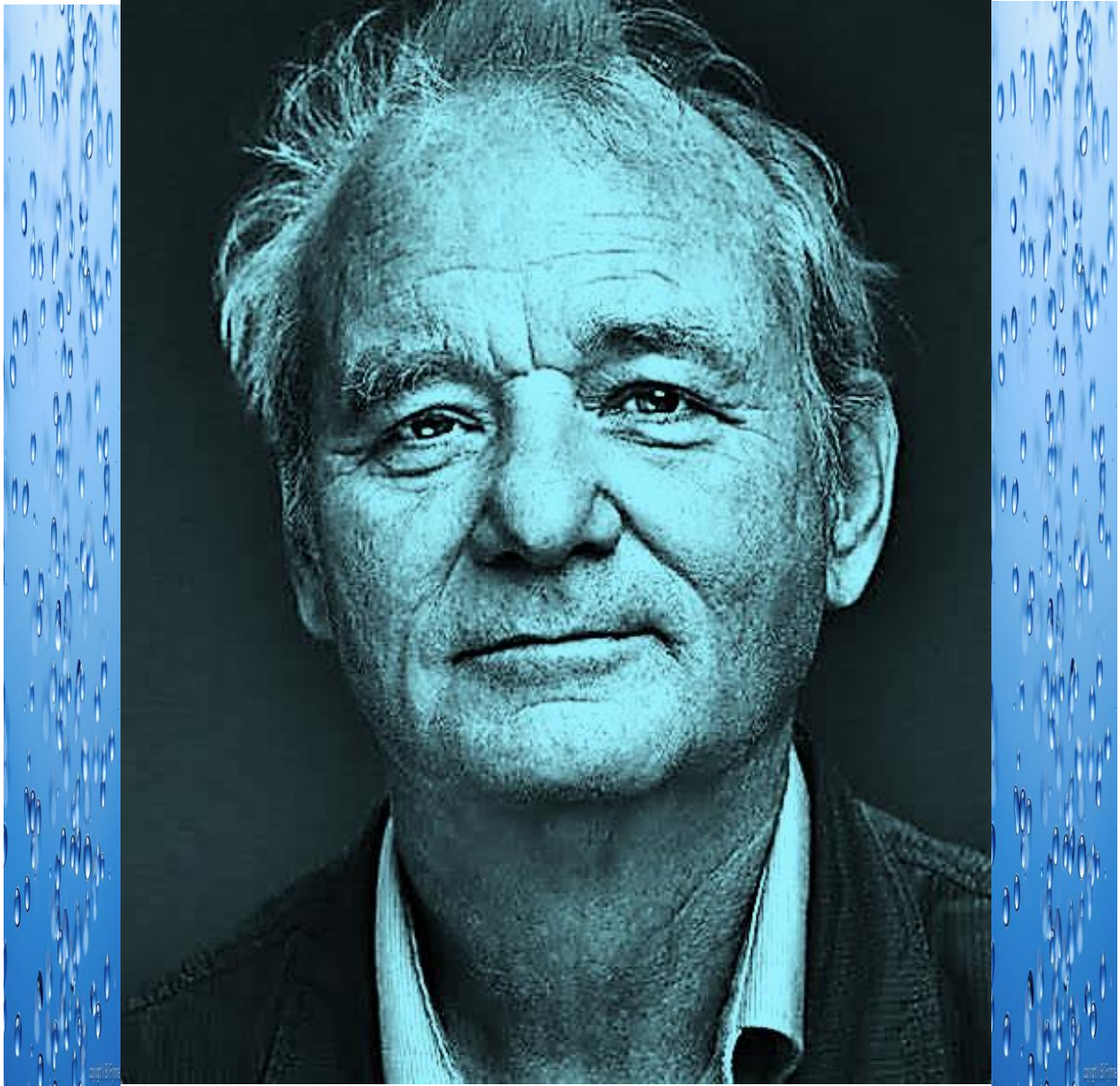
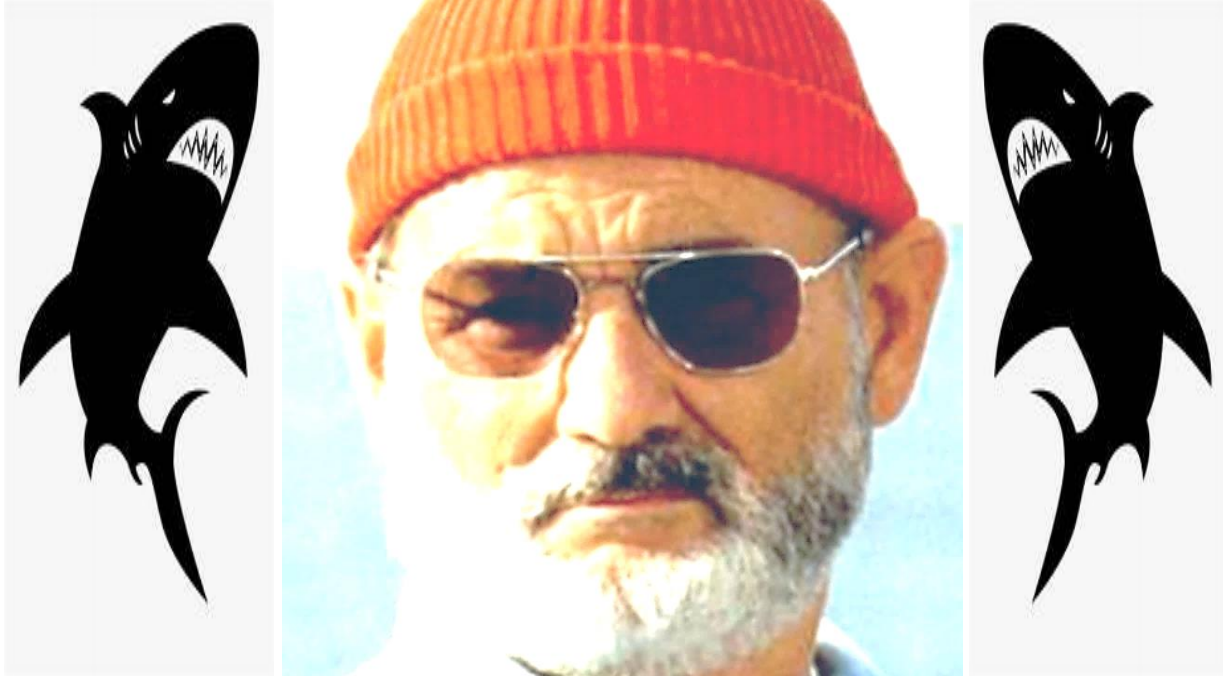


Zinda³Blake



“Call me KILLER SHARK!”

by Kevin Ahearn



'ZINDA BLAKE 3' is fiction.
All references to actual persons, alive
or dead, made for a good story.

Blackhawk created by Chuck Cuidera, Bill Powell, and Will Eisner

Lady Blackhawk & Kid Blackhawk created by Jack Schiff and Dick Dillin

ZINDA BLAKE.....MERYL STREEP

BLACKHAWK.....ROBERT REDFORD

AND INTRODUCING

KILLER SHARK.....BILL MURRAY

PLUS AN ALL-STAR SUPPORTING CAST

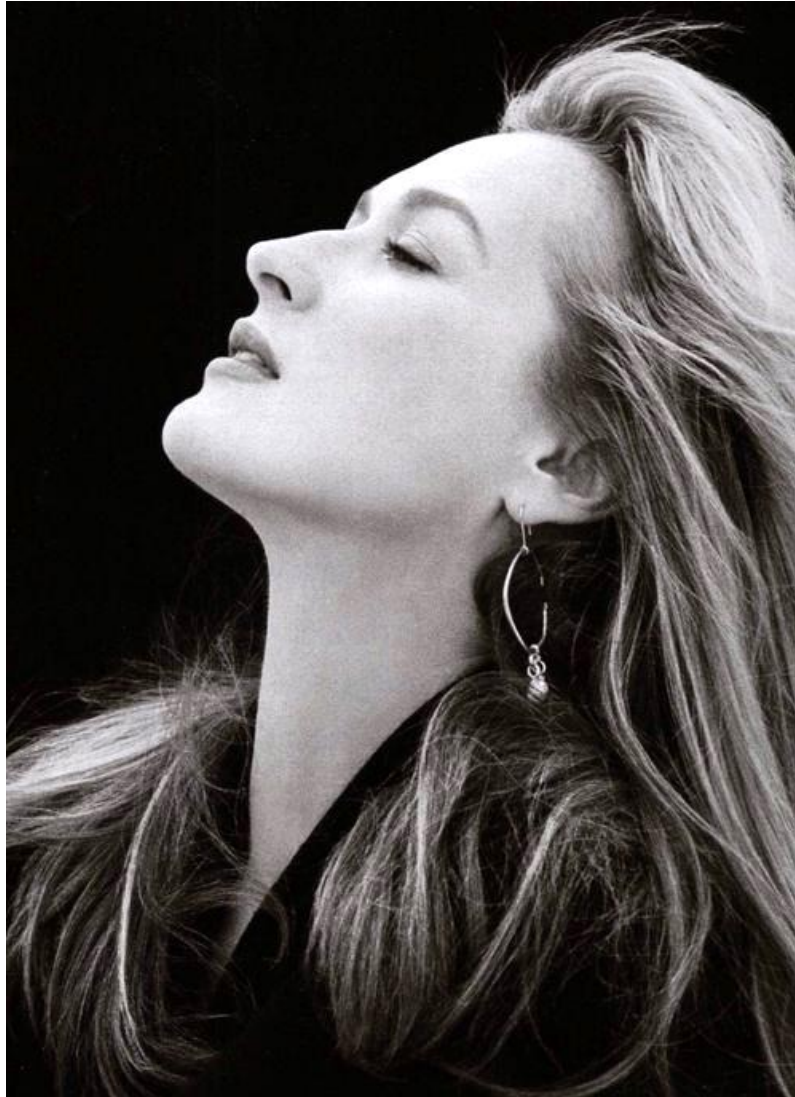
Blackhawk is a property of DC COMICS.

Cover: **Bill Murray**



COSMOPOLITAN

ZINDA  BLAKE



WOMAN-OF-THE-YEAR!

1959

1



*'Leave the saving of the world to the men?
I don't think so.'*



JANUARY 15, 1959

Dear Diary,

*Suddenly, I'm somebody! A celebrity, a "personality", a "role model", but am I **Blackhawk**?*



I had to quit my job. My "notoriety" became a "security issue"!

*I had no other alternative, but to move back home to historic **Blake Manor**.*



'Welcome, Zinda! I've been needing a "home secretary" for months!'

'He wouldn't pay the Union Wage, so I quit!'

After five solos and three tries at the written exam, I finally got my license—I'm a real supersonic pilot!



*Dad was so proud, he got my jet all painted up in **Blackhawk** livery!*



*I'm almost a **Blackhawk**!*



'Patience, "First Lady of Vengeance"! They'll call when they need you!'

'And if they never do. You did better than anyone else's best!'



'I'll know when to go. I'm ready! I am Lady Blackhawk!'



'Ah, so! Lady Blackhawk! Highheel boots in the African bush...HAWKA-A-A-A!'



'A stunt! A ploy! The "Angels of Vengeance" are marketing themselves to the masses!'

'Strictly a "Kiddie Show"! The DCU has turned them all into kiddie shills!'



'The Blackhawks are invincible as a unit!'

'The greatest threat to childhood illiteracy ever known.'



'This "New Blackhawk Era"! What are they trying to achieve? If the "Angels" are softening as they age, what hope does the West have left?'



*'Idealistic revolutionary or Communist butcher?
Fidel Castro leads his ragtag cabal over Fulgencio Batista,
backed by a professional army and air force
trained and armed by the United States.'*

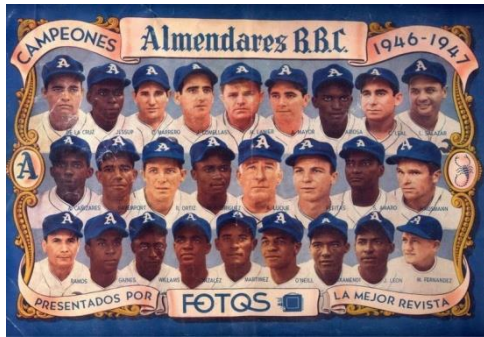


*'Castro talks freedom and liberty, eloquent rhetoric
and then executes more than 600 of Batistas officers!'*

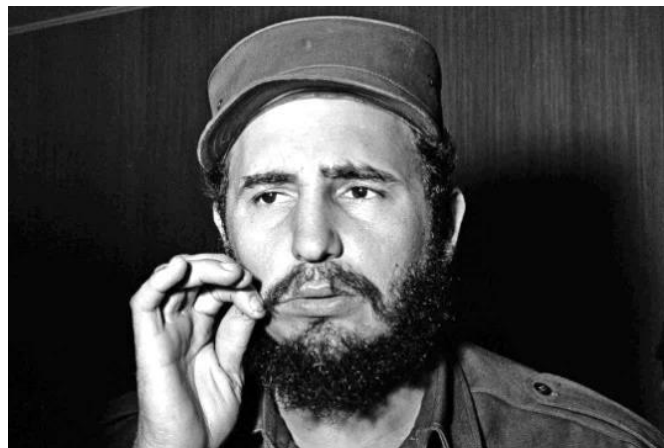


'Castro is either incredibly naive about communism or under Communist discipline. My guess, is the former.'

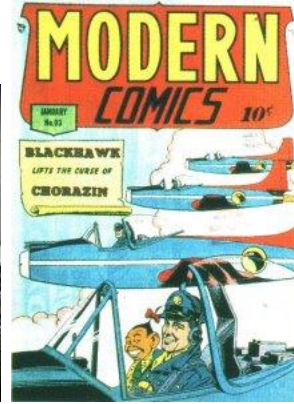
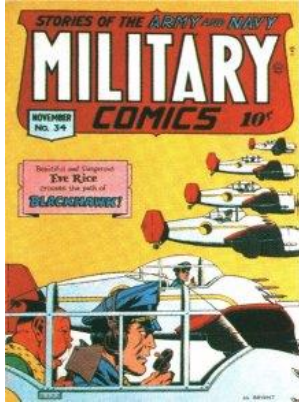
Fidel is a man of tremendous personal magnetism, destined to assume the role of leader in any movement in which he takes part ...'



'I played for Almendares in Cuba. Guess who was trying out for the team? Castro. Fidel Castro, as a pitcher. He could throw pretty hard, but he was wild. He didn't have any control.'



'The human being is a strange mixture of blind instinct, on one hand, and conscience, on the other.'



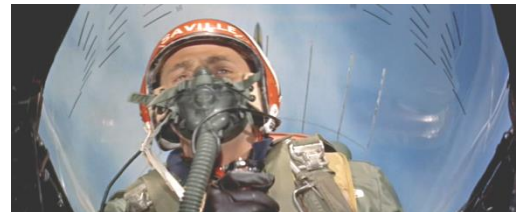
*'Fidel Castro, the man of the moment!
Who he is and who we believe him to be
may be two different men completely!*

'Let History be the sharpest of judges!

'And that's the way it is...

'And show me BLACKHAWK!'

Out over the vast pacific



*'Our friends at CIA gave us these coordinates
as the Scavenger's last known location!*

*'A lot of water, but look. There's an
island that's not supposed to be there!'*



While below...



'Patience! Don't fire until you see the panic in their eyes!'

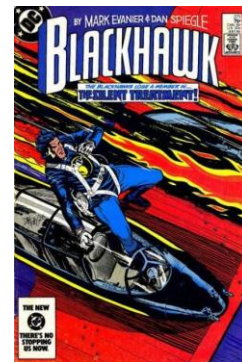
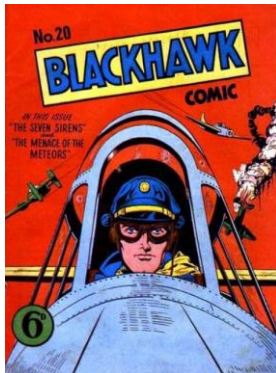
'Calibrating... just a little bit closer!'



'A floating island?'

'A mobile ocean lair!'

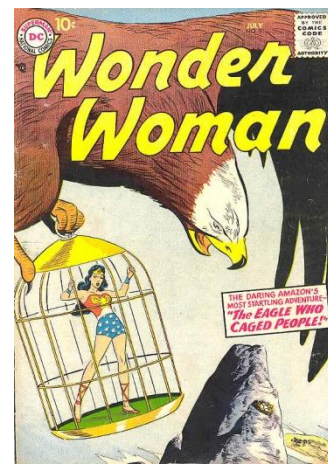
'They must see us!'



'Arm ordnance! We'll come in low and...WTF?'



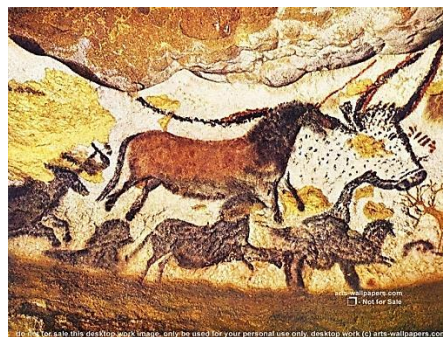
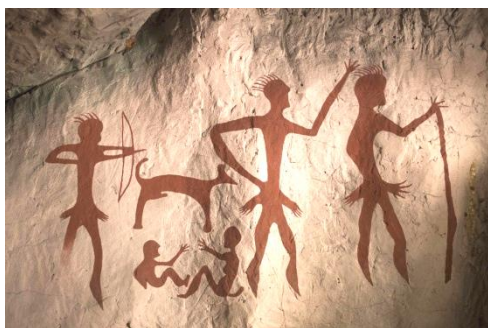
While around the world...



Comics ¹ History

ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

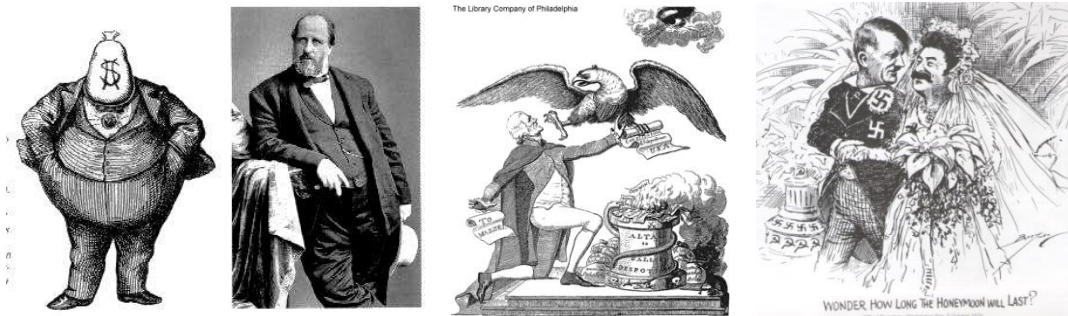
Telling stories with pictures began when humanity was living in caves.



Mayan and Egyptian stories are rich with pictures and symbols.



With the rise of newspapers, political cartoons took aim at corruption and warned of dark times ahead.



The first comic strip appeared in 1896 and gave birth to dozens, then hundreds more appearing in thousands of newspapers read by millions.



'Humor has historically tied to the mores of the day. The Yellow Kid was predicated on what people thought of the immigrant Irish. When you're different in a society, you're funny.'



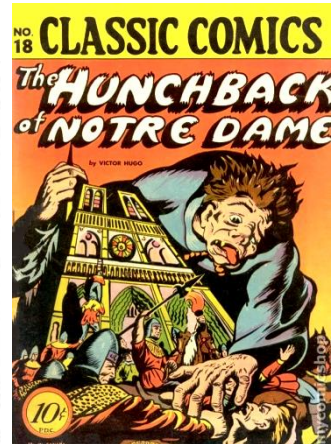
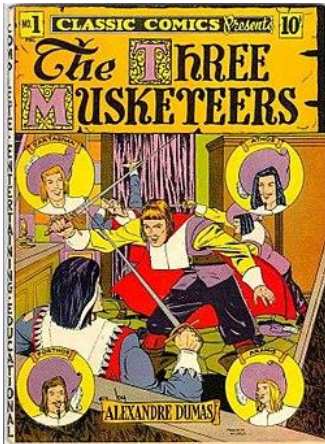
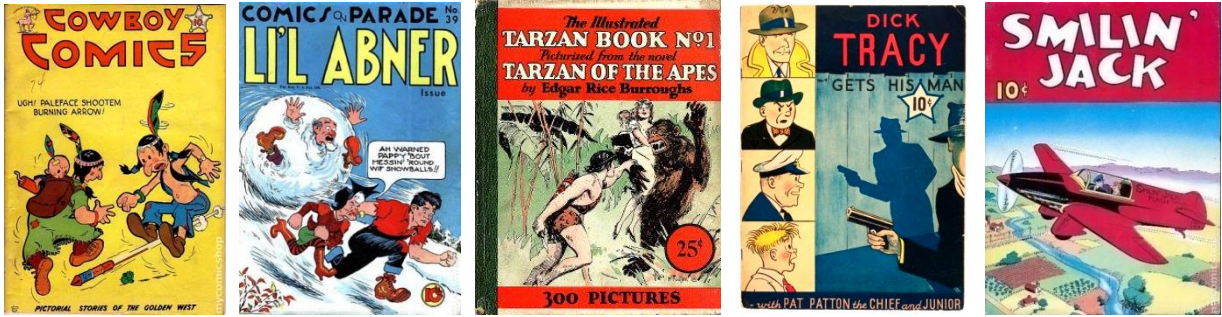
'I decided that if the police couldn't catch the gangsters, I'd create a fellow who could.'



The strip soon evolved into the comic book.



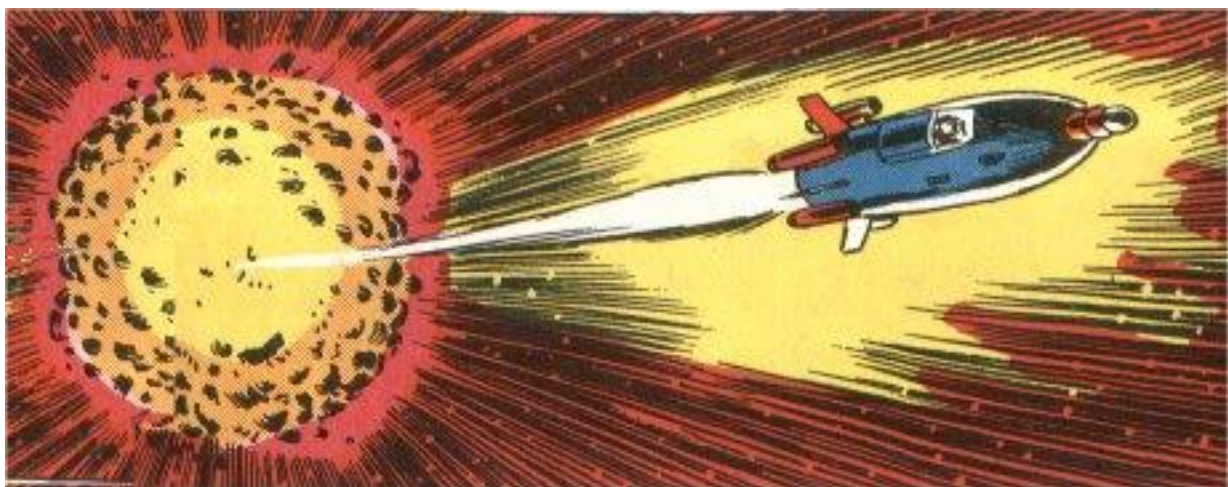
Many of the early books were comic strips "cut and pasted" together.



Russian-born publisher Albert Lewis Kanter believed he could use comics to introduce young and reluctant readers to "great literature". In 1941, he created *Classic Comics*.

Hundreds of characters, scores of titles, but the old hands and the veteran newsmen agreed that the fledgling industry cried out for a *superstar!*

Created by teenagers, he was already on his way.



(To be continued)

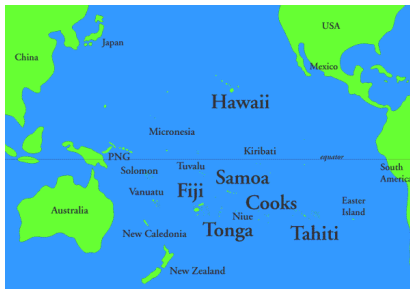


*“The question isn’t who’s going to let me;
it’s who is going to stop me.”*

*“One isn’t born courageous,
one becomes it.”*



‘THE BLACKHAWKS HAVE GONE MISSING!’

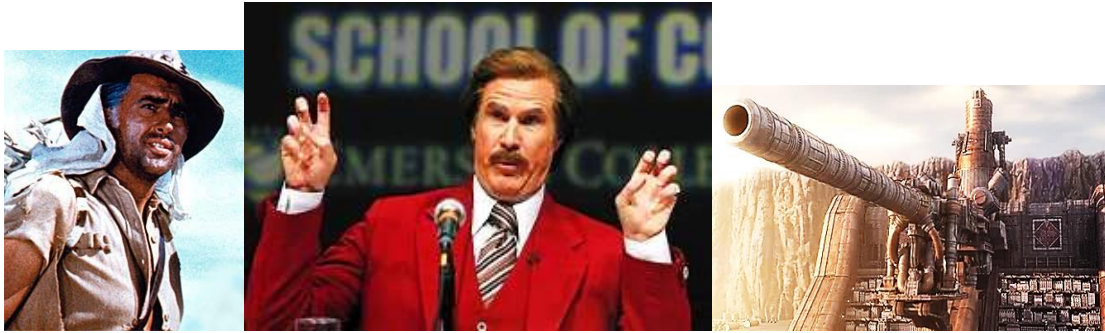


*‘Somewhere south of Hawaii, the famed team
failed to show for inflight refueling!’*

‘POOF! Gone without a trace!’



*‘We sent out signals! ‘No pick-up on radar!
No sign of any wreckage! As if the sea just
swallowed them whole!’*



'The "Angels of Vengeance" were in pursuit of the Sinister Scavenger, a merciless pirate said to be in possession of a Communist-Created Ray Cannon!

'What could have possibly happened?'



'Could we be dealing with a creature, a monster from another world or even an unknown dimension?'



*'The **Blackhawks** are invincible as a unit!'*



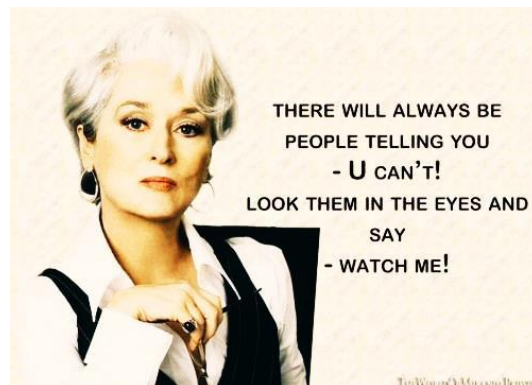
'The greatest threat to impossible missions ever known.'



*'Let us not even begin to give up hope!
No dawdling in despair! For there is
one "Angel of Vengeance" still in the fight...'*

'Show me Lady Blackhawk!'

2





MARCH 5, 1959

Dear Diary,

I got their static distress call on my belt radio...

*Longitude 160 degrees, Latitude forty
degrees...land...six knots westerly...*



*I thought of the **Lady Blackhawk**s before me and knew what I had to do!*



Mom and Dad gave me some advice...



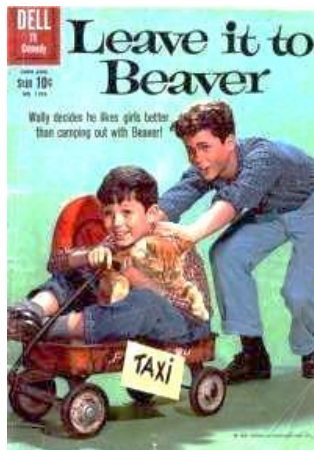
'Careful, Zinda! This isn't a little girl's dream anymore!'



'You show them, girl! You show them all!'



*'The **Blackhawks** are invincible as a unit!'*



'The greatest threat to silly pirates ever known.'

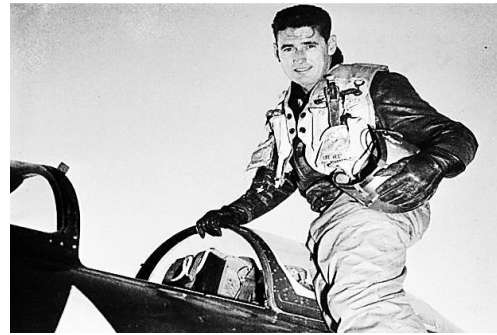
Before leaving for the field, I packed some "special surprises", then made a phone call.



'Your Majesty, my name is Zinda Blake and I need a Royal Favor!'



'Lady Blackhawk! Of course, my dear, how may I help you?'



'Topped off and fully armed, Zinda! Blackhawk Luck!'

I strategically packed my special surprises and I was off!



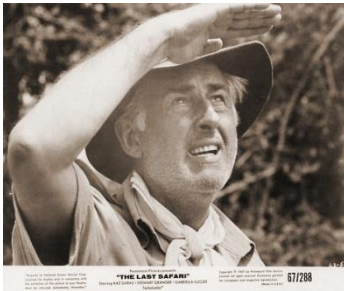
The Queen's finest showed up right on time!



'Fill you all the way up, "First Lady of Vengeance!'



"Six knots westerly" ...A floating island! I can use that to my advantage!



*'It's Lady Blackhawk!
FIRE!*

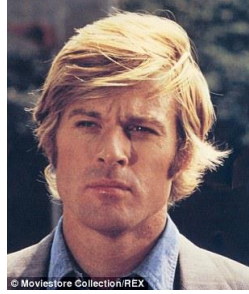
*'Uh-oh! Sorry, plane!
Got to make this work!'*



'Set the controls just right!'



*'By gar! It's that cute kid who wants to be a **Blackhawk**!*



'Not this way. She'll be trapped with us!'



'Donnevetter! What chance do any of us have?'

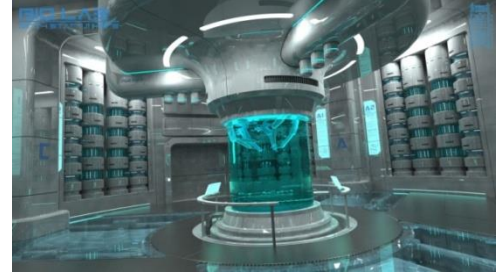
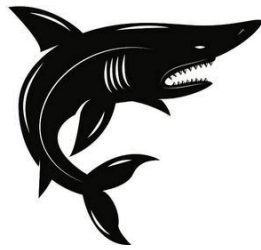


*'That fool girl won't get far! Guard the **Blackhawks** carefully! We'll round up the lady!'*



Less than a hundred miles off a Polynesian island and less than 100 feet deep, the secret headquarters of the world's most daring undersea criminal, the notorious **Killer Shark!**





His given name long forgotten, **Shark's** genius was in designing and building underwater apparatus ideal, not for scientific expeditions, but for wholesale theft, His stolen treasures have been secretly auctioned around the world for millions!

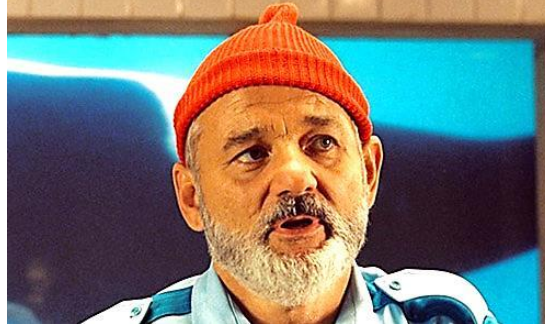


'Well, well, my "Denizens of the Deep", we have a new quarry who's been waiting for us for more than four hundred years! And this sweet, beautiful senorita is the Belle of the Ball!

'The San Jose treasure ship - the "holy grail" of shipwrecks!

'Call me Killer Shark!'





*'Our three-masted "target fish" was carrying lots of gold, silver and jewels!
The San Jose had 62 large guns. But it was sunk on June 8, 1708 with
600 people in a battle with British ships in the War of Spanish Succession.*



*'The San Jose may be the largest treasure ship ever found.
Could be worth as much as \$17 billion!*

'Call me Killer Shark!'



**'Yes, Killer Shark!
Who owns the loot
is in the courts!'**



**'Yes, Killer Shark!
Multiple nations and
private companies!'**



**'Yes, Killer Shark!
So while the trial
goes on, we go
under!'**



**'Aye-Aye, Killer Shark!
We'll take the Mecha!
"Buglarize boldly and
book"!''**



'Colombia has not signed the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. You know, to follow international rules and to inform UNESCO of what will be done with shipwrecks.'

'The San Jose is sitting on the sea bottom. Where she rests is a state secret for Colombia.'

'No, it isn't!'

'We've been bugging these fools for nearly a year! We know the exact location of the San Jose! And we will strip her down to the last doubloon!'

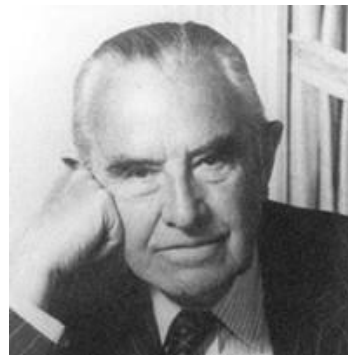
*'Ahoy, **Blackhawks**, we're a'comin!'*

*Call me **Killer Shark!***





'A political leftover from the Eisenhower administration! And we are going to do something about him!'



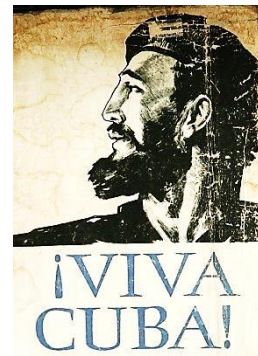
'The CIA's been training an army of exiles to invade and overthrow Castro!'

'You believe it will be that simple?'

'A "piece of cake"! Cuba will not support yet another dictator!'



'We cannot fail! Got to get rid of this firebrand before the Russians get their hooks into him!'



'If the United States is going to back an invasion by exiles, we've got to give them air support!'

'American aircraft mowing down "heroic revolutionaries"?'

'Mister Kennedy, we cannot send in those men and then turn our backs on them!'

'No, general, but if we send in an independent force...!'

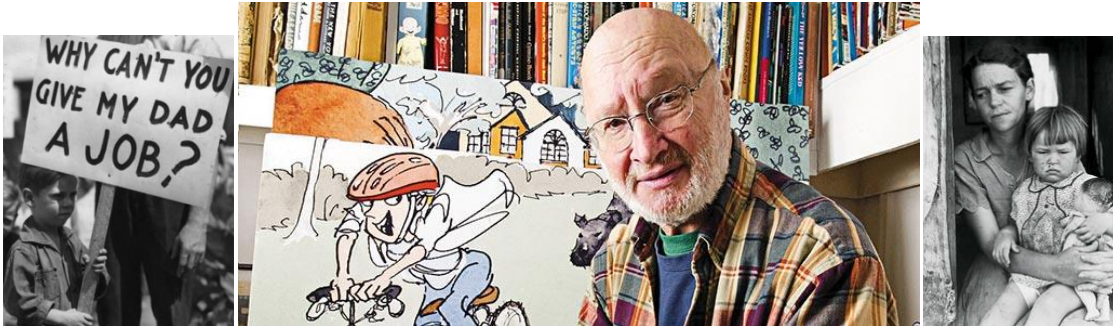
'You're not suggesting...?'

'Oh, but I certainly am...'

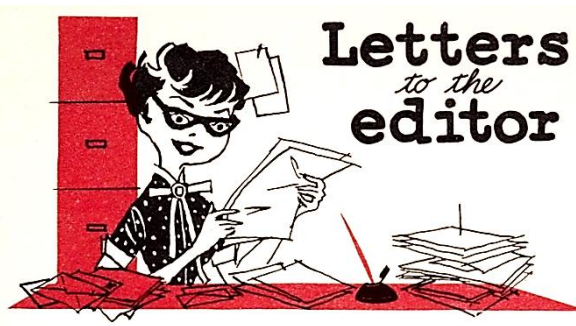
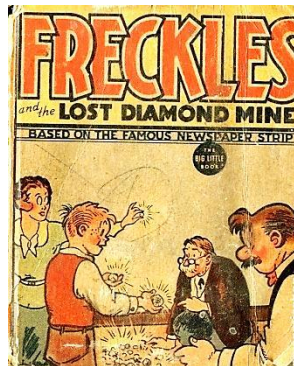
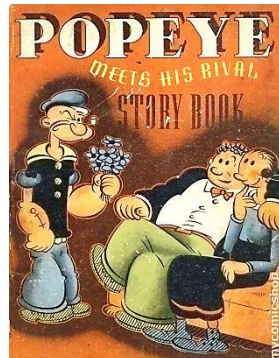
Show me Blackhawk!'

Comics²History

THE "BIG BANG"

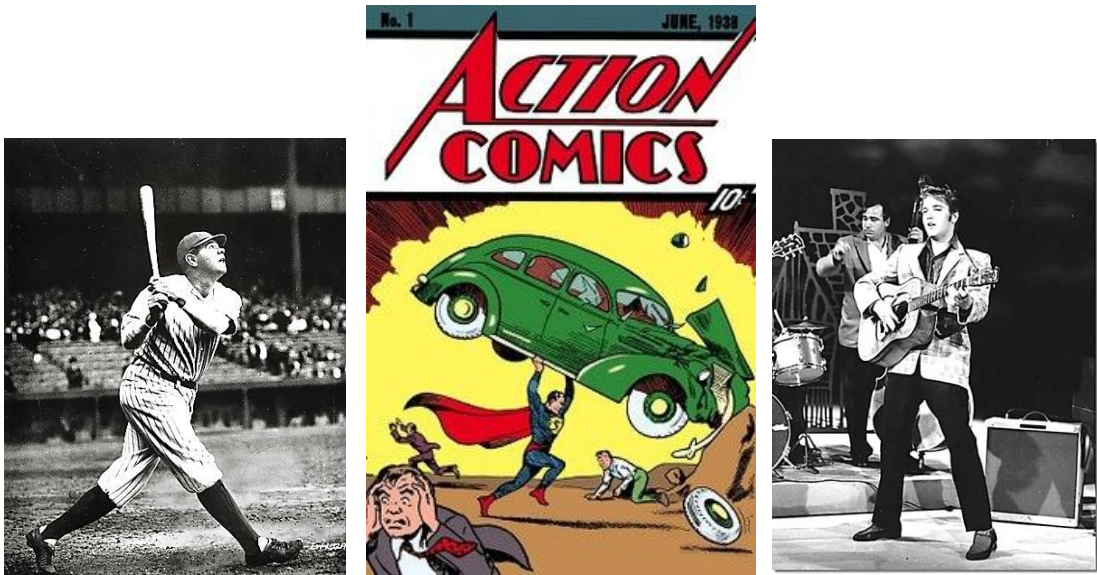


In the Depression, besides everybody being poor, our entertainment was much more primitive and innocent. The comic strip was still a very new form. Movies had just become talkies. Radio had just gone coast to coast for the first time. Network radio had just begun when I was a kid. Comics were fresh and funny and nery, and in a sense, defiant of the prevailing culture.'



*'In 1938, **Superman** appeared. He had been mailed to the offices of National Periodical Publications from Cleveland, by a couple of Jewish boys who had imbued him with the powers of a hundred men, of a distant world, an of the full measure of their bespectacled adolescent hopefulness and desperation.'*

Superman hit the industry like...



More heroes were quick to follow...



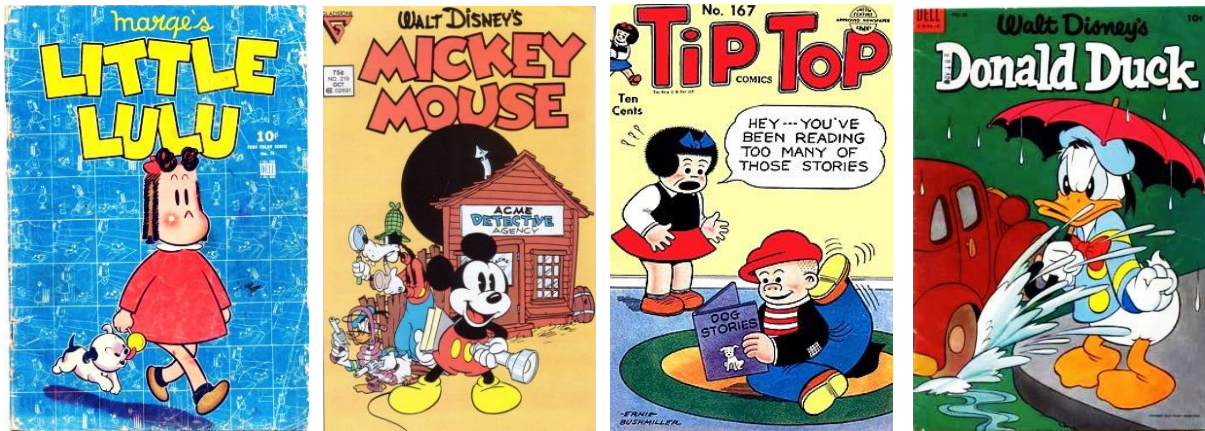
Horror comics were very popular!



Comics for girls...



And for the kiddies...



Soon enough, another man would impact the industry!



(To be continued)

On the **Scavenger's** floating island...



'Whaaat? The blonde played us!'



*'But how the...? She is **Blackhawk!**'*

Zinda had pulled a parachute "sleight of hand"!

She first bailed out at 50,000 feet while sending her jet into a dive to then turn over and eject her "mannequin"! The perfect distraction as she opened her chute at minimal height. No need to swim to shore: at "six knots westerly", the island floated under her.



*'The **Blackhawks** are invincible as a unit!'*

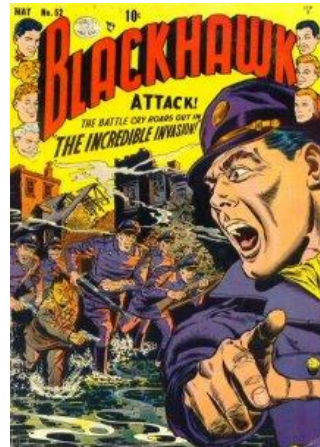
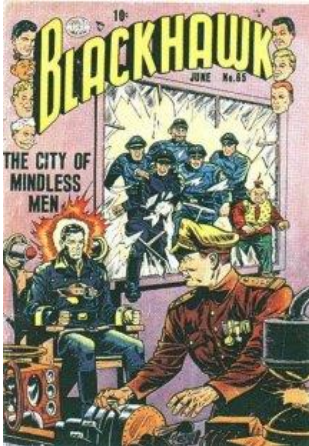


'The greatest threat to island gangsters ever known.'

While back with the team...



The "Angels of Vengeance" made short work of the **Scavenger's** gang.

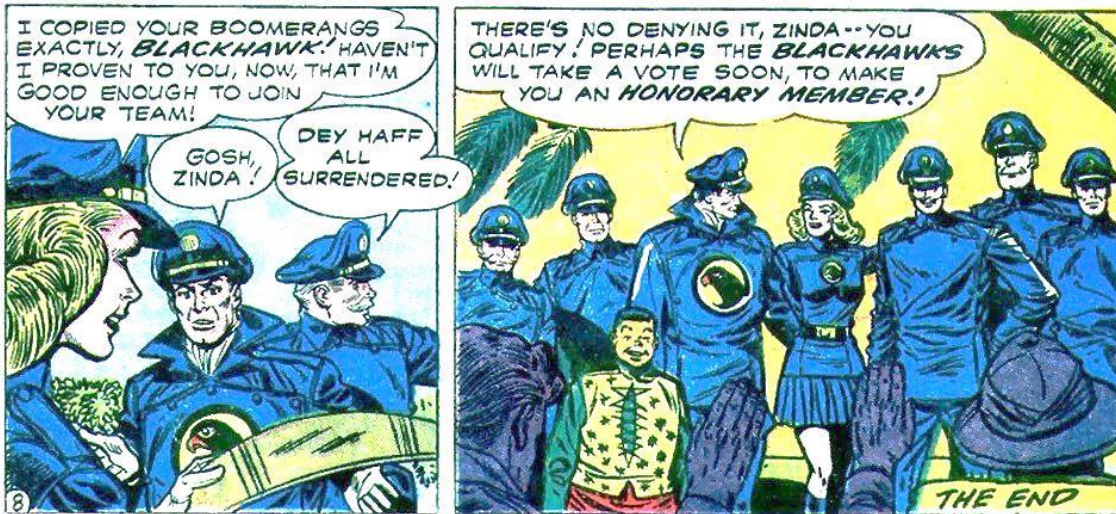


Zinda Blake took out their boss personally!



'Your voyage is over once again, Scavenger!'

'I fell for a beautiful young blonde...twice!'





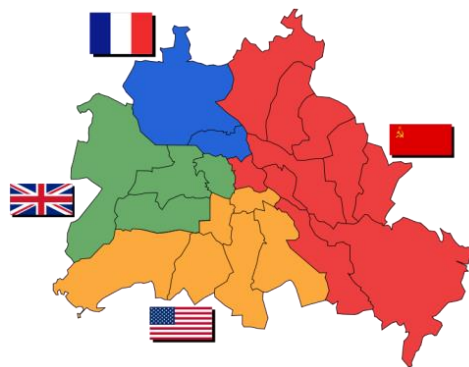
“Honorary”?
Honorary!

‘And this Ray Cannon
will look fabulous in our
Victory Museum!’



BERLIN

The Nazis crushed, Germany was divided into four Allied zones. The German capital, Berlin, was in the Russian zone and divided into four sectors—British, French, American and Soviet.



Stalin saw Berlin as a threat. In June 1948, the Russians—who wanted Berlin all for themselves—closed all highways, railroads and canals from western-occupied Germany into western-occupied Berlin.

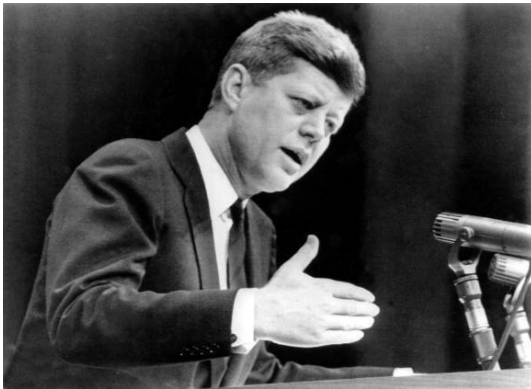
Unless Berlin surrendered to Soviet rule, the city would starve.

The Allies united to launch a massive airlift. Aircraft were landing and taking off every 30 seconds for nearly two years, 300,000 flights in all.

On May 12, 1949, the Soviets lifted the blockade and reopened the roads, canals and railway routes into the western half of the city. The Allies continued the airlift until September, however, because they wanted to stockpile supplies in Berlin just in case the blockade was reinstated.



Stalin died in 1953, but Berlin remained the flashpoint of the Cold War. In 1960, it was heating up yet again.



'...We shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.'



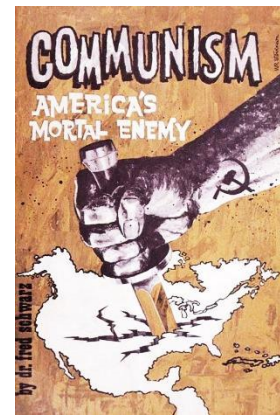
'Berlin is the testicle of the West. When I want the West to scream, I squeeze on Berlin.'





'Where World War Two ended in Europe, WW III could begin.'

'The Russkies'll roll over us like a misplaced speedbump!'



'Wait just one minute! I see not one, but TWO ways out of this predicament!'





'ONE – Either get Elvis in here. Drive the German women crazy! Russians wouldn't dare put "The King" in danger!

'Or...



'Show me Blackhawk!'

3



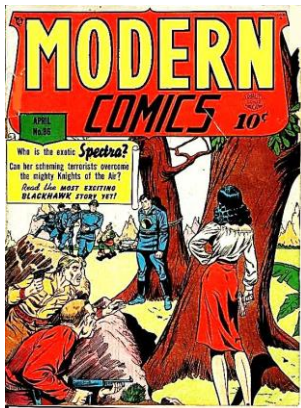
'A relationship is like a shark. It has to constantly move forward or it dies.'



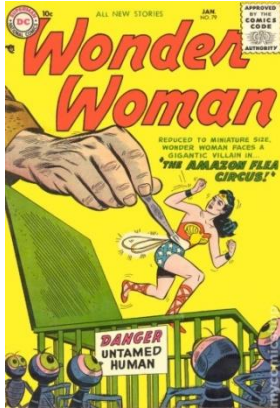
JANUARY 29, 1961

Dear Diary,

I'm an "Honorary Blackhawk", me? I save the whole team twice! They owe me their lives two times over and I'm still not the equal of any of them!



'Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, "She doesn't have what it takes." They will say, "Women don't have what it takes.'"



'To seek only equality, given the current male bias of the social values, is to assume that women want to be like men or that men are worth emulating. ... It is just as dangerous to fall into the trap of seeking liberation without due concern for equality.'

And what have the "Angels of Vengeance" been up to since I've been in uniform?



*Khrushchev's promising that Communism will "bury" us while Castro rails against Capitalism, the **Blackhawks** are chasing the **Cat-Man**!*

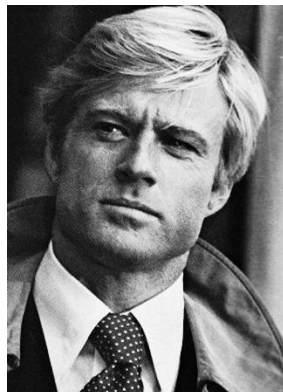


*All seven of them versus the bleeping Cat-Man! This is **not** what I ever dreamed of!*

Zinda

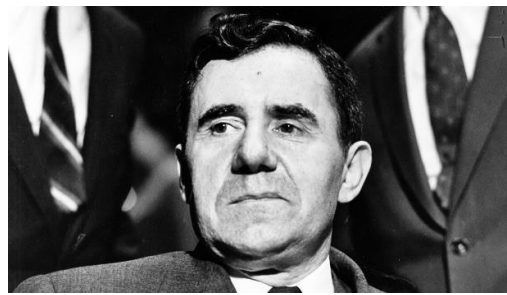
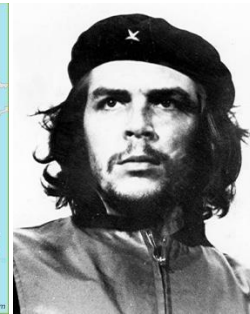


*'Comrades, I foresee good tidings in the wind!
Thanks to the incompetent **Scavenger**, the **Blackhawks**
are without their jets, and so is their "honorary" member,
Zinda Blake, the latest "Flavor of the Month"!*





'While the "Angels of Vengeance" are stranded on their secret Pacific base, let us concentrate on a Caribbean Island!'



'Do you envision us invading Cuba?'

'We could do so without firing a shot! Senor Castro will soon welcome our aid!'



'We will give Castro all he needs...with a few strings attached!'

Comics **3** History

AT WAR

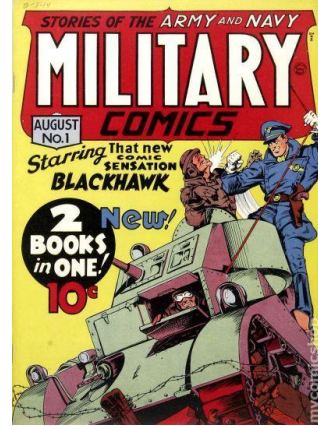
The comic book industry got into World War Two before the United States did.



OCTOBER 1939



MARCH 1941



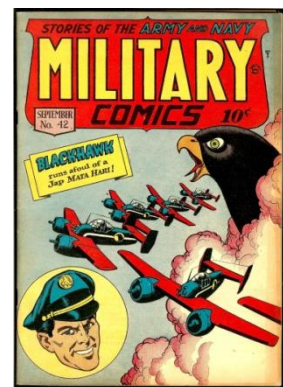
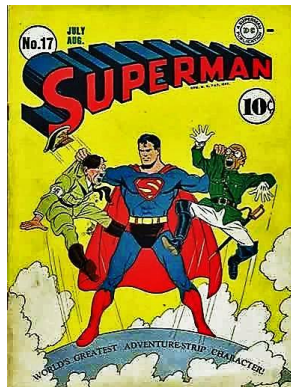
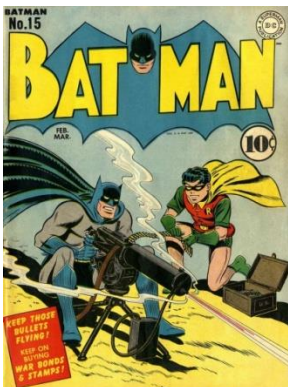
AUGUST 1941



'We have always held to the hope, the belief, the conviction that there is a better life, a better world, beyond the horizon.'



'How fortunate for governments that the people they administer don't think.'

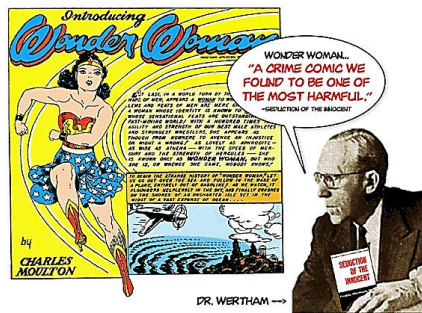


When World War Two ended in 1945, four heroes stood above the rest.
 Comic book heroes then took on the Communists!



But the Nazis and the Nips and the Fascists and the Commies were child's play compared to the next arch-enemy of comics...

The real "Doctor DOOM"!



"Archangel of Vengeance"! It is an honor to speak to you!"

"The honor is mine, Mr. President! How may we help you?"

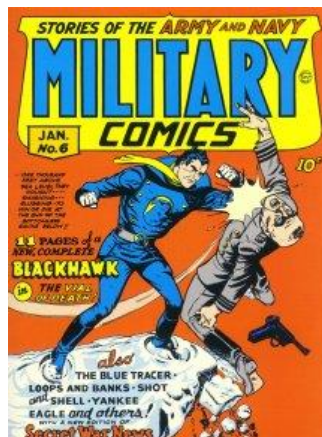
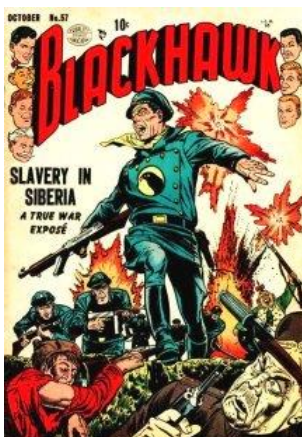


'It is I who will help you!'

'Go on, Mr. President?'

*'I've urged Lockheed to work
'round the clock on your new planes!'*

*'And let's not forget Lady Blackhawk's
F-94 Starfire!'*

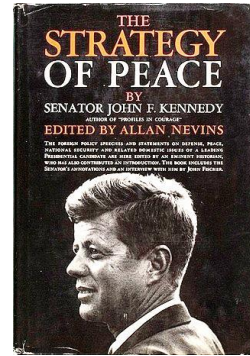
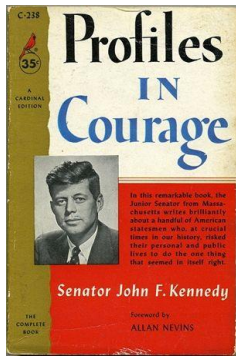




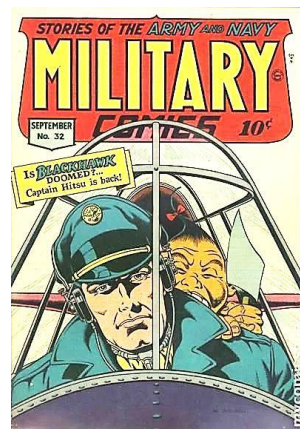
'The Blackhawks are invincible as a unit!'



'The greatest threat to political conspiracies ever known.'



'Please understand, Blackhawk, that receipt of the aircraft comes with certain conditions.'



"Conditions", Mr. President?"





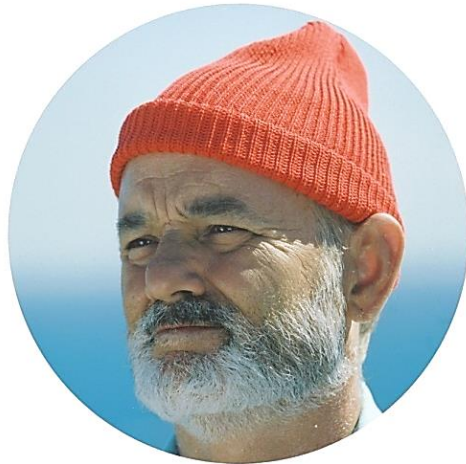
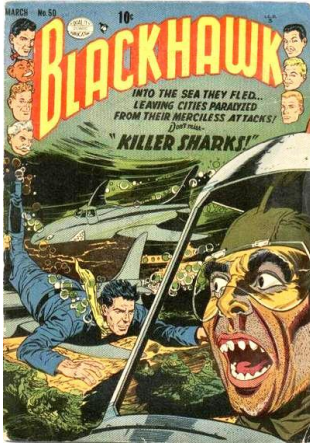
*'Look sharp, "Denizens of the Deep"!
We've got our Shark-Marine to launch!
And call me **Killer Shark!***



'Yes, **Killer Shark!** Almost seaworthy!

'We know "the way to the San Jose",
Killer Shark!





*'But this time will be very special!
I've invited old sea-mates of ours to join in the hunt!*

Call me Killer Shark!



'But Killer Shark, they always beat us up!'



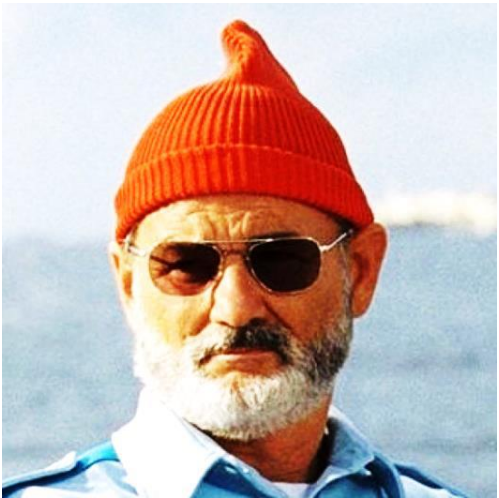
'Yes, Killer Shark! Why do want to take on the "Angels of Vengeance?"'



*'The **Blackhaws** are invincible as a unit!'*



'Because, finally, they admitted an "honorary" woman!'



*'Didn't any of you land-lubbers see the "**Biggest Movie of 1959**"? Starring the original team? Well, you just know there's going to be a sequel! And if we play this just right, we'll be in it!'*



*'Call me **Killer Shark!**'*



Buckingham Palace



'Your Majesty, Zinda Blake returned to the States and is home with her parents!

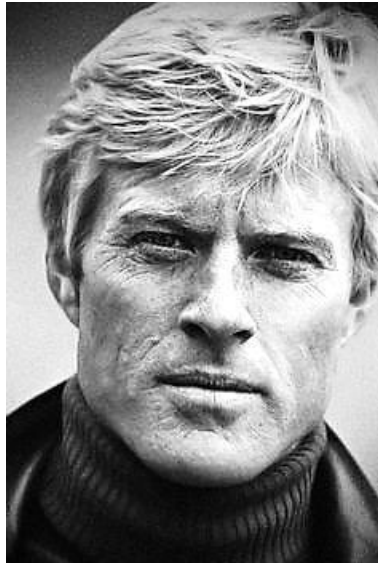
'She had little choice, Prime Minister! What will she do next?'

'She has many choices! Hollywood and advertisers bombing her with offers!'

*'But what Zinda wants is to be fully **Blackhawk!** And she's not there yet!'*

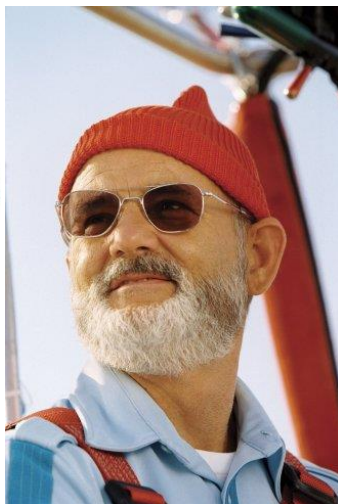


*'But she's finding out that becoming a **Blackhawk** is supremely difficult, even for a woman!'*



“Angels of Vengeance”, just before we go stir crazy without our jets, an arch-enemy has come to our rescue...

‘Call him Killer Shark!’

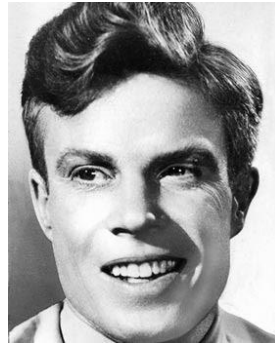




'Who? He looks like a crazy uncle!'



'He tried a body suit, but it wasn't him!'



'Then a mask that just didn't swim!'

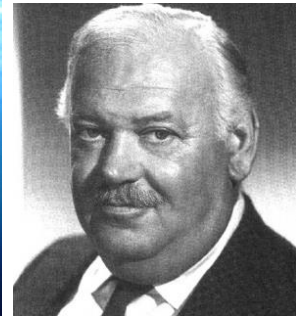
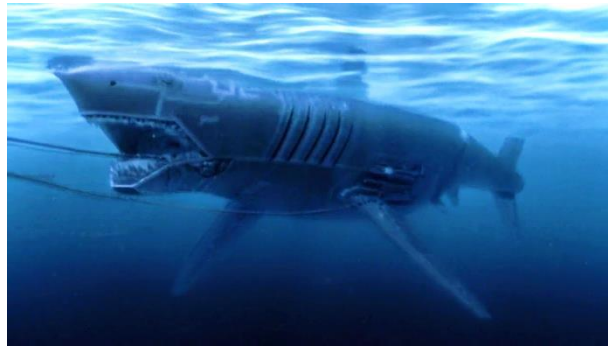


'What does he want with us?'



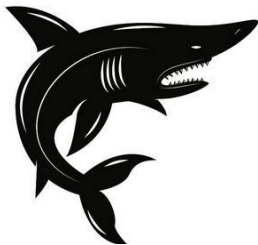
'Killer Shark wants competition for a sunken treasure ship!'

*'We'll be taking the **Hawk-sub** for an overdue sea voyage!'*



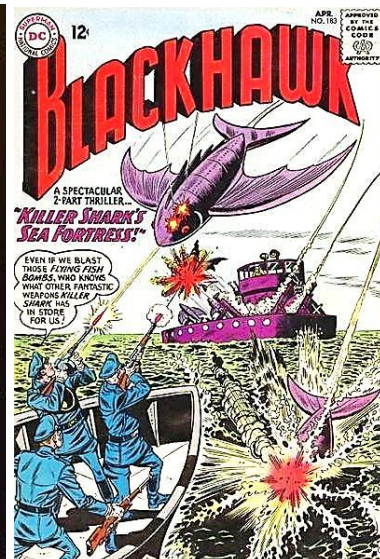
*'A battle of submarines?
Too easy a set-up! What
does **Killer Shark** really want?'*

*Donnevetter! Too easy
a trap to pass up!
Bon voyage!'*



*'Let's make this a coed "treasure hunt"!
Tell **Lady Blackhawk** we dock at
Midway in four days!*

*'Is she's looking for a lift to
Killer Shark, we'll be happy
to give her one!'*





VARIETY

LADY 🐣 BLACKHAWK



A STAR IS BORN!

**THE
Hollywood
REPORTER**

Zinda 🐣 Blake



A Solo Movie?

4



'How you first meet the public is how the industry sees you. You can't argue with them. That's their perception.'



MARCH 21, 1961

Dear Diary,

*There **was** going to be movie!*

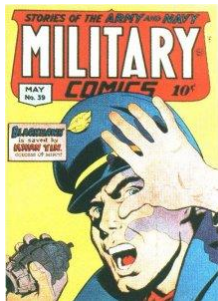


ZINDA BLAKE

THE GIRL WHO MADE THE BLACKHAWKS FAMOUS!

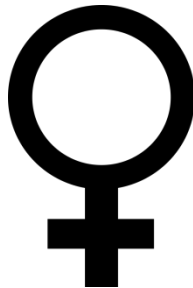
All I had to do was lay back and play on the "Casting couch"!

Not me! Not now! Not ever!



'You'll never work in this town again!'

Besides, I've got a date on Midway Island with seven heroes and a submarine!



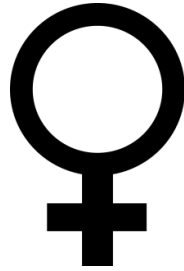
'I love to see a young girl go out and grab the world by the lapels. Life's a bitch. You've got to go out and kick ass.'

'Doubt is a killer. You just have to know who you are and what you stand for.'

*Was this how it felt in the glory days? You get the call for a **Blackhawk** mission! You were needed to "fight for liberty"!*



'HAWKA-A-A-A!'



*‘Power is not given to you.
You have to take it.’*

*‘I don’t go by the rule book...
I lead from the heart, not the head.’*



*‘The Communists have now given up
hope of controlling the countryside.’*

*‘The internal security situation here now,
although at times delicate, is better than
it has been at any time in the last
two or three years.’*



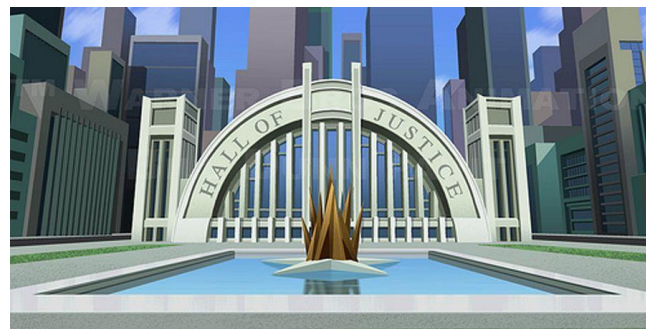
'Everything depends on the Americans. If they want to make war for 20 years then we shall make war for 20 years. If they want to make peace, we shall make peace and invite them to tea afterwards.'

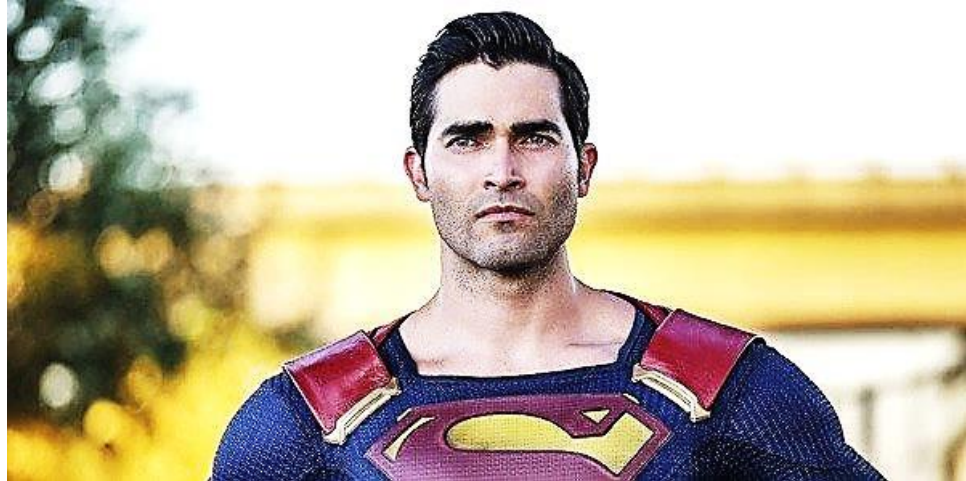
'Weapons are an important factor in war but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale.'



*'We can withstand the missiles and bombs of the Americans, but if the **Blackhawks**...'*

'Tell your loyal and brave comrades, they need not fear the "Angels of Vengeance"! They're busy fighting kiddie villains!'





'This emergency meeting has been called because one of our honored members is failing!

*'Together we must save the **Blackhawks** from themselves!'*



'What? The "Angels of Vengeance" began fighting the Nazis and the Imperial Japanese!'



'And then took on the Soviets and the ChiComs!'



'But when the famed team joined the DCEU, they were forced to fight foes unworthy of their prowess!'



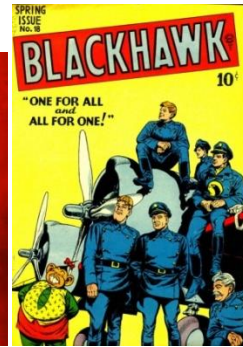
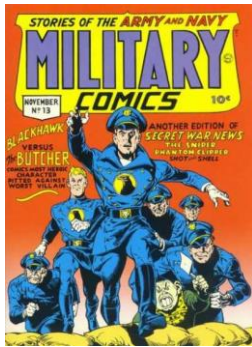
*'The **Blackhawks** are no strangers to change! They'll adjust because they have to!'*



'Easy enough for you to say! But what true hero would stoop to defeat a foolish costumed creep?'



'We are the Justice League! But is it our mission to confront and demand "justice" from the Blackhawks?'



'They have no super-powers, yet the Blackhawks are the greatest fighting team in history!'

And we're gonna tell them what?'



'Be relevant! Make a statement! Take a stand! What kind of heroes are these guys?'



'The Blackhawks are invincible as a unit!'

'One guess who made them so!'



*'Versus Porquepine and "whatever man"?'
To think who they used to intimidate!'*



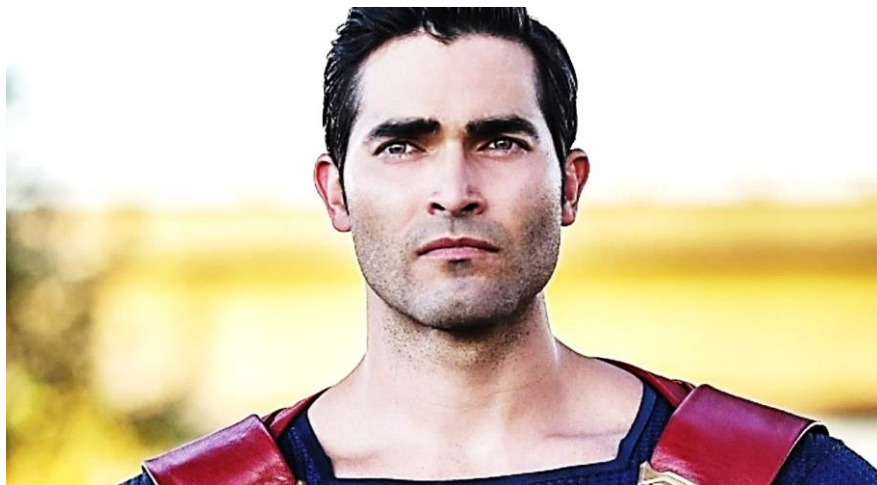
'WE WILL BURY YOU!'



'What shall we demand of the "Angels of Vengeance"?'



*"The peak of excellence...plus luck."
'What should we expect?'*



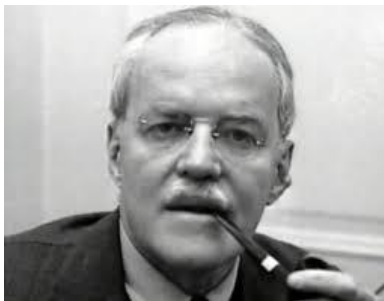
*'Quite simply...Show us **Blackhawk!**'*



Between a Cuban snake and a Russian bear, President Kennedy was looking for a way out *and* in.



"Boxing the compass", gentlemen, I want more than ideas...solutions!"



'The CIA army of exiles is ready to go! We'll launch from Guatemala with air strikes from specially-marked bombers!'

'The Cuban people will not support another dictator! We land at the "Bay of Pigs", seize the initiative and run Castro out of town!'



'And if something goes wrong? Will the United States commit American lives to get rid of this "revolutionary"?'



'Without hesitation! Those men will be fighting for freedom! How can we possibly abandon them?'



'Castro's turning more and more Red! Time is short. We've got to get in there and show the world we mean business.'



'Fighting tyranny and dictatorship is an idealistic mission America has fought for generations! But we cannot admit this invasion is our idea!'



*'Let's all of us face it: this mission is tailor-made for the "Angels of Vengeance"! With the **Blackhawks** leading the way, all the Free World will back us!'*



*'Yessir, But the **Blackhawks** are currently pursuing their archenemy – **Killer Shark!**'*



*'The **Blackhawks** are invincible as a unit!'*

'The greatest threat to global predators ever known!'



*'**Killer Who?**'*



*'Who in tarnation is **Killer Shark?**'*



'His given name is Murray Williams, a hotshot inventor whose unique underwater devices have revolutionized "treasure hunting" on the high seas!'



'However, his vision of himself is far different from how the rest of the world sees him!'



*'How long will it take the **Blackhawks** to corral this kook?'*



'Their new jets are being finished by Lockheed Martin in Georgia!'





*'The **Blackhawks** want this clown behind bars, and with **Lady Blackhawk's** presence, they should be done in a week or so!'*



'The decision is yours, Mr. President! Launch the invasion without the "Angels of Vengeance" or wait until their aircraft are operational.'

*'I can hear the Cubans cheering now...Ensená nos **Halcon Negro!**'*



The President took a long moment...



*'Operation Zapata is now a GO! Our "Exile" air force will strike Cuban airfields! As for "outside assistance", get the **Blackhawks** to Georgia and their planes fueled and armed. I'll take it from there!'*

"Killer Shark", really?

Comics **4** History

SAVE THE CHILDREN!

World War Two was over and won. Those who used to be our merciless, blood thirsty barbaric enemies had been totally crushed by the brave and bold Allied freedom-fighters.

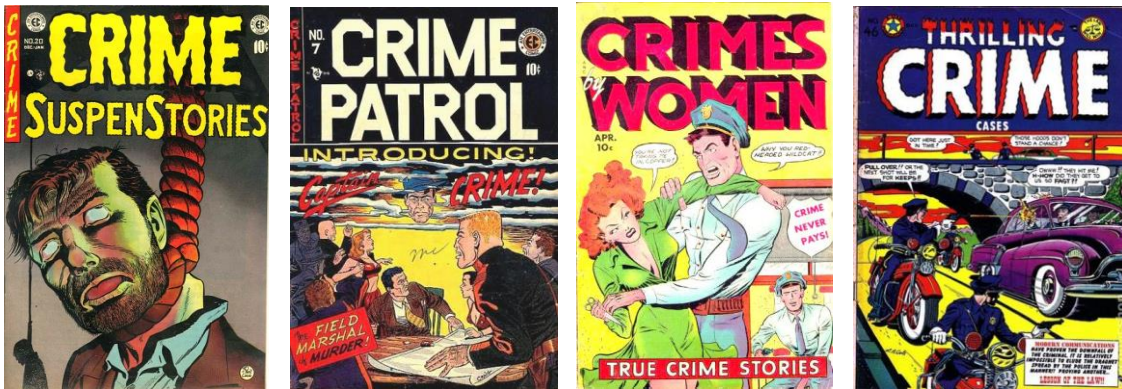


All that was suddenly history; superheroes were now, *right now!*



Arch-enemies were not enough and superhero sales began to sink.

Crime comics continued to prosper.



Leading the pack were horror books!



If this trend continued...



THE DAYS OF THE SUPERHEROES WERE NUMBERED!

In true comic book irony, the man who would save the superheroes was the doctor who hated them most!

Fredric Wertham, a German-American psychologist, despised comic books with a professional passion. His controversial 1954 book claimed that comic books, 90,000,000 published every month, were a direct threat to our children!



'A beginner compared to the comic-book industry.'

- 1) THE COMIC-BOOK FORMAT IS AN INVITATION TO ILLITERACY.
- 2) CRIME COMIC BOOKS CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE OF CRUELTY AND DECEIT.
- 3) THEY CREATE A READINESS FOR TEMPTATION.
- 4) THEY STIMULATE UNWHOLESOME FANTASIES.
- 5) THEY SUGGEST CRIMINAL OR SEXUALLY ABNORMAL IDEAS.
- 6) THEY FURNISH THE RATIONALIZATION FOR THEM, WHICH MAY BE ETHICALLY EVEN MORE HARMFUL THAN THE IMPULSE.
- 7) THEY SUGGEST THE FORMS A DELINQUENT IMPULSE MAY TAKE AND SUPPLY DETAILS OF TECHNIQUE.
- 8) THEY MAY TIP THE SCALES TOWARD MALADJUSTMENT OR DELINQUENCY.



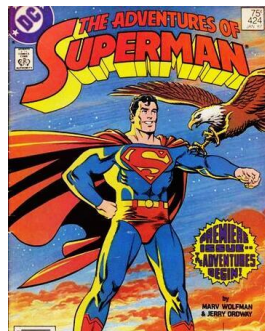
Beginning in 1948, Wertham wrote and spoke widely, arguing about the detrimental effects that comics reading had on young people.



Seduction spawned a whirlwind. Congress held committee meetings. Comics books were burned. Seemingly, superheroes got the worst of it!



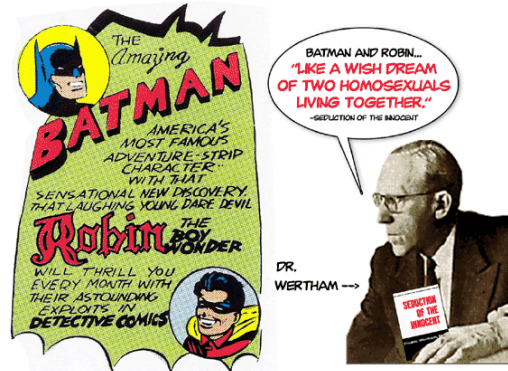
Promoted Lesbianism



Communist



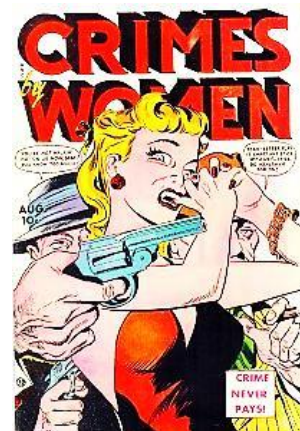
Homosexuals



‘For boys, Wonder Woman is a frightening image. For girls she is a morbid ideal. Where Batman is anti-feminine, the attractive Wonder Woman and her counterparts are definitely anti-masculine.’

‘The Batman type of story may stimulate children to homosexual fantasies, of the nature of which they may be unconscious.’

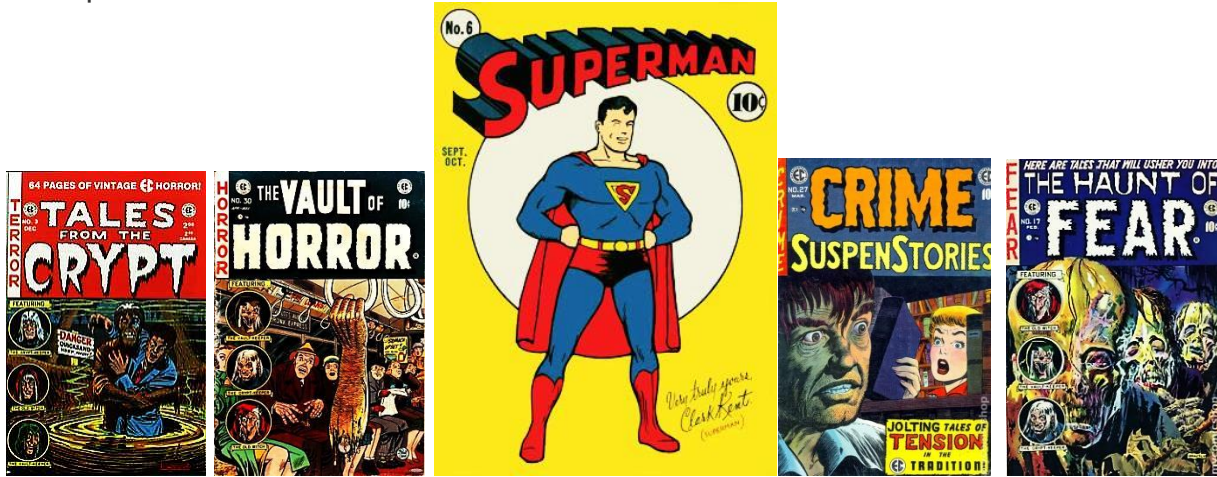
Not everyone agreed.



‘...When reading a comic book, children and adolescents are required to engage their imagination and visualize the elements in the story that were not graphically portrayed. Moreover, when reading a comic book, youth can self-regulate the intake of information. As such, children and adolescents can spend as much time as they like reading dialogue and viewing graphic images, thus affording youth a detailed encoding of violent material.’

Overnight, most small publishers perished. Scores of writers and artists had their imaginations and employment skewered. Surely, in the midst of this mayhem, there had to be a winner,

Horror and crime comics vanishing left and right, the superheroes again stood at the top of the market.



But for how long?

In October of 1954, after a number of hearings by the Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency and facing a growing concern over their works, Comic Book publishers came together to form the **Comics Code Authority** and created a set of rules and guidelines that they would have to live by. And to show that the books being published did exactly this, the group created a logo that was to be printed in the top right hand corner of each book.



From now on, there would be no more...

- THE WORDS HORROR AND TERROR ON THE COVERS
- ANY CHARACTERS OR IMAGES DEPICTING A DEFAMATION OF AUTHORITATIVE FIGURES, GOVERNMENT OR OTHERWISE
- GORE AND DISFIGUREMENT
- DRUGS
- SEXUALIZED SCENARIOS, INCLUDING ANY SORT OF NUDITY
- STORIES SHOWING FAMILIES AND THEIR DISFUNCTION
- PROFANITY



'The mightiest heroes ever imagined!' TMW MAN

When the smoke finally cleared, DC superheroes ruled the industry, their rivals too weak to be worth naming. In 1960, the **Justice League of America** premiered.

JLA dominance appeared to be immortal!



Who could have dreamt that from out of nowhere, a new team of superheroes would emerge and leave DC biting the dust?

"Excelsior!"

(To be Continued)

NEXT...



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