

ADVANCED IRON #51



Couture! 04-2001

HUBE'S

PAGE O' IRON MAN STUFF.



ITEM!

The man, the myth and the legend known simply as **BOB LAYTON** now has his own website! He features *never-before-seen armor designs*, puts some of his *artwork up for sale*, posts your letters to him – and more!! Go there NOW (wait – finish reading this issue of A.I. first *then* go over!!)!! But hey Bob – does this mean we don't get any more art scoops? ☺

www.boblayton.com

ITEM!

Speaking of Bob, he and partner **DAVID MICHELINIE** of course had submitted a few ideas to Marvel regarding **IRON MAN** over the last few years, including a pitch for getting the regular title. But did you know they had plans for spankin' new **TITANIUM MAN** and a new **Jim Rhodes-as-WAR MACHINE** in a six-issue **IRON MAN/WAR MACHINE** flip book series? Probably not! So, thanks as ever to Mr. Michelinie for filling us in on this little tidbit!

ITEM!

Tiberius Stone a.k.a. new **IRON MAN/TONY STARK** nemesis, eh? I recently purchased the hardback phenom book *The Marvel Universe* 2000 edition (although it stops commentary right before "Heroes Reborn") and as I was perusing the **SPIDER-MAN** chapter I noticed something in the **SPIDER-MAN 2099** section: the father of Miguel O'Hara, the future webslinger, is a corrupt official at the Alchemax Corp. – and his name is **Tyler Stone!!** Did **IM** scribe **Frank Tieri** purposely make this connection, especially now that **Stark-Fujikawa** is a part of the **IRON MAN** series?



Spidey 2099's pop – relative of new IM baddie Ty Stone??



"Jean M'kai
in
"Dinosaur"
Style

M. L. P.



COLLABORATION

One of the cooler things about working on A.I. is collaboration. Every now and then someone will e-mail someone else and say, "Hey – how 'bout we do something together for the next issue?" It's what makes A.I. what it is, essentially. **Dave Huber** began in A.I. by working with **Jason Stephens**. (Who was Jason? Check out last issue!) **Dwayne Wilder** began by working with Dave Huber. **Bill Meiggs**, Dave Huber and **Allen Bujak** all worked together on a project dubbed "**Iron Curtain**." Last issue, we saw the spectacular collaboration of **Scott Brooks** and **Bill Meiggs**. Collaboration is the foundation of this 'zine!!

Patrick Couture had e-mailed me for the first time years ago. We chatted every now and then about things **Iron Man**, and I really dug his **IM**-related website. Being a foreign language teacher, I was intrigued at the French-speaking Tony Stark featured on Pat's pages. More recently, close to about one year ago, I received an e-mail from Pat – he was in New Zealand! No wonder I hadn't heard from him in awhile, I thought. This guy gets around! But I thought he was from **Montreal, Québec!** Well, he is. He was in New Zealand with his fiancée, Rachel. Why was he there, though? Well, Rachel is *from* New Zealand! (That makes it easy, eh?) Pat was about to be married, and then he and his new bride would jet back to Canada to start wedded life together.

During the e-mails we were exchanging during this time, Pat expressed interest in getting involved with A.I. more. Talk about convenient timing! Then-Editor-in-Chief **Roger Ott** needed to go on hiatus due to his time-consuming additional schooling. *I* had given up that title for the same reason. But now I had more free time, and felt I

could reassume the EIC role now that Rog had to leave. Hey Pat! How would you like to be **Associate Editor??** 😊

Thankfully, Pat accepted! And since then, Pat and I have worked diligently to make the "**World-Wide**" in our website title wholly appropriate. Between the two of us, we speak three languages (English, French and Spanish) and we have really worked to open up the doors to **Iron Man** fans across the globe – first by including **French and Spanish versions** of the A.I main page, but also by adding the A.I site to foreign language search engines! And now, thanks to **German Iron Fan Holger Hinzberg**, we now even have a **German version** of the A.I. main page! And witness the international contributions we have seen over the last few issues: Holger himself with his way-cool **Iron Man** art a couple issues ago, and French graphic artist **Laurent Sebile** whose awesome 3-D images graced our pages last issue!

Most recently, Patrick approached me with an idea of collaborating on "the best" of **Iron Man** – battles, storylines, characters, single issues, etc. Naturally, I agreed! And here is our first installment. We hope you like it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "-Hube" with a horizontal line underneath the name.

BEST BATTLES OF IRON MAN

Every **Iron Fan** has his favorite **Iron Man** battle. In my view, **George Tuska** was the best artist when it came to depicting **Shellhead** beating the crap out of someone – or having the crap beat *out* of him. Certainly George wasn't the greatest *overall* artist to dabble on the **Golden Avenger's** pages. His regular characters could be among the cheesiest around (check out vol. 1 #10, page 2, panel 3 for just *one* example!), but then on the next page he could sketch some of the most beautiful comicbook women in the Marvel Universe (numerous examples abound, especially his **Marianne Rodgers**).

One of George's greatest battle issues was vol. 1 #49 – **Iron Man** vs. the **Adaptoid**. Beginning on page 6 and continuing through to the very end of the ish, **IM** and the **A.I.M.** creation go toe to toe with no clear victor! What makes George's **IM** appealing is that he *looks tough*. He *looks* like he can beat the tar out of anybody who gets in his way. I like to make the analogy to the actors who have played **James Bond** – my wife prefers **Roger Moore** while I prefer **Sean Connery**,

the original. Now just compare these two: Connery *looks* like he can kick arse, and he has the looks and suaveness to go along with it. On the other hand, Moore is a pretty-boy – he doesn't look like he could beat up Miss Moneypenney! Compare and contrast George's **Iron Man** to anyone else's. Tell me George's rendition doesn't look kick-arse!!

Some of George's other fine battle work can be found in **#63-67 (Dr. Spectrum)**, **#69-71 (Mandarin, Yellow Claw)**, **#88-91 (Blood Brothers, Controller)** and **#95-100 (Ultimo, Mandarin)**.

What makes George's kick-arse style even *more* enticing – especially in the #60s and 70s – is the writing style of **Mike Friedrich**. Mike must've been a big fan of **Shellhead** because he always used upbeat, "rev-you-up" dialogue and commentary. Just glance at the last panel of **#71**: "After all, a long-standing sore has just been removed from Tony Stark's life...and the **IRON** can only get it on when the **MAN** inside is...together...and brother, now he's to-**GETHER!!**"

Iron Man #66 is another example. Look at Mike's page 18: "*This is **power personified**: The greatest fighting machine ever made – yet powered inside by one of mankind's sharpest brains...truly the perfect wedding of flesh, blood, rivets and steel into one cause – and that is **power** – and that, friends, is **IRON MAN!***"



Many of these cool lines are illustrated by George's "**signature pose.**"

I'm not certain if this is *really* Tuska's signature pose, but I always refer to it as such since he sure uses it a lot!

Iron Man tucks

himself into a sort of **fetal position** with arms tucked in and fists clenched, and then uses his back as a battering ram (which certainly makes sense as the back can take a lot of punishment). He seems to have "perfected" it later in his tenure as **IM** artist as you'll find it more in post-#50 issues. I picked a few issues from my collection at random and here's what I found: #66 has the pose no less than *three* times; #67 has it once; #71 has it twice and #88 and 89 feature it once each!

HUBE'S BEST TUSKA BATTLES:

1. **IM v. Yellow Claw (#71)**
2. **IM v. Mandarin (#69)**
3. **IM v. Adaptoid (#49)**
4. **IM v. Mandarin (#100)**
5. **IM v. Doc Spectrum/Thor (#66)**

LIFE AFTER TUSKA

The next mainstay artists after George T. were – yep – **John Romita Jr.** and the legendary **Bob Layton**. I now say artists – plural – because Bob's inks were so definitive in making **Iron Man** truly "**iron**." John and Bob, in my view, do not have any real stand-out battle issues. Along with writer **David Michelinie**, this trio merely crafted some of the finest **Shellhead** yarns of all time – they didn't need to resort to all-out donneybrooks to weave a great story. So be it! Nevertheless, check out **IM** #s 127 (**IM** vs. **Justin Hammer's "Super Army"**), #131-132 (vs. the **Hulk**), #135 (vs. the **Titanium Man**), #145 (vs. the **Raiders**) and #150 (vs. **Doc Doom**). **Luke McDonnell** was the next "permanent" artist on **Iron Man**. Luke was not a particularly competent artist for the **Golden Avenger**, especially with **Steve Mitchell** inking him (which was the case for most of Luke's tenure on the mag). He was definitely more appealing with **Akin & Garvey** on the brush chores, which took place very late in the McDonnell era, however. As for great **McDonnell-Iron Man** battles, I admit I



McDonnell's best?
IRON MAN #192

am hard-pressed to think of any off the top of my head! Probably the **Rhodey/IM vs. Mandarin** yarn (#179-181) would classify.

Also, the **Stark-Rhodes "Iron Man vs. Iron Man"** clash (#192) has to be included. Other than that, I wouldn't call any other scrap a "great" battle.

Enter: **Mark Bright**. Mark took over art chores on, of all issues, #200. And, as a result, this is his best battle issue! Stark, in his spankin' new **Red and Silver Armor**, takes on arch-nemesis **Obadiah Stane** in his **Iron Monger** armor. All-out iron action at its finest!! In Bright's first

issues, **Akin & Garvey** continued on inking duties, and they did an admirable job. Later on, of course, **Bob Layton** returned on ink brush (along with pal **David Michelinie** on scripts) to bring us the "**Armor Wars!**" (#225-232.)

HUBE'S BEST BRIGHT BATTLES:

- 1. IM v. Stane/Iron Monger (#200)**
- 2. IM v. Firepower (#230-231)**
- 3. IM v. A.I.M. (#204)**
- 4. IM v. MODOK (#205)**
- 5. IM v. Crimson Dynamo & Titanium Man II (#229)**

POST #250 IRON MAN

No other steady artist on **Iron Man** really has enough issues to rate a separate section with the one exception – perhaps – of **Kevin Hopgood**. After the last Michelinie/Layton issue (#250), we had **John Romita Jr.** back (this time with Bob Wiacek on inks) on "**Armor Wars 2;**" **Paul Ryan** ("Demon Seed" saga); Kev Hopgood, along with the excellent **Len Kaminski** scripts; **Tom Morgan** (pre-"Crossing" issues); and lastly, scattered artists and inkers on the "Crossing" fiasco and Teen Tony miasma.

Let's take Hopgood first – the longest mainstay of the above. Kev was a captivating artist if he had the right inker. He had such with **Bob Wiacek** on the first **War Machine** issues (#281-283); however, when **Steve Mitchell** came back on brush (#290-306), Kev was less than optimal. Nevertheless, Kev gave us the War Mach issues, the **Hulk-Buster Armor** vs. the **Jade Giant**, **IM** vs. **Venom** and the **Iron Legion** against **Ultimo**.

Tom Morgan was awful. His characters were disjointed and awkward as a result of his hurried pencils and inks. Just scope **Iron Man #310** – **IM** vs. **War Machine** – especially where the **Mandarin** zaps in to nab the two. Yuck. He too, ruined a very cool Kaminski script where Stark journeys into cyberspace to take on the mad computer, **VOR/TEX**. Oh well.

HEROES REBORN

I would venture to say that many **Iron Fans** breathed a sigh of relief when "**Heroes Reborn**" debuted. After all, our hero was manipulated and killed, and then turned into a bratty teenager. But here we had an adult again, albeit a hardcore corporate head-hunter with seemingly little moral compass. The writers made this **Tony Stark/Iron Man** kick BUTT, and artists **Whilce Portacio** and Co. satisfied this. Whilce's figures are incredibly detailed, although his facial expressions need some refining.

HEROES RETURN

Sean who?? **CHEN** is his name. Very many of us did not know who Mr. Chen was aside from a little tidbit **Bob Layton** told A.I. a ways back that Sean would have been his and **David Michelinie's** choice for artist had *they* been given the book for "Return." Sean was certainly an excellent choice for **IM** – his characters are crisp and detailed, and his take on the armor was very Layton-esque. Unfortunately, too many of **Kurt Busiek's** scripts had **Iron Man** getting his butt handed to him rather than the reverse! But Sean obliged – and how – in the battle dept., especially with **IM** vs. **Fin Fang Foom**, **War Machine III** and **Ultimo**.

HUBE'S BEST POST IM #250 BATTLES:

- 1. IM vs. The Masters of Silence/Justin Hammer (Hopgood/Wiacek; #281-283)**
- 2. IM vs. The Hulk (Hopgood/Mitchell; #305)**
- 3. IM vs. Venom (Hopgood/Mitchell; #302)**
- 4. IM vs. War Machine III (Chen, Zircher/various inkers; vol. 3 #18-20)**
- 5. IM (and War Machine) vs. Battledroids (Hopgood/Mitchell; #291)**

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COUTURE'S FAVOURITES

Dave... you sure know your Iron Man.

All in all, I'd be hard-pressed to disagree with you. Aside maybe when it comes to **Tuska**. Now don't get me wrong, **I really dig Tuska**, not as much as you do, but I do like him. For me though, **the true Iron Man begins with Michelinie, Romita Jr and Layton**. Maybe it's because those were the first comics I ever got my hands on, I dunno... but to me, everything that came before that is like a footnote. I would be hard pressed to find a battle truly memorable out of these older issues (although your description of **that cool battering ram tactic** does make me want to dig out my old comics and go have another look).

So for me, Iron Man's greatest battles will have to be post-issue 115.

I've always seen the history of Iron Man as one with **four important and distinct highlights**. Three periods of pure masterpieces. I like to call them the **Age of Gold**, the **Age of Silver**, the **Age of Bronze** and **La Renaissance**. And since I don't want to simply repeat everything Dave has just said, I'll try to narrow it down to **ONE great battle per period**. Think I can do it? I'm not sure either! ☺

The Age of Gold

You guessed it, I'm talking about **Iron Man #115 to #153**.

Out of that truly brilliant period comes **one battle** that, in my opinion, **tops all the others from any period hands down**. It is truly what I consider to be **the one single greatest Iron Man battle of all times**. **Iron Man #132**: the Golden Avenger versus **THE HULK**. Give that issue to any kid on the face of the Earth and he or she is going to be hooked on Iron Man forever. Heck, that's what happened to me! ☺

What do I like so much about that one? **Try everything**. First of all, the art is absolutely brilliant. And no, **JRJ** wasn't on pencils at that moment, it was a guy called **Jerry Bingham** (who is he anyway? What else did he do? Why was his stay on IM so short? Does anyone know?) Whoever he was, his **beautiful art** enhanced by **Layton's legendary inking** gave us **extraordinary results**. **Stark** looks great, **Beth** looks great, **the Hulk** looks great and well... **Iron Man** looks amazing.

The **mother of all battles** takes place in the worst possible location, smack in the middle of **Stark's** company, with lots of innocent bystanders around (as if the pressure of single-handedly fighting the Hulk wasn't enough). And it's **one hell of a fight**. The Hulk is the **strongest and most powerful** being on the face of the Earth, so **Iron Man gets thrown around like a rag doll** for about 6 pages. Never before or since have I seen Stark throw **everything he's got** at something like that. The two of them trash the place. This is one particular adversary that **Stark** can't try to outsmart. When it comes to **the Hulk**, it's all about **raw power**.

All that his efforts have accomplished is making the **Hulk** dizzy. Then on **page 26**, **Iron Man** tenses up, clenches his fists, channels all his power in one single earth-shaking punch that completely drains the Avenger's armor of all its energy. **Those pages have an intensity that has remained unmatched in any other Shellhead battle**. Thanks to **Michelinie's** narrative, the suspense is so heavy **I hold my breath every time I read it**. The final punch is so powerful, I almost feel the ground shake, **it barely fits in an entire page**. Now that's what I call a masterpiece.

The Age of Silver

An aptly named age because it features **a new look for Iron Man**; the **Silver Centurion armor**. This second period of greatness extends from **IM #200 to #232**. **Michelinie and Layton** are back with a truly amazing penciler, **Mark Bright**.



My favorite battle out of that period would have to be the one that takes place all through issues **219 to 221**. Three issues, three rounds in a fight that pits IM to a guy that is **just about impossible to defeat**, a saboteur that can turn invisible or intangible at will... **the Ghost!**

Round one: **IM** chases **the Ghost** through Accutech, **punching his way through numerous walls** to follow the intangible menace. All he throws at him **passes right through him**. In the end, what does he get for his efforts? A bomb blown up in his face

and a deadly threat. **Round two:** never have I seen Stark **so helpless, so defenseless**. Reduced to **sleeping in his armor to protect himself** from an enemy who can walk through a wall at any time, Stark is scared... yes, **scared**. That doesn't happen too often. The only thing that saves him is **Spymaster's** interference, but the ruthless Ghost quickly eliminates that annoyance, **killing him even**. As for **IM**, he is forced to put on this old armor that he swore never to wear again, an armor that brings back so much bitter memories. **Round three:** how do you beat a guy you can't even touch? The answer is simple, really: **you outsmart him**. **Stark** sets a trap but what truly defeats the Ghost in the end is his own obsession. IM never even manages to even lay a finger on him.

In the end, **isn't it what often makes a battle truly great?** When **the possibility of defeat becomes overwhelming**, when **winning becomes unlikely**? And then the surprise ending when the hero finds a way to come out on top.

The Age of Bronze

I'm talking about **IM #280 to #306**. Out of that third great period, brought to us mainly thanks to the writing talents of **Len Kaminski**, comes another amazing battle. I'm talking about **issues 282-283**. The first appearance of **the War Machine armor** used by Stark to go after **the Masters of Silence** and his ultimate nemesis, **Justin Hammer**.

This battle is great for very different reasons than the two previous ones. **Stark is hurt, he's dying, he's**



desperate. He's taken **just about everything he can**, getting beat up by the **Mandarin, Fin Fang Foom, the entire Kree empire and the Stark barbarians** from the future... he's not going to take anymore.

After designing his **new kick-arse WM armor**, **Iron Man** endeavors give the MOS a crushing defeat they won't soon forget and then to

systematically **take Justin Hammer apart bit by bit**. No more mister nice guy, the kid gloves are off, and Hammer is going to get one rude awakening. What an **awesome battle... Iron Man unchained, unhinged, not holding back for once but rather giving the bad guys everything he's got. And man, do they ever get it**. Every panel erupts with raw power, every line makes you smile with satisfaction... this is what wearing an invincible armor is all about. Great stuff.

La Renaissance

This of course is the **Busiek-Chen era**, stretching from **IM volume 3 #1 to #25**. Two years of well-deserved bliss, after all the crap we had to endure before. Sure, **Heroes Reborn was cool** (especially after the Crossing). It was a fun series. **But that guy was not my Iron Man**. To me, that was some sort of alternate reality, an interlude until the real thing was to be brought back. And he thankfully was.

The best battle to come out of that fourth era of greatness would have to be **the one pitting the Golden Avenger against Ultimo**. I hesitated quite a bit before choosing this one, because I really loved the titanic clash between **IM and Fin Fang Foom**. But the Ultimo fight came out on top for one single reason: **I never saw the end coming**. Til the last minute, I kept asking myself **"How the heck is he going to defeat that thing this time?"** Iron Man had **one heck of a fight on his hands**, and I loved **every second of it**. I will not delve further into it because all of you have read it not so long ago so you know very well what I'm talking about.

So there you go, that's my grain of salt, Hube. **Four periods, four great battles...** they said it couldn't be done but I somehow managed to do it 😊. Now I gotta go and put all those comics back in their bags and boxes... look what you made me do 😊.

What about **you** who is avidly reading this column? Which is **your** favorite IM battle of all time? **Send us your article or your tribute drawing and we'll gladly print you in an upcoming issue of Advanced Iron...** the fanzine created **BY** fans **FOR** fans... yeah, that means **YOU** buddy!



Pat Couture.





Greetings Ferrofiles,

Now For part two of our very special AND exclusive interview with current Iron-scribe Frank Tieri & Iron Editor Bobbie Chase. Without further adIEU...

Under the Helmet with Frank Tieri & Bobbie Chase:

CF- Bobbie, what titles do you currently oversee?

BC- Captain America, Fantastic Four, and Iron Man are my 3 monthly titles. I also have lots of other special limited series and bookshelf comics (graphic novels) in the works.

CF- And how long have you been affiliated with Shellhead?

BC- Since the beginning of volume 3 -- we started working on it full-force in the middle of 1997.

CF- Frank, You're partnered with Sean Chen on Wolverine, a character about as diametrically opposed to Tony/Shellhead as is possible. How will your approach be different for writing these two characters?

FT- I approach the two books in the way that I think they work best -- what works for one won't necessarily work for the other. For Wolverine, it's like Dirty Harry meets Lethal Weapon – his fans like their Wolvie grim and gritty with plenty of violence and mystery. That sure wouldn't work with Iron Man. He's more Howard Hughes meets James Bond and more inclined to find himself in high levels of corporate intrigue, with the

latest state of the art technology and a good dose of the lovely ladies to keep him company.

CF- Any plans for a crossover between the two?

FT- Let's put it this way—it has been discussed. So I'll say a definite maybe. However, I will say this -- I'll only do it if it makes sense. I hate crossovers or guest appearances when people just pop up for no particular reason. It has to be a story that works for both characters, otherwise I'd rather just pass.

CF- In Frank Tieri's version, who takes who down? How?

FT- Actually, I could come up with scenarios where either one could take down the other. Wolverine, using hit and run tactics, picking Iron Man off piece by piece. Iron Man, from up high, using his vast arsenal to rain down on Wolverine.

So I'd say, the winner is... What are you guys trying to get me in trouble? If I pick one, the fans of the loser will grill me to no end! No thanks, fellas, I'll take the fifth on this one.

CF- Other than new armor this summer, any other tantalizing tidbits you can share exclusively with A.I. readers?

FT- Well, like you said, probably the big deal this summer will be the new armor -- but it's the way that we're putting it together that's really unique. We're talking about having fans involved in the process only we're still trying to figure out what the best way to do that is as we speak. So stay tuned.

As far as what's coming up, expect the unexpected – I like surprises and I've got a couple of doozies waiting in the wings. Some old villains will get a revamp, some new elements will be introduced, some old elements will be brought back – all in all, it should be a fun ride

CF- Bobbie, we've heard some of the things Frank has "planned," but how, exactly, do you interface with the creative process? I mean, we see your name on the letters page and in the credits but what does an editor at Marvel do?

BC- Oh, Lordy -- have you got a while? Feel free to edit this!

An Editor's first responsibility is to his or her regular monthly titles, in hiring the team of 5 that gets on every book -- writer, penciler, inker, colorist, letterer. We work with the writer in developing the long-term story line -- usually at least a 6 month timeline -- then we edit the plot, and send it along to the penciler, and from there we keep the work flowing along smoothly. We receive and send all work to and from the artists, making corrections as we go along, if the work needs it. We proof the scripts and final lettered books, make any art or coloring corrections that need to be made. We write the solicit material so the books can be put into the catalogue and advertised.

We work with the separators and printers, and work with the production department and designers in compositing the books and designing the covers and interior pages. We write or edit the letters pages (or the Assistant Editors write them), deal with Promotions and Advertising and Licensing and the press (people like you) as the need arises, negotiate page rates for creators, keep track of all deadlines and trafficking.

We act as "character cops" for characters in our domain, in cooperating with other editors to maintain character consistency in the Marvel Universe. We create and develop new projects, and generally act as talent scouts for the company and PR people for our own books.

And we do this with about 5-7 projects per Editor per month. Other than that it's a lot of clerical work, and spending time on the phone talking to the creators, and attending the occasional annoying meetings. I'm also currently running an "Editors School" program with Tom Brevoort, where we meet with the whole editorial staff once a week and discuss the craft. I'm forgetting important stuff, I'm sure.

CF- There you have it fellow Ferrophiles... straight from the man with Shellhead's plan. Thanks Frank. Thanks Bobbie.

Well Ferrophiles, that does it for me in this issue.
Hope you enjoyed this issue of Ferro-Files.

CF



STARK REMARKS

AND IRON TANGENTS
BY MIKE KALIBABKY

I'll begin with a couple of "**Stark Wars**" ("Armor Wars I") points of interest, continuing my comments begun in **A.I. 50** concerning the relationship between **Captain America's shield** and Tony Stark. As all **Iron Fans** know, Tony created a new shield for **Steve Rogers – The Captain** – during the "Stark Wars." Following an incident at **The Vault**, Tony and Steve had a severe falling out, one which literally comes to blows in **CAPTAIN AMERICA #341!** So what happens? I ain't saying! But even before the action in CAP #341, The Captain teams up with our favorite thunder god in **THOR #390**. Goldilocks drops his hammer and guess which little shield-slinger -- who is slinging the Stark-created shield -- picks it up!



Scott Lang, a.k.a. the **Astonishing Ant-Man**, has played an important role in both runs of **IRON MAN** by **David Michelinie and Bob Layton**. David was gracious enough to answer a few questions concerning the diminutive dynamo.

But first, a very brief rundown of some key **Iron Man**-related appearances of Scott Lang as **Ant-Man...**

Scott Lang first appeared as a character and as employee of Stark International in **AVENGERS #181** (March 1979), "**On the Matter of Heroes.**" Lang's introduction to Marvel readers lasted exactly three panels, as he installed a new security system

inside **Avengers Mansion**... which was promptly destroyed by **Wonder Man** and the **Beast**. *Story by David Michelinie. Artwork by John Byrne and Gene Day (inker not specified).*



A month later in **MARVEL PREMIERE: FEATURING THE ASTONISHING ANT-MAN #47** (April 1979), "**To Steal an Ant-Man!**," he made his first full appearances as both Scott Lang - single father,

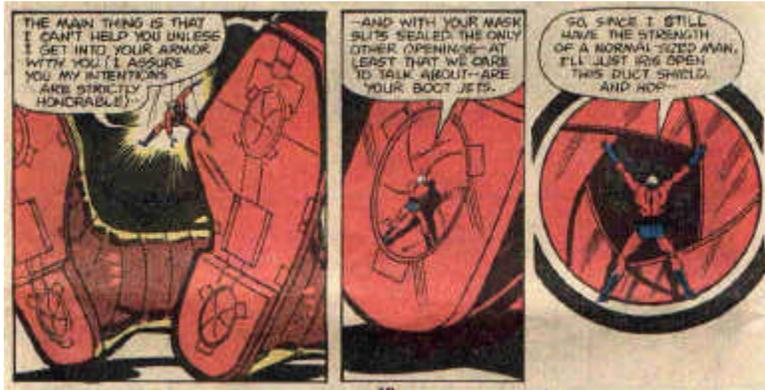
electronics expert, and ex-con -- and as Ant-Man. Lang's young daughter **Cassie** became the springboard for his becoming a superhero, upon needing specialized heart surgery which requires a special technique developed by **Dr. Erica Sondheim**. Unable to secure the services of Dr. Sondheim, Lang learns that she is being held against her will in the Long Island city headquarters of **Cross Technological Enterprises**. Using the cat burglar skills of his past "career" and applying his knowledge of security systems, he easily gains access to the CTE HQ and accidentally discovers the lab of **Henry Pym**, an employee of CTE, and Pym's stowed **Ant-Man costume**. During the action that follows in this issue and in the next, #48 -- "**The Price of a Heart!**," Lang capably uses the cybernetic helmet and Pym shrinking gas. Lang is afterwards congratulated by Hank Pym, in the guise of **Yellowjacket**, who had witnessed the ordeal. With his blessings, Pym allows Lang to keep the uniform and urges him to carry on as the new **Ant-Man**. *Story by David Michelinie. Artwork in both issues by John Byrne and Bob Layton (inker not specified).*

In **IRON MAN #125** (August 1979), "**The Monaco Prelude**," Tony Stark enlists the aid of Lang/Ant-Man in securing information on the whereabouts of **Justin Hammer**, who somehow had gotten control of Tony's armor and caused a repulsor to "misfire," resulting in the death of a **Carnelian ambassador**. *Plot and script by David Michelinie; pencil art by John Romita, Jr.; and finished art & plot by Bob Layton.*



"Iron Man has finally beaten the Hulk -- but at what cost?" touts the cover blurb of **IRON MAN #133** (April 1980), "**The Hero Within!**," which is the third installment of a terrific story arc. **Bob Layton** artwork depicts both

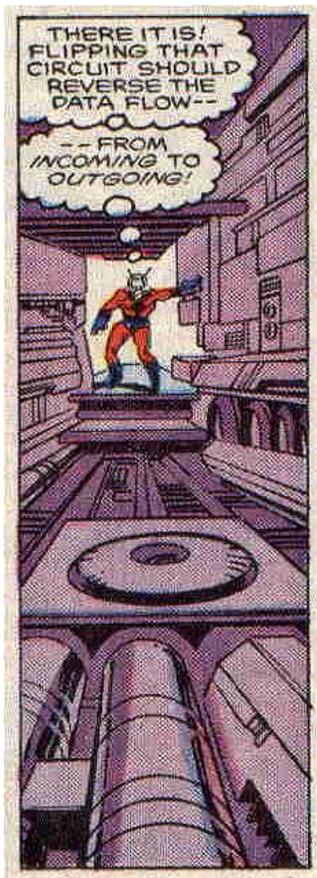
Iron Man and the **Hulk** seemingly down for the count. To end a titanic tussle with ol' Greenskin at the end of issue #132, **Iron Man** channeled all



available power from his armor into one, off-the-charts-powerful punch, which not only felled the Hulk but also created a massive systems failure in the tin tux, trapping Tony inside. Now in issue #133, it's Scott Lang -- Ant-Man -- to the

rescue. As a tribute of sorts to the classic **AVENGERS #93** written by **Roy Thomas** wherein Hank Pym as Ant-Man enters the body of the **Vision** to reboot his android systems, Lang similarly and successfully works the same magic with **Iron Man's armor**. Plot and script by David Michelinie, layouts by Jerry Bingham, and plot & finished art by Bob Layton.

To temporarily defeat the **Taskmaster** in **MARVEL TEAM-UP #103** (March



1981), "**The Assassin Academy**," Scott Lang/Ant-Man tries a trick with the shrink/enlarge gas that Hank Pym never did -- he enlarges something other than the intended user. In this case, **an ant!** **Spider-Man** co-stars in this little soiree. Story by David Michelinie, pencils by Jerry Bingham, and inks by Mike Esposito.



Tony Stark moves to California and creates **Stark Enterprises**. Scott Lang moves to California and starts up **ElectroLang, Inc.** After Tony learns that **Justin Hammer** somehow has stolen his proprietary armor technology, he intends to find out just exactly who received the stolen property by hacking into Hammer's database with the help of computer expert **Abe Zimmer**... and Scott

Lang, who as Ant-Man is required to physically enter Hammer's computer and flip a data input/output switch that will allow Zimmer to extract the needed information. Thus begins the first chapter of **"Stark Wars,"** possibly the most important and all-time **Iron-Fan-favorite storyline,** in **IRON MAN #225** (December 1987). *Plot and script by David Michelinie, breakdowns by Mark Bright, and plot & finished artwork by Bob Layton.*



In the first full post-"Stark Wars" story, **IRON MAN #233** (August 1988), **"Slaughterday,"** the public's grand introduction to the all-new **Iron Man** is almost scuttled by a band of light-armored baddies. Luckily, Scott Lang, who is on hand to help with the technological end of the demonstration, notices something suspicious and ultimately

stops the attempt as Ant-Man. Lang again uses the shrink/enlarge gas on a non-primary user by shrinking one of the attackers while still inside of his armor. *Plot and script by David Michelinie, layouts by Jackson Guice, and plot & finished artwork by Bob Layton.*

After **Reed Richards** and **Doctor Doom** apparently perish in the pages of **FANTASTIC FOUR #381,** Sue Richards contacts Tony Stark for tech support. Tony immediately recommends Scott Lang, who is "hired" on the spot. Needless to say, **Ant-Man joins the FF!** Lang holds his own in the role of a substitute superhero and as an in-awe electronics technician -- the equipment in the lab of Reed Richards would drop anyone's jaw.

Arrogant thirteen-year-old **Kristoff Vernhard** possesses all of the knowledge and experiences of **Doctor Doom.** Kristoff has allied himself with the FF in an attempt to search for Doom. The youngster's contempt for Scott Lang is as deep as his affection for Lang's daughter Cassie. Interestingly, Kristoff designed a **new Ant-Man uniform** for Lang which debuts in **FANTASTIC FOUR #405** (October 1995), **"Terror is Tomorrow!"** The helmet has plexiglass "bug eyes"; built-in antennas; and side-mounted, mandible-like microphones -- appliances



contacted, Ant-Man, wearing an updated version of his classic costume, which includes newly-designed stingers, delivers a zap to Namor's inner ear which renders the sea prince unconscious. *Plot by Carlos Pacheco and Rafael Marin, script by Jeph Loeb, pencils by Stuart Immonen, and inks by Jesus Merino.*

KALIBABKY: Did you originally set out to create Scott Lang as just a new, but un-superheroic, supporting character for **AVENGERS** and **IRON MAN**?

MICHELINIE: No, Scott was intended to be the new **Ant-Man** from the start. His debut in **AVENGERS** was a matter of design. One of the things I loved about Marvel Comics was the unified nature of the Marvel Universe. Everything seemed to be a part of the same world, rather than the Metropolis world of Superman, the Central City world of the Flash, the Gotham City world of Batman, etc. Part of that unity was accomplished by seeing characters from different series crossing over in an almost casual manner, not necessarily guest-starring but just being there. Putting Scott into the Avengers as a Stark International employee was an example of that.

KALIBABKY: Of all the "doppelganger" superhero characters you could have created, why another **Ant-Man**, a second-tier character at best? What's your fascination with Ant-Man?

MICHELINIE: Actually, one of the main reasons I created a new **Ant-Man** was because he was a second-string character. Nobody was using the character at the time, and nobody seemed to have any particular interest in it. So that gave me a lot of freedom to do what I wanted -- to try to come up with something new and interesting without having a lot of people looking over my shoulder and saying, "You can't do that!" As for a fascination with Ant-Man, that really wasn't the case. I had liked **The Atom** over at DC, but hadn't really read Ant-Man stories before starting to work for Marvel. It was really the Scott Lang character I was interested in; the costume, name and powers were just trappings.

KALIBABKY: Where did the idea for the character of **Cassie Lang** come from?

MICHELINIE: At the time, there weren't many (any?) single parent super heroes at Marvel. I thought that would be a great angle to explore. I mean, think of it: you're ten years old, your Dad's a genuine, honest-to-gosh super hero -- and you can't tell anyone! Imagine the unbearable temptation when someone on the playground says, "My dad can beat up your dad!"

KALIBABKY: When Scott debuted as the new Ant-Man, Hank Pym was flitting around as **Yellowjacket**. Did you worry about having two small, insect-monikered and like-powered heroes in the Marvel Universe at the same time?

MICHELINIE: No. Like I said, my major interest was in Scott Lang, who was a vastly different human being from Hank Pym. As long as the focus remained on the person rather than the powers, I didn't think surface similarities were that important.

KALIBABKY: Lang used Pym's shrink/enlarge gas to once enlarge an ant, but never used it on himself to become **Giant-Man II**. Any reason why he felt perfectly content as Ant-Man?

MICHELINIE: I don't think it was so much a case of Scott being content as Ant-Man, as it was of me not thinking of that possibility! I tried to play Scott as new at heroing, experiencing everything with excitement and an almost childlike sense of wonder -- an example being the thrill and terror he felt when flying on an ant for the first time, relative "miles" above the ground. Seeing how he'd react to being a giant would probably have made for a cool story. If it had occurred to me. (sigh)

KALIBABKY: During **"Stark Wars"** ("Armor Wars" I) Lang/Ant-Man made one brief appearance -- to help Tony Stark obtain information from Justin Hammer's database. Did you originally plan to use Ant-Man again during the storyline?

MICHELINIE: No, that was just another case of inserting Marvel characters -- especially those without their own series -- into stories wherever you found an opportunity to do so.

KALIBABKY: Did you, or Tony Stark, ever consider a new Ant-Man costume or armor for Lang? Any reason why Lang didn't make any enhancements to the costume himself? Comments on the one created by Kristoff Vernhard?

MICHELINIE: I usually revamp a costume or armor only when there seems to be a need for it, something that's dictated by a story or storyline. I liked the original costume, and there didn't seem to be any good reason to change it. As far as enhancements go, Ant-Man was a supporting character whose appearances were limited; generally he just played a part in the ongoing plots that centered around the main characters. This frequently dictated what I was able to do or not do with him. Had he been in his own ongoing series, with more time for subplots and character bits, I'm sure he would have indulged in quite a bit of tinkering -- which would undoubtedly have led to some fun stories! As for the Kristoff Vernhard design, I haven't read those stories so can't comment on them.

KALIBABKY: Delightful Cassie Lang is terrific comic relief. Did the thought ever cross your mind to use her in a short solo "adventure" of her own, say in an annual or something?

MICHELINIE: Again, there were the limitations of Ant-Man playing only a

supporting roll. I did a solo **Jarvis** story when I was writing **THE AVENGERS**, and a **J. Jonah Jameson** story when I was writing **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN**. But convincing Marvel to give me space for a story about a supporting character for a "supporting character" was a bit much to hope for!

KALIBABKY: After Cassie's heart surgery in **MARVEL PREMIERE #48**, there was never any follow-up on her condition. Or was there? Cassie's heart problem was the reason her dad became Ant-Man.

MICHELINIE: I didn't do any follow-up; I don't know if someone else did. This, again, was in large part a result of Ant-Man not having his own series. Since he was generally put into other characters' plotlines, having something major going on in his own life -- like a daughter with a heart problem -- would have been difficult to fit in.

KALIBABKY: Do you keep up at all with the goings-on of your characters, such as Scott Lang/Ant-Man or **Mrs. Arbogast**, once they fall into the pages of other books? As an aside, both Scott and Cassie Lang are alive and well; Scott appears to be an ongoing guest star in **FANTASTIC FOUR**, while Cassie, as **Stinger**, shows up from time to time in **SPIDER-GIRL**. Stinger, by the way, has her own action figure -- its special power is tipping over!

MICHELINIE: To be honest, I generally make an effort to *not* follow a character that I've created or developed once I've lost control of them. Seeing what happens to characters I care about when other people write them is almost always painful; even if a new take on the character is brilliant, it's never what I would have done myself, and that's inevitably frustrating. I don't condemn other writers for putting their own stamp on a character; once a character is out from under the protection of a creator or an editor, it's fair game. I've revamped characters (and likely pissed off other writers) myself. But accepting and enjoying are two different things, so I usually avoid reading stories featuring "my guys" once they leave the fold.

KALIBABKY: Is there anything you wanted to accomplish with Ant-Man or Scott Lang that you didn't get to do while you were writing **IRON MAN**?

MICHELINIE: There was one big plan that co-plotter **Bob Layton** and I had set up that we never got to follow through on. In the Ant-Man origin story in **PREMIERE**, it was mentioned that Scott's wife -- Cassie's mom -- had disappeared while he was in prison. Her name was established as "Rae." In the later issues of our second run on **IRON MAN**, we gave Tony Stark a new girlfriend, the wealthy owner of a posh styling boutique. Her name was "Rae LaCoste." That's right, we were building up to a point where Tony would introduce his new squeeze to his friend Scott, only to find that she's Scott's vanished wife! That would have led to a story where we explained why she had disappeared, and what her real reasons were for being in California. I think the situation would have made for some very juicy character stuff,

exploring how this revelation would have affected everyone involved: Tony, Rae, Scott... and especially Cassie.

KALIBABKY: Do you feel proud at all for having created the Langs?

MICHELINIE: I don't know if "proud" is quite the right word. Perhaps "pleased" would be better. I like Scott & Cassie a bunch, and wish I could have written more stories about them, developed their personalities further. But I think they're good, entertaining characters, and I'm happy with what I was able to do with them.

KALIBABKY: "Thanks to help from a little friend," is how Ant-Man describes his successful effort to free Tony Stark from his **Iron Man** armor in **IRON MAN #133**. The remark makes me wonder... are you a Beatles fan?

MICHELINIE: To quote the Vice President Of The United States: "Big time!"











Bonjour! Are you one of these people who can't get enough of Iron Man? The regular series, the Avengers and all the back issues aren't enough for ya? Want to know where you can get an extra fix? If so, then my humble column dedicated to **Iron Man's numerous apparitions as a guest-star** is for you!

Do you guys remember the "Marvel Comics Presents" series that began in 1988 and lasted several years? Every bi-monthly issue would feature **four stories** of about 8 pages and each one of them was about a **different hero**. Iron Man was featured in the pages of MCP on several occasions over the years and that's what I'll be looking at this time around. His first three guest-stars in MCP were in issues **8, 43** and **51**.

* * *

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #8

"One Day at a Time" - Early December 1988

Writer: Sholly Fisch

Penciler: Javier Saltares

Inker: Chris Ivy



the story:

The story begins with **Tony Stark** addressing a group of **Alcoholics Anonymous**. He talks about how AA has helped him with his drinking trouble and also in "**other ways too**". He then begins to talk about "**something that happened at work recently**". As we all know, what **Mister Stark** considers work is parading around in this cool armor of his. Turns out that **Tony** was testing a **new kind of generator** he invented when things got a little bit out of hand. Instead of drawing static electricity from the air as it was supposed to, the generator pulled the electrical being known as **Zzzax** out of orbit and rematerialized him. For those of you who don't know him, **Zzzax** is an old enemy of the **Hulk**, a creature completely made of pure electricity. Well, before the day is out, **Iron Man** will succeed over the electrical monster, **thanks to a valuable lesson** he learned with AA.





what's cool:

Cool and entertaining story, **good** character development and the art is **very good** too. It's worth buying, especially if you miss that **cool red and gold armor** Tony designed for himself after he ditched the **Silver Centurion** model.



WHAT'S BAAAAAD:

As you've learned by now, **nothing's ever perfect with me (most of the time anyways)** ☺. As I said before, every issue of this series features not one but four different stories, and it just so happens that the other stories in this issue are not very good at all. One features the **Man-Thing** (puh-lease) and another one the **Masters of Kung-Fu** (shoot me now). The fourth story is about **Wolverine** and that one is not too bad, it's written by **Chris Claremont** and drawn by **John Buscema**.



“Hi. My name's Tony and I'm an alcoholic” (makes you appreciate how far the guy has come since his old dark drinking days, doesn't it?).

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #43

“Donovan's Brains” - 1990

Writer: Ed Simmons

Penciler: Mark Bagley

Inker: Keith Williams



the story:

Stark Enterprises has concluded a deal with a company called “**Donovan Robotics**”, which has developed a new generation of **intelligent robots**. These machines have been programmed **to learn from their mistakes**, just like humans do (except a lot quicker). **Stark** is very impressed with the prototype robots but what he doesn't know is that **Donovan** has a hidden agenda. Asking his new partner for **Iron Man's** protection after a spree of industrial sabotage, **Donovan** manages to introduce a **computer virus** into **IM's** armor. Our hero is forced to shut down all systems for six minutes while the virus is being destroyed and systems reboot. Of course, **Donovan** has no intention of giving **IM** the precious minutes he needs and the powerless armored Avenger is immediately attacked by **enormous intelligent robots** who proceed to give him a **beating he won't soon forget**.





what's cool:

Although the story is entertaining, the **art** is what makes this one special. I don't know about you guys, but I really like **Mark Bagley (New Warriors, Amazing Spider-Man, Thunderbolts)**. It's great to see the talented **Bagley** tackle our favourite character. On top of that, **another story in this issue also features Iron Man**. Part 6 of the "**Stardust Miseries**" storyline features **Iron Man, Hank Pym** and **the Beast** against an old friend turned foe; **Wonder Man** (under the **Enchantress's** spells). It's a cool **IM versus Wondy face-off** that old fans of the West Coast Avengers will enjoy. Cool issue, I'll skip the "What's Bad" category with this one because I can't really think of anything (it was going to happen eventually) ☺.



Iron Man says: "I'll shut down all power except the bootstrap module and play dead. If this doesn't work, I won't have to fake it." (Well? Will it work? You have to read the story to know the answer to that!).

MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS #51

"The other way out" - 1990

Writer: Steve Saffel

Penciler: Mark Bright

Inker: Don Heck



the story:

Stark is working in his office when he suddenly hears on the television that the communist government of some eastern Asian country (can you tell the author doesn't want to write the word "China") has announced **the execution of twelve pro-democracy demonstrators**. **Stark** looks at the screen in shock and hurries out of his office, asking **Mrs. Arbogast** to cancel all his appointments as he hovers by her desk (he was stuck in his hoverchair at the time). Strapping on **the enormous reactors** he used once before **during the Armor Wars** to reach Russia, **Iron Man** heads for Asia as quickly as he can. After ruthlessly attacking the **red army**, he reaches the place of the execution... only a second too late. He takes a body in his arms and heads for the outside of the city where the mortally wounded man tells him: "**Tell Tony... good bye for me, I'm glad he got out earlier... the safer way...**"





what's cool:

What's cool you ask? What's cool? I'll tell ya what's cool! **Mark Bright** is cool! The man's only **one of the very best pencilers to have ever drawn Iron Man!!** The art is awesome, even with a mediocre inker, **Bright** rocks! No wonder he was so hot when he was working with a guy like **Bob Layton**. **Mark Bright** is the king, that's the guy I want to see coming back to work on the **IM** monthly book! **Layton**'s a great inker but he needs a great penciler to be at his best (in my most humble opinion) and I think **Mark Bright** is the man for the job! Okay... calm down Pat... you're hyperventilating again ☺.

Two of the three other stories aren't half bad either, the **Wolverine** story (drawn by **Rob Liefeld** sadly) features a character old **Alpha Flight** fans like me will fondly remember: **Wild Child**. There's also a story about a vastly underused character; **Le Peregrine**, France's answer to **Hawkman**. In this particular story, he has to deal with **Stane International**, no less.



WHAT'S BAAAAAD:

Well, although the art is awesome (did I already mention that I like **Mark Bright**?), and the story is cool, one thing **REALLY** made me mad. **Nobody took the time to tell us who the heck was that Asian guy Iron Man rescued!** Oh there's **an asterisk all right**, but that's all! No footnote to explain anything! **Who is he?** A character in one of Iron Man's previous adventures in Asia? Which issue? **Nobody knows...** that just sucks. If any of you guys think you may have the answer to this enigma, you be sure to send me a message, y'hear?



Mrs. Arbogast says: **"Drat, Mr. Trump isn't going to like being put off again."** (Don't you miss that woman? Because I most certainly do!).

* * *

There are three other solo Iron Man guest-stars in the pages of MCP but I'm keeping them for next time. Hope these will be **useful tips** to you. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions of issues you'd like to see reviewed, arguments or even if you just want to say **bonjour**, send me a quick message at cousture@yahoo.com and while I'm at, I cordially invite you to visit **my Iron Man web site** (yes, this is a shameless plug once more) at the following address:

<http://www.geocities.com/poppyslaw>

Hope to hear from you and bonne lecture!

A MINORITY POINT OF VIEW

By Brad Lyons

This article is in response to all of the negative reviews concerning the current state of the **Iron Man** monthly as seen in the infamous **RUST** website, various message boards, and **Iron Filings**. These complaints are primarily coming from the long term fans, which I will refer to as "veterans" which is a tad more fitting than "old farts." I am not arguing the opinions of veteran **Iron Man** fans, which are respected, but instead I'd like to give a different perspective from a member of the younger **IM** generation. "Younger **IM** generation" does not necessarily refer to actual age, but to the era in which comic books were first read and collected.

HISTORY (If you could care less about my **IM** history, skip down to the next section.)

My first encounter with **Iron Man** was back in the mid seventies when I was about 3 or 4. The neighbor kid had an awesome playroom, so that's where I spent a lot of my time. At the back of the playroom closet, there were 3 boxes full of comics with a large number of **Iron Man**. Now, being only 3 or 4 years old, I'm sure you can imagine how well we treated them. Now that I think about it, some of those could have been **Tales of Suspense**, because I remember seeing **Captain America** as well. I recently spoke to my neighbor's father, and he told me he still has those boxes!! (What I wouldn't give to get my hands on those! - but that's another story.) We couldn't read them, so we just looked at the pictures. The superhero that stood out for me was, of course, **Iron Man**. He had the coolest costume, and no matter how bad he was getting beat up, he'd always come back to win.

That's about all she wrote for me and comic books up until 1996. I was in boot camp at the age of 22 (don't ask), and towards the end of my little 9-week getaway, we had some free time to do whatever inside the barracks. One of my fellow recruits was reading some comic books he bought at the NEX and I was bored out of my mind, so I thought what the heck? I believe it was *X-Men #53*, a build-up story to the **Onslaught** epic - and what do you know? - this was good stuff! I thoroughly enjoyed every bit of it! As soon as I reached my next duty station, remembering my fondness of **Iron Man** in my childhood, I ran out and bought the newest issue of **IM**. It was #329

– smack dab in the middle of the Teenage Tony Stark saga. Thus began my quest for everything **Iron Man** under the sun!

WHERE I'M COMING FROM

Forget everything you know about **Iron Man** – forget every villain he's faced – forget he's an alcoholic – forget he owns (or owned) SE and SI – forget he has a bad heart – forget his origin – forget every supporting cast member he's ever had – forget he died and was replaced by a younger version of himself – forget he's an Avenger – forget every writer and penciler who has ever graced his pages – forget everything.

Now that you've done that, I'll tell you what you do know: You know that **Iron Man's** true identity is Tony Stark. You know that Tony Stark has a moustache. You know that Tony Stark is rich. Most importantly, you know that **Iron Man** is your favorite superhero. That's it. That's all you know.....good. Now that we're on the same page, let me share some positive points about what the majority feels is wrong with recent **Iron Man** issues.

Let's start off nice and easy with "Teen" **Iron Man**. This being my first dose of **IM** (that I actually read) I thought it was really good. The comic book medium was totally new to me and I loved every page. When I read the letters page, I couldn't believe how many people were complaining about it (this still happens today). However, having collected and read only a few back issues, I began to see why it was disliked. 'Nuff said.

The **Heroes Reborn** is still my favorite to date, including the armor. Seeing for the first time the origin of not one, but two superheroes was absolutely fascinating. The art and color was 10 times better than anything I'd seen before. The abstract page layouts were outstanding, and the plots were unbelievable (unbelievable in a good way). I had no idea a comic book could be this good. My copy of **IM #1 vol. 2** is in terrible condition because I've read it so many times. All the issues in **IM HR** were way ahead of their time (save #12 and 13).

Most people seem to like **IM vol. 3 #1-25**, so I'll skip over these.

As for **Joe Quesada's Sentient Armor**, well, anyone who didn't love that saga can take a long walk off a short cliff. What more could you want? A high flying battle in a lightning-filled sky, the birth of the **Sentient Armor**, the death of **Whiplash**, the return of the **Modular**

Armor, Tony Stark in a primal rage, a new sentient heart – beautiful. Although I must say, I agree it didn't make any sense that Tony would leave the armor buried on an island. But let's face it, this isn't the same **Iron Man** from the **Armor Wars**. He's been through a lot of changes since then. He's been brainwashed, killed, replaced, whisked off to another dimension, whisked back, he's started a new business, and even fell in love. I realize these events are everything veterans loathe, but the fact still remains, he's not the same.

Alitha Martinez – I don't think I've read a positive comment from anyone concerning her art. I'll admit, I was very disappointed when **Sean Chen** left. I did not like the first issue by Martinez, mainly because I had become accustomed to Chen's style. But after only another issue or two, her style started to grow on me. I've heard people say that she improving with each issue. Well, I got news for 'ya – each issue is basically the same. These people are just afraid to admit that she's growing on them as well. I've also seen Martinez's pencils be described as "Manga." Call it what you like, but I think she is an outstanding artist. Take a look at anything over 10 years ago. You're off your rocker if think the art was better back then. Sure, a lot of it has to do with the colors, but today's art is just so much better. If you don't believe me, take a look at **IM #40**, where old and new are side by side. Those guys ain't got nuthin' on Martinez!

And finally, I've also noticed **Frank Tieri** taking a verbal beating from almost every **IM** veteran. O.K. I see some reasons why he isn't well received, but the negative responses are overwhelming. **The Sons of Yinsen** collaboration was an exciting, high-action, well-written story. However, if you want to get philosophical and analyze past the surface, (which is not always a good idea concerning comics) maybe trudging up **IM's** origin wasn't what veteran fans needed. If you look back, making the **Mandarin** responsible for **IM's** origin instead of **Wong Chu**, and Wong Chu surviving the explosion (ish #s 266-268) was in the same ballpark as this.

The **Classic Armor** comeback I definitely loved because I was not around when Tony originally wore this suit. I've heard people say (I'm paraphrasing) "this was a cheap attempt to make die-hards happy" or "tried to connect new readers with **IM's** past." Whatever! Call me cheap or easily amused, but I thought it was cool.

Max Power was also an excellent story. This Max Power guy had a lot of potential. It was too bad he was tied into "Maximum Security." The only good thing that came out of "Max Sec" was that **U.S. Agent**

had a huge comeback. (Oops! Was that a negative comment?) Sure there was a touch of cheesiness to the Max Power story, but if you can't take a little bit of cheese, maybe you're too mature to read comics to begin with. Instead of subscribing to **IM** monthly, maybe you should switch to *The Wall Street Journal*.

I haven't seen hardly any reviews on the underwater filler. I guess no review is a good review. I enjoyed this one as well, but let me just say one word – Leviathan. The "Remote Control" saga was also an outstanding tale. It introduced what could be a very deadly business rival, **Tiberius Stone**, replacing **Stane** and **Hammer**. No one has even come close to these scoundrels. **Trevor Donohue** had potential, but now he's dying and even helped Stark. **Sunset Bain** is dangerous but is also attracted to Stark, which makes her not-so-dangerous. The possibilities for Ty Stone are endless. Back to the story – let's just say that at the end of each issue I was excited and anxious and giddy like a little school-girl, just waiting for the next issue. Any writer who can do that is Grade-A in my book.

Now that that's off my chest, I don't want anyone to get me wrong. I have read many-many-many back issues and absolutely loved 'em. I have almost every ish from #200 on, with only a few holes, and probably 25 or so from before that. I'm not exactly what you'd call an **Iron Man** expert, but I'm not that far behind. I've seen all the cries for a **Michelinie/Layton** return. I've read their issues and yes, they are some of the best (the **Ghost** is my all-time favorite villain). I would not at all oppose Michelinie's return to **IM**. Actually I would welcome it, but only after Tieri's run is finished. However, Layton is no longer in his prime. **Bad Blood** was good and I'd give the pencils a 6.5 on a scale of 1 to 10, but I think his time has past as a headlining penciler. Colors – sure, pencils – nah. There are too many gifted artists to choose from that can hang with the industry's finest.

All in all, I'd say the recent issues of **IM** are just as good - if not better – than anything prior. I know, I know...I am in the minority, but maybe this article will give others who share my point of view the *cojones* to send in their opinions who may otherwise be intimidated to oppose the veteran majority view. I know I was for the longest time.

And so, for all of you disgruntled **Iron Man** veterans who are displeased with the current state of **Iron Man**, especially the creator of [the website] RUST-----IT SUCKS TO BE YOU!!!! Maybe "Carousel" (from Logan's Run) wasn't such a bad concept.

Brad Lyons

The Easy As Pie Iron Man Trivia Quiz Answers!

And there came a day unlike any other, when the call went out, and was answered only by silence...

Not one response was received to our "Tough as Iron Iron Man Trivia Quiz" that appeared in **Advanced Iron #50**. Not one.

No iron maniac rifled through his mylar-sheathed collection in search of answers; no armored ally cracked open his **Essential Iron Man** seeking enlightenment; no ferrophile blew the dust from his **Marvel Masterworks #20** to secure his ascendancy as the foremost authority on Shellhead's nascent crime-fighting career. No one.

As we the ranks of **Iron Man's** most faithful subjects assemble here for another stellar issue of **Advanced Iron**, it must be with a sense of the utmost shame and humility. Let us bow our heads for a moment of reflection.

And primary amongst that reflection must be the single most pitiable fact: if only one person had answered only one question correctly, he would have been rewarded with original art by **Bob Layton** from the collection of our own generous Dave Huber. Ponder that. *(And check out what Bob is asking for some of his art over at his website! Oh well....!! -Hube)*

Okay, enough! Time now to reveal the answers that eluded EVERYONE! Commit these answers to your transistor-powered memory banks so that such shame may never again fall upon us, the legions of iron!

1. In the original comics (not the Marvel Masterworks reprints), what color are the highlights in Tony Stark's hair for his first few appearances in Tales of Suspense (TOS)?

- A. Dark Blue
- B. Gray
- C. Reddish-Brown
- D. Light Blue
- E. Purple

ANSWER: C. Go look for yourself!

2. What souvenirs does a group of orphan children receive from Iron Man during a charity demonstration in TOS #41?

- A. "Demagnetized" transistors
- B. Autographed pictures of Iron Man
- C. Autos that he crushed into a ball
- D. Bits of a crushed cannonball
- E. Transistorized haircuts

ANSWER: D. I wonder how much they could get for those on eBay...

3. What armor worry does Iron Man express in TOS #41?

- A. Shorting out
- B. Attitude control
- C. Rust
- D. Power overload
- E. Windshear

ANSWER: C. Salt-water -- the enemy of every crimefighter.

4. How does Iron Man get back to shore after foiling some spies in TOS #42?

- A. Palm-mounted air pressure jets
- B. Swings away on a rope
- C. Jumps
- D. Boot-jets
- E. Is carried off by jubilant sailors

ANSWER: B, just like Batman!

5. The Netherworlders are descendants of:

- A. Atlantis
- B. Ship-wrecked aliens
- C. Ancient Egypt

- D. Genetically engineered Neanderthals
- E. Prehistoric moles

ANSWER: A, so just ignore that upcoming Disney movie.

6. Happy Hogan saves Tony's life after an auto racing crash. Tony writes Happy a check for:
- A. \$ 5,000
 - B. \$ 25,000
 - C. \$ 50,000
 - D. \$ 100,000
 - E. He doesn't write a check; he gives him a car.

ANSWER: C, back when 50 grand could buy you a couple of nice houses.

7. Which is the first issue of TOS scripted by Stan Lee?
- A. #39
 - B. #41
 - C. #44
 - D. #47
 - E. #50

ANSWER: D – "Iron Man Battles the Melter!"

8. "Sunny Jim," aka:
- A. Gargantus
 - B. Happy Hogan
 - C. Jack Frost
 - D. Scarecrow
 - E. Mandarin

ANSWER: E. Iron Man calls Mandy this in TOS #50.

9. Nautilium -- what is it good for?
- A. Absolutely nothin'
 - B. It enables humans to breathe underwater
 - C. It makes air too "wet" to be breathed
 - D. It turns air into water
 - E. It causes metals to fatigue and fail

ANSWER: C. Attuma plans to use this rare substance to take over the

surface world (what else?) in TOS #66.

10. Who is the second person to discover Iron Man's secret identity?
- A. Weasel Wills
 - B. Happy Hogan
 - C. Mandarin
 - D. An unidentified guard of Kala's
 - E. Professor X

ANSWER: A. Weasel then goes on to impersonate Iron Man, quite badly.

11. Iron Man is an early skill for:
- A. F.O.O.M.
 - B. Stan's Brigade
 - C. The Merry Marvel Marching Society
 - D. The Mighty Marvel Marching Society
 - E. K.O.F.

ANSWER: C. Shellhead appears in ads promoting this fan club.

12. Who suggests to Tony that Iron Man ought to paint his armor gold, since the gray version frightens people?
- A. Jeanne
 - B. Kala
 - C. Marianne
 - D. Marion
 - E. Miss Glitter

ANSWER: D. Tony spray-paints his dull gray armor, giving birth to the "golden Avenger!"

13. What major spelling error in TOS #44 is corrected in the Marvel Masterworks reprint, but reappears in the Essentials volume?

ANSWER: The "Mad Pharaoh" is misspelled P-H-A-R-O-A-H throughout the original. A bonus point if you remember that this tidbit was pointed out in the Marvel No-Prize one-shot.

14. What kind of lock does Tony Stark have on his briefcase in TOS #42?
- A. A miniature A-bomb
 - B. Sleep gas

- C. One that responds to his unique heartbeat
- D. A miniature Z-bomb
- E. voice activated

ANSWER: A. Overkill? Remember, EVERYTHING was going atomic in the early 1960's.

15. Who is the first villain to find out Tony Stark's true identity?
- A. Kala
 - B. The Actor
 - C. Weasel Wills
 - D. The aliens who built Gargantus
 - E. Dr. Strange

ANSWER: B. He was killed off for this bit of knowledge, the poor Commie stooge.

16. Where is it first mentioned that New York is Tony Stark's base of operations?
- A. TOS #40
 - B. TOS # 41
 - C. TOS #43
 - D. TOS #44
 - E. Strange Tales #135

ANSWER: C, in the last panel.

17. What form of exotic entertainment does Tony enjoy in TOS # 44?

Belly dancing. Chest pains force him to retire to his room before he gets her number though.

18. Iron Man's infamous skates first appeared:
- A. in TOS #43
 - B. in TOS #45
 - C. in TOS #47
 - D. in TOS #48
 - E. on his back

ANSWER: E, in TOS #44!

19. In Happy Hogan's first few appearances, he has a distinguishing physical characteristic that in later

issues disappeared and seldom returned. What is it?

ANSWER: That badge of the pugilist, cauliflower ears.

20. What is the name of Tony's Indy 500 car?

ANSWER: The Stark Special, natch! (TOS #45)

21. In what issue do we first realize the name of Tony's company is "Stark Industries"?
- A. TOS #41
 - B. TOS #48
 - C. TOS #49
 - D. TOS #53
 - E. TOS #55

ANSWER: B, on a sign in an establishing shot of the factory!

22. What is the first sound effect Iron Man ever makes?
- A. THUD
 - B. KLANK
 - C. ZZZZT
 - D. CREEAAK
 - E. SSKEZZZ

ANSWER: A, when he topples over. (TOS #39)

23. Who is the first villain to make a second appearance in Tales of Suspense?
- A. Mandarin
 - B. Melter
 - C. Titanium Man
 - D. Black Widow
 - E. Crimson Dynamo

ANSWER: E, though it's a new guy (Boris) in the armor.

24. In what issue is Happy Hogan finally first shown actually chauffeuring Tony Stark?
- A. TOS # 48
 - B. TOS # 50
 - C. TOS # 54

- D. TOS # 55
- E. TOS # 59

ANSWER: As we revealed on the A.I. site, I got this one wrong. The correct answer is TOS # 51. Mea culpa.

25. What is Happy Hogan allergic to?
- A. Beautiful women
 - B. Roses
 - C. Fancy perfume
 - D. Boxing glove leather
 - E. Dogs

ANSWER: B, as seen in TOS # 56.

26. Who is the first villain to make a 3rd appearance in Tales of Suspense?
- A. Black Widow
 - B. Crimson Dynamo
 - C. Titanium Man
 - D. Mandarin
 - E. Melter

ANSWER: A, in TOS #57, which also features the first appearance of Hawkeye!

27. Who are the first Avengers to make a guest appearance in Tales of Suspense? (Hint: There are three in the same issue.)

ANSWER: Another error in this one. Technically, four Avengers make their first appearance in a one-panel cameo in TOS #49. They are Hulk, Giant Man, Wasp and Thor. The first Avengers who actually figure in to a story are Giant Man, Wasp and Thor in TOS #56.

28. Who first calls Iron Man "Shellhead?"
- A. Tony Stark
 - B. Happy Hogan
 - C. Hawkeye
 - D. Nick Fury
 - E. The Turtle

ANSWER: Oddly enough, A! (TOS #56)

29. What very unusual weapon does Iron Man employ to stop the Black Knight in their first battle?

ANSWER: In TOS #59, Iron Man places a cockleburr beneath Black Knight's horse's saddle! I wonder if it was transistorized..?

30. When the letter column finally shows up in Tales of Suspense, what is it called?

ANSWER: Mails of Suspense, of course, in TOS #59.

31. Mandarin claims his father was descended from whom?

ANSWER: Genghis Khan, in TOS #62.

32. George Hagenauer, a letter writer from Chicago, makes what prescient suggestion?

- A. That Tony Stark get a heart transplant
- B. That Tony Stark have a battle with the bottle
- C. That Hawkeye become a hero
- D. That the Mandarin learn that Tony Stark and Iron Man are the same person
- E. That Professor Yinsen didn't die at the hands of Wong Chu

ANSWER: C. The letter appeared in TOS #63. Good call, George!

33. Senator Byrd, Tony Stark's Capitol Hill nemesis, was also sometimes called this (by an absent-minded Stan Lee?).

ANSWER: Boyd. He was for the boyds anyways.

34. When an angry Happy leaves to return "home," to where does he go?

- A. Shannon, Ireland
- B. Philadelphia
- C. Detroit
- D. Cork, Ireland
- E. Yonkers

ANSWER: A. This happens in TOS #67.

35. By what other noms du crime is Count Nefaria briefly known in TOS #67 (list two)?

ANSWER: The Master of Dreams and the Dream Maker. (Kurt Busiek surmises that Stan Lee forgot that his Dream Maker character and Nefaria were supposed to be two different villains. Sounds plausible.)

36. Which of these dreamy past villains did Iron Man NOT face when Count Nefaria was posing as one of the answers to the last question?

- A. Jack Frost
- B. Unicorn
- C. Gargantus
- D. Scarecrow
- E. Melter

ANSWER: D. He also has to deal with Crimson Dynamo in this wacky issue.

37. What two cheesy alien invaders does Iron Man battle in TOS #68?

ANSWER: Ready for this...Edam and Gouda! Go ahead and edam, they're gouda!

38. What is the Countess de la Spiroza's name?

- A. Caroline
- B. Margaritte
- C. Eleanora
- D. Margeaux
- E. Stephanie

ANSWER: E, as seen in TOS #69.

39. What neutral country host the first battle between Iron Man and the Titanium Man?

- A. Swizzleland
- B. Austeria
- C. Alberia
- D. Belchium
- E. Putschia

ANSWER: C. Gosh but I enjoyed making up the fake answers to this one.

40. Adam Austin, aka:

ANSWER: Penciler Gene "The Dean" Colan. He used the pseudonym on TOS #73-77 before coming clean.

41. When Iron Man escapes from China in TOS #78 in a Chinese jet, to what country does he hope to fly?

ANSWER: Formosa. Better known to you young 'uns as Taiwan.

42. From issue 69-86 of TOS, one year and five months of real time have elapsed. Approximately how much time passes in Tony Stark's world?

- A. Just under a year
- B. Six months
- C. Three months
- D. Sixteen days
- E. 72 hours

ANSWER: D. NOW I understand how come the Marvel Universe is only 8 years old!

43. Who says, "No one has the right to defy the wishes of his government...not even Iron Man!"

- A. Tony Stark
- B. Happy Hogan
- C. Nick Fury
- D. Captain America
- E. Senator Byrd

ANSWER: A. Yes, A, in TOS #81. I wonder if Tony is still quite that patriotic?

44. What future Marvel creator gets a letter published in TOS #83?

- A. Walt Simonson
- B. Kurt Busiek
- C. Marv Wolfman
- D. Tom DeFalco
- E. Tony Isabella

ANSWER: C.

45. The Iron Man/Titanium Man fight in TOS #83 is witnessed and commented on by what famous real-life person?

ANSWER: President Lyndon Johnson. LBJ wonders why we can't all just reason together.

46. What significant fact about Tony Stark becomes public knowledge in TOS #84?

ANSWER: That Tony wears a life-saving chest plate. Testifying before Congress is stressful!

47. Besides his funky alien rings, what other "power" does Mandarin claim to possess in TOS #86?

ANSWER: That he is unequaled in the art of karate. (Snicker!)

48. Where does Iron Man set Happy's armor controls to take him after the two of them run athwart the Mandarin?

- A. The Philippines
- B. Okinawa
- C. Tokyo
- D. Taiwan
- E. Peking

ANSWER: B. This happens in TOS #86.

49. In TOS #88, what sport does Tony Stark claim to have played?

ANSWER: Baseball. Well, he's certainly known for hitting home runs with the ladies.

50. How many women does Tony Stark appear to date in TOS #89?

- A. At least 5
- B. At least 8
- C. At least 10
- D. At least 12
- E. At least 30

ANSWER: B. Count 'em!

51. What are the settings on the Melter's gun in his second appearance in TOS?

ANSWER: Wood, metal, stone, flesh.

52. What was the Crusher formerly known as in his native country?

- A. El Maestro
- B. El Culebra
- C. El Hombre
- D. El Profesor
- E. El Lider

ANSWER: D.

53. In what issue of Tales of Suspense do Happy and Pepper announce their marriage?

ANSWER: TOS #91.

54. Tony Stark tells us that as a child he was forbidden to:

- A. attend public school
- B. leave the table without cleaning his plate
- C. go anywhere without a bodyguard
- D. ride a rollercoaster
- E. stay up past 8:00

ANSWER: Believe it or not D. Poor little rich kid.

55. What future Marvel creator has a letter published in TOS #93?

- A. Walt Simonson
- B. David Michelinie
- C. Jerry Ordway
- D. Tony Isabella
- E. Roger Stern

ANSWER: A.

56. What name is Tony Stark's company given in TOS #93 and again in #98 and why is it significant?

ANSWER: Surprisingly, Stark Enterprises! Of course, this actually became Stark's new company's name

(after he lost Stark International and Circuits Maximus).

57. To whom does Tony Stark once compare Agent Jasper Sitwell?

- A. Robert McNamara
- B. General Patton
- C. Abraham Lincoln
- D. Billy Graham
- E. Sergeant Carter from "Gomer Pyle"

ANSWER: D. Presumably because he's such a zealous do-gooder. (TOS #95)

58. What unlikely source provides power to the drained Iron Man in TOS #98?

ANSWER: A car cigarette lighter.

59. What is unusual about the original issue of TOS #98?

ANSWER: It is the only issue of Tales of Suspense that leads with the Captain America story instead of the Iron Man story.

60. Tales of Suspense #95-99, The Submariner/Iron Man #1 one-shot, and Iron Man Volume 1, #1. Seven issues. Approximately how much time elapses in Tony Stark's world?

- A. 2-3 hours
- B. 9-12 hours
- C. 4-6 days
- D. 2 weeks
- E. Seven months

ANSWER: B! Count it yourself!

And there you have it! See, it wasn't so hard. It didn't even have any of those annoying "Shellhead is to Iron Man as Jade Jaws is to..." analogies like the SAT does! Hopefully you found the answers to be fun and educational.

And now I'm off to compile the questions for the Tough as Iron Iron Man Trivia Quiz 2! I'll see you back here in **Advanced Iron #100!**

I'm a **very patient and tolerant** man. God knows you have to be when you're a teacher. It really takes quite a **lot** to make me mad, and it **doesn't** happen very often. I remember the time I got the most mad, it was at a hostel manager in San Francisco because I had found **cockroaches** in my room. That's the kind of stuff that gets to me.

I just about **never** get mad about comics. It happened **twice** really. The **first time** was a few years ago, when somebody took my favourite comic book character, deconstructed his entire history by turning him into a evil puppet of Kang and then into a teenager. That made me mad (and also made me drop the title). **The second time was today**. It happened as I was reading the **latest Iron Man issue (#40)**. I was so mad in fact that I decided to write this... I simply call it:



I think most of us will agree that the latest **“Remote Control”** storyline was poor at best. I personally **disliked it enormously**. A bad story isn't usually enough to get me all worked up though. Even a bad story coupled with bad art isn't quite enough to make me really mad. But when it turns out that the bad story is not only bad but also a **complete rip-off**, to me, that's the equivalent of **finding a cockroach in my comic**. That really pisses me off. Really a rip-off you say? Absolutely... **a cheap copy**... see for yourselves.

A few years ago, all the Superman titles went through an event that was baptised **“The Death of Clark Kent”**. The similarities between this and **“Remote Control”** are **simply shocking**. Plagiarism pure and simple or unbelievable coincidence? You be the judge.

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| <p>THE DEATH OF CLARK KENT (1995) All Superman titles</p> <p>The bad guy: Kenny Braverman is an old college buddy of Clark Kent's turned super-villain. He knows the hero's secret identity. Now, he wants Kent dead.</p> <p>Why: Braverman was always bested by Kent in college, always second best at all sports. Driven mad by this old competition and obsessed with his always being second best, now he wants to prove he's the better man by killing Superman.</p> <p>The ending: Superman faces off against his nemesis in an enormous fake arena filled with robots cheering for Braverman. Despite the fact that his powers have been cancelled out by kryptonite, Superman manages to come back on top and defeats the bad guy.</p> | <p>REMOTE CONTROL (2001) Iron Man #37-40</p> <p>The bad guy: Tiberius Stone is an old college buddy of Tony Stark's turned criminal mastermind. He knows the hero's secret identity. Now, he wants Stark dead.</p> <p>Why: Stone was always bested by Stark in school and in the business world. Driven mad by this old competition and obsessed with his always being second best, now he wants to prove he's the better man by discrediting and killing Tony Stark.</p> <p>The ending: Iron Man faces off against his nemesis in an enormous virtual arena filled with an artificial crowd cheering for Stone. Despite the fact that his armor has been stripped away, Stark manages to come back on top and defeats the bad guy.</p> |
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What's next? Stark discovers he's from another planet that exploded years ago? Stark falls in love with a headstrong reporter and married her? Stark joins up with three teenagers and a dopey dog and solves mysteries while driving in a van called “The Mystery Bus”? Give me a friggin' break!

THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN



SHELLHEAD v THE MANDARIN & FIN FANG FOOM!

TEN RINGS TO RULE THE WORLD!



Wolshcat Graphics

WHEN DIPLOMACY FAILS,
THIS MEANS



THE A.I.M. OF THE WAR!



Witchcat 2001



ARMOR WARS 3.0

By The True Spirit of Vengeance

Chapter 1

Setting: the secret lair of underworld criminal SPYMASTER. We see him tapping away on a PC terminal with his left hand as his right hand is encased in a cast in his lair and a self-satisfied chuckle can be heard from under his mask. **“So I’ve finally uncovered all the secrets of my predecessor. He definitely was a thorough and ruthless sonnuva gun”** Spymaster mumbles to himself. **“But these discs I found contain some of the greatest secrets he ever obtained. Including the secret Iron Man technology that he**

sold to Justin Hammer all those years ago that led to that other Iron Man’s rampage against other armor-wearing criminals. Now the tech is mine. He kept it on hard copy and Hammer long since reported that his copies were erased by a mysterious computer virus. Now perhaps it’s time for a profit to be made again. Hammer may be lost now, but I believe I know someone else who could benefit from gaining Iron Man technology.” Leaning back in his chair he smiles under his mask. **“If Stark or his bodyguard ever find out they are gonna plotz! HAHHAHA”** Still laughing to himself he punches up a different computer file and begins to make a few phone calls.

Scene shift: Setting: Private lab in the Home of Tony Stark. The Time: A few weeks later. We see him muttering to himself as he goes over some preliminary drawings of the new Iron Man armor he wants to design to replace the armor that became sentient and later insane. Pausing for a moment to catch his breath, he reaches over to a power cord and plugs it into his artificial heart for it’s regular recharge. As he rests and allows his heart to power up, Jocasta his computer system comes onscreen **“Tony! I’ve received a news bulletin that I think you should see.”** Tony turns to the screen as Jocasta pulls up the news feed. Tony starts as he sees a new Blizzard, a new Blacklash and the criminal known as Boomerang as they rob a bank. Tony winces with guilt at the thought of his sentient armor having killed Whiplash. He then says **“Jocasta, ready my armor.”** Getting up Tony disconnects the power charge cord to his heart and heads to his armor vault and suits up in his classic Red and Gold armor. **“If it’s not one thing, it’s another”** he thinks to himself as the components clip into place. **“I like wearing this old suit, but things keep getting in the way of either upgrading it or building a new state of the art suit.”** Clipping his helmet in place he toggles a switch to open a roof hatch and launches into the sky. **“But it still feels darn good to wear this! A nice therapeutic treatment after what happened”** Setting his navigation system he jets off to stop the three supervillains. **“What I don’t understand however is who set up the new Blizzard and Blacklash.”** He thinks. **“Hammer is gone and Scarlotti used to be Blacklash then went back to being Whiplash, then was killed by my sentient armor.”** After a few minutes of flying, Iron Man arrives on the scene as the three criminals hold off the police. A gaping hole in the bank wall shows how the criminals got in and out and a quick visual scan shows no signs of hostages or casualties.

Down on the street Blizzard says to his companions **“Look guys. While it may be fun to play with the cops, we should beat it. We’ve made a nice haul here, and the new gear tests out.”** Boomerang chuckles and says **“yeah but the real test is arriving now”** and points up the arriving Iron man! **“Oh boy!”** blacklash whispers nervously. Iron Man faces the three and says **“okay guys. Nice and easy now, give it up before anyone gets hurt!”** Blacklash laughs and sends his whip in an attack towards the Golden Avenger. Iron Man easily catches the whip but is shocked literally by a constantly modulated electric charge sent into the whip! Before Iron Man can recover, the Blizzard encases him up to his helmet in solid ice as Boomerang lets fly a sonic screaming boomerang. **“Blast!”** Tony thinks **“I severely underestimated these guys. Clearly the two**

rookies have trained and Boomerang never was a lightweight. Still...” Diverting his energy to his strength circuits Iron Man easily shatters the ice, a fragment of which knocks out the boomerang attack, and sends a double repulsor blast forth that stuns Blizzard. Blacklash tries his whip again but Iron Man quickly sets up a reverse magnetic field to repel the whip’s attack from hitting him and a repulsor blast fells Blacklash. Iron Man then faces Boomerang. **“Give up Boomerang. You can’t win this!”** Boomerang quickly looks around at the police and at Iron Man and raises his hands in surrender. Moving quickly, Iron Man disarms Boomerang and Blacklash and removes Blizzards gauntlets since they were what radiated the cold attacks. The police take the criminals away as Iron Man waves to the cheering crowd, who if they could see underneath the helmet, would see the frown on Iron Man’s face. **“Those two rookies and even Boomerang seemed stronger than before. My sensors indicated that Blizzard’s cold attack was more intense than before and Blacklash’s whip has definitely never done that before. I need to study these weapons. Perhaps I can incorporate some new ideas into the new suit.”** Iron Man waves to the crowd once last time and jets off still concerned.

Scene shift: A palatial chamber where a figure sits in shadow with his hands clasped. A glint of light reflects of a ring on one of his fingers as he studies a report. **“So those three surrendered to the police after Iron Man bested them. Good. Little does my foe realize the gauntlet that has been cast at his feet. Soon he and I will clash. But not until he suffers more”**

Chapter 2:

The SCENE: Stark’s lab as he begins to study Blacklash’s whip. On a table nearby are Blizzards gauntlets and some of Boomerang’s weapons. **“Hmm the circuitry is rather sophisticated and I wonder...”** His studies are interrupted as Jocasta appears in hologram form and says **“Tony! A news bulletin just occurred! Those three you captured have been rescued! Description matches that of some old foes of yours!”** A screen comes on and shows photos of the three RAIDERS. **“This cant be possible!”** Tony exclaimed. **“Those three were neutralized in the first Armor Wars, then I beat them again back when I faced down Kearson Dewitt. To my knowledge there were no other suits made!”** Sitting back in his chair, Tony rubs his head as a cold sweat begins to form then says, **“Jocasta, access files X0989 through X0997. Tie into remote satellite systems for a worldwide scan.”** Jocasta pauses for a moment as she accesses the secured files and then begins to patch into the Earth’s satellites to scan the globe. Tony nervously goes and gets a cup coffee as he thinks, **“This can’t be happening. How could it? I took every possible precaution....”** Sitting back down, he looks again at the circuitry of Blacklash’s whip and studies it closely. As he does so a cold chill creeps over his bones that the hot coffee can’t dispel. **“Dear heaven, no!”** he whispers vehemently as he studies the circuits. **“Tony,”** Jocasta says **“I have finished a preliminary cursory scan of the Earth and am proceeding for a more comprehensive scan now. However I believe you will want to see the results so far.”** Tony looks up as a hologram globe of the Earth appears in front of him and begins to slowly rotate. As it does, several small dots of light appear in scattered places around the earth. **“It’s happening again.”** Tony says and smashes his fist down on his lab table. **“After all I did to stop it last time and keep it from reoccurring, it’s happening again!”** Gritting his teeth Tony says **“Jocasta, please send a priority message to Jim Rhodes. Tell him,”** Tony pauses as the agony of what he is about to say comes over him. **“Tell him, the Armor Wars have begun anew.”**

SCENE SHIFT

The Scene: a lab somewhere. We see a rather large Russian as he dons his new improved Titanium Man battle armor. **“So this armor is similar in design to the suit the Gremlin wore before his untimely demise eh?”** Securing the armor in place around his mammoth form he dons the helmet. **“Ah, it feels practically weightless and I can feel its power!”** Flexing his armored limbs he notices the newer, more streamlined armor worn by Valentin Shatalov, the current Crimson Dynamo. **“So ‘comrade’”** Dynamo says, **“Our suits**

are upgraded as they were once before. However I must warn you of one thing” Titanium Man looks at him. **“The last time I had a suit like this, Iron Man came and destroyed it. It was that fight that caused the demise of your counterpart, the Gremlin”** Titanium Man scoffs **“Bah! I do not fear Iron man! With this new suit and reports that he is using an older suit of armor, he won’t have a chance!”** Dynamo shakes his head **“Don’t underestimate him. That suit of his in the past has beaten our predecessors before. Whoever Stark employs to wear that suit is no fool. But if we team up, Iron Man will fall.”** Titanium man nods **“yes. Plus our benefactor doesn’t want us quarreling with each other anyway. He plans to use us to defeat Iron Man, Stark and then the World!”** A new voice then speaks **“Quite correct my minions”** both of them turn to see a figure in the shadows **“With your powers enhanced and combined as well as many others being improved, Iron Man and his employer Tony Stark are indeed in for rough times.”** The figure then snaps his fingers and a door opens. Inside the doorway is a silouhetted figure that looks somewhat familiar to the two armored Russians. The two armored Soviets watch warily as a red tracking beam slowly moves from spot to spot on their armor as if seeking a target lock. **“But to make things more interesting for them I have contracted the services of another foe of Iron Man’s!”** The figure steps forward from the door to reveal himself as the villainous **WAR MACHINE!** The two Russians each instinctively raise their arms as if to fire their weapons when War machine says, **“Relax guys! We all work for the same guy!”** as he points to the shadowy figure. **“But that armor was designed directly by Stark himself!”** Dynamo says, **“How did you get it?”** War Machine chuckles and says, **“It was worn by an old friend of his and ex friend of mine. He lost it, and I found it. It was damaged a bit but it was fixed and I fought Iron Man to a stand still twice, and that was in his latest suit of armor. In that old clunker suit of his now, he’s had it!”** The shadow figure laughs. **“Do not underestimate either of them, any of you. For now however I suggest all of you make use of the training facilities to prepare yourselves. Other agents shall continue to distract and soften up our foes.”** The figure then disappears back into the shadows.

SCENE SHIFT

Next day at Stark’s private lab, Rhodey has arrived. **“I don’t understand Tony.”** Rhodey says **“last time this happened it was because Hammer got your technology from the original Spymaster and sold it to various criminals. You and I did everything possible and then some to stop the stolen technology. You even had Abe Zimmer unleash a virus on the net to wipe all records everywhere except your own systems. How is this happening again?”** Tony shakes his head **“I don’t know Jim. I really don’t. We both know that Hammer is gone, lost somewhere in space frozen forever in a block of ice.”** Rhodey nods. **“But,”** Tony continues **“we both know there is also a new Spymaster and we’ve already met him a few times, especially recently”** Rhodey nods. **“Yeah, when Hammer was messing with your head though you nailed Spymaster and the cops took him away.”** Tony nods **“yes, but if he’s anything like the original, no jail will hold him for long unless he wanted it to. I’ve been spreading some cash, and getting information. Spymaster did escape after getting medical attention. I’ve been in touch with SHIELD and was able to get Nick to toss me information on Spymaster.”** Tony points to the hologram globe of the Earth. Several red spots are on it, more having appeared since Jocasta intensified her scan of the planet, but 5 yellow spots have been added, each with a rotating head of Spymaster on them. **“These are the known locations where he could be.”** Jim looks at Tony **“what are you going to do, Tony?”** Tony smiles grimly **“See if I can infiltrate one of his bases and have a chat with his database, and I have just the suit for the occasion.”** Tony looks over as his armor vault opens and a rack extends from the wall, a rack that contains the components of the **Iron Man stealth armor!**

CHAPTER 3

THE TIME: 48 hrs later THE PLACE: an isolated house somewhere in the northern Rocky Mountains.

Hovering 500 yards away, clad in his ebon stealth armor, Iron Man scans the area for signs of hostiles. **“So far, nothing”** he shakes his head **“Spymaster can’t just be counting on seclusion to guard this place. But I have no choice, I’m going in.”** Flying in with his jets muffled by an advanced set of baffles and noise suppressors, Iron Man quickly lands at the front door of Spymasters hideout. **“No lifesigns anywhere, and so**

far no defense systems have detected my approach.” He thinks to himself. **“This is almost too easy, despite the Stealth Armor”** as he opens the door. Walking carefully through the home, Iron Man scans everything into his armor recorders for later study. A sonic scan reveals a secret door that leads to a small yet sophisticated computer room. **“At last”** he thinks as he sits down at a control panel. Extending a cybernetic probe from his gauntlet, Iron Man begins to tap into the system and slowly but surely bypass the safeguards. As the data begins to appear on the screen Iron Man shakes his head. **“Both Spymasters are truly ruthless killers. Hard to believe that another one was trained to replace the last one that the Ghost killed.”** Scanning thru the data he finds an encrypted file. Upon accessing it, preliminary analysis indicates it has what he seeks. As he downloads it, Iron Man also slips in a computer virus that he coded earlier as Tony Stark. The virus begins to worm its way into Spymasters network and systematically erase the data stored therein. As he disconnects his probe however, an alarm goes off and the room seals shut. **“Intruder detected. Illegal access to Spymaster mainframe. Begin termination sequence”** Iron Man looks around as several automatic lasers extend from the walls and begin scanning the room. **“Good they can’t lock onto me, but I must have tripped a countermeasure when I withdrew the probe. I’ve got to leave now!”** heading to the sealed door, Iron Man attempts to smash through it but the alloy of the armor plating withstands his punch! **“Intruder present in room, target lock not functional. Begin random laser discharge!”** the computer announces as the lasers open fire in all directions. Some shots strike Iron Man but bounce off and hit the walls. Equipment sparks and shorts out as damage from the laser fire builds up. **“Can’t take this for long!”** he thinks, **“Stealth armor has limited resistance at best!”** Raising his arms he discharges a repulsor blast into the door, causing it to bend inward from the force of the blow! This time, instead of smashing through the door’s armor plating, Iron Man uses the limited strength of the Stealth Armor to rip the bent plating off the door and casts it aside. **“Warning! Unknown invader attempting to escape, destruct sequence activated!”** the computer sounds an alarm as Iron Man ignites his jets, however as he launches a laser beam strikes one of his boots and fuses the jet mechanisms! **“Blast! Half speed at best!”** he thinks as he pushes his suit to its limits and beyond to escape Spymaster’s trap. Barely escaping in time Iron Man is buffeted and hurled through the skies by the shockwave of the explosion that decimates Spymaster’s lair. Stabilizing his flight, Iron Man flies away to a predetermined pick up point where Jim awaits hovering in a helicopter. Entering the chopper, Tony closes the hatch and sits wearily in a seat as Rhodey veers away on a course designed to remove them away from the scene in a quick yet discreet pattern. **“How’d things go, Tony?”** he asked. Shaking his head, Tony removes the helmet of his stealth armor and says **“Hard to say, I downloaded the necessary files and then some, and inputted the virus, but then alarms went off and things went to blazes.”** He paused for a moment as he gazed at his ebon helmet pondering his options. **“From what little I read of the file it seems that the original Spymaster has secret hardcopy files of the Iron Man data he stole from my old Long Island offices.”** Rhodey nods **“And hard copies won’t be erased by the virus”** Tony nods **“yes and even if the virus that Abe wrote erases the data, it can just be reinputted again and again.”** Tony holds his head in his hands for a moment then looks at Rhodey **“But, I’ve got to fully analyze this data. I doubt seriously that the new Spymaster is the one outfitting super villains. Likely he sold it for a nice profit to someone else.”** Rhodey nods as he flies the chopper, **“yeah but who? Who among your foes has the resources to properly exploit the technology?”** Tony shakes his head. **“I don’t know for sure Rhodey.”** He leans back and then begins removing the armor and donning a flight suit. Rubbing his chest for a moment, Tony goes and sits in the copilot seat then takes a special power cord out from behind the seat and plugs it into his heart’s power port. Leaning back and closing his eyes, Tony fails to notice Rhodey looks at him for a moment the looks away, sadly.

Scene Change: Another of Spymaster’s lairs. The Time: an hour later.

The man the world knows as Spymaster enters his lair, having returned from a round of physical therapy designed to help him recover the usage of the hand that Iron Man crushed (reference bad Blood 2). He notices a blinking light on a wall panel and quickly goes to a computer terminal and frowns in anger at the readouts displayed. **“So, someone raided one of my lair’s and hacked my database. Likely it was Stark or his tin can lackey!”** scanning further, Spymaster reads of the base’s destruction and notes the damage inflicted on his files. **“Blast! I’ve lost a lot of critical data, some of which I can’t replace easily if at all! He will pay for this!”** Sitting in his chair, Spymaster taps a few keys on his terminal and initiates repair sequences to his

system files and backup restorations. **“Likely he found the datafiles of his stolen technology. The hardcopies are quite safe, and I’m quite sure my client is safe from that weird virus that erases the data. Still, it would be best to prepare myself for war.”** With that thought in mind, Spymaster keys a switch to reveal a secret room with a rather nice arsenal of high tech weaponry....

CHAPTER 4:

The SCENE: Tony’s lab. The Time: 48 hrs later.

Tony is sitting in a chair as he half-heartedly goes over some business reports as his heart recharges. Eventually though he tosses the reports aside in frustration and grabs a note pad and pen and begins sketching designs again for a new suit of armor. Rhodey looks on at his friend and sees the tension building in Tony. **“This is not good. Tony is under too much pressure.”** Rhodey pours a couple of cups of coffee and thinks **“Last time, the Armor Wars was weird but the first Armor Wars nearly killed Tony. I can’t let this happen to him again.”** Sitting next to Tony, Rhodey glances at a computer screen and watches data flow past as Jocasta unscrambles the files taken from Spymaster. He then looks over at a TV as a reporter comments about the recent increase of attacks by armored super villains. **“This isn’t good.”** Rhodey thinks again **“Tony is having the equivalent of writers block about building a new suit, thanks to what happened to his latest model, and he’s reluctant to take direct action like the first time with Negator packs since the public turned on him.”** Rhodey ponders for a moment, then gets up and heads to the armor vault. Going inside, Rhodey looks around at the assorted armors of Iron Man for a few minutes then lowers his head as he makes a decision. Heading back out, Rhodey stops, startled, as he sees Tony suiting up in the classic suit. **“Tony! Where you going?”** Tony points to the screen where Rhodey sees a sight that horrifies him. The Renegade War Machine is attacking a Stark-Fujikawa factory! **“I’ve got to stop him, Jim!”** Tony says as he clamps on his helmet. **“Tony, wait!”** Rhodey yells **“Think for a minute!”** Tony pauses and says, **“Jim that suit is my design, I have to stop him!”** and flies off. **“Damn, Tony! Don’t you ever learn?”** Rhodey fumes to himself. He then turns to Jocasta and says **“Hey, Jo’! Run a scan on that War Machine armor!”** Jocasta complies and asks **“what are you looking for, Jim?”** Rhodey shakes his head **“Tony tried a Negator Pack from the first Armor Wars on that suit but it didn’t work. If that suit is really mine then why is it functional?”** Jocasta appears in hologram form and says **“Preliminary analysis indicates that the countermeasures Tony installed after the Armor Wars to keep his systems from being scanned and replicated, also block the Negator Pack. Probability is high that when you lost the suit, it was damaged badly but was repaired.”** Rhodey nods. **“And Tony just zooms off to face a well trained killer in one of his better armor designs, wearing an outdated suit no less, hoping to stop him!”** Rhodey slams his fist into his hand. **“This stinks. I know Parnell. Someone is paying him to do this and likely the same one that got Tony’s tech from Spymaster.”** Rhodey pauses as he looks to the armor vault. **“Can’t believe I’m thinking this, Jocasta, but I have no choice.”** Rhodey then picks up a phone and contacts Tony’s office. **“Hello, Happy? It’s Jim, can you come to Tony’s lab please?”** He then looks at Jocasta as a scanner alarm goes off. Rhodey looks at the alarm and lowers his head. **“Guess my hunch about it being a trap was right”**

Soaring through the sky, Iron Man quickly approaches the area where War Machine was spotted. By the time he gets there however it looks to be too late. **“Blast it! Am I too late due to this old suit’s jets?”** he thinks as he looks around. Quickly helping put out some small fires and clearing some debris for rescue vehicles, Iron Man jets into the sky and scans the area for his foe. **“Something isn’t right here”** he says. Suddenly from behind, a concussion blast strikes him square in the back and sends him crashing to the Earth. Slowly getting up, Iron Man sees War Machine hovering in the sky along with Titanium Man! **“Oh boy!”** he thinks **“One of them sure, but two? This is a trap!”** he says as he fires his repulsors at them. Unfortunately both easily dodge the blasts. **“Ha! Guess you really aren’t ready to play the game today Iron Man!”** War Machine gloats as he fires several blasts at Iron Man, who is barely able to dodge. Titanium Man also fires several rounds. **“They are playing with me like a cat with a mouse”** Iron man thinks. **“Tony old boy you’ve really stepped in it deep this time!”** He shakes his head and attempts to fly off but gets blasted down again. **“Cant get airborne, no Negator packs. I am in deep trouble,”** he thinks as several damage alerts go off in his

helmet. **“Heh.”** War Machine chuckles **“I wonder if this is the same man in the suit I faced those two other times? Nah! At last he knew how to fight!”** His shoulder cannons swivel to lock on to Iron Man. **“Time to end the game, tin man!”** However Titanium Man intervenes. **“No fool! You know our instructions!”** War Machine looks at TM for a moment then knocks him aside. **“Big deal. I’ve been paid. I’m changing the game plan!”** Locking his weapons onto Iron Man, he prepares to fire when a voice comes over the comm. channels. **“I don’t think so Parnell!”** Pausing, WM looks around. **“Rhodes! Where are you?”** Swooping in from out of the sun come TWO other Iron Men! One is the Red and Gold Iron Man from the aftermath of the first Armor Wars who tackles Titanium Man! **The other is Jim Rhodes in the first model of the War Machine armor!** Plowing into the Renegade War Machine, Rhodey sends a haymaker punch into him that drives him into the ground. Staggering to his feet, Iron Man looks on in amazement at his unlikely saviors. Sagging to his knees from exhaustion and his injuries, Tony watches helplessly as the Iron Men combat his foes.

Titanium Man recovers and easily knocks aside the Red and Gold Iron Man. Red and Gold recovers a bit slowly then moves in as if he was a boxer and begins throwing punches at TM. **“Good lord!”** Tony thinks **“Happy!”** Looking in horror as his two best friends fight his battle for him, he slowly rises to his feet, gathering his strength. **“The first Titanium Man nearly killed him all those years ago, and Happy has no where near my experience!”** Clenching his fists, Tony launches into the sky at Titanium Man in an effort to aid his friend. Together the two double team TM and slowly begin to wear him down, until TM’s stasis beam strikes Happy and sends him crashing to Earth, leaving Tony to face him. **“So my outdated foe”** TM gloats **“its between us now”** and the two clash. **“Not this time murderer!”** Iron Man yells as he pounds TM with his fists.

Some distance away the two WM’s clash. People look on in awe at this legendary clash of armored titans as reporters arrive on the scene and begin to report on events. **“No way you walk away Parnell!”** Rhodey yells as he targets his shoulder cannon on the renegade and lets loose. **“That armor isn’t yours! I’ve come to stop you once and for all.”** Unfortunately, without his noticing, the renegade WM activates his energy sword and gut slices him! While the alloy of the WM armor is resistant to a point the attack still catches Rhodey by surprise and causes some system damage to his armor. Activating his own energy sword, Rhodey begins to circle Parnell. Each one looking for an opening to exploit so that one may win at the expense of the other.

Tony and TM continue to clash but Tony is slowly losing as his damaged armor catches up to him. A concussion blast from TM sends Iron Man back to Earth. TM lands and grabs him by the neck and lifts him up **“if it weren’t for my current master, you’d already be dead.”** He whispers as he throws Iron Man aside. However while distracted by his gloating, TM failed to notice the recovered Happy Hogan position himself and let loose his pulse bolts! The bolts catch TM directly in the back and cause serious damage, rendering him helpless. Getting up Happy snarls **“that was payback for all those years ago!”** and sends a kick into TM’s chest, knocking him backward. Running to the injured Iron Man, Happy quickly notes the progress of the clash of the WM’s.

The two WM’s have been deadlocked in a stalemated battle. Both armor’s and wearer’s apparently unable to gain a lasting advantage. Tony looks at the fight and whispers to Happy. **“Listen. Your suit was the first I built to project an EM pulse attack. It will disable them and you for 6 minutes. Hit them with it and the fight ends. Just let me get out of range first”** Happy looks at him **“Huh? Are you hurt that bad, boss?”** Tony shakes his head **“No, but I don’t know if my new heart can take a pulse and I don’t want to find out the hard way if it can’t.”** Standing up slowly, Iron Man launches into the skies and opens a commlink to Happy. **“When I give the signal move into them and hit them with the pulse. Then I can move back in.”** Iron Man checks his system readouts and compares his distance from the scene with his memories of the pulse range of his armor. **“Ready...set...NOW!”** Quickly flying to the two WM’s, Happy detonates the EM pulse attack. Everyone looks on in surprise, not realizing what happened as all three armored combatants freeze up then collapse. Quickly returning to the scene, Iron Man lands by the helpless combatants. Slowly, with great effort, Rhodey flips him a thumb up and says **“Good plan, Iron Man!”** Moving quickly, Iron Man

removes first the helmet, then the rest of the armor from the mercenary Parnell. Reporters quickly converge, despite their lack of equipment working and begin bombarding our heroes with questions. Setting the armor of the Renegade WM down, Iron Man helps his friends up to their feet where they attempt to stay steady as their systems recover. Iron man then turns to the media and raises his hands **“ladies and gentlemen of the press”** he begins **“I’m certain you all have some questions. However please direct your inquiries to Tony Stark himself. I’m under orders from him to not answer your questions at this time!”** He then turns to gather the WM armor, when Parnell begins laughing. **“You fool, Iron Man. You still don’t get what is going on do you?”** Iron Man turns to him and Parnell is about to speak again when he suddenly convulses and screams in agony as he bursts into flames and is consumed before everyone’s eyes!

Meanwhile over at a hidden base, a shadowy figure leans back in his chair with his fingers intertwined. Light can be seen glinting off the rings on his fingers. **“So much for that fool mercenary! However Iron Man has been dealt a serious blow. His suit is damaged and Stark apparently has yet to design something new. A few more attacks to soften him up then I shall move in for the kill, despite the arrival of those second hand Iron Men!”** Sitting back, the mysterious villain chuckles to himself contentedly as he casually gestures. Back at the fight scene, unnoticed by anyone, Titanium Man fades away into nothingness. Turning slowly from the ashes of Parnell, Rhodey attempts to contain his nausea. Iron Man stares in shock as he begins to realize who is likely behind this whole thing. Turning to the media he again states, **“Please direct your questions to Tony Stark.”** Looking at his friends, they nod to each other and launch into the sky, leaving behind a confused and grossed out set of reporters.

Over the next few hours the news reports are abuzz with speculation over the events that have transpired. Tony and Happy and Jim all sit in his lab sipping some assorted drinks as Jocasta runs a medical scan of them for injuries. On the far side of his lab, automated equipment is running repair routines on the armors. Tony however has his armor, on the table in front of him as he gazes at the helmet that he wore for many years, noting the damage done to it and how his fear of his advancing technology nearly led to his death this day. **“I can’t believe I was so bull headed as to believe that my old tried and true suit could stand against War Machine.”** Tony says. Happy pats his shoulder and says, **“Cheer up, Tony. Despite what happened to Parnell, you should chalk this one up as a win. This battle of the Armor Wars definitely goes to the good guys. Between us all, the renegade War Machine was stopped and the armor confiscated.”** Rhodey nods. **“Parnell took the wrong turn some time ago, Tony. Don’t be too broken up about his death.”** Rhodey sips his drink. **“I still want to know who is behind all this.”** He says. Tony nods, still gazing at his old helmet. **“Me too, old friend.”** Getting up, Tony says **“Jocasta, please schedule a press conference for 2 hours from now.”** Plugging his heart in to recharge, Tony looks over at his friends, both of who look a bit uneasy. Tony smiles for a moment. **“Sorry friends, but the old body battery was getting a bit low.”** They both nod and Happy says, **“I know Tony, it just looks weird, sorry”** Tony smiles **“It’s okay. It’s not as bad as it looks.”** Rhodey nods and asks **“But what are you going to tell the media?”** Tony grimaces for a moment as he considers his options **“I can’t let the media and the public go against our efforts like in the first Armor Wars, Jim. So I’m going to do something that many good businessmen do, yet which I hate”** Rhodey looks at him skeptically for a moment then Tony smiles weakly and says **“I’m going to tell some of the truth and lie about the rest.”**

Two hours later Tony confronts the media. Gripping the podium in front of him, Tony puts on his best face and says **“ladies and gentlemen of the press”** looking around at the assembled media before him he continues. **“ I realize that events today have raised many questions. First I would like to say this: The War Machine that attacked the Stark-Fujikawa factory was indeed the same Renegade War Machine that Iron Man fought a few months ago. “** A reporter raises a hand. Tony nods and she asks **“But what of the Iron Man we saw today? Was that the same one?”** Tony nods. **“It was the same Iron Man on the inside, yes. A recent major malfunction of the current suit he was using forced me to retire it pending further study of the problem. The more traditional suit he was using was the only spare unit I had available at the time for him to use.”** Another reporter then asks **“What of the other two then?”** Tony smiles. **“As many of you know, I have had different people in the role of Iron Man over time, especially**

since the Red and Silver Iron Man's rampage years ago. I find that rotating people in and out of the suit keeps them well balanced. However when I discovered that Iron Man was facing the Renegade War Machine I knew he needed help and called in the other two. I had just recently reactivated the spare set of War Machine armor and the man in it was indeed the Original War Machine that fought alongside the Avengers. The other Iron Man was an old friend who since retired from the role due to an illness that he suffers from chronically." Tony raises a hand to stall off other questions "As to what happened to the Renegade War Machine, we are investigating that. However an analysis of his armor indicates it was indeed the suit of armor the Original lost in battle some time ago. The suit was presumed destroyed, however it was found and repaired and worn by the mercenary that attacked Stark-Fujikawa. The suit has subsequently been locked away, however a review of the armor's log entries led to a disturbing discovery." Tony pauses and lowers his head for a moment then raises it. "It seems that the Renegade allowed his armor to be studied and some of its secrets adapted to other armor wearing villains, one of whom is the Titanium Man. While we at Stark Solutions do not know all of those that received such an upgrade, I urge them to surrender the technology before serious harm is done. Some of the Renegade's Armor contained prototype technology that wasn't fully field-tested at the time. They could do more harm to themselves with it then they realize" One reporter stands up and says "but what of Iron Man's performance today? Does this mean, he gets the axe?" Tony smiles. "No. The current Iron Man is one of the best one's I've had. One setback doesn't mean he gets scrapped. Right now he's resting and his armor is in the shop for an overhaul" Another reporter asks "what of the super villains that received this new technology from the Renegade War Machine?" Tony smiles again. "They are criminals in the eyes of the law. Iron Man will do as any other hero would do. He'll stop them. But please do not panic. I've had a long talk with Iron Man about what happened to the Red and Silver one. I assure you that this Iron Man will not go on a hunt, however, Iron Man does have this to say" Tony holds up a remote that activates a TV Screen that plays a prerecorded video message he made as Iron Man. The press all turn to see the image of the Golden Avenger's armored face as he says "What you have all just heard from Mr. Stark is quite true. I will not be hunting down these armored super villains. However if I encounter them in the act of committing any kind of criminal act, then of course I will step in wherever and whenever needed." He then points at the screen and says " But if you think this decision on Mr. Stark's part or my own present condition in any way makes you believe that we've gone soft and weak, think again. If anyone, anywhere, threatens Mr. Stark or his plans for a better tomorrow or his friends and loved ones in any way shape or form, you'll do so ONLY over Iron Man's dead body!" A different armored figure, this one matte black and shiny silver along the arms, legs and faceplate then steps up behind Iron Man. The targeting laser on his helmet flares brightly and points to himself with his thumb and says "What he said goes double for the Original War Machine!" the screen goes blank as the media applauds Tony Stark. Tony smiles and waves to the media even as his guilt over defaming the character, albeit shady character of the Renegade War Machine sets in along with how he's lied to the public in general and once again the Armor Wars begins to exact a personal toll.

Across the world, reaction varies. The mysterious figure sits in his chair and applauds at how Tony Stark shows his business acumen at handling the media. Over in one of his bases, Spymaster nods in appreciation, "I didn't think Stark had the guts for this kind of play." Other people in business and media applaud Stark and the speech of the Iron Men, even as several of the armored super villains begin to wonder at the words spoken by Stark.



A New Enemy **By Mike "The Man" Connolly**

The one known as your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man swings along his merry way always watching for crime. Police Sirens, the sound that's calls forth for a hero. Peter Parker (if you don't know, Peter Parker is Spider-Man) swings from skyscraper to skyscraper towards the sound. On the ground, fat, out of shape N.Y.P.D. Officers fight with a villain in a black suit.

"Brock again.....," Spidey murmurs to himself. "Now I gotta deal with him and his suit once again."

He swings down to deal with the evil one known as Venom. At that same moment the one once known as the former golden Avenger flies overhead. Looks to the ground and notices the same commotion. He kicks in his boosters and flies to the ground.

"Well Brock you just don't learn do you?" Spidey says arrogantly.

"You don't understand Spider-Man," Brock says with a smile, "I learn, and now I learned how to kill you."

"Well if you're right, I owe you a Yoo-Hoo," Spidey snickers.

Annoyed with Spider-Man, Venom Grabs him by the throat with a huge powerful arm and throws him through a police car. Spidey jumps back shooting a web at his torso, but Venom blocks it with a police car door. Jumping back, shooting a black, tar like web at Spidey, he picks him up and slams him again and again into the street. Finally he throws him in the air. Peter Parker is a very lucky hero.

"Just in the nick of time," Iron Man says to the body in his arms.

"Iron Man, you're always here when I need you," Spider-Man says to his rescuer.

"Let us subdue this nuisance," Shellhead says to Spider-Man.

"Agreed," Spidey says with a nod.

Iron Man lands on the ground placing Spider-Man on his feet. Iron Man runs at Venom using boosters at the last second propelling him over his head, then grabbing both his arms and restraining him. Spider-Man shoots off a thick web that tangles Venom up and, accidentally Iron Man also. This was all the Venom symbiote needed. Working on its own will and not the will of Eddie Brock, its host, it leaves Eddie, letting him fall to his knees as he



keels over dead. The black goo that is the symbiote starts covering the suit Tony Stark is wearing, making symbiote and Tony one.

"NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

Spider-Man says both surprised and sorrowful.

Spider-Man knows that when the symbiote adapts to a host it goes into the host's blood stream. If the symbiote leaves the host, the host dies like Brock did.

"IRON MAN.....!!!" Spider-Man drowns out.

What he doesn't know is that the symbiote did not merge with Tony but with his suit. Tony is still alive in the suit. He can either die when he is attack by the symbiote's immune system or he can wait for the suit to expel him. We can only hope he will live.

"You're mine Spider," he says with a vengeful voice. "And now that I don't have that big, stupid, dufus Eddie Brock as a host I will not fail in killing you."

Venom lunges at Spider-Man grabbing his arms crushing one of the web shooters mounted on his arms. Grabbing his leg with one arm and his other leg with a black goo that comes from his other arm. Venom picks Spider-Man up and swings him around mercifully. Spider-Man, drained of any strength he still had inside of him, feels his body getting stressed in the air.

"Spider-Man, if you say that I'm the strongest being in the universe, I might kill you quickly and not tell dear Aunt May that you died helplessly," Venom says with the same arrogance Spider-Man had.

"I will not let you get near her....." Spidey says using the last of his energy.

Venom starts keeling to his knees letting Spidey fall onto another police car. He opens up his mouth so wide the Hulk could walk through it with no problem.

"I feel sick..." he says weakly.

Gloop! Tony Stark falls out of the creature's mouth to the hard black asphalt.

"Ouch!" Tony said rubbing his head.

"That was nothing to what I'm gonna do to you," Venom says with much venom. (Pun intended)

Tony tries to crawl away from the vile creature that looms overhead. Venom picks him up and throws him into the air. Lucky for Tony, Spider-Man swings by grabbing him.

"Returning a favor," Spider-Man says with an exhausted laugh.

"Thanks," Tony said relieved, "We need to get out of here."

"I agree, but how?" Spider exclaims.

"I have a idea!" Tony says surprised with himself.

"What is it?" Spidey says, interested.

"Well we....." Tony whispers the plan into Spider-Man's ear.

"I'll try," Spider-Man says exasperated.

They both land on the ground. Spider-Man throws three web cartridges at Venom. Venom not realizing what is happening blasts it with a blaster from the suit. BOOM!! The three web cartridges explode in Venom's face throwing him back into a stone wall.

"Lets go Tony!" Spider-Man shouts at Stark as he shoots a web into the air hitting the building.

"All right then," Tony hops into Spider-Man's arms letting him swing away.

"Where are we going?" Spider-Man asks.

"To the office of Matthew Murdock," Tony replies. "I have a friend there that can help us."

"Well at least Daredevil can help us out," Spidey says shooting another web.

A Blind Friend

A blind Lawyer by the name of Matthew Murdock works diligently into the night in his corner office. He feels a cool breeze blow across his face and he picks up to familiar scents very close to his position. He steps up from his big oak desk and walks to the open window.

"You guys can come in now," he says out the window.

"Thanks Matt," Spider-Man says climbing in the window with Tony Stark right behind him.

"Yeah Thanks Matt," Tony says.



"Man, Tony, you look and smell like you were ran over by a very pissed off elephant," He says with a short laugh.

"Not exactly but, close enough," Tony says in an exhausted tone.

"Here's what happened," Spidey says taking a seat on one side of the desk.

Spidey sits and tells Matt what had happened with Venom and Brock, about Tony's suit and Eddie's sudden death.

At the same moment, our villain flies through the air-heading west from New York. He spots his destination. You can hear the gentle rhythm of a waterfall hitting the rock huge boulders. The Black Menace flies into a small cave at the bottom of the waterfall. The cave opens up wider and wider as he flies deeper and deeper into the cave. Eventually, the rocks on the walls are replaced with metal and a huge door lies ahead.

"Tony Stark," he says into the door.

"Welcome, sir," Plato, the Works' super-computer, says from a computer terminal.

"Shut up," Venom says as he walks by the terminal.

"You're not Tony?!?!?" Plato exclaims.

"SHUT UP!!!!" Venom says pointing a hand at the terminal.

BOOOOOM!!! The lasers from the suit blast the terminal into shreds. Making a complete 360 degree turn blasting everything in sight, Venom moves to another room and repeats the process again, and again. He finally comes to huge room with a huge retractable roof at the top and many doors around every level of the circular room. He walks to the only terminal left in the whole building.

"Open all Armory doors," he says into the terminal.

All the doors in the room opened, revealing suits similar but not identical to his own. BOOOM!! BOOM!! BOOM!! Over and over again Venom blasts every suit in the room. When his work is done, he blows up the terminal and flies out the huge ceiling.

"So that's about all so far," Spider-Man finished.

"Wow, that was quite the story," Matt said.

"Everybody in the world is in danger with that thing out there," Tony says in a tone that is filled with despair.

"So what do we do?" Spidey cut in.

"I'll get in costume and patrol the city for him," Matt responds.

"Ok, I'll go with you," Peter said.

"I'll get on a plane and head to the Works," Tony said, "All my other armor is there."

"Ok, it's a plan," Matt says heading to a closet.

"I'm out of here," Tony says bolting to the door.

"I'm out of here," Spidey says shooting out the window.

"Wait for me!!" Daredevil says jumping headfirst out the window.

Almost 3000 miles away at the Works, a helicopter lands and Tony Stark steps out. He doesn't notice the damage until he steps through the huge metal blast doors. He is shocked at what he finds.

"Plato??? Are you there?" Tony yells.

"Damn, he must have been here."

"I hope he didn't go after the armor," he says walking to the armory.

"NOOOO!!!" he screams as he looks around at the ruins that were his armors.

"I hope he didn't find the prototypes," he says walking to a door marked 13.

"Tony Stark, password Alpha Beta Gamma Rhodes," he says into the air and a small door behind him opened to reveal a small lab.

"Untested and unreliable but, it's all I have for now," he says stepping in front of a glass case that seemed to be a copy of the War Machine armor except for a few extra attachments.

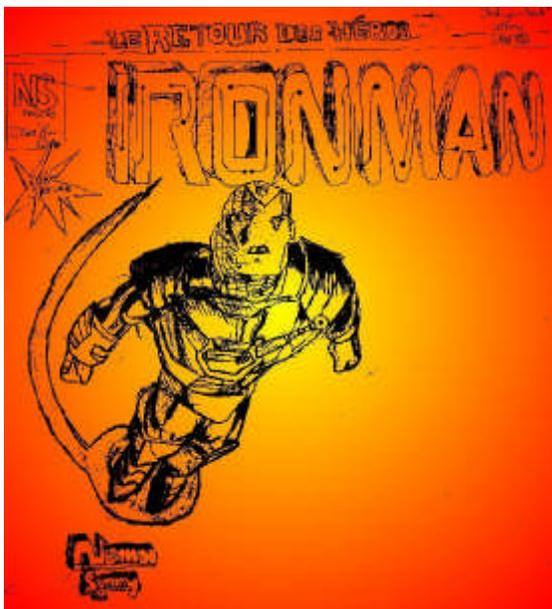
"The Stealth War Machine Armor. I never thought I would use this," he says opening the case.

"Here goes nothing."

The Junior **IRON MAN** Art Gallery

We here at A.I. are eager to give a voice to **the new generation of Iron fans** (the same who will one day run this fanzine when me and Dave are retired and too busy playing golf). This month, primary school students from **Montréal, Québec** have accepted to share their art with you. They came in contact with **Iron Man** recently when their teacher (namely me) bought a couple of comics for the class library. Because they are young French-speakers, the comments below are bilingual.

If you too know some **young Iron fans** like them who would like to see their art published in our pages (whether they be your own children, nephews, neighbours, etc.), be sure to send it to Dave or me via e-mail.



Ce premier chef-d'œuvre est le fruit du travail d'équipe entre Sonny (10 ans) et Nima (11 ans) et est inspiré d'une des plus belles couvertures de Sean Chen.

This first masterpiece is the fruit of team effort between Sonny (10 years old) and Nima (11 years old) and is inspired from one of those amazing Sean Chen covers.

Mademoiselle Tamara (10 ans) est l'artiste derrière ce superbe dessin d'Iron Man, inspiré d'une des couvertures de George Pérez. Beau travail!

Miss Tamara (10 years old) is the artist behind this superb Iron Man drawing, inspired from one of George Pérez's Avengers covers. Nice work!

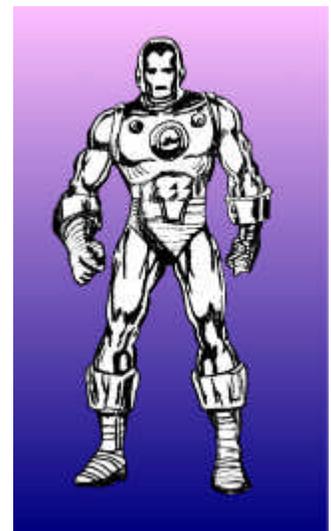




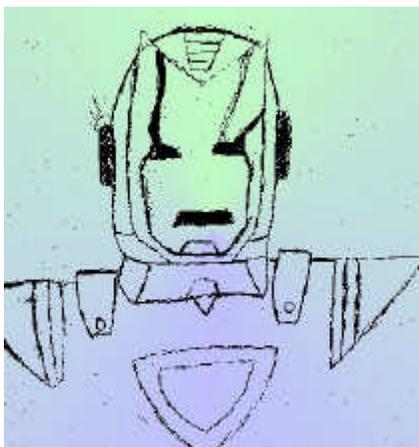
Sonny est de retour avec ce très beau dessin d'Iron Man, totalement original (aucun modèle n'a été utilisé). On peut y lire "On ne se moque pas de moi" (et de Sonny non plus d'ailleurs! ;-)

Sonny's back with this very nice IM drawing, totally original (no model was used). Iron Man is saying: "Don't mess with me" (and with Sonny either by the way)! ;-)

Radu Poisson (10 ans) nous offre ce superbe dessin très détaillé. de l'armure classique d'Iron Man, sa préférée peut-être?



Radu Fish (10 years old) offers us his superb highly detailed drawing of Iron Man wearing his classic red and gold suit, his favourite perhaps?

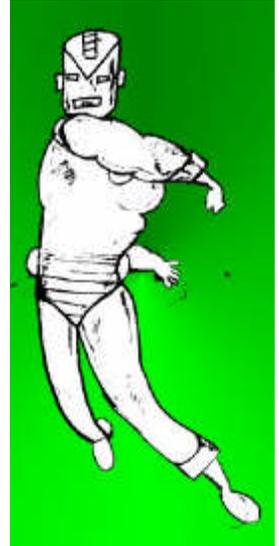


Et maintenant un très beau dessin d'une armure composite dans laquelle on reconnaît des éléments de l'armure "Centurion argenté" et celle du "retour des héros". Beau travail Julian (10 ans)!

And now on with a beautiful drawing of a composite armor in which we recognise some elements from the "Silver Centurion" armor, and others from the "Heroes reborn" armor. Nice work Julian (10 years old)!

Ce dessin très dynamique d'Iron Man est l'œuvre de Marina (10 ans). Qui a dit que les fans de BD n'étaient jamais des filles?

This very cool and dynamic Iron Man drawing is the work of Marina (10 years old). Who ever said girls didn't like comics?



Nima est de retour avec ce superbe dessin de Iron Man / Tony Stark. Nima est d'ailleurs en train de créer sa propre page web d'Iron Man!

Nima's back with this superb drawing of Iron Man / Tony Stark. Nima is actually in the process of creating his very own Iron Man web page!

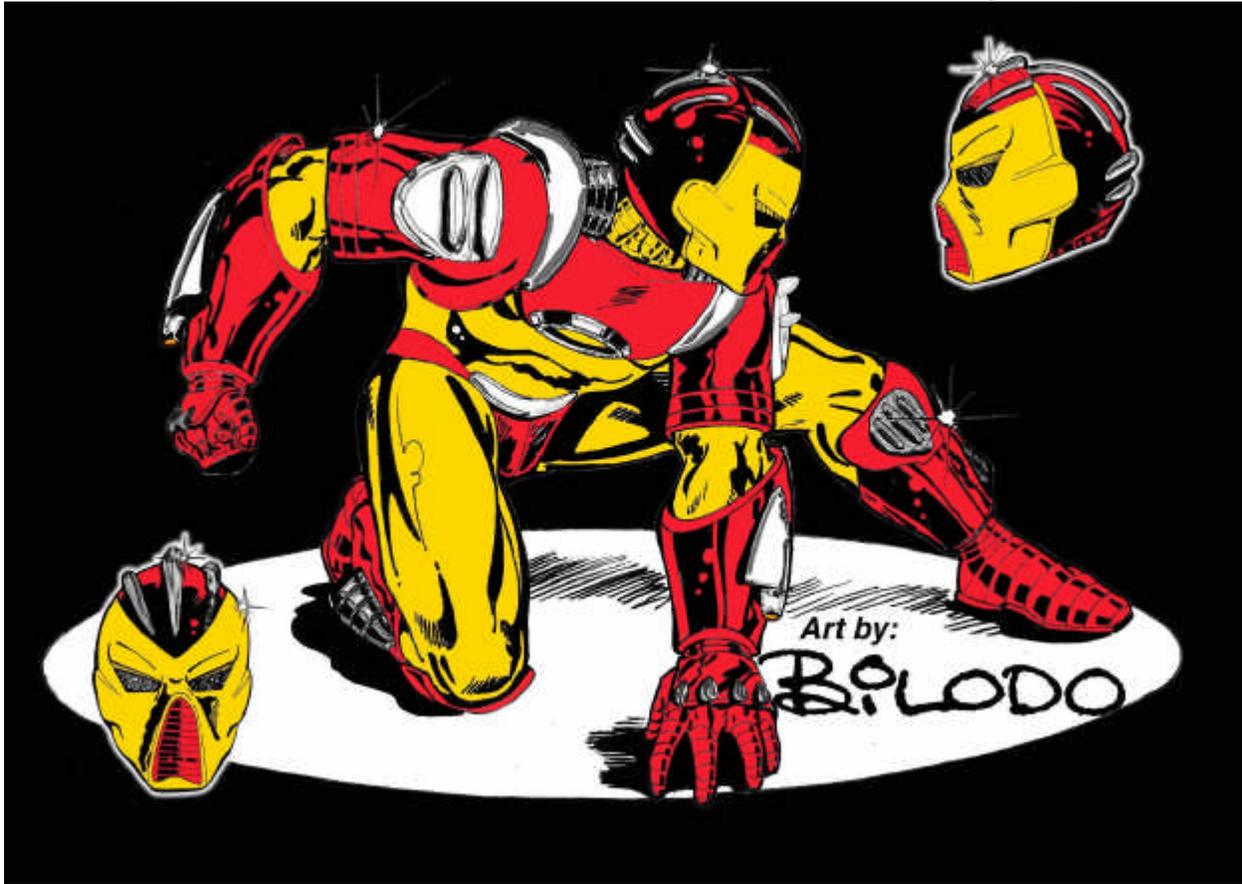
Tamara nous offre cette fois un très beau dessin d'Iron Man en pleine action. C'est beau Tam-Tam!

This time, Tamara is offering us a beautiful drawing of Iron Man in the heat of the action. Very nice Tam-Tam!



To be continued?

New Iron Man armor – Bilodo style!



Here are the basic criteria I abided to while conceiving and designing my Iron Man armor :

- Realistic, practical, comfortable and effective are the important concepts here.
- The suit must not get in the way of normal movements of the human body.
- It protects the joints.
- Good shoulder and neck protection without limiting the arm, head and neck movements.
- A helmet that looks like a real helmet and that takes into consideration the wearer's nose.**
- The eye slits are close to the face for a better vision (contrary to all previous models, except for the prometheum armor).
- The helmet is inspired from a motorcycle helmet, because they offer an excellent protection with their interior padding. Of course, this one is bigger than the traditional Iron Man helmet. But when you take a good look at proportions, I think Stark always looks like he has too small a head.
- It must not look like a monster or a robot.
- It should look **graceful, classy and noble**.
- It exclusively uses laser armament; there's nothing faster than light after all. No machine guns or canons.
- Both forearms are equipped with a laser canon.
- I wanted it to be light, manageable, fast and comfortable for Tony. This is the final result. I added some outlet jets on the calves to obtain boosts of speed if necessary.

Stéphane Bilodeau

Warwick, Québec.

E-mail: regart@sympatico.ca

My drawing is inspired by the cover of Iron Man Vol. 1 #155.

THE MANY COLORS OF IRON MAN

By Couture

A little while ago, **Frank Tieri** invited all Iron fans to **share their ideas** about the kind of gadgets that could be included in our hero's **upcoming new armor**. I read all the suggestions that were posted on the different boards with great interest. One of the suggestions I thought was the most interesting was the one about **changing the armor's color scheme**. It inspired me to have a bit of fun with Shell-head's suit. I scanned an Iron Man drawing I did recently and had a go at modifying the colors. Here are the results. This armor design was intended to be a new version of the **Silver Centurion armor** (as seen in issue 49), but I gotta admit... I think it looks pretty damn sharp in **blue and gold**...



METAL HEAD

Greetings, folks. This is a quickie look at the coolest (or biggest) summer movies this year -- in no particular order (and remember all dates are subject to change):

PEARL HARBOR

May 25

Directed by Michael Bay

Starring: Ben Affleck, Kate Beckingsale

This one is a love triangle between two young pilots who are friends and a Naval nurse. The backdrop is World War I, contrary to what the title says (just kidding). The action and effects should be good, but Bay's quick cuts can be jarring. And after seeing the Liv Tyler/Ben Affleck love scene in **ARMAGEDDON** (animal crackers just won't be the same after that corny crap), I have serious doubts about the romance. Sounds like **TITANIC** crap to me. It also has the largest green-light budget ever (\$135 million) + no one above the line and heads of departments get paid until the movie is in the black (something indie filmmakers do, not Disney heavyweights).

PLANET OF THE APES

July 27

Directed by Tim Burton

Starring: Marky-Mark Wahlberg, Tim Duncan

A re-imagining of the **APES** movies (no Earth or Statue of Liberty) + Dirk Diggler + an ape-ish Chuck Heston + TIM BURTON? I'm there! (Isn't it funny how Mark Wahlberg's film career rocks whereas his New Kids bro Donny's film career sucks! Did anyone recognize him or even want to SEE him in his tightie-whities in 6th Sense?! I sure didn't....)



New Apes On The Block

JURASSIC PARK 3

July 18

Directed by Joe Johnston

Sam Neill, Mrs. David Duchovny (Tea Leoni)



I am a huge fan of the first, the second was all right, but this one? I hear the beginning was solid, the middle so-so and the ending didn't exist when they started shooting. Dr. Grant (Neill) returns to one of the islands to face dinos that wreak havoc. The highlight should be the **T-Rex vs. Spinosaur** show-down. But, I have SERIOUS reservations, as does everyone else.

"Oh yeah? Bite me, McKnight!"

TOMB RAIDER

June 15

Directed by Simon West

Starring: Mrs. Billy Bob (Angelina Jolie)

This movie will make hundreds of millions of dollars worldwide because of Angelina Jolie's boobs.

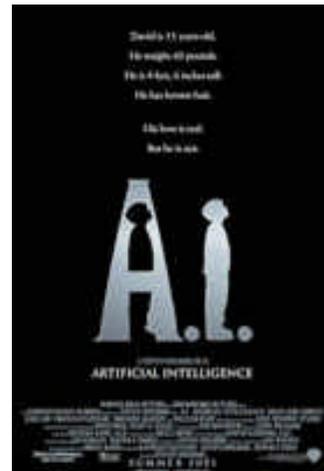
A.I.

June 29

Directed by Spielberg

Starring: The SIXTH SENSE kid (Haley Joel Osment)

Nope, not the official **Advanced Iron movie**, but a film about a boy who discovers he's a robot. I've been intrigued by this since 1995 when I read Kubrick wanted to do this. He put it aside for **EYES WIDE SHUT** (that took a long time to do). When he died in 1999, my first reaction was "What about AI?!" Well, apparently, he told a lot of it to Spielberg and now ol' Steve is doing it. The web sites out there are trippy, and most I guess are fake sites for the companies in the movie's world. And Jude Law LOOKS like a plastic android from what I've seen. Looks COOL. For more, go to <http://www.corona.bc.ca/films/details/ai.html> (*An Advanced Iron movie WOULD rock, though! Only problem is Kalibabky will demand and get \$25 million + 30% of upfront gross receipts leaving us with frozen burritos.*)



OSMOSIS JONES

August 10

Live action directed by the Farrellys

Animation by WB

This movie will hopefully rock in a funny way just as WB's **THE IRON GIANT** kicked MAJOR ASS in 1999. A cool white blood cell (Chris Rock) teams up with a cold tablet (David Hyde Pierce) to help a human host (Bill Murray) from a virus (Larry Fishburne). That's all I'll say.

ATLANTIS: THE LOST EMPIRE

June 8 (doesn't Disney OFFICIALLY release their OFFICIAL cartoon movies around the 23 or so of June?!?!?! What gives?!?!?!? What is tarnation is going on here?!?!?! Let's find out, shall we?)

Directed by: Those BEAUTY AND THE BEAST guys (that movie rocked)

Starring: Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox)



No musical numbers, no singing door stops, not even some famous guy singing over the action (like Tarzan). What's going on here?! Is this Bizarro Disney or something?! Nope, they want to try something different (It worked for

Tarzan). This movie is about an explorer named Milo looking for the lost city of Atlantis. Should be groovy...It took only 2 pitchers of Margaritas for the directors to come up with the idea.

FINAL FANTASY: The Spirits Within

July 11

Written by Jeff "IRON MAN" Vintar

Well, it's nothing like the game. Other than that, all I know is that Al (**APOLLO 13**) Reinhart's script was thrown out and reworked by our pal, Jeff Vintar -- oh, by the way, Apollo 13 was good because of script God John Sayles' uncredited re-write. The biggest thing going for FF is that the animation is VERY life-like, esp. Donald Sutherland's character.

JAY AND SILENT BOB STRIKE BACK

August 24

Directed by: Silent Bob (Kevin Smith)

Starring: Jay and Silent Bob and everyone from ALL the movies

No religion, no relationships, no mall, no convenience stores. Jay and Silent Bob road trip out to LA to stop the premiere of the movie based on them. This sounds cool since Jason (God) Lee is playing my

Director Kevin Smith -->



favorite character EVER Brody Bruce (from Mallrats) and even Banky (from Chasing Amy). This movie should rock, I think. This will be the end of the Jersey films Kevin Smith has been making. He says it's about his image he wants to leave Hollywood. We'll miss the ol' bastards Jay and Silent Bob...(oh, and a Marvel Comics character makes a cameo, and no, it ain't Iron Man...it's, well, take a guess--it's pretty obvious! Look who's directing it!! Everyone knows it's gonna be the Spider-Clone!!!)

SKYE FALLING

Sometime in June
Directed by some guy
Starring some people



An epic sad love story spanning a short amount of time...Um, visit the web site at www.skyefalling.com ????

That's it for now. If you wanna shell out your money for any other garbage movie this summer, go for it. I SURE WILL! Summer may not be **FARGO**-type material, but this is the funnest

time to sit your ass in a stained chair, spill you \$12 coke down the aisle and hope the film doesn't break since digital projection isn't widespread yet.

Movies to look forward to in 2002:

SPIDER-MAN: Nuff said.

STAR WARS Episode 2: Shot digitally with a better script and more effects. Sounds cool.

MATRIX RELOADED, aka, Matrix 2 (this is what Fox news Channel says is the title--lame at first, but makes sense--time to reload the program). Parts 2 and 3 are being shot back-to-back. I liked the Matrix -- it rocked THE PHANTOM MENACE.

Maybe some Heath McKnight movie.

2003:

BLADE 2, HULK (by Ang Lee!!!).

Maybe some Heath McKnight movie.



"YES" to Matrix 2; thank God I said "NO" to Speed 2!

2004:

IRON MAN (we hope -- maybe I can direct it!!!).

Maybe some Heath McKnight movie.

2005:

STAR WARS 3 (Vader rises and slaughters the Jedi -- at least I hope so; I get chills of fear when I think of how scary that must be. George, put the fear of the Dark Force in us!).

Maybe some Heath McKnight movie (do you detect a self-advertising trend here?).

Well, that's it, kiddies. Keep boycotting the book until Dave and Bob are back on or if they get a good writer.

**Send brick letters to:
heath@mpsdigital.com
and visit www.skyefalling.com for the time of your life. I remain, Bill
O'Reilly, I mean, Heath McKnight.**

