

JP

FANZINE

NO. 33

MAR '17

\$0.00US

\$0.00CAN

£0.00UK

SUGGESTED
FOR MATURE
READERS

JOURNEY PLANET

PÁDRAIG Ó MÉALÓID
JAMES BACON
CHRIS GARCIA
MICHAEL CARROLL



CONTENTS

IRISH COMICS

*Cover by
Michael
Carroll*

Page 2

Magical Moments by James Bacon

Page 5

An Interview with Steve Dillon by Michael Carroll

Page 12

Steve Dillon, Comic Book Artist from A Fan's Perspective
by James Bacon

Page 22 An Interview with Neil Bailey

by Pdraig O'Mealoid

Page 28

A Steve Dillon Gallery

Page 35

Meanwhile In England! Ka-Pow! The First British Comic
Con and Steve Moore. by Pdraig O'Mealoid

Page 41

A Paul Neary Gallery



SECTION 1

MAGICAL MOMENTS BY JAMES BACON



It was magic when Paul Neary replied to an email, because I had heard about an Irish Fanzine on BBC radio 4 that he drew for. It was magic when I met Steve Dillon and he gave me a sketch. It was magic when I met Steve Moore and we talked about fanzines. It was magic when Tony Roche walked into Octocon and showed me his fanzines.

Magical moments, spread across time.

Tinged with a tiny bit of sadness. I only learned that Steve Dillon had worked on a comic fanzine, and indeed that it had been his gateway to professionalism, after he was lost in October this year. Steve Moore answered questions about fanzines, but the interview is not and never will be finished.



All intertwined. Even though I heard about Heroes Unlimited in 2008, and so the germination of this zine may have started then, it all came to a head in October 2016.

Could we do a fanzine this year, get these histories out, a punishing deadline, yet at every step we seemed to get help and assistance to make it happen. I had a vision, all these connections, like some amazing synchronicity, needed to be told, even tenuous links were suddenly concreted with new information.

Tony talking about fanzines in the Royal Marine after meeting at Octocon 2016. Steve Dillon was our comics guest of honour at Octocon in 1993, held at The Royal Marine.

Paul Neary artwork abounded in Heroes Unlimited. Paul Neary drew Hulk written by Steve Moore in Hulk Weekly, edited by Dez Skinn, where Steve Dillon started his professional career in 1979.

Steve said: 'Paul was a great help to me. He saved me a lot of time because one of the problems I had was that I used to draw comics when I fancied it. And suddenly now I had to draw comics when I had to. So I had to do 3 pages a week whether I wanted to or not. That'd be a luxury now, just doing three pages a week. But at the time it was a bit much for me to handle and Paul helped me make a quantum leap which would have taken me months longer if I'd been doing it myself.'

Tony Roche speaks about the impact of the Hulk comic in May 1962.

Steve Moore helped Tony Roche, unbeknown at the time, but Steve Moore saw to it that Tony's full address be published in POW!, where he worked, and this brought new readers and survival to Tony's Merry Marvel Fanzine.

Tony wanted to win a Thing sweater, and offer it as a competition in his fanzine, Paul Neary went on to draw The Thing for Marvel.

Tony just beat Steve with Ka-Pow! With Merry Marvel Fanzine as the first Comics Fanzine in the British Isles and Steve ran the first comic book convention in the UK, which Tony attended.



Tony read Sgt Fury and his Howling Comandos in 1964, and in 1979 Steve Moore was writing Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. in Hulk Comic with Steve Dillon drawing it.

Alan Moore wrote Ro-Jaws' Robo Tales: Final Solution featuring Abelard Snazz which was drawn by Steve Dillon. Paul Neary drew Abelard Snazz: The Multi-Storey Mind Mellow Out! by Alan Moore. Steve Dillon drew Axel Pressbutton, which was created by Steve Moore and Alan Moore, and written by Steve Moore for Warrior comic.

'...Laser Eraser & Pressbutton with Steve Moore. That was fun....' Steve Dillon.

The neatly folded handwritten letter is from Alan Moore, writing as a fifteen year old, and it is erudite, well put together, humorous and quite the critique of a fanzine. Never published, it has emerged like from the inside pocket of Tony Roche's jacket, slowly rather like a magician producing that illusive item, and I hold it. That is magical.

We publish it here, for the first time ever. In a fanzine.

Our interview with Steve Dillon is by Michael Carroll. Steve was living in Dublin at the time and it appeared in an A5 ISFA publication. Michael Carroll has written one Future Shock, for 2000AD, Future Shocks were devised by Steve Moore, who wrote many of them, but only one Judge Dredd Story, Michael has written many Judge Dredd Stories. Paul Neary drew the art for a number of Future Shocks all by Alan Moore, who has never had a Judge Dredd story published, but wrote one.

Paul Neary drew Elemento, a comic for Heroes Unlimited and Tony had written it.

Am I imagining or dreaming up these connections, is it inevitable that there would be links, that Neil Bailey would mention Paul Neary and Dez Skinn by name? That all these artists and writers would work coincidentally on works, and some would have impacted Tony?

It's OK if you can see the magicians slight of hand, or the eminence grise, or hopeful beliefs, I will sit here in enthusiastic joyous naivety and enjoy the links I can see, love how threads and strands weave and wind through time and somehow draw together a patchwork of instances and people that provide my rose tinted vision with magical connections.

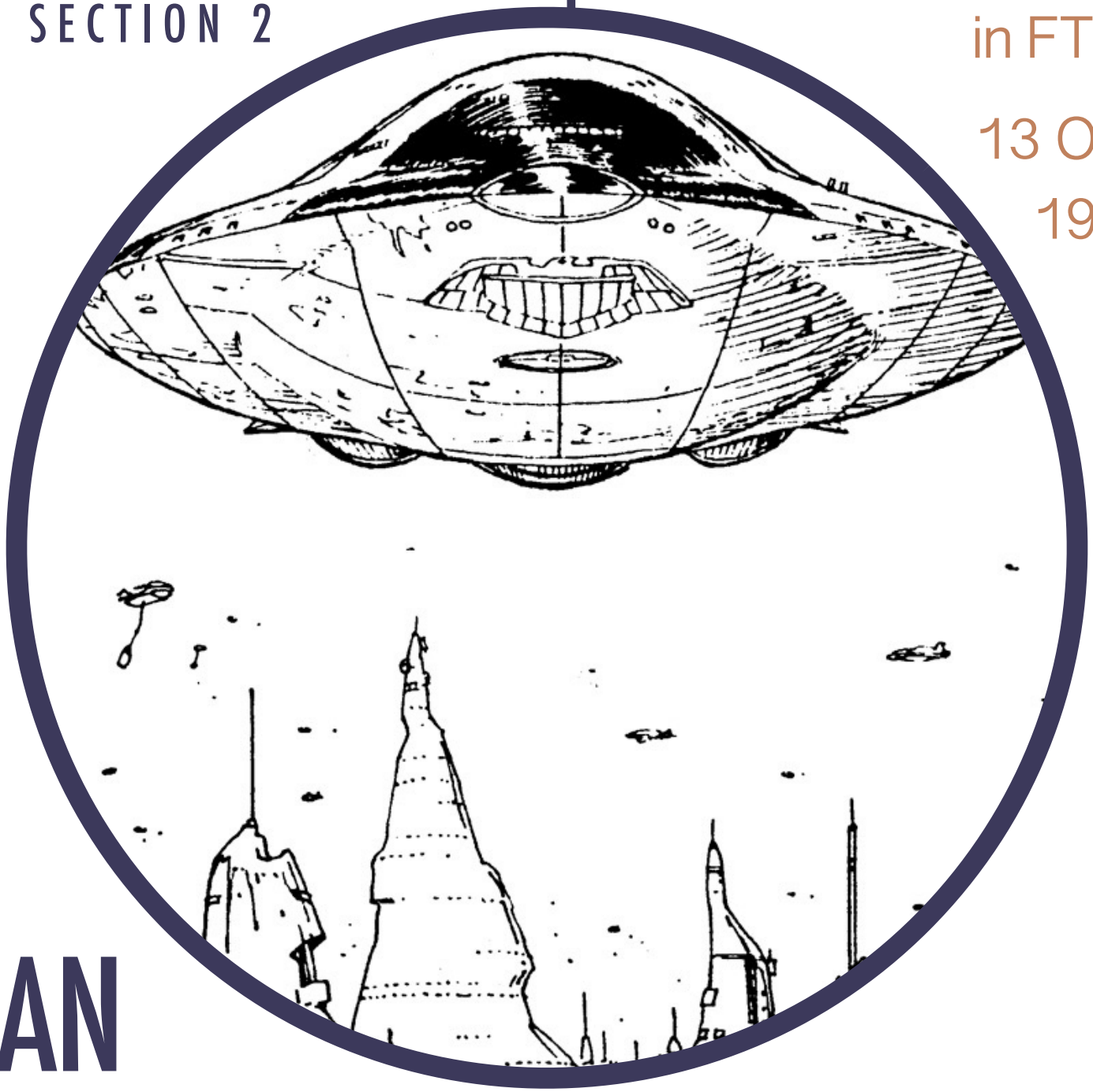
This fanzine is all about histories, stories, in many respects as Chris said, an oral history. I've loved reading and writing about them.

I hope fans enjoy reading and learning about these interesting, yet I feel historically significant happenings. The Fanzine connection, the Irish Connection, the comics connection. It is all connected and it is fascinating fun to find out about them.

I am exceptionally grateful to Neil Bailey, Alan Moore, Paul Neary, Dez Skinn, Michael Carroll, Paul Sheridan, and of course to my co-editors Pádraig Ó Méalóid and Chris Garcia who have grafted very hard on this one. My thoughts are with those who mourn Steve Dillon and Steve Moore and I hope we remember them well here.

Finally I am thankful to fellow yet distinguished fan Tony Roche who helped square the circle on all this. Ireland's greatest comic book fan. Thanks Tony.

SECTION 2



Michael Carroll

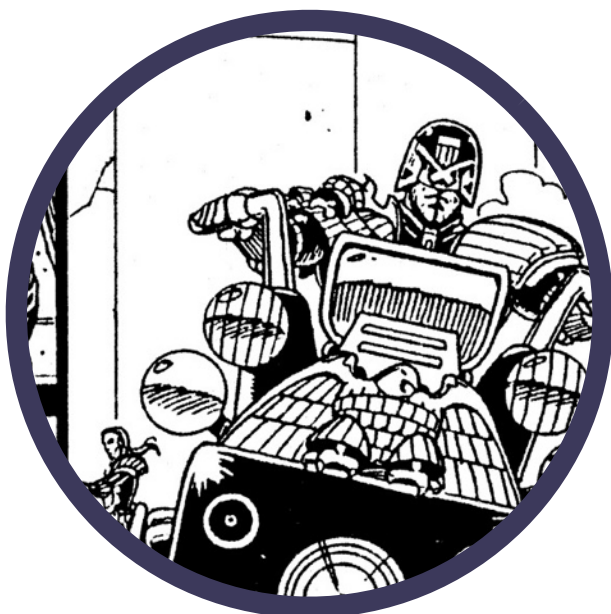
First published
in FTL #7,

13 October
1990

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEVE DILLON

Steve Dillon is a young British comic artist living in Dublin. Well, perhaps “artist” is too limiting a term – he’s also written his own stories and until recently he’s been the co-editor of *Deadline*, a popular and successful comic aimed at the more mature reader, of which he is also co-creator. He’s one of those rare comic artists who has developed a unique style without the need for gimmicks.

Steve kindly contributed photocopies of his work on an upcoming *Judge Dredd* story, excerpts of which can be seen on these pages. Peter McCanney and I spoke to him about his current work for popular



weekly comic *2000 A.D.*, as well as his input to *Deadline*.

What with the current boom in comic sales, and increased interest in comics per se, I asked Steve what he thought about the current trend in graphic novels. Does he think it's a good thing?

"Well, I don't think it hurts!" He replies. "Not for the people buying them. I sometimes wonder whether people are only going to have a certain amount of money, and can't afford to keep buying all the expensive stuff, but no, it doesn't hurt. There's a lot of people buying them, obviously there's a demand for them, and that's all that really matters."

But doesn't he feel that in a way it's exploitation of the readers? For example, they will buy a book because it's got Batman on it.

"Well, no. 'That's not exploitation any more than I buy that' – he indicates the drink in front of him – "because it's Guinness. I like Guinness, so I'll buy Guinness. They like Batman, so they'll buy Batman. What I don't like is where they release silver-covered versions of a comic, you know, change a little thing. Of course, that serves people right for being so stupid as to collect them."

I mentioned that Marvel have a habit of collecting a couple of issues of a comic and producing it with a square-bound card cover and calling it a graphic novel...

"If people buy it you can't really blame them for wanting to sell it," he replies.

What does he think of the four Batman titles, the four Spider-Man titles, and the soon-to-be-four X-people titles?

"Well, I remember when I was younger I was brought up on the X-Men, and if I could have got hold of more X-men I would have. That's what I liked." He says. "Once when I went to the States, I was about seventeen or eighteen, they had one of these scriptwriter's strikes, and there was a great shortage of original stuff to put on American TV at that time. Where we were staying in New York we could get *M*A*S*H* about three times a day, I thought it was great! It was wonderful, because I really liked *M*A*S*H* and I could watch it three times a day. I liked it, and I could watch loads of it. So I don't see anything wrong with doing loads of titles as long as

they're selling. It is a bit dangerous if you water stuff down. I'd be interested to see how the new *Judge Dredd* magazine works out, because maybe they're spreading it a bit thin. Personally, I think it would be better with four longer stories or maybe one long story and a couple of back-ups. At the moment it feels like a copy of *2000 A.D.*, but all about Mega-City One."

As we had strayed onto the subject, I asked Steve what he thought about *Judge Dredd – The Megazine*.

"Colin MacNeil's work on the America story is really nice. Of the lot, I think that's the one that really got me. I know Garth Ennis' story [*Chopper*] is going to be fun."

I mention that I think *Chopper* is a good story because it departs so much from the normal Judge Dredd-based story, and Steve, who knows about such things, agrees with me.

"Yes, the two stories that have really grabbed me in the Judge Dredd magazine have been America and Garth's one, the *Chopper* story. The Dredd story that Alan Grant's done is just straight Dredd, which is great if you like straight Dredd. Of the Judge Death story, well, it's hard to tell from the first episode what the story's going to be like. That first episode was obviously a teaser, so now we're going to get into the real stuff and I'm interested to see what's going to happen next."

The conversation turns to his own work, in particular Harlem Heroes in *2000 A.D.*, in which Steve pencils and Kevin Walker inks. It's a common enough thing in America, but it's quite rare with British comics.

"In America it's a tradition to work that way, also in American comics you produce a lot of pages per story, whereas in Britain there are only five- or six-page stories. There's a lot more switching around between people, episode-wise, in British comics, but the American comics have these big chunks, so it's a lot easier to handle. I don't know too much about the American tradition, or why it started up. I think there were more assembly line-type places in America back in the forties, like Eisner. An Eisner-type studio was where somebody drew the backgrounds, somebody drew the faces, and so on, so I suppose it's come out of that sort of tradition. Whereas British comics came out of an illustration tradition with one person doing the whole thing.

"But it was interesting to see what Kev was doing when we drew *Rogue Trooper*. I'd never really been inked by anyone before, except Brett Ewins, who'd inked *Skreemer* and an episode of *Nemo*."

Does he feel that Kevin Walker's inking complements his work or detracts from it in any way?

"Yeah, there are some things which I think he makes look better than I ever could, but there are other things he does where I think he lost it a bit. Kevin's very strong in certain areas and not in others. But again it's hard for me to say because I know I'd do it a certain way, whether my way is better, I don't know, it's just different. But I know Kev can handle machinery and all that sort of stuff very well, and I haven't got the patience to do a lot of the work that Kev puts into the machinery and stuff. I'm much more into people and faces, so it worked well that way."

Steve works mostly in black ink, but I asked him if he'd be interested in producing a colour strip.

"I don't know," he replies. "Personally, I haven't got too much time for all this full-colour painted comics. It was interesting to see Dave McKean's stuff when it first came out. I think the best of the bunch is Bill Seinkeiwicz, he manages to keep some energy in it. Simon Bisley does the same, keeps energy in it. The trouble with this fully-painted stuff is the danger of slowing it all down, it loses the pace, it deadens it. A lot of comics are about pacing and timing – if you've got rip-roaring stories you need a rip-roaring pace in the artwork, and if it's all a bit too detailed, fully painted-up then you can slow it down."

There's a trend in comics like *Revolver*, *Crisis* and the new *Judge Dredd* magazine towards fewer panels per page and nice big colour paintings. I ask him if he feels that this slows down the story.

"Well, that's where we start getting into dodgy areas. I mean, are the kids getting value for money? It depends what they want. Some kids love all these big panels, they love to look at the art, but they tend to be more on the fan end of it. *2000 A.D.* sells over one hundred thousand copies a week – I'm not sure how much over – you can't tell me they're all fans. Most of them are kids

who buy it, or their parents buy it for them, they read it, they swap it, or throw it away. But they're not fans. So I suppose the proof of the pudding is in the sales. If *2000 A.D.* can continue selling at that level, then clearly they're doing something right."

Wasn't there a survey done in *2000 A.D.*, broken down into age groups? Didn't they find that it was more older readers?

"Yes, it has more older readers than a lot of comics have. The trap *2000 A.D.* mustn't fall into – and I do think they are conscious of it – is following one section of the readership as it gets older. I mean, Richard Burton is an ex-fan, he's now editor of *2000 A.D.*, and Alan MacKenzie is a comics fan, he's sub-editor. A lot of people working on it are fans who've become artists and writers, and a lot of people writing letters and turning up at the conventions are the same people we've been seeing for the last ten years. The danger is that you'll follow them. You have to have a turnover of new readers. A good editor is one who can tell what the actual real comic-buying kids want, that's what *2000 A.D.* should be: a comic for kids."

I ask Steve about his own work on Hap Hazzard, a very popular story in *2000 A.D.*, which he both wrote and drew. Is it the first thing he's written?

"Well, yes, it's the first I've written myself professionally, it's the only thing I've ever written that's been any good. The trouble with a lot of stuff I've done in *Deadline* is that I ended up writing, drawing and lettering it overnight, five pages in one night. In some cases with a story idea, I'll draw it. When I've drawn it I'll fax it over to *Deadline*, and also send the artwork off at the same time. I would then sit down and write it, after I've drawn it!" he laughs.

"But Hap Hazzard... I've always wanted to do that. I'd an idea for the name, and somehow it just had to be that character to go with the name, and also I did quite like the slightly subversive idea of a story about two drunkards in *2000 A.D.* I mean, there's not much funny stuff in *2000 A.D.*, not any more. I liked it when *Dredd* had more black humour in it.

"Hap Hazzard could have been set anywhere. I happened to set it on a different planet because it was in

STEVE DILLON



2000 A.D. It gave me the chance to come up with some interesting characters like the Kango twins – two brains in one body – and have them arguing away. You come up with different ideas for that sort of stuff, like the mind-transfer story, which incidentally was spoiled because a balloon was missing off the last page.”

Is there any likelihood that Hap Hazzard will crop up again in the future?

“I’m working on a five or six part story at the moment, the title is ‘Another Story of Love, Death and Dry Cleaning.’”

Turning to this artwork he’s shown us for the upcoming Judge Dredd story, I asked Steve how a story like this goes into production.

“Well, John Wagner [the writer] is past the stage now where he has to do too much liaising with the editor on plot ideas. He just writes it and sends it in. I think John does have a say, or a bit of a veto, on who draws it, but the trouble with Dredd is because now that it’s in full colour it’s hard to get just one artist to draw a lot of episodes. I think Carlos Ezquerro is the one artist who could have turned out six pages of colour a week over twenty-odd issues. So you have to get a lot of different artists on Dredd because of that. Dredd has always been the longest story. Four pages a week is manageable for a lot of artists, six pages a week generally isn’t.

“I have to do about ten pages a week. As I’ve said I can do five pages over one night, but they’re not good! And it’s not what I want to do every night. I could work on two pages a day, and they’d be pretty good pages. Some of these pages I did two in a day, and it’s not bad.”

Changing the subject once more, I asked Steve about *Deadline*. How did it all begin?

“What happened was that both myself and Brett Ewins had been getting fed up with working at home. Brett because he lived on his own, and I was working a lot, so I wasn’t getting out of the house that much. So I thought I wouldn’t mind getting a studio with other people around, doing the same sort of stuff. And it was better for my family because I wasn’t always going, ‘Shhh! I’m working.’

“So me and Brett got together and decided to get a studio. We rented some studio space, right up the road from *2000 A.D.*, funnily enough. Brett was drawing *Bad Company* at the time, and I was doing *Rogue Trooper*. We just got talking about the idea of maybe doing a graphic novel together. We came up with a couple of ideas, and we realised that doing a graphic novel is a lot of work up front for no money. Neither of us could afford that, London property prices being what they were. So we had the idea of doing a one-off magazine for the convention. As we started talking about it, we thought we could get some other people in.

Brett had met Jamie [Hewlett] and Philip [Bond] when he gave a lecture at Worthing.

“The whole idea started to snowball. We started thinking that maybe we could do this regularly. We thought it would be relatively easy, we thought, ‘This will be good! We can do this!’ At that time *Heartbreak Hotel* and *Escape* were around, and we thought we could do it. However, we wanted an independent thing, but with a more commercial idea about it – we wanted it in newsagents all over the country. *Escape* and *Heartbreak Hotel* were only sold in newsagents in London. We thought here’s a chance to show people that there are different comics around.

“Myself and Brett are not businessmen, we became businessmen – not very good ones – but we became businessmen!” He laughs. “Mike Lake of Titan helped us out with the figures and showed us how to deal with cash-flow sheets. In the end we turned to Mike and asked him if he wanted to back it, and he was interested. Anyway, things started stalling and Titan were saying ‘How about just launching it in London?’ And that was exactly what we didn’t want to do with it. So we asked Brett’s mate Tom Astor if he’d back it, and after only a couple of meetings he said he would, and then it was all sorted out pretty quick.

“So, we got the first issue out in time for UKCAC that year.”

Deadline seems to have gone for more alternative stories recently...

“Well, what we did when we got people like Jamie and Phil up. We basically said ‘Do what you want.’ We said we would be interested in having something of a more female angle, as Jamie put it: ‘Brett and Steve asked us for girlie strips!’ So Phil came up with *Wired World*, and Jamie came up with Tank Girl, and the rest is history!”

“We met Nick Abadzis via John Tomlinson and Stevie Cook. Nick came in to work with John for a week, and he had a portfolio with him, lots of very good stuff. And we came across these two pages of a little stick-man, kicking the cat, raiding the fridge, turning the TV on and off. And both me and Brett said, ‘Oh, we like that! Can we have it?’ And Nick said ‘I’m really glad you said that, everybody else just passes that by.’ So we got that, and Nick had to go off and think up a name for it, and he came up with Hugo Tate. I think it’s my favourite strip that’s appeared in *Deadline*.”

I asked Steve if, from all the work he’s done in *Deadline*, *2000 A.D.*, *Warrior* and so on, would he be able to pick out any one thing he’s more proud of than anything else?

“It’s hard for me to do that. I’ve been doing this since I was sixteen – 1978 I started – so for different reasons I’m proud of different things, like I’m proud of the ‘Alone in the Crowd’ story, because it was my first Dredd. And I’m proud of this Dredd story I’ve done here. I think it’s probably going to end up being the nicest work I’ve done for *2000 A.D.* I’m proud of some of those Hap Hazzard stories, the first one I quite liked. I suppose I’m proud of that because it’s the first time I’d written anything for *2000 A.D.*”

As a final question before we parted, I asked Steve who he thought had influenced him most in the past few years.

“The bank manager,” he replies, laughing. “No, my early influences were people like Neal Adams. I was started too young, really. I got a contract when I was sixteen, I was offered a regular strip at Marvel UK. I was at art college, and I thought, ‘To do this I’ll have to leave college,’ and the only way I’d do that was if I had a guarantee of the work. So I got a year’s contract. Three pages a week, for Hulk comic, to do Nick Fury, and that was too much. You see, one thing a lot of fans don’t realise is that they’ll draw when they want, and they might think they draw a lot, but it’s because they want to.

“When you get into the business, and you have to do it professionally with publication dates to deal with, then if you don’t feel like drawing you’ve still got to draw. And I’d never had to draw three pages a week before. Once a month I might do three or four pages, I might do them relatively quickly, which made me think I could do three pages a week, but I wouldn’t do them every week. So a lot of my style has grown out of the fact that I had to learn to do the stuff quickly, and also make it look all right. I didn’t really get it together until I started doing the *Doctor Who* back-up strips.

‘Get some session work, you’d make loads of money.’

“The thing is, first and foremost this is a job. A friend of mine was a drummer – this is when we were at school – a very talented fellow on the drums. I kept saying to him ‘Get some session work, you’d make loads of money.’ He ended up going to art college, and he’s now working as one of the modellers on *Spitting Image*. But when he started out I said, ‘Why the hell didn’t you get into drumming?’ He said ‘Well, I like drumming too much to make it a job.’”

Addendum:

Steve Dillon died on October 22nd, 2016, at the age of fifty-four. I wish I could say we were close friends, but the last time we met was about twenty years ago. But back in the early 1990s, when he still lived in Dublin, Steve was a great supporter of both the Irish Science Fiction Association and Octocon, the Irish national SF convention. The interview, in fact, was published in issue #7 of the ISFA’s magazine FTL, which doubled as the programme book for the first Octocon.

It was shortly after the interview was conducted that Steve began to work more and more for American publishers, first for DC with notable runs on Animal Man and Hellblazer and then he and Garth Ennis unleashed their modern-day classic series Preacher onto the world.

For the past fifteen years or so, Steve worked mostly for Marvel comics, chiefly on Punisher for multiple acclaimed series (totalling about seventy issues), plus a twenty-five-issue run on Wolverine: Origins.

When my own career in comics began to take off I compiled a list of other creators with whom I wanted to work: Steve’s name was top of that list. I adored his work, and he was not only phenomenally talented, he was genuinely one of the good guys. Ask anyone who knew him – he was universally loved. As we in the ISFA learned back in the 1990s, Steve was more than generous with his help and advice for new creators, and when it came to fans he would happily spend hours chatting with them and sketching for them.

Everyone who knew Steve has their favourite Steve Dillon story, and here’s mine: After a panel at another Dublin convention in the early 1990s Steve found himself absolutely mobbed. He was trapped in a corridors surrounded by maybe two dozen young fans all clamouring for his attention, but he was needed elsewhere. He kept politely trying to excuse himself, but the fans weren’t willing to let him go. Steve spotted me at the far end of the corridor, and shouted, “Hey, Mike!” to attract my attention. He told the fans, “That guy’s a massively famous writer! You should all go talk to him!” Then, when all their attention was momentarily on me, Steve ran away. A sneaky trick, but those young fans saw me as Steve Dillon’s pal, which made that one of my Best Days Ever.

I’d always wanted to catch up with him one day, and say, “Hey, Steve, remember all that advice you gave me about creating comics? Well, you were right!” Sadly, that reunion will never happen now. I don’t know: maybe he knew. Maybe one day he saw my name in the credits of a Judge Dredd strip and thought, “Good for you, Mike!”

Then again, Steve knew a lot of people – you couldn’t help liking him and wanting to be his friend – so it’s possible that he didn’t remember me at all.

But I remember him. And maybe that’s enough.

Rest in peace, Steve.

Michael Carroll, Dublin, 2 December 2016

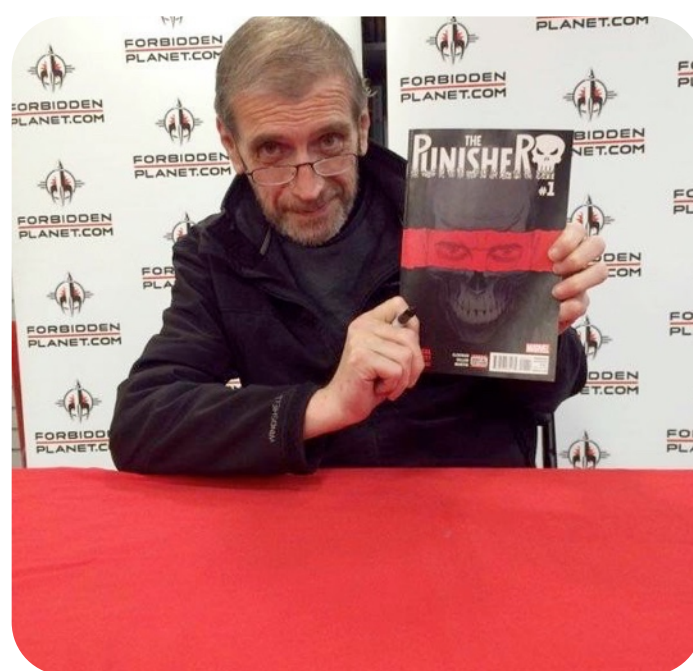
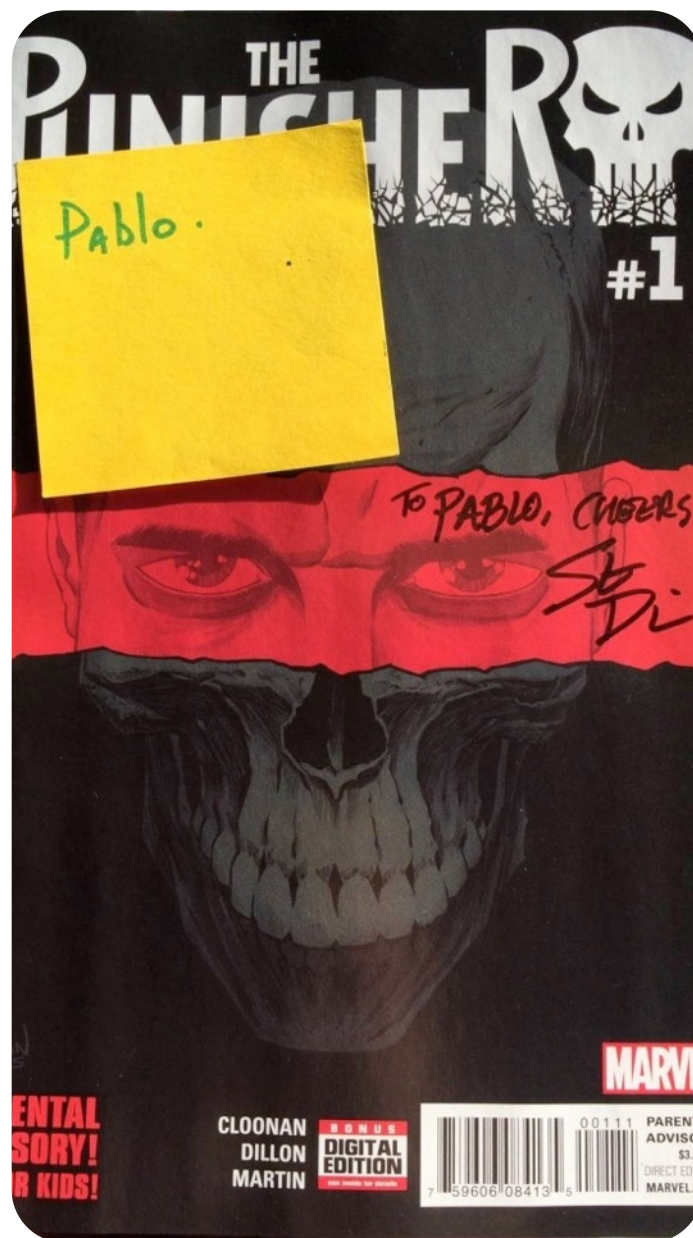
James Bacon

SECTION 3

STEVE DILLON, COMIC BOOK ARTIST FROM A FANS PERSPECTIVE

Steve Dillon's artwork in *2000AD* was attractive, clean, and neat, able to portray scenes and actions dynamically, grabbing the reader and telling the story at a pace that was electric.

I had stopped reading *Battle* as it merged with *Eagle*. Although I was a late joiner in 1989, and it was some time after I had read my first Dredd story, I happily admit that I started to pick up *2000AD* on a





weekly basis at issue 650, with fully painted stories, John Higgins Dredd, Will Simpson on part I Rogue Trooper War Machine and Simon Bisley on *Sláine* —a fabulous starting point. I wasn't to know my favourite writer with *Charlie's War* at battle, Pat Mills, was so involved with *2000AD*.

Soon I was buying back issues at a phenomenal rate. I was fifteen. My local secondhand comic shop, Phantasia in Dublin, where Mick O'Connor worked was selling back issues at four or five for £1, this was my regular haunt. I learned more about artists and writers here I made friends, Mick who was life long, Padraig O'Mealoid and many others. Cheap comics and great convo all thanks to Mick, with a foul bunch of science fiction and comic fans. Soon it was six for a £1. I was a valued customer, it was all new to me.



At this stage I was enjoying *2000ADs* in blocks. I would go back fifty comics and start to fill in the gaps, I refused to read *Zenith* till I got back to phase one, but the Horned God part I was good enough. Indeed, I would forgo school lunches to buy comics, use any spare pocket money to buy comics. Mick reorganised the comics to make my task of finding progs easier, I was reading and rereading them at an incredible rate.

Steve's work was everywhere. It was like I had hit gold and even though Steve was working on comics like *Skreemer* and editing and working on *Deadline* at this time, I was encountering his work in the five hundreds of *2000AD*. Characters like Dredd, Rogue Trooper, Tyranny Rex and Hap Hazzard all favourites were all drawn by him.



Steve's portrayal of movement, action scenes, and bullet shots were all fabulous. Up close hand-to-hand fighting seemed to always capture the fraught action, and it was all so neat and clean, fine crisp line work, shading and black and whites that were definite and clear. His panels always flowed, setting the scene, preparing the reader, sequential art at its finest. You could get any story by scanning it quickly without the words. He could change angles brilliantly, looking down the sight to up the barrel of a gun.

He had a distinctive style, a thin mouthed look for men, athletic women and men, no muscle bulging, and his faces always told as much of the story as anything. Be it between Anderson and Dredd, or the hints of smugness as a Judge goes wrong, or fear in a perp's eyes, facial descriptiveness as part of the art was key. Whether it was Rogue with his bio-chip buddies, Venus Bluegenes, Tyranny Rex, all emotions anger, horror and frustration, relief, joy and adoration he could capture easily, offering a vast range of looks, width of eyes, beads of perspiration, all giving the reader an exact understanding.

Dillon's *Dredd* was straightforward, clean and realistic, a sensibly styled hermit, a strong but natural jawline, a physique that looked right, and distinctive characters. From Anderson to Giant to Orlock, they all looked the part. His lawmaster and lawgiver were perfect. You never really got much of the city wide vista with Dillon, but that was okay, as the action was where it was at and his lawmaster liked perfect.

I of course was consuming a lot of comics, so I got to recognise artists by their style, Steve drew thirty-odd 2000AD covers, and I'd love finding that he had done a cover on a story I had not expected. His Maximan covers for *Zenith* were amazing, 535 and 538 both fantastic moments. He wrote Rogue Trooper Through the Eyes of a Gun and five episodes of Hap Hazzard, and although he did not do much wordsmithing I loved them too. The 500s were a hectic time, well from a reader's perspective. 569 had a cover, and two stories drawn by Steve, all in one prog.

At the time, back in the late 600's the New Harlem Heroes were drawn by Steve, which had stunning covers and pin ups, and Judge Dredd Nightmares, with Yassa Povey from 'The Dead Man/Necropolis' storyline, was drawn by him, and so amongst the greats were the steady weekly stream,

Of course many would point to Judge Dredd Block War, Night of the Werewolf, The Hunter's Club and City of the Damned as key Dredd works, by Steve and I would eventually work my way backwards, and indeed, they are stunning. I had lucked out, a friend of a friend had a couple of hundred progs and wanted a no-hassle cash deal, and so I bought these for a vast amount of money, £12, exchanging cash for a double wrapped bin bag full of progs, at a Black Sabbath gig in McGonagle's.

It had been an incredibly productive 18 months as a comic fan, learning, watching, attending events in Dublin, meeting fans, and finding a most amazing group of friends into comics, science fiction, great writing like Hunter S Thompson and beer. I was 17.

Then along comes the pairing that has stood the test of time. In 1991, in April, the cover of 2000AD featured Dredd's grimace, but with him was a Judge with a cheeky smile, a pint of porter, the island of Ireland behind them with the announcement of the star of the Emerald Isle. I nearly fell over reading the comic from purchase point on Henry Street at the Grafton Arcade to the bus stop.

Here was a Judge Dredd story set in Ireland. It was a huge deal to me. Colin MacNeil's Sadu from Hondo City, Will Simpson's Banana City Judges, McCarthy's Brit-Cit Judges, it felt like everywhere had a Judge, and then here comes Ennis and Dillon and they present a hilarious episode of Dredd. Judge Joyce, the spud gun, the Charles Haughey Port, St Stephen's Green, everything seemed tongue in cheek, a slight absurdity that resonated with me, perfect for my school boy humour sensibilities, and rebellious attitude. I was ecstatic.

The partnership of Steve Dillon and Garth Ennis was one that would last and be extremely fruitful, but I wasn't prepared or expected more than being a loyal reader.



Steve Dillon, Garth Ennis and John McCrea swaggered into a Dublin science fiction convention, swash-buckling style, the three Musketeers, full of confidence, charm, laughter, and looking for a good weekend, and so I had the opportunity to meet them. It was an incredible pleasure, but also a revelatory time.

I was an obtuse teenager, engrossed in my *2000ADs*, eschewing 'American' comics, focussed on expanding my knowledge of *2000AD* and now reading *Crisis*, adoring *Troubled Souls*, but I was also naïve, and my friends even had to tell me to bring some comics to sign. And so I got them signed, but then something, one of many moments, that remain with me occurred. It was put to me that it might be appropriate to ask for a sketch, and I was a bit flabbergasted. We were in The Powers Hotel, sitting near the bar.



Steve Dillon offered me a sketch, it was like he had to. It broke me. Comics were these amazing things that I read, that my Dad read to me when I was too small, and the artwork therein was to be revered and adored, stories that entertained, but actually having a sketch. a piece of art.. that was like, surely not allowed. I was lost for words, I'd been babbling anyhow, excited and pleased to meet these creators of fun, and now here I was owning a piece of artwork. It was incredible.

John likewise obliged, and I loved it, was indeed suddenly addicted, and over the weekend, got many sketches from them both, I even got one from Garth, and John had some unused pencils from a comic layout, that he just gave away. I was, well, it was unreal. I got to chat, drink and hang out with them. Steve was like the senior person in the group, that was for sure, you sensed John and Gareth's respect yet they were comic book professionals, colleagues and I loved the way Steve was always smiling and laughing, and just so pleasant, but they were all the best. John would do rather wild things for the laugh.

Now, there was drink involved, and they were all very kind and put up with a troublesome teenager, and at one stage, Geoff Ryman took me for a sandwich. I needed it. That was science fiction conventions, they were fun places, with great people.



Garth had heard my dismissiveness about American comics, but he did not mock me, or dismiss me, no, he found a quiet moment, and from an inside pocket produced a piece of art, a cover for a comic. It was a Glenn Fabry cover, it was *Hellblazer* number 52, and he said, this was an American comic he was writing, and so I was quickly convinced, my fickle youth ignoring previous protestations, and I remember afterwards Steve giving me this knowing look, and a nod and saying I would really like them, and of course, I did not even realise at that stage, that he was working on them.

Garth, Steve and John came to a number of conventions and events in the early 90s. Steve lived near Raheny, in north Dublin, and they were so accessible to fans. This of course led to a slight addiction for me, and when I saw Steve, or John, I would ask for a sketch, and by golly, they would oblige.

I look at these sketches now, and can tell where and when they occurred, as the paper is indicative of time and place. The idea of a sketchbook was lost on me, indeed, a lack of any preparations initially led me to utilise hotel paper, so many of my sketches are on a lovely heavy beige paper, and on the reverse, the hotel heading, be it Powers Hotel on Nassau Street, or The Royal Marine in Dun Laoghaire. Occasionally the opportunity occurred, and Steve who came to other events, would never have a problem doing a sketch, and so my Dredd sketch is on the back of an A4 page of graph paper, from my school copy book. He was good to me, but clever enough to keep me calm, and indeed, one time did a self portrait, mouthing 'Christ it's James' which everyone thought was very funny, and his smile and tap on the shoulder as he gave it to me with warm eyes, and I smiled and so I offered him a pint, I had learned.



Hellblazer was amazing straight away, starting as I did at issue 41. Will Simpson, whom I knew from *2000AD*, was doing the art, and I was so impressed, and then, issue 49, and it was a joyful Christmas issue, and by Steve Dillon. The last few pages though, were Garth and Steve walking home after a session, and I knew it was them, and was taken by their friendship and that such a realistic and natural thing could be in a comic, it felt amazing but also so unique, real people in the pages.

Steve's run on *Hellblazer* was excellent. Garth's run, I loved it all. Will Simpson who also soon came down to Dublin and later John Higgin's artwork. It felt like a different type of read, love, sex, racism, violence, hurt and of course John Constantine, all seemed magical yet grounded. I thought Kit was amazing, and was so pleased that she got to tell her own story, with Heartland, but the dam burst of comics also presented so many options and so my friends guided me, as best they could, but everyone recommended *Skreemer* and Pdraig insisted I read it.

Skreemer was just phenomenal, and I think one of the most overlooked comics from DC. Peter Milligan did an amazing job, and Steve's art, the use of colours, was fabulous.



STEVE DILLON

1962 - 2016



I grew a bit and got involved with these conventions, and soon Steve Dillon was kind enough to be a Special Comics Guest of Honour at Octocon. He attended anyhow, but he gave so much, he attended Irish Science Fiction Association talks, and was happy to be interviewed but here as a GOH he was amazing, Garth was also along and both participating in panels, and indeed making time for fans. I remember him showing a group of us thumbnails and scripts and going through the process. It was all so natural to him.

He was an amazing guest, and indeed, I think the first comic book guest of honour. Will Simpson, Paul Peart, John Higgins J.G Jones, Mike Carey and Gail Simone have all been guests at Octocon, but Garth, John and Steve were the first ones there, and indeed, initially they just paid their way and enjoyed the weekends with fans.



As I moved forward in time, my collecting went backwards too. Pdraig Sold me his Warrior comics, and I was taken by both David Lloyd, Steve Parkhouse and of course Steve Dillon art, and was amazed to see how young Steve was when he started, but his style was immediately recognisable and I loved that. As I found my way, writers and artists would become favourites, and so I would buy the comics by creators I liked. This would not always result in the most enriching experience. Some comics looked amazing, but the story was not as entertaining for me. I just about figured this out, so I was always a bit nonplussed by Judge Dredd City of the



Damned, and have a run of *Animal Man*'s because Steve drew it that was maybe a little too introspective for my liking.

Steve was a gentleman, in the sense that he was good to fans, so when I pitched up with some *Animal Mans* amongst *Hellblazers* to get signed, he was cautious about asking me what I thought of them. I love the artwork, I said, unsure, it is a tricky place, even now, how does one say to an artist that the writer is not for me, or to a writer that the art sits oddly with me. It is such a personal and subjective issue. Yet in my insecurity and his honesty, it came out that he did not really enjoy drawing all the animals, and there was relief as I admitted it wasn't my absolute fave, and *Hellblazer* which was running concurrently, was a favourite.



The image of *The Punisher* punching a polar bear often makes me smile, as I imagine it is some sort of retribution for all those Animals in *Animal Man*.

How were these comic book creators to know that my love of comics and enjoyment of conventions would see me leading conventions where their peers from Charlie Adlard to Bryan Talbot and David Lloyd to Glenn Fabry would be honoured and I'd work to ensure comics creators were a material fabric of what makes a science fiction convention a whole, welcoming as many as possible from Liam Sharp to Audrey Niffenegger.



Hellblazer delighted and then ended, and within six months, *Preacher* happened. I started at the beginning and saw it through to the end. It was beautifully drawn, doing a lot of what Steve was really great at, capturing close moments, portraying Garth's writing with real sense of storytelling, a flow, crispness and clarity that made each comic feel too short, and of course that sense of artistic timing and perspective. I loved it.

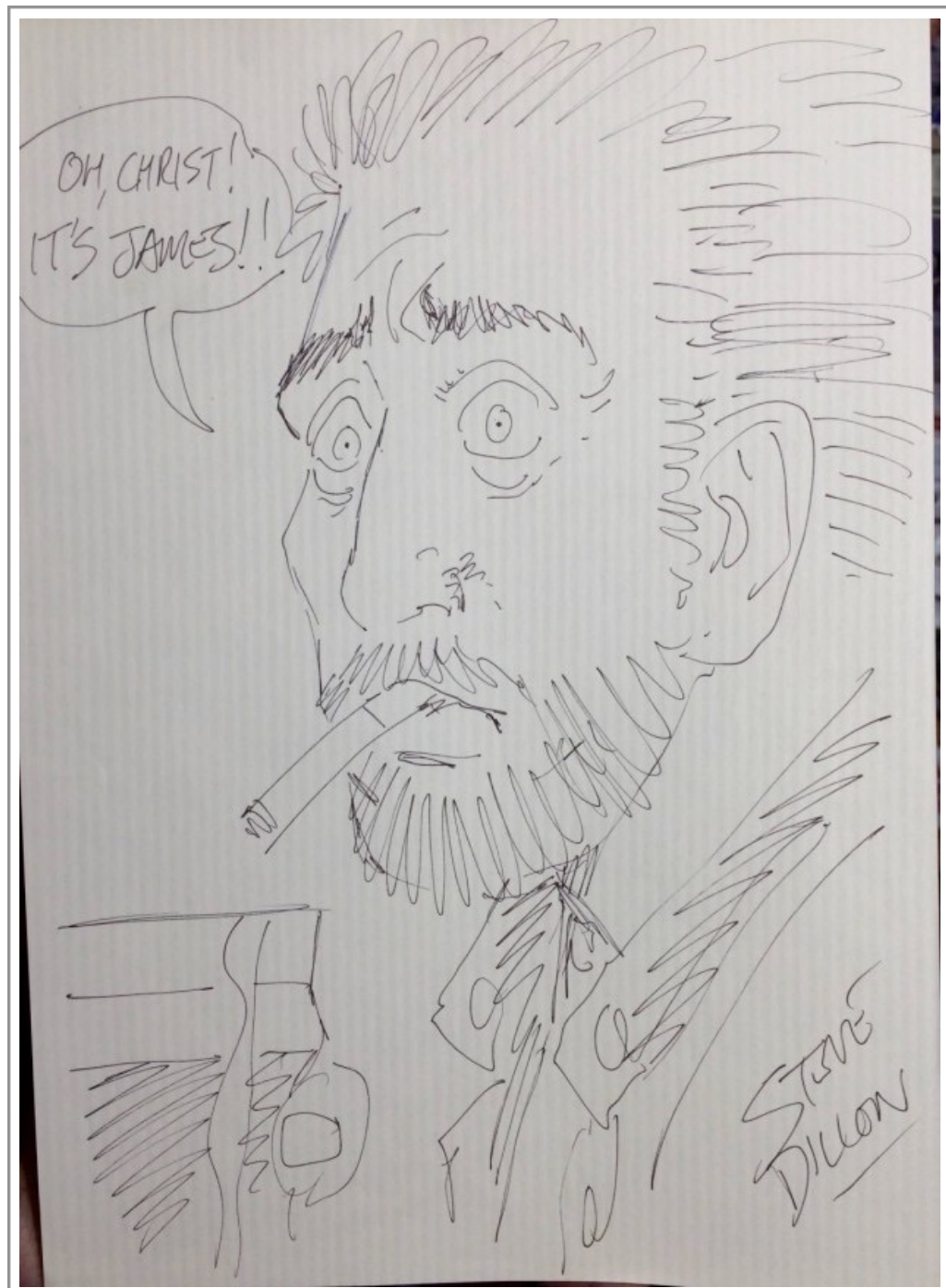
I also had a great time with it. Padraig and myself owned a book shop by that point and Padraig turned up some gems, and so I ended up with scripts and art from Garth, and even though Steve had moved back to England and soon Garth would be away to the States, the way Cassidy's story began in 1916 in the GPO was an incredible link and it all felt magical.

I had grown up a bit, and had taken to buying artwork. This was started by Will Simpson, who sold me a number of pages out of the boot of his car, *Hellblazer*, fabulous stuff. I was lucky to buy pages by Steve, from Tyranny Rex, Judge Dredd Both classic Hunters Club and my favourite, because it is a starting point for me, a page from Nightmares.

I was gifted a page from *When Irish Pies are Smiling*, and so a Judge Joyce adorned my wall, and then bought I bought pages from *Preacher*. That I could frame and hang these artworks on my wall was incredible, but seeing the art up close always fascinated me, the blue lines, pencils, how lettering was attached and the fading of different pieces of paper. One could see up close the skill of the lines, and indeed, not the cheats, but the ways that Steve made the artwork work, he was fast, crikey, everyone in Dublin who was a fan, or most of the fans I knew had a Steve Dillon sketch. It was adored, and treasured, but he was fast at them, deceptively so, his line was always right, his hand confident, and spot on, never did I see a sketch that did not look exactly right. That is a natural ability and skill, but also training and work.

Preacher came to an end, and I trekked up to Belfast where John and Mal hosted a final issue event, and it was an amazing day. Afterwards I ate with them all and had some drinks in the Queens before heading south. Steve had drawn a lovely print. Somehow this was just the perfect ending to the story. Indeed, I read the final issue down the back of the shop, and was so impressed and pleased and loved it, it was perfect. It was as if other readers, or in the case of Mal and John, retailers, naturally understood that this was worth celebrating. It was a story that went in many directions, encompassed many characters, and it had a beginning, many fantastic middles, and a definite end.

As if the pairing was bound to continue, *Punisher* had begun already and so fans were able to immediately continue with the team of Steve Dillon and Garth Ennis, and Steve brought his style to the comic. While the stories went in many directions, there was a thoughtfulness to a character that I had just seen as a brutal simplistic vigilante. The variety of stories were brilliant. The breadth has been wonderful, from a focus on realistic crimes that infect humanity to the wonderful is-



sue featuring Daredevil, Ennis can really twist the knife sometimes, and it was perfectly drawn, Steve using perspective and angles and the close up of facial expressions and features to their best advantage.

Punisher was a constant at that stage, but other comics, *Gen 13*, *Ultimates*, *Global Frequency*, *Supreme Power*, would pop up, and I would pick them up assured of a good job on the artwork while his run on *Wolverine Origins* and more recently *Thunderbolts* all have a spot on my shelf.

In 2008 I went to the Studio Space signing at Waterstones in Oxford St. This is a fabulous book by Joel Meadows and I of course bought a copy. Steve and Brian were both doing sketches in the book. I already had a lovely Luther Arkwright, so I was happy with just a signature from Bryan, who is always kind and offered a sketch, and Steve was happy to sketch, and had no problem doing it in my sketch book rather than in the book. I asked for Preacher. He looked surprised when I said I hadn't had a sketch of this, one of my favourite characters, but with skill and some speed, soon Jesse was looking out of the corner of his eye. Perfect. *Punisher* continued and then there was *Thunderbolts*.



Then *Preacher* hit the news as it was picked up by AMC and the idea of it actually at long last making it as a TV series was fantastic. This was great news, and I realised not so much as I was desperate to watch the TV series, but rather so pleased that it would be made, a type of vindication for a comic that I feel is ripe for such an adaptation and pleased for Steve and Garth. As the actors were made known, I was again amazed at the connectivity as Ruth Negga who is half Irish was announced as Tulip. It made me smile. My pal Pablo Miguel Alberto Vazquez went to South by Southwest in March and was sharing images and reportage as he went, and even got to see the screening and meet the various members of the creative team and spoke about it. It all sounded so good.

Concurrently, the news that Steve Dillon would be returning to *Punisher* with Becky Cloonan doing the writing was like a alarm going off in a U-boat of comic fans. Cloonan has secured herself as an excellent writer in my mind and this was a fabulous teaming.

Off I went to Forbidden Planet, but that wasn't good enough, in the fan boy sense.

Becky Cloonan was signing in Austin Books & Comics in Texas, not far from where Pablo lives, and so we coordinated. I have taken to buying multiple copies of comics and getting them signed to pals. It is an amazing thing to turn up in the post, a great way to start or reacquaint someone with a comic, and supports the creators. I had only been in Birmingham a short time, weeks beforehand, and gotten John McCrea to sign a bunch of comics, including his All Star Section Eight and *Mystic*, and I had just received a signed *Deaming Eagle* from the States, where my friend Dave Farmer had a relative attend a Garth Ennis signing of said comic.

So I queued, and I was impressed with the diversity of the queue. I was definitely older in the age curve of those who were here. It felt like a lot of younger readers—well younger than me—were here, and the gender mix was impressive. Good news, I thought, and I was pleased that in general the queue represented what I see as London. The first lady in the queue was very pleased. I smiled, and we could all hear the few words pass between them, about Becky in Austin, and as ever he was so friendly. Here was Steve Dillon, twenty five years on from when I first met him, gladly and happily signing comics, chatting and being so courteous. I picked up a bunch of *Punishers*, and adorned them with Post It notes, with the names of the people who would be getting them, from Morpeth to Santa Clara, and of course for Pablo in Austin, they would journey away, and as ever I was surprised that Steve remembered who I was, and was happy to chat. It was lovely. And the comic is excellent..



And so, I was saddened to hear of Steve's passing. Yet I only met him, for hours, maybe countable on the fingers of my hands, my early connections so important in my forming as a comic book fan, leaving much more meaning and importance to me, of course disproportionate in experience.

Steve was an incredible artist, but he was really great to his fans. I would love to write more about him, but I only saw glimpses, moments in time, and at all times, he exemplified everything that is just great about comic books. Generous, kind, thoughtful, with a great sense of humour and he gave so much to so many. I am just one fan, of tens of thousands. , mourning his passing, so many fans in Dublin shared sketches and encounters, their Steve Dillon moments cherished and the images cared and loved, and the moment special. Ah Dogwelder, he had an incredible sense of humour.

A I fan, it was unexpected, it still is, the generosity of time is incredible, I don't feel I deserve any more than a great read when I buy a comic, but for some reason, the kindness exists and is real and is an affirmation of what can be fabulous within the comics and books and amongst humans.

I cannot imagine how hard it is for Steve's family, his friends and colleagues, those who spent time with him, all I can do is record that his impact was important, in a wonderfully positive way. Be grateful for the appreciation of art that he helped nurture, grateful for an incredible body of work.

He is a real loss to those who knew him, I am certain there are many and I am certain that Garth and John especially will feel the loss and heartache. With the rest of us here in the Parish of Forbidden Planet Blog all we can offer is our condolences, say we are sorry for their loss but know that he will not be forgotten, and always remembered well.

Notes to readers:

Garth Ennis wrote about loss, and *Down the Tubes* has published them here:

<http://downthetubes.net/?p=34657>

Steve's family have asked that memorial donations be made to the Hero Initiative.

www.heroinitiative.org/be-the-hero

1993 Photos by Paul Sheridan.

SECTION 4

AN INTERVIEW WITH NEIL BAILEY

I. Can you explain how you met Steve, and then how and when "Sci Fi Adventures" came about.

Steve and I went to the same high school in Luton, Icknield High on Riddy Lane, from 1971 – 1977. *Sci Fi Adventures* was a photocopied A5 comic I started with classmate Paul Mahon probably around 1971. My dad had a photocopier at work that we could use to reproduce a couple of dozen copies of the comic. First issue was a single-sided A4 effort, stapled together but then I worked out how to (manually) print on both sides and it became a folded A5 comic.

Quality was pretty terrible (I can't draw and Paul wasn't much better) but we sold out every issue to classmates – I think it was 5p a copy for a dozen pages. I recall Paul did some Star Trek stories but can't remember what I did. Mercifully, I have long lost any copies of this!



When we did the second or third issue (it was monthly – it may have even been called *Sci Fi Monthly* at some point) a tall kid from a different class approached me in the playground and asked if he could draw for the comic. I said that if he could pencil a three or four page strip and we'd use it in the next issue.

It was brilliant. I remember he drew it on pink A4 paper and it needed inking to be dark enough to photocopy, so I inked it (with a blue ballpoint!) that evening so dad could take it into work the next day and we could get the issue out early – I was that excited, and happily dropped my own effort that month so we could get Steve's in. I can't remember what it was about.

Steve and I became close friends immediately and shared a passion for science fiction and Marvel comics. We were best friends at school from thereon and inseparable.

What was the inspiration and idea behind it?

After the first strip Steve borrowed my copy of the novelisation of the movie *Escape From The Planet Of The Apes* – there was a US TV series of the same he'd seen and I had the *Mad magazine* comic that mocked the film, but we had both missed the movie at the local Odeon.

I honestly can't remember what I wrote or illustrated for *Sci Fi* – it was over forty years ago – but Steve did a great adaptation of the movie until he got bored with it: I think he did three or four strips and then adapted the last half hour of the film in a single A5 page!

What was influencing you and Steve at this stage?

We both read a lot of science fiction. Dill (he was never 'Steve' as we had two other friends with that name) preferred EE Doc Smith whereas I liked Arthur C Clarke, and we both liked the Foundation books of Isaac Asimov and Frank Herbert's *Dune*. We were both infatuated with the paperback cover artist Chris Foss, and

NEIL BAILEY ON STEVE DILLON



you can see Foss's influence on much of Dill's artwork, especially when he got to work on *Judge Dredd*.

Comics-wise it was all Marvel. Dill liked John Buscema and couldn't initially see why I was so enamoured with Jack Kirby – years later Stan Lee told Dill to study Kirby's storytelling, but by then I think Dill was more influenced by Frank Miller's early *Daredevil*.

We discovered Neal Adams together and he instantly became our favourite. A few years later Dill fell big time for Gene Colan's work, but I've never seen the influence of that in Dill's art.

Can you give a detailed explanation of what stories and format they appeared in "Sci Fi Adventures"

Not really – you'll have to make do with what I've put above as details are sketchy. Sorry. I seriously doubt there are any copies anywhere now.



Was it just a comic adaption of Planet of the Apes?

It was the third of the original films, *Escape*. As neither Steve nor I had actually seen the movie he adapted it from the novelisation (which I think was written by Alan Dean Foster) and we later noticed that there were details in the book different from the film (I think the apes' names were different).

Was this in *Sci Fi Adventures*?

Yup.

Did you work on this, or was it purely an adaption, by Steve?

It was all Steve, words and pictures. I would have been quite happy to turn the title into a Steve Dillon comic from cover to cover but Paul Mahon still enjoyed doing his stuff.



Sci Fi Adventures would have probably stopped around 1976 when the schoolwork got more serious. By then Steve and I were in the same art class with another kid who went on to bigger and better things, Dave Stoten. You can read about Dave's later career here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Stoten. (Dave and I worked together on *Spitting Image* and *Mad* magazine in the eighties.)

We got a letter from Marvel Comics UK editor, Neil Tennant (who later became a Pet Shop Boy) that both Steve's mum and I still have.

Can you let me know how then that *Ultimate Science Fiction* came about?

I'd become interested in comic fanzines and conventions and had discovered *Comics Unlimited* and *Comic Media News*. We both wanted to produce something a bit more professional than the old photocopied effort so we hunted around Luton and found a printer who was happy to produce a low print run 16-page B&W comic for us. Dill did eight pages, I was supposed to do seven and the editorial/letters page but if Dill needed more I happily gave them to him. My stuff was embarrassing, he was improving with every page. When we did the first issue I asked Steve to produce an ad for the back cover of *Comic Media News* and that's when Dill's career started to take off as it caught the eye of the editor of CMN, Richard Burton, who a few years later became editor of *2000AD*.

Lew Stringer has put the ad online:
https://i.bp.blogspot.com/rDnGP_UhT4Q/WAutzrKFJOI/AAAAA AAAaYQ/pjP4jZbgegPG0out2aV82LxBj-i3EAwwCLcB/s1600/ULTIMATE_1977.jpg

I have the original artwork for the ad. I think Steve's dad, who was a professional signwriter, did the lettering for it – I recall he did the original "Ultimate" logo. Having said that, the ad's writing does look quite similar to Steve's own. Next time I see Bernard Dillon I'll ask him – he's a fine artist in his own right. (Presumably you know all about the comics and film work of Steve's younger brother, Glyn?)

I don't have anything from the first two issues to share. There may be copies lying around in Steve's home or with his family, but, so soon after his death, it would not be the right time to ask them to look.

Did you write all the stories and Steve draw them all, or were others involved? How did that process work? Did Steve also write the stories with you?

He wrote and drew three episodes of "Inheritance", which was heavily influenced by *Star Wars* and the novel *Dune*. It says a lot for his modesty that he insisted that each issue had a few pages from me – he didn't want it to just be his stuff. I couldn't add anything of value to Steve's work – he was amazing.

Paul Mahon wasn't involved – he'd lost interest in comics by then.

I understand issue 1 was in MAY 1977, A5 with 16 Pages, Black & White with a Colour Cover.

I have limited details on the stories, knowing only that that first part of the *The Inheritance* appeared. Do you have details or recall what else appeared and by whim, by any chance?

How was it received, where did you sell it, and what were you pleased with?

Ultimate got very good reviews in *Comics Unlimited* and a number of other fanzines. We sold out the first print run and doubled the number for the second issue (from thirty to sixty I think). We priced it wrong and didn't even cover the cost of printing and postage, but we weren't in it for the money.

I think the first issue had spot colour on Dill's cover – it wasn't full colour, just cyan. Sorry, but I can't even picture it. All the *Ultimate* covers were by Steve and featured "The Inheritance"

***Ultimate Science Fiction* no.2, Aug 1977. I understand it contained: "The Inheritance" Chapter 2 Even Heroes Can Cry by Steve, An Ultimate Editorial : USF needs it, but USF doesn't have it"**

Not sure what that is, at all. but USF is obviously *Ultimate Science Fiction*. I think it referred to "money" and was a feeble attempt to increase sales. Not sure why we sought to increase sales as we lost money of every issue we posted!

Forever People, Colin Campbell & Alan Austin

Top fanzine reviews" by yourself?

Sorry, not sure.

"Sands Of The Stars – Prologue

That rings a bell. I think it was my effort but can't remember a thing about it. Does that sound correct? What is wrong or right here? Probably.

How was reaction to this issue? Were you receiving subscriptions at this stage?

I think we had about thirty subs, which we had to return after we cancelled it with issue 3

I have no details on issue 3, at all, so any insight would be excellent, Content, and contributors, would be lovely.

Issue three had a wraparound “Inheritance” cover and nine pages of part three of the story, “J”. I think the other pages would have been my rubbish, a page of letters and an ad for the hypothetical issue four. I have all of Dill’s art for issue 3 – when I hear back from his family I’m happy to share it.

At what stage do you recall that Steve realised that he could make a living of comic art, and can you recall how that went for him?

Dill and I were approached by a publisher to produce some illustrations for a dutch language sci-fi magazine. It was Steve’s first paid artwork (and my only paid artwork!). Can’t recall the title. Steve’s was very, very Chris Foss inspired. I think mine got published first, which stunned both of us!

Issue three of *Ultimate* came out in 1978, when Steve was 16 and we had both left high school. He started an Art Foundation course at a local college but left after a month or so as he was approached by Dez Skinn, the new editor at Marvel UK, who was producing UK content for the first time. Steve met with Dez and Paul Neary (who was the creative guy there, an occasional Warren comics artist) and that was the start of his fantastic career.

We met comics professionals at conventions in the late seventies. We travelled up to London on the same train as Dave Gibbons (who lived in St Albans) and John Higgins. Through Marvel Dill met the two Moores, Steve and Alan but it wasn’t long before Richard Burton contacted him for *2000AD*.



A STEVE DILLON GALLERY

THE inheritance

CHAPTER III.
STEVE DILLON
© 1978

ROBOT J.

BATTERED & CONFUSED, HIS BRAIN A JUMBLE OF
TWISTED ELECTRONIC PATHWAYS, HE STUMBLES
ON THROUGH THE VARATAN
MOUNTAIN WIND ...



HE KNOWS WHERE HE MUST
GO, BUT NOT WHY, HE HAS
BEEN SEARCHING FOR
OVER 224 YEARS ...

... AND HIS SEARCH IS
NEARING AN END.

III. BY STEVE DILLON
S.D.

IT IS WARMER DOWN ON THE MALLAI FLATS WHERE SAL DAMUN AND THE DAUGHTER OF HIS ADOPTED PARENTS, ALEIKA, WORK THE BARE FIELDS.



THEIR EFFORTS DO NOT GO UNNOTICED



A PAIR OF LARGE BLUE EYES TURN BRIGHT RED WHEN THEY FOCUS ON THE FIGURES 200 METRES AWAY.



THE ROBOT HITS THE DRY EARTH AND LETS OUT A CROAKY CALL.



THE YOUNG MAN TURNED IN SURPRISE AT THE SHOUT.

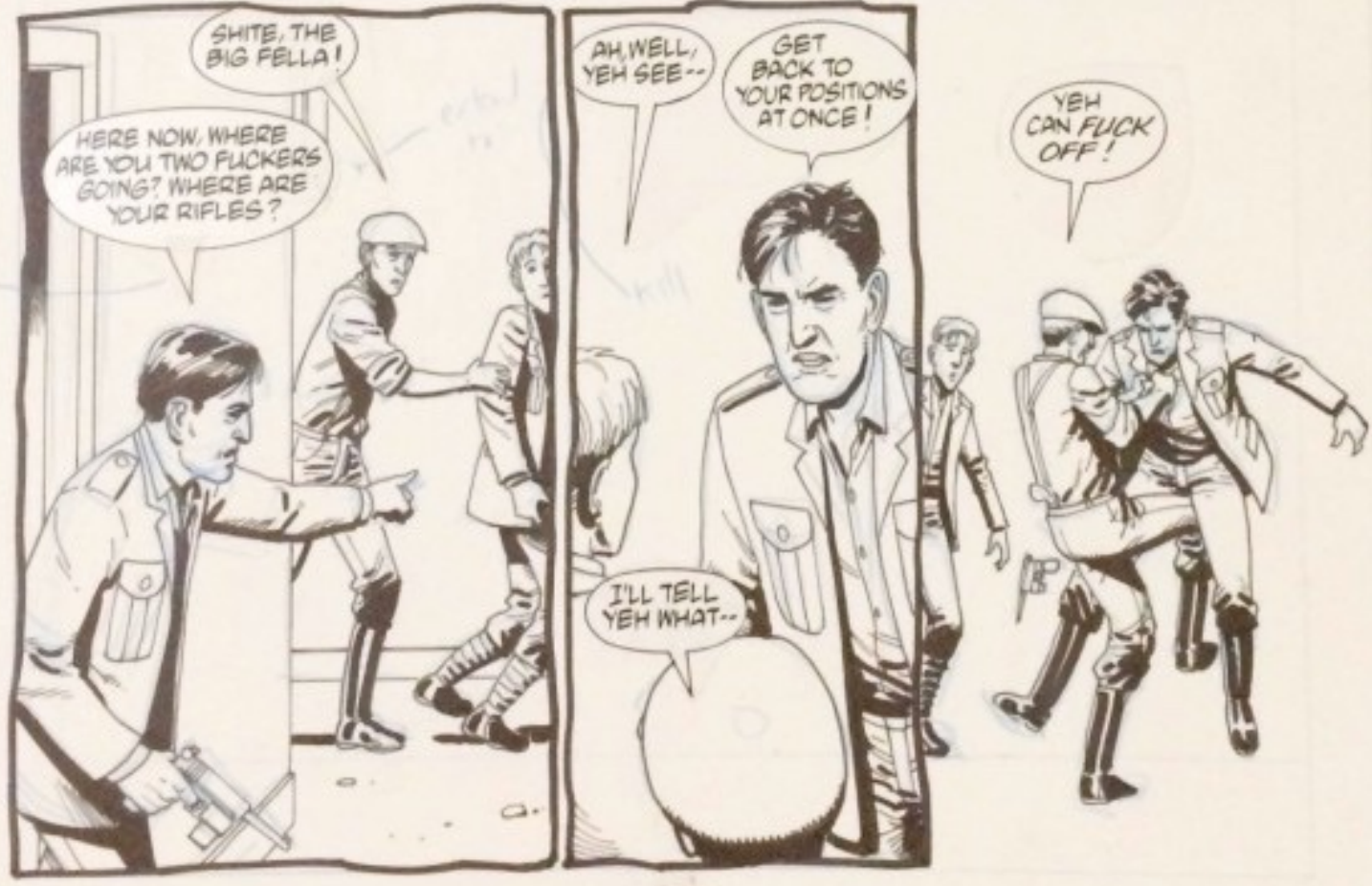


THE ROBOT FALTERS. HIS EYES FLICKER AND RETURN TO BLUE.

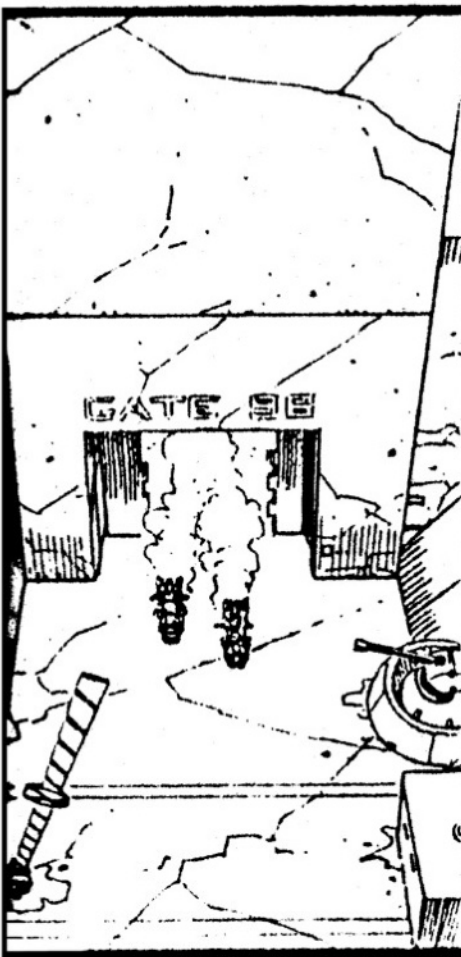
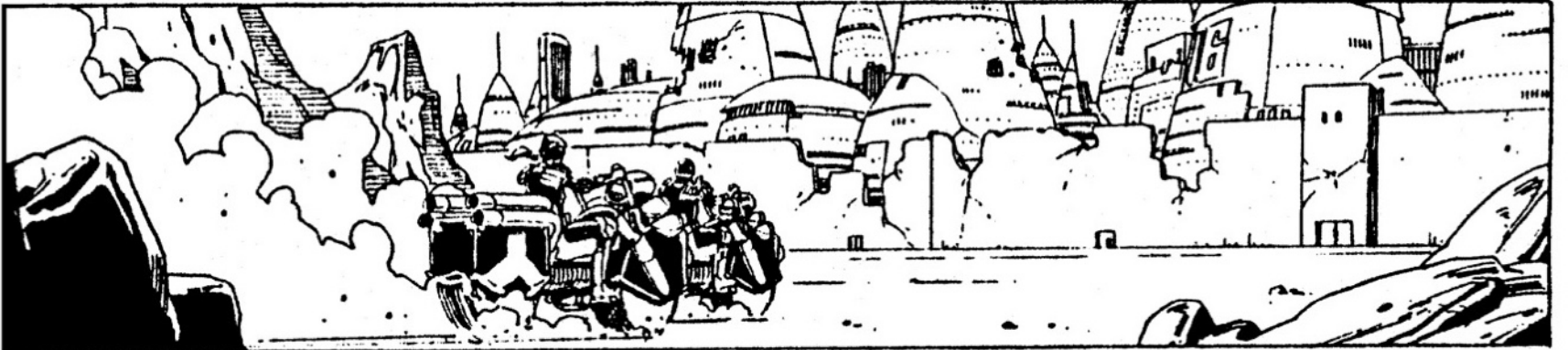
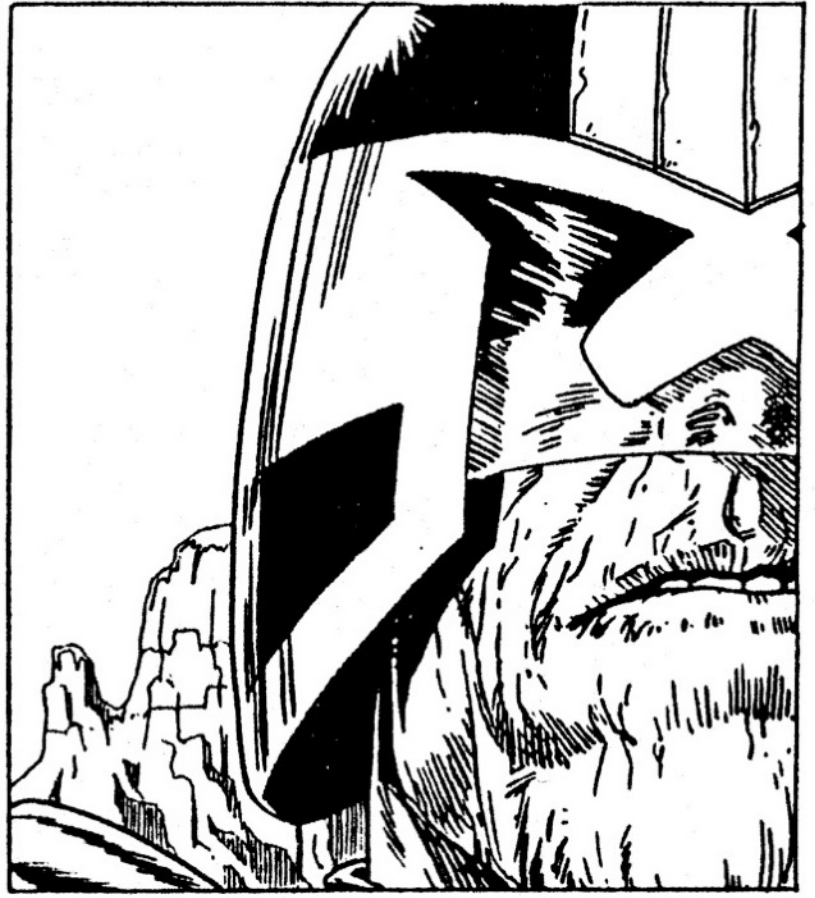
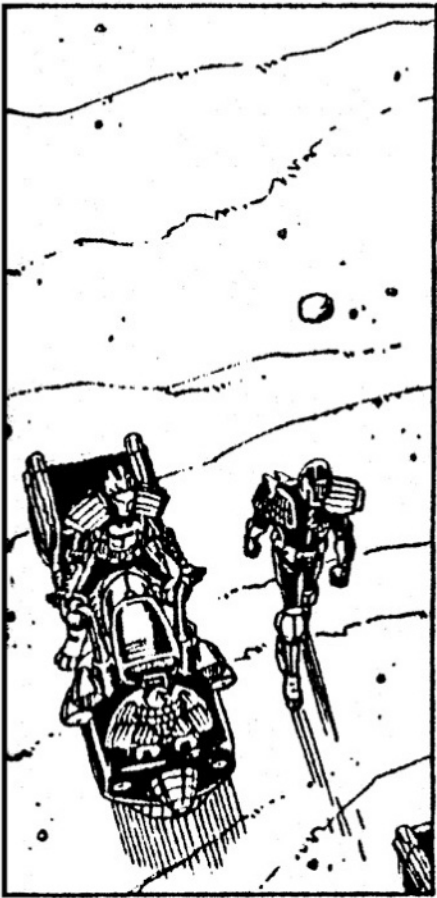


STAY PUT! I'M NOT 'MASTER VALLUS', MY NAME IS SAL DAMUN AND I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE!









FUNERAL IN BERLIN!

PROG 535
15 AUG 87

£1.70 Malaysia
75c Australia
85c New Zealand
Inc. G.S.T.
85g Mercury
210g Venus
60g Mars
110g Saturn
2g Pluto
425g Neptune

28p
EARTH
MONEY

IN ORBIT
EVERY
MONDAY

2000 AD

FEATURING **JUDGE DREDD**

WW2 WAS JUST THE START OF...
ZENITH!



MEANWHILE IN ENGLAND! KA-POW! THE FIRST BRITISH COMIC CON AND STEVE MOORE.



I was at an Alan Moore event in 2013 and Pdraig introduced me to Steve Moore. We were soon talking about fanzines. I mentioned that I was involved with Loncon 3, as director of programme, and Steve mentioned he had been to Loncon 2. Soon the chat was all about common acquaintances, whom we both knew in science fiction fandom. James White was one who we both knew well, and the conversation went in a direction I had not at all expected.

The two of us were chatting away and it was great, I really felt here was a fan who understood and got what I was at, although of course, I had at this stage read hundreds of pages



of Steve Moore comics in a variety of comics from 2000AD to Warrior, but we were chatting fanzines.

The first UK Comic fanzine was Ka-Pow by Phil Clarke and Steve Moore - which came together from those gents meeting at the 1965 Worldcon, Loncon 2 and there were two issues in 1967 and 1968, printed with a spirit Duplicator. Merry Marvel Fanzine just piped them to the post as being the first fanzine in the British Isles.

Padraig was interviewing Steve, as he does, and I recall suggesting some questions, although I also recall that any questions I had were in essence already scheduled to be asked. Of interest here also is the first two British Comic Conventions. Tony Roche reviewed the first one, for Heroes Unlimited, and was there, although I understand not listed.

Unfortunately, Steve Moore passed away before Padraig could finish the interview, which runs to some eighty pages in length. I'll pass it over to Padraig now.

James.

PÓM: You were part of the very first wave of British comics fandom, I believe. How did that come about, and how did you become involved in it?

SM: Well, first I was involved with British SF fandom, which was long established ... from before World War II, I believe. I think it was about 1964 (maybe 1963) that I joined the British Science Fiction Association (BSFA), probably as a result of seeing an advert in something like New Worlds. At the time there was quite a thriving London 'scene', particularly Friday evening meetings at the flat of a woman called Ella Parker, who lived in Kilburn, which I started attending regularly. I made a few contacts there and, while it might be too much to say I got to 'know' them, I at least got the chance to meet and hang out with authors like Mike Moorcock, John Brunner, Kenneth Bulmer and E.C. Tubb; and sometimes to share the tube back to Charing Cross with the charming John Carnell. Big thrills for a 15-year-old kid ... though obviously I was too young to really make a connection with the professional writers.

It was through the BSFA that I got to publish my first fanzine, Vega. Things were pretty primitive back then ... no computers, no printers, not even any copy shops. The height of amateur printing technology was the Gestetner machine, where you typed on plastic stencils which were then placed on an inked drum and printed from there. If you wanted to reproduce illustrations, you sent them away to someone who'd make 'electrostencils' for you. The BSFA ran something called the Publishing And Distribution Service, where you cut your own stencils and sent them in for printing (by future author and critic Charles Platt, who had his own duplicator). I don't think there were more than about ten members of PADS at the time, but the idea was that you got a few copies of your fanzine for your own use, and there were also copies printed off for the other members, so you'd get an envelope full of everyone else's fanzines as well.

Frankly, Vega was embarrassingly awful. The first issue was six pages long, the second and third eight pages. Having no contacts, I wrote the whole of the first two issues ... mainly stories and book reviews ... though by the time I got to the third issue a couple of other PADS members had taken pity on me and contributed stories. But by then even I couldn't stand my own magazine any more, so I knocked it on the head ... which was probably a relief to all concerned. But looking back, I can see a beginning there: I didn't so much want to write about SF, I actually wanted to produce it, which was something that carried over into my comics fanzines. Not long after that, I started building up a nice little collection of rejection slips from magazines like New Worlds, but never sold a story at the time.

Charles Platt also published a very classy (and very fat) fanzine called Beyond, which was where, in early 1964, I first read an article about the exciting new Marvel Comics that Stan Lee and Jack Kirby were producing, so I went out and picked up a few, and after that I was lost. For the rest of the 1960s I was collecting everything in sight ... mainly Marvel and DC, though I'd look at just about anything ... and as it was relatively easy at the time, I soon managed to pick up everything I wanted back to the time when American comics were first imported. But I was always picking up stuff as a 'reader' rather than a 'collector': it was very nice to have a brand new copy of something, but as for older stuff, so long as I had a copy I could read I really wasn't fussed about condition and the idea of going out and buying comics as an investment and storing them in mylar bags would have just struck me as ridiculous. Later I picked up some older stuff from the '40s and '50s, but again condition wasn't that important to me, and with that stuff I was much more interested in SF comics than superhero material.

Anyway, my first involvement with comics fandom really came about when I met Phil Clarke at the World Science Fiction Convention in London, in 1965. We were a couple of 16-year-olds and hung out that weekend, and from that developed a close friendship that lasted several years. At the time, of course, everyone basically kept in touch by letter, but every now and then I'd go to Birmingham to see him, or he'd come to London to see me. And before too long we'd decided to produce a comics fanzine together. I think we might have seen a couple of American examples, but at the time there was nothing over here.

I then acquired a Roneo spirit duplicator, which is just about the most primitive form of printing you can get. Essentially, you'd have a 'master' sheet of paper with an ink sheet attached, like carbon paper, facing the back of the master. So you'd then type or draw on the master, and you'd end up with a reversed ink impression on the back of it ... the standard ink being purple, though you could get other colours. The master would then go on the drum of the duplicator and be dampened by pure alcohol, which would dissolve just enough of the ink to print the image or text. It was hand-cranked, one page at a time, smelled appalling, and was good for maybe 50 or 60 copies per master. And, of course, if you left the pages in direct light for too long, they faded horribly. So that's what I printed Ka-Pow with.

Frankly, my memories of this period are pretty vague now. Hunting out the old issues of Ka-Pow, it became obvious to me that we'd prepared masters of interior pages for a first issue, which are dated April 1966, but this was never published ... though obviously I ran off at least one print from them, as I still have it. I suspect we just weren't happy with it. But we eventually released the first, much improved issue in July 1967. As far as I know, that was the first British comics fanzine, though Tony Roche's Merry Marvel Fanzine, published in Ireland, was a little earlier. By then we'd met a pretty good fan artist from Durham called Ken Simpson (though I'm not sure if he ever made it professionally), who contributed a cover and a strip called 'The Cat' while I, under the absurd delusion that I might be able to draw, did a strip called 'Nite-Man', and there was a text-story called 'American Eagle' by 'John James', which I think was me (at least, it was a pseudonym I used later when contributing an article to the men's magazine Game about women fighters in kung fu movies), although it could have been Phil and I together. I suspect it was just a move to make it look like we had more contributors! And Phil and I both did articles about old time British comics. The line up was pretty much the same for the second issue (February 1968), except the article (on

Tarzan strips) was by Gerald Cleaver. That was printed on the Roneo again and, frankly, large parts of my copy are now unreadable!

The third and last issue (August 1968) was all litho, which again I think was a first for this country, and featured strips by Mike Higgs, Ken Simpson and John Hudson (I'd learned my lesson by this point). I don't know why we stopped ... I suspect we may just have run out of steam. I was eventually involved in a couple more fanzines, but they come a little later in the story.

By then, of course, there were a number of other comics fanzines, and it was standard practice to trade issues and adverts with other editors, which was pretty much how the whole fan publishing network built up. Another good friend I made at the time was Frank Dobson, original publisher of the adzine *Fantasy Advertiser*, who lived not far from me in Lewisham. And although I'd realised by then that I couldn't actually draw, I could still swipe, so I did most of Frank's covers in 1968 and 1969, being basically pin-up pictures of favourite costumed characters. Frank was very good to me in that period. At weekends we'd jump in his van and go round the market stalls in London, where it was still possible to pick up second hand comics, Frank looking for stock and I for stuff for my collection, and there was never any competition. If I found something I wanted it was mine, even if it might have been something that Frank could have sold for a fair amount. He was a great EC collector, always looking to improve the quality of his collection by trading with dealers in the States; and, of course, EC had only gone out of business a dozen years before at that time. So if he'd got a pristine copy of something to replace a poorer one, he'd pass that on to me for about half the price he'd sell it in FA ... which was great because, as I said, I wasn't that fussed about condition. So I got quite a nice collection of original EC Comics really cheap, particularly the SF titles, which were obviously the ones I was most interested in.

Probably the most important other friend I made at this time was Derek 'Bram' Stokes, future owner of *Dark They Were And Golden Eyed*, the first specialist SF and comics shop in the country (and, I'm not sure, possibly in the world). I think I first met Derek at an SF convention where he was regarded by the more straight fans, many of whom could be surprisingly conservative, as a long-haired weirdo (particularly when he turned up for the fancy dress as a barbarian, wearing little more than a sword-belt and a translucent scarf as a 'loin cloth'), but I rather took to him. He was hip, and it was the Sixties, and we had a lot of fun. At the time he was running a mail order business for SF, horror and comics called *The Vault of Horror* from a lock-up in north London, but eventually he decided to open a shop. I remember him coming over to my place with a couple of young ladies called Eileen and Cathy, and we then all sat on my dining room floor (as one did in those days) discussing a name for the place. There were two options: to call it after the fairy tale collection 'East of the Sun and West of the Moon', which I actually favoured, but the other three outvoted me and it ended up as *DTWAGE*, after the Ray Bradbury story.

PÓM: You were involved in the first British comics conventions as well, I believe?

SM: The first two, yes. The first one was at the Midland Hotel in Birmingham in August 1968, and the organising committee was Phil Clarke, his then girlfriend Kay Hawkins and myself. Being on the spot in Birmingham, Phil and Kay did most of the actual organising, while I helped out with publicity (mainly through Odhams' *Power Comics* line) and printing with my 'trusty' Roneo. I'd already printed off a couple of personal sales-lists for Phil called *The Comic Fan*, which we then turned into two issues of *The Comic Fan Special*, which was our news-bulletin, and also listed comics (mainly Phil's) that were being sold to raise money for expenses. Looking at the second issue of this, I see there was going to be a convention booklet, which I wasn't going to be printing, but if I still have a copy of that, it must be somewhere in the loft.

I remember very little about that first convention (for many years I thought it had been in 1967!), though I recall the hotel as being big, old and gloomy. I think there may have been about 50 or 60 people there, and a few 'non-attending' members. There was the usual stuff: movies, panel discussions, auctions, but I only know this from looking at the bulletin, not from

memory! It was all very small scale, and modelled on what we knew of SF conventions, but we had a good time and that was how it all started. I'm afraid I'm one of the guilty men ...

Anyway, I obviously hadn't had enough, as I got involved with the second one as well, at the Waverley Hotel in London, the following year. This time the committee was Frank Dobson, Derek Stokes, Alan Willis (of whom I remember nothing whatever), and myself. It was bigger, more organised ... and again I remember virtually nothing about it, though this time that was mainly because I was in a blind, exhausted panic through most of the weekend, trying to make sure that everything worked. And that was enough organising for me. I went to the third in Sheffield, and I think to another one at the Waverley. And then I'd really had enough of conventions in general, and entered my 'reclusive phase' ... which has lasted for about 40 years so far!

PÓM: You have been a recluse, apparently, ever since then. Did you just decide it all wasn't for you, or what happened?

SM: I'm basically a recluse as far as comic conventions and personal appearances go, that's all. I have a number of very close friends, some going back decades, who I like to see as often as possible, and I'm certainly not agoraphobic in terms of not wanting to leave the house! But by the time we got to the comic cons I was working in the business, which made me a bit of a 'celebrity', and I've never had any interest in that. And the idea of being in a large room full of people who know me, when I don't know them, just makes me uncomfortable. Besides, by 1972 I'd gone freelance, and I made a conscious decision to stop reading other people's comics so I could develop my own style, so what was the point of going to a convention to discuss things I was no longer familiar with or interested in? By then I just wasn't 'a comic fan' any more. So I just withdrew from that whole scene.

PÓM: Do you remember who attended those early comic cons? [P: If you need a reminder, I'm pretty sure I can find you the membership list online...] [S: If you want to include that, I'd suggest you do it as a footnote, under your own name]

SM: Well, looking at the membership list published in an issue of *The Comic Fan Special*, I see that a number of notable fans were due to be at the first one, like Dave McCullough, Nick Landau, Pete Phillips and Paul Neary. But if you're asking me who I remember, apart from Phil, Kay and myself, it basically comes down to Jim Baikie, who was living not far from me in South Norwood at the time, and with whom I developed a fairly close friendship, before he moved back to the Orkneys.

As for the second one, like I said, it was pretty much of a blur. But among those there were Alan Moore, Steve Parkhouse, Barry Smith and Bob Rickard, the future founder of *Fortean Times*, none of whom I had as much time to talk to as I would have liked. I also remember shouting at a young kid called Dave Womack, who was making a rather loud nuisance of himself throughout the weekend, and being baffled by an Edgar Rice Burroughs fan called Frank Westwood, who asked me where he could find a Roman Catholic church on the Sunday morning; something which had simply never occurred to me to find out (and which, at the time, I actually thought was pretty weird; after all, when there was a comic book convention going on, why would you want to go to church?).

PÓM: What do you think drove you to want to produce all those fanzines?

SM: Essentially, it was what fans did in those days. There was no internet, no blogs, so if you wanted to do stuff about comics, you did fanzines. It was a mushroom industry in the late 60s, early 70s, especially as cheap offset printing started to come in. Everybody seemed to be doing it ... some people were doing four or five at once, on different topics, and the adzines were



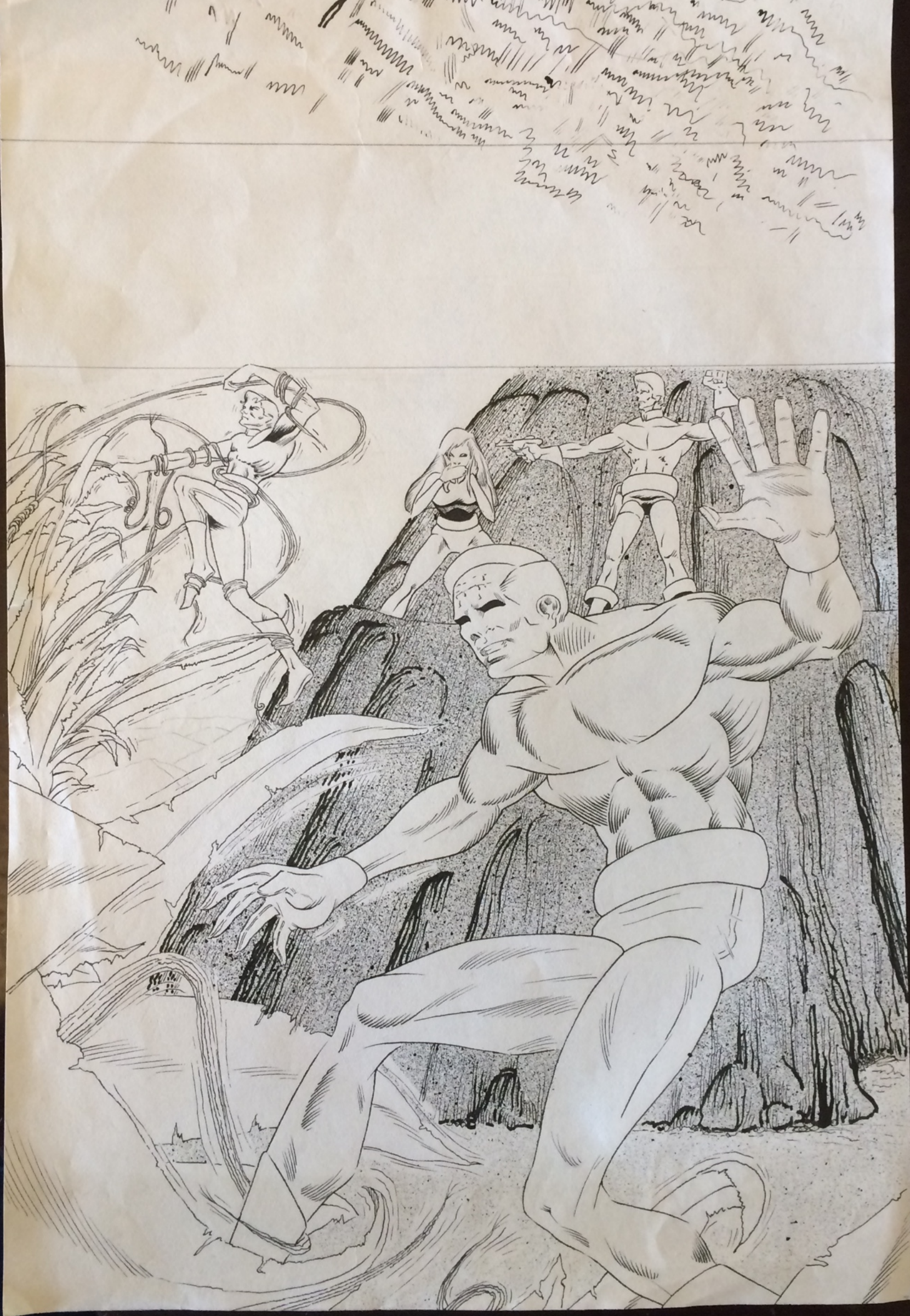
both offering comics for sale, but advertising all the various fanzines as well. And fanzine editors would trade both copies and adverts with one another, as well as offering space for articles, etc., that you might not have wanted to do in your own fanzine. In many ways it was a bit like an early version of the internet, but done with printed paper, envelopes and postage stamps. It's how we kept in touch.

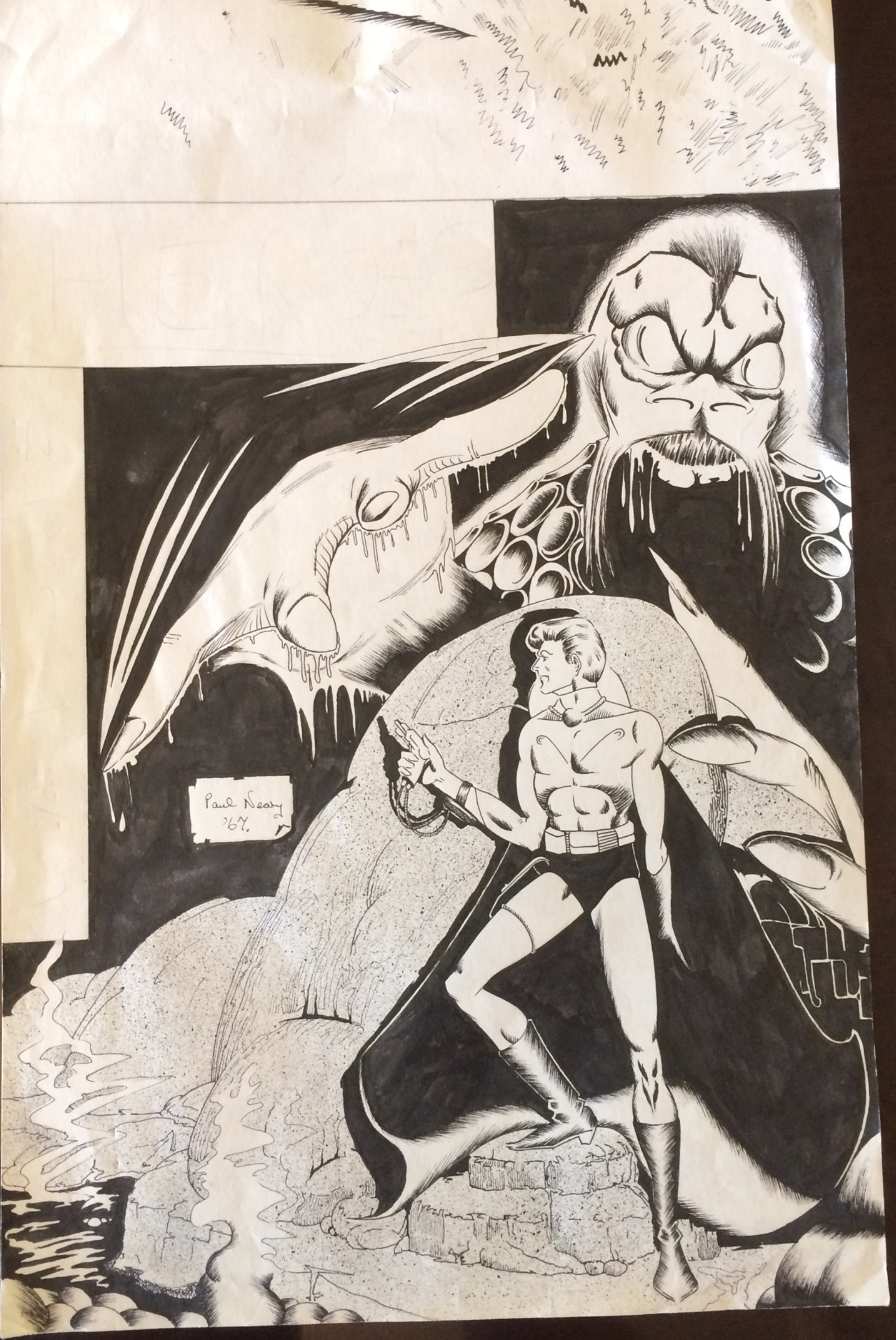
UNLIMITED
2 1/2
CHAPTER 2

A PAUL NEARY GALLERY



Paul Neary
87





Paul Neary
'67.

