would cause a difference in Asgard's position in space and time, moving it into a new plane, co-existent with Earth. In a physical sense, Asgard is quite close to Earth and once it appeared in Earth's



space-time plane, mutual gravitation would result in a collision meaning the destruction of both bodies. While hardly the end of the universe, and certainly on a cosmic level no more than a local disaster, it is quite enough for Asgardians to seek to avoid. The location of Olympus is obscure, but the same principals doubtless apply. An interesting possibility is that the gods first developed, and the Inhumans are next. They may be the gods of tomorrow, and the X-Men the first hints of what lays ahead for mortal man./ Odin, Zeus, the Watcher, and even Eternity: None of them are God. All post-date the beginnings of the Universe by some time. They are simply beings who have gained vast power, and on worlds where they have been, they may even be the inspiration for various religions and cults. So may be such beings as Mephisto and Sattanish, though in the opposite direction. Neither is the literal devil, but possibly the inspiration for him. Indeed, the two might have spawned two different legends which later merged. Mephisto may have the power to control the minds and ultimately the egos (i.e., souls) of men, but his power is not infinite. Someone with the power of Eternity would be more than his match and his captive souls, liberated by his defeat, would be able to go on to wherever the dead in the *Marvel Cartooniverse* go./ If one believes that the universe was created by someone (which raises the interesting question of who created HIM), then that entity is above all characters, no matter how powerful, so far introduced in *Marvel Comics*. It may be the Judaeo-Christian god or perhaps something else entirely. Perhaps it may be Stan Leiber himself./ The same question puzzled Greek philosophers. Like *Marvel gods*, their gods were also of a more recent origin than the Universe. So they theorized that there was something higher and somewhere in Athens they raised an altar inscribed "To The Unknown God." And in *Marvel Comics*, so must we. END



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