

ADVANCED IRON





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

Welcome to the December issue of AI! True to our advanced info last month, Len DID get replaced on War Machine. The replacement, starting with issue #13, is Dan Abnett. You should recognize his name from Force Works. On another front, I've got the initial responses from the Marvel Action Hour survey;

Character ratings*:

5	Iron Man
6	War Machine
6	Spider Woman
9	Mandarin
10	Hawkeye
11	Justin Hammer
13	MODOK
14	Blacklash
14	Blizzard
14	Whirlwind
14	Scarlet Witch
16	Grey Gargoyle
17	Century
20	DreadKnight
20	Hypnotia

* The numbers indicate the sum of the scores that were given to the character (1-best to 5-worst). Granted, we've only got four responses so far, but hey if the pollsters can make projections based on 4% of the vote counted then why can't we. The most interesting part is the consistency with which DreadKnight and Hypnotia were given the lowest score. Century was the lowest hero rated. He received the lowest possible mark from all but one of our respondents.

Episode ratings*:

11	Episode #2 <i>Data In - Chaos Out</i>
11	Episode #4 <i>The Grim Reaper Wears A Teflon Coat</i>
12	Episode #6 <i>Enemy Within, Enemy Without</i>
12	Episode #5 <i>Rejoice I Am Ultimo Thy Deliverer</i>
14	Episode #1 <i>And the Sea Shall Give Up Its Dead</i>
15	Episode #3 <i>Silence My Companion Death My Destination</i>

You can find more details of what Iron Fan's specifically had to say in the MAHIM section at the back,

This month's Iron Wares shows up as a separate page advertising the Marvel phonecards (featuring Iron Man).

And Len just wrote, the day before this issue saw print. He's provided me with the character bible for the cartoon series, the plot for issues #314 and 315, and HIS original design of the War Machine armor! You can see all of this in the next issue of IRON FAN! But just to whet your appetite I'll tell you that issue #314 involves Tony operating on Captain America!, the introduction of Dr. Slaght, and a new specialty armor. Oh, and Tony gets small!

ABOUT THE COVER:

Jason Stephen's provides us with a classic Stark/Iron Man shot. This is a good perspective view, the light catching Stark dramatically as he comes out of the dark. Note the new style of shine that Jason is using on the armor. If you've been with us for a while you've seen his varied styles his progression as an artist. Len was good enough to provide the plots for issues #314 & #315 to Jason and Jason will give us a sneak preview in an upcoming issue of Advanced Iron! By the way, make sure you don't miss Jason's signature block.

IRON MANIA

BY JASON STEPHENS

Does that cartoon suck, or what?! It'll be interesting to see the results of the cartoon survey – which Bill should have for us in this issue – and see what the majority of Iron Fans think... since only Iron Fans know what they're talking about. By now, though, is the question, "Do we like it?" or is it, "How much do we hate it?"

When I was reading about the cartoon before it started, I was prepared to see an alternate version from what we get in the comic. The comic won't change, regardless of the extent of the commercialization of Iron Man, so I was looking forward to a different take on the character without affecting continuity. However, what we got is ridiculous.

If any of you don't know why they aren't upping the quality by using past comic book plots for the cartoon – like they do on the X-Men, Spider-Man, and Fantastic Four cartoons – here's why.... When they decided they wanted one more cartoon and the Marvel Action Hour, Marvel also decided that one of the three new half-hour shows would *not* rehash old comic book plots. Instead, it would pick up from right now and move forward. Marvel chose Iron Man because of the character's constantly changing focus and appearance. When I looked at it this way, I thought, "Sure. Why not let Iron Man be the trend setter in the cartoon as well as in the comic and the toy line?" So, when it started, the cartoon already had War Machine, Force Works, and the "dragon Mandarin," instead of Tony Stark in Vietnam, wearing an ugly piece of iron on his body. However, speaking of that Mandarin guy, he was also in the next episode. Now, this shouldn't have come as any surprise to an Iron Fan. After all, we all knew ahead of time that he was going to be in every one. Although, the articles on the cartoon said that the villains under Mandarin would rotate and change. I assumed that this meant one episode we'd see Blacklash, and the Mandarin in his castle; the next episode we'd see Blizzard, and the Mandarin in his castle; the next episode we'd see the Mandarin himself in action; and the next episode we'd see Justin Hammer, and the Mandarin in his castle. Nope. No, Sir. Instead, we get the Mandarin in action in ***just about every single, stupid episode!*** The only villain rotation I see is approximately one or two differences in the line-up of the whole slew of villains in every episode.

I believe that the consistent "evil villainy of the malevolent Mandarin" is the only *real* problem with the cartoon as far as a *kids'* cartoon goes. We must not forget that the cartoon is aimed at kids, and as long as it entertains kids, it's a good cartoon. If anyone over, say, twelve wants to watch it, then they must get into a younger mindset. However, I truly do not see how, in the name of the beta-particle generator, even a kid can enjoy this near worthless cartoon. It's far worse than G.I. Joe, and I loved G.I. Joe as a kid – coincidentally, the Iron Man cartoon is written by the same guy. **Please, if any Iron Fans out there are parents of young kids who watch, and like the show, drop me a line and shut me up now.** If the creators nix the Mandarin and his other worthless flunkies – especially Hypnotia – from appearing more than once a season, I think the cartoon would be just fine. Granted, I would also like to see them actually draw a new armoring scene in every episode and cut that awful computer-generated garbage – there's no use having cool computer imagery if it doesn't mesh well with the rest of the cartoon – but they wouldn't even have to change these as long as they just give us new villains and different plots. Has anybody else noticed that almost all of the episodes begin with Hammer and Mandarin watching Tony Stark's latest invention, and coming up with a plan to steal it? Is anybody else getting so sick of seeing the Mandarin every week that they couldn't enjoy the second half of the "Hands of the Mandarin" cross-over? I guess we don't have to watch it if we're gonna complain... but... it's Iron Man.

I'll end this section on a good note, though. The first part of "The Origin of Iron Man" – which aired in my city on Nov. 27th – was actually thoroughly entertaining. It was severely out of synch with the comic, but very entertaining. Now, if you saw it, imagine just how much more entertaining this episode would be if it had been the first one to spotlight the Mandarin and "his" villains.... Are you done thinking about it? Now imagine all of the other episodes having different villains – same artwork, actors, and everything, but simpler plots with one threat at a time.... It starts shaping up into a really good cartoon real quick, doesn't it?

Off The Top Of My Head: The Iron Man Movie

I forgot to mention one minor detail in the last issue's column. In the section of the "Iron Man Collectors' Preview" where Stan Lee is interviewed, he mentions a new contract for an Iron Man movie. He promises it to be big, but he hypes up everything. However, seeing as how they signed contracts for Spider-Man with James

Cameron -- director of Terminator, Aliens, The Abyss, and True Lies, and with Chris Columbus -- director of Home Alone -- for a different Fantastic Four movie, not to mention the producers of the Lethal Weapon movies for the X-Men, Marvel could surprise us with another big name and a big budget for Iron Man. The only problem -- you knew there was going to be one, didn't you -- is that the contracts have not gone through yet. When he was interviewed, Stan Lee said that the contracts were going to be signed in the next couple of days, and he would address readers in the "Bullpen Bulletins" section that is in every Marvel comic. The interviewer wrote that Stan Lee was very excited and wanted very badly to tell the names of the supposed "big name actors" that were looking at the part, and the name of the director, but that he couldn't until the contracts were signed. The Collectors' Preview came out a couple of months ago, and there hasn't been any notice yet in the Bullpen Bulletins -- which changes for every week's print run -- but those things are written enough ahead of time that it might not have caught up yet. Or -- worst case scenario -- it could be that the deal fell through just like the last one... we'll see.

Other Iron Man Projects: "*Tales Of Suspense*"

If you haven't heard, Marvel has been doing a series of 64-page, painted one-shots celebrating their prime books from the 1960's: *Tales to Astonish*, *Tales of Suspense*, and *Strange Tales*. Well, *Tales of Suspense* of course is the one that features Iron Man and Captain America, and it went on sale about a month ago. The artist is extremely stylistic -- to the point that a lot of people may not like his work -- and left some of his blue-lined layout marks showing underneath the paint. These facts, and the boring panel layouts don't help the book. The story might have been done a couple of years ago, because Iron Man is in the armor that came right after the silver and red model. So, if you like stories that take place **now**, you might not like this book for that reason also. Finally, Tony Stark and Captain America were horribly out of character. The story even included a line about Stark wishing he looked and fought as good as Captain America. Hey, our billionaire playboy doesn't wish that he looked like **anyone** else! Captain America was wishing that he had the knowledge and armor that Stark possesses. So, you end up with two awesome heroes feeling all depressed just so the writer can work in a weak juxtaposition between the two -- trying to show them as opposites who have banded together to stop a common enemy. The story was far too melodramatic and was weak in all

the key places. With a price tag of \$7.95, the Iron Fans who missed this book on the stands were the lucky ones.

Iron Man in the Near Future: A Bold New Kaminski Twist

Len Kaminski and Nel Yomtov have put their heads together to come up with some changes in Stark's life in response to overwhelming reader opinion. With issue #314 – shipping the last week of January – Tony Stark will return to the playboy life style that most of us have come to know and love, and Veronica Benning leaves for good. It's also the debut of a brand new Len Kaminski villain – a former college professor of Stark's that should make things interesting. This issue may also mark the return of large inventions and projects for the government as Stark Enterprises begins construction on a space station for the United Nations. Who can tell where the Kaminski Era will take this? Be sure to take note... like any Iron Fan wouldn't do it anyway.

Your Responses: Dave Huber

Iron Fan, Dave Huber agrees with my naming of the Kaminski Era as the new definitive Iron Man era. As far as his classic favorites go, Dave picked the Friedrich/Tuska issues. These were the first issues of Iron Man that Dave read – beginning with Iron Man #69. Dave says that even though the artists gave Shellhead the cloth-armor look, "Tuska's action sequences were first rate, and I.M. always looked tough and muscular." Okay, I'll admit it. I've heard of George Tuska – at least I hope that's his first name – but this kid's too young to have much clue as to what Mr. Huber is talking about. I have over 220 issues, but they don't go back that far. However, I'm going to go looking for a couple of those issues and expand my horizons.

Regarding War Machine's own title, Huber and I agree. We don't much like it, and it's definitely not because of the writing at all. Neither one of us likes the radical change in concept for James Rhodes. We don't think that Worldwatch is anything up his alley. Dave says, "That and Rhodey is like mixing oil and water." I think it would be comical and kind of neat to see Rhodey take that multi-million dollar armor of his and go someplace where it far outclasses the other heroes... the streets of New York. He could make the difference that he wants to make for the common man, and could really show off against heroes like Spider-Man, Daredevil, and the New Warriors. Finding villains for him to fight might be

tough, though, because he'd beat the tar out of every one of those common, inner city villains. Dave also proposes a merging of the Iron Man and War Machine comics into one. I can't say I would like that too much. I, for one, would go absolutely ballistic if Tony Stark didn't have the entire issue's spotlight in his own book. Both characters must have their own book, in my opinion, to avoid losing the grandeur of Iron Man by himself. I'm glad Rhodey's on his own. I've been waiting for him to be taken out of *Iron Man* for a long time. While I'll read his continuing stories, I don't want him having anything to do with Iron Man for a significant amount of time ever again – but that's just my opinion. An additional Iron Man book, pairing the two, would be cool though.

About the new artist, Tom Morgan, Dave says -- how should I put this? Let's just say that Dave does not give high marks at all on the current Iron Man artwork, stating consistency as a major problem. While I know exactly where Dave is coming from, I think I can defend Tom Morgan a little. While Morgan is definitely not my favorite artist, and he draws in a totally different style than most artists, I can appreciate his unique style. Whether or not I think it belongs on *Iron Man* is a different story. However, Tom seems to be one of those artists like Klaus Janson and John Romita, Jr. in that he focuses on pure action – not perfect form and subtle nuances of form. Unlike Romita and Janson, though, Morgan adds a metallic, "cartoony" element to his art. While I can't defend his anatomy or the way he approaches metal, I absolutely love the way he draws Tony Stark – going for the cartoon, clean-face look myself. If you look at all of Morgan's action sequences, though, you'll see that they are hastily drawn, with a lot of action lines. Rather than focusing on individual figures in action, Morgan's art has an overall "franticness" to it, and a sense of urgency that a lot of other artists don't have. I would like to see Morgan draw *Flash*, or *Spider-Man*. Regarding *Iron Man*, however, I am undecided. I think he's fine for the time being, and an improvement over the blocky, dry art of Kevin Hopgood – am I going to get lynched here? But I do agree with Dave about wanting to see a change soon – for the better, or you can forget it.

I want to thank Dave Huber for an extremely nice letter, and his contributions. Please send responses and thoughts to the address below. Remember, whoever contributes the most will receive a free, personal, commissioned drawing in mid-January.

Jason Stephens
3606 N.E. 78th St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64119

You're all so cool,

JASON STEPHENS

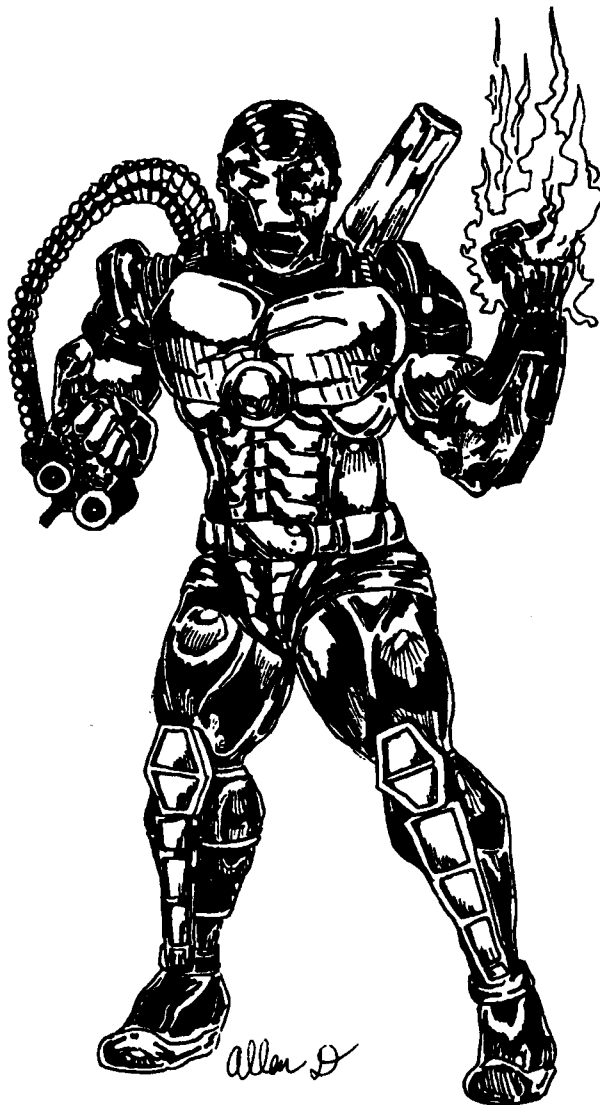
STARK REMARKS

by Mike Kalibabky
and Allen Del Caro

WHAT? Len and Scott are off *War Machine*? Yikes! Wonder what the deal is there? I can't wait to find out.

I just read that Marvel acquired Malibu! Does this mean that Len Strazewski might actually get a chance to write *Iron Man* now?

Mark Gruenwald is now the editor-in-chief of the "Classic Marvel titles," as determined by Marvel's restructuring ("Marvelution"), which sounds like a copy-cat version of doing business a la Image—breaking down the divisions into separate, autonomous entities. Anyway, Mr. Gruenwald is now in charge of the Iron Man Family of titles. I wish him well. I remember writing a somewhat hostile letter to Mr. G. after Mark



Bright was replaced by Butch Guice as the artist on *Iron Man*. Guice made Tony Stark, whether in or out of the armor, look anorexic (but made the babes in the book look fabulous). Dave Michelinie was still the writer. I BITCHED about the change in artists. I eventually got over it. And nowadays I am thoroughly enjoying the Michelinie/Guice collaboration on Superman in *Action Comics* (and the babes in the book still look fabulous).

Meanwhile, the Kaminski-Strazewski "feud" has been "reconciled" by Steve Lowry, Fan Liaison for *Prototype*. I'm including a scanned reproduction of Steve's letter to me on the subject. Thanks, Steve. I also encourage Iron Fans to pick up recent issues of *Prototype*—Strazewski is now the sole scribe and I think the book is infinite-



26707 West Agoura Road • Calabasas, CA 91302 • phone 818•878•7400 • fax 818•878•745:

Mike Kalibabky
5325 McNiven Rd.
Chisholm, MN. 55719

Dear Mike,

Thanks for this opportunity to respond to the column written. As you may or may not know, Len Strazewski and Len Kaminski have had an ongoing "feud" for years, which they do for fun. Neither one takes offense at what the other has to say, and are in fact good friends.

I spoke to Len about his comments in CBG, and he informed me that there was no malice, and it's all part of a gag based on the constant confusion of their names. He also informed me that he and Len Kaminski are currently working on a book about two evil twins who get confused for the other one consistently... and are waiting for a publisher.

If you have any other questions regarding this matter, please let me know and I'll be glad to look into it for you.

Best Regards,

Steve Lowry
Fan Liaison

ly better as a result.

Kaminski, not to be forgotten or slighted, is now co-writing DC's *Fate* (no longer *Doctor Fate*) with Steven Grant, beginning with issue #5 shipping on January 31, 1995. (NO, Jason, Fate is a DC character; no, Len is NOT writing about THE FATE OF THE DC UNIVERSE. Cripes, kids these days.)

Anyone who has ever traveled by car with kids should pick up the hilarious *Ren & Stimpy* #26, written by Scotty Benson. 'Nuff said.

Guardians of the Universe #'s 55-57 features a new armored character (a Martian, actually), RipJak, whose technology incorporates Iron Man armor technology—in fact, Ripjak's metal hide resembles The Stark's armor!

Iron Man cameos in *What If* #'s 67-68, "What If Captain America were Revived Today?" by Chuck Dixon.

A sad note: *Rocko's Modern Life* has been cancelled, but the final issue, #7, contains a great story about comic book conventions. Thanks, John "Lewie" for a fun, although short, run on Rocko.

After perusing some photos of the new Iron Man toy line, I must confess that the basic Iron Man armor, particularly the lame faceplate, looks damn DORKY. The War Machine figurine, on the other hand, appears to be cooler than ANY figurine on

the market, including my Spawn and Violator figurines. (Hey: Stephens! As per your last column: I just turned forty in November and I police the toy stores for cool stuff, so let up on us old guys, will ya? Cripes, kids these days. If I had a cane, I'd rap ya with it—

provided I could see that far). I plan to buy heavily regardless of anything I've said.

Jeff Mariotte of Jim Lee's Wildstorm Productions just sent me a delicious poster of Brass, their newest armored character that I mentioned a few months ago. Brass has been revamped completely and now resembles a cross between Aliens and War Machine. The first issue of *Brass*, written and drawn by Richard Bennett, is due out next summer. I'm hoping Jeff can send me a pen and ink drawing of the new Brass for a future SR column. NO WAY am I gonna risk smooching my poster by



attempting to xerox it!

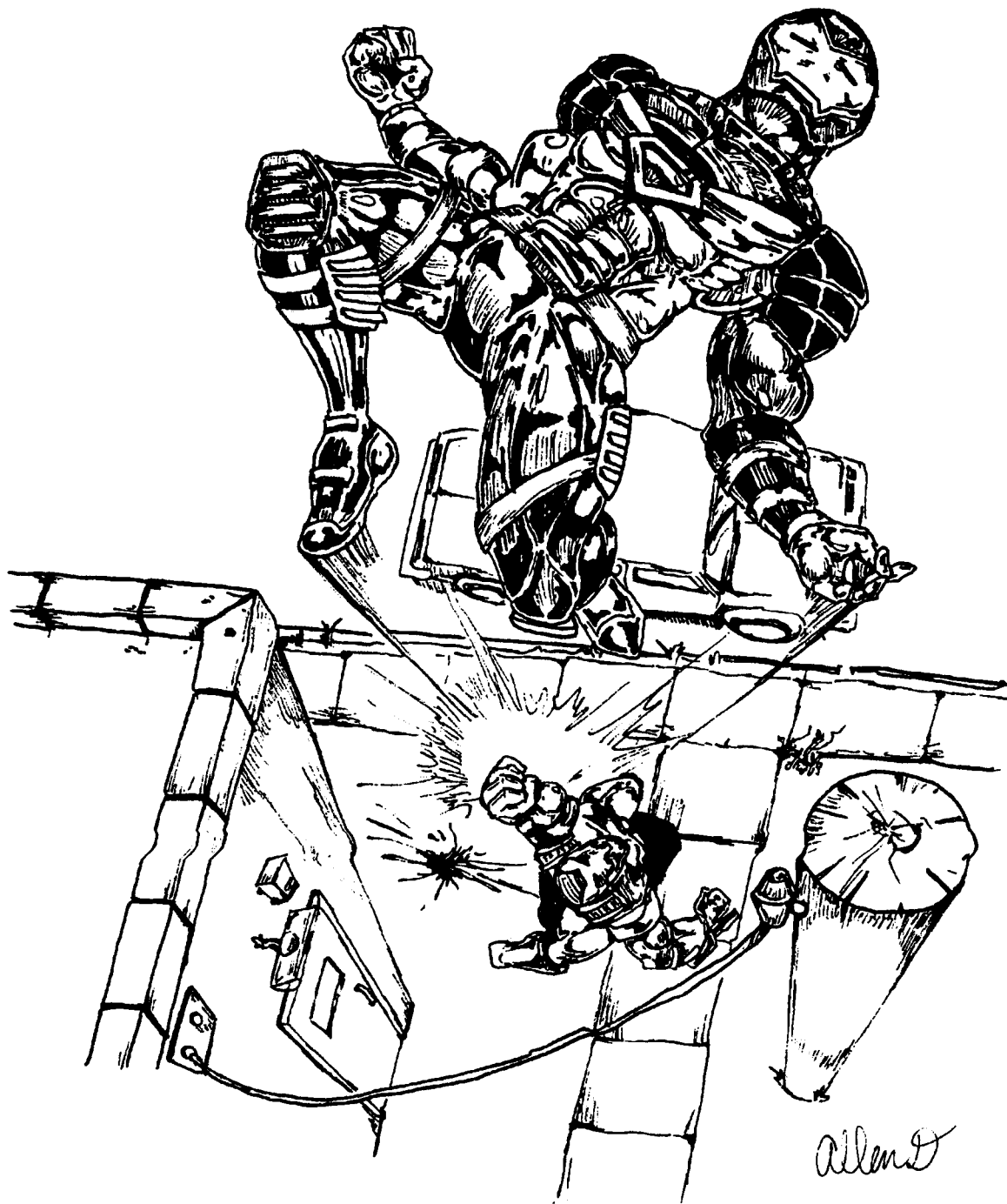
The wonderful cartoony look of Anthony Williams' Iron Man in *Marvel Action Hour Featuring Iron Man* gives a me a fanboy rush of excitement. Williams, as far as I'm concerned, can take over the art chores on *Force Works* or *War Machine* any old time.

I didn't enjoy the "Hands of the Mandarin" storyline. It seemed like rehash, rushed and pointless, to me. But I don't blame the writers. I get the impression that the guys and gals had to put together a Mandarin epic in time for the debut of the *Marvel Action Hour*. Now that it's over we

can get down to business—new insights on Tony Stark, new armor for WM, and new adventures for Force Works. Oh: for a great read—as I said I don't blame the writers for "Hands of the Mandarin," they are, after all, proven scribes—check out Abnett &

Lanning's work on *Punisher: Year One*.

TURN THE UNIQUE ALLEN DEL CARO ILLUSTRATION BELOW TO GET FOUR PERSPECTIVES OF THE SAME SCENE!



As Jason Stephens aptly pointed out in his comprehensive(!) list of impressive Kaminski-created contributions to the IronVerse in the last issue of *AI*, Kaminski is at the peak of his writing powers when creating new ideas/characters/concepts/etc. Let me add one to Jason's list and expand upon another: Iron Man's interaction with The Stark (*IM* #280) and the fact that Scotty Benson helped produce a lot of the displays and graphics as seen in the Iron Man armor's helmet.

Did you catch Bob Layton's marvelous interview in *Wizard* #39? Good stuff basically. However, Mr. Layton did say: "To me, Iron Man, as good as (he) was, always had a problem. I could never entirely accept the b.s. technology. It's just not available in reality—not yet, anyway." HUH? WHAT? Bob, Bob, Bob. Didn't, uh, you help create a lot of the Iron Man technology? If anything, the X-O technology—spider aliens and etc.—is MAJOR b.s. I think Mr. Layton has a bug up his ass about Iron Man and Marvel that makes him say regrettable, stupid things. However, he had only good things to say about his Iron Man collaborators Dave Michelinie and JR. JR. Overall, the interview was much more positive than I make it sound by pouncing on a single quote. If you're a Layton fan, hunt down *Wizard* #39.

Also in *Wizard* #39 was a "what if" battle section that included Iron Man vs. X-O Manowar. The winner: X-O! Reason: The X-O armor's ability to infiltrate the Iron Man armor and render it useless. Ya, right. Dream on. Comments? Meanwhile, *X-O Manowar* #36 lists in at #99 on the Diamond Comic Distributors list for October 1994, while *Iron Man* #311 checked in at #75. The true winner: Iron Man. The reason: X-O go bye-bye.

It's good to hear that Iron Man soon will be heading out into space again. I often reread some of my favorite deep-space Iron Man stories: *IM* #'s 142-144 (Michelinie/Layton, Romita, Jr.), Iron Man encounters the massive Roxxon Star Well I and Sunturion; *IM* #'s 215-216 (Michelinie/Bright/Layton). Rhodey is partially fried in his armor upon Earth re-entry; *IM* #237

(Michelinie/Guice), Iron Man battles an Aliens-like creature in a space station; *IM* #256 (Layton/Romita, Jr.), Iron Man cleans up the AIM virus in the Stark space station; *IM* #'s 278-279 (Kaminski/Hopgood), "Operation: Galactic Storm."

Iron Man POGS are coming out in January 1995. No specific details as yet.

Hey, Yomtov: Expand the letter columns in the Iron Man Family of comics to two pages like every other comic companies does! Currently with all the dialogue boxes you and Marts use to hype the oncoming books, there's barely room for fan letters. Get going. Print more letters.

Tony Stark develops a suit of armor for Marvel's Sentinel of Liberty in *Captain America* #437, shipping on January 3, 1995. Cap, however, won't actually wear the armor until issue #438.

And speaking of Tony Stark and Cap, the recent Marvel Select *Tales of Suspense* was listed as Volume 2, Number 1. Does this mean we now have FIVE on-going Iron Man books?

Checkout Neil Gaiman's *Mr. Hero-The Newmatic Man*, a new Techno-Comics book about a steam-powered Victorian-era robot (circa 1890) who's jump-started to life in modern-day Los Angeles. There, I got it out before Editor Bill could get on my case about hyping non-armored characters. *Whew.*

Final comment: Who in the real world most resembles Tony Stark? My choices: Ted Turner, Howard Hughes, and Bill Gates.

November 12, 1994

Mike Kalibabky
5325 McNiven Road
Chisholm, MN 55719

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MARVEL ACTION HOUR SNEAK P REVIEWS

The following are synopses for the shows which haven't been aired yet.

"THE ORIGIN OF IRON MAN: PART TWO"

As his armor's Memory Module replays scenes from his life and explain how Iron Man came to be, Tony Stark clings to life in the glacier as his friends and the Mandarin's thugs search for him. If his isn't found, the story of his origin will turn out to be his obituary.

"THE WEDDING OF IRON MAN"

As Tony Stark is marrying Julia Carpenter, AKA Spider Woman, we flashback on the events which brought the couple to the alter, only to learn that their marriage vows have nothing to do with love, and everything to do with the Mandarin.

"IRON MAN TO THE SECOND POWER: PART TWO"

While the Duplicate Iron Man threatens to release the Dark Water Fever Virus on Los Angeles, Spider-Woman and the Scarlet With find the real Iron Man mining gold in the depth of the sea. The real Iron Man then confronts his Duplicate in a battle ending in victory for Iron Man and an end to The Mandarin's scheme.

GRIBE BOX

Remember last weeks synopsis for the "THE DEFECTION OF HAWKEYE" episode of Marvel Action Hour's Iron Man? Part of it read: "Iron Man and his team examine Hawkeye's history to learn if they have a traitor in their midst." Well even Stan the man himself talked about discovering Hawk's past in his intro to the episode. The surprise was that his history WASNT revealed during the episode. The only thing we DID learn was that he has a relative in a convalescent home. OOPS!

CHARACTERS WHO *COULD HAVE BEEN* FROM THE KAMINSKI/BENSON CHARACTER BIBLE FOR THE CARTOON

THE GHOST

In the cutthroat world of business, corporate espionage is a matter of course. And if there's one thing that all the CEOs of all the companies in the world can agree on, it's this: The Ghost is the one spy you don't want poking around in your files. Other corporate spies can't walk through walls, or render themselves invisible; The Ghost *can*--and there isn't a security system yet invented, or likely to be, that can keep him out.

Which is all anyone knows about him for sure. His name, his background, even his face are, at best, matters of desperate speculation over a seventh double Scotch. As for his wraithlike powers, well . . .he's *probably* a mutant, or some technological genius. Has to be. Because if he isn't, the one choice left is that The Ghost is . . .a *ghost*, and that's the kind of thing that hardheaded businessmen just don't like to think about. . .

MAHIM

Reader response to the Marvel Action Hour - Iron Man (MAHIM) questionnaire

CHARACTERS

THE GOOD:

IRON MAN:

"Good voice acting, what I would expect the character to be like. <He has> a cool armory."

- Mike Kalibabky

"He's Iron Man! Everything about this character is pretty much okay."

- Jason Stephens

WAR MACHINE:

"He's most like the actual comic book character." - David Huber

MANDARIN:

"The actor REALLY gets into the character. You can't beat the maniacal laugh!" - Bill Egan

THE BAD:

HYPNOTIA:

"She's not even a Marvel character as far as I know, and she looks ignorant, and doesn't help the plot
-J. Stephens

"Her voice is way too breathy and stilted " -Bill Egan

"She's Totally Useless" -David Huber

THE UGLY (NOT SO GOOD):

HAWKEYE:

"Poor voice characterization - unneeded character. Dump Century too." -Mike Kalibabky

SCARLET WITCH:

"Her accent is so pronounced I can't understand her pronunciation!" -Bill Egan

"WHAT I REALLY LIKE ABOUT THIS SHOW IS:"

. . . Stan Lee Introduces each episode. He is Marvel personified and he gets you psyched for the show. -D.H.

. . . the Wanda-Julia-Tony-Benning love rectangle. Cool Hall of Armor. The dumb/sick corny jokes. Lots of new Tony Stark Inventions - planes, armored vehicles, etc. -M.K.

. . . the Hall of Armors. -J.S.

. . . the Mandarin. I also like the fact that they show off Tony's new inventions. The computer animation is nice but doesn't blend well with the rest of the animation. -B.E.

"WHAT I REALLY HATE ABOUT THIS SHOW IS:"

. . . the Mandarin and the same old villains in EVERY show, Hypnotia, Mandarin and Hammer wanting Stark's latest invention in EVERY show, the music the writing, Iron Man's lack of really awesome power he has in the comic, re-used animation shots (NO EXCUSE FOR THESE), and Stan Lee at the beginning of EVERY show. -J.S.

. . . too much of the same baddies! No HOMER! Too much of the "Armoring Up" scenes. -M.K.

. . . the fact that the cartoon strays from the comic too much. Why is Mandarin green with pointed ears? Why does Iron Man have a mouth slit and multiple shoulder cuffs? Why is Hawkeye in Force Works? -D.H.

. . . the forced "brilliant" statements from Tony. For instance, in episode 1, when Tony is trying to figure out why the Mandarin wanted to protect a sunken ship initially, but then didn't left it open to inspection, Tony says: "Jim. . . that's it. then and now. Then and now define time!" First off, that's not a particularly brilliant statement. Secondly, Tony's expertise is in engineering -- not philosophy. -B.E.

"I WOULD CHANGE THE FOLLOWING:"

1) the goofy beginning- they need a hip theme song like the original Spider-Man cartoon (you know "Spiderman, Spiderman, does whatever a spider can. . ."); 2) Keep true to the comic book! There are plenty of fantastic stories to choose from and you'll keep all Marvelites very happy!! -D.H.

Wanda's accent <should be changed>. Add more slugfests. <show> Episodes without the Mandarin and his goons. Make the IM & WM armors look like metal! Dump the Stan Lee intros and long unneeded character and villain intros. Show different armor in every other episode. -M.K.

I would totally rework the entire thing from the bottom up. I would take stories from the actual comics like the other cartoons do. I would use "real" classical music (VIVALDI, WAGNER & BACH) instead of this "Van Cliburn". I would scale down the cast of heroes and most importantly, I would change the villains for EVERY show. -J.S.

Iron Man should be a story about the Man not about the Iron. Tony's armor is just a tool to get the job done. Make the Music sound more human (less mechanical) and change the villains -- not everything has to be a plot from the evil Mandarin. Stark probably has plenty of corporate enemies. -B.E.

THINGS TO COME

A lot of my preview information comes from a book called PREVIEWS, which should be available at your local comic shop.

FORCE WORKS #10 (ships 7 February)

by Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning/ Calafiore/ Rey Garcia

Wonder Man's funeral! He's been gone for 9 issues, so maybe he REALLY IS gone for good... although the title "It's just a dream" makes me kind of suspicious. And don't miss the introduction of "Dreamguard" the super-powered Aborigine (did I *really* just say that?)

WAR MACHINE #13 (ships 14 February)

by Dan Abnett / Chlystek

For the right price, The Rush Team will turn you into a real weekend warrior. But when thrill addicts start dying, War Machine has to put the crush on Rush -- and one of his targets is an old friend! Also: Dan Abnett, instead of Kaminski & Benson, explores the racial tension brought about when Rhodes introduces his new white girlfriend to his parents. Previews is pushing this as a jump start for WM: "The new creative team has given this title a kick to its armor-plated pants!"

MARVEL ACTION HOUR FEATURING IRON MAN #6 (ships 21 February)

by Eric Fein / Anthony Williams / John Nyberg

Part 2 of the origins trilogy. This issue it's the Mandarin's turn.

IRON MAN #315 (ships 28 February)

by Len Kaminski / Tom Morgan

"OLD SOLDIERS" Introduces Dr. THEODORE SLAGHT, once Stark's friend and soon to be a new enemy! Then, Tony Stark head's to Russia for the opening of the first Stark Enterprises plant in that country. (This issue also introduces Stark's new pilot, Joan "Ace" Sheppard.) Once in Russia, Stark will meet up with the Titanium Man who is very upset about the fate of his Mother Country. If his reaction to Stark's new plant doesn't get your attention, the Black Widow will! She'll be making a guest appearance in this issue.



SIGHTINGS

IRON MAN VS DOCTOR DOOM Trade Paperback

by Dave Michelinie / John Romita JR / Bob Layton

Reprints issues #149-150 and #249-250. Just looking at the numbers should tell you that these were special stories from the start. What makes them even more special is that they were done on two separate runs by the most highly touted Iron Man creative team ever. If you don't have these stories in your collection already, they're a must have! Oh, and by the way, Dr. Doom might figure into some upcoming Shellhead stories wants he gets back from his FF sidetrip.