

# 741.5

# LIFE OF THE ARTIST

**BOSCH\*SCARFE\*BUSHMILLER**

**PLUS...WILLY MURPHY'S FLAMED-OUT  
FUNNIES & FOUL PLAY BY JACK DAVIS**

**JANUARY 2025 NO. 132**



**The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of**



**Lexington Public Library**  
*Reading Is Just the Beginning!*





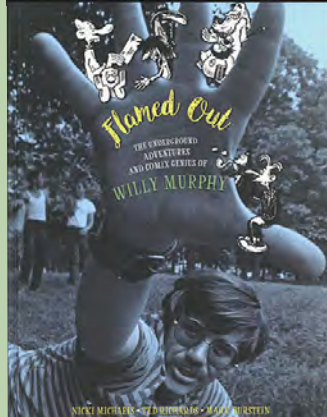
A splash page worthy of Goya (“Coffin Spell,” upper image above)...and a climax involving a giant octopus. Small-town satire in the vein of *Ma & Pa Kettle* followed by nail-biting adventures in the skies of WWI Europe and the space beyond the stars. Jack Davis drew it all, and he drew it like a pro, and drew it like a true artist. EC maven Thommy Burns calls Davis “Jack the Genre Killer” in his wide-ranging introduction to the final collection of Davis’ straight work for the legendary comics imprint of the 1950s. There’s the notorious lead story, the tale from the Crypt so gruesome Davis himself hoped Fantagraphics wouldn’t reprint it — sorry, Jack! There’s his “widdle kid” stories, including his adaptations of Ray Bradbury’s “The Black Ferris” and “Let’s Play Poison” (below). From frontier fear-fests to suburban burlesques, Davis brought his loping line and fervid brushwork to them all...including the infamous “Are You A Red Dupe”! Make your *Foul Play* at Central, Marksbury and Bates Creek!



Willy Murphy’s story was that of many Americans following the tumultuous decade of the Sixties. He was a bright, talented guy who had made his way ever closer to the top of the advertising profession...who just threw it all away one day so he could move out west and draw comics. He did just that, becoming part of the San Francisco comix scene. Then he died.



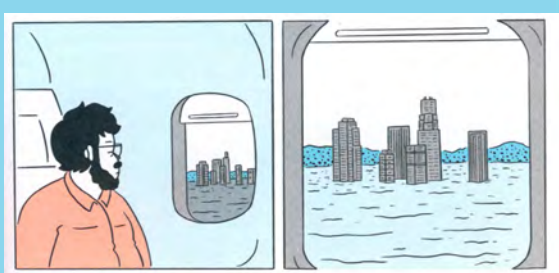
*Flamed Out* compiles the work created by *The Comix Genius of Willy Murphy*, including the Two Fools, Harry Kirschner, Henry Henpeck and Murphy’s stand-in, Arnold Peck the Human Wreck (seen right). Murphy was also one of Harvey Pekar’s earliest collaborators, as in the screed against Woody Allen *right*. Bathe in this light extinguished too soon at Central.



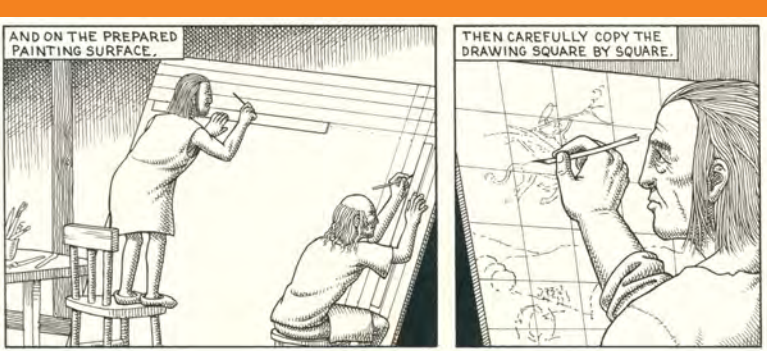
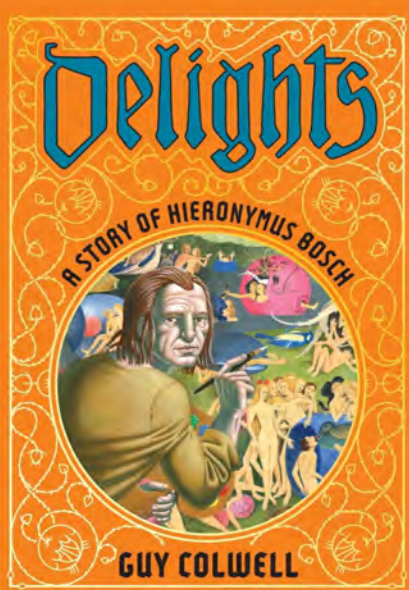
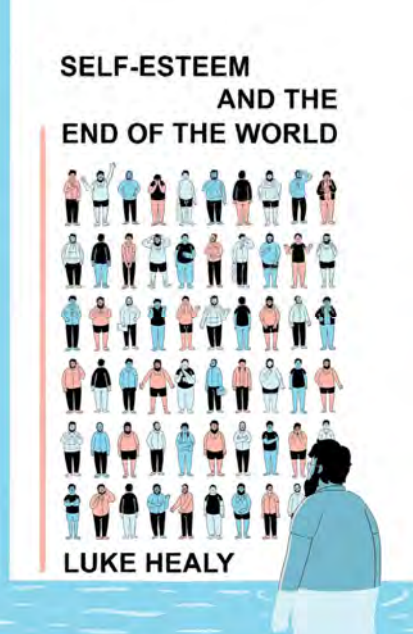
Still the leading English language magazine devoted to the art form of comics, *The Comics Journal* returns better late than never with #310, Winter/Spring 2024. An in-depth study of Bill Jemas’s controversial tenure at Marvel joins reviews of new alternative works (including a cold-blooded smackdown of Noah Van Sciver) and an



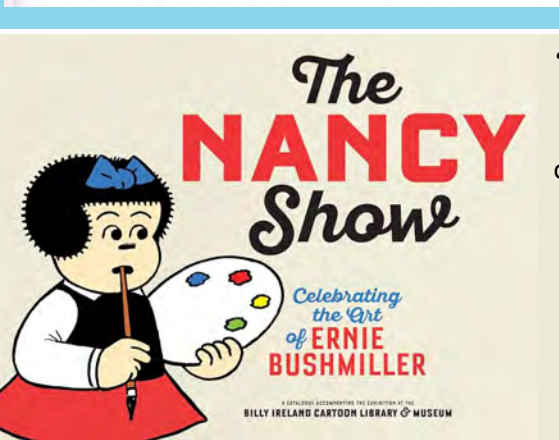
Informative round robin on pre-modern comics. Comic strips *HIV + ME* and *Explaining Music to Dogs* bookend an dialogue with Next Big Thing Lale Westvind (top pic). But the highlight is Gary Groth’s interview with England’s master of caricature, Gerald Scarfe (above), including his work with Disney and Pink Floyd!



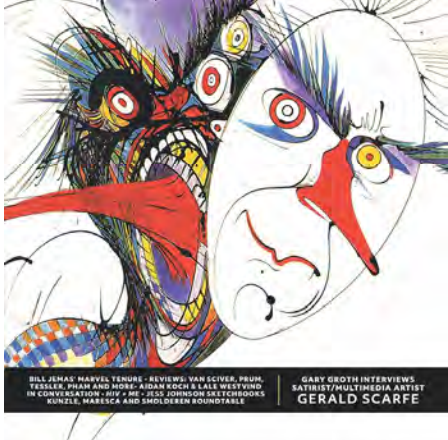
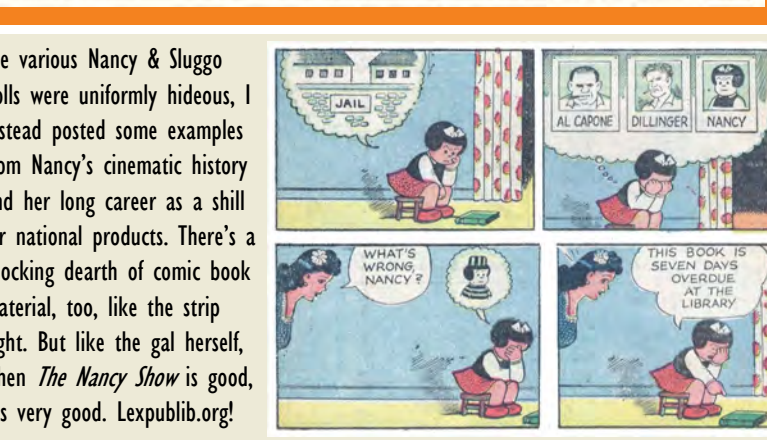
The most truthful title on the stands today, Luke (*The Con Artists*) Healy’s latest novel is indeed about *Self-Esteem and the End of the World*. As Luke fumbles and tumbles from one life-changing *faux pas* to another, he listens to self-help tapes, whether in the comfort of the storm-lashed hotel where his ill-fated play is set to go on or on the rain-ravaged hillsides of Greece while he dodges his boss in an extreme parody of “long distance work”. No matter where he is or what he does, Luke cannot escape himself. Meanwhile, the world drowns. Each chapter jumps five years into an increasingly dystopic yet resolutely banal future in which Healy tries to find a place as an artist and an individual. Get it at Central and Beaumont.



Jheronimus van Aken is a man caught between two worlds. There’s the everyday world of family, friends and community...and the more singular world of art. The late medieval world in which Inquisitors of the Church still loom over public life...and the new world of modernity, in which a growing aristocracy of wealth challenges the power of the priesthood with fancy new concepts like “private property”. The real world...and the world of visions that threaten to swamp the edges of his paintings and flood reality in a fever dream (below). Meanwhile, street hassle or no, J-van still has a deadline to meet for his new painting, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. Guy Colwell shows the plain old man behind the fabled name of Hieronymus Bosch in *Delights*, available through [lexpublib.org](http://lexpublib.org)!



“Another NANCY book?” you ask. Yes, but something special. An exhibit dedicated to what many consider the ultimate daily comic strip, *The NANCY Show* ran at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum in Columbus, Ohio in 1924. Published by Sunday Press, it includes not only originals and Sundays but examples of merchandise as well. Given





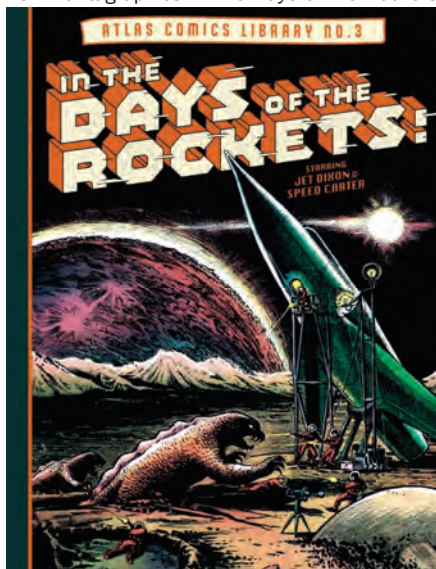


There are many tragic aspects of the end of EC comics in 1954, one of which was presaged by the cancellation of the line's science fiction comics one year earlier. As noted in past issues of 741.5, publisher **Bill Gaines** loved his sci-fi books so much, he kept them running at a loss. But eventually, as so many EC SF stories pointed out, the math wins. The last edition of the Dark Horse reprints of *Weird Science* includes the final issues of that title plus the first two issues of the combined *Weird Science Fantasy*. Like, for instance, *Vault of Horror*, the axe fell just as the creators were exploring new story-

Admittedly, the adaptation of "Calliope" has a stronger bite. But 741.5 leaves it up to the user to decide whether they want to separate the art from the artist. The current controversy aside, the Netflix adaptation of Neil Gaiman's groundbreaking *Sandman* series is pretty good. It manages to retain that Nineties Vertigo edge while staying contemporary...mainly by revising the gender or race of some characters. But, heck, it's not like most viewers knew Lucien as the former



telling techniques. **Wallace Wood** and **Al Williamson** began to break out of the six-panel grid that dominated EC stories, expanding the size of panels, using full page splashes for the first time, like **Wood's** stunning crowd scene for "EC Confidential." Throw that together with classic tales such as "50 Girls 50", "The Loathsome" and the chilling cover story "Keyed Up" and you have one of the best of the EC reprints, available at Beaumont, Central and Northside. If you want to see how the competition did it, check out the third edition of Atlas Comics Library from Fantagraphics. *In the Days of the Rockets*



## MEANWHILE



host of DC mystery comic *Ghost Castle*. Severing the series' roots in the more obscure corners of the DC universe has streamlined the story quite a bit, though speaking as a fanboy, I wished we could have kept the Three Witches as Mildred, Mordred and Cynthia, the hosts of my fave DC mystery book, *The Witching Hour*. In comparison, the *Deadpool* movies, like the *Deadpool* comic, are one long hog-



reprints series published in the early Fifties by what would become Marvel Comics, *Space Squadron* and *Speed Carter*, *Spaceman*. Unlike EC's cerebral and sensual SF stories, the Atlas books were basic BEMs-n-blasters space opera looking to swipe some dimes from *Captain Video* and *Tom Corbett*, *Space Cadet*. It didn't work; in fact, years later, publisher Martin Goodman's subsequent command "No ray guns, no spaceships!" nearly cost Marvel the *Star Wars* franchise! Meanwhile, the final edition of EC's *Vault of Horror* is notable for the exquisite work of **B. Krigstein**...in full color!

happy wallow in continuity and in-jokes. If anything, it's even worse now that the franchise is tied in to the Time Variance Authority introduced by the *Loki* mini-series. Kudos to **Hugh Jackman** for playing it straight, and it was nice to see **Chris Evans** as Johnny Storm again. I've not finished watching the final season of *Doom Patrol* because...I'm not ready to say goodbye to the most gloriously batshit program in the history of television. Don't tell me how it ends, okay?



Back issues of 741.5 are available at [www.lexpublib.org](http://www.lexpublib.org) under the READING SERVICES tab!