





# introduction

What you have in your hands is the practical summation of our FLASH GORDON dreams. That is not to say that it is everything it could be, however, it is a fair representation of what we wanted HERITAGE Volume I, Number 1b to be.

As you look through this final volume on Flash Gordon, some of you will recognize that some features are missing. ONE: AL WILLIAMSON's first comic strip.. This feature mysteriously disappeared from the hands of our camera-man. The strip did exist, but now is gone.

TWO: BERNI WRIGHTSON's strip. Berni's success has been overwhelming, to say the least. He is now among the highest paid artists in the comic field and enjoys acclaim that no other man his age enjoys. With Graphic Masters' Badtime Stories and, more recently, National's Swamp Thing out, Berni has been busy. He, unfortunately, could not meet our final deadline. Our apologies.

From these notes of disappointment, let's proceed to better things. The emergence of the fresh new Spanish talents brings Esteban Maroto, Carlos Garzon (now residing in the U.S.), and Adolfo Buylla to light. Our thanks to Al Williamson for the opportunity to work with these fine artists. HERITAGE will be presenting more and more features (in many forms) by these artists.

Also, welcome Australia's Stanley Pitt. Unrecognized in the U.S. as the talent he is, we hope to spark interest in his art into a warm glow. In an upcoming "HERITAGE SPOTLIGHTS..." series, Stanley Pitt's Universal Conquest story will be published for the first time.

It is now time for us to recoup a bit with HERITAGE. Soon we hope to be starting the second book (Volume I, #2) in the HERITAGE series. A new character will be presented in the same vein as Flash Gordon. We will afford the opportunity for the artists today to do the job they want to do, and to provide you--the reader, the collector--with a publication you are bound to enjoy. Any comments or suggestions on any subject, character, or field, will be appreciated.

- Richard Garrison

Doug here. A couple of final things before we sign off. First off, the opinions expressed by Larry Ivie in his article are meant to be that - his opinions. Many people admire the work of Austin Briggs, Raboy, and the others. It must be remembered that Larry is judging them from the standpoint of Alex Raymond, a standard extremely hard to match.

We would also like to explain a last minute change. The back cover of this issue was originally slated to be by Frank Frazetta. Indeed, when the ads were made up, he had the piece already penciled and was ready to ink it and finish it off. Unfortunately Frank, as usual, was knee-deep in deadlines and one caught up with him. Rather than delay publication further, we decided to use the Wood piece instead. We hope you will approve this change.

We appreciate the support of all those who sent in their advance money and we hope they enjoy these "bonus" pages.

- Doug Murray

# HERITAGE

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*Flash Gordon*

Volume I  
Number 1b

Edited by  
Doug Murray & Richard Garrison  
Published by  
Bruce Hershenson

# HERITAGE

Volume I  
Number 1b

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COVERS: Front - Al Williamson/Gray Morrow  
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Reed Crandall has been called " the greatest living comic artist." His work on Flash Gordon in KING COMICS and fanzines has made him the most popular delineator of Flash since Al Williamson. Here, Reed continues his chronicle of The Flash Gordon Saga as "Flash Meets the Amazons."





ACCORDING TO THE LATEST OVER FLIGHT SURVEY, HABITATION OF SOME SORT LIES JUST BEYOND THAT ESCARPMENT!

LET'S CLIMB IT AND INVESTIGATE!

ZARKOV, FLASH AND DALE ARE ON A MISSION TO INVESTIGATE FIRST HAND THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF A HITHERTO UNEXPLORED VALLEY ON MONGO.

REED L. CRANFORD



THESE RIDGE-BACKS OF ONCE MOLTEN LAVA MAKE IT AN EASY CLIMB.



QUITE AN IMPRESSIVE SIGHT!





THIS ISN'T AN ESCARPMENT, BUT THE RIM OF AN EXTINGUISHED VOLCANO! THERE'S A DWELLING ON A LAKE IN THE CENTER!

HOW DO WE GET DOWN?

HERE'S A NATURAL RAMP!



WHEE!  
DOWN THE UP-  
STAIRCASE!



OH, OH!  
HERE COMES  
THE WELCOME  
WAGON!



DON'T BE AFRAID OF THEM. THEY'RE PUSSY-CATS.

EACH OF YOU HOP ON A CAT BEHIND ONE OF US AND WE'LL TAKE YOU TO OUR LEADER.



PUT YOUR ARMS AROUND MY WAIST AND HANG ON, BUT DON'T CRUSH MY QUIVER.

RIGHT ON!



WE SAW YOUR SHIP COME DOWN BEYOND THE RIM. OUR QUEEN IS ANXIOUS TO MEET YOU.



THEY TRAVERSE THE FLOOR OF THE CRATER AND SOON ARRIVE AT THE QUEEN'S PALACE ON THE LAKE...



WE DISMOUNT HERE AND ENTER ON FOOT. I'LL ANNOUNCE YOUR PRESENCE AND INTRODUCE YOU.

I SHOULD LIKE TO MAKE AN APPEAL TO YOU, MR. GORDON FOR YOUR AID IN RIDDING US OF AN ANNUAL PLAGUE. A NEIGHBOR STATE OF MALES INVADES OUR COMMUNITY EACH YEAR ON THIS DATE TO COLLECT TRIBUTE AND A NUMBER OF GIRLS.



SINCE THIS IS A MATRIARCHY AND WE HAVE ONLY SWORDS AND BOWS FOR DEFENSE, WE HAVE ALWAYS CAPITULATED TO THEIR TERMS. I HAD HOPED YOUR THREE UNUSUAL WEAPONS MIGHT JUST TURN THE TIDE.



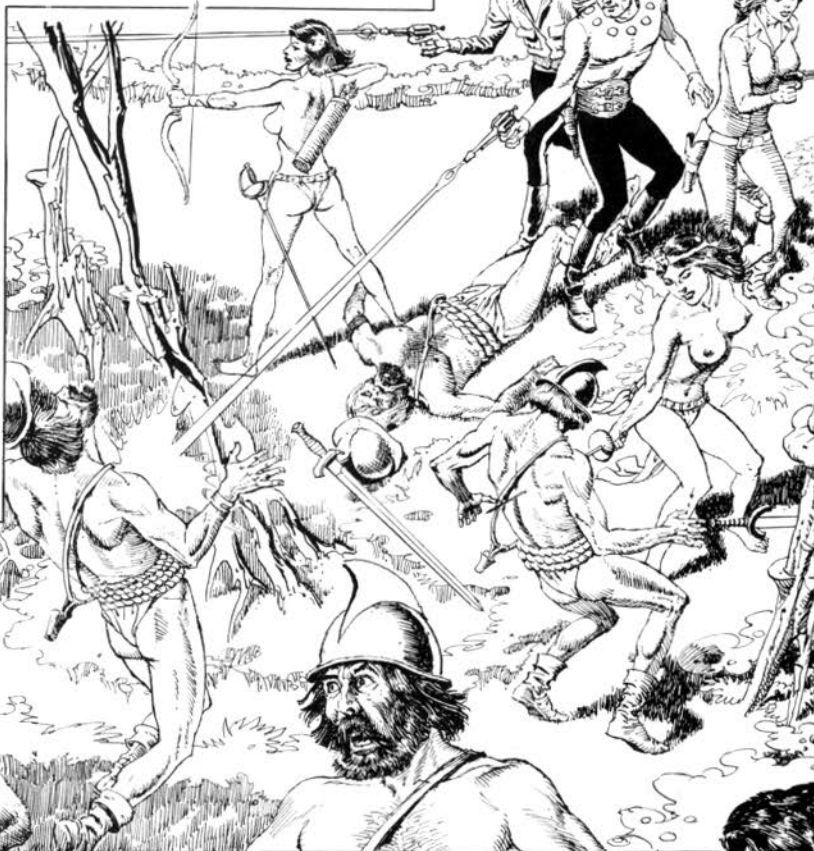
**SUDDENLY A SENTRY ENTERS...**

THEY'RE HERE!  
JUST BEYOND  
THE BRIDGE!

SUMMON THE  
GIRLS!



**WITH THE SUPPORT OF FLASH'S  
WEAPONS THE INVADER IS  
SOON PUT TO ROUT.**



**AFTER THE BATTLE, THE GIRLS GIVE A COMBINATION  
VICTORY AND FAREWELL PARTY FOR THEIR GUESTS.**





Ask a comic fan who Mike Royer is and nine times out of ten, you'll be told that: "He's Jack Kirby's inker." But Mike is more than that - much more. Here, Mike proves his skill (and his love for the female form) as he shows us "The Girls of Mongo."





QUEEN UNDINA

MAY - JUNE  
1936



QUEEN AZURA  
SEPT. 1935





*DESIRA*  
QUEEN OF TROPICA  
FEB. 1942



IF I DRESS  
LIKE A YOUNG  
POWERMAN,  
FLASH WILL  
NEVER KNOW  
I'M A GIRL!!

RENA, ALWAYS  
DARING, PLANS TO  
IMPROVE HER  
APPEARANCE TO BE  
ATTRACTIVE TO HER  
BOY, FLASH  
GORDON.

MIKE  
ROVER

RENA.  
ERGON'S SISTER  
OCT. 1940



I TELL YOU, CAPT. KHAN, THE LIZARD MEN TOOK FLASH DOWN THAT TUNNEL---

DALE ARDEN  
MARCH,  
APRIL  
1935



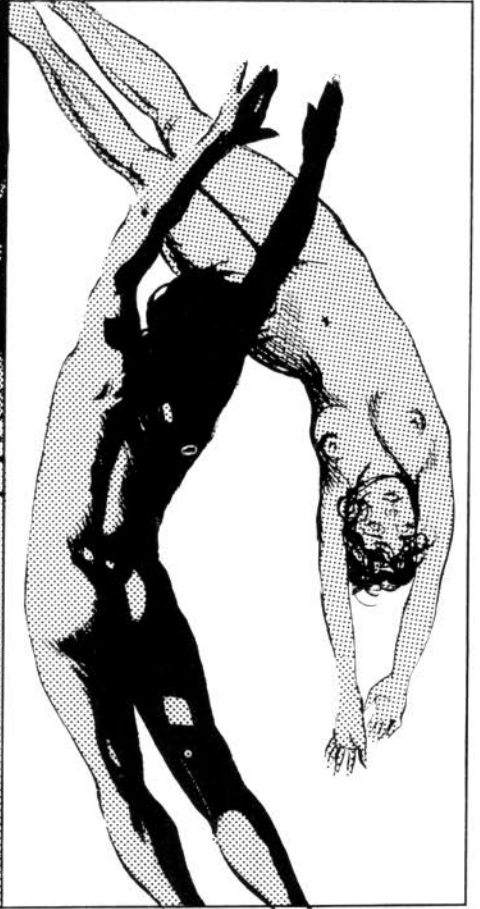
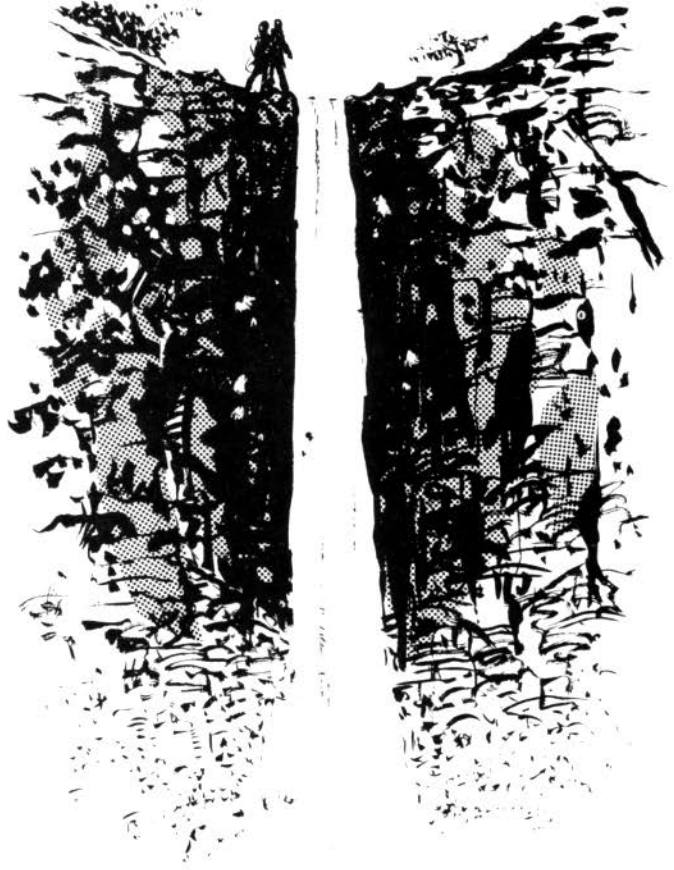
Ever wonder what a super-hero does between adventures? Bruce Jones gives us his idea, as he shows us what happens to Flash during a peaceful "Interlude."













Larry Ivie is, perhaps, the best known chronicler of comic history. His lifelong involvement with the field, and his experiences as a writer, artist, and editor, uniquely qualify him to peer "into" the evolution of the Flash Gordon strip.





*an evolution of the*

# **FLASH GORDON STRIP**

There is no doubt that Flash Gordon will survive as one of the most famous creations of imaginative literature. And, although the FIRST hero to originate as a well drawn adventure strip character, he has had remarkably few competitors in artistic quality, even after almost 40 years!

Other than Foster's *Prince Valiant*, the other contenders for *(a well-drawn series, created for the strip medium (including comic books), of an idea with some basic merit, done consistently by one artist)* are extremely few in number. There are a few, that ran for short periods. But whether they really came close to Raymond's quality is questionable, on top of the fact that most are now virtually forgotten. There is either a lot more genius to Alex Raymond than even that usually credited to him, or an appalling lack of it on the part of the potential creators who have followed. Undoubtedly a good deal of both is true.

All of which underlines even more the importance of the Flash Gordon series in imaginative adventure. And only three names, probably, will ever really be associated with this feature—Alex Raymond, the creator; Buster Crabbe, the actor who first portrayed him (how many even know there WAS a second, and a third? Gail Gordon on radio; Steve Holland on TV!); and Al Williamson.

Al Williamson, to date, has done only a handful of Flash Gordon comic book stories, a series of ads featuring the character, and one painting of Flash for a record album. Yet those comic book stories were so well done that they totally eclipsed the work of any other illustrator attempting to continue the character after Raymond. They verified the suspicion of comics readers everywhere that the REAL Flash Gordon had not been active for many years; and instantly received the National Cartoonists Society award for adventure illustration of the year. Again, this remarkable fictional hero (and almost all truly great creations seem to gain appeal from a fairly sharp and uncluttered concept) provided the spotlight of attention upon a deserving creator.



Raymond sketches characters from life. Current model (right) for Dale, Flash's sweetheart, is Patricia Quinn, 17, whom Walter Thornton signed up after seeing her Florida bathing beach picture in a rotogravure section. Pat lives with her mother in Arlington, N. J.



# Modern JULES VERNE



OBVIOUSLY, every artist paints, chisels, etches or composes some of his autobiography in his work. Even Dali. Even an artist in that most fantastic and popular of all genres, the comic strip. "Most popular" is not misapplied: A number of newspaper comic strips have larger and more cosmopolitan followings than any regular radio program, than any movie star. Flash Gordon is one.

Flash Gordon is young, handsome, an athletic whirlwind in Jules Verne-like adventures. "Flash's" creator, Alex Raymond is young, handsome. He got his higher education on an athletic scholarship. In boyhood, when his playmates had cowboy, detective or fireman second selves, Alex had a dream existence encircling the world in 80 days, voyaging 20,000 leagues under the sea, hurtling space. That is, he grew up on Jules Verne's books. Nothing has given him more satisfaction than to be called "the modern Jules Verne."

Like Verne, Raymond begot a whole new school of superman-creators. But none of the copy actors on the comic strip stage have ever caught up with Flash Gordon, whose normal means of transit is a rocket ship (above).



Raymond has to have a large library for research, for no matter how fantastic the adventure, Flash's following, always ready with criticism, expect his machines and actions to be plausible and "possible."



Above: It is a fact that comic strips influence fashions, and Raymond takes great care with coiffure and dress details. Below: Pat, who's seeing how she'll look in the funny papers, her posing period over, is a Blondie strip fan. She also models for style magazines.



If there hadn't been a 1929, Raymond might have been a broker. It made him broke. A neighbor, Russ Westover, who draws *Tillie the Tailor*, aware of Alex's skill with pen and pencil, suggested he try using it as a comic artist. Raymond did, first turned out "gag" panels, then developed an idea born of his devotion to Jules Verne—Flash Gordon. One reward is this impressive Connecticut home. You see him with his wife.

Raymond can get an immediate reaction from two comics fans in his own home. His son, Alex, Jr., 9, and daughter, Lynne, 6½, follow numberless strips and are frank in their criticisms of Dad's work. (Junior likes *Mandrake* better; Lynne prefers *Blondie*.) The Raymonds also have another child too young for comics.



Another reward is the appreciation of a vast public, which continuously makes its influence felt in letters. An artist can only draw a strip, a newspaper can only publish it; the public alone decides whether it continues and how long.



November 25th, 1934

The first creator to be spotlighted through Flash, of course, was Raymond. Not just one Raymond, but the succession of Alex Raymonds who evolved, one at a time, over the ten year lifespan of Raymond's career on Flash. The first was the young, still not fully matured craftsman who began Flash very much in the same style he had been using as an assistant on the feature *Tim Tyler's Luck*. (He began drawing Flash in 1933—the first page appearing in January, '34.) And it is art style, far more than story, that provides the strip with its characteristic mood.

The second Raymond was one somewhat influenced by the illustrator Matt Clark, whom the syndicate had contacted to do *Secret Agent X-9*—the daily strip of which both Flash and the smaller *Jungle Jim* became the Sunday page of the package. Clark, according to the story, was uninspired by the comics format, turned the offer down, and Raymond showed enough mastery of the same style to make everyone happy and get the job. But, during the transition, Raymond was not only developing his drawing skills,

but his artistic outlook as well. He soon dropped X-9 (despite the drop, also, in income) to devote full attention to the Sunday page, and his own artistic ideals. The change in outlook was not gradual. The pages up through November 25, 1934 are simply the work of a gifted draftsman. The work from that point on is that of an ARTIST.

Five months later, a third Raymond appeared. Instead of a dry-brush technique of rendering, he began inking extensively with pen; and with little, if any, trace of Clark influence.

By 1938, the style was one of relatively tight brush inking, backed by liberal use of ben-day grays—applied by the printer—beneath the coloring.

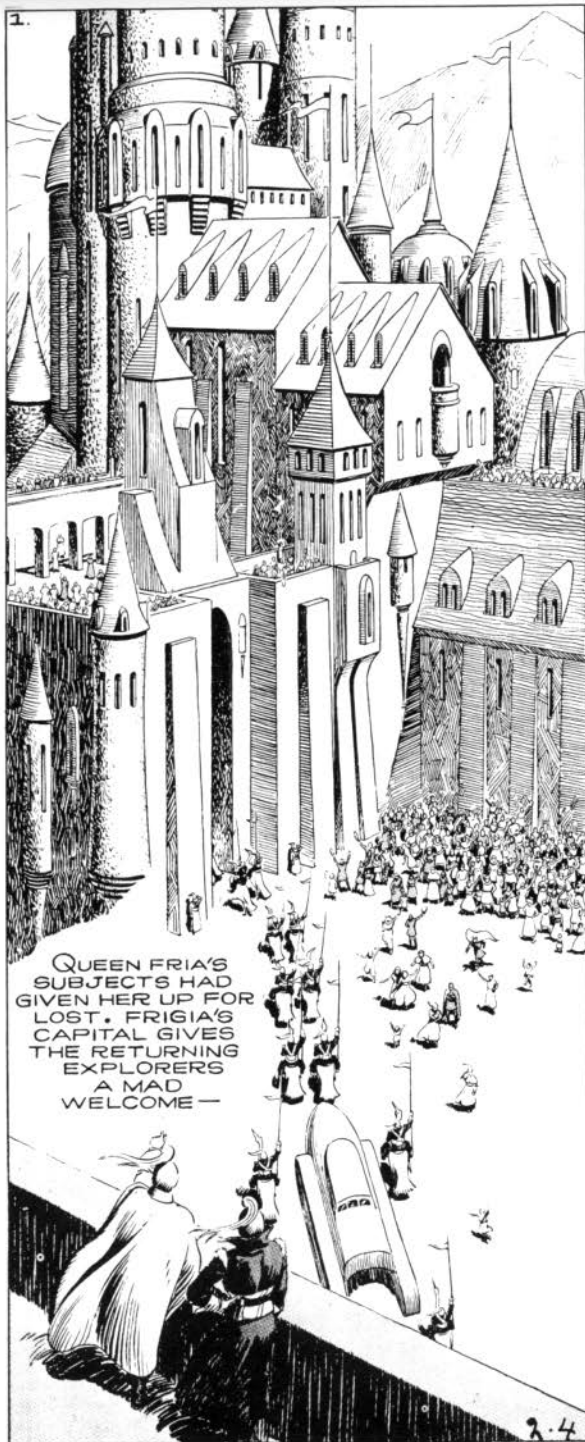
And, storywise, the feature also hit its peak during this period, beginning with the story now called "The Tyrant of Mongo", through to the page for Feb. 25, 1940, near the end of "The Ice Kingdom"—with the exception of 15 very-expendible pages (10-1 through 11-12, and 12-3 through 1-21) which stopped the plot cold for a badly conceived, and drawn-out, tangent adventure against a seldom seen ice-world monster. These were the two stories (both available in the 1st reprint book issued by Nostalgia Press) which established Flash as literature as well as fine art.

The grays were dropped in early '41, and more attention placed upon the coloring as the completing factor in the illustration—the color being used to give roundness to the figures by being darker at the edges than in the center of the figures. (Since the strip was intended for color, black and white reprints of the later years do not give a true representation of Raymond's intention.)



PRINCESS AURA, BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER OF MING, THE MERCILESS, ENTERS THE ARENA ON A GOLDEN THRONE CARRIED BY SIX BLUE DRAGON MEN-----





1.  
 QUEEN FRIA'S SUBJECTS HAD GIVEN HER UP FOR LOST. FRIGIA'S CAPITAL GIVES THE RETURNING EXPLORERS A MAD WELCOME —

2.4



2.  
 CRUSHED BY DALE'S APPARENT CHANGE OF HEART, FLASH GOES STRAIGHT TO HIS ROOM. HE DOES NOT KNOW THAT DALE AND FRIA HAVE BOTH SWORN TO GIVE HIM UP —



3.  
 "BUT FLASH," RONAL PROTESTS, "YOU CAN'T DO THIS! FRIA HAS PLANNED A BANQUET IN YOUR HONOR!" FLASH SHAKES HIS HEAD — "NO, RONAL, I'M GOING TO ZARKOV'S LABORATORY. YOU TAKE DALE TO THE BANQUET—SEE THAT SHE ENJOYS HERSELF—ALSO, PLEASE CONVEY MY APOLOGIES TO FRIA AND KORRO."



4.  
 A LITTLE LATER, FLASH, MOUNTED ON A SUPERB SNOWBIRD, GALLOPS THROUGH THE PALACE GATE, BOUND FOR THE WIND-SWEPT HEIGHTS WHERE PERCHES ZARKOV'S LABORATORY —

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5.  
 QUEEN FRIA QUICKLY SUMMONS ONE OF HER OFFICERS—"GET ME THE FASTEST SNOWBIRD IN THE STABLES—I'M GOING AFTER HIM—ALONE! NOBODY IS TO HEAR OF THIS! DO YOU UNDERSTAND, CAPTAIN?"

NEXT WEEK—THE KISS—



YOU SAY THE SHADOW IS COMING? WHAT NONSENSE IS THIS? AN INVISIBLE ENEMY?

**FLASH, ELECTRICALLY INVISIBLE, RAIDS THE PALACE OF HIS ENEMY, THE WITCH QUEEN.....**

August 25th, 1935

This interest, on the part of Raymond, to use the color as an important finishing element of the picture became even more pronounced in the following years. And the papers that did not provide good color printing—which many did not—carried a version quite different in appearance than others. At this time, also, some papers began to use new sizes for their strips—with the syndicate providing distorted panels for this purpose (staff artists trimming and adding to panels to make them fit the different sizes). This often caused drastic alteration, in some papers, of Raymond's careful layouts, and panel compositions. Raymond, meanwhile, ignored this, and continued to experiment with color even more, for those papers which DID follow his intentions. And, at one point, color alone was used to create all shadow patterns—with as little black as possible used on the drawing itself. But this, too, was soon exchanged for a still different style—just prior to Raymond's leaving the world of Mongo behind, in 1944, in favor of the Marine Corps—a brief experiment in cross-hatch rendering. For ten years Raymond had guided the career of Flash. And through changing art styles, at least that many evolutions in mood.



"WELCOME, MY FRIENDS---I GIVE YOU THE REFUGE OF THE KINGDOM OF THE UNDERGROUND!" TRICO ANNOUNCES. AS FLASH SWIFTLY SURVEYS THE STRANGE GATHERING, TARTARA MUTTERS: "A PUTRID LOT OF THIEVES AND BEGGARS! THEY'D SELL YOU FOR HALF A MINGOL---AND BRAZOR IS OFFERING A MILLION TO THE RAT WHO TURNS YOU IN, FLASH!"

*NEXT WEEK:*  
**THE SPECTER AT THE FEAST**

3-12-44.

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# FLASH GORDON

by ALEX RAYMOND

Registered U. S. Patent Office.



ONE OF THE THIEVES' GUILD REPORTS TO HIS CHIEF: "I BRIBED MY BROTHER, A PALACE GUARD. HE SAW THE WOMAN PRISONER TAKEN FROM BRAZOR'S PALACE TO THE SUMMER PAVILION. IT'S LIGHTLY GUARDED!" TRICO SAYS: "STRANGE, IT SMELLS LIKE A TRAP!" BUT FLASH DECIDES: "BRAZOR IS CLEVER ENOUGH TO HIDE DESIRA IN THAT OUT-OF-THE-WAY SPOT. LET'S GET GOING!"



"WE HAVEN'T TESTED THE NEW ROCKET'S YET, SIR," THE BOSS MECHANIC SAYS. FLASH SMILES: "I'LL TEST THEM-- OVER BRAZOR'S PALACE!"



AS FLASH IS ABOUT TO STEP INTO THE PLANE, DALE RUNS UP, PLEADING: "TAKE ME ALONG. I'M SMALL AND LIGHT-- AND I CAN GUARD THE ROTORPLANE."



WITH BLAZING GUNS, HALF-FEATHERED ROTORS AND SILENCED ROCKET'S, THE ROTORPLANE SETTLES VERTICALLY ONTO THE ROOF OF THE PALACE SUMMER PAVILION---

-30-44-



DALE REMAINS WITH THE ROTORPLANE, AS FLASH AND TRICO BLAST THEIR WAY INTO THE MAKESHIFT PRISON-- ONLY TO FIND, INSTEAD OF QUEEN DESIRA, THE DANCING GIRL, GYPSA!

NEXT  
WEEK:  
THE  
DOOMED  
MISSION

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Alex Raymond's last page.



## THE INTERIM ILLUSTRATORS

At this time, to anyone aware of the field, there was only one obvious choice as a replacement for Raymond. No one has ever accused syndicates of having awareness of the creative side of things, however; so this person, who will be covered later, was overlooked, and the job given to the one person who had already proven himself UNFIT for the job.

During his ten years of work on Flash, Raymond had, on 10 occasions, fallen behind on his deadline. To catch up, he had hired an individual named **AUSTIN BRIGGS** to substitute for him for one page. At first, Briggs was given pre-lettered pages, and took time to study the pages done just before his. (No one but Raymond touched the art on the pages signed by Raymond.) When the first unsigned page appeared, almost no one recognized that it was not Raymond's work—because it really was! Briggs had simply traced figures from previous Raymond pages. Later, however, when he was given scripts to which he was unable to find appropriate figures, he began to do his own work. And Briggs was not without talent. He had been the one to take over *Secret Agent X-9* after Raymond, which was the reason he was the logical choice to use on what was, by syndicate thinking, the Sunday page to X-9. To those with artistic awareness, the Briggs pages were **OBVIOUSLY** not Raymond. But they were close enough to fool most readers. Working in the same way as Raymond, he drew from posed models (taking photos, to eliminate the strain on the models); and, although not quite the same style, a few of the pages were quite good. His last two, however, displayed only a minimum of concern. Both contained inferior lettering, and, on the next to last, he had obviously paid little attention to the previous Raymond pages, as the costumes did not quite match.

On his next page, only 7 weeks later (6-30-40), there was no excuse for repeating the same error, as events were still taking place in the same story sequence. But, this time, the backgrounds and clothing were **TOTALLY** unmatched to the Raymond pages. And, on top of this indifference, he did the one thing which should have instantly disqualified him from continuing, after Raymond, the feature which had become so identified with artistic integrity. With lack of both personal pride, as well as respect for the artist he was, theoretically, helping, he **COPIED** one of the figure positions, not from an earlier Raymond page, but from the work of **ANOTHER ARTIST!** And not just from **ANY** other artist. From Hal Foster!

Making matters worse was the fact that this took place only a few months after the appearance of a figure position in the *Prince Valiant* strip **VERY** similar to one Raymond had just turned in for Flash. To collectors who were not fellow artists, Raymond's reputation—because of these two items—suffered its severest blow. Any similarity in figure poses is always spotted by some collector somewhere, with the word soon spread. If it happens just once, there will continue to exist some degree of doubt that it might have been a coincidence. But if it happens twice, there is almost no way to stop the suspicion, in the minds of many, that the person so "exposed" is not a real artist at all,

but has really copied **ALL** of the drawings that have appeared under his name from the work of others. And, indeed, to this very day, those two figures—one a coincidence, and one by Briggs—are still continuing to pop up as examples that Raymond wasn't really an artist after all!

Raymond's fellow artists, however, were aware of a number of things that the mere collectors were not—beginning with the anatomical awareness to realize that the figure by Raymond was not really in the same pose as Foster's at all. Copyists always tend to retain the basic structure of the figure copied, and that of Raymond, although in the same action, was in anatomical contradiction to that by Foster. And the obvious "swipe" by Briggs was clearly not the work of Raymond. Most of the collectors who were artists were also aware of how far in advance artists have to do their work, in addition to the fact that a person who can really draw simply has no need **NOT** to. Among the intrinsic qualities of an emotionally secure, sincere artist are those of pride, and creativity. Without these, the individual is not truly an artist; and a person who is a true artist would **NEVER** consider doing work not his own (unless during moments of extreme emotional insecurity, and for totally irrational reasons). Raymond was always rational; always possessed of pride in his work. He was an artist. Although very gifted, Briggs, on the other hand, seldom possessed the sincerity of the true artist. And the realization, by Raymond, that something

from another artist's work had been copied onto a panel of *Mongo* undoubtedly upset him no end, for he never again allowed another assistant to put pencil or ink (except on lettering) to another Flash page during his remaining time upon the feature.

When a daily version of *Flash Gordon* was launched by the syndicate, however, it went to Briggs, as well as the Sunday page after Raymond. Raymond left in the middle of a story, and neither Briggs nor the new writer obviously had much real understanding of (or interest in) the story. Fortunately, this did not interfere too severely with the completion of the last story Raymond had been writing, which had concerned the appearance of a mysterious desert brigand named Gundar, on the Mongo continent of Tropica. Raymond had obviously intended to end this sequence by a surprise revelation as to who Gundar really was. The story, under Briggs, was brought to an adequate conclusion; except for the fact that nothing was brought up about Gundar being anything special. And Zarkov, who had been with Flash at the beginning of the story, was forgotten, and nowhere in sight. And the concluding panel had Dale and Flash setting off together for their return to **MONGO!**

From there, the adventure can in no way be considered an accurate continuation of the Raymond series. The major villain became a fat oriental who was supposed to be a brother of Ming, and the stories were generally silly. A possible exception to the mediocrity was a moderately interesting sequence in which

Mac Raboy's work of 1949.



IN ELECTRIC HOT-FURS, FLASH AND DALE LEAD THE WAY TO THE SURFACE. HE WARNS, "WATCH OUT FOR ENEMIES. PRINCE POLON MAY HAVE PLANNED THIS."

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9-25

# FLASH GORDON

Registered U. S. Patent Office.

GYPSA IS FULL OF REMORSE: "FORGIVE ME FOR DOUBTING YOU!" FLASH SHRUGS: "DID YOU? NO MATTER, TRICO, LEAD US TO THE ROTORPLANE!"



FLASH AND TRICO MAKE THEIR WAY BACK TO THE OLD WAREHOUSE WHERE THEY LEFT THE ROTORPLANE. "BRAZOR HASN'T FOUND THIS HIDEOUT, YET." TRICO TRIUMPHS.



FLASH SPEEDS THE ARMING OF HIS ROCKET-ROTORPLANE: "WE HAVE NO TIME TO WASTE. BRAZOR HAS SET DESIRA'S EXECUTION FOR NOON---AND IT'S ALREADY DAYLIGHT!"



MEANWHILE, A YOUNG LIEUTENANT REPORTS: "I HAD CAPTURED TRICO AND SOME WOMEN--- THEN A YELLOW-HAIRED OFFICER SENT ME INTO AN AMBLISH!" "YOU IDIOT!" BRAZOR RAGES, "THAT WAS FLASH!"

BRAZOR SUMMONS THE DOOMED QUEEN: "TO CLIT SHORT YOUR HOURS OF WORRY, WE START NOW FOR EXECUTION PLAZA." DESIRA IS SCORNFUL: "WHAT HAS FLASH DONE TO MAKE YOU HURRY YOUR PLANS, MURDERER?"



NEXT WEEK:  
HOUR OF  
DISASTER.

7-2-44

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Flash broke a law of the sky city in which the penalty was to be flung over the edge. In order to save Flash while still complying with the law, the city was lowered to within a few feet of the planet's surface. But this one interesting gimmick was hardly enough to save the credibility of the series—particularly with the obvious lack of effort put into the art by Briggs. After a few years, Briggs decided it was time to leave comics behind, and go in search of a more respectable occupation. He did quite a bit of work for magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, and became one of the 12 symbolic “founders” of the Famous Artists correspondence school.

Following Briggs on Flash, in 1948, was the individual who should have taken it over 4 years before—**MAC RABOY**. But 4 years can be a long time in the evolution of an artist. Raboy had been at his peak in 1942, at that time doing *Capt. Marvel Jr.* for Master Comics. Just prior to Flash, he had done *Green Lama* (while others trying to imitate his style—and sometimes under his name, due to editorial ignorance—were continuing *Marvel Jr.* and doing *Kid Eternity*). Previously, he had done a number of minor items—the best being *Dr. Voodoo*; and, although he had officially taken over *Spy Smasher*, he did only a cover and one 2-page panel. His cover work for comic books was fairly voluminous—and he is considered a Captain Midnight artist from cover art only. He also did one *Capt. Midnight* painting as a Big-Little-Book cover, and some miscellaneous work in advertising.

His Flash Gordon work—particularly the first several months—had far more effort in them than one usually thinks of even for the best of features.

But, by this time, his style had stiffened slightly, and the figures also tended to have slightly short arms, long legs, and highly stylized clothing drapery. And, particularly during his last years on the feature, which he continued until his death, a large amount of effort which he was obviously still putting into it was unable to add interest to dreary stories and monotonous drawing habits. But, in his prime, he had been **BRILLIANT!**

**PAUL NORRIS** has never been considered one of the greats of cartoon illustration. Or even close to that distinction. And yet it was his comic book version of Flash, during the early 'fifties, which really kept the feature alive for the generation that had come after Raymond. The stories Norris drew returned far more to the Raymond type of story, and were very popular at the time—some of them being reprinted, in condensed versions, later. The other comic book attempts, during the 'fifties (other than the Raymond reprints can be ignored, as they were done by those with little or no awareness of what the REAL Flash Gordon was all about. (One of these stories, unfortunately—featuring an ill-conceived version of Ming's daughter, in an even more inept plot—was plagiarized for the fairly recent record album of Flash featuring Buster Crabbe. The second story of the album, however, was plagiarized (uncredited) from a story by Al Williamson.)

During the 'fifties, the new daily strip of Flash, probably by sheer chance rather than syndicate awareness, was handed to the favorite comic book artist of the late 'forties, **DAN BARRY**. And Barry, also, put his all into this strip for some time. And the stories—which were written, without credit, by Larry Shaw, Harvey Kurtzman, and others



Flash Gordon by Frank Frazetta, inked by Dan Barry.

who should have done outstanding jobs—did occasionally wander close to compatibility with the Raymond view of things. But, just as often, the time era would suddenly, unexplainably, be the far future; with the story lines wandering into aimless confusion. Making up for this, however, would be the sudden appearance—from periods of 2 days up to a few weeks—of artwork by such artists as Al Williamson, Roy Krenkel, Frank Frazetta, and, for diversion, Jack Kirby, and even Jack Davis. Barry, however, would usually do the inking himself.

It may come as a surprise to most Flash Gordon fans, but there is STILL both a Sunday and daily newspaper feature running under the title of Flash Gordon. Both are now signed with the name of Dan Barry. But, if indeed by Barry himself, there is no resemblance at all to the popular character of Flash Gordon, the Barry who was once the most popular adventure cartoonist, or a strip that anyone could find the slightest excuse to look at.

It was probably some unfortunate contract clause that doomed the Sunday page of Flash, upon the death of Raboy, into the same loss of identity and lack of interest as that of the almost totally ignored daily strip; while, at the same time, the ONLY logical person to be doing Flash Gordon in any form—Al Williamson—was being wasted upon a new version of Raymond's first daily feature, *Secret Agent X-9*—now, through typical syndicate thinking, under the less-easy-to-spot-and-remember title of *Secret Agent Corrigan*.

## WILLIAMSON

**AL WILLIAMSON** had been prepared to take over Flash to a degree that no one else could ever have been. He had grown up with the Flash strip (South American reprints of the Raymond periods) and the Flash movie serials as major influences of his childhood. It was the love of this feature—and the work of Raymond—that inspired him not only to become an artist, but one of the very BEST of artists. He became good enough not only to enter comic books while still in his teens, but, soon after, to join the staff of the very best company—EC. And, beyond that, to the eyes of many experienced artists, he became EC's BEST artist—specializing in SF stories of a Flash Gordon nature. At this point, he was

MADE for Flash Gordon. He possessed the unbeatable element of youth, in addition to talent and interest. Still in his early twenties, he was at the peak of his enthusiasm and industry. And his drawing style would have been a natural progression for the feature.

One of the prime elements of Raymond's genius had been his refusal to stagnate in any one style. Anyone else, then, continuing Flash with any of Raymond's old styles would be, ironically, very un-Raymond-like. And, contrary to the curiously unaware but highly repeated comment that Williamson's EC work was in the style of Raymond, it WASN'T. There was no sign at all of any surface influence, despite the internal one. The style was pure Williamson—BUT, with the full FEEL that it was RIGHT for Flash Gordon. It was Flash Gordon as Raymond might have been doing it at some later and still inspired time. And Williamson was still improving. The drawing was superb, and the figures all had movement. But the inking reached its peak—being at the same time most *tight*, most *fluid feeling*, and most *personal*, during the late 'fifties.

Most of human history, however, has been typified by the fact that the individuals with the power to see that things are done as they SHOULD be, are, at the same time, possessed of so little awareness of what those things are that they are totally unqualified for their position. It was over a dozen years before Williamson was able to do Flash Gordon—for the comic books.

During the latter part of this dozen year period, Williamson was working with John Prentice on the strip, *Rip Kirby*. And years of working with any other artist cannot help but have some lasting influence. Although Prentice was doing his utmost to retain the same style Raymond had last used on Kirby, the influence upon Williamson—the elements which remained added to his own style—were pure Prentice. Flash Gordon, as done by Al Williamson in 1966, then, was far different than it would have been in 1954, or 1959. Rather than it being a pure Williamson EXTENSION of the concept begun by Raymond, it became a feature which was, in spirit, although not in fact, done by Prentice, Raymond, or even Austin Briggs, in addition to Williamson. It is the scenes with heavy shadows—seldom used by the others—that the Williamson style is most his own.

Whatever the style, however, the fact does





AND COMES TO A SUDDEN SHATTERING HALT!



IS DALE ALL RIGHT?

YES, ZARKOV. THANK TAO SHE'S ONLY SLIGHTLY BRUISED.

Al Williamson uses the headgear on Flash for effect.



THIS MUST BE THE ROBOTS' HANGAR... LOOKS MORE LIKE A MUSEUM OF HORRORS! THEY SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DESIGNED AS MUCH TO FRIGHTEN AS HARM...

THE DOOR! SOMEONE'S COMING!



MAYBE I CAN GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS, RIGHT...



...NOW! WHAT TH-- WHO ARE YOU? WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

I AM RHEA... GUARDIAN OF THE SENTRIES...

Extreme use of contrasty shadow is true Williamson style.

remain that *Flash Gordon* by Al Williamson is the only true continuation of the character following the last story by Raymond, and, undeniably, the only artistic achievement on the title worthy of the tradition begun by Raymond.

## THE PROBLEMS OF WRITING FLASH GORDON

It was in 1959—when Williamson was at his peak, and well known for years—that I enquired at King Features, during the course of other business, what his chances would be for eventually getting the opportunity to do this feature. Their reply was profoundly typical of such businesses: “Who?”

I immediately gave them photo copies of his most Flash-Gordon-like-work, which I was told would be kept in the files. I also showed copies to Raymond’s successor, John Prentice, on the *Rip Kirby* strip. Prentice was obviously more aware of what he was looking at than the syndicate, and soon provided Williamson with a good share of the work on Kirby, until the time, in 1966, that the chance to do Flash in comic book form came along—a title for which I was to write the first story. Both Al and I were determined to make this as close as we could to a real continuation of the original character. A quick review of everything written under the title—showed that virtually everything after Raymond was really about OTHER people with the same names, and on other worlds simply CALLED Mongo, if “Mongo” was even included at all. And any story which did come close enough to be acceptable as part of the original theme was always of a plot line which would have to be at some far later point in Flash’s career; for Raymond had been progressing along a definite story-line that none of these stories picked up. Flash would certainly have stuck to the goals which had been left unfinished by Raymond; so the new story, to be a faithful continuation, HAD to pick up at the end of the last story started by Raymond and concluded by Briggs. The trick was simply to figure out what Raymond would have done with the story had he himself returned to it at this point.

The first thing needed was to clear up the muddle left by the final Briggs scene. In that, Flash was leaving the capitol city of Tropic for Mongo! If the Williamson series was ever reprinted immediately following this last Raymond story, it would be safe to assume the reader could accept “Mongo” as a lettering error for the word Mingo, and realize that they were leaving the capitol city of the continent of Tropic, ON Mongo, for the city of Mingo. The first order of business, then, was to retrieve Zarkov, whom Briggs had totally forgotten. Zarkov had been with Flash on Tropic.

So, the original script written for the Williamson series began with an opening caption (unfortunately editorially deleted! It should be restored if reprinted) saying something to the effect of: “Flash Gordon and Dale Arden land on the outskirts of the beautiful capitol city of Tropic, on the planet Mongo, to pick up their companion, the brilliant scientist Dr. Hans Zarkov.” Panel 2: “The three adventurers from Earth then turn their gleaming ship toward the city of Mingo.”

From there, for the dual purpose of both bringing newcomers up to date, and to save time for Al, who had far less time than desirable to complete this issue. I wrote a

lengthy flashback segment of how Flash first landed on Mongo, and the events which led up to the current point. Time could be made up at this point by using Raymond’s own scenes for these events. But, after a few panels, Al got *too* inspired, and began to make up a lot of the ones he could have simply repeated. (And, ironically, because of this, a lot of fans later complained because he didn’t make them ALL up!) This initial enthusiasm proved costly, as he later found he couldn’t complete the story by deadline, and had to get help for the last page.

The next thing that Raymond would certainly have done, upon Flash’s arrival back at Mingo, to be greeted by his old friends Barin and Aura, would be to enquire about their son, who had been named after Flash. And there would undoubtedly also be a scene in which Barin tells Flash that the city of Mingo has been renamed. Liberated from Ming’s tyranny, there would CERTAINLY have been a name change since Flash was last there, and the most logical change would have been in honor of the person bringing about the liberation from Ming. Again using the Arboorian word which means “flash”, it is more likely than not that Raymond would have used the name Alania for this city had he continued with the strip. Before beginning on the story, I also decided to begin a map of Mongo, showing all major details and cities mentioned by Raymond. And on this I listed the capitol as “Alania—formerly Mingo City”. However, both the mention of Barin’s son, and the change to Alania also became deleted, editorially, before the story reached Al’s drawing board. These three deletions did severely limit its credibility as a continuation in the true Raymond spirit; however, from that point on, the first story did much to fill in the business still left unfinished. And Al’s talented wife Arlene, although not credited, drew the adaptation of the map which appeared in the issue. (The idea for a map also occurred to Al—another evidence of his real feeling for this feature—and he enquired about the possibility of assembling one in time before even knowing that a pencilled version of such was underway. The original version—in which the continent of Tropic is a little closer to Raymond’s sketch appears in the Flash Gordon issue of *Monsters & Heroes* magazine.) Arlene also did the lettering throughout the stories drawn by Al.

The next event that would have to occur in the saga was also already established by Raymond. The second voyage to Mongo had been for the purpose of getting some radium back to Earth to power the defensive weapons brought back on the first trip. Getting the radium had been the theme of the first story drawn by Al. The next would have to be a return to Earth.

By chance, Al had already drawn an unprinted story, years before, originally intended for Buster Crabbe Comics, in which Buster found an underground city, on Earth, during the testing of new weapons. It was not only a perfect continuation of the Flash plot, but every character in the Flash Gordon saga. The captions and dialogue could be easily rewritten. But since the art style didn’t match that of the first story, it was decided to write a companion story—perhaps a sequel in actual continuity—to appear in between. Which is the sole reason the city of Krenkelium was born, rather than another story on Mongo. I only did the plot outline for this. Al himself wrote the script as it appeared.

Eventually, however, it was decided that the art style used for the Buster Crabbe story—done during the EC period—was simply TOO different from Al’s more recent work, and it was not used after all. (Although with a still different rewriting around the same drawings, it WAS printed in the first issue of *Witzend* as a non Flash, and non-Buster story. And Buster himself got a large size version of it in its original form.)

I wrote three more scripts—the last two of which I requested back from the syndicate (to save for a possible later date) when Al found that his new work on the daily X-9 strip made it impossible to continue the comic book at that time, and other artists would have to be used.

The second script of mine, which was the last Flash story that Al did in that series, was written to resolve, finally, the question of who Gundar really was—the item which Briggs had overlooked (along with Zarkov) when attempting to conclude Raymond’s final story. Again I worked in a flashback sequence (although a short one) to help Al with the time problem. And again the fans, for some fannish reason, complained that the drawings were not 100% Williamson—even though the flashback panels were Raymond scenes.

Other writers were also doing scripts for the new series, but most of the sequences purchased by King for the comic book series—as with the newspaper strip—were not really of the original concept. Some of them FAR from it. Which was undoubtedly of some influence, in addition to time, in Al’s decision to limit the number of stories he did in the series—although he did do a couple he knew would not go uncriticized. But, to counter-balance this, he decided at the beginning that he would do a script himself featuring the return of Ming. And this became the lead story for the March ’67 issue. (Issue #4 in the series—the second done by Al.) And in this story, perhaps, is best evidenced the differences between the Williamson and Raymond approach to the series. If Raymond had a choice between effect and consistency, the consistency would have to come first, with all else worked in around. In the Williamson drawings, artistic impact dominates. Flash will sometimes be wearing, without real logic, the headgear Raymond had him wearing underwater, to protect his ears from pressure. Ultra-logical, Raymond would never have had him wear it at other times. But Al liked its LOOKS, so put it there regardless of logic. And in Al’s version, Ming again wears the costume he wore in a very early Raymond sequence. Raymond would not have repeated this. Under Raymond, Ming would have returned with costuming different from any of those worn before. Raymond was always innovating; never repeating. And he was very conscious of details that most readers would fail to notice—such as emblems of rank, or the design of background banners. They were never made up for only one scene. Each was meticulously consistent with the overall planet’s scheme of things. Perhaps, for this reason, Mongo—the original Mongo—will always belong to Raymond only. But mood was also an important factor of the original Flash Gordon saga. And there is only one successful successor to Raymond, in keeping alive the true Flash Gordon FEELING—Al Williamson.

Stanley Pitt may be the best comic artist in Australia. His Silver Starr strip was a tribute to Alex Raymond, an artist he admired tremendously. Here, Stan once again pays mo homage to Raymond in this series of scenes from The Flash Gordon Saga.









STANLEY  
PITT  
72



STANLEY  
1911  
72

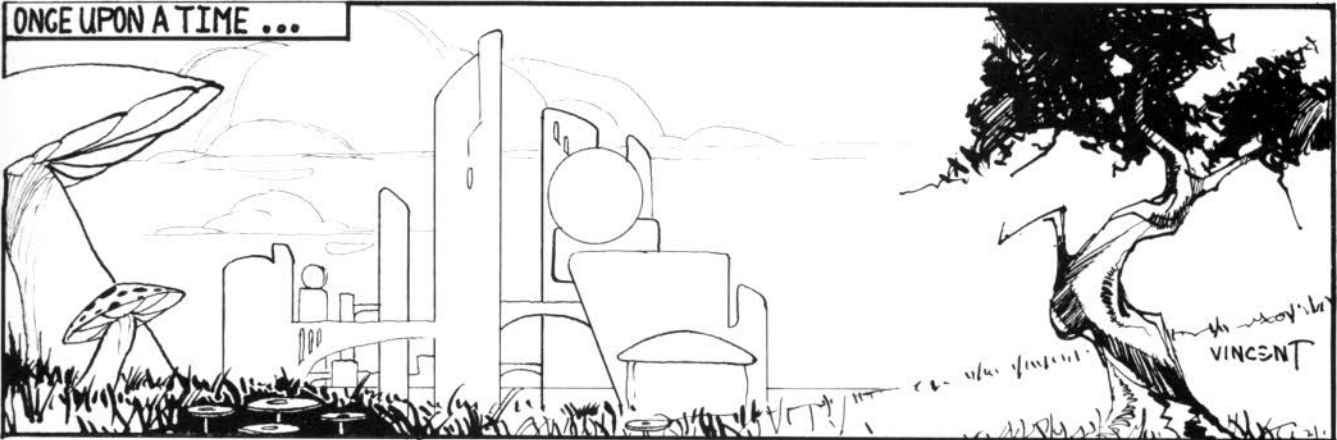


Steve Harper views the world differently from the rest of us. Perhaps more clearly... His version of Flash Gordon is, maybe, the strangest ever. Also, it just might be the most frightening.

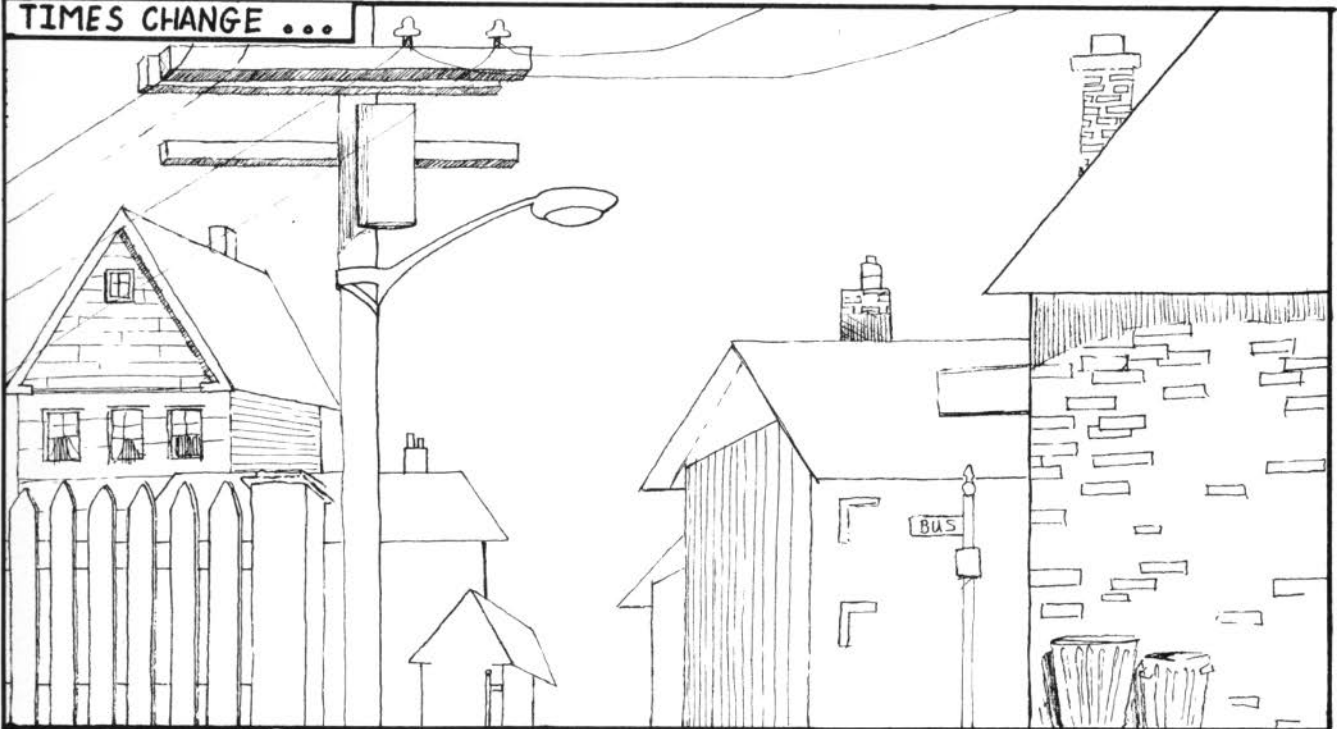


THE THRILLING ADVENTURES  
OF  
FLASH GORDON

ONCE UPON A TIME ...



TIMES CHANGE ...



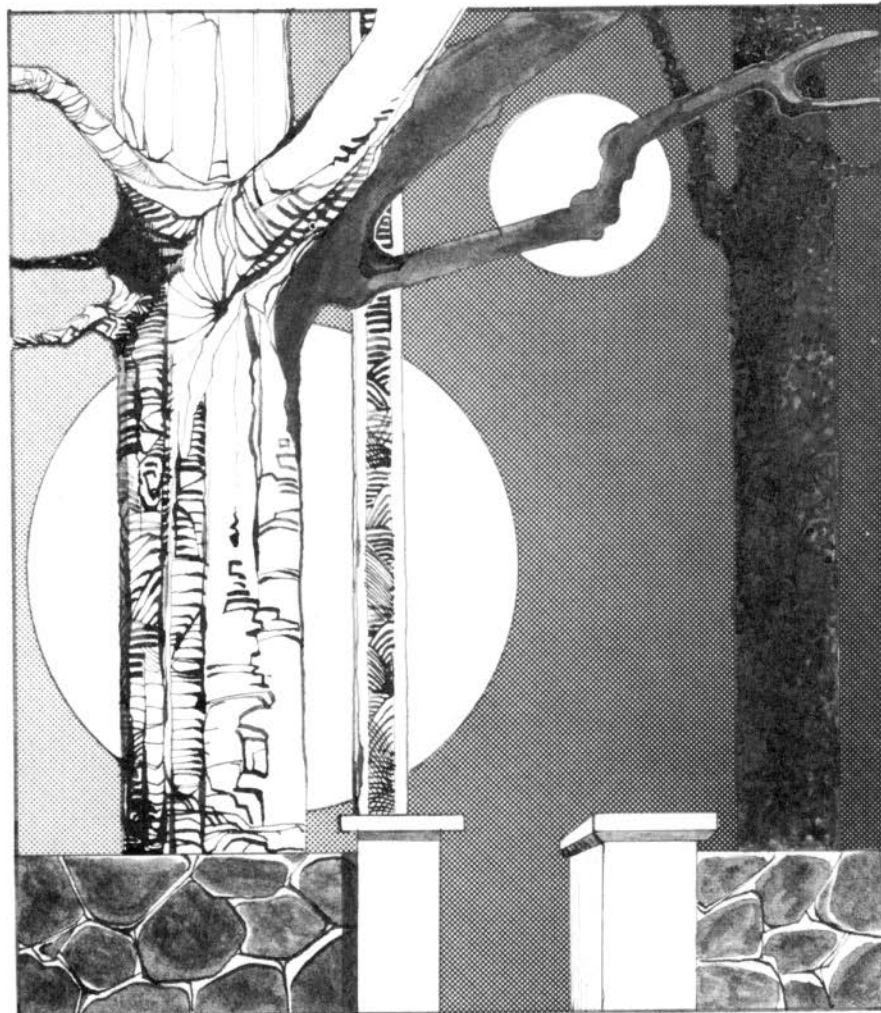
MY NAME IS GORDEN, FLASH GORDON.  
I AM A RETIRED SPACE ADVENTURER...



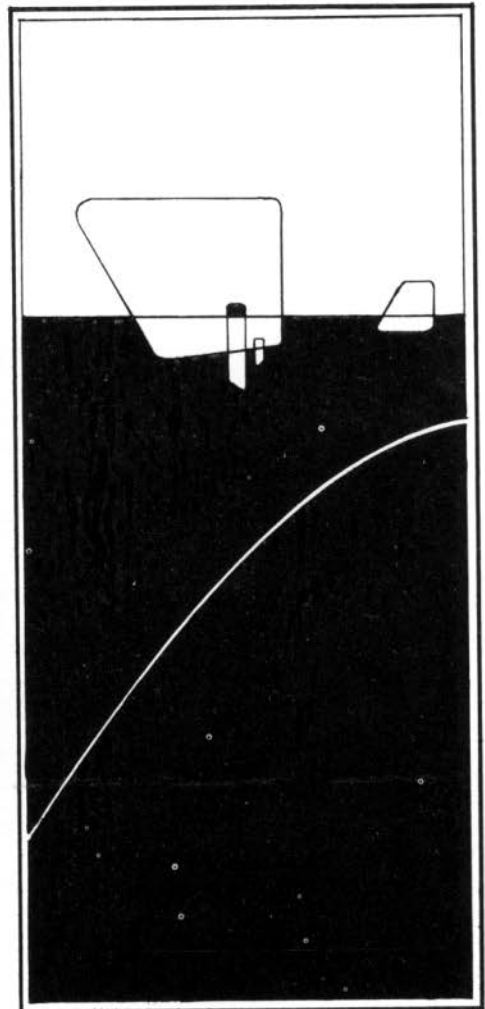
THIS IS MY HOME.



THE GARDENS, WHERE I WATCH THE MOONS DRIFT  
SILENTLY BY.

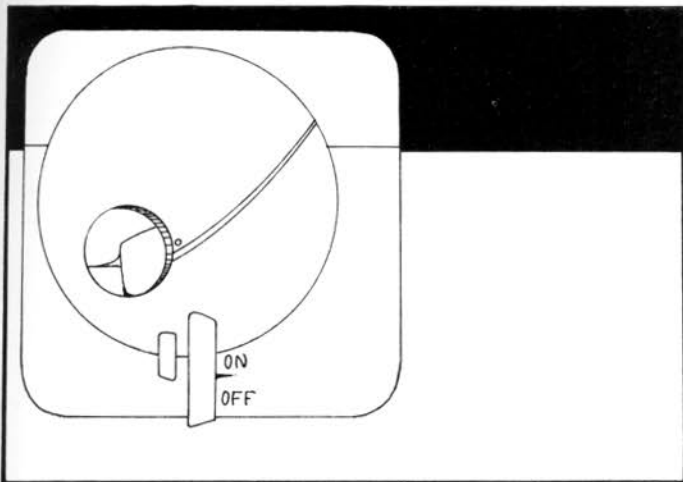


THE PAINTINGS:  
TIME'LESS AGAIN AND AGAIN.

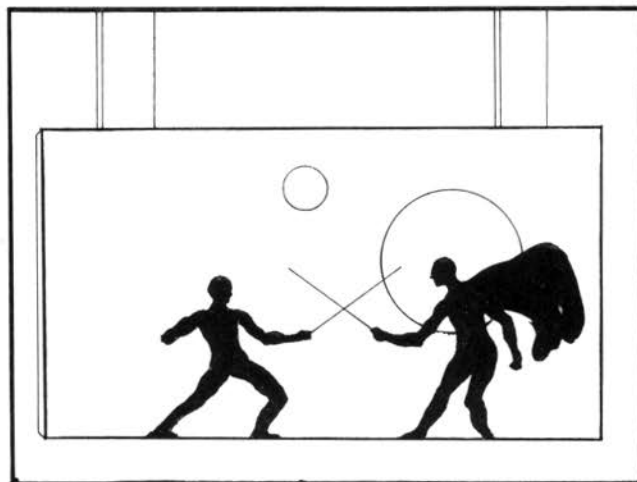




THE MACHINES PROVIDE ME WITH ALL THAT I MIGHT NEED.



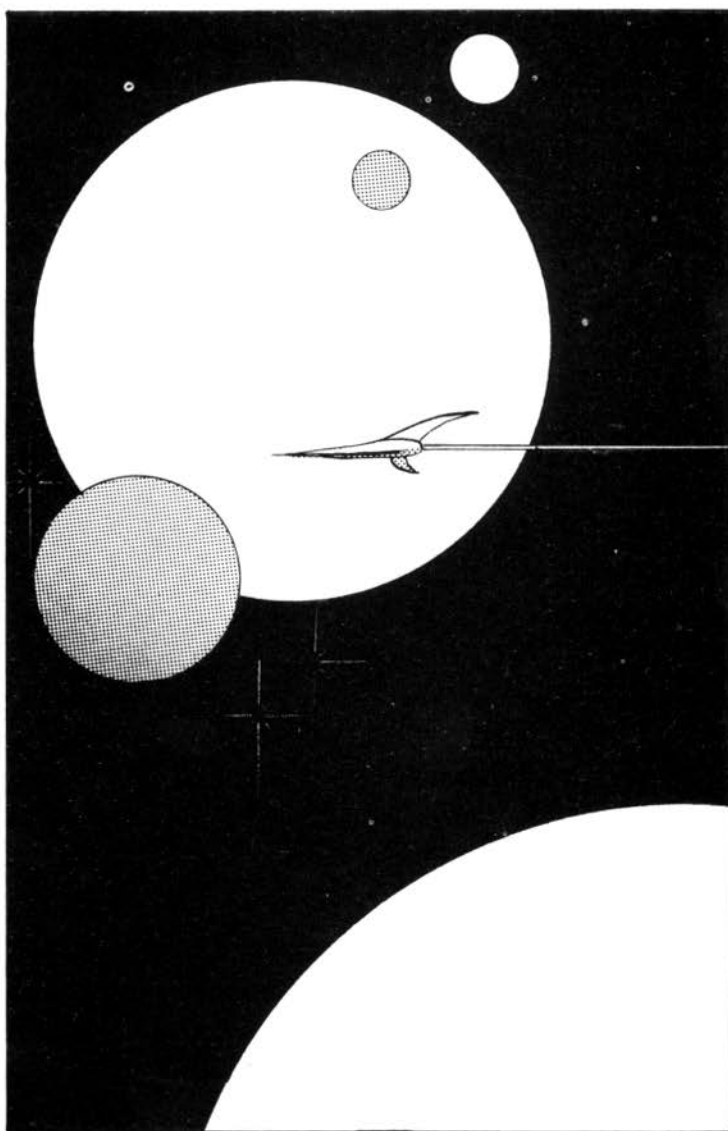
WATCHING IMAGES OF MY OLD ADVENTURES ON THE VISUAL SCREEN. GAZING AWAY MY YEARS.



AHH, BUT ONCE AGAIN TO BE YOUNG AND IN LOVE.

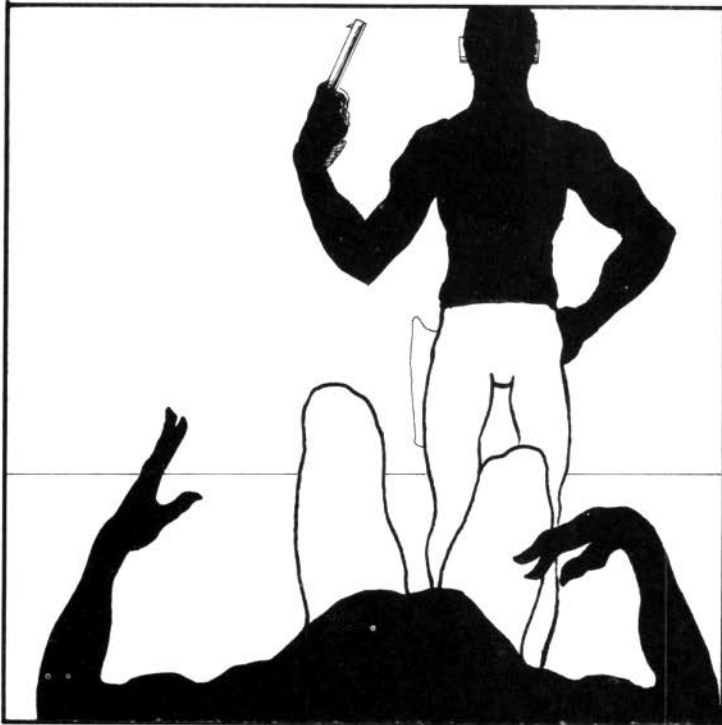


THE FEEL OF DEEP SPACE ...



THE DEFEAT OF EVIL ...

BUT YOU KNOW AND IT'S A DREAM .



HELLO KIDS, MY NAME IS GORDON, FLASH GORDON.  
I AM A RETIRED SPACE ADVENTURER ...

CLICK REPLAY CLICK, CLICK ...

A black and white line drawing of a man with a mustache and short, wavy hair. He is wearing a short-sleeved uniform with a star on the left chest. He stands next to a control panel with several buttons and a power outlet. The scene is framed by a thick black border.



GO ON TO NEXT 4.5 DEGREE SECTOR  
 YOU ARE POINTING AT THE SKY  
 IT'S SO DIFFERENT THAN WHAT I SUSPECTED  
 RADIATION BATTERY 800 DEGREES  
 LIFE TIME 99 YEARS  
 DONT FORGET YOUR TECHNICAL KNOWHOW  
 MORE EXPERIMENTS TO GAIN EXPERIANCE  
 AH WELL, MORE EATEN WORDS  
 HEARTBEAT: 120 BEATS PER MINUTE  
 117 HOURS 10 MINUTES  
 100 THOUSAND BITS OF INFORMATION PER SECOND  
 SOME SOAP OPERA  
 REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE A KID  
 YEA U.S.A.

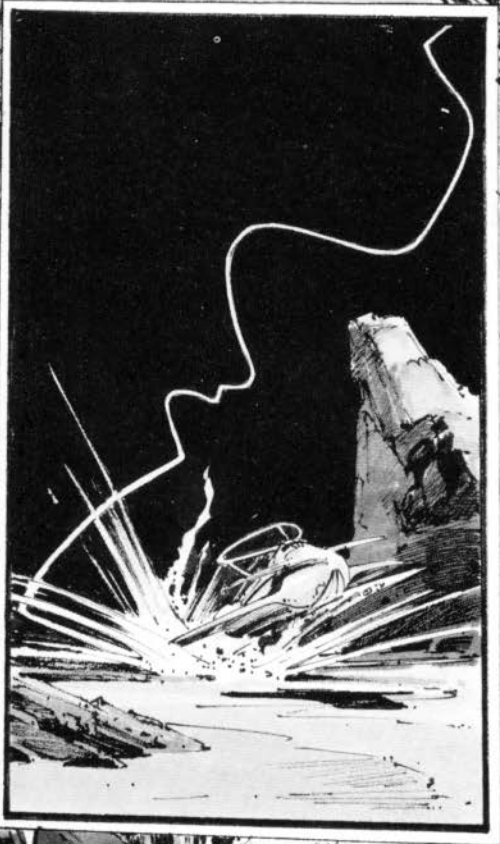
P.S.  
 THE PRES. SAYS THANKS.

ENDE

Neal Adams is the hottest artist in the field today. His Green Lantern-Green Arrow series has won the highest award possible. His up-coming War of the Worlds promises to be a new classic. Now, Neal once again demonstrates his talents as Flash meets "The Warrior."

















Every artist has, at one point in his career, attempted to picture Flash Gordon. George Evans shows Flash in the guise of Buster Crabbe (from "Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars"); Carlos Garzon and Roy Krenkel both show Flash battling a pterodactyl; and Reed Crandall gives a final example of his fine brush work, as Flash faces yet another menace.











ROY  
KRENKEL





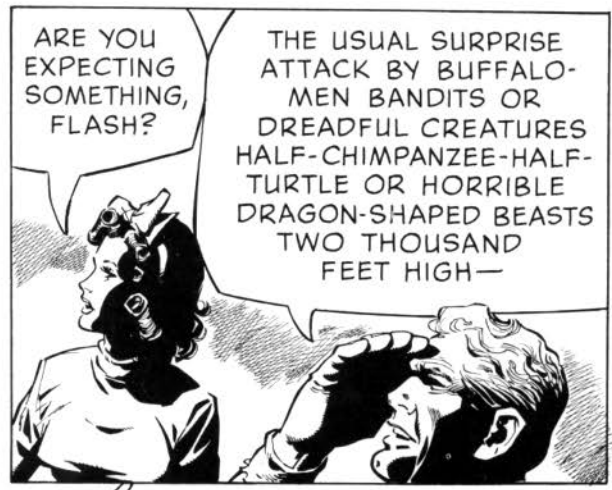
Adolfo Buylla and Carlos Garzon are two fine young Spanish artists. Carlos' work on Big Ben Bolt for KING FEATURES and Adolfo's fine strips for Trinca have made them both highly respected in the field. Here, both Carlos and Adolfo take a humorous look at Flash (Flat?) Gordon.







DO WE ALWAYS HAVE TO LAND THIS WAY?



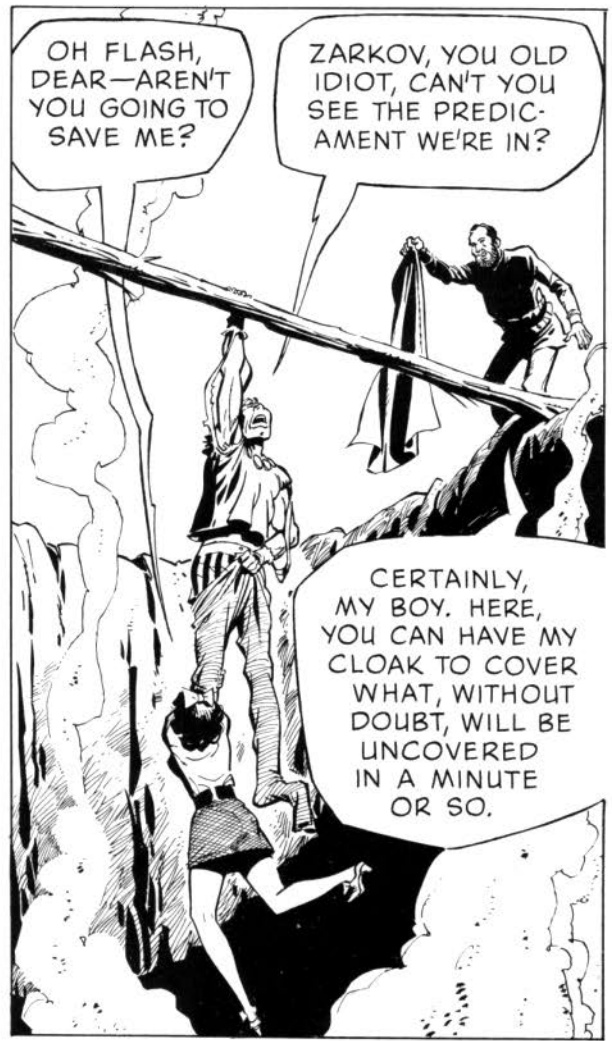
ARE YOU EXPECTING SOMETHING, FLASH?

THE USUAL SURPRISE ATTACK BY BUFFALO-MEN BANDITS OR DREADFUL CREATURES HALF-CHIMPANZEE-HALF-TURTLE OR HORRIBLE DRAGON-SHAPED BEASTS TWO THOUSAND FEET HIGH—



WHAT'S UP, DOC?

EGAD!



OH FLASH, DEAR—AREN'T YOU GOING TO SAVE ME?

ZARKOV, YOU OLD IDIOT, CAN'T YOU SEE THE PREDICAMENT WE'RE IN?

CERTAINLY, MY BOY. HERE, YOU CAN HAVE MY CLOAK TO COVER WHAT, WITHOUT DOUBT, WILL BE UNCOVERED IN A MINUTE OR SO.



RUN FOR YOUR LIFE! THIS IS NO MONSTER—IT'S A NIGHTMARE!

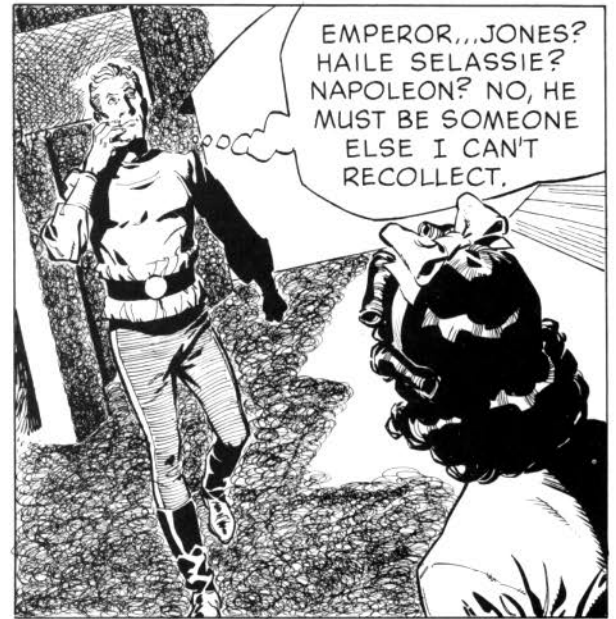
NIGHTMARE? FROM NOW ON I'LL STICK STRICTLY TO BRICK BRADFORD OR BUCK ROGERS, YOU BUM!



WHAT'S THIS? THE FLOOR IS VANISHING UNDER MY FEET!

HELP, FLASH!





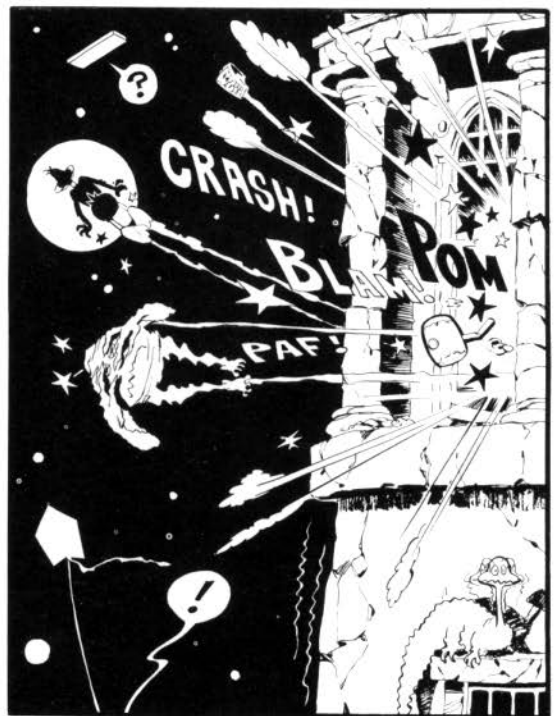






# FLAT GORDON

CARLOS GARCÍA '72





Al Williamson needs no introduction. His work is legendary. Here, in this new portfolio of his Flash Gordon work, we present two singular pieces. First, his first drawing of Flash Gordon (done at age seventeen), then, his only portrait of Buster Crabbe in the Flash Gordon role. Enjoy.



















Al  
Williams © 2010


Esteban Maroto may be the best of the new crop of Spanish artists. His work in Dracula, Trinca, and Cinco por Infinito is universally admired. Here, he shows us that "Even Legends May Die."





WE ARE NOT DEAD AS LONG AS SOMEONE REMEMBERS US.





LOWER  
THY SWORD,  
FLASH GORDON.  
IT CAN DO ME  
NO HARM.

HOW DO  
YOU KNOW  
MY NAME?

I KNOW AS  
MUCH OF THEE  
AS THOU KNOWEST  
LITTLE OF ME.

BE CAREFUL,  
FLASH. SHE MAY  
BE ONE OF MING'S  
SPIES.

HA' HA! THY WORLD IS  
AMUSING—SPIES, MONSTERS,  
BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, FANTASTIC  
ADVENTURES. NO, DALE  
ARDEN, I AM NOT OF  
THY WORLD.

THEN, WHO  
**ARE** YOU?



I AM THE END OR PERHAPS THE BEGINNING, THE ABSENCE OF EMOTION, FORGETFULNESS, THE LACK OF MEMORY, COMPLETE SILENCE, THE VOID.

WHAT DO YOU WISH OF US?

THOU MUST COME WITH ME. THY DEATH AWAITS.

BUT WHY? WE CANNOT DIE. WE ARE NOT MORTAL!

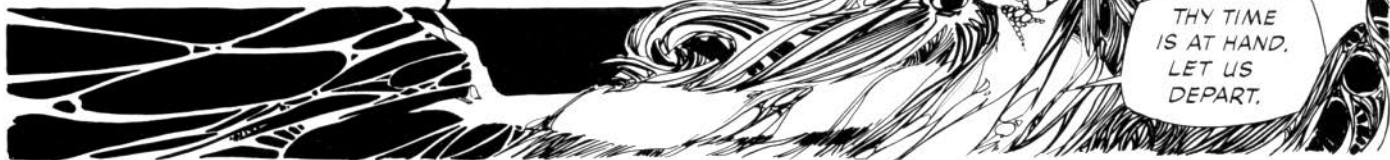


THERE ARE MANY FORMS OF DEATH, EVEN IDEAS AND IDEALS SOMETIME DIE. NOW WE MUST GO. I WILL TAKE THEE TO WHERE THY TOMB AWAITS.

WE MUST NOT GO, FLASH. I HAVE SUCH FEAR AS I'VE NEVER FELT BEFORE. PLEASE DO SOMETHING, MY INVINCIBLE HERO.

NO DALE, WE SHALL NOT DIE. SOMEONE SOMEWHERE WILL READ OUR STORY SO WE CAN RETURN FOREVER YOUNG AND ETERNALLY IN LOVE. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SOMEONE TO REMEMBER US. AS LONG AS THERE IS FANTASY WE SHALL EXIST. HAVE FAITH.

THY TIME IS AT HAND. LET US DEPART.





**THE END?**

TO ALEX RAYMOND WHEREVER YOU ARE

ESTEBAN MAROTO '12

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WOOD.