

May 2023



"It's your New York!"

The Rondout Reader

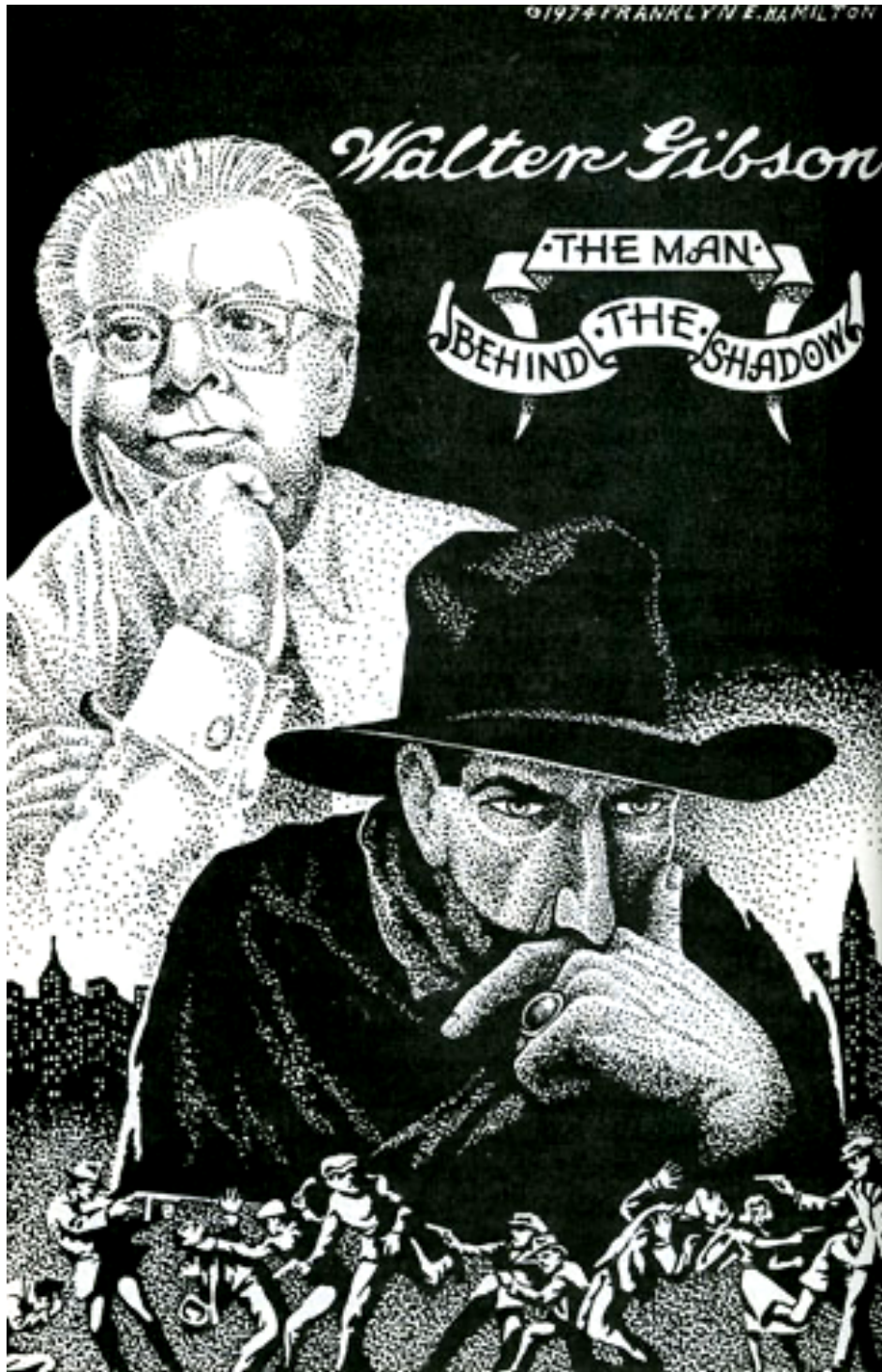
From Eddyville, New York



The *SHADOW* Returns!

AN INDELIBLE FANTASY

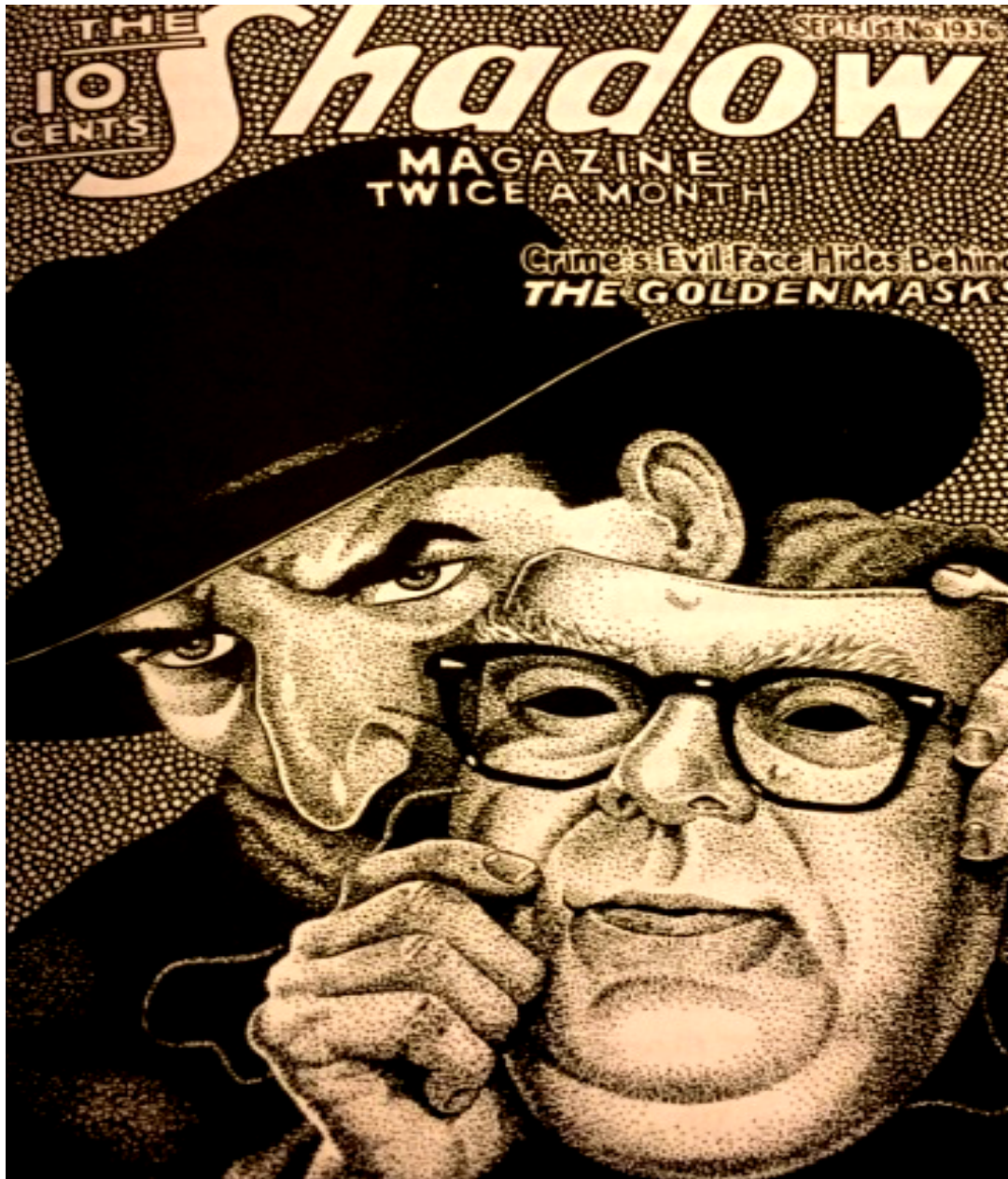
by Kevin Ahearn



Cover: Mike Kaluta

Note: "The RONDOUT READER" is pure fantasy.
All references to actual persons, alive or dead,
made for a good story.

Part 2



"Eddyville, New York!

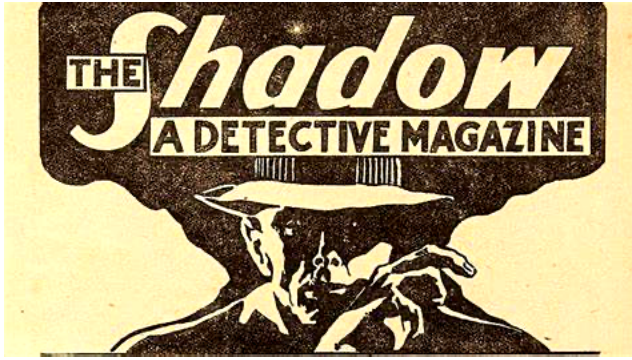
"We're here, but I can't find the town anywhere!"



“Litza understood me because she believed in magic! Our love was in the cards! Immediate major changes: in August of 1949, we got married and moved! No more Big City living for us. We got this beautiful 22-room farmhouse in Eddyville, New York!”



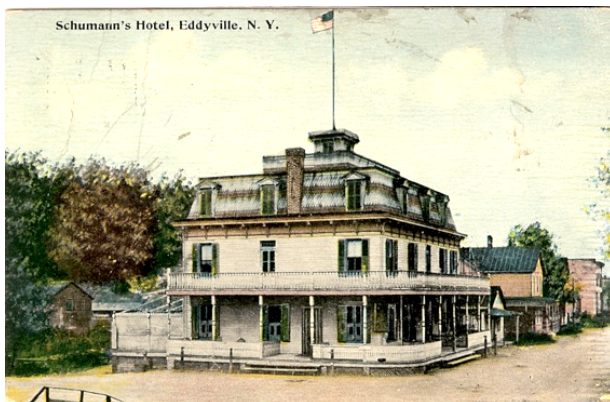
“You know, on the Rondout!”



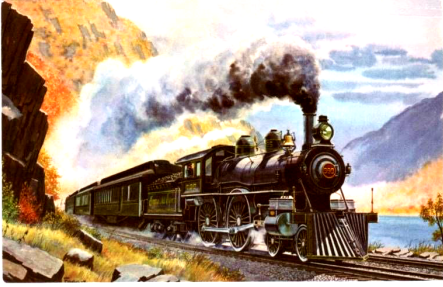
“Behold, the price of progress! This is what’s left of Eddyville once the Delaware & Hudson Canal shut down half a century ago!”



“The Schumann’s grand hotel...gone with the business that dried up with the historic waterway.”



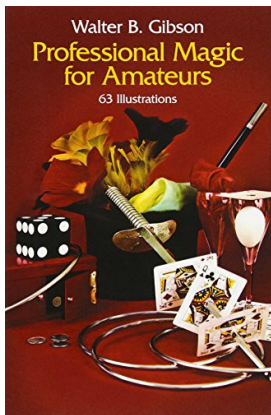
***“The remains of Eddyville doesn’t even include a post office. But it most certainly has
The Shadow!”***



“Technology pushed the Canal Community out of Eddyville! Now new technology has pushed ‘The Master of Darkness’ into Eddyville!”

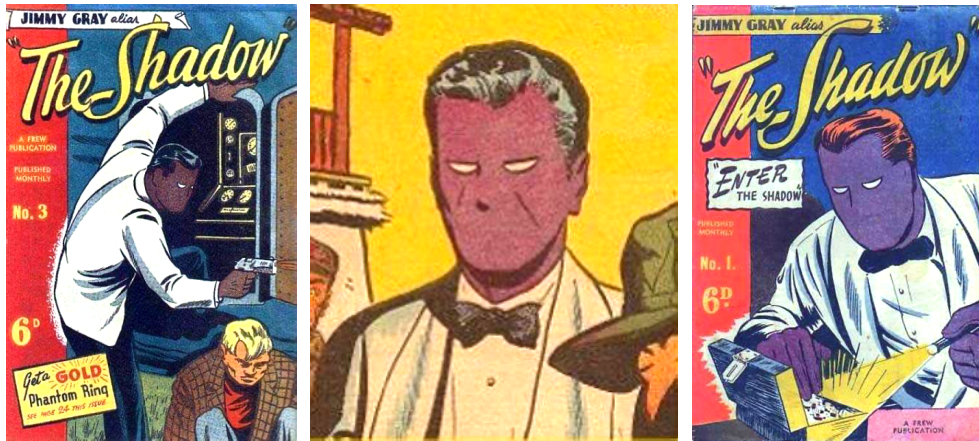


“Welcome to ‘The House that I Built!’



*“With three libraries - A room for **SHADOW** stuff, a room for true-crime stuff, a room for magic. I’ve got about 30,000 books in all.”*

1950 – THE SHADOW RETURNS

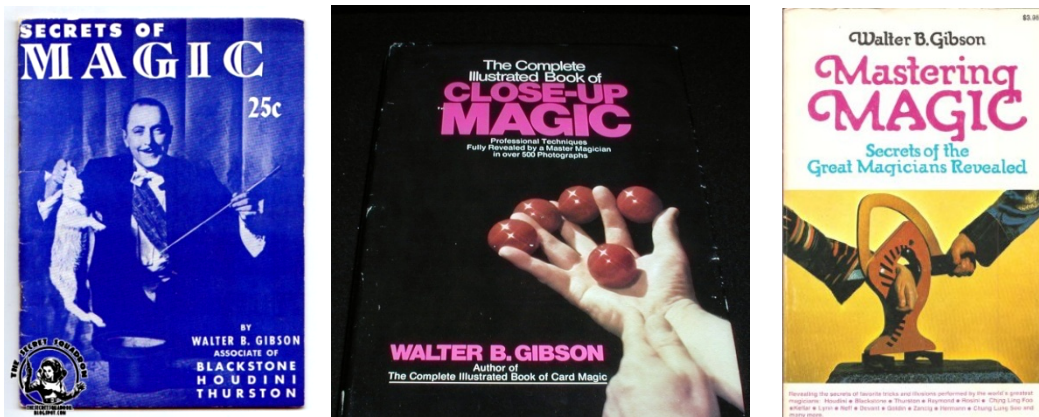


*“From Australia! Copyright thieves! “Jimmy Gray”?
The **SHADOW**’s got more aliases than I do!*

“Silliness! Come and gone in three issues!”



*“I concentrated on **Magic**--books and articles by the dozen!”*





“Always had a soft spot for science fiction!”



“Living on the beautiful Rondout and the Eddyville Marina, life with my wonderful wife is a magical joy!”

*“And I remain eternally grateful to the **SHADOW** and his loyal readers! For my success came at the dawn of the Great Depression, of unemployment, of breadlines. I was then a hungry young writer, even as writers have always been.”*

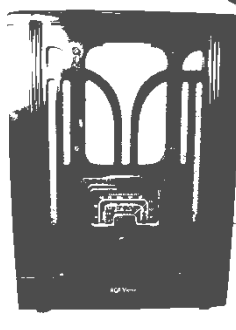


“Times were never really hard for me. Not compared to so many others around the world! I always sought a story to tell and sell. With the sad and sudden demise of the pulps, I took to my first love, magic! And my dear old magician friends welcomed me back!”

DECEMBER 29TH 1954
THE SHADOW'S LAST RADIO SHOW



*"Who knows what evil lurks
in the hearts of men?"*



"HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!"



"The SHADOW knows!"



“They say ‘When it rains it pours,’ and they’re right. I had been fully locked into magic when the Rondout rose, kept rising - the worst flood in the history of the Eastern United States!”

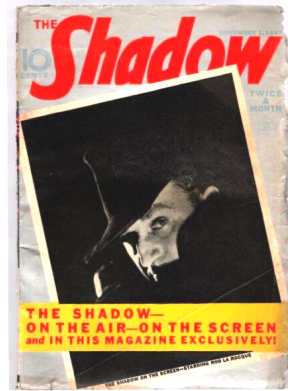
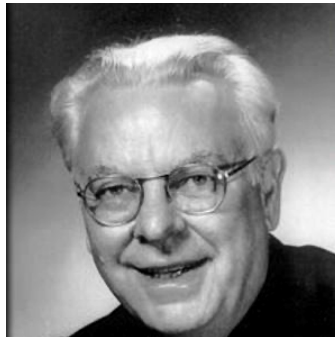
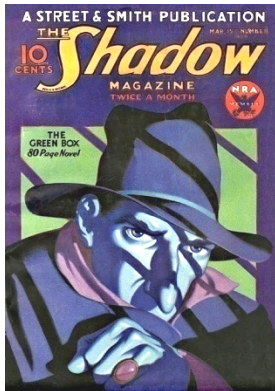


*“It rained like in the **Bible!** Then...chicken coops floating down the ‘Crick’ with chickens still perched on top. Thought what was left of Eddyville would completely wash away!”*



“The Great Rondout Freshet of 1955. You know “freshet – a freshwater stream flowing into the sea, a sudden rise in the level of a stream, or a flood, caused by heavy rains or the rapid melting of snow and ice.”

“Walter B. Gibson, the aspiring magician who took a radio voice, a title, and a tagline and created The ‘Master of Darkness’ typing more than fifteen million words and never once – F-r-e-s-h-n-e-t!”



*“Twice they tried to launch a **SHADOW** series on TV!”*

1954



THE Shadow OF TELEVISION

1958



“One was bad. The other was worse!”



*"Don't blame the actors or the production crew!
Gutless screenwriters! They had no idea who the
SHADOW is and will always be!"*



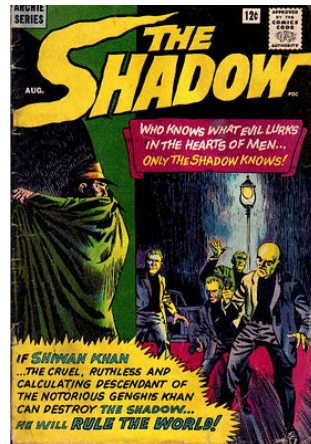
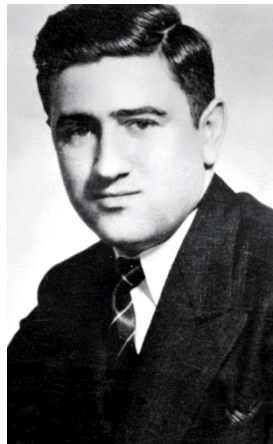
*"Segregation now, segregation
tomorrow, segregation forever."*

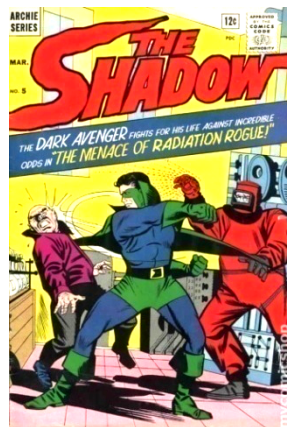


*"1963 is not the end,
but the beginning."*

1964 – A NEW **SHADOW** APPEARS!

*"From **ARCHIE COMICS**, no less! And written by comic book
royalty, Jerome Siegel, co-creator of **Superman**!"*





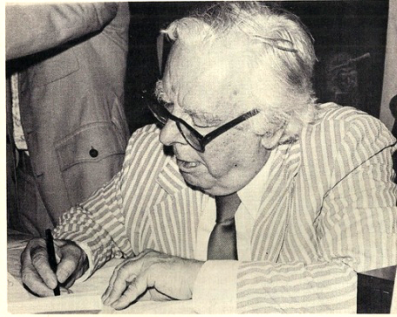
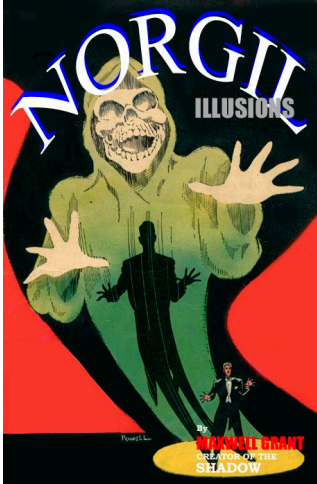
“And what did ‘comic royalty’ do to my **SHADOW**?
 He trashed my ideas and gave “The Master of
 Darkness’ a mask and a cape! ‘Super-Shadow!’
 My loyal readers hated it and Archie’s **SHADOW** disappeared!

“Is turnabout fair play? Some twenty years before, I got together
 With Harry Blackstone, the greatest magician of his age,
 to produce a superhero/Magician comic!”



“Twice, with two different publishers, Harry and I fell short.





*“Then in Crime Busters & Mystery magazines, I set out to create my own magician/ hero , but **NOGIL**, with all the tricks and gimmicks at the ready, just didn’t take!”*



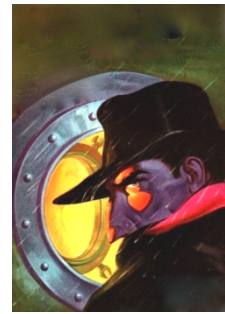
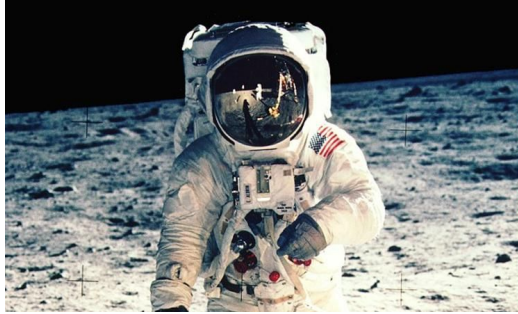
*“But there was a magician/hero of impact – Lee Falk’s **Mandrake!**”*



“If you’re going to have a story, have a big story, or none at all.”

“Those who tell the stories rule the world.”

7/20/1969

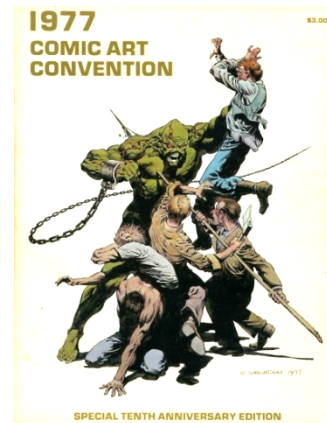


"The age of technology"

"The magic of humanity!"



*"The Swinging Seventies, humanity and inhumanity in abundance!
Magic and comics and art shows almost every other weekend!"*

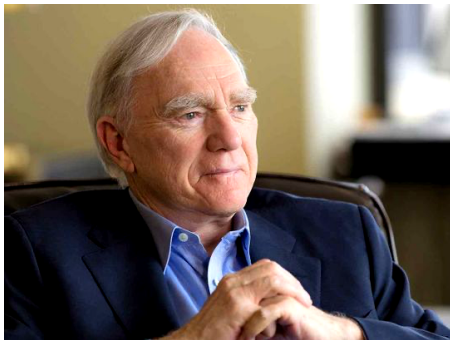




“Walter loved these ‘cons’! Children of all ages, every last one a future Shadow reader... Or maybe not!”



“The years passed without new SHADOW adventures, but I never lost hope. America wouldn’t be America without a two-gun hero with a hat!”



"Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today."

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."



*"Incredible news! DC beat out Marvel for The **SHADOW!**"*

*"The comic book business is rarely comical and as consistent and predictable as the Rondout. Originally, Len Wein who created **SWAMP THING** and **WOLVERINE** was going to do the book."*



"I think there's something inherently dishonest in trying to go back and mess with the past."

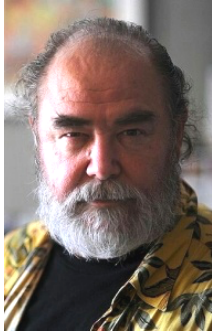


*"And Jim Steranko, the brilliant comic book artist who had rejuvenated **Nick Fury** had also done a series of painted covers for our **SHADOW** reprints!"*

*"But Steranko also wanted to write my **SHADOW** and I was having 'none of that'."*

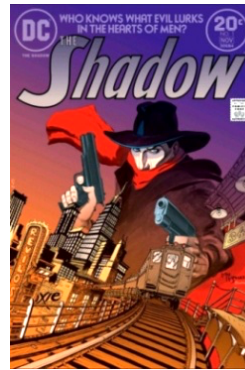


*"The Shadow didn't believe in the Death Penalty."
"The Shadow was the Death Penalty."*



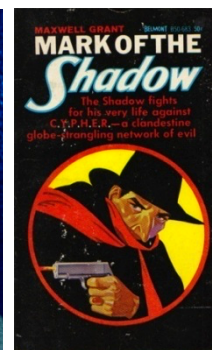
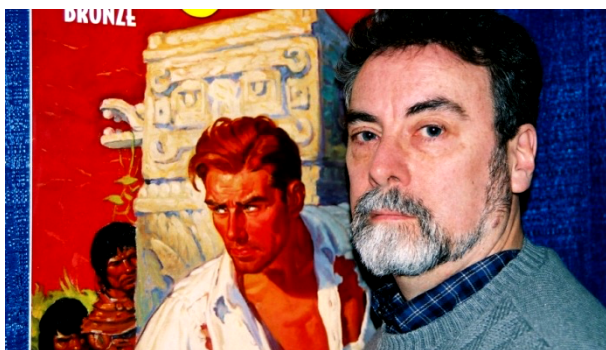
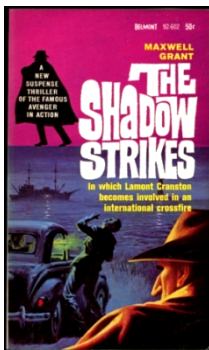
*"I only read one **Shadow** story and didn't like it."*

"He killed because he knew to an absolute certainty that his enemies deserved death."



"The 'new Shadow' is the 'old Shadow', Lamont Cranston flying his autogyro!"

According to an esteemed **SHADOW** historian...

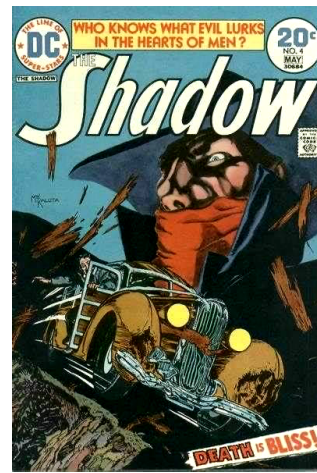
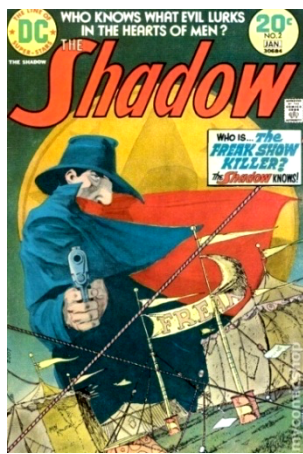


*"O'Neil's **SHADOW** was really an amalgamation of all the **SHADOWS** that had existed, from the pulps, the radio and Dennis Lynds' Belmont novels, as well as a few new twists of O'Neil's own invention. It's a credit to O'Neil's writing skills that he could bring together so many of disparate versions of the **SHADOW** and make the whole concept work."*

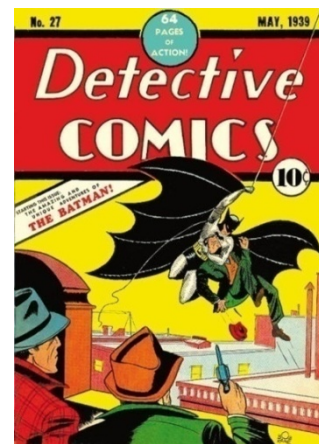


"I did it for the buzz. I did it for the pure joy of the thing. And if you can do it for joy, you can do it forever."

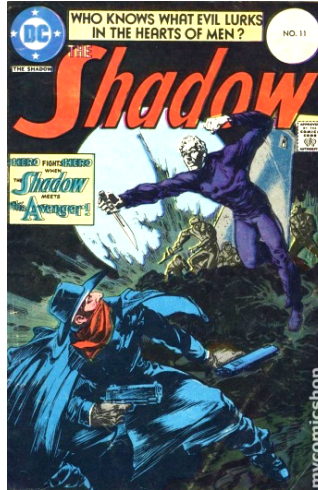
"I want to go on living after my death."



DC pulled out all the stops. The **SHADOW** would not be coming out alone!



"Batman is just a clowned-up version of The Shadow. The 'Caped Crusader's' creators admitted that his first appearance was a take-off on my Shadow story!"

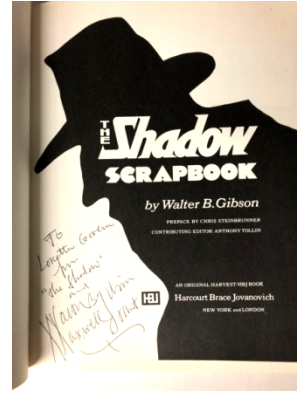
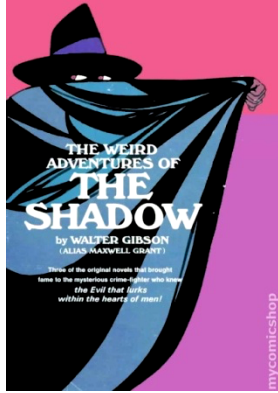


The SHADOW Never Fails!

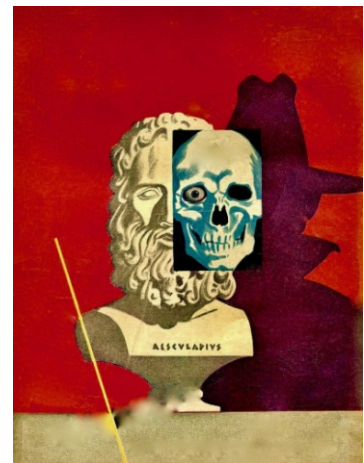
"But this time around he did! DC's 'Dark Avenger' lost the light after only 12 issues. My portrayal in color had never been better and it still wasn't good enough! Had my time run out?"



"The SHADOW gone forever and me along with him?"



"On rolled the Rondout without a care in the county."



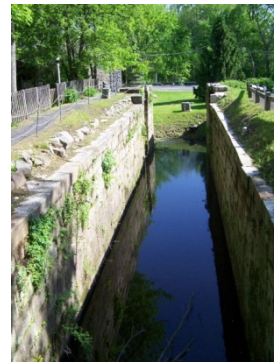
"The SHADOW dead and gone, existing only as reprints and radio reruns?"



"Who dares steal the SHADOW's thunder?"



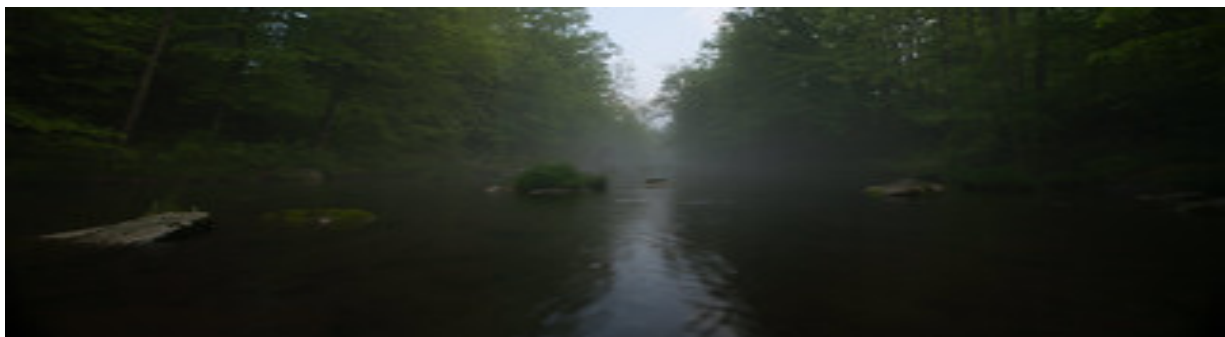
"When will I get MY movie?"



"I'm dead! Is this the state of literary abandonment by all publishers, in black and white and in four color? Am I to go the way of the DELAWARE & HUDSON CANAL? Only my stories from long years past are to be read! Nothing new about me any more!"



"Once an icon of my age! Am I to be remembered as a doll?"



"This time 'round, the SHADOW does not know... And neither does the Rondout!"



*“Walter dreams of a **SHADOW** blockbuster.
He’s already chosen his leading man!”*



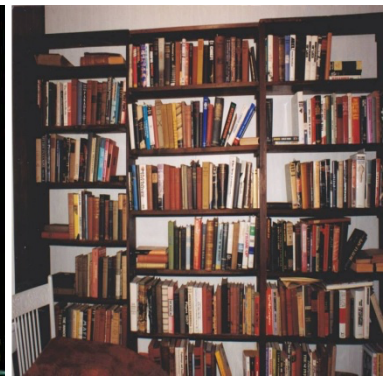
“I respectfully differ!”



*“Or is Eddyville, New York to be the final resting
place for the ‘Master of Darkness?’*



“Up Rondout Creek without a publisher?”



***"There is one beautiful thing about being an old man:
being an old man! Too few ever get the chance!"***



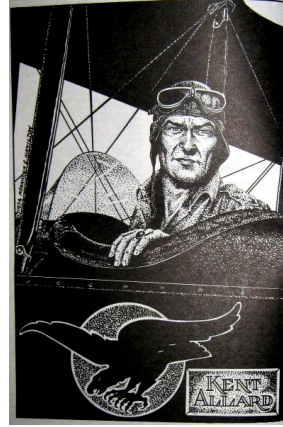


*“Over the years, I had sold some 400 comic book stories!
 DC honored me with a spot on **DETECTIVE** Comics #500!
 Batman vs Clayface in a prose story!”*



*“And the greatest detective story ever told...
 The greatest mystery yet to be solved...”*

*“**SHADOW**philes’ the world over, you
 still don’t know who I am!”*



‘Kent Allard - a spy in World War I, then a famed aviator who crashed in the South American jungles and made a fortune when he discovered a city of gold?’

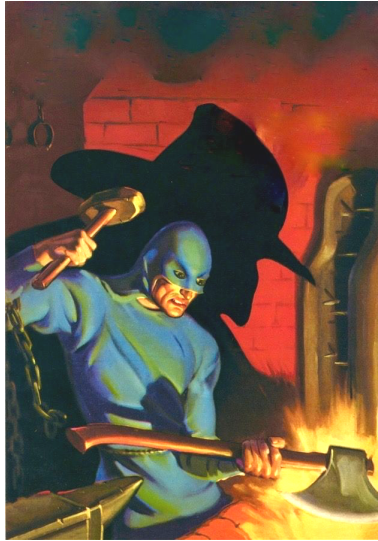


“Or do you believe my real persona is Lamont Cranston, international playboy and world traveler?”



“Or would you prefer one of my many disguises with a colorful alias?”

“I have been all, but none are me! How quickly you SHADOWphiles forget my creator’s canon!”



“The Shadow must be a mystery in himself!

“By combining Houdini’s escapist talents plus the hypnotic power of Tibetan mystics, and the magical knowledge shared by elite illusionists, would have unlimited scope when confronted by surprise situations, yet all could be brought within the range of credibility.”



“Do you get me now, beloved Readers?

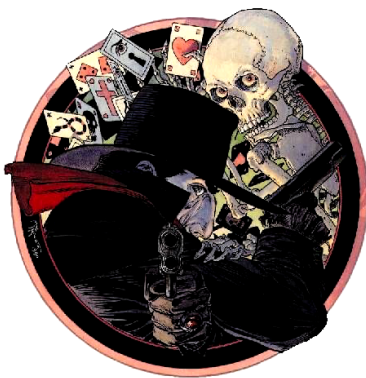
“Allard and Cranston are misdirections, facades crafted by a master magician! I am his cleverest trick, an illusion who has fooled millions for almost a century!

“Walter Brown Gibson, the most incredible magician who ever lived!”

1984



"I do not travel around the world now, the world travels around me."

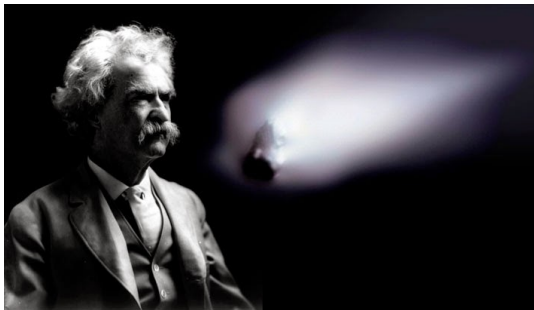


"So much left to do, so little time!"

*"I have to go to the city to see some people at Doubleday.
I should write the Blackstone story. I have to call John Henry Grossman.
I have to get my nephew to take me to the Preddie Reunion.
They want me to speak in Chicago."*



“My hands won’t type. My eyes are going. I can’t go upstairs. I have never known such frustration as not being able to do something. I don’t need a nurse. I need a secretary!”



**HAPPY
birthday**
FROM TODAY
Ask Willard Scott to celebrate
your loved ones live on the show

“I’d like to live to be 100, so Willard Scott could mention it On the TODAY SHOW, but then again, I think I might like to go out on Halley’s Comet like Mark Twain.”



“I’m in an awful mess. Right now I don’t know whether to get up or to get down. I don’t know whether to let the cat in or to let the cat out. I don’t know whether to go to sleep or to stay awake.

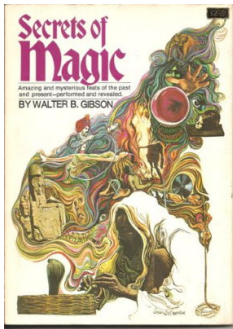
“Besides that, every night about 3:00 a.m. Litzka makes me cocoa. I guess I will just stay awake and wait for my cup of cocoa.”



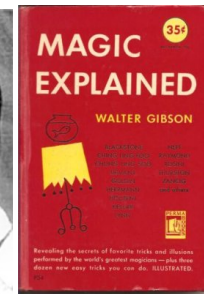
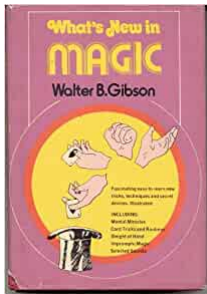
IMUS
IN THE MORNING
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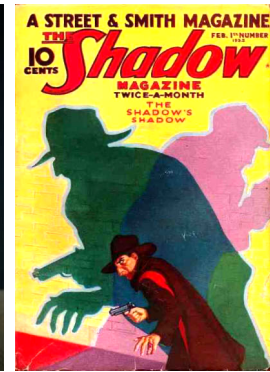
DECEMBER 6TH 1985



"Ever hear of Eddyville, New York, on the Rondout? Neither have I. And today we find out that the tiny village's most renown citizen has passed away and I never heard of him either!"



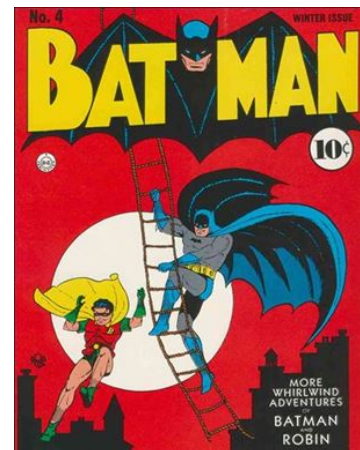
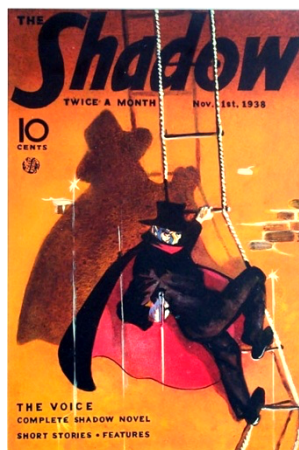
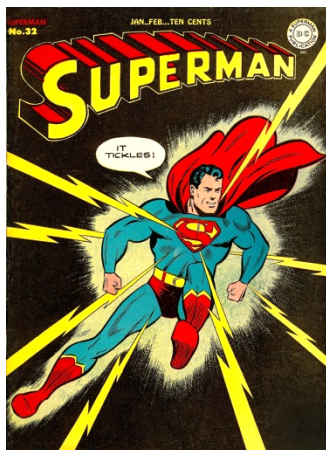
"Walter Brown Gibson was a magician who wrote over 100 books on magic, including 'ghostwriting' for all the greats including Houdini and Blackstone! "Sorry, Magic Fans, but I never heard of Walter Brown Gibson!"



***"But I grew up with The SHADOW by Maxwell Grant!
My main man did not mess around. The 'Master of
Darkness' was the light of my life—He gave me reading
lessons twice a month!"***



***"Compared to the SHADOW, caped, costumed
superheroes were a bunch of silly wimps!"***





***“Maxwell Grant wrote 282 or 283 SHADOW novels!
An incredible work ethic, he was turning out 2 per
month plus magic and crime articles and reports!
And now I find out that my hero’s creator is also
Walter B Gibson! This guy’s as mysterious as his creation!”***



***“I miss the relentless, merciless SHADOW!
With him you knew the bad guys would pay hard!”***



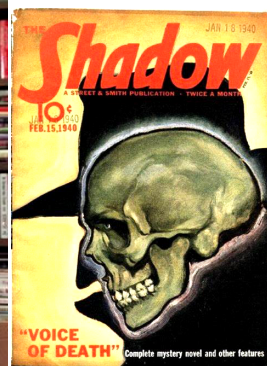
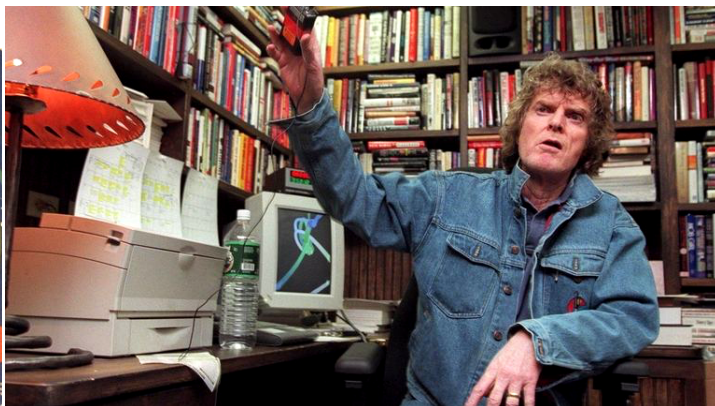
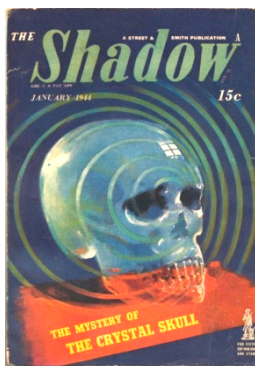
***“So much for The SHADOW!
How about those Knicks!”***

***“Gibson is gone to magical heaven!
While The SHADOW’s ship has sailed!”***



"Now wait a minute! You numbskulls don't understand! The 'Dark Avenger' must be immortal! To stalk evil and kill it dead!"

"Ha! Ha! Ha! HaHaHa!"



"Hello, yes. What? Who is this?"



"As if you didn't know, Mister 'Shock Jock'!

*"Wind up your clocks, America and
'round the world, synchronize your watches!"*

The SHADOW always comes back!"

(To be continued...)

The Rondout Reader

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