

ADVANCED IRON 53
















THE HAMMER STRIKES!



WELSHCAT 2001

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HUBB'S SHELLHEADISMS

TRAGEDY AND TERROR

THAT'S WHAT WE ALL FELT ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001. AND EVEN THOUGH IT WAS CLEARLY EVIDENT ON VARIOUS ONLINE FORUMS THAT NOT EVERYONE WAS OF LIKE MIND ON WHAT THE BEST COURSE OF RETALIATORY ACTION SHOULD BE, WE ALL FELT THE GRIEF OF LOSS. AND, IN MY VIEW, NO ONE CAPTURED THAT LOSS BETTER THAN ARTIST **MIKE DEODATO JR.** WITH HIS PORTRAYAL OF **CAPTAIN AMERICA** BEHIND THE NEW YORK SKYLINE.

The following interview was taken from:
<http://www.silverbulletcomicbooks.com/features/100288742639695.htm>



Keron Grant: Iron Giant By Mike Jozic

The first time I was made aware of the name Keron Grant was at the 2000 San Diego ComiCon. Rob Liefeld was giving away free previews of an upcoming mini-series called **Century** that, although it never saw the light of day, featured a young artist I had never heard of before. I really like what I saw of Keron's stuff, and I was sorry to see (or, rather, not see) **Century** materialize, falling predictably into Awesome's scheduling limbo. Still, after seeing his work in that preview, I decided to keep an eye out for this guy in the future.

It was some time before I saw his work again (although I will admit to not looking *too* terribly hard), but he eventually did pop up on my radar again about six months ago when I noticed his name on an issue of Marvel Comics' **Iron Man**. Apparently he had picked up the gig with issue #41 and had taken to the busy task of putting pictures to Frank Tieri's words, chronicling the continuing adventures of playboy billionaire, Tony Stark.

Unfortunately, his time on the series would not be a lengthy one.

I interviewed Keron via e-mail about his work on the book **Iron Man**, his reasons for leaving after only 7 issues, and some other assorted miscellany that you'll have to read the interview to find out what it is...



MIKE JOZIC: The last I saw your stuff was in the **Century** preview at the San Diego ComiCon last year, and the next thing I know, you're drawing **Iron Man** over at Marvel. Could you maybe fill in the blanks of what you were doing between the two projects, and how you eventually landed the **Iron Man** gig?

KERON GRANT: Well I did pretty much 3 issues of **Century** which may never see print. After that I needed to get away from those people so I did a couple online comics for **The Matrix** website, which can be found at [what is the matrix.com](http://whatisthematrix.com). After doing this, Rob Stull (the inker on the **Matrix** stuff) brought that stuff over to show Bobbie Chase, who was looking for a new artist on **Iron Man**, and the rest is history.

JOZIC: How difficult was it for you to redesign the **Iron Man** armour? Even though Tony changes the thing every couple of years or so, fans still seem to treat it as if it is a very big deal, and react accordingly.

GRANT: I felt very privileged and fortunate to be adding to the long line of great Iron Man artist and design. I'm typically predisposed to do things radically different, therefore my initial ideas for this were very strange. I wanted to challenge the perception of [the] futuristic, or challenge peoples expectations of the armour. In the end the editors and I came to a good compromise. However, I think it was still a bit timid of a design.

Now, looking at it in comparison with the previous armour it is pretty radical.

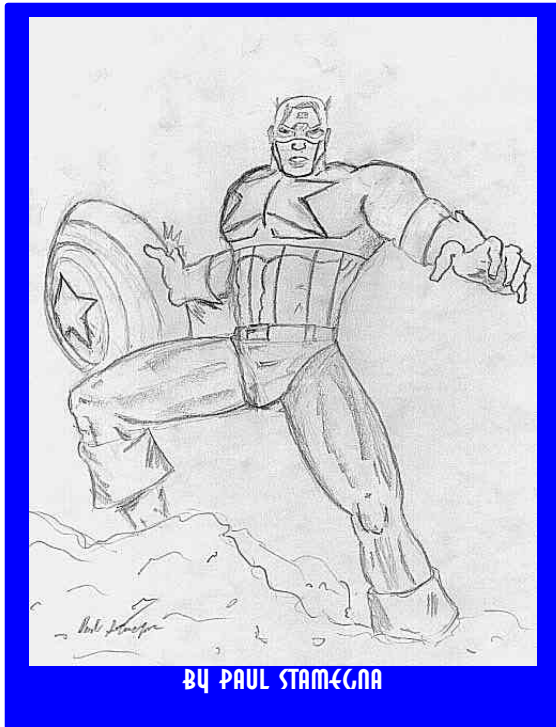
JOZIC: Were you an **Iron Man** fan prior to getting the assignment?

GRANT: Actually I was a fan of the concept of the character, however I never collected any of the books. I normally follow artist instead of certain characters. In turn I become fond of characters



BY PAUL STAMENGA

who've been drawn by my favourite artists.



JOZIC: I've heard that in issue #50 the new creative team of Mike Grell and Michael Ryan will debut, effectively ending your run on the book. Was the decision to move on an editorial one and out of your hands, or were you and Frank ready to leave the book?

GRANT: It was definitely an editorial decision for me. I'm not sure on Frank's situation.

JOZIC: After #49, how will you look back at your brief run on **Iron Man**?

GRANT: Unfortunately, I won't make it to 49, My last issue will be 47.

I am very proud of the run. I think Frank has some amazing ideas and I'm glad I had a chance to depict some of them. I wish I had a chance to become fully synchronized with the elements of the character and the book. Too bad; maybe I would have gone too far, perhaps isolating all the fans of the book, or maybe the work would have rivalled the pyramids or the Sistine Chapel.

JOZIC: What would be your advice to the new artist moving in?

GRANT: Do what makes him happy.

JOZIC: The new, and final, storyline for you and Frank, "Frankenstein Syndrome", has just hit the stands and I was wondering if you could reveal anything about where the sentient armour story is going to end up?

JOZIC: I won't be doing the last issue of that, so I cannot answer that question.

JOZIC: Do you know what your final issue will be about?

GRANT: The last issue is about Iron Man fighting about Ten versions of the Sentient Armour. It's pretty fun stuff.

JOZIC: Now, you've also mentioned the work you had done for Spencer Lamm, contributing two stories to the growing number



of **Matrix Comix** over on Warner's **Matrix** website. How did you get hooked up with that, and what was that experience like?

GRANT: The experience was a dream. I really love working with Spencer. He has this crazy tendency in allowing the artist to do what the artist does best.

JOZIC: Your second outing was scripted by Ted McKeever, right?

GRANT: It was pretty much a plot of Ted's from which I worked. Unfortunately, he was unavailable to script the story after I got it done. Therefore, I had to.

JOZIC: Do you actually prefer working solo, like you did on the Saga story, or collaborating with others like Ted?

GRANT: I find pleasure in both ways. I find it more comforting though, when I have to rely on myself. I think the work is best when I'm allowed to do everything.

JOZIC: Do you have any plans to do more **Matrix Comix**?

GRANT: Hopefully I get a chance to work with them again.

JOZIC: In his Robservations column over at SpinnerRack.com, Rob Liefeld has said of you (and I paraphrase), "Keron Grant is the real deal. His work is ahead of its time. There seems to be no angle too difficult to for him to express and his action is fast, furious and well choreographed. My only fear for Grant is that the comics industry won't be big enough to contain him and he'll be scooped up by game developers and animation companies looking to tap his considerable talents."

Considering some of the harsher criticisms I've read of your work recently, I was hoping I could get your response to Rob's comments.

GRANT: I really appreciate Rob's kind words. As far as the people who cannot understand my work, I think it usually takes a while in convincing people. I draw not by sight, but by faith. If a person appreciates my work, I am very proud of him. If they don't, well...

*If you're still looking for more of Keron's work after **Iron Man #47** comes and goes, be sure to watch for a manga-style **Fantastic Four** project he is currently developing Adam Warren.*

AND NOW, A SHORTENED



IRON MAN

RECENTLY, FAMED BUFFY CREATOR, SCREENWRITER AND SCRIPT DOCTOR JOSS WHEDON (HE WROTE TOY STORY AND ALIEN: RESURRECTION) TOLD NEW LINE CINEMA HE'D LIKE TO MAKE A DIRECTORIAL DEBUT. WHEN OFFERED A LIST OF FILMS IN ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT, HE CHOSE **IRON MAN**. IT'S NOT OFFICIAL AS YET (IT'S MID-OCTOBER RIGHT NOW), AND WITH THE ATTACKS, NOT MUCH IS MOVING FORWARD IN THE WAY OF VIOLENT, ACTION; ETC. MOVIES RIGHT NOW. OR ANYTHING OVERLY SAD. THE GOOD NEWS IS JOSS IS A TERRIFIC WRITER (HE SAVED SPEED) BUT I DON'T WATCH BUFFY SO I HAVE NO CLUE HOW HIS STYLE IS. THE BAD NEWS IS, I MAY NOT DIRECT THE FIRST ONE! ARGH! THE GOOD NEWS ALSO IS THE ARMOR IS RED AND GOLD, PLAYING UP MORE JAMES BOND-STYLE STUFF AND RON HOWARD IMAGINE ENTERTAINMENT AND TOM CRUISE'S CW PRODS. ARE BOTH INTERESTED IN IT. ALSO, TIM MCCANNIES' SCRIPT MIGHT BE TOSSED IF WHEDON COMES IN. WISH IT WERE ME, THOUGH...

SPIDER-MAN

I'M SURE YOU SAW THE TRAILER: SPIDY PUTS SOME BANK BADDIES IN A CHOPPER IN A WEB BETWEEN THE TWIN TOWERS. WELL, THEY'VE REMOVED THE TRAILER (THEY EVEN YANKED IT OFF A KNIGHT'S TALE VIDEO (OPTS) AND RE-DOED IT; TOOK AWAY THE GREAT POSTER WITH THE WTC IMAGES IN SPIDY'S SUITS; AND HAVE SPENT A REPORTED \$22 MILLION DOING...SOMETHING. THEY ALREADY SPENT \$150 MILLION ON THE FILM, AND SAM RAIMI HAS SAID THERE IS A SEQUENCE LIKE THE ONE IN THE TRAILER AND SONY SAID NO. SO \$22 MILLION IS BEING USED TO ALLEGEDLY FIX THE WTC SHOTS. MUST'VE BEEN HUGE.

THAT WAS PART ONE OF THE FALL-OUT. PART 2 IS THE RE-WRITING OF MEN IN BLACK 2'S WTC ENDING (NOT SHOT YET); DELAYS OF FILMS (THE NEW ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER FLICK COLLATERAL DAMAGE, SONY'S BIG TROUBLE; ETC. FOR TERRORIST STUFF, FOR BEING SAD...YOU NAME IT). WE'VE DELAYED OUR FILM SKYE FALLING BECAUSE IT'S SAD AND I PERSONALLY WANT TO WATCH HAPPY FILMS (AND EVEN MAKE SOME AS WELL).

WELL, A BIGGER ARTICLE NEXT TIME. WE HAVE A NEW LOOK: WWW.MPSDIGITAL.COM -- CHECK IT OUT!

GOD BLESS AMERICA AND DON'T GIVE IN!

--HEATH MCKNIGHT











REMC

THE WANDERINGS OF THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN

BY COUSTURE ✖

#6

Bonjour! Looking for cool comics featuring good ol' **Iron Man**? Then this is the place for you, my friends. As promised in my last column, this time around I'm going to focus on the fantastic **Ken Steacy** ... for those of you who are wondering "who the heck is **Ken Steacy**?", I will simply answer this: **he's a painter, he's Canadian, he's got talent like you wouldn't believe and he really loves working with Iron Man**. And when you read his stuff, you can tell! The issues he did for Marvel Fanfare are **awesome IM guest-stars every Iron Man fan should read** and today's the day you hear all about them. And since I'm such a generous guy, I'll also throw in a review of an **old IM appearance from the early 80s** in the pages of Savage She-Hulk. Enjoy!

* * *

MARVEL FANFARE #22-23

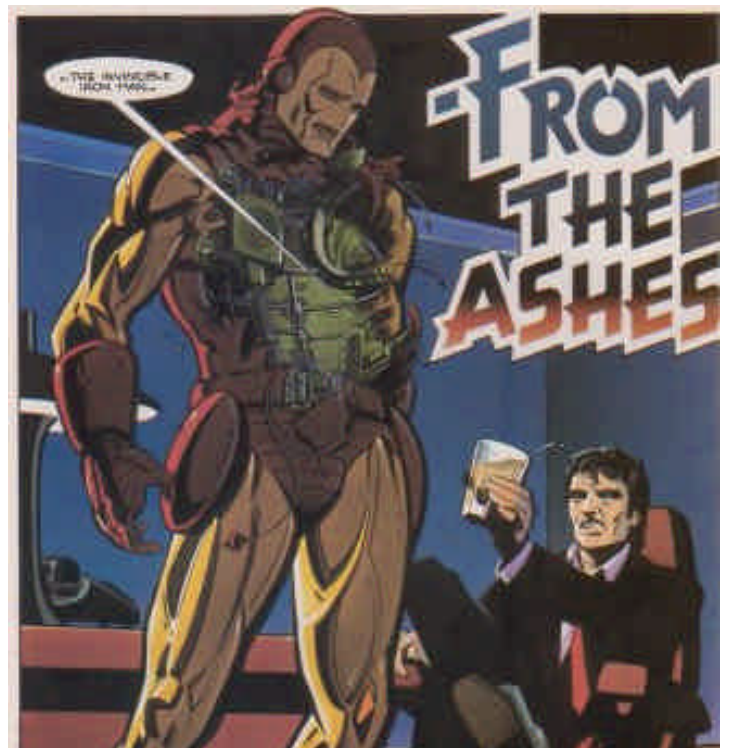
"Night of the Octopus" - 1985

Script: Roger McKenzie

Everything else: Ken Steacy



When the authorities decide that there have been way **too many break-outs from Ryker's Island penitentiary** and that they want to beef up security, who do they call? You guessed it, **Tony Stark** of course. Our story begins as **Stark** is giving **Mr. Barger** (a consumer activist) a guided tour of the facilities. At the same moment, one of the inmates' most deadly weapon is undergoing extensive testing in the labs of **Stark International: Doctor Octopus' adamantium tentacles**. The metallic



monstrosities break free of their shackles and start to make their way towards the penitentiary. The only thing standing between them and their ultimate destination is **the invincible Iron Man**, and he really tries **everything he can think of** to stop the bloody things. His **repulsors** bounce off them, he tries to **electrocute** them and even **blows them** up along with a gas tanker, the tentacles just keep on going. **Iron Man** soon has to stop the chase in order to rescue one of his employees, research scientist **Cherry Wood**. This gives sufficient time to the indestructible tentacles to reach the prison and **free their master**, the well-known arch-enemy of **Spider-Man**.

When **Iron Man** finally makes it to the prison, he's got a **major break-out** on his hands; the **Sandman**, **Electro** and the **Grey Gargoyle** have also escaped and they go after **Iron Man** with a vengeance. But the real threat, **Octopus**, is staying in the shadows, and when he finally confronts **Iron Man**, **you'll be shocked by the results!** With **Iron Man** defeated, **Stark's** new security discredited and **Dr. Octopus** running free, disaster strikes **Stark's** company. **Barger** levels charges of negligence, stocks nosedive and **Stark's** plant is closed until further notice. The first issue ends with **Tony** pouring himself a **glass**, downing it and dropping it on the floor in despair.

The **second issue** begins where the first one left off, and **when you find out what Stark has been drinking, you will be both surprised and relieved!** We all know **Tony's** not a guy who gives up easily, and he has no intention of doing it now. He repairs his suit of armor and **Iron Man lives again!** I don't want to sell too much of the **goodies** you'll find in this issue (**the best of the two** in my opinion), but let's just say that you'll **see lots of awesome Iron Man action** as our hero tries to foil the plans of the diabolical **Dr. Octopus**. But how can he hope to defeat a man armed with **indestructible adamantium tentacles** that keep you from ever even **touching** him? How will **Stark** save his company from **financial ruin**? You'll have to read the comic to find out... and believe me, **you won't be disappointed!**



what's cool:

Where do I even begin? The art is absolutely **awesome**, you guys have no idea **how long it took me to decide what to scan to go with this article**, every single panel is **better** than the previous one, **they'd all deserve to be framed on a wall!** In fact, the art in these issues look like stills from an animation movie. It's really unlike anything else I've ever seen before or since.

The story is great too, perfectly true to character, you'll recognise the **Tony Stark** we all know and love. These issues really have it all. The villain is a **classic Marvel bad guy** that has been seen on countless occasions in the pages of the **Spider-Man** comics, and it was about time we saw him fight **Iron Man**. The result is an **exciting and fun read** that will leave you wanting more. Add to that some cool special appearances by **Daredevil** and the **Avengers** and a bunch of awesome **Stacy** pinups at the end of each comic, and you have a real gem. If you only ever buy **TWO** comics guest-starring **Iron Man**, make it these two. **Satisfaction guaranteed.**



“It’s enough to drive a man to drink... if I were a drinking man. But I’m not, not anymore. I’m an IRON man, and I have a suit of armor to test.” Stark thinks to himself.

MARVEL FANFARE #44

“Doom Bug” – June 1989

Writer and illustrator: Ken Steacy



the story:

A decent résumé for this one would simply be **“Steacy is back and he’s having the time of his life pitting Iron Man against Doc Doom.”** But I’ll try to be a bit more elaborate without saying too much (quite a challenge, really). While he’s testing a **new telepresence system** in the desert with **Jim Rhodes** (talk about something that fits perfectly well in **IM** continuity), **Stark’s** armor becomes infested with a virus that plays haywire with his systems. After a nightmarish night in the desert during which **he almost dies of suffocation**, **IM** is finally rescued by **Rhodey** and a well-appreciated supporting character in the series over the years; **Ant-Man (Scott Lang)**.



The trio travel to **Latveria** a few hours later to attend the first **international symposium on robotics**. Needless to say that when **Doom** is involved, things are hardly what they seem! This is no exception. Turns out that many participants in the symposium experience similar problems with their armor systems, and **Iron Man** takes off and flies toward **Castle Doom** to investigate. I can’t really say more without selling the punch... but before the day is through, **IM** will have to save the life of his hated enemy.



what’s cool:

Iron Man versus **Doctor Doom**... how can you go wrong with these two? Add **Ken Steacy** to the mix and you’ve got **one heck of a good comic**. This is four years after the two previous comics, so **Steacy’s** art is better than ever. The cover just by itself is worth whatever

you'll pay for this book. And once more, the story is perfectly true to character, **Stacey** knows his **Iron Man** well!



WHAT'S BAAAAAD:

Well, I wouldn't say it's **bad**... but the story in this one is **not quite as good**. The actual face-off between **IM** and **Doom** is a bit disappointing... there's lots of talking, but not much doing, y'know? And the end of the story is a bit déjà vu... **IM** using **Pym particles** to penetrate **Doom**'s armor exactly the way Lang did once to rescue **IM** from his own armor (and also the way Pym did before him to save the Vision)... been there, done that. But these minor details do not ruin the comic, far from it.



At the symposium, Stark looks at all the surrounding technology from all over the world and thinks: **“It still galls me to think that some of the sub-systems at this show were pirated from me during the armor wars...”** (Yes, apparently Stacey knows the character better than certain IM writers ever did... (sorry for the cheap shot, I'm still trying to get over Stark burying his armor on a desert island!))

THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK #6

“Enter: the invincible Iron Man” – July 1980

Writer: David Anthony Kraft

Artist: Mike Vosburg

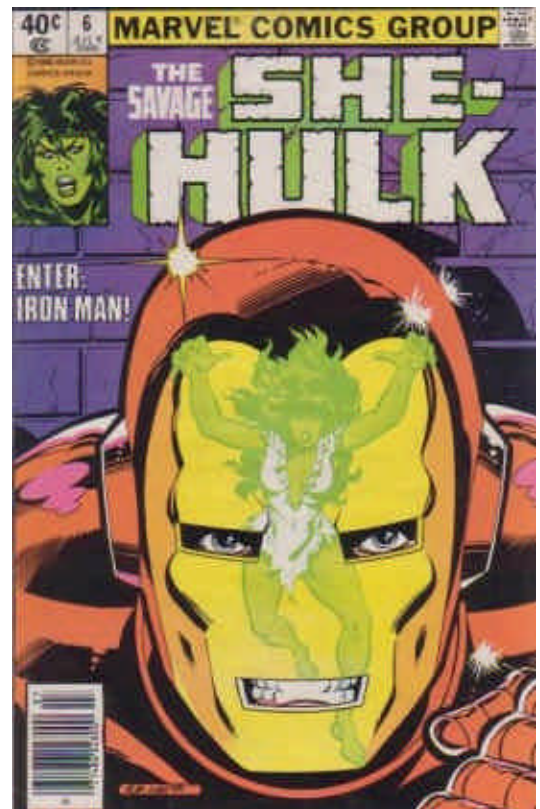
Inker: Chic Stone

Cover: Bob Layton!!



the story:

Iron Man is visiting **Los Angeles**, but he's not on vacation, he's investigating **the mysterious death of one of his employees**. It's when he goes to question the local authorities about the murder that he learns district attorney **Jennifer Walters** has been doing her own investigating. Her case incriminates **Stark International** and she delivers a **subpoena** for **Tony Stark** to appear in court. Before the story is through, **Iron Man** will have battled the **She-Hulk** (that he meets here for **the very first time**) and **Stark** will have faced **Walters** (the **She-Hulk**'s alter-ego) in court. In the end, two heroes will learn to work together in order that **true justice be done**.





what's cool:

All in all, this is a cool comic. It has a certain “historic” feel to it, since these are the early days of the **She-Hulk**’s existence and depicts **the very first meeting between the two heroes**. The fight between the two characters is a lot of fun, although it doesn’t last very long. I enjoyed the whole investigation as well... And the ending in this comic is particularly well done... very touching. But **the coolest thing about this book is definitely the cover**... it was done by none other than the one and only **Bob Layton**! Now what else could you possibly ask for? You want fries with that? ;-)



WHAT'S BAAAAAD:

Well, the only part I found a bit silly was when the **She-Hulk slams her fists into the ground** to create a tidal wave and separate the waters of a harbour, and as she searches for evidence, **Iron Man** uses his “**particle emission system**” to hold the waters back. That’s just a bit silly... but hey, this is a comic **from 1980**! As corny as it was, it did make me smile.



In the end, Walters says: **“I think I understand Mr. Stark (...) we all have our own private burdens to bear, but it takes something special to help make things easier for someone else when we don’t have to. It’s called compassion.”**

* * *

UPCOMING WANDERINGS:

Keep your eyes open for the upcoming «**PARADISE X**» series which will not only feature our good buddy **Tony Stark** (in the form of **an angel**, member of the «**Avenging Host**», who defends Paradise X alongside the spirits of Steve Rogers, Victor Von Doom, Jean Grey, Henry Pym and Black Bolt), but which will also star **the Iron Man of 2020**! X-51 has created a task force by recruiting a bunch of heroes from different alternate realities, and **Arno Stark** will be one of these «**Heralds**». The other members are Spider-Girl, Days-of-Future-Past-Wolverine, Deathlok, Killraven, Hyperion and Bloodstorm. Add to all that the **Guardians of the Galaxy**, the **Iron Avengers** and all the other characters of the two past series (Earth X and Universe X) and you got yourselves a series with a ton of potential, people!

As for me, in my next column I will be taking a look at three very cool Iron Man appearances in the pages of the «**Marvel Super Heroes**» series. If you thought **Kurt Busiek**'s first ever Iron Man story is IM vol.3 #1... well have I got a surprise for you my friends! That's coming up in the pages of **Advanced Iron #54!!**

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions of issues you'd like to see reviewed, arguments or even if you just want to say **bonjour**, send me message at cousture@yahoo.com, it's always a pleasure to hear from Iron fans from around the world. And while I'm at it, I cordially invite you to visit **my Iron Man web site** (yes, this is my usual shameless plug) at the following address:

<http://www.geocities.com/poppyshaw>

Check out my new “**Wanderings of Iron Man**” section, where you'll be able to access all of my past columns for A.I. (including the ones that were sadly unreadable in our last issue) as well as **some new and exclusive reviews** never before seen in these pages.

Hope to hear from you and bonne lecture!



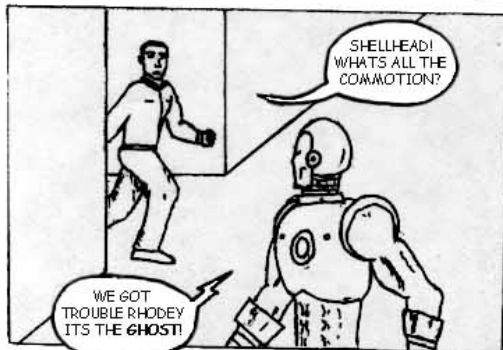
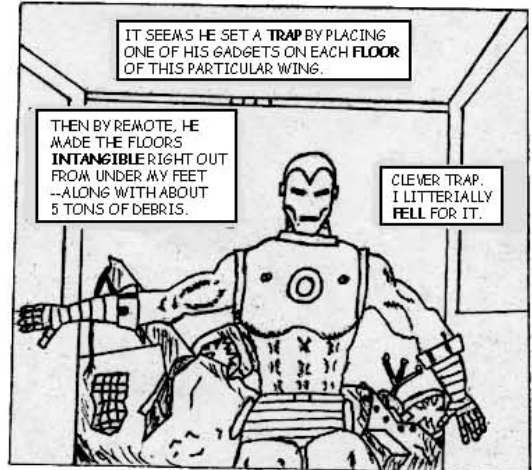
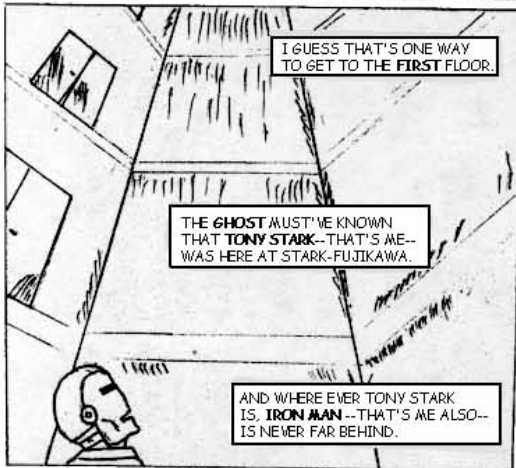
Howdy folks! Here's part 2 of my comic fan-fic.

I sorta told a fib at the end of part 1 - I said it would be "concluded" in this issue of *Advanced Iron*. Due to time constraints such as school and sleep, I had to spread it out into a 3 parter. Also, I didn't get a chance to color it either, which is probably a good thing considering how poorly part 1 turned out! Speaking of part 1, if you missed it last ish, you can e-mail me at futureboy@yahoo.com and I can send you a refurbished version with computer colors and typed text. I highly recommend it! A most excellent fan-fic if I do say so myself!

You can also e-mail me for questions, comments, or newsworthy items. And so, without further adu, I present to you:

THE INVINCIBLE

DROWN MAN



THE RETURN

PART 2

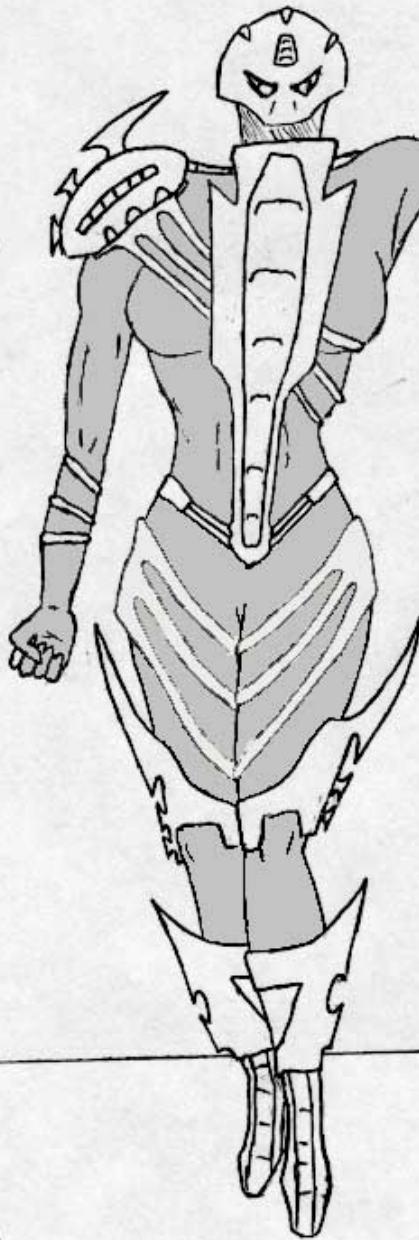
BY
BRAD LYONS

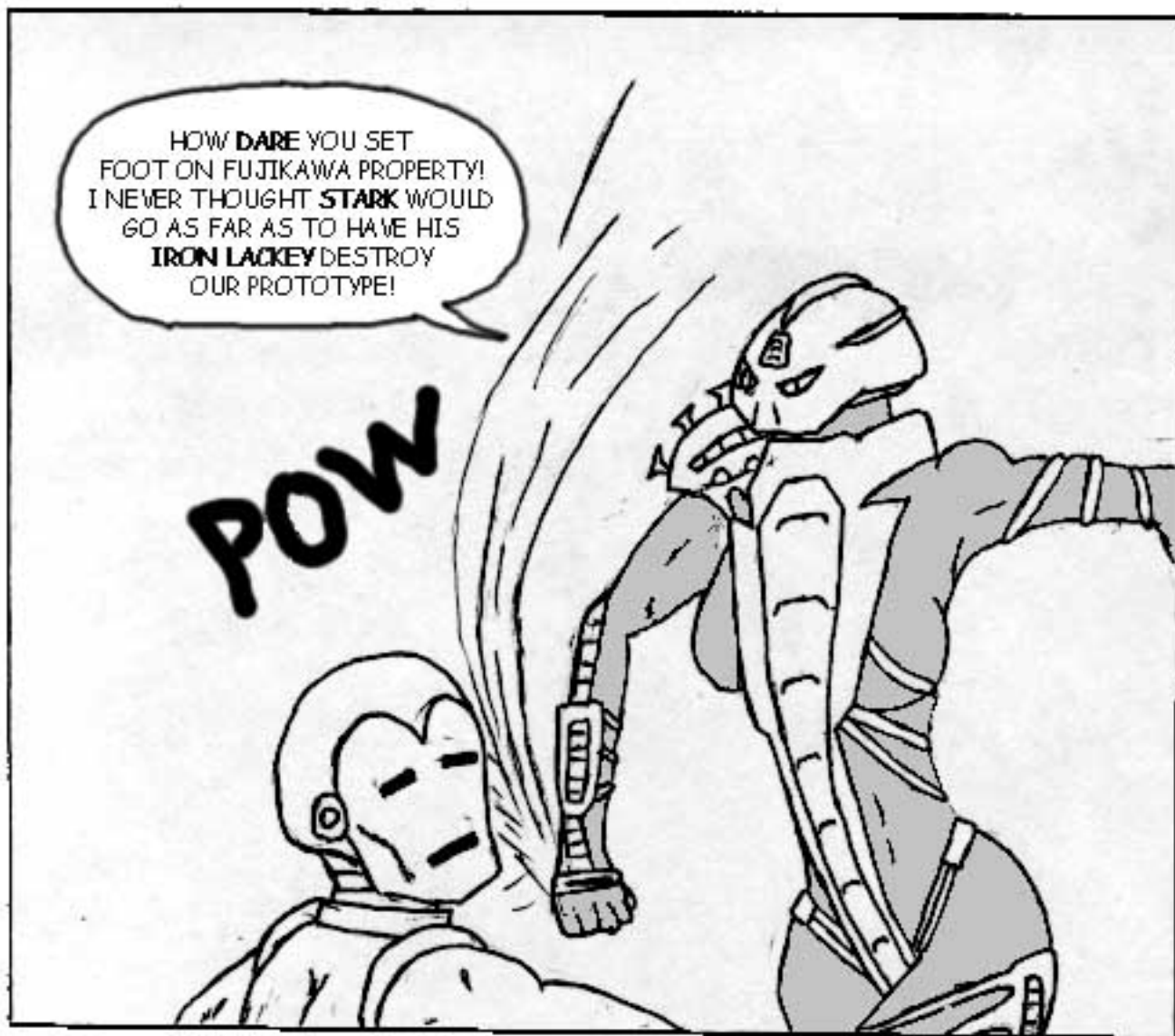
KACRASH

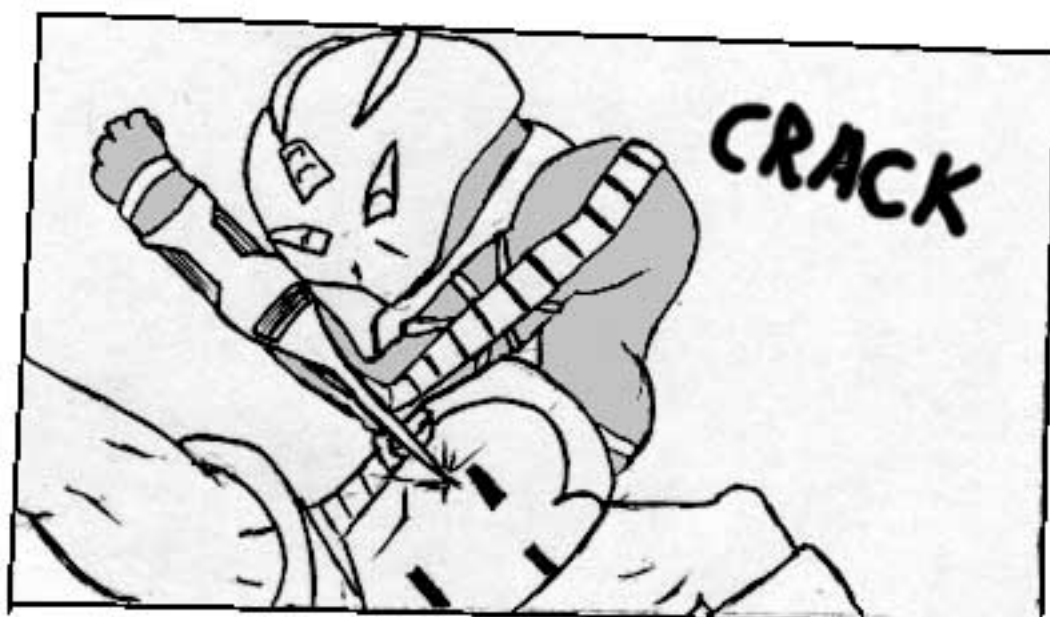
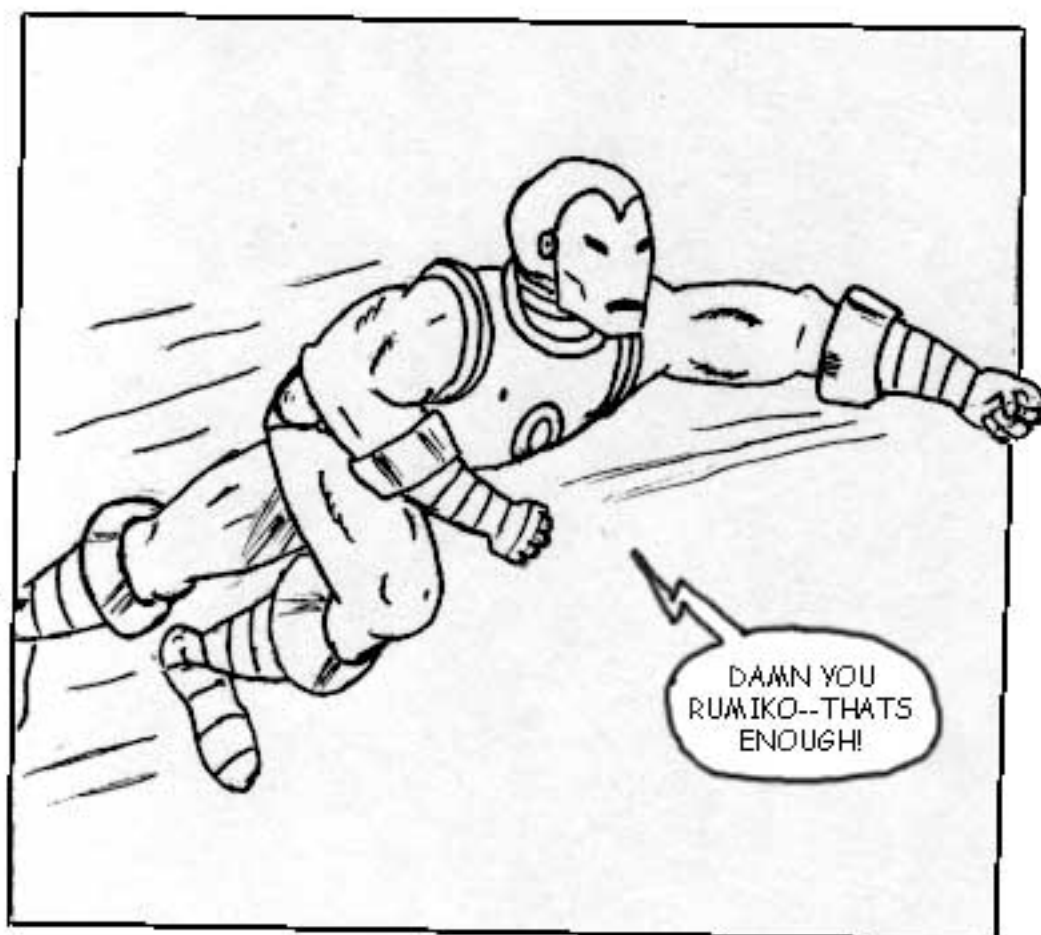
IRON MAN
YOU ARE THE
SABOTUER!

RHODEY
IS THAT--

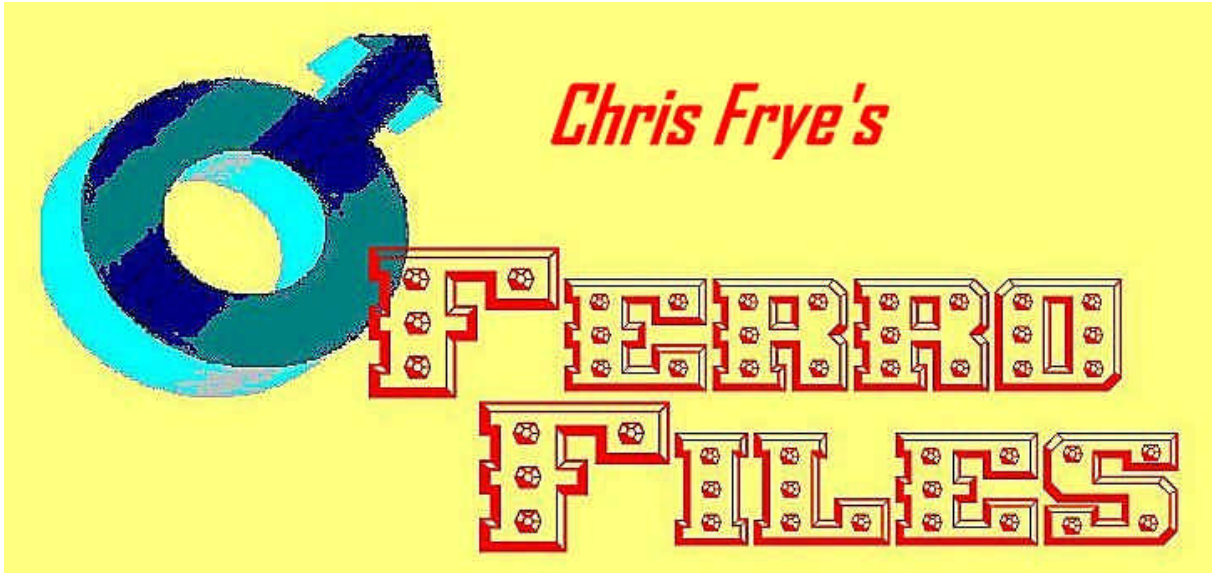
THE EILODON
WARWEAR!
BUT HOW?







TO BE CONTINUED IN PART 3 OF THE RETURN!
Rumiko continues to beat 'ol Shell Head senseless. And find out just how Ru became bonded with the WarWear! Don't Miss it!



□ GREETINGS FELLOW FERROPHILES... WHAT WITH EVERYTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, IT HAS BEEN A TRYING TIME FOR OUR COUNTRY. DESPITE THE FACT THAT SUPERHEROES LIKE IRON MAN WERE NOT THERE TO PREVENT WHAT HAPPENED, OUR NATION CONTINUES TO RECOVER FROM THE GRIEVOUS WOUNDS IT SUFFERED BECAUSE OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF REAL HEROES. HEROES WHO HAVE STEPPED FORWARD TO UPHOLD, DEFEND AND PROTECT THE PEOPLE AND IDEALS THAT MAKE THIS COUNTRY GREAT.



LET US NOT FORGET THOSE WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES, THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED LOSS OR THOSE WHO HAVE SELFLESSLY GIVEN OF THEMSELVES TO MOVE THE U.S. FORWARD TOWARD RECOVERY.



LET US ALSO NOT FORGET THAT WE ARE "...ONE NATION, UNDER GOD, INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL..." A NATION OF DEMOCRACY, TOLERANCE AND FREEDOM MADE UP OF A MELTING POT OF PEOPLE. PEOPLE WHOSE DREAMS, BELIEFS AND LIFESTYLES MAY DIFFER FROM OUR OWN, BUT WHO SHARE THE BELIEFS THAT WE, AS AMERICANS, HOLD DEAR: THAT "LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS" ARE "INALIENABLE" RIGHTS OF ALL ITS PEOPLE.

Now, onto our exclusive interview with newly appointed Iron Man Editor, Tom Brevoort:



Tell us a little about yourself. Who is Tom Brevoort? How did you get your start in comics? With Marvel?

I started reading comics in 1973 at the age of six. My first comic was SUPERMAN #268, and I was a dedicated DC reader for the first couple of years, particularly of the Julie Schwartz-edited titles. *The Flash* remains my favorite super hero. Eventually, after some false starts that put me off the company, I started reading Marvel books regularly in 1977, beginning with my favorite series, *FANTASTIC FOUR*. The first *Iron Man* story I read was the first one from *TOS #39*, reprinted in *SON OF ORIGINS OF MARVEL COMICS*, which I borrowed from my local library. I had seen Iron Man before that, though, on reruns of the *1965 MARVEL SUPER HEROES* cartoons. The first off-the-stands issue of *IRON MAN* I bought was #111, which wasn't really the best place to come in, but things got better within a couple of months.

Professionally, I was a college intern with Marvel in the summer of 1989, and was thereafter hired as an assistant editor in the special projects division in the winter of 1989--I've been there ever since.



I'm curious Tom, do Editors read comics outside of what they edit? Or to put it another way, are you a comic fan/geek?

It varies from person to person, editor to editor, obviously. In my own case, I read an obscene number of comics every month. While I'm usually about a month to a month and a half behind at any given time, I'm reading virtually the entire Marvel and DC output on a regular basis. I get a comp bundle from both companies for free every week or two--and I'm buying other stuff off the racks beyond that.

Since I'm answering this on a Wednesday night, I can tell you that earlier today I hit Jim Hanley's Universe in the shadow of the Empire State Building and bought five items:

MURDER ME DEAD #8, PANTHEON #9, STAN LEE'S SUPERMAN, ALTER-EGO #10 (though my comp copy from Roy Thomas arrived in the mail by the time I got home--I'm terrible about waiting for the Twomorrows magazines, though, and inevitably buy a copy off the stands if I see one there before by comp or subscription copy comes in) and the **FAWCETT COMPANION TPB**. And this doesn't take into account the small stack of back issues I add to on a regular basis--right now, I've got a few old **TALES OF SUSPENSE** from the Monster-era sitting there (Klagg!) as well as most of the **AMETHYST** limited series, a stack of **BRAIN BOY** issues, and a few other random Marvel and DC back issues from the 60s.



We see your name in the letter column and in the credit boxes, what exactly does an Editor do (besides give their assistant plenty to keep them busy;)?

The analogy I use to explain the job to people is that it's like being a combination of the coach and the manager of a ball club. I don't play in the game, but I get to decide who does, and what order they bat in, and what positions they'll play. I can call the plays if I so desire. I can bring in a substitute, or bench a player. I decide what the team uniforms will look like, and I'm responsible for getting the club to the stadium on time for every game, and in a condition to hit the field looking and playing like a ball club. I recruit new players. I make sure everybody gets paid. And I keep score.

To give one or two specifically **IRON MAN**-related examples from recent days, within the last week and a half I spoke with **Mike Grell** about what I thought was a structural weakness in **IRON MAN #51**'s plot, and we agreed on what needed to be done in the way of a rewrite. I spoke with **Michael Ryan** about an artistic technique he wants to try out on a section of #50, and tried to assure him that it was working well. I exchanged e-mails and thoughts with **Greg Horn** about his cover painting for **IRON MAN #50**, as we fine-tune it to make every element as sharp as we'd like it to be.

I figured out who was going to end up illustrating #48 when it became apparent that we were too under the gun schedule-wise to be able to hold the line for **Keron** and still ship on time. I spoke with **Frank** about his plot for the silent issue, #49, and we agreed on adding an additional page at the end to allow him the space he'd need to wrap up the issue visually, since there won't be any text to fall back on. I had the Bullpen perform a minor art correction on a panel in #47, adding in a character's gloves where necessary. And so on and so on.



What titles do you currently edit?

I currently edit **AVENGERS, THOR, THUNDERBOLTS, CAPTAIN MARVEL, IRON MAN, FANTASTIC FOUR, DEFENDERS, SPIDER-GIRL, HULK** through #33, **AVENGERS: CELESTIAL QUEST, FF: WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS MAGAZINE, THOR: GODSTORM, AVENGERS/JLA**, the upcoming **INFINITY ABYSS** and **HULK: THE END**, this year's three new **MARVEL MASTERWORKS**, and a bunch of other projects that are still in the pipeline awaiting official approval.



How long have you been affiliated with *Iron Man*? How long do you hope to remain with the character?

By affiliated, I assume you're asking how long I've been reading the book in one form or another. Since 1978, as I mentioned earlier. And I'd hope to remain with the title until the point where I've got nothing left to give to the series or say about the character--whether that ends up being two weeks or ten years.



We know Mike Grell and Michael Ryan are the new team for *Iron Man*, but can you tell us who else you considered for the new creative team?

A bunch of guys got idly talked about, but both **Mike** and **Michael** were the first guys I actually called and spoke to about

their respective disciplines. Beyond that, I don't think there's any reason to run down the names that somebody might have suggested during the period when we knew we'd be looking for a new team on the series. That'll just lead to those unhappy with the selection either now or when #50 comes out going: "Why didn't that dope hire so-and-so instead? He said he would be thinking about it!" I figure I'm going to hear enough of that about **Dave and Bob** regardless.



What affinity do you have for the character(s) of Tony Stark / Iron Man?

The same sort of affinity I have for most of the original, classic Marvel characters, which is that they tend to come from very different backgrounds than myself. (I've never really had to worry about managing millions of dollars or juggling my supermodel social calendar). But they've got essential human traits that make them relatable in a direct, human way.

In the case of **Tony**, he's the guy who seems to have everything. But secretly, underneath, he's grappling with an enormous vulnerability--and whether that vulnerability stems from a bad heart, an alcohol problem, a shattered spine or the guilt and responsibility he feels for the purposes the weapons he once manufactured were used for is almost irrelevant. And on the kid-cool level, **Iron Man** is among the most plausible super heroes-- he puts on state-of-the-art equipment and can do incredible things. What is **Iron Man** (about) to you? (i.e. is it primarily about Stark or about his Armor?)

This is the area in which I think so many people have gone wrong writing **Iron Man**, to one degree or another. Like all of the other archetypal Marvel characters of the 60's (and unlike their DC shelf mates of the period, who tended to be almost exclusively defined by their powers rather than their individual characterization), **IRON MAN** isn't about the powers or the weapons. It's about the individual, and the life he leads and the choices he makes. And that's **Tony Stark**. More than most series, **IRON MAN**'s fallen into the trap of trying to replace

Tony as the lead--largely because his background as an affluent young-middle-age white guy with a pro-corporate, pro-government background is seen by so many as being potentially alienating to the overall audience. (And, of course, it's a lot easier to replace **Tony** than, say, **Spider-Man**--you just have to put somebody else into the suit.) Sure, you can do this for a brief period, but only to underscore the fundamental truth of the series: **Tony Stark is Iron Man**.

Mike and I have spoken a bit about the fact that, in many ways, **Tony** rates the moniker **Iron Man** regardless of the armor. So our entire focus going into #50 and the future is to make **Tony** a strong, vibrant, compelling character again, whether he's in the armor or not. Expect to see more of **Tony** outside of the suit in the immediate future--and, hopefully, if we've done our job right, those sequences in a given issue when he goes out in the armor will carry more weight and impact to them.



All-time favorite Iron Man storyline?

I'm more apt to select a period than a specific storyline. I'd have to say that my two favorite periods would have to be the first **Dave and Bob** run, and the **Stan and Gene Colan** era. I'm also quite fond of the issue where the **Mandarin** tied **Iron Man** to the giant wheel, and then told him his origin and master plan.



Favorite supporting character?

Tough to call without qualifying a little bit. I always liked **Rhodey**, but I think he's damaged goods in a way now that he's been **Iron Man** himself, and then **War Machine**. I liked him best as **Tony's** friend and confidant, the guy who brought a more blue-collar everyman point of view to the table.

Unfortunately, whenever he shows up in the book these days, everybody starts asking when he's going to put on a suit of armor and fight the bad guys. He's seen as a super hero now, rather than as an ordinary guy.

I like most of the rest of the cast as well--**Happy** and **Pepper**, **Bethany Cabe**, **Jarvis** whenever he's around, the long-departed **Jasper Sitwell**, and so forth.



Favorite villain?

Another tough call. **Iron Man** doesn't have the greatest rogue's gallery in the world, and many of his main opponents over the years have been so connected to then-current events. There are plenty of solid villains, but most of them need some rethinking to make them work for today (the **Mandarin** is a good example). So **Mike** and I are talking about trying to create a new major foe for **Tony**--and hopefully that guy will be my favorite.



Favorite armor?

I never would have changed the refined red-and-gold. I liked the pointy-helmeted version as well. And I'm pretty pleased with our new refit.



If you could only choose 3 words to describe Tony Stark, what would they be?

Innovative, Passionate, Isolated. Good question.



What contribution do you hope to make to Shellhead's legacy during your tenure as the character's editor?

A bunch of good stories, mainly, combining the best elements of the past with new ideas and approaches that nobody's thought of yet, that'll make people wish for a return to this era a decade from now.



As part of your editorial duties, how are you planning to keep Shellhead relevant to both old and new fans, as well as increase his marketplace visibility in general?

I thought I'd give him a whole cadre of armored helpmates in color-coded armors of their own...

Seriously, it's all about telling good, strong, accessible stories that cut to the heart of what makes the character unique, told in a vibrant, modern, forward-looking manner. If the book is good, people will talk and people will come.



Why do you feel Tony Stark / Iron Man endured, as a character for almost 40 years?

Stripping everything else away, it's a simple premise: the guy who seems to have everything but whose secret handicap distances him from others, who through the strength of his own intellect and vision creates and maintains the technological marvel that allows him to rise above himself and his role in life and make a direct difference in the world--to be his own better self. More plausible and relatable than finding a magic hammer or surviving a bomb detonation.




What is your vision for *Iron Man* in the future?

The same thing, only different. The specific element I'd like to see more of--one of the things that always distinguished **IRON MAN** in the past--is politicism.

IRON MAN was the Marvel series most directly relevant to the social and political landscape of its day when it began. **Spider-Man** fought glorified thugs, the **Fantastic Four** battled indescribably menaces--but **Iron Man** dealt in espionage, world powers jockeying for position and prominence. **Tony Stark** was a Kennedy/Camelot-era man--a patriotic go-getter whose wealth and prominence put him into a position where he could strive to make things better for the world around him.


The political slant kind of got lost in the 70s, when being an establishment man and making weapons for the government went out of vogue. I'd like to bring it back in a way, bearing in mind that the world scene is vastly different today than it was

then. I want to see **Tony** and **Iron Man** grapple less with colorful super-villains, and more with real-world issues and concerns- playing up the fact that **Iron Man** is the most plausible of the mainstream Marvel characters, and placing him in a world that's similarly more plausible than fantastical.

 I think Tom Brevoort's done an exceptional job picking artists for the books he edits: Pérez and Davis on Avengers, Romita and Kubert on Thor. I have been particularly impressed with his fill-in artist choices: Mike McKone, Jim Starlin and Stuart Immonen on Thor, with some covers by Barry Windsor-Smith, as well as Ordway and Immonen on Avengers, among others. I know it's early in his run as editor of Iron Man, but is there any chance some of the above-mentioned will be pulling fill-in duty on Iron Man?

Depends on the timing of things, but I don't see why not. I try to get the best person I can for the job, depending on availability. For instance--and this will no doubt horrify some of you and delight others--I've currently got **Kia Asamiya** working on a cover for an upcoming issue, which should be pretty durned cool.

In general, though, I'm hoping not to need all that much help in terms of fill-in artists (particularly since **Iron Mike** is such a tremendous artist in his own right, and will certainly be doing his share of covers--and will likely be the first guy who's asked if we look like we need a guy to jump in and help out.)

 At the risk of irritating you, I'd (Scott) be curious to know if Tom knows if Mike Grell is an Iron Man continuity buff, or have you given him free reign to forge a largely new path for Shellhead?

Mike read **IRON MAN** in the 60s, but hasn't really followed all that many comics on a regular basis in the last batch of years. So he's familiar with the character, but not every detail of the history that might have been established. That's where I come in. **Mike**'s certainly been brought up to speed--we sent him virtually every issue of the v.3 run when he took the

assignment, and hopefully I can answer any other major questions about what has come before that crop up, and avoid any major mistakes. But I expect not to have to worry too much, in that **Mike** traditionally tends to march forward on the strips he writes, rather than plumbing the continuity of the past too much for older material to build on.

If you're waiting for somebody to follow up on a subplot that was started years ago and then dropped, **Mike's** probably not your guy--but hopefully the direction he moves in will be interesting enough and compelling enough that you'll want to come along.

He'll certainly be doing types of stories you've never really seen in **IRON MAN** before. For example, **Mike's** second story, in #51-52, is primarily a murder mystery, with **Iron Man** operating on more of a street level than you're used to seeing him at.



Would you have any reservations about bringing fan-favorite writer Dave Michelinie in to write *Iron Man* sometime in the future? A fill in maybe?

No, depending on the story and the circumstances. I've pontificated often enough on my feelings about trying to recapture the past on a monthly book--that statistically, it's a futile gesture. There aren't many creators who've done two regular stints on an ongoing title where the second run was superior to their first. So I'm always looking to try to put together the great team of tomorrow, rather than reuniting the great team of yesterday.

That said, that really only goes for ongoing monthly series assignments (and even then I wouldn't rule anybody out completely--that's just not the direction I'm most apt to look in first). I'd be entirely open to new **IRON MAN** stories or projects by **Dave**, or **Bob Layton**, or anybody that's worked on the character in the past. And those pitches will be judged on the merits of the story being proposed. But as can clearly be seen from **AVENGERS** over the last four years, where I've had side

projects done by **Roger Stern, Steve Englehart, Roy Thomas**, etc., I'm not averse to seeing those creators who have a history with a character or a series do something new, provided there's still something there to say.



What do you think of Advanced Iron?

It seems like a real labor of love for those involved with it, which is nice. **Iron Man** was never my favorite character--I liked him, but really no more or less so than most everybody else--but it's nice to experience the passion of those for whom he was.



Do you consider the RUST site (a critique page for dedicated ferrophiles) a fringe group?

I'm afraid I'm not familiar enough with it to be able to render an informed verdict on the subject. I've never so much as been over there, nor do I even know where it is. Sorry.

Where Are They Now?

As a special supplement to this issue's Ferro-files, I'm proud to introduce "Where Are They Now," an interview with former **Iron Man** contributors. This first edition of "WATN" features an interview with former **Iron Man** artist **Jerry Bingham**.

Jerry was the penciler on **Iron Man** for issues 130-136, and included Shellhead's **unforgettable battle with Ol' Jade Genes himself- the Incredible Hulk**. His credits also include a veritable Who's Who of comic book icons, as well as numerous industry awards and accolades.

Now, on to our chat...

1. How did you get your start in the comics industry? With Marvel?

I started out in the comics industry at the age of twelve. That's when I decided that I wanted to draw comics more than anything in the world. When I was discharged from the Air Force in 1976 at the age of 23, I spent nearly a year beating my head against the doors of the comic industry, and eventually I was taken in by a veteran comic book inker named **Dan Adkins**. A quirky guy who never pronounced my last name correctly, and who I will be forever grateful to. I moved into the apartment downstairs from him and he showed me the many things I was doing wrong with my art, and he continually told me I would never make it in comics, that art can't be taught- that "You either have it or you don't...and just look at these **Buscema** sketches, Bingham, you'll never be that good... etc." Well he was right about that part; Buscema remains out of

reach for me, but I was able to make it in comics, for a time.

Despite all his discouragement, I think he (Adkins) realized I wasn't going to shrivel up and go away, so he took me into New York with him, and introduced me to the folks at Marvel and DC.

He helped me get my first paying gig up at Marvel from then editor-in-chief, **Archie Goodwin**. Admittedly, my work was pretty primitive back then, but I was disappointed that the book I slaved over for more than a month, was stuck in a drawer and not printed...for about six years. Then my **Kazar** came out just in time to embarrass the slightly improved me.

2. How long did you stay in the field?

I ended up working in the comic book industry for over twenty-five years. Mostly bouncing from title to title, from company to company. In that time, I got the chance to draw most of my childhood heroes, **Spiderman, Capt. America, the Hulk, the Thing, Batman**, and many others, and oh yes, **Iron Man**.

3. Can you tell us some (behind-the-scenes) stories from your time on Iron Man?

I'm afraid I don't have too many behind-the-scenes stories about my time on **Iron Man**. I was young, and inexperienced, and it was my first regular series (for all of six issues). It was a time when all I wanted to draw was action-packed stories, like the **Kirby** books I fell in love with, and wouldn't you know it, one of the first things the writer said to me when I took over the book was, that every third book was to be almost exclusively about **Tony Stark**.

Well, I was more than a little disappointed and hated drawing comics about playboys battling alcoholism. It's hard for me to knock the writer; it was his thing, not mine, and he made a pretty good rep and his books of **Iron Man** sold pretty well back then, so he must have been doing it right. It just wasn't for me. I loved drawing **Shellhead**, though. He's a great character, and as a child, my favorite comic was always the **Tales of Suspense** with **Cap** and **Iron Man**.

4. Besides Iron Man, were there any other titles you worked on during your tenure in comics?

After I left the book, the editors at Marvel bounced me from title to title, never more than a couple books in a row, until I got frustrated and left the company (Marvel). That's when I locked myself up for a year and translated the poem **Beowulf** into a graphic novel. I was a student of mythology and literature and I thought I could teach the kids where so many of their popular heroes like **Robert E. Howard's** and **J.R.R. Tolkien's** characters originated.

I was somewhat vindicated when **Beowulf** became a best seller for First Comics, and that year won the **Kirby Award** for best graphic album. Another eye-opener came when I discovered that the people running First Comics were less than upstanding citizens. I never received a royalty check until my lawyer sent them a threatening letter. He wrote a lot of letters for me the next few years.

After my experience with First, I went to work for DC Comics on a graphic novel. "**Batman: Son of the Demon**" was a best seller for DC, even at an inflated cover price, a price that some at the company thought would never sell. The book won the **Golden Apple Award** that year,

bought me a used Corvette and helped me with the down payment on a house... (and I found I could no longer get hired after that.

5. What made you decide to leave the field of comics?

One of those quirky things about the comic book industry: Art styles change; new, younger editors get hired, and they want to find their own superstars. Who knows the reason why. It's something most of us have to prepare for. Artists I grew up buying: **Carmine Infantino**, **Curt Swan**, even the great **Jack Kirby**, had difficulty selling after a new audience became infatuated with a slicker art style. And so it goes, every decade or so tastes change. And the comic companies are quick to latch onto the hot new styles— after all, they're here to make money, art is just a by-product. Frankly, I'm almost glad I got out of the industry before they made me draw Anime.

6. After perusing your website, it would appear that there is more to Jerry Bingham than M.I.A. comic book artist. Can you tell us a little bit about what you have been doing since you left the comics field?

But I always had one foot out the door. While I was drawing comics, I was painting sci-fi paperback covers, and magazine illos. Then, once I moved to California, my focus centered on the movie industry. I worked in theme parks: I was art director of attractions at **Disney Imagineering**, and a principle designer for the **Disney Quest** facilities. I designed the recent **Disney Store** at the California expansion project. I tried a little animation, and won an **Emmy Award** for Background Designer for "**Todd MacFarlane's Spawn**" for HBO. I've been production designer on a number of independent films.

(Ed. Note- check out Jerry's résumé at www.jerrybingham.com/resume.html.)

This year, the tragedy in NYC and DC spurred me to start up my very own **non-profit children support group**—check it out at <http://www.kidsamericanpride.org>.

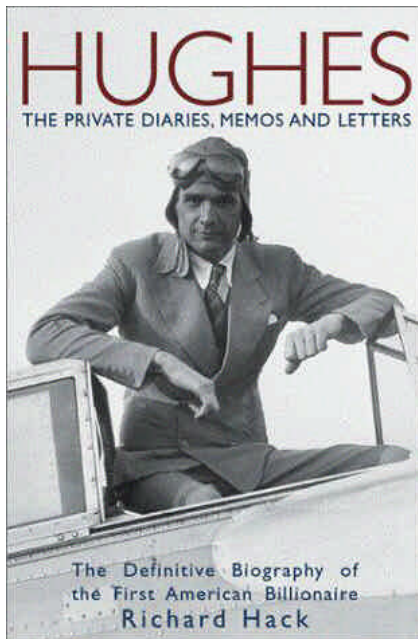
Thanks, Jerry. We at Advanced Iron appreciate your willingness to take the time to answer some of our questions about you and your career.

If you'd like to find out more about former **Iron Man** artist Jerry Bingham and his current activities, check out his website at <http://www.jerrybingham.com>.









A QUICK FOLLOW-UP NOTE: IN MY LAST COLUMN I MADE A COMPARISON BETWEEN TONY STARK'S **JUPITER LANDING VEHICLE (JLV)** AND HOWARD HUGHES' **SPRUCE GOOSE**. LET IT BE KNOWN THAT THE INTEREST IN AND FASCINATION WITH HOWARD HUGHES (CONTINUES IN A NEW BIOGRAPHY (SEPTEMBER 2001), **HUGHES: THE PRIVATE DIARIES, MEMOS AND LETTERS** BY RICHARD HACK. THE BLURB ON THE BOOK'S COVER TOUTS: "THE DEFINITIVE BIOGRAPHY OF THE FIRST AMERICAN MILLIONAIRE."

A MATTER OF FORCE

OF ALL THE ARMORED VILLAINS IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE WHO COULD HAVE BEEN THE FOCAL POINT OF THE "STARK WARS" ("ARMOR WARS I") FEATURED IN **IRON MAN 225-232** (1988-1989), THE CHARACTER OF **FORCE** WAS SELECTED TO FILL

THAT ROLE BY WRITER **DAVID MICHELINI** AND CO-PLOTTER & INK ARTIST **BOB LAYTON**. **FORCE**, YOU WILL RECALL, WAS A TOP OPERATING AGENT FOR **JUSTIN HAMMER** WHO ULTIMATELY TURNED AGAINST HIS BOSS AND REQUESTED ASYLUM FROM TONY STARK IN **IRON MAN 223-224** (1988). UPON EXAMINATION OF **FORCE**'S ARMOR, TONY LEARNED THAT SOME OF THE BATTLESUIT'S KEY TECHNOLOGY WAS OF STARK'S OWN DESIGN. (HANGING IN MY OFFICE IS THE FRAMED ORIGINAL ART PAGE FROM **IRON MAN #225** WHERE TONY MAKES THIS DISCOVERY.)



CREATED BY WORDSMITH **STEVE GERBER** AND PENCILER **DON HECK**, FORCE STARTED OUT AS A LAUGHABLY FORGETTABLE ROGUE IN **SUB-MARINER 68** (1973). **CLAYTON WILSON** WAS A LAB ASSISTANT FOR EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY'S PROFESSOR DAMON WALTHERS, A SCIENTIST WHOSE DEDICATION TO THE STUDY OF FORCE FIELDS RESULTED IN THE CREATION OF A FORCE-FIELD EMITTING DEVICE. WILSON TOOK THE GADGET AND INCORPORATED IT INTO HOPELESSLY CORNY AND HILARIOUSLY UNATTRACTIVE YELLOW, ORANGE AND GREEN COSTUME, WHICH VERY MUCH RESEMBLED THE ONE SPORTED BY THE **UNICORN** (OR KING TUT). DURING A SLUGFEST

WITH NAMOR, FORCE'S SUIT BECOMES DAMAGED, PROMPTING HIM TO FLEE AT TOP SPEED AND AFTERWARDS UTTER THREATS FROM A DISTANCE.

FORCE WOULDN'T APPEAR AGAIN UNTIL **IRON MAN 140-141** (1980), BY **MICHELINÉ**, **LAYTON**, AND **JOHN ROMITA JR.**, WHEREIN WE LEARN OF HIS INITIAL CONNECTION WITH JUSTIN HAMMER. THIS RETOOLED FORCE, HOWEVER, IS BOASTING A MENACING BRAND NEW ARMOR METICULOUSLY RENDERED BY BOB LAYTON. INSTILLED WITH YOUTHFUL CONFIDENCE AND VIGOR, WILSON NOW REFERS TO HIMSELF AS **DEADLY FORCE**.

DAVID MICHELINÉ GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS CENTERING AROUND THE CHARACTER OF FORCE.

DAVID'S PREFACE: "HERE ARE MY RESPONSES TO YOUR QUESTIONS. AS I MENTION IN A COUPLE OF THE ANSWERS, MEMORY IS NOT EXACTLY RAZOR-SHARP AFTER 15-20 YEARS, BUT I'VE RECOUNTED THINGS AS ACCURATELY AS I CAN UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES."
SIGNED: HIMSELF, THE DAVID.

KALIBABKY: **SPYMASTER** WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR STEALING STARK'S TECHNOLOGY AND SELLING IT TO HAMMER, WHO HAD IT INSTALLED IN FORCE'S ARMOR, WHERE IT WAS DISCOVERED BY TONY IN **IRON MAN #225**, "STARK WARS," (CHAPTER I. BUT EVEN BEFORE ALL THAT OCCURRED, HOW AND WHY DID YOU AND **BOB LAYTON** DECIDE TO REUSE SUCH A PATHETIC CHARACTER AS THE "SUB-MARINER" FORCE IN **IRON MAN 140-141**? WHY DIDN'T YOU TWO JUST CREATE AN ALL-NEW,



HIGH-POWERED BADDIE? WHY'D YOU BOTHER WITH (LAYTON WILSON)? ACTUALLY, THIS GERBER-HECK RENDITION OF FORCE IS SO DREADFULLY BAD IT'S IN SOME WAYS GOOD -- IS THAT CALLED NOSTALGIA? AND TO BE FAIR, FORCE DID APPEAR ON THE COVER OF **SUB-MARINER 68**.

MICHELINIE: ACTUALLY, IT'S CALLED "UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES." AT THE TIME, IT WAS COMMON FOR WRITERS AT MARVEL TO CREATE ONE-SHOT VILLAINS WHEN THEY NEEDED SOMEONE FOR THEIR HEROES TO FIGHT, AND THE STORY DIDN'T REQUIRE A SPECIFIC VILLAIN. I DID IT ANY NUMBER OF TIMES MYSELF. IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES IT CAN BE MORE EFFICIENT TO DREAM UP A MISCELLANEOUS GUY WITH GENERAL POWERS TO FILL A COUPLE OF PAGES THAN IT IS TO BRING IN AN ESTABLISHED VILLAIN AND THUS HAVE TO DEAL WITH CONTINUITY, PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED MOTIVATIONS, ETC. AS A RESULT, MARVEL'S LANDSCAPE WAS LITTERED WITH SECOND-STRING, ONE-SHOT VILLAINS. ONE OF THE MAIN GOALS THAT BOB AND I HAD IN OUR INITIAL RUN ON **IRON MAN** WAS TO BOLSTER THE TITLE'S **ROGUES GALLERY**, WHICH WE FELT WASN'T PARTICULARLY STRONG AT THE TIME. AND ONE WAY TO DO THAT WAS TO TAKE ALREADY INTRODUCED BAD-GUYS THAT NO ONE CARED ABOUT (AND THEREFORE WEREN'T BEING USED BY ANY OTHER WRITERS/EDITORS), AND KICK 'EM UP A NOTCH. "**FORCE**" WAS A SIMPLE BUT POWERFUL NAME, THE UTILIZATION OF FORCE FIELDS WAS A POWER THAT HAD POTENTIAL, AND THE CHARACTER'S SECOND-STRING STATUS MADE HIM A PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR JUSTIN HAMMER'S MODUS OPERANDI. SO WE BROUGHT HIM INTO THE **IRON MAN UNIVERSE** TO SEE WHAT WE COULD DO WITH HIM.

KALIBABKY: HOW DID YOU AND BOB WORK OUT THE COMPLETE REDESIGN OF THE FORCE BATTLE-SUIT? YOU KEPT THE SAME COLOR SCHEME. THE NEW HEAD-ENCLOSING HELMET INCLUDES GIANT-SIZED "VISION PORTS" THAT REALLY MAKE THE CHARACTER APPEAR THREATENING. THE FUNNY "**F**" LOGO ON HIS CHEST IS TERRIFIC.

MICHELINIE: I HAD VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH CHARACTER DESIGN WHILE WRITING THE SERIES; THAT WAS USUALLY SOMETHING WORKED OUT BETWEEN BOB AND SUPER-PENCILLER JOHN ROMITA, JR. (AND LATER, **MARK BRIGHT** AND/OR **BUTCH GUICE**). THE ONLY TIME I EVER HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH CHARACTER DESIGN WAS WHEN THERE WAS SOMETHING SPECIFIC TO THE STORY THAT NEEDED TO BE ESTABLISHED VISUALLY, AND THEN BOB AND I WOULD DISCUSS IT IN PLOT SESSIONS. IN THE CASE OF FORCE, AS FAR AS I KNOW, THE DESIGN WAS BOB'S ALONE.

KALIBABKY: AFTER HIS INITIAL REAPPEARANCE IN **IM #140-141**, DID YOU INTEND TO USE FORCE AS AN ONGOING VILLAIN IN **IRON MAN**? SEEMS TO ME THAT WITH HIS CONNECTIONS TO HAMMER, FORCE WOULD BE A CONTINUOUS THREAT TO SHELLHEAD, WITH CONSTANT UPGRADES TO HIS ARMOR. BY THE WAY, IS IT TRUE THAT THE NAME "HAMMER" IS A TRIBUTE TO ACTOR **PETER CUSHING**, WHO STARRED IN A NUMBER OF THE BRITISH HORROR FILMS MADE BY **HAMMER STUDIOS**?

MICHELINIE: BOB AND I ARE BOTH HUGE FANS OF PETER CUSHING. AND, YES, THE CHARACTER OF **JUSTIN HAMMER** WAS MODELED ON THE LATE ACTOR FROM THE START,

BOTH PHYSICALLY AND PERSONALITY-WISE. IF YOU'LL READ HAMMER'S DIALOGUE WITH CUSHING'S SILKY SMOOTH DELIVERY IN MIND, IT WILL ADD TO THE EXPERIENCE IMMENSELY. AS FOR MAKING **FORCE** AN ONGOING VILLAIN, OUR GOAL (AS STATED IN A PREVIOUS ANSWER) WAS TO CONSTRUCT A STRONG ROGUES GALLERY FOR **IRON MAN**. SO EVERY VILLAIN WE CREATED OR REVITALIZED WAS INTENDED AS A RECURRING THREAT FOR FUTURE STORIES. EVEN IF WE KILLED THEM OFF. (HEH, HEH...)



KALIBABKY: FORCE FIRST EMPLOYED AN **€.M.P.** (ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE) IN **IRON MAN #224** TO DAMPEN THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS USED BY **BLACKLASH**, **BLIZZARD**, AND THE **BEEBLE**. IT TOOK DOWN **IRON MAN'S** SYSTEMS AS WELL. FORCE'S ARMOR WAS OBVIOUSLY SHIELDED AND THEREFORE REMAINED IN OPERATION. IN **IRON MAN #231**, TONY UNVEILED NEW RED AND GOLD ARMOR, WHICH INCLUDED AN **€.M.P.** GENERATOR. HOWEVER, THE NEW ARMOR WAS SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE EFFECTS OF THE GENERATOR AS DEMONSTRATED WHEN **IRON MAN** DAMPENED **FIREPOWER'S** SYSTEMS WHILE ATTEMPTING TO DEFUSE A DAMAGED MISSILE. WHY DIDN'T THE NEW **IRON MAN** ARMOR INCLUDE SHIELDING TO PROTECT IT FROM ITS OWN **€.M.P.** EMISSIONS? SURELY, TONY COULD HAVE IMPROVED UPON FORCE'S ANTI-**€.M.P.**

TECHNOLOGY AND SUBSEQUENTLY ADDED IT TO HIS NEW ARMOR DESIGN?

MICHELINIE: AH, GOOD POINT. NEXT QUESTION! (AH-EM!) SINCE THE SITUATION YOU REFER TO OCCURRED SOME FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT I DON'T REMEMBER ALL OF THE SPECIFICS INVOLVED. ASSUMING THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF OUR ACTUALLY HAVING SCREWED UP (AH-EM, AGAIN), I'D POSTULATE THAT THE **€.M.P.** THAT **IRON MAN'S** NEW ARMOR GENERATED WAS VASTLY MORE INTENSE THAN THE ONE **FORCE** PRODUCED, THAT HE WAS SHIELDED AGAINST EXTERIOR **€.M.P.'S** BUT THAT HIS OWN WAS SO POWERFUL AND ITS PROXIMITY SO GREAT THAT HIS INTERNAL SHIELDING WAS ONLY PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST IT, ALLOWING IT TO TEMPORARILY DAMPEN HIS OWN ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS. AND YOU CAN TAKE THAT ANSWER TO THE BANK OF SURETY -- BETTER KNOWN AS, "B.S.!"

KALIBABKY: WHO CAME UP WITH IDEA OF USING AN **€.M.P.** IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND FROM WHERE DID THE IDEA ORIGINATE? ALSO, WERE THERE ANY FEATURES THAT WERE CONSIDERED FOR THE NEW ARMOR FROM **IRON MAN #231** BUT DIDN'T MAKE IT INTO THE FINAL DESIGN? (THE NEW SUIT DID CONTAIN AN ENERGY SIPHON-SHIELD, IMPROVED PULSE BOLTS, AN ENHANCED REPULSOR TRACKING SYSTEM, AND GREATER

MAN-EVNERABILITY.) I DID NOTICE ONE COSMETIC CHANGE THAT OCCURRED WITH THE "IM #231 ARMOR": THE SHOULDERS AT FIRST WERE SOLID, THEN BECAME WING-LIKE AND STUCK OUT, AND NOT TOO LONG AFTERWARD BECAME SOLID AGAIN. WHY THE BACK-AND-FORTH MODIFICATION?

MICHELINIE: I HAVE NO IDEA WHO CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF USING AN E.M.P. BUT I ASSUME IT WAS BOB, SINCE HE'S MORE OF A SCIENCE READER THAN I AM. (I LIKE NOVELS. PREFERABLY SHORT ONES.) THERE MAY HAVE BEEN OTHER FEATURES WE INTENDED FOR THE #231 ARMOR AND DIDN'T GET TO USE IMMEDIATELY. I DON'T RECALL SPECIFICS, BUT I'D BET THAT WE DID USE THEM ALL EVENTUALLY. THAT'S ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF NOT PUBLISHING A SCHEMATIC THAT TELLS THE READER, "THIS IS EVERYTHING THE ARMOR CAN DO." AS FOR FLUCTUATING SHOULDER DESIGN, I ASSUME THAT WAS PROBABLY A FUNCTION OF THE "OOPS! FACTOR."

KALIBABKY: NOW THEN, WHY DID YOU AND BOB USE FORCE'S ARMOR AS THE KEY ELEMENT IN "STARK WARS," WHEN THERE ARE MANY ARMORS IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE TO CHOOSE FROM? (CERTAINLY FORCE'S DEFECTION FROM HAMMER'S EMPLOY SMACKS OF POETIC JUSTICE, BUT THERE HAD TO BE MORE TO IT THAN THAT?)

MICHELINIE: ACTUALLY, IT WAS JUST A CASE OF SIMPLE NARRATIVE EXPEDIENCY. TONY ALREADY HAD THE FORCE ARMOR IN HIS POSSESSION, SO ALL WE HAD TO DO WAS HAVE HIM EXAMINE IT (A LOGICAL THING FOR A CURIOUS INVENTOR TO DO) AND DISCOVER THE THEFT. THE STORY COULD THEN QUICKLY MOVE FORWARD FROM THERE. GENERATING AN ENTIRE INTRODUCTION STORY WHERE IRON MAN FIGHTS A MORE MAJOR VILLAIN AND SOMEHOW DISCOVERS HIS STOLEN TECHNOLOGY WOULD HAVE DELAYED THE START OF THE REAL STORY, AND SEEMED UNNECESSARY GIVEN THE ELEMENTS THAT WERE ALREADY IN PLACE.

KALIBABKY: DID YOU EVER FOR A FLEETING MOMENT CONSIDER HAVING DOCTOR DOOM'S ARMOR CONTAIN SOME OF THE STOLEN STARK TECHNOLOGY AND POSSIBLY HAVE IT LEAD TO THE THIRD INSTALLMENT OF THE "IRON MAN-DOOM/CAMELOT SAGA?"

MICHELINIE: I DON'T RECALL THAT WE EVER CONSIDERED DOOM. HIS SCIENTIFIC BRILLIANCE IS ON A PAR WITH BOTH TONY STARK AND REED RICHARDS, SO WHY WOULD HE HAVE TO BUY TECHNOLOGY FROM A COMMON BOOTLEGGER (AS HE WOULD SEE IT) LIKE SPYMASTER? AS FOR THE SECOND PART OF THE QUESTION, AN ASIDE: BOB AND I DID COME UP WITH A PLOT FOR A THIRD AND CONCLUDING IRON MAN/DR. DOOM (CAMELOT) STORYLINE, ONE THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE PRESENT. WE WERE EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH WHAT WE WORKED OUT AND SUBMITTED IT TO MARVEL AFTER THE BAD BLOOD MINI-SERIES. THE IRON MAN OFFICE NEVER GOT BACK TO US ABOUT IT; AS FAR AS I KNOW, THEY NEVER EVEN BOTHERED TO READ IT. (EDITOR'S NOTE: SAY WHA-A-A-AT??? CALLING TOM BREVOORT!!)

KALIBABKY: DURING THE CREATION OF "STARK WARS," DID YOU, BOB, AND MARK BRIGHT EVER SIT DOWN TOGETHER AND TALK OVER THE STORY ARC? IF NOT, HOW DID YOU (CORRESPOND, ETC.) WERE THERE ANY OTHER ARTISTS CONSIDERED FOR "STARK WARS?"

MICHELINI: HAVING TWO PERSONALITIES AGREE TO WHAT WORKS, WHAT'S FUNNY, ETC. IS TOUGH ENOUGH. TRYING TO GET THREE DISPARATE MINDS ON THE SAME WAYLENGTH IS HIGH IMPOSSIBLE. AS A RESULT, NEITHER ROMITA, JR. NOR BRIGHT (NOR GUICE) HAD VERY MUCH CONCEPTUAL INPUT INTO THE IRON MAN STORIES THAT BOB AND I PLOTTED. MARK WAS THE ASSIGNED PENCILLER ON IRON MAN AT THE TIME OF THE ARMOR WARS STORYLINE, SO THERE WASN'T A QUESTION OF CONSIDERING ANYONE ELSE.

KALIBABKY: YOU USED TO EDIT AND RESPOND TO LETTERS WRITTEN TO IRON MAN DURING YOUR AND BOB'S FIRST RUN ON THE TITLE. WHAT WAS THAT LIKE, AND WAS IT A COMMON PRACTICE AT MARVEL AT THAT TIME FOR WRITERS TO EDIT THE LETTERS PAGE?

MICHELINI: IT WAS, INDEED, A FAIRLY COMMON PRACTICE AT THE TIME. AND I ENJOYED IT QUITE A BIT. IT MEANT THAT I GOT TO READ EVERY LETTER THAT CAME IN TO THE TITLE (WHICH I THEN PASSED ALONG TO BOB), AND THAT MEANT THAT WE WERE OPEN TO MAXIMUM INPUT FROM THE PEOPLE WHO READ OUR STORIES. PLUS, I GOT THE CHANCE TO ACTUALLY ANSWER QUESTIONS AND CORRECT MISCONCEPTIONS FROM TIME TO TIME. THE PRACTICE ALSO SERVED TO LET READERS KNOW THAT THEIR COMMENTS WERE REACHING THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STORIES, AND HELPED TO CREATE A MORE PERSONAL CONNECTION WITH THE READERSHIP.

KALIBABKY: FUTURE COMICS WILL MAKE ITS DEBUT IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2002. SO FAR, TWO TITLES HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED, FREEMIND AND ST. SYNN. ARE THERE ANY IRON MAN-ESQUE CONCEPTS IN EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE BOOKS? GUESS I'M LOOKING FOR A "YES" OR "NO" RATHER THAN A "WHO" OR "WHAT." ALSO, WILL YOU BE APPEARING AT ANY COMIC CONS IN 2002 TO HELP GENERATE FAN INTEREST FOR FUTURE COMICS?

MICHELINI: FREEMIND IS BASED ON CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY, AND THE LEAD CHARACTER -- OR PERHAPS I SHOULD SAY, HALF OF THE LEAD CHARACTER -- IS A BRILLIANT MAN WITH LOTS OF MONEY. BUT ANY OTHER SIMILARITIES TO TONY STARK END THERE, AND VERY QUICKLY. THE ONLY SIMILARITIES THAT ST. SYNN HAS TO OUR IRON MAN RUNS ARE (AND PARDON ME WHILE I REMOVE MY "COAT OF FALSE MODESTY") GOOD STORIES AND GREAT CHARACTERS. THE BACKGROUND THERE IS MORE MYSTICAL THAN TECHNOLOGICAL. BOB AND DICK GIORDANO USUALLY ATTEND THE ORLANDO MEGA-CON EVERY YEAR, SINCE THEY'RE BOTH CURRENT FLORIDIANS. ASSUMING THE CON IS HELD IN MARCH AGAIN, AND WE ACTUALLY HAVE AT LEAST A FUTURE COMIC OUT BY THEN, I MIGHT JOIN THEM TO PROMOTE THE WORK. OTHER THAN THAT, I HAVE NO CURRENT APPEARANCES PLANNED.

KALIBABKY: ARE THERE ANY COMIC RUNS OR INDIVIDUAL COMIC STORIES YOU'VE

WRITTEN FOR ANY COMIC PUBLISHER THAT YOU FEEL FANS OF YOUR IRON MAN WORK MAY BE INTERESTED IN READING?

MICHELINIE: BOTH RAI (#1-8) AND THE H.A.R.D. CORPS (#1-16) FOR VALIANT DEALT WITH HIGH-TECH CONCEPTS. RAI HAD MORE OF A HARD SCIENCE EDGE, BUT I THINK H.A.R.D. CORPS HAD MORE LIKABLE CHARACTERS, AND MORE HUMOR. OTHER THAN THAT, NOTHING LEAPS IMMEDIATELY TO MIND. OH, I DID WRITE THREE ISSUES OF STEEL (#17-19) AT DC. HE WORE HIGH-TECH ARMOR. HE ALSO CARRIED A BIG HAMMER. DOES THAT COUNT...?

KALIBABKY: BOB LAJTON HAS HINTED ON HIS WEBSITE THAT HE'S HOPEFUL YOU AND HE MIGHT GET GET ANOTHER SHOT AT IRON MAN IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, AND IN A SENSE HE'S STILL WORKING ON OL' SHELLHEAD INDIRECTLY WHILE CURRENTLY INKING AVENGERS AND CAP. SO, SHOULD WE IRON FAITHFUL TAKE HEART? PERSONALLY, I THINK HE'S RIGHT.

MICHELINIE: I CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY EXTREMELY REMOTE, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY BECAUSE OF ANY RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF BOB OR MYSELF. SO MANY THINGS WOULD HAVE TO CHANGE, BOTH INDUSTRY ATTITUDES IN GENERAL AND MARVEL PERSONNEL IN PARTICULAR, TO BRING SUCH A THING ABOUT THAT I WOULD BE GENUINELY SURPRISED IF IT WERE TO OCCUR IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

KALIBABKY: I JUST NOTICED A LOCKHEED MARTIN AD FOR THE REUSABLE VENTURSTAR SINGLE-STAGE-TO-ORBIT VEHICLE, IN THE OCTOBER 1998 ISSUE OF SMITHSONIAN (A FRIEND HAD SENT THE MAGAZINE TO ME BECAUSE IT HAS A COVER FEATURE ON OLD TIME BASEBALL - I'M A HUGE FAN OF OUR NATIONAL PASTIME'S GOLDEN AGE). NOW WASN'T THAT THE SHIP HAMMER USED TO FLY THE STARK-CREATED EVADER ARMORS TO HIS ORBITING SPACE STATION IN IRON MAN:

BAD BLOOD #3? THIS, DAVID, IS WHY I APPRECIATE YOUR AND BOB'S WORK ON IRON MAN SO MUCH -- YOU FELLOWS BRING REAL-WORLD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CONCEPTS INTO A STORY.

MICHELINIE: YOU'D HAVE TO ASK BOB ABOUT ANY PARTICULARS, BUT I DO KNOW HE BOUGHT ABOUT HALF-A-ZILLION REFERENCE BOOKS AND MAGAZINES DURING BAD BLOOD. SO MY GUESS WOULD BE THAT THE VEHICLE IS REAL -- AND IS



PROBABLY ACCURATE DOWN TO THE LAST RIVET ON THE NULL-GRAV TOILET SEAT.

KALIBABKY: IN **IRON MAN #141**, SHELLHEAD GOES BELOW DEPTHS FOR AN UNDERSEAS SHOWDOWN WITH **FORGE** AND **JUSTIN HAMMER** AND AN ATTEMPTED RESCUE OF **BETHANY CABE**. PRIOR TO INFILTRATING HAMMER'S SUBMARINE FORTRESS, **IRON MAN** IS ATTACKED BY A GROUP OF HOSTILE MINI-SUBS. **IM** THINKS TO HIMSELF AS THEY APPROACH: "UH-OH. EITHER GEORGE LUCAS IS FILMING HIS NEXT STAR WARS EPISODE UNDERWATER -- OR I'VE HIT THE JACKPOT!" **IRON MAN #141** WAS RELEASED IN 1980. STAR WARS: EPISODE I -- (CONTAINING UNDERWATER SCENES! -- APPEARED 19 YEARS LATER, IN 1999. SO, DOES THIS MEAN WE NOW SHOULD BE CALLING YOU "NOSTRA-DAVE-US?"

MICHELINIE: WELL, WHEN I WAS WRITING THE **STAR WARS** COMIC FOR MARVEL, I HAD TO ALTER MY FIRST STORYLINE BECAUSE IT DEALT WITH THE EMPIRE BUILDING A SECOND **DEATH STAR** -- WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE THE PIVOTAL THREAT IN "**RETURN OF THE JEDI**." I ALSO HAD THE REBELLION HEADQUARTERING ON A PLANET POPULATED BY CUTE LITTLE FURRY GUYS. I CALLED THEM "HOOJIBS" INSTEAD OF "EWOKS," BUT...HMMM. MAYBE YOU SHOULD START CALLING THE STAR WARS PRODUCER GEORGE LOOK-A'-WHAT-DAVE-DID...?

THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN



IRON MAN: MURDERER?
PIECES OF HATE!





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HA HA HA

ONLY 19
MORE YEARS
TO GO!