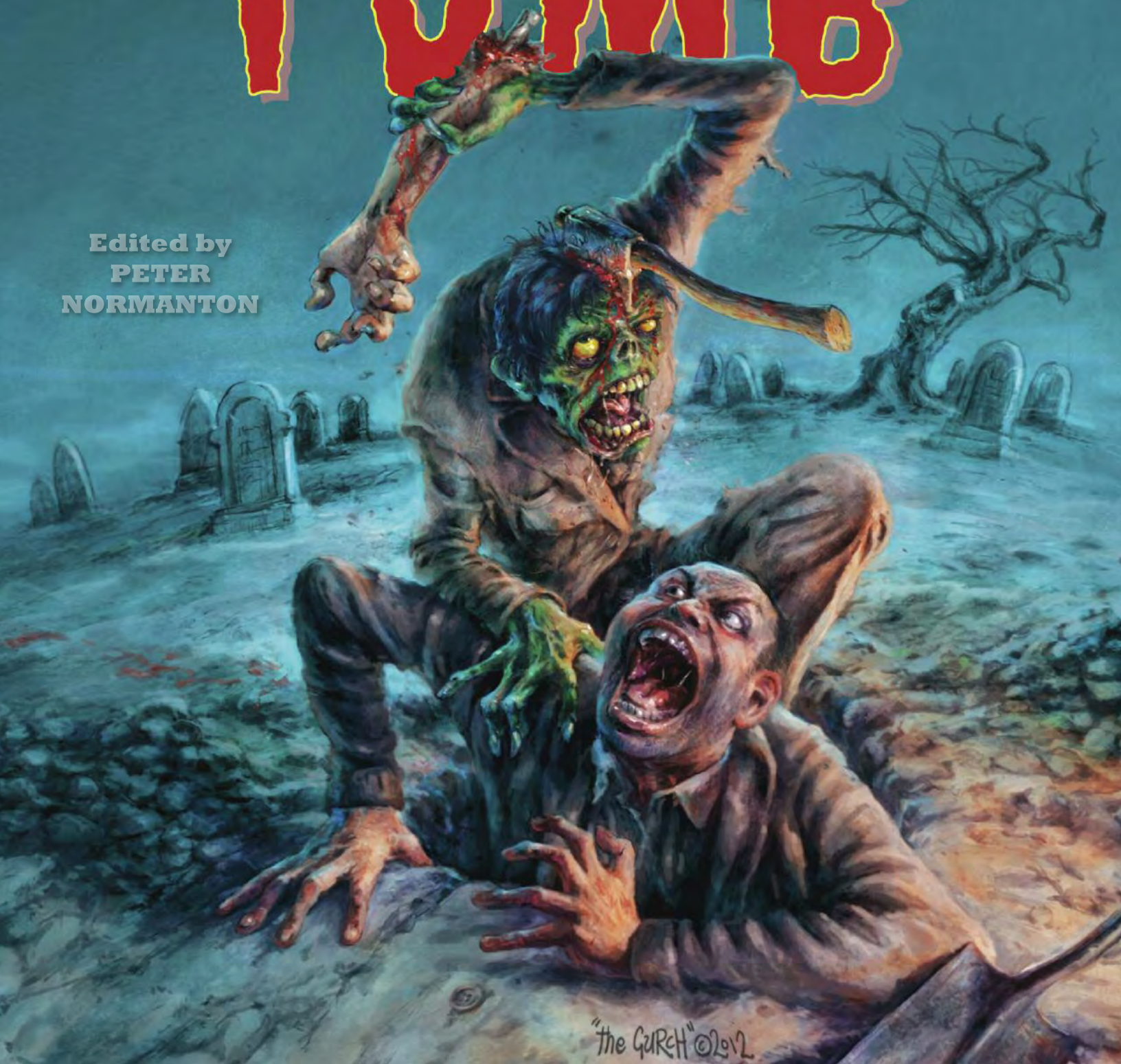




THE BEST OF
FROM THE

TOMB

Edited by
**PETER
NORMANTON**



"The GURCH" ©2012

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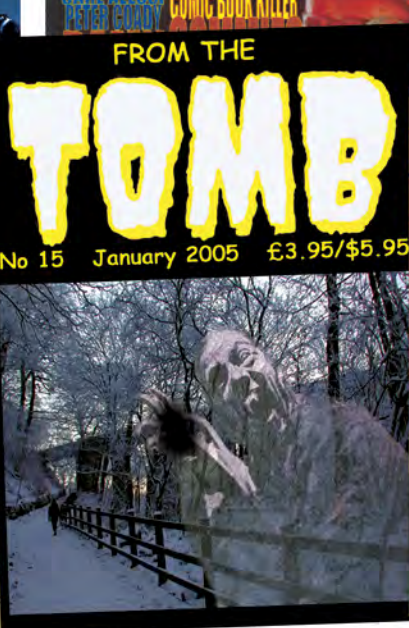
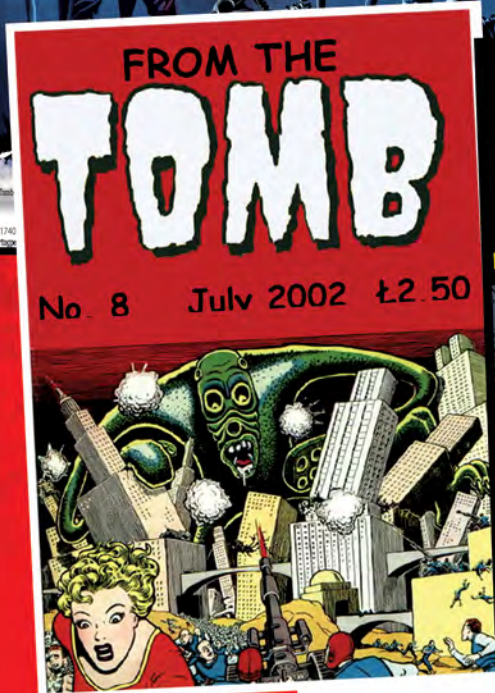
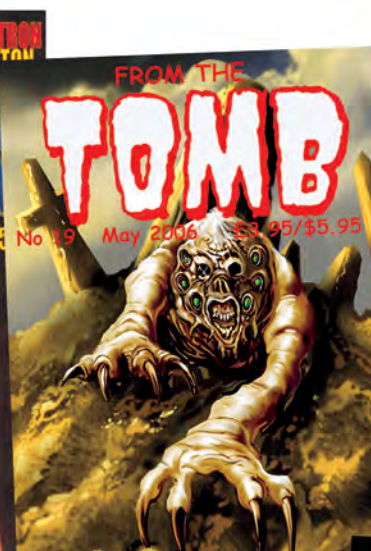
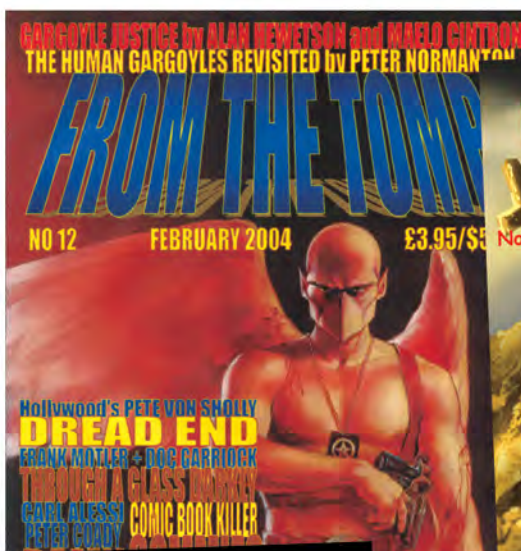
A WORD FROM THE TOMB...

Twenty years ago, when I first began my research into the madness of the horror comics' boom of the early 1950s I never for one moment imagined I would be typing these words. *From the Tomb*, or *Crypt* as it was then loosely named, was only ever intended to be a photocopied fanzine with a life span of a couple of issues. There was no great plan, just an urge to get something out my system that had been there since my

teens. Many comic book reading teenagers harbour dreams of going on to become pros; my aspirations were never so lofty, all I ever wanted was my own fanzine.

After contributing several articles to Calum Iain MacIver's tribute to H.P. Lovecraft, the much-missed *Strange Aeons*, I turned my attention to the release of *From the Tomb*. The world had changed; desktop publishing was now with us. Christmas 1999 brought a copy of Microsoft Publisher and a scanner. I was off, and by February, the first issue of *From the Tomb* rolled off my Hewlett Packard printer. I had been unusually patient, biding my time for almost a quarter of a century, but the dream had at long last come to true, I was now the editor of my own fanzine, all 20 A4 pages of it. It was the proudest of moments; but I had my reservations unsure as to whether the world was ready for my twisted prodigy as I was. During the 1970s, in the heady days of *Comics Unlimited*, *The Panelologist*, *Bemusing* and Dez Skinn's *Fantasy Advertiser*, British fandom had been quite a joyous accommodating affair, not so during the 1980s when an unhealthy cynicism had reared its ugly head. There was no need to worry, while I wasn't drowned by a deluge of letters, the response was very positive and by issue three I had mustered up a princely 64 readers. Okay, it was hardly the big time, but from the outset, my target had been one hundred regular readers.

With the appearance of issue #4, my fortunes changed and following my introduction to the internet, I plucked up the courage to get in touch with the legendary Al Feldstein. A couple of days later, Al replied to my mail, and soon after sent over an image that would alter the course of *From the Tomb* and bring it to a far wider readership. There was no way in a month of Sundays I could have been prepared for what happened on that Saturday morning in the June of 2001; it was going to be a day spent working on the A-bomb issue. It never happened. My inbox was inundated with requests for the latest issue of my magnum opus and an hour later the post arrived with letters requesting this issue and everything else I had done. It soon became obvious I had Dez Skinn to thank for my newfound success. He just loved this issue giving it a ten out of ten in his review column and free advertising on the inside back cover of *Comics International*. It wasn't the greatest publication in the world, but for Dez and many others of his generation, my audacity had rekindled many pleasant memories



of their earliest days in fandom.

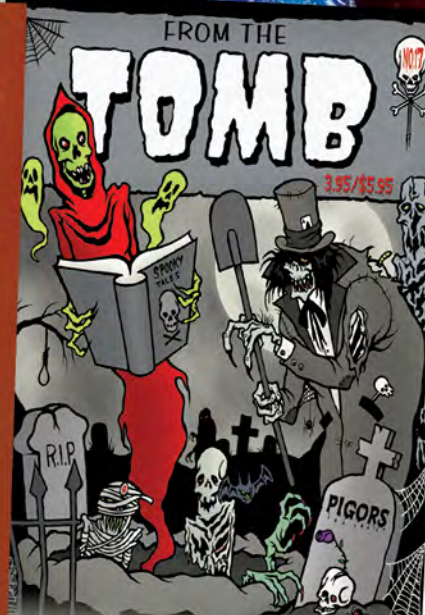
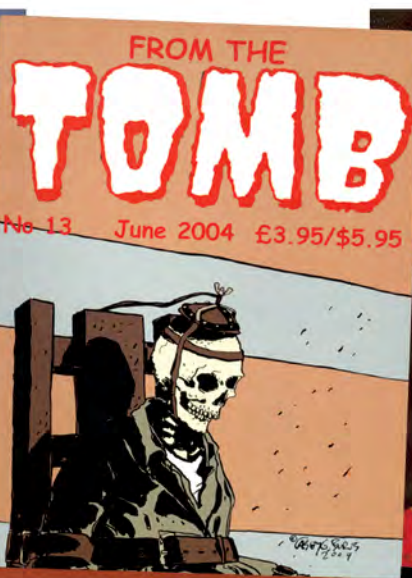
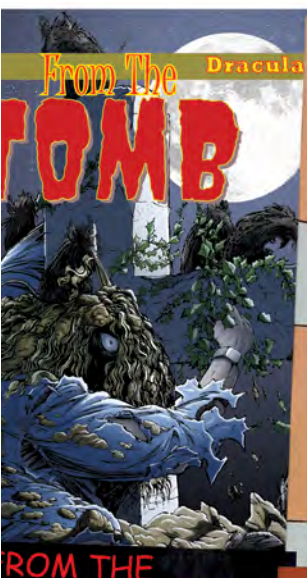
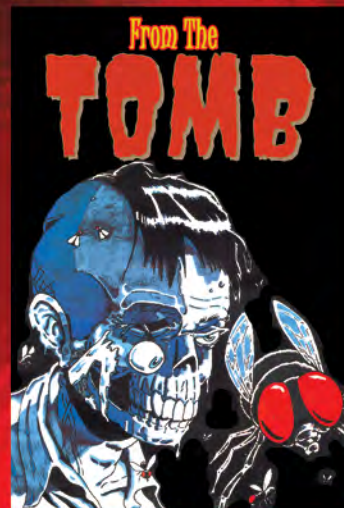
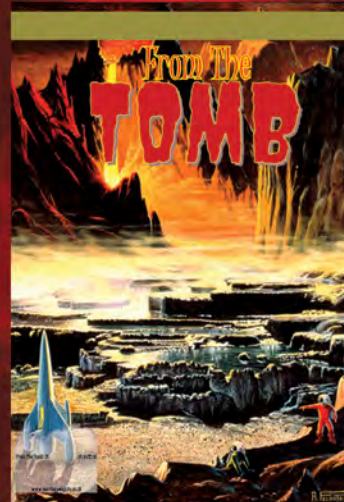
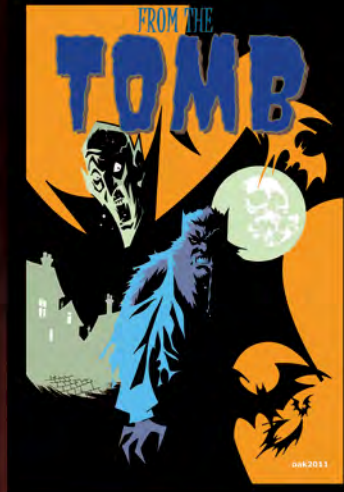
And so, my wicked offspring slowly started to grow, but it was still very much a British affair, with precious few people across the Atlantic being aware of its existence. It would be another twelve months before my first foray into the States, which almost brought about *From the Tomb*'s premature demise. With issue #8, we went for a Basil Wolverton-styled extravaganza, expanding the page count to 48. I also got in touch with Bud Plant, and his people were soon very interested in my manic endeavour. I was still printing on a Hewlett Packard, having graduated to a monster A3 printer with issue #2, but this was becoming very time consuming and the size of Bud's order meant every spare moment was given over to the print run and not enough was afforded to the next issue. I was on the verge of becoming the victim of my own success. Then I got a call from John Anderson at Soaring Penguin. He was sure he could get me professional printing at an affordable price and had contacts with Diamond Distribution who could get my venture into the United States. He was true to his word, and under his guidance, *From the Tomb* went onto a regular schedule and gained more and more readers across the globe. If John had not stepped in at this moment, *From the Tomb* probably would not have made it into double figures, and if the world's financial markets hadn't collapsed, who knows, maybe we would have got to three figures, such was the enthusiasm for this tome of terror.

With my own circumstances looking increasingly uncertain, I had to call time on *From the Tomb*, but thanks to Roy Thomas, John Morrow gave me the opportunity to produce this collected "Best Of". It has been absolute pleasure putting this edition together. So, a big thank you to both John and Roy. For me it's now time to move on. For the last eighteen months, I have been contributing to PS Publishing's essential *Harvey Horrors* collection, which has introduced me to a whole new world. Following the completion of this book I will be joining Pete Crowther and his team at PS Publishing to commence work on the new version of *From the Tomb* which will be dedicated to the 20th Century history of our comic book heritage. This is a very exciting project, which will bring together several names associated with *From the Tomb* along with some of PS's long standing writers.

Before I go, I would like to thank Frank Motler for both his friendship and tireless enthusiasm, John Anderson for his immense patience and making *From the Tomb* the success that it was, Raoul Collins for saving my neck and everyone who contributed, or wrote to me, or was there to buy my 'orrible mag; and last but not least my wife Mary for putting up with all of this madness. She would also like to thank Stefan for the monthly film magazine.

Peter Normanton

5th June 2012



THE DARK AGE OF COMICS

by
Peter Normanton

Before the boom in horror comics there were several attempts to terrorise the youth of America, each of which can be seen across the page. The one-off *Eerie Comics* published by Avon in 1947 is still acknowledged as the first horror comic anthology, while Classic Comics adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde" is considered the first horror comic. At the bottom of the page lies the chilling cover carrying ACG's invitation to take you on a journey to encounter *Adventures into the Unknown*, the title that opened the doors to this dark period in comic book publishing.

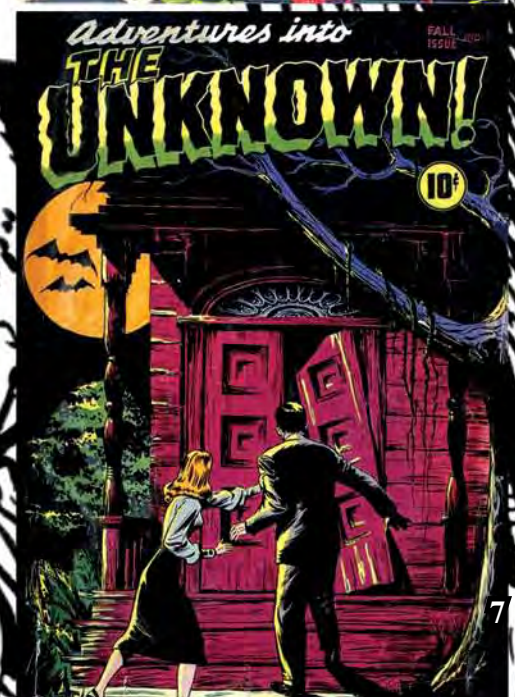
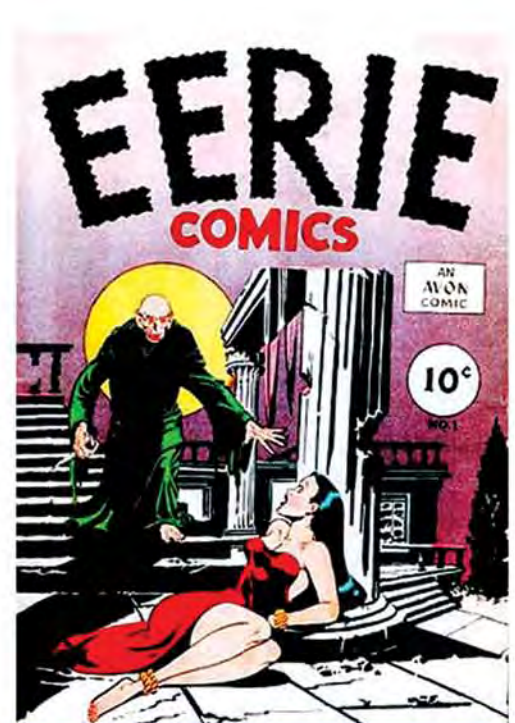


As the golden age of the superhero faded from sight in the years immediately after WWII, there followed a period in comic publishing now tainted in infamy, one now looked upon as the dark age of comics. With the Axis powers having put to flight, the costumed superheroes no longer commanded the multi-million dollar comic book publishing market; in their wake came a plethora of genres each vying to become the next four-colour sensation. Initially the newsstands were engulfed by tales of hard-bitten criminals and the lovelorn before an unholy breed started to spread its contamination across the length and breadth of North America. Their content was a far cry from the heroic splendour of the early 1940s and yet their dubious narrative was to inspire a generation of creators whose works would find their way into music, film, literature, and, of course, the comic book. However, while the seductive allure of these comics enthralled their young readership, they also attracted the attention of certain misguided groups who considered this grisly cabaret a threat to the very fabric of society. It was very late in the day when the publishers finally recognised the threat posed by these overly zealous groups. The excess they had perpetuated in this comic book grand guignol was the to become the precipitant for the industry's ruin and brought about seven years of fruitless stagnation.

HORROR COMICS IN 1943!

It was 1943 when *Classic Comics* #13 first put a tingle along their readers' spines with their interpretation of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, an adaptation widely acknowledged as the earliest fully-fledged horror comic. This was not an attempt to test the market nor was it the catalyst for other publishers to follow suit, although a macabre set of evil doers were quite often plying their foul trade in the pages of Timely's *Captain America Comics* and *Marvel Mystery Comics* and Continental's *Suspense Comics*. Capitol's *Yellowjacket Comics* ventured with graphic retellings of the works of Edgar Allan Poe, although their presence never made it to the cover. The appearance of Avon's aptly named *Eerie Comics*, dated January 1947, was to prove a landmark, as for the first time the entire content of a comic book was dedicated to original tales of terror. As it lay in wait on the shelves, the cover to this chilling debut would have carried a memorable impact, with its lewd staging of a scantily clad girl helplessly bound before the menace of an approaching Nosferatu-styled villain. Surprisingly, this diabolical scene did not stimulate a boom in sales, and the title was summarily axed. Four years later when the horror comics had secured a stranglehold on the market, *Eerie Comics* would make a welcome return for a run that would last for seventeen issues.

It was a company not readily associated with these debased tales that laid claim to being the first to launch an on-going supernatural series: none other than the American Comics Group. As the nights drew in during the fall of 1948, *Adventures into the Unknown* made its debut. Whether the American Comics Group was more patient than their counterparts at Avon, or it was simply a matter of timing, *Adventures into the Unknown* embarked upon a staggering twenty-year run. Sepulchred within the pages of its third issue were the uncanny renderings of the then unknown Al Feldstein. Al had already acquitted a reputation as a dedicated professional, but even his insight could not have predicted the dark tide that was soon to follow. A few months later, taking up on a concept suggested by Sheldon Moldoff, he and the legendary Bill Gaines forged the ideas that would introduce the Crypt Keeper into the pages of EC's *Crime Patrol* with its

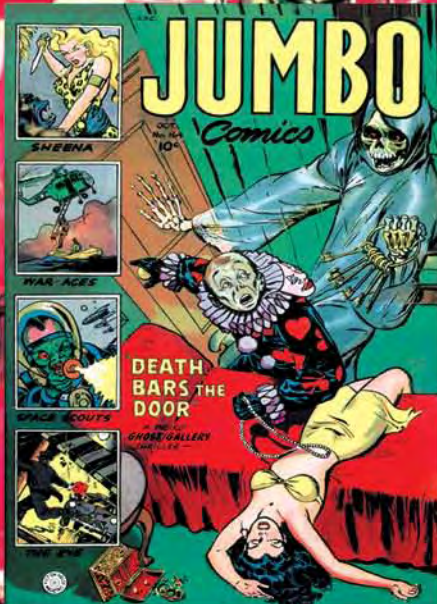


THE LATE FICTION HOUSE COMICS

GHOST

GALLERY

BY FRANK "DOGGER" MOTLER



All New!

Enthused by the public's appetite for the Korean "police action" as President Harry S Truman liked to call it (Communist hostilities commenced 25th June 1950), Fiction House revived their comic titles from torpor, as they shifted their emphasis to contemporary warfare. The mix was then enriched with the introduction of a few new titles. Less well known was the company's assay into horror, with the revamped *Jumbo Comics*, *Ghost Comics* and *Monster*. Finally came the revitalised, if sadly brief, *Planet Comics* and its companion *Man O'Mars*. In a further break with tradition, their continuing characters were sidelined, an approach made popular by the horror and romance comics. To ensure the readership was convinced, "All New!" was flashed across the tops of several of these revitalised titles. Amongst the all-new artists were Johnny Bell (John Belcastro), Bill Discount, Bill Benulis and Jack Abel, who would sometimes assist Benulis and Vic Carrabotta while occasionally working under his own steam. Many of the covers were supplied by "good-girl" art specialist, Maurice Whitman, who also provided an occasional interior story. Amongst this crop of artists was the mysterious A. Albert, whose signed art was only ever in evidence in Fiction House's later issues.

Easy To Read

The covers and many interior strips for these issues had been supplied by the S.M. Iger Studios, owned and managed by "Jerry" Iger (1903-90), many of which, from the mid-1940s on, were overseen by his prolific and talented associate editor, Ruth Roche (1921-83). This affiliation began when the owner of Fiction House, Thurman T. Scott, was persuaded to move into comic books during their seminal period of publishing. Iger's creation, Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, the leopard-skin clad heroine was taken from the UK comic *Wags*, to appear as one of several features in their launch title *Jumbo Comics* #1 (September 1938). The interior pages to Fiction's first comic were entirely black and white. (Strictly speaking, black ink on green or red tinted paper, on alternate pages.) Measuring 10½ by 14½ inches (265 x 365mm) it certainly did make quite an impression. Alongside the formative artwork of Will Eisner was that of Jack "King" Kirby, Dick Briefer, Bob Kane and many others who would play such a significant role in these early days of comic book publishing.

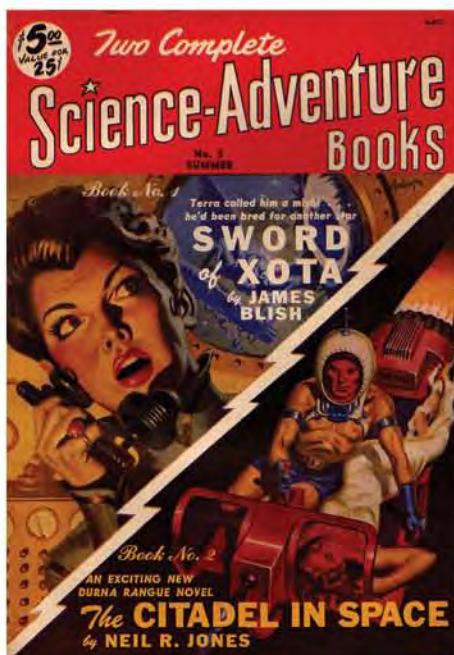
After eight issues of "Big Pages - Big Pictures - Big Type - Easy To Read," *Jumbo Comics* shrank to 7½ x 10¼" (190 x 255mm), the

size then increasingly favoured by the comic book industry. This was mitigated by the introduction of "64 Pages Full Color," another standardising feature of the period. Before diminishing in size, the final giant claimed a place in history when it showcased the New York World's Fair on the cover to its eighth appearance (June -July 1939). Three issues later, *Jumbo Comics* #11 claimed Malcolm Reiss as editor, with William E. Eisner as art director and S.M. Iger as features director. Reiss had been connected with Fiction House since 1937; he would play a part in their output until shortly before the company's demise. He was also listed as managing editor, before rising to general manager in the late-1940s. Reiss was succeeded on this line of comics by J.F "Jack" Byrne, another editor with a long association with this particular publishing house. Artist 'Will' Eisner (1917-2005) had become Iger's partner in the latter months of 1936, prior to an early departure to unveil his *Spirit Comics Weekly* newspaper insert (first instalment, 2nd June 1940). An indication of his importance, is implied in his lead billing in Eisner and Iger Ltd, 202 East 44th Street, New York City, in one of their former companies dating back to 1938. Iger employee, Gene Fawcette was accredited as the art director from 1941-2, before he was replaced by Iger himself, whose credit would be retained across the comic lines, until the very end.

The Big Six

Between 1939 and 1940, Fiction House supplemented *Jumbo*, with *Fight*, *Jungle*, *Planet*, *Rangers* and *Wings Comics*. The company would come to refer to these as The Big-Six. The stable package of attractive, risqué covers, well-rounded Iger shop and other art, with continuing storylines ensured long runs for this entire line of comics. While the style of these comics mimicked their pulp elders, the accent on the pulchritude was toned-down a notch or two so as not to corrupt its younger readership. These titles contained a host of continuing characters, such as Auro, Lord Of Mars, Mysta Of The Moon, Kayo Kirby, Senorita Rio, Sky Gal, Suicide Smith, Camilla, Glory Forbes, Hooks Devlin to name but a few. However, only *Sheena* ever benefitted from long-term notability.

Fight and *Rangers* presented a combination of adventure and war in contrast to the two jungle oriented titles (*Jumbo Comics*, *Jungle Comics*), whilst *Wings* offered flying adventures, a genre that had gained in popularity since the 1920s. *Planet Comics* would be



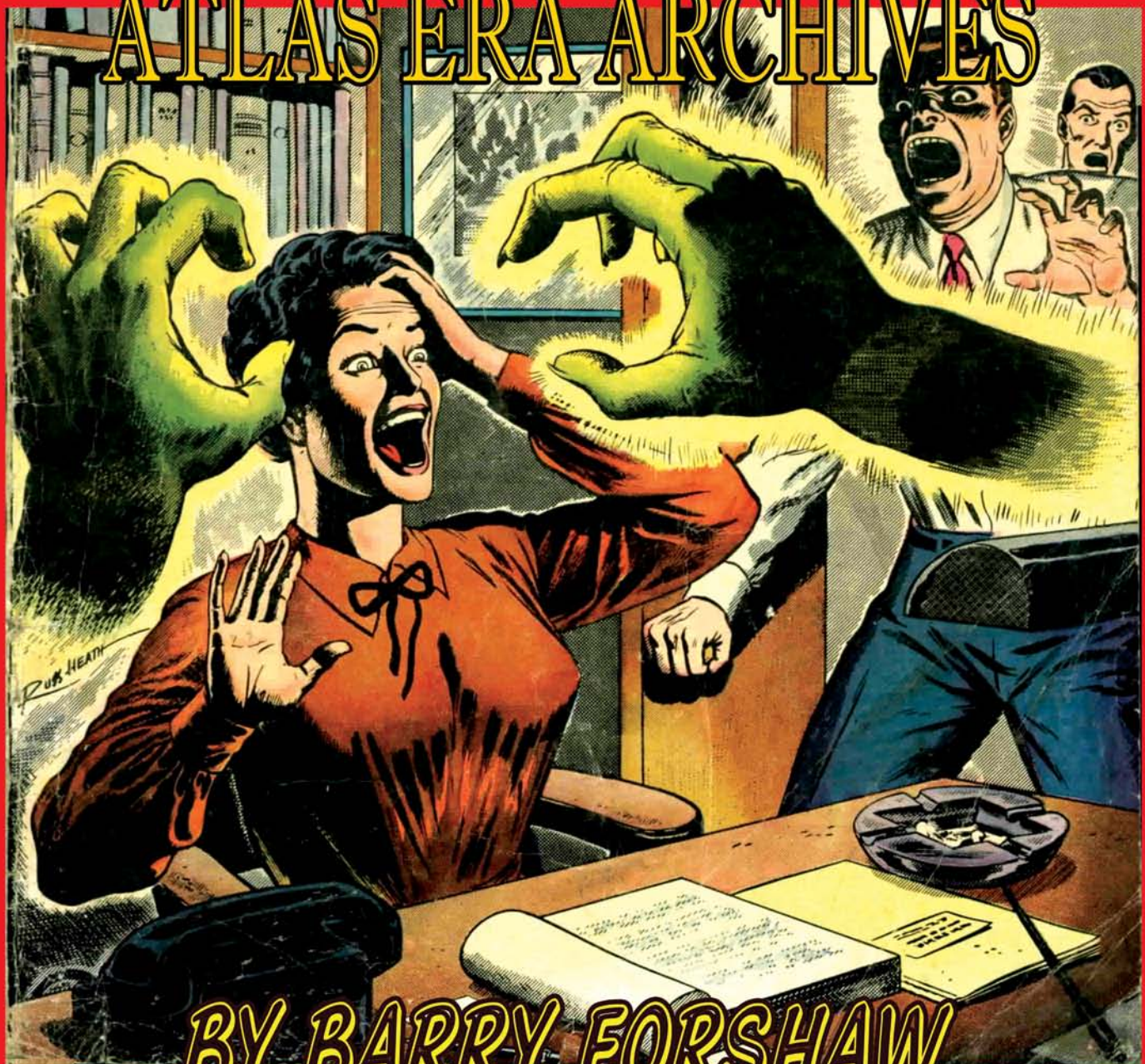
HORROR COMICS SPOTLIGHT

JOURNEY INTO

MYSTERY



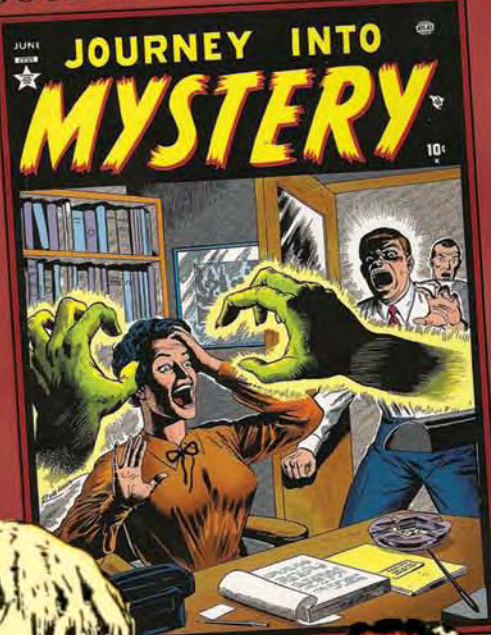
ATLAS ERA ARCHIVES



BY BARRY FORSHAW



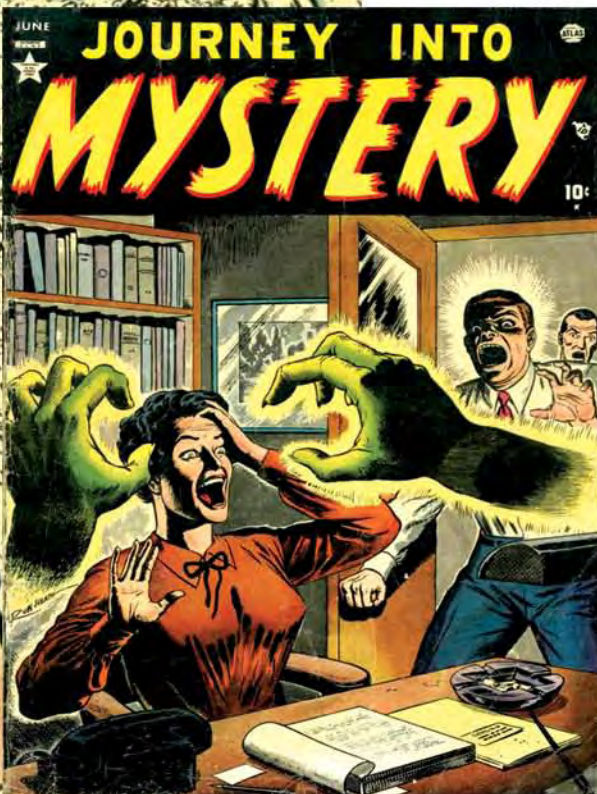
MARVEL MASTERWORKS
ATLAS ERA
JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY



Horror comics aficionados just don't know how lucky they are these days. Everything, or almost everything, is available: reprints of the celebrated Warren magazines *Creepy* and *Eerie*; a wide variety of brand new horror comics titles that may sacrifice storytelling values (something quite unthinkable in the golden age of comics), but which at least boast strikingly designed artwork, and (perhaps best of all) the innumerable reprints of the greatest of all horror comics companies, Al Feldstein and Bill Gaines' immortal EC comics (the most recent of many incarnations include deluxe full-colour, large-size bound volumes of *Tales from the Crypt* and *The Vault of Horror*. Riches indeed, and barely a month seems to pass without a reissue of some classic material (one of the most recent, of course, being the hefty volume curated by the editor of this very magazine, Peter Normanton's *The Mammoth Book of Horror Comics*).

The Dark Ages

But readers of a certain age will remember a time when the cornucopia we now enjoy was a drought: in the 1950s, shocked questions had been asked about horror comics in Parliament, and a mini version of the censorship scare that had neutered the American comics industry had taken place in England, effectively banishing (by the early Sixties) the gloriously grisly titles that many readers (including this writer, albeit at a very tender age) enjoyed. But even the most Draconian censorship is not able to completely cut off the source of subversive material, and although schoolboys such as me had to make do with post-Code reprints (admittedly, not really a hardship, as the Silver Age of comics was in its first flush of invention) those who knew how to look in dark corners for such things could find the odd horror tale which somehow sneaked into the shilling reprints series such as L. Miller's *Mystic* and *Spellbound* titles. These macabre pieces (which, of course, we now know to be reprints from the Atlas horror lines before Stan Lee and Martin Goodman made their real fortune with superhero material) were very distinctive. They usually boasted introductory blocks of text set in white against a striking black background which whetted our appetites for the grisly delights to follow. These "come-on" panels were

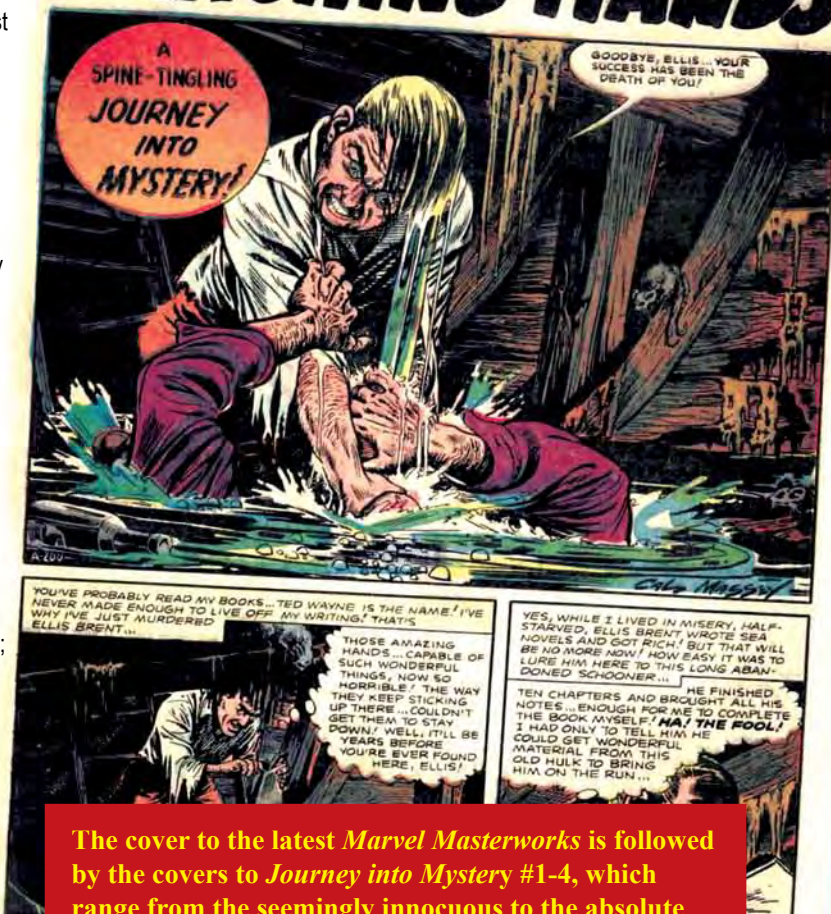


similar (youthful enthusiasts like myself quickly realised) to the gleefully flesh-creeping introductions given by the grotesque hosts of the EC comics line, The Crypt Keeper, The Vault Keeper and The Old Witch, although there was no accompanying drawing of some monstrous-looking host grinning malevolently at the reader. The tone was similar (editor/writer Stan Lee was clearly inspired by the decrepit horror hosts of Feldstein and Gaines), but everything was slightly less literate: phrases such as "how are you" were invariably rendered as "how are ya." And many of the stories were less-inspired riffs on ideas done with more panache in the EC titles. But caveats aside, these reprints of 1950s horror material were, for the most part, massively enjoyable.

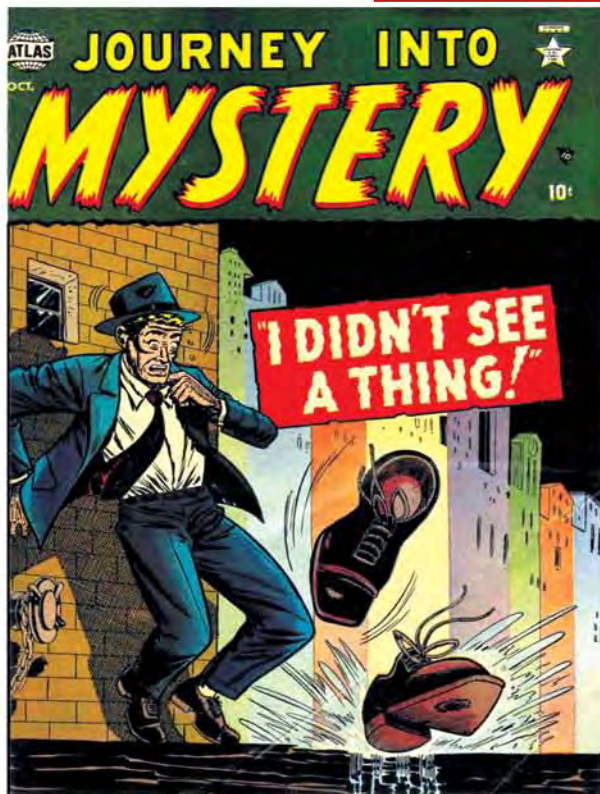
Stan Lee's Foot Soldiers

Lee and his fellow writers (including the ubiquitous Hank Chapman, who, unusually for the day, often signed his pieces "story by Hank Chapman"), made up in sheer gusto what they lacked in finesse, and from the middle period to the end of the line (say, 1952-1954), just before the Comics Code sanitised everything, the stories often matched those of EC for sheer inventiveness. And the artwork! What a cadre of talents! There was the brilliant draughtsman Russ Heath, with his dramatic lines; the pleasingly old-fashioned (but highly distinctive) Bill Everett; and the spidery, gothic work of Al Eadeh (so reminiscent of EC's equally eccentric master Graham Ingels – in Al Eadeh strips, nobody, but nobody, had a mouth of even teeth; all sported what Americans think all Brits possess: mouthfuls of misshapen molars). Without knowing it, English schoolboys were sampling (in these black-and-white reprints) the cream of the Atlas comics line from such books as *Adventures into Weird Worlds*. And while the recent handsome reissue programmes from Marvel have mostly concentrated on the much-sought-after superhero material, readers of this magazine will particularly appreciate the second volume in the "Atlas Era"

THE CLUTCHING HANDS



The cover to the latest *Marvel Masterworks* is followed by the covers to *Journey into Mystery* #1-4, which range from the seemingly innocuous to the absolute terrifying. As can be seen from Cal Massey's splash from this title's debut, Atlas wanted to unnerve their assembled readership.



THE ARCHIE

THE GOLDEN AGE OF WARREN

BY PETER NORMANTON

Archie and Jim Warren had the pick of the finest talent of the day, a talent still eager to produce comic books. Below is Frank Frazetta's only horror strip for the company, "Werewolf!" from *Creepy's* debut. While producing an array of stunning covers for Warren, he was also beginning to enjoy a highly successful career as a paperback cover artist. Reed Crandall was one of this era's finest. Further along we have a couple of his pages from *Creepy* #3's "Tell-Tale Heart" and a plate from Canaveral Press's *Tarzan and the Madman*

It was the dawn of a new decade, one in which the world would be forever changed. Thankfully, those still craving their comic book fix weren't to be disappointed. The authorities may have made every effort to legislate against their very existence, but this phenomenon, which for more than two decades had been such an integral part of juvenile culture, rolled on undaunted, now imbued with a renewed sense of purpose. This was the decade that was to exceed the exhilaration of its predecessors: beginning with a monumental series of developments at Timely-Atlas, before the onset of an innovative period from the publishers of the increasingly popular *Famous Monsters of Filmland*.

Jim Warren never disguised his admiration for Bill Gaines' EC portfolio of titles, but this appreciation did not mean the simple replication of the horrors created by this former icon. He was all too aware of the backlash experienced by his forerunners during the latter months of 1954, which was ultimately to be their downfall. If he had chosen to return to the unbridled excess of this era, he would have opened a doorway to disaster; and he was all too aware EC's penchant for gory horror had been done to death. It was time for something new, something more in keeping with the mood of the day. Whether Archie Goodwin was in complete accord with this vision will continue to be a matter of deliberation for many years to come; but as history has shown, it was the endeavour of this unassuming creator, that laid the



GOODWIN YEARS

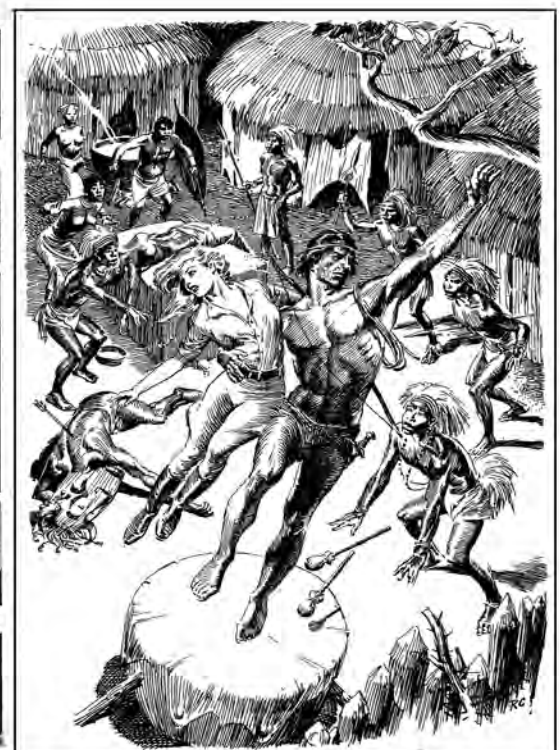
firmest of foundations for the Warren line of monochrome terror.

Jim's decision to follow on from his and Forrest J. Ackerman's success with the magazine format used on *Famous Monsters of Filmland* was to distance his publications from the clutches of the CCA and distinguish his take on the horror genre from the abominations that had swarmed from the offices of 225 Lafayette a decade past. With the wealth of talent that was to enter the Warren offices, it was inevitable that certain comparisons would be drawn with their infamous forebearers and for those who had previously enjoyed the twists and turns in these tales, this was a chance to savour the all too fleeting enchantment of their youth. As for the teenagers of this new generation, they were about to be presented with a new era of comic book terror. Just as Bill Gaines and his peers had done almost fifteen years before, Jim Warren wisely pitched his new title at the same twelve-to fourteen-year-old audience, which once again proved a model for success.

Time had moved on, the ubiquitous Al Feldstein who had been such a driving force during EC's halcyon years, was now solely

occupied by their one surviving magazine, the venerable *Mad*. It had been ten years since *Tales from the Crypt* and its darkly humorous brethren had closed their doors, but Al was still lauded as an editor of immense creative energy. Jim Warren would eventually engage the genius of a fledgling Archie Goodwin, who would come to command the latest addition to the world of comic book publishing, *Creepy* and very soon Cousin Eerie's companion magazine. In a short space of time, Archie revealed that he too could bring together the writing, artistic and editorial skills of his illustrious predecessor. The index to the first two issues of *Creepy* listed Archie as a freelance writer, a role in which he immediately excelled. By the time *Creepy* #3 hit the newsstands, he had assumed the position as story editor, and one issue later ascended to the very helm of Jim Warren's flourishing flagship.

Long time EC addict Archie had been highly recommended; his contemporaries were already in awe of his implicit perception for page layout and design, and very soon they would learn he had many more skills at his behest. Jim Warren however had hopes to persuade Joe Orlando to take on *Creepy*'s editorial





chores when Russ Jones made his acrimonious departure from the company. Much to his disappointment, Warren was unable to afford Orlando's editorial prowess. Nevertheless, during Archie's tenure as editor, Joe was still on hand to supply a series of breathtaking pages to *Creepy*, which in their experimentation fit perfectly with the milieu of this early phase of Jim Warren's entry into comic books. Almost ten years before Archie had been an enthusiastic contributor to the EC fanzine *Hoohah!*, and now he had the chance to publish several of his former editor Ron Parker's tales in the contents of *Creepy* and *Eerie*. Only a few years before he had graduated from The Cartoonists and Illustrators School, but the comic book industry was dead on its feet. Work would eventually come from *Redbook* magazine and Leonard Starr's *On Stage* strip before he moved on to Warren on a guaranteed one-year contract. This was quite a step for Archie, who needed to be sure his new boss could provide an assurance of regular employment. Jim was a shrewd man and was very keen to secure Archie's services, hence the promise of at least a year's work. The Warren Empire was rewarded with a man whose affable personality and ability as both a writer and editor would assemble some of the finest artists of the day: a creative gathering almost twenty years in the making.

Foremost amongst this imaginative collective was the now rejuvenated figure of Frank Frazetta, an artist only recently returned to the field of fantasy art. Having been gainfully employed at Magazine Enterprises, Famous Funnies, DC National and of course EC, Frank had progressed to work on his own syndicated newspaper strip *Johnny Comet*, along with *Flash Gordon* for Dan Barry, and then worked with Al Capp from 1953 through until 1961 principally on *L'il Abner*. His time with Al Capp's studio provided a regular source of income, but artistically Frank was suffering. So much of the joy and creative zeal of his early years was beginning to fade. There was an air of predictability to his leaving Capp's service, but his exit towards the end of 1961 did not go quite as planned. The steady stream of work he had expected to follow failed to materialise.

The publishing industry was now undergoing a period of change and there were many creative editors, who now looked upon Frank's style as passé. While he was under no illusion that he needed to make every effort to rediscover his technique of a few years past, this was still a bitter pill to swallow, and in a view of that which eventually followed, almost inconceivable. Fear not, Frank was not entirely without work, for Midwood he turned to the good girl, this time illustrating their spicy novels, and in the latter months of 1963, Roy Krenkel introduced him to the paperback cover. A series of covers for Ace's Edgar Rice Burroughs collection would ensue, amongst which would be his childhood hero Tarzan of the Apes. In less than two years, his popularity had soared to new heights. His time with Ace was to bequeath a legacy amounting to twenty-five covers along with a series of fluid interior illustrations.

A back cover for *Mad* depicting Ringo Star in 1964 would lead him into the lucrative fold of illustrating film posters and then there came Jim Warren. As in all classic comic book tales, Jim made his entry just in the nick of time. If he had put his dream of publishing a horror comic on hold for only a few years, the fantasy art world's bright new talent would have been well beyond his means. With a determination to make his mark and attract only the best, Jim knew he had to have Frank Frazetta, a man who had regained his vision of a few years past, and was about to ascend to a grandeur, few if, any would ever match. Thankfully, the rapport between the two men was almost immediate and Frank was afforded a considerable degree of freedom, which would have made him the envy of his contemporaries. The next few years would see an incredible array of paintings laid before the Warren editorial team, including the saurian beast, which was to make the cover to *Eerie* #5 such a memorable spectacle. Archie was so inspired by the power in this image he sat down to pen the tale "The Swamp God" and handed it to one of Frank's former cohorts, Angelo Torres, who illustrated his words to such exquisite effect. During his time at Warren, Archie would see seventeen of Frank's paintings adorn the covers to *Creepy* and *Eerie*, the first of which made it to the cover of *Creepy* #2, when he was still freelancing with another three seeing publication after his departure in 1967. Frank had already created a series of lusciously embellished pages for *Creepy*'s premier, a tale entitled "Werewolf" scripted by Larry Ivie. His beautifully conceived design would set the standard to which this title would aspire. Alas this was the only tale Frank ever produced for Warren, although he did find time to complete single pages of "Creepy's Loathsome Lore" for #2 and #7, plus a five-page anti-smoking strip in #9 "The Easy Way to Surfboard."

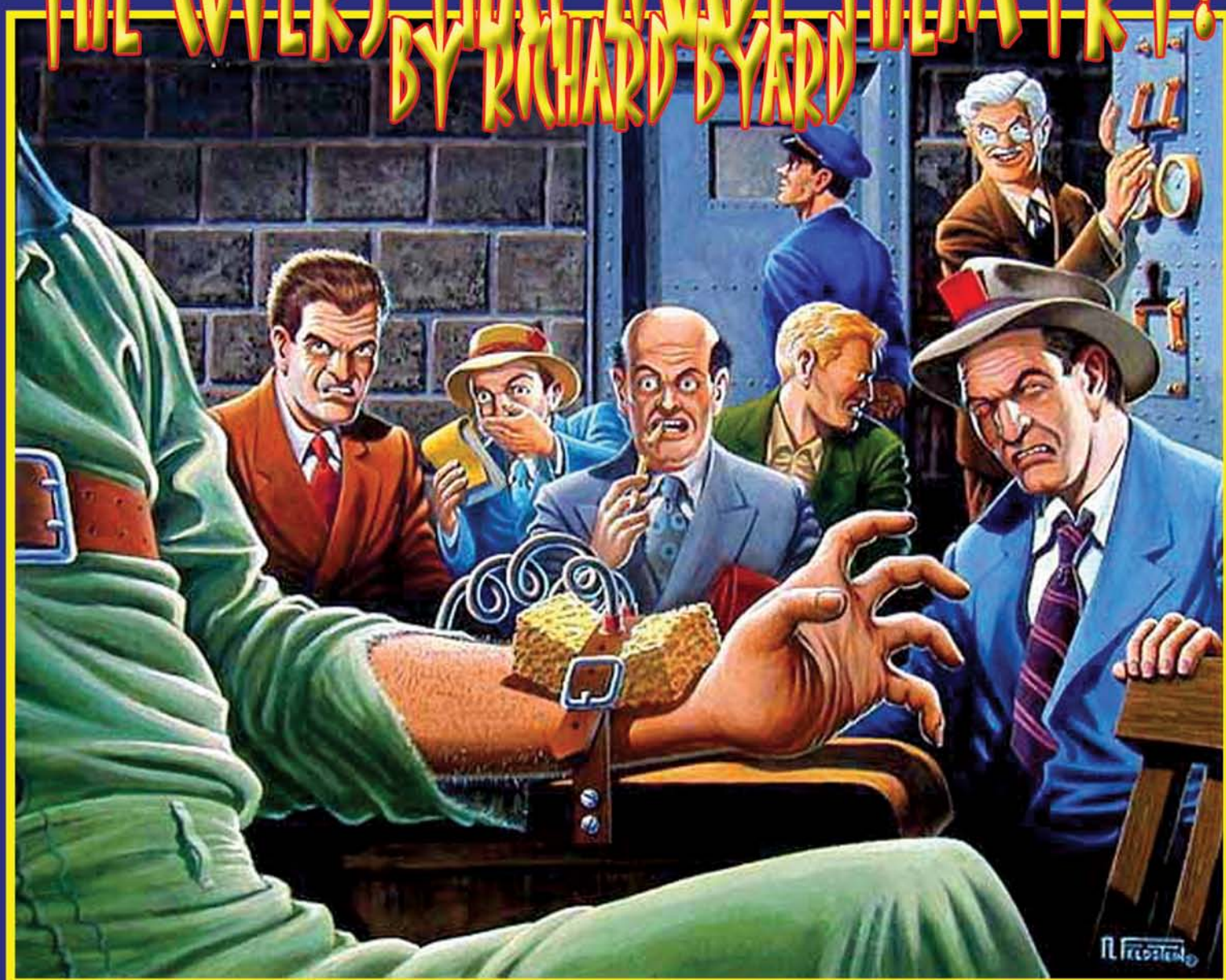
Frank Frazetta's buddies from the Fleagle Gang, Roy G. Krenkel, Angelo Torres and Al

Above a panel from
Tom Sutton's first
tale for *Creepy*,
"Image in Wax" seen
terrorising #17.
Across the page a
series of spreads
initially from Angelo
Torres and the
Archie Goodwin
scripted "Swamp God"
Eerie 5#, Joe
Orlando's "House of
Evil" *Eerie* #4
and Jerry
Grandenetti's
deranged pages
from "Voodoo Doll"
first seen in
Creepy #12.



THE COVERS THAT MADE THEM FRY!

BY RICHARD BYARD



Al Feldstein had developed a considerable reputation while working alongside Bill Gaines. Although his name was synonymous with the frenzy for pre-Code horror, some of his finest tales appeared in EC's memorable line of science fiction comics. This startling image from the cover of *Shock Suspenstories* #1 is often forgotten by many enthusiasts of the era, but for collectors of the electric chair cover sensation it remains one of the more poignant. Here the onlooker gets to stomach the real horror of an execution. One can only wonder as to the mental state of the benign looking man at the switch, in this remarkable re-visit to a bizarre scene first witnessed sixty years ago. I would like to thank Al for the opportunity to present this painting as an introduction to the covers that shocked America!

When the state of New York executed William Kemmler in the electric chair on August 6, 1890, it was to be the beginning of a new era for capital punishment. Although designed to be a more effective and humane manner of execution when compared to hanging (heads popping off, slow strangulation, and the like), it was not an immediate success. On that day, it took two jolts which resulted in an excess of singed flesh as blood streamed down Mr. Kemmler's face; it was only then was he pronounced dead. Progress, however, wasn't going to be denied, and by the 1930s, the electric chair had become synonymous with the death sentence in over half the United States. It was a banner decade for executions across the country, averaging 165 a year. By the end of the 20th Century, many states had replaced the chair with the more prosaic lethal injection, but in the heyday of the American comic book it was the electric chair that jolted the imagination of both the creators and consumers of the ever-popular crime and horror comics.

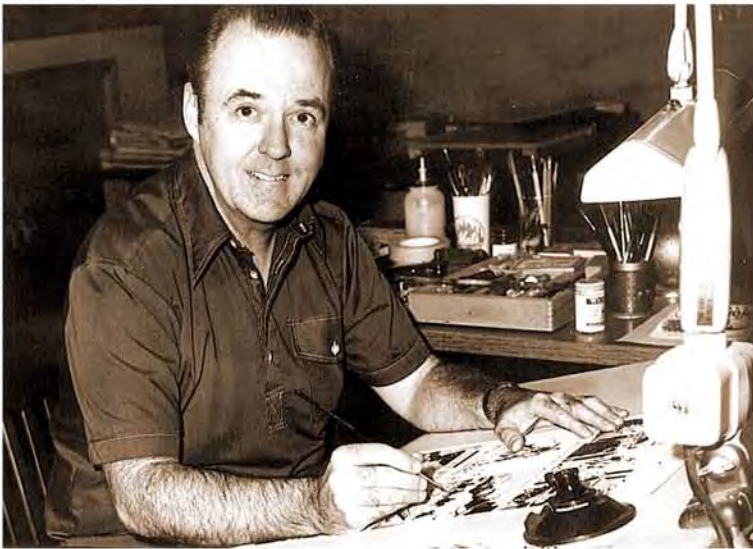
The image of a murderous gangster meeting his end while seated in the embrace of Old Sparky was common place in the pages of the pre-Code crime comics, but the depiction of the electric chair was a less familiar sight on the covers of these magnificent artefacts, and for the next few pages these covers become the focus of our attention. The earliest appearance of the electric chair on the cover of a crime comic was perhaps the most clever, which came with *Crime Does Not Pay* #42 in 1945. A desperate gangster was thrown into the spotlight as he exchanged gunfire with unseen coppers, his shadow shown strapped to a silhouette of the chair, metal skullcap already firmly in place. This image provides a stunning visual metaphor for the destiny that ultimately awaits him, but we would never get to see it, for as with so many covers from this premier crime title, it had nothing to do with any of the stories found inside.

The following year the chair returned to guest on the cover of *Crime Does Not Pay* #47. This time it holds the foreground to a verbally busy panorama featuring a reluctant Pig Ears being dragged to his fate as he is serenaded by his fellow inmates. (It is still a mystery to me why Charles Biro replaced his striking wordless covers from the early issues of *Crime Does Not Pay* with increasingly busy and verbose images just when he started to get some serious competition on the racks.) While Pig Ears does not appear in the



L.B. Cole provided the page of artwork from *Law Against Crime*, while his stark cover for this same issue sits across the page. Immediately above we have Bill Everett's wordless sequence from *Amazing Detective Cases* #13, with Joe Maneely's cover to this same issue to the right. At the top left appears the shocking cover to *Crime Does Not Pay* #42 and below a bizarre occurrence invites the reader into *Manhunt* #2.

THE JOE SINNOTT INTERVIEW



Before we begin, I would like to express my thanks to Joe and his son Mark for all of their help in making this interview very special. Joe was recovering from a broken shoulder when he agreed to chat with us, but remained enthusiastic about the whole thing, even though he must have been in quite a bit of discomfort. I submitted the questions and Mark had his dad chat away while he taped the entire conversation.

Could you tell us something about your early years, your family and the neighbourhood you grew up in?

Well, I grew up in a residential area, Saugerties, New York; there were about eight or nine thousand people in the town and I lived on a very quiet street, Washington Avenue. My mother and father had a little boarding house, we had school teachers that roomed there, usually two at a time. My earliest recognition of any kind of art or comics or whatever was when I was three years old, one of the teachers gave me a box of crayons for my birthday and it had an Indian on the cover. I can remember it to this day. I drew that Indian over and over with those crayons until they were worn down to a nub. That was my first connection with art or any kind of drawing.

I must say though the person who most inspired me to my liking to draw and my love of comic art especially... was one of our boarders, who happened to be a German cook. During the First World War he was actually on a German submarine. When he would come home at night from the restaurant, he would sit in the parlour in his white pants and shirt and I would sit next to him. He would draw all over his pants, Indians, cowboys, army guys and navy characters. At the time, I was so impressed with his ability to draw, I think he inspired me more than anyone else to follow a career in art. By the way, his name was Bill Theison. He went away after a few years and it was like losing part of the family; I think I almost cried when he moved. I never saw him again but I remember him to this day. That was back in the early '30s when Bill roomed with us.

When did comic books come in to your life and which of these left an impression on you?

I am sure it was around '36, '37 and '38. Our first contact with any comics at all, were the *Big Little Books*, which were extremely popular before the comics came out. They were reprints of a lot of things, such as *Flash Gordon*, *Dick Tracy*, but of course when the comics came out my earliest recognition and my favourite character at the time was Congo Bill, who appeared in *Action Comics*. It wasn't *Superman*; it was Congo Bill. I liked Jungle Jim. I guess Congo Bill was sort of a rip off of Jungle Jim, I loved him. I was about eight or nine years old.

Did they inspire within you a need to draw or was this already there?

Well it was already there. Of course, '34 when *Terry and the Pirates* and *Flash Gordon* came out I used to read those strips and copy them and draw them over and over again. They were my two favourite strips of the time. So the interest was there from the earliest days, there's no question about it.

Moving on from the comic books, did the films of the day influence you at all?

They influenced all of the kids of the time. We wouldn't miss

our Saturday afternoon shows it only cost a dime to get in and of course we looked forward to what we called chapters, in those days they were serials. Buster Crabbe when he played Flash Gordon and the Lone Ranger played by Robert Livingston and Chief Thundercloud who played Tonto. We just couldn't miss these chapters; yes, they were a great inspiration to us. And of course the radio shows were at that time, the *Lone Ranger* again and *Gangbusters*. With shows like that you conjured up your own image of what these characters looked like. And it was a great period to grow up in.

What about the pulps and novels which were about at the time?

As kids we didn't really see those, once in a while maybe if somebody had one. The drawings in them were great we thought, but comics were our main interest, *Terry and the Pirates*, *Flash Gordon* and *Prince Valiant*, strips like that. I could go back and name a lot of them, strips long since forgotten such as *Dan John* and of course *Dick Tracy*; that was a great one. We loved the adventure strips, I used to love a strip by Alex Raymond called *Curly Harper at Lakehurst*. Raymond did *Secret Agent X9* even before he did *Flash Gordon*. And of course *Jungle Jim* as you know was a great favourite of mine. All of these adventure strips were extremely appealing to all us kids of the time, kids eight, nine, ten years old. I didn't mention this but before *Terry and the Pirates* I used to love *Dickie Dare*, which Milton Caniff had drawn. Terry was really a take off on *Dickie Dare*. Then a little later as we know *Scorchy Smith* was a great strip by the great Noel Sickles; he inspired Milton Caniff's style, which became the pinnacle of comic book art.

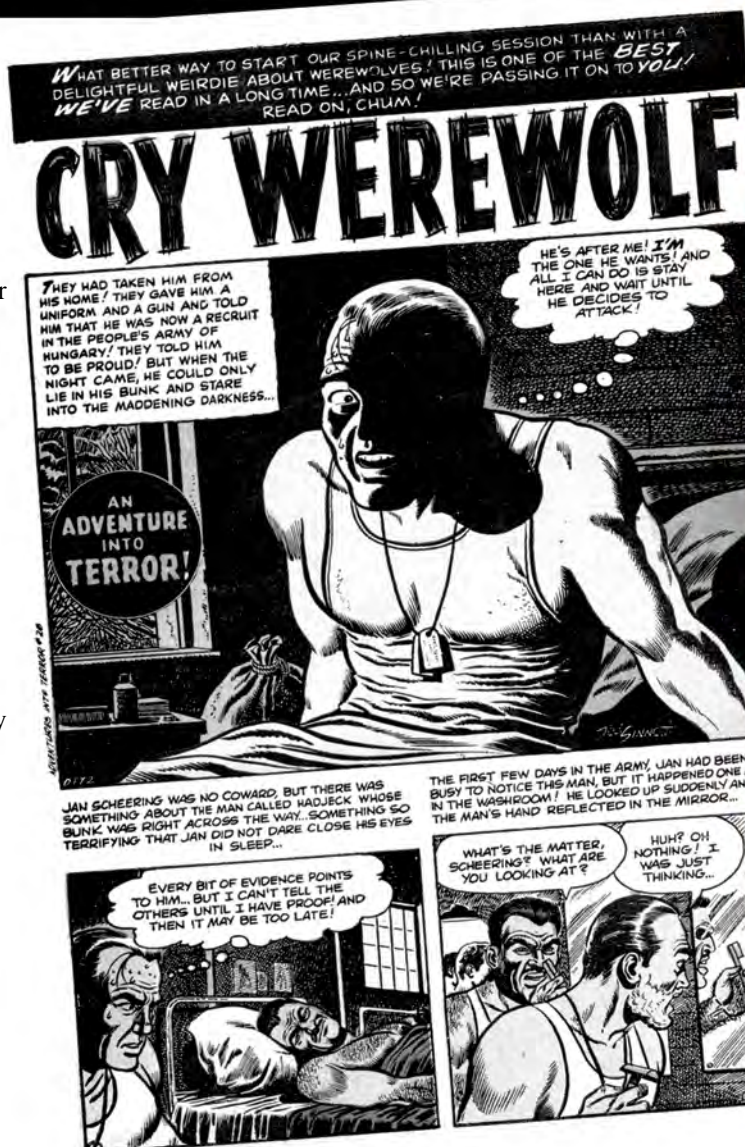
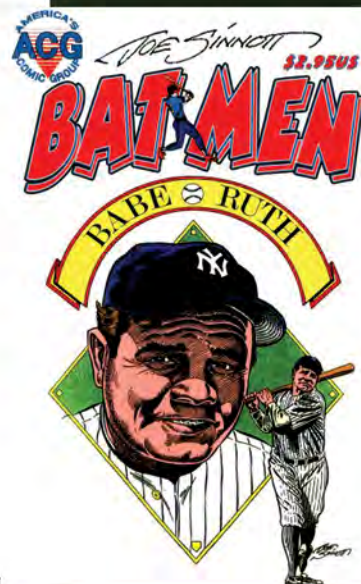
Once you realised you had a calling for art, how did you approach schooling and training?

Schooling at that time from 8 to 13 years old I drew all the time, constantly, even in school. Probably I would have been better at algebra if I had paid more attention to the teacher at the blackboard rather than making sketches of Terry and the Pirates or Flash Gordon or whatever might be in my books. I was the art editor of the yearbook in high school and the our paper which was called "The Ulsterette." I used to do drawings for these two papers.

I never thought of schooling, although I knew in the back of my mind someday I wanted to be an artist. I always thought I wanted to be an illustrator, it was always there at the back of my mind that was what I would do some day.

If you had paid more attention to your algebra, the comic world would have surely been missing one of its finest

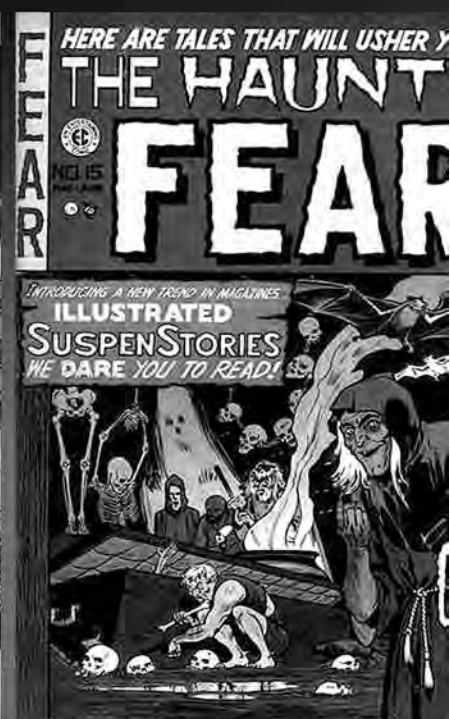
A selection of Joe's covers beginning with the Babe Ruth edition of Bat-Men from 1998, followed by his delicate rendering of Charlton's Brides in Love #27 and the gritty display from Devil-Dog Dugan #3. "Cry Werewolf" first appeared in Adventures into Terror #28.



Burn Witch, Burn!

Relentlessly they climb, the excruciating dance of the flames seeking to embrace your desperate struggle; teasing in their desire to cleanse your devil ridden soul. Oh you'll scream and you'll scream again, they'll make sure of that, but you know the devil's true disciple never to be too far away; Bible in hand, leering as your innocence is burned, condemned by ignorance and his blasphemous muse. To modern eyes, these images appear barbaric, but across Europe, witch burnings were all too commonplace; the blameless charred at the stake by the thousand. Try as they might though, those that sought their eternal condemnation were never to break the spell. The cackling figure of the witch would survive them all, her image living on through the centuries to find a welcome home on latter day print presses and way up high on the silver screen, and more significantly for these pages in the ill regarded contents of the pre-Code comic book.

While witches and their craft have been in evidence since the very dawn of civilisation, it was the advent of the print press during the Renaissance that precipitated a revival in witchery and the inevitable scourge of the witch hunt. The earliest volumes to see print were Bibles and writings of pious contemplation, which in their dutiful endeavour to spread the good word also disseminated eulogies on the malfeasance of witchcraft that for decades had faded from the public conscious. The most damning of these was *Malleus Maleficarum* (The Hammer of Witches), published in 1486, only thirty years after the first press was introduced to a predominantly illiterate population. Scribed by two Dominican inquisitors, the intensity in the book's portrayal of the alleged satanic and sexual abominations practised by the witch proved a catalyst for the horrors that followed. Much of Europe was returned to a dark age, an image completely in contrast to the enlightenment espoused by the Renaissance. Those in need would no longer seek the wisdom of the village wise woman, nor would they beseech the healing powers of the white witch. The plight of these once wise women was thrown further into jeopardy when plague once again crossed the land; they became the scapegoat for this and any similar ill that befell their fellow man. Such was the dread perceived in this witchery an act of Parliament was necessitated by the middle of the Sixteenth Century "agaynst Conjurations Inchauntmentes and Witchcraftes"; this entered the statute book as The Witchcraft Act of 1562. Those accused of such deeds would meet their maker



hanging from the end of a rope; a small mercy when compared to the agony endured by their sisters across the water in Spain and France who were burned at the stake. While the witch hunt at home was reprehensible, it paled before the scale of that instigated by the Inquisition in Europe. On these shores, the last execution of an accused witch took place in 1684, when Alice Molland was hanged in Exeter punished under legislation ratified in 1604, "an Acte against conjuration Witchcraft and dealinge with evill and wicked Spirits." This abhorrent statute wouldn't be repealed until 1736, when in the reign of George II, a more progressive frame of mind finally acknowledged it was impossible to conceive of there being a crime as witchcraft. In Scotland, the final victim of the executioner was poor Janet Horne in 1722, an old woman whose ramblings would now have her considered hopelessly senile. While the death sentence was revoked, many women still faced allegations of witchery with the last trial in this country ensuing as WWII climaxed in 1944, when sorcery famously coalesced with espionage to condemn Helen Duncan to a custodial sentence.

Comic books were still in their infancy when, in the same year as the previously mentioned trial, the anthology title *Yellowjacket Comics* published by E. Levy/Frank Comunale (later known as Charlton Comics) threatened "Tales of Terror." Such coercion was nothing new, the spectre of horror had already made several attempts to infiltrate these comics, but this collection of tales is regarded as the first on going series dedicated to the macabre. Included amongst the eight stories introduced by the Old Witch in these ten issues was Edgar Allan Poe's aptly entitled "The Black Cat" showcased in the very first issue followed by his "The Pit and the Pendulum" in issue #3, "The Fall of the House of Usher" in #4 and "The Tell Tale Heart" in #6. While this spate of terror did attract the interest of a small band of devotees, this was not the blue print for a new trend in comics; it would take another five years before this dark seed would eventually gestate to wreak its unholy wrath.

Following its gestation towards the end of the decade, this dark genre gradually began to infest more of North American continent. It was a fitting time for the Old Witch to once again step from the shadows, this time assisted by Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein as EC followed in the footsteps of ACG and Atlas in launching their memorable brand of terror. Inspired by Old Nancy, the screeching host from the 1930s radio show *The Witch's Tale*, she became the third of the three Ghoulnatics debuting in the second issue (numbered #16) of that which she and many others would consider her own title, *Haunt of Fear*, although she would of course make regular appearances in both *Tales from the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror*. Her mocking sarcasm would mingle with the cruellest of wit, a combination all those centuries ago that would have doomed her to eternal damnation, but the kids of the free-thinking atomic age just couldn't get enough. Such was the popularity of the Old Witch *Haunt of Fear* #14 dabbled at the cauldron to cast light on her fiendish origins in the unforgettable "A Little Stranger." Werewolves, vampires and a host of shambling monstrosities came together to witness a birth that would have shamed the infamous *Malleus Maleficarum*. With such a nefarious gathering, Graham Ingels had the perfect opportunity to demonstrate his ghoulish artistry. The witch became synonymous with this title, even the cover to *Haunt of Fear's* debut contained a portrayal of this wicked breed, but this was not the Old Witch with which we would soon become familiar.

The false accusers of centuries past would have feared for their very souls, for as this dark phenomenon continued to take hold of the newsstands, Harvey Comics found themselves unable to resist, they released *Witches Tales* in 1951. Whether inspired by EC, as with so many of the tales from the period or Old Nancy herself, this title thrived with a gleeful insanity until the introduction of the Comics Code in the latter months of 1954. Hidden away in the contents of its ninth issue there came a witch long since dead, now returned to reclaim her hair in the chillingly entitled tale "Tank of Corpses." Folklore would have us believe those in possession of such an item could acquire powers of intuition, while others would insist it was



You never knew whether to laugh or cry when Bill Everett presented one of his covers for Atlas, *Adventures into Terror* #21 was no exception. *Dark Mysteries* #22 appeared on the eve of the comics code and was a hopelessly diluted version of that which had gone before. The first issue of *Haunt of Fear*, numbered #15, introduced a witch, but not the Old Witch we were soon to come to love and loathe. Lee Elias did much work for Harvey's line of horror comics, this cover to *Witches Tales* #16 clearly warned of the insanity within. Finally on this page an offering from the Jerry Iger Studio for Ajax/Farrell's *Haunted Thrills* #12.

RUDY PALAIS

THE DANCE OF DEATH

By Frank Motler

Maniacs, demons and femme fatales frequent the horror art of Rudolph "Rudy" Palais. Unable to contain themselves, his characters chaotically overlap the panel borders in their fevered exertions, sweating and drooling as they plot and scheme under the hands of this master of comic book art. Using close ups and extreme angles made popular in contemporary cinematic noir thrillers, his characters are ultimately trapped under glass and bound to their hapless fate. The early years of his career saw Palais employed as a designer of theatre fronts before moving into comics where he went on to perfected his style in this darkest of genres. The horror comic was killed off with the introduction of the Comic Code in 1955, forcing Harvey to fold their line of horror titles and at the end of 1954 Comic Media ceased publication altogether. However, between 1951 and 1954, Rudy Palais completed some of his finest pieces for each of these two companies.

Who's Who of American Comic Books lists Rudy as the brother of Walter, a man who seemed destined for

the priesthood before he too became an artist, albeit more modestly talented. It was Walter who introduced Rudy to Jerry Iger when he was taken on as a letterer. Rudy worked for the Iger Shop circa 1941-42 mainly on the Fiction House line before finding a placement with Everett "Busy" Arnold and around 1946 for the Chesler shop, probably on their selection of in-house titles. Between 1944 and 1946, he was in the employ of L.B. Cole, who had taken over the Holyoke (Continental) range. Their work was to invigorate the pages of *Captain Aero*, *Cat-man*, *Contact*, *Suspense Comics* and *Terrific Comics* with a newfound energy. Rudy's work also appears in Harvey's hero titles from 1945 on, culminating in his horror work between 1951 and 1953 when he left their employ.

In his time freelancing for Ace (1945-49), he contributed to their hero/adventure comics, producing the now notorious and the highly collectible *Super Mystery* cover (Volume 6/3 December 1945) depicting a "Good Girl" in peril. His style would lead him to many other companies, including Gilberton (1947-54), Avon, DC, Fox, Fawcett, Gleason (1944-47) and Quality (1942-44), in all more than twenty companies before he joined Charlton,



supplying artwork for them from 1967 to 1969 when he retired from comics.

It was 1951 when Harvey first ventured into horror with *Witches Tales* #1 (January 1951) soon to be followed by *Chamber of Chills* #21 (June 1951), *Black Cat Mystery* #30 (August 1951) and finally *Tomb of Terror* #1 (June 1952). Other notables for Harvey were Bob Powell, Warren Kremer, Lee Elias, Sid Check and Rocke Mastroserio. If we are to disregard their later reprints, Harvey produced a total of eighty-eight different issues with Palais contributing to thirty-eight of them, his page count ranging from between one and fourteen pages per issue.

Whilst working for Harvey, he produced one story for Atlas's burgeoning horror line with *Suspense* #10 (September 1951). *Suspense* was the only horror title to be "based on the gripping CBS radio - television series" and as such is probably also the first TV comic with its first issue being December 1949; pre-dating *Howdy-Doody's* premier. Palais' art matched the

stilted and contrived story, yet remained typically atmospheric. A story in the same issue drawn by Russ Heath along with Joe Maneely's cover, tip the balance.

The year 1952 saw a new company Comic Media formed by Alan Hardy Associates off the back of their fledgling Artful Publications. Instead of using Iger Shop art as with Artful, they moved towards in-house art featuring Don Heck, Pete Morisi, Marty Elkin, Al Tewks, Bill Discount and Rudy Palais. *Weird Terror* #1 (September 1952) became their first title, a worthy addition to the already booming horror market.

Horrific was switched from Artful with its third issue (January 1953). For the uninitiated, this featured the notorious Don Heck "Bullet in the Head" cover, which is actually a part image of the earlier *War Fury* #1 (September 1952), inverted and redrawn. These two issues are now cult collectors items.

Both Harvey and Comic Media horror titles come highly recommended (with or without Palais) although Comic Media's output is much smaller with only twenty seven issues to their credit, with



It seems strange, given his background as designer of film posters, that Rudy never had the opportunity to produce more covers. The cover to *Terrific* #4 appears across the page, while below we have a series

GRANDENETTI

JERRY



A 2005 Interview With Jerry Grandenetti!

RA: Hello, Mr. Grandenetti and thank you for this opportunity! How did you get your start in comics?

JG: I really got started in comics by luck. I was very good in math so in high school I decided to study architecture. My father's influence, there. My first job was with C. C. Combs: Landscape Architects. I was a junior draftsman and was only 15 at the time. In those days comics were sold at most stores and newsstands. They were all over the place. I had always liked to draw and I started to copy the art in the comics. After high school I went into the navy with a specialist X rating. Working aboard ship or on the base I did a lot of cartoons or drawings for the base and ship's papers. I was also a draftsman in the administration building on base.

When I got out of the navy at the age of 21, I decided architecture was not as much fun as drawing so I put together a portfolio of some of the stuff I did in the service to see if I could get some work in the comics industry. The first place I went to was Quality Comics. Busy Arnold, the boss there, told me Will Eisner was looking for an assistant and sent me over. I didn't know who Eisner was. Will hired me and I don't think it was because of my drawing ability because for the next two weeks I did nothing but erase pages and white out lines. Then I started inking backgrounds. Then I began to do my own backgrounds. Then I began to ink figures as well as backgrounds. Nothing much impressed me at the time because I didn't know the greatness of Will Eisner until some time later.

Interviewed by Richard Arndt

By this time I was going to the Pratt Institute and hoping to do full color for the slick mags. John Spranger was penciling *The Spirit* when I got there but he left in a couple of months. Will did his own penciling and inking after that. Abe Kanister was lettering. Jules Feiffer was hired then {laughs}, would you believe, to erase and do the white outs! Later on he began coloring the Spirit's silver proofs. It was at this time that I realized the guys like Infantino and Kubert were drawing their own comics at the ripe age of 15 years old! So for the rest of my career I've been playing catch-up.

RA: What was it like working with Will Eisner?

JG: Working for Eisner was exciting. Although there was no such thing as teaching or showing you how to develop your craft. I think at this time he was trying to make the Spirit pay off and become a success. Which it never really was. Before its demise he tried everything. Had me penciling *The Spirit*, later on it was Wally Wood, but nothing could save the Spirit! Sad, too. It was probably the greatest comic strip ever created.

RA: How did the Dr. Drew strip come about? At that point your artwork looked very much like Will Eisner's.

JG: Will Eisner created Dr. Drew and I was to do it in the Eisner style. Which I did, badly. Anyway, after a couple of stories I began to do my own thing.

RA: How did you get involved with Warren Publishing?

JG: I think I began to do stories for Warren around 1965 or 1966. I'm not the best guy for interviews of this sort. I never kept records, etc. I started out for them by ghost penciling stories {see below for titles} for Joe Orlando. I think it was only about 5 or 6 stories. Then I started doing my own for them. I also penciled stories for Joe when he became an editor at DC.

I had a good relationship with Joe. I think because we both strived for a different look in our work. Besides the Warren work I also helped Joe create two books for DC. One was called *Scooter*. I'm not sure what the title of the other book was.

RA: Did you meet Jim Warren? You also worked for a number of editors while at Warren: Archie Goodwin, Bill Parente, Billy Graham, J. R. Cochran and Bill DuBay. What do you remember about them?

JG: Yes, I met Warren. He was a very interesting talent and publisher. As far as the editors, I only worked with Archie Goodwin. He was a great talent. His scripts always came with little thumbnail drawings that he did. They were a very good guide to the artist. He thought like an artist.



DAD! OH, GOD.....AAARRRGH!!



JERRY
G
R
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Petty Crime Part 3

The Comic Book

by Frank Motler

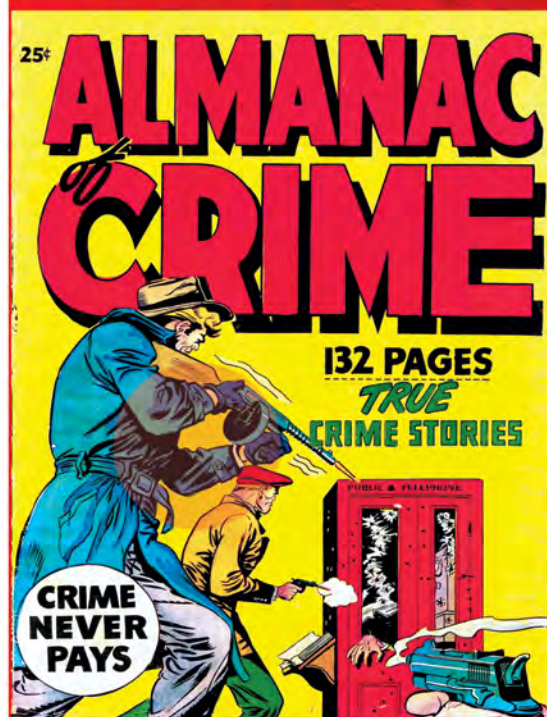
Fire Brand

Previously, in this three-part journey, we have looked at the rise of the American teenager and America's most iconic teen, Elvis Presley (FTT #26). FTT #27 tarried, investigating *Hep Cats* and their arcane jive-talk, via the many popular publications of the period. Triggered by perceptions of delinquency and youth crime, the anti-comics campaigns of Dr. Fredric Wertham, MD, the US Senate and New York Legislative committees became the subject of FTT #28. In this concluding instalment, we look at the four-color crime comics themselves. How they stuttered with the arrival of the "Comics Code" and breathed their last a few months later, when New York State prohibited the word 'crime' in the title of a comic. Elsewhere, our Electric Chair Special Issue with emphasis on shocking covers plus St. John's crime comics, Bad American's *Stir-Fry* (featuring *Crime Does Not Pay*), or Jack Cole and Co's *True Crime* are also recommended (see FTT #13, 15, 20 respectively).

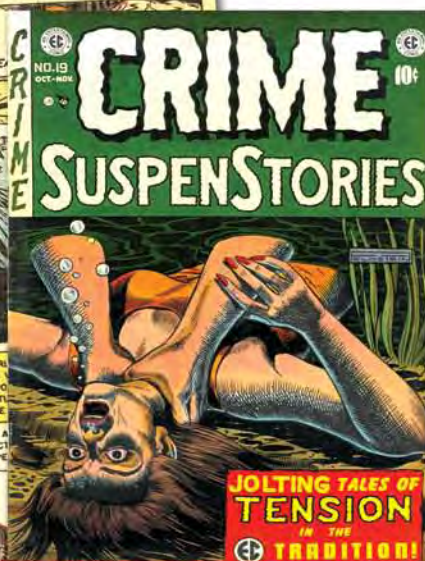
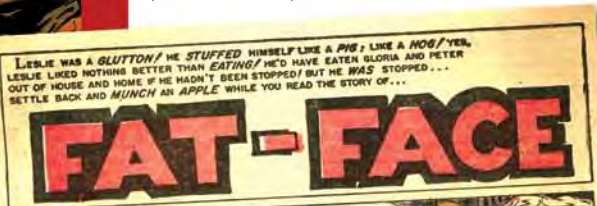
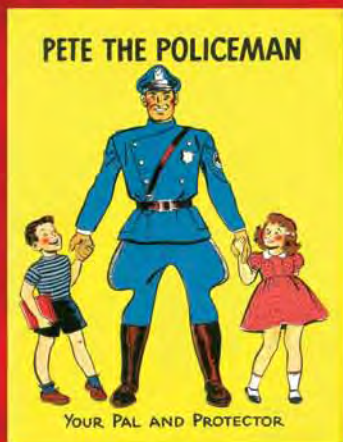
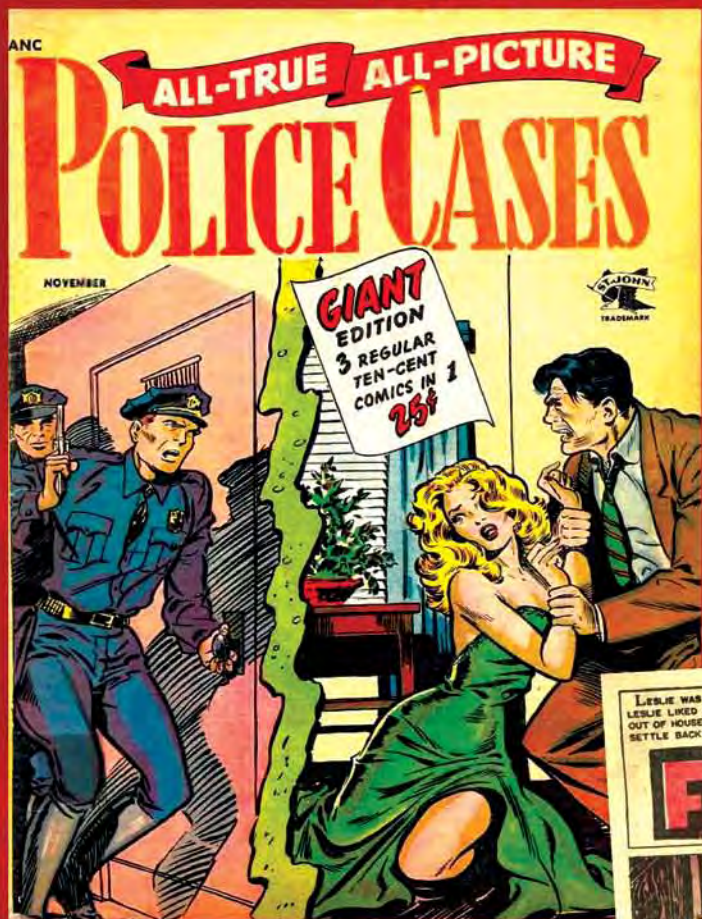
The first issue of *Crime Does Not Pay* debuted in 1942 (#22, dated July; formerly Silver Streak Comics) as the first genre comic. Immediately, it established a dark malevolent style befitting the real-life gangsters often portrayed. In the formative period, Charles Biro epitomised this with violent cover renditions of: Tommy-gun execution, prison breakouts, drowning, hatchet killing, bloody shootouts, or an infamous head-in-the-gas-flames portrayal (#25, #23, #28 and #29, #48, #33, #30 and #36, or #24). Until 1947, Gleason's comic had the field to itself, when it was joined by delinquent sister *Crime and Punishment* (#1, April 1948), plus competition from Harvey (*Green Hornet Fights Crime*), Magazine Village (*True Crime*), Martin Goodman's company (see index, note 5) and elsewhere. As the comics-code loomed, Gleason's young sibling dabbled with fake 3-D and delinquency themes (notably the Alex Toth illustrated *Crime and Punishment* #67 and "Dope Crazy Kids," #69). Uninspired, the elder statesman meandered, despite artistic invention from Joe Kubert and Pete Morisi. From 1950, Avon also produced comics, including: *Crime On the Waterfront*, *Gangsters and Gun Molls*, *Murderous Gangsters*, *Police Line-Up*, *Prison Break* and *Prison Riot*. Several were enhanced by painted covers first-seen on various Avon paperbacks (the company's first line of business). Both Goodman and Avon's crime comics were cancelled in 1952, as was the Star title *Crime Fighting Detective*. Meanwhile, *Star's All Famous Crime* mutated into *All Famous Police Cases*, surviving until 1954 (all featuring L.B. Cole covers). Avon's one-shot giants from 1952, *All-True Detective Cases* and *Sensational Police Cases* returned in 1953 for brief runs as regular comics.

Enlightening Strikes, Twice...

Publisher Archer St. John also produced crime comics, in the formative period (1948 on). Several of these reprinted Chesler art and were censured by Wertham, unaware of their original source (see FTT#13). Only *Authentic Police Cases* sustained a run until 1955, expiring as the code commenced. It benefited hugely from the input of African-American Matt Baker (1921-1959), a supremely talented artist who worked extensively for St. John. In 1953, *Authentic* expanded to 100-page giant format (#24-27), part of an experiment embracing several ongoing titles. It had been preceded by *All-True All-Picture Police Cases* #1-2 (October & November 1952), which contained rebound unsold comics, minus original covers, as did all St. John giants to this point. The 1953 releases were mostly new. *Authentic Police Cases* #25 included an expurgated, reworked and colorized version of "The Case of the Winking Buddha" (32 pages, Charles Raab art). Originally, Buddha had been a 132-page black-and-white, feature-length story, which debuted in a 1950 comics digest of the same name. It was contemporaneous with another uncommon St. John digest, *It Rhymes With Lust*; Matt Baker art throughout. Luckily, *Lust* was reprinted in its original form by *Dark Horse*, 2007 and is available still (it also appeared reformatted, in *The Comics Journal* #266, July 2006). Elsewhere, Baker's spot illustrations improved the looks of several story digests, including St. John's own *Manhunt* (unrelated to the Magazine Enterprise comic), Goodman's *Justice* and several Arnold Magazine titles.



Above, we have the Fox Giant Almanac of Crime, then comes Police Comics #105, Crime and Justice #19 and the St. John giant, All True Police Cases.



A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing...

As indicated in *FTT* #28, DC's crime titles were bland affairs enforced by stringent self-regulation, so the approaching comics-code afforded no real scares. Post-code, they employed intriguing, whimsical cover premises, seen on many DC's of the period. Typical were "The Prizefight the Fans Never Saw," "The Canine Eye-Witness," or "The Man in The Martian Suit," (*Gang Busters* #52, *Mr. District Attorney* #53 or 63, 1955-58). The November/December 1958 *Mr. District Attorney* offers a prequel to *Justice League of America* #1's cover, where animal suited villains unmask the titular hero, disguised as Mr. Wolf. (#66, "The Case of the Secret Seven," reprinted in UK issue #12; itself a reference to *All Star Comics* #3, 1940, the first appearance of the Justice Society of America).

Pre-code, the Charlton titles displayed an array of appealing if quirky artistry, with Ditko art spotted on the 1954 releases, *Racket Squad in Action* #11 (cover, plus "Botticelli Of The Bangtails" story), #12 (explosion cover) and "Killer on the Loose" story for *Crime and Justice* #18 (the two covers and Killer are reprinted in 3-D Substance #1, 1990 from 3-D Zone. Note: *Fight Against The Guilty* #22 does not contain any Ditko art). Lou Morales, Stan Campbell, Dick Giordano and Frank Frollo's art can be found in *Crime and Justice*, plus *Lawbreakers*. Alvin C. Hollingsworth's art was featured in *Crime Mysteries*, *Fight Against Crime/The Guilty* etc (see *FTT* #9 and #24 for overviews/indexes for Morales and Hollingsworth). The great Harry Anderson features in *Crime and Justice* #23, 24, plus later issues of Orbit's *Wanted*, alongside art by Mort Leav, Mort Lawrence, Syd Shores and John Buscema. Krigstein, Maurice Del Bourgo and Warren Kremer (signing as 'Doc') featured there in the formative period. All are recommended. Kremer also supplied some stark covers to the later Harvey horrors and we will return to him in the text. As with DC, the post-code Charltons are essentially for fans of the company. Even more so the Hillmans, except for early examples with Krigstein art.

Good Cop, Good Cop...

With crime becoming a troublesome word, several publishers switched to law enforcement titles: *Badge of Justice* (#22, #2-4), *Rookie Cop* (#27-33, 1955-57), *Police Badge* #479 (one-shot, 1955), *I Am a Cop* (#1-3, 1954; Bob Powell art throughout), plus Simon and Kirby's *Police Trap* (#1-7, 1954-55). Related to these was the bland *Public Defender in Action*

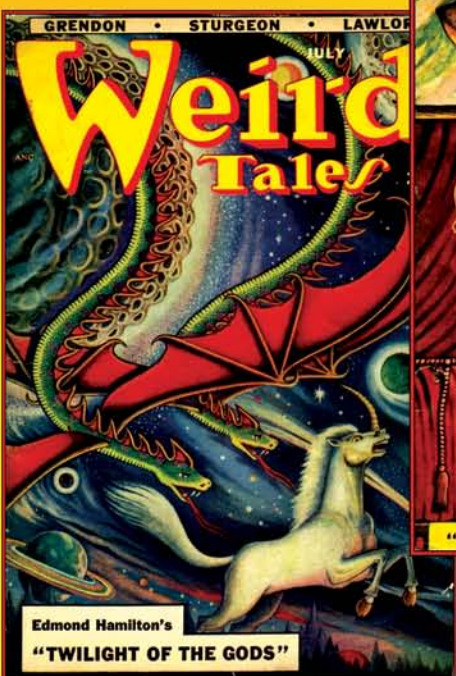
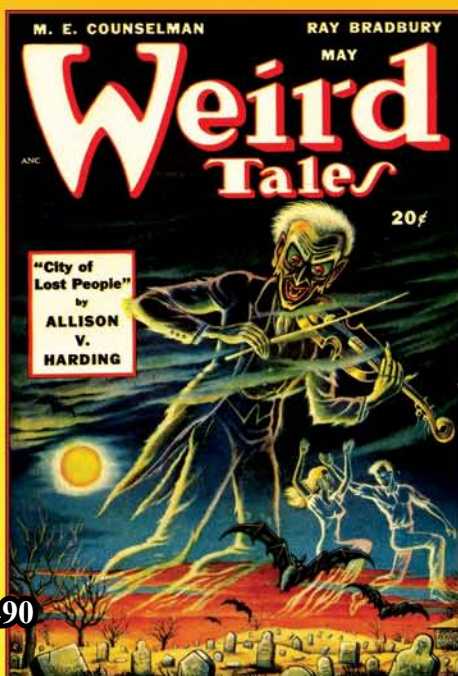
Above we have *After Dark* #4, *Toby's Johnny Danger* #1, the second of the giant *All True All Picture Police Cases*, *Pete the Policeman* from 1954 and Charlton's *Crime and Justice* 7.

A taste of what lay in wait in these despicable crime comics, "Fat Face" comes from the pages of *Fight Against Crime* #19.



THE WEIRD MATT

When, in 1973, Jerry Bails was assembling the entries for his invaluable *Who's Who of American Comics*, it was Matt Fox himself, who came forward with a set of biographical notes. It would appear Matt had been all but forgotten, and in researching this piece, I have been able to come up with few if any anecdotal references on his time in comics. The word deranged immediately springs to mind when beginning to assess his nightmare vision, and further investigation reveals he was an artist whose hideous imaginings had already unsettled a readership whose appetite took them way into the beyond. However, his body of work as a comic book artist is frustratingly diminutive, the majority



WORLDS OF FOX

of which saw publication in Atlas's range of weird titles, occasionally inking John Forte, with another three exceptional appearances in the employ of one of the minor publisher house's of the day, Youthful.

There are no known interviews with the man behind these lunatic images, but prior to terrorising the covers of Youthful's *Chilling Tales*, his woodcut style pen and ink renderings had shocked the avid readers of the science fiction and fantasy pulp magazines of the 1940s. This intriguing phase in his career continues to arouse the interest of many comic book purists, many of whom would have never have bothered with these wordy publications. Between 1943 and 1950, Matt painted eleven covers for the foremost magazine of the period, the mythical *Weird Tales*. In May 1948, his name would appear alongside Ray Bradbury in that month's edition of *Weird Tales*; an issue that would one day become a highly sought after collector's item.

THE THIEVES



THEIR COMING WAS REPORTED TO EARTH BY OBSERVERS AT MOUNT PALOMAR, AND THE NEWS SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE! TELEGRAPH WIRES HUMMED, AND THE GENERAL STAFF AT THE PENTAGON WAS BESIEGED BY NEWS-HUNGRY REPORTERS.

GENERAL, WHAT IS THE ARMY GOING TO DO ABOUT THESE SHIPS FROM POLARIS?

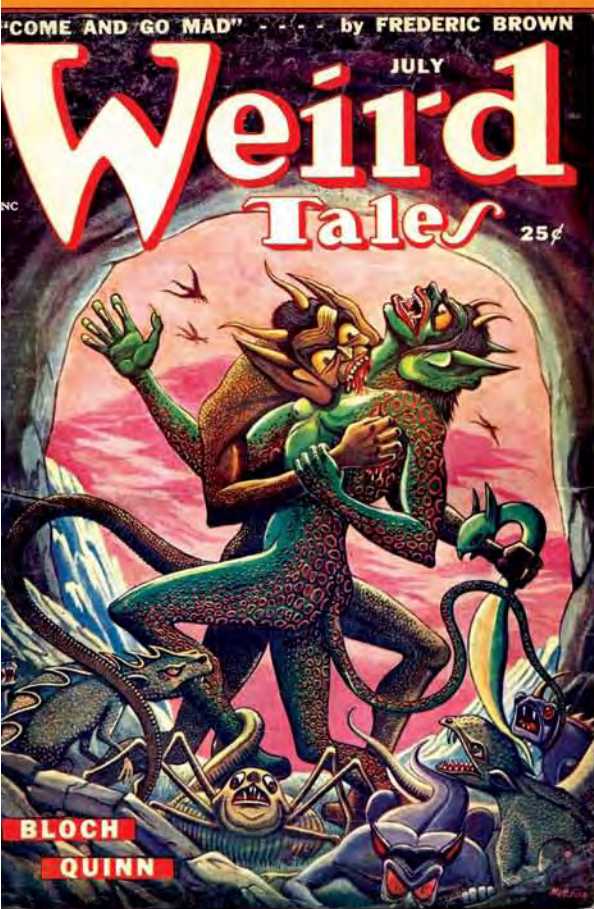
IS IT TRUE THEY HAVE 100000 SPACE SHIPS LARGER THAN WE'VE EVER SEEN?

I'M SORRY, BOYS! I CAN'T MAKE ANY COMMENT AT THIS TIME!

PLEASE, GENERAL READERS ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE CLAMORING FOR NEWS! YOU CAN'T HOLD BACK LIKE THIS... CHAOS IS BREAKING OUT EVERYWHERE!

THE U.N. HAS RECEIVED A WARNING FROM FRIENDLY PLANETS THAT THESE ALIENS FROM POLARIS ARE THIEVES! ARE THEY COMING HERE TO PLUNDER OUR WORLD?

NO COMMENT!



From the top of the opposite page some of Matt's bizarre covers for *Weird Tales*, beginning with Nov. 1944, July 1946, May 1947, Nov. 1947, May 1948, July 1948 and then the larger images from March 1949, July 1949 and Nov. 1949. Above begins the terror of "The Thieves" from *Adventures into Weird Worlds* #27.

FRANK FRAZETTA

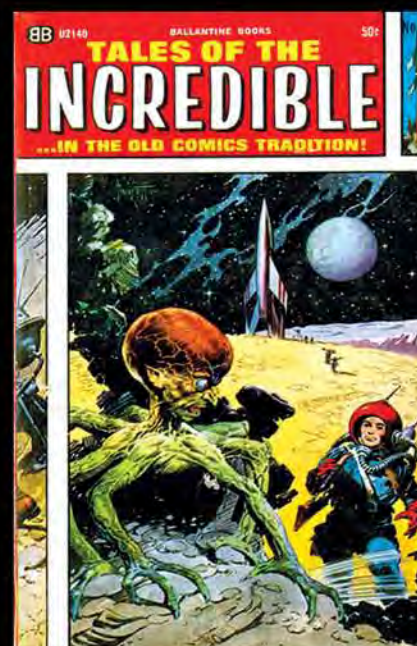
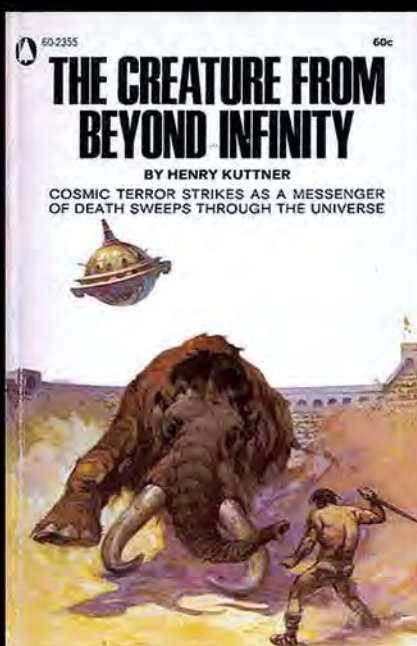
Frank Frazetta (Feb. 9, 1928 - May 9, 2010)

Frank Frazetta passed away, Monday 9th May 2010, aged 82.

Frazetta was a prodigiously talented artist whose imagination complemented his talents to perfection. He received a formal training at Brooklyn Academy of Fine Arts from the age of 8 until 16 under Michael Falanga. Frank was revered by his artistic contemporaries and during his lifetime received Hugo, Eisner and Kurtzman Lifetime Achievement awards. Though much imitated, Frazetta's hyper realistic portrayals of sword and sorcery, fantasy scenes or erotic females remained beyond compare. Frank is best remembered for his stunning cover portrayals of Conan the Barbarian, commissioned by Lancer for their paperback series (1966-71), or Tarzan for Ace. Frazetta supplied illustrations for numerous other media, including record sleeves and movie posters.

For comics fans, Frazetta is renowned for numerous comics strips/ covers of which the most notable are: *Thun'da* #1 (plus cover, 1952), *Personal Love* (1953-54, selected stories) and his series of Buck Rogers covers for *Famous Funnies* (#209-215, 1954). EC's *Weird Science Fantasy* #29 boasts the last of these, published with alterations as the Comics Code took effect (1955). Elsewhere, Frank's covers for publisher Magazine Enterprises are also noted. He used the penname "Fritz" (particularly on his humour work of the 1940s), sometimes initialling with a telltale elongated double-f.

THE MAN OF BRONZE
DOC
SAVAGE



Manhattan Project

As WWII drew to a close in Europe, U.S. Four Star General George S. Patton wasn't fooled and stated that "we would have to fight *them* sometime and we might as well do it now while we have the men and machinery over here!" They (*them*) were the Russians or more accurately The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). WWII had finally been brought to an end with the vaporising humanity and blinding flashes at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The massive \$2 billion "Manhattan Project" (1942-5), which had worked towards the development of the atomic bomb and its deployment in the belief that it would put an end to the war with Japan, was shrouded in a veil of secrecy. Great Britain, who had contributed significantly to the research and development of this nightmare weapon, was to be excluded, for fear of their leaking Top Secret information. Even J. Robert Oppenheimer, the Chief Scientist of the Los Alamos-based "Manhattan Project", had been impugned if not entirely discredited and his citizenship called into question owing to his pacifist left wing views. The "Hollywood Ten", a group of film screenwriters, directors and a producer, had been in 1947 imprisoned for refusing to answer the U.S. Senate's questions, in particular "Are you now or have you ever been a

Two scenes of devastation, on this page Lou Cameron's spectacular inferno from *World War III* #3 and the shattering cover that fronted *Atomic War's* debut.



LET'S DROP THE BIG ONE NOW!

THOSE APOCALYPTIC ACES

by Frank Motler

Along the bottom of this spread some of the rarest comic books of the period, *Atomic War* #2-4. Across the page, the fury of nuclear war continues in another full page scene from the contents of *World War III* #2 and just in case sound advice from the pages of *The H-Bomb* and *You*.

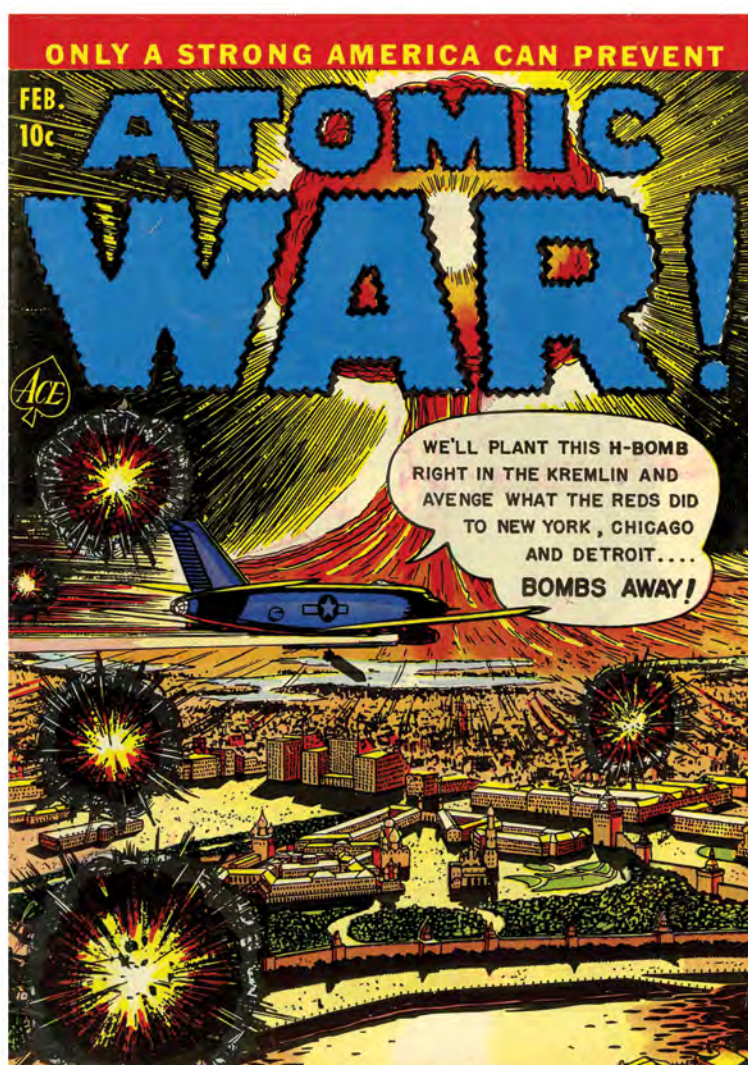
member of the Communist Party?" In 1953, The Rosenbergs had ingloriously died within minutes of each other in another of America's macabre inventions "Ole Sparky" himself, the Electric Chair! The "Atom Spy Trial" of 1951, at which they were the unwilling stars, had deemed that America's atom secrets had been passed to the USSR by the unfortunate couple. Only two years, before Russia had sent shock waves across America and around the world when it exploded its own Atomic Bomb in the August of 1949.

Reds Under The Bed

Post-War America had become afraid of its neighbours across the globe and fearful of its own citizens, and as some would say this was not without good cause. Reds were seen to be under most, if not every, bed! Into this fevered, xenophobic, atmosphere Ace Publications introduced the apocalyptic *World War III* (March '53) subtitled "The War that Will Never Happen if America Remains Strong and Alert." The apocalyptic cover scene shocked the casual onlooker with the atomic devastation of Washington D.C., this was but a prelude to the strongly nationalistic and alarming stories within. "World War III Unleashed" starts with the masthead caption "Let the reason for publishing this shocking account of World War III be completely clear. We want only to awaken America...and the world...to the grim facts. The only way to prevent this mass destruction of humanity is to prepare NOW. Only a super-strong and fully enlightened America can stop this onrushing horror of the future! THE EDITORS."

Waking the Sleeping Giant

Set prophetically in 1961, this first twelve-page story, rendered by Lou Cameron, exposed the Russians sneak attack on a "sleeping America," in a suitably sombre and hyper-realistic style. Washington, San Francisco and New York are irradiated, the latter whilst watching a N.Y. Dodgers baseball game, no less! Every page of this story packs a devastating punch and it's nigh on impossible to imagine the effect it would have had on a 12-year-old buying this in 1952. Pages 6 and 7 are given over to single page splashes, which compound the effect. The second instalment concerns "Operation Comeback", from what you may well ask! In its ten pages, again by Cameron, America uses a "newly developed sealed high-frequency beam" and a "Dynatomic" aircraft carrier to get back at the "Russky Snorkel Bases", before a ground war starts in Eastern Europe. During this phase, the U.S. launches a "GM-5" that looks suspiciously like a German V1 "Doodlebug" at the "Red Bomber Base at Krumansk!" The story ends with America about to implement the "Newcastle Project" and launch a "Super-Atomic guided missile AGAINST MOSCOW."



Conversations with an unsung editor! An Interview With Al Feldstein

by Jim Vanhollebeke

In the early to mid-1950s at the notorious EC comics... Al Feldstein created, wrote, illustrated and edited a line of titles, which are now legendary. They included horror titles such as *Tales from the Crypt* which was adapted in the '90s for HBO television, plus science-fiction, suspense, and other genres still being copied today. In 1955, he became editor of EC's *Mad* magazine when Harvey Kurtzman (with most of his artists) abruptly left the helm. Feldstein took the mag's then circulation from 375,000 to a high of almost 3 million. He gathered a new staff of talented artists and writers, supervised its operations, editing and re-writing stories, designing layouts, and creating a consistent format that led to *Mad*'s historic success. In 1984, Al retired from *Mad* and went back to his original love, painting. He moved to Paradise Valley, Montana and now enjoys painting that state's ranch life, fauna and beautiful scenery. He's been represented by numerous galleries in the Northwest and received many awards.

In 1999, Jim Vanhollebeke, a long time fan of Al and the legendary EC Comics in general, conducted his first interview with Mr. Feldstein for

an internet *Mad* magazine website. In 2002, Jim received this second interview. Al was very gracious and candid. In this session, he reveals publicly his disappointment in the "bad blood" that developed between him and *Mad*'s publisher Bill Gaines.

Following is the interview (edited):

Jim Vanhollebeke: Al, I recently discovered an interview with William Gaines (*Qua Brot* #1) in which he stated his hopes of getting together with you to put together ..."ONE MORE WHOPPING ISSUE of *Tales From The Crypt*, just to get it out of my system." This was, perhaps, 1985. He'd hoped it to be his final comment on (and to) the code. He had the artists picked out and a bunch of story ideas to "spring" at you! I'll bet you know about this interview, but I wanted to tell you JUST IN CASE you didn't. You guys! Wotta' team!

AL FELDSTEIN: No...I'm not familiar with the interview you quoted. I retired as Editor of *Mad* on Dec. 31st, 1984. My leaving *Mad* was not very well accepted by Bill...and our relationship was rather strained. I suspect that his statement was pure BS...since he knew that I would not be receptive to



THE AL FELDSTEIN INTERVIEW



such a project. However, I would be interested in having a copy of what he actually said.

Vanhollebeke: No problem.

FELDSTEIN: Thank you. I'm curious!

Al, I can't help thinking, in reading between the lines (through these years of interviews) ...that Bill had a quiet sadness that you guys had somehow drifted into irretrievable and discordant positions.

No doubt about it. Bill, for some reason, had suddenly decided to extract himself from our plotting/writing team well before EC was crippled and destroyed by the Comics Code. I really believe that Lyle Stuart, his business manager and a manipulating individual, had convinced him that what he was doing was not what a "Publisher" should be doing...that there were plenty of writers out there that I could use, either as collaborators or as an Editor...hence the arrival upon the EC scene of Jack Oleck, Dan Keyes, Carl Wessler, etc., etc. ... writers that I hired and developed, then re-wrote/edited their scripts directly to the art boards.

When the Code Authority doomed EC, and Bill had to drop all of his titles and fire me (along with most of the other artists), and all he had left was *Mad* and Harvey Kurtzman and the *Mad* staff, and he'd been crucified before the public on TV as a monster/comic book publisher, it had been a terrible, ego-shattering blow. Then, when Harvey engineered his own firing



(so he could run off and join Hugh Hefner with no guilt (after talking Bill and his Mother into saving *Mad* by paying off the debts they were stuck with from the Leader News, our Distributor's, bankruptcy!) by demanding 51% control of *Mad*, forcing Bill to fire him, Bill then had to come, hat in hand, to ask me to come back to work for him as *Mad*'s Editor...it was even more humiliation.

And the worst was, that as *Mad* became more and more successful, and his sole function as Publisher was to write checks and handle "business," being completely left out of the "creative process" because he really had no "feel" for "*Mad*," it was an even further ego-deflation for him. But even more devastating was his early and premature sale of the magazine for a capital gains deal, before *Mad* really took off...and his pacifying me with a "Percentage of the Gross" work contract, rather than share the sale proceeds with me... which, after *Mad*'s sales exploded, resulted in me as Editor earning more than he as Publisher! I really believe that he began to resent me and my success, both with the magazine and financially.

I'm sure it's complicated and the fact that you have been under reported by some historians certainly hasn't helped. But Bill seemed to settle into a downcast when he spoke of you. As if his memory of you and him creating those stories were the REAL MEAT of his existence, and it was all gone.

Correct. That was the period when he felt the most self-worth, when he was "participating" in the creative process and the resultant success of EC

I'm sure he had some regrets and feelings of guilt. We all do.

Regrets, perhaps! But I'm not sure what he felt "guilty" about...unless you mean being personified as a terrible, greedy, unconscionable Publisher who was destroying America's youth.

Certainly, there were no feelings of guilt on his part as far as I was concerned. After all, he was paying me very well, as per my contract. He even used to go around bragging (as a result of *Mad*'s phenomenal success) that I was the highest paid editor in the world (an exaggeration; Henry Luce, Harold Ross and Hugh Hefner were certainly making much more than me!).

Good points. Only you know whether my perceptions are valid ...but I still feel that Bill missed you (even before you left). I'm hoping also that he was, perhaps, a tad more honorable than your reservations about him might lead you to suspect.

If that were true, why was there a conscious effort on his part made, after my retirement, to write me out of the history of EC and *Mad*?! When I retired, Bill made himself believe that I was

The splash page to the very first story from *The Crypt of Terror*, numbered #17 appears above, the similarly macabre introduction to issue #22. There's no denying *Tales From the Crypt* set out to shock from the very beginning. Across the bottom of the page two graphic panels from *Tales From the Crypt* #21's "A Shocking Way to Die!" and the screaming finale from issue #23, of this same title, "Reflection of Death!"



REMEMBRANCES OF GARGOYLES-AT-LARGE **by Alan Hewetson – illustrations by Maelo Cintron**

I met Maelo Cintron during 1972. As the story goes, he'd walked into the Skywald offices with an appointment to meet Sol Brodsky but found me instead. Sol had gone back to Marvel, and I was the new editor. Little did either one of us know during that first awkward handshake that we'd be partnering for life on one of the most outrageous (and we both think, sane) comic book creations ever to see print.

The Human Gargoyles had already seen the light of day. Felipe De La Rosa had already ably illustrated Chapter One and there was a glimmer of a continuing plot emerging, but the characters had no distinct personalities, no quirks or unique strengths, no discernible foibles or obvious arch enemies, and if they were to have a future at all they needed all these things and more – they needed a profound physical appearance, a “look” that would

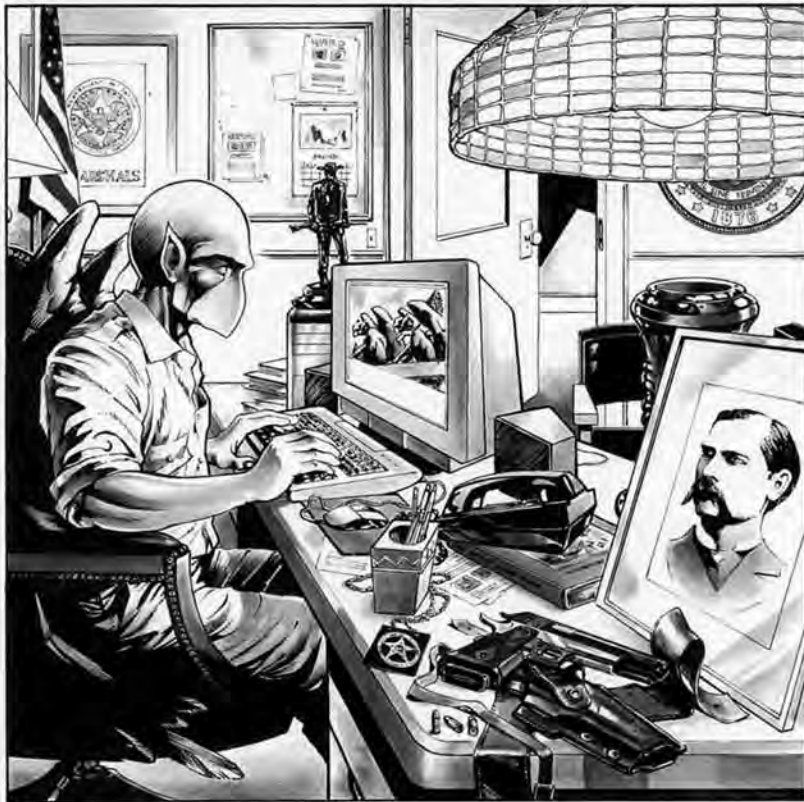


**the
HUMAN GARGOYLES
get**

METAPHYSICAL

in GARGOYLE JUSTICE

by Alan Hewetson & Maelo Cintron



make them downright different. They needed Maelo Cintron to bring them to life.

That first day, looking over the samples Maelo had brought into the office to show to Sol, I realized immediately Sol would have loved him, adored his artwork, hired him on the spot. He had a one-page finished story a friend had scripted, "Game of Skill," which I bought instantly, and in the next breath handed him a 2-page splash-art story called "The Zoo for the Beasts of the Universe," as a sample story. Maelo, soft-spoken and almost shy, possessed of a wide, sheepish grin, and a warm personality that insisted upon your intimate trust of him, created as charming an artistic rendition of that little story that a writer and editor could imagine, or hope for. The thought struck me, the first time I looked at that artwork completed only a few days after meeting Maelo, that this artist had interpretive abilities far superior to most artists. He'd given personality and real meaning to that little tale; he liked the story, he *understood* the story! Y'know how *rare* that is? When he walked in the door of Skywald, it was *me* who was the lucky one!

So then I wrote Chapter Two of "The Human Gargoyles," the one that starts off with little Andy being born in a very human way, and there was humanity and pathos and a bit of adventure in that story, "One and one Equals Three," and when Maelo handed in the finished artwork I looked at the first page of the story and practically wept. I walked around and showed everybody in the office – bookkeepers and people who had nothing to do with the Skywald magazines – and it was recognized without argument as *art*!

After that, Maelo and I threw ourselves into the Human Gargoyles series with more passion than anything else we were doing. Skywald readers declared this to be their favorite character series by far. Maelo and I spoke to each other of the Human Gargoyles as real people and we called them by their first names. The plot lines wandered off in disparate directions. These were street-wise virgins who had too much to learn in too short a time, strangers in a strange land desperately trying to fit in and become human without knowing why they even existed or if there was a noble or ignoble purpose in their being.

Over the years, readers have commented that perhaps The Human Gargoyles didn't even properly belong in the Skywald repertoire. After all, they weren't really "horror characters" as such, and the plot lines were more satirical and philosophical than anything else. As usual, the readers were right. Maelo and I weren't even trying to do a horror character series, we were simply offering stories about three unique comic characters and horror had nothing to do with it.

The Human Gargoyles ran for several years right through the closing of Skywald, and in fact Maelo had illustrated at least two complete stories that



1 AND 1 EQUALS 3;
IT IS THE ETERNAL
LAW, ONE RARELY
REVOKED, EVEN
FOR BEINGS
ONE OF STONE...
AND THE LAW...
IS THE LAW...
AND SO STARTS
OUR TALE

At the top of each page are images created by Maelo Cintron for the Gargoyle Justice series with accompanying panels from the celebrated Skywald series.

AMERICAN COMICS HAS A PANIC ATTACK!

BY FRANK MOTLER

Dime Bar

The release of EC's latest humour comic, *Panic* caused much consternation among the anti-comics campaigners, in particular, the launch issue (#1, Tiny Tots Comics, Inc, February/ March 1954) with its "The Night Before Christmas" spoof, based upon the poem (first published in 1823) by Charles Clement Moore. Although *Panic* retained the poem's original form, the festive reminiscence was seen as a sacred relic, certainly not suited to humorous asides about divorce or severed limbs, courtesy Will Elder's (1921-2008) alliterative doodles. Elder's unique, wayward style was perfected at *Mad* during its formative issues (#1-28, 1952-55) as edited by Harvey Kurtzman. The artistic team would sustain a lifelong association. In truth, *Panic* was another imitation of EC's original *Mad*, but one felt justified in light of the plethora available from publishing rivals. The presumptuous imitation was targeted in Irving M. Kravsov's censorious article, "Depravity for Children 10 Cents per Copy" February 14, 1954, part of an anti-comic book series, running in the *Hartford Courant* newspaper. (Founded in 1764, the *Courant* was published out of Hartford, Connecticut and remains in print to this day.) Further, the series was collated and sent by its publisher (John R. Reitemeyer) to US Senate Subcommittee Hearings into Comic Books and Juvenile Delinquency (held in New York, April 21/22 and June 4, 1954; chaired by Senator Robert C. Hendrickson), where it was welcomed as exhibit No.33. When published, the *Courant* texts were transcribed in full into the Hearing record.

Here is an extract, to indicate the tone: "*Tiny Tot Publications publishes a comic book which is billed as a humorous comic magazine. The cover shows a fireplace decorated for Christmas with stocking hung from the mantle to receive gifts from Santa Claus. It shows Santa's foot dangling in the fireplace an inch above a lethal bear steel trap while a young boy leers in anticipation of tearing Santa's leg off. The first story is a parody on Mickey Spillane that is so suggestive, it would put some adult pulp magazines to shame. Another story in this Tiny Tot Publication tells the story of Little Red Riding Hood with a switch. The twist is that Little Red Riding Hood, in this story, is really a vampire. The final story in this magazine is a reprint of the lovely Christmas poem, The Night Before Christmas, illustrated by gross and obscene drawings that defy description.*" ("Little Red Riding Hood" was one of EC's "Grim Fairy Tales," scripted by Gaines/Feldstein, illustrated by Jack Kamen. Writing as *Melvie Splane*, Al Feldstein (born 1925) lampooned the best-selling Mickey Spillane novel [*I, The Jury*] in "My Gun Is The Jury," illustrated by Jack Davis.)

Jury Tampering

As early as 1950, William M. Gaines (1922-1992) had come to the attention of the New York State Joint Legislative Committee, formed specifically (in 1949) to investigate the "menace" of comic books. As such, two of EC's formative horror comics (*Haunt of Fear* #17(#3) and *Crime Patrol* #15, from 1950) had pages reproduced in their first report; *Legislative Document* #15, 1951. The brief, approving article about publisher Gaines (*Tops* v.1#1, March 1954) was subject to further censure in the committee's 1954 report (*LD* #37). When NYS committee chairman James A. FitzPatrick appeared before the Senate subcommittee as an expert witness (June 4), he castigated *Panic* #1 at length, reading extensive extracts, which included samples from "*Jury*" and "*Christmas*." (See: "Petty Crime Part 2," *FTT* #28, for additional information about these anti-comics campaigns, plus a glimpse of *Tops* digest article).

Speaking to the subcommittee, FitzPatrick was unable to restrain his contempt for the comic, reminding them of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's comments from 1950: "*the availability of salacious literature and*



THE NEWSDEALERS OF AMERICA ARE SCREAMING...

STOPPIT!



BECAUSE, WITH JUST ONE DAY'S DISPLAY...

POOF! THERE GOES PANIC!

SO IF YOU'RE SELF CONSCIOUS IN A B.O. (BUYING OUT) CROWD... IF PANIC GOES POOF! TOO QUICKLY WHERE YOU BROWSE... IF YOU'D RATHER NOT PERSPIRE TILL THE NEXT ISSUE COMES IN... THEN SUBSCRIBE! FILL OUT THE COUPON, ENCLOSE ONE DOLLAR FOR EIGHT (8) ISSUES, AND MAIL! JUST GIVE THE ENVELOPE A GENTLE SQUEEZE AND POOF! SAY GOODBYE TO ORDER PROBLEMS! THE ONLY THING YOU'LL HAVE LEFT TO WORRY ABOUT THEN IS AN OFFENSIVE MAILMAN!

THE PANICKY EDITORS OF PANIC
ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
N. Y. C. 12, N. Y.

I ENCLOSE ONE DOLLAR (\$1.00). PLEASE RUSH ME THE NEXT EIGHT DECODORIZED ISSUES OF PANIC. I WANT TO SAY "POOF!" TO MY FRIENDS!

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____

PANIC, Jan.-Feb., 1964 - Volume 1, Number 2. Published by Tim-Tel Comics, Inc., at 225 Lafayette Street, New York 12, N. Y. Written by: Various. Drawing by: Various. Editor: Albert D. Gershon. Application for second-class mailing at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Approved on 10/10/63. Post Office at New York, N. Y. Postmaster: Please send no money orders or checks to this office. Second-class postage paid at New York, N. Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postage paid at New York, N. Y. and at additional mailing offices. This publication is published weekly except for one issue which is published bi-monthly. Printed in U. S. A.

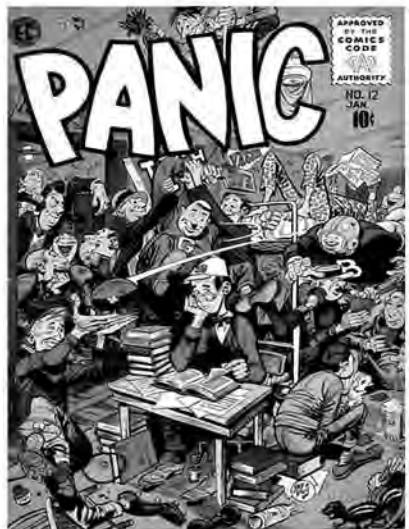
presentations of any type making mockery of democratic living and respect for law and order, are important causes leading to an unhealthy crime situation among young people." Referring to publisher Gaines, Hendrickson commented: "I shall never forget his testimony nor his demeanour." To which FitzPatrick replied: "I believe after you have read this comic book you will never forget this comic book, either, because I have been studying this subject very hard for a long time. I have never yet seen anything which equals this, nor which so well demonstrates the very type of evil that I believe we are trying to reach." FitzPatrick quoted at length from the Spillane spoof (from the "Sex and Sadism" department), commenting, "which is complete and utter perversion. I am referring now to the sequence where this so-called private eye proceeds to this girl's home - and she, incidentally, had been requesting him to come with a statement that if he came he could have everything, including her. She then, and remember this is all for children, or could be for children; it is 10 cents on any stand; she then takes..." At this point FitzPatrick was interrupted by Hendrickson, to relate a story from a Naval Officer and the deleterious effects that comic books were having on young officers. This diverted FitzPatrick's attention, as he confirmed his own Naval military credentials. He returned briefly to *Panic*'s "Christmas" retelling before indicating it as the "kind of complete and utter rot we are giving to children."

Kinder Surprise

As seen (FTT #28), Gaines's lengthy subcommittee testimony on the opening day (April 21) was reduced to simple headlines in the popular press, which saw the publisher as the cause of all the evils that comics embodied. In particular, those concerning severed heads, dripping blood and the subcommittee's sense of shock. Gaines was preceded by psychiatrist and redoubtable anti-comics campaigner, Fredric Wertham, MD, who had been befriended by the former organised crime-fighter and committee's star speaker, Senator Estes Kefauver. Wertham's testimony mixed lurid samples from comics with reports about disturbed children. It was unscientific and completely unsubstantiated, but guaranteed to horrify any right minded citizen. Although unnamed, Wertham cited several contemporary EC stories, including "The Red Dupe" editorial (in defence of fellow campaigner Gershon Legman), "Foul Play" (*Haunt of Fear* #19; "This is a baseball game where they play baseball with a man's head; where the man's intestines are the baselines. All his organs have some part to play. The torso of this man is the chest protector of one of the players.. There is nothing left to anybody's morbid imagination"), "The Orphan," and "The Whipping" (both, *Shock SuspenStories* #14). Wertham prefaced his description of the latter by indicating, "Hitler was a beginner compared to the comic-book industry."

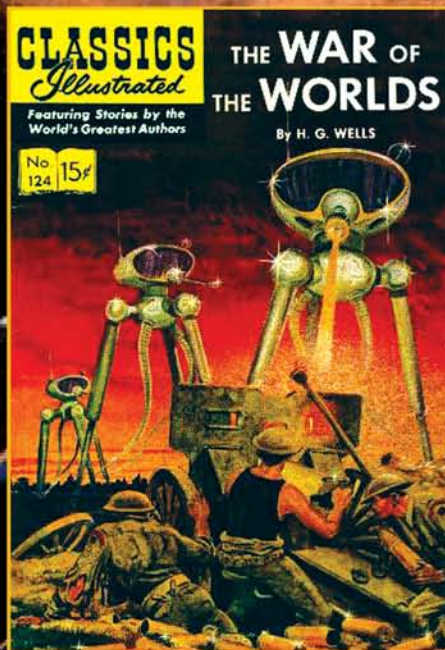
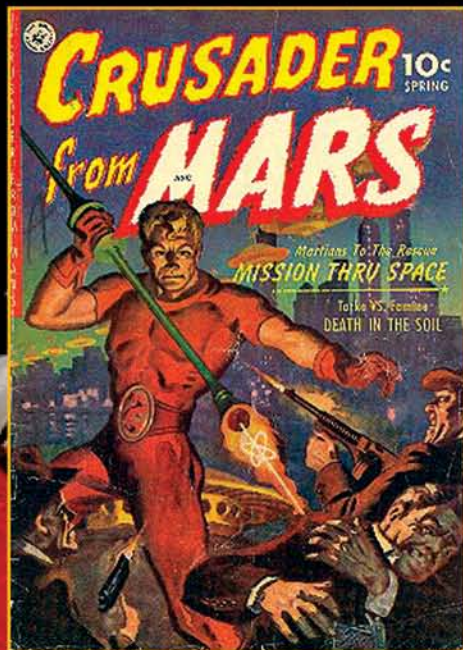
Smoke Alarm

It was Kefauver's sustained bout of questioning, with aside's from Hanoach and Hennings, which undid Gaines and prompted the quote-worthy headlines; as the publisher sought to defend his company's wares.



MARS IS HEAVEN

COMIC BOOKS & THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE
BY FRANK MOTLER





The Martians

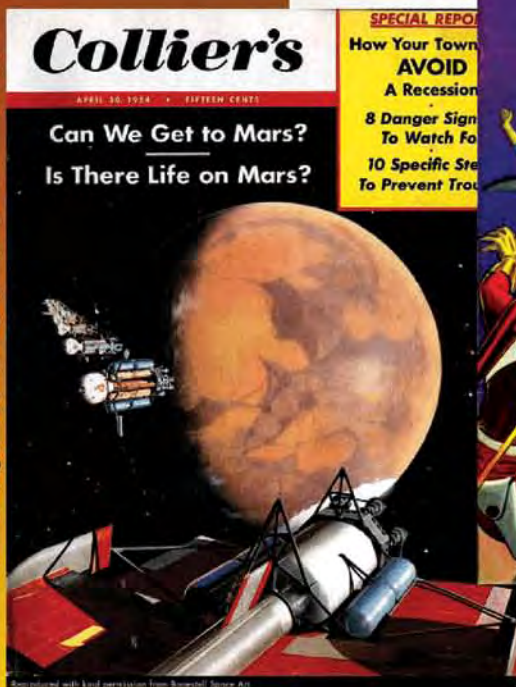
Riding along the canal in their motorboat, excitable children Mike, Robert and Timmy are asking their mother and father questions. "How far are we going, Dad?" "A Million Years" is the father's solemn reply. Mother spots something on the horizon, "Look, children there's a Dead City," "Wow!" "Golly!" Looking about for Martians, one asks his father "What Do Martians look like?" "You'll know when you see them." After their picnic, they take turns to listen to broadcasts from Earth. Suddenly, father's face "looked like one of those fallen Martian cities, caved in, sucked dry, almost dead." He passes the radio to his wife, "Her lips drop open." Blinking his wet eyes, he announces grimly "It's all over. The radio just went off the Atomic Beam. Every station on Earth is gone. The air is completely silent. It will probably remain silent."

After burning all their family papers, including a map of the United States, the father says "Come along all of you. Here, Alice. Now I'm going to show you THE MARTIANS!" They walk along, father carrying his son Robert, crying in his arms. The night sky revealed no sign of Earth, it was like "it had already set!" As they reach the canal, father points "There they are Michael..." They look down, It sends a thrill chasing through Timothy. "The Martians were there, all right... In the canal... reflected in the water. Timothy and Michael and Robert and Mum and Dad. The Martians stared back at them for a long silent time, from the rippling water..."

The Red Planet

The planets have been considered for centuries but at times their orbital precession, in the night sky, conflicted with mathematical predictions. These anomalies were resolved, when the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (in *De Revolutionibus*, 1530) proposed the fantastical idea that the Earth revolves around the Sun. This flew in the face of Catholic ideology, which insisted the Earth was at the centre of the Universe. It would lead to

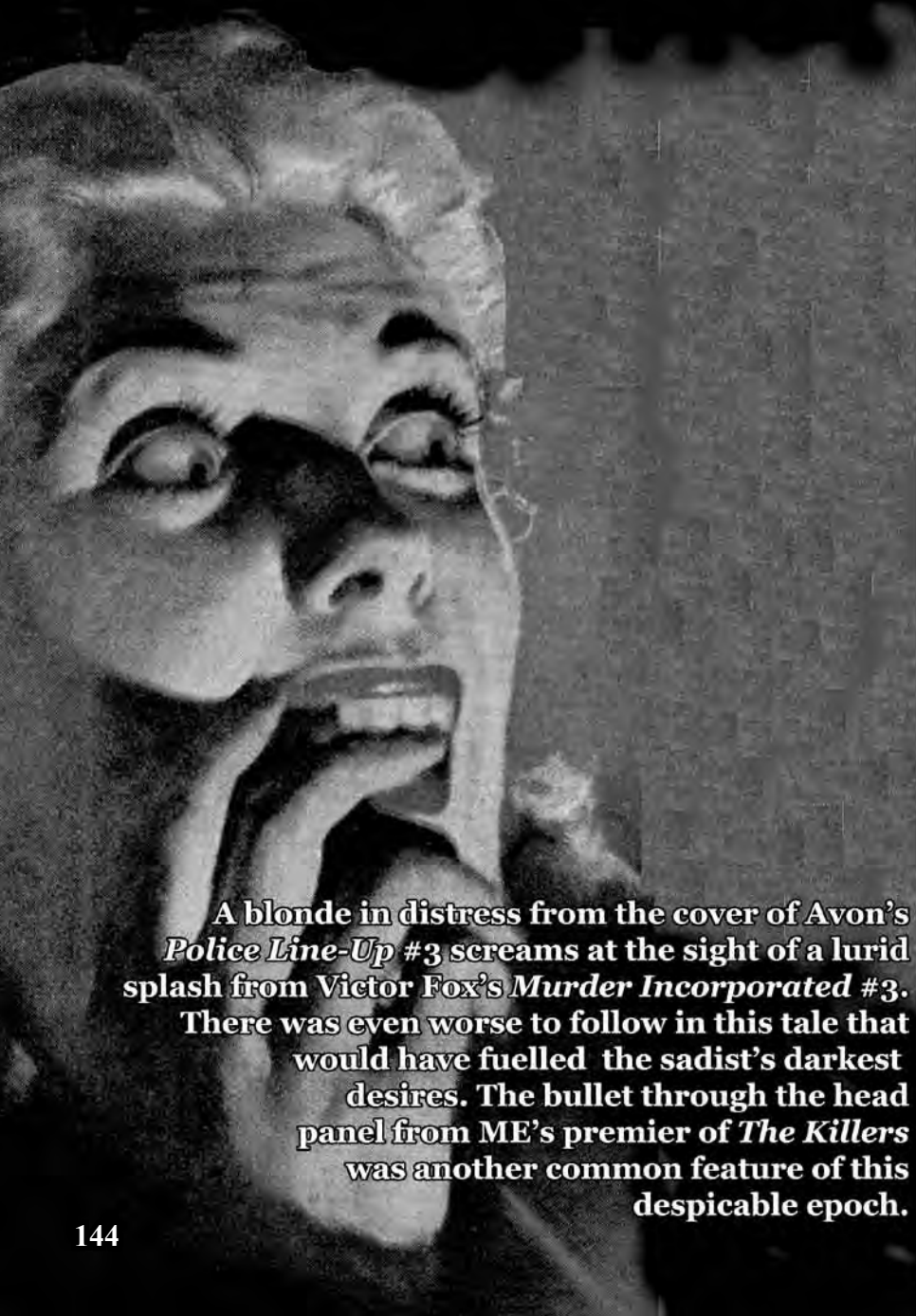
Comic books from beyond the stars, Ziff Davis's *Space Patrol* #1, the cover to *Collier's* April 1954 issue, *Mystery in Space* #55, Steve Ditko on *Space War* #8, Man in Space #716, Avon's *Attack on Planet Mars* and another stunning Ziff Davis entry, *Amazing Adventures* #4



Comic Book Killer!

Dr. Frederic Wertham and the
Death of American Comics.

by Carl Alessi



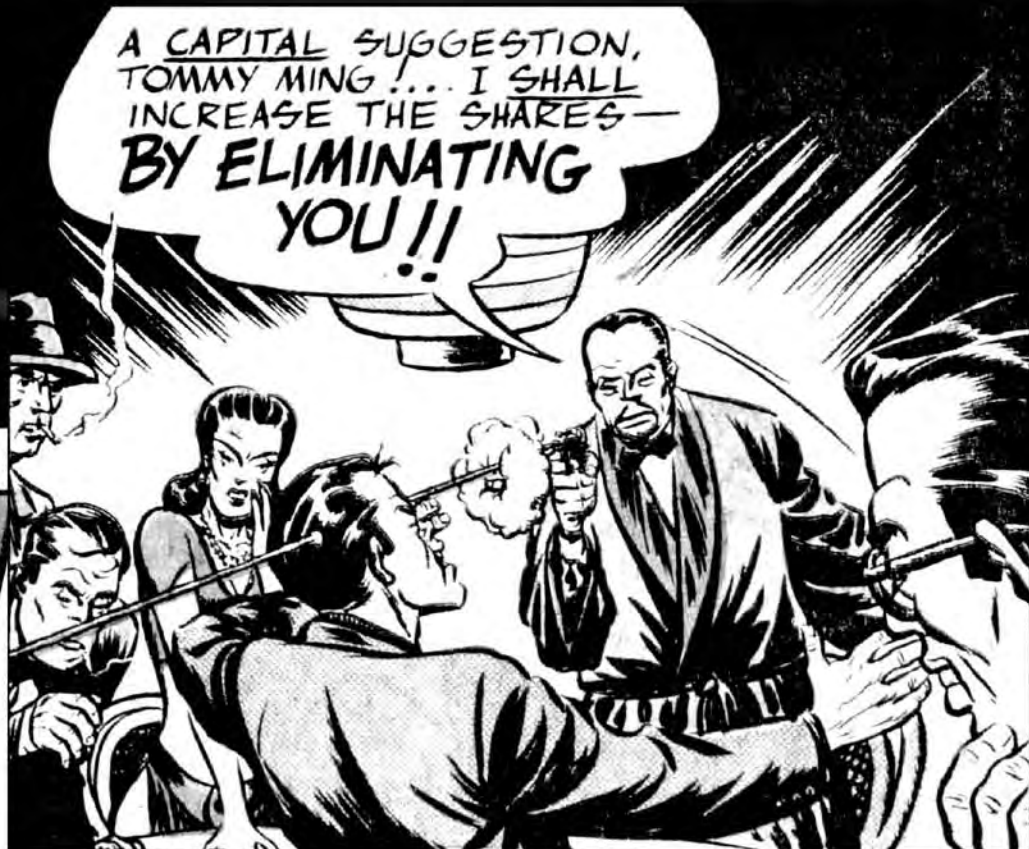
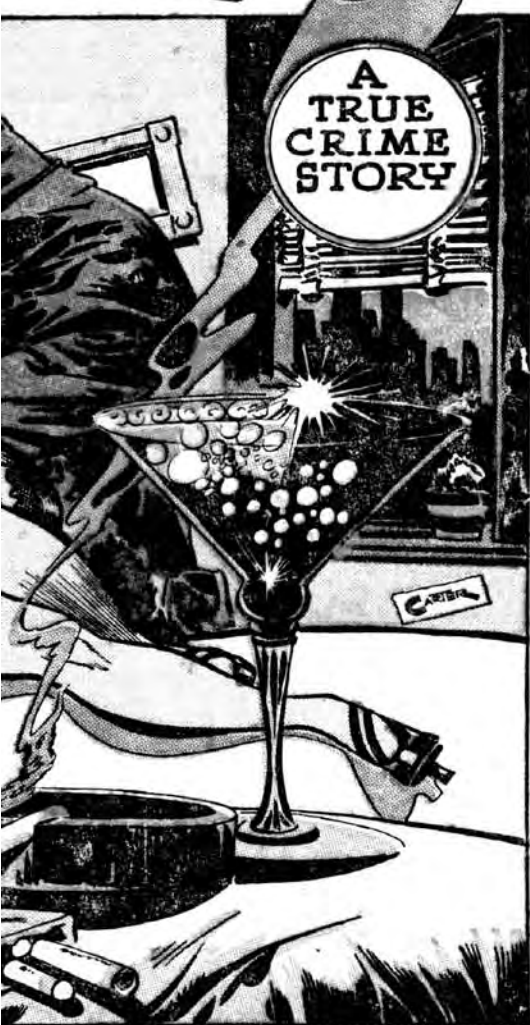
A blonde in distress from the cover of Avon's *Police Line-Up* #3 screams at the sight of a lurid splash from Victor Fox's *Murder Incorporated* #3. There was even worse to follow in this tale that would have fuelled the sadist's darkest desires. The bullet through the head panel from ME's premier of *The Killers* was another common feature of this despicable epoch.

JOSEPH M *Lady*



FORGER, THIEF, TORTURER
AND MURDERER. JOSEPH
MEDLEY LED A LIFE OF
ALMOST UNABATED CRIME
FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS.
A COLD BLOODED KILLER,
WITH AVARICE HIS ONLY
MOTIVE, HIS BARBAROUS
CAREER CAME TO A
CLOSE THROUGH THE
CHANGE OBSERVANCE OF
A COLLEGE PROFESSOR....

MEDLEY killer



The name Dr. Frederic Wertham will be forever associated with the dramatic rise and fall of the American comic book industry. The producers of comic books had always had their share of hostile intellectual critics. As the content of comic books became even more blood soaked and violent in the early 1950s, the opposition towards comic books also grew more intense. Until Dr. Frederic Wertham decided to embark on a crusade to drive the publishers of crime and horror comics out of business, the comic book industry had been able to successfully defend itself against the attacks of various opponents.

In Dr. Frederic Wertham, the comic publishers finally confronted an adversary who might be able to bring down their various publishing "empires." Unlike many of today's critics of comics, he was no eccentric "cracker barrel philosopher." Possessing impressive medical and psychiatric credentials, Wertham had served as the director of at least five mental health clinics. Besides all this, he was generally acknowledged as one of the country's leading experts on the psychology of the criminal mind and had often testified at the trials of infamous murders during the juvenile delinquent ridden 1950s.

Wertham has stated that when he first became interested in the "problem" of comic books, he didn't believe that crime and horror comics were all that harmful to children. After amassing a huge collection of comics for his own careful study, and after interviewing several hundred children on the subject of comic books, he very quickly reached the disturbing conclusion that the horror and crime comics found on virtually every news stand in America were a "grave" menace to the emotional health of every child or teenager who read

The anti-comic book crusaders would not have liked any of these images, the first of which comes from *Dark Mysteries* #14's "Fingers of Doom." Across the centre of this spread are the blood drenched panels from *Chamber of Chills* #8 and then comes a head severing from Charlton's *The Thing!* #17, followed by an enticing scene full of innuendo from the pages of *Weird Terror* #8.



them. Wertham was further disturbed when he realised that many of his fellow psychiatrists knew next to nothing about the "abominable" contents of modern comic books, and that some of this misinformed group actually believed that horror comics benefited children as they allowed the young reader to release his troublesome, "anti social" impulses through harmless fantasy.

Wertham knew that the best way to alert the American public to the menace of comic books was through the printed word. Unfortunately for the comics industry, Wertham was an extremely convincing writer.

In 1953, Wertham's controversial ideas and theories on comics were published under the ultra-dramatic title *Seduction of the Innocent*. Today this book is a collector's item, selling usually for at least \$75.

Just as he had hoped, the book received an enormous amount of media publicity and quickly became a best seller. The public's response to Wertham's book was even more enthusiastic than the author had hoped. He received great support from prominent educators and teachers' associations. Outraged by some of the gory material quoted in Wertham's book, politicians in various state legislatures began demanding legal restrictions be placed

on the publishers on American comic books. In some parts of the country, angry parents organised boycotts against local shops selling sold crime and horror comics.

The comic publishers realised that public opinion had begun to turn against them. They too, tried to use the printed word for their own advantage. Many comics started running special editorial pages featuring long quotations from psychiatrists who believed that crime comics were in no way harmful to the all important mental health of young readers. In his book *Who are the Guilty?*, Dr. David Abrahamson had insisted that "*Comic books do not lead to crime, although they have been blamed for it.*"

Finally, the furore over comics reached such a state of intensity that the Senate Judiciary Committee announced they would hold hearings to investigate the relationship between comic books and juvenile delinquency. One of the most influential men in the field of comics, William Gaines the head man at EC Comics, asked to testify before the Committee.

The SPECTRE Calls

The Spectre Calls The Dread Story of a Ghastly Avenger

by John Fennessy

Dig him no grave nor bury him deep! In the dread of night, window shutters rattle, a door gusts suddenly ajar and the bell chimes. Everyday sounds made unnaturally eerie send a shiver down your spinelessness. Snow falls and uncanny silence now wraps the house. Like the craven criminal you are, you stop counting your ill-gotten blood money and open the front door, slowly, nervously. Nothing, just the still black and white street parade and ... what's this? Foot prints in the snow. Leading to your door.



Back to 1968 and Neal Adams' inspired scene from *Spectre* #2 and then Jim Aparo's gorilla charged cover that fronted *Adventure* #438 and then the novel glow-in-the-dark image heralding the premier of the 1992 series.

A chill raises the hairs on the back of your neck – yes, that really happens. You turn to see an unearthly vision ... a great green billowing cloak hovering above you, attached to a green cowl, and inside that cowl, a face. Oh, Lord, what a face! White as death with eyes that would shake the devil himself, eyes that see into the soul. Heaven help you if your heart is not pure, for the Spectre has called.

The Spectre was created by Superman's Jerry Siegel and horror artist Bernard Bailey for *More Fun Comics* #52 in February 1940. His two-part origin story told how hard-boiled detective Jim Corrigan was buried alive in a barrel of cement and tossed to a watery doom by gangsters. The tale starts along the lines of a typical crime comic with Corrigan getting a tip-off about the bad guys from his stoolie. The art is visceral, very film noir. Corrigan was about to be married but after foiling the crime, the gangsters capture him and his bride-to-be, intent on revenge. Death is not to be the end for him; his spirit is sent back to Earth by a mysterious voice (God?) to start an unrelenting war against evil everywhere. To his horror, Corrigan sees his own dead body still in the barrel. With the power to walk through walls, he goes to rescue his fiancée Clarice, still a prisoner of the crooks. Corrigan, now the Spectre but not yet in costume, is merciless. One gangster is reduced to a living skeleton where he stands. For a man about to be married, he does not seem that bothered about Clarice either – a gangster finally shoots her in a bid to stop him. But the Spectre's powers seem limitless – he heals Clarice's wound and even brings two of the bad guys back

to life as the police arrive. The story ends with him breaking off his engagement to Clarice and making his famous green and white costume.

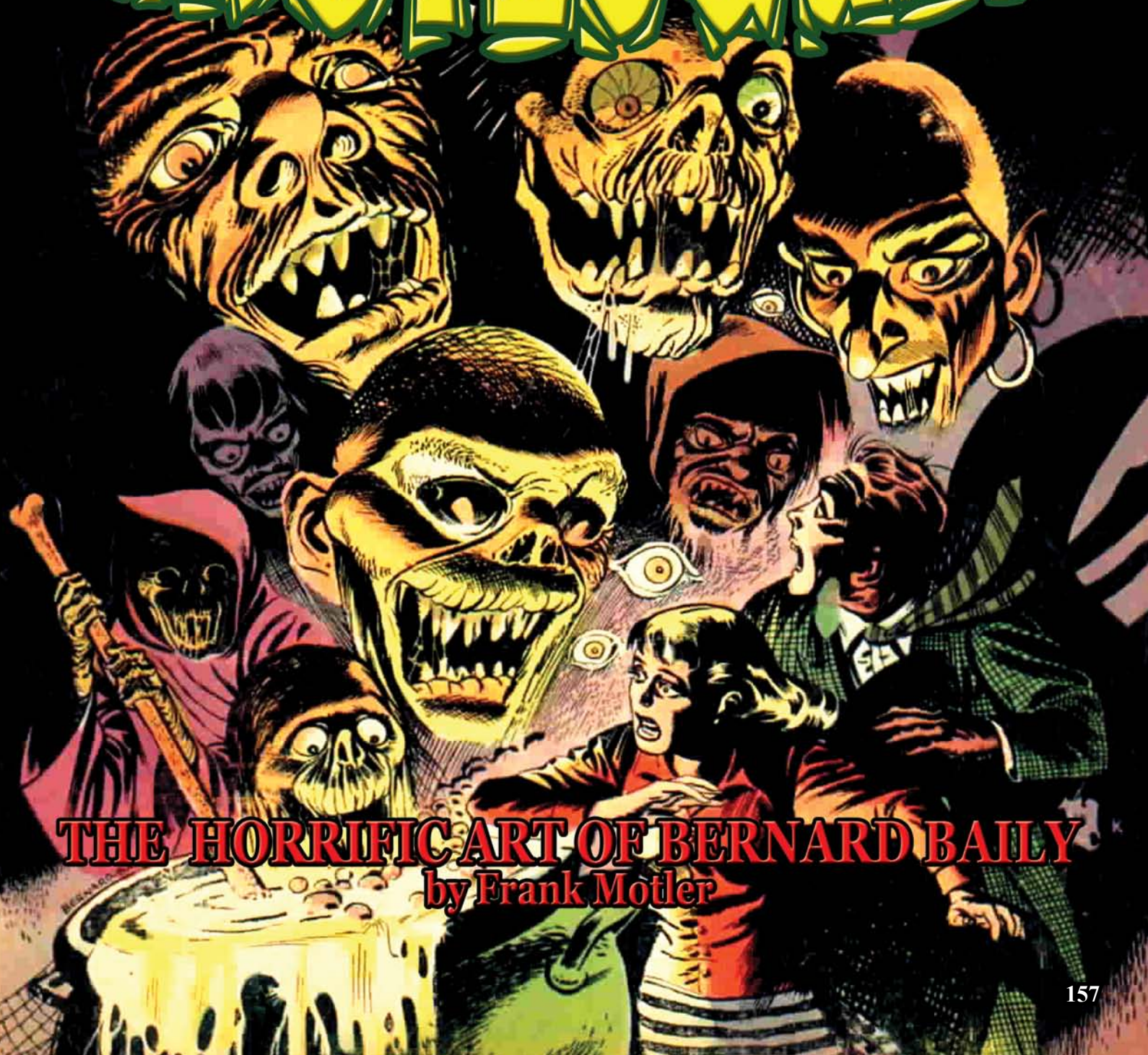
Sadly, the Spectre's early adventures are very expensive collector's items, but the origin story is reprinted in DC's *Secret Origins* #5, published in the 1970s, and is a recommended read. After his initial series was cancelled, the Spectre had a rather chequered history in comics. The ghostly guardian suffered the indignity of becoming involved with Percival Pop, the bumbling Super Cop. Excellent artwork from the likes of Neal Adams graced his short-lived 1960s revival in his own title. The original horror concept, however, was diluted by having Corrigan and the Spectre appear as two separate beings. The Comics Code also ensured that he was more like a traditional superhero than the merciless spirit of retribution seen two decades before.

In the 1980s, another revival in his own titled comic was to see a collection of superb art by Gene Colan and Gray Morrow with some beautiful Mike Kaluta covers. Doug Moench, the writer, tried hard but again the folly of having Corrigan and the Spectre as two different entities worked to spoil the fear factor. The Spectre even became involved in a controversially explicit love affair with Madame Xanadu and also suffered a reduction in his power, losing his omnipotent fury.

So putting aside these disappointing periods, in this article I want to concentrate on two consistently excellent versions of the



A GALLERY OF GROTESQUES



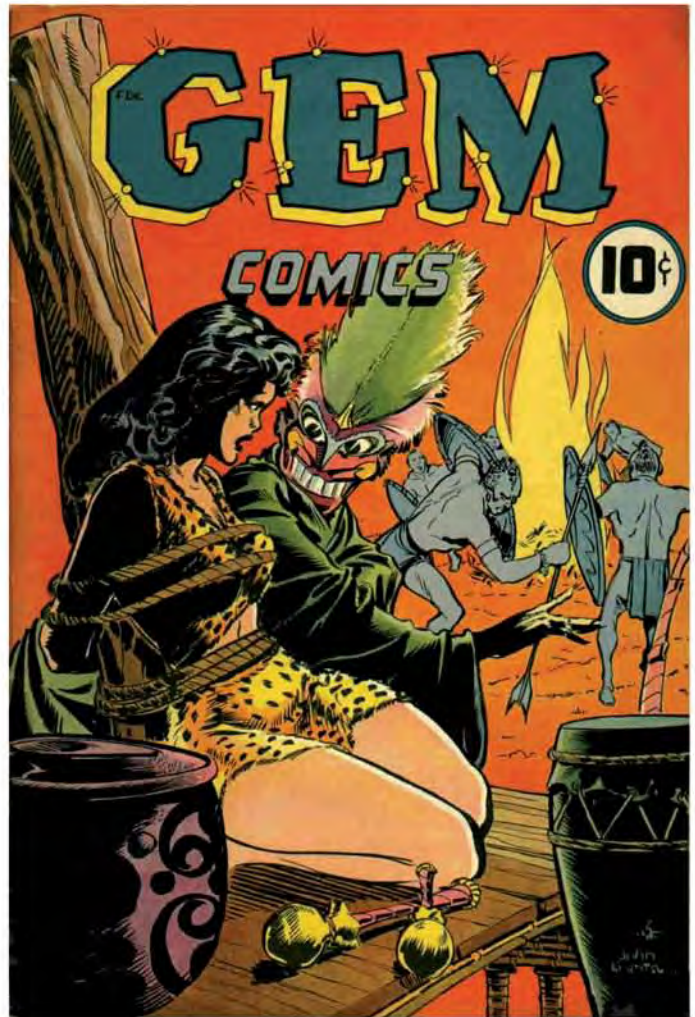
THE HORRIFIC ART OF BERNARD BAILY
by Frank Motler



Vengeance Of The Spectre

Bernard Baily is one of the premier horror cover artists, a distinction merited by some of the most significant images produced by anyone working within the genre. These covers rank alongside those of Bill Everett, Russ Heath, Joe Maneely, Al Feldstein and John Craig, each infused with an unbearable sense of fright and the surreal. The covers he produced for publisher Stanley Morse, are without equal, but it is the range and diversity of images that continues to stagger.

Born in New York in 1920, Bernard's connections with horror go as far back as 1940 with his first major assignment for DC, The Spectre, in the ironically entitled *More Fun Comics*. His art on The Spectre would appear in most issues as well as the early covers running from #52 through until #101 (February 1940 to January-February 1945).



including DC, Fox and Quality, 1936 through 1945. After a short-lived self-publishing venture he worked for Prize (1945-1954), DC again (1952-1957), L.B. Cole's Star (1951), Fawcett, Stanley Morse, Atlas/Marvel (1956-8 and 1961), Archie on *The Fly* and *The Jaguar* (1961), *Cracked Magazine* (1960's) and Harvey (1962). He retired from comics after a third spell at DC on *Spawn of Frankenstein* and mystery filler stories (1973-5). Around 1949 he also worked on syndicated strip art, amongst them *Vic Jordan* and *Mr. X*. In this long and largely unheralded career his pencils brought life to such diverse subjects as crime, horror/ mystery, humour, jungle, romance, superhero and western.

Baily Publishing Co.

Cambridge House was one of several company names that Bernard



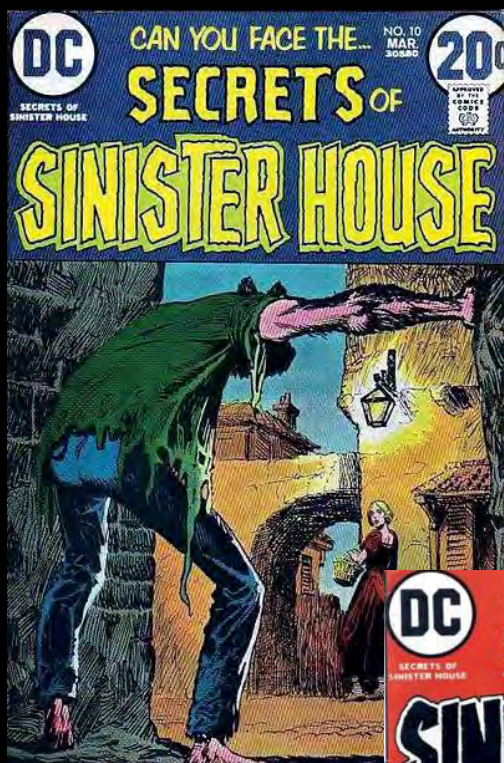
CAN YOU FACE THE... **SECRETS** OF **SINISTER HOUSE**

by Mike Howlett



The early 1970s weren't a bad time to be a kid in the U.S. Sure, there were the usual trials and tribulations of school and parents, but there were also some terrific escapes... most notably monster movies, monster magazines and horror comics. Lots of horror comics!

My own personal "Golden Age" of comics was from 1972 to 1975. The racks were brimming with great (and some not so great) horror books! Every week there was something new to entice me! Warren and Skywald were well into their runs, churning out grisly, yet sophisticated, monochrome horror to twist my young mind. Marvel and Eerie Publications rode along on the black-and-white bandwagon, glutting



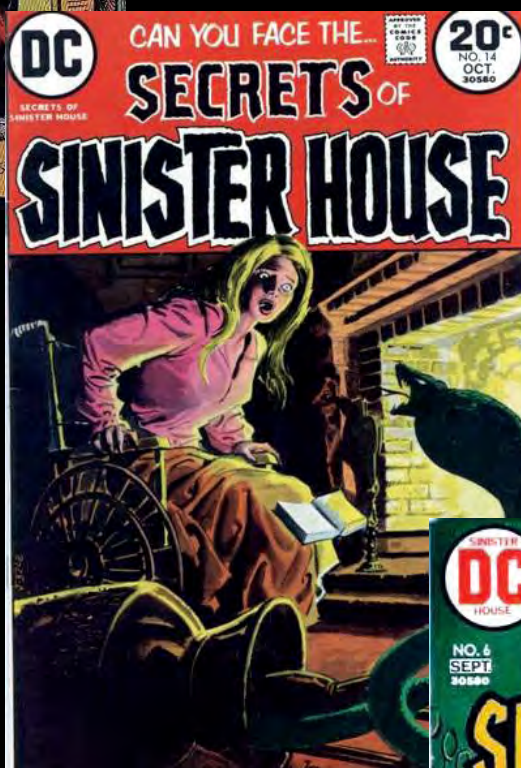
the market. Four-color horror was well represented by Charlton's sometimes good ghost comics and Marvel's pre-code reprint titles. The latter also crowded the shelves with continuing character titles like *Tomb of Dracula* and *Werewolf By Night* (though I have a tough time considering them real horror comics...) To me, the real horror comics were the anthology titles... like the ones DC put out!

In my eyes, DC absolutely ruled the roost of Bronze Age horror comics. To this day, any DC horror cover with the large 20 cent seal in the upper right corner gives me a great feeling! Well written EC-style stories (some by EC alum Jack Oleck), good to brilliant artwork, fun horror hosts and creepy covers... DCs had it all! Newer artists like Berni Wrightson and Mike Kaluta became superstars, while my young eyes were opened to the varied styles of Alfredo Alcalá, Alex Nino, Ruben Yandoc and many more.

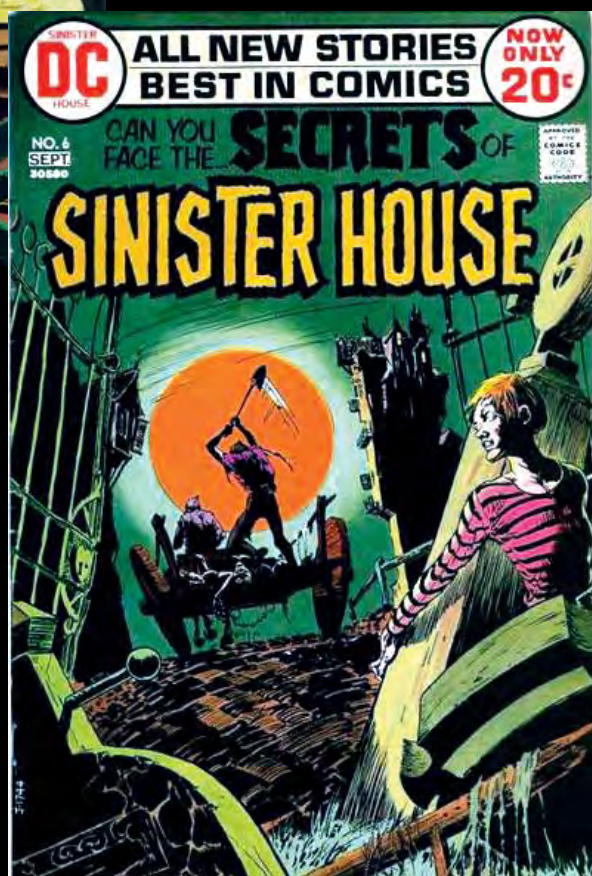
Long running titles like *House of Mystery*, *House of Secrets*, and *(Tales of) The Unexpected* got a face lift and put out some great stories. *Ghosts*, *The Witching Hour*, *Weird Mystery Tales*, and *Forbidden Tales of Dark Mansion* all served up plenty of quality shivers as well. But my favorite title was *Secrets of Sinister House*. This short run really struck a chord with me.

GOTHIC BEGINNINGS

"Dark Shadows" was a wildly popular daytime TV show in the late 1960s and early 70s, thrilling audiences with vampires, werewolves, romance, and well... dark shadows. Spotting a possible trend, DC decided to test the four color Gothic Romance waters with *House of Secrets* #88 (November 1970) and #89 (January 1971). Sales must have been encouraging, as October 1971 brought us two new titles from DC... *Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love* and *Sinister House of Secret Love*. These were big, 52-page graphic novelettes of love, terror, castles and the aforementioned dark shadows. *Sinister House* featured decent artwork by Alex Toth (#3), Tony DeZuniga (#2 & 4) and stories by the likes of Len Wein, Frank Robbins and some fellow named Joe Orlando (who also served as editor from #2 on.)



The summer of 1971 saw DC hit pay dirt with *House of Secrets* #92 and a story about a walking muck heap named Swamp Thing. Within a year, things started to move in a more horrific direction. Horror anthologies were proving to be a winner, and the romance angle was being phased out. *Sinister House's* name changed to *Secrets of Sinister House* with #5 (June July 1972) and it was the last 52 page gothic romance.



IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT!

By Peter Normanton

PRE-CODE GRAVE ROBBING



Pre-Code Grave Robbing

There was something of a mystery surrounding a series of dead bodies which had disappeared in the early hours from a church in Islington; it wasn't long before a local gravedigger was discovered selling the dead to a rather shady bunch of individuals. The whispers may have been guarded, but there was an insinuation these men were plying that most foul of trades, body snatching. Surely they had to be the devil's own! Several dead bodies had been unearthed in inexplicable circumstances from the grounds of St Mary's Church in 1773. Only a few years later, the head gravedigger at St James's Church Clerkenwell was apprehended in the act of selling the deceased to a South London gang of body snatchers, known locally as The Borough Boys. These episodes have not been lifted from the pages of *Tales from the Crypt* or any of its heinous pre-Code ilk; rather they were a rather ghastly side to a not often mentioned part of London life during the 1770s. This grisly epidemic of body snatching was an unfortunate consequence of a law making anatomy illegal, except when performed on criminals whose bodies were specifically assigned for dissection in the wake of their execution. The number of executions was grossly inadequate in meeting the increasing demands of the surgical institutions, thus it was

inevitable the numbers of fresh cadavers would fall into short supply. With their research and maybe the fate of mankind at stake, the medical profession turned to more dubious sources to obtain the specimens they so desperately needed. However, religious thought coupled with age old superstition made it nigh on unthinkable to disturb a person's mortal remains, so much so there were three days of riots in New York in April 1788 when it was discovered bodies had gone missing from a graveyard.

With only its second appearance Vault of Horror #13, (June/July 1950), Graham Ingels was already experimenting with the inflammatory narrative provided by "Doctor of Horror." Doctor Lemonet's pride had to find a way to increase the number of students attending his anatomy classes, but as we have already learned legislation had resulted in an alarming shortage of cadavers. The doctor couldn't resist, turning to grave robbing, on the predictable path to murder most heinous. This was a tenebrous account, providing a glimpse of what could be expected from both this man and EC as a publisher of ominous repute in the years to come.



TerrorVision

An interview with Shane Oakley
by Paul H. Birch





One Saturday afternoon I met the bio-engineered oatcake-scoffing offspring of Johnnies Lennon and Rotten; a lad who could splatter ink across a page in playful anarchy while possessing an articulate sense of design. His unique visual storytelling abilities have since evolved from *Mr. X* to *Deadline* magazine, between *Rock & Roll High School* to *The Fall of the House of Usher*, onto as lofty a marketing-team's dream as *Albion* and down to the nether-hells in his latest *Channel Evil* series. Older, wiser-nonetheless still as exasperating and exhausting an individual to be with, I value his friendship regardless and profoundly: He is Shane Oakley.

Shane grew up during the last hurrah of British comics when more titles came out weekly than a grown-up's wage packet could cough-up for; a happy childhood weaned on long-gone nursery titles like *Pippin* and *Playhour* that were "beautifully rendered" before moving on to *The Beano* and *Topper*, and more importantly *Valiant* and *Lion*, featuring iconic characters "that burnt deep" into his psyche, which is an apt place for readers to enter the picture...

Paul H Birch: Beyond the creepy cobwebs Reg Bunn drew in *The Spider* or the various monsters that would skirt the backgrounds of Grimly Feendish, what was it that made you search out for things to scare you as a kid?

Shane Oakley: It wasn't so much seeking things that frightened the crap out of me, I just liked a good escapist yarn, the more ridiculous the better; scary just made the ride that much sweeter.

But the love affair with monsters started with storybooks at school: Greek and Roman myths, Grimm's fairy tales, etc. I also adored those Saturday afternoon Ray Harryhausen movies, and anything with dinosaurs, *Godzilla* and *King Kong* especially.

The horror genre continues to draws you in. Do you view it as a catharsis for something?

Well, I could say it's a way we deal with deep set fears, the biggest of them being that you're going to die and there's nothing you can do about it, and horror comics and movies offer a chance to observe death from a safe distance; you are in control, you choose when, and how, you want to be frightened. Unlike real life. But yeah, they do offer a simple, healthy way of venting. And we all like a good vent.

Mostly though, I'm connecting to that wide-eyed kid watching



SHE STOPPED, SUDDENLY REMEMBERING THE BREAKABLE WINDOWS AND THE FIEND SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE! SHE DROPPED THE BODY, PICKED UP THE LUMBER, THE NAILS, THE HAMMER AND STARTED BOARDING THE WINDOWS...



FROM THE REAR OF THE HOUSE SHE HEARD A BOUNDING ON THE BACK DOOR AND SHE DROPPED THE HAMMER. SHE DROPPED THE NAILS AND SNATCHED UP THE BODY. SHE CALLED FOR HELP AND REMEMBERED THE BODY ON THE FLOOR...



MY DEALINGS JOHN BY DAVID

Sadly we were unable to get a copy of the canvas John painted for David, but we didn't think you'd object to seeing some of his work from his time at EC

SHE LET THE PHONE SLIP FROM HER GRASP AND TUMBLE INTO ITS CRADLE AND SHE PICKED UP THE HAMMER AND THE LUMBER AND ALL THE LITTLE NAILS AND FINISHED BOARDING UP THE WINDOWS...



SHE FINISHED THE WINDOWS AND WONDERED WHAT THE MANIAC WAS DOING AND REMEMBERED THE DEAD BODY AND WENT BACK AND DRAGGED IT INTO THE CLOSET...



SHE WENT OVER ALL THE WINDOWS AGAIN, CHECKING TO SEE IF THEY WERE ALL BOARDED UP AND MADE SURE THE BODY WAS IN THE CLOSET AND WENT DOWN TO THE CELLAR TO CHECK THE CELLAR DOOR...



THE CELLAR DOOR WAS LOCKED AND SHE RAN UP-STAIRS AND CHECKED THE DOORS AND CHECKED THE WINDOWS AND MADE SURE THE BODY WAS IN THE CLOSET AND RACED UP TO THE ATTIC TO MAKE SURE IT WAS ALL CLOSED UP...

AND AFTER SHE CHECKED THE ATTIC SHE CHECKED THE LOCKS ON ALL THE WINDOWS ON THE SECOND FLOOR AND THOUGHT OF THE FIEND AND A LIFE INSURANCE AND WENT TO HER DAUGHTER'S ROOM...



CAROL?

CAROL?

SHE'S

HE FELT THE PANIC SETTING IN AS HE STOMPED THE STARTER AGAIN, AGAIN AGAIN AGAIN AND AGAIN...

ON 9000 000 THE, THE BATT DEAD!

HE OPENED THE CAR WITH A SIGN OF RELIEF HE KEYS HANGING IN THE IGNITION SLOT. HE SLID IN...

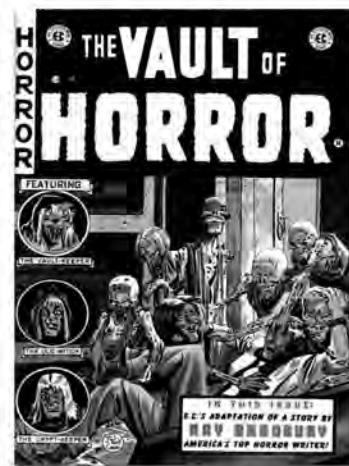
THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE I'LL HAVE TO BRING A NEW BATTERY BACK BEFORE I CAN GET CAR OUT OF HERE!

HE HAD PASSED BEFORE TO THE LODGE! HE FROD CAR. A BRAT TRYING PATIENTLY ON...

NO ONE'S FOU HAD, I CERTAINLY Y IT B TWO PEI

HE HAD PASSED BEFORE TO THE LODGE! HE FROD CAR. A BRAT TRYING PATIENTLY ON...

WITH LEGEND: CRAIG BURLINGTON

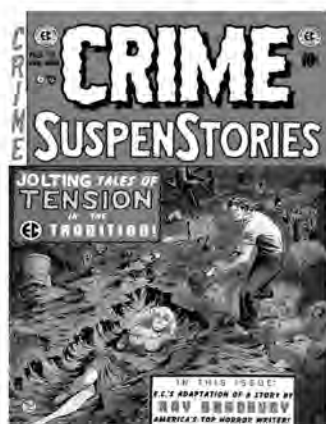
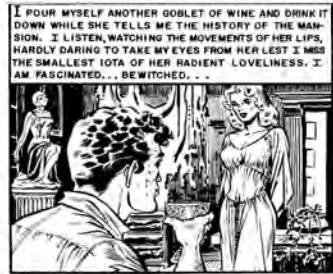
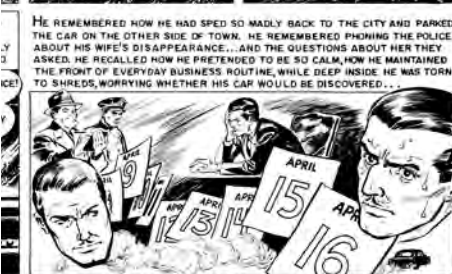


A number of years ago, I tracked down EC great Johnny Craig with a little detective work. From a 1968 interview he granted the seminal EC fanzine *Squa Tront*, I noted he had lived in a small town in Pennsylvania back then. On the off chance that he still lived there so many years later, I dialled telephone directory assistance. There was indeed a "John Craig" listed in that village. I agonized about whether to call him because I didn't want to invade his privacy. I finally decided to call. He was pleasant on the phone, and I asked whether we could correspond occasionally; I figured letters might be less intrusive than phone calls. He agreed, and we exchanged letters over a 5 to 8 year period.

I had always hoped to own some original Johnny Craig art some day. After several years of enjoyable correspondence, I worked up the courage to broach the subject of a commissioned illustration. Mr. Craig was amenable, and we began discussing what the piece would entail. Most of Craig's later work was in

oil. As great as I think Johnny Craig's prowess as a painter was, I wanted something a little different, something more akin to his 1950s EC work. Thus I asked if he would be willing to do an illo somewhat reminiscent of his EC panel work. What I proposed was this: for Johnny to pencil an illo, then ink it (similar to how he'd do a comics page), and then for him to go back over it in water colours to approximate the look of his EC comic book panels.

Mr. Craig said he hadn't done much inking in years, but that it ought to be fun. We then discussed subject matter. I knew I wanted it to feature the three EC GhouLunatics but, aside from that, I had no ideas set in stone. Mr. Craig indicated that he would do it for one price if he was allowed complete discretion as to the image and context. He quoted another higher fee if I were to dictate the exact elements of the illustration. I was more than happy to leave it to him. After all, Johnny Craig was one of the greatest comic artists ever. Who was I to dictate to



Subterranean Nightmare



A WORLD PEACE TREATY
WAS SIGNED ON THIS SPOT
BY ALL THE NATIONS OF THE
EARTH.

JULY 1971

by Frank Motler

