

'40s/'50s/'60s
TRIP THROUGH TIME WITH KIM DEITCH'S
REINCARNATION
STORIES

JANUARY 2020 - NO. 37

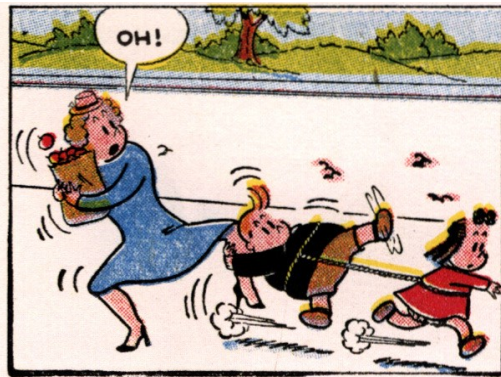
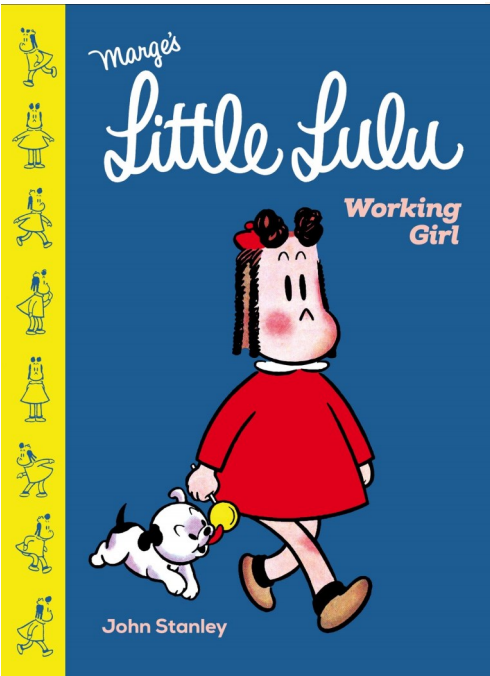
**PLUS...ROD SERLING, LITTLE LULU
AND THE BRAIN BATS OF VENUS!**



The Comics & Graphic Novel Bulletin of

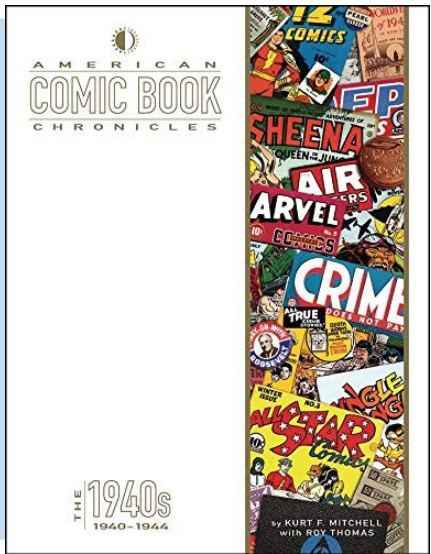


Lexington Public Library
Reading Is Just the Beginning!

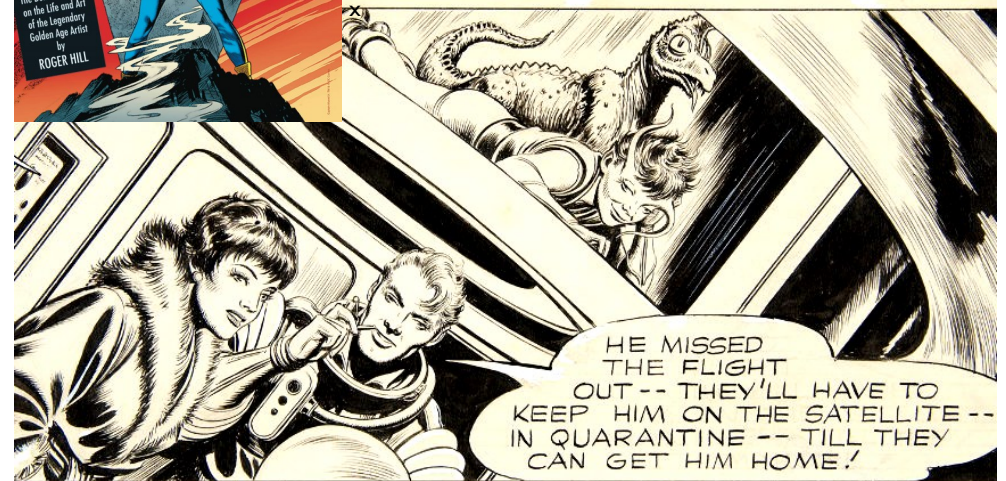


Created by Marge Buell for the best-selling *Saturday Evening Post*, Little Lulu was one of many popular pantomime strips. But it wasn't until Lulu moved to comic books that she found her voice. Writer/artist John Stanley and his ghosts, especially Irving Tripp, turned *Little Lulu* into the leading kiddie comic of its era. In the years since, Lulu has become a symbol of girl power second only to Wonder Woman. The first in a new reprint series from Drawn & Quarterly, *Working Girl* features an intro by Margaret Atwood. Get it from Beaumont, Central and Eastside.

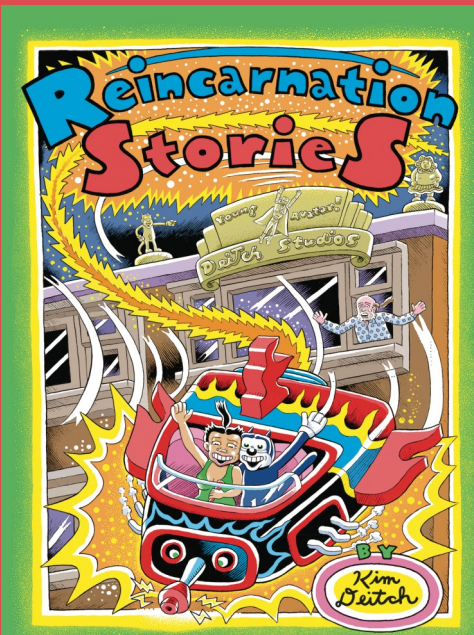
The newest volume of TwoMorrow's essential *American Comic Book Chronicles* delves into the most important years in the medium's history, 1940-1944. Every year saw new developments that shape the Ninth Art to this day. 1942 alone saw the rise of the funny animal genre, the debut of *Archie* and the first crime comic. And if you ever wondered about the career of the *Fantom of the Fair* or the features within *Hyper Mystery Comics*, author Kurt F. Mitchell takes a deep dive into the swarm of titles and characters from the famous to the obscure. Mitchell also talks business, from the decline of the "shops" to the bruising legal battle between the *Man of Steel* and the *World's Mightiest Mortal*. Get it at Central.



"Master Comics" was the Fawcett publication headlined by Captain Marvel Jr., one of the most successful spin-off characters in the biz. And each issue was a master class in cartooning thanks to Junior's primary artist, Mac Raboy. Unlike the rough'n'tumble art of his peers, Raboy's oeuvre is justly revered for its smooth, sleek realism. In a market crowded with the gaudy and the gruesome, Raboy's stuff was just plain pretty to look at. Following his fine *Reed Crandall: Illustrator of the Comics* (still available at Central), historian Roger Hill details the rise of Raboy from Golden Age sweat-shops to Fawcett's million-selling titles to his post-war work on the first Buddhist superhero to his troubled tenure on *Flash Gordon*. Reserve *Mac Raboy* from Central.



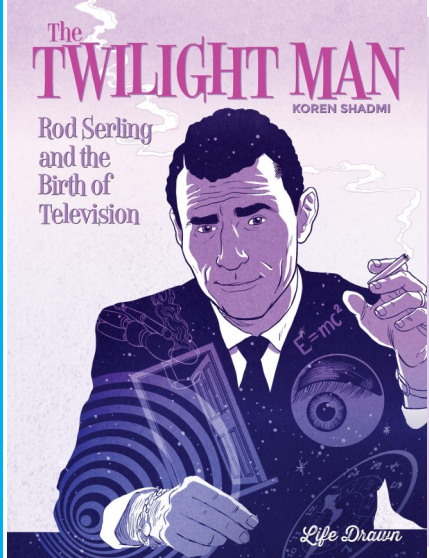
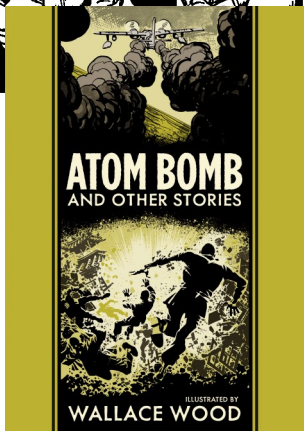
Kim Deitch was one of the junior members of the original group of cartoonists who created American underground comics. Though obviously talented, New Yorker Deitch was overshadowed by Crumb, Williams, Moscoso and the rest of the Zap Crew (see *Zap: The Interviews, Central*), as well as West Coast creators such as Gilbert Shelton and Greg Irons. But many of those artists were discombobulated by the social and economic upheavals of the 1970s, especially the nationwide crackdown on the head shops that were the main market for underground comix. Like his fellow B-lister Bill Griffith, Deitch saw the coming storm and found other outlets for his work, such as alternative weeklies and the independent comics market. He developed a relationship with the most forward-looking of the indie imprints, Fantagraphics, which has published the majority of Deitch's interconnected graphic novels. Just as Fantagraphics creators such as the Hernandez Brothers explored complex worlds based on hardcore punk and Central American culture, Deitch has created a sprawling mythology based on pre-electronic forms of entertainment. The medicine shows of the American frontier, the carnival midway, the Wild West revues—these lead to the dime museums, the nickelodeons, the action serials of silent Hollywood, the raw origins of animated cartoons. All have provided the back-



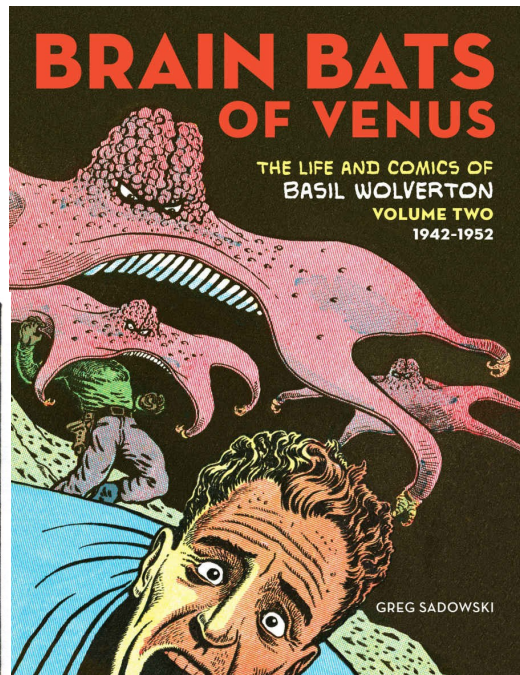
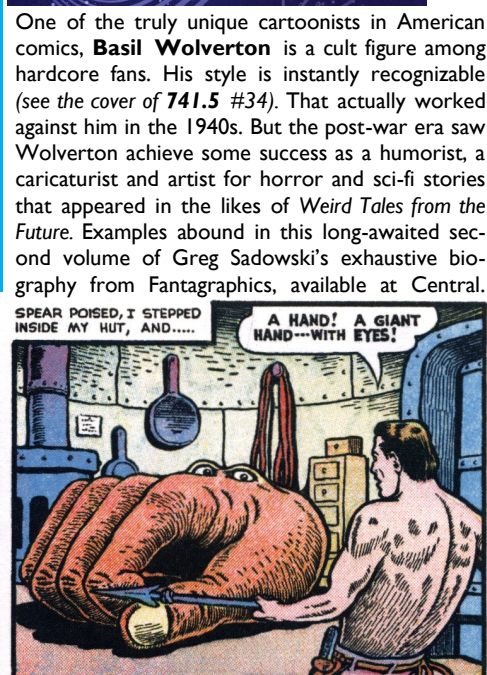
ground for Deitch's ongoing opus. *Reincarnation Stories* continues Deitch's mixing of reality and reverie as recurring character Sidney Pincus works with real life cowboy star Buck Jones while the young Kim, vacationing with his family, meets cult cowboy actor Jack Hoxie. Even moreso than Deitch's previous work, *RS* flows from character to character, story to story, image to image, the rhyme and reason obvious only after the reader finishes the book—which ends "To be continued"! The Plot Robot, an actual invention from the Golden Age of Pulp (image below), is this novel's maguffin. The bizarre little device links each free-floating incident to the next, including an actual flashback to the 1960s featuring fellow underground icon Spain Rodriguez. Meanwhile, a fantasy of mainstream success based on a *Thor*-style superhero comic starring the young Christ exposes Deitch's long line of previous lives. That is, once Judas, reincarnated as low-level demon and Deitch's life-long nemesis Waldo the Cat (image above), gives the lowdown on what actually happened behind the seraphic scenes. That's not Deitch's first encounter with metempsychosis. He recovers the memory of a childhood encounter with an aged D.W. Griffith, who mistakes the four-year-old Kim for none other than the forementioned Sidney Pincus! *Reincarnation Stories* is a wild and wooly trip through time and space available at Beaumont and Central.

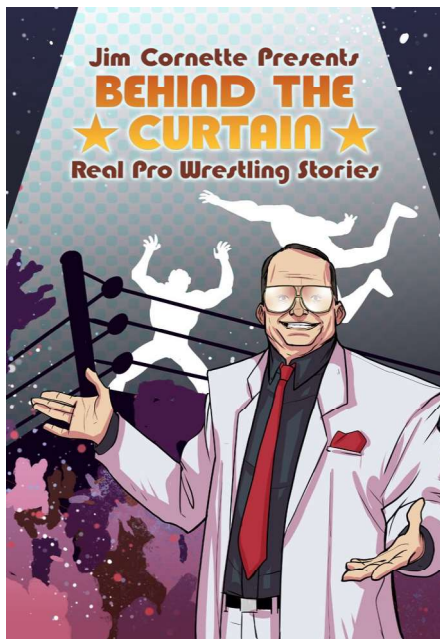


Wallace Wood is among the most admired creators in the history of comics. His work kept a perfect balance between illustrative realism and exaggerated cartooning. Drawing for *Entertaining Comics*, the upstart imprint that changed the standards of the industry in the early 1950s, Wood was adept at every EC genre. Wood's contributions to EC's fabled war comics are breath-taking examples of drama and verisimilitude. *Atom Bomb* (Fantagraphics) describes combat from the Punic Wars, the Middle Ages, our Civil War, World Wars I & II, and the Korean conflict still raging as these comics were published. Like the title story, some features tell the tale from the perspective of "the enemy", such as "War of 1812" (above), which follows a native warrior fighting for Tecumseh. True to history, true to life, *Atom Bomb* is available at Beaumont and Central.

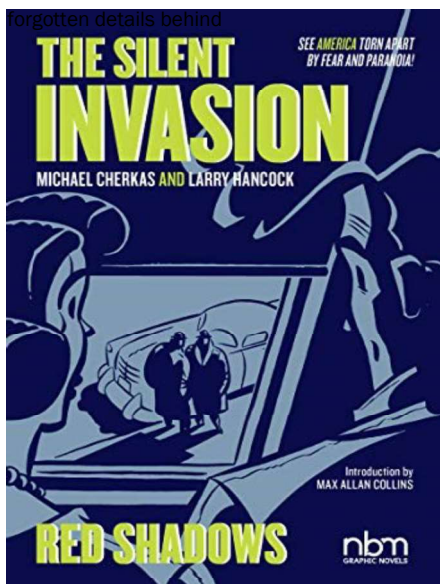


Stuck on a long, boring plane ride, Rod Serling opens up to an attractive fellow passenger about his life and career. As shown by Koren Shadmi's graphic biography of the legendary screenwriter, the two were often inseparable. *The Twilight Man* (Life Drawn) is a detailed look at Serling's place in the history of television as a bridge between the high-toned theatrical milieu of its New York origins and its sunshine-and-soda-pop sensationalism after the TV biz decamped for California. Like EC before him and Marvel after, Serling learned that a little bit of fantasy sugar makes the socially relevant medicine go down. But his own demons were as strong as those he imagined, as you'll see in this fine book available via lexpublib.org.



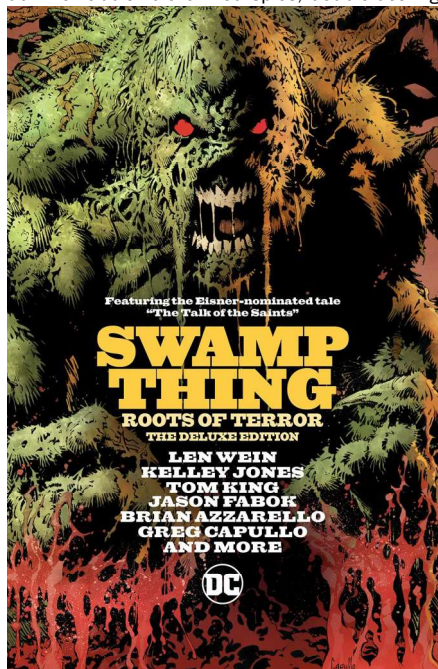


The King of Sports, professional wrestling, is going through a boom period. After nearly 20 years of dominance, **Vince McMahon's** World Wrestling Entertainment is facing actual competition— not just from rival promotions like All Elite Wrestling and Ring of Honor, but from its own subsidiary brand, NXT. Like AEW and ROH, NXT's success is based on performers who made their bones on the indie circuit in groups such as AIW, Evolve, PWG, Chikara Pro, GCW, Lucha Underground and more. Whether it's high-flying athleticism, brutal death matches, or comedic wrestlers like **Joey Ryan** and **Orange Cassidy**, there's something for everyone. Unless you're **Jim Cornette**. A fixture of the business since the early 1980s, **Cornette** has seen it all and done it all, and he is *not* a fan of the new breed of wrestling. But he is an expert on the old school, as shown by his graphic history *Behind the Curtain* (IDW). With the aid of screenwriter **Brandon Easton** and art by **Denis Medri**, the former manager, match-maker and promoter gives the lowdown on several legends of the industry. Whether it's the sad story of **Dr. Jerry Graham**, the terrifying tale of "The Man Who Knew the Sheik's Name" or the

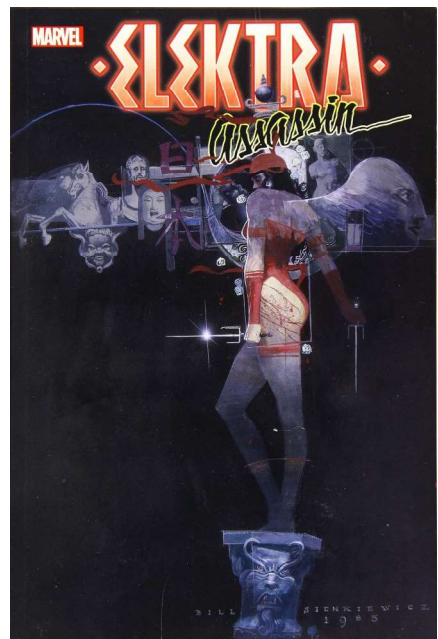


MEANWHILE

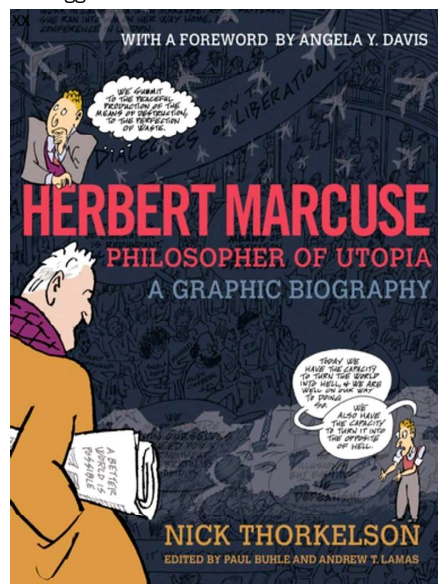
forgotten details behind the plane crash that nearly killed **Ric Flair**, **Cornette's** got the goods. Perhaps the most touching tale in the book is how racial segregation in Memphis was dealt a serious blow by popular wrestler **Sputnik Monroe**. The grappler adopted the moniker "Sputnik" in 1957, when the Soviet Union launched said satellite, sending shock waves through the world. But space was the place for many even before the great Race began. Visitors from other worlds were flying, landing and even talking with earthlings years before the Russians sent their little beeping tin can into orbit. The post-war phenomenon of "flying saucers" provides the background for *The Silent Invasion* by **Larry Hancock** and **Michael Cherkis**. Originally published during the "Black & White Boom" of the early 1990s and re-released by NBM, this series came out years before *The X-Files* brought Fortean paranoia to the masses. The first volume, *Red Shadows*, introduces reporter **Matt Sinkage** as he falls down a rabbit hole of Red spies, double-dealing



dames and G-Men chasing UFOs. The artwork of **Cherkis**, an ink-slathered mix of *Dick Tracy* and *Tintin*, is what made this title stand out from the monochrome mob. By the second volume, *The Great Fear*, the drawings are smoother, aided by the artist's use of zipatone shading (all the more impressive when one recalls that such screens were cut and applied by hand in those pre-digital days). A *noir* mix of history and hoodoo that seems even more relevant now than when it was first published, *The Silent Invasion* is available from **Beaumont and Central**. Those locations and Eastside are home to the latest book devoted to DC's most popular horror hero, *Swamp Thing: Roots of Terror* is a hardback Deluxe Edition containing short stories by contemporary creators such as **Tom (Mister Miracle) King** and **Brian (100 Bullets) Azzarello** with a special contribution by Swampy's original writer **Len Wein** featuring **Kelly Jones's** tribute to **Wein's** legendary collaborator, **Berni Wrightson**. The best story is the Eisner-nominated "Talk of the Saints" by **King** and artist **Jason Fabok**: A weak, faltering *Swamp Thing* seeks to protect a boy from the beast pur-



suing them. A chase both grand and goofy is at the heart of *Elektra: Assassin*. The first solo title dedicated to the popular villainess created by **Frank Miller**, this ground-breaking limited series came out in 1986, but still looks absolutely modern. That's due to the artwork of **Bill Sienkiewicz**, a multi-media riot of ink, pencil, watercolor and Xeroxes, simultaneously loud and lovely and crass and cool, like nothing that had been seen in comics. Years after the likes of **David Mack** and **Dave McKean** have furthered the cause of multi-media comics, *Elektra: Assassin* still shocks and impresses. Its story, a bloody farce of secret agencies wielding physical violence and mind control in the name of global power politics, could be a two-fisted explication of the ideas of **Herbert Marcuse**. He was a member of the Frankfurt School of philosophers who fled the fire of Nazi Germany for the frying pan of anti-Communist America. His pursuit of "a better world" for the minds and bodies of all made **Marcuse** a culture hero of the Sixties. **Nick Thorkelson's** playful line-work makes *Philosopher of Utopia* a fun read, even with all the stuff about Heidegger. Look under B M3345t at Central!



Back issues of 741.5 are available at lexpublib.org under the **COLLECTIONS** tab!