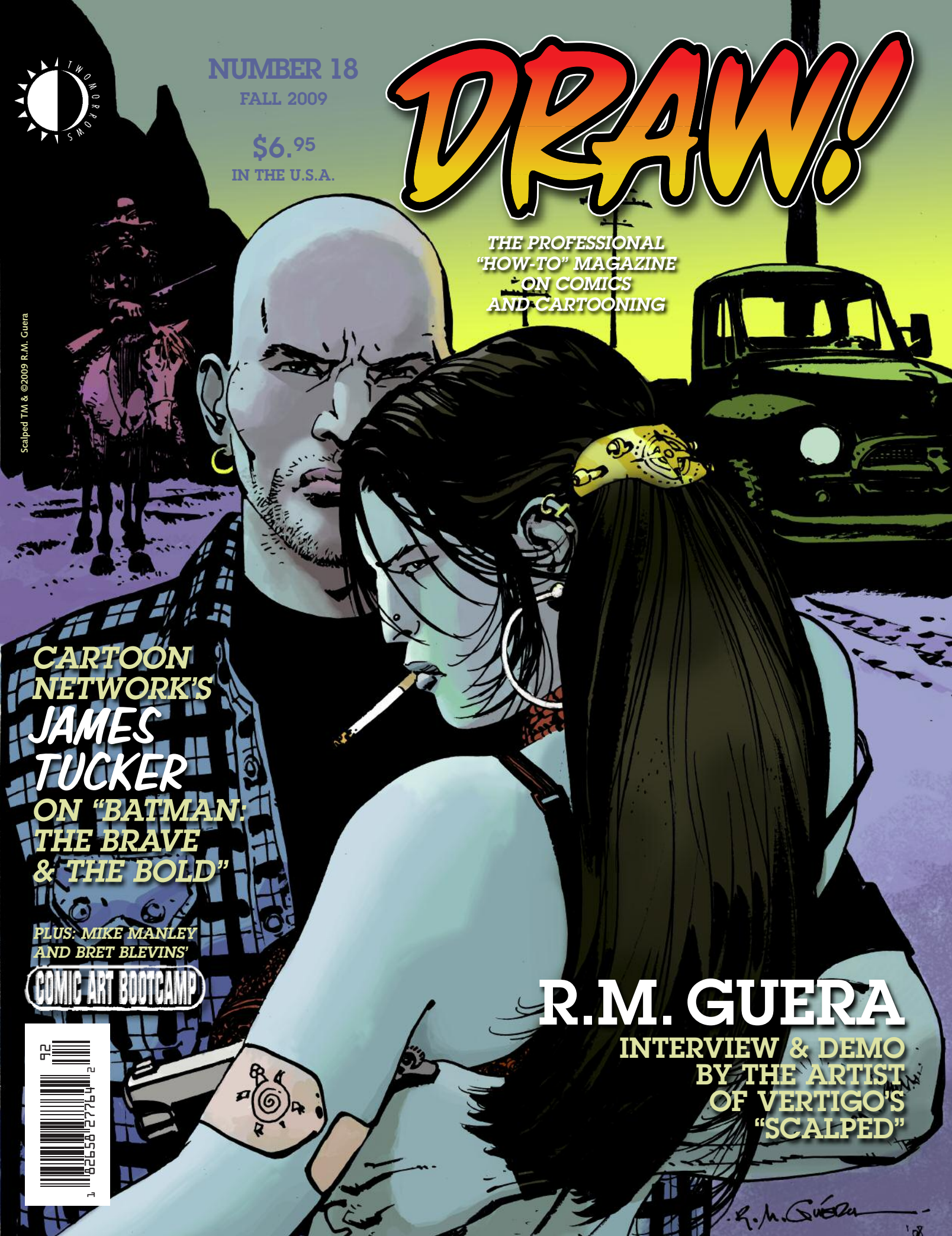
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FALL 2009
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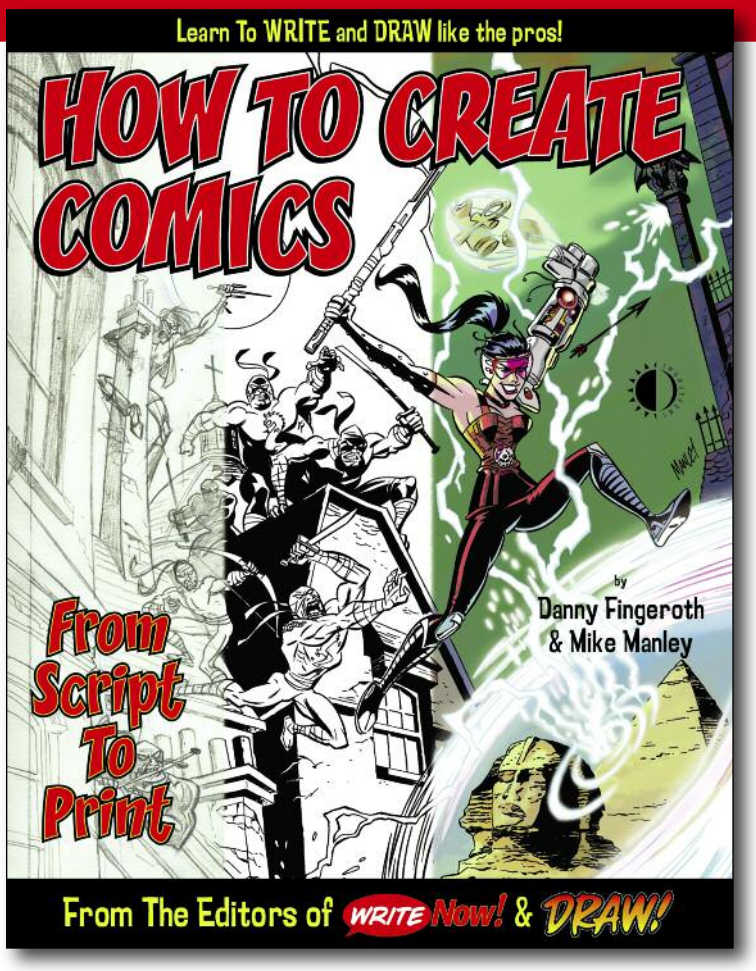
DRAW!
THE PROFESSIONAL "HOW-TO" MAGAZINE ON COMICS AND CARTOONING
Scalped TM & ©2009 R.M. Guera
CARTOON NETWORK'S JAMES TUCKER ON "BATMAN: THE BRAVE & THE BOLD"
PLUS: MIKE MANLEY AND BRET BLEVINS'
COMIC ART BOOTCAMP
R.M. GUERA
INTERVIEW & DEMO BY THE ARTIST OF VERTIGO'S "SCALPED"

THE ULTIMATE TUTORIALS ON CREATING COMICS, FROM SCRIPT TO PRINT



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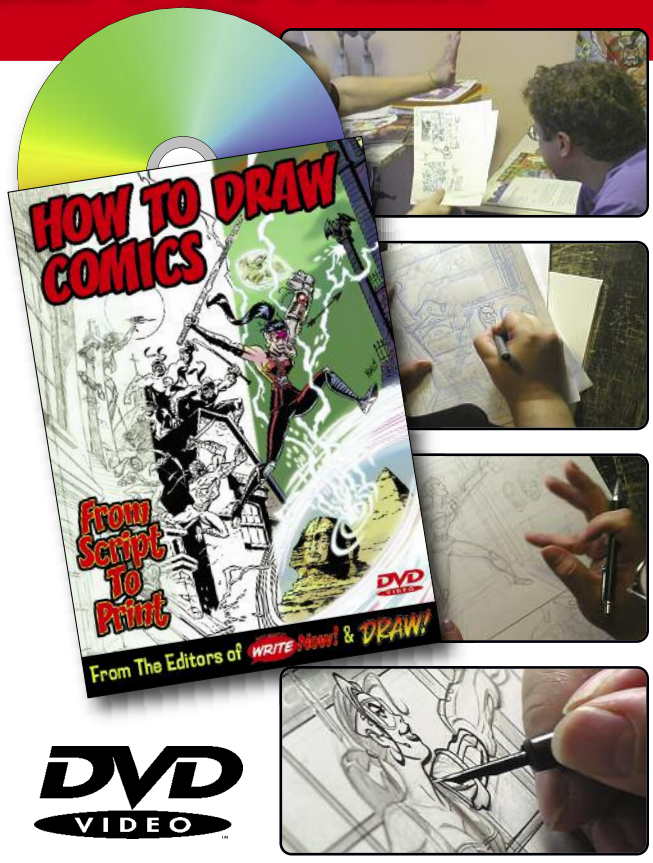

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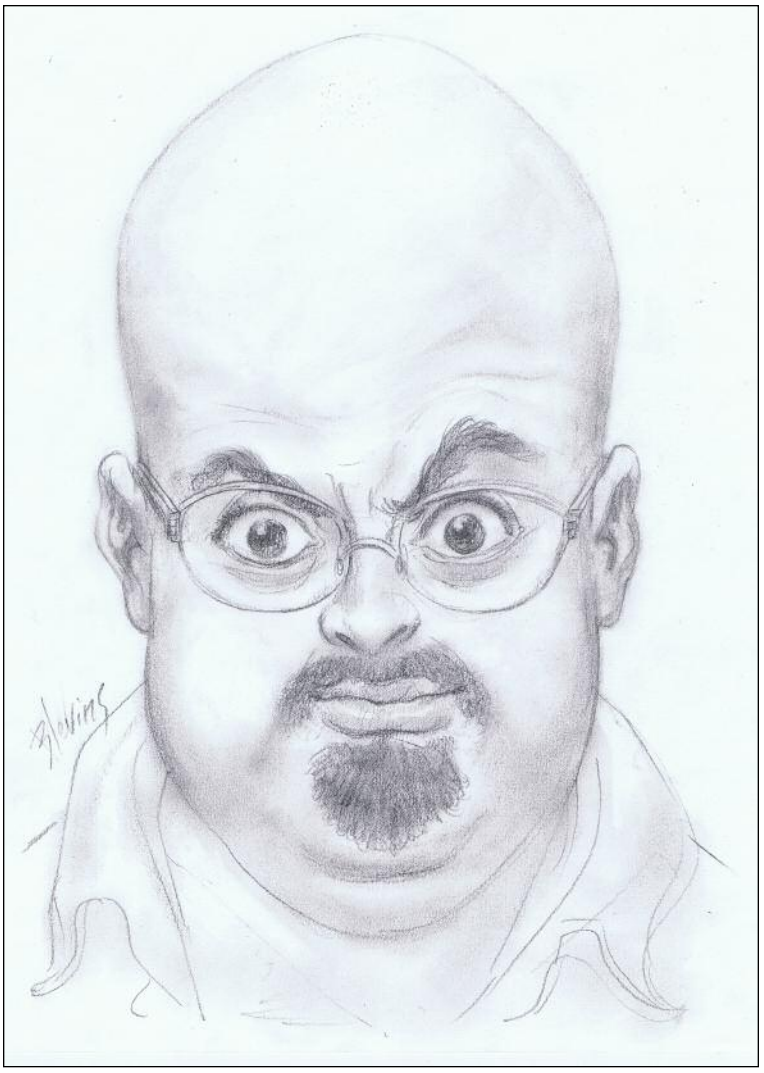

Figurative interpretation by Bret Blevins

Hey, amigos, welcome to the annual fall issue of *DRAW!* magazine, which has been nominated this year for a Harvey Award! I'll be attending the awards hosted by the Baltimore Comic-Con. In fact, by the time your read this, we may have already won. My hat's off—and my hair, too—to all the great folks that make each issue possible, from publisher John Morrow, to Eric Nolen-Weathington, to Jamar Nicholas and my buddy and man-at-arms Bret Blevins.

This issue was a long time coming, as it took some time to track down a way to interview R.M. Guéra, who lives in Spain. Luckily, fate (and the Internet) introduced me to Bojan M. Djukic—just the man for a job. I have been a fan of *Scalped* since the first issue and a big fan of Guéra's work in particular. So, my hat's off to Bojan for doing a great job on the interview.

"Bang, Pow! SMASH! Comics are not just for kids anymore!" Fehh! This is the typical headline you read in the fluff piece you see when the average newspaper looking to fill column space and does an article on comics today. They are always alluding back the super-popular '60s *Batman* TV show featuring Adam West, and the new show on Cartoon Network, *Batman: The Brave and the Bold* harkens a bit back to that era and the era of comics that inspired the '60s TV show, the Batman comics of the '50s and early '60s. Now, I was a huge fan of that show as a kid, as just about anyone my age was then. So it was a pleasure to catch up and chat with artist/producer James Tucker, who took time out of his busy schedule to chat with me about the show and his approach and take on Batman.

I also want to officially announce that the *DRAW!* magazine blog is up and running: **http://draw-magazine.blogspot.com.** Now you can find news updates and eventually additional and exclusive online material. I plan to start doing podcasts next year where I will be doing interviews and shop talks with artists. These things are in the works, as well as even more online events like live drawing lessons, demos, etc. Stay tuned to the blog for the latest news!

MIKE

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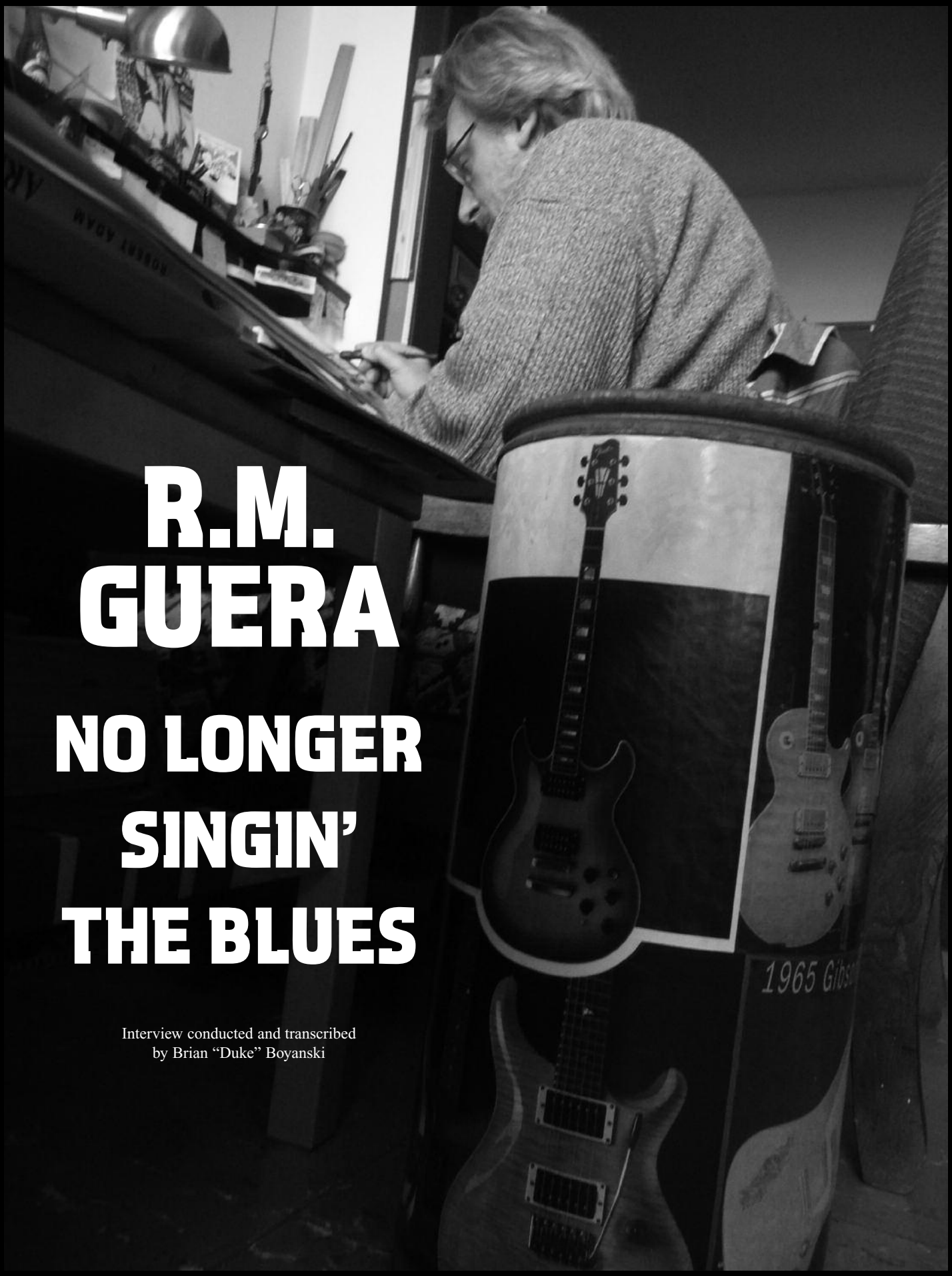


R.M. GUERA

NO LONGER SINGIN' THE BLUES

Interview conducted and transcribed
by Brian "Duke" Boyanski

With one foot in the European tradition of classics such as *Lt. Blueberry*, and one foot in classic American film noir, R.M. GUERA's work on Vertigo's *Scalped* is carving a fresh take on life on "the Rez" and the genre of crime comics.

BRIAN "DUKE" BOYANSKI: Your name is Rajko Milosevic. How on earth did you get the nickname "Gera," that's gradually evolved into "Guéra"?

R.M. GUERA: It's a funny story, as all of that kind are. When I was about eleven or twelve maybe, we moved from one part of town to another, so I changed schools. Being new, I had to remember lots of names, and one of them I remembered wrong. It was the name Gruya—a Montenegrin name, not average sounding even by Serbian standards—but I somehow heard it wrong and thought that this kid's name was "Guéra," and so called him by it. All of the kids laughed on this secretly, and so to keep the joke going, nobody told me for some days. I spotted my error and changed it, but it was too late, so when they referred to me in some way, they said Guéra, knowing who the real owner of that name is. [***laughs***] And it's stuck ever since.

It's not an artistic name or like that. Even my mother calls me Guéra. It evolved from writing it in Serbian as Gera to Guéra, as I was really tired of explaining it to the Spanish here, or whomever. Literally, not one single person read or said it correctly on the first try, so I added one letter and an accent to change the word. I am not sure I succeeded, but it sure made my life a lot simpler.

BB: When were you born?

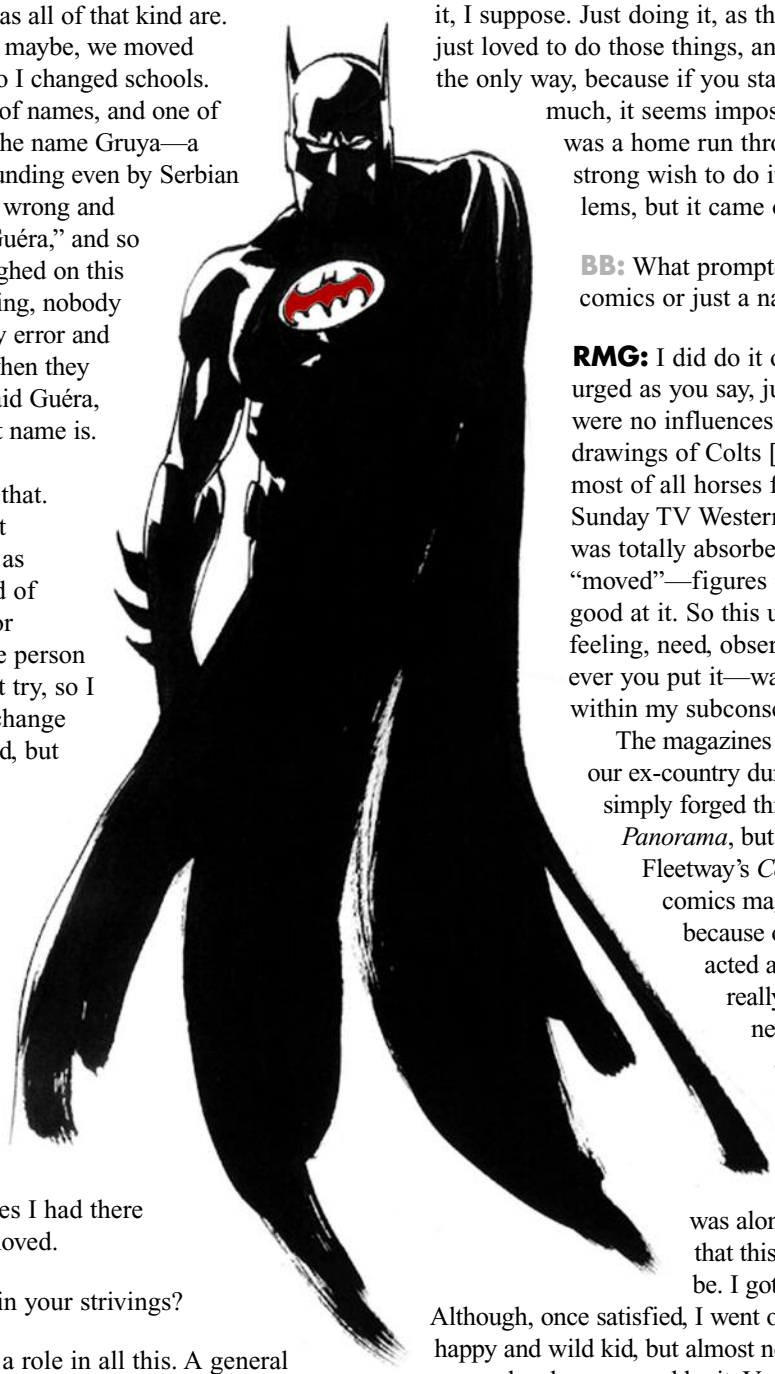
RMG: On 24th of November, 1959, in Serbia... well, Yugoslavia at the time.

BB: You're a Belgrade kid, right?

RMG: Yes. I did cut my roots pretty willingly. I'm now some 17 years out of it, but Belgrade, its unique charm and the good times I had there will stay with me and can't be removed.

BB: Did your family support you in your strivings?

RMG: In a way... our parents had a role in all this. A general one, I mean. I was lucky all right, because mine were present by their absence. We had scarce material means, but they really left me alone in doing whatever I thought mattered in my life from early on. You can't be grateful enough for that.



BB: How did you manage to effortlessly deal with heading a blues band while building a career as a comics artist?

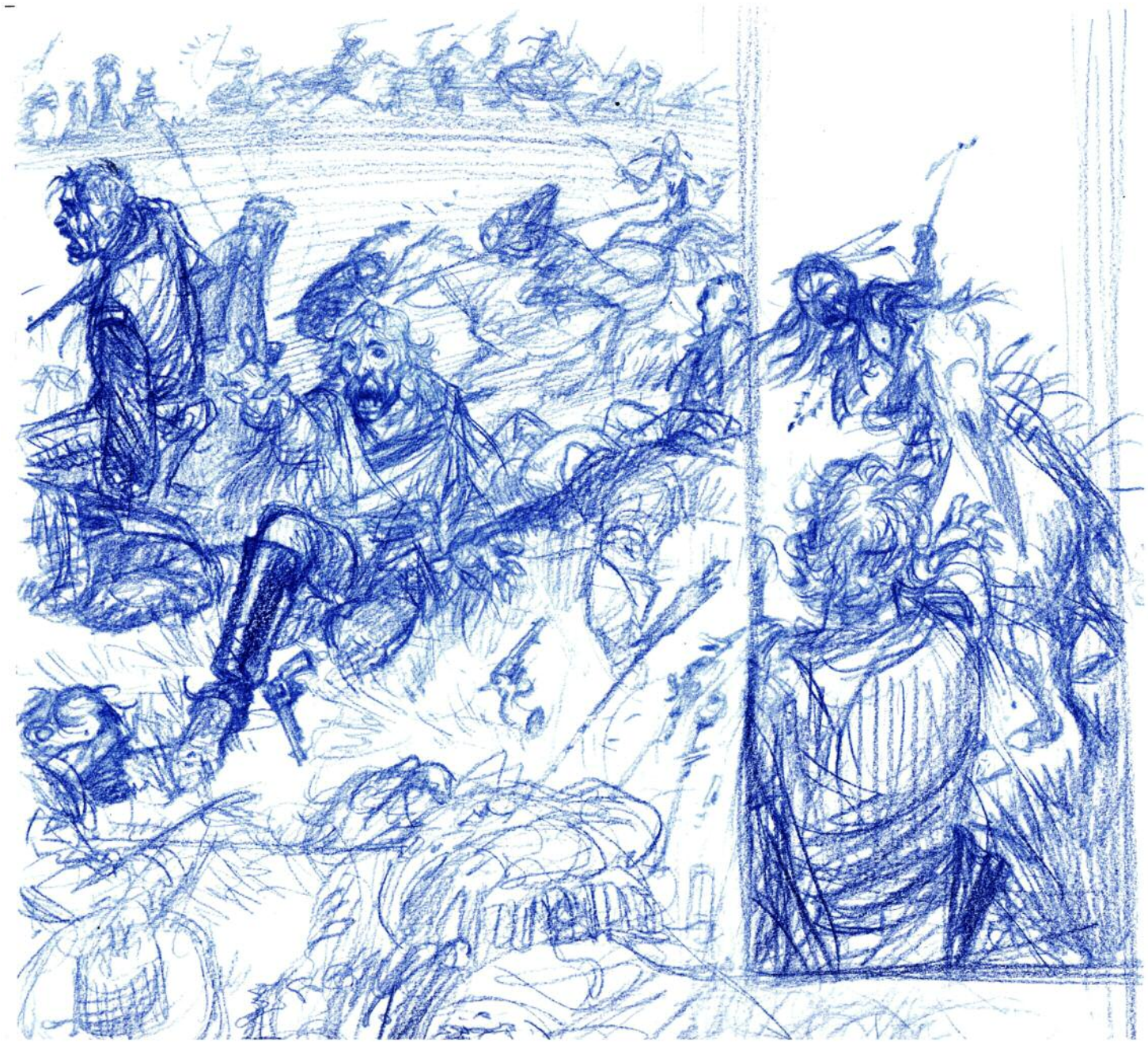
RMG: Thank you for putting it that way. By not thinking about it, I suppose. Just doing it, as the commercial says. I just loved to do those things, and so I let it flow out. It's the only way, because if you start thinking about it too much, it seems impossible, and you stop. It was a home run through passion and a strong wish to do it. Lots of survival problems, but it came out well eventually...

BB: What prompted you to draw? Was it comics or just a natural urge?

RMG: I did do it on my own at first. I was urged as you say, just on impulse—there were no influences I know of—to make drawings of Colts [revolvers], hats, and most of all horses from the Saturday and Sunday TV Western serials. Above all, I was totally absorbed by drawings that "moved"—figures in action—and was good at it. So this urge, thinking-about, feeling, need, observation, impulse—however you put it—was tattooed very deep within my subconscious.

The magazines that pioneered comics in our ex-country during the mid- to late '60s simply forged this urge: *Zenit*, *Pingvin*, *Panorama*, but more than anything else, Fleetway's *Cowboy Picture Library* comics magazines. In a way, because of this forging going on, I acted as more mature than I really was. For example, I never spoke with anyone about this. I never wanted to. I kept it to myself, which was a pretty mature thing considering my age. I was alone in this feeling, and felt that this was the way it should be. I got serious with it. Although, once satisfied, I went out and was a pretty happy and wild kid, but almost none of my friends knew I was so deeply possessed by it. Very few even knew I drew at all. It had to do a lot with the form my life took afterwards.

But I really think of it as some kind of need, which is weird when you come to think of it. Weird because to this day I'm not



(left) Batman sketch. (above) Guéra pencils very loosely with blue pencil. He prefers to tighten his drawings in the inking stage to keep them lively.

sure I've come through to the bottom of it. What in fact is it? What kind of need could you possibly have to draw so passionately from the earliest development of your consciousness, but you're 100% sure that you do have it? Is it observance, or maybe a purity of the feel of the world around you? Is it a heroic or a quitter's deed? A mix of this all? Interesting stuff, isn't it?

BB: Did you follow certain artists and writers from the start, or were you just attracted to comics in general?

RMG: Well, both I think. First, the purity of its attraction couldn't be compared with anything going on today. There was nothing similar, nothing as strong to choose or compare to or even think about. The plea to adults for money to buy them was totally destined. Automatic. It was real test of one's will and capabilities, y'know, to convince your mother that you needed a comic this week also. "You bought one last week, didn't you?" Hypnotism was going on there. The trick was to use regular words, but have a determined look in your eye—even though everybody knew you were only six. [*laughs*] If that didn't work, you rapidly brought up your most recent reward-worthy deed, anything to get to that moment of opening the first page... Ah, it was daily struggle. [*laughter*]

And the impact... my God... action movements actually captured and dramatically inked—they were lived through, y'know... Tremendous impact. I really doubt it's possible to compare it with, let's say, the newest video game, because—as much as it could be exciting for kids today, with all of today's tremendous technical achievements—at that time there really was nothing even similar to comics. Nothing even close to compare them with. It was a bomb which exploded so deep within

A Judge Anderson illustration. Guéra will often add blue marker highlights to his illustrations.

me... The artists were everything, actually... My personal tastes that flourished from that particular time is the root of roots of me today. Impossible to separate, it will be with me as long as I live.

BB: When did it occur to you that you could actually make a living by drawing comics?

RMG: I don't remember. In my case, it was somehow always there. Deep down, I just was 100% sure that at some point in my life it would come to be, despite the fact that it looked impossible at the time. That was the fight part, the good part. And I thought of myself as a survivor, so it was taken as such. The truly bad part was the mediocrity prevalent among editorials of the late '70s and '80s in Yugoslavia. That was a fight alright. You tried, but they failed to understand, because they just weren't capable. Hope-killers.

BB: Were you aware of any distinction between comics of European origin and those of US origin?

RMG: Not instantly, of course, but pretty early on, yes. Seeing *Johnny Hazard* or *Daredevil*, and then *Oumpah-Pah*, or much later *Blueberry*, there was some kind of obvious difference, a hint they were signaling, and I'm positive I caught it early on. But I never really cared. The whole point was to enjoy them as much as possible on their terrain—not separate them from it. For me, it always was just *comics*, and later, when the time came, I was ashamed a bit for not having a clearer opinion on which I liked better. I think that my separation went like, a "good issue" or a "bad issue," no matter which brand, and that was all there was for me. What I lacked was maybe a gray area there, so I'd rarely express my opinions out loud, because it was too much of a black-or-white opinion. People generally just wanted to talk, but I was a conversation killer with this. I just couldn't do it differently then. Still can't sometimes.

BB: But which did you prefer?

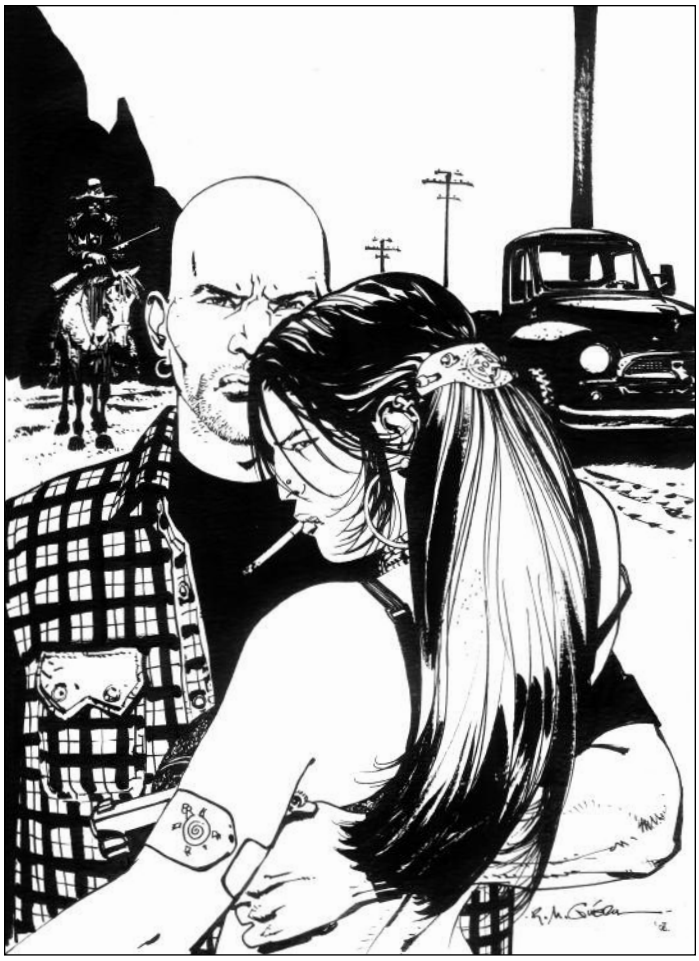
RMG: Well, each has its pros and cons. By nature, I'd fall more into a European style, but I also tend to be inclined towards the effectiveness of American storytelling. I simply enjoy and admire it so. They're just different. Different issue sizes, different markets also.

But, it's all about the story and therefore not so different. All this is not about one's drawing techniques. It's about the storytelling. It's empty if you don't feel it, or have a story frame to show behind it. I really consider myself lucky to enjoy doing both of them, without being 100% representative of either.

What our job is as artists is to make it believable,and that's all. Take Jack Kirby as a clear example. No matter how naïve the situation could be, his drawing always meant something. So, it's *him* that's alive there, not the drawing.

BB: What do you enjoy drawing the most?

RMG: Movement in general, and the mood of space. Horses and colts could be my fetish; they always have to be perfect. Also, the depth of character. The search for it really excites me, passionately.



Inks for this issue's cover, featuring Dashiell Bad Horse of *Scalped*.

BB: Did you have any early amibitions towards writing?

RMG: Not any worth mentioning. Balloons with coherence, dialogue that led somewhere, all came lots of years later—when a similar need or urge appeared—when I felt I could say something. After reading many books, I suppose. But when it started, in my early 30s, it started all over, as a total awakening, like a new language. I started writing lyrics for my music, as well as scripts and essays.

BB: How exactly did you begin to learn how to draw?

RMG: I really never had anything but common sense to help me. When I was a kid, there were no books about it, but it just seemed logical that the "real" pages are bigger that the ones you see published. And I knew about the existence of ink, pens, and brushes from school classes—simple as that. My father was working in a stationery shop. I asked from time to time for some material, as some kind of general allowance, and that's about it. He knew nothing about the actual way to do it.

When I was about 16, I met some of our common friends—Vesovich, Savich and very shortly afterwards yourself—who had some books, but I never was in awe of those. What I liked and enjoyed were good comics. Everything is already there, y'know? I was more interested in books that had Western movie photos inside. Now *those* were useful.

BB: Unlike you, I was—and still am—dependent on those reference and "how-to" books and magazines. I assume it's a continuing process for you.

RMG: A big yes on that one. It never really ends.

BB: Did your approach to the drawing process evolve or change throughout your career?

RMG: I think that in a way one always does the same thing, logic-wise. With time it goes faster, though. But it's a utility if you want; it's is something that can't be changed, so this part pretty much decides things by itself.

BB: Can you give me a rundown of your process?

RMG: Of course, but this'll be more of a general breakdown of the process. First are the rough ideas and sketches I do during the second reading of the script, with blue pencil—really rough. Then I add perspective lines aiming/positioning things better. I shape figure masses sometimes, adding black pencil or darker blue—sometimes with a thick, pale blue marker—or gray ink with a very watery brush... whatever's closest to my hands. Then I copy it—sometimes using a light box table—onto the original artboard, and re-check the drawing.

The penciling and composition are now clear, so there's only the inking left. Lots of times prior to inking, I'll use the soft kneaded eraser—Faber Castell is the best—to lighten the pencils, because if they're too heavy it gets in the way of the inking. That's about all. That's the basics. Although—I must be sincere here—it's been years since I actually did it in that exact order. Without mixing it up, I mean.

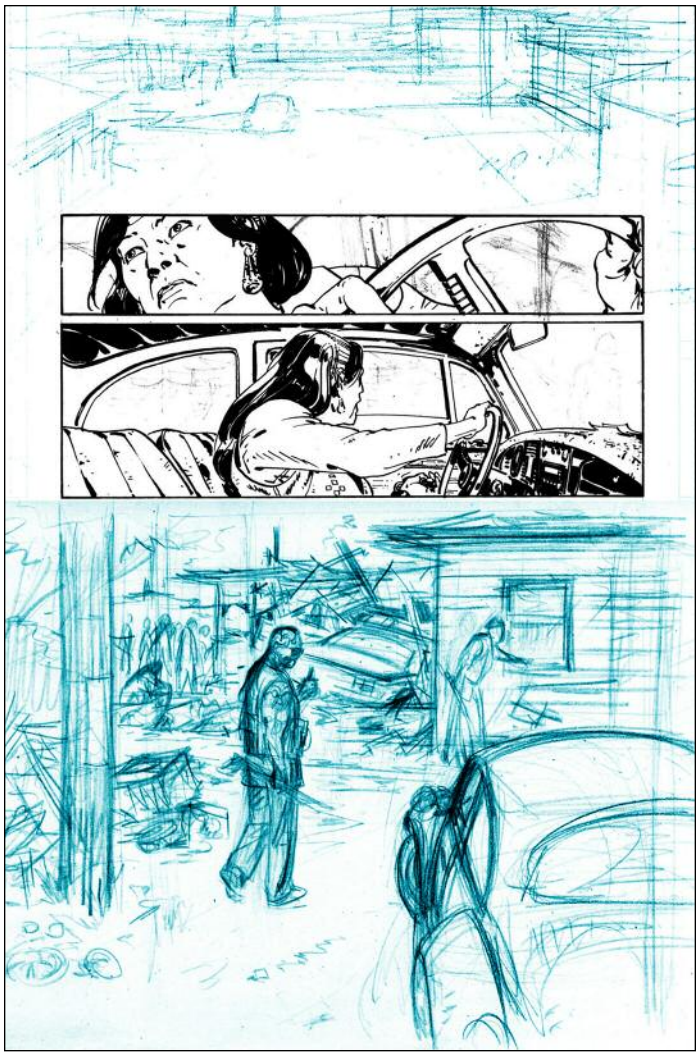
BB: How come?

RMG: Simply put, it is something I've been doing ten to twelve hours a day, for the last 25 years or more. With time the different parts of the process mingle with each other and you mix them without even being conscious of it.

I'll try to explain: If you'd wake me in the middle of the night, I'd say what I just said in that order. And I really have that picture of it in my head. But, in reality, it all goes directly down on to the original board. Almost always. Only if I'm not sure, or it's something complicated, or just interesting to check, will I then do it on separate piece of paper first.

The first phase—the rough idea—sometimes I draw it directly on the final board, sometimes I don't. If it's clear enough in my head, I don't need to. I'll even try to avoid sketching to maintain freshness. Other times, on the first read of the script I'll do some rough sketches, and if I feel excited about it, then it's straight to light box—to ink. No cleaning, no nothing, just ink straight away.

I also like to jump the order of pages. I like that a lot. No particular reason, I just get more inspired that way. The most recent example of this is I did pages 1 and 2 of a new *Scalped* issue and had the pencils for pages 3 and 4 ready for inking, but this morning I leaped to page 7 and inked the entire page today, because when an idea jumps out at you, you should give it a try at least. Do not underestimate that moment. It doesn't always work, but it does keep you under some kind of positive tension. It gives life to the panels.



A good example of Guéra's pencils versus his inks.
SCALPED ™ AND ©2009 JASON AARON AND RAJKO MILOSEVIC.

There's nothing fixed, so to speak. The only main tools through all this are a Staedtler CE triangular, thick, blue pencil for layouts and roughs. For more detailed penciling I use 2mm HB leads inside my trusty metal Caran d'Ache lead-holder.

Almost everything else, system-wise, is very widely applied and loosely executed. I don't know if I can define it better than that.

BB: Are you dependent on the inking phase to get the finished look, or do you prefer to sort out the drawing in the penciling stage?

RMG: Inking is my final statement. Everything else is a guide for the final look. When I do serious pencils they're a study, so I very rarely ink them. When I'm penciling comics I like to sharpen the general layout of the panel, not so much the detail itself, so when I start inking I'm still constructing the panel, finalizing, completing, drawing the whole idea—not just inking.

BB: How detailed are your pencils then?

RMG: Defined, but as loose as possible. Volume and construction are important to define—and obviously all the expressions. I'll stop when I feel that the panel is looking organized, not "beauti-

ful." I really think that if the pencils are too tight it sucks life out of the final panel as a whole. I prefer to leave it looser, to be able to imagine that I'm just finalizing my pencils by inking them. I'd rather use white tempera—gouache—afterwards [for corrections] than to go down a secure path with the pencils looking like they're inked already. It's like you're doing it twice then. Why do that? The repetition simply kills it. It's faked perfection, to put it another way.

I think that this feel or risk adds life quality to the drawing. That you, yourself, are more alive because of this uncertainty. You have to concentrate to improvise, and this energy is transmitted onto the page. It doesn't have to be perfect! It's better if it's not, anyway. Strive like crazy, yes, but don't reach it.

I'm always afraid of being misunderstood when questions come to this subject... It ought to be said that I have nothing against anybody else's process and that personal preference is something that make this world interesting.

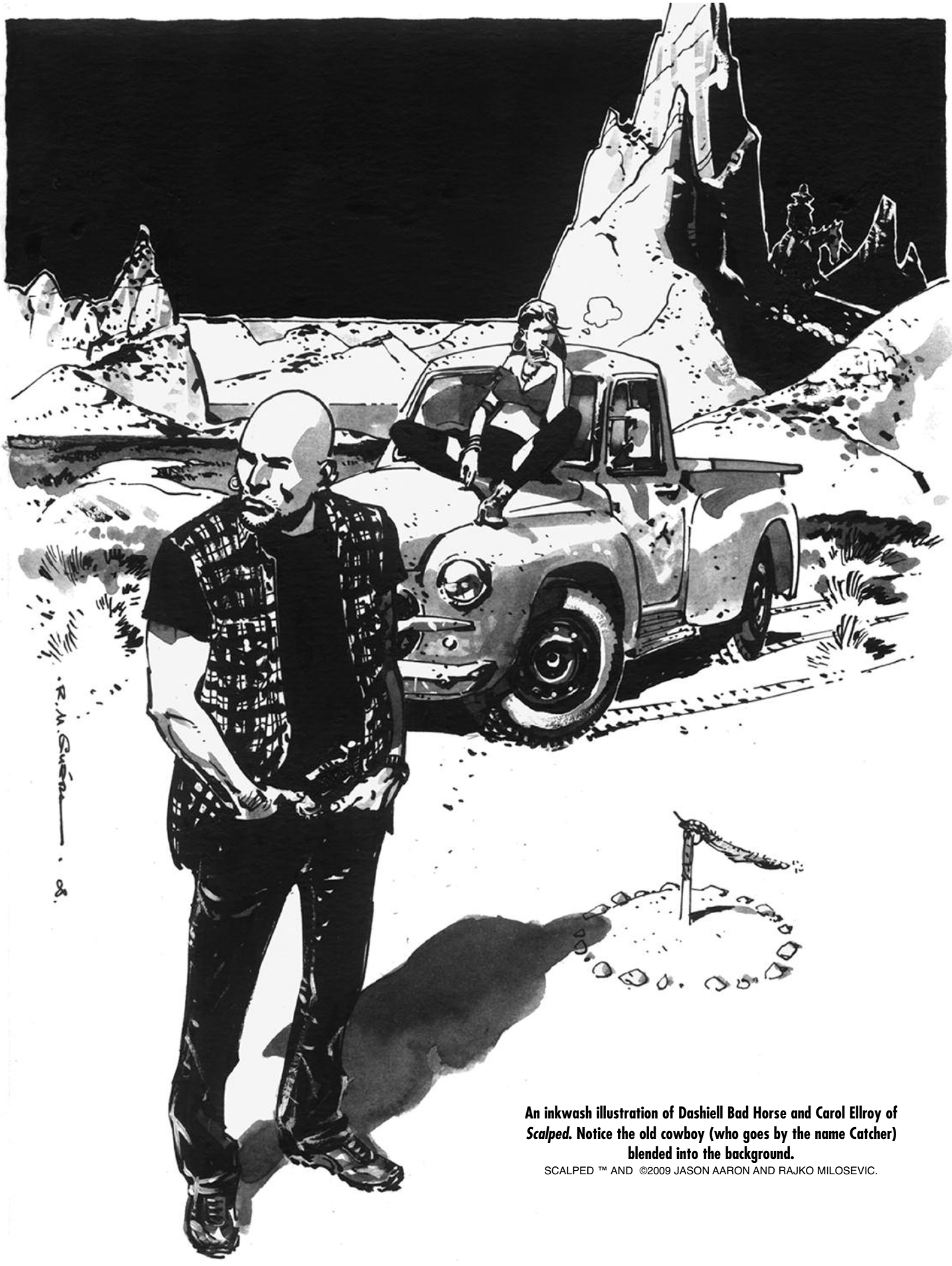
BB: It's such a revelation that you don't do an actual clean-up and tightening of your pencils over a light table.

RMG: It also is a revelation that somebody appreciates it. Thank you. I mean it.

BB: But what is the purpose of doing those really rough sketches then transferring them over the light box with blue pencil in an even rougher form before inking the whole thing?

RMG: I'll try to clarify. A general mistake I have spotted in other people's work is losing the life of a panel during the penciling stage. The result is some kind of disjoint between aims, as the panel in its final appearance is not meant to be pencilled, but inked. That's when it should be at its best. If I'm overly tight in the pencils, it will disable my intuition when inking. It will disable me from reaching the unique "top" of the particular drawing, as I reached it in pencil already. It can not be achieved twice with the same sense of naturalism—never ever. Every panel has its top, which one must learn to recognize. It is very, very important not to pass by it.

To answer your question more directly, if I do some beautiful pencil drawings—sometimes you can't help doing beautiful pencils. If it's going good and you can't help it, well then I'll let it flow and have a good time. I won't stop myself. There really are days when this is inevitable. I'll finalize it and therefore reach this top I talked about. But afterwards I'll take the original board to the light box, and roughly copy it, roughly pencil it again, as if it was just a faster sketch. And then I'll put the first penciled page in front of me to look at, checking against it while inking the rougher one. By looking at it and not directly copying it, I'll put my intuition to use again. It'll become incomparably fresher than trying to actually imitate something already done.



An inkwash illustration of Dashiell Bad Horse and Carol Ellroy of *Scalped*. Notice the old cowboy (who goes by the name Catcher) blended into the background.

BB: I remember you as being exclusively a brush man. Now you ink predominantly with a pen.

RMG: Yes, but a pretty big part of my confidence comes from that all-brush period. The brush is the queen. It's the most difficult tool to master because it refuses to fix its shape. It slips so easy it makes people either go stiff and afraid or explode, because they want to control it as if it was something with a thick shape—big mistake. Once you master this lady you can use whatever you like.

I took to the pen as naturally as anything, really. It simply felt like a time for a change and so I re-discovered it. Pure intuition.

BB: What specific tools do you use?

RMG: Besides the Staedtler CE blue pencil and Caran d'Ache leadholder mentioned above, absolutely everything else I change as much as possible, if the moment permits. So, lead pencils, yes, I have a lot of them—every imaginable brand and color. They're mostly around HB and mostly Faber Castell—with some exotic exceptions. I also have 2mm medium blue leads that I'm really impressed with, although they don't erase easily, but they have a really fine feel—Faber Castells again. They're pretty expensive and hard to find, but they do last longer without being too thick. I got a few boxes of them from Austria, sent to me by Milan "Lucky" Ilich, one of my closest friends and an incredible artist.

I never buy the same brush more than twice in a row. If I do, it's a synthetic one. I don't even know their brands. I get whatever is handy, and they last for months. I really think I've tried them all, but I don't collect or accumulate them. The brush I've used the longest and the only one that broke the "never three in a row" rule—because it is affordable *and* good enough—is a Barna. They're handmade here in Spain, and have a nice shape. They're not well known and nowadays are of so-so quality. Right now, I have a DaVinci No. 4 on my desk—really good, but I think I'll go for #6 next time—and a synthetic, cheapy, Italian-made KUBO Arte No. 8.

For a long time, pens were not the mainstay of my tools department, but since giving them a fair chance, I'm really impressed with them. They're definitely my main tool now. So many different one, such a variety—*so* good. Right now I have dozens of pens I've never tried. Literally. I don't collect them; it's for using them when their time comes. I bought them "passing through" just because they looked interesting, or simply right. But I do not know too much about their brands.

Mainstay pens... hmm, it was always safe to buy Gillott—except their extra fine, but that's because they really are extra fine. It's good, just not made for me I suppose. Actually, for your eyes only, I'll read off the brands of the old ones—the ones I saved as "served me well," in order to buy again. I remember them better visually than by brand. Leonardt's pens impressed me—one of the best, and long-lasting, too. Brause & Co.—wonderful touch to them and a variety of line thickness easily achieved; really good. Jaer No. 810 Sargent. 813s are good, also. I use these a lot for *Scalped*.

BB: When did you start using a computer for your artwork?

RMG: A year or so after buying one for the first time. Some eight, nine years ago. I was a late starter and proud of it—very.

BB: Did you start with Photoshop?

RMG: Yes, like everyone else, I suppose.

BB: What software are you using nowadays?

RMG: Besides Photoshop, I have Painter Classic, and that's about all I use. I use the newest version of Photoshop and the oldest version of Painter—the simplest—which I like very, very much. I have a digital tablet—a new one. I wore out my first one, which came with the program. I really enjoy using it.

BB: What is your experience with painting covers and interior artwork? Have you ever painted seriously?

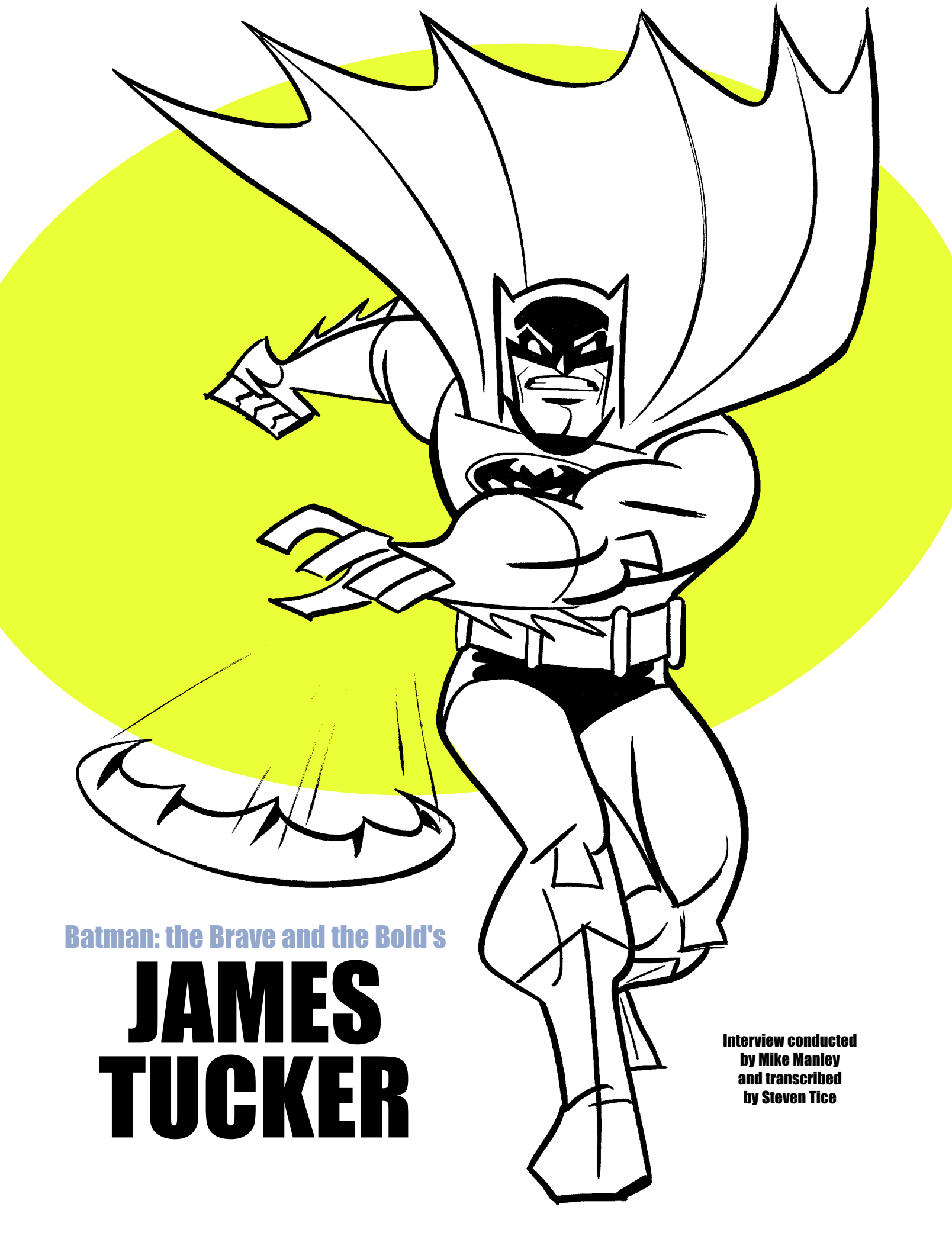
RMG: Yes, I've painted front and back covers for *Le lièvre de Mars*.

BB: Do you paint today at all, or color your interior work?

RMG: I colored my first pirate album, *Howard Blake: Under the Shadowlight*, the classic way—blue-line proofs, water colors and all. The cover, also, although with a lot of tempera mixed in. And on the back cover of the album is a black-and-white drawing painted on computer.

I've done and do both. I still think the grace of classic coloring is not going to disappear. For the moment it's overpowered by computer perfection—it's limitless; simple as that.. Digital painting is wanted all over, but time will separate and set the

R.M. GUERA INTERVIEW CONTINUES ON PAGE 41



Batman: the Brave and the Bold's

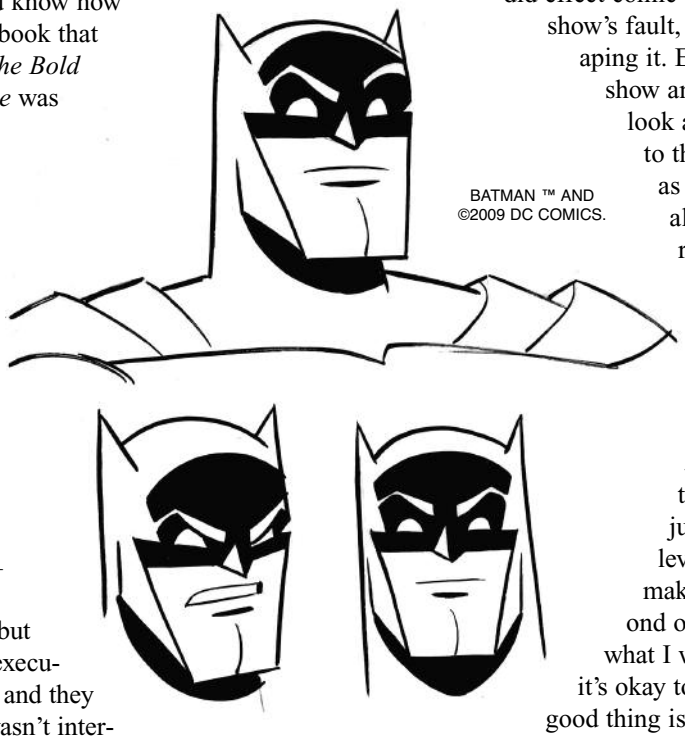
JAMES TUCKER

Interview conducted by Mike Manley and transcribed by Steven Tice

From *Animaniacs* to *Superman: The Animated Series*, *The New Adventures of Batman*, *Justice League*, and *Legion of Superheroes*, James Tucker has done it all. *DRAW!* catches up to the man of action to discuss the producer/artist's new hit series *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*.

DRAW!: I guess the main thing I wanted to go over was your new take on Batman, who has had how many retakes at this point, after almost 70 years now, right? They keep rebooting him, and on TV they've rebooted him, what, four or five times now, just since the '90s.

JAMES TUCKER: Well, there was *Batman: The Animated Series*, and then there was *The New Adventures*, which is kind of the same show. And then he was on *Justice League*, and then *Batman Beyond*, and then *The Batman*, and now *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*. I mean, I look at it kind of like a correlation with comics. You know how there's a different type of Batman book that can run concurrently? *Brave and the Bold* was out at the same time, *Detective* was out at the same time, *Batman* was out. So I just look at it as another comic book. And in my case, literally, since I'm taking my cues from the earlier era, anyway.



BATMAN ™ AND ©2009 DC COMICS.

DRAW!: I wanted to ask you about that. When you were pitching the show, I don't know if the network said, "We need a new show." Because I know sometimes they do that; they go, "Well, we want a new Batman."

JT: Well, basically Sam Register—now he's the chief executive in charge of animation here, I guess, but at the time he was a development executive. *Dark Knight* was coming out, and they needed a Batman show on TV. I wasn't interested because, "Oh, I've done that. I worked on the best one ever, so..." But then he said *The Brave and the Bold*, and so, to me, that was a totally different animal. I saw the hook for doing a Batman show then, because it wasn't just *Batman*, it was *Brave and the Bold*, it was Batman and another hero, Batman in different settings. It wasn't just Batman, Gotham City, Commissioner Gordon, Alfred, blah, blah. It wasn't the usual stuff where you're just readdressing the same old stuff.

You can't one-up certain things, especially when they're still fresh in people's memories. But you can look at it from a different angle. Plus, I had a comic-book template for the series already. There wasn't really much to reinvent. And it was also another way to do all the fun things about Batman that we've been taught to look down upon. I mean, Adam West is taboo with everyone now, but I guarantee you, most of us who got into Batman—of a certain age, anyway—were exposed to Batman through Adam West. There're tons of cool things about that show.

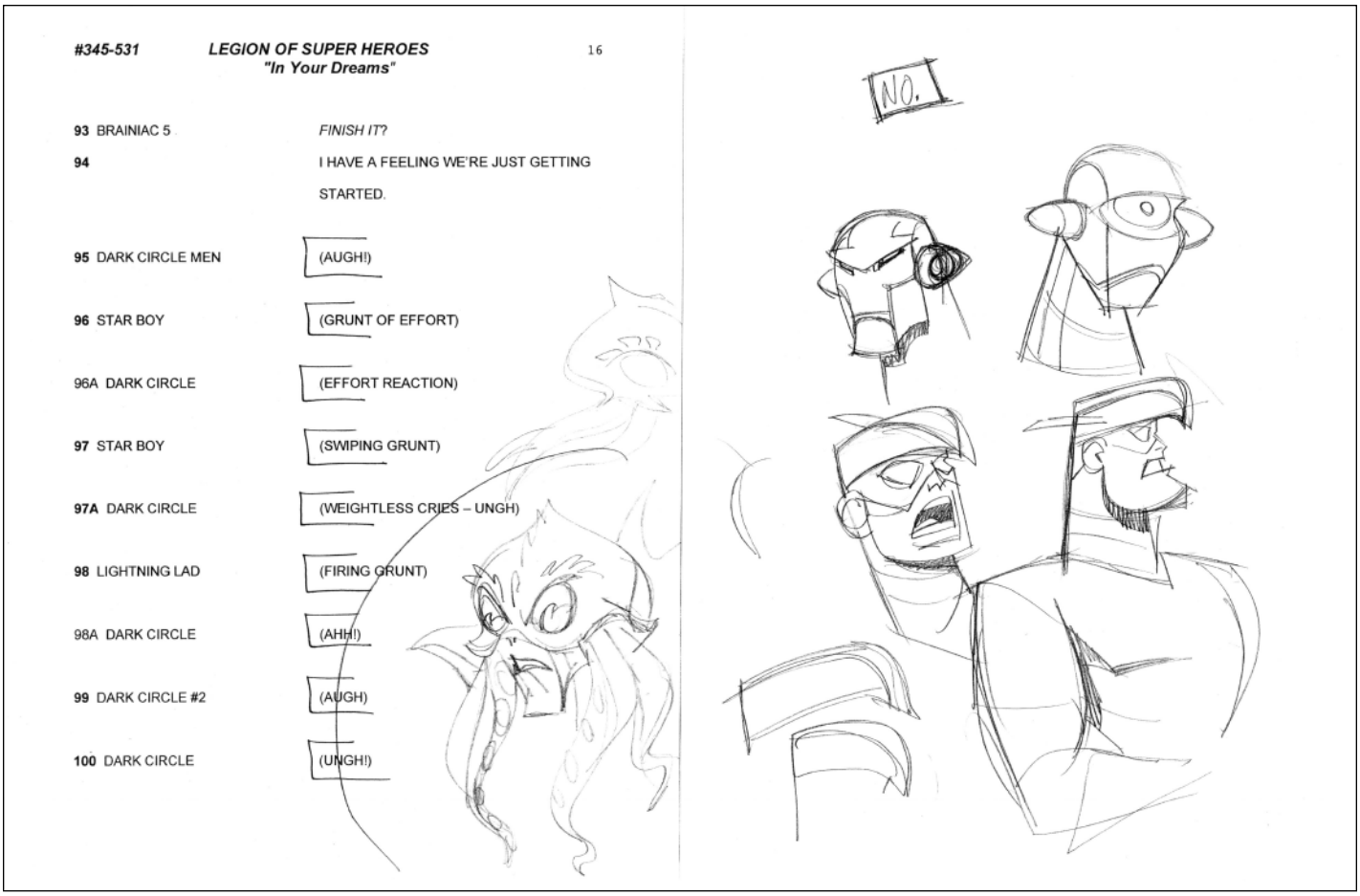
DRAW!: And that's actually still how Batman, I think, is thought of in popular culture. "Holy this, holy that." People still say that even if they're not maybe culturally aware of Batman in total.

JT: There's a whole new generation of kids who haven't even seen that show, really. But, still, that was such a powerful presentation that it effected comic books. I mean, yeah, it did effect comic books adversely, but it wasn't the show's fault, it was the people who were aping it. Everyone has a mad-on about that show and what it represents, but if you look at that show and then compare it to the comics it was actually using as its source material, it was actually fairly faithful. I mean, if you read the '50s stories and the early '60s, they weren't doing anything that the show didn't do.

DRAW!: Batman actually smiled in his comics back then!

JT: He smiled, and the alliteration, the different... the TV show just pushed it to a more obvious level. And at some point they were making fun of it, probably the second or third season. Anyway, basically what I wanted *B:BB* to do is just show it's okay to make Batman fun. And the good thing is, we have so much Batman now, of all types. There are so many different things out there. If you want your dark, gritty animation, you can get it. So I'm grateful. I mean, I couldn't have made this show without the existence of *Dark Knight*, because no one was expecting a cartoon show to mimic that. Plus, a lot of kids shouldn't see *Dark Knight*, so it was easy to say, "Okay, well, let's make a kid-friendly *Batman*, and this time *really* make it kid-friendly, not say we're going to do it and then not."

The thing about this series is that it's so open-ended. I have a lot more freedom to tell any kind of story I want. If I want to tell a dark story that touches on Batman's origins, I could do that. If I wanted to do a musical [*laughs*], I did that. So, for me, personally, it's been great. It's been very rewarding in that it's the best of all the Batmans that have come up until now, and I can pick and choose from all of them. I can have Batman in a



(above) Tucker messing around with a few loose ideas, searching for a feel for character. (next page) Batman gets angry.
GREEN ARROW, OCEAN MASTER, RED TORNADO ™ AND ©2009 DC COMICS

sci-fi setting, I can have Batman in Atlantis, I can have Batman in another dimension. And once people are with the program...

And, to me it's like, "Oh, Batman doesn't do that." That used to be the mantra in the old days about Batman, because everyone was reacting against the old Batman, what they perceived as being the silly Batman. Which at one time, if you were young enough, he wasn't silly, he was cool. But, anyway, I was actually taking Adam West's Batman, the '50s Batman, and just updating him a little bit and putting him in fairly contemporary situations.

DRAW!: It also kind of hearkens back, and I'm sure it sort of fits in anyway with the fact that Batman is an action character.

JT: Right!

DRAW!: And the other thing is if you're a ten-year-old or an eight-year-old, you don't come to the character with 40 years of pre-judgment. One of the things I like, and that I obviously liked about what Bruce Timm was doing before, is that there is just really good stories and really good cartooning.

One of the things I was really interested about on your take is that the viewer can obviously see that you are trying to follow in the cartooning style, let's say, of the work that was done in the '50s. Were you a fan of that material?

JT: Yeah. I mean, my first exposure to Batman in comic books was *Brave and the Bold*, and also the 100-Page Spectaculars. And in those you had the new story in the front, which was written by Denny O'Neil, probably, and either Dick Giordano or Irv Novick would draw it, but after that you had all these reprints.

DRAW!: Yeah, and you had the Neal Adams cover, which was very dramatic. And then in the back you'd have Batman drawn by Carmine Infantino when he was turning into a caveman or something.

JT: Yeah, so within that one book you'd have Batman from the '70s, but you'd see that he went all the way back to the '30s, '40s, '50s, and '60s. And so, in my mind, that was *all* Batman. I wasn't stuck on continuity and, "How can Batman be this old?" He's a make-believe character. He's like Paul Bunyan. So it was like, okay, that's fine. It's all one Batman in my head, and I do like that era of the simpler, cartoonier style.

DRAW!: When you were working, did you work on ideas? When you pitched the show, were you pitching that style?

JT: Well, originally, when we both worked on "Legends of the Dark Knight" and I did that Dick Sprang-inspired segment, ever since then people have said, "You should really do something like that." I worked on *Legion of Superheroes*, but it wasn't really right for that, and we didn't really find their style until the second season, anyway. When this came up, and my initial idea was in development, I tried all kinds of different ideas, but it kept coming back to that Dick Sprang-inspired style. I didn't

want to do literally Sprang in imitation, but I wanted to be influenced by that and the simplicity. And I also wanted to have a thicker, inked-line look to the animation just to really separate it from the reality-based cartoons that I'd been working on. You know, the general action/adventure cartoon has a fairly dead line as far as the drawings go, and I was wanting something that would give you the option of having bouncier animation, more squash and stretch, and I wanted to have the feeling of those '50s hand-inked, thick-brush-quality kind of drawings, Dick Sprang/Chester Gould-inspired drawings. And the only way to get that was to do a thicker line.

DRAW!: And it always looks really good on TV, too, when you do that.

JT: Yeah. Well, it's weird. This show, of all the shows I've worked on, has had the most consistent animation. Unless you have a really specific eye, you really can't tell. There isn't a dramatic drop in quality from show to show. If there is, it's based on whether we did our job in pre-production right. But, overall, the style has held up. Because having a thick line around characters was something we were told just not to do. Even for that "Legends of the Dark Knight" segment, I thought we should try to do that. Well, we were pretty much told we shouldn't.

DRAW!: Is that because people thought that made it look old-fashioned, or that it was just too difficult for the studio overseas to maintain?

JT: No, it was just a hesitancy to do something to really push the envelope. I mean, we were pushing it already just doing the segment, but I think we were scared about what it would look like coming back. We didn't trust that they would give us good quality on it. At the time, the Korean animation was at a good level, but now they really rival everyone when it comes to doing quality television animation.

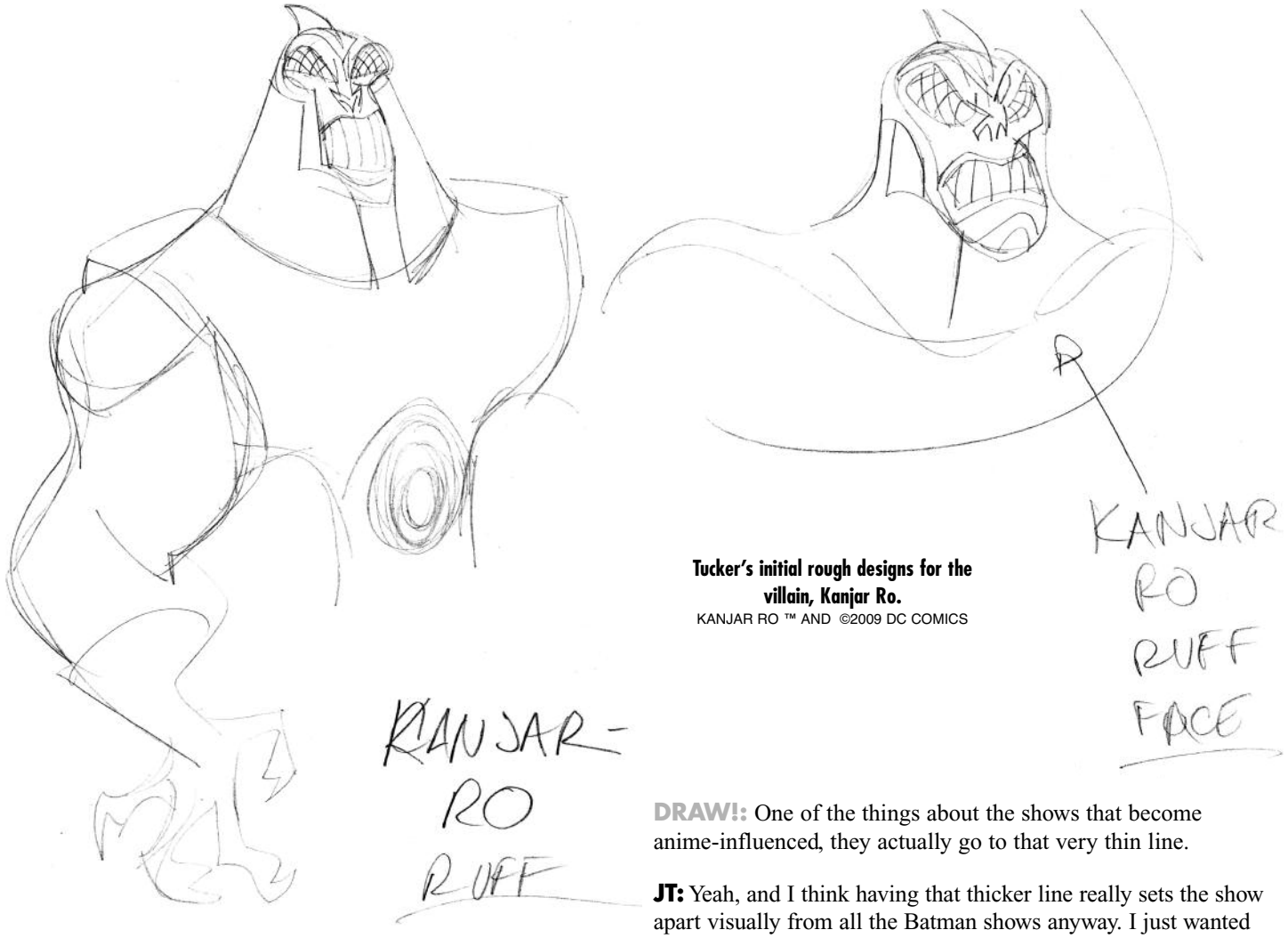
DRAW!: I guess that comes from 15 years of them doing it. I remember when I would see the shows come back, the boards I had worked on, and you could literally tell from scene to scene that an A-level animator did this one, and the C-level guy they just hired last week did this one.

JT: Yeah. And I don't know if they're better over there, or if the style is more forgiving, but the gulf between the A guy and the C guy is so much narrower now. It all looks pretty good.

DRAW!: Did you do any test footage in that style to see how it would look?

JT: We kind of just went for it. We went for what we called "priority scenes," but usually we asked for that just to have something to cut a sizzle reel for. Because, before the show came out, we had to present at San Diego, and we didn't have a full show back; we just were getting scenes back from overseas.

DRAW!: And that was the Kanjar Ro, the first show?



Tucker's initial rough designs for the villain, Kanjar Ro.
KANJAR RO ™ AND ©2009 DC COMICS

JT: That was the first show, but we also got some Plastic Man footage from the second show. We did do, not so much pencil tests, but we had animation done for the main title that we built of Batman just in motion, and that gave me an idea that it would look okay. But it wasn't until we got the first show in and saw that, "Wow, this looks really good, and they followed the style." Because not only is the line quality thicker, we also have a lot more color.

DRAW!: Yeah, it's a very rich-looking show.

JT: Yeah.

DRAW!: And then I noticed there were stylized segments in some of the fight scenes where you would do a drawing, and then you would have the drawing move.

JT: Yeah. I owe that all to do the guys on my staff who were really into anime. My three directors on the first season, two of them had worked on *Teen Titans* and the other guy had worked on *The Batman*, and they were just steeped in anime conventions. And at first I actually said we shouldn't do that, until I saw it come back and I went, "Wow, this looks great! Let's do it all the time." So I owe it all to the directors on that one. I didn't want it to look like anime, but I didn't mind using anime tropes or stylistic things. The show's not designed to look like anime, so I didn't really have to worry about it looking like knock-off anime.

DRAW!: One of the things about the shows that become anime-influenced, they actually go to that very thin line.

JT: Yeah, and I think having that thicker line really sets the show apart visually from all the Batman shows anyway. I just wanted the show to have an artistic integrity of being visually different than *B:TAS*. I mean, yeah, definitely I'm using the theories of *B:TAS* that Bruce set up and all that, but with that foundation you can go off in a lot of different styles. Glen Murakami used those same principles when he did *Teen Titans*, he just had an anime-influenced veneer over it. Underneath it was still structurally based, design-wise, on those old-school principles.

DRAW!: The straights against the curves—

JT: Yeah, exactly.

DRAW!: —and that whole sort of Disney, Ed Benedict approach. He mixed all that stuff in. I mean, that's one of the things I really like about the show is that you can see a little bit of that history, which on some shows gets lost in a way. And I also like the fact that you can do shows that have squash and stretch in them, because they're much more enjoyable to watch.

JT: On the old shows our goal was to do animated live-action, which is fine, but I didn't really want to do that on this. I wanted to have more in common with, say, Genndy Tartakovsky's *Clone Wars* than it had with anime, or something more realistically—I wanted it to feel like a cartoon, to have the excitement a cartoony cartoon can have. Within limits. We always have to find the line not to go over, because the characters still have to feel real. But they can be endangered, so they're not totally made of putty.

DRAW!: Right, they're not like Wile E. Coyote, who can get blown up and then shake his head and he's okay or something.

JT: Right. I just wanted them to have that graphic quality, like the Chester Gould stuff, where he takes a character and he makes them a graphic so that he can draw them over and over again and they always look the same. I just wanted to simplify it and streamline it even more than we did on the Bruce Timm shows.

DRAW!: One of the things I also noticed is that, especially compared with back when we were boarding on *Batman*, or when I started on *Superman*, is now, because the digital technology has increased, you can do all these camera moves and effects. Even on the credits of the show there's a lot of computer-animated backgrounds. You can turn the planes of the cars into 3-D... which means that they look much better.

JT: That's right. Animated cars do, yes.

DRAW!: And you can do more complex moves, pans, and scans, a lot more complex camera work that's a lot more like live-action.

JT: Yeah. You definitely see the money on the screen. And, again, we're only limited now by our imaginations as far as what we give them to do, because they've really raised the bar. I mean, there're inconsistencies along the way, and I do think the style is more forgiving of really poor animation, but we did our share of bad scenes here and there.

Early rough design ideas for Batman, with more of an Adam West look to the face.

DRAW!: Do you have as many retakes on this as they would have on the old shows?

JT: No, actually, my retake count on this show's been very low, relatively speaking. At least this is what they tell me. And I also attribute that to having a really good crew, having a good group of people who make sure all the material we send overseas is proper and correct. That goes a long way to keeping your retakes down. But, yeah, from the other side, more often than not they've been doing a great job. Hopefully it stays that way for the second season. Another thing we had in our favor last season is that we didn't have a lot of other shows on the floor going on, so this was the only show from us that they were even dealing with.

DRAW!: Now, did you go overseas and work with the people over there? Did you meet them? How closely do you follow through?

JT: A great thing with digital stuff, we can do a teleconference. I don't have to go over anymore. If they have a question, they can just...

DRAW!: Skype you? They can Skype you or whatever?

JT: Yeah! I mean, they don't, but they could if they wanted to. It could be as easy as them Skyping me in and saying, "Hey, we need..." But the thing is, with the translations and stuff, it has to be a little more formalized. And especially with the time difference. Like, right now they're not even there yet, I guess. At the start of each season and then midway through, we have a teleconference with them just so they can ask questions about things. But we're in constant communication with them through e-mails or whatever. Any time they really need to know something, they have access to us. It's not like the old days where you literally had to take a trip over there and walk them through the whole thing by hand, or at least you thought you did. On *Justice League* we did that.

More rough design ideas for Batman, this one a slightly leaner version.

We took a trip to Korea the first season of *Justice League*. Now we would have done it just by video camera.

DRAW!: Maybe I'm wrong, but I would think that since they've been animating American superheroes for close to 20 years now, and the fact that the entertainment culture globally is blending more together now as opposed to the way it was 20 years ago, where somebody in Korea might not culturally understand what would be funny here, or what would be cool about Batman, I would imagine you probably have less of that now. Everybody is kind of keyed in on what's cool.

JT: Oh, yeah. You can see that in Korean movies, like *Old Boy*. To me, I was struck by how American it felt in certain ways, as opposed to say, a movie from Hong Kong, or even Japan. Culturally, they're really tied to us now, in a lot of ways. In the old days they just wouldn't get the nuance because it was something strictly American, and now, I think, through the world getting smaller and smaller because of the Internet and television, and our shows are over there, it's a blending of cultures that they get a lot more of our references now, and there's a lot less misunderstanding.

DRAW!: You can trace Batman back through the '60s and the Filmation shows, and you could tell there were people who worked on the show who didn't get what was cool about Batman. "Hey, I've gotta do whatever scenes I have to do today."

JT: A lot of those guys were old school animation guys who were used to working on Disney. They were old school guys who used to work on full animation now working on very limited stuff. And some of them knew about Batman, and some of them probably didn't care at all. The thing I know is there is definitely a difference when you give them a Batman show versus the kind of attention you get when it's not a Batman show. If it's an icon like Batman, everyone across the world knows Batman. There's a prestige to that, and I think people tend to bring their A game to Batman now, overseas. If they get a project like Batman, they know, "Okay, we have to put our best people on it," whereas you don't get that treatment with every show you ship over there.

DRAW!: So if it's *Star Wars* or *Batman* or something like that, everybody goes, "Wow, that's cool..."

JT: Even *Scooby Doo*, people know that and it's popular.

DRAW!: When I was boarding with the *Venture Brothers*, a lot of people started going to being paperless, where they were doing their boards on the Cintique. Are you guys doing that now?

JT: Oh, yeah. I'd say, from what I can tell, probably about 45% of our guys are now doing boards on Cintiques, at least on my show.

More rough design ideas for Batman, now with the final vision in sight.

DRAW!: What about you?

JT: Yeah, I asked for it, and I haven't used it. [*laughter*] I mean, there's a big learning curve. I actually have one at home that I haven't been able to hook up. I'm not a technophobe, I'm just technically intolerant.

DRAW!: So if it's not plug it in and it looks easy, then it's like, "Ahhh..."

JT: The thing I've noticed is that there's a trap with the Cintique because it is so easy, it makes certain things so easy that I think some people may be over-relying on it. I worry about it being misused.

Early rough character sketches by Tucker for Batman, Aquaman, Hawkman, and the Outsiders—Metamorpho, Black Lightning and Katana.

DRAW!: Now, misused, it would effect good drawing, too much cut-and-paste or something?

JT: A little bit of that, but too much holding. I find people hold on a scene longer now. In the old days it used to be people cut too quick, they would go from scene to scene too fast. Now they're holding on a scene way longer, because they can just change one thing in it.

DRAW!: Oh, right, so you can just paste down that same scene and then just change the guy's arms or something?

JT: Right, yeah, but you have pages and pages of that one scene. I'm like, now you need to cut here. So it's taking people's rhythm off a little bit. I think when you're hand drawing and you're creating it as you go along, you're more in tune with the rhythm of what you're doing.

DRAW!: Do you think that's more of an organic rhythm in your body as opposed to the rhythm of working on...

JT: Yeah. I hate to sound like that, because it makes me sound like some old, crazy, "Oh, in my day..."

DRAW!: No, I'm the one who said it, so I'm the one who's crazy. [*laughs*]

JT: I do think so, but I think you can adapt to the Cintique, and I think eventually people will learn how to tune themselves into the Cintique so that it is an extension of themselves. To me it's like, you absorb the story through the script and then you translate it out through your hand, and there's just a rhythm that comes through doing that, and you can sense when it's time to change. And also just the way dialogue should not be broken up in certain ways and all that—that basic stuff. But I just find that when I get a stack of boards that are done on the Cintique, I'm like, "Well, why is this scene still going on?" It's just because the guy could hold, and move a hot arm here, and change one little thing there. I mean, I'm not complaining about them, because it's just a tool, but I just worry that people may be picking up bad habits from them. Especially guys who haven't done it traditionally.

DRAW!: Now everybody seems to do an animatic to time the show out.

Design ideas on how to design/style the hands and boots on Batman. Designs are always getting tweaked right up to the last moment.

Do you guys do that? Do you do an animatic to time the show before you send it?

JT: No. We discussed it, but the way the schedule runs, if you make time for an animatic, that's less time that you have to actually board. We're locked down to doing the shows in a certain amount of time, so anytime I can give the person more time to do... If everyone was doing their job along the line, the sheet timers, everyone does what they're supposed to do, you can pretty much trust that you don't need an animatic. Only for really special situations. Like, we did a musical, and we ended up doing an animatic. And it still came back with a lot of problems that we had to fix. So I'm on the fence now for animatics. Now we kind of do them if someone needs to see it other than us, like if we need to show it to Consumer Products, or if it's a special thing that people would want a heads-up on so they'll know what's going on.

DRAW!: When worked on *Fairly Odd Parents* and *The Simpsons*, they always did animatics because they want the humor to be timed exactly.

JT: Well, when you have a lot of humor in something, then it is all about timing. We can do it on our end when we get the show back. The other thing with editing digitally is you have so much more freedom with fixing timings than we might have had with film back in the day, but we just haven't found it necessary. And, for me, I don't like to take that time away from the artists, because if they're rushing to get a board done so it can be made into an animatic before it ships... if we had more time, yeah, it would be a nice luxury to have, but it's no—

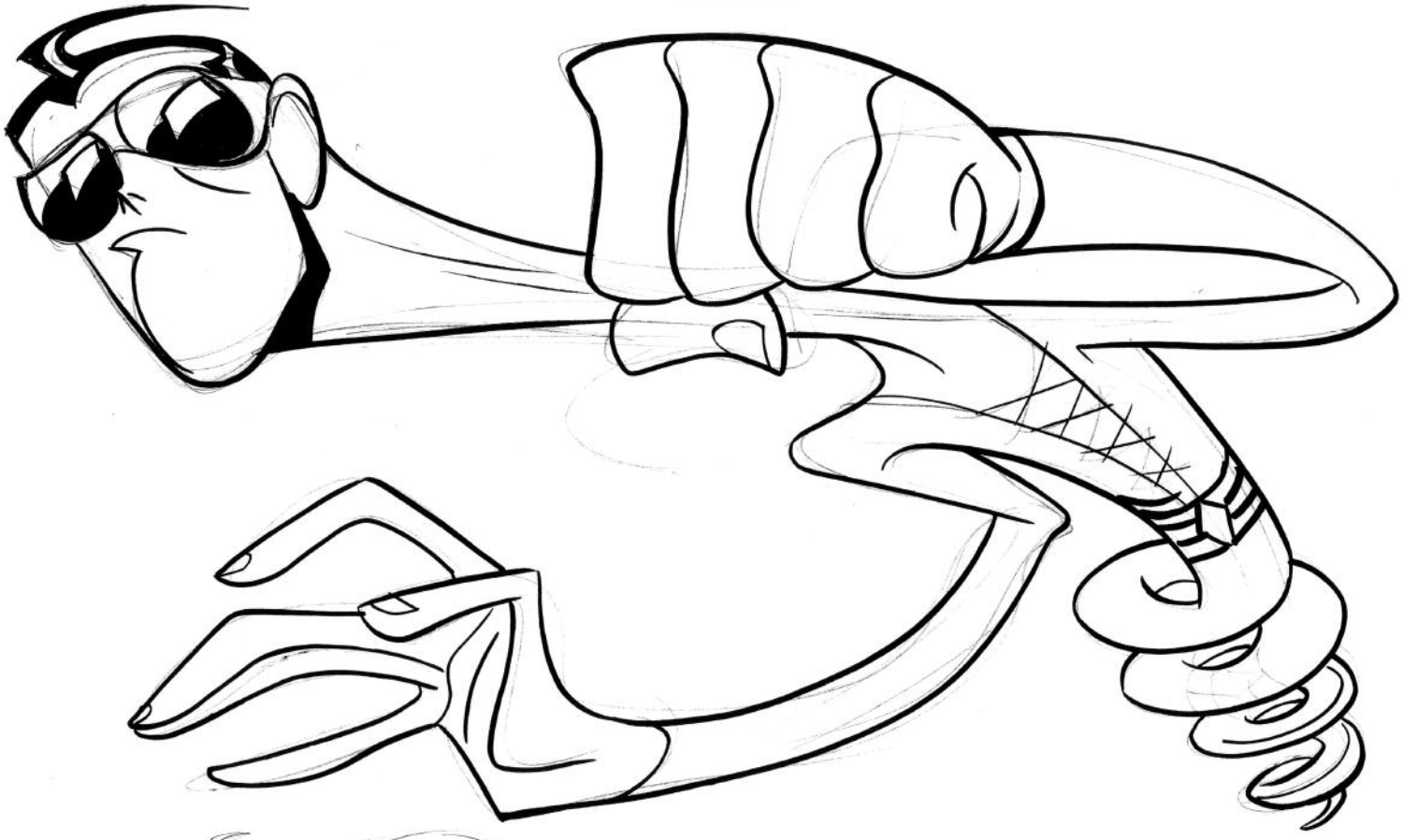
DRAW!: Nobody has enough time in animation, right?

JT: No, you never do. It's a luxury, but it's not one that I find I really need. I've done it on other shows, and it can come in handy. The only good thing I can say about animatics is it helps if you're over your footage; you can cut from an animatic. If you need to pull something out, you can see it clearly in the animatic, as opposed to when you just have to figure it out as you're going through a board by hand. But that's such a minor perk, really, that it's not worth the time it takes to do an animatic.

STARTING OUT

DRAW!: You've been in the business for a really long time now. Did you start out as an animator? Because one of the things I always admired about your boards back when I'd always get Dan Riba to send them to me—because being an off-site guy—

JT: Yeah, it's hard.



Plastic Man finally made it to the screen in *Brave and the Bold* after an aborted series of his own.

DRAW!: —you always want to see what everybody else is doing so you can see what's going on—your boards always had such great pose-to-pose arcs and rhythms in the poses.

JT: Yeah, actually. I was lucky in that I was in an area where I was able to learn from the ground up. Meaning I was in Chicago, and there was a studio called StarToons, and they had just gotten a contract to do, like, ten episodes of *Animaniacs*. I had literally just moved to Chicago from Tennessee. I was an art director at a T-shirt company, miserable. "I just need to get out of Tennessee." So I ended up in Chicago, and at the time there was *Comics Scene* magazine, and they had an article on—it wasn't *Animaniacs*, it must have been *Taz-Mania*. They did an article about *Taz-Mania*, and it had one little paragraph that said, "Additional animation will be done in Chicago, Illinois, at StarToons."

DRAW!: And so you started packing your bags?

JT: Well, no, actually I had already decided to move. I was in mid-move when I read that, so I was already going to Chicago, and I said, "Well, I think I should just call them up. Why not?" And I called them up. I mean, this story is not the typical story by any means. It was way too easy. They said, "Sure, come in." I didn't have a portfolio, so I had to draw one that night, before the interview. Literally just do—

DRAW!: The freshest portfolio ever, right? [*laughs*]

JT: Well, it worked. "Okay, they said 'figure drawings,'" so I made up some figure drawings. And then I said, "Well, it's a cartoony show," so I made up a character that I thought would fit in *Taz-Mania*. It was a Tasmanian Devil cartoon called *Taz-Mania*. It was pretty awful. But I just went for it and I showed up. And if I had known that they were accepting pretty much anyone who could hold a pencil, I wouldn't have sweated over it so bad. But, anyway, they gave me a shot.

I started out as an assistant, basically tracing over animation drawings and then doing my in-betweens and stuff. Basically I learned on the job, which is a great way to learn. And I was surrounded by these other guys who had done it before, really skilled guys. It was a small mom-and-pop shop. We were basically alone and isolated; it wasn't like Hollywood around us at all. In fact, there was nothing around us, because we were in a really boring suburb. So, anyway, I learned. And because it was a small studio, the chances for advancement came a lot quicker, because they needed people. I was an assistant for about a year, and then they started giving me scenes to do. I had worked up to animator.

Because they knew I was a caricature artist earlier, too, they would have me sometimes change our models that we would get from Warner Brothers. There were all kinds of things we did there that we shouldn't have done. Like, we would get stuff already timed out for us sometimes, and we wouldn't follow it.

DRAW!: You would try to make it better, or just make if funnier?

JT: Yeah. John McClanahan was my boss. He and Bruce Timm I owe my animation career to, because John was the first guy to hire me, and he was the first guy to say, "You're the artist, you're the animator." If we had a board and we thought it was a little crappy, we kind of went, "Oh, we can make that a little better." And so we changed things, which we shouldn't have, but we did. We'd get models from L.A., and they'd be okay, but they wouldn't really be animatable. Like, in *Animaniacs*, the celebrity characters. John would give them to me to simplify, because whoever was doing the caricatures, and it was a great artist, but they weren't animatable by any means.

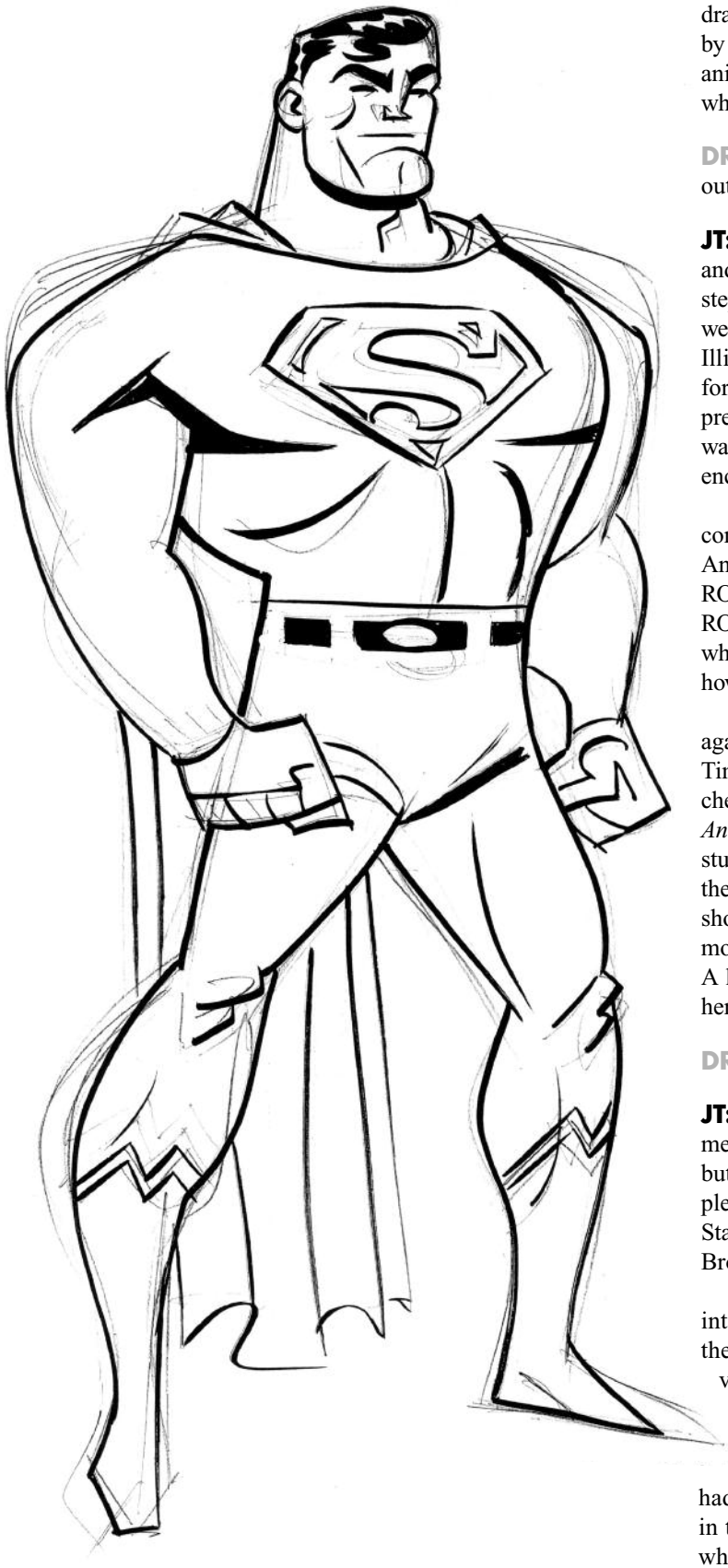
DRAW!: Probably because they had never animated anything.

JT: Right. Well, you find in this business—and it's easier to understand—that there's not a lot of animation done here, so it was really a unique situation to be in a studio where you can learn and actually hand-do the animation, and do your own exposure sheets, and understand, also, the process, because we also did our backgrounds there. We did everything there. It was a production house, so you could see every step of the way what you did, how it contributes to the whole process, and you knew what each division did, so you actually saw a cartoon. I think we even shot them, because it was all cel, too.

DRAW!: Do you find now, because of the fact that you came up and you learned how to do each step—even though technology has changed how we do each step greatly—does that understanding of the process help you?

JT: It helps. I mean, we're finding now that the more you get digital, the less things like footage—it doesn't mean the same thing in the digital realm. You know how Photoshop wasn't really artist-friendly at first, and as they developed it, they started using more artist-friendly jargon? I'm finding, yes, it helps to know all this stuff. I'm glad I know it. But I also find that there're other guys who are younger than me, but may not have that experience, who are just as skilled, they're just coming at it from a different angle. So I don't think I have superior

Aquaman's design was based on '50s/'60s sword-and-sandals actor, Steve Reeves, a former Mr. America and Mr. Universe. Also shown are designs for Aquaman's misguided brother, Ocean Master.
AQUAMAN, OCEAN MASTER. ™ AND ©2009 DC COMICS



This design for Superman shows a Joe Shuster influence.

knowledge, but for my job, it helps me to know the things I know. It helps me more in design, I think, because the thing that computers haven't taken over is the fact that we do hand-drawn animation still. The Koreans have to animate these things by hand. So I, having animated, know that certain designs will animate more easily and look better than other designs. That's where I think it helps me.

DRAW!: How did you get from Chicago to L.A.? Did you go out because of the *Animaniacs* work?

JT: Well, we did *Animaniacs*, and the contract was fulfilled, and we all got laid off. One of my co-workers actually took the step and went out and got a job on *The Simpsons*, and we all went, "Wow. She got a job!" Because we were in Homewood, Illinois. We didn't think about L.A. The idea of going to L.A. for a lot of us, I think, was just—you just couldn't even comprehend it. Chicago's a great place to live, so I definitely didn't want to go at first. I just didn't. I was like, "I have this experience in animation, but I don't want to have to go out there."

I ended up designing Happy Meal toys for a while for this company in Chicago, since McDonald's is headquartered there. And that was a cool gig, and then I got caught up in the CD-ROM situation which wasn't very good. Remember CD-ROMS? They were the big thing back then. It's funny, we had a whole room of computers to do what Flash does now. But that's how long ago it was.

The thing that motivated me to come out here was I read, again in *Comics Scene* magazine or something, that Bruce Timm was doing a Superman cartoon. I was always kind of cheesed off that I'd missed the first series of *Batman: The Animated Series* because I was in Chicago. But when I saw his stuff, I went, "Wow, I would love to work on that show." And then it was over with, and I was like, "Ah, I guess I missed my shot." And then *Superman* came along and I went, "Wow. If I moved to L.A. for anything, it would be to work on that show." A lot of my coworkers at StarToons had already migrated out here and gotten jobs...

DRAW!: So you had a little base of contacts of people?

JT: Yeah, we're the Chicago Mafia, basically, of animation. It's me, Tony Cervone, Spike Brandt—they both worked on stuff, but *Duck Dodgers* is probably the most recent thing most people know of. There's quite a few of us who migrated from StarToons out here to get jobs. Most of us stuck with Warner Brothers, actually.

So, anyway, I came out here, and those guys got me an introduction with Bruce, and he saw my portfolio. He hated the whole thing, just loathed everything in it, because he's not very enamored with funny animal cartoons, which all I had at the time was *Animaniacs* stuff, goofy cartoon stuff.

But I had the foresight to say, "Let me do a few pages, do some free drawing in what I think his style is." If I hadn't done that, if I hadn't had those two sheets of drawings in the portfolio where I was attempting to draw in his style, where he could see that I actually could do what he needed me to do, I probably wouldn't have gotten the job. It always pays to be prepared. I used to be a Boy Scout, and that was our motto.

The action shots really help the storyboard artists and animators solve drawing and design issues in posing the character.

DRAW!: [*laughs*] And it continues on into adulthood. Now you can be an Eagle Scout or whatever.

JT: Well, I didn't make it past Second Class, but I got everything I needed from it. So, anyway, he took a shot, and I got a job as a designer.

DRAW!: You were doing character designs?

JT: Yeah, I started out doing character designs for the first... Well, it didn't take long. After they realized I had animated at StarToons, because I knew more about animation than the average guy who was coming in out of school or something, they said, "Well, we need a board guy. Do you want to try that?" I'm like, "Sure!" I knew about boards, because I had dealt with them, but I hadn't drawn in a realistic style. My history was with *Pinky and the Brain* and doing *Animaniacs* stuff. So there was a learning curve there, but, again, my tendency to be more cartoony has lended itself into doing *B:BB* because I kind of went back to that. But now I have the experience of having worked on Bruce's shows. So it's weird. Timing-wise, all the stuff I've had to go through as far as work experience has played a big factor in *B:BB*. The way it looks and the way it is has a lot to do with my history.

DRAW!: What was your first board for *Superman*?

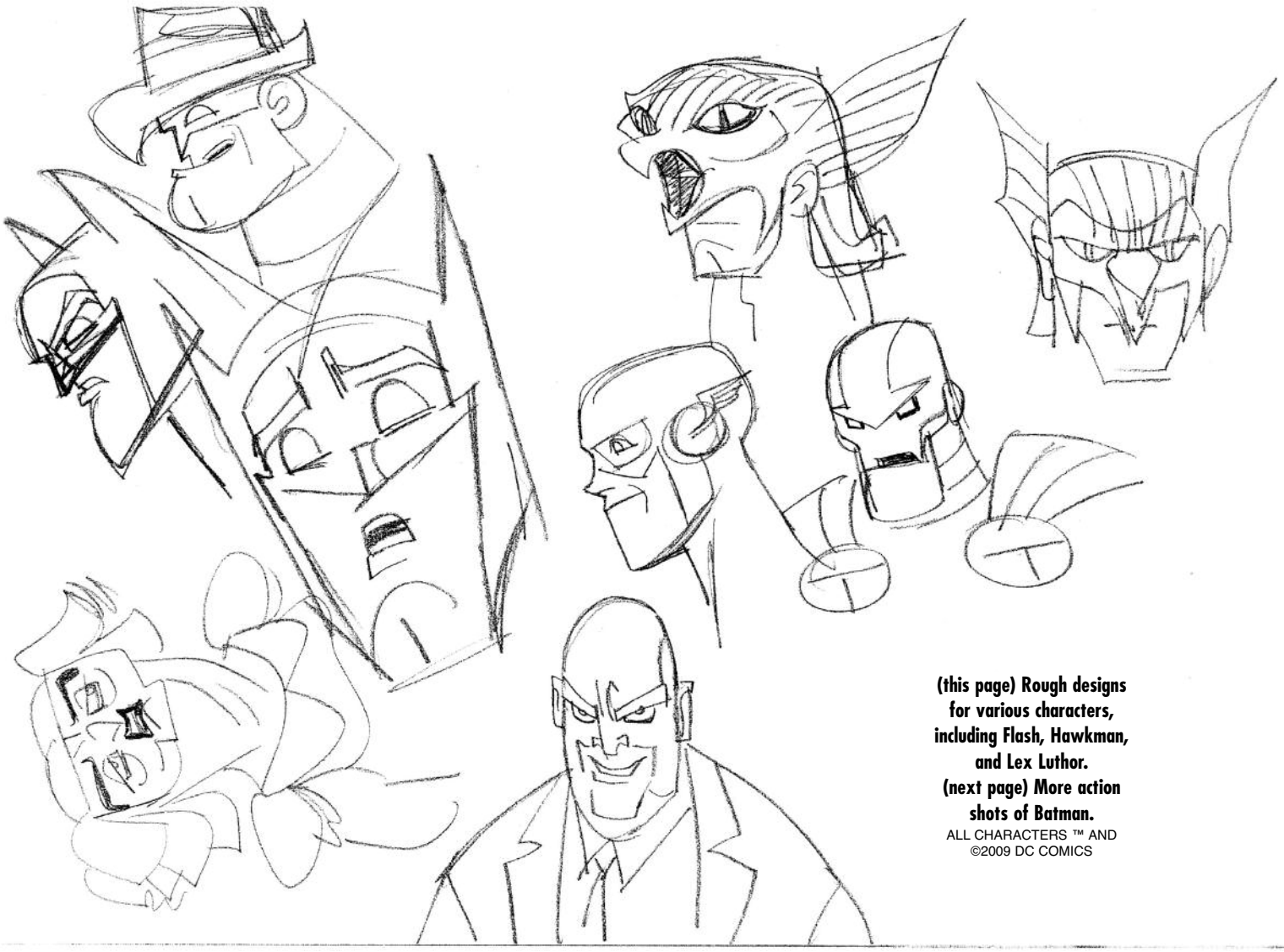
JT: Oh, it was awful. It was the "Lobo, Part 1."

DRAW!: Oh, okay, well, I did "Lobo, Part 2," and I think Bret did "Part 3."

JT: Well, you guys had much better boards than I did. My first board was horrible. [*laughs*] When I saw it a few months ago when the DVD came out, I thought, "You know, this isn't as bad as I recall," but I remember it was just such a struggle to figure out. Because most funny animal cartoons, you're just doing left and right. You're not doing a depth thing as much. You're just setting up a gag and setting up a joke. So my first boards tended to be very goofy because the setups were off, and figuring out the choreography and stuff. I mean, I think I caught on pretty fast, but it was a struggle, at first.

DRAW!: I think the one thing that stops most people from doing boards who can draw well, even tell a story well, is they just can't do that many drawings.

JT: Yeah, and I have ADD intensely, so it works for me. And I was always about the challenge. I liked character design, and I like doing boards, and I like directing, but I think having that sense of liking a little bit of everything helps make you a good producer, or at least makes you want to produce, because I would be bored if I were still doing boards now. No pun intended. I would have



(this page) Rough designs for various characters, including Flash, Hawkman, and Lex Luthor. (next page) More action shots of Batman.

reached my limit on that. I kind of like having my hand in everything and being able to see all the different areas that go into making the cartoon. I still do character design, and I still pitch in and do a section on a board here and there. I like being able to dabble in all the different aspects rather than being stuck in only one area.

DRAW!: What was the last board you did?

JT: It hasn't aired yet, but I did a Catwoman teaser for *The Brave and the Bold*. It was a lot of fun, but it was hard getting those muscles back into place. [*laughs*] And the thing for me when I boarded—was it four weeks back then?

DRAW!: Yeah, four weeks, right.

JT: You get two weeks to rough, two weeks to finish. Well, at the end of my first two weeks, it seemed like I would always throw out the board. Whatever I had done those first two weeks I hated, and I would literally throw it out, which would give me only two weeks left to start completely from scratch. I was throwing out so much. I would just totally change my mind and throw the whole chunk out. The last two weeks of the month was always very stressful for me. [*laughs*]

DRAW!: What I do on the boards now—I've boarded on the first couple seasons of *Secret Saturdays*—is I'll just draw the board. I find for me it's easier just to draw it. If you don't like it, I'll change it. But then it's done. I found that if I did the roughs, in order for me to getting to feel the meat of everything, I might as well just finish the drawing.

JT: Yeah, for you to feel like you're on the right track.

DRAW!: Maybe that's also because I came from comics as opposed to coming from animation, so my way of working on a drawing, or building a drawing, comes from a more finished aesthetic.

JT: Well, some guys are like that. I don't know two guys who board the same way. It's just different processes. Because Van Wyck—you know Adam Van Wyck's work.

DRAW!: Yes.

JT: A lot of his roughs you could use as finishes. There's very rarely a time where he needs to tighten them up. He will, but you can look at his drawings and... I believe he's had an animation background, too, so they tend to look more bouncy. And the same thing with Ben Jones. There's definitely a difference. I mean, I like having on this show the guys that come from all different disciplines, so guys that were steeped in anime, but also guys who are into... Ben had his work with John

Kricfalusi, so he definitely has his own style. It's good to have a bunch of different influences coming into a show. It really helps to make it more rounded.

DRAW!: I guess it's like having a good repertoire company.

JT: Right, exactly. This isn't a one-man show. This is a bunch of us making the show.

DRAW!: You, locked in a room with a bunch of paper for nine months.

JT: Yeah. I mean, my job basically is to keep the tone consistent. The consistency cop—that's pretty much what I do. This is a show where there's a lot more leeway for freedom to try different things, because there's nothing really wrong. I mean, there are certain things you just don't do. Like, we don't want Batman smiling too much. He can smile more than he did in the past, but we don't want him smiling every time he shows up. It's not Boy Scout Batman. But there's not a lot of rules. Each story is different, each story is set in a different era.

DRAW!: Well, that's actually what I like about the old comics. That's one of things I think actually hurts comics now is you have this ponderous multi-decade history of all these characters, and then you have to try to keep that in line with the fact that, well, now Batman would be 90 and he wouldn't be able to walk.

JT: Bruce Timm calls it "magic-sapping realism," and it's true. I remember when I was a kid—I hate to say it that way—as I recall, you could be ten years old and read a Batman comic, but you could also be thirty years old and read the same comic and not feel like you were stupid for doing it.

DRAW!: Right. The other thing I think is, because it has such a rich history, you're allowed to pull from it. And the nature of comics and TV is still the fact that a kid might watch it Saturday morning, and then not watch the next five episodes, and then see the next one. So if it was a *Lost* kind of thing where you had to see every episode, it really wouldn't work as far as just being casual entertainment.

JT: Yeah. I remember the old DCs before they had a lot of continuity, and I have to say, I liked them being different from Marvel in that respect, where if you had never read a Batman comic, you could go and pick one up and read a whole, complete story, and know everything you needed to know, basically, about the character from that one story. And then you didn't have to necessarily read the next one, but if you wanted to, you could. I think continuity, things like that have hurt comics in the long run, because now you've got people who are sucking all the continuity from all the past eras and trying to reconcile them into a story, and it's just becoming mud. A mental mud.

DRAW!: Another thing I would have to point out, too, is that I think childhood ends sooner.

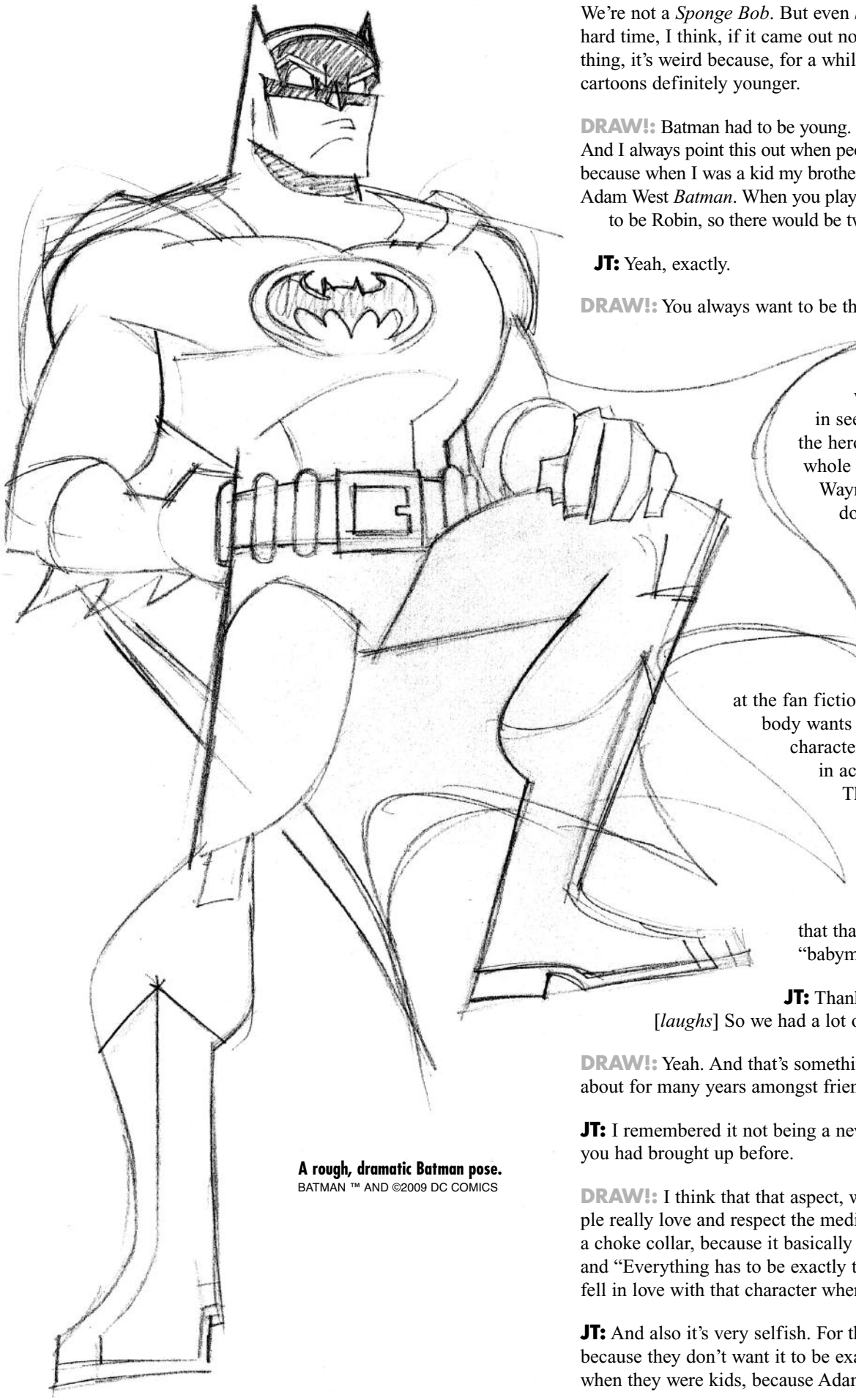
JT: Well, yeah, definitely, these days.

DRAW!: Because, as a kid, you might have watched *Jonny Quest* up until you were 12, 13, 14.

JT: Sure.

DRAW!: The slant the last five or ten years has been aiming the shows at a younger demographic—when they're five or six—because by the time they're ten they're getting a cell phone, they're tweeting. They become teenagers, tweens, or whatever—they have a new term for that every week. But, when I was a kid, you played with your G.I. Joes much longer. Do you get feedback from kids, from the audience? Did you get feedback for how it's playing in Peoria?

JT: It's hard to measure that now, because the whole cartoon landscape has changed. Now the measurements of what is successful and what your viewership is is kind of imprecise to me. We've got so many networks, so what you get as a ratings share, what used to be considered poor is now great, because the market is so subdivided. I think we're not a smash hit, from what I understand, but there isn't any cartoon that is right now.



A rough, dramatic Batman pose.
BATMAN ™ AND ©2009 DC COMICS

We're not a *Sponge Bob*. But even *Sponge Bob* would have a hard time, I think, if it came out now. Going back to your other thing, it's weird because, for a while there, they were skewing cartoons definitely younger.

DRAW!: Batman had to be young. He couldn't be old, because... And I always point this out when people will talk about that, because when I was a kid my brother and I would watch the Adam West *Batman*. When you played Batman, nobody wanted to be Robin, so there would be two Batmans. [*laughs*]

JT: Yeah, exactly.

DRAW!: You always want to be the hero. You never want to be the kid.

JT: And you know what? I never was interested in seeing how the guy became the hero. I never understood this whole fascination with Bruce Wayne when he's not Batman. I don't get that. I want to see the guy in the costume. All I need is one page saying he studied in Tibet and is really smart. I don't need any dull backstory. And now it seems like, even if you look at the fan fiction and all that crap, everybody wants to know a dossier on the character rather than just see them in action having an adventure. They'd rather read a superhero's diary than they would read an adventure that the superhero's having.

DRAW!: Well, I think that that is part of the nature of the "babyman," the fanatic.

JT: Thanks for that, by the way. [*laughs*] So we had a lot of good producers. [*laughs*]

DRAW!: Yeah. And that's something I actually had talked about for many years amongst friends.

JT: I remembered it not being a new thought. It was something you had brought up before.

DRAW!: I think that that aspect, while it's good because people really love and respect the medium and all that, it's also like a choke collar, because it basically says "Nothing can change," and "Everything has to be exactly the same as it was when I fell in love with that character when I was 15 years old."

JT: And also it's very selfish. For them it's disingenuous, because they don't want it to be exactly the way they were when they were kids, because Adam West was Batman when

Rough Red Tornado action pose.
BATMAN ™ AND ©2009 DC COMICS

they were kids, and yet they rebelled against the show because it wasn't dark and gritty. And I'm like, "Well, wait a minute. This is a Batman that people have seen and enjoyed, and in fact was a big hit in its day. Why is all of a sudden Christian Bale's Batman the de facto Batman?"

DRAW!: In fact, no TV show now can pull anywhere near the numbers that they had.

JT: Oh, yeah, it was a huge phenomenon. In fact, we wouldn't be talking about Batman today if it weren't for that show. There wouldn't have been a Tim Burton *Batman* if there wasn't an interest in Batman. Of course, people grow up, and they don't want to grow up, and they get embarrassed by things they liked when they were kids when, really, it's okay to like it. You don't have to mimic it. I think, with the whole Adam West thing people took that show and made that the template for comic books and anything superheroic, and they did bad Adam West knockoffs. It wasn't that show itself was bad, it was just that all the knockoffs were bad.

DRAW!: But that is the nature of Hollywood, if there is a hit. They actually changed *Lost in Space* to be like *Batman*.

JT: Right. I would have enjoyed *Lost in Space* more if it stayed the way it was the first season. When Dr. Smith wanted to actually kill people. [*laughs*]

DRAW!: Right, that was cool! I think you could have had a darker, funnier story then, and it may have lasted longer, too. But, yeah, the whole thing with the babymen is that it's disingenuous and it's selfish, because they don't want anything for kids. Meanwhile, if their parents had had that attitude, they wouldn't have had access to anything. You have to reinvent, especially the DC characters. They're fables. They are modern mythology. There are a lot of different ways to tell a Hercules story.

JT: There are a lot of different ways to tell any kind of legend story. You manipulate and change. How many different ways can you tell "Snow White"? You can tell a dark "Snow White," because they've done it. You can tell a Disney-inspired "Snow White." And DC characters, to me—not so much Marvel. Marvel's kind of locked in. Marvel's very specific, to me. But DC characters are iconic in a way that as long as you get the basic things right and you get the tones right...

DRAW!: When you take Superman and you try to make him this dark, psychological character, it just doesn't work.

JT: It becomes boring.

DRAW!: Right. When you take the cape off and you try to make it real, you basically say, "Here's God. God has a problem with his girlfriend." [*laughs*]

JT: Right. And the guys in the '50s and '60s knew that if they ever logically went down that road, who'd want to read it? So they wisely focused on Jimmy. Basically, they focus on the supporting characters and how they relate to God. That's what Superman is. It's about, "Okay, God's your friend. He's your best bud."

DRAW!: And you have a watch that can call God! [*laughs*]

JT: Right. And you're calling God. Well, that's a whole other discussion about how Biblical Superman is. That's why people like Superman. It's not that it's Superman. They don't watch it to

see him push the world out of orbit. They watch to see how normal people relate to him. I think that's why the George Reeves show is probably the best Superman adaptation, next to the Chris Reeve version. But there's still a wholesomeness there.

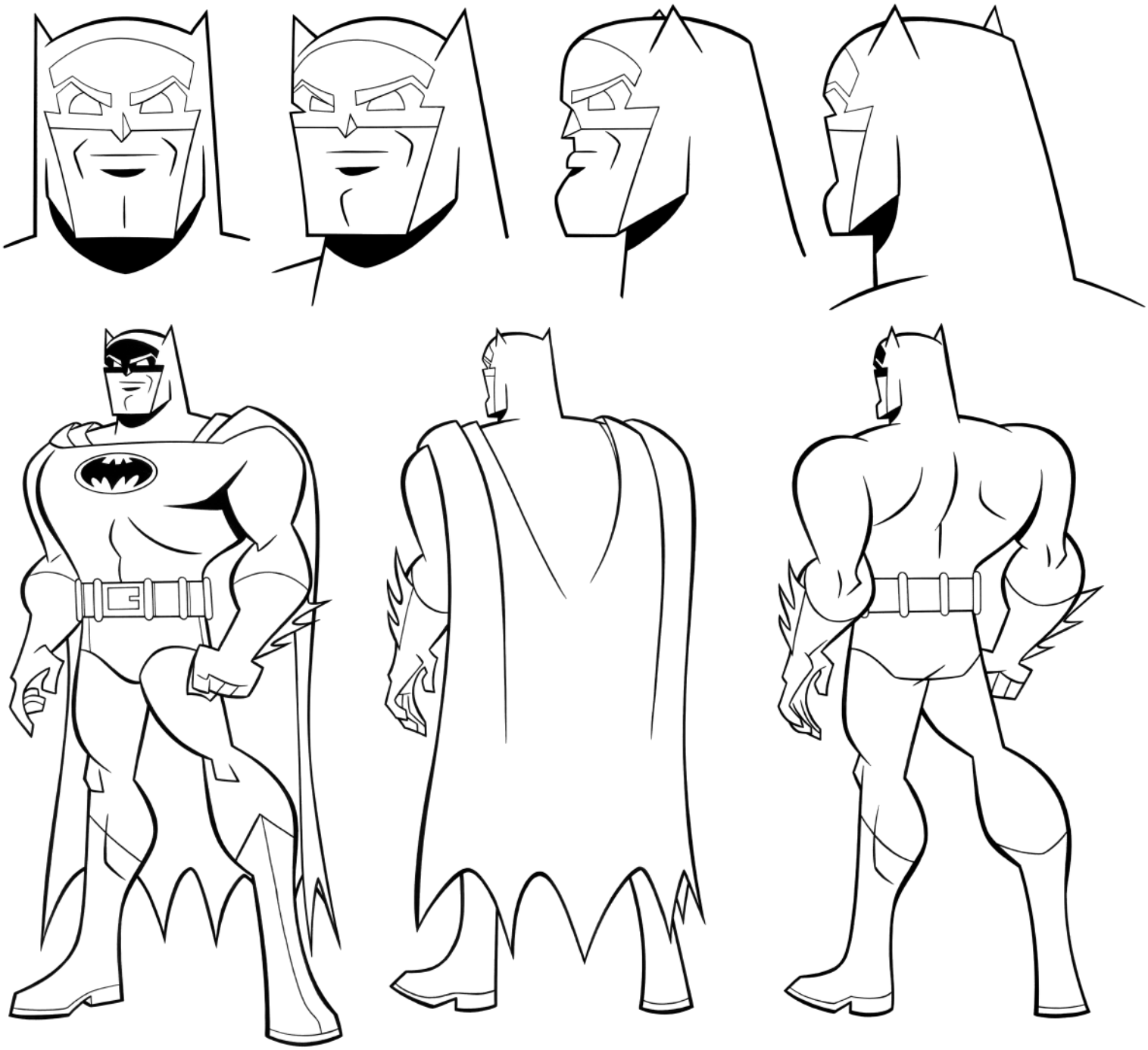
DRAW!: And there also seems to be something now where when you walk into a comic store, everything sort of has the same tone. One thing I liked about the *Batman* show is that it had a very distinct tone. A lot of people were thinking in the beginning, "Oh, great. Batman's going to smile, and you're going to have big sound effects, and the Joker's going to have a mustache painted over."

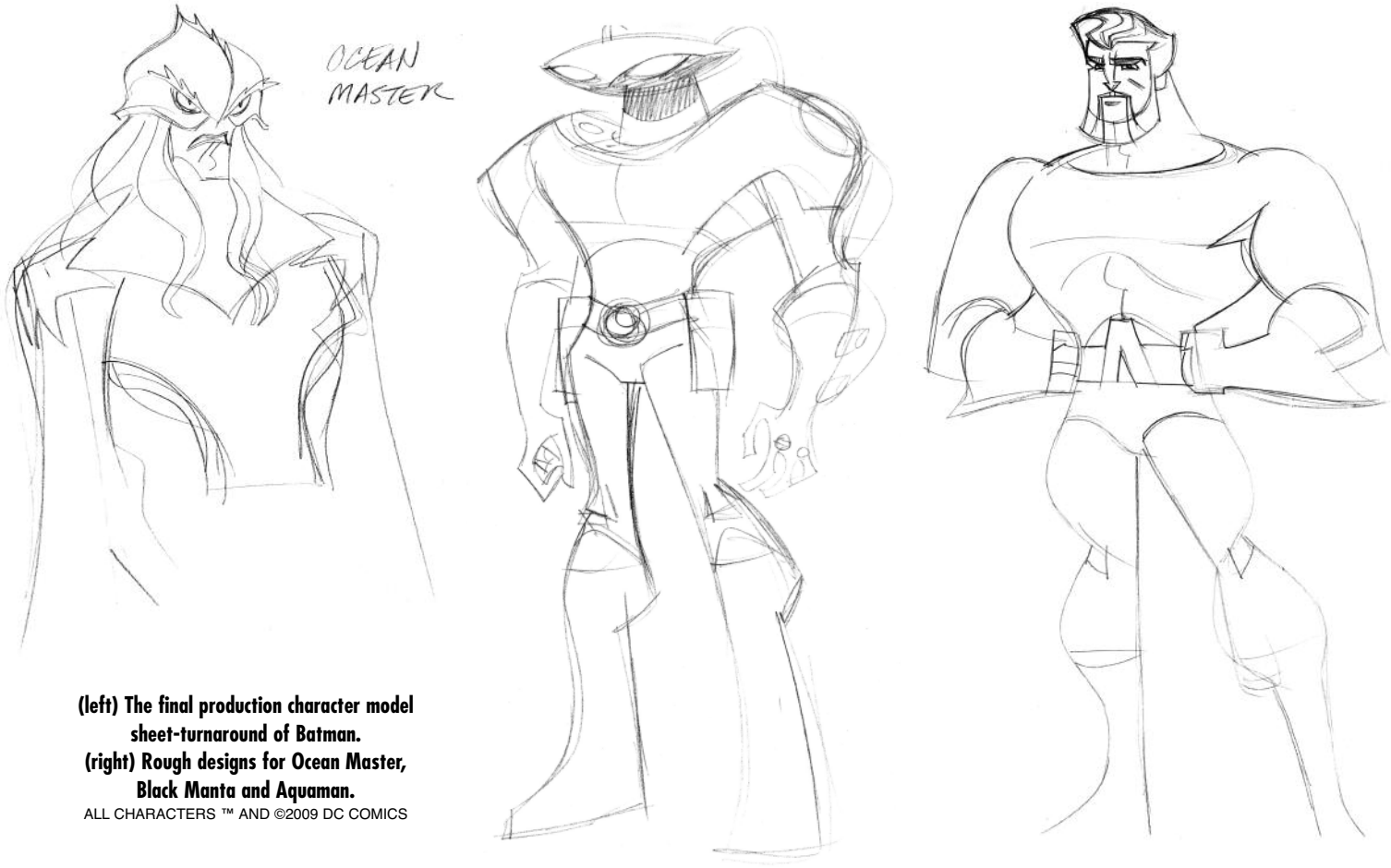
JT: Yeah. I always said, "I'm doing the Batman show I thought I was watching when I was watching Adam West."

DRAW!: As a kid, I never paid attention to the fact that Cesar Romero had a mustache.

JT: No, you don't look at that. If anything, it's just another reason to be freaked out by him. When I was a kid, I knew something was up under his nose, but I didn't know what it was. I didn't realize, because I didn't know who Cesar Romero was, so who knew that he had a mustache? Kids don't see things in such minute detail. At least, we used to not. I don't know, kids now might.

DRAW!: They might be saying, "That belt clashes with his..." [*laughs*] I mean, they are more sophisticated. I think they know sooner if you're trying to be disingenuous and pull the wool over their eyes. Do you get letters from kids? Do you get feedback?





(left) The final production character model sheet-turnaround of Batman.
(right) Rough designs for Ocean Master, Black Manta and Aquaman.

JT: Yeah. I mean, I've always said I made this show for nerd dads and moms and their offspring. I mean, I'm preaching to the converted with this. Anyone who really can't suspend their disbelief, anyone who can't buy into the fantasy of Batman... I always say if you need to see a Wayne Foundation annual report, this isn't the show for you. If you need to believe that he's a real billionaire and he exists in real life, this is not the show for you.

The responses I've been getting from people have been pretty positive. The online response, after the whole furor died down and people actually got to see what we were doing and realized that we weren't making fun of Batman—that we were having fun *with* Batman, but we weren't making fun *of* him. And they realized that I was drawing on all kinds of comics. They're getting so much fan wank that my wrist is tired, y'know? [*laughter*] If anyone can look at this show and can't see that a deep comic book fan is in charge of it and involved with it—even across the crew, we're all fans—if they can't see that, if they just want Chris Nolan Batman, this isn't a show for them. The thing is, Warner Brothers is doing so much now, like with our DVD initiative and stuff, but there's so much Batman to go around that I can't imagine anyone being disappointed that my show's being too goofy.

DRAW!: Well, I always have to point out, too, that one of the things that the babymen forget is that that isn't their Batman. He actually is owned by Warner Brothers, and if tomorrow they wanted to team him with Strawberry Shortcake and make a cartoon because that was going to be popular, they'd find somebody to make it.

JT: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. And there'd probably be a whole new group of people who would watch it, too. I mean, it may not be the same fans they had, but... And, also, another thing is the studios know that as much as the fans claim they're going to hate something, they'll be the first in line. Because the other thing I've learned about the Internet is, hating is actually part of the enjoyment. [*laughs*] They fully enjoy hating things. It gives them a goal. Like, actively hating a show, people will tune in just so they can hate it, which is amazing to me.

DRAW!: Yeah. Well, I guess that's the same with me, because I'm a fan of comics, but I was always only a fan of the comics that were drawn by the artists that I liked.

JT: Yeah, I'm that way, too. But you have fans who follow characters.

DRAW!: Yeah, I never followed characters. If I didn't like the art, or if it wasn't inked by Joe Sinnott and I didn't like it, I wasn't going to read it. It was like, "Well, that looks gross."

JT: Exactly. Not to sound—well, it'll sound elitist no matter how I put it—but there's a difference between fans who create versus fans who collect. Of course, people who create also collect, but it's different being on the side where you're actually contributing to the mythos of the character.

DRAW!: And working really hard. You're comparing yourself against all the great stuff where, like with Batman, it's all come before.

Tucker drawing upon the '50s and early '60s era Caped Crusader in this funny illustration which clearly places this show in a more "kid friendly" vein.

JT: Right, yeah. There's a legacy. You can also be bound by just what's gone before, but your job is to further it, to do more. Anyone who's written for Batman knows that. Anything typed about Batman, everything you do, there's a legacy that follows it. But you can't just be tied to what's gone before, you have to do a little more to further it, to add more to the entertainment value of it. And I think a lot of people who just passively read it, they're the reason we exist, they're the reason we're able to do it, but they also can be limiting, because they're resistant to change. Until you change it in a way that they like, and then they go, "Oh! Well, that's cool."

DRAW!: But at the same time now you have kids coming up and this is their Batman.

JT: Yeah, and this is what they'll know. And I'm being fairly faithful to the character in general. It's the character I was reading in the comics here and there. I mean, yeah, the first *Brave and the Bold* I got had Joker on the cover killing a family, but, you know...

DRAW!: [*laughs*] Wholesome family entertainment!

JT: That was my transition from Cesar Romero into the "Joker" Joker. But I also knew the Cesar Romero version, and I also knew the Dick Sprang version because of the comics, so I was like, okay, these are all different aspects of this one character. They're all correct.

DRAW!: Well, the Joker that you have is very creepy. He has that clownish aspect, but there's a real creepiness, too.

JT: Well, I like him, because with the *B:TAS* Joker, if you saw him a mile away you knew, "Oh, I'd better get out of here because this guy's going to kill me." I wanted the Joker I remembered from the '50s comics reprints, where sometimes he would show up and no one would blink an eye. No one assumed they were going to get killed by him, so when he did kill them, it was like, "Oh, crap." And he was very debonair; he always struck me as debonair and kind of Mid-Atlantic Continental, so when he finally did laugh, it was really—

DRAW!: He's sort of like David Niven until he goes off his rocker.

JT: Yeah. Actually, that came about with the voice actor, because he kind of brought that to it. It really wasn't what I was expecting at first, but then when I thought about it I went, "Well, that feels right." And I don't think Mark Hamill would have wanted to do a recreation of his Joker, either, for the show. He's been on the show in other aspects, and he loves the show, so that's good, but why get Mark Hamill to do another version of the character he's made fresh to people.

DRAW!: You didn't bring back Kevin Conroy as Batman, although the actor you hired actually sounds much like Kevin sometimes.

Art done for promotion and to express the feel of the show and how different this version of Batman is compared to those that have come before.

JT: Yeah, he can. I think Kevin's kind of set the template for the modern way Batman should sound. What I like about Diedrich Bader is that he has Kevin's vocal quality with Adam West's kind of comedic underpinnings. His voice sounds more approachable, in a way, then Kevin's does. And that's no slam against Kevin, that's just the way this character was presented as more forbidding and more distanced than the Batman we're doing.

DRAW!: How much do you have a say in that, as opposed to the network? Does the network say, "We don't want this actor," or, "We like this actor"?

JT: Cartoon Network has been fairly hands-off. We basically auditioned a bunch of people, we picked the guy we wanted, they didn't have any issues with it, so...

DRAW!: Do you work with the voice director of the cast?

JT: Oh, yeah. I'm there. I'm everywhere. Every facet of production, I'm there. At our recordings I'm sitting right behind Andrea Romano, and she's getting my input and passing it along to the actors, or sometimes I talk directly to them.

DRAW!: Are they seeing the boards?

JT: No. Some shows they can do the boards first, and actually I would love to work on a show like that, where you actually have the board first and then the actors act to the board. But for action/adventure, where the plots are more complicated and there's a writer involved, you kind of need to do the board. You do the track first, vocally, and then the board guy draws to the track, for the acting specifics and stuff.

DRAW!: Some shows are switching that up, now. When I worked on *Secret Saturdays*, it never got any tracks, so they must have been acting to my board. I imagined what they sounded like, and I actually wasn't too far off. I just wondered if you were working that way.

JT: No, even on our humor stuff, the Warner Brothers way has always been to record first, and then board to the record. I can't think of a show where we boarded first and then did the recording. I mean, it would probably be easier that way. I don't know about action/adventure though. There's so much—for some reason, we just don't do it that way. I'm so used to it that I thought I had a reason why we don't, but now I see, why don't we do that? [*laughs*]

DRAW!: I've worked on all kinds of shows. I've worked on funny stuff, I've worked on stuff that was serious. The most demanding was *Fairly Odd Parents*, because that's such a hyper...

JT: Sure, that's a lot of pencil mileage.

DRAW!: Yeah, and they would want, really, for every line a new pose.

JT: It's odd because it doesn't seem designed for that.

DRAW!: I remember there was an episode I boarded that had Julia Louis-Dreyfus doing Wanda's sister. She was Blonda. They didn't have her track for the show, so I boarded it and I turned in. Then, I think the last week of clean-up, they got Julia Louis-Dreyfus to do the track. Then they send it to me, and of course she ad libs and changes all these lines. So everything now is completely different, and I had kind of a row with the producer, because it was like, "I can't redo my entire board in a week." I didn't know whether you guys had to go through that, because that does complicate things.

JT: We have our schedule, and the board guy has to start a week early, without a track. But usually that's the rough week, anyway, so it doesn't kill them when they get the track a little later and they get more specific. I mean, I'm lucky I have a really strong board crew. This is just the way we've been doing it, and for action/adventure, I think it's probably the more sound way—especially when you have a lot of scene changes

and things—knowing the acting involved in the scene, because tonally you can have a line of dialogue read one way and it'll result in a whole different drawing.

DRAW!: True, very true.

JT: I think the producer has more control if the track is a certain way, and then the board guy has to go by the track. That keeps things consistent, because you're actually hearing the full performance of the show when you record it.

DRAW!: It's like listening to old radio shows.

JT: Right. You get a gist of how the show's flow is, whereas if you just went with the one board... And that's another thing, I tend to think most boards that are done first, it's only one or two guys doing that board, and they're usually shows that have two segments in them, like *Sponge Bob*, and there are usually one or two guys doing that board, and there are one or two guys doing the second. But it's a contained story, whereas when you have multiple acts, you really need a roadmap for them. Once you generate a script, you probably should just go on and record it, I think, whereas a lot of the times, on a lot of those shows, they don't even have a script, right? They just get a premise. On *Samurai Jack*, did you guys have a script?

DRAW!: [*laughs*] I would get, like, a paragraph from Genndy, and then I would go do the whole thing, and then they would record it and do everything afterwards.

JT: Yeah. I would love someday to work on a show like that, but the type of show this is isn't really conducive to that way of doing it.

DRAW!: Well, probably, because it's such a big show.

JT: Yeah, I mean, our shows are pretty friggin' huge, even writing them in advance and knowing what's coming, we still have a pretty big character count and scene count.

DRAW!: A lot of aspiring people read the magazine. Do you have any sage advice for people who are trying to follow your path and be animators or board people? Because a lot of people want to work on these shows. I'm sure you probably get dozens of people sending in submissions all the time.

JT: You know, I don't, and the thing I would say now, if you're particularly interested in action/adventure animation, there's a finite group of people who can do this. I mean, very finite. And, particularly here at Warner Brothers, we're finding there are not enough people to go around, because we'll soon have a

JAMES TUCKER INTERVIEW CONTINUES ON PAGE 54

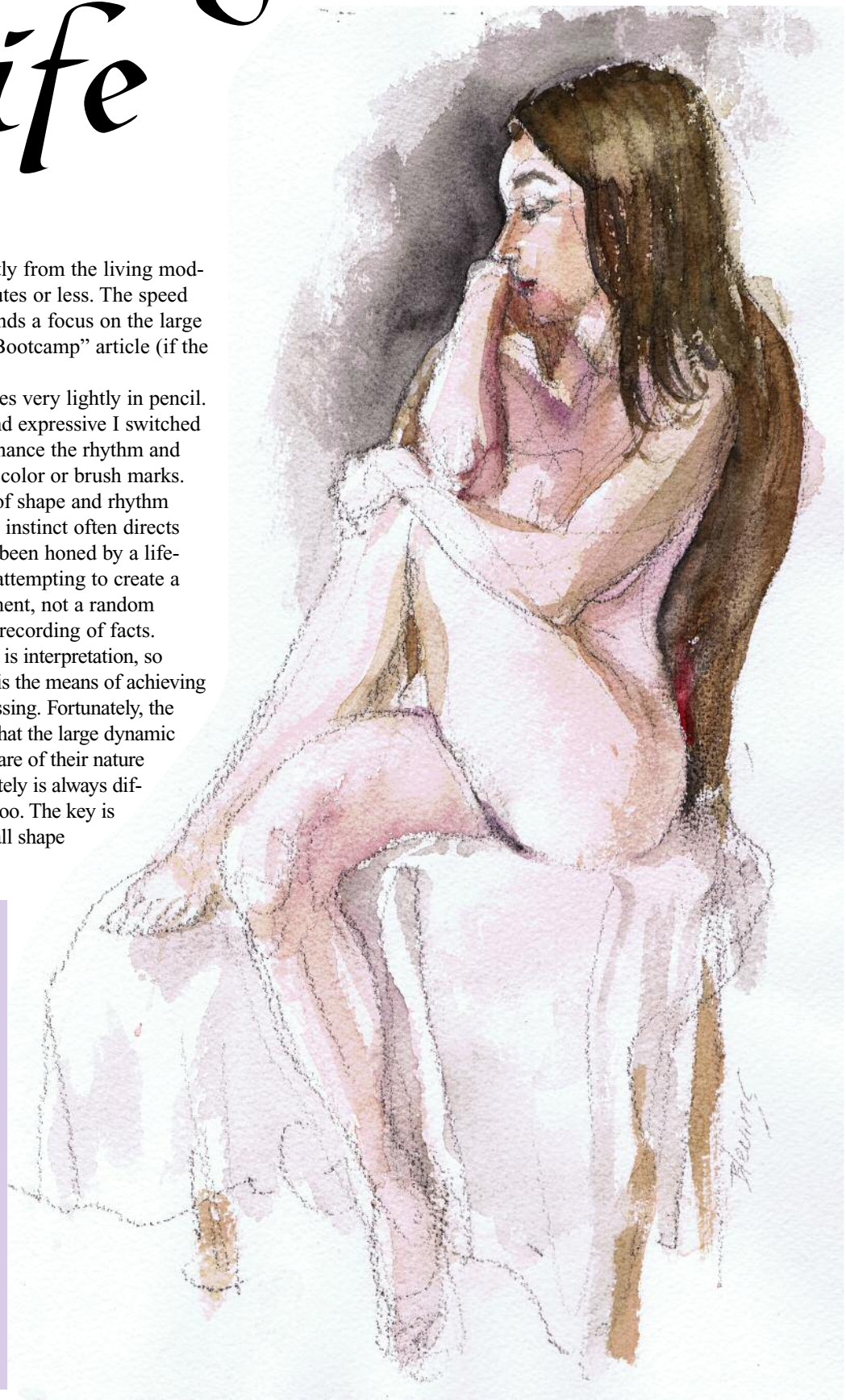
Drawing from Life

by Bret Blevins

These watercolors were drawn directly from the living models, each completed in twenty minutes or less. The speed required by such short poses demands a focus on the large dominant rhythms Mike describes in his "Bootcamp" article (if the entire figure is to be portrayed).

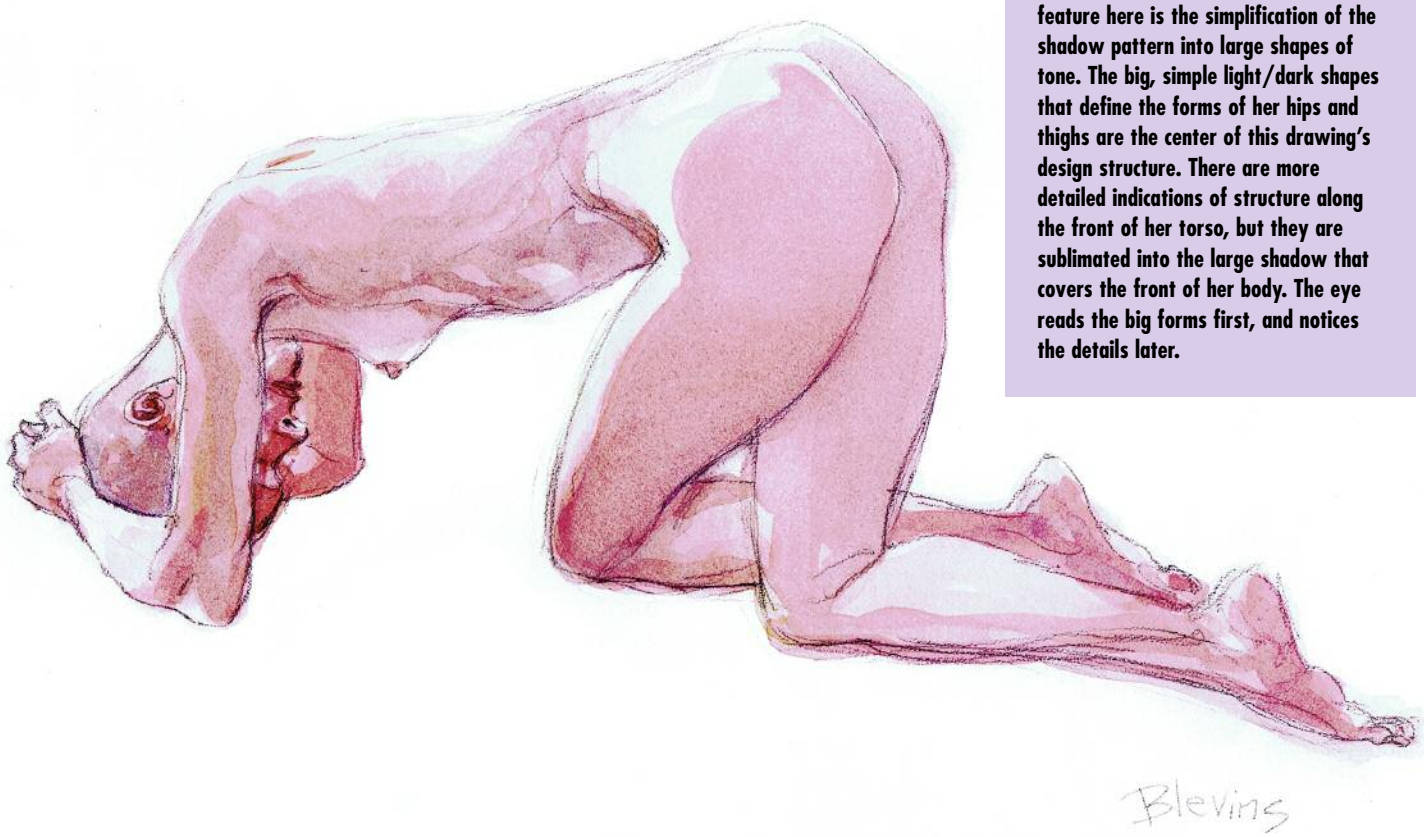
I began by outlining the forms and shapes very lightly in pencil. When the drawing seemed both accurate and expressive I switched to watercolor to embellish the structure, enhance the rhythm and design, or simply add an esthetic beauty of color or brush marks. Every decision is guided by the principles of shape and rhythm though—nothing is arbitrary. Subconscious instinct often directs much of the process, but my instincts have been honed by a lifetime of study and practice, so I am always attempting to create a well designed artwork, an expressive statement, not a random assortment of impressions or a dead-literal recording of facts.

That is the important distinction: Artwork is interpretation, so learning to see with an aesthetic perspective is the means of achieving the control of shape and design we are discussing. Fortunately, the human body is so obviously a living design that the large dynamic rhythms are easy to identify once you are aware of their nature and interlocking flow. (Drawing them accurately is always difficult, but that can be learned with practice, too. The key is to begin with a clear view of the goal—overall shape and design before detail.)

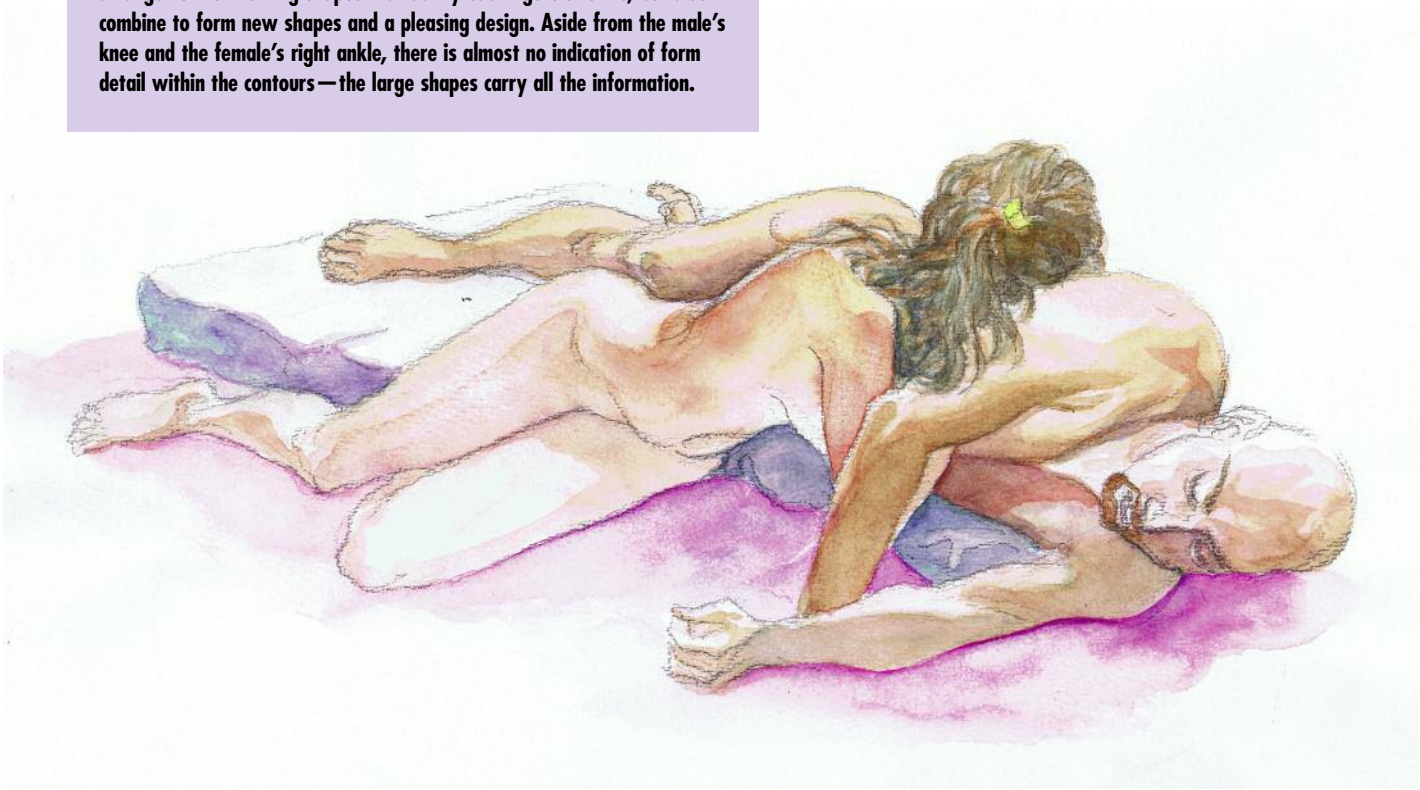


Here the lovely, interlocking shapes formed by the repeated angles of her bent legs and left arm are the important under-structure of the design, forming a series of gentle V-shapes that rise up to support her head. There is a V-shape below her left knee, below her left arm, the shadowed fingers of her right hand form another inverted V-shape, as does the patch of light falling across her right shoulder and the shadow across her upper chest. These repeated shapes form a rhythm that gracefully lifts the eye up to her face and head, which is framed by her dark hair that blends into the arc of the chair back and leads the eye back down to start the journey over again. I wasn't analyzing all this as I drew and painted, but I responded to the aspects of the pose that appealed to my sense of design and followed them.

There are many V-shapes in this image, too—the body creates them every time it moves—but the most interesting feature here is the simplification of the shadow pattern into large shapes of tone. The big, simple light/dark shapes that define the forms of her hips and thighs are the center of this drawing's design structure. There are more detailed indications of structure along the front of her torso, but they are sublimated into the large shadow that covers the front of her body. The eye reads the big forms first, and notices the details later.

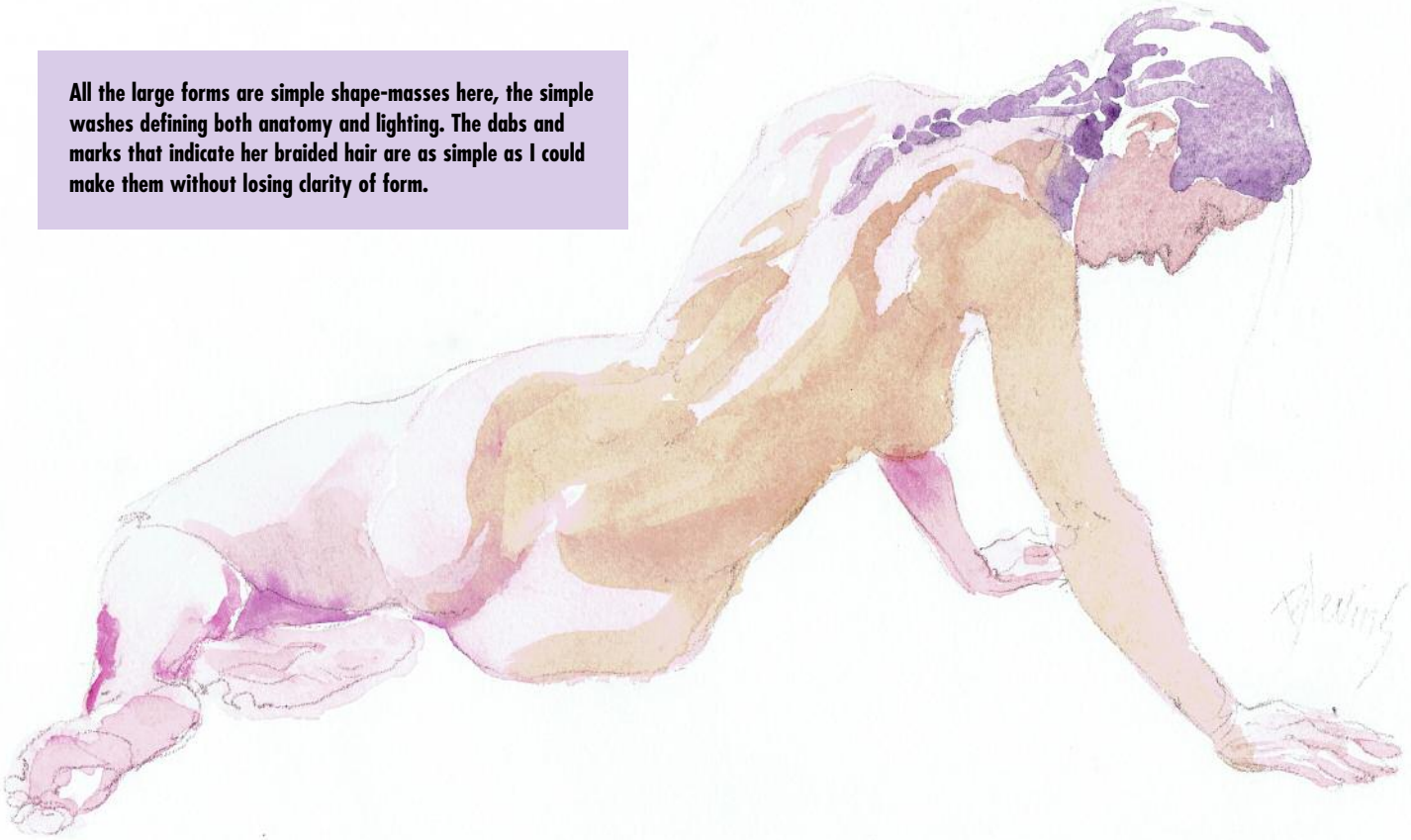


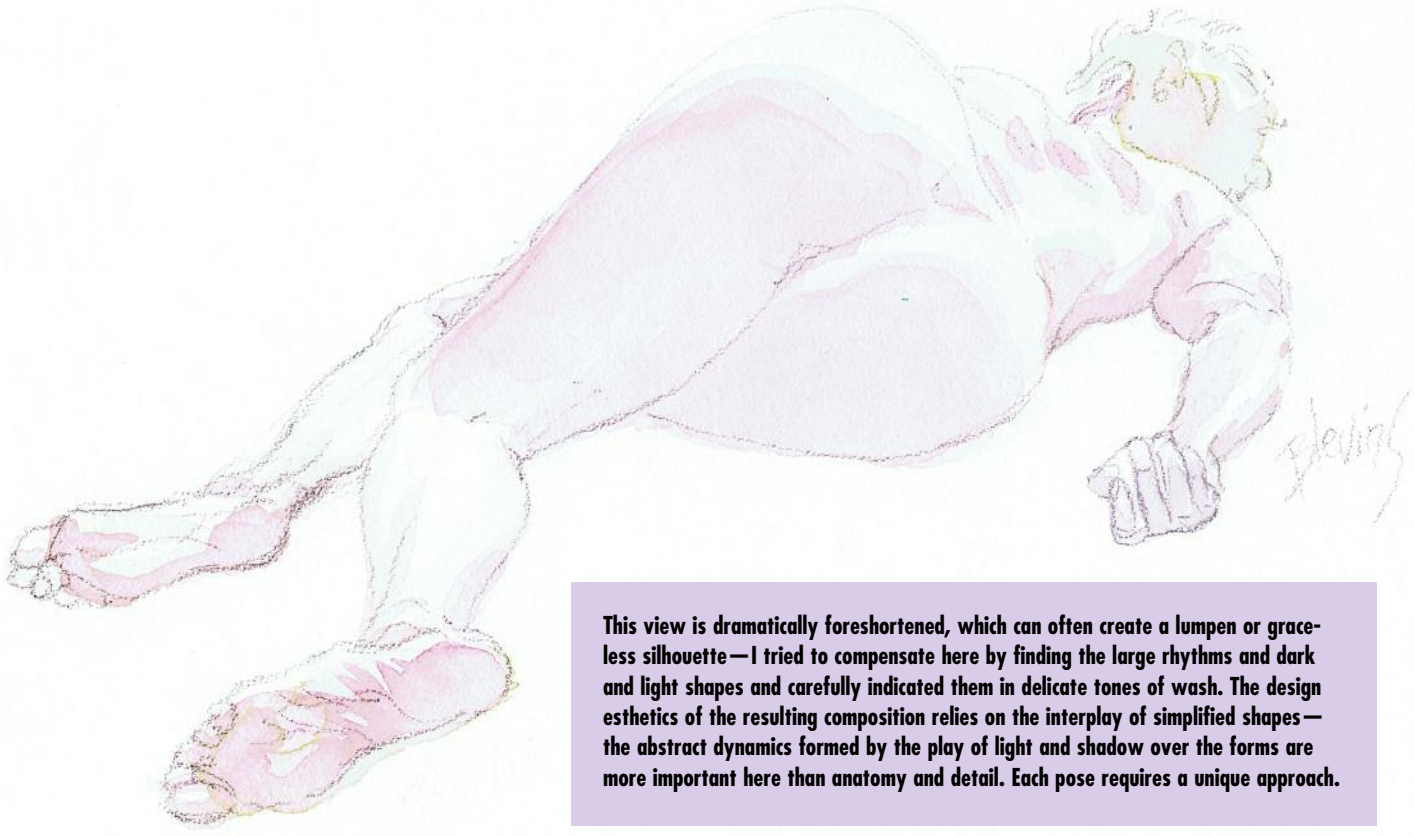
Two figures entwined create many new shape dynamics, but the same principles apply. Here the large forms are accented to create a rhythmic arrangement of flowing shapes that clarify each figure's forms, but also combine to form new shapes and a pleasing design. Aside from the male's knee and the female's right ankle, there is almost no indication of form detail within the contours—the large shapes carry all the information.



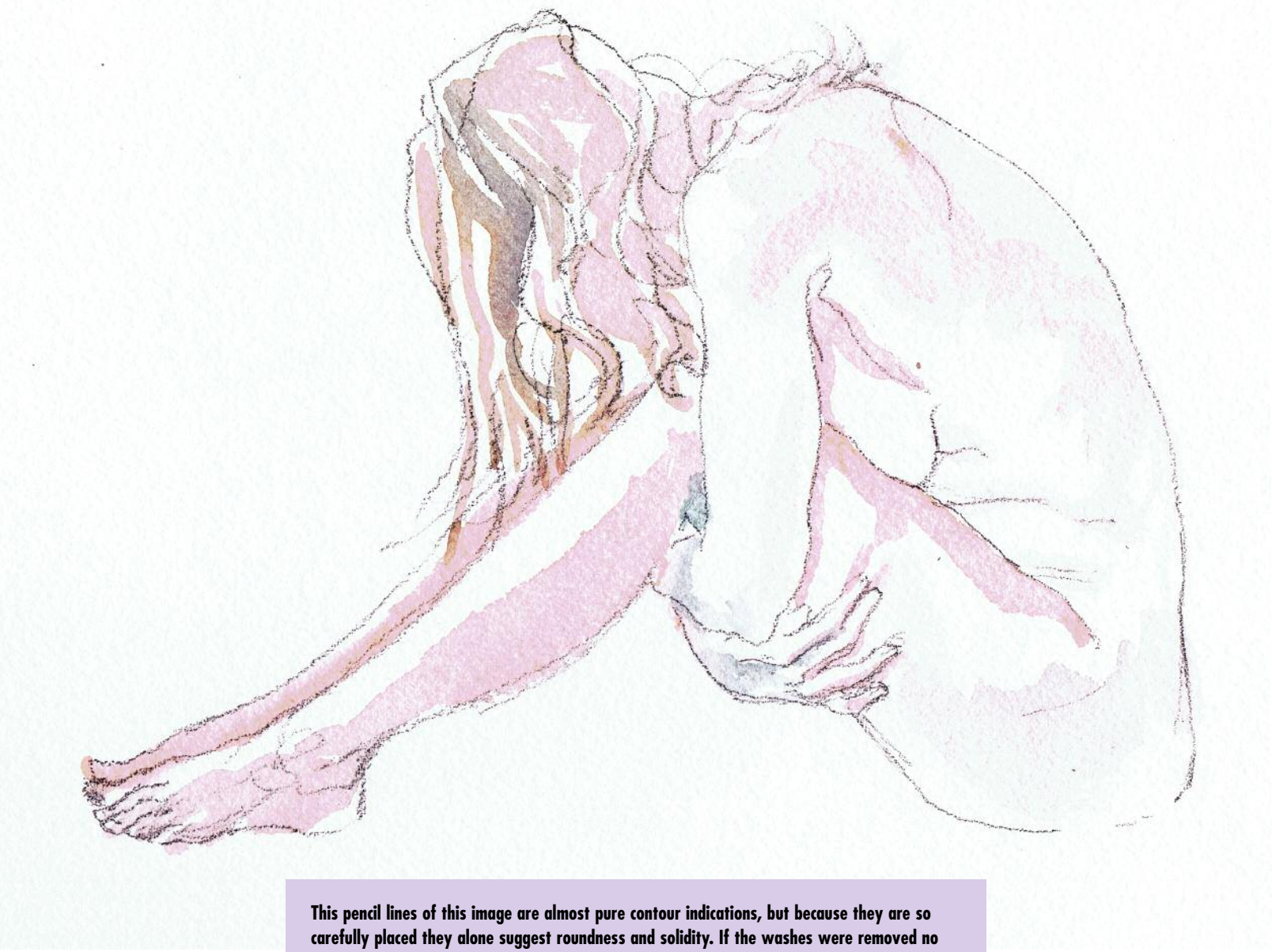
The rendering of form here is most detailed around her left knee. This is because the steep foreshortening of this view makes the large shape of her folded left leg somewhat amorphous, requiring clarification to ensure the anatomy was obvious and correct. By contrast, the rest of her body is virtually outline. Gravity is pulling her right calf downward from the bone. This is indicated with a few simple marks, and the merest thin lines within a large shadow mass define the folds of her stomach. The strongest contrast is reserved for the composition's center of interest—her face—and here also both the planes of structure and her facial expression are indicated with large simple shapes of shadow and light.

All the large forms are simple shape-masses here, the simple washes defining both anatomy and lighting. The dabs and marks that indicate her braided hair are as simple as I could make them without losing clarity of form.





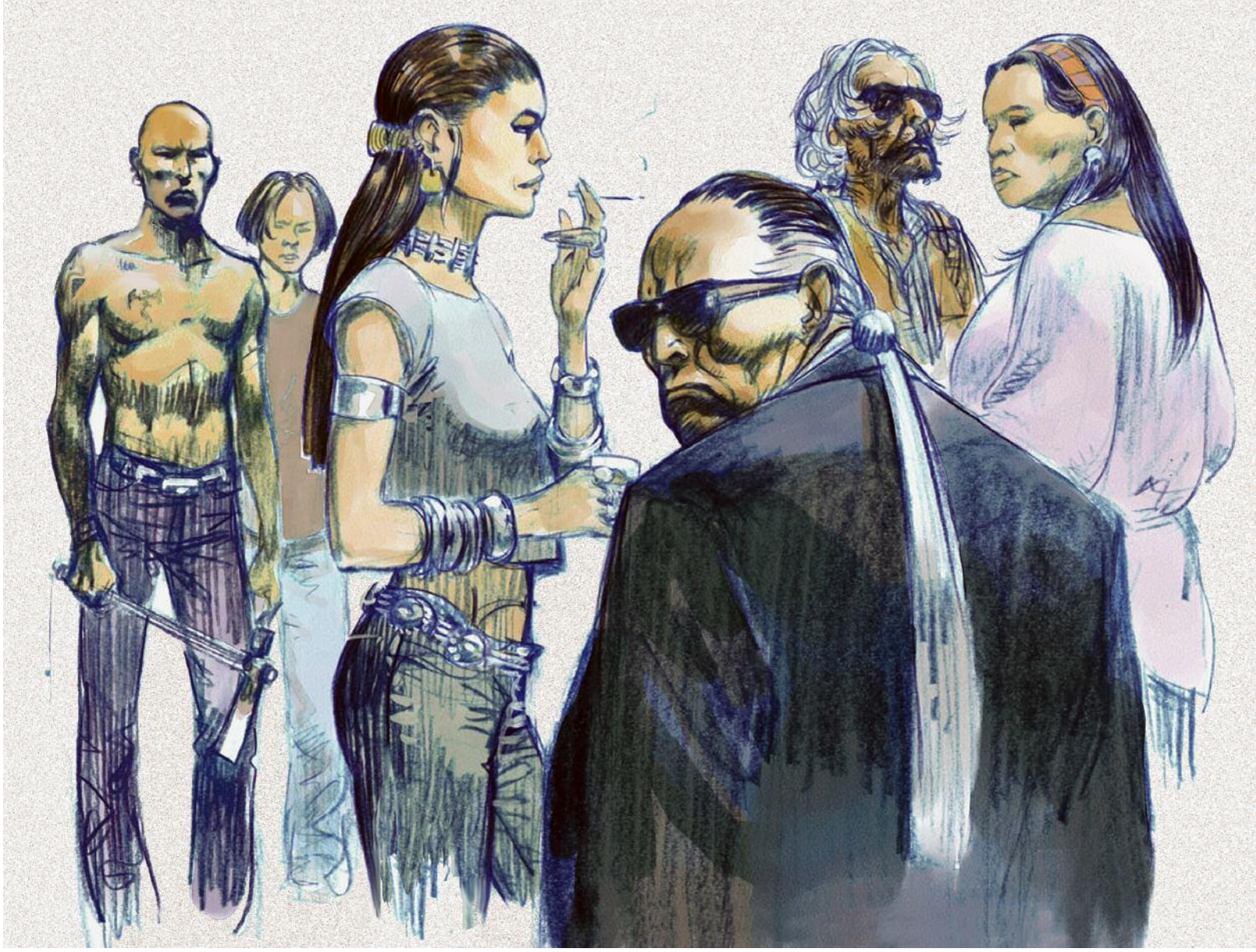
This view is dramatically foreshortened, which can often create a lumpen or graceless silhouette—I tried to compensate here by finding the large rhythms and dark and light shapes and carefully indicated them in delicate tones of wash. The design esthetics of the resulting composition relies on the interplay of simplified shapes—the abstract dynamics formed by the play of light and shadow over the forms are more important here than anatomy and detail. Each pose requires a unique approach.



This pencil lines of this image are almost pure contour indications, but because they are so carefully placed they alone suggest roundness and solidity. If the washes were removed no clarity of form would be lost. The large tone shapes here do embellish information about form, but the real contribution they make is to design, adding movement by urging the eye along their fluid runs, especially the lone dark accent within her falling hair.

In these examples you can see how the sensitive and knowledgeable simplification of the large movements and rhythms of the body can create dynamic figure drawings. In this case the images are realistic depictions of actual people, but the same principles apply to the invented figures of fantasy and cartooning. Even if you prefer highly finished rendering and detail as your final statement, designing your images with simple strength first will make your compositions more effective. All sound construction, in any sphere, depends on a strong foundation. In the realm of art that means strong design and composition, which always starts with simplicity.

See you next time!
Bret



Mixed media color sketch drawing of the cast of *Scalped*.
SCALPED ™ AND ©2009 JASON AARON AND RAJKO MILOSEVIC.

R.M. GUERA INTERVIEW CONTINUES FROM PAGE 11

fine-tune to it all. There won't be competition, just personal taste, because the quality of brush against good old paper isn't about perfection at all. It's about grace. Recently I've done eight covers for Osamu Tezuka's *Hidamari no Ki*—straight watercolor and ink.

If you were to ask me about my actual preference, it is to work by hand and then scan, touch up and finalize in the computer.

BB: How did you meet Giulia Brusco, who colors *Scalped*?

RMG: Thank you for asking this, as she really deserves credit and recognition. The coloring on *Scalped* needed a change, and she was my choice. Will Dennis, my DC editor—first class man—sent me to see her samples. For me, it was an instant yes the minute I saw her samples. With time—eleven issues with me, some 15 on *Scalped*—with her on the palette, I simply can say her work is now a vital part of *Scalped*. She's exceptionally good. I just cannot imagine somebody else doing it. I'm serious. Her speed in capturing the essence of *Scalped* is simply awesome.

Such an open collaborator is priceless, really. One week ago I saw the freshly done issue #21 and was blown away, if nothing else, by her intelligence. She understood everything, even my smallest aims, and then she added hers. I am not the easiest artist to color. I know that. But she knows how to underplay, adding that small cherry on top. Just... wow. Simply put, she's one of the most talented colorists in the entire market today, and her best is still to come.

BB: You used to work on storyboards for animation, too?

RMG: Yes, pretty intensely for four years. I did a lot—20 movies to be exact—but finally left it. Nice experience, met really wonderful people, especially Jorgen Lerdam and Therese Sachse from a movie called *A-Film*. Also, it was nice pay at the time, but it was sometimes insane. My personal record is 204 pages of storyboards in one month... insane.

BB: Did you do any storyboards for live-action movies?

RMG: No, but I'll check that out the first chance I get. The idea of it challenges me.

(this page and next) Watercolor paintings for the covers of *Hidamari no KI* #4 and #6.


F.M. QUÉRA

(left) Illustration for "Smoky Joe's 1000 Blues," which appeared in *Heavy Metal*.
(above) Guéra applying white gouache to the page after the inks have been laid down.

BB: Why did you decide to end your music career?

RMG: It became physically impossible to do both. It was either leave music or start using chemicals. The second option was out of question.

BB: Is it actually over, or just "on hold"?

RMG: I rarely go out to play clubs now, which I did for years after leaving it actively. But I do play at home maybe an hour each day. It's like drinking fresh water. I recommend it; it's really useful, like if I went out on a mountain and back for an hour. It clears the head, levels the emotions. I can't say I've left it for good, but I don't think anything big is going to happen. I played as a guest on a few CDs, and I suppose I'll play live on special occasions.

BB: Do you consider yourself a guitar collector?

RMG: No, no. I'm not capable of real collecting. First, you need a lot of money and free time for maintenance. Second, quantity strangles me, really. All the guitars I have sound different, and before purchasing them they each said something to me—which was the point of having them. Three months ago, I got a beautiful Paul Reed Smith, but I think I'll sell one Les Paul now—just to level. If I have too many and don't actually play them, somehow I don't feel right. Instruments are supposed to be played, aren't they? Also, every instrument needs time to come to life, dedication to discover its "real sound." Each has its special sweet spots when it starts coming to life, and suddenly you see its real face. So if you have 50 or 100 guitars, who's gonna do this for them? No, they're sad instruments. I don't like that.

BB: How many guitars do you own?

RMG: Two Gibsons, two Fenders—actually one is JV Strat from '84, a rare bird and wonderful to play—a PRS 24 Standard, and a Yairi acoustic—a beautiful sounding instrument—along with a few old amps, a mandolin and a six-string banjo.

BB: May I assume that you have composed at least some of the tunes you've performed on stage?

(left) A loose freehand painting. (above) Artwork for the *Final Conquest* video game.

RMG: No, I'm just a guest. A friend, really. They like my playing, that's all. There is a lot of material left to be finished from my active years. Lots of demos, sketches, I've recorded. But that's it for the moment.

BB: Why did you push yourself into becoming a writer-artist?

RMG: I just had something to write about. Stories inside my head were pushing their way out. It started slowly, but firmly, and once it's in your pulse, then it's just a question of time. It must come out. I haven't done much, but I'm pretty okay with what's been done. Let's say that I'm too close to my scripts to be impressed, but it could be said I'm kind of fulfilled, satisfied. But I am drawing other writers' scripts also, gladly.

BB: You're happy collaborating with writers?

RMG: Yes, especially with Jason Aaron. Other people's scripts can be a nice challenge. They come with other sensibilities, peculiarities, which can be very interesting to do. Other people choose different elements to explain the same point, so it is just plain interesting to play an important part with those stories, because it is always good to try to understand different points of view, to support them emotionally and to choose the right elements to show. The truth is, I like both. If nothing else, I'm really allowed to tell my story through theirs. There is always a story to tell, in both cases.

Jason constantly keeps impressing me. Over and over again, his material is so good, and he works hard to add depth to the script, which consequently is such a push for my art. I really feel I'm part of a compact team with him. It never crosses my mind if his writing could be better or worse, or even "mine," it just is. I believe in this team as a whole. So, it's good times all over.

BB: Are you an illustrator of the scripts given to you, or a creative storytelling partner?

RMG: Well, I think the proper, or fair, answer should come from the people I work with.

BB: How do you remember the comics scene in our homeland, which is no more, Yugoslavia?

RMG: It was bitter as a whole, and sweet individually. Bitter because it was a land of wasted talent. Sweet because it was my home.

The economic boom never happened, although at one point it looked like it was bound to. In fact, it was just our fathers living better because the state got big credits. Without them, it was almost impossible to actually live and prosper based on your talent and the purity of its execution, because nobody took it as such. We were the real stuff, and they didn't know how to deal with this fact.

BB: Yeah, I remember some editors telling us that there was nothing to do or look for at home or abroad, for they knew it all. They travelled and went to bookfairs and comic cons all over.

RMG: They neither knew how to value it, nor how to make money on it, but they acted as if they did, imitating what they thought was done in the successful comic scenes of other countries. There were no real motifs, no real ideas in them, therefore there was no future. Kitsch actually is the right word. The problem was their mediocrity. It's a tough thing to say, I know, but it is as simple as that.

But it defines me today. I evolved there. It's where I met [Zeljko] Pahek, a genius in flesh—my name for people who change things for the better, usually with, but as well as without

aiming to. Understanding what he was doing caused deep changes within me. My friendship with him; with Milan Ilich,an outstandingly talented guy, successfully working in Austria; and [Dragan] Savich, who unfortunately never got to show the real brilliance of his talent, was totally opposite from this kitsch going on all around. I was in a deep crisis after leaving my band and music in general, and was far from being good company to anybody, but this little group was a place to hide—literally an oasis. It was where you could do the two absolutely healthiest things possible in those circumstances: have a deep thought and a good laugh. Very often at the same time.

BB: When exactly did you emigrate from Yugoslavia, and why did you move to Barcelona, Spain?

RMG: It was September of '91, and it was due to professional circumstances plus my personal refusal to be given a rifle. There was a [civil] war going on, so bye-bye.

I had already visited a few publishers in Milan, Italy, asking there about flats, rents, and so on. Barcelona was actually my wife's choice—at the time she was my girlfriend. I was going to be drafted any day, and my initial choice was to go to Budapest, Hungary, and lay low there for a few months, 'til this general craze went away. The craze lasted for ten years, by the way. My wife wisely advised and pressed me not to do that, but instead to accept a generous invitation from two friends to join them in Barcelona—one of the friends being Darko Perovich, an excellent and fairly well known Serbian artist. He had some kind of work with Enrique Abulí, the writer of *Torpedo 1936*, and he figured it would be better to be there and not be alone. It was the better idea, because Barcelona looked like a town where serious editorials existed. It was also out of curiosity, and once we decided, it was only matter of hours before we caught a plane.

Page 18 of Scalped #4. This page changed drastically from the quickly inked layout to the finished inks.

BB: How long did it take for you to settle in and become noticed there?

RMG: It was a seriously tough time, I can tell you that. Abulí was really friendly and helpful at the beginning, and presented us to a few publishers, but that was as far as he could go. And on my second meeting with *Norma* editorial, I crossed horns irreversibly with its director, Rafa Martinez—a wise thing to do, wasn't it? [*laughs*] So we went to Josep Toutain, where I knew it would be essential to make a definite contact—or we'd be on the street, literally. He had been managing other artists, pretty big names—Rich Corben, Victor De La Fuente—and he understood right away what was necessary. Gaining Spanish ID was now possible, but my God, his payments were less than miserable. It was literally starvation time—as clear as the word says.

That lasted a year and a half, close to two years. It seemed much longer, though. The most noted work I did at that time was "A Killer Like You and Me," a short story serialized in five parts with Óscar Aibar, who's now a movie director, on script.

Opinions about it were generous, really, with those few I met from the comic world. I felt respected, but basically everybody felt a bit sorry. You could feel it, because there was a tremendous comic crisis going on. Magazines were dying all around, and albums were losing money on a large scale. Only a few pros could say that they lived in Spain working exclusively on comics. Even Abulí had his translation gigs on the side. At comic cons, Spanish editors were trying to avoid your eyes, knowing they could offer you almost nothing. It was simply terrible to read that names like Carlos Gimenez were without work. I simply couldn't believe it. The only hope was in France, but I didn't even have the money to survive while preparing a project, y'know, something to go there with. In fact, there was no money even for the trip.

So I was almost exclusively working for Toutain on a few magazines and living in hell. I played a lot in clubs with a band in order to survive. Then I made a decision and went to a design studio and got work there for the next five years—it was publicity stuff: museums, banks, Honda, posters, illustrations, publicity-comics, etc. Slowly it brought back the feel of normal life again.

BB: How and why did you get the ambition to branch out and start drawing for Italian and French publishers?

RMG: In Italy it was pretty much the same as in Spain. Truth be told, I only contacted Bonelli, whom I gave up on after a month. They sounded willing, but really unclear. It seemed to me that you simply wouldn't be able to control much about your career there. What's been published there in the last few years was through Glénat, my French editor, and a few months ago I think *Scalped* started with the first TPB, also. Although they try to act and sound differently, I doubt that in Italy it really matters how good you are.

The French work came out of the blue at just the right time. The moment was simply perfect, as I was fed up with not doing comics. I still don't know who gave my phone number to Csaba Kopeczky, my actual French agent, but one Sunday morning some six years ago, maybe more, he phoned me and the whole thing started. I had accumulated material to offer, and pretty soon I was invited to Angouleme Comic Fair. I met people from Glénat there, but I was really ready. I came with five separate projects, each with a plot, chapter plan, some script pages, character sketches, and even a page or two done already. *Smoky Joe* had some 20 pages done. I took them by surprise a bit, so looking back now, it was impossible to come back home without a contract. Now I'm doing my third album of *Le lievre de Mars*, the tenth book of the serial—the art before was done by Antonio Parras—with Patrick Cothias on script, and the second album of my own serial, *Howard Blake*.

BB: Then came the work for DC and *Scalped*. How did that come about?

RMG: That was kismet all along. I just called Igor Kordey to ask for advice and help on the American scene and how to break in, and he was simply incredible. Priceless experience this man has. He gave me the right advice, used the right words,

Guéra's two sample pages of Books of Magic done specifially to show Vertigo editor Will Dennis what he had to offer.

cared about the right things. Wonderful person, and one of most high-quality pros I ever met. He immediately connected me to his friend Alex De Campi—Igor is doing *Smoke* with her on script—and she was also very helpful, open and direct.

So I e-mailed some boards and illustrations to important addresses in the US, got some replies back, but stuck with Vertigo's Will Dennis. Will simply felt right from the first word he wrote. Igor and Alex both knew I'd connect with him best, and said something like, "He's your man. He's like you," or something similar, and he really is. He's a very good pro and a good person in one—just perfect, the whole deal. It was he who called the whole thing kismet, and I agree.

He asked what I'd want to do, then I did about two pages of *Books of Magic* for him, on my own, as a courtesy, just to try to show what my Vertigo style would look like. Instead of jumping onto a known series, I chose to try something modest instead. As Will really has some special sense—I'm totally convinced of it now—the very first synopsis he offered was *Scalped*, and for me that was it. Done. "Let's work."

The whole process lasted six or seven e-mails—two months at most. That was all. Oh, yes, I also did one page—one only—based on a written *Scalped* synopsis for Jason to see, and nobody asked for more. Perfect fit, we roll. I started on the character sketches.

BB: Do you have any inclination towards trying super-heroes for DC or another publisher?

RMG: Yes. I must say that the script is the most important thing, but, yes, I would like to leave some trace there.

BB: Why?

RMG: With time I discovered the power of interpretation, the real challenge of it at all levels, and the key point: storytelling. I'm confident that once I believe in the super-hero personally I'll do a good job on it and it'll be worthwhile reading. The only thing that I dislike with super-heroes is that there are so many of them. Just too many, anybody can see that. *Any* genre if used so much loses its edge, loses its dynamic relevance. So it becomes material for a younger and younger audience. It becomes more like a treatment than a story, y'know?

For me, the natural next step for the super-hero story was *Akira*, and not one more muscled, costumed jumper. Don't get me wrong, I think that each artist for himself could, or should, create their own super-hero. It really would be nice to see this, but the problem is in developing the characters. The whole idea of super-heroes needs a relevant reason within their world, not more melodramatic clichés for super-abilities, no matter how super they are, as they become

irrelevant because of the feeling of, "It's already been done." They need an identity, but a real one. I admire that, for example, Batman reached some kind of attitude reference, enabling any of us to leave a personal comment on his world. We can make it ours because it's clear what it is, motives are achieved. Just look at Bruce Timm's work; I've got a soft spot for him, there. *Watchmen* also made good points about the whole thing. In that vein, Shyamalan's movie *Unbreakable* was a worthy try, also.

BB: How do you view the contemporary differences between European and American approaches to comics?

RMG: I think they're closer than ever. Not only in my case. But, truth be told, I really don't think I'm representative enough for questions like this one. To me, schools, approaches, styles—it'll always depend on a few guys that'll make some story unbelievably believable. That's all. Stories that are good to read, exciting to watch. To me it's about them, these guys. It's not their backgrounds, it's what they took from them.

BB: What is your stance regarding manga? It's quite popular in Spain.

RMG: Well, it's always good to have freshness attacking established values, as it always, always pays off in the long run. I admire some of them: Hisashi Sakaguchi's *Ikkyu*, for example, is really good. I did eight covers for Osamu Tezuka's *Hidamari no Ki* and was caught in the net while reading it. It's so simple and so addictive. They have a different sensibility.

Manga's more or less sudden mass-quantity attack on the market made a bit of a mess all over. It lowered standards all around. All those "schools" and "how-to" books made some kids unable to draw outside of that box anymore, which is a sad thing when you look at them now. Lots of them are helpless, especially in Spain; people can be pretty passionate about something you see will not work in the long run.

But there is quality work that shouldn't be overlooked—the work of people like Miyazaki. *Porco Rosso* had my mouth hanging open. Otomo is absolutely nothing less than amazing—as simple as that. Being familiar with it or not shouldn't matter to an honest reader.

BB: Are you happy with digital lettering?

RMG: Well, I still am getting used to it, after some 20 issues of *Scalped*, which should speak for itself.

BB: Lettering is still an integral, organic part of the artwork in European comics. How do you cope with "mute" pages for Vertigo.

RMG: The way I see it , I'm clearly on the European side. I really think everybody should do it for themselves, as it does add some kind of rhythm to panels, especially the page as a whole. But one should not forget the differences of the market and the tradition that come with it. So, I learn to accept it and from time to time—especially when deadlines come—boy, I'm grateful it exists. [*laughter*]

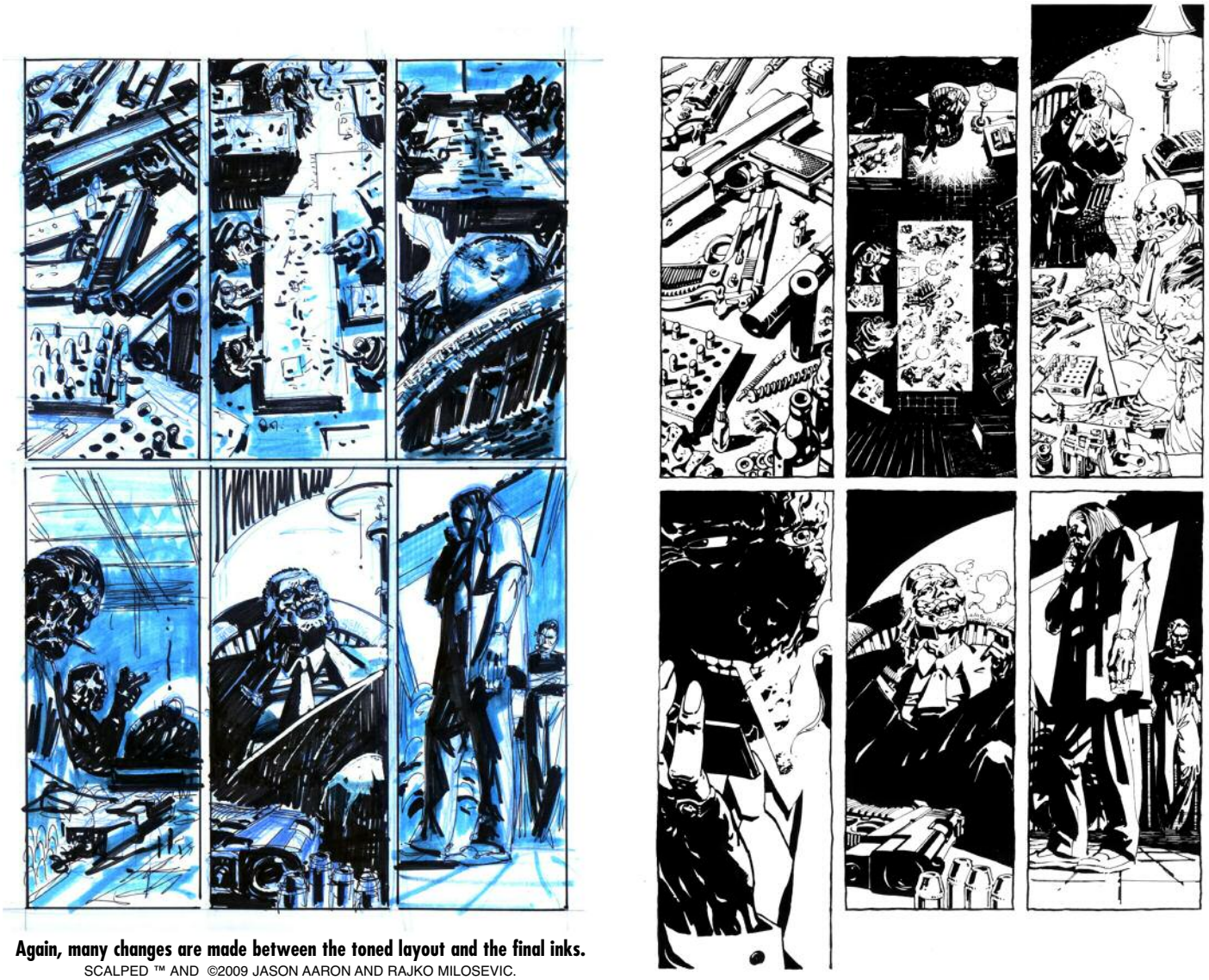
BB: Your lovely wife used to be a professional comics letterer. Did she ever letter your work?

RMG: She did, but some 18 years ago, when I was preparing works for Italy, and after that... no, curiously enough. It simply didn't happen, although we did speak about it, what font of hers to use, how to execute it, which best applied for my drawing style, what looks most natural.

BB: Are you willing to accept yourself as a comics veteran, or as a seeker of new challenges?

RMG: Second option. Seeker, definitely, and it's not to hide my age. I hate being bored, so if something already done is

Guéra's "pilot" page of Scalped, to show writer Jason Aaron how he saw the series.



Again, many changes are made between the toned layout and the final inks.

going on, I'll invent elements that excite me, but still work inside the plot as the script demands it. For example, Jason wrote that some shoot-out should happen in an abandoned house or flat, which we had in the script. I proposed an old barn instead, and normally he accepts these proposals.

BB: What motivates you to remain in comics?

RMG: I just love to do it. I don't even think about it, nor define it; it's part of my being by now, I suppose. My wife has a nice way of describing it: "No matter where we travel, how high the mountain, how deep the sea, how crowded the place, you'll always find someone to talk with about comics or music." It's pretty accurate.

Maybe a month ago I saw a documentary about the famous Catalan scientist, Jordi Sabater Pi, a primatologist, actually, now very old. He's a very thin, very soft-spoken man, fresh-minded, witty, who got to work with and was pretty close to Diana Fossey some years before her assassination and still is very passionate about gorillas, etc. Really a likable man. By the end of the documentary there was a surprise waiting for me: he's an excellent artist and his drawings are really first class. Mostly watercolors or pastel and pencils, but he's seriously good. I go, "*Yeah*!" This man is really a relief. And during the ending of the documentary, offered as a kind of statement for younger generations, he says that everybody should draw as much as possible, from the earliest age possible! What's more, he thinks drawing classes should be applied to any kind of education and profession, especially early on, no matter the eventual future choice of job. At that stage, my jaw dropped. This man is one of the most famous scientists of all times here in Catalonia. The surprised interviewer asked almost a reflex question: "Why?" He said, and I'll never forget it, "To make a drawing you must carefully observe. If you observe, you start to understand. If you understand, you start to love. And if you love... you'll protect." It blew me away.

BB: Who were or are your artistic influences?

RMG: Okay. Here's a special goodie, simply because you're the one that's asking these questions. This is the first time I've said this to anybody —it's a pretty religious moment for me now. [*laughter*]

There were many, like Moebius, who's the artist of the century as far as I'm concerned. I was simply blown away by him, nothing existed *but* him. I wanted this kind of knowledge desperately. In a way, it was like meeting raw power.

André Franquin, who is maybe the best ever—no one comes even close to his level of charm. The smallest hair drawn by him has this unique sense of movement, and the beauty of it, oh God.

I already mentioned Zeljko Pahek, who showed what being complete means. The importance of being mature in the wild games we play while creating. Noel Sickles, who's the root for all that came during the last 60 years of the 20th century; Jack Davis, who showed me what real freedom and fun is; Giovanni Ticci, who was all about elegance; Chaland, also; Wally Wood with his sensibility in pure estate; Jije, as the first to totally rampage with a brush and yet look so controlled and realistic; Frank Robbins and his greasy, soft, but at the same time tough brush... My God, the list really could be endless.

But there were four artists who "made me" as a child, in an irreversible way. Their names were not an easy find, as their fame is not wide-spread. Respected is what they are, as any father should be, and hopefully they're exotic enough for any reader.

I'll start with the least important to the most important, but all of them were crucial and equally fascinating to me at some point. Each awakened the vital part of what now can be called my personality. This should be made clear.

Jorge Moliterni. Talent that stayed a reference, but with years lost its original edge. He was all about aesthetic beauty, and I think I got to know him at his best, in the late '60s, especially in one issue with Sergeant Ironside as the hero published in *Fleetway Super Library* in '67, titled "Yesterday's Heroes." Simply brilliant. Many years later he worked on the serials *Bob Crockett* and *Watami*, but those were just far echo of his talent.

Alberto Breccia. He really worked a lot all over, and I tend to think that it's not fair people know him best by *Mort Cinder*. For me, he was far better doing stories with more frame limitations to them. He's the first to have shaken all I saw before, because he showed me the beauty of expressiveness, so the expression became beauty. It was a feeling of truth, so to speak. Aesthetic beauty started to pale, because it couldn't reach this depth—especially at the moment you start understanding it; that's when it's at its strongest, open and shameless. Breccia's absolute masterpiece was *Silver Saddle*. I truly think that this particular issue, even by today's criteria—or any other—is a true masterpiece. It's simply head and shoulders above all those published in *Cowboy Picture Library*, and thinking about it, above many, many other publications as well, many years later. It's perhaps the strongest impression of completed deed, achievement, height, in comics that I brought from my childhood.

Ruggero Giovannini. Later he was better known as the artist on the *Olac the Gladiator* serial. His work had a magical beauty of tough, big, massive brush volumes. The beauty of clean strength, like his figures had more life. Although economically executed and on the powerful side—when his figures walk, those steps have weight—somehow, it looked slick and rich and nuanced at the same time. He guided me towards another all-time master, Frank Robbins, and, interestingly, people like Giovanni Ticci and Alessandrini that came after. I understood far better what they were doing because of his work.

Joao Batista Mottini. Absolutely the most important of all. I was drinking him. Literally. I breathed him while walking on the street. My crude talent, my bones, got its connection with the whole skeleton, became articulate, thanks to this man. The prior three artists were some kind of muscle, nerve, shirt, applied on the unshakeable skeleton that I gained thanks to Mottini. I simply lack words to describe this. He felt like family, seeing his work from the first moment, I simply *agreed* with him. It was the most natural thing to me. And many years after I was really numbed and speechless—insulted in a way—that almost nobody I knew—no, not almost—*nobody* knew him. Nobody. But go see for yourself. Just search the Internet. Sadly, there's not much to be found, but I sincerely hope to an eager eye it will be enough. Download *Flame over Missouri* from '60 or '61.

By the way, the very name of the man I owe so much, Mottini, I read for the first time in my life on my computer screen, on August 8, 2008, thanks to the courtesy of Steve Holland (and Jeff Brooks who directed me to him). After some 40 years of waiting, asking, and searching to finally read his name somewhere and to be sure it was his—I really don't know if you can imagine the excitement I felt. Permit me to believe you can't.

BB: Which movies, directors, writers and actors made a permanent mark on you?

RMG: There's no end to this one. Regarding directors, Sam Peckinpah most of all. There's no bottom to that well. What I drank there is now part of my blood. Also, Akira Kurosawa, Michael Mann, Robert Altman, Martin Ritt, John Huston. On the French side, Alain Corneau, one of most impeccable storytellers ever. Also Henri-Georges Clousot; his *Wages of Fear* is one of my all-time favorites. It really would be too long a list, but my taste goes for storytellers mostly. The purer the better. Less for visual masters, although I adore *Duelists*.

Movie script writers are a fantastic breed. I enjoy them a lot. Peoples, Walker, Alan Sharp... McMurtry is an enigma. And as for actors, maybe readers will be surprised, but Clint Eastwood, whom besides being obviously drawable, I kind of dislike as an actor. People miss too often that these are separate things. My actor faves are Walter Brennan and Lily Tomlin, [Serbian prodigal acting genius, the late, great] Bata Stojkovich, Morgan Freeman, people like them. People who have real charm, character and strength inside them. Not toughness, but strength. They can say almost anything, and it'll mean something. Now, that is an actor.

Writers... also endless. I really enjoy literature any moment I have time for it. Joseph Conrad, Joseph Heller, Phillip K. Dick, Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Elmore Leonard, and the Serbian storytelling master, the late Borislav Pekic. I'm totally in awe of the only Serbian Nobel Prize-winner for literature, Ivo Andric. He's not visual, and at first was too technical for me, but with time he grows to a giant. He makes you decide your own attitude, which is maybe most important. And it's like magic—you don't even notice it. Bob Dylan also activates many buttons in me, lots of panels I did are visualizing him, almost directly.

BB: Do you ever consider having someone else ink your pencils?

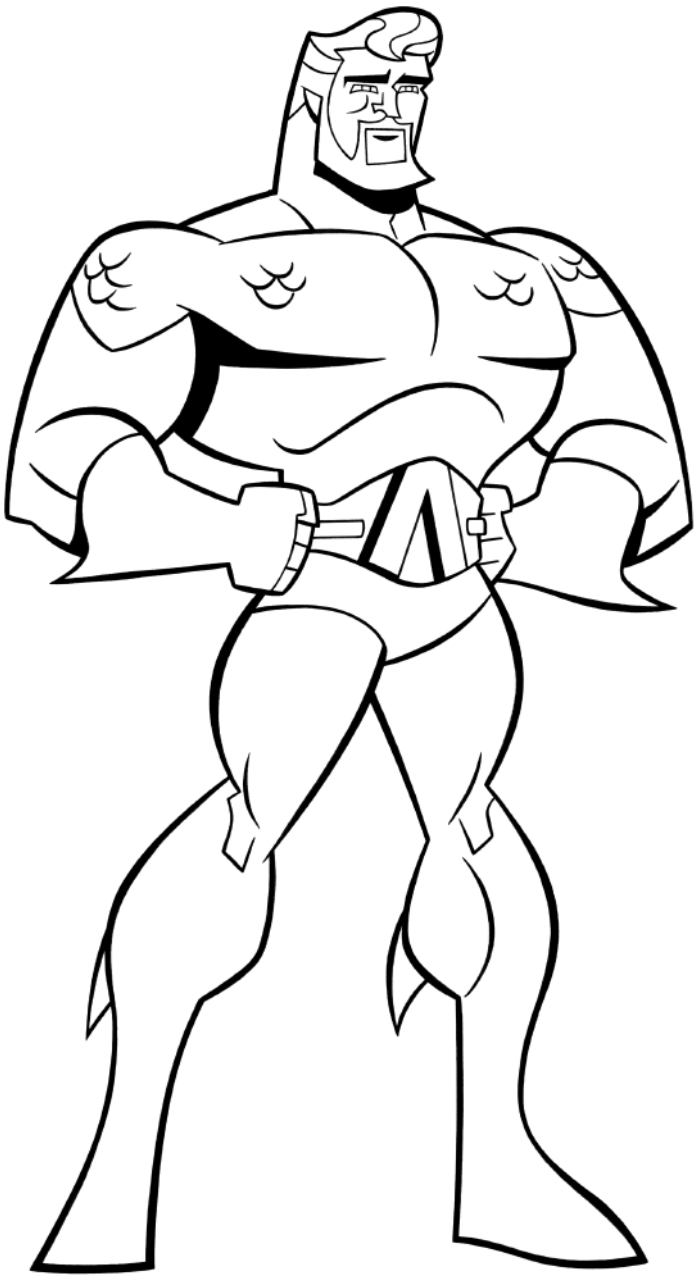
RMG: To be honest, I've never given it a serious thought, but if I do, I'll adapt my attitude to it first. I really never say never, I just try to do things for a reason, that's all.

JAMES TUCKER INTERVIEW CONTINUES FROM PAGE 35

lot of stuff. It'll be like the old days, I think, where we have more than several productions. We're doing four DVDs a year, I think, now. There are three or four series that will soon be on the floor all at one time.

DRAW!: That's a lot of board people.

JT: Yeah. And what I would tell them, specifically speaking from action/adventure, that's the area we are finding we need people. I mean, I could tell everyone, "Oh, yeah, you need to know figure drawing." But when we get portfolios, we need them geared to us specifically rather than the general kind of portfolios they give you in school, when they train you in school.



Inked production art of Aquaman showing the thicker outline look of the show.
AQUAMAN ™ AND ©2009 DC COMICS

DRAW!: The pictures of them drawing just some old lady shopping or something like that.

JT: Right. The thing is, yeah, there's the school thing where they give you three months to do one thing that normally you would get three days to do here. It's so hard, because I really didn't take a conventional route to get here at all. The only thing I had was the desire to do it and the willingness to make the sacrifices as far as moving. Everything, to get where I am, took saying, "Okay, I just have to get up and move. I have to leave stuff. I have to go out of my comfort zone and take a shot."

I don't know. Good drawing skills are always important, and I find a lot of people don't really know how to draw, particularly in these days, with computers and stuff. I'm finding a lot of portfolios where people are hiding their deficient drawing skills under a lot of Photoshop filters. When I look at a portfolio, I don't look at color stuff; I don't look at any of that stuff that looks finished and clean and slick. I look at what their raw drawing looks like, because that will tell me how they think, how the connection from the brain to their pencil, what happens between those things. That's, to me, the most important thing.

I've been swayed by really slick-looking portfolios, and then you actually hire the person and you don't get that if they can't put a filter over it or a blur panel or whatever. No matter what division you're going into—I don't care if you're doing CGI—people really need to know, at least producers like me, people who come from the artistic end and not so much the digital end, how you think. Where is your creativity coming from? How do you problem-solve? And a lot of these portfolios coming through are so finished and so slick, it's like getting the complete ad campaign without knowing the process that gets you to that final piece. So I really don't base anything, when I go through portfolios, on finished stuff at all.

DRAW!: Would you suggest that they do storyboard type segments?

JT: When I got my job at StarToons, I said, "Let me design a character that I think would fit in this show." That's the other thing is that there are a lot of shows to choose from, but if you really want a job, you really have to tailor your portfolio toward that job. In my case, I wanted to work with Bruce Timm, so I tailored my portfolio toward what I thought he would need. I was very specific. I wanted to work on that show with him, so I made sure that I at least did something that could speak to him, specifically. I'm not saying I did a bunch of Batman drawings, which is the worst way to get a job. He already drew Batman. On *Brave and the Bold*, I've already designed Batman. I don't need him designed. I need these other incidental characters, so draw those guys in the style of the show.

And be sensible, too. I mean, I can go back and do a *Pinky and the Brain* type show now if I had to. I probably don't want to, but I would, and who knows? Maybe down the line I would. But having that influence, being able to do a lot of different things will help... I'm all over the map, here, but you know what I'm saying.

DRAW!: Well, no, the reason I ask you this is I teach a storyboarding class. I'm saying the same things that you say, but I can say something, and sometimes, as a teacher, the student

Rough design for Gorilla Grodd from the first season of *Batman: The Brave and the Bold.*

will think, "Yeah, whatever." But when they hear it from the person who's actually doing it every day...

JT: Right. The basic things, like storyboarding, most studios will give out their drawing board test, which means they'll give you three or four pages of script pages and you'll do a rough panel from the board. Boarding is something that's hard to just jump into without knowing... I mean, some people can, and I've hired people who probably never had any animation experience, never designed a character or anything. But have a good knowledge of cinema. Know how to move the camera around. Know when not to move the camera around. Being able to break dialogue up appropriately is a very important thing. You can't break a scene up in the middle of a line. If someone's saying something, you don't want to cut. If there's space allotted for it, if there's a pause—if there's dialogue, dialogue, dot-dot-dot, well, on the dot-dot-dot you can change. But the common mistake I see is people cutting in the middle of a line. And another thing is, having animated, if I read a line of dialogue, I can visualize how long that scene is going to be, but a lot of times people don't know that a sentence is very short, and that if you cut in the middle of that sentence, sometimes you don't have enough footage. You end up with two choppy scenes rather than one solid scene.

DRAW!: Right, and then the viewer becomes a little disjointed when they watch that.

JT: Yeah, too much cutting in inappropriate places is a problem. Just pacing. That's the big thing with board guys. And, again, if you watch a good, old movie...

DRAW!: [*whiny voice*] Oh, a black-and-white movie? Maaaannn...

JT: If they're watching *Transformers* or something like that, to me that's still a bad—

DRAW!: That'll just give you a headache. [*laughs*]

JT: Right, and that's the thing. There are all kinds of new ways to tell a story, but I think you should have the basic skills, the basic foundation. So, again, I'd stress strong drawings, especially for boarding. Be selective about your cuts. Don't cut a lot. It really helps to animate, but if you don't have that, watch animation. For super-hero animation, I guess live-action is better as a reference point for staging how to set up a scene.

DRAW!: What about acting? Your acting is one of the things I always like on your boards. You always have those nice counter arcs and things like that, and you know how to goose the key pose so that it will actually help the animator. You basically give him his key frames.

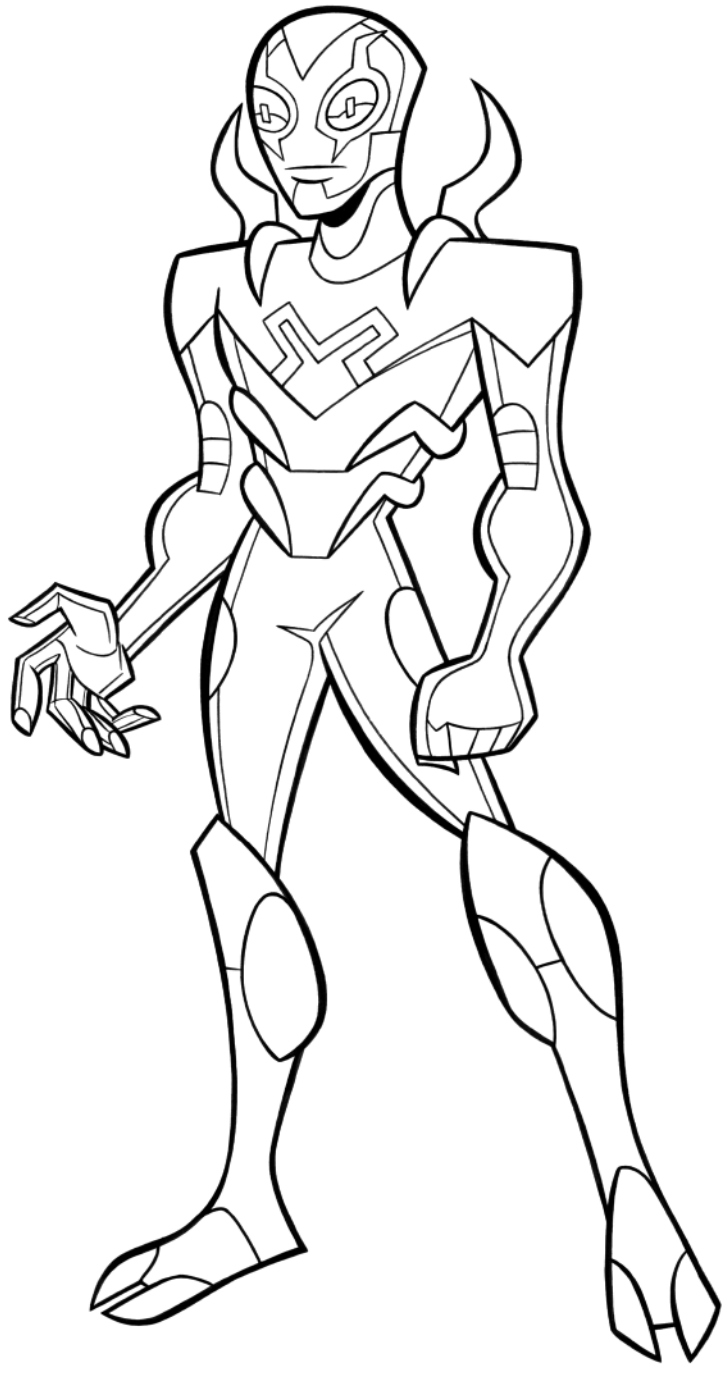
JT: Yeah. Well, again, having animated, I've worked in key frames. The only reason animation looks good is when you're hitting the key frames. The in-betweens don't count. You have to make sure you have those strong poses that people can animate into and out of, into the next strong pose. What I find these days is a lot of storyboard guys are good at choreography, meaning they know how to draw the body doing flips and jumping through stuff and around, but when the character is held, their faces suddenly go dead. There's nothing going on acting-wise. Maybe I got that from doing the funny animal stuff.

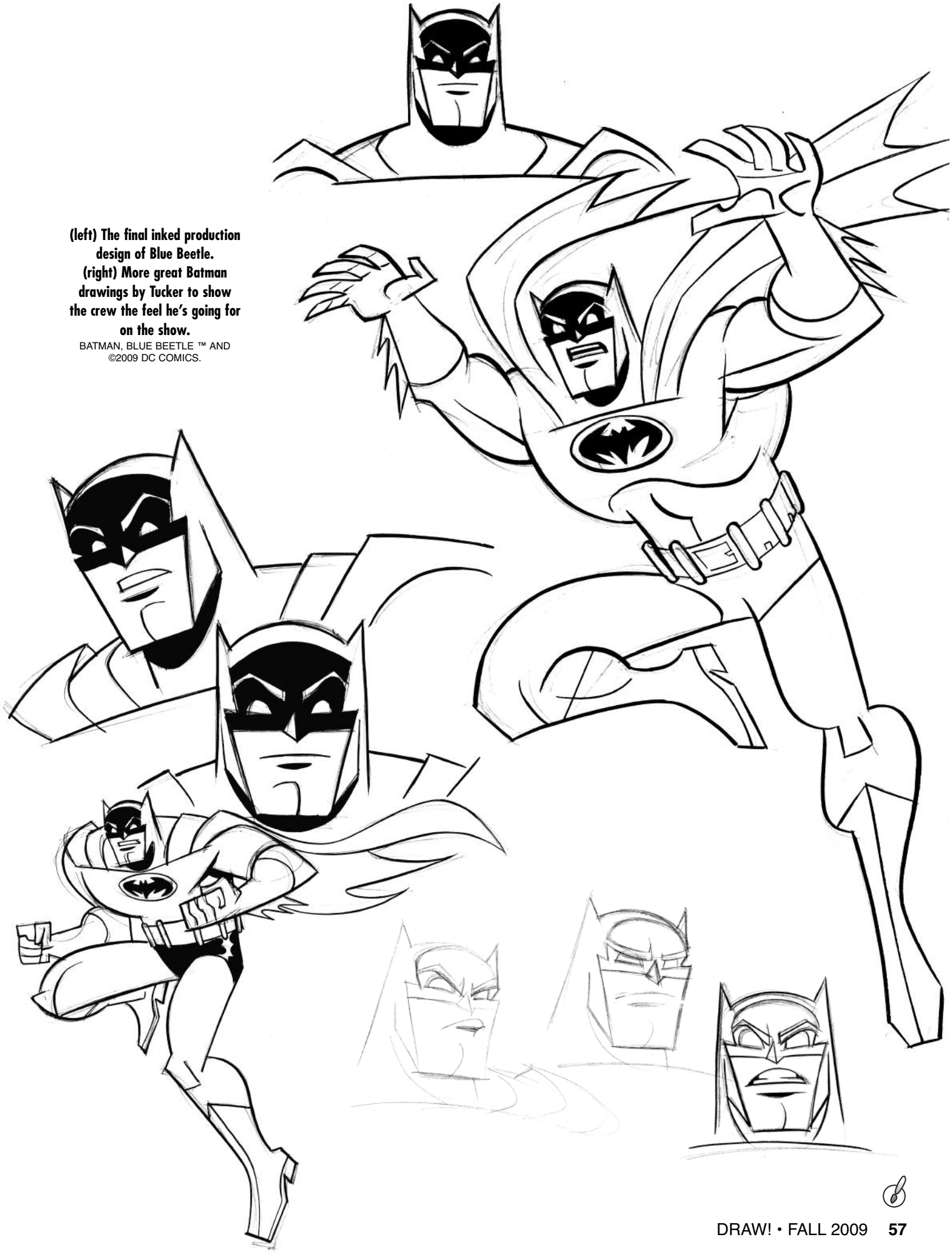
DRAW!: The other thing is, when the drawing goes dead and doesn't move, it's dead.

JT: Right, it's dead. And there's such a thing with more realistic animation, you don't want to go too far, but you do need to give them at least an extended pose that they can draw into just to push it. The other thing is, anytime you send something overseas, it's going to be lessened by ten percent, so you kind of have to overcompensate for that, because they tend to knock it back. It's going through a whole...

DRAW!: Purification.

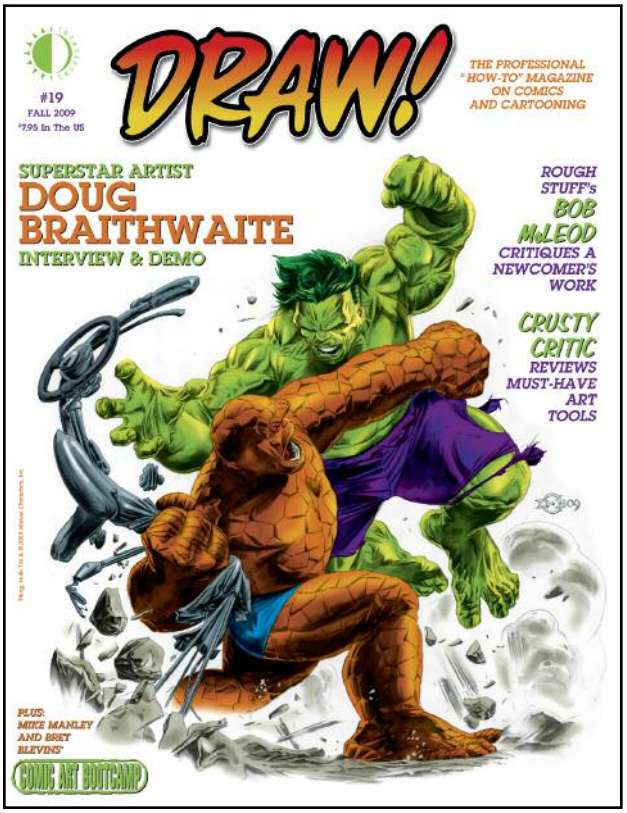
JT: Yeah, it gets distilled, and the edges get rubbed off of it.





(left) The final inked production design of Blue Beetle. (right) More great Batman drawings by Tucker to show the crew the feel he's going for on the show.

NEXT ISSUE: DRAW! #19



NEXT ISSUE'S COVER BY DOUG BRAITHWAITE

DRAW! #19 goes behind the scenes into the studio of DOUG BRAITHWAITE (_Earth X_, _Secret Invasion: Thor_, _The Punisher_, _Justice_, and _The Brave and the Bold_), one of the top realistic artists working in comics today, for a demo and interview.

Beginning this issue, we welcome pro inker BOB MCLEOD to _DRAW!_, as he presents a "Rough Critique" of a newcomer's work. Also, JAMAR NICHOLAS returns with "The Crusty Critic" column to give you the low-down on the best art supplies and tool tech. Plus, another installment of "Comic Art Bootcamp" by BRET BLEVINS and MIKE MANLEY, and much more! Edited by Mike Manley.

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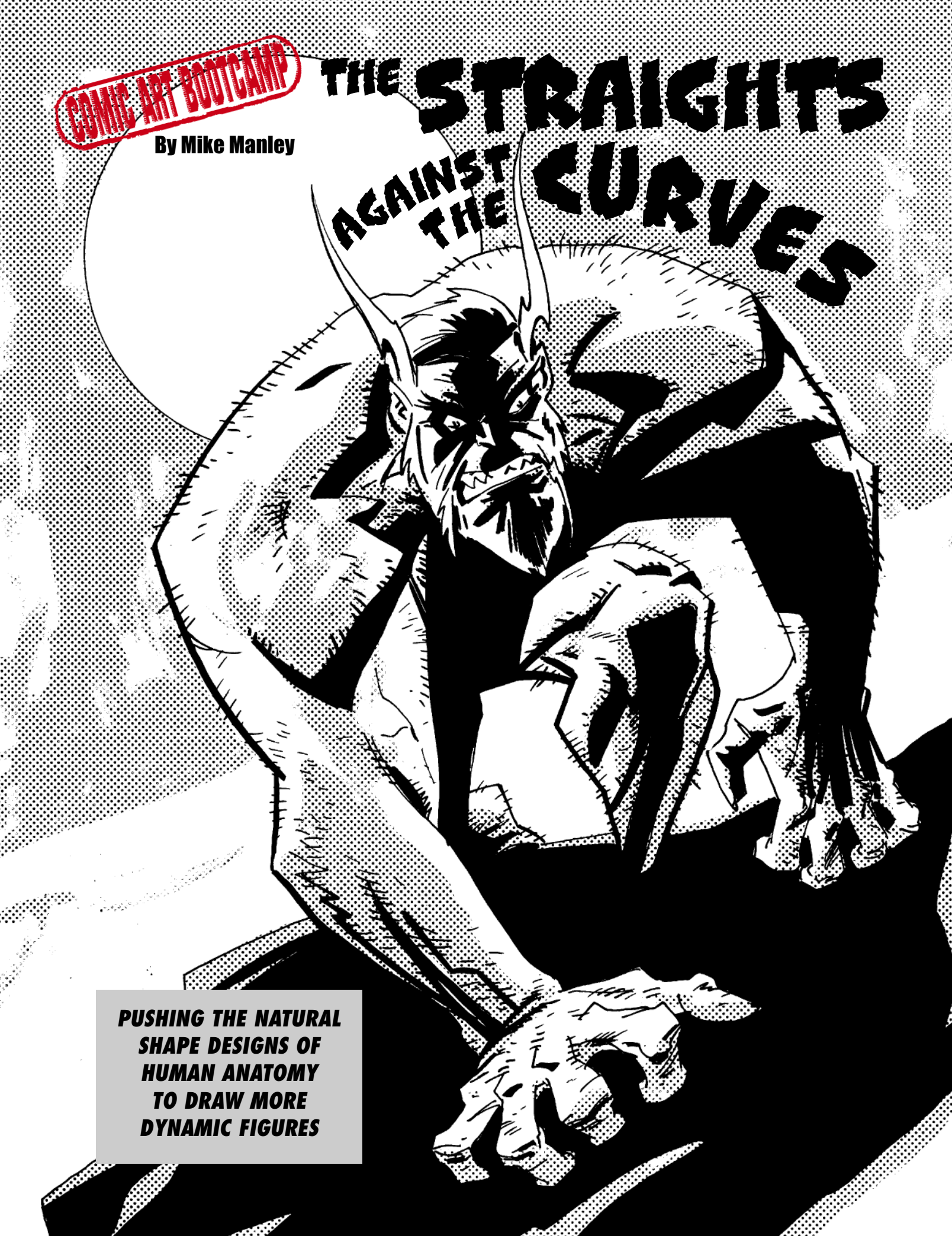
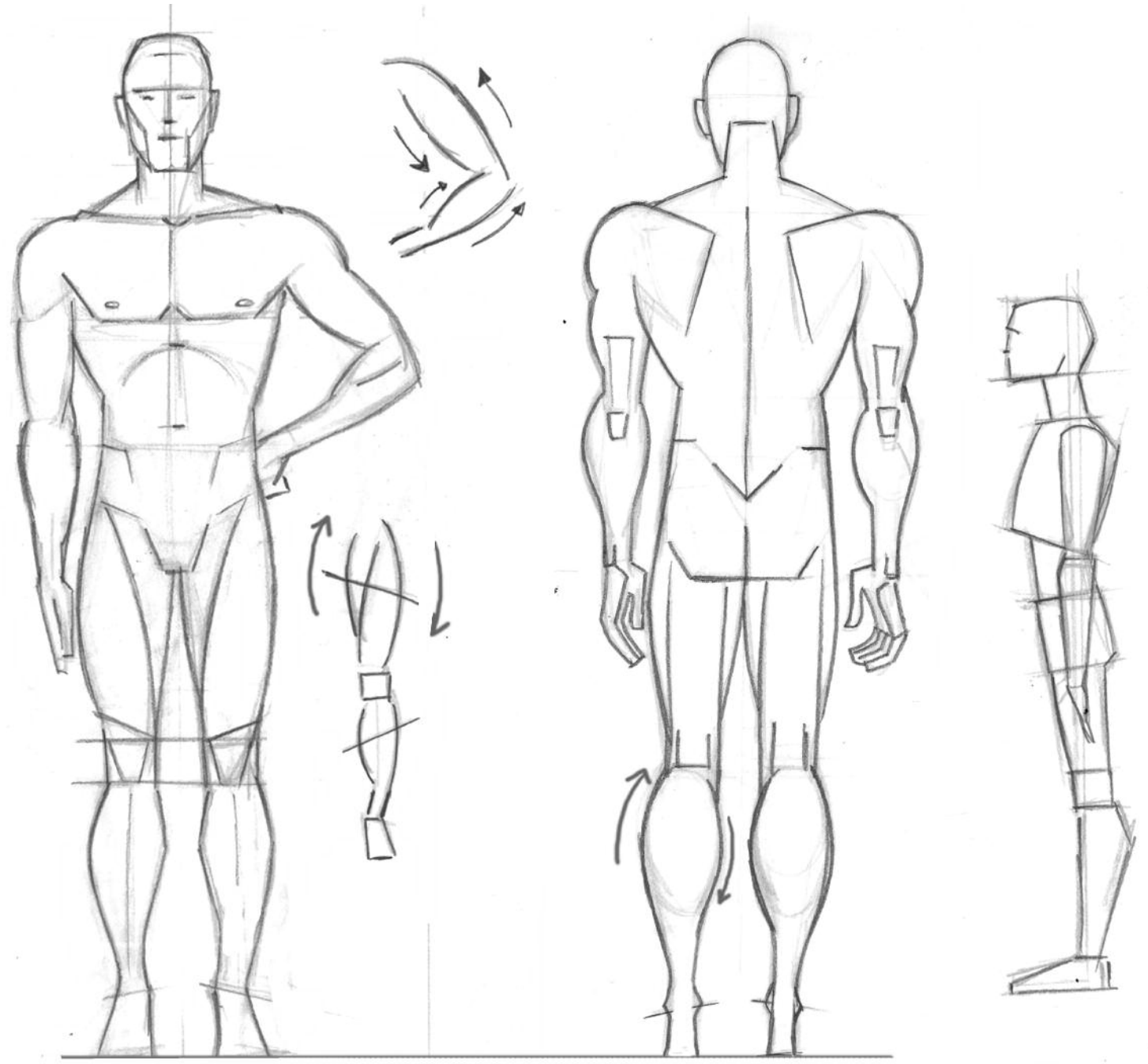
COMIC ART BOOTCAMP

THE STRAIGHTS AGAINST THE CURVES

By Mike Manley



PUSHING THE NATURAL SHAPE DESIGNS OF HUMAN ANATOMY TO DRAW MORE DYNAMIC FIGURES

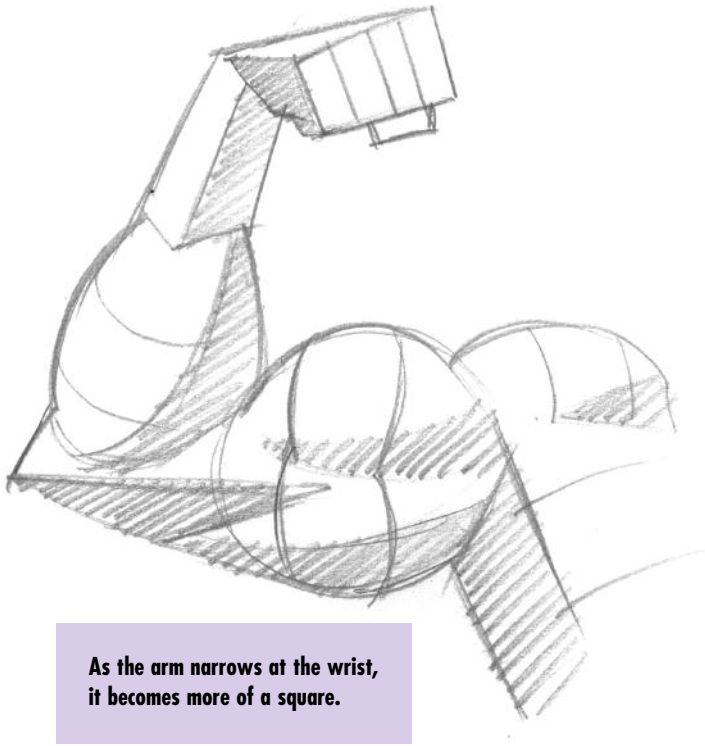


In this chapter of "Bootcamp," we are going to wrestle with figures. More specifically, you will learn to take advantage of the natural flow and design of shapes inherent in the body and how to emphasize them to make your figures more appealing and dynamic, be they realistic or cartoony in style.

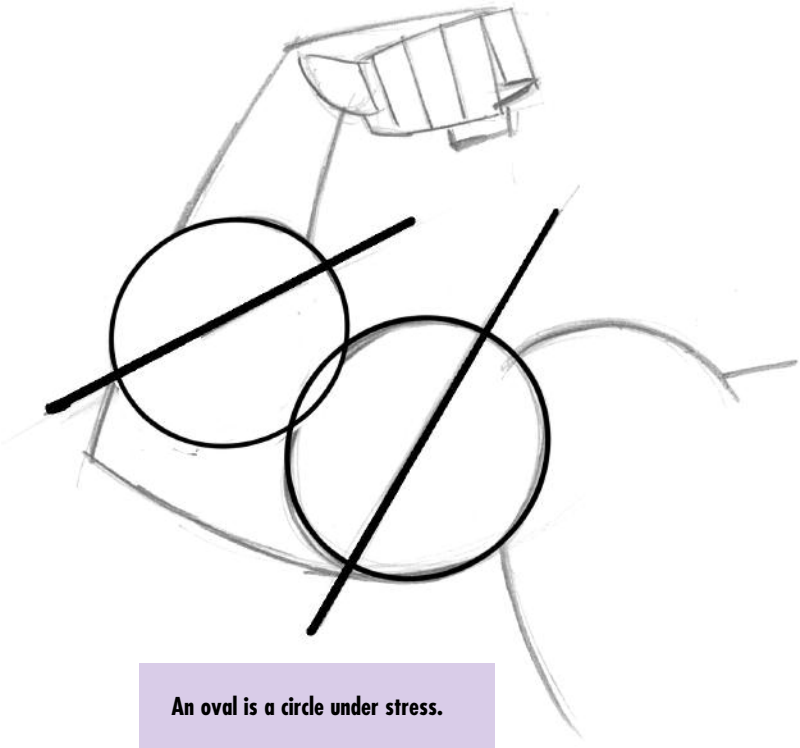
Great figure drawing is still, for most, the hallmark used to judge a good artist by. It makes the top-tier artists stand out from the crowd in comics, animation, illustration and fantasy art. The ability to command the figure—to place it in repose or dynamic action, in complex compositions; to give the figure power, weight and grace—is essential. After all, great figure drawing is the bread and butter of comics, fantasy art, and animation.

In previous issues of *DRAW!* we have talked about drawing dynamic figures, starting with good, strong lines of action and clear posing, and we have covered drawing hands and feet, as well—two difficult subjects for artists to master. In those articles we talked about specific anatomy issues. In this chapter we will be touching on anatomy and how it is comprised of and creates a series of dynamic core shapes of ovals and squares. By learning these design principles, how they are created and work together—essentially the shapes muscle and bones create on the body—we can use them to enhance the design and dynamics inherent in the human body and to push our drawings to more dynamic and interesting heights, no matter the style.

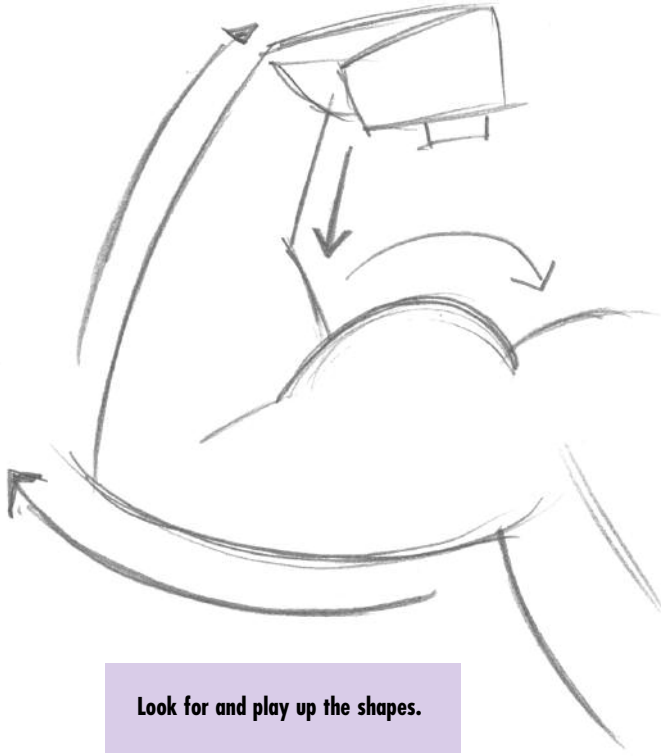
When we draw a figure, we are building it up like a sculptor or an architect. We start with the big gestures, the big shapes, and then work toward the smaller details. You should be able to hold the figure in your mind, like a virtual sculptor. Feel the figure as a sculptor would. Try to feel the figure you are drawing in your own body. Connecting your mind and hand to this figure you are imagining in your mind will help you give the figure more dimension on the paper's flat surface.



As the arm narrows at the wrist, it becomes more of a square.



An oval is a circle under stress.



Look for and play up the shapes.

The first thing we are looking for and start with are the big lines of action/energy/acting—motion—that are in the pose we are drawing. These action lines usually have a shape, an arc. Sometimes they almost look like an "S" or an "X" or even a hieroglyphic.

In every pose there is usually one major line of action running through the body along the spine and down through the pelvis and the legs. Next, there is the tilt of the shoulders and pelvis, and it's the twist and turn of these against each other that gives the figure its torsion and pushes the muscles into flexing along the skeleton. This starts to create shapes or push the shapes as certain muscles flex and others relax.

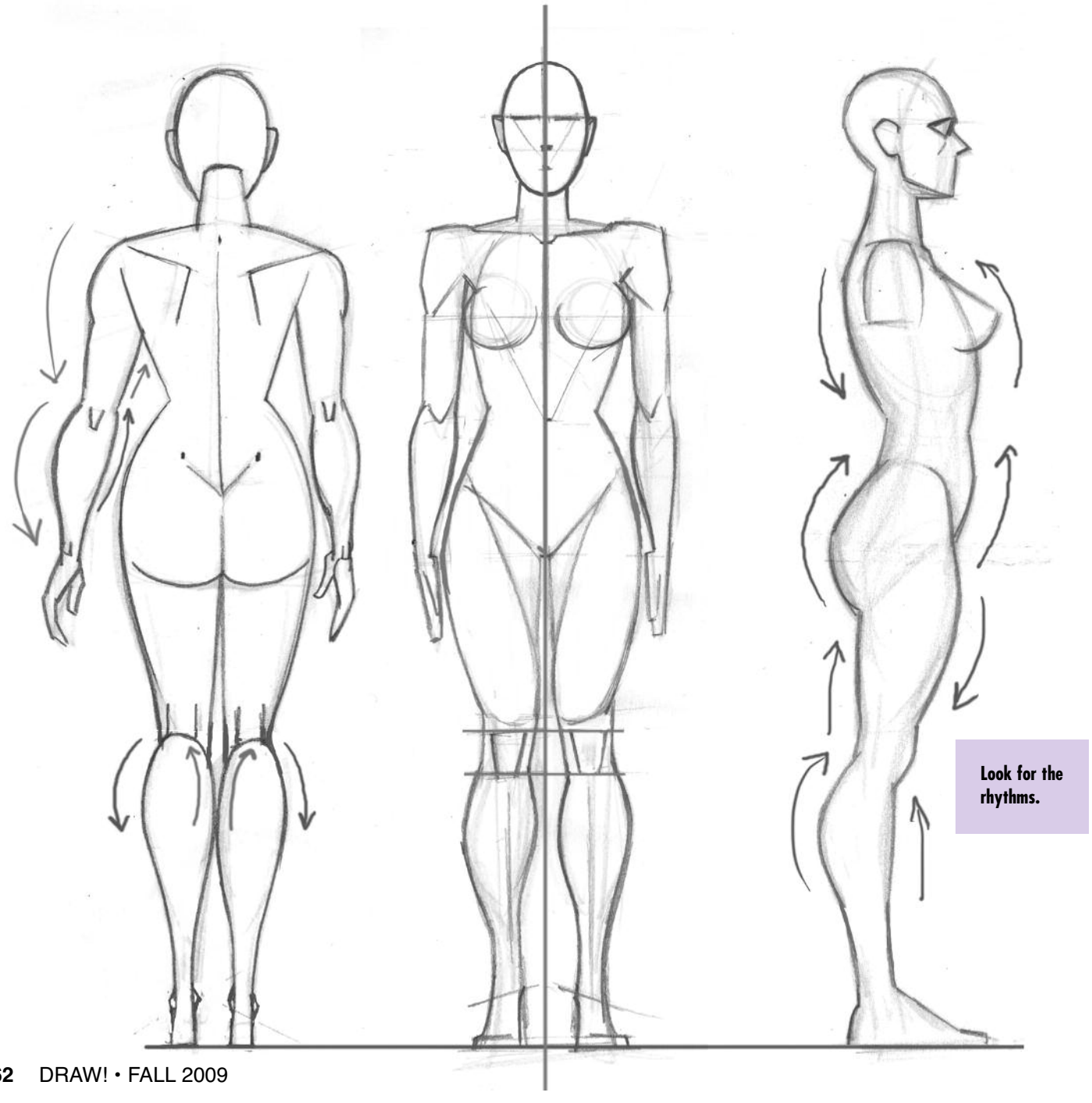
The flexing of the arm creates shape when the biceps is contracted or flexed. As the biceps flexes it creates a shape in contraction, and the triceps on the bottom creates a counter-shape. So we have an interesting arc and counter-arc—a flow of

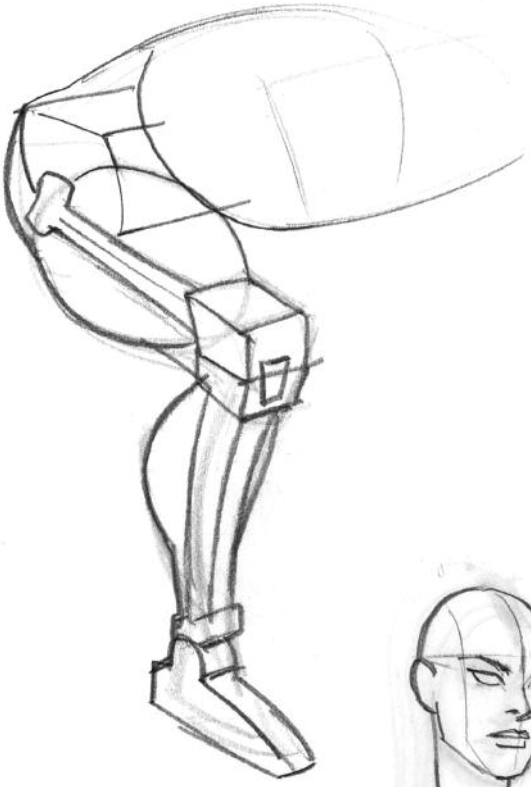
opposing shapes. In learning the anatomy of the arm and then deciding how much you want to enhance or play up this shape design, you can really create a very dynamic drawing.

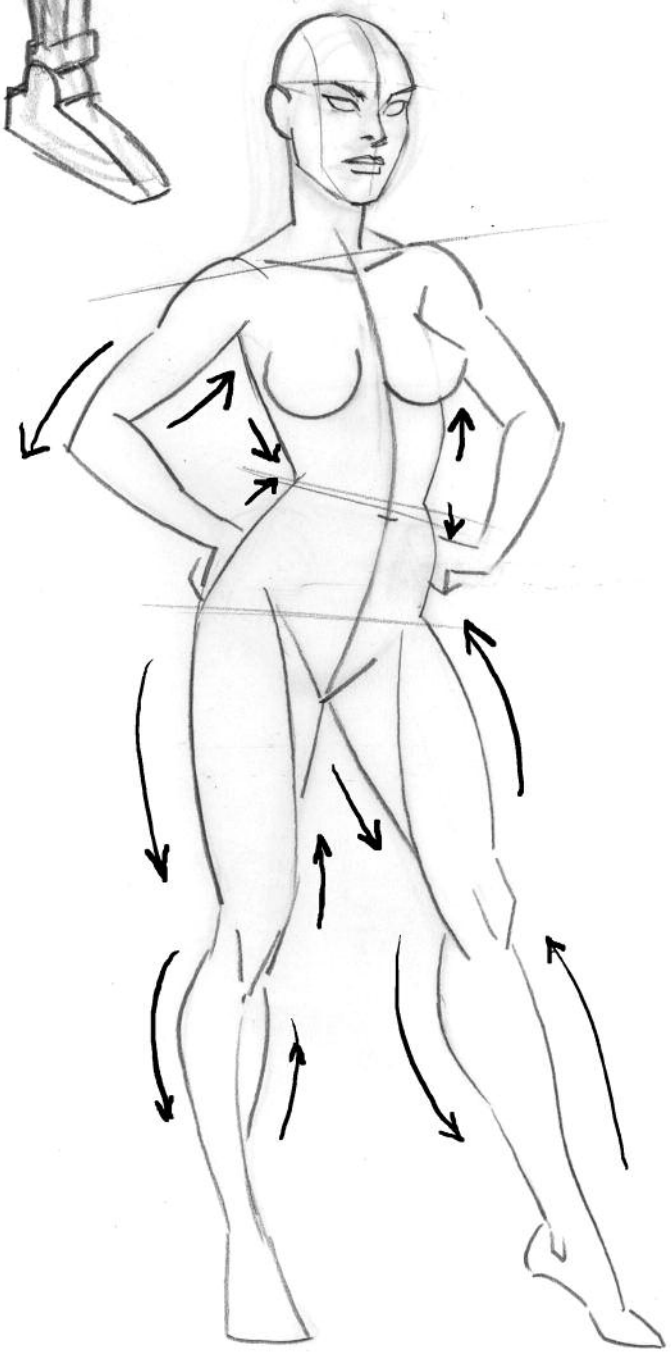
The human body is comprised of many of these types of counter-shapes, or arcs, because the muscles of the body are arranged on the skeleton as a series of pulleys. One set contracts the arm toward the body or the leg, and another pulls it away. These sets of muscles create shapes; these shapes are what I like to call design shapes. For instance, the front of a legs is divided into two shapes on the thigh, and the division by the sator satorius—the longest muscle of the body—arcs down from its origin on the pelvis, separating the powerful quadriceps of the front of the legs from the muscles of the inner thigh. Right below the "quads" the skin thins and we see the bones: the heads of the femur, the tibia and fibula, and the knee cap. This part of the leg can be thought of as a square. Below that, as we go down the lower leg, the main shapes are created by the peroneous longus on the outside of the leg and the gastrocnemius—or calf muscle—on the inside of the leg.

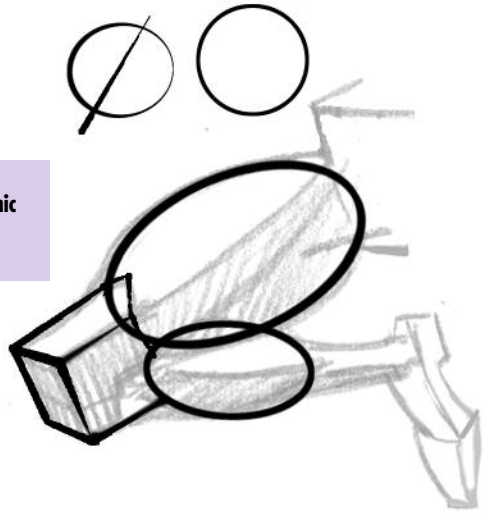
In the illustration at the bottom of the next page I have indicated the essential shapes each set of muscles creates. Simply by drawing these shapes well we can makes a pretty dynamic figure. Then by adding more anatomical detail along with these design shapes we can make a powerful or dynamic figure even a bit more dynamic or graceful.

So to sum up, every group of muscles in action has a core shape, a design shape. The human body is such a graceful and powerful machine. There is a series of arcs, curves and counter-curves that run throughout the body. By learning these along with anatomy—where the muscles insert onto the bones, which

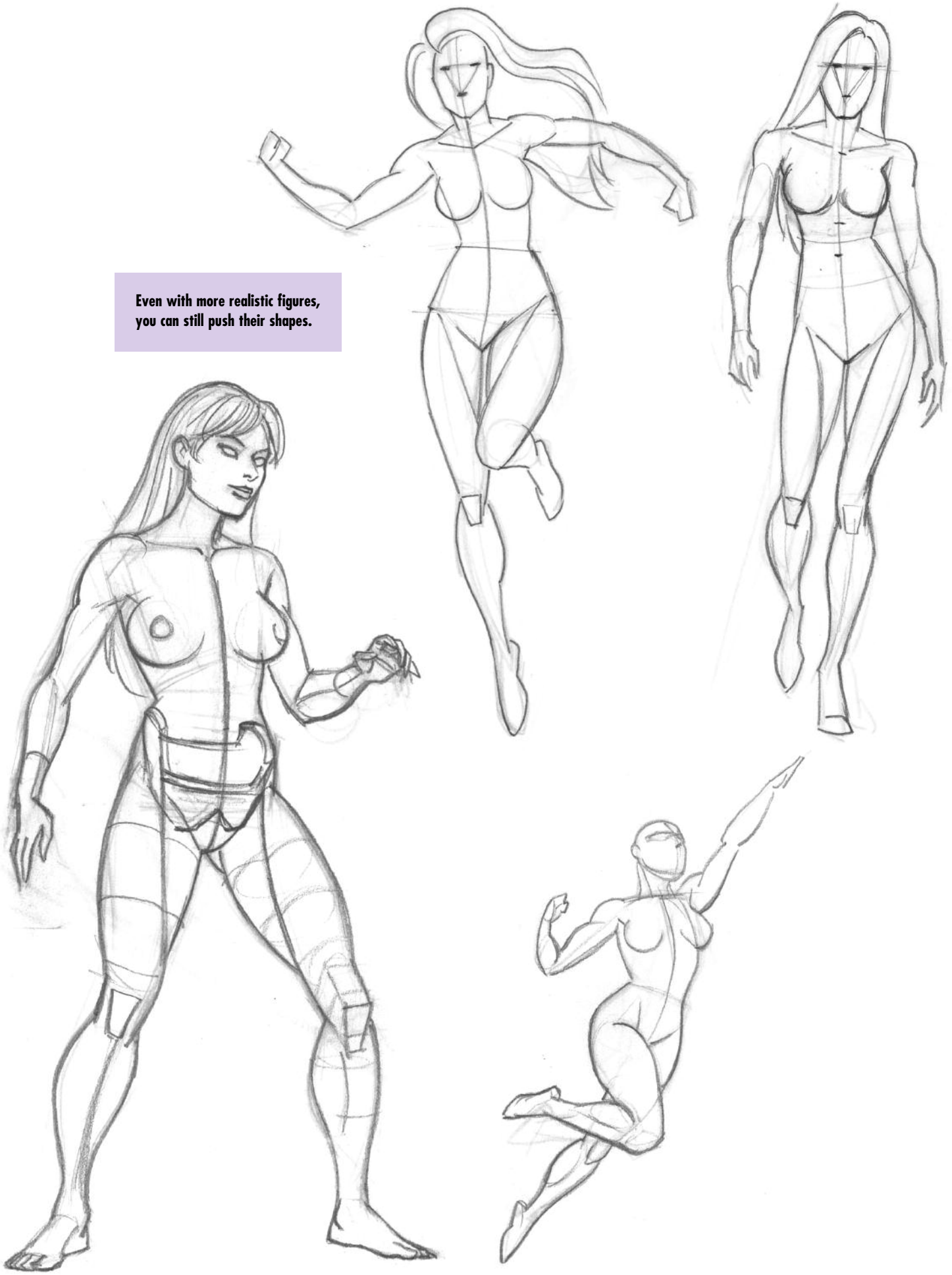








Ovals are more dynamic shapes than circles.



Even with more realistic figures, you can still push their shapes.

then create the shapes—we can become stylists and use or enhance those natural shapes to design and draw better, stronger, more dynamic figures, depending on the style or amount of exaggeration you are putting into you work.

I enjoy animation because, by the nature of having to do so many drawings, the artists are forced to simplify the anatomy drawn on the figure. But as the saying goes, "form follows function," so just because something is simpler in appearance doesn't mean it's simple. The simpler the drawing, the more important the knowledge and use of these design shapes becomes. Even when drawing the figure without adding any inside details, by using these counter-shapes and arcs we can create a very dynamic and interesting figure.

Now, on the surface it might seem that this is very simple, but I have seen thousands of figures drawn where none of this shape logic or design has been applied, and the art is always weak—the figures are doughy, weak and awkward no matter how much rendering is applied. Rendering, no matter how lush or skilled, can't overcome bad design and weak figures. Even the most realistic artists will use these shapes to design and enhance their work. You can play them up or down for effect, and there you can really start to have some fun!

Though in these examples I am exaggerating the anatomy and pose, this is based on the knowledge of anatomy. By studying anatomy and learning the muscular skeletal system, you will understand these shapes better, along with where and why they are created. Grab that sketchbook and go to town with this. I guarantee that, if you do these exercises, within a few short weeks of diligent work your figures will be filled with more life, dynamics, and interest!

Till next time,

MIKE

This cover to *Quasar* was from my last issue on the series, I was rally trying to push the design angularity of the figures here and had been working up to this way of working for a few issues. I wanted to exaggerate and have fun pushing the shapes.

This page was done a few years after the *Quasar* page, and I was feeling much more comfortable pushing the shapes and gestures at that point in my work. I wanted the monster to be heavy, but DH too; DH is a cybernetic organism—he wears a battle suit—so I always thought it was like he was wearing an exoskeleton, that he was dense. If you pay attention and learn the shape logic, the design of the body, you can give even a small figure dynamics and power—even when you can't render. Rendering alone, no matter how well done, will not give a figure weight or make a sluggish design sense dynamic. Animators face this challenge, as their work by nature must be much simpler in the finish than a comic artist's work. But simple is hard, not easy, as you must do less with more. That means you have to understand these principles of design so that you know how and where to simplify and where you need to push or bend a rule, or even break it, to get the effect you want.

DARKHAWK ™ AND ©2009 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC.

This is a great iconic page by John Romita, Jr., one of my favorite artists working today. He understands the figure so well he can design it on the page to have maximum impact. Look at the shape design on Batman's figure: the dynamic arcs/counter-arcs through the figure, right down the legs, the arcs of the lats driving into the straight lines of the waist—everything is pushed to a high degree in the service of dynamics, giving Batman a massive, heavy feeling. The anatomy, while technically not accurate, is exaggerated to a high degree and is *emotionally* accurate, and the rhythm shapes feel correct and powerful.

BATMAN ™ AND ©2009 DC COMICS.

Here is a much simpler drawing of Batman, which I did for a coloring book. While my shapes are not as pushed as the ones by Romita, the same rules are applied here. Compare the two figures and notice that by pushing the shapes you can bulk up the figure and give it weight. Repetitive shapes, weak shapes or lack of play between hard and soft or round and square variety make a figure appear light, weightless and/or sluggish. And who wants a sluggish Dark Knight?

Lots of dynamic, ovoid shapes here in this drawing of two sexy gals fighting. To be attractive, the female figure must be mostly constructed of these ovoid shapes along a figure full of many "S" curves. How many can you find here?

G.I. JOE ™ AND ©2009 HASBRO.

BLACK PANTHER ™ AND ©2009 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC.

After having worked in animation for several years, I was approached by Marvel and asked to do a few issues of *Black Panther* in a more animated style. Here is a page from the issues I did. You can see how much I was pushing the shapes here, in the figure as well as the background. My idea was to streamline the contours and then punch up the figures and the tree, etc., with blacks and textures to give the image depth. The first thing I did was to make sure the figure of the Panther would read well as a silhouette against the tree and to make sure that the figure in this pose had a power, a gesture, while coiled like the jungle cat.

This page is from my work on *Alien vs. Predator*. It was done in a much more realistic style, and aided greatly by my inker, Ricardo Villagran. Though this story was drawn more realistically, that doesn't mean I didn't apply the same shape rules, I just made them more subtle. The rules are the same no matter the style. It's like making a blend of coffee. Do you want a high-test caffeine blend, or something more subtle and mild?

SPACE ACE ™ AND ©2009 DON BLUTH FILMS.

A few years back I was approached by a company that was going to do a comic book with the Don Bluth *Space Ace* characters. We never reached an agreement but I did do this sample page to show I could do the style, which is a very Disneyesque style with plenty of straights against curves and really interesting shape designs. The designs of the models sheets really pushed the angles against the organic, or rounder, shapes and this gives the drawing more power not only when the characters are animated, but also when they are drawn as comic characters which don't move like animation. I was also using the background shapes, mostly non-organic shapes, like the rocks, to frame and lead the eye. You can apply the ideas of pushing shapes and using organic against non-organic to the backgrounds and environments, as well.

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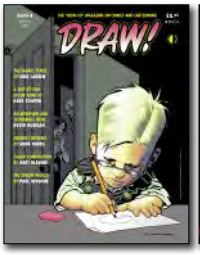

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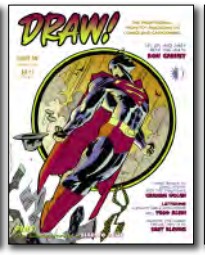

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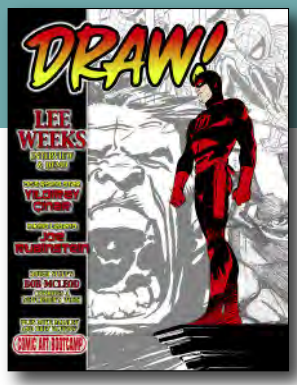

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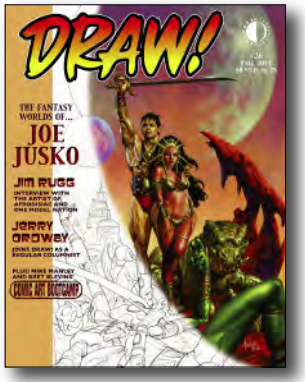

DRAW! #26

JOE JUSKO shows how he creates his amazing fantasy art, **JAMAR NICHOLAS** interviews artist **JIMM RUGG** (Street Angel, Afrodisiac, The P.L.A.I.N. Janes and Janes in Love, One Model Nation, and The Guild), new regular contributor **JERRY ORDWAY** on his behind-the-scenes working process, Comic Art Bootcamp with **MIKE MANLEY** and **BRET BLEVINS**, reviews of artist materials, and more! *Mature readers only.*

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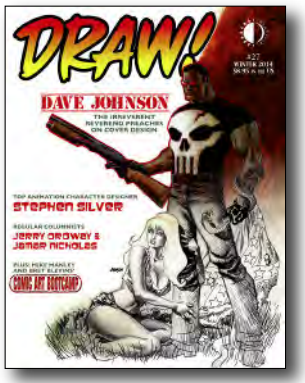

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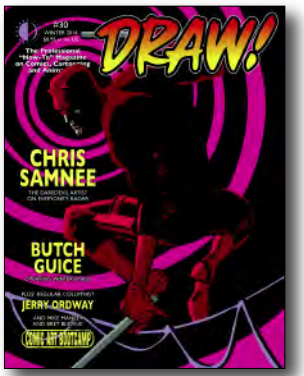

DRAW! #30

We focus the radar on Daredevil artist **CHRIS SAMNEE** (Agents of Atlas, Batman, Avengers, Captain America) with a how-to interview, comics veteran **JACKSON GUICE** (Captain America, Superman, Ruse, Thor) talks about his creative process and his new series Winter World, columnist **JERRY ORDWAY** shows his working process, plus more Comic Art Bootcamp by **BRET BLEVINS** and *Draw!* editor **MIKE MANLEY**! *Mature readers only.*

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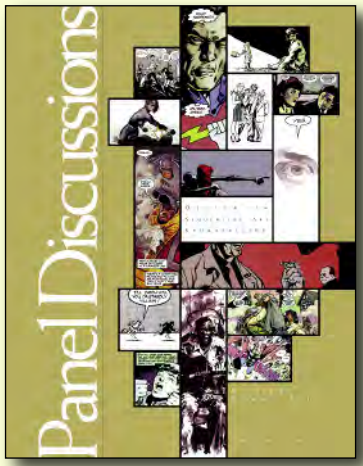

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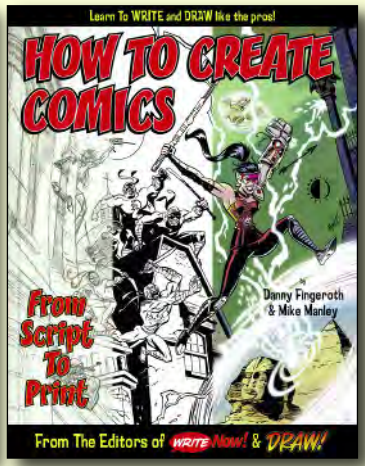

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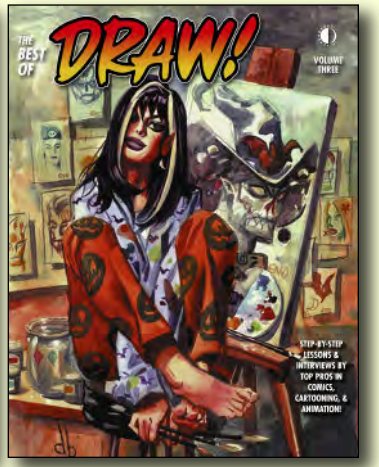

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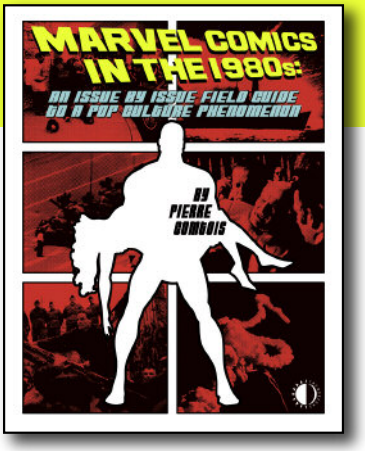

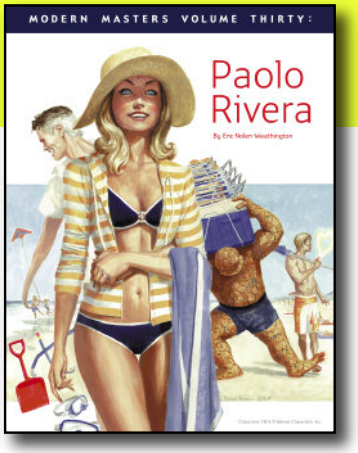

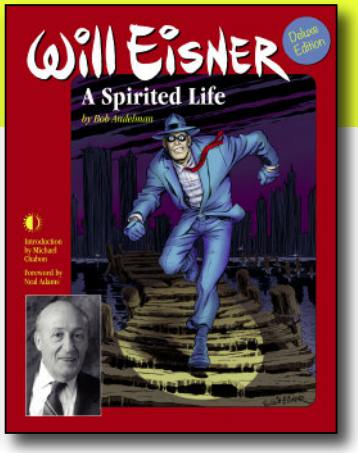

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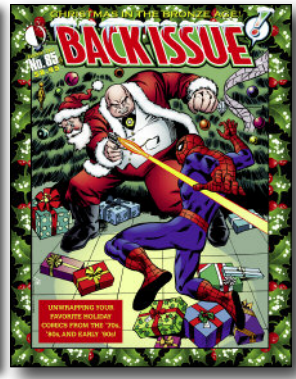

BACK ISSUE #85

"Christmas in the Bronze Age!" Go behind the scenes of comics' best holiday tales of the 1970s through the early 1990s! And we revisit Superhero Merchandise Catalogs of the late '70s! Featuring work by **SIMON BISLEY, CHRIS CLAREMONT, JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA-LÓPEZ, KEITH GIFFEN,** the **KUBERT STUDIO, DENNY O'NEIL, STEVE PURCELL, JOHN ROMITA, JR.,** and more. Cover by **MARIE SEVERIN** and **MIKE ESPOSITO!**

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BACK ISSUE #86

"Marvel Bronze Age Giants and Reprints!" In-depth exploration of Marvel's **GIANT-SIZE** series, plus indexes galore of Marvel reprint titles, Marvel digests and Fireside Books editions, and the last days of the "Old" X-Men! Featuring work by **DAN ADKINS, ROSS ANDRU, RICH BUCKLER, DAVE COCKRUM, GERRY CONWAY, STEVE GERBER, STAN LEE, WERNER ROTH, ROY THOMAS,** and more. Cover by **JOHN ROMITA, SR.!**

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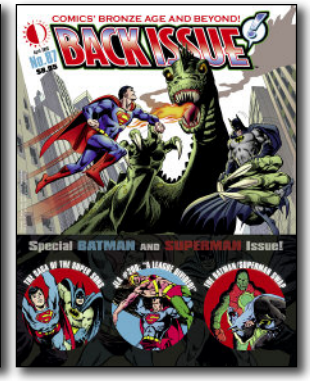

BACK ISSUE #87

"Batman AND Superman!" Bronze Age World's Finest, Super Sons, Batman/Superman Villain/Partner Swap, Jimmy Olsen and Lois Lane go solo, Superman/Radio Shack giveaways, and JLA #200's "A League Divided" (as a nod to *Batman v. Superman)*! Featuring work by **BRIAN BOLLAND, RICH BUCKLER, GERRY CONWAY, JACK KIRBY, GEORGE PÉREZ, JIM STARLIN,** and more. Cover by **DICK GIORDANO!**

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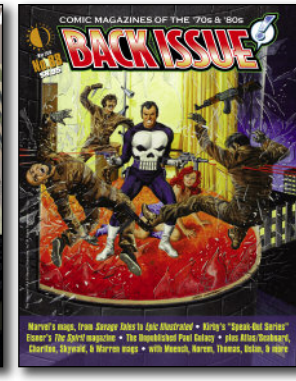

BACK ISSUE #88

"Comics Magazines of the '70s and '80s!" From Savage Tales to Epic Illustrated, **KIRBY**'s "Speak-Out Series," **EISNER**'s Spirit magazine, Unpublished **PAUL GULACY, MICHAEL USLAN** on the Shadow magazine you didn't see, plus B&Ws from Atlas/Seaboard, Charlton, Skywald, and Warren. Featuring work by **NEAL ADAMS, JOHN BOLTON, ARCHIE GOODWIN, DOUG MOENCH, EARL NOREM, ROY THOMAS,** and more. Cover by **GRAY MORROW!**

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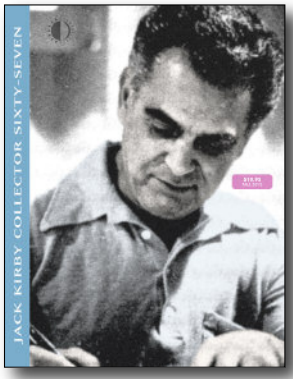

KIRBY COLLECTOR #67

UP-CLOSE & PERSONAL! Kirby interviews you weren't aware of, photos and recollections from fans who saw him in person, personal anecdotes from Jack's fellow pros, **LEE** and **KIRBY** cameos in comics, **MARK EVANIER** and other regular columnists, and more! Don't let the photo cover fool you; this issue is chockfull of rare Kirby pencil art, from Roz Kirby's private sketchbook, and Jack's most personal comics stories!

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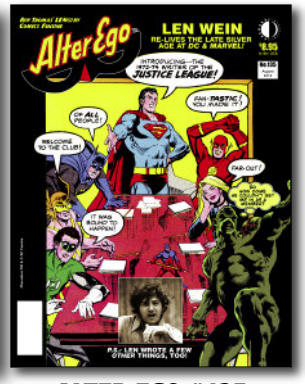

ALTER EGO #135

LEN WEIN (writer/co-creator of Swamp Thing, Human Target, and Wolverine) talks about his early days in comics at DC and Marvel! Art by **WRIGHTSON, INFANTINO, TRIMPE, DILLON, CARDY, APARO, THORNE, MOONEY,** and others! Plus **FCA** (Fawcett Collectors of America), **MR. MONSTER**'s Comic Crypt, the Comics Code, and **DAN BARRY!** Cover by **DICK GIORDANO** with **BERNIE WRIGHTSON!**

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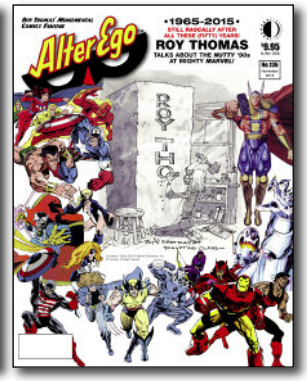

ALTER EGO #136

BONUS 100-PAGE issue as **ROY THOMAS** talks to **JIM AMASH** about celebrating his 50th year in comics—and especially about the '90s at Marvel! Art by **TRIMPE, GUICE, RYAN, ROSS, BUCKLER, HOOVER, KAYANAN, BUSCEMA, CHAN, VALENTINO,** and others! Plus **FCA, MR. MONSTER**'s Comic Crypt, **AMY KISTE NYBERG** on the Comics Code, and a cover caricature of Roy by **MARIE SEVERIN!**

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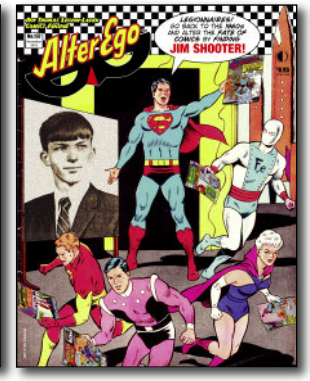

ALTER EGO #137

Incredible interview with **JIM SHOOTER,** which chronicles the first decade of his career (Legion of Super-Heroes, Superman, Supergirl, Captain Action) with art by **CURT SWAN, WALLY WOOD, GIL KANE, GEORGE PAPP, JIM MOONEY, PETE COSTANZA, WIN MORTIMER, WAYNE BORING, AL PLASTINO,** et al.! Plus **FCA, MR. MONSTER, BILL SCHELLY,** and more! Cover art by **CURT SWAN!**

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ALTER EGO #138

Science-fiction great (and erstwhile comics writer) **HARLAN ELLISON** talks about Captain Marvel and The Monster Society of Evil! Also, Captain Marvel artist/co-creator **C.C. BECK** writes about the infamous Superman-Captain Marvel lawsuit of the 1940s and '50s in a double-size **FCA** section! Plus two titanic tributes to Golden Age artist **FRED KIDA, MR. MONSTER, BILL SCHELLY,** and more!

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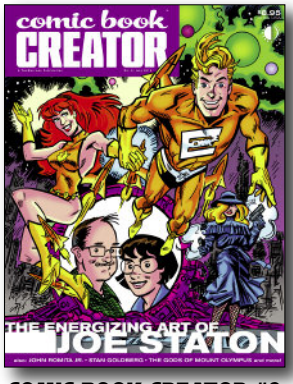

COMIC BOOK CREATOR #9

JOE STATON on his comics career (from E-MAN, to co-creating The Huntress, and his current stint on the Dick Tracy comic strip), plus we showcase the lost treasure **GODS OF MOUNT OLYMPUS** drawn by Joe! Plus, Part One of our interview with the late **STAN GOLDBERG,** why **JOHN ROMITA, JR.** is the best comic book artist working, we quiz **PABLO MARCOS** about the days of Marvel horror, plus **HEMBECK!**

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COMIC BOOK CREATOR #10

The Broadway sci-fi epic **WARP** examined! Interviews with art director **NEAL ADAMS,** director **STUART** (Reanimator) **GORDON,** playwright **LENNY KLEINFELD,** stage manager **DAVID GORDON,** and a look at Warp's 1980s **FIRST COMICS** series! Plus: an interview with **PETER** (Hate!) **BAGGE,** our **RICH BUCKLER** interview Part One, **GIANT WHAM-O COMICS,** and the conclusion of our **STAN GOLDBERG** interview!

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COMIC BOOK CREATOR #11

Retrospective on **GIL KANE**, co-creator of the modern Green Lantern and Atom, and early progenitor of the graphic novel. Kane cover newly-inked by **KLAUS JANSON**, plus remembrances from friends, fans, and collaborators, and a Kane art gallery. Also, our **RICH BUCKLER** interview conclusion, a look at the "greatest zine in the history of mankind," **MINESHAFT**, and Part One of our **ARNOLD DRAKE** interview!

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DRAW! #31

How-to demos & interviews with Philadelphia artists **JG JONES** (52, Final Crisis, Wanted, Batman and Robin) and **KHOI PHAM** (The Mighty Avengers, The Astonishing Spider-Man, The Mighty World of Marvel), **JAMAR NICHOLAS** reviews of art supplies, **JERRY ORDWAY** demos the "ORD-way" or drawing, and Comic Art Bootcamp by **MIKE MANLEY** and **BRET BLEVINS**! JG Jones cover! *Mature readers only.*

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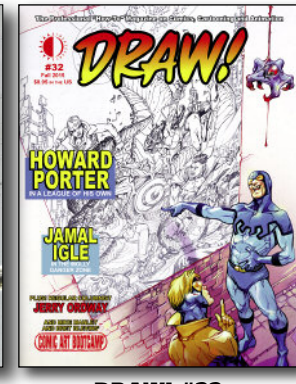

DRAW! #32

Super-star DC penciler **HOWARD PORTER** demos his creative process, and **JAMAL IGLE** discusses everything from storyboarding to penciling as he gives a breakdown of his working methods. Plus there's Crusty Critic **JAMAR NICHOLAS** reviewing art supplies, **JERRY ORDWAY** showing the Ord-Way of doing comics, and Comic Art Bootcamp lessons with **BRET BLEVINS** and Draw! editor **MIKE MANLEY!** *Mature readers only.*

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