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COMIC BOOKS' FIRST MODERNIST **KRIGSTEIN**

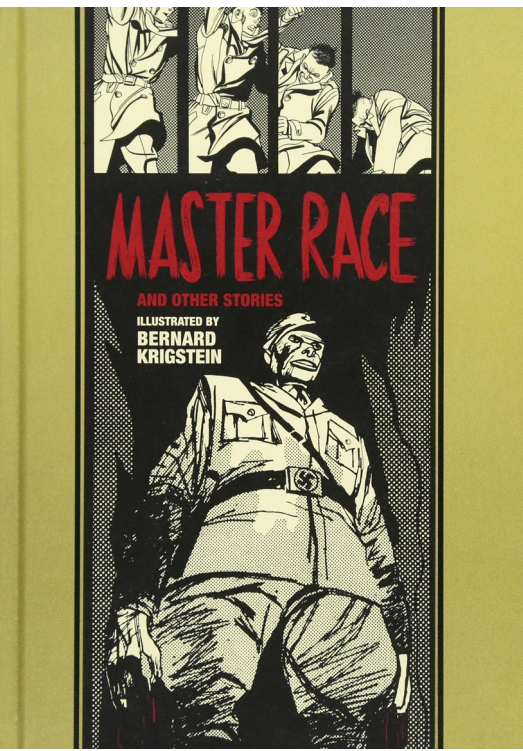
MASTER RACE AND OTHER STORIES
and **WE SPOKE OUT: COMIC BOOKS AND
THE HOLOCAUST—THEN AND NOW**

APR 2018 — NO. SIXTEEN

PLUS...**BLAZING COMBAT,
INCREDIBLE SCIENCE**

THE TRAIN GRINDS TO A STOP. THE DOORS SLIDE OPEN.
HE'S COMING *TOWARD* YOU, CARL! *RUN! THIS IS YOUR
CHANCE! RUN!...*

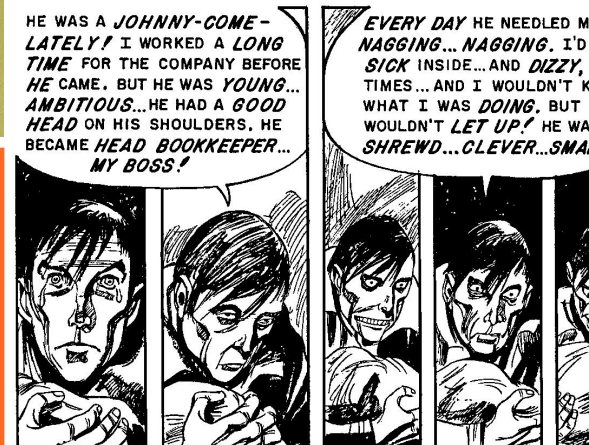




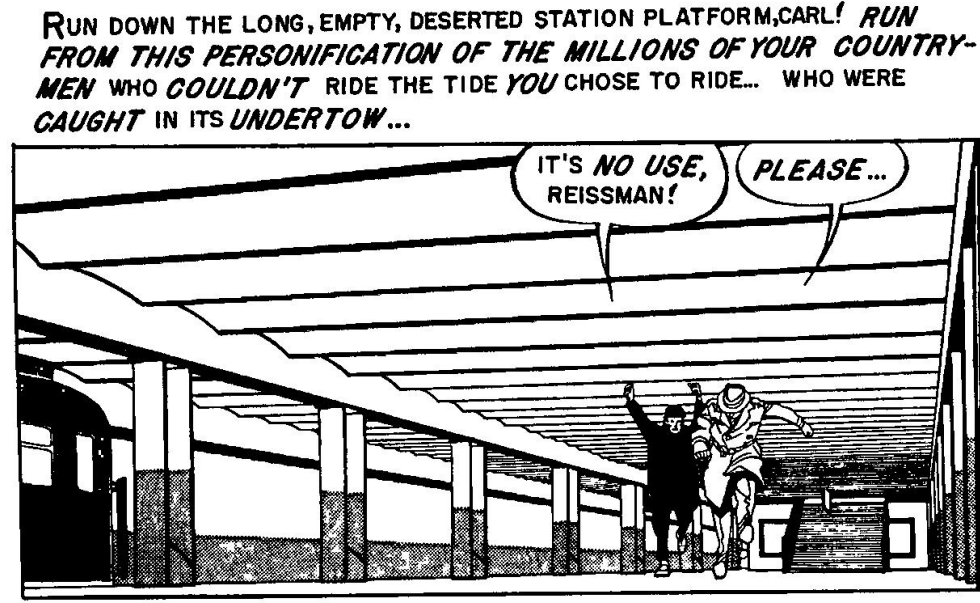
MASTER RACE AND OTHER STORIES
by Bernard Krigstein
(Fantagraphics EC Artists Library)
Beaumont — Central

It worked like this: Cartoonists would visit the offices of Entertaining Comics and drop off their latest assignment and pick up the

new one. If they worked for Al Feldstein, who edited and wrote EC's horror, SF and crime books, they would receive a number of blank sheets of Bristol board with the script already lettered and laid out on the pages. Most EC artists were happy to work that way—but not **Bernard Krigstein**. A latecomer to EC, Krigstein differed from his peers in both background and approach to his chosen medium. His art reflected a worldly variety of influences, from the graceful compositions of ancient Chinese print-makers to the manic modernism of the Futurists. "The idea of drawing (is) simply too big to be confined to a 'style'" said Krigstein. "I just thought of expressing thought and feeling in the best possible way." Hence the delicacy of his adaptation of Ray Bradbury's "The Flying Machine" (below left). Or the smoky distortions of "Pipe-Dream". Or the sleek mid-century illustration of the suburban Suspensory "More Blessed to Give". From the Groszian savagery of "The Pit" and "You, Murderer" to the cool, almost architectural renderings of "The Bath" and "The



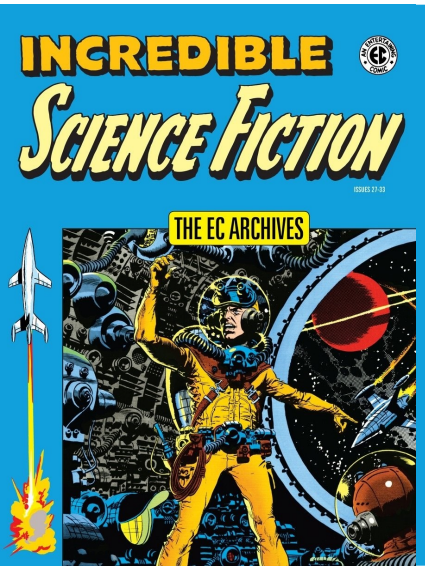
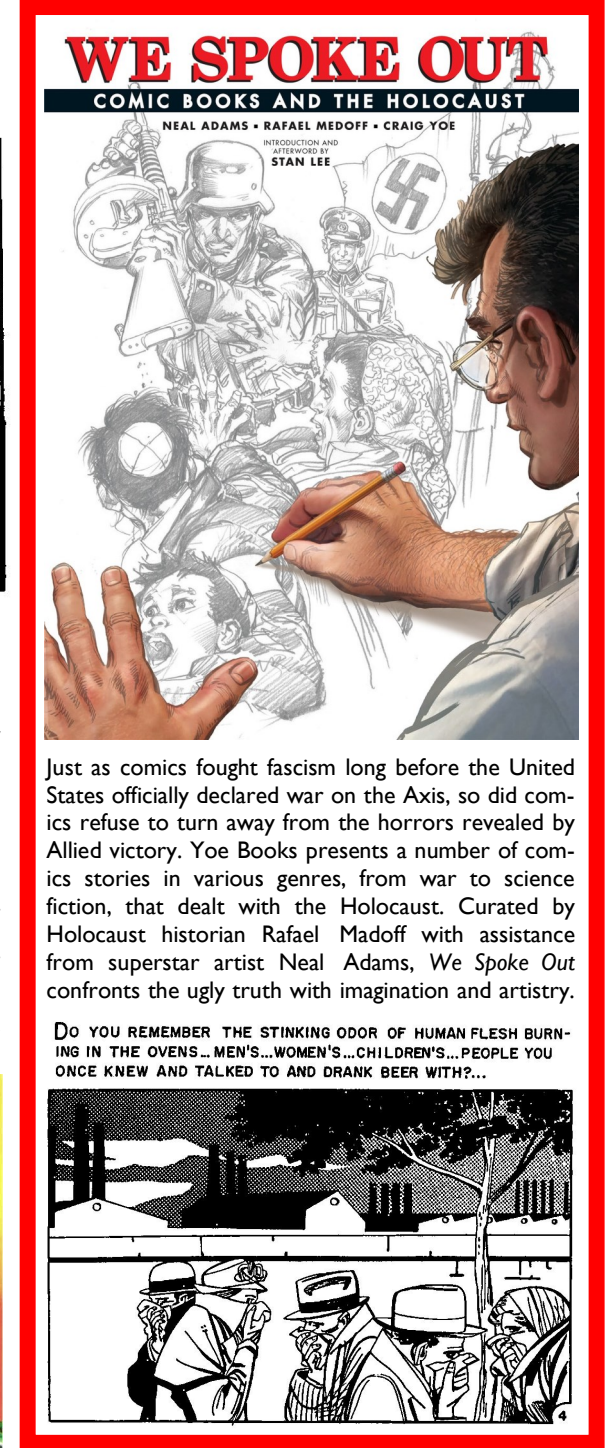
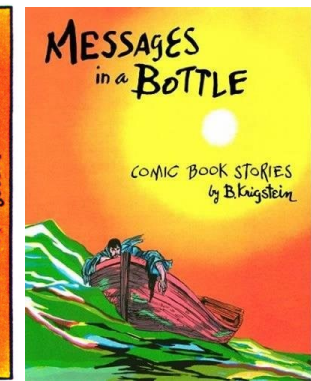
Purge", Krigstein brought to comics a new intellectualism no less passionate and dynamic than the romanticism of Wood and Williamson, the naturalism of Davis and Severin. Fortunately, editor Feldstein encouraged artists to follow their bliss...as long as they made both the deadline and the page count. Krigstein always hit the former, but chafed at the latter. Every EC book was laid out as 8-7-6-7 pages of story content. Krigstein wanted more space to explore his new obsession with using multiple panels to express both physical actions, such as running (above right), and emotional states, such as the ebb and flow of madness gripping the killer of "In the Bag" (above).



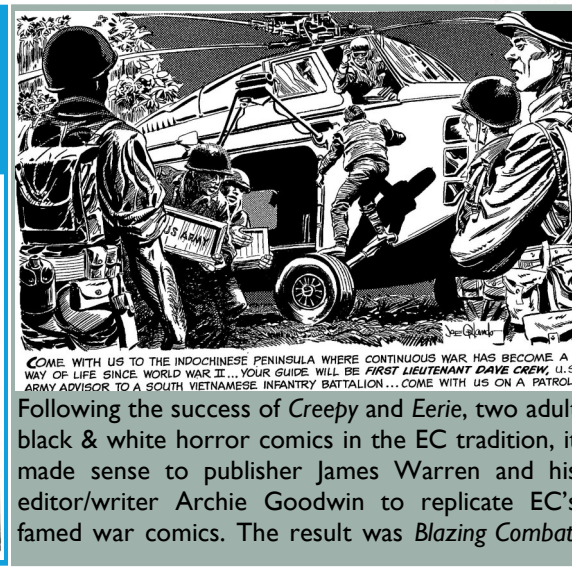
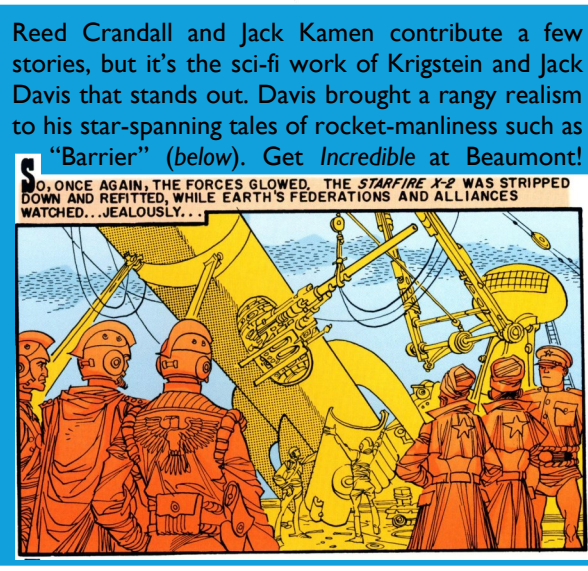
Run down the long, empty, deserted station platform, Carl! Run from this personification of the millions of your country-men who couldn't ride the tide you chose to ride... who were caught in its undertow...

Krigstein tried to exercise his theories within the framework of genre fare like "Key Chain" and "The Catacombs" (below). But then he received an assignment called "Master Race", one of the socially conscious stories EC semi-casualistically called "preachies" that ran in *Shock Suspenstories*. Stunned by the story's fearless description of the rise of Nazism and the subsequent Holocaust, inspired by the frantic intensity of the climax, Krigstein demanded his boss let him expand the original six pages to eight. After asking his boss, Feldstein agreed—and Krigstein delivered one of the best jobs in the history of comics. The story of a man whose past catches up with him, "Master Race" is notable for its visual treatment of the

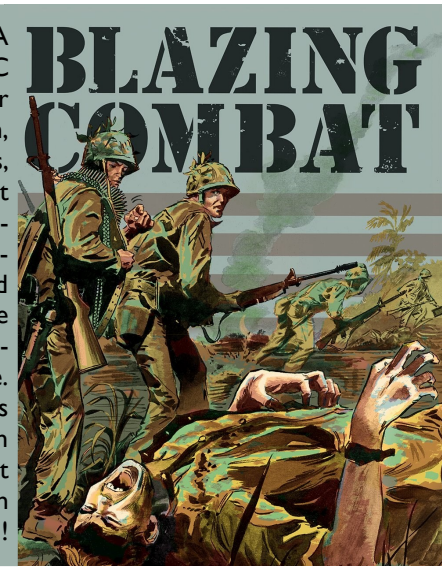
monstrosity of Nazism, with portrayals of raw bestiality—the hysteria of the rallies, the brutality of the guards—contrasted with images of cold inhumanity—the shot of a camp from the viewpoint of a gun tower, the panel (below right) of civilians skulking past the death factories. And as the apex of Krigstein's experiments with time and movement, from the Bal-laesque depiction of bodies in motion to the multiplicity of panels devoted to a single moment, "Master Race" is a must-read for admirers of comics as art. And his WWI air war stories rock! Those interested in color versions of Krigstein's best for EC, as well as his work before and after that company, should check out *Messages In A Bottle*, available from Central.

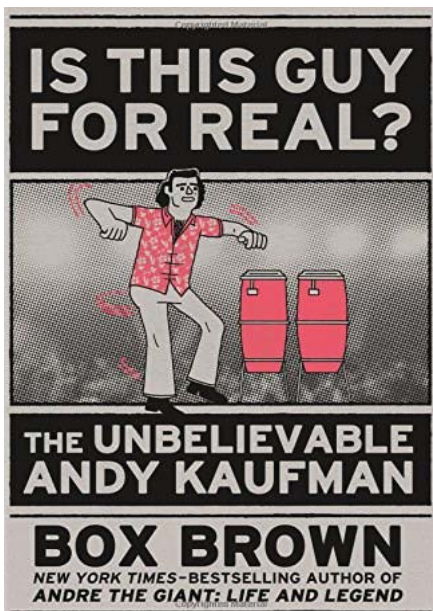


During his tenure at EC, Krigstein worked in every genre published by the fabled company: horror, war, crime, satire, pirate stories—and science fiction. "EC IS PROUDEST OF ITS TWO SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES" trumpeted house ads—so proud, the publisher ignored low sales and took a loss to keep those titles going. Eventually, EC had to compromise with the market and combine the books into *Weird Science-Fantasy*. Once the word "Weird" became controversial, EC changed the title to *Incredible Science Fiction*. That comic featured not only the core group of EC sci-fi artists such as Wally Wood, Al Williamson and Joe Orlando—whose adaptations of Eando Binder's classic "Adam Link" stories are a highlight of the collection—but refugees from the cancelled crime and horror books.

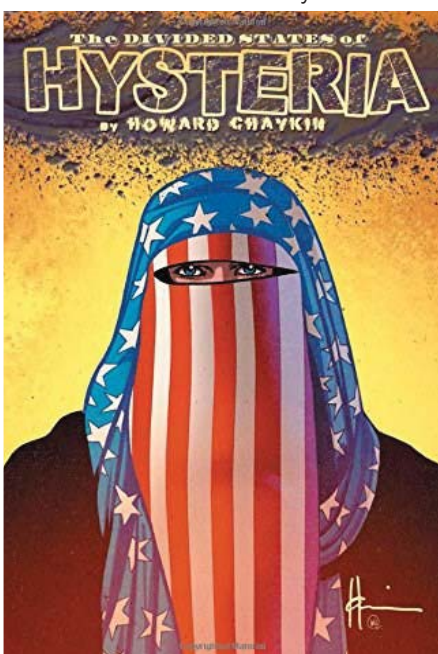


which some call the best war comic ever published. A mere four issues featured powerful art from both EC war vets like John Severin, Reed Crandall and letterer Ben Oda and Warren mainstays such as Alex Toth, Gray Morrow and Joe Orlando (left). Angelo Torres, whose dramatic work rarely receives the praise it deserves, did some amazing jobs, especially the paratrooper tale "Night Drop". All the artists took advantage of the black & white format, best showcased by Gene Colan's ink washes on "Conflict". Like the EC books, *Blazing Combat* was meticulously researched and written from a humanistic perspective. That's what got it killed. Conservative wholesalers were outraged by the antiwar subtext, especially in the stories about the then-burgeoning conflict in Viet Nam. Fortunately, Fantagraphics' collection has been in print since 2009. Get the latest edition at Central!





It makes perfect sense that the cartoonist responsible for the bestselling graphic biography of **Andre the Giant** would do the same for comedian **Andy Kaufman**. **Andre's** game, professional wrestling, was one of **Kaufman's** main influences. He took its performative ethos of *kay-fabe*—the maintenance of the illusion of reality at all times, at all costs—and adapted it to create a confrontational form of humor that infuriated and inspired audiences and other artists. **Box Brown's** simple, straight-forward approach to both art and story aptly depicts **Kaufman's** ludicrous yet wondrous tale of fame and misfortune. This monochrome memoir from First Second can be found at Beaumont and Central. It's a testament to **Kaufman's** impact on American culture that many believe his

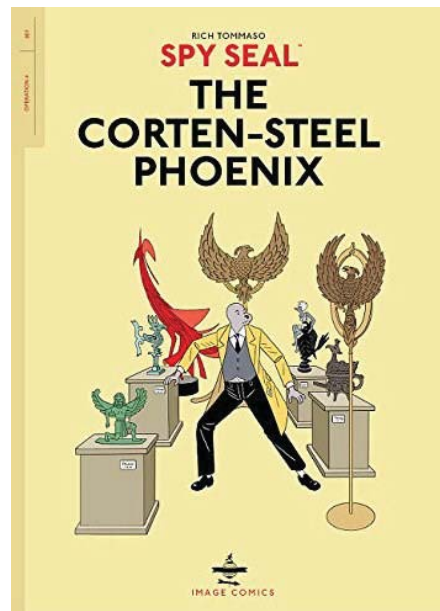


MEANWHILE

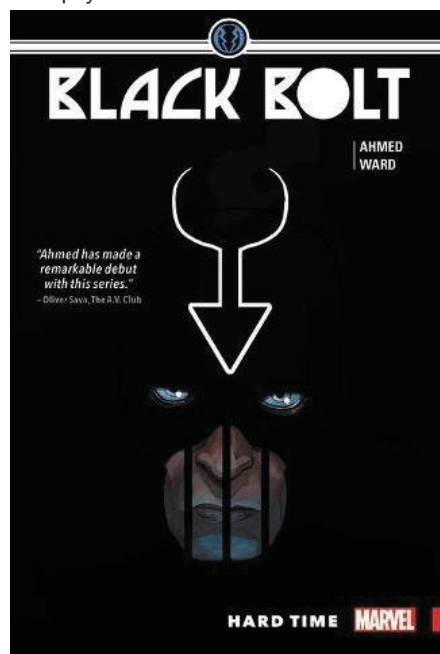
death was just another put-on. The skepticism sown by tricksters from **Kaufman** to **Nixon** long ago metastasized into a cancer of distrust ravaging the common ground between us, creating *The Divided States of Hysteria* (Image). Just as he ragged on the follies of Reaganism in his 1980s sci-fi satire *American Flagg*, writer/artist **Howard Chaykin** flogs the venal narcissism of post-truth America. Never one to mince words, **Chaykin** paints an ugly picture of a not-so-far future enveloped in a cocoon of interminable electronic chatter, where ceaseless gifting and petty conflicts lead to cataclysmic results. Too bad **Howie** can't just bring in his old pal Lamont Cranston to clean up the mess. One of the many contributors to the history of the original dark knight, the Shadow, **Chaykin** brought the best-selling hero of the 1930s



into the modern age in one of several *Shadow* series published by DC over the years. Now DC has teamed up with Ying-Ko's new publisher Dynamite to bring us *Batman/Shadow: The Murder Geniuses*. The script by **Scott** (*American Vampire*) **Snyder** & **Steve** (*Midnighter*) **Orlando** portrays Batman as one of many crimefighters, from Green Arrow to the Woman in Red, nurtured by the Shadow in his eternal war on evil. Like the Shadow himself, this story is violent. Not so much Batman's other team-ups—but that's because it's *Batman '66!* Spun off the popular series based on the **Adam West** version of the Caped Crusader, these TEEN books are fun, campy romps in which Batman and Robin '66 Meet Wonder Woman '77, the Man from U.N.C.L.E. and Steed and Mrs. Peel, that suave pair of super-spies known



across the pond as the Avengers. The secret agent craze of the 1960s that made John and Emma international icons lives again in *The Corten-Steel Phoenix* (Image), the first album starring **Rich** (*She-Wolf*) **Tommaso's** *Spy Seal*. Originally a website sketch of a childhood creation, *Spy Seal* was an immediate hit, even cosplayed before **Tommaso** had drawn a single page. This action-packed tribute to both Fleming and Herge can be found at multiple locations. Meanwhile, the Netflix version of *The Defenders* deal with a resurrected Diamondback in one of several new Marvel books. Check our TEEN collections for *Nova*, *Thor*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Totally Awesome Hulk* and my fave of the bunch, *Black Bolt*, featuring the psychedelic art of **Christian Ward!**



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