

EXHIBIT DDD

STAN LEE UNIVERSE

Stan Lee and Jack Kirby
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Interviewed by Mike O'Dell
Transcribed by Steven Tice

UNEDITED

MO: Who goes around saving maidens, preventing banks from being robbed, and committing deeds of that type, under an alter ego for the name, "Peter Parker?" How about "Tony Stark?" Would you believe "Reed Richards?" "Stan Lee?" "Jack Kirby?" Well, except for the last two, they're all superheroes and they belong in Marvel comics, and they are written and drawn by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. And Mr. Lee and Mr. Kirby are going to be answering questions about their superheroes. And I guess the first one would be addressed to Stan Lee, and it's the title of this program. Stan, will success spoil Spider-Man.

SL: [chuckles] Well, I don't think anything could spoil old Spidey, as we lovingly call him. Just have to correct one thing you said, though. You said that, except for Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, the others are superheroes. We like to think of ourselves as superheroes, too. Might add also that there are other artists and other writers who do some of the other books, too. Jack and I don't do them all, although we do the Fantastic Four and Thor. Spider-Man has been a success since he started, and, luckily, I don't think he's been spoiled yet, so we just have our fingers crossed.

MO: I ran across Marvel comic books about six or eight months ago, and one of the things that drew me to Marvel comic books, and Spider-Man in particular, is a panel that showed Spider-Man swooping down on some bank robbers, and they said, "Whoops, here comes Spider-Man!" And he replies, "Who were you expecting? Vice president Humphrey?" Now, this is not a line you expect to find in a comic book, and it sort of symbolizes your whole approach to the field, which is offbeat and interesting. Was it your idea, Stan? Where did it come from?

SL: Well, I guess, in that sense, it was my idea, since I write the dialogue. In a nutshell, our theory is-- Although maybe I shouldn't give the theory in a nutshell, because then I don't know what we'll talk about for the rest of the half hour. But, at any rate, in a nutshell, our theory is that there's no reason why a comic magazine couldn't be as realistic and as well-written and drawn as any other type of literature. We try to write these things so that the characters speak the way a character would speak in a well-written movie, well-produced television show, and I think that's what makes our book seem unique to a person who first picks them up. Nobody expects, as you say, that sort of thing in a comic book. But that's a shame, because why shouldn't someone expect reasonable and realistic dialogue in a comic book? Why do people feel that comic books have to be badly written? And we're trying to engage in a one-company crusade to see to it that they're not badly written.

MO: Jack, you drew and invented, if I'm not mistaken, Captain America, one of the earliest superheroes, who's now plying his trade in Marvel comics. How did Captain America come to be, and does he have any particular relationship to your other superheroes?

JK: I guess Captain America, like all of the characters come to be, because of the fact that there is a need for them. Somebody needed Captain America, just as the public needed Superman. When Superman came on the scene, the public was ready for him, and they took him. And so, from Superman, who didn't exactly satiate the public's need for the superhero, so spawned the rest of them. The rest of them all came from Superman, and they all had various names, and various backgrounds, and they embraced various creeds. And Captain America came from the need for a patriotic character because the times at that time were in a patriotic stir. The war was coming on, and the corny cliché, the war

humor, quite a bit of humor, to them, there is an underlying sincerity. We take them seriously, and I think the readers are aware of this.

MO: Did you also innovate the letters page? It adds to your stories, and frequently I sometimes find in the blurbs you run that you advance the stories by means of these letter pages.

SL: The letters pages are one of our most successful devices. It also established a rapport between ourselves and the readers, and I'm happy to say most of our readers feel that we're all friends. When they write a letter, they don't say, "Dear Editor." They say, "Dear Stan and Jack," "Dear So-and-so." They call us by name. And we give ourselves nicknames. We started this as a gag, and they've caught on. The fellow here on my right isn't just Jack Kirby. He's Jolly Jack.

MO: I'll get you for it. [laughs]

SL: Or Jack "King" Kirby. And I'm "Smilin' Stan." This is kind of cute, too, because, as I mentioned to you earlier, I think before we were on the air, we sort of think of the whole thing as one big advertising campaign, with slogans, and mottos, and catch phrases, and things that the reader can identify with. And besides just presenting stories, we try to make the reader think he's part of an "in" group. In fact, we've discussed before, we're always a little worried about being too successful, where the readers will feel, "Oh, gosh, now everybody's caught on to it. We have to find something new."

MO: Is there a real Irving Forbush?

SL: Oh, I don't think that it would be right for me to answer that. [Jack laughs] When we're off the air, I might hint at it. He's real in our imagination, I'll put it that way.

MO: I think you also pioneered the use of mythological superheroes. I'm talking about Thor, which you two come up with every month.

SL: Well, you've got the right guy here, because I always say that Jack is the greatest mythological creator in the world. When we kicked Thor around, and we came out with him, and I thought he would just be another book. And I think that Jack has turned him into one of the greatest fictional characters there are. In fact, I should let Jack say this, but just on the chance that he won't, somebody was asking him how he gets his authenticity in the costumes and everything, and I think a priceless answer, Jack said that they're not authentic. If they were authentic, they wouldn't be authentic enough. But he draws them the way they should be, not the way they were.

MO: Did you do a lot of homework on that, a lot of Norse myths, and so forth?

JK: Well, not homework in the sense that I went home one night and I really concentrated on it. All through the years, certainly, I've had a kind of affection for any mythological type of character, and my conception of what they should look like. And here Stan gave me the opportunity to draw one, and I wasn't going to draw back from really letting myself go. So I did, and, like, the world became a stage for me there, and I had a costume department that really went to work. I gave the Norse characters twists that they never had in anybody's imagination. And somehow it turned out to be a lot of fun, and I really enjoyed doing it.

MO: Isn't it rather tough to come up with villains that are a suitable match for a Norse god?

JK: Well, not if they're Norse villains.

MO: Well, you've also dragged in some Greeks. I remember one epic battle with Hercules.

JK: Well, Hercules had Olympian powers, which certainly are considered on an equal basis with the old powers of the Norse gods, and therefore we felt that they were an equal match for each other. and by rights they should contend with each other.