

THREE ROCKS

Three Rocks #1. Published for Capa-Alpha in April 2013 by Rogers Cadenhead, 135 Jenkins St., Suite 105B #244, St. Augustine, FL 32086. Email: cadenhead@gmail.com. Web: <http://cadenhead.org>.

Please Allow Me to Introduce Myself

Since this is my first Capa-Alpha contribution in over 20 years, I thought I'd begin by reintroducing myself to comics fandom.

I'm Rogers Cadenhead, a 45-year-old author and web publisher. During the '80s and '90s I wrote articles and reviews for the *Comics Buyer's Guide*, *Amazing Heroes* and *Wizard* and tried to break into comics as a writer, a dream that was dashed in 1996 when the computer book publisher Sams liked my pitch letter a lot better than Marvel, DC, Malibu and Defiant.

I write the *Teach Yourself Java in 24 Hours* and *21 Days* books and publish the Drudge Retort, an alternative news site at drudge.com.

I recently completed my first novel, a thriller that has reached the second round of this year's Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award contest. I find out in a few days whether it made the next round.

I began reading comics in the early '70s, tearing into issues of *Justice League of America* and *Batman* until the covers fell off. I became a comics collector as a 12-year-old after experiencing nerdvana at a convenience store in Everman, Texas, when I saw *Man-Thing* #1 on a "Hey Kids! Comics!" rack in November 1979.

Bob Wiacek's cover depicts the title character emerging from a swamp, his dead eyes peering through bulbous sidelocks that drip with muck as he extends a giant clawed hand to grab the reader.

I was grabbed.

As a pre-pubescent boy mere months from becoming a teen, I naturally wanted a *Man-Thing*. Perhaps even a *Giant-Size Man-Thing*.

The concept of burning if you touched the wrong thing was familiar to me as a young Catholic.

Today, I'm still buying comics, splitting a pull list at All Books and Comics in St. Augustine, Fl., between myself and my 17-, 13- and 11-year-old sons.

I rejoined K-A because I thought it would be fun to start writing about comics again.

Also, I couldn't resist the gravitational pull of this APA after I found the most recent Central Mailer's Comments on Yahoo Groups.

There are a lot more familiar names on the membership roster than I expected.

Just so you know, all of our prior interactions are still in continuity.

I have not been rebooted to appeal to a younger audience.



Dave Cockrum: John Byrne is 'First Class'

In 2003, a fan on the Cockrum Corner message board asked the artist Dave Cockrum what he thought about John Byrne's pencilling on *Uncanny X-Men*. In 1977, Byrne succeeded Cockrum on the comic with issue 108 and by the time Cockrum got it back three years later in issue 145, the book was an enormous fan favorite and Byrne one of the hottest artists in comics. Here's how Cockrum answered the question.

Don't get me started on Byrne.

My opinion of his art is colored by the fact that I think personally, he's an arrogant, first-class jerk.

His art on *X-Men* was interesting, and sometimes innovative, but it was also as simplistic as a Saturday morning cartoon — which may explain the wide appeal he has. Yes, *X-Men* sales took off when he took over the book. You may not have noticed, though, that sales continued to increase when I came back.

My leaving *X-Men* — on both occasions — was voluntary. The first time, I had accepted a staff job at Marvel, to design covers, not to color. I couldn't do a nine-to-five job, with four hours of commute each day, and continue drawing *X-Men*.

My coming back to *X-Men* was a serendipitous accident. I'd been asked to pencil *X-Men* in *Marvel Fanfare* and it was so much fun I mentioned to Chris Claremont (on a Saturday) that if Byrne left the book, I'd like to have it back.

The following Monday, Byrne quit the book, and I returned, after one fill-in by Brent Anderson.

Was I envious of Byrne?

Probably a little, because he's frequently touted as being more important to the book than I am.

But if I hadn't created Storm, Nightcrawler, Colossus, Phoenix, Mystique,

Lilandra, Deathbird, the Shi'ar Imperial Guard and the Starjammers, there would have been an entirely different X-Men book, and possibly no X-Men publishing empire. Possibly even no X-Men book at all. And probably no X-Men movies.

And if, instead of leaving DC I'd stayed on the *Legion of Superheroes*, we might be watching Legion movies these days. :p

Source: <http://www.nightscrawlers.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=2139>. Dave Cockrum original art from *Uncanny X-Men* 100.

Amazon Contest Pitch for My First Novel

The Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award is a contest for self-published and unpublished novelists that began in 2008. In January, 10,000 people submitted completed novels in the hopes of winning a \$50,000 publishing advance or one of four \$15,000 advances in the categories of general fiction, mystery/thriller, romance, science fiction/horror and young adult. The first round of the competition required that writers submit a pitch of up to 300 words. My first novel reached the second round with 400 mysteries and thrillers on the basis of this pitch.

No marriage is without its secrets, but Clemson University professor Jessup Clark accidentally uncovers one that threatens more than his happiness.

A discovered airplane ticket stub reveals that his wife Shani lied to him and took a flight to Chicago when she claimed to be in Atlanta for business. When he confronts his wife about what looks like an affair, she undertakes a ruthless campaign to destroy his life, take away his job and rob him of his freedom.

A happy marriage shatters as she concocts a domestic violence charge and has a mysterious associate punch her brutally in the face, telling the police she was hit by Jessup. A loaded gun is planted in his car, scaring his workplace after a tip is called in to security before he arrives one

morning. A story is planted in the newspaper, sharing Jessup's darkest family secret to make him look even more guilty. It makes no sense that Shani, a loving spouse and the dignified daughter of academics, would engage in an extramarital affair — much less go to such extreme lengths to destroy Jessup after getting caught.

While his life is being taken apart piece by piece and the police begin pursuing him over the crimes for which she has framed him, Jessup must uncover the real reason she is doing this — an event that occurred 10 years earlier at an Afghanistan tribal leader's compound in the Shah-i-Kot Valley.

The Engineer is a thriller about marriage and other disasters

'I Deserve Better Than Being Marginalized'

"In 1996, after 29 years as an artist for Marvel Comics, I got fired — 56 years old, two children still in college and no job."

Herb Trimpe wrote these words in a *New York Times* essay published on Jan. 9, 2000. Sharing diary entries covering four years, he described how he stopped getting assignments and couldn't even get editors to return his calls. He said Marvel lost the feeling of family it had when he started.

"I'm beginning to hate drawing comics," he wrote. "It becomes harder and harder to compete with the new creative 'stars.' Experience doesn't seem to matter."

After Trimpe was laid off, he went to college, eventually landing a job as a seventh-grade art teacher.

In March of this year, Jerry Ordway wrote on his blog that despite an exclusive contract with DC, he stopped getting assignments beyond the occasional fill-in story. Editors wouldn't return his emails. Even as the publisher launched a huge number of titles for the "New 52," the 55-year-old artist didn't get a single series of his own.

"I understand that no company owes anything that isn't contractually stipulated, but in my heart, I think I deserve better than being marginalized over the last 10 years," Ordway wrote. "All I ask is for some of the same consideration my

generation of creators and editors gave to the older guard in the 1980s. ... In my time at DC in the 1980s and 1990s, DC had a heart. They made sure Don Heck had work, they made sure guys like Aparo were kept busy. They weren't perfect, but there was a feeling of family for me."

The comments section of Ordway's blog drew other experienced pros who said they're in the same situation, including Chuck Dixon and Joe Rubinstein.

I'm a fan of Ordway who checks every week to see if he has a new comic. He's been one of my favorites since his *WildStar* mini-series for Image in 1993. I couldn't understand why DC wasn't putting him on a new title.

Trimpe and Ordway are telling the same story at roughly the same age in their lives. Both thought of their employer as a family.

Perhaps it's a generational thing, but I never believed that a corporation would reward my life-long loyalty. After jobs as a computer programmer and newspaper reporter, I gravitated to self-employment.

Before Ordway starts looking at teaching, I hope he tries an option that wasn't available to Trimpe in 1996. If Ordway launches a self-published comic on the crowd-funding website KickStarter, he's likely to have its print run completely funded — by loyal fans.

Links: Jerry Ordway's blog: <http://ordstersrandomthoughts.blogspot.com>, Herb Trimpe's essay: <http://goo.gl/SkeoS>.

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