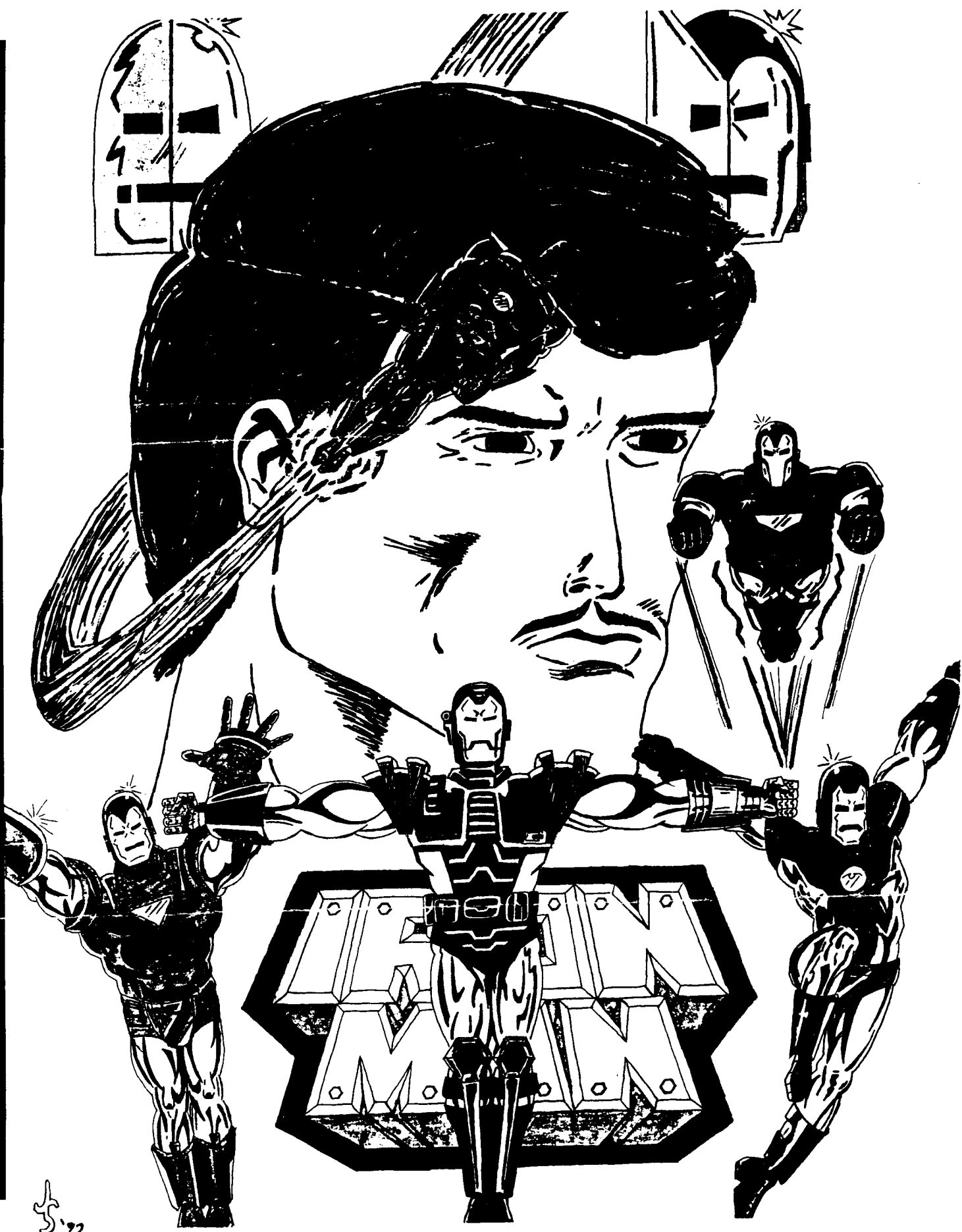


ADVANCED IRON



5 '72

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Iron Fan, 10341 Leola Court #1, Cupertino, CA 95014.

This week's cover, by Jason Stephens, is very appropriate when you read the synopsis of Iron Man #300 at the end of this issue. As usual I'm going to keep it short, but I would like to hear back from you about Iron Man #300 as well as this month's Stark Remarks. Enjoy!



SIGHTINGS

The boys (IM and WM) have been busy, check out their latest exploits in the following:

AVENGERS: THE TERMINATRIX OBJECTIVE #3

Would you believe Iron Man and War Machine vs. the Keystone Cops?!?!

AVENGERS #368 (Blood Ties part 1 of 5)

War Machine and the rest of the Avengers band together to help save Luna (Grand daughter of Magneto) from the clutches of Cortez, who is trying to incite a bloody civil War between humans and "mutates" in Genosha.

X-MEN #26 (Blood Ties part 2 of 5)

War Machine blasts through a group of S.H.I.E.L.D. agents to allow the Avengers to get to Genosha

AVENGERS WEST COAST #101 (Blood Ties part 3 of 5)

War Machine battles toe to toe with Exodus.

The UNCANNY X-MEN #307 (Blood Ties part 4 of 5)

War Machine guest appearance.

THE INCOMPLETE DEATH'S HEAD #11 (of 12)

The original Death's Head gets a little assist?... from the Iron Man of 2020!

SCARLET WITCH #1

War Machine (again! . . .Rhodey must not have to eat or sleep) helps Wanda out in her own limited series.

Stark Remarks

by Mike Kalibabky

Armored "Impostors"

I've faithfully been following a number of Iron Man "imitators" in recent months. And I'm sure you're familiar with them. Here are my **very brief** comments on the top ones.

X-O Manowar

I've read this Valiant book since issue #1 primarily out of respect for Bob Layton's efforts on *Iron Man* over the years. However, despite the book's almost too perfect art (by various artists) and hit-or-miss writing (by various writers), I find this epic of "Conan in armor" somewhat juvenile for my tastes—especially the many mindless gore-soaked battles. And I've been confused by Aric's on-again-off-again "love affair" with the X-O armor; like, does he still want to be a full-time, naked barbarian or not or what? Otherwise, *X-O Manowar* has great potential, with an interesting lead character and fine supporting cast—including the armor!

Hardware

A good looking book with absolutely faulty, disappointing characters and stories. Dig it: the world's smartest inventor is locked into an exclusive, inescapable contract with an employer that makes big bucks from his inventions and by dealing in illegal commodities. Said brain-boy then after being rejected as a corporate partner tries to exact revenge by using a high tech suit of weapon laden armor he builds with company resources. And how! He, as Hardware, in fighting the good fight, kills tons of innocent people—enough, in fact, that reader and reviewer complaints force Milestone to change the character's motivations, making him a more introspective, ahem, human being. Unfortunately, the change comes after a run-in with a villain who was heavily into rape—including child rape. I, myself, fired off a letter of complaint about using rape as an element of character development. However, *Hardware* is still a quick, fun read, insipid or not, that *could* be great. Oh, the Milestone trading cards included one of *Iron Man* inker Steve Mitchell, who inks

some of the Milestone books as well.

Prototype

The writers of this Ultraverse offering wanted to produce a more true-to-life corporate armored hero than Iron Man. So they made Prototype's alter-ego a 19-year-old expert video game player who is chemical and bio-tech enhanced to increase his reflexes and response time while wearing his armor. Now THAT'S realism! But I still like the book's fresh approach to how technology *ruins* human beings. Depressing, but true!

Robocop

Dark Horse's latest two Robocop series, the *Robocop 3* movie adaptation and *Mortal Coils*, are a waste. Save your money for *Robocop 3*, the movie, and video rentals of the first two Robocop films. But in all fairness, the covers of the above mentioned books are really sharp!

Of the four, my favorite is *Prototype*, followed by *Hardware* and then *X-O Manowar*.

Are these books worth the price of admission? All I can say is this: after reading them I always shake my head and ask myself why, WHY do I blow my cash on them month after month? And do I ever re-read them? No.

The 1993 Marvel Masterpieces: Julie Bell's IRON MAN and Joe Jusko's WAR MACHINE are terrific.

Check out *What If... #55, What if the Avengers Lost Operation: Galactic Storm?*

The Avengers 30th Anniversary poster is great. It includes everyone who was ever an Avenger. In addition, five versions of Iron Man are shown. I hung mine in my study. Good stuff.

Onward to *Iron Man #300* and *War Machine #1!*

End

THINGS TO COME



FORCE WORKS (COMING SOON!)

IRON MAN #300
(WARNING! see last page for a spoiler!)

IRON MAN #301
(shipping Dec 28!)
Part 1 of the six part "Crash and Burn" storyline. Marcy Pearson is back and she means business.... the bad business that Stark International has been conducting in Tony's absence.

MARVEL AGE #133
(shipping Dec 21)
Preview of the upcoming War Machine series. War Machine cover by Gabriel Gecko.

WARNING: THIS IS A SPOILER

Len Kaminski has graciously agreed to answer your questions about his Iron Man universe. His answers to some questions about the upcoming War Machine series will be included next month. This month Len has been exceptionally kind, by providing me with the plot for:

IRON MAN #300

The following is a synopsis of the story. I've placed actual portions of the plot in this type of text. If you'd like to see the whole thing, send \$3.00 to the address on page one, and I'll get it to you ASAP.

CHAPTER ONE: *APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION*

Jim Rhodes calls in some people from Stark's past: Happy Hogan, Eddie March, Mike O'Brien, Carl Walker, and Bethany Cabe. He has a favor to ask of them: "You recognize me, you recognize the suit, now we're all one big happy family. . .The bottom line is that Ultimo's still loose out there, and I'm not stupid enough to think I can take on something that ripped Iron Man to scrap metal in minutes by myself." If you emphasize the last part of Jim's statement you know where things are heading. As Jim says on page 5/6 "I've got Bethany, and I know from personal experience she knows how to handle herself--there's at least one thing all of you have in common. . .You've all worn one of these" He's referring to five suits of Iron Man armor from the past. They are being prepped for their use by Abe Zimmer and Archie Thu (you'll be seeing more of Archie in later issues). The suit up scenes are described beautifully, as the five prepare for battle with Ultimo! Len describes page 9: CUT TO the IRON LEGION, roaring through the ominous night sky straight at us, ready to kick Ultimo's butt, looking mighty impressive and powerful--THIS team could beat the living TAR out of those wimpy THOR CORPS. guys!

CHAPTER TWO: *THE SOFT MACHINE*

Very appropriately named. This chapter deals with Tony's struggle to free himself from the "cybernetic storm unleashed within his artificial nervous system" by the feedback at the end of issue #299. I liked this chapter because it dealt with the character of Tony Stark, rather than his alter ego. It's a human story. The scenes in this chapter are split between the reality of Veronica Benning talking to a comatose Tony Stark and the hallucinatory experiences of Tony as he fights his way to consciousness. Veronica's monologue about her personal struggles is turned into a narration of Tony's current struggle. The two dovetail nicely as we learn more about both of them. I tried to pick out some scenes as an example, but I realized that you really have to take this chapter as a whole -- just wait and see!

CHAPTER THREE: *THE IRON LEGION*

This is it! The all out battle of six iron clad heroes against the towering ULTIMO! If you like action, then you'll get plenty here. Six different types of Iron Man armor with all manor of weapons *blazing*. There are plenty of close calls too, and not everyone comes out of this unscathed. But if you're a long time Iron Man fan you'll enjoy the thrill of seeing some of your favorite stand-ins from past issues fight the good fight again. And if you're as much of a fan of the Bethany Cabe character as I am, then you're really in for a treat. As the first woman to wear the armor, she's given a strong role as one of the more competent people in battle. But when it comes down to

it, none of them (with the exception of Rhodey) have nearly enough experience and none have the inventive genius of Tony Stark and they are eventually forced to fall back.

Rhodey is extremely displeased with the situation: "What the #@%# was I thinking of?" he asks himself. BETHANY lays a hand on his shoulder, trying to be consoling. "Look, Jim, you did the best you could. It's exactly what Tony would have done." WAR MACHINE is disgusted. "Yeah..." he thinks, realizing she's right -- and is overcome with self-loathing. He's done exactly the same kind of thing he hates Stark for, manipulating people and putting them at risk without concern for whether they get hurt. "That's just what I did wrong," he says. Rhodey recommends that Bethany and Mike warn the citizens of Futura (the city ULTIMO is inexplicably bearing down on) to evacuate while he slows ULTIMO down. When I got to this section I thought that it was not the type of thing that Bethany would agree to. . .and fortunately Len agrees: ANGLE ON BETHANY, resolute. "Between the two of us, we can slow him down more," she says. WAR MACHINE is about to argue but she cuts him off. "Look it'll only take one of us to put the warning out, and I'll be a lot more useful helping you slow him down." WAR MACHINE looks at her, trying to decide. "You sure you're in shape for: --" BETHANY cuts him off "I'm fine," she says, "except for the fact that my tits are killing me in this suit. . .". It's a perfect blend of attitude and humor. And with that said the two are off to do battle!

CHAPTER FOUR: *REVISED*

Tony Stark is back in action as IRON MAN. Pay close attention to page one and three. You'll see the new lab and the new armor, with it's multiple add-on attachments. Len wants to make the lab a recurring set, so it promises to be a cool setup. But for me, the most impressive part of the finale is seeing Stark's Iron Man back in action: He'll defeat ULTIMO, but he'll do it in a way that only Tony Stark could -- proving that it's not just the suit, but also the man inside that makes this hero.

Rhodey is also shown to be a hero by dealing with another life or death situation -- but I'll let you find out about that for yourself. Suffice it to say that Rhodey is not at all happy about Tony's part in all this: KA-THANG! WAR MACHINE belts him straight in the kisser! IM pitches backward into some debris, laid out flat. ANGLE ON WM, pissed. "You smug #@%\$. You let everybody risk their butts, then waltz in slick as glass and save the day. Well, this is it. Next time, you're on your own -- because if you or one of your flunkies so much as call me, I swear to god I'll make you wish you were never born." This cements the boundary between Stark and Rhodes that will put Jim on his own as War Machine. And that's only part of Tony's problems. There's also Marcy Pearson, who's out for revenge as well as the mysterious VOR/TEX (Virtual ORganism / Turing EXperiment) that will be orchestrating the upcoming Crash and Burn story arch.

That's it for this month. Please write in to express your opinions about the direction Iron Man is taking. And feel free to ask Len any questions. He's very quick with his responses and very open too. You may even help alter the course of Iron Man history if you've got a good point.

Next Month:

- Len Kaminski answers questions about War Machine
- Fans provide their suggestions for plot ideas
- Where you can get Iron Man posters, pictures, buttons and models.